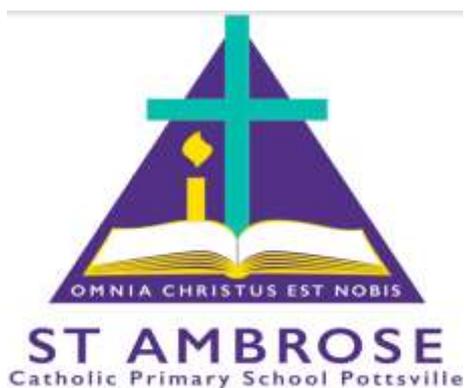


Annual School Report

2020 School Year

St Ambrose Primary School, Pottsville



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Pottsville NSW 2489

Phone 02 6676 0099

moodle.sapotlism.catholic.edu.au

About this report

St Ambrose Primary School is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Diocese of 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 and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school Improvement Plan.

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

This *Report* complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, yearbooks and other regular communications. The *Report* must be available on the school's website by 30 June 2021 following its submission to NESA.

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 6676 0099 or by visiting the website at moodle.sapotlism.catholic.edu.au.



1.0 Messages

1.1 Principal's Message

The primary purpose of St Ambrose 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 Ambrose Primary School 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 2020. Student work was proudly displayed in classrooms, on school noticeboards and in the school office. School achievement was highlighted and celebrated at many school assemblies. Our focus was to continue to build on the reputation that St Ambrose Primary School has earned as an exemplary school. The following list provides an indication of the school's academic achievements. In 2020 the school:

- Participated in the Mathematics Progressive Achievement Test. 3 Year 5 students scored in the highest achievement band.
- Participated in the Reading Progressive Achievement Test. 13 students across Years 4-6 scored in the highest achievement band.
- Won the Northern Rivers Green Innovation Awards. This was a great result from Year 5.
- Conducted Mathematics Assessment Interviews. 8 students achieved the highest growth point for components of Number.
- Achieved significant growth in oral language development in Kindergarten due to the successful implementation of play-based learning.

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 2020 the school:

- Conducted online simulated events in lieu of many events being postponed or cancelled due to COVID-19.
- Conducted Remembrance Day ceremony within all classrooms.
- Sent letters of support and thanks to frontline workers throughout the pandemic.
- Albeit adhering to restrictions and guidelines, the school was able to conduct a Graduation Mass and end of year School Award ceremonies. These were videoed and made available to all families.
- Provided an effective and comprehensive online education platform throughout COVID lockdown, which enabled students to continue with engaged and meaningful learning.

Students performed well at various sporting events throughout the year. The following list provides some examples of sporting highlights. In 2020:

- Due to COVID restrictions interschool sport was suspended for 2020.



- St Ambrose school was still able to conduct School Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics Carnivals. Winning houses were: Athletics - Gold; Swimming - Teal; and Cross Country - Teal.
- Was the first year St Ambrose school has had a specialized Physical Education Teacher. This allowed students to develop and be engaged in age appropriate activities taught by a qualified Physical Education teacher.

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 Ambrose Primary School is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

Brian Laybutt
Principal

1.2 A Parent Message

The official parent body is the Parish School Forum which consists of school leaders and 5 parent representatives who generally meet twice a term. The Forum's role is to:

- Enhance the partnership between the school and families.
- Coordinate school social / fundraising events.
- Give parental advice and feedback on a range of issues to school leaders.
- Provide a link with parents.
- Represent parents of the school when required.
- Review school policies and procedures.
- Assist with parent education and parent forums.

In 2020 the Forum conducted 8 meetings and discussed a range of issues. 6 of the 8 meetings were conducted purely on line and 2 were conducted with parents being present as well as online. Prominent on the agenda were issues pertaining to online learning and addressing COVID guidelines within the school context. Whilst many school initiated Parent Forum events had to be cancelled, the school was able to conduct:

- Kindergarten families welcome barbecue.
- Year 6 End of Year Graduation and farewell.
- St Ambrose Feast Day activities.
- Informative online webinars.

The school live-streamed all its Parent Forum meetings in 2020 - resulting in extremely high levels of engagement.

Jeff Bottle
Chairperson
Parent Forum

2.0 This Catholic School

2.1 The School Community

St Ambrose Primary School is located in Pottsville and is part of the St Anthony's Parish which serves the communities of School families are drawn from the towns and communities of Salt, Casuarina, Cabarita, Bogangar, Hastings Point, Tanglewood, Sea Breeze, Koala Beach, Pottsville, Cudgera Creek, Black Rocks, Wooyung, Burringbar, Billinudgal, Ocean Shores and Brunswick Heads., from which the school families are drawn.

Last year the school celebrated 7 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest Father Paul McDonald is involved in the life of the school.

St Ambrose Primary School is a parish school with strong links to the parish family. The school aims to involve the children and their families in the life of the parish through activities such as:

- Participation in a Sunday School Parish Mass, twice a term, whereby the students involved in Sacramental classes share commitment pledges with Parishioners while teachers oversee the ministry roles. COVID restrictions did curtail this participation to a large extent.
- Support for students from Parishioners in the form of prayer. Parishioners choose a child to pray for throughout the preparation and receiving of the Sacrament.
- Involvement with weekly Parish Masses on Tuesdays on a rotational basis whereby students lead singing and reading of prayers. Again this activity was limited because of COVID restrictions.
- Support for comprehensive Sacramental Programs where students, families, teachers, Leader of Evangelisation and the Parish Priest have a shared responsibility, including parent/parish information sessions, some online.
- Encouraging and supporting the Parish Altar Serving Ministry where time is allowed at school to practice and promote this Ministry among the students.
- Promoting and advertising Parish Mass times, special Church services and the online Religious Education resource "FORMED."
- Three of St Ambrose staff were members of the St Anthony's Parish Pastoral Council which meets regularly on a Wednesday afternoon.
- Promotion of student Religious Education Learnings shared with Parishioners through QR codes and displays in the Church.

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 two and a half 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 *The Mission of Jesus Christ Foundational Values Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore*. 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 Ambrose 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	28	20	29	31	24	26	17	175	159
Female	22	36	17	28	25	26	23	177	162
Indigenous *	0	2	1	2	0	2	0	7	8
EALD *	1	3	0	2	6	1	4	17	17

* count included in first two rows

NB: EALD refers to students who have English as an Additional Language or Dialect.

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, staff monitor attendance each day as a part of their duty of care. 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
95.7%	94.7%	95.5%	95.2%	93.5%	94.5%	93.6%	94.1%

2.4 Teacher Standards and Professional Learning

All teachers employed by the School are qualified to teach in NSW. Additionally, all teachers at this School who are responsible for delivering the curriculum are accredited with NESAs. Effective from October 2007, the minimum qualification for a teacher in a systemic school in the Diocese of Lismore is a four year teaching degree. Teachers at this School are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the *NSW Teacher Accreditation Act 2004*. Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher are voluntary. The number of teachers within the Diocese at these levels is as follows: Conditional 82 teacher(s); Provisional 93 teacher(s); Proficient 946 teacher(s); Highly Accomplished 1 teacher(s); Lead 2 teacher(s). Teacher status at individual schools can be sourced directly from the School.

At this school there are 27 teacher(s) accredited with NESAs, 17 teacher(s) with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education, 1 Indigenous staff and 9 non-teaching staff.

2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention

The average teacher attendance figure is 95.9%. This figure is provided to the school by the CSO.

2020 saw the employment of a specialist Physical Education Teacher 2 days per week. This position complements other specialist teachers previously employed in the school - Music, Art and Drama teacher. In addition to this the school also employed a School Counsellor 4 days per week. During the year we had one teacher take maternity leave. Apart from the disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 lockdowns all other classes continued with little disruption.

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:

The school constantly revisits its school values - Responsible, Respect, Courage - and embeds these within the daily life of the school.

Programs such as those listed below were implemented in 2020. These focused on respect and personal responsibility and were facilitated by the school counsellor:

- Cool Kids - 10-week anxiety program for Years 4-6.
- Cool Little Kids - 6-week parent only program for parents with students that are experiencing either separation, social or generalised anxiety.
- Seasons for Growth Program - The program runs for 8 weeks and groups are divided into ages 6-8 years, 9-10 years and 11-12 years. Seasons for Growth aims to strengthen the social and emotional wellbeing of students that have experienced loss (separation or divorce), grief or significant change (moving cities/schools).
- "Talk About" - social communication skills program run with Year 3 boys with the Additional Needs teacher.
- Kindergarten 4 week social and emotional skills units.
- Focus on friendship groups focussing on conflict resolution, communication and social skills.
- Mental Health: myth or reality unit for Years 4-6.

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.

- In 2020 the school participated in the School Review and Improvement process supervised and supported by the Catholic Schools Office. "School Review and Improvement" offers the school the opportunity to review all aspects of school life and plan ahead for the next three years. During School Review and Improvement, a number of staff, parent and student surveys and meetings were conducted to gauge the opinion of all members of the school community.
- At Parent Forum meetings, families are not only invited to join the live stream but they can comment on items being discussed and submit agenda items.



- The school has a designated Parent Forum email address whereby families can contact the Chairperson of the Parent Forum and make suggestions re school improvements, provide general feedback and/or seek clarification re issues/events pertaining to the school.

3.0 Teaching and Learning

3.1 School Curriculum

The school provides a comprehensive educational program based on and taught in accordance with the NSW Education Standards Authority (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.

- At St Ambrose children have specialist teachers each week for Creative Arts (Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts) and Physical Education.
- Whole school agreed best practice informs the pedagogical approach to teaching English and Mathematics. Year level teachers work collaboratively to target individual learning goals in small guided groups. They meet on a regular basis to analyse student data and plan learning experiences to improve student learning outcomes. State, system and school assessments are used to track student learning growth.
- CASL (Collaborative Analysis of Student Learning) meetings occur weekly between specialist staff, teachers and the leadership team. In these meetings the academic, social and emotional needs of individual students are discussed and action plans are formed to support students.
- A variety of Literacy and Numeracy intervention programs are offered across all year levels. These include STAR, Quick Smart, LLI, EMU and Support-A-Talker.
- There is a consistent approach to the use of Apple Technology from K-6. Teachers authentically embed technology across all Key Learning Areas. Students' skill development is mapped on a continuum.

21st Century pedagogy underpins learning across the school. Technology is integrated into the design of learning. The planning for this is underpinned by The 5 Elements of Learning (Teamwork, Critical Thinking, Personalisation of Learning, Real-world Engagement, Communication & Creation).

Year 5 participated in the 'Green Innovation Awards' last year. They created a webpage that showcases their vision and commitment to sustainability.

Additionally, classes have published iBooks which are accessible to the wider community.

In Kindergarten, students start each day with play-based inquiry learning. K-6 classrooms are flexible and fluid learning environments that promote interaction and discussion. These creative learning environments foster high student engagement and achievement.

The parish primary school offers a strong co-curricular program including student participation in:

- Parish School Family masses held throughout the year.
- School based sporting events held within the school grounds.
- Clubs run within the school include Gardening, Drama, Art, Board Games and Library.
- Unfortunately, COVID-19 resulted in most events being cancelled in 2020.



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

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 2020 were:

Staff Professional Learning Activity	Date	Presenter
Apple Tech to Enhance Teaching and Learning Part 1	20/07/2020	Chelsea Fisher Mike Lubans Grace McMahon Brian Laybutt
Apple Tech to Enhance Teaching and Learning Part 2	24/09/2020	Chelsea Fisher Brian Laybutt
Staff Retreat Day	25/09/2020	Sue Falcke Brian Laybutt
Professional Learning	12/10/2020	Sue Falcke Chelsea Fisher Caitlin Martin Megan Longden Tori Moody Maree Spamer

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

Activity	Staff numbers	Presenter
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The professional learning expenditure has been calculated at \$2126 per staff member. This figure has been calculated by the CSO and reflects expenditure on casual release days and professional development activities in particular categories.

4.0 School Policies

4.1 Enrolment Policy

Parish schools were established as places of educational excellence and places that transmit the faith, in the mission entrusted to the Church by our Lord Jesus Christ. They form part of a tradition of Catholic education provided by religious and lay teachers in the Diocese of Lismore for over 150 years. They also fulfil parents' rights to choose the schooling for their children which reflects their own faith, values, beliefs and hopes. Catholic schools have a particular responsibility to provide a Catholic religious education to children baptised in the Catholic faith and to support parents in honouring the commitments that they made on behalf of their children at baptism. The Catholic school is also "open to all who want to share its educational and faith goals inspired by Christian principles" (Congregatio de Institutione Catholica 2009). Most importantly, there is a special place in parish schools for those



with the greatest need, especially in areas of lesser educational options or lower socio economic circumstances, and efforts should be made to encourage such enrolments, within the vision of the Bishop of Lismore for the poor. Every new enrolment at St Ambrose Primary School 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. The School Enrolment Policy explains the Parish enrolment guidelines. A copy of the enrolment policy is located in the school office or it can be accessed on the [school's website](#). There have been no changes to this policy this year.

4.2 Pastoral Care Policy

The school's Pastoral Care Policy is based on the principles of restorative justice and procedural fairness. The policy reflects the vision and mission of the Catholic Church and is characterised by safety, trust and mutual respect. To live out this policy the school has adopted various programs aimed at helping students value themselves and experience wellbeing. These include programs focussing on self-esteem, social relationships, moral development, vocational awareness, sexuality, anti-bullying, drug awareness, health and personal safety. The school's pastoral care program has been developed in consultation with staff, parents and students and is available on the [school's website](#). There have been key changes to this policy.

4.3 Discipline Policy

The school does not sanction corporal punishment or allow parents to administer corporal punishment in the school.

The school policy is based on procedural fairness and ensures that school practices respect the dignity, rights and fundamental freedoms of individual students. Students are required to abide by the school rules and to follow the directions of teachers and other people with delegated authority. Where disciplinary action is required any penalty imposed will vary according to the nature of the breach and/or the student's prior behaviour. The policy is discussed with students, staff and parents on a regular basis. Reminders about the policy are regularly included in school newsletters. Relevant sections of the policy are also published in the student diary and it is available on the [school's website](#). There have been key changes to this policy.

4.4 Anti-Bullying Policy

The school's Anti Bullying Policy fosters a cohesive approach to the issue of bullying and includes specific initiatives that are designed to promote pastoral care, wellbeing and safe school communities. This policy covers the bullying of students with disabilities. Disabled children and young people need to know they have the right to be safe from bullying, what bullying is, how to keep safe and what to do if adults do not do enough to stop the bullying. The dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and intrinsic to our education ministry. There have been no changes to this policy this year and it is available on the [school website](#).

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. There have been no changes to this policy this year and it is available on the [school website](#).



5.0 School Determined Improvement Targets

Each year the school implements the School Improvement Plan. 2020 was a very rewarding year.

Key improvements achieved this year	Key Improvements for 2021
Mission of Jesus Christ Stage 3 students were engaged more holistically in Religious Education through the introduction of Project Based Learning (PBL).	Mission of Jesus Christ The school will continue to introduce new pedagogies/strategies to support student engagement in Religious Education.
Learning and Teaching As evidenced in teaching programs and class practice technology was meaningfully embedded within the curriculum.	Learning and Teaching To ensure all students experience one year's academic growth in a school year.
Pastoral Care The school ensured that the newly appointed School Counsellor transitioned smoothly into the role at St Ambrose.	Pastoral Care The school will implement a range of programs that will meet the well-being needs of students.
Leadership All staff were provided with Leadership opportunities whereby they could take ownership of specific school roles or work in a collaborative group setting.	Leadership The leadership team will work closely with all staff to ensure that conversations regarding student learning are rigorously and meaningfully conducted.
Family School Partnership Parents were given the opportunity to engage more fully within the school through various forms of technology.	Family School Partnership The school will continue to explore ways in which we can continue to improve communication and outreach to families.

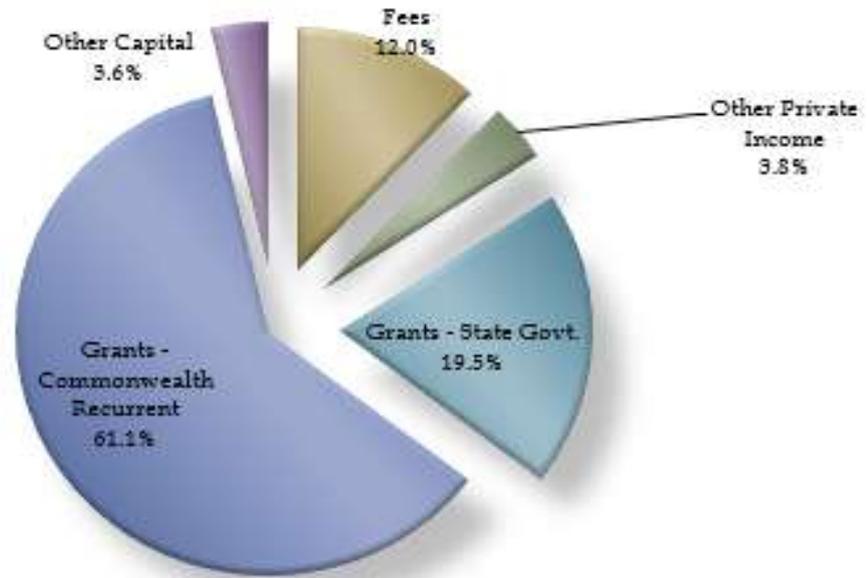
6.0 Financial Information

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 2020 is presented below:



2020 INCOME - St Ambrose Catholic Primary School POTTSVILLE



2020 EXPENSE - St Ambrose Catholic Primary School POTTSVILLE

