



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

2024

Annual Report to the School Community



St Joseph's School

44 Mernda Village Drive, MERNDA 3754

Principal: Julie McDougall

Web: www.stjosephsschoolmernda.org

Registration: 2060, E Number: E1394

Principal's Attestation

I, Julie McDougall, attest that St Joseph'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 12 May 2025

About this report

St Joseph'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

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School values a Catholic Environment of educational excellence that ignites the imagination, develops good citizenship and creates a lifelong search for knowledge INQUIRE, IGNITE and INSPIRE in God's presence.

School Overview

Our Strategic Intent:

Our school community, St. Joseph's, is dedicated to maximizing the learning and wellbeing of all students which reflects contemporary pedagogy and the Victorian curriculum in a distinctly Catholic environment.

Strong, strategic and shared leadership is grounded in high levels of relational trust which creates opportunities to build the capacity of staff to lead evidence-informed growth for all.

The religious dimension of our school permeates a culture of welcome, belonging, outreach, dialogue and learning together where staff hold unconditional positive regard for students.

Our parents and carers value the community orientation of the school and the capacity of the school to cater for the learning and wellbeing needs of every child.

Principal's Report

Dear St Joseph's Community,

As we reflect on the 2024 school year, I am proud to share the progress we have made as a united, vibrant, and faith-filled learning community. This year, we focused on four key areas of development:

To embed the authentic voice of all in dialogue with Catholic beliefs and practices.

To continue to strengthen St Joseph's as a professional learning community.

To optimise the engagement of all students.

To develop authentic partnerships with all members of the St Joseph's community.

Through the dedication of our staff, the partnership of families, and the leadership of our students, we have made significant strides in each of these areas.

1. Embedding Voice in Dialogue with Catholic Beliefs and Practices

In 2024, we deepened our commitment to nurturing faith through shared dialogue and understanding. Key achievements included:

Professional Formation and Interfaith Dialogue: Staff engaged in professional learning and interfaith discussions to build understanding of Catholic and other faith traditions.

Pedagogy of Encounter: Continued unpacking and embedding of this approach allowed students and staff to explore how faith, culture, and lived experiences intersect.

FIRE Carrier Program: Staff participated in cultural awareness training led by Leila, enhancing understanding of Aboriginal spirituality and connection to Catholic teachings.

'Australians Together' & Ochre Resources: These tools were introduced and embedded through professional learning to support culturally inclusive curriculum design.

Protocols for Sacred Space: We began developing respectful, inclusive practices for community participation in Sacred Space time.

These initiatives have strengthened our Catholic identity and fostered respectful dialogue across cultures and beliefs.

2. Strengthening Our Professional Learning Community

We continued to grow as a learning community committed to excellence, collaboration, and reflective practice. Highlights included:

Creation of a Whole-School Unit Planning Framework: This tool ensures consistent, meaningful curriculum design across all learning areas.

Learning Village Coaching Model: A Leading Teacher Coach in each village supported teacher growth and consistency in instructional practice.

PLTs and Facilitated Planning: These structures enabled staff to regularly review assessment

practices, pedagogy, and student progress.

Formalised Induction and Ongoing Feedback: Our revised induction process ensures that all new staff feel supported and aligned with our shared expectations.

Learning Support Officer Meetings: Ongoing meetings enhanced collaboration and role clarity for support staff.

Data Literacy: Continued improvements in assessment storage, analytics (via Compass), and review of assessment schedules informed teaching and learning.

3. Optimising Student Engagement

Creating meaningful, inclusive, and future-focused learning experiences has remained a key focus. We have worked hard to ensure every student is engaged, motivated, and supported to succeed:

Dialogical Classrooms and Flexible Learning Spaces: We explored how contemporary pedagogy and student agency enhance classroom environments.

Voice and Agency: Students and staff were involved in discussions about expectations and use of flexible learning spaces.

STEM and Dispositional Curriculum: Events like our STEM Gala Showcase and the development of skills like problem-solving and creativity enriched student learning.

Student Commissioners: Continued to lead Learning Walks, analyse behaviour data, and offer feedback to staff.

Professional Learning in Engagement Strategies: Staff explored practices such as “Opportunities to Respond” and engaging instructional strategies to enhance learning environments.

4. Strengthening Partnerships with Families and Community

We believe that strong family-school partnerships are foundational to student success. In 2024, we strengthened our community ties through:

Learning Conversations & Getting to Know You Interviews: Strengthened understanding and communication between teachers and families.

Helping Hands & PAIR Program (Term 1): Supported student wellbeing and built connections.

Program Support Group (PSG) Meetings: Ensured shared planning for students with additional needs.

Little Joey’s Program: This foundational transition program was reviewed and strengthened to better support incoming families and students.

Community Engagement and Feedback: Parents were invited to offer feedback on intervention processes and PBL practices.

PFA and School Board: Constitution reviews, clarity of protocols, and ongoing recruitment ensured strong governance and parent involvement.

Student Leadership in Action: Our student leaders actively participated in outreach through programs such as FIRE Carrier, Mini Vinnies, Caritas, Catholic Mission, and Student Market

Days—living out our values through service and stewardship.

Looking Ahead

As we move into 2025, we will continue to build on this year's progress, with a continued focus on voice, engagement, faith formation, and deep learning. I am grateful to each staff member, student, and family who contributes to the life of St Joseph's with generosity, care, and a shared commitment to excellence.

Together, we are not just building a school—we are nurturing a community of learners, leaders, and people of faith.

With gratitude,

Julie McDougall

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: To embed the authentic voice of all in dialogue with Catholic beliefs and practices.

Intended Outcomes:

1. That staff capacity is strengthened to use relevant and up to date pedagogy and practices to engage students to explore issues and questions in dialogue with Catholic beliefs.
2. That students are empowered to provide agency in the co-creation of learning experiences in a culture of learning together.
3. That learning partnerships with the community is promoted through dialogue linked to learning and self efficacy.

Achievements

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has continued to work in close partnership with all stakeholders to continually enhance Catholic Identity and deepen its faith journey within the Catholic Parish of Christ the Light. We have continued to work dialogically with the members of the other communities in our Parish. St Paul the Apostle Doreen, St Mary's Whittlesea, the Kinglake Community along with the Parish and Fr Hien Vu. This is an explicit example of embedding an authentic voice in dialogue with Catholic beliefs and practices with our Parish community. We continue to regularly come together to plan, organise and sustain an ongoing sacramental faith journey.

