

2024

Annual Report to the School Community



St Monica's School

91 High Street, KANGAROO FLAT 3555

Principal: Matthew Knight

Web: www.smkangarooflat.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 204, E Number: E3004

Principal's Attestation

I, Matthew Knight, 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 23 Mar 2025

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 Catholic Education Week theme for 2024, “Behold I Make all Things New,” invited us to reimagine possibilities to enliven our ministry in Catholic education in innovative and creative ways. The theme challenged us to ensure our educational enterprises were clearly focussed on every student, every teacher, every school, every day.

In 2024, the recognition that Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (CESL) is a multi-school system found expression in our commitment to streamlined governance responsibilities and enhanced support for our learning centres. This approach allows for unified policies, consistent standards, and centralised support, while still catering to the unique needs of each individual learning centre.

To align the work of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd with the CESL Strategic Plan 2023-2027, three “Guiding Lights” have been identified that will shape the work of the organization for the next three years:

- **Authentically Sandhurst Catholic Education**
Recognizing our rich diocesan relationships and commitment to spiritual formation, Sandhurst Catholic Education is living the missionary call to respond to the needs of our young people and our world with an ongoing and Gospel infused process of encounter, deep listening, discernment and courageous action.
- **Outstanding Learner Growth**
Together, across the system, we will invest in educational and allied staff capabilities so that irrespective of personal circumstances, every young person in every school will have access to an equitable, sound, engaging and responsive learning program.
- **Solidarity and Subsidiarity**
Through our commitment to solidarity, in each of our learning centres, our young people have the same opportunity to flourish and grow. Our collective strength will be used for the benefit and growth of all parts of the organisation.

At the same time, subsidiarity allows entities to bloom and thrive under clear parameters, knowing in which circumstances decisions are to be made at the lowest level possible, or the highest level necessary.

In line with these three Guiding Lights and the recognition that CESL is both an evangelizing and educative entity, 2024 saw the groundwork established for Magnify Sandhurst, a transformative learning and teaching program to be rolled out to our 51 Catholic schools across the Sandhurst Diocese. This new learning and teaching program aims to significantly

enhance the learning experience for students and provide teachers with the tools they need to deliver an evidence-based curriculum that boosts student outcomes.

With the support of world-class educational partners such as Steplab, Knowledge Society, MultiLit, and Ochre Education, Magnify Sandhurst is an investment in the future of every child in all 51 schools. With the mantra, 'Every student, every teacher, every school, every day', the program is designed to create a learning environment that challenges and supports students, helping them reach their full potential.

I am extremely grateful for the commitment and professionalism that is clearly identified by the efforts throughout 2024 of our school staff and Catholic Education Sandhurst Office personnel; they continue to work tirelessly for the students and families in our schools and are true bearers of the Mission to which they have been called.

Kate Fogarty

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 2024, 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.

The Australian Council Educational Research (ACER) National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) was utilised through the school review and in 2024 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 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 2024 have also shared the joy that comes from participation knowing that all that we do benefits the children in our care.

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 2024 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 Catholic Education Sandhurst (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 offering 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 Religious Education Leader (REL) 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

- Caritas involvement- Project compassion, Shrove Tuesday (Pancake) Morning,

- 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

Throughout 2024, staff engaged in targeted professional learning to support the implementation of the revised Victorian Curriculum 2.0 framework. These sessions, supported by Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), dedicated planning time, and Pupil Free Days, allowed teachers to explore the changes and collaboratively develop a Whole School Overview, which guided effective delivery in classrooms.

In Semester 2, staff also engaged with **Magnify Sandhurst**, a system-wide initiative providing aligned resources and frameworks to support consistent and high-quality mathematics teaching across the diocese, implemented in 2025.

- 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.
- 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.
- Throughout 2024, staff participated in a range of professional development programs to build capacity and align with strategic school and diocesan priorities. These included:
 - Initialit: Early years staff completed training to strengthen foundational literacy instruction.
 - Ochre Education: Staff accessed high-quality instructional resources to support consistent, knowledge-rich curriculum delivery.
 - Knowledge Society: Professional learning focused on structured literacy practices and enhancing content knowledge across curriculum areas.

- StepLab: Teachers engaged in instructional coaching and feedback cycles to refine and improve teaching practice.
- Revised Source of Life Curriculum: Staff began professional development in preparation for the implementation of the updated Religious Education curriculum, deepening understanding of Catholic Identity and contemporary theology.

Student Learning Outcomes

Assessment data was completed per our assessment schedule in 2024. 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	380	39%
	Year 5	473	66%
Numeracy	Year 3	382	50%
	Year 5	467	63%
Reading	Year 3	394	70%
	Year 5	463	63%
Spelling	Year 3	391	55%
	Year 5	468	66%
Writing	Year 3	397	77%
	Year 5	487	72%

*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

- 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 2024:

- 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. The team has worked with staff to develop new Safety Plans.
- In 2024 there was a total of 4 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.

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, St. 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 2024. Welcome BBQ's were held for Prep families and staff. Graduation Mass was held with the school community and Grade 6 children.

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 108.3 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 St. 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	92.1
Y02	93.1
Y03	92.9
Y04	92.5
Y05	86.9
Y06	90.1
Overall average attendance	91.2

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 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 2024
- Teacher confidence in the implementation of their pre- testing and post-testing to inform their curriculum and lesson planning.
- Employing a speech pathologist to conduct assessments and build the capabilities of staff and their capacity to implement intervention programs.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024	
<p>In 2024 staff across the school participated in a range of professional learning opportunities provided by CES and other providers, as well as sharing their in-house expertise through staff meetings and planning sessions.</p> <p>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 • Various other RE, Learning & Teaching and Wellbeing PL opportunities occurred and are outlined in those sections of this report. 	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024	40
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$337.50

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
Masters	3
Graduate	5
Graduate Certificate	3
Bachelor Degree	17
Advanced Diploma	4
No Qualifications Listed	9

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	5
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	35
Teaching Staff (FTE)	26.31
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	16.25
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	26
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 2024 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 2024 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