



# 2023

## Annual Report to the School Community



### St Mary's School

121-143 McLennan Street, MOORoopna 3629

Principal: Anthony Butts

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

Registration: 1408, E Number: E3034

---

## Principal's Attestation

---

I, Anthony Butts, 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 27 Mar 2024

---

## 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

---

The 2023 Catholic Education Week theme “Let the Words You Speak Always Be Full of Grace” reminds us of Pope Francis’s call to be a synodal Church in which our understanding of others and respect for diversity is shaped by respectful dialogue borne from deep listening.

Catholic Education Sandhurst continues to be committed to providing contemporary and innovative learning environments that value diversity and promote care, respect and co-operation. In 2023 we launched the CES Ltd Strategic Plan 2023-2027 which sets out directions and priorities that will guide the way in which our Catholic schools pursue excellence in fostering the development of each person in all the dimensions of human existence: intellectual, spiritual, emotional, bodily, relational, environmental and cultural.

Schools have begun the process of developing School Improvement Plans aligning their local strategic planning to the CES Strategic Plan, under the direction of Principal Consultants and in response to schoolbased review findings.

Our governance structure continues to mature, with both CES Ltd and SCECEC Ltd committed to ensuring the highest quality student outcomes in a safe and nurturing environment.

Our learning data has identified pockets of excellence in school communities across the diocese but also highlighted greater scope for improvement in the future. The development of the CES Ltd Catholic Learning and Teaching Framework will promote greater collaboration and focus on student learning growth.

The nation-wide shortage of teachers continues to impact all schools demanding new and innovative ways to attract and retain high quality and committed Catholic educators. Strategic initiatives will prioritize workforce placements that are sustainable and ongoing with particular attention given to our remote and smaller communities.

CES Ltd has a small number of schools with low enrolments and personnel and the Catholic Education Office works closely with leadership in these schools to ensure continued viability. An incentive scheme to attract and retain educators has been initiated and the CES Ltd Board has taken a robust interest in the way small schools are promoted through the CES Ltd Marketing Strategy.

I am extremely grateful for the commitment and professionalism that is clearly identified by the efforts throughout 2023 of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd - our schools and personnel in the Catholic Education Office. They continue to work tirelessly for the students and families in our schools, true bearers of the Mission to which they have been called.

PAUL DESMOND

Executive Director, Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited

---

## Vision and Mission

---

### **Our School Vision**

We are all called to be living witnesses to the Gospel values of love, forgiveness, understanding and respect.

Every child is given a quality education that provides them with the knowledge, skills and values to make informed decisions as committed contributors to society.

Each person in our school community is unique and nurtured to achieve their full potential.

We ensure that children understand our past stories, celebrate the present and build a thriving community and environment.

We create and maintain a spirit of social justice and selfless giving, making Jesus real in our everyday lives.

### **Graduate Outcomes**

We aim that our students are compassionate and have a sense of social justice based on Gospel values. Filled with faith, hope and love.

Our goal is that students are respectful in their interactions with others, the environment and accountable for their choices.

We hope that our students are responsible, show initiative and have confidence to take their own path and reach their full potential.

We aim that our students are inquiring learners willing to take risks, ask questions and problem solve. resilient, optimistic and aspire to reach their dreams.

---

## School Overview

---

The school's enrolment at the 2023 August census was 296 full time equivalent students. 14 class groupings:

2 X Foundation

4 X Gr 1/2

4 X Gr 3 /4

4 X Gr 5 /6

21 full time and 11 part time teaching staff with a full time equivalent of 24.

2 admin officers (54.5 hrs/wk in total) and 13 non teaching staff.

14 general purpose classrooms, an Art room, a music room, a Library and a multi purpose hall.

Specialist classes include Visual Arts, Physical Education, Music and Italian.

---

## Principal's Report

---

We were very grateful that 2023 was uninterrupted and our programs were carried out without the challenges faced by our community in previous years.

