



**The John Berne School**  
**&**  
**Pete's Place School**

Annual School Report to the Community  
2010

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**Pete's Place School**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

At the heart of Berne there is a relationship between Jesus and Mary, lived out through the example of Marcellin Champagnat.

In this spirit, we welcome those students who have struggled to find their place in main-stream schooling.

Within our inclusive community, and with a sense of connectedness, we live out this relationship with these students, enabling them to see beyond their troubles and daring them to dream. In this way, we encourage them to adopt in their lives the motto: *“Hope Always”*.

This journey at Berne will allow them to open new doors, building foundations and opportunities for the future.

## **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

The John Berne School, Lewisham, is registered by the Board of Studies (NSW) and managed by the Trustees of the Marist Brothers', the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The *Annual Report to the School Community* for this year provides the school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The *Report* also outlines information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the school community during the year and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school's Strategic Plan.

This *Report* complements and is supplementary to school newsletters and other regular communications. The *Report* will be available on the school's website by 30 June 2010 following its submission to the Board of Studies.

Further information about the school or this *Report* may be obtained by contacting the school on 02 9560 9260 or by visiting the website at [www.johnberneschool.org](http://www.johnberneschool.org).

PRINCIPAL: BR DARREN BURGE

DATE: 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2011

## MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

### Principal's Message

The strategic plan, which had its origins towards the end of 2009, began to move into full swing throughout 2010. The staff has spent many hours examining their practices and explored new ways of dealing with the ever-changing needs of the young people in our care. There is a range of complex and diverse needs being presented to us and a program with the flexibility to respond to this variety of needs is essential. This has been the launching pad for many of the outcomes of the strategic planning undertaken throughout 2010, and the creation of programs and targets for 2011.

The strategic planning process, and the initial outcomes, has highlighted how focused we are on responding creatively and effectively to student needs. The process has also created an even greater team spirit amongst the staff. It is an excellent foundation for further change and development throughout 2011. I also feel confident that the hard work will come to fruition in 2011.

At the beginning of 2010 we formally began a new campus (Pete's Place School) of the school at Blacktown in collaboration with Marist Youth Care. Marist Youth Care, primarily a welfare service, had been informally educating students who have fallen out of mainstream schooling for some years but desired to have this acknowledged formally. Many of these students are at risk of not completing an education without a smaller, supportive environment in which to do this. It was exciting to see these two arms of Marist ministry join together for the benefit of young people who are struggling to hold their lives together.

Dr Roger Vallance's research of collective efficacy was also conducted throughout 2010. The outstanding results indicated in his report and research paper is indicative of the professionalism and skill of the staff employed at the school. It also supports our belief that the positive school culture and environment impact on staff and, in turn, the students. A summary of results can be found at the conclusion of this report.

I am also indebted to all the volunteers who support us so generously in our work. I thank those who come each week to sit alongside children in classes and to those who organise the many fundraising activities that raises the extra money essential to make up the shortfall in government funding.

Br Darren Burge  
Principal

## **Parent Representative's Message**

It is an enormous challenge to put into writing the value of The John Berne School. Every student who arrives in Lewisham hasn't just stumbled into the care of Br. Darren and his staff. Without exception, adverse circumstances have meant that "different" young people who desperately require special care are welcomed into the Marist Spirit at this exceptional school.

The John Berne School has a philosophy that is underpinned with oodles of patience. Every student is treated with respect. Each student is considered for their circumstances. Most students prosper here. This is such a remarkable outcome for the parents and carers of these young people.

Make no mistake, there are many bumps in the road. The beauty of The John Berne School is that indiscretions and misdemeanours are dealt with promptly. Once resolved there are no recriminations. It is important to appreciate these students have often come from an environment where they have been labelled "bad kids". At Berne a student starts every day with a clean record. It is an excellent approach to educating "challenging" teenagers.

The development of any teenager is a daily battle for parents, carers, teachers and society. Obviously it is a very tough time for the adolescent. When other issues join the mix many of the students need extra guidance. There is no place better suited to help a young person who is under stress than The John Berne School.

John Berne is more than a School, it is a Community. As parents of a child with challenging behaviour caused by Aspergers Syndrome it is an absolute relief to have found The John Berne School. The level of care and understanding provided a safe place for our child to learn and grow. He would not have found this in a regular school. Both child and parents alike are provided with wonderful support from Br Darren and his team. For this we are forever grateful.

## **SCHOOL FEATURES**

The John Berne School is an Independent Catholic School under the care of the Marist Brothers offering a positive option for students (Years 7, 8, 9, 10) whose education is at risk. The students are enrolled on the basis of diagnosed disability and/or inability to cope in mainstream schools. The John Berne School is a coeducational day school. The school's motto, *Hope Always*, reflects the fundamental belief that intervention in the lives of troubled people is always worthwhile.

The school caters for a culturally diverse community with around 45 students and employs 25 staff. In August 2010 there were 95% male students and 5% female students and 2% of students identified as indigenous. Our Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) enrolments comprised 23 % of the school population.

The high student to staff ratio is essential to the success of the school which provides, in addition to a complete curriculum, a number of special programs for our students and their families including:

### **Family and Student Counselling**

Counselling is a central part of our work at Berne. Each student is assigned a Counsellor who meets with him/her each fortnight to assist with their behavioural needs. The Counselling team also conducts Parenting Programs and other practical support to families.

### **Breakfast Program**

Our *Breakfast Program* not only meets the nutritional needs of students, but in sharing this meal together each day, with adult care and supervision, students have the opportunity to settle before classes begin and improve their social skills. At the end of the long journey to school from all parts of Sydney, students need a good breakfast. Research shows that student performance is enhanced by approximately 50% as a result of a nutritional breakfast.

