



St. Mary's Primary School Newsletter

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Date: 13th December, 2024

Newsletter No: 19

Term: 4 - Week: 10

School Notices

Yard Supervision:

Morning: 8:30 - 8:55am
Afternoon: 3:20 - 3:35pm

Bell Times:

School Begins 8:55am
Recess: 11:10-11:30am
Lunch: 1:30 - 2:20pm
Finish: 3:20pm

Student Absences:

Please phone the office by 9:00am if your child will not be at school on 57 521808.
Or mark absence on PAM.



TERM 1 2025

28th January 2025
Staff Return
4th April 2025

TERM 2

28th April 2025
4th July 2025

TERM 3

21st July 2025
19th September 2025
TERM 4
6th October 2025
19th December 2025

MASS TIMES

Myrtleford

Saturday @ 5:00pm
Sunday @ 9.00am

Bright

Sunday @ 11:00am

St Patricks Whorouly

Last Sunday of the
Month @ 5:00pm

WEDNESDAY 18TH DECEMBER IS THE LAST DAY FOR STUDENTS 3:20PM FINISH

As the year closes for 2024, I wish to say farewell to three families who have the last of their children finishing this year. We farewell the McMasters, McMahon, and the Power families. It has been a pure pleasure working with these families and their beautiful children over the years. On behalf of St Mary's staff, we wish you all the very best for the future.

This week the school reports will be sent home. I have read all reports and highly recommend you read your report to your child/children. These reports provide honest feedback which you can discuss with your child for next year's learning.

Please check out the pupil free dates for next year as the children will be having a three week break during the Easter holidays. This is because the Sandhurst Diocese are implementing MAGNIFY which will be rolled out across all Catholic schools in our Diocese. MAGNIFY is well researched and evidenced-based to ensure each, and every child, no matter what school, what classroom they attend, they will receive the very best education possible. This is an outstanding commitment on behalf of the Catholic Education Office. For St Mary's Myrtleford this will not see major changes in our teaching as we have been following evidenced-based teaching for many years and our results have consistently ensured we have been on the right track. It is reassuring that this has been recognised and all schools will follow the path St Mary's has been on.

I congratulate our staff for all their work over the years. It has been a pure pleasure working with them. I will miss the buzz of teaching. Thank you to all our families, for your support and commitment to St Mary's and especially to all the children who have made my job so full of joy.

I welcome Andrea O'Connor as she takes up the reigns. The school is in very good hands.

All the best for the future.
Kitty Hancock

CLASS OF 2024



St Mary's Primary is committed to students experiencing a sense of inclusion that is respectful of their giftedness, abilities, culture and contexts. Our student's experience learning and teaching in a child safe environment that is engaging and liberating.

'Magnify Sandhurst' will launch in 2025 and to ensure that we can undertake the necessary professional learning with our staff we will be shifting our usual student-free days.

For St Mary's this is an affirmation of what we have been doing for the last five years and this step by the Sandhurst Catholic Diocese is very much welcomed as resources and relevant professional development will be made available to all of our staff.

Please note the change in structure for the 2025 school holiday period and the days when Professional Development will be happening across all of the schools in the Sandhurst Diocese.

DATES FOR 2025

Term 1

Monday 27 th January	Australia Day Public Holiday
Tuesday 28-29 th January	Staff Professional Learning Days
Thursday 30 th January	Years 1 – 6 students commence
Friday 31 st January	Foundation students commence

Term 2 – (IMPORTANT to note, Students will have three weeks holiday)

Monday 21 st April	Easter Monday Public Holiday
Tuesday 22 nd -24 th April	Staff Professional Learning Days
Friday 25 th April	ANZAC Day Public Holiday
Monday 28 th April	Students commence Term 2

Term 3

Wednesday August 13 th	CESL Staff Spirituality Day
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Term 4

Tuesday 16 th December	Students Last Day
Wednesday 17 th December	Staff Professional Learning Day

SCHOOL NEWS

DECEMBER

Wednesday 18 th	Last Day of School for Students 3:20pm Finish
Thursday 19 th	Staff Planning Day
Friday 20 th	Staff Planning Day

JANUARY

Tuesday 28 th	St Mary's Office Open (Staff PD Day)
Wednesday 29 th	Staff CPR Training
Thursday 30 th	Year 1 – 6 Students First Day
Friday 31 st	Foundation Students First Day

FEBRUARY

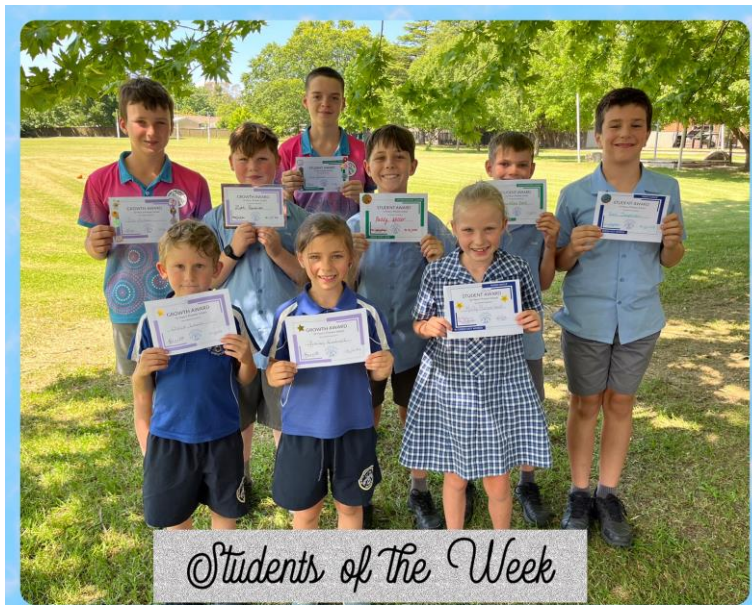
Wednesday 5 th	Foundation Rest Day
Wednesday 12 th	Foundation Rest Day
Wednesday 19 th	Foundation Rest Day
Wednesday 26 th	Foundation Rest Day

MARCH

Wednesday 5 th	Foundation Rest Day
Monday 10 th	Labour Day Public Holiday
Wednesday 26 th	School Photos

APRIL

Friday 4 th	Last Day Term 1
Monday 21 st	Easter Monday Public Holiday
Tuesday 22 nd to Thursday 24 th	Staff Professional Learning Days - PUPIL FREE DAYS
Friday 25 th	Anzac Day Public Holiday
Monday 28 th	Start Term 2



CATHOLIC IDENTITY NEWS



END OF YEAR LITURGY

On Thursday December 12th the whole school and families came together to celebrate the year that was.

Every student who read or had a role did an exceptional job and we can't thank them enough. Well done to you all. All the students sang beautifully and participated in the liturgy with respect and enthusiasm. It was a joy to be a part of the liturgy with our wonderful students.

The Foundation students did an amazing job reading their special messages to their buddies in a heartfelt and meaningful way. It certainly brought a tear to the eye.

During the liturgy two Year 6 students read a moving tribute to Mrs Hancock on her retirement and two Foundation students presented her with a lovely bouquet of flowers. This liturgy was a fitting end to a year filled with so much growth and happiness.

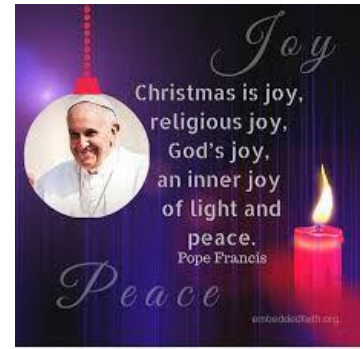
GRADUATION LITURGY

The Year 6 Graduation Liturgy will be held on Tuesday the 17th of December at 6pm St Mary's Church.

All families are welcome to attend our special liturgy for our beautiful Year 6 students.

Wishing you a relaxing and joy filled Christmas and New Year.

Jo Bennett (Catholic Identity Leader)



ITALIAN NEWS

CELEBRATING PRESENTATION DAY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MARIAN COLLEGE.

Pasta & Gelato

On Wednesday 27th of November the students of St. Mary's were invited to share lunch with the Marian College Community. This was to celebrate the special day for Nano Nagle and The Presentation Sisters. We were all treated to a pasta lunch and gelato afterwards. We are very grateful for their hospitality and the children enjoyed it immensely.

We thank Maria Fin and all the staff and students for the work they did to organise this day. A big thank you must also go to Bev Rossato and helpers for all the work and preparation they put into making the pasta for us. It truly was an enjoyable day.

Mackenzie, Zahlee, Zoe and Niamh made thank you cards to express our gratitude.

Beau and Pia enjoying their gelato



JUNIOR NEWS

Wow we have had a busy 2 weeks! In between swimming lessons, swimming carnival, transition days and LETI workshops we have been doing our best to keep up our learning in the JLC. By the time you read this we will have also been on our Bright and Sunny Day Excursion, which we're sure was an amazing day.

FOUNDATION

In Foundation, we have been really busy writing letters to our buddies, drawing pictures and having swimming lessons. Mrs Hancock bought us icy poles and we kept cool eating them in the garden. We loved eating pasta at Marian College on Presentation Day and had an absolutely fantastic time at the Christmas Concert. What a wonderful way to wrap up the end of our amazing year in foundation!



YEAR 1 AND YEAR 2

MATHS

The Year 1 students have been revising previously taught content in maths. We have also studied symmetry and lines of symmetry, and are revising multiplication.

In Year 2 students have continued to revise the work we have done this year, we have been brushing up on our number facts with Numbots.

In Measurement and Geometry we have also been exploring the effects of rotation on various shapes. Check out Tom, Madelyn and Mavis' examples of how $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ turns have on their first initial.



ENGLISH

We have just finished our study of 'Features of places' which looked at the managed features (why people go to parks), design of parks and marine parks. We read all about these and learned new vocabulary relating to each area. The students have continued to focus on letter formation and size in handwriting and have written some amazing factual pieces and narratives in Big Write.

Our Novel study on Fantastic Mr Fox in Year 2 is fast coming to an end! We have been busy reading the novel and enjoying completing different tasks about the chapters we've read.

LETI: DESIGN TECHNOLOGY/THEATRE

The students have continued to work on following the design process to create puppets out of recycled items. There have been some amazing creations made!!

SWIMMING LESSONS

We really enjoyed our swimming sessions last week. We thank Mrs Bennet, Mr Corcoran and Mr Davies for the time they have given to this program.



As this is our last newsletter for the year, we'd like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe holiday. We'd also like to thank all the students, parents and helpers who have helped to make this a fantastic year.

Nicole, Kelly, Sandra, Jo, Carolyn & Sonia.

MIDDLE NEWS

SWIMMING CARNIVAL

Congratulations to all the students who participated in the Swimming Carnival on Monday! It was a fantastic day and so good to see great teamwork, school spirit, and impressive swimming skills. Well done to everyone who took part!

Swimming was fun! Everybody supported each other. I came first in butterfly! - **Maddie S**

I really liked the swimming carnival and the three days of swimming with Mrs Bennett, Mr Davis and Mr Corcoran -

Javi



On Monday, we had the swimming carnival and it was very fun and we were very active. - Luca

At the swimming carnival we did every stroke and then we watched the Year 1 and Year 2 students swim a lap of either freestyle or breaststroke. We then swam the relays and got to have some free time in the pool - Thomas



TRANSITION DAY

Our Year 4 students had the opportunity to experience life as Year 5 students, while our Year 3 students enjoyed a fun and engaging day as they looked ahead to Year 4. It was a wonderful day of exploration and excitement as they prepared for the next step in their learning journey!

It was fun doing the activities and the number 4! - Lui

I can't wait for Year 4. Next year is going to be so awesome. We got to write a letter to Mrs Humphreys and it was fun. - John

It was really exciting in Year 4 because we got to read a chapter of our new book for next year. It was called Kensuke's Kingdom.

I cannot wait to start reading it. - Heidi

I had a great day with Mrs Humphreys in Year 4 because I've never had Mrs Humphreys all to myself without the Year 4s - Pippa

It was fun being in Year 4. We got to colour and write in a hoodie all about me - Harlow

It was fun and we did posters about ourselves and what we like doing. We learnt about a new book called 'A Ghost in my Suitcase' - Kristina

It was very good to be in Year 5 for the day - Freddy

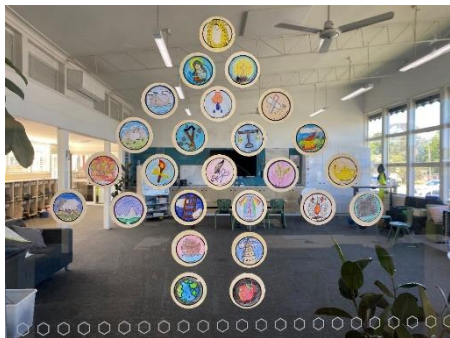
It was one of the best transition days that I have ever had! - Clare

