

# 2024

## Annual School Report

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### Holy Spirit Infant School

Church Street, ABERMAIN 2326

Principal: Diane Murphy

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

## About this report

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Holy Spirit Infant School (the 'School') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (CDMN). 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 Strategic 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

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### Principal's Message

It is with pleasure that I present the Annual School Report for 2024. As the only K-2 school in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, Holy Spirit Infants School, Abermain proudly provides a holistic Catholic education for early learners in the Hunter Valley area. Our school's story is unique and we embrace this through strengthening our solid reputation for providing spiritual enrichment, quality teaching and learning, and cultural and sporting experiences within a safe, supportive and connected faith community. We foster a faith-filled Catholic learning culture where students can grow as confident, courageous and collaborative learners. We encourage curiosity and questioning through play-based learning and support students to develop social and emotional resilience, problem-solving skills and learning dispositions which utilise creative thinking. At Holy Spirit Infants School, we provide a solid foundation to enable all students in their early years to develop a strong sense of self and a confident student voice. We are called to draw inspiration and strength from the Gospel as we seek to actively witness the living presence of Jesus Christ throughout the community. We provide an environment in which students are encouraged to live out Gospel values, especially those of justice, respect, compassion and honesty. We provide opportunities for the children to celebrate feast days and significant liturgical events within our Parish setting and to foster a relationship through prayer, story and song with our loving God the Father, Jesus God the Son and The Holy Spirit. Our mission is to strive for excellence in Catholic education for the whole child as the early learner.

### Parent Body Message

We acknowledge the generosity of parents and carers who volunteered to provide a variety of opportunities to engage in the school community events from term 2. Some parents assisted with the Easter raffle and Mother's Day events; the joint Athletics Carnival with Holy Spirit Kurri Kurri and School Cross Country; Father's day breakfast and paper plane challenge and various excursions and/or sport events. A highlight was our Family Carols and Santa event where families of many generations came to enjoy a picnic tea, watch the class performances and sing along to favourite Christmas carols. The canteen is thriving due to parent and grandparent volunteers, which the community appreciated. Parents and families were able to join in Parish masses each term and a special welcome to Kinder mass. The school also joined the local community events such as the Anzac March; Choirs at the Civic initiative and Year 2 competed in the League Tag local gala day. All very well supported and attended by our parents and carers.

Parents are aware that they can make appointments to see their child's teacher and regularly comment that the school has a welcoming, caring and inclusive vibe that is supportive of both parents and children. The Seesaw app used to communicate with families was well received and utilised effectively by teacher and parents in the educative partnership. Communication to parents and carers is via a fortnightly school newsletter and Compass alerts are sent directly to phones by the school, class teachers or the CSO. We continued our practice of Student Led Conference process for all students at the end of semester one and the beginning of Semester three which was very well attended with 98% of parents in attendance. Parents attended the P.E.G meetings held across both Holy Spirit Schools and engaged in the educational components and directed the focus of each meeting.

### **Student Body Message**

As Holy Spirit is an Infants school, the six elected school leaders are in Year Two. We nurture and welcome the opportunity to develop and share leadership skills at this young age. The School Leadership team have shown servant leadership across the school year through leading the awards assemblies and managing the sport equipment and sport shed; meeting with the Principal twice a term to share feedback and ideas about making Holy Spirit Infants an even better place. Many of the student leaders' ideas are implemented where possible.

Student voice is a valued feature of our school community. Some skills leaders have learnt include organisation, resilience, being quick to get things done, confidence, public speaking, setting an example and being a role model, having respect for others and leading by following our school rules.

The School Leaders said: "You can play and learn", "Everyone is included at our school"; "It's a happy community; you get a good education."; "Nobody's mean here and you make good friends."; ; "You include others not exclude."; "You get to meet new friends and teachers."; "The teachers always help me."

## School Features

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Holy Spirit Infants caters for the early learner from Kinder to Year 2 with two streams of each grade. Our school is in the Vineyards Parish and our local church is St Francis Xavier Church adjacent to the school. Holy Spirit Infants School Abermain is located in the Cessnock City Council region, only a few kilometres from Weston and Kurri Kurri. The students who attend the school are drawn from Abermain, Weston, Sawyers Gully, Kurri Kurri, Pelaw Main, Heddon Greta, Cliffleigh, Mulbring and Gillieston Heights. The students are encouraged to continue their Primary education at Holy Spirit Primary 3-6 at Kurri Kurri and then onto high school at All Saints Campus at Maitland. Holy Spirit Infants is located on land of the Awabakal and Wonnarua nations peoples. In June 1908 the Sisters of St Joseph travelled from Cessnock each day to operate a school in the Church hall. In 1935 classrooms were built. In 1966, the Abermain site became the Infants department, while the Primary children were educated at Kurri Kurri. The schools became known as St Joseph's Infants School, Abermain and St Joseph's Primary School, Kurri Kurri. In 1984, the first Lay Principal was appointed to St Joseph's, Abermain. In 1991, both schools became known as Holy Spirit Schools after the name of Kurri Kurri Church. In 2008 new school buildings and facilities were opened. In 2009 Holy Spirit received BER funding. In 2010 the canteen, refurbishment of the hall annex, entrance and the COLA were completed. In 2013 HSIA received the National Partnership Program funding. In 2014, 2015 and 2016 HSIA utilised funding from the State Action Plan. In 2019, due to expansion, Holy Spirit welcomed two demountable classrooms with a linking deck to the site. We have beautiful grounds with play equipment for Infants classes and excellent classroom and outdoor facilities. In 2024 we had six classes of early learners. Our school is a Successful Foundations School and we are committed to Play based learning for early learners. Parents are the primary educators of their children and are seen as partners with our school on enrolment. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the life of the school. Our school being K-2 enjoys a variety of excursions and several incursions. The students engaged in sporting programs such as cricket skills and gymnastics. With a focus on drama, the Showcase Event was an original production about The Zones of Regulation, co-created with the talented ASPIRE team. The administration building which was refurbished continues to welcome parents and ensure staff have excellent contemporary surroundings to work in. The outdoor covered learning area is a learning space is enjoyed daily by students. The school is well maintained and well resourced and welcomes all.

# Student Profile

## Student Enrolment

The School caters for students in Years K – 2. Students attending this School come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2024: Additional information can be found on My School website.

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
61	58	5	119

\* 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 [Enrolment 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 2024 was 91.30%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group		
Kindergarten	Year 1	Year 2
92.82	90.28	90.80

## 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 Professional Officer for School Enrolment 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

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### Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2024:

Total number of staff	22
Number of full time teaching staff	6
Number of part time teaching staff	8
Number of non-teaching staff	8

### 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 155 teachers
- Provisional 71 teachers
- Proficient 1953 teachers
- 4 Highly Accomplished teacher

Additionally, there are a number of 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.



## 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 educate from and for vibrant, welcoming and diverse communities with a particular commitment to the poor; for justice, integrity and peace; and with hope for the future.

At the heart of everything there is always Jesus Christ.

Catholic schools educate:

- From and for the community of faith
- From and for excellence in learning
- In a rigorous, creative and critical pursuit of truth

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

Holy Spirit Infants School is committed to proudly celebrating its Catholic identity, nurturing a genuine faith life in its students and staff and welcoming families on this journey into a relationship with God. Our day begins with whole school prayer at assemblies led by our students. The children embrace calm, daily prayer in the classroom before lunch, recess and at the end of the day. The school has organised liturgies where students, staff, parents, families and parishioners are invited to celebrate the presence and guidance of our loving God in our lives. In 2024 we continued Family Masses with the Parish where families were invited to come to worship with the local parish community and this has been very well received and supported by Fr James and is our ongoing goal of building strong partnerships. We recognise that each child is on their own spiritual journey and we encourage children to recognise the Fruits of the Spirit within themselves. Holy Spirit Infants School, Abermain are invited to participate in Parish life in a number of ways, such as participation at the Welcome to Kinder Mass, Sunday Masses and significant Church celebrations. Where possible we celebrate liturgies as our students are too young to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. Parishioners comment that they love seeing the children and their families at mass.

Holy Spirit Infants follows the Diocesan K-12 RE Syllabus with Kindergarten, Year 1 and 2, teaching from a new Early Stage One and Stage One Diocesan syllabus focused on "An Encounter" experience with God. We celebrate elements of the Church's Liturgical Seasons as well as cultural days, Harmony day and NAIDOC week. Holy Spirit Infants School lives out its Vision and Mission statements by providing an environment in which students are encouraged to live out Gospel values. We highlight the importance of growing the "Fruits of

the Spirit" in each child and we recognise these important gifts daily in our positive affirmations and during fortnightly assemblies. This is a reflection of the Josephite charism of the school. Christian Discipleship, Social Justice and initiating compassion are significant aspects of our expression of our core beliefs and the life of Holy Spirit Infants School. We promote discipleship by giving students the opportunity to understand what helping others really means and by allowing them time to respond to God through prayer. The school has a strong social justice focus, participating in Diocesan sponsored activities and school based social justice initiatives. This year the students raised funds for Caritas, Catholic Missions, the Vinnies Winter appeal and Christmas appeal with food donations and the school community is very generous.

## 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 and Languages.

The Curriculum is structured around the outcomes and content for each KLA and provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding through assessment. The curriculum incorporates a focus on capabilities and priorities, including literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, and personal and social capability.

Holy Spirit Infants School is a committed learning community focused on quality teaching through a whole-school approach. Professional collaboration across all stages ensures consistent practice and understanding. Teachers base their programs on NESA syllabus documents.

In 2024, we maintained a strong focus on student growth in mathematics and wellbeing, as outlined in our SIP. Our involvement in the Leading Learning Collaborative, inspired by Lyn Sharratt, continued, alongside new learning from Dr Michael McDowell. This professional learning supported our data-driven, targeted teaching practices.

We welcomed a new Pedagogical Mentor (also our AP), who worked closely with staff and the Principal to lead learning, analyse data, and support student goal setting. Teachers deepened their understanding of the learning environment's impact and embraced the concept of the "third teacher."

Student Led Conferences were embedded and well-received by parents, teachers, and students. Data walls evolved to include Place Value, Acadience, phonemic awareness, and wellbeing tracking. Teachers refined explicit reading and comprehension instruction using the gradual release model daily.

Literacy was strengthened through synthetic phonics resources and new decodable and comprehension readers. A whole-school focus on explicit instruction and scope and sequence documents contributed to improved NAPLAN results.

We applied the Assessment Waterfall Chart to guide effective practices and partnered with MNSW to enhance mathematics teaching using Launch, Explore, Summarise strategies. All classrooms use concrete materials to support flexible thinking, with agreed practices like "Number Talks" in K–2.

Teachers participated in regular PLT and Case Management Meetings, showing growth through collaboration and contributions. Our Learning Support Teacher ensures adjustments for all learners. Technology continues to enhance critical thinking and digital skills across the school.

## 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 Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#).

The Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy 2022 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.

### Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy

The School's policies and procedures for the management of student behaviour are aligned with the Catholic School's [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#) and to the [Schools Behaviour Management Policy](#). 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.

## **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.

## Community Satisfaction

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Consultation with parents, students and teachers is valued and sought. Their feedback contributes to the planning and the achievement of 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. The school undertakes extensive surveying of all stakeholder groups every 2 years. This data is shared with the school community and contributes to the priorities for future planning.

### Parent satisfaction

In 2024, parents were invited to provide feedback via the “Tell Them From Me” survey distributed by the CSO. Results were highly affirming, reflecting the positive verbal feedback we receive daily from families. A key focus was improving parent understanding of our Social Justice initiatives, achieved through clear newsletter communication using survey terminology. Data showed 95% of respondents understand the Faith Life of the school, and 88% have a stronger grasp of Catholic Culture. Parents affirmed the school as welcoming, safe, inclusive, and supportive of positive behaviour, with strong safeguarding practices.

Clear communication remained a priority through emails, Seesaw, Compass, and regular phone contact. Parents are always welcome to speak with the Principal, and this feedback avenue has been very effective. While P.E.G. meetings were not well attended in 2024, parents report being happy with the school. Most newly enrolling families cited positive word-of-mouth as their reason for choosing Holy Spirit Infants, with 94% noting the school's strong reputation locally. The school is well resourced, well maintained, and proudly educates generations of local families.

### Student satisfaction

At Holy Spirit Infants, the voice of the child is highly valued. We cater for early learners in K–2, giving students opportunities to express their likes, dislikes, and opinions with teachers and the Principal. They enjoy sharing ideas and feedback, helping build strong, positive relationships. We listen to students' concerns and resolve most issues easily, creating a happy and supportive environment. Behavioural matters are addressed fairly using Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) and Restorative Justice practices. Students say the best things about our school are the caring Principal, teachers, and staff who help them learn. They also love the Fruits of the Spirit, PBL and Principal awards, the playing fields, laptops, iPads, play equipment, sandpit, fairy garden, canteen, dress-up days, and bus excursions. No major issues were raised. Most of all, students say they love being with their friends at school.

## **Teacher satisfaction**

At Holy Spirit Infants, we are proud of our strong, positive staff relationships. Every staff member is a valued part of our TEAM, bringing unique skills and willingly sharing them. Staff concerns are welcomed through one-on-one discussions with the Principal or in team forums. Support staff also have a direct line via their team leader (LST). Trust and collaboration underpin our culture, where every voice is heard and respected. Open communication helps resolve most issues quickly. Staff are generally very satisfied and enjoy coming to work. Clear communication is maintained through Compass alerts, emails, briefings, and meetings. Collaboration across classes and grades is strong, with staff supporting one another. Roles like Pedagogical and Gifted Education Mentors foster professional growth. Staff are committed to lifelong learning, goal setting, and meaningful feedback. Professional Learning and Case Management Meetings are embedded in our culture. A shared sense of humour and celebrations add joy to our workdays.



## 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 2024 year is detailed below:

Recurrent and Capital Income 2024	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$1,870,106
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$0
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$511,997
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$355,275
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$4,419
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$113,676
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$2,855,473</b>

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2024	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$30,279
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$2,165,270
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$813,745
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$3,009,294</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 2024 REPORT