



2023

Annual Report to the School Community



St Monica's School

91 High Street, KANGAROO FLAT 3555

Principal: Timothy Edwards

Web: www.smkangarooflat.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 204, E Number: E3004

Principal's Attestation

I, Timothy Edwards, attest that St Monica's School is compliant with:

- The minimum standards and other requirements for school registration and school boarding premises (if applicable) as specified in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic).
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2023 school year under the Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth) and the Australian Education Regulations 2023 (Cth).
- The Child Safe Standards as prescribed in Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises.

Attested on 10 May 2024

About this report

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

Governing Authority Report

The 2023 Catholic Education Week theme “Let the Words You Speak Always Be Full of Grace” reminds us of Pope Francis’s call to be a synodal Church in which our understanding of others and respect for diversity is shaped by respectful dialogue borne from deep listening.

Catholic Education Sandhurst continues to be committed to providing contemporary and innovative learning environments that value diversity and promote care, respect and co-operation. In 2023 we launched the CES Ltd Strategic Plan 2023-2027 which sets out directions and priorities that will guide the way in which our Catholic schools pursue excellence in fostering the development of each person in all the dimensions of human existence: intellectual, spiritual, emotional, bodily, relational, environmental and cultural.

Schools have begun the process of developing School Improvement Plans aligning their local strategic planning to the CES Strategic Plan, under the direction of Principal Consultants and in response to schoolbased review findings.

Our governance structure continues to mature, with both CES Ltd and SCECEC Ltd committed to ensuring the highest quality student outcomes in a safe and nurturing environment.

Our learning data has identified pockets of excellence in school communities across the diocese but also highlighted greater scope for improvement in the future. The development of the CES Ltd Catholic Learning and Teaching Framework will promote greater collaboration and focus on student learning growth.

The nation-wide shortage of teachers continues to impact all schools demanding new and innovative ways to attract and retain high quality and committed Catholic educators. Strategic initiatives will prioritize workforce placements that are sustainable and ongoing with particular attention given to our remote and smaller communities.

CES Ltd has a small number of schools with low enrolments and personnel and the Catholic Education Office works closely with leadership in these schools to ensure continued viability. An incentive scheme to attract and retain educators has been initiated and the CES Ltd Board has taken a robust interest in the way small schools are promoted through the CES Ltd Marketing Strategy.

I am extremely grateful for the commitment and professionalism that is clearly identified by the efforts throughout 2023 of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd - our schools and personnel in the Catholic Education Office. They continue to work tirelessly for the students and families in our schools, true bearers of the Mission to which they have been called.

PAUL DESMOND

Executive Director, Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited

Vision and Mission

Identity Statement

St Monica's is a Catholic school embracing faith and learning together, as a community, reflecting Christ.

Our School Vision

Celebrates Learning and Faith Together in the Light of Christ

- We believe in a Catholic community that fully develops the whole child and celebrates their faith journey with Jesus.
- We believe that the community, families, teachers and students are partners in the learning process challenging each other to grow and be the best we can be.
- We acknowledge our founders who started our school and chose St Monica as our patroness enabling us to provide a Catholic education whose faith, compassion and love we seek to reflect.
- We are committed to promoting a curriculum that is diverse, relevant and meaningful to an ever-changing society.
- We are a welcoming school community that promotes self-worth and recognises the dignity and uniqueness of each individual.
- We are stewards of our environment who respect, care for and maintain the resources that God has provided us.

School Overview

St Monica's is situated in Kangaroo Flat, which is a suburb of the Victorian Regional town of Bendigo. The school celebrated its 150th year in Catholic Education in 2010. The first school, a building made of vertical slab walls and a bark roof was built for Dr Henry Backhaus in 1860.

The Mercy Sisters were requested to take over the running of the school in 1920 by Bishop McCarthy. The Mercy sisters continued with their dedicated service to the community of Saint Monica's until the end of 2002, when the first lay Principal was appointed.

The school is situated in High St. Kangaroo Flat, which is on the main highway going through Bendigo. The students who attend the school mainly come from Kangaroo Flat, Golden Square, Maiden Gully and outlying areas such as Lockwood.

The school's enrolment at the February Census was 304. There were 14 classes divided into 4 Units across the school- Prep, Junior, Middle and Senior. The school has an active School Advisory Council and Parent's and Friends Association.

