

2024

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT



St Bernard's Catholic Primary School

Warrina Street, BEROWRA HEIGHTS 2082

Principal: Mrs Gill Austin

Web: www.sbbdbb.catholic.edu.au

About this report

St Bernard's Catholic Primary School (the 'School') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB), the proprietor, with Catholic Schools NSW (CSNSW) as the approved authority for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the Education Act 1990 (NSW).

The Annual School Report (the 'Report') demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies and CSBB. Additionally, the Report complements and is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the School community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students.

The Report provides parents and the wider community with fair, reliable and objective information about educational and financial performance measures as well as School and system policies. This information includes summary contextual data, an overview of student performance in state and national assessments, a description of the achievement of priorities in the previous year and areas for improvement. Detailed information about the School's improvement journey is documented at local school level and is developed, implemented and evaluated in consultation with key stakeholders.

Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the School directly or by visiting the School's website. Information can also be obtained from the [My School website](#).

Message from key groups in our community

Principal's Message

Now in my fifth year as Principal, I continue to be heartened by the community here at St Bernard's. Our school student body continues to grow in numbers, this year rising to 13 classes, with a strong community reputation for guiding students to be the best that they can be.

Our strength lies with a dedicated teaching staff who strive to bring out the best in every child. I am constantly inspired by our teachers and the concern they have for those in their care and the dedication to the profession they exhibit each day. Teaching remains a vocation to us here which is evident in the way we approach our work.

We believe in providing our teachers with not only the resources to do their jobs well but also targeted professional learning. We continue with our collaborative coaching model - freeing teachers for additional learning with a dedicated teacher coach in literacy and more specifically written language. We are seeing true progress in our learners and will continue to build on that success.

This report aims to explain and contextualise events this year and outline the future we envisage for our school.

This year also saw a significant investment in the establishment of our SPARK program (Supporting Potential Among Remarkable Kids). This program is coordinated by five North Shore schools who come together twice a term to support students showing potential in various areas from maths & science to music and drama. St Bernard's was proud to support students from these schools in Science and written language this year and we are planning similar projects in 2025.

Parent Body Message

As a parent of two children at St Bernard's I feel welcome, included and involved in the life of the school. I receive regular communication from via Compass notices, school Newsletter and the St Bernard's Facebook pages.

The Parent Engagement Coordinator (PEC) at Bernard's is a helpful conduit between me and the school. I feel comfortable asking questions and giving feedback. The PEC is a friendly face at school events available for a chat.

The P&F meetings are a great forum to provide feedback and advocate in support of the school. They do a great job with building community and running many fundraising events for the school.

St Bernard's gives me lots of opportunities to be engaged in school life through events such as a weekly assembly, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparents Day, Open Classrooms, Swimming Carnivals and CrossCountry, Mass and Liturgies.

The annual Welcome BBQ is an exciting start to the year when I can reconnect and meet other families. We have a wonderful class parent network. They regularly share information about events, and school life and do a great job organising get togethers outside school hours.

Overall, St Bernard's is a welcoming, open and caring school community which makes me feel engaged and involved in the St Bernard's family. I am blessed with this school for my kids.

Student Body Message

St Bernard's is a safe and fun learning place for all students to feel comfortable and happy while learning. We have endless possibilities for all students with fun clubs and outstanding leadership teams which include debating, coding, dance troupe, choir, art club, chess club and a sensational band! We have multiple leadership teams including school captains, vice captains, sport captains, kindness captains, hospitality club, dance captains and media team.

The kind teachers inspire all students to do their best and collaborate with peers. We have great learning support teachers, and they always help with subjects such as writing and mathematics.

Some of the extra curriculum activities include Japanese and library. We also do PE once a week with a specialist teacher and then have class sport on top of that. Once a year we have a swimming carnival, cross-country and athletics carnival.

At St Bernard's we have before and after school care (OSHC) for when parents must go to work early and stay at work late. We even have vacation care for school holidays!

We have excursion days for all grades. In the younger grades we go to the zoo, and in Year 5 we go to Milson Island and in Year 6 we go to Canberra.

We love St Bernard's, and all the opportunities we have here. It is a school that values our ideas and personal growth. St Bernard's is a great place to be.

School Features

St Bernard's Catholic Primary School Berowra Heights is a Catholic systemic co-educational school. The school was established in 1971 by the Sisters of Mercy. It is situated in a beautiful bushland setting with students drawn from the surrounding suburbs of Mt Ku-ring-gai, Mt Colah, Cowan, Brooklyn and Mooney Mooney.

The school enjoys priority feeder status to two North Shore High Schools – St Leo's Catholic College Wahroonga and Mercy Catholic College in Chatswood, with a high proportion of our student's gaining entry for their high school education.

Within our area and across the Diocese of Broken Bay, our school enjoys a reputation as a centre of excellence in teaching and learning which offers a balanced, holistic curriculum in a safe and caring environment. Our school is known for its close-knit community and for its warm welcome, inspiring one another to grow in faith, hope, love, respect, justice and joy.

The school offers a welcoming Christ-centred community, quality teaching and learning, specialist teachers in Physical Education and Japanese. In addition, there is a five-week musical incursion for all year groups in terms 2 and 3, a well-resourced library and classrooms, a Rock and Water program, Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL), Zones of Regulation, a Worry Woo program, and ExSEL groups, which all support students in their social and emotional development

Religious Education is an integral part of the school and students are involved in developing liturgies for classroom and whole school celebrations. The new Religious Education curriculum launched to kindergarten in 2022, was this year extended into the primary years with great success.

The school has a busy and well supported Parent and Friends organisation. This group holds many activities over the course of a school year, including a whole school welcome BBQ's, Mother's Day and Father's Day celebrations, fund raising events – all profits are then returned to the school. Such resourcing is greatly appreciated allowing the school to obtain extra resources to enhance both academic and social and emotional learning.

Their final year of primary school is filled with opportunities to lead the rest of the school in technology, sport, dance troupes, hospitality, kindness and SRC (Student Representative Council).

There are many opportunities for students to participate in a variety of sporting, cultural and academic activities, including public speaking and debating competitions, gala sport days, creative school performances, dance troupes, chess club, maths Olympiad, maths games and maths explorer extension and enrichment groups, and coding clubs.

We are fortunate to have spacious and beautiful green areas in our school, with many opportunities for imaginative play as well as team games.

Student Profile

Student Enrolment

Students attending the School come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2024. Additional information can be found on the [My School website](#).

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
139	146	41	285

* Language Background Other than English

Enrolment Policy

The [Enrolment Principles](#) temporarily supersede The Enrolment Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools (2013) and are being followed by the School for enrolments for 2024. As inclusive and evangelising communities, we welcome every family who would like a Catholic education for their children. Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB) strives to respond to the needs of all students, within the constraints of our available resources. We believe all students should have access to our schools which offer educational opportunities that nurture the Catholic faith, expand life choices, cater for the disadvantaged, and challenge all students to reach their full potential. Our schools are explicitly evangelical, catechetical and address (with the support of our parishes and agencies), the faith formation of our school communities. Copies of these principles and other policies in this Report may be obtained from the [CSBB website](#) or by contacting CSBB.

Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for the School in 2024 was 92.30%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group						
Kindergarten	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
92.30	91.70	93.10	92.80	92.60	92.00	91.60

Managing Student Non-Attendance

In order for students to reach their full potential it is of paramount importance that they attend school regularly. While it is the parents' legal responsibility under the NSW Education Act (1990) to ensure that their children attend school regularly, our staff as part of their duty of care, monitor all absences and work in partnership with parents to support and promote the regular attendance of students. In doing so, the School, under the leadership of the principal:

- provides a caring environment which fosters a sense of wellbeing and belonging in students
- maintains accurate records of student attendance
- implements policies and procedures to monitor student attendance and to address non-attendance issues as and when they arise
- communicates to parents and students, the School's expectations with regard to student attendance and the consequences of not meeting these expectations
- recognises and rewards excellent and improved student attendance.

School attendance records also contain information regarding student absences including reasons for absence and documentation to substantiate reasons for absences. Teachers are required to monitor non-attendance diligently on a student by student basis and to bring to the attention of the Principal immediately any unexplained absences, non-attendance of a chronic nature, or reasons for non-attendance that cause concern. Matters of concern are referred to the Principal, CSBB and the relevant Department of Education officer where appropriate.

Where a student is not able to attend school for a prolonged period of time due to a medical condition or illness, the School in collaboration with parents, provides resources to contribute to the student's continuum of learning where possible. CSBB monitors each School's compliance with student attendance and management of non-attendance as part of the system's Quality Assurance and Compliance processes. The School's attendance monitoring procedures are based on the Procedures for the Management of Student Attendance in Catholic Schools Broken Bay.

Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2024:

Total number of staff	21
Number of full time teaching staff	14
Number of part time teaching staff	7
Number of non-teaching staff	4

Total number of teaching staff by NESA category

All teachers employed by the School are qualified to teach in NSW. Additionally, all teachers at this School who are responsible for delivering the curriculum are accredited with NESA and hold a Working with Children Check.