Throughout the year, we continued to provide our students with a rich and engaging curriculum, wrapped in our very special St Mary's culture and environment. I would like to thank all of our staff for their ongoing commitment to St Mary's and the endless hours they contribute to ensuring our children have the best possible education. I would also like to thank our School Advisory Council for giving up their time and contributing to the decision-making at St Mary's.

Our Parent's and Friends group continues to provide the school community with a range of social events throughout the year along with much-needed financial support.

Parental engagement is critical to effective school management, and I am very grateful to both the P&F and the School Advisory Council for their dedication and commitment.

We have continued to flourish under the spiritual leadership of Mons Peter Jeffrey. His presence in the school is constant, visiting most days, attending school assemblies and leading our liturgies. Mons Peter has been a prominent part of our School Advisory Council and is always supportive of the parents and staff. I thank him for his supportive leadership and spiritual guidance.



---

## Catholic Identity and Mission

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

St. Mary's is a Catholic school which actively promotes the traditions and practices of the Catholic Church. Monsignor Peter leads school masses and the children enjoy contributing to the liturgy through reading, reflecting and music.

A family Sunday mass is held on the first weekend of the month and is organised on a rotational basis by each area of the school.

The school prides itself being recognisably Catholic and endeavours to demonstrate this through the provision of daily prayer, Religious Education classes, celebrating school Masses and liturgies, and striving to ensure that Jesus Christ is our model for how we act as individuals. Our message in its essence is a simple one of loving ourselves, loving each other, caring for the world we live in and loving our God.

Our Religious Education Coordinator Michelle Hicks, has provided the school with meaningful and vibrant Masses in which our children play an active role that we all gain great spiritual nourishment from.

We gathered to begin the new school year with our Opening Mass celebrated by Mons Peter. Our new preps, Sacramental children, new staff and school leaders were warmly welcomed to the parish community. We concluded the school year with a thanksgiving mass which in the Marian Centre. It was a vibrant and engaging liturgy, highlighted by the children's singing which was very energetic.

We also celebrated a variety of whole school masses throughout the year including the Feast of the Sacred Heart and Mary's Birthday. Mons Peter has a beautiful way of engaging the children in the liturgy through his unique gift of being able to recontextualise the Gospel in our contemporary world.

A large number of children received the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation during the year and participated in the Parish Based Sacramental Program. The school is closely linked to the Parish during this time and supports the Sacramental Team in various ways. Children in Grades 4-6 participated in class Reconciliation.

The student leadership Social Justice Team initiated and took responsibility for promoting Social Justice throughout the school community. Caritas was the focus during Lent and classes made a coin line with the money raised through Project Compassion.

Celebrating Mercy Founder's Day gave the school community an opportunity to know and reflect on our past story and give thanks for the sacrifices and commitment the first Mercy Sisters had to bring Catholic education to Mooroopna. We are proud that the Mercy tradition is still evident and alive in our school culture today.

At our Mass of Compassion, the school collected a large amount of food and clothing for St Vinnies for which they were greatly appreciative.

## **Achievements**

During the year our Staff and Parish continued to give staff, students, school and Parish community opportunities to better understand and clarify their Catholic identity and beliefs. We were extremely happy to achieve the following:

Structures developed to be a more "Dialogue School":

A focus on Recontextualising our Catholic Faith.

To develop a greater understanding of Social Justice through witnessing Catholic Faith. Improving the Parish/School connection.

More theology based PD.

Review Vision Statements & Graduate Outcomes. Kinship of the Earth.

Develop Staff understanding of sacraments, sacrament & Sacramentality (CoSSI) To teach PBIS in the context of Catholic Identity.

To improve the "Relativism" aspect at St Mary's:

Greater staff & student involvement in planning liturgy.

