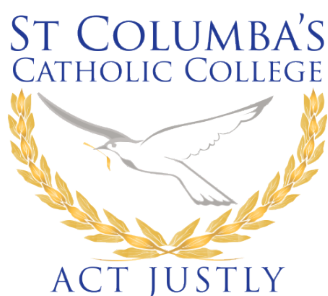




St Columba's Catholic College

2024 Annual School Report



St Columba's Catholic College
PO Box 7
Springwood 2777
0247549000
StColumbas@parra.catholic.edu.au
www.stcolumbasspringwood.catholic.edu.au

Introduction

About the Annual School Report

St Columba's Catholic College 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 Scollard

I am proud to present to you the 2024 Annual School Report for St Columba's Catholic College.

2024 provided the community with a range of opportunities to celebrate success. Enrolments continued to grow - a clear sign of the confidence the local community has in the College to educate well rounded young people who are able to engage with the world in a critical and insightful way. At the end of the year we were delighted with our most outstanding HSC results ever. These results were a great testament to the outstanding teaching staff at The College and the authentic partnership which exists between the staff and families. They are of course also a great testament to the skills and efforts of the wonderful graduates of 2024.

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

Teacher and Parent communication is promoted and encouraged using a range of tools. The Compass Student Management System, the electronic noticeboard, the College Website and College social media accounts all help to enable clear lines of communication. Parent teacher interviews were conducted by either face to face or zoom. Parents/carers also had the opportunity to attend Curriculum Information Sessions. Parents/Carers are continuously invited to enter into dialogue with the College and to provide feedback. There is an authentic focus on developing true partnership between the school, families and the wider communities.

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 college. The results will be used to look at further improvements at the college.

From the Students

The students feel very proud to attend such a caring and focused learning community as St Columba's Catholic College. In 2024 we were given many opportunities to participate in the academic, cultural and sporting life of the college. The students were represented formally by the Student Leadership Team that met weekly and tabled the issues raised by the student body. The Student Leadership Team organised and chaired college assemblies and other significant events. These members were actively involved in the liturgical life of the college. The leaders worked with students to promote pride in the liturgical life of the college and all sporting and cultural events. Our leaders helped all students to develop their leadership skills by actively involving them in fundraising, charitable works and social justice initiatives. The students at St Columba's Catholic College believe they are integral to the ongoing growth of our wonderful college community. wonderful college community.

Students at the college 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 college

St Columba's Catholic College was originally built as a seminary for candidates to the priesthood in 1908. In 1979, the College was established as a Years 7 to 10 Catholic school by the Diocese of Parramatta. It was restructured as a Year 7 to 12 school in 1993. The design and architecture of our magnificent buildings reminds us daily of our links to the past but with the new design of our modern facilities, the staff and students are reminded of our expectations that they each contribute as leaders in our contemporary society.

Location / Drawing Area

St Columba's Catholic College is a co-educational Catholic high school set in the beautiful Blue Mountains and surrounded by National Park. The College serves the parishes of St Finbar's Glenbrook, St Thomas Aquinas Springwood, Our Lady of the Nativity Lawson, Our Lady of the Way Emu Plains, St Nicholas of Myra Penrith, Mary MacKillop, Upper Blue Mountains and Sacred Heart Blackheath.

Workforce Composition

Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile	
Total Number of Staff	131
Number of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	2
Number of full time teaching staff	79
Number of part time teaching staff	11
Number of non-teaching staff	41

Total number of teaching staff by NESA accreditation level

Teachers at the college 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 Columba's Catholic College can be sourced directly from the college.

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 college 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 college this year has included:

- Analysing the Enhancing Catholic Schools Identity Data as the College continued to develop an approach to Catholic education which is dialogic in nature.
- Developing a greater sensitivity to an understanding of Australia's indigenous brothers and sisters who are a part of the "Stolen Generations" and the ongoing impact of dispossession.
- Planning for the implementation of new NESA Syllabus documents with a focus on Explicit Teaching.

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 college. 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 college 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 college engaged in the following initiatives and activities:

- Students work to support the Jesuit Social Services at Emerton with an annual food drive.
- Students collect goods to create Christmas Hampers for the local St Vincent De Paul Chapter.
- Students and staff volunteer at Mamma Lana's Foundation - a local community kitchen which provides meals for homeless and underprivileged people.

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 college 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:

- All members of the Religious Education faculty were involved in planning for the implementation of the New RE Curriculum to be implemented in 2025.
- All Religious Education teachers at The College worked collaboratively to ensure teaching and learning programs supported a dialogic approach.
- All Religious Education Teachers spent time breaking open the KU Leuven Enhancing Catholic School Identity Data.

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 7 2024

Year 7	Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
	School	Australia
Reading	87%	67%
Writing	68%	65%
Spelling	77%	72%
Grammar and Punctuation	69%	61%
Numeracy	76%	67%

NAPLAN Results Year 9 2024

Year 9	Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
	School	Australia
Reading	80%	63%
Writing	70%	61%
Spelling	82%	72%
Grammar and Punctuation	63%	55%
Numeracy	73%	63%

Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

Eligible students who leave school before receiving their Higher School Certificate (HSC) will receive the NSW Record of School Achievement (RoSA). The RoSA has been designed to provide grades for all Stage 5 (Year 10) and Stage 6 (Preliminary) courses completed during secondary education.

