

# Annual Report

2023



**Loving God, Loving Others, Loving Learning**

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## Contextual Information

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### School Information

Name	Sunshine Christian School Ltd
School Sector	Independent
Total Enrolments	99
Year Levels Offered	Foundation (Prep) to Year 6
Co-Educational or Single Sex	Co-Educational
Address	81-83 Westmoreland Road, Sunshine North, Victoria, 3020
Principal	Damian Pietsch
Telephone	(03) 9312 1253
Email	admin@scs.vic.edu.au
Website	scs.vic.edu.au

### School profile

Sunshine Christian School was founded in 1982 by a group of committed Christians from across denominations who desired to provide a Christian choice in education for the western suburbs of Melbourne. In 2004 the school became a member of Lutheran Education Australia, and in 2021 the school became an incorporated identity. Our sister church is St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Footscray.

Sunshine Christian School seeks to provide a rich and supportive education within a Christian framework for students in years Prep to 6. A deep care and concern for all members of the school community provides the foundation of our school. We have small class sizes and an overall enrolment level in the mid-90s. The curriculum of the school is based on the Australian Curriculum and the Christian Studies Curriculum Framework (published by Lutheran Education Australia). It embraces the many languages, cultures and gifts of our students.

A positive and stimulating environment provides students with the opportunity to develop across all wellbeing domains. In addition to a robust Literacy, Numeracy and Humanities focus, students undertake specialist programs in Music, Visual Art, Physical Education, Christian Studies, Science and LOTE (Auslan). Students and staff seek to live out our school motto 'Loving God, Loving Others, Loving Learning' and display our school values.

The dedicated staff of Sunshine Christian School support and nurture our students to achieve personal academic excellence, make positive contributions to the community and to manage the demands placed upon them in further study and beyond.

## Governance

Sunshine Christian School Ltd has a governing board of five directors which contributes significantly to the success of the school. The core business of the School Board is to set strategic direction for the school and elaborate its purposes in clear policies, so as to guide school staff in their daily work. Led by Ms Erin Mibus, Board Chair, the board has continued to work in a highly professional manner and has been tirelessly committed to governing with integrity and compassion.

Sunshine Christian School Ltd was registered with ASIC in 2021 and approved by the ACNC as a charity as a part of the Incorporation. All staff completed a transition of employment document as part of the restructuring of Lutheran Education Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania (LEVNT) and its member schools.

### 2023 Sunshine Christian School Board of Directors:

Chairperson/Director:	Erin Mibus
Director/Minute Secretary:	Ruth Wickson
Director:	Naomi Burke
Director:	Tyson Williams
Director:	Kirstie Jenkin
Director:	John Dunning (resigned September)
Principal:	Damian Pietsch
Business Manager:	Fergus Weber
Congregation Pastor:	Vacant

## School Philosophy

Our school holds the wellbeing and spiritual development of our students, families and staff in highest regard. Our vision, mission and values inform the school in all aspects of the students' development.

### Vision

Our school aims to nurture students who inquire, learn and shine God's light by living like Christ.

### Mission

To provide a Christ-centred, inclusive community, where quality education inspires and equips lifelong learners to serve in God's world.

### Values

We seek to operate by the values shared by all Lutheran schools in Australia, as expressed in the Lifelong Qualities of Learners document lived out in our context and community.

- Love
- Justice
- Compassion

- Forgiveness
- Service
- Courage
- Humility
- Hope
- Quality
- Appreciation

Of these, the school has specifically chosen the following as our focus values:

- **Compassion** - We are open and responsive to the diversity of our community by 'walking in their shoes'. We have a compassionate heart for all the needs of our community and the injustices of the world.
- **Forgiveness** - God's grace is core to our Christian belief. Forgiveness encompasses our school wide approach to repairing relationships with others.
- **Service** - Christians cannot love without serving. We encourage active service in our community and God's created world.
- **Courage** - We have the courage to stand up for others and be firm in our faith. We have the courage to acknowledge and learn from our mistakes, face our fears and embrace new opportunities.

## Aims

- Provide students with a comprehensive program of education that is conducive to the development of their talents and skills for responsible Christian living and service
- Encourage students to strive for excellence in learning according to individual ability
- Help students value themselves as persons created in the image of God, redeemed by Christ, and made members of his body, the church, and to express their new life in Christ in their relationship with God and others
- Include as a core part of the program, a Christian Studies curriculum which has been developed deliberately and consciously from the perspective of confessional Lutheranism
- Provide an alternative to a secularistic, humanistic philosophy and practice of education
- Promote the spiritual life and development of the school community through regular worship, study of the Scriptures and pastoral care
- Assist parents in the fulfilment of their God-given responsibilities to their children
- Assist the State in providing it with responsible citizens equipped to contribute positively to the community

## **Statement of Democratic Principles**

- Sunshine Christian School is committed to the principles of a liberal democracy
- We believe in an accountable, democratically elected government
- We respect and observe the rule of law, and believe that no person is above the law
- We believe in equal rights for all before the law, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender or other attributes
- We believe not only in the freedom of religion, but also the need to practice tolerance and understanding of others' beliefs
- We believe in the value of freedom of speech and freedom of association, but also acknowledge that we have the responsibility not to abuse this freedom
- We believe in the values of openness and tolerance, and value and respect all members of the school community regardless of background

## **Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing**

All children and young people who come to Sunshine Christian School have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe, feel safe and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

We have a zero tolerance for child abuse and other harm and are committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The school promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children, including those with a disability, those who are from a culturally or linguistically diverse background and those who are of Aboriginal heritage.

The School regards its child safety responsibilities with the utmost importance and is committed to providing the necessary resources to maintain a child safe culture and ensure compliance with all relevant child safety and wellbeing laws and regulations.

Each member of the School community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually and collectively in ensuring that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision that they make.

# Teaching and Learning Statement

We believe that every student is a unique creation of God with the potential to learn and develop their God-given gifts and talents. Every child has strengths as well as needs, and as such our educational programs are designed to be relevant and personalised. The curriculum provides students with the understanding and skills necessary to equip them as responsible citizens in a complex and changing world.

The school follows the Australian Curriculum as its core curriculum. The daily program incorporates lessons in Literacy and Numeracy, while Humanities, Health, Physical Education, Science, Music, Visual Arts, LOTE (Language Other Than English) and Christian Studies are included in weekly teaching.

Information and Communication Technologies are integrated throughout the curriculum, as are the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities (literacy, numeracy, ICT capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social responsibility, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding) and Australian Curriculum Cross-Curriculum Priorities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and Sustainability). The school's Christian faith is seen across all teaching and learning and is supported by Lutheran Education Australia's Christian Studies Curriculum Framework.

## **Essential agreements about teaching and learning**

The following statements underpin all teaching and learning at Sunshine Christian School:

- Every child is a unique creation of God and every child can learn
- Learning is nurtured by positive, supportive and committed student-teacher relationships
- Every child deserves at least one year of progress for one year of input
- Learning is accessible to all
- Learning outcomes and success criteria are made clear to students
- Feedback is timely, meaningful and supportive
- Teaching and learning are informed by best practice and driven by student data and analysis
- The school curriculum is founded on our school values and the LEA Christian Studies Curriculum Framework in partnership with the Australian Curriculum

These agreements manifest themselves across eight domains:

1. Teaching and learning which views students as individuals in a community
2. Excellence in teaching practice
3. Evidence based teaching and learning
4. Relevant, targeted and rigorous curriculum
5. Targeted resourcing
6. A community of lifelong learners
7. Meaningful relationships with partnering organisations
8. School-wide commitment to continual improvement

# School Workforce

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## Staff qualifications

All teachers are registered with the Victorian Institute for Teaching and meet registration requirements.

The Lutheran Church of Australia believes that educators in Lutheran schools should have sufficient theological understanding to uphold and promote the Lutheran character of their schools. The majority of teachers at Sunshine Christian School hold teacher accreditation with the Lutheran Church of Australia while the remaining staff members are currently working towards accreditation. Three teachers are fully accredited as teachers and leaders of Christian Studies.

Non-teaching staff hold a current Working with Children Check and are qualified to fulfil their duties competently in their areas of expertise.

All members of staff are annually trained in the Child Safety Standards, First Aid (including Anaphylaxis, Asthma and CPR), Mandatory Reporting and the Lutheran Church of Australia's Valuing Safe Communities Policies and Procedures.

The table below provides a summary of the formal qualifications of teachers.

Qualification	Number
Diploma	8
Bachelor's Degree	11
Postgraduate certificate or diploma	10
Master's Degree	3

The table below provides a summary of the formal qualifications of non-teaching staff.

Qualification	Number
Diploma	1
Bachelor's Degree	4
Postgraduate certificate or diploma	1
Master's Degree	2

## Workforce composition

In 2023 there were 6.8 FTE teaching staff and 4.0 FTE office and program support staff employed, creating a total workforce of 16 people. There were 0 indigenous employees.

At the conclusion of the 2023 school year the workforce composition at Sunshine Christian School consisted of:

- 1.0 Principal
- 9.0 Primary School Teachers
- 5.0 Support staff
- 1.0 Administration

In addition to core teaching competency in Literacy, Numeracy and Humanities, the teaching staff of Sunshine Christian School utilise specialist teaching skills in areas including Music, Visual Art, Library, Technology, Christian Studies, Science and Physical Education.

Staff retention remains high, with all staff enjoying strong fellowship and appreciation of each other's gifts, talents and contributions. Teaching staff retention in 2023 was 90%. Our school support staff, made up of 5 part-time staff members, experienced a 100% retention rate.

### **Staff Professional Learning**

Professional Development in 2023 was driven by annual goals as set out in the school's strategic plan. All school staff have individual professional learning plans which support their growth as an educational professional. Plans are developed in conjunction with and supported by school leadership. Review and development of the educational program at Sunshine Christian School is ongoing.

Staff members participate in a range of individual and school-wide collaborative professional development activities as a means of improving the learning outcomes and opportunities for students. Staff regularly undertook onsite professional development sessions on the following topics:

- Child Safety
- Child Protection
- General capabilities in the Australian Curriculum
- Supporting students with disabilities
- Visible Learning practices
- Working with students from refugee backgrounds
- Spiritual development – Growing Deep
- Working with translators and interpreters
- iPad coaching
- Autism
- Asthma Training for Schools
- Excursion Risk Management
- Privacy
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness
- Infection Prevention and Control
- Project Based Learning



# Student Body

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## Composition

There were 99 children enrolled at the time of the Australian Government Census in August. The census showed the following demographics:

Year	Number
P	11
1	22
2	13
3	14
4	12
5	9
6	18

In 2023:

- The student body consisted of 45 girls and 54 boys
- 86% of students lived in families with language backgrounds other than English
- 0% of enrolments were Indigenous students
- Students identified as SWANS (Students with Additional Needs – both funded and non-funded) received additional support through provision of program support staff, individual learning plans, program support meetings, and individual and small group lessons with our Special Education teacher and onsite Speech Therapist.

## Attendance

In 2023, students in Years 1-6 attended 190 days of educational instruction while students in Prep attended 185 days of instruction. The average attendance rate for 2023 was 93.5%. Students attend school Monday to Friday during term time from 8.45am to 3pm each day.

Sunshine Christian School recognises the clearly established link between low levels of student absenteeism and high levels of student achievement. The school takes great care to ensure accuracy in attendance records and all student absences are followed up.

The following measures are in place at Sunshine Christian School to support high levels of student attendance:

- Records of student attendance are kept in an online database and rolls are taken daily
- Reasons for absences are expected to be supplied by parents or guardians
- Unexplained absenteeism is followed up with a phone call and contact with parents or guardians
- All notes and doctors' certificates concerning absences are kept in office archives
- The principal informs parents of emerging attendance issues at regular intervals and meets with parents to deal with cases of ongoing absenteeism and late arrival to school
- School newsletters regularly include information about the importance of school attendance

The chart below shows student attendance by year level.

<b>Year level</b>	<b>Enrolments</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>P</b>	11	89%
<b>1</b>	22	95%
<b>2</b>	13	92%
<b>3</b>	14	87%
<b>4</b>	12	92%
<b>5</b>	9	95%
<b>6</b>	18	95%

# Student Outcomes in National Literacy and Numeracy Testing

Each year, students in Years 3 and 5 are required to sit NAPLAN tests. Sunshine Christian School encourages all students in Years 3 and 5 to participate, including those in receipt of Government funding for learning disabilities and those with language backgrounds other than English. Sunshine Christian School has been undertaking the tests online since 2019. The following NAPLAN data is taken from the 2023 testing period.

## School Summary Report – Year 3

	<b>NAS</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Reading</b>	0%	15.4%	76.9%	7.7%
<b>Writing</b>	0%	0%	92.3%	7.7%
<b>Spelling</b>	0%	15.4%	76.9%	7.7%
<b>Grammar and Punctuation</b>	0%	15.4%	76.9%	7.7%
<b>Numeracy</b>	0%	30.8%	61.5%	7.7%

## School Summary Report – Year 5

	<b>NAS</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Reading</b>	0%	11.1%	66.7%	22.2%
<b>Writing</b>	0%	11.1%	77.8%	11.1%
<b>Spelling</b>	0%	0%	55.6%	44.4%
<b>Grammar and Punctuation</b>	0%	11.1%	88.9%	0%
<b>Numeracy</b>	0%	33.3%	55.6%	11.1%

NAS – Needs additional support

D – Developing

S – Strong

E – Exceeding

The table below shows the percentage of students at or above national benchmarks in NAPLAN 2023.

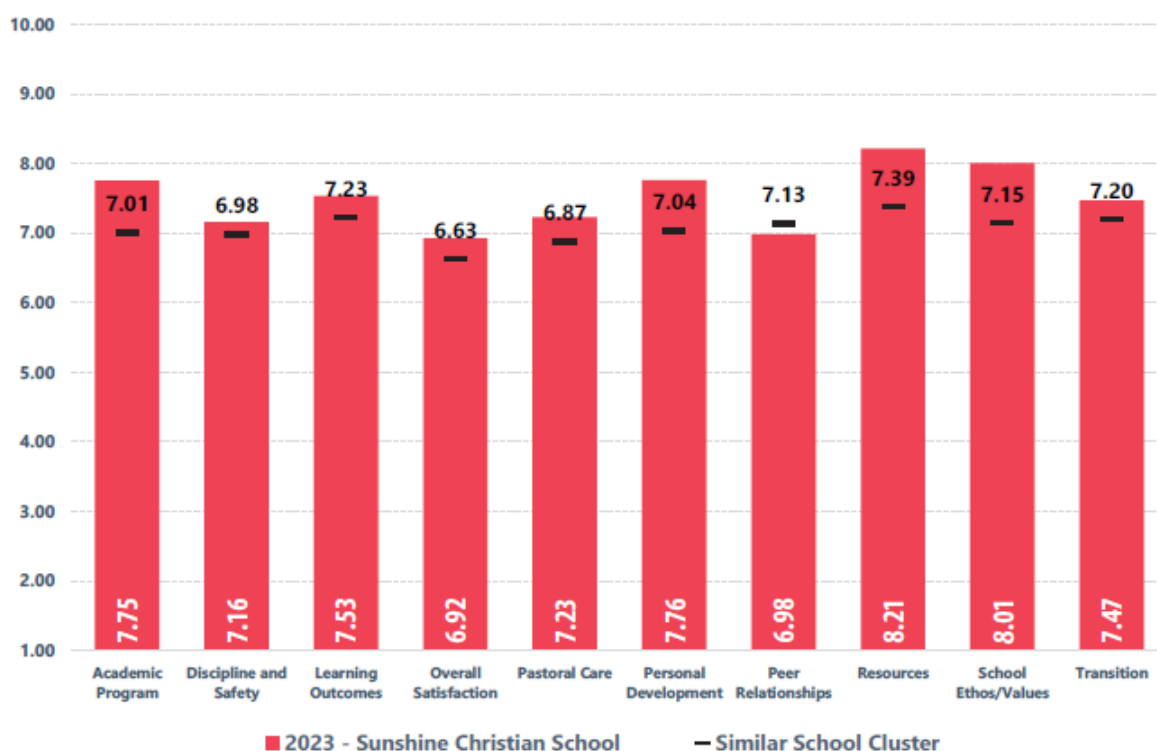
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
<b>Reading</b>	100%	100%
<b>Writing</b>	100%	100%
<b>Spelling</b>	100%	100%
<b>Grammar and Punctuation</b>	100%	100%
<b>Numeracy</b>	100%	100%

# Community Satisfaction

## Students

The school principal regularly works to build positive and supportive relationships with all students in order to maintain a detailed understanding of student concerns and issues. The principal also maintains an active teaching load to foster good communication between staff and students. Teachers actively and compassionately engage with students in order to build trusting relationships. Students are also represented by student leaders and a student council which provides feedback to school staff.

The Year 5/6 students participated in the LEAD School Effectiveness Survey which was administered externally by Independent Schools Victoria. The survey reflected the students' have great satisfaction with the quality of education and care provided by the staff of Sunshine Christian School.



The above figure displays the student's general satisfaction at Sunshine Christian School compared to statistically similar schools.

The Student Representative Council reviewed and revised the child friendly version of the school's Child Safe Policy so that all students can access support and relevant child safe information.

## Staff

All staff regularly meet with the principal to formulate professional learning plans and reflect on their practice. Sunshine Christian School enjoys the blend of service of many long-standing and experienced staff members as well as enthusiastic, team-oriented younger staff members. Leaving staff participate in exit interviews which provide valuable feedback.

In 2023 staff participated in the LEAD School Effectiveness Survey which was administered externally by Independent Schools Victoria. The Staff Satisfaction Survey results reflected their shared values, deep affiliation with the school and commitment to improving student learning and wellbeing.



*The above figure displays a snapshot of some of the headline indicators of the school's current performance on important questions.*

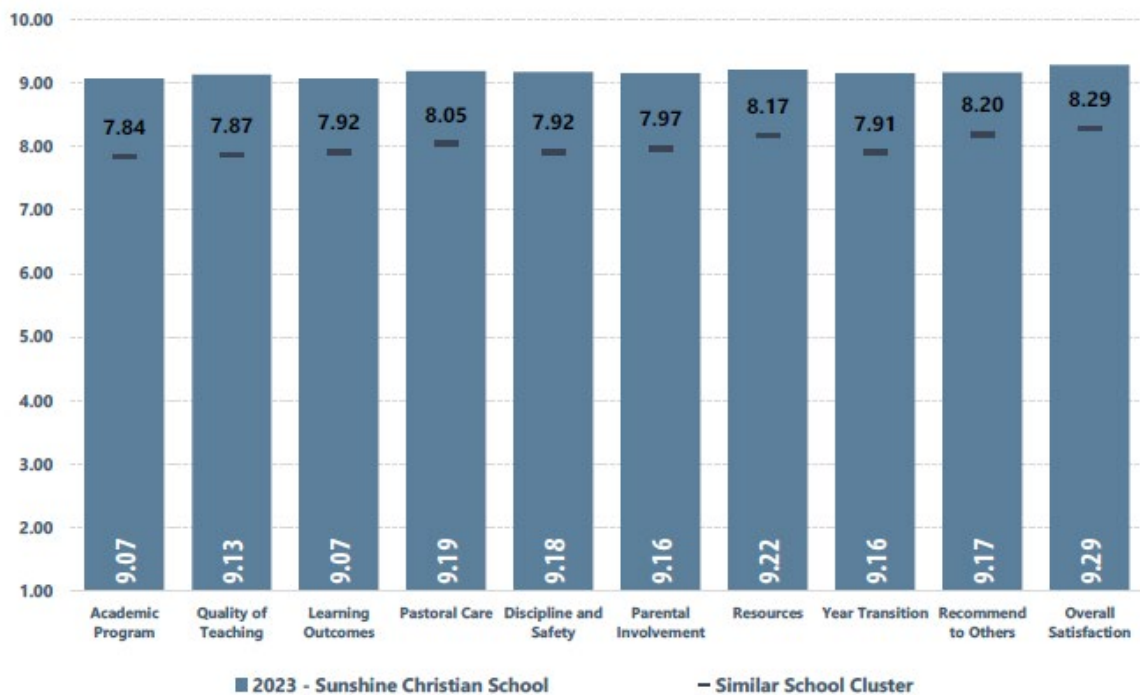
## Communities

The principal has an open-door policy and habitually makes himself available at the front gate before and after school to allow parents to provide feedback. The school receptionist builds excellent relationships with parents and students which creates an additional channel for feedback to the school. The school chaplain provides an important link between school and families as she provides programs and personal care for staff, students and community members who require guidance and assistance. Teachers are accessible to parents to discuss concerns and celebrate progress. The school employs a part-time interpreter to assist non-English families to communicate effectively with the school.

The principal regularly undertakes consultation with parents, both formally and informally, regarding new and current initiatives. Families leaving our community meet with the principal to provide exit feedback.

The school takes its high student retention rate and lengthening waiting lists for enrolments at all year levels as indicative of a high level of community satisfaction with the school.

In 2023 parents participated in the LEAD School Effectiveness Survey which was administered externally by Independent Schools Victoria. The parent survey results showed great satisfaction with the school and with being part of the close-knit community.



*The above graph displays overall parent satisfaction per domain at Sunshine Christian School compared to statistically similar schools.*

# Financial Performance

