St Patrick's Catholic Primary School
Asquith

2013 Annual Report
1. **Message from Our School Community**

1.1 **Message from the Principal**

2013 was a very successful year in the history of St Patrick’s. Much has occurred and there has been a great deal to celebrate. Some of the highlights included our first ever Art and Community Expo, our iPad expansion and trial, building expansion of the staffroom, opening outdoor staff retreat area and establishment of the prayer garden. Enrolment demand continued to grow, and the school has now fully expanded to close to capacity.

In 2013 there was a consolidation of initiatives from the last few years and these have become embedded into the life and character of the school. Some of these included the work of our Mercy Action Group (MAG) students. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) has reflected sustained work in Numeracy, introduction of mobile devices into student learning, a focus on prayer and the introduction of KidsMatter to attend to student and staff wellbeing.

Our school is also undertaking a change of Principal at the end of 2013 – which will be my last as leader in this community. As Principal, I feel a genuine sense of pride and achievement as I leave this community. The continual and strong sense of mutual respect and partnership between staff, parents and students has been stronger than ever in 2013 – making this an ideal time to move on as Principal.

It is with great pride that I introduce the 2013 Annual Report to you – I hope it provides a snapshot of life at St Patrick’s – and gives some sense of the dynamic and supportive culture that characterises our community.

1.2 **Message from the Parent Body**

The Parents and Friends Association is an integral part of the St Patrick’s community. It aims to create an inclusive and vibrant parent community, providing opportunities for all parents to be involved in school life.

The P & F helped organise many social events throughout 2013, including the well-attended Green and Gold Ball and the Lawn Bowls and Dinner evening. Additionally, there were Mothers’ Day and Fathers’ Day Stalls, morning teas for Kindergarten Orientation and Grandparents’ Day; and the successful Welcome BBQ.

A Class Parent information session was held early in 2013, to clarify roles and expectations for the year ahead. This is an essential part of preparing parent helpers and is a particularly important process for new parents.

The P & F’s work involves an element of fundraising each year, which directly benefits students at the school. The inaugural St Patrick’s Art and Community Expo was a tremendous event held in October and really was a combined effort from parents and staff. It was wonderful to see the creative and artistic talents of the students on display.

Each year many members of the parent community provide much needed support and assistance to families in need within the school. This support is provided in the true spirit that forms the objectives of the P & F, under the name of Paddy’s Care Group.

The P & F looks forward to continuing their strong relationship with the staff and school community in 2014.

2013 Acting President of P&F
1.3 Message from the Student Body

2013 was a very successful year for students at St Patrick’s. There was a range of highlights and different experiences that students were privileged to enjoy. Some key highlights were our first ever Art Show which was a massive success. It included student and class works as well as a variety of workshops.

One of the highlights was the expansion of iPads in the school. Year 5 were fortunate enough to participate in a trial where each student received their own iPad, and there were many others also existing throughout the school. As part of this program, St Patrick’s hosted a professional learning day for teachers where numerous educators throughout Broken Bay visited us and saw our learning in action.

Students enjoyed their sports again this year - lunchtime soccer and netball competitions were a great chance for students to play sport and have fun. We also had lunchtime chess competitions which were very popular.

Overall 2013 has been a great and eventful year for St Patrick’s students.

2013 Captains and Vice Captains.
2. **School Profile**

2.1 **Student Profile**

The following information describes the student profile for 2013:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>LBOTE*</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>185</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>350</td>
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*Language background other than English

2.2 **Enrolment Policy**

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established an **Enrolment Policy**† which is implemented by all systemic schools in the Diocese.

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.

†Copies of this policy and other policies in this report may be obtained from the Catholic Schools Office website at: [http://www.csodbb.catholic.edu.au/about/index.html](http://www.csodbb.catholic.edu.au/about/index.html) or by contacting the Catholic Schools Office.

2.3 **Staff Profile**

The NSW government requires that this report detail the number of teachers in each of the following categories:

- a) have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines
- b) have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications
- c) do not have qualifications as described in (a) or (b) but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context. Such teachers must have been employed:
  - to 'teach' in NSW before 1 October 2004 (either on a permanent, casual or temporary basis), and
  - as a ‘teacher’ during the last five (5) years in a permanent, casual or temporary capacity.

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<tr>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
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Further information about the staff profile can be found in the School Facts section of the school’s profile page on the My School website.

