annual school report

OUR LADY OF MERCY COLLEGE PARRAMATTA

MERCY  COMPASSION  JUSTICE  DIGNITY  EXCELLENCE  HOSPITALITY  STEWARDSHIP  SERVICE
Setting the Scene

Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta is an independent Catholic girls’ school in the Mercy tradition. Through its integration across the curriculum of the Mercy values of compassion, justice, dignity, excellence, service, stewardship and hospitality, the College aims to provide an environment which fosters the spiritual, moral and intellectual growth of each student. With a view to developing academic excellence in the context of a well-balanced education, the College provides a very broad curriculum with an extensive choice of subjects to Higher School Certificate level in a technology rich learning environment. Student achievement is consistently above State average in NAPLAN tests, and in the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations. OLMC's Pastoral Care program acknowledges and values the dignity of each individual. It emphasises the development of leadership skills, equipping students to take responsible roles in society and developing their awareness of the importance of social justice and mercy. Students are also encouraged to extend their abilities beyond the classroom by taking part in a range of offerings in sport, in the creative and performing arts, and in a diversity of competitions.

OLMC in 2011 had an enrolment of 997 girls across Years 7-12. OLMC is a non-selective Catholic school and accepts students from across the academic spectrum and aims to provide an education to meet the needs of all students.

OLMC values the contribution made by its students, staff, parents and the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, the Board, exstudents and other groups who assist in building the College as a centre of educational excellence in the Mercy tradition.

History

The Sisters of Mercy established OLMC at Parramatta in 1889. This followed an invitation from Cardinal Moran, the then Archbishop of Sydney, for the Sisters to come from Callan, Ireland to Parramatta to establish a Catholic school for girls. The Sisters have made a major contribution to the education of young Catholic women in the western areas of Sydney, and throughout the State and overseas when the College was a boarding school. In 2003, the first lay Principal, Mrs Kitty Guerin, was appointed.

In 2002, the College was incorporated and the first Board of Directors was appointed to help carry on the work of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta.

Location

The College is located on Victoria Road, Parramatta in an important historic education and religious precinct. Students come from throughout the western, north western and south western parts of Sydney, many relying on public transport to travel to the school.
Message from the Chair of OLMC Board

I am pleased to present the 2011 Annual School Report of Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta. The Report will give a general overview of the College and provide parents and the wider community with information about the religious life of the school, the College’s educational performance and development and the co-curricular activities which extend the students’ opportunities beyond the classroom.

The College Board has the broad mandate of carrying on the mission of Mercy in the ministry of education at OLMC. It is our key responsibility along with the educational community to ensure that OLMC continues to provide a Catholic education based on the Mercy tradition for both the present and future generations of young women. We also must provide diligent, comprehensive and forward thinking stewardship of the school’s resources, ensure that there is proper corporate governance in place and provide high level oversight of the curriculum and the pedagogy in the College.

The Board members reflect a diversity of skills and experience coming from educational, financial, strategic planning, organisational development and architectural backgrounds and this diversity enables us to take broader perspectives and add value to the decisions we must make around OLMC. We respect the responsibilities that we have and are committed to doing our best for the school.

In 2011 it was very pleasing to see the completion of the first major stage of the College Master Plan, and it has been very rewarding to see the girls using our wonderful new facilities.

During the second half of 2011 the Board commissioned some market research to assess the views of the College community. We wanted to see if the services we were delivering were meeting the needs of our students and our parents. The findings of this research showed that OLMC Parramatta girls have a positive reputation in the community and parents generally felt that their expectations in terms of a well rounded education were being met. There was an overwhelming view that OLMC students both past and present are the greatest marketing tool the College has - "I am a Mercy Girl".

Throughout 2011 there was a continuing focus on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2010 -12 and members of the OLMC Executive provided updates on progress to the Board through regular presentations. These presentations have proven valuable in keeping Board members well informed on the current changes in curriculum, pedagogy and technology. The Strategic Plan has proved to be a very useful document for guiding governance and leadership activities including strategic reviews of risk management and the actual operation of the Board.

During 2011 two directors, Jan Smith (Chair Building Committee) and Emily Amos (Chair Finance, Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee) resigned from the Board. Both Jan and Emily contributed much to the Board and the various committees over the years of their appointments and their experience and skills is missed along with their considerable dedication to OLMC as exstudents. They are both proud to be known as Mercy girls.

OLMC has a very effective Board and I would like to acknowledge and thank all the directors who contributed so ably and generously in terms of their time to the operations of the Board and its various Committees. My particular thanks to Bill Rowan, Bernard Ryall and Sister Patricia Bolster who have provided strong leadership to our Finance, Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee, Building Committee and Financial Assistance Committee; to Beverley Johnson for her support in the role of Deputy Chair and to Sophie Ryan, Christopher Roehrig and Linda Sassine who have all made strong contributions in a range of areas.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Sister Catherine Ryan for her leadership and very insightful support for the work of the Board over the past year, along with the members of the Congregational Council. Our special thanks go to Sister Maria Lawton who was an active member of the group guiding the establishment of the Mercy Tree.

