About This Report

St Joseph’s School Alstonville is registered by the Board of Studies (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 Board of Studies requirements for Registration.

This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, year books and other regular communications. The Report will be available on the school’s website by 30 June 2014 following its submission to the Board of Studies.

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 66281009 or by visiting the website at http://www.alstplism.catholic.edu.au/
Principal’s Message

The primary purpose of St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School Alstonville 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 Joseph’s offers students a 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 faith and spiritual growth of the students as well as opportunities 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 2013. 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 Joseph’s has earned as an exemplary school. The following list provides an indication of the school’s academic achievements:

- Students participated in ICAS testing in Mathematics, Spelling, English, Science and Computer Skills; the Australian Maths Trust Competition and the Maths Olympiad.
- Students participated in a variety of Gifted and Talented opportunities in Art, Maths and Science.
- Students were active in Chess opportunities, gaining 2nd place in the regional Primary Chess Competition.
- The Gift of the Gab public speaking day enabled students to then participate in the regional public speaking competition.

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:

- Students were involved in NAIDOC celebrations planned by our school committee. The activities revolved around building cultural awareness for our students.
- Our school choir, band and percussion band performed at the Lismore Musical Festival receiving several 1st places; at the Rous Unplugged and for the Tibouchina Club as well as at local markets and other community events.
- All our students were involved in Dance Fever for Term 3 with a “Dance Off” held as a culmination of their work.
- The School played a major part in the Alstonville Show celebrations with both the choir and percussion band performing, as well as students supplying a large number of individual and group entries to the competitions.
- The school plays a major part in community celebrations such as Anzac Day, Alstonville Week and the Ballina Shire celebrations.
Students performed well at various sporting events during the year. The following list provides some examples of sporting highlights:

- Our students were successful in reaching Polding level in Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics.
- Our students also represented our Diocese in AFL, Netball, Rugby Union, Touch Football and Soccer.
- Students had the opportunity to participate in Rugby, AFL and Cricket days held in the region.
- Students participated in a Water Polo fun day.
- The school held very successful Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics carnivals and was very successful at Zone competitions winning the Small School trophy.

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 Joseph’s is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

Therese Seymour
Principal

**A Parent Message**

St Joseph’s has an active and committed parent body. 2013 was filled with activities that included parents, children, grandparents, staff, parishioners and the wider community.

The School’s Parish School Forum (PSF) Groups were well supported at the various functions throughout the school in 2013. We saw the continued success of Joey’s Golf Dads. The aim of this group is to help the dads in our school community find a social outlet and help build a stronger school community, as well as embrace new families and raise funds for the school. This group continues to go from strength to strength with a successful weekend away for members and their families.

A number of PSF groups have also been involved in the co-ordination of events this year. These events were all well attended due to the efforts of parents and school staff. Some of the events hosted were the ICAS competitions, a disco, a trivia night, Dance Fever, the Lismore Lantern Parade, NAIDOC week, Rice Day which was to raise awareness to the plight of the Burmese People and also the annual Celebration of Family Day. Our social committee was again busy with the various social functions throughout the year.

We hosted very successful Mother’s and Father’s Day stalls; these stalls prove to be very popular with the children and parents. We had lots of helpers at the stalls. Liturgies to celebrate these events were well attended by family members and beautifully put together by staff.

Several of our parents are active representatives on the Lismore Diocesan Parent Assembly and we had some school families attend the Family Faith Retreats facilitated by the Catholic Schools Assembly.
Our fundraising efforts came to fruition with the finishing touches being added to our fixed playground equipment. It is wonderful to see our children enjoying the benefits of this equipment.

As a school we participated in the Coles Supermarket Schools for Sports initiative and we received many dockets thanks to the support of our families and parish members.

Parent/Carer helpers in our school are a great asset at St Joseph's. Class Parent Reps organise family gatherings throughout the year, these gatherings continue to develop a positive school community. They are also an excellent networking opportunity for those working parents that may be unable to attend events during school hours.

We also have many parents who come into the classrooms and help our staff with a variety of tasks, including reading groups, maths groups and art projects.

The parents of St. Joseph's School are an integral part of the school community and together with the staff of the school work to provide the very best learning opportunities and environment for our children; it is a pleasure to be involved. We look forward to a bright 2014.

Deb Howe
Co-ordinator
Parish School Forum

This Catholic School

St Joseph's is located in Alstonville and is part of the Our Lady of the Rosary/ St Patrick's Parish which serves the communities of Alstonville and Wardell. School families are drawn from the towns and communities of Alstonville, Wollongbar, Wardel, Meerschaum Vale, Alstonvale, Richmond Hill and Macleans Ridges. Last year the school celebrated 93 years of Catholic education.

The Parish Priest Fr Max Gow is involved in the life of the school.

