



2023

Annual Report to the School Community



St Mary's School

2 Murlong Street, SWAN HILL 3585

Principal: Kathryn Quin

Web: www.smswanhill.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 1084, E Number: E2040

Principal's Attestation

I, Kathryn Quin, attest that St Mary'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 27 Mar 2024

About this report

St Mary'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 Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) governs 52 primary schools, one F – 8 school, and five secondary Colleges, educating around 13,500 students and employing more than 2,200 teachers and staff, from Mildura in the north, Portland in the south, and west to Edenhope and Nhill.

Now in its third year of operation, DOBCEL continues to work diligently to ensure all its schools flourish fully in their mission to provide high-quality, affordable, faith-based education opportunities for students and families in safe, supportive, and secure learning environments, that value diversity and promote cooperation, care, and respect for all.

During 2023, I was fortunate to visit all of our schools as the DOBCEL Board held meetings in different venues across the diocese. The spirit of harmony and sense of community, along with cultures of care for students and staff I experienced, was extremely encouraging. These school visits were also a reminder of the calibre of young people we have in our education system.

The role of school Principal continues to grow in complexity, demanding an increasingly diverse skillset and knowledge base. I am proud and deeply grateful for the exceptional dedication and professionalism of our 58 Principals, who, along with leadership colleagues and staff, work tirelessly to deliver education services for the families and communities they serve.

Enterprise Bargaining Agreement negotiations continued this year, involving staff from schools and human resources teams giving many hours and great effort to the process. Working with the inter-Diocesan bargaining group, DOBCEL continued to support efforts to finalise the Agreement with the Independent Education Union (IEU) as expediently as possible. DOBCEL continues to recognise the extraordinary work of staff in our schools and offices, and the substantial changes to the Agreement are intended to have a positive impact on staff and their workload.

As mandated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), the development of clear policy and procedural documents continued apace, with schools required to utilise DOBCEL foundational work, yet contextualise documents to suit the specific needs of each school. I express my gratitude to the team at Catholic Education Ballarat, who are both talented and conscientious in delivering this vital work.

During the year we saw the end of an era with the closure of St Brendan's Primary School, Dunnstown. Over 160 years of schooling was celebrated through speeches, laughter, and the sharing of many memories. Pleasingly, we also saw the refurbishment and opening of several new school buildings across the diocese this year.

I continue to be extremely grateful for the ongoing dedication, professionalism, and support of our personnel at Catholic Education Ballarat. I particularly acknowledge the commitment of our school leadership teams and their staff in nurturing and empowering the students in our care, as together we work to bring to life our vision: As partners in Catholic Education and open to God's presence, we pursue the fullness of life for all.

Tom Sexton

Executive Director DOBCEL

Vision and Mission

At St Mary's we are committed to improving the lives and learning of the children for whom we are responsible. Our vision is to create a dynamic learning environment that integrates modern pedagogical approaches with Catholic principles, empowering students to excel academically, socially, and spiritually.

We strive to create an educational environment that engages students in purposeful and relevant learning. St Mary's has developed a whole school approach to learning and teaching underpinned by a model of pedagogy that provides a common language and process for effective learning communities to operate across the school. Our beliefs are lived out through our commitment to the Response to Intervention (RtI) and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) framework which underpins all teaching and learning programs and practices.

School Overview

St Mary's Primary School is part of St. Mary's Parish, Swan Hill. The school opened in 1919 and, in 1923, the arrival of three Sisters of St. Joseph, began a long and close association of the Josephites (1923-1996) with Catholic Education in Swan Hill. The school retains the values of the order with the Josephite characteristics of hard work, dedication, community, and family unity, still strong features of our school.

St Mary's Primary School currently has a student population of 608 students under the care of a close, effective professional team of Teachers, Learning Support Officers, School Service

Officers, and Office Administration. St Mary's currently comprises a mix of permanent classrooms and portables, a large junior hub, canteen, gymnasium, and an administration building, which houses a library, staff planning room, staff room, and offices. Our beautiful landscaped gardens and quality playing spaces are excellent features of our school, along with well-presented classrooms that promote learning in a positive and secure environment.

St Mary's enjoys a position of esteem in the local community. Staff share a belief in the dignity of individuals and the promotion of self-esteem and community responsibility amongst the students. There are currently 27 straight classes. Our student population comprises 41% Catholic children with the next significant percentage identifying as Christian. A diverse range of other religions are represented as our student population consists of 20 nationalities providing us with a rich experience of multiculturalism. Our school community is made up of both town and rural families, with the majority of children having to travel by bus to school. Factors such as extreme weather conditions and rural remoteness can impact our families in many ways with 25% of families receiving CSEF. We also have strong links with our Italian and Koori Communities, which is best demonstrated through our annual Italian and Indigenous Days.

Children at St Mary's are extended an invitation and are supported to discover God's presence in their lives. Within a Gospel-centred environment, students are challenged to explore and understand themselves and the world in which they live through a worldview grounded in Scripture and the traditions of the Catholic Church. At St Mary's, we are committed to the Gospel values, a strong school-family identity, quality curriculum, and 'best practice' learning.

Teachers actively engage in developing a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Response to Intervention (RTI) has been the foundation for our teaching practices and we are currently being informed by the characteristics of a Professional Learning Community (PLC). The curriculum is vertically aligned so that there is continuity and progression across all years of school with Essential Learning Statements in Mathematics and English. Differentiation of curriculum is evident across year levels with intervention and extension programs in place in the areas of literacy and numeracy to support individual children's learning needs. Our staff is given significant time to allow for collaborative planning which is data-driven through the use of pre and post-testing. Reflection on the learning is used to feedback, feed in, and feed

forward all curriculum planning and subsequent teaching that occurs.