Finally and importantly, I would like to recognise the contributions of the parents and other members of the OLMC community to the work of the College. Your ongoing commitment and support is much appreciated.

The Board commends the College leaders, teachers, staff and students for their dedication and achievements that are outlined in the following 2011 Annual Report.
Message from the Principal

Returning to school at the beginning of Term 1, 2011, there was great anticipation that the Janet Woods Building with its excellent new facilities would soon be ready for occupation. While there was some frustration at the delay to its completion, nevertheless we slowly moved in. The Hospitality students were the first students to use their brand new facilities followed by the Science laboratories, the domestic kitchen, the Library and Senior Common Room all became available for use.

Following the completion of the Janet Woods Building the refurbishment of the previously used spaces was able to commence so that by the end of 2011, the Barbara McDonough Student Centre, the Christina Creede Music Centre and changes to the Administration Area were completed. With the landscaping outside the Janet Woods Building finally completed, the first major stage of the Master Plan has been achieved. Hand in hand with all this new development has been the progressive improvement in disability access on the OLMC site with five lifts installed in recent years and access for the visually impaired installed.

An attractive and well-resourced learning environment is our key objective so that OLMC students have the optimal environment to achieve to their potential. This year was the first year that all students from Years 7 - 12 had access to their own notebook computers and quick and reliable access to the internet. In addition the structure of the school day was changed to four 75 minute periods a day. This allowed for longer time on task and increased the opportunities for deeper learning. It also allowed for less disruption and movement during the day, an important factor with the new facilities being available for student use.

The College was successful in renewing its registration and accreditation with the Board of Studies. The College had a very successful visit from the Office of the Board of Studies which was led by the Inspector for Creative Arts.

Another key initiative this year has been OLMC’s involvement in the Federal Government’s National Partnership Program. Fourteen Catholic independent schools (girls, boys, coeducational, special schools) have joined in the partnership to address more fully the needs of students at both ends of the academic spectrum. The Coordinator of the project who is based at OLMC has, with staff in each of the schools, set up a number of projects which will continue into 2012. These projects included literacy for learning support, differentiation for learning support, meta conversations on gifted, life skills programs, learning support assistants training programs, and classroom behaviour management.

Each project involved different sets of schools, meeting at various times of the year with different frequencies depending on the needs and wants of the teachers and schools, and the objectives of the project. For example, meta conversations on gifted held several workshops where participants could come together and evaluate the state of gifted programs at their schools, and consider programs that would provide for their gifted population; the life skills programs project decided to meet once a term and share strategies and resources with one another as well as use the Centre’s Moodle to upload resources; the literacy for learning support invited two speakers for the year who came to share strategies they used at their school.

The Centre also set up a Moodle and website, www.outsidethebellcurve.com, to inform schools and teachers, as well as, provide another way that teachers could access professional learning by avaling themselves of the resources uploaded.

One of the College’s key successes of recent years has been the strengthening of the relationship between the five Mercy schools (Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta, Catherine McAuley Westmead, Monte Sant’ Angelo North Sydney, Our Lady of Mercy College Burraneer, Mercy College Chatswood) in Sydney. This began with social justice initiatives involving junior and senior students and student leaders which continue today. This year a new program was introduced, the Mercy Staff Formation Program which has involved a number of teaching staff from all five schools. The program which has run over four days and involved the Parramatta and North Sydney Sisters of Mercy and staff has been highly successful with the participants commenting very favourably on their greater understanding and appreciation of the Mercy story and charism. One staff member who completed the course will be attending a Mercy Pilgrimage to Dublin, Ireland in 2012.

This link to other Mercy schools was further enhanced by the attendance of a number of Mercy staff and two Year 11 students at the Australasian Mercy Secondary Education Conference held in Perth in July. The conference had two streams, one for students and one for staff. The students met up with fellow students from across Australia and New Zealand as did staff. To have the opportunity to share in the common heritage and to learn from other schools is invaluable. This is further highlighted by the successful Student Exchange Program we run with St Patrick’s College Townsville, involving students from Year 10.

At the beginning of Term 4, the students and staff returned to find a new addition to the entrance of the College – the Mercy Tree. The Mercy Tree is a new initiative involving the College and the Sisters of Mercy. The Mercy Tree will be used as the focus of a fundraising initiative involving the Alumnae, students, staff and OLMC families in raising money to support the special ministries of the Sisters of Mercy. As the Tree grows, it will become a significant symbol of the College and its commitment to social justice.

This year, 2011, was a year of significant growth in the College and much has been achieved. Students and staff now enjoy the outcomes envisaged in the Master Plan which was endorsed by the College Board in 2008. These developments have been the result of a great collaborative effort involving all members of the College community.
Message from the OLMC Student Leaders

The Student Leaders and Student Representative Council at OLMC were very active over the course of 2011. The Senior Leaders were involved in a range of social justice activities such as the annual Project Compassion campaign during Lent and activities organised by the five Mercy schools in Sydney and interstate. They also organised a well attended afternoon tea for student leaders from a range of local schools. The Student Representative Council held a very successful Multicultural Week with a range of activities and their annual dance party which attracted a full house of OLMC students and invited guests from other schools. The funds raised from these events were used to support a range of charities identified by the students.

School-determined Improvement Targets

The College priorities for 2010 were:

- Implementation of the Strategic Plan (2010)
  The Strategic Plan is a living document used by the Executive to plan and set targets for 2010 – 2012. The Executive report twice a year to the College Board on the progress of the Strategic Plan. An example is the development of a leadership survey which was distributed and completed by all teaching staff at the end of 2010.

- Implementation of the Master Plan – building of the Janet Woods Building and planning for the demolition of the Science Building and the refurbishment of the Barbara McDonough Student Centre, the Christina Creede Music Centre and the completion of the Administration area.
  The first stage of the Master Plan started to take shape in 2010 with the building of the Janet Woods Building and planning the refurbishment of the Barbara McDonough Student Centre, the Christina Creede Music Centre and the completion of the Administration area.

- Ongoing implementation of the notebook program so that all students from Years 7 -11 would have a notebook.
  Because of the funding provided under the Digital Education Revolution, the notebook program was accelerated so that all students from Years 7 -11 were provided with their own notebook. The ICT Integrators continued to provide ongoing support for teachers in the use of ICT in the classroom.

- Upgrade of the wireless system to meet the needs of the notebook program
  The wireless system was updated to provide high speed access to online resources for students and staff.

- Planning for a change to the structure of the school day to improve learning outcomes.
  A consultation process was undertaken involving staff, students and parents to evaluate the current structure of the school day and plan for an alternate model.

The College priorities for 2011 were:

- Completion of Stage 1 of the Master Plan
- Final implementation across Years 7 – 12 of the notebook program
- Implementation of the 4 period day
- Renewal of the College’s Registration and Accreditation with the NSW Board of Studies
- Participation in the NSW Congregational Schools National Partnership “Beyond the Bell Curve” program
- Development of closer contact with the five Mercy schools in Sydney through the implementation of the Mercy Staff Formation Program
- The Mercy Tree initiative to raise awareness in the OLMC community about the ministries of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta and to use the Mercy Tree to raise funds to support those ministries
- Market Research Project
Religious Dimension

Religious Education

OLMC Parramatta is a Catholic girls’ secondary school in the Mercy tradition, which provides its students with a wide-ranging and comprehensive program of classroom Religious Education delivered by a specialist team of Religious Education teachers.

In Years 7, 8, 9 and 10, the College has implemented Sharing Our Story, the Religious Education guidelines of the Diocese of Parramatta. In Years 11 and 12, the College offers the NSW Board of Studies courses, Studies of Religion I and II. These courses are scheduled so as to allow teachers to take extra time to explore Religious Education outcomes applicable to Catholic education that may not be covered by the outcomes of the Board of Studies courses.

The classroom Religious Education program operates in partnership with other elements of the religious life of the College, including prayer, liturgies, retreats, reflection days, social justice initiatives, staff spirituality and various activities related to the College's Mercy identity and heritage.

Liturgical Celebration, Reflection and Prayer

In 2011, the College consolidated its various liturgical initiatives established in previous years. These included the Opening School Mass, Ash Wednesday Liturgy, Holy Week Liturgy, the Mother/ Daughter Mass, the Father/Daughter Mass, Mercy Day Mass, Year 12 Graduation Mass and the Advent/Christmas End-of-Year Mass. The talents of many students and staff were drawn upon for these and other significant liturgical celebrations in the areas of music, singing, reading, design, visual arts, movement and technical support. A special feature of the College’s liturgical life in 2011 was the introduction of the revised English translation of the Roman Missal.

Being a Catholic College, prayer is central to the life of OLMC and the College has continued its fine tradition of beginning many of its activities with prayer. These include: daily Homeroom, assemblies, Chapel gatherings, form meetings, staff meetings and Board meetings. In 2011, a system of Prayer Partners was introduced in which Year 7 and Year 12 girls were paired with each other so that each had someone special to both pray for them and to pray for during the respective challenges of starting secondary school and facing the examinations that mark the end of secondary schooling.

All students once again experienced a retreat or a reflection day. Years 11 and 12 participated in a three-day off-site residential retreat while students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 each participated in a reflection day. These were valuable opportunities designed to facilitate the students’ spiritual development and growth.

Social Justice

As OLMC is a Mercy community, there is a very strong focus on justice in the life of the school.

Throughout 2011, the College continued to offer students many opportunities to engage in social justice (or Mercy Action) activities designed to raise their awareness of the needs of others as well as learn about how they might make a stand against injustice, and thus make a difference in our society.

A large number of coordinated activities drew the interest and involvement of many OLMC students. In fact, in 2011, record numbers of OLMC students assisted with the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal and the St Vincent de Paul Doorknock Appeal. Other activities included: Caritas Australia Just Leadership Day and Project Compassion Appeal; Have a Heart Day for the Queensland Flood victims; St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal and Christmas hampers; Bahay Tuluian Kidsview Conference; Fair Trade Fortnight; fundraising for Mercy Works projects in Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and Pakistan; Riding for Disabled Australia; Catherine Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia; Australia’s Biggest Morning Tea; Reconciliation Week; 65 Roses Day; Cambodian Orphanage Save Organisation (COSO); Mamre House; St Michael’s Family Centre; UNICEF East Africa Emergency Appeal; Mercy International’s ‘Good Cup of Tea’ Day; visits to the Marian Nursing Home in Parramatta and assistance given to Marian Mercy College in Christchurch in the aftermath of the earthquakes in February 2011.

Once again, in 2011, each Homeroom had a designated Mercy Action Representative, who helped to raise awareness of matters of social justice and helped to initiate and develop activities designed to involve the rest of the student body in works of mercy and justice. In this way, OLMC continued to support and enhance the participation of its students in the area of social justice. The links with and commitment to the Mercy 5 schools was evident through several activities, including voluntary assistance with asylum seekers at the House of Welcome at Carramar.

With a focus on social justice, two students represented the College at the Young Mercy Justice Tree workshops in Adelaide and Perth in 2011. This gave them an opportunity to further their understanding of social justice while both broadening and deepening their Mercy identity.
Respect and Responsibility

In 2011, OLMC continued to integrate the identified ‘Mercy’ values of Mercy, Justice, Compassion, Dignity, Excellence, Hospitality, Stewardship and Service into the life of the College. The idea of ‘Respect and Responsibility’ that these values express underpin all policies and procedures at the College. Values integration across the curriculum has continued to be a focal point which has been addressed in both the academic life of the College and in the formal Pastoral Care program. Various initiatives designed to raise awareness of Respect and Responsibility have been included in the Pastoral Care program, which is based on the four key strands of Mercy in Action; Learning for Life; Leadership in the Community; and, Wellbeing and Resilience. In addition to these activities, the College’s Peer Support Program has further enhanced a sense of Respect and Responsibility amongst the members of the OLMC community.

Additionally, the themes of Respect and Responsibility are strengthened by the way in which OLMC lives its Mercy values through initiatives in the areas of cultural awareness and cultural exchange.

Cultural Awareness

In 2011, the College continued to recognise the value of providing students with an opportunity to listen to guest speakers from various cultural backgrounds. An example of this was the address given to the Year 7 students from a Sister of Mercy from New Zealand. Presentations by special guests were held to educate the students about the Sisters of Mercy who work with impoverished women in Peru and the Sisters of Mercy working in the area of maternal health in Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and Pakistan.

Cultural Exchange

Cambodia Immersion Experience

Every two years, OLMC students are given an opportunity to undertake an overseas immersion experience which exposes them to a number of agencies working in the areas of human rights and social justice. The visit to Cambodia by thirteen students and three staff members in December 2011/January 2012 included working with orphans in Siem Reap and field trips to places of national significance such as the Killing Fields. This trip provided the students and staff involved with great insights into issues of poverty and outreach in a most unfamiliar environment. During 2011, the students learnt about and actively prepared for this experience. Through their fundraising efforts, they were also able to promote greater awareness of poverty in Cambodia and the challenges faced by its people.

Mercy Schools Visit

Every few years, students from OLMC are given an opportunity to travel to Italy and Ireland on a Mercy Pilgrimage. Included in this trip are visits to sites in Dublin significant to the life of Catherine McAuley as well as sites in Callan in County Kilkenny, which was the starting point for the Sisters of Mercy who came to Australia to establish the Parramatta congregation. In January of 2011, a group of twelve students and three teachers undertook this trip. They learned about the heritage of the Sisters of Mercy and visited significant places of Christian pilgrimage, including the Vatican City in Rome.

Mercy Student Exchange Program

The College continued to participate in the Year 10 Mercy Student Exchange Program in 2011. Four students from OLMC visited St Patrick’s College, Townsville for one week and these students then hosted three St Patrick’s students later in the year. This venture enabled the OLMC students to experience the culture of another part of Australia in a school with both a boarding wing and a significant indigenous enrolment. It also gave the rest of the members of the OLMC community an opportunity to meet and interact with the girls from Townsville. The exchange proved to be a valuable experience for the girls and families involved.

Mercy Conference

In 2011, two OLMC students attended the Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools’ Association Conference in Western Australia as student delegates. This allowed them to learn about Mercy education and other Mercy projects across Australia, New Zealand and beyond. They were able to share their experience with the rest of the College community upon their return. It gave them a greater sense of OLMC’s Mercy heritage and the place that the Mercy charism holds in this region of the world.
Teaching and Learning

OLMC students achieve very well academically and in the cocurricular program. At all times all students are encouraged to give their best whether it is in the classroom or in any of the wide variety of activities in which they participate.

In 2011 OLMC offered a very broad curriculum with an extensive choice of subjects for the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate. All students have access to a range of technologies to facilitate their learning in all Key Learning Areas.

OLMC aims to provide students with opportunities to learn and grow to achieve their best. OLMC develops academic excellence in the context of a well-balanced education.

OLMC is committed to excellence in teaching and learning. This commitment is evident at every stage of the girls’ education. OLMC’s performance in the NAPLAN tests in Years 7 and 9 is excellent.

OLMC’s performance in the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate is examined in detail in this section of the report. Statistical analysis of these results demonstrates sound value added learning between the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate. This analysis affirms the constant striving for excellence by teachers and students at all levels in the school.

School Performance in National Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

In 2011, Years 7 and 9 students sat for NAPLAN tests. The results of these tests compare students with the National Standards for Literacy and Numeracy. OLMC Parramatta students are well above the national standards for both literacy and numeracy. These results reveal consistent, excellent performance across all elements of literacy and numeracy.

Performance on NAPLAN is documented on the My School website:

http://www.myschool.edu.au
School Certificate Tests


Results of the tests are reported in performance bands with Band 6 being the highest. The following table shows the School and State means for each examination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>OLMC Mean</th>
<th>State Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Literacy</td>
<td>82.40</td>
<td>77.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>81.04</td>
<td>75.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>76.85</td>
<td>70.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian History</td>
<td>77.86</td>
<td>72.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Geography</td>
<td>80.30</td>
<td>72.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing Skills</td>
<td>86.58</td>
<td>79.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OLMC girls achieved excellent results in the School Certificate tests. A comparison of the school’s performance against the State in Bands 5-6 reveals that English Literacy, Mathematics and Science achieved a high percentage of students in the top two bands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>66.10%</td>
<td>64.87%</td>
<td>62.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>43.33%</td>
<td>36.90%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>58.32%</td>
<td>69.63%</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Higher School Certificate Examinations

In 2011, 172 girls completed their Higher School Certificate in 38 courses.

31% of the class achieved Band 6 in at least one subject.

78% of students achieved at least one Band 5 or higher.

OLMC students achieved above state average results in 30 courses with 13 courses achieving results at least 5 marks above the State average.

Three students were placed on the All-round Achievers list, having gained Band 6 in ten or more units of their HSC. One student was nominated for Art Express and one student was nominated for consideration for ENCORE for their Viva Voca in Music.

Outstanding Higher School Certificate achievements include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>OLMC % in Bands 5 and 6</th>
<th>State % in Bands 5 and 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ancient History</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Studies</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Family Studies</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design &amp; Technology</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth &amp; Environmental Science</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Standard</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Advanced</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Extension 1</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>84</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Extension 2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Technology</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality Examination</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Studies</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Mathematics</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Beginners</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics Extension 1</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics Extension 2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDHPE</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Services Examination</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Science</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies of Religion 1 Unit</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies of Religion 2 Unit</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles &amp; Design</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cocurricular Activities

In 2011, students in the College were involved in a number of cocurricular activities which extended their abilities beyond the classroom. There is a diversity of cocurricular activities from which students can choose to suit their skills and talents whether it is on the sporting field, in the public speaking arena or in one of the many competitions in which the students participate. Within each field there may be multiple choices. Students are acknowledged for their contribution to cocurricular activities through the Merit Award Scheme.

The College has a strong Music tradition and students can choose from the College Orchestra and a range of ensembles to singing in the Choir. The Variety Night was one of the highlights of the year as was Christmas Carols held in the Chapel. The students perform for local organisations as well as at a number of in-school functions for the Parents and Friends Association and the OLMC Parramatta Alumnae.

OLMC students were very successful in Debating and Public Speaking with one Year 9 team winning the Sydney Catholic Schools Debating Association Competition and the State Competition, one Year 12 team reaching the finals and the other Year 12 team reaching the semi-finals of the CSDA Competition. There continues to be a considerable growth in the number of students who participated in public speaking competitions.

Students continue to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at Gold, Silver and Bronze levels. Two students achieved the Gold Award, five achieved the Silver Award and twelve achieved the Bronze Award.

In 2011, OLMC students had a very successful year on the sporting field across a number of sports. Students represented the College at regional, state and national level in the following sports: Athletics, Aquathlon, Basketball, Cheerleading, Cross Country, Hockey, Dancing, Netball, Soccer, Softball, Swimming, Ten Pin Bowling, Tennis, Touch Football, Triathlon, Ultimate Frisbee, Volleyball, Vigoro, Water Polo and Waterskiing.

Particular successes in sport included students who achieved state representation in Touch Football, Netball, Swimming, Hockey and European Handball and national representation in Ultimate Frisbee, Taekwondo and one student who represented Australia at the Commonwealth Youth Games and won a gold medal in Triple Jump.

