

Annual School Report 2015 School Year

St Finbarr's Primary School



ST FINBARR'S
Catholic Primary School

Byron Bay

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About this report

St Finbarr's is registered by the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) (NSW) and managed by the Lismore Catholic Schools Office (CSO), as the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The *Annual Report to the Parish School Community* for this year provides the parish school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The *Report* also outlines to the parish school community information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the parish school community and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school's Strategic Management Plan and Annual Plan.

The *Report* demonstrates accountability to the Federal and State Government regulatory bodies, the parish and school community and the Catholic Schools Office. This *Report* has been approved by the CSO which monitors school processes to ensure compliance with all NSW BOSTES requirements for Registration.

This *Report* complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, year books and other regular communications. The *Report* must be available on the school's website by 30 June 2015 following its submission to the BOSTES.

The contents of this *Report* may be tabled for discussion at various parent forums and all information is public.

Further information about the school or this *Report* may be obtained by contacting the school on 02 6685 6342 or by visiting the website at <http://www.bbplism.catholic.edu.au/>



1. Messages

1.1 Principal's Message

The primary purpose of St Finbarr's Catholic Primary School is to support the members of the parish community in providing a faith formation for their children. The school fosters a commitment to the individual person and provides opportunities for academic, cultural and sporting achievement. St Finbarr's offers students a quality Catholic education based on the teaching of the Church and within the context of a strong faith community.

Our parish school continued to provide many opportunities for the students to excel in academic, cultural and sporting areas. All of these areas combined to ensure that our school's mission was lived out daily in the life of the school.

The students' achievements and accomplishments were showcased throughout 2015. Student work was proudly displayed in classrooms, on school noticeboards, in the school office and on class webpages. School achievement was highlighted and celebrated at many school assemblies. Our focus was to continue to build on the reputation that St Finbarr's has earned as an exemplary school. The following list provides an indication of the school's academic achievements. In 2015 the school:

- Achieved above the State NAPLAN mean in most areas of Literacy and our Reading results were once again very strong.
- Participated with Distinction and High Distinctions across all the areas of the national competitions.
- Offered opportunities for extension and enrichment through the Australasian Problem Solving Mathematical Olympiad.
- Performed extremely well on the Year 6 Religious Education test.

There were many opportunities throughout the year for our school to be represented at community and cultural events. The following list provides an indication of the school's cultural program and community involvement. In 2015:

- Students participated in the Byron Bay ANZAC Day March and Ceremony.
- The school chose the theme "the history of creative and performing arts" for its Performing Arts Showcase.
- A group of Year 6 students attended the Byron Bay Writers' Festival events and authors' meet and greet.
- Band and choir performed at whole school events such as the Christmas Fair.
- Years 3 to 6 participated in the school's Outdoor Education Program.

Students performed well at various sporting events throughout the year. The following list provides some examples of sporting highlights. In 2015:

- St Finbarr's teams performed well in Zone Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics with individuals reaching diocesan and state level.
- The school won the Tweed Zone Cross Country Carnival.
- Individual students reached district level in a wide range of sports.
- Students at state level competed in cross country and soccer.
- The school cross country, swimming and athletics carnivals and intra-school house competitions provided an opportunity for all students to compete and hone their individual skills and teamwork.

There were many people who assisted in the school's quest for excellence. In particular special thanks are extended to the parent body and the school staff for all their generous efforts. St Finbarr's is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

John Wilson
Principal

1.2 A Parent Message

The St Finbarr's parish school community has once again worked hard to support a strong and happy school culture.

Parent Involvement

St Finbarr's parents were involved in a wide range of school community activities throughout 2015. These include fundraising events such as our annual Christmas Fair, school family celebrations such as the Mother's Day and Father's Day Breakfasts and Blessing, social gatherings such as the parents' Trivia Night and School Bush Dance as well as weekly assistance in classroom and at sporting events.

Parent Report

The Parish School Forum has been led this year by a cohesive and positive team that has supported a number of parent committees such as Learning for Life, Class Parents and Fundraising. One of the most successful practical outcomes of the Forum's work in 2015 was "The Big Dig Out" where dads dug out over 15 cubic metres of soil under the school hall and provided space for what is now the Teacher's Resource Room. This was funded through the Forum and constructed during the school holidays. Teachers can now store and quickly locate and prepare teaching aids.

I sincerely thank all St Finbarr's parents and the parish in general for their wonderful support of our school.

