



Melbourne Archdiocese  
Catholic Schools

# 2023

## Annual Report to the School Community



### St John's School

34 Essex Street, FOOTSCRAY 3011

Principal: Emily Conroy

Web: [www.sjfootscray.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sjfootscray.catholic.edu.au)

Registration: 1146, E Number: E1100

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## Principal's Attestation

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I, Emily Conroy, attest that St John'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 08 May 2024

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## About this report

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St John'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](#).

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## Governing Authority Report

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When Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) launched our inaugural strategic plan MACS 2030: Forming Lives to Enrich the World just over a year ago, I spoke about the need for our whole organisation to reflect on the biggest challenges that confront us, and to work at speed to find practical, ambitious, student-centred solutions.

As a relatively new governing authority, 2023 set us on the path to achieving our first goals, as we focussed our efforts on building strong foundations for success. The four pillars of MACS2030 – Inspired by Faith; Flourishing Learners; Enabled Leaders; and Enriched Communities - serve to guide our work on how we achieve our strategic intent.

When we surveyed our teachers in late 2022, over 80 per cent told us that they want access to quality teaching and assessment resources. So in January 2023, we secured a system-wide licence for MACS primary and secondary schools to access the Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) assessment suite. The inclusion of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Survey allows schools to monitor the wellbeing of their students and target resourcing to specific areas of need. Together, these tools provide a coherent and systematic approach to student assessment.

In partnership with Ochre Education, we began work on F-6 Mathematics curriculum resources, being developed in a phased approach over three years, and delivered the first tranche for F-2. A key consideration in developing the materials is ensuring teachers retain autonomy to tailor curriculum implementation to meet the individual and local needs of students.

This is an exciting development for our MACS community, clearly demonstrating the commitment we all share to delivering the best possible education opportunities for our 120,000 students and supporting our 10,000 classroom teachers to be the very best that they can be.

Archbishop Peter commissioned a comprehensive review of Religious Education curriculum, the first in over a decade. It offers us some challenges, but fundamentally is a hope-filled report that invites a path of ongoing work to develop a new RE curriculum for all Catholic schools. We continued Working Together in Mission with Parish Priests throughout the Archdiocese, including through regular roundtable discussions.

Across greater Melbourne, one in five students attend a Catholic school and 2023 saw steady growth in enrolments across our system, demonstrating the value families place on a Catholic education and the high quality, holistic education MACS schools provide.

As a system of schools, we can be better together, reducing the administrative load on our schools and freeing our teachers and principals to focus on what they do best.

I would like to pay tribute to our MACS school and office colleagues who have worked so hard to achieve our goals. We look forward to further strengthening those partnerships as we work together to deliver an education that inspires young people to enrich the world.

Yours sincerely

Dr Edward Simons

Executive Director

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

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## Vision and Mission

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We refer to our vision as our horizon, we strive to reach a horizon as much a horizon meets us.

Horizons of Hope has framed our horizon.

We walk together as a community, valuing the dignity of all people first and foremost.

In our passionate, dynamic and inspiring community we hear all voices and embrace diversity.

Through our openness we discover, explore and encounter the world around us.

'We walk together in the light, as God is in the light, we are one with each other' (John 1:9)

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## School Overview

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Established in 1922, St. John's Catholic Primary School in Footscray was under the stewardship of the Josephites until 1999. Committed to nurturing a multi-faith community, St. John's School embodies a holistic approach to education, addressing the physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and intellectual well-being and development of each child.

While traditional education focuses on transmitting knowledge from teacher to student, we recognise that yesterday's solutions may not suffice for today's challenges. At St. John's, our vision is to reimagine education in response to the evolving world. We prioritise collaborative learning, meaning-making, creativity, research, problem-solving, and negotiation, aiming not merely to meet standards but to uncover, create, and realise the seemingly impossible.

Central to our approach is the cultivation of learners' capacity to thrive in complex situations, emphasising adaptability and resilience when faced with uncertainty. We prioritise nurturing learner dispositions and capabilities, encapsulated in our Learner Qualities: Reflect, Question, Connect, Think, Be Self-Aware, Wonder, and Be Determined. These qualities are fundamental to building learning capacity and fostering a growth mindset among our students.

Equally vital is our emphasis on the Learning Process as a deliberate teaching strategy. By empowering learners to set goals, analyse data critically, establish learning intentions, and identify pathways to success, we equip them with the tools to navigate their educational journey effectively. Through ongoing reflection and refinement, we ensure continual progress and growth for each student.

At St. John's, we aspire to cultivate a learning environment where discovery, creation, and innovation are pathways to building a sustainable and just world. We encourage children to articulate and demonstrate their learning, embracing both successes and failures as integral to the learning process. Our commitment to excellence extends beyond academic achievement to encompass the development of resilient, empathetic, and socially responsible individuals prepared to make meaningful contributions to society.

