



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Park Avenue

2021 Annual School Report



Catholic Education
Diocese of Rockhampton

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Park Avenue

Catholic Education Diocese of Rockhampton

Principal

Bernard Fitzgerald

Address

33 Main Street
Park Avenue Qld 4701

Total enrolments

362

Year levels offered

Prep – Year 6

Type of School:

Co-educational

School Overview

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is located in the North Rockhampton suburb of Park Avenue.

St Joseph's is a two-stream, Prep to Year Six school with a current enrolment of approximately 370 students, proudly boasting an Indigenous enrolment of about 15%.

There is a Kindergarten within the school grounds, and the strong partnership between school and Kindergarten ensures successful transitions for our youngest learners. Additionally, Outside School Hours Care is available for all enrolled students. The school was established in 1929 by the Sisters of St Joseph whose foundress, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, was committed to ensuring all young Australians, especially those in rural and regional areas, had access to high quality education.

At St Joseph's we endeavour to create a dynamic learning environment within a Christian community that is centred around the Gospel message. Our School Mission Statement highlights the responsibility of each person in our school to develop as a learner with a clear sense of self-worth and able to demonstrate mutual respect for all, for the good of the whole community.

The curriculum structure is both holistic and inclusive, as we strive to meet the needs of all learners through well-formulated academic, arts and sports programs while being mindful of learners with special needs.

In recent years, extensive building and refurbishment has been completed with the school now comprising state of the art learning areas with contemporary environments for students and staff. We have developed an excellent technology infrastructure which integrates seamlessly across the curriculum and is integral to all aspects of learning at St Joseph's. Our school maintains strong links with our local parish and operates on an open-door policy for families which helps foster the community atmosphere that underpins everything we do at our school.

More information on our school can be accessed from myschool.edu.au

Curriculum Offerings

Distinctive Curriculum Offerings

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School implements an inquiry-based approach to learning, endeavouring to make learning student-focused and to enhance the thinking process. We educate our children for their future and therefore engage in real-world endeavours and investigations in conjunction with quality assessment activities. To assist with this direction, we utilise a significant amount of technology in the school, providing 1-to-1 device access across the entire school.

Our Prep classes offer the Australian Curriculum delivered with a balance of direct teaching, skill practice and play-based enquiry.

Our school offers faith development opportunities with daily lessons and units of work designed to deliver the Religious Education Curriculum developed by the Diocesan Catholic Education Office.

At St Joseph's Park Avenue, we encourage students to be the best learners they can be. Each child is supported to co-construct learning goals and work towards achieving these goals. All students have an individual learning goal for mathematics, reading and writing. These goals are updated on a regular basis as they are achieved. Additionally, teachers negotiate learning intentions and success criteria with their students when delivering the Australian curriculum. This makes learning and progress visible to students and encourages students to strive for excellence. To encourage further academic growth from our students, Semester Academic Awards acknowledging both academic performance and effort are a continuing practice.

Our school values collaborative practices and promotes co-operative teaching and planning. Prep to Year 6 work in contemporary open learning spaces. These offer flexibility as well as an opportunity for students to engage in the Australian Curriculum in an environment that suits different learning styles. We promote our learning spaces to be places where risk taking, collaboration and exploration is encouraged and supported.

In Term 4 of 2021, the staff of St Joseph's reviewed a list of the many Learning Dispositions exhibited by productive learners. During this process, they identified and prioritised five dispositions that they would like to see develop in our students. The five dispositions prioritised were: Resilience, Collaboration, Persistence, Independence and Creativity. These five Learning Dispositions will be a focal point for our school community in teaching and learning moving forward.

Extra Curricula Activities

Our school works with and supports the parish community in providing relevant and meaningful experiences for families to enhance a sense of belonging within the context of a Catholic community. Through the parish, children and families are afforded the opportunity to work together through sacramental programs as appropriate.

St Joseph's traditionally has a tremendous turn out to community events such as the annual ANZAC Day Dawn Service and march, biennial school fetes, various special annual events and feast day celebrations.

