

Annual School Report 2020 School Year

St Mary of the Angels Primary School, Guyra



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Guyra NSW 2365

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<https://stmarysguyra.catholic.edu.au>

Principal
Sharon Wittig

About this report

St Mary of the Angels Primary School is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Diocese of Armidale 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 provides the 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 school community information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school Annual Improvement Plan.

The report demonstrates accountability to the Federal and State Government regulatory bodies, the parish and school community and the CSO. This report, approved by the CSO, monitors school processes to ensure compliance with all NESA requirements for Registration.

This report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters and other regular communications. It is available on both school and CSO websites by 30 June 2021 following its submission to NESA.

The contents of this report may be tabled for discussion at various parent forums, including the School Advisory Council meetings and all information is public.

Further information about the school or this report may be obtained by contacting the school on 02 6779 1661 or by visiting the school's website <https://stmarysguyra.catholic.edu.au>.



1.0 Messages

1.1 Principal's Message

There were many people who assisted in the development of the school as a Catholic learning community. In particular, special thanks are extended to the parent body and the school staff for all their generous efforts. St Mary of the Angels Primary School is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

We began the 2020 school year welcoming the rain that eased pressure on our drought stricken community. Plans were underway to celebrate this with a follow-up support evening after the bushfire and drought disasters. It was at this point that the COVID-19 restrictions began. School staff responded immediately by accessing professional development to allow them to remain in constant contact with students and families during isolation.

Teachers and aides worked overtime creating Remote Learning Packs. These packs included all things necessary for students to access on-line learning platforms as well as the highest quality 'Hands On' resources. While some schools concentrated on just literacy and numeracy, St Mary of the Angels provided meaningful activities across all Key Learning Areas. For the duration of the isolation period, the school organised contactless drop off and pick up exchanges in order to ensure that a variety of learning experiences were continually available to students and that teachers could mark completed student work. Feedback from families was very positive.

Without any COVID cases being reported in this area, a plan to return all students back to school as quickly as possible was enacted. This was also viewed very favourably by the parent body. This allowed students to resume on-site learning quickly and teachers felt that student achievement was only minimally impacted. An increased number of anxiety issues and social problems were noted as students returned to normal classes.

Throughout the year the school responded to changing COVID regulations, always trying to minimise any negative impact upon families. Some positives to take from this experience was the enrichment in the use of technology skills and websites by both students and teachers and also the level of independent work displayed by many students that has now become part of normal classroom practice. Another huge positive in 2020 was the new approach to student reporting where student voice and self-assessment were used to guide the reporting process.

St Mary of the Angels is looking forward to a new year where COVID-19 does not influence as many aspects of school life and where parents are once again active participants within the school community.

Sharon Wittig
Principal

1.2 A Parent Message

This year was certainly an unusual one for parents of the school community. Parental involvement was one of the casualties of the COVID-19 pandemic. With parents excluded from school grounds for most of 2020, regular assemblies, P & F functions and School Advisory Council Meetings took a back seat. Fundraising events were cancelled, however, some essential services usually provided by the P & F were continued by the school secretaries.

We were very grateful to the school staff who worked hard to ensure that opportunities were still made available to students. Staff continued to provide hot lunches on Fridays without the assistance of parent volunteers. They still managed to run an athletics carnival and to ensure that the annual Water Safety Program could go ahead without the usual assistance from willing helpers.



As COVID-19 restrictions eased towards the end of the year, parents were extremely grateful to be able participate in Presentation Night and the Year 6 farewell dinner even though the format was slightly different to usual celebrations.

The parent body is looking forward to 2021 with a view to working more closely with teachers and again contribute to the school community. A major focus for next year is to work with the Principal on designing and creating exciting, interactive play spaces to encourage both imagination and the development of fundamental movement skills.

Theresa Grills
Secretary
St Mary of the Angels School Advisory Council

2.0 This Catholic School

2.1 The School Community

St Mary of the Angels Primary School is located in Guyra and is part of the St Mary of the Angels Parish which serves the communities of Guyra, from which the school families are drawn.

Last year the school celebrated 101 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest, Fr Stephen O'Shea, is involved in the life of the school.

2.2 Catholic Life and Religious Education

St Mary of the Angels Primary School follows the Armidale Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum and uses the student text To Know, Worship and Love, as authorised by the Bishop of Armidale, Michael Kennedy.

During 2020, the parish priest was absent from the diocese for an extended period of time. During his absence, visiting priests from the Diocese of Armidale assisted the school with the planning and celebration of religious services. Throughout the COVID period, when churches were closed, religious services were made available to parishioners, parents and students via electronic telecasts. During this time of isolation, the school reached out to elderly parishioners with cards, gifts and stay safe messages. The students were unable to make visits to the local aged care facility but kept in regular contact sending cards, messages, flowers and social media messages.

