



Melbourne Archdiocese  
**Catholic Schools**

# 2024

## Annual Report to the School Community



### **St Thomas More's School**

Reynold's Lane, BELGRAVE 3160

Principal: Declan McDermott

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

Registration: 1618, E Number: E1228

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## Principal's Attestation

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I, Declan McDermott, attest that St Thomas More'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 07 May 2025

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## About this report

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St Thomas More'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

"We are one, as we walk in the footsteps of Jesus"

Kindness - We treat others as we would like to be treated.

Justice - Our school is a place where everyone can be their best.

Fairness - We do what is right by making good choices.

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## School Overview

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St Thomas More Primary School is situated in Belgrave in the Shire of Yarra Ranges bordered by Sherbrooke Forest. It attracts enrolments from a wide geographical area throughout the southern part of the Dandenong Ranges and serves the communities of Belgrave, Tecoma, Upwey, Selby, Menzies Creek, Clematis, Emerald, Avonsleigh and Cockatoo. The community reflects a combination of urban and rural lifestyles influenced by the surrounding environment of forest and hills.

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## Principal's Report

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Welcome to St Thomas More Catholic Primary School.

My name is Declan McDermott and I am currently the Principal of our wonderful school community. I look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child on their educational journey.

St Thomas More school is a small, caring school of approximately 100 students. It is a community of faith based on belief in Jesus Christ and his mission to build a better world. The school community expresses Christian values and a desire to bear witness to the faith they share and nurture. Enlivening the motto 'We Are One', the staff, parents and students work together to develop an environment, which is conducive to producing excellence in educational outcomes.

St Thomas More school is part of the Belgrave Parish, which has mass centres at Monbulk, Belgrave, Emerald and Gembrook. Two schools comprise the parish - St Paul's in Monbulk and St Thomas More in Belgrave. St Thomas More has a strong emphasis on learning, both for our staff and students. Our collaborative approach to learning focuses on the opportunity for all students to flourish and to reach their full potential.



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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To enhance the schools Catholic Identity.

- Staff to have an improved understanding of the achievement standards in the RE curriculum
- Parents feel welcomed into our faith community.
- Students have a better understanding of a re-contextualised catholic faith.

### Achievements

2024 saw a successful Sacramental Program with students in Year 5 and 6 participating in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

School staff were professionally developed with a wonderful tour of the Mary Glowrey Museum in Melbourne. Staff learnt more about the early years of Catholic Education in Australia.

Social Justice programs - including raising funds for Caritas Australia through purposeful learning experiences.

### Value Added

Staff professional development. Increase in Knowledge of the Church in Australia.

Increase in Catholic Identity in student cohort from 2023 - 2024

Rise in the Catholic Identity of LSO and other school staff from 2023 - 2024

Increase of Catholic iconology around the school, including prayer table which is regularly changed with Liturgical season.

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## Learning and Teaching

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

That all teachers are proficient in utilising high impact teaching strategies.

For staff to be engaged in a structured Professional Learning and feedback cycle.

That teachers continue to actively engage in collegial mentoring.

### Achievements

School engagement in Eastern Region SILC (School Improvement and Learning Collaborative) agenda, including strategic planning for Annual Action Plan implementation.

School engagement in Western Region; Flourishing Learners agenda, including several PD days around Expert Teacher Practice in Behaviour, Spelling / Reading, Writing and Maths.

Engagement with Knowledge Society and the set up of internal instructional coaching routines.

School based Professional Learning has increased through the work of Learning and Teaching Leader, Literacy Leader and Numeracy Leader.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Successful NAPLAN results for Year 3 students; all students above the proficient band in Reading.

100% of students in the top two bands for Year 3 reading in NAPLAN.

Positive internal results in the DIBELS suite of assessments. Recorded in our internal data tracking process.

Increased % in staff perception of high quality Professional Learning received (MACSSIS survey).

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	*	*
Numeracy	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	476	64%
Reading	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	496	92%
Spelling	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	*	*
Writing	Year 3	*	*
	Year 5	*	*

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

To embed consistent teaching practice and rigorous curriculum enactment.

That student voice and learning dispositions data improve

### Achievements

Engagement in Respectful Relationships Program

Partnership with Catholic Care School Councilor (to begin in 2025)

Pre-work and professional learning around Grow your Mind, evidence based Wellbeing program (to begin in 2025)

Pre-work and professional learning around the Mental Health in Primary Schools program (to begin in 2025)

Continuation of School Representative Council as vehicle for student voice.

School Leadership training around School Open Days with Senior Students.

### Value Added

On-Site counselling service at school from 2025

Evidence-based Wellbeing Program to begin at school in 2025

Staff now undertaking training for the Mental Health in Primary Schools Program.

Increase in student data for student voice (MACSSIS data)

Increase in student data for school belonging (MACSSIS data)

### **Student Satisfaction**

MACSSIS data increases in:

School engagement (31%-43%)

Teacher-Student relationships (68%-75%)

School belonging (70%-76%)

Learning Disposition (66%-74%)

Student voice (49%-62%)

### **Student Attendance**

Attendance rate for semester 1: 88% (in line with MACS average)

Attendance rate for Term 3: 86% (in line with MACS average)

Student attendance is managed in accordance with MACS Policy and procedures.

- The class rolls are marked twice per day 9:00am and 2:15pm
- Any student who is absent without a provided reason is contacted via our SMS system
- Any student who is away for several days in a row with a provided or approved reason is contacted by the classroom teacher / school leadership.

- Any unknown absences are followed up by the classroom teacher or school office and are updated in the school attendance platform.

For ongoing absences St Thomas More follows MACS Policy and Procedures:

- Arrange a formal meeting with the student, family and relevant care team members (school and external), to develop and implement Attendance Support Plan, even if the student has already returned to school, to prevent potential future absences.
- Explore potential for age-appropriate flexible learning options or re-engagement programs at a school level or in the community

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	89.9
Y02	90.6
Y03	90.7
Y04	84.6
Y05	91.2
Y06	83.7
Overall average attendance	88.4

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## Leadership

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To embed consistent teaching practice and rigorous curriculum enactment.

That student outcomes improve across all curriculum areas.

### Achievements

Engagement in SILC Network across the Eastern Region. Strategic planning and implementation of AAP and SIP.

Engagement in Flourishing Learners West. Implementing school wide expectations for routines and engagement norms.

Implementation of Instructional Coaching Professional Learning.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024	
Respectful Relationships teaching materials.	
Instructional Coaching around Behaviour curriculum and Daily Review	
Internal Professional Learning around engagement norms and school-based routines.	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024	10
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1000.00



## Teacher Satisfaction

Increase % in MACSSIS survey in the following areas:

School Climate (77%-87%)

Professional Learning (75%-80%)

Collective Efficacy (76%-91%)

Satisfaction with school leadership remained steady at 78%, this is 19% above the MACS average.

Satisfaction with staff Safety also remained steady at 82%, this is 14% above the MACS average.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0
Masters	1
Graduate	0
Graduate Certificate	1
Bachelor Degree	7
Advanced Diploma	2
No Qualifications Listed	6

<b>Staff Composition</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	1
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	12
Teaching Staff (FTE)	9
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	14
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	7.3
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

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## Community Engagement

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

To have an engaged and committed community of learners

### Achievements

Fantastic participation at the School Advisory Council

An active and supportive Parents and Friends Committee

Parent Teacher Interviews

Parent Support Group Meetings

Parent Information Evenings (ICT, Junior, Sacramental)

Newsletter and fortnightly assemblies

### Parent Satisfaction

Increase % in the MACSSIS Survey in the following areas:

Family Engagement (48%-71%) 23% above the MACS average

School Fit (87%-92%) 16% above the MACS average

Communication (79%-87%) 14% above the MACS average

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