Instrumental music classes are offered as part of an optional program with the second to last Monday Morning Whole School Assembly each Semester reserved for a Cultural Assembly in which our various musicians, singers and public speakers are given the opportunity to perform for the school community.

To provide greater and more varied opportunities in the cultural aspects of the curriculum, St Joseph's has employed an Arts teacher, providing specialist lessons across all year levels.

St Joseph's also takes part in initiatives that support our students in accessing the curriculum. Some of these include our annual Science Expo, The Big Book Swap, Joeys in Jamas, Self-Defence lessons, Interschool Maths Challenge, Under 8s Week, Book Week Activities, Laudato Si' Expo, NAIDOC Day, Arts Council visits as well as participation in the Premier's Reading Challenge.

For the first time in 2021, the school participated in the Inter-school Mathematics Challenge. Multiple teams comprised of Year 5 and 6 students entered the competition and enjoyed both representing the school and being able to exhibit their mathematical abilities. We will be continuing to participate in this competition in the future.

The school community participates in addressing Catholic Social Justice issues to raise awareness of local and global concerns. One aspect of this advocacy is the fund-raising activities within the school community that support various community partners such as Vinnies, CARITAS and Catholic Mission and the good works that they do. The school P&F Association hold special Meal Deal days once per Semester to support families with specific needs within our own community.

Our school is also establishing a sustainability project in conjunction with Laudato Si' and is exploring ways in which we can tackle being more ecologically friendly and allow us as a community to live sustainably in dignity. This included hosting our first ever Laudato Si' Expo in 2021 which was a hugely successful community event.

Interschool Sport is offered to Years 4 to 6 students. Inter-school sport is played each Friday across a range of sports throughout the year. Additionally, there are over 100 children who play in school-based touch football teams on Saturdays.

Netball and Rugby League teams are sent to the annual Challenge Cup carnival held in Yeppoon. Rugby League teams also take part in CQ CAPRAS Challenge Gala Day each year.

In 2021 we hosted a Cross Country/Fun Run Carnival to decide both house and age champions. Children from Years 4 to 6 are invited to train and compete in the Rockhampton District event with a representative team being selected.

St Joseph's holds an Athletics Carnival across two days each year. A field events day is held at St Joseph's for our students aged 9- 12 years, followed by a track events day held at Emmaus College. All students take part in the track day with both house and age champions being announced at the end of the day. From these days, a team is selected to progress to the Rockhampton District Trials.

St Joseph's runs a swimming program during PE over 6 weeks in Term 4. The program consists of 5 weeks of lessons and culminates in an evening swimming carnival to decide both house and age champions. The school's P&F Association contributes to the cost of the swimming program in order to keep costs as low as possible. Even though swimming is a priority at St Joseph's, COVID has prevented us from holding lessons and a carnival since 2019.

St Joseph's continues to explore both resources and learning opportunities in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) area of the curriculum with a designated teacher providing opportunities to the Middle and Upper Precincts of the school.

How Information and Communication Technologies are used to assist learning

At St. Joseph's we run a 1-to-1 MacBook program with our Years 5 and 6 students and 1-to-1 Chromebooks from Prep to Year 4. iPads are present in all classrooms along with other digital devices. This provides the students with exposure, access and understanding of a range of operating systems during their time at the school. Additionally, every classroom is equipped with mobile touchscreens which further serve to enhance the collaborative and interactive nature of learning and increases the degree to which the children are engaged with the learning.

The school also makes use of Vivi devices that are linked to every display screen in the school. This enhances learning opportunities by enabling quick and easy information sharing from any device.

Our school has a fully functioning, soundproof green room for the creation of digital presentations. At St. Joseph's one of our goals is for students to utilise technology for real world learning.

For parents, we also have a School Web App and multiple LED school signs which serve as communication tools and means of sharing information between school and home.

