



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

2024

Annual Report to the School Community



St Mary's School

95A Railway Street, ALTONA 3018

Principal: Sonia Riccardi

Web: www.smaltona.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 1273, E Number: E1118

Principal's Attestation

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 2024 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 15 May 2025

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

Whether in classrooms or across communities, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS), took bold and ambitious steps this year to bring our MACS2030 Strategy: Forming Lives to Enrich the World, to life.

In 2024, MACS moved forward with purpose, transforming vision into action and progress into lasting impact. From aligning our teaching practices to enhancing our early years education, we took meaningful strides towards elevating learning experiences – and fostering excellence across our entire network.

In chartering our vision for 2030 and our pursuit of a world-leading Catholic education system, we made significant progress across the four strategic pillars beneath our Purpose and Vision.

Inspired by Faith, we advanced our multi-year program to lift the theological capabilities of all teachers to support the teaching of RE in MACS schools. Our bold ambition here is for all teachers to be accredited by 2026. We developed a new faith formation strategy and are in the process of developing resources to facilitate vastly improved formation for our teachers.

To continue developing our Flourishing Learners, we delivered our Vision for Instruction, leading the way in Victoria as the first education system of scale to unify teaching approaches across almost 300 schools to ensure every student benefits from high-impact, evidence-based teaching methods.

With nearly 100% of our educators engaged in professional learning programs to bring this vision to life, our approach is also resonating beyond our own system, providing a model for best practice that is informing educational discussions across the state.

The year also marked the establishment of MACS Early Years Education (MACSEYE) to bring Outside School Hours Care services to MACS schools and to establish early childhood education centres in new and existing MACS primary schools. MACSEYE is now providing OSHC services in 34 MACS schools, and is expanding to over 100 by the end of 2025. While change brings challenges, the progress MACSEYE has made in 2024 has been remarkable and we're confident it will have a profound impact on our communities.

Our principals and teachers continue to raise the bar across our schools and our work to support them as Enabled Leaders is ongoing. In the past year, we set to work re-imagining leadership and, in the process, strengthened our principal appointment process and introduced more flexible models of principalship.

We established a new MACS Code of Conduct that embodies our collective commitment to fostering a safe, respectful and nurturing culture across every school and office.

And lastly, but not least, we continue to find ways to strengthen our partnerships and create new and Enriched Communities that ultimately deliver an education that inspires young people to enrich the world with several new schools opening their doors in 2024. By adapting to shifting community needs, we are ensuring that high-quality MACS education remains accessible where it is needed most.

As we continue working towards our MACS2030 vision, we are deepening our understanding of what it means to be a truly connected Catholic education system – one where collaboration strengthens outcomes and a shared mission drives success.

Thank you to all our students, staff, families and community members for being part of our journey so far.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Edward Simons

Executive Director

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

Vision and Mission

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.

School Overview

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 2024 enrolments saw 270 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 2024, we offered Physical Education, Visual Arts, LOTE (Auslan) Performing Arts (Term 1) and STEM (Term 2-4) as specialist subjects. The timely introduction of STEM as a new specialist area was very well received, with students and parents alike praising the highly engaging content.

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 offer a variety of play experiences and opportunities for all students.

The introduction of a heritage Melbourne Tram onto our grounds, refurbished via the generosity of our parent and local community grants, was an incredible addition to our already well-equipped grounds.

Our focus on the implementation of Explicit Teaching practices, centred around the Science of Learning, saw huge increases in

Principal's Report

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

2024 was an incredible year of Learning and Teaching for our school, in particular, our participation in the MACS Flourishing Learner Pilot Program, along with a majority of the school in the Western Region.

The last time I can recall such a buzz being created was during the introduction of Visible Learning and the research of John Hattie around what works in schools.

To say that I am proud of the way in which our staff have taken on this learning and its implementation would be a gross understatement.

While the quality of the content provided through the Office, delivered by the Knowledge Society, was of the highest standard, the follow-through of coaching and observation cycles was crucial in giving leaders in schools the tools to ensure teachers were able to implement the theory that was taught during our professional learning days.

Given the great challenge posed by teaching in such a different way from before, St Mary's teachers embraced the challenge with the same grit and growth mindset they expect of our students.

The introduction of regular (monthly) coaching and observation visit was not only positively received, but staff continue to show a genuine interest in the feedback they are given and continued openness to improve their practices each time.

The finalisation to both our tram renovations and sensory garden were a testament to our school community's fundraising efforts and to the many contractors who fell in love with the project as much as we did, some even donating tens of thousands of dollars in labour and countless hours to see our projects ready to be enjoyed.

I am most looking forward to another productive year filled with learning from not only our students, but also teachers, when we will hopefully see greater gains to match the enthusiasm for learning we share each day.

