



# 2024

## Annual Report to the School Community



### St Francis' School

Chapel Street, NATHALIA 3638

Principal: Matthew Carver

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

Registration: 1823, E Number: E3051

---

## Principal's Attestation

---

I, Matthew Carver, attest that St Francis' 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 26 Mar 2025

---

## About this report

---

St Francis' 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

---

### **Our Identity:**

St Francis' school is a welcoming community striving to live the Franciscan tradition of Peace and Joy.

### **Our Vision:**

St Francis' Nathalia strives to:

- Provide a positive learning environment with a commitment to being safe, responsible and caring learners
- Build a community with a sense of responsibility to create a sustainable future for God's world.
- Build an inclusive community that fosters respectful relationships for all.
- Build and nurture a stimulating learning environment where all are supported in reaching their full potential.

---

## School Overview

---

St. Francis School in the Nathalia area offers a vibrant, student-centred educational approach. Established in 1961 by the Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood, our school embodies Franciscan values such as peace, joy, justice, integrity, and respect for all creation. Our mission prioritises the holistic development of students—intellectual, spiritual, social, physical, and emotional—fostering an environment conducive to learning, nurturing, and empowering young individuals to live out the Catholic faith inspired by Jesus Christ.

Dedicated to providing exemplary educational experiences, St. Francis' school embraces the diverse gifts and talents of our students while addressing their varied developmental needs. We are committed to:

- Setting high expectations that encourage learning and responsibility
- Tailoring learning experiences to honour each individual's uniqueness and strengths
- Recognising the innate and ongoing capacity for learning within every person
- Ensuring that learning is meaningful, purposeful, and applicable to daily life

Crucially, we prioritise fostering close relationships among students, teachers, parents, and the parish community. As a Catholic school, we take pride in our rich heritage and faith traditions.

---

## Principal's Report

---

The 2024 school year at St. Francis has been one of reflection, growth, and resilience. This year, we have celebrated numerous achievements, but it was also a time of deep sadness with the passing of our much-loved teacher and colleague, Veronica Williams, in Term 1. Veronica's kindness, dedication, and passion for teaching left an indelible mark on our community. Her loss was profoundly felt by all, yet her legacy of care, compassion, and commitment to the students continues to inspire us. We remain deeply grateful for the strength and unity that our school community showed during this difficult time.

Amid these challenges, we focused on ensuring that our learning environment remained positive, supportive, and inclusive. The PBIS (Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports) framework continued to provide clarity and structure, helping students feel safe, valued, and empowered to engage in their learning journeys. We remained committed to fostering a culture of respect, responsibility, and achievement throughout the year.

A significant change this year was the appointment of Rosina Gemmill as Deputy Principal. Rosina has been a valuable addition to our leadership team, and her role has been essential in supporting both students and staff. Alongside Rosina, we also welcomed Natasha Boase as Administration Officer. Natasha's role in supporting the day-to-day operations of the school has ensured the smooth functioning of the administrative systems, allowing staff to focus on delivering quality education to our students. Additionally, towards the end of Term 4, Matt Knight was successful in obtaining a new principalship role at St Monica's Kangaroo Flat and Matt Carver was named Executive Principal for both St Francis Primary and St Mary of the Angels College Nathalia.

During the 2024 school year, we completed the VRQA and Catholic Identity Reviews.

In line with the priorities identified in the 2023 National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) Review, we focused on key areas for improvement in teaching and learning:

- Developing a coherent, school-wide approach to curriculum delivery, ensuring consistency and clarity across all year levels.
- Building expert teaching teams through collaboration, shared professional development, and reflective practice.
- Using data-informed practices to drive student improvement and cater to individual learning needs.

Wellbeing remained a central focus in 2024. Through programs like Respectful Relationships and social-emotional learning, students gained tools to navigate challenges, build positive relationships, and manage emotions. Year 6 students took on leadership roles, guiding

assemblies, supporting events, and mentoring younger students, strengthening our school community.

We also implemented weekly PIVOT wellbeing surveys to monitor students' emotional and social health. These surveys provided valuable insights, helping us refine wellbeing initiatives and ensure every student's voice was heard and supported.