St John's school is part of the partnered parishes of Braybrook and Maidstone known as The Holy Family Parish. In 2023 we had 240 enrolled children and employed 15 full time staff (including two Learning Support Offices) and 19 - part time staff (including four Learning Support Officers and 2 Administration staff). There were 12 class groupings that consisted of two groups each of Prep to Year 4 and two groups of 5/6 children. Specialist programs offered at the school were Engaging with Place, Innovation, Japanese, Physical Education, The Arts - Visual Art, Performing Art and Music.

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## Principal's Report

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In 2023, our Annual Action Plan prioritised enhancing Learning & Teaching and fostering a Performance & Development Culture through coaching strategies, stemming from our 2019 school review. Wellbeing remained a key focus, with all new staff trained in the Berry Street Educational Model and all staff engaged in The Resilience Project professional learning. Collaborating with Lisa Burman, we strengthened our pedagogy in cultivating a community of writers through staff-wide professional development and 'in-action days' dedicated to planning Writing lessons. Together, we created our collective "why" from this year-long collaboration creating the below statement:

*Our intention is to develop authors who will find writing a useful tool to think, learn and express their ideas. We view writing as a way of representing and expressing our ideas about the world. We believe learning foundational writing skills begin from birth, through continued development of reading, conversation and play.*

*We believe in creating an environment that grows and fosters a passion for writing and helps support the development of children's identity as authors. This environment needs to provide space for children to be inspired, give and receive feedback and take risks. Through establishing a school wide community of writers, children will experience joy, support and care.*

*We hold the belief that children need to develop the skills to not only express themselves but also engage their audience in a purposeful way. This includes prioritising the ownership and engagement of children in authentic writing experiences. It also involves explicitly teaching children the necessary skills, knowledge and understandings to progress their capabilities as a writer.*

*We will endeavour to see every aspect of learning across the curriculum as an opportunity to develop our author's voice.*

*(St. John's Staff, 2023)*

Our school community welcomed Luna, a therapy dog in training, who adores being around people, especially children. Luna's presence contributes to a positive and inclusive learning environment, prioritising the well-being of both children and staff. Under the guidance of her trainer, Luna engages with small groups of children to ensure her suitability as a wellbeing dog. She provides emotional support to children experiencing anxiety or needing moments of calmness, while activities like interacting, giving commands, and reading together form part of her role in fostering well-being.

I extend my gratitude to Fr. Rene and Fr. Gerald for their unwavering support in nurturing the spirituality of our youth and fostering our growth as a vibrant Catholic community within the Holy Family Parish.



I also want to express my heartfelt thanks to the entire school community for their continual support as we evolve together, always prioritising our shared vision of placing the child at the heart of everything we do.

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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Build an environment of Faith formation that celebrates and engages both the Catholic tradition and relationship with the wider Church.
- Create a sense of belonging by purposefully listening to and celebrating the narratives of the community and encouraging dialogue with Catholic beliefs and practices.
- Explore recontextualisation and investigate innovative ways for children to engage in a dialogue about the Catholic faith and its place within our diverse multi-faith community.

### Achievements

- REL attendance at the Western Region REL Network Meetings x 4
- REL attendance at the 2023 World Youth Day experience in Rome, Assisi and Portugal
- Twice Termly TADs (Teachers as Designers Meetings) to build capacity of staff in the teaching of Faith Life, Social Justice Principles and assessment and reporting.
- Fortnightly whole School Prayer Gatherings led by Hub Groups including daily Holy Week liturgies and weekly Advent Liturgies
- One whole school mass celebrated at Our Lady's Church for Beginning of the School/ Ash Wednesday led by Father Gerald
- Feast of St. Mary MacKillop - liturgy and celebration
- School liturgy for End of the Year celebrated at St. John's Hall led by Father Gerald
- Year 6 liturgy for Graduation led by Father Gerald
- Sacramental Preparation Program, Family Formation Evenings and celebrations of Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation with Christ the King School in Braybrook at Our Lady's Church.

### Value Added

- Promotion of the Catholic Identity of St. John's School through making the traditions and rituals of the Catholic Faith visible including prayer when gathering for assemblies and staff update meetings (Tea Time Tuesday).
- Acknowledgment of faith traditions and spiritual traditions of cultural groups including engaging with an Indigenous Elder for a Smoking Ceremony and acknowledging significant celebrations of other faiths ie. Ramadan, Holi, Diwali.
- Child led fundraising by the Social Justice Leaders via Caritas and Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

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## Learning and Teaching

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Ensures that students are consistently engaged in meaningful experiences and there is a strong whole school focus on student assessment and providing opportunities for students to engage in feedback processes.
- To build a culture of giving and receiving feedback across the school to facilitate high-quality pedagogy and leadership in learning and teaching.
- Build a culture of designers of learning to foster student motivation, increase children's voice and build children's agency.

