



2025

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 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 30 Mar 2026

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

From the Murray to the Sea, DOBCEL aims to realise a vision of the 'fullness of life for all' for more than 18,600 students across a community of 63 Catholic primary and secondary schools.

We began 2025 with an uplifting Mass led by Bishop Paul in a packed St Patrick's Cathedral. In his homily, Bishop Paul highlighted our mission as Catholic educators to pursue the fullness of life for every child in our care, reminding us to keep students, staff and mission at the centre of our work.

The January 2025 publication of the DOBCEL Strategy 2035 represents a pivotal moment for the DOBCEL community and marks an important phase in our ongoing development.

The main purpose of this 10-year strategy is to inspire the whole system to commit to and move towards a high performing system of Catholic schools. The system is strong and well-performing, but we can do better.

Underpinned by our Catholic Identity, the strategy identifies five strategic pillars that reflect primary areas of focus.

- Collaborative Cultures
- Engagement and Belonging
- School as Community
- Rich Pedagogical practices for Deeper Learning and Wellbeing
- Sustainable Stewardship

The strategy was co-designed with teachers, school leaders, non-teaching staff, students, parents and those working in Catholic Education Ballarat offices.

I had the great privilege of participating in these co-design sessions, which showcased the professionalism and passion of all those in our system that devote their working lives to provide a great education for our children and young people.

Therefore, it is only fitting that I record my sincere thanks to all of you. These are exciting times of opportunity for our community of schools, but it is only possible because of your extraordinary work and dedication.

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. Established by the Sisters of Mercy, the school was originally built on a former farm property owned by Mr Fortune, an early entrepreneur from the goldfields era. The original homestead remains on the grounds today and continues to serve as an integral part of the school.

The Sisters of Mercy led the school until the early 21st century, when the last of the religious sisters retired from teaching. Today, Saint Francis Xavier is a co-educational primary school serving students from Foundation to Year 6. With an enrolment of 485 students, the school operates across three streams at each year level. Our dedicated staff of more than 60 includes classroom teachers, support staff and administration personnel. The school celebrates strong community ties, with many Ballarat families maintaining multi-generational connections to this historic site.

Saint Francis Xavier Primary School continues to uphold the Mercy values of Hospitality, Compassion, Justice, Respect and Excellence. These values underpin daily interactions and guide our positive approach to behaviour, known as “The Villa Way.” Students are encouraged to understand and articulate these values, fostering a strong connection to the school’s heritage.

In recent years, the school has undertaken a number of building and improvement projects. While maintaining an ageing and partially heritage-listed site presents ongoing challenges, support from state and federal government grants has enabled the modernisation of facilities to better reflect contemporary teaching practices. Our ongoing commitment is to provide an outstanding education for all members of our community, fostering a culture of excellence in which every student, staff member and family is known, valued and respected.

Principal's Report

We have had another great year at Saint Francis Xavier Primary School. Having just completed 123 years on this site we can celebrate our well established position within the Ballarat community.

Throughout the 2025 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

This year, our school has proudly supported more than 100 students as they received the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation. Our commitment to maintaining strong links with the parish is evident in the relationships we have built over time, particularly as we plan collaboratively with the parish sacramental team for these important occasions. As we transition to a new Religious Education Leader next year, we will continue to strengthen these relationships for the benefit of our students and our school.

Throughout the year, we have supported a range of charitable agencies through fundraising activities, most often in the form of free-dress days accompanied by a gold coin donation. Teachers work with students to help them understand the importance of almsgiving as a way of supporting those who are less fortunate.

School Community

Our school community is made up of a diverse range of families and individuals. We work together to educate both faithfully and in faith, regardless of circumstance. Over the year, we have supported families through times of ill health, marriage breakdown, bereavement, and the arrival of new babies. With XX families in our community, it is rare that we are not responding in some way to the needs of those around us. Our staff frequently work behind the scenes to offer support during challenging times, and our Parents & Friends Committee is always ready to lend a hand.

Leadership & Stewardship

This year, we have focused deliberately on building a sense of harmony and welcome among our staff. This has been especially important as we supported a large number of new staff beginning with us in 2025. As we approach the final weeks of Term 4, I am delighted with the team we have formed, and it is pleasing to see the strengths of our newest teachers emerging as they settle into life at our school.

The Leadership Team has worked in a coaching capacity throughout the year to support our Level Leaders, who coordinate the seven teams that make up our teaching staff. This has involved regular meetings during work hours to set and review goals. We look forward to building on this model next year.

Learning & Teaching

This has been another year of significant growth in learning and teaching at St Francis Xavier. We have now completed three years of literacy development under the DOBCEL structured literacy program, FLARE. Although we were invited to continue as a Lighthouse School, we have chosen to pursue a self-directed pathway. This decision allows us to use commercial resources to support planning, rather than creating all resources ourselves, as required in the Lighthouse model. We believe this approach will best meet the needs of both staff and students.

We will continue to receive support from FLARE, and our connection with La Trobe University will remain strong. The key difference is that we will not take on the extended responsibilities associated with being a Lighthouse School.

This year, we have also begun exploring the new DOBCEL Strategy for Learning and Teaching—DOBCEL Strategy 2035—which will guide the organisation's direction for the next decade. We will learn more about this strategy as it unfolds next year.

School Wellbeing

The newly created MHiPS (Mental Health in Primary Schools) Officer role has been implemented across all our schools this year. This government-funded initiative provides both financial support and professional learning through the University of Melbourne. Mrs Christine Meneely has taken on this role in our school, and we are grateful for the important work she is doing with students and families.

Student wellbeing remains a priority across our schools. Mental health concerns among young people are increasing statewide, and many families are navigating these challenges. The three-year funding and support for the MHiPS initiative is therefore very welcome. Looking ahead to 2026, we will continue to provide programs and support in this space.

It has been a busy and productive year at our school. As we move towards the end of the year, we are also preparing to welcome 78 new students in 2026. Our Year 6 students will transition to various secondary schools confident and well-prepared, knowing their time at St Francis Xavier has served them well. As our School Advisory Council completes its first cycle of tenure, I would like to acknowledge the work of Quinten Jones, Mark Kersley and Ange Staley who agreed to undertake the role of foundation Council members. These people will complete their tenure at the end of 2025 and new members will be inducted early in 2026. Along with Lisa Clark and Cassandra Hiscock who will continue in the role, our School

Advisory Council has worked diligently to support the leadership of our school. I have valued their support very much.

As we close the 2025 school year, I thank all members of our school community for your support and I wish everyone a blessed Christmas and a restful break.

Mark Hogbin

Principal.

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The following goals and intended outcomes were formulated as part of our annual action plan for the 2025 school year:

GOAL

Nurture and strengthen St Francis Xavier's Catholic Identity as a lived expression of our Vision and Mission. We have two areas of priority namely:

- implementing the Fullness of Life for All Relationships and Sexuality Program from F-6
- continue recontextualising our Religious Education Program.

OUTCOMES

1. Strategic directions for growth in recontextualisation formulated with support from DOBCEL
2. By the end of 2025 we will have developed a plan to enhance the catholic identity of our school.

Achievements

The Catholic culture of our school remains strong and deeply embedded in the life of our community. It has been a privilege to witness and participate in student-led liturgies, where students engage in prayer and reflection with reverence and authenticity. These rich experiences are made possible through the dedication and guidance of our staff, whose commitment ensures that liturgy remains meaningful and accessible for all students.

Throughout 2025, more than a hundred students participated in the Sacramental Program. In partnership with St Alipius Parish and the Parish Coordinator, we supported students in receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation. These sacred celebrations were led by Fr Justin and supported by our staff, under the leadership of Ms Christine Meneely, Religious Education Leader.

As a faith community, we gathered regularly for whole-school liturgies, including celebrations to mark the beginning of the school year, Easter, Mercy Week, Advent and the end of the school year, as well as special occasions such as Mother's Day, Father's Day and Grandparents' Day. These were held both at school and at St Alipius Church, strengthening our shared sense of faith and community.

We continue to nurture strong connections with neighbouring schools within the Ballarat East Parish and value the opportunities to come together in faith, prayer and fellowship.

Value Added

In 2025, we were pleased to welcome Ms Jo-anne Van der Vort from DOBCEL as a new contributor to our planning teams. Ms Van der Vort brings extensive expertise in Biblical studies, along with a strong capacity to connect historical context with contemporary teaching practice. Her contribution will further enrich our work, building on the outstanding support provided by Mrs Bernadette Luckman over the past three years in program planning.

Staff professional learning remained a key priority throughout the year. Collectively, staff accrued an additional 15 hours towards their Teacher Accreditation Program (TAP) requirements in 2025. New staff members also engaged in targeted online learning to deepen their knowledge of Religious Education, with these courses contributing towards their TAP accreditation.

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The following goal and intended outcomes were established as part of our 2024 Annual Action Plan:

Goal

To ensure high-quality learning and teaching that promotes excellence and fosters the fullness of life for all students.

Key Outcomes

- Continued implementation of explicit instruction in literacy, informed by the Science of Learning, through the FLARE Primary Literacy approach (Phase C).
- Implementation of the Mathematics Version 2.0 curriculum from Foundation to Year 6, in alignment with VCAA requirements.
- Strengthening connections between inquiry learning and structured literacy through the use of the Inquisitive resource model, supported by FLARE.
- Review of the Environmental Education program to enhance authentic links between literacy and science.

Achievements

Through targeted professional learning with SunLit Structured Literacy, staff deepened their understanding of explicit, focused literacy instruction and strengthened their classroom practice as their knowledge continued to grow. With the support of the SunLit team, the school has made the strategic decision to transition to a self-directed phase in 2026. This will enable consolidation of current practices, particularly for new staff, before considering progression to the Lighthouse stage of the FLARE program.

Ongoing peer observations across Foundation to Year 6, with a focus on Structured Literacy, have further reinforced whole-school consistency. These observations have supported teachers to refine their practice, engage in professional dialogue and thoughtfully challenge existing assumptions about teaching and learning.

In Mathematics, the school continues to utilise the Stepping Stones program, which is aligned to the Australian Curriculum. During Semester Two 2025, staff worked closely with the Stepping Stones team to ensure alignment with the Mathematics Version 2.0 curriculum. While this required a significant investment of time, it has resulted in a well-aligned and

coherent mathematics program. Professional learning was provided through staff meetings to support teachers in implementing these updates effectively.

Regular moderation of student achievement across year levels has provided valuable insights into student progress along the learning continuum. This process ensures consistent teacher judgement and alignment with expected learning outcomes across all stages of literacy and numeracy.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes in 2025 continued to reflect patterns consistent with previous years, demonstrating strong growth at both individual and cohort levels. This positive trend is evident across Literacy and Numeracy, particularly in Years 3 and 5.

At Saint Francis Xavier Primary School, NAPLAN data is used alongside school-based assessment to complement and validate teacher judgements. This approach enables us to track longitudinal growth, benchmark performance, and strengthen the reliability of our internal data. Staff recognise the importance of drawing on multiple sources of evidence to inform responsive and targeted teaching practices.

Analysis of the 2025 NAPLAN results indicated a decline in performance across both Year 3 and Year 5 in Literacy and Numeracy. This pattern was not consistent with school-based assessment data. It is acknowledged that testing conditions during the NAPLAN period were less than optimal and may have influenced student performance. Triangulation with other assessment measures suggests a discrepancy between NAPLAN results and demonstrated classroom achievement, reinforcing the likelihood that external factors impacted outcomes.

This will remain an area of focus in 2026, with ongoing monitoring to ensure consistency across data sets and to further strengthen confidence in our assessment and reporting practices.

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	416	66%	425	66%
	Year 5	508	69%	511	69%
Numeracy	Year 3	422	67%	434	75%
	Year 5	503	79%	509	82%
Reading	Year 3	405	63%	426	72%
	Year 5	486	75%	495	78%
Spelling	Year 3	410	69%	415	70%
	Year 5	490	75%	494	75%
Writing	Year 3	430	85%	436	89%
	Year 5	491	80%	495	82%

*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.

Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The following goal and intended outcome were established as part of our 2025 Annual Action Plan:

Goal

To build and nurture a community grounded in inclusivity, belonging and wellbeing, where all experience hospitality, a strong sense of welcome, and trust in one another.

Key Outcome

To deepen our shared understanding of The Villa Way, strengthening its connection to our core Mercy values and its consistent expression across all aspects of school life.

Achievements

The role of Wellbeing Leader was refined in 2025 to prioritise the coordination of targeted support for students in need, alongside strengthening partnerships with external agencies. Following the trial of separate staff and student wellbeing leadership roles, these were consolidated into a single position to enhance coherence and impact. The introduction of the Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHIPS) initiative has further strengthened this area, enabling greater allocation of time, resources and expertise. Mrs Christine Meneely has undertaken this role in conjunction with her position as School Counsellor. A future priority will be the development of a whole-school student wellbeing monitoring tool to support the tracking of student needs across year levels.

Through the leadership of Ms Jayne Mohr, the school successfully secured funding support for over 100 students through the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD). This funding provides essential resources to support students requiring adjustments, including the provision of support staff, targeted professional learning and specialised resources. In 2025, the school also participated in an external NCCD audit, with all student data reviewed to ensure accuracy and compliance.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan continues to grow as a meaningful and visible part of school life. It remains embedded within assemblies and community gatherings, reflecting our ongoing commitment to fostering understanding, respect and reconciliation. We are proud of the progress made and look forward to continuing to deepen our knowledge and practice in this important area.

Value Added

The Wellbeing Leader dedicated significant time to the provision of structured and engaging break-time activities, designed to support students who experience challenges in social interaction. Initiatives such as the weekly Teddy Bear Picnics were particularly popular among junior students, while Chess Club and Card Swap gatherings attracted consistent participation from middle and senior students. With a strong focus on positive socialisation, these opportunities provided safe and supportive environments in which students could build friendships, develop social skills and engage in collaborative problem-solving.

The Buddy Program continued to be a highlight of school life in 2025. Senior students embraced the responsibility of supporting Foundation students, with regular opportunities provided to foster meaningful connections. This program not only strengthened relationships across year levels but was also highly valued by our parent community.

The introduction of the paddock play area has further enhanced opportunities for positive student interaction. This space has encouraged creativity, cooperation and shared problem-solving, enabling students to develop respectful, constructive relationships through play.

Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction is evaluated through the Insight SRC surveys, conducted biennially. In 2023, students in Years 3–6 participated in the survey, providing valuable insights into their learning experiences, peer interactions, and overall engagement with school. The survey was conducted again in 2025.

In 2025, results reflected a strong sense of student wellbeing and connection. Among students in Years 5 and 6, 90.5% reported that they felt good about being at school. Additionally, 91.2% indicated that their teachers listened to them, while 92% felt supported by their teachers to achieve their best. These results are a source of great pride for our school community.

In relation to student motivation, senior students reported an average rating of 94.0%. Peer connectedness was rated at 91.0%, and student safety at 80.0%, with these results remaining consistent across survey cycles.

The overall aggregate indicator for student wellbeing was 77.9, representing a slight increase from the historical score of 76.6. This reflects a stable and consistently positive trend in student wellbeing 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	91.84
Y02	92.41
Y03	92.05
Y04	91.42
Y05	90.82
Y06	91.75
Overall average attendance	91.72

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The following area was identified as a goal for 2025:

GOAL

To review the annual action plans for the past 4 years and to define any areas of the school improvement plan which are yet to be met by 2026.

OUTCOME

We have successfully met our expectations with some works to be completed in 2026.

Achievements

Throughout the year, the Leadership Team has worked collaboratively to refine the school's strategic direction and advance our improvement agenda. Year-level leaders met regularly with the Curriculum, Religious Education, Learning Diversity, and Structured Literacy leaders, resulting in enhanced communication and strengthened professional relationships across the team. These structures have supported greater coherence in our work, and we will continue to prioritise and expand opportunities for collaboration moving forward.

The Leadership Team has also continued to support staff in embedding the new award into the life of the school. Careful consideration has been given to Time in Lieu (TIL) provisions, with the Consultative Committee working diligently to ensure compliance with all legal requirements relating to staff entitlements. This area will remain a key priority as we prepare for the next industrial agreement in 2026.

A review of the Annual Action Plans, aligned with the School Improvement Plan, has identified a number of priorities to be completed in 2026. In addition, several emerging areas for growth have been recognised—areas not anticipated at the commencement of the current strategic cycle but which have become evident over time. These will be incorporated into future planning to ensure continued responsiveness and improvement.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2025	
In 2025, staff engaged in a broad range of professional learning opportunities aligned with the priorities outlined in the Annual Action Plan. A key focus was the continued implementation of Structured Literacy, with staff participating in three dedicated professional learning days and two staff meetings facilitated by Catholic Education Ballarat (FLARE). This professional learning further strengthened our whole-school commitment to the SunLit program and supported consistent, evidence-informed classroom practice. Additional professional learning undertaken by staff throughout 2025 included: • First Aid Training • CPR Training • Anaphylaxis Training • SALT Training Modules • Occupational Health and Safety Training • Emergency Services Warden Training • Auslan TCL Training • Reporting and Assessment • Participation in professional networks, including:Principal Network • Deputy Principal Network • Religious Education Leaders Network • Literacy Leaders Network • Learning Diversity Network	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2025	31
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$500.00

Teacher Satisfaction

The Insight SRC data gathered for 2025 shows trends consistent with previous surveys. The historical data aligns closely with previous results across most areas.

Staff rated their own morale at an average of 90.0%, compared to a historical average of 75. Work demands was rated on average at 80.0% favourable, school distress at 90.0% favourable and student management at 90.0% favourable. Minimal variation was observed across all survey areas for staff, both in the organisational and teaching climate categories.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0
Masters	3
Graduate	5
Graduate Certificate	0
Bachelor Degree	36
Advanced Diploma	5
No Qualifications Listed	0

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	3
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	45
Teaching Staff (FTE)	38.69
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	29
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	19.56
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The following areas were identified as goals and intended outcomes for 2025:

GOAL

To develop procedures for inclusive practices around school gatherings and events which require an interpreter for hearing impaired members of our community.

OUTCOME

A school procedures document was developed in conjunction with Catholic Education staff to formulate how inclusive practices will be incorporated into our school and community gatherings.

GOAL

Work with the reconciliation action plan (RAP) team to continue to explore opportunities to demonstrate practices of reconciliation and inclusivity authentically within school life.

OUTCOME

Staff PD in inclusive indigenous studies and cultural awareness.

Achievements

Our Auslan program will continue to strengthen with the support of CEB staff and the expertise of Ms Chantelle Stacey, our Language Coach. As the program grows, we will continue to monitor Chantelle's role and time allocation, with consideration given to increasing her hours to meet emerging needs.

Our Inclusive Practices document has guided our efforts to more effectively include members of the Deaf community in school events and gatherings. In addition, developing our understanding of the NCCD and NDIS has been a significant area of professional learning, enabling staff to better support students and families through informed and inclusive practices.

In 2025, the RAP Team facilitated two staff meetings focused on building understanding of culture and inclusion. These sessions provided valuable opportunities for staff learning and

reflection. We also strengthened our connections with the local Indigenous community, continuing to build on the positive relationships established over time.

Parent Satisfaction

The Insight SRC data collected in 2024 indicates that parent satisfaction has remained largely consistent with historical trends.

Parents rated teacher approachability at 80, slightly below the historical average of 81. School improvement was rated at 81, in line with previous results, while focused learning increased to 82, up from a historical score of 80. Notable areas of growth included stimulating learning, which rose to 87 (from 83), and connectedness to school, which increased significantly to 88 (from 80).

The most notable decline was in classroom behaviour, with a rating of 53 compared to the historical score of 64. This highlights an important area for ongoing focus and targeted improvement.

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