2012 Annual School Report
St Joseph’s Primary School, Denman
Messages from Key School Bodies

Principal

I am pleased to present Saint Joseph’s Primary School, Denman Annual School Report for 2012. This report provides parents and members of the wider community with information about St Joseph’s activities and performance throughout 2012.

Our school has grown significantly over the last four years, which I am proud to have witnessed. I believe this is a clear indication that we are doing things right at St Joseph’s. We are proudly Catholic. We proudly celebrate the whole child. We are proudly committed to raising academic achievement. We are proudly a community.

We follow our school motto – Growing in Christ, in all we do. Here at Saint Joseph’s Denman we develop and celebrate each child’s full potential in a Catholic environment. We strongly believe that the qualities of honesty, acceptance and equality are important in life and therefore we develop these within our interactions at School.

The staff here is committed to deliver a quality Catholic education to the children in their care. The staff ensures that each child is taught to their ability. We strive for the academic excellence of all students.

We value our community and encourage all of our parents to become active members of Saint Joseph’s Denman.

As a community we strive for academic excellence. We do this by up-skilling our staff through targeted professional development, offering many and varied opportunities for our students and by making learning enjoyable. Students enjoy coming to school and enjoy the learning experiences offered to them. We are proud to offer a diverse range of opportunities to our students. These include:

Academic
- Newcastle Permanent Maths Competition
- Newcastle Herald Newspaper (writing) Competition
- Celebrating National Science Week
- Celebrating National Literacy & Numeracy Week
- School Spelling Bee & Public Speaking
- Middle Schools Day
- Solar Boat Challenge
- Engineering Challenge
- Video Competitions

Cultural/Arts
- Exhibiting at the Regional Show
- Book Week
- Violin tuition for all primary students
- School Play Night
- ANZAC Day
- Upper Hunter Conservatorium Ensemble visits
- Cultural Shows where available

Sporting
- Intensive Swimming Program
- Athletics
- Rugby League clinics
- Little Athletics Visit
- Zumbatonics ® program
P & F

2012 was a busy year for St Joseph’s Denman P and F. Community support continued for Meals on Wheels, Parish Church cleaning and catering for parish and other wakes was well supported by St Joseph’s parents. Pavers were bought and laid by the P and F in the playground with old and new families/students sponsoring pavers with their names engraved.

The tradition of providing a cost only stall for the children to buy Mothers and Fathers day gifts was continued, and working bees for both maintenance and building were well supported by families.

Fundraising events held during the year to raise funds for the school included; Clearing sale catering events (for Edward Parkinson), Wine and Food affair food stall with St Joseph’s Aberdeen, combined catering for the local monthly cattle sales with the Denman Public School, a community movie night at SJD, Trifecta tickets with St James Muswellbrook, The Pudding Lady, raffles, local pony club canteen, birthday party catering.

The P and F school uniform cupboard is fully stocked and uniforms are available for purchase providing consistency in quality of the school uniform. Our canteen continues to provide a cost effective and an increasingly healthy range on Mondays, with the valuable support of parents’ time and other food donations.

We continue to contribute towards the wages of the school groundsman and water rates. Items purchased for the school and students include information technology equipment, maths equipment and literacy resources.

Student Leaders

We are proud of our leadership program at St Joseph’s Denman. As a school we proudly teach the ‘whole child’. As such we believe all students should have the right to learn public speaking skills through leadership. All of our 5/6 students have the opportunity to lead school events and run regular morning assemblies. This affirming program allows students to develop confidence and public speaking skills in a supportive environment.

As a part of this program students have the opportunity to attend the Diocesan Young Leader’s Day and also to attend student workshops run by the Toastmasters organisation.

Religious Dimension and Culture of School Life

Catholic Identity

Saint Joseph’s Primary School Denman is built on land traditionally owned by the Wanaruah people. The school is also linked to the traditions of the Sisters of St Joseph who began education in the Denman area in the small town of Wybong.

St Joseph’s is one of 45 Catholic primary schools under the management of the Catholic Schools Office. We are a Parish School that play an important role in the mission of the Church. As such we have links with our local Parish, St Bernard’s of Clairvaux, where we come to together to celebrate important feasts and also the Sacraments.

Throughout 2012 our school has celebrated as a worshipping community with liturgies, Masses and specific liturgical celebrations.

We are proud of our catholic identity and this is clearly visible in our school, from the office and in the classrooms. The close proximity of the school and the church helps in visually reinforcing the school’s Catholic identity. Religious symbols, both traditional and contemporary can be found throughout the school grounds and the classrooms.