2.4 **Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates**

The average teacher attendance rate during 2013 was 96%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

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

2.5 **Teacher Satisfaction**

In the early part of Term 3 all staff (teaching and non-teaching) underwent individual meetings with the Principal. During these meetings, staff members were given an opportunity to reflect on the school, its direction and their own professional growth during 2013. Feedback from staff indicated strong satisfaction with both the direction of the school and the opportunities provided for professional growth and development. Staff also valued opportunities for individual goal setting...
around their role and their professional learning. Staff members felt affirmed in that each person was known, respected and acknowledged for the individual gifts and contribution they made. Feedback included a sense of common purpose and collective energy which was promoted by the leadership of the school. The approach of two staff learning teams (Literacy & Numeracy) whereby all classroom and many specialist staff members were represented on one of these, enabled ownership and responsibility for these key aspects of student and staff learning. There was a sense of widespread ownership of decision making for all staff members with good support and consultation processes in place. This encouraged staff to contribute in a distributed leadership model for the school whereby all staff were given opportunities to lead – and in turn were led by others.

2.6 Student Attendance and Retention Rates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average student attendance rate (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>98</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
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The average student attendance rate for 2013 was 97%.

Management of non-attendance: In order for students to reach their full potential it is of paramount importance that they attend school regularly. While it is the parents’ legal responsibility under the Education Act 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. In doing so the school, under the leadership of the Principal:

- provides a caring environment which fosters in students, a sense of wellbeing and belonging;
- maintains accurate records of student attendance;
- implements policies and procedures to monitor student attendance and to address non-attendance issues as and when they arise;
- communicates to parents and students, the school’s expectations with regard to student attendance and the consequences of not meeting these expectations; and
- recognises and rewards excellent and improved student attendance.
School attendance records also contain information regarding student absences including reasons for absence and documentation to substantiate reasons for absences. Teachers are required to monitor non-attendance diligently on a student by student basis and to bring to the attention of the Principal immediately any unexplained absences, non-attendance of a chronic nature, or reasons for non-attendance that cause concern. Matters of concern are referred to the Principal, the Catholic Schools Office and the relevant Department of Education and Training Officer where appropriate.

Where a student is not able to attend school for a prolonged period of time due to a medical condition or illness, the school in collaboration with parents, provides resources to contribute to the student’s continuum of learning where possible.

The Catholic Schools Office monitors each school’s compliance with student attendance and management of non-attendance on an annual basis as a minimum, as part of the system’s School Review and Development processes.

2.7 Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction data was gathered through a variety of sources, among them individual conversations between students and members of the leadership team. Added to this data was dialogue in various grades across the school and with classroom teachers. Students expressed their satisfaction with the wide range of learning, cultural and social initiatives that exist in the school. Of particular note was lunchtime soccer and netball competitions held in Term 2. In addition to providing a level of fun and competition in lunchtimes, students had more opportunities to be physical and active – and the sense of team beyond individual year groups was appreciated.

Students also expressed excitement over their opportunities with iPad development across the school. Year 5 all received individual iPads in a 1 to 1 program and trial for the school. Year 6 were given ten to share and extra banks existed for classes to use – and this occurred frequently. Students enjoyed the opportunity to present their efforts at a well-attended parent evening on November 6 – and this was a great highlight for the students present.

The student voice was also sought and valued in the form of an online survey from Macquarie Marketing Group as St Patrick’s prepares for a School Review in 2014. Results from that survey will be available in time to inform that Review.
3. **Catholic Life and Mission**

3.1 **Catholic Heritage**

St Patrick’s Catholic Primary School was established by the Sisters of Mercy in 1958, and continues to model the Mercy values inspired by Catherine McAuley. In 2013 the founding charism of the Sisters of Mercy was strengthened through a number of significant initiatives.

The year began with new staff inducted in the Mercy charism through a half day Mercy orientation. This was led by an external facilitator engaged by the Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney. Through this induction process, new staff members became aware of the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy and were supported to take responsibility in understanding and contributing to the school’s unique identity.

The Mercy Action Group (MAG) students attended two forums with other North Sydney and Parramatta Mercy schools held in Ryde – and they used this experience to share their work in Computer Pals (an initiative to tutor local elderly in use of computers); The Dish (a local initiative to feed the homeless in Hornsby); fundraising for Caritas and our Soup Day which raised awareness and funds.

Connections were consolidated with the North Sydney Mercy Sisters through a Year Six visit to Monte Sant’ Angelo Mercy College. The children were immersed in the Mercy charism through a variety of activities which allowed them to understand the place of St Patrick’s school in the scheme of evangelisation and their specific role as students of St Patrick’s 2013. Most importantly the children broadened their understanding of the role of the Mercy Action Group with a number of ideas from the Monte students.

3.2 **Religious Life of the School**

In 2013 our Deacon continued weekly class visits to discuss units being taught in the classroom. Our Parish priests continued to interpret the Gospel for the children during school and class Masses and joined in the life of St Patrick’s. They were often present at major school and staff events such as special staff morning teas and luncheons, the Christmas concert and Art Show.

Liturgies and prayer life in 2013 continued to be integral for children and staff. There were numerous opportunities to connect and respond as a school and parish community. Each class from Year 3 to Year 6 had opportunities twice a year, in Terms 1 and 4 to attend the Second Rite of Reconciliation with their class. Students also had the chance to become Altar Servers and serve at class and parish Masses which included the celebration of special feast days. Students were supported in their participation of the sacraments, although parish-based, by classroom programs and teaching. Each grade from K-6 also led a Sunday Parish Mass with students and teachers leading the congregation, with parents organising a community morning tea afterwards. A special outdoor Mass was held by the entire community, along with the wider parish on November 24 as the community farewelled the Principal. This event also served to highlight the religious significance of leadership and the community at St Patrick’s.

All classrooms had sacred spaces with Catholic visual symbols including use of liturgical colours, scripture and connections with the current Religious Education modules taught. Classrooms experienced daily routines of prayer with all having the St Patrick’s School Prayer displayed near their class sacred space, and outside the main foyer of the school. During assemblies, host classes always commenced with a prayer and included the school song ‘The Faith that We Claim’. Monday morning assembly included the whole school reciting the St Patrick’s school prayer.
The bond with St Bernard’s at Berowra Heights, the other school in our parish, has continued in 2013. Additional opportunities to unite and celebrate were sought. The Year 6 children had an additional opportunity to mix with other children in the Diocese and celebrate Mass together at the Cluster Mass at Waitara. Other liturgies were also attended by students and/or staff and included Mission Week Mass, Southern Cross Outdoor Centre Camp Mass for Year 5 students and the Diocesan Schools Staff Mass in Term 1.

3.3 Catholic Worldview

In 2013 the school continued to support its involvement with ‘The Dish’. This was an outreach programme to provide for the homeless in the Hornsby area. The school community participated in five ‘Dish’ evenings over the course of the year. This included making and delivering the food, as well as providing compassion to those less fortunate in the community. ‘The Dish’ was a school community project with Mercy Action Group students, parents and staff involved in every aspect from shopping for ingredients, to cooking and then with parents serving the homeless on site.

2013 saw the continuation and growth of the Mercy Action Group (MAG). This once again included interested children from Years 4 to 6 and three staff members. The group aimed to reflect, become informed about issues of injustice, demonstrate genuine compassion and empathy for those who suffer injustice and take action that will lead to the eradication of the injustice. The children from MAG attended the Diocesan Mission Mass at Waitara as the student representatives there. MAG students led a ‘School Soup day’ to assist ‘The Dish’ raise funds for the van upgrade.

A staff team in Catholic Life and Mission (CaLM) was formed to assist in the leadership and co-ordination of the running of liturgies and social justice initiatives. This was chiefly in regard to the work of the MAG students but also looked at other aspects of school life including the selection of the ‘Spirit of Mercy’ annual award for a student in each class.

The school continued its involvement in Project Compassion and the Mercy Candela Appeal where all children learned about the importance of hygiene and adequate sanitation in third world countries and the difference a simple toilet and shower can make to a community.

In 2013, The Year 5 children from both parish schools (St Bernard’s and St Patrick’s) joined for a camp at Southern Cross Outdoor Education Centre to focus on leadership. This not only included their roles and responsibilities as leaders in their respective schools but also challenged students to be the best person they can be. Fr Biju joined the children to celebrate Mass during the evening, whereby a focus during the homily was on how the children could be the best leader they can be.

3.4 Professional Learning in Catholic Life and Mission

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established an Accreditation Policy for Staff in the Diocesan School System in respect to the Mission of the Church which is implemented by all systemic schools in the Diocese.

