

Annual Report

2025



Loving God, Loving Others, Loving Learning

Principal's Report

It is with gratitude and a strong sense of purpose that I present the Sunshine Christian School Annual Report for 2025. This year has been marked by continued growth, deepened learning, and a strengthened sense of community, as we have sought to live out our motto: *Loving God, Loving Others, Loving Learning*.

A key highlight of 2025 has been the continued development of our **Project-Based Learning approach**, particularly through the **Empathy to Impact (E2I) framework**. Through this work, students engaged in authentic, real-world learning experiences that fostered empathy, critical thinking, and meaningful action. This approach reflects our commitment to developing not only strong academic learners, but also compassionate and thoughtful contributors to their communities.

Student wellbeing has remained a central priority. Through regular use of the **Komodo wellbeing platform**, we have strengthened our capacity to monitor psychological safety and respond proactively to student needs. This has been supported by a dedicated wellbeing team and a whole-school commitment to ensuring that every student feels safe, supported, and known. The positive relationships between staff and students continue to be a defining strength of the school.

The school has also experienced sustained confidence from the community, reflected in strong student retention and growing enrolment demand across all year levels. Our culturally and linguistically diverse community is one of our great strengths, and we continue to prioritise inclusive practices that ensure all families are welcomed, supported, and able to engage meaningfully with the life of the school.

In 2025, our strategic priorities have focused on:

- Strengthening **high-quality teaching and learning**, including the continued implementation of Project-Based Learning and explicit instruction in literacy and numeracy
- Enhancing **student wellbeing and belonging** through data-informed practice and targeted support
- Building **staff capacity** through professional learning, coaching, and reflective practice
- Strengthening **community engagement and partnerships**, particularly with families and our sister church, St Matthew's Lutheran Church

These priorities align with our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and our vision of nurturing students who learn, inquire, and live out their faith in meaningful ways.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our **dedicated staff**, whose professionalism, care, and commitment make a lasting difference in the lives of our students each day. I extend my thanks to our **School Board**, led by Ms Erin Mibus, for their strong governance, strategic leadership, and faithful stewardship of the school. I also acknowledge the support of **Lutheran Education Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania (LEVNT)** and our wider church community.

Finally, I thank our **families and students**, who partner with us in creating a vibrant, caring, and faith-filled school community. It is through these strong relationships that Sunshine Christian School continues to flourish.

We give thanks to God for His guidance and provision throughout 2025 and look forward with confidence to the opportunities ahead.

Damian Pietsch

Principal

Sunshine Christian School

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Contextual Information

School Information

Name	Sunshine Christian School Ltd
School Sector	Independent
Total Enrolments	94
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 sought to provide a Christian education option for families in the western suburbs of Melbourne. In 2004, the school became a member of Lutheran Education Australia, and in 2021 it became an incorporated entity. Our sister church is St Matthew's Lutheran Church, Footscray.

Sunshine Christian School provides a rich and supportive education within a Christian framework for students from Prep to Year 6. A deep care and concern for all members of the school community underpins our work. The school maintains small class sizes and an overall enrolment in the mid-90s. Our curriculum is based on the Australian Curriculum and the Christian Studies Curriculum Framework (published by Lutheran Education Australia), and it reflects and celebrates the diverse languages, cultures, and gifts of our students.

A positive and stimulating environment enables students to grow across all areas of wellbeing. Alongside a strong focus on Literacy, Numeracy, and Humanities, students participate in specialist programs including 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 demonstrate our core values in daily practice.

The dedicated staff of Sunshine Christian School support and nurture each student to achieve personal academic excellence, contribute positively to the community, and develop the skills and resilience needed for further study and life beyond school.

Governance

Sunshine Christian School Ltd is governed by a Board of six directors, whose leadership contributes significantly to the ongoing success of the school. The core responsibility of the Board is to set the strategic direction of the school and to articulate its purpose through clear and effective policies, guiding staff in their daily work.

Led by Board Chair, Ms Erin Mibus, the Board continues to operate with a high level of professionalism and is steadfast in its commitment to governance marked by integrity, diligence, and compassion.

Sunshine Christian School Ltd was registered with ASIC in 2021 and approved by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) as part of its incorporation process. Following incorporation, all staff completed transition of employment documentation as part of the broader restructuring of Lutheran Education Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania (LEVNT) and its member schools.