The School as part of Parish and Diocesan Life

St Joseph’s Denman participates in the life of our Parish through celebrating Masses and liturgies with our parishioners. We also have close links with the Parish Sacramental team.

The Sacramental program is parish based and includes the School Principal (who is a member of the Parish Pastoral Council & Parish Finance Committee), the Priest and another member of the Parish Pastoral Council. The Sacramental program is supported by the school curriculum and the parish team is in close communication with the class teachers of the students involved.

Our School is proud to be part of a wider Diocesan community. As such we attend important Diocesan events including, the opening Called to Serve Mass for staff, Upper Hunter Catholic Schools Week Liturgy and Diocesan Catholic Schools Week Mass.
During Catholic Schools Week, our students participated in a colouring in competition which was displayed across a number of local businesses. The theme for 2012 catholic Schools Week was ‘Faith in Every Student’.

Mass was celebrated by the school community on many occasions throughout the year including Opening School Mass and the Feast of the Assumption

This year we celebrated Mothers and Fathers Day. We had a shared afternoon tea for both days. On Fathers Day we started a new tradition – The SJD Paper Plane Classic. A fun day was had by all.

**Teaching of Religion**

St Joseph’s Denman actively implements the mandatory Diocesan K-12 Religion Syllabus in all classes throughout the school, with outcomes in the areas of:

- History and Belief
- Jesus and Scripture
- Celebration and Prayer
- Justice and Morality

To assist teachers in the quality teaching of Religion each class teacher has access to the Diocesan K-12 Religion Resource Units and a comprehensive range of teaching resources for Religion. Because we teach across stages, a school scope and sequence is followed allowing for structured lessons that develop the knowledge and understanding of our Catholic faith.

The Catholic perspective is also demonstrated in all key learning areas

Our REC has diligently carried out her role this year. She offers assistance and guidance to all staff in the teaching of religion here at St Joseph’s Denman.

**Retreats and Faith Development Programs**

A staff spirituality day, run by Mary Kenyon, Spiritual Director of the Canberra-Goulburn Diocese, was held in Muswellbrook for all Catholic School Employees in the Upper Hunter in term three.

Prayer and reflection opportunities begin most meetings and gatherings.

Daily prayer is a part of all classrooms, with all having a sacred space and prayer focus. Many opportunities were made available for spontaneous prayer as well as formal prayer. The newsletter each week has a prayer included to reflect upon during the week.

**Values (including Social Justice Initiatives)**

Values are an important part of living justly and as such, St Joseph’s Denman reinforces positive values such as respect and responsibility. Our students are aware of the importance of justice, a fair go for all and are keen to support social justice initiatives.

This year SJD supported Catholic Missions, St Vincent De Paul Winter Appeal and Catholic Mission Australia.

We take pride in developing values within our students: to be honest, fair and just. As a part of this we believe students learn these values by participating in important events. These include: ANZAC Day ceremonies, Remembrance Day, Senior Citizen events, Mission Australia visits, Clean up Australia Day and National Tree Day.

This year St Joseph’s Denman has implemented the Bounce back program across the entire school. The BOUNCE BACK! Classroom Resiliency Program addresses the environmental building blocks and the personal skills for fostering resilience in children and young people. The program focuses mainly on the teaching of coping skills to help children and young people respond positively to the complexity of their everyday lives. In other words, children are taught how to ‘bounce back’ after experiencing sadness, difficulties, frustrations and hard times.
Policies

Enrolment Policy
St Joseph’s Primary School follows the guidelines provided by the Catholic Schools Office Policy Enrolment (Amended 2008). The Policy has been devised to accommodate, as far as is possible, the needs of families seeking a Catholic education. In situations where enrolments have to be restricted because of limitations on capacity, preference may need to be given to children of Catholic families, as defined in the Policy. Implementation of the Policy is via our local school Enrolment Committee which has discretionary authority in keeping with Diocesan guidelines. Copies of the Policy are available from the school, or from the Catholic Schools Office website (cf end of Report). Parents concerned about school fees should ensure they make contact with the school. Diocesan provisions (including standard discounts for those with a Health Card) exist to help in this area, and the Principal can also exercise discretion where genuine need exists.

Student Welfare
Student welfare is catered for under a number of policies, the main one being the Pastoral Care Policy. An underlying belief is that everyone at St Joseph’s has the right to feel safe. A strong emphasis is placed on making choices and accepting consequences. Programs dealing with bullying, self-esteem and mentoring assist all members in developing their full potential.