Social Climate

Strategies to Promote a Positive Culture

As a Catholic school, Gospel values are at the core of everything we do. From this we choose to focus on three specific school values being: Self-worth, Mutual Acceptance and Personal Responsibility. In all learning situations, we endeavour to refer to these values and make them part of our daily decision-making processes.

Catholic Social Teaching principles are being introduced to classrooms each semester. Following the focus of Pope Francis' challenge in regard to Laudato Si', the focus principle is Stewardship of Creation. Classes will actively participate in better recycling as the key whole school initiative in sustainability.

Student leadership is distributed throughout the school with a Student Council that provides support for activities and presents the "student voice." Further to this we have a Peer Support Program with weekly sessions run by the Year 6 students once they are trained. These groups consist of a mixture of P-6 students and are monitored by a staff member. These groups provide an opportunity for the students to express concerns, develop strategies and provide a proactive approach to behaviours. The Peer Support program focuses on social and emotional learning with units based on topics such as Living Positively, Optimism, Resilience and Persistence.

A school counsellor, accessed through Emmaus College, is onsite for three days a week. The counsellor provides family, student and teacher support in maintaining positive relationships with self and others. At St Joseph's, we prioritise spiritual, physical and emotional health.

Cyber Safety and Anti-Bullying Strategies

As the school introduces and accesses more and more technology in the classrooms, so increases the risk of cyber bullying and the need for a greater awareness of cyber safety. Students participate in cyber safety and cyber bullying sessions tailored to the Upper Primary students, particularly those involved in the 1-to-1 program that take their devices home. Students and parents are made aware of school expectations in terms of acceptable use prior to receiving laptops and must sign an end-user agreement from the school and an acceptable user policy from the Catholic Education Office. We also access our Adopt-a-Cop to deliver an online safety-based program to students in the Upper School.

Strategies for involving parents in their child's education

The P&F association hosts a 'Cuppa and a Chat' after our Monday morning whole school assembly. This initiative provides an opportunity for an informal gathering that allows for parents to mix and network together. It is a way of welcoming new families into the community, as well as providing an increased opportunity for parents to volunteer in various roles around the school. This is a shared initiative of the School and P&F.

Parents and friends are welcome to join us for Monday Morning assemblies where we mention weekly notices, acknowledge Academic Excellence Awards and our Virtues Awards. The Prayer Reflection at each assembly breaks

open the scripture from the preceding Sunday. After Monday assembly, we also hold volunteer induction sessions for parents wanting to engage in the educational aspects of the school.

At the beginning of each year, each cohort holds a Parent Information session. We have two scheduled times for formal parent/teacher interviews throughout the year in early Term 2 and late Term 3. The Inclusive Curriculum teachers also host Parent Information sessions upskilling parents on oral language and reading skills specifically for Prep to Year 3 parents. The Assistant Principal Curriculum writes a section for the weekly newsletter that highlights strategies parents can use at home to assist with reading, writing and numeracy.

Parents are involved in school planning and decision making through the School Board and P&F Association. Parents and Friends actively encourage involvement through social gatherings and adult education opportunities. Parents are invited as guest speakers for inquiry learning units on a range of topics for which they offer their expertise. The P&F Association meets on the second Wednesday of the month while the School Board meets on the third Wednesday of each month.

Classes in the Upper School utilise a unique class website that is designed so students can revisit their topics and tasks, helping to guide their learning. These class pages are accessible to parents to promote parental engagement in their child's learning. The school utilises the SeeSaw app in Prep to Year 3 as a way of promoting parental engagement with their children's educational journey.

Parents are invited to, and regularly join our weekly school Prayer Assemblies and whole school masses and liturgies that are held in Our Lady Help of Christians Church that is adjacent to the school.

Information is also shared through our weekly Newsletter. We also have the ability to share notices and important information instantly with our school community through the use of the Skoolbag app. Although not the main form of parental contact, the school also has a Facebook page that can be used to share information. The page is administered by the Principal and the P&F Executive.

