



SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024

As part of our funding agreement with the Australian Government, we provide our 'School Performance Information' and have it publicly available to the school community. The information has been posted on our website at www.stmarks.sa.edu.au and is also available at the school office.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please direct them to the Principal, Mr James Heyne.

Contextual Information

In 2024 St Mark's Lutheran School operated with a Foundation to Year 6 structure providing 2 classes in each year level. In July 2024 we offered a Foundation midyear intake class. St Mark's continues to operate as a systemic Lutheran school located in the Adelaide Hills. In harmony with our Lutheran ethos, the School is centred on the gospel of Jesus Christ as described in our Purpose and Values, which we strive to bring to life each day with all our interactions within and beyond the school community.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to inspire each learner today to shape the world of tomorrow, encouraged and cared for in a community drawn together by shared Christian values.

Our Values

Love - We reflect God's love for us by caring for others and treating everyone with kindness and respect

Courage - We welcome challenges as opportunities to learn and grow, moving forward with optimism and confidence

Curiosity – We view the world in wonder, open minded and inquiring, seeking opportunities to explore, discover and learn

Service – We give generously of our time and talents for others.

St Mark's Lutheran Strategic Priorities

Learning and Growth

VISION

A consistent, whole school approach to contemporary teaching and learning.

PRACTICE

Teaching and learning practices that:

- Challenge and support each student to grow academically to their potential.
- Develop the whole person academically, socially, spiritually, physically and emotionally.

DATA

Above average whole school academic results and growth.

IMPROVEMENT

Staff engage proactively in outward-looking inquiry and investigation to continually develop their professional skills, collaborate with colleagues and incorporate the best methodologies into their practice.

Connection and Wellbeing

COMMUNITY

Students, families and staff feel welcomed, that they belong, are supported and valued and are connected to each other and the school through shared purpose, values and a commitment to helping each other to succeed.

COMMUNICATION

The quality, quantity and mode of access to information is highly effective and meets the needs of students, families and staff.

RELATIONSHIPS

The school cultivates an understanding of wellbeing and positive behaviour and how this supports positive relationships.

SERVICE

The school has a heart of service.

Future Focus

VISION

A clear vision of the school's direction for growth, relationships, structure, location.

A clear St Mark's vision for Lutheran Education in Mount Barker.

ENROLMENTS

A sustainable flow of students into Foundation

Increased retention and growth in enrolments.

Increased brand awareness and positive perceptions of St Mark's in the wider community.

Increased percentage of parents of pre-school aged children considering St Mark's.

SUSTAINABILITY

A clear vision and plan to care for and connect with the Earth.

A clear plan for ongoing improvement of spaces and facilities, including marketability.

A sustainable long term financial and funding plan supports delivery of operational programs and capital improvements.

SCHOOL LIFE

St Mark's adopts a holistic approach to learning where individual student needs are developed through quality educational and pastoral programs.

Educationally, ongoing curriculum development and quality teaching results in a strong emphasis placed upon Literacy, Numeracy and Christian Studies. The integration of technology into the learning programs developed from the Australian Curriculum areas of English, Mathematics, Science, HASS, The Arts, Health and PE, Technologies and Languages – German, underpins quality learning experiences for our students.

In 2024 the school reviewed its 6 Learning Principles.

1. We learn through concept based inquiry.
2. We are confident learners when we feel safe and respected.
3. Learning looks different for everyone.
4. Feedback helps us grow in our learning.
5. Learning excites us when we can connect it to our world.
6. We connect with new ideas, skills and others using technology as a tool.

Through staff professional learning and opportunities for reflection, our original six Learning Principles have been thoughtfully refined into three core principles that continue to guide our teaching and learning practices:

1. We are valued for who we are.
2. Our learning is connected to real life.
3. Feedback helps us grow.

Areas of subject specialisation in 2024 included Music, German, Physical Education and collaborative use of our Library/Resource centre.

In addition, students at St Mark's undertake a wide range of learning experiences through many events, activities and learning opportunities.

Social Justice

Support of national and local charities through our chapel offerings i.e. Australian Lutheran World Service Walk My Way Project, Nifty Knitters

Leadership

Student Representative Council, House Captains, playground Peer Mentor Program, Student Representative Council lunch clubs, Choir Captains, Band Captains

Excursions

Art Gallery, Museum, Laratinga Wetlands, Parliament House, Adelaide Zoo, Hahndorf German Excursion, Year 6 Survivor Day, HILS Day, Morialta Conservation Park, Monarto Zoo, The Cedars Hahndorf, Space Discovery Centre

Incursions

Music is Fun, German Day

Outdoor Education

Year 1 – Year 5 Camps as well as Year 6 Aquatics Camp & Foundation Stay & Play Afternoon, Nature Play Day

Music/Drama Program

Senior Choir, Band, Individual Music Tutor Programs for varied instruments, Senior School Musical and Sounds on Sunday performances

Community Events

Eat, Meet & Greet, Parents and Friends Twilight Family Picnic, Ride & Walk to School Days, Colour Run, Parents & Friends PJ & Pizza Night, Student Representative Council Reading Fest, Parents & Friends Student Disco, Year 6 Graduation Dinner, Remembrance Day and Inform and Empower Parent Information Webinar

Sport

SAPSASA Swimming, SAPSASA Netball, Barker Districts Athletics Day, Inter-Lutheran Athletics, Cross Country, Pedal Prix, Lightning Carnival, Courier Cup, House Sports, Sports Day, Swimming & Water Safety and Gymnastics programs were all highlights in 2024

Related Curricula

ICAS Competition, Premier's Reading Challenge and Book Fair, National Science Week activities, International Maths Day and Maths Olympiad

Learning Support

Targeted intervention programs for Numeracy and Literacy including MiniLit & MacqLit, Phonemic Awareness

Pastoral care at St Mark's is grounded in nurturing, respectful relationships across our school community, with a strong emphasis on active parent involvement. Our dedicated staff,

alongside our Pastoral Support Worker, provided compassionate support to students and families - attending to their wellbeing in both every day and challenging life moments.

The *Whispers of Hope* initiative extended this care by inviting families to be a 'whisper of hope' to others—through acts of kindness such as preparing meals, assisting with emergency school drop-offs or pick-ups, offering babysitting, or helping in other practical ways.

In 2024, our Year Level Carers continued to play an important role by serving as contact points for families and coordinating *Stay & Play* afternoons. These gatherings were well attended and offered a valuable opportunity to foster connection, belonging, and community spirit among families at St Mark's.

In 2024, guided by its Mission and Ministry Framework, St Mark's School continued to nurture meaningful connections between the congregation and the student community. Members of the St Mark's congregation faithfully mentored at-risk students through the school's Kids Hope Program, offering consistent support and care. The much-loved Nifty Knitters club also remained a vibrant part of school life, with congregation members generously sharing their knitting skills with students. In a further expression of faith and encouragement, Year 2 students were each gifted a Bible, fostering their spiritual growth and connection to God's Word.

In 2024, staff continued to embed the 'You Can Do It' program and Circle Time into classroom routines, further strengthening our whole-school approach to student wellbeing. These practices align with and support our restorative approach to behaviour management. Throughout the year, our Wellbeing Leader provided ongoing guidance and support to teaching staff, enhancing their capacity to foster positive, respectful classroom environments.

At St Mark's, we are committed to the wellbeing of every student and their family. While parenting is a journey filled with joy and growth, it can also come with challenges—particularly for those caring for neurodivergent children. In 2024, St Mark's continued to host a *Connect* session each term, providing a valuable space for learning, encouragement, and community connection.

These sessions offered insight into how our school supports neurodivergent learners and featured guest speakers who shared expertise on topics such as understanding and embracing neurodiversity, fostering self-regulation, and using tools like social stories to create safe and predictable environments. Importantly, *Connect* also provided parents and caregivers the opportunity to share their own experiences in a supportive setting. This exchange of real-life stories helped build a sense of community and empowered families with practical ideas, reassurance, and hope.

The school held fortnightly assemblies where classes were invited to present their learning experiences. Assemblies are also an opportunity for the Student Representative Council to share initiatives i.e. lunch time clubs, fundraising foci as well as reminders of the school value/s for the term. Weekly chapels are another occasion that our students come together. Chapels were either led by the school's Pastor or individual classes.

In 2024, St Mark's continued to actively implement its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) through meaningful engagement during National Reconciliation Week. Further to National Reconciliation Week celebrations, David Booth - a Warumunga Yugeera man with a strong connection to the Peramangk people of the Adelaide Hills collaborated with student leaders and First Nations students to create a mural. This artwork symbolises the shared journey of staff and students learning and growing together on Peramangk Country. Now proudly displayed at the student entrance, the mural stands as a powerful reminder of the school's enduring connection to Country.

In 2024, the school community came together to celebrate Harmony Day—an important occasion that honours the rich cultural and religious diversity within St Mark's. It was a meaningful opportunity for students to learn about, appreciate, and respect the many backgrounds that now shape our school.

In 2024 students from Cornerstone College (sister school) were able to support student learning through the college's Legacy Project.

At St Mark's, the safety and wellbeing of our students in the digital world is a key priority. In 2024, students from Year 1 to Year 6 took part in the Inform & Empower Cyber Safety and Digital Wellbeing Program, proudly endorsed by the eSafety Commissioner. Across four interactive online sessions, students explored how to become safe, respectful, and responsible digital citizens.

At St Mark's we believe that educating the whole child is a shared responsibility, and strong partnerships with parents and caregivers are essential. To support this, our parent community was invited to an Inform & Empower webinar, which covered important topics including social media use, screen time, online gaming, current child and tween online trends, cyberbullying, and managing devices at home. Together, we're equipping our students—and their families—for a safe and balanced digital future.

Our Students

In 2024 St Mark's provided enrolment for 349 students comprised of 175 girls and 174 boys. 1% of students identified as indigenous. 7% of our students have a language background other than English.

Our Staff

Teacher Standards and Qualifications

All teachers have satisfied the requirements of teacher registration, including Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care Training and DHS Working With Children Check.

The following table indicates the highest qualifications of St Mark's teaching staff.

Masters	Bachelor
2	26

In 2024 the school was served by 28 teaching staff and 14 administration and support staff. No staff identified as Indigenous. Together they form the cornerstone of the quality environment that St Mark's is known for.

Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy testing

In 2024 the school participated in the online National Literacy and Numeracy testing. Students at St Mark's continued to achieve at high levels with the percentage of students achieving above the national percentages in the new category of 'needs additional support' above national averages.

Percentage of Students above the Needs Additional Support Benchmark

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar and Punctuation	Numeracy	% of students absent or withdrawn
Year 3	87%	98%	91%	81%	94%	2%
Year 5	92%	94%	86%	92%	96%	2%

Student Attendance

The student attendance in 2024 across the school is reported below for the two collection periods for all students in Years 1 to 6.

Semester One	
Year level	% attendance
Year 1	91.3
Year 2	93.1
Year 3	93.2
Year 4	93.9
Year 5	97.7
Year 6	92
School Total	92.5

Term Three	
Year level	% attendance
Year 1	89.5
Year 2	90.3
Year 3	89.1
Year 4	88.8
Year 5	98.0
Year 6	90.4
School Total	90.0

When a student is absent without explanation, a phone call is made to the parents or guardians after the morning roll has been marked. Parents and guardians are required to provide explanations for absences from school and apply for attendance exemptions for extended absences of 5 or more days. Parents used a variety of mediums to inform the school if their child was absent.

Parent, Student and Staff Satisfaction with the School

As part of St Mark's Lutheran School's pursuit of ongoing improvement, the Principal commissioned MMG to obtain research informed feedback from parents (Foundation to Year 6), staff (teaching & non-teaching) and students (Years 5 & 6) regarding their views, expectations and satisfaction with key elements of the school's value proposition.

MMG's analysis highlights that top-performing schools typically achieve results of 80% or higher in key areas, with such scores considered indicators of strong performance. These high levels of satisfaction often correlate with strong parent and student advocacy, and a school's status as a first-choice option. Among its findings, MMG identified the following key strengths and areas of distinction at St Mark's:

- 84% overall satisfaction of parents and students of the school overall
- 84% overall satisfaction of parents with child's education at the school
- 83% overall satisfaction of parents of the school's learning support program
- 80% overall satisfaction of the school's student wellbeing program
- 84% overall satisfaction of the school's facilities and resources
- 84% overall satisfaction of parents with the way St Mark's engages with the school community
- 88% of parents / caregivers would recommend St Mark's to others

Comments for areas for improvement included

- Improved communication when learning is not improving as expected
- Support for advanced learners
- Develop a communication plan that outlines the school's wellbeing initiatives and how students can access them. Include wellbeing updates in regular newsletters

The school thanks families for their feedback to the MMG survey as this will continue to inform the school's Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026.

In 2024 we continued to be affirmed by our community anecdotally through the following indicators.

- ✓ Our school has again been greatly supported through the wonderful efforts of a dedicated team of Parents and Friends.
- ✓ Student Representative Council hosted numerous events to promote the school's values. Initiatives included National Reconciliation Week, Harmony Day and a Non-perishable Food Drive for Service. Our Student Representative Council also hosted numerous lunchtime clubs which were well attended by students from Foundation to Year 6.
- ✓ A caring community - Our Religious Pastoral Support Worker oversaw our 'Whispers of Hope' which provided valuable support and care for many families in need. He also provided programs of support for students to assist them to feel safe and respected in our school i.e. Seasons for Growth & What's the Buzz? Parents and extended family feedback consistently affirmed the care provided to families in times of difficulty.
- ✓ Graduation of students. Families with students graduating from St Mark's in 2024 continued to express their deep gratitude and thanks to our staff for the care, nurture and education provided to their children.

School income broken down by funding source

Below is listed the income received by the school in **2024**. We acknowledge not only the funding provided by the Commonwealth and State Governments but also the significant and substantial level of tuition fees paid by families.

Commonwealth Funding:	\$3,710,605 – 58%
State Funding:	\$1,050,411 – 17%
Tuition Fees:	\$1,513,998 – 24%
Other Income:	\$ 75,154 – 1%
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$6,350,168</u>

Thank you for taking the time read our 2024 School Performance report. I would welcome any questions you may have. The best way to understand the experience we provide for our community is to visit us personally. I would welcome the opportunity to share our story with you.

Respectfully Submitted

James Heyne
Principal
St Mark's Lutheran School.