



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

2023

Annual Report to the School Community



St Ambrose's School

18 Templeton Street, WOODEND 3442

Principal: Bronwyn Phillips

Web: www.sawoodend.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 289, E Number: E1033

Principal's Attestation

I, Bronwyn Phillips, attest that St Ambrose'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 10 May 2024



About this report

St Ambrose'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](#).



Governing Authority Report

The recently restructured leadership team has impacted positively on the operation of the school. Leadership has a clear focus on enacting the school's vision and mission and a clear direction for improving teaching and learning.

- The linking of the RE curriculum with inquiry where appropriate within the school curriculum
- The school has a strong commitment to improving teacher practice and leadership and staff express collegiality, team support, and a willingness for continued improvement.

Leadership invests in collaborative approaches through targeted whole-school professional learning to plan for teaching and learning and well-being.

- Commitment to the school's Catholic identity, RE program, the culture of welcome, and the staffs'

knowledge of individual students.

Staff have completed PD in the areas of mathematics and literacy to support achieving our goals in these areas.

- There is a continuing emphasis on student wellbeing with numerous structures in place to support the students. A schoolwide approach to wellbeing, with a focus on increasing student resilience, has been implemented.



Vision and Mission

Our Vision:

Centred by Faith - In Partnership with Community - We Provide Excellence in Learning.

We welcome all to our vibrant school community! It is our great privilege to work in partnership with our families & community to engage in the adventure of learning! We aspire to enable growth and development in every aspect of our children: social, emotional, physical, spiritual and cognitive. We see learning as an adventure and a journey of endless possibilities, where students are energised to seek meaning and explore questions about the world around them.

Our Aims

In partnership, we aim to provide the best education possible for each child. Specifically, our aims are:

- to provide an excellent education for our students which develops their talents and capacities to full potential and is relevant to the social, cultural, and economic needs of the nation.
- to enable our students to achieve high standards of learning and to develop self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, respect for others, and achievement of personal excellence.
- to provide a foundation for further education and training, in terms of knowledge and skills, respect for learning, and positive attitudes toward education.
- to provide students with the knowledge and skills to actively participate and positively contribute to an ever-changing world.
- to provide our students with the basis to develop a conscious relationship with themselves, others and God in the tradition of the Catholic Church.

Our Beliefs

We believe that parents, students, teachers, and our parish community have an obligation to co-operate to provide an environment that can be truly called a loving Catholic Community in which Gospel values flourish. We hope that together, we will achieve this aim to the fullest. We base our endeavours on the beliefs:

- each individual is unique.

- education is an adventure and journey of endless possibilities and that all children should feel safe at school so that they can learn.
- education is about learning what it means to be human and that in Jesus Christ we have a model of what it means to be truly human.
- education is a means for discovering meaning in life, developing human potential, and liberating and empowering individuals to be responsible for their lives and to contribute to the society in which they live.
- education, shaped by engaging in the deeper questions of life, serves the true and enduring needs of our students and society.
- education enables the integration of faith, life, and culture.



School Overview

St Ambrose Parish School is located on a site surrounded by trees and homes approximately 76 kilometers from the Melbourne CBD and provides education for students from a wide catchment area.

In 2023 St Ambrose Parish School had an enrolment of 237 students. Of the current enrolment, 9% of students are from a language background other than English. Students are arranged in 10 class groups. (One straight Foundation class; three composite Years 1 /2; three composite Years 3 /4 and three composite Years 5 /6). We offer a comprehensive curriculum, which is based on the Victorian Curriculum Framework Foundation – Year 6. Specialist programs are provided in physical education, visual arts, performing arts, Science, Technology Engineering, and Maths (STEM) and AUSLAN. We also offer targeted programs in literacy to support the classroom programs through intervention and extension.

The school leadership team includes one Deputy Principal and four positions of leadership. The leadership team performs multiple roles including leading teams as well as direct teaching commitments.

St. Ambrose Parish School is an educational institution, registered in 1906 but in existence since approximately 1859, that gives careful attention to academic and personal excellence, in a manner that allows children to develop to the best of their ability. We endeavor to provide an environment that welcomes, nurtures, and stimulates the children in our school academically, spiritually, socially, emotionally, and physically. We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children, so we create an atmosphere of partnership in the educational process between the staff of the school and the parents.

Dedicated and passionate teachers are employed at St Ambrose Parish School. Teachers plan and work in teams with the guidance and support of a leader, and they actively collaborate to facilitate rich, real, and relevant learning experiences for the children. Children are consistently immersed in a stimulating learning environment and are encouraged to set goals and challenges. They are provided with opportunities to discover their own individual learning styles and are supported by a variety of resources and technologies.

As a driven and cohesive staff, we offer a variety of experiences across the curriculum, designed to provide specialised opportunities for each individual to discover their giftedness. Data-driven teaching based on comprehensive, ongoing testing and planning is focused on the constructivist approach to teaching and learning, enabling the creation of understanding through rich, real, and relevant experiences.

Personal goal setting is a high priority for staff, and this forms the basis of the 'performance and development appraisal culture.' The AITSL standards of professional practice and What Works Best Toolkit for Teachers are used as a foundation for personalised goal setting. This practice highlights the importance of self-reflection and feedback that is the basis for improvement.

At St Ambrose Parish School we believe that it is important to develop a child's faith as well as their knowledge about the Catholic traditions. Through the teaching of religion, the children reflect on scripture teachings and are encouraged to put the words of Jesus into action through social justice. Our religious faith is reflected through prayer and the way we treat one another. We strive to live by God's greatest commandment 'love one another as I have loved you.'

St Ambrose Parish School is committed to prioritising the safety and well-being of the children in its care and strives to empower its families, children, young people, and staff to have a voice and raise concerns when needed. The school commits to rigorous risk-management and employment practices ensuring safety for all.

In partnership with our parents, parish, and the broader community we contribute to a life foundation for students that is centred in Jesus Christ and grounded in truth, beauty, and love.



Principal's Report

At St Ambrose School, we pride ourselves on being a friendly, welcoming, and inclusive school community for all. It was pleasing to receive feedback from visitors who say that they feel very welcomed when they visit our school.

The 2023 year marked the fourth year of the school improvement cycle which meant along with our major building works and commitments to our students, we were appointed an external reviewer to spend time in our school to give feedback on our progress with our School Improvement Goals.

Our strategic intent targeted whole school approaches to learning and teaching and student behaviour management that are consistently implemented, evidence-based, data-driven, and evaluated for impact. Specific areas for improvement included differentiated teaching, student voice and agency, collaboration and co-construction, feedback, and teacher goal setting.

The goals we set for the four-year improvement cycle were:

1. To develop a whole-school approach to Learning and Teaching.
2. To implement a whole-school approach to student behaviour management.
3. To empower teachers to be engaged and reflective practitioners.
4. To enable student voice and student agency.

In 2023 our annual action plan supported teachers using data effectively to design and evaluate their teaching, understanding what student voice and agency is and how it looks in our school, and developing/refining our whole school scope and sequence for mathematics, literacy, inquiry, mental health and wellbeing.

In his report our reviewer noted the friendliness and cooperation of all staff, students, and parents saying it was clearly evident during the review, reflecting the school's values. He went on to say that there were clear links between the school's vision, strategic intent, and the key priorities and actions undertaken.

As a staff we engaged in a thorough process led by MACS staff to determine where we were at in each area of school improvement so that we could set our goals for our next four-year cycle effectively. Although the effects of Covid had hindered our school to achieve all its goals from the last School Improvement Plan (SIP) beginning in 2020, it was clear that significant progress had been made. Details about this process have been shared with our community and we thank our students, staff and families for their feedback.

Our strategic intent for our 2024-2028 School Improvement Plan was decided after the review process. This is:

During this school improvement cycle, St Ambrose Primary School, Woodend will focus on building a strong performance and development culture which gives voice and agency to students, staff and families, enabling them to make connections between the Catholic faith and traditions and everyday life.

Our three priorities are:

1. To build an authentic and empowered Catholic Learning Community.
2. To build a rigorous Performance and Development culture underpinned by reflective practice
3. To develop a whole-school approach to student voice, agency and participation for optimal wellbeing and learning

Our yearly annual action plans will work towards achieving these goals.

At the close of 2023 we were very pleased to be almost finished our large-scale rebuild/ refurbishment of all learning spaces. This has meant that over the past two years classrooms have been regularly moved and changed. It has also meant that outside play areas have been unavailable for extended periods. When completed, by the end of 2023, all school areas including the art room will be located under the one roof and all play areas will once again be available for students' use.

The older classrooms were painted and re-carpeted over the summer holidays and ready to move into at the beginning of term 1 2024. The new staff room allows space and facilities to accommodate our number of staff. It is great to have additional meeting rooms available as well. The library area was set to be completed in term 1 2024.

There were numerous highlights this year. Our school production Safari was a great success. Student voice and agency are essential elements of a student-centered learning environment, where learners are empowered to take ownership of their own education and engage in meaningful and relevant experiences. The process is where the learning occurs so when deciding on a theme and way to enable our student's creativity and points of view Mrs. Byrne collaborated with each class to determine how to allow an avenue for each class to express their ideas in their varied and unique ways. Giving the students choice empowers them to direct and take responsibility for their learning.

Indeed, our students created a sense of wonder and awe throughout their stunning performances which included singing, dancing (choreographed by the students) eurythmy, showcasing new skills like ukulele playing, drumming, percussion, reciting poetry, gymnastics, Auslan, and delivering their own scripts all while instilling a sustainable mindset and appreciation of nature and life in all its forms.

We congratulate our students on an inspiring, vibrant, and entertaining performance. They were amazing! Indeed, we live in a world full of wonder and we hope that you felt uplifted and energised to live in harmony with our environment by taking on sustainable practices.

The children's costumes were creative and colourful. We thank you, our families for supporting your children and the success of the production by encouraging them and putting the effort into their costumes. It was terrific to see all of our students on stage and shining.

As always, our incredible staff rallied together to make sure their classes were prepared and knew what they were doing.

St Ambrose day was celebrated this year with a special canteen menu and kite-making fun. It was a calming and joyous experience witnessing our children supporting each other to fly their kites.

St Ambrose School has a culture of continuous improvement where the principles of shared decision-making and teamwork are alive. We are committed to working together to guide and support each of the students in our care to reach the highest levels of development academically, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. This is achieved by building a safe, inclusive, and secure learning environment where opportunities are rich and diversity thrives.

Other highlights this year have been:

- the opening of our new art/stem space.
- our new canteen opening and providing delicious home cooked options.
- the introduction of Auslan.
- the re-establishment of our PFA who organised a disco and carols evening as well as formed a sub-committee to begin planning for a 2024 fete with a difference!
- regular meetings with our SAC.

-our numerous incursions and excursions.

-our 5-6 STEM EXPO.

-see our teaching and learning report to read about developments in this area.

-taking part in the SHC Junior Chef Competition.

-welcoming numerous work experience students from SHC and Salesian College whom our children enjoy working with.

As always, we welcome the active participation of students, staff, parents, and community members are encouraged to participate in all aspects of school life and in the decisions of the school. Parents are valued as true partners in the education of their children, contributing their initiative, energy, time, and expertise to the school. Thank you, to you all for your contributions this year which have enriched the programs we offer and in turn, the lives of our children and their families.



Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The main Annual Action Plan RE Goal for 2023 was to review the Religious Education Planner to meet the needs of St Ambrose Primary School. The intended outcome for the goal was to empower teaching staff to use the RE Planner effectively to address the RE Curriculum and for all staff engaging in RE professional development that is accredited.

Achievements

By the end of Term 1 the RE planning template had been modified and refined as staff trialled it and by the end of Term 2 all teachers had agreed on the RE planning template and were using it in their planning. Throughout the year all learning teams were supported by a staff RE expert to plan with teams fortnightly so as there was facilitated collaborative planning. RE Planners at the completion of an inquiry RE planning unit were evaluated to ensure the Learning Intentions and Success Criteria aligned with the Achievement Standards. A RE/ Inquiry Scope & Sequence Units Yr A/B Cycle was also created. This document was established for the purpose of staff to use as a library of established RE units in line with the school's Inquiry cycle to help teachers plan future RE units.

Value Added

Throughout 2023, teachers were also involved in other professional learning and facilitated planning sessions, with teachers participating in accredited professional learning facilitated by the school's new MACS RE consultant Pauline Cicutto to enhance their understanding of the curriculum and theological approaches to Scripture/Godly Play and importantly how it connects, is meaningful and relevant to children's everyday lives and that their learning and understanding leads to an action.

During 2023 as St Ambrose Parish School community, we gathered to learn, worship and celebrate:

- Whole school beginning and end of term masses
- Term year level masses
- Electing 2 Gr6 Faith Leaders to help lead faith events

School/Parish faith displays
Parent sacrament preparation evenings
Caritas Project Compassion & Longest Coin Line event
Sacrament commitment masses.
The Sacraments - Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Communion Masses.
Staff liturgies
Staff RE PLTs
Mother's Day Liturgy
Father's Day Liturgy
Weekly grade led Lent liturgies
Weekly grade led Advent liturgies
Prep led Nativity Play
St Ambrose Feast Day Mass and festivities
Graduation liturgy and ceremony



Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Intended Outcomes:

- that student outcomes reflect differentiated teaching practices.
- that teachers are using data effectively to design and evaluate teaching
- that feedback mechanisms are embedded.

Goal: Priority 2 (Collaboration)

To empower teachers to be engaged and reflective practitioners.

Intended Outcomes:

- teachers are actively participating in cycles of Performance and Development to improve their teaching and student outcomes.

Goal: Priority 3

To enable student voice and agency.

Intended Outcomes:

- students are learning through activities that are meaningful and relevant to them, driven by their interests, and often self-initiated with appropriate guidance from teachers.
- students have a voice and choice, in how they learn.

Key emphasis was placed on:

- differentiation of students learning so all students achieve success.
- student engagement of learning experiences.
- ensure Aboriginal perspectives are integrated through our learning and teaching practices.

To meet these goals, we, as a school community targeted the following:

- regularly schedule PLTs and Staff Meetings dedicated aligned to our 2023 Annual Action Plan, including developing student voice and agency through collaborative learning strategies.
- developing a whole school approach to teaching Reading, Writing, and Spelling.
- develop a 2023 Mathematics Annual Action Plan.

- professional development in enabling and extending prompts in Mathematics to support differentiation.
- sourcing professional development for the teaching staff that builds teacher confidence and supports teachers in the delivery of Aboriginal perspectives aligned with the curriculum.

Achievements

A highlight of term one was a two-day school closure dedicated to the teaching and learning practices in Literacy. These two days were facilitated by Anne Bone, a Literacy Specialist from the Ballarat Diocese. The whole staff including leaders, teachers and ESO's actively participated in this rich professional learning, working in level teams, mixed groups, pairs and individually to extend our knowledge about how children learn to write. We particularly focused on the pedagogical model of I Do, We Do, You Do which is a gradual release of responsibility model whereby students begin highly supported by their teacher, given time to practice and build their skills with their peers before moving towards individual practice and competency.

We especially focused on the strategies that underpin this which developed a whole school approach and a common language in relation to the teaching of learning of Writing. This whole school professional learning was reinforced during Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings and dedicated Staff Meetings so that we could share improvements in practice and celebrate our successes throughout the year.

One of the key initiatives has been the introduction of the Bump It Up Wall (BIUW). This is a visual display of the writing continuum, and our students have been explicitly taught how to self-assess where they are at with their writing, and it is building our students capacity to not only find out where that are at, but to all set personal goals in writing as to what they need to work on next.

During term two the grade three and four students worked on writing and publishing a short picture book aimed at a junior audience, and then spent time reading their wonderful stories to the students in prep and one/two classes. Such rich writing experiences give students an authentic purpose and audience for writing. This in turn creates engagement and motivation in the writing process.

The school has again dedicated school closure days to implementing formative assessment, across all levels, using the Mathematics Online Interview (MOI). This enabled our teachers to accurately assess where each of their students are at in Number and plan learning experiences that are targeted at point of need.

In 2023, we continued to access the Early Number and Algebra program which is designed to support mathematics leaders and teachers in developing detailed and nuanced understanding of how children learn mathematics in the early years of schooling. This our second year, all the grade one-two teachers undertook the professional learning alongside the maths leader. Our teachers enhanced their knowledge of the Victorian Curriculum in the Number and Algebra strand, progressions of learning and assessment practices and the pedagogical approaches that underpin these. This allowed them to plan and implement learning cycles for students to move students onto the next growth point along the continuum. The aim of continuing this professional development journey is to ensure that all our junior students develop a strong foundation and positive learning dispositions in mathematics.

Alongside this initiative the grade 3-4 teachers undertook a learning journey of their own looking into Launch Explore Summarise, a high impact instructional model that is both collaborative and engaging for students. At the heart of this model is developing the proficiencies of understanding, problem-solving and reasoning and extend the students beyond fluency. The grade 3-4 teachers participated in professional reading, visited neighbouring schools to observe Launch Explore Summarise lessons before planning and trialling their own LES lessons using vertical learning surfaces. The school purchased a set of vertical whiteboards so that students, in collaborative groups could show their thinking and share their reasoning and strategies with the whole class. This exploration led to opportunities for formative assessment of where students are at, it guided future planning of learning opportunities and saw an increase in student dialogue and peer to peer teaching during math lessons. The insights gained from this were also showcased by the Maths leader at Community of Practice Day at the final MACS Maths Network Day for 2023.

During 2023 our Inquiry units provide all our students an opportunity to learn about their world and transfer their knowledge into an action. In term two the grade five and six classes' inquiry was 'Innovation Arcade'. This inquiry allowed students to gain a real-life understanding of the design and production process when creating a brand-new product. Each student in collaboration with their peers produced an item that they marketed and then played at an Arcade called 'Box Arcade' that was shared with the whole school! This inquiry integrated Design and Technology with Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking and Economics and Financial Literacy. This rich unit of work highlights how the inquiries we plan for every term over the year at St Ambrose incorporate multiple areas of the curriculum and depth the students understanding with strong connections to real-life contexts.

Teachers were once again subscribed to Wingaru Kids, a digital platform created by Aboriginal educators and designed to support teachers in the classroom. This educational resource is actively used in many areas of the curriculum and continues to build teacher confidence and cultural competency, which supports Aboriginal students and an appreciation for indigenous culture. The 2023 Cultural Leaders continue to lead each school assembly

with an Acknowledgement of Country. During the year the school celebrated National Reconciliation Week with the theme for 2023 'Be a Voice for Generations'. During term four Performing Arts sessions the prep – grade six students learnt about the Central Australian Warlpiri Indigenous clan and in particular the women of the clan and their singing, Indigenous 'Dreamtime Stories', through role-play and creating a soundscape. The students gained an understanding of how important Dreamtime Stories are to the Indigenous culture.

With a goal to develop student voice and agency staff undertook professional learning in a number of key focus areas throughout the curriculum, but in addition the staff were introduced to the new High Impact for Wellbeing Strategies (HIWS) document produced by the Department of Education. These are 7 practical, evidenced-based strategies that have a significant effect on student wellbeing. We have started our deep dive into these strategies, starting with 1. Build relationships with students; and 2. Facilitate peer relationships. As a staff we look forward to building on these foundations moving into 2024.

Our grade six students, at the end of term one undertook an education tour of our national capital, Canberra. Students were given the opportunity to participate in a variety of educational programs with a focus on Australia's history, culture, heritage and democracy. Our grade four students enjoyed their team building and adventure experience at camp ADANAC in the Yarra Ranges. Students raved about highlights such as canoeing, disc golf and the flying fox. Many loved the chance to build connections and do fun activities together away from home.

With the new Time in Lieu (TIL) requirements significantly increasing the cost of camps, it was necessary to review our camp programs to find the most workable option. In consultation with staff and our School Advisory Council, and feedback sort from families it was decided that in 2024 and onwards the school would run a two-day/one night year three and four camp in term four which would be an adventure camp and a three-day/two night year five and six camp in term one, with Phillip Island being the main contender due to the unique experience it will offer our senior students. This change to the camp program means that students will go on camp in either years three and five or in years four and six. The benefits of this model will include larger number of students attending will lower costs, whole classes will attend together allowing continuity of learning, and cost-effective as the school will not have to employ CRT staff to work with students back at school.

A number of incursions and excursions were experienced by our students over the year to enrich the learning happening in the classroom. The Grade 3-4 classes enjoyed an excursion to Scienceworks as part of the investigating stage of their inquiry 'The Power of Invention'. This immersive activity was designed to build engagement in the topic and to support the students to enquire more deeply about aspects of the topic, such as how inventions have improved the lives of people in the world.

The junior classes were involved in a 'Toys Over Time' incursion where the students were informed about the many simple ways children entertained themselves in days gone by. This incursion sparked the imaginations of our junior students who went on to make a number of their own toys. Our prep class during term four also enjoyed a morning involved in creating science experiments with staff from Supreme Incursions. They explored a number of experiments, including exploding bags and even made their own slime!

Once again, we were appreciative of the support by the Kyneton Aquatics Centre to enable us to meet curriculum swimming requirements for our students. Running this program during the winter months gave our students the opportunity to get out of the classroom and be active during a time in the year where we can find ourselves confined indoors.

A significant highlight of 2023 was the culmination of the students learning in both the performing arts and visual arts with the return of our school production 'Safari'. Once again, our production was hosted by Sacred Heart in their spacious theatre. Students in their classes from prep to six dressed as either flora or fauna to represent the life that exists on Earth. It was an environmental journey that looked at our planet's concerns and sustainable solutions so as to maintain the diversity of the natural world. In particular, the production provided for many opportunities for student voice, as students were actively involved in the decision-making process from beginning to end, including choreographing and mask design. The production also highlighted the students learning in language with a whole school performance to 'What a Wonderful World' using Auslan signing.

2023 was also a milestone year for St. Ambrose with MACS conducting our four yearly school review during term three. The reviewer spent time in the classrooms, meeting with key school bodies, groups of parents, students, staff and leadership over a number of days. This was followed in term four with our entire school leadership team spending two full days collaboratively working together on our next four-year strategic plan which was informed by the recommendations of the school review. MACS consultants supported this process, and we were able to share our 2024-2027 School Improvement Plan with our School Advisory Council and all our families in our school newsletter prior to the end of our school year.

Literacy Report

We started off Term one 2023 with two School Closure days to complete the English Online Interview testing for the Grades Preps, Ones and Twos and Fountas and Pinnell (reading and comprehension) and BURT word testing (single word reading) for grades three to six. The English Online Interview for Grades Prep and One is now mandated by MACS (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools) so they can analyse the results and work out trends across the state and Diocese. These testing days are very important as they allow teachers to better understand where their students are with their Literacy before the year begins.

At the end of term one, 2023 St Ambrose had two School Closure days, and these were used

for Professional Development with the very experienced Literacy leader, Mrs. Anne Bones, from the Ballarat region. During these two days as a whole staff, we concentrated on Writing in the classroom and Best Practice on how to model, teach, moderate and get the best writing from our students when they are writing in the classroom. Anne also introduced us to the Bump It Up Wall.

We introduced the Bump It Up Wall into each classroom. The Bump It Up Wall is a visual learning classroom display which allows students to track their learning progress in writing. These displays help students to set achievable goals, as they are able to use the display to identify the next steps in their learning journey.

The Bump It Up Wall is present in each classroom and is referred to when students are deciding on their writing goals.

Throughout the year we continued to have Professional Learning Teams meetings and Staff Meetings dedicated to Literacy and improving students' outcomes in Literacy.

Staffing specifically for Literacy included 1 full time teacher as the Literacy Leader and teacher (Small group or individual Intervention teaching of Literacy to eleven students in Grade One and Two who needed extra support using MSL and Reading Recovery practices) and an experienced teacher who worked with students in Grade three to six who need extra support in Reading/Spelling/Writing. She worked with these students for four hours per day three days a week in small groups.

In 2023 we trialled Promoting Literacy Development (PLD) with the intention of fully implementing it in all classes in 2024. PLD provides an Australian, evidence-based approach to Structured Synthetic Phonics (SSP) for primary school educators. Aligned with the Science of Reading, PLD's Structured Synthetic Phonics approach extends from the junior primary years through to upper primary years and thereby facilitating a whole school approach.

Literacy continues to be taught for two hours each day with one hour for Reading and one hour for Writing. Students are encouraged to borrow from the levelled books (up to level thirty) and from our very well-equipped school Library. We use the Victorian curriculum for planning and to ensure all aspects of the Literacy curriculum are covered at each year level.

Student Learning Outcomes

Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results over the past three years show that the school has improved outcomes in Reading and Writing. Numeracy results have not been as strong. Following our cyclical review, we will continue the work of the previous school improvement

plan (SIP) to collaboratively design and document a learning and teaching framework that will outline an agreed instructional model reflecting innovative strategies for both literacy and numeracy. The structured collection and analysis of data to focus on individual growth, a focus on the last SIP, continues to be an area of development, particularly in numeracy, for the school.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	413	59%
	Year 5	502	72%
Numeracy	Year 3	402	60%
	Year 5	491	72%
Reading	Year 3	415	75%
	Year 5	521	76%
Spelling	Year 3	405	62%
	Year 5	505	72%
Writing	Year 3	434	85%
	Year 5	502	76%

*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.



Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goals:

- to implement a whole-school approach to student behaviour management.
- to implement a whole-school approach to student mental health and wellbeing.

Intended Outcomes:

- PBL practices are embedded across the whole-school community.
- teachers know their students as learners.
- students have greater self-efficacy in their learning.
- embed a whole school wellbeing program in partnership with our community.
- Key emphasis was placed on:
 - student voice and agency across the curriculum.
 - embedding PBL (Positive Behaviour for Learning) across the school.
 - developing awareness of the new Child Safe Standards.
 - continuing to gather and analyse data on student wellbeing.
 - preparing for the roll out the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Program.
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To meet these goals, we, as a school community targeted the following:

- providing formal professional learning opportunities to look at discuss the new Child Safe Standards.
- formalising the role of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader within the school.
- implement the Student Voice Audit Tool.
- administer PAT Wellbeing Assessment.
- schedule Staff Meetings and/or PLTs to introduce and discuss as a staff the new Child Safe Standards.
- providing an induction process for new staff to ensure that PBL is consistent across the school.
- increasing student leadership opportunities.
- supporting student initiatives.
- professional development and training provided to staff in preparation for Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) program roll out.
- parent Information evenings to sharing RRRR program and answer community questions.

Achievements

In 2023 St. Ambrose we have strived to personify the concept of Wellbeing for Learning. The Wellbeing Leader together with the Mental Health & Wellbeing Leader have continued to work closely together, strongly supported by leadership to provide wellbeing initiatives. This included; guided Circle time with the goal of supporting Grade 1/2's in developing friendships, modelling Circle time and Social Stories in classrooms when a need is observed, running the STOP, THINK, DO program for a small group of students, supporting staff with the wellbeing of individual students, and delivering professional learning to the staff during Professional Learning Team meetings and Staff Meetings over the year.

We spent the year preparing for the roll out and implementation of the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) program in 2024. Scope and sequences designed, staff professional development and training provided, and conversation sessions for members of our community, to answer questions and prepare for the program's arrival.

Seasons for Growth is now an embedded research-based educational program offered each year to students in Prep to Grade Six who have experienced grief or loss due to a significant change experienced in their lives such as death, divorce, separation, moving schools...etc. This educational program continues to be very beneficial with another three groups facilitated by the Seasons for Growth Companion. This year reconnector sessions were offered so that students who had previously completed Seasons for Growth could reconnect with each other and be reminded of the strategies that they had learned.

At St. Ambrose we have continued to strengthen our belief in Wellbeing for Learning with most of our staff completing the Berry Street training. The Berry Street Educational Model (BSEM) training has equipped our school with practical, classroom-based strategies to increase the engagement of all students. As an initial action our teachers start the school day with Circle Time, a Positive Primer, together with prayer which builds connectedness and sets the tone for the day. This educational model enables schools to support students' self-regulation, relationships, and well-being to increase student engagement and significantly improve academic achievement.

New student-led initiatives included the development of a Cartoon Club, a Colouring Competition, Pom Pom making and a Dance Group to be run during lunch time breaks, just to name a few. Our music teacher also facilitated a Ukulele club at lunch time on Thursdays. Our Ukulele club members even got to perform to our families at the Carols evening.

Regular Staff Meetings were dedicated to Positive Behaviour for Learning each school term, with an increased focus on gathering student data, with an aim to support and guide teaching practice. A small team of staff trained in the SWIS data collection platform, which over time, allows staff to analyse behaviour trends across the school. Another student-led initiative was the creation of the PBL Rainbow Certificate to be awarded to a student who receives 100 Bee Tickets throughout the year for regularly demonstrating Responsibility, Respect,

Resilience and Kindness. Two inaugural winners achieved this milestone towards the end of Term 4.

Weekly Mental Health & Wellbeing articles continue to feature in our school newsletter, informing our parent community about the latest research, supportive programs and local services available to them.

Both the Wellbeing Leader and the Mental Health & Wellbeing Leader are members of local and regional networks which strengthen their knowledge and expertise in the area of wellbeing. This is an invaluable network of professionals that informs and supports the school in staying up to date with the latest research and builds awareness of services that are available to our school community.

The Transition to Secondary School day we run with St Mary's Lancefield was another great success. Providing the students with opportunities to make new friends and meet staff and students from their future schools.

Value Added

Year 5 students participated in a 'Leadership' session with the Kids Helpline. Equipping the students with language, conversation and knowledge around what it means to be a leader, as they prepared for their transition into grade 6. This session also allowed the students to become familiar with what the Kids Help line can do for them.

The Wonders of Living Program, offered to our year 5 & 6 families, a sexual education program designed to bring parents and their children together to begin the conversations about puberty and beyond.

NED program was delivered to the whole school, promoting the messages 'never give up, encourage others, do your best' through a fun and interactive performance.

As the year came to a close, St Ambrose received a fully funded scholarship to The Resilience Project (TRP) program, generously provided by Jellis Craig. With TRP's close cross curricular links to the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships curriculum, we were able to accept the position and roll out TRP in time for the beginning of 2024.

Student Satisfaction

The 2023 MACSSIS survey student data shows that we continue to show consistency and relatively positive results in a number of areas including Learning Dispositions, Rigorous Expectations, Teacher-Student Relationships and School Belonging. In particular St. Ambrose’s student data demonstrated that we remain higher than the average MACS school in Student Safety and on par with other MACS schools in relation to the domains of Student Voice and School Climate. Student voice has been an area of continuous growth, trending upwards over the past two years. The two domains that we have identified as areas for future improvement are Catholic identity and Student engagement.

Student Attendance

Students' attendance is recorded online in Nforma at 9.00 am and again at 2.40pm. We always contact parents/guardians about any unexplained absences, on the same day, as soon as practicable, including for post-compulsory-aged students. Children are issued late passes at the office if they arrive late. If they are picked up early the time they leave is also recorded.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	90.8%
Y02	92.7%
Y03	91.9%
Y04	90.6%
Y05	92.6%
Y06	89.6%
Overall average attendance	91.4%



Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

GOALS:

Develop a whole school strategic approach to a performance and development culture.

To create a vibrant learning community at St Ambrose that is characterised by a culture of professional dialogue, collegiality, and teamwork in an environment aimed at the further development of all.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

to further develop the leadership capacity of teachers and students.

- using an action research cycle for professional learning teams.
- refining and strengthening accountability.
- that clarity, centered on St Ambrose School Vision will continue.
- we will explore and decide on a program to support learning about respectful relationships and developing resilience.
- that we further explore the science of reading approach.
- that we decide on a spelling program to enable consistency across the school and set an explicit and sequential approach to teaching spelling.
- that leadership will use the AGILE tools to inform and reflect on their leadership.
- continue developing a clear and consistent approach to teaching mathematics.

Achievements

Our recently restructured leadership team has impacted positively on the operation of the school. Leadership has a clear focus on enacting the school's vision and mission and a clear direction for improving teaching and learning.

Specifically in 2023 we achieved:

- linking of the RE curriculum with inquiry where appropriate within the school curriculum.
- a strong commitment to improving teacher practice and leadership and staff express collegiality, team support, and a willingness for continued improvement.

- establishing collaborative approaches through targeted whole-school professional learning to plan for teaching and learning and well-being.
- strengthening of the culture of welcome, and the staffs' knowledge of individual students.
- staff have completed PD in the areas of mathematics and literacy to support achieving our goals in these areas. Consistency of practice is being strengthened.
- there is a continuing emphasis on student wellbeing with numerous structures in place to support the students.
- a schoolwide approach to wellbeing, with a focus on increasing student resilience, is being implemented.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLD Spelling. • Science of Reading. • Resilience Project. • Respectful Relationships. • Literacy: Writing. • Numeracy: Launch Explore Summarise. Number talks. • Religious Education: Scripture & Bibliodrama. • PBL PD, particularly on data collection on SWIS platform and induction on PBL with new staff. • Berry Street (BSEM) = PLT on Circle Routine, Mind Breaks and Positive Primers. • Literacy Strategies in PLTs - Modelled Writing, Shared Writing, Guided Writing and Interactive Writing. • Mathematics - Early Number and Algebra (ENA) for a 2nd year with grade one-two teachers through MACS. • Mathematics - Introduction to the new Vic Curric. 2.0 (Mathematics). • Staff Meeting - Intro to the High Impact Wellbeing Strategies (HIWS). • Student Voice & Agency - Collaborative Learning & Thinking Routines. • School Improvement - Presentation of the new SIP. 	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	16
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1024.00

Teacher Satisfaction

The 2023 MACSSIS survey teacher data shows that we continue to show growth and positive results in several areas including;

- collaboration around improvement strategies.
- collaboration in teams.
- collective efficacy.
- Catholic Identity.
- school climate.
- staff-leadership relationships.
- instructional leadership.
- feedback.

In particular, St. Ambrose's staff data demonstrated that we remain higher than the average MACS school in:

- staff safety.
- psychological safety.
- professional learning.
- support for teams.
- student safety.

We are on par with other MACS schools concerning the domains of instructional leadership.

Areas for future improvement include providing more opportunities for staff feedback and professional goal setting.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	11.8%
Graduate	5.9%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	52.9%
Advanced Diploma	17.6%
No Qualifications Listed	11.8%

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	3
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	27
Teaching Staff (FTE)	20.1
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	12
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	16.7
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0



Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

GOALS:

To create a vibrant learning community at St Ambrose that is characterised by a culture of professional dialogue, collegiality, and teamwork in an environment aimed at the further development of all.

Intended Outcomes:

- to rebuild our PFA and plan two social events for the year to bring our community together.
- to build up our parent as helper options to enable numerous avenues for our parents to work in partnership with and support the school.
- to allow opportunity for our families to spend time in the classroom with their children.
- our community feels they are welcome and valued.

Achievements

Parents, staff and students support the school's endeavours to engage the wider community through activities such as our school disco and upcoming fete.

The fete committee forms partnerships with the parent and Parish community, as well as local business. Parent feedback indicates that the fete is a successful way of promoting the school and its work. These activities may also present opportunities to continue to build the Catholic identity of the school.

- An improvement in the level of communication about student learning has been a positive aspect of parent engagement with their children's education. This has come about with the introduction of online digital communication tools such as SeeSaw. This was endorsed during focus group discussions.
- Parent involvement through the regular 'meet and greet' opportunities, social get-togethers, and parent links with new families to the school are activities valued by parents and the school. Teacher/parent communication is strong and parent engagement in student learning is encouraged.

School Advisory Council 2023 Report

The St Ambrose Primary School Advisory Council (SAC) completed its second year of operation in 2023. I would like to thank the school Principal, Bronwyn Phillips for her continual commitment to improving and developing St Ambrose School across multiple areas, as well as the members of the school community who have taken the time to contribute to the SAC this year.

2023 saw the re-establishment of the St Ambrose School Parents and Friends Association, which was last in place before 2020. We thank those who have worked on initiatives including the school disco and preparing for the 2023 St Ambrose Parish School Fete.

Throughout 2023 the SAC worked closely with Bronwyn Phillips and the wider School community discussing matters relating to School Camps, the introduction of the Victorian Teaching Agreement 2023 time in Lieu changes, the School Masterplan and Building Project, introduction of various policies, including the Emergency Management Plan, staffing requirements and ongoing management of the school.

The SAC met with Nicole Scarborough from the SAC Inclusion sub-committee to understand their key priorities. These included establishing an inclusion and diversity support team, collaborating with First Nations communities, and further developing safe spaces within the school.

The SAC worked with the school to establish a volunteer requirement for all families at the school to be rolled out from Term 1 in 2024. Families will be required to volunteer a minimum number of hours per term across a range of activities where the school requires assistance, this supports the school and assists in building community connections.

Mike Boudrie

2023 SAC Chair – Mike Boudrie

2023 SAC Staff -Bronwyn Phillips and Debbie Geisler

2023 SAC Members – Rilla Healey, Jodie Warner, Danielle Perrin, Ellen Vernon, Michelle Lancefield, and Libby Nuttall

Parent Satisfaction

During focus group discussions throughout our review process parents acknowledged that they felt valued and that communication with the school was good.

The 2023 MACSSIS survey family data shows that we continue to show consistency and positive results in several areas including school climate, student safety, school fit, and communication. Areas for further development are Catholic identity and family engagement.



Financial Performance

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.

