



OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

**2012 ANNUAL SCHOOL
COMMUNITY REPORT**

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SCHOOL PROFILE

Our Lady of Mercy School is founded in the Catholic Christian tradition. The school is in the Meander Valley Parish which serves both Westbury, Deloraine and surrounding areas and is situated adjacent to the Holy Redeemer Church in Deloraine.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School aims to provide an education which fosters the spiritual, academic, social, emotional and physical development of its students through a balanced curriculum.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is committed to nurturing the Faith and encouraging each person's relationship with God, through Jesus Christ. We value a Christian way of living that promotes a commitment to care, service and respect for justice and compassion within our school community and in society in general. We strive to provide the best possible learning environment.

We value excellence in the pursuit of all aspects of school life. We encourage all individuals to achieve their potential. We value a strong sense of community and encourage full involvement of parents, students and staff in the life of the school.

We value each child's uniqueness and welcome his/her particular and special abilities and needs.

Our Lady of Mercy School was established by the Sisters of Mercy in February, 1895.

The Sisters taught both boys and girls from infant to secondary classes and also took in girl boarders. In 1971 the secondary section

was closed and the boarding school closed in 1972.

The first lay principal was appointed in 1996. The school is now staffed entirely by lay people.

The school's motto, 'The Lord is my Light', is reflected in Liturgy, assemblies, gatherings and is central in all planning.

The school tastefully blends ultra-modern facilities and refurbished heritage sections. Complementing the buildings are well-maintained spacious grounds, two adventure playground areas and a full-sized netball/basketball/tennis court.

The School Board works in collaboration with the Principal in the planning for, and bringing to reality, improvements in all areas of function at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School. The Board also oversees the responsible supervision of school resources and sees that the school meets its governmental, financial, industrial and legal obligations.

Parents are actively involved in many ways, especially through classroom help. We have a very committed Parents and Friends Association who have a representation on the newly formed Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents Council.

CATHOLIC LIFE AND MISSION

Liturgy and Prayer:

Regardless of religious background, all children are welcomed at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School. We celebrate being a community of Faith where values for living have, as their root, the Gospel values.

Our Catholic identity and ethos are integral to all areas and function of the life of the school.

The learning offered at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is an invitation for each

student to develop to his/her full potential as a person. The education program is delivered in a faith context and is therefore an invitation to a relationship with God.

The school's Catholic identity is expressed in various ways: through class and whole school prayer, liturgical celebrations, religious symbols, the Religious Education Program, community service and the manifestation of Gospel values in the day to day happenings and interactions of the school community.

Prayer, Liturgy and Celebration

We began our school year with an Opening School Mass attended by students, parents and parishioners. We gathered again for Ash Wednesday and Mercy Day. Fortnightly assemblies began with a prayer. The principal attended the Parish Pastoral Council meetings, giving an update on school events.

Mondays began with an assembly of all classes and staff, where we pray our school prayer (composed out of the Mercy tradition). Each class has an established sacred space and prayer is an integral part of the day in each class.

In 2012, the school continued to provide a variety of experiences to foster the students' spiritual and faith formation. All students from Kinder to grade 6 engaged in prayer liturgies in the Church and Multi-Purpose Hall, with Prep to Six students attending parish masses. This structure was in consultation with Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Parish, and in particular, Father Terry Yard who regularly leads many of the liturgies. Advent, Lent, Easter, Holy Week along with significant events such as Mother's, Father's and Grandparents Days were liturgically celebrated with strong attendance by family and friends.

Parents and friends were invited to join their children in all the liturgical celebrations.

Religious Education Curriculum:

Religious Education is the foundation of our school and is an integral part of our Curriculum.

The formal Religious Education Program is drawn from the (2005) Curriculum Framework for Religious Education, 'Good News for Living'. Under the guidance Miss Errin McDonough, Religious Education Co-ordinator, and Religious Education Consultants from the Catholic Education Office, our teachers implemented the program with a high level of success during 2012.

Spirituality:

The staff support each other on their faith journey through prayer and reflection at the beginning of staff meetings and on scheduled Spirituality Days.

The MJR (Making Jesus Real) programme continues to be integrated into life at the school and students and staff are able to draw on it to reinforce the development of values and spirituality in the classroom and playground settings. This program, specifically offered to Grade 6 students, is overseen by Peter Mitchell and Mr Julian Davie and is designed to promote Christian leadership and to foster a relationship with Jesus that is real to the students and applicable to their daily lives.