### **Student Withdrawal Assistance Program (SWAP)**

*SWAP* offers a supervised environment in the short term for students who have been facing significant troubles in their mainstream school. It provides a forum for thorough assessment of a student's cognitive and academic strengths and weaknesses as well as disturbances in mood and behaviour. This program aims to provide other schools with an affordable service which allows them to respond more appropriately to the special needs of students who are struggling.

### **Learning Advancement Centre (LAC)**

The *LAC* supports students in their educational engagements and pursuits on a one-on-one level. This enables us to target their specific individual needs.

### **Cracking the Code Literacy Program**

The students participate in a program that addresses their literacy needs. This is a direct instruction program that takes place four times per week for thirty minutes and is based on university research. It aims

to enable students to access the curriculum more effectively. Students with even greater need are identified and further weekly instruction addresses their specific needs.

### **Outdoor Education Program**

Demanding outdoor challenges helps students to develop their personal attitudes and values of self-esteem, motivation, confidence, team work and responsibility. A camp or outdoor activity is conducted each term.

### **job ready! Program**

Berne has in place a range of vocational preparation courses to prepare its students for the workplace. Teaching skills like writing a job application, interview techniques and telephone protocol, the program also instructs students on appropriate workplace behaviour and communication in its nine week work experience placement course in Years 9 and 10. The Work Education unit for the School Certificate is also completed as part of this program.

### **Changing Lanes Program**

*Changing Lanes* is for ex-Berne students who need help with the next stage of their lives. The Coordinator of this program offers extra help in finding a job or starting an apprenticeship or other course.

*A more detailed description of all of these school programs can be found on our website at [www.johnberneschool.org](http://www.johnberneschool.org).*

### **School Features – Pete’s Place School**

Pete’s Place School is a campus of The John Berne School. It is an alternative school setting which aims to meet the social and educational needs of marginalised young people who have been excluded from, or have not coped with, mainstream education. Pete’s Place School is a coeducational day school and enrolls students from Years 7 – 10. In August 2010 there were 50% male students and 50% female students and 25% of students identified as indigenous. Our Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) enrolments comprised 0 % of the school population.

During 2010 Pete’s Place School employed three full time teachers and one part-time teachers’ aide.

## **CATHOLIC LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The John Berne School's approach to Catholic Life and Religious Education is demonstrated primarily in the Gospel witness of the staff in their daily association with each other and the students in their care. The caring and sensitive relationships that are fostered within this community, characterised by acceptance, forgiveness and restorative practises, are a palpable expression of our faith.

The Marist Province theme of "Dream New Dreams" was embraced during the 2010 commencement Mass where staff and students explored this meaning and were challenged to offer up a dream, which was brought to the altar, and formed the basis for many other liturgies and prayers throughout the year. The students at Berne connect with this type of symbolism.

Champagnat Day (June 6), John Berne Day (Oct 10) and our annual pilgrimage to *The Hermitage* in Mittagong on Holy Thursday are three of our special Religious Education days where direct links are forged with our Marist tradition. The presence of our Marist Brothers, Brothers Darren Burge, Mick Jones and Chris Hogan, gives that great witness the Marists have with the education of young people. The occasional visit of other Brothers, including Brothers Roger Valance and Tony Leon, provide that special Marist flavour demonstrating the connection between The John Berne School and the wider Marist Community.

2010 saw the introduction of formal Religious Education lessons throughout the school. These weekly classes for each year group demonstrated the thirst that young people possess for information and a willingness and innocence to share deep thoughts and feelings of a spiritual nature. It is also aimed at equipping them with the knowledge and ability to make sense of their own life experiences. The students indicated their enjoyment of these classes. Their willing and enthusiastic participation is testament to this.

An optional staff retreat was conducted for the first time. Two thirds of the staff attended this retreat. Other Berne staff participated in Province programs such as "Sharing Our Call" and "Schools of the Spirit". In 2011 the Faith Formation Team plans to extend the connection of the students to go beyond their comfort zone and embrace the 2011 Province theme of "Around the Same Table: A Place for All" by forging a connection with a school with special needs students.

Each morning the staff pray together for the day ahead. This time of quiet, reflective prayer was cited by 80% of the staff as one of the most significant factors in their experience of the school .



## SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The John Berne School is an Independent Catholic School, owned and conducted by the Marist Brothers – Sydney Province. This school adheres to the Board of Studies syllabus for each of the courses offered. During 2009 the school obtained registration for five years, and throughout 2010 the thrust was to enhance the Assessment of the Curriculum Continuum.

In 2010, following the recommendations from the Board of Studies, the Curriculum Coordinator and Subject Coordinators undertook work relating to Assessment. The following key elements of Assessment were identified and developed: **Assessment Policy; Assessment Overviews; Assessment Tasks; Assessment Exams and Exam Results**. These elements helped to connect and make relevant both programs and reports. The school reports were also reviewed and updated as part of this process.

In 2010, The John Berne School offered the five mandatory courses of: Science, Mathematics, Geography, History and English. Other courses also offered were: PDHPE, Religion, Indonesian, Visual Arts and Industrial Technology – wood. In our Years 7 and 8 extra subjects such as Technology (Mandatory) and Music were offered. As a continuation, the Skills-Based Literacy Program (*Cracking the Code*) was offered.

During 2010 our teaching facilities have continued to be refurbished with the much improved La Valla room, which is used in a variety of ways for the students.

Our *Learning Advancement Centre* continued to be utilised effectively for some students requiring a more one-to-one delivery and break-down of the curriculum.

The professional development of staff, in order to expand the effective and creative use of ICT, will be a focus during 2011. In addition, numerous subject meetings with the Curriculum Coordinator and Subject Coordinator have been scheduled during 2011 in order to further develop the curriculum, with special focus on assessment procedures. Further time has been scheduled in our weekly general staff meetings for a sharing of curriculum resources and classroom techniques.

### School Curriculum – Pete’s Place School

Pete’s Place School provides an Individual Education Plan for each student designed to meet their particular learning needs. Pete’s Place School offers the School Certificate in the following core subjects: English, Maths, Science, History and Geography. In Years 7 and 8 the subjects Technology (Mandatory) and Music are also available. Pete’s Place School also offers the option of a Life Skills School Certificate. The staff of

the head school provide resources, support and staffing assistance in addressing curriculum in this smaller context.

Pete's Place School also offers an Outdoor Education Statement of Attainment in partnership with Blue Mountains TAFE. It also offers Work Experience for year 10 students. A short-term course in photography is on offer as well as regular opportunities to improve Living Skills such as cooking. A program in Social Skills is currently being developed.

## **STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN TESTS**

### **National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)**

At the time of the 2010 NAPLAN assessments The John Berne School did not have a Year 7 cohort. Therefore, all the results recorded for 2010, are for the Year 9 cohort.

Students in Year 9 sat the National Program in Literacy and Numeracy in May 2010. Although the NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy, these results provide more relevant information to the school teachers and would be difficult to interpret in a broader context. Parents and those who are interested in the performance of students at the school would be advised to discuss individual attainment.

As the school is a special school designed to provide education to students at risk, the student population is small and highly variable from school term to school term. Different intakes of students each term reflect different literacy and numeracy skill levels. Mostly we endeavour to include all students in the NAPLAN assessment, even though some of our students would have been excluded from the assessment in traditional school settings.

Many of our students participate in intensive literacy and numeracy programs which show considerable growth over time. This may not be reflected in the NAPLAN results as the student may have just begun the program before the assessment and will need a longer period of treatment, or the student has entered the school with literacy and numeracy results that preclude them from attaining high results in the NAPLAN assessments at that time.

The school's performance in spelling and grammar has consistently risen from 2008 to 2010. This may be the result of the intensive programs at the school, or it could be a coincidence due to variability in student

intake. The school's performance on these indicators has risen to average despite having extremely poor intake assessment data in some years.

The table provided shows the percentages of students who achieved particular skill bands in numeracy and aspects of literacy. The school results shown are compared to students nationally. Literacy is reported in four content strands: Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Numeracy is reported in a single content strand.

NAPLAN results 2010		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	All schools	School	All schools
Year 9	Reading	0%	18%	88%	26%
	Writing	0%	19%	88%	30%
	Spelling	0%	22%	0%	25%
	Grammar & Punctuation	0%	22%	50%	24%
	Numeracy	0%	23%	63%	21%

Source: MySchool <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>; Additional information can be viewed at this website.

### **National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) – Pete's Place School**

The students at Pete's Place were not enrolled at the time of the NAPLAN tests.

## School Certificate

Students in Year 10 sat for the School Certificate examination in November this year. The table provided shows the percentage of students who achieved in the top three bands and shows comparison with results from previous years.

	School Certificate: % of students in bands 4, 5, 6					
	2008		2009		2010	
	School	State	School	State	School	State
English Literacy	70%	77%	82%	83%	76%	80%
Mathematics	25%	50%	18%	50%	14%	53%
Science	45%	66%	70%	71%	52%	72%
Australian History	45%	51%	53%	59%	33%	52%
Australian Geography	55%	67%	64%	60%	42%	58%

The students attending this school are all at risk of not completing the School Certificate because of their behavioural and emotional disorders. Some are school refusers and have not succeeded in a mainstream setting. In addition, a number of our students have significant issues with literacy and numeracy. This is the lens through which these results should be viewed. The completion of the School Certificate is in itself an achievement. As a result, the achievement of 76% of our cohort attaining bands 4, 5 or 6 in English literacy in 2010 is an outstanding achievement. The significant difference between the three years represented in each subject is an indication of the many variables that impact on the lives of our students.

## School Certificate - Pete's Place School

Only one student from Pete's Place completed School Certificate Examinations in 2010. In the interests of confidentiality, the results have not been listed.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHER STANDARDS

### Professional learning

In 2010 a number of staff undertook Professional Development as a means of improving and extending their learning. This also assisted in the improvement in class delivery for our students. Some of the In-Services included:

- Understanding Autism
- Anxiety and Depression in Children and Adolescents with Learning Difficulties
- Implementing the Teacher Quality National Partnership and the 2010 Australian Government Quality Teacher Program
- TAFE Diploma Training and Assessment
- Science Teachers' Forum
- Geography Brought Alive
- Bullying
- Rock and Water
- Cyber Bullying Cyber Safety
- Visual Mathematics
- The Brain that Changes Itself
- Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation

### **Professional Learning - Pete's Place School**

- Cultural Awareness
- BKS Training
- Adobe Photoshop
- Keep Them Safe, Changes to Mandatory Reporting
- Marist Youth Care – Our Story
- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention
- Child Protection Training
- Assess and Respond to Individuals at Risk

### **Teacher Standards**

The following table sets out the number of teachers on the school staff who fall into each of the three categories determined by the Board of Studies:

<b>Teacher Qualifications - The John Berne School</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>
1. Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	16
2. Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	0
3. Those not having qualifications described in 1 or 2 above but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate relevant knowledge.	0

<b>Teacher Qualifications – Pete’s Place School</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>
1. Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	3
2. Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	0
3. Those not having qualifications described in 1 or 2 above but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate relevant knowledge.	0

## **TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION**

The John Berne School maintained a quota of 16 teachers in 2010. The average teacher attendance rate during 2010 was 94%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave. The teacher retention rate from 2009 to 2010 was 100%.

Other specialist positions at Berne included two full-time and one part-time Counsellors, Chaplain, Careers Adviser and administration support staff. Berne operates a school canteen employing a Canteen Manager and a Breakfast Program Co-ordinator.

### **Teacher Attendance and Retention – Pete’s Place School**

Average teacher attendance rate was 98%.

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

### **Attendance Rates**

The average student attendance rate for the school during 2010 was 84%. School attendance rates disaggregated by year group are shown in the following table.

<b>Attendance rates by Year group</b>	
Year 7	95%
Year 8	98%
Year 9	79%
Year 10	80%

Students attending Berne are enrolled on the basis of diagnosed disability and/or inability to cope in mainstream schools. Attendance rates fluctuate annually reflecting the personal situations of the student cohort at the time.

A number of our student population are school refusers or have had poor attendance records at previous schools. If a student is not at school by 9.30 am the office staff make a telephone call to the parents or caregivers. This serves to make parents accountable for the whereabouts of their son/daughter. The students are aware of this policy and our adherence to it. Consequently, truancy is rarely an issue.

Our preparedness to work with parents, including through *our Parenting in Practice* course, helps parents to deal with students who are refusing to come to school and establishes a good relationship with the school. The alternative education program we have in place here and the individual planning reduces the incidence of non-attendance as students find the program more appropriately tailored to their needs than a mainstream school can achieve. However, in more extreme cases the Principal or member of the leadership team, accompanied by a counsellor or the Chaplain, will visit the family home to address the issues and bring the student to school.

### **Attendance Rates – Pete’s Place School**

An evaluation of student attendance has revealed that 75% of students have an attendance rate of 75 % or higher.

Student non-attendance at Pete’s Place School is responded to by:

- Contact with parents or carers to notify re non-attendance
- Discussion with student and parents or carers regarding reason for absence
- Regular non-attendance would necessitate a meeting with the student and their family or carers

### **POST SCHOOL DESTINATIONS**

Each year the school collects destination data relating to the Year 10 student cohort.

Twenty students successfully completed their School Certificates in 2010 at The John Berne School.

The school continues to operate two programs, the *job ready!* and *Changing Lanes Programs*, aimed at the development of employability skills through participation in a range of activities, including Careers Day workshops and work experience placements each term in Years 9 and 10.

During 2010:

- More than 100 employers provided work experience opportunities for students in Years 9 and 10.

- Careers Days workshops were convened each term, designed and delivered to reflect NSW Board Of Studies Work Education subject outcomes.
- Parents attended events at school that were specifically designed to help them help their children make decisions about what do to when they left Berne.
- A Careers Expo was held for Year 10 students and their parents and carers, and was attended by representatives from industries identified by students as being of interest to them.
- Students sought assistance in getting their tax file numbers, opening bank accounts and finding part time work while still at school.
- Just under half of the 2009 graduating students made contact with the school as part of the *Changing Lanes Program* seeking assistance. This number was augmented by a smaller number of students from previous years, too, maintaining contact through *Changing Lanes*.

As at March 2011, graduating students from 2010 (who completed the full range of programs at school) are represented as follows:

39% engaged in full time study of Year 11 courses

34% engaged in full time employment (apprenticeship or general employment)

6% engaged in part time study at TAFE

Four students not able to represented in the above (could not be contacted or for other reasons).

To summarise, 79% of Year 10 graduates, nearly six months after graduation, are engaged in full time employment, full time study or part time study.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

Amongst the various policies of the school is one entitled *Pastoral Care, Behaviour Management and Discipline*. This policy addresses student welfare and discipline. It explains the use of the Behaviour Management Record, the cornerstone of our behaviour management approach. This card makes a daily record of students' behaviour and application to tasks. It incorporates the bonus point system that encourages positive behaviour. The bonus point system has been changed and upgraded in recent times and we are in the process of adjusting this policy to reflect the change. The policy also outlines our behavioural expectations and the use of consequences in dealing with negative behaviour, including suspension and exclusion. The exclusion policy is consistent with the process required by the Marist Brothers Sydney Province in their independent schools. Exclusion would only be used in rare cases and requires the Principal to consult with the Regional Director of Marist Schools Australia. The policy includes



references to the part played by the counsellors in working with students to achieve better outcomes in the many dimensions of their lives. Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. The school does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by school persons and non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the school.

A grievance policy has been updated for the staff outlining the steps that they can use to address issues of conflict or tension amongst themselves. In the first instance, staff are encouraged to address the matter directly amongst themselves and if this is ineffective they are given options and steps, including approaching members of the leadership team and an officer (one of our counsellors) to deal with grievances.

A complaints policy has been updated in recent times explaining the approach that parents or members of the public can use to address concerns that they have. A reminder of this policy and where it can be found is now placed in the school newsletter each term. This policy also lists the steps to resolving complaints.

Full text of school policies can be obtained from The John Berne School office at 1 Thomas Street, Lewisham NSW 2049.

Pete's Place School adopts the same policies as the head school for enrolment, student welfare and discipline. The complaints and grievance policies are policies of Marist Youth Care and can be obtained from their head office 36-38 First Avenue, Blacktown NSW 2148.

## **Enrolment Process**

Children from families who are prepared to support Catholic ideals and principles may be considered eligible for enrolment. Priority is given to referrals from Catholic schools, however special consideration may be given to individual cases from other school systems.

The essential factor in offering a position at the school is whether the environment and service we offer can contribute to the child's development, assisting them to address the behavioural, emotional or social challenges they face. There must be a hope that we can make a difference in this child's life. If not, we are at risk of contributing to another failure that will further erode the young person's esteem.

The Enrolment Counsellor gathers data from the previous school and family. A psychological assessment may also be required before making a decision about the child's appropriateness for Berne. This data is presented to the Principal for consideration.

Parents / carers are interviewed by the Principal before an enrolment is finalised. The documents required at the interview include the child's Birth Certificate and immunisation records. A passport, with documents validating the child's current VISA status, is also necessary if the child does not hold Australian citizenship. Previous school reports, reports from medical practitioners, psychologist reports and any relevant medical records are also needed.

Total fees are made up of the tuition fees, materials fees and our enrolment charge. The school has the policy of keeping the total fees similar to a Catholic systemic school. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

This enrolment process is consistent with the enrolment policy and philosophy of the Marist Brothers of the Sydney Province for their congregational schools.

## **SCHOOL DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS**

A small number of staff who have been addressing the teaching and learning aspects of the strategic plan has, during 2010, designed a new program called the *Transition Unit* for new students to our school. This program is set to begin from Term 1, 2011. This evolved from our concern that we need to establish even clearer individual plans to address a variety of dimensions of the student's life while at the school. It is a five-week program in which the students remain separate from the main classes at the school. During this time, members of staff complete various academic and psychological assessments in order to establish a clear individual education plan for each student. This will enable us to better respond to the child's needs, be they social, emotional, academic, psychological or a combination of these. In the process, the aim is to assist the child to grasp the issues they need to tackle to improve their schooling and behaviour. The hope is that they will enter the main program after the five weeks with a clearer appreciation of why they are here, what the issues are for them and their own personal goals. Parents are also informed and consulted as part of this process.

The school timetable has been significantly altered to reduce the number of staff changes that a child experiences in their school day. We have experimented with this in years 7/8 over the last year or so and have been pleased with the results. We are finding that stronger relationships have been established between staff and students and the increased predictability has had a settling influence on the students. Consequently, we have re-designed the teaching program to reflect an approach that is more typical of a primary school setting. One or two teachers work with small groups of students teaching across the curriculum throughout the day. There are small exceptions to this in some areas of the curriculum to add some variety and for more effective use of the expertise of staff members.

We decided during 2010 to replace the electives in Years 9/10 with three flexible learning lessons throughout the week from the beginning of 2011. Our review of the electives is that they were too narrow and were not adequately giving students the opportunity to develop skills aligned to their natural talent. Consequently, they had the capacity to frustrate some students and reinforce their own inadequacies. This was also reflected in poor student behaviour. This has allowed us to tailor a program to the student's individual needs, areas of interest and talent. In addition, it attends to other educational areas and gives a greater control over what they would like to learn. For example, a small handwriting class has been established. At the completion of a significant amount of this in any one-week might see the introduction of an outdoor activity to provide balance. Some students are pursuing woodwork projects, cooking classes or gardening.

Throughout 2010, we revamped our bonus point system to reward good behaviour and celebrate achievements. A point system, established with the collaboration of the students, designates the appropriate rewards for a certain amount of points. At the beginning of the year we found that the students used their points quickly even impulsively. However, the example of a couple of patient students who were willing to withhold their satisfaction for a larger prize, encouraged other students to accumulate these points over a longer period. We are pleased that the system of bonus points allowed us to reward good behaviour in a concrete manner, allowing the student some say in how they are used. In addition, we noted that some students improved their capacity to set a goal and achieve it. One of the most positive aspects of the system emerged unexpectedly – the number of students who used their accumulated points for their classmates. Built into the system, at the student's insistence, were communal rewards after a significant number of points had been accumulated. Frankly, the staff was surprised at how often this was chosen by individual students.

## **A Second Campus – Pete's Place School**

At the beginning of 2010 we formally began a new campus of the school at Blacktown in conjunction with Marist Youth Care. Marist Youth Care had been informally educating students who have fallen out of mainstream schooling for some years but desired to have this acknowledged formally. Many of these students are at risk of not completing an education without a smaller, supportive environment in which to do this.

One of the targets of the head school was to provide curriculum support to the teachers in the smaller environment at Pete's Place. This has resulted in collaboration between the staff in the two campuses. The staff from Pete's Place has expressed its appreciation for this palpable and practical support of curriculum

development. The staff from both campuses participated in a common in-service programs for dealing with students with challenging behaviours. Both curriculum development support and common in-service opportunities are continuing targets for the head school during 2011.

The key goals for 2011 will be to evaluate and shape the above initiatives for 2011. Staff, student and parent evaluations will examine the strengths and weaknesses of the programs and set a course of action for 2012.

The School Executive will be feeding changes and development in the ICT plan for the school. This will involve increased professional development opportunities for staff to become more conversant with the latest developments.

### **School Determined Improvement Targets - Pete's Place**

- Registration of Pete's Place as an campus of the John Berne School took place at the end of 2009 so this is the 'Achievement of Priorities for the Previous Year'
  
- Priority areas for improvement for the reporting year and the following year:
  - To establish an appropriate version of the School Certificate curriculum for use at Pete's Place School and begin building up the required resources for delivery of this program
  - To seek and establish links to various community service providers, especially in the area of mental health support
  - To participate in Professional Development opportunities as part of The John Berne School community

### **INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Respect and responsibility are core values at Berne and their promotion is part of daily practice at Berne. In their interactions with students, staff emphasise the acceptance of responsibility for actions as a fundamental part of our behaviour management strategy. This is reflected in our Behaviour Management Record (BMR) card, which rates students' in-class behaviour and task participation as satisfactory, needing improvement or unsatisfactory. Where student's behaviour falls below satisfactory, they are required to discuss the matter with their class or roll-call teacher or finish work that was not completed. In order to promote students to be proactive in respectful and responsible behaviour, they are also given points on their BMR cards for taking the initiative to act in ways consistent with the school's core values. Points may be later redeemed for a range of rewards. Consistent with our core value of respect, some of these rewards

are shared with the student's roll-call group. It is not uncommon for students to save their points all term to redeem them for a class activity.

In addition to our general practices aimed at achieving these goals, Berne has a number of periodic programs that have respect and responsibility as their focus or core components. These include the *Outdoor Education Program*, *Enough is Enough*, *Youthsafe* and our restorative justice procedures. Finally, these issues are often also dealt with in student's individual counselling.

Berne's *Outdoor Education Program* involves students attending three to four camps per year with their year group. Camps held every year include the Snow Camp for Years 9 and 10 in term 3, teambuilding camp to Gerroa in Term 1 for our Year 8 students and a challenge camp that is run by a team from Marist Youth Care for Year 9 in Term 1. All students participated in at least three camps throughout the year. The *Outdoor Education Program* has been designed specifically to encourage students to participate in demanding outdoor challenges where they are supported in improving their personal attitudes, sense of self, confidence, team work, respect for the needs and abilities of others and responsibility. The student's established modus operandi is constantly challenged through exposure to different environmental demands and provision of models of appropriate behaviour. Students acquire valuable life skills; improve parent, teacher and peer inter-relationships; and understand themselves and others better.

The *Enough is Enough* program promotes respect and responsibility by exposing students to a personal story of loss and adversity and a response consciously shaped by the values of respect and responsibility. We are fortunate to have a core group of people who regularly attend our school to share their life experience with our students but also who challenge their thinking and understanding. Of special significance is Ken Marslew the founder of *Enough is Enough* who presented to the school in 2010 a special award for the contribution the school has made to being a peacemaker in our society. Ken visits the school to speak to students about the importance of focusing on personal responsibility and self control and being aware of inappropriate behaviour. Students were inspired by his personal story of loss and commitment to preventing community violence. His presentation attuned the students in developing a sense of empathy for victims of crime.

The *Youthsafe* program is designed to help students recognise and manage risky situations through conversations with people who have been injured through risk-taking activity. Students develop an ability to recognise and manage dangerous risk-taking in a variety of contexts and encourage them to make safer, responsible choices. An important aspect of this presentation is that the students see first hand what can happen when responsibility is not part of a decision because the presenters have all had accidents that were

a result of negligence on their own part and want to share with the students the consequences of their actions.

Restorative justice has been a core part of Berne's approach to conflict between members of the school community since the school's inception. This can happen informally on a regular basis as staff work with the students to guide them in taking responsibility for their actions. There is also a more formal approach for situations where there have been more significant breaches in relationships. This involves interviews with counsellors for both parties to enable them to reflect on their behaviour and to understand on a deeper level what triggered the situation, what action was undertaken and what the alternative options for behaviour could be in the future if the same situation was to occur. Following the reflective process and interviews, the two parties are involved in a facilitated session where they discuss the impact of what occurred and look to the future. The restorative process allows people to make amends for their behaviour and to move forward in a positive manner.

### **Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility – Pete's Place**

Pete's Place School community promotes at all times the fundamental importance of respect.

On display throughout the school are our Student Expectations:

- Respect of other students
- Respect of staff
- Respect of property
- Respect of self

These values are modelled by staff at all times and are a regular point of reference in conversations with students. Living Skills activities such as cooking and shared meals facilitate a broader range of interactions where respect and responsibility shown by students can be improved. Excursions and participation in programs beyond the school, such as Outdoor Education, Photography or Drumbeat, provide an excellent learning opportunity for young people regarding respect and responsibility in the community.

### **PARENT, TEACHER AND STUDENT SATISFACTION**

Parent satisfaction is determined at parent interviews throughout the year with a special evaluation conducted during our *Parenting in Practice* course. In addition, parent surveys and interviews have begun with Dr Roger Vallance to ascertain parent satisfaction, issues to be addressed and so forth.

Parents have indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the range of services offered by the school. They cite their satisfaction at increased learning in this adjusted environment, appreciate the practical support for their families in dealing with challenging behaviours and the excellent transition to work programs we offer.

Dr Roger Vallance has provided below a snapshot of his research into teacher efficacy at the school. This highlights an outstanding degree of satisfaction in their work.

