Annual School Report 2023 School Year

St Patrick's Primary School, Walcha



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Principal Dallas Hyatt

About this report

St Patrick's Primary School is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office (CSO), as the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The Annual Report provides the school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The report outlines to the school community information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school Annual Improvement Plan.

The report demonstrates accountability to the Federal and State Government regulatory bodies, the parish and school community and the CSO. This report, approved by the CSO, monitors school processes to ensure compliance with all NESA requirements for Registration.

This report complements, and is supplementary to, school newsletters and other regular communications. It is available on both school and CSO websites by 30 June 2024 following its submission to NESA.

The contents of this report may be tabled for discussion at various parent forums, including the School Advisory Council meetings and all information is public.

Further information about the school or this report may be obtained by contacting the school on 02 6777 2328 or by visiting the school's <u>website</u>.

1.0 Messages

1.1 Principal's Message

There were many people who assisted in the development of the school as a Catholic learning community. In particular, special thanks are extended to the parent body and the school staff for all their generous efforts. St Patrick's Primary School is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

St Patrick's Primary School is committed to fostering growth and providing opportunities for every student to excel in various aspects of their education and personal development.

As a Catholic Professional Learning Community, we have made significant progress in preparing students for the challenges of the 21st Century. We are dedicated to implementing innovative teaching programs and updating learning spaces to ensure a contemporary and engaging learning environment.

I am truly grateful to be part of a school community that values the dedication and support of its staff. Students are always at the forefront of the decision-making process, and this is evident in the wide range of experiences and opportunities available to them. The school staff, along with the dedicated PT&F, work tirelessly to organise enriching extracurricular activities and excursions for the students. Together, we all contribute to making a positive impact on the school, and I am confident that 2024 will bring even greater achievements.

Dallas Hyatt Principal

1.2 A Parent Message

The School Advisory Council collaborates with the Parents and Friends Association to provide opportunities and resources for students.

Various fundraising events are organised throughout the year to raise funds. These events include selling hot cross buns, conducting a student Easter raffle, selling bulbs, organising open garden and street stalls, hosting a pie and lamington drive, setting up a Father's Day stall, organising a readathon, offering keepsake gifts, and running the canteen. Funds generated from these events contribute to programs for students, such as Mathletics, Reading Eggs, Mini Minstrels and excursions.

Plans are afoot to initiate the playground project using the funds raised over the past few years. This project will enable students to play on new equipment, including a ninja course, which will aid in developing their fine and gross motor skills and physical development.

Additionally, the PT&F will host the biannual long lunch. The venue has been booked and a caterer secured. Tickets for this event will be available in March with the aim of selling 300 tickets. The funds raised from this event will contribute to the music program.

Furthermore, the additional funds raised this year will go towards installing air conditioning in the primary classroom block.

On behalf of all parents at St Patrick's, I would like to express my gratitude to all the staff members for their dedication in supporting students.

Karen Rizzi Secretary School Advisory Council

2.0 This Catholic School

2.1 The School Community

St Patrick's Primary School is located in Walcha and is part of the St Patrick's Parish which serves the communities of Walcha, Woolbrook, Niangala and Yarrowitch, from which the school families are drawn.

Last year the school celebrated 112 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest, Monsignor Edward Wilkes, is involved in the life of the school.

2.2 Catholic Life and Religious Education

St Patrick's Primary School follows the Armidale Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum and uses the student text *To Know, Worship and Love*, as authorised by the Bishop of Armidale, Michael Kennedy.

At the start of the year, the school held an Opening School Mass where leaders were inducted. Following that, the school conducted Mass every two weeks. As students became eligible, sacramental programs for first reconciliation (five students), first Eucharist (four students), and confirmation (four students) were carried out. The school consulted with the parish priest to celebrate feasts and holy days. This year, significant celebrations included St Patrick's Feast Day, the feast of the Assumption, the feast of the Sacred Heart, and Ash Wednesday. Parents were invited to participate in all these occasions. Currently, there are no students actively serving as altar servers. During Catholic Schools Week, students from Years 3-6 represented the school at the Diocese's Catholic Schools Week Mass in Armidale. Additionally, the school hosted an open day which the community was invited to attend.

At the end of the academic year, a concluding End of Year Mass was held. The Diocesan Spirituality Team conducted three twilight retreat days at St Patrick's Primary, which were attended by most staff members. Weekly staff prayer sessions were held, with each member taking turns preparing and delivering them. Similarly, school masses were organised by the staff. The children actively participated in regular school and class prayer sessions and prepared public prayer for assemblies and special occasions like Good Friday.

