



Melbourne Archdiocese  
Catholic Schools

# 2025

## Annual Report to the School Community



### St Joseph's School

44 Mernda Village Drive, MERNDA 3754

Principal: Julie McDougall

Web: [www.stjosephsschoolmernda.org](http://www.stjosephsschoolmernda.org)

Registration: 2060, E Number: E1394

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## Principal's Attestation

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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 2025 school year under the Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth) and the Australian Education Regulations 2023 (Cth).
- The Child Safe Standards as prescribed in Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises.

Attested on 22 May 2026

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## About this report

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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](#).

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## Governing Authority Report

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,

Dr Edward Simons

Executive Director

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

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## Vision and Mission

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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.

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## School Overview

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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.

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## Principal's Report

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Principal's Report to the School Community – 2025  
St Joseph's School Mernda

As we reflect on the 2025 school year, I am filled with gratitude for the commitment, dedication and partnership shared across our St Joseph's community. Together, staff, students and families have continued to nurture a learning environment grounded in faith, excellence and wellbeing.

This year, our strategic focus centred on five key improvement goals that have guided our teaching, learning and community engagement.

### Goal One – Literacy: Prep Phonics

Our focus on synthetic phonics in Foundation has strengthened early literacy instruction and supported students in developing strong foundational reading skills. Through explicit and systematic teaching practices, our Prep students have demonstrated growing confidence in recognising sounds, blending words and developing early reading fluency.

Staff professional learning and collaborative planning ensured consistency in practice, enabling students to experience success in their literacy learning journey from the very beginning of school.

### Goal Two – Numeracy: Counting in Year One

Improving student outcomes in counting remained a priority for our Year One students. Teachers implemented targeted numeracy strategies, hands-on learning experiences and regular assessment practices to build student confidence and understanding in number concepts.

As a result, students demonstrated increased proficiency in counting, number recognition and mathematical thinking, establishing strong foundations for future numeracy learning.

### Goal Three – Religious Education and Catholic Social Teaching

Faith continues to be at the heart of all we do at St Joseph's. This year, our Student Commissioners played an active role in contributing student voice to the design and implementation of Catholic Social Teachings across the school.

Students increasingly demonstrated their understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and our Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) Matrix through their daily actions, relationships and service to others. It has been inspiring to witness students embracing compassion, respect, justice and responsibility within our school community.

#### Goal Four – Evidence-Based Teaching Practice

Throughout 2025, staff continued to strengthen teaching practice through the implementation of Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, with a particular focus on retrieval practice in reading and mathematics.

The introduction of daily review across Years Two to Six supported students to rehearse, encode and retrieve their learning more effectively. Teachers observed increased student engagement, improved retention of knowledge and greater confidence in applying skills across learning areas.

This commitment to evidence-based practice has strengthened consistency in teaching and contributed positively to student learning outcomes across the school.

#### Goal Five – Early Identification and Support

A continued priority this year was improving student achievement through the identification and support of students at risk in the junior years from Prep to Year Two.

Through early intervention practices, targeted support programs and collaborative partnerships between teachers, learning support staff and families, students received timely assistance tailored to their individual needs. Our focus on early identification has enabled many students to make significant growth academically, socially and emotionally.

#### Looking Ahead

As we celebrate the achievements of 2025, we also acknowledge the collective effort that has made this progress possible. I sincerely thank our dedicated staff for their professionalism and care, our families for their ongoing partnership, and our students for the enthusiasm and joy they bring to our community each day.

St Joseph's continues to be a place where faith and learning flourish together, and I look forward with hope and optimism to the opportunities ahead.

With gratitude,

Julie McDougall

Principal

St Joseph's School Mernda

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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

This year we aimed to strengthen student voice and whole-school understanding of Catholic Social Teaching (CST), by empowering Student Commissioners to actively contribute to the design and implementation of CST at St Joseph's, and by embedding clear, visible links between CST and our Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) Matrix.

Intended Outcomes:

Student Commissioners confidently contribute ideas and leadership in promoting and embedding CST across the school.

The PBL Matrix is explicitly aligned with Catholic Social Teaching, with clear and age-appropriate connections evident in classroom practice.

Visual supports, including posters and audio-visual resources, are developed and displayed to enhance student understanding of CST and its connection to expected behaviours.

Students demonstrate an increased ability to understand and apply CST principles in their daily interactions and decision-making.

A shared language develops across the school community, enabling students, staff, and families to articulate the connection between the PBL Matrix and Catholic Social Teaching.

Over time, this alignment fosters a culture of faith in action, where respectful relationships, social justice, and service are visible and lived throughout the school.

### Achievements

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School continues to nurture and strengthen its Catholic identity through strong, collaborative partnerships with all members of our community and the wider Parish of Christ the Light. We have maintained meaningful dialogue with neighbouring parish communities, including St Paul the Apostle Doreen, St Mary's Whittlesea, and the Kinglake community, alongside our parish leadership and Fr Hien Vu. These partnerships reflect an authentic commitment to living out Catholic beliefs and practices through shared planning, celebration, and participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

Student leadership remains a key strength, with Year 6 students taking on roles as Stewardship, Social Justice, Caritas, and Mini Vinnies leaders. Through these roles, students have actively contributed to prayer, liturgy, and a range of social justice initiatives, demonstrating service and compassion in action. Funds raised have supported organisations such as Caritas Australia (Project Compassion), St Vincent de Paul Society (Mini Vinnies), and Children's Mission. The F.I.R.E. (Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education)

Carrier program has also been further developed, with new Year 5 students commissioned to join existing leaders. These students play a vital role in promoting awareness, understanding, and reconciliation through learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Fundraising efforts, including those connected to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day, have supported the Opening the Doors Foundation through Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria, aligning with our ongoing commitment to Child Safety Standards and school improvement priorities.

The Nazareth Centre continues to serve as a central gathering space for liturgical celebrations, sacraments, and Masses, reinforcing our shared Catholic identity. In addition, the renewed use of St Joseph's Catholic Church provides opportunities for more intimate worship experiences. School leaders regularly represent the community at parish liturgies, strengthening these important connections. Our shared entrance and gathering spaces have been thoughtfully used to reflect our Catholic identity through visual displays, prayerful focal points, and acknowledgements of Country, honouring First Nations peoples as an integral part of our community.

Prayer continues to underpin daily life at St Joseph's, with students and staff gathering regularly in sacred spaces, and all meetings grounded in prayer and reflection. Our sacramental programs remain inclusive and engaging, welcoming students from all backgrounds into meaningful encounters with Jesus and the teachings of the Church, and encouraging them to live out the Gospel through service and mission.

We are proud to be a diverse and inclusive community, enriched by a range of cultural and faith traditions that sit alongside and enhance our Catholic identity. Our vision—to be a Catholic learning community that inspires curiosity, fosters excellence, and nurtures lifelong learners in God's presence—continues to guide our work in strengthening engagement and building a dialogical, faith-filled environment.

Ongoing implementation of the renewed Religious Education curriculum remains a priority, with a strong focus on deep learning through the framework of Encounter, Engage, and Embark. Staff continue to build their capacity through professional learning, including REL Network participation and collaboration with Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS). A particular focus has been on embedding Catholic Social Teaching within the curriculum. Through collaboration with MACS staff, student commissioners, and social justice leaders, we have explored the practical application of these teachings and aligned them with our Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) Matrix. Student voice has been central to this work, which will continue to evolve as we develop a shared and visible understanding of CST across our community.

Our 2025 theme, "Shine your light in faith and learning," has shaped all aspects of school life, from staff formation to classroom practice and community engagement. In a special way, this has been enriched through our connection to the Jubilee Year 2025, where we are called to be Pilgrims of Hope in our world. This theme has invited our community to reflect on how we

carry and share hope with others, particularly through acts of kindness, service, and faith in action. It has supported the continued growth of a culture grounded in respect, inclusion, reconciliation, and stewardship, as we encourage students to be people of hope who shine their light in both their learning and their relationships, inspired by the message of the Gospel.

