



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

2024

Annual Report to the School Community



St Mary's School

20 - 24 New Street, DANDENONG 3175

Principal: Terrence Gardiner

Web: www.smdandenong.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 935, E Number: E1080

Principal's Attestation

I, Terrence Gardiner, 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 03 Jun 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

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

Vision and Mission

St. Mary's Catholic Parish Primary School is a multicultural community that gives witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We are a multi-faith community that creates a Christian atmosphere through experiences of welcome, reconciliation, acceptance and celebration.

We nurture individual growth to its fullest potential.

We aim to:

provide a safe, happy, caring and supportive yet challenging learning environment for all

embrace our multicultural richness; respecting and appreciating the diversity of our community

provide a broad, rich curriculum, relevant to individual needs that will prepare students to flourish and meet the challenges of their future.

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School works in partnership with the Parish, where: -

Catholic faith, doctrine and attitudes are valued and taught, reflecting the values of St. Mary in accordance with the direction of the Melbourne Archdiocese of Catholic School

We celebrate through liturgy, scripture and prayer as a school community, a class and individually

We promote respectful relationships which are inclusive, acknowledging the diversity of our multicultural community, including Indigenous Australians

We provide a supportive environment by respecting the individual dignity of all within our community

We prioritise the academic growth, faith formation and wellbeing of each person in our school community to enable them to reach their full potential as children of God

School Overview

St. Mary's Primary School Dandenong: A Beacon of Excellence in Education

Located in the vibrant community of Dandenong, St. Mary's Primary School stands as a symbol of academic excellence, spiritual growth, and community engagement. With a rich history spanning over five decades, our school has been nurturing young minds and fostering a love for learning since its establishment in 1912.

Enrolment: At St. Mary's, we welcome students from diverse cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds, creating a vibrant and inclusive learning environment. Our enrolment currently stands at [number of students], ranging from Foundation to Year 6. Through small class sizes and personalised attention, we ensure that every student receives the support they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Founded on the principles of Catholic education, St. Mary's Primary School has been a cornerstone of the Dandenong community for 114 years. Our school was established by the Presentation Sisters with the vision of providing quality education grounded in faith, compassion, and service. Over the years, we have evolved and adapted to meet the changing needs of our students and community while staying true to our core values of respect, integrity, and excellence.

Principal's Report

As Principal of St Mary's Primary School, I am proud to present a summary of the key highlights, decisions, and achievements from the 2024 school year. This year has been one of growth, celebration, and commitment to our shared vision of fostering a vibrant Catholic learning community where every student is known, valued, and empowered to thrive.

Engagement in Faith

At St Mary's Primary School, students actively engage in their faith through a rich and meaningful integration of Catholic values, prayer, liturgy, and service. Faith formation is embedded across all aspects of school life, with students regularly participating in class and whole-school prayer, school and parish Masses, and the celebration of key liturgical events throughout the Church year, such as Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, and Feast Days.

Students are deeply involved in the Sacramental Program, preparing for and celebrating the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation in partnership with families and the parish community. These sacred milestones are approached with reverence and provide students with an opportunity to grow in their relationship with God.

Through the Pedagogy of Encounter, Religious Education lessons challenge students to make connections between Gospel values and contemporary life. They explore themes of compassion, justice, and stewardship, and are encouraged to act for the common good.

Students also engage in social justice initiatives, such as Project Compassion and local outreach efforts, putting their faith into action. These experiences nurture empathy and a sense of responsibility to others, helping students grow as thoughtful, faith-filled citizens who live out the teachings of Jesus in their daily lives.

Curriculum and Learning Programs

This year, our focus on improving student outcomes in literacy and numeracy, as outlined in our School Improvement Plan and Annual Action Plan, has yielded strong results. Through targeted interventions, differentiated instruction, and the continued implementation of evidence-based teaching practices, we have seen pleasing gains in both internal assessments and NAPLAN data, particularly in Year 3 Reading and Year 5 Numeracy. Our ongoing use of data to inform teaching has enabled staff to respond to students' individual needs with greater precision and confidence.

Special Programs and Enrichment

Our Literacy Support Program and Maths Extension Groups have continued to provide essential scaffolding and enrichment for students at both ends of the learning spectrum. The introduction of a STEM Inquiry Program in Years 3–6 has been a highlight, promoting problem-solving, collaboration, and critical thinking through hands-on learning. Our students have benefitted from implementing explicit teaching and following our Vision for Instruction.

