

Annual School Report

2016



St Therese's Community School, Wilcannia

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

St Therese's Community School, Wilcannia is registered by the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) and managed by the Catholic Education Office (CEO), Wilcannia-Forbes, the 'approved authority' for the registration system formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act (1990).

The Annual School Report provides parents and the wider school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education. The Report also outlines information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance during the year and the achievements arising from the implementation of the School's Annual Improvement Plan.

The Report demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the school community and the CEO Wilcannia-Forbes. This Report has been approved by the CEO Wilcannia-Forbes in consultation with the School's Consultant who monitors that the School has appropriate processes in place to ensure compliance with all NSW BOSTES requirements for Registration and Accreditation.

This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters and other regular communications. Further information may be obtained by contacting the School or by visiting the School's website.

SECTION ONE: MESSAGE FROM KEY GROUPS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Principal's Message

2016 was a great year in the life of St Therese's Community School. The community appointed new teachers and principal and the children settled into two class groupings, Yapa Yapparla (Kindergarten) and Kukirrka/Ngalkirrka (Year 1/2).

The students were well supported by a wonderful team of Aboriginal Education Workers to assist with learning in and outside the classroom, cooking, cleaning and transport to school.

A School Committee was also re-introduced. The School Committee was chaired by our Parish Priest, and comprised elders of the Wilcannia community and members of the parish community, as well as staff and parents.

The children received a wide range of opportunities across all Key Learning Areas. Learning of Paakantji Culture and Language was integrated into lessons as well as a strong weekly program. Children learned about the local area through Geography topics such as 'Paakantji - People of the River' and went on excursions to galleries to view local art and create their own.

Numerous school celebrations brought the community together such as regular award ceremonies, monthly community breakfasts, Religious celebrations, NAIDOC Week celebrations and the St Therese's Spring Fair. The Book Week Assembly and Christmas Pageant/Carols were highlights.

Congratulations and well done to the boys and girls for their great efforts to grow 'stronger and smarter' and to all in the community who supported their children with their learning.

Parent Body Message

St Therese's has a School Committee which meets once a term. A community meeting is held twice a year at the school for the parents to meet with the Director and Catholic Education Office Staff.

It is great to see the children coming to school and getting along. The children are

really progressing with their learning. They are improving in their reading and they are getting much better with the new spelling program. The teachers help our children to learn to read and we are happy that the children bring reading books home. We especially like the assemblies and days we can come up to school like the Parent Breakfasts. The special assemblies are really good, like the Book Week Assembly and Christmas Concert - it is good to see what the kids are learning. The Spring Fair was great for people to come and see the school and it is good to see the kids sing at events in the community. We are looking forward to the school growing next year to include Year 3.

Student Body Message

As St Therese's is a K-2 school, it does not have a Student Representative Council. Please refer to the 'Student Satisfaction' section for some student comments.

SECTION TWO: SCHOOL FEATURES

St Therese's Mission School was established on 22 February 1966. At the request of the local people, Bishop Douglas Warren obtained the services of the Sisters of Compassion from New Zealand. The school is situated on a floodplain on the outskirts of town, in delightful bush surrounds on the banks of the Darling River.

In 1989 the name of the school was changed to St Therese's Community School and adopted a new logo with the motto - 'We are the hope of the future. Let's get educated.'

St Therese's has an enrolment of 22 students catering for classes from Kindergarten to Year 2. We welcome all students to enrol at our school. At present we have 91% Aboriginal enrolment. The NSW syllabus is followed with a strong emphasis placed on Literacy, Numeracy and Aboriginal Studies. The school operates a daily morning and afternoon bus run, a daily nutrition program and a dental program.

Throughout the school year students are involved in a variety of learning experiences outside the classroom. Classes travel to locations of cultural relevance within the local area and participate in activities designed to further develop their knowledge of the Paakantji Culture and the Wilcannia area.

Celebrations are held throughout the term through award, birthday and attendance assemblies. This is just one of our ways of celebrating each individual child.

SECTION THREE: STUDENT PROFILE

Student Enrolment

The school caters for students in Kindergarten to Year 2. The following information describes the student profile for 2016.