This commitment to faith and mission was further strengthened through our Staff Wellbeing Conference at Yarra Valley Estate. Set in a peaceful and reflective environment, staff engaged in meaningful professional learning, prayer, and meditation, allowing time to reconnect with both personal wellbeing and our shared purpose. A highlight of the conference was hearing from keynote speaker Brendan Murray, founder of the UPR Project, whose message of unconditional positive regard deeply resonated with our Catholic values. His insights challenged and inspired us to continue fostering authentic relationships, leading with empathy, and living out our mission through inclusive and compassionate outreach to all members of our community.

Communication with families remains a priority, with the school newsletter serving as a key platform for sharing prayer, reflections, and updates related to Religious Education and sacramental life. Digital platforms, including YouTube, have also been used to share significant moments such as retreat days, liturgies, and community celebrations.

St Joseph's continues to be a vibrant and welcoming faith community, where all students—Catholic and from other faith traditions—are supported to find meaning, grow in relationship with others, and engage deeply 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 being 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.

Continued Professional Learning around Catholic Social Teachings and delivery of rich

learning experiences in Religious Education

Continued the Catholic Social Teachings Project with Student Commissioners and Social Justice Leaders focussing on Linking our Positive Behaviour for Learning Matrix with Catholic Social Teachings.

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## Learning and Teaching

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

#### Goals

To improve student achievement in Literacy through a synthetic phonics focus in Foundation.

To improve student outcomes in counting in Year 1.

To use Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction to build best practice across all year levels.

To improve student achievement through identifying students who are at risk in the junior school (Prep–Year 2).

#### Intended Outcomes

If we implement Read, Write, Inc. (synthetic phonics program), then we will improve students' phonological awareness.

If we use an explicit instruction approach with retrieval practices, then we will improve the proficiency of students counting in Year 1.

If we use Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction to build best practice in retrieval, then we will improve the learning outcomes of students in reading and mathematics across all year levels.

If we implement daily review for Years 2–6, then we will support our students to rehearse, encode, and retrieve their reading and mathematics knowledge.

If we identify at-risk students using data and evidence, then we will provide interventions and support to aid their achievement in the junior years (Prep–Year 2).

If we develop protocols and expectations to identify at-risk students through TACs (Team Around the Child), then we will have a shared understanding of students' needs in the junior years (Prep–Year 2).

### Achievements

#### Achievements

St Joseph's has had a year of growth and achievement in 2025, and we are pleased to share the highlights of our learning and teaching practices. This year, we have continued to strengthen student learning, wellbeing, and engagement across all areas of the curriculum.

**Curriculum Development - Scope and Sequence** In 2025, St Joseph's designed a comprehensive restructure of the scope and sequence across all curriculum areas, guided by the MACS Vision for Instruction. This ensures that learning is purposeful, coherent, and aligned with the Victorian Curriculum 2.0, while embedding high-quality teaching practices in every lesson. The restructure, set to be implemented in 2026, strengthens the integration of inquiry-based learning, identifies essential skills and knowledge for each year level, and supports teachers in delivering learning experiences that are engaging, challenging, and connected across subjects.

Assessment and Data In 2025, our Learning and Teaching team focused on developing new literacy and numeracy assessments to enhance how we monitor and support student learning. These assessments provide teachers with clear insights into students' skills, understanding, and growth. The new assessment schedule is set to be implemented in 2026, embedding these tools consistently across classrooms. Through TACs (Team Around the Child), we identify student strengths, gaps, and implications for teaching, directly informing both intervention and extension opportunities so that all students receive appropriate support or challenge.