As restrictions eased, the parish resumed masses following the social distancing guidelines. For most of 2020, only students in Years 3-6 attended school masses, with any regularity, as the size of the church severely restricted attendance numbers.

During Term 4, St Mary of the Angels celebrated the sacraments of first Eucharist and reconciliation, with workbooks being sent to students enrolled in other schools, as personal lessons on-site were not possible.

Spiritual and faith formation are an important part of life at St Mary of the Angels. The overnight staff retreat was cancelled, as delivery of content could only be in one hour sessions. Despite this, staff enjoyed a wonderful retreat day on-site, while maintaining social distancing and working on individual faith modules.

Students in Year 6 in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Armidale undertake the Diocesan Religious Education (RE) Test annually. The test consists of fifty multiple-choice questions.

Results of the test are analysed by teachers and are used to inform teaching and learning in Religious Education.

Our School's average result (as a mark out of 30)	
Year 6	24



2.3 School Enrolment

St Mary of the Angels Primary School caters for children from Years K to 6. The following table indicates the student enrolment characteristics:

	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	TOTAL 2020	TOTAL 2019
Male	7	9	11	6	7	7	3	50	49
Female	6	6	5	3	6	7	1	34	40
Totals	13	15	16	9	13	14	4	84	89

2.4 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, school staff as part of their duty of care, monitor attendance each day. The class roll is marked every day and rolls are checked each week by the Principal or their delegate. The school uses the attendance coding system adopted in all NSW schools. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by staff. Parents are requested to provide a satisfactory explanation for an absence by means such as a written note, telephone call, sms message or email to the school preferably on the first day of absence, and certainly within seven days. 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 2020 is shown in the following table.

	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	All Years
Average Student Attendance Rates	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%	97.0%	96.0%	95.0%	98.0%	95.9%

Managing Student non-attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The school, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

School staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community;



- monitoring engagement of individual students in their learning and identifying strategies to enhance engagement;
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance;
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance;
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance;
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented;
- intervention strategies for students with unsatisfactory attendance may include academic case management, social case management, referral to counselling and parent/carer involvement;
- the Director of Catholic Schools or designated Catholic Schools Office Armidale officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom previous strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

When the Catholic Schools Office Armidale is notified of a student for whom chronic non attendance is an issue and previous strategies have failed, the Principal and the School Consultant will convene a meeting with the family, the student, and other agencies if required, to develop a Return to School Plan.

2.5 Staff Profile and Teacher Standards

Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile		Number of Teachers
1.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Provisional or Conditional level.	3
2.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Proficient level.	5
3.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Highly Accomplished level.	0
4.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Lead level.	0
5.	Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.	6
6.	Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the school.	1
7.	Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the school.	5

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:

Student Leadership forms a major part of the culture of respect and responsibility that makes up the warm and caring climate within the school. Student leaders act as role models for younger students and accept responsibility for specific tasks around the school. They represent the school at events



within the diocese and the local community. During 2020, their leadership roles outside the school were limited due to COVID-19 restrictions. Within the school environment, staff relied heavily on the older students to assist with some activities that parents would usually undertake. Students were unable to visit the local aged care facility, however, they reached out to their friends through cards, gifts and social media messages. With ANZAC Day being cancelled, children were concerned about local veterans and made beautiful cards to be sent to them.

During this unusual year, students embarked on initiatives to reach out to others. They created origami doves and helped pray one thousand prayers for those affected by the COVID-19 virus. Students engaged in one hundred days of kindness campaign.

2.7 Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, the School has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers.

Parent Satisfaction

Once again, parents expressed a very high level of satisfaction in the formal survey tool. It was perhaps the informal feedback throughout the year that showed the high regard that parents have for the school and the staff who work with their children. They continually expressed gratitude for the communication between school and home during the long months that parents were unable to join enter school grounds. Communication was in person via phone calls, through newsletters and emails, as well as through Zoom meetings.

The following highlight typical responses received:

- *We just wanted to say thank you for all that you and your staff are doing to provide a stable, safe environment for our children during this very uneasy time.*
- *My kids are well informed of the risks of coronavirus and the impending reality, and they are calm and matter of fact about this. We put this down to your education and providing a sense of resilience to be able to piece steps together to remain safe for them.*
- *You have our support if the time comes to close the school, but we can't thank you enough for the normality you are providing our kids and the ability to keep us working as parents. All your hard work is not going unnoticed! (Jess)*
- *My family and I would like to send our personal thanks to everyone at St Mary of the Angels.*
- *The amazing effort that you all put in to ensure that our children continue to learn throughout this crisis should be applauded!!*
- *I cannot image the countless hours that you have and continue to put in to give our children the best opportunity to maintain some "normality" and structure in their learning. The way you have adapted to a situation that we have never dealt with before, shows what an amazing bunch of people you are.*
- *I feel so very proud to be part of this amazing little school. Stay safe and once again a big thank you from the bottom of our hearts. (Craig, Tracy and Sam)*

Student Satisfaction

Students are very complimentary about the school. Even in a difficult year they could find things to be happy about. They expressed concern that they were unable to participate in sporting and other events in 2020. They felt that the leadership opportunities available to past students were very



limited this year. They were extremely disappointed that their long awaited excursion to Canberra was cancelled but were very grateful that we were able to arrange a four day camp later in the year so that they did not miss out completely. Students were very concerned that they had been unable to visit their friends at the aged care facility. They took great satisfaction in the fact that they were able to keep in contact by sending messages and gifts instead. Students were also pleased that they could find ways to reach out to others by creating prayer doves, writing thank you posters for essential workers and recognising goodness by creating hearts of kindness.

Staff Satisfaction

Responses from staff to formal and informal surveys depict a very high level of satisfaction. Staff feel valued and cared for. During a very difficult year, they noted that throughout the COVID-19 isolation period they felt they were very well supported and were given adequate resources, ample release time and assistance and guidance from leadership and each other. They felt that the supportive environment allowed them to learn new skills, experiment with different learning programs and present high quality work in a variety of formats. They appreciated the fact that they were encouraged to choose whether to work from home or work together in the school environment. Staff also expressed gratitude to the Catholic Schools Office for the way that they encouraged autonomy and allowed local decisions to be made that would best suit the circumstances of each individual school according to their circumstances.

There is a strong sense of collegiality between all staff. Younger teachers, in particular, love that there is a willingness to share ideas and resources so freely. Staff obviously love coming to work each day and their enthusiasm and dedication is visible to all within the community.

3.0 Teaching and Learning

3.1 School Curriculum

The school provides an educational program based on and taught in accordance with the NESA 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. In addition, the school implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools Office Armidale.

Religious Education in Catholic schools is a mandatory KLA included in the curriculum for students in each year group. St Mary of the Angels Primary School is committed to providing a quality education that meets the needs of all students.

St Mary of the Angels Primary School places great importance on building the foundation skills of literacy and numeracy. The school has designated literacy and numeracy blocks. Wherever possible, these subjects are taught consistently by the same teacher. Lessons in these areas are planned carefully to deliver the curriculum based on assessment of student skills and knowledge. Lessons are therefore differentiated for groups of students with learning intentions adjusted to suit the learning needs of each group. Flexible class groupings are also used to cater for students who are working above or below their expected stage level.

The school is committed to implementing the 14 parameters based on Dr Lynn Sharratt's work of Putting Faces to the Data. The gradual release of responsibility model is followed and all classes participate in Big Write and VCOP strategies. A Case Management approach is used to help address the needs of identified students.

In addition to excellent academic programs, St Mary of the Angels offers a wide range of sporting, cultural and community involvement opportunities. Participation in the Musica Viva program provides a wide range of orchestral and musical concerts to rural communities. The school celebrates the



talents of students in a Creative Arts evening which showcases music, dance and drama. These opportunities were, however, limited in 2020.

Physical education and sport is very important at St Mary of the Angels. Students have access to a wide variety of sporting equipment at morning, recess and lunch breaks. Students are taught basic skills in a number of recreational sports which encourage them to participate in weekend competitions. Good sportsmanship and fairness is at the forefront of all sporting activities.

Students have the opportunity to participate at a diocesan level in athletics, swimming, cross country, soccer and touch football as well as summer and winter sporting trials. Students who excel can move on to represent at diocese and state level. Again, in 2020 the opportunities were very limited.

Service to others is a key focus of school life. Students regularly visit the local age care facility and have developed a long and lasting relationship with the residents through shared activities which include reading, talking, singing, craft and games mornings. The school takes great pride in contributing to the community through ANZAC Day, Rotary Street Carnival and the annual agricultural show.

A Transition to School class operates each Wednesday in the year preceding Kindergarten. This class helps to build strong foundations for literacy and numeracy, as well as developing important social and class routine skills that assist students in making an excellent transition into full time schooling.

