



2024

Annual Report to the School Community



Ss Michael & John's Primary School

7 McLachlan Street, HORSHAM 3400

Principal: Louise Chesterfield

Web: www.smjhorsham.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 486, E Number: E2023

Principal's Attestation

I, Louise Chesterfield, attest that Ss Michael & John's Primary School is compliant with:

- The minimum standards and other requirements for school registration and school boarding premises (if applicable) as specified in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic).
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 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 24 Mar 2025

About this report

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

Governing Authority Report

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

Vision and Mission

With Christ as our centre point and inspiration, our children will thrive and be empowered to positively contribute to the world.

In light of the Gospels, we commit to establishing authentic relationships and collaborative partnerships to maximise learning for ALL.

Our Vision and Mission are brought to life through our school mantra:

CARING LEARNING GROWING

EVERY CHILD EVERY DAY

School Overview

Ss Michael and John's Primary School, working in partnership with St Brigid's College, is a community devoted to Catholic Education. The school also works in close collaboration with St. Paul VI Parish Wimmera-Mallee.

The Brigidine Sisters assumed responsibility for the school between 1920 and 1990. St Brigid's College also operated here from 1920 until 1968. The Brigidine motto, "Fortier et Suaviter," which means "Strength and Kindness," remains part of our story and tradition.

In 2010, the current building replaced the former Brigidine Convent, as the building had become structurally unsound due to severe drought conditions.

With the site's redevelopment, the school now offers open, modern facilities catering to the diverse educational needs of our students. It is supported by dedicated staff, the School Advisory Council, and a supportive parent body, all of which promote and implement the school's Vision and Mission.

Ss Michael and John's philosophy is to develop all children's self-esteem and provide for their educational needs. We offer a comprehensive education that will help children develop a consistent set of beliefs and values: an education committed to spiritual and moral development and providing knowledge and skills for the future.

Our school community is diverse, drawing from both the urban and rural sectors of the Horsham Community. Its socio-economic makeup is likewise diverse.

We pride ourselves on meeting individual students' divergent needs and celebrating our reputation as an inclusive school within our local community. In its work, the school provides education in faith and life for all entrusted to our care.

In 2024, we operated three Foundation classes, three grade 1/2 classes, three 3/4 classes and three 5/6 classes. Our enrolments continued to grow throughout the year. We began the year with 293 students and finished the year with 306.

This year, we successfully received 3.6 million dollars as part of the Victorian Government Capital Funding Program 2023 – 2027 (VGCFP 2023-27). This will be used to construct general learning areas, breakout spaces, and specialist rooms, refurbish student amenities, construct permanent specialist facilities, and undertake associated works.

This building project will allow us to continue providing our children with modern education, emphasising the spiritual well-being of the whole child, personalised learning, technological integration, and fostering critical thinking and creativity in an open-plan collaborative

community.

Principal's Report

2024 has been a time of growth and consolidation for our school. Our 2023 school review meant we had clear goals to move forward into the school year, a year that saw a smooth transition of leadership at the school with the appointment of a new Principal and Assistant Principal.

The school continued its culture of growth and improvement with clear, concise and targeted goals to build staff capacity and improve student outcomes.

Our staffing has been very stable across the year, and we consider ourselves very fortunate to have a pool of Casual Relief teachers, which has meant minimal disruption to learning and teaching.

Family engagement continues to be a priority of the school. It has been wonderful to see families participate in school-based events such as masses, liturgies, and end-of-term lunches. Families are also connected to learning through classroom helper programs, especially at the Junior end of our school.

Our enrolment continued to grow throughout the year, with the school finishing the year with 306 students. This remains a challenge because of our limited space. The exciting news around this has been our success in being granted a 3.6 million dollar grant through the State Government 2023–24 Building Fund for Non-Government Schools. This grant will allow for the construction of general learning areas, breakout spaces and a purpose-built STEAM centre to replace the current relocatables.

We have maintained our focus on Wellbeing and have commenced a three-year partnership with Real Schools. Our work with Real Schools will enable us to continue to build a culture that is strong, relational, and built on trust and involves all stakeholders within our school: children, staff and families. Our partnership with Uniting Wimmera continues, and we have been able to offer counselling to a number of children, link children and families to outside services and run Seasons for Growth. We are very grateful to Uniting Wimmera and Kellie Morson, our school-based wellbeing worker, for their work in this area and continued commitment to our school's wellbeing and mental health and the wider community to which we belong.

We continue to work alongside our sister school, St. Brigid's College, to offer Catholic Education from Prep to Year 12 for our community's children and young people. Some examples of this are our participation in St. Brigid's swimming sports, the St. Brigid's health staff running puberty education sessions for our Senior children and a joint celebration for Catholic Education Week.

Our staff continues planning and running camps, excursions, and incursions to enrich our children's learning and provide diverse experiences.

I cannot thank the staff enough for their ongoing commitment to the children in our care. Your dedication, professionalism, and love of our children are evident daily. Every adult in our school, including teachers, administrative staff, support staff, library staff, and grounds staff, has children at the centre of everything they do and the decisions they make. Our children could not be in safer hands.

Thank you to everyone in our school community for your support, understanding, encouragement for your children's learning, and continued support to the staff as they work with you for the best outcomes for your child/ren.

Louise Chesterfield

Principal

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Explore Catholic social teaching as a vehicle to be explicit in embedding all school-based initiatives for justice.

Enhance the teaching of explicit, engaging and meaningful RE lessons, including Christian values and Catholic principles.

Further develop the concepts of respect, tolerance, and diversity in relationships in our community, based on the dignity of all humans made in God's image.

Achievements

Religious Education units are designed and planned through the lens of recontextualisation.

The school continued to celebrate significant religious days with masses and liturgies.

high level of student engagement in masses and liturgies.

Our Catholic Education week liturgy was celebrated with our sister school, St. Brigid's.

Collection of non-perishable items for the Christian Emergency Food Centre Winter Appeal culminating in the Gifting Mass in collaboration with the Christian Emergency Food Centre

The lens of Catholic Social Justice/teaching underpins the work we do at the school, which aligns with our Vision and Mission.

Ongoing and positive relationship with our parish and priests.

Value Added

Appointment of joint Religious Education Leaders, Alison Brennan and Jessica Wilson

Increased attendance at our beginning and end-of-year mass.

Catholic Social Teaching is included in our newsletter each week

We reestablished our Christmas donations program with our local Saint Vincent De Paul, and the school collected gift cards for distribution.

Termly planning sessions and Professional Learning Team meetings with the CEB Religious Education staff member, Bernadette Luckman.

The Student Pastoral Team leads prayer at weekly assemblies and supports the REL with masses, liturgies, and social justice initiatives.

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Further develop, document and embed whole school collaborative and consistent approaches to curriculum planning and instructional approaches.

Embed systematic and consistent diagnostic, summative and formative assessment practices, which align strongly to planning documentation, to obtain and provide feedback on student learning, wellbeing, growth and attainment.

Further build staff knowledge and capacity to deliver a whole-school, evidence-based approach to learning and teaching. E.g., coaching, team teaching

Achievements

Prep to Two teachers completed UFLY Training

Whole school review of the Literacy block for 2025 and the creation of a plan for a P-2 Literacy planner

Ongoing use of standardised assessments such as DIBELS and PAT

Partnership with Shay King, CEB Ballarat, to develop our UFLY resources

Made gains on consistency across the school, particularly with Daily Reviews.

Data conversations between staff and how they can use the data to impact teaching and learning

PLT in every collaborative team to review interventions, and connect the interventions to the needs of the individual students

Implementation of the Michael Ymer Scope and Sequence document in Numeracy

Building staff understanding of responsibility to deliver the curriculum (recognising the support required for individual students)

Whole School utilising Essential Assessment to complete Mathematics assessments

Junior Learning Community moved to the inquiry-based Discovery Centre Model

Maintained Personalised Learning programs aligned with NCCD practice.

Reviewed our reading Scope and Sequence.

Consistent use of the DIBELS reading assessment across the school to develop targeted classroom teaching, small group, and individual

Completed DIBELS Assessments across the school

Utilised data from DIBELS for Response to Intervention

Ongoing monitoring of children using DIBELS

Student Learning Outcomes

We have invested in significant professional learning programs to increase a consistent pedagogical approach to teaching to improve student learning outcomes. The teacher judgment data (TASA) in Reading and Numeracy

Student learning outcomes show a spread of students across the levels, with an overall percentage between 52% and 66% at or above standard. This is also reflected in the PAT Reading and Mathematics data. The NAPLAN data shows gains in Years 3 -5 Writing, Spelling and Numeracy.

The areas highlighted for future improvement by our school include using data to set targets that ensure 12 months of growth for every student. Aligned with this intended improvement, we evaluate current programs and use data to determine the efficacy of programs in improving student learning outcomes.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	359	40%
	Year 5	478	57%
Numeracy	Year 3	405	63%
	Year 5	477	61%
Reading	Year 3	402	73%
	Year 5	479	68%
Spelling	Year 3	390	53%
	Year 5	455	54%
Writing	Year 3	406	79%
	Year 5	468	58%

*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2024 due to participation not meeting these criteria or no students were assessed. Participants include students who were assessed, including non-attempt, or those exempted from the test.

Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Refine effective practices to monitor behaviour and build a systemic whole-school approach to supporting positive behaviour.

Embed multi-tiered systems of support that enhance student and staff wellbeing.

Ensure an effective and consistent approach, language and practices, when dealing with behaviours.

Activate authentic student voice, agency and leadership to strengthen student participation and engagement in learning and wellbeing.

Table options

Editing

12

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Achievements

The Tiered Fidelity Inventory linked to School-Wide Positive Behaviours increased by 30 to 70 per cent across the year.

We have begun our journey with Real Schools, which involved a staff closure day, ongoing professional learning meetings across the year and the use of Restoring Teaching (Adam Voigt) text in Real Schools meetings and PLTs

Embedded use of the P3, P3, F3 tool by staff with our children.

Continued consistent approach to behaviour management through our work with Real Schools and the application of our School Wide Positive Behaviours rubric.

Ongoing development of Individual Student Behaviour plans when needed.

Staff completed Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct modules and professional learning sessions.

Value Added

Collaborated with St. Brigid's College health teachers to run a Puberty Information session for our Grade 5/6 children.

Partnered with Uniting Wimmera to run full days with Stride Education for Grades 3- 6. Revved Up for our boys and Empowered for our girls. This also included a teacher follow-up session and a parent information night.

The Senior Executive student leadership team conducted a student safety survey. The team planned the survey, gathered the information, collated the data, and presented it at a staff meeting.

Completion of the School Engagement Tool through our work with Real Schools.

Establishment of the Real Schools Team.

Student Satisfaction

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Our 2022 Insight SRC student satisfaction data has remained steady in Student Wellbeing (76-77) and Student Behaviour (84 - 83).

Children generally appear confident speaking to adults when there are concerns at school. The developing, consistent, and precise behavioural expectations support children's sense of safety and wellbeing at school.

The school has maintained a focus on trauma-informed practice due to our professional learning from MacKillop Family Services and ReLate.

The introduction of Real Schools and the use of restorative language, affirmative statements, positive priming and the P3, P, F3 student-focused process has supported student agency and voice across the school.

Student Attendance

Student attendance is monitored daily. Families can notify the school via the Parent Access Module to phone the school office to report absences. After rolls are completed our Administrative Officer sends text messages to any families who have not notified us.

If individual attendance is low classroom teachers notify leadership and contact families. Ongoing issues are then addressed by the Principal.

Extended family holidays require the school to be notified and an educational plan put in place.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	92.1
Y02	94.0
Y03	93.4
Y04	91.9
Y05	93.2
Y06	90.1
Overall average attendance	92.4

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Build a shared vision of leadership and professional responsibility at all levels, creating conditions where individuals and teams feel empowered and are confident that they can and do make a positive impact on the school's life.

Identify opportunities to build middle-level leadership.

Achievements

The leadership teams of Ss Michael and John's and St Brigid's College continued to collaborate throughout the year to identify opportunities for partnering.

Both the Real Schools Team and the Curriculum team were reconfigured to allow more staff the opportunity to be part of these teams.

Opportunities were provided at Staff Meetings and Professional Learning Team meetings for various staff (not just leadership) to plan for and lead.

Staff structures support leadership opportunities across the school: Executive Leadership, Religious Education Leaders, Real Schools Team, Curriculum Team and Collaborative Planning Teams.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024	
Mandatory Reporting Online Modules Reportable Conduct Real Schools DIBELS literacy UFLY literacy Graduate Professional learning Catholic Social Teaching Professional Learning Closure Day Brown Collective Mentoring Program	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024	30
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1520.00

Teacher Satisfaction

The Insight SRC survey undertaken in 2022 shows improvement in the overall scores, with the Organisational and Teaching Aggregate Indicators showing that the school falls within the mean for all Australian schools. Strengths identified by the data are in the areas of School improvement, Team-based practices and Work Demands.

The data also provides the opportunity to identify areas for improvement, as indicated by the lack of growth in Appraisal and Recognition. Staff want a more formal procedure that allows for peer observation and coaching.

The RELaTe survey undertaken by staff in November 2022 shows decreased staff stress since we began our work with MacKillop Family Services. This is also reflected in the Insight SRC data.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0
Masters	4
Graduate	2
Graduate Certificate	3
Bachelor Degree	21
Advanced Diploma	4
No Qualifications Listed	1

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	23
Teaching Staff (FTE)	19.78
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	22
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	13.55
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Evaluate the strengths and challenges of current practice in the area of Community engagement.

Reimagine the role of the School Advisory Council in light of the new guidelines

Be as invitational as possible in as many areas as possible to get families back through the school doors.

Achievements

Continuing opportunities to partner with St. Brigid's College.

Mandatory Volunteer Training

Opportunities for families to attend masses, liturgies, sporting events, classroom helpers, assemblies etc

Utilising multiple forms of communication with families -

- Get to Know You meetings,
- Student Led Conferences,
- Parent Access Module (PAM),
- SeeSaw,
- Google Classrooms,
- Email,
- FaceBook etc

Partnership with Uniting Wimmera

Collaborative partnerships with NDIS Allied Health workers

Kinder to School Transition Program - By Five

Parent Satisfaction

The 2022 Insight SRC data indicates very little change in the data since the last data set in 2020. There is an area of concern around reporting which shows a significant drop from 73 to 61. There are a couple of factors that could have influenced this decline:

- Since the last data set, the school has moved from a traditional Parent/Teacher Interview model to Student-Led Conferences.

Significant improvement (64-76) in Student Safety is indicative of the work that we have done over the years in the areas of behaviour management, the employment of a Pastoral Care Worker and increasing the status of the Wellbeing Leader in the school.

The following is a direct quote from the Review validation report in regards to parent satisfaction:

'It was evident to the panel that the school community holds the school in high esteem and feedback from parents demonstrated their appreciation of the school's ability to offer their children high quality learning, social and emotional support within an environment that has a strong Catholic Culture. '

Financial Performance

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

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