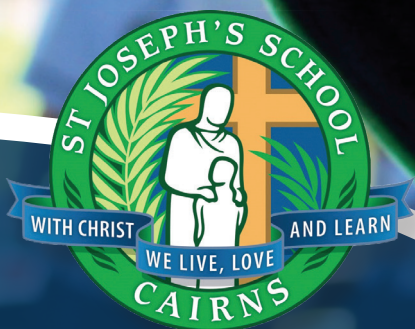


With Christ, we **live**, **love** and learn



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

St Joseph's School



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St Joseph's School Parramatta Park  
2023 School Annual Report  
7 December 2023

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**Parish Priest:** Fr Roy Neervelil  
**Principal:** Gavin Rick  
**Acting Principal:** Brendon Napier (Term 2 and 4)  
**Assistant Principal,  
Religious Education:** Robyn Chambers  
**Assistant Principal,  
Learning and Teaching:** Marita Brown  
**School Board Chair:** Elisha Raso  
**Joey's Community  
Connect President:** Jason Quirk

At St Joseph's School, we continue to collect feedback to ensure we deliver the best learning and wellbeing for our learners. We do this to refine our management practices and processes to ensure we remain responsive to feedback and relevant in a modern and contemporary world. Feedback is sought using systemic instruments and school-based surveys. Each continually shows high satisfaction with St Joseph's and clear improvement ideas. This year, we have included feedback from two external reviews: the National School Improvement Tool and the Non-State School Accreditation Board Compliance Check.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which St Joseph's community lives, loves and learns and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

# PRINCIPAL'S REPORT



I am delighted to present the St Joseph's School (Parramatta Park) Annual Report for 2023. This report provides a celebration of our success, shares areas for growth, gives an outline of our future directions and highlights the performance and progress of our students.

2023 has been a year of changes in school leadership as I took professional renewal and long service leave from May to mid-August and then took on a system leader role in Term 4 as Acting Director of School Effectiveness (Primary). I thank Brendon Napier as acting principal and assistant principals Marita Brown and Robyn Chambers, who supported Brendon and me, providing leadership continuity. Through the change, the spirit of camaraderie has been a big part of this year's success.

I continue to be in awe of our students' resilience, growth, and independence, particularly our youngest, who managed their independence from day one. Our students, supported by staff and families, have championed the year. With their wellbeing toolkits and learning powers, they have achieved their learning and wellbeing goals, navigated friendships, and adapted when needed. Both academic and non-academic aspects have been impressive, with high-quality teaching and learning programs providing the foundation for success. There is much to be proud of as families read the end-of-year school reports and reflect on their child's growth and achievements.

The staff continued to build stronger partnerships with families – one of our strategic intents for the year. We hosted many events with families, enabling us to connect, share, and draw on their skills, experiences, love, and support. Of note were the sensational Kick Off event, the introduction of the U8s Day, the extremely successful Fete, and the much-loved Christmas Concert. We noticed a renewed level of family volunteering, which was a great blessing.

There has been an increase in family connections, particularly families working in proactive partnership with staff. These relationships enrich the school culture and achieve great things because of these interpersonal connection moments. We want families to feel connected with the school community and know they play a vital role in St Joseph's success. We remain as committed as ever to school-to-home and habitat-to-home connections, with a further strong focus in 2024.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge how families

support the school in many wonderful ways. Both the big and small support equates to a brilliant school. There are dedicated volunteer teams, families who proactively engage with their child's teacher, families who support us from a distance – providing support beyond the gate and families who help students arrive on time in uniform, with lunch and ready to learn and a positive mindset – this all adds up, and I am beyond grateful.

I thank the parent community, school administration, School Board, Joey's Community Connect (JCC) and our highly dedicated staff for tireless efforts in enacting St Joseph's strategic goals and supporting the students in 2023. It takes a village to raise a child, and the dedication of many creates a flourishing school community.

Our success is measured in many ways. This year, feedback to draft policies, the JCC Think Tank & Review Meeting, and the Catholic Education Annual Feedback Surveys have been candid, sincere, and highly valued. There are great things to celebrate as well as improvements to consider. The voice of staff, families and students is valued, and the feedback has helped us shape our future direction.

Two major school review events took place in 2023. The Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) School Improvement Review and the Non-State School Accreditation Board (NSSAB) compliance audit. These were extensive and included collecting and analysing in-depth data from discussions with all staff, families, and students. I was extremely proud to receive glowing reports from both organisations and suggestions for advanced improvement. We will use these reports to inform the development of our 2024 Strategic Plan.

2024 will focus on strategic planning for the future. We have a mandate from our reviews to develop specific learning targets for students, to define better and support our agreed ways of teaching and to provide staff with feedback on their practice. We know our school is great and want to make it outstanding – these changes will make it so. I look forward to the staff's continued professional and high-calibre delivery in 2024. They always go above and beyond for our children. This is noticed by many and deeply appreciated.

“ We are extremely proud of how our students live by our values of love, learning, community and respect. We always look for ways to make a difference. ”

Leadership Team

“ St Joseph's is a flagship school in the diocese of Cairns, sought after by many families across the region, always moving to improve learning and wellbeing. ”  
Gavin Rick, Principal



A complete account of both family and community events and the array of our wellbeing and learning activities are in this report. I commend the information provided by key people, and I encourage you to take the time to read and celebrate our achievements.

As I look to 2024, I am confident we will continue evolving, remaining the school of choice for families across the Cairns region. I look forward to next year and the further successes we can achieve through a strong focus on working together and inspiring our students to dream, believe and achieve.

I wish you God's blessings, wellness, love, and connection, and I look forward to welcoming you with open arms on day one of the new school year in January.

Gavin Rick  
- Principal

“ This Annual Report is only one component of our reporting process. It should be read with other documents on the school and Catholic Education website that contextualise our purpose and operations. ”

# FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

It is always a great opportunity to reflect and write the annual report on the work of the St Joseph's School Board. 2023 has been a full and exciting year; collectively, we have much to be proud of.

The St Joseph's School Board comprises a diverse group – parents, staff, leadership, a representative from the St Joseph's Parish and our Parish Priest. Each of us with different professional and cultural backgrounds brings a kaleidoscope of perspectives for decision-making. As a cohort, we have supported and challenged each other to ensure that well-considered decisions are for the students who play and learn at Joey's today and future students. We are proud custodians of the legacy that is St Joseph's, and as we inch closer to our school centennial celebrations, the true legacy of St Joseph's becomes more realised.

Throughout the year, the Board has worked in an advisory capacity with the leadership team towards achieving set goals for 2023. Some of the accomplishments include:

- Development and endorsement of the new Personal Smart Device Policy. This involved researching, drafting, community consultation, and eventual adoption. The comprehensive approach ensured that the school has a robust policy framework.
- Provided input to the school's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Engagement (MTSSe), aligning it with The St Joseph's Way. The Board offered valuable insights to enhance the effectiveness of this system, contributing to the overall engagement strategy of the school.
- We supported the development of a new Master Plan - providing our perspective and views in shaping the future direction and infrastructure of the school. This is still a work in progress, and we are excited to see its completion in 2024, with new playgrounds and kitchen gardens included in the masterplan.
- Provided feedback for the 5-Year Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) Review and Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB) Compliance Audit. This external evaluation and engagement underscore our dedication to ensuring that the school adheres to the highest standards and continuously seeks avenues for improvement.
- Providing constructive feedback for the National School Improvement Tool. Schools undergo this review every five years to ensure they align with systemic directions and the nine domains of the assessment tool. The outcomes of this review process are detailed in the report.

- Ratified the 2024 School Budget, including levies.
- Assisted in interviewing the 2024 school leader candidates on behalf of the board, and it's evident that the legacy of St Joseph's is indeed in good hands with the youth that has come up through our school.

Throughout the year, leadership provide generous reporting, this year with a focus on Religious Education and Literacy. This provides a great understanding of the key educational experiences students and families can expect at St Joseph's. In turn, we provide feedback that is openly received.

It has been an honour to be part of the exceptional group of people committed to representing the school community and the parents as the St Joseph's School Board. I've loved being involved and feel proud that our efforts have been marked by achievements across policy development, system improvement, infrastructure planning, external evaluations, and financial governance. These accomplishments collectively underscore our commitment to fostering continuous improvement.

On behalf of all families, I want to acknowledge and thank Gavin Rick, Brendon Napier (Acting Principal), Marita Brown and Robyn Chambers for their dedicated and inspirational leadership of the school community. To St Joey's staff – a heartfelt thank you for your dedicated teaching and for working together with busy families to provide the best care and learning for our children.

Elisha Raso  
- School Board Chair 2023



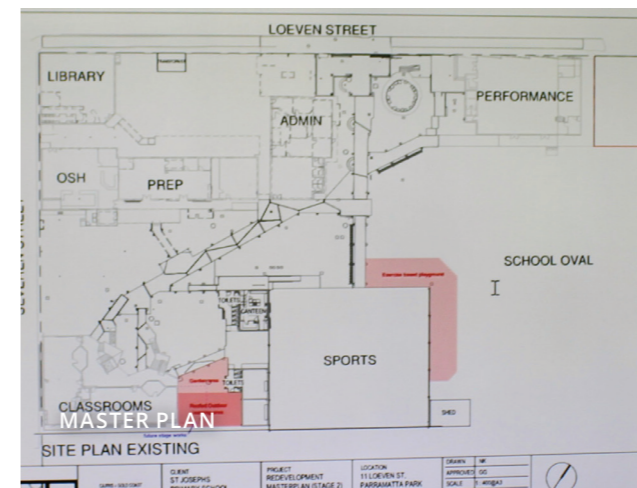
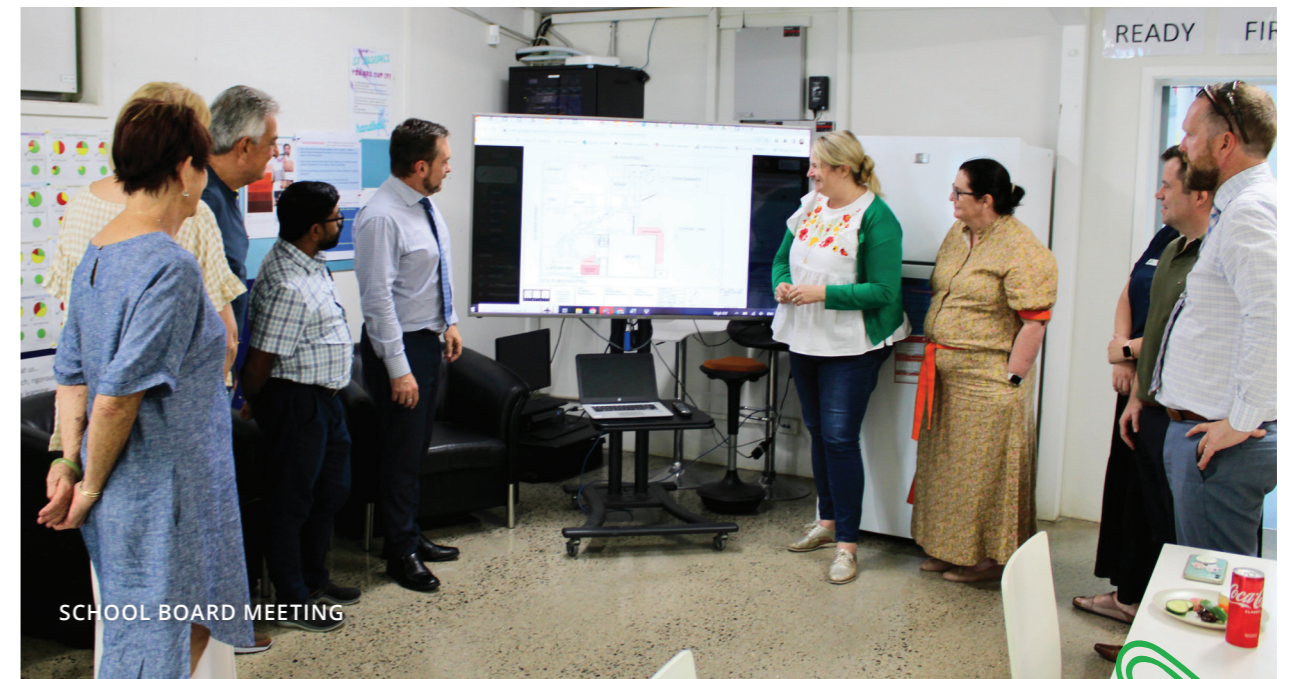
“ I witness firsthand staff professionalism, strength and resolve. It would be hard to find a more hard-working, committed and enthusiastic team. ”

Board Chair, 2023

## SCHOOL BOARD ACTIVITIES

“The diverse makeup of the Board has brought a richness of dialogue, and it is liberating to hear parent voices being considered by school leadership and staff.”

Board Member, 2022



“ We have seen many wonderful results, including the new entrance and covered walkways and a renewed approach to student leadership. ”

Board Member, 2023

# Board Report Card



## 1. Develop and endorse the new policy for Personal Smart Devices.

Research, consultation, and adoption



## 2. Provide input to the school's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Engagement - MTSSe (The St Joseph's Way).

Discussed and provided ideas for minor and major behaviours, including the development of consistent consequences for breaches.



## 3. Support the Development of a new Master Plan for St Joseph's

Achieved with family voice gathered through the Board, providing further ideas.



## 4. Provide input through feedback to the 5 Year ACER Review and NSSAB Compliance Audit.

In Term 4, the Board provided feedback to the assessors for the 9 domains. The outcomes of the review are published in this report.



## 5. Other

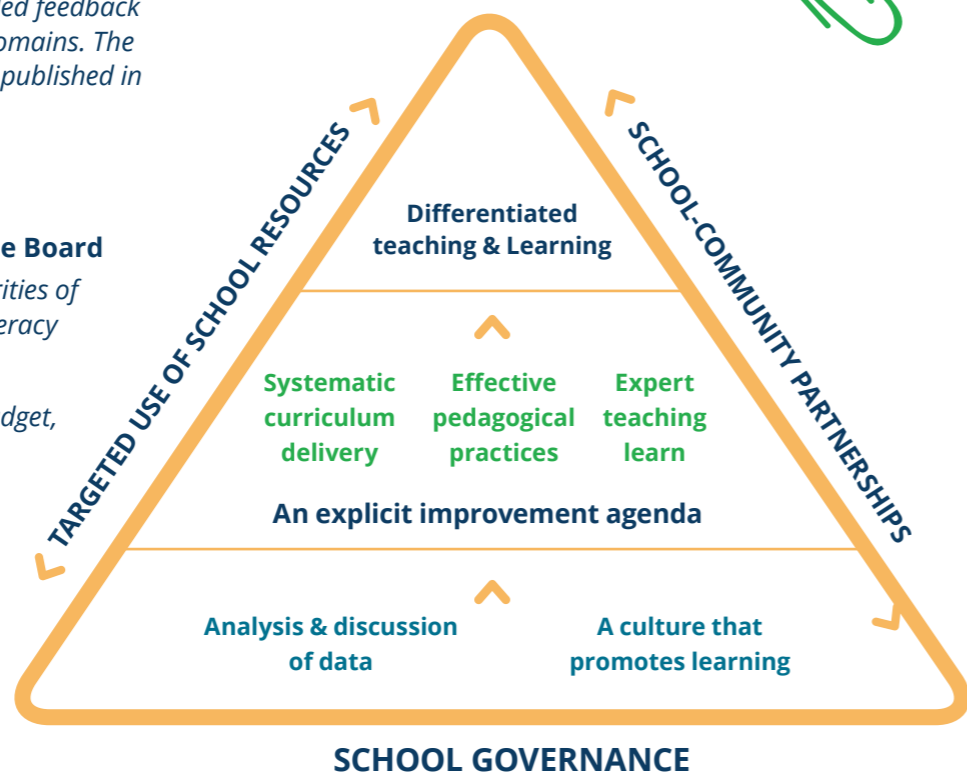
### Ongoing reporting to the Board

School's improvement priorities of Religious Education and Literacy

### 2024 School Budget

Ratified the 2024 School Budget, including levies.

Schools are reviewed every five years using the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) to ensure they align with systemic directions. These reviews are essential to planning and the school improvement cycle, informing the school's approach and affirming its existing work. The tool provides a continuous improvement framework ensuring quality learning outcomes for students.



"St Joseph's is a great school and community well designed for working parents."  
Year 1 Parent, 2022

# FROM JOEY'S COMMUNITY CONNECT (JCC)

I am pleased to provide the Joey's Community Connect (JCC) Report for 2023.

This year, the JCC committee members and teaching staff remained committed to reaching out to St Joey's families and friends to ensure they felt welcomed and connected. This is a major role of the committee and something we are very proud of.

In February, the JCC Annual General Meeting (AGM) was a success, with a full executive elected and events charted for the year ahead.

At this AGM, we saw several integral and long-term JCC executives and committee members stand down as their children completed their final year of primary school. We thank them for contributing to the school and Joey's community. The JCC can't operate without such dedication, and we are eternally grateful.

## 2023 Joey's Community Connect goals were to provide:

1. Family and community connection; and
2. Family-focused events.

### 1. Family and Community Connection:

Our emphasis on family connection and community was successful, with families engaging and many parents volunteering for activities. This year, we had more social catch-ups for parents, a welcome return since COVID restrictions limited contact with the community in recent years. These events were positively attended, offered a renewed sense of community and inspired the spirits of many. Other events scheduled and achieved throughout 2023 are a testament to the consideration of connecting family and community.

### 2. Family-Focused Events:

Our 2023 family-focused events did not disappoint. It was an honour to provide a variety of community events for the families, and the JCC committee wish to thank everyone for their participation, support, and inspiring feedback.

The events included:

- Joey's Kick Off - Well attended with families and staff socialising in the hall followed by visits to habitats.
- Family Movie Night - Excellent attendance, given the wet weather.
- Fete - Excellent attendance, and the fete committee welcomed a budding student entrepreneur who set up a stall to sell homemade jewellery.
- Disco - Year 6 celebrated their final weeks at a JCC-coordinated disco, dancing and having fun reflecting on their primary years.
- Community Support - A few families took to the Cairns Speedway to cheer on a couple of Joey's families who race in the event.
- The Trivia Night - Regrettably, this event was cancelled this year due to the lack of registrations.



“It is hard to give to the JCC but we are deeply thankful for the families who can volunteer. The events for busy families are great.”

Parent



We wrapped up the year with a General Meeting, including a 'Think Tank' to review 2023. The 'Think Tank', whilst widely advertised, did not attract the attendance anticipated; however, the time was not wasted with those who did attend. Much constructive feedback and enthusiasm came from the meeting, and positive plans for 2024 are underway.

Overall, 2023 was a success in achieving the goals planned. This year is also consistent with previous years, where JCC would love to see more family involvement, though we are conscious of and acknowledge the demands of work-life placed on families. The JCC will take this into account when planning future events.

On behalf of the JCC Committee, we look forward to 2024 and delivering the year's events with collaboration, creativity, and enthusiasm to bring all families and community together.

I wish to thank the amazing Joey's staff for their continued hard work and dedication across the school year, and all the best to those families and staff departing.

Jason Quirk  
JCC President 2023

St Joseph's Primary School  
Parramatta Park, Cairns

“It was awesome to see more family involvement in JCC events in 2023 but it would be wonderful to double this in 2024.”

Active JCC Parent



# SCHOOL CONTEXT

## Student cohort

St Joseph's School enrolments in Semester Two, 2023, from Prep to Year 6, totalled 394. We appreciate and celebrate cultural diversity, with 6.1% of our student population with English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL-D), 11% First Nations and 11% with a disability.

## Size

With 297 families, we are considered a smaller school than others. This has been one of our greatest strengths in that many families love the smaller school community vibe, labelling it as personal, welcoming, and friendly.

## Reputation

The school has a well-regarded reputation for solid academic results; the holistic and wellbeing education provided to students via our wellbeing programs, pastoral, co-curricular, and educational programs ensure our students' social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual development. Our community outreach programs define us as an outward-focused community that witnesses the call to mercy.

## Professional practice

St Joseph's culture of continuous improvement to professional practice means that staff are committed to innovation and ongoing excellence in teaching and leadership. This has enabled us to be recognised as an innovative and high-performing school.



## Learning environments

We provide high-quality learning environments where student learning can be dynamic, motivating, and meaningful. Our contemporary learning environments enable collaborative learning and teaching and high-quality differentiation. Staff embrace evidence-based teaching and learning practices to meet modern learners' needs best, and our balanced use of digital technology has created powerful ways for us to accelerate and differentiate learning for students.

## School values

The school's values are derived from our Catholic heritage and are lived out in the activities and programs our students are involved in. Various values-based experiences reinforce the tangible sense of belonging within our learning community.

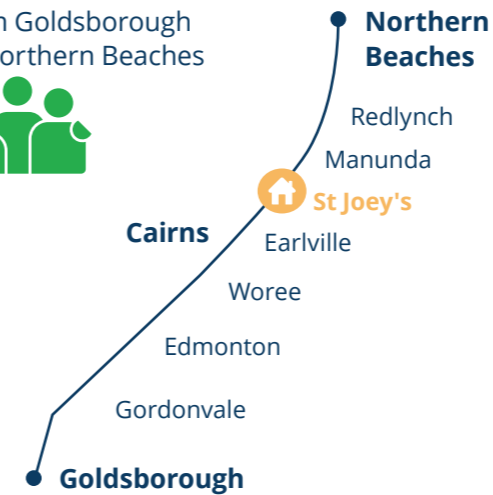
## Location

Our inner-city location remains popular and convenient, with families of working professionals commuting to and from the city. This creates a wide feeder net with families commuting from Goldsborough to the Northern Beaches. The convenience has also been challenging because families live far from the school, limiting attendance at school events and reducing the sense of localised community.

## Demographics

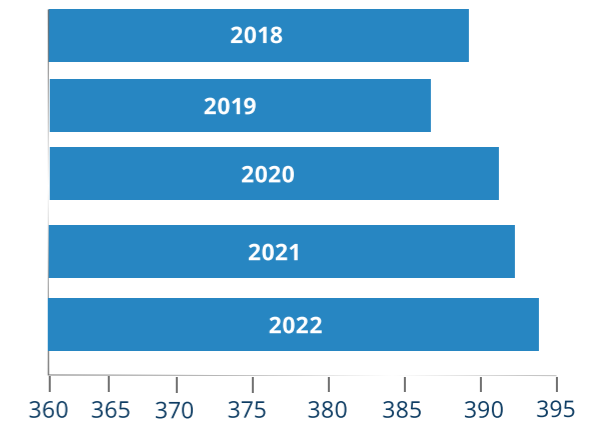
297 families

from Goldsborough to Northern Beaches



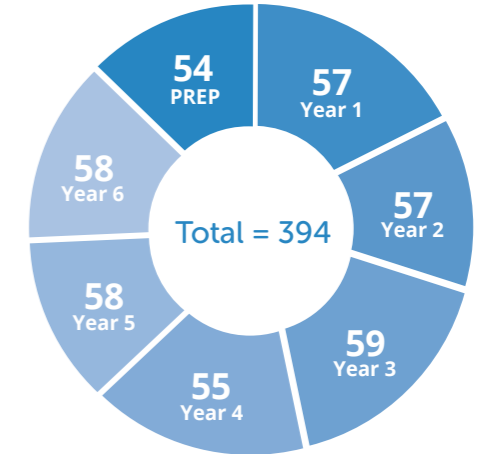
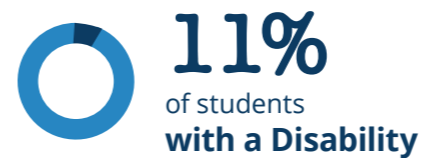
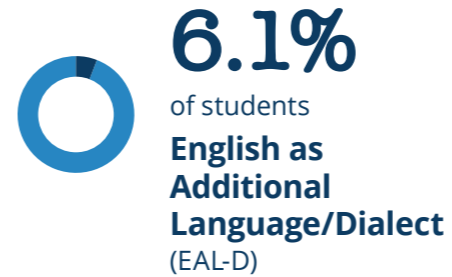
394 students

from Prep to 6



Student Number Trends Semester 2, 2018 – 2022

## Student Diversity



Student Numbers, Semester 2, 2023

“ St Joseph's remains a school of choice, with many enrolments requests coming well before we officially 'open the doors' for enrolment. ”

# STAFFING PROFILE

This year, we had 50 staff (teaching, non-teaching, and service) and low turnover. The student-to-staff ratio is 1:12.

Teaching staff are registered with appropriate teaching qualifications and varying degrees of experience.

Staff participate in extensive professional learning, focusing on high-impact teaching strategies based on the latest science and research on how young people learn. This year, they have fully embraced the new aspects of the Australian Curriculum in Mathematics and Health & Physical Education.

Our learning spaces - habitats (not classrooms) are dynamic environments designed from evidence-based criteria that have earned wide acclaim for enriching a young person's learning experience.



Staff are committed to working proactively and positively with families in learning partnerships to provide a well-rounded education for students. Both leadership and families continue to be inspired by St Joseph's School's highly professional and collaborative culture.

This year, our community nominated five staff for our Catholic Education Docemus Awards and Spirit of Catholic Education, Queensland Awards. We are extremely proud of the nominations.

“The staff at Joey's are absolutely brilliant. I have actively reached out and engaged proactively with my daughter's teachers since Prep and my relationship with her teachers have been positive - and this has helped our daughter tremendously.”

Year 5 Parent, 2023

## Staffing Semester 2, 2022



**50 staff**

Teaching, non-teaching and service



**1:12**

Staff ratio

## Annual Staff Survey - Top Three Areas of Satisfaction

In the Annual Staff Survey, staff shared that they are *most satisfied* with:



### Living Values

Staff strongly stated that St Joseph's fosters respectful relationships among all students and that staff live out our school values in actions and words.



### Safety

Staff value that families are encouraged to be active partners in wellbeing and learning of their children.



### Student Management

Staff believe that students are treated fairly and that student behaviour is managed well.



### Learning

Staff indicate that students are highly interested in their learning and that high adjustments are made to meet student needs.



### Partnerships

Staff believe St Joseph's is a safe and respectful workplace.

## Congratulations:

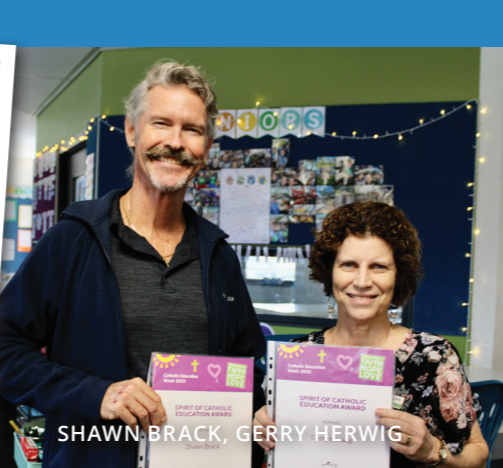
- Alicia McConville - Primary Teacher
- Shawn Brack - Primary Teacher
- Gerry Herwig - Primary Teacher
- Giovanna Hogan - Primary Teacher
- Vanessa Bush - School Officer Category



AWARD NOMINEES



ALICIA MCCONVILLE, SARAH HESSION, VANESSA BUSH



SHAWN BRACK, GERRY HERWIG



# VISION

In sacred learnscapes we are learning to live so that we can live to learn.



# VALUES



# MISSION

It is our mission to strive for and be:

## Community of Faith



- Welcome all who seek a Catholic education
- Follow in the footsteps of Jesus as expressed through the Joey's School Values
- Acknowledge and honour sacredness in ourselves, others and in our environment
- Joyfully celebrate who we are and our achievements
- Accept and embrace our differences
- Create a safe environment based on a culture of trust

## Positive Partnerships



- Know and link with the Mercy Sisters and the history of the school
- Engage parents through active and collaborative participation at all levels in the school community
- Link with the Parish mission and life
- Collaborate with and serve others in our community

## Holistic education



- Prioritise wellbeing by integrating social and emotional learning into all we do
- Focus on a personal and spiritual journey of growth
- Choose a positive, solution-oriented attitude
- Inspire a love of learning and a joy of discovery
- Celebrate creativity

## Christ-entered Education



- Prioritise Religious Education, Social and Emotional Learning, English and Maths as core learning areas
- Deliver clear, well-defined, rigorous teaching and learning that caters for all learning abilities and styles
- Embrace change to meet the needs of the 21st-century learner
- Recruit and support quality professional staff committed to the mission of the Catholic Church
- Provide an up-to-date, well-maintained and well-resourced school environment

## Strategic Innovation



- Foster a culture of renewal by researching, reflecting and being discerning
- Respectfully give, receive and learn from feedback
- Maintain relevance and currency

# NOTABLE 2023 HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Highly successful school reviews
- Healthy NAPLAN results in both Years 3 and 5
- Science Week and Book Week celebrations
- Five successful family and community events: 2023 Kick Off Social, Fete, Movie Night, Under 8s Day and the Christmas Concert
- Achievements in Choric Speaking at the Eisteddfod
- Ongoing healthy levels of attendance at assemblies from parents
- Completion of the new Master Plan
- Kitchen Garden, including projects that used garden produce for cooking
- Engagement from First Nations families at the twice-a-term Cuppa
- Meaningful NAIDOC celebrations, Reconciliation Week and Sorry Day prayer events
- Celebrated Year 6 Easter Play and Year 5 Christmas Nativity Musical
- Good representation at interschool Netball and Hockey competitions
- Family involvement in inter-school sporting events
- Strong support for Outreach programs, e.g., Vinnies, Rosies, and Ukraine community
- For more notable student academic and personal achievements refer to St Joey's Facebook page.



# LEARNER ATTRIBUTES & LEARNING POWERS

St Joseph's teaches learning attributes and attitudes called the Learning Powers. These allow students to be architects of their learning and are a common language guiding their lifetime of learning.

At St Joseph's we are building learners who are:

### Reflective

We question, make links, imagine, reason, and capitalise.

### Reciprocal

We collaborate, imitate, empathise, listen, and develop independence.

### Resilient

We manage distractions, persevere, become absorbed in learning, and notice.

### Resourceful

We plan, revise, distil experiences and information, and learn about ourselves as a learner.



# LEARNING & TEACHING

It is my great pleasure to share 2023 highlights from student data and assessments (learning) and professional learning engagements (teaching).

## Literacy Teaching Skills

Staff continued professional learning with Literacy Consultant Joanne Rossbridge. Jo assisted with Literacy planning to incorporate reading, writing and oracy.

## Mathematics

We introduced the new Version 9 of the Australian Curriculum. Teachers worked with our Leader of Teaching and Operations, Karina Brady, and Essential Assessment consultant Jacinta Browning to collect and analyse student data in Mathematics to ensure students were progressing in all areas.

## The Oracy Implementation Team

Marita Brown, Karina Brady, Giovanna Hogan, Jacqui Doolan, and Carmel Buckley supported teachers in embedding oracy skills, such as dialogic teaching and groupings. Teachers also engaged in professional development with oracy expert and Catholic Education Consultant Meg Drummond. She modelled lessons in Year 5 and provided strategies to support oracy teaching with our students.

## Clarity Team

We are pleased with our Clarity Project work that continued this year, focusing on student-centred and data-informed ways of knowing and growing students. Led internally by Giovanna Hogan, Karina Brady, Marita Brown, and Gavin Rick, we continued working with Professor Lyn Sharratt to build teacher capacity. We proudly presented our Clarity journey to other principals and leadership teams from the Cairns Diocese.

## NAPLAN Testing

In February, students in Years 3 and 5 participated in NAPLAN testing. The process ran smoothly, and we were delighted with the results for Reading and Numeracy.

## NAPLAN Results

- Reading and Numeracy – a significantly higher percentage of students than the state in the 'strong' and 'exceeding' bands.
- Writing and Spelling - lower percentage of students than the state in the 'strong' and 'exceeding' bands.
- Grammar and Punctuation - a significantly higher percentage of students in Year 5 and lower in Year 3 than the state in the 'strong' and 'exceeding' bands.

## Other Academic Monitoring

Across the year teachers facilitate various forms of assessment. This, along with their observations, is used to grade students. Some of the formal assessments from this year included:

- Essential Assessment formative and summative testing, reading assessments
- School-wide writing assessment called The Writing Gain.
- Optional online testing for students in Grades 2-6 in areas of English, Mathematics, Science, and Digital Technologies.
- We adopted the International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS) Testing - an independent, skills-based assessment program that recognises and rewards student achievement.
- Students completed the Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) in Literacy and Mathematics. The results were very pleasing showing significant growth in Numeracy, Spelling and Reading.



## NAPLAN Results

- Reading and Numeracy – a significantly higher percentage of students than the state in the 'strong' and 'exceeding' bands
- Writing and Spelling - lower percentage of students than the state in the 'strong' and 'exceeding' bands
- Grammar and Punctuation - significantly higher percentage of students in Year 5, and lower in Year 3 than the state in the 'strong' and 'exceeding' bands

## Graduate Mentor Program

This year, we had four early careers teachers (ECT) on staff. Each ECT was given an experienced teacher to guide and support their work. The work continued across the year. We thank teachers Karina Brady, Giovanna Hogan, Sarah Hession and Kirsty Malsem for their commitment to this program.

## Science Week

This year's Science Week was led by a passionate and dedicated Science Committee of Year 5 students who gave up many lunch times to work with Marita Brown. The week involved live streams from Street Science and the AI Academy. Classes created an interactive display in the hall, and the week culminated with a whole School Science Quiz with special visiting 'scientist' Professor Curious.

## Book Week

Always a highlight, the annual Book Week Dress Up Parade attracted many parents and grandparents, with great effort going into costumes. Students attended the Meerkat School Drama Performance based on books from Book Week. Students from Years 1-3 also visited Cairns Performing Arts Centre to view the dramatisation of Roald Dahl's The Twits.

## Green Island – Year 5

The Year 5 excursion to Green Island provided real-life experiences and created high engagement in learning about sustainability and the importance of looking after the Great Barrier Reef.

## Kitchen Garden

Led by teacher Alicia McConville, the Kitchen Garden program continued throughout the year. Students from Prep-3 engaged in gardening, cooking, and learning about sustainability.

## Classroom Management Practices

Teachers continued to reflect on the effectiveness of their classroom management practices through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support – Engagement (MTSS-e), and our early career teachers engaged in Classroom Profiling. This year, we trained an additional profiler, Sarah Hession, who will work with other profilers to provide feedback to staff about their classroom management skills.

## Teacher Professional Learning:

In addition, staff engaged in professional learning in these areas:

- English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) training
- High Potential Learners
- National Consistency of Collection of Data (NCCD) for students with disability moderation
- Learning Intentions and Success Criteria
- Restrictive practices
- Student protection
- Cultural understandings – Coming of the Light Festival
- Anxiety

## 2024 Prep Transition Program

This program included Kindy visits, Family Meet and Greet, Play Dates and Get Set for Prep mornings. Students and families had more opportunities this year to get to know their prep teachers and become comfortable in their habitats and school environment.

This report is a mere highlight with many more success stories reported across the year in SeeSaw announcements, mentions in the Principal's Weekly Update email or shared in habitat-to-home communication with families. As I reflect on the year I am immensely proud of our outstanding achievements.

**Marita Brown**

**Assistant Principal Learning & Teaching**



# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2023 was a year of living, loving, and learning as we sought to follow Jesus' words when he said, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another. This presented tangible opportunities for our future leaders as they were nurtured and formed in the Mercy Tradition and demonstrated the works of mercy at a school and global level.

## Term 1

- The Opening Celebration was full of energy as we welcomed a new year of possibilities, inducted new student leaders, and blessed our community. We filled the hall with our final song and theme for the year: Go Make a Difference!
- The Year 6 Leadership Workshop was a whole-day experience. Senior students explored what servant leadership looked, felt, and sounded like and were challenged to go and do likewise.
- We welcomed Australia's No. 1 acclaimed indigenous entertainer Sean Choolbarra. He captivated students and weaved his inimitable blend of traditional dance, didgeridoo, story, knowledge, and humour into his presentation.
- Shrove Tuesday was celebrated with pancakes and games before the start of Lent. Students visited the St Joseph's Church for Ash Wednesday ceremonies. Blessings were personal, intimate, and meaningful.
- St Joseph's Feast Day Celebrations were a highlight of the year. Mr Brack began our Mass with a short theatrical presentation, and voices were raised in song. Celebrations continued with the addition of waterslides. A great and fun day for all.
- Turkey and Syria were on our minds and hearts as students initiated an Easter egg decorating competition to raise funds to support them.
- The Year 6 Easter play magnificently set the scene to start the story of Easter.

## Term 2

- Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week was a time to stop and listen. Slowly, more community members are attending our commemorations. A highlight was the Reconciliation Walk that ended at our yarning circle.
- Year 5 Mercy Leaders in training came up with a brilliant way to support Rosies (Friends on the Street)



by inviting students to bring a cup of noodles to win the 'Guess How Many Lollies' in the jar competition. 423 cups of noodles were donated!

- We congratulated Sacramental students who received the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, supported by Mrs Zaccour.
- Our final semester assembly, our Joy Assembly, was another opportunity to celebrate the amazing things our community has been doing.

## Term 3

- The highlight of our NAIDOC celebrations was the amazing contribution of Elizabeth Thaiday (Abia's mum) in educating the community on the Torres Strait Island, Coming of the Light ceremony as well as our very own students learning and then performing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dances at liturgy.
- In Catholic Education Week (CEW), we launched Acts of Kindness passports, encouraging students to make kindness a part of their everyday language. Students who completed 40 acts of kindness were awarded a CEW certificate.



- The Year 5 Leadership Retreat was held at Seville Mercy Conference Centre. It was a moving and memorable day that concluded with a family barbecue. As students left, they were invited to consider whether they were called to lead in 2024. During Mercy Week, a record number of students who responded with a 'yes' to the call were recognised in a simple ceremony in our school's ceremonial space.
- Led by our school leader, Matilda Byrne, the community got behind her band of Year 6 helpers and raised \$950.00 for Camp Quality.
- Mercy melodies were hotly contested in the last week of term, with Year 1 winning the Sr Rovena Duffy trophy for their performance of Shine from the Inside Out.

## Term 4

- Rosary beads were sold for the month of the rosary and used as we joined children worldwide to pray for peace and unity in Israel and Palestine.

- Year 5 students wrote and presented school and house leader speeches, putting themselves forward for election to formal leadership positions. School Leaders were chosen after an interview process, House Leaders from their speeches and voting, and Mercy Leaders from an interview process. Standards were high, and nominations exceeded our expectations. We are in good hands in 2024.
- The Mercy signpost was erected, and the names of places significant to our community started appearing each week. Did you uncover the clues before the names went up?
- Our community's generosity continued until the end of the year with Christmas donations donated to Vinnie's for families in need. Students accompanied their donations with handwritten Cards of Hope that will be popped into each Christmas basket, adding a personal touch.

**Robyn Chambers**  
Assistant Principal Religious Education

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & WELLBEING\*

We had a positive start to the year with the appointment of our new School Counsellor, Alex Laffin. We relocated the School Counsellor from the Admin building to the library to be closer to the Diversity Team. This allowed for more collaboration between staff and increased wellbeing spaces for students.

A peaceful space was created within our tree-house-themed library for children who would prefer to have a quieter time during their play. It includes low sensory input and mindfulness activities like puzzles, meditative music, a large mellow mat, soft cushions, blankets, bean bags and fidgets.

We were excited to successfully obtain a whole school licence for the Smiling Minds Social Emotional Learning platform to be rolled out across our school in 2024.

Regular communication with families has been maintained throughout the year via the SCHOOL TV articles in the weekly Principals Update.

In collaboration with the Leader of Diversity, Individual Behaviour Support Plans (IBSP) were developed with Colin Cutler, our Catholic Education Services (CES) Engagement Consultant. This included hosting Care Team meetings involving parents, teachers, CES staff, school leaders, school counsellors and outside-of-school professionals.

## Multi-Tiered Support System - Engagement

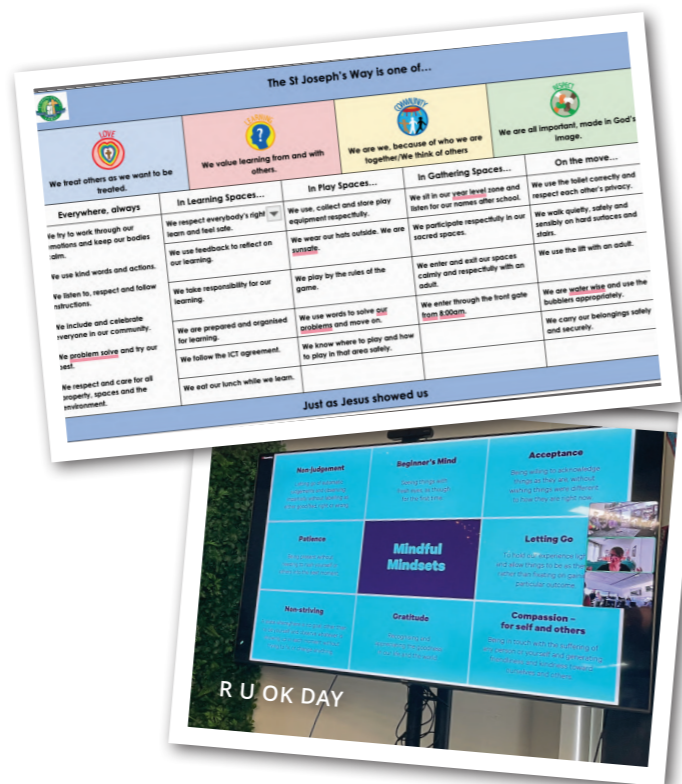
The Multi-Tiered Support System - Engagement (MTSS-e) project was a major focus throughout 2023. The School Engagement Team (SET) comprising of Leadership representative, Leader of Diversity, Counsellor, classroom teachers, OSHC Director and CES Consultant, met three times each term after school to lead the community's upskilling of MTSS-E, creating clear consistent and sustainable learner engagement through a Mercy lens as expressed through the St Joseph's Way of Love, Learning, Community and Respect.

The team worked tirelessly to:

- Examine school data,
- Receive and respond to feedback; and
- Consulted with staff to create processes, practices, and documents to ensure consistency.

Documents include a Behaviour Response Continuum, Reset Class process, Reflection sheets, Out of Play sheets and a School-wide matrix of expected behaviours that align with the St Joseph's Way. The documents have been presented to staff and the School Board for feedback and will be available to the wider school community in 2024.

This year, the SET attended Professional learning led by Dr Shirlalee Poed from UQ on High Impact Engagement Strategies (HIES) and providing intervention and support to Tier 2 behaviours. Tier 2 encapsulates up to 15% of students needing additional help developing positive behaviours. In this tier, interventions include increased instruction, supervision, positive reinforcements, academic support, pre-corrections, and focus on finding the function of the behaviour. This work will continue into 2024.



“ I appreciate the support and communication from classroom teachers and their dedication to improving our children's learning experience. The way the children are cared for as individuals is wonderful. ”

Parent, 2022

## Staff Professional Learning

Staff professional learning in the areas of Wellbeing and Engagement included:

- Identifying minor and major behaviours with SET.
- Developing agreed response continuums for behaviours with SET.
- Catholic Education Services (CES) Restrictive Practices training with consultants Colin Cutler and Mark Bamford.
- Child and Youth Mental Health training on Childhood Anxiety.
- Smiling Mind Introduction training with targeted staff.
- Analysed Student Wellbeing Survey Data.

## Student Learning

Student programs delivered have included:

- Bravehearts - Personal Safety Program for P-2.
- Education about the brain in health lessons.
- Brain Talks facilitated by Pathways to Resilience Consultants.
- Use of the emotional regulation app in the habitats.
- Tier 1 Friendology 101 lessons.
- Evidenced-based lunchtime Social Skills groups based on Friendology 101.
- Healthy and Strong Adventure-Based Social Skills Program with the Physical Education teacher for Years 2-6



## Events

Events included:

- RU Okay Day with the involvement of the Wellbeing Mercy Workers and National Child Protection Week 2023.
- Queensland Mental Health Week with the involvement of the Wellbeing Mercy Workers Administration of the Student Wellbeing Survey.

## Student Feedback Survey

Student voice was captured through the annual feedback survey. Here are some of the highlights:

- First Nations Histories and Cultures: students reported that they experience First Nations culture in their learning and through the special days and celebrations.
- Prayer and Religious Education: students identified that prayer is an important part of their school life and that they are invited to see the relevance of Jesus teachings in the world.
- Technologies: there is great access to technology and digital ways of learning at St Joseph's, and they feel safe accessing online activities while at school.
- Challenge in Learning: most students reported that they are provided with learning that makes them think.
- Respect: students reported that our value of respect is shown at the school.



Refresh Your Mindset on  
**CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR**

To refresh your mindset and prepare to support positive behavior in your students, read this mantra and take some time to think about each line.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> This is someone's child.</li> <li> This is a good person.</li> <li> This student wants to be successful.</li> <li> This student is communicating with their behavior.</li> <li> I can figure out what this student needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> I can set this student up for success.</li> <li> I can choose to respond with care.</li> <li> I can welcome this student into this space.</li> <li> I can forgive past mistakes.</li> <li> I can start fresh each day.</li> </ul>
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# PARENT PARTNERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT IN WELLBEING & LEARNING

## Partnership in Wellbeing and Learning

We know that when parents are engaged in what their child is learning and committed to partnering with teachers, this adds enormous value to their learning outcomes. At Joey's, we are more committed than ever to ensuring families understand their role in this critical partnership and are clear on the expectations we place on them playing this role.

St Joseph's families are deeply interested in their child's wellbeing and education. We are, therefore, committed to working with families to ensure they feel informed, engaged and involved in the partnership.

This year, we placed importance on ensuring families felt more connected and welcome to be involved. Teachers opened up their habitats for the Annual Kick-Off School Year Event early in the year, and this cemented classroom-to-home connections and a commitment to improved classroom-family partnerships in wellbeing and learning. Teachers gave families important information about the learning program, school and habitat expectations and routines.

More effective family-friendly communication from classroom to home has increased interactivity. We have seen an increase in parents' use of SeeSaw and email in supplying teachers with valuable information about their child and asking questions about learning. We have been conscious of the volume of communication between home and school and have established guidelines to ensure that communication is timely and consistent with the values that our school lives by.

## Engagement and Involvement in School Activities

Research from parent engagement is consistent, positive, and convincing – the more involved a parent or other significant family members are in a child's education, the higher the odds that the child will be successful in school and life endeavours.

In recent years, family involvement at St Joseph's had been declining. Our school-based research showed that, despite COVID, this was because families are busier than ever, and their life demands (as they need to be) are a competing priority regarding parent involvement in school events.

With this in mind, we have aimed to ensure that school events are family-friendly, with the least amount of volunteering for busy families as possible.

We have noticed a positive increase in new families participating in family education and sharing workshops, a notable increase in attendance at assemblies and higher than average levels of parents volunteering for classroom-based events or excursions.



## Parent engagement



**4**  
Family events  
by the JCC



**700+**  
Family/teacher engagements  
(i.e., classroom volunteering,  
excursions, conferences)



**A notable  
increase in family  
attendance at  
assemblies**

## Parent Feedback Survey

Based on the Parent Feedback Survey, parents were most satisfied with the following:



### High expectations

of teachers for students to do their best – we know that high expectations yield high results, and our teachers provide the right amount of stretch in learning.



### Expectations

parents indicated that the school staff works well with them to support their child's learning.



### Partnerships

when behavioural expectations are clearly referred to and reinforced, there is greater adherence to them. Parents believe that the expectations expressed in the St Joseph's Way are clear.



### Prayer

families appreciate that prayer is an important part of the school.

# ENGAGING FAMILIES THROUGH PROACTIVE COMMUNICATION

This year, emphasis was placed on improving classroom-to-home and school-to-home communication. Teaching staff continued to improve their Seesaw, in-person, and phone/digital connections with parents.

Leadership focused on improving access to information, clearer in-person messaging and ensuring families had more timely messages.

We learnt that busy families used to in-demand communication channels and mediums expect a certain level of responsiveness from the school. Some of our systems are compliance-based and less savvy than the modern world of digital channels families use; however, we are making positive and much-appreciated changes. Catholic

Education has developed a new parent app that we expect to be introduced in 2024.

In the meantime, we have continued to sharpen our skills, tweak our approach, and focus on creating the best communication possible with our processes and systems to ensure families feel informed.

Enquiry Tracker software continued to assist us to improve the attraction of new families. The quality of the St Joseph's website developed for this was such that it has been used as a benchmark nationally. We have continued to tweak our website to make it more relevant to current and prospective families.

## Communication



Published

**44**

Weekly Principal Updates



**560+**

SeeSaw posts to families



**5,600+**

Emails from teachers to families

# SPORTS, MUSIC & EXTRACURRICULAR

For the size of our school, we pack a powerful punch in extracurricular activities. Research indicates that participation in extracurricular activities positively correlates with students' academic and personal development. Students who participate in extracurricular activities have greater academic success, more significant character development, especially in time-management and leadership skills, positive social development, and greater interest in community involvement. Unsurprisingly, we encourage our learners to participate in activities that enhance their personal and academic achievements.

The year started with a successful Cross Country and Swimming program and the Year 6 School Camp hosted at Camp Paterson in Mareeba.

Students of all ages became very excited about reading books as they participated in book clubs during lunch. They read, recommended, and wrote book reviews.

Years 2, 4, and 6 performed poetry as choric speaking at the Cairns District and Junior Eisteddfod. We were awarded first place for Year 4 and second place for Year 6. The St Joseph's school choir also performed admirably.

We took three chess teams to two interschool competitions across terms 2 and 3, with our Year 6 team winning the B division. We also took out two individual awards for first and third.

The Year 5 and 6 Swimming Carnival was a huge hit at the end of Term 2, as well as the P-6 Athletics Carnival.

In Term 3, our netballers participated in the Mary Mills Cup and Fowler's Cup Competitions.

Year 5 had a positive discovery day at Green Island, experiencing the Great Barrier Reef.

We launched our first Under 8's Day, which was a huge success, with students from Prep-Year 3 engaged in various fun outdoor activities.

In Term 4, the Years 4 and 6 Hockey teams participated in the Cairns Schools' Hockey Competition. Throughout the year, we continued our Strong and Healthy Boys program, which was implemented to help our boys regulate their emotions, communicate more effectively, and build resilience and confidence.

We rounded the year with a Book Club break-up party, Bump Up Morning, and the annual Christmas Concert.



UNDER 8'S DAY



SCHOOL CHOIR



NETBALL TEAM



ATHLETICS DAY

“ St Joseph's feels fresh, modern and inviting when you walk in, and I love my child's habitat - it is so open with many flexible learning spaces. ”

Parent 2022

# BUILDINGS, GROUNDS & FACILITIES



In 2023, minor capital works and improvements were undertaken. The funds raised through the JCC levy and school budget were allocated to prioritise:

- ✓ Engagement of a new grounds contractor
- ✓ Maintenance of the playground and gardens
- ✓ New furniture for some habitats
- ✓ Annual aeration and top dressing of the oval

## FACILITIES PROJECTS

### TERM 1

- Conversion of the green room to the counsellor room and the design of a wellbeing space in the Tree House (Library).
- Working Bee was well attended and transformed our grounds for students
- New Grounds Contractor and Maintenance Contractor engaged

### WHAT'S AHEAD FOR 2024?

- Master Planning for further enhancements, including
- Construction of an outdoor learning habitat for the Kitchen Garden
  - Construction of a new play and exercise equipment area and shade
  - Planning and design of a new administration building



# FINDINGS OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TOOL REVIEW CONDUCTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF EDUCATION RESEARCH



Reviewers Trevor Gordon and Brett Manion of ACER spent time observing and speaking with the school's staff, students, and families. They measured the school's level of performance and improvement against national criteria in nine domains. We are proud to share the following.

## Commendations

- The strong commitment from school leaders and staff to successful learning for students, underpinned by the School Values of Learning, Love, Community, and Respect.
- The embedded understanding by students of the School Values, their links to the appropriate Sisters and what the values look like in practice.
- The commitment by staff and students to enacting the school's mission of 'striving to form positive partnerships' through links to the Mercy sisters, engaging parents, actively participating with Parish mission and life and serving others in the community'.
- The collaborative and collegial culture of mutual trust and support among teachers where new staff are welcomed and made to feel they belong.
- The strong sense of community reported by students, staff, and families, and where parents report that their children are known and cared for by all staff.
- The staff and the School Board's commitment to implementing the School's Annual Improvement Plan (SAIP).
- The sourcing and funding of a literacy consultant to support teachers in developing teaching practices to improve student outcomes in literacy.
- The focus on data analysis and interpretation at both Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) as a tool to trigger in-depth discussions of teaching practices and school policies.
- The allocation of significant resources leading to the identification of the diverse learning needs of students and the effective implementation of interventions to meet these needs.
- The linking of school facilities and artefacts to the school vision, mission and learning as evidenced by learning habitats, First Nations art and Catholic symbolism.
- The development of curriculum planning documents that clarify what (and when) teachers should teach and students should learn.
- The priority given and release time provided for staff to enable a range of opportunities to come together to learn and plan collaboratively.

## AFFIRMATIONS

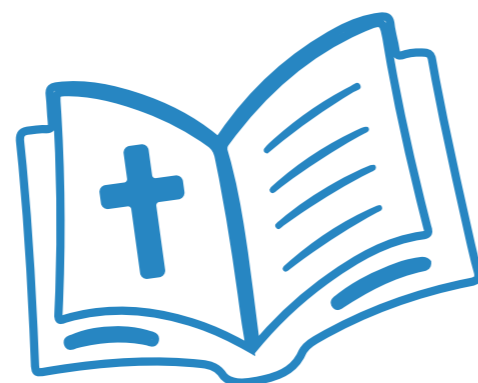
### St Joseph's School Parramatta Park is to be affirmed for

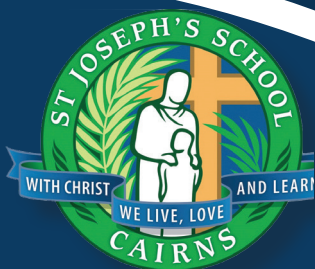
- The gathering of data from the Writing Gain tests to measure improvement in writing skills for individual students and for overall improvement across the school.
- The development by school leaders of a detailed data plan outlining the significant range of data collected and analysed.
- The documentation by teachers in 'grade books' of comprehensive wellbeing and learning data for each of their students.
- The use by many teachers of the standards elaborations as a guide to developing assessment criteria sheets and the implementation of moderation processes to enhance the consistency of judgments concerning Levels of Achievement.
- The development and implementation of mutually beneficial partnerships with organisations, including St Augustine's College, First Nation's Elders, Catholic Charity Organisations and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC), resulting in enhanced student learning and wellbeing.
- The role of the Diversity Team in promoting an inclusive culture and ensuring that all students are engaged in meaningful learning.
- The focus on collaboratively developing and refining supporting documentation to build school-wide clarity and understanding of behaviour support processes as part of the implementation of Multi-Tiered School Support- Engagement (MTSSe).
- The Co-Teaching model that provides the structure within which students are regrouped, and additional support is provided according to the students' levels of learning and readiness.
- The focus on building teaching capability to support the priority areas of Religious Education and English (literacy).

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## St Joseph's School Parramatta Park is to be affirmed for

- Continue systematically reviewing student outcome data to areas for learning improvement. The identified area/s will help inform the school's explicit improvement agenda.
- Establish agreed ambitious and achievable student-centred targets based on current student achievement levels. Build shared ownership of the targets and agreed strategies, ensuring that teachers clearly understand the changes in practice required to achieve them. Establish timelines for action and rigorously monitor the achievement of these targets.
- Define and prioritise an explicit and agreed position on a core set of high-impact pedagogical practices to be consistently implemented by all teachers from Prep to Year 6, supported by aligned professional learning, systematic approaches to the provision of feedback, and the development of processes to monitor progress. Consider how the approach to Co-Teaching might support and maximise the impact of implementation.
- Implement processes to ensure that staff receive high-quality feedback focused on enhancing their professional teaching skills aligned to the school's prioritised pedagogical practices. Document a plan for implementing the feedback processes, including protocols for feedback conversations to ensure they include reflection, analysis of impact, affirmations, and shared agreement on the next steps. Ensure that the process is adequately resourced.





# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

St Joseph's School

With Christ, we *live, love* and *learn*