## **Value Added**

We gathered in February to begin the new school year with our Opening Mass celebrated by Mons Peter. Our new preps, Sacramental children, new staff and school leaders were warmly welcomed to the parish community. We concluded the school year with a mass in December. It was a vibrant and engaging liturgy, highlighted by the children's singing which was very energetic.

Prayer is an important part of every day at St Mary's. Classrooms have a prayer table to encourage a warm and spiritual atmosphere within the classroom and each morning begins with sacred prayer time. Prayer focuses and icons are prominent around the school, in classrooms and meeting areas. Christian Meditation is practiced throughout the school as we believe it not only develops our relationship with God, but has lifetime positive affects on the

wellbeing of our school community. Each week our whole school assembly begins with a prayer prepared by a different class. This reflects classroom topics, current events or celebrations on the Church calendar and is presented in prayerful, reverent and meaningful ways using varied mediums.

The student leadership Social Justice Team initiated and took responsibility for promoting Social Justice throughout the school community. Caritas was the focus during Lent and classes raised money through Project Compassion.

The Social Justice Team helped organise the Liturgy for the Poor Liturgy and presented members of our local St Vinnies with several baskets of non-perishable goods that had been donated. They also promoted our Christmas Giving Tree and again were able to present many gifts to St Vinnies that were distributed within the local community.

Celebrating Mercy Founder's Day gave the school community an opportunity to know and reflect on our past story and give thanks for the sacrifices and commitment the first Mercy Sisters had to bring Catholic education to Mooroopna. We are proud that the Mercy tradition is still evident and alive in our school culture today.

At assemblies, a class "Mercy Award" is awarded to recognise students who display the Gospel Values of Love, Forgiveness, Understanding & Respect.

---

## Learning and Teaching

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To continue developing our Professional Learning Communities, while keeping data analysis and differentiated curriculum a focus.

To create an environment where staff share the responsibility for all children at St Mary's and are accountable for student learning.

Use technology to maintain consistent communication with all stakeholders regarding student progress.

A priority at the beginning of the year to develop a positive classroom environment and build meaningful relationships.

### Achievements

St. Mary's continued to provide quality Professional Development opportunities to all staff, in a range of curriculum areas. This included ongoing support from staff at the Catholic Education Office on NAPLAN data analysis and assessment, and planning for/implementing a Differentiated Curriculum based on current student assessment.

Staff discussed Professional Development with the principal to ensure their development not only enhanced personal teaching, but was also in line with VIT registration requirements. The first 15 minutes of staff meetings was dedicated to reading professional learning material.

All students have access to i-Pads, with technology in education continuing to be embedded in our curriculum.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) are embedded as a core aspect of professional learning & planning processes. This involved planning areas meeting fortnightly to focus specifically on assessment analysis and planning for learning based on assessment and a commitment to assigning pupil free days dedicated to PLC meetings most terms.

Staff Development days were focused on Catholic Identity, ICT and Curriculum.

Student Reports were distributed at the end of Terms 2 and 4.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Our Gr 3 results were very good with above average results in writing when compared to students with a similar background. All other areas were average and no below average scores.

In Gr 5 our school achieved above average results in reading and writing. All other areas were average and no below average.

The significant curriculum focus we have had over the past few years and the increased support for struggling students have been a major contributor to our consistent results.

<b>NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Year level</b>	<b>Mean Scale score</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	372	33%
	Year 5	493	67%
Numeracy	Year 3	380	61%
	Year 5	470	69%
Reading	Year 3	398	66%
	Year 5	497	78%
Spelling	Year 3	393	64%
	Year 5	483	64%
Writing	Year 3	420	80%
	Year 5	493	78%

\*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2023 due to participation not meeting these criteria or no students were assessed. Participants include students who were assessed, including non-attempt, or those exempted from the test.

---

## Student Wellbeing

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To continue our commitment to Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support (PBIS) and the collection of data to support students.

To establish a whole school program for developing learning and teaching of the 5 social competencies of Self Awareness, Social Awareness, Self Management, Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision Making.

### Achievements

St Mary's is committed to continually review and implement Child Safe Standards. The standards revolve around the following areas: Leadership of Cultural Change, Child Safe Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, Human Resource Management, Reporting & Responding to allegations, A Risk Management Approach, Participation and Empowerment of Children. Staff and the St Mary's School Council were involved in the review of all Child Safe Standard policies and procedures.

The school offers Program Support Group meetings for NCCD funded students and those students considered "at risk". Present at the meetings are parents, principal, Wellbeing Coordinator, class teachers and teacher aides (when deemed necessary). During the meetings goals are set and revised.

Our School Speech Pathologist visits our school once a week and works with children, teachers and assistants and conducts assessments.

All Prep children have buddies from the senior grades who spend time with them in their first year at school. The program aims for the Preps to have a familiar face at school and make their initiation a little more comfortable.

Our major focus in Pastoral Well-being continues to be Positive Behaviour Intervention & Support Program (PBIS) and we have had excellent results in this area. Major Behavioural reports to parents continue to be low.

### Value Added

We were very lucky to conduct our Gr 5/6 Camp and the trip was a great success once again.

Many students demonstrated their artistic talents in the MacKillop Arts Exhibition and we had a number of students receive commendations.

The FIRE Carrier program gave students an opportunity to learn about the significance of aboriginal culture and local history.

NAIDOC Week was celebrated with a variety of activities that highlight the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Indigenous education is a priority at St Mary's and this week is important for everyone in our school, particularly our Aboriginal families.

The whole school paused at 11am to reflect on the significance of Remembrance Day. It's a day where we remember all the service men and women who have sacrificed their lives in war for our country.

Each year we celebrate Founder's Day when we recognise the Sister's of Mercy who started St Mary's Primary School Mooroopna in 1936.

### **Student Satisfaction**

Our student goal setting meetings have been a way we have asked for their feedback and suggestions. Data from these meetings indicate that students enjoy the differentiated learning structure in the senior grades and that children at St Mary's feel challenged with the work they are assigned.

### **Student Attendance**

Contact from parents indicating the reason for absences is a requirement at St Mary's. The reason for the child's absence must be marked on the roll.

Teachers are required to contact parents if children are absent without notification.

The Principal is to be informed of any irregular attendees.

If continued absence occurs the Principal will attempt to meet with the Parents/Guardians to discuss the reasons for the absences.

The Principal will take appropriate action and make a report to the Department if necessary.

During remote learning the students were required to contact their teacher each day via the online platform to confirm their attendance.

<b>Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level</b>	
Y01	91.2%
Y02	91.0%
Y03	90.1%
Y04	89.0%
Y05	89.9%
Y06	88.8%
Overall average attendance	90.0%



---

## Leadership

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To ensure that expectations are clear for all members of the school community.

To empower our staff with a clear understanding of shared educational philosophies and an ability to articulate our pursuit to develop a culture that promotes learning.

To seek opportunities that encourage parent involvement in school activities and foster meaningful relationships to create a greater community feel.

To evaluate school events and seek feedback on a regular basis to improve performance.

To make directed decisions to ensure the effective and targeted use of resources and expertise

to maximise outcomes.

To continue to develop a Master Plan for St Mary's that will provide quality buildings and resources for a sustainable future.

### Achievements

Our staff leadership team, comprised of Anthony Butts (Principal), Ann Margaret Carroll (Deputy Principal & Junior Unit Leader) Michelle Hicks (Religious Education Coordinator), Felicity Bryant (Pastoral Wellbeing & Learning & Teaching ), Tayla Junor (Gr 5/6 Unit Leader) and Lauren Calder (Gr 3/4 Unit Leader). The group meet once a fortnight to discuss our School Improvement Plan and implementing programs in classrooms.

All new staff took part in an induction day prior to the students first day at school. staff induction includes a briefing on Catholic Identity, School Operations, Culture, OHS, ICT, Curriculum and general housekeeping.

