



# 2024

## Annual Report to the School Community



*With God First,  
We Will Live, Learn  
and Thrive*

### St Thomas More School

Cuthbert's Road, ALFREDTON 3350

Principal: Simon Duffy

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

Registration: 1803, E Number: E2068

---

## Principal's Attestation

---

I, Simon Duffy, attest that St Thomas More 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 23 Mar 2025

---

## About this report

---

St Thomas More School is registered by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). The Annual Report to the School Community (ARSC), provides parents and the wider community with information about the school's activities and achievements throughout the year including information about various aspects of school performance. The Report is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the school community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students. Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the School directly or by visiting the School's website. Information can also be obtained from the [My School website](#).

---

## Governing Authority Report

---

Reflecting on 2024, we have much to be proud of, with DOBCEL demonstrating our dedication to ensuring the highest quality student outcomes in a safe, affordable, faith-based and nurturing environment. There was significant ongoing investment in new learning facilities and refurbishments through the Australian and state Government Capital Grants Program and school community funding continued across our schools, enhancing learning spaces and amenities for the benefit of students and staff.

In 2024, I visited all our Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) schools from the Murray to the Sea. DOBCEL governs 51 primary schools, one F-8 school, and five secondary colleges, educating approximately 13,500 students and employing over 2,200 teachers and staff across the diocese. These visits highlighted the spirit of harmony and sense of community, along with the cultures of care for students and staff.

During 2024, I had the privilege of meeting with all Principals along with leadership colleagues and staff. Demands on schools continue to grow, as the communities they service undergo change and face challenges such as devastating bushfires and cost of living challenges.

During the year DOBCEL commenced the development of its future DOBCEL Strategy 2035. Our strategy is focused on ensuring fullness of life for all in our school communities and particularly our students. With our Catholic Identity foundational to our mission our focus will be on

- Collaborative Cultures
- Engagement & Belonging
- School as Community
- Rich Pedagogical practices for deeper learning and wellbeing
- Sustainable Stewardship

I recognise the extraordinary work, exceptional dedication and professionalism of staff in our schools and offices in providing education services to the families and communities they serve. I particularly acknowledge the commitment of our school leadership teams and their staff in nurturing and empowering the students in our care, as together we work to bring to life our vision: As partners in Catholic Education and open to God's presence, we pursue the fullness of life for all.

Tom Sexton

Executive Director DOBCEL



---

## Vision and Mission

---

### **Mission**

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is a child-safe school that offers an educational foundation, which is united in faith and committed to developing the whole person to live, learn and thrive in God's love.

### **Vision**

As a community of learners, we will strive to:

- Achieve excellence in education in a Catholic faith community
- Nurture the spirit, mind and body of each learner
- Provide a stimulating and collaborative learning environment preparing all for lifelong learning
- Empower learners to meet the future with confidence and resilience.

---

## School Overview

---

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is a Foundation to Year 6 co-educational Catholic school in the St Patrick's Cathedral Parish of the Diocese of Ballarat. Our school is located in Alfredton, a suburb in the west of Ballarat, which is located in a high-growth area of Ballarat West. Our school draws students from the local area as well as from the surrounding rural areas. There was an enrolment of 431 students in 2024.

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School draws on the Gospel values to build a learning environment where students feel valued and inspired to learn. We offer a quality-learning environment where each individual is supported to reach his or her potential.

We promote a vibrant, caring community that works together to create a welcoming and stimulating educational environment. Our teaching and learning philosophy is based on the belief that all students can achieve success given sufficient time and support. We believe that a focus on collaboration, learning and results are crucial in supporting students to achieve success in all facets of their school life. By offering a rich curriculum, we nurture an enthusiasm for learning in our students and a belief that optimal achievements are possible.

We believe that nurturing children through the critical, formative years means surrounding them with a learning environment rich in experience and opportunity and a pastoral atmosphere of individual care and attention.

---

## Principal's Report

---

It is with pleasure that I present the 2024 Annual Report to the School Community for St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. I am very proud of the spiritual, academic, social and sporting achievements of our students throughout the year.

St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School is well respected and has continued to strongly serve our local community. We are very proud of the sense of community that continues to develop and we genuinely value the input from the parish, our families, the Parents and Friends Association, School Advisory Council, DOBCEL and other external support networks.

I have again been blessed to lead this wonderful school community. Throughout this year the school truly lived out the school motto "With God First, We will Live, Learn and Thrive".



---

## Catholic Identity and Mission

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

One of our key priorities for 2024 as articulated in our Annual Action Plan was:

*Creating and nurturing a Christ-centred learning community that recognises, recontextualises and responds to the Catholic tradition and experiences/needs of all.*

\*Liaise with Catholic Earthcare to establish a plan centred around the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and ecological conversion.

\*Engage with Catholic Earthcare/Caritas to develop an approach/plan for the school to follow in terms of becoming an earth care school.

\*Assist teachers to create effective ongoing assessment tasks that makes links with their units' scripture focus and recontextualises its relevance for today's society highlighting a Catholic response to action.

\*Create a school song that reflects St Thomas More's Mission and Vision in student friendly language.

### Achievements

At St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School, the DOBCEL Religious Education Scope and Sequence has been successfully integrated into the curriculum for its third year. This program, operating on a two-year cycle for all grade levels except Foundation, provides comprehensive units developed each term by Ballarat REL and Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) staff. These units, created using the Shared Christian Praxis model, include a wide array of resources, such as detailed PowerPoint presentations, insights into scriptural texts, Catholic Social Teaching principles, and diverse teaching strategies. By focusing on different Old and New Testament texts throughout their schooling, students engage with a rich and varied religious education experience.

To tailor the program to the needs of St. Thomas More School, the units were reviewed and adapted collaboratively by teaching teams, guided by the school's Religious Education Leader (REL). Each team works through four units annually, with each term focusing on a broad concept. CEB REL Education Officer Jo-anne Van der Voort further enriched the process by assisting staff in unpacking the units during planning sessions, sharing her deep scriptural knowledge and practical insights. This collaborative and flexible approach ensures

that the curriculum remains engaging, relevant, and aligned with the educational goals of the school community.

DOBCEL Religious Education staff continued to support staff at St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School through termly professional development sessions, focusing on key areas such as Spiritual Capabilities, Recontextualising Prayer, and the Three Worlds of the Text model for scriptural exploration. These sessions were highly engaging, with staff gaining valuable knowledge, deeper understanding, and increased confidence in interpreting scripture passages. Jo-anne's guidance has significantly enriched the religious education program and empowered teachers in their roles.

It is a requirement that all staff accrue a minimum of fifty hours of Religious Education

professional development over a five-year period in order for them to receive their accreditation to teach Religious education. The professional development provided through staff meetings, planning meetings and professional development days continue to ensure our staff are accruing their required hours.

The REL attended three online network meetings, one in-person professional development day and one Diocesan Religious Education two day Professional Development. Bishop Paul Bird facilitated this learning, focusing on development and celebration of liturgy within the school and again in a context that is relevant to our students.

Whole School Prayer, led by one class on a fortnightly basis, remained a cherished tradition at St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School this year. Held in-person in the hall, these prayerful gatherings welcomed many members of the school community and played a vital role in nurturing the school's Catholic identity. Each class contributed by focusing on different aspects of the liturgical calendar, significant cultural days, or themes from their current units of work, enriching the prayer experience with meaningful reflections.

These occasions continue to be a cornerstone of the school's culture, fostering a sense of unity and reverence. Staff work diligently to ensure that Whole School Prayer is a respectful and spiritually enriching experience for all, reinforcing the importance of prayer in supporting the Catholic tradition and the faith journey of students and staff alike.

The students also had the opportunity to celebrate mass three times at school at our Beginning of Year mass, St Thomas More Feast Day and the Mass of Thanksgiving and Year Six Graduation. This was a change to the usual end of year mass occurring at St Patrick's Cathedral. This decision was made in order to allow our entire whole school community to be part of this special school celebration.

It was with great excitement that we welcomed Andrew Chinn to our school in Term 1 to assist us with writing our school song. The song required input from our students, staff and community members and Andrew worked collaboratively with a group of Year 6 students on the day to develop the words. He later put music to the words and four of our students

feature on the recording of our school song "With God First". This song was officially released at our St Thomas More Feast Day mass in June and is now enjoyed in classrooms, at prayer times and during masses. Again, the St Thomas More Has Talent show followed on from our Feast Day mass. This concert was coordinated by Ms Sue Larkin and continues to be a highlight for our students.

Many special events throughout the year enabled students to recontextualise their scriptural understanding through various actions. Term One included a Crazy Hair day, a casual clothes day and our annual K's for Caritas, raising important funds for Caritas. Catholic Education Week celebrations took place in May, with this year celebrating 150 years of Catholic Education within our diocese. Again, we took the opportunity to open the school for parents and friends to share lunch with their children, tour the school, participate in classroom activities and celebrate a liturgy together. It was a special day to again see the school crowded with visitors. Mission Day took place in October and our grade five and six students enjoyed coordinating this event for all students with an amazing total of approximately \$2400 being raised to be donated to Catholic Mission.

The St Patrick's Cathedral sacramental program again underwent further changes this year with parent information sessions being facilitated at a school level with direction from the parish. Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation preparation with students involved in the program were led through the program by staff over a four-week period to cover the contents of the program. Fr Ed Moloney also visited the students throughout their preparation time prior to celebrating the sacraments.

## Value Added

\*Continue commitment to the interpretation of scripture through dialogue amongst teams

provided an additional depth which ensured that the post-critical belief dimension was being prioritised.

\*Staff continued to be led by the REL and CEB staff on a termly basis to develop appropriate RE units of work that were inclusive of all, following the Shared Christian Praxis and providing students with opportunities to discern and dialogue with scripture as a basis of the unit.

\*Professional development focusing on Spiritual Capabilities, Recontextualising prayer and continued scripture student focus.

\*Introduction of data collection tools to apply to Religious Education assessments with a focus on creating rich assessment tasks.

\*Continued development of the school choir singing at school masses with the introduction of new songs.

\*REL availability at PLT and Planning time on a more regular basis.

\*Whole School Prayer occurring fortnightly allowing classes to create a reverent, relevant and engaging liturgy for the school community.

\*Writing, recording and launch of the school song "With God First".

\*Continued contributions to Catholic charities such as Caritas and St Vincent de Paul.

\*Sacramental program being more accessible to families with meetings taking place at school.

---

## Learning and Teaching

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

One of our key priorities for 2024 as articulated in our Annual Action Plan was:

“Ensuring highly effective, evidence-based teaching strategies, engage and empower learners and give life to all aspects of the whole person.”

This included a twofold approach; one with a focus on learner agency, and the other a focus on literacy.

### Achievements

In consolidating a collective understanding of what an agentic educational landscape might look like for all at STMCPs, we engaged in action research over the course of the year. In the different teams across the school, we developed a focus area to explore and gather data on with our students. This was an opportunity to put into practice some of the professional learning from the previous two years, whilst making an active effort to listen to our students and facilitate their agency in various learning contexts. This was reiterated in the data collected and collated at the end of our action research. Across the school it has become clear that students feel more involved in their own learning, have a better understanding of what is expected of them, are able to regulate behaviour and emotions more effectively, can articulate what and how they are learning, and collaboratively set learning goals. This was particularly evident in the Student Involved Learning Conversations (SILCs) in Term 3 where students led conversations about their own learning and achievements.

The literacy focus for 2024 was to engage in professional learning exploring the underlying principles, research and strategies for Structured Literacy. A Structured Literacy Leadership Team was established comprising representative F-6. As a team we were able to engage in then deliver the scheduled professional learning modules over the course of the year, per our Annual Action Plan. In the process we have started an informed and discerning audit of current literacy and assessment practices. DIBELS is an assessment suite we implemented F-6 and it provided invaluable data about the subskills supporting reading development. We have already seen indicators of pleasing growth across the school, with the assistance of the DOBCEL DIBELS Data Tool. The data is foundational to learning conversations across the school. This will continue to be part of our assessment schedule and data-focused learning conversations.

The implementation of Heggerty's phonics and phonological awareness program has continued to offer a systematic and sequential approach F-2. It was ended this year into the 3-4 classes, with the uptake of the Primary Extension component (a 12 week program to 'catch up' students or as a point of needed review). Both DIBELS and Heggerty's are consistent with practices within a structured literacy approach.

We have also made the decision to move into Phase A of the Flare Literacy Strategy offered by DOBCEL in 2025, as a means of extending our professional learning with expert guidance, continuing to audit current practices, and implement an assessment schedule that is both rigorous and informative. It is hoped that by the end of 2025 we will be in the position to move into the next phase of the Flare Literacy Strategy.

Seesaw has continued to be an effective platform to communicate student achievement regularly F-6. Parents are kept informed of focus areas across the curriculum matched with photos, videos and samples of student work, as well as special days/events. As students develop levels of proficiency in their interaction with this platform, this has become another way to show their agency in presenting their learning with photo, video and audio attachments.

Consistent with PLC practices, teachers meet in collaborative teams to discuss assessment data and establish goals for learning. All learning is clearly aligned with the Victorian Curriculum, and communicated to students in the form of 'I can...' learning statements. Teachers are working together to source and make use of increasingly more effective strategies to support the learning of students, as informed by the assessment data we systematically collect.

With the guiding principle and commitment, "I commit to doing whatever it takes to achieve growth for all", we maintained structures to support differentiated learning F-6. This included the school wide practice of targeted intervention to support students in areas of need. We were able to provide some 'boost' sessions for students in literacy and numeracy. This included a focus on lifting student levels as well as extending students. We have a number of intervention programs to support student learning: ERIK, MiniLit, MultiLit and MacqLit. We have also had JEMMS in place, which is a program designed to build automaticity and number sense in Mathematics.

We maintained the approach of having integrated Inquiry as a means of ensuring curriculum delivery across areas such as The Arts, Technologies, the Humanities, Health and Science, including the capabilities: Personal and Social, Intercultural, and Ethical, as well as Critical and Creative Thinking, Sustainability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Asian

perspectives are covered in our 2 year cycle with close links to the Religious Education curriculum. Where possible we have created connections and integration with the Specialist classes, particularly with STEM. Inquiry foci and contexts for learning continue to attract high levels of interest and engagement from our students, particularly when they have opportunities to design or negotiate what some aspects of their work might look like.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Yr 3 and Yr 5 students completed NAPLAN assessments online. Yr 3 students completed their writing assessments on paper, but this was the only task in hard copy format. School results were reasonably pleasing. The majority of students in Year 3 and 5 fall within the 'strong' proficiency range for reading and our median is higher than both state and national. Writing results were also strong with most of our students falling in the strong to exceeding range. In spelling we are achieving mostly within the 'strong' range for both Years 3 and 5, but there is a slight drop for Year 5 from 2023. In Numeracy, our 2024 results were better than 2023 for Year 3 but the 2023 results were better for the Year 5 cohort. We are still however achieving a strong proficiency level for both year levels.

Assessment for and of learning occurs in a timely manner, guided by a whole school assessment schedule. School wide data collection of key literacy and numeracy data provides not only a level of accountability for all concerned, but a means to consider the impact of teaching. In this way we have been able to identify where practices need to be developed and improved.

We also used PAT Assessment tools (through ACER) online to inform, set and track whole school SMART goals in the areas of Spelling, Reading and Numeracy 2-6. The use of these standardised assessments continues to provide valuable trend data, and offers another perspective along with the other school assessments in use.

In reading and mathematics our average achievement was slightly lower than 2023, while our spelling data is higher. We are tracking comparatively with the national averages for all year levels.

| <b>NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards</b> |                   |                         |                   |
|---|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Domain</b>   | <b>Year level</b> | <b>Mean Scale score</b> | <b>Proficient</b> |
| Grammar & Punctuation   | Year 3            | 419                     | 53%               |
|   | Year 5            | 502                     | 70%               |
| Numeracy  | Year 3            | 414                     | 67%               |
|   | Year 5            | 488                     | 73%               |
| Reading   | Year 3            | 423                     | 83%               |
|   | Year 5            | 505                     | 82%               |
| Spelling  | Year 3            | 401                     | 62%               |
|   | Year 5            | 483                     | 70%               |
| Writing   | Year 3            | 423                     | 88%               |
|   | Year 5            | 482                     | 68%               |

\*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.



---

## Student Wellbeing

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

One of our key priorities for 2024 as articulated in our Annual Action Plan was:

"Ensuring highly effective, evidence-based teaching strategies, engage and empower learners and give life to all aspects of the whole person".

Actively work through our SIT goals (ReLATE)

- 1) Safety: Staff have a clear understanding of minor, major and critical incidents
- 2) Counter Stress School Environment: Staff and student self-care and wellbeing are prioritised, actively engaged in, and resourced through professional learning
- 3) Enhanced Teaching and Learning: Staff understand the functions of challenging behaviour as not surface level, and respond accordingly
- 4) Sustainable Whole School Culture Change: Consistent language is used throughout the school to support the concepts and practices of ReLATE

### Achievements

As students commence the school year at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, our main focus is centred around social and emotional wellbeing. Building the foundations for strong relationships between students, teachers, peers and support staff is integral for all to feel safe and welcomed. The beginning of the school year centred around our Fantastic 48 program. This program facilitated relationship building as well as providing dedicated time to unpack our School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework (SWPBS). The SWPBS framework provides students and staff with clear expectations and shared responsibility for being 'safe, responsible and respectful' within our learning and playing spaces. Our staff continued to implement the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships curriculum as our social emotional learning framework.

In August 2024, the teaching staff reviewed the processes of our Behaviour Flow Chart to ensure that our processes were both achievable and informative. In turn, the chart was updated to reduce steps that staff needed to follow to make a report on negative student behaviour. Staff also engaged in best practice regarding identifying, developing and fostering positive student teacher interactions during both class and yard spaces.

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School engaged in the third and final year of the ReLATE program (Reframing Learning and Teaching Environments), before the school moves into an independent sustaining phase with limited support from the McKillop Institute in 2025. The support from McKillop has been a key component in developing our SIT (School Implementation Team) goals. These goals, listed above, were evident in our Annual Action Plan for 2024 and were embedded in all our team meeting achievement standards. Upon review with our school's facilitator Yvonne Lindros, our SIT team was delighted to be able to see growth and achievement across all 4 goals. One of our main professional learning days centred around staff selfcare, adverse childhood experiences and trauma informed care.

The Peaceful Kids program and Quiet Play continued to operate in 2024 and the school planned and delivered a sensory space called 'Wattle Room'. The Wellbeing team sought consultation with Ashley Dalton, Occupational Therapist and director of Connected Kids, to ensure the Wattle Room space was accessible for any of our students that may need additional opportunity to self or co-regulate in a supportive environment. The Wellbeing team continued to meet weekly. This team consisted of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Pastoral Care Worker, Learning Diversity Leader and Wellbeing Leader. The aim of these meetings was to ensure the wellbeing of students, staff and families continued to be supported as required. Student Behaviour Surveys were developed and analysed. These surveys were completed by our Year 3-6 students in Term One and Term 3. The results of these surveys were collated and shared with our students so that there was an opportunity to discuss ways that we can continue to improve student wellbeing within all areas of our school.

### Value Added

- Employment of a Pastoral Care worker 3.5 days/week
- Wellbeing leader engaged in DOBCEL led professional development days
- New students transition days utilised to support social emotional wellbeing Rights, Resilience and Respectful Relationship program embedded
- Quiet Play options during second break on Tuesdays and Fridays for students to monitor personal self-regulative needs
- On-going implementation of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework.
- Restorative Practices Model used by staff in the classroom and on the yard
- Behaviour Flowchart linked to the SWPBS framework
- Parent, student and teacher communication methods including SSG and Student-Led Conferences to encourage a shared approach to student learning and wellbeing
- Behavioural contracts and Safety Plans written and developed for individuals when required
- Provided weekly Wrap Around the Learner (WATL) meetings to plan and intervene for identified students, led by our Learning Diversity Leaders
- Wellbeing Team meetings weekly

- Learning Diversity Leaders facilitating wellbeing interventions
- ReLATE Professional Development for staff to develop an understanding of trauma informed care
- SIT (School Implementation Team) met fortnightly to plan and implement ReLATE goals

## Student Satisfaction

The latest Insight SRC data showed Student satisfaction improvement in the following areas:

- Managing Emotions (Emotional Awareness and Emotional Regulation)
- Connectedness to School
- Student Morale
- Encouraging Learning
- Personal Development

## Student Attendance

Attendance-related notifications from parents are recorded by school administration staff who in turn notify class teachers. Attendance registers are monitored in the front office daily and parents were contacted in the event of unexplained or regular student absence. Due to our high attendance rate (89.29%) the above policy and practice is adequate. The Principal contacts families where non -attendance is significant and when students are absent on a regular basis.

| Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level |      |
|---|------|
| Y01   | 92.1 |
| Y02   | 90.9 |
| Y03   | 92.6 |
| Y04   | 92.7 |
| Y05   | 91.7 |
| Y06   | 89.5 |
| Overall average attendance                    | 91.6 |

---

## Leadership

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

One of our key priorities for 2024 as articulated in our Annual Action Plan was:

"We will build staff capability to be leaders of learning so that we develop a culture of continuous professional development".

### Achievements

There were many major leadership areas addressed over the school year.

The school utilised Catholic Education Office staff expertise where/when required as well as out-sourcing other professionals in various fields when required. There were many professional development opportunities available to staff throughout the year. These sessions were a combination of onsite and offsite sessions, both whole staff and individual.

Staff undertook the opportunity to develop and 'thrive' by taking up leadership roles and responsibilities. The positions of Team leaders, Sports Coordinator, ICT coordinator and Wellbeing Coordinator all became positions of Leadership.

The School Master Plan was revised with the engagement of Law Architects.

The process involved input from staff, students and parents. The school applied for capital grants with the intention to commence the project works in 2025. With the school master plan in mind, resources (physical, human and financial) were allocated to school initiatives.

The school continued to work with St Patrick's Parish Primary and Siena Catholic Primary Schools to build better links between the schools, allowing for better sharing and understanding.

There was a large investment in information technology to allow for staff and students to have increased computer and technology connectivity.

| <b>Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning</b>   |          |
|---|----------|
| List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024   |          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· ReLATE training modules (all staff 1 day)</li> <li>· First Aid, anaphylaxis, diabetes training (all staff)</li> <li>· ACHPER conference - 1 staff</li> <li>· EduTech Conference (Melbourne) – 2 staff</li> <li>· Learner Agency Professional Development - 4 staff ( 4 days)</li> <li>· Religious Education Professional development ( all staff)</li> <li>· Religious Education Diocesan Conference - 1 staff</li> <li>· Child safety- Mandatory reporting (all staff)</li> <li>· Student health - Diabetes in School Level 2 (all staff)</li> <li>· Online Work Health and Safety Compliance Training (all staff)</li> <li>· Religious Education - Exploring Enhancing Catholic School Identity</li> </ul> |          |
| Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024   | 50       |
| Average expenditure per teacher for PL  | \$310.00 |

## Teacher Satisfaction

The latest Insight SRC data showed Teacher Satisfaction improvement in the following areas:

- \* Work demands
- \* Parent partnerships
- \* Individual distress
- \* Student behaviour

| <b>Teacher Qualifications</b> |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Doctorate                     | 0  |
| Masters                       | 3  |
| Graduate                      | 3  |
| Graduate Certificate          | 0  |
| Bachelor Degree               | 29 |
| Advanced Diploma              | 7  |
| No Qualifications Listed      | 3  |

| <b>Staff Composition</b>              |       |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Principal Class (Headcount)           | 3     |
| Teaching Staff (Headcount)            | 36    |
| Teaching Staff (FTE)                  | 29.04 |
| Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)        | 24    |
| Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)              | 16.01 |
| Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount) | 0     |

---

## Community Engagement

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

One of our key priorities for 2024 as articulated in our Annual Action Plan was:

Embedding a culture of inclusivity that celebrates diversity and partners with the community to provide relevant and authentic learning opportunities for all.

- To enhance the school community connectedness.
- To improve student engagement through school community engagement.
- To strengthen the parent/school/parish partnership

### Achievements

We have continued to warmly welcome parents and families onto the school grounds and at school events and this has promoted increased opportunities to forge stronger connections and partnerships with the school community. Many and various strategies and actions were utilised throughout 2024 to enhance the school community connectedness and promote/strengthen parent, school/ parish community partnerships.

#### 2.1 Partnering with Families

Inviting parents, other family members, and friends into our school space offered many opportunities for school members to reconnect with existing families and establish connections with new families.

The school's communication strategies included regular newsletters, digital platforms like Seesaw and Facebook, and effective use of the Parent Access Module (PAM) to keep parents well-informed and engaged.

A comprehensive fortnightly newsletter kept the parent community informed about all aspects of the school, always featuring a mix of information, photographs, and a calendar of events for the current and upcoming school terms.

The St Thomas More Catholic Primary School app was frequently used to send instant updates and communicate important information directly to parents.

The school's Facebook page was updated regularly to showcase activities, events, and

achievements involving students, staff, families, and the parish. An Instagram account was also launched to further connect with families, sharing both upcoming events and photos from school events in a timely manner.

The Parent Access Module (PAM) served as the main platform for parents to access and update student information and provide consent in response to digital notifications.

Teachers consistently used Seesaw to communicate examples of student learning. This included a variety of content such as videos, photos, text, images, files, and drawings.

At the beginning of each term, the four teaching teams created and sent home newsletters to families, outlining key events and curriculum focuses for the term ahead.

Student diaries were used daily as a tool for communication between teachers and parents, facilitating the exchange of messages and updates.

Throughout the year, teachers maintained communication with students' parents as needed, using a variety of methods such as phone calls, emails, video conferences, and both scheduled and impromptu onsite meetings.

The School Advisory Council (SAC) met each term and was a culturally diverse representation of the school community. They were frequently consulted on both operational and strategic matters, and their input was valued as a reflection of the broader school community.

In Term 1, the school provided parents with the opportunity to attend a range of information sessions covering the following topics:

Strategies for helping students settle into school.

An overview of how students learn to read, the approaches and strategies used at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, and tips for parents on how to support their child in becoming a confident reader.

Participation in the Classroom Helpers training program, designed to equip parents, grandparents, and family friends with the skills needed to assist in the junior classrooms during the Literacy block (9-11am).

Parent Support Group meetings, led by the school's Learning Diversity Leaders.

All parents, volunteers, and contractors were required to adhere to Child Safe standards. This meant that every staff member, volunteer, and contractor at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School had to complete the Child Safe Induction process annually before working onsite, assisting in classrooms, attending excursions, or participating in committee group work. Once the induction was completed, and a valid Working with Children Check and photo ID were provided and recorded by the administration staff, they were authorised to assist with school events.



Throughout the year we communicate student learning formally on four occasions, comprising of once per term; by doing so we ensured we met VCAA requirements.

Term 1: Parent Teacher interviews occurring in early February. Parents were invited to complete a short questionnaire with their child/ren relating to assisting the teacher know more about each individual student. This proforma formed the basis for discussion at the PT Interviews and assisted with student goal setting.

Term 2: Student progress and achievement was conveyed to parents at the end of each semester through a formal written report available through PAM. Follow-up discussions were available.

Term 3: Our Semester Two Parent Teacher interviews took the format of 'Student Involved Learning Conferences' (SILC) involving the teacher, parents and student. The SILCs involved the child having a significant role to play in talking about their own learning.

Term 4: Student progress and achievement was conveyed to parents at the end of each semester through a formal written report available through PAM. Follow-up discussions were available.

Our Assemblies, Whole School Prayers and meetings (Staff, SAC and parent meetings) all begin with Acknowledgement of Country.

Our Parents and Friends committee remained enthusiastic and active in organising and hosting, both social and fundraising events, throughout the year. In general, these events were very well supported and attended, e.g. Mother's Day Breakfast, Father's Day Breakfast, Christmas Concert, Trivia Night, Colour Fun Explosion were some of the planned events.

We held five Parent Information sessions to give families of prospective 2025 Foundation enrolments the opportunity to learn about our school, its structure, the curriculum offered, our teaching approach, and more. Attendees were given a guided tour of the school led by members of our Year 6 Student Leadership group. After a centralized application process, we were able to offer Foundation placements to all families who listed St Thomas More as their first preference.

Earlier in the year, families were invited to participate in a working bee to help with tasks around the school grounds. The event was supported by several parents and students who generously volunteered their time to assist with the work.

Parents and carers were invited to participate in various surveys throughout the year to help gauge community thoughts about school related matters, including the ESCI survey, and feedback relating to the three homework trials that were conducted during Term 3. These responses formed data that assisted in decision making in regard to the future direction of the school.

We conducted brief face-to-face 'interviews' with each of our new Foundation students (for the upcoming year) and their parents. These 66 meetings were held onsite and helped us put names to faces while gathering important information to support a smooth transition into formal schooling. The meetings also provided parents with an opportunity to share details that would help us better understand and support their child as a student at the school.

At the end of Term 4, a 'Thank You Afternoon Tea' was held to express our gratitude to classroom helpers who had volunteered their time throughout 2024 to support learning in the junior classes.

## 2.2 Community Partnerships

Throughout the year, our students had several off-site learning opportunities, often making use of local attractions such as Lake Wendouree and the wetlands precinct, Sovereign Hill, the Alfredton neighbourhood, and ShowBiz Cinema, among others. Additionally, our middle and senior students participated in annual camps.

The school invited the community to join in various celebrations, including the Opening School Mass, fortnightly Assemblies, Whole School Prayers, and the End of Year Mass, all of which were held onsite.

Our fortnightly school newsletter regularly featured a section for Community Notices and Events, allowing local community groups, clubs, and organizations to promote their activities.

The school website was consistently reviewed and, with the support of our school compliance officer, remained current and up-to-date, particularly for enrolment inquiries and Child Safety requirements.

We continued our collaboration with Australian Catholic University (ACU) in 2024 by offering placements to second, third, and fourth-year students. Having pre-service teachers work as Learning Support Officers (LSOs) was highly beneficial, providing them with practical experience in applying university theory within the classroom, as well as the opportunity to observe and learn strategies from experienced teachers. In October, we were fortunate to

hire a fourth-year student, who had completed her final university placement at STMCPs, as a replacement classroom teacher for the class in which she had gained her seven-week experience.

We partnered with local sporting clubs to provide specialized sports coaching for various year levels. Thanks to Sporting Schools funding for Terms 2 and 3, we were able to bring in external specialist coaches for Football (soccer) for our Year 3/4 classes and gymnastics for our Year 1/2 classes. Each class received five one-hour sessions, fully funded by the Sporting Schools Grant.

Our middle and senior year students had the opportunity to attend performances by St Patrick's College and Loreto College throughout the year. In Term 4, the St Patrick's Junior Band visited and performed a variety of musical pieces, showcasing different instruments and talents.

We also worked with several external allied health providers, including speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and psychologists, to offer onsite support and assessments for individual students. Additionally, our ongoing collaboration with staff from Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) provided school visits and professional learning opportunities. These partnerships addressed identified student needs and offered access to resources, support, and experiences not available within the school, including collaborations with the parish, other educational institutions, local businesses, and community organizations.

Towards the end of Term 4, our 2025 Foundation students participated in three onsite transition sessions to help them experience life as an STMCPs student. These sessions allowed them to become familiar with their new environment, teacher and peers. One of the sessions also included a Parent Information meeting, which was well attended by both new and returning parents. The session featured presentations from the principal, deputy principal, learning and teaching leader, learning diversity leaders, Year 6 student leaders, and Foundation students.

Similarly, our Year 6 students had the opportunity to visit their future secondary schools. In collaboration with families and secondary schools, some students attended multiple sessions to help ensure a smooth transition to secondary school in 2025.

The school continued to support after-school activities for students and families. Kelly Sports utilised our facilities twice a week for sports sessions, and we also offered a daily 'walking bus' service to escort students safely to Out of Hours School Care at Alfredton Primary School, run by Ballarat YMCA.

Our Year 5 students participated in Secondary Education Experience Days (SEED) at St Patrick's College, Loreto College, and Damascus College. These sessions gave students a firsthand look at secondary school life and offered them the chance to experience subjects not typically taught at the primary level. This annual event strengthens our relationship with local Catholic secondary schools and forms part of their promotional efforts.

In 2024, staff were again invited to donate personal care and hygiene items for the St Vinnies Christmas appeal. Requested items personal toiletries and other personal care items to be distributed to those in need.

As a school community, we also encouraged students to think of those less fortunate in Ballarat. The Student Leadership Group organized a Christmas food drive, asking families to donate non-perishable food items for St Vincent de Paul. Donations were collected at the school office and forwarded to St Vincent de Paul for distribution.

## Parent Satisfaction

The latest Insight SRC data shows growth in parent satisfaction in the following areas:

- \*Learning focus
- \*Homework
- \*Student safety
- \*Approachability

---

## Financial Performance

---

The school's financial performance information and a report of the financial activities of the school's boarding premises (if applicable) have been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au).

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at [www.stmalfredton.catholic.edu.au](http://www.stmalfredton.catholic.edu.au)