



St Margaret Mary's Primary School

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2024 Annual School Report



Introduction

About the Annual School Report

St Margaret Mary'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 Grace Carlo-Stella

I am proud to present to you the 2024 Annual School Report. Together, we have embraced challenges, celebrated successes and strengthened the bonds that unite us as educators, learners and families.

In 2024, we introduced the 24 Character Strengths framework, embedding it into our teaching and learning programs. These strengths have provided a shared language for students, staff and families to recognise and celebrate the unique contributions of every individual.

Our focus on high-impact teaching strategies has enriched classroom experiences. Staff engaged in ongoing professional learning in current pedagogy, ensuring our practices reflect the latest research and foster deep, meaningful learning. Across all year levels, students have demonstrated curiosity, resilience and determination, achieving milestones that reflect their hard work and commitment.

Our students continue to inspire us with their achievements, both in and out of the classroom. From academic successes to sporting accomplishments and creative arts performances, their dedication and enthusiasm have shone brightly. Highlights include the introduction of a swimming program, where students developed essential water safety skills and Carols by Twilight, which showcased the students' musical talents and brought the community together.

Our staff's commitment to lifelong learning and service has been outstanding. Staff participated in outreach programs, sharing their expertise and generosity beyond our school gates, embracing new opportunities to refine their teaching practices. This dedication ensures we continue to provide the highest quality education for our students.

We are immensely grateful for the parents and caregivers who contributed to the life of our school, involvement in excursions, as well as their support of special events such as Mother's Day, Father's Day.

Together, we have created an environment where everyone feels valued and supported. We look forward to 2025.

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 Parents and Friends group. In 2024, parent meetings were

held to establish ways in which the parents could support the educational and fundraising of the school. Throughout the year various Parent Groups organised the Easter Raffle, Mothers Day and Fathers Day stalls, School Discos and the Second Hand Uniform sale days.

The Easter raffle, also provide several Easter egg baskets to the 'House of Wellness' as part of our outreach program.

Parents were involved in our 2025 kindergarten orientation morning, answering questions for parents new to the school.

The newsletter is provided each fortnight with information regarding curriculum and events taking place at the school.

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 our school community by sharing our faith and providing a safe environment where everyone is welcomed and respected. We are aware of social justice issues and by our actions reach out to others, especially through our Mimi Vinnies program.

At St Margaret Mary's, as students we take pride in their school community by living out our faith, fostering inclusivity and creating a safe and respectful environment where we feel valued.

Learning is important and we are supported by the dedication and expertise of our teachers who promote quality education.

In 2024, students deepened their connection to Christ through active participation in liturgies and celebrations.

We were provide with many opportunities to showcase where we embraced a wide array of extra-curricular opportunities that catered to diverse interests and talents. Programmes such as Mini Vinnies, the National STEM Mad competition that took one of our groups to Nationals in Brisbane.

We celebrated our feast day, Mother's day, Father's day, grandparents day and our first Carols by Twilight that was a great community event.

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	56
Number of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	0
Number of full time teaching staff	31
Number of part time teaching staff	15
Number of non-teaching staff	10

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 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:

- Our professional learning focused on developing teacher capacity in the explicit teaching of Religious Education, English and Mathematics to improve student outcomes.
- The introduction of school wide assessment strategies in reading, writing and Mathematics, to analyse student growth and develop targeted programs to meet the needs to the students
- To continue to develop an in depth understanding of the NSW English and Mathematics syllabus across the grades.

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:

- Mini Vinnies students engage in the Winter Sleepout to support the St Vincent de Paul Society Winter Appeal.
- St Vincent de Paul Society Christmas Appeal where students donate food and other products for the less fortunate in our community.
- Project Compassion

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:

- Collaborative approach to focus on unpacking the new curriculum and scripture, allowing staff to deepen their understanding of pedagogy.
- Coaching sessions that provide guidance for staff, in refining their teaching practices, fostering positive classrooms.
- Formation Days for staff to engage in faith in action experiences in the local community, prayer practices and discussions on reach out practises.

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	84%	66%
Writing	90%	77%
Spelling	70%	61%
Grammar and Punctuation	79%	54%
Numeracy	76%	63%

NAPLAN Results Year 5 2024

Year 5	Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
	School	Australia
Reading	77%	71%
Writing	80%	67%
Spelling	77%	68%
Grammar and Punctuation	68%	65%
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 2024	
Number of Boys	Number of Girls
255	287
Total Enrolments: 542	

Student attendance

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

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)	287
Students with disabilities (SWD)	125
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:

- Implementing the 24 Character Strengths as a way for students to build self-awareness, resilience and positive relationships.
- Harmony Day to promote inclusivity, respect and a sense of belonging, fostering a united and supportive school community.
- Student achievement and positive interactions are recognised and celebrated weekly during assembly.

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:

- Implementing the 24 character strengths across the school to develop positive interactions with each others and involve families in the process.
- Mixed grade clubs where introduced during to support student wellbeing and develop positive interactions with peers.
- NAIDOC week students participated in a range of activities developing their knowledge of stories, traditions and achievements.

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:

- Clear and accessible communication to families about their children's progress, school events and opportunities to get involved.
- Value opportunities to encourage and celebrate their children's achievements, reflecting the success of this collaboration.
- Provide a secure and nurturing space for every child. The behavioural expectations and respectful atmosphere.

Areas of strength from the student feedback include:

- Learning is relevant to their everyday lives and has a lasting impact. Purposeful instruction that connects academic to real-world applications.
- Feel supported by teachers who respond to their needs, encourage independence and create an inclusive classroom environment.
- Feel supported by clear rules and expectations that foster a respectful and focused atmosphere.

Areas of strength from the staff feedback include:

- Staff are treated with respect, feel comfortable in taking risks and cooperate well together.
- Staff have access to the resources that are required to complete their work.
- Staff understand how the organisation's Catholic mission and norms should guide their day-to-day behaviour.

School Improvement and Learning

Priorities

Current Year 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.	Still Working Towards.
Priority 2	To enhance our student's wellbeing through developing and implementing positive education and character strength programs across our community.	Still Working Towards.

Projected School Priorities		
Priority 1	To improve students' understanding of Catholic tradition by engaging meaningfully with Scripture.	
Priority 2	To build each student's capacity to excel in English and Mathematics by: improving comprehension outcomes in particular retrieving information. building parent understanding of reading and Mathematics, implementing an enrichment program.	

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	\$6,669,761
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$1,772,180
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$1,389,995
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$296,822
Total Income	\$10,128,758

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$342,256
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$7,550,976
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$2,534,756
Total Expenditure	\$10,427,988

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