2013 Annual School Report
St Joseph’s Primary School, Merriwa
About the Annual School Report

St Joseph’s Primary School, Merriwa is registered by the Board of Studies as a member of the Catholic system in the Diocese 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 2013 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 great pleasure that I present the 2013 Annual School Report for St Joseph’s Primary School Merriwa. The school community of St Joseph’s is very proud of the achievements made in 2013 and I commend to you this report as testimony to the wonderful educational institution that it is.

St Joseph’s Primary school is a small, rural Catholic school situated in the Upper Hunter town of Merriwa. Its mission is to be a community of Catholic faith where the uniqueness of each child is nurtured and valued; where students are empowered and challenged to become lifelong learners with optimism and hope for the future. The school achieves its mission by working together with students, families, parishioners and members of the wider community to provide a holistic education to all students. Gospel values support all school policies and procedures. We teach students by example to become problem solvers and forward thinkers and to demonstrate an appreciation of our environment and our responsibility for its preservation.

Strong programs in each Key Learning Area are delivered to all students. In 2013 the school was engaged in the second and final year of the National Partnerships (Low SES) program. This program was designed at St Joseph's to enhance the capacity of its teaching staff to strengthen the educational standards of its students in Literacy. A highly structured combination of professional development opportunities, access to quality teaching resources and experiences as well as an increased emphasis on parent engagement has been developed to increase student readiness for and engagement in learning. Curriculum differentiation ensures that the needs of all students at all levels are catered for adequately. A major emphasis throughout the planning and implementation process was to ensure sustainability of outcomes for the school. The program came to an end at the close of the year but the quality work being done throughout the school is to be continued on in future years to progress to Numeracy and then to the other Key Learning Areas.

The school’s environmental stewardship programs highlight the respect it has for the earth and our responsibility to care for it. Participation in Clean Up Australia Day enables the students to take responsibility for the wider environment while their daily and weekly classroom and playground incentive programs ensure the school environment is cared for. The vegetable gardens and chook raising, along with worm farm and compost systems add practical lessons to the environmental focus.

In word and action, our goal is to live out Jesus' commandment to 'Love One Another'. The culture of the school is one of a caring community. The relationships and interactions between students, staff and parents highlight the love and care each has for the other. Participation in Senior Citizens events, program of visitation to the local aged care facility and hospital as well as active participation in community commemorative services and celebrations ensure the students develop a sense of belonging to and responsibility for their local community as citizens.

Parent Body

2013 has seen the P&F contributing extensively to the school and most importantly to supporting the students. The P&F continues to bring together the school community through initiatives and events, and has continued the momentum of previous years.

We have maintained a voice across the school, with all members working in a positive and productive way to ensure that the voices of parents have been heard.
The campdraft was again our major fundraiser. It not only raised a vast sum of money but also continued to raise the profile of the school in the local community in a very positive way.

There have been many social activities organised by the P&F throughout the year. These events provided a service of sorts and continue to build a sense of community within the school.

There is a tremendous amount of goodwill in the parent body which is one of the contributing factors to making St Joseph’s such a great school.

I would like to thank teachers and administrative staff at St Joseph’s for their continuing support of the P&F.

Thank you to the entire P&F Committee and parents for your support this year.

**Student Body**

Throughout 2013 all Year 6 students had leadership roles and we all filled our portfolio roles from sport and recreation, health and safety, religion, public relations and communication, student welfare and the environment. We meet each week with our class teacher and the Principal to plan our leadership experiences and to discuss the needs of the students within the school.

We helped the teachers, Principal and students throughout the year. As leaders, we put 110 percent effort in to everything we did, whether it was school work, homework or jobs.

2013 was a great year for the students. Some things making it a great year include the Canberra excursion for Stage 3, for most of us the horse sports carnivals, the Science Discovery Day at Muswellbrook, the ANZAC ceremony and the school junior campdraft and fete.