Throughout the year, our students were actively engaged in a wide range of extracurricular activities, including Book Week, sporting events, National Reconciliation Week, and the Jump Start Foundation transition program. These events fostered a sense of belonging and school spirit, contributing to the vibrant atmosphere at St. Francis.

As Matt Knight concluded his time as principal, he wanted to express his deepest gratitude to our entire community—students, staff, and families. Your unwavering support and commitment have been integral to the success of this year. We are confident that St. Francis is on a strong path, grounded in faith, guided by our values, and ready to continue its journey toward a bright future.

---

## Catholic Identity and Mission

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Develop Theological Understanding of staff through professional learning & staff meetings
- Work in partnership with Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd (CESL) Religious Education teams to develop units of work & assessment pieces.

### Achievements

Our Catholic identity remained at the heart of everything we do. Throughout the year, we continued to build upon our strong relationship with Fr. Jophin Joy, St. Mary's Parish Priest, and our collaboration with St. Mary of the Angels College. Together, we celebrated liturgical events, prayer services, and Masses, enriching the spiritual lives of our students and staff. The Catholic Identity Review, completed in Term 2, affirmed the strength of our spiritual culture while also identifying opportunities to integrate Catholic teachings more deeply across our curriculum.

- Build upon staff professional knowledge of curriculum by working with CESL RE Team during planning times.
- Delivery of the Sacramental Programs (8 Children) - Reconciliation, First Community and Confirmation in collaboration with St Mary's Parish and Bishop Shane.
- Student-led liturgical events and special commemorations, including ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, and Advent.
- Integration of Catholic traditions into daily school life through prayer, ritual, and the use of religious symbols.
- Strengthened connection between school leadership and parish council to enhance Catholic identity.
- Completed the Catholic Identity Review

### Value Added

- Active involvement in parish council meetings.
- School-wide participation in St Vincent De Paul Appeals and Caritas initiatives during Lent and Christmas.
- Commitment to National Reconciliation Week, including whole-school liturgies, and student led activities.
- Daily Acknowledgement of Country and flag raising to reflect cultural awareness and respect led by students.

---

## Learning and Teaching

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Foster data-driven decision-making, monitoring, and differentiation.
- Support teacher reflection, collective efficacy, and learning from one another.
- Promote a guaranteed and viable curriculum, vertically aligned and inclusive.

### 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. Magnify Sandhurst will be implemented in 2025.

MiniLit and MacqLit Literacy Interventions:

The school continued its commitment to literacy intervention in 2024 through the delivery of MiniLit for selected students requiring additional support. Positive student growth was observed, and the program will continue in 2025. In addition, MacqLit was implemented to support senior students, providing structured, targeted literacy intervention, with encouraging early outcomes.

Staff Professional Learning 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.

These learning opportunities played a vital role in fostering a culture of continuous improvement and enhancing teaching and learning outcomes across the school.

Achievements included:

- Staff professional learning in Victorian Curriculum 2.0, including planning and creation of a whole-school Numeracy Overview.
- Continued implementation of MiniLit and MacqLit as literacy interventions with demonstrated student growth.
- Launch of collaborative Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) focused on research-based pedagogy (Rosenshine's Principles).
- Staff Professional Development for the introduction of Magnify Sandhurst in 2025.
- Implementation of a school-wide data plan to guide differentiated instruction and assessment practices.
- Data literacy training to improve use of student achievement data in planning and instruction.
- Use of PIVOT surveys to capture student voice on teaching effectiveness and classroom experiences.
- School-wide moderation of student writing and early development of a scope and sequence for writing instruction.

## Student Learning Outcomes

The 2024 school performance data is made up from a small Year Three cohort (17 students) and small Year Five cohort (18 students). VCAA states caution should be used when drawing conclusions from data, particularly with small groups of students (i.e less than 10).

77% of Year Three students met the 2024 NAPLAN Proficient standard for Writing, with 77% in the Strong band or Exceeding band of the assessment. 63% of Year Three students were at or above the Strong band in Spelling and over 55% of students Proficient in Reading and Numeracy. Grammar and Punctuation will be a focus area in 2025 for these students.

The Year Five data shows fairly consistent NAPLAN results in the Numeracy and Reading assessment areas with 50% of students in the Strong or Exceeding bands (Proficient), and 67% of students in the Strong or Exceeding bands for Writing. Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation will be a focus area in 2025 for these students.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards					
	2024 (current year)			2-Year Average	
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient	Mean Scale score	
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	364	38%	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y3.Grammar]	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y3.Grammar]
	Year 5	443	44%	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y5.Grammar]	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y5.Grammar]
Numeracy	Year 3	395	56%	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y3.Numeracy]	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y3.Numeracy]
	Year 5	446	53%	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y5.Numeracy]	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y5.Numeracy]
Reading	Year 3	365	59%	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y3.Reading]	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y3.Reading]
	Year 5	456	50%	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y5.Reading]	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y5.Reading]
Spelling	Year 3	372	63%	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y3.Spelling]	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y3.Spelling]
	Year 5	424	39%	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y5.Spelling]	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y5.Spelling]
Writing	Year 3	406	77%	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y3.Writing]	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y3.Writing]
	Year 5	462	67%	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y5.Writing]	[ASR_Naplan.meanscalescore_2yavg.Y5.Writing]

\*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

- Continue to develop the Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHiPs) initiative with Goulburn Valley schools.
- MHiPs training (VC and in person) for school lead & MHiPS school implementation plan
- PBIS Framework is embedded and communicated to the school community.

### Achievements

St Francis Primary had a dedicated Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHiPS) Leader to guide and implement wellbeing strategies across the school. Regular student wellbeing check-ins were conducted through PIVOT, with data carefully analysed by the wellbeing team to ensure timely and targeted interventions. Whole-school support was provided by our CARE Team and Wellbeing Officer through a combination of one-on-one and group sessions. In addition, Kids Helpline resources and sessions are integrated throughout the school year to further strengthen our wellbeing initiatives.

### Value Added

- Embedding of the PBIS Framework, promoting consistent behavioural expectations.
- Ongoing staff PD in Respectful Relationships and resilience education.
- Attendance strategies involving tracking via SIMON and reinforcement through newsletters and assemblies.
- Improved student resilience, connectedness, and safety as shown in student surveys.
- Regular Kids Helpline sessions are provided to students to help them build their understanding of resilience and to raise awareness of the support networks available to them.

### Student Satisfaction

The PIVOT survey results for students indicate consistency across most elements when compared to 2023, particularly in the areas of social connections ("I have friends at school I trust"), safety ("I can be myself at school"), and resilience ("I keep trying even when my schoolwork is difficult"). The data also highlights that students feel they "know how they are supposed to behave in class," believe "this teacher thinks I can succeed in school," and feel "this teacher respects me for who I am." An area for further focus is the provision of more

frequent and varied feedback, as the results suggest students would like to “know how well I am doing in this class” on a more regular basis.

**Student Attendance**

Student non-attendance at school is monitored through SIMON and is followed up through automated SMS or phone contact made with parents to ensure that the student is able to return to school as promptly as possible, and that there are no serious impairments to them returning to school. First contact is completed by administrative staff, followed by the classroom teacher and further correspondence is made by the principal as needed.

Student attendance is consistently promoted at assembly and through the newsletter.

<b>Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level</b>	
Y01	91.5
Y02	91.9
Y03	91.7
Y04	89.7
Y05	88.2
Y06	93.7
Overall average attendance	91.1

---

## Leadership

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Review and develop School Improvement Plan documentation
- Complete VRQA Review School
- Complete Catholic Identity Review
- Budgeting reflects strategic directions and local improvement

### Achievements

Completing the VRQA (Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority) Review in Term 2 marked a significant achievement for the school. The successful outcome of this review underscores our ongoing commitment to upholding high standards in curriculum delivery, child safety, governance, and financial management. The positive results from the VRQA review confirmed that St. Francis is well-equipped to continue offering a high-quality educational experience while prioritising student safety and wellbeing.

Furthermore, we successfully completed the Catholic Identity Review within the following two weeks. This review reaffirmed our strong Catholic identity and provided valuable insights into areas for future growth and development.

A key challenge during this period was the change in leadership late in Term 4, with Matt Knight taking on a new role at St. Monica's Kangaroo Flat, and Matt Carver stepping in as acting Executive Principal for both St. Francis Primary and St. Mary of the Angels College. Despite these transitions, both principals worked closely together to ensure a smooth handover, allowing the school to continue operating with minimal disruption. In addition, the staff rallied together to support the leadership team and maintain a consistent focus on student success.

Achievements in 2024 included:

- Successful transition for principal handover
- Re-establishment of a leadership team (Semester 2)
- Collaborative development of the 2024–2026 School Improvement Plan, aligned with CES Ltd priorities.
- Support for leadership development of staff and student leaders, including senior students' roles in school events.

Value was added through

- Use of PIVOT for feedback and planning, including weekly student check-ins.

- Participation in a variety of professional learning programs, including literacy interventions, child safety, and numeracy strategies.
- Leadership and resource management of finances to ensure a compliant budget.

<b>Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning</b>	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal &amp; Deputy Principal Meetings</li> <li>• R.E.C. Network Meetings</li> <li>• Child Safe Leader Training</li> <li>• MiniLit &amp; MacqLit Literacy Training (Interventions)</li> <li>• Learning Diversity Professional Development</li> <li>• Numeracy PD and ongoing PLCs throughout the year</li> <li>• Respectful Relationships Rights and Resilience updates</li> <li>• Wellbeing Leader network days</li> <li>• Little Learners Love Literacy PD</li> <li>• MHiPs Professional Learning</li> <li>• ZART Art PD</li> <li>• Magnify Specific Training</li> <li>• MS Software Training</li> <li>• First aid Training</li> </ul>	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024	11
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1319.70

### Teacher Satisfaction

There is a palpable sense of energy, enthusiasm, and pride among the staff at St. Francis School. Collaborating in such an environment fosters the development of effective teaching and learning methods. The findings from the Orima Survey highlight the strong sense of collegiality at St. Francis, increasing from 82% to 86% of respondents acknowledging the valuable relationship between the staff and leadership team, and 70% expressing satisfaction with the positive school climate. Moreover, staff safety, psychological well-being, and collective efficacy were rated highly, with 71% of staff members identifying these as areas of strength. The survey results suggest that further exploration into methods for providing effective and timely feedback would be welcomed by staff. Additionally, there is a call to

continue integrating the behaviour management framework throughout the school. Furthermore, there's an opportunity to explore avenues for professional development for Learning Support Officers

<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	
Doctorate	0
Masters	0
Graduate	1
Graduate Certificate	0
Bachelor Degree	8
Advanced Diploma	2
No Qualifications Listed	5

<b>Staff Composition</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	3
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	12
Teaching Staff (FTE)	9.8
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	7
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	5.68
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

---

## Community Engagement

---

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Embedding teacher practices based P.B.I.S Framework
- Provide Parent and Student Cyber Safety Learning Opportunities
- Monitor and promote student attendance at assembly/newsletters and in classrooms
- Maintain St Francis CARE team initiatives
- Introduce MHiPs Leader role and outcomes

### Achievements

This year, the Pastoral Wellbeing Team dedicated considerable effort to supporting the overall wellbeing of our school community. We were excited to welcome Darren Ogier as the MHiPs Leader, joining Lorraine Bain (Wellbeing Officer) and Malinda Rankin (Wellbeing Leader) in strengthening our support system.

The team worked closely with families in a variety of ways, addressing diverse needs through initiatives led by the CARE team, the school wellbeing team, and collaborations with local community organisations. Lorraine played a key role in facilitating sessions with Kids Helpline, Ditto Bravehearts, Ride to School, as well as Harmony and Epilepsy awareness days, focusing on the mental wellbeing of all members of the community.

In addition, the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden (SAKG) Program offered opportunities for family involvement by inviting volunteers to assist with student learning in both the garden and kitchen settings. These hands-on activities aimed to teach valuable life skills related to cooking and healthy eating.

### Parent Satisfaction

Unfortunately, we were unable to gather data from the Orima Survey parent survey due to a lack of responses. However, through both formal and informal feedback from parents, as well as insights from members of our School Advisory Council, it is clear that families highly value the positive school climate at St. Francis. In particular, parents appreciate the approachability of staff, the welcoming environment, and the respect that St. Francis staff show towards their children.

Looking ahead, continuing to explore various ways to provide timely feedback to parents regarding their child's progress and finding effective methods to encourage greater parent engagement in their child's learning remain important areas for future 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](http://www.acnc.gov.au).

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