Columba Catholic Primary School

Bunyip

Annual Report to the School Community

2009

Registered School Number: 1996
## School Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Contact Information</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address:</strong></td>
<td>28-38 Hope Street, Bunyip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal:</strong></td>
<td>Jan Gubbins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parish Priest:</strong></td>
<td>Fr Thomas Mannakulath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Board Chair:</strong></td>
<td>Glenn Pullin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Telephone:</strong></td>
<td>03 5629 5933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email:</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:principal@bunyip.catholic.edu.au">principal@bunyip.catholic.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Website:</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.bunyip.catholic.edu.au">www.bunyip.catholic.edu.au</a></td>
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</table>
Our School Vision

“Those who seek the Lord lack no great thing”
St Columba

Columba Catholic Primary School is a community that gives witness to the Church’s mission to proclaim Christ’s message. Our hope is to further develop an environment of spiritual, academic, emotional and physical well being.

At Columba:

We believe in providing a welcome and open place of learning for those who wish to foster Christian values.

We believe in providing quality Religious Education that enables students to deepen their faith.

We believe that each child is entitled to a comprehensive curriculum that acknowledges that all children learn differently and can achieve.

We believe in providing positive learning experiences as well as a positive environment that encourages and challenges students to take responsibility for their own learning.

We believe teachers require special qualities of heart and mind; they must prepare carefully and be constantly aware of changes to current teaching practice.

We believe in providing a welcome, friendly and safe environment where everyone is respected and treated fairly and justly.

We believe students and staff thrive in a school that is well managed and resourced.

We believe in acknowledging the vital role of parents in the education of their children.

We believe in building on the partnership that exists between school families, parish and the wider community.
Columba Catholic Primary School opened for the first time in Hope Street Bunyip in March, 2001. Columba is part of the Iona-Maryknoll Parish. The school has a modern and innovative facility including new classrooms and a library containing the latest technology. In 2009 there were 15 staff members, 72 families and 114 students. Columba prides itself on catering for the individual needs of students with extensive intervention programs and extra-curricula activities. Columba uses the Bluearth sports program and has a strong Arts focus with students regularly participating in music, visual and performing arts. Columba has a tremendously dedicated staff who use exemplary teaching skills and strategies to facilitate learning. Through these learning experiences students are taught to be life-long, co-operative and inquiring learners. Columba boasts highly successful student leadership initiatives and very effective pastoral care and wellbeing processes. Our motto is ‘Let Your Light Shine’. Parents are an integral part of the school and are encouraged to participate in all programs. Education is seen as a partnership between home, school and the wider parish community including the Sacramental program which is “Parish Based, Family Centred and School Supported”.
2009 was indeed an exciting time for the **Columba School Advisory Board**.

Some points of note were:

We welcomed Michelle Gooden and Keli Fox to the Board, while Julie McMillan and Pauline Agneletto departed after having both served for two terms.

We saw unprecedented Government funds provided for building works which resulted in what appears to be an entirely new school.

We revised and renewed a number of policies, such as the Enrolment and School Fee Policy as well as reviewing the Master Plan for the school.

We put in place the groundwork for several more policies, such as the Home Learning Policy in which the foundations of the children's homework were examined and this resulted in the Home Learning Grid that is now part of the curriculum.

After the 2009 bushfires, we discussed and reviewed bushfire management procedures and evaluated school assessment procedures as well as planning for grade structures and enrolments towards the end of the school year.

Working in conjunction with the Parents & Friend's Association, we increased the school’s learning assets with the purchase of interactive whiteboards and signage at the front of school. We initiated a greater public presence for the School Board within the school community with representation at all school functions, including performances and information sessions.

Glenn Pullin  
Chairperson *on behalf of the*  
Columba School Advisory Board
Education in Faith

Goals and Intended Outcomes

To deepen student’s faith and understanding of their relationship with God through their improved knowledge of Jesus’ life.

Through:-
- Continuing to provide opportunities for students to reflect on their faith, pray together and celebrate liturgies and Sacraments.
- The Promotion of prayer, liturgies and Sacraments across all grade levels.
- A continued emphasis of service to the local and global community.
- The development of a sacred space at school for prayer and liturgy.

Columba has an excellent partnership with the Parish of St Joseph’s Iona and the other Parishes and Catholic Schools within the area. The staff of Columba fully supports the Family-centered, Parish-based Sacramental Program and staff representatives attend all Parish Celebrations. Columba said farewell to Fr Michael Willemsen in May having provided both supportive and thoughtful leadership to the school community. In June we welcomed Fr Thomas Mannakulath as the new Parish Priest.

The Staff continue to provide a comprehensive and effective Religious Education Curriculum through the implementation of Journeying Together in Hope. The extent to which parent, students and staff value and support all that the school provides in Faith Education is clear to see in the many achievements which are listed below.

Achievements:

- Support given by students, families and staff to local and global charities including, Shave for a Cure, Caritas, The Bishop’s Family Foundation, St Vincent De Paul, Safety House, Royal Children’s Hospital Appeal and MS Readathon.
- Each class presented a Prayer or Reflection at the beginning of Assembly demonstrating learning from their RE topic or celebrating an event in the Church year.
- Classes prepared a Mass each term as well as a Reconciliation celebration.
- Grade 5 students were invited to attend the Healing Mass at Iona and helped serve morning tea to the parishioners.
- 90% attendance by staff at the Commissioning Mass and combined Parishes in Partnership, Staff Spirituality Retreat held at Rawson in May with Fr Elio Capra as the Guest Speaker.
- Two whole staff inservices at Warragul exploring the theme of the complexities of Christian Life and Sacraments preparation with Sr Helen Carboon.
- 95% attendance rate of families in Sacramental Workshops and at least two staff representatives at each liturgical event including Commissioning masses and Sacramental celebrations.
- More masses celebrated at school in the Multipurpose Room rather than at the parish church in Iona. Many parents attended these Masses and 2009 also saw an increase in the number of parishioners attending school masses.

Teacher and parent attendance at the events mentioned above indicate a high level of satisfaction concerning the religious goals of the school.
Learning and Teaching

Goals and Intended Outcomes

To provide a learning environment that excites, engages and encourages students’ growth.

To encourage students to experience a sense of joy and optimism in their journey to becoming successful learners.

Through:-

- Provision of individualised programs to meet the specific needs and interests of students
- Creating opportunities to celebrate the successes of all students in all curriculum areas
- Effectively use data and assessment information to inform planning and teaching
- Extend and develop the use of ICT in all curriculum areas
- Promote learning activities through the newsletter and displays around the school.

A highly qualified and enthusiastic staff worked tirelessly to provide for the wellbeing and learning of all students throughout 2009. Extra-curricula and co-curricula activities have a high priority at Columba to ensure that the needs of all students are taken into consideration. We successfully provided activities which enhanced classroom programs and met the individual interests of the students. 2009 was particularly exciting because we welcomed Cathy Edwards as our Music/Drama teacher. Cathy not only provided music lessons across the grades but also introduced a Choir, Guitar Club & Instrumental Group.

Achievements:

- 3962 books borrowed from the Library by students throughout the course of the year which was 957 more books than 2008.
- Participation by all Grade 5 & 6 students in an Adventure Camp at Forest Edge, Neerim South.
- Student satisfaction was evident through their involvement in many extra-curricula and co-curricula activities including Debating and Public Speaking Competitions, Equestrian events and the Chess Club. The acclaimed Arts Showcase (School Performance 2009) was held in the Multi-purpose Room in November. Students from each grade sang and danced the night away to the delight and appreciation of the audience.
Incursions and excursions were an important part of learning at Columba throughout 2009 and the Tony Bones Anti-Bullying Theatre Production particularly captured the student’s interest as did the World of Maths incursion and Ciao Italia cultural presentation. Both parents and students were very supportive of these activities and student attendance is a clear indication of the importance of these opportunities as learning experiences. The Junior Grades enjoyed a visit to the Zoo and the Senior Grades used many real life skills in Literacy & Numeracy during ‘Earn & Learn’ in Term Four. The majority of Grade 5 & 6 students mentioned in their self-evaluation in December that ‘Earn & Learn’ was their favorite learning experience of the year.

Students in Grade 3 & 5 participated in external assessment procedures in 2009. Our cohort of students is too small to predict trends for our community particularly when comparison data involves groups of less than 10 students. However, the following information emphasises the variable nature of abilities and skills in each grade as well as the specific and particular learning needs of individual students when they participate in these programs. It also demonstrates the incredible energy and dedication displayed by teachers to ensure that individual needs are being meet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Three Reading</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-11.8</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Three Writing</td>
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<td>91.7</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Year Three Grammar and Punctuation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year Three Numeracy</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>-6.2</td>
<td>93.8</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year Five Writing</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-7.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year Five Spelling</td>
<td>92.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year Five Grammar and Punctuation</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-7.7</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Five Numeracy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall we are pleased with the proportion of students achieving at or above the National Benchmarks in 2009. As would be expected there are variations from the 2008 results which is on the whole due to the particular learning needs between the two cohorts of students. There are however some areas of concern that are being addressed in 2010. Additional support for students in Junior classes has been provided with the emphasis on reading and writing. Professional learning for teachers in relation to these areas has also been put in place.

The Staff believe in rigorous and ongoing school-based assessment to assist in the development of programs for all students and in planning an appropriate curriculum to suit learning needs. Examples include:

- **PIPs (Prep)** Post Test conducted late Term Four indicated excellent progress of Prep students across the year
- **EMU (Grade 1)** post test indicated 100% success rate for participants
- **Benchmark Reading Assessments** for Grade 1 & 2, all students reaching age appropriate levels
- **PAT Maths** for Senior students indicated continued progress for all students.

During 2009 Intervention Programs continued in response to the Literacy and Numeracy needs as indicated by student assessments. Programs such as EMU, Decoding Strategies and Reading Programs as well as the employment of a Literacy Support Teacher were put in place to cater for these individual learning needs throughout the school. During Parent/Teacher Meetings parents expressed their satisfaction about these programs and indicated their confidence in the progress and achievements of their children.

Senior activities: Earn & Learn, Aussie Theme Day, Guitar Club & Swimming.
Leadership and Management

Goals and Intended Outcomes

To provide opportunities and support for all members of the school community to achieve their leadership potential.

Through:-
- opportunities for students to develop leadership skills both within the school and local community
- opportunities for students to participate in decision-making processes with regard to their own learning
- increasing opportunities for parents to have input into the school
- increasing opportunities for staff members to undertake leadership roles

Achievements

During 2009 the Columba Code was introduced with the involvement of parents, students & staff. The students participated with enthusiasm in activities and discussions during the development of the Columba Code which focuses on respect for self, others, the school, uniform and learning.

The children represented their school with pride on excursions, at sports carnivals and during community events. The Senior students displayed excellent leadership throughout the year and set a great tone for the school. The staff continued to be involved in many professional development opportunities, many outside of school hours. The staff set an excellent example of life-long learning which is a fundamental aim at Columba.

Results & Achievements

- Two staff members undertaking study for Accreditation to teach Religious Education and one staff member completed studies for a Master’s Degrees in Education. As is indicated in the following data, Columba has a highly qualified staff who exemplify life-long learning and academic achievement. 23.08% of Teachers have a Masters Degree, 30.77% have a Graduate Diploma, 61.54% also have a Bachelor of Education and 30.77% also have an Advanced Diploma.

- $11,176.78 was expended on professional development opportunities for staff across 2009 and this represents an average of $798 per teacher. Highlights for Staff included the Spirituality In-service, EMU training, Religious Education, Student Wellbeing, Technology (use of interactive whiteboards) and Literacy & Numeracy Days. Sessions with Jo Osler developing effective teaching and learning strategies were particularly well received by staff members. Their high level of satisfaction became evident when all staff without exception integrated their learning from these activities into classroom practice. All 15 staff members at Columba participated in professional learning opportunities in 2009.

Staff with the Bishop of Sale in Term Three.
At the beginning of the year we welcomed Alanna Vanderhorst and Lisa Shaw as new staff members. We were delighted to appoint two graduates to Columba and found their energetic and enthusiastic approach inspiring both in the classroom and across the school. Staff changes in 2009 represent a staff retention rate of 72.3%.

During 2009, every staff member held a position of leadership and responsibility for a specific curriculum area. The staff worked with great dedication and persistence to ensure that students received the best possible learning opportunities. The staff attendance rate at school being an amazing 90.34% including Professional Development days is a clear indicator of high level of satisfaction with the school.

Sustainability issues became a focus at Columba with the continuation of the Water-saving Program conducted by Grade 4, Recycling regime and Garden maintenance initiated by Grade 5 & 6.

The highly successful Buddy Program continued between Preps and Grade 6 students culminating in a Buddy Transition Program for new preps in Term 4.

Opportunities for Grade Five and Six students to further develop leadership skills by participating in the fortnightly School Leaders Program and by acting as sports captains. The school leaders are also responsible for awarding the much valued Playground Awards at Assembly. Senior students used their excellent ICT skills to prepare powerpoints which were used at several school events including assemblies, Mother’s Day Morning Tea & Liturgies.

The development of a Building Committee comprising Principal, Parish Priest and members of the School Board was particularly helpful in planning for the many building projects initiated in 2008/2009. A sheltered area, refurbishment of the Administration area and two new classrooms were all completed in 2009.

Review of the Home Learning Policy by the staff of Columba and the School Board leading to an introduction of a Home Learning Grid.

In the playground incidences of inappropriate behaviour were further reduced and during anti-bullying and friendship surveys the students particularly commented on the inclusive nature of games at playtime and lunchtime.
School Community and Student Wellbeing

Goals and Intended Outcomes

To generate sense of connectedness between school, families, Parish and community members through an emphasis on wellbeing and resilience.

Through:-

- Improvement of behaviour both in the classroom and playground
- Providing a consistent, whole school approach by staff to wellbeing and discipline
- Improve data collection processes for wellbeing and medical issues

Achievements

2009 began with the threat of bushfires and although families experienced very little loss of property the constant anxiety and threat of fires remained until the beginning of April. Students were often concerned during days of high wind and smoke. The staff worked diligently and with great care to develop resilience in students and to ensure the most effective emergency management procedures were in place. The Columba Community is very grateful to the local CFA for their assistance and advice both at the beginning of the year and in Term Four to help during our Fire Awareness Week.

The school had another successful year in 2009 in school sports and the Bluearth program continued to be a highly motivating and popular activity for all students. Many opportunities were offered to the wider community to participate in school events. The Columba School Advisory Board and Parents and Friends Association worked tirelessly throughout the year to provide support for the school and ensure the ongoing development of facilities and resources. Throughout 2009 the importance of the partnership between home and school continued to be emphasised.

Results & Achievements

- Excellent student participation in community events such as ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day services as well as visiting the local Hostel and providing entertainment for elderly citizens. The feedback from local community groups is always extremely positive and we regularly receive compliments on the behaviour of our students during local events.
- Overall Student attendance figures at Columba are excellent with a commendable average of 96.57% per student. Parents greatly value the education provided at Columba and recognize the importance of regular attendance at School.

Family Picnic & Games, Hillview, Fire Awareness & ANZAC Day
The **Family Picnic** in Term One was great fun and a good opportunity for teachers to meet parents and for families to participate in Bluearth Games.

The **Father’s Day Breakfast** and **Mother’s Day Morning Tea** were outstanding successes much to the enthusiasm and delight of the students. Greater than 80% of families attended these events. Students played games with Dads and played host to mums as well as providing entertainment at both events.

Utilisation of the school facilities by local Parish and Community groups is encouraged with after-school sports activities, crafts and the local soccer club conducted its movie nights at Columba.

Lunchtime activities provided by Kelly Sport and the Country Woman’s Association provided further learning opportunities for Senior Students through knitting classes.

A highlight of the year was the annual **Columba Fete** with over $10,000 raised on a beautiful Autumn Day. Because our Fete is so popular throughout the local area, many families take the opportunity to attend the Fete prior to enrolling their child in Prep. These families always comment on the welcoming nature of the Columba community.

School success and maximum student involvement in **Sporting Competitions** including; Winter Round Robin, Athletics, Hooptime, Cross Country, Swimming and Equestrian events. Many students participated at Regional and Zone level with the Grade Four relay team reaching the state final in Athletics. Two Grade 6 students were selected in the top 30 of the Victorian Primary School’s Team in Hockey and Football and the Junior Hooptime team made it to the Victorian Grand Final.

Grade 3 & 4 students were incredibly excited to participate in a tennis clinic and the Grade 5 & 6 enjoyed a golf clinic provided by Garfield Golf Club.

The **Christmas Carol Concert** was a wonderful way for the entire community to celebrate the achievements of the year. Everyone enjoyed the cosy atmosphere of the Multi-Purpose Room and joined in the singing of traditional Christmas carols.
Financial Performance
Financial Performance for the year ended 31 December 2009
(The information for this section is from the VRQA Financial Report tab on your AFS.)

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<tr>
<th>Reporting Framework</th>
<th>Modified Cash</th>
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<td><strong>Recurrent income</strong></td>
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<td>School fees</td>
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<td>Other fee income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private income</td>
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<tr>
<td>State government recurrent grants</td>
<td>220,247</td>
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<td>Australian government recurrent grants</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total recurrent income</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,015,010</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Recurrent expenditure**                                | Tuition       |
| Salaries, allowances and related expenses                | 776,062       |
| Non salary expenses                                     | 134,077       |
| **Total recurrent expenditure**                          | **910,139**   |

| **Capital income and expenditure**                       | Tuition       |
| Government capital grants                                | 1,188,092     |
| Capital fees and levies                                  | 45,811        |
| Other capital income                                     | 44,615        |
| **Total capital income**                                 | **1,278,518** |
| **Total capital expenditure**                            | **1,007,449** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loans (includes refundable enrolment deposits and recurrent, capital and bridging loans)</th>
<th>Tuition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total opening balance</strong></td>
<td><strong>119,012</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total closing balance</strong></td>
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Note that the information provided above does not include the following items:
System levies charged to individual schools, intra-systemic transfers and diocesan supplementary capital fund (SCF) supported borrowings for primary schools. The information provided is not comparable with other educational sectors. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) is in the process of reviewing the Financial Questionnaire (FQ) during 2009, that may ultimately change the method of reporting these exclusions.
Principal's Report

Future Directions

2009 was an extraordinary year at Columba. The year began with great anxiety because of the bushfire threat and lasted well into the second term. Whilst this was a difficult and trying time for the school community many positive and affirming actions were demonstrated during the threat. The whole community banded together to look out for each other, share concerns and patiently await improvement in weather and bushfire conditions. The senior students organized and facilitated a bushfire fundraising day towards the end of term one and displayed excellent leadership skills and great resilience as well as service to the community. An amazing total of $500 was raised through fundraising and these funds were donated to the local CFA. This was an extraordinary achievement considering Columba had only 72 families in 2009.

In 2009 one of our key objectives was to develop Leadership across all areas of the school community including staff, students and parents. Leadership in learning, management and in Service. The leadership skills displayed by the students during the bushfire crisis and throughout the rest of the year was exactly what we wanted to achieve! We are very proud of Columba Students.

In 2010 we will build on these skills, not just for students but for our families as well. We pride ourselves on being a community school with a strong partnership between home and school. We know that excellence in education at Columba is only achieved as a result of the support and input of our parents. Parents at Columba are great role-models of learning!

2010 will be the time to make the optimum use of our new facilities. With the expected completion of the Learning Centre (Library), new classrooms and circulation area a new era in education begins at Columba. Columba will be at the forefront of innovative learning and this is especially pleasing after the unsettled nature of 2009 caused by bushfires, floods and continuous movement of resources and equipment to make way for building and renovation.

2010 will also be a time to showcase literacy & numeracy at Columba. Throughout the year we will highlight and celebrate classroom learning through the newsletter, displays and school events. We wish to ensure families have a greater understanding of the wonderful work occurring in classrooms. We also want students to be very proud of their achievements in learning and continue to strive to produce their very best efforts.

We look forward to continued success at Columba, building on the achievements of 2009 and moving forward together as a strong community committed to excellence in learning.

Jan Gubbins
Principal