



2023

Annual Report to the School Community



St Joseph's School

1 - 25 Broadway Street, COBRAM 3644

Principal: Sarah Iddles

Web: www.sjcobram.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 1152, E Number: E3029

Principal's Attestation

I, Sarah Iddles, 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 01 Mar 2024

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 2023 Catholic Education Week theme “Let the Words You Speak Always Be Full of Grace” reminds us of Pope Francis’s call to be a synodal Church in which our understanding of others and respect for diversity is shaped by respectful dialogue borne from deep listening.

Catholic Education Sandhurst continues to be committed to providing contemporary and innovative learning environments that value diversity and promote care, respect and co-operation. In 2023 we launched the CES Ltd Strategic Plan 2023-2027 which sets out directions and priorities that will guide the way in which our Catholic schools pursue excellence in fostering the development of each person in all the dimensions of human existence: intellectual, spiritual, emotional, bodily, relational, environmental and cultural.

Schools have begun the process of developing School Improvement Plans aligning their local strategic planning to the CES Strategic Plan, under the direction of Principal Consultants and in response to school based review findings.

Our governance structure continues to mature, with both CES Ltd and SCECEC Ltd committed to ensuring the highest quality student outcomes in a safe and nurturing environment.

Our learning data has identified pockets of excellence in school communities across the diocese but also highlighted greater scope for improvement in the future. The development of the CES Ltd Catholic Learning and Teaching Framework will promote greater collaboration and focus on student learning growth.

The nationwide shortage of teachers continues to impact all schools demanding new and innovative ways to attract and retain high-quality and committed Catholic educators. Strategic initiatives will prioritize workforce placements that are sustainable and ongoing with particular attention given to our remote and smaller communities.

CES Ltd has a small number of schools with low enrolments and personnel and the Catholic Education Office works closely with leadership in these schools to ensure continued viability. An incentive scheme to attract and retain educators has been initiated and the CES Ltd Board has taken a robust interest in the way small schools are promoted through the CES Ltd Marketing Strategy.

I am extremely grateful for the commitment and professionalism that is clearly identified by the efforts throughout 2023 of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd - our schools and personnel in the Catholic Education Office. They continue to work tirelessly for the students and families in our schools, true bearers of the Mission to which they have been called.

PAUL DESMOND

Executive Director, Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited

Vision and Mission

St. Joseph's endeavors to educate students to become:

- Problem-solving, inquiring & critical thinkers with high competencies in literacy and numeracy.
- Confident, competent, and ethical users of technology.
- Hope-filled, independent, resilient, and confident young people capable of contributing to building a just and fair society.
- Knowledgeable and appreciative of the Catholic faith.
- Socially adept, respectful, just, environmentally conscious, and appreciative of diversity.

St. Joseph's School strives to:

- Create a child-safe and positive environment in which each person academically, socially, spiritually, and emotionally flourishes.
- Be a community where the teachings of Jesus are taught, modelled, and lived.
- Build and value collaborative partnerships with parents, the Parish, and the wider community.
- Build a learning community that fosters best teaching practices to enable improved student learning.

School Overview

St. Joseph's Primary School is part of St. Joseph's Parish, Cobram in north-east Victoria. Our school has grown to a current population of over 300 students and 40 staff. The Mercy Sisters have left characteristics of hard work, community, and dedicated family as strong features of our school.

St. Joseph's is a place where minds are inspired, characters are formed and the traditions and values of the past are the foundation for the future. While our school is rich in history and tradition, we provide a modern and dynamic school environment. St. Joseph's currently comprises 16 permanent classrooms, a state-of-the-art auditorium, a music room, a library and an administration building, staffroom, and offices, as well a beautiful yard for the children to play in.

We recognise that students thrive when provided with excellent teaching staff, resources, facilities, and the support needed to set and reach goals. The school offers a broad, versatile curriculum to equip students for a rapidly changing world and one that helps prepare them for the next step on their life journey. Our aim is to offer an excellent academic program in modern comfortable facilities in an open, safe, and spacious environment.

St. Joseph's offers a Catholic education for all.

Principal's Report

At St. Joseph's School, Cobram, we take great pride in our welcoming school community, engaging environment, and the Catholic culture of our school. We are a community rich in faith and proud to be part of St. Joseph's Parish, with Father Corcoran as our Parish Priest.

2023 has been a year filled with many blessings for all to enjoy. We provided a broad range of learning experiences for students to ensure maximal growth. Learning and Teaching continues to be at the forefront of what we do. We made significant changes to teaching literacy and have seen improved results.

We undertook significant professional development to enhance and develop our literacy and numeracy skills. We are extremely proud of the gains we have made in student learning and student growth. Our Motivated, Actioned Thinker (MAT) dispositions along with our Sister Mary Austin Awards were also celebrated throughout the year.

The Catholic Identity of our school underpins all that we are and all that we do daily. Jesus is at the heart of our Catholic School community. Our school identity statement, 'Always Faithful to God' calls us to live in relationship with Christ every day, not only speaking the Gospel or looking back historically but living with Jesus among us, bringing forth the missionary mandate of the Gospel.

2023 saw the St. Joseph's Fete run with a dedicated and hardworking committee formed. This committee was made up of a core group of parents and friends who saw the need to reignite the flame of the school community and successfully engage the community. The biggest winners were the students who participated in a Fete song and experienced all the day had to offer. The money raised went towards stage two of the shade sails over the Downball courts and the new drinking fountains. We look forward to the Fete continuing in 2024. Thank you to the parents, staff, students, and the wider community for supporting this event.

The school has successfully established an Advisory Council. We thank the members of the Advisory Council for their time, dedication, and their willingness to play an important guiding and supporting role to the Principal.

The inaugural members were:

Angelo Siciliano - Chair

Mary-Kate O'Brien

Olivia VanEvery

Rebecca Robertson

Gemma Tilley

Dean Harris

May God bless you and hold you in His loving care,

Sarah Iddles

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To reintroduce the FIRE Carrier Program into our school

To continue our journey as a Catholic Earth Care School

To provide a range of experiences for our students to enhance their understanding and connection with the Catholic Faith

To provide opportunities for staff to gain accreditation hours through Catholic Identity PD

Achievements

By Term 3, after planning and preparation for both staff and students, we had 21 staff and 36 students commissioned as FIRE Carriers in a smoke ceremony hosted by Michael & Troy from the CES. Students and staff were given the choice and we feel that because of the teaching/learning and experiences provided throughout the year to share the message and stories, there was a greater awareness of the importance of knowing and understanding the Aboriginal culture and history.

Every year level in the school participated in the Catholic Earth Care Schools Art Competition (hosted by Caritas Australia). Each year level entered different types of artwork that had been worked on throughout the term. Many schools across Australia entered the competition and our Grade 1/2 entry won first place.

Throughout the year we celebrated a range of events through Mass, Liturgy, and Prayer. We continued to host our annual Holy Week Liturgy at school, inviting parents, friends, and parishioners to join. We also celebrated Catholic Education Week with a whole school Liturgy and celebration.

36 participants took part in the preparation and celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

24 participants took part in the preparation and celebration of the Sacraments of Confirmation & Eucharist.

Our school took part in the Catholic Identity Review in Term 4 which was a great opportunity for us to reflect on all of the amazing things we do, as well as highlight areas which we can look to improve and enhance in 2024.

As a staff, we were provided with the opportunity to participate in a minimum of 10 hours of Catholic Identity PD throughout the year.

Value Added

The dream of the FIRE Carrier program is to promote respect, fairness, and inclusion for Aboriginal people. The FIRE Carrier promotes enculturation and reconciliation in our school and students showed an increased understanding of this significance.

The Catholic Earth Care Art Competition saw our classrooms focused on developing students' understanding and appreciation for Our Common Home & God's Creations.

We achieved our annual goals, both to reintroduce the FIRE Carrier Program & achieve higher levels in our Earth Care journey.

All staff have made progress in attaining their accreditation hours for maintaining their accreditation to teach in a Catholic School.

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Elevate learning excellence through an embedded guaranteed and viable curriculum.

To develop a coherent sequenced plan for curriculum delivery.

Develop a two year Curriculum Domain Map F-6.

Implement Victorian Curriculum Mathematics 2.0

Agreed and implemented Curriculum Domain Map

Mathematics 2.0 Scope and Sequence

Whole school planning template

Whole school lesson structure

Achievements

Visible Learning has taught us the importance of data and evidence based practice when making decisions. Data remains an integral element of the decision making process at St. Joseph's. Collaborative planning continues to be an integral part of our school learning and teaching culture. Throughout collaborative planning time and PLC meetings, learning communities and leadership regularly tap into the advice, expertise and support of the consultants at Catholic Education Sandhurst.

The Science of Learning remains the driver for English. All staff continued professional development (Little Learners Love Literacy - LLLL and Jocelyn Seamer) to support their understanding and implementation of the structured literacy approach. Assessments were conducted and data was utilised to support the planning and teaching of Literacy. MacqLit was identified as a program that would benefit students who required intervention for reading, predominantly decoding.

Staff have continued learning about evidence based approaches to teaching Mathematics. This was regularly supported by consultants from the Catholic Education Sandhurst who attended planning sessions and presented at staff meetings. The school is now using a consistent Mathematics planner and approach which incorporates explicit teaching, rich learning tasks and enabling/extending prompts. Our Leader of Mathematics attended all

Numeracy network days. Much work was also completed around the familiarisation of Victorian Curriculum Mathematics 2.0 in readiness for implementation in 2024.

As a school we continued to complete and collect data through the ACER PAT suite. We spent regular staff meetings and PLCs engaged in data dialogues regarding this data and how it could be best utilised to impact student learning outcomes.

Curriculum overhaul:

We spent a vast majority of Term 4 engaged in robust professional dialogue around the revision of our schools' 'Philosophy of Learning'. This discussion then led to the redevelopment of the school's Domain Map which scopes out the teaching of all domains across a two year cycle; inclusive of the Source of Life and RRRRs.

Consistent whole school documentation was developed using the Victorian Curriculum Templates as a guide. These documents include Year and Term Overviews, Domain Scope and Sequences and Unit Planners. Part of this process was supported by CES Learning and Teaching consultants.

Learning adjustments continued to be looked at and be improved. Our 'Leader of Learning Diversity' led several staff meetings and PLC meetings to engage in a collaborative conversation, always student-focused. We are committed to ensuring a high level focus and support is placed on learning adjustments and Personal Learning Plans (PLPs). We have a committed team of teachers who support the Leader of Learning Diversity. Program Support Groups (PSGs) are conducted each term which strengthens the learning partnerships between allied health professionals, home and school for these students. LSOs supported teachers with PLPs in providing regular PLP goal observations to allow for adjustments and or evaluations.

We continued to structure our Senior Learning Community to have straight Year 5 and 6. The Year 6s continued to take on extra responsibilities running the canteen, lunchtime jobs and just to name a few. High expectations have continued around and student leadership development was once again offered to the students through the Values for Life Program.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students in Year 3 and 5 participated in NAPLAN for 2023.

As a school, we completed PAT Mathematics, PAT Reading, PAT Social Wellbeing, PAT Spelling Skills and PAT Grammar

PAT Maths - Average whole school effect size is 0.88 which is the equivalent of 2 years growth

PAT Reading - Average whole school effect size is 0.74 which is the equivalent of 2 years growth

PAT Vocab Skills - First year we completed this test. Two data sets are required to calculate effect size

PAT Spelling Skills - First year we completed this test. Two data sets are required to calculate effect size

Teachers have looked at the data and completed an online digital red book to keep track of the data going forward.

NCCD moderation was conducted and all audits were passed.

NAPLAN Graphs - Deidentified

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	418	59%
	Year 5	469	52%
Numeracy	Year 3	407	73%
	Year 5	457	61%
Reading	Year 3	429	81%
	Year 5	477	75%
Spelling	Year 3	422	72%
	Year 5	465	61%
Writing	Year 3	442	87%
	Year 5	452	61%

*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2023 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

At St Joseph's each person is called to understand, value and actively promote the wellbeing of all members of the schools community.

To provide information to our community in regards to RRRR, Play Therapy and other social emotional programs being taught in the school.

Achievements

The Pastoral Wellbeing Leader worked closely with John Mitchell the schools Catholic Education Sandhurst consultant for Pastoral Wellbeing. John regularly met with the Pastoral Wellbeing Leader to ensure all processes and procedures were correctly implemented. John supported the Pastoral Wellbeing leader and Behaviour Support Team (BST) during fortnightly meetings.

Our Wellbeing Officers were responsible for liaising with DHS and other agencies, working with vulnerable families, monitoring attendance, running Season for Growth, Peaceful Kids and social skills sessions.

The BST continued to meet frequently to put supports in place for teachers to use with students who are presenting undesirable behaviours. Each term, escalation plans were updated and adjusted for any students who required them. Yard plans were made and implemented and alternative programs were required for some students. Using SIMON to document behaviour incidents was continued and data was used to inform decisions.

Coco, our school dog, continues to be a support for students. Many students incorporated walking her and caring for her into their support plans. She also spent time in classrooms and on the yard with students as needed.

The daily breakfast program is offered to students and led by an LSOs. The students and

staff have noticed the positive results this has produced. St. Joseph's is very appreciated of the local businesses that donate to this program.

The outcomes of the RRRR was taught once a week by specialist teachers for Grades 3-6, with the exception of Topic 7 and 8 which was taught in Term 4. F-2 continue to generate their own throughlines in conjunction with VicCurriculum and teaching RRRRs as a stand alone subject area. Ditto Bravehearts Show performed for students in F-2.

Our Whole School Positive Behaviour Intervention in Schools (PBIS) incentive system continued to award house points for displaying expected behaviours and the Student Leadership Group tallied and displayed the points for each house. They also helped to choose and advertise whole school rewards. Feedback from staff and students in regards to house points and rewards has been positive and will be continued. Many children gather to see the points be upgraded and are awaiting the announcement of the House Cup trophy.

Cybersafety and how to respond to online bullying was again addressed as part of the iPad Learner's Licence and the Matrix was adjusted to accommodate new learning.

A Pastoral Wellbeing Team continued to meet fortnightly to ensure all matters under the Pastoral Wellbeing banner are met and dealt with accordingly. This team includes the Deputy Principal, Pastoral Wellbeing Leader, John Mitchell and the Wellbeing Team. Attendance was a major focus of the team this year. Data around this was collated and presented to leadership, staff and the Advisory Council.

St. Joseph's School, Cobram received funding to implement Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHIPS). The VIT registered staff member employed to roll out this initiative introduced Ready to Learn Scales, and Toolkits into the classrooms that students were taught to use to self regulate. These supported the Wellbeing Officers in that some students no longer required as much support as they were beginning to build self regulation strategies. The leader of MHIPS attended regular 'Community of Practice' meetings with MHIPS colleagues and professional development days and online training modules.

We participated in and passed the Child Safety Governance audit offered by CES.

All staff completed relevant and mandatory training such as Restraint and Seclusion, Child Safety Read and Understanding, Mandatory Reporting and Discrimination Act to name a few.

Value Added

Behaviour Support Team continue to meet regularly and collaborate with class teachers to put supports in place for students. Simon is used to track behaviour incidences, which in turn drives decision making and allocation of resources. Professional development focused on developing positive relationships with students and using data to inform supports is ongoing.

The daily breakfast program is offered to students.

In 2023, we had two Wellbeing Officers work 3 and 4 days a week. In Term 4, we employed another Wellbeing Officer in preparation and hand over for one Wellbeing Officers intended move away.

We continue to develop resources for lessons and videos to teach social skills for Always Safe, Always Respectful and Always Learning. These are our Weekly Blitz. At the beginning of each session an announcement Blitz script is read by the Principal or Deputy Principal over the PA system.

Student Satisfaction

In 2023, we had a yearly average 88.29% student attendance. This demonstrates that students are satisfied with their learning environments and feel safe and happy to attend school.

We have an average of 12 students attend the breakfast program each morning, some of these students also utilise the space to make lunch.

We completed the ORIMA survey and this indicated:

77% of our students believe there are supportive adults at our school
 71% of our students enjoy being together with students in their class
 67% of our students believe that the adults at our school care about them as a student and their future.
 63% of our students believe they belong to our school

Student Attendance

Students' attendance is recorded on SIMON. A text message is sent to parents each day at 9:30am if children's absences have not been recorded. The Wellbeing Officer checks these daily and contacts parents if the school has un-notified absences. Our classroom teachers also keep an eye on absence percentages on SIMON when marking rolls and will flag to leadership as needed. In 2023, we had a yearly average 88.29% student attendance. The Deputy Principal, Leader of Pastoral Wellbeing and Wellbeing Officers work in close consultation with Catholic Education Sandhurst around this topic.

We keep a whole school weekly attendance spreadsheet as well as an individual attendance monitoring log to track student attendance and flag any at risk students who may require individualised plans.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	90.9%
Y02	88.8%
Y03	90.5%
Y04	89.5%
Y05	87.7%
Y06	87.2%
Overall average attendance	89.1%

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY

Continue to embed evidence-based approaches to develop better learning outcomes for students and teachers.

To develop a whole school approach to understanding and implementing a structured literacy approach.

Using an evidence-based approach to implement relevant and meaningful Mathematics tasks.

Achievements

Agreed upon non-negotiables for teaching literacy across the school

Professional development for all staff in teaching literacy

A whole school assessment schedule, reflecting the new literacy approach

Data analysis protocols

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning

List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023

- * Analysis of data at all levels of the school to improve student learning outcomes
- * Leadership Days
- * Budget workshops
- * First Aid
- * C.P.R, anaphylaxis, and Asthma - whole school
- * Child-safe training
- * Writing analysis and moderation
- * Network Days for roles; Principal - Director's Briefings, Deputy Principal, REC, Pastoral
- * Well-being Leader, Learning Diversity, Numeracy.
- * Science of Reading - all staff
- * Little Learners Love Literacy
- * Struggling Readers - Jocelyn Seamer

- * RE accreditation
- * VIT Provision Teacher Assignments
- * VIT Registration criteria
- * Graduate Conference
- * Critical Incident training
- * Epilepsy Refresher

- School closure day on

- *Rich Learning Tasks - Mathematics

- *Literacy Jocelyn Seamer

- *RE Accreditation hours - Tell the Good News - Maria Ford

- *Restraint and Seclusion

- Escalation Plans

- Break Procedures - John Mitchell

- NAPLAN - Catherine Bonham

- Mathematics - Bernadette Pearce

- What is Liturgy? - Maria Ford

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
NSIT Review Preparation	
Evergreen Teacher - Jocelyn Seamer	
Acer - PAT Data	
Planning at Liturgy - Maria Ford	
Master Plan	
Behaviour Project - Swinbourne University	
Cultural Plans - Possum Skin Cloak - Jye Warren	
Catholic Identity Review Preparation	
Curriculum Mapping Overhaul	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	42
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$664.34

Teacher Satisfaction

Staff had an opportunity to meet with the principal to gain feedback and set goals.

Staff indicated that leadership was supportive and understanding during the year and indicated the following: They felt supported during the year with behaviour, professional development, and parents, as leadership had systems and structures in place to access information:

* I felt that communication was always at the forefront and this made life easier, as I knew what was going on in a timely manner.

* I felt that I was well-supported in my well-being, as leadership constantly supported me.

Staff also appreciated the kindness that was shown towards them, this was evident in a meeting with them all individually each term.

Data from ORIMA survey

75% of our staff believe it is ok to make a mistake at school and it won't be held against you
 75% of our staff believe school leaders are knowledgeable about learning and teaching practices.

78% of staff believe school leaders protect and maintain their team's meeting time

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	3.0%
Graduate	12.1%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	51.5%
Advanced Diploma	30.3%
No Qualifications Listed	3.0%

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	33
Teaching Staff (FTE)	26.5
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	13
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	14.9
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

For the school community of St. Joseph's to be collaborative, inviting, and work together educationally, spiritually, and socially for the good of all members of our community.

Be a community where the teachings of Jesus are taught, modelled, and lived.

Build and value collaborative partnerships with parents, the Parish, and the wider community.

Achievements

The advisory council welcomed in two new members, and operated very successfully throughout 2023, advising the school on parent voice, including school fees and master plan.

Reestablishing a 'Parents and Friends' group called 'the Dough Raisers'. This community of parents decided an online messenger platform was the best fit for a post-COVID parent group.

This group supported many school events and was instrumental in raising funds for the students.

The Fete Committee continued to grow in strength, running the sequential 2023 Fete. St. Joseph's Fete is well known throughout the district. Many families and staff felt it necessary we continue the tradition of organising a Fete for 2024. Preparation, support, and meetings began in late 2022 for this to happen.

Parent Satisfaction

Parents are surveyed and asked for opinions throughout the year on various aspects of school life the advisory council is always speaking on behalf of the parent body in our meetings. At St. Joseph's we have an open-door policy that allows parents to come and be heard at any time.

During 2023, parents were welcomed back to parent-teacher-student interviews, and to enhance engagement we held them in the Josephenium. These were available face-to-face or via Google Meet, with a high success rate.

Below are some of the comments from parents that indicated satisfaction with the school:

- * Thank you for all you and your staff are doing to support us at school
- * We appreciate the 'feeling' and support that we always receive when coming into the school
- * The students are so happy and engaged at school and the junior school reading has made a big difference.

Results from the ORIMA survey

83% of our parents, based on their experience of our school would recommend the school to prospective families

79% of our parents believe their child feels they belong at school

79% of our parents believe students show respect to one and other

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.sjcofram.catholic.edu.au