At St Mary's, we believe that 'every child matters every day' and our staff is committed to providing a learning environment to cater to all individual needs. The Vision and Mission statement is fundamental to all practices as we challenge, educate, and nurture each child.

During the school year, we focused our energy on priorities to drive school improvement with the School's Annual Action Plan centered on the areas of:

- Embedding a guaranteed and viable curriculum
- Strengthening staff understanding of Catholic Social Teaching
- Creating authentic leadership opportunities for staff, students, and parents

Principal's Report

2023 proved to be a year of hope and optimism and despite the challenges of continuing to provide a quality education amid a national teacher shortage and industrial unrest, the staff's ongoing professionalism and positive approach to providing rich and engaging learning experiences for students remained foremost.

So too, a very sincere thank you to our School Board Chair, Jess Merrett, and the School Advisory Council for their commitment to St Mary's School during 2023. The SAC has provided valuable advice and honest feedback in many areas of the school during the year. Their insights, well-thought-out questions, and input have been a great support to our students, parents, and staff. I also wish to acknowledge the different ideas posed by our P & F and their ability to continue to provide new and exciting opportunities for students to enjoy time together when at school. In particular, the work of Renee Hirst and their team who undertook organizing the Junior Welcome Picnic and the very successful Colour Fun Run, the School Disco, and our Mothers and Fathers Day events. These have been absolute highlights for students this year.

Buildings and Infrastructure

In many ways, our landscape has been dominated by the construction of the Junior Hub. Recently completed, we are delighted to have a state-of-the-art building that is designed to meet the differentiated learning needs of our students. The junior hub contains 8 bright and beautiful classrooms that offer flexible working areas that all open into a large internal learning street. Complete with offices and well-being spaces, the junior hub is a very welcome addition to our current school facilities.

In late 2022, we were advised that the parish block in Murlong St had been sold to Catholic Care for a social housing project. As the block is our main source of parking for staff, plans to accommodate the school's parking needs were considered and initial plans to construct a large car park to accommodate staff vehicles and to fence the length of our southern boundary have commenced.

Fundraising from our Parents and Friends this year has been directed to supporting the installation of a new Ninja playground to be located on the Senior Oval. We are on track to complete this project by the end of the 2024 year.

Staff and Students

Enrolments have remained consistent throughout the year. While several families relocate each term to other parts of the state or country, a similar number enrol. In addition to local families on the move, we have had considerable new enrolments from India, China, Vietnam, and South Africa arriving throughout the year.

Open Days and Flying Start were both successful and the evening school tours in Term 1 proved popular. Foundation numbers are encouraging and despite a large Year 6 class exiting, we started our school year with much the same figures as 2022.

With a large cohort, we often have staff heading off to travel overseas or take time out for family leave and this year was no exception. Throughout 2023 we welcomed many new staff to our school as LSOs or to replace teaching staff who took maternity or medical leave as the year unfolded. Baby news has abounded and with some staff relocating at the end of 2023, it has made for another very busy year in the employment area. Of particular significance, we farewelled Ginny Gook, who after 44 years of service decided the lure of winter in Queensland was too enticing! We acknowledged Ginny's tremendous contribution to St Mary's and to Catholic Education in our diocese at a school assembly and a special staff evening.

OSHC Service

@2Murlong, our new OSHC program has continued to exceed all expectations with many families at both St Mary's and Swan Hill North Primary School using the service. The program has continued to grow with service capacity increased to accommodate 80 students per day. It now employs over 25 part-time educators and has between 20-30 children each morning and 45-75 children attending each night. The school holiday program, which runs during each term break, has been extremely popular and has assisted families struggling to find affordable childcare for primary-age children during the holiday periods.

Teaching and Learning

Under the direction of Mardi Hall, our Curriculum Leader, considerable work has been undertaken in enhancing current inquiry units to increase student engagement and opportunities for differentiation for all students.

Our commitment to the RTI (Response to Intervention) and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) philosophy has maintained our priority in maximizing the learning opportunities for every student. This philosophy urges us to invest time and resources in a way that gives all learners the best chance for success. This area of the school was bolstered with another injection of funding through the School Tutor Program and has been used to differentiate support for students with particular literacy needs, the expansion of our Boost reading team, the consolidation of WIN time, our differentiated approach to teaching writing and the consolidation of weekly timetabled RTI problem-solving meetings to allow 2 levels per week to be released. These teams work through best practices in action to differentiate learning experiences and provide an appropriately challenging curriculum for all

students in our care. So too the consolidation of the use of digital formats for parent-teacher communication, tools such as Seesaw has enabled the sharing of work and the return of onsite 3 Way Chats and Student Led Conferences has been welcomed by both staff and parents as they partner together in support of each child's learning

Academically, 2023 was another very successful year for St Mary's. Our school was recognized by ACARA as a school of excellence and our NAPLAN results and PAT testing indicated the majority of students continued to maintain pleasing gains in key curriculum areas.

For staff, there were also many learning opportunities. The engagement of James Anderson, a leading expert in Student Agency has seen the start of a 3-year partnership to re-culture our approach to student learning and assist in building teacher efficacy and reflective practice.

I have encouraged all staff wishing to extend their leadership or curriculum knowledge through formal study or attendance at intensive leadership PD. Members of the Senior Leadership team have undertaken Crucial Conversations training while 17 staff have commenced their RE accreditation through the University of Dayton, and 4 of our new LSOs undertook studying for their Certificate IV in Education.

