

Annual School Report 2020 School Year

St Joseph's Primary School, Wee Waa



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<https://stjosephsweewaa.catholic.edu.au>

Principal
Alistair Stewart

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 6795 4038 or by visiting the school's website <https://stjosephsweewaa.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.

Wow, 2020 was the rollercoaster of all years! Starting with storms and drought-busting rain, maybe this was an omen of the complexities of the year to come.

The year started with a bang with several events very early in the term. We had the swimming carnival, Ash Wednesday Mass and a welcome bbq for families run by the school's P&F. Unbeknownst to all of us, that was the last time that parents gathered with students at a school event.

With a pandemic being declared, this started a chain reaction of events that we had never experienced or planned for. Thankfully, the staff and diocese were able to come up with structures that enabled students to complete learning from home or essential workers children at school.

COVID-19 had a lasting impact on the school during 2020. With no excursions, no sport and restrictions on learning and school operations, this was not easy, but it showed that the school community is resilient and was able to work through the challenges as they came up. I am forever grateful to the staff, who were able to quickly adapt to these restrictions and provide a continuity of learning for all students.

We welcomed several new staff; Laura Chapman in Stage 2, Anna Fullarton in Stage 1 and Darcy Lang in Stage 3. At the end of the school year, we sometimes say goodbye to staff members and this is the case this year. However, as it may be sad to see some staff go, it is an exciting time in their lives.

Olivia Robertson left us at the end of the school year. Olivia was a Leader of Learning in Stage 3 during 2019 and 2020. Olivia successfully led the school in 2020 as the MaST (Mathematics Specialist Teacher) and worked closely with Stage 1 to change the way that mathematics is taught at St Joseph's Primary School. Olivia will be relocating to Queensland in the new year to take on a position in Toowoomba and be close to her partner.

Laura Chapman also left us at the end of the school year. Laura was an Education Assistant in Stage 2 during 2020. Laura worked successfully with students in Stage 2 and helped all students to achieve their learning goals. Laura is returning to Tamworth to be close to her partner Josh and their family, as Laura is pregnant and is expecting a baby boy early in 2021.

We have been blessed to have both Olivia and Laura in the school and we wish them both well for their futures.

2021 is going to be an exciting year. St Joseph's Primary School has aligned the Annual Improvement Plan to encompass three main points: great learning and teaching, an authentic Catholic community of care and strong teams.

I am excited to see how the school performs and where we can thrive in the future.

Thank you to all of you, the school community for your assistance and the hard work you have put into the school. This has been a tough year, but one that I am pleased that we have faced together.

Alistair Stewart
Principal

1.2 A Parent Message



The vast majority of 2020 at St Joseph's Primary School Wee Waa was dictated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost every aspect of school life was impacted in some way. Student interactions, parent participation, canteen and sport were all significantly altered and that was only after students were allowed back onto school grounds.

Fortunately, the local community and the greater shire council area managed to stay free of any COVID-19 cases. Regardless of this fact, St Joseph's Primary School was required to abide by strict precautionary measures outlined by the Catholic Schools Office with advice from the NSW State Government.

Principal Alistair Stewart and all teaching and administrative staff did an amazing job adapting to the changing circumstances throughout the year. Adoption of technology in both teaching and administration of the school prior to the pandemic meant that learning outcomes for students during lockdown were far less restricted. By comparison, it would appear that some schools in much larger regional centres did not navigate lockdown as successfully.

To all the teachers and educational assistants, you deserve special recognition. Significant time was spent outside of school hours to prepare for remote learning sessions. Your delivery of these sessions and the ongoing support of students (and very stressed parents/homeschooling substitutes) was outstanding.

As per the recent newsletter, you would be aware that there are two members of staff that are finishing up at the end of this year. Laura Chapman was an educational assistant in Stage 2 and Olivia Robertson was a teacher in Stage 3. Thank you both for the time and effort invested in St Joseph's Primary School and I wish you both success and happiness in your chosen paths.

This year, the School Advisory Council saw some changes to its participants. After two and a half years on the Council, Lorna Gleeson stepped down in August. Thank you, Lorna, for your time and input into the Advisory Council process. This year we welcomed Ben Palmer as an additional parent representative. Thanks also to Fr Joseph, Alistair Stewart, Elise Vinson, Kate Lennon, Jono Baird and Carlie Gray for your support of the school.

Steve Carolan
Chairman
School Advisory Council

2.0 This Catholic School

2.1 The School Community

St Joseph's Primary School is located in Wee Waa and is part of the St Andrews Parish which serves the communities of Wee Waa, Burren Junction, Piliga, Yarrie Lake and Spring Gully, from which the school families are drawn.

Last year the school celebrated 110 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest, Father Joseph Armah, 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 St Joseph's Primary School community came together to celebrate a smaller number of liturgies throughout 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. A whole school Mass was held to celebrate the beginning of the school year, with the school community. The end of year Mass was celebrated in the church, with only students and staff present. This was live streamed to the school community.



This was also the first time that all students came together for Mass since the beginning of the school year.

Holy Week activities and learning were part of the activities set within the first two weeks of online learning. An online liturgy was held for staff of St Joseph's Wee Waa, St Francis Xavier's Narrabri, and St Joseph's Walgett. This liturgy was attended by the School Performance Leaders of the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale.

Pre COVID-19, a Junior Joey's leadership group and a Mini Vinnies group were formed. Both groups were organised and had plans to contribute to the school's life across 2020. When students and staff fully returned and school life returned closer to pre-COVID-19 levels, the Junior Joey's held fundraisers for Mission Week.

The Religious Education Coordinator organises the Sacramental Program for the parish. With COVID-19 restrictions in place, modified versions of reconciliation, first Holy Communion and the sacrament of confirmation were held. In previous years, these special occasions were usually well attended by families and wider school community members. However, in 2020, these were only attended by pre-registered members as per the COVID-19 guidelines. Father Joseph was granted special dispensation to confirm our Year 6 students who sought the sacrament of confirmation, as the bishop could not visit the community during the year.

The school had regular communication with the parish administrator, Fr Joseph, throughout the year and staff regularly attended Sunday Mass and were regularly rostered for reading at the community Mass.

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.

Our School's average result (as a mark out of 30)	
Year 6	18

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
Male	9	14	11	7	6	9	8	64	61
Female	10	4	5	5	8	5	6	43	46
Totals	19	18	16	12	14	14	14	107	107

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
Average Student Attendance Rates	92.0%	90.0%	92.0%	93.0%	91.0%	95.0%	91.0%	92.0%

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
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1.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Provisional or Conditional level.	1
2.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Proficient level.	9
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.	6
6.	Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the school.	3
7.	Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the school.	9

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 prides itself on promoting respect and responsibility with high expectations placed on behaviour.
- School leadership is promoted by the school through the cultivation of Year 6 as school leaders. St Joseph's continued to develop the leadership potential of students through different student groups, Mini Vinnies and Junior Joeys.
- There were some opportunities throughout the school year for Year 6 to lead events such as school tours during the enrolment period, assemblies, masses and liturgies. Unfortunately, community events were very limited. Students did not get the opportunity, due to COVID-19, to have an active leadership role outside the school in organised community events.
- Social competency was developed through the Buddy Program, which ensures a safe and enjoyable transition for Kindergarten students and helps build relationships between the older and younger students.
- Positive learning behaviour was promoted, encouraged and celebrated via the weekly Recognition of Learning assemblies. Further recognition was celebrated when children were seen demonstrating the "Spirit of Jesus" in areas of their learning, both inside and outside the learning environment.

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. Of the parents surveyed, 57% participated in the survey. Parents were happy overall with their child's education, support for students with additional needs and the pastoral care provided to families. Parents had the opportunity to comment on areas they would like to see improved at St Joseph's Primary School. There was a range of suggestions. Some suggestions were more consistent communication between the school and the parent community and the implementation of a clear and consistent approach to behaviour management.

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, General, Teaching and Learning, Resources and the Improvement Process. Of the Years 4-6 students surveyed, 67% participated in the survey. Students were generally happy about their education, safety and learning opportunities. Students would like to see more assistance with dealing with anxiety and times of struggle, more STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) integration into learning and improved facilities in the playground and under the Covered Outdoor Learning Area.

Staff Satisfaction

An independent organisation was engaged to survey staff with regards to their level of satisfaction within the key areas of Catholic Ethos, Leadership, General, Teaching and Learning, Resources and the Improvement Process. Of the staff surveyed, 75% completed the survey. Overall, staff found St Joseph's a rewarding workplace and generally they feel valued and challenged. Staff indicated that they would like to construct a clear and consistent approach to behaviour and student wellbeing as well as improving the consistency of programs run within the school.

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 Primary School is committed to providing a quality education that meets the needs of all students. The school used a variety of assessment strategies at key points in the learning framework. There was a focus on formative assessment to inform teaching and self and peer assessment guided by success criteria. The school participated in the norms based assessments such as the Progressive Achievement Tests in maths and reading which helps identify individual learning needs and the review of whole-class teaching programs.

Information on student progress was communicated on a regular basis and opportunities existed for external assessment results to be discussed with parents on an individual basis. The school also participated in the Best Start Kindergarten Assessment, MiniLit Program and MacqLit Program to support classroom learning. St Joseph's Primary School has, under the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan (LNAP), received a proportionate allocation of teacher time to support and monitor the implementation of the K-2 Diocesan Learning Enhancement Strategy.



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
School & System Registration and Compliance training	03/02/2020	Alistair Stewart
English Professional Development	04/02/2020	Elise Baird
Integration of Key Learning Areas & Learning Environment Development	05/02/2020	Alistair Stewart
Compass Student Management System Training	13/03/2020	Catholic Schools Office Armidale
Catholic Identity Retreat	11/12/2020	Karlee Hatton & Alistair Stewart

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://stjosephsweewaa.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://stjosephsweewaa.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://stjosephsweewaa.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://stjosephsweewaa.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://stjosephsweewaa.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
<p>Objective: Improve performance and retention of Mathematical Skills and Concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in the MAST pilot (Mathematics Specialist Teacher, CSO Armidale initiative). • Professional Learning on Great Maths Sequence, Quality assessment informs instruction, Hooks and Misconceptions, understanding of content within the maths syllabus • Working maths walls (The third teacher) • Increase in achievement in PAT-M Data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 58.82 % of Year 2 students achieved at or above PAT-M (an increase from 36%) • 65.45% Year 3-6 students achieved at or above PAT-M (Goal for 2020 was 60%) <p>Objective: Improve the performance of students in Reading, Writing and Spelling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained focus and accountability to lead targeted guided reading to improve student growth • Professional learning — Quality assessment informs instruction and the planning of future learning • Non-negotiables of the English Block • Within writing, anecdotal data showed increased student growth • 81.5 % of K-2 students achieving CSO benchmark goal in reading for 2020 • 65% Year 3-6 students achieved at or above the PAT-R scale score for their assigned year level <p>Objective: Improve performance knowledge retention of key concepts in Science, History and Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning 2020, staff used professional reading to learn and enhance the backward mapping approach to planning and delivery of units of work. • Change in scope and sequence for 2020 to enable blocks of learning in one focus subject • Anecdotally, students were more engaged and retained concepts as they were frequently covering concepts across a week/unit. 	<p>GOAL 1: Great Learning and Teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Literacy and Mathematics learning outcomes for all students. • Improved use of classroom instruction, assessment and feedback to enhance learning for all students. <p>GOAL 2: An Authentic Catholic Community of Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and use of 'Living Well, Learning Well' framework. • Common language and practices of authentic Catholic care. <p>GOAL 3: Strong Teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and consistent communication and guidance from school staff. • To have all students and their families feel like an active member of the school community.

6.0 Financial Information

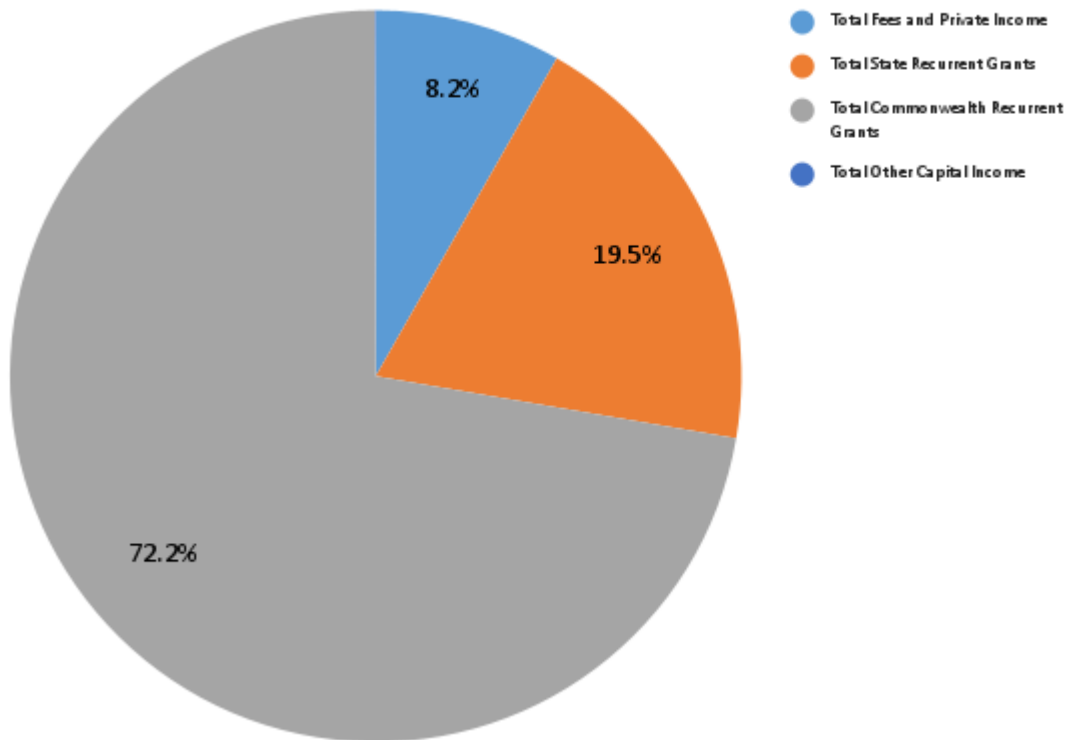


Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary schools, K-10 schools and secondary colleges. This statement details the income and expenditure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



2020 Expenditure - St Joseph's Primary School, Wee Waa