The range of cocurricular activities include:

- Amnesty International
- Athletics CCC (Combined Catholic Colleges)
- Athletics PDSSSSC (Parramatta Diocese Secondary Schools Sports Council)
- Athletics IGSSA (Independent Girls Schools Sports Association)
- Basketball CGSSSA (Catholic Girls Secondary Schools Sports Association)
- Chamber Orchestra
- Cheerleading
- Chess Club
- Choir
- Concert Band
- Cricket CCC
- Cross Country PDSSSC
- Cross Country IGSSA
- Dance CGSSSA
- Debating CSDA (Catholic Schools Debating Association)
- Diving CGSSSA
- Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
- Golf CCC
- Gymnastics CGSSSA
- History Club
- Hockey CGSSSA
- Mercy Action Group
- Mercy Chorale
- Music Ensembles – e.g. Flute, Clarinet, Jazz
- Netball CGSSSA
- Orchestra
- Peer Support
- Public Speaking CSDA, Rostrum, Rotary
- Rock Band
- Science Club
- Scrabble Club
- Soccer CGSSSA
- String Orchestra
- Swimming CGSSSA
- Swimming IGSSA
- Swimming PDSSSC
- Tennis CGSSSA
- Textile Club
- The Readers Group
- Titration Competition
- Tournament of the Minds
- Variety Concert
- Volleyball
- Water Polo CCC
Human Dimension –
Students and Staff at OLMC

Student Attendance

For whole school student attendance rates please refer to the school's data on the My School website: http://www.myschool.edu.au.

Ninety five per cent of students attended school on average each school day in 2011. This was similar to the daily attendance in 2010.

Management of school attendance

The College implements policy and procedure for the management of student non-attendance. In 2011, an SMS system was implemented. An SMS is sent to parents of students who are absent. The College follows up where written explanations are not received from the parents. Absences are monitored and parent and student conferences are held to resolve the non-attendance. Mandatory reporting procedures apply where absences are extended or the student may be at risk.

Student Retention Rates

There is a strong student retention rate at the College with 172 students in Year 12 in 2011 enrolled in the College from 190 students in Year 10, 2009. The numbers that stay on do vary from year to year depending on the number of students who make the decision to move schools, often to coeducational schools, or the workforce. Students who left school in Year 12 in 2011 overwhelmingly went on to further study at University (88%), TAFE or private colleges (7%) and 2% into apprenticeships. Approximately 1% went directly into employment with 2% whose destinations are unknown.

School Policies

Policies for Student Welfare

Our Lady of Mercy College seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- supports the spiritual, academic, social and emotional development of students;
- minimises risk of harm and ensures students feel secure;
- provides pastoral care programs that develop confidence, competence and a sense of self-worth.
To ensure that all aspects of the College’s mission for providing for a student’s welfare are implemented the following policies and procedures are in place:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Changes in 2011</th>
<th>Access to Full Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Child Protection Policy encompassing: | • definitions and concepts  
• legislative requirements  
• preventative strategies  
• reporting and investigating ‘reportable conduct’  
• investigation processes  
• documentation             | Revised – flow charts added                        | Staff Portal                                  |
| Code of Conduct Policies encompassing:| • code of conduct for staff  
• code of conduct for students  
• behaviour expectations  
• student leadership system | Nil                                           | Staff Portal                                  |
| Evacuation Policy encompassing:       | • evacuation plan  
• evacuation procedures  
• evaluation of plans and procedures | Minor changes made after the review of each practice evacuation | Staff Portal                                  |
| Pastoral Care Policy encompassing:    | • the pastoral care system and program  
• availability of and access to special services such as counselling | Nil                                           | Staff Portal and College website             |
| Anti-Bullying Policy                  | Nil                                                                          | Staff Portal and College website             |
| Critical Incident Policy              | Nil                                                                          | Staff Portal                                  |
| Students Attendance Policy            | Revised in light of new SMS attendance system                                | Staff Portal and College website             |
| Student Health Policy                 | Policy redrafted                                                             | Staff Portal                                  |
| Homework Policy                       | Revised                                                                     | Staff Portal and Student Diary               |
| Excursion Policy                      | Reviewed and updated                                                        | Staff Portal                                  |
| Security Policy                       | Reviewed and updated to include new electronic key procedures               | Staff Portal                                  |
| Communication Policy                  | Nil                                                                         | Staff Portal                                  |
| Spirit Cup Policy                     | Nil                                                                         | Staff Portal and Student Diary               |
| Student Dress Code                    | Nil                                                                         | Staff Portal and Student Diary               |
| Merit System                          | Revised                                                                    | Staff Portal and Student Diary               |
| Extreme Weather Policy                | New – ensuring student and staff safety in extreme weather events           | Staff Portal                                  |
| Disability Policy                     | New – outlining disability access mechanisms in place                        | Staff Portal                                  |
| No Smoking Policy                     | New – stating that the College is a non-smoking site                         | Staff Portal                                  |
| Homework Policy                       | Revised                                                                    | Staff Portal                                  |
| Learning Enrichment Policy            | Revised, Incorporated                                                      | Staff Portal                                  |
| Student Assessment and Reporting Policy| Revised                                                                    | Staff Portal                                  |
| Tutors and Outside Providers Policy   | Revised                                                                    | Staff Portal                                  |
| Gifted and Talented Students Policy   | Revised, Incorporated                                                      | Staff Portal                                  |
| WHS Policy                            | Revised procedures for ensuring student safety in class activities          | Staff Portal                                  |
Policy for Student Management

