



Melbourne Archdiocese  
Catholic Schools

# 2025

## 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 2025 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 27 Mar 2026

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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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Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) continues to take bold and ambitious steps, guided by our MACS2030 strategy, to empower our students to flourish and step into the world as the leaders of tomorrow.

In advancing our 2030 vision and our ambition to deliver world-leading Catholic education, we celebrate the significant progress made across our four areas of strategic focus. The safety and wellbeing of our staff and students underpins everything we do, enabling an environment where learning grows with purpose, leadership develops in capability and confidence, and our communities continue to thrive through our shared Catholic outlook.

Inspired by faith in the Jubilee Year of the Catholic Church in 2025, we successfully implemented our Faith Formation Framework, to further strengthen faith education, offering deeper opportunities for spiritual development and meaningful engagement for students, staff and leaders alike. Faith is at the heart of all our schools, grounding our mission and inspiring students, teachers and staff to grow and lead with integrity.

The official launch and implementation of the Vision for Engagement (VFE) strategy demonstrated impressive results in our community of Flourishing Learners.

Anchored in evidence-based practise, the VFE strengthens our system-wide teaching and learning approach and enhances the daily engagement of students through the explicit teaching of positive behaviour, reinforcement and consistency. It sets clear expectations about attendance and includes a sustained focus on student mental health and wellbeing.

For learners to flourish, students must be safe, which is why we are continuing to strengthen our safety processes and risk management culture. Our focus is on providing training and professional development for all staff to ensure student safety remains top of mind in every decision we make, every environment we shape and every interaction we have.

To strengthen the pillar of enabled leaders, MACS has established consistent standards across schools for cultivating inspiring, capable leaders for students to observe.

In the past year, our Pathways to Principalship Programme and Women in Leadership Programme have both strengthened our principal appointment process and introduced more flexible models of principalship.

It is inspiring to see our principals and teachers continue to raise the bar, reflected in the extraordinary number of nominations received in our Best Teachers campaign.

Finally, we continue to create new and enriched communities, with the opening of a new primary school and children's hub in Melbourne's growing north, ensuring families have access to high quality education no matter where they live.

MACS Early Years Education (MACSEYE) continues to expand early years and outside school hours care services across our schools and communities, with continued growth planned for 2026.

These investments are not simply about building infrastructure. They are about building a dynamic, Catholic education system where every child has an opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

Thank you to all our students, staff, families and community members for being part of our journey so far, and we look forward to continuing to serve as a supportive and guiding presence in your children's lives.

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 110 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

2025 saw a successful Sacramental Program where a number of our students in Years 3 and 4 engaged in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist.

The staff at the school worked with Father Elio Capra for Professional Development around the Sacraments. Father Elio discussed each Sacrament and how and why they are important to the Catholic Faith.

The Social Justice Leaders and Student Representative Council led the schools social justice drives including Project Compassion and Advent drives.

### Value Added

Staff professional development. Increase in Knowledge of the Sacraments and their importance, this was done through a Professional Development Day with Father Elio Capra.

Positive responses from Staff in the MACSSIS data for staff and parents (increase in many areas). The questions are themed around the Catholic Identity of the school leadership and learning and teaching program.

Continued updating of Catholic Iconography around the school. This includes updating the school and classroom prayer tables in line with the liturgical calendar.

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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.

Staff Professional Development - Ron Yoshimoto training (Reading, spelling); Writing Revolution (Writing); Maths Acceleration Program (MACS, Maths)

Continued engaged with Knowledge Society and the continuation of our school Instructional Coaching Cycle.

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

The school also engaged with MACS Maths consultants to participate in the Maths Acceleration Program.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Successful internal data sets. Data is tracked using an internal assessment tracker.

School engaged in PAT testing and NAPLAN testing, seeing student growth in these areas.

Staff use of engagement routines increased, this saw student engagement levels rise.

High positive responses in MACSSIS data for Student / Teacher relationships.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards					
	2025 (current year)			2-Year Average	
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	348	33%	*	*
	Year 5	503	78%	*	*
Numeracy	Year 3	402	56%	*	*
	Year 5	501	84%	489	74%
Reading	Year 3	352	39%	*	*
	Year 5	506	83%	501	88%
Spelling	Year 3	356	44%	*	*
	Year 5	460	61%	*	*
Writing	Year 3	373	56%	*	*
	Year 5	444	47%	*	*

\*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2025 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

School Counseling Program

School Introduced "Grow Your Mind" Wellbeing Program across all levels.

School began to engage in the Mental Health in Primary School Program (2 Teachers employed)

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 began 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)

Staff engaged with Maria Ruberto for Professional Learning around Mental Health.

### **Student Satisfaction**

MACSSIS data increases in: (Student Survey)

Teacher-Student relationships

School belonging

Student voice

### **Student Attendance**

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

Attendance rate for Term 3: 88% (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

<b>Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level</b>	
Y01	89.93
Y02	90.56
Y03	90.73
Y04	84.56
Y05	91.24
Y06	83.67
Overall average attendance	88.45

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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 with MACS Maths team around Maths Acceleration Program

Engaging with Knowledge Society for work around instructional coaching

Introduction of weekly PLT meetings with L&T focus, as well as weekly planning sessions.

MACS Case Study Video was filmed at our school. Focus of the video was the implementation of Engagement Norms and Evidence Based Practises at school.

<b>Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning</b>	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2025	
Instructional Coaching around Maths Acceleration Program	
Mental Health Workshop with Maria Ruberto (School Conference)	
Unpacking the Sacraments (Father Elio Capra)	
Ron Yoshimoto training (Reading, Spelling)	
Writing Revolution	
Ongoing in house Professional Learning	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2025	10
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1500.00

### **Teacher Satisfaction**

Increase % in MACSSIS survey in the following domains:

School Climate

School Leadership

Professional Learning

Collaboration in Teams

Satisfaction with school leadership 83%, this is 22% above the MACS average.

<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	
Doctorate	0
Masters	1
Graduate	0
Graduate Certificate	1
Bachelor Degree	8
Advanced Diploma	2
No Qualifications Listed	0

<b>Staff Composition</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	1
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	13
Teaching Staff (FTE)	9.2
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	15
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	8.59
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:

School Climate (97% up from 91%)

Communication (92% up from 87%)

The following areas remained steady (within 5% points from previous year):

School fit (1% increase)

Family engagement (2% decrease)

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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)