



St Mary's Catholic Primary School Mackay

2022 Annual School Report



Catholic Education
Diocese of Rockhampton

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Mackay

Catholic Education Diocese of Rockhampton

Principal

Wesley Rose

Address

42 Juliet Street
South Mackay Qld 4740

Total enrolments

375

Year levels offered

Prep- Year 6

Type of School:

Co-educational

School Overview

St Mary's Catholic Primary School Mackay is a two-stream school catering for students from Prep to Year Six. The school was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1924 and in keeping with their example, St Mary's has a significant role to play in educating children in the Catholic tradition and is a vital part of St Mary's Parish. The school is situated in South Mackay, an inner-city suburb and a convenient school for inner city workers. Consequently, the students come from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds and cultural groups and from several parishes. Providing quality education in a loving and accepting Christian environment, we value our small size, family-like and welcoming atmosphere. Our school motto "Learn from Christ" permeates everything we do and stand for at St Mary's. The school, through its religious and educational programs, supports parents in the task of developing children's skills for life-long learning. This requires a level of responsibility, and such a partnership requires cooperation, communication, involvement and mutual respect. St Mary's is committed to quality learning and teaching. We succeed as co-educators when we cater for our students with flexibility and care, foster a love of learning, celebrate the individual and encourage growth and development as an ongoing journey for all. Staff at St Mary's present a dynamic and evolving curriculum based on solid gospel values, a fostering of academic excellence and a deepening relationship with our God. A wide variety of academic, cultural and sporting co-curricular activities enrich learning at St Mary's.

More information on our school can be accessed from myschool.edu.au

Curriculum Offerings

Distinctive Curriculum Offerings

Our school is an exciting place to be. Parents send their children to St Mary's for a variety of reasons. Many people comment on the caring culture that permeates all facets of our school community. An obvious strength is the positive atmosphere that exists in our school; the children are loved, respected and well taught. Students are offered a holistic education that supports personal growth based on Christian values.

Extra Curricula Activities

At St Mary's, children are given opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities. These include choir, outdoor education camps, spiritual development, sport competitions, 'Making Jesus Real' peer-led groups, curriculum competitions, excursions, social activities, Opti-Minds, music, artistic and physical education specialists, guest speakers and leadership opportunities. We provide an education that promotes the personal development of each child. Initiatives such as Project Compassion, Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, NADIOC week and our 'Mini Vinnies' group promote compassion for others and responsibility and self-respect for the whole school community. Parents are regularly encouraged to participate in school activities and attend Friday assembly. Family socials are regularly organised as well as holistic support offered to families. Our school is part of Southern Suburbs sub-district representative sport. Our students aged 10-12 years are invited to trial in a variety of representative sport. Children can nominate themselves to be part of our Reader's Cup team. Our school has specialist teachers in the following areas; Performing Arts, Health and Physical Education and Spanish language. The children have access to a music specialist and instrumental program through Musicorp, where children from Year 3 have the opportunity to learn a variety of musical instruments. Students are also invited to become members of our choir and verse speaking groups. Children participate in our school's camp program. The Years 5 and 6 students participate in camps that foster their leadership development. In term 3 we host a local artist in residence, who works with our students to develop their artistic abilities. Over three sessions, students produce an artwork that is shown at our annual Art Exhibition, which is a highlight of the school calendar each year. Our Year 5 students are invited to learn all about photography in our camera club. Students discover the potential of their camera and prepare some photography pieces for our Art Exhibition. During the year the children view a range of performances by the Queensland Arts Council. Book Week is an important event in the school's calendar. Classes participate in many activities that promote literacy. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Week is celebrated. We recognise the importance of multiculturalism as our society is made up of many different cultures. The children have an opportunity to participate in the national competitions in Computing, Science, Maths and Literacy.

How Information and Communication Technologies are used to assist learning

We believe that it is essential that our students are equipped with Information and Communication (ICT) capabilities so that they can "participate in a knowledge-based economy and to be empowered within a technologically sophisticated society now and into the future" (MCEETYA 2008). We aim to develop the students' knowledge, skills

and dispositions around ICTs. A variety of devices are used across the school, including desktop and laptop computers, Chromebooks and iPads. Our 'Makerspace' offers students the facility to immerse themselves in a myriad of technology; including robotics, coding, screen animation and movie making. The nature and scope of ICT capability is not fixed but is responsive to ongoing technological developments. Students need to use ICT with confidence, care and consideration, understanding its possibilities, limitations and impact on individuals, groups and communities.

Social Climate

Strategies to Promote a Positive Culture

Based on our shared values and beliefs, all learners at St Mary's are invited and challenged to be and become reflective, self-directed learners who are producers, participators, investigators, communicators and problem solvers. Through modelling and living out of the values according to the Catholic ethos, religious education is the umbrella that oversees and permeates all that we do. We seek to inspire children to have Jesus Christ as their model and with the help of the Holy Spirit, be the best person they can be, as God intends. St Mary's implements the diocesan Religion Curriculum. The religion program encompasses the four strands, with a defined focus on Scripture and understanding the 'three worlds of the text'. Our staff explore ways to develop students' understanding of Catholic Social Teachings, both in Religion and other subjects. Catholic Social Teachings aim to promote a more just and respectful approach to living one's life. Initiatives that have been introduced in the area of curriculum over the past few years have challenged the St Mary's staff to review and improve programs and teaching practices. Despite the changes, our school Mission and Vision statement has remained central to our curriculum.

Cyber Safety and Anti-Bullying Strategies

We use a proactive approach to mitigate bullying. The "Making Jesus Real" philosophy forms the base for developing a positive, cohesive and faith-filled learning environment. We have a very comprehensive Behaviour Management approach, to which all staff, students and parents commit. Our school has implemented Diocesan policies on acceptable ICT use agreements for students and staff. We participate in the annual Day of Action against Bullying and teach the Daniel Morcombe Curriculum which specifies what cyber bullying is and how to address issues. The school regularly communicates to parents and the school community about cyber safety issues. We also have appropriate policies in place to deal with the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices. Our school has a number of social/emotional learning programs in place to assist students in guarding against bullying at school. Our wellbeing club is one such example. The school community is kept informed of current cyber safety concerns through our school newsletter.

Strategies for involving parents in their child's education

Our parent body continues to work tirelessly to provide a wide range of valued services for the school. The St Mary's P&F Association is a very active group within the school community and meets regularly. They have introduced various fundraising initiatives such as the Trivia Night, which contribute significantly to enhancing the educational offering at St Mary's. With an emphasis on parent engagement, their contribution to the culture of the school is impressive. We have class coordinators who welcome new families and organise social activities for families and parents during the year. The 'Just One Thing' campaign asks families to list ways that they can be engaged in the life of the school. We have an excellent reputation in our local area and many visitors comment upon the caring environment that exists in our school. The St Mary's School Board seeks to work towards the achievement of the church's educational mission. It consists of a variety of people who have an awareness of the Catholic Church's educational mission and who together reflect on the implementation of policies and guidelines that are based on Gospel values. This gives direction to the school and promotes its special religious identity. Furthermore, our teaching staff actively plan for parent engagement activities throughout the year on a class, cohort and whole-school level.

Reducing the school's environmental footprint

We have a recycling program, and recycle paper, cardboard and food scraps. In 2022, we partnered with the Mackay Regional Council and local industry to further reduce our waste and enhance student understanding about the importance of recycling. Teachers and students use electronic media to produce work and monitor their photocopy paper usage throughout the year. We have 120kw of solar panels.

Characteristics of the Student Body

St Mary's Catholic Primary School was founded by the Rockhampton Sisters of Mercy in 1924 and now caters for students from Prep to year 6. The school is situated in South Mackay which is an inner-city suburb with a mixture of older single residences and an increasing number of multiple dwellings, catering for older residents and single parent families. Adjoining a regional Catholic year 7 to 10 college, St Mary's is a convenient school for inner-city workers with around a quarter of the school population coming from outside the traditional boundaries of the parish. Consequently, the students come from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds and cultural groups. For the past several years, the school has experienced very strong enrolment numbers and all classes are now at capacity. This trend is due to a new housing development in the area which has led to a number of families sending their children to the school, proactive promotion and a very good reputation in the community and the school has spent a considerable money in improving its facilities and enjoys the support of a very proactive P&F.

Our school has a dedicated learning support team and volunteer parents who assist those students with diverse learning needs. Our learning support program and ESL programs are an integral part of our school, with teachers depending on these programs to assist them with both the large number of students with learning difficulties and ESL students. It should also be noted that the staff are proactive in developing the skills necessary to support the large number of students with learning difficulties and ESL needs in their classes.

Average student attendance rate (%)

The average student attendance rate for 2022 was 88.93%.

Management of non-attendance

The school roll is marked twice per day. The parents of a student who is absent without notice will receive a text message to request contact with the school. Continued absences are flagged by the administration staff and attended to by the school Leadership Team. Each term, students who have not met school targets receive a letter advising of their low school attendance. At the end of the year, all parents receive a detailed report on their child's attendance.

Staffing Information

Workforce Composition

Workforce Composition	Teaching Staff	Non-Teaching Staff	Indigenous Staff
Headcounts	24.00	23.00	1.00
Full-time equivalents	21.00	13.52	0.59

Qualifications of all teachers

Qualification – highest level of attainment	Percentage of staff with this Qualification
Doctoral / Post-doctoral	
Masters	4.55%
Bachelor Degree	95.45%
Diploma	
Certificate	

Major Professional Development Initiatives

Due to restrictions associated with the COVID pandemic, 2022 was very challenging year to facilitate professional development opportunities other than remote/ZOOM learning. Despite these challenges, staff participated in PD initiatives including;

- All staff participated in a staff/student wellbeing course led by local company, Minds Aligned.
- Teaching staff in relevant years learnt about the revised Religion Curriculum that is being implemented across our Diocese.

The percentage of teachers engaged in professional development was 100%.

Total funds expended on Professional Development

The total of funds expended on teacher professional development was \$43,000.

Average Staff Attendance and Retention

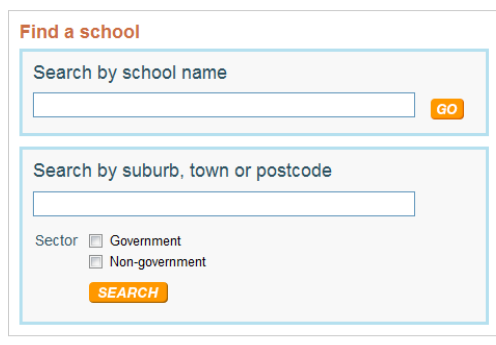
The average staff attendance for the school year, based on unplanned absences of sick and emergency leave for periods of up to five days, was 89.42%.

Percentage of teaching staff retained from the previous school year was 96.15%.

School Income

<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>.

(The School information below is available on the My School website).



The image shows a search interface titled "Find a school". It contains two search boxes: "Search by school name" with a "GO" button, and "Search by suburb, town or postcode" with a "SEARCH" button. Below the second search box, there are radio buttons for "Sector" with options for "Government" and "Non-government".

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy Results

Our reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy results for Years 3 and 5 are available via the My School website at www.myschool.edu.au.

If you are unable to access the internet, please contact the school for a paper copy of our school's NAPLAN results.

Key Student Outcomes and Value Added

Each term, teachers meet with the leadership team to discuss various aspects of the teaching and learning program. St Mary's continues to embed the Response to Intervention (RTI) model in Mathematics. This tiered model focuses on essential Mathematical concepts, quality classroom teaching, ongoing formative assessment and targeted

intervention by a team of expert teachers. The RTI approach sees teams of teachers work closely with each other three times per week, enabling them to discuss and examine student learning, share ideas for improving instruction, and opening their classrooms to learn about effective instructional practices. This RTI model is an example of a professional learning community (PLC) in action. Transforming our school into a professional learning community has very positive impacts for students and the results include:

- Increased levels of student engagement
- Lower rates of absenteeism.
- Greater academic gains in maths, science, history, and reading.
- Smaller achievement gaps between students from different backgrounds.

For staff, the following results have been observed:

- A reduction of isolation of teachers.
- Increased commitment to the mission and goals of the school and increased vigour in working.
- Shared responsibility for the total development of students and collective responsibility for students' success.

Strategic Improvement Progress and Next Steps

Strategic progress in 2022

Catholic Identity and Ethos: *To have a clear focus on the Catholic Social Teaching of Sustainability.* Significant work was undertaken to align our ecological education initiatives to the inspiration found in the Church's Catholic Social Teaching on Sustainability.

Effective Teaching and Learning: *To enhance student numeracy achievement, with particular focus on enrichment and extension activities.* Optimisation of our Mathematics scope and sequence enabled concepts to be re-taught multiple times throughout the year.

Pastoral Support and Wellbeing: *To develop students' determination (grit), with an increased ability to persist when solving challenging mathematical problems.* Our school counsellor worked alongside teachers to develop an understanding of how mindset and grit can positively influence mathematics outcomes in students.

Leadership, Partnerships and Resourcing: *To strengthen the parent/teacher partnership to improve student learning in numeracy.* Several classes completed a student grit survey, which was shared with their parents and enabled some tailored teaching of grit concepts.

Strategic Priorities for 2023

Our 2023 Strategic Priorities are;

Catholic Identity and Ethos: To improve student understanding of the Catholic Social Teaching of Subsidiarity and Participation.

Effective Teaching and Learning: To deepen student mathematical understanding.

Pastoral Support and Wellbeing: To facilitate and develop student voice across all year levels.

Leadership, Partnerships and Resourcing: To strengthen the parent/teacher partnership in each year level.

Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction

Comments include:

- A beautiful school that welcomes everyone. A small friendly community that my child feels safe in.
- Staff seem to be very happy in their jobs at the school and are friendly to parents even if they don't teach their children/know them as such. So far, our experience with the school has been a positive one and our child is really enjoying her first year of school. Thanks St Mary's!
- The welcoming feeling, parent/teacher connection, principal/parent connection, education and nurture my child receives, my child's wellbeing put first.
- I love that St Mary's is a community and everyone works together. It has a lovely welcoming feel. My children are becoming wonderful students because their teachers and the people around them push them to do their best.
- I love the culture of the school; this is a great school.

- St Mary's has a friendly and respectful atmosphere. Staff are very dedicated to encouraging the students to reach goals and improve in every aspect of their schooling and home life. Staff are very approachable and have a genuine concern for their students.
- St Mary's School feels like a family. Everyone is very welcoming and happy to participate in anything the school tries to implement.
- The thing that appeals to me most about St Mary's is its commitment to keep the Catholic values that helps in instilling good behaviour in children, personal development and well-being programs. I also like the cultural diversity in the school, which is supportive of my personal values and my religious beliefs. I am also happy with the school curriculum as a whole.
- Friendly staff; excellent implementation of curriculum; participation in extra-curricular activities including touch football, run club, Rock Pop mime, good behaviour management structure; clean schooling environment.
- Our family enjoys the inclusive nature of the St Mary's community; we appreciate that the 'character' and moral integrity of our children is also being developed and that the focus is not only on academic or sporting achievement.