Reducing the school's environmental footprint

St Joseph's has implemented a major waste management system that incorporates recycling of paper products, soft plastics and food waste. The aim of this waste management system is to reduce the school's ecological footprint. All classrooms at St Joseph's Park Avenue make use of multiple recycling bins. Our ongoing journey towards digital work and storage rather than paper copies also helps to reduce the amount of waste sent to our local landfills.

In response to learning about social justice issues, the Year 4 cohort participate in the 'Containers for Change' program in an effort to reduce the amount of Tetra Briks and plastic bottles filling school bins and local landfills. This initiative commenced in 2019 with resulting funds raised being used to fund greater resources for future sustainability projects. In 2021, this initiative paid for new bins and a worm farm to aid in composting and the fertilising of our plants.

In 2017 the school installed a major solar system to significantly lower our power consumption. The true reflection of these reduced levels of consumption were not fully known until the end of the 2019 school year. To date, 2018 consumption levels have declined by approximately 30% and 2019 was up to 65% lower than 2017. This project has also made a tremendous positive impact to the school budget as the school now qualifies for lower tariffs and can allocate significant funds previously used for electricity to other school-based projects.

In 2020 the school experienced major capital works upgrades. During the planning and design stage, attention was given to being more ecologically friendly and considering more sustainable processes regarding waste management, water use, composting and recycling as well as better energy consumption practices. The establishment of increased natural environment spaces as well as additional play spaces was also a priority.

Characteristics of the Student Body

St Joseph's caters for students with many varied backgrounds. Students who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander make up 15% of our school population. Several other nationalities are also represented within the school.

To help meet the growing needs of the student body and their families, our school counsellor has been employed for three full days each week. More than 50% of our students benefit from engaging with our Inclusive Curriculum staff on a regular basis. In 2021 the school continued to employ an additional full time Inclusive Curriculum teacher to work with ascertained students. In addition, the school engaged a Writing Coach and Maths Extension teachers to provide extension for students in our Middle and Upper Precincts. A specialist teacher and Educational Support Officer were also engaged to deliver the MiniLit program in the Lower Precinct.

St Joseph's has a diverse range of families, with many being adversely affected by recent industry changes in the area. Most students who leave the school, do so because they are moving out of the area. In 2021, St. Joseph's has welcomed many new families into the school during the year giving stability to our student numbers. Enrolments in our Prep classes have remained steady with both Prep classes at capacity for a number of years.

Average student attendance rate (%)

The average student attendance rate for 2021 was 95.28%.

Management of non-attendance

Parents are required to inform the school of student absences. This can be done through a variety of platforms including an eForm on the school app, Parent Lounge, email or more traditional methods such as a phone call or written note. If a child's absence has not been explained by 10:00 am, caregivers are sent a text notifying them of the absence. If a child is absent for two days, without parental contact, the school contacts the family to determine the reason for the absence.

Staffing Information

Workforce Composition

Workforce Composition	Teaching Staff	Non-Teaching Staff	Indigenous Staff
Headcounts	26.00	21.00	2.00
Full-time equivalents	22.60	14.83	1.32

Qualifications of all teachers

Qualification – highest level of attainment	Percentage of staff with this Qualification
Doctoral / Post-doctoral	
Masters	11.54%
Bachelor Degree	80.77%
Diploma	7.69%
Certificate	

Major Professional Development Initiatives

Staff participate in regular Professional Development throughout the year with the annual Bishop's In-service Day and other Religious Education and curriculum PD days. Professional Development is driven by the School Improvement Plan as well as the needs of the staff and students. In 2021, all staff began a three-year commitment to Professional Learning through Corwin. This commitment focuses on Visible Learning and a school change model based on a simple belief: every student should experience at least one year's growth over the course of one school year. This PD partnership will continue through to 2023.

Teaching staff continue to implement the '6 + 1 Writing Traits' to promote best teaching practices. Improved student skills in the quality and complexity of their writing have been a priority at St Joseph's over the past year. In 2021, all teaching staff continued the use of 'Matific' in the Key Learning Area of Mathematics. Years 5 and 6 began the use

of 'Maths Pathway' digital program aimed at addressing any gaps in maths understanding. This program also has the added benefit of aligning with our neighbouring 7-12 years College, Emmaus who also utilise this resource.

