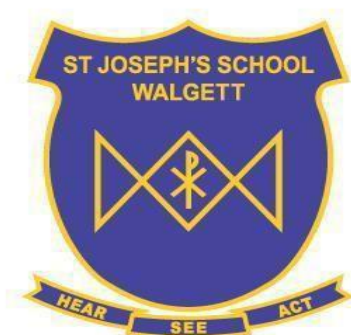


# Annual School Report 2023 School Year

St Joseph's Primary School, Walgett



82 Arthur Street  
Walgett NSW 2832

Phone 02 6828 1060

Web <https://stjosephswalgett.catholic.edu.au>

Principal  
Donna Fiechtner

## About this report

St Joseph's 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 6828 1060 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 Joseph's Primary School is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

The primary purpose of the school is to support the members of the parish community in providing a faith formation for their children. The school fosters a commitment to the individual and provides opportunities for academic, cultural and sporting achievement. St Joseph's Primary School offers students a quality Catholic education based on the teaching of the Church and within the context of a strong faith community.

The St Joseph's Primary School community experienced growth in learning and was able to complete a full year of learning without being affected by floods or school closures. With a deep focus on respect, safety and learning and a concentrated effort on improving reading, St Joseph's achieved good results in all areas of learning. Parents, students and staff worked cooperatively to continue building a professional learning community underpinned by a strong foundation in Catholic faith, which was evidenced by the support of all stakeholders.

Throughout the year, the school and parish came together to celebrate a number of masses and sacramental programs which fostered and developed the spiritual life of the school. This year saw the continuation of collaborative teaching and learning strategies in staged classes across K-6. Quality teaching and learning occurs within classrooms where students are supported in their learning by professional, dedicated staff supported by a strong parent community.

Donna Fiechtner  
Principal

### **1.2 A Parent Message**

Our wish for a 'normal' season for this year, following the floods of 2022, was not granted, with the driest year since the big drought plaguing us for most of the year. The positive of this was that the days of homeschooling for so many of the students and teachers following COVID-19 and the floods were finally over! This was so beneficial for the students, as one can not underestimate the importance of face-to-face learning for both the academic and social development of primary school kids.

Naturally, one of the greatest challenges of a dry year in Walgett is the maintenance of the school grounds, and it is an absolute credit to Panther and the staff of St Josephs who kept the grounds immaculate and welcoming under trying conditions. It exacerbated one of the school's greatest challenges, the re-establishment of a decent playing field. Although it has been on the priority list for some years, it is now of the highest priority and 2024 should produce a positive outcome, with the plans for a new watering system and returfing well under way.

One of the great positives of the year was the construction of new play equipment. The replacement of the ageing and increasingly dangerous playground has been a big hit and big thanks to Principal Donna, for all the hard work in making this come to fruition. Thank you too to Nick Schiller for making the construction process seamless.

Another big consideration for parents and teachers is the discussion and future decisions to be made regarding the original school building, currently used as the front office. Serious structural issues with the building, along with the need for a more modern functional office and co-curricular space have necessitated in depth discussion of how we approach this, balancing both St Joseph's and the Walgett communities' love of the old building, along with the future needs of the school.

Thank you to all the teachers and staff at St Josephs for another great year. We're looking forward to scoring many goals, both literally and figuratively, in 2024.



Ben Hawke  
President  
School Advisory Council

## 2.0 This Catholic School

### 2.1 The School Community

St Joseph's Primary School is located in Walgett and is part of the St Mary's Parish which serves the communities of Walgett, Collarenebri and Rowena, from which the school families are drawn.

Last year the school celebrated 128 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest, Father Samson Koyipurath, is involved in the life of the school.

### 2.2 Catholic Life and Religious Education

St Joseph's 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.

The school exists to ensure the faith development of the children of the school community. Clergy, staff, parents and parishioners work together to support the religious development of the children. The Religious Education curriculum supports the catechetical and evangelising mission of the Church while supporting children in their lifelong journey in faith. St Joseph's takes pride in nurturing the prayer life and faith formation of the students in the school.

Children were involved in the different sacramental programs run in conjunction with the parish, including first reconciliation, first Eucharist and confirmation which was celebrated with Bishop Michael Kennedy. The school celebrated an opening school Mass and induction of school leaders, Ash Wednesday, St Joseph's feast day and a variety of different masses and feast days throughout the year. Year 6 students celebrated a Graduation Mass in December and the whole school celebrated the year of learning with an End of Year Mass that was then followed by presentation of awards. Many feast days were celebrated in the classrooms. Prayer is a regular part of the school day, both in the classroom and at whole school assemblies.

St Joseph's participated in a number of outreach activities including Caritas, Project Compassion, Catholic Mission, NAIDOC Week activities, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparents' Day and Harmony Day.

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 Joseph's 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
<b>Male</b>	10	14	11	6	15	6	5	67	23
<b>Female</b>	11	10	13	11	8	5	9	67	13
<b>Totals</b>	21	24	24	17	23	11	14	134	36

## 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>	87.0%	84.0%	86.0%	83.0%	87.0%	80.0%	78.0%	83.6%

### 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.	15
3.	Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Highly Accomplished level.	0
4.	Those teachers at the NESAs Teacher Accreditation Lead level.	0
5.	Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.	10
6.	Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the school.	8
7.	Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the school.	16

## 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:

- St Joseph's Primary School promotes the Gospel Values to act justly, love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God. The school focuses heavily on respect, safety and learning in all that is said and done. Student well-being and upholding the dignity of the student is at the heart of the positive behaviour focus.
- Students were involved in Anzac Day and Remembrance Day services, NAIDOC Week and Harmony Day.
- The Yuwaalaraay Language Program helps promote respect and pride for the Aboriginal culture. The program was embraced by all staff and students and holds pride of place in the curriculum. Students were given the opportunity to participate in the Guwaali programs. These programs were designed by the Aboriginal education assistants and focusses on building self-esteem, cultural identity and confidence.



- A memorial garden was created, opened and blessed, to recognise the impact the original Aboriginal educators have had on the school 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**

An independent organisation was engaged to survey parents with regard to their level of satisfaction within the key areas of Catholic Ethos, Leadership, General, Teaching and Learning, Resources and the Improvement Process. The School Advisory Council (SAC) was also a source of informative feedback, as well as regular meetings and discussions with parents. There was strong agreement that the school is a safe place for students, that staff take a high interest in the children's well-being and learning and that learning for students is really satisfying and engaging. Catholic religious identity is seen to be highly promoted in the school. Support for a continued focus on the School Advisory Council and more refined and detailed communication with parents will be a focus for 2024. Parents also identified the need for upgrading the facilities.

### **Student Satisfaction**

An independent organisation was engaged to survey students with regard to their level of satisfaction within the key areas of Catholic Ethos, Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Resources and the Improvement Process. Students' views were also gathered informally throughout the year. Students expressed strong pride in the school and very positive comments in the areas of learning, safety, pastoral care and the school staff. Students indicated that they generally like attending St Joseph's, enjoy working with the teachers and the programs offered. The students indicated that the homework offered does not help them with their learning. This feedback will be used to inform planning in 2024.

### **Staff Satisfaction**

An independent organisation was engaged to survey teachers with regard to their level of satisfaction within the key areas of Catholic Ethos, Leadership, Staff Engagement, Resources and the Improvement Process. Teachers' views were also gathered through meetings throughout the year. All areas of teaching and learning, collegiality, professional development and school leadership, received very positive feedback indicating a high level of satisfaction working at St Joseph's. Teachers agreed that access to outside professional development is a need for 2024. This includes feedback on their teaching and learning, as well as more time to complete assessments and analyse student data.

## **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 Joseph's Primary School is committed to providing a quality education that meets the needs of all students.

The school is committed to the continuous improvement of teaching and student learning outcomes in all facets of the curriculum. The Annual Improvement Plan identified goals which included the deepening of Catholic identity by embedding the Catholic Principles and Values across the school and by providing faith formation for staff. The Learning and Teaching goal focused on improving student learning results, with particular emphasis on reading. Contemporary learning is supported by a range of digital technologies which form an ever-increasing part of classroom practice, enabling students to access a broad range of tools and resources to suit their learning styles and needs. The ongoing purchase of individual Chromebooks for students school wide has provided an excellent tool to support learning. Students identified with 'additional needs' were assisted through differentiation of the curriculum and support via Education Assistants in the classroom. St Joseph's has received a proportionate allocation of teacher time to support and monitor the implementation of the K--2 Diocesan Learning Enhancement Strategy. The programs to support Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 learning include BestStart, InitialLit and MiniLit.

