



# Star of the Sea Primary School Gladstone

2023 Annual School Report



**Catholic Education**  
Diocese of Rockhampton

# **Star of the Sea Primary School, Gladstone**

Catholic Education Diocese of Rockhampton

## **Principal**

Jennett O'Mullane

## **Address**

181 Goondoon Street  
Gladstone QLD 4680

## **Total enrolments**

340

## **Year levels offered**

Prep to Year 6

## **Type of School:**

Co-educational

## School Overview

Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School is situated in the centre of Gladstone, with the school drawing enrolments from many areas of the Gladstone region. Star of the Sea was established in 1902 and has a distinct Catholic ethos with a particular focus on Gospel values, the teachings of Jesus, and Mary as a guide and role model. We value deeply our Parish family, with our local priests officiating at masses and liturgies, visiting classrooms and playing an important part in the religious and faith development of our community.

The school has a strong focus on digital technologies with teachers utilising a wide variety of technology and strategies to facilitate learning and to equip students for their role as digital citizens. Outside School Hours and Vacation Care is available for enrolled families. Our school has a dedicated and active Board, and Parents and Friends Association. These groups meet monthly and provide much appreciated input into policy and program development. Star of the Sea operates an open-door policy, where all staff members are accessible to parents for formal and informal discussions regarding their children's progress. Parents are encouraged to take an active role as partners in their children's education and are acknowledged for their crucial role in the development of each child's character.

More information on our school can be accessed from [myschool.edu.au](http://myschool.edu.au)

## Curriculum Offerings

### **Distinctive Curriculum Offerings**

Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School is a Catholic community which seeks to give witness to the gospel as modelled by our namesake, Mary, Star of the Sea, and as a result has a distinctive Marian flavour. At Star of the Sea, we endeavour to provide students with a safe, supportive, and caring Christian environment enabling all learners to strive towards their full potential. We believe that children learn by doing and classrooms should be full of investigation and challenge, with students encouraged to be actively involved and responsible for their learning. We seek to provide an education that caters for the needs of the whole child – nurturing, not only their academic qualities, but also their physical, social, emotional, and spiritual development as well.

### **Extra Curricula Activities**

Music and the Arts has a particularly strong emphasis across all areas of the curriculum and is also used during masses, liturgies, and school assemblies. Our specialist teacher delivers an accredited program with opportunities for student performances taking place at the annual Eisteddfod, our annual School Christmas Concert and at various community and school functions. Our School Choir is offered to Years 3 to 6 with performances also occurring throughout the year. Our school has a tradition of competing in various speech and drama sections of the Eisteddfod with staff and students often involved in the bi-annual community theatre performance.

An Instrumental Program is offered in Years 3 to 6 in brass, woodwind and percussion. The School Band and Bell Ensemble both rehearse once a week, and play regularly at school assemblies, at the local Eisteddfod and at various community functions. Students are also encouraged to attend the annual week-long Instrumental workshop run by visiting inter-state conductors.

A fully accredited Physical Education Program is offered with a variety of skills taught. Students are encouraged to participate in a period of daily physical activity. School swimming is also offered as part of the program. A gross motor program forms an essential part of our P - 2 curriculum.

The school is represented in the local Interschool Sports Competition in the following areas: Netball, Soccer (boys and girls), Hockey (boys and girls), Touch Football and Rugby League, and Interschool Athletics and Cross Country.

Students are encouraged to participate in local primary school sports, and a strong percentage of students have been chosen to represent their region at local, regional, and state level. Our school has a process to formally recognise and acknowledge these students.

A variety of lunch time clubs and activities are offered to students such as School Dance Choir, Social Justice Group and our Robotics and Drone Groups which meet to prepare for participation in local Robotic and Drone Challenges.

## How Information and Communication Technologies are used to assist learning

Information and communication technologies form an integral part of the learning environment at Star of the Sea. The school supplies a variety of digital technology aids such as laptops, Chromebooks, iPads, EV3 robots, Microbits and Beebots which assist in providing dynamic and meaningful learning experiences. Ongoing professional development assists teachers to use these technologies as an effective teaching tool. Google Classroom is used in our older classes as a digital learning and communication platform. Bee-bots and Microbits are a solid introduction to basic coding which is expanded throughout the Year Levels. All students from Prep to Year Six participate in lessons with a specialist IT teacher and class-based lessons with their own teacher using various digital technologies for various purposes. Over the course of the year, students are exposed to Microsoft and Google products and apps, Internet Safety activities, Robotics and explore a myriad of skills such as coding, film production and digital presentations.