Read, Write, Inc. Phonics Instruction St Joseph's strengthened its approach to early literacy through the implementation of explicit phonics instruction in Prep using the Read, Write, Inc. (RWI) program. This evidence-based approach provides students with a strong foundation in decoding, fluency, and early reading skills through structured, systematic teaching. Due to the success of this implementation, RWI will be expanded across Prep to Year 2 in 2026, ensuring consistency and continuity in early literacy instruction. RWI will also serve as an intervention and support program for students in Years 1–4 who require additional help with decoding, fluency, or spelling, with targeted small-group sessions led by trained teachers and LSOs.

Ochre Teaching Resources In Mathematics, 2025 saw the introduction of Ochre as an explicit teaching resource to support high-quality, consistent instruction across classrooms. Ochre provides teachers with clear lesson structures, worked examples, and sequenced content aligned with curriculum expectations, enabling a strong focus on explicit teaching and student understanding. Building on its success in Mathematics, Ochre will be expanded into English in 2026. Additionally, the school will trial Ochre literacy resources for Years 3–6 to strengthen reading comprehension and writing across the middle and upper primary years.

Flexible Groupings - Teaching to Student Needs At St Joseph's, we use flexible groupings to ensure teaching meets students at their point of need. Students are grouped based on their current understanding and learning goals, with groups adjusted in response to content, progress, or emerging learning needs. This approach allows teachers to provide targeted instruction, offer additional support, or extend learning for those ready for greater challenges.

Targeted Interventions The Learning and Teaching team focused on designing interventions that directly support the new literacy and numeracy assessments. These interventions are carefully structured to build skills, close learning gaps, and extend high-achieving students, linking closely with assessment outcomes to provide timely and personalised support.

Phoenix Club - Extension in Mathematics Our Phoenix Club continued to provide enrichment opportunities for students who demonstrate advanced skills and a passion for mathematics. Students develop higher-order thinking skills, collaborate with peers, and extend their learning through complex problem-solving and creative application of mathematical concepts beyond the regular classroom program.

Classroom Wellbeing and the Berry Street Model Classroom practices continue to be informed by the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM), placing student wellbeing and social-emotional learning at the centre of our teaching. In 2025, staff deepened their understanding and application of BSEM strategies, integrating trauma-informed approaches and practical strategies to enhance student resilience, self-regulation, and positive relationships.

Professional Learning and Staff Development Staff development remained a priority throughout 2025. The Learning and Teaching team led focused professional learning sessions and staff development days to enhance teaching practices and pedagogy. All Foundation to Year 2 teachers undertook comprehensive professional learning in Read, Write, Inc., and all LSOs received targeted RWI training to support classroom delivery and intervention sessions.

Community Engagement In 2025, we actively sought feedback from staff, students, and families, particularly regarding mathematics teaching. Families were invited to share their perspectives on curriculum and learning experiences, helping us refine our teaching approaches, identify areas for improvement, and strengthen the partnership between school and home.

## Student Learning Outcomes

### Student Learning Outcomes

In 2025, students in Year 3 and Year 5 at St Joseph's participated in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The following provides an overview of school performance across all assessed domains, compared to state and national benchmarks.

Year 3 In Reading, the school mean of 413 was in line with the state average of 417 and above the national average of 402, with 22.2% of students achieving at the Exceeding level. In Writing, the school mean of 421 closely matched the state average of 424 and was notably above the national average of 414, with a strong 78.1% of students achieving at the Strong level. In Spelling, the school mean of 420 was above both the state (415) and national (405) averages, with 20.8% of students Exceeding - above the national figure of 16.7%. In Grammar and Punctuation, the school mean of 424 was above both the state (423) and national (408) averages, with a combined 54.2% of students performing at the Strong or Exceeding levels.

Year 5 In Reading, the school mean of 501 was comparable to the state (503) and above the national average of 492, with 21.3% of students Exceeding. In Writing, the school mean of 488 was on par with the state (494) and above the national average of 480, with 68.9% of students achieving at the Strong level. In Spelling, the school mean of 502 was above both the state (494) and national (487) averages, with 21.7% of students Exceeding. In Grammar and Punctuation, the school mean of 508 was comparable to the state (507) and above the national average of 497. In Numeracy, the school mean of 506 was above both the state

(503) and national (492) averages, with a combined 75% of students achieving at the Strong or Exceeding levels.

