

2024

Annual School Report

SERVICE | LEADERSHIP | JUSTICE

TOGETHER IN CHRIST



St John the Baptist PS

12 Victoria Street, MAITLAND 2320

Principal: Ms Katherine Gardner-Ferguson

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

About this report

St John the Baptist PS (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

Principal's Message

As Principal of St John the Baptist Primary School, it is my privilege to present our 2024 Annual Report. This report not only highlights our achievements but also reaffirms our commitment to our vision: *to develop moral, respectful, and resilient children, proud of their Catholic heritage, who will find their place as contributing members of Australian society. We strive to be a community where Jesus Christ is at the heart of all we do.*

This year, we have continued to create an environment where our students are not only challenged to excel academically but are also encouraged to live out the values of our faith. Central to this is our commitment to fostering positive relationships and ensuring that our students grow into individuals who are compassionate, strong, and confident in their identity as Catholics.

In 2024, we introduced initiatives to support the holistic development of our students, including enhancing our pastoral care programs and providing ongoing professional development for staff. These initiatives help us continue to build a supportive, faith-filled community where students are empowered to thrive and contribute meaningfully to society.

As we reflect on the past year, we remain focused on our vision, ensuring that Jesus Christ is at the heart of everything we do and that our students are well-prepared to lead with integrity and compassion in the world.

Parent Body Message

St John the Baptist has an active Parents and Friends Association (P&F) that continues to contribute enormously to the life of the school. A large number of parents organised and participated in fundraising and social events throughout 2024, highlighting the strength of our school community. Communication with families was maintained through formal information sessions, the school website, the Compass parent portal, formal and informal parent meetings, the school newsletter, our school Facebook page, and regular P&F meetings.

It has been a positive and productive year for the St John the Baptist Parents and Friends Association. Throughout 2024, the P&F continued to strengthen community connections, supporting a wide range of opportunities for parent involvement in school life, including Grandparents' Day, Open Classrooms, the Welcome BBQ, and the Christmas Family Night. Through a variety of fundraising initiatives — including the Easter Raffle, Mother's Day and Father's Day Stalls — the P&F raised approximately \$11,000 to support school projects and activities.

We sincerely thank all members of the P&F and the broader parent community for their time, energy, and enthusiasm throughout 2024. Your ongoing support enriches the learning environment and helps to strengthen the spirit of St John the Baptist Primary School.

Student Body Message

Throughout 2024, students were given many opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership through our Student Representative Council (SRC), St Vincent de Paul Committee, and our elected Year 6 leaders. Each of these groups was influenced by the student voice they gathered, working closely with staff, students, and the wider community to drive positive initiatives.

Our Year 6 students continued their important role in welcoming new students as Kindergarten Buddies, embracing the opportunity to lead and support younger members of our school. The SRC, with representatives elected from each class and changing each semester, worked alongside the school leadership team to gather student feedback on the use of playground spaces and further opportunities for improving playtime resources.

The St Vincent de Paul student leaders actively promoted awareness of key social justice initiatives throughout the year, demonstrating their commitment to service and community engagement. Our Creative Arts and House Sports Leaders also played a vital role in building school spirit by leading activities at whole-school events such as the Cross Country, Athletics, and Swimming Carnivals.

Through these leadership opportunities, students at St John the Baptist Primary School have continued to grow as confident, compassionate, and capable young leaders in 2024.

School Features

St John the Baptist Primary School is located in Maitland and provides a nurturing Catholic education for our 395 students. Our school prides itself on our strong Catholic identity, shown through our vibrant sense of community. We recognise and celebrate our Dominican heritage, honouring the contributions of the sisters to our school's history.

Throughout 2024, the school continued to celebrate Masses and liturgies with the Parish Priests from our local Chisholm Region Parish. Year level Mass at St Mary's Chapel occurred throughout the year, and as a whole school, we celebrated key events within the Catholic faith including Lent, Easter, and Pentecost.

Our commitment to social justice remains strong at St John the Baptist, with initiatives such as Children's Mission, St Vincent de Paul, and Caritas promoting compassion and service. Our St Vincent de Paul student leaders actively worked with the school community to raise awareness and support for these important causes.

In 2024, St John the Baptist maintained high expectations for student learning and growth, with opportunities to showcase achievement through open classrooms, showcase assemblies, and participation in debating and public speaking with two students participated in the diocesan Virtual Academy, reflecting our commitment to catering to the diverse learning needs of all students.

This year, Mathematics was a particular focus across all key learning areas. Building on the foundations of Peter Sullivan's approach, staff engaged in targeted professional development to strengthen mathematical thinking, problem-solving, and reasoning skills across the curriculum. Explicit teaching practices, underpinned by Lyn Sharratt's methodologies and Michael McDowell's feedback strategies, were consistently implemented to enhance student learning. Pedagogical mentors provided ongoing support, particularly in the area of mathematics, leading to increased student engagement, confidence, and achievement.

I extend heartfelt gratitude to the families, friends, and volunteers whose unwavering support contributes to the success of our school. I also commend the dedicated staff, whose passion for children and learning continues to enrich our school community. Finally, I express my appreciation to our students for their eagerness to learn and their outstanding growth throughout the year.

I am incredibly proud of the achievements and accomplishments of St John the Baptist Primary School in 2024. Together, we have continued to build a vibrant and dynamic learning community where students are empowered to grow academically, spiritually, and personally. As we look towards the future, I am confident that the spirit of St John the Baptist will continue to guide and inspire us in all that we do.

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 2024: Additional information can be found on My School website.

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
205	192	16	397

* 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 90.58%. 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
91.48	89.92	91.44	92.04	89.51	90.92	88.72

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

Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2024:

Total number of staff	39
Number of full time teaching staff	16
Number of part time teaching staff	9
Number of non-teaching staff	14

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

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)

Throughout 2024, the Catholic mission of St John the Baptist Primary School remained at the heart of all aspects of school life. Each day commenced with prayer — both formal and spontaneous — offered as a whole school and within individual classrooms, grounding our community in the knowledge of God's abiding presence. Sacred spaces, thoughtfully curated in every learning environment, served as visible reminders of our commitment to faith, prayer, and reflection.

A significant development in 2024 was the introduction of Student Formation Sessions for all students from Kindergarten to Year 6. These sessions provided meaningful opportunities for students to engage more deeply with the teachings of Jesus Christ, explore the rich Dominican charism that shapes our identity, and reflect personally on their own faith journeys. The Formation Sessions enriched students' understanding of what it means to be a witness to the Gospel in thought, word, and deed.

The faith life of the school was further nurtured through the regular celebration of Masses, liturgies, and special assemblies, offering students and staff alike the opportunity to encounter Christ in prayer, Scripture, and sacrament. Regular visits to St Mary's Chapel enabled students to deepen their connection to Catholic tradition and to the story of the Dominican Sisters whose legacy we continue to honour.

Our Catholic identity was made visible and tangible throughout the year through a range of initiatives, including:

- The centrality of prayer at daily assemblies and within classroom routines, incorporating both traditional prayers and student-led expressions of faith.
- Prominent displays of sacred symbols, icons, and prayers in communal areas, including the School Prayer and the Prayer of St Dominic.
- School-wide celebrations of key liturgical seasons and feast days, including Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Easter, Catholic Schools Week, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Recognition of Christian Living, exemplary school spirit, and community service through end-of-year awards, affirming students who live out the Gospel values in their daily lives.

In all we do, St John the Baptist Primary School strives to nurture a vibrant, living faith community, forming students who are not only academically capable but spiritually aware, ethically grounded, and committed to making a positive difference in the world.

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 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.

At St John the Baptist Primary School, Maitland, we are committed to delivering a comprehensive educational program that nurtures the academic, social, and spiritual development of every student. Our curriculum aligns with the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabuses and is deeply grounded in our Catholic faith and Dominican tradition.

The curriculum encompasses the following Key Learning Areas (KLAs):

- English
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE)
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)
- Creative Arts

In addition, we focus on the development of general capabilities, including literacy, numeracy, critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, personal and social competence, ICT capability, and intercultural understanding.

Religious Education, following the Diocesan K–12 syllabus, remains central to our mission. Staff engage in ongoing professional development to deliver engaging and reflective faith formation experiences, including Godly Play. Religious Education is prioritised within our teaching and learning programs to ensure students deepen their knowledge and live out the values of the Gospel.

We also offer specialised programs to meet the diverse needs of our learners:

- **Gifted Education Mentorship**, including participation in the Diocesan Virtual Academy.

- **Individualised Support** for students needing targeted interventions.
- **Inclusion Support for students** with additional needs across learning and play.

A rich co-curricular program enhances student learning, offering opportunities in public speaking, debating, creative arts, sport, and leadership through camps and excursions.

Our educational program is designed to empower each student to thrive academically, socially, and spiritually, reflecting our commitment to holistic development and Catholic education.

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).

NAPLAN is a nationwide measure through which parents/carers, teachers, schools, education authorities, governments and the broader community can determine whether or not young Australians are developing critical literacy and numeracy skills. NAPLAN results allow parents/carers and educators to see how students are progressing in literacy and numeracy over time - individually, as part of their school community, and against national standards. NAPLAN is made up of four domains of:

- reading
- writing
- conventions of language (spelling, grammar and punctuation)
- numeracy.

NAPLAN results are reported against proficiency standards with four levels of achievement to give parents and carers, teachers and schools clearer information on how students are performing:

- Exceeding: The student's result exceeds expectations at the time of testing.
- Strong: The student's result meets challenging but reasonable expectations at the time of testing.
- Developing: The student's result indicates that they are working towards expectations at the time of testing.
- Needs additional support: The student's result indicates that they are not achieving the learning outcomes expected at the time of testing. They are likely to need additional support to progress satisfactorily.

The percentage of student achieving at Exceeding and Strong proficiency standards in NAPLAN at St John the Baptist PS for 2024 is reported in the table below.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2024		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 3	Grammar and Punctuation	63%	54%
	Reading	75%	66%
	Writing	88%	77%
	Spelling	66%	61%
	Numeracy	80%	63%
NAPLAN RESULTS 2024		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 5	Grammar and Punctuation	72%	65%
	Reading	83%	71%
	Writing	68%	67%
	Spelling	66%	68%
	Numeracy	79%	68%

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 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

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 and carers of St John the Baptist Primary School continued to affirm the strong partnership they share with the school. The welcoming atmosphere, strong sense of community, and genuine camaraderie among staff are highly valued. Parents feel respected and involved, appreciating the care, support, and learning opportunities offered to their children.

The strong relationship with the local parish further enriches the school's inclusive and faith-filled culture. Parents and friends participated enthusiastically in assemblies, liturgies, Masses, and special celebration days, highlighting their deep commitment to their children's education and faith journey.

Survey data from 2024 indicates that parents believe their children are safe at school, that positive behaviours are promoted, and that communication is clear and consistent. Parents continue to appreciate the visible Catholic identity that is central to the life of the school.

Student satisfaction

Survey data from 2024 indicates that the majority of students enjoy being at St John the Baptist Primary School and feel that they learn well. Students consistently report a positive attitude towards school, with many expressing a sense of belonging and engagement in their learning.

The strong relationships between students and staff are central to the positive school experience. Students recognise the importance of these relationships in creating a supportive and encouraging learning environment. They appreciate the care, respect, and guidance provided by staff, which enables them to thrive both academically and personally.

Overall, the survey showed St John the Baptist's ongoing commitment to fostering an environment where students feel valued, supported, and motivated to achieve their best.

Teacher satisfaction

In 2024, teacher satisfaction at St John the Baptist Primary School remains high, with staff consistently expressing positive views about their roles and the school environment. Teachers report feeling supported and valued by both the leadership team and their colleagues, which fosters a collaborative and respectful atmosphere. Many teachers highlight the strong sense of community within the school, which allows for professional growth and shared commitment to the school's mission.

The positive relationships between staff and students are recognised as a key factor in job satisfaction, with teachers expressing pride in the strong connections they build with their students. Survey data indicates that teachers appreciate the resources, professional development opportunities, and collaborative planning time available to them.

Teachers also acknowledge the school's commitment to wellbeing, both for staff and students, and feel supported in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. The overall satisfaction reflects a workplace that values its educators, fosters professional growth, and creates a supportive environment where both staff and students can thrive.

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 ¹	\$4,604,236
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$1,220,567
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$1,126,481
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$0
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$291,484
Total Income	\$7,242,768

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2024	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$35,604
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$4,892,716
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$2,667,245
Total Expenditure	\$7,595,565

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