



ST PAUL'S COLLEGE

Annual Report to the School Community

Registered School Number 1243



"Enhancing opportunities, enabling dreams and unleashing potential for people through relationships, innovation and inclusion."



Contents

Contact Details	2
College Vision	3
School Overview	4
Principal's Report	6
Chief Executive Report	8
Education in Faith	10
Learning & Teaching	12
Student Engagement and Wellbeing	13
Leadership & Management	15

Contact Details

Address	Gate 3, 3-13 Fernhurst Grove Kew Victoria 3101
Principal	Cheril Dewhirst
School Board Chair	St Paul's College is under the auspice of Villa Maria The President of the Villa Maria Board is Dr Angela Atkin
Telephone	(03) 9855 7700
E-mail	stpauls@villamaria.com.au
Website	www.villamaria.com.au



VILLA MARIA

Villa Maria is a Catholic Not for Profit organisation providing core services in the disability, education and senior service sectors

Vision Statement

Villa Maria will deliver quality and innovative disability, education and senior service options that empower and enrich individuals and communities.

Values Statement

Villa Maria Board, management, personnel and volunteers value:

Compassion	We care about the needs of others and seek to understand their life and spiritual journey.
Accountability	We take responsibility for what we do and are honest in the way we do it.
Respect	We recognize the value and uniqueness of each person.
Courage	We have the quality of spirit to act in accordance with our convictions.



School Overview

St Paul's College, auspiced by Villa Maria, is a small independent, non-systemic Catholic School supported by the Catholic Education Office as their sole specialist school for students with physical and complex disabilities.

Located close to Kew junction, St Paul's College provides specialist education for children, adolescents and young adults, with a wide range of needs including intellectual, physical, profound multiple and sensory disabilities including autism and complex medical needs, aged 5 to 18 years. Students travel to St Paul's from as far afield as Attwood, Heidelberg West, Yarraview and West Ivanhoe.

We also support families who may wish to have dual enrolment so their child can also integrate into their local community.

With a focus on relationships and communication we are committed to working in partnership with families, ensuring each student has access to comprehensive educational, developmental and therapy programs to enable them to develop their full intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual potential. Our learning is immersed in activity, in relating, in experience, in feelings and in celebrating achievements either individually or as a group.

St Paul's College is a warm, accepting community which welcomes and respects children and families of all faiths.

Our staff to student ratio is high, as many of our students have high support needs. We also have a full-time nurse on campus to support children with health issues. We have small class groups throughout the College of 5 – 6 students with a teacher and assistant.

Students have individually designed programs, where teachers, therapists and parents work collaboratively to tailor programs to the unique learning needs and desires of the individual student. Parents are welcome at the College any time and we value their support and involvement.

Our highly skilled staff work as a multidisciplinary team comprising teachers, speech therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, music therapists, school nurse and assistants.

The structure of the school includes a Primary section which includes the Bridging program as well as Secondary section which includes transition to adult services.

New staff participate in Villa Maria's, two day, induction program and are also linked to a mentor who is experienced in the protocols of the College.

Through parent satisfaction surveys we consult with families and seek feedback in all areas of the College's service provision so that it continues to be flexible and responsive to the current needs of students and families.

In all areas, their responses have been highly positive with "strongly agree" being the predominant response to all items. There is a high level of overall satisfaction expressed. This is an encouraging endorsement of the style of management and programming currently implemented by the school.



ST PAUL'S COLLEGE

The school will continue to foster a caring, supportive community for students and families whilst striving to provide high quality educational and therapy programs that meet the increasingly diverse needs of our students.



Principal's Report

It was a privilege to be appointed as Principal of St Paul's College at the commencement of the 2009 school year. It was a very busy year getting to know the students, staff and families who all made me feel most welcome. St Paul's is a unique, supportive community and having been at the College some time previously as Deputy Principal, I enjoyed returning 'home'.

There are many transition points during a child's school life – from entry to prep, to primary, to secondary, to young adulthood and post-school activity. Our person centered approach focuses on the many transition points experienced by students and their families. Staff worked closely with the students and their families to enable these transitions to be as seamless as possible. Many of our prep students transfer from Villa Maria's Early Childhood Intervention Service which is also on the Kew campus, thus enabling staff from the college and ECIS to work together to achieve successful outcomes for each student.

