



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

2023

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

Attested on 20 May 2024

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

When Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) launched our inaugural strategic plan MACS 2030: Forming Lives to Enrich the World just over a year ago, I spoke about the need for our whole organisation to reflect on the biggest challenges that confront us, and to work at speed to find practical, ambitious, student-centred solutions.

As a relatively new governing authority, 2023 set us on the path to achieving our first goals, as we focussed our efforts on building strong foundations for success. The four pillars of MACS2030 – Inspired by Faith; Flourishing Learners; Enabled Leaders; and Enriched Communities - serve to guide our work on how we achieve our strategic intent.

When we surveyed our teachers in late 2022, over 80 per cent told us that they want access to quality teaching and assessment resources. So in January 2023, we secured a system-wide licence for MACS primary and secondary schools to access the Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) assessment suite. The inclusion of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Survey allows schools to monitor the wellbeing of their students and target resourcing to specific areas of need. Together, these tools provide a coherent and systematic approach to student assessment.

In partnership with Ochre Education, we began work on F-6 Mathematics curriculum resources, being developed in a phased approach over three years, and delivered the first tranche for F-2. A key consideration in developing the materials is ensuring teachers retain autonomy to tailor curriculum implementation to meet the individual and local needs of students.

This is an exciting development for our MACS community, clearly demonstrating the commitment we all share to delivering the best possible education opportunities for our 120,000 students and supporting our 10,000 classroom teachers to be the very best that they can be.

Archbishop Peter commissioned a comprehensive review of Religious Education curriculum, the first in over a decade. It offers us some challenges, but fundamentally is a hope-filled report that invites a path of ongoing work to develop a new RE curriculum for all Catholic schools. We continued Working Together in Mission with Parish Priests throughout the Archdiocese, including through regular roundtable discussions.

Across greater Melbourne, one in five students attend a Catholic school and 2023 saw steady growth in enrolments across our system, demonstrating the value families place on a Catholic education and the high quality, holistic education MACS schools provide.

As a system of schools, we can be better together, reducing the administrative load on our schools and freeing our teachers and principals to focus on what they do best.

I would like to pay tribute to our MACS school and office colleagues who have worked so hard to achieve our goals. We look forward to further strengthening those partnerships as we work together to deliver an education that inspires young people to enrich the world.

Yours sincerely

Dr Edward Simons

Executive Director

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

Vision and Mission

St. 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

We began our year of 2023 with the theme of "Fire to Flourish". The theme is an opportunity to pay our respects as a school community to our country, honour those who work tirelessly and to share the stories of our community, especially with the knowledge of what came before in 2022.

Year 4 embarked on an immersive exploration of Australia's gold rush era at Sovereign Hill, delving into history while fostering camaraderie. Meanwhile, Year 5 ventured into the serene wilderness of Camp Toolangi, where they honed leadership abilities amidst nature's challenges, strengthening bonds and resilience. Year 6 embraced coastal wonders at Phillip Island, blending adventure with discovery, crafting lasting friendships, and navigating new horizons, fostering holistic growth and memorable learning experiences for all.

The incoming 2024 prep students were welcomed into the school community through the engaging Little Joeys Prep Transition program, which provided a nurturing environment for them to form bonds and gain familiarity with the prep experience. While the future preps students participated in fun and engaging learning the parents/guardians participated in informative sessions tailored to equip them with valuable insights into their child's educational journey ahead. Through this holistic approach, both students and caregivers were empowered to embark on this new chapter with confidence, establishing connections and gathering essential knowledge for a seamless transition into school life.

In line with the school's strategic plan of building capacity to lead, the school leadership team participated in the Agile Leadership program. The program is an intensive, 12-week online workshop designed by Dr Simon Breakspear to create high-performing school leadership teams and protocols aimed at supporting schools and leaders to navigate the complexities.