We have continued to provide student leadership opportunities in this sphere by electing Stewardship, Social Justice, Caritas and Minni Vinnies leaders from our Year 6 cohort. They were involved in many social justice charity initiatives, prayer liturgies and opportunities to lead our school community in the important work of giving service to others. Monies raised through their fundraising efforts were distributed between Caritas-Project Compassion, Mini Vinnies (St Vincent De Paul), and Children's Mission. This year we strengthened the engagement of the F.I.R.E. (Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education) Carrier program. We commissioned five new students from Year 5 to work with the already

commissioned students who are now in Year 6. FIRE carriers are students and teachers that share a passion for learning about Aboriginal culture and history and are committed to sharing this knowledge and promoting reconciliation within and beyond the school community. These students have been integral in raising awareness and promoting education across our school community. Fundraising efforts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day have supported the 'Opening the Doors Foundation' via Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria. This initiative continues to support our School Review process and the recommendation that came from this around the Child Safety Standard.

The Nazareth Centre continues to be a focal point to provide continued gatherings for liturgical celebrations, sacraments and masses, an ongoing reminder of our Catholicity. The reinvigoration of our small St Joseph's Catholic Church on Plenty Road in Mernda has continued to be a place of worship for small gatherings. We continued to take our School Leaders to celebrate liturgies on behalf of our school community, maintaining our connection to the Parish. Our school foyer has continued to be a shared entrance to the school and Nazareth Centre and we have taken this as an opportunity to promote our catholicity through displays, focal points and pin boards as this is the place where our families and wider community drop off and pick up their children. The plaques throughout the entrance, Nazareth Centre, Learning Villages and community gathering spaces that display 'Acknowledgement of Country', have continued to be used as a respectful acknowledgement of First Nations members of our community and our nation.

Prayer is a focal point of our school day, with all of our community gathering in our Sacred Spaces to start the day. Likewise, each of our Staff Meetings and Leadership Meetings begin with a prayer to continue to form and deepen our faith. Our Sacramental programs have continued to be rich and engaging, inclusive of all of our students regardless of their faith background, providing an opportunity to engage in meaningful learning and dialogue to encounter Jesus, engage in the knowledge and love of Jesus and the church and embark on a life of mission to share the Gospel and witness the joy of the Good News to others.

We pride ourselves at St Joseph's on being a rich and diverse community inclusive of many cultures and many faith traditions that exist alongside our Catholic Tradition and Faith:

We are a... 'Catholic Primary School that values a Catholic environment of educational excellence that ignites the imagination, develops good citizenship and creates a lifelong search for knowledge. Inquiring, Igniting and Inspiring in God's Presence!'

...our goal to enhance our Catholic Identity and Iconology is one that aims to strengthen student and parent engagement and in turn promotes a recontextualised and dialogical school community.

We continue to explore and embed the Renewal of the Religious Education Curriculum throughout our planning and designing of learning experiences. Deep thinking and learning have continued to drive our robust and rigorous Religious Education curriculum which is integrated throughout our school life and key learning areas based on Discipleship: Encounter, Engage & Embark. We are continuing to further our Professional Development in this through REL Network meetings and filtering learning back to our staff through Professional Learning Days, Professional Learning Community Meetings and Staff Meetings. We have been working closely with MACs staff to further our understanding of Catholic Social Teachings and embed them in our curriculum, ensuring that they are integrated into our teaching of Religious Education. This has followed on from work done with Eloise Meyer (MACs), our Student Commissioners and our Social Justice Leaders. We embarked on a project where we unpacked the Catholic Social Teachings, identified how they are connected to our everyday life and made links between these and our St Joseph's Positive Behaviours for Learning Matrix. We sought student voice in all of the stages of this project thus far. This project will continue into 2025 where we will aim to educate students, staff and wider St Joseph's community and form a St Joseph's 'brand' of Catholic Social Teachings and PBL Matrix.

Our 2024 theme 'Flourishing Learners in 2024' has been a driving force in all that we have done at St Joseph's throughout 2024 from staff formation opportunities, embedding this theme in our learning and teaching through to the way we engage in our catholic traditions, catholic social teachings and connection to country and our First Nations People with a Stewardship lens. We have continued building a culture of respect, inclusivity and reconciliation through this theme.

We continued to use the school newsletter as an effective way to connect to families and provide updated, comprehensive information related to Religious Education, Sacramentality and Prayer. We continued to use this as a platform to publish reflective prayers, readings and information connecting to the events of the time. We have used youtube as a platform to share memories of Sacramental Retreat Days, Stations of the Cross, special liturgies and events with our community.

St Joseph's continues to be a school community that enables students, Catholics as well as other believers in our multi-faith community, to discover meaning in their lives and to deepen their relationship with humanity in dialogue with the Christian story.

Value Added

Our results demonstrate a consistent set of results in relation to our Catholic Mission and Identity. A positive response from Staff, Students and Families, all of which contribute to the continued growth and development of the Education in Faith Sphere/Catholic Mission and Identity. It is important to note that despite our Catholic Enrollments are below 50%, the overall response to this sphere has continued to remain above the MACs average.

Value Added:

Continued commissioning of FIRE Carriers into the FIRE Carrier Program & OTDF

Continued Modelled Godly Play Sessions & implementation into Religious Education Workshops

Continued Facilitated Planning once each term with teams & end of term forward planning at the end of each term.

Professional Learning around Catholic Social Teachings and delivery of rich learning experiences in Religious Education

Catholic Social Teachings Project with Eloise Meyer (MACs), Student Commissioners and Social Justice Leaders focussing on Linking our Positive Behaviour for Learning Matrix with Catholic Social Teachings.

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: To continue to strengthen St. Joseph's as a professional learning community.

Intended Outcomes:

1. That a comprehensive, systematic and strategic approach to induction is developed.
2. That clear protocols are developed which ensure a focus on the cultivation of strong professional growth which reflects teaching and learning and a consistency of classroom practice.
3. That staff are enabled to evaluate the impact of their learning and teaching on student outcomes

Achievements

In 2024, at St Joseph's, the implementation of the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) Vision for Instruction has been a structured and strategic process, ensuring that our students receive the highest quality education in literacy and numeracy. Guided by the principles of explicit instruction, we have taken deliberate steps to align our teaching practices with evidence-based methods that support student learning and success.

One of our primary areas of focus has been literacy instruction. After an extensive review of phonics programs, we selected Read, Write, Inc. as the most effective program to support our students' reading and writing development. This decision was made based on its strong emphasis on targeted, systematic phonics, structured reading progression, and its proven track record in improving literacy outcomes. The roll-out of Read, Write, Inc. is scheduled for 2025, with teachers undergoing training to ensure seamless integration into our literacy curriculum. By embedding this phonics program into daily instruction, we aim to strengthen our students' phonemic awareness, decoding skills, and overall reading fluency.

In mathematics, we have embraced the Vision for Instruction by utilising OCHRE resources to support effective teaching practices. OCHRE resources have been instrumental in reinforcing the key components of our maths instruction, including developing number sense,

building fluency in arithmetic operations, and deepening students' understanding of mathematical concepts. By incorporating concrete materials, problem-solving strategies, explicit instruction, and precise mathematical language into our daily lessons, we ensure that students not only grasp fundamental maths skills but also apply them confidently in problem-solving scenarios.

To support this transition, our teachers have participated in professional development workshops focused on explicit instruction strategies. These sessions have equipped educators with the tools necessary to provide clear, structured, and engaging lessons that gradually shift responsibility to students through guided practice and feedback. The emphasis on explicit instruction has helped reduce uncertainty in learning, ensuring that students master foundational skills before progressing to independent tasks.

The adoption of the MACS Vision for Instruction at St Joseph's signifies our commitment to excellence and equity in education. By implementing structured and research-backed teaching methods, we are setting our students up for long-term success in literacy and numeracy. Parents who wish to learn more about Vision for Instruction can access the Parent Guide at the following link: [MACS Vision for Instruction Parent Guide](#).

Mathematics

In 2024 at St Joseph's the approach to mathematics teaching and learning has focused on continuing to strengthen numeracy outcomes across all year levels.

With the introduction of the Victorian Curriculum Mathematics 2.0, our teachers were supported in unpacking the new curriculum by comparing and contrasting it with the previous version, ensuring a clear understanding of key changes. Through this process, we developed a new yearly overview that reflected the updated curriculum's progression of learning. Additionally, we refined units of work to address the curriculum's new expectations, ensuring that our teaching remains aligned with best practices.

A key feature of our mathematics instruction has been the integration of evidence-based explicit teaching practices, guided by Cognitive Load Theory. Through using OCHRE resources, we have structured lessons to manage cognitive demands effectively. Full Participation tactics and Daily Review (retrieval practice) have been explored to enhance learning retention and fluency. Instructional practices were the main focus during weekly facilitated planning sessions. This consistent connection between teaching teams and the Mathematics Leader allowed us to refine instructional approaches and respond dynamically to student needs.

A structured assessment schedule was developed to include the Mathematics Online Interview (MOI) and PAT-M assessments, as mandated by the MACS. Students were assessed on their mathematical understanding and the insights gained from these assessments were pivotal in identifying student needs, allowing us to implement targeted support. Students requiring additional assistance engaged in enabling interventions, while those demonstrating advanced skills were extended.

Several structured interventions continued to operate throughout 2024, addressing the needs of students requiring Tier 2 and Tier 3 mathematics support. They included:

The Phoenix (JNR) Club - an extension program that met weekly to extend students' problem-solving skills.

GRIN (Getting Ready In Numeracy) - ran at full scale, with three lessons a week dedicated to building readiness for new mathematical concepts.

EMU (Extending Mathematical Understanding) - an intensive program designed for Year 1, meeting four times per week, to build students' foundational Numeracy skills.

Lastly, a Mathematics Team consisting of several staff members from different year levels met on a termly basis to review and reflect upon the mathematics instruction at St Joseph's. Discussions focused on forward planning, by continuing to refine our instructional approaches to integrate and embed the current foci whilst continuing to acknowledge those from prior years: explicit instruction, open-ended tasks/problem solving, dialogue and student engagement strategies.

Throughout 2024, we have sought to provide an integrated approach to reading that targets individual student needs. Our reading program provides a comprehensive framework for teaching reading skills to students. Our classroom programs have focused on the explicit teaching of decoding and reading comprehension strategies to ensure that each student receives the instruction and support they need to succeed in Reading.

We have celebrated growth in reading by identifying and teaching to student needs in reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. We have assessed each student's reading level regularly and have provided targeted instruction based on their individual needs. We have also provided ongoing support and encouragement to help each student achieve their reading goals.

In February and March of 2024, students in Foundation and Year One completed the English Online Interview (EOI). Teachers used the data from this assessment in their planning of Literacy. Students in Years Two to Six are assessed twice a year (May and October), using the Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) for Reading. The data obtained from these

assessments is used by teachers in their planning of Reading lessons. Data collection such as these ensure that students are catered for, and that the curriculum is differentiated to suit the learning needs of all students.

Encouraging children to read is crucial for their development, "Today a reader, tomorrow a leader," this quote emphasises the transformative power of books. In 2024, teachers continued to read to their students on a daily basis. Students in Years Two to Six were engaged in the listening to, and following along with a class novel. Students in Foundation and Year One were read to using quality picture books. Reading lessons incorporated high quality literature as means to develop vocabulary, grammar, comprehension and a love of reading.

In 2024, we continued to further develop the implementation of the Seven Steps for Writing Success program for all students in Years Two to Six. Our aim has been to provide a consistent approach to teaching writing and to provide a framework for teachers and students that can be built upon as students progress through the school. The program has enabled our students to receive the instruction and support they need to become confident and competent writers.

Students have engaged in three main types of writing: writing to entertain, writing to persuade, and writing to inform. Grammar and punctuation have been explicitly taught within reading and writing lessons and one-to-one teacher-student conferences. We believe that these skills are essential for effective reading and writing, and ensure that our students receive the instruction and support they need to master these skills.

In 2023, we continued to focus on spelling by introducing the SMART Spelling strategies for students in Years One to Six. SMART Spelling incorporates both the systematic teaching of spelling each week and personal words derived from each student's writing. Students have been explicitly taught the spelling patterns in words. Teachers have been able to choose a range of words (from simple to complex) from a suggested list in the SMART Spelling guide. Teachers have used their strong professional knowledge to give meaningful feedback to students about their spelling in writing, teaching at the point of need.

Students in Foundation and Year One have engaged in the Language Experience Approach which integrates speaking and listening, reading and writing, through the development of a written text based on first hand experiences. We believe that oral language development is a critical foundation for future writing success. That is why we place a strong emphasis on oral language play in our Foundation and Year One classrooms. Oral Language Play has created

a fun and engaging environment where students can experiment with language, explore new vocabulary, and develop their communication skills. We have used a range of activities, such as storytelling, role-playing, and games, to encourage students to use language in creative and expressive ways.

Teachers and Learning Support Officers interact with the children, encouraging conversations and cooperative play. This approach has assisted students to develop their oral language skills and has formed the basis of our writing instruction in these levels. By providing students with a strong foundation in oral language, we help them to develop the confidence and skills they need to become effective writers. We have found that this approach has led to more authentic writing experiences for our junior students, which in turn has produced more engaging and authentic writing samples. When students have a strong foundation in oral language, they are better able to express their ideas and thoughts in writing, leading to more meaningful and effective written communication.

We have differentiated the learning and teaching of curriculum to support our students' learning diversity through a range of strategies, that have included, but not limited to, the following:

Small group targeted teaching within the classroom Small group instruction using the Levelled Literacy Intervention (LLI) program - a targeted reading intervention program designed to support students through tailored instruction, focusing on areas such as phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary.

Individual or small group intensive writing intervention workshops - structured guidance for students, helping them develop essential writing skills such as planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing their work effectively.

