



St Patrick's
Special School

2023 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REPORT

St Patrick's Special School

St Patrick's is a specialist R-12 setting dedicated to the holistic education of children and young people with intellectual disability. We are inspired by the unique abilities of our students and offer a curriculum that is contemporary, individualised, faith-filled and orientated to
'Learning for Life'

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SECTION ONE School Context

St Patrick's Special School enrolls students from the age of 5 to the completion of schooling (approximately 18 years of age) with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Many students have a range of additional complex disorders, including Autism, Down Syndrome, and extensive medical needs, which require a different approach to teaching and learning. We offer an integrated, developmentally appropriate curriculum encompassing the Australian Curriculum, including the General Capabilities, the ABLES Curriculum, and The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (Belonging, Being and Becoming).

Each student has a Personalised Plan for Learning (PPL), which is developed and reviewed each semester in collaboration with students, their families and caregivers. The plan is structured around several domains that contribute to a successful post-school life, including communication, social skills, independent living skills, regulation skills and, for students in their senior years, work education.

Our approach to learning is informed by the characteristics of our students who typically exhibit a wide variation of cognitive development and communicative abilities (including delayed or absent speech), significant impairments in communication and socialisation, limited repetitive patterns of interest and activity; unique, complex and challenging behaviours and wide disparity between developmental and chronological ages. Various care plans are used when supporting many of our students including:

- Behaviour 4 Learning Plans
- Continence Care Plans
- Health Care Plans
- Manual Handling Care Plans
- Oral, Eating and Drinking Care Plan
- Toilet Care and Learning Care Plans
- Transfer and Positioning Care Plans
- Transport Plans

SECTION TWO Student Profile

The school caters to students from Reception to Year 12. Students attend from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2023.

Enrolments

54 Students

24 primary and 30 secondary students

The students were grouped into 8 classes as follows:

CLASS	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1 Junior	7	1	8
2 Primary	9	3	12
3 Middle	12	6	18
2 Secondary	11	5	16
TOTAL	39	14	54

Student Attendance

The average attendance rate for our school in 2023 was 85.5%. Attendance rates are aggregated by year group, as shown in the table below.

Attendance Rates by Year Level			
Reception	79.7%	Year 7	89.1%
Year 1	83.4%	Year 8	85.4%
Year 2	81.8%	Year 9	88.2%
Year 3	75.1%	Year 10	94.4%
Year 4	60.6%	Year 11	94.2%
Year 5	94.8%	Year 12	92.1%
Year 6	84.0%	Average	85.5%

When a student is not attending school for the day, parents/caregivers telephone or email the school informing personnel of the student's absence, which is accordingly documented. If a student has not arrived by 9.30 am, school personnel contact the parent/caregiver by phone. Parents must submit an "Exemption" form if they request an extended absence for their child from school.

SECTION THREE Staffing Profile

The school is staffed by teaching and allied health staff (Speech Pathology & Occupational Therapy) and support staff, including a Registered Nurse. There is a staffing ratio of approximately 1:2. Some students require 1:1 support for varying lengths of time.

The school's leadership team in 2023 consisted of

- Principal
- Deputy Principal (Curriculum & Faith Formation)
- Allied Health Leader

In recent years, the school has placed a strong emphasis on developing and sustaining team-based approaches to teaching and learning. This involves class and inter-disciplinary teams (therapists and educators) working collaboratively together to design, implement and evaluate approached student learning.

The school's speech pathologist and three occupational therapists enable a multidisciplinary approach to support the delivery of curricula. While clinical services are not provided, therapists work across the school to support professional staff in the development of programs and practices designed to meet the individual needs of students.

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2023:

Total Teaching Staff	Total Allied Health Staff	Total Non-Teaching Staff	Combined Total
17 (FTE 12.6)	5 (FTE 3.5)	33 (FTE 22.7)	55

Employees who identify as First Nations people: 0

Teacher Qualifications	Number of Teachers
- Masters of Education	3
- Bachelor degrees	17
- Diploma of Teaching	4

Staff Retention

78% of teaching staff continued in service in 2023.

