

2022

St Dominic's CHIC

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## About this report

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St Dominic's CHIC (the 'School') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO), Maitland-Newcastle. The CSO as the 'approved authority' for the diocesan registration system formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act (1990), is responsible for monitoring the compliance of member schools in the manner that has been approved by the Minister of Education. The Annual School Report (the 'Report'), provides parents and the wider community with fair, accurate and objective information about various aspects of school performance and development. Additionally, the Report complements and 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.

Detailed information about the School's improvement journey is documented in the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) which is developed, implemented and evaluated in consultation with key stakeholders. 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 be also be obtained from the My School website.

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## Message from key groups in our community

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### Principal's Message

St Dominic's is a systemic Catholic special school, catering for students from K-12 with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, cognitive delay, and /or deaf or hard of hearing. In 2022 we continue to grow with 6 Primary classes, and our Stage 4 and 5 Secondary classes.

Our team is inclusive of teachers, learning support assistants, pastoral care worker, and a school psychologist. The multi-disciplinary team make invaluable contributions to our community in their specialist areas including whole school programs, targeted interventions and liaising with external specialists to

We feel we are working with a team who are as genuinely dedicated to our children as we are .

And we can not thank St Dominic's enough.

Caroline Fowles (parents of Year 2,3,5,6 students)

### Student Body Message

Students feel safe and supported at St Dominic's. They are challenged every day to be the best they can be and are given the dignity of risk. We look for teachable moments in all aspects of our school life, ensuring that students feel safe to try. It is often in these moments that the biggest growth occurs. Individualised planning, adjustments and modifications allow us to be student focussed on personalised goals. Our focus is on student achievement to reach individual potential and ability whilst celebrating uniqueness and difference.

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## School Features

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### History of the school

St Dominic's has a history built on the traditions of the Centre's founders, the Dominican Sisters. The Dominican Sisters began educating students who were deaf and hard of hearing in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese in 1872. The evolution of St Dominic's has seen it grow and change in many directions. From being a boarding school for up to 250 students, advances in technology has seen a steady decline in enrolments over the years. The school moved to our current site in 1993 and its purpose-built features such as being soundproof benefits other students with sensory needs.

After consultation with the Dominican Sisters, it was agreed that continued evolution of St Dominic's is supported and encouraged by their community, which has resulted in a strategic expansion of the school in enrolments, facilities and staff resourcing.

### Location/Drawing Area

St Dominic's is located in the Mayfield Parish and draws students from a wide geographical area including Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie, Maitland and Newcastle areas. Students enrolled at St Dominic's are eligible for assisted travel enabling students who live within 40km of the school to receive travel to and from school. Given that we are a special school we accept students who live outside of our catchment area.



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## Staffing Profile

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### Staffing Profile

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2022:

Total number of staff	29
Number of full time teaching staff	9
Number of part time teaching staff	6
Number of non-teaching staff	14

### Total number of teaching staff by NESA category

Teachers at this School are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the NSW Teacher Accreditation Act 2004. Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher are voluntary. The number of teachers within the Diocesan Schools System (systemic schools)

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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle participate, under the leadership of the Bishop and in partnership with parents and parishes, in the mission of the Church to provide quality education in the context of a living Catholic Christian tradition. Within this context, Catholic schools in

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develop among our students. In Term 4, we hoped to celebrate the end of year Mass with San Clemente, however this was also cancelled due to Covid restrictions.

Throughout the year, staff participated in staff meetings that orientated them with the new Religious Education and Spirituality curriculum and the Pedagogy of Encounter. Meetings were aimed at developing teachers' understanding of JETBT/F3 14.67df0.75 0 0 0.75 460.12 708.12 708.1

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All of this is then linked in the Positive Behaviour for Learning framework that supports students in emotional regulation, decision making and empowering the individual strengths of each child.

Assessment as, for and of learning is then conducted throughout the term to determine the progress of each student. Feedback to parents is given through email, phone calls, social media, reports and the PP meetings. Parents are invited to two formal planning meetings a year to review and set goals with the staff and student. This is also the opportunity for families to give feedback from their perspective as to the

The 2022 curriculum at St Dominic's is inclusive of Years 7-10 Life Skills Outcomes and Content and Every Student Framework. Each student has a data folder that informs the programming and instruction for each area of learning. Input from the multi-disciplinary team also informs academic goals that are streamlined through the Personalised Planning process. Through the Professional Practice and Development process staff set whole school goals, team goals and individual goals that support the continual reflection and improvement of practices and student outcomes.

A community access program has been successful in students developing life skills within the local community, performing essential everyday living tasks such as shopping, cooking and participating in health, fitness and leisure activities. A mini-Woolies was installed during the year which gave students the opportunity to learn and develop skills such as; stocktaking, customer service, money handling, weighing, counting and pricing of grocery items.

Two cross curriculum programs have been successfully developed that run each week over two days. The secondary students operate a canteen on one of the days and the other day a café for staff. Students receive, process and make the orders developing their social, customer service, money handling and cooking skills.

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## Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

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### Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

Eligible students who leave school before receiving their Higher School Certificate will receive the





## Complaints Handling Policy

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has established a [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) which is implemented by our school and all systemic schools in the diocese. The rationale for the 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 our contemporary world. CSO monitors the implementation of this policy.

The full text of the [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or at the CSO website.

## Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

St Dominic's has adopted a Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) Framework. A variety of assessment tools are used to gather baseline data across the school in a variety of areas such as social, emotional and behavioural functionality. This data informs goals and targets that are then set for whole school, stages and individuals. Across the school we have a PBL award system that encourages students to work towards their personalized goals as well as following school expectations. Staff present students with a PBL award that they can take home, as well as documenting this on Compass so parents receive an email with their child's achievement. Once a student receives ten PBL awards, they are presented with a principal's award to acknowledge their progress.

Our Allied Health Team are integral in the setting and evaluation of the student's personalised goals. Parents are also offered professional learning and encouraged to implement the strategies at home.

Punitive consequences are not common place, opting instead for a consequence that is relevant to the behaviour, which makes the process more restorative.

To assist with our students in regulating their own emotions and understanding the emotions of other students we use the Zones of Regulation program throughout school. This involves the use of visual and explicitly teaching students and staff to identify and use appropriate strategies.

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## School Improvement

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The School implements the system's review cycle of improvement through the processes and benchmarks for creating the culture and practice of collaboration with students as the focus. Strategic Improvement Plans are future focused to map the School's directions, aimed specifically at improving educational and outcomes for all students through the following areas:

- Catholic Culture and Mission
- Learning

Each year, the School develops a Strategic Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. A copy of the school's Strategic Improvement Plan may be obtained from the School administrative office.

### Key Improvements Achieved

#### Catholic Formation

Our Religious Education Coordinator engaged and collaborated with key personnel from the Catholic Schools Office, and St Columban's to offer curriculum content matched to student need and development. This initiative re-commenced a collegial relationship between the mainstream primary school and specialised setting.

#### Learning and Teaching

Continuing to build allocation and application of data across all year groups remained a focus for 2022. This included a combination of standardised testing along with assessment as, for and of learning. St Dominic's adopted Every Student Framework (ESF) across K-10 and this work continued to be embedded in all teacher's planning and practices. Learning through play was extended to facilitated play in break times. Staff were encouraged to encourage and promote play and engagement in the playground. Our secondary campus adopted an inquiry-based learning framework for their teaching and learning. Common themes and outcomes were identified across several KLAs with cross-curricular teaching and learning achieved through team teaching.

#### Leadership

Using the PP&D framework staff were supported in setting and working towards individual and team goals. This enabled staff to share ideas,



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## Community Satisfaction

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Consultation with parents, students and teachers is valued and sought. Their feedback contributes to the planning and the achievement of improved outcomes for students. This year, the School has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers. The school undertakes extensive surveying of all stakeholder groups annually. This data is shared with the school community and contributes to the priorities for future planning.

### Parent satisfaction

Parents at St Dominic's feel that the ethos that St Dominic's brings to the school is evidenced through newsletters, children's academic work and their positive experiences. Families believe that their positive experiences at school have positive learning experiences at school, the curriculum content is meeting their needs on an individual level. It is observed that some parents may be unaware of how assessment takes place at school and may need some clarification around this. Parents and carers identify St Dominic's as a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment, with clear policies and procedures. It is noted that some parents would like greater communication between school and home, 'such as family conferences in the classroom'.

I love the school my young children attend. It's like a home away from home when they are there. They feel safe, happy and cared for by all the staff. All students look out for each other. The staff are caring and well trained to look after special needs children.

Excursions would be great too! Even walks in the community, or playground, parks, covid safe options.

The school is approachable and the staff are kind, and professional. Our child feels safe and happy going to school, and that's what matters most.

Teachers look after children very well, all safety concerns are addressed immediately, I always receive updates about my child's performance and b.67 T3nee

## Student satisfaction

Students have made the following remarks when asked about what they enjoy about their schooling experience:

Primary:

- The school is pretty fun, and the best part is the movement room.
- School Camp and Sailing

Secondary:

- I like the teachers because they listen, and everyone is so nice.
- I like that school is fun. Even the work is fun.
- I like working and I like talking to my teachers.
- I like the movement room because it is there for when kids need it and it burns up peoples energy
- I like the sanctuary because it is dark in there, it has bean bags, it has a projector and it has jellyfish light plus the jelly fish move. I think the sanctuary could be better because it could have more stuff in it such as cushions and a box of sensor toys.
- The food is good.

## Teacher satisfaction

Staff have a strong commitment to the individualised learning needs of the students and see this as a priority for their learning needs and goals. Teachers assess student learning on a regular basis to inform teaching. Staff agree St Dominic's provides a quality learning environment for students, where all students have a personalized plan and are working towards clear goals that have been set collaboratively. Staff have embraced and supported the implementation of PBL across the whole school. Staff agree that parent and community engagement is welcomed and supported by invitation to many school event opportunities.

During 2022 staff have expressed that the school is moving in the right direction to meet the needs of our students. Staff commented that

towards allocating staff with the most skills set and experience to suit positions and classes. This has extended to the recruitment process.

Form the Tell Them from e survey, staff were asked to describe one or two actions you or your school could do in the short-term to achieve a stronger focus on learning. Below are the responses:

- Engage the students in education or play based learning relevant to their disability and abilities.
- We need access to computers (technology) for all students.

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## Financial Statement

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This School Financial Information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire.

School Financial Information for the 2022 year is detailed below:

Recurrent and Capital Income 2022	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$2,005,710
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$0
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$649,459
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$91,899
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$0
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$37,226
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$2,784,294</b>

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2022	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$36,334
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$2,477,383
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$269,309
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$2,783,026</b>

### Notes

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.
3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income.
5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture and Equipment.
7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.