Catholic Culture

St Mary's continues to enjoy an active connection with the Parish. Fr James and Mary Kennedy now undertake the Sacramental programs and work closely with our staff to prepare the children for these important steps on their faith journey. Student social justice opportunities abound through participation in Meals on Wheels, visits to local aged care homes, fundraising for St Vinnies Winter Appeal, and monthly fundraising opportunities coordinated by the SRC. We enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate Catholic Education Week with St Mary Mackillop College at our annual CESH gathering and celebrated many Masses and liturgies on our school grounds throughout the year.

Student Wellbeing

Student wellbeing has become an increasing priority to support students with anxiety, emotional regulation, or struggling with aspects of childhood. In addition to our full-time learning diversity leader and 4 student support officers, working closely with Headspace has strengthened the team's expertise and assisted in dealing with increasingly complex needs and with supporting student's well-being and emotional literacy. So too, successfully obtaining funding for Mac, our amazing well-being dog who I commenced working at school this year has diversified the support provided to students at their point of need. It is a great honor to be a Mac Monitor and his presence has seen many children blossom in confidence and resulted in increased attendance rates for some of our more reluctant starters.

Finally, thank you to our students and families for their ongoing support of St Mary's. Together as a community, we have achieved so much over the past 12 months. I also wish to thank the wonderful people who together form the staff of St Mary's. Our teachers, administration staff, and support teams take such pride in the school and value the community, learning environments, facilities, and above all the students.

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Our priority for 2023 was for staff to build understanding and expertise in recontextualizing through scripture, Catholic tradition and Shared Christian Praxis to collaboratively and confidently teach new Religious Education units of work. We also continued to strengthen our knowledge of social justice and Catholic Social Teachings.

Achievements

- Time allocated into the Professional Learning Schedule each term for staff from the same level to plan units and rich assessment tasks together.
- Time allocated for the RE Leader to meet with different staff on a needs basis each week to discuss planning of Liturgies, school masses, the new curriculum and other aspects of the Religious Education program.
- Staff using the New Awakenings online website to support planning and the collaborative approach in constructing learning activities and rich assessment tasks.
- Staff working in teams together with Kim Hawkes (CEOB) to further develop knowledge and understanding around new units to be taught.
- Teaching staff and the Religious Education Leader have undertaken professional learning with CEOB staff via Zoom and face-to-face to develop robust Religious Education units of work using the RE curriculum.
- Whole staff professional development days focusing on strengthening knowledge around Social Justice and the new RE Curriculum.
- Staff using and becoming more familiar with the Caritas website and resources when teaching Catholic Social Teaching Principles.
- As part of our commitment to teaching Religious Education across the school all students engage in timetabled Religious Education classes each week as well as dedicated prayer times each day.
- Weekly staff prayer time on a Friday morning that is led by two different staff members each week.

- All new staff attended a diocesan-wide professional development day facilitated by the CEOB to deepen their understanding of Awakenings (our Religious Education program) and Shared Christian Praxis.
- Our Student Representative Council (SRC) and wider school community have been actively involved in a wide range of social justice events.
- Providing regular communication to parents and friends through our weekly newsletter, including Religious Education news as well as prayers and reflections.
- Parental engagement in the Sacramental program. Parents were invited to attend sessions and completed the program at home with their child allowing some special time with their child to discuss their faith.
- Sacramental Celebrations of Confirmation, Eucharist and Reconciliation were celebrated with Fr James at the Parish.
- Seventeen staff completed their first year of RE Accreditation through the Uni of Dayton.

Value Added

- Whole School Masses.
- Assembly Prayer.
- Daily Class Prayer.
- Special celebration of feast days/events e.g. CESH Mass, Mary Mackillop, Year 6 Graduation Mass, Beginning and End of Year Mass.
- Liturgical Celebrations e.g. Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Advent, Mission Week.
- Ongoing communication with parents and the wider community through our weekly newsletter.
- Staff led prayer time on Friday mornings.
- Continued involvement of Religious Education Leader within the Senior Leadership Team.
- Staff participation in professional learning and development through CPL's.
- Making connections between Religious Education and other curriculum areas.

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Engaging students in rich and authentic learning experiences.
- Building authentic student and learner agency into our teaching and learning practices.
- Embedding a culture of shared leadership and continuous learning for all.

Achievements

At St Mary's the teaching of a viable and guaranteed curriculum in 2023 continued to provide a cohesive and consistent framework for teaching and learning across the entire school community. With such a young and often in-experienced staff our pedagogical approach ensures that all teachers within the school, regardless of level or subject area, share common principles, practices, and goals to support student learning and development. As a school we also continued to pride ourselves on "Explicit Teaching" and the strong use of evidence-based programs like Origo Maths, STARs, CAR's online, New Waves Mental Maths, and Spelling Mastery. These evidence based programs show a commitment to using proven methods to support student learning across different subjects and levels.

In 2023 ACARA identified St Mary's as a high-performing school and acknowledged this distinction in a media release. This recognition reflects that students at St Mary's Primary School had performed significantly above all other students nationally with similar socio-educational advantage. Tom Sexton was quoted saying "“To have St Mary's Primary School recognised as an educational community that extends young people's learning consistently over a three year period relative to their socio-economic status is fantastic. Only a small number of schools are identified nationally and we are excited for the work of this community to be celebrated. The St Mary's Primary School community, Principal, staff, families and most importantly the students should be very proud of their achievements”".