Arts, Culture, and Celebration

Our bi-annual Art Show celebrated the creativity of our students, with hundreds of vibrant works displayed across various media. The Music Program has also flourished, with the school choir performing at local community events and parish celebrations.

Sports and Outdoor Education

Students embraced physical activity through weekly sport, inter-school competitions, and whole-school events such as the Cross Country, Athletics Carnival, and Swimming Carnival. We were thrilled to see our Year 5/6 soccer team reach the regional finals – a testament to their teamwork and dedication.

Our Years 3/4 and our 5/6 students attended school camp. These experiences support students' independence, resilience, and interpersonal development.

Cultural and Faith-Based Experiences

Cultural diversity was celebrated through Harmony Day, NAIDOC Week activities, and our Multicultural Family Night, where families shared food, dance, and traditions. As a Catholic school, we continued to nurture the spiritual formation of our students through regular liturgies, Sacramental programs, and participation in social justice initiatives.

Looking Forward

As we conclude another successful year, I extend my sincere thanks to our students, staff, families, and parish community for their partnership and dedication. Together, we have created a learning environment where children are supported to achieve their best academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

We look forward to building on this momentum in 2025, with continued focus on student growth, wellbeing, and a deep commitment to our Catholic identity and mission.

Terry Gardiner

Principal

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goals:

To embed personalised learning and celebrate the diversity of all learners through developing their self-efficacy and agency, inspired by the Gospel and led by the Holy Spirit to act for justice and the common good.

Intended Outcomes:

- That a well defined pedagogical approach which encourages student self-efficacy and agency is developed that challenges, engages and supports all students
- That all students are supported and challenged to fully flourish through planned personalised instruction
- That the Design for Learning includes a Pedagogy of Encounter that is embedded in planning and school culture

Achievements

Catholic Identity and Mission – Achievements Aligned with School Goals

In 2024, St Mary's Primary School made significant progress in strengthening our Catholic identity and mission through a renewed focus on personalised learning, student agency, and the celebration of diversity. Guided by the Gospel and inspired by the Holy Spirit, our work was underpinned by a deep commitment to supporting all students to flourish—spiritually, academically, socially, and emotionally—while acting for justice and the common good.

A key achievement was the development of a clearly defined pedagogical approach that placed student self-efficacy and agency at the heart of learning. Informed by Catholic social teaching, staff worked collaboratively to plan learning experiences that not only engaged students academically but encouraged them to reflect on their role in the world as compassionate, informed, and active citizens. Students were increasingly empowered to set learning goals, track their progress, and reflect on how their learning connects with their values, responsibilities, and faith.

Personalised instruction became a central pillar of our practice. Teachers designed differentiated learning tasks that recognised the unique needs, interests, and strengths of every student. This approach acknowledged the dignity of each learner, in line with our Catholic belief that every person is created in the image and likeness of God. Through goal

setting, formative assessment, and student conferencing, learners were supported to achieve success in ways that respected their individual pathways. This approach allowed students to thrive and strengthened their identity as capable, confident learners.

Another key development was the consistent integration of the Pedagogy of Encounter into our planning and school culture. Staff engaged in professional learning to understand and embed this framework, which invites students to reflect deeply on their faith, the world around them, and their responsibility to respond with compassion and justice. This was especially evident in Religious Education, where learning units included opportunities for students to encounter real-world issues, explore Church teachings, and consider meaningful actions they could take. Whether through classroom discussions, social justice initiatives, or reflective prayer, students engaged with contemporary issues through a faith-based lens.

Social justice and outreach activities, such as our support for Caritas Australia's Project Compassion and local community initiatives, further reflected our Catholic mission. These experiences allowed students to put faith into action and to understand their capacity to contribute to the common good. Importantly, they were not just participants in charity efforts but active planners and advocates, demonstrating their growing agency and alignment with Gospel values.

These achievements were made possible through strong collaboration between staff, students, and families, and a shared commitment to living out our Catholic identity every day. Our learning and teaching practices now more intentionally reflect our mission—to educate hearts and minds for a life of service, hope, and faith.

By embedding personalised, faith-inspired learning and celebrating diversity, St Mary's continues to nurture students who are not only successful learners but also compassionate leaders of the future.

