



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

2025

Annual Report to the School Community



St Finbar's School

90 Centre Road, BRIGHTON EAST 3187

Principal: Michelle Hill

Web: www.sfbrightoneast.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 1221, E Number: E1111

Principal's Attestation

I, Michelle Hill, attest that St Finbar's School is compliant with:

- The minimum standards and other requirements for school registration and school boarding premises (if applicable) as specified in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic).
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2025 school year under the Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth) and the Australian Education Regulations 2023 (Cth).
- The Child Safe Standards as prescribed in Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises.

Attested on 29 May 2026

About this report

St Finbar's School is registered by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). The Annual Report to the School Community (ARSC), provides parents and the wider community with information about the school's activities and achievements throughout the year including information about various aspects of school performance. The Report 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. 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](#).

Governing Authority Report

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) continues to take bold and ambitious steps, guided by our MACS2030 strategy, to empower our students to flourish and step into the world as the leaders of tomorrow.

In advancing our 2030 vision and our ambition to deliver world-leading Catholic education, we celebrate the significant progress made across our four areas of strategic focus. The safety and wellbeing of our staff and students underpins everything we do, enabling an environment where learning grows with purpose, leadership develops in capability and confidence, and our communities continue to thrive through our shared Catholic outlook.

Inspired by faith in the Jubilee Year of the Catholic Church in 2025, we successfully implemented our Faith Formation Framework, to further strengthen faith education, offering deeper opportunities for spiritual development and meaningful engagement for students, staff and leaders alike. Faith is at the heart of all our schools, grounding our mission and inspiring students, teachers and staff to grow and lead with integrity.

The official launch and implementation of the Vision for Engagement (VFE) strategy demonstrated impressive results in our community of Flourishing Learners.

Anchored in evidence-based practise, the VFE strengthens our system-wide teaching and learning approach and enhances the daily engagement of students through the explicit teaching of positive behaviour, reinforcement and consistency. It sets clear expectations about attendance and includes a sustained focus on student mental health and wellbeing.

For learners to flourish, students must be safe, which is why we are continuing to strengthen our safety processes and risk management culture. Our focus is on providing training and professional development for all staff to ensure student safety remains top of mind in every decision we make, every environment we shape and every interaction we have.

To strengthen the pillar of enabled leaders, MACS has established consistent standards across schools for cultivating inspiring, capable leaders for students to observe.

In the past year, our Pathways to Principalship Programme and Women in Leadership Programme have both strengthened our principal appointment process and introduced more flexible models of principalship.

It is inspiring to see our principals and teachers continue to raise the bar, reflected in the extraordinary number of nominations received in our Best Teachers campaign.

Finally, we continue to create new and enriched communities, with the opening of a new primary school and children's hub in Melbourne's growing north, ensuring families have access to high quality education no matter where they live.

MACS Early Years Education (MACSEYE) continues to expand early years and outside school hours care services across our schools and communities, with continued growth planned for 2026.

These investments are not simply about building infrastructure. They are about building a dynamic, Catholic education system where every child has an opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

Thank you to all our students, staff, families and community members for being part of our journey so far, and we look forward to continuing to serve as a supportive and guiding presence in your children's lives.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Edward Simons

Executive Director

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

St Finbar's is a Catholic Primary School Community which aims to provide a safe, supportive and dynamic learning environment in which each member is respected and nurtured.

Mission Statement

St. Finbar's is a school where:

- all members are nurtured to grow in their Catholic Faith and Spirituality with a focus on our Catholic Social Teachings and Social Justice.
- students are encouraged and supported to participate fully in an ever changing global community, supported by a curriculum which meets their individual learning needs.
- we value each member as an individual whilst nurturing their social and emotional wellbeing.
- structures and practices are put in place to ensure that all members of the community have the opportunity to grow.
- positive partnerships between school, home and parish are fostered to strengthen our relationships and promote active community involvement.

The school enacts its philosophy in its deeds and actions and through the curriculum.

School Overview

School Overview

St Finbar's Parish, Primary School is situated beside the historic St Finbar's Church on the corner of Centre Road and Nepean Highway, East Brighton.

Formerly known as St Patrick's Parish of Little Brighton, the church was opened in a newly erected weatherboard building on April 30, 1848, with Mass. The school shared this building with the church for three months and in June 1848, St Finbar's School was opened in another small, wooden building on the site.

With the development of plans for a Melbourne Cathedral, the Archbishop requested that the name Patrick be given to this project, hence St Patrick's Little Brighton took the name of St Finbar's - a truly Irish saint. The weatherboard church and school, 'the first Catholic Church erected in the suburban area of Melbourne' have long since disappeared and have been replaced by the present buildings. None of the original buildings remain as many of them were demolished during the 1970s with the widening of Nepean Highway.

The school was originally founded and staffed by lay teachers. Between 1906 and 1908, the Presentation Sisters taught in the school. They then returned to run the school in 1925 and remained until 1974. Due to decreasing numbers and a redefining of their mission, the Sisters handed on the tradition of quality education to a lay administration and teachers, and this legacy lives on today.

Principal's Report

2025 has been another wonderful year at St Finbar's, filled with learning, exciting events, and a strong sense of community. One of the highlights of the year was our August production of Peter Pan, which captivated the entire school community and is fondly remembered by students and staff alike.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge our incredible staff, whose dedication, care and commitment to the well-being of our students is at the heart of everything we do at St Finbar's.

We implemented the InitialLit program in Prep to Year 2, ensuring that we are providing a rigorous, research-based synthetic phonics program in our junior school. Spelling Mastery was introduced in Years 3 to 6.

Our sporting calendar was equally busy, with whole-school Swimming and Athletics carnivals, our Year 3-6 Cross-Country event, inter-school Winter sport, Cricket Blast and Hoop Time. Our Junior All Stars Boys' team made it through to the Hoop Time State Finals and proudly finished as Runners Up, a remarkable achievement!

Camps are always a highlight of the year for students in Years 3 to 6. I had the privilege of attending the Year 3 camp this year. It is always wonderful to spend time with our students outside of school. I also travelled with my South-Central Principal colleagues to Broome for our biennial conference. This journey allowed us to deepen our understanding of Indigenous culture and visit several remote schools, broadening our perspectives and inspiring future learning.

Amid all of these activities, our teachers continued to deliver high-quality learning experiences, ensuring that every student thrives academically, socially and emotionally.

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To develop the capacity of teachers to dialogue with students about matters of faith

Intended Outcomes:

That teachers feel confident initiating and leading discussions with their class about matters of faith.

Achievements

Religious Education is a key learning area unique to Catholic schools. The course content is outlined in documents produced by the Religious Education Department of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools and further developed by staff.

Students learn about the doctrine and traditions of the Catholic faith and are also provided with many opportunities to participate in Catholic practices. Liturgies are planned and celebrated to mark major Church seasons and events. Junior grades share in a Prayer Night, which involves the students, parents and teachers.

Sacramental Programs are central to the existence of St Finbar's as a Catholic school. Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation are whole school celebrations, which also aims to provide opportunities for parents to reflect on their own personal faith journey. Sacramental/Family nights are held prior to each of these celebrations. These nights, together with Family/Class Masses and Class Prayer Nights are intended to bring families together to support them on their faith journey.

Value Added

The Religious Education Leader included an explanation of the weekly Gospel in our school newsletter

We supported the Caritas Project Compassion and St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal

We held three Prayers in Pyjamas evenings for students in Prep - Year 2 with a focus on a Gospel story

We held Sacramental Family nights for students in Years 3, 4 and 6

Each year level participated in on Saturday evenings throughout the year

Classes attended weekday Parish Masses to strengthen our engagement with parishioners

Attendance at MACS' Catholic Education Week Mass

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goals:

To enhance learning outcomes of all students by developing a consistent approach to a differentiated curriculum

To implement highly effective teaching strategies, using research-based teaching practices, to ensure that every student is engaged and challenged

Intended Outcomes:

That there is growth of all students in Mathematics and students can articulate how they have been challenged and where they are at and where they move to next

That there is consistent approach in planning, assessment, pedagogy in Mathematics

That students enter their learning journey at their own level, through a differentiated curriculum to ensure they are engaged and challenged.

That teachers are deliberate in their use of High Impact Teaching Strategies to cater for differentiation in all curriculum areas.

Achievements

Implemented the InitialLit program in Prep to Year 2

Implemented Spelling Mastery from Years 3 to 6

Engaged education consultant Glenn Pearsall to work with staff on explicit instruction strategies, including Check for Understanding, Full Participation and Feedback

Further implementation of the MACS Ochre Resources

Continued to use Inquisitive platform to guide staff in planning high-quality units of work in History, Science, and Geography

Extensive professional development in explicit teaching strategies

Student Learning Outcomes

St Finbar's students demonstrated strong achievement in the 2025 NAPLAN assessments, with results reflecting the school's ongoing commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. Across both Year 3 and Year 5, students performed strongly in all assessed domains when compared with students from similar backgrounds.