Overall, St Joseph's students in both Year 3 and Year 5 performed at or above state and national averages across the majority of NAPLAN domains in 2025. Literacy results were a particular strength, with spelling and writing outcomes standing out across both year levels. As we move into 2026, we are excited to build on this foundation, continuing to provide engaging, challenging, and meaningful learning opportunities that inspire every student to thrive.

<b>NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards</b>					
	<b>2025 (current year)</b>			<b>2-Year Average</b>	
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Year level</b>	<b>Mean Scale score</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Mean Scale score</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	424	55%	418	57%
	Year 5	508	66%	501	65%
Numeracy	Year 3	403	64%	400	63%
	Year 5	506	76%	490	74%
Reading	Year 3	413	69%	410	70%
	Year 5	501	72%	489	69%
Spelling	Year 3	420	68%	414	70%
	Year 5	502	80%	498	75%
Writing	Year 3	421	88%	417	83%
	Year 5	488	80%	487	76%

\*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2025 due to participation not meeting these criteria or no students were assessed. Participants include students who were assessed, including non-attempt, or those exempted from the test.

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## Student Wellbeing

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

#### Student Voice and Leadership

In 2025, the Student Commissioners continued to play an important role in strengthening student voice across our school community. Their work supported the ongoing development of a Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) environment, ensuring that student perspectives were heard, valued and included in school improvement processes.

Student Commissioners analysed school-based behaviour data, provided feedback on school-wide expectations and contributed to the refinement of the Behaviour Matrix, behaviour flowchart and school rewards system. Their work strengthened connections

between PBL expectations and Catholic Social Teaching, helping students understand how positive behaviour reflects the way we care for and support others in our community.

This work contributed to a stronger culture of inclusion, respect, responsibility and student agency across the school.

#### Positive Behaviour for Learning and Catholic Social Teaching

Throughout 2025, the school continued to revisit and refine the Positive Behaviour for Learning framework to ensure it remained clear, consistent and meaningful for students, staff and families.

The Behaviour Matrix and behaviour flowchart were reviewed collaboratively to support a shared understanding of expectations and behaviour responses across the school. The rewards system was also strengthened to ensure recognition practices reflected the values of respect, responsibility, effort and service to others.

A significant achievement during the year was the integration of Catholic Social Teaching within the PBL framework. Students developed a deeper understanding of how actions such as showing kindness, including others, making fair choices and helping those in need connect directly to both our faith values and school expectations.

#### Student Engagement and Wellbeing

Student wellbeing and engagement remained a strong focus throughout 2025. The Berry Street Education Model continued to guide classroom practices that support regulation, relationships and readiness for learning.

Across the school, staff implemented predictable routines, visual schedules, check-ins, brain breaks, pre-corrections and positive reinforcement strategies to support student participation and success. This consistent approach strengthened calm, safe and supportive learning environments where students felt known, connected and ready to learn.

#### Transition Programs

Transition programs continued to support students and families during important stages of schooling.

Prep Transition included school tours, open mornings and participation in the Little Joey's Pre-Prep program, allowing students to become familiar with school routines, learning spaces and staff prior to commencing school.

Year Six Transition supported students preparing for secondary school through transition activities, high school visits and opportunities to build confidence, independence and readiness for the next stage of learning.

These programs helped students feel supported, prepared and confident during periods of change.

## Value Added

### Professional Learning and Staff Development

Professional development remained a key priority throughout 2025, with staff engaging in ongoing learning focused on student engagement, behaviour support and effective classroom practice.

Professional learning included:

strengthening consistent Positive Behaviour for Learning practices

implementing clear classroom routines and expectations

supporting student regulation using Berry Street strategies

increasing opportunities for student participation and active engagement in learning.

This learning supported staff to build calm, consistent and engaging classrooms where students were encouraged to participate, take risks and experience success.

