

# Annual School Report 2023 School Year

St Mary of the Angels Primary School, Guyra



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Principal  
Zoe Nugent

## About this report

St Mary of the Angels Primary School is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office (CSO), as the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The Annual Report provides the school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The report outlines to the school community information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school Annual Improvement Plan.

The report demonstrates accountability to the Federal and State Government regulatory bodies, the parish and school community and the CSO. This report, approved by the CSO, monitors school processes to ensure compliance with all NESA requirements for Registration.

This report complements, and is supplementary to, school newsletters and other regular communications. It is available on both school and CSO websites by 30 June 2024 following its submission to NESA.

The contents of this report may be tabled for discussion at various parent forums, including the School Advisory Council meetings and all information is public.

Further information about the school or this report may be obtained by contacting the school on 02 6779 1661 or by visiting the school's [website](#).



## **1.0 Messages**

### **1.1 Principal's Message**

There were many people who assisted in the development of the school as a Catholic learning community. In particular, special thanks are extended to the parent body and the school staff for all their generous efforts. St Mary of the Angels Primary School is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

St Mary of the Angels, Guyra, began the school year by welcoming back the young people, the skilled helpful adults and a new Leader of Pedagogy, Mrs Theresa Grills.

This was a year of exploring and embedding the system wide vision of 'A Christ-centred inclusive learning community that supports young people to realise a hope-filled future'. As schools who are committed to the teachings of Christ, we are charged with a mission to spread the "Good News of Jesus". St Mary of the Angels continued to be a school where students feel safe, valued, cared for, respected, and where all students are learners.

The initial two days of professional development, increased staff understanding of the Living Well, Learning Well Framework, Child Safe Training, the Catholic Schools Office Armidale Non Negotiables and first aid.

It was wonderful to see families, friends and volunteers back into the school, through the Welcome Mass, Welcome BBQ, Mother's and Father's Day events, various parish events, Parents and Friends Fundraisers (Disco, Colour Explosion) and sporting carnivals.

All stakeholders; students, educators and families, relished the opportunities to gather as a community again. The year brought no relief from social challenges that were being noted and acted upon in the school environment. Student resilience and family support were two critical aspects. Increased staff communication, through Child Safe Briefings and connection with support services such as Centacare and Catholic Schools Office Inclusion Team, certainly supported the school community in managing some of these challenges. Due to staffing shortages at Centacare, a counsellor was only available for Term 1 and the final two weeks of Term 4. However, with support from the school, a number of parents were encouraged to see private clinicians.

St Mary of the Angels continued its engagement of a number of Educational Assistants through the Intensive Learning Support Funding, issued by the NSW Government. This funding allowed specific and targeted support to students on a frequent basis.

Students continued to thrive in all areas at St Mary of the Angels. A number of student represented at Polding and NSW Swimming Championships.

This success extended to students' creative flair with the Guyra Show Art and the Creative Arts Presentation. In order to provide students with the best possible education, the Stage 2 students completed a camp at Thalgarrah Education Camp and Stage 3 students participated in the Urban Camp experience in Canberra.

The St Mary of the Angels community looks forward to continued success in 2024.

Zoe Nugent  
Principal

### **1.2 A Parent Message**

This was another year when understanding of school goals and Living Well, Learning Well education for parents and carers was increased.

The employment of a new Leader of Pedagogy for four days a week was of great benefit to staff and students. Having Theresa Grills on the team to build knowledge and increase personal capacity aided teacher professional development.



There was sadness as Basil, the school's well-being dog, passed away, and I know a number of families would like the school to start with another dog when possible.

The Principal and staff engaged the St Marys community through newsletters and conversations about student behaviour, Catholic Social Justice, puberty, Cyber Safety with Real Talk, Living Well, Learning Well, and parents as the first educators of children.

The language of Living Well and Learning Well has crept into everyday use with staff, and now parents, with Mr Anthony Rosser, School Advisory Council Chairperson, referring to the staff as 'Skilled Helpful Adults'.

The School Advisory Council, met with Cathy Ible from Catholic Schools Office to clarify their role in the school and the importance of their efforts in parent/ carer engagement. Topics for future discussion are how to support rural students in the community, how to engage community members/ connection with school and a revision of the St Mary of the Angels school uniform, so that it effectively reflects the school community and the commitment to ensuring all students have a uniform, that encourages a full understanding of the school tradition but also ensures all students are safe, respected, valued and cared for. Gender-neutral options are also critical to this mission.

St Mary of the Angels children participated in two camps. Year 3/4 went to Thalgarrah and Year 5/6 went to Canberra. We thank the staff for their energy and commitment to the children by taking them to these events.

The Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 Class had some ups and downs with staff movement, but were very well-supported by the Principal, and the team, to ensure the students had a realignment in Terms 2 and 3 with new teachers and new learning spaces.

The Teacher and Parent meeting area, where the old library was located, was well-used by staff and parents alike. It is good to have somewhere that is comfortable and close to the school office.

Learner Led Conferences were introduced during the year, which helped students share their learning with their parents, whilst Parent Teacher Interviews could occur by request.

The school asked for a lot of feedback around everything from Learner Led Conferences, to organisation of events and opportunities for children to participate in other-learning, such as debate and the arts.

The Parents and Friends Committee made great efforts at community engagement, with a number of new and exciting events and social opportunities for the children.

Thank you to the committed group and well done on the significant fundraising and joyful events like the Disco and Colour Explosion. We all look forward to 2024.

Wendy Warner  
Parent  
School Advisory Council

## **2.0 This Catholic School**

### **2.1 The School Community**

St Mary of the Angels Primary School is located in Guyra and is part of the St Mary of the Angels Parish which serves the communities of Guyra, Ben Lomond, Glencoe, Black Mountain and Bald Blair, from which the school families are drawn.

Last year the school celebrated 104 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest, Father Stephen O'Shea, is involved in the life of the school.



## 2.2 Catholic Life and Religious Education

St Mary of the Angels Primary School follows the Armidale Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum and uses the student text *To Know, Worship and Love*, as authorised by the Bishop of Armidale, Michael Kennedy.

Students attended fortnightly school masses and special feast days and Holy days of obligation. During the year, St Mary of the Angels celebrated the sacraments of first Eucharist, reconciliation and confirmation.

Spiritual and faith formation are an important part of life at St Mary of the Angels. In Term 2, the staff retreat was facilitated by the spirituality team at the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale.

The school's average result was 24.1 with two students receiving distinctions and seven receiving credits.

Students in Year 6 in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Armidale undertake the Diocesan Religious Education (RE) Test annually. The test consists of 30 multiple-choice questions.

Results of the test are analysed by teachers and are used to inform teaching and learning in Religious Education.

Our School's average result (as a mark out of 30)	
Year 6	24

## 2.3 School Enrolment

St Mary of the Angels Primary School caters for children from Years K to 6. The following table indicates the student enrolment characteristics:

	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	TOTAL 2023	TOTAL 2022
Male	6	10	4	5	11	9	7	52	51
Female	2	6	6	7	6	6	4	37	40
Totals	8	16	10	12	17	15	11	89	91

## 2.4 Student Attendance

In order for students to reach their full potential it is important that they attend school regularly. Whilst it is the parents' legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly, staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor attendance each day. The class roll is marked every day and rolls are checked each week by the Principal or their delegate. The school uses the attendance coding system adopted in all NSW schools. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by staff. Parents are requested to provide a satisfactory explanation for an absence by means such as a written note, telephone call, SMS message or email to the school, preferably on the first day of absence and certainly within seven days. The Principal is made aware of sustained student absences or absences reflecting a pattern. In these situations, the Principal or delegated staff member contacts the parent/guardian. Parents are encouraged to arrange medical and other necessary appointments outside school hours. Prolonged periods of absence occur from time-to-time for various reasons. In these cases, students and their parents meet with the Principal to discuss the leave request.

The average student attendance rate for the school during 2023 is shown in the following table.



	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	All Years
<b>Average Student Attendance Rates</b>	95.0%	90.0%	88.0%	91.0%	92.0%	90.0%	91.0%	91.0%

### Managing Student non-attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The school, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

School staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.
- monitoring engagement of individual students in their learning and identifying strategies to enhance engagement.
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance.
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance.
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented.
- intervention strategies for students with unsatisfactory attendance may include academic case management, social case management, referral to counselling and parent/ carer involvement.
- the Director of Catholic Schools or designated Catholic Schools Office Armidale officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom previous strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

When the Catholic Schools Office Armidale is notified of a student for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and previous strategies have failed, the Principal and the System Performance Leader will convene a meeting with the family, the student, and other agencies if required, to develop a Return to School Plan.

## 2.5 Staff Profile and Teacher Standards

	Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile	Number of Teachers
1.	Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Provisional or Conditional level.	0
2.	Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Proficient level.	7
3.	Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Highly Accomplished level.	0
4.	Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Lead level.	0



Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile	Number of Teachers
5. Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.	6
6. Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the school.	1
7. Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the school.	7

## 2.6 Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The school ensures that at every available formal and informal opportunity the values of respect and responsibility are promoted. We want every student to understand and appreciate that they are part of both the school and the local community. The school models and teaches students about respect and responsibility in a number of ways:

- The school continued to deepen its work and understanding of the Living Well, Learning Well framework. Through this, weekly student briefings focused on the framework and the addition of Mini Vinnies ensured that the young people have every available opportunity for formal and informal learning on the values of respect and responsibility.
- Student leadership forms a major part of the culture of respect and responsibility that makes up the warm and caring climate within the school.
- Student leaders act as role models for younger students and accept responsibility for specific tasks around the school.
- Participation in Mini Vinnies action groups and representing the school at events within the diocese and the local community.

## 2.7 Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, the school used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the school from parents, students and teachers.

### Parent Satisfaction

Using the formal survey tool, parents were able to share their overall satisfaction with the school with a 41 of our 90 completion rate.

Most important to parents was the way teachers make learning engaging and take interest in each child and the safe nature of the school.

The school receives regular informal feedback throughout the year from parents and people in the community regarding the school and the staff who work with their children. Open feedback opportunities were extended to parents/ carers, students and staff on; communication, staff interactions and events such as sports, Learning Conferences, camps, Creative Arts and End of Year processes.

The change over to Compass as a formal communication and digital newsletter was a challenge for families who like to receive a hard/ paper copy. They have shown dissatisfaction with Compass and the End of Semester Reports.



Families are always appreciative of more communication between school and home and this is a goal for 2024.

### **Student Satisfaction**

Overall, the students at the school demonstrate appreciation and respect for the school itself, the staff and the opportunities provided for them in regard to their learning experiences. Using the formal school survey, the students expressed a high level of satisfaction in most areas, with the only exceptions being the topic of homework, parents actively involved in the religious life of school and student opinion. Student agency continued to improve with the embedding of Learning Conferences, between students and parents/ carers.

### **Staff Satisfaction**

Responses from staff to formal and informal surveys show that they gain satisfaction from working at the school, but find alignment with their purpose and communication low. In response to this, the Principal commenced direct report check-ins with staff and engaged a Subject-Matter expert in 'Strong Teams' to work across the school. In addition, the leadership team worked closely with staff and other schools in the system to tighten PLT structures to ensure all staff were supported in delivering quality educational outcomes and were supported to build their own capacity.

Towards the middle to the end of the year, staff satisfaction improved significantly.

## **3.0 Teaching and Learning**

### **3.1 School Curriculum**

The school provides an educational program based on and taught in accordance with the NESA syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. In addition, the school implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools Office Armidale.

Religious Education in Catholic schools is a mandatory KLA included in the curriculum for students in each year group. St Mary of the Angels Primary School is committed to providing a quality education that meets the needs of all students.

St Mary of the Angels Primary School places great importance on building the foundation skills of literacy and numeracy. The school has designated literacy and numeracy blocks. Lessons in these areas are carefully planned to deliver the curriculum based on assessment of student skills and knowledge. Lessons are therefore differentiated for groups of students with learning intentions adjusted to suit the learning needs of each group.

The school is committed to implementing the 14 parameters based on Dr Lynn Sharratt's work of Putting Faces on the Data and Clarity. The 'gradual release of responsibility' model is followed and all classes participate in Big Write and VCOP strategies.

St Mary of the Angels commenced the year under the Mathematics Specialist Teacher Program for schools. Mrs Tiffany Ahumada undertook the lead role and ensured quality MaST teaching in the K-2 space, whilst delivering professional development for all educators on the Great Math Learning Sequence. Participation will extend across all stages in 2024.

In addition to excellent academic programs, St Mary of the Angels offers a wide range of sporting, cultural and community involvement opportunities. Physical education and sport is very important at the school. Students have access to a wide variety of sporting equipment during morning, recess and lunch breaks. Students are taught basic skills in a number of recreational sports which encourage





them to participate in weekend competitions. Good sportsmanship and fairness are at the forefront of all sporting activities. Students have the opportunity to participate at a diocesan level in athletics, swimming, cross-country, soccer and touch football, as well as summer and winter sporting trials. Students who excel can move on to represent at diocese and state level. It has been wonderful to see students engage in sport and other events.

The school takes great pride in contributing to the community through Anzac Day, Remembrance Day, Seniors Ball, Rotary Street Carnival and the annual agricultural show.

### 3.2 Student Performance in National Testing Programs

#### 3.2.1 NAPLAN

The school participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) with students in Years 3 and 5 tested. In Year 3, 13 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 16 students.

In Literacy there were four elements tested. These were reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation. In Numeracy, students were tested in number, patterns and algebra, measurement, data and space and geometry.

Commencing in 2023, NAPLAN test results are reported using proficiency levels.

Students' results show how they performed in each of the NAPLAN assessment areas against 4 proficiency levels:

- Exceeding: The student's result exceeds expectations at the time of testing.
- Strong: The student's result meets challenging but reasonable expectations at the time of testing.
- Developing: The student's result indicates that they are working towards expectations at the time of testing.
- Needs additional support: The student's result indicates that they are not achieving the learning outcomes expected at the time of testing. They are likely to need additional support to progress satisfactorily.

At St Mary of the Angels Primary School, school and student performance are closely monitored. These tests are one means of gathering data on individual student and school achievement. School staff have participated in Catholic Schools Office information sessions on NAPLAN and Data Analysis workshops.

The following data indicates the percentage of St Mary of the Angels Primary School students in the top two levels compared to the State percentage.

**Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy  
Percentage of Students in Levels Strong and Exceeding**

Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar and Punctuation	Numeracy
75.0	100.0	84.0	55.0	75.0



**Year 5 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy  
Percentage of Students in Levels Strong and Exceeding**

Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar and Punctuation	Numeracy
76.0	56.0	69.0	56.0	69.0

#### **4.0 School Policies**

##### **4.1 Enrolment Policy**

The Diocese of Armidale adheres to the policy as endorsed by the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' of Students in the Catholic Systemic Schools of the Diocese of Armidale. The Catholic Schools Office Armidale monitors the implementation of this policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. Children from families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church may be considered eligible for enrolment. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

This school does not have any enrolment policies or support documents in addition to the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' for schools in the Diocese of Armidale. This policy is available on the school's [website](#) and the Armidale Catholic Schools Office [website](#).

##### **4.2 Living Well, Learning Well - A Student Support Framework for the Diocese of Armidale**

Living Well, Learning Well - A Student Support Framework for the Diocese of Armidale are policies and procedures justifying a model of student support that considers learning, wellbeing, school connection, behaviour, family-school partnerships and similar domains as inseparable and interrelated elements in the lives of children and young people and in the complex community that is the contemporary school.

The development goal of Living Well, Learning Well, and related policies was, and is, to ensure contemporary research and findings in fields of pedagogy, inclusion, behaviour support, pastoral care, bullying prevention and intervention, student voice, participation and connection to school, child and adolescent psychology, student wellbeing and staff collective efficacy are reflected in all language, policy, practice and protocols of the system and schools. It supports a whole-system ecological approach to understanding and acting on the complexity of factors that interact to shape and form the lives of children and young people.

At the heart of Living Well, Learning Well is a universal and unconditional positive regard for children and young people and a high regard for the collective capacity of a school staff team to increase learning, wellbeing and life-opportunity outcomes for children and young people. The full text of the school's Living Well, Learning Well procedures may be accessed on the school [website](#).

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. The school does not sanction the administration of corporal punishment by school staff or non-school persons, including parents, to enforce appropriate behaviour in the school.



### 4.3 Student Protection Policies and Procedures

The role of the Catholic school in child protection is to protect children and young people and to promote and safeguard the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. This responsibility is shared with the whole community. Every school within the Armidale Catholic Schools Office (CSO) system of schools works within a statutory framework of cooperation with government authorities and other relevant agencies and with families in the care and protection of children and young people.

Schools have a key role to play in today's society by assisting students and families with child protection. The safety, welfare and wellbeing of students is given the highest priority in every preventative and protective action taken.

In caring for children and young people, we must act in their best interest and take all reasonable steps to ensure their protection. This involves sincere commitment to upholding children's rights to safety and their wellbeing, and taking comprehensive steps to create a child safe school organisation and culture, with shared responsibility requiring all Armidale CSO personnel to work together within a comprehensive framework to ensure action and accountability for child safety.

St Mary of the Angels Primary School is committed to fulfilling its obligations and seeks to develop best practice to identify and address risk and harm, and to promote the wellbeing of all children and young people in Armidale CSO schools. The dignity of the human person is a central truth of the Gospel message of Jesus. In respecting the dignity of all human persons, Catholic school communities are called to ensure the welfare and safety of all of their members.

The protection of the students entrusted to our care, then, is a very serious responsibility. In taking up this responsibility along with parents, who are recognised as the primary educators and carers of their children, Catholic school communities are committed to ensuring Catholic schools have at their centre the total care of the whole student.

St Mary of the Angels Primary School follows the guideline, policies and procedures as determined by Armidale Catholic Schools Office who provides policy, procedures, forms and links to other resources relating to child protection. These resources have been developed to guide and assist staff and to inform Catholic school communities. Further details can be accessed from the school's [website](#) which includes a further [guide for parents](#).

### 4.4 Complaints Handling Policy and Guide

The Diocese of Armidale has established a 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' which is implemented by this school. The rationale for this policy is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of the contemporary world. The Catholic Schools Office monitors the implementation of these policies.

*No changes were made to the 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' this year.*

*The full text of the school's 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' may be accessed on the school's [website](#) or the administration office.*

### 5.0 School Review and Improvement

Each year, the school develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. The plan is drawn from the school's Strategic Improvement Plan and informed by the Catholic Schools Office Annual Improvement Plan. The school engages in an annual evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness against these external standards in collaboration with the System Performance Leader.



Key Goals Achieved and Implemented in 2023	Key Goals for 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built a strong Catholic Community of Care devoted to improved inclusive practices that strengthen faith, pastoral care and well-being for all.</li> <li>• Promoted a data-informed culture that improves pedagogy, and enhances learning outcomes for all students.</li> <li>• Promoted a data-informed strong team culture that improves pedagogy, and enhances learning outcomes for all students and staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To embed Living Well, Learning Well to form and transform this Catholic community of care.</li> <li>• To ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum that supports young people to shape a better future.</li> <li>• To embed a data-informed strong team culture that enhances connection to system and school for all.</li> </ul>

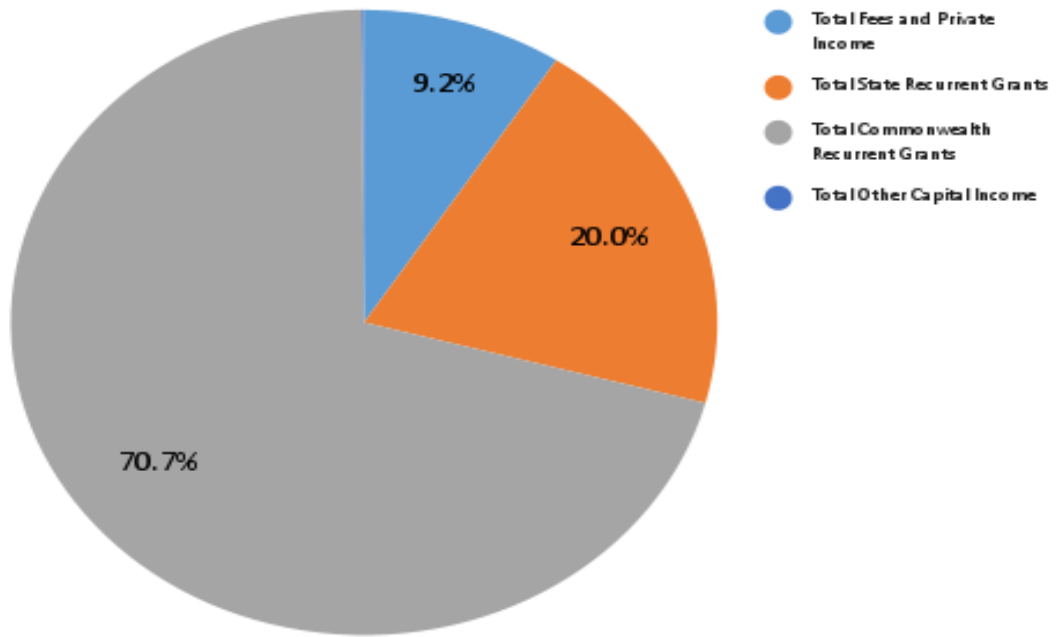
## 6.0 Financial Information

Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary schools, K-10 schools and secondary colleges. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school. In addition, the financial accounts for each school and for the Catholic Schools Office are audited annually.

A visual summary of the income and expenditure reported to the Commonwealth Government for 2023 is presented below:



### 2023 Income - St Mary of the Angels Primary School, Guyra



### 2023 Expenditure - St Mary of the Angels Primary School, Guyra

