

2024 Annual Report

St Paul's College

Registered School Number: 1647



St Paul's
College

Message from our CEO



This past year has been one of growth, resilience, and renewed purpose at St Paul's College.

St. Paul's has continued to strengthen our commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, while supporting the wellbeing of every student.

We celebrated six years at our Balwyn campus—a vibrant, state-of-the-art learning environment that continues to offer exceptional opportunities for our students to thrive.

St. Paul's location has also resulted in strong ties with the local community, including with All Hallows Church in Balwyn, and the local Rotary Club. Joint occasions with these groups enrich the experience of our students, staff, and families alike.

In 2024 we began discussions with the Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA), the peak body for Catholic education in Victoria. This collaboration will provide enhanced support and resources for our school, and professional development for our staff. We look forward to building on this relationship in the years ahead.

As we strengthen external collaborations, we also remain deeply connected to our founding organisation.

St Paul's is integral to Villa Maria Catholic Homes (VMCH), linked to our history and overseen by our governance structures. The Principal of St Paul's annually reports to VMCH governance committees, including the Quality Compliance Risk committee and the Board of Directors.

This strong governance framework ensures that our school remains aligned with VMCH's values and strategic direction, while continuing to meet the evolving needs of our students and families.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated teaching staff for their passion, professionalism and care. I am confident that the year ahead will be both productive and rewarding for everyone in our school community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Sonia Smart'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sonia Smart
Chief Executive Officer

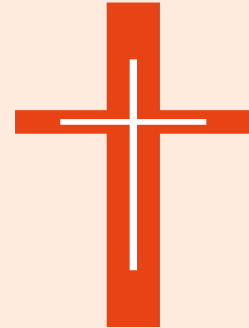
St Paul's College is a child-safe community. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which our school is situated, the Wurundjeri (Woi Wurrung) peoples of the Kulin Nation, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Wominjeka!

Vision

To create a contemporary, safe, and nurturing school environment where children and young people with a range of disabilities have a sense of belonging and every opportunity to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

Mottos

Belong. Grow. Discover. Achieve.



Philosophy and Values

St Paul's College seeks to provide all students with equal opportunities to develop a confident sense of self and understanding of the world within a collaborative and diverse school community. We aim to empower students with disabilities to achieve their highest level of independence and potential through the provision of quality education services.

bringing **Love**

We foster connections and show compassion for one another with kindness and respect.

creating **Joy**

We create a culture of happiness and positivity, celebrating life and the uniqueness of all.

embracing **Hospitality**

We welcome all to our community, bringing comfort and a sense of belonging.

showing **Courage**

We do what is right, regardless of our fears, the challenges or consequences.

What makes us unique

Established in 1957, St Paul's College is an Independent Catholic Specialist School in Balwyn, providing education from Pre-Year 12 for students with intellectual disabilities. Many students present with coexisting conditions such as autism spectrum disorders, hearing or vision impairments, genetic conditions, and complex communication needs.

We are a specialist school with just under 60 students. We intentionally keep our student numbers small to enable close relationships that support each student's unique developmental, behavioural, and communication needs. Individual goals are identified through a personalised Individual Learning Plan.

Our purpose-built environment promotes inclusive learning and provides a safe, adaptable, and engaging educational setting featuring:

- **Flexible, Multi-Functional Spaces:** Classrooms and shared areas are designed to be calming, adaptable, and supportive of students' changing needs and emotional regulation.
- **Specialised Facilities:** These include a Sensory Room, Living Skills Room, STEAM Centre, inclusive playgrounds, and a café social enterprise for applied learning.

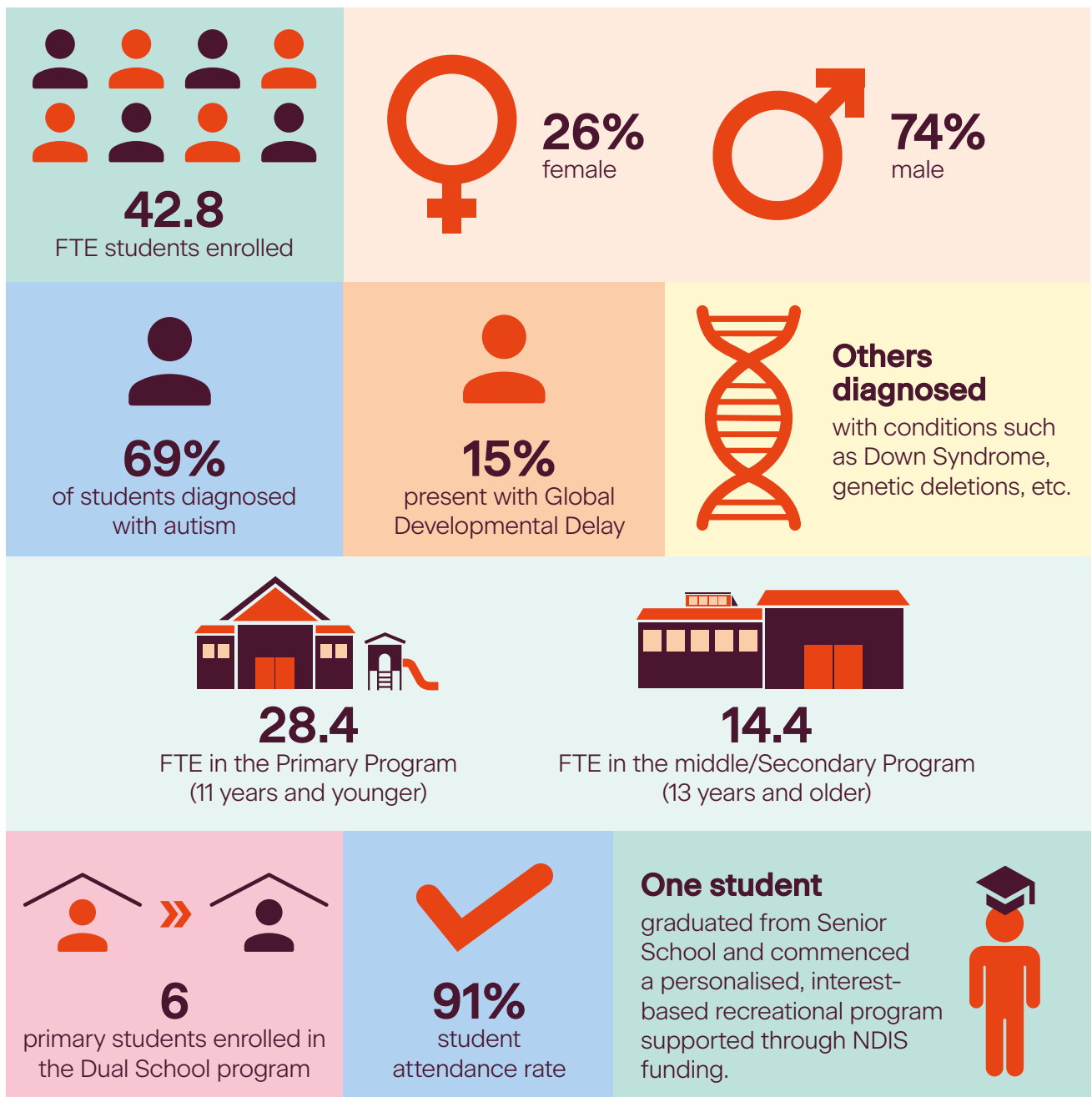
Our highly skilled multidisciplinary team includes teachers, teaching assistants, a speech therapist, physiotherapist, occupational therapists, psychologist, and school nurse. With a strong focus on communication, we work in partnership with families to support students' intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual development.

In 2024, St Paul's maintained an exceptionally generous staffing ratio of approximately 1 staff member for every 1.7 students. This ensures highly individualised attention, with each student supported by a dedicated team—including a Teacher and two Learning Support Officers—meeting their academic, social, and emotional needs. This level of support far exceeds typical classroom ratios and reflects our commitment to nurturing every student's potential.

Our curriculum is grounded in the Victorian Curriculum F–10 and thoughtfully adapted to meet the diverse and complex needs of our students. Each student follows an Individual Learning Plan developed in collaboration with families and allied health professionals to ensure personalised, meaningful learning experiences. Our approach emphasises explicit learning, communication, life skills, and social-emotional development. Through a blend of classroom learning, therapeutic support, and community engagement, we empower students to grow in independence, confidence, and wellbeing. This holistic model reflects our commitment to inclusive education and lifelong learning.



Our students, our story



Student attendance is recorded twice daily for every student. Attendance data is regularly monitored and analysed to identify patterns at the school, class, and individual levels. This enables early identification of students at risk of poor attendance or disengagement. For families experiencing school refusal issues, an action plan is developed to support the student's return and engagement with school.



Jonathan's story

Jonathan, a kind and caring 17-year-old with multiple disabilities, has thrived at St. Paul's since starting in prep.

His mum, Helen, credits the school's individualised attention and strong partnerships between staff, parents, and therapists for his remarkable growth.

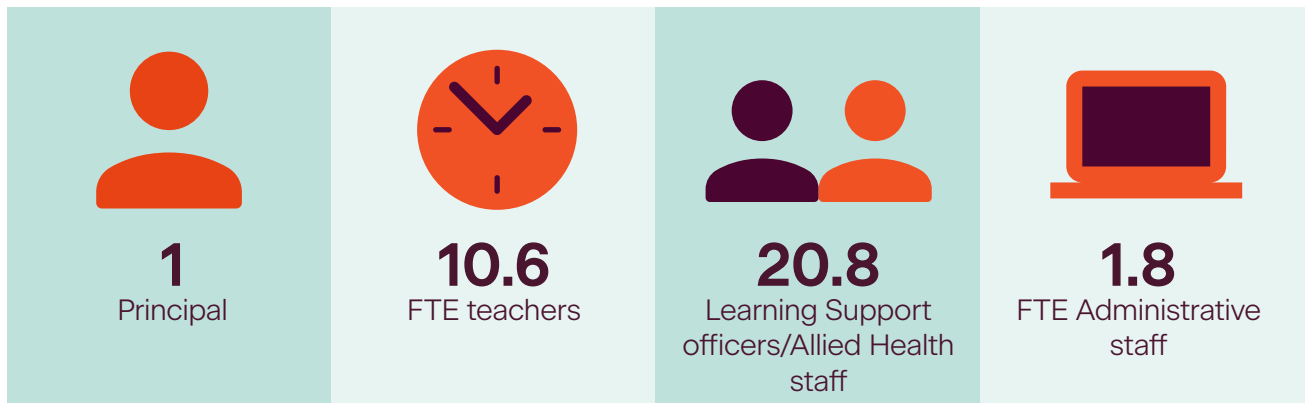
A standout influence has been Hygenia Lobo, a dedicated teacher of 26 years

who taught Jonathan in both his first and final years, even learning AUSLAN to better support him.

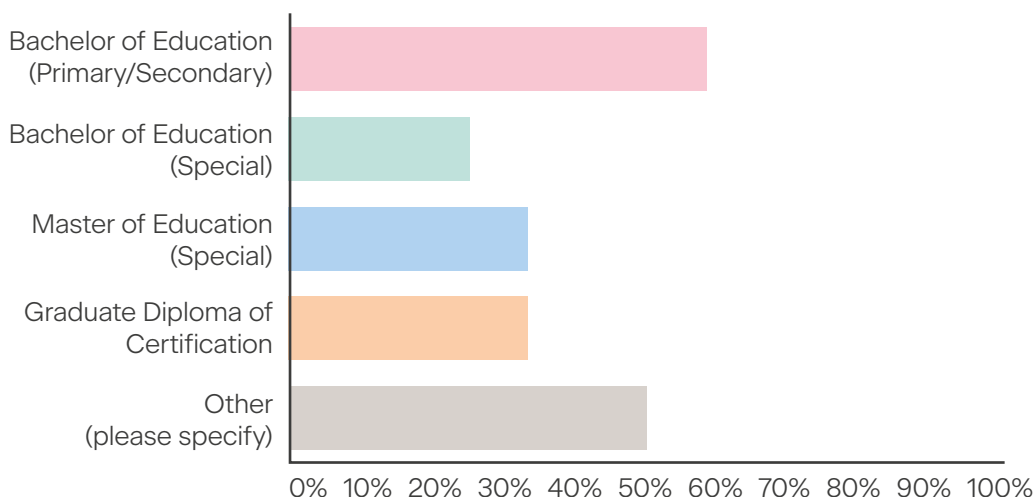
Recently named school captain, Jonathan's journey reflects his resilience and the nurturing environment around him, with hopes for continued independence after graduation.

Our dedicated team

In 2024, College staffing included:



All teachers were fully qualified and registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Each held a Bachelor of Education and/or a Bachelor of Education (Special Education), with many also completing a Master of Education in Special Needs. Additional staff qualifications included a Master of Art Therapy, a Bachelor of Applied Science (Disability), and a Bachelor of Arts, enriching the school's multidisciplinary approach.



The College operated five Primary classes and four Middle/Secondary classes, each with an average of five students, one Teacher, and two Learning Support Officers.

Staff provided feedback to school leadership through individual discussions and various school meetings, including the Consultative Committee.

Professional development

- Team Teach
- Building a High-Performance Team
- LAMP (Speech)
- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)
- Comprehensive Literacy
- First Aid/CPR
- Mandatory Reporting
- Anaphylaxis Briefings (twice a year)
- Fire Awareness.



Summary of parent survey

86%

expressed satisfaction with the school environment

86%

were satisfied with personal and social development

80%

were satisfied with the quality of education

76%

were satisfied with parent-teacher communication

80%

were satisfied with the augmented curriculum

76%

expressed satisfaction with school leadership

70%

were satisfied with learning opportunities



Financial report

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

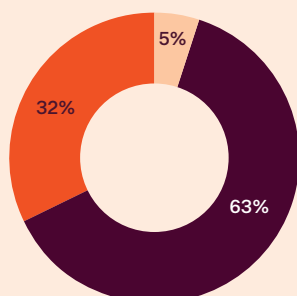
For the year ended 31 December 2024

Revenue	2024	2023
Federal Government grant revenue	2,403,091	2,510,240
State Government grant revenue	1,235,254	1,398,130
Private Income	-	-
School fees and charges	199,650	178,730
Income from excursions and trips	-	1,500
Employee benefits expense	(3,318,030)	(2,638,508)
Agency staff	(325,682)	(468,433)
Depreciation	(178,534)	(170,256)
Lease interest expense	(167,275)	(167,804)
Utilities and maintenance	(264,294)	(274,457)
Other expenses	(138,275)	(159,454)
Bad debts expense	(13,258)	3,578
Profit/(loss) for the year	(567,353)	213,266
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of income tax		
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	(567,353)	213,266

Income	2024	2023
Federal government grant	2,403,091	2,510,240
State government grant	1,235,254	1,398,130
School fees and charges and others	199,650	180,230

Income

\$3.84M



- State government grant (32%)
- School fees and charges and others (5%)
- Federal Government grant (63%)

About VMCH

Here at VMCH, love, joy, hospitality and courage aren't just words to us. As a Catholic for-purpose organisation, these values underpin everything we do.

Our professional and compassionate teams are with you on your life journey; helping you with a wide range of support from early learning and therapy, specialist education, disability services, affordable homes, residential aged care, retirement living and at-home aged care.



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The information in this brochure has been prepared by VMCH (Villa Maria Catholic Homes) as a general guide to our services and operations. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, VMCH accepts no responsibility for any loss or inconvenience caused by reliance on the information set out in this brochure. Please contact us if you require detailed information about any of our services. June 2025.