St. Joseph's School has embraced a forward-thinking approach to education by actively participating in the Leading the Learning Collective alongside other institutions, fostering a culture of collaboration aimed at enhancing feedback mechanisms and advancing evidence-based learning practices. Through this collective effort, St. Joseph's remains committed to continuously refining its educational strategies, ensuring that teaching methodologies are grounded in the latest research and tailored to meet the evolving needs of students. By engaging with peers in the educational community, the school reinforces its dedication to providing a dynamic learning environment where evidence-based practices flourish, ultimately enriching the educational experience for all students at St. Joseph's.

The school continues to be committed to nurturing a comprehensive and enriching educational experience for its students by embedding a range of innovative programs and initiatives into its curriculum. Through initiatives like Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU), the school is dedicated to fostering a deeper comprehension and proficiency in mathematics among its students. Additionally, St. Joseph's actively participates in the Maths Intense Partnerships initiative with Melbourne Archdiocese and Catholic Schools (MACS), leveraging collaborative efforts to enhance mathematical learning outcomes. Complementing these efforts, the school integrates programs such as SMART Spelling, Seven-steps to writing, Positive Behaviour for Learning, and the Resilience Program, which collectively contribute to a holistic approach to education, fostering academic excellence, personal growth, and social-emotional well-being among its student body.

The culmination of another successful school year at St. Joseph's was marked by the spectacular whole-school production titled "Space Jump," where the entire student body came together to showcase their talents and creativity. Over two captivating sessions, students from all grades participated in this engaging production, which followed the thrilling journey of four students stranded in outer space. As they navigated through the cosmos, encountering a myriad of extraterrestrial creatures, they found allies in the enigmatic Men In Black, aiding their quest to return safely to Earth. Through vibrant performances, intricate sets, and spirited teamwork, "Space Jump" not only entertained but also underscored the values of collaboration, resilience, and imagination that are integral to the St. Joseph's community, leaving a lasting impression on performers and audience members alike.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate Marita Richardson on her time here at St Joseph's. Marita joined the St Joseph's community in 2014 and has been a dedicated and passionate leader of our community since then. Marita has led the staff, students and families on an educational journey for over 9 years and her impact on the community is immeasurable. We wish Marita all the best in health and happiness in her future endeavours.

I look forward to working in partnership on your child's learning journey.

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 worked 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. We 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. This year saw the introduction of the F.I.R.E. (Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education) Carrier program. 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 were officially commissioned into their roles and have been integral in raising awareness and promoting

education across our school community. This initiative was to support our School Review process and the recommendation that came from this around the Child Safety Standard.

The Nazareth Centre, which is the place of worship both for our Parish and our School Community, has been reimagined and developed to become 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. We have continued to revise, design and install icons, images, prayer tables and statues to enhance our stance as a Catholic School. 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 has continued to be a focal point of connection with and to our community. Staff have worked closely with the REL to build their capacity to design and implement Godly Play and Christian Meditation practises to enhance opportunities to engage in prayer as well as designing and implementing engaging and relevant prayer during Sacred Space time on a daily basis. 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. This approach has naturally followed on from the Pedagogy of Encounter approach and 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 Meeting. We engaged in a wonderful day of learning and formation around this in Term 2 where our MACS leaders facilitated to build the capacity of our staff to teach religious education. This year saw a focus on feedback where staff were provided with written feedback based on our Feedback Schedule around Learning Intentions & Success Criteria to continue to improve engagement and student learning outcomes.

We have been able to continue our 2023 Sacramental program, working with our Parish Team and meeting the needs of our families across the parish who wanted their children to receive the Sacraments. The Parish and Religious Education Leaders were able to meet regularly to deliver a sacramental program to our community. Father Hien Vu has continued to work collaboratively with us, warmly inviting our community to engage and providing opportunities for our staff to work with him to enhance the catholic identity of our school and parish.

Our 2023 theme 'Fire to Flourish' has been a driving force in all that we have done at St Joseph's throughout 2023 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.

2023 also enabled us to be part of a rigorous review process from Melbourne Archdiocese and Catholic Schools (MACS). This process created an opportunity to

develop a new School Improvement Framework (SIF) and provided an opportunity for self-reflection, self-assessment, and review in our school. The SIF promotes an evidence and research-based approach to planning for improvement within our school context and across all spheres (or domains) of a Catholic school. St Joseph's incorporates ongoing monitoring, deep learning and focus on our impact to enable continuous school improvement.

