



Our Lady of The Way Primary School

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Catholic Schools
Parramatta Diocese

2024 Annual School Report



Introduction

About the Annual School Report

Our Lady of The Way Primary School is registered by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) as a member of the Catholic system of schools in the Diocese of Parramatta.

The Annual School Report provides parents and carers and the wider school community with fair, accurate and objective information about various aspects of school performance and development. The Report describes the achievement of school development priorities in 2024 and gives information about the next years priorities.

This Report is a legislative requirement under the Schools Assistance Act 2008 and the Education Amendment Act 2004.

The information in this Report is complemented by the school website where other school publications and news can be viewed or obtained from the school.

Key Messages

From the Principal Mr. Phillip Kapitanow

I am pleased to present the Annual School Report for Our Lady of the Way Primary School, Emu Plains. It represents the collaborative efforts of the students, staff and families of this vibrant Catholic faith learning community.

Education at Our Lady of the Way Primary School is based on developing and nurturing the whole child in the Catholic tradition in order for the students to become lifelong learners who interact positively with others and with the world around them.

We are a Christ-centred Catholic faith and learning community. As Catholics who live by the Gospel values of faith, hope and love, we believe integrity is essential in living the values of being a safe and inclusive community. We are a community who looks to Mary, Our Lady of the Way, to guide us on our journey and help us on our way, as we live out the Catholic values to be the best people we can be.

We aim to bring to life our school motto: 'To Act Justly, To Love Tenderly, and To Walk Humbly with our God' (Micah 6:8). This is the philosophy that drives all that we do and the way that we do it. We believe in the love of God and aim to foster the love of one another. We encourage respect of self and others through positive relationships and foster the values, which Jesus lived, such as service, mercy, reconciliation and compassion. We celebrate the value and individuality of each person and hope to develop young people who will go on to make a real difference in our world.

We believe that our purpose and identity flows strongly from within the parish of Our Lady of the Way and consider our work here as being integral to the broader parish and church community.

The Annual School Report is a government initiative that allows our parents and carers to gain information about some of the structures and performance of our school and its role in the wider community. It is, however, a written document that cannot replace that very real and human need for personal interaction. We invite all parents and carers who wish to discuss any aspect of this report to make contact and work with us collaboratively.

From the Parents/Carers

Parents and carers were an important and valued part of the school community. The role of families has been crucial in supporting student learning and wellbeing throughout the year. Parents and carers were encouraged to participate in the life of the school including involvement in liturgies, excursions, parades and celebrations.

I am pleased with the level of communication from the school about day-to-day matters and specific information relating to student learning. We have focused on improving communication pathways between school and home and will continue this work to ensure parents and carers have the information they require.

Parents and carers were formally surveyed in a centrally-administered feedback system that provided information to staff about their child's experience and their own experience of the school. The results were analysed to see what areas of the school could be improved. These will be action points for the school Leadership Team in 2025.

The Parents & Friends provide a valuable link between school and home. The group actively supports the school through fundraising initiatives and by bringing the community together to share ideas for school improvement.

Parents and carers were formally surveyed in a centrally administered feedback system that provided information to staff about their child's experience and their own experience of school. The results will be used to look at further improvements at the school.

From the Students

Students got to experience a variety of learning and growth opportunities throughout 2024. These included sport, social justice outreach, religious celebrations, excursions, incursions, whole school shows and community events.

Students are encouraged to take an active role in their own learning. Student / staff relationships are crucial to achieving learning outcomes and the social and emotional development of the whole child. We continue to emphasis the importance of these relationships and the positive impacts they have on students development.

Our Year 6 student leaders played a significant role across all areas of the life of our school. We are proud of the leadership skills developed by our Year 6 leaders as they actively work within the school. An emphasis was placed on all students being given a voice. Students in Years 3 to 6 were formally surveyed in a centrally-administered feedback system that provided information to staff about the students and their experience of school. The results of the survey will be used for future initiatives to improve students perception of the school.

Students at the school were formally surveyed in a centrally administered feedback system that provided information to staff about the students and their experience of school.

