

2024

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT



St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School

7 Johnson Street, FRESHWATER 2096

Principal: Mrs Alicia van der Merwe

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About this report

St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School (the 'School') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB), the proprietor, with Catholic Schools NSW (CSNSW) as the approved authority for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the Education Act 1990 (NSW).

The Annual School Report (the 'Report') demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies and CSBB. Additionally, the Report complements and is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the School community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students.

The Report provides parents and the wider community with fair, reliable and objective information about educational and financial performance measures as well as School and system policies. This information includes summary contextual data, an overview of student performance in state and national assessments, a description of the achievement of priorities in the previous year and areas for improvement. Detailed information about the School's improvement journey is documented at local school level and is developed, implemented and evaluated in consultation with key stakeholders.

Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the School directly or by visiting the School's website. Information can also be obtained from the [My School website](#).

Message from key groups in our community

Principal's Message

As 2024 comes to a close, there is much to reflect upon with pride and gratitude at St. John the Baptist, Freshwater. Throughout the year, the school has continued to fulfil its mission of providing an authentic and professional Catholic education, delivered with care and compassion, aligned with the broader Mission and Vision of Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB).

The wellbeing of students and families was a priority for St. John the Baptist in 2024. To support this goal, The Resilience Project continued in our classrooms. This initiative has laid the groundwork for nurturing key values of Gratitude, Empathy, and Mindfulness within the school, and the positive impact on students and staff has further developed.

Parent partnerships continued to strengthen throughout the year. The collaboration between the Executive Team, P&F Presidents, and School Counsellor resulted in a successful parent engagement seminar, led by Michelle Mitchell: Tweens - What Kids need now. This was also shared with the Northern Beaches Precinct of Schools, Primary Schools.

This year marked a period of significant progress in curriculum reform and professional development. Professional Learning ensured that the delivery of our curriculum remains modern, comprehensive, and effective in supporting student learning. This curriculum enhancement was complemented by the investment in the MultiLit Suite, which provided crucial support for both whole-class instruction and small-group intervention.

The school continued to strengthen its connections with local pre-schools and fellow Northern Beaches Southern Precinct Schools, enriching the community and expanding learning opportunities for students. These partnerships have fostered collaboration and a shared sense of purpose among local educational institutions, benefiting all involved.

Reflecting on the year, St. John the Baptist, Freshwater is grateful for the hard work and dedication of its staff, parents, volunteers, and students. Their commitment and enthusiasm are what make the school a unique and special place. A heartfelt thank you is extended to the volunteers whose generous contributions have greatly enriched the school community.

Looking forward to 2024, the school remains committed to building on the foundations of this past year, with continued focus on curriculum reform, professional learning, and strengthening parent partnerships. The goal is to keep improving and fostering a community where courage, compassion, and humility are at the heart of all endeavours.

Parent Body Message

As we approach the conclusion of the school year, we reflect on the numerous successful events and initiatives that have strengthened our school community. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who have contributed to making 2024 a year of achievement and unity.

Acknowledgement of Generous Contributions

We are deeply appreciative of the generosity of our donors and the success of our main fundraising event, Prom Night, which raised an outstanding \$21,809. These funds have significantly enhanced our P&F account, enabling us to finance a variety of school initiatives and enrich the educational experience for our students.

Initiatives Funded During the Year:

- Young Engineers Program: A comprehensive, hands-on five-week program for students in Kindergarten through Year 6.
- Civiq Aquafil Drinking Fountain: Installation of a new water station to benefit both students and teachers.
- Parenting Seminar: Sponsorship of Michelle Mitchell's seminar, 'Tweens - What Children Need Now Before the Teenage Years'.
- SJB Feast Day: Provision of a climbing wall and giant inflatables for added enjoyment.
- Mother's and Father's Day Celebrations: Arrangements for a coffee van, catering, and floral decorations.
- SJB Camping Weekend: Entertainment provided by an ice-cream truck and parents' canapés.
- 2024 Welcome Picnic: Inclusion of face painting and inflatable activities.
- New School BBQ: A new addition to support school events and community gatherings.

It has been immensely gratifying to witness the positive impact these initiatives have had on our students and families.

Gratitude to Event Organisers and Volunteers

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Year 3 parents, Holly Jones, Donna Tauro, and Vanessa Le Compte-Smith, for their exceptional effort in organizing the 'Glow' Disco last term. The event was a resounding success and greatly enjoyed by the students.

Appreciation for the P&F Team

We wish to express our profound gratitude to our P&F Secretary, Jill Hogan, and Treasurer, Fiona Joy, for their exemplary service and dedication throughout the year. We are currently seeking new volunteers for 2025 to join the P&F team. If you are interested in contributing to event organization or fundraising activities, we encourage you to reach out via the SJB Volunteers form.

Acknowledgement of the Wider SJB Community

Finally, we extend our sincere thanks to the entire SJB community for your unwavering support of the P&F. Your enthusiasm and participation are vital to the success of our initiatives. We welcome your feedback and suggestions, which can be shared through the provided link.

Thank you for your continued commitment and support. We look forward to another prosperous and engaging year in 2025.

Student Body Message

Year Six Leadership Reflection – 2024

Being part of the Year Six Leadership Team at St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School gave us the amazing opportunity to help the younger students enjoy their time at school—while having so much fun ourselves! One of the best things about our school is that everyone knows each other, and as leaders, we were able to work together and be involved in so many exciting events.

One highlight of the year was our School Camp, where we enjoyed time together, engaged in learning and completed an amazing race to return to school!

As leaders, we organised and ran school assemblies, SJB's Got Talent, and fundraising appeals for Caritas and St Vincent de Paul. We proudly represented our school in the community and helped welcome preschoolers during their visits and on special Playgroup Days.

One of the most rewarding parts of the year was spending time with our Kindy Buddies—whether it was helping them in the playground or joining in classroom events, it was always special.

2024 has been an unforgettable year, and we're grateful for the chance to give back to our school in such meaningful and memorable ways.

School Features

St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Freshwater is a vibrant co-educational school for students from Kindergarten to Year 6, located on Sydney's Northern Beaches. As part of the Catholic Schools Broken Bay system, we are committed to providing a nurturing and inclusive learning environment rooted in our Catholic faith. We proudly belong to the Manly Freshwater Parish.

Established over a century ago in 1922 by the Good Samaritan Sisters, our school continues to build on a rich tradition of excellence in education and community engagement. We are honoured to be a priority feeder school for St Paul's College, Manly.

Our two-campus layout provides a dynamic setting for learning and play, with modern classrooms, engaging outdoor spaces, a well-resourced library, and a flexible multi-purpose learning environment.

In 2024, our students benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum enriched by diverse opportunities including Mixed Ensemble, dance, debating, public speaking, sports, gala days, academic competitions, and other extracurricular experiences designed to inspire confidence, creativity, and collaboration.

Student Profile

Student Enrolment

Students attending the School come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2024. Additional information can be found on the [My School website](#).

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
89	80	12	169

* Language Background Other than English

Enrolment Policy

The [Enrolment Principles](#) temporarily supersede The Enrolment Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools (2013) and are being followed by the School for enrolments for 2024. As inclusive and evangelising communities, we welcome every family who would like a Catholic education for their children. Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB) strives to respond to the needs of all students, within the constraints of our available resources. We believe all students should have access to our schools which offer educational opportunities that nurture the Catholic faith, expand life choices, cater for the disadvantaged, and challenge all students to reach their full potential. Our schools are explicitly evangelical, catechetical and address (with the support of our parishes and agencies), the faith formation of our school communities. Copies of these principles and other policies in this Report may be obtained from the [CSBB website](#) or by contacting CSBB.

Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for the School in 2024 was 91.60%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group						
Kindergarten	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
91.60	91.20	92.40	92.70	91.90	90.00	90.80

Managing Student Non-Attendance

In order for students to reach their full potential it is of paramount importance that they attend school regularly. While it is the parents' legal responsibility under the NSW Education Act (1990) to ensure that their children attend school regularly, our staff as part of their duty of care, monitor all absences and work in partnership with parents to support and promote the regular attendance of students. In doing so, the School, under the leadership of the principal:

- provides a caring environment which fosters a sense of wellbeing and belonging in students
- maintains accurate records of student attendance
- implements policies and procedures to monitor student attendance and to address non-attendance issues as and when they arise
- communicates to parents and students, the School's expectations with regard to student attendance and the consequences of not meeting these expectations
- recognises and rewards excellent and improved student attendance.