Our reviewer, Christine Wakeling, provided some extremely positive feedback and insights after the intensive review process which validates the commitment and work of our staff:

The school's religious dimension permeates the school's culture and environments. Its Catholic identity is clearly expressed in the school's liturgical and Sacramental life, symbols, iconography, rituals, Christian Meditation, scripture, stories, outreach and regular prayer. These exposures are designed to stimulate and enable students and the school community to encounter the sacred in relevant, plausible and compelling ways. Leaders and teachers have strengthened their ability to co-construct prayer experiences. Each village has its own sacred space where students, teachers, support staff and parents gather to listen, contemplate and pray. The charism of St Joseph provides inspiration for the school's vision and mission.

Strong staff support for Recontextualisation (ECSI 2022) and above average MACSSIS data for Catholic Identity are reflective of the religious leadership of leaders and teachers who share responsibility for the school's inclusive multi-faith community. Similarly, improved families' and students' perception data for Catholic Identity and discussion with parents and students demonstrate the success of the school's intention to ensure that the integration of faith, life and culture is visible. The school's efforts to create a culturally safe environment is evident in its F.I.R.E. (Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education) Carrier Project to promote respect, fairness and inclusion for Aboriginal people. The ECSI student data for Recontextualisation indicates the challenge of supporting students to develop their understanding of the Christian faith, in encounter and conversation, without reducing the faith to its ethical aspects alone.

Professional learning is a key enabler for staff faith formation and to develop teachers' capacity to confidently use the Pedagogy of Encounter to design learning experiences for students, create an environment for dialogue and consider possibilities for learning that will progress student learning in line with achievement standards. Facilitated planning, common planning documentation, a scope and sequence for religious education and conceptual frameworks further support teachers to plan curriculum and assessment. The use of thinking tools supports the implementation of the RE curriculum. Dialogue with the diversity of this multi-faith community provides opportunity for the students to understand other perspectives. As a result of staff turnover and the interruptions of the pandemic, the school recognises the

importance of on-going professional learning, induction and reflection to maintain the momentum achieved to date.

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 continued growth in Staff Leadership Relationships, Instructional Leadership, Feedback, School Leadership, Support in Teams, Collective Efficacy and Catholic Identity. All of which contribute to the continued growth and development of the Education in Faith Sphere.

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

Literacy

Throughout 2023, 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 2023, we saw 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 Six students - opportunities for advanced readers to explore challenging and enriching literature together.

Extension writing group (Scribble Squad) for students in Years Four to Six

Mathematics

In 2023, we were fortunate to have been successful in our application for the MACS "Mathematics Leadership Grant," receiving \$20,000 to implement improvement in Mathematics teaching and learning in our school.

The Numeracy Leader appointment was increased to two days per week, a Numeracy Intervention role was created (two days per week) and a Maths team was formed, consisting of the Numeracy Leader and one classroom teacher representative for each year-level team.

Throughout the year, Mathematics was viewed as a whole-school priority. MACS Regional Learning Consultants for Mathematics worked with the Numeracy Leader to plan and facilitate a school closure day, focusing on Mathematical Dialogue. By engaging in this professional learning, staff worked towards the following objectives: analysing pre-data based on students' Mathematical Discourse, identifying why creating a culture of discourse within Mathematics is important and exploring some instructional routines/strategies that can support students to engage in Mathematical Discourse.

Mathematical Dialogue formed the basis for year-long inquiry. Led by the Maths team, teachers conducted a lesson study, with the intent to increase purposeful and rigorous dialogue within their Mathematics lessons. Teachers chose to experiment with the implementation of sentence stems, which provided scaffolding for students to articulate their mathematical thinking, fostering richer discussions and deeper understanding. This learning was documented and collated into a comprehensive Mathematic Dialogue Framework - a framework we will begin to embed as a key pedagogical strategy in 2024.

To support our Mathematics teaching and learning practices, we assembled specialised 'Mathematics Toolboxes' for each class. These toolboxes contain a curated selection of resources designed to enhance learning experiences. Professional learning sessions were conducted using these resources, focusing on evidence-based games and activities.