During the year, St Paul's expanded its role in supporting students and local schools where students have dual enrolment. Part of this service includes our highly successful Bridging Program where we offer a year of additional preparation for entry into prep for students with a disability or developmental delay, which affects their learning.

We consolidated the comprehensive transition program established in 2008 for students in their last two years of schooling. These senior students have the opportunity to undertake supervised external work experience, which this year was undertaken at Salvo Stores. The experience they gain assists students to develop good work habits including focus, independence, sequencing and task completion, as well as specific task-related skills.

Promoting community connection and interaction is an integral part of the St Paul's program and philosophy. Highlights of our college year included the Parents and Friends dinner and the highly enjoyable college social, jointly hosted by the students of Xavier College, Burke Hall.

Our whole school arts day in preparation for the Kew Festival was well organised and students had great enjoyment participating. Unfortunately it did 'rain on our parade', however we did not let this deter us and we arranged a parade at school which was enjoyed by all.

The creative art elective continued to be most popular and with our students who produced the mosaic garden sculpture titled 'Smashing Times', which is proudly positioned in the college grounds.

The spiritual dimension is important at St Paul's. We are a faith community built on love and welcoming and respecting children and families of all faiths. A highlight of the year was Bishop Christopher Prowse celebrating the Mass for Feast of our Patron Saint, St Paul, alongside Fr Malcolm Crawford, Fr Michael Ryan, and Fr David Ryan.



Providing a physical environment which promotes student independence, interaction, learning and wellbeing is an ongoing priority. We were delighted to receive funding from the Federal Government's *Building the Education Revolution* program (BER). We obtained \$50,000 from the *National School Pride* component for a variety of works to improve accessibility, safety and maintenance including the fitting of two electronic doors which provide access for students in wheelchairs. We also received \$250,000 from the *Primary Schools for the 21st Century* component for the refurbishment of our Living Skills and laundry facilities.

We were able to install a Liberty Swing through donations from the Newsboys Foundation and The Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund. The Liberty Swing enables students in a wheelchair to experience the many therapeutic benefits of movement.

As a result of significant donations from Catholic Capital Grants, Blake Dawson, Helen MacPherson Smith Trust, Scobie & Claire Mackinnon Trust, Jack Brockhoff Foundation and the Roche Trust, we were able to complete major refurbishments to the swimming pool. This \$280,770 refurbishment, undertaken in two stages, has resulted in extensions and upgrades to the change rooms, pool deck and interior.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) continues to be a focus at St Paul's, with significant investment in hardware and software and professional development being undertaken this year. As a result of a generous grant from the Leslie Eric Paddle Trust Fund, we were able to purchase two interactive whiteboards. By drawing directly onto these whiteboards with their fingers at eye level, students are able to improve their hand-eye coordination, fine motor coordination and reduce the frustration they experience when trying to use a pencil or crayon to write, or a mouse to control the computer.

Cheril Dewhirst Principal (2009)



Villa Maria

In 1907, a small group of committed volunteers led by an inspirational woman, Louisa Fawcner, joined forces to provide people with vision impairment access to Braille translations of Catholic literature. This was the first community service offered by Villa Maria.

More than 100 years later, this desire to make a meaningful difference to people's lives, to connect them with their community and enable them to achieve their dreams and goals, continues to be the driving force of Villa Maria. It is an enduring legacy: one of inspired leadership, vision and commitment.

Over the century, Villa Maria's rich tapestry of services and programs has evolved from our willingness to continually review, grow and adapt to meet the changing needs of the individuals, families and communities we serve, while retaining our strong sense of mission, spirit and values.



CEO Report

Presenting at Villa Maria's Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at the end of October provided me with an opportunity to reflect on all of the great work that has taken place across the organisation throughout the past year.

It has certainly been a year of highlights, achievements and challenges, with staff and volunteers from all of Villa Maria's service and business areas making an enormous contribution towards our many accomplishments – thank you most sincerely for all that you do.

Driven by a unified commitment to our vision, mission and values we have made significant progress towards delivering on our three-year strategic plan – Achievements and Aspirations 2008-2011.

We achieved many positive outcomes in each of the 10 Key Result Areas (KRAs) contained in our strategic plan and made steady progress towards our service delivery, growth and development targets. Space precludes me from mentioning all of them, but here are a few particular highlights for which we can all feel justifiably proud:



- We expanded our Early Childhood Intervention Service (ECIS) in the City of Yarra and became a Panel Provider for the Helping Children with Autism Program.
- We opened Outer Encounters – an after school and vacation care program for children with a disability in Melbourne's outer east.
- Despite a difficult economic climate, Villa Maria achieved a solid financial result while investing heavily in buildings and ICT infrastructure.
- Villa Maria received a Victorian Government Fair & Flexible Employer Recognition Award 2009.
- We established our strategic planning and business planning processes.

Over and above this impressive list and more importantly, Villa Maria continued to focus on delivering the highest standards of care and support to the individuals and families who access our services. Our desire to celebrate the human spirit and to deliver services that unleash the potential for all people through innovation and inclusion remained paramount.

Villa Maria will continue to celebrate and support the unique worth and capacity of every individual.

Valerie Lyons
Chief Executive Officer, Villa Maria



Education in Faith

History In 1957, Archbishop Mannix directed Br Patrick Guildas O'Neill to provide Catholic Education for blind children in Victoria. The fruits of this endeavor are beautifully evident in the spirit of the St Paul's community past and present and from the continuing work we do each day. As educators we draw our inspiration from current pedagogy, progressive innovations and practiced processes.

As educators in a Catholic school, we reflect and remember that ultimately we engage in the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ. We do so within the values and governance of Villa Maria who continue to steward the inspired work of Louisa Fawcner, Blessed Edmund Rice and Br O'Neill.

Philosophy We believe that each human being is made in the image of God and has been blessed with an immortal soul. God's creation and love for each one enables a response of love to be given. God's love is channeled through his creation, through the love of parents and carers, and through each of our students, regardless of the degree of disability. An atmosphere of love, compassion, acceptance and tolerance is a sure sign of God's loving presence, and our religious education program at St Paul's seeks to articulate and raise awareness of his presence. Indeed, without this positive atmosphere, the viability of our religious education program would be jeopardized.

Implicit in the goal is to ensure students have access to a range of experiences, and that people leading faith development are able to adapt to the physical and intellectual needs of the students.

Achievements

- ❖ Fortnightly assemblies enable students to reflect spiritually on their daily lives.
- ❖ Mass is celebrated each term, where the Parish Priest from Sacred Heart, Kew, joins us. The boys from Burke Hall come to the Masses and provide the singing support we need.
- ❖ For our Feast of St. Paul, we celebrate with a Mass which is usually offered by the Archbishop.
- ❖ The Masses are well prepared so that students and staff are familiar with the carefully chosen hymns.
- ❖ Students participate in offertory processions, using switches to lead the prayers of intercession, and often providing art work which is used as decoration.
- ❖ The Burke Hall boys also join us for bowling activities, Amberley students support our Rideability program and in addition we welcome students who are on work experience or community service programs.
- ❖ We have a Moslem boy in the College. We are sensitive to his needs. He attends the Masses, sometimes with his mother.
- ❖ One student was prepared for First Eucharist during the year. She took part in the preparation in her Parish (Our Lady of Good Counsel, Deepdene) and was also supported by her class teacher who also helped in the preparation.



- ❖ At the commencement of each year we meet with families to develop the student's Individual Educational Plans. Often the subject of initial reception of the Sacraments is raised by parents, and we discuss ways of preparation and the place where First Communion will be celebrated.
- ❖ Many of our students are fragile, and sometimes we are saddened by the death of a student. On these occasions, we support the families through the grieving process. We need to grieve as a school community, and so we usually have a memorial service at the school attended by the appropriate people.
- ❖ We consider our College as a family and are aware of the stresses and needs of families, staff and students. We adhere to the mission statement, vision and values of the Villa Maria Society.



Learning and Teaching

At the commencement of each year Student Support Group (SSG) meetings are held where parents meet with our multidisciplinary team to decide on priorities and goals. Student progress is measured against the achievement of their individual goals established in their Individual Learning Plans (ILP's). The goals are set against the VELs structure and the Dandenong Valley Curriculum is the main document used in the College for curriculum and goal setting.