### Achievements

- Co-constructed with leaders & educators a pedagogical statement for learning and teaching in Writing.
- Co-constructed with leaders & educators a purpose and role description for the adult's role (Influencer) in Discovery.
- Co-constructed with leaders & educators a purpose statement for the role of the child (Discoverer) in Discovery.

### Student Learning Outcomes

- STRENGTHS - Reading consistently grown in Yr. 3. Yr. 5 is high. Numeracy is lowest in both year levels.
- FOCUS - Consolidate and ensure 'good practice' in reading.
- FOCUS - Continue to implement writing pedagogies explored this year - book making, Writer's Notebook.
- FOCUS - Building teacher capacity and reviewing the whole school approach to Numeracy.

*This growth is attributed to:*

- Term 2 Professional Learning Day - led by Kirsty Liligren from Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange (REAIE) in consultation with St. John's Learning and Teaching team.
- Term 1 and Term 3 Professional Learning Days - led by Lisa Burman. On these Professional Learning Days, she supported all teams in developing a planning process to support the needs of the children and ensure we address genre, craft and process skills throughout the year.

<b>NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Year level</b>	<b>Mean Scale score</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	422	71%
	Year 5	520	75%
Numeracy	Year 3	407	74%
	Year 5	500	83%
Reading	Year 3	422	74%
	Year 5	541	88%
Spelling	Year 3	405	69%
	Year 5	506	92%
Writing	Year 3	415	83%
	Year 5	511	92%

\*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.

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## Student Wellbeing

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To ensure that students are consistently engaged in meaningful experiences and there is a strong whole school focus on student assessment and providing opportunities for students to engage in feedback processes.
- Continue to promote high expectations of all school community members in the demonstration of our Ways of Working to maintain an environment where children feel safe and ready to learn.

### Achievements

- Induction and implementation of the first year of The Resilience Project.
- Second year of Berry Street Training for new staff (commenced in 2022)
- Triangulating data for Student Wellbeing by using Resilient Youth Survey, PAT SEW and Student Focus Group Data
- School Closure Day for Staff Wellbeing facilitated by Andrea Downie at St. Joseph's by the Sea, Williamstown.
- Twice Termly facilitated planning for Personal and Social Capability curriculum and Ready to Learn using resources from Berry Street, The Resilience Project and DET's Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships
- Student Leadership roles including, School Captains, Sport Captains, Social Justice Captains, Wellbeing Captains
- Semesterly Village Leaders for each learning hub to promote student voice and engagement in active decision making
- Transition Programs at Year 6 and Kinder
- Partnership with DKM Psychology for the provision of two provisionally registered psychologists working onsite at St. John's for two days per week.

### Value Added

- Student development of proactive strategies to increase resilience using the GEME strategies of The Resilience Project ( Gratitude, Empathy, Mindfulness & Emotional Literacy)
- Student engagement with TRP journals to reinforce and practise the GEME principles
- Staff Meeting to embed Berry Street practices and daily Ready to Learn routines Buddy Program for the Prep children paired with a 5/6 HUb child to support transition into school
- Kinder visits and Term 4 School Orientation Program (three sessions)

- Engagement with Carley McGauran from Inform and Empower who facilitated parent workshops (online and face to face) in relation to supporting young children with emotional regulation
- Year 6 Transition Program including a Parish Schools Day with Christ the King Braybrook and St. Monica's Footscray.
- Leadership Day for the children in Grades 4 and 5 facilitated by UPP ( Unleashing Personal Potential).
- The Resilience Project Page on St. John's digital newsletter to ensure that all families are aware of the program implementation and to provide access for families to the Parent & Carer Hub available to them in support of developing their child's capacity to increase resilience.

### **Student Satisfaction**

2023 MACSSIS Student results indicates an overall School Positive Endorsement for students was 56%. However, our Student data shows that children feel like their educators hold them to a high expectation of their effort, understanding, persistence and performance. Children also indicated that there are strong connections between themselves and their educators. Student safety is an area that children raise as being an area for improvement. They felt at times other children's behaviour impacted on the negatively. We held focus groups with children across Year 4 to 6 to hear more about this. Children articulated that sometimes things that happened during break times carried over into their learning time. In the final weeks of 2023 we trialled some recommendations that came out of the focus groups to implement in 2024. This included additional staff members to supervise the soccer pitch, timetable umpires/referees, split break in the afternoon to allow more time on the pitch or more room for ball games on the backyard.

### **Student Attendance**

Student attendance across the school year was high indicating children are wanting to come to school every day.

<b>Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level</b>	
Y01	92.1%
Y02	93.7%
Y03	93.5%
Y04	90.7%
Y05	90.4%
Y06	88.9%
Overall average attendance	91.6%

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## Leadership

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Engage educators in the process of coaching through co-constructing professional goals through ongoing discussion and dialogue.
- Empower educators to engage in professional inquiries based on areas of interest and potential areas for professional growth with coaches.
- Maintain current practice of allocating time and resources to educator professional development, as per the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards for teaching.
- To provide opportunities for educators to develop their capacity in understanding the capabilities and its place within all curriculum areas.

### Achievements

The Leadership Team and aspiring leaders continued their development of leadership and coaching skills with Geoffrey Still. All leaders completed a DiSC assessment, utilising their profiles for goal setting and personal growth. DiSC encompasses four main personality profiles: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness. These profiles shed light on aspects of ourselves we may not have recognised, fostering understanding of our behaviours and reactions. This self-awareness promotes acceptance and openness towards others. Leaders applied this insight when supporting educators, during coaching conversations, planning, staff PL for continued capacity building of all staff members.

We implemented a leadership structure change to enhance support for educators and families from the beginning of 2023. We established a Learning and Teaching team comprising leaders assigned to specific year levels supporting teams across all curriculum areas. This team convened weekly to maintain consistency and deliver unified messages during planning sessions, concurrently fostering their own leadership skills. Assigning a Learning and Teaching Leader to each level meant we could manage educator workload and the expectations put on them at different times during the year, representing their voices at leadership meetings, and nurturing the home-school partnership through an in-depth understanding of the children within those levels.



<b>Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning</b>	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023	
<p>St John's staff have participated in the following professional learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing PL with Lisa Burman</li> <li>• Berry Street Education Model PL (for new staff)</li> <li>• EduTeach Conference</li> <li>• The Resilience Project</li> <li>• Heggerty implementation training (P-2 educators)</li> <li>• Discovery: "Reggio in Context" with Kirsty Liligren from Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange (REAIE)</li> <li>• First Aid and CPR training</li> <li>• Leadership and Coaching development with Geoffrey Still</li> </ul>	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	26
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1540.00

### Teacher Satisfaction

Our Staff 2023 MACSSIS (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools - School Improvement Survey) data reflects consistently positive results, surpassing MACS averages in all areas. Staff responses indicates that staff were 82% overall positive in their responses compared to the MACS average of 67%. Specifically, our school excels in staff leadership relationships, school climate, staff safety, school leadership, support for teams, collaboration, collective efficacy, and psychological safety, all with endorsements of 88% or higher. These strengths have been consistently upheld over the past three years. We would attribute these results to the work leaders in preparing for team planning, professional learning, shared ownership and having a positive regard for everyone.

<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	19.0%
Graduate	14.3%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	47.6%
Advanced Diploma	9.5%
No Qualifications Listed	9.5%

<b>Staff Composition</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	4
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	33
Teaching Staff (FTE)	26.0
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	12
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	10.5
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

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## Community Engagement

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Explores innovative ways for the diverse cohort of parents to be more engaged in the life of the school.
- Develops relationships with the primary caregivers of students to empower them as active partners in their child's learning
- Engage and invite families to be active partners in school life by providing opportunities for families to engage in dialogue about their child's learning; and to contribute to discussions, school celebrations and events.

### Achievements

- Consultation with the School Advisory Council on the Behaviour Support Response pathway followed by communication to families.
- Elder (Uncle Dan) led a smoking ceremony for our Welcome Picnic.
- Diwali and Holi were supported by Nidhi to share her cultural traditions and celebrations with staff and children. Multi Faith celebrations acknowledged in prayer gatherings and social media posts for the community.
- Engaging in Place is a specialist subject, there has been parent and community involvement with the farm. Celebrated on social media and access by the family community on a regular basis.
- Fortnightly assemblies and prayer gatherings where families are welcome to join us each week. When a child is receiving an acknowledgement we invite their families to the assembly so they can be present for this.
- Expo of learning so families can come to the school to engage in the learning their child and other children have learnt through community and discovery projects.
- Parent sessions to inform parents of the work we have done in developing our Community of Writers.

### Parent Satisfaction

65% of the parent community who completed the MACSSIS Survey (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools - School Improvement Survey), responded with overall positivity. The school scored highly in the areas of parents feeling like the school meets the developmental needs of their child (76%) and families' perception of the social and learning climate of the school (74%). The results also show an increase in positive responses in the family's perception of and engagement with the overall Catholic Identity of the school from 51% in 2021 to 60% in 2023.

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## Financial Performance

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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](http://www.acnc.gov.au).

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at [www.sjfootscray.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sjfootscray.catholic.edu.au)