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
14	8	0	22

* Language Background Other than English

Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes has established an Enrolment Policy for Systemic Catholic Schools. The CEO Wilcannia-Forbes monitors the implementation of this policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. Children from families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church may be considered eligible for enrolment. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

Information about enrolling in a systemic school in the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes may be accessed at the CEO website.

Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for the School in 2016 was 77%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group	
Kindergarten	65%
Year 1	82%
Year 2	86%
Year 3	n/a
Year 4	n/a
Year 5	n/a
Year 6	n/a

Managing Student Non-Attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. While it is the parent's legal responsibility under the NSW Education Act (1990) to ensure that their children attend school regularly, our staff as part of their duty of care, monitor all absences and work in partnership with parents to support and promote the regular attendance of students.

School staff, under the Principal's leadership, supports the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community;
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance;
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance; and
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance;
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented;
- visits to homes to follow up absences are undertaken by school staff when unsure of reason for a student being away and notes signed and filed;
- documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern;
- the Director of Catholic Education or designated CEO Wilcannia-Forbes officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom school strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

SECTION FOUR: STAFFING PROFILE

Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2016:

Total Teaching Staff*	Total Non-Teaching Staff	Combined Total
4	7	11

* This number includes full-time teachers and part-time teachers.

Percentage of staff who are indigenous	55%
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Teacher Standards

The NSW government requires that this Report detail the number of teachers in particular categories. The following table sets out this information.

Teacher Qualifications		Number of Teachers
1	Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	4
2	Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	0

Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued. Professional learning (PL) can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in-services, meetings and conferences and a range of professional learning programs provided by the Catholic Education Office (CEO). The School takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking staff professional learning. Individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing professional development. During the year all teachers have been involved in professional learning opportunities related to improving student outcomes.

The school held the equivalent of five staff development days this year with areas of focus as follows:

Term 1	Day 1-Orientation/Indigenous Induction Day Day 2-'Living and Working Well Together'
Term 2	Day 3 -NSW Geography Syllabus
Term 3	Day 4 -'EMU - Extending Mathematical Understanding'
Term 4	Day 5 -Staff Spirituality with Bishop Columba

Staff members are committed to personal and professional development. This occurs both within and out of school hours during staff meetings, inservices, university courses and professional conferences.

Professional learning undertaken by staff in 2016 includes:

- 'SALT' Child Protection Training
- Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Program
- Programming and Assessment
- A-E Reporting
- 'Stronger/Smarter Leadership' Program
- Religious Accreditation
- Early Career Teacher Inservice
- 'Mathletics' and 'Reading Eggs'
- Learning Intentions and Success Criteria
- AITSL Standards
- Writing Workshop
- Geography Programming
- The Eight-way Framework of Aboriginal Pedagogy Classroom Practice Analysis
- Report Writing
- ICTT Workshops
- Science - 'Primary Connections'

SECTION FIVE: CATHOLIC LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Catholic Schools have a unique role in the evangelising and educating mission of the Church. As a key ministry of parishes and the Diocese, Catholic schools encourage and support parents in their responsibility for faith formation of their children. This formation is supported by prayer and opportunities to participate in the life, mission and liturgy of the broader Catholic community.

Prayer, Liturgical Life and Faith Experiences

Each Monday the boys and girls gather for prayer in the Kulyi (Hall). This time incorporates formal prayer, singing and aspects of Aboriginal spirituality and story. Each Friday the boys and girls participate in a Christian meditation in the Kulyi.

The students pray and sing each day in class, and as part of mass with our Parish Priest and at special liturgies. Some special liturgies in 2016 included Ash Wednesday, Easter Assembly, Catholic Schools Week, Sorry Day, St Therese's Feast Day, NAIDOC Week plus our Christmas Celebration and Carols in the Kulyi.

Other highlights included all staff travelling to Broken Hill to attend a Spirituality Day led by our Bishop and one classroom teacher attending World Youth Day in Poland in July.

The Bishop also led a special prayer service incorporating aspects of Catholic and Paakantji Tradition by the banks of the Darling River

Parish Partnerships

Each month our Parish Priest comes from Broken Hill to celebrate Mass on Sunday with the staff and community. He then has breakfast with the children the following Monday morning and celebrates Mass or a Special Liturgy with the students. He also visits the children in their classrooms, often playing his piano accordion! He also finds time to make home visits to many people in the community and visits to the Wilcannia Hospital

Religious Education

The Religion Program, based on the Parramatta Diocesan Curriculum document, *Sharing our Story*, covers seven strands: God; Jesus; Church; Scripture; Sacraments; Christian Life; and Prayer). It offers students rich and varied faith experiences.

Year 4 students undertake an online Religious Literacy Assessment consisting of thirty five multiple-choice questions drawn from the strands of the Religion Program, *Sharing our Story*.

Our School's average result (as a mark out of 35)	
Year 4	n/a

Results of these assessments are analysed by teachers and are used to inform teaching and learning in Religious Education.

SECTION SIX: CURRICULUM, LEARNING AND TEACHING

Primary Curriculum

The School provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the NSW BOSTES syllabuses for primary education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology (S&T), Human Society and its Environment (HSIE), Creative Arts (CA) and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE).

In 2016 the School implemented the new syllabuses developed by BOSTES for History and Geography. In addition, the School implements the requirements of the CEO Wilcannia-Forbes.

Staff members strive for continuous improvement of teaching and learning in all facets of the curriculum. The School is committed to providing quality education that strives to meet the needs of every child. The curriculum is underpinned by Catholic values and the diocesan Statement of Faith and Mission.

Emphasis is placed on literacy at St Therese's Community School. Every morning is dedicated to teaching our students to read and write. We have an agreed practice for our Literacy Block which consists of exposure to rich, authentic texts and features Modelled Reading, Shared Reading, Guided Reading, Independent Reading, Modelled Writing, Shared Writing, Guided/Independent Writing, Handwriting and MiniLit sessions.

In Mathematics, our students are all assessed in their Numeracy development at the beginning of each school year through the 'Mathematics Assessment Interview' (MAI) This informs the teacher's knowledge of the students' Mathematical understanding and drives the cycle of teaching and learning. There is agreed structure to the Mathematics block including a warm-up, rich task and reflection.

SECTION SEVEN: PERFORMANCE IN TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Students in Year 3, Year 5, Year 7 and Year 9 across Australia participated in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in May 2016. The purpose of this test is to provide information to parents and teachers about the achievements of students in aspects of Literacy and Numeracy. The test provides a measure of the student’s performance against established standards and against other students in Australia. Each year the results are analysed by the school to inform teaching with a view to improving student performance.

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum acceptable standards for literacy, numeracy, reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling at particular ages. These are referred to as national minimum standards. Student performance in NAPLAN in our school is compared to these standards. The percentages of students achieving at or above these national minimum standards, and the percentages of students in the top three bands are reported in the table.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2016		% of students at or above national minimum standard		% of students in the top three bands	
		School	NSW	School	NSW
Year 3	Grammar and punctuation	%	%	%	%
	Reading	%	%	%	%
	Writing	%	%	%	%
	Spelling	%	%	%	%
	Numeracy	%	%	%	%

NAPLAN RESULTS 2016		% of students at or above national minimum standard		% of students in the top three bands	
		School	NSW	School	NSW
Year 5	Grammar and punctuation	%	%	%	%
	Reading	%	%	%	%
	Writing	%	%	%	%
	Spelling	%	%	%	%
	Numeracy	%	%	%	%

SECTION EIGHT: PASTORAL CARE AND STUDENT WELLBEING

Policies and procedures relating to pastoral care and wellbeing are underpinned by the guiding principles from the National Safe Schools Framework (2011) that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all Catholic school settings.

Student Welfare Policy

Student Welfare or Pastoral Care is at the forefront of all policies at St Therese's Community School. The Pastoral Care Policy outlines the key responsibilities of all involved in ensuring that students are safe, happy and well taught to enable them to achieve their full potential. The Policy is vital in the promotion of positive relationships between students, families and all members of the school staff.

No changes were made to the policy this year.

Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy

The School's policy and procedures for the management of student behaviour operate within a context of justice, compassion, reconciliation and forgiveness. They are based on procedural fairness, clearly defined rights and responsibilities and the inherent dignity of each individual. Corporal punishment in any form is prohibited at the School.

