

St Matthew's Primary School

2023 Annual School Report



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Introduction

About the Annual School Report

St Matthew'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. Ben Ticehurst

I am delighted to present the 2023 Annual School Report for St Matthew's Primary School, a community dedicated to meeting the needs of children and families with pride and commitment. Our rich heritage and forward-looking approach foster enthusiasm, optimism, and unity.

Our mission remains steadfast:

- Cultivate a supportive Catholic faith community, embracing all with warmth, forgiveness, and hope.
- Nurture strong, affectionate relationships among students, staff, and families.
- Pursue educational excellence, guiding each child to their fullest potential through personalized support and a focus on growth.
- Embrace moments of joy and camaraderie in various settings, fostering holistic growth.

In partnership with the Parish and wider community, we're celebrated for our faith-based education, marked by excellence and innovation.

At the core of our student management philosophy lies the principles of safety, responsibility, and respect - values that promote a culture of acceptance and harmony among students, staff and the broader community.

We are proud of our accomplishments in 2023 and believe that we have made substantial contributions to the learning community. Reflecting on our successes, our teachers have diligently assessed the efficacy of their teaching practices and implemented new strategies aimed at further enhancing student learning growth.

As we eagerly anticipate the challenges and opportunities that 2024 will bring, we do so with a resolute sense of purpose and unwavering dedication to the holistic development of every individual within our school 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

Parents form an essential partnership in the educational journey of their children. Their involvement spans various facets from actively participating in classroom activities to volunteering for extracurricular events and fundraisers. Parents serve as invaluable resources, offering their time, expertise and support to enhance the learning environment, Catholicity of our school and overall school community. Through their engagement, parents have provided additional assistance and encouragement to students but also foster a sense of belonging and connection within the school. Their presence at school functions, liturgies, masses and learning experiences supports our shared mission, their

feedback and consultation in decision-making processes and collaboration with educators demonstrates a shared commitment to academic success and holistic development. Parents form a vital part of the continuous improvement of our school, ensuring that St Matthew's remain responsive to the needs and aspirations of both students and families. Overall, the positive contributions of parents enrich the educational experience, creating a supportive and thriving school environment conducive to growth

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

Our student leaders, chosen through peer and teacher elections, play integral roles at St Matthew's Primary School. Their diverse responsibilities encompass organising and conducting school assemblies, facilitating our Kindergarten Buddies program, representing our school as special ambassadors at significant school and community events and undertaking various tasks as required. Additionally, our Year 6 students hold targeted leadership roles, serving as exemplary models for their peers and demonstrating responsibility throughout the school community. They embrace their leadership roles with earnestness, consistently meeting the high expectations set for them. Our students benefit from exceptional facilities, including playing areas, learning spaces and technological resources, which support their educational and leisure pursuits. They are entrusted with significant responsibilities, such as organising school masses, carnivals and fundraising events. Our students express appreciation for the School's efforts in promoting their wellbeing and academic growth. They possess a positive outlook on learning, valuing themselves as learners and approaching their education with enthusiasm.

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 Matthew's Primary School was established in 1833 and it is amongst the oldest Catholic schools in Australia. It is the oldest continuous Catholic school in Australia, having been continuously sited at its current location. The Good Samaritan Sisters had a continuous association with St Matthew's Primary School from 1882 until 1990. These Sisters continued the fine work of the laity, bringing to the school their own unique spirit. The history of St Matthew's Primary School is also the human story of a wonderful parish, the region, of pupils past and present and the dedication of those who served the school, often against adversity. St Matthew's Primary School is a small but growing school where tradition meets innovation.

Location / Drawing Area

St Matthew's Primary School is nestled in the beautiful historic town of Windsor, a short walk from the scenic Hawkesbury River. It is one of the oldest Catholic schools in Australia having been started in 1832. The school was officially gazetted with the earliest written record being a letter from the Colonial Secretary, dated 24th August 1833. St Matthew's Primary School has continued to provide a warm and secure educational environment, with a strong focus on quality teaching and student engagement. Our students are encouraged to model positive behaviour and to value the uniqueness of each person created in God's image. Our students come from a broad drawing area across the Hawkesbury district, including Windsor, Bligh Park, Pitt Town, McGraths Hill, Glossodia, Wilberforce and further afield from Putty, Upper Colo, Colo, Maraylya and the Wisemans Ferry area.

Workforce Composition

Staffing Profile

| Staffing Profile | |
|--|----|
| Total Number of Staff | 41 |
| Number of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people | 0 |
| Number of full time teaching staff | 17 |
| Number of part time teaching staff | 10 |
| Number of non-teaching staff | 14 |

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 Matthew'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:

- Developed a deep understanding of prayer and appreciate our connection to First Nation Australians in Darug Country.
- Dedicated significant preparation time to the introduction of the K-6 English and Mathematics syllabuses.
- Embedded a launch, explore, reflect pedagogy in Mathematics that challenges learners.

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:

- Implemented and expanded the Social Justice program to foster practical expressions of faith among students.
- Strengthened community outreach efforts by organising support packages for community members in need, demonstrating compassion and solidarity.
- Promoted cultural awareness and foster connections among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

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:

- Engaged in the Staff Spirituality Day on prayerful dialogue around our faith and Sacred Scripture to better understand the messages of scripture.
- Enhanced our understanding of prayer through contemplative experiences with Visio and Lectio Divina.
- Deepened our understanding of scripture through the utilisation of the three senses and integrating this into our Religious Education cycles.

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 | 74% | 67% |
| Writing | 95% | 76% |
| Spelling | 54% | 61% |
| Grammar and Punctuation | 57% | 54% |
| Numeracy | 83% | 65% |

NAPLAN Results Year 5 2023

| Year 5 | Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards | |
|-------------------------|---|-----------|
| | School | Australia |
| Reading | 59% | 74% |
| Writing | 70% | 66% |
| Spelling | 45% | 69% |
| Grammar and Punctuation | 59% | 64% |
| Numeracy | 58% | 68% |

Student Profile

Enrolment Policy

St Matthew'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 |
| 149 | 136 |
| Total Enrolments: 285 | |

Student attendance

| Student attendance rates 2023 | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Year | Attendance Rate | Year | Attendance Rate |
| K | 95% | 4 | 93% |
| 1 | 92% | 5 | 91% |
| 2 | 92% | 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.

| Student Body Characteristics | |
|--|----|
| Language background other than English (LBOTE) | 52 |
| Students with disabilities (SWD) | 65 |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander | 16 |

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 Matthew'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:

- Highlighting student achievements that meet our school expectations at each weekly assembly.
- Revised our school expectations matrix by incorporating input from students.
- Implementing a new system to monitor and review the School's behaviour data to identify strengths and have plans to address areas of improvement.

St Matthew'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 Matthew'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:

- Implemented a whole-school reward system that recognises respectful and responsible behaviours by students, through our PBS4L framework
- Celebrated the first-ever Hawkesbury Cultural Immersion Day, uniting local school networks to recognise and celebrate our Indigenous heritage.

- Built an awareness of the diverse needs in our community by celebrating World Autism Awareness Day.

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:

- My child feels safe at school.
- My child is clear about the rules and expectations for school behaviour.
- Teachers encourage my child to do well at school.

Areas of strength from the student feedback include:

- My school helps me grow in my understanding of Jesus.
- School staff emphasise academic skills and hold high expectations for all students to succeed.
- At school, we learn about what keeps me and other students safe.

Areas of strength from the staff feedback include:

- The school's professional learning is strategically aligned with a comprehensive whole-school improvement plan.
- Staff feel a sense of accomplishment, are proud to work at St Matthew's and are motivated to apply their best effort.
- Staff understand the school's Catholic mission and norms, which guide their day-to-day words and actions.

School Improvement and Learning

Priorities

| Current Year Priorities | | |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Priority 1 | To implement a writing culture of growth using the progressions as a means to track performance and monitor standards. | Still Working Towards. |
| Priority 2 | To embed a launch, explore, reflect pedagogy in Mathematics that challenges learners to deepen their Mathematical reasoning, understanding and efficiency. | Still Working Towards. |

| Projected School Priorities | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Priority 1 | To increase the opportunity for staff, students, and parents to engage in prayerful experiences and dialogue at St Matthew's. | |
| Priority 2 | To enhance the anticipated growth in writing skills and overall achievement among all students, supported by the school's pedagogical approach to writing. | |

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 | \$4,106,570 |
| Government Capital Grants ² | \$0 |
| State Recurrent Grants ³ | \$1,128,739 |
| Fees and Private Income ⁴ | \$726,366 |
| Other Capital Income ⁵ | \$129,592 |
| Total Income | \$6,091,267 |

| Recurrent and Capital Expenditure | |
|--|--------------------|
| Capital Expenditure ⁶ | \$493,111 |
| Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷ | \$4,540,626 |
| Non-Salary Expenses ⁸ | \$1,374,469 |
| Total Expenditure | \$6,408,206 |

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