

Annual Report 2024



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Introduction

Purpose of this Report

All schools and system authorities must make publicly available, within six months of the end of each program year, a report that includes information about the school. The legislative instrument by which recurrent funding from the Commonwealth Government is provided to independent schools is the Australian Education Act 2013 and the Australian Education Regulation 2013. One of the conditions for funding is the publication of information by schools. The purpose of the school Annual Report is to inform parents and the wider school community of the school's successes, activities, and achievements throughout the year, and to meet Commonwealth and State legislative requirements.

How the Report is Distributed

This report is a culmination report of the activities conducted by St John's Lutheran Primary School Ltd in the year 2024. It is published on the school website www.stjohnsportland.com.au and on the Victorian Regulation and Qualification Authority (VRQA) state register. There are hard copies available at the school and the Portland-Heywood Lutheran congregation. This report is also a summary of reporting that is provided to the School Board, Portland-Heywood Lutheran Congregation, Independent Schools Victoria (ISV), VRQA, Lutheran Education VIC, NSW, TAS & ACT Ltd (LEVNT), Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) and the wider St John's school community. Broader data and reports are available in other forms such as newsletters, school magazines and additional written, electronic, and digital content made available to the wider community.



Contextual Information

School Contact Information 2024

NAME	St John's Lutheran Primary School Ltd
SCHOOL SECTOR	Independent
TOTAL ENROLMENTS	100 (August DESE census including 1 Special Consideration)
YEAR LEVELS OFFERED	Foundation to Year 6
CO-EDUCATIONAL OR SINGLE SEX	Co-Educational
ADDRESS	43-55 Trangmar Street, Portland, Victoria, 3305
PRINCIPAL	Tara Pritchard
SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIR	Stephen Rudolph
BUSINESS MANAGER	Hayley Bristow
TELEPHONE	03 5523 3833
EMAIL	admin@stjohnsportland.vic.edu.au
WEBSITE	www.stjohnsportland.com.au

School Profile

Pastor Ben Schwarz helped inspire Portland Heywood Lutheran Church to establish the "Feed my Lambs Fund" in 1975. Through the extreme generosity of members Mr Bert Porte and Mr Vic Mibus, a 10-acre block of land on Trangmar St was earmarked as the future site of a primary school. In 1978, a selected congregational committee agreed that the Lutheran school would commence in 1980. This decision ignited a lot of activity, and many hours were devoted to fundraising, clearing the land of pine plantations, landscaping the oval, and drawing up building plans. St John's Lutheran Primary School did indeed open in 1980 with 36 students. God has grown and blessed this school ever since, enabling it to 'feed God's lambs' and provide a wonderful Christian education to the children of the Portland district.

The school places significant focus on developing the whole child - intellectually, spiritually, socially, physically, emotionally, and creatively. This is supported by spacious classrooms, outdoor learning areas and specialist areas for Japanese, Music, Visual Arts and Physical Education.

All staff, along with a Chaplain, work together as a team to support the well-being of our students and their families. St John's staff work hard to build positive relationships with our school community and most importantly, developing confident, resilient, and positive students in a caring, Christian environment.

Strategic Intent

The Strategic direction of St John's Lutheran Primary School Ltd is endorsed by the Board after recommendations from the Principal, Business Manager, LEVNT, wider consultation with staff and representatives from the parent body and Portland-Heywood Lutheran congregation. When establishing this direction, the school mission statement and motto of Praise, Love, Serve remain as a focus. Lutheran schools are an integral part of the mission of the LCA and are supported by three Lutheran Education Regions and Lutheran Education Australia as described in the LEVNT Governance Charter (as amended from time to time). Through its schools the LCA deliberately and intentionally bears Christian witness to students, parents, teachers, friends and all who comprise the world of the school.

School Board

St John's Lutheran Primary School Ltd has a governing board of elected representatives. The School Board consists of 5 Directors and 3 representatives who act as consultants. The key role of the School Board is governance, ensuring the ongoing viability of the school and maintaining the strategic direction of the school.

