

# Annual School Report 2020 School Year

St Joseph's Primary School, Walgett



82 Arthur Street  
Walgett NSW 2832

Phone 02 6828 1060  
<https://stjosephswalgett.catholic.edu.au>

Principal  
Donna Fiechtner

## **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 also 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 2021 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 6828 1060 or by visiting the school's website <https://stjosephswalgett.catholic.edu.au>.



## **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.

The primary purpose of the school is to support the members of the parish community in providing a faith formation for their children. The school fosters a commitment to the individual person and provides opportunities for academic, cultural and sporting achievement. St Joseph's Primary School offers students a quality Catholic education based on the teaching of the Church and within the context of a strong faith community.

Despite the difficulties associated with the school closure and COVID-19, it was a year of improvement for the St Joseph's school community. With a deep focus on respect, safety and learning and a concentrated effort on improving reading, St Joseph's achieved good results in all areas of learning. Parents, students and staff worked cooperatively to continue building a professional learning community underpinned by a strong foundation in Catholic faith, which was evidenced by the support from all stakeholders during the school closure. Staff and parents worked together to continue learning at home. Throughout the year, the school and parish came together to celebrate a limited number of masses and sacramental programs which fostered and developed the spiritual life of the school. This year saw the continuation of collaborative teaching and learning strategies in staged classes across K-6. Quality teaching and learning occurs within classrooms where students are supported in their learning by professional, dedicated staff supported by a strong parent community.

Donna Fiechtner  
Principal

### **1.2 A Parent Message**

The St Joseph's School Advisory Council (SAC) is made up of the parish priest, Principal, staff members, community representatives and parents. Its purpose is to provide a link between community, parents and the school and to support and advise on the school's policies and procedures. Like all organisations, the SAC and its ability to carry out its functions was severely affected by the regulations and restrictions needed for COVID-19, with only two face to face meetings able to be carried out with the current SAC members. Despite this, the SAC discussed a number of topics and key goals for the immediate future were articulated. These included:

- Construction of a permanent shelter over sport court including sources of finance, quoting for the construction and the process of progression. This process is already in place.
- SAC proposed that a renovation could include repurposing the building as a more interactive space for the school and interface with the local community. The repurposing of the current library into a more functional office space would be done at the same time. The school is to discuss the options for both construction and finance with the diocese, then come back to the SAC for further discussion.
- The dire need for re-turfing of the sporting field, including an efficient and effective watering system, is deemed by the SAC as a very high priority for both the physical and mental welfare of the students and staff. A committee will be formed to fast track both progression and financing.

The SAC hopes that it can meet more regularly in 2021 in order that these targets can be progressed with enthusiasm. Most importantly of all, the SAC would like to commend both the



Principal, Donna Fiechtner, and her staff with the incredible way they were able to achieve the academic outcomes of all St Joseph's students during the uncertainty and ultimate lockdown resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Their commitment to the students and support to all parents was above their call and greatly appreciated. It would be safe to say that the respect St Joseph's parents already had for the staff has only increased. Thank you all.

Ben Hawke  
Secretary  
School Advisory Council

## **2.0 This Catholic School**

### **2.1 The School Community**

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

Last year the school celebrated 125 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest, Fr Jose Adriano, 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 school exists to ensure the faith development of the children of the school community. Clergy, staff, parents and parishioners work together to support the religious development of the children. The Religious Education curriculum supports the catechetical and evangelising mission of the Church while supporting children in their lifelong journey in faith. St Joseph's takes pride in nurturing the prayer life and faith formation of the students in the school.

Children were involved in the different sacramental programs run in conjunction with the parish, including first reconciliation, first Eucharist and confirmation which was celebrated with Bishop Michael Kennedy. Due to COVID-19 health restrictions there were limitations on the liturgies and masses held throughout the year. The school celebrated an opening school Mass and induction of school leaders, Ash Wednesday and then each class had one Mass together in the church. Year 6 students celebrated a Graduation Mass in December. Many feast days were celebrated in the classrooms. Prayer is a regular part of the school day, both in the classroom and at whole school assemblies.

St Joseph's participated in a number of outreach activities including Caritas, Project Compassion, Catholic Mission, NAIDOC Week activities, Mother's Day, Father's Day and Harmony Day. All were celebrated at school due to the restrictions.

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

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

<b>Our School's average result (as a mark out of 30)</b>	
Year 6	22

### **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 2020	TOTAL 2019
<b>Male</b>	8	11	8	6	9	6	4	52	57
<b>Female</b>	8	8	5	13	5	11	10	60	79
<b>Totals</b>	16	19	13	19	14	17	14	112	136

## 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, school 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 2020 is shown in the following table.

	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	All Years
<b>Average Student Attendance Rates</b>	85.0%	89.0%	86.0%	89.0%	82.0%	86.0%	82.0%	85.6%

### 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 School Consultant 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 NESA Teacher Accreditation Provisional or Conditional level.	1
2.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Proficient level.	13
3.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Highly Accomplished level.	0
4.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Lead level.	0
5.	Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.	11
6.	Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the school.	7
7.	Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the school.	14

## 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 promotes the Gospel Values to act justly, love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God. The school focuses heavily on respect, safety and learning in all that we do and say. Student well-being and upholding the dignity of the student is at the heart of the positive behaviour focus.

Most annually held community events were postponed due to COVID-19, however, St Joseph's was able to recognise some events both at home during home learning and at school. Students were involved in ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day services, NAIDOC Week and Harmony Day.



The Yuwaalaraay Language Program helps promote respect and pride for the Aboriginal culture. The program was embraced by all staff and students and holds pride of place in the curriculum. All students were given access to the Yuwaalaraay Language Program throughout home learning via the use of online programs and Google Classroom. Students were given the opportunity to participate in Sista Speak and Bro Speak programs. These were run during Term 4 and focussed on building self-esteem, cultural identity and confidence. These programs were developed by the Aboriginal Education Assistants.

## **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 has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers.

### **Parent Satisfaction**

An independent organisation was engaged to survey parents with regards to their level of satisfaction within the key areas of Catholic Ethos, Leadership, General, Teaching and Learning, Resources and the Improvement Process. The School Advisory Council (SAC) was also a source of informative feedback, as well as regular meetings and discussions with parents. There was strong agreement that the school is a safe place for the students, that staff take a high interest in the children's wellbeing and learning and that learning for students is really satisfying and engaging. Catholic religious identity is seen to be highly promoted in the school. Support for a renewed positive approach to acknowledge and encourage student achievement and a continued approach to student behaviour is on the school's agenda for 2021.

### **Student Satisfaction**

An independent organisation was engaged to survey students with regards to their level of satisfaction within the key areas of Catholic Ethos, Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Resources and the Improvement Process. Students' views were also gathered informally throughout the year. Students expressed strong pride in the school and very positive comments across the areas of learning, safety, pastoral care and the school staff. Students indicated that they would like to see more celebration of student achievements and did not value homework as a way to improve their learning. This feedback will be used to inform planning in 2021.

### **Staff Satisfaction**

An independent organisation was engaged to survey teachers with regards to their level of satisfaction within the key areas of Catholic Ethos, Leadership, Staff Engagement, Resources and the Improvement Process. Teachers' views were also gathered through meetings throughout the year. All areas of teaching and learning, collegiality, professional development, and school leadership, received very positive feedback indicating a high level of satisfaction working at St Joseph's. Teachers agreed that it is time to review pastoral care strategies for students who have challenging behaviours and to explore ways to further encourage high student achievement.

## **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.

The school is committed to the continuous the improvement of teaching and student learning outcomes in all facets of the curriculum. The 2020 Annual Improvement Plan identified goals which included the deepening of Catholic identity by embedding the Core Catholic Principles and Values across the school and by providing faith formation for staff. The Learning and Teaching goal focused on improving student learning results, with particular emphasis on reading. Contemporary learning is supported by a range of digital technologies which form an ever increasing part of classroom practice, enabling students to access a broad range of tools and resources to suit their learning styles and needs. The ongoing purchase of individual Chromebooks for students school wide provided an excellent tool to support learning. Students identified with Additional Needs were assisted through differentiation of the curriculum and support via Education Assistants in the classroom. St Joseph's has, under the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan, received a proportionate allocation of teacher time to support and monitor the implementation of the K-2 Diocesan Learning Enhancement Strategy. The programs to support Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 learning include BestStart, InitialLit, MiniLit and MultiLit.

The local Aboriginal language, Yuwaalaraay, is taught to all students. Aboriginal students have the opportunity to participate in the Waa Gaay camp which identifies individual students with particular strengths and provides educational experiences that cater for their individual learning styles. Sport is an important component of the curriculum, with students participating in a range of sports and locally organised competitions. Many students were selected to compete in sport at diocesan and Polding levels. Students were also selected to be a part of the Moorbilla Voices choirs and singing camps.

### 3.2 Student Performance in National Testing Programs

#### 3.2.1 NAPLAN

There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as a result of the decision by the Australian Government for students not to participate in the NAPLAN Assessments due to the circumstances of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

### 3.3 Teacher Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued. Professional learning can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in services, meetings and conferences and a range of professional learning programs provided by the Catholic Schools Office Armidale. The school takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking of its staff professional learning and individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing professional development.

All teachers have been involved in professional learning opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes.

Whole staff development day professional learning activities in 2020 were:

Staff Professional Learning Activity	Date	Presenter
--------------------------------------	------	-----------



Compliance Training	03/02/2020	Donna Fiechtner
Learning and Teaching Framework	04/02/2020	Donna Fiechtner & Leanne Chape
Compass Training	28/02/2020	Armidale Catholic Schools Office

#### 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 <https://stjosephswalgett.catholic.edu.au> and the Armidale Catholic Schools Office [website](#).

##### 4.2 Pastoral Care Policy

Jesus Christ and his teachings are the basis of all that occurs at St Joseph's Primary School. Christ's teachings therefore should relate to how staff develop student self-discipline. The school community believes in a holistic approach to individual development. Such an approach aims to develop the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, aesthetic, moral and spiritual dimensions of a child. Staff aim to bring this about in the school by promoting self-worth and by encouraging each individual to answer to one's self for one's own actions.

All people attending St Joseph's Primary School have the right to be treated:

- justly
- respectfully
- fairly

*No changes were made to the 'Pastoral Care Policy' this year.*

*The full text of the school's 'Pastoral Care Policy' may be accessed on the school's website <https://stjosephswalgett.catholic.edu.au> or at the administration office.*

##### 4.3 Student Discipline Policy

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

*No changes were made to the 'Student Discipline Policy' this year.*

*The full text of the school's 'Student Discipline Policy' may be accessed on the school's website <https://stjosephswalgett.catholic.edu.au> or at the administration office.*

##### 4.4 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy



The Catholic Schools Office, Armidale has established a 'Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy' which is implemented by the school and all systemic schools in the Diocese. It provides a framework for school communities to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person. The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) monitors the implementation of this policy.

*No changes were made to the 'Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy' this year.*

*The full text of the school's 'Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy' may be accessed on the school's website <https://stjosephswalgett.catholic.edu.au>, the administration office or on the CSO website.*

#### 4.5 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 <https://stjosephswalgett.catholic.edu.au> 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 Schools Consultant.

Key Goals Achieved and Implemented in 2020	Key Goals for 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed confidence and competence in designing effective teaching and learning programs and high quality/rich tasks in religious education.</li> <li>• Teachers used whole school tracking assessment data to inform the design of explicit teaching and learning experiences in reading.</li> <li>• St Joseph's achieved outstanding results in the Year 6 Religious Education Test</li> <li>• All students experienced growth in reading.</li> <li>• Staff developed whole school programming proformas to assist in consistency and improvement in teaching and learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to embed the Catholic Principles and Values and the Living Well, Learning Well Framework. This goal is focussed on student well-being and aligns with CSO strategic plan.</li> <li>• Increased the use of Data Dashboard evidence and data literacy to plan next steps in student learning. This goal will be achieved with the assistance of the School Performance Leader.</li> <li>• Continue to build strong, effective teams.</li> <li>• Focus on building teacher capacity by accessing effective professional development.</li> </ul>

#### 6.0 Financial Information

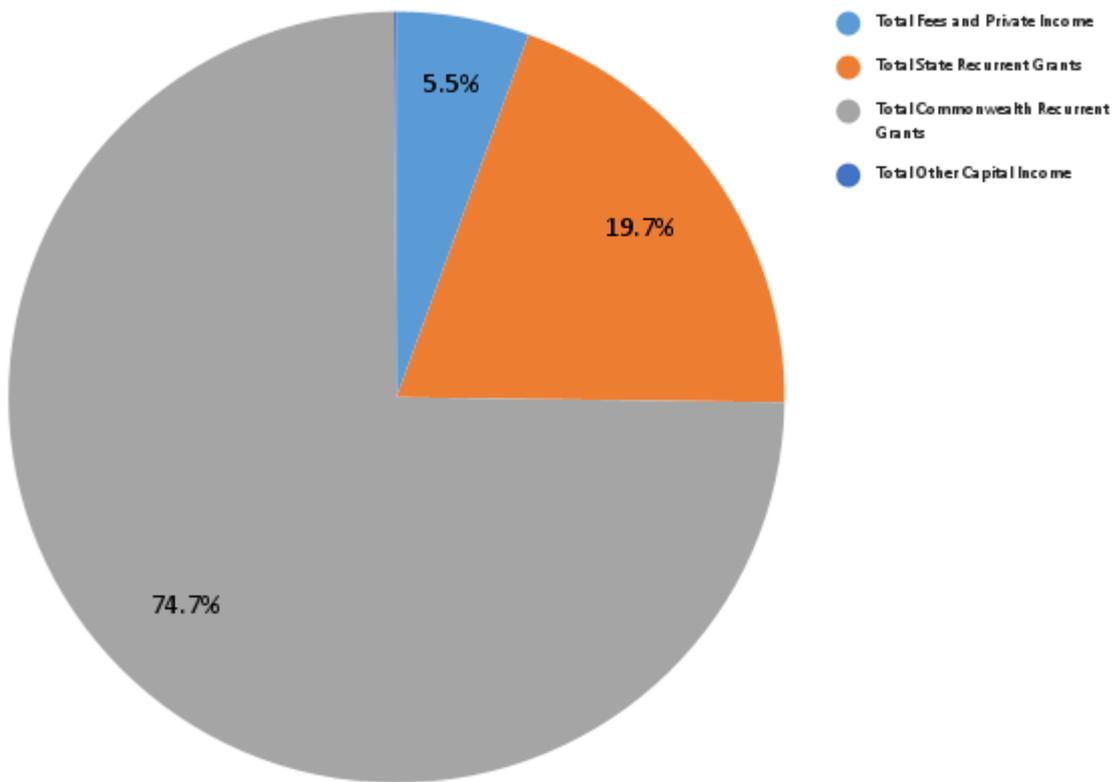


Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary schools, K-10 schools and secondary colleges. This statement details the income and expenditure 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 2020 is presented below:



2020 Income - St Joseph's Primary School, Walgett



2020 Expenditure - St Joseph's Primary School, Walgett