## Social Climate

### Strategies to Promote a Positive Culture

Wellbeing and strong personal relationships are a priority in the school's efforts to build a strong positive culture. Multi-age Pastoral Care Groups meet regularly throughout the year to help build connections across the age groups and present a unified message regarding important social and personal skills and strategies to deal with bullying and relationship difficulties. Our Leadership Team work closely across all year levels to deliver consistent messages about wellbeing, social and personal development and following the example of Jesus in the way we treat others. These messages are reinforced each week at our whole school 'Working Together' assemblies run by the Leadership Team. Consistent practices and language are used across the school to provide a safe and familiar learning environment across the school. Programs such as Berry Street, Smiling Mind and Be You offer resources and strategies to support the whole school focus in this area. A Buddy System operates across the school with our Year 5 & 6 students mentoring and supporting our younger students.

The school employs a qualified School Counsellor three days per week, and the service is available to all students and parents. Our Wellbeing Officer also plays a valuable role in supporting student wellbeing and the development of personal and social skills.

One of the local parish priests officiates at masses and liturgies, visiting classrooms and playing an important part in the religious and faith development of our community. The school encourages all students to treat each other according to Christian principles of love and respect and provides them with the strategies and vocabulary to do this.

A particular focus on building future leaders guides several initiatives put in place with our upper primary students. An induction program is implemented each year supporting students in developing leadership and social skills such as conflict resolution, problem solving and relationship building.

### Cyber Safety and Anti-Bullying Strategies

Our school has implemented Diocesan policies on Acceptable Use Agreements for students and staff. The school regularly communicates with parents and the school community about cyber safety issues. We also have appropriate policies in place to deal with the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices. As part of our Information Technology curriculum, all students complete a cyber safety and cyber bullying program each year.

Our school has several social/emotional learning programs and a Positive Behavior Policy in place to assist students in guarding against bullying at school. Professional Development for staff in this area is a priority as is regularly communicating information to parents. The school actively works to create a safe and supportive learning environment where all members are encouraged to advocate for their own and other's safety. All Diocesan and school policies are reviewed on a regular basis.

### Strategies for involving parents in their child's education

We believe that parents and family are the most significant influences in a child's life, and we value the opportunity to work in partnership with them as educators. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in their children's education. Star of the Sea operates an open-door policy, where all staff members are accessible to parents for formal and informal discussions regarding their children's progress. At the beginning of the school year, parents are invited to Parent Information Evenings to meet teachers and have teaching programs and classroom routines explained. Parent workshops are conducted on a needs and interest basis.

The school has a dedicated and active Board, and Parents and Friends Association. These groups meet monthly and provide much appreciated input into policy and program development, and funds for additional equipment and resources. Opportunities for relaxed, social interactions occur regularly, such as our monthly gathering before the P&F Meeting and our School Discos and Christmas Concert.

Parents are welcome to assist in the classroom and are particularly active in the early years of schooling. Programs like our Reading Stars depend on committed volunteers who help support our students' learning. Parents also volunteer their time at sporting events, gardening, tuckshop, school events, retreats, and excursions.

## Reducing the school's environmental footprint

Star of the Sea is a Reef Guardian school that has engaged in a range of environmental initiatives and programs. We actively recycle paper and cardboard and promote the sorting of rubbish within the classroom. We have an energetic group of student leaders who work to educate the students and their families and initiate environmentally sound practices within the school community. Students engage in community projects that seek to give back to the environment, and classrooms include sustainability principles across the curriculum. Lunch scraps are composted, and our students participate in programs based around creek to coast thinking, allowing them to explore our impact on waterways and estuaries. Drink containers are recycled for money which is donated to charity.

## Characteristics of the Student Body

Students at Star of the Sea come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, including those of Indigenous Australia, and those from Asia, Africa and New Zealand. A number have English as a second language. Many travel quite extensively.

