



St Bernadette's Primary School

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Catholic Schools
Parramatta Diocese

2024 Annual School Report



Introduction

About the Annual School Report

St Bernadette's 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 Mrs Bianca Cooke

I am pleased to present the 2024 Annual School Report for St Bernadette's Primary School Castle Hill. This report is a snapshot of the hard work accomplished by this community over the last twelve months. At St Bernadette's Primary School, we strive to enhance the learning for all of our students through providing effective and stimulating learning programs and creative learning environments that reflect learning in the 21st century. We believe that all children must be equipped with the skills and strategies to problem solve and to think critically and creatively.

At St Bernadette's Primary School we work collaboratively with members of our community to ensure all are valued, respected and welcomed for who they are. Our strong connection with our Parish allows high levels of involvement for our whole community through participation in liturgies and celebrations. Our school motto, Strength Through Gentleness, is a guide for our way of being as our school seeks to reflect our school values of respect, honesty, tolerance, forgiveness, care and compassion in everyday encounters with one another. A particular strength of our community is the active support and participation of the parents in their children's ongoing learning. Parents are generous in their assistance at school as well as at home with their child and usually demonstrate high participation rates in all extra-curricular activities.

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

Parental involvement is highly valued at St Bernadette's Primary School and family members actively support our school in a number of ways. They assist at whole school and class level activities such as classroom reading and mathematics helpers, excursion supervisors, sporting carnival assistants, library helpers, garden club helpers in addition to events that are organised by our school's very active Parents & Friends Association (P&F). Our P&F provide our community with many opportunities to build community and raise funds to help support the school to improve playground and/or classroom spaces. Some examples of P&F organised celebrations in 2024 were a Family Fun Night, Mother's Day, Father's Day and Grandparents Day events just to name a few. The P&F work hard to strengthen the already strong sense of community pride through their welcoming nature and activities that promote outreach. Parental communication is active and strong. Families have the use of a parent app to receive notifications, emails, weekly newsletters and termly grade learning updates. Families

are encouraged to engage with social media sources such as Facebook and grade what's-app groups.

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

Our school motto, Strength through Gentleness, guides the students in the development of their relationships with their peers, teachers and the wider community. Year 5 and 6 students engage in a buddy program with the youngest members of our school as well as given significant leadership roles as school and student leaders. Year 6 students in particular have the opportunity to gain formal positions of leadership such as School Captains, Vice Captains and Sport Captains. Primary students are given the opportunity to seek positions on the Student Representative Council (SRC) as well as become members of the school's social outreach teams. All grades are involved in educational excursions and incursions which help students to connect to learning in the real world. Students are involved in social outreach opportunities such as fundraising for charities and visiting local aged care centres. Students have the opportunity to develop other skills and interests by inclusion in school sporting teams, debating, public speaking, chess, band and choir.

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

St Bernadette's Primary School opened on 31 January 1956, sharing a building, which was also the original church for the Castle Hill parishioners. The Sisters of Mercy taught the children and continued to provide teachers and principals until the early 1980s. The children at St Bernadette's Primary School learn in a well-resourced environment, composed of modern facilities, air conditioning and dynamic learning programs. Large screen and Apple televisions are installed in each of our classrooms, extra-curricular learning spaces and the library. The school is equipped with basketball and netball courts and synthetic grass in the main playing area. Two hard-covered surfaces provide large playground areas with safety from the weather. St Bernadette's Primary School has a Catholic Out of Hours School Care facility within the school grounds and this supports families with the out of hours care of their children before and after school and in school holiday periods.

Location / Drawing Area

St Bernadette's Primary School is a three-stream school catering for students from Kindergarten to Year 6. Located in Castle Hill, the school serves the parish of St Bernadette's and draws on students from the local Castle Hill district including Glenhaven, Cherrybrook, West Pennant Hills and surrounding suburbs.

Workforce Composition

Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile	
Total Number of Staff	53
Number of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	0
Number of full time teaching staff	22
Number of part time teaching staff	16
Number of non-teaching staff	15

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 St Bernadette's 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:

- Unpacking and Implementing the new syllabus documents for English and Mathematics K-6.
- Embedding creative Prayer experiences in all grades.
- Continuing our work to understand the EAL/D learner and the adjustments needed to ensure academic success.

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:

- Stage 3 students participated in the Vinnies Winter Sleep out, younger grades donated food items for the Vinnies Food Van.
- Senior students regularly visited our local nursing homes to build intergenerational relationships.
- Senior students regularly visited our local preschools to build intergenerational relationships.

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:

- Staff were engaged in professional learning on enhanced prayer experiences.
- Staff began to unpack new teaching and learning sequences.
- Staff were invited to lead and participate in social justice initiatives.

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	92%	66%
Writing	91%	77%
Spelling	80%	61%
Grammar and Punctuation	80%	54%
Numeracy	89%	63%

NAPLAN Results Year 5 2024

Year 5	Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
	School	Australia
Reading	85%	71%
Writing	90%	67%
Spelling	79%	68%
Grammar and Punctuation	79%	65%
Numeracy	82%	68%

Student Profile

Enrolment Policy

St Bernadette's 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
242	224
Total Enrolments: 466	

Student attendance

Student attendance rates 2024			
Year	Attendance Rate	Year	Attendance Rate
K	93%	4	92%
1	93%	5	93%
2	93%	6	92%
3	93%	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)	276
Students with disabilities (SWD)	103
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	4

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. St Bernadette's 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:

- Revise and embed PBS4L strategies K-6.
- The school has implemented Wellbeing Week in Terms 2 and 4 to allow students and staff a chance to connect to added wellbeing activities.
- Our library is named 'The Wellbeing Library' where students learn effective and necessary wellbeing strategies during their weekly library lessons.

St Bernadette's 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

St Bernadette's 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:

- The school's PBS4L team revisited classroom resources for teacher use.

- Staff continued to use school based recording system to track incidences that may occur and to find solutions to common issues.
- NAIDOC day and Harmony day activities were held to celebrate cultural diversity and acceptance. Cultural Incursions were also organised.

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 feel welcome in the school and that written information from the school is clear.
- Teachers have high expectations for my child to succeed.
- There are clear expectations regarding behaviour and learning to ensure the children learn to their full potential.

Areas of strength from the student feedback include:

- Students feel well supported by staff and believe they listen to their concerns.
- Teachers provide quality instruction, providing understanding as well as challenge.
- Students are motivated and interested in their learning.

Areas of strength from the staff feedback include:

- Staff feel they are treated with respect at work and the people they work with achieve set goals.
- Staff trust the leadership team of the school.
- Staff feel a sense of belonging and know they will be supported to succeed to their full potential.

School Improvement and Learning

Priorities

Current Year Priorities		
Priority 1	Exploration and use of deeper challenging tasks in Mathematics for all learners. This work was supported by the inclusion in a system based series of professional learning- Leading Excellence in Mathematics.	Still Working Towards.
Priority 2	For the school to further investigate its changing multicultural demographic and ensure teaching methods suit all learners, including EAL/D and LBOTE learners. This particularly relates to the teaching of reading, writing and spelling.	Still Working Towards.

Projected School Priorities		
Priority 1	Continue to improve English and Mathematics outcomes for all students through the use of explicit teaching.	
Priority 2	Improve students' understanding of the Catholic approach to engage with Scripture.	

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	\$5,013,147
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$1,319,213
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$1,294,399
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$383,321
Total Income	\$8,010,080

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$893,209
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$6,081,376
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$1,845,311
Total Expenditure	\$8,819,896

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