2023 saw a new partnership formed with James Anderson (an educator, author and keynote speaker) with the lens on Learner Agency. Learner Agency is fast becoming the latest educational buzzword and James Anderson is a well-known figure in education, particularly in the realm of Learner Agency. He's an advocate for empowering students to take ownership of their learning journeys, allowing them to make choices and decisions about what and how they learn. Staff engaged in a whole day workshop and a number of staff meetings throughout the year centered around the Learner Agency. James continually challenged and emphasized the importance of fostering a culture in schools that supports student agency,

where learners feel motivated, engaged, and responsible for their own learning outcomes. Staff gained insight that Learner Agency involves more than just giving students freedom; it also requires providing them with the necessary skills, tools, and support to navigate their learning effectively. James focused on strategies for educators to cultivate learner agency in their classrooms especially around fostering a growth mindset among students. James introduced the concept of The Learning Zone Model. This model describes the journey that we often take when we start learning something new. It is divided into three distinctive zones: The Comfort Zone: where what you do is routine and familiar. The Performance Zone: where you apply the skills and knowledge acquired in the learning zone. The Learning Zone (or Growth Zone): where you experiment, develop skills and stretch your abilities. Staff identified that planning and understanding the dynamics between learning, performance, and comfort zones can help students navigate their personal and professional growth journeys more effectively, fostering resilience, adaptability, and continuous improvement.

Embracing the diversity of experience each year, with a mix of young, experienced, and graduate staff members is both challenging and rewarding. 2023 saw the continuing implementation and strong prioritizing of our Coaching and Mentoring model. These models continued to go from strength to strength and have been highly commendable by the Catholic Education Office on numerous occasions. Instructional coaching is a professional development process that focuses on improving teaching practices and student learning outcomes. It involves a collaborative partnership between a coach (a more experienced educator) and a teacher, in particular our Graduate and Provision to teach teachers. It is designed to be supportive and focused on continuous improvement to help teachers enhance their effectiveness in the classroom and ultimately improve student learning outcomes. Our Graduate and Provision to teach teachers are also provided a Mentor teacher who provides guidance on classroom management, instructional strategies, curriculum development, and professional growth daily.

Recognizing the importance of collaborative planning, regular Curriculum Team meetings were strongly incorporated into our staff meeting agenda. This facilitated both formal and informal discussions among colleagues focusing on differentiation with a strong emphasis on extension and enrichment. Additional time was given to the staff planning Inquiry, auditing current units sequentially according to year level descriptors and the interests and needs of our students. During this work, time was also spent on evaluating planned learning experiences to cater for higher order thinking as well as student voice and learner agency. From here it was identified a priority for 2024 would be to engaged with an Inquiry facilitator such as Shaz Bailey (an independent consultant who partners with schools to support inquiry) to further drive this process going forward.

Student Learning Outcomes

2023 was St Mary's second year of students assessing the online NAPLAN platform for our Year 3 & 5 children. The NAPLAN online tests included a range of question formats and interactive features. Students were required to answer questions by clicking, typing and dragging; some questions included audio or interactive tools. Students and staff found the online platform friendly to use and saw the benefits of it being online.

ACARA identified high-performing schools and published the results which included St Mary's Primary School, Swan Hill among those with this very impressive distinction. This recognition reflected that students at St Mary's Primary School have performed significantly above all other students nationally with similar socio-educational advantage. In this media release achievement Kate Quin stated 'this achievement is a testimony that our evidence-based teaching and learning programs, differentiated support provided to all children, and our teacher efficacy are key to our success. At St Mary's the leadership team, teachers, learning support officers, and the well-being team all work together guided by our school mantra - "Every child matters every day. Results such as these are a wonderful reflection of our commitment to this belief and of the collaborative efforts of both staff and families who work in partnership to support our student's learning journey."

Engaging students in their own learning has been a continued focus in planning units of work with the lens of opportunities for student voice and learner agency embedded in learning experiences. Students are being engaged in and given opportunities to set learning goals and share their learning. Students now regularly use their pre and post-data testing results in reading, writing, spelling and maths to identify their current levels of achievement and what they are required to do in order to improve. There has been a continued focus on teachers moving from 'my' to 'our' data across levels and units, with data discussions featuring at each unit meeting and at our weekly leadership team meetings. The use of consistent questions to inform the conversation has been introduced with staff encouraged to reference discussions around children's data against the 6 PLC and 4 RTI questions.

With the introduction of the NCCD requirements, our systematic approach to providing services and intervention for students with additional learning needs has been further refined.

There is a designated Learning Diversity Leader and Curriculum Leader and an established RTI team to ensure we do all we can to best meet the individual learning needs of each child in our care. Having adopted the RTI framework there are increasing levels of intensity (Tiers 1-3) of support based on progress monitoring and data analysis. A variety of evidence-based intervention programs in numeracy and literacy are provided within a multi-tiered approach in classrooms, small groups and 1 to 1 instruction dependent on individual students' learning needs.

Whole school moderation in writing occurred twice yearly with staff moderating against the school essentials and aligned against the Victorian Curriculum work samples. Moderated pieces of writing have been scanned to create banks of writing samples to use to moderate and to create annotated 'bump it up walls' for students' to use a rubric against which to assess their own writing. The continued implementation of WIN (What I Need) into our writing block of a Thursday & Friday continues to strengthen and allow for differentiation and enrichment.

