

## ANNUAL SCHOOL COMMUNITY REPORT



St Brigid's  
LORD TEACH US

Year	2014
School Name	St Brigid's Catholic School
School Type	K-6
Suburb/Town	Wynyard
Address:	40 Jackson Street
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Website:	www.sbw.tas.edu.au
Co-Principals:	Mrs Elaine Barrenger & Mrs Annette McCulloch

## SCHOOL PROFILE

St Brigid's Catholic School is a co-educational primary school situated in the heart of the North West coastal town of Wynyard. The core purpose of our school is to provide a quality Catholic education for all students in a safe, secure and caring community, which actively models Gospel values.

St Brigid's Catholic School caters for students from Kindergarten to Grade Six. In 2014 there was a school population of 179 students.

Our school is a focal point for the community and it serves and has a long history of active parent and community involvement. St Brigid's was opened by sisters from the religious order, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in 1923. We acknowledge and endeavour to carry on the charism of our founding order and strive to live out their mission – to imitate Christ, so everyone we encounter sees His love and compassion through us. Our school motto is 'Lord Teach Us' and we are proud to be named after St Brigid, an Irish saint remembered for her care and kindness and who was renowned for her generosity to the poor people in Ireland.

St Brigid's Catholic Church and Presbytery are both heritage listed and are well-known landmarks in Wynyard. St Brigid's is part of the Burnie/Wynyard Catholic Parish. Father John Girdauskas was Parish Priest of the Burnie/Wynyard Parish.

At St Brigid's, we strive for academic excellence in an atmosphere where Gospel values are modelled and encouraged, and the doctrines and traditions of the Catholic Faith are taught and fostered. We endeavour to encourage a sense of inclusive community, a family-like place, where children, teachers and parents work in partnership and pursue common hopes and dreams.

## FACILITIES

Our facilities were upgraded with BER and National School Pride Funding between 2009-11. The construction of a new Library and administration area commenced on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2009 and this was completed, as well as the school entrance and façade on Jackson Street, in 2011. Our Netball-Basketball Court was covered during 2010 to enable us to use it for Physical Education Lessons in winter and wet weather. It also provides an outdoor learning area for classes in the warmer months. Late in 2011 we completed the refurbishment of the Early Childhood classrooms, incorporating an indoor/outdoor learning area and a new student toilet facility. These areas were officially opened in April 2012. In October, 2013 refurbishment of two more classrooms commenced. This development will complete the Early Childhood Education classroom areas. The Parish Hall was purchased as a Multi-purpose area for school Assemblies, Performances and larger gatherings in October 2013. Work was undertaken early in 2014 to connect the Hall to the school by a new path-way and also to provide internet access to the Hall to enable it to be used as another Learning Area and allowing it to be used for multiple purposes.

## GOVERNANCE

The St Brigid's Catholic School Advisory Board assists the Co-Principals in the management of the school. Included in the stewardship that the Board exercises, is the responsible supervision of school resources. The Board shares responsibility for the

overall wellbeing of the school. The St Brigid's Catholic School Advisory Board co-operates with, and supports the Co-Principals, in maintaining the School as an institute of Catholic Education and, contributes to the planning and management of maintenance and building programs. The Board plays a major role in assisting, where possible, on matters regarded as major initiatives and changes to the school, participates in the development, implementation and evaluation of the School Improvement Plan and Master-Plan.

The St Brigid's Catholic School Advisory Board consists of elected members of the school and local community with the Parish Priest, Fr John Girdauskas and the school Co-Principals, Mrs Elaine Barrenger and Mrs Annette McCulloch, as ex-officio members.

In the 2014 academic year the Board Executive was:

Chair Mrs Renice Billows

Vice Chair Mrs Paula Cornish

Secretary Mrs Bronwyn Folden

Treasurer Mrs Alison Stevens

Other Board Members - Mrs Kellie Anderson, Mr Adrian Dixon and Mr Craig Dwyer.

The St Brigid's Catholic School Board met monthly on a weeknight at 6:00pm in 2014.

## OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY

Our school offers a curriculum that is differentiated, relevant, challenging and interesting - engaging all students in reflection, risk taking, problem solving, decision-making and creative thinking. We place particular emphasis on our morning Literacy and Numeracy blocks, inquiry based units in various curriculum areas, balanced with a commitment to personal development and growth. Through our PBS (School-wide Positive Behaviour Support) Program we explicitly teach social skills in areas that are identified with students. Great importance is placed on caring for our students, staff and parents by-

- striving to be a welcoming Christ-centred community, where every person feels welcome and valued
- extending students to their individual potential by encouraging, recognising and rewarding both effort and achievement
- developing in students, Christian qualities and values such as respect, cooperation, responsibility, active communication, independence and creativity
- preparing students for their next stage of learning by building on their strengths and experiences
- providing a rich learning environment where students are exposed to current learning technologies
- providing quality, varied and ongoing professional development opportunities for staff, with special focus on implementing the Australian Curriculum
- supporting students through the school-wide program – Positive Behaviour Support which explicitly teaches social skills and sets students up to succeed
- providing frequent opportunities for parents, the primary educators of their children, to discuss their child's progress and development of their social skills with teachers
- facilitating effective communication to foster a strong partnership between the school and parish
- providing equal opportunity for all members of the school community
- fostering an awareness of our responsibility to care for our environment.

St Brigid's is a community of life-long learners and all its members are part of the learning process. We value the contribution of all learners and strive to develop those habits of mind, values, attitudes and practices, which equip our students to deal with the demands of a world that is rapidly changing. We work collaboratively to provide programs that foster intellectual curiosity and empower children to think and act independently. We make a continual effort to keep up with the rapid changes in Information and Communication Technology by incorporating digital technology throughout all areas of the curriculum.

Throughout 2014 we continued to embed School-wide Positive Behaviour Support throughout the school, building on the foundations created in 2011,2012 and 2013. Our school has three school values:

- We are Learners
- We are Respectful
- We are Safe

School-wide Positive Behaviour Support rewards the child positively for making correct choices and specific behaviours are identified and explicitly taught. This ensures that each student is aware of behavioural expectations for various situations.

Throughout 2014 our main focus was on improving our teaching pedagogy and Formative Assessment as the focus of teacher professional learning. Formative Assessment will be a two-year focus in Professional Learning. In 2014 the focus was specifically on developing Learning Intentions and applying these in the classroom to improve student learning.

Throughout 2014 we also continued to focus on improving our students spelling as this area had been identified as an area we needed to focus on improving. We developed our Focused Spelling Groups Program with students in Grades 2-6 participating in multi-age spelling groups that focused on the area of need. In order to monitor that students were in their appropriate groups we continue to do ongoing testing and evaluation of results. Students in their groups were then taught explicitly the sounds, generalisations, prefixes or endings they needed to learn.

Our 2014 NAPLAN (National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy) reflected 96% of our Year Five students were at or above the National Minimum Standard in Reading and Writing. In Numeracy 100% of students in Grade Five were at or above the National Minimum Standard. The data relating to Grammar and Punctuation saw 96% of our students at or above National Minimum Standard. St Brigid's had 87% of students at or above the National Minimum Standard in Spelling. Compared with the same cohort of students two years prior, 45% and 32% of students, respectively, presented high relative gain in persuasive writing and spelling.

Data for Year Three NAPLAN 2014 indicated St Brigid's had 95% of students above National Minimum Standard in Reading and Writing. Further data indicated we had 100% of students above National Minimum Standard in Spelling and 95% in Grammar and Punctuation. Results in Numeracy show 95% of students at or above National Minimum Standard. We have identified areas on which we will focus to enable us to draw closer to 100% of students at or above National Minimum Standards in all areas. During 2015 we will continue to focus on improving teacher practice to promote improvements in learning and outcomes across all curriculum areas.

In order to continue our commitment to providing a quality education for all students at St Brigid's Catholic School, we will continue to place particular emphasis on the following priorities in 2015:

- ongoing integration of Catholic values into all areas of the curriculum
- developing our knowledge of teaching and improving students skills in Oral Language
- continue our two hour dedicated Literacy time with twenty-five minutes dedicated to Spelling in all classes, Prep-Grade Six
- ongoing testing of students in Grades 2-6 to identify letter combinations or word endings that need to be explicitly taught
- multi-age the explicit teaching of the Letters and Sounds Program in Prep and Grade One
- literacy and numeracy intervention programs for students who are not reaching the expected level of attainment, as well as special focus groups consisting of students needing additional support in class
- introduce Grade 2-Grade6 dedicated approach to explicitly teaching Times Tables
- continue our dedicated Numeracy time daily
- curriculum differentiation and catering for differing learning styles will be a priority
- continue working with teachers on the implementation of the AITSL Professional Teaching Standards
- ongoing implementation of the Australian Curriculum and the Early Years Learning Framework
- continue to deliver a quality curriculum throughout the school acknowledging and encouraging risk taking, higher order thinking, and the use of a variety of problem-solving strategies that encourage students to be effective communicators, creators and designers
- Professional Learning for all staff on high quality teaching pedagogy and formative assessment – Learning Intentions as the initial focus for 2014
- further emphasis on teacher planning and specific learning intentions and planning for different learning styles of students
- continuing to support students with learning difficulties and continuing to provide additional support
- embedding ICT practices in all areas of the curriculum to enhance delivery and learning, and keeping students up to date with current technological changes including emphasis on students using individual iPads as learning tools in Grades 3-6.

During 2014, we evaluated and implemented effective teaching and learning programs to improve student learning in Literacy, Numeracy and ICT through:

- (1) Undertaking Professional Learning for teachers in key areas of Literacy and Numeracy.
- (2) Providing release time for the ICT Coordinator to work with teachers in classrooms in order to integrate ICT across the curriculum.
- (3) Increasing and renewing our teaching and learning resources for classrooms.
- (4) Increasing the number of iPads purchased in line with the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office's Strategic Plan in ICT for student learning.
- (5) Providing IEPs for an increased number of students together with classroom support.
- (6) Using the services of the Regional Education Officers to work with teachers on planning and implementing successful Literacy and Numeracy Programs.

## CATHOLIC LIFE AND MISSION

During 2014 our Grade Five and Six students participated in the inter-denominational Women's World Day of Prayer early in March as readers and participants in the congregation in the nearby St Brigid's Church. This Day of Prayer took place in over 170 countries throughout the world. Our SRC members joined our Grade Five and Six students to serve afternoon tea and to meet and converse with the many participants from the Parish and other denominations from the broader Wynyard community. Prayer celebrations are held regularly throughout the year. Significant feasts and celebrations are acknowledged by a whole-school participation in Prayer Celebrations or Liturgies.

The school and the parish celebrated Mother's Day with a special Mother's Day Mass and supper on the Saturday evening prior to Mother's Day. Students made cards to give to all mothers and grandmothers at the Mass.

Students joined with the Parish to celebrate Mass on Ash Wednesday and attended Tuesday morning Masses throughout the second half of the year. The Parish Priest, Father John Girdauskas, used the Eucharistic Prayer for children and encouraged the students to do the readings and participate in the Offertory Procession at these Masses. The school year ended with a family Mass of Farewell for our Grade Six students and their families, celebrated at a Parish Saturday evening Mass in early December. Supper followed the Mass and was a chance for Father John, families and staff to catch up informally.

Students who wish to be Altar Servers are trained during their year in Grade Four. They then serve on a roster system at the 6 pm Saturday evening Vigil Mass in St Brigid's Church.

The Parish Priest, Father John Girdauskas and parish members, led the Sacramental Preparation Program and assisted parents to prepare their own children from Grades 3, 4 & 5, to receive the Sacraments on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September. The Sacramental program is family centred, Parish based and school supported. The evening meetings were attended by the Co-Principal responsible for Religious Education, and sometimes, class teachers as well. The students made a personal Sacramental banner with their name, photo and symbols for the Sacraments, in May at the first meeting. These banners were reproduced and displayed in each of the four Parish Churches throughout the Sacramental preparation program. Meetings were held at regular intervals from May through to September.

St Brigid's had its first official visit from the Archbishop of Hobart, the Reverend Archbishop Julian Porteous, on Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> September. The students gathered and participated in a Liturgy with Archbishop Porteous before he addressed them. Archbishop Porteous enjoyed afternoon tea with the staff after his visit with the students. Archbishop Porteous celebrated the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist for the Burnie-Wynyard Catholic Parish on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> September in St Brigid's Church.

Catholic Education Week is celebrated each year in August. In 2014 we had a special lunch for residents from Yaraandoo Home for the Aged, parishioners and grandparents of students at St Brigid's. Grade Six students assisted parents to cook and serve the

meal. They waited on tables, serving tea and coffee, as well as engaging in conversation with the elderly and all visitors. The students from all classes, Kindergarten to Grade Six, performed a short concert for all guests, as well as many individual student performances, to complete the afternoon.

During Catholic Education Week our Grade Five students attended a North West regional Mass at St Brendan-Shaw College in Devonport, which was con-celebrated by Archbishop Julian Porteous as chief celebrant, together with parish priests from the North West parishes. This was the first time Archbishop Julian Porteous had celebrated Catholic Education Week in Tasmania, as he took up his role in September 2013.

A variety of opportunities are offered to all staff to enhance their personal faith development including a Spirituality Day where all staff have the opportunity to attend workshops of their choice on a Student-free Day with all North West Catholic Schools. Our Spirituality Plan for 2014 was to hold Professional Learning sessions on Christian Meditation led by Sr Gabrielle Morgan PVB. This was held over two evenings in Term Three, and staff who wished to complete a written task in addition to attending the sessions, received additional Accreditation points.

Ongoing accreditation requirements ensure staff further their studies in Religious Education, and they are encouraged to also seek personal opportunities for ongoing spiritual development. Each year teachers participate in a Religious Education Curriculum Project for the school that involves preparation of a unit, teaching and assessment and moderating or preparing a reflection on the unit once it is completed. In 2014 the unit focus was on the Sacraments. Work is then submitted and this contributes to the maintenance of teachers' Accreditation status.

Our Grade Six students participated in the MJR (Making Jesus Real in our Daily Lives) Program with Peter Mitchell (Mitch) from the Catholic Education Office and a local teacher who is Mitch's representative, Jason Marien. Jason works with the class on one day each term and the focus is developing their leadership skills and preparing them to be active role models in the community.

Each year during Lent our students participate in Project Compassion at home and at school. During Holy Week students return any Project Compassion boxes to school. The money raised was sent away to Caritas to support the work they do in third world countries.

Our SRC students conducted fundraising events in order to sponsor four students from the Asian Pacific area, who would otherwise miss out on an education. This is a project of St Vincent de Paul and our students wanted to make a difference in the lives of these students.

St Brigid's students also collected toys and wrapped gifts for under-privileged children in the wider community during the months leading up to Christmas. The goods collected and the gifts donated and wrapped by the students were delivered to St Vincent de Paul in Somerset early in December so they could be sorted and distributed in time for Christmas.

## THE WIDER COMMUNITY

The school choir, with the Music Teacher, Sharon Neilson, visited Yaraandoo Home for the Aged to sing Christmas Carols and songs for the elderly residents in December. The choir also performed a Christmas presentation for a Probus luncheon. The school choir performs annually in the Burnie Eisteddfod primary school choir section.

Students participated in many sports events and represented the school at North West Catholic Schools' Carnivals in swimming, cross-country and athletics during 2013. Our Grade Six students joined students from other North West Catholic Schools to celebrate Mass in August for Catholic Education Week and had the opportunity to meet and have lunch with students from other North West Catholic Schools at St Brendan-Shaw College.

The Students' Representative Council members and students from various grades represented St Brigid's in the local Anzac Day March through the main street and at the wreath laying ceremony at the cenotaph. We were presented with a book for the Library by the RSL for our participation in this annual event.

Students from Kindergarten together with their 'Buddy class' Grade 5/6, visited residents at Wynyard Care Centre in Term Three. The Kindergarten students had made presents for the residents and also sang some songs for them to enjoy. Students from both classes answered the questions of residents and told them about their work at school.

Our Grade Six students were represented by Emily Dixon and Ethan Best, on the Waratah-Wynyard Youth Council. Students from all schools in the Waratah-Wynyard region represent their school on the Youth Council as a voice for young people in the Waratah-Wynyard area. The students regularly informed the school community of their monthly Youth Council Meetings and events in the community.

## ENROLMENT AND STAFFING

In 2014, St Brigid's Catholic School had an enrolment of 179 primary students in Kindergarten through to Grade Six. Of these 179 students, 28 were Indigenous students.

Our school had 23 Kindergarten students who attended three full days of school weekly. Kindergarten days were Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday in 2014.

The number of teachers at St Brigid's in 2014 was seven fulltime and four part-time. We had eight teacher assistants, one full-time office administrator, two part-time office administrators, a part time grounds-man and two part-time cleaners.

This report was prepared by Annette McCulloch, Principal, May 2015.

Financial Summary:

