

DIOCESE
OF
BALLARAT
CATHOLIC
EDUCATION
LIMITED



2025

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 2025 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 22 May 2026

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

From the Murray to the Sea, DOBCEL aims to realise a vision of the 'fullness of life for all' for more than 18,600 students across a community of 63 Catholic primary and secondary schools.

We began 2025 with an uplifting Mass led by Bishop Paul in a packed St Patrick's Cathedral. In his homily, Bishop Paul highlighted our mission as Catholic educators to pursue the fullness of life for every child in our care, reminding us to keep students, staff and mission at the centre of our work.

The January 2025 publication of the DOBCEL Strategy 2035 represents a pivotal moment for the DOBCEL community and marks an important phase in our ongoing development.

The main purpose of this 10-year strategy is to inspire the whole system to commit to and move towards a high performing system of Catholic schools. The system is strong and well-performing, but we can do better.

Underpinned by our Catholic Identity, the strategy identifies five strategic pillars that reflect primary areas of focus.

- Collaborative Cultures
- Engagement and Belonging
- School as Community
- Rich Pedagogical practices for Deeper Learning and Wellbeing
- Sustainable Stewardship

The strategy was co-designed with teachers, school leaders, non-teaching staff, students, parents and those working in Catholic Education Ballarat offices.

I had the great privilege of participating in these co-design sessions, which showcased the professionalism and passion of all those in our system that devote their working lives to provide a great education for our children and young people.

Therefore, it is only fitting that I record my sincere thanks to all of you. These are exciting times of opportunity for our community of schools, but it is only possible because of your extraordinary work and dedication.

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, which had become structurally unsound due to severe drought.

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 sense of self, wellbeing 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 meet each student's unique needs and celebrate our reputation as an inclusive school in our local community. In its work, the school provides education in faith and life for all entrusted to our care.

In 2025, we operated three Foundation classes, three grade 1/2 classes, three grade 3/4 classes, and three grade 5/6 classes. Our enrolments continued to grow throughout the year. We began the year with 312 students and finished the year with 312.

In 2024, we successfully received \$3.6 million under the Victorian Government Capital Funding Program 2023 – 2027 (VGCFP 2023-27). In 2025, we worked with our architects to finalise plans for the construction of general learning areas, breakout spaces, and specialist rooms; the refurbishment of student amenities; the construction of a permanent STEAM centre; and the undertaking of associated works.

At the end of 2025, we appointed Plazzer builders as the successful tenderer for the project, with work commencing in January 2026.

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

Principal's Report

2025 has been an extraordinary year of learning, fun and growth for our children and community.

The school has a strong focus on learning outcomes for children alongside strong wellbeing practices. Leadership structures across the school support strong collaboration and build the capacity of all staff. We plan professional learning for staff to enhance learning opportunities for our school and to ensure that current, evidence-based learning and teaching are prioritised.

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 throughout the year, and we consider ourselves fortunate to have a pool of Casual Relief teachers, which has ensured continuity in 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 School Advisory Committee has focused on rebuilding family participation and school-based events.

Our enrolment has remained constant across the school year, with a number of enrolment enquiries. We are looking forward to the start of our building project, which will allow for increased enrolments. St Michael and John's continues to maintain a strong reputation in the community for providing quality education.

We have maintained our focus on Wellbeing and continued our partnership with Real Schools. Our work with Real Schools will enable us to continue building a strong, relational culture built on trust that involves all stakeholders within our school: children, staff, and families. This year has seen the development of our School Engagement Plan. This plan focuses on building trusting, supportive, and safe communities of learning where we hold each other accountable for the impact of our behaviour. We provide safe spaces where learners identify their mistakes and are supported in repairing relationships. We ensure that all staff have access to high-impact, evidence-informed professional learning opportunities, ensuring a consistent understanding, approach, and skill level to embed a restorative culture within our school.

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 to Kellie Morson, our school-based

wellbeing worker, for their work in this area and for their continued commitment to our school's wellbeing and mental health, and to 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 to plan and run camps, excursions, and incursions to enrich our children's learning and provide diverse experiences.

And to all the staff: your commitment to our children and your support of each other are outstanding. Every adult in our school places the children at the heart of all they do. Every adult ensures that we have a well-run and child-focused school. This includes all staff members: our teachers, support staff, admin staff, library staff, and wellbeing staff. Their professionalism is outstanding, their love and compassion for our children undisputable, and their joy in their profession is evident in all they do.

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

Louise Chesterfield

Principal

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

Cultivate rich opportunities that invite learners to integrate life experiences, cultures, Catholic traditions and religious learnings, expanding their world views.

Intended Outcomes:

- The planning of all Religious Education units is guided by the lens of Catholic Social Teaching.
- Increased student engagement and involvement in masses and liturgies.
- Create authentic connections between the school and the parish.
- Explicit connection with Religious Education concepts and units of Inquiry.

Achievements

The Religious Education program at Ss Michael and John's has grown in intentionality and connection to Catholic Identity, with an explicit focus on Catholic Tradition and Social Teaching in 2025.