School Improvement

Throughout the 2024 year, several notable developments took place including:

- Installed seats under top oval shade sail.
- Senior toilets renovated.
- Fences to Western and Southern boundaries installed.
- Speed humps installed in driveway.
- Chicken coop rewired by the Portland-Heywood Lutheran Church congregation.
- Carpet replaced in junior classrooms, and classroom next to the Art room.
- Renovation of Year 3/4 classroom completed.
- Funding received from Planet Ark for tree seedlings for school grounds.
- Tutoring Learning Initiative.
- Strengthening of our school Playgroup.
- Our 'Getting Ready for School' Transition program for students enrolled in Foundation 2025 was facilitated in Term 4.
- Service-learning fundraiser to the hospital in Vanuatu.
- Service-learning fundraiser for the ALWS Gifts of Grace.
- A very successful Christmas Tree Exhibition organised by the P&F and enjoyed by the wider community.

In all that we do we aim to

Praise. Love. Serve.

Curriculum

Our School is committed to creating a student-centred environment that values and supports the diverse experiences and background knowledge of each learner. We believe this approach best addresses the unique needs of all students. Our dedicated staff continuously work to provide meaningful learning opportunities, ensuring that each lesson is relevant, engaging, and purposeful.

We foster a culture where students are encouraged to learn from their mistakes and make positive changes along their educational journey. At the core of every learning experience is the strong relationship between teacher and student. This vital connection plays a fundamental role in the quality of teaching and learning that takes place within our school community.

Early Learning

The Early Learning Program at our school offers a nurturing environment that ensures a smooth, safe, and enjoyable transition from home to school. Our thoughtfully designed curriculum provides a strong foundation that supports young children as they begin their learning journey.

Our Playgroup continues to thrive, with strong attendance from families in the Portland community. Led by Playgroup Coordinator Mrs. Jess Cook, the program offers a rich, engaging learning environment, including a music component. Held every Wednesday and Thursday morning, the Playgroup attracts an average of 50 children each week.



In Term 4, we again provided the 'Getting Ready For School' transition program for Kindergarten students enrolled in Foundation for 2025. This program provided our youngest learners with the opportunity to engage in inquiry-based learning, while developing essential skills in literacy and numeracy. It also allowed students to become familiar with the school environment and, by the end of the term, to meet their senior buddy. The program was facilitated by Victorian Institute of Teaching registered educators, who are also Early Childhood trained, ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all participants.

Primary Years

We provide a Christian education for students from Foundation to Year 6, nurturing each child's intellectual, spiritual, physical, emotional, creative, and social growth. Our goal is to cultivate a life of faith and service, ensuring that every student is equipped to thrive in all aspects of their development. Through meaningful and relevant learning experiences, we foster collaboration, celebrate individual efforts, and encourage each child to strive for excellence. Our commitment to preparing students for success in the 21st century is central to our educational mission.

Teaching and learning at our school align with the Victorian Curriculum, with a strong focus on core literacy and numeracy skills. These foundational areas are key to ensuring that students have the competence and confidence to succeed across all subjects.

This year, our curriculum was enriched by a range of extracurricular activities and events, including the school athletics day, cross country, swimming program and carnival, and participation in the Portland Schools Winter Series sports competition. Students also took part in Portland Athletics, Year 3/4 camp to Halls Gap, Year 5/6 camp to Noorla Yo-Long, the Western Hub Lutheran Leadership camp, and the GRIP Leadership day. Our students





also enjoyed a variety of Performing Arts excursions and incursions, the Music Festival, Art Alive, tree planting initiatives, and a visit from a Japanese school.

We also celebrated Book Week, organized fundraisers, and participated in service-learning activities such as supporting the Vanuatu hospital and schools through The Melanie Jewson Foundation by bagging and selling sheep manure. Additionally, students contributed to the Australian Lutheran World Service Gifts of Grace initiative, furthering our commitment to global outreach and service.

