



# 2024

## Annual Report to the School Community



### St Patrick's School

9-11 William Street, PORT FAIRY 3284

Principal: Olga Lyons

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

Registration: 599, E Number: E2029

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## Principal's Attestation

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I, Olga Lyons, attest that St Patrick'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 2024 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 02 May 2025

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## About this report

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St Patrick'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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Reflecting on 2024, we have much to be proud of, with DOBCEL demonstrating our dedication to ensuring the highest quality student outcomes in a safe, affordable, faith-based and nurturing environment. There was significant ongoing investment in new learning facilities and refurbishments through the Australian and state Government Capital Grants Program and school community funding continued across our schools, enhancing learning spaces and amenities for the benefit of students and staff.

In 2024, I visited all our Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) schools from the Murray to the Sea. DOBCEL governs 51 primary schools, one F-8 school, and five secondary colleges, educating approximately 13,500 students and employing over 2,200 teachers and staff across the diocese. These visits highlighted the spirit of harmony and sense of community, along with the cultures of care for students and staff.

During 2024, I had the privilege of meeting with all Principals along with leadership colleagues and staff. Demands on schools continue to grow, as the communities they service undergo change and face challenges such as devastating bushfires and cost of living challenges.

During the year DOBCEL commenced the development of its future DOBCEL Strategy 2035. Our strategy is focused on ensuring fullness of life for all in our school communities and particularly our students. With our Catholic Identity foundational to our mission our focus will be on

- Collaborative Cultures
- Engagement & Belonging
- School as Community
- Rich Pedagogical practices for deeper learning and wellbeing
- Sustainable Stewardship

I recognise the extraordinary work, exceptional dedication and professionalism of staff in our schools and offices in providing education services to the families and communities they serve. 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



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## Vision and Mission

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### **Vision**

In the tradition of the Good Samaritan sisters, we are a Catholic educational community, giving ourselves to goodness throughout our lives.

### **Mission**

We do this by:

- Nurturing, developing and celebrating faith
- Welcoming, including and supporting each other
- Inspiring and challenging each other through excellent teaching, leading to high levels of learning and achievement for all
- Respecting the uniqueness of each person
- Enjoying life as part of a community
- Responding to the personal safety and developmental needs of our students to support their mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing, making our school a Child-Safe school.

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## School Overview

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St Patrick's is a Catholic Primary School situated in the picturesque coastal town of Port Fairy. Port Fairy has a population of approximately 3,500 people.

St. Patrick's was the 2nd Catholic School established in Victoria in 1849.

Our school has well-organised and maintained contemporary facilities. We provide structured, and high impact teaching practices founded in a culture of collaboration and a commitment to providing individualised learning for each student.

Our Religious Education program is centred in the traditions of the Catholic Church and the teaching of Jesus Christ, but is open to inclusive dialogue with all faith backgrounds. Scripture is taught with a Post Critical Belief stance.

We have an extensive curriculum with a focus on learning success for all in literacy and numeracy. We are embarking on a Structured Literacy pedagogy for the teaching of the English Curriculum.

STEM, Visual and Dramatic ARTS, Japanese and Physical Education are our specialist programs.

We are a 5 Star Sustainable School. We endeavour to teach our students to be good stewards of creation.

### Statistics

2023 enrolment - 179

Number of families - 123

CSEF students - 10 families

Catholic students - 88 Baptised Students

Number of teachers - 18 Registered Teachers

Ancillary staff - 11 Non-Teaching Staff

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## Principal's Report

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It was an honour to be the Principal in the year that marked 175 years of Catholic Education at St. Patrick's Primary School.

In October we invited past staff and students to an open day followed by an official gathering to acknowledge the rich history of the school and the commitment made by so many to providing a Catholic Education for so many years.

Mr. Tom Sexton addressed the attending visitors and spoke about the impact the Good Samaritan Sisters had in the governance of the school after taking over from the Sisters of Cluny who were recalled to France in the school early stages of development. We also acknowledged the many lay Principals and teachers who devoted their work to the core business of evangelisation. It is through their tireless work and sacrifice that generations have been educated with excellence and guided in the ways of faith.

A mass was held in the school hall on the Sunday followed by a generous morning tea provided by the current families of the school community.

2024 was also a year of significant pedagogical change. We moved away from the Balanced Literacy approach which had been embedded in our school culture for over 30 years to adopt a Structured Literacy approach based on the Science of Learning and Reading. This required a significant shift in our philosophy about how children learn. While it was challenging for staff, I am proud of the way they were open to new learning and practices. This change also required a large amount of financial support so that we could purchase a Structured Phonics Program; decodable books for F-2 and class sets of novels for years 3-6.

The Parents & Friends were unable to secure volunteers to fill executive roles and hence the organisation of key events fell to the Principal and Leadership Team. While this is not ideal, it speaks of the ongoing challenge of attracting volunteers to actively engage in the life of the school. We attribute this to the need for families to have 2 incomes to manage the increasing cost of living.

Our enrolments dipped once again in 2024 due to the increase in housing prices and the lack of affordable rentals in Port Fairy.



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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: To enhance the Catholic School Identity with a focus on recontextualising Religious Education lessons.

Our ESCI data indicates that we have too many students in Literal Belief and Relativism. Our PCB data is above 4.0 which is positive but should be higher.

Teaching from a recontextualised lens will move students and staff data from literal belief and relativism to PCB (Post Critical Belief) by delivering RE content (e.g. plays, song, imagery).

Being skilled in how to dialogue with members of other faiths in a respectful and inclusive way is still something that teachers have identified as an area for further development.

Teachers will be more confident to deliver the Gospel message with a Post Critical Belief stance will assist students to understand that the message behind the story is more important than the events in the bible and will take this forward into their lives.

### Achievements

All staff and student leaders were commissioned at our Opening School Mass in February.

Our marking of the Season of Lent was able to happen in year levels. Ashes were distributed amongst classes and liturgies were led by the classroom teachers and students.

We celebrated St Patrick's Day and Harmony Day in term 1. A much loved day of fun and enjoyment, happily completed by all staff and students to celebrate our patron saint.

All Sacraments were able to run successfully and it is a credit to all participants who completed each sacrament. For the first time, all candidates from schools in the Warrnambool Network gathered for an education day on the Eucharist at St. Joseph's Church Hall and Confirmation grouped together in 3 churches for the Sacrament. The Network has committed to seeking financial support to run a Network Sacramental Program for all Sacraments in 2025.

We participated in a day of Prayer with Jim Waight from the Catholic Education Office. We explored a variety of forms of prayer and each year level created a Prayer Scope and

Sequence. The prayer forms included were focused on a post critical belief approach and less on formal prayer.

A fantastic year of being able to gather together and celebrate our Catholic faith.

Our Mini Vinnie leaders and team members successfully ran events to support the local Food Share organisation and Caritas.

The Sisters of God's Love from Canberra visited our school and did an activity with the students to link their work to the Catholic Social Teachings.

### **Value Added**

The focus on prayer and the creation of a prayer Scope and Sequence has transformed the way we lead prayer with our students. There is a focus on using a variety of resources and structures to engage the students in meaningful reflection on scripture and their own spirituality.

Teachers became confident in planning Religious Education lessons that were less literal and more recontextualised.

The ECSI analysis lead us to identify a new goal: To enhance Catholic Identity in all aspects of our school community. This goal came from our desire to make connections between our Catholic Identity and all aspects of the school community, so that students understand that Catholic teachings are evident in the wider world.

Our commitment to the Catholic Social Teachings was enhanced by the fund raising efforts of the Mini Vinnies team. Linking our Principal Award to the Catholic Social Teachings also created a deeper understanding of what they look like in action.

A Network approach to the Sacramental Program has added a level of consistency and support for the Religious Education Leaders.

Students have a more interpretive understanding of the bible stories and an understanding that the bible stories are not recounts. They were written hundreds of years after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Teachers gained an understanding of the 3 Worlds of the Text when using scripture.

Students and Teachers confidently questioned and wondered about details in the bible.

Students and Teachers made connections to what is important in the Catholic Tradition.

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## Learning and Teaching

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: To promote a culture of engagement and learning success through student agency.

Our student Insight SRC data indicates that we need to focus on motivating our students to learn. While their desire to learn is higher than historic data their motivation is lower. While their desire to learn and learning confidence scores are higher than historic data they are still at the lower end of the scale.

To design programs and learning approaches that motivate and engage our students in their learning.

To build teacher confidence and capacity to explicitly teach phonics and spelling, to increase student's literacy outcome.

### Achievements

2024 was a year of significant pedagogical change. All staff attended a Science of Reading/ Structured Literacy PD.

Junior teachers, some LSOs and a teacher from the middle and senior areas of the school participated in the 4 day face-to-face Sounds Write Training.

Sounds Write was implemented in F-2 classes and used as an intervention program in years 3-4. SPELD Decodable Texts were purchased to support the Sounds Write Program.

Spelling Mastery was purchased ready to be implemented in 2025.

Years 3-6 began using the Ochre Education slides for Literacy. Class sets of novels were purchased to support the Ochre Novel Studies content.

Teachers revisited the Inquiry Model to enhance student engagement in learning the humanities subjects.

Science/STEM became an addition to the specialist programs offered in the school.

The F-2 teachers trialled the EMP mathematics program and have adopted this program for 2025.

Wellbeing and Sustainability focus days were planned at the end of each term. Student leaders planned and lead the activities in house groups.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Students actively participated in learning discussions and co-designed learning content.

Students indicated that they have a sense of ownership and agency over their learning and presentation of work.

Teachers indicated that they felt confident in developing lessons and units that enable student agency.

Students were more engaged in the Structured Literacy Lessons and took a keen interest in the novels being read and discussed.

Students leaders met with the Deputy Principal to build a culture of openness and were provided with opportunities for student voice in a variety of ways.

Student data in F-2 has indicated a significant increase in phonological knowledge and reading fluency.

### **Students below Standard and requiring Sounds Write intervention at the end of the year (after 6 months teaching SW)**

Foundation - 4 out of 18

Year 1 - 8 out of 24

Year 2 - 10 out of 29

Year 3 - 3 out of 26

## **NAPLAN**

**YR 3 = 23 STUDENTS** *This data show a number of students working in the low average to below level.*

### **Reading**

Exceeding = 6 Strong = 11 Developing = 3 Needs Assistance = 3

### **Spelling**

Exceeding = 1 Strong = 12 Developing = 6 Needs Assistance = 4

### **Grammar & Punctuation**

Exceeding = 0 Strong = 12 Developing = 5 Needs Assistance = 6

### **Numeracy**

Exceeding = 1 Strong = 12 Developing = 7 Needs Assistance = 3

**YR 5 = 24 STUDENTS** *This data shows that the majority of students are at or above average.*

### **Reading**

Exceeding = 6 Strong = 18 Developing = 0 Needs Assistance = 0

### **Spelling**

Exceeding = 2 Strong = 17 Developing = 5 Needs Assistance = 0

### **Grammar & Punctuation**

Exceeding = 7 Strong = 13 Developing = 4 Needs Assistance = 0

### **Numeracy**

Exceeding = 2 Strong = 19 Developing = 5 Needs Assistance = 0

<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	354	52%
	Year 5	543	83%
Numeracy	Year 3	384	57%
	Year 5	507	88%
Reading	Year 3	413	74%
	Year 5	529	100%
Spelling	Year 3	385	57%
	Year 5	499	79%
Writing	Year 3	419	91%
	Year 5	507	88%

\*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

Goal: **To promote a culture of engagement and learning success through student agency.**

To promote a culture of inquiry and innovation, where student agency is evident in creative exploration and independent, interrelated and purposeful learning.

To develop a greater understanding and appreciation for the impact trauma has on student engagement and learning.

### Achievements

We began our 2 year journey with Mackillop Family Services and the ReLATE Program. Staff created their own Stress Management Plans and shared their stress triggers and release strategies with students. Students created their own Stress Management Plans. We had 2 full days of professional learning and developed a SIT panel to drive the initiative and discuss student wellbeing issues.

Safety/Wellbeing Plans were created for students who displayed anxiety and major behaviour issues.

A student Wellbeing Survey was conducted twice in the year to indicate where students felt unsafe in the school and who made them feel unsafe or anxious.

Staff completed a Wellbeing Survey midyear.

Hands on Learning (HoL) was implemented with 2 groups of students. The focus was on learning how to use hand tools and make items out of wood. These groups also created a course for the Colour Fun Run. Students had their personal and team goals to assist them to develop independence, resilience and cooperation skills.

House Groups were held 3 times a term on Friday afternoons. The groups were multi-age and participated in a variety of wellbeing activities which included Fitness; Team Games; Yoga; Music; Mindful Colouring.

The Year 6 students and their buddies participated in wellbeing buddy activities twice a term.

Student awards were aimed at commending good learners, students who kept themselves and other safe and were respectful to adults and fellow students.

The school counsellor facilitated workshops on Friendship Skills in the Year 2 class where we had observed incidences of bullying behaviour.

## Value Added

Feedback from students and parents about the value of the HoL program was very positive.

Creating and sharing stress management plans with team members was a positive way for staff to acknowledge that we all have times of stress and certain triggers can be avoided if everyone is aware.

The Buddy System provided the senior students with a sense of purpose and responsibility that had a positive impact on their wellbeing.

As a result of the student and staff wellbeing surveys, the SIT panel was able to identify students who were having a negative impact on the wellbeing of others and refer them to the school counsellor or design wellbeing lessons that target specific behaviours and skill sets. The leadership team were able to identify workload and expectations that cause staff members to experience high levels of stress. Minimising strategies were considered to reduce workload where possible.

SWPBS data on SIMON indicated that it is well embedded in the school culture. The number of major behavioural incidences reduced in 2024.

## Student Satisfaction

### Insight SRC Data

Overall Actual Score - 76.04	Historic Actual Score - 71.9
Student Morale - 84	Historic - 76
Connected to School - 82	Historic - 72
Student Distress - 90	Historic - 82
Student Safety - 84	Historic - 76
Purposeful Teaching - 92	Historic - 89
Stimulating Learning - 77	Historic - 88
Learning Confidence - 74	Historic - 77



Motivation - 85	Historic - 83
Connected to Peers - 83	Historic - 83
Teacher Empathy - 92	Historic - 90

## Student Attendance

### Attendance Analysis - SIMON

In 2024 attendance in the year 5 cohort was low due to a group of students experiencing mental health conditions. They were referred for medical mental health plans.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	90.4
Y02	90.3
Y03	91.7
Y04	87.9
Y05	86.9
Y06	89.4
Overall average attendance	89.4

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## Leadership

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: To implement pedagogical change to align with the Science of Learning.

To research curriculum programs to support Explicit and Direct Instruction in Literacy.

To research curriculum programs to support Explicit and Direct Instruction in Mathematics.

To re-engage with the Inquiry Process to design engaging and creative units of work in humanities subjects.

To introduce a music program that can be taught by classroom teachers.

### Achievements

#### Leadership Team Members

Principal - Olga Lyons

Deputy Principal - Tristan Fay

Religious Education Leader - Eliza Dwyer

Learning and Teaching Leader - Tristan Fay

Wellbeing Leader - Benson Steere

Learning Diversity Leader - Rachael Osborne

In 2024 we participated in a Review Process to gather, analyse and interpret ESCI data and Student Outcome Data.

The staff designed goals and strategies for each of the Characteristics of an Effective Catholic School. 3 goals were determined a priority for our 5 year Strategic Plan.

An external reviewer and a panel of external educators visited the school over 2 days to critique and approve our proposed goals.

1. To enhance Catholic Identity in all aspects of our school community.

2. To strengthen effective and sustainable community partnerships for mutual benefit.
3. To promote a culture of engagement and learning success through student agency.

The Leadership Team met each week to guide strategies and actions to meet the 2024 goals in the Annual Action Plan. Professional Learning opportunities were supported to assist staff to further develop their expertise and meet goals created in the Annual Professional Learning Plans.

A significant amount of the Leadership business was around researching Literacy and Numeracy programs that would align with Explicit and Direct Instruction models.

Resources were purchased to support the programs adopted (see Learning and Teaching section of this report).

Two teachers completed the REAP program to attain their accreditation to teach RE in a Catholic School.

<b>Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning</b>
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024
Principal - 1 (10 days)
Catholic Diocesan Leadership Project - 1 (4 days)
Child Safety Network - 2 (2 days)
Deputy Principal Network - (2 days)
Religious Education Network - 1 (9 days)
REAP - 2 (8 days)
Religious Education Conference - 1 (2 days)
Structured Literacy Leaders - 1 (5 days)
Leaders of Learning - 1 (3 days)
PAT Assessment - 3 (1 day)
Learning Diversity Leader - 1 (9 days)
Mathematics - 6 (2 days)
Wellbeing Leader - 1 (2 days)
ReLATE - All Staff (2 days)
ReLATE SIT - 5 (3 days)
Early Career Program - 1 (2 days)
Structured Literacy - All Staff (2 days)
Hands on Learning - 2 (2 days)
Japanese - 1 (6 days)
Art - 1 (2 days)
Learning Support Officers - 11 (2 days)
Finance - 1 (5 days)
Administration SIMON - 1 (2 days)

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
OHS - 1 (8 sessions) Prayer - All Staff (1 day) Sounds Write Training 8 (4 days) Library - 1 (3 sessions)	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024	29
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1316.00

## Teacher Satisfaction

### Insight SRC Data

#### Organisational Climate

Current - 73.34          Historic - 77.1

#### Teaching Climate

Current - 82.34          Historic - 82.06

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0
Masters	3
Graduate	3
Graduate Certificate	0
Bachelor Degree	9
Advanced Diploma	2
No Qualifications Listed	7

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	18
Teaching Staff (FTE)	13.48
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	13
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	8.54
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

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## Community Engagement

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: To strengthen effective and sustainable community partnerships for mutual benefit.

Our desired outcome was to increase parent and community engagement in the life of the school after so many years of no contact due to COVID.

We designed opportunities for parents to observe and participate in learning experiences in Structured Literacy as it was a new learning and teaching approach.

Opportunities to invite community members into the school to enhance learning experiences was also a focus for the year.

### Achievements

Parents visited classrooms to participate in Structured Literacy lessons, especially the Sounds Write Phonics Program.

Parents attended a Learning Showcase at the end of term 2 as part of our reporting to parents requirements.

A Parent Helper's session was held to equip parents to volunteer to assist with the learning in classrooms.

Where appropriate, members of the community were invited into the school to enhance the learning of units of work being taught.

The senior students participated in the Social Innovators Project to create projects to overcome an issue or problem in the community.

The staff attended a Cultural Immersion Day at Tower Hill to enable them to have a greater knowledge of the spiritual, ecological and kinship culture of the local Indigenous people.

Students created Podcasts to share information and events with the community on Social Media. We also created an Instagram account to promote positive aspects of the school.

The students took more ownership of sharing their learning with their parents and the wider community. The students selected examples of their learning to share and took responsibility for talking to parents about their learning.

Senior students learned about making podcasts from the ABC podcast team in Warrnambool.

Teachers were well informed so that they could authentically teach Indigenous cultural perspectives.

### **Parent Satisfaction**

Parent feedback from the classroom visits and Learning Showcase were very positive. We had 100% attendance at the Learning Showcase and the Parent/Teacher Interviews.

Attracting volunteers for Parents and Friends executive positions was unsuccessful, indicating a reluctance or an inability to commit time to the life of the school.

Insight SRC Data in 2022 (70.5) was lower than historic data (79.6). We anticipate that this data will improve when we redo the survey in 2025.



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