About the Annual School Report

St Dominic’s Centre is registered by the Board of Studies as a member of the Catholic system in the Dioceses of Maitland-Newcastle.

The Annual School Report provides parents and the wider community with fair, accurate and objective information about various aspects of school performance and development. The Report describes achievement of school development priorities in 2014 and gives information about 2014 priorities.

This Report is a legislative requirement under the Schools Assistance Act, 2008. The information in this Report is complemented by the school website where other school publications and newsletters can be viewed or obtained from the school.

Messages from Key School Bodies

Principal

It is with pleasure that I present the 2014 Annual Report for St Dominic’s Centre, Mayfield. As we move into a new year it is timely that we look back over the many events and achievements that our school community has shared during the past twelve months and look forward to the next twelve months.

St Dominic’s is a Catholic special school which traditionally has catered for children from Kindergarten – Year 6 who have a significant hearing impairment and consequential delay in language. In 2012 an application was submitted to the Board of Studies, NSW to extend the registration of the Centre to include Stages 4 and 5. This application was successful and planning saw the realisation of an Additional Campus Unit, located at San Clemente High School, commence in 2013. This program caters for students with cognitive disability and/or autism spectrum disorder from Years 7-10 providing an environment rich in enveloping individual learner needs. A high demand for placement within this program prompted planning for a second Additional Campus Unit which commenced in 2014.

The programs at St Dominic’s have a focus on quality teaching and learning across all key learning areas. Staff members are committed to achieving optimal outcomes for students in a safe and inclusive environment. Engagement of the students is a particular focus of all teaching and learning at the Centre. In the classroom and across a wide range of opportunities the curriculum provides a rich and engaging learning environment for all students.

St Dominic’s supports student integration into regular classrooms at partner schools, St Columban’s Primary School and San Clemente High School. The program is developed in close liaison with parents, and staff from partner schools. Regular meetings are held between the schools to closely monitor the program.

During Term 4 accessible amenities at partner school, San Clemente High School, were officially opened and blessed by Reverend Bill Wright, Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle Diocese, and Mr Ray Collins, Director of Schools Maitland-Newcastle. The completion of this work ensures the full curriculum can be delivered to all students across both primary and junior high school settings.

Throughout 2014 our school community celebrated achievements, overcame challenges and shared our faith in many different ways. I thank all members of the school community for being part of that journey.

Frances Belcher

PRINCIPAL

Parent Body

In 2014, the Parent and Friends Association (P&F) continued to be a small but very active group. Supportive fundraising activities continued, contributing to the purchase of much needed resources for the school and to the St Dominic’s speech pathology program. The P&F continued to fund the annual Mother’s Day and Father Days Stalls, Boating Day, Christmas Picnic Day and Family Night.

This year the P&F continued building a closer interaction between families of St Dominic students by providing opportunities to spend time together for not only the children but for the parents. Due to the geographical spread of the children’s homes, families had limited opportunities to see each other. To this end, School Disco Nights were organised by the P&F and found to be very
successful with high attendance. The emphasis of building a strong St Dominic family community that supports each other will be continued into 2015 by the P&F.

It is hoped in 2015 that more families will support the P&F so that this group can continue to work closely with the staff as they strive to continually provide quality educational programs, facilities and events for our children.

Who We Are

History of the School
St Dominic’s has a history built on the traditions of the Centre’s founders, the Dominican Sisters. The Dominican sisters began educating students who were Deaf and hard of hearing in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese in 1872. In 2014 we celebrated 142 years of continuous Catholic education for students who are Deaf and hard of hearing.

Throughout 2014 we have continued the Dominican tradition of educating students with significant disability as we practise Christ’s teachings of truth, justice, inclusion and joy.

Location/Drawing Area
St Dominic’s is located in the Mayfield Parish and draws students from a wide geographical area including Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie, Maitland and Newcastle areas.

Characteristics of the Student Body
The table below shows the number of students in each of the categories listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LBOTE*</th>
<th>SWD*</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Language Backgrounds Other Than English (LBOTE); Students with Disabilities (SWD)

Religious Dimension and Culture of School Life

The School as part of Parish and Diocesan Life
St Dominic’s is within the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese and maintains close links with the Catholic Schools Office and other Diocesan systemic schools. The school community participates in Diocesan, Regional and Parish celebrations.

