

SMMC excels in annual NAPLAN testing

by M. Biddle

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SAINT Mary MacKillop Colleges has achieved outstanding NAPLAN results yet again, ranking in the top two per cent of secondary schools nationwide for numeracy and grammar and punctuation. Nationwide, the secondary school ranked no.10 out of the 917 regional schools nationwide (i.e. in the top 1%).

NAPLAN – the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy – is held annually for Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students, testing all students in all schools in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation and numeracy. Of the 2,980 secondary schools in the country, St Mary MacKillop Colleges ranked 202, higher than all other secondary schools in the Wagga Wagga region.

In the primary school rankings, St Mary MacKillop Colleges ranked 861 out of 7,691 schools, placing it in the top 12 per cent of primary schools nationwide.

Principal of Primary John Burton was thrilled with the results, which he said were a result of numerous factors.

“I’m very pleased,” he said. “We’ve had good results over the last several years but this year we certainly improved. There’s definitely a constant focus on literacy and numeracy here, we have quality teachers, and we aim, where possible, to keep classes sizes small, particularly in the lower primary school so that the students get a really solid foundation.”

With finances per student well below the national average, the results suggested the school was using its resources in a highly productive manner. Mr Burton said, *“There’s a lot of resources out there that you can purchase... but we just focus on having less of more quality resources rather than all the bells and whistles,”*

Sr Mary Martin OP, one of eight Dominican Sisters who teach at St Mary MacKillop Colleges, described the NAPLAN results as “astounding”. There were numerous reasons why the school was succeeding academically, Sr Mary Martin said, *“Good student-centred, teacher-directed lessons; expectations from students of hard work, and respectful and disciplined behaviour promote human factors which help academic success,”*

“It’s evident that Our Lord blesses the efforts of those who recognise that academic success is only one of the many means to a much more important goal – his glory and our salvation. St Mary MacKillop Colleges was founded in order to pursue that goal and we pray that God may give us his continued blessings to do so.”