I enjoyed being in my Year 5 class for next year because I liked making a name tag and reading the start of 'A Ghost in my Suitcase' - Paddy

Our transition day was very fun. It was the best day of school that I have had in a long time because we went up a grade and got to know our teacher for next year - Rylan

KRIS KRINGLE

We had our Kris Kringle gift exchange last Friday, 13th December, with a \$5 spending limit for each gift. It was very exciting to see our gifts appearing throughout the week.



MLC JESSE TREE

The students have created a beautiful Jesse Tree on display in the MLC, showcasing their thoughtful reflections on the Advent season and the story of Jesus' birth, adding a special touch of meaning and creativity to our school.



CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Exciting Christmas activities are underway in the MLC, with students working on special gifts full of love, which will be sent home. It's a heart-warming time as we celebrate the festive season with creativity and joy!

We wish all our families a very safe and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

April, Julie and Anna.

SENIOR NEWS

SWIMMING CARNIVAL

Even though it was a little chilly to begin with, the participation, encouragement and positivity that radiated from all swimmers on Monday was amazing!! We could see the growth in confidence of many students after last week's three days of lessons. A big pat on the back to all SLC students, you demonstrated your leadership qualities and made the swimming carnival one of the best the teachers can remember. Congratulations to those students who placed in their races and also to those students who gave it their absolute best in every race they entered. We are very proud of your efforts!!

Some photos here please

STATEWIDE TRANSITION DAY

Last Tuesday was an exciting day for Year 6's who had their transition day at Marian. There were many enjoyable friendship building activities and tasks to orientate students with the new space.

It was also a wonderful day in the SLC, welcoming new students Dylan, Mia, Jasper, Evie and Jayden and all of the new Year 5 students. Mrs Humphreys has definitely prepared you all as the three learning spaces were working effectively with engagement levels at a high for their entire day. Well done everyone!! Thank you to the new Year 6's for conducting yourselves in a responsible and respectful manner, to help guide the 2025 Foundation students during recess and lunch play. You were all able to navigate the amount of support and space each child required to allow them to have the best day possible. You are going to be wonderful leaders of St Mary's in 2025!!

END OF YEAR LITURGY

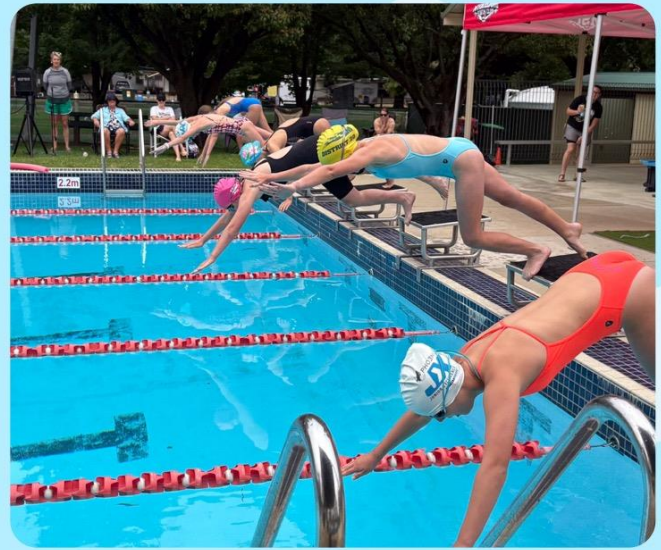
The Year 6's will have their end of year liturgy on Tuesday 17th December at 6:00pm at St Mary's Church.

GOOD BYE AND THANK YOU

Finally we thank Ms Wall for all she has done for the SLC. Hannah has been an amazing teacher and colleague. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for the enthusiasm, energy and creativity she has brought to our unit. We wish Hannah all the best as she heads to teach in Wangaratta.