Teachers at this School are either accredited as conditional, provisional, proficient or highly accomplished as defined by the NSW Teacher Accreditation Act 2004. Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher are voluntary. The number of teachers within the Catholic Schools Broken Bay in our 45 schools at these levels is as follows:

- Highly Accomplished: 9 teachers
- Proficient: 1322 teachers
- Provisional: 132 teachers
- Conditional: 67 teacher

Additionally, there are approximately 60 teachers who are currently actively engaged in the submission process at the higher levels of accreditation. Teacher status at individual schools can be sourced directly from the School.

Catholic Identity and Mission

As a Catholic community, the School shares in the mission of the local Church. The [Diocesan Mission Statement](#) is our statement of shared common purpose: "The Diocese of Broken Bay exists to evangelise, to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, gathered as friends in the Lord and sent out to be missionary disciples."

In partnership with parents as the first faith educators of their children and the local parish community, the School seeks to provide authentic, professional Catholic Education, inspiring hearts and minds to know Christ, to love learning, to use their talents to be the very best they can be. Our vision, purpose and all we do is founded on faith in Jesus Christ, and informed by Christian values including faith, joy, witness, compassion, and courage.

The School's Religious Education (RE) program is based on the [Catholic Schools Broken Bay Religious Education Curriculum](#) and aims to provide students with meaningful, engaging and challenging learning experiences that explores the rich diversity of the Catholic faith and ways in which we live it. A new Religious Education Curriculum has been developed to further enhance the learning experience for all. This was implemented into Early Stage 1, Stage 1, Stage 3, Stage 4 and Stage 5 classrooms incrementally from 2022 with the final stage being implemented in 2025. These programs include formal Religious Education as well as retreats, spirituality days and social justice opportunities in which students are invited to serve others, especially the poor and those who are marginalised.

Faith formation opportunities are provided for students, staff, parents and caregivers. Students regularly celebrate Mass and pray together. Students are invited to participate in age appropriate sacramental and Youth Ministry activities aimed at living out their mission as disciples of Jesus.

As a Catholic school founded in the Mercy tradition under the Diocese of Broken Bay, we are dedicated to fostering a community that reaches out to those in need. Outreach initiatives in 2024 included The Dish (an outreach van supporting the needy in our local area), Project Compassion (Caritas), and Crazy Sock Day (Catholic Mission). We also assembled food and warm clothing hampers for The Feast of the Sacred Heart and Christmas food hampers for St Vincent de Paul and The Dish.

The Mercy Action Group continued its efforts in 2024, focusing on social justice issues both locally and globally. This group led the school during October and Mission Month, raising funds for Mission Australia.

Throughout 2024, we acknowledged significant liturgical seasons of the Church Year, including Lent, Easter, and Advent. We celebrated Masses together for important occasions

This summary of our Catholic life highlights the deep commitment of St Bernard's to fostering faith, compassion, and a spirit of community throughout the 2024 school year.

Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

The School provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabuses for primary education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology (S&T), Human Society and its Environment (HSIE), Creative Arts (CA) and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE). In addition to this, the School implements the Diocesan Religious Education syllabus. Staff members are committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning in all facets of the curriculum.

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At St Bernard's Catholic Primary School, we believe that students excel when the curriculum is both relevant and challenging. Our teaching programs are designed to inspire and address the diverse needs of all students. We encourage each student to pursue individual excellence and reach their personal best. Our staff is dedicated to the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning across all areas of the school curriculum.

We have continued our rigorous focus on the collaborative coaching framework with grade partners meeting weekly with the Assistant Principal to develop, refine and deliver class programs to enhance the learning skills of all students. The key aim of these sessions is to support students in improving their written language with particular focus on tier 2 vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation and using a range of cohesive devices.

Other particular features of the school curriculum initiatives include:

- Year 3 to Year 6 implemented NESA 3-6 English and Mathematics Syllabus documents
- Identified groups from Kindergarten to Year 6 supported by specialist teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) to run the 'Reading Tutor Program' and 'MiniLit'
- K-6 Japanese language program facilitated by a specialist language teacher
- K-6 music program facilitated by a specialist music teacher in term 3
- Specialist Physical Education teacher to support student participation in dance, athletics, sport skills and gymnastics
- Use of contemporary technology to enhance teaching and learning including BeeBots, Sphero's and drones

- Selected students involved in SPARK (Supporting Potential Among Remarkable Kids) days working in a range of schools across the diocese on varying topics of study
- Identified students from Year 3 and 4 participate in weekly Maths Explorer sessions
- Identified students from Year 5 and 6 participate in weekly Maths Olympiad sessions
- Positive Behaviour for Learning established in all classes.

Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

NAPLAN

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The purpose of NAPLAN is to provide information to parents and teachers about the achievements of students in literacy and numeracy. The test provides a measure of the student's performance against established standards and against other students in Australia. Each year the results are analysed by the school to inform teaching with a view to improving student performance.

NAPLAN results are reported against proficiency standards with 4 levels of achievement to give teachers, parents and carers clearer information on how students are performing:

- 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.

The percentage of student achieving at Exceeding and Strong proficiency standards in NAPLAN at St Bernard's Catholic Primary School for 2024 is reported in the table below.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2024		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 3	Grammar and Punctuation	76%	54%
	Reading	87%	66%
	Writing	98%	77%
	Spelling	80%	61%
	Numeracy	89%	63%

NAPLAN RESULTS 2024		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 5	Grammar and Punctuation	84%	65%
	Reading	84%	71%
	Writing	84%	67%
	Spelling	86%	68%
	Numeracy	70%	68%

Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

Pastoral Care Policy

The School's pastoral care and student wellbeing policies, guidelines and procedures are informed by the [Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing Policy](#). This policy is underpinned by the guiding principles from the National Safe Schools Framework (2013) (NSSF) that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a prerequisite for effective learning in all Catholic school settings. The Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Framework for Learning for the Diocese of Broken Bay Schools System (the Framework') utilises the NSSF ensuring that diocesan systemic schools meet the objectives of the NSSF at the same time as meeting the diocesan vision for pastoral care and wellbeing. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the CSBB website or by contacting CSBB. The policy was revised in 2019 to align with the [Australian Wellbeing Framework \(2018\)](#) for implementation in 2020.

Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy

The School's policies and procedures for the management of student behaviour are aligned to the [Behaviour Support Policy](#). Policies operate within a context that all members of the school community share responsibility to foster, encourage and promote positive behaviour and respectful relationships. The policy aims to promote a safe and supportive learning environment to maximise teaching and learning time for all students. It supports the development of students' pro-social behaviour based on respectful relationships and clear behavioural expectations. The dignity and responsibility of each person is promoted at all times along with positive student behaviours while ensuring the respect for the rights of all students and staff. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the CSBB website or by contacting CSBB. There were no significant changes made to this policy in 2024.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The School's Anti-Bullying guidelines and procedures are based on and informed by the [Prevention and Management of Student Bullying Policy](#) and is aligned to the Pastoral Care Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools and other related wellbeing policies and guidelines. All students, their families and employees within Catholic education have a right to a learning and work environment that is free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. Anti-Bullying policies support school communities to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying. Further

information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the [CSBB website](#) or by contacting CSBB. There were no changes made to this policy in 2024.

Complaints Handling Policy

The School follows the [Complaints Management and Resolution Policy](#). A distinctive feature of this policy is to ensure that complaints are addressed in a timely and confidential manner at the lowest appropriate management level in order to prevent minor problems or concerns from escalating. The expectation is that complaints will be brought forward and resolved in a respectful manner, recognising the dignity of each person concerned in the process. The policy recognises that a number of more minor or simple matters can be resolved without recourse to the formal complaint handling process but rather, quickly and simply, by discussion between the appropriate people. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the [CSBB website](#) or by contacting CSBB. There were changes made to this policy in 2024 to reflect new system processes.

Community 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, a variety of processes have been used to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers.

Parent satisfaction

Current parents have expressed the following about our school

- Strong external ties and a sense of belonging, with people sharing common beliefs
- A heart-felt approach while giving reassurance
- Transparent exchanges, including parents, while reinforcing available guidance
- Pursuit of high scholastic standards, while enhancing performance and ensuring success
- Kindness towards those in need, ensuring everyone is involved and supported
- Close working partnerships with parents to best support student needs

Student satisfaction

Students have expressed the following about our school

- Students feel safe attending St Bernard's
- Students feel teachers are responsive to their needs and encourage independence with a democratic approach
- Students understand that there are clear rules and expectations of classroom behaviour
- Teachers emphasise academic skills and have high expectations for all students to succeed
- Students feel as though they have improved this year at school
- Students enjoy their environment and take advantage of the oval and many other play spaces

Teacher satisfaction

Teachers at our school expressed the following

- Opportunities to generate and explore new ideas and better ways of working
- Transparent exchanges and opportunities to share new ideas
- Appreciation for their closest connections and personal time
- Deep concern and consideration shown for others, while extending a gentle approach

- An uplifting, can-do outlook in their endeavours, making space to involve others
- Focus on being authentic – truthful with others and living in accord with their principles

Financial Statement

Consistent with the NESAs requirements, financial income and expenditure for the School in 2024 is shown below. More detailed financial data is available on the My School website.

Recurrent and Capital Income 2024	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants ¹	\$2,703,303
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$643,980
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$1,286,355
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$0
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$203
Total Income	\$4,633,842

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2024	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$410,500
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$3,631,396
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$1,167,728
Total Expenditure	\$5,209,625

Notes

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.
3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income.
5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture and Equipment.
7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.

END OF 2024 REPORT