



Melbourne Archdiocese  
Catholic Schools

# 2023

## Annual Report to the School Community



**St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary  
School**

47 Farmhouse Boulevard, EPPING NORTH 3076

Principal: Claire Pitcher

Web: [www.smcmeppingnth.catholic.edu.au](http://www.smcmeppingnth.catholic.edu.au)

Registration: 2087, E Number: E1388

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## Principal's Attestation

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I, Claire Pitcher, attest that St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School is compliant with:

- The minimum standards and other requirements for school registration and school boarding premises (if applicable) as specified in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic).
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2023 school year under the Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth) and the Australian Education Regulations 2023 (Cth).
- The Child Safe Standards as prescribed in Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises.

Attested on 10 May 2024

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## About this report

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St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School is registered by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). The Annual Report to the School Community (ARSC), provides parents and the wider community with information about the school's activities and achievements throughout the year including information about various aspects of school performance. The Report is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the school community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students. Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the School directly or by visiting the School's website. Information can also be obtained from the [My School website](#).

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## Governing Authority Report

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When Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) launched our inaugural strategic plan MACS 2030: Forming Lives to Enrich the World just over a year ago, I spoke about the need for our whole organisation to reflect on the biggest challenges that confront us, and to work at speed to find practical, ambitious, student-centred solutions.

As a relatively new governing authority, 2023 set us on the path to achieving our first goals, as we focussed our efforts on building strong foundations for success. The four pillars of MACS2030 – Inspired by Faith; Flourishing Learners; Enabled Leaders; and Enriched Communities - serve to guide our work on how we achieve our strategic intent.

When we surveyed our teachers in late 2022, over 80 per cent told us that they want access to quality teaching and assessment resources. So in January 2023, we secured a system-wide licence for MACS primary and secondary schools to access the Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) assessment suite. The inclusion of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Survey allows schools to monitor the wellbeing of their students and target resourcing to specific areas of need. Together, these tools provide a coherent and systematic approach to student assessment.

In partnership with Ochre Education, we began work on F-6 Mathematics curriculum resources, being developed in a phased approach over three years, and delivered the first tranche for F-2. A key consideration in developing the materials is ensuring teachers retain autonomy to tailor curriculum implementation to meet the individual and local needs of students.

This is an exciting development for our MACS community, clearly demonstrating the commitment we all share to delivering the best possible education opportunities for our 120,000 students and supporting our 10,000 classroom teachers to be the very best that they can be.

Archbishop Peter commissioned a comprehensive review of Religious Education curriculum, the first in over a decade. It offers us some challenges, but fundamentally is a hope-filled report that invites a path of ongoing work to develop a new RE curriculum for all Catholic schools. We continued Working Together in Mission with Parish Priests throughout the Archdiocese, including through regular roundtable discussions.

Across greater Melbourne, one in five students attend a Catholic school and 2023 saw steady growth in enrolments across our system, demonstrating the value families place on a Catholic education and the high quality, holistic education MACS schools provide.

As a system of schools, we can be better together, reducing the administrative load on our schools and freeing our teachers and principals to focus on what they do best.

I would like to pay tribute to our MACS school and office colleagues who have worked so hard to achieve our goals. We look forward to further strengthening those partnerships as we work together to deliver an education that inspires young people to enrich the world.

Yours sincerely

Dr Edward Simons

Executive Director

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

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## Vision and Mission

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*Inspired by the Spirit of Mary MacKillop*

*Guided by the life of Jesus Christ*

*St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School*

*Is a place of optimism, excitement, excellence and challenge*

*Where every student, teacher, parent and community member is*

*Accepted and invited to make a contribution;*

*Where we seek to fire the imagination and promote a lifelong thirst For God and learning.*

*'There where you are, you will find God.'*

*St. Mary MacKillop (1871)*

### **Educational Vision & Philosophy**

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School, Epping North is part of the mission of the Catholic Church serving and providing opportunities for life in the Catholic Parish of Epping and Epping North,

It honours the diversity of the children and families entrusted to it, shaping its endeavours so that all are drawn forward within its mission, formed by the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Church and the inspired life of St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School is a place of optimism, excitement and challenge, where students, parents and staff see each day as a journey, full of purpose, where intellectual engagement and connectedness to the real world are priorities. Personalizing learning is vital to the success of each child's unique development and preparation for a rapidly changing society, confident, resilient and hopeful.

As a learning community this school thrives in a diverse and flexible environment where an inseparable relationship has been created between innovation, sustainable design and a deep knowledge of how children learn. The learning spaces are open, adaptable and aesthetic, embracing the importance of interaction, communication and collaboration; enabling the learning community to share and learn from each other. The provision of state of

the art technology resources is integral to the school's belief of accessing both the local and global communities.