Our achievements include:

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

Staff continue to engage in Religious Education professional learning supported by Bernadette Luckman from Catholic Education, Ballarat.

Our Catholic Education Week liturgy was celebrated with our sister school, St Brigid's, strengthening Catholic education as a Prep to Year 12 experience and connecting the school and the parish.

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.

Planning units of work with Bernadette Luckman from Catholic Education Ballarat enriches RE teaching across the school. All staff are optimistic about its impact on their teaching and theological understanding of the units they teach.

Children engage more in and with the masses and are developing greater reverence and connection.

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

Value Added

The lens of Catholic Social teaching was applied to all school-based fundraising activities, with an intentional decision to contribute to Caritas Australia and our local St Vincent de Paul Christmas appeal.

Ongoing appointment of Alison Brennan as our Religious Education Leader.

Increased attendance by families at our masses and liturgies, inclusive of inviting families to take on roles within these celebrations.

Fortnightly student Pastoral Team meetings.

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

Collaboratively and interdependently embed, agreed, and consistent pedagogies and evidence-based practices.

Intended Outcomes:

- Further develop, document, and embed whole-school collaborative and consistent approaches to curriculum planning and instruction.
- 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, such as coaching and team teaching.

Achievements

In 2025, our work in the area of learning and teaching has been intentional, collaborative, and aligned with our commitment to improving our Tier 1 teaching practice and student outcomes.

Our achievements include:

- Ongoing utilisation of the DIBELS assessments and data to improve student outcomes.
- Full implementation of UFLI Prep to 2.
- Collaborative Planning meetings where DIBELS data is an agenda item.
- Professional Learning Team meetings with Belinda Chiswell to examine DIBELS data and to plan for intervention and support.
- Utilising the Michael Ymer scope and sequence for Numeracy.
- The curriculum team has focused on mapping curriculum and data.
- The use of Essential Assessment as a core Numeracy resource.
- Explicit planning for the delivery of evidence-based interventions across the school.
- Implementation of Jocelyn Seamer Literacy resources in Grades 3/4 and Ochre in Grades 5/6.
- The introduction of Creative Media as a specialist subject in Grades 3 - 6.

Student Learning Outcomes

We have invested in significant professional learning programs to ensure a consistent pedagogical approach to teaching to improve student learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes show a spread of students across levels, with an overall percentage ranging from 52% to 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 their efficacy in improving student learning outcomes.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards					
	2025 (current year)			2-Year Average	
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	359	32%	359	36%
	Year 5	473	50%	476	54%
Numeracy	Year 3	377	53%	391	58%
	Year 5	466	56%	472	59%
Reading	Year 3	380	64%	391	69%
	Year 5	474	61%	477	65%
Spelling	Year 3	372	47%	381	50%
	Year 5	463	61%	459	58%
Writing	Year 3	351	59%	379	69%
	Year 5	456	56%	462	57%

*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2025 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

Goal:

Identify and embed impactful practices that enrich and enhance the wellbeing culture within our school.

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.
- Embed restorative practices across the school.

Achievements

In 2025, we have continued to prioritise authentic relationships, build a restorative culture and increase student engagement.

We have continued our journey with Real Schools, which has involved a staff closure day, ongoing professional learning meetings across the year, and the use of the Restoring Teaching (Adam Voigt) text in Real Schools meetings and PLTs. We have embedded the use of the P3, P3, F3 tool to address student conflict. This has ensured a consistent approach to behaviour management through our work with Real Schools and the application of our School-Wide Positive Behaviours rubric.

Our Real Schools Team continues to drive this initiative.

We have continued our partnership with Wimmera Uniting, enabling the employment of a School-Based Wellbeing worker to work with individuals and groups of children.

We continue to partner with families to develop Individualised Learning Plans and Behaviour Support plans, alongside Program Support Groups meetings.

Child Safety is paramount, and staff engage in all training modules on Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct, alongside clear, explicit processes and procedures.

We offer multiple opportunities for families to engage with the school through special events, get-to-know-you meetings, and student-led conferences. We value and understand the impact that strong family engagement has on student outcomes.

Value Added

Strengthening the student leadership teams to generate authentic projects within our school.

The appointment of a Mental Health in Schools staff member two days a week, with a focus on embedding consistent student wellbeing practices, culture and curriculum across the school.

Increasing the School-based Wellbeing worker's days from 2 to 3 per week.

Developing a school-based team for the triage for the allocation of students to the School-based Wellbeing worker.

Ongoing professional learning through the Real Schools Partnership and the development and implementation of our School Engagement Tool.

Student Satisfaction

The continuation of our explicit work with 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. This is supported by our School-Wide Positive Behaviour approach and our trauma-informed practice.

In our 2025 Insight SRC data, children generally indicated that they feel safe at school. They had a high score around cyber-safety, and that the school was educating students about this. They indicated that teachers showed empathy and that they felt connected to the school and their peers.

The open-plan nature of our school means that children have access to a range of adults and can seek out those they feel most comfortable with.

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

During breaks, children will refer themselves to the Reset and Reflect space if they need time or adult support to regulate. A variety of interest-based clubs also run during the second half of lunch, giving children an opportunity to engage in things they feel passionate about and to take some time away from the yard, should they need to.

Student Attendance

Student attendance is monitored daily. Families can notify the school via the Parent Access Module or 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. The school works with the family to address any issues pertaining to poor school attendance. Plans are developed in consultation with the family. SIMON is our tool for monitoring attendance.

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

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	92.11
Y02	93.95
Y03	93.41
Y04	91.9
Y05	93.15
Y06	90.13
Overall average attendance	92.44

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

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

Intended Outcomes:

- Identify opportunities to build middle-level leadership.
- Enhanced personal growth for all educators.
- Increased collaboration and development of stronger collegial relationships.

Achievements

In 2025, we focused on the slow release of responsibility and the ongoing development of teams within schools to build leadership capacity across the school.

At the start of the year, we ensured that both the Real Schools and Curriculum teams had clarity about their purpose and goals for the year. In doing so, these teams were responsible for planning and leading Professional Learning Team meetings. Both teams were noted as a standing item on the Staff Meeting Agenda to ensure there was both feedback to staff and the opportunity to receive feedback from staff.

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

Annual review meetings were successfully completed and served as both an affirming process for staff and leadership. These meetings enabled strong, honest dialogue and reflection, as well as planning opportunities for professional learning and staff goals.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning

List Professional Learning undertaken in 2025

Professional Learning opportunities at St Michael and John's are driven by our Annual Action plan and must align with current school-based initiatives. As well as this, professional learning may be linked to specific areas based on the individual needs of teachers and on the results of Annual Review Meeting discussions.

Professional Learning is provided on closure days, as well as through Professional Learning Team and Staff Meetings on individual days.

Some professional learning is completed annually as part of our legislative obligations, such as Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct, as well as various Occupational Health and Safety Modules.

Professional Learning across 2025 included, but was not limited to:

Real Schools 1-day intensive training and Professional Learning Team Meetings

DIBELS literacy and assessment sessions

Graduate Professional Learning Program

Brown Collective Mentoring Program

Catholic Social Teaching and Prayer

Awakenings Theology and Planning

Country Diocesan Leadership Program

National Catholic Educators Conference

Curriculum and Reporting

Deputy Principal Network Meetings

Annual Review Meetings

Teacher led Professional Learning Team Meetings

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2025	30
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1630.00

Teacher Satisfaction

The Insight SRC survey undertaken in 2025 shows that overall school morale was high. There was a lower score in individual morale, which may be indicative of the workload and demands of teaching in the current climate. A strong school-based focus on staff wellbeing is key for our school in managing this, as is ensuring that staff have information around available support.

Staff feel a strong sense of ownership over their work, evident in the level of collaboration within learning community teams and in their shared planning. This is supported by the Insight SRC data, where teamwork scored highly.

Teachers demonstrate great respect for students, and their confidence is high. They also indicated a strong commitment to school improvement and are very focused on improving student outcomes. Our teachers are aspirational for all our children.

Teachers also scored highly on pastoral care, which is reflective of their practice and understanding that educating children is based on relationship and connection and includes both learning and wellbeing.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0
Masters	4
Graduate	3
Graduate Certificate	3
Bachelor Degree	22
Advanced Diploma	4
No Qualifications Listed	1

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	24
Teaching Staff (FTE)	19.27
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	23
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	15.08
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To strengthen and further develop opportunities to engage families in their children's learning and the life of our school community.

Intended Outcomes:

- Increase family participation in school-based events and activities.
- Continue to build a culturally safe environment for all families.
- Reinvigorate the role of the School Advisory Council and invite more parent participation.
- Maintain and strengthen partnerships with community organisations to encourage thriving communities to which our children belong.
- Continue to build a partnership with St Brigid's College.

Achievements

St Michael's and John's recognises the importance of belonging to a vibrant, thriving community and understands the opportunities it offers our children. We understand that authentic relationships, multiple opportunities for engagement, listening to feedback, strong communication, and connection to the community enable our children to grow in a safe, supportive, and loving environment.

Our achievements include:

- Offering multiple touchpoints for families to engage in their children's learning through Get-to-know-you meetings, the Seesaw App, student-led conferences, one-on-one meetings with teachers, and support group meetings.
- Engaging in Child Safety training
- Inviting families to attend masses, liturgies, sporting events, special event days, 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
- Partnering with Uniting Wimmera
- Collaborative partnerships with NDIS Allied Health workers
- Kinder to School Transition Program - By Five

Parent Satisfaction

The 2025 Insight SRC data indicated that families feel they are working in partnership with the school, that staff are approachable, and that they have input into their children's learning. They indicated that they would like more information on reporting.

Families saw the teachers as having high morale, scoring in the top 25% of the state, and being invested in the children, and noted a strong learning focus and stimulating learning within the school.

Families indicated that their children had a sense of connection to school but were at times less motivated than they would like their children to be.

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