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To deepen the Catholic faith experience of staff, students and families by explicitly connecting what we do and why we do it

Intended Outcomes:

- That students will be able to explain the connection between our actions and our Catholic faith.
- That staff use their knowledge and experience to connect faith with life in a contemporary and relevant context.
- That leaders will develop the capacity of staff to implement the pedagogy of encounter.
- That families are given opportunities to engage in the Religious Education of their child.

Achievements

- A focus on the use of scripture in prayer was introduced to staff
- A focus on the use of scripture in RE lessons was supported with levels
- A staff prayer template to support staff using scripture was developed
- The use of scripture in prayer was introduced, developed and supported to be used by staff.
- A focus on the use of scripture in RE lessons was supported with levels during planning of units of work.
- A staff prayer template to support staff using scripture was developed and implemented.

Value Added

- Sacrament family information sessions were facilitated by experts in the areas.
- Every class hosted a Friday morning parish mass each semester.
- Easter liturgies were celebrated with the whole school community, commemorating the events of Easter and Holy Week
- Advent liturgies were celebrated as a whole school community, reflecting on the scripture and focus for action during Advent.

- Feast days for Mary Help of Christians and St Mary MacKillop were celebrated as whole school events.
- Social Justice stalls as fundraising for SVDP

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To engage and include all students in all aspects of their learning

Intended Outcomes:

- That students can identify the next steps in their learning
- That students give and receive meaningful feedback about their learning
- That staff explicitly teach and monitor the skills required to support students to manage their next steps in learning (including growth mindset, grit, challenge, the pit)
- That leaders support and guide staff in their work with students when identifying their next steps in learning

Goal:

To build a robust instructional practice culture, ensuring growth and challenge

Intended Outcomes:

- That staff give and receive meaningful feedback about their performance
- That staff implement co-created evidence-based instructional practices across the school
- That leaders support/enable the consistent implementation of agreed instructional practices

Achievements

LEARNING & TEACHING

- Implementation of MOI & EOI assessments at the beginning of the school year
- Flourishing Learners - Science of Learning Professional Learning attended by all staff

- Ochre resources were explored with staff for trial in programs in English and Maths Inquiry units were developed
- Classroom Mastery Whole School Routines were developed and practiced (Cue to Start, Entry and Exit)
- Introduction to Elastik Program through Professional Learning to support student assessment for Learning

ENGLISH

- Leaders attended a UFLI PD to evaluate our phonics approach
- Flourishing Learners: Daily Review implemented at the start of Literacy lessons
- OCHRE resources were explored to support Literacy lessons
- OCHRE novel study in 3/4 on Matilda by Roald Dahl
- MID-Year PAT Reading testing to inform reports
- VCOP writing moderation using the online Elastik platform
- Literacy Leader attended Literacy Masterclass Series on high impact teaching strategies (5 days)
- Flourishing Learners: implementation of Engagement Norms in Literacy lessons
- MiniLit training and implementation in P-2
- Book Week performance - Perform Education
- 5/6 local author visit - Nean Mackenzie
- Victorian Premiers' Reading Challenge
- SMART Spelling PD for new staff
- Little Learners Love Literacy PD for new staff

MATHS

- Victorian Curriculum Version2 was introduced to staff for planning, assessment and reporting.
- A new report template to match Victorian Curriculum Maths V2 was developed.
- OCHRE resources were explored to support Maths lessons.
- Daily Review was trialled at the beginning of lessons.
- Mid-year PAT Testing to inform reports.
- Extension opportunities provided through ACER programs.
- MOI was run with Prep and Year 1 students.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

- TV screens replaced IWBs in classrooms.
- Continued to access Cyber Safety education through Cybersafety Project incursion and staff PL.
- Purchase of presentation remotes for each classroom to assist with speed and flexibility of lesson delivery.

SPECIALIST AREAS

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- Lacrosse Clinics
- AFL Clinics

PERFORMING ARTS

- Carols night
- Altona Community Christmas Carols performance

ART

- 5/6 showcase for recycled material projects
- Special Art Team painted and named the Gaga pits

AUSLAN

- Developed community connection with the church to teach the children the Our Father

STEM

- Introduced as a Specialist area from Term 2

Student Learning Outcomes

Our 2024 NAPLAN results have remained relatively stable compared to our 2023 results.

There have been slight gains in Year 5 Grammar and Punctuation, Year 3 Numeracy and Year 5 Spelling.