School leaders will develop a wellbeing culture across the school, and will have a strong presence in the community and broader Parish. The vision of the school will be to reach out, providing structures, processes and procedures for creating links between student wellbeing and improved learning outcomes.

Every student, teacher, parent and community member is accepted and invited to make a contribution to a vibrant school community that seeks to fire the imagination, develop good citizenship and promote a lifelong thirst for God and learning.

At St Mary of the Cross MacKillop we aim to provide a physically safe and emotionally secure environment, where each child feels accepted and respected, and is challenged to work to his/her full potential.

Ours is a community of learners where all students are personally known, encouraged and challenged by a dedicated, caring staff.

We work to ensure that the programs offered, and the teaching in St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish School, supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to:

- elected government
- the rule of law
- equal rights for all before the law
- freedom of religion
- freedom of speech and association
- the values of openness and tolerance.

We work as a collaborative team to achieve common goals. We value learning from each other and a culture of learning and continual improvement at SMCM. We believe this will provide the best learning for our students.

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## School Overview

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St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School is located in Epping North, approximately 24 kilometres north of Melbourne, in a rapidly expanding suburb. The school is situated on Farmhouse Boulevard, named for the historic 160 year old blue stone farmhouse on the school site. The school was officially opened in 2013. St Mary of the Cross MacKillop School is one of three schools in St Peter's Catholic Parish Epping. The Parish Priest is Father Anh Nguyen. The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value is 1063 with a school percentile of 75%. There are currently 30 LOTE backgrounds represented in the school and 49% of students have a language background other than English.

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop is a child safe school that promotes a child safe culture of safety, wellbeing and inclusion for all children. The student enrolment numbers have continued to grow with a current enrolment of 560 students. The students are arranged in 24 class groupings as follows: Foundation x3, Year 1 x4, Year 2 x4, Year 3 x3, Year 4 x3, Year 5 x4, Year 6 x3. There are 50 teaching staff and 20 non teaching staff.

Our innovative and flexible learning spaces provide an environment for collaborative and targeted learning opportunities. The outdoor spaces embrace opportunities for nature play and include expansive play spaces such as a soccer pitch, basketball court, AFL paddock, two adventure playgrounds, sandpits, cubby house and wetlands. Specialist programs are offered in Japanese, Physical Education, STEM, Visual Arts and Performing Arts.

The 2020 - 2023 School Improvement Plan sets a strategic direction that is multifaceted, holistic and focused on continual improvement. We aim to develop a culture of learning for young people, teacher leaders and parents by creating the conditions for learner agency and creating spaces of encounter for all learners to feel empowered to inquire into the questions that matter for all. In creating this culture of learning, we aim to bring the richness of the Catholic tradition into dialogue with contemporary culture. These next horizons will be achieved through a process of school wide, evidence informed professional inquiry in partnership with our faith community.

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School is grounded in Australia's Contemporary Catholic tradition and guided by the life, actions and spirit of St Mary MacKillop.



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## Principal's Report

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The 2023 school year marked our 10th Anniversary celebrations at St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish School Epping North. Our school theme focused on this special milestone as we were 'Learning from the Past to Shape the Future'.

Highlights of our 10 Year Anniversary celebrations included:

- Our 10th Anniversary Mass which was celebrated with 700 current and former staff, parents, students and parishioners.
- The 10th Anniversary Community Fair which was a wonderful community event and raised close to \$30000 in funds to support the continual growth and development of our school capital works.
- Mary MacKillop Feast Day celebrations and school disco.
- The Term 3 Celebration of Learning and Book Fair with books donated to our school library by families to mark our 10th Anniversary.

In 2023 we completed our external School Review. I extend my thanks to the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Northern Region Office staff for their support in this process and to our reviewer Judi Gurvich. I'm pleased to report that our VRQA and Child Safety assessments were completed to a high standard and all requirements were met and surpassed. The review of our School Improvement Spheres promoted rigorous dialogue amongst staff as we analysed our school data and reflected on school processes and pedagogy. We look forward to enacting the goals set through the review process over the next four years.

My role in overseeing the daily running of the school was supported by a dedicated and professional staff who have created a special place of learning and have demonstrated a desire to provide continuity, wellbeing and safety for our students and families. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their care, professionalism and nurturing of the children during 2023. Special thanks must be given to the leadership team who ensure the smooth running of many aspects of our school including learning, sacramental life, student wellbeing and community events.

Thank you to our Parish Priest Fr Anh, and to the parish staff for your support this year. We look forward to continuing this partnership as we work together in mission for the full flourishing of every child.