2025 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:	Matthew Pearce
Principal:	Damian Pietsch
Business Manager:	Viet Le
Congregation Pastor:	Vacant

School Philosophy

Sunshine Christian School places the wellbeing and spiritual development of its students, families and staff at the centre of its work. 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

- **To provide a Christ-centred education** that nurtures students' spiritual growth and supports them to live out their faith in their relationships with God and others.
- **To promote academic excellence for all students**, encouraging each child to achieve their personal best through a comprehensive and engaging learning program.
- **To support the development of the whole child**, recognising each student as a unique creation of God and fostering wellbeing, confidence, and resilience.
- **To encourage service, responsibility, and active citizenship**, equipping students to contribute positively to their community and the wider world.
- **To partner with families in the education of their children**, supporting parents in their God-given role and building a strong, connected school 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
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Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

All children and young people at Sunshine Christian School have the right to feel safe and be safe. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of every child and young person in our care. We strive to provide a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children and young people are not only protected, but also feel secure and are encouraged to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

The school has a zero tolerance for child abuse and all forms of harm. We are committed to acting in the best interests of our students and to protecting them from harm. Sunshine Christian School promotes the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of all children, including those with disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

The school regards its child safety responsibilities as a priority and is committed to providing the resources necessary to maintain a strong child-safe culture and ensure compliance with all relevant child safety and wellbeing laws and regulations.

Every member of the school community has a responsibility to understand and fulfil their individual and collective role in safeguarding students. The wellbeing and safety of all students must remain central to all actions and decisions.

Teaching and Learning Statement

We believe that every student is a unique creation of God, with the capacity to learn and develop their God-given gifts and talents. Each child brings individual strengths and needs; therefore, our educational programs are designed to be relevant, inclusive, and personalised. The curriculum equips students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to become responsible and engaged citizens in a complex and changing world.

The school follows the **Australian Curriculum** as its core framework. The daily program includes explicit teaching in Literacy and Numeracy, with Humanities, Health and Physical Education, Science, Music, Visual Arts, LOTE (Auslan), and Christian Studies provided through a balanced weekly program.

A key feature of learning at Sunshine Christian School is our commitment to **Project-Based Learning (PBL)**, particularly through the **Empathy to Impact (E2I) framework**. This approach encourages students to engage deeply with real-world issues, develop empathy, think critically, and take meaningful action. Through E2I, students are empowered to investigate authentic contexts, collaborate with others, and contribute positively to their communities, reflecting our Christian values in action.

Information and Communication Technologies are integrated across all learning areas. The **Australian Curriculum General Capabilities**—including literacy, numeracy, ICT capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding, and intercultural understanding—are embedded throughout teaching and learning. Similarly, the **Cross-Curriculum Priorities**—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and Sustainability—are woven into classroom practice.

Our Christian faith underpins all teaching and learning and is intentionally integrated across the curriculum. This is supported by **Lutheran Education Australia's Christian Studies Curriculum Framework**, ensuring that faith and learning are meaningfully connected in the life of the school.

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

Staff qualifications

All teaching staff are registered with the **Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)** and meet all relevant registration requirements.

The **Lutheran Church of Australia** affirms that educators in Lutheran schools should possess sufficient theological understanding to uphold and promote the Lutheran character of their school. The majority of teachers at Sunshine Christian School hold teacher accreditation with the Lutheran Church of Australia, with the remaining staff actively working towards accreditation. Four teachers hold full accreditation as teachers and leaders of **Christian Studies**.

All non-teaching staff maintain a current **Working with Children Check** and are appropriately qualified to perform their roles competently within their areas of responsibility.

All staff participate in training in the **Child Safe Standards, First Aid** (including Anaphylaxis, Asthma, and CPR), **Mandatory Reporting**, and the **Lutheran Church of Australia's Valuing Safe Communities Policies and Procedures**. This ensures a consistent and ongoing commitment to student safety, professional standards, and compliance.

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

Qualification	Number
Diploma	7
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	2
Postgraduate certificate or diploma	0
Master's Degree	1

Workforce Profile and Retention

Sunshine Christian School was supported by a dedicated and diverse team of teaching, support, and administrative staff throughout 2025. The school maintained a stable workforce, with a mix of classroom teachers, specialist support personnel, and program and office staff working collaboratively to support student learning and school operations. At the conclusion of the year, the staff included a Principal, a team of Primary School teachers, educational support staff, and administration personnel.

The school continued to benefit from a strong and positive staff culture, characterised by collegiality, mutual respect, and a deep appreciation of each individual's gifts and contributions. This culture contributed to outstanding staff retention, with all teaching and support staff remaining with the school throughout the year. There were no Indigenous employees during this reporting period.

Staff Professional Learning

Professional Development in 2025 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
- Working with students from refugee backgrounds
- Spiritual development – Growing Deep
- Working with translators and interpreters
- Trauma Informed Practices
- Autism
- Asthma Training for Schools
- Excursion Risk Management
- Privacy
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness
- Project Based Learning
- Synthetic Phonics - UFLI

Student Body

Composition

There were 94 children enrolled at the time of the Australian Government Census in August. The census showed the following demographics:

Year	Number
P	11
1	13
2	13
3	20
4	14
5	13
6	10

In 2025:

- The student body consisted of 54 girls and 39 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 2025, students in Years 1–6 attended 190 days of instruction, while Prep students attended 187 days. The average attendance rate for the year was 94.3%. Students attend school from 8:45am to 3:00pm, Monday to Friday during term time.

Sunshine Christian School recognises the strong link between regular attendance and student achievement and maintains clear and consistent systems to support high attendance levels. Attendance is recorded daily using an online system, with parents and carers expected to provide explanations for all absences. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly, and emerging attendance concerns are communicated to families, with the Principal working in partnership with parents to address ongoing issues.

The school also promotes the importance of regular attendance through communication with families, including newsletters and direct engagement, reinforcing shared responsibility for student learning and wellbeing.

The chart below shows student attendance by year level.

Year level	Enrolments	Attendance
P	15	85.5%
1	11	93.5%
2	20	97%
3	12	95%
4	12	97%
5	12	96%
6	09	96%

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 2025 testing period.

School Summary Report – Year 3

	NAS	D	S	E
Reading	5.6%	38.9%	55.5%	0%
Writing	0%	11.1%	77.78%	11.1%
Spelling	11.1%	33.3%	38.9%	16.7%
Grammar and Punctuation	22.2%	38.9%	22.2%	16.7%
Numeracy	16.7%	44.4%	27.8%	11.1%

School Summary Report – Year 5

	NAS	D	S	E
Reading	15.4%	7.7%	76.9%	0%
Writing	7.7%	0%	76.9%	15.4%
Spelling	7.7%	7.7%	61.5%	23.1%
Grammar and Punctuation	0%	38.5%	46.1%	15.4%
Numeracy	15.4%	15.4%	69.2%	0%

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 2025.

Domain	Year 3	Year 5
Reading	94.4%	84.6%
Writing	100%	92.3%
Spelling	88.9%	92.3%
Grammar and Punctuation	77.8%	100%
Numeracy	83.3%	84.6%

Community Satisfaction

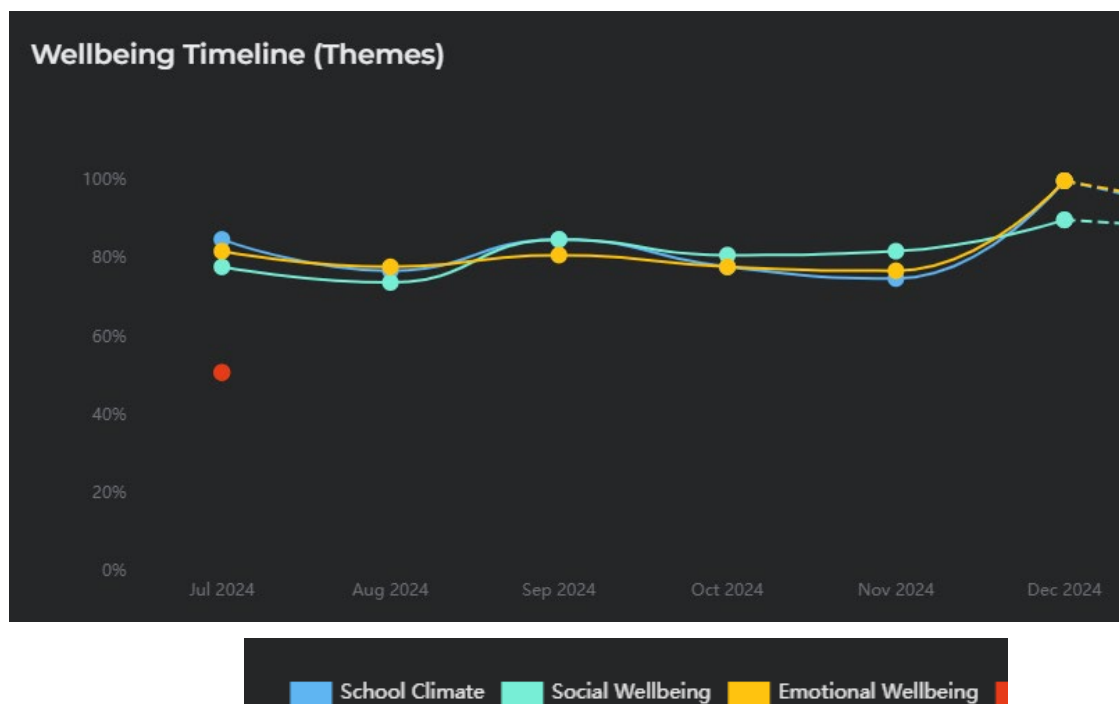
Students

The Principal actively works to build positive, supportive relationships with all students, enabling a strong understanding of student needs, concerns, and experiences. The Principal also maintains an active teaching role, fostering meaningful connections and effective communication between staff and students.

Teachers engage with students in a compassionate and intentional manner, seeking to build trusting and respectful relationships. Student voice is also actively encouraged through the school's leadership structures, including **student leaders** and the **Student Representative Council**, which provide valuable feedback and contribute to school decision-making.

All students regularly participate in wellbeing surveys through **Komodo**, which monitor levels of psychological safety across the school. Psychological safety is recognised as essential within an educational environment, with research indicating that students who feel safe are more likely to achieve academic success, develop positive relationships, and demonstrate prosocial behaviours.

In addition to psychological safety, the school collects data across key areas including **school climate**, **social wellbeing**, **emotional wellbeing**, and **digital wellbeing**. A dedicated and proactive wellbeing team analyses this data and responds to identified trends or concerns, ensuring targeted support and ongoing monitoring to safeguard the wellbeing of every student.



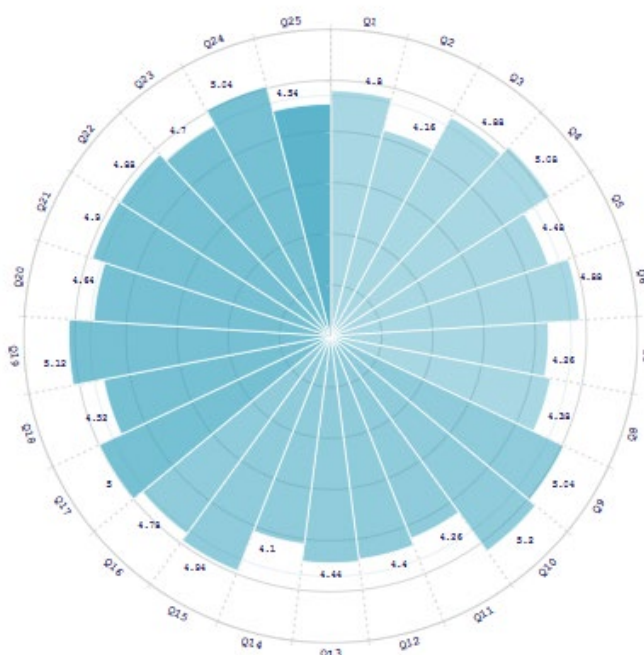
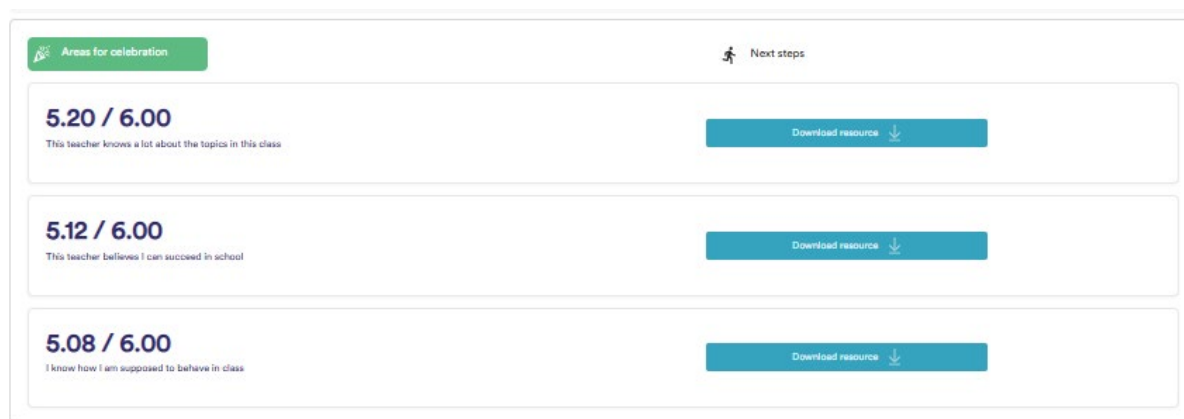
The above figure displays the student's Wellbeing Timeline at Sunshine Christian School over the 6 months from June 2025 to December 2025

Staff

All staff regularly meet with the Principal to develop **Professional Learning Plans (PLPs)** and to reflect on their practice, supporting a culture of continuous improvement and professional growth. Sunshine Christian School benefits from a rich blend of experienced, long-serving staff and enthusiastic, collaborative early-career educators, fostering a strong and supportive professional culture.

Staff who leave the school participate in **exit interviews**, providing valuable feedback to inform ongoing improvement in workplace culture, leadership, and operational practices.

In 2025, staff also participated in the **PIVOT Staff Feedback Survey**, which provides data-driven insights into teaching practice and staff experience. The survey captures student perceptions of classroom practice, offering teachers meaningful feedback on areas such as instructional clarity, classroom environment, student engagement, and relationships. Results are used to support individual reflection, inform Professional Learning Plans, and guide whole-school professional development priorities. The data complements other school-based measures, enabling a comprehensive understanding of teaching effectiveness and strengthening the school's commitment to evidence-informed practice.



The above figure displays a sample of the Pivot Survey questions.

Staff provided valuable feedback for the principal in each of the above areas which were utilized in the principal's professional learning plan.

Communities

The Principal maintains an open-door approach and is intentionally visible within the school community, regularly greeting families at the front gate before and after school. This provides accessible and informal opportunities for parents and carers to share feedback, raise concerns, and celebrate successes.

The school receptionist plays a key role in fostering a welcoming and supportive environment, building strong relationships with both families and students and providing an additional, trusted channel of communication. The school chaplain further strengthens connections between the school and families through pastoral care, wellbeing programs, and individual support for students, staff, and community members requiring guidance and assistance.

Teachers are approachable and responsive, working in partnership with families to discuss student progress, address concerns, and celebrate learning. To ensure inclusivity, the school employs a part-time interpreter to support effective communication with families from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The Principal undertakes regular consultation with parents, both formally and informally, regarding current initiatives and future directions. This includes parent information sessions, surveys, and community meetings, as well as individual conversations as needed. Families leaving the school are invited to meet with the Principal to provide **exit feedback**, contributing valuable insights to inform ongoing improvement.

The school demonstrates its commitment to community engagement through a range of additional practices, including:

- Regular **newsletters and digital communications** to keep families informed and connected
- **Parent-teacher interviews** and learning conferences to support student progress
- Opportunities for families to participate in **worship services, school events, and celebrations**
- Active engagement with families through **wellbeing initiatives**, information evenings, and support services
- Collaboration with the school's sister church, **St Matthew's Lutheran Church**, to strengthen community connections

The school considers its high student retention rate and growing waiting lists across all year levels as strong indicators of community confidence and satisfaction. These outcomes reflect the strength of relationships, effective communication practices, and the school's commitment to partnering with families in the education and wellbeing of their children.

Financial Performance

