



**Catholic Schools**  
DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

# 2025

## 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>

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

## About this report

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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) which forms part of the broader system of schools governed by Catholic Schools NSW. 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

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, an imaginative play space, a creative construction 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 where 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 continues to provide a supportive, inclusive and values-driven environment where every child is encouraged to thrive both academically and personally. As a parent community, we deeply appreciate the school's ongoing commitment to open communication, student wellbeing and fostering a genuine sense of belonging.

Throughout 2025, it has been wonderful to see our children grow in confidence and capability, supported by dedicated teachers who nurture both learning and individual strengths. The school's focus on academic excellence, alongside opportunities in sport, performing arts and leadership, ensures all students are given the chance to shine.

A highlight of the year was the incredible support shown by our school community during the Gr8 Race fundraiser. This event not only raised valuable funds to support school initiatives

and resources but also brought families together in a fun and meaningful way. The enthusiasm and generosity demonstrated by local businesses, students, parents and staff is a true reflection of the strong community spirit that defines St Mary's.

We are grateful for the continued partnership between families and the school, and for the many opportunities provided to enrich our children's education and experiences. St Mary's remains a place where students feel safe, supported and inspired each day, and we are proud to be part of such a connected and caring community.

### **Student Body Message**

St Mary's is such a friendly and welcoming school with a great atmosphere, all thanks to our dedicated teachers, staff, and friendly 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 also 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 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. This year we partnered with Lake Macquarie City Council to investigate strange looking holes we found in our playground. We set up cameras at the end of this year and we are looking forward to seeing what interesting wildlife is living at our school!

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 and classrooms that have recently been renovated, flexible learning furniture, 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.

At St Mary's we have families from many different cultures and we are welcoming to all. We have multicultural days and celebrate Harmony Week every year.

This year we had an amazing fundraising day called the Gr8 Race. The day was organised by parent volunteers, and we got to participate in fun and physical activities like a ninja warrior course, slime slide, throwing and catching games, team strategy challenges and water activities.

We maintain a strong connection with our parish. It's great to be able to celebrate liturgies with Fr Darryl Mackie (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 and sing in the choir 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. We also have ASPIRE Creative Arts School Representatives who meet with other schools in our diocese.

It's great being part of such an active and positive community!

## School Features

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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 Boolaroo, Booragul, Cardiff South, Croudace Bay, Eleebana, Floraville, Hillsborough, Lakelands, Macquarie Hills, Mount Hutton, Speers Point, Tingira Heights, Valentine and Warners Bay.

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

## Student Profile

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### Student Enrolment

The School caters for students in Years K – 6. Students attending this School come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2025: Additional information can be found on My School website.

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
203	215	43	418

\* 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.

### Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for 2025 was 90.96%. 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
91.52	91.64	90.15	90.77	91.26	91.60	89.75

### Managing Student Non-Attendance

All schools maintain an accurate register of their student's attendance. Any absences (part or full day) from school are recorded on this register and appropriate intervention strategies are implemented if required.

While parents/carer are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their child at school, school staff, as part of their duty of care, play a vital role in providing a continuum of active support including universal, targeted, and individualised strategies when supporting students with attendance concerns. Documented attendance plans may be developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern.

## Staffing Profile

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### Staffing Profile

Note: The data presented reflects the most current information available at the time of reporting. Variations in data currency may occur where staff updates are pending. Differences between tables are due to variations in staff inclusion criteria; therefore, minor discrepancies in reported numbers may occur.

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2025:

Total number of staff	50
Number of full time teaching staff	12
Number of part time teaching staff	26
Number of non-teaching staff	12

### Total number of teaching staff by NESA category

Teachers are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004 (NSW). Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher is voluntary.

The following table describes the accreditation status of teachers at St Mary's Primary School in 2025:

Conditional Teachers	2
Provisional Teachers	0
Proficient Teachers	33

## 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)

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 Darryl Mackie, 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, Ash Wednesday 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

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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 embeds capabilities and priorities within curriculum content points in all KLAs. These include literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, and personal and social capability.

The school provides an educational program 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 curriculum is structured around the outcomes and content for each KLA and provides multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding. 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, and 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 implementation of 'high impact' strategies 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 know 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 assisted 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. All teaching staff have completed the University of NSW Mini COGE course; a practical professional development for educators to support high potential and gifted students. The course focused on how to engage and support these students to reach their potential.

## Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

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### 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 2025 is reported in the table below.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2025		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 3	Grammar and Punctuation	67%	54%
	Reading	86%	66%
	Writing	87%	76%
	Spelling	77%	62%
	Numeracy	83%	64%
NAPLAN RESULTS 2025		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 5	Grammar and Punctuation	61%	63%
	Reading	76%	73%
	Writing	75%	65%
	Spelling	75%	69%
	Numeracy	73%	69%

## Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

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### Pastoral Care Policy

The School's approach to pastoral care and wellbeing is guided by the [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#).

This policy provides a framework for the development and implementation of policies, programs, resources, and practices at all school levels. Its purpose is to support and enhance the wellbeing of students and all members of the school community, fostering a climate of care within a Catholic educational context.

The School is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and academically rigorous environment. A strong emphasis is placed on nurturing and maintaining positive, respectful relationships among staff, students, and parents, with the wellbeing of all at the forefront.

### Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy

The School's behaviour management and student discipline procedures align with the Catholic School's [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#) and to the [Schools Behaviour Management Policy](#). These policies uphold the dignity and responsibility of each individual, promote positive student behaviour, and ensure respect for the rights of all students and staff. Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited at the School. The School does not permit or condone the use of corporal punishment by any School personnel or non-School individuals, including parents, as a means of discipline in the School. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the School's website.

### Anti-Bullying Policy

The School implements the Catholic Schools [Anti-Bullying Policy](#) which is adopted by all schools within the Diocese. This policy provides a framework for school communities to collaboratively prevent and address bullying, fostering respectful relationships and responding to individual needs with sensitivity and care. The Catholic Schools Leadership team 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 on the Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle website.

## Complaints Handling Policy

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) is implemented by the School and all schools in the diocese. This policy acknowledges that misunderstandings and differences of opinion may arise and provides a structured process for resolving such matters respectfully and constructively. By addressing concerns within a framework of dignity, respect and truth, the policy reflects the values of the Catholic faith and offers opportunities to model the love of Christ in contemporary contexts. The Catholic Schools Leadership team monitors the implementation of this policy in our schools.

The full text of the [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or on the Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle 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

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.

Informal feedback in 2025 from parents included:

- *'Dear Liz, Andrew and the wonderful staff of St Mary's, Thank you for all your support, love and patience over the past 13 years. It honestly only felt like yesterday when Lachie started Kindergarten. Our time at St Mary's has been great and I truly appreciate all the care and support the kids and I have received over the past 13 years, particularly when my sister died. I appreciate the patience and understanding going from supermum with Lachie - notes in on times, uniform perfect, didn't miss and event, to the poor third child where we were late, forgot what uniform day it was, forgot events and went through 7 hats. That's a wrap from the Marshall Gilles Crew!' Parent of 3 children*

### 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

Informal feedback in 2025 from students included:

- *'Dear St Mary's Wonderful Staff, Thank you for nurturing me and helping me grow at St Mary's. Your support has been priceless and I have valued it on this amazing journey. The attached is a souvenir which is a small recognition of all that you have done for me during my years here. It is the code of Hammurabbi, created in ancient Iraq, my country of origin. It is mankind's first laws. I chose it because it is a reminder that school is where we first learn right from wrong, rules and consequences.'* Graduating Yr 6 student

### **Teacher satisfaction**

Staff 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.

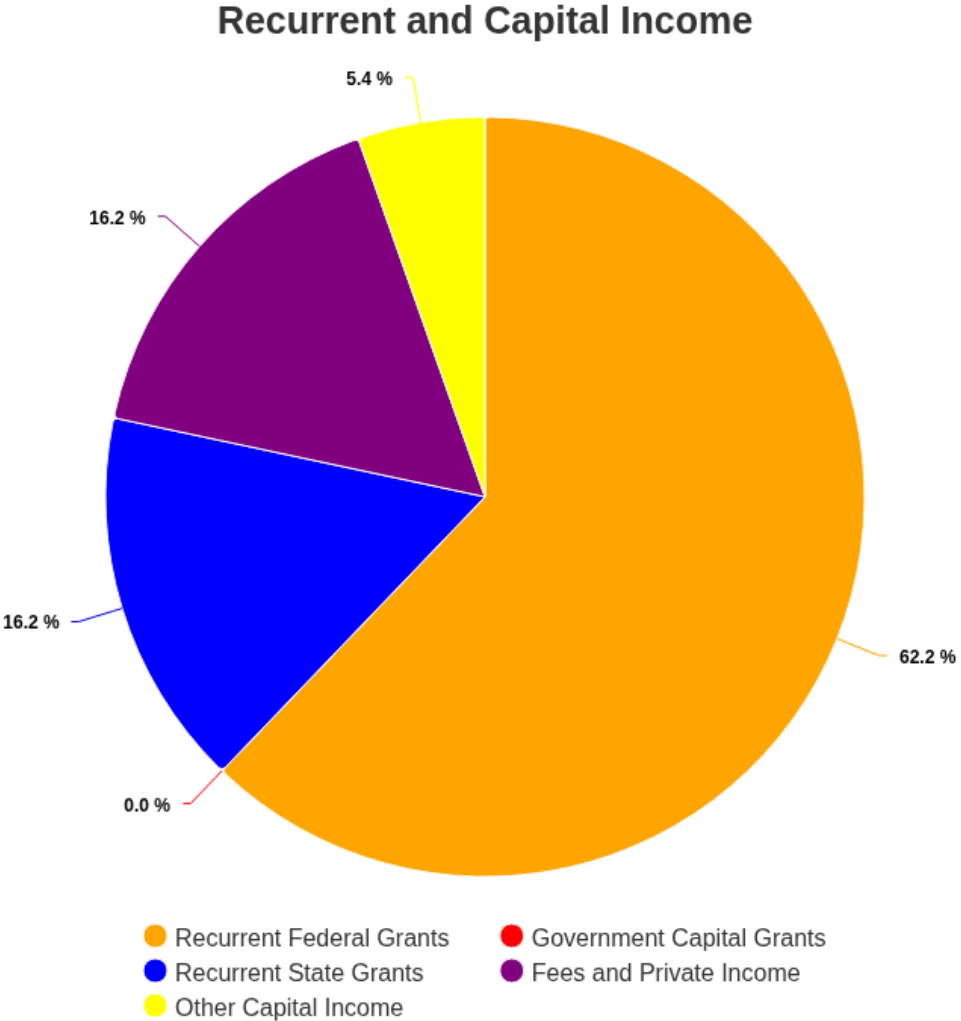
In 2025 the diocese conducted a Staff Engagement Survey. Results showed our staff have higher job satisfaction and commitment to the school when compared to the diocesan survey in 2023. It also showed an increase in the emotional wellness of staff and their ability to manage job stress when compared to the diocesan survey in 2023. This survey also showed staff see room for improvement in workload, recruitment and career opportunities.

# Financial Statement

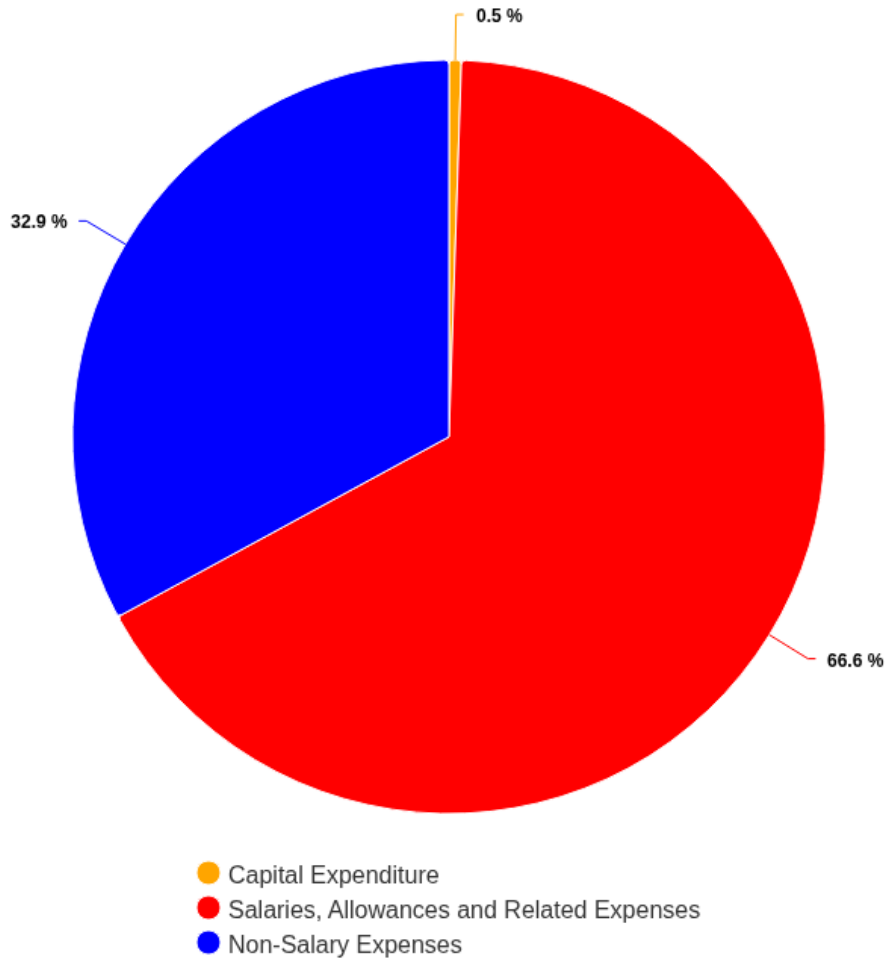
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This School Financial Information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire.

School Financial Information for the 2025 year is detailed below:



## Recurrent and Capital Expenditure



END OF 2025 REPORT