

2024

Annual School Report

SERVICE | LEADERSHIP | JUSTICE

TOGETHER IN CHRIST



St Mary's Primary School

2 Bayview Street, WARNERS BAY 2282

Principal: Liz Starling

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

About this report

St Mary's Primary 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

Principal's Message

St Mary's is located in the scenic suburb of Warners Bay, right on the shores of beautiful Lake Macquarie. Our spacious grounds feature two playing fields, three hard-surfaced undercover play areas, a large fixed play area with an adjacent sandpit, three cricket nets, a creative playground, a fairy garden, a prayer garden, a yarnning circle, a bush tucker garden, a herb garden, a veggie garden, and landscaping with native plants and wildlife.

As a Catholic school, we are dedicated to creating a loving, caring, and compassionate environment where the teachings of Jesus are reflected, and everyone treats each other with kindness and respect. The school is known for its strong reputation in academic excellence, performing arts, cultural and sporting achievements, and innovative use of learning technology. In Years 4-6, all students work with laptops on a 1:1 basis as part of our modern approach to learning.

St Mary's is a well-equipped school that prepares students for the 21st century. We aim to provide a well-rounded education across all Key Learning Areas. We place significant emphasis on social-emotional learning and wellbeing, while also teaching our community to adopt sustainable environmental practices.

We strive to develop thoughtful and responsible students who use the knowledge and skills they gain not just for themselves, but for the betterment of society. Cultural experiences are a key part of our approach, along with fostering a love of learning so that all students become lifelong learners.

Parent Body Message

St Mary's Primary School offers a supportive and safe environment that prioritises the wellbeing of all its students. As parents, we value the focus on involvement and the ease of accessing open, transparent communication.

Our children have formed strong, positive bonds with their teachers and look forward to each school day. The school fosters academic excellence across all subjects, consistently recognising and celebrating its students' achievements within the community. Co-curricular opportunities such as performing arts and a variety of sports ensure each child's talents are nurtured and supported in an inclusive, secure setting.

We highly recommend St Mary's to any prospective families and are deeply appreciative of the education our children are receiving.

Student Body Message

St Mary's is such a friendly and welcoming school with a great atmosphere, all thanks to our awesome teachers, staff, and the super nice students. There are so many ways to get involved and do well here. We have the opportunity to represent St Mary's in academic and sporting events, whether it's at school, regional, diocesan, state, or even national levels! We're really proud of our creative talents, like our choirs, guitar group, and all the amazing ASPIRE performers.

Our school is great at using technology for learning – we have robots, smart hub screens, computers, iPads, and students in Years 4-6 get to use their own laptops.

We also care a lot about the environment at St Mary's. We're a 'rubbish-free school,' we compost, and we even use our vegetable garden for the canteen! Our school is beautiful with modern buildings, plenty of fields, and three Covered Outdoor Learning Areas. There are lots of different play spaces to choose from, and we're encouraged to be creative and use our imaginations.

We maintain a strong connection with our parish. It's great to be able to celebrate liturgies with Fr Greg Barker (our Parish Priest) and our families in the COLA and in classrooms. Each term we have a parish family Mass on a Sunday and the students get to do the readings for that Mass. We even have morning tea with the parishioners afterwards. We also get involved in a lot of social justice activities and raise money for a variety of charities throughout the year.

At St Mary's we have several student leadership teams, including School Leaders, Sports Leaders, Mini Vinnies, Wellbeing Leaders, and Sustainability Leaders. It's great being part of such an active and positive community!

School Features

St Mary's is part of the Boolaroo-Warners Bay Parish and was opened in 1958 with 41 students from Kindergarten to Year 4. The school was staffed by the Sisters of St Joseph. In 1960 the school was extended to include Years 5 and 6. In 1968, St Mary's became the Infants School, while Our Lady Help of Christians, Boolaroo, catered for the Primary classes.

This continued until 1975 when the decision was made to phase out one of the parish schools because of declining enrolments and the increasing cost of maintaining the two schools.

In 1976 Our Lady Help of Christians School was moved from Boolaroo to Warners Bay. In 1981 the Sisters of St Joseph relinquished charge of the school and a lay principal was appointed. Due to increasing enrolments, extensions were completed over the years and the school became 2 stream. In 2008-9 the school was completely rebuilt. The school now has an administration block, library and computer room, 15 permanent brick air-conditioned classrooms, extensive landscaping and three covered outdoor learning areas.

St Mary's is part of the Lakes Region of schools within the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. The school draws students from Warners Bay, Speers Point, Boolaroo, Booragul, Cardiff South, Croudace Bay, Eleebana, Floraville, Hillsborough, Lakelands, Macquarie Hills, Mount Hutton, Speers Point, Tingira Heights and Valentine.

Students from St Mary's go on to either St Paul's High School, Booragul or St Mary's Catholic College, Gateshead.

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
195	216	54	411

* 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 90.38%. 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
91.74	90.05	90.73	90.63	90.07	90.00	89.46

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	38
Number of full time teaching staff	18
Number of part time teaching staff	9
Number of non-teaching staff	11

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)

At St Mary's we live out our ***Vision: Learning Together, Enriching Lives***, and Mission:

St Mary's is a Christ-centered community founded on the Josephite tradition of faith in action through service.

We are partners in learning in our pursuit of excellence.

We use our head, heart and hands to live life to the full and enrich our world.

St Mary's caters for students from the Parish of Boolaroo-Warners Bay and has a history built on the traditions of the Sisters of St Joseph. We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, the Awabakal people, upon which the school is built. St Mary's celebrates its Catholicity through regular morning prayer assemblies and liturgies, with Monday morning being another celebration of the Sunday Gospel readings.

St Mary's School is fortunate to be situated on the same site as St Mary's Church and our Parish Priest, Father Greg Barker, celebrates Mass and liturgies on special school occasions. Special celebrations this year included Mass for Our Lady Help of Christians, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, the Assumption of Mary, Beginning of School Year, and End of School Year Mass. We held many special liturgies for events such as Catholic Schools Week, Harmony Day, Easter, ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, Mothers' and Fathers' Day, Grandparents' Day and Year 6 Graduation. Our liturgical celebrations are always very well-attended by parents and extended family members.

Children from Years 3-6 received the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist through the Parish Sacramental Program, which is supported by the school.

Our staff and students designed and established a special prayer garden to allow for quiet prayer and reflection. We also established a yarnning circle and bush tucker garden to enhance our connection with Aboriginal spirituality.

The St Mary's School community has a close relationship with the Parish community and actively participates in the Parishes of Warners Bay and Boolaroo on a number of levels. During Lent, the school supported Caritas' Project Compassion. Our Year 5 students organise a whole school Mission Fun Day to raise funds for Catholic Mission every October. Each Christmas the school assists St Vincent de Paul by donating food and gifts for the needy.

There is regular contact between the school and the Parish Priest through meetings, enrolment processes, staffing interviews and pastoral visits to the school.

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.

This year, St Mary's continued to implement 'The Learning Pit' to encourage students to approach learning with a growth mindset. We deepened our understanding and commitment to supporting and challenging children in their learning, by engaging with the creator of The Learning Pit, James Nottingham. We also have continued to engage in 'Visible Learning' and Lyn Sharratt's 14 Parameters to promote students becoming life-long learners.

Staff strengthened their knowledge and understanding of 'high impact' strategies and implemented them in learning experiences. High impact strategies implemented across the school include learning intentions, co-constructed success criteria, effective and timely feedback, goal setting, and building and maintaining a growth mindset. We believe all students can and will learn. Staff utilise a wide variety of thinking routines in line with Cultures of Thinking to help students think and talk about their learning.

Students are regularly challenged to take risks in their learning, make mistakes and try different ideas which help them to learn and achieve their goals.

St Mary's challenges every student in a supportive learning environment and values each student's different abilities. We acknowledge that students learn in different ways, therefore learning programs must contain different options for learning. A wide range of support is provided for students who need assistance with learning academically and socially, and academic strengths are challenged during classroom learning. The Learning Support Team at St Mary's continued to assist the teaching staff in meeting the diverse needs of students. We consulted with students, their families and specialist services to understand individual needs, and to determine the adjustments required. The Learning Support Team collaborated with teaching staff to develop and deliver a variety of programs and intervention.

In 2024 all teaching staff participated in the University of NSW Mini COGE course. GERRIC's Mini-COGE courses are practical professional development for educators to support high

potential and gifted students. High potential students are not necessarily high achievers. The course focused on how to engage and support these students to reach their potential.

The Mini-COGE professional development helped teachers to;

- identify gifted, high potential and talented students
- differentiate the curriculum for high potential students
- implement ability grouping or acceleration
- understand gifted education research and best practices and,
- develop an existing (or create a new) unit of work to best suit the needs of the differentiated classroom and gifted students.

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 Mary's Primary School 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	66%	54%
	Reading	83%	66%
	Writing	86%	77%
	Spelling	62%	61%
	Numeracy	78%	63%
NAPLAN RESULTS 2024		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 5	Grammar and Punctuation	81%	65%
	Reading	86%	71%
	Writing	85%	67%
	Spelling	76%	68%
	Numeracy	81%	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

Through formal surveys and informal consultation with parents and carers, feedback was overwhelmingly positive and indicated a very high level of satisfaction.

All parents were invited to complete the Tell Them From Me survey in 2024. Results showed that parents at St Mary's have higher levels of satisfaction than the diocesan average in all areas. 94% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that the school enjoys an excellent reputation in the community.

- *'Thank you for all that you do for our children. You have created an environment where our children can thrive and not feel 'less than'; or 'other' for being different. We are so grateful!*
- *'Thank you so much for all you've invested in our family this year. We are so grateful for your support and look forward to a fantastic 2025 at St Mary's!'*
- *'The school provides a range of opportunities for students to succeed and take part in, to further develop themselves as individuals. Teachers do a wonderful job getting to really know the students and how to help them improve in all areas of school life. It is evident liturgical celebrations and school events have been planned with thought and care to make them meaningful and special.'*

Student satisfaction

Through formal surveys (Yrs 4-6) and informal consultation with all students, feedback was also overwhelmingly positive and indicated a very high level of satisfaction.

Students reported that they believe the school places great importance on:

- Improvement – each person should be improving in their learning and that the school community is always trying to become even better
- Wellbeing – each person in the community is cared for and respected, and a focus on positive wellbeing practices happens every day at the school
- Safety - children feel safe at the school

- *'I really like the people at my school, the learning environment and learning opportunities we get to have. The school organises really fun activities for us to enjoy. I love the learning here!'*
- *'Things I really like about my school are:*
 - *students, teachers, principal*
 - *classrooms*
 - *out of uniform days such as pjs day, Mary Mackillop day etc.*
 - *our clean environment*
 - *that people care about fun learning and including parents*
 - *that everyone is respectful and caring*
 - *what we learn about is very important in our everyday lives.'*

Teacher satisfaction

Teacher satisfaction is also extremely high, with very little turnover of staff in the school.

The diocese invited all staff in the school to complete the Tell Them From Me survey in 2024. Staff survey results were very similar to parent survey results, showing that staff at St Mary's have higher levels of satisfaction than the diocesan average in all areas.

100% of staff would recommend this school and believe that St Mary's is highly regarded in the community, and 96% of staff agree and strongly agree that the school has effective leadership.

100% of staff agree or strongly agree that there is a shared sense of responsibility amongst staff for the faith life of the school, and staff place great importance on the school being inclusive of all children.

'We already have a strong focus on learning and will continue to focus on learning, as we do every day.'

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	\$3,927,502
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$1,045,543
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$1,180,385
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$19,752
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$354,503
Total Income	\$6,527,685

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2024	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$45,568
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$4,765,591
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$1,970,907
Total Expenditure	\$6,782,066

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