Fine motor and handwriting workshops - workshops that focus on developing students' hand strength and handwriting proficiency, helping them to write more legibly and with greater control and precision.

Phonological awareness workshops - workshops to help students develop their awareness of the sounds of language, laying the foundation for literacy success.

Extension reading groups (Book Club) for Year Five and Six students - opportunities for advanced readers to explore challenging and enriching literature together.

Students have had the exciting opportunity to dive into the dynamic and ever-evolving world of STEM, where they have explored innovative concepts, engaged in hands-on learning, and developed critical problem-solving skills for the future.

Students have actively participated in a variety of STEM challenges, where they have been encouraged to ask questions, think critically, and develop innovative solutions to problems. Through engaging, hands-on activities, they have been guided through the stages of the Engineering Design Process, fostering a growth mindset, sparking curiosity, and building

resilience. These experiences have fostered collaboration and communication skills, empowering students to work respectfully and efficiently with their peers.

Throughout the year, Prep to Year 6 students have participated in whole-school STEM Gala Days, each inspired by a central theme. In Term 1, the focus was on fostering creativity, teamwork, and resilience. Students in Prep to Year 3 explored these skills by designing and building their own roller coasters, while Year 4 to 6 took on the challenge of planning and building an innovative theme park. In Term 2, our whole school focus shifted to Geography, where students explored iconic landmarks and famous monuments from Australia and around the world. Through research, design, and hands-on reconstruction, they deepened their understanding of architectural innovation. Term 3 shifted its focus to implementing a STEM Inquiry Unit for Year 5 students. Students were actively involved in designing and constructing a gaming controller powered by Makey-Makeys, enabling them to play an online game. In Term 4, students took on a festive challenge, designing and constructing an innovative new mode of transport for Santa.

Lunchtime Clubs:

Throughout the year, students in Year 4 to Year 6 had the opportunity to participate in STEM club during lunchtime once a week. The club focused on engaging students in science experiments like volcanoes, hands-on challenges such as balloon races, and ICT activities including Minecraft, Mario Kart, and other online games.

Incursion:

Students from Prep to Year 6 had the opportunity to take part in a 45-minute STEM incursion featuring a variety of LEGO challenges. This exciting event, presented as St. Joseph's LEGO Day, was led by Ryan Evans, a finalist from LEGO Masters and a semi-finalist from LEGO Grand Masters.

STEM education at St. Joseph's focuses on empowering students to engage deeply with the STEM Engineering Design Process, helping them develop the essential skills to become effective problem-solvers and innovators.

Student Learning Outcomes

In 2024, St Joseph's students in Years 3 and 5 participated in the NAPLAN assessments across five learning areas: Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation (G&P), and Numeracy. The results are grouped into four proficiency levels:

Needs Additional Support
Developing
Strong

Exceeding

These categories help identify where students are in their learning and where further support or extension may be needed. Below is a breakdown of our results:

Key Takeaways (Year 3):

The majority of students are achieving at Strong or Exceeding levels, particularly in Writing (76.6%) and Reading (69.2%).

Areas for further support include Grammar & Punctuation and Numeracy, where more than 10% of students fall in the "Needs Support" category.

Key Takeaways (Year 5):

Most students are achieving at Strong or Exceeding levels, especially in Writing (73.4%) and Numeracy (70.7%).

Spelling stands out positively, with nearly a quarter of students exceeding expectations.

Reading and G&P are areas where targeted support may benefit students at the developing or support level.

Our 2024 NAPLAN results reflect a strong performance across both year levels, with the majority of students meeting or exceeding national expectations. These results also highlight key focus areas for continued improvement, including Grammar & Punctuation and Numeracy.

We remain committed to using this data to inform teaching practice, strengthen targeted support, and extend all learners as we strive for excellence in student achievement.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	411	59%
	Year 5	494	63%
Numeracy	Year 3	397	61%
	Year 5	473	71%
Reading	Year 3	407	70%
	Year 5	477	65%
Spelling	Year 3	408	72%
	Year 5	493	70%
Writing	Year 3	413	78%
	Year 5	485	71%

*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 optimise engagement of all students.

Intended Outcomes:

1. That the school implements and conceptualised a pedagogy for the physical and digital spaces.

2. That student centred learning environments are created.

3. That Positive Behaviour for Learning framework is continually embedded and reviewed.

4. That high quality teaching practices are consistent throughout the school.

5.

That the use of high quality impact teaching and engagement strategies reflect the performance of all students.

Achievements

At St Joseph's, we are committed to nurturing a learning environment where every student feels safe, valued, and empowered to grow. In 2025, we continue to deepen this commitment through student leadership, positive behaviour support, wellbeing programs, and strong transitions between key learning stages. This report outlines the ways we are working together—as staff, students, and families—to build a community grounded in respect, engagement, and excellence.

Student Commissioners: Empowering Student Voice

Our Student Commissioners have played a crucial role in shaping the direction of our Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) approach. These student leaders actively contribute to decision-making by:

Analysing school behaviour data and offering informed feedback on behavioural expectations.

Leading discussions with peers about positive behaviour strategies.

Collaborating with staff to refine the learning environment.

Connecting schoolwide practices to Catholic Social Teachings and our school values.

Their engagement ensures that student voice is heard and respected, and that our school remains a place where all students feel a strong sense of ownership, belonging, and purpose.

Refining Our PBL Framework

This year we have revisited and enhanced our Positive Behaviour for Learning framework to ensure it continues to meet the evolving needs of our school community. Key updates include:

Behaviour Matrix: Updated with Student Commissioner input to ensure clarity and student relevance.

Behaviour Flowchart: Refined to provide clear, consistent responses to behaviours across the school.

Rewards System: Reviewed by staff and students to better align with what motivates our learners and celebrate positive behaviours meaningfully.

These changes help maintain a consistent, transparent approach to behaviour that supports all learners and fosters a positive, productive environment.

The Resilience Project: Supporting Emotional Wellbeing

The Resilience Project remains central to our wellbeing strategy, helping students develop the social and emotional tools they need to succeed. With a focus on Gratitude, Empathy, Mindfulness, and Emotional Literacy, students participate in structured activities that:

Build coping strategies for life's challenges.

Reinforce a growth mindset in both learning and relationships.

Encourage students to reflect on their emotions and behaviour.

This approach helps create a calm, respectful school climate and supports each student's personal development and mental wellbeing.

Transition Programs: Supporting Students Through Change

We recognise that transitions are critical times in a student's educational journey. That's why we've developed targeted programs to support both our youngest and oldest learners.

Prep Transition

Weekly school tours provide families with opportunities to explore learning spaces and learn about school life.

Multiple open mornings offer prospective families a warm, welcoming experience.

The Little Joey's Pre-Prep Program allows children to engage in the Purple Village while parents attend information sessions with school leaders, ensuring both students and families feel confident and informed.

Year Six Transition

A structured program including high school visits, workshops, and mentoring supports a smooth and successful move into secondary school.