Professional Learning

In 2023, several staff members participated in the Graduate Certificate of Catholic Education, facilitated by Catholic Education South Australia in collaboration with the University of South Australia. As part of their professional development, staff immersed themselves in the Catholic Professional Formation (CPF) program, demonstrating their commitment to ongoing growth and learning.

Professional Development Days for 2023 involved all staff learning together with the following focus and facilitators:

Term 1	Michel Edgecombe – Wellbeing Jane Farrall – Comprehensive Literacy
Term 2	Jane Farrall – Comprehensive Literacy
Term 3	CPI Safety Intervention
Term 4	Staff Reflection Day – Faith Formation

In addition, a range of Work, Health and Safety training was provided with the aim of minimising risk of injury to staff, students and the wider school community. St Patrick's Special School has a WHS system of implementation, identification, monitoring and reviewing systems in place to allow for continuous improvement. Staff training is an important component of this, and in 2023 included:

- Camps and Excursions – on commencement as required
- Contact Officer training
- CPI Safety Intervention – all staff
- Cybersecurity including protecting work data at work, home and offsite – all staff
- Dealing with Challenging Behaviours – administration
- Driver Safety Awareness – on commencement as required
- Electrical Procedure training
- Emergency Evacuation & Lock Down/Out Training – all staff
- Emergency Warden Training
- Gastrostomy & Jejunostomy nutrition
- Key SACCS Documents including Code of Conduct, Harassment, Privacy, ICT, Protective Practices – all staff
- Manual Handling - on commencement as required
- Medication Safety for Health Support Workers
- Practical WHS: Slips, Trips and Falls, Ergonomics, Manual Handling, Fire & Other Emergencies
- Privacy for schools – all staff
- Provide First Aid in an education and care setting – all staff
- Purchasing training - CSHWSA
- Return to Work Coordinator training - RTWSA
- Safeguarding essentials – all staff
- SALT Compliance Administration training
- Seizure First Aid and INM
- WHS Coordinator meetings/training
- WHS incl. Health and safety at school, Workers' rights and obligations
- Workplace Behaviours for Schools incl. Workplace Bullying, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment, Diversity and Inclusion – all staff
- Worksite WHS Induction - on commencement

A total of \$42,183 was spent on professional development in 2023.

SECTION FOUR Catholic Identity

St Patrick's Special School remains deeply committed to fostering the Catholic Identity and Spiritual Development of both students and staff, based in its historical association with the Dominican Sisters and the Sisters of Saint Joseph. These religious orders have significantly influenced the school's journey and core principles. Embracing their legacy, we strive to maintain a vibrant Catholic community characterised by faith, academic excellence, and dedication to serving others.

Liturgy

Throughout 2023, we welcomed members of our community to join us in our termly liturgical celebrations. These gatherings not only provided moments of spiritual reflection but also offered opportunities for active participation from our students. In Term 3, students from the Senior West Class had the privilege of attending the Catholic Charities "Thanksgiving Mass." This special occasion allowed us to honour the invaluable support provided by Catholic Charities to our school each year.

Religious Education

Aligned with the Crossways curriculum, our Religious Education programs integrate the Wisdom strand and five knowledge strands, providing students with a rich exploration of the Catholic faith and its mission. Central to our curriculum is the "Made in the Image of God" program, emphasising the inherent dignity and worth of every individual as a reflection of God's image. This holistic approach enables students to engage deeply with their faith and develop a profound understanding of Catholic teachings.

Staff Formation

Our dedicated staff members actively engage in opportunities to deepen their faith and understanding of Catholic identity. Weekly prayer and reflection sessions are offered to support staff in living out their Catholic values. In Term 4, our staff gathered at the Mary MacKillop Precinct for a day of reflection and learning. Led by Paul Murphy, participants embarked on a journey through the life and work of Mary MacKillop, culminating in a liturgy in the chapel. Inspired by Mary MacKillop's ethos, our staff embraced her call to action, leading to the renaming of our "Data Hub" as the MacKillop Data Hub – as a space dedicated to fostering student growth and ensuring equitable opportunities for all.

Social Justice/Outreach and Student Agency

Throughout 2023, students from our Senior West class demonstrated exemplary commitment to social justice through various outreach initiatives. These initiatives not only enriched our school community but also raised awareness of the needs of marginalised individuals within the wider community. In Term 2, St Patrick's Special School supported the Moore St Soup Kitchen by organising a collection drive for clothing and blankets for those experiencing homelessness throughout Adelaide. During Term 4, we partnered with The Monastery in their food collection drive, enabling our students to directly contribute to alleviating food insecurity within our community; witnessing the impact of their efforts firsthand, our students learned a valuable lesson in empathy, compassion, and solidarity.

SECTION FIVE Curriculum

Teaching and Learning

In 2023, St Patrick's Special School embarked on a transformative journey with the establishment of a School Quality Performance Team (SQPT), dedicated to optimising student growth and learning outcomes. Comprising of members from both the Teaching and Allied Health teams, the SQPT endeavoured to cultivate a deeper understanding of data utilisation and its impact on teaching and learning practices.

Drawing from the inspiration of Dr. Lyn Sharratt and her text, "Clarity: What Matters Most in Learning, Teaching and Learning," SQPT members investigated the methodologies for data collection and analysis. Through this collaborative effort, we explored diverse avenues to gain comprehensive insights into our students' learning journeys, empowering teachers to tailor their instructional approaches effectively.

Our engagement with Dr Sharratt's principles was seamlessly integrated into the broader framework of the system-wide initiative led by Catholic Education South Australia. We were honoured to host Dr Sharratt during her visit to Australia, providing her with firsthand exposure to our interpretation and implementation of the methodologies within the context of Special Schools. During her visit, Dr Sharratt immersed herself in our learning environment, "walking the walls" of our MacKillop Data Hub and classrooms adorned with displays showcasing student growth data. Her keen observations and insights illuminated the path forward, guiding us toward enhanced strategies for fostering student progress.

In tandem with our exploration of data-driven practices, the SQPT undertook the development of a Literacy and Numeracy agreement. This document delineates the curriculum scope and sequence, aligning with the Australian Curriculum while incorporating insights from our collaboration with Jane Farrell and Comprehensive Literacy. By establishing clear guidelines on what to teach and when, we ensure coherence and continuity in our educational endeavours, equipping our students with the essential skills and knowledge to thrive academically.

Through the concerted efforts of the SQPT, St Patrick's Special School reaffirms its commitment to excellence in student learning, embracing innovative approaches grounded in research-backed methodologies. By harnessing the power of data and fostering collaborative partnerships, we empower our students to realise their full potential and embark on a journey of lifelong learning and growth.

Access to the Community

At St Patrick's Special School, we understand the importance of the environment as the third teacher and encourage students and staff to explore different environments as part of their learning programs.

The school owns and operates three buses. These are used to transport students to and from school and enable students to access the community during the school day. With the restrictions of COVID lifting, students were once again able to engage in learning offsite through participating in excursions in different environments and through incursions held at school. Some of these experiences were ongoing, whereas others were one-off experiences.

- Adelaide Zoo
- Botanic Gardens
- We Rock the Spectrum
- Burnside Shopping Centre
- Bushwalking
- CEG Cooking School
- Variety Day at the Zoo
- Variety Movies
- NAIDOC Incursion
- Outdoor Learning Day
- Mini Woolworths (Our Lady of La Vang)
- Inclusive Basketball
- Inclusive Sports Day
- National Simultaneous Story Time
- Book Week
- Science Week
- PE Week
- SPSS Christmas Party
- Kildare Music Concert

A specialist teacher in music and performance works across the school. Music is centred on exploring sound, expressing oneself, communicating, making choices, singing, listening, performing, improvising, and composing. A broad range of tonal, digital, ICT (Information and Communications Technology) and sensory equipment is used to support performance and expression. Students are provided the opportunity to make music together, perform to one another, share musical experiences, and be empowered by the bonding, nourishing, healing, and community aspects that music offers.

SECTION SIX Student Performance

Assessment and Reporting

Throughout 2023, St Patrick's Special School continued to assess and report on the Australian Curriculum and SACE-M. This included Parent Meetings in Terms 1 and 3 where Personalised Plans for Learning were developed, and formal reporting in Terms 2 and 4. All eligible students were exempted from participating in the NAPLAN testing program with parental consent.

ABLES

In 2023, St Patrick's Special School, in conjunction with Catholic Education South Australia, the Department for Education (South Australia), Vic Schools and The University of Melbourne, implemented Abilities Based Learning and Educational Support (ABLES).

ABLES is an assessment and reporting suite that allows teachers to monitor the learning readiness and programs of students with disability and diverse learners. It provides the tools, guidance, and evidence-based teaching and learning strategies to assist students in teaching based on their individual learning needs linked to the curriculum. In addition, ABLES generates reports to enable individualised learning planning and tracks students' progress and achievements over time.

In future years, the data will be analysed to depict student growth across the school, which will be used to show achievement in relation to grades in school-based reports.

Graduating Students

Eight students graduated from St Patrick's Special School in 2023. These young adults are accessing individualised post-school programs and continue to develop key activities of daily living concentrating on the promotion of their health, wellbeing, and community connections.

South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)

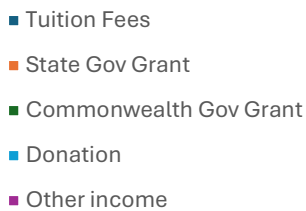
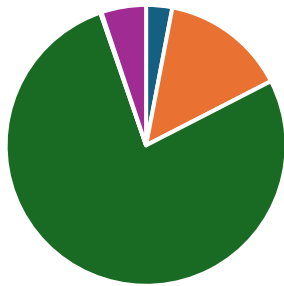
In 2023, St Patrick's Special School was invited to participate in the SACE Subject Renewal Project. As part of our participation, we implemented the Exploring Identities and Futures subjects at Stage 1. This enabled us to connect more holistically with our post-school pathway approach and will, in the future, lead to a more rigorous transition program through the Activating Identities and Futures (Stage 2) subject, set to be released in 2025.

SECTION SEVEN Financial Statement

Financial Income 2023

Tuition Fees and Charges	\$	150,248
State Government Grant	\$	722,179
Commonwealth Government Grant	\$	3,863,591
Donations	\$	7,126
Other income	\$	257,638

Financial Income 2023



School Improvements

- Classroom and Data Hub furniture
- ICT upgrade including screen mirroring, monitors, student and staff laptops
- Telephone system
- Playground rubber soft fall
- Drain pump & control panel.

SECTION EIGHT Satisfaction Levels

Staff

Staff met individually with a member of the leadership team. These professional conversations were based on the AITSL standards and invited staff to reflect on their practice and set future personal and professional learning goals. These conversations were documented and will be an ongoing dialogue between staff and leadership for future growth and development.

Students

Satisfaction levels are not obtainable in traditional ways with our students.

SECTION NINE Engagement

The community of St Patrick's Special School is an amazing and supportive community. In 2023 we were lucky enough to have the support of our families, community groups, and volunteers including Parents and Friends, and board members. Being the first year we had been permitted to operate in a post-COVID "norm" we were blessed to be able to welcome our community to our various celebrations and gatherings including our liturgy masses, welcome night, morning teas, information sessions, and meetings.

Our community was engaged through regular newsletters, Seesaw announcements and website updates. Our school provided families assistance with NDIS and Centrelink queries, facilitation of the student immunisation program with Eastern Health Authority, and provision of placement and work experience for university and school students.



Cathy Sires

Principal

St Patrick's Special School

28 June 2024