



Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn
CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

HOLY SPIRIT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Nicholls, ACT

2009 SCHOOL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Welcome to our School

Welcome to Holy Spirit School, Nicholls. We are a Kindergarten to Year 6 school with three classes at each level. We, together with Good Shepherd School and Mother Teresa School in 2010 form part of the Holy Spirit parish in Gungahlin. We are also in the unique position of sharing a campus with Gold Creek School. The two schools are committed to incorporating values of belong, sharing, friendship, tolerance and unity into their partnership. We celebrate together events such as ANZAC Day, the Arts Fiesta, Children's Week and Remembrance Day.

Our Whole School Focus provides an opportunity to explicitly teach children the importance of living a life based on Christian values. Staff share prayer each morning and all classes begin the day with prayer and reflection. Our Sacramental programs for Reconciliation (Year 2), Eucharist (Year 3) and Confirmation (Year 6) allow the children to further develop their relationship with God and each other.

We are proud of the way the ACT curriculum "Every Chance to Learn" has been implemented across the school. With a strong belief in integration, a scope and sequence of essential learning in all areas has been achieved to ensure continuity and success for all students. Our focus on Literacy and Numeracy was evident in our NAPLAN results this year. Our teachers are currently using the Quality Teaching Framework to ensure their teaching is highly proficient and effective.

Our students are offered opportunities to learn Japanese and many also belong to our Japanese club. Many of our students are members of our Choir and they have participated in the Canberra Eisteddfod. Our Rock and Water program aims to assist students to develop self-confidence, self-control and self-respect. Although it is taught specifically in the higher grades, some elements are taught through our Whole School Focus to all students. Robotics is a popular extracurricular activity and this year a large group of our students participated in the Robocup.

We have many programs that assist our students to develop themselves as learners in an exciting and innovative environment !

Highlights of the Year

2009 has been a year of highlights for all members of the Holy Spirit community. Without doubt, the refurbishment program for the school has provided all staff and children with better equipped classrooms and outdoor spaces. Most of the classrooms have now been fully refurbished with the much need additions of evaporative cooling systems and interactive whiteboards. The school now boasts a 'passive space', complete with well-maintained artificial grass and shaded seating areas. This space has allowed classes to move outside and experience learning in a new and exciting environmental area.

Our Year 3 Eucharist and Year 6 Confirmation Sacramental programs were well attended and supported by many members of our community. This was an especially important time for the children who were receiving the Sacraments. The children were reverent and thoughtful at this time and gained a greater insight into the importance of the Sacraments of the Catholic Church.

New sporting equipment was purchased in 2009 with grant money received from the ACT Government. The resources purchased by the school are available to children from Kindergarten through to Year 6. It features activities that promote agility and gross motor skills, golf equipment, a hockey set and this equipment will be featured in a 'Sports in Action' day at the school in early 2010.

The gardening club at the school continues to develop children's knowledge about the growing of vegetables and the value of compost! This environmental project has made a huge impact on the learning experiences for children and is one Holy Spirit School will continue into 2010.

Our annual Christmas Fair was held in conjunction with Good Shepherd School and Holy Spirit Parish and was a great success. It provides much needed funds for our many important programs in the school.

Principal's Report

We have had a very successful year in 2009. There have been initiatives introduced that have proved to be beneficial for all our students.

Our school focus was titled "Growing me from the Inside out." In Term 1 the students learned that we are all made in God's image and likeness and explored their special qualities, learning that who we are on the inside is more important than what we look like on the outside. During the rest of the year students looked at their own strengths and recognised those seen in others. The benefits of having a positive attitude and celebrating who we are led on to how we can all make a positive contribution to our community by sharing our time and helping each other.

Student leadership in the life of the school was facilitated through our Year 6 Leadership program. The aim of the program is to increase students' self-esteem and develop skills of effective group membership. Students had the opportunity to participate in two mentoring programs, Seasons for Growth and Connecting Kids.

Holy Spirit School is an integral part of the parish of Holy Spirit Gungahlin and together with our companion school, Good Shepherd in Amaroo, participated in many parish initiatives.

In 2009 three classroom blocks were refurbished and the rest of the classrooms are currently undergoing renovations thanks to the Federal Government "Building the Education Revolution" funding. It is anticipated that all building works will be finished during 2010.

The parents raised funds to purchase Interactive Whiteboards for all classrooms and all teachers have undergone professional development so they can utilize them well in their teaching. There have been many initiatives undertaken in 2009 which have been highlighted in other parts of this report.

We are proud of our joint campus and continue to work with Gold Creek school in many initiatives so that the students at both schools benefit from this unique collaboration in Canberra.

School Community Report

2009 has been an extremely busy year for the Holy Spirit community. Our year 6 students began the year by sharing a day of leadership opportunities and expectations with the Rising Generations team. This enabled them to share many leadership challenges throughout the year. The Year 6 Leadership Program at Holy Spirit is now embedded into all areas of our curriculum.

All children at Holy Spirit School have been involved in many activities during the year. There have been two whole school performances from indigenous artists and the Alpha Theatre Company, as well as performers from Asia.

Students from Year 3 to Year 6 were given the opportunity to see the Canberra Symphony Orchestra in concert to promote our solid commitment to exposing children to all areas of the Arts. The school Choir performed at the Australian National Eisteddfod and was also asked to perform at the ACT Chief Minister's Literacy and Numeracy Awards for 2009.

Children were able to participate in many organised sporting activities including football, gymnastics, AusTag, ACT and school representative sport as well as athletics, swimming and netball carnivals.