St Joseph’s continues to have a buddy program (peer support) to help new students, especially Kindergarten students, make a smooth transition and develop positive relationships.

St Joseph’s promotes safety, valuing individuals and recognising pupil effort and achievement by:

- Weekly merit certificates & Principal Awards
- Regular focus on safety and concern for others
- An inclusive approach to games
- School Leaders organising assemblies

The full text of the Pastoral Care policy and other related policies are available from the Principal.

Discipline
The 2002 Catholic Schools Office Student welfare Policy forms the basis of St Joseph’s discipline approach. Our Pastoral Care policy guides our actions.

Families are contacted over discipline concerns and in all matters both child and family are treated with procedural fairness.

At St Joseph’s Primary School we do not have rules; we have baseline behaviours. These baseline behaviours are the minimum expectation we have of our students.

The 4 baseline behaviours are:

- Respect Ourselves, Other & the Environment.
- Friendly Words, Friendly Actions.
- Right Time, Right Place, Right Task
- Stop, Look, Listen, Think.

We feel that these baseline behaviours are working well and have no need to change these.

Our Positive Behaviour (Token) System continues to recognise students, via public recognition, certificates and reward activities. Positive behaviour within the school continues.

The full text of the Behaviour Management policy and other related policies is available from the Principal.
Complaints and Grievances


We continue to send home a complaints and concerns agreed process. This brochure outlines the process to which families are asked to approach the school.

Of course, families are always encouraged to contact the Principal when matters of concern arise.

A copy of this policy is available from the Principal.

There have been no changes to this policy in 2012.

Student Achievements

Academic Achievements

Academic excellence is valued at St Joseph’s Denman.

During 2012 teachers at St. Joseph’s used various techniques for differentiating the curriculum which gave the students every chance to succeed academically.

Our students are invited to take part in ICAS assessments. These assessments are in Maths, Science, English, Writing and Computer Skills. Many of our children often achieved distinctions and credits in one or more of these tests. We even had one student receive multiple High Distinctions in this competition.

All of our Stage 3 students participated in the Newcastle Permanent Maths competition in which we receive fantastic results. We received many credits and distinctions in this competition. One of our students came 1st in the Muswellbrook Education region and was 16th overall out of over 7000 students and was awarded a High Distinction.

St. Joseph’s had its own Public Speaking competition, which was held in Term 3. All students from Early Stage 1 to Stage 3 competed in this event. This competition was extremely beneficial in developing and enhancing the oral speaking skills of the students. Successful students then went on to participate in the Regional Public Speaking finals.

These skills provided a good base for improving debating skills. Our school debating team competed in the Regional Cluster Debating Competition. This provided wonderful experience for the Stage 3 children in the area of public speaking.

To further encourage public speaking skills the St Joseph’s Stage 3 leaders ran weekly school assemblies.

Students across all grades participated in our School Spelling Bee. The winners of our School Spelling Bee represented our School at the Regional Spelling Bee which was held at St James Muswellbrook.

In that Spelling Bee students of St Joseph’s Denman were awarded:

- 2nd Prize in Stage Three
- 1st Prize in Stage Two
- 1st Prize on Stage One.

Our Stage Three students attend the Upper Hunter Engineering Challenge in Muswellbrook in Term 3. There were a number of activities to complete including bridge building. Our Stage Three students were awarded first place in this challenge.

Our stage three students also participated in the Muswellbrook Shire Solar Boat Challenge. As a part of this Challenge students were required to research solar energy and design prototypes to be built as their solar boat. They had to deliver an oral presentation on this process. Our students came second in the Region.

Our 3/4 class participated in a Regional Video competition. Their videos were judged to be the best in the Hunter & New England Region.
Performance in National Testing

The teaching staff at St Joseph's has prioritised the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy over the next 4 years. The school is being supported in this pursuit by the National Partnerships program. Our aim is to see the progression of all students to higher bands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAPLAN Program 2012 - Year 3</th>
<th>Percentage in Skill Band</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Band 6 and Above</strong></td>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Denman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Band 5</strong></td>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Denman</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Band 4</strong></td>
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<td>National Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Performance</td>
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<td><strong>Band 2</strong></td>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Denman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Band 1</strong></td>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Denman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| National Performance | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 14.3% |

Cultural Achievements

We are proud to offer a wide variety of cultural opportunities for our students here at St Joseph's Primary School, Denman. Our students in Years 3 – 6 took part in an in school violin tuition program run by the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music. The students were also able to take their hired violins home to practise with. A number of students have continued to receive tuition in violin. The Upper Hunter Conservatorium also run private violin, piano and guitar instruction within school hours of operation in our hall. All are supported heavily by families. Catholic Mission Australia visited us this year to make us aware of the plight of other children around the world, with our talent night proceeds going to support this important project. We also had several visiting musical groups perform at our school this year.