Embedding the use of data collection and storage to a shared platform (Team Drive) has made our data transparent and has really assisted in developing a collective responsibility for improving standards. Our commitment to the RTI framework and adoption of the PLC and RTI questions and culture to reference teaching and learning decisions has provided the reference for all decision-making about targeted intervention to best meet the needs of all children, with RTI sessions timetabled weekly for levels to meet with the Principal, Deputy Principal, and Learning Diversity Leader and Curriculum Leader. We have well-documented and structured intervention, facilitated by the Learning Diversity Leader & Curriculum Leader and monitored by Unit Leaders. This includes evidence-based intervention within classrooms and across levels to cater for intervention: Read 3, MiniLit, MultiLit, Reading Fundamentals, BoostReading, Numeracy Fundamentals and Quicksmart. Funding through NCCD and the Schools Tutor Program allowed us to facilitate these vital programs, supporting students at their point of need.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	404	47%
	Year 5	502	67%
Numeracy	Year 3	440	83%
	Year 5	520	86%
Reading	Year 3	417	81%
	Year 5	515	87%
Spelling	Year 3	416	64%
	Year 5	488	71%
Writing	Year 3	430	92%
	Year 5	500	82%

*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

- Refine effective practices to promote and enhance the well-being of staff, students and St Mary's families.
- Build and expand methods of celebrating achievement and acknowledging and affirming students and staff for their achievements.
- To strengthen students' social and emotional learning and to have a whole-school approach to positive behaviour management.
- Create and incorporate a Social Behaviours Guaranteed and Viable F-6 framework into the school's learning and teaching programs.

St Mary's continues to strive to maintain a strong reputation in the community for student wellbeing and has significant external community agency support to assist students and families in need, however not just the ones in urgent need but making sure we have a proactive approach to all families within our school community.

Promoting and enhancing student wellbeing encompasses nurturing various facets of their lives including personal, social, physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Essential components include fostering positive self-esteem, cultivating respect for others, fostering positive relationships, encouraging responsible behaviour, and building personal resilience. These values and abilities are not only taught but also expected from students. Through Dog's Connect we have a school Wellbeing dog, Mac, who will work closely with students around school anxiety. Mac is having a positive emotional and social impact and supports mental health and wellbeing. The program helps create an ongoing connection between a school and community.

Key strategies involve maintaining a consistent Positive Behavior Support system, explicitly teaching social and emotional skills, and employing restorative language. Recognising the crucial role of staff wellbeing in fostering a positive school culture, there will be a focus on gathering both staff and student wellbeing through Simon, Wellbeing surveys, notes and PD. Additionally, exploration into implementing the Zones of Regulation within the school community will be undertaken with some teachers and LSOs.

Achievements

St Mary's commitment to Dogs Connect (Wellbeing Dog - Mac) has been a crucial part of promoting student and staff Wellbeing. The school's Wellbeing staff members have been an integral part in utilising Mac as part of their Wellbeing sessions. Mac brings a smile to anyone who comes past him, this has been positive for staff and community culture. Mac teaches the children to regulate their emotions and brings a calm and proactive approach to students who may have anxiety or find it difficult coming to school.

Consistent and collaborative delivery of our SEL curriculum (The Resilience Project).

Resilience Project family information sessions on Zoom, Headspace (Tuning into Teens) worked closely with the schools Wellbeing team and families from grade 5/6 in ways to deal with emotional regulation and ways to connect with their children. Headspace will be working more with our school in the future.

St Mary's Stars: In 2023 we have developed a new program called 'St Mary's Stars'. It has started off very positively and ignited a new wave of kindness, respect, and positivity throughout the student body. This innovative initiative aims to recognise and celebrate the students who have gone above and beyond in demonstrating respect and consideration towards others in their everyday interactions. The heart of the program lies in the students themselves. Peers have the power to nominate their fellow classmates if they witness acts of kindness, empathy, and respect within the school community.

Programs such Brain Gym, Mindfulness and Movement, and Peaceful Kids have supported students to engage fully in their learning.

Having 4 dedicated Wellbeing Officers who do daily and weekly check ins with students is something we are proud of and how they work with students and family members where necessary.

Whole school focuses on Sensory Breaks/Brain Breaks.

Consistent whole-school approach to behaviour management with an emphasis on Restorative practices.

A strong response to staff wellbeing has continued by using strategies including PULSE surveys and PD with Tom Heirck, which provides strategies to support staff wellbeing.

Staff PD days were re-examined to allow a strong focus on PD around staff and student wellbeing, personal resilience & positive psychology.

Staff check-ins each semester which is run by Kate, Jason or Chris

Breakfast Club-daily.

Restorative practices daily.

During the school review, Wellbeing was highlighted as an area in which we are excelling across the school.

Some other programs we are proud of and always trying to improve are below:

Community Groups

Once a term children are put into vertical groups (Foundation to Year 6) and spend time with a different teacher participating in activities related to our Social and Emotional Learning

focus. This is a great opportunity for children to make new friends and to get to know other children in the school.

Lego Club

This runs every lunchtime in a designated area for children who love to construct and make amazing creations and enjoy the company of other children at the same time. Lego club is a great social network for all students.

Colouring Club

This runs every day in a designated area for children who love to colour in, draw and socialise while creating their artistic pieces.

PALS

The Year 6 children meet regularly with our Foundation children and participate in a joint activity promoting fun and building relationships. This gives the Year 6 children a level of responsibility and the Foundation children a sense of security and of being connected.

Playground Activities

Each day a variety of great activities are set up in the Passive Play area for our younger and not so young children to play with during recess and lunch. Our wellbeing team spends many recesses and lunch times in this area interacting with children. The benefits are enormous as many children are learning socialisation skills under their wonderful guidance. It is also a lovely way of giving children who struggle to build and maintain friendships a safe and enjoyable place to play.

Quiet reading in the Library, meditation & yoga run daily while strings club and dance are weekly highlights.

Seasons for Growth Program

This program caters for children who may have suffered grief and loss due to a death in the family or a family separation. Our Student Support Officer works with a group of children working through a specialised program over a period of eight weeks.

Peaceful Kids

The 'Peaceful Kids' program is a Mindfulness and Positive Psychology based program to lessen anxiety and stress and increase resilience in children. This program helps children to build their emotional resilience so they are better equipped to deal with the day to day stresses that life brings them.

Wellbeing Room/Sensory Rooms

We have a designated wellbeing and sensory room that is set up to cater for the differing needs of children. Our wellbeing team work from these rooms which have wonderful resources to support the sensory needs of children. Programs to support children who need

extra support for social and emotional reasons are also set up in these rooms. LSOs are also trained to support the wellbeing needs of our students.

Value Added

Increased amount of Sensory & Wellbeing rooms across the school

Sensory Breaks PD for staff and LSOs

Dogs Connect

Peaceful Kids-trained well-being staff who run sessions for students on a regular basis

Brain Gym

Mindfulness and Movement programs

The resilience Project

Staff Wellbeing surveys

Positive Schools Conference

Tom Hierck- PD trauma Informed Students

Cyber Safety Workshops-Students and Parent delivery online

E-Learning modules

Consolidated whole school positive behaviour blitzes-SWPBS

Refined data analysis process for RTI meetings

Consolidation of the Year 6 student leadership program to provide all with skills in their area of strength

Development of student-devised individual learning goals and reflection on these as a means of growth

Use of Seesaw posts on a regular basis for children to share their learning goals and celebrate their achievements

Using regular PSGs to reflect and refine student short and long term goals

Raising more awareness around R U OK? Day by having staff activities on all throughout the week around mental health

Pd with staff around creating Individual Learning Plans

Headspace PD sessions for all staff members (Wellbeing team to work with Headspace)

Staff lunchtime Yoga (once a fortnight)

Chris has done training with The Resilience Shield and aims to work with school community moving forward

Increased the number of LSOs across the school to support children with specific needs

Engagement of paraprofessionals to support individual students and their families with particular social and emotional needs (Occupational Therapist, CAMHS, counsellors)

It's OK to not be OK - Workshop for Year 6 boys

Self Worth workshops - Year 5–6 girls and parents

Ongoing commitment to PAL (Foundation-Year 5/6 buddies) program and bus buddies

Commitment to having a diverse range of activities available for children to utilise during play break times (Library, Lego club, gardening club, mediation, yoga, and imaginative play)

Tracking student behaviour (SIMON) and aligning it to St Mary's Way -and consistent follow up and communication with the parents

Introduction of new Child Safe standards and Protocols

Student Satisfaction

We have shown improvement in relation to student experiences across the school. The whole

school blitzes continue to improve the focus on positive behaviour for all students and the introduction of the Alignment of SWPBS on Simon allows us to analyze data patterns in terms

of student behaviour and needs.

Taken from the most recent Insight SRC Data show that students felt relatively positive about their ability to learn and about the wellbeing and care provided.

Student wellbeing: 69.1

Contentedness to school: 70

Teacher Empathy: 73

Student safety: 76

Student motivation: 71

Student Attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential for students to maximize their learning. The school in partnership with parents is responsible for promoting regular attendance of students. The following procedures are followed to monitor and address non-attendance:

- Attendance is checked twice daily and entered electronically on SIMON
- Parents/Carers are required to notify the school of the reason for any absence
- An SMS message is sent by 9:30 am for any unexplained absence and a follow-up phone call is made if parents or carers have not responded to the SMS.

Attendance is constantly monitored and frequent non-attendance is followed up by leadership with a phone

- Call and, if necessary, a letter
- During remote learning, rolls were taken remotely by staff working from home at 9:00 am and uploaded to the on-site staff. Onsite student rolls were marked and the two correlated on
- SIMON (software used) to generate an accurate attendance roll

- Unexplained absences were followed up with an SMS that is automatically generated at 9:30 am and /or a phone call by the onsite office staff

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	89.5%
Y02	88.3%
Y03	89.8%
Y04	88.4%
Y05	89.1%
Y06	88.1%
Overall average attendance	88.9%

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To refine and articulate a clear leadership model for St Mary's Primary School and build the capacity of all members.
- To strengthen and sustain a culture amongst staff that is characterized by a shared vision, professional inquiry, a strong sense of teamwork, and a focus on continuous learning and improvement for all.

Achievements

All new students and staff quickly settled into school life and it was heartwarming to see classrooms full of students who were engaged in their learning and excited about school. Despite the challenges presented by the national staffing shortages, and the protracted EBA negotiations we enjoyed a settled and productive year.

General Achievements

Undoubtedly one of our major achievements has been the completion of the new junior hub. Having been fortunate to obtain Federal funding to build a large learning hub, containing 8 Classrooms and a learning street, initial progress was slow due to unseasonal wet weather and then major flooding in the area. Despite initial setbacks, the project was full steam ahead in 2023 and this vibrant and contemporary learning area opened its doors to our Year 1 and 2 students in mid-Term 4.

OSHC

The expansion of @2 Murlong, the St Mary's OSHC program with the ability to cater for before and after school care as well as provide vacations has also been a major achievement. The service provides before and after-school care for up to 75 students a day from both St Mary's and SHNPS and has resulted in the employment of 25 part-time educators and admin staff.

Collective Leadership

As part of our commitment to building a collective leadership culture by sharing and distributing leadership responsibilities and nurturing and supporting others to become

influential leaders themselves, the new look senior Leadership structure has seen both the Learning and Diversity Leader and Curriculum and Coaching leader take on full-time non-classroom-based roles. Both have provided great leadership and mentoring to early career teachers and LSOs. Our RE Leader (.4 non classroom) has provided an integral link between parish and school, worked closely with the CEOB staff, sourced accredited PD for TAP hours, and supported 17 staff undertaking their RE Accreditation.

It was particularly encouraging to have a take-up for accreditation from university students who work as LSOs at the school, graduates, and PTT staff, demonstrating their commitment to learn more about our faith and traditions. The existing middle leadership structures were consolidated and refined with the continuation of weekly leadership meetings, weekly Senior Leadership team meetings, weekly Well-being team meetings, and regular LSO meetings conducted during school hours. All meetings were minutes and housed in Shared Drive for ease of access by staff.

As a Leadership Team, we were mindful of staff fatigue and the heightened awareness of the need for work-life balance for staff., Staff meeting schedules were adjusted in line with the new EBA to allow levels greater autonomy in running regular level meetings based on identified needs and we continued to prioritize what was essential to focus on in the curriculum, reducing commitments for staff while ensuring we remain strongly focused on providing quality teaching and learning experiences learning in the classrooms.

The wellbeing of staff and students remained a high priority in 2023 with our wellbeing team offering support to many families and children, staff PD on wellbeing and self-care, and promoting EAP to all.

2023 saw the continued trend of levels of anxiety and disengagement in some children which were noted on return from lockdowns and all were supported on a case-by-case basis. The continuation of our commitment to a partnership with the Resilience Project was a positive experience, with its focus on gratitude, empathy, and mindfulness and looking at what we have, not what we don't have in our quest to be content in our lives.

Our commitment to showcasing all St Mary's in the local community paid off with strong interest from prospective parents, resulting in enrolments staying on par with previous years. Midweek afternoon/evening Open Days for prospective families were very popular and we continued with weekend Open Days, media campaigns Flying Start, and our revamped transition program for preschoolers which runs throughout term 3. Introducing Fly Into Foundation, a Term 4 Transition Program for students who have enrolled for the following year, provided a personalized approach to getting to know students and their families before school entry.

We maintained a strong online presence with greater delivery of key communication to families and regular video and snippets of daily life shared with families and the wider community using Facebook and Instagram. Our online followers continue to grow and with

the help of our Student Media Leaders, we have maintained videoing and uploading the Student of the Week presentation each Friday.

With staff all back in the office, we enjoyed liaising with the CEB staff in a combination of on-site visits and the provision of professional development opportunities throughout the year. Regular input from wellbeing and the LDL team, assistance from Centralized payroll, advice from HR on a range of matters, and the assignment of Vicky Hodgson to oversee OH&S significantly reduced the workload in these key areas and assisted leadership teams to focus on educational and wellbeing and spiritual needs of stakeholders.

High numbers of early career teachers and 3 PTT staff and early career teachers have meant that our commitment to instructional coaching and mentoring remained a key focus. Weekly coaching sessions, opportunities for peer observations, and support to achieve identified PLP goals were well supported through our coaching staff and mentor programs. Strategic recruitment of LSOs completing their teacher training and a successful partnership with the ACU Teach Together regional hub has assisted with teacher recruitment, although attracting staff to our regional area remains an ongoing challenge.

Leading a community of Learners:

The leadership team focused on being savvy about our data and strategically looking at the data collected, its purpose, and how to interpret it to inform all teaching and learning programs and practices and drive student improvement. Working with James Anderson and Steve Russell allowed us to develop confidence in understanding what our data told us in terms of success stories and opportunities for improvement in various aspects of school life.

Staff remain committed to really knowing the unique learning needs of each student and developing a sense of collective ownership of achievements and results. Data is looked at to determine priorities for intervention and extension in timetabled RTI meetings, with each level meeting once per month for this purpose. A comprehensive Professional Learning Schedule outlining all staff Professional Learning is circulated by the start of each term. All staff meetings and weekly professional development for staff are aligned to the School's Annual Action Plan and the AITSL standards, to ensure sufficient time was allocated to focused discussion and professional development around key priorities.

A whole school closure day in Term 3 facilitated by James Anderson, assisted all staff in developing their collective understanding of the notion of student agency and leadership, while a day facilitated by the Catholic Education Office. RE staff upskilled and respectfully challenged staff beliefs and understandings around catholic social teachings and mission. It was wonderful to have a day with our colleague and critical friend Canadian educator Tom Hierk. His workshops on trauma-informed students and moral purpose consolidated our school vision with staff and the importance of a positive school culture and staff who champion students in order for all to flourish.