Through these programs, we ensure students are emotionally prepared and excited for their next learning chapter.

Investing in Staff Development: Engaging Every Learner

Staff professional development has been a key focus this year, particularly in the area of classroom engagement. Training has centred on:

Engaging Classroom Practices to increase participation and motivation.

Opportunities to Respond strategies that invite active learning.

Powerful Teaching Practices based on research, designed to enhance learning outcomes.

This ongoing investment ensures that every classroom at St Joseph's is a place of dynamic, inclusive, and engaging learning where all students can flourish.

Together, We Thrive

At St Joseph's, our commitment to fostering student leadership, wellbeing, and academic growth remains strong. With the continued partnership of families, staff, and students, we are proud to be a school community that lives out our values in every action—and supports every learner to become confident, capable, and compassionate citizens of the future.

If you'd like to learn more or get involved in our community initiatives, we warmly invite you to connect with us.

Value Added

At St Joseph's, student wellbeing continues to be a cornerstone of our educational mission. In 2024, we have taken deliberate steps to strengthen our support systems, ensure inclusive practices, and provide responsive care to meet the diverse needs of all students.

Value Added in Student Wellbeing

Our wellbeing approach has continued to evolve, with a strong focus on proactive support, early intervention, and collaborative partnerships. Key highlights this year include:

NCCD Moderation and Documentation: Rigorous processes have been implemented to ensure accurate and thorough documentation for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD). This has enhanced our ability to identify and support students with diverse learning needs while meeting compliance requirements.

Program Support Group (PSG) Meetings: PSGs have been conducted for all students requiring additional support, and we are continuing to complete notes for students who were unable to attend. These meetings have provided a vital platform for families and teachers to collaborate on tailored learning plans and wellbeing strategies.

Learning Support Officer (LSO) Meetings: Regular, structured weekly LSO meetings have been introduced, which include a facilitated session followed by a check-in. These meetings are enhancing communication, role clarity, and consistency in how support is delivered across the school.

Tier 2 Targeted Social Groups: A number of Tier 2 interventions have been implemented to support students with emerging social and emotional needs. These small group sessions have focused on emotional regulation, friendship skills, and confidence-building.

Auditing Wellbeing Programs: A full review of current wellbeing programs has been undertaken. As a result, The Resilience Project program will be phased out, with resource collection managed by CHRIS. This decision reflects our commitment to using programs that are evidence-based, relevant, and effective for our current cohort.

Transition Support for Prep and Year 6 Students: Transition planning has commenced for both ends of the schooling journey. Elly and Maddi have begun visiting local kindergartens to support our future Preps, while Year 6 students are engaging in structured transition activities to prepare for secondary school.

Brain Breaks and Reset Breaks: These continue to be reviewed and refined across all year levels to support student self-regulation, focus, and overall mental wellbeing during the school day.

Family Engagement Through DOJO: Approximately 25% of families are now actively connected to ClassDojo, supporting greater communication and home-school collaboration in the area of wellbeing and classroom updates.

Looking Ahead

As we plan for 2025, the student wellbeing team will continue to build upon these initiatives, with a focus on:

Increasing family engagement with wellbeing programs and digital communication platforms

Strengthening Tier 1 supports across the whole school

Expanding Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions in line with student needs

Continuing to refine transitions, documentation processes, and LSO support structures

We thank all staff, families, and students for their continued partnership and commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and caring learning environment.

Student Satisfaction

The 2024 MACSSIS (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools – School Improvement Surveys) results for student voice affirm that St Joseph’s is a place where students feel safe, connected, and engaged. Our school continues to prioritise student wellbeing and agency, ensuring all learners are supported both academically and socially.

Overall Student Endorsement

In 2024, St Joseph’s received an overall student positive endorsement of 73%, surpassing the MACS average of 69%. This reflects the strength of our school environment and our focus on building positive relationships, belonging, and purposeful learning experiences.

Key Areas of Strength

We are especially proud of the following domains, where our students rated the school well above the MACS average:

School Climate – 93% positive endorsement

(MACS average: 84%)

Students feel safe, respected, and supported in their learning environment. This reflects our school’s strong culture of inclusion, positive behaviour, and shared responsibility.

School Fit – 86% positive endorsement

(MACS average: 76%)

Students feel that they belong at St Joseph’s and that the school is a good fit for their individual needs—socially, emotionally, and academically.

Communication – 89% positive endorsement

(MACS average: 73%)

Students report strong and open communication with staff, feeling heard, supported, and part of the school dialogue. This result highlights our emphasis on student voice and relational trust.

Celebrating Student Voice

These results confirm the success of several key initiatives in 2024, including:

Student Commissioners and student-led learning walks

Enhanced Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) strategies

Increased opportunities for student input into school improvement

Greater consistency in teacher-student communication and feedback

Looking Ahead

We are committed to continuing this growth by:

Expanding student leadership and feedback opportunities

Strengthening classroom relationships and collaborative learning structures

Ensuring every student feels valued, included, and capable of success

We thank all students who participated in the 2024 MACSSIS survey. Your voice is critical in shaping a school culture that is safe, inspiring, and truly student-centred.

Student Attendance

At St Joseph's, student attendance remains a key priority in supporting academic success, social development, and overall wellbeing. We understand that every day of learning matters, and we are committed to working in partnership with families to ensure that every child is present, engaged, and supported.

Daily Monitoring and Family Communication

To maintain strong attendance practices:

The school contacts families daily if a child is marked absent without explanation, ensuring consistent communication and transparency.

All child safety requirements relating to attendance and student wellbeing are strictly followed in accordance with legislative and MACS guidelines.

Teacher-Led Attendance Review

Each term, classroom teachers:

Conduct a thorough audit and review of their class attendance data.

Follow up individually with families where attendance patterns raise concern or indicate barriers to regular attendance.

Engage in supportive, solution-focused conversations to explore how we can best assist each student in maintaining consistent school engagement.

This proactive and personalised approach helps identify any underlying issues and strengthens the home-school partnership to promote better outcomes for every child.

Our Commitment

We recognise that improving attendance is not just about tracking days—it's about understanding and addressing the reasons behind absences. Whether these are related to health, wellbeing, family circumstances, or other challenges, our goal is to work alongside families to reduce barriers and ensure students can fully participate in their learning journey.

Together, we are building a culture where every student is known, supported, and expected to succeed.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	88.2
Y02	90.5
Y03	86.1
Y04	87.3
Y05	88.0
Y06	87.7
Overall average attendance	88.0

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: To embed the authentic voice of all in dialogue with Catholic beliefs and practices.

Intended Outcomes:

1. That staff capacity is strengthened to use relevant and up to date pedagogy and practices to engage students to explore issues and questions in dialogue with Catholic beliefs.
2. That students are empowered to provide agency in the co-creation of learning experiences in a culture of learning together.
3. That learning partnerships with the community is promoted through dialogue linked to learning and self efficacy.