In 2013, professional learning for staff focused on prayer. This culminated in a staff retreat facilitated by Gail Gill from the Diocesan Curia on prayer life and its importance for those working in Catholic schools. Staff prayer developed into a more focused and explicitly Catholic experience – rather than a broad spiritual focus that seemed to have evolved over some years. In 2014 it is hoped that parent prayer will be a focus with the assistance of Virginia Ryan from Mission Services.

The staff consolidated its knowledge of its place as a school in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy. All new staff (teaching and non-teaching) attended an annual induction about the story of the Sisters of Mercy – and St Patrick’s link in that story. This was presented by Kate Anderson on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney.
The continuation of a staff team in Catholic Life and Mission (CaLM) also served to distribute leadership in Religious Education (RE) to a broader group of staff members – so that ultimately ownership and responsibility for Catholic Life and Mission was shared among all staff. Professional learning in the RE curriculum in 2013 was related to the planning cycle of Religious Education modules. Staff undertook to co-plan a number of modules for classroom lessons – and ensured the rigour of assessment driven instruction of all KLAS existed in RE lessons in the same way it does in other KLAS.
4. Pastoral Care

4.1 Diocesan Policies

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policies including Student Welfare and Anti-Bullying, which are implemented by all schools in the Diocese.

The implementation of these policies is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.

4.2 School Implementation of Diocesan Policy

In 2013 St Patrick’s embarked on the commencement of the ‘KidsMatter’ initiative. Although the program will be undertaken in full – and beyond 2013, the initial trigger for this is the high level of student anxiety that appears to exist. Although this is not in any way unique to St Patrick’s, the issue exists – and a systematic strategy is needed. ‘KidsMatter’ was launched to staff through a series of training sessions – and to parents at an information evening on June 4 which focused on student anxiety.

In 2014 the school will continue its work in ‘KidsMatter’, consolidating and furthering staff training, as well as community awareness. This will build on the work done in 2013 and earlier which has identified an ongoing need to build resilience in students – and support parents in undertaking this.

4.3 Pastoral Care of Families

2013 saw the continuation of "Paddy’s Care Group" to work with families in crisis in a sensitive, non-intrusive and discrete way that offered relevant and much needed assistance at the point of need. The number of families participating has increased from 2011 and families in crisis have been greatly supported in their time of most need. Staff members were also the recipients of pastoral support in 2013 and this allowed staff to support their families while maintaining high standards of learning within the classrooms.

The Principal on an individual and needs basis worked closely with families in need, to support their meeting of financial responsibilities in relation to school fees and other costs. Added to this was liaison with the Asquith chapter of St Vincent de Paul to assist families in financial crisis in a discreet and dignified manner. Whilst these issues were deeply personal and sensitive to all involved, each was afforded the opportunity to work closely with the school to ensure all students and their families were able to resolve difficulties as a result.

4.4 Resolving Issues

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established a Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese.

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.
4.5 Work Health and Safety

Each school is required to implement and comply with the Diocesan School System Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS). This system reflects the current statutory requirements for WHS and complies with the Australian Standard for WHS Management Systems. The WHSMS adopted by the CSO for Broken Bay Systemic Schools has been designed to address general health, safety and welfare matters and also to take account of specific issues that apply to school communities. The management system supports the provision of a ‘safe and supportive’ environment for all students as well as taking into account the health, safety and welfare of staff, visitors and contractors to the school site.

Principals, in consultation with the relevant CSO personnel, are responsible for monitoring the school’s compliance with WHS legislation and for the implementation of the management system in keeping with the Catholic Schools Office’s Annual WHS Plan. External WHS system audits are conducted across a sample of schools each year to validate the implementation of the management system.
5. Excellence in Teaching and Learning

5.1 Quality Teaching and Learning

In 2013, the school’s core business of learning and teaching continued to remain a central focus. Many earlier initiatives such as EMU (Extending Mathematical Understanding) were expanded from 2012, whilst others such as the school’s approach to Literacy were consolidated from the work in earlier years. A variety of special programs and initiatives was offered to students from Kindergarten to Year 6 at St Patrick’s, to foster quality learning for all children.

The undertaking in Numeracy during 2012 was expanded in 2013. The school’s participation in ‘Extending Mathematical Understanding’ was a specific goal of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). This was evidenced by the engagement of two staff members as ‘EMU Specialists’, to provide direct intervention for students at risk in Year 1. A pupil-free day was set aside in February for Mathematics Assessment interviews (1 to 1 assessments between students and teachers) to take place.

