

# 2024

## Annual Report to the School Community



### St Mary's School

5-7 Southam Street, RUSHWORTH 3612

Principal: Vincent Ryan

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

Registration: 1523, E Number: E3035

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## Principal's Attestation

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I, Vincent Ryan, attest that St Mary's 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 06 May 2025

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## About this report

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St Mary's 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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The Catholic Education Week theme for 2024, “Behold I Make all Things New,” invited us to reimagine possibilities to enliven our ministry in Catholic education in innovative and creative ways. The theme challenged us to ensure our educational enterprises were clearly focussed on every student, every teacher, every school, every day.

In 2024, the recognition that Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (CESL) is a multi-school system found expression in our commitment to streamlined governance responsibilities and enhanced support for our learning centres. This approach allows for unified policies, consistent standards, and centralised support, while still catering to the unique needs of each individual learning centre.

To align the work of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd with the CESL Strategic Plan 2023-2027, three “Guiding Lights” have been identified that will shape the work of the organization for the next three years:

- **Authentically Sandhurst Catholic Education**  
Recognizing our rich diocesan relationships and commitment to spiritual formation, Sandhurst Catholic Education is living the missionary call to respond to the needs of our young people and our world with an ongoing and Gospel infused process of encounter, deep listening, discernment and courageous action.
- **Outstanding Learner Growth**  
Together, across the system, we will invest in educational and allied staff capabilities so that irrespective of personal circumstances, every young person in every school will have access to an equitable, sound, engaging and responsive learning program.
- **Solidarity and Subsidiarity**  
Through our commitment to solidarity, in each of our learning centres, our young people have the same opportunity to flourish and grow. Our collective strength will be used for the benefit and growth of all parts of the organisation.

At the same time, subsidiarity allows entities to bloom and thrive under clear parameters, knowing in which circumstances decisions are to be made at the lowest level possible, or the highest level necessary.

In line with these three Guiding Lights and the recognition that CESL is both an evangelizing and educative entity, 2024 saw the groundwork established for Magnify Sandhurst, a transformative learning and teaching program to be rolled out to our 51 Catholic schools across the Sandhurst Diocese. This new learning and teaching program aims to significantly

enhance the learning experience for students and provide teachers with the tools they need to deliver an evidence-based curriculum that boosts student outcomes.

With the support of world-class educational partners such as Steplab, Knowledge Society, MultiLit, and Ochre Education, Magnify Sandhurst is an investment in the future of every child in all 51 schools. With the mantra, 'Every student, every teacher, every school, every day', the program is designed to create a learning environment that challenges and supports students, helping them reach their full potential.

I am extremely grateful for the commitment and professionalism that is clearly identified by the efforts throughout 2024 of our school staff and Catholic Education Sandhurst Office personnel; they continue to work tirelessly for the students and families in our schools and are true bearers of the Mission to which they have been called.

Kate Fogarty

Executive Director, Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited

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## Vision and Mission

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### IDENTITY STATEMENT:

St Mary's Catholic School is a community who walks in the footsteps of Jesus and works in partnership with families in the Josephite tradition, to develop and educate the whole child in a safe learning environment.

### VISION STATEMENTS:

At St Mary's we believe:

In celebrating our Catholic faith in a life-giving community of witnesses who serve God and society

In fostering open and supportive partnerships with families as the primary educators of their children

In educating the whole child in a safe, learning environment where teamwork and collaboration are central so that each child endeavours to become a valuable contributor to society

In providing a curriculum which cultivates life-long learning through commitment to informed, current teaching and learning practice

In building sustainable relationships based upon mutual respect, safety, trust, justice, equality, compassion, hope and care for the environment

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## School Overview

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St Mary's School was established in 1954 as a parish school with the Sisters' of St Joseph being invited to provide a catholic education for children living in the Rushworth area. In 2024 there was an enrolment of 43 students and the socio-economic status was 87.

In 2024 the class structure was: Foundation/One/Two, Three/Four, Five/Six.

St Mary's is inclusive of students from diverse backgrounds and needs and all students are challenged to value their learning, develop positive relationships with their teachers and peers to progressively manage their own learning.

Specialist classes were: Auslan, Visual Arts, Science, STEAM and Respectful Relationships. Blueearth is also a specialist area.

St Mary's strives to inspire a sense of hope in each student by being a positive and caring place where children are happy, secure and engaged in their learning. Students and families are welcomed into a caring environment and parents are encouraged and supported to become active participants in their child's learning and school life.

St Mary's School is a Child Safe school. We promote the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children.

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## Principal's Report

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I am pleased to present the Annual Report to the School Community for 2024.

This report is a celebration of all the successes present throughout the 2024 year as well as a reflective piece for our school and wider community. St Mary's School is constantly looking to improve practices, policies and outcomes for all of its various stakeholders and we are very pleased with what we were able to accomplish for the 2024 year. This is a testament to the hard work of our students, staff, families and wider community.

St Mary's is committed to improving outcomes for all stakeholders through quality development for our staff and allowing students their voice and ownership over their learning and development.

In 2024, our school data (including NAPLAN) was indicative of improvement and growth in the core subjects of Literacy and Numeracy.

Fr Rene Ramirez from St Mel's Parish, Shepparton was our supervising priest with Fr Minh Tran from Holy Rosary Parish, White Hills, supporting our school liturgies. During the year, the school staff undertook learning that focused on the historical context of the time of Jesus which strengthened staff capacity to teach the Source of Life religious curriculum.

In 2024, the school took part in a VRQA audit conducted by Marita Richardson, an external auditor. The school was found to be compliant in all areas which was a testament to processes and documentation within the school. St Mary's also participated in a Post Enumeration Census Audit. External auditors also found the school to be compliant and accurately recorded.

In 2024, our staff commenced planning and learning regarding the implementing the Magnify Sandhurst Intervention in 2025. This required some structural preparation to staffing and timetabling as well as resourcing. 2025 promises to be a very exciting year for learning and teaching and developing staff capacity through process, professional learning, coaching and feedback.

In 2024, we expanded both our Parents and Friends association and our School Advisory Board for more members to attend. I cannot thank both groups for their dedication to our school and commitment to the students. I truly appreciate the insights of the board and the planning, organisation and fund-raising of our P and F.

2024 was my first year as principal and I cannot thank the members of the school and wider community for their support, collegiality and friendship throughout the year. It has been an exciting year and I look forward to continuing the journey in 2025.



Kind regards,  
Vincent Ryan

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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To build staff capacity and background understanding through quality professional development opportunities.

To support staff in planning quality and engaging units of work using the Source of Life curriculum.

To continue to strengthen school and parish connections.

To ensure that our school celebrates liturgical events, traditions and the charism of the school.

Mrs Angela Brockett to continue into her second year as Leader of Religious Education and on the school leadership team.

Kylie Smith CES Education Officer; Spirituality, Faith Formation and Sustainability; to facilitate staff meetings on CES theme "Matthew's Gospel".

To continue to build awareness and participation in Social justice activities through Caritas, Catholic Missions and Mini Vinnies for staff and students.

### Achievements

Throughout the year, our staff participated in quality professional learning opportunities focusing on their understanding of scripture, prayer, historical context and delivering high quality curriculum materials based on the Source of Life.

Our staff undertook professional learning that was facilitated by CESL staff for faith formation, scripture, historical context and curriculum (Kylie Smith and David Waker) as well as external facilitators who delved deeper into prayer (Carly Anderson) and historical context through the unit 'The Jewish world of Jesus'.

Angela Brockett continued as REL leader, facilitating and coordinating our RE program, Masses and liturgies and connecting with the Parish.

On August 8th, we celebrated St Mary of the Cross MacKillop feast day with a full day of charism-related activities. St Joseph's in Nagambie hosted this day with our whole staff and student cohort travelling to them. This celebration of Saint Mary MacKillop was further solidified with part of our whole school excursion travelling to Melbourne to visit the Mary MacKillop Museum.

Throughout the year, our school participated in social justice aligned initiatives including Caritas and St Vinnies.

## Value Added

Leader of Religious Education attended the Religious Education Network meetings each term and provided feedback to relevant staff.

Kylie Smith CES Education Officer; Religious Education supported staff with their RE planning and historical content/scripture understanding through staff meetings and planning sessions.

Kylie Smith CES and our school staff facilitated our Year 6 student retreat.

Mini Vinnie's in the senior classes continued to organise the small fundraisers.

School staff took part in ATSI professional learning which included a visit to Whroo for an Acknowledgement of Country and smoking ceremony.

FIRE carriers were commissioned.

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## Learning and Teaching

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

For the staff to have greater opportunities to analyse and discuss learning evidence that is collected. Continue to use this discernment to develop learning experiences for all students to access. Continued understanding of the use of Dibels tool.

To provide professional learning for staff to enhance their capacity to collect, interpret and action all forms of data within the school.

Leader of learning and principal to attend learning leader network meetings.

Audit of the learning and teaching practices within the school with the understanding that Magnify Sandhurst will provide much change in 2025. Plan practices and programs to be de-implemented at the commencement of 2025.

Review the school scope and sequences as well as data plan and assessment schedules.

### Achievements

Throughout 2024, St Mary's continued developing and teaching existing programs and strategies. Toward the end of 2024, and as information regarding Magnify Sandhurst became visible, school leaders commenced auditing current practices, school structures and processes in preparation for planning 2025.

Learning continued to progress throughout the year with Lauren Gould (CES) working with staff in providing contemporary, data-informed literacy and numeracy programs. Intervention continued for both literacy and numeracy and was delivered by VIT registered staff and Education Support Officers.

Students offered weekly Visual Arts, Respectful Relationships, Science & Auslan programs. STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) was a new specialist class offered to students in 2024 with Mr Damian Kerrins joining the team at the school.

All staff were engaged in AUSLAN in the 'Teachers as Co-learners' program during 2024 and attended the AUSLAN Conference at the Victoria Academy in Bendigo during Term 1.

My Future Academy staff visited the school fortnightly to facilitate specialist sport sessions for each class.

Catholic Education Week and St Mary's Open day were successful days with local Kinder students attending the school for transition days.

Learning conversations were held in Term's 1 and 3 and written reports were provided during Term 2 and 4 per the reporting guidelines.

Walker Learning continued to be embedded into our curriculum with the senior students presenting their Educational Research Projects each term which were supported by our parents.

Book week 2024 proved, yet again, to be a celebration of all things reading and writing. There were many opportunities for students to celebrate their learning with families engaged for our Book Week Parade and activity.

Foundation transition days were well received with the school opening its classrooms for 2025 enrolled Foundation students.

A whole school excursion to Melbourne witnessed students visiting the Mary MacKillop Museum and Lego land.

3/4 students attended camp to Charnwood alongside St Joseph's Nagambie and our 5/6 students attended a 2-day camp to Anglesea alongside Holy Rosary Heathcote.

All students attended our swimming program at Aquamoves in Shepparton.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Throughout 2024, staff collected assessment evidence as directed by the schools' data plan and assessment schedule. The school prioritised enhancing staff capacity in interpreting and analysing this collected data, developing learning opportunities accordingly.

NAPLAN was conducted online during Term 1. Analysis of student data indicated that students continued to make academic or maintain growth across the school, especially in Year 3 reading and writing. St Mary's made the similar growth as schools with students with

the same beginning score or same background. Numeracy and Grammar and Punctuation maintained.

School attitudes toward school indicated that students were happy and felt that their teachers respected them. Students felt that their work was generally pitched at their level.

<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	*	*
	Year 5	*	*
Numeracy	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	*	*
Reading	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	*	*
Spelling	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	*	*
Writing	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	*	*

\*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.

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## Student Wellbeing

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Continue to embed a culture of child safety within the school and community.

Continue to support parents in the use of SIMON everywhere for communication and school-related activities and events.

Update and maintain the school child safety risk register.

Ensure the school and staff are compliant with relevant legislation, documentation and training. This will prepare the school for the 2024 VRQA audit.

Ensure cultural safety and awareness of ATSI students and communities.

Pastoral wellbeing leader to attend network meetings.

### Achievements

In 2024, St Mary's successfully completed a Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority audit. There were many commendations received and some recommendations with which the school attended to throughout the year.

Several external facilitators from Catholic Education Sandhurst (Jamie Edwards, John Mitchell and Jye Warren of the Pastoral Wellbeing team; Troy Firebrace and Michael Chisholm of the ATSI team and Megan Gerrish from Child Safeguarding) attended the school to upskill staff in further understanding Child Safeguarding, the Child Safe Standards, legislation and general behaviour and wellbeing themes.

The school continued to embed the PBIS framework and behaviour intervention strategies.

In 2024, the school assembled a Student Representative Council to gain the voice of the

students. Fortnightly Year 6 led updates were shared with classes and all students were provided the opportunity to feed back to the staff and principal.

### **Value Added**

Rights, Resilience and Respectful Relationships was explicitly taught weekly in conjunction with teachings from The Resilience Project.

All Year 5 students and several teachers applied for and were commissioned at FIRE (Friends Igniting Reconciliation in Education) by Michael Chisholm of CESL. This was further developed through learning activities and experiences throughout Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks.

The school participated in and celebrated with the community; Harmony Day, RUOK day, Sandhurst Switches Off and various other wellbeing-related opportunities.

In 2025, St Mary's will appoint a Mental Health in Primary School's teacher. Toward the end of 2024, a process was commenced that resulted in Mrs Bianca Brook being appointed to the role for 2025.

### **Student Satisfaction**

In 2024, students completed the ORIMA survey which documents students' attitudes towards school. Overall, students' attitudes towards the 10 domains evidenced significant improvement. Notably, students' perception of having a voice within the school increased by 34% and the percentage of students who perceived a greater sense of physical and psychological safety while at school nearly doubled.

Student perceptions of access to and quality of staff support in order to feel connected, safe and respected while at school grew to exceed that of the CES average as did their perception of Catholic Identity within the school.

### **Student Attendance**

Student attendance and non-attendance is managed by:

Parents are encouraged through the newsletter and on PAM to record their child's absence on PAM (Parent Access Module) or via phone call to the office. A phone call is made by office



staff to parents by 9.10am, if the school has not been notified about a student absence. The emergency is contacted if the listed parent / carer is unavailable.

Regular reminders and articles are included in the newsletter about the importance of school attendance. Attendance posters are displayed physically and are monitored during assembly and SRC. If absences are ongoing, the principal phones the parent to negotiate a solution.

The overall average attendance for 2024 was 89%.

<b>Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level</b>	
Y01	92.8
Y02	93.2
Y03	91.0
Y04	88.9
Y05	89.1
Y06	90.6
Overall average attendance	90.9

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## Leadership

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Review and develop the school Annual Action Plan.

School leaders to build capacity through attendance of network meetings and professional learning.

Form executive leadership team who meet regularly.

Complete the VRQA review audit and post-enumeration census audit.

Recruit additional members to the School Advisory Council.

Ensure regular consultative committee meeting are held

### Achievements

In 2024, St Mary's staff collaborated with personnel from CESL, school staff, School Advisory Council (SAC) and students to develop their 2024 Annual Action Plan in conjunction with the School Improvement Plan.

Thea Parry – Senior Leader: Learning and Teaching; Katherine Jamieson – Learner Diversity Leader; Angela Brockett – Religious Education Leader; Bianca Brook – Indigenous perspectives; and Vincent Ryan – Pastoral Wellbeing leader. All leaders attended their respective leadership networks.

During 2024, the school executive leadership team met weekly to plan for school improvement. This team also met for a weekly school safeguarding meeting. The principal and Finance officer met fortnightly to discuss financial matters.

The school successfully passed the VRQA and Post-enumeration census audits.

The school advisory council met termly to discuss matters of school improvement. Sharon Gleeson was elected to continue as SAC chair. New members joined; Kelly Ross, Jacob Gillie and Sarah Jones.

Consultative meetings were held each term.

Significant funding was allocated to ensuring compliance signage, processes and procedures were up to date. This included an overhaul of the school's Emergency Management Procedures. Bounce Readiness was consulted for this undertaking.

<b>Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning</b>		
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024		
Stitches First Aid Anaphylaxis and CPR Soundwaves professional learning Liturgy and scripture professional learning Imaginative prayer professional learning AUSLAN conference Designated Teacher and Child Link training Three staff continued or completed Master courses Principal attended VACPSP conference Numeracy – challenging tasks and CRA model Warden training, 1st attack and staff awareness Resilience Project Dibels training Jewish world of Jesus Professional Learning Pastoral Wellbeing Network REL network Principal network Deputy Principal/Senior Leader network ATSI network/ Lake Mungo immersion Learner Diversity Leader network Media training Microsoft training Ochre Education professional learning MultiLit training SIMON administration conference		
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024		18
Average expenditure per teacher for PL		\$900.00

### Teacher Satisfaction

St Mary's School is a happy and positive place for staff. Morale and collegiality is high with all staff working toward the common goal of improving outcomes for students and families.

The ORIMA survey overall positivity highlighted the positive environment with 79% overall endorsement. The staff perceptions of the overall social and learning climate of the school

and their perceptions of the quality of relationships between staff and members of the leadership team were both 93%.

All 14 of the domains within the survey exceeded the CES averages for 2024 and this was within significant in some of the domains.

Teachers have very good collective efficacy and believe that they are able to take risks and feel safe while at school.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0
Masters	2
Graduate	0
Graduate Certificate	0
Bachelor Degree	4
Advanced Diploma	0
No Qualifications Listed	2

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	10
Teaching Staff (FTE)	6.4
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	12
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	5.15
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

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## Community Engagement

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To gain family voice within school matters.

Promote student attendance through parent channels.

Invite community members, families and the parish community into the school.

Enhance the reputation of the school.

### Achievements

The School Advisory Board reconvened in 2024 with 3 new members joining the existing 6 members and met termly to discuss matters pertaining to school improvement. The SAC endorsed and added their voice to the schools' Annual Action Plan.

The St Mary's Parents and Friends committee continued their active role within the school, planning various opportunities to invite the community into the school and help raise funds that went fully to assisting with providing the students with quality camps and excursions.

Many families attended school events throughout the year which included school assemblies and Educational Research Project expos. Highlights of the school year included when students represented St Mary's at RSL events, at the Community House and an excursion to a local event 'Shearing for Kids with Cancer'.

Throughout the year, the school invited parishioners and families to Masses, liturgies and Open Days.

Regular communications through local newspapers, social media and newsletters highlighted learning and teaching at St Mary's.

## Parent Satisfaction

Parent responses on the ORIMA engagement survey demonstrate that families are very happy with St Mary's which was evidenced through the 88% overall school positive endorsement.

Communication, the social and learning environment, student safety and the schools' fit for their child all showed 93-98% positive endorsement for the school. In 2025, it would be nice for more of the males within the community to contribute to the engagement survey.

Families interacted with all school communication platforms with a preference for social media content and SIMON everywhere.

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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.smrushworth.catholic.edu.au](http://www.smrushworth.catholic.edu.au)