Value Added

The achievements made at St Mary's Primary School in 2024 have significantly enriched our Catholic identity and deepened our commitment to the mission of the Church. By embedding a pedagogy that values student self-efficacy, personalised learning, and faith in action, we have cultivated a school culture where Gospel values are not only taught but lived each day.

The intentional use of the Pedagogy of Encounter has empowered students to make meaningful connections between their faith, learning, and the world around them. As a result, students are more aware of their role as active contributors to the common good, grounded in Catholic Social Teaching and inspired by Jesus' message of love, justice, and compassion.

Personalised learning, guided by the dignity of each student, reinforces our belief that every individual is uniquely created in the image of God. By supporting all learners to flourish

academically and spiritually, we have ensured that our Catholic identity is inclusive, life-giving, and focused on the holistic development of every child.

Through these practices, our mission has become more visible and authentic—strengthening our partnership with families, building a faith-filled learning environment, and nurturing students to be courageous, compassionate, and hope-filled disciples in today's world.

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To provide leadership that guides, directs and supports improvement in teacher practice and student learning

To elevate the culture of professional growth aligned to the school's strategic intent

To enhance student learning through engagement, agency and voice in school priorities to develop a strong culture of success and the full flourishing of every student.

Intended Outcomes:

- That all staff prioritise the teaching of numeracy through professional learning and support to improve learning outcomes.
- That staff capacity is built for existing, new, and aspiring leaders through Professional Learning at school and through external opportunities
- That all staff have a sound understanding of formative assessment and data discussions using student learning data to guide differentiated instruction and improve student outcomes.
- That all staff use feedback as an integral part of their learning process
- That all teacher professional learning goals are aligned to the schools' strategic targets
- That all staff take part in formal peer observation and coaching programs, aligned to professional and whole school learning priorities

Achievements

In 2024, St Mary's Primary School made significant strides in strengthening Learning and Teaching practices through a clear alignment of strategic goals, leadership, and targeted professional growth. Our focus on building teacher capacity, prioritising student voice and engagement, and using evidence-based practices has resulted in improved student outcomes and a strengthened professional learning culture across the school.

A key achievement has been the consistent prioritisation of numeracy through professional learning and targeted support. Staff engaged in regular collaborative planning sessions, coaching cycles, and professional development tailored to numeracy instruction. This has

resulted in a stronger focus on mathematical thinking, problem-solving, and differentiation. Teachers reported increased confidence in planning purposeful numeracy lessons, while student data indicated steady growth in numeracy achievement across all year levels.

Leadership capacity has also been a major area of development. Existing, new, and aspiring leaders were supported through both in-school mentoring and external professional learning opportunities. Leaders took ownership of driving key initiatives, leading professional learning teams (PLTs), and modelling best practices. This has created a ripple effect, elevating the culture of shared responsibility and instructional leadership across the staff.

Formative assessment practices and data literacy were also embedded more deeply in teaching practice. Staff participated in ongoing professional learning focused on using student learning data to inform differentiated instruction. Data discussions became a routine part of team meetings, and teachers used formative assessment tools to provide timely, specific feedback to students. As a result, students have become more engaged in their learning and better able to articulate their goals and progress.

The implementation of a whole-school feedback culture further strengthened professional practice. Staff actively sought and provided feedback as part of formal coaching and peer observation programs. These structures supported professional reflection, encouraged dialogue about pedagogy, and created a safe, collaborative space for continuous improvement. Teachers were more open to experimenting with new strategies and refining their practice, contributing to greater consistency in instructional quality across the school.

Importantly, all professional learning was aligned with the school's strategic targets. Staff developed individual professional learning goals that directly supported broader school improvement priorities. This alignment ensured that professional growth was purposeful, relevant, and had direct impact on student learning.

Student engagement, agency, and voice also saw significant gains in 2024. Through goal setting, reflection, and increased student-led learning conversations, students became more active participants in their own education. Teachers created classroom environments that valued student contributions and promoted independence, critical thinking, and collaboration. These practices helped cultivate a strong culture of success, where all students were supported to flourish.

Together, these achievements reflect the school's commitment to providing leadership that supports both teacher growth and student success. By aligning professional learning with school priorities, fostering a culture of feedback and collaboration, and promoting student-centred approaches, St Mary's has created a dynamic learning environment where every member of the community is encouraged and supported to thrive.