Achievements

As we reflect on 2024, it has been a year of significant growth and development for St Joseph's, guided by clear vision, strategic leadership, and collaboration. With a strong focus on improving the teaching and learning environment, we have set the stage for continued success in 2025.

Leadership Transition and New Principal Appointment

The most notable change for our school this year was the appointment of Julie McDougall as the new Principal. Julie has brought a fresh perspective and a commitment to fostering a positive, inclusive, and dynamic school culture. Under her leadership, we have already seen an emphasis on collaboration, transparency, and building strong relationships within our school community.

Julie's leadership has been marked by her focus on building professional capacity and aligning the school's goals with the needs of students, staff, and the wider community. She has worked tirelessly to ensure that the strategic direction of the school reflects both our Catholic values and a commitment to academic excellence.

Executive Leadership and Professional Development

This year, the Executive Leadership Team participated in the Leading the Learning Collective, a professional development initiative aimed at enhancing our leadership capacity in supporting high-quality teaching and learning across the school. This collective has been instrumental in equipping our leaders with the tools and strategies necessary to drive continuous improvement.

In addition, MACS facilitated school improvement workshops with Dr. Simon Breakspear, a renowned expert in education and learning innovation. These workshops provided valuable insights into the latest trends in school improvement and pedagogical strategies. Dr. Breakspear's sessions focused on creating environments where teachers can thrive and students can achieve their fullest potential.

Pedagogy of Environment: Flexible Learning Spaces

A significant change to our learning environment in 2024 was the introduction of the Pedagogy of Environment, with the installation of new glass walls and sliding doors in various classrooms. These changes are part of our commitment to making our learning spaces more flexible and adaptable to the needs of our students and teachers. The new design allows for greater fluidity between spaces, fostering collaborative learning and providing students with the opportunity to engage in a variety of learning styles.

This transformation aligns with our vision of creating environments where students are not just passive recipients of knowledge, but active participants in their learning. The flexible learning spaces have already received positive feedback from both students and staff, as they encourage more interaction, creativity, and engagement.

Revised Timetable for More Focused Learning

In 2024, we made important adjustments to the daily timetable to provide more focused and uninterrupted time for learning. These changes were designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning by reducing distractions and allowing students to engage more deeply with their subjects.

The revised timetable has had a positive impact on student engagement, as it allows for longer, more concentrated periods of learning. Teachers have found this change beneficial, as it gives them the flexibility to delve deeper into content and respond to student needs in a more targeted way.

Looking Ahead to 2025: Focus and Direction

As we approach 2025, we are excited about the direction our school is heading. The foundations laid in 2024 have set us up for a year of continued growth and improvement. Key areas of focus for the upcoming year include:

Strengthening the Pedagogy of Environment to enhance learning experiences.

Building on the leadership development provided by the Leading the Learning Collective and workshops with Dr. Simon Breakspear.

Further refining the daily timetable to ensure that learning time is maximised for all students. Continuing to adapt and evolve our approach to teaching and learning based on feedback and insights from staff, students, and the broader community.

We are confident that the changes made in 2024, underpinned by strong leadership and a focus on innovative, flexible learning environments, will continue to positively impact the learning outcomes for all students at St Joseph's.

Conclusion

2024 has been a year of transformation, with significant steps taken to enhance leadership, teaching practices, and the physical learning environment. Under the leadership of Principal Julie McDougall, and with the ongoing support of the Executive Leadership Team, our school has set a clear course for success in 2025.

The changes implemented this year, along with the professional development opportunities provided to staff, have created a solid foundation for the future. We look forward to working together as a community to continue building on this momentum and ensuring that St Joseph's remains a place where all students can achieve their full potential.

As we look ahead to 2025, the leadership team at St Joseph's has been focused on ensuring a strong and sustainable foundation for the year to come. A number of strategic decisions have been made across staffing, infrastructure, budgeting, and operational planning to support the continued growth and effectiveness of our school.

Staffing and Enrolment

Staffing for 2025 is now confirmed, with structures in place to meet the needs of our students and support effective teaching and learning.

We are pleased to report that enrolments have increased to 473 students for the 2025 school year, continuing our steady growth and affirming the strength of our school community.

Facilities and Learning Spaces

The removal of portables in 2025 will allow for better use of permanent facilities and a more streamlined layout of learning environments.

Shantelle's current portable will be repurposed as a new planning space for teachers, providing a dedicated area to collaborate and support professional learning.

Year 4 students will move into the Galleria and Purple Planning Room, ensuring age-appropriate and flexible learning areas.

Financial Planning and Budget

The budget for 2025 has been set, with an emphasis on responsible financial stewardship. While our recent grant applications were unsuccessful, we are actively engaging with MACSS to reassess eligibility for future funding opportunities.

Thanks to strategic planning and cost efficiencies, we are projecting significant savings for 2025 and over the next three years, positioning the school well for long-term financial health.

Timetabling and Teaching Adjustments

A new timetable structure will be introduced in 2025, aligned with best practice and student wellbeing. Key changes include:

A consistent 5-hour teaching block per day, supporting strong instructional time.

Eating times will be tightened to maximise learning opportunities and improve transition between sessions.

A reset of expectations around Friday PE/Sport lessons will be implemented to ensure these sessions maintain a clear focus on physical education and student engagement.

Curriculum and Differentiation

In 2025, Individual Learning Times (ILTs) will be discontinued. Instead, there will be a renewed focus on differentiated planning and classroom practice, ensuring every student's learning needs are met through high-impact teaching strategies.

Looking Ahead

The changes and improvements planned for 2025 are grounded in our vision to provide a high-quality, inclusive education that prepares students for lifelong learning. We are confident that these strategic shifts will strengthen our teaching and learning culture, enhance collaboration, and support the continued growth of our community.