Peter Parker

Chair, St Finbarr's Parish School Forum

2. This Catholic School

2.1 The School Community

St Finbarr's is located in Byron Bay and is part of the Holy Spirit Parish which serves the communities of St Finbarr's (Byron Bay) and St Kevin's (Bangalow). School families are drawn from the towns and communities of Byron Bay, Suffolk Park, Ewingsdale, Bangalow and the surrounding district.

Last year the school celebrated 99 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest Fr David Gilbey is involved in the life of the school.

St Finbarr's is a parish school with strong links to the parish community. The school aims to involve the children and their families in the life of the parish through activities such as:

- The Sacramental Program.
- Weekly Altar Serving teams.
- Weekly Children's Liturgy managed by the school staff.
- Regular family Masses.
- Student lead initiatives supporting Catholic Missions and St Vincent De Paul Society in conjunction with Parishioners.

The parish school uses the mandated Diocesan Religious Education curriculum and the resource text "To Know, Worship & Love". Catholic life and culture permeate school life with 2.5 hours of religious education taught formally each week. The Diocesan Daily Prayer guidelines support the school's prayer life. The aims and direction of our parish school are guided by *Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore, the Foundational Beliefs and Practices – The Essential Framework*. This Framework underpins all policy, planning, roles and processes within the parish school. Our aim is to increasingly integrate the essence of this statement into all aspects of school life. Religious Education is given priority in our school and classroom curriculum and planning.

The parish school Mission Statement highlights the nature and calling of the school.



2.2 School Enrolment

St Finbarr's caters for children from Kindergarten to Year 6. The following table indicates the student enrolment characteristics:

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL 2015	TOTAL 2014
Male	13	14	17	14	13	24	21	116	111
Female	15	13	13	30	19	16	18	124	133
Indigenous count included in first two rows	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	2
LBOTE (Language background other than English) count included in first two rows	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

2.3 Student Attendance

In order for students to reach their full potential it is important that they attend school regularly. Whilst it is the parents' legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly, our staff as part of their duty of care monitor attendance each day. The Class Roll is marked every day and rolls are checked each term by the Assistant Principal. The school uses the attendance coding system adopted in all NSW schools. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by our office staff. Parents are requested to provide a note to the teacher immediately the child returns to school. The principal is made aware of sustained student absences or absences reflecting a pattern. In these situations the principal or delegated staff member contacts the parent/guardian. Parents are encouraged to arrange medical and other necessary appointments outside school hours. Prolonged periods of absence occur from time-to-time for various reasons. In these cases students and their parents meet with the principal to discuss the leave request.

The average student attendance rate for the school during 2015 was 93.2%. School attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

	Kindergarten	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Attendance rates by Year group	93.4	90.9	93.7	94.3	93.9	92.8	92.9

2.4 Teacher Standards and Professional Learning

Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile		Number of Teachers
1.	Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	16
2.	Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	0
3.	Those not having qualifications described in 1 or 2 above but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate relevant knowledge.	0
4.	Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.	15
5.	Number of staff identifying as indigenous employed at the school.	0
6.	Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the school.	11

2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention

The average teacher attendance figure is 95%. This figure is provided to the school by the CSO.

- In Term 3 our Leader of Catechesis and Evangelisation, Mrs Kate Jones commenced maternity leave for 12 months. We look forward to welcoming her back to St Finbarr's in 2016.
- Mr Kerry Wills, after 33 years of service to Lismore Catholic Education retired.
- We welcomed Mr Dale Layland to St Finbarr's for a 12 month secondment as Assistant Principal.

2.6 Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The school ensures that at every available formal and informal opportunity the values of respect and responsibility are promoted. We want every student to understand and appreciate that they are part of both the school and the local community.

The school models and teaches students about respect and responsibility in a number of ways:

- St Finbarr's teaches a new component of a school value to students every week.
- At weekly assemblies a student in each class receives the Value Award for demonstrating the school value of the week.
- The weekly value is communicated and explained in our newsletter to inform and educate parents.
- An integrated Personal Development and Health program incorporates social and emotional competencies and the school values.
- The Mary MacKillop award is presented to a student who "sees a need and does something about it" each fortnight at assembly.
- The Mini Vinnies student group organises opportunities for fundraising and raises awareness of those living in poverty or recovering from natural disasters.

2.7 Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

The school uses a variety of methods to gauge parental, student and teacher satisfaction with school operations. The school understands the importance of regularly reviewing approval and satisfaction levels. Last year the following formal and informal opportunities allowed the school to test reaction to decisions, policy and school procedures.