2013 saw a renewed focus on student assessment data gathering in both Literacy and Numeracy from a variety of sources, and the recording and triangulation of that data to inform learning for each and every student. This data was gathered through school-based assessments, entered into common spreadsheets that were specifically developed – then entered into school-based tracking programs – that also included student profiles being developed. Our Student Review Team featured cross-referencing of this data to student progress and informed future directions for students who were referred to that team. This focus has created a new layer of rigour in the systems and processes to inform student learning.

In terms of digital learning, 2013 saw the expansion of the work done in 2012 in mobile device learning (specifically iPads). A significant purchase of iPads took place and by mid Term 2, a 1 to 1 program existed in Year 5, which was complimented by the purchase of banks of iPads for Year 6 and further banks to be shared among all classes. This trial assisted in understanding whether 1 to 1 devices – or a bank of devices would best enhance student learning, and was conducted in partnership with Education Officers in Literacy and Numeracy from the Catholic Schools Office. This culminated in two significant events in the community – the first of which was a day for teachers in the Diocese of Broken Bay. Over eighty teachers from Broken Bay schools came on October 21 and saw students in action, and heard from teachers on the educational use of iPads. Feedback from this event was enormously positive and served to demonstrate the high esteem in which St Patrick’s is held by colleagues from other schools. The second event was a well-attended parent consultation evening whereby student learning with iPads was showcased, as well as consultation for future directions in iPads was canvassed.

Some Stage 2 students were invited to participate in a revamped GATEway (Gifted & Talented Enrichment) program, a joint venture between St Leo’s Catholic College, Wahroonga, and three other Catholic Primary Schools. This aimed at providing enrichment and extension in four different areas of curriculum. In 2013, those areas were Creative Arts (Dance); English (Writing); Science and a cross curriculum day on Robotics. A challenging and varied program was jointly developed, and presented by expert teachers in each of the participating schools.

In 2013 the school continued to conduct co-operative writing groups as part of a process to ensure students are able to work at their instructional writing needs in groups across the grade. NAPLAN results and other data showed that the co-operative writing group program in Stages 1 and 3 was achieving its goal of improving all children’s writing skills.
The Co-operative Writing team facilitating these groups consisted of the Learning Support Teacher, the ESL Teacher, Gifted Co-ordinator, Classroom Teachers and Teacher Assistants. The team worked co-operatively to analyse writing samples to group students with similar learning needs, plan teaching and learning activities appropriate to the different groups, and implement individualised writing programs on a weekly basis. The whole team worked with a grade in their classrooms at a set time each week, with each teacher facilitating the same group throughout the term. In Term 4, Stage 3 sessions were replaced with sessions in Stage 2.

Student Review Team Meetings remained a successful initiative throughout 2013. This team consists of the Learning Support Teacher, the Principal, the Gifted Education Co-ordinator, ESL Teacher, a Classroom Assistant and the classroom teachers (one grade meets with the team at a set time each week). The meeting allowed time to discuss students’ individual needs, and collaboratively share ideas using the expertise of the staff members involved, to help cater for the needs of the students more rigorously. This initiative fosters the understanding that the development of each child at St Patrick’s is a joint responsibility; and the continuation of Student Review Meetings in 2013 has allowed the team to consider the development and needs of individual children over the length of their time at St Patrick’s, rather than just year by year.

### 5.2 Student Achievement

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. Analysis of these results assists school planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs.

Several points should be noted:

- **In Year 3**, students placed in Band 1 are achieving below the national minimum standard. Students in Band 2 are achieving at the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 3 – 6 are performing at a standard deemed to be above the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 5 and 6 are “at proficiency”.

- **In Year 5** students in Band 3 are achieving below the national minimum standard. Students in Band 4 are achieving at the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 5 – 8 are performing above the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 7 and 8 are “at proficiency”.

- Students who were exempted from any test were deemed not to have met the national minimum standard in that test area and are not included in band distributions.

- State data for band distributions is sourced from the School Measurement and Reporting Toolkit (SMART2), developed by NSW Department of Education and Training. All national data and state figures for the percentage at or above national minimum are sourced from the NAPLAN Summary Report (Preliminary Results for Achievement) published by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). All school data is sourced from SMART2. Because figures are rounded and exempted students are not included in Band distributions, percentages may not add up to 100.

- In the 2013 cohort, there were (46) students in Year 3 and (48) students in Year 5.