Holy Spirit School works in partnership with Gold Creek School to create cross-campus activities that promote community building. Some of those experienced this year were ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, and a Father's Day Breakfast. Others included our traditional Market Day stalls in Children's Week, a chance to become a fictional character in Book Week and a joint healthy morning tea to celebrate Healthy Bones Week. Our biggest collaboration in 2009 was the combined campus Arts Fiesta which featured artwork from every child across the joint campus.

2009 was also an important year for the school as we continued our refurbishment program. By the end of 2009, the majority of classrooms will have been refurbished with airconditioning, new wet areas and electronic whiteboards. The School community plans to continue to support the above-mentioned ventures and others planned for 2010.

Student Achievement

The following tables show the school's results in the national testing of literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN) in 2009.

School and National Mean Scale Scores

YEAR 3	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
National	411	414	405	420	394
School	439	448	436	460	430

YEAR 5	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
National	494	485	487	500	487
School	537	490	501	541	532

The above tables show that all Year 3 and Year 5 students at Holy Spirit School exceeded the National Mean Scores in all areas of Literacy and Numeracy.

Proportion of students at or above the National Minimum Standard

YEAR 3	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
National	94%	96%	92%	93%	94%
School	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%

YEAR 5	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
National	92%	93%	92%	92%	94%
School	100%	98%	100%	100%	100%

The above tables show a very high proportion of students in Year 3 and Year 5 at Holy Spirit School are above the National Minimum Standard in all areas of Literacy and Numeracy.

Proportion of students in each Achievement Band

YEAR 3	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
Band 6	28%	35%	24%	31%	22%
Band 5	28%	28%	36%	40%	32%
Band 4	28%	25%	24%	16%	27%
Band 3	12%	10%	11%	8%	13%
Band 2	3%	1%	4%	4%	5%
Band 1	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

YEAR 5	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
Band 8	20%	4%	7%	11%	13%
Band 7	36%	17%	19%	38%	24%
Band 6	24%	44%	37%	37%	40%
Band 5	15%	25%	20%	10%	18%
Band 4	5%	7%	17%	4%	6%
Band 3	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%

The above tables show extremely pleasing results:

Most Year 3 students achieved results in the upper achievement bands 4, 5 and 6.

Most Year 5 students achieved results in the upper achievement bands 6, 7 and 8.

Student Wellbeing and Engagement

We at Holy Spirit School encourage all our students to succeed in all areas of school life. Through our whole school focus we develop "child-friendly" language that enables the students to talk about values and share their gifts and strengths with others.

Our Behaviour Management Agreed Practice focuses on positive behaviour. As a staff we encourage and expect that students and teachers will treat each other with care and respect, that students will follow teachers' directions, that manners will be displayed and, finally, that students will take responsibility for their behaviour. Each class develops their class rights and responsibilities and these are displayed in the classroom throughout the year. These expectations have ensured that everyone at school is clear about expectations we have at Holy Spirit School.

The 'Seasons for Growth' program is run during each year and is designed to help children deal with grief in their lives and is led by trained facilitators. Our 'Rock and Water' program aims to assist students to develop self-confidence, self-control and self-respect. Although it is taught specifically in the higher grades some elements are taught through our Whole School Focus to all students.

Our Leadership program includes a "buddy" system in which each Year 6 student is paired with a Kindergarten child. Throughout the year the Year 6 students work with their buddies, helping them with literacy activities, art and sport. In this way a relationship is developed and the younger students know they can find their "buddy" who will help them. Every other class has a buddy grade and in this way children get to know others throughout the school.

In 2009 our student population was made up of two hundred and sixty-one girls and two hundred and ninety-five boys. We have eight Indigenous students and fifteen students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The wellbeing of our students is of paramount importance to everyone at Holy Spirit School. The staff strive to give each child every opportunity to experience an excellent education.

Priorities and Targets

In 2009 our improvement plans were in the development of teachers as learners, refurbishment of buildings, development of a passive space for children and community and providing opportunities for student growth. Those additional learning opportunities included 'Rock and Water', Choir, Dance, Robotics and 'Tournament of Minds'. Curriculum development focused on Mathematics with the mapping of teaching and learning across the school in line with the new ACT Curriculum, the application of the Quality Teaching Framework and the alignment of Mathematics with the school's new curriculum organizers.

In 2010 our improvement plans include curriculum development in English, consolidation of the work done in 2008 and 2009 in all curriculum areas, the continued application of the Quality Teaching Framework and the exploration and development of quality assessment procedures and opportunities across the school. The school, with the support of the P&F, will continue to resource all key learning areas and continue to support teachers as learners through professional development opportunities and shared learning as a staff. Parent/teacher partnerships are key to children's success and in 2010 the school will renew these partnerships by exploring parent needs and providing parent learning opportunities. Communication and links between school and home will be strengthened through continued development of MyClasses and the school web page.

Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy plans for 2010

The school's literacy goal for 2010 is to create and implement an English Scope and Sequence across all strands and create an Agreed Practice for the school

An English team will lead this process by creating a series of action plans that will involve the whole staff, Professional development will guide our decision making process. We will purchase resources to support the teaching of Literacy across the school. We will spend some time developing a specific Literacy program format that will include assessment and a Quality Teaching Framework focus.

Numeracy plans for 2010

The school's numeracy goal for 2010 is to complete and implement the Mathematics Scope and Sequence and Agreed Practice across the school.

This will happen through professional development, resourcing, developing a specific Mathematics program format, an assessment schedule and numeracy blocks across the school and the application of Quality Teaching Framework in the teaching and learning cycle.

School Contact Information

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