In 2024:

- The number of students issued with a RoSA in Year 10 was 0.
- The number of students issued with a RoSA in Year 11 was 2.

Higher School Certificate (HSC)

Percentage of students in performance bands 4, 5 and 6 (trend data) in select courses as compared to the state.

HSC Results						
HSC Subject	Percentage of students in top 3 bands					
	2024		2023		2022	
	School	State	School	State	School	State
English Standard	97%	67%	71%	59%	79%	56%
English Advanced	101%	96%	100%	95%	97%	94%
Studies of Religion 1	82%	80%	81%	84%	71%	79%

Total number of Year 12 students engaged in either a VET or NESA endorsed courses: 74.

NESA endorsed courses and or VET courses undertaken by Year 12 students include: Design Fundamentals, Fitness, Numeracy, Studies in Catholic Thought Life Skills, Studies in Catholic Thought, Work Studies.

School HSC Highlighted Performances

Percentage of students in performance bands 4, 5 and 6 (trend data) in highlighted courses as compared to the state.

HSC Results		
HSC Subject	Percentage of students in top 3 bands	
	2024	
	School	State
English Extension 1	100%	95%
Earth & Environmental Science	100%	64%

HSC Results Comment

The entire College community celebrated the remarkable achievements of the graduating class of 2024, marking the most successful results in the College's history. The College Dux

attained an impressive ATAR of 98.15, while 16 students achieved ATARs above 90, and 8 students ATARs above 95. Additionally, there were 3 HSC All Rounders and a total of 96 Band 6 results. Notably, 2 students earned HSC course ranks, including first place in Extension II English and eighth in Design and Technology. Furthermore, 8 students were nominated for HSC Major Works showcases across various courses. The College secured the 143rd position in The Sydney Morning Herald rankings. Both staff and students reflected on the strong collaborative learning culture that had been cultivated within the cohort.

Student Profile

Enrolment Policy

St Columba's Catholic College 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
548	525
Total Enrolments: 1073	

Student attendance

Student attendance rates 2024			
Year	Attendance Rate	Year	Attendance Rate
7	90%	10	88%
8	89%	11	87%
9	89%	12	93%
College Average: 89%			

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.

Student retention rates

The retention rate of students for Year 10 to Year 12 was 88%.

Post School Destination

Each year the college collects destination data relating to the Year 12 student cohort. The table below sets out the percentages of students for the various categories.

Post School Destination	
University	85%
Technical and Further Education (TAFE)	12%
Workforce	3%
Other/Unknown	0%

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)	138
Students with disabilities (SWD)	285
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	39

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 Columba's Catholic College 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:

- The College partnered with The Walk The talk Foundation to address issues of consent and gender based violence.
- The College continued to monitor and address students attendance with a focus on promoting the value of attendance.
- The College staff developed a model for a St Columba's Graduate as a guide towards the development of the whole person at St Columba's.

St Columba's Catholic College 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 college.

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 Columba's Catholic College actively promotes respect for others and responsibility for self. During the past year, our community has engaged with the following actions and opportunities:

- The College continued to engage with Jarara, the indigenous Team from CSPD, to promote the important role the first nations students.

- The College participated in the local community ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day Celebrations.
- All Year 10 and Year 11 students engaged with a "Truth Telling" experience with Aboriginal Elders who were part of the Stolen Generations .

Community Satisfaction

During 2024, CSPD and our college 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 appreciate the the numerous invitations to celebrate with their children at The College throughout the year.
- Parents appreciate the high regard with which The College is held in the local community.
- Parents appreciate the broad learning and co curricular opportunities available to the stduents at the College.

Areas of strength from the student feedback include:

- The students feel a strong sense of connection to the community and know that there are numerous adults they can seek support from.
- The students appreciate the range of co curricular opportunities they can engage in.
- The students value the work of the teaching staff and the commitment they show to their learning.

Areas of strength from the staff feedback include:

- The staff feel supported by The College Leadership Team.
- The staff appreciate the calm and ordered learning environment at The College
- The staff were delighted with the outstanding results from the Year 12 Class of 2024.

School Improvement and Learning

Priorities

Current Year Priorities		
Priority 1	The English faculty worked collaboratively on developing a strategic approach to teaching students in all year groups to write in a sophisticated analytical way.	Still Working Towards.
Priority 2	The College is committed to continuously assessing and enhancing the current Wellbeing program. We maintain a strong emphasis on analysing PIVOT and ACER Social and Emotional Wellbeing Data to ensure that our efforts are making a meaningful impact.	Still Working Towards.

Projected School Priorities		
Priority 1	The work commenced in English developing the strategic development of writing in a sophisticated analytical way will be broadened to include other subjects from Year 7-12	
Priority 2	The College Wellbeing Team has a focus on implementing the CSPD Multi Tiered System of Supports.	

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	\$13,829,687
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$3,674,956
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$5,506,477
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$664,780
Total Income	\$23,675,900

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$9,603,441
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$17,790,139
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$5,908,813
Total Expenditure	\$33,302,393

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