



# 2023

## Annual Report to the School Community



### St Joseph's School

17 Fitzroy Avenue, RED CLIFFS 3496

Principal: Naomi Kennedy

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

Registration: 1373, E Number: E2047

---

## Principal's Attestation

---

I, Naomi Kennedy, attest that St Joseph'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 10 May 2024

---

## About this report

---

St Joseph'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](#).

---

## Governing Authority Report

---

The Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) governs 52 primary schools, one F – 8 school, and five secondary Colleges, educating around 13,500 students and employing more than 2,200 teachers and staff, from Mildura in the north, Portland in the south, and west to Edenhope and Nhill.

Now in its third year of operation, DOBCEL continues to work diligently to ensure all its schools flourish fully in their mission to provide high-quality, affordable, faith-based education opportunities for students and families in safe, supportive, and secure learning environments, that value diversity and promote cooperation, care, and respect for all.

During 2023, I was fortunate to visit all of our schools as the DOBCEL Board held meetings in different venues across the diocese. The spirit of harmony and sense of community, along with cultures of care for students and staff I experienced, was extremely encouraging. These school visits were also a reminder of the calibre of young people we have in our education system.

The role of school Principal continues to grow in complexity, demanding an increasingly diverse skillset and knowledge base. I am proud and deeply grateful for the exceptional dedication and professionalism of our 58 Principals, who, along with leadership colleagues and staff, work tirelessly to deliver education services for the families and communities they serve.

Enterprise Bargaining Agreement negotiations continued this year, involving staff from schools and human resources teams giving many hours and great effort to the process. Working with the inter-Diocesan bargaining group, DOBCEL continued to support efforts to finalise the Agreement with the Independent Education Union (IEU) as expediently as possible. DOBCEL continues to recognise the extraordinary work of staff in our schools and offices, and the substantial changes to the Agreement are intended to have a positive impact on staff and their workload.

As mandated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), the development of clear policy and procedural documents continued apace, with schools required to utilise DOBCEL foundational work, yet contextualise documents to suit the specific needs of each school. I express my gratitude to the team at Catholic Education Ballarat, who are both talented and conscientious in delivering this vital work.

During the year we saw the end of an era with the closure of St Brendan's Primary School, Dunnstown. Over 160 years of schooling was celebrated through speeches, laughter, and the sharing of many memories. Pleasingly, we also saw the refurbishment and opening of several new school buildings across the diocese this year.

I continue to be extremely grateful for the ongoing dedication, professionalism, and support of our personnel at Catholic Education Ballarat. I particularly acknowledge the commitment of our school leadership teams and their staff in nurturing and empowering the students in our care, as together we work to bring to life our vision: As partners in Catholic Education and open to God's presence, we pursue the fullness of life for all.

Tom Sexton

Executive Director DOBCEL

---

## Vision and Mission

---

### Our School Vision

As partners collaboratively educating our students to ensure they learn at high levels, we are inspired by Christ and our Catholic Faith & Tradition as we pursue fullness of life for all.

### Our School Mission

Therefore, inspired by the Gospels we will:

- Be a community inspired by Catholic faith and its traditions through the active living of the Gospel and by teaching for, and witnessing to justice, peace and ecological conversion.

#### (Catholic School Culture)

- Work in close partnership with families, parish and the wider community to enhance faith, student learning and wellbeing.

#### (Community Engagement)

- Be educators who effectively collaborate and work collegially to deliver high-quality outcomes for all students and to build a positive culture with a clear sense of purpose and direction aligned with policies and protocols.

#### (Leadership and Stewardship)

- Be educators who work collaboratively and reflectively to educate the whole child to a high standard inspiring ALL to achieve as successful, life-long learners in an ever-changing world.

#### (Learning and Teaching)

- Sustain a safe, respectful, inclusive and positive educational environment that celebrates achievement and promotes dignity and self-responsibility for all.

#### (Wellbeing)

---

## School Overview

---

St Joseph's Primary School Red Cliffs was founded 88 years ago by the St. Joseph's Parish and staffed by Sisters of Mercy. When the school first commenced, Red Cliffs was a fast-growing, newly established horticultural district for returned soldiers from World War 1.

Since opening in 1933, sisters, priests, lay teachers, parents, students, and members of the St Joseph's Red Cliffs parish have worked tirelessly to develop the four acres of land that the school is located on into an inspiring environment that celebrates faith, learning and life.

Over the past two years, St Joseph's has experienced a fluctuating period of enrolment with 89 students at the end of 2023 and a predicted enrolment of 103 in 2024.

While we have lost students this year across the school our Foundation enrolments remain strong with an enrolment of 17 students for 2024.

We have five multi-age classroom groupings. Our student population is drawn from a wide range of multicultural and faith backgrounds, providing us with a rich experience of culture and tradition.

The school is very well-resourced in regards to staffing with 24 people being employed in a mix of casual, contract, part-time and full-time work. Many staff contribute specialised skills in a part-time capacity. St Joseph's is able to employ a number of specialised staff to meet the needs of the students and the community due to additional funding due to our low Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage score (ICSEA) of 984 which is up from an ICSEA of 951 in 2022. We also have 43% of our families in the bottom quarter of the Social-Educational Advantage Distribution (SEA) compared to the national average of 25%.

Our school maintains a high percentage of children who meet the definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act and are therefore entitled to funding under the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) program. Below is a list of some relevant statistics relating to our demographics:

- 14% of our students are from a non-English speaking family which is a significant increase from previous years;
- 12% of our students are of indigenous heritage;
- 34% of our total school population is classified as having a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act and are included in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data.

Of the students included in the NCCD, a majority require Supplementary (mild) adjustments and supports with only a few requiring Substantial levels of adjustments and in 2023 two have required Extensive adjustments.

St Joseph's School participates in rich prayer and liturgical experiences that name and celebrate our faith and tradition. We celebrate regular whole-school school Masses that are a positive experience for students and families. Our community, and in particular our students develop a sense of social justice through their participation in parish fundraising for Project Compassion and Catholic Mission along with contributing to other social justice events such as Footy Colours and other fundraisers. We provide regular opportunities for students to learn about and witness to ecological conversion through the Resource Smart Schools Sustainability program. At St Joseph's we are using 'Awakenings' as our RE curriculum, which adopts the Shared Christian Praxis pedagogy (critically adapted and used hermeneutically). This method sees all human beings as being made in the 'image of God'. St Joseph's is accepting of all world views and encourages students and families to express these in the true spirit of dialogue and community. Amongst a diversity of views and attitudes, we hope that students can discover for themselves and interpret topics and life issues in a process of dialogue. Beginning with the child's own experience of the world, the Catholic faith and its traditions are introduced through stories, discussion and worship to be interpreted and reinterpreted by the students.

Our experienced and caring teachers and support staff are committed to developing innovative teaching practices that develop skills within students to better prepare them for life and work in a contemporary world. Students are encouraged to develop self-regulation in regard to their learning and behaviour. The aim is to inspire them to become lifelong learners who seize any opportunity to make new discoveries about themselves as learners and about the world in which they live.

St Joseph's is a Professional Learning Community. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are an approach to school improvement where groups of teachers work collaboratively at the school level to improve student outcomes.

St Joseph's also engages the students in evidence-based and research-validated teaching and interventions in Literacy and Numeracy. We have adopted a Structured Literacy approach to teaching Reading and have moved away from the Whole Language approach. We engage in explicit instruction and believe that skills and knowledge are taught and not caught. While we have a strong focus on Literacy, Numeracy and Social Emotional Learning we also teach all other areas of the curriculum with specialist lessons in the Performing Arts, Physical Education, Technology and Languages - Italian. Science, History and Geography are taught through the Inquisitive curriculum which provides a wide range of relevant,



engaging resources based on the Victorian Curriculum. Inquisitive lessons use differentiation and student choice ensuring students learn with purpose, engagement and depth.

St Joseph's has a highly qualified and experienced Wellbeing team. Maintaining student, staff and community well-being is a key part of our mission. At any point in time, we are implementing a wide range of whole school, small group and individual preventative interventions. Our staff has a shared commitment to the general care of our students. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is regarded as an essential component of the education of the whole child in our school. The school has adopted the Play is the Way methodology, uses trauma-informed practices through implementing the ReLATE model (Reframing the Learning and Teaching Environment) and explicitly teaches Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships through teaching the RRRR curriculum. We employ a Pastoral Care Worker, Wellbeing Leader, Occupational Therapist and Speech Therapist who work with students at their point of need. At St Joseph's we abide by the philosophy that parents and carers are the first and lifelong educators of their children. By working together, we know we can provide the compassionate, supportive and safe environment crucial to nurturing creative and successful young adults that results in the fullness of life for all.

---

## Principal's Report

---

We are back to preCOVID normal. We have been able to resume all activities and the students have flourished. Particular highlights from this year include the Beginning of Year School Picnic, Trivia Night, our Mother's and Father's Day Breakfasts, Grandparent's Day, School Sports days, our production of Peter Pan and our school camps. The community participation and involvement in these events have been outstanding.

Congratulations to our students, who are of course the most important people in our school community. They are also displaying our school values of good manners, friendliness, courage, resilience, acceptance and compassion in their engagement with students and staff alike. I am particularly proud of how our students represent our school when they go out into the wider community. Our students have exemplary behaviour at events such as ANZAC Day, eisteddfod, Lightning Prems and other community events.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the St Joseph's staff including our Teachers, Learning Support Officers, Administration Staff, Speech Therapists and OT, as well as our maintenance, and cleaning team. We are blessed to have such a dedicated, enthusiastic and talented group, who bring a multitude of gifts and expertise to their work at St Joseph's.

Thank you to our School Captains Sophia Camera and Anky Mansley, Student Sports Leaders and Student Representative Council who have led our students with friendship, compassion and concern for all in the school community.

I would like to thank our Leadership Team, Janice Divola, Nadine Williams, Dylan Darby and Tamara Leamon, the School Advisory Council and Fr Matthew Thomas for their continued advice and support throughout 2023.

This year we welcomed Julie Minaudo in the office who replaced Trish Forrest. Julie has been a friendly and competent addition to our team. We have also welcomed Claire Gowers who has worked as an LSO and welcomed back Jodie Richmond and Josie Gallace who have rejoined us in a part-time capacity.

We farewelled Fr Shaiju and welcomed Fr John Corrigan as our new Assistant Priest. Fr John has celebrated Masses with us and visited our school with much enthusiasm and grace

throughout the year. I would like to thank Fr John and Fr Matthew Thomas for their continued support in 2023.

Kim Hawkes has also resigned to take up an ongoing position with DOBCEL/CEB (Catholic Education Ballarat) after more than 20 years of service as a teacher and leader at St Joseph's. Kim taught across the school and took on leadership roles such as Learning Diversity Leader, Religious Education Leader and Deputy Principal. Kim was well-loved by the community and known for her strong work ethic, knowledge, skill and commitment to the students.

Tamara Leamon has had a long association with St Joseph's and has been the person responsible for our amazing Productions every second year, and community events such as our school picnics and breakfasts. This year Tammie has also been our Religious Education Leader. Tamara has informed us that she will reduce her time fraction at St Joseph's in 2024 to pursue more work specifically in the area of the Performing Arts. Tammie will stay at St Joseph's one day a week to teach performing arts.

Mrs Cav (Chen Cavallaro) has been associated with St Joseph's for more than 50 years. She attended school here, her children attended here and now her grandchildren attend here. Chen is well-loved by staff and students due to her kind and thoughtful nature as well as her strong desire to support the learning and wellbeing of every student at St Joseph's. Chen will be enjoying her second attempt at retirement in 2024.

Holly Southwell has had 12 months' leave in 2023 to pursue other work and has recently accepted a position with DOBCEL/CEB (Catholic Education Ballarat) as an Education Officer in the Structured Literacy Project. I would like to thank Holly for the amazing contributions she has made as a classroom teacher and leader over the previous four years and wish her well in her new role. Holly has tendered her resignation and accepted the full time position with DOBCEL. Holly was instrumental in our take up of Structured Literacy at St Joseph's and offered a great deal as a teacher and leader at our school.

To our graduating year 6 students, we wish you all the very best in your future endeavours and thank you for your time at St Joseph's. We pray that God's spirit goes with you and guides you in all you do.

Finally, a big thank you to our school community. It is our parents, students, staff and parish who make St Joseph's such a wonderful place to grow and learn. I look forward to working with you all again in 2024.

Kind regards,

Naomi Kennedy

Principal

---

## Catholic Identity and Mission

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

#### Long term Goals

Enhancing and strengthening St Joseph's Catholic School Identity by building staff knowledge and confidence in using ECSI data, delivering the Awakenings curriculum and linking Social Justice activities to scripture.

#### Short Term Goals

Provide staff with the skills and knowledge to engage in Catholic Social Justice Teaching.

Engage students and community in Catholic Social Justice awareness and action.

Further develop staff's skills and confidence in planning and delivering RE Awakenings units with a focus on assessment and reporting.

### Achievements

Our teachers are using the Awakenings curriculum to inform their teaching of Religious Education. Throughout the year, with the support of our Religious Education Leader, and Catholic Education Ballarat's Education Officer for Religious Education, we have placed an emphasis on supporting our teachers to develop their pedagogical approaches and confidence in planning and delivering the Awakenings curriculum.

Our staff professional learning has also included a pupil-free day with Jim Waight, DOBCEL Education Officer, where staff engaged in a day's personal and spiritual reflection on the purpose of Catholic Schools and Formation for Mission.

Environmental sustainability and environmental awareness are an integral part of our Catholic faith, curriculum and strategic priority. We continue to unlock the Pope's Encyclical *Laudato si'* (On Care For Our Common Home.) Pope Francis says that caring for Our Common Home is an essential part of our faith. St Joseph's aims to reduce our footprint through being resource-smart by recycling our waste, being Waterwise, growing a vegetable garden and caring for our four hens. Pope Francis calls us to a spirituality of love and respect for all creation in the one community of life on earth. Most of all he is full of hope that we can meet this urgent challenge to the future of 'Our Common Home'. Staff have engaged in Professional Learning on *Laudato si'*, with the school leaders doing additional learning in this area. We aim that the students develop a sense of social justice through their

participation in fundraising for Project Compassion and Catholic Mission along with contributing to several other social justice activities that all stem from their learning in Religious Education.

We use the Awakenings Religious Education curriculum, which adopts the Shared Christian Praxis pedagogy. This method sees all human beings as being made in the 'image of God'.

It starts with the student's experience of the world, takes them to the Catholic Faith and Tradition, and then gets them to reflect back on their life, considering how they can respond to this in order to live out the Christian Story and Vision. We accept and value a diversity of world views and attitudes and aim that students can discover and interpret for themselves topics and life issues in a process of dialogue.

St Joseph's School participates in rich prayer and liturgical experiences that name and celebrate our faith and tradition. Masses are celebrated to acknowledge: the beginning of the school year, Grandparent's Day, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week and Grade 6 Graduation.

In 2023 Red Cliffs, Mildura and Merbien combined into one Parish, Ss Anne and Joachim (Jesus' Grandparents, Mary's Parents). This uniting of the three parishes of the region into one enables the sharing of resources and support across our region which enriches us as a community. While the Parish name has changed, the church and school at Red Cliffs will still be known as St Joseph's. This year we farewell Fr Shaiju Mathew who moved to Robinvale and welcomed our new Assistant Priest Fr John Corrigan. Our Parish Priest Fr Matthew Thomas and Assistant Priest, Fr John Corrigan have both been valuable pastoral, religious and spiritual support for our school.

## Value Added

### VALUE ADDED

The school is dedicated to its Catholic heritage and traditions and works closely with the Parish Priest and parish to ensure that all members of the community feel connected to and involved in parish life. The school's Religious Education curriculum documentation is based on the Awakenings curriculum. Teachers use Shared Christian Praxis in their planning to bring faith to life and then life back to faith. Students can articulate how they are learning to put their Religious Education learning into practice and explain how their Catholic identity is reflected in the school's values. Parent feedback endorses the school's Catholic identity, even though only 36% of families are of a Catholic background. From a Social Action and Justice perspective children are encouraged to take action for justice and this is evident in

the many social justice and action initiatives that occur throughout the year. Our achievements this year have included:

Providing support to our teaching staff to build their confidence in planning and delivering the Religious Education Awakenings units.

Providing professional development for staff on Prayer and Catholic Faith Formation for Mission.

Providing professional development for our staff on the Pope's Encyclical *Laudato si'* (On Care For Our Common Home.)

The Leadership team also began unpacking the schools ECSI Data to drive improvement in 2024.

---

## Learning and Teaching

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

#### Long term Goal

Building staff capability to develop a positive, safe and engaging learning environment with a focus on Literacy as the basis for all learning within a culture of continuous improvement and achievement.

#### Short term Goals

Improve student writing by implementing the Hochman method using the resource 'The Writing Revolution'

Embed Structured Literacy to ensure it is implemented with fidelity

Provide targeted Professional Learning at areas of need in SL/WR to improve teacher competence and confidence

Improve teacher instruction and student learning in Mathematics through renewed pacing guides for composite grades using Stepping Stones.

Implement Student Led Conferences F-6 to replace Parent-Teacher interviews.

### Achievements

St Joseph's has adopted a Structured Literacy approach to teaching Reading and is using the Hochman Method to teach Writing. The key elements of Structured Literacy include Phonology, Sound-Symbol Association, Syllable Instruction, Morphology, Syntax and Semantics. The Writing Revolution (TWR) provides a clear method of instruction based on the Hochman Method. It focuses on specific techniques and provides students with targeted feedback. The Six Principles of The Hochman Method include:

Students need explicit instruction in writing, beginning in the early grades.

Sentences are the building blocks of all writing. When embedded in the content of the curriculum, writing instruction is a powerful teaching tool. The content of the curriculum drives the rigour of the writing activities. Grammar is best taught in the context of student writing.

The two most important phases of the writing process are planning and revising.

During 2023, we have consolidated our Structured Literacy approach with twice-termly Teacher Professional Learning meetings and two pupil-free days dedicated to our continued knowledge in this area.



The school has dedicated 2 school closure days, 8 Professional Learning sessions and every second week's Professional Learning Team Meetings to Structured Literacy and the Writing Revolution. The outcomes of this work include:

- Development of a 2-year cycle for SL with 'buffer weeks' built into the termly planners
- Developing a handwriting curriculum, F-6
- Implementing the DIBLES assessment as our twice-yearly normed literacy assessment
- Development of a Reading Spine (Read To Scope and Sequence)
- Providing year-level specific professional learning at PLTs
- Exploring ways to focus more on oral language as part of our Structured Literacy curriculum implementation
- Improving teacher confidence and enjoyment for improved student outcomes
- Refining the Daily Review component, particularly how to ensure that this part of the day does not become too overloaded
- Review Creative writing looking at ways to ensure we provide the students with opportunities to learn and practise this skill.

In 2023 we accepted an invitation to be part of a Structured Literacy Research Project with the Science of Language and Reading (SOLAR) Lab in the School of Education at La Trobe University.

The aims of the collaboration and research are:

- To determine if this approach results in measurable gains in students' literacy skills
- To document student well-being and behaviour in response to Structured Literacy
- To examine changes in teacher knowledge and confidence

We are honoured to be part of this project and appreciate the support from La Trobe University and DOBCEL's Structured Literacy Team.

During 2023 we also implemented Student Led Conferences with great success. This involved considerable learning from our teachers, students and community. Student Led Conferences have led to an improvement in student engagement in the reporting process, improved student voice, students driving and reflecting on their learning and greater collaboration between teachers and students.

We did not change our Maths Scope and Sequence or pacing guides as we made a decision early in the year to teach straight grades for Maths to ensure that students could engage in Mathematics lessons at their curriculum.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

Despite having an ICSEA score of 984 (well below the average 1000), a recent analysis of NAPLAN and PAT data shows that we have high levels of student growth. Our 2023 PAT data

has indicated significant growth for our students in the areas of Reading with improved growth in Numeracy, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation.

As part of our work with Latrobe University, we are using standardised assessments multiple times a year. According to these assessments our students, particularly in the latter half of the year have experienced significant growth with effect sizes well above the expected .4 growth for the year.

<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	364	27%
	Year 5	493	55%
Numeracy	Year 3	397	57%
	Year 5	489	73%
Reading	Year 3	377	50%
	Year 5	*	*
Spelling	Year 3	364	33%
	Year 5	449	45%
Writing	Year 3	389	56%
	Year 5	*	*

\*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.

---

## Student Wellbeing

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

#### Long Term Goal

Develop effective practices to promote, monitor and enhance staff and student wellbeing in order to build learning resilience, self-management and self-reflective capabilities in our students.

#### Short Term Goals

Further embed the Play is the Way Life Raft Concepts, Games and Self-Reflective Language through coaching and ongoing professional development

Continue implementing Play is the Way's, Growing Personally and Socially (GPS) and the 3R's process to build students' self-awareness and self-management and improve behaviour. The school will revisit SIMON Social Behaviour to identify and provide interventions for problem behaviour.

Complete the TFI, Tiered Fidelity Inventory to identify gaps in well-being practices.

Staff will engage in professional learning and implement Trauma-informed practices when engaging with students.

### Achievements

In 2023 we added four additional programs to support our practices in the area of wellbeing.

Staff have been trained in the ReLATE model in Reframing the Learning and Teaching to ensure support for students with a trauma background.

Additionally, we are implementing the RRRR, Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships curriculum that aims to develop students' social, emotional and positive relationship skills.

To monitor our staff and student wellbeing we have implemented the EI Pulse. EI Pulse surveys staff and students every week regarding their mental health, well-being and school culture so the school can provide immediate targeted support for those in need and collect data over time to plan for strategic improvement.

We have implemented Play is the Way's 3Rs. The 3Rs Method is an intervention to help all students, especially those who are having difficulty with their behaviour, to develop self-management skills to function effectively in primary school. The 3Rs Method uses Guide Sheets that, with the assistance of a teacher, explicitly teach SEL skills. Students are also

given the opportunity to make the restitution that facilitates the repair of relationships. The 3Rs Method helps students to adhere to the standards of behaviour expected by our school and is for all year levels. It builds a sustainable culture of safety and support.

In 2023 St Joseph's prioritized the safety and well-being of the students, by implementing the 11 Child Safety standards, including MO 870 and MO 1359. To ensure a safe and secure learning environment, we have established policies and procedures that align with these standards, we regularly train staff and students on best practices for child safety, and consistently monitor and assess the effectiveness of these safety measures. By prioritizing the implementation of these standards, we aim to prevent child abuse, neglect, and other forms of harm, and provide a supportive environment where students can learn and thrive.

### **Value Added**

To help create a more coordinated approach we have our Learning Diversity Leader, Janice Divola working in conjunction with our Learning Support Officers, Pastoral Care Worker (Felicity Rix), Speech Pathologist (Sophie Bell) and Occupational Therapist (Letecia Ellis), teachers and families to offer additional support and a wide variety of early interventions to address the social/emotional needs of students. This team works closely with students and teachers to implement manageable interventions regarding language development, sensory integration, emotional regulation, and/or social skills.

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with a Disability identifies that 32% of our students meet the criteria under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005. These students receive adjustments so that they can access and participate in education on the same basis as their peers. The level of support varies from quality differentiated teaching practice, through to supplementary, then substantial and finally extensive. As a school, we have dedicated a significant amount of time to developing processes to ensure that the adjustments are being made for any student who requires support, particularly those with a disability. Significant human resourcing has gone into ensuring that our students who have been identified as having the greatest need regarding learning, behaviour and wellbeing, have specific support plans that include intervention programs, adjustments and management strategies.

To help teach children how to manage emotions, promote care and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships and handle challenging situations effectively, we teach a Social Emotional Curriculum called Play Is The Way. As a school in 2020, we adopted Play is the Way (PITW) as a methodology for teaching social and emotional skills using guided play, classroom activities and empowering language. PITW is an approach that gives primary schools a way to develop, improve and entrench the personal and social capabilities of students. These skills include recognising and managing our emotions, developing caring concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively. This approach is

certainly assisting in providing a consistent approach to social/emotional learning, behaviour and student self-management at St Joseph's.

Other initiatives have been implemented including Breakfast Club, Seesaw, Play is the Way, Restorative Practices, Sporting Schools, Pastoral Care Worker, Speech Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Students with Disability program, Tier 2 and 3 interventions, Program Support Group Meetings, Assembly Awards, SIMON Everywhere for ease of communication between home and school, and our RRRR lessons. We feel that these programs and initiatives have directly impacted the improvement in student well-being at our school.

## **Student Satisfaction**

Insight SRC data that was collected in 2019 from students saw a decrease in the Student Wellbeing Aggregate Index with our 2019 score decreasing from a score 84.5% to 71.9%, this trend has continued in 2022 with our aggregate falling to 67.5.

Last year's scores do however indicate some improvements including student morale from 60-65, connectedness to school from 68-71, student safety from 67 to 78, and student behaviour from 33 to 38.

In 2021 St Joseph's began using EI Pulse, a weekly survey of staff and students, to monitor wellbeing.

Our 2023 EI Pulse Student wellbeing data indicated an overall slight increase in student wellbeing of .2. Our students have reported improved outcomes in bullying, physical activity, managing challenging emotions, health, nutrition, access to necessities, emotional engagement with teachers, positive academic self-concept and a strong sense of belonging. Emotional engagement with teachers scored 8.7/10 and Academic Self Concept 8.1/10. Student friendships also scored well with an 8.4/10. Our students also reported that they feel very positively about their lives outside of school.

## **Student Attendance**

Classroom teachers twice daily record attendance, and late arrivals, in the mornings and afternoons; including those days when the class may be off-site.

A student is present for a half day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction.

Daily attendance is monitored using the learning management system, SIMON, and a tally of days absent and late arrivals is included on the student's semester reports. The reason for absence is coded such as for being sick, medical appointment, school notified, funeral and holidays.

Parents are expected to provide an explanation for students who are absent by 10am. This can be done in writing, by phone or through SIMON.

If a child is absent and no communication has been received from the parent, a text message is made to parents/carers by the administration officer by 10am.

Long term and/or consistent unexplained absences are followed up by the principal and parents are informed, in writing, if the principal deems that the parents have not met their obligations under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.

The role description of the administration officer states that they are responsible for following unexplained absences by 10am or as soon as practical and for maintaining a current register of parent/guardian contact details.

Student attendance is accurately recorded on the student report twice per year.

Attendance improvement strategies are implemented for students with poor attendance. A program support group may be established if the principal believes that the individual student and/or family require this support.

<b>Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level</b>	
Y01	89.9%
Y02	89.2%
Y03	87.9%
Y04	85.8%
Y05	87.0%
Y06	88.8%
Overall average attendance	88.1%

---

## Leadership

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

#### Long Term Goal

To build the shared leadership capabilities of all staff in order to enact St Joseph's Vision and Mission.

#### Short Term Goal

Create a leadership team that includes a wider cross-section of staff to ensure there is improved staff voice, enhanced collaboration, decision making and communication.

### Achievements

In 2023 our school leadership team has consisted of the Principal, Religious Education Leader, Learning Diversity Leader and Unit Leaders. This team meets fortnightly to discuss the implementation of the key priorities in our Annual Action Plan and consult with the Principal on a wide range of school-based issues. This has ensured that decisions made are reflective of the whole school rather than just the executive team. This has led to a more Distributed Leadership Model which has many benefits including:

More diverse perspectives and expertise being brought to the decision-making process. This can result in better-informed and more effective decisions.

Teachers often have a greater say in school governance and decision-making, which leads to increased job satisfaction, motivation, and a sense of ownership over their work.

I would like to thank our Leadership Team, Mrs Janice Divola, Mr Dylan Darby, Mrs Nadine Williams and Mrs Tamara Leamon for all of their support and commitment throughout 2023

2023 has seen the achievement of our Annual Action Plan goals with significant improvement in the school environment and improvement in the quality of Literacy instruction and learning outcomes. While staff have noted that workloads have been high, the overall well-being of staff and students has been enhanced.

I would like to thank Rebecca Thurman for her leadership in Structured Literacy which has led to improved outcomes for our students.

## Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning

List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023

### **Staff Professional Learning**

Our Key Priorities in 2023 were, Structured Literacy, Play Is The Way (Behaviour Education Self Management), ReLATE (Reframing the Learning and Teaching) and Catholic Faith Formation for Mission.

### **Learning and Teaching**

Structured Literacy Professional Learning at Staff Meetings and PLT's at least twice a term  
Pupil Free Days for all staff on Structured Literacy and Implementation and of the Writing Revolution

School Leaders completed a 5-week course online on the Writing Revolution

Pupil Free Day on Writing Revolution strategies from Ch 1 and Ch 2 - The teaching of sentence-level strategies in the classroom from F-6

Unit Leaders attended a Maths Curriculum PD in Bendigo

Professional Learning on Student-Led Conferences

### **Catholic Faith Formation for Mission Professional Learning:**

Kim Hawkes, CEB Education Officer RE ran termly Professional Learning with teachers regarding the Teaching of Religious Education

All staff participated in a professional learning day with Jim Waight on Formation for Mission

Religious Education Leader attended two full days of professional learning per year with Catholic Education Ballarat in Halls Gap as well as termly network meetings

### **Wellbeing Professional Learning**

All staff participated in a professional learning day on ReLATE as well as one professional learning meeting per term on trauma-informed practices

The school met with the MacKillop Institute to write an implementation plan for ReLATE

Play is The Way (PiTW) Professional Learning included

Professional learning on the 3R's with Wilson McCaskill with all staff at staff meetings

Learning Diversity Leader attended one full day of professional learning per term with Catholic Education Ballarat in Euston/ Robinvale

Professional Learning for staff on providing adjustments for students with disabilities

### **Leadership:**



<b>Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning</b>	
Principal, Literacy Leader, REL and Learning Diversity Leader attended required Diocean and network meetings.	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	16
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$825.00

### **Teacher Satisfaction**

According to our 2022 Insight SRC survey data we have had some significant positive improvements in Student Behaviour with overall scores in this area improving by 20 points.

Catholic School Culture scores have increased across the board with increases in almost all areas.

Areas of strength were: Individual morale, Role Clarity, Appraisal and Recognition, Professional Growth, Pastoral Care, Curriculum Processes, Parent Partnerships, Teacher Confidence and Quality Teaching. Our highest score was in School Improvement Focus where we scored better than 78% of schools. We have also had significant improvements in Student Behaviour with overall scores in this area improving by 20 points.

We have had a small decrease in our teacher satisfaction ratings in both Organisational Climate and Teaching Climate. This may be attributed to staffing shortages, changes in leadership, increased teacher workloads and stress associated with learning a new way of teaching literacy. Areas of significant challenge were school distress, work demands and student management.

Our yearly Summary Data from EI Pulse indicated that our staff have good Experiences at work 7.3/10 and feel well supported at work 8.1/10. Staff are also noting a high level of Life and Work Satisfaction.

<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	0.0%
Graduate	12.5%
Graduate Certificate	12.5%
Bachelor Degree	62.5%
Advanced Diploma	12.5%
No Qualifications Listed	0.0%

<b>Staff Composition</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	1
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	13
Teaching Staff (FTE)	9.1
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	13
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	10.9
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

---

## Community Engagement

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

The school actively seeks ways to enhance student learning and wellbeing by partnering with families.

### Achievements

St Joseph's actively seeks partnerships within the parish and wider community to enhance student learning and wellbeing. This year St Joseph's was involved in an increased number of community events. Our school choir performed at the Red Cliffs community ANZAC Day ceremony with our school leaders also reading some of the prayers. Our school Choirs and Marimba Band participated in the Mildura Eisteddfod with our Marimba Band receiving first prize and our Junior and Senior Choirs both being awarded places.

Highlights from this year include our Mother's and Father's Day breakfast where we served hundreds of hungry students, parents, family members and carers. Our Grandparent's Day celebration also exceeded our expectations with our church full to the brim for Mass and approximately one hundred grandparents coming in to engage in student learning and enjoy a light morning tea at school.

We continue to be strongly engaged in our Parish community through participating in weekday Masses, fundraising for Project Compassion and Catholic Mission, being involved in the Parish Sacramental Program and attending Parish Council Meetings.

Throughout 2023 we have continued to work on the ResourceSmart Schools Sustainability Program. This assists our school to embed sustainability in everything we do, encourages real-life sustainability learning and helps our school save money. Our students constantly witness how we take care of each other, our physical environment, our resources and the earth. Our Catholic model of service and justice calls us to step up, pay attention, serve all people and work to make the world a better place to live in, not just for today but for future generations.

Community Engagement in learning and wellbeing continues to have a significant focus at St Joseph's. As a school, we know learning is enhanced when parents are acknowledged and supported in their role as educators. We strive to maintain and build a strong rapport with our parents and the wider community.

Our Learning Diversity Leader, teachers and parents have regular opportunities through Program Support Group meetings to create and evaluate Individual Learning Plans and Behaviour Support Plans for students who are at risk. We are conscious of working with families in a climate of mutual respect where communication and consultation is encouraged.

To support students with a disability and other students experiencing difficulties in a specific area, we access contracted services for one day a week each for Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy. These professionals alongside our Learning Diversity Leader, and Pastoral Care Worker make up our Allied Health team. This team meets regularly in a coordinated approach in order to meet the needs of our more complex students.

Our Schoolzine eNewsletter, which was introduced in 2020 can be read easily on any type of technological device. It also allows parents to read the newsletter in any language. This allows more parents to be informed about upcoming events and see what we are achieving as a school. As a school, we are also utilising many informal opportunities to communicate with parents and showcase to the community student learning. We use the Seesaw digital portfolio, the St Joseph's Facebook and Instagram pages, the Schoolzine Newsletter and the Parent Access Module (PAM) or SIMON Everywhere.

This year has meant the resumption of all our great community engagement experiences including:

Morning tea for families on the first day of school

Student Led Conferences

Beginning of the year Family Picnic and games night

St Pat's Day Project Compassion Fundraiser

Mother's Day Breakfast

Catholic Education Week Mass at St Joseph's College Mildura

Assemblies resumed with parents in attendance

Open Days

Grandparents Day

Students performing and reading at the community ANZAC Day Ceremony at Barclay Square

Father's Day Breakfast

Cross Country

Enrolment interviews

Parent Information Morning

Book Week Celebrations  
Trivia Night fundraising event  
School Masses

### **Parent Satisfaction**

The Insight SRC data that was collected in 2022 from staff, parents and students saw an increase in the Community Engagement Aggregate Index from 90.3 to 91.2. As a school, we provide many opportunities for parents to be informed about what is happening in the school and provide many opportunities for parents to engage in the life of the school and support their children's learning.

---

## 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](http://www.acnc.gov.au).

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