



Melbourne Archdiocese  
**Catholic Schools**

# 2024

## Annual Report to the School Community



### **St Ambrose's School**

18 Templeton Street, WOODEND 3442

Principal: Bronwyn Phillips

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

Registration: 289, E Number: E1033

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## Principal's Attestation

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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 15 May 2025

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## About this report

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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](#).

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## Governing Authority Report

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When Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) launched our inaugural strategic plan MACS 2030: Forming Lives to Enrich the World just over a year ago, I spoke about the need for our whole organisation to reflect on the biggest challenges that confront us, and to work at speed to find practical, ambitious, student-centred solutions.

As a relatively new governing authority, 2023 set us on the path to achieving our first goals, as we focussed our efforts on building strong foundations for success. The four pillars of MACS2030 – Inspired by Faith; Flourishing Learners; Enabled Leaders; and Enriched Communities - serve to guide our work on how we achieve our strategic intent.

When we surveyed our teachers in late 2022, over 80 per cent told us that they want access to quality teaching and assessment resources. So in January 2023, we secured a system-wide licence for MACS primary and secondary schools to access the Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) assessment suite. The inclusion of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Survey allows schools to monitor the wellbeing of their students and target resourcing to specific areas of need. Together, these tools provide a coherent and systematic approach to student assessment.

In partnership with Ochre Education, we began work on F-6 Mathematics curriculum resources, being developed in a phased approach over three years, and delivered the first tranche for F-2. A key consideration in developing the materials is ensuring teachers retain autonomy to tailor curriculum implementation to meet the individual and local needs of students.

This is an exciting development for our MACS community, clearly demonstrating the commitment we all share to delivering the best possible education opportunities for our 120,000 students and supporting our 10,000 classroom teachers to be the very best that they can be.

Archbishop Peter commissioned a comprehensive review of Religious Education curriculum, the first in over a decade. It offers us some challenges, but fundamentally is a hope-filled report that invites a path of ongoing work to develop a new RE curriculum for all Catholic schools. We continued Working Together in Mission with Parish Priests throughout the Archdiocese, including through regular roundtable discussions.

Across greater Melbourne, one in five students attend a Catholic school and 2023 saw steady growth in enrolments across our system, demonstrating the value families place on a Catholic education and the high quality, holistic education MACS schools provide.

As a system of schools, we can be better together, reducing the administrative load on our schools and freeing our teachers and principals to focus on what they do best.

I would like to pay tribute to our MACS school and office colleagues who have worked so hard to achieve our goals. We look forward to further strengthening those partnerships as we work together to deliver an education that inspires young people to enrich the world.

Yours sincerely

Dr Edward Simons

Executive Director

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

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## Vision and Mission

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Our vision statement and framework for the school convey a deep commitment to nurturing a holistic educational environment centered on faith, community, and personal growth.

### **Vision:**

- Centred by Faith: Establishes a foundation rooted in spiritual values and Catholic teachings, emphasizing moral development and a sense of purpose in students' lives.
- In Partnership with Community: Highlights the importance of collaboration with families, local parishes, and the broader community, recognizing that education is a shared endeavor.
- Excellence in Learning: Affirms a dedication to high standards in educational practices, aiming for continuous improvement in teaching and learning outcomes.

### **Aims:**

The aims succinctly articulate clear goals that our school strives to achieve, covering academic excellence while emphasizing personal, social, emotional, and spiritual development:

1. Comprehensive Education: The focus on developing talents in a way that addresses societal needs which ensures students are prepared for their futures in a relevant manner.
2. Personal Growth: Fostering self-confidence, respect, and a mindset of optimism promotes a supportive and empowering learning environment.
3. Foundation for Future Learning: Preparing students for continued education reflects a commitment to lifelong learning and adaptability.
4. Active Participation: Equipping students with skills to contribute positively to an ever-changing world instills a sense of responsibility and engagement.
5. Spiritual Connection: Nurturing relationships with God supports moral and spiritual development consistent with Catholic values.

### **Beliefs:**

These beliefs encapsulate the essence of our school and promote a learner-centered approach, underscoring:

- Individual Uniqueness: Celebrating diversity allows each student to flourish according to their strengths and interests.
- Safe Learning Environment: Prioritizing safety creates a supportive atmosphere where students can explore and engage without fear.
- Understanding Humanity: Viewing education as a journey toward understanding what it means to be human connects to the teachings of Jesus, providing a model for personal growth.
- Empowerment through Education: Committing to nurturing autonomy equips students with skills for responsible living and societal contribution.

- Integration of Faith and Life: Emphasizing the relationship between faith, culture, and life fosters well-rounded individuals who are mindful of their roles in various contexts.

**Conclusion:**

This framework not only guides educational practices but also builds a nurturing community where the intersections of learning, faith, and personal development thrive. Implementing these principles into daily operations will undoubtedly contribute to a vibrant educational experience for all, creating a legacy of empowered learners who are prepared to engage with and positively impact the world.

By honing in on these ideals, our school is positioned to cultivate a generation of individuals equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to navigate the complexities of life with confidence and purpose.

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## School Overview

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St. Ambrose School, founded in 1859 and formally registered in 1906, is a Catholic educational institution dedicated to fostering academic and personal excellence. The school values strong partnerships with parents and the wider community, recognizing them as essential collaborators in the education process. Our 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 2024 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. (two straight Foundation classes; three composite Years 1 /2; three composite Years 3 /4 and two 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, music & performing arts, and AUSLAN. We also offer targeted programs in literacy to support the classroom programs through intervention and extension as well as Science, Technology Engineering, and Maths (STEM) within the curriculum.

The school leadership team includes the Principal, Deputy Principal and Learning Diversity Leader. We also have four team leaders; The leadership team performs multiple roles including leading teams as well as direct teaching commitments.

The school employs passionate and collaborative teachers who use data-driven, constructivist teaching methods to provide meaningful and personalized learning experiences. Emphasis is placed on student goal-setting, individual learning styles, and self-reflection for both students and staff. Religious education with a focus on scripture, prayer, and living out the teachings of Jesus through social justice guides our way of being together.

St. Ambrose also prioritizes child safety, fostering a culture of openness and responsibility. The school aims to provide a foundation in faith, truth, beauty, and love, shaping students' lives in partnership with families and the broader community.



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## Principal's Report

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As a St. Ambrose staff we are dedicated to creating an inclusive and caring environment which inspires, engages and nourishes our student's growth in all areas. We want to support our children to be motivated about coming to school and feel confident to immerse themselves in the diverse learning opportunities offered. Together we enable our vision, "Centred By Faith – In Partnership with Community – We Provide Excellence in Learning".

We were fortunate to begin the 2024 year with great 'hope'. We celebrated the opening of our beautiful and flexible new and renovated spaces with MACS Building and Infrastructure Representatives, our architects from Clarke Hopkins Clarke, our local member Mary-Anne Thomas, members of our local council, SAC, school community and of course our students who set the official proceedings off to a colourful and pageantry start with their musical circus acts. We were pleased to have our Executive Director Dr. Edward Simons officially open the building and cut the ribbon and Fr John Healy bless our buildings.

With the building works behind us, we were set to open ourselves up to new learning to support the needs of all students at St Ambrose School. We began the new year with a theme of 'Connection'. Connection with ourselves in 2024, connection with each other, new classmates, new teachers and new families, and connection with our learning environment. This gave us time to continue building a positive and cohesive culture, learn more about ourselves and each other as people first and then as learners. At St Ambrose we celebrate differences and the unique story each of us brings to this very special community called 'school'. It is only when we feel we belong we can be open to the challenges and excitement of learning new things. We continued to work on our overarching school values and expectations of Respect, Responsibility, Resilience and Kindness. We apply the message of Christ and our expectations to ourselves, each other, our environment and our wider community. We understand that we are all learners and that we make mistakes but we continue to hold each other to our Christian way of being together - the students, the teachers and the parents.

Throughout 2024, our students engaged in a wide range of inquiry-based learning experiences that nurtured curiosity, deep thinking, and connection to the world around them. Each term focused on a key concept, providing opportunities for students to explore real-world issues, connect with their community, and demonstrate their learning through rich, hands-on tasks.

We began the year with an inquiry into Wellbeing, helping students develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to support their physical, mental, social, and emotional health. This inquiry laid a strong foundation for students' confidence, autonomy, and sense of self-awareness. This in turn places them in a good mindset to learn.

Students also explored the theme of Culture and Diversity through the historical lens of Migration to Australia. They investigated the concept of change, learning about the push and pull factors that led people to migrate from Europe and Asia, and the role these groups played in shaping the Australia we know today.

We continued specialist lessons in Health & Physical Education and Visual Arts, Music & Performing Arts and Auslan and supported classroom teachers to support Wellbeing and STEM (ICT, problem solving and creativity) in the classroom and across the curriculum. This was to be an opportunity to grow our teaching and learning across curriculum areas. It was an opportunity to deepen our knowledge and experiences as well as our expertise. Each year level participated in three of their specialist subjects throughout one whole day - e.g. Foundation, Year One and Two students participated in three of their specialist programs on Thursdays. They had their Auslan lesson on Friday which allowed teams to plan together for three hours on their specialist day. It also allowed time to explicitly teach literacy and numeracy each school day rather than across four days as it was when all specialist programs were held on one day.

With the launch of MACS Vision for Instruction we continued to learn more about the Science of Reading and the Science of Learning. We opened our minds up to new research and evidence-based information about the brain and about how children learn. We committed to the Science of Reading because it is evidenced that it is the most effective way to teach all children to read. We also continued to refine our practices using High Impact Teaching Strategies and build shared language and consistency of practice across the levels.

At St Ambrose School we continue to acknowledge that as a learning community, we are called to meet these opportunities and challenges with courage and with faith, hope and love for our students. (Horizons of Hope, Vision and Context, p. 16)

It is our hope that each day our children learn more about themselves, more about each other, more about their environment and more about their God. We aspire to honour the trust placed in us by our families by dedicating ourselves to enacting our vision with integrity and fidelity.

Some Learning Highlights included:

- Our Bushfire Preparedness STEM Project Work. See:

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bEXp\\_3Gtlg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bEXp_3Gtlg)

- Solid progress with reading, writing and mathematics.

- students engaged with the Resilience Project learning about Gratitude, Empathy and Mindfulness. We spent time exploring things in our lives that we are grateful for, how they

impact us and how these make us feel. Students became very confident with identifying ways to regulate their emotions through mindfulness.

-Our junior students were excited to discover and explore the world of Minibeasts. Through the Story of Creation and biological sciences, we learnt about the features of minibeasts, how they survive, ecosystems and our impact on the world. We had a visit from Wild Action Zoo who showed us real life minibeasts. We used all the information we learnt to create information posters and lapbooks.

-Our Inquiry Unit “Faster, Higher, Stronger, Together” focused on cultural diversity through the Olympics. We explored special landmarks, traditions, cuisine and significant events within a culture. We enjoyed following the journeys of famous Athletes around the world. This led us on an excursion to the MCG where we were taken on a tour of the venue, listened to history through stories and met a real-life Olympian!

-Students explored animals through geography and Indigenous perspectives. We studied the continents of the world and where animals live. Our excursion to the Werribee Zoo allowed us to see our learning in action! We really enjoyed connecting with our world and the creatures around us.

2024 has been a year of growth, exploration and connection for our students. They have demonstrated resilience, leadership and a genuine curiosity about the world around them. Through inquiry, collaboration, and creativity, they have embraced opportunities to learn deeply, engage critically, and make meaningful contributions to our school and wider community.

We are incredibly proud of their achievements and look forward to seeing them carry these skills and values into the next stage of their learning journey.

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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

During this school improvement cycle, St Ambrose Primary School, Woodend has focused 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.

#### **Goal: Priority 1 Catholic Learning Community**

Goal: To build an authentic and empowered Catholic Learning Community.

Intended Outcomes:

- That students are co-designing prayer, class masses and inquiries and acting for common good.
- That staff capability to design and implement authentic and rigorous RE curriculum is strengthened.
- That the school community participates in enriching the Catholic identity of the school.

#### **Our overall aims in Religious Education are:**

- To create conditions to make connections between Faith and Tradition and family life.
- To build an authentic and empowered Catholic learning community.

One of the ways we hoped to begin building our Catholic learning community was to introduce and develop the new Religious Education curriculum. As it was still being developed MACS requested schools to continue planning and implementing the Religious Education Inquiry approach to units, along with the continued use of the textbooks called "To Know, Worship and Love".

In our annual action plan for Religious Education, 2024, our general aims were broken into three main goals:

- That students and teachers organise and co-design prayer and liturgy in the school.
- That there be parent participation in Faith Formation sessions.
- That there be a strengthened connection between school and parish.

## Achievements

### **Prayer and Liturgy**

The staff were involved in professional learning in Prayer. Pauline Cicutto from MACS met with staff routinely to discuss the development of prayer and liturgy, and ways we could involve students in planning these. There was also the opportunity to attend on-line inservices on Prayer (History, types of prayers and how to pray; a closer look at the well known prayers of the Our Father, Hail Mary, and the Glory Be).

Many of the classroom teachers were encouraging the students to lead prayer sessions in their classroom. The students learnt how to write prayers and the teachers made prayer books in Term 1 using the prayers the students wrote. These were in use the whole year.

### **Parent Participation in Faith Formation Sessions**

Parent participation is vital, especially in Sacramental years, as the way the Sacraments are delivered has changed dramatically over time, even from one child to the next in the family. Through these sessions, both students and parents begin to understand and become comfortable with the Sacrament. Parents have the opportunity to ask questions for clarity and they realise there will be no surprises.

Attendance was firmly encouraged. We averaged 90% attendance which is heartening. In future years, we are aiming for 100% attendance.

### **A strengthened connection between School and Parish**

Parents and parishioners are invited to all school and class masses and religious events. Events are advertised in both school and parish newsletters and all are welcome.

Father Brian arrived in January as assistant to Father Martin. At the end of Term 2, we said goodbye to Father Martin and welcomed Father John as our Parish Priest in Term 3. Father John is regularly seen in the school and is always a welcome visitor to the classroom.

Father John has encouraged a closer association between the parishes and schools of Woodend and Lancefield. He set up a productive meeting with the principals and Religious Education Leaders of both schools where Sacrament dates were set and the possibility to introduce the students to each other and to work together in some way were discussed. We look forward to further developments on this front.

The principal met monthly with the parish lay team and we have a member of the parish lay team on our School Advisory Council.

## Value Added

In summary, during 2024, the St Ambrose Parish School community gathered to learn, worship and celebrate through:

- whole school beginning and end of term masses.
- year level masses each term.
- faith displays.
- parent and student Sacrament preparation evenings.
- sacrament commitment masses.
- welcoming students to the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Communion.
- the project compassion and Longest Coin Line event.
- staff liturgies.
- staff R.E. PLTs and on-line inservices.
- Mother's Day Prayer service.
- Father's Day Prayer service.
- opening of the new School prayer service.
- level led prayer services for the major events in Holy Week.
- year level led Advent prayer services on the Jesse Tree.
- prep led Nativity prayer service.
- St. Ambrose Feast Day mass.
- Graduation Liturgy and ceremony.

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## Learning and Teaching

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

#### Strategic Intent:

During this school improvement cycle, St Ambrose Primary School, Woodend has focused 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.

#### Goal: Priority 2 (Performance and Development Culture)

Goal: To build a rigorous Performance and Development culture underpinned by reflective practice.

#### Intended Outcomes:

That staff can articulate and enact a consistent and agreed approach to learning and teaching

That student outcomes improve across all areas of the curriculum, especially in Mathematics.

#### Goal: Priority 3

Goal: To develop a whole-school approach to student voice, agency and participation for optimal wellbeing and learning

#### Intended Outcomes:

Develop a culture of student feedback and inclusion in decision-making

Key emphasis was placed on:

Developing a shared staff focus for the development of learning and teaching in the light of the MACS Vision for Instruction

Scheduling of Peer Observations each term with a clear protocol for staff to follow, including completing a Peer Observation Form and follow-up collegial conversations and individual goal-setting

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

- Regularly schedule PLTs and Staff Meetings (twice per week) dedicated and aligned to our 2024 Annual Action Plan Goals

- Developing a whole school approach to Peer Observations, including formal documentation, collegial conversations and goal-setting
- Develop a 2024 Mathematics Annual Action Plan, with a key focus on implementing the new Victorian Curriculum 2.0
- Sourcing professional development for the teaching staff that builds teacher confidence and supports teachers in working towards achieving the AAP Goals.

## Achievements

The driving force for professional learning for 2024 was the launch of the MACS (Melbourne Archdiocese for Catholic Schools) Vision for Instruction: Flourishing Learners document. This vision was accompanied by the 2023 Strategic Plan that will guide our school through the stages of experimentation towards embedding key initiatives.

To begin this learning journey, all members of leadership attended the MACS School Improvement Network days each term to build knowledge and, together, strategically plan forward the professional learning of all staff members.

The Deputy Principal attended the termly Teach Well Masterclasses at the Catholic Leadership Centre on Explicit Instruction, Daily Reviews, Spaced Retrieval practice and the Gradual Release of Responsibility pedagogical teaching model which included full-participation and student engagement strategies.

Over 2024, we continued a strong focus on the teaching and learning of Mathematics, kick starting the year with a whole school full-day staff professional learning day with Michael Ymer. As a highly sought after experienced mathematics consultant, he demonstrated a practical, solution-focused approach as he addressed the challenges of a new curriculum. Our shared focus was on whole school planning using a model that encompasses all class structures, the familiarisation of the new Victorian Mathematics Curriculum version 2.0, Mathematics support documents such as the Mathematics Learning Continuums, and a variety of other teacher references and resources, moving from macro planning to micro planning, and transitioning from yearly overviews to term planners and unit planners, and including ideas and strategies that teachers can use in every class through the school year, with the goal to invigorating and exciting students during mathematics lessons.

Following this, there were a number of Staff Meetings dedicated to Mathematical learning and teaching goals, including: mathematical curriculum, content and teaching strategies, such as Number Talks, questioning to support mathematical reasoning and data analysis to strategically plan for student growth from point of need. All teaching staff also attending the TIMS (Teaching for Impact in Mathematics Series) professional learning sessions offered by MACS to support the understanding of explicit instruction and move towards embedding



effective practices in Mathematics. These workshops also provided the opportunity for teaching staff to self-reflect and participate in a video coaching cycle and impact tracking to reflect on student data.

In particular, the Leadership Team and staff established a feedback, coaching and mentoring framework to enable consistent practice. A common learning and improvement goal was established each term, and during weeks five and six staff would be released to observe each other with teachers completing a self-reflection proforma, that included future goal-setting based on collegial conversations. Like our students, our teachers were able to pinpoint the 'Where to next?' for their individual professional learning journey with the aim of building consistency of practice, a common language and reflective practice aligned to our school improvement plan. To supplement this initiative leadership, spend time each week in the classrooms. These walkthroughs give leadership a snapshot of what we as a school are doing well and where there are opportunities for improvement in our quest to continually build our collective efficacy.

During 2024 our Inquiry units provided all our students an opportunity to learn about their world and transfer their knowledge into an action. As an example, our Grade three/four classes experienced an incursion facilitated by Western Water. They learnt many surprising facts about the water we drink and learned how important water is to their health and how drinking water helps everyone learn and grow. This was an important lead into the inquiry and learning about Sustainability. This valuable inquiry allowed students to develop the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary to contribute to more sustainable patterns of living.

Our 3-4 students' interest and curiosity were further captured throughout their Wild Action Zoo incursion where the students learned more about; the unique features, habitats and life cycles of Australian animals and how they are classified. They also developed an understanding of how Australian animals depend on each other and the environment to survive. As a purposeful action from the learning the year 3-4 students participated in Clean Up Australia Day to actively do their part to protect and sustain their local environment. This also strongly aligned with our goal to build an authentic and empowered Catholic community that has the opportunity to transfer their learning into visible action for the common good others.

This rich inquiry of learning also demonstrated the significant connections with Aboriginal culture, especially our Dja Dja Wurrung people and their deep connection to the land and our native wildlife, and how today, each of us can help to care for the significant flora and fauna in our local environment.

2024 heralded in the change to our camp program with our grade five-six students going on their first combined senior camp to Phillip Island during Term One. The students spent time enjoying beach activities and boogie boarding as well as seeing the native Fairy penguins at the penguin parade in the evening. The experience was planned and designed so the

students used the dispositions of risk-taking, collaboration, persistence, creativeness, inquisitiveness, and reflectiveness throughout the camp activities.

Once again in 2024 we are 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.

As a school, following positive results and encouraging feedback at the end of 2023 from all stakeholders, we once again funded, The Resilience Project across the whole school. This engaging and valuable teaching resource also covers the majority of the federal governments mandated Respectful Relationships program content within the lessons, delivered at an age-appropriate level.

With our strong lens on wellbeing for learning our teaching staff also undertook in-house professional learning from the Department of Education and Training (DET) High Impact Wellbeing Strategies that overlay the High Impact Teaching Strategies that ensure that if we are not only employing explicit instruction strategies but are also and most importantly catering to the wellbeing needs of individual students so they are better equipped to flourish as a learner. This knowledge served as a precursor and a solid foundation to the MACS Vision for Engagement which is to be strategically rolled out across all MACS schools in 2025 and will be a critical partner document to the Vision for Instruction launched at the beginning of this year.

Staff meetings have also been allocated each term dedicated to the continued professional learning for all staff in building their understanding of student voice and agency within the classroom context, across different curriculum areas and at a whole school level. This included the now embedded practice of our Principal meeting regularly with the School Captains and senior leaders. New student leadership roles in 2024 extended into the areas of Sustainability, Social Justice, Culture and The Arts. These roles support the everyday intricacies of school life and highlight the broad range of skills that are needed to support the flourishing of our school community.

During September our year six leaders collaborated with the Principal around the agenda and activities that would showcase our school for the dignitaries who attended the official opening and blessing of our new building. Our school captains then went on to plan a STAM day for the whole school to enjoy as part of our Feast Day. Even our canteen manager sought feedback and listened to suggestions from some of our year six students which culminated in some additional canteen options for the whole school during Term 4.

## Student Learning Outcomes

In 2023 we refined our structured approach to the teaching of literacy to improve our reading comprehension, reading fluency as well as writing results and to reduce the amount of students requiring literacy intervention. Our 2024 Year 3 NAPLAN data indicates a rise in the number of children reading proficiently (84%) and writing (94%).

In 2025 our focus will be on Place Value in Mathematics and Writing.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	410	52%
	Year 5	504	64%
Numeracy	Year 3	417	74%
	Year 5	484	63%
Reading	Year 3	438	84%
	Year 5	496	76%
Spelling	Year 3	411	61%
	Year 5	482	68%
Writing	Year 3	439	94%
	Year 5	486	73%

\*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2024 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

#### Intended Outcomes:

That PBL practices are embedded across the whole-school community  
That teachers know their students as learners  
That students have greater self-efficacy in their learning  
Embed a whole school wellbeing program in partnership with our community  
Key emphasis was placed on:

Focus on student voice and agency across the curriculum  
Embedding PBL (Positive Behaviour for Learning) across the school  
Develop awareness of the new Child Safe Standards  
Continue to gather and analysis data on student wellbeing  
Preparing for the roll out the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Program  
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 2024 our school community embraced the opportunity to join The Resilience Project and to embed their social and emotional wellbeing curriculum. From prep to 6, our students, as well as our staff and families were becoming familiar with the 4 pillars of the program; Gratitude, Empathy, Mindfulness and Emotional Literacy. The program enriched the conversations our students were having in the classroom about their own wellbeing and made the learning fun

and accessible. Our staff and students were very excited to continue with the program into 2025.

Small focus group sessions continued in 2024, with both our Wellbeing Leader and Mental Health & Wellbeing Leader running a variety of programs. The Seasons for Growth program, a program offered to students who experienced grief or loss due to significant change (death, divorce, separation, moving schools etc) continued into its 4th year. Some of our grade 3/4 students engaged with the 'Helping Children Manage Friendships' program, design to support their confidence in engaging in friendships and their confidence around having difficult conversations. Some of our preps also took part in the 'Talking about School program', designed to develop their situational understanding and verbal reasoning skills.

Our Student Representative Council, ran for its 2nd year. Led by our Social Justice Leaders, supported by our Mental Health & Wellbeing Leader, our class representatives met fortnightly to discuss student initiatives, fundraising ideas and to discuss school related issues whilst developing the students' confidence and leadership skills.

The grade 5 & 6 cohorts participated in the REACH program workshops. Focusing on leadership for our year 5's and transitioning to high school for our grade 6's. Both cohorts came together to explore the sort of leaders and learners they want to be in 2025.

The Transition to High school day with St Mary's Lancefield ran for its 3rd year, onsite at St Ambrose and extended to include both Woodend and Lancefield Primary schools. The year 6 students came together to explore what the transition into high school will look like, what common fears and expectations they all had and what are some ways they could overcome some of their concerns. The day was spent building new relationships with the students that would be attending their new high school.

Mental Health & Wellbeing newsletter articles continued to feature in the fortnightly newsletter. Sharing new research, workshops, strategies or insights into mental health & wellbeing.

Both the Wellbeing Leader and the Mental Health & Wellbeing Leader continued to strengthen their relationships with local and regional networks. These relationships have supported the growth of St Ambrose's response to Wellbeing amongst our students, staff and families.

The Positive Behaviour for Learning model (PBL) continued into its 4th year. The model has been well embedded into all classrooms, with our students demonstrating a clear understanding of the 4 areas of focus: Be Kind, Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Resilient. Having seen the strong level of understanding of the model across the school, it has afforded us the opportunity to redevelop some of the initial documentation and visual displays. This development is occurring to 2025 and will reflect the ways the St Ambrose community responds to Positive Behaviour.

## Value Added

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. This year we extended the invitation to Woodend Primary School and held the event on our campus.

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 gave the students the opportunity 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.

We introduced The Resilience Project (TRP) program, funded generously provided by Jellis Craig. With TRP's close cross curricular links to the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships curriculum, we were able to enhance our work in supporting our students mental health and wellbeing.

## Student Satisfaction

Our 2024 MACSISS student survey data (Year 5-students surveyed) indicated that:

77% of the students at St Ambrose believe that teachers hold them to high expectations of their effort, persistence, effort and performance. 73% of the children believe they have a good relationship with their teachers. 77% have a positive mindset about themselves as learners and 72% feel a strong sense of belonging to the school. These scores have improved since 2022 and are above the MACS averages.

## Student Attendance

The Student Attendance The roll is taken twice daily.

At 8.55am and 2.40 pm by classroom teachers.

If a child is late or leaves early, administration staff adjust the roll.

All students arriving late or leaving early must come through the office area.

Parents are asked to ring the office or email if their child is to be absent and explain the absenteeism. This can now be recorded at any time a parent calls not just during office hours.

If parents do not call the office, an administration officer will call to find out where the child is and why they are absent.

If a child is late to school they need to come to the office to get an 'I'm here' pass.

If a child is required to leave school early, the parent must pick their child up from the office and sign them out.

An extended leave form must be signed by the parent or a guardian if it is known that the child will be absent from school for more than a week.

Teachers must report extended absences to leadership.

Where attendance becomes an issue, a meeting is convened with parents and school leadership.

Students' attendance is recorded online in Nforma at 9.00 am and again at 2.45 pm.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	92.5
Y02	89.8
Y03	87.5
Y04	89.8
Y05	89.5
Y06	90.0
Overall average attendance	89.8

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## Leadership

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

Our school leadership team strives to enable, inspire and support our staff, students and community so that our school continues to thrive. There is a confidence and vitality that is reflected in the many programs and new initiatives that operate in our school. Our staff are a strong team who are passionate about learning, professional, committed to working together to enact our vision and dedicated to supporting their student's growth in all areas.

#### **Goal:**

To build a performance and development culture underpinned by collaboration, reflection and feedback.

#### **Intended Outcomes:**

That all staff including leadership, are actively involved in the performance and development cycle.

Our School leadership team met weekly and included:

- Principal.
- Deputy Principal.
- Foundation leader.
- 1-2 leader.
- 3-4 leader.
- 5-6 leader.
- Learning Diversity leader.

We support our staff to continue to grow professionally while attending to their inner wellness so that they can be the best version of themselves and are in a position to do our job well.

### Achievements

Optimal learning outcomes require integrating insights from several perspectives, including the cognitive sciences, philosophy, and pedagogy, and that is why the MACS Vision for Instruction has been formulated. It combines what we know about how learning takes place, and the distinctive pedagogical approaches that are needed for effective teaching of literacy



and numeracy, with a focus on the development of the whole child. Perhaps more importantly, it provides a clear focus for all teachers working in MACS schools to support each other in ensuring that every child thrives at school and leads a flourishing, fulfilled life.

MACS have set out an explicit instruction sequence which we have been refining and following at St Ambrose along with researched high-impact teaching strategies: The sequence is:

Explicit instruction.

Modelling.

Guided practice.

Independent practice.

This cycle is informed by regular formative and summative assessments and regular reviews.

Our school leadership Team:

- Attended PD about the MACS school's vision for instruction which they have recently launched.

We:

- Participated in the Breakspear - 'Agile Leadership' with NRO schools.

- Attended Explicit and Direct Instruction Professional Development and Explored the Science of Reading by reading, attending webinars, professional development and conferences.

- Leaders supported professional development and planning for all year levels.

- Parish Lay team met regularly to discuss Parish-School life, vision and community.

- We continued our St Ambrose Performance and Development Cycle together with all teachers.

- We met weekly as a leadership team and checked in with our Annual Action Plan weekly.

- The principal and deputy principal met six times with our SAC.

- The principal met 8 times with our PFA.

- Leaders supported staff to embed high impact teaching strategies.

<b>Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning</b>
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024
<p><b>Staff Professional Development in 2024 Included:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pathological Demand Avoidance PD - 2 staff members</li> <li>-Team Teach - MACS PD 2 staff members</li> <li>-Northern Region Learning Diversity Networks - 7 staff members</li> <li>-Anne Bone- Dylan Willam HITS literacy - whole staff</li> <li>-Explicit and Direct Instruction – Twice weekly PLT'S in Numeracy, Mathematics - Teaching Staff</li> <li>-TIMS(Teaching for Impact in Maths) Leader &amp; Teacher Days: Leaders &amp; Teaching staff.</li> <li>-Teach Well Masterclass Series for Literacy Leaders</li> <li>-Mathematics: Whole School Staff PD 1: Michale Ymer</li> <li>-Ochre Maths resources- Teaching Staff</li> <li>-Internal PD - Spaced and interleaved practice/daily reviews - 2 PDs facilitated via webinar - teaching staff</li> <li>-DIBELS - Introduction teaching staff</li> <li>-Resilience project - Whole Staff</li> <li>-Religious Education- 5 PLT meetings and one closure day teaching staff</li> <li>-Respectful Relationships - teaching Staff</li> <li>-Compliance: Whole Staff</li> <li>-Anaphylaxis: Whole Staff</li> <li>-Mandatory Reporting: Whole Staff</li> <li>-CPR Update</li> <li>-Explicit &amp; Authentic Teaching of Writing Ballarat - 3 teachers</li> <li>-Dr Loraine Hammond - Science of Learning -2 staff.</li> </ul>

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
-Leadership, Governance & Compliance - Principal & DP -Teach Well Masterclass - Deputy principal - Annual Action Planning - Craigieburn - Leadership Team. -Department of Education and Training (DET) High Impact Wellbeing Strategies - teaching staff & leadership.	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024	30
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$500.00

### Teacher Satisfaction

- Teachers perceptions of the overall social and learning climate of the school is positive (84%) and they feel that staff and leadership relationships are positive. (82%) Staff believe that leadership sets the the conditions for teams to collaborate effectively. (74%) Teachers also feel they work well together in teams to improve teaching and learning.(86%) Teachers feel that they have what it takes to improve instruction. (86%)

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0
Masters	5
Graduate	2
Graduate Certificate	0
Bachelor Degree	13
Advanced Diploma	5
No Qualifications Listed	4

<b>Staff Composition</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	3
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	21
Teaching Staff (FTE)	15.43
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	13
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	8.39
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

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## Community Engagement

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

#### GOAL

To improve student learning outcomes through partnerships with family, parish and community that creates a positive sense of belonging.

#### INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- For families to be aware of the MACS Vision for Instruction.
- That the broader community will become an active partner in the learning at St Ambrose.
- That families and the community feel welcomed and valued at St Ambrose School.

### Achievements

St Ambrose continued to support local events such as the ANZAC and Remembrance Day service as well as visit BUPA aged care facility to perform and to share cards and messages with the residents.

One highlight this year was certainly our school fete. Indeed our community came together with vigour, vitality, variety, and entertainment! Our fete committee members attended many meetings held over five months to plan and prepare for what was a beautiful celebration of community and a wonderful day to be enjoyed by all who took part and attended. It was a brave and colossal undertaking by our generous and dedicated parents who did an outstanding job so capably led by Sophie L and Amanda L. The day was thoroughly organised and well run taking into consideration all in our community. Numerous stalls, including activity options, baked goods, fairy floss, ice cream, plants, preserves, honey, BBQ, clothing, trash and treasure, an obstacle course, games, prizes, coffee, a silent auction, the SHC band, and a sensational DJ and MC all added to the positive and relaxed vibe and fun. THANK YOU...everyone who collectively made this day possible. Our main aim was to bring our school and local community together to connect, have fun, reinforce friendships, and celebrate our local town and wonderful school by hosting a “good old-fashioned fete”. The goodwill and generosity of our community was both heartwarming and inspiring and very much alive on this day.

Hats off to our amazing fete committee who worked tirelessly to ensure the event was both successful and enjoyable for everyone involved. Indeed it is a day that will be remembered.

Our profits rested around \$14,750.00 which is FANTASTIC! We used the money to purchase a PA system that is effective outside.

At St Ambrose we aim to offer authentic and purposeful learning opportunities which enable student voice and agency and where we can engage with experts in the wider community.

In the second half of the year, our senior school inquiry focus shifted to community safety and environmental awareness through a powerful and relevant unit: Fire Readiness. This unit was delivered in partnership with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and guided by Neil Munro (CFA researcher) and Dr Briony Towers (Lead Researcher), building upon the findings of the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires and the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

Students began by exploring the causes and impacts of bushfires and the important role of preparedness. They worked alongside CFA experts and other emergency services to gain life-saving knowledge and developed a strong understanding of fuel loads, fire ecology, and Indigenous fire practices. This phase also strengthened their teamwork, communication, and problem-solving abilities.

In Term 4, students took ownership of their learning by selecting individual fire readiness research topics. They connected with local experts, asked in-depth questions, and refined their thinking through real-world application. Students explored topics such as emergency planning, early warning systems, and the role of community education in disaster preparedness.

Their work culminated in a school-wide showcase event, attended by parents, local emergency services, and government officials. Students proudly presented their projects, offering practical solutions and sharing their learning with a broader audience.

The success of Fire Readiness was documented by Tom Lowe, a video producer and local CFA brigade member, who had previously worked on an early documentary about the program. With a deep understanding of its goals and impact, Tom created a 5–10 minute video that captures the learning journey of our students.

The documentary includes:

- Behind-the-scenes classroom activities and CFA-led sessions
- Interviews with students, educators, and emergency services
- Student reflections on how their learning connects to their community
- Showcases of projects and their real-world applications
- Parent perspectives on the impact of the program

This video will serve as a case study for other schools, demonstrating how young people can play a vital role in building resilient, informed communities. Being involved in the Bushfire preparedness Pilot Project was both a privilege and a highlight.

In addition to their classroom learning our students proudly represented our school across a wide range of sporting and community events throughout the year.

Each term, students participated in school-based and inter school competitions, including Summer and Winter Sports, Cross Country, Soccer, Basketball, and Athletics. Many of our teams and individual athletes achieved outstanding success, advancing through district, division, and regional levels—a testament to their hard work, team spirit and perseverance.

Our students also showcased their creativity and community pride through the Kyneton Agricultural Show, where they submitted writing pieces and artwork. We were thrilled to see several students come away with awards and prizes, and even more importantly, a sense of pride in sharing their work with the broader community.

These experiences helped strengthen our students' sense of belonging, collaboration, and contribution, highlighting the many ways they connect with and enrich the life of our school and town.

We promoted the newsletter as a central means of communication. We included photographs with the intention of keeping our community connected and aware of what was being achieved across the school.

Further opportunities to connect with community included:

- We had a Mother's & Father's Day afternoon tea followed by family liturgy from the classrooms.

- We celebrated through Footy Colours Day Activities, and raised funds for Down Syndrome Australia, The Cancer Institute and Caritas.

- Engagement in garden-based learning.

- Parents did the training and assisted as helpers both within the classrooms as well as assisting with sporting events.

- Weekly articles and feedback in the newsletter were included about School Improvement Progress.

- Articles in the school newsletter about different aspects of child development and education. 1-1 meetings with parents.

- Parent information sessions about different aspects of education.

- Participation in local community events like the ANZAC services.

- Our students attended events & programs at the local library, Buffalo Stadium and The Woodend Community House.

- The principal and staff were available to meet with parents as requested or needed.

-MACS Vision for Instruction was presented over the year at our School Advisory Council meetings. It was also shared via parent information meetings, newsletter articles and our website.

#### **School Advisory Council 2024 Report** (Written by Mike Boudrie)

I would like to thank the school Principal, Bronwyn Phillips, and her staff for their commitment to the ongoing development of St Ambrose School, which has improved the students' school experience, built a strong school community, and enhanced the school's facilities. I would also like to acknowledge the many volunteer hours contributed by the Parents and Friends Group, Fete Committee and those who have volunteered during the year.

During 2024, the school hosted the official opening of its new building, attended by Dr. Edward Simons and Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas, along with those who assisted in delivering a hugely significant building development that will have a lasting positive impact for many years to come.

Throughout 2024, the SAC worked closely with Bronwyn Phillips and the wider School community to discuss matters related to the school, including the review and introduction of various policies, review of a new website and the process for establishing a Facebook page to promote the school and further connect with the local community. The SAC also discussed options for the use of funds raised and met with representatives from the Melbourne Archdiocese of Catholic Schools (MACS) as part of the school review process.

Mike Boudrie attended a meeting of all MACS SAC Chairs in Melbourne during the year, which provided important information regarding the MACS 2030 plan and offered an opportunity to meet with members of other SAC groups from schools in our region to discuss positive initiatives and approaches other schools had taken.

In 2024, Marice Fanning, a member of the St Ambrose Parish community, joined the SAC, establishing an important connection to the community and offering valuable external input to the SAC.

2024 SAC Chair – Mike Boudrie

2024 SAC Staff -Bronwyn Phillips and Debbie Geisler

2024 SAC Members – Rilla Healey, Jodie Warner, Danielle Perrin, Ellen Vernon and Michelle Lancefield.



## Parent Satisfaction

Feedback from parents was offered via email, telephone conversation, and through meetings.

We invited and listened to feedback and responded to any issues raised. From the conversations and emails received the majority of parents said that they felt heard and supported.

Only 19 % of our families completed the MACSSIS survey. From this small percentage, our school scored above average in family engagement , barriers to engagement and catholic identity. Areas of student safety, communication and school fit were also above or within the average range.

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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.sawoodend.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sawoodend.catholic.edu.au)