



Melbourne Archdiocese  
Catholic Schools

# 2025

## 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 2025 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 13 May 2026

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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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Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) continues to take bold and ambitious steps, guided by our MACS2030 strategy, to empower our students to flourish and step into the world as the leaders of tomorrow.

In advancing our 2030 vision and our ambition to deliver world-leading Catholic education, we celebrate the significant progress made across our four areas of strategic focus. The safety and wellbeing of our staff and students underpins everything we do, enabling an environment where learning grows with purpose, leadership develops in capability and confidence, and our communities continue to thrive through our shared Catholic outlook.

Inspired by faith in the Jubilee Year of the Catholic Church in 2025, we successfully implemented our Faith Formation Framework, to further strengthen faith education, offering deeper opportunities for spiritual development and meaningful engagement for students, staff and leaders alike. Faith is at the heart of all our schools, grounding our mission and inspiring students, teachers and staff to grow and lead with integrity.

The official launch and implementation of the Vision for Engagement (VFE) strategy demonstrated impressive results in our community of Flourishing Learners.

Anchored in evidence-based practise, the VFE strengthens our system-wide teaching and learning approach and enhances the daily engagement of students through the explicit teaching of positive behaviour, reinforcement and consistency. It sets clear expectations about attendance and includes a sustained focus on student mental health and wellbeing.

For learners to flourish, students must be safe, which is why we are continuing to strengthen our safety processes and risk management culture. Our focus is on providing training and professional development for all staff to ensure student safety remains top of mind in every decision we make, every environment we shape and every interaction we have.

To strengthen the pillar of enabled leaders, MACS has established consistent standards across schools for cultivating inspiring, capable leaders for students to observe.

In the past year, our Pathways to Principalship Programme and Women in Leadership Programme have both strengthened our principal appointment process and introduced more flexible models of principalship.

It is inspiring to see our principals and teachers continue to raise the bar, reflected in the extraordinary number of nominations received in our Best Teachers campaign.

Finally, we continue to create new and enriched communities, with the opening of a new primary school and children's hub in Melbourne's growing north, ensuring families have access to high quality education no matter where they live.

MACS Early Years Education (MACSEYE) continues to expand early years and outside school hours care services across our schools and communities, with continued growth planned for 2026.

These investments are not simply about building infrastructure. They are about building a dynamic, Catholic education system where every child has an opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

Thank you to all our students, staff, families and community members for being part of our journey so far, and we look forward to continuing to serve as a supportive and guiding presence in your children's lives.

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**

Through evidence-based practices, we aim to create a vibrant educational community where learners consistently achieve their highest potential and embrace challenges as opportunities.

We strive to develop empowered individuals who live out the mission of the Church through our school values, actively shaping their education and community.

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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 2025 enrolments saw 260 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 Girls' College.

During 2025, we offered Physical Education, Visual Arts, LOTE (Auslan) Performing Arts and STEM as specialist subjects.

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, closed-format 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. Our expansive playground and equipment offer a variety of play experiences and opportunities for all students.

Our heritage Melbourne Tram, along with our beautiful, newly established sensory garden, is a wonderful addition to our already well-equipped, expansive grounds.

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## Principal's Report

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This year, our school community has made meaningful strides in strengthening the quality of learning and teaching across every year level. Guided by our key word for the year, consistency, we focused our collective energy on building shared practices, refining our routines, and ensuring that every student benefits from a calm, purposeful learning environment.

One of our most significant achievements has been the introduction of the UFLI Phonics Program across Prep to Year 2. A special mention must go to our junior team, who chose to begin the program from day one of the school year. Given 12 months to implement, they chose not to wait, and that eagerness has made a real difference to the outcomes we are already seeing. Our teachers have embraced the program with enthusiasm and professionalism, and we are already seeing the benefits reflected in the confidence and progress of our students.

Consistency as a guiding principle extended beyond our literacy programs. Across the school, staff worked together to refine the practices and routines that shape our daily learning environments. A deliberate focus on calm, orderly classrooms has meant that students are better positioned to engage deeply with their learning, and the positive shift in our school culture has been both visible and encouraging.

A highlight of our professional learning this year was the introduction of a new approach to working towards and monitoring our year-level-specific goals. Rather than goals being reviewed only at set points in the year, all staff had regular, active opportunities to work on their priorities and celebrate the achievements of each team. This has strengthened our sense of collective purpose and reinforced that we are one community working toward shared goals.

This year also saw the introduction of a new initiative where I met with each teacher on a termly basis for individual check-ins. These conversations focused on how staff were progressing towards our goals and where additional support could be offered. It has been a valuable way to stay connected with each member of our team and ensure that no one is navigating challenges alone.

We have also continued to invest in staff growth through coaching and observation, with particular emphasis on supporting newer members of our team. Opportunities to receive meaningful feedback and observe one another in action have deepened professional understanding across the school.

Thank you to every member of our school community for your commitment, your openness to growth, and your dedication to our students.

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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To develop a Scripture Scope and Sequence for each of the School Values

### Achievements

Staff worked with Dr Marg Carswell, senior lecturer of Religious Education at Australian Catholic University to explore the use of scripture with students.

Staff created a P-6 scope and sequence for implementing the scripture passage, 'The Sower,' Luke 5:5-8.

We also explored ways to use scripture as a vehicle to teach our school values.

Staff also spent a day at the MacKillop Heritage Centre, exploring the charism of Mary MacKillop, helping us work towards the naming of our school's house teams.

### Value Added

- St Patrick's Day Mass attended by REL & School Captains
- Easter Holy Week Liturgical celebrations
- Advent liturgical celebrations
- Sacramental program and celebrations
- All classes attending and reading at parish Mass each semester
- Whole school Mass celebrations for: Opening of School, Mother's Day, Mary Help of Christians feast day, Mary Mac Killop feast day, Grandparent's Day, Father's Day, Graduation, Close of school year.
- Caritas Australia Project Compassion supported

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## Learning and Teaching

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To improve Year 6 student oral reading fluency by the end of the year

- We will know this is achieved if all students achieve an Oral Reading Fluency(WRC) score of 117 or greater on the end-of-year DIBELS

To improve Year 4 multiplication fact knowledge

- We will know this is achieved if by the end of Year 4, 90% of students will know their times tables up to 10x10

To establish focused teaching groups based on UFLI assessments and progress monitoring

- We will know this is achieved if 80% of Preps and Year 1s will achieve a PSF of greater than 36 at the end of the year

### Achievements

- Facilitated planning with a new planning agenda
- Curriculum Leaders attended PL: Flourishing Learners Network, Walkthroughs
- L&T Playbook development commenced
- Team Charters developed
- Individual teacher coaching implemented twice termly
- PL for staff with Nathaniel Swain

### Literacy

- UFLI PD for staff
- UFLI Progress Monitoring completed weekly in P-2
- OCHRE Novel Studies 3-6
- OCHRE Grammar project P-2
- De-implement LLLL in order to implement UFLI
- De-implement SMART Spelling in place of UFLI and OCRE units
- MID-Year PAT Testing to inform reports
- VCOP Moderation using Elastik
- Implementation of Victorian Curriculum 2.0
- Flourishing Learners: Embedding Engagement Norms

- Continued with DIBELS Benchmark
- Use of DIBELS Progress Monitoring Assessment
- Elastik software (Writemark) to assess writing tasks

### **Mathematics**

- OCHRE Yearly & Termly overviews, daily Review and Lesson structure fine-tuned with teachers in planning
- Report indicators edited to match the learning stream implemented by levels
- Coaching and modelling of gradual release model through OCHRE lessons
- Full participation strategies, engagement norms implemented in Maths lessons.
- Intellectual preparation model implemented during facilitated planning for maths lessons, with teaching levels
- Use of CFU throughout lessons to monitor progress
- Elastik software for mid and end unit tracking

### **Digital Technology**

- Staff PL in the use of Elastik software for assessment
- Update of staff and student devices in line with school plan
- Move to nForma for parent portal access - permissions, notices, medical register
- Software upgrade to Library accessIT software
- Security hardware and software upgrades in line with MACS requirements
- Times Tables Rockstars purchased for Yr3-6 students

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

NAPLAN Results from 2024 to 2025:

### **Reading**

- The school has gone from just below national and state mean in Year 3 Reading to above national and in line with state mean.
- Year 5 Reading has remained at level with national

### **Maths**

- Year 3 Numeracy went from being in line with national, and just below state means to above national to slightly below state level (6 scale score points)
- Year 5 Numeracy went from 8 points below national mean to 3, closing the gap by 5 scale points

<b>NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards</b>					
	<b>2025 (current year)</b>			<b>2-Year Average</b>	
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Year level</b>	<b>Mean Scale score</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Mean Scale score</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	415	58%	410	54%
	Year 5	494	58%	501	62%
Numeracy	Year 3	411	71%	409	68%
	Year 5	489	71%	485	71%
Reading	Year 3	422	81%	411	70%
	Year 5	491	84%	493	82%
Spelling	Year 3	417	72%	407	67%
	Year 5	489	68%	490	66%
Writing	Year 3	424	81%	419	87%
	Year 5	478	68%	485	75%

\*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2025 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 consolidate an agreed-upon list of expected behaviours, rules and consequences (behaviour curriculum)

- We will know if this has been achieved if 80% or more of students are in the Developed or Above categories in the overall SEW score in PAT SEW

### Achievements

- Created and implemented a team charter for meetings
- Continued working on Flourishing Learners
- MHiPS leader
- Finding Your Neurotribe group run by school counsellor with Year 5/6 ASD students
- Social Skills groups run by speech pathologists
- Celebration Meetings held each term at the last staff meeting to look back on the successes of the term
- Explored a whole school behaviour curriculum
- Circle Time and SEL focus in all classrooms
- Two x Managing Anxiety in Children meetings run for parents by Elaine Geraghty (Occupational therapist)
- Managing Anxiety In Students professional learning presented at a staff meeting by Elaine Geraghty (Occupational therapist)
- Jeanette Trento (MACS psychologist) worked with whole staff as well as individual teachers on writing and implementing Behaviour Plans
- Whole School Team Teach Professional Learning
- Began PBL training and chose a team who would lead this

### Value Added

- Weekly Fun and Fitness session
- Walk/ride to School day promotion
- Colour Days (Red Day for Child Safety, Purple Day for Buddy Day, Spring into Happiness and Kindness)
- Footy Fun Day
- Prep Breakfast
- Junior Camp (extended day)
- Year 3/4 Camp to Bacchus march
- Year 5/6 Camp to Corop

- Athletics Carnival
- District Sports
- Interschool Sports
- Hobsons Bay Junior School Council
- Recycling initiatives
- School tree Planting schemes

### **Excursions and Incursions**

**Prep:** Scienceworks, Como House, Simultaneous Reading and Drama (Hobsons Bay)

**Juniors:** Melbourne Museum and Cook's Cottage, Book Week Performance

**Middles:** Local walk around Altona, Werribee Zoo, AFL Max, Book Week Performance

**Seniors:** Walk around Altona, AFL Max, Book Week Performance, GRIP leadership and St Patrick's Day Mass for various Year 6 leaders

### **Student Satisfaction**

The 2025 MACSSIS Student Data shows that we have made considerable gains from the previous year.

Overall school positive endorsement by students rose by 5%.

There were also significant gains in:

- School engagement which reflects how attentive and invested students are in school
- Teacher-student relationships which indicate a positive social connection between students and teachers
- School belonging which shows that students feel that they are valued members of our community
- Learning Dispositions which is indicative of how they see themselves as learners

### **Student Attendance**

The attendance roll on nForma is taken in every classroom at the beginning of the day and after lunch.

Parents are asked to fill in absences via a Google form, which teachers check and then mark the roll accordingly.

Our office receptionist is responsible for checking the roll each morning and contacting parents if there are any unexplained absences.

Our average overall attendance sits at 90%.

<b>Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level</b>	
Y01	91.5
Y02	89.4
Y03	90.81
Y04	90.75
Y05	88.92
Y06	88.43
Overall average attendance	89.97

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## Leadership

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

While leadership did not feature as a specific focus area in our Annual Action Plan goals this year, reflecting on what was achieved across this space makes it clear that it was a year of real and measurable growth.

### Achievements

This year, our School Improvement Team focused on strengthening the quality of teaching and learning across the school through a deliberate, sustained approach to instructional leadership.

Leaders delivered regular coaching sessions twice each term, centred on the practical implementation of classroom routines and daily review practices. These sessions were designed to support teachers in embedding consistent, evidence-informed habits that benefit every student.

In parallel, staff meetings were structured around level groups, allowing teams to focus on goals specific to their year levels and collaborate around shared challenges and successes. Work also commenced on our school's Learning and Teaching Playbook, a key document that will ultimately articulate shared expectations around entry and exit routines, cues to start learning, and explicit teaching practices. This playbook will serve as an enduring reference point for our teaching staff.

Underpinning all of this was a deliberate structural decision: by placing our entire School Improvement Team in non-teaching roles, we were able to prioritise direct support for staff through coaching, mentoring, and classroom observations. This created meaningful opportunities for teachers to learn both from our leaders and from one another, building professional confidence and collective capability across the school.