The REC effectively maintained and enhanced links with partner schools, St Columban’s Primary School and San Clemente High School, and the wider Parish through combined celebrations.

In 2014 St Dominic’s school community together with Bishop Bill Wright celebrated a ‘Deaf Pride Mass’ at the Sacred Heart Cathedral. Members of the Deaf community and the wider community were also invited.

Teaching of Religion
Spirituality at St Dominic's is developed through daily prayer, community celebrations and formal Religious Education teaching and learning. Units of work are based on the Maitland-Newcastle Diocesan K-12 Religious Syllabus. Spirituality is the experience of God through liturgy and prayer, and the reflection of Gospel values in daily life.

Retreats and Faith Development Programs
Students have participated in retreats and a camp with our partner schools, St Columban’s and San Clemente. Primary students participated in a Deaf Camp at Point Wolstoncroft Sport and Recreational Facility.

In Term 3 staff members attended an overnight Spirituality retreat exploring the Dominican theme – Veritas – the quest to look into the heart of things with the eyes of God.
Values and initiatives to promote respect and responsibility

Students at St Dominic’s are introduced to the values of respect, rights and responsibilities through the positive behaviour support program (BARK) and these qualities are rewarded through a star and merit certificate system. The classrooms model these values daily and the associated language is taught explicitly: *Be Your Best, Act Safely, Ready to Learn* and *Kindness to All*.

Students are made aware of the needs of children around the world and are encouraged to raise money for humanitarian causes. During 2014 ‘Mission Activities’ were organised to raise money for Catholic Mission Projects. Students also participated in fundraising activities with our partner schools to raise money for Penola House, St Vincent de Paul and Caritas.

An action team planned and led staff training in the Kidsmatter program; a mental health and wellbeing framework. Components implemented in 2014 were: *Positive School Communities* and *Social and Emotional Learning for Students*.

Policies

Enrolment Policy

St Dominic’s Centre has an enrolment procedure devised to accommodate, as far as is possible, the needs of families who are seeking a specialised program for students with significant disability within a Catholic school. The Centre follows the guidelines provided by the Catholic Schools Office *Enrolment Policy* 2013. This Enrolment Policy has been devised to set direction for school procedures and practices for enrolling students into Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools within the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and to establish a common, consistent approach in enrolment practices. Copies of the Policy are available from the school, or from the Catholic Schools Office website.

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 and Discipline

The Centre’s *Pastoral Care and Student Management Policy* was reviewed in 2012. This policy aims to create an environment where the rights of others are preserved at all times, and provides guidelines for staff to follow in the management of appropriate and inappropriate student behaviour. This policy is based on rights and responsibilities, the development of responsible and independent student behaviour, and procedural fairness. Copies are available from the Centre.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Catholic schools have the responsibility to promote cultures of trust, cooperation and respect in the lived experience of the Catholic Christian setting. Bullying in a school mitigates such a culture and inhibits the development of positive relational outcomes for the common good of students, teachers and caregivers. St Dominic’s *Anti-Bullying Policy* was developed in 2013. St Dominic’s *Anti-Bullying Policy* is reviewed regularly and is available on the school website.

Complaints and Grievances

The school has formal written protocols in place to address complaints and grievances. These protocols are in line with the Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy (2013), developed to provide a consistent approach for all Diocesan schools. This policy aims to address the concerns of Parents / Carers and the wider community. These concerns may include children’s learning, behaviour and welfare, School organisation and management, student health and safety issues.

A copy of this policy and the informative parent brochure is available from the school office, school website or is available on the Catholic Schools Office website. The policy and associated support material was updated in 2013.
Student Achievements

Academic Achievement

Staff members recognise that students enrolled at St Dominic's learn at different rates and in different ways. By using the teaching and learning cycle (assessing, planning, programming, implementing and evaluating) teachers can ensure that the individual learning needs of all students are considered and a learning environment is created that supports students to achieve the outcomes of the syllabus.

