



Catholic
Schools Office

DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

2022

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

SERVICE | LEADERSHIP | JUSTICE

Together in Christ

ST JOSEPH'S
PRIMARY SCHOOL
MERRIWA



ACTIONS
NOT WORDS

St Joseph's Primary School

Marquet Street, MERRIWA 2329

Principal: Anne Marie Peebles

Web: <http://www.merriwa.catholic.edu.au>

mn.catholic.edu.au

About this report

St Joseph's Primary School (the 'School') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO), Maitland-Newcastle. The CSO as the 'approved authority' for the diocesan registration system formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act (1990), is responsible for monitoring the compliance of member schools in the manner that has been approved by the Minister of Education. The Annual School Report (the 'Report'), provides parents and the wider community with fair, accurate and objective information about various aspects of school performance and development. Additionally, the Report complements and 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.

Detailed information about the School's improvement journey is documented in the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) which is developed, implemented and evaluated in consultation with key stakeholders. 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 be also be obtained from the My School website.

Message from key groups in our community

Principal's Message

It is with great pride that I present the 2022 Annual School Report, my first as Principal. St Joseph's Primary School Merriwa is a small, rural school situated in the Upper Hunter town of Merriwa. Demographically, we are the furthest school from the Diocesan offices, but we are never left wanting!

Our mission is to be a community of Catholic faith where the uniqueness of each child is nurtured and valued; where students are empowered and challenged to become lifelong learners with optimism and hope for the future.

Students this year have achieved academically, with placings in the Diocesan Public Speaking, as well as representing the school in the Regional Spelling and Maths Bee and the Regional Debating. This year saw our first student working within the Maitland Newcastle Gifted and Talented Virtual Academy program.

Staff this year have undergone significant professional learning and collaboration related to Learning Intentions and Success Criteria, which particular focus on phonics and spelling.

Students know what and why they are learning content and how it relates to real life.

I express my personal gratitude to all of the staff for their continued hard work, dedication and genuine love for each other, the students and families and our beautiful school.

We look forward to continuing to improve the standard of our learning and academic outcomes throughout 2023 and beyond.

Parent Body Message

Just when we thought the years couldn't get much more interesting, 2022 has come along and challenged our community just like previous years with enduring COVID, significant flooding and storm damage across the area, but despite the external challenges, our P&F have been well supported during the year by our students, parents, teachers and the wider community of Merriwa and beyond.

Behind the scenes, the P&F have been supporting the school with investment into our School and learning resources. We look forward to seeing more of the technology and education materials rolling out over the coming years as the fundraising efforts of the P&F transform into tangible benefits, improving the learning opportunities for each and every student in our great School.

Throughout the year, P&F volunteers in conjunction with the staff of the School have facilitated the Mother's and Father's Day BBQ's, the school canteen and much needed refrigerator upgrade, running the uniform shop, supporting the school sporting events and contributing towards technology upgrades in classrooms.

We have tried to minimise the time impacts to busy schedules throughout the year, and the time and effort in supporting the running of our annual Campdraft and Fete, cleaning of the Aberdeen Bus, and supporting daily activities of the School are not only acknowledged, but appreciated. A strategy to develop ownership of events to share the work load should assist with the successful running of future Mother's and Father's Day stalls, as well as provide leadership opportunities for all students.

For a small community we are well supported, and through the collective efforts of yourselves, sponsors and the wider community, significant funding has been successfully fundraised and reinjected back into the learning of our children and facilities for our School, as outlined in the P&F financial report.

Our P&F would not have run without the ongoing tireless efforts of Danielle Cronin and Marion Ridding and the support of the staff of the School, especially Leanne Hunt and Anne-Marie Peebles. Thank you for your amazing efforts with the P&F.

We need support to make the P&F run, and look forward to welcoming new members to our P&F. No role is overly onerous, and every single member of the P&F is well supported, with help only ever a phone call away.

I also wish to extend my thanks to Mr Dermot Shannon for his enduring support of our P&F, for being the returning officer for countless AGM's, even after completing an extended time as President in years gone by.

With a strong P&F, our small school will continue to grow, ably supported by the tremendous staff that make our school a fantastic learning community. It takes a village to raise a child, and our children are set for great success with the village that surrounds them.

Thank you to the efforts of everyone who has contributed in any way to making 2022 a successful year, and I look forward to seeing the continued successes of the P&F in 2023.

Student Body Message

As the Captain of St Joseph's in 2022 I would like to say that it has been an outstanding year. All the teachers and students worked extremely hard together as a team to ensure that a variety of learning opportunities were provided for all students.

Excursion opportunities included Kindergarten to Year 4 going to the Hunter Valley Zoo. Year 5 and 6 getting the opportunity to go the Canberra with St Joseph's Denman.

The school play was another highlight. It was a whole school community effort with lots of support from staff and parents who made props and costumes. This year also allowed for a live audience to return.

I will say on behalf of St Joseph's that it has been an amazing year and we as a school community went through many highlights and challenges, but we all went through it together.

Overall, I think St Joseph's is a great little Catholic school and I have been very fortunate to have been a student here for 7 years and even having the opportunity to be school captain. This school gives all students, no matter who they are, great opportunities and experiences that they will treasure forever.

School Features

History of the school

St Joseph's Primary School was founded in 1883 by the St Anne's Catholic Parish Merriwa. In 1885 the Sisters of St Joseph took up residence in Merriwa and assumed responsibility for the education of the children at the school. They were the first Foundation formed from Lochinvar, which had come into existence only two years earlier in 1883. The Sisters of St Joseph continued a teaching presence at the school until the early 1990s.

In 1886, the total enrolment was 77 - 39 girls and 38 boys. On 25th November, 1928, Bishop Dwyer blessed the new school in Marquet Street. In 1954, Bishop Toohey blessed the new infants' classroom and in 1961, blessed the new school building of three classrooms. Secondary classes operated at St Joseph's Merriwa from the early 1950's to 1968. In 2008 the Honourable Joel Fitzgibbon opened and Fr Des Harrigan blessed the new Kindergarten classroom giving the school a total of four classrooms.

In 2016 the school gained a new library which boasts state of the art facilities. In 2019 the total refurbishment of the student toilet blocks was completed. In 2020, the belltower was lovingly restored after significant damage. In 2021, the new playground shelter was constructed, giving students a safe place to play in all conditions.

For over 130 years, St Joseph's Catholic School has provided quality education to the children of the Merriwa district.

Location/Drawing Area

St Joseph's School is located in the rural township of Merriwa in the New South Wales Upper Hunter Shire Council area. It is the most western school in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. Students travel from within the town limits, as well as from outlying rural properties. The villages of Cassilis to the west, and Gungahlin to the east are served by this school. Although the geographical drawing area dwarfs other Diocesan urban schools, the population within the drawing area is small as is the school enrolment (2021 - 47 students).

Neither the small population nor the 180 odd kilometre distance to our Newcastle based Catholic Schools Office can dampen the St Joseph's School Community's passion for education. St Joseph's Primary School Merriwa is a small school with a big heart!

Students at St Joseph's are offered Catholic education from K-12. Students completing Year 6 are able to travel by coach daily to St Joseph's High School Aberdeen.

Student Profile

Student Enrolment

The School caters for students in Years K – 6. Students attending this School come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2022: Additional information can be found on My School website.

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
21	27	0	48

* Language Background Other than English

Enrolment Policy

The [Enrolment Policy](#) applies to all school enrolments within the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. School authorities manage local enrolment processes and procedures in a manner consistent with the rationale and guiding principles articulated in this Enrolment Policy and accompanying [Enrolment Procedures](#). It aims to:

- Set direction for school procedures and practices for enrolling students into Catholic primary and secondary schools within the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.
- Establish a common, consistent approach in enrolment practices.
- Assist the system of Catholic schools to:
 - provide schooling, where possible, for children of Catholic families who seek enrolment
 - cater for the individual needs of each child equitably within the constraints of the available teaching and material resources
 - encourage parents enrolling their children in Catholic schools to give support to parish and school life, especially in education in faith.

Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for 2022 was 89.13%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group						
Kindergarten	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
90.79	87.85	86.56	91.09	89.29	87.54	90.76

Managing Student Non-Attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The School, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, School staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

School staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the School community
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented
- documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern
- the Regional Directors of Catholic Schools Office (CSO) or designated CSO officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom the School's strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2022:

Total number of staff	15
Number of full time teaching staff	4
Number of part time teaching staff	4
Number of non-teaching staff	7

Total number of teaching staff by NESA category

Teachers at this School are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the NSW Teacher Accreditation Act 2004. Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher are voluntary. The number of teachers within the Diocesan Schools System (systemic schools) at these levels is as follows:

- Conditional 101 teachers
- Provisional 50 teachers
- Proficient 1862 teachers
- 1 Highly Accomplished teacher
- 1 Lead teacher

Additionally, there are approximately 4 teachers who are currently actively engaged in the submission process at the higher levels of accreditation. Teacher status at individual schools can be sourced directly from the School.

Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued. Professional learning can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in services, meetings and conferences and a range of professional learning programs provided by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO). The School takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking of its staff professional learning and individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing professional development. All teachers have been involved in professional learning opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes.

Summary of professional learning at this school

Staff at St Joseph's Primary School Merriwa continued to engage in relevant and meaningful Professional Learning, which built upon and aligned closely with the School's Improvement Plan for 2022.

Professional Learning Highlights included:

- Lenten Program held weekly over Lent for a period of 6 weeks, which nurtured staff member's Faith Formation, according to the Catholic Schools Office, FEA Policy.
- Working closely with a phonics specialist Katie Edwards from the TAP program to create a scope and sequence and resources to implement the new K-2 Syllabus, before commencing work with the primary staff. This opportunity gave staff the knowledge, practical skills and ability to efficiently implement a spelling program which catered for the needs of each student. Termly writing samples were marked collaboratively with PLT partner and tracked on a data wall.
- Development of Learning Intentions and Successful Criteria in English and other KLAs with the implementation of Bump it Up walls in classrooms. When combined with sound pedagogy and instructional walks, student learning gains are found to be of a higher yield.
- Staff continued in their pursuit of excellence and consistency throughout the year through regular Professional Learning Team meetings, where conversations generally revolved around student learning and improvement.

Catholic Identity and Mission

Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle participate, under the leadership of the Bishop and in partnership with parents and parishes, in the mission of the Church to provide quality education in the context of a living Catholic Christian tradition. Within this context, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle educate from and for vibrant, welcoming and diverse communities with a particular commitment to the poor; for justice, integrity and peace; and with hope for the future.:

At the heart of everything there is always Jesus Christ.

Catholic schools educate:

- From and for the community of faith
- From and for excellence in learning
- In a rigorous, creative and critical pursuit of truth

(Adapted from: The Catholic School's Office Diocesan Vision Statement, 2016)

Catholic Imagination and Spirituality

St Joseph's Primary School Merriwa's mission is to be a community of Catholic faith, where the uniqueness of each child will be nurtured and valued, where students will be empowered and challenged to become lifelong learners with optimism and hope for the future. There were many opportunities for students to celebrate Catholic mission and identity at St Joseph's school.

Daily prayer, Opening School Mass, Commissioning Mass, liturgies for St Joseph's Day and many other areas of focus. The Year 6 students participate in a Retreat, and all students help the community wherever we find a need. Wherever possible the school community attends significant parish liturgical celebrations.

During Friday assembly each week the students reflect on the Sunday Gospel and apply the salient message to their everyday lives. Parents are invited to share this Liturgy with the students. Staff members also gather for prayer once a week which focuses on the Gospel message applying this to their personal and school lives.

The staff participated in a Lenten Program to which parish members also attended. This focus continued for 2022 - Building the Kingdom of God Together - Our Journey - Engaging in Contemplative Dialogue.

The learning intentions were:

A positive relationship between the school and Parish continues to be a high priority at St Joseph's school. During Catholic Schools Week students and teachers prepared displays for the main street to highlight the Catholic identity of the school. A school parish dinner is also held during this week. The fortnightly school newsletter was placed in the church and emailed to parents and friends. Also social media is used to build awareness of significant religious events and feast days. The school supported the local St Vincent de Paul Society through its appeals. The Parish Priest maintains a good relationship with the Principal, REC and others.

The REC works closely with the parish priest and the children preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation.

Christian Discipleship

Prayer and reflection begin all meetings, gatherings and the parent newsletter. In each prayer there is a call to action. At the end of the school year, Year 6 students participated in a retreat. During this retreat, the Year 6 students took time to reflect on their years at school and what direction they see themselves and their friends going and what special gifts they are to themselves and others. Our weekly liturgy provides opportunities for students, staff and parents to reflect on the message of the Gospel. A relevant hymn/song is also used at times to help staff and students fully understand the Gospel message of the week.

Throughout the teaching of Religion, students are given the opportunity to reflect and participate in meditations which allows for the formation and development of their own spirituality. Each classroom and the staffroom have a sacred space designed and refreshed regularly.

Religion lessons at St Joseph's follow the curriculum set by the Maitland–Newcastle Diocese.

All class teachers are responsible for the teaching of Religious Education in their classes and are formally accredited to teach Religious Education or are in the process of satisfying the academic requirements needed for accreditation. Each structured lesson develops the knowledge and understandings of Catholic faith. Class and school liturgical, sacramental and prayer celebrations form an important aspect of the Religious Education curriculum.

Religious literacy is a priority in the classroom with added resources and support given to teachers and students particularly a focus of Religious Literacy vocabulary- which directly link up with the units taught. Teachers attend relevant professional development on the Religious Education curriculum.

Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

The School provides an educational program based on and taught in accordance with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

The Curriculum is structured around the outcomes and content for each learning area and general capabilities for learning across the curriculum including literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, critical and creative thinking, ethical behaviour, personal and social competence and intercultural understanding.

Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued. Professional learning can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in services, meetings and conferences and a range of professional learning programs provided by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO). The School takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking of its staff professional learning and individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing professional development. All teachers have been involved in professional learning opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes.

Summary of professional learning at this school

Staff development was mainly focused in delivering a whole school phonics and spelling scope and sequence, plus reading which was developed by the school's Pedagogical Mentor along with the principal.

The main aspect of this approach was to build teacher capacity in the areas of spelling, writing and reading.

Teachers completed extensive professional learning in the writing and reading progressions, phonemic awareness, teaching phonics (K-2) and spelling (3-6) working with teachers on improving the consistency of the teaching of all aspects plus, consistent teacher judgement in writing.

In addition to this, scope and sequences were reviewed and adjusted to meet the requirements of NESA as well as to better align with the newer teacher philosophy in the school. This approach required teachers to utilise collaboration time and significant funds were used to release teachers to do this work. The benefits of this work should be seen in the coming years with a more consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, reading, and spelling, all of which are encompassed in the School Improvement Plan and Strategic Planning of St Joseph's.

Positive Behaviour For Learning (PB4L) continues to be a focus at St Joseph's. This continued awareness and approach to the behavioural outcomes for students has seen continued good behaviour at school, more calm students and teachers who focus more of their teaching time on teaching, rather than on behaviour management.

Staff engaged in a refresher in Visible Well Being with Annabelle Knight, from Strengths Canvass in Melbourne. This professional learning, coupled with the school's work in Wellbeing this year, has contributed to the establishment of a Wellbeing Framework for the school.

At St Joseph's, a culture of "High Expectations, No Excuses" is embodied throughout. Staff are dedicated to the pursuit of excellence, this was highlighted by the end of year parent surveys distributed throughout the school.

All staff in 2022 were fully accredited or graduate teachers with NESA and conducted themselves professionally in their work.

The school's learning support programs, which included MiniLit, Multi Lit, and this year MacqLit and assistance with Literacy and Numeracy Groups, provided students with excellent pathways to success.

Whole school approaches to improve student achievement included the use of Learning intentions and Success Criteria in Religion Mathematics and English, which highlighted strengths and areas of improvement for students. This gave students a greater clarity in their learning and allowed staff to hone in their teaching. 2022 has seen further focus on feedback as well as co-constructed success criteria.

Staff work in two Professional Learning Teams (PLT's), Infants (K-2) and Primary (3-6). These teams are highly collaborative and professional in their diligence and pursuit of high performance throughout the school. The teams worked closely with our Pedagogical Mentor (PM), to achieve strong growth in all areas of the PAT testing regime.

A continuation of the "Leading Learning Collaborative", a CSO initiative based on the work of Lyn Sharratt, Canadian Educational Researcher, was weaved through the Professional Learning of staff. Data Walls will continue to enhance the terrific work being done in this area of school improvement.

Our Performing Arts program was further enhanced this year, with the regular visit of Anna Kerrigan, ASPIRE Artistic Director. Her input, influence and expertise were invaluable in assisting all students and staff in the formation of the highly successful School Play. This year, we successfully showcased "Commotion In The Ocean".

St Joseph's worked diligently with students throughout the year in Mental Maths and Spelling, as well as Public Speaking. The school held school-wide competitions, before

advancing onto Regional and Diocesan levels.

Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

NAPLAN

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia participate in the National Assessment program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The purpose of this test is to provide information to parents and teachers about the achievements of students in aspects of Literacy and Numeracy. The test provides a measure of the student's performance against established standards and against other students in Australia. Each year the results are analysed by the school to inform teaching with a view to improving student performance.

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum acceptable standards for literacy, numeracy, reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling at particular ages. These are referred to as national minimum standards. Student performance in NAPLAN in our school is compared to these standards.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2022		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 3	Grammar and Punctuation	60%	52%	20%	12%
	Reading	60%	54%	0%	11%
	Writing	40%	50%	0%	7%
	Spelling	60%	48%	20%	15%
	Numeracy	60%	34%	0%	15%
NAPLAN RESULTS 2022		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 5	Grammar and Punctuation	20%	31%	40%	14%
	Reading	40%	39%	40%	11%
	Writing	0%	25%	50%	18%
	Spelling	40%	37%	60%	14%
	Numeracy	20%	25%	40%	16%

Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

Pastoral Care Policy

The School's pastoral care and student wellbeing policies guidelines and procedures are informed by the [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#).

The Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy 2022 aims to provide a framework for the policies, programs, resources and practices implemented at system and school level with the purpose of supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of students, and all within its school community. It refers to the overall climate of care that exists within a Catholic school.

The environment is designed to be safe and inclusive, one that promotes academic rigour. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents, and the wellbeing of all.

There were changes to the policy in 2022.

Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy

The School's policies and procedures for the management of student behaviour are aligned the CSO [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#) and to the [Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion Procedure](#). The dignity and responsibility of each person is promoted at all times along with positive student behaviours whilst ensuring respect for the rights of all students and staff. Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this School. The School does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by School persons and non-School persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the School. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the School's website.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Catholic Schools Office has established an [Anti-Bullying Policy](#) which is implemented by our school and all schools in the diocese. It provides a framework for school communities to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person. The CSO monitors the implementation of this policy.

The full text of the Anti-Bullying Policy may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or at the CSO website.

Complaints Handling Policy

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has established a [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) which is implemented by our school and all systemic schools in the diocese. The rationale for the policy is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of our contemporary world. CSO monitors the implementation of this policy.

The full text of the [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or at the CSO website.

Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

St Joseph's willingly and wholeheartedly participates in Positive Education and Visible Wellbeing Programs, as a member of the Where There's A Will Foundation Upper Hunter Cluster. The Principal attends regular meetings each term to keep in touch with the latest information. These continued in 2022.

We engaged with Annabelle Knight, from Melbourne, who is an expert on Positive Education. We met with her once per term to speak about how we can enhance our teaching and learning in the area of Positive Education. Staff completed online training refresher courses in Visible Wellbeing using the SEARCH Framework.

In 2022, a regular Character Strength of the Week focus was placed in newsletters and on our Facebook page, to keep the public informed of our initiatives. A Character Strength of the Week Merit Award continues to great effect.

Wellbeing Weeks continued, which were in Week 5 or 6 of every term. The emphasis was on "No Homework, No Meetings" and opportunities for staff and students to enhance wellbeing on a personal or spiritual level. Activities were organised by teachers and were proven to be a great success and change from the regular routine during lunchtimes! Discos, mindfulness colouring, thankful cards and meditation were some of the terrific initiatives provided by the school staff.

St Joseph's Merriwa students were able to participate in a number of community gatherings and events. Our School Captains attended the Remembrance Day and ANZAC Day ceremonies, which were greatly appreciated and noticed in the town. Students created Christmas Cards and engaged with the local hospital (Merriwa Multi Purpose Centre) and Gummun Place to deliver these cards to those in need and sing carols.

In 2022, our Pastoral Care Worker funding continued. Our PCW worked diligently to provide services such as a Science Club, Gardening Club, breakfast club and provided meaningful and local support for students and families where necessary.

School Improvement

The School implements the system's review cycle of improvement which outlines the processes and benchmarks for creating the culture and practice of continuous improvement with students as the focus. Strategic Improvement Plans are future focused documents that map the School's directions, aimed specifically at improving educational and wellbeing outcomes for all students through the following areas:

- Catholic Culture and Mission
- Learning

Each year, the School develops a Strategic Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. A copy of the school's Strategic Improvement Plan may be obtained from the School administrative office.

Key Improvements Achieved

Catholic Formation and Mission

Staff completed the Lenten program with members of the St Anne's Parish. Our Parish Priest and parishioners commented on the wonderful and frank nature of the conversation. The Acting REC completed qualifications in Religious Education through ACU.

Learning and Teaching

Staff continued success in using Learning Intentions and Success Criteria in Key Learning Area of Reading and Writing and developed Learning Intentions and Success Criteria across other KLAs.

Staff have continued to use the Acadience reading assessment which helps identify children with specific reading skills to target through instructional support.

Staff have been engaged in the Leading Learning Collaborative and have learned about creating success criteria for the basis of student understanding, engagement and feedback.

Case management meetings were undertaken to individualise teaching and address a variety of students which resulted in specific teaching strategies being implemented.

The Principal engaged in regular Instructional "Walks and Talks", where students were asked about their progress, how they recognised improvement and what they needed to do to improve. The five questions were displayed in classrooms with teachers making reference to them in their own teaching time.

1. What are you learning?

2. Where can you go to for help?
3. How can you improve?
4. How are you going?
5. How do you know?

Leadership

The Executive Team (REC and Principal), attended Executive Leadership training courses, provided by the Catholic Schools Office and run externally, during 2022.

Wellbeing and Partnerships

Community partnership continued to be an important part of the school, through creating Christmas cards for the sick and elderly at Gummun Place and Merriwa Multipurpose Centre and also singing when allowed. Our partnership with the local Newsagency, who sponsor our "Spirit of St Joseph" award, was continued.

Wellbeing is an important aspect and focus at St Joseph's with a continued focus on the Wellbeing of both students and staff. Each term we have a designated Wellbeing week where the focus is on building relationships, enjoying each other's company, and taking time out to look after ourselves.

The school has a behaviour matrix to address all behaviours, celebrating positive behaviour is a focus with Gotchas being given out for students who demonstrate: right place right time, ready to learn, show self-control, making responsible choices and being respectful of others space.

Priority Key Improvements for Next Year

The 2023 School Improvement Plan (SIP) was drafted late 2022, with the view to consolidating many of the wonderful initiatives throughout the school. These included:

Catholic Formation and Mission

- The improvement of the overall teaching of Religion
- All staff working towards gaining accreditation, as per the Catholic Schools Office Faith Education Accreditation (FEA) Policy
- The establishment of a more rigid environmental awareness through the document, Laudato Si with support from our Pastoral Care Worker

Learning and Teaching

- To build capacity of teachers in the pedagogical practice in phonics in K-2 and spelling in 3-6 to improve reading, spelling, and writing.

- To refine and enhance our daily and weekly focus points in the teaching of phonics and spelling.
- To diminish cognitive load, create repetitive and sustainable practices and match them to resources.

Leadership

- To continue to enhance the quality of the Principal and REC and their leadership capacity.
- Continuation of Mentoring and Observation of teachers throughout the school, including Instructional Walks and Talks, to enhance leadership capacity and build teacher capacity.

Wellbeing and Partnerships

- Continue to enhance, review, and implement the PB4L program throughout St Joseph's.
- Visible Wellbeing Professional Learning for all staff – through engagement with Annabelle Knight- Canvass strengths.

Community Satisfaction

Consultation with parents, students and teachers is valued and sought. Their feedback contributes to the planning and the achievement of improved outcomes for students. This year, the School has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers. The school undertakes extensive surveying of all stakeholder groups annually. This data is shared with the school community and contributes to the priorities for future planning.

Parent satisfaction

According to the Tell Them From Me Survey for Parents in 2022:

- Parents felt very welcomed in the school, could easily speak with their child's teachers and the Principal about any matters.
- They were well informed and were given appropriate and immediate feedback about their child or school events.
- Parents believed the school supports positive behaviour and students are clear about school rules.
100% of parents 'agreed' or "strongly agreed" in recommending St Joseph's Merriwa to others.

Student satisfaction

According to the Tell Them From Me Survey for Students in 2022:

- Students valued their positive relationships with their peers
- Students valued, very highly their schooling outcomes and believed what they learn at school will make a difference to them.
- Students mostly felt their behaviours were "positive" at school (81%)
- 87% of students felt they tried hard to succeed in their learning.
- 93% of students felt the school would help if they felt unsafe.
- 83% of students recommended St Joseph's strongly to others.

Teacher satisfaction

According to the Tell Them From Me Survey for Teachers in 2022:

- Teachers felt well supported in challenging times (10/10)
- Staff felt as though they collaborated well with each other (8.3/10)
- Student engagement and work were discussed regularly (9.2/10)
- Staff felt that they worked well with students with special learning needs

- Staff felt they have clear expectations for classroom behaviour
- Teachers wish to continue to improve their skills in engaging with feedback at the school.
- All teachers felt that leadership was strong and effective, as well as their belief that the school was highly regarded in the local Merriwa community.

Financial Statement

This School Financial Information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire.

School Financial Information for the 2022 year is detailed below:

Recurrent and Capital Income 2022	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants ¹	\$961,154
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$284,556
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$81,324
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$4,940
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$31,414
Total Income	\$1,363,388

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2022	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$313
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$1,120,987
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$207,711
Total Expenditure	\$1,329,011

Notes

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.
3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income.
5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture and Equipment.
7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.

END OF 2022 REPORT