Listening to and valuing the thoughts and ideas of all has remained key in 2023 with regular opportunities for staff check-ins or chats scheduled during the year. A continued focus on professional conversation time consistently built into the weekly level meeting times including whole school weekly professional focus facilitated by the curriculum or Unit leader, analysis of data against the RTI questions to diagnose and respond to student needs, sharing of teaching strategies and expertise and work on developing and refining a guaranteed and viable curriculum in all key curriculum areas has ensured these things are an established practice.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023	
Student Agency PD- James Anderson-a series of afterschool workshops via Zoom and a school closure day	
Catholic Social teachings and Mission- school closure day	
Creating a Positive School Culture-Tom Hierck Zoom workshops and one onsite visit.	
HITS-High Impact Teaching Strategies- workshops	
TAP Accredited course	
RE Accreditation through the University of Dayton	
Certificate IV InTeacher Assistance- undertaken by any new/unqualified LSO's	
Seesaw & Google Classroom	
MultiLit	
MacLit	
The Resilience Project	
Enneagram profiling	
Family Engagement -Tony Dalton	
First Aid & Associated training	
Reportable Conduct and Child Safety Standards presentations	
Mandatory Reporting	
Headspace-Dealing with Student and Parent Anxieties	
Strategies to support trauma-informed students	
Dogs Connect	
Use of sensory tools and resources	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	48
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$791.00

Teacher Satisfaction

Latest Insight SRC data reveals the following:

- Teacher Climate 80
- Curriculum Processes 85
- Parent Partnerships 80
- Quality Teaching 81

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	7.0%
Graduate	4.7%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	79.1%
Advanced Diploma	7.0%
No Qualifications Listed	2.3%

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	58
Teaching Staff (FTE)	43.4
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	57
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	41.7
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Goals and Intended Outcomes
- Achievements
- Parent Satisfaction (from Insight SRC)

Achievements

St Mary's welcomes and actively seeks community engagement in the life of the school and values the contribution of our family and wider community. Daily Breakfast Club and volunteers working in the canteen provided an avenue for many parents to engage in the life of the school as did parental attendance at incursions, school excursions, and camps. Service clubs visited to read to our younger students while representatives from sporting bodies and St Mary MacKillop College assisted with the sporting events or special events at the school.

St Mary's holds many activities and events which actively encourage the attendance and participation of our broader school community. Our Welcome Picnic drew a large crowd which gave new and existing families a chance to mingle and meet others in a relaxed environment. While in Term 4, our annual Grandparents and Friends event was revamped into a daytime event which proved very popular. A very large crowd of parents, carers, and extended family members enjoyed visiting classrooms and watching the staff and student performances while our Carols Evening in December was also well attended. It was also fantastic to see many visitors to our school for the Harmony Day celebrations, The Great Race, the Book Week Parade, Italian Day celebrations and a multitude of sporting events throughout the year.

The Mother's Day morning tea and Father's Day morning tea to celebrate the special figures in our lives were very popular. Both events saw huge numbers of parents, grandparents, and special friends come along to enjoy seeing classrooms in action before enjoying morning tea, a little treat and the chance to play or spend time with their loved ones.

Prospective families were well catered for with the introduction of a mid-week Open day in Term 1, the traditional Sunday Open Days, and a series of School in Action and Come and Try days. These provided opportunities for prospective families to come along and see what

the school has to offer as we went about our daily business. Any prospective students were also able to participate in 'Flying Start' - a preschool transition program.

Throughout the course of the year, staff actively built parent involvement and engagement in the learning process. Meet the teacher chats were held at the beginning of the year to allow parents to inform their child's new teacher about any important information they should know and to establish the lines of communication. Each term Curriculum newsletters were sent home outlining the learning to take place in all year levels and specialist subjects and staff regularly kept families informed of special events via class newsletters or Seesaw notifications. Our school newsletter was revamped with the school adopting a more contemporary and professional format and all special events were advertised on the newsletter, via PAM and shared on our social media platforms.

We continued to invite families along each Friday for our whole school assemblies and family-friendly Friday lunches. Student of the Week has continued to be videoed each week by student media leaders and placed on our Facebook page to allow family members from afar to enjoy seeing students' special achievements.

The School Advisory Council continued to be fully represented with all positions filled, it was also great to see some new faces joining the Council. They demonstrated a strong commitment to the life of the school and their work and support throughout the year were much appreciated.

Our students participated in the Australia Day ceremonies, the ANZAC Day March and Remembrance Day, and our wonderful school captains and SRC organised activities which supported local, national and international agencies including the Good Friday Appeal, Cancer for Kids, MS, St Vincent De Paul Winter Appeal and Caritas. Other student highlights include Footy Colours Day, PJ Day and Crazy Hair Day and the Colour Run.

Some of our Year 6 students volunteered to assist with the local 'Meals on Wheels' program to support the elderly in our community. This was supervised by some staff members and families from our school community.

Parent-teacher Conversations provided an opportunity for parents and staff to look at the strengths and individual learning needs of each child and set goals for future learning during Term 1, while Parent-teacher Conversations in Term 3 provided another opportunity for parents and teachers to partner around student learning.

Weekly Wemba Wemba classes to indigenous families if requested with the support of local elders and a trained teacher were continued to be offered.

Employment of bilingual aides with a community engagement component to their role. These aides liaise with the community, translate key information and ensure a connection between the Vietnamese, Chinese and Indian communities and the school. Incorporation of Google Translate in the school newsletter to assist families to receive information in their language of choice.

Parent Satisfaction

In past years, the following activities have strongly suggested there is a high level of satisfaction among staff, parents and students on the operation of the school.

This includes

- The welcoming and hospitable school environment
- Involvement in parish sacramental programs
- Attendance at school liturgies and assemblies
- Regular, productive school advisory council meetings
- Continued support for school-based fundraising ventures- continuous raffle
- Positive feedback regarding mid-year and annual reports
- Consistent attendance rates at student led conferences/Parent teacher conversations in Term 1 and term 3
- Willingness of parents to openly discuss issues with the principal and staff

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.smswanhill.catholic.edu.au