The educational curriculum at St Dominic’s encompasses the key learning areas of the Board of Studies NSW curriculum, plus Religious Education. The curriculum is integrated drawing together content from various key learning areas to create units of work.

Adjustments to learning and assessment activities are made for each student depending on individual need. Because of the collective nature of the students' needs, there is a strong emphasis on the development of receptive and expressive language skills, and the acquisition of sound literacy and numeracy foundation skills across all key learning areas.

To facilitate the goal of integration in mainstream classrooms, St Dominic's has partnership agreements with St Columban's Primary School, and San Clemente High School. The integration program is developed in close consultation with parents and staff from partner schools to ensure that key learning areas are covered. Students are supported in the integrated setting by staff from St Dominic's dependent on student need.

Each year awards are presented for academic and sporting achievements at Family Night.

Academic Achievement

The teachers at St Dominic’s have been participating in a school improvement and peer professional learning project aimed at improving the literacy and numeracy skills of all students. In 2014 the major focus was on improving literacy: listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Literacy resources were extended and an intensive reading program was implemented. In 2015 we will continue to be involved in more professional development focusing on numeracy skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Steps taken to achieve the priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Support the State Action Plan initiatives in improving student achievement in Literacy and Numeracy from Kindergarten to Year 10 | Training and ongoing professional learning and mentoring for teachers
- in the use of assessment and tracking of student achievement on the literacy and numeracy continuum
- to develop a Balanced Literacy Program and implementation of the Balanced literacy Block
- to assist with implementation of new English and Mathematics syllabus
- in data analysis (e.g NAPLAN, ACER) |

Performance in National Testing

National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) 2014

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. An analysis of these results assists school planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs. The tables below show the percentages of students who achieved particular skill bands in numeracy and the aspects of literacy. The school results shown are compared to students nationally. Literacy is reported in four content strands (aspects): Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Numeracy is reported as a single content strand.

In 2014 three Year 3 students, one Year 5 student, two Year 7 students and one Year 9 student participated in the National Assessment Program. Assessments were administered with adjustments that reflect the type of support students access on a regular basis including extra time, individual supervision and oral/sign support.
Cultural Achievements

St Dominic’s offers various cultural experiences for the students through School Camps, Deaf Camps, a Deafness Awareness Program, excursions, incursions and school community events.

Excursions and incursions in 2014 included Life Education, Oz Opera and a Boating Day at Port Stephens hosted by the Nelson Bay Rotary Club. The Centre maintains links with the Deaf Community through the Deafness Awareness Program, Hearing Awareness Week celebrations, Deaf Camps and Picnics.

Visual Arts have a high profile at the Centre a team of artists participated in the annual San Clemente ‘Veritas’ art exhibition and the ‘Pavement Art’ competition. All students participated in the Drama Program which culminated with a performance at Family Night in December. Students performed as a signing choir at the official opening of Catholic Care accommodation at Mayfield and at various school and partner school celebrations.

Sporting Achievements

Students participate in sporting activities both at the Centre and with partner schools St Columban’s Primary and San Clemente High Schools. In 2014 students competed in swimming and athletic events at Regional, Diocesan, inter-Diocesan and State levels.

Other Highlights for 2014

Students at St Dominic’s participate in the Books in Homes program which supports the development of literacy skills and promotes student exposure to local authors.

St Dominic’s celebrated significant events in the life of the school community during 2014 including: Grandparent’s Day, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Harmony Day, Anzac Day, St Dominic’s Day, Hearing Awareness Week, Book-Giving Ceremonies and NAIDOC Week.

The Centre’s major celebration for 2014 was Family Night, which was held in December. Students, staff and families had the opportunity to share a Liturgy and meal together, and celebrated the Centre’s achievements throughout the year.

