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 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. Students are also encouraged to extend their abilities beyond the classroom by taking part in a range of cocurricular offerings in sport, in the creative and performing arts, and in a diversity of competitions.

OLMC in 2012 had an enrolment of 929 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, ex-students 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 2012 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 cocurricular activities that 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 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 College.

Across the education sector in 2012 there was a strong focus on funding with the release of the report of the Gonski review in December 2011. In the second half of 2012 the independent schools sector along with the National Catholic Education Commission and the state and territory governments commenced bilateral discussions with the Australian Government around the implementation of the Gonski reforms with much of the discussion focused on the model that would be applied to determine the entitlement to funding. At this stage we are unable to indicate what the outcome for OLMC will be and a number of factors, including the coming elections have resulted in continuing uncertainty around future funding.

In September 2012 the NSW Government announced as part of their savings measures that operating funding to non-government schools would be cut. Following strong opposition the funding cuts were reduced with funding frozen for four years at 2012-2013 levels and the commencement of the cuts delayed to the 2014 school year to allow some transitional planning. The estimated total funding loss for OLMC over the next five years is one million dollars. The Board resolved that the 2013 share of this loss would be found in areas that will not impact on teaching activities and most importantly, that an additional increase in fees would not be sought. However managing the funding loss in the coming years will be more challenging.

These events in relation to school funding, especially at the State level have reminded us that the fight for equity in the allocation of funds is not a thing of the past.

2012 was a time of consolidation in relation to our building works and the implementation of the College Master Plan. The completion of the Janet Woods Building enabled us to focus on a range of smaller projects across the College which have significantly enhanced the facilities of OLMC especially in the delivery of performing arts with the completion of a dance studio and additional performance spaces and workshop for drama teaching. We have also improved the facilities for our teachers with the construction of new teacher staffrooms, the refurbishment of existing staffrooms and the refurbishment of the kitchen and common room for our staff.

During 2012 we put in place a number of initiatives to enhance our communications and marketing. These include:

• development of a new OLMC website;
• production of OLMC newsletter in electronic format;
• enhanced Open Day and regular College tours;
• new biannual formal message to parents from Principal and Chair of Board;
• increase in quality and frequency of press releases;
• better targeted newspaper advertising, and
• changes to Mercy Scholarship Program.

The College now offers academic and music scholarships in each of Years 7, 9 and 11 with all scholarships continuing through to the end of Year 12. All applicants undertake the testing provided by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) with further interviews and auditions. We are pleased with the outcomes of this initiative and in particular the offering of music scholarships.

Our Mercy Tree is growing beautifully and in 2012 our first allocation of funds took place to St Michael’s Family Centre and Mamre. In 2012 a total of $20,557 was donated to Mercy Tree funds.

OLMC has a very effective Board with the Directors demonstrating their preparedness to deal with challenging issues. I would like to acknowledge the commitment of my fellow Board Members and their efforts throughout the year. My particular thanks to Beverly Johnson for her support in the role of Deputy Chair; to Bill Rowan, Bernard Ryall and Sister Trish Bolter who have provided strong leadership to our Finance, Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee, Building...
Committee and Financial Assistance Committee; and to Sophie Ryan, Christopher Roehrig and Linda Sassine who have all made strong contributions in a range of areas. Every Board Member has been generous with their time and have thoughtfully worked to ensure that the Mercy values provide the solid foundation for educating young women at OLMC.

The Board has a sound working relationship with Ms Kitty Guerin, the OLMC Executive and staff members. I acknowledge the leadership demonstrated by Ms Guerin and the Executive team in relation to the mission, teaching and learning and pastoral care at OLMC.

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.

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 are much appreciated.

The Board commends the College leaders, teachers, staff and students for their dedication and achievements that are outlined in the following 2012 Annual Report.
Message from the Principal

Over the past few years the College has lived with the noise and upheaval of different groups of builders as they have created for us exciting new facilities for students and staff. 2012 has seen the culmination of much effort in realising about 80% of the Master Plan which was endorsed by the College Board in 2008. This year students and staff celebrated the opening of the new Janet Woods Building by the Governor of NSW, Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO and the Blessing and Opening of the Christina Creede Music Centre, the Barbara McDonough Student Centre and the Mercy Tree by Father Walter Fogarty and Sr Catherine Ryan, the Congregation Leader of the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta. The newly developed Drama and Dance facilities have been completed with the Drama students and a Dance elective class in Year 9 and Year 11 using the new facilities. The staff areas and the Staff Common Room have been refurbished with the staff now enjoying a more comfortable and spacious working environment.

The Mercy 5 programs for staff and students continue to grow and flourish and are an excellent way of fostering an ongoing knowledge and understanding of Mercy. Senior and junior students and senior leaders of the five Mercy schools in Sydney enjoyed meeting with each other at the different schools. The Mercy Staff program has finished its second year and the final day of the program which was held at Mamre involved the presentations of the projects which were a strong testimony to the worth of the program.

If you come into the College now, you will notice that there are more visible signs and symbols of Mercy. This is the result of the work of the Visible Signs of Mercy Committee. The inaugural Rosemary Crumlin Art Award was held at the end of 2012 and this enabled students to create beautiful artworks based on our Mercy values. Sr Rosemary attended the last Assembly of the year and announced the winners of the awards. Some of the artworks have now been displayed around the College.

The OLMC commitment to social justice was demonstrated once again in January 2012 when fourteen students and three staff travelled to Cambodia for an immersion experience. The girls worked very hard to raise money before they left to give to the orphanage we have been supporting and while there worked hard to improve the facilities. It is indeed a true example of "Mercy in Action". Another trip is planned for January 2014.

One significant change to the public face of OLMC has been the development of the new website which was live from Easter. Not only is it far more attractive, it is more interactive and user friendly so that you will be able to navigate your way easily around the site. The College newsletter, the Parragraph, is now produced in an eformat and we are now able to communicate more effectively and keep our community more in touch with each other.

OLMC’s involvement in the Federal Government’s National Partnership Program has continued in 2012. 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 have continued 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 students 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 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 availing themselves of the resources uploaded. To conclude the National Partnership, a gathering was held at OLMC where members of each project presented their work to the group. There was also a formal evaluation process.

It was with great pleasure that we welcomed the Hon Julia Gillard MP, Prime Minister of Australia and the Hon Peter Garrett MP, the Minister for Education to the College on the last day of Term 3. The Prime Minister visited the Janet Woods Building joining a Year 9 Science class before meeting the Senior Leaders and Year 12 Amnesty International members for a forum in the Library. This was followed by a visit to the Christina Creede Music Centre to hear the girls singing and then to Student Services to meet the staff. The girls gave Ms
Gillard a resounding welcome and she, in turn, responded warmly and graciously. Mr Garrett proved a hit particularly with the staff which, I think, was less to do with education and more to do with his earlier life in music!

OLMC has, indeed, been delighted to welcome three of the most significant female leaders in Australia over the past year: the Prime Minister, the Governor General and the Governor of NSW.

The Mercy Tree which was blessed at the beginning of 2012 is flourishing literally and metaphorically. It has become very quickly a feature of college life highlighted by the Year 11 girls in their farewell to Year 12 at their final College assembly. It has been decorated by paper boats in preparation for Mercy Day and tinsel for Christmas. It has also proved to be a very effective symbol in raising money for the various ministries of the Sisters of Mercy. This year monies raised provided financial support to Mamre and to St Michael's Family Centre.

At the end of 2012 we farewelled four significant staff members who retired from the College: Vivien Brewer, the Assistant Principal since 2005, ex-student and mother of an ex-student, Janet Frost, the Director of Teaching and Learning since 2010 and ex-student, Robyn Scott, the Technology and Applied Studies Coordinator and teacher at the College since 1989 and Geraldine Perry, the Liturgy Coordinator since 2010. All of these women have made an extraordinary contribution to education and to OLMC, in particular. Through their dedication and commitment, they have ensured that OLMC continues to be a centre of excellence for the education of girls in the Mercy tradition.

Message from the OLMC Student Leaders

The Student Leaders and Student Representative Council at OLMC were very active over the course of 2012. 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. 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 attracted a full house of OLMC students and invited guests from other schools. The funds raised from this event were used to support a range of charities identified by the students.

School-determined Improvement Targets

The College priorities for 2011 were:

- Continuation of Stage 1 of the Master Plan
  2011 saw the completion of the Janet Woods Building with students and staff accessing all areas of the building by May. This was followed by the refurbishment of the areas of the school which were allocated to the Janet Woods Building. The Barbara McDonough Student Centre was created to provide for the Student Reception, the Learning Enrichment Centre, and offices for the College Counsellors and the Director of Pastoral Care. The Christina Creede Music Centre provides excellent resources for the class music program, the cocurricular program and the peripatetic program. Finally the administration area was refurbished to provide office space for the College Executive, the Business Office and the College Reception. The installation of new gates and fencing provides a safer and more secure environment for students and staff.

- Final implementation across Years 7 - 12 of the notebook program
  All students from Year 7 - 12 now have their own notebook computer as a tool for learning. Improved wireless access has ensured quick and reliable access to information for students and staff. The ICT Integrators continue to provide ongoing training and support for staff.

- Implementation of the 4 period day
  The four period day was implemented. It will be evaluated after a period of three years.

- Renewal of the College’s Registration and Accreditation with the NSW Board of Studies
  The College was successful in the renewal of its Registration and Accreditation with the NSW Board of Studies. The staff were complimented by the review team on the quality of its documentation.

- Participation in the NSW Congregational Schools National Partnership “Beyond the Bell Curve” program
  OLMC became involved with the NSW Congregational Schools National Partnership “Beyond the Bell Curve”. A Coordinator for the project began work and initiated a series of projects across the schools to meet the needs of students who require extra support and those who are gifted.
• Development of closer contact with the five Mercy schools in Sydney through the implementation of the Mercy Staff Formation program

The Mercy 5 principals continue to meet on a termly basis and look for ways to strengthen the connections between the schools. This is demonstrated by the development of the Mercy Staff Formation Program which is a four day program involving staff from all five schools. There were three staff from OLMC who participated and one staff member who was given the opportunity to go to Dublin early in 2012.

• 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

The placing of the Mercy Tree in the courtyard at the front of the school has provided a strong symbol which will be used to raise awareness about the ministries of the Sisters of Mercy so that a fundraising campaign can be put in place to support those ministries.

• Market Research Project

An extensive market research project was endorsed by the College Board to seek responses from the various stakeholders in the College particularly staff and parents about what their perceptions of the College are. In particular what are our strengths, areas of challenge and how others see us. The findings of this project have been used in setting our strategic directions and in revising our marketing strategies which included the appointment of the Communications Officer

The College priorities for 2012 were:

• Continued implementation of the Master Plan with the development of a new Drama space and Dance studio and the refurbishment of the teachers’ staff rooms
• Improvement in College communications
• Visible Signs of Mercy project
• NSW Congregational Schools National Partnership
• Review of Years 7 and 8 Reports
• ICT skill development
Religious Dimension

Religious Education and Formation

OLMC is founded on and guided by the Mercy story. Our commitment seeks to ensure that all aspects of the life of the College are centred on Mercy and Gospel values in the Catholic Tradition. At OLMC theological and spiritual formation and immersion in the Mercy charism are provided for staff to enable them to foster the College’s Catholic ethos.

Student Religious Education and Formation at OLMC involves students, staff and parents understanding the Mercy values and the charism of Catherine McAuley which underpins the curricular and cocurricular life at the College. Students are provided with a wide-ranging and comprehensive program of classroom Religious Education delivered by a specialist team of Religious Education teachers. At OLMC we are committed to nurturing and extending students understanding of their Catholic faith. One of the ways we do this is in the Religious Education classrooms. The subject of Religious Education provides students with the opportunity to seek clarification on relevant religious topics and learn how the Catholic Church and the Sisters of Mercy help those in need. They gain an understanding of the influence of the Catholic faith and practices in Australia’s contemporary society.

In Years 7, 8, 9 and 10, students are taught the Diocese of Parramatta Religious Education syllabus called ‘Sharing Our Story’. This syllabus provides students with the opportunity for learning a range of topics that will help them to develop an understanding of the Catholic faith and traditions. In Years 11 and 12 we offer students the opportunity to study the 1 and 2 unit Studies of Religion courses.

Religious Education, Social Justice, Liturgy, Retreats and Reflection days are formal and informal ways the College upholds a Mercy education and assist the students to develop and form a personal relationship with God. These activities are related to the College’s Mercy identity and heritage. Students have the opportunity throughout their retreat experiences to experience the Sacraments through the support of the local diocesan clergy.

Respect and Responsibility

In 2012, OLMC continued to integrate the identified ‘Mercy’ values of Mercy, Justice, Compassion, Dignity, Excellence, Hospitality, Stewardship and Service into the life of the College. These values are integrated across the curriculum and have continued to be a focal point in the communal, academic College life and the formal Pastoral Care program. The Pastoral Care program 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. Through Homeroom, Year and College Assemblies, students and staff are encouraged to reflect on their role as responsible citizens in demonstrating respect for all.

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 immersions (cultural exchange).

Liturgical Celebration, Reflection and Prayer

In early 2012, there were two significant liturgical celebrations for the opening of the Janet Woods Building and the Blessing of the Mercy tree. NSW Governor General Professor Marie Bashir, Vicar-General Fr Peter Williams and Diocesan Priest Fr Walter Fogarty led the OLMC community in reflecting on the contributions of Janet Woods as a Mercy Sister, Teacher and Principal of OLMC from the mid 1970s to 1989. The Mercy Tree was planted as a visible sign of future financial commitment to the ministries of the Sisters of Mercy.

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 2012, students were invited to participate in Christian Meditation exercises in Religious Education classes and retreat experiences. Students were encouraged to visualise their images of God, to foster their relationship with Jesus and developed a sense of inner calm in the process.

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

The foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley strongly believed in living the Gospels in real terms. Catholic Social Teachings reinforce the importance of social concern in today’s society guided by Jesus’ actions in the Gospels. Thus Social Justice is a key priority in the Mission of the College. Social Justice is creating awareness of all members of society, especially those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable. It involves charity work, but moves beyond charity. It is about advocacy and working towards changing the structures of society so that the human rights of all people are addressed. It includes issues such as indigenous rights, homelessness, ecological sustainability, poverty, fair trade, refugees and asylum seekers. Through systemic change, mutuality, networking and solidarity, we strive to bring justice to all members of the human family, particularly the most disadvantaged, to make a difference in our society and Church. Throughout 2012 at OLMC, social justice is central to our Mercy Spirit and because of this, we often refer to social justice as ‘Mercy Action’. There are two elected Mercy Action Leaders in Year 12. There is also a Mercy Action Representative in each Homeroom for Years 7 to 12.

A large number of coordinated activities drew the interest and involvement of many OLMC students. Students across all years also participated in the St Vincent de Paul Doorknock. Other activities included: Caritas Australia’s Just Leadership Day; Australian Catholic University Social Justice Forums; Mercy Foundation Homelessness Appeal; St Vincent de Paul’s Winter Appeal and Christmas hampers; Bahay Tuluyan’s Kidsview Conference; Fair Trade Fortnight; fundraising for Mercy Works projects in Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and Pakistan; Riding for the Disabled Australia; Australian Catholic Religious Against Human Trafficking; Australia’s Biggest Morning Tea for the Cancer Council; Reconciliation Week; 65 Roses Day; Mamre House; visits to the Marian Nursing Home in Parramatta.

Once again, in 2012, 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 initiatives with Mercy Works, Mamre, House of Welcome for refugees and asylum seekers, Caritas Walk as One Indigenous Program.

Cambodia Immersion

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. In 2012 students visited Siem Reap taking field trips to places of national significance such as the Killing Fields. This immersion provides students and staff with a more profound insight into issues of poverty and outreach in a most unfamiliar environment. Prior to departing, students actively prepare for the practical, historical and cultural components of the immersion.

Mercy Student Exchange Program

The College continued to participate in the Year 10 Mercy Student Exchange Program in 2012. Four students from OLMC visited St Patrick’s College, Townsville for one week and these students then hosted the 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 both the girls and families involved.

Staff Spirituality Day

Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff participated in Spirituality Days to learn more of the story of Catherine McAuley, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy and the founding College Principals at OLMC. These two days were opportunities for staff to become more aware and engage in the Mercy charism. Five teaching staff each year for the last two years have participated in the Mercy 5 Formation Program. This initiative supports teachers in developing their understanding of Mercy tradition and values. These experiences are pivotal in the process of assisting the formation of students.
Teaching and Learning

OLMC students achieve very well academically and in the cocurricular program. At all times, students are expected to engage in a range of learning opportunities to explore, experience and test their individual competencies, interests, gifts and talents.

In 2012, OLMC offered a very broad curriculum with an extensive choice of subjects from Stages 4-6. All students have access to a range of technologies to facilitate their learning in all Key Learning Areas. Each Key Learning Area is compliant in terms of the development of programs of teaching and learning, scope and sequence of learning, assessment and reporting.

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 in the Mercy tradition.

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

Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

In 2012, 148 girls completed Stage 5 (Year 10) at OLMC. From 2012, eligible students who leave school before receiving their Higher School Certificate receive the NSW Record of School Achievement (RoSA). The RoSA is a cumulative credential in that it allows students to accumulate their academic results until they leave school. The RoSA records completed Stage 5 and Preliminary Stage 6 courses and grades, and participation in any uncompleted Preliminary Stage 6 courses.

OLMC teachers use the Common Grade Scale to determine grades for all Board Developed and Board Endorsed Courses. Grade descriptions are derived from the knowledge, skills and understandings developed in Stage 6 syllabuses and provide a general description of typical performance at each grade level from A to E.

OLMC teachers apply their professional judgement to the overall picture of student achievement at the end of the course and then use the Common Grade Scale to make an on-balance judgement of the most applicable grade description. A student is awarded a grade that aligns with the most appropriate grade description. This grade is determined at the end of the Stage. School reports issued by OLMC give parents and students data on the progress of learning outcomes in relation to syllabus objectives.

OLMC had only one student that required the issuance of a Record of School Achievement in 2012.

School Performance in National Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

In 2012, Year 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
Higher School Certificate Examinations

In 2012, 162 girls completed their NSW Higher School Certificate in 38 courses. These figures include Preliminary Year students completing the study of Mathematics as accelerated students.

The following table reflects the combined percentage of Bands 5 and 6 achieved at OLMC in relation to the State percentage of Bands 5 and 6.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>OLMC % in Bands 5 and 6</th>
<th>State % in Bands 5 and 6</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tamil Continuers</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles and Design</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the 162 students who sat for the NSW Higher School Certificate in 38 Courses, 96% of candidates across all courses achieved marks of 50 or more (Bands 2 or higher) with 92% of these placed in Bands 5 and 6 (80-100 marks). Of the 41 candidates who sat for a one unit Extension Courses, 88% achieved 25 marks or more out of 50 with 28% of these, achieving in the highest bands with 40 marks or more. OLMC students achieved above state average results in 31 courses with 31 students with ATARS of 90 or over in respective courses. Further to this, 74% of all courses achieved higher than State means for their respective courses with four subjects achieving greater than 10% above the state mean. These subjects include: Community and Family Studies, English Standard, Food Technology and French Beginners.

Three students were placed on the HSC Top Achievers List, for Community and Family Studies with two students who received first and third places in Community and Family Studies. One student received 10th place in Studies of Religion (2 unit).

In general, student achievement was at or above the state level means at the NSW Higher School Certificate. This has been a consistent trend at OLMC.

**Post HSC**

94% of OLMC students went on to study at a tertiary institution, TAFE or Private College. 48% of OLMC students went on to study a Science based course at University.
Cocurricular Activities

In 2012, students in the College were involved in a number of cocurricular activities which extended the students’ 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/debating arena or in one of a number of 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 10 team reaching the grand final of the Sydney Catholic Schools Debating Association Competition and a number of teams going through to the Elimination Rounds. There continues to be considerable growth in the number of students who participated in public speaking competitions. Students reached the finals of the CSDA Public Speaking competition, the Rostrum Voice of Youth and the Legacy Competition. Students achieved a number of first places in the Parramatta Eisteddfod.

For the second year running, one of the Tournament of Minds teams reached the National Final of the competition and achieved Honours.

Students continued to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at Gold, Silver and Bronze levels.

In 2012, 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 and Water Polo.

Particular successes in sport included students who achieved state representation in Touch Football, Swimming and Hockey and national representation in Athletics, Cheerleading, Cross Country, Ultimate Frisbee, Taekwondo, European Handball and Triathlon. One student competed in an international Ultimate Frisbee event in Ireland.

The range of cocurricular activities include:
- Amnesty International
- Athletics CCC (Combined Catholic Colleges)
- Athletics PDSSSC (Parramatta Diocese Secondary Schools Sports Council)
- Athletics IGSSSA (Independent Girls Schools Sports Association)
- Basketball CGSSSA (Catholic Girls Secondary Schools Sports Association)
- Basketball PDSSSC
- Cake Decorating
- Chamber Orchestra
- Cheerleading
- Chess Club
- Choir
- Concert Band
- Cricket CCC
- Cricket CGSSSA
- Cross Country PDSSSC
- Cross Country CCC
- Dance CGSSSA
- Debating CSDA (Catholic Schools Debating Association)
- Diving CCC
- Diving CGSSSA
- Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
- European Handball
- Golf CCC
- Gymnastics CGSSSA
- History Club
- Hockey CGSSSA
- Mercy Action Group
- Mercy Chorale
- Mock Mediation
- Music Ensembles – e.g. Flute, Clarinet, Jazz
- Netball CCC
- Netball CGSSSA
- NSW All School Triathlon
- Orchestra
- Peer Support
- Public Speaking e.g. CSDA, Rostrum, Rotary
- Rock Band
- Saturday Basketball
- Saturday Netball
- Saturday Soccer
- Saturday Volleyball
- Science Club
- Scrabble Club
- Soccer CGSSSA
- Soccer PDSSSC
- Softball CGSSSA
- String Orchestra
- Swimming CCC
- Swimming IGSSA
- Swimming PDSSSC
- Tennis CGSSSA
- Tennis PDSSSC
- Textile Club
- The Readers Group
- Titration Competition
- Touch Football CGSSSA
- Touch Football PDSSSC
- Tournament of the Minds
- Ultimate Frisbee
- Variety Concert
- Volleyball
- Water Polo CCC
- Wednesday Touch Football
Human Dimension –
Students and Staff at OLMC

Student Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Attendance Rate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ninety-five per cent of students attended school on average each school day in 2012. This was similar to the daily attendance in 2011.

Management of school attendance

The College implements policy and procedures for the management of student non-attendance. In 2012 the College complied with the amendments to the Education Act 1990 by requiring parents to complete an Application for Exemption from Attendance at School. The Application is available on the College website. New South Wales Attendance Register Codes have been implemented.

Student Retention Rates

There is a strong student retention rate at the College with 143 students in Year 12 in 2012 enrolled in the College from 170 students in Year 10, 2010. 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 2012 overwhelmingly went on to further study at University (92%), TAFE or private colleges (2%). Approximately 3% went directly into employment with 3% 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 2012</th>
<th>Access to Full Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection Policy</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of Conduct Policies</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Policy</td>
<td>Minor changes made after the review of each practice evacuation</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral Care Policy</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal and College website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Bullying Policy</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal and College website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Incident Policy</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Attendance Policy</td>
<td>Compiled to amendment to Education Act. NSW Attendance Codes implemented</td>
<td>Staff Portal and College website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Health Policy</td>
<td>Revised</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Policy</td>
<td>Revised</td>
<td>Staff Portal and Student Diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursion Policy</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Policy</td>
<td>Revised</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Policy</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit Cup Policy</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal and Student Diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Dress Code</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal and Student Diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit System</td>
<td>Revised</td>
<td>Staff Portal and Student Diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Weather Policy</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Policy</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Smoking Policy</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning enrichment</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student assessment and reporting</td>
<td>Revised</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors and outside providers</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability provisions</td>
<td>Revised</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted and talented students</td>
<td>Revised</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHS</td>
<td>Revised procedures for ensuring student safety in class activities</td>
<td>Staff Portal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 for students to understand that there are consequences for 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. Amendments implemented in 2012 include merit for service guidelines.
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 the Year Coordinators in Term 4 2012. This annual review is to maintain the contemporary nature of the content delivered in Pastoral Care lessons. Changes in resourcing were made for the 2013 program.