Reading and Grammar & Punctuation were particular areas of strength. Year 3 students achieved their highest results in Grammar & Punctuation (442) and Reading (438), while Year 5 students recorded outstanding results in Grammar & Punctuation (538) and Reading (534). These outcomes reflect the impact of the school's consistent focus on evidence-based literacy instruction and the development of strong language skills across all year levels.

Students also achieved solid results in Numeracy, with Year 5 students attaining a score of 528, demonstrating confidence and competence in mathematical thinking and problem-solving. Writing and Spelling results remained positive and provide valuable information to guide ongoing curriculum planning and targeted improvement initiatives.

While NAPLAN provides one measure of student achievement, these results are considered alongside a broad range of academic, wellbeing and engagement data. The 2025 outcomes affirm the dedication of our students, staff and families and support our continued focus on ensuring every learner is challenged, supported and empowered to achieve their personal best.

NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards					
	2025 (current year)			2-Year Average	
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 3	442	71%	438	73%
	Year 5	538	87%	529	84%
Numeracy	Year 3	431	82%	434	84%
	Year 5	528	83%	527	87%
Reading	Year 3	438	86%	438	85%
	Year 5	534	91%	520	86%
Spelling	Year 3	427	71%	424	70%
	Year 5	514	83%	506	82%
Writing	Year 3	436	94%	440	92%
	Year 5	512	87%	513	88%

*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2025 due to participation not meeting these criteria or no students were assessed. Participants include students who were assessed, including non-attempt, or those exempted from the test.

Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: To empower students to have self-efficacy and agency in their own learning.

Intended Outcomes:

That students will be able to articulate their learning goals and identify their strengths and challenges in each learning area

Teachers are providing regular opportunities for feedback and metacognition conversations

That there are consistent processes in place for goal setting and providing and responding to feedback

Achievements

Wellbeing continues to be a high priority for us at St Finbar's with a strong belief that children need to feel happy and safe at school, before they can be ready to learn. Students undertook the Respectful Relationships program in 2025. Once again the Wellbeing Team met regularly to

discuss specific student concerns and wellbeing initiatives. We raised the profile of Harmony Day in 2025 with a whole school dress up day, parade and classroom activities.

We used various tools to track how our students are feeling on a day to day basis, including the Ripple program, and classroom based Wellbeing trackers for students to raise concerns directly with their teachers. Students in Years 3 - 6 completed the Youth Resilience Survey and we discussed the results of this survey as a Wellbeing Team, and with classroom teachers in PLTs.

Value Added

Began Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) training through MACS

Respectful Relationships program from Prep to Year 6

Implementation of Ripple program from Years 2 - 5

Year 6 teacher buddy program

R U Okay Day

Harmony Day

Participation in the Youth Resilience Survey

Wellbeing Team meetings

Year 6 Wellbeing Leaders (Student Leadership)

Protective Behaviours program

Student Satisfaction

The 2024 MACSIS student survey at St Finbar's highlights many strengths in our school community. A strong 77% of students feel that their teachers set high expectations, encouraging effort, understanding, and persistence—reflecting our commitment to academic excellence.

Students also report a strong sense of belonging, with 77% feeling valued as important members of the school community. Positive teacher-student relationships are evident, with 73% of students experiencing supportive and meaningful connections both inside and outside the classroom.

Our school is recognised as a safe and respectful environment, with 74% of students feeling physically and emotionally safe, supported by 71% who value the staff's role in maintaining this positive climate.

Additionally, the majority of students feel confident and motivated as learners, showing a strong learning disposition (78%) and engagement in their studies.

We are proud of the positive experiences of our students and remain dedicated to building on these strengths to ensure every student flourishes.

Student Attendance

At St Finbar's we use the NForma program to monitor student attendance. Parents are notified via an automated email of any unexplained student absence. Classroom teachers reach out to families if there are absences of more than two days without parent contact.

Repeat absenteeism is followed up by the Deputy Principal or Principal, and we follow MACS Attendance policies and guidelines for cases of chronic absenteeism.

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y01	87.49
Y02	87.42
Y03	87.83
Y04	89.23
Y05	88.44
Y06	83.86
Overall average attendance	87.38

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

- To implement highly effective teaching strategies, using research-based teaching practices, to ensure that every student is engaged and challenged

Students - That students enter their learning journey at their own level, through a differentiated curriculum to ensure they are engaged and challenged.

Staff - That teachers are deliberate in their use of HITS to cater for differentiation in all curriculum areas.

School - Professional development is in line with differentiated, high quality and evidence based pedagogy.

Achievements

Regular attendance at the Southern Region's School Improvement Network

Regular fortnightly Leadership meetings

Refined Annual Review Process for teaching staff

School leaders trained as Instructional Coaches, working with individual teachers to analyse their own practice, and set goals for themselves

Worked with Finance Business Partners to ensure that the school remains in a strong financial position

Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
List Professional Learning undertaken in 2025	
Education Consultant Glenn Pearsall led our staff conferences, with a focus on Check for Understanding techniques School Improvement Network for leaders in the Southern Region Mandatory Reporting online modules Participation in Graduate mentor program Emergency Management Training Student Wellbeing Network Regular attendance at Deputy Network Regular attendance at South Central Principal Network	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2025	340
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$395.00

Teacher Satisfaction

In 2025, 38 staff members at St Finbar's School participated in the MACSSIS Staff Survey, with the school achieving an overall positive endorsement rate of 78% — above the MACS system average of 70% and consistent with the strong results recorded in 2023 (84%) and 2024 (83%). This reflects a highly positive staff culture and a strong sense of professional belonging within the school community. Particular strengths were evident in Staff-Leadership Relationships (97%), School Climate (86%), Collective Efficacy (92%), and Psychological Safety (83%), all of which significantly exceeded system averages. Staff also rated Student Safety (75%) and Staff Safety (79%) positively. Areas identified for continued growth include Feedback (44%), which, while a known challenge across the MACS system, remains below the school's own previous results and warrants ongoing attention. Support for Teams (61%) and Collaboration Around an Improvement Strategy (72%) also present opportunities to strengthen structured professional collaboration. Catholic Identity was rated at 78% overall, with non-teaching staff rating this notably higher (89%) than teaching staff (70%). The school values these results as meaningful insight into staff experience and will use them to inform priorities for professional learning and leadership development in 2026.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0
Masters	5
Graduate	4
Graduate Certificate	3
Bachelor Degree	15
Advanced Diploma	3
No Qualifications Listed	4

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	5
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	27
Teaching Staff (FTE)	23.75
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	21
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	10.82
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	1

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: To be a community that encourages growth and nurtures student learning through opportunities and supportive partnerships with parents, parish and the wider community.

Intended outcomes:

That participation and engagement with parents and community will grow to benefit student learning outcomes.

Parents are aware of our approach to differentiation and feel that they are part of their child's learning.

Achievements

Our major community event in 2025 was our very successful school production of Peter Pan

Active participation in the Hampton RSL ANZAC Day service

Collaboration with Mayflower Aged Care Home - Year 5 biography writing project

Aerobics competition participation, including making it to the national championships

Regular visits to local kindergartens

Grandparents' Day

Parishioners invited to our Science Week Open Day

Volunteer work with local charity - Bayside Community Relief

Dad's Footy Match against a local Catholic primary school

Cluster Days with local Catholic schools

Year 6 Graduation and Big Day Out

Revamped whole school Christmas Carols with a Christmas festival atmosphere

Introduction of St Finbar's Yearbook

Hoop Time All Star Girls Championship

I Sea I Care

Parent Satisfaction

In 2025, 39 families participated in the MACSSIS Family Survey, with St Finbar's School achieving an overall positive endorsement rate of 76%, an improvement on 70% in 2024 and above the MACS system average of 69%. This result reflects the genuine satisfaction families have with their experience of the school. Particular strengths were noted in School Climate (86%) and School Fit (81%), indicating that families feel the school provides a positive, supportive learning environment that meets their children's developmental needs. Student Safety also rated strongly at 77%. While Family Engagement (45%) remains a shared challenge across the system, the school continues to explore opportunities to strengthen partnerships with families. Two domains that will receive focused attention in 2026 are Communication (63%) and Catholic Identity (58%), both of which declined from the previous year and sit below the MACS system average. The school is committed to improving the timeliness and quality of communication with families and to deepening engagement with the Catholic identity and mission of the school community. These results are valued as an important source of feedback to guide our continued improvement efforts.

Financial Performance

The school's financial performance information and a report of the financial activities of the school's boarding premises (if applicable) have been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at www.acnc.gov.au.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at www.sfbrightoneast.catholic.edu.au