All new prep children took part in an interview with the principal (new families) and deputy principal (current families). They also participated in a transition program leading up to the orientation day in December where the children spend time with their teachers and classmates for the next year.

Teaching staff took part in annual review meetings towards the end of the year. It is an

opportunity to review practices and affirmation of the wonderful efforts our staff have made throughout the year.

Catholic Education Shepparton Mooroopna was promoted through newspaper advertising in Catholic Education Week and the lead up to the enrolment period.

Professional learning communities (PLC's) continued to be a major driver for our curriculum. PLC's analysed assessment data which was used to direct a differentiated curriculum throughout all grades.

The St Mary's School Council continued to provide leadership to maintain school improvement, strengthen relationships and develop the potential of student learning.

The St Mary's School Improvement Plan continued to be the reference point for strategic planning of the school. The plan incorporates research that has identified the features of Highly Effective Schools and used the Sandhurst Charter of School Improvement as the core resource.

I am extremely appreciative to the St Mary's bingo committee for the continued financial contribution to the school. The group has committed to donating \$12,000 each year which has gone towards paying off the blocks of land backing onto the school in Hall St that we are now using as a car park. I am extremely grateful to the bingo committee for the many years of fund raising that has benefited St Mary's School with both land and valuable resources.

<b>Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning</b>	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023	
The school continued to narrow its focus of Professional Development and commit ourselves to CEO driven initiatives. Staff took part in the following areas of Professional Development: Leadership, Special Needs, Learning & Teaching (major focus Mathematics), Religious Education, Accreditation to Teach RE, Literacy, Technology and Pastoral Wellbeing (including PBIS).	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	21
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$600.00

## Teacher Satisfaction

The data from teacher goal setting meetings and annual review meetings was pleasing. The feedback regarding teacher workload was constructive as we continue to support staff in this area. The data around role clarity and teamwork has continued to improve. A belief that St Mary's is strong in the area of Catholic Identity continued to be prominent. The majority of teachers report that overall behaviour of students is very good. We credit this to the increased focus on behavioural data collected through our PBIS program. Student support has increased significantly, particularly with the introduction of alternative activities for specific students during break times.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	4.5%
Graduate	9.1%
Graduate Certificate	4.5%
Bachelor Degree	40.9%
Advanced Diploma	31.8%
No Qualifications Listed	9.1%

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	23
Teaching Staff (FTE)	20.7
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	18
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	16.3
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	2

---

## Community Engagement

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To seek opportunities that encourage parent involvement in school activities and foster meaningful relationships to create a greater feel of community.

To evaluate school events and seek feedback on a regular basis to improve performance.

To ensure that expectations are clear for all members of the school community.

### Achievements

The school advisory council is the principal leadership group in the school community and meets twice a term. The Council play a pivotal role in the direction of the school and oversee the major decisions made in the school. Our school newsletter was available online every second Wednesday and is available at the parish masses each weekend. School assemblies are held once a week to acknowledge student successes and are run by our student leadership team. We begin each assembly with an acknowledgement of country. Awards for students of the week, creative arts, PBIS, good manners and leadership are presented each week. A grade six graduation evening, including a paraliturgy, was held in December. Awards were handed out to students who have excelled in a variety of areas during their time at St Mary's.

### Parent Satisfaction

The most recent parent survey conducted by the School Advisory Council included 49 families that took part. The vast majority of responses were very positive with an average of over 80% of the parent population either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the quality of current school practice which we are very pleased with. We have deliberately extended the scope for comments in this survey and have asked parents to specifically identify areas they would like to see improved. The School Advisory Council have analysed the data and used it to compliment our current School Improvement Plan and set goals for next year. Our assessment and reporting system has led us to develop an avenue to provide parents and carers with more regular feedback on student progress throughout the school term. Our online Parent Access Module now drives our assessment and reporting and is a very effective way of communicating with parents.

---

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

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