### Strengthening School Culture

The continued refinement of PBL practices and the integration of Catholic Social Teaching added significant value to the school community by strengthening a shared language and understanding around behaviour, relationships and inclusion.

The active involvement of Student Commissioners further enhanced opportunities for student leadership and authentic student voice within school decision-making processes.

## Student Satisfaction

Student feedback and participation throughout 2025 reflected a growing sense of belonging, safety and connection within the school community.

Students were provided with increased opportunities to contribute their ideas and perspectives through the Student Commissioners and classroom discussions. This strengthened student agency and helped students feel heard and valued within the school environment.

The consistent implementation of Positive Behaviour for Learning practices, Berry Street strategies and supportive classroom routines contributed to calm and predictable learning environments where students felt safe and supported.

Students also responded positively to the stronger connection between Catholic Social Teaching and everyday school expectations, developing a greater understanding of respect, inclusion, fairness and service to others.

Transition programs for both Prep and Year Six students supported positive student experiences during periods of change, helping students feel confident and prepared for their next stage of learning.

Looking ahead, St Joseph's School Mernda remains committed to creating learning environments where every student feels safe, known, included and ready to learn.

The 2025 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 2025, 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.

## 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. Attendance is taken am and pm  
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.

<b>Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level</b>	
Y01	88.17
Y02	90.52
Y03	86.12
Y04	87.33
Y05	87.96
Y06	87.65
Overall average attendance	87.96

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## Leadership

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To strengthen a culture of excellence across St Joseph's School Mernda through the strategic implementation of evidence-based learning and teaching initiatives, supported by consistent high-quality assessment collection and data-informed practice.

This goal aims to build collective teacher efficacy by ensuring staff engage in collaborative planning, targeted professional learning and ongoing reflection on student achievement data. Through the systematic collection, analysis and use of assessment data, teachers will be supported to monitor student growth, identify learning needs and implement responsive teaching practices that improve outcomes for all students.

A strong focus will remain on maintaining high expectations, consistent instructional practices and a shared commitment to continuous improvement in teaching and learning across the school community.

### Achievements

Throughout 2025, St Joseph's School Mernda continued to strengthen a culture of excellence through the strategic implementation of evidence-based learning and teaching initiatives across the school.

A key achievement was the establishment of consistent assessment practices across year levels. Staff engaged in the systematic collection and analysis of student achievement data in literacy and numeracy, allowing teachers to monitor growth, identify learning needs and respond with targeted teaching strategies. This strengthened the school's capacity to use data to inform planning and improve student outcomes.

Collaborative planning structures and professional learning opportunities supported staff to build consistency in instructional practice. Teachers worked together to implement agreed approaches to explicit teaching, daily review and retrieval practices, contributing to improved student engagement and confidence in learning.

The implementation of new learning and teaching initiatives was supported through ongoing coaching, professional dialogue and reflective practice. Staff demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement and high expectations for all learners.

Leadership teams also strengthened processes for tracking student progress and supporting early intervention, ensuring students requiring additional support were identified promptly and provided with targeted assistance.

This collective commitment to excellence contributed to calm, focused and purposeful learning environments where students were supported to achieve success and experience growth across all learning areas.

## **Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning**

### List Professional Learning undertaken in 2025

Professional learning remained a strong priority at St Joseph's School Mernda throughout 2025, supporting staff to strengthen evidence-based teaching practices, leadership capacity, student wellbeing and learning outcomes.

Staff participated in Read Write Inc. training, building teacher knowledge and confidence in the implementation of structured synthetic phonics instruction. This professional learning supported the school's literacy improvement agenda, particularly in the early years, and strengthened consistency in explicit reading instruction across Foundation classrooms.

School leaders, including the Principal and Deputy Principal, continued to engage in a range of leadership networks and professional forums throughout the year. These networks provided opportunities for collaboration, professional dialogue and shared learning focused on school improvement, instructional leadership and student wellbeing.

Professional learning also focused on strengthening staff understanding of the school's improvement priorities through The Why sessions, which supported teachers to connect evidence-based practice with student learning outcomes and school-wide strategic goals.

Staff engaged in Intellectual Preparation using Ochre, supporting teachers to deepen curriculum knowledge, strengthen lesson preparation and improve instructional clarity. This work contributed to greater consistency in planning and delivery across learning areas.

The continued development of St Joseph's Maths Pedagogy remained a significant focus throughout the year. Professional learning supported teachers to implement agreed approaches to mathematics instruction, explicit teaching and student engagement strategies to improve numeracy outcomes across the school.

Staff were also introduced to the school's new planning framework through the Introduction to the New Planner professional learning sessions. This work supported consistency in curriculum planning, assessment practices and the alignment of teaching and learning documentation across all year levels.

Additionally, teachers participated in DIBELS administration training, strengthening staff capability in the accurate administration and analysis of literacy assessment data. This supported the early identification of student needs and informed targeted intervention and differentiated teaching practices.

### Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning

Throughout 2025, staff also continued to strengthen their understanding and implementation of the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM). BSEM is a trauma-informed, strengths-based approach to teaching and learning that supports the diverse and complex needs of students through the development of safe, supportive and relationship-focused learning environments.

Professional learning in BSEM provided staff with practical strategies to support student wellbeing, emotional regulation and engagement in learning. The model emphasises the importance of building strong relationships, creating predictable routines and supporting students to feel safe, connected and ready to learn.

Across classrooms, staff implemented a range of Berry Street strategies including check-ins, brain breaks, co-regulation practices, visual supports and consistent classroom routines. This work strengthened student self-regulation, positive relationships and classroom engagement while supporting calm and inclusive learning environments.

Collectively, the professional learning undertaken throughout 2025 strengthened teacher practice, supported collaborative approaches to improvement and reinforced the school's commitment to excellence in teaching, learning and student wellbeing.

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2025	63
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1250.00

### Teacher Satisfaction

The 2025 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 2025, St Joseph's achieved an overall staff satisfaction rating of 86%, 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 – 98% 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 – 97% 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 – 92% 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 2025 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 2026 and beyond.

<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	
Doctorate	0
Masters	5
Graduate	3
Graduate Certificate	3
Bachelor Degree	22
Advanced Diploma	2
No Qualifications Listed	17

<b>Staff Composition</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	43
Teaching Staff (FTE)	36.7
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	33
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	24.03
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

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## Community Engagement

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To strengthen and sustain a vibrant, inclusive and faith-filled school community where students, staff and families work in partnership to promote student growth, wellbeing and achievement.

This goal focuses on deepening meaningful engagement between school and home, strengthening student voice and agency, and building a shared commitment to Catholic identity and Positive Behaviour for Learning. Through strong relationships, clear communication and collaborative practice, the school will continue to foster a sense of belonging where every member of the community feels valued, respected and connected.

A key priority will be to further embed Catholic Social Teaching and school-wide expectations into daily practice, ensuring that the values of respect, inclusion, justice and service are lived authentically across all aspects of school life.

Through this shared commitment, St Joseph's will continue to grow as a welcoming and high-performing community where every student is supported to thrive academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

### Achievements

#### 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.

Throughout 2025, we have strengthened this partnership through increased opportunities for families to engage in school life. Open Days, school expos and classroom invitations have provided authentic ways for families to see learning in action and engage directly with their child's educational journey. These experiences have helped deepen understanding of classroom practice and strengthened the connection between home and school.

The continued success of the Little Joey's Pre-Prep Program has also supported strong early engagement with families, providing valuable transition experiences for children entering Foundation. This program has helped build familiarity, confidence and positive relationships prior to the commencement of school, ensuring students begin their learning journey with a strong sense of belonging.

Communication with families has been a key focus, with ongoing review and refinement of communication processes to ensure information is timely, clear and accessible. A range of communication platforms and strategies have been explored and strengthened to improve consistency and enhance engagement across the community.

A dedicated leadership role has also been established to oversee community engagement, ensuring a coordinated and strategic approach to building strong relationships with families. This role has supported a more intentional focus on connection, communication and collaboration across the school.

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.

Strengthened attendance and participation at school events, celebrations, liturgies and parent information sessions, reflecting increased family engagement in school life.

Improved two-way communication between school and families, with increased opportunities for feedback, surveys and informal consultation to inform school decision-making.

Greater visibility of student learning through classroom displays, digital platforms and learning showcases, supporting families to better understand curriculum expectations and student progress.

Expansion of volunteering opportunities for families, including classroom support, excursions, fundraising and community events, strengthening partnerships across the school.

Increased participation of families in student learning conversations, including goal setting, learning reviews and reporting processes that support shared understanding of student progress.

Strengthened community culture through school events such as celebrations of learning, cultural days, liturgies and special events that bring families together in meaningful ways.

Enhanced transition processes (Prep and Year 6), with stronger family engagement in orientation sessions, information evenings and transition activities.

Development of more consistent and accessible communication tools (e.g. newsletters, apps, platforms), improving clarity and connection between school and home.

Stronger student–family–school partnerships in wellbeing support, including collaboration around attendance, behaviour and learning needs.

Increased sense of belonging reported by families, reflecting stronger relationships, visibility of leadership and approachable staff culture.

Greater engagement of families in Catholic identity and faith life of the school through liturgies, prayer opportunities and community celebrations.

Establishment of structured community engagement leadership or coordination role, ensuring a more intentional and strategic approach to family partnership initiatives.

## 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.

As we continue to grow together, we remain committed to strengthening relationships, listening to our community and ensuring every child is known, supported and challenged to achieve their best in all aspects of their learning journey.

## Parent Satisfaction

### Overall Parent Satisfaction

In 2025, St Joseph's received an overall parent endorsement of 83%, a result well above the MACS average of 64%. This strong outcome reflects the continued strengthening of relationships with families and the growing confidence in the education, wellbeing and opportunities provided for students.

### Key Areas of Strength

The survey captured feedback across several important dimensions. St Joseph's continued to exceed the MACS average across all areas, with further positive growth from 2024 school-based data. Highlights include:

**Rigorous Expectations – 93% positive endorsement (MACS average: 77%)**

Parents strongly recognise our high expectations for student learning and behaviour, with a continued upward trend reflecting consistency in teaching and learning practices.

**School Engagement & Climate – Strongly above MACS average**

Families continue to value the welcoming, inclusive and connected school environment, as well as the strong partnership between school and home.

**Teacher–Student Relationships – High positive endorsement**

Strong, respectful and supportive relationships between staff and students remain a consistent strength, highly valued by families.

**School Belonging – Continued positive growth from 2024**

Parents report an increasing sense that students feel safe, known and valued within the school community.

**Learning Disposition – Above MACS average with improvement trend**

Families continue to recognise the school's success in developing motivated, resilient and engaged learners.

Student Safety & Enabling Safety – High endorsement maintained

Parents expressed strong confidence in the systems and practices in place to support student safety, wellbeing and care.

Student Voice – Ongoing positive growth from 2024

An increasing number of families report that students are being provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute ideas and participate in school life and decision-making.

Catholic Identity – Strong alignment with MACS vision

Parents continue to identify a clear and authentic connection between Catholic Social Teaching and the everyday life of the school.

Conclusion

The 2025 MACSSIS results affirm that St Joseph's continues to strengthen as a high-performing and values-driven school community. The sustained growth across all domains reflects the commitment of staff, the partnership of families and the shared focus on improving outcomes for every child.

We sincerely thank all families who contributed feedback. These insights are deeply valued and will continue to guide our ongoing improvement and community engagement work into 2026 and beyond.

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## Financial Performance

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The school's financial performance information and a report of the financial activities of the school's boarding premises (if applicable) have been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au).

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at [www.stjosephsschoolmernda.org](http://www.stjosephsschoolmernda.org)