The local Aboriginal language, Yuwaalaraay, is taught to all students. Aboriginal students have the opportunity to participate in the Wii Gaay camp which identifies individual students with particular strengths and provides educational experiences that cater for their individual learning styles.

Sport is an important component of the curriculum, with students participating in a range of sports and locally organised competitions. Many students were selected to compete in sport at diocesan and Polding levels. Students were also selected to be a part of the Moorambilla Voices choirs and singing camps.

## **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, 17 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 13 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 Joseph's 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 Joseph's 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
36.0	47.0	35.0	18.0	35.0

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

Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar and Punctuation	Numeracy
61.0	62.0	69.0	53.0	46.0

#### 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 Joseph's 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 Joseph's 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>• Developed confidence and competence in designing effective teaching and learning programs and high quality/ rich tasks in religious education</li><li>• Teachers used whole school tracking assessment data to inform the design of explicit teaching and learning experiences in reading</li><li>• All students experienced growth in reading</li><li>• Staff developed whole school programming proformas to assist in consistency and improvement in teaching and learning</li><li>• Opportunities for parents to be more involved in the life of the school: Mother's Day, Father's Day and Grandparents' Day celebrations</li><li>• Opportunities that focussed on Aboriginal identity, culture and spirituality, opening of the memorial garden for the original Aboriginal educators in the school</li><li>• Instalment of the new infants' playground and surfacing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continuation of embedding of the Living Well, Learning Well Framework for staff, students and parents</li><li>• Further opportunities to build connection with school, home, community and parish</li><li>• Staff PLPs developed and aligned to the annual improvement plan</li><li>• Strong teams leading quality teaching and learning through the use of the data ecosystem and data analysis</li><li>• Recruitment of teaching staff</li><li>• Work closely with the school advisory council and the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale on building and maintenance plans</li><li>• Instalment of a sprinkler system and turf for the upgrade of the school oval</li></ul>

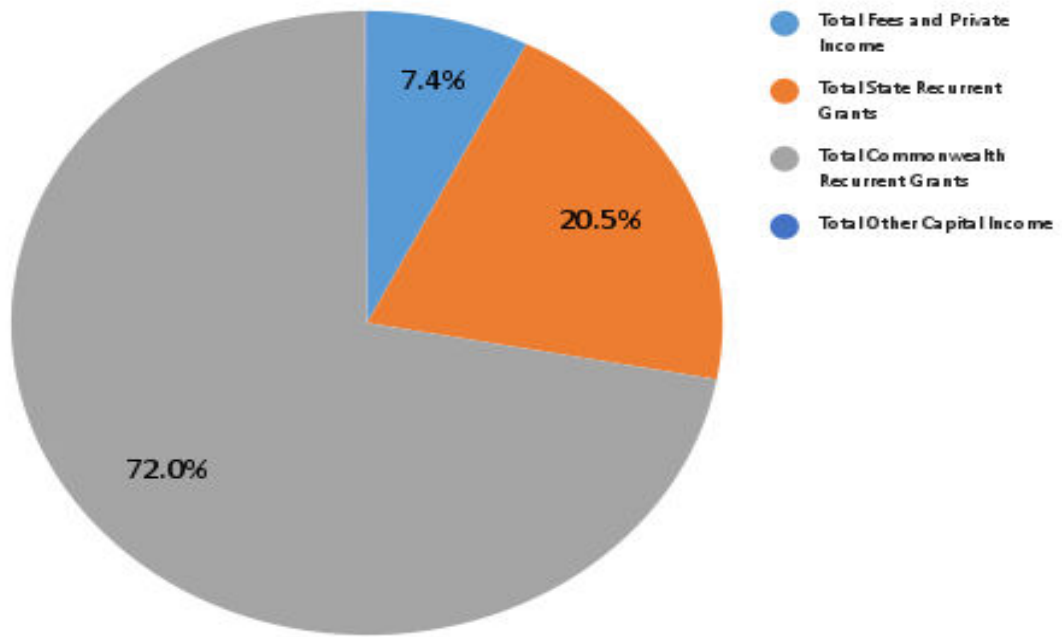
## 6.0 Financial Information

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 Joseph's Primary School, Walgett



### 2023 Expenditure - St Joseph's Primary School, Walgett

