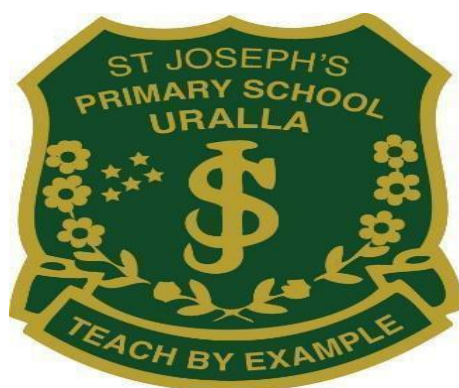


Annual School Report 2023 School Year

St Joseph's Primary School, Uralla



Wood Street
Uralla NSW 2358

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Principal
Judith Elks

About this report

St Joseph's Primary School is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office (CSO), as the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The Annual Report provides the school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The report outlines to the school community information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school Annual Improvement Plan.

The report demonstrates accountability to the Federal and State Government regulatory bodies, the parish and school community and the CSO. This report, approved by the CSO, monitors school processes to ensure compliance with all NESA requirements for Registration.

This report complements, and is supplementary to, school newsletters and other regular communications. It is available on both school and CSO websites by 30 June 2024 following its submission to NESA.

The contents of this report may be tabled for discussion at various parent forums, including the School Advisory Council meetings and all information is public.

Further information about the school or this report may be obtained by contacting the school on 02 6778 4063 or by visiting the school's [website](#).



1.0 Messages

1.1 Principal's Message

There were many people who assisted in the development of the school as a Catholic learning community. In particular, special thanks are extended to the parent body and the school staff for all their generous efforts. St Joseph's Primary School is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

St Joseph's Primary School is a small rural Catholic systemic co-educational school located in Uralla. St Joseph's was established by the Sisters of Saint Joseph in 1886. In that year, Mother Mary MacKillop (Saint Mary of the Cross) paid a visit to the school. Mother Mary wrote in her diary, on 29 April 1896, that she 'was very pleased with the school and children'.

St Joseph's is a vibrant Christ-centred community, well-supported by the parish and parent body. The Gospel values, including faith, respect and service, guide and permeate all learning and behaviour. A high standard of education is provided for the students, strengthened by the teaching and example of Catholic faith and tradition. Students are encouraged to develop to their full potential, in an inclusive and supportive climate of love, respect and acceptance.

Student engagement is the key to learning. Dedicated and enthusiastic teachers strive to ensure that student learning is both meaningful and inspiring. Children are exposed to an array of activities that encourages them to extend themselves in all Key Learning Areas of the curriculum. They develop values, skills and knowledge within an engaging and inspiring environment. Classrooms are large, well-resourced, flexible learning spaces that allow for 21st century learning to take place. Students have access to Chromebooks, iPads and Promethean Boards to further support learning, allowing them to keep up to date with the ever-changing world of technology.

Teacher capacity continues to be built, in order to deliver the curriculum to students, by working collaboratively to enhance a more flexible and engaging learning program. St Joseph's remains focused on the needs of each and every individual student, whilst adapting programs to promote maximum learning growth and well-being.

Many extracurricular activities, that engage students and support the delivery of the NSW Syllabus, are included in the curriculum. These include the school's Organic Learning approach, a sheep manure business, and garden projects which not only beautify the school but also provide fresh vegetables for students to snack on. Many and varied visiting incursions and co-curricular and extracurricular excursions are conducted. Specialist coaches are accessed to support the school sport program, enabling student skill development.

The school values its place in the Uralla and wider community. The school participates in the local Thunderbolt's Festival, Anzac Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies, as well as contributing to the local Uralla Arts Festival and Australia Day activities. The school participates in a variety of local and diocesan cultural and sporting activities.

A before and after school hours care service, operated by Esteem Kids, is located within the school grounds. This service supports families in providing care for students outside school hours and is open to the wider Uralla community for all students K–6. A weekly playgroup, Uralla Tigers, is hosted on the premises allowing parents a place to bring their toddlers and meet other young local families.

Judith Elks
Principal

1.2 A Parent Message

During the year, parents attended the opening and closing school ceremonies and presentation of awards. These were occasions for the parents to come together socially to meet new parents and to mingle with staff. The PT&F were able to do some fundraising via a street stall and by running a BBQ at the Uralla Thunderbolt's Festival and the annual St Joseph's Parish and School Fete. Apart from



the opportunity to be involved in community events, the funds raised enabled the PT&F to contribute to the cost of a new set of classroom readers for K-2 classes, the Life Education Van visit, end of year book prizes and a number of small school incursions and excursions.

Parents at St Joseph's were able to participate in the annual school satisfaction survey which allowed us to give feedback to the Principal on a variety of aspects regarding the school. We are grateful for the opportunities which continue to be provided to all parents to be involved as partners in the education of children.

Kristy Redmond
President
St Josephs PT&F

2.0 This Catholic School

2.1 The School Community

St Joseph's Primary School is located in Uralla and is part of the St Joseph's Parish which serves the communities of Uralla, from which the school families are drawn.

Last year the school celebrated 139 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest, Monsignor Edward Wilkes, is involved in the life of the school.

2.2 Catholic Life and Religious Education

St Joseph's Primary School follows the Armidale Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum and uses the student text *To Know, Worship and Love*, as authorised by the Bishop of Armidale, Michael Kennedy.

The Opening School Mass was a great way to start the new school year, asking for God's blessing and guidance for the year ahead. During this Mass, School Leaders were inducted and received their badges. The whole school normally attends Mass each Friday morning. Each class took it in turn to prepare the readings and hymns. Students in Years 3–6 were invited to altar serve at the school masses as well as weekend masses. They participated during Mass by reading or singing in the choir. Parents and friends were invited to attend the weekly school Mass when possible. Special liturgies and/ or masses were celebrated at other significant times throughout the year. These included Ash Wednesday, Holy Week and the feast of St Joseph. A special end of year Mass was held for Year 6 students.

Catholic Principles and Values (CPV) underpin all that is done in Catholic schools. These principles and values were explicitly taught in all Key Learning Areas. Through the teaching of the CPV, students develop a world view that focuses on God and his desire for us to create a world where everyone is cared for and respected. This includes a commitment to look after the environment.

Students were encouraged, through their lessons, to reach out and help those in need by active participation in such things as the Charitable Works and Catholic Mission fundraisers.

Once each term, a special prayer afternoon is held at the school and run by the Spirituality team from the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale. Staff, parents and parishioners are invited to this special time of self reflection. A retreat day is offered each year to all the staff. This year it was held off premises, allowing the staff to reconnect with God in an uninterrupted space.

Students in Year 6 in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Armidale undertake the Diocesan Religious Education (RE) Test annually. The test consists of 30 multiple-choice questions.

Results of the test are analysed by teachers and are used to inform teaching and learning in Religious Education.



Our School's average result (as a mark out of 30)	
Year 6	23

2.3 School Enrolment

St Joseph's Primary School caters for children from Years K to 6. The following table indicates the student enrolment characteristics:

	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	TOTAL 2023	TOTAL 2022
Male	5	3	1	2	6	2	2	21	20
Female	13	7	7	2	2	3	4	38	27
Totals	18	10	8	4	8	5	6	59	47

2.4 Student Attendance

In order for students to reach their full potential it is important that they attend school regularly. Whilst it is the parents' legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly, staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor attendance each day. The class roll is marked every day and rolls are checked each week by the Principal or their delegate. The school uses the attendance coding system adopted in all NSW schools. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by staff. Parents are requested to provide a satisfactory explanation for an absence by means such as a written note, telephone call, SMS message or email to the school, preferably on the first day of absence and certainly within seven days. The Principal is made aware of sustained student absences or absences reflecting a pattern. In these situations, the Principal or delegated staff member contacts the parent/guardian. Parents are encouraged to arrange medical and other necessary appointments outside school hours. Prolonged periods of absence occur from time-to-time for various reasons. In these cases, students and their parents meet with the Principal to discuss the leave request.

The average student attendance rate for the school during 2023 is shown in the following table.

	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	All Years
Average Student Attendance Rates	89.0%	89.0%	87.0%	89.0%	88.0%	86.0%	84.0%	87.4%

Managing Student non-attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The school, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

School staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.



- monitoring engagement of individual students in their learning and identifying strategies to enhance engagement.
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance.
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance.
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented.
- intervention strategies for students with unsatisfactory attendance may include academic case management, social case management, referral to counselling and parent/ carer involvement.
- the Director of Catholic Schools or designated Catholic Schools Office Armidale officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom previous strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

When the Catholic Schools Office Armidale is notified of a student for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and previous strategies have failed, the Principal and the System Performance Leader will convene a meeting with the family, the student, and other agencies if required, to develop a Return to School Plan.

2.5 Staff Profile and Teacher Standards

Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile	Number of Teachers
1. Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Provisional or Conditional level.	1
2. Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Proficient level.	7
3. Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Highly Accomplished level.	0
4. Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Lead level.	0
5. Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.	5
6. Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the school.	0
7. Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the school.	0

2.6 Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The school ensures that at every available formal and informal opportunity the values of respect and responsibility are promoted. We want every student to understand and appreciate that they are part of both the school and the local community. The school models and teaches students about respect and responsibility in a number of ways:

- St Joseph's Primary School continually promotes respect and responsibility as part of its culture and beliefs as a Catholic school. These permeate throughout the curriculum and all aspects of school life. Students, teachers and parents are regularly reminded of the school's commitment



to these and other school values by newsletter items, assembly messages and by the nature of interpersonal relationships.

- Student Leadership forms a major part of the culture of Respect and Responsibility that makes up the caring climate within the school. The school actively promotes Gospel values, with respect and responsibility being a core element. Student leaders act as role models for younger students and accept responsibility for specific tasks around the school.
- Students are actively engaged in negotiating school rules that reflect the rights and responsibilities of all students and staff. These are routinely reinforced with positive feedback and restorative practices in order to build respectful relationships. School and class awards are used to formally promote these values.
- St Joseph's encourages a three-way partnership between parent, student and teacher. This effective partnership is based on mutual trust and respect, and shared responsibility for the education of the child at school. Parents are encouraged to have an active involvement in all areas of their child's education. Through this partnership, positive outcomes for the child can be achieved.
- The school participates in important community commemorations such as Anzac Day, Remembrance Day and NAIDOC Week, reflecting on important cultural values and beliefs, from a Catholic perspective.

2.7 Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, the school used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the school from parents, students and teachers.

Parent Satisfaction

The parent satisfaction survey was conducted by an external agency in September. Of the 47 parents, 28 completed the survey (60% completion rate is considered excellent). The average response for all 28 categories of questions was 2.60 out of a possible 3.

The overwhelming majority of parents are happy with the education their children are receiving at St Joseph's. They have confidence that their children are being well-educated in a safe, supportive and welcoming environment. They are satisfied with the facilities and opportunities provided for their children.

The vast majority of respondents praised the positive school culture: "friendly, engaging, nurturing and supportive", "great communication between parents and staff", "individualised learning", "well set out classrooms with great technology", "appreciation for the Organic Learning structure", "the school feels like a big family and everyone knows each other by name" and lots of involvement with parents, children and staff".

Some suggestions for improvement were: "concerns about safe parking during school pick up and school drop off times and the need for more parking", "additional opportunities for parent involvement", "consider reviewing and potentially modifying the school uniform for practicality" and "notification when their child is receiving an award at assembly".

Student Satisfaction

The Student Survey results were just as pleasing. Year 4/5/6 students were invited to participate in the Student Survey. Of the 19 students, all responded. The average response for all 22 categories of questions was 2.14 out of a possible 3.0.



Their overwhelming response was that they feel respected, happy, safe, accepted, cared for, encouraged and engaged in their learning. When asked if they would recommend this school to others 100% of them said they would. They also feel encouraged to have a “growth mindset” and to “not give up easily”. They like the Organic Learning approach and the attention given by their teachers to each individual.

Their recommendations for improvement revolved around “more sport choices” and the need for a “bigger soccer field”. They also thought it would be good to have more male teachers for “better communication with boys”.

Staff Satisfaction

The Staff Satisfaction survey was conducted by an external agency in September 2023. The average response for all 31 categories of questions was 2.9 out of a possible 3.

Staff responses to the satisfaction survey were overwhelmingly positive with all staff commenting that they feel valued and supported in a “positive, welcoming and God-centred environment”. There is high morale amongst all staff members, reinforced by good communication between staff and school leadership. Professional learning opportunities are appreciated and valued. There is a “shared excitement around student learning”. They value the “leadership of their collegial Principal” and the shared “dedication to high quality student learning”.

One area for improvement, which staff continue to see as important, is the creation of an outdoor learning space. They also expressed concerns around the need for more parking options for parents as the school continues to grow. There was also a desire expressed for more male teachers as role models for students.

3.0 Teaching and Learning

3.1 School Curriculum

The school provides an educational program based on and taught in accordance with the NESA syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. In addition, the school implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools Office Armidale.

Religious Education in Catholic schools is a mandatory KLA included in the curriculum for students in each year group. St Joseph's Primary School is committed to providing a quality education that meets the needs of all students.

St Joseph's strives to cater for individual differences by making adjustments for those students who have specific needs, as well as using pedagogical practices that cater for different learning styles. Indigenous perspectives are integrated into the curriculum and the curriculum is enhanced through the use of digital technologies.

The methodology of teaching, called “Organic Learning”, continued this year and students are thriving. This initiative is designed to allow students to become self-directed learners, working both independently and collaboratively, in order to guide their own learning. This is a K–6 initiative, with a team teaching approach, in order to deliver the NESA outcomes from HSIE, PDHPE, Creative Arts and Science syllabuses. This methodology has a major focus on engagement of the students in order to increase their depth of learning.

All students made substantial progress throughout the year, due to the engagement and the opportunities offered to deepen their knowledge in the areas of interest to them.



3.2 Student Performance in National Testing Programs

3.2.1 NAPLAN

The school participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) with students in Years 3 and 5 tested. In Year 3, 4 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 7 students.

In Literacy there were four elements tested. These were reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation. In Numeracy, students were tested in number, patterns and algebra, measurement, data and space and geometry.

Commencing in 2023, NAPLAN test results are reported using proficiency levels.

Students' results show how they performed in each of the NAPLAN assessment areas against 4 proficiency levels:

- Exceeding: The student's result exceeds expectations at the time of testing.
- Strong: The student's result meets challenging but reasonable expectations at the time of testing.
- Developing: The student's result indicates that they are working towards expectations at the time of testing.
- Needs additional support: The student's result indicates that they are not achieving the learning outcomes expected at the time of testing. They are likely to need additional support to progress satisfactorily.

At St Joseph's Primary School, school and student performance are closely monitored. These tests are one means of gathering data on individual student and school achievement. School staff have participated in Catholic Schools Office information sessions on NAPLAN and Data Analysis workshops.

The following data indicates the percentage of St Joseph's Primary School students in the top two levels compared to the State percentage.

Note: Year 3 had five or less students who participated in the Assessments this year and the NAPLAN information has been withheld to protect the privacy of the students.

**Year 5 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy
Percentage of Students in Levels Strong and Exceeding**

Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar and Punctuation	Numeracy
71.0	57.0	71.0	57.0	71.0



4.0 School Policies

4.1 Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Armidale adheres to the policy as endorsed by the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' of Students in the Catholic Systemic Schools of the Diocese of Armidale. The Catholic Schools Office Armidale monitors the implementation of this policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. Children from families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church may be considered eligible for enrolment. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

This school does not have any enrolment policies or support documents in addition to the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' for schools in the Diocese of Armidale. This policy is available on the school's [website](#) and the Armidale Catholic Schools Office [website](#).

4.2 Living Well, Learning Well - A Student Support Framework for the Diocese of Armidale

Living Well, Learning Well - A Student Support Framework for the Diocese of Armidale are policies and procedures justifying a model of student support that considers learning, wellbeing, school connection, behaviour, family-school partnerships and similar domains as inseparable and interrelated elements in the lives of children and young people and in the complex community that is the contemporary school.

The development goal of Living Well, Learning Well, and related policies was, and is, to ensure contemporary research and findings in fields of pedagogy, inclusion, behaviour support, pastoral care, bullying prevention and intervention, student voice, participation and connection to school, child and adolescent psychology, student wellbeing and staff collective efficacy are reflected in all language, policy, practice and protocols of the system and schools. It supports a whole-system ecological approach to understanding and acting on the complexity of factors that interact to shape and form the lives of children and young people.

At the heart of Living Well, Learning Well is a universal and unconditional positive regard for children and young people and a high regard for the collective capacity of a school staff team to increase learning, wellbeing and life-opportunity outcomes for children and young people. The full text of the school's Living Well, Learning Well procedures may be accessed on the school [website](#).

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. The school does not sanction the administration of corporal punishment by school staff or non-school persons, including parents, to enforce appropriate behaviour in the school.

4.3 Student Protection Policies and Procedures

The role of the Catholic school in child protection is to protect children and young people and to promote and safeguard the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. This responsibility is shared with the whole community. Every school within the Armidale Catholic Schools Office (CSO) system of schools works within a statutory framework of cooperation with government authorities and other relevant agencies and with families in the care and protection of children and young people.

Schools have a key role to play in today's society by assisting students and families with child protection. The safety, welfare and wellbeing of students is given the highest priority in every preventative and protective action taken.

In caring for children and young people, we must act in their best interest and take all reasonable steps to ensure their protection. This involves sincere commitment to upholding children's rights to safety and their wellbeing, and taking comprehensive steps to create a child safe school organisation



and culture, with shared responsibility requiring all Armidale CSO personnel to work together within a comprehensive framework to ensure action and accountability for child safety.

St Joseph's Primary School is committed to fulfilling its obligations and seeks to develop best practice to identify and address risk and harm, and to promote the wellbeing of all children and young people in Armidale CSO schools. The dignity of the human person is a central truth of the Gospel message of Jesus. In respecting the dignity of all human persons, Catholic school communities are called to ensure the welfare and safety of all of their members.

The protection of the students entrusted to our care, then, is a very serious responsibility. In taking up this responsibility along with parents, who are recognised as the primary educators and carers of their children, Catholic school communities are committed to ensuring Catholic schools have at their centre the total care of the whole student.

St Joseph's Primary School follows the guideline, policies and procedures as determined by Armidale Catholic Schools Office who provides policy, procedures, forms and links to other resources relating to child protection. These resources have been developed to guide and assist staff and to inform Catholic school communities. Further details can be accessed from the school's [website](#) which includes a further [guide for parents](#).

4.4 Complaints Handling Policy and Guide

The Diocese of Armidale has established a 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' which is implemented by this school. The rationale for this policy is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of the contemporary world. The Catholic Schools Office monitors the implementation of these policies.

No changes were made to the 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' this year.

The full text of the school's 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' may be accessed on the school's [website](#) or the administration office.

5.0 School Review and Improvement

Each year, the school develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. The plan is drawn from the school's Strategic Improvement Plan and informed by the Catholic Schools Office Annual Improvement Plan. The school engages in an annual evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness against these external standards in collaboration with the System Performance Leader.



Key Goals Achieved and Implemented in 2023	Key Goals for 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed quality curriculum and pedagogy to implement new K-2 curriculum and MAST • Authentically embeded CCPVs in all KLAs • Strengthened and revitalised the spiritual and liturgical life of the school community in the aftermath of COVID-19 • Built a collaborative team to incorporate new staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Teaching and learning: Teachers using data to improve teaching practice • Continue to develop quality curriculum and pedagogy to implement the new MaST 3-6 and embed the K-2 English • Catholic Identity - Focus on prayer life at school and at home • Strong Teams: Maintain the current culture of the school, by building a collaborative team that works together to maintain whole school and class learning processes across all KLAs

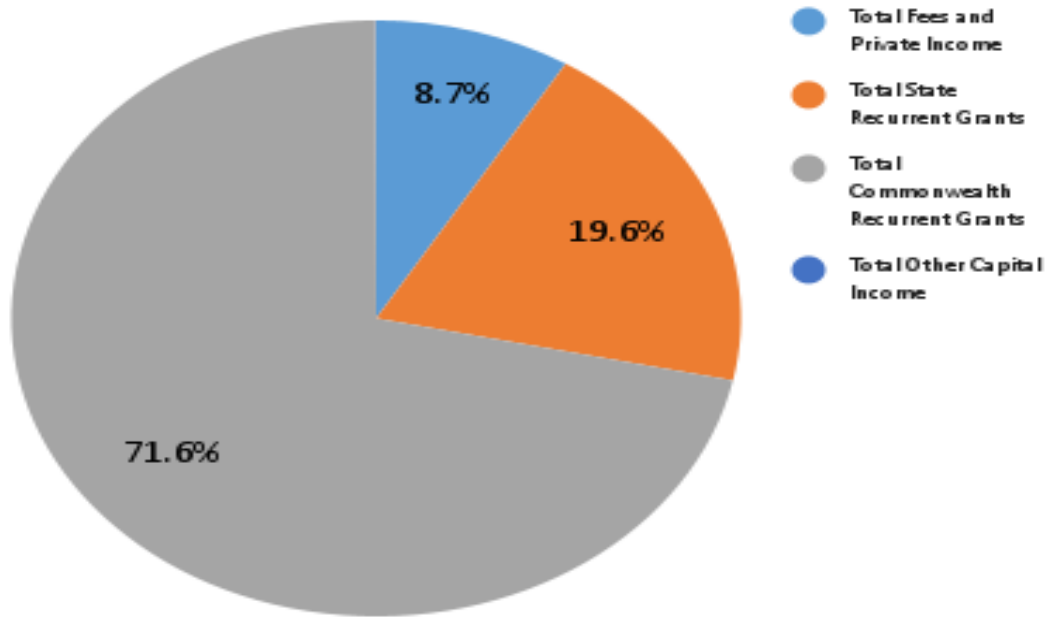
6.0 Financial Information

Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary schools, K-10 schools and secondary colleges. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school. In addition, the financial accounts for each school and for the Catholic Schools Office are audited annually.

A visual summary of the income and expenditure reported to the Commonwealth Government for 2023 is presented below:



2023 Income - St Joseph's Primary School, Uralla



2023 Expenditure - St Joseph's Primary School, Uralla