St Joseph's 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 such activities such as:

- celebration of Family Day and Family Week
- activities based around Catholic Schools Week
- a parish based Sacramental program for Eucharist and Confirmation
- a well supported Altar Server training program
- whole-school daily Christian meditation
- participation in Family Groups- a program entitled Conversations about Catholics.
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 this parish school is 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 parish school life. Religious Education is always given priority in our school and classroom curriculum and planning.

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

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

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<tr>
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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>TOTAL 2013</th>
<th>TOTAL 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBOTE (Language background other than English)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Curriculum

The school provides a comprehensive educational program based on and taught in accordance with the Board of Studies 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 2013 the school moved to working in staged open classrooms with additional staff there to support the pedagogical changes necessary for contemporary learning.
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, 22 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 23 students.

In Literacy there were four elements tested. These were reading, writing, spelling, 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 Joseph’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 Joseph’s students in each band compared to the State percentage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of students in Bands 1 to 6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BAND</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Punctuation</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number, Patterns and Algebra</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy
Year 5 NAPLAN results in Literacy and Numeracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy</th>
<th>Percentage of students in Bands 3 to 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BAND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Punctuation</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number, Patterns and Algebra</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Points of interest

**Year 3**

Year 3 (Boys-16 students) are 31 scale scores above the state average in the test aspect of Reading. 76% of our Year 3 students sit in the top three Reading bands with 40.9% sitting in Band 6 which is an excellent result.

64% of the students sit in Band 4 and 5 in Writing; therefore the challenge for us is to move this significant cohort in Band 4 into the top bands.

Nearly 55% of the Year 3 cohort sit in Bands 3 to 5 in Numeracy so an identified focus for 2014 is the need to concentrate on Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry.

Thorough collaborative programming in Mathematics, in line with our school Numeracy Plan we will ensure these areas are targeted.
Year 5

Year 5 (Girls-12 students) are 28 scale scores above the state average growth in the test aspect of Grammar & Punctuation.

In Literacy between 65% and 76% of students sit between Band 6 and 8 but the significant numbers in all aspects in Band 6 and/or 7 poses the challenge to target these children and prepare them for growth in the Year 7 NAPLAN assessment. Writing is an aspect of Literacy of particular concern in this cohort as 60% of the group were sitting in Band 6.

Just over 76% of the Year 5 cohort sit in Bands 5 to 7 in Numeracy so an identified focus for 2014 is the need to concentrate on Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry.

As highlighted above collaborative planning in Mathematics guided by our school Numeracy Plan will target these areas.

Our focus on the inquiry model of learning, QuickSmart numeracy, Enrichment Tutors and Learning Coaches will all combine to meet the challenges highlighted above.

Teacher Standards and Professional Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Those not having qualifications described in 1 or 2 above but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate relevant knowledge.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number of staff identifying as indigenous employed at the school.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Total number of non-teaching staff employed in the school.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All teachers have been involved in professional development activities during the year. These activities are designed to develop the 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 2013 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Development Days</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Retreat Day- Ignatian Spirituality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>School Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Curriculum</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Leader of Pedagogy/Leader of Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proclaim</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Catholic Schools Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Curriculum</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>School Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Learning Framework</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>School Executive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- collegial visits to Diocesan Catholic schools to investigate contemporary learning;
- teacher placement at schools in Sydney and Brisbane to collect ideas and evidence regarding pedagogical change for contemporary learning;
- Fire Safety conducted by FireStop at the school to maintain competency for all staff;
- attendance by three staff members at a John Hattie professional development day on Visible Learning;
- ongoing work in developing confidence and competency in the Science and English Australian Curriculum and the use of Moodle.

The professional learning expenditure has been calculated at $6841 per staff member. This figure has been calculated by CSO and reflects expenditure on casual release days and professional development activities in particular categories.

**Teacher Attendance and Retention**

The average teacher attendance figure is 92.89%. This figure is provided to the school by the CSO.

In 2013 a long serving staff member took long service leave and then retired. Another staff member took a year’s leave without pay to attend to a young family. Some staff took periods of long service leave.
Student Attendance

School attendance is always high. The Class Roll is marked every day and rolls are checked each term. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by classroom teachers. 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 their leave request.

The average student attendance rate for the school during 2013 was 97.6%. School attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance rates by Year group</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>97.8</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

School Policies

School policies are reviewed regularly. In 2013 the following policies were reviewed, updated or newly created:

- The School Behaviour and Discipline Policy including Anti Bullying procedures was updated with input from parents and staff.
- The School Evacuation and Lock down policy was updated after drills were held.
Enrolment Policy

Every new enrolment at St Joseph’s Alstonville 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.

Pastoral Care Policy

This policy incorporates the Behaviour Policy as well as all aspects of the pastoral care of students, staff and families.

At St Joseph’s Alstonville we have a strong focus on the pastoral care and wellbeing issues related to our staff, students and families. We work in supporting individual students, small groups, whole classes and staff. We also have a School Welfare Officer who assists students in the classroom and on the playground with a range of issues including friendships, integrating into a new school or stage, appropriate play, providing emotional support to students who may be experiencing family breakdown, illness in the family or changes such as relocation to a new area.

As a school we have school leadership groups for our Year 5 and 6 students which help them to build their leadership skills and support the younger students in our school. One of the groups that focuses on the pastoral care area is the Better Buddies program which assigns our Kindergarten students to a Year 6 buddy to help show them around the school and develop positive friendship groups. Our Social Justice Group works in the school to promote positive ways to help others in our school, local and global community. Some of the activities for 2013 were Rice Day for Burma, Caritas Project Compassion, Mini Vinnies Easter Hat Parade for St Vincent de Paul, The St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal and Christmas Hampers for St Vincent de Paul.

We have a number of students in our school who have experienced grief and loss due to a death in the family, family separation and divorce, relocation from a new area, and long term illness within their family. We cater for these students by offering a program called Seasons for Growth. This program is available to all students in the school.
St Joseph’s believes in building a school community and family. For this reason we have class parent representatives for each stage group who organise events for families and students to encourage socialising and to assist in developing a supportive network for our existing families as well as new families and students to our school. Other areas through which we promote family and parent interaction is our school playgroup “Jumping Joeys” and our Kindergarten transition program “Junior Joeys”, both of which support existing and new families to integrate into the school and form new friendships with our parents.

At St Joseph’s we believe that the social and mental wellbeing of our students is extremely important as this creates a safe and happy environment for students to thrive academically. Part of the pastoral care role in our school is to be accepting and supportive of all students and their families. Students experiencing difficulties in their families, have learning difficulties or social issues need more support as they may feel anxious and unwilling to come to school at times. Our aim is to provide students with this safe environment as well as encourage open communication between staff and families so that school is a positive place to be.

Discipline Policy

The principles of restorative justice are embedded in the school’s Behaviour Management Policy. These principles include acknowledging the inevitability of conflict and hurt in relationships, working towards healing by repairing relationships, learning and growing from experience. Significant aspects of the policy are regularly communicated to all members of the school community. 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.

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.
School Determined Improvement Targets

Each year the school develops an Annual Plan drawn from the five-year Strategic Plan. 2013 was a very rewarding year. Listed below are a number of goals and priorities that the school focused on during the year.

Goals are set in place by staff on an annual basis. They are generally developed from the School Review & Registration process. These are then monitored throughout the year. The goals are divided into the areas of Catholic Faith & Culture, Organisation & Administration, Teaching & Learning and Relationships.

The parish school’s main goals and priorities were to:

**Catholic Faith & Culture**
- assimilate the many changes in the Religious Education (School Evangelisation and Catechetical Services) structure including new Parish Priest, Leader of School Evangelisation and Leader of Catechesis and make best use of these structures;
- introduce the Making Jesus Real resource to our school community and to continue to offer regular, relevant and topical parent education to all our families.

**Organisation & Administration**
- focus on the areas of Rich Curriculum and Learning Community in the Contemporary Learning Framework and to use the CSO resources to support these areas;
- revisit the theories of Restorative Practice within the school.

**Teaching & Learning**
- utilise the Leader of Pedagogy and the Learning Coaches to improve learning for our students and to facilitate change in our pedagogy;
- investigate the Australian Curriculum more thoroughly in English and Science and to trial aspects of the Maths syllabus.

**Relationships**
- continue to develop our transition plan in consultation with our feeder pre-schools;
- improve our celebration of achievements as a school, stages and individuals.
Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The school ensures that at every available formal and informal opportunity the values of respect and responsibility are promoted. The school models and teaches students about respect and responsibility in a number of ways:

- The school has a focus on restorative practice encouraging dialogue between parties to gain a satisfactory resolution to any concern.
- The Seasons program is available each year for any students who might benefit from their involvement.
- Our school Behaviour Benchmarks of Safety, Effort, Respect and Self-responsibility are the basis of all our interactions.
- Following the Making Jesus Real program, with weekly draws at Assembly for God Moments witnessed by members of our community, has worked towards developing respect and responsibility in the school.

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:

- There were several survey responses invited from families including School Welfare Officer feedback, thoughts on communication options as well as the feedback on the staging and open classrooms.
- Students were invited to give their thoughts twice in 2013 regarding the open classrooms and the changes made with staging.
- Parents were asked to give feedback on their preferences for receiving newsletters, parent information and receipts. As a result the school has adopted the Skoolbag App for quick and timely communication as well as School Interviews Online for ease of access by families. All newsletters are also sent by email to parents who have requested this option.

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 2013 is presented below: