



2023

Annual Report to the School Community



St Joseph's School

6 Priory Lane, BEECHWORTH 3747

Principal: Carly Avery

Web: www.sjbeechworth.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 672, E Number: E3022

Principal's Attestation

I, Carly Avery, attest that St Joseph's School is compliant with:

- The minimum standards and other requirements for school registration and school boarding premises (if applicable) as specified in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic).
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2023 school year under the Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth) and the Australian Education Regulations 2023 (Cth).
- The Child Safe Standards as prescribed in Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises.

Attested on 24 May 2024

About this report

St Joseph's School is registered by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). The Annual Report to the School Community (ARSC), provides parents and the wider community with information about the school's activities and achievements throughout the year including information about various aspects of school performance. The Report is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the school community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students. Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the School directly or by visiting the School's website. Information can also be obtained from the [My School website](#).

Governing Authority Report

The 2023 Catholic Education Week theme “Let the Words You Speak Always Be Full of Grace” reminds us of Pope Francis’s call to be a synodal Church in which our understanding of others and respect for diversity is shaped by respectful dialogue borne from deep listening.

Catholic Education Sandhurst continues to be committed to providing contemporary and innovative learning environments that value diversity and promote care, respect and co-operation. In 2023 we launched the CES Ltd Strategic Plan 2023-2027 which sets out directions and priorities that will guide the way in which our Catholic schools pursue excellence in fostering the development of each person in all the dimensions of human existence: intellectual, spiritual, emotional, bodily, relational, environmental and cultural.

Schools have begun the process of developing School Improvement Plans aligning their local strategic planning to the CES Strategic Plan, under the direction of Principal Consultants and in response to schoolbased review findings.

Our governance structure continues to mature, with both CES Ltd and SCECEC Ltd committed to ensuring the highest quality student outcomes in a safe and nurturing environment.

Our learning data has identified pockets of excellence in school communities across the diocese but also highlighted greater scope for improvement in the future. The development of the CES Ltd Catholic Learning and Teaching Framework will promote greater collaboration and focus on student learning growth.

The nation-wide shortage of teachers continues to impact all schools demanding new and innovative ways to attract and retain high quality and committed Catholic educators. Strategic initiatives will prioritize workforce placements that are sustainable and ongoing with particular attention given to our remote and smaller communities.

CES Ltd has a small number of schools with low enrolments and personnel and the Catholic Education Office works closely with leadership in these schools to ensure continued viability. An incentive scheme to attract and retain educators has been initiated and the CES Ltd Board has taken a robust interest in the way small schools are promoted through the CES Ltd Marketing Strategy.

I am extremely grateful for the commitment and professionalism that is clearly identified by the efforts throughout 2023 of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd - our schools and personnel in the Catholic Education Office. They continue to work tirelessly for the students and families in our schools, true bearers of the Mission to which they have been called.

PAUL DESMOND

Executive Director, Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited

Vision and Mission

Identity Statement

Joseph's school is a Catholic community promoting excellence in education, and living the ideals of Strength and Kindliness in the tradition of the Brigidine Sisters.

Vision Statement

St. Joseph's Primary School is committed to:

Giving witness to the Catholic faith and honouring the Brigidine charism.

Ensuring all children feel safe and are safe all of the time.

Treating each individual with respect and dignity.

Providing excellent teaching and learning opportunities allowing all to celebrate gifts and talents.

Ensuring a safe and nurturing learning environment.

Developing strong partnerships with Parish, family, school, wider community and the natural environment.

Graduate Outcomes

At St. Joseph's we endeavour to educate students to:

Be passionate life-long learners.

Be fully engaged in their learning and pursue personal academic excellence.

Be resilient, optimistic and self confident.

Be empathetic, accepting and respectful.

Be active in caring for the environment.

Be open to challenges and opportunities.

Be of service within the local and global community.

Know and value the beliefs, rituals and traditions of the Catholic faith.

Be responsible for their own learning choices and actions.

School Overview

St Joseph's is a Catholic Primary School that dates back to the mid 1800's. St Joseph's is situated in a small country town in the North East of Victoria. The forerunner of the present St Joseph's School was a wooden structure built in 1857, and up to the year 1886 it was staffed by lay teachers. In 1886 four Brigidine Sisters came out from Ireland after negotiations made by Dean Tierney and the Superioress of the Brigidine Convent of Abbeyleix, Ireland. Almost immediately the present site of 10 acres was purchased and the first stone was laid in 1888, and the convent and school were completed at the end of 1888.

St Joseph's continues the Brigidine spirit of 'Strength and Kindliness' today. In 2023 St Joseph's Primary School had 89 students and five classrooms operating. St Joseph's strives to provide excellent learning opportunities for all students in an atmosphere that is caring and nurturing. St Joseph's values and maintains the wellbeing of all in the St Joseph's community, striving to be a school that highly values relationships. It is acknowledged that parents are a vital link in the education of children and in 2023 St Joseph's continues to work in partnership with families developing the bond between home and school. St Joseph's staff and children embed a culture that honours our school vision. We are very proud of our work in making the school a safe and nurturing environment where all are treated with respect and dignity. We continue on this path, paying particular attention to building relationships and embedding a culture of respect for all. The wellbeing of students and families and the climate of a safe and caring environment is paramount at St Joseph's, and as the staff know a loving environment it is of the utmost importance in order to allow for the best possible education for all students.

St Joseph's Primary School has a close relationship with St Joseph's Parish Priest, Father Tony Shallue, and our Priest in residence, Father Mike Pullar. They are our community's spiritual and school leaders and as our Priests are building important, strong relationships through their caring, nurturing and strong presence in our school community.

The school is dedicated to high expectations and the staff strives to provide teaching that matches the children in interest and academic ability. The school has good facilities that are well maintained, including a multipurpose room, art room and kitchen area. School grounds include vegetable beds that contribute to the kitchen garden program. All students from grade three up have their own ipads. Children in the lower classes have access to i-pads to enhance their learning. St Joseph's offers specialist teachers in the areas of Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Italian, STEAM and Physical Education.

One of St Joseph's greatest strengths is the continual enthusiasm and participation of our parents in all school life. The staff are very grateful, as this contributes so much to the quality of education and the happiness and wellbeing of all our children.

Principal's Report

St. Joseph's Primary School acknowledges the original Aboriginal landowners and extends respect to past and present local Elders.

I am pleased to share with you the highlights of the 2023 school year, a year filled with growth, camaraderie, and exciting developments within our school community. It is with genuine pride and gratitude that I reflect on our collective achievements and milestones.

Throughout the year, our community has continued to thrive through various events and activities that bring us closer together. From the Easter parade and food stall to the Mother's Day stall, these events have provided opportunities for us to celebrate and support one another. Additionally, our trivia night, arts show, and sporting events have fostering a continued sense of joy and connection among students, parents, and staff.

Our Catholic faith has remained a cornerstone of our school community. Through school masses, liturgies, and participation in parish morning teas, we have strengthened our bonds and deepened our spiritual connections. Furthermore, our engagement in community service projects, such as the Mary and Brigid group's work at Quercus gardens and the op shop, reflects our dedication to serving others and making a positive difference in the world.

One of the highlights of the year has been the addition of a new playground and sandpit to our school facilities. These enhancements provide our students with safe and enjoyable spaces to play, explore, and socialise. The new playground and sandpit have already become beloved features of our school environment, encouraging physical activity, creativity, and imaginative play among our students.

I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank Father Tony and Father Mike for their support and guidance over the year. I would also like to thank the members of our School Council and School Chair Simone Nolan for their support in 2023.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our teachers, staff, parents, and students for your support and dedication throughout the year. Your contributions, whether big or small, have made a meaningful impact on our school community. Together, we have created a warm, nurturing, and inclusive environment where all members feel valued and supported.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our school community.

Warm regards,

Carly Avery.

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

For staff to identify and live out the mission of our Catholic community, in partnership with others.

- To provide opportunities for staff faith development and reflection.
- To provide opportunities for staff professional development as educators in a Catholic school.

Achievements

The 'Brigid and Mary MacKillop Group' demonstrates a commitment to putting Catholic social teaching into action. By participating in activities such as helping at the Opportunity Shop and working on the gardens at Quercus, the school community is actively engaged in serving those in need and promoting social justice.

Hosting Parish Friends morning teas and Masses provides opportunities for the school to continue its ties with the wider parish community. These events foster a sense of belonging and collaboration among all involved.

The weekly gatherings for prayer, with each class taking turns to prepare and present prayers, reflect a commitment to nurturing the spiritual life of the school community. This practice helps deepen students' relationship with God and fosters a sense of unity and shared faith among students and staff.

Special thanks given to Linda Murcutt, Irene Sharp, and Markeeta Green. This highlights the importance of recognizing and appreciating the efforts of those who contribute to the school's Catholic ethos. Their dedication to areas such as social justice, religious education, and the organisation of school Masses and Sacraments support the school's Catholic identity.

The emphasis on fostering a culture that values the school's Catholic identity among staff members indicates a commitment to ensuring that the school's mission permeates all aspects of school life. This includes creating an environment where Catholic values are lived out and celebrated daily.

Value Added

The school values its connection with the community, particularly through participation in school and parish masses.

The strategic plan was to support teachers in fulfilling their Religious Education maintenance hours, ensuring they are well-prepared to teach, and has continued through professional development.

The school emphasises prayer, celebration of feast days, and religious education, along with community engagement through the social justice group.

Several students underwent the Sacrament of Eucharist and Confirmation, with support from the school, parish, and parents.

Overall, these initiatives demonstrate St. Joseph's commitment to its Catholic identity and the faith development of our students.

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To establish and implement a systematic plan for the collection, analysis and use of student achievement data.

- Through professional learning opportunities build on teachers data literacy.
- Embed use of and analysis of data in Professional Learning Communities (PLC).
- Review and update school assessment schedule.

Achievements

Staff participated in a series of professional development sessions focused on enhancing teaching methods and approaches to instruction. As a key part of this learning staff participated in a Learning Walk at Sacred Heart Yarrowonga with a focus on an Instructional Approach to teaching literacy. The range of foci in this area this year added to the rigorous conversations with our curriculum review.

National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) Review: Participating in a comprehensive review of the school's performance using the NSIT framework, involved input from staff, parents, and students. This process helped to identify strengths and areas for growth, and inform strategic planning and decision-making.

Staff also undertook professional development in unpacking and planning for Mathematics Curriculum 2.0. This involved an analysis of the updated mathematics curriculum, updating scope and sequences and collaboratively planning for implementation.

Student Learning Expos provided opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge while fostering a sense of pride and achievement.

Learning Walks for parents continued providing them with insights into classroom practices and fostering a stronger home-school connection.

Our Art Show which showcased students' creativity and artistic talents was a great success. This event promotes appreciation for the arts and provides students with opportunities for self-expression and recognition.

Student Learning Outcomes

NAPLAN data for 2023 indicated:

Year 3 Reading- median of 437 compared to state median of 421

Year 5 Reading- median of 561 compared to state median of 509

Year 3 Writing- no school median due to less than 10 students completing test

Year 5 Writing- median of 506 compared to state median of 499

Year 3 Spelling- median of 414 compared to state median of 408

Year 5 Spelling- median of 518 compared to state median of 497

Year 3 Grammar and Punctuation- median of 427 compared to state median of 422

Year 5 Grammar and Punctuation- median of 547 compared to state median of 504

Year 3 Numeracy- median of 418 compared to state median of 417

Year 5 Numeracy- median of 495 compared to state median of 492

Our 2023 NAPLAN data tracks slightly or significantly higher than the state average for all areas. Focused professional learning in 2021 and 2022 on reading and trialling strategies have contributed towards these results. Whilst there is a focus across the school on fluency and comprehension, there is also an emphasis on reading for enjoyment.

Our professional learning and implementation of our pedagogical approach with phonics, morphology and orthology has resulted in a consistent approach across the school. This has also impacted on improving student vocabulary and writing.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	530	88%
Numeracy	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	486	81%
Reading	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	544	88%
Spelling	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	530	88%
Writing	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	517	88%

*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2023 due to participation not meeting these criteria or no students were assessed. Participants include students who were assessed, including non-attempt, or those exempted from the test.

Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To reduce anxiety in students.
- Promote and build wellbeing for students, staff and parents.
- To promote expected behaviours for students.

Achievements

Recognizing students for positive behaviour through Joey points and awarding the Joey trophy to the class with the highest points. This fosters a positive environment and encourages students to engage in positive behaviours.

Involving students, Parent Representatives and the School Council in providing feedback and support for pastoral wellbeing initiatives ensures that student perspectives are considered in decision-making processes.

Facilitating smooth transitions for incoming students through kindergarten visits and transition sessions helps ease their anxieties and familiarise them with the school environment.

Little Joey's program continues to provide a supportive environment for young learners to socialise and learn.

Offering pastoral wellbeing sessions for students in need and training staff to deliver programs like Peaceful Kids demonstrates a commitment to supporting students' emotional wellbeing.

Value Added

St Joseph's engaged in a broad range of activities to enhance learning and provide better outcomes for our students.

These include:

- Social Enterprise Project
- After School Care
- Kitchen Garden Program
- Little Joey's
- Transition Sessions
- Student Leadership Program
- ARC (Lunchtime Clubs)

- Sovereign Hill Camp

Student Satisfaction

Student data indicated a general positive enforcement and sense of satisfaction at St. Joseph's. Results indicated engagement at school, positive teacher-student relationships and a sense of connectedness and respect at school. This data is consistent with climate survey data collected in previous years and a reflection of the strong respectful relationships established between staff and students.

Student Attendance

Student attendance is recorded twice a day electronically by classroom teachers. Parent Guardians are expected to notify the school by 9:00am of any absences. Any absences which are not notified are followed up by a text message to the parent by office staff by 10:00am. Parents are expected to respond to the text. If parents do not respond, other contacts on the students list are called.

The school follows up students who have high levels of absenteeism, with plans to support the student and family in this matter. In more difficult situations advice and support is sought from the Catholic Education Office, Absenteeism Officer.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	92.9%
Y02	87.3%
Y03	91.3%
Y04	85.9%
Y05	90.0%
Y06	88.0%
Overall average attendance	89.2%

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Strengthen the leadership capacity of the leadership team.
- Finalise landscape master plan.
- Develop a strategic plan.

Achievements

School leadership worked together to prepare for the VRQA review and the NSIT review. These demonstrated our adherence to compliance and child safe standards and commitment to continued improvement in teaching and learning.

Student leadership roles, buddy programs, and transition sessions continued in strength, focusing on our dedication to nurturing student development and creating a supportive environment.

The leadership team developed a five year strategic plan and annual action plans based on feedback from reviews and regular parent surveys. These have set a solid vision moving forward as a community.

Community and parent engagement were a continued focus. Fundraising events and social gatherings, as well as maintaining an active school council, helps foster a sense of community and support within the school.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level 2 CPR - Faith Formation Staff Retreat - Sandhurst Budget workshops - Catholic Identity Leaders Days - Critical Incident Training - Principal Cluster Days - Dr Tessa Daffern Spelling Professional Development - Sounds Write Training - Student Wellbeing Professional Development: Georgia Manning - Numeracy Professional Development: CES Staff and VCAA - Data Knowledge Professional Development: CES Staff 	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	17
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$345.07

Teacher Satisfaction

ORIMA data indicated strong results in the school climate, staff-leadership relationships and collective efficacy. In line with findings from our NSIT review and working in a small school collaboration in teams indicated an area to address.

Anecdotal evidence, individual conversations, staff meetings, annual review meetings and general attitude from staff would indicate positive team and individual morale, with the main challenge being workload. Staff continued to work as a team, supporting each other. The impacts of the demands of teaching continue to impact staff wellbeing. This highlights the ongoing importance of support for staff from all stakeholders.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	10.0%
Graduate	10.0%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	50.0%
Advanced Diploma	20.0%
No Qualifications Listed	10.0%

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	1
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	15
Teaching Staff (FTE)	9.8
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	12
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	7.7
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To develop a strategic plan for building community partnerships.

- To provide opportunities for student voice through student leadership and response to student wellbeing surveys.
- To work with community groups to offer authentic learning experiences for students.
- To continue developing partnerships with community groups.
- To build on parent engagement opportunities.

Achievements

The role of the School Council continued to play an important part in 2023. The main areas the council focused on in 2023 were:

- Landscape Planning- this involved working with parents and the council to develop a landscaping master plan.
- NIST & VRQA Review/ Future Planning- this involved working with a range of stakeholders. It was affirming that there was consensus as to what is valued by the community and future areas of development.
- Parent Engagement- A continued focus on parent engagement and fundraising, with a view to recruitment of parents to the School Council. This focus was a success with increased numbers at both fundraising and social events, along with new members for the school council in future years.

Parent Satisfaction

Internal climate satisfaction surveys from parents indicated that some areas working well at St. Joseph's are good communication, professional, approachable staff and the sense of community/ family, care and attention of individual students. Responses to what is most valued by parents in our community included Happy children who are eager to attend school and learn, community spirit and connection parents and teachers have with each other to help care for our kids and a safe and calm place where all children can thrive at their individual level.

Financial Performance

The school's financial performance information and a report of the financial activities of the school's boarding premises (if applicable) have been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at www.acnc.gov.au.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at www.sjbeechworth.catholic.edu.au