Berne Staff that as a Staff they					Mean
<b>1. Teachers at Berne school are able to get through to difficult students.</b>					7.41
(1)	(3)	(5)	(7) ↓	(9)	
Nothing	Very Little	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal	
<b>2. Teachers at Berne are confident they will be able to motivate their students.</b>					6.82
(1)	(3)	(5)	↓ (7)	(9)	
Nothing	Very Little	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal	
<b>3. Teachers at Berne school really believe every child can learn.</b>					7.59
(1)	(3)	(5)	(7) ↓	(9)	
Nothing	Very Little	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal	
<b>4. If a child doesn't want to learn teachers here give up.</b>					3.94
(1)	(3) ↓	(5)	(7)	(9)	
Nothing	Very Little	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal	
<b>5. Teachers here don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning.</b>					3.79
(1)	(3) ↓	(5)	(7)	(9)	
Nothing	Very Little	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal	
<b>6. These students come to school ready to learn.</b>					3.63
(1)	(3) ↓	(5)	(7)	(9)	
Nothing	Very Little	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal	
<b>7. Home life provides so many advantages the students here are bound to learn.</b>					2.93
(1)	↓ (3)	(5)	(7)	(9)	
Nothing	Very Little	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal	
<b>8. Students at Berne just aren't motivated to learn.</b>					6.25
(1)	(3)	(5)	↓ (7)	(9)	
Nothing	Very Little	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal	
<b>9. The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn.</b>					6.60
(1)	(3)	(5)	↓ (7)	(9)	
Nothing	Very Little	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal	
<b>10. Learning is more difficult at Berne because students are worried about their safety.</b>					4.40
(1)	(3)	↓ (5)	(7)	(9)	
Nothing	Very Little	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal	
<b>11. Drug and alcohol abuse in the community make learning difficult for students here.</b>					6.67
(1)	(3)	(5)	↓ (7)	(9)	
Nothing	Very Little	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal	
<b>12. Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with student disciplinary problems.</b>					4.33
(1)	(3)	↓ (5)	(7)	(9)	
Nothing	Very Little	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal	

A measure of collective staff efficacy was employed towards the end of 2010. The short form of Staff Collective Efficacy Scale (Goddard, 2002) is based on a longer instrument developed by Goddard, Hoy and Woolfolk (2000). The short form has twelve items and excellent reliability being well suited to administration in staff settings (Hoy, 2002). Collective efficacy asks the staff to judge the skills and capacities of the whole teaching staff to perform their professional tasks in the context of their everyday experiences. Staff are realistic in this survey. Not all problems can be solved within the classroom, and some problems are to be expected to predominate in terms of the previous experiences of schools that Berne students bring.

Questions 1, 2 and 3 report high levels of teacher commitment to the learning of their students. Questions 6 and 7 acknowledge that Berne students bring their history and previous experiences with them and these experiences impact the learning capacities of the students. Regardless of those difficulties, questions 4 and 5 report that Berne staff do not give up easily and believe that they have the skills to work with Berne Students. Questions 8 and 9 present the Berne staff's positive and enthusiastic engagement with learning and the strong conviction that Berne students can and want to succeed.

Question 10 is reassuring that the safety aspects of the school are well designed so that there is little concern that fears about student safety impedes learning. Question 11 acknowledges that the communities from which students come can be challenging and a number of Berne students are dealing, with help from the school, with drug and abuse issues.

Lastly, teachers are confident that they have the skills to deal with disciplinary problems, expressing little concern about levels of these skills, within the disciplinary structures of Berne.

Using the rubric of Hoy (2010) to calculate a staff collective efficacy score, this sample has a Standardised Collective Efficacy Score of 721 which is 2.21 standard deviations greater than the standard group. This score would rank Berne staff collective efficacy above 98.7% of staff in the standard group, a normative sample of Ohio USA teachers.

## References

- Goddard, R.D., Hoy, W.K., Woolfolk, A. (2000). Collective teacher efficacy: Its meaning, measure, and effect on student achievement. *American Education Research Journal*, 37(2), 479-507.
- Goddard, R.D. (2002). A theoretical and empirical analysis of the measurement of collective efficacy: The development of a short form. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*.
- HOY, W.K (2010) COLLECTIVE EFFICACY SCALE (CE-SCALE) DOWNLOADED FROM:**  
**[HTTP://WWW.WAYNEHOY.COM/COLLECTIVE EFFICACY.HTML](http://www.waynehoy.com/collective_efficacy.html)**

Following is a sample of student comments about Berne which were written by Year 10 students before their graduation and reflect the sentiments expressed, without exception, by Year 10 students this year:

*"I came to Berne in the start of 2009. I had been asked to leave two schools. I often didn't go to school and got in to trouble a lot. Since coming to Berne I have become a great person. "*

*"If I didn't come to Berne, I don't know where I'd be. I know that I would definitely have been kicked out of my old school..... Berne is a fun school, it's not what you would normally expect because you get to call teachers by their first names and it's much better than going to a mainstream school."*



*“The best thing about Berne is the teachers. They are very understanding, helpful and patient. I have learned how to read better and improve my basic skills. Berne is a wonderful place. We get breakfast made for us, the teachers take us on excursions and we have regular contact with counsellors.”*

*“I would like to thank Brother Darren and the teachers for giving me the opportunity to come to this school and for being patient with me during the good and bad times.”*

*“Originally I thought the school was dodgy and I didn’t even want to come here. I was sent here because at my old school I had bad behaviour and attitude problems. I didn’t think I would improve my behaviour when I first came here. Since then it has. I like Berne because it is a lot more relaxed, you don’t have to wear a uniform, and there is no homework. My favourite memories of Berne are getting to go on the Snow Camp and learning how to snowboard.*

*My advice to future students of Berne is to keep at it and just give it a go. I am thankful that the teachers at Berne never gave up on me.”*

*“I like coming to Berne because they help me with everything that I needed to be helped with. .... If I didn’t come to Berne I probably would have gone to another school and gotten kicked out again.”*

*“By being at Berne I have had to be more accepting of others and be more patient. I have realised that the goal you aim for cannot be achieved in a small amount of time and to achieve your goals you must stick to them.”*

*“If I hadn’t have come to Berne, I would have dropped out of school a long time ago.”*

*“At first it was hard and I didn’t know what to do, but the staff at Berne have been a great help. I thought I couldn’t do it, but this school showed me how to do better for myself and helped me deal with my troubles and taught me to face my demons and say, ‘I am strong now’ and I want to do the right thing.”*

*“I like Berne because you can actually get your work done and understand it better. . . . If I didn’t come to Berne I would be worse off than before, not going to school and getting in trouble.”*

*“Berne has helped me because I have learned how to not get so angry or frustrated and I have calmed down a lot. I learned how to read thanks to Donna and the other teachers.”*

*"I have enjoyed my time at Berne, even though it can be very frustrating at times. I have no regrets going to Berne, because I have learned so much, both emotionally and intellectually."*

*"If I hadn't come to Berne I reckon I would had just left school and never gone again."*

### **Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction – Pete's Place School**

Parents reported, at the end of 2010, that they were pleased with the regularity of students' attendance at Pete's Place school. They described noticeable positive changes in their child's motivation for school work and confidence around learning. Parents also described improvements in their child/children's behaviour at home such as being less aggressive, calmer, better at coping with stress and being happier. Parents also expressed a high level of satisfaction with staff at the school and described their work with students as patient, understanding, dedicated, good role models, child-centred and solution focussed. They were also very appreciative of daily contact with them by the staff and found this helpful.

Teacher satisfaction at Pete's Place School is generally high. The passion and empathy required by professionals who choose to work with marginalised young people motivates them to work hard to create positive relationships with students. The staff gain enormous satisfaction from the outcomes achieved by our students, whether they be behavioural, social or academic. The complex needs of the young people who attend Pete's Place School sometimes result in obstacles to their success which is beyond the influence of teaching staff. This can be disheartening for staff at times, however, they value very highly the opportunity they have to make a positive difference in the lives of these disadvantaged young people.

Students reported, at the end of 2010, finding it easier to learn at Pete's Place School because of 1:1 assistance by staff, the calm secure environment and having input into their own education plan. They described feeling more confident and positive about themselves because they felt they were achieving. Students also gave feedback about their relationships with teachers as being very helpful – saying they felt cared for, supported, motivated and treated as an equal.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT – The John Berne School

### SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The financial position of The John Berne School has been audited by VJ Ryan Chartered Accountants.

#### **Statement of Income and Expenditure for year ended 31 December 2010**

<b><u>REVENUE</u></b>	<b>\$</b>
Fees – Tuition	121,556
Fees – Others	48,864
	<hr/> 170,420
Interest	(397)
State Govt Grants – General Recurrent	108,458
Commonwealth Govt Grants – General Recurrent	1,084,120
Special Education & Special Disabilities	2,000
Building Grant Province	7,600 485,927
Tuckshop (Deficit)	(4,841)
Donations	47,103
Fundraising	85,449
Gain on Sale of Assets	-
Other Income	2,240
	<hr/> 1,988,079
<b><u>TOTAL REVENUE</u></b>	<b>1,988,079</b>
<b><u>LESS EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>1,762,659</b>
Tuition Expenses and Materials	
Administration and General Running Costs	<hr/> 198,129
<b><u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b><hr/>1,960,788</b>
<b><u>SURPLUS FOR THE PERIOD</u></b>	<b><hr/><hr/>27,291</b>

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT – Pete’s Place

### SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The financial position of Pete’s Place School is maintained by Executive Manager Financial & Corporate Services – Marist Youth Care.

#### Statement of Income and Expenditure for Financial Year ended 31 December 2010

<b><u>REVENUE</u></b>	<b>\$</b>
Fees – Tuition	0
Fees – Others	2,452
	<hr/> 2,452
Interest	
State Govt Grants – General Recurrent	10,000
Commonwealth Govt Grants – General Recurrent	0
Special Education & Special Disabilities	0
Other Income – Marist Youth Care Recoveries	87,181
Building Grant	0
Province – Marist Brothers	100,000
Donations	0
Fundraising	0
Gain on Sale of Assets	0
	<hr/> 199,633
<b><u>TOTAL REVENUE</u></b>	
<b><u>LESS EXPENDITURE</u></b>	
Salaries, Allowances & Related Expenses	158610
Non-Salary Operating Costs	41023
	<hr/> 199,633
<b><u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	
<b><u>SURPLUS/DEFICIT FOR THE PERIOD</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>

## SUPPORTERS OF THE JOHN BERNE SCHOOL

The John Berne School would like to express thanks for the support it received during the year from organisations and individuals in the wider community including: Canterbury Bulldogs; C.I.R. Property Maintenance; Coca Cola Amatil Pty Ltd; Club Ashfield; Ex-Marist Mothers' Association; Former Members Association; Illawarra Catholic Club; Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club; : Mary MacKillop Foundation; PaKay Pty Ltd; Petersham RSL Club; Rotary Club of Burwood; St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill; St Thomas Becket Parish, Lewisham; Tenix Foundation; Wests Ashfield.

We are also very grateful for the constant support of our many volunteers. It would not be possible to achieve everything we do at this school if it wasn't for the valued assistance of our volunteers who provide support to us in so many ways including day-to-day classroom assistance; Special Examination Provisions; Careers days and motivational speakers; grounds and equipment maintenance; support on camps and excursions; fundraising; and help in the Canteen.

The John Berne School would like to acknowledge and thank all of the work experience host employers who generously gave of their time and shared their knowledge with our students. More than 100 businesses supported *the job ready! Program* in this way during 2010.

Thanks also to all those people who provided financial support and who wanted to remain anonymous. Your financial and moral support is appreciated by staff, students and families.