



Melbourne Archdiocese  
**Catholic Schools**

# 2023

## Annual Report to the School Community



### St Mary's School

95A Railway Street, ALTONA 3018

Principal: Sonia Riccardi

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

Registration: 1273, E Number: E1118

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## Principal's Attestation

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I, Sonia Riccardi, 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 22 May 2024

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## About this report

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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](#).

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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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### **VISION**

We are a welcoming and supportive Catholic Community.

We proclaim the presence of Jesus Christ in all people.

We value and celebrate our faith, diversity, individuality and life-long learning.

In the Spirit of Mary MacKillop.

### **STRATEGIC INTENT**

At St Mary's, we continuously strive to be a prayerful and active Catholic faith community. We intend to improve the learning outcomes of our students by building teacher's capacity to be reflective of their practice, analyse data and design curriculum in a contemporary Catholic context. We intend to achieve this by challenging every student to achieve expected growth which is driven by evidence-based teaching practices.

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## School Overview

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St Mary's has been an integral part of the Altona community since the Sisters of St Joseph opened the first school in 1928. We have continued to build on this rich educational foundation grounded in the charism of Mary MacKillop. We proudly proclaim ourselves as a Caring Catholic Community in Education.

Our 2023 enrolments saw 275 children organised into 12 class groupings. The majority of our Year 6 children transition to Catholic Secondary Colleges, with most enrolling at Emmanuel College (St Paul's and Notre Dame campuses) and Mount St Joseph's Girl's College.

During 2022, we offered Physical Education, Performing Arts, Visual Arts and LOTE (Auslan) as specialist subjects. This year was our second year offering Auslan and it has been a resounding success seeing high engagement amongst our students.

We proudly value, acknowledge and explicitly promote the school's Catholic heritage and traditions. Displays throughout the school; the respectful manner of all interactions; and social justice in action are key features of St Mary's. Additionally, the welcoming nature of the school, the inclusiveness of its practices, the links to the parish and its commitment to supporting all families are evidence of this.

Our large classrooms are well presented with colourful displays designed to support student learning. The school utilises Digital Technology across all aspects of the curriculum, with students having access to a variety of tools, including Chromebooks from Year 3 and banks of iPads for the junior school. The expansive playground and equipment provided offers a variety of play experiences and opportunities for all students.

Our pedagogical philosophy hinges on the belief that we are all learners and teachers. To this end, we aim to develop inquiring and reflective minds through learning and teaching approaches that empower our children to be lifelong learners. Experiential and 'hands on' activities underpin the school's approach to immersing and engaging students in their learning.

Our focus on personalised learning aims to differentiate learning, taking into account each child's needs, abilities and interests. This is providing them with every opportunity to realise their potential and grow as strong, contributing members within our school and active citizens in the wider community.

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## Principal's Report

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I am proud to present this year's Annual Report to our community.

2023 was a year of great learning and reflecting, including undergoing our 4 yearly Review.

Staff worked together to gather evidence of our progress since the last Review in 2019 and we were pleased to be able to provide evidence of some great achievements towards our last strategic plan, despite the pivot that COVID forced schools to undertake.

Our Reviewer confirmed some of the great things we already knew about our school and community and presented a considered and accurate reflection of where we need to head next.

Some of the strengths that were noted were:

- A strong sense of community, with leaders, teachers, students and parents indicating they are proud to be part of the school.
- A consistently applied Foundation to 6 instructional model (visible learning) which is underpinned by a contemporary research base.
- A robust assessment schedule and processes for storing, organising and interpreting student assessment data, particularly in literacy.
- Leadership's clear focus to enact the school vision and provide clear direction for improving teaching and learning.
- Student wellbeing is school priority. The school supports personalised learning and an understanding of each child as an individual.