We thank all staff, families, and students for their ongoing commitment to the values and vision of St Joseph's. We look forward to a productive and successful year ahead.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024
<p>In 2024, St Joseph's focused on providing a wide range of professional learning opportunities for our staff, supporting continuous growth and strengthening our commitment to high-quality teaching and leadership. The following professional learning initiatives were undertaken across the school:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <p>1. Leading the Learning Collective</p> <p>The Executive Leadership Team participated in the Leading the Learning Collective, a professional development initiative designed to strengthen leadership skills and foster a culture of collaboration among school leaders. This collective focused on best practices for supporting high-quality teaching and learning, providing valuable insights into effective leadership strategies and educational innovation.</p> <p>2. School Improvement Workshops with Dr. Simon Breakspear</p> <p>In partnership with MACS, our staff took part in school improvement workshops facilitated by Dr. Simon Breakspear, a renowned expert in education. The workshops provided strategies and frameworks to drive school improvement, focusing on evidence-based practices, student outcomes, and fostering a growth mindset among both teachers and students. Dr. Breakspear's expertise has been invaluable in guiding our approach to continuous improvement and innovative teaching methods.</p> <p>3. Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) and Resilience Workshops</p> <p>A PBL Resilience Workshop was held to build staff understanding of how to embed positive behaviours in the school culture while supporting students' emotional and social resilience. This workshop aligned with our school's broader vision of creating an environment where students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. By equipping staff with tools to support positive behaviour and resilience, we aim to enhance the overall learning experience for our students.</p> <p>4. MACS Leadership Networks</p> <p>St Joseph's staff participated in MACS Leadership Networks, which provided valuable opportunities for networking and sharing best practices with educators across the region. These networks focused on leadership development, school improvement, and collaborative practices aimed at enhancing student outcomes. Through participation in these networks, our leadership team was able to gain insights from other schools, fostering collaboration and strengthening leadership capacity within our own school community.</p>

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning

5. Read Write Inc. Training

In 2024, staff undertook Read Write Inc. (RWI) training, an evidence-based literacy program designed to improve reading and writing skills for students. This training equipped staff with effective strategies for teaching phonics, fluency, and comprehension, supporting early literacy development in our school. The implementation of RWI is a key part of our commitment to improving literacy outcomes for all students, particularly in the early years.

6. Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) Moderation Training

Staff participated in NCCD Moderation Training, which deepened their understanding of the NCCD framework and the process for identifying and supporting students with disabilities. This training ensured that staff are equipped to make accurate and consistent decisions regarding student adjustments and funding, promoting an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.

7. EMU (Extending Mathematical Understanding) Training

Mathematics teaching was further strengthened through EMU Training, a professional learning program focused on developing staff expertise in numeracy instruction. EMU training empowers teachers to deliver targeted interventions and strategies that extend mathematical understanding for students, particularly those who need extra support in numeracy. This program has helped build staff confidence and capacity in teaching mathematics, ensuring a strong foundation for all students.

8. Employee Relations Briefing

An Employee Relations Briefing was held to ensure that staff were updated on key employment practices, policies, and legal requirements. This session covered aspects such as workplace relations, staff wellbeing, and the maintenance of a positive school culture. By keeping staff informed of their rights and responsibilities, we continue to foster a supportive and respectful work environment.

9. Mandatory Reporting Training

As part of our commitment to child protection, all staff completed Mandatory Reporting Training. This training equipped staff with the knowledge and skills required to identify and report concerns regarding student safety. By prioritising the safeguarding of students, we ensure that all members of the St Joseph's community can work together to create a safe and supportive learning environment.

10. Emergency Management Training

In preparation for any unforeseen circumstances, staff participated in Emergency Management Training. This training covered the protocols and procedures to follow in the event of emergencies, ensuring that our school community is well-prepared and able to respond quickly and efficiently to protect the safety of all students and staff.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
<p>11. Coaching and Mentoring Programs</p> <p>A robust Coaching and Mentoring Program was introduced in 2024 to provide teachers with ongoing support and development. This initiative fostered a collaborative culture in which experienced staff members guided and mentored their peers, sharing expertise and offering feedback to improve teaching practices. The program has created a positive, supportive environment for professional growth and reflective practice.</p> <p>12. Vision for Instruction Workshops</p> <p>The Vision for Instruction workshops aimed at aligning teaching practices with the school's overall educational philosophy. These workshops helped to clarify the instructional vision, ensuring that teaching strategies are cohesive, purposeful, and tailored to meet the diverse needs of our students. This initiative supports our goal of delivering high-quality instruction across all year levels.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>In 2024, St Joseph's made significant investments in professional learning to empower staff with the skills, knowledge, and tools needed to support student success. These initiatives have enhanced teaching practices, leadership capabilities, and staff wellbeing, creating a positive and thriving learning environment for both students and educators.</p> <p>We look forward to building on this momentum in 2025 and continuing to invest in the professional development of our staff to further strengthen our commitment to excellence in education.</p>	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024	57
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1460.00

Teacher Satisfaction

The 2024 MACSSIS (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools – School Improvement Surveys) results reflect a strong and positive staff culture at St Joseph's. This year's staff survey results highlight the deep sense of collaboration, shared purpose, and professional respect that underpin our work together.

Overall Staff Endorsement

In 2024, St Joseph's achieved an overall staff satisfaction rating of 83%, well above the MACS average of 68%. This result demonstrates our staff's strong confidence in the school's leadership, direction, and culture of continuous improvement.

Key Areas of Strength

We are especially proud of the following areas, where our school significantly outperformed MACS-wide averages:

Staff–Leadership Relationships – 97% positive endorsement

(MACS average: 81%)

Staff overwhelmingly reported positive, respectful, and collaborative relationships with the leadership team, recognising the clear communication, trust, and shared decision-making.

Collective Efficacy – 96% positive endorsement

(MACS average: 75%)

Staff feel confident in their collective ability to make a meaningful difference in student outcomes, reflecting a strong professional learning culture and team-based approach.

School Climate – 90% positive endorsement

(MACS average: 73%)

The school culture is seen as supportive, inclusive, and focused on growth—for both students and staff. There is a shared sense of responsibility, collegiality, and mutual respect across the school.

Consistently Strong Performance

In all other areas surveyed, St Joseph's also scored well above the MACS average, reinforcing the strength of our school's culture and our focus on collaboration, professionalism, and shared vision.

These results are a direct reflection of the commitment, expertise, and unity of our staff team. The positive working environment created by staff at all levels has played a key role in ensuring that St Joseph's continues to be a place of high-quality teaching, learning, and care.

Looking Ahead

The insights gained from the 2024 MACSSIS data will inform our continued efforts to:

Strengthen collaborative practices and shared leadership

Build capacity across teams through professional learning and mentoring

Sustain a culture where every staff member feels empowered, valued, and supported

Align school improvement initiatives with staff feedback and experience

We thank all staff for their contributions to making St Joseph's a thriving, professional, and compassionate community. Your feedback is deeply valued and continues to shape our direction into 2025 and beyond.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0
Masters	4
Graduate	3
Graduate Certificate	3
Bachelor Degree	23
Advanced Diploma	2
No Qualifications Listed	13

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	3
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	38
Teaching Staff (FTE)	33.1
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	20
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	14.07
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: To develop authentic partnerships with all members of the St Joseph's Community.

Intended Outcomes:

1. Promoting learning partnerships with parents where dialogue is linked directly to learning and growth and contributes to students developing self-belief and confidence in their learning.
2. That parents will have the opportunity to be authentically engaged in their children's learning journey
3. That parent voice will be actively sought.

Achievements

Strengthening Partnerships with Parents: A Collaborative Approach to Learning

At the heart of our school community is a deep commitment to fostering meaningful partnerships with parents. We believe that when families and educators work together, students thrive—not only academically, but also in confidence, wellbeing, and self-belief. Through a variety of initiatives and communication channels, we strive to ensure parents are informed, involved, and empowered as active participants in their children's learning journeys.

