



St Finbar's Primary School

2024 Annual School Report



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Catholic Schools
Parramatta Diocese

Introduction

About the Annual School Report

St Finbar'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 Robyn Clarke

I am pleased to present to you the 2024 Annual School Report for St Finbar's Primary School, Glenbrook. At St Finbar's Primary School we believe that it is our mission to educate the whole child: intellectually, spiritually, physically, socially and emotionally. We aim to empower students with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will enable all students to be confident citizens.

St Finbar's Primary School is recognised for its community spirit, which is inspired by our Catholic faith, and its commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. All members of the community work together to provide a learning environment which: provides opportunities for members of the community to enrich their faith and spiritual development; ensures that the values taught by Jesus are evident in our relationships with each other; engages the student in a challenging environment which facilitates rich and meaningful experiences; provides a supportive environment that nurtures the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of the community promotes partnership between home, school and parish.

We were able to provide a number of initiatives that meet the individual needs of all students and developed the whole child. These included:

- co-curricular activities such as coding, gardening, lego building, dance, chess and rock band
- children learning violin, viola, cello or double bass as part of our Strings programme
- student leaders representing the school in the Voice of Youth competition
- participation of children in the Mountains Live event
- participation in Bebras Educational Challenge.

Professional learning for teachers is a high priority at St Finbar's Primary School so that we can respond to the needs of the students in a strategic and productive way. Building teacher capacity ensured that skills, knowledge and strategies were current, evidence-based and productive towards students' growth and gain.

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

At St Finbar's Primary School our parents are a vital part of the school community and are involved in many aspects of school life. We have an active Parents and Friends Group (P&F) who collaboratively plan and coordinate a number of social, educational,

fundraising and strategic direction planning activities. This group worked collaboratively with the school and parish to promote partnership between the home, parish, school and wider community.

Throughout 2024, the P&F were able to host social events in order to promote fun and community spirit. The welcome BBQ at the beginning of the year was a great success, as was the Mother's Day, Father's Day and Grandparent's breakfasts, the athletics carnival and Christmas BBQ. The P&F were able to hold Mothers Day and Fathers Day stalls. There was also a pastoral group which organised meals for the sick and needy. The P&F also provided farewell gifts for families leaving the school community, as well as coordinating our second hand uniform shop.

Our P&F met each Term and at these meetings educational issues and initiatives were discussed, demonstrated and shared with parents.

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 at St Finbar's Primary School have many opportunities to be involved in the life of our school. In 2024, these included taking on leadership roles; Kindergarten/Year 5 Buddy system, library monitors, Mission Leader, Academic Leader, PBS4L Leader, Environment Leader, membership of all of year six on one of these aforementioned committees, school representation at diocesan sporting events; organising social justice activities to raise money for Caritas, Catholic Mission and St Vincent De Paul, and taking part in our music programs. Each child in our school was provided with opportunities for both academic achievement and personal growth. We valued difference and personal best in an environment where students fostered a love of life-long learning. We saw mistakes as a chance to grow and learn. We have always been a community where we encouraged students to be safe & respectful learners. All students and teachers were involved in a whole-school approach to wellbeing. This programme is known as Positive Behaviour Support for Learning (PBS4L) and is an evidence-based, proactive system that establishes understandable expectations where teachers reinforce positive behaviour.

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 Finbar's Primary School is part of the proud history in the growth of the Blue Mountains. It had its beginnings back in 1912 when the Sisters of St Joseph taught railway workers' children in our original church (which doubled through the week as our school). When the Glenbrook tunnel was completed, workers' families moved on and the school closed. As the population increased after World War II, the school reopened in 1954 to accommodate 40 children from Kindergarten to Year 3, staffed by the Sisters of St Joseph. Our school proudly celebrated our 60th Anniversary in 2015. Throughout the years, St Finbar's Primary School has continued to upgrade school buildings and resources, ensuring children have a rich and contemporary learning environment, built on the strong traditions of our past. Our school song reflects our history and growth. We have now completed the refurbishment of the original church/school building. It has been named the Fr Thomas Barlow Community Centre in honour of our pioneering priest. The building turned 100 years old in August 2012.

Location / Drawing Area

St Finbars Primary School is set in the beautiful surroundings of the lower Blue Mountains with panoramic views to the south and south west. Located in Glenbrook, the school population draws on students from the Lapstone, Glenbrook, Mt Riverview, East Blaxland, Blaxland and Warrimoo surrounding areas. We are indeed blessed to be located in such peaceful and secure surroundings. Our school serves as a part of the evangelical ministry of the parish of St Finbar's Parish, Glenbrook.

Workforce Composition

Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile	
Total Number of Staff	36
Number of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	0
Number of full time teaching staff	10
Number of part time teaching staff	11
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 Finbar'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:

- Staff received professional learning in the area of explicit teaching of mathematical skills, designed to improve mathematical fluency.
- Staff were trained and involved in using and interpreting Pivot - a wellbeing initiative introduced in 2024.
- Staff received professional learning in the area of accuracy in writing, using Soundwaves to develop spelling and grammar skills.

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 Three students were involved in Lifted Live, joining with other schools in our Diocese for this event.
- Students raised awareness and funds for Caritas, St Vincent DePaul and Down Syndrome Australia.
- Students in Years K-6 were involved in several Aboriginal Cultural Programs, including the Honey Bee project.

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 involved in Personal Wellbeing opportunities as well as Spiritual Formation opportunities in 2024.
- Teachers participated in "Encountering Jesus" workshops to unpack and fully understand the new RE curriculum to be implemented in 2025.
- The Faith In Action Coordinator worked with students to establish a Mini Vinnies group, enabling students to work alongside staff in many 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	68%	66%
Writing	82%	77%
Spelling	73%	61%
Grammar and Punctuation	45%	54%
Numeracy	68%	63%

NAPLAN Results Year 5 2024

Year 5	Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
	School	Australia
Reading	100%	71%
Writing	90%	67%
Spelling	52%	68%
Grammar and Punctuation	86%	65%
Numeracy	81%	68%

Student Profile

Enrolment Policy

St Finbar'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
86	76
Total Enrolments: 162	

Student attendance

Student attendance rates 2024			
Year	Attendance Rate	Year	Attendance Rate
K	93%	4	95%
1	94%	5	93%
2	95%	6	95%
3	94%	School Average: 94%	

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)	2
Students with disabilities (SWD)	67
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	1

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 Finbar'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:

- The Pivot program enabled students to voice their emotions, allowing staff to follow up on concerns that students presented.
- Two teachers were trained to be Peaceful Kids facilitators, a program that will commence in 2025.
- The Wellbeing Wagon was introduced at St. Finbar's, allowing students to meet and socialise with each other in a safe and supportive environment.

St Finbar'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 Finbar'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:

- At St. Finbar's our safe and respectful learners are rewarded with Possum tokens, culminating in a whole school reward day.
- Teachers and students celebrated The Coming of the Light Festival (Torres Strait islander event) with Aunty Thelma, participating in cultural events.
- Year Five and Six attend the Youth Eco Summit at Homebush this year, bringing ecological initiatives back to our school.

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 believe that our teachers are caring and empathetic towards their children.
- Parents have the opportunity each term to visit classrooms and see what their child is learning.
- Parents believe that our facilities and learning initiatives are excellent.

Areas of strength from the student feedback include:

- Students believe that they have a voice and are listened to about issues important to them.
- Students understand that it is acceptable to make mistakes, as mistakes lead to growth.
- Students are motivated and interested in their learning and thrive in a problem-solving environment.

Areas of strength from the staff feedback include:

- All staff are treated with respect and they have clarity around the demands and expectations of their roles.
- Teachers are given plenty of opportunities to improve their skills through professional learning and feedback sessions.
- The staff believe that the school leaders encourage them and their students to behave in ways that promote Catholic mission.

School Improvement and Learning

Priorities

Current Year Priorities		
Priority 1	To explicitly teach students how to use phonemic awareness and phonics knowledge to decode texts.	Still Working Towards.
Priority 2	To build critical readers and accurate writers.	Still Working Towards.

Projected School Priorities		
Priority 1	To enhance the Catholic identity of St. Finbar's through our links to the charism of St. Mary MacKillop and the Josephite sisters.	
Priority 2	To improve students' pro-social behaviours to support learning.	

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	\$3,033,150
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$804,610
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$486,977
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$71,298
Total Income	\$4,396,035

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$64,667
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$3,613,108
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$842,541
Total Expenditure	\$4,520,316

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