School data indicates that the majority of students achieved their goals with Good to Very Good in all curriculum areas. In those instances where this was not achieved, students were away from school for extended periods of ill health throughout the year.

Running records, observation surveys and reading levels provided measurable data in literacy for individual students; however this is not appropriate for all students.

In our endeavour to monitor student learning and record progress, we also collected video data which can be viewed and discussed with the team, thus intervening more accurately with appropriate support. This practice has proved most beneficial and will be further extended during 2010.

Our practical experiential programs are designed to expand understanding, knowledge and skills in an engaging way. For example we have a Café program which is an integration of many curriculum areas within a public and social setting. It concentrates on functional math skills through counting and the use and exchange of money. Expressive language is enhanced by ordering meals and informally chatting to community members, peers and staff. Road safety is a focus when walking to and from the café; attention is given to the use of traffic lights, crossing the road and awareness of traffic noise and passersby. Whilst dining at the café, attention is given to using cutlery and organizing plates, food and drink within a limited space.

ICT continued to be a focus for the College, with investment in hardware/software, professional development and infrastructure.



Student Engagement and Wellbeing

St Paul's College continued to provide a safe, supportive environment for students and their families within an educational setting. The improvements to facilities such as electronic doors, swimming pool upgrade, refurbishments to classrooms, living skills and laundry have all improved access for our students.

Student wellbeing is of the highest priority and duty of care is paramount. In support of this, all staff has current Level 2 First Aid qualifications and are trained in enteric feeding. We also have a full-time nurse who supports students, their families and staff with the more complex health needs.

In the primary area of the school, all classrooms have a secure outdoor play area which enables the students to withdraw if they are feeling anxious or need a little personal space for any reason.

Students Data and Attendance

Whilst we do have student attendance records, given the high medical support needs of many students they are not comparable to other schools.

In 2009 we had a total of 38 students. We had six students in our Bridging program which works in partnership with parents and the mainstream school of the parents' choice to facilitate transition into that school. The rest of the students were mostly full-time with some dual enrolled.

Student attendance is around 90%. A snapshot of the month of May was used to calculate this percentage. The attendance percentage varied due to some of our students who are frail with complex medical needs.

We continue to have a high student retention rate of 98%.

Student Pathways and Transitions

During 2009, our Person Centered focus has been on the many transition points which we are aware of and staff work with parents and students to enable these to be as seamless as possible.

Many of our prep students transfer from Villa Maria's Early Childhood Intervention Service (ECIS) program which is also on the Kew campus, enabling staff to work together for successful outcomes. Visits to the College, joint play activities and innovative 'Getting to know you' sessions are all part of the transition process. Teaching staff are also given the opportunity to observe and interact with the student's family and the staff from the other settings to ensure that



essential information and systems are obtained. Staff is aware that this can also be a very traumatic time for parents as well as the children.

We also pay the same attention when students transfer to other classrooms at the end of the year or move from the primary to the secondary section of the school.

Prior to a student moving to secondary, they are included in a number of secondary activities such as electives and drama so they can become familiar with the setting and some of the routines.

Five students turned 18 during the year and successfully participated in the 'Futures for Young Adults program. Staff supported our young adults and their families as they considered their post school options.



Leadership and Management

During 2009 college staff undertake an internal review which encompassed our documentation, reporting procedures, curriculum delivery based on VELs, policies and procedures, job descriptions and school manuals. Part of this review also included visiting other schools and researching Best Practice to ensure we maintain a high standard of service delivery.

Villa Maria recently conducted a survey to ascertain future directions for the development of their next five year plan. As part of this our families who are supported by Education Services which includes St Paul's College and Early Childhood Intervention Service, were asked what they felt we did well. Listed below are some of their responses:

- ❖ Provide good education
- ❖ Support the child and family
- ❖ Share ideas and experience
- ❖ Compassion
- ❖ Everything x2
- ❖ Great staff – approachable, understanding and supportive
- ❖ Hire great staff
- ❖ Provide highly professional and committed services
- ❖ Staff are experienced and passionate
- ❖ Quality of care
- ❖ Caring quality staff
- ❖ Physical facilities
- ❖ Non denominational exclusion
- ❖ Innovative and valuable programs
- ❖ Help in the best way they can

Professional Development

St Paul's is a learning community. Assessment of the student learning goals and needs informs the direction of staff development and learning.

All staff have access to professional development and in support of this, St Paul's College has a substantial budget for Professional Development. We place a high value on further developing staff knowledge and teaching skills. The budget for St Paul's College January to December 2009 was 1.4% of salaries with additional subsidy from grants received. During this time we had 36 staff, 10 of whom were teachers who attend at least one additional professional development.

External Training \$11,922

Training wages \$22,318

The whole College professional development focus for the year was staff being trained in First Aid Level 2 and Information Communication Technology.

Additional staff professional development included:



- Experienced Mentor Update
- Early Years Conference
- The Psychology of Achievement
- School Sustainability
- Freeware – Effective free software
- Chat Now
- How to communicate in challenging situations
- Working with today's parents
- Learning Difficulties Australia Seminar
- Sharepoint
- Social Stories with Carol Gray
- Drama
- Difficult situations with relatives
- Inclusion into ECIS with Autism
- RE through Visual Arts

Teacher Qualifications

All teachers at St Paul's College are registered with the *Victorian Institute of Teaching*. The requirements for this registration can be found at:

<http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document ID=241>.

In addition to teacher qualifications all of our staff is qualified to teach in a special school having obtained a Graduate Diploma of Special Education.

Staff Absence

Teacher attendance rate 97.3% for the year.

Staff Retention

In 2009 we had 35 staff made up of teachers, teacher assistants, therapists and support staff.

11 teachers employed as 8.6 FTE positions

10 teacher assistants employed as 8.6 FTE positions

5 therapists employed as 3.6 FTE positions.

Additional support staff includes nurses, bus drivers, maintenance staff, librarian (0.4), administration staff (1.0) and a Principal (1.0).

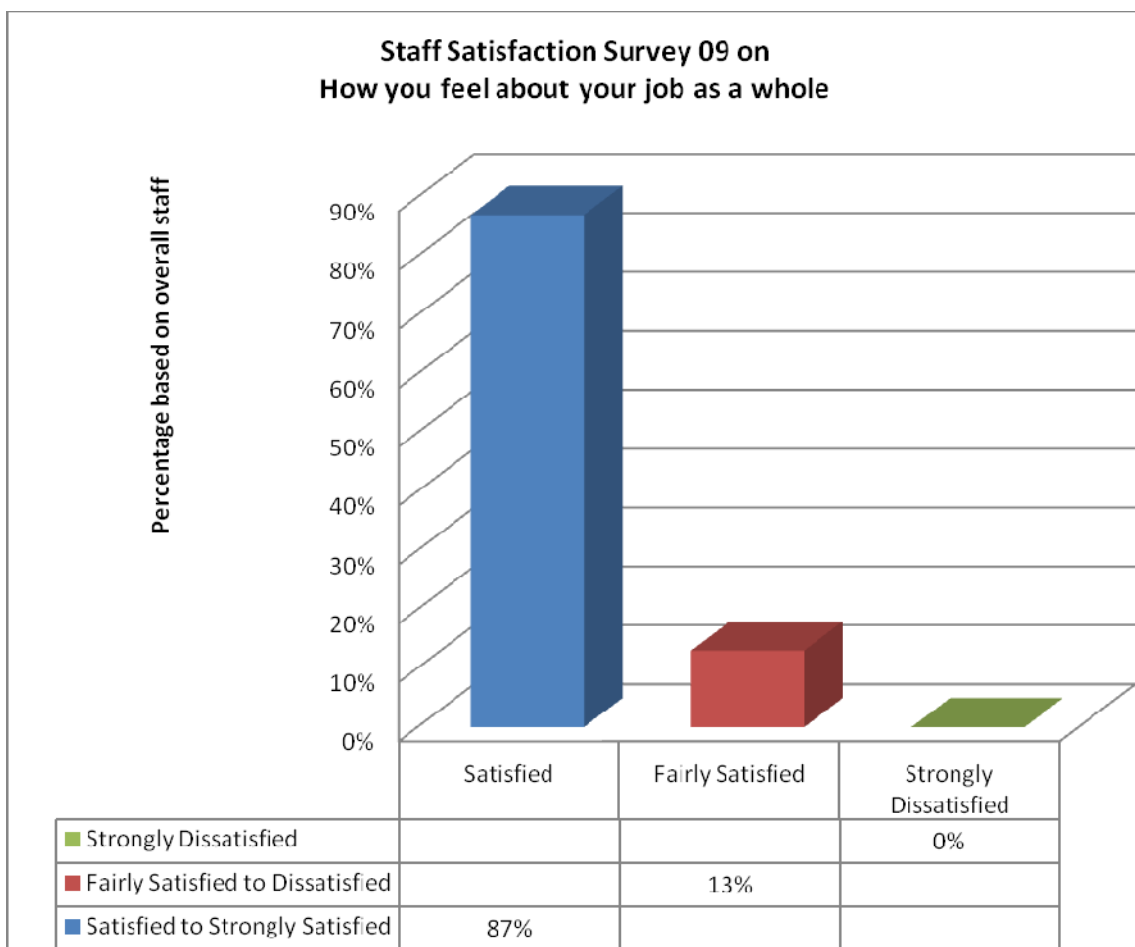
At the end of 2009, one teaching staff member retired, one part-time teacher left to pursue her career related to her studies in ECIS, with another part-time teacher obtaining a position closer to home.



The proportion of teaching staff retained before the start of Term 1 2010 is 73% (headcount) or 88% Full Time Equivalent. The proportion of our overall staff retention was 85%.

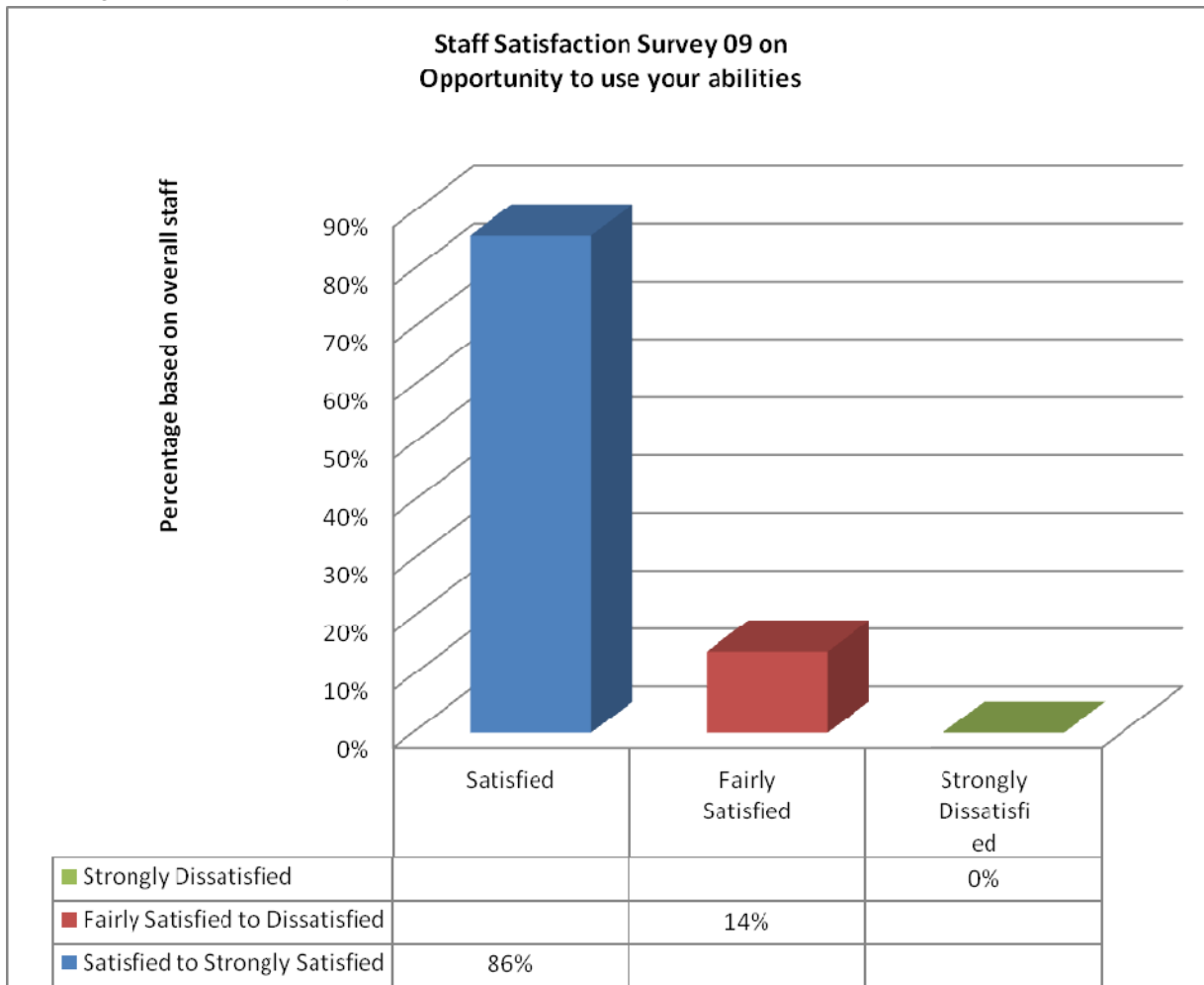
Villa Maria conduct an in-depth staff satisfaction survey every three years with the next one being conducted in September, 2010. To supplement this we conducted our own survey for 2009.

1. Nearly 87% of staff reported they were satisfied with their job as a whole including nearly 20% are strongly satisfied.





- 2. Staff Satisfaction on Opportunity to use their abilities.
Nearly 86% reported that they are satisfied which include 34% strongly satisfied with given the opportunity to use their abilities.

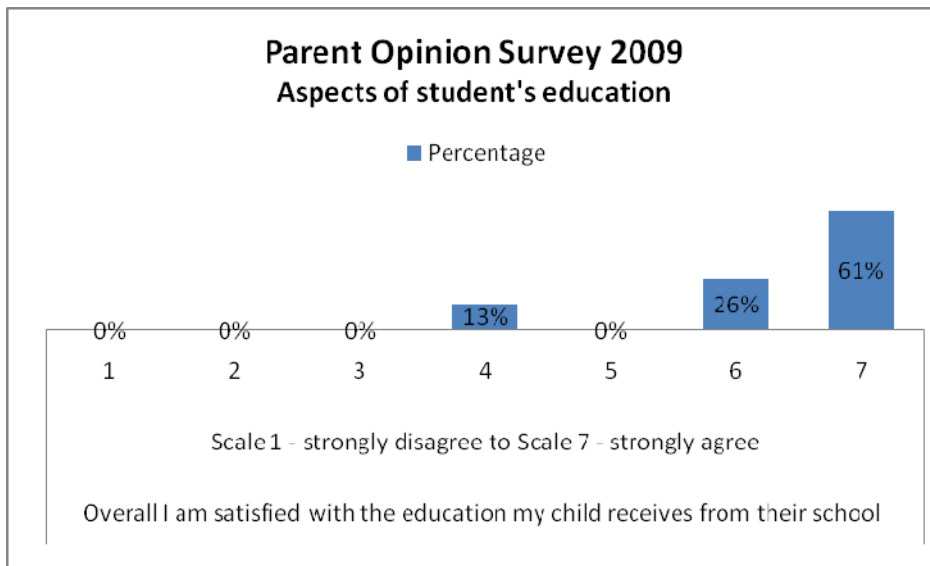




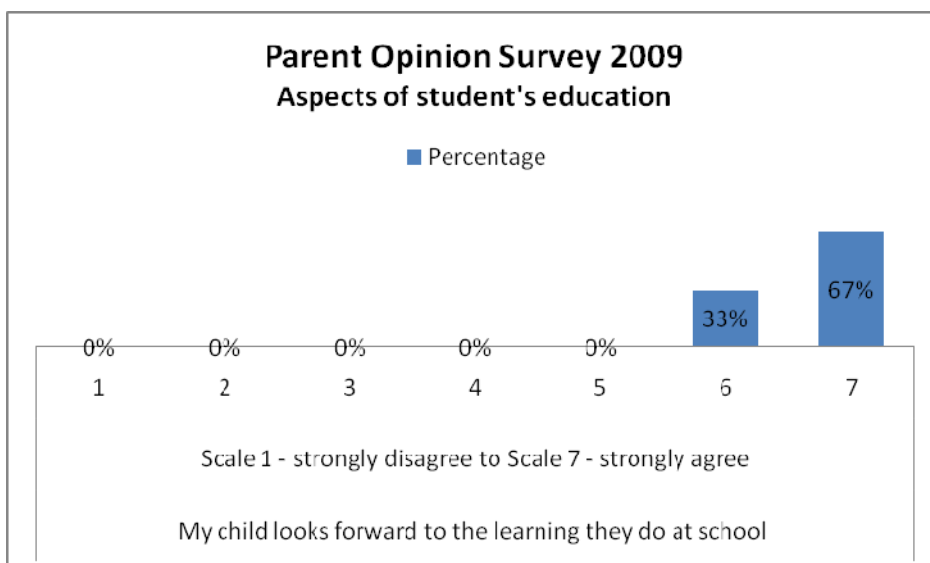
Parent Opinion Survey

The scales range from strongly dissatisfied (1) to strongly satisfied (7).

1. Parents opinion on Overall satisfied with the education students receive from St Paul's.
 - 100% of the parents reported a scale of 4 and above with 61% strongly satisfied with the education provided by St Paul's.



2. Parents' opinion on their children looking forward to the learning at school
 - 100% of the parents reported a scale of 6 and above with 67% strongly satisfied.





Future Directions

2010 will see the implementation of the newly designed documentation for Individual Learning Plans, assessments, midyear and end of year reports. In addition we will also finalise the review of our policies and procedures, job descriptions and school manuals.

As we focus on the changing need of our student population, our staff training and professional development will focus on whole College training in the areas of best practice in curriculum delivery, assessment and communication.

To enable this to happen we realize that we must enhance our communication options through development of technologies such as our SharePoint facility for internal communication so as to be able to focus on pedagogy in staff meetings.

The staff will participate in training relating to developmental Assessment for Students with Additional Needs (SWANs). The assessment materials cover the five foundational learning areas which include communication, literacy (symbolic representation leading towards reading and writing), internal processes (social interaction and responsibility), cognitive development (attention, memory, executive functioning and task based skills) and emotional self management. We will then commence implementation of the SWANs assessments in second semester.