Detail on school performance is provided in the following tables. Band distributions and percentages of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard are shown separately for Years 3 and 5. Additional information can also be accessed from the My School website (http://www.myschool.edu.au/).
An analysis of Band achievement for Year 3 students shows that in the areas of Reading and Writing, 98% of students were at or above national minimum standard. 75% were in the top two Bands for Reading and 95% were in the top two Bands of Writing deeming them proficient. This continues to affirm the early Literacy programs across Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2. 76.5% of students were in the top two Bands for Spelling whilst 79.1% were in the top two Bands for Grammar and Punctuation. Numeracy has 52.3% of students in the top two Bands.

For Year 5 students in the areas of Reading, Writing and Spelling, 98% of students were at or above national minimum standard. 98% were in the top two Bands for Reading and 98% were in the top two Bands of deeming them proficient. In Spelling 87.2% of students were in the top three Bands, whilst 83% were in the top three Bands in Grammar and Punctuation. 78.7% of students were in the top three Bands in Numeracy.

The school has undertaken Professional Learning around Numeracy to assist conceptual understanding for all students. This work and the data from Mathematical Assessment Interviews doesn’t appear to triangulate neatly with NAPLAN results in 2013.
5.3 Extra Curricula Activities

St Patrick’s students actively engaged in a wide variety of extracurricular activities in 2013. The school continually sought to cater for the students’ development as a whole person, by providing them with opportunities to accommodate and nurture their individual talents and interests, whilst also encouraging them to explore a diversity of experiences:

**Japanese:**

In 2013 St Patrick’s was successful in securing funding from the Catholic Schools Office for the teaching of languages, for which the school undertook Japanese. This was combined with a small amount of funding from the school and enabled the students to continue Japanese lessons from 2010-12. The Japanese teacher taught each class for a 30 minute lesson each week over two terms, helping the students to develop an appreciation of the culture of Japan and teaching them a variety of phrases and greetings, building on their knowledge from 2012 lessons. The funding enabled blogging between a sister school in Japan, as well as a Skype video conference between Year 6 students here and students in Japan which was very successful.

**School Bands and Instrumental Lessons:**

In 2013 the Band was open to students from Years 2-6 with three levels – ‘Training’, ‘Intermediate’ and ‘Senior’. Most members of the School Bands were divided into small ensemble groups to learn various instruments. The groups learnt their instrument before coming together for their respective Band. The Bands performed at whole school gatherings, Anzac Day liturgies, special occasions such as Grandparents’ Day, combined concert with St Bernard’s and the end of year concert.

**Sport:**

In 2013 Sport continued to play an important part in the life at St Patrick’s. One of the highlights was the lunchtime soccer and netball competitions in Term 2. Students in Years 2-6 had the opportunity to play for a team in an internal competition at Mills Park, or at school in netball once a week at lunchtimes with a special Grand Final day at the end of term.

The school sought to provide children in Years 3 to 6 with the opportunity to be involved in many gala days over the course of the year. Some required trials due to a limited number of children being able to attend, whereas others were open to all children to attend. Sports offered at St Patrick’s in 2013 were: Netball, Soccer, AFL, Cross Country and Rugby Union. One of the school’s students attained representation for Polding in swimming. Several students achieved representation for Broken Bay in various sports. The school’s annual swimming carnival took place in Term 1 at the facilities at Abbotsleigh.

Additionally, Years 2-6 students were given the opportunity to walk to and from the local park (Mills Park) twice a week at lunchtimes to take advantage of less structured sport on the oval. Mills Park is also well utilised by Stages 2 and 3 for Sport lessons throughout the year.

**DIY Workshops:**

In line with staff beliefs that all students can learn and support others in their learning, DIY Workshops were presented in the ‘CLiC’ each Friday during lunch throughout 2013. They were planned and presented by interested students and topics were varied.
5.4 Professional Learning

The Professional Learning Advisory Team (PLAT) consolidated in 2013 as a core group that facilitated and managed the professional learning agenda for all staff. This team consisted of the School Principal, Assistant Principal, Learning Support and ESL teachers and the 3 Co-ordinators. This team met fortnightly before school, and brought together its collective experience and expertise to plan and cater for the professional learning needs of staff, guided by the 2013 School Improvement Plan (SIP).