In continuing to address the diverse learning needs of our students, we introduced several programs to support students in Mathematics:

The Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU) Program is a highly effective, intensive, evidence-based teaching program designed to help Grade 1 students build their foundational Numeracy skills. It is delivered by highly qualified and experienced teachers, who have received specialised training and utilise a range of strategies, such as one-on-one tutoring and small group work, to help students build their mathematical knowledge.

The Getting Ready In Numeracy (GRIN) Program is an early intervention program that has been designed to help students in Grades 3-6 develop their mathematical thinking and problem-solving skills. It is delivered by trained GRIN tutors, with the support of the GRIN Coordinator and classroom teachers. The main objective of the GRIN Program is to increase students' confidence and positive regard towards learning in Mathematics by exposing them to key mathematical concepts, prior to exploring these ideas within a classroom setting.

The Phoenix Club and the Phoenix Junior Club are extension programs for students in Grades 4-6 and Prep-Grade 3, respectfully. Students in these clubs meet weekly to extend their problem-solving skills. These groups prepared to compete in national competitions that test students' problem-solving skills and mathematical abilities. The Phoenix Club and the Phoenix Junior Club aim to provide opportunities for our high-achieving students to develop their talents and engage in challenging and exciting learning experiences.

Student Learning Outcomes

In 2023, St. Joseph's Mernda underwent an extensive school review. Some of the strengths highlighted as part of this review included:

A dynamic shared vision, reflective of a clearly proclaimed Catholic identity, permeates the school's pursuit of excellence in teaching, learning and wellbeing, commitment to innovation and success for all learners.

Strong sense of connectedness and belonging, nurtured by a deliberate focus on creating safe, welcoming environments, developing positive relationships that respect diversity and amplifying student voice, student agency and student leadership.

Empowerment to lead and innovate cultivated in targeted, research-based professional learning within and beyond the school.

Tailored intervention and environments to support students that is a testament to the school's responsiveness to students' wellbeing and learning needs and capacity to improve outcomes.

Engagement with educational networks to improve practice, with the parish and parish schools in partnerships designed to strengthen community and family engagement and support parents as the first educators in faith of their children.

These strengths highlight our ongoing commitment to achieving student growth for all of our learners - not by chance, but by design. In 2023, we rolled out a new conceptual framework, tailored to the needs of our learners. This conceptual framework was developed with authentic staff voice, and linked to the curriculum. With a termly focus on Identity, Society, Change & Innovation and Systems, our learners were exposed to a wide range of curriculum areas to meet their learning needs.

Our pedagogical approach remained aligned with the tiered systems of support, ensuring high quality universal practices for all learners, whilst using data to inform Tier 2 and Tier 3 learning support.

Ongoing professional development was provided to our teaching staff, and a consistent framework was implemented to improve teaching and learning by providing feedback around Tier 1 practice, planning and documentation.

NAPLAN

Percentage of students scoring at each proficiency standard in 2023 NAPLAN assessments.

YEAR THREE

Reading

Needs additional support: 5.2%

Developing: 15.5%

Strong: 53.4%

Exceeding: 25.9%

Writing

Needs additional support: 1.7%

Developing: 23.7%

Strong: 66.1%

Exceeding: 8.5%

Spelling

Needs additional support: 3.4%

Developing: 15.5%

Strong: 62.1%

Exceeding: 22.4%

Grammar & Punctuation

Needs additional support: 11.5%

Developing: 30.8%

Strong: 55.8%

Exceeding: 1.9%

Numeracy

Needs additional support: 11.3%

Developing: 24.5%

Strong: 52.8%

Exceeding: 11.3%

YEAR FIVE

Reading

Needs additional support: 5.2%

Developing: 15.5%

Strong: 53.4%

Exceeding: 25.9%

Writing

Needs additional support: 1.7%

Developing: 23.7%

Strong: 66.1%

Exceeding: 8.5%

Spelling

Needs additional support: 3.4%

Developing: 15.5%

Strong: 58.6%

Exceeding: 22.4%

Grammar & Punctuation

Needs additional support: 5.2%

Developing: 24.1%

Strong: 62.1%

Exceeding: 13.8%

Numeracy

Needs additional support: 6.9%

Developing: 24.1%

Strong: 55.2%

Exceeding: 13.8%

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	411	58%
	Year 5	501	76%
Numeracy	Year 3	403	64%
	Year 5	492	69%
Reading	Year 3	402	72%
	Year 5	505	79%
Spelling	Year 3	407	60%
	Year 5	506	81%
Writing	Year 3	398	72%
	Year 5	486	75%

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

Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) continued to build momentum throughout 2023 with many strides made in student, teacher and community involvement. In the PBL space, we developed upon our PBL lessons with an aim to boost engagement and purpose. Through the implementation of PBL lessons and social stories, students were able to see appropriate examples of expected behaviours which provided students with the necessary tools to understand and embody our school's expectations. The continuation of positive reinforcement, driven through our Dojo point system, continued to inspire students to uphold our school expectations, with many students utilising their Dojo's to serve as helpers in other classes. Throughout 2023, many Double Dojo days proved to be highly successful in furthering positive student behaviour. At a staff level, the St Joseph's staff focused on pre-corrections as a strategy to set students up for success, outlining clear expectations before instructions are given. Looking different across year levels, this took place in many different forms such as videos, verbal instructions and visual representation of instructions. Active

supervision was further explored as a preventative approach to behaviour both inside and outside of the classroom, with teachers engaging in professional development in this area.

The student commissioners were integral partners in the evaluation and development of PBL at St Joseph's in 2023. They continued to provide feedback on strategies, rewards and preventative approaches to behaviour. Their involvement included learning walks, creation of social stories and feedback on PBL lessons.

Our continued participation in the Resilience Project program provided engaging lessons across year levels to support the emotional wellbeing of our students. Students and teachers developed upon their understanding of gratitude, empathy and mindfulness. Students built upon their emotional literacy and resilience skills, essential skills in navigating life challenges.

The transition process in 2023, especially for our 2024 Prep and year six students proved effective in nurturing collaborative relationships. The Little Joey transition program provided support to both students and families, allowing opportunities to become familiar with our school environment and community. Prep 2024 families were engaged in exploring and providing feedback on our PBL behaviour matrix, whilst children participated in activities centred around introducing our 3 school wide expectations.

Value Added

Student commissioners

PBL

Resilience Project

Transition (Prep & Year six)

Pre-corrections / active supervision

Student Satisfaction

The transition process in 2023, especially for our 2024 Prep and year six students proved effective in nurturing collaborative relationships. The Little Joey transition program provided support to both students and families, allowing opportunities to become familiar with our school environment and community. Prep 2024 families were engaged in exploring and providing feedback on our PBL behaviour matrix, whilst children participated in activities centred around introducing our 3 school wide expectations.

Student Attendance

Student attendance is monitored daily with parent/guardians contacted if the student has a non explained absence with a text message and follow up phone call.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	88.3%
Y02	88.7%
Y03	87.3%
Y04	88.5%
Y05	89.4%
Y06	88.1%
Overall average attendance	88.4%

Leadership

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

Our 2023 theme 'Fire to Flourish' has been the theme that has guided all that we have done at St Joseph's, Fire to Flourish builds upon the previous years themes and encourages the continued building a culture of respect, inclusivity and reconciliation in our community. This theme has also permeated through our learning and teaching as we engage in our catholic traditions, catholic social teachings and connection to country and our First Nations People with a Stewardship lens.

Professional learning continued to be a high priority and focus for St Joseph's in 2023. A Team approach to leadership saw the development of leadership teams such as the Positive Behaviour for Learning Team, Literacy and Numeracy Teams, Religious Educations Team, and Community Teams. These teams were developed with the focus on improving the quality of teaching to improve student learning, engagement, and wellbeing.

Participation within the Leading the Learning Collective provided opportunities for staff to build their own capacity, but also further embedded Evidence Based Learning into St Joseph's. This Collective allowed leaders to attend professional development days alongside other associated catholic schools to learn with and from one another. The Collective had a

major focus on the understanding of Feedback and how feedback can improve student engagement and learning.

Weekly meetings with the Parish Priest, Leadership Team, and Professional Learning Teams promoted and maintained a consistent approach that was transparent. These meetings ensure that charters, policies, and structures were current and were focussed on collegial discussions and professional development.

2023 also enabled us to be part of a rigorous review process from Melbourne Archdiocese and Catholic Schools (MACS). This process created an opportunity to develop a new School Improvement Framework (SIF) and provided an opportunity for self-reflection, self-assessment, and review in our school. The SIF promotes an evidence and research-based approach to planning for improvement within our school context and across all spheres (or domains) of a Catholic school. St Joseph's incorporate ongoing monitoring, deep learning and focus on our impact to enable continuous school improvement.

As part of our Review process, we also completed the Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Compliance Review. This process ensures compliance in the areas of School Governance, Enrolment, Curriculum and Student Learning, Student Welfare, Staff Employment and School infrastructure.

From the review process, our MACS assigned Reviewer, Christine Wakeling was able to identify and highlight various significant strengths of our school:

A dynamic shared vision, reflective of a clearly proclaimed Catholic identity, permeates the school's pursuit of excellence in teaching, learning and wellbeing, commitment to innovation and success for all learners.

Strong sense of connectedness and belonging, nurtured by a deliberate focus on creating safe, welcoming environments, developing positive relationships that respect diversity and

amplifying student voice, student agency and student leadership.

Empowerment to lead and innovate cultivated in targeted, research-based professional learning within and beyond the school.

Tailored intervention and environments to support students that is a testament to the school's responsiveness to students' wellbeing and learning needs and capacity to improve outcomes.

Engagement with educational networks to improve practice, with the parish and parish schools in partnerships designed to strengthen community and family engagement and support parents as the first educators in the faith of their children.

Finally, it is with great sadness that St Joseph's wishes a fond farewell to Marita Richardson our Principal. Marita has been with St Joseph's Mernda since 2014. Marita leaves us to pursue other roles in education. Marita has led the staff, students and families on an educational journey for over 9 years and her impact on the community will be felt for years to come.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning

List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023

Professional Learning Activities via various platforms including webinars etc, that staff has undertaken in 2023 are:

- Maintaining and developing a School Emergency Management Plan
- Mathematics – Math Intensive Partnerships (MACS)
- Leading the Learning Collective
- Religious Education Network
- Social Justice and Catholic Identity
- Targeted Assessment
- Coaching sessions
- Intervention Framework
- Handling Difficult Conversations
- Record of Oral Language Analysis
- Discovery Based Inquiry
- Pat R and Pat M Analysis
- Wellbeing Networks
- Early Childhood Networks
- Learning Diversity Networks
- Mernda Community Networks
- First Aid Training
- Literacy and Numeracy Networks
- Deputy Principal Networks
- Principal Networks

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Principal and Parish Priest Networks · Family School Partnerships Collective · Curriculum planning · NCCD professional development · Understanding the Achievement Standards in the RE curriculum · NAPLAN online professional learning and analysis workshop · Cert 4-LSO · PBL Tier 1 training · PBL Tier 2 Training · Cyber Safety · Duty of Care · Mandatory Reporting · Reportable Conduct 	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	52
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$461.00

Teacher Satisfaction

Teacher Satisfaction

Staff leadership relationships

School % Positive Endorsement : 97%

CEM Average School Comparison % Positive: 80%

Feedback

School % Positive Endorsement: 73%

CEM Average School Comparison % Positive: 39%

Psychological safety

School % Positive Endorsement: 94%
CEM Average School Comparison % Positive: 65%

Professional learning

School % Positive Endorsement: 88%
CEM Average School Comparison % Positive: 62%

Collaboration in teams

School % Positive Endorsement: 87%
CEM Average School Comparison % Positive: 67%

Collective efficacy

School % Positive Endorsement: 92%
CEM Average School Comparison % Positive: 74%

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	10.0%
Graduate	0.0%
Graduate Certificate	10.0%
Bachelor Degree	60.0%
Advanced Diploma	3.3%
No Qualifications Listed	16.7%

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	40
Teaching Staff (FTE)	33.4
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	21
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	24.4
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

During 2023, St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School has continued to strive for connectedness to the wider community and maintain inclusivity with students, families, the Christ the Light Parish and local community businesses. The school continues its dedication to the community with the ongoing appointment of a Community Engagement Leader, whose main purpose is to work towards strengthening the partnership between school, home and the local Mernda community.

The Parents and Friends Association (PFA) was functioning and thriving in 2023, with a total fundraising profit of almost \$9,000 for the year. With the guidance of the Community Engagement Leader and wider school leadership, the PFA was able to organise a myriad of events that contributed to this great fundraising amount, whilst keeping in line with the School Vision and the needs of the community. Some of these events included the Bunnings BBQ and Pyjama Day.

The school's major fundraising event was the very popular Colour Explosion Fun Run, seeing students raise money for prizes and participating in the colourful event, all with the support of Australian School and Club Fundraising Specialists. This organisation provided the online platform for fundraising, coloured powder and inflatable banner to make the event possible, and the prizes that rewarded all fundraising efforts.

2023 saw the introduction of Zooper Dooper Fridays (Terms 1 & 4) and Chocolate Fridays (Terms 2 & 3), which acted as an ongoing minor fundraiser during lunch time each Friday. With items being sold for \$1 each, this was an event students very much looked forward to each week.

In 2023 the school moved away from the traditional Mother's Day morning tea and Father's Day breakfast events to introduce the Mother's and Father's Day Dinners, to celebrate all the special men and women in our students' lives. These events proved popular by the sheer number of attendees. It was great to see parents and grandparents socialising with each other and enjoying a delicious meal with their children.

St. Joseph's also saw the return of some family helpers within the Village learning spaces, after three years of restrictions due to COVID-19 safety regulations. These helpers were able to support students in reading practise, oral language play in the junior levels, and assisting with creative artistic endeavours.

Celebration of Learning was reintroduced as a way that year levels could share their learning with the wider school community in a school assembly style presentation. This looked different to the pre-COVID Celebrations of Learning as we have grown in student enrolments and could no longer fit the whole school into one space. Instead, there was a Junior Celebration of Learning with the Year Preps to Year Threes, and a Senior Celebration of Learning for the Year Fours to Year Sixes. This became a great opportunity for families to come and see what their children have been learning at school, and for the students to practise their speaking and presenting skills.

Our 2023 School Production "Space Jump: The Musical" was another huge success for St. Joseph's, with many of the students thriving on the stage and creating a primary school memory they will never forget. With two performances over one evening, Cast A and Cast B were able to dazzle the audience and evoke tears of joy from extremely proud families. The production night provided a great opportunity for our local feeder schools to come and promote their facilities and encourage Year 7 enrolments from our Year 5 and 6 families. St. Joseph's was pleased to welcome representatives from Marymede Catholic College and St. Monica's College to meet our school community and enjoy the show.

The school newsletter continued to be published throughout 2023, containing updates and highlights from each of the year levels. Recipients of disposition awards were shared with the community via the newsletter after being present at Celebration of Learning. Towards the end of 2023, the newsletter began to be shared in a format that allowed for translation into other

languages. This was to make it more accessible for the school's many families who read and speak languages other than English at home.

The school welcomed families for a whole community event at the end of the year with the Farewell Barbecue organised by the PFA. Following the End of Year Mass, families were invited to join the children and staff for a sausage sizzle with drinks, popcorn and chocolate. Fun activities were arranged where all community members could participate in pony rides, face painting, zorb ball games and sports activities. It was a great way to end a fantastic school year and farewell Marita as the departing principal.

Throughout the year, the community was invited into the school in a variety of other ways, including:

- Whole school Masses
- Sacramental Program
- “Open Hour” afternoons
- St. Joseph’s Feast Day
- Athletics Carnival
- Stations of the Cross
- Book Week Parade and Grandparents Morning Tea

Parent Satisfaction

Due to the lack of MACSSIS participation by the school community data was not validated and collected.

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