

# 2020

## ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

SERVICE.LEADERSHIP.JUSTICE

*Together in Christ*



### St Columba's Primary School

Lockyer Street, ADAMSTOWN 2289

Principal: Jenny Howard

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



[www.mn.catholic.edu.au](http://www.mn.catholic.edu.au)

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## About this report

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St Columba's Primary School (the 'School') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO), Maitland-Newcastle. The CSO as the 'approved authority' for the diocesan registration system formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act (1990), is responsible for monitoring the compliance of member schools in the manner that has been approved by the Minister of Education. The Annual School Report (the 'Report'), provides parents and the wider community with fair, accurate and objective information about various aspects of school performance and development. Additionally, the Report complements and is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the School community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students.

Detailed information about the School's improvement journey is documented in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) which is developed, implemented and evaluated in consultation with key stakeholders. Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the School directly or by visiting the School's website. Information can be also be obtained from the My School website.

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## Message from key groups in our community

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### Principal's Message

Our students have enjoyed success in their achievements across the academic, cultural and sporting areas. They flourish in an environment that provides expansive learning activities and the opportunity to perform and grow. The school has a rich spiritual life that celebrates our Catholic traditions, is centred on the teachings of Jesus and the charism of our founders, the Mercy Sisters.

We are guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ, especially focused on through daily prayer, meditation, staff and student opportunities to recognise and develop their spirituality, liturgical celebrations and by embedding the Making Jesus Real philosophy in all that we do.

Our school community has benefited from the strong support of parents and the wider community. Working together, the staff and parents have been able to bring about significant improvements in student achievement, student leadership and teacher capacity through the implementation of our School Improvement Plan(SIP) and its many initiatives. This continues with the staff working as a Professional Learning Team which has focused on analysis of school results and the development of Writing. As a Gifted Education Lead School (GEL) we have continued to our process for identification of gifted students and maintained our focus to better meeting the needs of these students.

### Parent Body Message

2020 was a very different year for our parent community as Covid impacted school involvement so heavily. Our P&F stepped back from most functions and fundraising during the year and meetings that were able to be held were carried out via Zoom. The P&F met with Cath Garrett-Jones to discuss the model of P&F for the school. This will be further reflected on in 2021, once we are able to meet in person and include more families again.

St Columba's maintained a positive relationship with a very supportive parent community through a switch to online sharing of school events and ongoing updates of the situation.

### Student Body Message

St Columba's students proudly seek to live out the values taught in the Making Jesus Real Program. This asks them to act and see in others the values we teach and links faith and spirituality with the practicality of everyday life. We also promote the Mercy values according to the traditions of the school history.

St Columba's aims to give every Year 6 student the experience of leadership within the school. The school formally inducts the whole Year 6 cohort into their leadership roles at the Opening School Mass. Their leading of the school assembly is an opportunity to demonstrate their wonderful leadership skills and the pride they have in their school. This year meant that students had to adapt to presenting information digitally to continue sharing with our parent community, as they were unable to be on the school site. Student leaders are expected to work cooperatively and support their school, taking on and sharing the many responsibilities that go with the role.

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## School Features

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### **History of the school**

Established in the 1890's by the Sisters of Mercy, St. Columba's Primary School continues to serve the needs of the Catholic community of Adamstown. The school proudly maintains its close connection with the Mercy order and its charism. Since the retirement of Sr. Mary Regina Donoghue in December 1986, the school has been staffed by lay teachers. In 2011 the school underwent a major refurbishment and building program under the BER (Building Education Revolution) which replaced 3 classrooms, created a new library, canteen, toilet block redesigned the upper primary rooms and added a COLA area. Two demountable classrooms with additional outdoor learning space have been added to our playground to accommodate our students. Enrolment stands at 230 students with two streams in two grades and strong enrolment in all other classes.

### **Location/Drawing Area**

St Columba's Primary School mainly draws students from the suburbs of Adamstown and Adamstown Heights, Kotara, Merewether, Broadmeadow and Hamilton. However, we also have students who live in other areas and where family circumstances require a placement in our school.

Our school is a part of the All Saints Blackbutt South Parish which also comprises the communities of St Kevin's at Cardiff and St James' at Kotara South. All three schools have active church and school communities.

St Columba's is part of the Central Region, one of the six geographic regions that make up the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and feeds into St Pius X High School.

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## Student Profile

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### Student Enrolment

The School caters for students in Years K – 6. Students attending this School come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2020: Additional information can be found on My School website.

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
117	105	12	222

\* Language Background Other than English

### Enrolment Policy

The [Enrolment Policy](#) applies to all school enrolments within the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. School authorities manage local enrolment processes and procedures in a manner consistent with the rationale and guiding principles articulated in this Enrolment Policy and accompanying procedures. It aims to:

- Set direction for school procedures and practices for enrolling students into Catholic primary and secondary schools within the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.
- Establish a common, consistent approach in enrolment practices.
- Assist the system of Catholic schools to:
  - provide schooling, where possible, for children of Catholic families who seek enrolment
  - cater for the individual needs of each child equitably within the constraints of the available teaching and material resources
  - encourage parents enrolling their children in Catholic schools to give support to parish and school life, especially in education in faith.

### Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for 2020 was 93.94%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group						
Kindergarten	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
94.15	93.85	95.40	92.56	95.01	93.31	93.33

## Managing Student Non-Attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The School, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, School staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

School staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the School community
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented
- documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern
- the Regional Directors of Catholic Schools Office (CSO) or designated CSO officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom the School's strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

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## Staffing Profile

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### Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2020:

Total number of staff	24
Number of full time teaching staff	11
Number of part time teaching staff	8
Number of non-teaching staff	5

### Total number of teaching staff by NESA category

Teachers at this School are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the NSW Teacher Accreditation Act 2004. Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher are voluntary. The number of teachers within the Diocesan Schools System (systemic schools) at these levels is as follows:

- Conditional 260 teachers
- Provisional 136 teachers
- Proficient 2060 teachers

Additionally, there are approximately 3 teachers who are currently actively engaged in the submission process at the higher levels of accreditation. Teacher status at individual schools can be sourced directly from the School.

### Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued. Professional learning can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in services, meetings and conferences and a range of professional learning programs provided by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO). The School takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking of its staff professional learning and individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing professional development. All teachers have been involved in professional learning opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes.

## Summary of professional learning at this school

Our Staff Development days were limited in 2020. Most of the PD was completed online. As a staff we participated in PD on:

- Child Protection
- Disability Standards for Education
- Whole school focus for ongoing PL:
- Introduction to the 14 parameters of the LLC & selection of parameters for school focus
- Case management meetings
- Development of a data wall

Individual staff also completed PD in:

- Impact Coaching
- Pedagogical Mentor roles
- Gifted Education

Exec staff and pedagogical mentors completed professional development and ongoing case management meetings for the Leading Learning Collaborative.

Additionally, executive staff attended assembly days for Principal, Assistant Principal, REC and Primary Coordinator.

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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle participate, under the leadership of the Bishop and in partnership with parents and parishes, in the mission of the Church to provide quality education in the context of a living Catholic Christian tradition. Within this context, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle aspire to be:

“Communities of living faith where the heart of all we do is Jesus Christ.”

(Adapted from: The Catholic School's Office Diocesan Vision Statement, 2016)

As such, they are to:

Be truly Catholic in their identity and life;

Be centres of the 'new evangelisation';

Enable students to achieve high levels of 'Catholic religious literacy'; and

Be led and staffed by people who will contribute to these goals.

(Catholic Schools at a Crossroads, 2007)

St Columba's Adamstown aims to be easily identifiable as a Catholic school. We promote our Catholicity each day in many ways. We begin each day as a school and class using prayer, both formal and spontaneous and each class has a sacred space as one of the focal points in the classroom. Our Catholic identity is reflected in all areas of curricula and every aspect of school life. The sense of Christian community present at St Columba's is evident by the caring and supportive attitude of staff members and a willingness to promote the school vision of "Faith, opportunity and inspired learning for every child."

The school actively promotes its Mercy history and values. We have an active Mini Vinnies team who live and share the Gospel's messages within our school community.

With the ongoing promotion of Making Jesus Real, students were encouraged to take the time to recognise 'God moments' in our lives. These are the times when someone shows us the love of Jesus, and in doing so, is Jesus for us. We were also encouraged to think of ways that we could be Jesus for others.

St Columba's implements the Diocesan K-12 Religion Syllabus. An essential element of each day's learning is a focus time on children learning about our Catholic Faith, deepening their spirituality and providing a time for prayer and reflection. The importance of having such a time each day is reflected in the expectation that teachers in the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle ensure that 2½ hours teaching/learning time each week is

allocated to Religious Education. The classroom teaching at St Columba's promotes student centred learning, utilising the Diocesan Units of Work.

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## Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

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The School provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. The Catholic Schools' Office Learning Framework is brings together structures that relate to quality learning and experiences in schools across the Diocese.

The Learning Framework provides a context for the development of learning and its key components, informed by research, are built around five essential elements:

Continual focus on Leading Learning

Cultures built on Collaborative Learning

Rich and purposeful Personalised Learning

Creating the conditions for Supportive Learning

Building capacity through Professional Learning

### **Curriculum**

Staff at St Columba's have regular Professional Learning Team meetings to discuss and improve teaching and learning across the school. This means that there are ongoing plans to analyse and improve on current practices and plan for the future. This is done with the scaffold of the Leading Learning Collaborative diocesan focus.

Staff work collaboratively on analysis of standardised testing results to ensure that assessment results inform their targeted teaching. They share their analysis and planning for individual students as well as for teaching and assessment in literacy and numeracy. Staff work in collaborative environment to continually evaluate and improve on current practice and target areas for improvement. Literacy remains an area of focus overall.

Staff also work with a continuous cycle of assessment, in line with the assessment waterfall example within the Leading Learning Collaborative. This ensures that the assessment of where the children are informs the planning and teaching for each teacher.

### **Learning Support**

St Columba's has a learning support teacher who liaises with parents, staff and outside agencies to ensure the best learning opportunities for the children who have additional needs within the school. Teachers have her support in developing and providing programs to support the identified needs of individual students as well as needs across class groups.

### **GEM**

St Columba's continues working as a Gifted Education Lead School. The Gifted Education Mentor (GEM) works with teachers to identify and support children who are working in the gifted range across all curriculum areas. The GEM works at providing quality learning experiences and daily challenge for our gifted learners but also guiding our teachers and giving them confidence in meeting the needs of gifted learners within their classrooms. We continue to deepen our understanding of the gifted learners in our school and support staff to implement differentiation and other provisions to support the diverse needs of our students.

We are proud of our school culture that supports the differences of all our learners and encourages each individual to reach out and discover their true potential. Opportunities also arise for highly gifted students in Years 5 and 6 to participate in the Virtual Academy.

### **BYOD**

Currently, Year 5 and 6 work in a BYOD environment with additional practice of skills for this beginning in Year 4. These classes complete many of their tasks in an online environment with extensive use of OneNote as their workspace. Lower primary classes and infants have access to a range of laptops as well as a class set of iPads to build competency with technology and research skills as students move through the grades.

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## Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

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The National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. An analysis of these results assists the School's planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 this year, the Education Ministers agreed that NAPLAN would not proceed in 2020. This decision was taken to assist school leaders, teachers and support staff to focus on the wellbeing of students and continuity of education, including potential online and remote learning.

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## Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

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### Pastoral Care Policy

The School's pastoral care and student wellbeing policies guidelines and procedures are informed by the Student Well being and Pastoral Care Policy.

The Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy 2017, aims to provide a framework for the policies, programs, resources and practices implemented at system and school level with the purpose of supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of students, and all within its school community. It refers to the overall climate of care that exists within a Catholic school.

The environment is designed to be safe and inclusive, one that promotes academic rigour. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents, and the wellbeing of all.

The Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Policy for Students can be found at [www.mn.catholic.edu.au/about/policies](http://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/about/policies)

There were no changes to the policy in 2020.

### Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy

The School's policies and procedures for the management of student behaviour are aligned the CSO [Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#) and to the [Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion Procedure](#). The dignity and responsibility of each person is promoted at all times along with positive student behaviours whilst ensuring respect for the rights of all students and staff. Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this School. The School does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by School persons and non-School persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the School. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the School's website.

### Anti-Bullying Policy

The Catholic Schools Office has established an [Anti-Bullying Policy](#) which is implemented by our school and all schools in the diocese. It provides a framework for school communities to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person. The CSO monitors the implementation of this policy.

The full text of the Anti-Bullying Policy may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or at the CSO website at this link.

## Complaints Handling Policy

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has established a [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) which is implemented by our school and all systemic schools in the diocese. The rationale for the policy is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of our contemporary world. CSO monitors the implementation of this policy.

The full text of the [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or at the CSO website at this link.

## Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

2020 provided challenges in supporting the wellbeing of our students and their families, particularly with the removal of many events from our school year and the lack of access to the school for our parents. Our communication and SEL programs became all the more important in this time.

The inclusion of the Be You program acts as an umbrella for a range of wellbeing initiatives in the school. The school implements the Bounce Back program in conjunction with the PDHPE syllabus to explicitly teach and promote social skills and resilience. Additionally, the embedding of the Making Jesus Real program across our classes is central to the values and philosophy we promote throughout St Columba's.

The promotion of respect is at the heart of the school's behaviour management and pastoral care policies. All classes embrace the Bounce Back Social and Emotional Learning program which assists schools and teachers in their efforts to promote positive mental health and wellbeing in their students and, in particular, to enable them to act with resilience when faced with change and adversity. Additionally, each newsletter includes an article for parents which relates to wellbeing topics.

All staff enact the school's Pastoral Care policy to assist in the provision of a safe and secure environment for all students. We recognise that positive relationships are important in achieving and maintaining a happy and productive school environment. The Year 5 and 6 students support kindergarten students through an established Buddy Program.

In addition to the school-wide use of Bounce Back, the school uses a range of social and emotional learning programs across K-6 to improve children's self-concept, resilience and social emotional skills. The guiding principles are that behaviour can be changed and environments can be changed to change behaviour. The Principal and staff clearly inform students and parents of student expectations and school rules. Parents work closely with the

teaching staff through effective communication, consistency of approach and positive reinforcement.

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## School Improvement

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The School implements the systems review Cycle of improvement which outlines the processes and benchmarks for creating the culture and practice of continuous improvement with students as the focus. Strategic Plans and School Improvement Plans are future focused documents that map the School's directions, aimed specifically at improving educational and pastoral outcomes for all students through the following areas:

- Catholic Formation and Mission
- Learning and Teaching
- Leadership
- Wellbeing and Partnerships

Each year, the School develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. A copy of the Strategic Improvement Plan and the Annual Improvement Plan may be obtained from the School administrative office.

### Key Improvements Achieved

- Development of co-constructed success criteria in classrooms for the targeted improvement of writing.
- Teachers improved practice through targeting individual improvement goals in pedagogy through working with pedagogical mentors
- Adaptations to the scope & sequence for Mathematics in several grades to integrate strands across units of work.
- Adaptations to programs and teaching practices to work with the issues that came with the Covid Pandemic.
- Expanded use of visual learning in all classrooms.
- Connections with our school community through the use of digital media such as assemblies, Seesaw, online learning sharing, shared videos of events
- Significant adaptation to our Kindergarten orientation processes that lead to greater connection with our new families and a highly positive transition to school.

### Priority Key Improvements for Next Year

- Continued targeting school of improvement through participation in the Leading Learning Collaborative - Working with staff and Lyn Sharratt
- Following the "identified areas for improvement" on the School Religious Literacy Plan.
- Leaders will assist teachers to identify and monitor priorities and goals for their professional growth and develop Peers Goal Action Plans based on the Australian Professional Standards and High Impact Teaching Strategies. Teachers will reflect and evaluate their practice during this process.

- Continuous improvement of pedagogy through the use of professional learning teams and targeted individuals working with our two Pedagogical Mentors.
- More specific use of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria with a focus on co-construction and the development of the "third teacher" in each classroom.
- Integration of Making Jesus Real & Positive Behaviours for Learning in the development of scope and sequence for explicitly teaching behavioural expectations for a more consistent approach.

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## Community Satisfaction

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The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, the School has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers. At the beginning of each review phase school's undertakes extensive surveying of all stakeholder groups. This data is shared with the school community and contributes to the priorities for future planning.

### Parent satisfaction

In 2020 St Columba's received feedback after surveys for self review, reflection on home learning and the Tell Them From Me survey. The feedback from parents is highly valued and is reflected upon in making decisions for future directions.

Some of the parent feedback:

- I think it's wonderful how every teacher knows my children, regardless of which class they're in, and I'm surprised by how many teachers know me by name also. It's a wonderfully welcoming community.
- Staff are very friendly even though we haven't been able to be on site. Teachers have always been very approachable. We've loved the online assemblies and the continuing efforts to share what is happening in the classrooms. Kids are overall really well behaved and reflect expected high standards
- My child loves going to school and that is the best thing for a parent. He always talks about what he learnt at school and also about his class teacher and his friends at school. The school also keeps us updated about any issues, events or any updates that we need to be aware of as a parent . The teachers are wonderful, supportive and very professional. I am really happy with the school he goes too and can definitely see the results through his learning.

### Student satisfaction

Students at St Columba's express that they are happy at school and enjoy their friendships and the positive relationships with their teachers.

Although some students struggled with home learning, many reflected that they enjoyed the independence it gave them in their learning as well as the opportunities to extend skills in BYOD, which became more important due to Covid.

Students mix well in the playground & utilise all parts of our playground with creative and imaginative play, particularly in the cubby house areas. They are proud of their school and eagerly contribute to make St Columba's a better place for everybody.

### Teacher satisfaction

St Columba's has a highly supportive and cohesive staff. Teacher satisfaction covers a variety of facets including their satisfaction with the leadership of a school, the wellbeing services offered, the student cohort as well as things like building facilities and cleanliness.

At St Columba's, the Tell Them From Me survey in 2020 indicated staff were pleased with the leadership. Teachers expressed satisfaction with learning and using data to inform teaching, with teachers again rating these areas higher than the region average.

Teachers are satisfied with the majority of classrooms at St Columba's, citing the space in the classroom is essential for large classes. Teachers are pleased to hear building works are in place to extend the office space and create one large classroom instead of two small ones. There is currently a lack of space for teachers to work on RFF days so the extra offices have been met with excitement by teachers. Many teachers would like a larger indoor space for our entire school, such as a new school hall that will fit everyone.

Teachers appreciate the wellbeing efforts offered at St. Columba's. Each term "Wellbeing week" is celebrated in week 6. There are opportunities for staff bonding, decreased workload and an acknowledgement of mental health. In addition to this, the staff room is always promoted as a positive place to share things we are grateful for about each other and leave positive affirmations.

Looking towards 2021, we are hoping to learn from the experiences in 2020 and focus on nurturing quality teaching rather than increasing the quantity of work for teachers. We are also hoping to establish permanent leadership staff in 2021 to further increase their already high level of satisfaction with leadership.

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## Financial Statement

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This School Financial Information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire.

School Financial Information for the 2020 year is detailed below:

<b>Recurrent and Capital Income 2020</b>	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$1,954,318
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$0
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$590,863
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$435,398
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$214
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$139,120
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$3,119,913</b>

<b>Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2020</b>	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$362,518
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$2,233,382
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$779,379
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$3,375,279</b>

### Notes

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.
3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income.
5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture and Equipment.
7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.

END OF 2020 REPORT