



Diocese of Sale  
Catholic Education Ltd

# 2023

## Annual Report to the School Community



### St Joseph's School

1-3 Bridge Street, KORUMBURRA 3950  
Principal: Sharon Anderson  
Web: [www.sjkorumburra.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sjkorumburra.catholic.edu.au)  
Registration: 999, E Number: E4010

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## Principal's Attestation

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I, Sharon Anderson, 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 10 May 2024

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## About this report

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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](#).

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## Governing Authority Report

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The 2023 school year marked my first year as Director of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Sale following the retirement of previous Director, Ms Maria Kirkwood who served in the role for ten years.

Throughout the year, I had the pleasure of visiting each of our 38 Catholic primary schools and five Catholic secondary schools. It was inspiring to witness the dedication of staff and the wonderful work taking place to provide a high-quality Catholic education for our students in a faith-filled environment.

Working with the Bishop, the Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (DOSCEL) Board, DOSCEL Secretariat, schools and parishes, the mission to offer every student the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God while achieving their personal best, remained at the forefront of our work.

Investing in school staff and leadership teams to promote expert learning and teaching practices was a top priority. The nation-wide shortage of teachers presented challenges, but we were committed to finding new and innovative ways to attract and retain high quality, committed Catholic educators.

Reflecting on the 2023 year, we have much to be proud of. Ongoing significant investment in new learning facilities and refurbishments through the Capital Grants Program and school community funding continued across our schools to enhance learning spaces and amenities to benefit students and staff.

During 2023, 13 blessing and opening ceremonies were held to celebrate school projects completed over the past three years, while the commencement of three new major projects were recognised with sod-turning ceremonies.

We were particularly excited to begin construction on the new St Josephine Bakhita Catholic Primary School at the newly established Five Farms estate in Clyde North. This will be the 44th school within the network of primary and secondary schools operated by DOSCEL.

The care, safety, and wellbeing of children and young people remain a central focus and fundamental responsibility. During Child Safety Week 2023, schools and parishes were invited by DOSCEL to showcase their innovative projects and activities to keep young people safe. Many of the projects were developed by young people themselves. A video and education resource were created from the submissions to share the work and promote awareness of child safety.

Our Catholic schools continue to be places of learning and enrichment, nurturing students in their spiritual, academic, physical, and emotional development.

I extend my deep appreciation to everyone involved in Catholic education within the Diocese of Sale for their commitment to our vocation of Inspiring Faith, Inspiring Learning.

Paul Velten

Director of Catholic Education - Diocese of Sale

Chief Executive Officer - Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited

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## Vision and Mission

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At St Joseph's, we are a welcoming, nurturing and forward thinking learning community with a focus on excellence where the Catholic Faith is at the heart of our identity.

At St Joseph's, we aim to:

- Invite our school community to develop a close personal relationship with God and deepen their understanding and experience of the Catholic Faith.
- Build a community of responsible, resilient, self motivated learners who strive towards reaching their fullest potential.
- Nurture the skills of collaboration, co-operation and problem solving to be ready and prepared for a world that is constantly changing.
- Welcome, encourage and celebrate each person's strengths, including all people for who they are.
- Be gentle and mindful stewards for the people and environment of our world.

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## School Overview

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St Joseph's has a long and proud history in the beautiful township of Korumburra in Victoria's South Gippsland. It was established in 1914 by the Good Samaritan Sisters and since then, has held a strong, highly respected presence in the community.

The school has undergone significant renovations which proudly integrate a sense of the old and the new in a vibrant and engaging learning environment.

As a Catholic school in the Diocese of Sale, we service the educational needs of the families of Korumburra and the surrounding, largely farming, areas. Increasingly, we are welcoming families who have moved from the city seeking a more rural or regional lifestyle.

Our students are at the centre of everything we do. We know our children and hold high expectations for each of them. Their academic expectations are met via dedicated teachers who deliver the Victorian Curriculum with passion and expertise. We acknowledge the variation that exists amongst our students and adjust learning experiences to meet them at their point of need and ability.

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## Principal's Report

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2023 was a year of consolidation for St Joseph's resulting in stronger academic results and a settled, happy climate in the school.

The "Covid years" seem to be fading into our memories as we move forward with confidence and a renewed direction.

Our focus remains on the explicit teaching of core literacy and numeracy skills, inquiry learning to build knowledge and a rich, dialogical Religious Education program. This year, we have been trialling more targeted literacy approaches in our middle and senior school and we are beginning to see strong results.

Our students experienced a broad curriculum including specialist classes in Italian, Physical Education, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and Art. Over the course of the year, our students participated in an intensive swimming program and a variety of sporting opportunities with other schools. In Term 3, we engaged the talents of "Footsteps" to facilitate a weekly dance program which culminated in a brilliant concert for the children's families. A highlight for us was our whole school excursion to Scienceworks as a culmination to our Science knowledge units.

In line with our annual improvement plan goals, our staff (Teachers and Education Support Officers) participated in ongoing development; professional learning team and staff meetings each week, whole day collaborative planning and opportunities to participate in learning beyond the school environment.

I am grateful for the many contributions made by so many to our school. I wish to particularly acknowledge our dedicated staff and our supportive families who are at the heart of our existence. Finally, thank you to our inspiring students, who constantly remind us that the future is full of hope.



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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

This year, we aimed to create Religious Education units which were relevant to our students, encouraged dialogue and were built on an Inquiry approach. This proved to be challenging but also evoked some thoughtful and rich questions from our staff. Together, we developed a consistent planning model which is providing support and clarity for our teachers.

Another goal was to build relationships with our Parish and with the arrival of a new Parish Priest, we found new opportunities to connect.

### Achievements

- Several exemplary units of learning were developed under the guidance of our Religious Education Leader (REL), Catherine Riseley.
- Whole day staff professional learning facilitated by our REL with support from DOSCEL personnel.
- A collaborative process of preparation (brainstorming) before a unit of work followed by a dedicated reflection session is giving confidence to our teachers.
- We celebrated school Masses regularly on a Wednesday and invited Parishioners to join us.
- Whilst the number of students preparing and receiving the Sacraments was reduced, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation were offered.
- Over the course of the year, we came together as a school to celebrate St Joseph's Day and other feast days. With a focus on social justice, we also celebrated Harmony Day, Reconciliation Week, Catholic Education Week and Mission Week.
- A highlight was a presentation to our staff from our Parish Priest, Father Stanly Devasia, who continues to encourage us in our mission as a Catholic school.

### Value Added

- The opportunity to celebrate the Sacraments with an invitation to Parishioners to join us.
- Staff prayer remained a priority. Staff were encouraged to plan and present prayer at the beginning of meetings.
- Classrooms included a dedicated prayer table and space.
- Our new Parish Priest, Father Stanly received an open invitation to visit our school and work directly with the children in the classroom.
- Social Justice was again a focus with the celebration of days such as Sorry Day and Harmony Day.

- Children were invited to join a "Mini Vinnies" group facilitated by teacher, Emily Sherriff.
- Outreach into the community with visits to the local nursing home were a joyful highlight.

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## Learning and Teaching

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Students at St Joseph's achieve learning growth and experience success through exposure to high quality teaching practices within a safe and inclusive environment.

In 2023, we focused our attention on strong research in the area of learning and teaching. We engaged in rich professional learning, particularly in the area of cognition, i.e. understanding how the brain absorbs, processes and retains information. This has impacted the way we understand our students as learners and ultimately on the way we teach them. We are practising explicit direct instruction across the school, but particularly in the junior school where phonics is a key part of our literacy program. As the children move through the school, we are layering this with an inquiry approach which encourages them to apply their learning in meaningful and realistic contexts.

Our goal will always be to build the expertise of our teachers so that they can improve the learning outcomes of all students in their care. As a whole staff, we continue to learn about how to collect, interrogate and respond to data. Data which is relevant and accurate informs our teaching plans and so, we are vigilant about the programs and tools we use.

### Achievements

2023 saw our staff build their knowledge and expertise across the Victorian Curriculum. We paid particular attention to understanding how children learn and began adapting our pedagogies to reflect this.

We continued to focus on writing and saw significant improvements in the output (and quality) of our students. This year, with an eye on the explicit teaching of reading, we began to discuss how to assess student progress more effectively, especially in the middle and senior spaces. We trialed PLD as a resource in our year 5/6 class and intend to extend this to our 3/4 level in 2024.

We were aware of the introduction of a new Mathematics Curriculum (2.0) and ensured that our Learning Leaders attended briefings about it.

Staff are now more confident with the Diocesan assessment schedule and are engaged in collegial conversations about the data they are collecting. It is obvious that these conversations are becoming easier and as a result, teaching is more targeted and relevant.

Our Learning and Teaching Leader, Carole Livesey has once again provided expert guidance which is seeing an accelerated rate of development in our staff. The trust that has been built

has created a climate where by, once difficult conversations, are seen as opportunities for improvement.

## Student Learning Outcomes

NAPLAN was administered across our Year 3 and 5 cohorts and reflected steady growth, particularly in writing where our emphasis has been.

In 2023, resources were allocated to our intervention program in the form of daily small group learning and tutoring. This model is now well embedded in our school and is allowing us to differentiate the curriculum according to individual student need.

As previously reported, we are looking forward to stronger assessment results as our younger students, who have experienced a more explicit and direct approach to teaching, move through the school.

<b>NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Year level</b>	<b>Mean Scale score</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	407	67%
	Year 5	498	70%
Numeracy	Year 3	421	83%
	Year 5	505	90%
Reading	Year 3	410	83%
	Year 5	524	80%
Spelling	Year 3	400	67%
	Year 5	505	60%
Writing	Year 3	435	92%
	Year 5	509	70%

\*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.

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## Student Wellbeing

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Wellbeing and student safety are a priority at our school and are standard items at every staff meeting.

In 2023, we focused on the most recent Child Safe Legislation and updated our policies in a response to these. This included a greater awareness of our Indigenous students to ensure that their needs are being met in a culturally safe and appropriate way.

Staff completed child safe learning modules as well as updated their knowledge and practice around their obligation as mandatory reporters.

We continued to foster strong parent/school relationships and created opportunities for our families to meet both at school and offsite.

Our Seasons for Growth program continued and provided support to children who were experiencing significant change, grief or loss.

This year, we changed our student leadership model to include more students and as a result we are seeing greater practical input from the children.

### Achievements

- Our Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour is now well embedded in the school. We are proud of the behaviour standards we have set and of the way the children are responding to these expectations.
- We adjusted the way we record behaviour on SIMON (our online platform) so that it is more accessible and streamlined.
- More families are now attending our fortnightly assemblies.

### Value Added

- Whole school excursions and incursions
- A dedicated dance program which built confidence and a strong sense of teamwork and inclusion in our children
- Wellbeing activities during Harmony Day
- Father's Day Breakfast
- Mother's Day Dinner
- Grandparents Day
- Open Days with tours led by the children

### Student Satisfaction

Through the Insight SRC survey our Years 3 - 6 children expressed a general satisfaction with their school experience. They recorded less of a connection to Religious Education, but enjoyed the opportunities they were given to take part in Social Justice activities.

### Student Attendance

Attendance is recorded via our online platform (SIMON) and parents are able to log into PAM where they can record their child's absence and the reason for it. When this is not done by a parent, an office staff member follows up with an SMS initially and then a phone call.

Extended absences are followed up by the principal and in the case of school refusal, supports are provided to the family and the child.

<b>Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level</b>	
Y01	93.7%
Y02	92.6%
Y03	91.1%
Y04	87.3%
Y05	90.3%
Y06	88.3%
Overall average attendance	90.5%

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## Leadership

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Leadership at St Joseph's is about creating the conditions whereby our students can flourish. This means ensuring that the structures we have in place are transparent, supportive and reliable.

Our goals for greater collaboration and consistency across the school are coming to fruition via weekly Professional Learning Team Meetings and scheduled meetings between our Leader of Learning and Teaching and our classroom teachers.

This year, we extended leadership roles to more staff which resulted in a palpable sense of ownership of our work. A "wellbeing leader" was appointed whose brief was to oversee more than just the management of behaviour. Their work included child safety as well as the creation of activities with a wellbeing focus. Our work continues in the the development of a social capabilities scope and sequence document.

Our broadened leadership team attended DOSCEL learning and teaching days each term and shared the information at whole staff meetings. This again, provided opportunities to "lead" and "influence".

### Achievements

- More staff presented at staff meetings, building their own skills and sharing knowledge in an authentic way.
- Pre planning of Professional Learning Team and Staff Meeting agendas meant greater rigour and more effective outcomes.
- Fortnightly Leadership Team (executive) meetings were scheduled and prioritised.
- Opportunities to lead were offered to staff in a variety of areas. Whilst not taken up by all, some staff appreciated the chance to practice and develop their skills.

<b>Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning</b>	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023	
<p>Whole day/whole staff PL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cognition and Learning</li> <li>- Knowledge units</li> <li>- Religious Education - Inquiry process</li> <li>- Sharing Best Practice - All of staff conference day</li> <li>- Learning and Teaching - DOSCEL network days (each term)</li> <li>- Mental Health</li> <li>- OH&amp;S</li> <li>- Various subject specific meetings e.g. LOTE network meeting/PE and Sports meetings</li> <li>- Mathematics</li> <li>- First Aid and CPR</li> </ul> <p>Online Learning Modules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Literacy</li> <li>- Child Safety</li> <li>- NCCD</li> <li>- Diabetes Management</li> </ul>	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	19
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$300.00

### Teacher Satisfaction

Teachers expressed high levels of satisfaction via the Insight SRC survey, in particular in the area of Supportive Leadership. There continues to be an upward trend across all aspects of the survey.



All staff have the opportunity to meet with members of the leadership team to express concerns and to celebrate successes.

<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	20.0%
Graduate	15.0%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	45.0%
Advanced Diploma	20.0%
No Qualifications Listed	0.0%

<b>Staff Composition</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	11
Teaching Staff (FTE)	6.7
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	9
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	8.1
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

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## Community Engagement

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

We have been deliberate in our efforts to engage with the wider community by participating in community held events and holding a place at the table of local organisations. We continue to be outward facing and welcoming to all.

### Achievements

Once again, we attended the ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day services, events at Coal Creek and took the children to visit our local nursing home. Our Principal and our Foundation Teacher are representatives on the "Karmai" (the local child care organisation) Board and we have been part of formal conversations with the Shire about the future of young people in our area.

Our reach beyond the school gate continues to be enhanced by our presence on social media platforms like Facebook and we have once again, engaged with our local newspaper, "The Sentinel".

### Parent Satisfaction

It has taken some time for our families to re engage with school life, but in 2023, we saw the spark return.

Our Parents and Friends group reformed and continued to meet regularly. We are grateful for their support and encouragement and look forward to them thriving into the future.

Our School Advisory Committee met regularly across the year and provided excellent advice to the Principal.

Feedback, via the Insight SRC survey reflected parents who felt confident in the education that we are providing at St Joseph's. They recognise that their children are learning in a safe environment and acknowledged that they have many avenues by which they can communicate and be heard.

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## Financial Performance

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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](http://www.acnc.gov.au).

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at [www.sjkorumburra.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sjkorumburra.catholic.edu.au)