Staff

Staff Qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications and Experience</th>
<th>Number of Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Teachers with teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR).</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Teachers with qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by NOOSR but lacking formal teaching qualifications</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. (b) Of these which are New Scheme Teachers.</td>
<td>(b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All teachers at St Dominic’s have attained the necessary standard of professional teacher competence as determined by the Minister for Education. All teachers have or are working towards further specialist teaching qualifications in addition to their original teacher qualifications. The Speech Pathologist has recognised university qualifications as well as professional accreditation. All support staff members have completed a minimum of Certificate III.
Workforce composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Staff</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total teaching staff</td>
<td>5.7 FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total non-teaching staff</td>
<td>4 FTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total</td>
<td>9.7 FTE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of teachers who are Indigenous: -

Professional Learning Undertaken

Professional learning is an integral part of the strategic plan and contributes to improved student outcomes. There is a direct link between professional learning and school development priorities. In 2014 professional learning included:

- Kidsmatter Training
- Professional learning in the use of assessment and tracking of student achievement on the literacy and numeracy continuum
- Training to assist with implementation of new English and Mathematics syllabus

Teacher Attendance

The average teacher attendance rate for this school is 97%.

Teacher Retention

The teacher retention rate from 2013 to 2014 was 100%.

Enrolments

Actual Enrolments 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholastic Year</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Student Attendance**

Percentage of student attendance by Year level and school average for 2014:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>School Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>88.37%</td>
<td>91.91%</td>
<td>96.93%</td>
<td>90.10%</td>
<td>89.60%</td>
<td>86.88%</td>
<td>94.31%</td>
<td>86.63%</td>
<td>79.21%</td>
<td>82.67%</td>
<td>89.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Managing non-attendance**

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents and guardians, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. The compulsory schooling age is 6 to 17. Principals and school staff, in consultation with students and their parents, will usually be able to resolve problems of non-attendance. While parents should be reminded of their legal obligations under the Education Act (1990) the welfare of the student must be the focus of this consultation. The most effective means of restoring and maintaining regular school attendance includes sound attendance monitoring practices and regular follow-up of unexplained absences by contacting parents promptly. Resolution of attendance difficulties may require a range of additional school based strategies including student and parent interviews, reviewing the appropriateness of the student's educational program, development of a school-based attendance improvement plan, referral to the school counsellor or outside agencies and support from school-based personnel. If a range of school-based interventions has been unsuccessful, support may be requested by referring individual cases of unsatisfactory attendance to the Catholic Schools Office.

**Annual School Priorities**

Priorities for 2014 include:

- **Staff and Student Faith Formation**
- **Wellbeing and Mental Health**
- **Implementation of the Australian Curriculum (K-10)**
- **Planning for growth and development of multi-campus units**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Steps taken to achieve the priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff and Student Faith Formation</strong></td>
<td>Meaningful learning and celebration of liturgical celebrations for students and other members of the school community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wellbeing and Mental Health</strong></td>
<td>Kidsmatter action team members appointed Professional learning for staff and parents Implementation of Kidsmatter Components: Positive School Community, and Social and Emotional Learning for Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation of the Australian Curriculum (K-10)</strong></td>
<td>School improvement plan developed and implemented Professional learning for staff Development and implementation of English scope and sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning for growth and development of multi-campus units</strong></td>
<td>Liaison with partner school and CSO personnel Capital works completed on partner school campus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Satisfaction

Survey data was collected during Term 1 as part of the School Evaluation and Development process. Almost 95% of parents responded to the survey, resulting in solid data and feedback for consideration and planning. Feedback from parents was overwhelmingly positive. The following four aspects were identified as being the most positive aspects of the school by parents:

- Catholic ethos/inclusivity/value without judgement
- Welcoming community
- Catering for K-10 students
- Caring committed staff

Financial Information

The following graphs represent the income and expenditure for St Dominic’s Centre, Mayfield for the school year ending 31 January 2015 as aggregated from the annual returns to the Australian Government’s Department of Education, Science and Training.

**Recurrent & Capital Income**
Concluding Statement

The success of programs at St Dominic's is dependent upon the quality and skill of the staff, and their partnerships with families. We are fortunate to have experienced and dedicated staff and I wish to acknowledge the excellence of the work of our teachers and support staff during 2014. I also wish to acknowledge the support of parents who have worked in partnership with staff to provide quality educational programs for students.

Throughout 2014 our school community celebrated achievements, overcame challenges and shared our faith in many different ways. I thank all members of the school community for being part of that journey.

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:

Frances Belcher
Principal
St Dominic's Centre
76 Havelock St
Mayfield 2304
Phone: 49681295

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