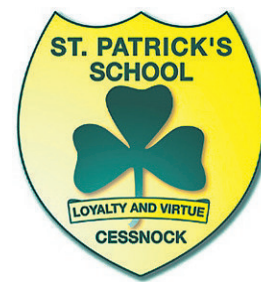


Primary entry #49: St Patrick's Primary School, Cessnock



# Catholic Chronicles



**BANG:** St Patrick's pupils get musical. Picture: William Parkes

## In harmony from rhythm and music

By **GEORGIA SHALHOUB, ISABELLA PARKER, LAURA COYLE** and **TEMEKA SEE**

THE students of St Patrick's Cessnock have a thriving music community. Amanda Murray is head of the music programs and has dedicated her time for 16 years to providing opportunities for the students to participate in singing and percussion activities.

St Patrick's children aspire to achieve and present enthusiastic and entertaining performances.

Their achievements are renowned in the local area where they have received awards in the Abermain Eisteddfod.

Due to the demands of school life the students undertake their music commitments in their lunch break. There are currently two choirs: a Stage one and a combined Stage two and three choir.

There is also a percussion band and an a cappella group, which involves a small group singing songs in different harmonies. The group has been learning a traditional song, *The Earth is our Mother* and a more modern song, *Price Tag*, from the hit movie *Pitch Perfect*. It's a chance for the young stars to show off their talents, especially with the solo parts.

Recently the Stage three boys were getting into the rhythm as part of a new and exciting Boy's Drum Band. They debuted on Father's Day and entertained the large crowd of parents and grandparents.

By **GILES JEFFERY** and **ZACHARY CLASON**

PENNY Tully, the principal of St Patrick's Cessnock, has spent the greater part of her life dedicated to the care and education of children.

Penny was born in India and spent her early days in the Railway School as her father worked on the railways.

From an early age her interest in education set her on the path of a teaching career which she completed at St Mary's Teachers College in Poona. As a young girl she took up her first appointment at St Ann's Convent, Secunderabad, a school for boys.

To expand her experience she travelled to Australia, teaching in the state school system then taking up a position in a Catholic school within the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese.

She has taught students from kindergarten to year 6 in a number of schools in the area during her 35 years of teaching.

Penny has also made huge contributions in her role as principal, especially at St Patrick's Cessnock, where she has worked since 1997.

During this time she has been instrumental in providing an innovative class structure of stage-based multi-age classes and bringing learning into the 21st century with technology in the classroom.



**FOND FAREWELL:** Joseph Hall, Blake Archbold, Callan McNamara, Hayden Davies, principal Penny Tully, Seamus Donohoe and Harry Whitfield.

Picture: Joshua Cagney

In recent years she has worked tirelessly to provide new building facilities for a range of activities, including: a new library and computer lab, creative arts, a multi-purpose centre, learning support, a canteen, staffroom and office block.

Her love of children and gardening have also led to beautiful gar-

dens and exciting play equipment to occupy the students at break time.

Penny's love of learning is evident in the school from the variety of programs she has introduced, ranging from learning support through to the annual speech competition that includes students from kindergarten to year 6. She is also a great

supporter of the arts and is proud of the huge number of students involved in the music program.

After an amazing career in teaching it's time for Penny to retire. And how does she plan to fill her time?

"Reading, gardening and time with family and friends," she said.

## Special students' chance to learn

By **MEG LARSEN** and **JADE EAGLETON**

ST Patrick's is an inclusive school where all students are given the opportunity to learn. Currently enrolled at the school are children with a variety of disabilities and learning difficulties.

Cerebral palsy is one of these disabilities. Every 15 hours an Australian is born with this permanent disabil-

ity which affects movement. It results from damage to the developing brain, usually before birth.

Some of the children with this disability are unable to speak, but modern technology is helping them become active learners.

An iPad is one of the many tools that can assist children in their school life.

At St Patrick's, Tiarne Bayliss is one of these inspiring

children. She uses her iPad and sign language to help her communicate.

Mrs Eglit facilitates the special needs programs. She works with students using a variety of activities, including puzzle solving, to develop their skills.

The dedication and enthusiasm of the student support staff also gives children an enjoyable and important learning experience.

**UNIQUE:** Support staffer Emily Monro and student Tiarne Bayliss. Picture: Rosa Obeid



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