Student Learning Outcomes

The strategic focus on explicit teaching, professional learning, data-informed practice, and targeted intervention programs at St Mary's Primary School has had a demonstrable impact on student academic outcomes. In 2024, these efforts translated into significant improvements in both our NAPLAN results and in-house assessment data, with a clear pattern of student growth across key learning areas—particularly literacy and numeracy.

Our school's enhanced commitment to data literacy and the consistent use of formative assessment has allowed for more accurate tracking of student progress. Teachers engaged in regular data discussions and used in-house assessment tools such as PAT (Progressive Achievement Tests), Essential Assessment, and writing moderation rubrics to identify student needs and inform instruction. These practices ensured that teaching was responsive and personalised, resulting in greater levels of student engagement and achievement.

NAPLAN data revealed strong growth across Years 3 and 5, particularly in reading, writing, and numeracy. The most notable improvement was in student growth between testing periods, where the percentage of students achieving medium to high growth increased significantly compared to previous years. This growth is a direct reflection of our school-wide emphasis on instructional consistency, differentiated teaching, and timely intervention.

A key contributor to these results has been the implementation of targeted literacy and numeracy intervention programs. Students identified as needing additional support were provided with small-group and one-on-one intervention using evidence-based approaches such as MiniLit, MacqLit, and targeted numeracy sessions. Intervention was regularly monitored, with student progress tracked against clear goals. Many students demonstrated more than 12 months of growth within the academic year, with some closing long-standing learning gaps that had previously hindered their confidence and participation in classroom learning.

These gains were made possible through a whole-school culture of collaboration and shared responsibility. Intervention staff worked closely with classroom teachers to align goals, monitor progress, and adjust teaching strategies as needed. This cohesive approach ensured that students experienced continuity and consistency in their learning journey, both within and beyond the classroom setting.

Additionally, professional learning in the areas of formative assessment, feedback, and differentiation strengthened staff capacity to respond to student needs in real time. Teachers were better equipped to identify when a student required additional challenge or support, and to adjust their teaching accordingly. This has been particularly evident in the improved academic resilience and self-efficacy shown by students, who are now more confident in articulating their learning goals and tracking their own progress.

The success of these approaches has reinforced the value of our internal assessment schedule. Rather than relying solely on summative assessments, teachers now use a balance of formative and summative data to inform planning and instruction. This has led to a more proactive approach to student learning, where early intervention prevents students from falling behind and ensures consistent growth.

Overall, the combined effect of strategic leadership, targeted intervention, and evidence-informed teaching has positioned St Mary's as a school where academic achievement is both expected and supported—for every student, every day.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	389	36%
	Year 5	490	57%
Numeracy	Year 3	378	52%
	Year 5	486	67%
Reading	Year 3	374	57%
	Year 5	503	86%
Spelling	Year 3	385	59%
	Year 5	490	62%
Writing	Year 3	389	68%
	Year 5	503	81%

*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 enhance student learning through engagement, agency and voice in school priorities to develop a strong culture of success and the full flourishing of every student.

Intended Outcomes:

- That students are supported by staff to embrace student voice and agency to improve their learning outcomes
- That students use tools to identify their learning strengths and goals and to monitor their learning.

Achievements

Enhancing Student Learning Through Engagement, Agency and Voice

In 2024, St Mary's Primary School remained firmly committed to nurturing the full flourishing of every student by deepening student engagement, promoting voice and agency, and fostering a culture of success across the school community. Guided by the belief that students learn best when they are actively involved in shaping their learning, we implemented a number of initiatives that supported student ownership and empowerment.

A key achievement was the embedding of student voice across multiple aspects of school life. Staff were supported to create classroom environments where student input was valued and acted upon. This included opportunities for students to contribute to classroom norms, co-construct success criteria, and reflect meaningfully on their progress. By placing students at the centre of the learning process, we noticed increased motivation, deeper engagement, and a stronger sense of responsibility for learning.

Students were explicitly taught how to identify their strengths and set achievable, personalised learning goals. Across year levels, learners used tools such as learning portfolios, goal-setting templates, and feedback rubrics to reflect on their progress and next steps. Teachers worked closely with students to build their capacity to self-assess and to

make informed decisions about their learning. This was particularly evident during student-led conferences and reflection tasks, where students confidently articulated their learning journey, areas of growth, and future goals.