The entire school community actively participated in several fundraising activities, including Project Compassion and Children's Mission. Financial support was provided to St Vincent de Paul for their Winter and Christmas Appeals. Additionally, the school's Mini Vinnies Group organised fundraisers that contributed funds to various communities in New South Wales.

St Patrick's Primary School maintains a strong and collaborative relationship with the local parish. The parish priest is a member of the School Advisory Council, ensuring effective communication and planning between the parish and the school. Furthermore, parish events are promoted through the school newsletter.

Students in Year 6 in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Armidale undertake the Diocesan Religious Education (RE) Test annually. The test consists of 30 multiple-choice questions.

Results of the test are analysed by teachers and are used to inform teaching and learning in Religious Education.

Our School's average result (as a mark out of 30)				
Year 6	32			

2.3 School Enrolment

St Patrick's Primary School caters for children from Years K to 6. The following table indicates the student enrolment characteristics:

	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	TOTAL 2023	TOTAL 2022
Male	4	7	3	7	4	4	4	33	30
Female	4	5	6	6	8	3	4	36	40
Totals	8	12	9	13	12	7	8	69	70

2.4 Student Attendance

In order for students to reach their full potential it is important that they attend school regularly. Whilst it is the parents' legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly, staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor attendance each day. The class roll is marked every day and rolls are checked each week by the Principal or their delegate. The school uses the attendance coding system adopted in all NSW schools. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by staff. Parents are requested to provide a satisfactory explanation for an absence by means such as a written note, telephone call, SMS message or email to the school, preferably on the first day of absence and certainly within seven days. The Principal is made aware of sustained student absences or absences reflecting a pattern. In these situations, the Principal or delegated staff member contacts the parent/guardian. Parents are encouraged to arrange medical and other necessary appointments outside school hours. Prolonged periods of absence occur from time-to-time for various reasons. In these cases, students and their parents meet with the Principal to discuss the leave request.

The average student attendance rate for the school during 2023 is shown in the following table.

	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	All Years
Average Student Attendance Rates	91.0%	92.0%	90.0%	93.0%	91.0%	93.0%	93.0%	91.9%

Managing Student non-attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The school, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

School staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the school community.
- monitoring engagement of individual students in their learning and identifying strategies to enhance engagement.
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance.
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance.
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented.
- intervention strategies for students with unsatisfactory attendance may include academic case management, social case management, referral to counselling and parent/ carer involvement.
- the Director of Catholic Schools or designated Catholic Schools Office Armidale officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom previous strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

When the Catholic Schools Office Armidale is notified of a student for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and previous strategies have failed, the Principal and the System Performance Leader will convene a meeting with the family, the student, and other agencies if required, to develop a Return to School Plan.

2.5 Staff Profile and Teacher Standards

	Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile	Number of Teachers
1.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Provisional or Conditional level.	0
2.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Proficient level.	8
3.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Highly Accomplished level.	0
4.	Those teachers at the NESA Teacher Accreditation Lead level.	0
5.	Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.	7
6.	Number of staff identifying as Indigenous employed at the school.	1
7.	Total number of non-teaching staff employed at the school.	5

2.6 Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The school ensures that at every available formal and informal opportunity the values of respect and responsibility are promoted. We want every student to understand and appreciate that they are part of both the school and the local community. The school models and teaches students about respect and responsibility in a number of ways:

• The St Patrick's Primary School community persistently applied and executed the Learning Well, Living Well Framework, wherein students were progressively acknowledged for their endeavours. This encompasses the fundamental principles of the school, as well as rewards and acknowledgements meeting the school's expectations. Biweekly, school-wide assemblies were conducted to present school awards. Exceptional achievements were acknowledged at the Annual Presentation Assembly, which included awards for all Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and recognition from the broader community for the remarkable efforts and accomplishments of the students.

- The values that children and their families are encouraged to demonstrate in their daily lives are consistently reinforced within the school community. This reinforcement takes place through various means such as the weekly newsletter and school correspondence, as well as through verbal and nonverbal messages and the behaviours exhibited by both staff and students. The school's policies and procedures, which can be accessed on the school web page, are all rooted in the values of respect and responsibility. Additionally, the acknowledgements and awards given to students throughout the year serve as a testament to the importance of these values.
- St Patrick's Primary School has upheld its long-standing tradition of actively engaging in numerous local community service initiatives. The students had the privilege of representing the school at the Anzac Day service, enchanting the community with their melodious Christmas carols during the Carols by Candlelight event, and showcasing their artistic talents and agricultural produce from the school's gardens at the local community Agricultural Show.
- The fundraising efforts for social justice appeals by Caritas Australia, Pontifical Missions, St Vincent de Paul Winter and Christmas Appeals, and Assist a Student were generously supported by the students, staff, and parents as part of their charitable work.
- The school assemblies were overseen by the senior students, who also provided support for the various tasks involved in organising the school's liturgical events throughout the year.

2.7 Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, the school used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the school from parents, students and teachers.

Parent Satisfaction

St Patrick's Primary School undertook a Parent Satisfaction Survey in September. Parents were asked to express their satisfaction in response to a number of statements.

Their responses were scored as follows:

- Strongly disagree 0
- Disagree 1
- Agree 2
- Strongly agree 3

Parents who expressed dissatisfaction were asked a follow-up question seeking further information about the issue of concern. Their responses were included in this report with the relevant question. The survey response rate was 61%. From the executive summary, the average score for all summaries was between 2.2 and 2.9. St Patrick's Primary School would like to sincerely thank the parents for their participation in this survey. Feedback will assist in delivering real benefits to students.

Student Satisfaction

St Patrick's Primary School undertook a Student Satisfaction Survey in September. Students were asked to express their satisfaction in response to a number of statements.

Their responses were scored as follows:

- Strongly disagree 0
- Disagree 1



- Agree 2
- · Strongly agree 3

Students who expressed dissatisfaction were asked a follow-up question seeking further information about the issue of concern. Their responses were included in this report with the relevant question. The survey response rate was 97%. From the executive summary, the average score for all summaries was between 1.9 and 2.7. St Patrick's Primary School would like to sincerely thank the students for their participation in this survey. Feedback will assist in delivering real benefits to students.

Staff Satisfaction

St Patrick's Primary School undertook a Staff Satisfaction Survey in September. Staff were asked to express their satisfaction in response to a number of statements.

Their responses were scored as follows:

- Strongly disagree 0
- Disagree 1
- Agree 2
- Strongly agree 3

Staff who expressed dissatisfaction were asked a follow-up question seeking further information about the issue of concern. Their responses were included in this report with the relevant question. The survey response rate was 93%. From the executive summary, the average score for all summaries was between 1.5 and 2.9. St Patrick's Primary School would like to sincerely thank the staff for their participation in this survey. Feedback will assist in delivering real benefits to students.

3.0 Teaching and Learning

3.1 School Curriculum

The school provides an educational program based on and taught in accordance with the NESA syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. In addition, the school implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools Office Armidale.

Religious Education in Catholic schools is a mandatory KLA included in the curriculum for students in each year group. St Patrick's Primary School is committed to providing a quality education that meets the needs of all students.

St Patrick's Primary School consistently evaluates its existing teaching methods. By implementing learning intentions and success criteria for all KLAs, staff are integrating a modern approach to learning that addresses all curriculum requirements and perspectives. The school provides support to students who are at risk or require additional challenges through a comprehensive tracking and testing system from Kindergarten to Year 6. This system undergoes regular review during staff and collaborative meetings.

During the Literacy and Mathematics learning block, students receive support and guidance through small group instruction led by educational assistants, Aboriginal educational assistants, or teachers. These groups are formed based on data gathered from various assessments to ensure that students receive the appropriate level of support and enrichment. Additionally, some students have participated in ICAS assessment challenges and the Newcastle Permanent Mathematics Competition, with several achieving Distinctions and Credits.

Additional learning opportunities were available, such as taking part in events like the NAIDOC Week program, going on school trips to support inquiry-based learning projects, and participating in the Da Vinci Decathlon. It was the first time that the students at St Patrick's took part in this event. Furthermore, the school continued to integrate the Google suite of products, which allowed for collaborative teaching methods using technology.

A comprehensive sports program is in place, consisting of three major events that allow children to compete at the diocesan, state and national levels. St Patrick's Primary School had 25 students who represented the region in cross-country, with four of them going on to represent the Diocese of Armidale at the Polding Cross Country Trials in Homebush. Additionally, 26 students participated in the Diocesan Athletics Trials in Tamworth, and four of them were selected to represent the diocese at the Polding Athletics Trials in Sydney. One student from this group was chosen to represent Polding at the NSWPSSA Athletics Carnival in Sydney. Furthermore, 10 students competed at the Diocesan Swimming Carnival in Gunnedah. In hockey, one student represented the diocese at the Tamworth Polding Winter Trials and was subsequently selected to represent Polding at the NSWPSSA Hockey Championships in Tamworth, where they became joint premiers. The school entered two netball and football teams in the Diocesan Gala Day in Tamworth. Throughout Terms 2, 3 and 4, the school offered athletics, tennis and aquatics as part of its sports program, and the children's skill development was clearly evident.

The cultural program for this year encompassed a range of activities. Notably, the Primary Choir achieved a commendable third place in their section at the Armidale Eisteddfod. Additionally, all students from Year 3 to 6 actively engaged in diverse band workshops throughout the year. Furthermore, the school showcased its talents at the Walcha Show through a captivating school display, as well as entries in writing, art and cooking. The students' exceptional efforts were recognised with several awards.

3.2 Student Performance in National Testing Programs

3.2.1 NAPLAN

The school participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) with students in Years 3 and 5 tested. In Year 3, 13 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 7 students.

In Literacy there were four elements tested. These were reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation. In Numeracy, students were tested in number, patterns and algebra, measurement, data and space and geometry.

Commencing in 2023, NAPLAN test results are reported using proficiency levels.

Students' results show how they performed in each of the NAPLAN assessment areas against 4 proficiency levels:

- Exceeding: The student's result exceeds expectations at the time of testing.
- Strong: The student's result meets challenging but reasonable expectations at the time of testing.
- Developing: The student's result indicates that they are working towards expectations at the time
 of testing.
- Needs additional support: The student's result indicates that they are not achieving the learning outcomes expected at the time of testing. They are likely to need additional support to progress satisfactorily.

At St Patrick's Primary School, school and student performance are closely monitored. These tests are one means of gathering data on individual student and school achievement. School staff have participated in Catholic Schools Office information sessions on NAPLAN and Data Analysis workshops.

The following data indicates the percentage of St Patrick's Primary School students in the top two levels compared to the State percentage.

Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy Percentage of Students in Levels Strong and Exceeding

Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar and Punctuation	Numeracy	
73.0	100.0	55.0	82.0	82.0	

Year 5 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy Percentage of Students in Levels Strong and Exceeding

Reading	Reading Writing		Spelling Grammar and Punctuation	
100.0	100.0	71.0	100.0	100.0

4.0 School Policies

4.1 Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Armidale adheres to the policy as endorsed by the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' of Students in the Catholic Systemic Schools of the Diocese of Armidale. The Catholic Schools Office Armidale monitors the implementation of this policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. Children from families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church may be considered eligible for enrolment. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

This school does not have any enrolment policies or support documents in addition to the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' for schools in the Diocese of Armidale. This policy is available on the school's website and the Armidale Catholic Schools Office website.

4.2 Living Well, Learning Well - A Student Support Framework for the Diocese of Armidale

Living Well, Learning Well - A Student Support Framework for the Diocese of Armidale are policies and procedures justifying a model of student support that considers learning, wellbeing, school connection, behaviour, family-school partnerships and similar domains as inseparable and interrelated elements in the lives of children and young people and in the complex community that is the contemporary school.

The development goal of Living Well, Learning Well, and related policies was, and is, to ensure contemporary research and findings in fields of pedagogy, inclusion, behaviour support, pastoral care, bullying prevention and intervention, student voice, participation and connection to school, child and adolescent psychology, student wellbeing and staff collective efficacy are reflected in all language, policy, practice and protocols of the system and schools. It supports a whole-system ecological approach to understanding and acting on the complexity of factors that interact to shape and form the lives of children and young people.

At the heart of Living Well, Learning Well is a universal and unconditional positive regard for children and young people and a high regard for the collective capacity of a school staff team to increase

learning, wellbeing and life-opportunity outcomes for children and young people. The full text of the school's Living Well, Learning Well procedures may be accessed on the school website.

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. The school does not sanction the administration of corporal punishment by school staff or non-school persons, including parents, to enforce appropriate behaviour in the school.

4.3 Student Protection Policies and Procedures

The role of the Catholic school in child protection is to protect children and young people and to promote and safeguard the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. This responsibility is shared with the whole community. Every school within the Armidale Catholic Schools Office (CSO) system of schools works within a statutory framework of cooperation with government authorities and other relevant agencies and with families in the care and protection of children and young people.

Schools have a key role to play in today's society by assisting students and families with child protection. The safety, welfare and wellbeing of students is given the highest priority in every preventative and protective action taken.

In caring for children and young people, we must act in their best interest and take all reasonable steps to ensure their protection. This involves sincere commitment to upholding children's rights to safety and their wellbeing, and taking comprehensive steps to create a child safe school organisation and culture, with shared responsibility requiring all Armidale CSO personnel to work together within a comprehensive framework to ensure action and accountability for child safety.

St Patrick's Primary School is committed to fulfilling its obligations and seeks to develop best practice to identify and address risk and harm, and to promote the wellbeing of all children and young people in Armidale CSO schools. The dignity of the human person is a central truth of the Gospel message of Jesus. In respecting the dignity of all human persons, Catholic school communities are called to ensure the welfare and safety of all of their members.

The protection of the students entrusted to our care, then, is a very serious responsibility. In taking up this responsibility along with parents, who are recognised as the primary educators and carers of their children, Catholic school communities are committed to ensuring Catholic schools have at their centre the total care of the whole student.

St Patrick's Primary School follows the guideline, policies and procedures as determined by Armidale Catholic Schools Office who provides policy, procedures, forms and links to other resources relating to child protection. These resources have been developed to guide and assist staff and to inform Catholic school communities. Further details can be accessed from the school's website which includes a further guide-for-parents.

4.4 Complaints Handling Policy and Guide

The Diocese of Armidale has established a 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' which is implemented by this school. The rationale for this policy is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of the contemporary world. The Catholic Schools Office monitors the implementation of these policies.

No changes were made to the 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' this year.

The full text of the school's 'Complaints Handling Policy and Guide' may be accessed on the school's website or the administration office.

5.0 School Review and Improvement

Each year, the school develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. The plan is drawn from the school's Strategic Improvement Plan and informed by the Catholic Schools Office Annual Improvement Plan. The school engages in an annual evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness against these external standards in collaboration with the System Performance Leader.

Key Goals Achieved and Implemented in 2023

- The ethos of the Living Well, Learning Well Framework is present in the language and conduct of every individual in the school community.
- All classes successfully implemented and benefited from the enhanced pedagogy of Religious Education, as evidenced by the valuable lessons taught.
- The extent to which data is being used and applied expanded greatly.
- The MaST and Initialit programs were further embedded with great success.
- Implementation of the new K-2 English and Mathematics syllabi.
- Developing an understanding of the new 3-6 English and Mathematics syllabi.
- Establish and implement a fluid approach to the whole school literacy block.

Key Goals for 2024

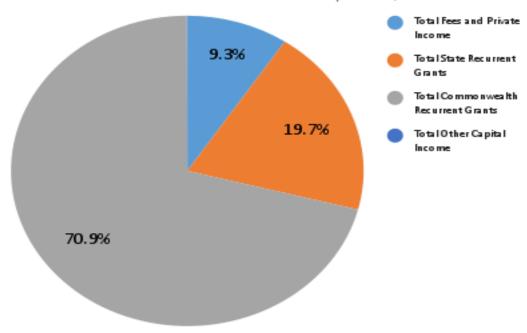
- Continue embedding high-impact Religious Education pedagogical practices using the Clarity Suite as well as focusing on the use of storytelling in all classes.
- Continue with the implementation and building of stronger faith and learning communities and positive family partnerships through the Living Well, Learning Well Support Framework.
- Staff to familiarise themselves with targeted assessment suites (Dibels) to provide relevant and meaningful data to inform teaching practices.
- Continue embedding of the K-2 English and Maths syllabi as well as implementation of the 3-6 English and Maths syllabi.
- Evidence of teaching and learning with high-impact teaching strategies.
- Develop the leadership capacity of all teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Ensure effective working relationships, through the School Advisory Council and Parents and Friends Association are implemented.
- Implement clear maintenance and enhancement plans with the use of Information Technology across the school.

6.0 Financial Information

Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary schools, K-10 schools and secondary colleges. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school. In addition, the financial accounts for each school and for the Catholic Schools Office are audited annually.

A visual summary of the income and expenditure reported to the Commonwealth Government for 2023 is presented below:

2023 Income - St Patrick's Primary School, Walcha



2023 Expenditure - St Patrick's Primary School, Walcha