1. Promoting Learning-Centered Dialogue

We are committed to maintaining open, purposeful communication that directly supports student growth and development. Key strategies include:

Class Dojo posts that provide real-time updates on classroom learning and student achievements.

Village and curriculum newsletters that highlight key learning focuses and upcoming events. Curriculum information sessions including those run through our Little Joey's transition program, which introduce families to our educational approach.

Parent-Teacher Interviews that offer direct, personalised conversations about student progress.

St Joseph's School Community Report: Strengthening Our Home-School Partnerships

At St Joseph's, we deeply value the role of families in each child's learning journey. We believe that strong partnerships between home and school help our students to thrive—not only academically, but socially, emotionally, and spiritually. Together, we are building a community where students feel confident, supported, and empowered to grow.

Promoting Learning-Focused Communication

We are committed to keeping parents informed and engaged with their children's learning. Open and consistent communication helps strengthen the connection between school and home, and supports student success. Here's how we're making that happen:

Class Dojo posts provide real-time updates on classroom activities and learning.

Village and curriculum newsletters keep families informed about what's happening across all areas of learning.

Curriculum information sessions, including those offered through Little Joey's, help parents understand the learning focus and how to support their children at home.

Parent-Teacher Interviews offer vital one-on-one time to discuss progress, challenges, and goals.

Phone calls home ensure timely conversations when concerns arise.

Support programs like Helping Hands and the PAIR program offer additional care and connection for students and families.

Program Support Group (PSG) meetings involve parents in the planning and support for students with additional learning needs.

Creating Opportunities for Involvement

We want every parent to feel welcome and connected to our school life. When families are actively involved, it reinforces a child's sense of belonging and pride in their learning. Some of the ways we invite parent participation include:

Celebration of Learning events where student progress is showcased.

Morning welcome routines that encourage parents to come into the village and greet teachers.

Special community events such as Grandparents Morning Tea, Open Mornings, and the Book Week Parade.

Excursions and school events, with parent volunteers supporting student experiences.

The Art Show, Sports Day, and Colour Explosion Fun Run, which celebrate creativity, teamwork, and fun.

Whole School Masses, Class Masses, and celebrations like St Joseph's Feast Day that bring our faith community together.

Little Joey's transition program that supports new families and introduces them to our learning culture.

Parent Meet and Greets each term to foster connections between families and staff.

Listening to Parent Voice

We recognise and value the insights parents bring. Your voice helps shape the direction of our school, our policies, and the way we work together. Here's how we're actively listening:

All families are invited to complete the MACSSIS survey, providing important feedback on their experience at St Joseph's.

Our behaviour management policy includes and values parent input to ensure shared expectations and mutual understanding.

The Parent and Friends Association (PFA) is always open to new members, and we actively encourage participation in building a vibrant, inclusive school culture.

Together, We Grow

Partnership with families is not an 'add-on' to education—it is central to our mission. We thank all parents and carers for the many ways you support your children and contribute to our community. With your ongoing involvement, we continue to nurture confident, capable learners who are known, loved, and celebrated.

If you'd like to become more involved, or have ideas to share, we would love to hear from you.

St Joseph's – Learning and Growing Together.

Proactive communication, including phone calls home when concerns arise.

Support programs like Helping Hands and the PAIR program, which extend care beyond the classroom.

Program Support Group (PSG) meetings, ensuring students with additional needs receive coordinated support involving families.

2. Engaging Parents in the Learning Journey

Creating opportunities for families to be present, involved, and celebrated in our school life builds a strong sense of community and connection. Events and initiatives include:

Celebration of Learning days showcasing student growth and achievements.

Open morning greetings, inviting parents to connect with teachers at the start of the day.

Special events such as Grandparents Morning Tea, Book Week Parade, and the Art Show.

Participation in excursions, which fosters shared experiences and memories.

Community gatherings including Sports Day, Whole School Mass, Class Mass, and St Joseph's Feast Day.

Little Joey's transition program supporting new families and early connections.

Termly Parent Meet and Greets, which nurture ongoing relationships.

Colour Explosion Fun Run, a joyful community celebration of wellbeing and school spirit.

3. Valuing and Seeking Parent Voice

We actively seek and respect the perspectives of our families, ensuring their voices help shape the culture and practices of our school. Examples include:

MACSSIS survey participation, inviting all parents to contribute feedback for school improvement.

A behaviour management policy that explicitly values parent voice and input.

A welcoming PFA committee, open to new members and new ideas, reinforcing that parent engagement is not only welcomed but essential.

Conclusion

Our goal is to create a learning community where students feel supported by a strong partnership between home and school. By fostering open communication, meaningful involvement, and a culture of listening, we enable students to develop confidence, resilience, and a lifelong love of learning.

Parent Satisfaction

We are pleased to share the results of the 2024 MACSSIS (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools – School Improvement Surveys), which provide valuable insight into parent perceptions and engagement within our school community.

Overall Parent Satisfaction

In 2024, St Joseph's received an overall parent endorsement of 81%, a result that is well above the MACS average of 64%. This strong result reflects the positive relationships we have built with our families and their trust in the education and care we provide.

Key Areas of Strength

The survey captured feedback across several important dimensions. St Joseph's exceeded the MACS average across all areas, with notable increases from our own 2023 school-based data. Highlights include:

Rigorous Expectations – 92% positive endorsement (MACS average: 77%)

Parents strongly recognise our high expectations for student learning and behaviour.

School Engagement & Climate – Significantly above the MACS average

Parents value the welcoming and inclusive environment, as well as the clear communication and partnership with families.

Teacher–Student Relationships – Above average endorsement

Strong connections between students and staff are acknowledged and celebrated by our parent community.

School Belonging – Positive improvement from 2023

Parents report that students feel safe, known, and valued within the school environment.

Learning Disposition – Higher than MACS average

Families recognise the school's success in nurturing motivated and resilient learners.

Student Safety & Enabling Safety – High endorsement

Parents expressed confidence in the safety and wellbeing measures in place to support their children.

Student Voice – Positive growth from 2023

An increasing number of parents feel that their children have opportunities to be heard and make meaningful contributions to school life.

Catholic Identity – Strong alignment with MACS vision

Parents noted a clear connection between the school's Catholic mission and everyday school life.

Conclusion

The 2024 MACSSIS results affirm that St Joseph's is not only exceeding system-wide expectations, but also continuing to grow in ways that matter most to our families. The increased satisfaction across all domains is a testament to the hard work of our staff, the support of our families, and the shared commitment to building a thriving school community.

We are grateful to all families who took the time to provide feedback and will continue to use these insights to guide our ongoing improvement efforts in 2025.

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.stjosephsschoolmernda.org