School attendance records also contain information regarding student absences including reasons for absence and documentation to substantiate reasons for absences. Teachers are required to monitor non-attendance diligently on a student by student basis and to bring to the attention of the Principal immediately any unexplained absences, non-attendance of a chronic nature, or reasons for non-attendance that cause concern. Matters of concern are referred to the Principal, CSBB and the relevant Department of Education officer where appropriate.

Where a student is not able to attend school for a prolonged period of time due to a medical condition or illness, the School in collaboration with parents, provides resources to contribute to the student's continuum of learning where possible. CSBB monitors each School's compliance with student attendance and management of non-attendance as part of the system's Quality Assurance and Compliance processes. The School's attendance monitoring procedures are based on the Procedures for the Management of Student Attendance in Catholic Schools Broken Bay.

Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2024:

Total number of staff	16
Number of full time teaching staff	10
Number of part time teaching staff	6
Number of non-teaching staff	3

Total number of teaching staff by NESA category

All teachers employed by the School are qualified to teach in NSW. Additionally, all teachers at this School who are responsible for delivering the curriculum are accredited with NESA and hold a Working with Children Check.

Teachers at this School are either accredited as conditional, provisional, proficient or highly accomplished as defined by the NSW Teacher Accreditation Act 2004. Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher are voluntary. The number of teachers within the Catholic Schools Broken Bay in our 45 schools at these levels is as follows:

- Highly Accomplished: 9 teachers
- Proficient: 1322 teachers
- Provisional: 132 teachers
- Conditional: 67 teacher

Additionally, there are approximately 60 teachers who are currently actively engaged in the submission process at the higher levels of accreditation. Teacher status at individual schools can be sourced directly from the School.

Catholic Identity and Mission

As a Catholic community, the School shares in the mission of the local Church. The [Diocesan Mission Statement](#) is our statement of shared common purpose: "The Diocese of Broken Bay exists to evangelise, to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, gathered as friends in the Lord and sent out to be missionary disciples."

In partnership with parents as the first faith educators of their children and the local parish community, the School seeks to provide authentic, professional Catholic Education, inspiring hearts and minds to know Christ, to love learning, to use their talents to be the very best they can be. Our vision, purpose and all we do is founded on faith in Jesus Christ, and informed by Christian values including faith, joy, witness, compassion, and courage.

The School's Religious Education (RE) program is based on the [Catholic Schools Broken Bay Religious Education Curriculum](#) and aims to provide students with meaningful, engaging and challenging learning experiences that explores the rich diversity of the Catholic faith and ways in which we live it. A new Religious Education Curriculum has been developed to further enhance the learning experience for all. This was implemented into Early Stage 1, Stage 1, Stage 3, Stage 4 and Stage 5 classrooms incrementally from 2022 with the final stage being implemented in 2025. These programs include formal Religious Education as well as retreats, spirituality days and social justice opportunities in which students are invited to serve others, especially the poor and those who are marginalised.

Faith formation opportunities are provided for students, staff, parents and caregivers. Students regularly celebrate Mass and pray together. Students are invited to participate in age appropriate sacramental and Youth Ministry activities aimed at living out their mission as disciples of Jesus.

Our school's values—Courage, Compassion, and Humility—reflect the life and mission of St John the Baptist. These values are embedded within our Wellbeing and Religious Education programs, fostering a sense of discipleship and Catholic identity from Kindergarten to Year 6. Regular reflection and activities help students connect these values with their call to live as missionary disciples.

In 2024, our Mission and Civics and Citizenship team participated in the Catholic Schools Broken Bay Mission Mass. As part of our commitment to social justice, we raised funds for Mary MacKillop's Place, the St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal, Caritas Project Compassion, and the Christmas Appeal. These initiatives empower students to engage actively with their faith and contribute to the community, strengthening their Catholic identity and discipleship.

In 2024, the Religious Education Coordinator (REC) and the Parent Engagement Coordinator (PEC) worked closely together as part of the Towards 2025 strategy to continue enhancing

relationships between the school, families, and the wider Catholic community. This collaboration played a crucial role in fostering a welcoming and respectful environment while strengthening these important connections, ensuring that we remained united in our mission to serve and support each other in faith and community.

At St John the Baptist, we walk together in faith, committed to serving others and strengthening connections within our school, parish, and broader community. Through our shared mission, we inspire students to live as authentic disciples of Jesus Christ, shaping a vibrant and compassionate Catholic school community.

Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

The School provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabuses for primary education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology (S&T), Human Society and its Environment (HSIE), Creative Arts (CA) and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE). In addition to this, the School implements the Diocesan Religious Education syllabus. Staff members are committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning in all facets of the curriculum.

Collaborative Coaching continued as a major focus of Professional Learning at the school with teachers released from class on a weekly basis to meet with the Assistant Principal (AP) as Collaborative Coach. Collaborative Coaching engages teachers in professional learning, data analysis and instructional intervention planning in a specific subject area. The meetings are purposeful in maintaining a continuous cycle of improvement in student learning outcomes and this year working mathematically, additive relations and multiplicative thinking were the target areas for improvement.

As the NSW Curriculum Reform continues to be embedded, 2024 saw the implantation of the New 3 - 6 English and Mathematics Syllabus', as well as the New Religious Education Syllabus in Year 5 and Year 6.

Professional Learning

A major focus across all schools in the Broken Bay Diocese during 2024 was the strengthening of teacher consistency in Assessment and Reporting. Staff participated in a series of system wide Staff Development Days (SDD) and professional learning meetings to further develop rigor in assessing and reporting in English and Mathematics.

Professional Learning attended by staff

Two system-wide Staff Development Days (SDD) on Curriculum Reform with a focus on building an image of the learner and developing consistency in approach to assessment.

- Staff Development Day: continued professional learning with our learning partner – 'Deadly Ed' - Indigenous Education and Cultural Immersion
- Staff Development Day: Curriculum Reform with a focus on Cognitive Load Theory by Ollie Lovell
- Annual Compliance Review – HSIE (Geography) and Religious Education.
- InitaLit and Language Lift Training (three staff members)
- CPR, Anaphylaxis and Asthma – all staff
- Middle Leaders Professional Learning Days attended by four members of staff
- New Stage 2 Religious Education Syllabus (two members of staff)

Twilight professional learning sessions in the following areas:

- Wellbeing - The Resilience Project
- NCCD whole staff professional learning and NCCD modules
- Behaviour Management online webinar with Ross Greene
- Essential Assessment ongoing professional learning

Staff continued to engage with the CSSB Learning Improvement site, MyPL and CSNSW to support their self-directed learning with a focus on the new English and Mathematics Curriculums during 2024.

Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

NAPLAN

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The purpose of NAPLAN is to provide information to parents and teachers about the achievements of students in literacy and numeracy. The test provides a measure of the student's performance against established standards and against other students in Australia. Each year the results are analysed by the school to inform teaching with a view to improving student performance.

NAPLAN results are reported against proficiency standards with 4 levels of achievement to give teachers, parents and carers clearer information on how students are performing:

- 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.

The percentage of student achieving at Exceeding and Strong proficiency standards in NAPLAN at St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School for 2024 is reported in the table below.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2024		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 3	Grammar and Punctuation	60%	54%
	Reading	75%	66%
	Writing	89%	77%
	Spelling	70%	61%
	Numeracy	84%	63%

NAPLAN RESULTS 2024		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 5	Grammar and Punctuation	70%	65%
	Reading	85%	71%
	Writing	85%	67%
	Spelling	70%	68%
	Numeracy	90%	68%

Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

Pastoral Care Policy

The School's pastoral care and student wellbeing policies, guidelines and procedures are informed by the [Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing Policy](#). This policy is underpinned by the guiding principles from the National Safe Schools Framework (2013) (NSSF) that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a prerequisite for effective learning in all Catholic school settings. The Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Framework for Learning for the Diocese of Broken Bay Schools System (the Framework') utilises the NSSF ensuring that diocesan systemic schools meet the objectives of the NSSF at the same time as meeting the diocesan vision for pastoral care and wellbeing. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the CSBB website or by contacting CSBB. The policy was revised in 2019 to align with the [Australian Wellbeing Framework \(2018\)](#) for implementation in 2020.

Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy

The School's policies and procedures for the management of student behaviour are aligned to the [Behaviour Support Policy](#). Policies operate within a context that all members of the school community share responsibility to foster, encourage and promote positive behaviour and respectful relationships. The policy aims to promote a safe and supportive learning environment to maximise teaching and learning time for all students. It supports the development of students' pro-social behaviour based on respectful relationships and clear behavioural expectations. The dignity and responsibility of each person is promoted at all times along with positive student behaviours while ensuring the respect for the rights of all students and staff. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the CSBB website or by contacting CSBB. There were no significant changes made to this policy in 2024.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The School's Anti-Bullying guidelines and procedures are based on and informed by the [Prevention and Management of Student Bullying Policy](#) and is aligned to the Pastoral Care Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools and other related wellbeing policies and guidelines. All students, their families and employees within Catholic education have a right to a learning and work environment that is free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. Anti-Bullying policies support school communities to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying. Further

information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the [CSBB website](#) or by contacting CSBB. There were no changes made to this policy in 2024.

Complaints Handling Policy

The School follows the [Complaints Management and Resolution Policy](#). A distinctive feature of this policy is to ensure that complaints are addressed in a timely and confidential manner at the lowest appropriate management level in order to prevent minor problems or concerns from escalating. The expectation is that complaints will be brought forward and resolved in a respectful manner, recognising the dignity of each person concerned in the process. The policy recognises that a number of more minor or simple matters can be resolved without recourse to the formal complaint handling process but rather, quickly and simply, by discussion between the appropriate people. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the [CSBB website](#) or by contacting CSBB. There were changes made to this policy in 2024 to reflect new system processes.

Community 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, a variety of processes have been used to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers.

Parent satisfaction

Parents responded positively to the offering of the 2024 Parenting Seminar: Sponsorship of Michelle Mitchell's insightful seminar, 'Twins - What Children Need Now Before the Teenage Years'.

Parents highly valued the opportunities to volunteer and be engaged in the school through a range of options, but mainly through our P&F.

Student satisfaction

2024 Year in Review – Educational and Wellbeing Highlights

In 2024, Students continued to engage with The Resilience Project, which provided them with practical tools to support their mental health and wellbeing.

A much-anticipated highlight of the year was SJB Feast Day, which brought the whole school community together for a fun-filled picnic at Freshwater Park. Students especially enjoyed the giant inflatable obstacle course, where friendly competition—even with staff—made for lots of laughs and lasting memories.

When surveyed, students expressed appreciation for the school's welcoming and supportive atmosphere. They highlighted the benefits of being in a smaller school, where "everyone knows each other" and teachers understand the individual strengths and needs of each child.

Senior students especially valued their leadership roles, which included organising and leading school assemblies, representing the school at community events, and mentoring younger students, particularly through the Kindergarten Buddy program. Other highlights for our students included participating in debating and public speaking, and various representative sporting events.

Teacher satisfaction

2024 Staff Reflection – Professional Learning and Wellbeing

In 2024, teachers at St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Freshwater expressed deep appreciation for the school's strong collaborative culture and the collegial support it fosters—particularly for Early Career Teachers. Staff highlighted the value of mentoring and teamwork in building professional confidence and contributing to a positive and inclusive learning environment. The collegial support around student management was also a key strength, with teachers noting how effective collaboration ensured consistent approaches and shared strategies to support students' behavioural and emotional needs.

The Collaborative Coaching model continued to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from teachers, who recognised its immense value in fostering a professional learning community. This model not only helped improve their own teaching practices but also facilitated peer collaboration and support. Collaborative coaching allowed for targeted, evidence-based teaching strategies, with the integration of Essential Assessment enabling effective tracking of student progress and identification of future learning goals.

Financial Statement

Consistent with the NESAs requirements, financial income and expenditure for the School in 2024 is shown below. More detailed financial data is available on the My School website.

Recurrent and Capital Income 2024	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants ¹	\$2,003,713
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$321,976
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$855,930
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$0
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$120
Total Income	\$3,181,741

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2024	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$221,955
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$2,904,897
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$1,153,746
Total Expenditure	\$4,280,600

Notes

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.
3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income.
5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture and Equipment.
7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.

END OF 2024 REPORT