Stay cool and enjoy the sunshine!!
SLC Teachers

SWIMMING CARNIVAL









CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES - 2024

CHRISTMAS EVE....Tuesday, 24th December

5.00pm – Whorouly (St Patrick's Church/outdoor) BYO chair

7.30pm - Myrtleford (St Mary's Church)

NO MASS - Bright (Our Lady of the Snows)

CHRISTMAS DAY....Wednesday, 25th December

8.30am - Myrtleford (St Mary's Church)

10.30am - Bright (Our Lady of the Snows)

NB: Reconciliation Communal Celebration and Absolution will be offered at the Masses leading up to Christmas.



"Blueberry Magic"



Organic blueberries

Pick your own \$10 per kg at

71 Clancy Lane Myrtleford between 8am - 12pm

every day unless raining

Bring your own containers to take them home in



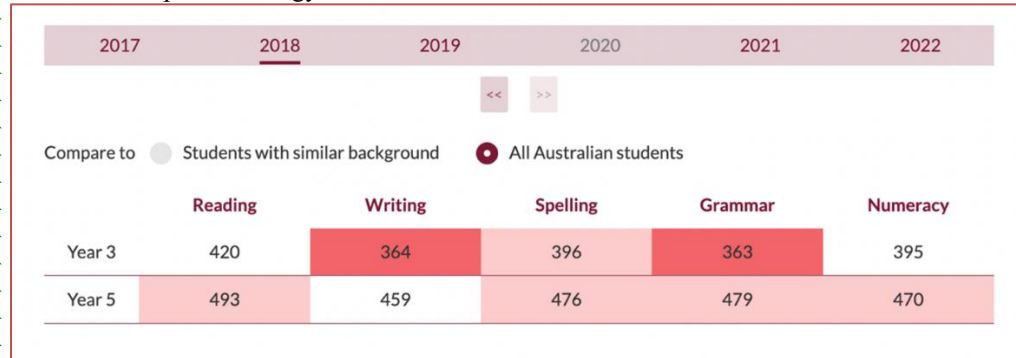
More info on Facebook, look up "Blueberry Magic"

A MESSAGE FROM KITTY

As an outgoing principal and strong believer in The Science of Learning I wanted to share my thoughts for anyone interested in the journey that St Mary's Myrtleford has undertaken in making changes to our teaching over the last five to six years to make a difference for our students, including the many students who have traditionally found learning difficult. St Mary's is not unique and has had many schools go before us who, we have taken full advantage of, to support our own growth.

Schools within the Sandhurst diocese have also taken steps and moved along the same path as we have, but we have all done this in silos, oblivious to what other schools were doing. How we could have come together and shared had we had known! This is where schools have so much more potential with Magnify bringing schools together, and to learn and support together.

In 2019, I began as the new school principal, following the footsteps of an excellent principal who had worked hard in establishing a strong culture and processes for an effective and calm school. I was then able to layer upon this putting to work my skills in teaching and lifting standards. We knew we had to do things differently, the results were appalling. Not one staff member could argue we were doing a good job, however there was blame put on the children and their families. My argument has always been children in Myrtleford are not born dumb and we can only influence what happens in our classrooms not what happens at home, so let's put our energy where it needs to be, in the classroom.



So early in 2019 our exploration stage happened. It was messy and I as a leader lacked how I could lead the change, but I knew what was happening, was failing for most of our children. I had teachers that were keen to do better but only knew what they knew and could not move forward. St Mary's was an 'Inquiry' school, based on concepts to be taught such as sustainability, change etc. Much of the pedagogy assumed that children would learn if they were exposed to the concepts, but explicit teaching was certainly not consistent or built upon each year. However, at this time we were oblivious to this realisation. Magnify will allow for every teacher to receive the same knowledge and professional growth based on evidence. The principal will not need to outsource and look for this information.

Our starting point was looking at our lowest areas in NAPLAN, being spelling and writing. This literally took a year of devising rubrics to assess writing, then assessing the writing and trying to understand where our students were in spelling. My advice here is, do not bother going down this path! It was a waste of time and did not support our learning or our teaching. However, as the years went on, we engaged with 'No More Marking' which enabled us to work with other teachers to assess our students' writing with ease and so much more quickly.

During the early years, I stumbled across Nathaniel Swain and Think Forward Educators. It was in this forum I came to understand the scientific research and how this could link into classroom practice. Through this forum I learnt about 'The Writing Revolution' and as a school this became our professional development within our staff meetings each week with practice during the week. This process was beginning to make sense. Teach explicitly at sentence level and then expect paragraphs and whole texts. We had this so wrong! So, we had started, but we were still struggling as we really had no expert or explicit direction. We made the decision to embark on spelling using the resource and professional development with 'SMART Spelling' as that was what I knew from my previous school. If nothing else, we were all on the same page and consistent within the spelling approach across the school and at least we were teaching spelling!! However, it is so true that when we 'know better, we do better!' More about this later!

In the meantime, I continued to seek out any evidence based professional development I could. It is without a doubt that I could not go past the work being done and shared on 'Think forward Educators.' Not only was this information so sound, understandable and relevant, I was blown away that all these people shared this information free of charge. This was truly inspirational, and I so much wanted our school to be a part of this. This was heading into 2020 and the beginning of lock downs etc. Within the forum was a principal section and it was here I first heard Steve Capp speak. After a few attempts to contact Steve, he was able to zoom in during a respite against lock downs and his work with us (again free of charge) literally turned our school around. I cannot thank him enough.

We spent over an hour discussing where we were and what we were attempting to do with writing and spelling. He told us to stop what we were doing and to first understand the meaning of explicit, direct instruction. We purchased the book and studied this book for the year implementing the norms and strategies across the school. A game changer!! All classrooms had the same norms, same implementation of teaching, and teachers were teaching! The work with Knowledge Society through 'Magnify' will address these issues across all Sandhurst schools.

While we were still implementing the strategies from The Writing Revolution, the teaching was now more explicit and with clarity. It is interesting, as Nathaniel Swain states in his recent book, Harnessing the Science of Learning, “a successful change process involves trialling new approaches, collecting student information, and adapting in continuous improvement cycles.” This is certainly how we felt, as we went around in circles, discussing, trialling, arguing and always coming back to data! Were we making a difference?

Yes, we were seeing in roads. As we learnt more, we became aware of how much we did not know!! As we got more comfortable with our learning, staff were asking for more! Staff were asking to do professional development during the Christmas school holidays and were willing to pay for it! For me it is important to support staff who are the ground breakers and willing to give up their time and so the school paid for the professional development and the staff members gave up five days of their holidays to complete the Orton Gillingham training. While this was an expensive undertaking it has been essential in our understanding of the teaching of reading and spelling. This course has provided an in-depth understanding of the English language and will hold the staff in good stead as they implement MultiLit. At this present date most, staff have completed this training in their own time. This is pure dedication that a school cannot buy, it is the culture and the joy in delivering the best education that all children deserve. Once staff were educated in Orton Gillingham it was quickly realised that the SMART Spelling program was not the most efficient or effective approach to administer. From here we used the Orton Gillingham resources and much of the PHORMES approach which Reid Smith developed and again free of charge.

At this stage in the process of change, different practices began to overlap. The school began to make huge headway. Teachers were seeking out their own professional development and a tsunami in teaching and learning was happening. I no longer was the leader, staff were motivated and supported each other in their learning. Ash Pasqualotto established the Sharing Best Practice in the Alpine region, again all presenters share their knowledge free of charge. All presenters are aligned with the Science of Learning. It has been so special as a principal to observe our teachers sharing their experiences and their knowledge with other schools. This has not only been Ash, but also other teachers who are so talented and able.

While all the above was happening we realised that as a school we needed a Low Variance Curriculum which we worked on carefully with all staff establishing clear guidelines what each child in each year level must be taught and understand. Providing low-variance curriculum, as is stated in the Magnify notes, “ensures that the relevant curriculum is addressed” freeing “valuable head-space” to respond to the teaching needs within each classroom. Our teachers have used OCHRE for several years which has lifted the activities and curriculum ensuring students have received a high-quality and evidence-based curriculum.

While we have attempted coaching this has been more difficult to embed as again, we had to do our own research and make decisions as to how we would implement. Magnify will greatly support this action within our school and will support and continue to lift standards.

After years of implementing the Science of Learning and refining our skills in explicit-direct instruction our results have lifted dramatically. Our most recent results on the My School website are indicative of the huge improvement. What this data does not show is the impact the teaching has had on well-being and behaviour which have also pleasingly improved.

2023

Compare to ● Students with similar background ● All Australian students

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar	Numeracy
Year 3	451	460	459	483	454
Year 5	502	485	478	518	508