The School in the Life of the Parish and Diocese:

Led by Fr Terry Yard and Sister Maria Goretti, the Parish has responsibility in candidate preparation for the Sacramental Program. The school continued in its role as support for both Parish and parents in preparing children for the reception of the sacraments of First Eucharist, Confirmation and First Reconciliation. The Parish worked with the school in identifying students eligible to receive sacraments and Sister Maria Goretti worked with parents/guardians in preparing a number of our students for the Sacraments. The sacramental program is parish based and supported by the school.

Primary grades prepared and attended the weekly Wednesday Parish Mass.

Community Participation and Christian Outreach:

Our students were actively involved in community awareness activities. Classes were rostered to visit Kanangra, the Aged Care home located next to Our Lady of Mercy. Both the Chamber Choir and School Choir visited Kanangra. The grade 3/4 class are involved in music therapy sessions with Kanangra.

Students and their families donated food for St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal and food donations were also given to Deloraine House for their Christmas Appeal.

In 2012, our school continued its outreach program of providing assistance to Catholic charities. These included the Archbishop's Samaritan Fund and Caritas.

Students also played an important role in the Deloraine Carols by Candlelight.

Parent Participation:

At the commencement of the year parents were invited to a bbq during which Information Sessions were held by class teachers. Parents met with class teachers where details were provided for the management of each class, homework and communication expectations.

Student goal setting meetings were held by each class teacher early in the year and Parent/Teacher Evenings in second term.

Parent involvement is actively encouraged through our Volunteer's Program. All Volunteers attend an Induction Session with the Principal prior to working with students in the school.

The weekly newsletter contains items of general information, educational articles, a diary of upcoming events, a report from class teachers on a rostered basis, Parents &

Friends and community notices. Photos highlight the activities of students during the previous week.

Parents are welcome to attend every assembly, liturgy and event happening at school. Parents of students receiving a certificate are invited by letter to attend the assembly. The school sincerely appreciates parents assisting in the classroom, canteen, fundraising and excursions.

OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is committed to providing the best possible education for its students. The school aims to develop the whole child spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally and morally. The Australian Government mandates eight learning areas. Teachers use the Australian Curriculum as a basis for student learning. As a Catholic school an additional high priority learning area is Religious Education.

Learning and Teaching:

As partners in Catholic education, we commit ourselves to our students by celebrating being Catholic in Australia, ensuring quality teaching and learning programs and inspiring hope, a love of learning and a positive vision for the future.

The staff of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is dedicated, committed and very energetic. All staff members have a genuine love of children. They are an open, welcoming and cohesive team who build strong, quality relationships with students, parents and each other and contribute to a very supportive and collegial atmosphere.

The enthusiasm and willingness of staff to take on new approaches or programs is central to the professional growth of staff and improving student outcomes. Staff is encouraged to build professional capacity through quality professional learning. The

Principal is proactive in encouraging discussion with staff members to provide support for quality classroom practice.

Staff members are actively involved in professional development programs directly linked with the educational needs of the children and the educational foci of the school. Weekly staff and curriculum meetings were held which reflected term, annual and System direction. Whole day professional development experiences were also held.

The school uses the Good News for Living Religious Education Curriculum, the Australian curriculum and N.S.W. syllabi for all other key learning areas. From K – Gr 6 specialist lessons include Music, Speech and Drama, Physical Education and Japanese. Teachers plan collaboratively each week during block non-instructional sessions.

Students begin each day with a two hour uninterrupted literacy block and one hour numeracy block. The literacy block is made up of a hour reading and a one hour writing focus.

Within the classroom children are involved in individual, small group and whole class activities. Our approach to children with special needs is to identify those students of concern, involve specialists when necessary and prepare specific programs to address the needs of students. Our approach is inclusive and programs are overseen by the class teacher, parents / guardians, Learning Support teacher, Principal, Catholic Education Office personnel. Parent input is seen as vital with communication with parents occurring regularly. This enhances the teaching and learning program within the classroom and gives students the opportunity to receive one-on-one or small group assistance.

Integrated Inquiry and stand alone units are a focus each term. These units have the relevant syllabus documents as their source. Leadership Values Programs, Peer Support, Grade 3/4 and 5/6 6 Camp and Inter-school

sport are also important components of the curriculum at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School.

At Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School we believe the learning process begins with assessment. This provides the data for planning student learning. Our Lady of Mercy uses a wide variety of assessment strategies which include whole school standardised testing which is based on stages of development and syllabus guidelines, formal assessment such as teacher observation, student self-assessment and anecdotal records. The school also has an extensive formal assessment structure which includes observational tests, running records, portfolios of student work and numerous other strategies. The combination of formal and informal assessment ensures that the learning needs of students are regularly identified and monitored and specific learning programs are developed. Testing occurs regularly throughout the year. Our Lady of Mercy is actively involved in NAPLAN testing for students in grades 3 and 5 (Government mandated testing), PIPS (Performance Indicators for Primary School) testing in Prep and PAT Maths and PAT Reading which is mandated by our System.

Literacy and Numeracy

NAPLAN results:

NAPLAN assesses student performance in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy.

Below are the percentages of student achievement and where they sit in the 60% range of students in Australia.

In 2012 eight Year 5 students sat NAPLAN.

Numeracy

75% of students achieved in the range.
25% of students achieved below.

Reading

100% of students achieved in the range.
1 student was absent.

Persuasive Writing

88% of students achieved in the range.
12% of students achieved below.

Language Conventions – Spelling

75% of students achieved in the range.
25% of students achieved below.

Language Conventions – Grammar and Punctuation

75% of students achieved in the range.
25% of students achieved below

In 2012 15 Year 3 students sat NAPLAN.

Numeracy

94% of students achieved in the range.
6% of students achieved below

Reading

27% of students achieved above the range.
54% of students achieved in the range.
19% of students achieved below.

Persuasive Writing

74% of students achieved in the range.
26% of students achieved below.

Language Conventions – Spelling

80% of students achieved in the range.
20% of students achieved below.

Language Conventions – Grammar and Punctuation

13% of students achieved above the range.
67% of students achieved in the range.
20% of students achieved below.

Targeted Programs

Our Lady of Mercy has a number of students who receive Equity Funding for Targeted Programs. Identified students benefited from the extra funding and received additional support in the classroom through individualised programs and by working with teacher aides. The teacher aide role is to support the teacher with intervention programs for students in the area of literacy, numeracy and social skills. Teacher aides take a significant role in supporting teachers with the implementing of Individual Education Plans for students with special needs. They also implement the funded speech programs. The professional relationship which exists between teachers and teacher assistants has contributed in a

significant way to the enhancement of student outcomes at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School.

Health Promoting Programs

In addition to weekly Physical Education sessions, all students are involved in swimming, athletics and cross country programs as well as school, regional and state carnivals. Grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 students have the opportunity to play hockey, football, netball and soccer during the Friday sport program co-ordinated by the Northern Midlands Primary School Sports Association.

Daily Physical Education sessions are held each morning with our Grade 6 students conducting the sessions.

Kinder to Grade 6 students have a nutritional 'fruit break' each morning at 10.00 a.m. Having a short break, during which students are invited to eat healthy fruit, helps their concentration across the two hour Literacy Block.

A 'no hat, no play in the sun' policy operated in Terms One and Three, when students were most at risk.

Achievements Across the Curriculum

Students from Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School presented both solo, duet and choir items in the Devonport Eisteddfod and gained considerable recognition for their outstanding efforts.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is proud of its involvement in the ANZAC Day parade and service. Led by school student leaders, students from Kinder to grade 6 represented the school by marching and attending the ANZAC Day service and laying a wreath. Our whole school community showed its respect by holding a school-based ANZAC service and attending an Anzac Day Service at the Deloraine Community Centre led by Deloraine High School Students.

Grade 4, 5 and 6 classes are involved in annual multiple day camps. Excursions are encouraged to support and enrich the curriculum from Kinder to Grade 6.

At the whole-school assembly held each fortnight students receive MJR (Make Jesus Real) certificates and Class Awards. Examples of positive role models are recognised and rewarded.

At the end of the year Presentation Evening recognition is given for Religious, Academic, Sport / P.E, Music, Drama, Japanese, Community Spirit and Personal Achievement.