No changes were made to the policy this year.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Anti-Bullying Policy clearly states that bullying in any form is not tolerated. The policy guidelines state that all allegations of bullying are thoroughly investigated and addressed.

No changes were made to the policy this year.

The full text of all policies focusing on student welfare, discipline and anti-bullying are available from the school.

Complaints and Grievances Policy

The School has formal written protocols in place to address complaints and grievances. These protocols are in line with the CEO's Complaint Handling Policy which is available from the school office.

No changes were made to the policy this year.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The values of respect and responsibility are reflected across all dimensions of school life.

In 2016 the principal attended training in the 'Stronger/Smarter Leadership' Program with other principal colleagues and colleagues from the Diocesan Office. The aim of the "Stronger Smarter" philosophy is to promote and develop high expectation relationships with all in the community. Subsequently, "Stronger Smarter" professional learning experiences have been undertaken with all staff. Many rituals such as 'Yarning Circles' and 'Check-in, Check-out' have been introduced to the daily life and routine of St Therese's.

Efforts have been undertaken to involve the family and wider community in the school through opportunities to gather and talk, and to share in and celebrate the learning of the children. The reintroduction of the School Committee provides advice for decisions and future direction in the school.

SECTION NINE: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Each year the School develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. The Plan is informed by the Strategic Plan for Wilcannia-Forbes Diocesan Schools, “Christo et Doctrinae – For Christ and Learning”. The School engages in an annual evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness against the identified priorities.

Annual School Priorities for 2016

Priority 1	To further engage students with learning in literacy and develop a more personalised approach to learning, especially with spelling instruction.
Reason for priority 1	Analysis of spelling assessments from 2015 indicated that growth in this area was required.
Steps taken to achieve priority 1 Brief summary from the Annual Improvement Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and consolidation of Minilit and Prelit Programs. 2. Introduction of ‘Soundwaves’ Spelling Program. 3. Establishment of a daily spelling routine involving all teachers and Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) to best utilise time at the start of each day.
Status of priority 1	The ‘Soundwaves’ Spelling Program has been introduced and a strong spelling routine has been established. ‘Soundwaves’ will continue in 2017 and will be extended to include Year 3.

Priority 2	The Personal Learning Plan (PLP), parent teacher meeting process and Reporting to Parents will be reviewed to ensure it appropriately meets the unique needs of the parents in Wilcannia.
Reason for priority 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To better cater for the varied learning needs of students. 2. To engage parents more fully in their children's learning. 3. To ensure parents are aware of the progress and future learning needs of their child
Steps taken to achieve priority 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modify the PLP and include greater detail. 2. Involve Aboriginal Educations Workers (AEWs) in the communication process. 3. Provide informal opportunities for parents to attend school and also organise opportunities for formal conversations about learning.
Status of priority 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New PLP 'placemat' developed to assist interviews. 2. There are now increased opportunities for families to talk about children's learning progress. 3. The PLP process is continuing to be improved and developed and will remain in focus for 2017 and beyond.

Priority 3	Paakantji language and culture classes will become more integrated and classroom based.
Reason for priority 3	Rather than being a one off lesson each week, classroom AEWs will support the students' learning of language and culture within their classrooms. Teachers and AEWs will play an important role in ensuring language and culture permeates all learning at St Therese's.
Steps taken to achieve priority 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a program/timetable for lessons twice a week. 2. Create displays of words in all classrooms and around the school. 3. Consolidate Paakantji Resource Room. 4. Provide opportunities for parents and the wider community, e.g. singing and performing at community events.

Status of priority 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. At the end of 2016 the Paakantji resources were being updated and converted to digital (if required) to prevent deterioration.2. A new space to create art in the Playgroup building has been established.3. A Revised Paakantji Program is being developed in conjunction with Wilcannia Central School.
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Projected Priorities for 2017