A renewed focus on formative assessment practices also supported this work. Teachers regularly used formative data and student feedback to tailor instruction and provide timely, relevant feedback. This helped students gain a clearer understanding of what they were learning and why it mattered. Through tools like learning intentions and success criteria, students were able to track their own progress and take more ownership of their outcomes.

Student leadership structures were also expanded to give students a greater say in school priorities. The Student Representative Council (SRC) played an active role in shaping initiatives that impacted learning and wellbeing. Initiatives led by student leaders included peer mentoring, promoting inclusivity during playtimes, and raising awareness of school values through assemblies. These roles gave students authentic platforms to lead, collaborate, and advocate for positive change within the school community.

Professional learning for staff was a vital component in supporting these outcomes. Teachers engaged in professional development focused on student agency, goal setting, and feedback. Coaching sessions provided opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice and embed strategies that support student-led learning.

Overall, the school saw increased student confidence, improved learning behaviours, and stronger academic and social outcomes. Students demonstrated a greater ability to set goals, reflect on progress, and articulate their learning with clarity and purpose.

The achievements in 2024 affirm St Mary's commitment to a culture where every student is known, valued, and empowered to succeed. By enhancing student voice and agency, we continue to support each learner in reaching their full potential in a vibrant and inclusive learning environment.

Value Added

At St Mary's Primary School, students are offered a broad and enriching range of curricular and extra-curricular activities designed to support the development of the whole child. Our health and fitness programs promote physical wellbeing through weekly Physical Education lessons, sports clinics, and participation in interschool sports and athletics events. These programs not only build skills but also encourage teamwork, resilience, and school spirit.

School camps and excursions are key highlights each year, providing students with hands-on learning experiences outside the classroom. These opportunities strengthen independence, collaboration, and real-world connections to curriculum content. Excursions to cultural centres, museums, and environmental parks enhance inquiry learning across all year levels.

The integration of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) across the curriculum ensures students develop essential digital literacy skills. Students use Chromebooks to research, create, and collaborate, while also learning about digital safety and responsible technology use.

Creative expression is fostered through our music and drama programs, where students participate in classroom lessons, performances, and school-wide productions. These experiences build confidence, creativity, and a sense of achievement.

Through this well-rounded program, St Mary's supports the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development of every student, ensuring learning is engaging, inclusive, and meaningful.

Student Satisfaction

In 2024, student satisfaction at St Mary's Primary School showed significant improvement, as reflected in the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools – School Improvement Survey (MACSSIS). The data highlighted marked growth across key domains such as student voice, engagement, and teacher-student relationships, indicating a more positive and empowering learning environment for our students.

Compared to previous years, students reported a stronger sense of belonging and connection to the school. Feedback indicated that students felt more confident expressing their ideas and opinions, particularly through initiatives promoting student agency and voice in learning. This growth was supported by increased opportunities for goal setting, peer collaboration, and student-led learning conversations.

Improvements were also seen in the area of engagement, with students highlighting that lessons were more purposeful and connected to their interests. The respectful and supportive relationships between staff and students were consistently acknowledged, contributing to a safe and inclusive school culture.

These positive trends in the 2024 MACSSIS data reflect the school's strategic focus on student-centred learning, wellbeing, and empowerment. St Mary's remains committed to listening to student feedback, celebrating their contributions, and continually improving practices to ensure every student feels known, valued, and successful.

Student Attendance

At St Mary's Primary School, we recognise the vital link between regular attendance and student success. To ensure effective monitoring, the school roll is marked twice daily—at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions—allowing for accurate tracking of student presence and punctuality.

Attendance data, including absenteeism and late arrivals, is analysed twice each term to identify patterns or concerns. This proactive approach enables early intervention and tailored support for students and families. When concerns arise, the school communicates directly with parents through written correspondence or follow-up phone calls, ensuring a collaborative approach to improving attendance.

The school emphasises the importance of attendance not only as a requirement but as a foundation for positive learning outcomes and social connection. To foster a culture of commitment and celebrate consistency, high attendance is acknowledged at whole school assemblies. Students with outstanding or improved attendance receive certificates of appreciation and gratitude, recognising their efforts and encouraging continued engagement.