School functions are well attended and there is a strong community spirit in the school. Before School Care is offered every morning, staffed by school staff. After School Care is offered every night at the school and is run by the YMCA.

Graduate Outcomes

At St Monica's Kangaroo Flat, we endeavour to educate students who:

- follow Christ in their care and respect for life, self, others and the environment
- are able to develop and sustain relationships with a sense of justice and empathy for others
- have the academic confidence to develop the skills and strategies to succeed in an ever-changing society
- follow their ideals with confidence and resilience

Principal's Report

In 2023, the school sought to continue the ongoing development of teachers through professional learning that was specific and targeted whole school improvement.

Staff were supported by school leaders to develop their own learning program and these were cross referenced with whole school goals and directions. We had one graduate Teacher progress to VIT Full Registration in 2023.

The Australian Council Educational Research (ACER) National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) was utilised through the school review and provided excellent feedback for future planning.

Our staff participated in the following initiatives as part of our school wide professional learning;

- Exploring Best Practice L&T strategies
- Establishing and embedding Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at St Monica's
- Reviewing our School Wide Positive Behaviour in Schools (SWPBS);
- Leading and Living our Catholic Identity

Thanks to following individuals and groups who have supported the ongoing opportunities for learning for all in our community:

- Fr Brian and Fr DJ for their wisdom and presence at masses and school events.
- The leadership team - Max Lamb, Belinda Christie, Cassie Polonowita, Colm Feeney, Tanya Balcke Angela Dickson-Flood for their tireless work in supporting the school.
- Our staff for their commitment to the children and families in our care.
- The School Advisory Council, Parents and Friends for their ongoing work of building the school community through community events

Schools cannot function without sharing the workload and I hope that all those who contributed to St Monica's in 2023 have also shared the joy that comes from participation knowing that all that we do benefits the children in our care.

Tim Edwards
Acting Principal

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To explicitly teach and deliberately integrate Catholic Social teachings across all areas of the school.
- To consistently live our Catholic identity through our daily actions and words.
- Provide a range of opportunities for students to connect with God/faith
- Strengthen our families' faith through involvement in school and parish community
- Deepen our understanding of St Monica's as a Catholic school in Kangaroo Flat in relation to the centrality of the Eucharist in our lives.
- Continue to develop an understanding of re contextualising our faith story in the modern world.
- Develop staff ability to plan using the new Source of Life units of work.

Achievements

In 2023 our focus was to build capacity and knowledge in the teaching of Religious Education.

We continued to develop our teachers' understanding of Enhancing Catholic School Identity (ECSI) and recontextualisation by inviting CES staff to facilitate professional learning that was specific to the planning model developed by the school outlining clear learning intentions, success criteria and assessment of skills and knowledge. Prior knowledge tasks were introduced to gauge students prior knowledge so that planning could meet the students at their point of need.

We continued to formulate a clear sacramental pathway for St Monica's students by delivering the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation. Time was allocated to implement the Sacramental program with clear learning intentions in order to keep focused on key learning. The planning day for sacraments gave teachers to explore their own sacramental understanding and to plan the formation night for parents and ceremony together supported by the Principal and the REL.

Teachers were supported to plan using the Shared Christian Praxis by CES staff and the RE Leader and time was allocated to professional learning around planning with the Source of Life documents.

Professional Learning was documented on TAP in order to document gain or maintain hours of learning towards accreditation.

Value Added

The following activities and programs occurred in 2023 to promote, celebrate and share our Catholic Identity:

- Caritas involvement- Project compassion, Pancake Night,
- School and parish masses, prayer and delivery of Source of Life.
- Sacraments celebrated were Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation for school students and parish members
- Mini Vinnies as a student outreach program
- Continuation of the Mercy in Action - family support
- Students attended mass in their classes each Friday on a schedule so that students were present at parish masses.

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Foster shared responsibility for all students
- Engage staff in current learning and teaching practices
- Encourage students to become responsible for their learning and goal setting
- Provide learning opportunities at the student's point of need.
- Improved understanding and usage of Feedback to raise achievement

Achievements

- Completion of whole school review using National School Improvement Tool (NSIT)
- Devices (3-6 chrome books and P-2 iPads) provided to all students to enable continuity of learning.
- Trial of UFLI implementation in some junior classrooms.
- Professional development was provided to all teaching staff on St Monica's learning and teaching philosophy.
- Additional intervention and extension groups were offered to students in areas of literacy, speech numeracy and social skills.
- Introduction of Fluency program in Years 3-6 to help students quickly and accurately recall mathematical facts, especially multiplicative thinking.
- The Plus Model in place for semester 1. This model provided additional support in P-2 to facilitate targeted teaching at the point of need. In 3-4 this model provided additional support to targeted teaching at the point of need and allow for peer observation and coaching opportunities for teachers.
- Speech work, under the guidance of our Speech Pathologist, has been extended to include multiple articulation and language groups.
- Continued implementation of a systematic early literacy program for a small group of students that focuses on explicitly teaching phonemic awareness. This is implemented based on the learning needs of the student and in coordination with the Literacy leader and Speech Pathologist.
- Personal learning plans were developed and maintained to assist with the monitoring and learning of children with learning difficulties.
- St Monica's has a whole school-testing schedule in place to coordinate valid data collection and responsible and timely reporting. We have immediate access to all relevant data using online data trackers.
- Continued commitment to a whole school moderation process for writing, with the introduction of a whole school writing prompt.
- Wide range of resources and materials as well as online apps continue to be used to engage and enhance student's learning with literacy and mathematics tasks.

- Continuation of a Holiday Reading Challenge to encourage reading over the school holidays.
- Promoted and participation in The Great Book Swap that supported the Indigenous Literacy Fund.
- Whole school celebration of Book Week with dress up and parades.
- 5/6 Camp and class excursions took place across the school linking to the curriculum
- Students participated in school choir and performance programs.
- School Production took place showcasing the talents of Grade 5/6 students.
- Students participated in a swimming program.
- Students participated in a comprehensive sports program facilitated by the Sports leader and specialist sport teacher. The included School Sports Victoria funding and access to expert facilitators. Students in 3-6 were involved in Cross country, athletics, tennis and all students participated in the school sports carnival and cross country.
- Reporting package implemented across the school with continual review. The reporting package includes a report assessing against the Victorian Curriculum, a journal of annotated work samples with a work and play checklist and teacher comment
- Defined handover and transition procedure that enables smooth year to year for students.

Student Learning Outcomes

Assessment data was completed per our assessment schedule in 2023. The data collected was analysed by school leaders and teachers to evaluate students progress and to inform future teaching and school priorities. Student progress is closely monitored throughout the year through the use of data charts and data trackers across the school.

NAPLAN band parameters were changed this year and as a result, trend analysis was not available.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	365	40%
	Year 5	475	55%
Numeracy	Year 3	396	60%
	Year 5	458	55%
Reading	Year 3	386	63%
	Year 5	484	76%
Spelling	Year 3	390	51%
	Year 5	463	58%
Writing	Year 3	391	65%
	Year 5	481	65%

*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2023 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

- To provide outreach to all members of the school community in times of challenge and adversity.
- Shared responsibility of staff for the guidance of all students.
- Create confident, caring and resilient learners.
- To consistently provide a Child Safe environment.

Achievements

Wellbeing actions that have been enacted in achieving goals in 2023:

- The behaviour support team to implement the safety plans and strategies introduced by Dan Petro in 2022.
- Safety Plans have continued to be updated, folders and hardcopies in all rooms.
- Team have worked with staff to develop new Safety Plans.
- In 2022 there was a total of 3 student safety plans.
- Peaceful Kids started with Wellbeing Officer and schedule for at risk kids identified by SWB team.
- Family Support Officer- running social skills groups and friendship groups, commenced in Term 4.
- SWPBS Focus – Whole school all year.
- Continuation of School Wellbeing officer and associated social groups.
- PD and training for new Family Support Officer and staff member.
- Investigated options for a whole school social emotional program. (Respectful relationships and /or The Resilience Project).
- RRRR – Is completed across the whole school; once a week in all classrooms.
- Development of action plan for Child Safe standards.
- Policy - Implementation of school and system wide policies directed by CES.
- Maintaining Child Safe Standards and regulations to ensure compliance.
- All Staff provided with a Child Safe Wellbeing resource that included all relevant policies and documentation.
- Student behaviour data continued to be tracked electronically and is accessible to all teaching staff via SIMON. This allows our school wide SWPBS focuses to be proactive and specific.
- SWPBS continued to be implemented by all staff across the school. This involves the presentation of awards for demonstrated Be Safe Be Friendly Be a Learner - the use of pebble rewards and regular explicit lessons around behavioural expectations.

- Mercy in action continued to operate through the gathering, storage and redistribution of food to members of the school community as required.
- Fresh Fruit Friday continues to be a success and is well implemented.
- Breakfast Club continues to run and is well utilised by our community.
- The school continues to provide before school care.
- Wellbeing for students and families, alongside providing parents and carers with information and skills to assist with children's resilience building was highlighted through the provision of external services
- The wellbeing team met to monitor attendance and follow up with family support.
- The Learning Diversity Leader liaised with external support agencies for the wellbeing of families.
- The Learning Diversity leader facilitated for teachers the NCCD process of identifying students in need, identifying the levels of intervention required and documentation required.

Value Added

- SWPBS whole school rewards continue to be effective in ensuring positive behaviour.
- Child safe standards shared with all staff.
- A renewed push on student attendance was begun with the 'Cool Cats' program continuing to operate.
- The school plans for, and has as a priority, the inclusion of all staff in professional learning.
- Staff and children have knowledge of the procedures to be followed in matters relating to safety and wellbeing.
- Students at Risk have been identified, their needs recognised and with the support of school staff and the services of the Catholic Education Office, Saint Monica's has put into place specific intervention based on those needs.
- Individual student safety plans are continuously developed and reviewed.
- The Wellbeing Officer has liaised with other wellbeing workers across the Diocese.
- The Wellbeing Officer has made regular contact with families in their own setting as required. This is in line with the schools salutogenic approach to wellbeing.
- Communication has been a priority through the publication of a comprehensive newsletter, text messages, the school website, and the use of the school app.
- Buddy families were provided for all new Foundation families starting school in 2023.
- Welcome BBQ's were held for Prep families and staff.
- Graduation Mass was held with the school community and Grade 6 children.
- Children participated by showing art work in the Mackillop Art Exhibition.
- Senior students attended the Festival of the Sacred.

Student Satisfaction

- Grade 6 students completed a Social-Emotional Wellbeing Survey (ACER) which provides a mean average overall score comparing our students with all students across all school participating in the survey. A standard deviation score is also provided which indicates the extent of variation in students' individual social-emotional wellbeing scores.
- Our Students - Mean 111.3
 - Std. Dev. 13.5
- All Schools - Mean 117.6
 - Std. Dev. 13.6

A higher mean score indicates that this particular student cohort on average enjoys a higher level of social-emotional wellbeing than student cohorts with a lower mean score.

Student Attendance

Attendance at Saint Monica's involves the classroom teachers marking attendance twice a day. The school administration officer follows up any unexplained absence with parents in the first instance. The administration officers monitor all attendance data has been entered into the Simon administration package.

Student non-attendance has been addressed through the promotion of the 'Cool Cats' program. Awards are presented to students who have shown improvement with their attendance. Children's attendances are monitored, and parents are contacted when there are concerns.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	92.8%
Y02	92.3%
Y03	91.5%
Y04	86.9%
Y05	91.8%
Y06	89.6%
Overall average attendance	90.8%

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To partner with the parent community in decision-making relating to student learning, Parish, and the school.
- To encourage students, staff and parents to learn and reflect upon effective leadership.
- Collaboratively develop whole-school approaches to teaching that include:
 - the explicit and agreed position on the research-based teaching practices that need to be evident in every classroom, every day
 - professional learning to support school leaders and teachers in their understanding and implementation of effective teaching methods
 - processes to monitor and build the consistency of agreed practices.

Achievements

The Leadership Team continued to work together and grow in role clarity so that the community will benefit. The CES led School Review utilised the ACER National School Improvement Tool (NSIT). St Monica's was affirmed for the following;

- The school-wide belief and high expectation that every student can learn and experience success are clearly conveyed to students, parents, and the community.
- The work of the leadership team in analysing and using school longitudinal data to inform improvement activities.
- Beginning the path to clarity about data in the document Assessment and Reporting Package 2023.
- Teacher confidence in the implementation of their pre- testing and post-testing to inform their curriculum and lesson planning.
- The emphasis on growing and nurturing the school's Catholic identity and Catholic social teachings.
- The high levels of familiarity evident in the whole-school community with the three key behavioural expectations.

- The high levels of allocation of resourcing across the school to enhance and ensure that student learning and wellbeing needs are met effectively.
- Employing a speech pathologist to conduct assessments and build the capabilities of staff and their capacity to implement intervention programs.
- The well-resourced library that is a highly valued centre for learning in the school.
- The bright, vibrant, modern, and inviting classroom spaces that foster flexible arrangements and encourage teachers to explore innovative pedagogies.
- The emerging culture of collaboration that is growing through the teachers' weekly team planning sessions.
- The level of appreciation by teachers for the work of learning support officers and the valuable contribution they make to school culture.
- The active role played by the school Parents and Friends Group in supporting school events and fundraising.
- The impact of the Mini Monica's Story Time in engaging parents and children in early childhood literacy and in promoting enrolments and transition.

Further items for recognition include:

- The positive role that the School Advisory Council and P&F play in the school.
- The Oval and play space precinct development
- The school leadership team participated in networks run by CES- Principal, DP, Learning diversity, Students wellbeing, RE, Numeracy as well as liaising with key staff
- Staff worked with Fr Brian and Fr DJ to build on Parish connection.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023	
<p>In 2023 staff across the school participated in a range of professional learning opportunities provided by CES and other providers, as well as sharing their inhouse expertise through staff meetings and planning sessions. Some training was to meet compliance expectations and professional learning was provided to build teacher skill and knowledge and administration staff skills and knowledge including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Budget workshops • AFS & FBT workshops • Emergency Management • Child Safe Training • Engaging Volunteer Workshop • CPR & Anaphylaxis Training • NCCD training <p>Various other RE, Learning & Teaching and Wellbeing PL opportunities occurred and are outlined in those sections of this report.</p>	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	40
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$435.00

Teacher Satisfaction

Staff feedback regarding areas of commendation at St Monica's:

- Diversity
- Intervention and extension of students
- Welcoming community - Inviting and friendly
- Students and families - supportive and engaged
- Committed and dedicated staff
- Continual professional practice
- Parent engagement very strong
- Hardworking colleagues
- Modelling, fantastic resources and facilities
- Infrastructure good
- Strong culture, students and staff diversity
- Assessment tracking
- Speech and Language support onsite
- Hard working passionate staff

Areas for attention:

- Collective and consistent practices that are school wide
- ATSI awareness
- L&T Policy and Practice
- Staff Efficacy
- Staff collaboration and support through and across the school.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	8.8%
Graduate	8.8%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	50.0%
Advanced Diploma	14.7%
No Qualifications Listed	17.6%

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	3
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	40
Teaching Staff (FTE)	30.2
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	25
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	29.3
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To provide outreach to all members of the school community in times of challenge and adversity.
- Through community partnerships, an inclusive environment will be promoted
- Build a culture of stewardship grounded in the principle of co-responsibility

Achievements

In 2023 we continued to resource a Wellbeing Office, however staff retention throughout the year did impact the consistency of this role. Our Wellbeing Officer engaged and supported our community by running the following initiatives:

- Implemented our Breakfast Club.
- Supported families through Mercy in Action.
- Supported staff, students and families around the implementation of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) program.
- Implemented resilience programs.
- Attended student Camps and excursions.
- St Monica's Learning Diversity Leader liaised with external welfare providers and coordinated school based referrals.
- St Monica's offered out of hours parent information sessions.
- In 2023 our Friday morning run club continued for family members.
- St Monica's contributed on a regular basis to the community newsletter "Flat Matters".
- St Monica's parents organised soft plastic collections and bread tag collections.

Parent Satisfaction

Feedback from the School Advisory Council consultation:

Established Strengths

- The school is an inclusive environment for all students and families.
- The school has a high level of engagement amongst staff and students.
- The school actively engages in external community partnerships to promote the school's involvement with the broader community of Kangaroo Flat.

Areas For Future Growth & Development

- Providing opportunities to invite Parishioners into the school and involving them in what we do.
- Look outside the box to establish programs that set the students up for success in their future employment fields.
- Developing school wide consistent expectations for student learning and behaviours.

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.smkangarooflat.catholic.edu.au