



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

2024

Annual Report to the School Community



St Thomas More's School

313 Canadian Bay Road, MOUNT ELIZA 3930

Principal: Martine Verhagen

Web: www.stmmtlza.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 1822, E Number: E1321

Principal's Attestation

I, Martine Verhagen, attest that St Thomas More'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 21 Mar 2025

About this report

St Thomas More'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

When Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) launched our inaugural strategic plan MACS 2030: Forming Lives to Enrich the World just over a year ago, I spoke about the need for our whole organisation to reflect on the biggest challenges that confront us, and to work at speed to find practical, ambitious, student-centred solutions.

As a relatively new governing authority, 2023 set us on the path to achieving our first goals, as we focussed our efforts on building strong foundations for success. The four pillars of MACS2030 – Inspired by Faith; Flourishing Learners; Enabled Leaders; and Enriched Communities - serve to guide our work on how we achieve our strategic intent.

When we surveyed our teachers in late 2022, over 80 per cent told us that they want access to quality teaching and assessment resources. So in January 2023, we secured a system-wide licence for MACS primary and secondary schools to access the Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) assessment suite. The inclusion of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Survey allows schools to monitor the wellbeing of their students and target resourcing to specific areas of need. Together, these tools provide a coherent and systematic approach to student assessment.

In partnership with Ochre Education, we began work on F-6 Mathematics curriculum resources, being developed in a phased approach over three years, and delivered the first tranche for F-2. A key consideration in developing the materials is ensuring teachers retain autonomy to tailor curriculum implementation to meet the individual and local needs of students.

This is an exciting development for our MACS community, clearly demonstrating the commitment we all share to delivering the best possible education opportunities for our 120,000 students and supporting our 10,000 classroom teachers to be the very best that they can be.

Archbishop Peter commissioned a comprehensive review of Religious Education curriculum, the first in over a decade. It offers us some challenges, but fundamentally is a hope-filled report that invites a path of ongoing work to develop a new RE curriculum for all Catholic schools. We continued Working Together in Mission with Parish Priests throughout the Archdiocese, including through regular roundtable discussions.

Across greater Melbourne, one in five students attend a Catholic school and 2023 saw steady growth in enrolments across our system, demonstrating the value families place on a Catholic education and the high quality, holistic education MACS schools provide.

As a system of schools, we can be better together, reducing the administrative load on our schools and freeing our teachers and principals to focus on what they do best.

I would like to pay tribute to our MACS school and office colleagues who have worked so hard to achieve our goals. We look forward to further strengthening those partnerships as we work together to deliver an education that inspires young people to enrich the world.

Yours sincerely

Dr Edward Simons

Executive Director

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

Vision and Mission

Our Vision

We are a welcoming, inclusive community,
growing in faith, love and knowledge,
nurturing resilient, life-long learners,
empowered to make a difference.

Our Mission

We are a welcoming, inclusive community...

At STM we believe everything we do is guided by our Catholic faith. We are committed to providing a safe, supportive and caring environment for all in our community, where each individual is known, valued and respected.

Growing in faith, love and knowledge...

As a Catholic school, our beliefs and traditions are central to all that we do. We strive to develop a faith filled community of people who are empowered to serve others, ensuring that our Catholic values guide our actions, decisions and interactions.

Nurturing resilient, lifelong learners...

The dedicated staff at St Thomas More are committed to providing every student in our care with an exemplary education. Staff work collaboratively, using student data and the latest educational research, to plan high quality learning experiences that meet the needs of each individual and ensure they reach their full potential.

Empowered to make a difference...

At St Thomas More, education is a holistic journey shaping not just minds but also character, resilience, and adaptability. Through rich inquiry learning, students gain a deeper understanding of the world, empowering them as lifelong learners, critical thinkers, and responsible global citizens. Our Religious Education programs and social justice initiatives encourage students to embody Gospel values by caring for others and making a positive difference in the world around them.

School Overview

St Thomas More Primary School is a Catholic Parish Primary School located in Mt Eliza on the Mornington Peninsula. The school was established in 1981 and is an integral part of the St Thomas More Parish community. We recognise the strength of our vibrant community and are enriched by the partnerships between staff, parents, students and parish. We firmly believe that Catholic school communities are most effective when teachers, staff and parents work together to educate the whole child emotionally, academically, physically, socially and spiritually.

