



St Mary's Primary School

2023 Annual School Report



St Mary's Primary School
1 Myrtle Street
Rydalmere 2116
0288446000
StMarysRydal@parra.catholic.edu.au
www.stmarysrydalmere.catholic.edu.au

Introduction

About the Annual School Report

St 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 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. Richard Blissenden

I am proud to present to you the 2023 Annual School Report for St Mary's Primary School, Rydalmere. St Mary's Primary School is a two stream Catholic co-educational school that strives to develop the whole person academically, socially and spiritually. Our purpose as a Catholic primary school is to provide a quality education for our students in a caring and supportive environment.

At St Mary's Primary School we aim to improve student learning outcomes and cater for individual differences with a differentiated curriculum. 2023 was a productive year, as students were involved in a variety of initiatives designed to improve learning outcomes, especially in the areas of formation, literacy and numeracy.

Throughout 2023, staff continued to develop an inquiry-based learning platform for our students. We continued a Bring Your Own Device program in Years 5 and 6. In addition, the school expanded its technology resources and updated a number of ageing devices.

Throughout 2023, the school community continued to consolidate and strengthen the faith formation of students and staff, as well as focus more deeply on the teaching and the learning, with a particular emphasis on the use of data to drive future learning as well as identify vulnerable students. Staff members at St Mary's Primary School were committed to ensuring that all students under our care improved their learning outcomes with individual and differentiated programs of learning to ensure academic success.

There is a strong sense of community at St Mary's Primary School and we focus on building positive relationships. We give thanks to our Lord for the successes and achievements of 2023 and look forward with enthusiasm and excitement to 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

During the year parents and carers were, as always, an important and valued part of the school community. Parents and carers were encouraged to participate in the life of the school including;

- Assisting in reading as parent helpers.
- Organising social functions.
- Attending the twilight swimming carnival.
- Attending the athletics carnival and cross country event.
- Attending online cyber-safe information session.
- Attending grade information sessions.

- Attending online personal development meeting.
- Making financial contributions to the school fundraising levy.
- Being actively involved in Parents and Friends meetings.
- Providing hospitality for key school events (Mother's Day, Father's Day and Grandparent's Day).
- Assisting with coordinating and operating the second-hand clothing pool.
- Acting as parent representatives for classes, organising social functions for each grade for both parents and students.

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

Throughout 2023, the students continued to appreciate the spacious open-learning spaces, the withdrawal work rooms and access to 21st Century technology. This included the purchase of new and additional MacBooks, Chrome Books and iPads and the continued use of large multi-modal screens in each learning space. The students have become more competent at working collaboratively with their peers and enjoyed being able to access various learning platforms to enhance their learning outcomes on a daily basis.

The students were appreciative of the access to our music tutors in being able to learn to play the keyboard, take up an various musical instruments and be a member of the school band. The students enjoyed the extra-curricular activities such as choir, dance group, the many clubs such as, board games, garden, coding and the playground games available at lunchtimes on both sites.

Throughout 2023, students enjoyed their participation in our social skills and anti-bullying programs. The year also saw further use of Captain Care, our social skills mascot, with the continuation of Care Cards and our positive behaviour initiatives which were enjoyed by all students.

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 Mary's Primary School opened in 1889 and was run by the Sisters of Mercy from 1893 until 1976. The sisters worked tirelessly for the St Mary's community for over eighty years before handing the running of the School to the first lay principal. In 1981 the Marist Brothers took over and ran St Mary's Primary School for ten years, leaving behind a strong Marian culture, which is still very evident today. The School became a co-educational, two stream Kindergarten to Year 6 school in 1987 when it retained the boys from Year 4 to Year 6. Formerly, boys in Years 5 and 6 left the school to attend St Patrick's Marist College, Dundas until it ceased its primary enrolments in 1987. In 1991, St Mary's Primary School came under the leadership of a lay principal. In 1998, and again in 2010, the School undertook extensive refurbishment projects to meet the needs of individual students more effectively in a contemporary learning environment. During 2021 the school refurbished the student toilets on both sites. Today the School continues to look at ways to ensure it remains at the forefront of the provision of quality Catholic Education in a modern contemporary world.

Location / Drawing Area

St Mary's Primary School is a co-educational Kindergarten to Year 6 (K-6) school with an enrolment of 383 children which is a slight increase of recent years owing to families relocating and moving into the area. The School is located in Rydalmere and draws on students from Rydalmere, Dundas, Ermington and Oatlands. It serves the parish of Holy Name of Mary Rydalmere. Enrolments in recent years have been taken from other suburbs as we cater for parents who want their children to attend a Catholic school adjacent to the Parramatta central business district and local Silverwater industrial area where they are employed. In the coming years enrolments are expected to increase owing to many local building developments, including medium density housing in Rydalmere, Silverwater, Newington and Parramatta.

Workforce Composition

Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile	
Total Number of Staff	37
Number of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	0
Number of full time teaching staff	15
Number of part time teaching staff	11
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 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:

- Professional learning for teachers led by curriculum leaders exploring the new English K-2 & 3-6 curriculum.
- Professional learning for teachers led by curriculum leaders exploring the new Mathematics K-2 & 3-6 curriculum.
- Professional learning led by the Mission Team from CSPD to design inquiry units for Sharing Our Story.

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:

- During 2023, St Mary's Primary School was heavily involved in the Caritas Project Compassion Lenten appeal and JRS Winter appeal.
- Staff attended JSR Outreach Parramatta, where they learnt about the charity and then helped to pack bags of food ready for collection.
- Students had a visit from the Vinnies Van resulting in a food drive. Student leaders then packed over 300 snack packs ready for distribution.

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 engaged in a Staff Development Day that explored the spirituality of the Mercy Charism.
- Staff worked with the Mission team to establish inquiry questions to re-connect with Sharing Our Story and produce programs of learning.
- Staff engaged in Religious Education assessment and constructing reporting comments.

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	83%	67%
Writing	95%	76%
Spelling	74%	61%
Grammar and Punctuation	67%	54%
Numeracy	83%	65%

NAPLAN Results Year 5 2023

Year 5	Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
	School	Australia
Reading	88%	74%
Writing	94%	66%
Spelling	90%	69%
Grammar and Punctuation	77%	64%
Numeracy	81%	68%

Student Profile

Enrolment Policy

St 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
188	193
Total Enrolments: 381	

Student attendance

Student attendance rates 2023			
Year	Attendance Rate	Year	Attendance Rate
K	95%	4	95%
1	94%	5	95%
2	93%	6	94%
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)	112
Students with disabilities (SWD)	101
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	7

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 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:

- Play equipment installed for students K-6.
- Regular assemblies were held throughout 2023 recognising student achievements.
- PBS rewards through care cards and house points were given throughout the year.

St 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 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:

- The continuation of a social skills program, 'You Can Do It' in all grades with a particular focus on 'Getting Along',
- Participation by Year 6 student leaders in a leadership conference run by our school staff.
- Buddy program - senior students buddied with younger students to support them and to model being a supportive role model.

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 welcome when visiting the school and were kept informed with clear and plain language.
- Parents reported that their child felt safe at school.
- Parents see the school as inclusive with teachers helping students who need extra support.

Areas of strength from the student feedback include:

- Students have friends at school they can trust and who encourage them to make positive choices.
- Students feel teachers are responsive to their needs and encourage independence.
- School staff emphasise academic skills and hold high expectations for all students to succeed.

Areas of strength from the staff feedback include:

- Staff have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in their role.
- Teachers are encouraged to come up with better ways of doing things.
- Staff understand how our school's Catholic mission and norms guide their day to day behaviour.

School Improvement and Learning

Priorities

Current Year Priorities		
Priority 1	Quality English and Mathematics learning was delivered, informed by the new K-2 and 3-6 syllabuses.	Achieved.
Priority 2	To establish a plan for enhancing the school's Catholic identity. This was informed by engaging of staff, parents and students in completing the ECSI survey.	Still Working Towards.

Projected School Priorities		
Priority 1	To improve vocabulary knowledge in order to increase students' reading comprehension and interpretation of implied information.	
Priority 2	To improve student outcomes in the content areas of Measurement and Space.	

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 ¹	\$4,078,937
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$1,070,040
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$1,013,724
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$184,215
Total Income	\$6,346,916

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$488,153
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$4,401,423
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$1,770,478
Total Expenditure	\$6,660,054

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