OLMC is committed to providing a safe and caring environment, which fosters respect for others. The gospel values of mercy and justice are central to the management of students at OLMC – students are invited to learn and grow from their mistakes. In the light of the College Mission Statement we base our relationships on the teachings of the Gospel: “Whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters you do unto me.”

The management of students at OLMC is undertaken within the framework of the College’s commitment to Pastoral Care and hence a commitment to work in partnership with students and parents. Student management, as practised at OLMC, is based upon respect for self, respect for others and respect for the proper use of authority. It always involves listening and forgiveness.

The overall well-being and growth of each individual as well as the welfare of the entire College community is intrinsic to the management of students. The just and equitable treatment of students and the maintenance of their dignity are principles that underpin this policy. A primary focus at OLMC is to assist students to develop a genuine sense of social responsibility for themselves and the wider community.

Student management practices focus on developing self-discipline within students and helping students understand consequences of their actions. OLMC affirms and rewards positive behaviours and intentions. Behaviours that have an adverse impact on the individual student and those around them are sanctioned. These sanctions may include suspension, expulsion or exclusion. Accordingly, OLMC is committed to adopting procedures in relation to suspension and expulsion which are in all respects fair and appropriate and which are designed to avoid injustice in practice.

The full text of the Student Management Policy and associated procedures is provided to all members of the College community on the Staff Portal and on the College website. A partial text of the same policy outlining expectations of students and teachers is also in the Student Diary.

The College expressly prohibits corporal punishment and does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the College.

The Student Management Policy was implemented in 2006 and contains revised processes for student management that are based on procedural fairness.

Merit System

The Merit System at OLMC works in conjunction with the overall student management strategy as a tangible avenue to proactively influence and reinforce positive behaviour. It seeks to recognise and reward students for any outstanding effort and achievement and for positive contribution to the life of the College community.

The system is designed to allow all students the opportunity to consistently have their academic effort, positive attitude and good behaviour specially recognised as being an integral part of class and College life. Students are awarded merit codes for their efforts and not their natural abilities.

Students, parents and staff were invited to complete a survey regarding the Merit System in Term 4 2010. The results of this survey were used as the basis for amendments to the system which were developed in 2011 and will be implemented for the start of the 2012 school year.
Formal Pastoral Program

The formal Pastoral Care Program implemented in 2009 has minimised overlap with the curriculum. Common strands in each Year Group - STRAND A: Mercy in Action; STRAND B: Learning for Life; STRAND C: Leadership in the Community; STRAND D: Well-being & Resilience, have afforded the girls a broad range of experiences.

The content delivered under the four central strands was reviewed by Year Coordinators in Term 4 2011. This annual review is to maintain the contemporary nature of the content delivered in Pastoral Care lessons. Changes in resourcing were made for the 2012 program.

Pastoral Care Structure

The College’s Strategic Plan involves a review of the current Pastoral Care structures. Throughout Semester 2 2010 and Semester 1 2011, Year Coordinators conducted school visits to investigate alternative Pastoral Care structures. The findings will be used by a working party in 2012.

Policy for Complaints and Grievances

OLMC is committed to developing an educational and organisational culture based on mutual trust and respect. We are committed to providing a safe and supportive work and learning environment for all employees and students.

The College acknowledges that students, parents and community members may sometimes have a complaint about a decision, behaviour, act or omission that they feel is unacceptable or affects them adversely. This policy provides a process for parents, students and members of the wider community to raise a complaint related to any practice or policy of the College. These processes incorporate, as appropriate, principles of procedural fairness.

This policy works toward the achievement of the following objectives:

- to ensure that College practices and policies are consistent with the College Mission Statement;
- to resolve complaints and grievances as far as possible to the satisfaction of both the complainant and the College;
- to ensure that complaints and grievances are investigated without bias;
- to consider all aspects of a complaint or grievance and follow the principles of procedural fairness in investigating;
- to respond to complaints and grievances in a timely manner.

Complaints will be addressed according to these Principles:

- investigated in a fair and impartial manner;
- a person facing a complaint is entitled to know detailed information about the substance of the complaint and have the opportunity to respond;
- confidentiality will be observed;
- the complaints management process will be respectful of all parties;
- persons making a complaint will not be victimised or sanctioned in any way;
- complaints will be addressed in a timely manner and the complainant will be advised if the matter cannot be finalised within one month.

The full text of the College’s policy and processes for complaints and grievances resolution is provided on the Staff Portal. A summary is included in the Student Management Policy.

