



Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn  
CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

# ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gungahai, NSW

## 2014 Annual Report



## SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Address:                         | 26 Homer Street, Gundagai 2722                             |
| Principal:                       | Mary Quinane   |
| Parish Priest / School Chaplain: | Farther Bernard Hennessy                                   |
| School Board / Council Chair:    | Sarah Graham   |
| Telephone:                       | 02 69441085  |
| Fax:                             | 02 69442161  |
| Email:                           | Office.stpatricksgundagai@cg.catholic.edu.au               |
| Website:                         | <a href="http://www.spg.nsw.edu.au">www.spg.nsw.edu.au</a> |

This report was prepared by:

Mary Quinane

PRINCIPAL

## MESSAGE FROM OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

---

### **Principal's Message**

St Patrick's is a Catholic Primary School catering for boys and girls from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Our School Motto 'Walk Together in Faith and Knowledge' invites all members of our school and community to work together to create an experience of unity. Our school strives to provide a well-rounded quality Catholic education. We focus on the spiritual, social, emotional and academic dimensions of each child in our care. We, the staff, assist students to become independent, confident learners and encourage them to be good citizens in all endeavours. Children learn from what they experience every day. Collaborative teaching partnerships throughout all grades ensure that St Patrick's strives to offer learning programs which are relevant, contemporary, stimulating and enjoyable. There is a very strong focus on the development of English (including Reading Recovery), Mathematics, Religion and Information Communication and Technology.

In addition to all of the designated Key Learning Areas, St Patrick's offers opportunities such as a Music Program, School Choir, Public Speaking Competition, Chess Competition, the Aspirations Program (a Science and Mathematics Enrichment Program for Year 5 and 6 students), a range of sporting endeavours including local gala days and further sporting representative opportunities.

In 2015 the school will undergo refurbishments in classrooms and the school library through an Australian Government Block Grant. The school community is very excited with this prospect. It will provide the teachers and students with more contemporary learning spaces for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning needs. The school is very appreciative of all funding sources granted, to realise this next phase for the school's life.

### **Student Representative's Message**

We, the School Captains and Vice Captains have had a busy year at St Patrick's. We have loved our school, all the children and teachers. We have had many opportunities to have fun and learn.

We have represented our school at community events such as the ANZAC Day March and Remembrance Day services. We have consulted with Mrs Quinane to put forward many ideas to help our school. One such idea was to use our Traveling Stock Route (TSR) lease to manage some sheep so that they could be sold to raise money for something that the Year 6 students wanted to leave to the school before moving on to high school. There are 20 sheep that were donated by school and other families and we thank them sincerely. We do have some ideas.

## SCHOOL FEATURES

---

St Patrick's is a Catholic Primary School located in Gundagai, NSW. The school caters for students in Kindergarten - Year 6, and has a current enrolment of 123 students.

Students attending this school come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities consisting of 70 male and 53 female students; no indigenous students; and 1 from a Language Background other than English (LBOTE).

The school employs 14 staff comprising 10 teachers and 4 non-teaching staff, the latter being employed in a variety of capacities including clerical support, administration, learning support assistant and groundsman. No staff identify as Indigenous.

The school works closely in partnership with the Parish and School community to provide a contemporary quality education for all students; an education that guides our young people to become independent discerning learners.

In acknowledging educational trends today, the school has harnessed and utilised 21st century technologies to enrich students learning opportunities. A range of technologies enables students to broaden their knowledge base about the world and ideas. The school's interactive technologies have furthered inquiry based learning opportunities. Using an inquiry based approach to programming allows teachers to use these technologies (e.g. iPads, Flip cameras, Bee Bots, Note pads and Interactive White Boards etc.) to engage students in new, exciting and stimulating ways to learn and understand the world around them. At the same time these learning tools promote conceptual understandings and essential critical and lateral thinking skills across many curriculum areas.

A Reading Recovery Intervention program is in place for students at risk of not achieving reading success in Year One. To resource students in need in other classes, teachers look at the needs of students regularly and consult the Learning Support teacher to strategise and seek ways of supporting students who may need further adjustments or in-class support.

Student leadership is an increasingly prominent part of the school community. As part of our Peer Support Program the school continues to mentor the Stage Three students. It assists and guides students towards independence and discernment as they ready themselves for the transition to high school. The Buddy System (Kindergarten and Year 6 students) ensures a nurturing and caring relationship between the younger and older students and continues to draw positive comments from parents and community members.

As part of nurturing leadership opportunities, our Student Representative Council (SRC) is greatly valued. The Student Council consists of students from Year 1 to Year 6 This student representative body is reformed annually. SRC representatives pass on information and ideas to teachers and school executive members of ideas about future directions and initiatives students would like to see happen within the school. The SRC currently maintains a small kitchen garden in which herbs and vegetables are grown. This initiative together with tree planting and the 'sheep' initiative on the TSR continue to provide students with a real life context in which to use and enhance their problem solving and decisions making skills for the benefit of the environment and the local community.

The St Patrick's School Choir has provided students with an avenue to excel in another extracurricular area. Over 60% of all school students chose to join the choir this year. Our school community organised an inaugural Western Region Choir Festival for Catholic

primary schools in our part of the Archdiocese. It was a great success. Seven choirs entered this festival. All choirs were justifiably proud of their achievements. Each year students are given opportunities to learn a variety of musical instruments. This year students have had opportunities to learn the saxophone, trumpet, violin, key board, drums and guitar and have singing tuition. Each year the students regularly perform for the school community.

Many St Patrick's students represented the school at Western Region, Archdiocesan and NSW carnivals in a variety of sporting events including Athletics, Cross Country, Swimming, Football, Aus Tag and others sports depending on individual student talent. Representation at a State level has been a highlight this year.

There is a lot of parent involvement at St Patrick's. Parents are very involved in Sporting carnivals, tuckshop, uniform shop and fundraising activities through the School Community Council. Three outstanding achievements this year have been the High Tea Morning in August; the Christmas Design Work shop attended by about 120 people in late October and a Melbourne Cup luncheon attended by many in the Gundagai community and beyond. The resounding success of these and other fundraisers is due to a whole school community effort of willing parents, students and staff all being actively involved in planning, preparing and being responsible for various jobs on the days.

Our School Captains and Vice Captains attend Remembrance Day Service at Anzac Grove and lay a wreath in honour of the victims of war annually. This year our Year 4, 5 and 6 classes attended as well. Our school community marches in the annual Anzac Day March. The Kindergarten and Year 1 classes attend the Biggest Morning Tea at the RSL club to raise funds to assist cancer sufferers and their families within the local community each year. It is very well received by the local community.

The school's website can be found at [www.spg.nsw.edu.au](http://www.spg.nsw.edu.au)

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

---

St Patrick's Primary school follows the Archdiocesan Religious Education Curriculum, *Treasures New and Old*. All teaching staff have now completed Accreditation A and B in line with the Archdiocesan policy. Some staff are working towards Accreditation C.

An area for continued development has been assessment and reporting in Religious Education. Staff drew on the rubrics developed by the CEO Religious Education team and have begun to look at using the Understanding by Design (UbD) approach to programming to develop a more open ended style of assessment.

The prayer life of the school has continued to be an area of focus. Whole school prayer led by students is an integral part of our morning assemblies. Year 6 students lead daily assemblies with the St Patrick's school prayer. Staff begin the week with staff prayer on Monday afternoons. Each class has their own classroom prayers before recess, lunch and at the end of the day. Our school celebrates special feast days and in particular the feast day of St Patrick. Masses and liturgies are celebrated each Friday in the parish church. We use

our school hall for some prayer celebrations. The sacramental program continues to evolve and this year parent information evenings preceded the sacramental program.

Our school participates in raising money for the missions during Lent and in preparing hampers for St Vincent De Paul for our end of year Thanksgiving Mass in December.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT - NAPLAN

---

Students in **Years 3 and 5** sat the *National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) in May this year. 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.

### School and National Mean Scale Scores

| <b>YEAR 3</b>   | <b>Reading</b> | <b>Writing</b> | <b>Spelling</b> | <b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b> | <b>Numeracy</b> |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>National</b> | 419            | 402            | 412             | 426                              | 402             |
| <b>School</b>   | 466            | 477            | 462             | 476                              | 447             |

| <b>YEAR 5</b>   | <b>Reading</b> | <b>Writing</b> | <b>Spelling</b> | <b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b> | <b>Numeracy</b> |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>National</b> | 501            | 468            | 498             | 504                              | 487             |
| <b>School</b>   | 528            | 508            | 541             | 560                              | 492             |

### Proportion of students at or above the National Minimum Standard

| <b>YEAR 3</b>   | <b>Reading</b> | <b>Writing</b> | <b>Spelling</b> | <b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b> | <b>Numeracy</b> |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>National</b> | 94%            | 94%            | 93%             | 94%                              | 95%             |
| <b>School</b>   | 100%           | 100%           | 100%            | 100%                             | 100%            |

| <b>YEAR 5</b>   | <b>Reading</b> | <b>Writing</b> | <b>Spelling</b> | <b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b> | <b>Numeracy</b> |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>National</b> | 93%            | 90%            | 93%             | 93%                              | 93%             |
| <b>School</b>   | 100%           | 100%           | 100%            | 100%                             | 100%            |

### Proportion of students in each Achievement Band

| <b>YEAR 3</b> | <b>Reading</b> | <b>Writing</b> | <b>Spelling</b> | <b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b> | <b>Numeracy</b> |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Band 6</b> | 50%            | 50%            | 28%             | 44%                              | 28%             |
| <b>Band 5</b> | 6%             | 50%            | 56%             | 33%                              | 39%             |
| <b>Band 4</b> | 39%            | 0%             | 17%             | 22%                              | 28%             |
| <b>Band 3</b> | 6%             | 0%             | 0%              | 0%                               | 6%              |
| <b>Band 2</b> | 0%             | 0%             | 0%              | 0%                               | 0%              |
| <b>Band 1</b> | 0%             | 0%             | 0%              | 0%                               | 0%              |

| <b>YEAR 5</b> | <b>Reading</b> | <b>Writing</b> | <b>Spelling</b> | <b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b> | <b>Numeracy</b> |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Band 8</b> | 13%            | 6%             | 25%             | 31%                              | 6%              |
| <b>Band 7</b> | 31%            | 31%            | 38%             | 31%                              | 19%             |
| <b>Band 6</b> | 38%            | 44%            | 25%             | 25%                              | 19%             |
| <b>Band 5</b> | 19%            | 6%             | 13%             | 13%                              | 50%             |
| <b>Band 4</b> | 0%             | 6%             | 0%              | 0%                               | 6%              |
| <b>Band 3</b> | 0%             | 6%             | 0%              | 0%                               | 0%              |

The above tables show that 100% of the Year Three and Year Five student cohorts are at or above the National Minimum Standard in Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation and Numeracy. A number of initiatives have impacted on this result. A range of specific reading and writing practices such as Literacy and Numeracy block sessions (including explicit teaching focuses each day) has contributed to this improvement.

Teachers have continued to refine their knowledge, skills and understandings in the art of teaching and learning in these core areas of the curriculum. Teachers have set goals to refine their knowledge, skills and practices through the lens of the Australian Teaching Standards. Regular focused assessment practices have informed teaching and learning decisions in planning and programming units of work.

Annual Strategic and Improvement Plans give a clear direction for areas needing further development.

Results in some aspects of Literacy and Numeracy indicate that we need to set priority targets for further development in 2015 and in particular maintain a focus on higher order thinking skills in Literacy including inferring, interpreting information and making connections between written and visual information in both disciplines and in Grammar and Spelling. Emphasis on developing students thinking skills and problem solving skills will continue to be a strong feature of teaching and learning in Numeracy and teacher professional development in 2015 particularly in Stages 2 and 3 in the school.

## SCHOOL POLICIES

---

### **Enrolment Policy**

In enrolling students we are directed by the Archdiocesan Enrolment Policy which can be found on the Annual Report page of the school's website or on the Catholic Education Office website at <http://www.ceocg.catholic.edu.au/parents/Pages/GeneralPolicies.aspx>

### **Attendance Policy**

St Patrick's Primary School Attendance Policy is aligned to the Canberra Goulburn Catholic Education Office Policy "Attendance at Schools (NSW)" Jan 2013.

Class teachers record daily absences according to guidelines in a class roll at the commencement of each school day. Parents are encouraged to provide a written explanation of a student's absence.

If a written explanation is not forthcoming within two weeks of the student's return to school, the class teacher issues a formal reminder.

The Assistant Principal reviews all class rolls at the end of each term. The Principal will contact parents or guardians if records indicate a non-compliance with Compulsory School Attendance Legislation. The Principal and school staff will endeavour to assist families who may be experiencing difficulty with complying to regulations. The policy may be accessed on the School web page.

### **Pastoral Care Policy**

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. In addition we do not sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons to enforce discipline at our school.

The full text of the school's St Patrick's Pastoral Care Policy, including behaviour, is available on the school website or from the Front Office.

### **Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy**

The school policy is based on procedural fairness and recognises that parents and caregivers must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory environment. Any concerns raised are responded to promptly and fairly and confidentiality is always maintained. A full text of the school policy is available on the school website or from the Front Office.

## PRIORITIES AND TARGETS

---

The St Patrick's School Improvement Project was focused on Numeracy across the school in 2014, and other priority areas for improvement as noted in the school's Strategic and annual Management Plans (including the Annual Improvement plan).

Targets and Priorities in 2014 included:

- the use of the Australian Teaching Standards to develop and refine teacher practices.
- an emphasis on English assessment data to demonstrate evidence of improved student outcomes across all grades
- a focus on planning and programming for Literacy and Numeracy. This included:

Embedding the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Pearson & Gallagher 1996) as a whole school agreed practice including all adjustment documentation made for students in programs

- focusing on reading comprehension strategies and early years reading strategies necessary for students to successfully read
- an emphasis on Numeracy assessment data to demonstrate evidence of improved student outcomes across all grades and in particular focusing on problem-solving and reasoning in applied open-ended Numeracy tasks. The strategy used is a project entitled '*Collaborating On Student Achievement*' (COSA+). This project involves visiting Numeracy mentors from the CEO working one to one with teachers on improved practices in the applied area of the Numeracy block
- adjusting the whole school agreed Numeracy proforma for planning and programming that include all adjustments made to meet student Numeracy needs when necessary to improve student outcomes.

### **Literacy and Numeracy 2014**

Our 2014 Strategic and Improvement Plans gave a clear direction for areas needing further development. To this end, staff have engaged in regular professional learning sessions to continue to implement reading comprehension strategies and further their knowledge about grammar, punctuation and spelling strategies in line with contemporary literacy research.

Staff have engaged in regular professional learning sessions to continue to implement more open-ended numeracy problems for students so that they have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understandings of numeracy concepts learned.

To these ends, teachers (K-6) use a consistent common weekly programming proforma to plan and cater for all students' learning needs. This proforma is based on the 'Pearson & Gallagher Learning' model (1996) for planning and programming in these core areas of the curriculum. The school has now included an added section in English and Numeracy program proformas that clearly state any adjustments necessary for those students who have been identified as having specific needs.

The team of Learning Support/Resource teachers, Learning Support assistant and Principal target specific student groups each term during Literacy and Numeracy blocks; Students with Disabilities (SWD's) have individual programs that are planned with parents, the class teacher/s and the Learning Support team and then written to meet their specific needs. The class teacher and Learning Support Resource teachers meet to discuss adjustments and strategies necessary to meet all student needs.

Evaluation to further refine this strategy is ongoing to ensure it is effective. The Reading Recovery early intervention strategy has continued to be very successful. This strategy includes maintaining a specialist Reading Recovery teacher to implement this early intervention strategy for those students needing to develop efficient reading skills in Year One.

Mathematical practices such as creating open-ended mathematical problems that are contextualised have been explored during daily Numeracy blocks in 2014. The use of these strategies needs to be extended in 2015 to maintain focus on the applied component in daily numeracy blocks by the continued use of the school improvement model '*Collaborating On*

*Student Achievement* (COSA+) in conjunction with CEO Numeracy mentors and outside experts in the field of Numeracy.

Teaching and learning practices in Grammar and Punctuation was reviewed across all grades. Professional dialogue and teacher up skilling in this area has had some effect on student achievement however this is still an area for improvement. A systematic scope and sequence for teaching diagraphs, consonant vowel blends and vowel consonant blends needs to be a priority for further development in all grades.

Specific assessment tools (e.g. rubrics) have been utilised to guide teachers in program planning phases. The Rubric assessment tool has added value to multi-levelled, open-ended tasks by providing explicit clear criteria for students to set learning goals and targets.

### **Towards 2015 priorities**

These priorities have been discerned from the 2014 NAPLAN data and other school data evidence collected throughout 2014 and from the 2014 school priorities.

#### **Priority 1**

Further development of whole school agreed practices and use of best pedagogies across all learning areas is an ongoing priority for the school for 2015.

To improve student outcomes and whole school agreed practices the school/teachers will:

- Set own goals in line with the Australian Professional Teaching Standards (<http://www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au/>). Teachers will set goals each term and work towards reaching criteria provided during the year.
- Continue to raise expectations for/from their students. To this end it is intended that teachers across the school visually display outcomes in user friendly language for students so students know what outcome targets they need to work towards during learning experiences.
- Give instant feed-back to students at point of need. This means that task design must have an open-ended component in place so that students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understandings. Constant dialogue with students will provide more opportunities for instant feedback and ways to improve on a daily basis are discussed.
- Continue to write and use rubrics for major learning tasks in all key learning areas.
- Focus on higher order thinking and inquiry in reading comprehension especially to support students in making informed inferences and better connections between characters and events in narratives, poetry and persuasive texts. This will be a more particular focus in later Stage One, Stage Two and Stage Three classes.
- Refine the scope and sequence for Phonological and Graphaphonic Awareness and explicitly teach diagraphs etc. in weekly programs.

#### **Priority 2**

The school and community will revisit the area of *Partnerships and Relationships* within the context of the school community; in particular relational culture, consultation and communication, engagement with parents and care givers, partnerships and School Governance.

This will be developed in line with the guidelines set by the Canberra and Goulburn Catholic Education Office. Towards these ends staff/community will:

- revisit the school's Vision statement Walk Together in Faith and Knowledge. This will allow staff to revisit who we are as a staff in our Catholic school of St Patrick's and what that may mean to us as professionals and as people. This journey will continue at various points during 2015.
- revisit school governance and the role of this leadership body in the context of the school community.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

---

### Professional Learning

All teachers have been involved in professional learning during the year. These activities are designed to develop the skills and understandings of staff to improve student outcomes. Professional learning can take many forms including whole staff days, subject specific inservices, meetings and conferences.

The school held six whole staff days in 2014. The content of these days was as follows:

- Term 1 – Making Jesus Real Day, First Aid Training including CPR;
- Term 2 – Literacy Day with Professor Kay Lowe from Wollongong;
- Term 3: - Mathematics/Numeracy Day – COSA project ;
- Term 4 -: Mathematics and problem Solving Day with Rhonda Faragher from ACU Canberra, NAPLAN analysis for 2014 Literacy and Numeracy directions.

### Teacher Qualifications

All teachers are qualified as required by the relevant State and Territory bodies.

## TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION

---

The average teacher attendance rate during 2014 was 89%.

The teacher retention rate from 2013 to 2014 was 91%.

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

---

The average student attendance for the school during 2014 was 93%.

School attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

**Attendance rates by Year group**

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| Kindergarten | 93% |
| Year 1       | 91% |
| Year 2       | 93% |
| Year 3       | 96% |
| Year 4       | 95% |
| Year 5       | 93% |
| Year 6       | 92% |

## PARENT, TEACHER AND STUDENT SATISFACTION

---

The opinions of parents, students and teachers were sought covering a range of aspects including school effectiveness through surveys and anecdotal evidence and collected over the year. Parents expressed their appreciation at being encouraged to participate in classroom and extracurricular activities. Parents appreciated staffs acknowledgement of the countless parental contributions to the life of the school. They gratefully acknowledged the care provided to their children, and in the ongoing teacher commitment to the educational achievement of students.

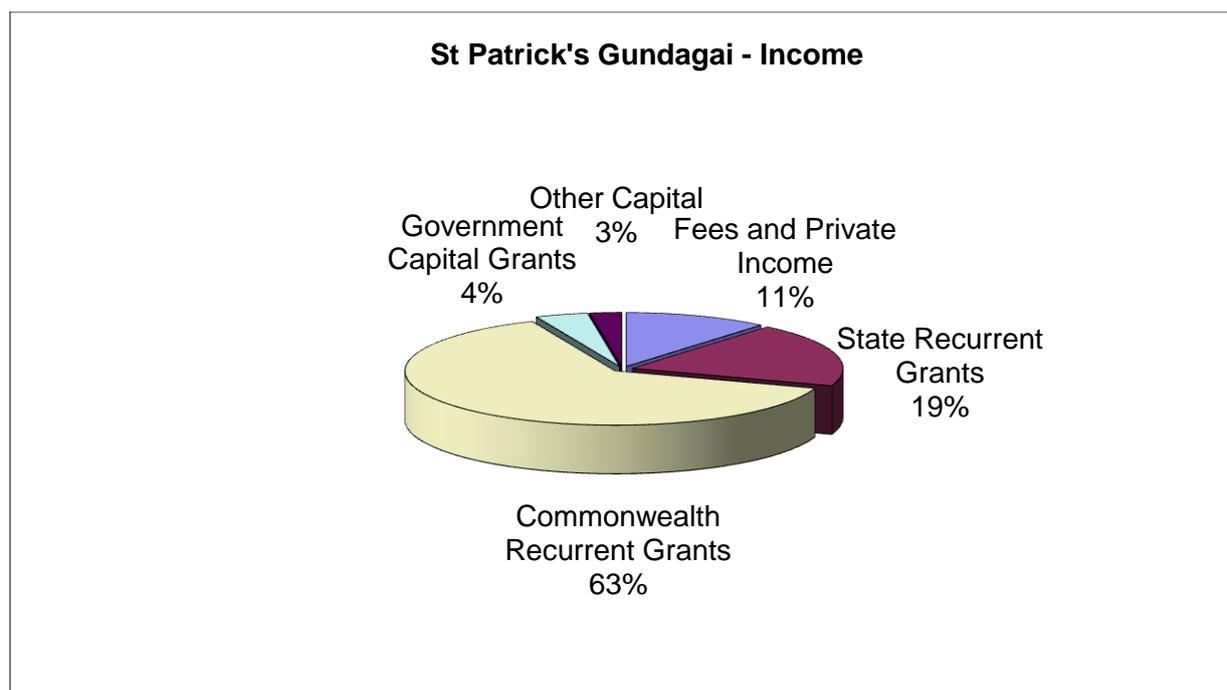
Last year parents stated that they would appreciate more digital forms of communication to compliment the information contained in the weekly newsletter. This has been achieved in 2014 much to the parents satisfaction. Parents indicated that they would like more information on the Learning Support model after a Parent Forum in Term 4. In the coming year this will be a Community Council and school focus for Semester One.

Students enjoyed the many opportunities for parent participation both in the classroom and at whole school events and celebrations. Students have expressed a great love of their school in many areas including opportunities to represent their school in extracurricular cultural and sporting events. Students were very appreciative of the significant ongoing parental support that parents and grandparents play in the life of the school.

Teacher satisfaction was positive, with many citing the positive benefits of one to one support they receive (from time to time) with expert consultants. Staff acknowledged the support and recognition they receive from their colleagues. A focus for 2015 will be to revisit who we are as a Catholic staff under the heading of Catholic Identity and Work Culture.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

---



### St Patrick's Gundagai - Expenditure