During 2013, Numeracy and Literacy were again the significant structure for staff professional learning. Staff members were divided into two learning teams – Literacy and Numeracy – with the Principal on the Literacy team, and the Assistant Principal on the Numeracy Team. Each grade was represented on each team. Several staff professional learning meetings were allocated to conduct team meetings throughout the year. The Literacy team agenda for the year was to consolidate strategies promoted in “Leading Learning in Literacy” (Broken Bay) and learning around the NSW Board of Studies English Syllabus (reflecting the Australian Curriculum) for 2014. In Numeracy the agenda was to consolidate work begun in the EMU (Extending Mathematical Understanding) project in 2013, as well as undertake preparations for the introduction of the NSW Board of Studies Mathematics Syllabus (reflecting the Australian Curriculum) for 2014.

Various staff meetings, cluster Staff Development Day and staff retreat were among the foci for staff professional learning in 2013. Work was also carried out on developing a Scope & Sequence for Maths and English across K-6 which reflects the priorities of the new Syllabus documents, which will be trialled in 2014. Staff also undertook training in Best Start.

Staff Development Days in 2013 included:

Term 1: Beginning of School Year focus
Term 2: Cluster Staff Development Day new Syllabus for Mathematics and English
Term 2: Staff Retreat on prayer
Term 4: Two Staff development days – one on ‘Kids Matter’ and one on grade planning for 2014.
6. Strategic Initiatives

6.1 2013 Priorities and Achievements

The 2013 Priorities and Achievements formed the basis of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) for the year. There were three areas identified, (Catholic Life & Mission, Pastoral Care and Teaching & Learning). From each a number of tangible achievements followed.

In Catholic Life & Mission the school sought to "support students’ personal relationship with Jesus through prayer". This was successful at a staff level with some success achieved at student level. For staff, prayer each week became more focused on the Catholic identity and focus, rather than simple and broad spiritual presentations that had featured previously. The work in this area was highlighted by a staff retreat at the end of Term 2 in which Gail Gill from the Diocesan Curia presented theories and experiences of Catholic prayer.

In Pastoral Care the school sought to "develop a framework to address and manage student resilience". The school began work introducing staff and parents to the 'KidsMatter' framework, with a particular focus on anxiety and resilience in students. A well-attended parent workshop took place on June 4 with student anxiety as the focus. Staff underwent a series of training sessions and staff development to become orientated towards the 'KidsMatter' program – and this will continue in 2014. The annual focus on anti-bullying in Term 3 was again an important aspect of student well-being and this proactive strategy was well received by students and parents alike.

In Teaching & Learning the school set the goal "to improve student conceptual understanding of number, specifically place value". This was a consolidation of the work undertaken in Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU) in 2012 towards it being embedded in 2013. The school had two EMU Specialist Teachers in action to assist in the intervention for Year 1 students at risk and this was seen as very successful. Developed by Dr Ann Gervasoni of Australian Catholic University, Ballarat, the program involved staff, students and parents at different levels engaging in conceptual understanding in Mathematics. This was well received and it is anticipated it will be consolidated in 2014.

Also in Teaching and Learning, the school sought “To prioritise and build on a dynamic & collaborative contemporary learning community”. The work undertaken in iPads for student learning, including a partnership with the Catholic Schools Office’s Literacy and Numeracy consultants gave life to this priority. The 1 to 1 program of iPads in Year 5, along with associated teacher professional learning and support enabled student gains to be recorded and presented to other staff in Broken Bay schools (October 21) and to parents (November 6).
6.2 2014 Priorities and Challenges

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2014 identifies three main areas Catholic Life & Mission, Pastoral Care and Teaching & Learning.

In Catholic Life & Mission the goal is to support students’ personal relationship with Jesus through prayer. This will entail working with parents through Virginia Ryan (CSO) in their understanding and use of prayer. It is hoped that by working with both parents and the work undertaken by staff in 2013 will enhance the experience of prayer for students, for which the community firstly exists.

In Learning and Teaching the goal is to consolidate understandings of pedagogy to apply to Australian Curriculum in Mathematics and English. This is a consolidation of the work undertaken in 2013 and prioritises pedagogical understandings in Numeracy and Literacy to the context of the newly formed Australian Curriculum (NSW Board of Studies syllabus documents).

Also in Learning and Teaching the goal is to develop mobile learning devices in the school to modify and redefine student learning.

In Pastoral Care the goal is to develop a framework to address and manage student resilience. The school will further explore the ‘KidsMatter’ framework and adopt the principles of this mental health program.

