



2024

Annual Report to the School Community



St Joseph's School

Campaspe Street, ROCHESTER 3561

Principal: Elizabeth Trewick

Web: www.sjrochester.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 603, E Number: E3018

Principal's Attestation

I, Elizabeth Trewick, attest that St Joseph's School is compliant with:

- The minimum standards and other requirements for school registration and school boarding premises (if applicable) as specified in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic).
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2023 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 07 May 2025

About this report

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

Governing Authority Report

The Catholic Education Week theme for 2024, “Behold I Make all Things New,” invited us to reimagine possibilities to enliven our ministry in Catholic education in innovative and creative ways. The theme challenged us to ensure our educational enterprises were clearly focussed on every student, every teacher, every school, every day.

In 2024, the recognition that Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (CESL) is a multi-school system found expression in our commitment to streamlined governance responsibilities and enhanced support for our learning centres. This approach allows for unified policies, consistent standards, and centralised support, while still catering to the unique needs of each individual learning centre.

To align the work of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd with the CESL Strategic Plan 2023-2027, three “Guiding Lights” have been identified that will shape the work of the organization for the next three years:

- **Authentically Sandhurst Catholic Education**
Recognizing our rich diocesan relationships and commitment to spiritual formation, Sandhurst Catholic Education is living the missionary call to respond to the needs of our young people and our world with an ongoing and Gospel infused process of encounter, deep listening, discernment and courageous action.
- **Outstanding Learner Growth**
Together, across the system, we will invest in educational and allied staff capabilities so that irrespective of personal circumstances, every young person in every school will have access to an equitable, sound, engaging and responsive learning program.
- **Solidarity and Subsidiarity**
Through our commitment to solidarity, in each of our learning centres, our young people have the same opportunity to flourish and grow. Our collective strength will be used for the benefit and growth of all parts of the organisation.

At the same time, subsidiarity allows entities to bloom and thrive under clear parameters, knowing in which circumstances decisions are to be made at the lowest level possible, or the highest level necessary.

In line with these three Guiding Lights and the recognition that CESL is both an evangelizing and educative entity, 2024 saw the groundwork established for Magnify Sandhurst, a transformative learning and teaching program to be rolled out to our 51 Catholic schools across the Sandhurst Diocese. This new learning and teaching program aims to significantly

enhance the learning experience for students and provide teachers with the tools they need to deliver an evidence-based curriculum that boosts student outcomes.

With the support of world-class educational partners such as Steplab, Knowledge Society, MultiLit, and Ochre Education, Magnify Sandhurst is an investment in the future of every child in all 51 schools. With the mantra, 'Every student, every teacher, every school, every day', the program is designed to create a learning environment that challenges and supports students, helping them reach their full potential.

I am extremely grateful for the commitment and professionalism that is clearly identified by the efforts throughout 2024 of our school staff and Catholic Education Sandhurst Office personnel; they continue to work tirelessly for the students and families in our schools and are true bearers of the Mission to which they have been called.

Kate Fogarty

Executive Director, Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited

Vision and Mission

Identity Statement

St Joseph's is a proud Catholic Community united in faith and committed in action, to live, learn and grow in God's love.

Vision Statement

At St Joseph's Primary School, we strive to be a community where;

- *Students have the right to be treated with respect and will be protected from harm*
- *Students develop a meaningful relationship with God that inspires social justice and compassion*
- *Students have a responsibility to care for and sustain our natural environment*
- *Authentic Learning experiences and celebrations inspire student success*
- *Parents, students and staff value our school's charism and partnerships with local community*

Our Graduate Outcomes

At St Joseph's Primary School, we seek to educate our students to be;

- *Confident – to be themselves, to achieve great things and be resilient in their learning*
- *Collaborative – to be open to new ideas and learn with others*
- *Inclusive – to always be welcoming and be respectful to all*
- *Compassionate – to consider each person and to take action for those who are unable*
- *Courageous – to be a risk taker, to challenge themselves and to lead with a just heart*

School Overview

Rochester is located 176 kms north of Melbourne with a population of approximately 2, 999 situated on the banks of the Campaspe River. Larger regional centres, Echuca, Kyabram, Bendigo and Shepparton, are within close proximity. Located centrally within the Rochester township, the school attracts numerous children from the surrounding district, encompassing areas such as Nanneella, Lockington, and Bamawn.

With a rich educational legacy dating back to 1893, St. Joseph's Primary School has been an integral part of the community for generations. Evolving over time, it has transitioned into a co-educational Catholic Parish School. In 2024, the student population at St. Joseph's Primary School Rochester comprised 102 students distributed across seven classrooms. With multi-age classes except for Foundation, teachers employed collaborative efforts to ensure effective practices catered to the diverse needs of all students.

Driven by our motto, "People of Strength, People of Gentleness," we are dedicated to fostering love and support within our Catholic community, where inclusivity is paramount. Our school embodies a distinctive sense of community, where parents, staff, and students cherish and honour one another, ensuring that every individual who walks through our doors feels embraced and valued.

Principal's Report

2024 has been a year of growth, achievement, and strengthened community connections at St Joseph's.

Our staff engaged in targeted professional learning, supporting the implementation of the Victorian Curriculum 2.0 and enriching instructional practices through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and expert-led sessions, including the Resilience Project and Jocelyn Seamer's workshops.

Student wellbeing has been prioritized with initiatives such as Wellness Weeks, Courage & Crowns, Boys to the Bush, and Psychological First Aid training, reinforcing a culture of care and inclusion.

Our Catholic Identity and Mission remained central to school life, with sacramental preparation, liturgical celebrations, and participation in social justice initiatives like Reconciliation Week. The Student Engagement Survey highlighted strong student-teacher connections, while the Parent Satisfaction Survey reflected positive perceptions of communication, safety, and developmental support.

Leadership flourished through student-led conferences, the GRIP Leadership gathering, and school visits from Catholic Education Sandhurst leaders. The Teacher Satisfaction Survey identified strengths in collaboration, while also guiding areas for improvement in school leadership and feedback processes.

Our community spirit has been strengthened through ANZAC Day, MUSIC Bingo, Elmore Field Days, and the Easter Raffle, fostering engagement between students, families, and the broader community. Sporting and performance opportunities enriched student experiences, and fundraising efforts supported key initiatives.

As we look ahead, our focus remains on learning excellence, wellbeing, leadership, and community engagement—ensuring every student thrives at St Joseph's.

Thank you to staff, families, and students for making 2024 a memorable and impactful year.

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goals and Intended Outcomes

- To engage families in liturgies, prayers and rituals
- To further deepen the Charism of St Joseph and the Brigidine Sisters
- To stimulate a growing awareness of social justice and service to others

Achievements

Under the leadership of Eliza McNamara, our Catholic Identity Leader, we have deepened our faith connection through collaborative efforts with Fr Caldwell and Catholic Education Sandhurst. Our liturgical celebrations and community engagements have fostered a strong sense of faith and belonging across students, staff, and families.

The Beginning of Year Mass welcomed a large gathering of parishioners and parents, reinforcing our shared commitment to faith and community.

Liturgical celebrations, including Ash Wednesday and the Feast of St Joseph, provided students with valuable opportunities for reflection and spiritual growth.

Golden Hammer Day, supported by Parents and Friends, fostered a sense of gratitude and togetherness.

Teachers have received robust support in their planning of Religious Education, ensuring theological depth and structured learning experiences.

Through collaboration between Eliza McNamara and Fr Caldwell, sacramental preparation has been strengthened, guiding students as they prepare for Reconciliation, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Our dedication to social justice and inclusivity was reflected in Reconciliation Week, with students actively participating in the Reconciliation Walk in Echuca.

Additionally, Catholic Identity Leaders engaged in a Caritas Social Justice workshop, offering leadership opportunities for 2025 Student Leaders.

The Catholic Identity Review, led by Eliza McNamara, ensured alignment with our mission and ongoing faith-driven initiatives, reinforcing the spiritual foundation of our school community.

Value Added

- Our liturgical celebrations and community engagements have fostered a strong sense of faith and belonging across students, staff, and families.
- The Beginning of Year Mass saw a high turnout from parishioners and parents, reinforcing our commitment to faith.
- Ash Wednesday and Feast of St Joseph masses provided meaningful opportunities for students to reflect on their faith journey.
- Golden Hammer Day created an opportunity to blend community spirit with gratitude, supported by Parents and Friends.
- Teachers are receiving robust support in their planning, ensuring theological depth and structured RE units.
- Collaborative efforts between Eliza McNamara and Fr Caldwell have enhanced sacramental preparation, building a solid foundation for faith development.
- Our students prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation, and Eucharist, deepening their faith journey.
- The Reconciliation Week initiatives strengthened our commitment to social justice and inclusivity through participation in the Reconciliation Walk in Echuca.
- Catholic Identity Leaders participated in a Caritas Social Justice workshop in Echuca, providing leadership opportunities for 2025 Student Leaders.
- The Catholic Identity Review, led by Eliza McNamara, ensures alignment with our mission and continued faith-driven initiatives.

Through collective efforts and strong leadership, our Catholic Identity and Mission remain vibrant, fostering a faith-filled learning environment for all. We look forward to the continued growth of our students' faith journey in the year ahead.

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To develop a growth mindset for student learning.
- To enhance effective teacher practice and performance.

Achievements

Throughout 2024, teaching and learning at our school have been marked by significant progress and enriched professional growth. Under the leadership of Sue Kerlin (Teaching and Learning) and Cheryl Schwab (Learner Diversity), our school community has embraced innovation and strengthened instructional practices, fostering a dynamic and effective learning environment. Staff have embraced changes in instructional practices, supported by structured learning opportunities and classroom collaboration, fostering a dynamic and responsive teaching environment.

Jocelyn Seamer's professional learning sessions have been instrumental in challenging and inspiring educators, leading to measurable progress in student learning outcomes. Our Professional Learning Conversations have evolved, focusing on knowledge-building before planning, ensuring depth and effectiveness in instructional delivery.

Academically, our students successfully completed NAPLAN assessments, with Grade 5/6 accommodated despite camp schedules, and Start-of-Year maths testing provided valuable insights into student understanding and growth. Ongoing monitoring through standardised testing has enabled tailored support for those requiring intervention, ensuring no student is left behind.

These achievements reflect our commitment to high-quality learning, professional excellence, and holistic development, ensuring an engaging and supportive educational experience for all.

Student Learning Outcomes

In 2024, assessment data was gathered in accordance with our scheduled framework. School leaders and teachers carefully analyzed the collected data to assess student progress and guide future teaching strategies and school priorities. Throughout the year,

student progress is closely monitored using data charts and trackers across the school to ensure effective support and intervention. Due to changes in NAPLAN band parameters this year, trend analysis was not available.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	369	31%
	Year 5	467	50%
Numeracy	Year 3	413	71%
	Year 5	470	55%
Reading	Year 3	397	65%
	Year 5	477	74%
Spelling	Year 3	354	25%
	Year 5	428	35%
Writing	Year 3	431	94%
	Year 5	455	42%

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

Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To engage parents in their child's learning journey.
- To embrace the social and emotional development of students.

Achievements

In 2024, our commitment to student wellbeing has been strengthened through leadership, targeted initiatives, and increased community engagement. Jessica Carmichael in her role as Wellbeing Leader, guiding our wellbeing programs with care and expertise, while Lorraine Bain continues her invaluable work as our Chaplain. We were thrilled to be fast tracked as a Mental Health in Primary Schools funding recipient, with Jessica Carmichael serving as our Mental Health & Wellbeing Leader (MHWL), ensuring timely and meaningful wellbeing support for students and staff.

Staff participated in their first Professional Learning session with The Resilience Project, equipping them with strategies to support positive mental health in the classroom.

Courage & Crowns was launched, with Megan Simpson facilitating meaningful sessions for mothers and daughters in Grades 5 & 6, fostering confidence and connection.

The Boys to the Bush program successfully engaged students, leading to plans for a second round later in the year.

Students enjoyed enriching community experiences, including Flying Fruit Fly Circus in Bendigo (sponsored by the City of Greater Bendigo) and Ride 2 School Day, which encouraged active lifestyles.

Peaceful Kids sessions provided teachers and parents with tools to support student wellbeing, with five parents attending the evening session.

A strong focus on mental health awareness saw students participate in Do It For Dolly Day, raising an impressive \$2600 for Dolly's Dream, reinforcing our commitment to anti-bullying and mental health advocacy.

Three staff members attended Psychological First Aid training, further strengthening our school's capacity to provide support.

Students and teachers engaged deeply with The Resilience Project, culminating in sessions with Martin from TRP in the Rochester Cluster, where the school benefited from in-person learning as a digital partner.

Value Added

A proactive and inclusive approach to wellbeing has significantly enriched school culture in 2024. Wellness Week—held in Week 4 of every term—has emphasised the importance of regularly checking in on wellbeing beyond RU OK Day, incorporating staff wellness as a priority alongside student initiatives. Activities, such as creating Kindness Catchers, encouraged reflection and connection. The new plan invites the broader community to participate, with promising engagement and future growth anticipated.

Our annual camps provided opportunities for personal growth, resilience, and teamwork, with Grade 5/6 attending Cave Hill Beaufort (March 13–15) and Grade 3/4 visiting Swan Hill (August 29–30), each preceded by thorough facilities checks.

Run for Mums, Mother's Day event, was a resounding success, adapting seamlessly to unexpected weather challenges, creating a memorable experience for families.

Little Joeys sessions welcomed 6–8 children as they settled into the school environment, strengthening early connections.

An emphasis on teacher wellbeing and appreciation was reflected in World Teachers' Day morning tea, generously supported by families. The event was a heartfelt reminder of the strong bonds between our school community and its educators.

With ongoing wellbeing initiatives and strong leadership, 2024 has been a transformative year for student and staff wellbeing, and we look forward to building upon these successes.

Student Satisfaction

The 2024 Student Engagement Survey reflects a strong sense of connection, high expectations, and areas for growth within our school community.

- 82% of students feel their teachers hold them to high expectations, fostering a culture of effort, understanding, and persistence
- 75% of students report strong social connections with teachers both within and beyond the classroom
- 77% feel valued as members of the community
- 65% perceive the social and learning climate positively
- 66% believe they have opportunities to impact their school

While engagement levels are promising, there is room for improvement.

- 52% of students reporting they are consistently invested and attentive in school
- 62% have a positive mindset about themselves as learners, though further support could strengthen confidence

- 65% of students feel they have access to quality staff support to feel connected, safe, and respected.
- 40% express concerns about physical and psychological safety at school, highlighting an area for further focus
- 56% of students acknowledge the Catholic identity of the school, reinforcing the importance of faith-based initiatives.

These insights provide valuable direction for future initiatives, ensuring continued growth in engagement, wellbeing, and connection across the school community.

Student Attendance

At St. Joseph's, we strongly believe in the importance of consistent attendance for the academic and socio-emotional growth of each student.

Being present at the beginning of the school day lays the groundwork for their learning journey.

We closely monitor student attendance through SIMON.

- If a child is absent, we require parents to notify the school using any of the following methods: PAM (Parent Access Module) Website
- Verbal communication via phone call or in-person
- Written communication via email, text message to the school phone, or a note
- Classroom attendance is recorded twice daily, at 9:00 am and 2:15 pm.
- We also track children who consistently arrive late, reaching out to families for clarification.
- To ensure effective communication, a text message is sent to families at 10:00 am if their child is absent and no communication with the school has been received.

Attendance is also monitored by Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	88.3
Y02	89.6
Y03	90.8
Y04	88.7
Y05	88.5
Y06	90.1
Overall average attendance	89.3

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To establish high expectation and accountability
- To embed an Inquiry Mindset
- To develop rigorous target setting, inclusive of continuous monitoring

Achievements

In 2024, student and staff leadership at St Joseph's has flourished through engagement in conferences, professional learning, and community initiatives.

Our Student Leaders began the year with enthusiasm, attending key leadership events such as the GRIP Leadership Conference at Red Energy Arena in Bendigo and the Northern Plains Cluster Student Conference.

Jessica Carmichael was appointed Senior Leader, guiding wellbeing and mental health initiatives, including rolling out Mental Health in Primary Schools information to staff and families.

Leadership was further strengthened through engagement with Catholic Education Sandhurst Executive Director Kate Fogarty and Board Member Tony Morwood, addressing enrolment and future flood challenges.

Leadership planning was intensive as the Catholic Education Sandhurst MAGNIFY roll-out was launched, focusing on evidence-based teaching in core subjects.

This year has been defined by growth, collaboration, and forward-thinking leadership across our school community.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024	
<p>In 2024, staff engaged in a diverse range of professional learning opportunities, delivered by Catholic Education Sandhurst (CES) and other providers, alongside valuable in-house knowledge sharing through staff meetings and planning sessions.</p> <p>Some training was designed to meet compliance requirements, while other professional development focused on enhancing teacher expertise and administration staff capabilities.</p> <p>Key sessions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Budget workshops; including AFS & FBT workshops • Emergency Management training • Child Safe Training • Engaging Volunteer workshops • CPR & Anaphylaxis training • NCCD training <p>A partnership with Jocelyn Seamer of Jocelyn Seamer Education supported all staff as they implemented a school-wide initiative to improve student english data. This included onsite visits for modelling and knowledge building.</p> <p>Additional Religious Education, Learning & Teaching, and Wellbeing professional learning also took place, with further details outlined in the relevant sections of this report.</p>	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024	21
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1535.00

Teacher Satisfaction

The 2024 Teacher Satisfaction Survey highlights both strengths and areas for growth within the school community.

- 74% of teachers feel they collaborate effectively in teams to improve teaching and learning
- 64% perceive strong relationships between staff and leadership
- 65% of teachers believe staff have the capacity to enhance instruction
- 60% feel school leadership fosters collaboration among teams.

While there are positive aspects of engagement, challenges remain in areas such as professional learning coherence (47%), school improvement strategy alignment (32%), and leadership effectiveness (48%).

Student safety perceptions (51%) and staff safety perceptions (52%) indicate room for strengthening wellbeing and security measures. Additionally, 49% of teachers feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes in their work, suggesting that a more supportive culture could be beneficial.

Perceptions around feedback (26%) and school leaders setting conditions for improved teaching and learning (48%) suggest a need for enhanced communication and instructional support. Faith leadership (54%) and the overall social and learning climate (53%) indicate a solid foundation, but continued engagement is essential for progress.

These insights have informed future leadership strategies, professional development, and wellbeing initiatives, ensuring a thriving and supportive school environment for both staff and students.

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

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	1
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	13
Teaching Staff (FTE)	10.84
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	13
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	9.61
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To intensify the capacity of our school community to respond to and enact the gospel values
- To encourage and actively engage parents in partnerships about student learning.

Achievements

In 2024, our school community has thrived through engagement, participation, and meaningful connections.

Student Leaders showcased confidence and leadership in the December Community Chat, articulating the importance of Community Connections to local members.

The year began with our traditional Beginning of Year Mass and Welcome Night, fostering a strong start for students and families.

Sporting achievements were celebrated, with Jessica McMillan and Chelsea Wilson competing in the Campaspe Swimming Carnival, and Jessica qualifying for the State event in Melbourne.

Community fundraising efforts flourished, including a hugely successful Easter Raffle, alongside dedicated volunteer work at the Elmore Charity Ball and Tractor Pull.

Students actively engaged in ANZAC Day commemorations, with 20 students marching in school uniforms and others representing different service groups.

MUSIC Bingo, organised by the Parents & Friends Association, was a joyful and well-attended event, showcasing the dedication of families involved.

Run for Mums and the enthusiastic "Slime the Staff" fundraiser brought fun and connection to our community. Elmore Field Days volunteers covered 48 shifts on four gates.

The school embraced Book Week with a dress-up event, followed by Father's Day breakfast and Footy Colours Day, both reinforcing the spirit of togetherness.

Looking ahead, Parents and Friends (PnF) hosted an end-of-year community celebration, ensuring 2024 concluded with gratitude, joy, and continued engagement.

Our commitment to fostering connections has strengthened relationships within and beyond our school, making this year a truly memorable one for community involvement.

Parent Satisfaction

The 2024 Parent Satisfaction Survey highlights strong engagement and positive perceptions of St Joseph's school environment.

- 88% of families feel the social and learning climate supports their child's development
- 77% believe the school effectively meets their child's individual needs
- 78% of parents appreciate the timeliness, frequency, and quality of communication between school and families, fostering a sense of partnership.

Parents also acknowledge their role in the school community, with 66% feeling actively involved in their child's education.

- 62% noted challenges that hinder engagement, suggesting opportunities to further strengthen family-school connections
- 69% of families believe students experience physical and psychological safety at school, indicating room for continuous improvement in wellbeing support
- 60% of parents express engagement with the Catholic identity of the school, reinforcing the importance of faith-based initiatives in strengthening community values.

These insights provide valuable guidance for enhancing family involvement, wellbeing strategies, and communication, ensuring a supportive and connected learning environment for all students.

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.sjrochester.catholic.edu.au