There will also be a whole school focus on the Intensive Interaction communication program which is an approach designed specifically for people with complex learning needs, often referred to as autistic spectrum disorders. Intensive Interaction enables teachers to support learners who don't use words, or any other obvious or formal ways of communication, to communicate and build meaningful, equal relationships with other people. The program promotes social dialogues and play and assists in developing the basics in communication such as turn taking, eye contact, sociability, the use of meaningful facial expressions and enjoying being with another person etc.

Student and staff wellbeing will remain a main focus with the introduction of a detailed internal Hazard Report as well as monthly assessments of facilities which will form part of Villa Maria's Risk Management System.

We will continue to provide a safe and supportive environment within educational setting and in addition to having a nurse on campus, four staff will also obtain First Aid 3 qualifications.

We will continue to develop open communication channels with our families and staff as well as obtaining feedback through surveys, focus groups, coffee mornings and social opportunities.



Financial Performance for the year ended 31 December 2009

Reporting Framework	Modified Cash \$
Recurrent income	Tuition
School Fees	52,675
Other fee income	2,644
Private income	16,173
State government recurrent grants	1,184,479
Australian government recurrent grants	869,122
Total recurrent income	2,125,093
Recurrent expenditure	Tuition
Salaries, allowances and related expenses	1,896,444
Non salary expenses	405,254
Total recurrent expenditure	2,301,698
Capital income and expenditure	Tuition
Government capital grants	
Capital fees and levies	
Other capital income	138,504
Total capital income	138,504
Total capital expenditure	330,431
Loans (includes refundable enrolment deposits and recurrent, capital and bridging loans)	Tuition
Total opening balance	
Total closing balance	(368,532)

Villa Maria support St Paul's College deficit.