All leaders attended a leadership day at Lochinvar. It helped us understand more about being a leader and what roles we had to take on accepting the challenge of being a leader. We also learnt about the roles of the other leaders that attended the young leader’s day. It gave us ideas about how to improve things around the school.

We hosted fundraising events for the students including Shrove Tuesday where we cooked and sold pancakes and pikelets.

Another fundraising event which is big on the school calendar is Mission Day which is provided by the leaders to raise money for the Catholic Mission. We organised events such as Jaffa Basher, talent quest, disco, lolly guess, bowling, obstacle course and many more activities which gave the students lots of opportunities to donate money to the mission.

In Year Six we have lots of roles and responsibilities, some assisted by Year Five such as sports shed, buddies and much more. Our biggest role is making sure that our school community is cared for and is safe. We have responsibilities to give out weekly awards to the deserving students and teachers.

**Who We Are**

**History of the School**

St. Joseph’s Primary School is part of the St Anne’s Catholic Parish, Merriwa.

St Joseph’s Primary School, Merriwa, was founded in 1883 when the Catholic people of the district agreed to contribute ten pounds per month to employ a teacher. Miss E. Cooper (some records state “Cook”) was offered the position.

By March of 1884 the number of students had increased, requiring a second teacher.

On 5th January, 1885, three Sisters of St Joseph took up residence in Merriwa. They were the first Foundation formed from Lochinvar, which had come into existence only two years earlier in 1883.

School records go back to 1886 (unfortunately the first records of 1885 have been lost.) The total enrolment was 77 - 39 girls and 38 boys. On 25th November, 1928, Bishop Dwyer blessed the new school in Marquet Street. On 31st January, 1954, Bishop Toohey blessed the new infants’ classroom and on 19th January, 1961, blessed the new school building of three classrooms. Secondary classes operated at St Joseph’s Merriwa from the early 1950’s to 1968. In 2008 the Honourable Joel Fitzgibbon opened and Fr Des Harrigan blessed the new Kindergarten classroom giving the school a total of four classrooms. For over 130 years, St Joseph’s Catholic School has provided quality education to the children of the Merriwa district.
The Sisters of St Joseph, whilst no longer teaching at the school, continue to maintain a presence in the community as Pastoral Care workers. The two religious living in close proximity to the school are closely involved in school activities and community affairs.

Location/Drawing Area
St Joseph’s School Merriwa is located in the rural township of Merriwa in the New South Wales Upper Hunter area. It is the most western school in the Maitland-Newcastle diocese. The students travel from within the town limits, as well as from outlying rural properties. Some students travel from Cassilis to the west, as well as Gungal to the east.

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>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Religious Dimension and Culture of School Life
Catholic Identity
The school’s Vision and Mission statements clearly articulate the role the school assumes as a community of Catholic faith. This vision underpins all school policies and procedures. The community of St Joseph’s School Merriwa believes that Jesus came that we “may have life, life in all its fullness” Jn 10. We see it as our mission to help this become a reality for the students whom we serve.

Respect for the traditional owners of this land is fostered through regular acknowledgement and the celebration of NAIDOC week and other events as they arise. Also a copy of the Apologies to the Australian Indigenous People is displayed in the MacKillop Room.

The Sisters of St Joseph’s founded the school. Due to our proximity to the convent we are able to maintain a close relationship with the two Sisters who reside in Merriwa.

The school celebrates its Catholic identity through a number of visible signs in the school. Each classroom has a crucifix at the front of the room and a sacred table which is the focus of class prayer. In the front office there is a strong sense of Catholic identity where we have photos of Pope Francis and Bishop William Wright, a picture of Mary MacKillop, a statue of St Joseph, a school candle, copies of the Aurora, Australian Catholics Magazine and the Majellan, a crucifix as well as other icons. In other areas of the school we have a cross which depicts our founding Sisters plus links to the Merriwa community, a grotto to Mary, Mother of God, a statue of St Joseph and Jesus in the garden plus our school banner. Each classroom has access to a variety of bibles which best suit the needs of the students.

The school also celebrates many important Feast Days throughout the year including: Lenten and Easter Liturgies, Pentecost, Grandparents Day - Feast of St Joachim and Anne, Feast of the Sacred Heart.

In the school newsletter each fortnight there is a reflection placed on the front page as well as a section which is called RE News - in this section of the newsletter it informs parents of religious activities happening in our school - special feast days, liturgical seasons and class news.

The School as part of Parish and Diocesan Life
A positive relationship between the school and Parish continues to be a high priority at St Joseph’s school. We work closely with our Parish Priest, Sisters of St Joseph and parish community groups, who are always very welcomed members of our school community.
The Sacramental program is parish based and involves three staff members, the Sisters of St Joseph and other parent volunteers. 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. Bishop William presided at the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation.

During the year we had a Parish/School dinner where parents, staff and parish members gathered together to share a meal. This was a wonderful community event and a great night was had by all.

During Catholic Schools Week students and teachers prepared displays for the main street to highlight the Catholic identity of our school. Also at the commencement of Catholic Schools Week, Year 6 leaders made a leaders’ pledge and staff were commissioned at the Sunday Parish Mass.

Mass was celebrated by the school community on several occasions throughout the year including the Opening School Mass and the end of School Mass, as well as a well-attended Grandparents Mass. On other occasions classes have attended the regular Friday Mass and other significant feast days.

Copies of the school newsletter were placed in the church to ensure that parishioners had access to what was happening within the school.

The Mother’s and Father’s Day breakfasts, liturgy and activities were very well attended by parents.

The Principal is an ex-officio member of the Parish Council and attended meetings as appropriate.

The school supports the annual winter and Christmas appeals for the local St Vincent de Paul Society.

At school working bees, assistance is given to general tidying up of the Church grounds.

The local St Vincent de Paul Society use our facilities to hold their meetings.

At the conclusion of the Parish Anointing Mass the parishioners have lunch in our Mary MacKillop room and are entertained by the students.

Students serve on the altar at weekend Masses and other special Masses.

Students and staff representatives attended Masses throughout the year including Catholic Schools Week Mass in Hamilton, Called to Serve Mass and the Diocesan Mission Mass.

**The Liturgical and Prayer Life of the School**

Each morning assembly we begin the day with prayer together and at the beginning of lunch and recess each class says grace in the classroom. At our final assembly of the day we say a prayer together before we dismiss the students. Prayer is also used throughout the religion units taught in each classroom.

Throughout the year there are many opportunities for students to be part of liturgical celebrations. The focus each week at our Monday liturgy is the Sunday gospel where each teacher and Stage 3 students prepare and deliver the message from the gospel. This is concluded with a song/hymn which supports the gospel message.

Students have opportunities to receive the Eucharist at all Masses attended during school time. Students who have not received the sacrament of the Eucharist are encouraged to receive a blessing from the Parish Priest.

Wherever possible we attend the parish annual liturgical celebrations, for example: Ash Wednesday Mass.

**Teaching of Religion**

Religion lessons at St Joseph’s follow the curriculum set by the Maitland–Newcastle Diocese. All class teachers are responsible for the teaching of Religious Education in their respective classes and are formally accredited to teach Religious Education or are in the process of satisfying the academic requirements needed for accreditation. Each class has a structured lesson that develops the knowledge and understandings of our Catholic faith. Class and school liturgical, sacramental and prayer celebrations form an important aspect of the Religious Education curriculum. Currently Stage 3 is using new units of work, written by the diocese. Other Stages will implement the new units as soon as they are available.
Catholic perspectives are integrated into all Key Learning Areas.

**Retreats and Faith Development Programs**

Prayer and reflection opportunities begin all meetings and gatherings. Each year, one professional development day is set aside for the teachers to join together in learning more about their spirituality or the teaching of Religious Education. This year staff joined with other members of the Diocesan Leadership team to participate in a staff reflection day entitled ‘The Eighth Day’.

A Lenten program was conducted by staff, for staff and community members from the Parish as well as other community members. This was an optional experience which many staff and parish members attended.

Daily prayer was experienced in classrooms, all of which have a sacred space and prayer focus. Many opportunities were made available for spontaneous prayer as well as formal prayer.

The newsletter each fortnight has a reflection/prayer for the parents and staff to enjoy.

Service to the wider community is an important aspect of our faith development. As such, Mission Day is a major event on the yearly calendar, as well our winter and Christmas Vinnies appeals. Visits to the Gummun Place Hostel for the Aged and the Merriwa Hospital are also included as well as carolling at the town Christmas Party.

At the end of each year, Year 6 participate in a retreat. During this retreat the Year 6 students take time to reflect on their years at school and what direction they see themselves and their friends going. As many of our students go to different high schools it is a wonderful day where they get to reflect on their gifts - the gift they are to people, the gift people are to them and how they can use their gifts to help spread the Gospel values.

**Values and initiatives to promote respect and responsibility**

Our school motto ‘Actions Not Words’ captures the spirit of our school and is a constant reminder of the importance to continue to witness the values of Jesus Christ in all interactions with each other and to provide a learning environment where learning is permeated by Gospel values. These values include Respect, Responsibility, Service, Compassion, Honesty, Justice, Integrity, Resilience and Achievement. In word and action, our goal is to live out the great law of ‘Love One Another.’

Environmental stewardship programs continue to be an important aspect of the school. This highlights the respect we have for creation and our responsibility to care for it. These include our vegie patch, chooks, composting, solar energy, worm farm and gardens. This is also seen in the great attendance we have at the working bees at the beginning of each term, where families come together to look after our school and church grounds.

Compasion and service are displayed in the service projects the students have participated in with the elderly and sick in the wider community. This service includes visits to the aged care facility and the hospital, as well as fundraising for the poorer members of our local and wider community. Being a responsible citizen is encouraged through participation in ANZAC ceremonies, Remembrance Day services, Australia Day events, Senior Citizen events, Richard Cootes visit - from Mission Australia, singing for our sick in the parish after the anointing Mass, NAIDOC activities, Clean up Australia Day and National Tree Day.

**Policies**

**Enrolment Policy**

St Joseph’s Primary School, Merriwa follows the guidelines provided by the Catholic Schools Office Enrolment Policy 2013. This Enrolment Policy has been devised in order to accommodate the needs of families seeking a Catholic education. It aims 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 and assist the system of Catholic schools to provide schooling, where possible, for all Catholic children who seek enrolment, cater for the individual needs of each child equitably within the constraints of the available teaching and material resources and to encourage parents enrolling their children in Catholic schools to give support to parish and school life, especially in education in faith.

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 Principal. Diocesan provisions (including standard discounts for those with a Health Care Card) exist to help in this area, and the Principal can also exercise discretion where genuine need exists.
The enrolment period commences in Catholic Schools Week each year and enrolment forms are available from the school office at any time throughout the year. An extensive transition program is conducted for children wishing to enrol at St Joseph’s, in the second semester of the year prior to enrolment.

**Student Welfare**

Student welfare at St Joseph’s Merriwa is based on the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy. The School’s Vision Statement underlies all policies and practices within the school:

*St Joseph’s Primary School Merriwa:*
*A community of Catholic faith*
*where the uniqueness of each child will be nurtured and valued.*
*Where students will be empowered and challenged to become lifelong learners with optimism and hope for the future.*

Student wellbeing is an agenda item at every staff meeting. Student welfare is supported by St Joseph's’ Anti-Bullying policy as well as its Behavioural Support and Special Needs Policies. These policies outline the rights and responsibilities of students as well as procedures followed for inappropriate behaviour. Counselling services were obtained through the CSO school counsellor who visited the school on a fortnightly basis. There has been no change to this policy in 2013.

Copies of these policies are available from the school office upon request and on the school website.

**Discipline**

Discipline at St Joseph’s is supported by the Behavioural Support Policy which is aligned to the Restorative Justice philosophy. This policy provides a framework for building relationships and managing behaviour. The policy aims to promote Gospel values, develop self-esteem, encourage responsibility, protect rights and model respectful behaviour.

The school uses the Positive Behaviour Framework across all grades in the school. This framework is designed to enable children to engage with their learning more effectively by being taught the skills to be ready to learn. School wide systems are in place to ensure consistency of expectations and consequences for not meeting the expectations.

The school’s Discipline policy is supported by our Procedural Fairness Policy which is based on the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy of 2002. This outlines procedures for suspension and expulsion, if this is being considered. There has been no change to this policy in 2013.

Copies of these policies are available on the school website and from the school office upon request.

**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 Joseph’s Primary School, Merriwa’s Anti-Bullying Policy is reviewed regularly and is available on the school website and from the school office upon request. There was no change to this policy in 2013.

**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 and is available on the Catholic Schools Office website. The policy and associated support material was updated in 2013.
Student Achievements

Academic Achievements
In our quest to empower and challenge students to become lifelong learners, we offer our students a vast range of learning opportunities. The teachers, with the assistance of the Learning Support teacher and Learning Support assistant, encourage all students in this pursuit.

Students were encouraged to participate in a range of competitions such as the Newcastle Permanent Maths Competition, Poetry competitions as well as writing competitions and Science competitions.

The senior class participated in the Upper Hunter Science Discovery Day as well as the Newcastle Herald competition. This was again a learning highlight as the children honed their writing skills in a relevant and realistic way. One student in Year 5 was highly commended as a Young Writer in the Primary category.

Public Speaking was a major focus across the grades as each child participated in a whole school public speaking competition. The winners at school level went on to compete against all the other Catholic schools' winners in a regional competition. The skills of our St Joseph's children were again strengthened by this experience.

A similar competition was instituted this year to help develop the students spelling skills. The Spelling competition followed the same format as the Public Speaking competition listed above.

Annual School Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Steps taken to achieve the priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve student reading skills</td>
<td>Implement NP Low SES program to assist students who are identified as falling below the chosen benchmark in Literacy and Numeracy including closing the gap for Aboriginal students. Increased targeted Professional Development on teaching literacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specifically target the teaching of K-6 Mathematics to improve student outcomes</td>
<td>Provide explicit professional learning opportunities for the continued emphasis on the teaching of Mathematics specifically focusing on problem solving and higher order thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate and promote contemporary, pedagogical and ICT approaches to support excellence in learning and teaching</td>
<td>Promote a variety of professional learning opportunities for teachers to assist in developing pedagogical skills as part of the Digital Education Revolution. Focus on using the ICT Scope and Sequence across the KLAs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Performance in National Testing

National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) 2013
Students in Year 3 and Year 5 across Australia participated in National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in May 2013. The purpose of this test is to provide information to parents and teachers about the achievements of students in aspects of Literacy and aspects of Numeracy. The test provides a measure of the students’ 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. Band 2 is the minimum standard for Year 3 and band 4 is the minimum standard for Year 5. 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 below.

As stated on the NAPLAN Smart data website, the number of students in the school in both Year 3 and Year 5 is too small to draw any reliable analysis of the school’s performance. We identified pleasing growth from Year 3 to Year 5 in Writing, Spelling and Grammar and Punctuation. Reading continues to be an area for focussed improvement. Focus will be on pedagogy of maths including explicit teaching based on student needs as identified from NAPLAN as well as ongoing class assessments and use of the numeracy continuum to identify students for intervention. Participation in The National Partnerships low SES program in 2012/13 enabled the school to focus on improving the quality of teaching so as to improve the quality of learning at the school. The strategies employed are being continued by the teachers even as the program has ceased. The school is determined to maintain the focus on identifying student weakness and target teaching to gain growth. In 2014 the school will participate in the SAP program for Literacy and Numeracy improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAPLAN Program 2013 - Year 3</th>
<th>Percentage in Skill Band</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 6 and Above</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Merriwa</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Performance</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Merriwa</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Performance</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Merriwa</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Performance</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Merriwa</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Performance</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Performance</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Merriwa</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Performance</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAPLAN Program 2013 - Year 5</th>
<th>Percentage in Skill Band</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 8 and Above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Merriwa</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Merriwa</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Performance</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Merriwa</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Performance</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Merriwa</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Performance</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Merriwa</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Performance</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Josephs Primary School Merriwa</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Performance</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Cultural Achievements**

Music was a major highlight on the cultural agenda in 2013. Many students took the opportunity to learn an instrument at school, through the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music. The whole school was entertained later in the year by the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music percussion group which toured the Upper Hunter.

The School performance of “Joseph and the technicolour dream coat” was a great success with all students from grades K – 6 taking an acting role. All students’ performance skills improved greatly over the term.

The local community “Little Sprouts Day” was a great opportunity for the students to celebrate literacy.

Singing for the Senior Citizens and at the local Aged Care facility and Hospital was a great opportunity for the students to practice their singing skills and at the same time demonstrate their care for all members of the community. The students were also invited to sing the National Anthem as a school choir at the local Relay for Life event.
Sporting Achievements

St Joseph’s Primary School is extremely proud of the high participation in sport and the many sporting achievements gained by individual students and school teams in 2013. St Joseph’s students participated in swimming, cross country, athletics, netball and horse sports. A carnival was held for all these sports using our own or local council facilities. All students from Kindergarten-Year 6 were given the opportunity to excel at their age level. In addition, our students had opportunities to try out for places on Regional teams in a variety of sports. A team of St Joseph’s swimmers was selected to compete in the Regional and Diocesan Swimming carnivals. We also sent students to the Regional and Diocesan Athletics carnivals. A team of St Joseph’s runners competed at the Diocesan Cross Country in Lochinvar.

Participation in Horse Sport Events is an area which is growing rapidly at this school. In 2013, our team of riders competed at 3 carnivals with great success.

St Joseph’s Merriwa hosted the second annual St Joseph’s School Junior Campdraft. This was a great success and afforded our children the opportunity to compete and display their riding skills to the wider community.

One of our skilled horse riders has been selected as part of the team to compete nationally in his chosen horse sport.

Other Highlights for 2013

St Joseph’s school has dedicated significant resources to the sustainable provision of ICT. The teachers have undergone PD to ensure they are able to employ 21st century learning teaching tools to all learning areas.

The Positive Behaviour Framework is working well in most areas of the school. Readiness for learning has increased dramatically. Parent information sessions were held in Semester 1 and Semester 2. This has heightened parent awareness and participation in student learning and school initiatives. Parent/school partnership has been strengthened.

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>0</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) 0 (b) 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. (b) Of these which are New Scheme Teachers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Workforce composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Staff</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total teaching staff</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total non-teaching staff</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of teachers who are Indigenous</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professional Learning Undertaken

Members of staff have participated in the following Professional Learning opportunities:
**Classroom mentoring:** formal program throughout the year as part of National Partnerships.

**Religious Education:** Spirituality workshop.

**English:** Stephen Graham Workshop-Balanced Literacy Block, Focus on Reading training, New Curriculum – English x 2 workshops, Mini Lit training.

**Mathematics:** Achieving results in number and patterns and algebra - Anita Chin, Count me in Too training, Best Start training.


**General Curriculum** planning workshop, Scope and Sequencing the new curriculum workshop, Beginning Teachers workshop, How to motivate, manage and engage workshop, Child protection training.