A summary of our next strategic goals are listed below:

- To engage and include all students in all aspects of their learning
- To build a robust instructional practice culture ensuring growth and challenge
- To deepen the Catholic faith experience of staff, students and families by explicitly connecting what we do and why we do it



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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

#### Goal:

To strengthen the Catholic identity of St Mary's as an active and prayerful, contemporary faith community

#### Intended Outcomes:

- That we nurture the faith and religious development of each individual, staff and students
- That we embed in the life of the school the charism of Mary MacKillop
- That we design learning using the Pedagogy of Encounter

### Achievements

- REL sourced staff PL opportunities to assist in reaching the required minimum hours for accreditation
- REL commenced preparations for Parish Mass attendance
- Class teachers organised class liturgies/prayer assemblies
- REL worked with teams to plan units around Mary MacKillop
- REL worked with teams to plan units using the Pedagogy of Encounter

### Value Added

- All Sacraments and Masses back to pre-COVID numbers
- Grades resumed attending weekly class masses including doing readings and songs
- Sacrament Preparation Evening meetings returned and were well attended
- Creation of a Mary MacKillop Prep - 6 scope and sequence of units of work

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## Learning and Teaching

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

#### Goal:

To build teachers' capacity to engage in collaborative analysis of data to design a curriculum that supports and challenges every student to achieve expected growth and standards

#### Intended Outcomes:

- That data is used to inform curriculum planning in all academic and wellbeing learning
- That PLCs routinely track and monitor whole school progress
- That students of all capabilities are challenged and supported to reach their full potential

### Achievements

- Visible Learning language visible in planning room and in Level Planners
- Reading, Writing and Number Planners show evidence of Data informed focused teaching
- Data walls in Planning Room display student assessment levels and achievement
- What does it mean to be a good learner at St Mary's? Student reflection Video evaluation show improvement in understanding of what it is to be a successful learner
- Learner characteristics have been developed with staff and students:
  - Risk Taking
  - Creativity
  - Self Motivation
  - Curiosity
  - Persistence
- Intervention Framework informs differentiation of learning

### Student Learning Outcomes

- Continued and extended Visible Learning Framework - Corwin (while they lasted)
- Developed and defined Learner Characteristics
- Supported staff to refine use of Learning Intentions & Success Criteria

- Introduced the use of 'Classroom Mastery' strategies - Cue to Start, Voice levels

## **ENGLISH**

- Little Learners Love Literacy Parent Night
- Parent helpers training and implementation in classrooms
- New staff PD for SMART Spelling, LLLL
- VCOP Cold Write schedule implemented
- VCOP Assessment and Reporting PD sessions
- Digital tracking for VCOP and LLLL
- Mini Lit program implemented
- EOI training for leadership ready to implement in 2024

## **MATHS**

- Evaluation and modification of organisational structures to facilitate focused teaching at point of need
- Expanded the use of focused assessment data to teach students at the point of need
- Evaluate and improve Progression of Learning in Number to include student-friendly language (I can.. )
- Maths Parent information evening on the use of data to focus teaching
- Provide access to an online copy of the progressions of learning in Number to parents to support reporting and student goals during units of work

## **DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY**

- Updated Student Devices (Chromebooks)
- Completed Infrastructure upgrades including Internet connection speed increase

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- Skateboard clinics for students in Grades 3-6

## **PERFORMING ARTS**

- A whole School performance for Christmas Carols facilitated by David Enever

## **ART**

- An Art House was developed to house Visual Art lessons

<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	405	65%
	Year 5	494	76%
Numeracy	Year 3	401	68%
	Year 5	485	59%
Reading	Year 3	414	71%
	Year 5	489	78%
Spelling	Year 3	412	61%
	Year 5	468	61%
Writing	Year 3	422	81%
	Year 5	493	68%

\*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

#### Goal:

To build teachers' capacity to engage in collaborative analysis of data to design a curriculum that supports and challenges every student to achieve expected growth and standards

#### Intended Outcome:

- That data is used to inform curriculum planning in all academic and wellbeing learning
- That students of all capabilities are challenged and supported to reach their full potential

### Achievements

- All staff participate in Visible Learning PL
- Engaging students in their learning through Learning Intention & Success Criteria
- Staff began using Learner Characteristics in class and Principal awards
- Student individual learning goals implemented in Reading, Writing and Number
- Engaged with Real Schools to begin our 3 year partnership

### Value Added

- ASD Student Support Group - Finding Your Neurotribe
- ASD Parent Support Group continues
- Sandhya Menon ASD - Conference Guest speaker
- Wellbeing Inquiry Unit in Term 1
- Values revisited at the beginning of the year
- Values displayed on the TRI Centre wall
- Kindness Day - Building a culture of kindness / Buddy Day
- Wellbeing leader PL on PAT SEW
- Students completed PAT SEW for the first time
- Visible Learning Framework - LISC, Goal setting, Feedback, Learner Characteristics

### Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction appears to be following similar patterns to MACS averages, however, our results appear to have generally declined across the domains surveyed in the last 2 years.

Results also appear to decline heavily when comparing our Year 4 data with our Year 5/6 student data, as well as the results from our male students compared with our female students. These patterns, however, are not uncommon across other schools.

These results have been the catalyst in our pursuit of further information from our students with the introduction of the PAT social-emotional wellbeing (SEW) assessment.

The commencement of our participation in the Western Region Flourishing Learners PL and our 3-year partnership with Real Schools will also help target the areas of most concern identified through the MACSSIS and PAT SEW surveys and assessments.

## **Student Attendance**

St Mary's School teaching staff mark an electronic roll twice per day. Administration staff contacts parents /guardians about any unexplained absences as soon as practicable on the day of absence. This is done via text message in which parents are asked to call the office to confirm and explain the absence.

Families have continued to be very diligent in informing the school regarding student absenteeism, and this very high level of attendance, as detailed in the table below, indicates the importance families place on ensuring children are consistently at school.

Reasons for student absence are documented within attendance rolls. Days absent are reported to parents via each child's semester report. Staff contact parents and notify members of leadership if a student's attendance becomes an issue. Members of leadership would also contact parents/guardians if attendance was an issue.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	88.8%
Y02	91.6%
Y03	92.0%
Y04	89.1%
Y05	88.7%
Y06	91.1%
Overall average attendance	90.2%

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## Leadership

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

#### Goal:

To establish reflective practices (observation, feedback, mentoring and coaching) to enhance staff performance

#### Intended Outcomes:

- That staff have high levels of trust that enables them to support and challenge each other to continually improve
- That staff are able to engage in constructive and professional dialogue
- That staff identify goals for professional growth

### Achievements

- School Values have been explored with students and visuals introduced through classroom lessons and awards
- Positive Primers embedded into teacher language
- Protocols
- School Values
- Professional Improvement Plans
- Conference at Lorne: ASD and Corwin Visible Learning (Feedback)
- Revamped the planning room to further facilitate collaborative planning
- New School Uniform
- Leadership Dinner: Guest Speaker ASD Sandra Tom-Jones

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visible Learning - LISC, Feedback, Learner Characteristics</li><li>• ASD - Sandhya Menon: Autism and ADHD</li><li>• Flourishing Learners, Science of Learning for Leadership</li></ul>	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	39
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1260.00



## Teacher Satisfaction

There are many domains within our MACSSIS data in which staff satisfaction is higher than other MACS schools. These areas include:

- Support for teams
- Professional Learning
- Collaboration in Teams

The following domains have been identified as areas for improvement:

- Staff and student safety
- Feedback

It has also been noted that there is a noticeable discrepancy between the data of our teaching and non-teaching staff.

We have introduced more frequent meetings of our support staff to ensure there is an opportunity for our school leaders receive feedback and input into how support is structured. It is also a forum to communicate the reasons behind some of the decisions that directly impact our non-teaching staff.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	24.1%
Graduate	10.3%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	37.9%
Advanced Diploma	17.2%
No Qualifications Listed	10.3%

<b>Staff Composition</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	30
Teaching Staff (FTE)	23.1
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	18
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	14.3
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	1

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## Community Engagement

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

**Goal:**

To strengthen the Catholic identity of St Mary's as an active and prayerful, contemporary faith community

**Intended Outcomes:**

That we nurture the faith and religious development of each individual, staff and students

### Achievements

- Parent attendance at Class and School Liturgies and Prayer services are high.
- Parent engagement in Sacrament programs and Sacrament preparation evening meetings are high.

### Parent Satisfaction

For the most part, our Family MACSSIS data shows great similarities with the MACS average.

The areas in which our results are less than the average are in the domains of Communication and Student Safety.

The school will be working with the SAC and wider community to establish further actions to address the areas in which we are currently falling behind the MACS average.

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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.smaltona.catholic.edu.au](http://www.smaltona.catholic.edu.au)