

DIOCESE  
OF  
BALLARAT  
CATHOLIC  
EDUCATION  
LIMITED



# 2023

## Annual Report to the School Community



**ST JOSEPH'S  
SCHOOL**  
COLERAINE

### St Joseph's School

67 Read Street, COLERAINE 3315

Principal: Karl Dwyer

Web: [www.sjcoleraine.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sjcoleraine.catholic.edu.au)

Registration: 684, E Number: E2031

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## Principal's Attestation

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I, Karl Dwyer, attest that St Joseph's School is compliant with:

- The minimum standards and other requirements for school registration and school boarding premises (if applicable) as specified in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic).
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2023 school year under the Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth) and the Australian Education Regulations 2023 (Cth).
- The Child Safe Standards as prescribed in Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises.

Attested on 18 Mar 2024

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## About this report

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St Joseph's School is registered by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). The Annual Report to the School Community (ARSC), provides parents and the wider community with information about the school's activities and achievements throughout the year including information about various aspects of school performance. The Report 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. 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 also be obtained from the [My School website](#).

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## Governing Authority Report

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The Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) governs 52 primary schools, one F – 8 school, and five secondary Colleges, educating around 13,500 students and employing more than 2,200 teachers and staff, from Mildura in the north, Portland in the south, and west to Edenhope and Nhill.

Now in its third year of operation, DOBCEL continues to work diligently to ensure all its schools flourish fully in their mission to provide high-quality, affordable, faith-based education opportunities for students and families in safe, supportive, and secure learning environments, that value diversity and promote cooperation, care, and respect for all.

During 2023, I was fortunate to visit all of our schools as the DOBCEL Board held meetings in different venues across the diocese. The spirit of harmony and sense of community, along with cultures of care for students and staff I experienced, was extremely encouraging. These school visits were also a reminder of the calibre of young people we have in our education system.

The role of school Principal continues to grow in complexity, demanding an increasingly diverse skillset and knowledge base. I am proud and deeply grateful for the exceptional dedication and professionalism of our 58 Principals, who, along with leadership colleagues and staff, work tirelessly to deliver education services for the families and communities they serve.

Enterprise Bargaining Agreement negotiations continued this year, involving staff from schools and human resources teams giving many hours and great effort to the process. Working with the inter-Diocesan bargaining group, DOBCEL continued to support efforts to finalise the Agreement with the Independent Education Union (IEU) as expediently as possible. DOBCEL continues to recognise the extraordinary work of staff in our schools and offices, and the substantial changes to the Agreement are intended to have a positive impact on staff and their workload.

As mandated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), the development of clear policy and procedural documents continued apace, with schools required to utilise DOBCEL foundational work, yet contextualise documents to suit the specific needs of each school. I express my gratitude to the team at Catholic Education Ballarat, who are both talented and conscientious in delivering this vital work.

During the year we saw the end of an era with the closure of St Brendan's Primary School, Dunnstown. Over 160 years of schooling was celebrated through speeches, laughter, and the sharing of many memories. Pleasingly, we also saw the refurbishment and opening of several new school buildings across the diocese this year.

I continue to be extremely grateful for the ongoing dedication, professionalism, and support of our personnel at Catholic Education Ballarat. I particularly acknowledge the commitment of our school leadership teams and their staff in nurturing and empowering the students in our care, as together we work to bring to life our vision: As partners in Catholic Education and open to God's presence, we pursue the fullness of life for all.

Tom Sexton

Executive Director DOBCEL

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## Vision and Mission

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### **Vision Statement**

At St. Joseph's School, we are committed to Jesus Christ's teachings and Gospel Values. We believe that all students can achieve high levels of learning, and we are committed to embedding and providing a culture of child safety. We actively promote and respect the cultural diversity of all members of our school community.

### **Mission Statement**

At St. Joseph's School, we will:

- work in partnership with the parents, the parish and the wider community to provide Religious Education that is meaningful, challenging and supportive of parents who provide the foundation of their child's faith education.
- work together to challenge each child to achieve their potential and fulfil their personal goals.
- provide a learning environment that is welcoming, safe, supportive, and that celebrates success.
- be vibrant members of our caring, friendly and cohesive community.