Pastoral Care Structure

The College’s Strategic Plan involves a review of the current Pastoral Care structures. A committee was convened in the latter half of the year and it commenced the process of writing a survey regarding the current pastoral care structure to be given to students, parents and staff in 2013.

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

- 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 2012, there were 929 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 2012 there were 48 Homeroom classes. In Years 7 there were five core streams and in Years 8 -10 there were six core streams (Religious Education, English, History and Geography, Religious Education and Personal Development/ Health/ Physical Education) and seven in Years 11-12. In Years 7 and 8 class sizes are reduced for some practical subjects: Technology, Music, Drama and Visual Arts in Year 7 and Technology, Music, PD/H/PE and Visual Arts in Year 8.

The Enrolment Policy of the College is printed below:

Enrolment Policy - 2012

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 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 Registration Form (available on the website) for admission to OLMC must be completed by both parents and forwarded to the college. The applicant’s name is placed on the Waiting List.
- Two years prior to enrolment for a Year 7 student and 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
  - 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.
Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

The College believes strongly that we work in partnership with parents in the education of their daughter/s. Parents are encouraged to be in close communication with the staff of the College with regard to the academic performance and pastoral care of their daughter/s. Attendance by parents at parent/teacher interviews in all year groups is, approximately, 95%.

There is a keen and enthusiastic Parents and Friends Association which meets eight times a year. The Parents and Friends Association ran a number of successful functions in 2012: A Welcome to Year 7, Principal’s Cocktail Party, Trivia Night and a farewell morning tea for Year 12. They also assisted at the Year 7 (2014) Enrolment Evening, Mother/Daughter Mass, the Father/Daughter Mass and the Year 7 (2013) Orientation.

In 2012 as in previous years Year 12 students were invited to a series of morning teas attended by members of the College Executive as a way of thanking them for their contributions to the College and asking them for their reflections of their time at the College and suggestions for the future. The girls speak so positively of their relationships with their teachers and of their respect for them in terms of the quality of the teaching in their classes. They also speak of the friendships they have made with their peers and the ways they were supported and cared for.

Parents and teachers were surveyed in relation to the changes made to the Years 7 & 8 Reports in Semester 1. The parents’ and teachers’ responses to the new drop down menu for report comments were very positive.
Teachers at OLMC

Professional Learning

College staff participated in a broad range of professional development activities in 2012 including a range of workshops to support the implementation of the new Australian curriculum.

Members of the College Executive, Middle Management and teaching staff attended a variety of conferences throughout the year. Conferences included Technology in K-12 Education National Congress 2012, the Inclusive Technologies Conference and subject specific conferences such as the English Conference conducted by AIS and the History Teachers Conference conducted by Macquarie University.

Regular professional development was provided for all teaching staff through a series of after school workshops and Staff Development Days. Examples of topics covered in these sessions included how to use Social Media /Networking in the classroom, Life Skills workshops and opportunities to further develop skills in a range of software applications.

The Mercy values provided the focus for the Staff Development Day in Term 2.

In addition the following professional development activities were undertaken by staff throughout 2012:

<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>15</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>24</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>7</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>10</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>5</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>9</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>12</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>14</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>15</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>16</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>6</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>8</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>6</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>2</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>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Provided information that was specific and related to the administration of the College.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>Provided information that was related to the social justice values of the College.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average expenditure per teacher on Professional Development in 2012: $1860
## 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 (NEOOSR) guidelines</td>
<td>86</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>0</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 2012 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 2012. 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