**Assessing and Reporting:** Workshop, NAPLAN Data Assessment analysis.

**PD/H/PE:** First aid workshop, CPR training.

**Library:** Conference.

**WHS:** Training day.

**Leadership:** Covey Course, Building strong communities workshops, Mentoring/Classroom walkthrough workshop.

**Membership to Professional Associations:** ACEL, ASCP, S&T Association, Mathematics Assoc, Primary English Teachers Assoc, HSIE Teachers Assoc.

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

**Teacher Retention**
The teacher retention rate from 2012 to 2013 was 100%.

**Enrolments**

**Actual Enrolments 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholastic Year</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Attendance**
Percentage of student attendance by Year level and school average for 2013:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>School Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>92.81</td>
<td>96.54</td>
<td>95.41</td>
<td>93.88</td>
<td>95.92</td>
<td>90.01</td>
<td>93.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT 2013
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

The focus of the school’s attention during 2013 was to develop the capacity of the leadership and teaching in the school so that sustainable improvement in student performance especially in Literacy and Numeracy can be achieved. In order to do this there was specific attention to learning technologies, school – parent partnership, adoption of best practice performance management and staffing arrangements, to implement a Professional Development Plan to help teachers focus on best classroom practice in Literacy and Numeracy.

Achievement of School Priorities

There has been measured success in all the above areas. As with all improvement plans there is never an end point as improvement in practice is an ongoing goal. The school – parent partnership has been strengthened and we are able to work collaboratively to set new learning goals for the future.

Facilities

Each of the four classrooms and the library is equipped with air conditioning, an electronic interactive whiteboard, and a number of fixed computers. A mobile bank of laptop computers is shared by the four classrooms on a needs basis.

The library is very well stocked and offers a wonderful retreat for students at lunch time as well as weekly library lessons.

A beautiful enclosed outdoor learning area is used for assemblies, meetings and most importantly as an area to conduct daily fitness and gross-motor programs.

The canteen facility adjoins the outdoor learning area and is operated by the Parents and Friends Association and staffed by volunteer parents and grandparents.

The school grounds consist of a large playing field, a shaded play gym, as well as a shaded sandpit area, an outdoor chess area and handball courts. There is a paved assembly area.

A water harvesting system enables us to maintain lawns on which the children play and to support the growth of the many trees recently planted to provide shade for the children and to reduce erosion in the playing fields. The extensive gardens planted and maintained by the school community add an aesthetic dimension to the grounds.

The school generates energy through the use of solar panels.

School maintenance is determined in consultation with the CSO facilities team.

Community Satisfaction

St Joseph’s School is a harmonious environment. The students and staff are proud of their school and enjoy attending daily. The attendance record shows very little time out of school. Students and parents attend extracurricular school activities in good number, such as working bees, fund raisers, social events and representing the school at civic functions. The Parents and Friends Association is very well supported by parents in its efforts to assist the school. Staff rollover from 2012 – 2013 was 100%. This along with anecdotal feedback from staff indicates that the staff is very satisfied with the operation of the school. The school is held in very high esteem by the parent and local community. Enrolment numbers have been on a steady increase for several years.
Financial Information

The following graphs represent the income and expenditure for St Joseph's Primary School, Merriwa for the school year ending 31 January 2014 as aggregated from the annual returns to the Australian Government’s Department of Education, Science and Training.

Concluding Statement

2013 was a very rewarding year for the school community of St Joseph’s Merriwa. We have witnessed great learning among the students as well as the teachers. The contribution of the Federal Government through National Partnership funding has significantly improved the ability of the school to raise the Literacy standards of the students. The students are very well supported by their teachers, parents and members of the wider community. Thank you one and all.

Thank you to the staff from the Catholic Schools Office and the Parish Priest for the ongoing support of our efforts to provide quality education to our students.

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 may do so by accessing the school website at http://www.merriwa.catholic.edu.au/ or by contacting:

Mrs Helen Whale  
Principal  
St Joseph’s Primary School  
Marquet Street  
MERRIWA NSW 2329  
(02) 65482035

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