

# Annual School Report 2023 School Year

St Joseph's Primary School, Wee Waa



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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 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 6795 4038 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.

This year was significant and filled with excitement, learning and challenges.

This report celebrates the students' remarkable progress and academic achievements. We acknowledge their hard work and dedication and are proud of their growth and development. We look forward to supporting them in their continued educational journey.

It has been great to welcome the community to the school and celebrate various events throughout the year. It was wonderful seeing students participate in swimming, cross-country and athletics carnivals, celebrating NAIDOC Week and Book Week, and coming together for fundraisers.

The P&F had a successful year and significantly supported the school community, helping us with learning resources, classroom upgrades and financial support by subsidising camps and school excursions. However, we are bidding farewell to the committee: Rebecca Crutcher (President), Courtney Bell (Vice President), Rebecca Dewson (Treasurer) and Kylie Shearer (Secretary). We are grateful for their time and dedication to their respective roles.

At the end of the year, we said goodbye to some staff members. Mrs Avery, Mrs Woodhill and Mrs Lucero will be taking maternity leave, and we wish them all the best. Ms Fullarton, Miss Simmonds-Cutts, and Mr David Hefferen also left at the end of the academic year. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours. Mrs Jill Haire, who has worked in the school office for ten years, also retired. We will miss her and wish her well when moving to the Sunshine Coast. It is also a bittersweet farewell to Mrs Elise Baird, who has worked in the school for over 17 years. She has been a fantastic Assistant Principal and someone I have had the greatest pleasure working alongside. I am proud of her for taking on the challenge of being a full-time Inclusion Coach for the Diocese of Armidale, as I know the talents she brings to that job, and the students in all the schools she works with, will be positively impacted by her presence.

Thank you for taking the time to read the Annual School Report for 2023.

Alistair Stewart  
Principal

### 1.2 A Parent Message

Well done to St Joseph's on a wonderful year. It feels like we were able to get back to normality and finally have a disaster-free year, free of flooding and major COVID-19 impacts. The school was able to host BBQs, community events (Book Week and NAIDOC Week), and a successful school fête. Importantly, children were able to travel for excursions and represent the school at major extracurricular and sporting events.

A sincere thank you to the teachers and staff who continue to provide an excellent place for children to learn and grow. Your patience, care and enthusiasm are greatly appreciated and, as a parent, I know that you all have had a very positive influence on the children. Your reputation is unmatched, and I think it is a testament to the strong Joey's team that the school has increasing numbers, as recently as Term 4.

After six years and starting on the first School Advisory Council (SAC) in its current inception, this year, along with Steve Carolan and Elise Avery, is our final year on the aSAC. It has been a pleasure working with you both. We have worked with three different principals, seen a high turnover of staff and experienced the school enrolments grow year-on-year. We had some lengthy



discussions concerning school operations, always with the intention of helping the school. Elise, good luck with your maternity leave, and we wish you and Dave all the best for your future family.

I want to thank Alistair and Father Joseph for listening and providing an open platform for us to discuss school matters over the last few years. I am sure the current and new board members will have great dialogue with you and feel as confident as we did discussing school matters.

To the new board, good luck with your future roles. The council is the link between the community and the school, and I am sure you will give great guidance through your committed investment towards the future of the school. Thank you.

Jon Baird  
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 Andrew's Parish which serves the communities of Wee Waa, Burren Junction, Pilliga, Spring Plains and Yarrie Lake, from which the school families are drawn.

Last year the school celebrated 112 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest, Fr 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 school community came together to celebrate several liturgies throughout the year.