Sporting Achievements

In 2012 we had a number of students represent our school at the Diocesan Athletics carnival which was held at Glendale. We have also had a number of students represent our school with success at local Horse Sports Days.

Our school has also participated in touch football, netball, soccer and cricket gala days.

Here at SJD, we encourage all students to do their best.
Staff

Staff Qualifications

Qualifications and Experience | Number of Staff
--- | ---
I. Teachers with teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR). | 5
II. Teachers with qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by NOOSR but lacking formal teaching qualifications | 0
III. (a) Teachers not having qualifications as described in I or II above but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context | (a)
III. (b) Of these which are New Scheme Teachers. | (b) 1

Professional Learning Undertaken

Staff attend many professional development courses across a wide variety of topics. A major focus for all staff last year was Mathematics. We organised a Mathematics lecturer from Australian Catholic University to work with us on teaching working mathematically, as well as programming and assessment of Mathematics.

Teacher Attendance

The average teacher attendance rate for this school is 95%.

Teacher Retention

The teacher retention rate from 2011 to 2012 was 100%.

Enrolments

Actual Enrolments 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholastic Year</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Attendance Rate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>95.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>93.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>92.52</td>
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<td>Year 3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>92.76</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>93.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>93.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Attendance

The average student attendance rate for students at this school during 2012 was 94%.
School Priorities

Achievement of School Priorities

As a school we have just finished our first strategic plan for 2010 – 2012. Within this three year plan we have annual plans which include Key Performance Indicators. There were completed in 2012.

These following priorities have been achieved:

- The establishment of a Children’s Mass in conjunction with the Parish.
- Offer higher order opportunities for students.
- The development of a prayer scope & sequence.
- Implement an agreed scope and sequence for spelling – This will be installed in 2013.
- Reading Comprehension professional development.
- The use of NAPLAN style questioning used in classroom assessment opportunities
- Explicit NAPLAN analysis of Mathematics
- Begin collaborative professional development as an Upper Hunter Region
- Purchase of classroom resources for literacy and numeracy.
- Implementation of accrual accounting system within school.
- Maintenance of weatherboard facilities

Facilities

We have a great school. In 2011 St Joseph’s Denman, like all primary schools across Australia, received BER funding. We have one demountable classroom, a weatherboard building which consists of two classrooms, a new building comprising of a library and a classroom and a new administration block. The old Church is also located within our school grounds.

In 2012, we undertook works to the weatherboard building to repair piers and footings that were damaged as a result of ground movement. Drainage was also upgraded to this building. Internal walls were also removed in both of these classrooms to create a larger learning area. The classrooms were painted.

The outdoor environment at Saint Joseph’s is aesthetically appealing, with many varieties of birdlife found within our grounds. This year we have installed a shade sail above our sand pit. We have also completed major paving works outside of our toilet block.

Community Satisfaction

The school community strongly supports St Joseph's Primary School, Denman. High levels of satisfaction exist in the areas of school identity, curriculum, school organisation and management. Parents indicate satisfaction with educational and pastoral care programs offered by the school. Students acknowledge St Josephs are a safe environment in which to learn and they appreciate the respect and care shown to them by school staff.

Financial Information

The following graphs represent the income and expenditure for St Joseph’s Primary School, Denman for the school year 31 January 2013 as aggregated from the annual returns to the Australian Government’s Department of Education, Science and Training.
Concluding Statement

Saint Joseph's Catholic School is a wonderful place to learn. Our students are offered many and varied opportunities – educationally, spiritually, socially, emotionally and in the sporting arena.
Report Access and Publication

This report is available to members of the school and wider communities. Copies will be supplied to the Catholic Schools Office, The Board of Studies, The Parents and Friends Association, the Parish Priest and to all parents.

Copies of this school's Annual School Report are available to the general public. Persons wishing to access a copy of the report should contact:

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(02) 6547 2496

For further information relating to the Diocesan Policy please refer to: http://mn.catholic.edu.au