<p>Priority 1</p>	<p>By December, students will demonstrate increased engagement in the Religious Education Curriculum as evidenced by pre and post surveys and staff observations.</p> <p>Through</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Including Aboriginal perspective in Sharing our Story; 2. Establishing a Sacramental Program in conjunction with the parish; 3. Developing a knowledge of the school's history and charism; and 4. Developing a stronger link to the parish and engaging Aboriginal families.
<p>Reason for priority 1</p>	<p>In 2016 there were no Aboriginal families involved in the parish or attending school masses. In 2017 the school will be extended to Year 3, which will provide an opportunity to start a Sacramental Program.</p>
<p>Steps taken to achieve priority 1</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a Sacramental Program in conjunction with Aboriginal community members. 2. Set a date for the Bishop to celebrate the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation in a way that combines Catholic and Paakantji traditions

Priority 2	Set Up Personalised Learning Program to engage children with learning at their level.
Reason for priority 2	The boys and girls of Wilcannia do not receive the opportunities for Literacy that many other children receive and come to school without early language experiences. We need to cater for the different learning approaches beneficial to Aboriginal children.
Steps taken to achieve priority 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consolidate the implementation of the 'Soundwaves' Spelling Program. 2. Introduce the 'Seven Steps to Writing' Program. 3. Introduce the reading program- 'Reading Our Way' - to support the Personalised Learning Program.

Priority 3	To continue to develop and promote Paakantji Culture and Language.
Reason for priority 3	There is the need to acknowledge, promote and celebrate Paakantji Culture by revising the learning and teaching program and developing a specially designated area for the whole community - e.g. exhibition/art centre for celebration of Paakantji Culture and Language.
Steps taken to achieve priority 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide training for all staff in the 'Stronger/Smarter' Philosophy. 2. Consolidate classroom programs taught by AEWs in conjunction with Wilcannia Central School. 3. Establish Paakantji Art Centre in the Playgroup building. 4. Develop Bush Tucker and Yarning Circle Project (\$3500 grant received). 5. Organise an overnight excursion to Mutawintji Historic Site and other local excursions to important Paakantji sites.

SECTION TEN: COMMUNITY SATISFACTION

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, a variety of processes have been used to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers. In our unique community on-on-one conversations and opportunities to gather and talk are the most beneficial. The following are some insights into the satisfaction level of the community.

Parent Satisfaction

Some parent comments:

“I love how the kids always smile when I come into the school!”

“I like it when the kids go outside for classes, like down by the river to learn about culture and language.”

“My granddaughter has come a long way with her writing and her spelling.”

“The kids always seem to enjoy each other’s company and show good manners.”

“The kids really enjoy art. Going over to Broken Hill to see the local art was really good.”

“Great to see the kids going on excursions.”

“I like the way all the staff work together as a team.”

“I love when they come together and sing in the morning. I love it when they dance.”

Student Satisfaction

Some student comments:

“I like the way the kids are nice to each other.”

“I like playing and reading books!”

“Cooking with Miss Elsie is one of my favourites!”

“Learning Paakantji words is pretty cool.”

“I love the way we learn in Maths.”

“I like the way we all listen to the teacher and take notice and show respect.”

“I like my friends at the school.”

Teacher Satisfaction

Feedback from Staff:

“Teaching at St Therese’s is challenging but rewarding. Everyone works extremely

hard and collaboratively to make things work. It has been a big learning curve but the kids always make it fun - they are the centre of it all. We are all here for the same reason, and that is helping these kids be the best they can be. “

“Learning about Paakantji Culture and Language is really interesting and has given me a greater insight into other ways of viewing things. I look forward to learning more from the AEWs and other leaders in the community.”

“St Therese’s truly is a place where we address the needs of the whole child - physically, socially, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually. Our school is a unique, supportive and caring place for these children to learn and grow.”

SECTION ELEVEN: FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Consistent with the BOSTES requirements, financial income and expenditure for the School is shown below. This financial information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Financial Questionnaire.

RECURRENT AND CAPITAL INCOME		RECURRENT AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants	<i>\$717,221</i>	Capital Expenditure	<i>\$2,491</i>
Government Capital Grants	<i>\$0</i>	Salaries and Related Expenses	<i>\$772,339</i>
State Recurrent Grants	<i>\$176,706</i>	Non-Salary Expenses	<i>\$136,789</i>
Fees and Private Income	<i>\$16,317</i>	Total Expenditure	<i>\$911,619</i>
Other Capital Income	<i>\$0</i>		
Total Income	<i>\$910,244</i>		