- Teachers provided Circle Time and Class Meetings in their classes which allowed children the opportunity to provide feedback about school life.
- Members of the school Leadership Team and parents met as the *Learning for Life Team*, a reference group that enabled leaders to gauge parent and student satisfaction regarding innovations to teaching and learning.
- SRC Insight Survey was conducted in Term 1 and the results were explored with staff and the *Learning for Life Team*.

3. Teaching and Learning

3.1 School Curriculum

The school provides a comprehensive educational program based on and taught in accordance with the Board of Studies and Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

The school aims to develop in students a love of learning and engage them actively and cooperatively in the process of life-long learning through the core values of respect, honesty, personal best, encouragement, teamwork, commitment and belonging. Our teachers work collaboratively in Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) where they analyse student assessment data and share effective teaching strategies in order to assist students to achieve high levels of learning. When required, teachers and parents work in partnership with the Leader of Pedagogy, Leader of Curriculum and the Addition Needs Teacher to support students in their personalised learning plans.

3.2 Student Performance in National Testing Programs

The school participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) with students in Years 3 and 5 tested. In Year 3, 42 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 37 students.

In Literacy there were four elements tested. These were reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation. In Numeracy, students were tested in number, patterns and algebra, measurement, data and space and geometry.

In both Year 3 and Year 5 there are six achievement bands with Band 6 being the highest level of attainment in Year 3 and Band 8 the highest in Year 5.

The Commonwealth Government has set minimum acceptable standards for reading, writing and numeracy at particular ages.

In Year 3, students who achieve Band 3 or higher have achieved above the minimum standard. In Year 5 those students who achieve at Band 5 and higher have achieved above the minimum standard set by government.

At St Finbarr's, school and student performance is closely monitored. These tests are one means of gathering data on individual student and school achievement. School staff have participated in Catholic Schools Office information sessions on NAPLAN and SMART 2 Data Analysis workshops.

The following data indicates the percentage of St Finbarr's students in each band compared to the State percentage.



Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy

Percentage of students in Bands 1 to 6

BAND	6		5		4		3		2		1	
	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School
Reading	30.5	58%	19.5	10%	21.0	20%	19.0	10%	5.7	3%	4.3	0%
Writing	15.9	15	38.5	33	23.0	38	16.4	13	4.3	3	1.8	0
Spelling	27.1	23	20.1	20	20.8	33	18.4	23	9.6	3	4.0	0
Grammar and Punctuation	32.1	33	20.4	25	23.6	35	12.6	8	7.3	0	4.1	0
Numeracy	18.8	20%	19.3	15%	23.8	18%	21.1	40%	12.6	8%	4.4	0%

Year 5 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy

Percentage of students in Bands 3 to 8

BAND	8		7		6		5		4		3	
	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School
Reading	17.5	27%	20.5	27%	21.8	32%	20.7	11%	15.0	3%	4.6	0%
Writing	6.2	3%	15.2	32%	31.5	24%	32.6	41%	8.7	0%	5.8	0%
Spelling	12.9	11%	27.0	35%	25.2	24%	20.0	30%	10.4	0	4.5	0
Grammar and Punctuation	18.1	27%	20.6	30%	21.5	14%	22.5	24%	10.7	5%	6.6	0
Numeracy	14.1	19	16.6	22	25.6	30%	25.3	16%	15.3	14%	3.0	0%

As can be seen from the table above, the percentage of students in the top two bands in Reading for both Year 3 and Year 5 are higher than the State percentage. 68% of students in Year 3, and 54% of students in Year 5 achieved in the top 2 bands in Reading, and no children were in the lowest band in either cohort. This could be due to the effectiveness of the school's targeted work in structuring guided reading within their Professional Learning Teams.

NAPLAN results will be further analysed to inform and guide the direction for future improvements particularly in the area of Mathematics. The small percentage of students achieving minimum standards has followed recent years' achievements and is indicative of the focus placed on individualised student learning programs and intervention strategies adopted by the school.

3.3 Teacher Professional Learning

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

Whole staff development day professional learning activities in 2015 were:

Staff Professional Learning Activity	Date	Presenter
English – Essential Learnings	30 January	School Leaders
Staff Retreat	2 April	School Leaders
Implementing the Australian Curriculum – History	17 August	School Leaders
Implementing the Australian Curriculum - Geography	6 October	School Leaders

Additionally staff attended either singly or in groups a range of professional development opportunities including:

Activity	Staff numbers	Presenter
The Art and Science Of Teaching	5	Marzano Institute
A Systematic Response to Intervention	2	Hawker Brownlow
Peer to Peer Training	6	CSO
Christian Meditation	3	CSO – Danny Hatchman
English Programming and Planning	9	CSO – Kate Salmon

The professional learning expenditure has been calculated at \$7170. This figure has been calculated by the CSO and reflects expenditure on casual release days and professional development activities in particular categories.

4. School Policies

4.1 Policy Review

School policies are reviewed regularly. The table below lists the school policies and notes any additions, changes or upgrades made during 2015.

Policy name	Status in 2015 (No change, new policy, changes made)	Access this policy at:
Assessment and Reporting	no change	School Office
Anti-bullying	no change	School Website
Overnight Excursions	no change	School Website
Enrolment	changes made	School Website
Computer User Agreement	changes made	School Website
Medication	no change	School Website
Homework	no change	School Website
Growing As Friends	no change	School Website
First Aid	no change	School Website
Student Attendance	no change	School Office
Assessment and Reporting	no change	School Office

4.2 Enrolment Policy

Every new enrolment at St Finbarr's requires parents to attend an enrolment interview. The interview provides an opportunity to learn more about the educational experience provided by the school, specific school procedural policies and current school expectations.

Preference for enrolment is given to children of baptised Catholics. It is a condition of enrolment that all children will participate in class religion lessons and activities, as well as prayer celebrations and school and class Masses.

Children who turn five by 30 June are eligible to apply for enrolment in Kindergarten. Enrolments for Kindergarten children are called for in the year before commencement. Other enrolments are accepted throughout the year if there are vacancies in the classes concerned.

A copy of the enrolment policy is located in the school office or it can be accessed on the school's website. The School Enrolment Policy explains the Parish enrolment guidelines.

4.3 Student Welfare Policy, Pastoral Care Policy

The school's Student Welfare Policy is contained within our Growing Together as Friends program of the overarching school framework. As St Finbarr's community members we share beliefs and values and grow together through shared experiences. This policy outlines how the values espoused in our Mission guide us in our teaching and management of behaviour and relationships to truly make St Finbarr's a place of belonging and nurturing that will enable everyone to learn.

The policy is lived out through various elements of the program such as school values, student awards, social/emotional competencies, personal development education and by creating a positive and caring classroom and school environment.

4.4 Discipline Policy

The school policy is based on procedural fairness and ensures that school practices respect the dignity, rights and fundamental freedoms of individual students. The policy is contained within the Growing as Friends program and is discussed with students, staff and parents on a regular basis. Reminders about the policy are regularly included in school newsletters.

Students, staff and parents have a clear understanding of the expectations articulated through this policy and are supportive of the need to provide a safe and caring learning environment. The policy acknowledges teacher and student rights and responsibilities and is based on the Gospel teachings of love for self and others. The school does not sanction corporal punishment or allow parents to administer corporal punishment in the school.

4.5 Complaints and Grievance Policy

The school policy is based on procedural fairness and recognises that parents and caregivers must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory environment. Any concerns raised are responded to promptly and fairly and confidentiality is always maintained. The policy is available at the front office or from the school's website.

5. School Determined Improvement Targets

Each year the school develops an Annual Plan drawn from the five-year Strategic Plan. 2015 was a very rewarding year. Listed below are a number of goals and priorities that the school focused on during the year. The parish school's main goals and priorities were to:

Strengthen Catholic mission and life

- Embed Christian Meditation across K-6 in developmentally appropriate ways
 - Engage Students in Student Proclaim
 - Support teachers in leading faith development in students
-

Improving the Quality of our Teaching

- Support classroom teachers in professional goal setting
 - Facilitate action research within Maths and English, that allow teachers to inquire into the pedagogical practices that are most effective (PLT)
-

Build higher levels of learning

- Use PAT (Progressive Achievement Test) data to create Year level SMART goals
 - Provide intervention in a timely, structured and effective way
 - Establish English Essential Learnings for Reading Comprehension
-

Increase parent engagement

- Provide relevant parent education systematically
 - Devise Reading learning targets and proficiency scales
 - Offer parents the opportunity to celebrate class and Stage Masses.
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6. Financial Information

Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Lismore Catholic Schools Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary schools and secondary colleges. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school. In addition, the financial accounts for each school and for the Catholic Schools Office are audited annually.

A visual summary of the income and expenditure reported to the Commonwealth Government for 2015 is presented below:

