

# 2023

## ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

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*Together in Christ*



**St James' Primary School**  
MUSWELLBROOK

### St James Primary School

Skellatar Stock Route, MUSWELLBROOK 2333

Principal: Aaron Moon

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

## About this report

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St James Primary School (the 'School') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO), Maitland-Newcastle. 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

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### Principal's Message

Our vision at St James' is We at St James', are inspired by the Gospel to be successful learners and informed, engaged, global citizens.

St James' Primary School, Muswellbrook provides a holistic education for every child, through academic, spiritual, physical and emotional endeavours. We expect our students to be learners, to be respectful and to make safe choices.

I am proud of our many achievements across the year including:

Nicholas James has represented himself and the school as part of the Virtual Academy for gifted learners. We have nominated 3 students for next year so stay tuned.

Success as part of the Newcastle Permanent Maths Competition.

Tournament of the Minds success. The team did a tremendous job and they came away with two awards.

### Parent Body Message

During 2023 the parents and friends of St James' Muswellbrook were included in the life of the school in many ways including: the opening and closing Masses for the year, Liturgies, Catholic Schools Week Open Classrooms, Book Week, Cross Country and the Athletics and Swimming Carnivals. This inclusion in the creation of community for our children is one of the many blessings of being associated with SJM! The Parents and Friends Association was able to host many friend-raisers/fundraisers for our school community throughout the year.

### Student Body Message

As 2023 comes to a close, we approach the end of another school year. For the year 6 students, it is the end of our primary school journey and our final presentation. Another chapter ends in our story.

There have been many memories made this year. These included End of Term Rewards, discos, community day, Nadicoc week, Wellbeing weeks, the School Daram naight and most recently the School Colour Run, just to name a few.

It has been wonderful to represent you as our school captains this year,

We appreciate all of our teachers for teaching us everything in your capabilities, if not more. As well as making learning fun and interactive. All as thanking our Principal Mr Moon.

Thanks for another great year @ SJM.

Abi Large & Justus Matheson

School Captains.

## School Features

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St James' School is a Catholic Parish school within the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. The school is situated on the western fringe of the town, on land first settled by the Wanaruah people. The school began its existence as a Catholic denominational school in the middle of a developing township in 1862. When government funding was withdrawn in 1883, the Sisters of Mercy took over responsibility for the school. This school continued to provide a valuable Catholic education to the people of the area, until demand for places, brought on by an expansion in mining and power industries, resulted in the need for the construction of a larger school. In 1983, 100 years after the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy, the present Primary School of 14 classrooms, library and other amenities was opened. The Sisters of Mercy continued their mission in St. James' School until 1972. The Sisters of St. Joseph continued the important task of providing a Catholic education from 1973 until 1991 when the first lay principal was appointed. St James' School is proud of its dual heritage and encourages students and their families to incorporate the values and ideals of the charisms into daily life.

# 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 2023: Additional information can be found on My School website.

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
124	181	26	305

\* 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 2023 was 89.02%. 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
89.88	89.25	89.65	90.05	88.41	88.60	87.31

## 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 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

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## Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2023:

Total number of staff	32
Number of full time teaching staff	18
Number of part time teaching staff	3
Number of non-teaching staff	11

### 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 107 teachers
- Provisional 69 teachers
- Proficient 1887 teachers
- 4 Highly Accomplished teacher
- 1 Lead teacher

Additionally, there are approximately 10 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**

There were three main focuses for Professional Learning this year, including our continued work with Lyn Sharratt. The executive worked with Lyn Sharratt again over two days. The Principal and Pedagogical Mentors also visited St Joseph's Wauchope to see how that put the LLC in place.

Our spirituality day was again based on the Diocesan Spirituality Day.

## Catholic Identity and Mission

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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)

The school Mission and Vision Statements reflect our role as a community of witnesses to the Catholic faith. We believe that St James' School community excels in education through living and learning in Christ. We are inspired by the Gospel to be successful learners and informed, engaged global citizens. St Joseph's Muswellbrook participates in the life of our Parish. We also have close links with the Parish Sacramental team. The Sacramental program is parish based and includes the School Religious Education Coordinator and the Priest. The Sacramental program is supported by the school curriculum and the parish team is in close communication with the class teachers of the students involved.

Our School is proud to be part of a wider Diocesan community. As such, we attend important Diocesan events. We also support Regional initiatives, including the Regional Teachers Mass and Dinner.

We have implemented the Visible Wellbeing Program with support from the Where There's a Will Foundation.

## Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

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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.

St James' Catholic Primary School promotes equity and excellence.

We:

- Provide challenging and stimulating learning experiences and opportunities that enable all students to explore and build on their talents and abilities. Provide students with opportunities to experience success through differentiated educational teaching and learning activities.
- Promote knowledge and understanding of Indigenous culture together with global cultures and religions.
- Encourage students to take an active role in their learning through personal goal setting and self-evaluation.
- Teach the essential skills in Literacy and Numeracy in order to foster informed communication and collaboration.
- Employ best practice in Pedagogy and provide adequate resources to enable creative and productive use of technology to assist in communication and problem solving.
- Develop personal values and attributes so as to have a sense of self-worth and maintain healthy satisfying lives.
- Teach and model Gospel values to maintain healthy relationships and accept responsibilities for their own action.

## Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

### NAPLAN

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The purpose of NAPLAN is to provide information to parents and teachers about the achievements of students in 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.

From 2023, NAPLAN results are reported against proficiency standards with 4 levels of achievement to give teachers, parents and carers clearer information on how students are performing:

- Exceeding: The student's result exceeds expectations at the time of testing.
- Strong: The student's result meets challenging but reasonable expectations at the time of testing.
- Developing: The student's result indicates that they are working towards expectations at the time of testing.
- Needs additional support: The student's result indicates that they are not achieving the learning outcomes expected at the time of testing. They are likely to need additional support to progress satisfactorily.

The percentage of student achieving at Exceeding and Strong proficiency standards in NAPLAN at St James Primary School for 2023 is reported in the table below.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2023		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 3	Grammar and Punctuation	58%	54%
	Reading	66%	67%
	Writing	76%	76%
	Spelling	38%	61%
	Numeracy	60%	65%

NAPLAN RESULTS 2023		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 5	Grammar and Punctuation	71%	64%
	Reading	79%	74%
	Writing	58%	66%
	Spelling	58%	69%
	Numeracy	71%	68%

## Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

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### 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.

### 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**

At St James', Positive Education is at the centre of our Living and Learning with Jesus at the Heart of all we do.

Again, we have funded a Leader of Positive Education at SJM. This leader was instrumental in driving Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Our Leader of Positive Education is teaching Wellbeing as part of the PDHPE syllabus each fortnight to classes through RFF. This is a significant shift in how we teach Wellbeing to our students.

SJM liaised with the 'Where There's A Will' Foundation to promote positive health and mental well being in our communities.

We have a major focus on Character strengths; the identification of them and also assisting students to unlock their strengths.

## School Improvement

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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 Identity and Catholic Curriculum
- Learning and Wellbeing

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

We have successfully attained these goals from our 2023 School Improvement Plan:

- Create a new Staff Formation Framework 2023-2025 and Student Formation Framework 2023-2025 that will articulate and outline an intentional program of formation experiences that include our unique culture, identity and charisms.
- Embedded Leading Learning Collaborative Framework with staff to ensure improved outcomes for students
- build a cohesive culture that is inclusive of all students, with transparent academic and wellbeing structures that support and inspire their resilience and self-awareness.

### Priority Key Improvements for Next Year

- To develop a Formation in Action Team (FIAT) which collaborates with staff, students and families to identify, develop and deliver comprehensive formation experiences across the school community.
- Formation focus on the relationship between aboriginal spirituality and our catholic faith to bring connection to the schools strong indigenous culture and tradition.
- School wide focus on number sense (numeracy progressions “quantifying numbers”) to allow teachers to identify the needs of students and plan appropriately.
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## Community Satisfaction

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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

In 2021 the Diocese implemented the 'Tell Them From Me - Partners in Learning' survey for all Diocesan schools. The 'Partners in Learning' Parent Survey is based on a comprehensive questionnaire covering several aspects of parents' perceptions of their children's experiences at home and school. The survey includes seven separate measures, which were scored on a ten-point scale. The scores for the Likert-format questions (i.e., strongly agree to strongly disagree) have been converted to a 10-point scale, then averaged and reported by question and by topic. A score of 0 indicates strong disagreement; 10 indicates strong agreement;

Parents feel welcome - 8.1 (Region 7.2) - an increase on the previous year.

Parents are informed - 7.1 (Region 6.5) - an increase on the previous year.

Parents Support Learning at Home - 7.1 (Region - 6.6)

School Supports Learning - 7.8 (Region 7.1) - an increase on the previous year.

School Supports Positive Behaviour - 8.2 (Region 7.3) - an increase on the previous year.

Safety at School - 8.3 (Region 7.5) - an increase on the previous year.

Inclusive School - 7.5 (Region 6.7)

### Student satisfaction

Students enjoy their school at St James' Muswellbrook. This is a direct result of their expert teachers and the balanced curriculum that is offered at St James' Muswellbrook. There is a careful mix of academic, sporting and other activities on offer at the school. We cater for the needs of all.

### Teacher satisfaction

In 2022 the Diocese implemented the 'Tell Them From Me - Focus on Learning' teacher survey for all Diocesan schools. The 'Focus on Learning' teacher Survey is a self-evaluation tool for teachers and schools which is based on two complementary research paradigms.

Leadership - 7.2 (Region 7.0)  
Collaboration - 8.2 (Region 7.7)  
Learning Culture - 8.4 (Region 8.0)  
Data Informs Practice - 8.9 (Region 8.0)  
Teaching Strategies 8.2 (Region 8.0)  
Technology - 6.3 (Region 6.8)  
Inclusive School - 9.0 (Region 8.4)  
Parent Involvement - 7.9 (Region 6.8)  
Four Dimensions of Classroom and School Practices  
Challenging & Visible Goals - 8.0 (Region 7.6)  
Planned Learning Opportunities 8.2 (Region 7.7)  
Quality Feedback - 7.6 (Region 7.3)  
Overcoming Obstacles to Learning - 8.2 (Region 7.8)

# 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 2023 year is detailed below:

Recurrent and Capital Income 2023	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$3,189,686
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$0
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$932,456
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$868,585
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$0
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$254,362
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$5,245,089</b>

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2023	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$50,619
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$3,643,604
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$1,642,870
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$5,337,093</b>

### 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 2023 REPORT