St Thomas More Primary School is set within a natural bushland setting which provides a uniquely beautiful learning environment for our students. School facilities include dedicated Prep, Junior, Middle and Senior learning areas where classrooms are spacious, bright and welcoming. Students at St Thomas More enjoy a dedicated STEM space, a well-stocked library, a multi-purpose area, a visual arts area and performing arts room. A state-of-the-art gymnasium is used for PE, school assemblies and other special events. Students are blessed with expansive grounds that provide excellent spaces for outdoor learning, fitness and play.

In 2024, there were 285 students enrolled at St Thomas More Primary School. Students were organised into thirteen classes from Prep to Year 6 with an average class size of twenty-two. Students were supported by a dedicated and caring staff totalling thirty-four, with twenty-two teaching staff and twelve non-teaching staff.

In addition to our Principal and Deputy Principal, positions of leadership on staff included leaders of Religious Education, Learning and Teaching, Student Wellbeing and Learning Diversity. These leaders actively supported our teaching staff to provide rich, contemporary learning and teaching programs based on current educational research and targeted to meet individual student needs.

At St Thomas More Primary School we strive to provide every student with a high quality education in a safe and supportive learning environment. Through our evidence-based learning and teaching programs students are encouraged to become resilient and independent learners who question, reflect, take risks, critique, analyse and act. Teaching programs are personalised to meet the needs of individual students and are based on the rigorous and consistent use of student data to ensure maximum growth for every student.

At St Thomas More we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people entrusted in our care as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. We believe this is a shared responsibility and all staff at our school are committed to creating a nurturing and supportive environment where every student feels valued, respected and safe.

Principal's Report

It was a pleasure to once again lead the St Thomas More Primary School community as Principal in 2024.

St Thomas More Primary School is widely recognised for its strong Catholic ethos and values, its nurturing and inclusive culture, and its unwavering focus on student wellbeing and the education of the whole child. As a mid-sized school, one of our greatest strengths is that every student is known and valued as an individual. This deep sense of connection fosters belonging and pride, and is one of the key reasons why so many families choose St Thomas More for their children.

In 2024, the launch of the MACS Vision for Instruction marked a significant and exciting milestone for our school. Guided by this system-wide commitment to effective and consistent teaching practice, our Annual Action Plan focused firmly on Learning and Teaching, with an emphasis on embedding best practice - underpinned by the Science of Learning - into every classroom. Staff collaborated to ensure students were engaged, challenged, and supported. This focus on evidence-based teaching has already led to noticeable improvements in student engagement and a deeper understanding of key concepts across the school.

Throughout the year, our staff embraced a culture of reflection and continuous improvement. Through collaborative planning and participation in professional learning communities, teachers actively sought feedback and shared best practice. This collective commitment led to more consistent, high-quality instruction and strengthened a shared language and approach to teaching and learning across the school.

A true highlight of the year was our Senior School Production of Shrek Jr. Our Year 5 and 6 students captivated audiences with their talent, energy, and hard work. The production reflected not only their dedication, but also the creativity and commitment of the staff who supported them through every stage - from auditions to opening night. The collaboration, teamwork, and joy shown by the students were truly inspiring.

Students were also given opportunities to showcase their sporting and academic talents, participating in a range of events and competitions that celebrated their skills and achievements. A standout moment was the outstanding performance of our senior students at the Padua Academic Challenge Day, where they proudly represented our school and secured first place overall. Their success reflects their intellectual curiosity and the strength of the academic foundation we continue to build at St Thomas More.

The involvement of our parent community—through classroom support, excursions, social events, and active participation in school life—further enriched our strong culture of inclusion and partnership. The efforts of our Parents' Association were especially appreciated, with

community events like the STM Disco, Colour Fun Run, and Buddy Family Night bringing families together in celebration and connection.

As we reflect on the achievements of the past year, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated staff, supportive families, and enthusiastic students. Your partnership, energy, and belief in the mission of St Thomas More Primary School continue to inspire all that we do. Together, we have created a vibrant learning community where every child is supported to thrive - academically, socially, and emotionally.

I look forward to another year of working together to nurture the ongoing growth, learning, and wellbeing of every child at St Thomas More, as we continue to shape confident, compassionate learners grounded in faith and service.

Martine Verhagen

Principal

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal

To support students to strengthen their Catholic identity, making sense of their lives in today's world and responding in encounter with Catholic tradition and the school's faith community.

Intended Outcome

That students will make stronger connections between the school's Catholic culture and their own Catholic identity, their learning and their lives.

Achievements

At St Thomas More Primary School, we remain deeply committed to Catholic Social Teaching and the belief that education should inspire students to make a positive impact in the world. Throughout 2024, our school continued to embed social justice initiatives into both the Religious Education and Inquiry curriculum, empowering students to engage with real-world issues through the lens of faith.

A key part of this work involved supporting those in need beyond our immediate community. Our fundraising and awareness-raising efforts not only provided tangible support to others but also helped nurture empathy, compassion, and a sense of justice in our students. These initiatives were student-led, giving children the opportunity to take ownership and lead with purpose.

In 2024, the school continued its involvement in the Mini Vinnies Program, with Year 4 members of the Student Representative Council actively participating in this initiative of the St Vincent de Paul Society. The program empowered students to take on leadership roles within the school and broader community, fostering a strong sense of social responsibility and service. As part of their work, the Mini Vinnies group led awareness campaigns and inspired their peers to support important initiatives, including the Christmas Toy Appeal and the Vinnies Winter Appeal. A highlight of the year was the successful organisation of a Vintage Clothing Pop-Up Store, which raised funds and awareness for those experiencing hardship during the colder months.

Another meaningful addition to our social justice framework in 2024 was the school's continued participation in the FIRE Carrier Program. This initiative supported students in learning about and promoting First Nations culture and the importance of reconciliation. Throughout the year, new members from Year 5 joined the program and collaborated with

existing FIRE Carriers to raise awareness and foster understanding within the school community. Together, they were guided by the STM School covenant as they continued to promote reconciliation and ensure its values remained an active part of school life.

Throughout 2024, our commitment to nurturing the spiritual life of students was reflected in our rich program of liturgical celebrations. The school community gathered regularly for whole-school Masses and liturgies, including the Opening School Mass, the celebration of our patron saint's feast day, the Feast of the Assumption, and special liturgies for Grandparents' Day and the Advent season. With the support of our Parish Priest, these sacred gatherings deepened the connection between our Catholic identity and the everyday lives of our students and their families.

The Pedagogy of Encounter continued to underpin our approach to Religious Education throughout 2024, even as work began on the development of a new curriculum. Teachers remained committed to designing learning experiences that connected faith with students' lives, using inquiry and recontextualization to deepen understanding and encourage personal reflection. Our integrated Religious Education and Inquiry units were thoughtfully planned and assessed against the Religious Education Achievement Standards, enabling us to honour each student's growth—both spiritually and academically—as we prepared for future curriculum changes.

Sacramental preparation remained a significant focus in 2024, supporting students in deepening their faith through meaningful experiences. Our Year 3 students began their sacramental journey with preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where they explored the themes of forgiveness and healing, making thoughtful connections to broader ideas of reconciliation, including with Australia's First Nations peoples. Later in the year, they prepared for and received their First Eucharist, gaining a deeper understanding of its significance within the Catholic tradition.

Our Year 6 students received the Sacrament of Confirmation in a joyful and reverent ceremony celebrated by Bishop Tony Ireland. In the lead-up to the sacrament, students took part in a dedicated Retreat Day, which provided time for prayer, reflection, and connection. This day was made particularly memorable by the involvement of Gen Bryant and her team, who guided students through engaging and reflective activities focused on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Staff professional learning continued to be a priority in 2024, with a strong focus on enhancing the role of prayer in both personal and classroom contexts. Teachers engaged in professional development that offered practical strategies for creating rich, reflective prayer experiences that support students' spiritual development. A key element of this learning was a whole-day staff conference, which explored different forms of prayer and how these can be meaningfully integrated into daily classroom life. This opportunity deepened staff

understanding and confidence, enriching the way prayer is experienced across the school community.

As we look ahead to 2025, we remain committed to our mission of being a welcoming and inclusive community, where every student is supported in growing in faith, love, and knowledge. Our focus continues to be on nurturing resilient, lifelong learners who are empowered to make a difference in the world. Guided by Gospel values, we will build on the strong foundations of faith, service, and justice that define our school, ensuring every child feels a deep sense of purpose and belonging within our community.

Value Added

The school continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to social justice through a range of fundraising efforts and charitable initiatives. In 2024, students, staff, and families worked together to support various causes, including:

- Caritas Australia – Project Compassion Appeal during Lent
- St Vincent de Paul Society:
 - Christmas Toy Appeal
 - Hosting a Vinnies Winter Appeal – Vintage Clothing Pop-Up Store
- Local charities – Supporting causes through events such as the Footy Day Gold Coin Appeal

In 2024, students engaged in a variety of liturgical and sacramental celebrations that enriched their spiritual development and fostered a deeper connection to the Catholic faith. Highlights included:

- Whole-school Masses
- Sacramental programs, including Reconciliation and First Eucharist for Year 3 students and Confirmation for Year 6
- Confirmation Retreat Day led by Catholic musician and speaker Gen Bryant
- Stations of the Cross Reflection and Advent liturgies
- Prep "Prayers in Pyjamas" Evening

In 2024, the school introduced and continued a number of initiatives that enriched the learning and faith life of students and staff beyond the classroom. These included:

- Christmas Carols and Nativity Play
- Mini Vinnies Program – new students inducted
- FIRE Carrier Program – new students inducted
- Staff Retreat Day – Focused on the theme of Prayer
- Andrew Chinn School Visit and Concert

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goals

To improve student outcomes in numeracy & literacy

To deepen teacher understanding of evidence-based instructional practices.

Intended Outcome

That staff will have a shared understanding of evidence-based instructional practices grounded in the principles of the Science of Learning.

That Science of Learning principles will be embedded in Mathematics and Spelling instruction to support long-term retention of key concepts.

Achievements

In 2024, we focused on several key improvement strategies aimed at deepening teacher expertise and enhancing student outcomes in Mathematics, Spelling, and pedagogy grounded in Cognitive Science research.

Intensive Maths Support provided by MACS staff concluded early in 2024 with a professional learning day that focused on differentiation. Workshops offered practical examples of differentiated tasks aligned with current teaching units at each year level. Teacher understanding of effective differentiation in Mathematics was further enriched through professional learning in data analysis. Supported by Learning Leaders during weekly facilitated planning sessions, teachers collaboratively refined their approaches to data analysis and targeted instruction in Mathematics. The Victorian Mathematics Curriculum 2.0 and associated resources were embedded in planning, assessment, and reporting across all year levels.

In February 2024, MACS launched the new Vision for Instruction (VFI), offering a clear pedagogical direction for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Guided by the VFI, all staff engaged in professional learning to deepen their understanding of the Cognitive Science principles underpinning the VFI, with an initial focus on explicit instruction and retrieval practice.

Through Learning Sprints, teachers trialled and evaluated new teaching strategies, leading to visible shifts in classroom practice from Prep to Year 6. Resources informed by the Science of Learning supported this process, highlighting how the brain learns and retains information.

The Learning and Teaching team emphasised consistency in instructional approaches while acknowledging individual teaching styles.

As staff engaged with the VFI, structured content review was embedded into daily Spelling instruction. These sessions were designed using research-based strategies to maximise long-term retention. To support this, the Learning and Teaching team utilised MACS' Flourishing Learners documentation, professional learning, and Ochre Education resources to strengthen teacher expertise and support the implementation of evidence-informed classroom practices.

A continued priority in 2024 was ensuring that all learners—particularly those at risk and those requiring extension—were effectively supported. Students identified as being at risk of not achieving expected growth received targeted interventions through structured support programs, small group instruction, and adjustments within classroom practice. Learning Support Officers worked alongside teachers to implement Personalised Learning Plans and regularly monitor student progress.

Highly able students were provided with opportunities to engage in challenging learning through differentiated tasks, open-ended investigations, and enrichment programs. Planning was informed by data and guided by the Victorian Curriculum to ensure appropriate extension in core learning areas. Teacher collaboration during planning sessions allowed for the identification of students requiring enrichment, ensuring they were consistently engaged and extended in their learning.

Student Learning Outcomes

NAPLAN data for 2024 indicates strong performance by students at St Thomas More. Year 3 students achieved results above the state mean across all assessed areas, including Numeracy, Reading, Writing, Spelling, and Grammar and Punctuation. Year 5 students performed above the state mean in Numeracy and Writing, and achieved results close to the state mean in Reading, Spelling, and Grammar and Punctuation.

The Student Learning Team—comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal/Learning and Teaching Leader, and Learning Diversity Leader—played a key role in identifying and monitoring students at risk. Using a range of assessment tools, the team evaluated student progress and determined eligibility for targeted, evidence-based intervention programs. Tier 1, 2, and 3 supports were implemented to address students' individual learning needs and promote improved outcomes.

In 2024, a range of intervention programs were offered to support students in meeting expected standards. These included MultiLit programs, Spelling Mastery, Maths Mastery, and targeted Tier 2 interventions embedded within classroom practice. Additionally, a

Mathematics tutor worked with small focus groups of students from Years 1–6 to strengthen foundational number skills and build confidence in Numeracy.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	439	68%
	Year 5	496	63%
Numeracy	Year 3	431	72%
	Year 5	509	81%
Reading	Year 3	450	88%
	Year 5	495	85%
Spelling	Year 3	417	62%
	Year 5	475	63%
Writing	Year 3	462	94%
	Year 5	505	88%

*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

Goal

To embed comprehensive wellbeing practices that support students' mental, emotional, and social development, fostering a safe, inclusive, and nurturing school environment for all.

Intended Outcome

That every student feels valued, respected and empowered to thrive academically and personally.

Achievements

In 2024, student wellbeing remained a core priority and a key element of the educational philosophy at St Thomas More. Staff maintained a strong focus on fostering positive relationships and supporting the social and emotional development of every student. This emphasis created a safe, secure learning environment where students were empowered to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

At St Thomas More, we continued to believe that a smooth and supported transition at the beginning of the school year was essential for student success. To support this, classroom teachers received key wellbeing information before the year began, including insights into students' social and emotional needs, family circumstances, and effective support strategies. This allowed staff to address individual needs from day one.

During the first few weeks of Term One, all students participated in a whole-school unit called Learning to Learn, which explored our school values and learning dispositions. This unit helped students build strong relationships, develop positive learning habits, and establish a solid foundation for a successful year.

Classroom wellbeing programs focused on developing students' social, emotional and relationship skills. Weekly lessons, informed by wellbeing data, were supported by a range of high-quality, evidence-based resources, including The Resilience Project, Bounce Back, and Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships. A notable addition in 2024 was the Grow Your Mind Schools Program, which used a blended learning approach combining play-based, collaborative, and digital resources. Together, these programs promoted positive mental health and enhanced students' social-emotional learning and overall wellbeing.

Connection and inclusion were further fostered through whole-school assemblies, the Buddy System, and a variety of lunchtime clubs such as gardening, coding, yoga, dance, and badminton. These provided safe, engaging opportunities for students to connect with peers. Our Wellbeing Dog also continued to be a cherished presence and source of comfort throughout the school.

The school's dynamic student leadership program offered a wide range of opportunities across all year levels. School Captains and Vice Captains represented the school at community events, led assemblies, and played a central role in school life. The introduction of a new House System created additional leadership roles for senior students and strengthened cross-level connections. Remaining Year 6 students led in areas aligned with their interests, Year 5 students had the opportunity to participate in reconciliation initiatives through the FIRE Carriers program, and selected Year 4 students contributed to social justice projects via Mini Vinnies. Leadership was also fostered within all classrooms through the Green Team, Student Representative Council (SRC), and Japanese language leaders.

The School Camp program provided further opportunities for connection, learning, and resilience-building. Year 1/2 students participated in a Pre-Camp experience at the Enchanted Adventure Park, Year 3/4 students attended Mount Evelyn Adventure Camp, and Year 5/6 students explored life in the 1850s at Sovereign Hill. These experiences allowed students to connect in a relaxed, fun setting while facing new challenges and building confidence.

The Student Wellbeing Team - comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal, Student Wellbeing Leader, and Learning Diversity Leader - met regularly to address student wellbeing concerns and provide additional support to staff and students. Teachers followed established referral processes, and the team implemented, monitored, and evaluated tailored strategies for students needing further assistance. Social skills groups were facilitated by Learning Support Officers under the guidance of the Wellbeing Leader, while access to our qualified School Counsellor continued to provide vital support for students and their families.

Value Added

- Wellbeing lessons continued to be implemented weekly in all classrooms to further enhance student wellbeing
- Daily lunchtime clubs were run by teachers and Learning Support Officers to support social and emotional learning
- A Welcome Circle routine (from the Berry Street Education Model) was implemented in every classroom to provide students with intentional positive micro-moments of connection to begin each day
- Class Meetings were held regularly, enabling students to share successes and concerns, and problem-solve in a safe environment

- Our School Wellbeing Dog attended school twice weekly, making regular classroom visits and supporting children as needed
- The Student Representative Council (SRC) met regularly with the Deputy Principal and Wellbeing Leader to discuss issues relating to student wellbeing
- Student Wellbeing Leaders organised and ran lunchtime activities for younger students
- Whole school gatherings and events, including fortnightly Masses and assemblies, our school disco, Kaboom Sports incursion and our Colour Fun Run, promoted a strong sense of belonging to school
- School camps provided opportunities for students to build connections and develop resilience
- Students with high social/emotional needs were supported by our School Counsellor
- Student wellbeing tools were used to collect data throughout the year, which was analysed and acted upon to further enhance student wellbeing

Student Satisfaction

Data from the 2024 MACSSIS Student Survey reflected a strong and positive perception of the social and learning culture at St Thomas More. Students reported feeling known, valued, and supported within our school community. Notably, 75% of students indicated that the overall energy at school was positive and that they experienced a strong sense of belonging. Additionally, over 80% of students agreed that the adults in our school are supportive and know them well enough to recognise when something might be wrong - highlighting the strength of the relationships built between staff and students. Our continued emphasis on student voice and leadership was also clearly recognised, with 97% of students acknowledging the opportunities they have to contribute and lead within the school. These results affirm our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment for all learners.

Student Attendance

Attendance at St Thomas More's is closely tracked through an electronic system, with student attendance recorded twice daily. Students arriving late or leaving early must sign in or out at the office. To support student safety, an automated system notifies parents when their child is absent. Unexplained absences are followed up by administrative staff with a text message to parents on the same day.

Absence records are maintained in student files and reported in student reports. If a student's absenteeism becomes a concern, the school principal will contact parents, guardians, or carers directly for further discussion.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	95.1
Y02	93.0
Y03	92.4
Y04	91.8
Y05	93.3
Y06	91.7
Overall average attendance	92.9

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goals

To lead the implementation of the MACS Vision for Instruction, ensuring all staff are supported to deliver high-quality, evidence-based teaching that maximises student learning outcomes.

To develop a school-wide performance development culture committed to improving student learning.

Intended Outcomes

That staff will engage in targeted professional learning to deepen their understanding of high-impact teaching strategies and evidence-based instructional practices.

That regular Learning Walks will focus on identifying and celebrating evidence of the Vision for Instruction in action.

That action research which informs learning sprints is embedded in teacher practice.

Achievements

At St Thomas More Primary School, the Leadership Team worked collaboratively to ensure a comprehensive and holistic approach to both educational excellence and student wellbeing. Members of this team actively promoted a positive school culture and consistently modelled the core values of respect, integrity, service, and empathy for all members of our community.

In 2024, our School Leadership Team consisted of the Principal, Deputy Principal/Learning and Teaching Leader, Education in Faith Leader, Learning Diversity Leader, Student Wellbeing Leader, and three Learning Leaders. This team met fortnightly to discuss school improvement priorities and to ensure the Key Improvement Strategies from the Annual Action Plan were effectively implemented across the school.

A significant focus of the year was the implementation of the MACS Vision for Instruction, which provided a consistent, evidence-based framework for teaching and learning. In response, the Learning and Teaching Leadership Team — comprising the Learning and Teaching Leader and Learning Leaders — led comprehensive professional learning across the school. These sessions focused on high-impact teaching strategies and supported teachers to deepen their pedagogical content knowledge and curriculum expertise. As a result, classrooms became more consistent and structured in their approach, with students

demonstrating increased engagement, improved understanding, and stronger retention of key concepts.

The Learning and Teaching Leadership Team also supported staff during weekly facilitated planning sessions. These leaders played an important role in ensuring the Victorian Curriculum was delivered through high-quality, evidence-based instructional practices. They provided expert guidance, sourced quality teaching resources, and modelled effective strategies to build staff confidence and capacity.

To monitor the implementation of the Vision for Instruction and evaluate its impact, Learning Leaders conducted Learning Walks throughout the year. These observations offered valuable insights into classroom practice and informed the team's ongoing leadership decisions. Teachers were also invited to participate in Learning Walks, allowing them to observe effective instruction in other classrooms, reflect on their own teaching, and further strengthen consistency across the school.

Alongside these instructional improvements, the Student Learning Team continued to monitor student progress closely. This team met regularly to review student achievement data, identify learning trends, and implement targeted Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention programs. Their data-informed approach ensured that instruction and support were personalised to meet the individual learning needs of every student.

The Student Wellbeing Team, consisting of the Principal, Deputy Principal, and Student Wellbeing Leader, met regularly to address wellbeing concerns and to oversee a wide range of support services. These included access to counselling, lunchtime clubs, and individualised support plans for students experiencing social, emotional, or behavioural challenges.

To support clear and timely internal communication, a weekly staff memo was distributed, incorporating updates from each school leader. This not only kept staff informed but also provided an important platform to celebrate achievements and acknowledge the ongoing contributions of all team members.

Together, these leadership structures and practices ensured that 2024 was a year marked by intentional growth, high levels of professional collaboration, and a deepened focus on student learning and wellbeing across St Thomas More Primary School.

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2024	
<p>In 2024, professional development at St Thomas More Primary School continued to prioritise evidence-based teaching practices, with a strong focus on the Science of Learning and the MACS Vision for Instruction. Throughout the year, the Learning and Teaching Team supported staff during weekly Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings and facilitated planning sessions, helping them to refine and deepen their understanding of the Science of Learning principles that underpin the Vision for Instruction.</p> <p>All staff also began the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) professional learning program, completing two of the four training days in 2024. This trauma-informed training equipped staff with a practical toolkit to create safe, predictable, and supportive classroom environments. By integrating BSEM strategies, teachers further enhanced their ability to prioritise both learning and wellbeing as essential foundations for student growth and achievement.</p> <p>Other Staff Professional Learning in 2024 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory Reporting & Child Safety Training • OH&S Training • First Aid and Anaphylaxis Management • Faith Development Sessions • Network Days for Leaders in RE, Wellbeing, Learning Diversity & Learning and Teaching • Individual staff sponsored study 	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024	25
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$650.00

Teacher Satisfaction

MACSSIS Survey data for staff showed that a very positive school climate exists in our school, characterised by high quality instructional leadership and supportive staff leadership relationships.

Scores in the domains of School Climate, Instructional Leadership and Support for Teams were all well above the MACS average. 87% of staff indicated that there is a very positive working environment in our school and that school leaders set a positive tone for the culture of our school. Over 90% of staff also indicated that school leaders are very knowledgeable

about learning and teaching practices and communicated a clear vision for learning and teaching at our school.

Scores in the area of Staff-Leadership Relationships were also very high, with 94% of staff indicating confidence that school leaders are working for the best interest of the school. More than 90% of staff also indicated that they were comfortable approaching members of the school leadership team for support, and that school leaders were supportive when they face challenges at work.

Psychological safety scores were high, with 81% of staff indicating they were comfortable sharing information about what does and does not work in our school. Leadership support for teams was also high, with 86% of staff indicating that leaders were supportive of instructional decisions made by teaching teams.

The vast majority of staff indicated that school leaders communicate important information effectively and are knowledgeable about what is happening in the school.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0
Masters	2
Graduate	4
Graduate Certificate	1
Bachelor Degree	16
Advanced Diploma	7
No Qualifications Listed	5

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	28
Teaching Staff (FTE)	20.2
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	16
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	8.23
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal

To foster a sense of belonging and connection amongst students, families, our Parish and the wider community.

Intended Outcomes

That collaborative parent and community partnerships enhance student learning.

That students and school families build a strong connection to our school and Parish community.

Achievements

One of the many things that makes St Thomas More's truly special is the strong sense of connection shared between our students, families and Parish. In 2024, we continued to nurture these relationships, ensuring every member of our community felt supported, valued, and included.

Students regularly engaged with the wider school community beyond their classrooms. Fortnightly assemblies and whole-school Masses served as meaningful opportunities to gather in faith and celebration, reinforcing students' sense of belonging to both the school and Parish communities.

A number of much-loved annual events brought our students and families together throughout the year to celebrate learning and school life. These included our Mother's Day and Father's Day celebrations, Grandparents Day, Book Week Parade, Footy Day, and our end-of-year Nativity Play and Christmas Concert. Each of these occasions strengthened the bonds within our community and fostered a sense of shared pride and joy.

A strong sense of pride and teamwork was also fostered through a range of sporting events. Students in Years 3–6 participated in the STM Swimming Carnival, Cross Country, and Athletics events, with many going on to represent the school at district, division, regional, and even state levels. Our Summer and Winter Lightning Premierships offered senior students the chance to compete alongside neighbouring schools, strengthening their skills and community spirit.

In 2024, we introduced a brand new House System, which was embraced with great enthusiasm. House events were held each term, encouraging students to build friendships across year levels, work collaboratively in teams, and demonstrate school pride. A particular highlight was our House Mini Olympics, where students came together to showcase their athleticism, sportsmanship, and team spirit in a fun and inclusive environment. The House System has quickly become a much-loved part of school life, enhancing students' sense of belonging and providing new leadership opportunities.

Adding to the richness of the year, our Senior School Production of Shrek Jr. was an absolute highlight. This spectacular performance brought families, staff, and Parish members together to celebrate the creativity, talent, and dedication of our Year 5 and 6 students. The production was a wonderful expression of our vibrant community spirit and a testament to the hard work of students and staff alike.

Parents continued to play a vital role in strengthening connections across the school. Whether supporting classroom programs, attending excursions, participating in social events, or sharing their expertise during inquiry units, families made a valuable contribution to school life. Their involvement helped create a welcoming and collaborative environment where all students could thrive.

The St Thomas More Parents' Association (PA) remained a cornerstone of our community engagement. This dedicated group of volunteers organised a wide variety of events such as Prep Play in the Park, Buddy Family Night, the STM Disco, and the end-of-year Colour Fun Run. Their major fundraising event, held in the school gymnasium, was a joyful evening of connection and celebration, bringing our community together in support of a shared purpose.

Throughout 2024, effective communication underpinned our strong partnership with families. Fortnightly newsletters provided snapshots of school life, while semester reports and parent–teacher interviews offered valuable insights into student learning and progress. For families of students with additional needs, Program Support Group (PSG) Meetings were held each term to ensure collaborative planning and individualised support. These practices reflect our commitment to building a transparent, inclusive, and connected school community.

Parent Satisfaction

MACSSIS Parent Survey data showed that families' perceptions of the social and learning climate of the school was high. A significant 84% of respondents reported feeling welcomed upon entering the school, indicating a strong sense of hospitality and inclusiveness within the school community. Additionally, 94% of parents felt that teachers were approachable, reflecting strong communication and relational trust between staff and families. Parent attendance at school events remained consistently high, demonstrating families' ongoing commitment to involvement in their children's education and the school community as a whole.

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.stmmtlza.catholic.edu.au