In 2023 we met as a Parish School Advisory Council allowing us to work collaboratively with the parents, parishioners and other school leaders within the Parish of St Peter's Epping. I thank the SMMC parents for representing our community on the Council. Your engagement in school life and willingness to listen and clarify on behalf of the wider parent community is much appreciated.

The children of SMCM are the centre of all the work we do. Our students give inspiration and meaning to the work we do each day. I thank each of them for the life and energy they bring to our school through their love of learning and interactions with each other.

SMCM is a special place due to the tenacity and enthusiasm of the students, the dedication of the staff and the support and engagement of the families.

I am pleased to provide this report for the 2023 school year to the school community.

Claire Pitcher

Principal

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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

**The identified goal of our School Improvement Annual Action Plan for Education in Faith was:**

- To develop powerful learning for deeper understanding for all in our faith community

**The intended outcome was:**

- To engage with a Pedagogy of Encounter that invites young people to explore their questions and to be in dialogue with different perspectives and interpretations, including those from the Catholic tradition, other religions and philosophies, as they seek to make personal meaning.

### Achievements

At St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, Prayer is a key element in the life of a Catholic school and a vital part of our daily routine. Each day begins with our school prayer and Christian meditation continues to be practised regularly in our learning Communities. We also developed a whole school afternoon prayer, which is prayed together as learning communities at our afternoon gatherings with our school community.

We continue to strengthen our partnership between our school and parish, in order to support the faith experience of our children and families. This has been particularly evident in the preparation and celebration of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation, with large numbers of candidates in participation; with 50 Reconciliation candidates, 66 Eucharist candidates and 60 Confirmation candidates celebrating over 6 Sacramental celebrations. Religious Education leaders and Year 3-6 teachers worked collaboratively to plan Connectors preparation sessions and Sacramental Family Faith Nights; all of which were well received by candidates, families and the wider community.

Our parish priest Father Anh continues to assist us in living out our mission to bring the Gospel into our lives. His involvement in the planning, preparation and presentation of Year level masses, as well as some Religious Education sessions has helped staff and students to develop their understandings in the areas of liturgy, the structure of Mass and our Catholic traditions. All Year levels participated in weekly Parish Masses each Term. At the beginning of the year, we gathered together with our students, staff and school community to celebrate our 10 year anniversary; which was led by Bishop Terry. We reflected on the growth of

SMCM; from a vacant block of land in a new suburb with a vision for a school and community to the vibrant, diverse and flourishing school and community we are today.

Embedding a social justice platform continues to be an integral part of our culture. During the season of Lent, we focused our efforts on helping those in need within our own and wider community by supporting the Caritas Project Compassion appeal. This year, our Year 6 students worked closely with the Epping Parish conference of St Vincent de Paul to raise awareness and funds for those less fortunate in our local community. A large number of toiletries were delivered to the Vinnies shed as part of the Winter Appeal. Alongside these donations, a committee of Year 6 Leaders organised two Winter Wednesday fundraisers, which enabled us to raise \$1,212.45. During the season of Advent, the joy and Christmas season was very present in our school community as we collected donations for the St Vincent de Paul's Christmas Appeal. Together as a community, we were able to generously fill 26 hampers with gifts, food and Christmas goodies.

We continue to enact our school vision by celebrating the life of our patron saint, Mary of the Cross MacKillop in all that we do. This is particularly reflected on Mary's August 8 feast day, when we celebrate and give thanks for her contribution. Staff participated in a Professional learning day at the Mary MacKillop Heritage centre, to develop a deeper understanding of the values and faith that inspired St Mary MacKillop's life work and how this connected to their life and work. This day also enabled staff to nurture their own faith and reflect on the model of St Mary MacKillop who was inspired by the life of Jesus Christ.

Our Faith Life Inquiry approach to learning in Religious Education has provided numerous opportunities for students to explore rich concepts in connection with the Religious Education Framework. Rigorous discussion in whole school and team planning sessions has enabled teachers to explore their own and others' perspectives and interpretations of the Gospel, before recontextualising for students in Religious Education sessions.

Our school vision recognises that faith education is ongoing, as we promote a lifelong thirst for God and learning. Onsite and online professional learning in the areas of Lent, Advent and prayer were made available to all staff and our RE leaders participated in important network meetings.

### **Value Added**

- Parish Sacramental Season for candidates
- Sacramental Faith nights
- Weekly Parish Masses for year levels

- Whole school community liturgical celebrations, including our 10 Year Anniversary Mass,
- Holy Week and Easter
- Prayer Liturgies within learning spaces for community gatherings, Remembrance Day, End of Year celebrations
- Mary MacKillop Feast Day Whole School celebration
- Continued the tradition of Caritas Friday's as a day of action, awareness and fundraising for Project Compassion
- Established a Mini Vinnie's student team to support the Vinnies Winter Appeal
- Raised funds and awareness for St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal
- Education in Faith facilitated planning
- Regular meetings between Education in Faith Leader, Principal and Parish Staff and Religious Education School Advisors MACS
- Whole School Staff Professional Learning day; at the Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre guided by Sr Rita
- Education in Faith Staff Professional meetings once a term; including Pauline Cucciotto from MACS as a presenter
- Education in Faith Leaders attended the Northern Region Network Meetings termly

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## Learning and Teaching

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

**The identified goal of our School Improvement Annual Action Plan for Learning & Teaching was:**

- To create the conditions for young people to seek the challenges they desire and to achieve their optimal growth and progress in their learning.

**The intended outcomes to meet this goal were:**

- To create the conditions and offer the scaffolds that support the development of assessment capable learners as they strive for optimal growth and development.
- To engage in all dimensions of learning – knowledge, capabilities (skills) and dispositions across all domains of learning.

### Achievements

In 2023, SMCM remained committed to enriching our students' educational journeys, fostering lifelong learning, and nurturing personal growth. Our teaching practices seamlessly align with our overarching vision, embedded within a contemporary curriculum that offers robust support for students to build on their knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for thriving independent learners in the 21st century.

Collaborative efforts among teaching teams, supported by Curriculum leaders, were instrumental in crafting and executing learning experiences tailored to connect Literacy, Mathematics, and Faith Education through an Inquiry Model. This facilitated planning process provided ample opportunities for ongoing discussions on student progress, enabling teachers to tailor their approaches to meet individual learning needs (assessment for learning) and promote best practices throughout all areas of the curriculum.

In 2023, SMCM furthered its commitment to engaging families through various communication channels aimed at sharing and commemorating student achievements. The integration of Online Learning Logs (OLLs) via the Seesaw Family app, alongside Student Progression Reports and Teacher-led learning conversations, fostered meaningful dialogues among students, families, and educators to reflect on accomplishments and collaboratively set new learning objectives.

Learning & Teaching Highlights include:

- 50 Days of School Learning Celebrations in Foundation

- 100 Days of School Learning Celebrations in Foundation
- Discovery Learning in Foundation to Year Two
- Inquiry Based Learning in Year Three - Six
- Book Week Celebrations included two author visits from Gregg Dreiss and Nat Amooore for all students
- National Simultaneous Reading
- Content and Language Integrated Learning in Japanese
- Literacy & Numeracy Intervention
- APSMO Maths Olympiad in Years Five and Six
- APSMO Maths Games Junior in Years Four, Five and Six
- APSMO Maths Explorer in Years Three and Four
- Aus/NZ 2023 Matific Olympiad
- Excursions to CERES, Scienceworks, Melbourne Zoo, Bundoora Heritage Centre,
- Incursions led by Wild Action and St Monica's College
- Foundation, Year Two and Year Three Swimming Program
- Physical Education opportunities such as District Swimming, District Athletics, Cross Country, Basketball, Tennis, Soccer and T-ball.
- Year Three Extended Day Camp Experience to Treetop Adventure Belgrave
- Year Four Overnight Camp to lady Northcote
- Year Five - Three Day Camp Experience Portsea
- Year Six - Three Day Camp Experience to Rumbug

## **English**

At SMCM, our commitment to a comprehensive literacy approach continued, ensuring students develop proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking and listening. Throughout 2023, the integration of inquiry and English deepened, with inquiry units enriched by a diverse range of literacy texts. These units served as a rich context for English activities, supported by explicit and scaffolded instruction that empowered students to explore and express themselves creatively.

Teachers in years three to six continued with the implementation of the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. This provided teachers with tools and texts to observe and quantify specific reading behaviours. After conducting the assessment, teachers were able to confidently determine students' instructional and independent reading levels as well as conduct a revealing Comprehension Conversation. Teachers then interpreted and used that data to plan for meaningful targeted teaching with the support of the Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading Collection.

Furthermore, the school continued in implementing Michelle Hutchinson's SMART Spelling approach throughout the 2023 academic year, reinforcing our commitment to fostering strong literacy skills across all levels.

## **Mathematics**

At SMCM, our approach to Mathematics learning and teaching continued to be data-driven practices, using the data from curriculum aligned pre-assessments along with other standardised assessments to inform instruction, identify areas for growth, and differentiate learning experiences to meet the diverse needs of our students. We prioritised students' development of conceptual and relational understandings and procedural fluency as well as real-world application and students' resilience in Mathematics learning. Across all year levels, the structure of Mathematics lessons by following the approach known as Launch, Explore, and Summarise was strengthened. The Number Talk strategy to build students' mathematical reasoning, fluency, and flexibility with numbers was also implemented with support of coaching and peer mentoring/observations.

Fluency building continued to be an essential component of Mathematics learning at SMCM. The fluency both in procedural skills and conceptual understanding was built through regular practice and differentiated instruction during Foundation to Year 2 Fluency Sessions.

In 2023, we maintained the Getting Ready In Numeracy (GRIN) intervention program in the Years Foundation, One, Three, Five and Six which was facilitated by our qualified GRIN tutors. The objective was to enhance students' readiness for regular Mathematics classes, aiming for optimal engagement and improvement in Mathematical language usage and understanding of key concepts. The positive impact of GRIN was evident to our homeroom teachers, particularly in the increased confidence and participation of GRIN students during the regular Mathematics lessons.

Furthermore, 82 students from Years Three to Six with above-standard achievements in Mathematics or with a keen interest in Mathematics participated in contests facilitated by the Australian Problem Solving Mathematical Olympiads (APSMO). Throughout the year, these students took part in four contests as well as occasional workshops to explore Mathematical problem solving strategies. Notably, one Year 6 student achieved a ranking in the top 10, and two Year 6 students secured a ranking in the top 25% of the 2023 Maths Olympiad Junior Division.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

The Year 3 NAPLAN 2023 results indicate that more than half of our students demonstrated a commendable performance. Students achieved the proficiency standard of either 'exceeding' or 'strong' across all five areas: Reading (62.2%), Writing (74.3%), Spelling (67.6%), Numeracy (68.9%), and Grammar and Punctuation (54.1%). When compared to



Outcome Mean data from the previous year (Year 3 NAPLAN 2022), there is an improvement in the area of Numeracy (+18.7 points). However, in the other literacy-based areas (averaging at -26.9 points), these results indicate that instructional practices and approaches to intervention require attention, particularly to support students who did not achieve within the top two proficiency standards.

The Year 5 NAPLAN 2023 results show that students achieved a notably higher proficiency standard of either 'exceeding' or 'strong' compared to their Year 3 peers: Reading (72.3%), Writing (75.9%), Spelling (69.9%), Numeracy (62.7%), and Grammar and Punctuation (55.4%). The Outcome Mean data reflected a similar narrative. Compared to 2022, the Outcome Mean data improved in all five areas, particularly in Writing (+30 points).

The results of NAPLAN 2023 have helped to prompt robust discussions including instructional practices, assessment, analysing data and supporting students' needs. These discussions will be instrumental in informing and shaping our strategic decisions for 2024. We remain committed to supporting all students to reach their full potential in Literacy and Numeracy.

<b>NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Year level</b>	<b>Mean Scale score</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	400	56%
	Year 5	479	57%
Numeracy	Year 3	420	73%
	Year 5	492	66%
Reading	Year 3	396	64%
	Year 5	488	73%
Spelling	Year 3	397	69%
	Year 5	495	72%
Writing	Year 3	411	76%
	Year 5	498	76%

\*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2023 due to participation not meeting these criteria or no students were assessed. Participants include students who were assessed, including non-attempt, or those exempted from the test.

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## Student Wellbeing

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

**The identified goal of our School Improvement Annual Action Plan for Student Wellbeing was:**

- To create the conditions for young people to seek the challenges they desire and to achieve their optimal growth and progress in their learning.

**The intended outcomes to meet this goal were:**

- Develop the wellbeing of all students to improve social relationships, resilience and feelings of safety at school.

### Achievements

#### Student Wellbeing

SMCM is a School-Wide Positive Behaviour (SWPB) school that prioritises the importance of building relationships with our students. The student code of behaviour is taught using the FARM Code- F(friendly, fair, and flexible), A(act safe), R(respect for self, others, and the environment), and M(make good choices). Learning Community Gatherings are recognised as important ways to share consistent messages with the whole school community and to foster compliance with the FARM code. At these Gatherings, we recognise student achievement with the presentation of the SMCM FARM Code and Saint Mary MacKillop awards.

The Resilience Project continues to be the focus of Social Emotional Learning taught across all years levels to promote the development of Gratitude, Empathy, and Mindfulness (GEM) skills. Alongside The Resilience Project, staff engage with the Department of Education's Respectful Relationships curriculum to meet the needs of students and the Victorian curriculum. Data collected from the Resilient Youth survey indicates that our senior boys are developing help seeking behaviours and emotional regulation strategies.

Child Safety is prioritised each term in the professional learning provided to all staff across the school. The professional learning reviews The Child Safety Standards, Mandatory Reporting, PROTECT, reportable conduct, and student supervision.

In 2023 SMCM built upon staff capacity to manage student emotional regulation through engagement in professional learning and coaching. The school continues to work with MACS consultants to successfully introduce a coaching and feedback model that supports student and staff needs.

Assisting students to problem solve, manage conflict, recognise strategies to manage big emotions, and develop teacher knowledge of SWPB continues to be a priority. A school closure day at the beginning of the year was dedicated to the use of restorative practices and our school-wide approach to managing behaviour.

### **Child Safe Standards**

At St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Primary School, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent in the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel. We have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where all children and young people are respected, their voices are heard, and feel safe. All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed are treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect. Staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors, parents and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by school leadership. St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Primary School has always been committed to the highest standards of child safety and has a zero tolerance for child abuse.

Our school works in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and protection. An updated Child Safe Standards presentation was made to the School Advisory Council and to all staff. This included unpacking the 11 Child Safe Standards and establishing a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

All adults in our school, including teaching and non-teaching staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors, have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse. The policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of students are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children and young people. Our

school policies and practices demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and cooperation with the Church, governments, the police and human services agencies.

SMCM has always been committed to the highest standards of child safety and has a zero tolerance for child abuse. As a School we have used the Victorian Child Safe Standards as an opportunity to review all the School's policies and practices regarding the School's care, safety and welfare of children. A Code of Conduct for all members of the School Staff, Contractors, Visitors and the School Community was completed. Staff attended a school based Child Safety Standards meeting and completed the DET Mandatory Reporting Modules.

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct has been made available to the public via the school website and our community via the school newsletter and other digital platforms. Each year the students of SMCM review a child friendly version of the Child Safe Standards and Code of Conduct so that all students understood their rights and empowered to speak up. All volunteers are required to have a Working With Children Check (WWCC) before they assist at School, even if they are working with their own child's class and sign the Child safety Code of conduct.

Students are given a voice to express issues on child safety within their homegroups or with the Wellbeing Leader or a trusted adult. Content specific lessons are taught throughout the year and highlighted by the whole school on special days of action such as the Day for Daniel, So No to Bullying Day and eSafety day.

### **Value Added**

- Family Welcome Meetings at the beginning of the year
- Prep Orientation program to support transition to school
- Prep Family Welcome Picnic in Term 1
- Socio-linguistic profiles to support students with English as an additional language
- Year 3 - 6 Resilient Youth Survey completion
- Embedding PBL: Naming and noticing positive behaviour using the FARM code (raffle tickets given)
- Staff Professional Learning including a school closure day and numerous staff meetings:
  - School-Wide Positive Behaviour, Child Safety updates, Behaviour support coaching, and Restorative Conversations
- Parent Nights: Behaviour management at school and home. Year 5 and 6 Puberty evening.
- Mothers, Fathers, and Grandparents morning celebrations

- Student Wellbeing Support Group meetings for students at risk
- Morning Gatherings to celebrate and recognise student learning dispositions and the FARM Code
- School Counsellor extended support 5 days onsite
- Active Supervision during all yard duties to support students' play on the yard
- Social support clubs supervised by staff are available at all breaks to support our students' social skills and friendships
- Additional resources were purchased to support individual or groups of students during break times e.g. sandpit toys, Lego, card games, board games, drawing materials
- First Aid, Anaphylaxis, and CPR training for all staff
- Prep and Year 6 Transition programs
- Participation in: Ride 2 School Day, Bullying No Way, Day for Daniel, R U OK, and Harmony Day

## Student Satisfaction

### A measure of Student Satisfaction from the MACSIS Surveys:

#### Student Voice:

SMCM: 56%

MACS Average: 57%

#### School Belonging:

SMCM: 67%

MACS Average: 70%

#### School Engagement:

SMCM: 46%

MACS Average: 52%

#### Rigorous Expectations:

SMCM: 79%

MACS Average: 77%

## Student Attendance

SMCM's school attendance procedures adhere to the policy applicable to all MACS schools. Attending school every school day for the whole day enables students to participate in the school's educational program as well as develop their social skills. Regular attendance enables the school to:

- plan an organised educational program that is delivered in a consistent way and has continuity
- facilitate shared student learning experiences that support the educational program
- monitor student progress and adjust the educational program to meet student needs.

All MACS schools must document their school-based procedures for monitoring and recording attendance. To meet legislated requirements and discharge a school's duty of care, school staff must record student attendance twice per day. Attendance must be recorded, including the reason given for each absence.

A flow chart provides a description of how non-attendance is managed by the school. The school contacts the student's parents /guardian about any unexplained absences, on the same day, as soon as practicable, before 11:00am.

<b>Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level</b>	
Y01	89.3%
Y02	91.1%
Y03	90.5%
Y04	90.4%
Y05	92.1%
Y06	87.4%
Overall average attendance	90.1%

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## Leadership

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

**The identified goal of our School Improvement Annual Action Plan for Leadership & Management was:**

- To create a professional learning culture with new patterns of learning, leading, working and being.

**The intended outcomes to meet this goal were:**

- To enact ways of working, learning and being in teams that privilege opportunities for dialogue, sense making, equity of voice, diversity of perspectives and a space for innovation.

### Achievements

School Leaders at St Mary of the Cross MacKillop are an exemplary model of our school vision and actively work to create a welcoming and innovative school community. They are present in all aspects of school life including welcoming and greeting students and families each day, on yard duty and in active supervision. They are present 'on the floor' in our learning spaces supporting learning and engaging with students. Our Leaders attend planning with teams, lead professional learning team meetings and Community and Family Engagement (CaFE) opportunities.

In 2023 Key Improvement Strategies guided our work in achieving our intended outcomes for Leadership and Management. These include establishing a performance and development cycle to identify and reflect on professional learning needs and continuing to develop a culture of collaboration, co-design, deep dialogue and inquiry through facilitated planning and PLCs.

Key actions to meet these outcomes include:

- Growth of and diversification of leadership roles and team to reflect the continual growth of our school and the changing needs of our community
- Team charters and agendas for the variety of working teams across our school that identify the vision & purpose of each team, the shared values that unite us in our work and protocols for working and communicating effectively.



- Staff Action Teams to engage all staff in areas of interest while developing capacity and promoting a culture of shared responsibility.
- Whole School Professional Learning Plan
- Annual Review Meetings (ARM) with the Principal

In 2023 we completed our external School Review. Our VRQA and Child Safety assessments were completed to a high standard and all requirements were met and surpassed. The review of our School Improvement Spheres promoted rigorous dialogue amongst staff as we analysed our school data and reflected on school processes and pedagogy.

Below are excerpts from the Review Report Executive Summary and highlighting our success and future goals:

“St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School has been largely successful in achieving the intent of the school improvement goals while managing the challenges presented by the pandemic. Building staff capacity through the creation of a professional learning culture and nurturing an inclusive faith community, were goals that were fully realised. While significant progress was made to align teaching and learning across school to create conditions for students’ optimal growth in learning, this work is still evolving.”

“As St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School engages in the process of strategic thinking and planning, manifesting in the development of its School Improvement Plan for the next four years, the reviewer recommends that the school:

- Aligns teaching and learning across the school through the development and documentation of a pedagogical plan that is underpinned by common understandings and high impact teaching strategies.
- Builds leader and teacher capacity through systematic opportunities for coaching, peer observation and feedback from a knowledgeable other.
- Heightens student engagement, agency and perceptions of safety through stronger student voice in learning and decision-making.”

<b>Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning</b>	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting Ready In Numeracy (GRIN) Professional Learning</li> <li>• Lisa Burman Book Making Professional Learning and Workshop</li> <li>• The Resilience Project</li> <li>• Maths Association of Victoria</li> <li>• First Aid Training including CPR, Asthma and Anaphylaxis</li> <li>• Emergency Management Warden training</li> <li>• Mandatory Reporting Online Module</li> <li>• MACS Religious Education Prayer Collective</li> <li>• Japanese Teachers Association Conference</li> <li>• ACHPER Conference for Physical Education Teachers</li> <li>• Zart Art Book Week Workshop</li> <li>• SMART Spelling Training</li> <li>• Fountas &amp; Pinnell Classroom Guided Reading: Professional Development Workshop</li> <li>• PETAA Professional learning &amp; Work shops including 'Unpacking The Science of Reading'</li> <li>• St Mary MacKillop Pilgrimage Staff Faith Formation</li> <li>• School Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning</li> <li>• Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Regional Networks for school leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Student Wellbeing Cluster Network days</li> <li>◦ Principal &amp; Deputy Principal Networks</li> <li>◦ Religious Education Leaders Network</li> <li>◦ Learning Diversity Leaders Network</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	67
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$964.86

## Teacher Satisfaction

**A measure of Staff Satisfaction from the MACSIS Surveys:**

**Collaboration in Teams:**

SMCM: 73%

MACS Average: 69%

**Support for Teams:**

SMCM: 71%

MACS Average: 67%

**Professional Learning:**

SMCM: 61%

MACS Average: 62%

SMCM 56%

MACS Av 57%

<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	4.3%
Graduate	13.0%
Graduate Certificate	4.3%
Bachelor Degree	65.2%
Advanced Diploma	6.5%
No Qualifications Listed	6.5%

<b>Staff Composition</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	54
Teaching Staff (FTE)	46.4
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	20
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	18.3
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

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## Community Engagement

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

**The identified goal of our School Improvement Annual Action Plan for School Community was:**

- To continue to engage and nurture an inclusive faith community

**The intended outcomes to meet this goal were:**

- To extend an authentic invitation to all community members to participate in the life of our Catholic Parish Primary School in ways that are meaningful to them and their families.
- To offer family members opportunities to recognise and celebrate learning as a journey of growth for each young person, across a wide range of experiences offered within and beyond school.

### Achievements

2023 was an important year in the history of SMCM as we celebrated our momentous 10 year anniversary. We came together many times and in many different ways over the year to celebrate and commemorate the achievements and growth over the last 10 years. Whole school liturgies and Masses proved to be joyous events for our community.

We gathered together and welcomed our new prep families into our community with events such as Prep Transition mornings and concurrent Parent Information sessions and the re-commencement of an on site Prep Family Information evening and our ever popular Prep Family Welcome Picnic.

Welcome Meetings onsite with families and teachers gave students an opportunity to familiarise themselves with their learning spaces and teacher at the beginning of the school year. We continued to greet students and families at the gates by name to reiterate the feeling in the community that our students are known and valued. We continued to invite families to be involved in all aspects of school life. Our online platforms such as Seesaw Class, Skoolbag App and Year level Facebook Groups proved invaluable in keeping families informed and involved.

Our entire school community, former students and School Advisory Council parents and distinguished guests came together to celebrate our 10th Year Anniversary Mass under Bishop Terry Curtain. On a 37 degree day and with over 700 people in attendance we celebrated mass, the overwhelming feelings were of pride and joy. The singing of our students was commented on during a beautiful morning tea following the Mass.

One of the highlights of the year was our 10th Anniversary Community Fair. Volunteer fair committee members came together weekly to plan and discuss the event, with lead up events including Bunnings Sausage Sizzles, raffles and ride wristband sales and competitions. The day dawned hot and extremely windy but nothing could dampen the SMCM community spirit. The event raised much needed funds for the school, but it was the community spirit that truly won the day with so many parents volunteering their time to assist during the day and with set up and pack up.

The year came to a joyous end with a whole school End of Year Picnic and Christmas Carols, a Year 6 Graduation Mass and whole school End of Year Liturgy and Mass.

Some of the other activities undertaken to engage families and community:

- Continuation of Community and Family Engagement Leader role
- Sacramental Program
- On site family faith nights to support students and families in preparing for Sacraments
- St Mary MacKillop Feast Day Disco and whole school liturgy to commemorate
- Prep 'Getting to know you" Transition Mornings and Parent Information sessions
- Whole School End of Year Liturgy and Year 6 Graduates' procession
- Mother's Day stall and afternoon
- Prep Family Welcome Picnic
- Reintroduction of Prep Home visits
- Student representatives attending Epping RSL for Remembrance Day preparation
- Student representatives attending Epping RSL for ANZAC Day Dawn Service
- Year 6 Graduation Dinner and Mass
- Year 6 Final Fun Day
- Celebrations of Learning
- SMCM Christmas Carols and fundraising Sausage Sizzle
- Inaugural School Athletics Carnival
- Sports Colours Day
- Candle and Rocky Road Christmas Wreath fundraiser
- Vinnies' Winter Appeal Toiletry Drive
- Book Week Book Character Parades
- 10th Anniversary Mass with distinguished guests and morning tea

- 10th Anniversary Community Fair
- Fair Committee meetings every week in Term 1
- 10th Anniversary Book Fair and library donation drive
- Morning/afternoon Gatherings within Learning Communities
- Parish SAC- School Advisory Council met each term
- Foundation 2024 playdates, enrollment meetings, Information Evening, Facebook page, kinder visits
- Parish Mass led by a different year level each week
- Use of Seesaw for sharing Online Learning Logs
- Ride to School Day
- Walk Safely to School Day
- Father's Day stall and special morning
- Grandparents' Day special activity morning
- Parent / Teacher interviews and Program Support Group meetings conducted on site in person
- Use of Interpreters both in person and online/over the phone for family meetings
- Successful application to join Refugee Education Support Program for 2024

## Parent Satisfaction

### A measure of Parent Satisfaction from the MACSIS Surveys:

#### Communication:

SMCM: 77%

MACS Average: 71%

#### Barriers to engagement:

SMCM: 69%

MACS Average: 66%

#### Family Engagement:

SMCM: 41%

MACS Average: 46%

**Families Perceptions of and Engagement with the overall Catholic Identity of the school:**

SMCM: 69%

MACS Average: 64%

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## Financial Performance

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The school's financial performance information and a report of the financial activities of the school's boarding premises (if applicable) have been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au).

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at [www.smcmeppingnth.catholic.edu.au](http://www.smcmeppingnth.catholic.edu.au)