The schooling experience for the children is enriched by the close partnership between families and the school community. The dedication and care displayed by all staff is widely acknowledged and appreciated.

3.2 Student Performance in National Testing Programs

3.2.1 NAPLAN

There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as a result of the decision by the Australian Government for students not to participate in the NAPLAN Assessments due to the circumstances of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

3.3 Teacher Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued. Professional learning can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in services, meetings and conferences and a range of professional learning programs provided by the Catholic Schools Office Armidale. The school takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking of its staff professional learning and individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing professional development.

All teachers have been involved in professional learning opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes.

Whole staff development day professional learning activities in 2020 were:

Staff Professional Learning Activity	Date	Presenter
Diocesan Compliance - Child Safety and Protection	28/01/2020	Sharon Wittig and on-line staff Learning Portal
Implementing the new PDHPE Curriculum	29/01/2020	Nadine Kennedy on-line Modules
Senior First Aid	11/06/2020	Ghris Gaddes



Staff Retreat Day - Spirituality and Wellbeing	15/06/2020	Anne Finlayson and Sharon Wittig
Phonemic Awareness	12/10/2020	Matilda Hunt and Sharon Wittig
Understanding Autism (2 Day Course)	19/10/2020	Lydia Meem (Clinical Psychologist)
Living Well- Learning Well Framework	17/12/2020	Rod Wheelan

4.0 School Policies

4.1 Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Armidale adheres to the policy as endorsed by the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' of Students in the Catholic Systemic Schools of the Diocese of Armidale. The Catholic Schools Office Armidale monitors the implementation of this policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. Children from families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church may be considered eligible for enrolment. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

This school does not have any enrolment policies or support documents in addition to the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' for schools in the Diocese of Armidale. This policy is available on the school's website <https://stmarysguyra.catholic.edu.au> and the Armidale Catholic Schools Office [website](#).

4.2 Pastoral Care Policy

Jesus Christ and his teachings are the basis of all that occurs at St Mary of the Angels Primary School. Christ's teachings therefore should relate to how staff develop student self-discipline. The school community believes in a holistic approach to individual development. Such an approach aims to develop the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, aesthetic, moral and spiritual dimensions of a child. Staff aim to bring this about in the school by promoting self-worth and by encouraging each individual to answer to one's self for one's own actions.

All people attending St Mary of the Angels Primary School have the right to be treated:

- justly
- respectfully
- fairly

No changes were made to the 'Pastoral Care Policy' this year.

The full text of the school's 'Pastoral Care Policy' may be accessed on the school's website <https://stmarysguyra.catholic.edu.au> or at the administration office.

4.3 Student Discipline Policy

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. The school does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by school persons and non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the school.

No changes were made to the 'Student Discipline Policy' this year.

The full text of the school's 'Student Discipline Policy' may be accessed on the school's website <https://stmarysguyra.catholic.edu.au> or at the administration office.



4.4 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

The Catholic Schools Office, Armidale has established a 'Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy' which is implemented by the school and all systemic schools in the Diocese. It provides a framework for school communities to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person. The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) monitors the implementation of this policy.

No changes were made to the 'Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy' this year.

The full text of the school's 'Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy' may be accessed on the school's website <https://stmarysguyra.catholic.edu.au>, the administration office or on the CSO website.

4.5 Complaints Handling Policy and Guide

The Diocese of Armidale has established a 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' which is implemented by this school. The rationale for this policy is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of the contemporary world. The Catholic Schools Office monitors the implementation of these policies.

No changes were made to the 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' this year.

The full text of the school's 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' may be accessed on the school's website <https://stmarysguyra.catholic.edu.au> or the administration office.

5.0 School Review and Improvement

Each year, the school develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. The plan is drawn from the school's Strategic Improvement Plan and informed by the Catholic Schools Office Annual Improvement Plan. The school engages in an annual evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness against these external standards in collaboration with the Schools Consultant.

Key Goals Achieved and Implemented in 2020	Key Goals for 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A relentless focus was maintained on addressing differentiation for all students. This began with the development of flexible class groupings, allowing students to move fluidly between classrooms to place them with students working at their ability levels. This involved moving children down for additional assistance and moving children up to allow enrichment. Teachers concentrated on pre-testing to ensure that students were learning new content rather than just covering work at their class level. An entire school platform was developed to keep information and communication in a central location for all students with disabilities. A much greater focus was made on communication and consultation with both students and their parents when creating goals and personal plans. This work will continue to be a major focus next year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality differentiation for all students through flexible class groupings, targeted Professional Learning Teams, access to professional development and a greater application of adjustments in teaching programs.• Improved literacy results through tiered Phonemic Awareness teaching across the school.• Greater application of problem solving skills in Mathematics involving open ended questions and real life situations.• Implementation of the "Living Well - Learning Well" Framework



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Mary of the Angels implemented the new PDHPE Syllabus. A number of teachers engaged in professional learning which was then delivered to all staff through professional learning in school teams. School Scope and Sequence documents were revised and implemented. Staff began the on-line PDHPE learning modules but after evaluation it was decided that they were not meeting the needs of staff and the thirty hours was not completed. With COVID-19 isolation rules, opportunities to support the syllabus through Real Talk visits for parents and students were postponed and the revised delivery was not deemed as successful as we had hoped. • Although the year began well, plans for school/community support relating to the drought were thrown into chaos. Events were cancelled and parents were not able to gather together. Support was therefore provided in personal phone calls to families by the Principal and Zoom meetings conducted by teachers and other staff. The school continues to financially support families through fee reduction and subsidising all activities that required monetary contributions from families. Sponsorship was again procured to cover the cost of the two week intensive water safety program. This was of great financial assistance in the weeks leading up to Christmas. • The school continued to implement the Non-Negotiables of a Catholic Professional Learning Community. This work was largely supported by the Leader of Pedagogy who worked with staff across the school, both inside and outside the classrooms. The use of banked release time and other school structures allowed flexible professional learning teams to be created to achieve shared goals. Case management meetings were particularly successful in addressing the needs of identified students. Shared marking of student writing samples using the Australian Writing Criteria was also very successful. 	
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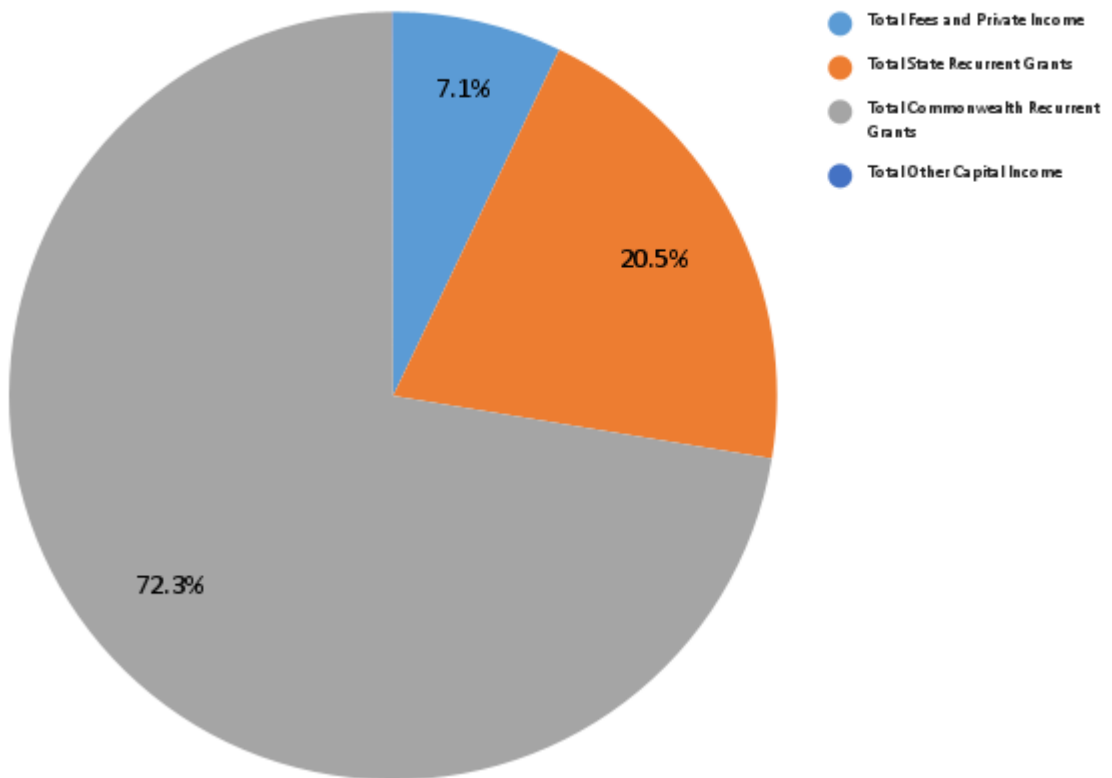
6.0 Financial Information

Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary schools, K-10 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 2020 is presented below:



2020 Income - St Mary of the Angels Primary School, Guyra



2020 Expenditure - St Mary of the Angels Primary School, Guyra