Although these are the three focus areas under the 2014 School Improvement Plan (SIP), the smooth running of the school where learning is prioritised by students, staff and parents will remain a priority within our Catholic Church context.
7. Parent Participation

7.1 Introduction

A feature of great pride for the St Patrick’s community in 2013 was the continued involvement of parents. This occurred on a number of levels with the Parents and Friends Association the official and overarching body representing parents over the year. The P&F worked closely with the school in the major fundraiser – which was the inaugural Art and Community Expo, which was truly a community event of some note. This was enormously successful with many parents heavily involved from the beginning of the year- along with staff in a collaborative community event.

Parents continued to have an active and welcome presence in the school and classrooms in 2013. Staff conducted a classroom helper training workshop in February and a large number of parents assisted in the Kinder, Year 1 and Year 2 classrooms in the first hour of each morning. Not only did this support the work of the teacher in Literacy time, it added to the welcoming presence of parents in the community.

Parents were also involved in social and community events., Fathers’ Literacy Week, Grandparents’ Day, Fathers’ Day ‘Feed, Read & Speed’ and ‘Mothers’ Maths & Memories Day’.

The successful and well received parent education sessions prior to P&F meetings continued to be offered by the school in 2012. These workshops were: I-Pads (Term 1); Australian Curriculum and an iPad evening on November 6 which was hugely attended by parents.

Parents were also engaged strongly through the thorough and regular weekly newsletters. Usually these contained a Principal editorial for parents either in faith formation, or with a curriculum – Teaching/Learning focus. Aspects of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) were often explained and detailed through this medium.

The school further engaged parents by regularly offering meetings between parents and teachers. In the third week of the year Parent-Sharing Interviews were held whereby parents reported to teachers on their hopes, goals and the needs of their child. These were followed up in Term 2 with scheduled report interviews. Several other needs-based meetings occurred between parents and staff including Individual Program (IP) meetings for students with specific learning and behavioural needs.

The school worked closely with the P&F to ensure a strong and vibrant ‘Class Parent’ network existed. In Term 1 information sessions for all Class Parents were held, and this served to define the role and responsibilities of this important arm of the parent body. This network assisted the school welcome new families and farewell leaving families, provide social opportunities for parents as a grade group and acknowledged teachers in their life milestones.

The Welcoming Committee was another parent team – which worked closely with the Principal to ensure a spirit of hospitality and welcome existed at special community events. These included the P&F Welcome Barbeque, Sausage Sizzle prior to the end of year concert, Grandparents’ Day and Kinder orientations.

Parent volunteers also supported the tuckshop and uniform shop which was both a practical service to families – and a way to continue and promote involvement and decision making by parents for the good of the students.

Added to these were the sense of welcome and support for parents at a range of school and class events. These included class Masses and Liturgies, numerous community events such as Book Week, Easter Hat Parade, Art & Community Expo and social occasions such as the ‘Green and Gold Ball’ where staff were well represented.

A more detailed list of how parents were involved at St Patrick’s is available on the school’s website at http://www.stpat.nsw.edu.au
7.2 Parent Satisfaction

In 2013 the parents at St Patrick’s continued to indicate a high level of satisfaction. The school’s website continues to be well received by the parent body and many communicate that they feel more connected to their child’s classroom and the school in general, with the regular updates that the school staff work hard to maintain.

Feedback from parents has occurred from a number of sources. This includes formal evaluation tools in some grades such as the evaluation survey from the iPad information evening on November 6, parent feedback in Parent-Sharing Interviews and enrolment interviews. Further to this, anecdotal comments abound from a number of parents relaying satisfaction with such aspects as the level of communication, approachability of staff and the Principal, quality of the learning environment and some noted the sense of community which was tangible and real to many.

Among the aspects parents are most satisfied with, the quality of teachers at St Patrick’s rates highly. Parents also feel welcomed and well received by classroom teachers, especially by their inclusion as classroom assistants in the K-2 Literacy block. Parents have relayed strong support of the Principal’s “hands on” style, including his welcoming presence in the playground – and strongly affirm his knowledge of each student – both as a learner and as a person.

Strong feedback was also received, particularly by new parents to the school about the strong sense of community at St Patrick’s. It was recognised that each child and family was known, respected and recognised for their own unique contribution and place within the community.

Consistent with Board of Studies requirements, financial income and expenditure for this school is shown in the graphs below. More detailed financial data is available on the "myschool" website at http://www.myschool.edu.au. Diocesan system financial reporting can be found in the Diocesan school system Annual Report, which will be available at http://www.csodbb.catholic.edu.au

The contents of this annual report have been validated by the School’s consultant, Diann Hynes.