

2023

Annual Report to the School Community



Our Lady of Mercy College

52 Cape Street, HEIDELBERG 3084

Principal: Judith Weir

Web: www.olmcheidelberg.catholic.edu.au

Registration: 914, E Number: E1075

Principal's Attestation

I, Judith Weir, attest that Our Lady of Mercy College is compliant with:

- The minimum standards and other requirements for school registration and school boarding premises (if applicable) as specified in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic).
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2023 school year under the Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth) and the Australian Education Regulations 2023 (Cth).
- The Child Safe Standards as prescribed in Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises.

Attested on 10 May 2024



About this report

Our Lady of Mercy College is registered by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). The Annual Report to the School Community (ARSC), provides parents and the wider community with information about the school's activities and achievements throughout the year including information about various aspects of school performance. The Report is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the school community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students. Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the School directly or by visiting the School's website. Information can also be obtained from the [My School website](#).



Governing Authority Report

A year in the life of a school, and particularly a vibrant and energetic one like Our Lady of Mercy College is not just about the speed of the year that has passed but is also a reflection of all that has been achieved.

This report on 2023 serves as an excellent commentary on the endeavours of the talented staff, parents, caregivers, and students who have once again worked tirelessly and generously in so many different ways.

I hope that as you read this report, you too will share my pride and that of the MEL Board at the achievements of 2023. All who are associated with OLMC can be heartened by the tangible evidence of success, not just academic and sporting, but also in the spiritual, social, and emotional arenas. As a Catholic school, inspired by the rich traditions of Catherine McAuley, MEL schools make a significant contribution to working and supporting those who live on the margins of our society and to instilling the value of a Mercy spirituality. This calls for a deep understanding of connection to things bigger than ourselves and attention to the injustices of our time.

I am excited about the plans and innovations that I know will be part of the future at OLMC. The College Advisory Committee under the leadership of OLMC is to be congratulated for the time and energy they commit to supporting the community in achieving its goals.

The MEL Board recognises the amazing commitment of the Principal, Leadership Team and all staff to the students and families of OLMC. They are prepared to go the extra mile and stories abound of quiet and tender moments of personal and professional care. All associated with OLMC can be assured their contributions have added to the rich history of this special place and will contribute to the stories that are told in years ahead.

Vision and Mission

Our College Vision

Our Lady of Mercy College Heidelberg, founded in 1910, is a Catholic Secondary Girls' College and is a ministry of Mercy Education Ltd. The College's vision and work are inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and guided by the example of Mary and the charism of Catherine McAuley.

We are a community of learners where excellence is pursued in all we do and where relationships are nurtured to enable individual growth and a sense of belonging for all. We empower our girls to be women of joy, courage and compassion who retain an enduring commitment to God's vision of mercy and justice for all.

Our Vision for OLMC Girls

They will be awakened to the life-giving traditions of the Catholic faith. They will recognise their own and others' innate dignity and humanity. They will be independent, active and curious learners.

They will be encouraged, supported, challenged and heard.

They will engage in respectful and authentic discernment about the scripts of their lives.



Our Values

Justice

We seek to:

- Extend hospitality to all
- Respect the dignity of each person
- Respect the sacredness of the earth and nature
- Act for justice in our school, local and global communities.

Compassion

We seek to:

- Nurture generosity of heart and a spirit of kindness
- Understand others and respond to them in times of need
- Know the power of forgiveness and offer this to others.

Courage

We seek to:

- Embrace life, recognising our strengths, limitations and possibilities
- Promote perseverance and risk-taking in learning
- Be a school community where all are encouraged to reflect and grow
- Live authentically, guided by the values taught by Jesus.

Joy

We seek to:

- Embrace moments of grace and beauty in our world Share and celebrate as a community
- Bring energy and enthusiasm to all that we do
- Awaken in students the awe and wonder that will lead to lifelong learning.

College Overview

Our Lady of Mercy College (OLMC) Heidelberg provides extensive learning programs for students from Bulleen, Bundoora, Doncaster, Donvale, Greensborough, Heidelberg, Ivanhoe, Kingsbury, Macleod, Mill Park, Montmorency, Templestowe and Thornbury East.

The College has the capacity for eight streams at Years 7, 8 and 9 to move through to Year 12. Our February 2023 enrolment was 1192 students.

Community life at OLMC is enriched by our Catholic faith and Mercy heritage. We draw on these traditions to help our girls find 'pockets of spirit' in themselves and their world. Our social action, community engagement and outreach programs provide girls with many and varied ways of developing their social consciousness.

Our learning culture features a strong commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. The College has achieved a consistent record of good learning outcomes over many years.



Staff members contribute significantly to this learning culture. They are energetic, collegial, highly motivated educators who are passionate about learning, love teaching girls and are committed to their own professional growth. They have specialist knowledge in girls' education and draw on this expertise to provide safe, nurturing and stimulating learning environments.

At OLMC, the social and relational aspects of student growth are at the forefront of our efforts. The crucial relationship between wellbeing and learning success is well established. We therefore ensure specific programs and structures are in place to counteract the negative influences that impact on our girls. We also value our role in enabling and nurturing friendships that endure well beyond students' time together at OLMC.

Our learning environments feature technology-rich spaces and purpose-built facilities for Sport, the Performing Arts and Science. Our Centenary Building provides Year 7 and 8 girls with contemporary, colourful and engaging learning spaces and our Nalleijerring Centre is a wonderful facility for Physical Education, Sport and lunchtime activities.

Principal's Report

The year began with the long-awaited official opening of the Frayne Design Art and Technology Building, the Marian Centre, the Canteen and new classrooms. It was an honour to welcome distinguished guests and to share with all students the celebration of our wonderful new facilities.

The theme chosen by the Year 12 leaders for this year, 'And, who is my neighbour?' (Luke 10:29b) has been the thread running through the wonderful stories of our students and some whole school highlights. The fantastic way both teachers and students embraced 'Dare2Donate' in order to support McAuley for Women and Children was evidence of the living of our values. Courageous teachers dressed up or completed dares sponsored by compassionate students who were helping to raise money to bring some comfort to those who are facing forms of injustice, and they did so with such joy.



Mercy Day is always part of the story of our community. In the celebration of our story, we are creating new chapters that are individual to the students of our time. This year the spirit of our students was so strongly present in the celebration of Mass, the fun activities, stalls and the celebration of student talents in the performances from the House Arts competition.

This year the Senior Production led by Marcellin College was *Rock of Ages* while the Junior Production led by OLMC was *High School Musical Jr.* Once again the productions showcased the talents of students from both schools and were wonderful successes.

Our story has been built by courageous women whose quest for justice and compassion for others drove them to find opportunities to build new communities. Our joy is the sharing in this legacy, knowing that it is now the story of every one of our students, parents, teachers and staff. Your story is our story and we are a stronger community because of it. Our story has grown and developed over time with each new person contributing by creating their story.

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- We will make explicit the treasures of the Scriptures, the Catholic tradition and the Mercy story and how this is lived out in our human experience.
- We will deepen staff and students' understanding and knowledge of Catholic moral and social teaching and support students in developing personal meaning in their lives.

OLMC Strategic Plan 2020-2023, Key Commitments 1 and 2

Achievements

2023 Scriptural College Theme

'And, who is my neighbour?' (Luke 10:29b)

The text selected by our Year 12 Student Leadership Team, taken from Luke's parable of the Good Samaritan, encouraged us to embrace our Mercy heritage by extending a welcoming hand to all, both within our school community and beyond. It urged us to recognise the diverse identities of our neighbours and empowered us to actively engage with the needs of those who were experiencing suffering. Catherine McAuley's teachings inspired us to place our trust wholly in God, enabling us to embody the spirit of Mercy. As we journeyed into 2023, we contemplated how we would respond to the profound question posed in the Gospel, 'And who is my neighbour?'

Prayer and Liturgies

It was a joyous opportunity to observe all liturgical events in 2023 seamlessly. These included the Opening Year Mass, featuring the blessing of the Frayne Design Art and Technology Building. This building pays tribute to Mother Ursula Frayne RSM, who laid the foundation of Mercedes College in Perth before venturing to Melbourne to establish the Academy of Mary Immaculate. We also blessed the Marian Centre, named in honour of Mary, Our Lady, who serves as our guiding light, as echoed in our school anthem. The event was graced by the presence of numerous community members, including ISMAPNG Congregation Leader Sr Evelyn Crotty; a director of Mercy Ministry Companions, Professor Gabrielle McMullins; Mercy Education Limited Chief Executive Mr Christopher Houlihan and Head of School Engagement Mr Chris Bence; MACS; College Council; local principals; parents; former principals; architects; project managers; along with staff and students.

Furthermore, we marked the commencement of Lent with Ash Wednesday and observed the Triduum on Holy Thursday. Our calendar was adorned with ceremonies such as the Anzac Day Liturgy, Mercy Day, Class Masses, Graduation Mass, Remembrance Day Liturgy, and Advent Masses. OLMC students showcased their generosity by devoting their time and talents to lead and contribute to our liturgies, setting an example of active discipleship.



Social Justice Initiatives

Throughout this year, numerous students have dedicated their time to foster a sense of community and uphold our shared dignity through various Social Justice initiatives. These endeavours included participating in the biweekly Exodus Family dinners and forging meaningful connections with our cherished companions. Year 8 and 11 students ventured into homes and shared bread and life. Meanwhile, Year 10 students continued to cultivate friendships with peers at St Pius X Primary School, offering academic support and engaging in shared experiences. Many students volunteered at our Annual High Tea, raising awareness and funds for McAuley for Women and Children. The Justice Groups remained steadfast in their advocacy efforts during Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week, and Eco- Justice Day. The Feminist Collective amplified awareness about the challenges faced by young women worldwide, particularly regarding access to sanitary products, resulting in substantial donations to support homeless women and those in short-term accommodation through McAuley for Women and Children.

During the September holidays, 'Camp Heide' proved to be a source of joy, with Year 11 students organising and leading captivating activities for our young friends within the Exodus community. Student representatives actively participated in the Young Vinnies annual conference, while others embarked on the inaugural Melbourne Young Mercy Leaders pilgrimage. Year 7 students engaged in crafting Christmas decorations alongside residents from Trinity Lane, culminating in a heartwarming Christmas concert and festive afternoon tea. Furthermore, Year 9 students dedicated their efforts to decorating and packing Christmas hampers generously provided by staff, extending seasonal goodwill to our friends within the Exodus Community.



Mercy Day

Mercy Day, observed around the feast of Our Lady of Mercy, serves as a cherished occasion for our community to pause and express gratitude to God for the abundance of blessings we receive. It also provides a tangible opportunity to extend practical support to Mercy Works, the Sisters of Mercy, and their collaborators across Australia who are dedicated to serving Indigenous communities. This day holds immense significance within the life of the College, and it is marked by profound joy and blessings.

Religious Education Curriculum

The Religious Education teaching team persistently assessed and enhanced units of study to ensure that RE classes remain captivating and pertinent to young individuals' experiences. They expanded their curriculum by incorporating the 'Pedagogy of Encounter' into a new unit of study. Additionally, courses underwent thorough review, editing, and integration into our recently launched Learning Management System, empowering students to take ownership of their learning journey.



Value Added

Year 8 Reflection Days focused on how we are connected as Mercy people. Using the power of story and the fun of games, students explored the parable of the Good Samaritan and were challenged to find ways to connect, forgive and celebrate life with their peers.

The 'Wonderfully Made' Year 10 Reflection Days conducted in Terms 1 and 4 were highly successful. The program enabled an exploration of the precious gift that each person is made in God's image, and it also examined some related issues of sexuality, identity and consent.

Year 11 Reflection Day, conducted at the Catholic Leadership Centre in East Melbourne, offered our students a chance to be together offsite, and reflect upon what is important to them and how they are called to be people of Mercy. As leaders, they were invited to consider their place and role in the OLMC community of faith.

The Year 12 Retreat invited students to explore the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) as they considered their pathways in life. It also gifted them precious time with their friends.

Many Year 7 Pastoral Groups had their own Class Mass in the Chapel, giving thanks for all our blessings and praying for the many needs of our world.

Significant learning and outreach programs were undertaken in collaboration with people and organisations external to the College, such as the Exodus Community in Heidelberg West, the St Vincent de Paul Society, Fire Carriers groups and Mercy Seeds of Justice groups. These include:

- Exodus Bread Run
- Exodus Family Dinners
- St Pius X Reading Club
- Camp Heide
- MEL Seeds of Justice
- Young Vinnies
- FIRE Carriers
- Trinity Lane
- McAuley for Women and Children High Tea.



Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- We will put the student, their learning and their wellbeing at the centre of all we do.
- We will investigate and implement strategies for optimal and sustainable use of our resources to promote contemporary learning and community development.

OLMC Strategic Plan 2020-2023, Key Commitments 3 and 6

Achievements

OLMC Career Insights Series

An important 2023 initiative was the Career Insights Series which saw OLMC students given the opportunity to meet practitioners in a range of professions during Terms 2 and 3. The series consisted of a number of breakfast seminars with the format of a brief presentation followed by time for 'Q & A'. Students from all year levels were able to attend the breakfast presentation and they had the opportunity to hear from women in a range of professional fields, including engineering, science and law. A particularly significant element of the seminar series was the fact that a number of the presenters were OLMC alumni.



STEM and Extension in Science

Our Lady of Mercy College has a vibrant Science program in which classroom learning is complemented by extension activities. Year 10 Science students in 2023 benefited from the MACS STEM in Space grant which saw the school provided with resources and equipment to explore the mechanics and challenges of rocket construction and launching. One of the activities undertaken by the STEM Extension program in Year 8 Science was an introduction to the Design Thinking Framework, facilitated by participation in a Design Fundamentals workshop. In 2023, the focus for this exploration of Design Thinking was creating a product that encouraged consumers to be more mindful and aware recyclers.

Both the Year 10 rocket launching program and the Year 8 Design Fundamentals workshop are examples of activities in Science that help students see the relationship between theory and application and as a result, help deepen both understanding and appreciation of scientific concepts.



Design Art Technology and Performing Assessment Preparation

A key element of learning in most subjects is having the opportunity to view and study high-quality exemplar student work and this is particularly important in relation to subjects in the Learning Areas of Design Art Technology and Performing Arts. In 2023, both the Design Art Technology and Performing Arts Learning areas instituted comprehensive programs to provide students with opportunities to view high-quality work from the previous year's Unit 3 & 4 cohorts.

VCE students in these learning areas had several opportunities to view the work of 2022 VCE students in the Top Arts / Top Design exhibitions staged by the VCAA. Students in subjects such as Visual Communication and Design and Media, along with those in Drama, benefited greatly from visiting these VCAA exhibitions as they were able to see for themselves the quality of work produced by the most able students. It was very gratifying to see that three OLMC students from the Class of 2023 were selected by the VCAA to present their final works for Top Class 2023.

Professional Learning Teams and Teacher Development

Teaching staff at Our Lady of Mercy College worked in Professional Learning Teams (PLT) in 2023 with the focus on engaging and extending high-achieving students. This focus of teacher professional learning was in response to results from analysis of student learning data, which indicated that although our teachers were effective at catering to the needs of students requiring extra support to learn, the stronger students in our cohort would benefit from a sharper focus on their learning. The PLT were subject-focused and they made use of a range of data sources but particularly NAPLAN, VCE results and internal assessment results. There were a range of positive outcomes from this professional learning focus; one of the most encouraging was a range of students responded positively to the PLT focus, not just the academically strongest students.



Student Learning Outcomes

In 2023 there was a significant change to NAPLAN, as such it is difficult to comment on trends in NAPLAN data in 2023 due to the move away from the 10 bands, and the inclusion of four proficiency levels.

However, in comparison with the state data, there was significant improvement in the median for Year 9 Numeracy compared with previous years, with the median being above the state median. However, this shift has been into the 'Strong' proficiency level and the percentage in the 'Exceeding' is an area of focus. Attention to this occurred through Professional Learning Teams in 2023, with the Mathematics Learning Area focusing on how to further challenge and extend high performing students. Work was undertaken on embedding a variety of extension opportunities for each unit, as well as targeted setting of tasks through our online platforms.



NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards			
Domain	Year level	Mean Scale score	Proficient
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 7	561	80%
	Year 9	589	77%
Numeracy	Year 7	546	79%
	Year 9	583	81%
Reading	Year 7	562	86%
	Year 9	595	81%
Spelling	Year 7	547	82%
	Year 9	575	81%
Writing	Year 7	579	89%
	Year 9	620	86%

*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2023 due to participation not meeting these criteria or no students were assessed. Participants include students who were assessed, including non-attempt, or those exempted from the test.

Senior Secondary Outcomes	
VCE Median Score	32
VCE Completion Rate (includes VCE VM completions)	100.00%
VCAL Completion Rate (VCAL Intermediate)	*

*Not reported due to insufficient data i.e. less than 4 student enrolments for VCE/VCAL.

Post-School Destinations as at 2023	
Tertiary Study	*
TAFE / VET	*
Apprenticeship / Traineeship	*
Deferred	*
Employment	*
Other - The category of Other includes both students Looking for Work and those classed as Other	*

Data is based on On Track Year 12 completer survey 2023 for Post School Destinations of Year 12 or equivalent completers in 2022.

* indicates no data reported for schools with any of the following:

- (i) less than 10 Year 12 completers,
- (ii) less than 10 On Track respondents,
- (iii) less than 50% consent rate,
- (iv) less than 50% response rate or
- (v) less than 20% of the Year 12 cohort participating in the survey.

Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- We will put the student, their learning and their wellbeing at the centre of all we do.
- We will establish new and strengthened approaches to building parent engagement in and understanding of their daughter's learning and in the life of the College.

OLMC Strategic Plan 2020-2023, Key Commitments 4 and 7



Achievements

Student Leadership and House Initiatives

Our senior Student Leadership Team played a highly significant role in building a sense of belonging for students and maintaining a strong sense of community in 2023. The Student Leadership team utilised the college values of Courage, Compassion, Justice and Joy to help build a sense of what it means to be part of the OLMC community after significant periods of online learning over recent years.

The piece of scripture that was the College's theme for 2023 was 'And, who is my neighbour?' from the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). The team used this theme to anchor their work and to challenge all students to develop connections with their peers and strengthen our community, and to also serve the members of our College community and the wider community.

This theme underpinned much of the formal and informal work and activities throughout the year. OLMC has a rich co-curricular program with students having the opportunity to involve themselves in the various GSV competitions, participate in the music and performing arts programs or commit to the various social justice groups that run throughout the year. All of these activities provided opportunities to build connections and serve our neighbours. This theme also guided a number of activities run by the Student Leadership Team in 2023.

One of these activities which is led by the Student Leadership Team is Dare2Donate. This day of joy (for the students) and courage (from the staff) is an important fundraiser for McAuley for Women and Children, with a total of \$3100 being raised on the day. Dare2Donate is also an important way we build a strong College community, connect to our values and focus on serving our neighbours.



Another important date through the year in relation to building College community is Mercy Day. A special whole school assembly was held in preparation for Mercy Day, where both students and staff shared stories of what Mercy Day means to them. During this assembly we also highlighted that our fundraising efforts would support Mercy Works projects to assist Indigenous communities in Australia. On the day itself, after celebrating mass together in the Nalleijerring Centre, students and staff alike enjoyed the OLMC disco, treats from the café run by the VCE VM students, and finding a new outfit at the second-hand clothing stall. The badge-making stall once again proved to be very popular and many students enjoyed creating their own tote bag which was one of the new activities offered this year. The Student Leadership Team continued to provide students with the opportunity to buy tokens electronically in the lead-up to Mercy Day. This helped the college raise \$10,000 for Mercy Works.



The SRC team raised awareness of a number of prominent issues throughout the year. This included the National Day Against Bullying and Violence and R U OK? Day. Our SRC team promoted activities through our Learning Management System and then ran these activities throughout the year to raise awareness of these issues. House Arts, an event run by the Student Leadership Team, was held as a live performance event again in 2023. It was wonderful to witness the support the audience gave to those students who courageously took to the stage.

House Trophy

Every year a trophy is awarded to the House with the most points accumulated via various events. It is a combination of participation numbers and success that leads to a House winning the coveted trophy.

1. McAuley 4,225 points
2. Loreto 3,275 points
3. Mercy 3,075 points
4. Carmel 2,750 points

Pastoral Program

An effective way to build community begins with the connections that students make within their Pastoral Group. In morning pastoral and during Lesson 3 on Day 7, the Pastoral team work hard to provide opportunities for students to gain a sense of belonging to their Pastoral Group. This begins at the start of the year, with various 'Icebreaker' activities, but continues during the set activities that are planned for the Pastoral Program throughout the year. A few of the highlights of the Pastoral Program are listed below:



Year 7 Pastoral Program

- Exploring the theme 'And, who is my neighbour?' by creating our own Year 7 neighbourhood in the Centenary Building
- Presentation by Y Safe on Cyber Safety
- Time & Space Evening for Year 7 students and their significant female mentors
- Journal work on character strengths
- Year 7 Camp at Phillip Island
- Preparation of their time capsules as a way for students to capture the highlights of their first year at OLMC.

Year 8 Pastoral Program

- Time & Space Evening for Year 8 students and their significant male mentors
- Using success journals for goal setting throughout the year
- Development of study skills and time management
- Camp at Lake Dewar Lodge Adventure Camp.

Year 9 Pastoral Program

- Peer Support Training and leadership skills
- Growth mind-set and goal setting
- Cyber Safety presentation from Susan McLean
- Resume writing and interview skills
- The Butterfly Foundation.

Senior Students Wellbeing Programs

Our Senior Pastorals are based in Houses and consist of Year 10, 11 and 12 students. Senior Pastoral had a focus on the following activities as part of their Pastoral Program:

- Career Action Plans
- Learning a New Skill Sessions
- Women's Health Week activities
- In addition, Year 10 students had a focus on Safe Partying. Sonya Karras is an experienced presenter and advocate for safe partying amongst young people. Students learnt about the effects of drug and alcohol substances, as well as how to look after themselves or others who may be affected.
- Meanwhile, Year 11 students engaged in the Big Sister Experience. This program is designed to increase the students' self-awareness and resilience capabilities. Topics included self-worth, friendship, trust, navigating relationships, setting boundaries and mental health awareness. It was an engaging and interactive seminar for the Year 11s, with many useful tools and strategies presented on how to make wellbeing a priority.
- Finally, Year 12 were given a choice of activities that had a focus on health and wellbeing. One of these activities was a forum with Dr Anna Kelly and the Hurstbridge Medical Centre about the health system, the role of a GP, and some of the key terms and ideas that students might need to know to make informed decisions about their healthcare and how to access it.



Value Added

The Time and Space Program, which is offered to Year 7 and Year 8 students and their families, continues to provide a valuable way to connect with our community. The program is based on Year 7 students taking time with a key female in their life (mother, grandmother, godmother, etc.) to share their feelings about their 'significant other' and what they most valued in the relationship, and what they needed from them as they entered and transitioned into secondary school life. It was likewise an opportunity for the women to reciprocate along similar lines. The Year 8 evening was for students and a key male mentor or figure in their life. This was an opportunity to discuss 'growing up' and how this change might deepen and alter the dynamics of their relationship. The discussions at both evenings were facilitated by older OLMC students. There are a significant number of these senior OLMC students who are choosing to return each year to volunteer at this event. This is testament to the value of the program. It is also wonderful to see this service to the College being modelled to our Junior students.

This program now means that we have established a new and early way to enable our families to be more involved and engaged in some aspects of school life that our students experience.

Other initiatives have helped build connections between our Senior and Junior students throughout this year. These include our House Arts Captains working with a

group of Year 7 students who created artworks to display what Mercy means to them. These artworks were presented to the College community as part of our Mercy Day mass.

One member of the Student Leadership team, with the support of staff, developed a mentoring program for our Junior students. This involved sessions running a number of afternoons each week in the Learning Commons so that our Year 7 and 8 students could receive assistance in a particular subject by our Senior students.

Our College Captains worked with the Counselling Coordinator to develop a Wellbeing page on CANVAS, our new Learning Management System, to help make various resources to support mental health and wellbeing more accessible to students.

Student Satisfaction

In 2023, the MACSIS survey of student satisfaction was conducted. 2023 was a challenging year for some students. The impact of online learning and being isolated from peers and the broader community in recent years, has meant that for some students, meeting the learning and behavioural expectations of the College has been difficult. For some students, spending their initial years of secondary school online has meant that making connections with peers has not been easy. The MACSIS survey results help College Leadership identify areas of focus for our College community. One of these areas related to how much students feel that their teachers hold them to high expectations. In this area, we did not see any improvement in comparison to results for 2022.

However, in the following areas, OLMC achieved results above the MACS average for all schools:

- 46% viewed OLMC as a school that promotes strong learning dispositions
- 43% of students had a strong sense of belonging to OLMC.

Student Attendance

The procedures for student absences are as follows:

- If prior notification has not been received at the College by approximately 9.30 am on the day of absence, the College will send an SMS to the parent or guardian advising of their child's absence.
- If a parent or guardian does not contact the College to provide an explanation on the day of their child's unexplained absence, the College will attempt to contact

the parent or guardian of the student within three days of the unexplained absence, either by telephone or email. The College will record the reason for the unexplained absence if a reasonable explanation is received.

- If after contacting the parent or guardian, no explanation is provided within 10 school days, the absence will be recorded as an unexplained absence and remain recorded as an unexplained absence in the College's attendance database.
- Parents and students are advised that an accumulation of five unexplained absences in a 12-month period could lead to a referral of the accumulated absences to MACS.

Years 9 - 12 Student Retention Rate	
Years 9 to 12 Student Retention Rate	94.9%

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y07	92.4%
Y08	90.4%
Y09	88.5%
Y10	88.8%
Overall average attendance	90.0%

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- We will grow together by facilitating opportunities for collaboration and research-based professional learning.
- We will develop a model of empowered leadership that operates in an environment of trust and respect that enhances both autonomy and diversity.

OLMC Strategic Plan 2020-2023, Key Commitments 3 and 5

Achievements

Leader Development

The Leadership Team engaged in an exploration of their own development in 2023 through the engagement of a Critical Friend. The Critical Friend supported the team to further their strategic focus and to develop new ways of addressing emerging issues around student learning outcomes and wellbeing.

In 2023 we also launched an Aspirant Leader program open to all staff to apply. The program aims to focus on the mind sets, skill sets and tool sets for effective leadership. In the initial phase all who joined the program were sponsored to complete online modules with Harvard University or University of Melbourne. Over the course of two years the aim is to address a range of skills and tools for leadership. The first cohort comprises ten people and is a mixture of Teachers and Education Support Staff.

Teacher Candidate Program

OLMC continues to engage with pre-service teachers and hosted a number from ACU and Deakin University. We are privileged to support new teachers in their learning and hope to expand the number of pre-service teachers in 2024.

Professional Learning Teams

Teams again formed this year based on Learning Areas and, using the Data Wise model of inquiry, focused on the development of students with High Achievement with a particular focus on those with low growth. Each Learning Area focused on a range of strategies to engage and encourage those students to move beyond their comfort zone. Student growth in learning was monitored and successes documented. This has opened the way for new work in 2024.

Professional Learning

As is the case each year, teachers at OLMC are encouraged to engage in learning that will challenge them. This has seen teachers involved in a number of programs over the course of the year to enhance their knowledge, particularly in the area of VCE. A group of staff also had the privilege of attending the biannual Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools Association Conference in Brisbane. It was a wonderful event with so much learning and development in the area of our Mercy Heritage. Another focus for a team of teachers has been further development of Visible Thinking. All of this work contributes to the overall focus of challenging our students and improve learning outcomes.



Expenditure And Teacher Participation in Professional Learning

List Professional Learning undertaken in 2023

Professional learning in 2023 continued with our focus on working with research, evidence and data through Professional Learning Teams. The Professional Learning Teams continued to use the Harvard Data Wise model to identify a 'learner centered problem' and a 'problem of practice' and, by engaging with contemporary education research, develop some strategies for addressing this need. The focus was to enhance the learning growth of high achieving students.

Another focus for the next two years is Developmental Rubrics. Two Learning Areas per semester, over the two years will work directly with Michael and Mary Anne Francis to develop their skill and knowledge about developmental rubrics and in turn develop rubrics for all assessment tasks that provide progression and stretch in learning. This work will continue into 2024.

In 2023 we also focused on the Year 9 Horizon program and engaged with New Tech Network Australia (NTNAU) to explore ways in which the program can be enhanced for a deeper learning experience for students. Over the course of the year, the team worked with an NTNAU coach who supported their learning and creation of new opportunities for students. This too will be work that will extend into 2024.

Throughout 2023 the Religious Education Learning Leader (Staff Development) continued to offer a range of professional learning and support opportunities for both the Religious Education teachers and the broader staff. This program is targeted at support for teachers to grow in their understanding of faith and scripture so that they can confidently engage with young people both within the Religious Education class and also in other aspects of the curriculum.

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2023	106
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1280.00

Teacher Satisfaction

MACSSIS data from 2023 has seen a return to a more positive view of the workplace, team work and staff relationships and is trending towards levels of pre-COVID OLMC held by staff regarding their work with leaders and colleagues. The areas of focus on professional learning saw an improvement from 2022 but still has some way to go to meet the pre-COVID levels. Support for teams improved from 2022 but is still an area for growth. In all other areas there was improvement, and OLMC was above the MACS average for Secondary Schools. The areas of challenge that we have

identified from the data will enable us to target specific processes and practices in 2024.

Areas of growth

- 85 % of teachers felt positively about staff/leader relationships
- 51% saw positive value in the Professional Learning offerings at OLMC 59 % viewed collaboration around improvement positively
- 75 % of teachers valued the level of collective efficacy at OLMC 82% of teachers viewed positively the Catholic identity of the school.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	0.6%
Masters	14.9%
Graduate	27.0%
Graduate Certificate	4.0%
Bachelor Degree	47.1%
Advanced Diploma	5.7%
No Qualifications Listed	0.6%

Staff Composition	
Principal Class (Headcount)	5
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	119
Teaching Staff (FTE)	101.9
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	61
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	52.4
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- We will investigate and implement strategies for optimal and sustainable use of our resources to promote contemporary learning and community development.
- We will establish new and strengthened approaches to building parent engagement in and understanding of their daughter's learning and in the life of the College.

OLMC Strategic Plan 2020-2023, Key Commitments 6 and 7

Achievements

As part of our focus on improved communications, a concerted effort has been made to enhance the Newsletter. Each fortnight teams of teachers and students take time to share stories of their success both here at school and with their interactions with the broader community. Accompanied by photos, our Newsletter has developed into a wonderful narrative of life at OLMC, while remaining an important source of communication.



Mother's Day and Father's Day Events

The OLMC Parents' Association again held the annual Mother's and Father's Day Events in 2023. Mother's Day was attended by nearly 200 people and included students and significant women in their lives. Some families had three generations of women there on the night. A photo booth allowed everyone to capture the moment and dress up for photos. The night was a great success and we are looking forward to 2024. The Father's Day breakfast was attended by approximately 80 people. The student-led liturgy, offering a blessing for each significant man, was very special.

This and other initiatives of the Parents' Association were warmly and gratefully received.

Mercy Works and McAuley for Women and Children Fundraisers

Each year the College hosts a 'High Tea in Heidelberg' to raise funds for McAuley for Women and Children, an organisation that helps women and children confronting family violence to rebuild their lives. It was very special to once again welcome so many members of OLMC and the broader Mercy Community to the event, including a number of Sisters of Mercy. In addition to sharing good food and company, we also spent time listening to the experiences and needs of McAuley for Women and Children. In these moments we have the chance to show gratitude for all that we are so lucky to enjoy.



Our students regularly focus on our role in the community beyond the gates of OLMC. Each year students spend time on Mercy Day reflecting on the works of Mercy Works, in particular their work in Papua New Guinea and with Indigenous communities in remote parts of Australia. Our students baked, made badges, sold second hand clothes, coffees and played games, all to raise money to help those who belong to the broader Mercy Family.



Parent Engagement

Earlier sections of this Annual Report account for various activities and events that helped to build strengthened partnerships with our parent community in 2023. The activities/events included:

- The Year 7 Welcome Mass – see Catholic Identity and Mission
- The Year 7 and Year 8 Time and Space Programs – see Student Wellbeing
- Pastoral Meets for Year 7, 8, 9 and 10
- Subject Selection and Subject Expo programs (online) – see Learning and Teaching
- Parent Information Evening for Year 7
- OLMC and Marcellin Joint wellbeing evening for parents.

Parents' Association

- Mother's Day Supper
- Father's Day Breakfast
- Comedy Evening
- Bunnings BBQs.

Parent Satisfaction

In 2023, the MACSSIS annual school survey of parent satisfaction was conducted and it was pleasing to see an improvement in the number of parents completing the survey. OLMC was above the MACS Secondary School average in all areas of the survey. Particularly pleasing was the strong view regarding student safety, school fit and school climate.

Other measures of parent satisfaction and engagement with the College was the highly attended Parent Evenings at the start of the year, where parents engaged with the Pastoral Leader for their child's class along with other parents from the same Pastoral class. The information evenings and Parent/Student/Teacher Interviews were also well attended.

Over 2023, the Principal and members of staff continued to receive many email messages of support and commendation for OLMC students. In 2023 the number of parents who participated in the Parents' Association grew significantly as did the attendance at events led by them. At each event the Parents' Association aimed to meet the goal of enhancing the community of OLMC and they have been extremely successful.

Financial Performance

The school's financial performance information and a report of the financial activities of the school's boarding premises (if applicable) have been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at www.acnc.gov.au.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at www.olmcheidelberg.catholic.edu.au