Whole school masses were held to celebrate the beginning and end of the school year. In addition, various feast days, such as St Joseph's and St Andrew's, were observed. Holy Week activities were a significant element of the school's liturgical life, as were the sacramental programs, including reconciliation and Eucharist led by Fr Joseph. As well as regular class and school prayer time, the children celebrated times of importance for the school and the broader community, such as Anzac Day and NAIDOC Week. St Joseph's participated in the following social justice opportunities: Caritas Project Compassion and Catholic Mission. This year saw the continuation of the Mini Vinnies committee's great work, which helped to fundraise for St Vincent de Paul. The Religious Education Coordinator, Mrs Karlee Hatton, organised the Sacramental Program for the parish. Staff regularly attend Sunday Mass and were 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 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	25



## 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
<b>Male</b>	6	17	2	9	7	12	11	64	71
<b>Female</b>	13	10	6	7	4	8	7	55	50
<b>Totals</b>	19	27	8	16	11	20	18	119	121

## 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
<b>Average Student Attendance Rates</b>	90.0%	88.0%	91.0%	85.0%	89.0%	89.0%	81.0%	87.6%

### 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 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 NESA Teacher Accreditation Provisional or Conditional level.	1
2. Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Proficient level.	11
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.	7
6. Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the school.	4
7. Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the school.	12

## 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:

- The school promotes school leadership through the cultivation of Year 6 as school leaders. St Joseph's continued to develop the leadership potential of students through different student groups, such as School Captains, Sports Captains, Mini Vinnies and Junior Joeys. There were opportunities throughout the school year to lead events such as school tours during the enrolment period, assemblies, masses and liturgies, as well as other community events. St Joseph's students attended Anzac Day, Remembrance Day, Senior Citizens' Luncheon, Grandparents' Day, and NAIDOC Week.



- 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 fortnightly Recognition of Learning assemblies. Children were further recognised when they demonstrated 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 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 surveyed parents regarding their satisfaction with the critical areas of Catholic ethos, leadership, general education, teaching and learning, resources, and the improvement process. Of the parents surveyed, 42% participated. Parents were happy with their child's educational progress, there was an increase in happiness in the communication between school and home, and they were pleased that the school has explicit, clearly communicated school-wide targets for improvement. This survey gives the school leadership an opportunity to hear opinions from parents and an opportunity for them to record their feedback.

Through parents' responses, the following areas have been identified to investigate and target in 2024. These areas have had a positive increase in metrics since the last survey. However, parents have identified that the school facilities need to be updated more, and they believe that the School Advisory Council could be better utilised.

### Student Satisfaction

An independent organisation surveyed students regarding their satisfaction with the critical areas of Catholic ethos, leadership, general education, teaching and learning, resources, and the improvement process. Of the students surveyed, 69% of Years 4-6 participated. Students were generally happy about their education, safety and learning opportunities. However, students would like to see more relevant homework assigned to assist in their learning, and the school should improve play and leisure facilities and increase the chance for more play, sports, and use of digital technologies.

### Staff Satisfaction

An independent organisation surveyed staff regarding their satisfaction with the critical areas of Catholic ethos, leadership, general education, teaching and learning, resources, and the improvement process. Of the school's staff, 90% completed the survey. Overall, staff found St Joseph's a safe and rewarding workplace. They feel valued and challenged.

Through this survey, staff indicated that they would like to see the school better maintained and its facilities improved to provide them with better learning environments and the opportunity to enhance the cross-curricular priorities within Key Learning Areas.



### **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 uses 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 nationwide literacy and numeracy testing program (NAPLAN), which helps identify individual learning needs and review whole class teaching programs. Information on student progress was communicated regularly, and opportunities existed for external assessment results to be discussed with parents individually. The school continued using the MiniLit Program to support classroom learning in Stage 1. During the year, St Joseph's was a pilot school for a Tier 3 intervention program called Read 3. A speech pathologist has devised this program, and it will help some of students retain words and read more accurately.

#### **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, 17 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 21 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.





**Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy  
Percentage of Students in Levels Strong and Exceeding**

Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar and Punctuation	Numeracy
50.0	69.0	63.0	33.0	38.0

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

Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar and Punctuation	Numeracy
55.0	45.0	60.0	55.0	45.0

**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"> <li>• <b>Great Learning &amp; Teaching</b> - Became data-evident practitioners enhancing the improvements of all students in English and Mathematics</li> <li>• <b>An Authentic Catholic Community of Care</b> - Built self-efficacy of students, staff and school community</li> <li>• <b>Strong Teams</b> - Built collective efficacy of learners to enhance achievement</li> </ul> <p>This year saw a strong year of growth and a number of 'Evidence of Impact' goals were met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 82% of K-2 students exceeded PM benchmark targets</li> <li>• 53.7% of students achieved above the norm-referenced sample mean - PAT Reading</li> <li>• 48.5% of students achieved above the norm-referenced sample mean - PAT Maths</li> <li>• 25.3 avg score - Yr 6 RE Test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Great Learning &amp; Teaching</b> - Develop a coherent instructional framework to improve achievement in literacy</li> <li>• <b>An Authentic Catholic Community of Care</b> - Build self-efficacy of students, staff and school community</li> <li>• <b>Strong Teams</b> - Increased capacity of staff to enhance the collective efficacy of all</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence of Impact: <i>How do we know if we have achieved our goals?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased correlation with A-E Reading reporting, Pm benchmarks and external validators (0.8 best system practice)</li> <li>• Increased percentage of students achieving strong in NAPLAN 2025</li> <li>• Above 80% of K-2 students achieving PM Benchmark Targets</li> <li>• 65% Year 1-6 Students to achieve at the mean or above in PAT Reading and Maths</li> <li>• Co-Constructed planned units of work will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fluid groupings and adjusted levels of entry based on assessment</li> <li>• Differentiation and adjustments present due to reflective practice</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Anecdotal evidence collected through Learning Walks and Talks</li> <li>• Increase in wellbeing factors in the LWLW survey</li> <li>• Decrease in safety chronicles</li> <li>• Increased scores in the Student Satisfaction survey 2.1&lt;</li> <li>• Retention of staff</li> <li>• Maintain staff satisfaction in annual school improvement survey 2.0&lt;</li> <li>• Increased staff voice and agency</li> </ul>



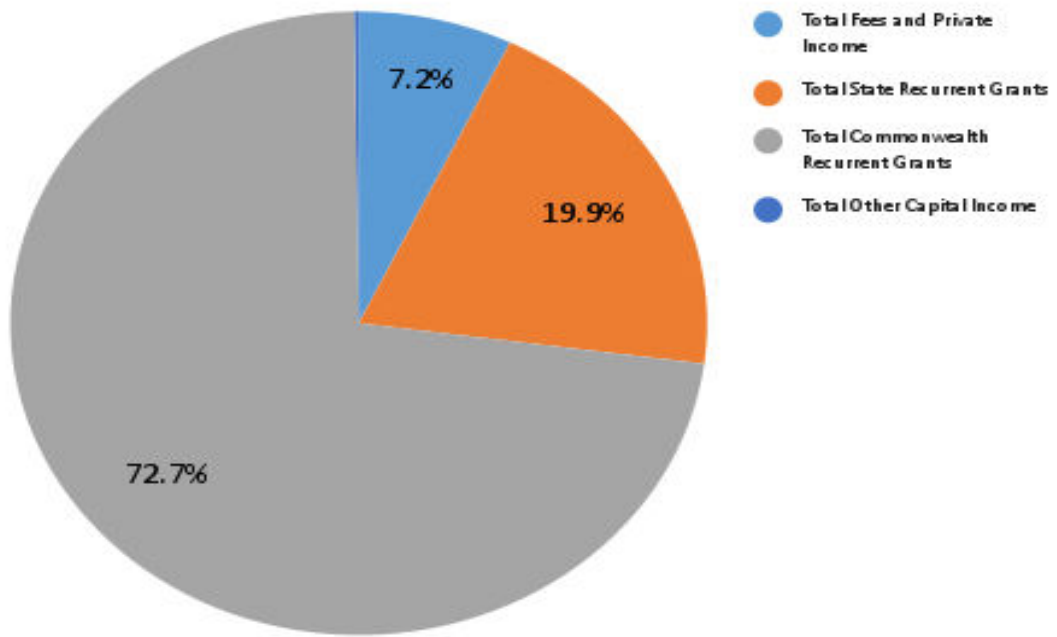
## 6.0 Financial Information

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 2023 is presented below:



### 2023 Income - St Joseph's Primary School, Wee Waa



### 2023 Expenditure - St Joseph's Primary School, Wee Waa