School Assembly begins with acknowledging the Original Custodians of the land on which our school has been built and concludes with the National Anthem.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Primary School in 2012 continued to provide opportunities for students to enhance I.C.T. skills and competencies. Our Parents and Friends Association purchased 10 iPads and covers which allowed us to place 2 in each class. Our aim is to have a class set of iPads which we experienced with the loan of the Catholic Education Office's Class set. The connection to the National Broadband Network allows even greater access to learning technologies. The iPads allow students easy access to research-based inquiry learning, individual programs and skill development Computer technology is integral with learning. Our library is spacious and well-stocked.

Our school has an ICT Coordinator and ICT Aide, who are supported by the CEO ICT Technician. The Coordinator role carried curriculum and technical responsibilities and the Technology Aide carried technical responsibilities only.

Student Leadership

Student leadership is encouraged and fostered. Formal positions of leadership included school captains and vice captains as well as house captains. School leaders were

given opportunities throughout the year to develop leadership skills and individual gifts and talents were developed.

In Term 3, Grade 5 students were selected to attend a Caritas Day with other northern Catholic school students. This day provided an experience for those students in being a leader.

The staff at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is deeply committed to caring for each child and recognises the uniqueness of each.

The school continued to provide opportunities for students to develop capacity in the area of leadership. The majority of Grade Six students were exposed to leadership experiences through leadership days, sporting carnivals and interaction with other students.

Assessment and Reporting

Fundamental to improving student outcomes is determining where students are and monitoring their progress carefully. At Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School, a whole school literacy and numeracy assessment timetable is maintained, producing a more coordinated approach to the identification and diagnosis of learning needs. This enabled appropriate early intervention strategies and programs to be put in place to assist students in their literacy development.

A variety of assessment tools, tests and screeners are used. Assessment in the early grades is now comprehensive and includes:

- Auditory Processing Assessment.
- Phonological Awareness Screen.
- Expressive Language and Articulation Screener.
- P.I.P.S.

- Kindergarten Developmental Checklist.

Reading Comprehension and Mathematics are tested regularly at all levels. The assessment includes both teacher initiated assessment tasks as well as standardised tests.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School formally reported to parents in the mid-year and at the end of the year using an A - E rating to report achievement of its students. This form of reporting is in accordance with a mandate of the Australian Government. A to E ratings are not used for Kindergarten or Prep.

Parents were formally invited by the School to attend Parent/Teacher Interviews following the issue of the Mid-Year Achievement Reports.

Students in Preparatory began and finished the 2012 year with Performance Indicators in Primary School (P.I.P.S.) screening to assess progress in their first formal year of schooling. The National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy is administered to all Australian students in Grades 3, 5, 7 and 9 in May each year.

PASTORAL CARE

The Mission Statement of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School states: 'We value a Christian lifestyle with a commitment to care, service, respect for the justice and compassion within our school community and society in general.'

We believe all children have the right to grow and develop in an atmosphere of love, belonging and security.

Teachers and parents sharing this vision, cooperate in a climate of mutual support and respect.

'We value a strong sense of community and encourage full involvement of parents, students and staff in the life of the school.'

The school mission statement is reflected in many real and visual ways. We have an open-door policy whereby parents are always welcome to come and discuss the success and challenges of their children in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Students, teachers and parents speak and treat one another with respect. Staff build positive relationships with students.

Behaviour Support is premised by students being accountable for their own actions and decisions. There is out-of-school support for those students with ongoing problems, using local community expertise where possible. There is zero tolerance to fighting and bullying with set procedures and consequences. The school believes in working in partnership with parents to support students.

A buddy system between the older and younger students develops positive relationships. Opportunities arise in the educational, social and religious settings.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

2012 saw Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School continue with the School Improvement process, culminating in the school undergoing a highly successful School Validation and the development of a 2012 – 2017 Strategic Pathway.

School Improvement is a process of ongoing development that builds on strengths and addresses issues and needs in a strategic manner. It involves "a process of analysis and evaluation of information and the use of that information in a systematic way to widen understanding and to plan programs and school practices" (Mitchell et al, 2002:267). This program is school-based, learning centred and future-oriented.

The School Improvement Team was composed of the Principal, AP:LT, AP:RE and three parent representatives. The School Improvement Framework is

composed of five Domains and Elements within those Domains. The results of close investigation of gathered data resulted in Emerging Goals. The Goals were then prioritised over the next five years.

ENROLMENT

Class structures in 2012 were:

Kindergarten – 16 students,

Preparatory – 24 students,

Grade 1 – 26 students,

Grade 2 17 students,

Grade 3 15 students and

Grade 4 14 students.

Grade 5 9 students

Grade 6 12 students

There were 89 families represented in the school. Just over half of the student population was drawn from regional areas around Deloraine with the remainder coming from the town of Deloraine. There were 61 catholic students and 72 non-catholic students. The school also offers Pre-Kinder and Mercy Munchkins Playgroup.

The Enrolment policy is in accordance with the TCEC guidelines, with the guarantee of a place for every Catholic student seeking enrolment. In Term 1, Kindergarten students attended school for three full days. All other students attend school fulltime.

The average attendance rate was 92% for Prep - Grade 6 students.

Parents of students absent from school are required to ring or email the school to notify student absence. The school follows guidelines for student absence as directed by TCEO.

Our teaching staff comprises experienced professionals whose qualifications enable them to be fully registered with the Tasmanian Registration Board. There were 11 teaching staff and 11 ancillary staff

members. The average attendance rate of teachers was 83%.

The Leadership Team was comprised of the Principal, Assistant to the Principal: Religious Education and Assistant to the Principal: Learning and Teaching.

The four teacher aides at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School are dedicated and highly skilled. They liaise closely with teaching staff, Catholic Education Office personnel and specialists.

Staff also includes a Finance Officer and Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Utility Officer, WHS officer and cleaner. These roles have differing hours of employment.

We are fortunate to have two Sisters of St Joseph living in the parish. Sr Maria Goretti and Sr Virgil are very supportive of the school.

The Parish Priest, Fr Terry Yard, fosters active participation of all our students in the Faith life of the school and has developed a positive relationship with both staff and students. Father Terry Yard is a member of the School Board of Management.

SERVING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY in 2011

Leadership:

Mrs Josephine Craddock – Principal

Teachers:

Miss Errin McDonough – Kindergarten/
AP:RE

Miss Pauline Denman - Preparatory

Miss Dianne Murray – Grade 1

Miss Michelle Donohoe – Grade 2/3/AP:LT

Ms Linda Denman – Grade 3/4

Mr Christopher Weare – Grade 5/6

Mrs Amelia Reynolds – Music, School Choir,
Chamber Choir

Mr Nick Cramp - Physical Education

Teachers Assistants:

Mrs Anita Bowman – Kindergarten

Mrs Carol Lyall - Primary

Mrs Amanda Maude - Primary

Mrs Georgie Warham-Kindergarten

Administration:

Mrs Anne Stewart - School Secretary/ Finance Officer

Mrs Katie Gardner – Administration /ICT Aide

Services:

Mr Pat Coleman – Groundsperson/Security

School Board Membership 2012:

Chair – Mr Michael Sullivan

Vice Chair - Mr Andrew Smith

Secretary - Ms Vanetta Harding

Treasurer – Mrs Simone Arnold

Members – Michael Sullivan, Andrew Smith, Mrs Simone Arnold, Mrs Kate Dunne, Ms Vanetta Harding, Mt Terry Webb, Father Terance Yard and Mrs Josephine Craddock.

Parents and Friends Executive Committee

President –Mrs Karen Claridge-Robins

Vice President - Gina Sullivan

Secretary – Mrs Joanne Woolley

Treasurer – Mrs Nicki Atkins

Canteen Coordinator – Mrs Nicki Atkins

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School works hard at building a school community that is welcoming to all.

Local and globally focussed projects foster a sense of community and citizenship. These projects are nominated and led by staff and school leaders and undertaken throughout the year.

Kanangra Aged-Care

All students have an opportunity to enrich their own lives and those in Kanangra.

The school choir visits and students share their learning and lives with residents. Grade 3/4 joined with Kanagra residents for Music Therapy Sessions.

Centacare: After School and Vacation Care is provided by a caring team from Centacare. Children are engaged in quality and creative activities. This service is provided for all students over the age of four.

Carols by Candlelight provided both valuable and welcomed support to those community projects and also showcased the excellent Performing Arts program provided by the school.

Many initiatives at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School would not have been possible without the involvement of an army of volunteers who give dedicated time to supporting children and teachers in classrooms, at sport training and on excursions and camps. Not everyone is able to give their time to help out. The support and loyalty given by members of the school community is just as valuable in making Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School a happy and successful place of learning.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