<b>Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning</b>	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2025	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPR/First Aid/ Anaphylaxis training</li> <li>• Western Flourishing Learners PL for Leaders</li> <li>• UFLI training for leaders and the Junior school team</li> <li>• Crucial Conversations for leaders</li> <li>• Network attendance for Principal, Deputy, Literacy, Numeracy and Religious Education leaders</li> <li>• Flourishing Learners MACS Conference</li> <li>• Staff Mary MacKillop/Scripture mini-conference</li> <li>• Mentor training for graduate mentors</li> </ul>	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2025	21
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1600.00

### Teacher Satisfaction

The 2025 MACSSIS survey results paint an encouraging picture. Our school recorded its strongest results in three years across a number of domains. Staff safety, school climate, and school leadership all reached a three-year high, a genuinely pleasing outcome that reflects the sustained work that has gone into building a positive, respectful and well-supported school culture.

Equally encouraging were our results relative to the broader MACS network. Our school performed above the MACS average across the domains of feedback, instructional leadership, support for teams, and collaboration around an improvement strategy. These results tell us that the structures and practices we have put in place are not only working for our community but are also strong by any external measure.

Taken together, these results reflect a leadership approach that has prioritised being present, responsive and deliberate about the conditions in which staff do their best work. The introduction of termly one-on-one meetings with every teacher, our focus on coaching and observation, and the way we structured our goal-monitoring processes throughout the year all contributed to staff feeling supported, connected, and clear on where we are headed.

There is always more to do but these survey results are a reminder that the everyday work of building trust, maintaining high expectations, and supporting our staff genuinely matters. We head into next year with strong foundations and a clear sense of what good leadership looks and feels like in our school.

<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	
Doctorate	0
Masters	6
Graduate	4
Graduate Certificate	1
Bachelor Degree	16
Advanced Diploma	5
No Qualifications Listed	8

<b>Staff Composition</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	36
Teaching Staff (FTE)	25.83
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	23
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	13.57
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	1

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## Community Engagement

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

While Community Engagement did not feature as a specific focus area in our Annual Action Plan goals this year, we ensured we worked on continuing our strong connections with our community.

### Achievements

St Mary's is committed to strengthening parent partnerships and fostering a welcoming and inclusive community where all families feel connected and valued. We are committed to promoting active engagement in a wide range of school activities and celebrations that positively impact student learning, wellbeing and our identity as a faith-filled community.

Throughout the year, families were warmly welcomed to participate in whole school Masses and liturgies, including celebrations for Mary Help of Christians Day, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Feast Day, Easter, Advent and Christmas. Special celebrations for Mother's Day, Father's Day and Grandparents Day provided opportunities for families to gather together in prayer, celebration and community.

Weekly whole-school assemblies continued to be an important part of school life, allowing us to come together to celebrate student achievements, share important learning, and strengthen our sense of belonging. The strong attendance and involvement of parents at these gatherings reflects the value our families place on being active members of the school community. As a community, we also gathered for prayer services and reflective occasions such as ANZAC Day, with students participating in commemorations including the local dawn service. These opportunities encouraged students to reflect on the importance of service, sacrifice and remembrance.

Students were also provided with opportunities to engage with the wider community through initiatives such as Ride & Walk to School events, Junior School Council leadership experiences at Hobsons Bay Council House and environmental projects, including tree planting for World Tree Day as part of the More Trees for a Cooler, Greener West project. Community connection and school spirit were further strengthened through events such as Buddy Night, school discos, Footy Fun Day, and Christmas Carols, which brought families together to celebrate.

Fundraising and social events organised by our Parents & Friends group, including Trivia Night, Bunnings BBQs, the Sensory Garden project and the Colour Run, were highly successful and demonstrated the generosity and commitment of our parent community.

Many parents generously volunteered their time throughout the year by supporting excursions, school events and fundraising activities, helping to create meaningful experiences for our students. Through these shared celebrations, community events and opportunities for involvement, our school community continues to grow as a welcoming, supportive and faith-filled environment where strong partnerships between home and school are valued and nurtured.

### **Parent Satisfaction**

Parents are invited to participate in the MACSSIS each year.

Key strength areas identified on the 2025 Family survey were:

- School climate 79%
- School Fit 62%
- Student safety 63%

Each of these areas reported a three-year high.

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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)