This policy was implemented in 2006 following staff and parent consultation.
Enrolment

OLMC is a secondary school. In 2011, there were 997 girls from Years 7 – 12 enrolled at the College. As part of the pastoral care arrangements students are allocated at the beginning of the year to Homeroom classes. In 2011 there were 49 Homeroom classes. In Years 7 - 10 there were six core streams (Religious Education, English, History and Geography) and seven in Years 11 - 12. In Years 7 and 8 class sizes are reduced for some practical subjects including Technology, Music, Drama and Visual Arts (Year 7 only) and PD/H/PE (Year 8 only).

The Enrolment Policy of the College is printed below:

Enrolment Policy - 2011

The ambition of the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley, to “fit the young women for earth without unfitting them for heaven” is fundamental to OLMC’s mission. This aim and the foundations established by the Sisters of Mercy strongly influence the operation of the College today including the enrolment process.

OLMC is an independent Catholic school that enrolls girls from families seeking a Catholic education in the Mercy tradition.

OLMC’s rich tradition and excellence in education have earned the College a strong reputation in the community.

Enrolment decisions at the College are based on the following considerations;
- The year group in which the girl wishes to enrol - the College’s main intake is into Year 7 though occasionally vacancies do occur in other years (in particular Year 11).
- The provision of appropriate documentation - all applications must be supported by full documentation as detailed in the Enrolment Procedures.
- The capacity of the College to meet the applicant’s individual needs.
- Total student numbers - OLMC operates on a resource base to meet the educational needs of an enrolment of approximately 1000; the College seeks to keep student numbers close to this target.

Enrolment priorities:
- Applications are dealt with in order of receipt
- Applications are open to all families who seek a Catholic education for their daughter however;
  - Priority is given to female siblings of students currently enrolled at OLMC.
  - In terms of groups, priority is given in the following order:
    - Catholic applicants
    - Orthodox Christian applicants
    - Applicants from other Christian denominations
    - Other

Should a family be unsuccessful in their application, they have the right of appeal against the College’s processes.

Enrolment Process

- The College’s main entry is Year 7 although occasionally vacancies do occur in other years, in particular, Year 11.
- An Application for Waiting List Form (available on the website) must be completed and signed and forwarded to the College with a non-refundable Application for Wait List fee and such other information as the Principal requires. The applicant’s name is placed on the Waiting List.
- Two years prior to enrolment (for a Year 7 student) or at the time of application for students in other years, OLMC will require parents to:
  - complete the Application for Enrolment Form
  - provide a copy of the last school report and NAPLAN results
  - provide any information which may assist in the determination of the College’s capacity to meet the educational needs of the applicant or to provide services or facilities that are not required by other students.
- The College will undertake an assessment process once all material is received. The Principal may require the parents and girl to attend an interview.
- At the conclusion of this process, OLMC may make an enrolment offer. To accept the offer, parents will be asked to:
  - complete the Acceptance Form
  - pay the enrolment fee and enrolment deposit as outlined in the fee schedule. These amounts are reviewed annually.
The table below highlights additional externally provided professional development activities undertaken by staff throughout 2011:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General focus of Professional Learning Activity</th>
<th>Description of the Professional Learning Activity</th>
<th>Number of attendances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral Care</td>
<td>Provided information that assists teachers in pastoral care positions undertake their role including current issues in adolescent health and communication skills</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Provided information that was curriculum based and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Provided information that assists teachers in leadership positions or aspiring to leadership positions to develop skills and strategies appropriate to their roles</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning support</td>
<td>Provided information that was subject specific and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Provided information that was subject specific and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Education</td>
<td>Provided information that was subject specific and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Provided information that was subject specific and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Provided information that was subject specific and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>Provided information that was subject specific and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and Social Sciences</td>
<td>Provided information that was subject specific and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDHPE</td>
<td>Provided information that was subject specific and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological and Applied Sciences</td>
<td>Provided information that was subject specific and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual and Performing Arts</td>
<td>Provided information that was subject specific and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational and Educational Training/Careers</td>
<td>Provided information that was subject specific and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOTE</td>
<td>Provided information that was subject specific and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Provided information that was subject specific and related to content, syllabus, assessment, and teaching and learning strategies</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>Provided information that was specific and related to the administration of the College</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Provided information that was specific and related to the social justice values of the College</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average expenditure per teacher on Professional Development in 2011: $1652.00
### Teaching Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers who have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers who have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers who do not have qualifications as described in (a) and (b) but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In conclusion, this annual report for Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta has provided a glimpse of the educational outcomes for 2011 and the dedication and professionalism of staff who teach a range of subjects and are involved in many cocurricular activities. Students are well cared for and given a wide range of opportunities to give of their best. The College celebrates the achievements of students in all fields in 2011. OLMC remains a strong independent Catholic girls’ school in the Mercy tradition.

Kitty Guerin  
Principal  
Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta

Kerrie Walshaw  
Chair  
Board of Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta