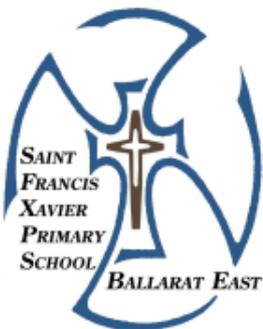


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OF
BALLARAT
CATHOLIC
EDUCATION
LIMITED



2024

Annual Report to the School Community



St Francis Xavier School

Fortune Street, BALLARAT EAST 3350

Principal: Mark Hogbin

Web: www.sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 981, E Number: E2039

Principal's Attestation

I, Mark Hogbin, attest that St Francis Xavier 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 2024 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 01 Apr 2025

About this report

St Francis Xavier 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

Our Vision:

Through the mission of Jesus within the Mercy tradition, we are called to action in pursuing fullness of life for all

Our Mission:

St Francis Xavier is a Catholic primary school community, inspired by the example of Catherine McAuley where we promote for all a sense of belonging, nurture right relationships, inspire a passion for learning and live in harmony with creation.

School Overview

Saint Francis Xavier Primary School has been located on its current site since 1902. The Sisters of Mercy established the school for boys on a former farm property owned by Mr. Fortune, an early entrepreneur from the goldfields era. The original house remains on the property and is now an integral part of the school.

The Sisters of Mercy led Saint Francis Xavier Primary School until the early 21st century, when the last of the religious sisters retired from teaching. Today, the school provides a co-educational learning environment for students from Foundation to Year Six. With a student population of 470, the school operates with straight year levels across three streams. The dedicated staff consists of 56 teachers, along with administration and support personnel. Many families in Ballarat have long-standing ties to the school, with generations linking their educational journey to this historic site.

Saint Francis Xavier Primary School continues to uphold the Mercy values of Hospitality, Compassion, Justice, Respect, and Excellence. These principles shape our daily interactions and inform our positive approach to behaviour management, known as "The Villa Way." Students are encouraged to understand and articulate these values, connecting them to the school's rich history.

In recent years, the school has undertaken several building and improvement projects. Managing an aging site presents challenges, particularly with the complexities of maintaining heritage-listed buildings. However, with support from state and federal government grants, we have modernized our facilities to align with contemporary teaching practices and evolving pedagogies. Our commitment is to provide an outstanding education for all members of our school community, fostering a culture of excellence in everything we do. Each student, staff member, and family is valued and appreciated as part of the Saint Francis Xavier community.

Principal's Report

We have had another great year at Saint Francis Xavier Primary School. Having just completed 122 years on this site we can celebrate our well established position within the Ballarat community.

Throughout the 2024 school year we were able to work together to build on the strengths of our school in the areas of learning, teaching, faith and community. Our Leadership team worked with staff, students and families to meet the needs of all who choose to connect with our school.

Catholic School Culture:

We celebrate our place in the Catholic story of Ballarat in many different ways. Through word and action we are called to live according to the Mercy values of Hospitality, Compassion, Respect, Excellence and Justice. These values, which we call The Villa Way, are practiced each day at school. Our students are recognised for displaying these values and we work together to instil the Mercy way of life in every encounter.

School Community:

We continue to receive many requests for enrolment in our school from within Ballarat and beyond. With just about all classes at capacity now we realize that many people are left feeling disappointed but I am also aware of the need to keep classes at a manageable size across the school. Our enrolment for 2025 across all classes stands at 480 next year which places us as being at capacity. Our Parents & Friends club has worked tirelessly throughout the year to build community and to fundraise for our school. The goal of replacing the old adventure playground with sun protection was achieved in September. This is a huge improvement on what we had and we now have a safe playing area for the children to explore. It looks like we will be able to add to the playground in the near future with some more challenging equipment so that will also add to the experience for the children.

Leadership & Stewardship:

I was fortunate enough to be able to join a spiritual heritage pilgrimage to Ireland at the end of last term. This was a great opportunity provided by DOBCEL for all Principals in the Ballarat Diocese. Over two weeks we visited the religious orders who sent staff from Ireland in the early 1850's to educate and care for the children of the goldfields. In the 150th year of the existence of our diocese it was very special to spend time meeting with the various personnel in Ireland and to visit the places from where their people left never to return. My visit to Mercy House in Dublin was a highlight of the trip and I was able to learn much more about our founder Catherine McAuley and the Mercy order of sisters who came to establish

our school. While away both Jane Clark and Jayne Mohr led our school as co-principals, and I am very grateful to them for so willingly taking this on.

Learning & Teaching:

The Fullness of Life program ran for the first time from Foundation to Year 6 in third term. This personal development program is sanctioned by DOBCEL for all of our Catholic schools to use. Parent information sessions were well attended and the teachers were happy with the content covered. Our children entered into it respectfully and showed a desire to learn together in a safe environment. Over this term we continue to develop our approach to Structured Literacy which is now becoming embedded in our school. The team from FLARE (Diocesan instruction team) undertook a visit to our school to observe lessons which was very affirming for our staff. We worked with our curriculum support team to ensure that the updated mathematics program was ready for the new school year. This has been a requirement across all schools for 2025, and we are up to date and ready to go. We thank Jane Clark for leading us in this space. In the next few weeks I will begin to finalize staffing across our school. I have attached a list of staff for our information and this will be made public in the next couple of weeks.

Overall, we are looking forward to a positive 2025 for all. 2024 has been productive for our students and a year of growth for our staff. We will welcome new staff members into the fold in 2025 and farewell other who are moving on. With this in mind, we are looking forward to a very productive 2025 school year.

School Wellbeing:

Our community came together in the last week of the school year to celebrate Graduation for Year 6 students, to acknowledge leaving families and to share some Christmas cheer. Opportunities like these help to build our sense of community which is important for our school. We are extremely fortunate to have a community of families who want to support our school and we are proud of their efforts. As we look forward to 2025, we do so knowing that we work together to build a happy school where all are safe, challenged and supported to be our best selves always and in all we do.

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The following goals and intended outcomes were formulated as part of our annual action plan for the 2024 school year:

GOAL:

Nurture and Strengthen St Francis Xavier's Catholic Identity as a lived expression of our Vision and Mission.

OUTCOMES:

Implement the Fullness of Life for All Relationships and Sexuality Program

Continue implementing our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

Achievements

The Catholic culture of our school remains strong and vibrant. It has been a privilege to participate in student-led liturgies, where our students engage in prayer and reflection with such reverence. This would not be possible without the dedicated support and guidance of our staff, whose commitment is evident in the meaningful liturgical experiences they create for our students.

Throughout 2024, more than 100 students participated in the Sacramental Program. With the support of St. Alipius Parish and Mrs. Cathy Prunty, we guided students as they received the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation. These sacred ceremonies were officiated by Fr. Justin and Fr. Matt, with invaluable support from our staff under the leadership of Ms. Christine Meneely, our Religious Education Leader.

As a school community, we gathered for whole-school liturgies throughout the year, including the Start of the School Year, Mother's Day, Easter, Mercy Week, Father's Day, Grandparents' Day, Advent, and the End of the School Year. These celebrations took place both at school and at St. Alipius Church. In January, we warmly welcomed Fr. Justin as our new Parish Administrator and bid farewell to Fr. Matt mid-year.

We continue to foster strong connections with our neighbouring schools in the Ballarat East Parish and cherish opportunities to come together in faith and fellowship

Value Added

In 2024, we successfully completed our ECSI surveys with staff, students, and parents. In 2025, we will analyse this data to enhance our school's practices. Our commitment to Enhancing Catholic Education continues to guide our planning for future learning and teaching. With support from DOBCEL, we will interpret the data to deepen our understanding of recontextualization and dialogue.

In 2025, we will welcome a new member to our planning teams with Ms. Jo-Anne Vandervort from DOBCEL adding her expertise to our work. She brings extensive expertise in biblical studies and a strong ability to connect historical events with contemporary teaching. Her insights will further enrich our classrooms, building upon the invaluable support provided by Mrs. Bernadette Luckman over the past three years in program planning.

Additionally, through ongoing professional development, our staff collectively added 10 hours to their TAP records for the 2024 school year

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The following goals and intended outcomes were formulated as part of our annual action plan for the 2024 school year:

GOALS:

Ensure quality learning and teaching that promotes excellence and fosters fullness of life for all

Embed understandings of Structured Literacy into practice across all year levels as we work with Catholic Education Ballarat to enhance our learning.

OUTCOMES:

Develop capacity of key personnel as supportive leaders of contemporary professional learning & collaboratively develop a culture of teacher feedback

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

Achievements

Through professional development with SunLit Structured Literacy, we deepened our understanding of focused literacy learning and enhanced our teaching practices as our knowledge expanded.

To support literacy development, we have expanded middle school resources by acquiring decodable readers and class novel sets. This complements last year's purchases for the junior school. These resources are accessible to all students. Additionally, professional development in the Ochre and PHORMES programs has begun and will continue to be available for staff.

Ongoing Peer Observations focused on implementing Structured Literacy (F-6) have reinforced our understanding while encouraging us to refine and challenge our teaching

methodologies. We have also explored and developed proficiency scales and SFX Assessment Tasks to assess student skills and comprehension effectively.

Regular moderation of student achievement across year levels has provided valuable insights into the learning continuum, ensuring alignment with expected learning outcomes at all stages.

Student Learning Outcomes

The student learning outcomes for 2024 follow similar patterns to previous years, demonstrating consistently strong growth in both individual and year-level data. This positive trend is evident in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy for students in Year 3 and Year 5.

At Saint Francis Xavier Primary School, we utilize NAPLAN data collected annually to complement and validate the assessments conducted by classroom teachers. This approach not only helps us track improvement trends but also serves as a benchmark for evaluating our internal data. Our teachers recognize the importance of using multiple data sources to inform their teaching practices effectively.

A thorough analysis of the 2024 NAPLAN data confirms that our students continue to achieve consistently high growth across all cohorts.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	434	65%
	Year 5	513	68%
Numeracy	Year 3	446	83%
	Year 5	515	84%
Reading	Year 3	446	81%
	Year 5	503	80%
Spelling	Year 3	420	71%
	Year 5	497	74%
Writing	Year 3	441	92%
	Year 5	498	84%

*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

The following goals and intended outcomes were formulated as part of our annual action plan for the 2024 school year:

GOAL:

Build and nurture communities of inclusivity, belonging and wellbeing, where all experience hospitality, a sense of welcome and trust with/in each other.

OUTCOME:

We will enhance our understandings of the Villa Way which is designed to build on our core values.

Achievements

The role of Wellbeing Leader has been redefined to focus primarily on overseeing programs aimed at supporting students in need and collaborating with external agencies to provide additional assistance. Ms. Gemma Johnson assumed this position in 2024.

We have successfully completed training in the ReLate program, delivered by Mackillop Family Services. This training has underscored the importance of fostering a safe and supportive environment for both staff and students. Key topics such as self-regulation, relaxation techniques, stress management, and identifying triggering experiences have informed our approach to wellbeing this year.

Ms. Jayne Mohr has applied for funding support for over 100 students through the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) scheme. This funding ensures that schools can access additional resources to support students requiring extra assistance in their learning. It covers support staff wages, as well as training and resources to meet diverse student needs. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Jayne for her dedicated efforts in this crucial area. Additionally, we have recruited four new Learning Support Officers throughout the year to assist with various programs and provide essential support.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan continues to flourish within the school community, playing a prominent role in our assemblies and gatherings. We are proud of the progress made in this

important area and look forward to further expanding our knowledge and commitment to reconciliation.

Value Added

The Wellbeing Leader dedicated significant effort to providing engaging break-time activities and clubs for students who faced challenges with social interactions. The Teddy Bear picnics became a weekly favourite for many junior school students, while the Chess Club consistently attracted participation from middle and senior grade students. Additionally, the Card Swap meetings regularly enjoyed strong attendance. With an overall focus on positive socialisation and interaction these regular gatherings create a safe environment for children to explore friendships and problem solve together.

The Buddy system has proven to be a standout success for students throughout 2024. Senior students eagerly look forward to becoming Buddies for Foundation children, with numerous opportunities created throughout the year for these connections. The system has also been highly appreciated by our parent community.

Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction is evaluated through the Insight SRC surveys, conducted biennially. In 2023, students in Years 3, 4, 5, and 6 participated in the survey to gather insights into their learning experiences, peer interactions, and educational engagement. The next survey will be conducted in 2025.

In 2023, students in Years 5 and 6 reported a school connectedness score of 74, which is consistent with the school's historical average of 72. Although connectedness was not measured for students in Years 3 and 4, this will be monitored in the future to identify areas for potential improvement.

Concerning teacher-student relationships, students in Years 5 and 6 rated various aspects of teaching as follows: purposeful teaching scored 83 (historically 78), teacher empathy received a rating of 83 (historically 81), and encouragement of learning was rated at 79 (historically 74).

For the first time in 2023, students in Years 3 and 4 participated in the Insight SRC surveys, a practice that will continue in future years. They reported a student morale score of 70, a student distress level of 7, and a school connectedness score of 65. Their connection to teachers was highly rated, with teacher empathy and purposeful teaching both scoring 83, and stimulating learning rated at 63. Overall, this group demonstrated strong motivation (80), confidence as learners (75), and a sense of peer connection (82).

The overall aggregate indicator for student wellbeing is 77.9, reflecting a slight increase from the historical score of 76.6, indicating consistent results over time.

Student Attendance

Saint Francis Xavier Primary School regards student safety as one of our highest priorities. In order to monitor student attendance the following procedures are in place:

- Attendance records are kept twice daily. The electronic roles are released each morning and monitored by the administration staff
- Absences are recorded electronically and followed up by the administration staff prior to first break or at the earliest possible time.
- Parents and guardians are required to contact the office or classroom teacher if their child will not be in attendance at school on any given day.
- Unnotified absences are followed up with a phone call by the administration staff prior to first break or at the earliest possible time.
- All attendance is recorded in student files

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	91.8
Y02	92.4
Y03	92.1
Y04	91.4
Y05	90.8
Y06	91.8
Overall average attendance	91.7

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The following areas were identified as goals and intended outcomes for 2024:

GOAL:

Facilitate respectful connections between parents, guardians, care teams and staff

OUTCOME:

Promote parent access to apple TV for resources to support home/school connection

GOAL:

Build the schools capability and capacity to engage respectfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities and other cultures

OUTCOME:

Connect with CEB staff to build a positive relationship in support of our RAP.

GOAL:

Induct new staff into the school's way of operating including learning and teaching practices and expectations.

OUTCOME:

Revised staff handbook and develop a Play Book in line with Structured Literacy learning.

Achievements

Throughout the year, our Leadership team has collaborated closely to refine our strategic direction and drive the school's improvement agenda. All year-level leaders participated in coaching sessions facilitated by John Marks Consulting, resulting in enhanced communication and stronger working relationships between level leaders and the broader leadership team. Moving forward, we will continue to foster opportunities for collaboration.

The Leadership team has also been actively navigating the challenges posed by the new industrial award. This has presented certain operational difficulties, particularly concerning restrictions to hours of employment. The introduction of time in lieu for teachers has prompted a thorough review of practices traditionally held outside of school hours. Additionally, a financial allocation for overtime payments has been incorporated into the

budget, although we remain mindful of the impact on staff expectations beyond their contracted hours. Through ongoing discussions with the consultative committee, we have been able to assess existing practices and explore alternative approaches for any requirements outside of regular working hours.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024	
<p>In 2024, staff participated in a variety of professional learning opportunities. Aligned with our annual action plan, staff engaged in three Structured Literacy days and two Structured Literacy staff meetings, coordinated by CE Ballarat, in addition to our internal professional development sessions led by our Structured Literacy Leader. This initiative reinforced our commitment to the SunLit program.</p> <p>Additional professional development provided to staff in 2024 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Training CPR Training Anaphylaxis Training SALT Training Modules Occupational Health & Safety Training Emergency Services Warden Training Auslan TCL Training ReLate Professional Development Reporting & Assessment Principal Network Deputy Principal Network Religious Education Leaders Network Literacy Leaders Network Learning Diversity Network 	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024	31
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$500.00

Teacher Satisfaction

The Insight SRC data gathered for 2024 shows trends consistent with previous surveys. The historical data aligns closely with previous results across most areas.

Staff rated their own morale at 76, compared to a historical average of 75. Individual distress was rated at 72, up from the historical average of 70. Work demands were rated at 58, slightly lower than the historical score of 61. Minimal variation was observed across all survey areas for staff, both in the organisational and teaching climate categories.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0
Masters	5
Graduate	7
Graduate Certificate	2
Bachelor Degree	36
Advanced Diploma	7
No Qualifications Listed	1

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	3
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	41
Teaching Staff (FTE)	37.13
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	29
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	17.42
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

GOAL:

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

OUTCOMES:

To embed the ReLATE pedagogical framework as part of the way we nurture each other here at St Francis Xavier to ensure a community of belonging and a strong sense of acceptance.

To embed the AUSLAN curriculum with the support of a hearing impaired language assistant who will work across the school 1.5 days per week.

Achievements

After concluding our collaboration with ReLate, we are confident that we have gained valuable insights from the program. We will now focus on embedding the strategies developed with ReLate into our classroom routines and operational practices. Additionally, all new staff members will be introduced to the ReLate model as part of their onboarding process.

Our Auslan program will continue to thrive with the support of CEB staff and the involvement of Ms. Chantelle Stacey, our language coach. We will closely monitor Chantelle's role within the program as our time commitment increases, and may consider extending her hours to meet the growing demands of the program in the future.

Parent Satisfaction

The Insight SRC data collected for 2024 regarding Parent Satisfaction shows minimal change compared to historical data.

Parents rated teacher approachability at 80, slightly down from the historical average of 81. School improvement was rated at 81, consistent with the historical score, while focused learning received a rating of 82, up from the historical score of 80. The most significant areas of improvement were seen in stimulating learning (87, compared to a historical score of 83) and connectedness to school (88, compared to a historical score of 80). The most notable

decline occurred in classroom behavior, where parents rated the school at 53, down from the historical score of 64, highlighting an area for future focus and development.

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.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at www.sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au