This comprehensive approach reflects our commitment to student wellbeing and learning continuity. By working closely with families and celebrating positive habits, St Mary's creates an environment where attendance is valued, monitored, and supported as a shared responsibility across the school community.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	80.9
Y02	87.4
Y03	84.8
Y04	86.1
Y05	89.0
Y06	86.2
Overall average attendance	85.7

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: To provide leadership that guides, directs and supports improvement in teacher practice and student learning

Intended Outcomes:

- That all staff prioritise the teaching of numeracy through professional learning and support to improve learning outcomes.
- That staff capacity is built for existing, new, and aspiring leaders through Professional Learning at school and through external opportunities.
- That all staff have a sound understanding of formative assessment and data discussions using student learning data to guide differentiated instruction and improve student outcomes.
- That all staff have deep knowledge and understanding of the progression of learning in Religious Education based on current guidelines from MACS
- That all staff use feedback as an integral part of their learning process

Achievements

Throughout the year, St Mary's Primary School made significant progress towards key goals, resulting in positive outcomes for both staff and students.

Prioritising Numeracy: A strong emphasis was placed on the consistent and explicit teaching of numeracy across all year levels. Staff engaged in targeted professional learning and collaborative planning, which led to improved pedagogical practices. As a result, students demonstrated increased confidence and achievement in numeracy, with growth reflected in school-based assessments and NAPLAN data.

Building Leadership Capacity: The school actively supported the professional growth of current and emerging leaders. Staff participated in a range of leadership development opportunities, including internal coaching, mentoring, and external programs offered through MACS and other educational bodies. This investment in leadership strengthened whole-school capacity and succession planning, while also promoting a culture of shared responsibility and continuous improvement.

Effective Use of Data and Differentiation: Staff deepened their understanding and application of formative assessment strategies, supported through ongoing professional development and structured data conversations. Teachers used data more confidently to identify learning needs, set goals, and differentiate instruction. This approach led to more targeted teaching and measurable improvements in student engagement and outcomes.

Religious Education Curriculum Progression: In alignment with current MACS guidelines, staff developed a deeper knowledge of the progression of learning in Religious Education. Professional learning sessions and planning days were dedicated to strengthening staff capacity in this area. As a result, classroom teaching reflected a clearer progression of concepts and a stronger connection between curriculum content and lived faith experiences.

Embedding Feedback in Practice: A culture of feedback was further embedded across the school. Staff engaged in peer observations, coaching conversations, and reflective practices to inform their teaching. Students were also given more regular and meaningful feedback to support their learning goals. This commitment to feedback has contributed to improved instructional practice and stronger student-teacher partnerships in learning.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024	
<p>In 2024, St Mary's Primary School prioritised targeted professional learning to build teacher capacity in the areas of literacy and numeracy, aligned with school improvement goals and the needs of our learners.</p> <p>Weekly professional learning meetings were held, focusing on best practices in the teaching of reading, writing, and numeracy. These sessions were grounded in current research and supported staff in deepening their understanding of the curriculum, evidence-based instructional strategies, and the use of formative assessment to guide teaching. Teachers engaged in rich discussions around student work samples, assessment data, and learning progressions, enabling more precise and differentiated instruction.</p> <p>To complement these sessions, staff participated in regular coaching and mentoring opportunities. A structured coaching model supported the implementation of new strategies in classrooms, with a focus on lesson design, learning intentions, success criteria, and effective feedback. Peer observations and reflective dialogue fostered a culture of collaboration and professional growth, enabling staff to trial, refine, and evaluate their practice with the support of experienced colleagues and school leaders.</p> <p>A particular focus was placed on using student data to inform planning. Staff engaged in data conversations using tools such as NAPLAN, PAT, and school-based assessments to identify trends, set learning goals, and monitor progress. This strengthened our shared understanding of student learning needs and allowed for more responsive teaching across the school.</p> <p>Additionally, professional learning extended into the area of Religious Education, with staff engaging in MACS-led workshops to enhance their understanding of the learning progression and strengthen the integration of Catholic Social Teaching in curriculum delivery.</p> <p>These ongoing professional learning experiences supported staff to work collaboratively, develop their leadership skills, and ensure high-quality teaching and learning across the school.</p>	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024	15
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$4800.00

Teacher Satisfaction

Teacher satisfaction has again been a feature of St Mary's Primary School when looking at our MACSSIS data, with our internal data sets relating to Staff-Leadership Relationships exceeding MACS averages in every area by a minimum of 4% for *School Leaders are respectful towards me* and a maximum of 18% for *How much do your school leaders care for you as an individual?*

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0
Masters	4
Graduate	2
Graduate Certificate	2
Bachelor Degree	13
Advanced Diploma	1
No Qualifications Listed	4

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	3
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	23
Teaching Staff (FTE)	18.62
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	20
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	12.69
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To enhance student learning through engagement, agency and voice in school priorities to develop a strong culture of success and the full flourishing of every student.