We are currently sitting at or just below the state mean across most areas.

| NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Domain | Year level | Mean Scale score | Proficient |
| Grammar & Punctuation | Year 3 | 404 | 50% |
| | Year 5 | 508 | 66% |
| Numeracy | Year 3 | 407 | 65% |
| | Year 5 | 481 | 70% |
| Reading | Year 3 | 399 | 60% |
| | Year 5 | 494 | 79% |
| Spelling | Year 3 | 396 | 61% |
| | Year 5 | 490 | 63% |
| Writing | Year 3 | 414 | 92% |
| | Year 5 | 491 | 82% |

*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2024 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

Goal:

To engage and include all students in all aspects of their learning

- That staff explicitly teach and monitor the skills required to support students to manage their next steps in learning (including growth mindset, grit, challenge, the pit)

Achievements

- Real Schools Partnership
- Flourishing Learners - Classroom Mastery
- New Mental Health Leader role
- MHiPS training
- Finding Your Neurotribe groups run with ASD students
- Social Skills Groups
- Speech Pathologists employed

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 Portsea
- Year 5/6 Camp to Anglesea
- Athletics Carnival
- Various District sports days
- Interschool Sports

Excursions and Incursions:

Prep: Aquarium, St John's Ambulance, Altona Vet Clinic, Metro Trains

Juniors: Zoo, Scienceworks, St John's Ambulance

Middles: Zoo, Emmanuel College, Beyond the Bin

Seniors: Triennial at the NGV, Resuscitate a Mate, Mad about Science, Maths Escape Room and Amazing Race

Student Satisfaction

The MACSSIS Student survey data shows we have made great gains on 2023 overall.

In particular, the following areas have shown a positive shift:

- School Climate: Perceptions of the social and learning climate of the school)
- Learning Dispositions: Students' mindset about themselves as learners
- Teacher-Student Relationships: The strength of the social connection between teachers and students, within and beyond the school

Student Attendance

Student attendance for 2024 was 90.8% accross the year.

| Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level | |
|---|------|
| Y01 | 91.5 |
| Y02 | 89.4 |
| Y03 | 90.8 |
| Y04 | 90.8 |
| Y05 | 88.9 |
| Y06 | 88.4 |
| Overall average attendance | 90.0 |

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To engage and include all students in all aspects of their learning

- That leaders support and guide staff in their work with students when identifying their next steps in learning

To build a robust instructional practice culture ensuring growth and challenge

- That leaders support/enable the consistent implementation of agreed instructional practices

To deepen the Catholic faith experience of staff, students and families by explicitly connecting what we do and why we do it

- That leaders will develop the capacity of staff to implement the pedagogy of encounter.

Achievements

- Real Schools Partnership for Student Behaviour Management
- Flourishing Learners Professional Learning and Coaching Cycles
- Leadership dinner- Guest speaker Rodney Dillon
- Coaching cycle of Classroom routines from Flourishing Learners
- Coaching cycle of Daily Review from Flourishing Learners

| Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning | |
|--|-----------|
| List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flourishing Learners West - The Science of Learning, • Flourishing Learnerds West - Classroom Mastery and Behaviour Curriculum • Flourishing Learners West - The Science of Reading • Flourishing Learners West - The Science of Writing • Restorative Practices V2 - Real Schools | |
| Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024 | 26 |
| Average expenditure per teacher for PL | \$2189.00 |

Teacher Satisfaction

Our MACSSIS Teacher Survey results show that there have been significant positive increases in satisfaction across 13 out of 14 surveyed domains since 2023.

Of particular note are the areas of Psychological Safety, Professional Learning, Collaboration around an Improvement Strategy, Team Collaboration and Collective Efficacy, in which our staff scored significantly higher than the MACS average.

| Teacher Qualifications | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Doctorate | 0 |
| Masters | 6 |
| Graduate | 4 |
| Graduate Certificate | 1 |
| Bachelor Degree | 15 |
| Advanced Diploma | 6 |
| No Qualifications Listed | 9 |

| Staff Composition | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Principal Class (Headcount) | 3 |
| Teaching Staff (Headcount) | 31 |
| Teaching Staff (FTE) | 24.46 |
| Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount) | 26 |
| Non-Teaching Staff (FTE) | 15.91 |
| Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount) | 1 |

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To deepen the Catholic faith experience of staff, students and families by explicitly connecting what we do and why we do it

Intended outcome:

- That families are given opportunities to engage in the Religious Education of their child.

Achievements

- Whole School Mass celebrations for St Mary Help of Christians day, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparents Day, Easter, Advent, Christmas
- Junior School Council at Hobsons Bay Council
- House captains
- Fundraising for Dario
- ANZAC Day dawn service
- Ride & Walk to School - partnership with IPC Health
- Sensory Garden
- Tram renovation complete, opening day with a member of parliament in attendance
- Tree planting for World Tree Day - More Trees for a Cooler, Greener West project
- Mulch donation from the local council for playgrounds and garden areas
- Colour Run fundraising event

Parent Satisfaction

Our MACSSIS Parent Satisfaction Survey produced very similar results to those of 2023.

While results in the areas of Catholic Identity, Barriers to Engagement, Communication and Family Engagement have remained stable, the areas of Student Safety, School Climate and School Fit appear to be areas in which further investigation would be beneficial, with a drop since 2023.

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.smaltona.catholic.edu.au