Teachers also negotiate two professional goals based on the AITSL professional standards per year. In 2021, teacher professional goals were paired closely to the School Improvement Plan. In 2022 we are looking to engage a Professional Goals Coach to further enhance teacher's professional goals and align them to the AITSL standards and the School Improvement Plan 2022-2024.

In 2021, the school Principal and an additional staff member completed a two-year course delivered by the Australian Catholic University and sponsored by Rockhampton Catholic Education. The course focuses on 'Safeguarding Children and Young People.' New staff members have applied for sponsorship in this course for 2022.

Our APC and APRE currently offer mentoring to both our graduate and experienced teachers in best practices when planning and delivering the curriculum including strategies to best utilise our contemporary, open learning spaces. Teacher's individual professional goals should help promote the achievement of the goals set out in our School Improvement Plan.

Both teachers and support staff take part in weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLC) gatherings as an opportunity to both share and enhance professional practice.

At the beginning of each year, the school Leadership Team create a Professional Development Plan to submit to the Catholic Education Office. This plan takes into consideration the professional needs of our staff community, individual AITSL goals, as well as being informed by our current School Improvement Plan goals.

In 2021, the school Principal and additional staff attended The Berry Street Model. This is professional development is aimed at schools being more trauma aware within their community and aligns with the current School Improvement Plan.

The percentage of teachers engaged in professional development was 100%.

Total funds expended on Professional Development

The total of funds expended on teacher professional development was \$35,300.

Average Staff Attendance and Retention

The average staff attendance for the school year, based on unplanned absences of sick and emergency leave for periods of up to five days, was 93.82%.

Percentage of teaching staff retained from the previous school year was 95.12%.

School Income

<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>.

(The School information below is available on the My School website).

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National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy Results

Our reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy results for Years 3 and 5 are available via the My School website at www.myschool.edu.au.

If you are unable to access the internet, please contact the school for a paper copy of our school's NAPLAN results.

Key Student Outcomes and Value Added

In ascertaining the future direction for the school and its key objectives for the students, the composition of the student body plays a significant role. Decisions on curriculum direction are data driven and collected from sources such as NAPLAN, PM benchmarks, DRA assessments, Catholic Identity, SR&I, NSIT reviews and the like.

In 2021, St Joseph's set NAPLAN specific goals in improved paragraphing results as well as continued growth in all academic areas. It was additionally noted that there was a need for extension opportunities to support our higher achieving students in the areas of writing and numeracy.

A number of staff were given the opportunity for Professional Development with the 'MiniLit' program throughout 2020 with the program funded and implemented in 2021. The program would be in response to data indicating a number of students in the Lower Precinct performing below benchmark in the area of reading. This initiative was decided as beneficial and processes were established for the implementation of the program for the next 3 years. Leadership and support staff will be closely monitoring the data and progress of the students in this program.

At the end of 2021, three key improvement priorities were identified for 2022. These three key priorities for school improvement are:

- Prayer
- Family Partnerships
- Increased Learning Gain & Achievement

These three priorities will be communicated and acted upon with staff, parents and students in 2022.

Strategic Improvement Progress and Next Steps

Strategic progress in 2021

Our goals for 2021 were to:

- Action and complete the School Improvement Plan for 2017-2020 that gives focus for the future direction of the school.
- Consider the most effective ways to utilise professional development and formation opportunities for staff members in future planning.
- Formulate new school improvement priorities for the 2022 school year.
- Formulate a new School Improvement Plan 2021 – 2024.
- Explore Catholic Social Teaching principles and explicitly link and embed them as the basis for outreach activities.
- Continue to implement the school's Teaching and Learning Framework.
- Embed the processes of Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) with both the teaching and support staff.
- Continue to build teacher capacity in data literacy informing the teaching and learning process.
- Implement staff 'Well-being' check-ins with staff by the Leadership Team.

- Establish a Well-being Team and take part in the 'BeYou' program to increase staff capability in social emotional well-being and mental health initiatives.
- Engage a Professional Goals Coach to guide teachers in formulating realistic and measurable professional goals from the AITSL standards. Due to COVID, this was established in Term 4 2021 and due for full implementation in 2022.

The school made good progress on the goals for 2021:

- A more deliberate Professional Development plan was formulated for Leadership, Learning Support, ancillary staff and teaching staff to best support our student body.
- Satisfaction survey results from the parents, staff and students were overwhelmingly in the 'Excellent' range.
- In 2021 the Catholic Social Teaching that the school explored was *Stewardship of Creation* and we hosted our first ever 'Laudato Si' Expo.
- Professional Learning Communities were well established with both teaching staff and Educational Support Officers to promote positive pedagogical practices.
- The St Joseph's Leadership Team set NAPLAN targets for 2021 in relation to improving overall results in the use of paragraphing in written texts.
- The school successfully navigated teaching and learning processes considering the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Finalising the last 10% of a significant Capital Works project and the delivery of state of the art, contemporary learning spaces that support the school's educational philosophy that is embedded throughout the new Teaching and Learning framework.
- Increased emphasis on the presence of Catholic Identity elements around the school after Capital Works was completed.
- Ongoing acknowledgment was made in the mental health and wellbeing of staff, parents and students.
- NAPLAN results across the school were continuing to demonstrate an upward trend.

Strategic Priorities for 2022

Three key improvement priorities were identified for 2021. These three key priorities for school improvement are:

- Prayer
- Family Partnerships
- Increased Learning Gain & Achievement

Strategic Priorities 2022- 2024

1. Catholic Identity

- 1.1 - To enhance the culture of Prayer at the school.
- 1.2 - To develop the practice of Praying through Christian Meditation at the school.
- 1.3 - To continue to support all staff to implement the new Religious Education Curriculum.

2. Effective Teaching & Learning (NSIT Domains 2, 5, 6, 7, 8)

- 2.1 – To increase learning gain and achievement for all students.

3. Pastoral Support and Wellbeing (NSIT Domain 3)

- 3.1 - Continue development and implementation of Be You to support mental health & wellbeing of the school community.
- 3.2 - The introduction and implementation of Mindfulness with both staff and students.
- 3.3 - The implementation of 'You Can Do It!' across the entire school promoting Social Emotional Learning.
- 3.4 - Develop a school Reconciliation Action Plan.

4. Leadership, Partnerships and Resourcing (NSIT Domains 1, 4, 9)

- 4.1 - Creation and implementation of a new school technology plan and scope & sequence following the 2020 Technology audit recommendations to support and enhances staff capacity in ICT.
- 4.2 - Support staff in exploring increased opportunity for growth in teacher capacity and leadership through AITSL standards, professional goal setting, and PD opportunities.
- 4.3 - Explore and implement ways to promote increased Family Partnerships
- 4.4 - Source and install resources for newly established outside environmental areas and outdoor activity spaces.

Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction

School Board, P & F and Parish Council are supportive of our efforts and continue to provide affirmation. Parents at St. Joseph's are very positive in their support of the school and its offerings, and it is this 'word of mouth' reputation that is driving our current positive enrolment trends. Similarly, teachers are now committing to longer terms of employment within the school and are not applying for transfers, as had been a previous trend. The current staff views St. Joseph's, Park Avenue as a 'Catholic School of Choice'.

Throughout the 2017 School Review and Improvement process, the school surveyed parents, staff and Years 3-6 students on many aspects of the school. Parent, staff and student surveys provided overwhelming evidence of a very high level of satisfaction within the community at St Joseph's.

The 2019 school year saw further polling of the school community via satisfaction surveys to provide further up to date data for the school Leadership Team. These results were also primarily in the 'Excellent' range.

2021 still saw St Joseph's as a school of choice with places in all Year levels in demand. Although officially full at 350 students, the school had an expected enrolment of just over 365 students for the next calendar year.