Star of the Sea draws on enrolments from many areas of the Gladstone region. It has experienced sustained growth in recent years with the total capacity remaining at two-stream. Many students come from families where both parents are in the workforce, while a number reside in single or shared parenting situations. The number of students and families with English as a second language continues to grow in Gladstone and at Star of the Sea with our teachers and Inclusive Curriculum team supporting these students and their families.

As Gladstone attracts many families who work in industry, the city is still considered quite transient in nature.

## Average student attendance rate (%)

The average student attendance rate for 2023 was 92.86%.

## Management of non-attendance

Student attendance is generally very good at Star of the Sea. Our school maintains a procedure of requesting parent contact to explain student absences. Our office staff liaise with classroom teachers to coordinate this procedure. Electronic rolls are used in all classrooms with direct communication made with parents if a child is absent for roll call. Extended absences are brought to the attention of the Principal who works with relevant parties to support the student's return to in class learning. Parent education through newsletters and parent information evenings reinforces the importance of regular student attendance.

## Staffing Information

### Workforce Composition

| Workforce Composition | Teaching Staff | Non-Teaching Staff | Indigenous Staff |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Headcounts            | 24.00          | 20.00              | 1.00             |
| Full-time equivalents | 20.30          | 12.30              | 0.58             |



## Qualifications of all teachers

| Qualification – highest level of attainment | Percentage of staff with this Qualification |
|---|---|
| Doctoral / Post-doctoral                    |   |
| Masters                                     | 4%  |
| Bachelor Degree                             | 96%   |
| Diploma                                     |   |
| Certificate                                 |   |

## Major Professional Development Initiatives

Star of the Sea staff members are involved in a diverse range of ongoing professional development opportunities with a major focus on creating consistency in our teaching approaches and using data effectively to improve teaching and learning. Implementing the new Religion Program and reviewing our Catholic Identity has also been a focus for professional development along with a continued investigation into approaches that nurture deep learning and critical thinking skills. The school continues its journey to develop trauma aware, whole school practices for the development of student personal and social competencies.

Many staff engage in additional personal professional development in numerous areas such as First Aid, Curriculum and diverse learning needs.

Whole staff Professional Development days have addressed the following areas:

- Student Protection and Workplace Health and Safety Inductions
- Planning for diverse needs – going deeper with the data
- Collaborative planning for quality teaching and learning – focus on Mathematics
- Engaging Learners – facilitating deep learning and critical thinking
- Bishop's In-service Day – Evangelisation and Faith Formation
- Trauma Informed Practice
- First Aid / Anaphylaxis Training
- Berry Street Training
- Catholic Identity – Authentic dialogue.

The percentage of teachers engaged in professional development was 100%.

## Total funds expended on Professional Development

The total of funds expended on teacher professional development was \$50,400.

## Average Staff Attendance and Retention

The average staff attendance for the school year, based on unplanned absences of sick and emergency leave for periods of up to five days, was 93.35%.

Percentage of teaching staff retained from the previous school year was 96%.

## School Income

<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

(The School information below is available on the My School website).

**Find a school**

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Sector  Government  
 Non-government

## National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy Results

Our reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy results for Years 3 and 5 are available via the My School website at [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au).

If you are unable to access the internet, please contact the school for a paper copy of our school's NAPLAN results.

## Key Student Outcomes and Value Added

Generally, our student body performs very well in NAPLAN. Our approach has been guided by good teaching for the entire year, rather than focusing only on test preparation. As cohorts, our classes achieve good results. We are continuing to use technology to assist us in assessing our results and trends across year levels. This data is used to inform teaching and learning across the school. Our solid results are attributed to quality literacy and numeracy programs, the setting of high expectations for all learners, explicitly teaching learner assets and skills, and a focus on differentiating for the individual needs of learners. Strong growth was achieved in numeracy and writing continues to show steady growth. The school is focused on improving spelling and reading results through a focus on investigative, literature-based approaches that build engagement and confidence.

## Strategic Improvement Progress and Next Steps

### Strategic progress in 2023

Our Core Goals and Strategies for 2023 included:

- To encourage deep learning through the development of critical thinking skills and skillful questioning techniques, especially in Mathematics.
- To put into practice whole school language and strategies that support engagement and wellbeing and safe, supportive learning environments.
- To explore collaborative planning practices and refine data collection techniques to track and plan for the diverse needs of learners.
- To deepen our understanding and use of dialogue to build an authentic Catholic Identity.

Strategies to support the implementation of these goals included:

- Regular opportunities to explore data, determine error patterns, track targeted students and strategically plan with cohort groups.
- CED-R Maths Project developing Maths Coaches to introduce core concepts and provide support throughout the year.
- Work with Diocesan and Berry Street staff to continue the implementation of trauma informed practices
- Review the language, symbols and practices we use to ensure meaning for students.

- Leadership modelling of best practice in teaching social and personal capabilities – explicit teaching to students.
- Adoption of three key rules for whole school.
- Review of resourcing to support teaching and learning, especially in Mathematics.
- Modelling of recontextualized prayer and dialogical approach at staff meetings.
- Regular unpacking at staff meetings of ways to build authentic dialogue and sharing of frustrations and successes, including samples of student input.

Staff are reaping the benefits of our sustained work in establishing whole school beliefs for teaching and learning. With a shared vision and established agreements for discussion and investigation, we continue to pursue our hunches and identified areas for growth as we strive towards providing best practice in teaching and learning. Collaborating with peers and area specialists has deepened learning and widened the sphere of strategies available.

## Strategic Priorities for 2024

Our school's commitment to the wellbeing of our community has us continuing to explore the benefits of a trauma aware approach to teaching and learning and developing social/emotional skills. The school continues to work with Diocesan Staff and the Berry Street Education Team to develop whole school strategies and language that support the development of student personal and social capabilities. The introduction of a Wellbeing Officer supports our work in valuing wellbeing and the development of social and emotional skills. Our whole school 'Working Together' assemblies provide an opportunity to deliver whole school messages in these areas as well as providing additional release for the purpose of facilitating teacher collaboration for professional learning.

The school continues to explore ways to connect with and engage all members of the school community and is closely linked to the school's renewed commitment to developing an authentic Catholic Identity, with dialogue and deep respect for the individual dignity of all human beings at the heart of its efforts. In particular this year we look more deeply into the school's Charism and story to find ways of communicating its meaning in a relevant way. A new gardening project supporting our belief in the value of nature based play is being developed as another opportunity for parent engagement.

We continue our exploration of best practice in supporting the diverse learning needs of our students with an emphasis on sharpening our planning for and recording of adjustments for student needs, including reflective data. This year's project takes staff on a learning journey to become more strategic in curriculum planning with intentional collaboration within and across the year levels. Our journey with digging deeper into data and making it a useful and relevant part of our decisions continues as an important tool for our planning.

Our focus on developing critical thinking skills and deepening student learning is explored further this year as we continue our Mathematics Project. Our Math coaches will work to upskill classroom teachers while continuing their individual journey of learning in this area. An exploration of best practice in English Planning begins this year with an emphasis on collecting a quality body of evidence and determining non-negotiables.

Our Core Goals and Strategies for 2024 include:

- To explore our School Charism as a means to authentic dialogue and recontextualised prayer.
- To collaboratively plan for a rich body of evidence that seeks to deepen student learning, particularly in English and Mathematics.
- To clearly articulate our whole school practices through a variety of means at the class, small group and individual level of support.
- To collaboratively explore the personnel, data and routines that contribute most effectively to tracking and planning for the support of our diverse learners.

## Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction

In general, the parents and students seem very satisfied with the school and its progress. The parent community is supportive of the P&F and its goals to provide funds to support school initiatives. The School Board is well attended and parent response to requests for feedback is relatively strong. The school continues to embrace a cycle of improvement, seeking regular input from the community and implementing goals that have stemmed from the data collected.

A strong emphasis is on all community members having a strong voice within the school. Teachers work with students to help them develop personal learning goals and plan for growth. Opportunities for suggestions are implemented throughout the year on an individual, class and whole school basis. Parents are strongly encouraged to support their children in sharing their voice as needed.