Learning Support

Our school is dedicated to supporting and enriching the learning journeys of all students, ensuring that each individual receives the attention and resources they need to thrive. To achieve this, we implemented a variety of Learning Support and enrichment programs designed to cater to the diverse needs of our students. A key initiative was the Victorian Government Tutoring Program, which provided targeted academic support to students who required additional assistance, helping them to bridge learning gaps and achieve their full potential.

In addition to academic support, we introduced therapy dogs as part of our holistic approach to student well-being, offering emotional support and helping to create a calm and nurturing environment for learning. We also worked closely with a range of specialists, including Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, and Physiotherapists, who provided tailored interventions and strategies to address specific learning and developmental needs. These specialist services play a crucial role in ensuring that every student has access to the support they require, empowering them to succeed both academically and personally.

Outdoor Facilities

In 2024, we made significant improvements to our school grounds to enhance the learning environment and provide our students with more inviting spaces for outdoor activities. One notable addition was the installation of a new seating area beneath the top oval shade sail. This new space offers a comfortable and shaded spot for students and to gather, relax, and engage in outdoor learning or social activities, fostering a sense of community and well-being.

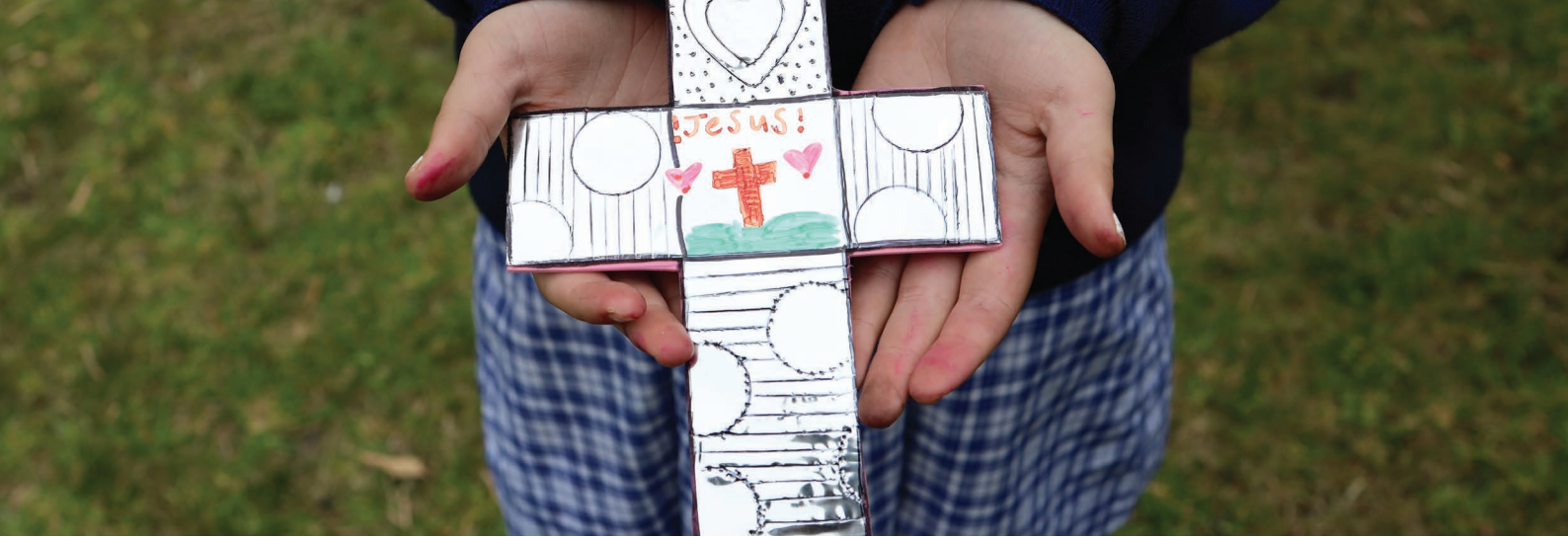
Additionally, we took steps to further beautify our school grounds and promote environmental awareness by planting a variety of trees. These new plantings not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of our school but also contribute to sustainability efforts, providing shaded areas, improving air quality, and supporting local biodiversity. These initiatives reflect our ongoing commitment to creating a positive, nurturing environment where students can thrive both academically and socially.

Pastoral Care and Wellbeing

In 2024, we made a concerted effort to meet the diverse needs of our students by utilizing a wide range of resources. We are particularly grateful for the funding received through Independent Schools Victoria (ISV), which enabled us to implement several impactful initiatives aimed at supporting the social and emotional well-being of each student. These initiatives were designed with the understanding that every child is unique, and our approach prioritizes individualized support to foster growth in all areas of development.

Central to our approach is the creation of a nurturing environment that emphasizes respectful relationships, a strong sense of community, and individual responsibility. We believe that cultivating these values helps students not only succeed academically but also develop into compassionate, responsible individuals. Two key examples of initiatives that foster these values are our Senior Buddy System and the Student Representative Council (SRC).





The Senior Buddy System pairs older students with younger ones, providing mentorship, guidance, and friendship. This initiative not only supports the social and emotional development of both senior and junior students but also strengthens bonds across year levels, encouraging a culture of support and collaboration.

The Student Representative Council (SRC) provides students with a platform to voice their opinions and take on leadership roles within the school community. Through the SRC, students learn the importance of responsibility, teamwork, and advocacy, while actively contributing to decisions that affect their school environment.

At the heart of our pastoral care program is an ethos of care and respect for all students. We are committed to ensuring that every student feels valued, supported, and connected to the wider school community. This holistic approach to student wellbeing underpins all aspects of our school culture, helping students to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically.

Worship Program

Worship plays a central and meaningful role at St John's Lutheran Primary School Ltd, fostering a strong sense of faith and community within our school. Throughout 2024, we continued to prioritize worship as a vital part of our school life, providing regular opportunities for students and staff to come together in reflection, prayer, and praise.

Every Friday morning, we held Chapel services that were thoughtfully led by our students and senior leaders. These services provided an opportunity for the school community to gather in fellowship, celebrate our faith, and reflect on values that are integral to our school culture. By involving students in leading these services, we encouraged their leadership, responsibility, and engagement in the life of the school, while deepening their understanding of spiritual practices.

In addition to Chapel, students began each school day with a classroom devotion, setting a positive tone for the day ahead. This time of reflection and prayer allowed students to center themselves spiritually, fostering a sense of peace and purpose as they began their learning journey. Staff also participated in daily devotions, providing a model of faith and reflection for the students, and ensuring that our commitment to spiritual growth extended throughout the entire school community.

Through these practices, we continue to create an environment where faith, respect, and community are at the heart of everything we do, supporting the holistic development of our students both academically and spiritually.

Student Information

Contextual Characteristics of the Student Body

At the DESE Census in August, the school population of 100 students was comprised of:

YEAR	STUDENTS	% BOYS	% GIRLS
Foundation	20	50%	50%
Year 1	9	33%	67%
Year 2	23	39%	61%
Year 3	14	57%	43%
Year 4	10	30%	70%
Year 5	16	12%	88%
Year 6	8	75%	25%
Total	100	42%	58%

Student Attendance

The whole school student attendance figures for 2024:

Foundation	92%
Year 1	86%
Year 2	89%
Year 3	89%
Year 4	91%
Year 5	86%
Year 6	85%

Parents or caregivers are expected to inform the school of absences either by email or phone by 10:00am on day of absence. This ensures that the school is aware of the whereabouts of children. If a pattern of extended or unexplained periods of absence occurs, teachers contact the parents or caregivers to determine an appropriate course of action to ensure learning is not compromised.



Student Learning Outcomes

In 2024, students in Years 3 and 5 participated in The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests. While NAPLAN provides valuable data, it is important to remember that such assessments do not tell the complete story of a school's performance or that of its students. Rather than being a definitive measure, these tests offer a snapshot of student performance at a particular point in time, designed to support teachers in identifying areas for improvement in literacy and numeracy.

When interpreting these results, it is essential to view them as just one element of a student's broader learning journey at St John's. They should be considered alongside school reports, teacher feedback, and observations from both teaching staff and families. This holistic perspective ensures a more complete understanding of each child's achievements.

NAPLAN results complement a variety of other assessment tools, including ongoing teacher observations and specific learning tasks, all of which contribute to a well-rounded picture of each student's progress and development. Additionally, the data generated by these tests allows us to review and refine our teaching strategies to better meet the needs of our students.

Results from the Year 3 and Year 5 Student Group Summaries show most students performing above the minimum standards expected. Below is a summary of the 2024 NAPLAN results:

Year 3						
Learning Area	Exempt	NAS	Developing	Strong	Exceeding	Participating students
Reading	0 %	7 %	7 %	50 %	36 %	14
Writing	0 %	0 %	7 %	86 %	7 %	14
Spelling	0 %	0 %	36 %	50 %	14 %	14
Numeracy	0 %	0 %	14 %	79 %	7 %	14
Grammar & Punctuation	0 %	0 %	29 %	57 %	14 %	14

Year 5						
Learning Area	Exempt	NAS	Developing	Strong	Exceeding	Participating students
Reading	0 %	6 %	13 %	75 %	6 %	16
Writing	0 %	6 %	44 %	44 %	6 %	16
Spelling	0 %	19 %	50 %	19 %	12 %	16
Numeracy	0 %	6 %	56 %	38 %	0 %	16
Grammar & Punctuation	0 %	6 %	25 %	63 %	6 %	16

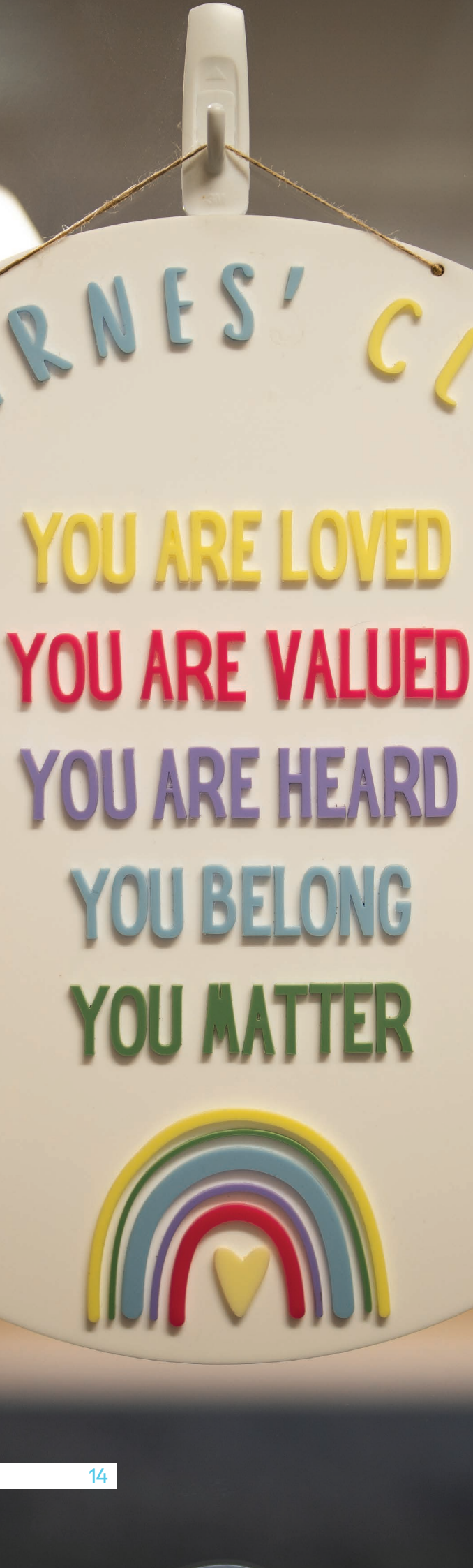
Staff Information

Teacher Standards and Qualifications

All teaching staff at St John’s Lutheran Primary School Ltd are appropriately qualified and hold registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Below is a summary of the qualifications held by teachers at the school.

Qualification	Number Held by Staff
Doctorate	0
Masters	1
Bachelor	6
Diploma	1
Certificate	0
TOTAL QUALIFICATIONS	8





Participation in Professional Learning

At St John's Lutheran Primary School Ltd, we are committed to fostering a culture of continuous professional growth. As active members of a professional learning community, all staff are encouraged to engage in a variety of professional learning opportunities throughout the year.

In 2024, a wide range of Professional Development sessions were offered to enhance staff knowledge and skills. These included training in Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S), First Aid (including Anaphylaxis Management and Asthma), Child Safety, and Evacuation Procedures, delivered through Dynamiq. Additionally, staff participated in a professional development session with PeaceWise, which focused on conflict resolution and fostering positive relationships. Teachers also had the opportunity to expand their knowledge through a learning tour to Woodline School in Geelong, Victoria, where they gained insights into innovative educational practices.

All teaching staff at St John's are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, ensuring that we maintain the highest standards of professional practice and are aligned with state regulations and requirements.

Workforce Composition

In 2024, St John's Lutheran Primary School Ltd employed 7 teaching staff, of which four of whom were full time. Students at St John's received specialist instruction in Physical Education, Visual Arts, Music, and Japanese. STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) was facilitated by the classroom teacher.

Student learning was also supported by non-teaching staff. Areas provided by non-teaching staff included Learning Support, Administration, Business Management, Maintenance and Cleaning.



No Indigenous staff member is employed at the school.

The composition of the work force at St John's Lutheran Primary School Ltd is summarised below.

	Number	% of workforce
Full time teaching	5	48
Part time teaching	0.5	4
Part time non-teaching	3.8	37
Chaplain	0.2	2
Principal	1	9
TOTAL STAFF	10.5	100%

Not included in this breakdown are temporary replacement teaching and ancillary staff.

Parent and Friends Association (P&F)

The Parents and Friends (P&F) group played a vital role in both fundraising and fostering a strong sense of community at St John's. Throughout the year, they organized a variety of special activities for students, including the Mother's Day and Father's Day stalls, Fun Food Fridays, icy pole days, and hot milos during winter. Additionally, they coordinated a lively disco for the students and a highly successful Christmas Tree Exhibition, which was well-attended and received strong support from the wider community.

The P&F also provided the Welcome BBQ at the start of the year and supported the Athletic Sports day, helping to create memorable experiences for our school community. Their efforts extended to purchasing essential resources and equipment for all students, including catering crockery, utensils, and glassware, ensuring that our school had the tools necessary to host events and provide for our students' needs.



School Satisfaction

In 2024, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) survey of our current Strategic Plan goals, was conducted by an Independent Education Consultant with key stakeholders.

The following is a summary of the strengths of St John's Lutheran Primary School Portland based on the SWOT data from July 2024:

Ministry and Mission

- **Chapel Services:** Students lead Chapel, fostering leadership and a strong Christian culture.
- **Christian Studies & Bible Teaching:** Students actively engage in Bible exploration and learning Christian values, with a strong emphasis on role modeling support for individuals and families.
- **Community Events:** Regular events such as Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, World Day of Prayer, and the Christmas Tree exhibition create opportunities for spiritual growth and community involvement.

Excellence in Teaching & Learning

- **Strong Focus on Literacy & Numeracy:** Tailored learning, with one-on-one support, ensures every student's individual needs are met.
- **Hands-on Learning:** Incorporating life skills, music, STEM, and other creative activities into the curriculum, fostering well-rounded education.
- **Engaged, Caring Teachers:** The dedicated, kind, and empathetic staff create a calm and focused learning environment.
- **Low Class Sizes:** This contributes to personalized learning experiences and strong teacher-student connections.

Community Engagement

- **Active Participation in Local Events:** The school is deeply involved in community activities such as ANZAC Day, World Day of Prayer, and the Christmas Tree exhibition. Students and staff are visible and engaged in significant local events, enhancing the school's connection to the community.
- **Diverse Community Activities:** Events like Carols by Candlelight, Grandparents Day, and Meals on Wheels foster strong ties with the local community, creating a vibrant, engaged school culture.

Organisational Sustainability

- **Effective Communication and Branding:** Regular updates on social media and a well-maintained school prospectus help promote the school's achievements and strengthen its brand.
- **Strong Leadership and Governance:** The School Board plays a key role in guiding the school's direction, and regular P&F and School Board meetings ensure active involvement in school matters.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Recycling initiatives and resource management contribute to environmental sustainability and support the school's long-term goals.

These strengths reflect that our school is deeply committed to its mission, provides high-quality education, is engaged with its community, and is striving for growth and sustainability in the face of challenges.

The **areas of growth** identified in the SWOT analysis for St John's Lutheran Primary School Portland are as follows:

Ministry and Mission

- **Inclusivity of the Lutheran Congregation:** There's an opportunity to be more inclusive of the Lutheran congregation in school life, creating stronger connections between the school and the wider church community.
- **Strengthening Community Outreach:** Further expansion of the school's outreach efforts, such as giving back to the community (e.g., supporting others through initiatives like the Christmas Tree exhibition) and increasing community connections in areas like aged care, healthcare, and environmental care.





Excellence in Teaching & Learning

- **Professional Development for Teachers:** More professional development opportunities to support teachers in working with children who have learning difficulties and in providing guidance to parents of these students.
- **Senior Primary Learning Centre:** There's an opportunity to further develop and enhance the senior primary learning space.

Community Engagement

- **Balancing Community Engagement with Resources:** While the school is highly engaged in community activities, managing the volume of these events and balancing them with other commitments (like volunteer training) could help make participation more accessible and sustainable.
- **Improving Consultation with Families:** There is an opportunity to involve families more in decision-making, such as in consultations around term breaks, to better align with their needs and expectations.

Organisational Sustainability

- **Expansion of Classroom Space:** As the school's enrolments grow, there is a need for additional classroom spaces to accommodate new students and ensure continued growth without limitations.
- **Improved Website and Communication:** Updating the school website and improving communication channels to effectively share academic results and other important information can further strengthen the school's visibility and engagement with families and the wider community.
- **Increase in Funding and Support:** Addressing the challenges related to funding for learning support (compared to government schools) and raising additional resources to support education for students will be critical to meeting the needs of all learners.
- **Staff and Board Stability:** Maintaining stability within the staff and Board is important to ensure consistent leadership and governance, especially during times of transition or leadership changes.

These areas of growth highlight the opportunities for St John's to refine and expand upon its strengths while addressing key challenges to ensure continued development and success.

School Financial Activities

Statement of Income

For Year Ended 31st December 2024

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE		
Income sources -		
Net Tuition Fees	\$174,474	8.59%
Operating Grants	\$1,795,374	88.38%
Capital Grants	\$0	0.00%
Donations - Capital & Other	\$31,078	1.53%
Interest & other Income	\$30,366	1.50%
Interest from Related Entities	\$-	0.00%
	\$2,031,2920	100.00%



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