



# St Margaret Mary's Primary School

## 2023 Annual School Report



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## Introduction

### **About the Annual School Report**

St Margaret Mary's Primary School is registered by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESAs) 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 2023 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. Kevin Mills

I am proud to present to you the 2023 Annual School Report for St Margaret Mary's Primary School, Merrylands.

At the heart of St Margaret Mary's Primary School, is the value placed on allowing each child to reach his or her potential. Our school motto, 'Love the Truth,' continues to underpin our work and helps guide our daily actions and beliefs. At StMM's we use the concepts of HEAD (Listen), HEART (Share), and HANDS (Act) as a foundation to live out the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Our learning program is enriched by our Catholic faith with a curriculum that is both challenging and designed to meet the learning needs of individual students. In 2023 we launched StMM's whole school JigSaw pedagogy within our community through the 'JigSaw Learner.' Our pedagogical practice engages, inspires and empowers our students to gain knowledge, build skills, and actively participate in their learning journey. Through School Newsletters and Parent Meetings, we outlined how our JigSaw pedagogy aligned with NSW Syllabus, provides our students with the knowledge and skills to succeed in an ever changing world. The rigour of our academic approach is matched by our commitment to students' artistic, sporting and cultural pursuits, enabling all students to discover their passion and achieve their best.

This year we have invested in Professional Development of all staff focusing on building our knowledge and pedagogical practices aligned with the New 3-6 NSW English and Mathematics Syllabus, ready to implement in 2024. Building teacher capacity to improve instructional practice remains a strong focus at our school. In 2023 strong learning gains are evident in all classes with students showing progress, particularly in Reading and Writing.

The outstanding support of staff and StMM's families has enabled us to finish another year with the Graduation and celebration of our Year 6 students. I thank God for the privilege of being a member of the StMM's 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

St Margaret Mary's recognises the central role parents play in their children's education. The school has a very active Parents and Friends community.

In 2023, Parent meetings were held to establish ways in which the parents could support the educational and pastoral programmes of the school. Throughout the year various Parent Groups organised and implemented our Easter Raffle, Mothers Day and Fathers Day stalls, School Discos and the Second Hand Uniform sale days.

We welcomed our Kindergarten parents and students for 2024 who attended 3 orientation mornings. Our staff led Parent Information sessions for English, Religious Education, Maths and our StMM's JigSaw framework, whilst our newest students were engaged in learning.

St Margaret Mary's staff strive to provide effective and efficient communication with parents on a regular basis. Parents receive our school newsletter every week detailing all aspects of school life. Parents were also regularly communicated with via Compass and our school website showcasing all of our events. Our parents are very appreciative of all that is given for their children in terms of teacher time, reports, interviews, communication and events.

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**

St Margaret Mary's students take pride in all aspects of their school community by sharing their faith and providing a safe environment where everyone is welcomed and respected. They are aware of social justice issues and attempt to be strong people of Christ displayed by their actions. Student learning is paramount and enhanced by staff to promote quality learning.

In 2023, all students have joined in liturgies where students listen to, and act out, the Word of God. This supports units of work that they are studying in Religious Education and strengthens their relationship with Christ. Our students have continued to listen, share and act on the Word of God through our outreach programs across the school. Our school choir enjoyed singing at Masses, liturgies and other celebrations.

Extra-curricular activities offered to all students include Mini Vinnies, National STEM MAD competition, Extension Writing/Mathematics groups, Voice of Youth Competition, Lunchtime clubs and Sport Gala Days. All students were involved in educational incursions and excursions which helped the students to connect their learning to the real world. Year 6 travelled to Canberra for a two-day excursion.

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 Margaret Mary's Primary School is a well-established primary school situated at Merrylands, Sydney, within the Diocese of Parramatta. The school was founded in 1942 by the Sisters of St Joseph and in 1950 the school came under the care of the Marist Sisters. By 1965 over 500 students were enrolled at the school. As a result, the parish purchased cottages on the block bounded by Merrylands Road, Davies Street, Henson Street and Chetwynd Road. These cottages were used as classrooms until they were demolished to allow for new buildings. The administration building was completed in 1981 and the hall was completed in 1986. During 1987, the Marist Sisters informed the Catholic Education Office in the Parramatta Diocese that they would no longer be able to allocate one of their sisters to hold the position of principal and as a result the first lay principal of St Margaret Mary's Primary School was appointed, effective from January 1988. We acknowledge those who have gone before us and draw on their strength to continue in the spirit with which St Margaret Mary's Primary School Merrylands was started. Today, the school caters for girls and boys from Kindergarten to Year 6 and is rich in cultural diversity. Approximately fifty different nationalities are represented in the school, along with twenty different languages backgrounds. The school currently caters for 557 students. A special feature of St Margaret Mary's Primary School is the friendly atmosphere and rapport that exists amongst all members of our school community, students, parents, staff and priests.

### Location / Drawing Area

St Margaret Mary's Primary School is located at 7 Chetwynd Rd in Merrylands, a Catholic systemic school educating girls and boys from Kindergarten to Year 6 within the Diocese of Parramatta Sydney. The School is rich in cultural diversity and is a growing community of cooperative learners. The School is on a bus line and a train station is a 15 minute walk away.

## Workforce Composition

### Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile	
Total Number of Staff	50
Number of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	0
Number of full time teaching staff	24
Number of part time teaching staff	15
Number of non-teaching staff	11

### 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	363
Provisional Teachers	125
Proficient Teachers and/or above	3495

Teacher status at St Margaret Mary'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:

- Developing a deeper understanding of the NSW English and Mathematics Syllabus across Kindergarten to Year 6.
- Gaining a deeper understanding of our school's JigSaw Leader framework and how we can effectively implement teaching strategies to enhance student engagement.
- EAL/D, InitialLit and MacqLit professional learning for all infants and specialist staff to enhance our English programs across the school.

# 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:

- Years 5 and 6 students engaged in the winter sleepout and made care packages for St Vincent de Paul who support homeless people within our community.
- Our Mini Vinnies student committee raised awareness for nominated charitable organisations and hosted fundraising events to support causes.
- Year 6 students and the school choir attending the local Aged Care facility during Term 4 sharing stories, playing card games and performing songs.

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:

- All staff engaged in our Formation Spirituality day, focusing on strengthening our relationship with God through prayer and unpacking Scripture.
- Reconnection with our RE Curriculum 'Sharing our Story'.
- Teachers worked closely with the Religious Education Coordinator and CSPD staff to develop, plan and implement engaging RE programs across Year K-6.

## 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 2023

Year 3	Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
	School	Australia
Reading	65%	67%
Writing	87%	76%
Spelling	61%	61%
Grammar and Punctuation	44%	54%
Numeracy	52%	65%

### NAPLAN Results Year 5 2023

Year 5	Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
	School	Australia
Reading	84%	74%
Writing	85%	66%
Spelling	84%	69%
Grammar and Punctuation	68%	64%
Numeracy	71%	68%

## Student Profile

### Enrolment Policy

St Margaret Mary'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 2023	
Number of Boys	Number of Girls
261	294
Total Enrolments: 555	

### Student attendance

Student attendance rates 2023			
Year	Attendance Rate	Year	Attendance Rate
K	94%	4	93%
1	92%	5	93%
2	93%	6	93%
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.

<b>Student Body Characteristics</b>	
Language background other than English (LBOTE)	418
Students with disabilities (SWD)	116
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 Margaret Mary'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:

- Our Four Pillars demonstrate our school's core values where everyone is welcomed, included and respected and is the foundation of our award system.
- Student achievement is recognised and celebrated at assemblies and through our school newsletter.
- School Counsellors developed and implemented Parenting Courses to support families within our community.

St Margaret Mary'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 Margaret Mary'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:

- Each term our school celebrates Wellbeing week where staff and students engage in lessons and other activities promoting diversity and inclusion.
- Celebrated Harmony Day and NAIDOC week with a range of activities.

- Student Leaders and staff implemented Student Led clubs at lunchtime and recess to support student wellbeing on the playground.

## Community Satisfaction

During 2023, 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 welcomed at St Margaret Mary's and were able to meet with their child's teacher to discuss learning achievement and wellbeing.
- The positive way staff support children's behaviour at school and are satisfied that behaviour issues were dealt with in a timely manner.
- The strong relationships their child has with their teachers and peers makes them feel supported in their learning and eager to attend school.

Areas of strength from the student feedback include:

- A strong commitment and involvement in the St Margaret Mary's parish and a belief that they have a role to play in the area of social justice.
- The strong relationships with their teachers fosters a sense of belonging to our school community and an appreciation of opportunities they are given.
- Students felt motivated and engaged in their learning, but at times lacked the confidence in their ability to complete complex tasks.

Areas of strength from the staff feedback include:

- A high level of collaboration between colleagues, diverse learning staff and leadership enabled all learning opportunities met our student's needs.
- Teachers felt a strong sense of ownership and alignment between their daily work and the strategic goals of our school.
- Strong relationships between teachers, parents and students led to a growth in student behaviour and engagement, as well as enhancing school morale.



## School Improvement and Learning

### Priorities

Current Year Priorities		
Priority 1	To gain a deeper understanding of the NSW English and Mathematics syllabus documents to enhance our student's academic achievement.	Still Working Towards.
Priority 2	To consolidate and build on our whole school approach to collaborative inquiry and our Jigsaw pedagogy.	Achieved.

Projected School Priorities		
Priority 1	For students to be challenged within the areas of English and Maths, in order for them to develop deeper knowledge and skills, enabling all students to demonstrate growth through their academic achievement.	
Priority 2	To enhance our student's wellbeing through developing and implementing positive education and character strength programs across our community.	

## 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 2023 is detailed below:

Recurrent and Capital Income	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$6,350,892
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$0
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$1,724,066
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$1,172,391
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$268,952
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$9,516,301</b>

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$160,898
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$6,725,080
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$2,439,382
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$9,325,360</b>

<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth relates to Commonwealth Recurrent Grants including per capita funding and special purpose grants

<sup>2</sup> Capital relates to Government Capital Grants received for construction of school assets

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

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

<sup>5</sup> Other refers to Other Capital Income including amounts charged for Diocesan Building Levy from parents

<sup>6</sup> Capital Expenditure refers to expenses incurred mainly for School Buildings, Furniture and Equipment

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

<sup>8</sup> Non-Salary refers to all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenses