



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

2024

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

Registration: 2087, E Number: E1388

Principal's Attestation

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 29 Apr 2025

About this report

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](#).

Governing Authority Report

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

Vision and Mission

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.

School Overview

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 1060 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 571 students. The students are arranged in 25 class groupings as follows: Foundation x4, Year 1 x3, Year 2 x4, Year 3 x3, Year 4 x3, Year 5 x3, Year 6 x4. 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.

We aim to develop a culture of learning for young people, teacher leaders, and parents by creating the conditions for learner agency and establishing spaces of encounter where all learners feel empowered to inquire into the questions that matter. Grounded in the MACS Vision for Instruction and informed by the Science of Learning, our approach prioritises deep, evidence-informed practices that foster high academic achievement, strong social development, and meaningful faith formation. In cultivating this culture, we seek to bring the richness of the Catholic tradition into dialogue with contemporary culture, forming learners who are capable, compassionate, and spiritually grounded. These next horizons will be achieved through a process of school-wide, evidence-informed professional inquiry in partnership with our broader 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.

Principal's Report

The 2024 school year at St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish School was shaped by our guiding theme: *'Reimagining SMCM'*. This theme invited us to reflect, renew, and courageously innovate. Inspired by the parable of the grapevine, reimagining called us to grow closer to God through the Holy Spirit—to let go of practices no longer serving us and to embrace new ways that will help us bear greater fruit and lead our community to a more abundant life.

This year marked the beginning of our 2024–2027 School Improvement Plan. Our goals are shaped by the following Strategic Intent:

"St Mary of the Cross MacKillop will be a high-quality, improvement-focused, and student-centred learning environment, rich in its Catholic identity. Student agency, safety, and relationships are central to our school's charism."

Our reimagining focused particularly on pedagogy, driven by deep analysis of student data and a collective commitment to growth. Informed by the Science of Learning, our staff engaged in whole-school professional learning and implemented evidence-based practices including Daily Reviews, Explicit Instruction, and Engagement Norms. These shifts were supported through partnerships with La Trobe University's SOLAR Lab, Teach Well, and the OCHRE resources. The dedication of our staff to engaging in inquiry and adopting new practices was foundational to the progress made in 2024.

Highlights from 2024 include:

- Outstanding community engagement across multiple whole-school events, especially the Colour Run, which raised \$30,000
- A significant achievement in securing a \$3.6 million government grant for our Stage 4 building project
- Completion of Stage 1 of our internal walls and doors installation, enhancing our flexible learning spaces
- The addition of a second basketball court to enrich outdoor play and physical activity
- Full implementation of the MACS Vision for Instruction, embedding high-impact teaching strategies across all learning areas

The daily operations of our school were made possible by a dedicated and professional staff who create a nurturing and inspiring learning environment. I extend my deepest thanks to our staff for their tireless efforts in ensuring continuity, wellbeing, and excellence in education throughout 2024. I especially acknowledge our leadership team, whose coordination of learning, sacramental life, student wellbeing, and community events ensures the flourishing of our school.

I thank Fr Anh and our parish staff for their ongoing partnership in our shared mission. We look forward to continuing our work together in faith and service.

To the members of our School Advisory Council and Community and Family Engagement Teams, thank you for your time, insight, and generous contributions. Your role in strengthening the relationship between families and the school is deeply valued.

Above all, I thank our students, who are at the heart of everything we do. Their curiosity, joy, and love of learning continue to inspire us daily.

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish School is a truly special place—made so by the resilience and spirit of our students, the commitment of our staff, and the wholehearted engagement of our families. It is both a privilege and a blessing to lead this vibrant and faith-filled community.

I am pleased to present this report to our school community as a reflection on a year of reimagining, renewal, and growth.

Claire Pitcher
Principal

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

- To use data-driven approaches and high-impact teaching strategies to optimise student learning outcomes.

The intended outcome was:

- That the school has a charter that documents beliefs and non-negotiables that define teaching and learning aligned with our vision and educational philosophy.
- That a pedagogical plan is developed and documented underpinned by common understandings and through high impact teaching strategies.

Achievements

At St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, prayer is a foundational element of our Catholic identity and a vital part of our daily life. Each day is framed by prayer, beginning and concluding with our school prayers, while Christian meditation is regularly incorporated into the rhythm of our learning communities, nurturing a reflective and faith-filled environment.

The partnership between our school and parish continues to grow, providing meaningful support for the faith development of our students and their families. This was particularly evident during the preparation and celebration of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation. In total, 60 students received Reconciliation, 55 received Eucharist, and 62 celebrated Confirmation across seven Sacramental celebrations. Religious Education leaders and Year 3–6 teachers collaborated effectively to design and deliver the Connectors preparation sessions and Sacramental Family Faith Nights. These initiatives were well attended and positively received by candidates, families, and the wider community.

Our parish priest, Father Anh, continues to be a valued partner in helping us live out our mission of bringing the Gospel into our daily lives. His active involvement in the planning, preparation, and celebration of year-level Masses, along with his contributions to selected Religious Education sessions, has deepened the faith understanding of both staff and students. Through his guidance, our community has grown in its knowledge of liturgy, the structure of the Mass, and the richness of our Catholic traditions. Each term, all year levels

have had the opportunity to participate in weekly Parish Masses, further strengthening our spiritual connection to the parish and to one another.

Our Faith Life Inquiry approach to Religious Education continues to provide students with meaningful opportunities to engage deeply with rich concepts aligned with the Religious Education Framework. Through thoughtful and collaborative whole-school and team planning sessions, teachers have engaged in rigorous dialogue—exploring their own and others' perspectives and interpretations of the Gospel. These professional discussions have supported the recontextualisation of Gospel teachings, enabling educators to present them in ways that are relevant, accessible, and engaging for students in their learning.

Embedding a social justice platform remains a vital part of our school culture. Throughout the year, students and staff actively engaged in initiatives that reflect our commitment to compassion, empathy, and service. During Lent, we focused on supporting those in need within both our local and global communities through the Caritas Australia Project Compassion appeal. Our Year 6 students took a leading role in social outreach by collaborating with the Epping Parish conference of St Vincent de Paul. Their efforts raised awareness and funds for vulnerable members of our local community, including a significant donation of toiletries delivered to the Vinnies Shed as part of the Winter Appeal. The spirit of giving continued into Advent, when our school community came together to support the St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal. Thanks to the generosity of our families, we were able to fill 26 hampers with food, gifts, and festive treats—spreading joy and hope to those in need during the Christmas season.

We continue to bring our school vision to life by honouring and celebrating the legacy of our patron saint, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, in all aspects of school life. This is especially evident on her feast day, August 8, when our community comes together to reflect on and give thanks for her extraordinary contribution. As part of our ongoing commitment to faith and professional growth, staff engaged in a dedicated professional learning day led by Sr Rita and Pauline Cicutto. This day provided a rich opportunity for staff to deepen their spiritual and theological understanding, aligning with the school's commitment to religious growth. The day was thoughtfully designed to nurture spiritual awareness, theological insight, vocational motivation, and capabilities for mission and service in the Church and the world. The day also included exploring the Josephite charism and the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love. By reflecting on Mary MacKillop's dedication to education and service, staff were inspired to integrate these virtues into their daily work, enhancing their vocational motivation and capabilities for mission.

Value Added

- Parish Sacramental Season for candidates
- Sacramental Faith nights
- Weekly Parish Masses for year levels
- Whole school community liturgical celebrations, including 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; guided by Sr Rita and Pauline Cicutto
- Education in Faith Staff Professional meetings once a term; including Pauline Cicutto from MACS as a presenter
- Education in Faith Leaders attended the Northern Region Network Meetings termly

A measure of Catholic Identity from the MACSIS Surveys:

Staff:

SMCM: 76%

MACS Average: 76%

Student:

SMCM: 64%

MACS Average: 65%

Parent:

SMCM: 71%

MACS Average: 66%

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

- To use data-driven approaches and high-impact teaching strategies to optimise student learning outcomes.

The intended outcome was:

- That the school has a charter that documents beliefs and non-negotiables that define teaching and learning aligned with our vision and educational philosophy.
- That a pedagogical plan is developed and documented underpinned by common understandings and through high impact teaching strategies.
- That student growth in literacy and numeracy outcomes will be achieved with proficient use of data.

Achievements

Learning and Teaching

The 2024 academic year marked a profound period of pedagogical transformation at SMCM, characterised by a deliberate shift towards explicit instruction to underpin the teaching and learning from Foundation to Year 6 in English and Mathematics. Anchored in the Science of Learning, this transition was driven by a shared aspiration to align instructional practice with contemporary research and cognitive science, to elevate student learning experiences and outcomes.

At the outset of the year, the Leadership Team strategically facilitated in-house professional learning to develop collective staff knowledge in key theoretical frameworks such as Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory, Anita Archer's insights on explicit instruction, and Ebbinghaus' Forgetting Curve. This foundational learning laid the groundwork for a coherent instructional model across the school.

Alongside this theoretical learning, SMCM strategically invested in high-leverage classroom tools to translate research into practice and enhance instructional effectiveness. Every student from Foundation to Year 6 was equipped with a mini magnetic whiteboard, marker, and eraser, resources designed to increase active participation and provide teachers with immediate formative feedback. SMCM agreed on school-wide whiteboard etiquette and

routines, such as “hover it” and “chin it” to develop consistency across year levels, which will benefit students as they move through school. These tools were introduced alongside professional learning on Ybarra and Hollingsworth’s Engagement Norms, enabling staff to embed effective, low-variance routines to promote active participation. These predictable cues became integral to lesson delivery, reducing cognitive interference while maximising student thinking time and accountability. Cold calling, facilitated through the use of popsicle sticks, was also adopted as a routine engagement strategy, promoting equitable participation and supporting retrieval practice. Moreover, classroom design and furniture positioning were reconsidered through the lens of cognitive architecture, with an emphasis on reducing extraneous load and enhancing the learning environment’s alignment with instructional goals.

In alignment with these instructional shifts, SMCM also refined its whole-school assessment schedule to better inform teaching and support progress monitoring. The introduction of screeners, such as DIBELS and Acadience, provided more granular, meaningful data on student learning and ensured our assessment practices matched our pedagogical direction. Together, these practices reflected a deliberate and research-informed commitment to embedding the Science of Learning in tangible, observable ways across every classroom at SMCM.

Professional learning throughout the year was intentionally tailored to address staff’s emerging needs, ensuring alignment with our evolving context. Projects and programs, such as La Trobe’s SOLAR Lab, Systematic Synthetic Phonics - Little Learners Love Literacy, Teach Well, GRIN, and regional MACS networks in Literacy and Mathematics, empowered teachers to implement evidence-informed strategies with greater confidence as they continued to build on their professional knowledge. A key focus across both English and Mathematics was the implementation of OCHRE’s Daily Reviews resource, with teachers actively developing and refining their capacity to adapt these materials to meet the needs of their students. Aligned with Rosenshine’s first Principle of Instruction, Daily Reviews are a high-impact, evidence-based practice that promotes frequent retrieval of previously taught content. Research in cognitive psychology highlights that the act of retrieval strengthens memory and supports the transfer of knowledge into long-term memory, significantly enhancing retention and reducing forgetting over time. The integration of this routine into daily instruction not only built fluency but also ensured foundational knowledge remained accessible for future learning. Despite the inherent demands of change, staff responded with professionalism, unity, and a deep commitment to student growth, establishing 2024 as a pivotal year in the school’s instructional journey.

English

In 2024, the English learning area underwent significant refinement as SMCM deepened its

commitment to evidence-informed, explicit instruction across all year levels. Supported by targeted professional learning and a revised instructional framework grounded in the Science of Learning, educators enacted structured and systematic approaches to the teaching of the modes of English.

Foundational literacy was strengthened through the implementation of Little Learners Love Literacy from F-3, with teachers drawing upon the principles explored in the SOLAR Lab (Beginner and Intermediate) to ensure the “Big 5” of Reading were delivered through a cohesive, high-impact model. The Curriculum Team responded to emergent needs by curating professional learning aligned with staff practice, reinforcing key constructs such as scaffolded instruction, cognitive load management, and review-based retrieval.

The introduction of OCHRE resources and novel studies provided a culturally and contextually rich framework for text engagement, enabling teachers to embed disciplinary literacy within broader learning experiences. The SMART Spelling program continued to provide consistent and structured word-level instruction, supporting orthographic knowledge development. As staff deepened their collective understanding of the Science of Learning, classroom teachers began to extend and enhance core programs with supplementary instruction, such as explicit vocabulary instruction, to ensure lessons are tailored to meet the specific linguistic and academic needs of our diverse student cohort.

A revised Assessment Schedule, alongside regular team moderation, enabled more targeted and responsive instruction. The professionalism and adaptability of staff ensured English teaching in 2024 was both rigorous and responsive, consolidating a strong foundation for future growth.

Mathematics

Throughout 2024, the Mathematics curriculum at SMCM was reimaged through the lens of the Science of Learning, resulting in a cohesive, explicit, and strategically sequenced approach to numeracy instruction. With cognitive science informing both planning and delivery, teachers refined their practice to support student mastery, retention, and transfer of mathematical knowledge.

The introduction of OCHRE Mathematics resources offered a consistent structure for the sequencing of lessons for all strands of the Mathematics curriculum. Just as it has been embedded in English, Daily Reviews and cumulative practice became integral to the Mathematics instructional model, providing students with repeated opportunities to retrieve prior learning and strengthen long-term retention. Teachers also engaged in a Teach Well

Mathematics seminar, where they explored how to apply the Science of Learning to numeracy, further reinforcing high-impact, explicit teaching practices. Mini whiteboards were regularly used as tools for active engagement and formative assessment, allowing teachers to immediately gauge understanding and adjust instruction in real time.

Dedicated Mathematics meetings provided time and structure for staff to collaboratively unpack the OCHRE resources, deepening their understanding of the materials and supporting consistent and responsive implementation across year levels. In addition, teachers engaged in professional learning focused on the revised Victorian Curriculum Mathematics 2.0. As part of this transition period, structured opportunities were created for staff to become familiar with the curriculum changes and the implications for teaching, learning, and assessment. This also included communication with families to ensure a shared understanding of how these changes impact both curriculum content and student reporting. These collective efforts reflected a strong commitment to instructional alignment, curriculum clarity, and the development of mathematically confident learners.

Student Learning Outcomes

The results of NAPLAN 2024 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 2025. We remain committed to supporting all students to reach their full potential in Literacy and Numeracy.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	396	46%
	Year 5	493	72%
Numeracy	Year 3	401	61%
	Year 5	497	71%
Reading	Year 3	393	64%
	Year 5	492	76%
Spelling	Year 3	402	62%
	Year 5	494	75%
Writing	Year 3	410	80%
	Year 5	496	80%

*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2024 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.

Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

- To enhance student engagement, agency and perceptions of safety through student voice in learning and decision-making.

The intended outcomes to meet this goal were:

- That staff have a deep understanding of the complex needs of diverse learners to inform the strategies that support all to flourish.
- That students use the 'Confident Learner Dispositions' to reflect on their learning and set challenging goals in literacy and numeracy.
- That a School Wide Positive behaviour approach is consistent and supported by all.
- That students have voice and agency to be active decision makers in the life of the school.

Achievements

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.

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 2024 SMCM built upon staff capacity to manage student emotional regulation and behaviour through engagement in professional learning and coaching. This was facilitated by our new Learning Enhancement Coach who worked directly with students, teachers and Learning Support Officers.

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

Appointment of a Learning Enhancement Coach

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: Year 5 and 6 Puberty evening.

Mothers, Fathers, and Grandparents morning celebrations

Student Wellbeing Support Group meetings for students at risk

Afternoon Gatherings to celebrate and recognise student learning dispositions and the FARM Code

School Counsellor 5 days onsite to support students

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: 56%

School Belonging:

SMCM: 69%

MACS Average: 69%

School Engagement:

SMCM: 48%

MACS Average: 51%

Rigorous Expectations:

SMCM: 76%

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.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	90.0
Y02	90.7
Y03	91.3
Y04	91.2
Y05	90.7
Y06	89.7
Overall average attendance	90.6

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

- To build leader and teacher capacity through systematic opportunities for coaching, peer observation and feedback from a knowledgeable other.

The intended outcomes to meet this goal were:

- That staff strategically reflect individually and collegially on their role, our purpose and practice to align with the vision and educational philosophy for continuous improvement.
- That staff have an understanding of feedback, its purpose and implementation to drive school improvement.

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 2024 we began enacting the goals of our 2024 - 2027 School Improvement Plan and this guided our work in achieving our intended outcomes for all areas of Leadership and Management at our school. These include:

- To use data-driven approaches and high-impact teaching strategies to optimise student learning outcomes.
 - That student growth in literacy and numeracy outcomes will be achieved with proficient use of data.
 - That the school has a charter that documents beliefs and non-negotiables that define teaching and learning aligned with our vision and educational philosophy.

- To enhance student engagement, agency and perceptions of safety through student voice in learning and decision-making.
 - That staff have a deep understanding of the complex needs of diverse learners to inform the strategies that support all to flourish.
 - That a School Wide Positive behaviour approach is consistent and supported by all.
- To build leader and teacher capacity through systematic opportunities for coaching, peer observation and feedback from a knowledgeable other.
 - That staff strategically reflect individually and collegially on their role, our purpose and practice to align with the vision and educational philosophy for continuous improvement.

Key actions to meet these outcomes include:

- Participation in LaTrobe University SOLAR Lab Project to develop staff understanding of the Science of Learning & Reading
- Participation in MACS Teaching for Impact in Mathematics (TIM) Professional Learning to transfer their knowledge of the Science of Learning into Maths
- Appointment of a Science of Learning Leader
- Development of a whole school 'Pedagogical Playbook' that sets a clear charter of learning and teaching at our school aligned with MACS Vision for Instruction, Cognitive Load Theory and the Science of learning.
- Appointment of a Learning Enhancement Coach to build the capacity of LSO and staff to implement adjustments that meet the needs of diverse learners.
- Engage in coaching, peer observation, and feedback to share expertise and discuss challenges and successes with trusted colleagues.
- Enacted an Instructional leadership model that supported whole school change

In 2024, in alignment with the MACS Vision for Instruction, we undertook significant pedagogical change. This transformation would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our Leadership Team, who were unwavering in their commitment to becoming "knowledgeable others" ahead of staff, providing both clarity and direction throughout the process.

Their thoughtful and deliberate choices ensured the implementation was supportive and sustainable. Importantly, they allowed themselves to be vulnerable—learning alongside staff as part of a shared journey of growth and improvement.

This dedication by our leaders was reflected in our MACSIS Staff data. In response to the Domain 'Collaboration around an Improvement Strategy' we scored 75% demonstrating a continual growth at school level and 8% above the MACS average school score.

These achievements highlight the strength of leadership at our school and the unwavering commitment to creating a culture of continuous improvement, collaboration, and excellence.

As we move forward, we remain grounded in our shared vision and dedicated to ensuring that every decision, action, and strategy continues to serve the growth, wellbeing, and success of all members of our school community.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024
<p>Getting Ready In Numeracy (GRIN) Professional Learning</p> <p>Extending Mathematical Understanding</p> <p>First Aid Training including CPR, Asthma and Anaphylaxis</p> <p>Emergency Management Warden training</p> <p>Mandatory Reporting Online Module</p> <p>Japanese Teachers Association Conference</p> <p>ACHPER Conference for Physical Education Teachers</p> <p>Zart Art Book Week Workshop</p> <p>Little Learners Love Literacy Phonics Instruction</p> <p>Teaching for Impact in Mathematics</p> <p>Teach Well Leadership Training</p> <p>OCHRE Resources</p> <p>SOLAR Lab (La Trobe / AERO) - Beginner and Intermediate (F-2)</p> <p>Year 3-6 Science of Learning</p> <p>Daily Reviews with Lorraine Hammond</p> <p>PETTA Conference</p> <p>Reading Connective (Eastern)</p> <p>Refugee Education Support Program</p> <p>Staff Faith Formation - The Charism of the Sisters of St Joseph</p> <p>Principal's Conference - Walking in the Footsteps of St Francis & St Clare</p> <p>School Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning</p> <p>Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Regional Networks for school leaders:</p> <p>Student Wellbeing Cluster Network days</p>

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
Principal & Deputy Principal Networks	
Religious Education Leaders Network	
Learning Diversity Leaders Network	
Mathematics Leaders Network	
Literacy Leaders Network	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024	75
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1012.20

Teacher Satisfaction

A measure of Staff Satisfaction from the MACSIS Surveys:

Collaboration in Teams:

SMCM: 75%

MACS Average: 67%

Support for Teams:

SMCM: 77%

MACS Average: 68%

Professional Learning:

SMCM: 71%

MACS Average: 63%

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0
Masters	2
Graduate	6
Graduate Certificate	1
Bachelor Degree	31
Advanced Diploma	3
No Qualifications Listed	16

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	3
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	58
Teaching Staff (FTE)	51.73
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	28
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	23.32
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

- To enhance student engagement, agency and perceptions of safety through student voice in learning and decision-making.

The intended outcomes to meet this goal were:

- That staff have a deep understanding of the complex needs of diverse learners to inform the strategies that support all to flourish.
- That a School Wide Positive behaviour approach is consistent and supported by all.
- That students have voice and agency to be active decision makers in the life of the school.

Achievements

2024 was a turning point in SMCM's history. We used what we learnt in our reflection of the previous 10 years and reimagined what our future could be. As well as implementing new methods of teaching and engagement with our students, we redefined the way we work with and engage 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, a Prep Family Information evening and our ever popular Prep Family Welcome Picnic.

Individual assessment meetings prior to the commencement of the school year gave students and their families 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 Instagram, Seesaw Class, Audiri App and Year level Facebook Groups proved invaluable in keeping families informed and involved. Weekly What's On reminders via Audiri and term reminders via Instagram assisted families in being organised and up to date with all that was happening, allowing full participation.

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
- Appointment of additional Deputy Principal, Learning Diversity
- Successful continuation of Sacramental Program for Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation
- On site family faith nights to support students and families in preparing for Sacraments
- Mary MacKillop Feast Day whole school liturgy and discos to celebrate
- Prep 'Getting to know you' Transition Mornings and Parent Information sessions
- Installation of sliding doors and dividing glass panels for increased flexibility of The Boulevard building space
- Whole School End of Year Liturgy and Year 6 Graduates' Guard of Honour procession
- Mother's Day stall and morning
- Prep Family Welcome Picnic
- Harmony Day Picnic and sausage sizzle fundraiser including Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony.
- Bunnings BBQ Fundraiser for upcoming 2025 School Fair
- Development of 2025 School Fair Organising Committee and initial planning meetings
- Participation in Weetbix Active Bands during 2024 Olympics
- Prep socio-linguistic profiles completed on students believed to be of EAL background
- Student representatives attending Epping RSL for Remembrance Day preparation and service
- Year 6 kinder visits to Galada Kindergarten as part of their 'Getting Ready for School Program.'
- Year 6 Graduation Dinner and Mass
- Year 6 Final Fun Day
- Celebration of Learning at the end of Term 3
- SMCM Christmas Carols and fundraising Sausage Sizzle
- School Athletics Carnival including inaugural surprise Teacher Character Race
- Sports Colours Day
- Caritas Australia appeal
- Vinnies' Winter Appeal Toiletry Drive
- Whole School Book Character Parade for Book Week
- Weekly afternoon Gatherings within Learning Communities
- Parish SAC- School Advisory Council met each term
- Foundation 2025 playdates, enrollment meetings, Information Evening, Facebook page, kinder visits conducted
- Parish Mass led by a different year level each week
- Use of Seesaw for sharing Online Learning Logs
- Ride to School Day
- Father's Day stall and special morning
- Grandparents' Day special activity morning

- Learning Conversations and Program Support Group meetings conducted on site in person
- Use of Interpreters both in person and online/over the phone for families needing them for
- PSGs and Learning Conversations, Welcome Meetings
- Professional development as part of the Refugee Education Support Program (RESP) in Terms 1-3 including school audit

Parent Satisfaction

A measure of Parent Satisfaction from the MACSIS Surveys:

Communication:

SMCM: 77%

MACS Average: 71%

Barriers to engagement:

SMCM: 62%

MACS Average: 64%

Family Engagement:

SMCM: 44%

MACS Average: 48%

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

SMCM: 71%

MACS Average: 66%

Financial Performance

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.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at www.smcmeppingnth.catholic.edu.au