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## School Overview

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Statistics 2024:

Enrolment- 40

Number of families- 29

Teachers

1 Principal (full-time)

4 Teachers (2 full-time - 2 part-time)

Ancillary Staff

2 Administration Officers – (2 part-time)

3 Education Support Officers (3 part-time)

1 Maintenance Staff (part-time)

St Joseph's School is located in Coleraine, a country town with approximately 1,000 residents. Coleraine is located some 240 km west of Ballarat, in Victoria's western district and is best known for its agricultural significance during Victoria's flourishing wool industry boom of the last century.

The first Catholic School in Coleraine was established in 1903 on the corner of Winter and Church Streets by Fr. O'Connell and Miss Phelan (a lay teacher). Owing to a shortage of students and sometimes staff, the school closed and reopened many times throughout the early years.

In 1924 the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, having closed their Catholic school in Dunolly, was approached to take over the school at Coleraine, and later that year, two sisters arrived to take up the offer. The sisters began the new year with 99 pupils, and the school operated on that site until June of 1934, when the school was relocated to the Church grounds on Read Street.

The first lay principal was appointed in 1987, with the Sisters of Mercy handing the administration over to the new staff. The school received government funding to undertake refurbishments in 2003, which saw the original hall building, situated on the school grounds, restored. As time passed, ongoing structural concerns regarding the integrity of the forty-year old classrooms resulted in the complete demolition of the school building in late 2014. In early 2015, a new, modular school complex was constructed and formally blessed and

opened by the Most Reverend Bishop Paul Bird CSSR in October of that year, where it proudly stands as a showpiece school in our diocese today.

Teachers at St Joseph's are committed to working as a Professional Learning Community with other teachers in the Western Trinity (Sacred Heart Casterton and St Malachy's Edenhope). We focus on high-level learning for all students, teacher collaboration, and using data to plan for successful results. All students work towards a viable and negotiated curriculum.

The school's spirit is enhanced through a welcoming atmosphere and a high level of parent engagement in student learning. The school community works in a culture of mutual trust with a deep commitment to and ownership of Catholic education.



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## Principal's Report

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I am pleased to present this report on the growth and development of St Joseph's School through 2023. The following outline offers a summary of key decisions, events, and achievements of the school, which are detailed in the body of this document.

### **School Wide Positive Behaviour Support**

We continued working with Anne Ruddell from the Catholic Education Office Ballarat to refine our structures, professional mindsets and practices. We implemented several strategies to increase positive relationships and learning experiences around student and staff behaviour. Ongoing support was received from Anne in the form of PLTs, and the students made videos highlighting expected behaviours, which were shared at assemblies. We held events at the end of Terms 1-3 as celebrations of the efforts made by students each week to uphold behavioural expectations. For those three terms, we used an acknowledgement system where students who had been 'caught doing the right thing' were given raffle tickets and a small number were drawn out each week.

### **School Chaplain**

Megan Garland was employed to come each week to provide students, parents, and staff with regular counselling sessions and group activities at recess and lunchtime. The chaplaincy role is funded through the Catholic Education Office Ballarat.

### **Literacy & Numeracy**

The Learning and Teaching Team for the Western Trinity this year is made up of Katherine Jarrad (Sacred Heart), Patrick Sinnot (St Joseph's) and Cara Watt (St Malachy's) focused on the area of developing a Grammar scope and sequence. Our goal is to improve reading and writing outcomes for all students by using good-quality teaching practices in the classroom. As a result, the Western Trinity has agreed to implement Structured Literacy. Structured Literacy is a term coined in 2016 by the International Dyslexia Association to unify the many names for instructional approaches based firmly and intentionally within the Sciences of Reading and Learning.

### **Student Leadership**

Our model of shared leadership and increased student voice continues to develop and grow. The students worked with leadership to unpack student, parent, and staff survey results in front of the Insight SRC survey, gather more data, and put in place strategies that support students in areas such as peer connectedness, classroom behaviour, and student safety. They became more confident in airing their ideas and sharing information and plans with the

student body. Each leader shared their future wishes for their area for the coming year and worked with the grade 4 and 5 students to hand over their titles.

**Achievements and Future Directions:**

I am pleased to report that our school has made significant strides in achieving our goals outlined in the School Improvement Plan. Our students have demonstrated significant academic improvement, particularly in Numeracy, and our efforts to promote student well-being and engagement have been widely recognized. Looking ahead, we remain committed to continuous improvement and excellence in education as we strive to empower our students to reach their full potential.

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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Enhance the school's Catholic identity through dialogue within the school and parish community (Annual Action Plan Priority 3)
- Create a communal culture of learning and faith development in partnership with staff, students, families and the wider community
- To deepen staff, student and parent understanding of the meaning of Catholic identity in today's world
- Develop a whole school approach to consistent and purposeful teaching of the Religious Education Curriculum: Awakenings
- Deepen staff understanding of what it means to 'recontextualise' artefacts, scripture or imagery.
- Improve parent's understanding of the religious nature of a Catholic School
- Expand opportunities for student leadership within the school and the wider community through Mini Vinnies
- Develop staff understanding of recontextualising prayer.

### Achievements

- Religious Education work units were planned with teachers from the Western Trinity schools and supported by Catholic Education Office staff.
- PD in Bibliodrama and recontextualisation were run by CEB staff.
- Mini Vinnies members were commissioned at the start of the year and met regularly to plan and reflect on their projects and fundraising.
- Parents were educated about Catholic Identity through the newsletter and School Advisory Council meetings.
- Our school involved students, staff and parents in many religious events through Mini Vinnies, such as the St. Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal, Mission Month Activities and the Christmas Appeal.
- Through the Mini Vinnies Student Committee, students were consulted on various issues that affected them, such as how to raise funds for the underprivileged, raise awareness of social justice issues, and set work expectations for projects and assignments.
- A whole school liturgy combined with our Award Ceremony was held in the last week of the year.

## Value Added

- Mini Vinnies invited St Vinnies rep, Bryan Roberts to their meetings to plan projects like the Winter Appeal.
- Shrove Tuesday was celebrated with pancakes, prepared by parents and served at a family breakfast. Our Student Leaders were commissioned, and our new Prep students were welcomed into the school.
- Attendance of Ash Wednesday Mass and other whole school Masses later in the year. Five students completed the Sacramental program run by our REL and attended by Fr George.
- Students went and visited the residents at Wannon house
- Principal attended a two-day faith-formation retreat.
- Staff attended a full-day faith formation session led by our Justin McInerney
- Mission Month liturgy was run by Grade 5/6 students.

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## Learning and Teaching

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Develop the professional capabilities of the staff to support the needs of students through differentiated learning and teaching practices (Annual Action Plan Priority 1)

- Develop a grammar scope and sequence (F-6) for teachers to use.
- Consolidate the consistent and explicit teaching of phonological awareness as Tier 1 practice through the use of programs such as Heggerty.
- Staff use coaching, classroom observations and professional dialogue to improve practice and achieve individual professional goals.

### Achievements

Our school continued its collaborative work with our two neighbouring Catholic primary schools, St. Malachy's, Edenhope and Sacred Heart, Casterton, 'The Western Trinity Catholic Schools Network'. The network used the PLC model to improve student learning outcomes across the three schools, specifically in writing and spelling.

The Learning and Teaching Team (LaTT) has developed confidence and knowledge about teaching grammar. The teacher's knowledge of the curriculum and how to teach each subject area has improved by developing and revising Essential Curriculum Standards for our school in Writing and Spelling.

The teaching staff unpacked the PAT data in October and, as a result, developed a sequence of explicit lessons on inferencing and retrieving information from texts delivered in Term 4. This model of small group-focused teaching for 30 minutes each day will continue in 2024.

### Student Learning Outcomes

- In 2022, 28% of students were below standard in spelling; in 2023, that decreased to 16%.
- In Maths, 65% of the school was at or above standard, and a significant number of children were in grades 7-9. This is an increase of 20% from the previous year.
- Reading and literacy continue to be challenging at St Joseph's, with 50% of children at or below standard for Reading. As a result, our school will develop and embed a school-wide research-based approach to literacy.

<b>NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Year level</b>	<b>Mean Scale score</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	*	*
Numeracy	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	*	*
Reading	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	*	*
Spelling	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	*	*
Writing	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	*	*

\*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2023 due to participation not meeting these criteria or no students were assessed. Participants include students who were assessed, including non-attempt, or those exempted from the test.

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## Student Wellbeing

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Build a safe, positive and inclusive environment to support the wellbeing of the school community.
- To support students in becoming confident, engaged and reflective learners.
- Fully implement the SWPBS scope and sequence developed with Anne Ruddell Identify and use evidence-based student self-assessment and self-reporting practices, such as, using rubrics (proficiency scales and marking guides) designed by teachers and used by the students in assessment and reporting.
- Ensure a whole school approach to sharing and displaying learning intentions and success criteria.
- Establish and implement whole school behavioural expectations (SWPBS).
- Students have a voice in decision-making.
- Employment of a school counsellor.
- Implement a transition program for Grade 6 students.

### Achievements

The students' responses in their termly well-being check-in were used to gauge their mental health.

- PLC has focused our attention on improving how we write and share learning intentions and success criteria with students; this has assisted in students knowing what is expected of them in class.
- The Student Council Leader attended each class meeting and reported back to the Student Leadership team successes and challenges to be shared at the assembly that week.
- The school counsellor runs the START Program for six weeks in Term 4. It supports Grade 6 students' transition to secondary school.
- A Stepping into Leadership program ran six weeks for the Grade 5 students.
- Students participated in activities promoting anti-bullying strategies (Bullying No Way Day and Day for Daniel)
- The school counsellor regularly met with the Principal to ensure all students were supported.

## Value Added

- Promoted and encouraged student leadership with Year 5/6 students.
- Staff and students supported continuing the school's student Mini Vinnies group.
- Provide pastoral care to school families in many ways, including supplying meals to families in need when necessary.
- Devised and implemented Personalised Learning Plans and held termly support meetings for students with special needs and those deemed at risk.
- The student wellbeing leaders were invited to unpack the Student Wellbeing Survey results and generate ideas to address the areas of concern.

## Student Satisfaction

According to a recent survey, Grade 5/6 students scored high in personal development, desire to learn, and connectedness to peers. Their ability to manage emotions significantly increased. They felt that cyberbullying was not an issue and that collaboration was very high, as was their teachers' encouragement to learn.

## Student Attendance

Attendance is recorded on the web-based site SIMON. Attendance is monitored carefully. Parents are required to send a notification to the school of their child's absence via a handwritten note, an email or through the Skoolbag app indicating the reason for their child's absence from school, either before or on the morning of the absence. If a student's absence is unexplained by 9:30 am without notification, the school contacts the family to verify non-attendance. Any students with an attendance percentage below 90% are monitored carefully. If the percentage does not improve or dips below 85%, the school contacts the families concerned. The school asks parents if there are any concerns or reasons for absences that the school is unaware of. The school explains to parents that poor attendance often negatively affects academic progress and isolates students socially and emotionally. Poor attendance is reported to the Catholic Education Office and the Department of Education in severe cases.

Student attendance data for Semester 2 shows a significant increase in absenteeism. In Semester 1 3% of students' attendance was below 85%, in Semester 2 this increased to 31%. COVID and other illnesses explain some absences, but others are unexplained, and staff are concerned about the impact on student learning outcomes and the lack of reason for non-attendance.



<b>Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level</b>	
Y01	87.8%
Y02	91.2%
Y03	85.3%
Y04	91.0%
Y05	82.2%
Y06	92.6%
Overall average attendance	88.3%

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## Leadership

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To collaboratively write a Reflection Report for the School Review in Term 3.
- To improve role clarity.
- Use data effectively to plan, monitor and assess student learning.
- Whole school Professional Learning opportunities.
- Investigate and unpack the AITSL Professional Teaching Standards by writing Professional Learning Plans with all teachers.
- To build leadership capacity.
- All key teaching staff will be part of a PLC team, where a range of leadership skills will be shared amongst the group and developed.
- Improve student voice and a sense of ownership through Student Leadership roles.
- To support individual teachers and PLC teams through a Learning and Teaching Leadership team.
- To support a third-year Principal.

### Achievements

- All staff attended Professional Learning in 2023 appropriate to their role within the school.
- Annual Action Plans and policies were created with the input of all teaching staff and the principal to meet students' needs.
- Professional Learning Plans were refined to make them more user-friendly, and work was done on writing SMART goals that they will refer back to. Teachers increased their understanding of the AITSL Professional Teaching Standards as these were referenced and used in the Annual Review Meeting with the Principal.
- The student leadership structure was streamlined to enable students to work as a team with support from students in other grades.
- The principal attended one two-day Induction Workshop in Ballarat.
- Western Trinity Principals met weekly for a catch-up and wellbeing check-in.
- Regular Leadership Team meetings with a long-term plan for meeting foci are documented in the calendar.
- Staff meetings also have a main agenda focus planned out, and different staff members are responsible for running meetings in their areas of expertise.
- Successful grant to Sporting Schools in Term 1 and 4 to fund our athletics and swimming program.

<b>Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning</b>	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023	
<p>The Religious Education Leader (REL) attended three days of REL network meetings</p> <p>All staff attended a school closure day that included a Child Safety Briefing, a Mandatory Reporting Briefing, an OHS Briefing, and a PLC.</p> <p>RE Education Officer Justin McInerney- ran a PD day for all Western Trinity staff on prayer renewal: recontextualization with prayer as the focus.</p> <p>PLTs are run by Education Officers in Running Records, Scripture and Mathematics.</p> <p>Teachers attended an NCCD moderation workshop run by the Learning Diversity Leader to develop an understanding of the types of evidence required and ways to adjust for children with diverse learning needs.</p> <p>Preparation for 2023 School Review - 2 whole days and multiple PLTs attended by Principal teachers with input from LSOs and Admin.</p> <p>Teachers and LSOs had two 'coaching conversations' with John O'Sullivan.</p>	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	4
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1054.00

### Teacher Satisfaction

The External Review panel members reported high levels of teacher satisfaction within our school. Our dedicated teachers consistently express a profound sense of fulfilment and pride in their roles, attributing it to the supportive environment, collaborative culture, and opportunities for professional growth. The positive relationships forged between teachers, students, and parents contribute significantly to our school's success and reputation for excellence. As we celebrate this achievement, we remain committed to sustaining a culture prioritising our valued teaching staff's well-being and professional development.

<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	0.0%
Graduate	0.0%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	100.0%
Advanced Diploma	0.0%
No Qualifications Listed	0.0%

<b>Staff Composition</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	1
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	4
Teaching Staff (FTE)	3.4
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	6
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	3.3
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	1

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## Community Engagement

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To strengthen parent and community involvement in all aspects of school life.
- Identify opportunities for students to send personal invitations to parents and the wider community to participate in school community activities.
- Participate in a variety of community events.
- To develop a sense of welcome from St Joseph's School to the wider community and a willingness to participate in community events.
- To strengthen relations between St Joseph's and the Coleraine Kindergarten and other schools in the local area.

### Achievements

- Students competed in the local schools Sports Association days.
- Reached out to the Men's Shed and had them make equipment for the Twilight Fair. Reciprocal visits to Wannon Hostel.
- Students attended the ANZAC Service and parade.
- Students participated in Clean Up Australia Day.
- Networking with Diocesan principals enabled us to attend a "Come and Try" day at Monivae College.
- Lions Club Speeches
- Learning Walks- In the pre-walk session, the parents were asked to think of a question they had about learning at St Joseph's and then to take photos of things in each room that helped them to answer the questions. The facilitator's role is to point out things that might answer people's questions and highlight things they might not otherwise notice.
- Student-led conversations were held in Term 2 where the students shared work from the semester for part of the interview and parents had the opportunity to speak with the teacher for the other part of the meeting. Meeting times were extended to 20 minutes to promote deeper discussion

### Parent Satisfaction

The External Review panel reported that parents felt welcomed and valued. The school listens to and responds to issues, which are dealt with effectively and satisfactorily.

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## Financial Performance

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The school's financial performance information and a report of the financial activities of the school's boarding premises (if applicable) have been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au).

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at [www.sjcoleraine.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sjcoleraine.catholic.edu.au)