

# 2021

## ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

SERVICE | LEADERSHIP | JUSTICE *Together in Christ*



**St James' Primary School**  
MUSWELLBROOK

### St James Primary School

Skellatar Stock Route, MUSWELLBROOK 2333

Principal: Aaron Moon

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

---

## About this report

---

St James 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.

---

## Message from key groups in our community

---

### Principal's Message

I am pleased to present Saint James' Primary School Annual School Report for 2021. This report provides parents and members of the wider community with information about St James' activities and performance throughout 2021.

2021 saw the COVID-19 pandemic continue to affect the globe, the nation and the state of New South Wales. This also affected our school greatly.

Our school community is an amazing community. We, once again, were able to deal with all of issues that arose with care and professionalism. Although living in a world of uncertainty, our staff provided a calming influence to our students. They are true professionals.

We are a Catholic school that strives for academic excellence. We take great pride in our Catholic identity, expressing Gospel values in all the Key Learning Areas and throughout the general life of the school.

The students of St James' Muswellbrook enjoy their schooling because they are encouraged to fulfil their potential in all fields; academic, sport, music and the arts, by their professional teachers.

The staff at Saint Joseph's are committed to ensuring our students have the best start to their education. We offer quality education in a Catholic setting. We are innovative in our approach to teaching and learning and value each child within our school. This was very different in 2020, with life in lockdown another reality. However, our school community adapted and soldiered on.

Our school community is an open and caring community where social justice, honesty, compassion and love are nurtured and valued.

We want our students to learn, laugh and have fun.

### Parent Body Message

The St James' School P & F Association provides an opportunity for members of the school community to become involved in fundraising activities for the school in a social setting. Meeting dates are advertised in the newsletter and will be held in the staff room at school. Parents are encouraged to attend.

The Association has the following objectives:

- To promote the interests of St James' School.

- To foster closer association and good fellowship between parents, parish, staff and students of our school.
- To encourage community interest in the educational, community and pastoral aims of our school.
- To facilitate the growth of the school as expressed in the School's mission statement.
- To organise and conduct functions and arrange services approved by the Principal of the school for the purpose of achieving fundraising goals.

Major events this year were limited due to COVID-19 restrictions.

We acknowledge that the P & F were limited in their capacity this year due to COVID. We look forward to a more productive year in 2022.

### **Student Body Message**

#### **A Message from the Captains**

We are grateful for the opportunities that came with being school captains.

We also loved representing our school in ceremonies like the ANZAC Parade, Vietnam War Memorial and the Raising of the Aboriginal Flag.

Even running the assemblies was a pleasure to do. We are going to miss being school captains of St James, but after hearing the year 5 students presenting their leadership speeches, we are CERTAIN that next year St James will be in great hands.

---

## School Features

---

St James' School is a Catholic Parish school within the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. The school is situated on the western fringe of the town, on land first settled by the Wanaruah people.

The school began its existence as a Catholic denominational school in the middle of a developing township in 1862. When government funding was withdrawn in 1883, the Sisters of Mercy took over responsibility for the school. This school continued to provide a valuable Catholic education to the people of the area, until demand for places, brought on by an expansion in mining and power industries, resulted in the need for the construction of a larger school. In 1983, 100 years after the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy, the present Primary School of 14 classrooms, library and other amenities was opened. The Sisters of Mercy continued their mission in St. James' School until 1972.

The Sisters of St. Joseph continued the important task of providing a Catholic education from 1973 until 1991 when the first lay principal was appointed.

St James' School is proud of its dual heritage and encourages students and their families to incorporate the values and ideals of the charisms into daily life.

### **Location/Drawing Area**

Muswellbrook is a town in the Upper Hunter Region of New South Wales, Australia, about 243 km north of Sydney and 127 km north-west of Newcastle. Muswellbrook had an estimated urban population of 12,075 as at 2016 Census.

Muswellbrook is located 48 kilometres via the new England Highway from Singleton to the South and 25km from Scone to the North. The town is predominately reliant on mining for its employment.

St James' Primary School is situated on an large acreage on Skellatar Stock Route. The Parish Church is a 5 minutes away as it is situated in the centre of the town.

---

## Student Profile

---

### 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 2021: Additional information can be found on My School website.

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
112	160	19	272

\* 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 2021 was 91.81%. 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
91.94	93.27	91.53	90.90	91.48	92.50	91.07

## 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.

---

## Staffing Profile

---

### Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2021:

Total number of staff	29
Number of full time teaching staff	17
Number of part time teaching staff	3
Number of non-teaching staff	9

### 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

A school life during COVID made many Professional Learning Opportunities take place via ZOOM.

There were three main focuses for Professional Learning this year, including our continued work with Lyn Sharratt. The executive worked with Lyn Sharratt over two days and then shared this information with staff in another Pupil Free Day. The focus of this was the assessment waterfall.

We also worked with Sheena Cameron, an academic based in New Zealand. This work focused around our School Improvement Plan, based around improving student writing.

Our spirituality day was again based on the Pope's encyclical 'Laudato Si', which was a focus for the school staff.

---

## Catholic Identity and Mission

---

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)

The school Mission and Vision Statements reflect our role as a community of witnesses to the Catholic faith. We believe that St James' School community excels in education through living and learning in Christ. We are inspired by the Gospel to be successful learners and informed, engaged global citizens.

St Joseph's Muswellbrook participates in the life of our Parish. We also have close links with the Parish Sacramental team. This has been affected by COVID restrictions again in 2021.

The Sacramental program is parish based and includes the School Religious Education Coordinator and the Priest. The Sacramental program is supported by the school curriculum and the parish team is in close communication with the class teachers of the students involved.

Our School is proud to be part of a wider Diocesan community. As such, we attend important Diocesan events. We also support Regional initiatives, including the Regional Teachers Mass and Dinner.

We have implemented the Visible Wellbeing Program with support from the Where There's a Will Foundation.

---

## Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

---

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

St James' Catholic Primary School promotes equity and excellence.

We:

- Provide challenging and stimulating learning experiences and opportunities that enable all students to explore and build on their talents and abilities.
- Provide students with opportunities to experience success through differentiated educational teaching and learning activities.
- Promote knowledge and understanding of indigenous culture together with global cultures and religions.
- Encourage students to take an active role in their learning through personal goal setting and self-evaluation.
- Teach the essential skills in Literacy and Numeracy in order to foster informed communication and collaboration.
- Employ best practice in Pedagogy and provide adequate resources to enable creative and productive use of technology to assist in communication and problem solving.
- Develop personal values and attributes so as to have a sense of self-worth and maintain healthy satisfying lives.
- Teach and model Gospel values to maintain healthy relationships and accept responsibilities for their own action.

## Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

### NAPLAN

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia participate in the National Assessment program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The purpose of this test is to provide information to parents and teachers about the achievements of students in aspects of Literacy and Numeracy. The test provides a measure of the student's performance against established standards and against other students in Australia. Each year the results are analysed by the school to inform teaching with a view to improving student performance.

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum acceptable standards for literacy, numeracy, reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling at particular ages. These are referred to as national minimum standards. Student performance in NAPLAN in our school is compared to these standards.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2021		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 3	Grammar and Punctuation	45%	54%	20%	11%
	Reading	50%	55%	18%	10%
	Writing	44%	53%	3%	7%
	Spelling	30%	50%	28%	13%
	Numeracy	15%	37%	18%	13%
NAPLAN RESULTS 2021		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 5	Grammar and Punctuation	32%	35%	18%	14%
	Reading	44%	41%	12%	11%
	Writing	15%	20%	6%	18%
	Spelling	38%	38%	15%	14%
	Numeracy	30%	29%	9%	14%

---

## Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

---

### 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 2021.

### 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

At St James', Positive Education is at the centre of our Living and Learning with Jesus at the Heart of all we do.

Again in 2020 we have funded a Leader of Positive Education at SJM. This leader was instrumental in driving Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Our Leader of Positive Education is teaching Wellbeing as part of the PDHPE syllabus each fortnight to classes through RFF. This is a significant shift in how we teach Wellbeing to our students. This will continue again in 2022.

Again at SJM this year we liaised with the 'Where There's A Will' Foundation to promote positive health and mental well being in our communities.

We have a major focus on Character strengths; the identification of them and also assisting students to unlock their strengths.

---

## School Improvement

---

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

Here at Saint James' we are acutely aware of the need for School Improvement Plans. These plans along with our school and system strategic plans guide the school towards a focus of effective improvement.

- Some of our plans have, understandably, been carried over from 2020. Our main areas of our School Improvement Plan in 2021 included:
- To develop the spiritual formation of staff at St James' Muswellbrook - continuation of Laudato Si.
- Continue to implement the effective use of Literacy Learning Progressions to all staff, in Creating Texts, based on an identified area of student need.
- Review the current behaviour policies and practices to develop positive classroom management practices that support the learning, behaviour management and inclusion of all students.
- To improve teacher pedagogy to ensure improved outcomes for all students.
- Continue to implement the Visible Wellbeing Framework within the school (SEARCH Framework)

### Priority Key Improvements for Next Year

After the end of the 2021 school year we feel that the following priority goals for 2022 will be:

- To review the school's Pastoral Care policy and procedures to include Catholic values.

- The development of staff knowledge and understanding of the new K – 2 English and Mathematics syllabus.
- To develop effective teaching strategies and differentiated learning opportunities that address the learning strengths and needs of students.
- Develop and implement consistent progress monitoring processes (Acadience and Initialit for literacy and SENA1 for numeracy) across the early years for the tracking and development of early literacy and numeracy learning.

---

## Community Satisfaction

---

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 the Diocese implemented the 'Tell Them From Me - Partners in Learning' survey for all Diocesan schools. The 'Partners in Learning' Parent Survey is based on a comprehensive questionnaire covering several aspects of parents' perceptions of their children's experiences at home and school.

The survey includes seven separate measures, which were scored on a ten-point scale. The scores for the Likert-format questions (i.e., strongly agree to strongly disagree) have been converted to a 10-point scale, then averaged and reported by question and by topic. A score of 0 indicates strong disagreement; 10 indicates strong agreement;

#### Two Way Communication with Parents

Parents feel welcome - 8.1 (Region 7.2)

Parents are informed - 7.1 (Region 6.5)

Parents Support Learning at Home - 7.1 (Region - 6.6)

School Supports Learning - 7.8 (Region 7.1)

School Supports Positive Behaviour - 8.2 (Region 7.3)

Safety at School - 8.3 (Region 7.5)

Inclusive School - 7.5 (Region 6.7)

During an incredibly challenging 2021, we were pleased that we were able to support our community so well.

### Student satisfaction

Students enjoy their school at St James' Muswellbrook. This is a direct result of their expert teachers and the balanced curriculum that is offered at St James' Muswellbrook. There is a careful mix of academic, sporting and other activities on offer at the school. We cater for the

needs of all. During COVID-19 a careful balance was achieved to ensure students working both at home and at school we afforded quality learning opportunities and time with the teacher. For our students at home this occurred via zoom. During school holidays and when school services were disrupted we ensured our students were isolated. We held online storytimes, virtual discos, fun Facebook challenges and even online concerts with a contestant from 'The Voice.'

### Teacher satisfaction

In 2021 the Diocese implemented the 'Tell Them From Me - Focus on Learning' teacher survey for all Diocesan schools. The 'Focus on Learning' teacher Survey is a self-evaluation tool for teachers and schools which is based on two complementary research paradigms.

#### Eight Drivers of Student Learning

Leadership - 6.6 (Region 6.9)

Collaboration - 6.9 (Region 7.7)

Learning Culture - 8.3 (Region 8.1)

Data Informs Practice - 9.0 (Region 8.0)

Teaching Strategies 8.6 (Region 8.1)

Technology - 6.1 (Region 7.1)

Inclusive School - 8.9 (Region 8.4)

Parent Involvement - 8.3 (Region 6.8)

#### Four Dimensions of Classroom and School Practices

Challenging & Visible Goals - 7.8 (Region 7.6)

Planned Learning Opportunities 7.6 (Region 7.7)

Quality Feedback - 7.4 (Region 7.3)

Overcoming Obstacles to Learning - 7.7 (Region 7.8)

---

## Financial Statement

---

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 2021 year is detailed below:

<b>Recurrent and Capital Income 2021</b>	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$3,823,541
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$0
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$1,097,763
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$546,792
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$0
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$233,067
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$5,701,163</b>

<b>Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2021</b>	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$23,752
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$2,956,937
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$2,335,022
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$5,315,711</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 2021 REPORT