To elevate the culture of professional growth aligned to the school's strategic intent

Intended Outcomes:

- That students are supported by staff to embrace student voice and agency to improve their learning outcomes
- That all staff take part in formal peer observation and coaching programs, aligned to professional and whole school learning priorities
- That all staff have deep knowledge and understanding of the progression of learning in Religious Education based on current guidelines from MACS
- That staff capacity is built for existing, new, and aspiring leaders through Professional Learning at school and through external opportunities

Achievements

Developing Staff Capacity to Engage and Communicate Effectively with Our Community

At St Mary's Primary School, we understand that the foundation of strong community engagement lies in the expertise, confidence, and professionalism of our staff. In 2024, we focused on key strategies aligned to our intended outcomes to strengthen staff skill sets, deepen professional knowledge, and enhance the way we connect with our students, families, and the broader school community.

A central priority was empowering students to take greater ownership of their learning. Staff were supported to embed practices that promote student voice and agency, encouraging students to set goals, reflect on progress, and actively participate in shaping their learning journey. By building trusting relationships with students and creating inclusive, student-centred classrooms, teachers have been able to model open communication, active listening, and collaboration—skills that naturally extend to how we interact with families. These practices have helped build stronger partnerships between school and home, as families are now more aware of student goals and engaged in learning conversations.

Staff professional growth was further enhanced through a formalised peer observation and coaching program. This initiative, aligned with school priorities, provided a structured space for reflection, feedback, and the sharing of best practices. Through observation cycles, professional dialogue, and coaching conversations, staff developed confidence in discussing their teaching practice with clarity and purpose. These experiences not only improved instructional quality but also positively influenced how teachers communicate learning progress, strategies, and outcomes with parents and carers. Staff became more articulate and transparent in their communication, fostering greater trust and collaboration with families.

Religious Education remained a key area of focus, with staff participating in professional learning centred on the MACS guidelines and the progression of learning in RE. This deepened understanding enabled staff to design more meaningful and connected RE experiences for students while also enhancing our ability to engage families in faith development. Teachers confidently led discussions with parents about sacramental programs, classroom liturgies, and the integration of Catholic Social Teaching into everyday learning. This has reinforced the school's identity as a faith-filled community that invites and values parent involvement in spiritual growth.

Leadership development was another critical strategy for strengthening our school culture and external relationships. Aspiring, new, and experienced leaders engaged in both internal and external professional learning to grow their capabilities in instructional leadership, change management, and relational trust. These experiences empowered staff to take on leadership roles with clarity and confidence, leading initiatives that directly improved teaching and learning while modelling professional communication with all stakeholders. Leaders became key figures in community engagement, acting as liaisons between the school and families, and supporting staff in their interactions with parents.

Through these combined efforts, St Mary's has cultivated a highly skilled and cohesive staff team that communicates with purpose, listens with empathy, and works in true partnership with students and families. By continuing to build our professional capacity, we ensure that our community is not only informed but actively involved in supporting the growth and success of every learner.

Parent Satisfaction

The implementation of key school initiatives in 2024 has led to a marked improvement in parent satisfaction, as reflected in our MACSSIS (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools – School Improvement Survey) data. Parents reported increased confidence in the school's ability to support student learning, particularly in the areas of student engagement, communication, and leadership visibility.

The focus on student voice and agency has positively influenced home-school partnerships, with parents noting that their children are more motivated, self-aware, and capable of

articulating their learning goals. This shift has fostered more meaningful learning conversations at home, enhancing parental engagement.

Our peer observation and coaching program has contributed to more consistent and confident communication from teachers. Parents observed that teachers clearly explain learning progress and strategies, reinforcing a shared understanding of student needs.

In Religious Education, families appreciated the deeper connection between classroom learning and the spiritual development of their children, especially through well-communicated sacramental programs and faith-based events.

Leadership development initiatives have enhanced parent-school relationships, with school leaders being more visible, approachable, and responsive. Overall, the MACSSIS data demonstrates that our intentional focus on professional growth, communication, and student-centred learning has significantly strengthened parental trust and satisfaction with St Mary's.

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.smdandenong.catholic.edu.au