School Context

History of the school

Our Lady of the Way Primary School was established under the guidance of Fr Kevin Hannan, the first Parish Priest, and a highly motivated and faithful group of parish pioneers. The school began in 1979 with the first lessons being held in 'The Cottage'. The school had a total of 52 children in two classes, Kindergarten and Year 1. By 1983, the School population had grown to 223 with nine classes. In October of 1982, a new primary block, comprising eight classrooms, was officially opened and blessed, and in 1985, four additional Infants classrooms were added. In 2007, ten of the classrooms were refurbished to provide considerably expanded and modern learning spaces. During 2009 to 2010, a further two learning spaces were built and the Kindergarten classrooms were completely refurbished. Using a state government building grant, major building works were completed in 2017, with the building of a new administration block fronting Troy Street, demolition of the existing administration block and laying of artificial turf, erection of covered walkways throughout the school and major landscaping including the building of brick garden boxes and the covering for the senior stairwell. A large covered outdoor learning area was built over the main playground. In 2018, the back playground was re-turfed and an irrigation system installed. Brightly coloured outdoor furniture was added to the playground as was decorative information pencil-art that displayed the school motto and values. In 2019 the Kindergarten classroom was refurbished and a sensory garden installed to meet student needs. In 2022, there has been roof restoration work completed. Through the commitment and determination of families, staff and parishioners, our school has gone from strength to strength. A strong tradition of providing a high quality Catholic primary school education has been established and maintained.

Location / Drawing Area

Our Lady of The Way Primary School is located in Emu Plains and serves the Parish of Our Lady of the Way. With enrolment of students from Emu Plains, Leonay and Emu Heights. We also enrol students from surrounding areas whose families have chosen to become part of the Our Lady of the Way Parish community. Nestled at the foot of the Blue Mountains, just on the western side of the Nepean River, we enjoy a very beautiful, safe and peaceful setting. Penrith Valley offers many outstanding sporting and educational facilities, such as Penrith Lakes and Penrith Regional Gallery. We are also close enough to the city and the mountains to be able to access all the facilities and opportunities they have to offer. As the population of the Nepean/Lower Mountains region continues to grow and expand, we can look towards a very encouraging future where Catholic education can evangelise and continue to spread the Word of Christ.

Workforce Composition

Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile	
Total Number of Staff	45
Number of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	0
Number of full time teaching staff	17
Number of part time teaching staff	14
Number of non-teaching staff	14

Total number of teaching staff by NESA accreditation level

Teachers at the school are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004 (NSW). Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher is voluntary.

The contracted number of accredited teachers within Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) are as follows:

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) accredited teachers	
Conditional Teachers	458
Provisional Teachers	102
Proficient Teachers and/or above	3258

Teacher status at Our Lady of The Way Primary School can be sourced directly from the school.

Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member working within CSPD is highly valued. Professional learning can take many forms including: whole of school staff days, subject-specific engagements, conferences, meetings and a range of professional learning opportunities provided by CSPD.

The school takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking its staff's professional learning and individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing professional development. All teachers have been involved in professional learning opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes.

Specific and focused Professional Learning for the staff of the school this year has included:

- Deepening students' encounters with God linking prayer and Scripture to the school motto, song, and Catholic identity via reflective practices.
- Sessions on Mathematics, emphasising challenge and explicit teaching, and on English, focusing on growth in reading.
- Develop consistent first wave student management expectations and associated whole school procedures.

Catholic Identity and Religious Education

Prayer, Liturgical Life and Faith Experiences

Education within the Diocese of Parramatta is a ministry of the Catholic Church, walking with humility in the way of Jesus, serving all of God's people. The Gospel messages of love, forgiveness, tolerance and compassion are lived experiences that are visibly evidenced at school. We offer families high-quality accessible education that challenges each student to discover a meaningful, hope-filled and flourishing life. Our caring teachers share faith and learning with students, including through their own example. Every day, be it in the playground, at an assembly or in the classroom our students experience a genuinely religious way of understanding the world. The invitation to meaningful prayer and liturgy, as well as participation in the Sacraments, nurture and give expression to the religious dimension of school life in the context of the Church's celebration of the liturgical year.

Social Justice

All students at the school are encouraged to regularly engage in activities to support Catholic Mission with fundraising and awareness-raising initiatives. Students are encouraged to work closely with their local parish, community groups, support local charities and participate in outreach or immersion experiences for the benefit of the whole community and the student's personal development.

This year students and staff from the school engaged in the following initiatives and activities:

- Year 6 students attended Edinglassie Nursing home every Thursday afternoon over the whole year to sharing stories, games and conversation.
- Each term the FIAT Team gathered for a prayer and enrichment afternoon expanding their knowledge of Catholic traditions particularly the Rosary.
- The whole school was involved in learning about Caritas' mission works in Term 1 and raising funds for global justice.

All of these initiatives enabled the students and staff to practise their faith through action as Jesus demonstrated in the Gospels.

School, Home and Parish Partnerships

Parents and carers have been actively encouraged to engage in a variety of school activities including parent forums, information evenings, parent/teacher/student meetings, liturgies, social events and opportunities to provide feedback. Regular communication with parents and carers occurred through phone calls, meetings and the Compass information platform.

Religious Education

At the heart of our school is the Religious Education program. It is through this area of study that students learn to value the Catholic identity, traditions, values and Christ's

teaching. Our Religious Education program is embodied by the quality of our relationships and how we deal with the daily issues of life.

CSPD schools use Sharing Our Story, a Religious Education curriculum that has been used for more than 20 years. In all subject areas, we offer an education completely consistent with the teaching of the Church on the dignity of all aspects of the human person. We also appreciate the need to provide age-appropriate learning opportunities.

Professional Learning of Staff in Religious Education

Professional Learning in Religious Education offered to staff this year included:

- Participated in a whole-school Formation Day, exploring and deepening their understanding of forms of prayer.
- Collaborated to reimagine and refine school expectations, aligning them with the values of the Beatitudes and the example of living like Jesus.
- Sessions to prepare for the implementation of the new Religious Education syllabus in 2025.

Learning and Teaching

National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia participated in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The purpose of NAPLAN is to provide information to parents and carers and teachers about the achievements of students in literacy and numeracy. Questions are based mostly on the literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills students have learnt from previous years of schooling.

Each year the results are analysed by the school to inform teaching and learning with a view to improving student performance. Commencing in 2023, NAPLAN test results are reported using proficiency standards. Students' results show how they performed in each of the NAPLAN assessment areas against 4 proficiency levels:

- Exceeding: The student's result exceeds expectations at the time of testing
- Strong: The student's result meets challenging but reasonable expectations at the time of testing
- Developing: The student's result indicates that they are working towards expectations at the time of testing
- Needs additional support: The student's result indicates that they are not achieving the learning outcomes expected at the time of testing. They are likely to need additional support to progress satisfactorily.

The percentages of students achieving at Exceeding and Strong proficiency levels are reported in the table on the next page.

NAPLAN Results Year 3 2024

Year 3	Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
	School	Australia
Reading	72%	66%
Writing	83%	77%
Spelling	57%	61%
Grammar and Punctuation	53%	54%
Numeracy	70%	63%

NAPLAN Results Year 5 2024

Year 5	Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
	School	Australia
Reading	79%	71%
Writing	75%	67%
Spelling	60%	68%
Grammar and Punctuation	65%	65%
Numeracy	69%	68%

Student Profile

Enrolment Policy

Our Lady of The Way Primary School follows the Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) Enrolment Policy Procedures and Guidelines. The full text or a link to the full text of the school's enrolment policies, including all prerequisites for continuing enrolment, can be obtained from the school office or can be accessed on the school's website.

Student enrolments

Student enrolments 2024	
Number of Boys	Number of Girls
158	165
Total Enrolments: 323	

Student attendance

Student attendance rates 2024			
Year	Attendance Rate	Year	Attendance Rate
K	91%	4	93%
1	93%	5	93%
2	94%	6	92%
3	94%	School Average: 93%	

Managing non attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents and carers, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

The compulsory schooling age range is 6-17. Parents and carers are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, explaining the absences of their children in writing within several days to the school, and taking measures to resolve attendance issues involving their children.

School staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences. They maintain accurate records of students' attendance, follow up unexplained absences through written and verbal communication, implement programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise, and provide clear information to students

and parents/carers regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.

The school principal or their delegate may grant permission for late arrival or early departure from school, leave or exemption from attendance only in individual cases, on written request from parents and carers. For longer exemptions, an application for approval is made through Diocesan authorities. The principal/delegate will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents/carers promptly if an unexplained absence occurs. If truancy is suspected, the principal will contact the parents/carers to ascertain the reason for the absence. If a satisfactory response is not received, the matter will be referred to the relevant staff at CSPD who will follow up unexplained absences as per legislative requirements.

Characteristics of the student body

The table below shows the number of students in each of the categories listed.

Student Body Characteristics	
Language background other than English (LBOTE)	36
Students with disabilities (SWD)	108
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	17

Wellbeing

The wellbeing and safety of all students is central to the purpose of Catholic Education and we acknowledge that healthy relationships and exceptional pastoral care are core to each child's positive experience at school. Our Lady of The Way Primary School is a place where students are nurtured to grow, to belong and to be safe.

A sense of wellbeing and connectedness promotes optimal development of the person as a whole and contributes to academic success. We have a strong focus on pastoral care and our school has a counsellor to support our students. CSPD provides resourcing for additional wellbeing initiatives and teams to support attendance, behaviour and intervention for students at risk.

Our wellbeing initiatives include:

- Students completed Pivot Wellbeing Check-In Surveys to share insights into their personal wellbeing and identify areas requiring support.
- Staff used a multitiered student care team case management system to provide a comprehensive approach to student wellbeing at school.
- Sporting gala days and house spirit events were implemented to enhance school belonging and strengthen connections within the student community.

Our Lady of The Way Primary School bases student wellbeing on the [CSPD Student Wellbeing Policy \(2022\)](#) and the [CSPD Student Wellbeing Framework](#). The guidelines identify the rights and responsibilities of every student in the school and are based on the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. Corporal punishment is expressly forbidden at the school.

Related policies include:

- [Bullying of Students - Prevention and Response Procedure \(2022\)](#)
- [Student Use Of Digital Devices And Online Services Policy \(2022\)](#)
- [Guidelines for Parents and Carers in Raising Complaints \(2023\)](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Policy \(2022\)](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Framework](#)
- [Student Attendance Policy \(2021\)](#)
- [Student Attendance Procedures \(2022\)](#)
- [Bullying of Students - Prevention and Response Procedure \(2022\)](#)
- [Weapons Procedures \(2022\)](#)
- [Banned Substances Student Procedures \(2022\)](#)
- [Family and School Partnership Principles](#)

Actions promoting respect and responsibility

Our Lady of The Way Primary School actively promotes respect for others and responsibility for self. During the past year, our community has engaged with the following actions and opportunities:

- Implemented a behaviour management flowchart and explicitly taught and corrected behaviours to reinforce expectations of respect and responsibility.
- Whole-school engagement in Aboriginal language and culture lessons fostering respect, and appreciation of Indigenous heritage and traditions.
- Sporting gala days and house spirit events were implemented to enhance school belonging and strengthen connections within the student community.

Community Satisfaction

During 2024, CSPD and our school utilised a variety of measures to obtain feedback from parents and carers, students and staff regarding community satisfaction.

Areas of strength from the parents/carers feedback include:

- Parents felt welcome at the school and well-informed about its activities and events.
- Parents reported that their child/ren feel safe at school, and behaviour issues are addressed promptly and effectively.
- Parents communicated that their child/ren are consistently encouraged to put in their best effort and achieve their full potential.

Areas of strength from the student feedback include:

- Students feel a strong sense of belonging, acceptance, and value from their peers and the school community.
- Students build trusting friendships and positive relationships that encourage good choices at school.
- Students value the education, seeing it as meaningful and essential for their future success.

Areas of strength from the staff feedback include:

- Staff have a strong sense of belonging and community.
- Staff have trusting relationships with one another and feel energised in their work environment.
- Staff communicated that their leader acts consistently with the Catholic mission, earns the trust, and removes barriers to help me succeed at work.

School Improvement and Learning

Priorities

Current Year Priorities		
Priority 1	For all students to achieve reading and comprehension benchmarks for Years K-6.	Still Working Towards.
Priority 2	To challenge students in Mathematics and achieve growth, measured by PAT-M, MAI, LEM, and school metrics.	Still Working Towards.

Projected School Priorities		
Priority 1	Improve students' understanding of the Catholic approach to engaging Scripture.	
Priority 2	Enhance Years K-2 reading outcomes through the implementation of effective reading instruction practices and the UFLI program, focusing on explicit and systematic phonics instruction.	

Financial Statement

Financial information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth and State Government in the Financial Questionnaire.

School Financial Information for 2024 is detailed below:

Recurrent and Capital Income	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants ¹	\$4,536,701
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$1,211,978
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$884,677
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$148,546
Total Income	\$6,781,902

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$487,338
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$5,231,000
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$1,632,100
Total Expenditure	\$7,350,438

¹ Commonwealth relates to Commonwealth Recurrent Grants including per capita funding and special purpose grants

² Capital relates to Government Capital Grants received for construction of school assets

³ State relates to State Recurrent Grants including per capita funding, interest subsidy and special purpose grants

⁴ Fees relate to Diocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income from parents/carers

⁵ Other refers to Other Capital Income including amounts charged for Diocesan Building Levy from parents

⁶ Capital Expenditure refers to expenses incurred mainly for School Buildings, Furniture and Equipment

⁷ Salaries refers to the total of all Salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation, workers compensation and leave

⁸ Non-Salary refers to all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenses