



St Gabriel's School

EXCELLENCE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION K-12

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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## Introductory Statement

### St. Gabriel's School Vision Statement

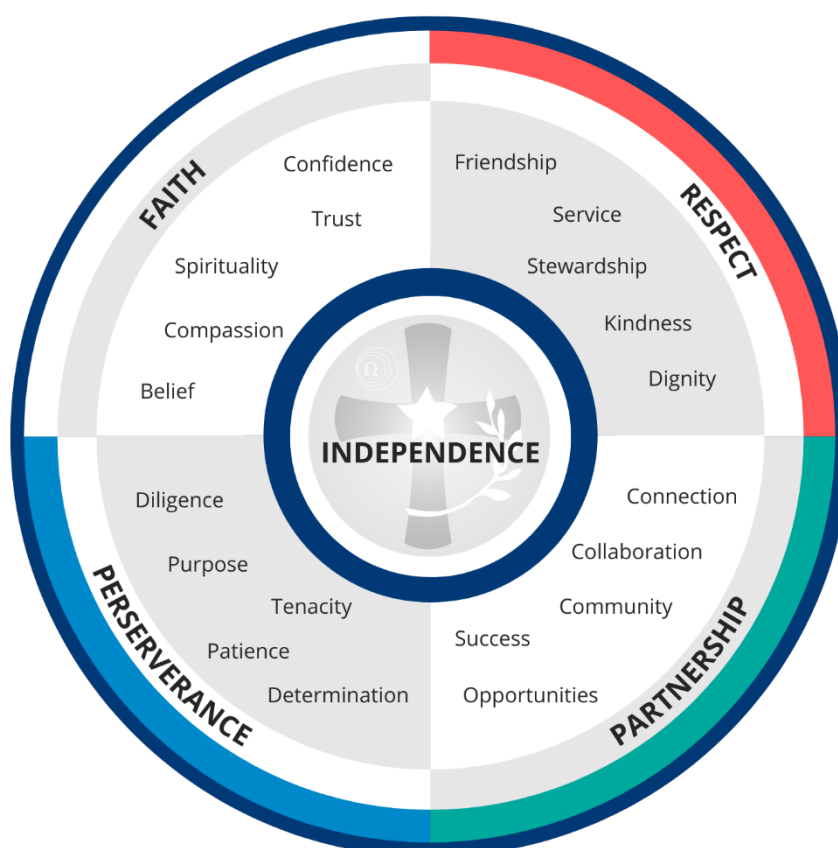
Our vision is to enrich the hearts and minds of young people with special needs for active participation in their community.

### St. Gabriel's School Mission Statement

Through quality Catholic Education in the Edmund Rice tradition, we transform the whole person through authentic relationships and innovative, educational experiences.

### St Gabriel's School Values

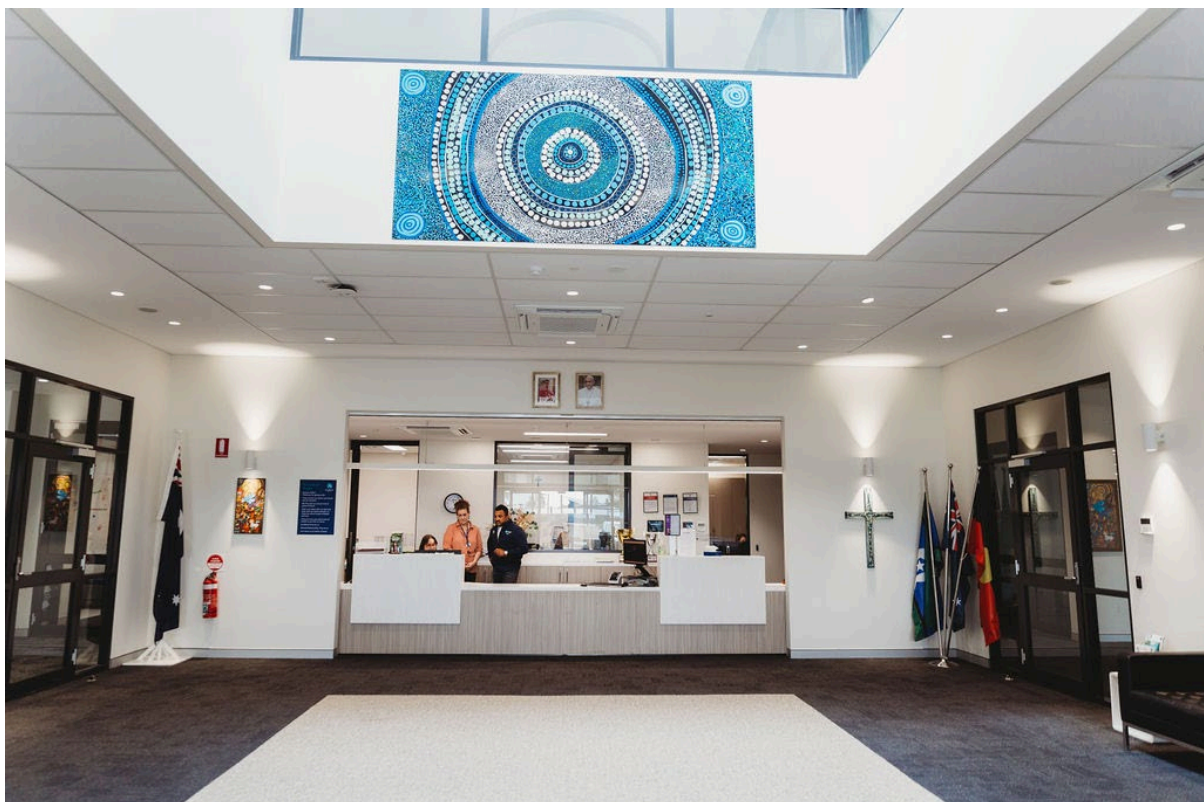
The values held by the St Gabriel's School community are based in Gospel values where Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of a full Christian life. It is through innovative learning and teaching that we aim to nurture these values. They are founded in the Charter for Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice tradition of Liberating Education, Gospel Spirituality, Inclusive Community and Justice and Solidarity.



## Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

We are on Dharug Country. We respectfully acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on this land today and recognise their connections to Country and community. We acknowledge the ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging who will lead us into tomorrow. In the same way that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were diverse nations with their own cultures, languages and lives, we acknowledge the uniqueness of each student here at St Gabriel's. Like the First Nations people, we embrace our differences while supporting one another and, like a connection to Country, we keep returning to Jesus as the common ground which unites us all.

St Gabriel's School is committed to the process of reconciliation and to fostering and maintaining active partnerships with Aboriginal communities, in recognising Aboriginal people as the custodians of this land and ensuring that respect for Aboriginal cultures is promoted in all School activities.



## School Profile

St Gabriel's was founded 100 years ago as a school for the deaf and broadened its admissions to children with special needs in 2010. Our primary enrolment criteria is an intellectual disability in the mild to moderate range. We also support many other needs in our student population, including students who are deaf or hard of hearing; blind or have low vision; with Down Syndrome; and Autism and ADHD. We deliver core primary and secondary education, including numeracy and literacy, as well as subjects to develop social skills and communication, through a life skills curriculum.

St Gabriel's delivers a tailored curriculum in a purpose-built environment that enables the most positive outcomes for our students.

We're going through a great deal of growth at present and have been transitioning from Primary to K-12. Our first Year 12 class graduated in 2024. We currently have just over 200 students enrolled.

Our school motto is 'Nurturing Independence, Transforming Lives'. Our mission is to develop independence and confidence in our students, giving them opportunities to thrive. Our parents, carers and families are as much a part of our school community and mission in helping the children.

## About this Report

St Gabriel's School is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The 2024 Annual Report provides the School community with fair, reliable and objective information about the School performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The Report also outlines information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the School community during the year.

Accordingly, the Report demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the School community and EREA. This Report complements and is supplementary to the fortnightly Newsletter and other regular communications. The Report will be available on the School website by 30 June 2024 following its submission to the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and EREA.

Further information about the School or this Report may be obtained by contacting the School on 02 9634 2367 or by visiting the website at [www.stgabriels.nsw.edu.au](http://www.stgabriels.nsw.edu.au).

## Principal's Message



2024 saw the consolidation of the use of our new facilities, with our staff and students becoming familiar with their new surroundings. We also added to our playground space with an obstacle course for our Year 3 – 6 students. This has proved to be a popular addition as they climb, swing, and slide through the course.

We were proud to celebrate our first-ever Year 12 graduating class, which we celebrated through our Mass as well as a celebration dinner.

The environment for our students at St Gabriel's provides a safe and supportive space for them to thrive in their learning as well as their development in social skills. This is a strength of our school and one that is celebrated in all that we do.

The environment within a school is not just the classrooms and the buildings. It is the 'feel' that exists when we walk through the front door. I am proud of how our staff set the tone of welcome and care for all who enter our school. This culture is ingrained within all who have the privilege of working at St Gabriel's and is often commented upon by all who visit our amazing school.

I would like to acknowledge our school community and the events that bring us together. The Golf Day, Trivia Night, and the Christmas Fun Fair, all of these plus many others, allow for our school to be the meeting place for our families to build the strong bond that is needed for school to be successful for our students.

St Gabriel's has for over 100 years provided a safe and inclusive environment for our young people, and 2024 demonstrated that continued commitment to have each student be a reflection of Jesus in their words and actions.

We live by our motto, Nurturing Independence, Transforming Lives.

God bless and kind regards,

David Cook

**PRINCIPAL**

## Message from the EREA Flexible Schools Director & CEO



To the members of the St Gabriel's community,

2024 has been another significant year in the journey of Edmund Rice Education Australia Flexible Schools Ltd (EREAFLS), now responsible for the strategic and operational oversight of 21 Flexi Schools and two Special Schools across every jurisdiction except Victoria and the ACT.

The year began with the implementation of new leadership structures across the entity, with a focus on embedding and strengthening fit-for-purpose governance and support for our amazingly diverse and dynamic network of schools. While there is still more to do, significant milestones have been reached.

Most importantly, at the centre of all we have done has been the wellbeing, safety, and educational opportunities for the young people who attend our schools. We are privileged to educate over 2400 young people across the nation, all of whom inspire us with their resilience, empathy, resourcefulness, and crucially, their sense of fun and hope.

It is my absolute honour to do my best to serve and support the amazing work being done at St Gabriel's College, and to share in the authentic expression of the Edmund Rice charism alive in this community.

Dr Matt Hawkins

**Director and Chief Executive Officer**

*EREA Flexible Schools Ltd*

## Message from the Chair of the Board



Independence, Partnership, Respect, Faith & Perseverance

While 2024 was a disruptive year navigating our challenging building program, our students and staff have continued to 'live' the College values of Independence, Partnership, Respect, Faith & Perseverance. St. Gabriel's continues to be a special place that inspires many people to be involved and contribute generously.

The Advisory Board is a group of volunteers who lend their expertise to support David Cook and the Executive team to provide the best environment to enrich the hearts and minds of our students. As Advisory Board Chair, I would like to thank all the Advisory Board members for their generosity and support. On behalf of the ERSES Advisory Board, congratulations to David and all the staff at St. Gabriel's for their extraordinary efforts during 2024.

We wish our community a safe and wonderful end to the year.

David Roffe

**ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR**

## Student Data

Student data as of the census date (Friday, 2 August 2024) was 199.

Year level	Number of students
Kindergarten	16
Year 1	17
Year 2	13
Year 3	14
Year 4	16
Year 5	10
Year 6	15
Total Primary	101
Year 7	22
Year 8	18
Year 9	18
Year 10	18
Year 11	11
Year 12	11
Total Secondary	98
Total Students	199

Student data is collected daily. St Gabriel's School has a clear policy for dealing with and managing student absences. Parents are notified by the School for unexplained absences, and these are followed up by Classroom teachers on the student's return.

Year level	% of Attendance
Kindergarten	92%
Year 1	86%
Year 2	83%
Year 3	86%
Year 4	79%
Year 5	78%
Year 6	84%
Year 7	87%
Year 8	86%
Year 9	85%
Year 10	84%
Year 11	83%
Year 12	91%
Total Students	85%

Overall retention rate for students is 98%. Student data as of the census date (Friday, 2 August 2024) was 199.

Year level	Start of year	End of year	Leavers	New Enrolments
Kindergarten	16	15	1	
Year 1	17	15	2	
Year 2	12	13		1
Year 3	14	13	1	
Year 4	16	16		
Year 5	10	10		
Year 6	15	15		
Year 7	22	23		1
Year 8	18	16	2	
Year 9	18	17	1	
Year 10	17	18		1
Year 11	11	11		
Year 12	11	11		
Total Students	197	193	7	3



## Workforce Composition

	Number	Full-time equivalent
Teachers	38.0	35.4
Speech & OT Pathologist & Nurse	4.0	4.0
Learning Support Staff	28.0	25.6
Administration	10.0	9.4
Maintenance	2.0	2.0
Total	82.0	76.4

In 2024, the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff members was 1.

## Teaching Staff

New staff members are provided with a minimum 12-month induction to assist their transition to the School staff community during their first year. Eleven new teachers were inducted into the school during 2024.

## Teacher Qualifications

Qualifications	Number
Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR)	38
Teachers having a bachelor's degree from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines, but lack formal teacher education qualifications.	0

## Teacher Professional Learning, Accreditation and Qualifications

Accreditation Level	Number
Conditional/Provisional	8
Proficient Teacher	30
Highly Accomplished Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0

## Teaching and Learning

### Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy Testing

For NAPLAN results, please refer to the My School website [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au)

### Higher School Certificate

In 2024, St Gabriel's celebrated the first Year 12 cohort to graduate. All students within this group received a Higher School Certificate Testamur (Life Skills). We offered the Life Skills Curriculum for courses, with the exception of the TVET course in Hospitality, and a range of EVET courses for our students.

Our Year 12 students were supported in their transition to post-school training and pathways such as supported employment and day programs.

### Teacher Professional Learning, Accreditation and Qualifications

Teaching staff participated in designated professional learning days and additional professional learning afternoons in person and online throughout 2024, incorporating guest speakers, workshops and training in compliance-related areas, department and wellbeing meetings and planning time.

St Gabriel's staff presented at local and state conferences.



## Professional Learning

Description of Professional Learning Activity	Staff Numbers
2024 Behaviour Management (Carl Warren) - NESA Outcomes (5 hours) - 1.1.2; 2.2; 6.2.2; 6.3.2	75
2022 Child Safeguarding – Professional Boundaries and School Mandatory Reporting Processes	75
2024 Emergency Evacuation Procedures and Personalised Emergency Evacuation Procedures	69
2024 EREA Flexible Schools Ltd - Child Safety [NSW]	64
2024 EREA Flexible Schools Ltd. - Recognising and Reporting Grooming Behaviours	63
2024 EREA Flexible Schools Ltd - Student Duty of Care	57
2024 EREA Flexible Schools Ltd - Work Health and Safety [NSW]	67
2024 School Activities Risk Management and Compliance	65



## School Student Enrolments – Range of Disabilities

Disability	Total
Cognitive - Substantial	3
Cognitive - Extensive	192
Physical - Substantial	
Physical - Extensive	
Sensory - Substantial	
Sensory - Extensive	3
Social-Emotional - Substantive	1
Social-Emotional - Extensive	
<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>

Ages	Boys	Girls	Total
5	4	2	6
6	10	4	14
7	11	7	18
8	9	7	16
9	10	4	14
10	8	5	13
11	10	3	13
12	11	7	18
13	8	11	19
14	13	10	23
15	7	7	14
16	7	5	12
17	3	9	12
18	6	1	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>199</b>

## School Policies

All Policies are available from St Gabriel's School and may be accessed by contacting the School and via the school website.

St Gabriel's School policies are reviewed constantly (live) via 'Complispace' an online Compliance and Assurance management system. Implementation of policies and procedures is part of a process involving information sessions, staff training, staff discussion and signing off on major policies and procedures.

The policies that have been updated over the past 12 months are:

- / Emergency Procedures: Evacuation
- / Mandatory Reporting Procedures
- / EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Complaint Handling Policy, Guidelines and Procedures

Publicly available policies can be found at: <https://stgabriels.nsw.edu.au/policies>



## **Catholic Identity**

At St Gabriel's, we maintained and strengthened the relationship with St Bernadette's through a number of liturgies as well as the Sacramental Program for our students.

The Parish Priest has a connection with our school and our children and is more than willing to attend the school to celebrate with us the Catholic milestones throughout the year.

The incorporation of prayer continued each morning within each classroom with a theme-based approach closely aligned with the time of year within the Catholic calendar.

During the second half of 2024 a Head of Mission and Identity was appointed on staff to allow for this to be a focus for the school going forward. The need for this to be a role held by one person was evident as this was coordinated by the previous Deputy Principal

## Priority areas for improvement as selected by the School for achievement in 2024 and what was achieved

### School Playground

The improvement of more active space for the Year 3 – 6 playground was achieved through the installation of the Obstacle Course.

### Enrolments

2 stream model throughout the school

The move towards a dual stream across year levels was achieved through the enrolment process during 2024 to commence in 2025.



## **Parent, Student and Teacher Wellbeing**

St Gabriel's is committed to the health and wellbeing of our students, staff and families.

### **Student Wellbeing**

Students have been supported with a number of extra curricular programs, including:

- Secret Agent Society Social Skills Training
- Lego Therapy Workshop
- Various food and healthy eating programs, including establishing a vegetable garden
- A mental wellbeing and resilience program and supporting resources

### **Parent and Sibling Workshops**

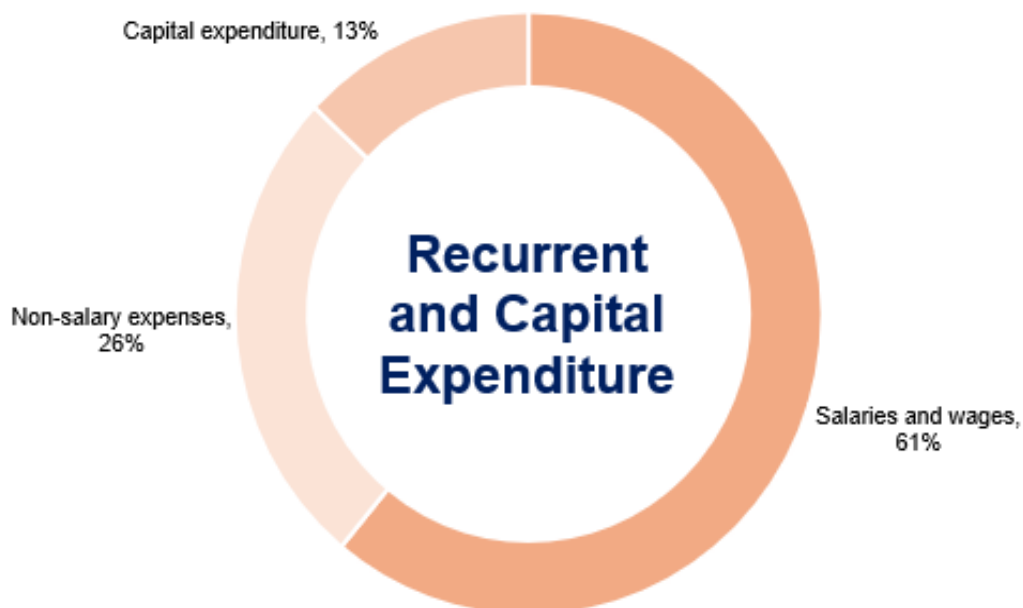
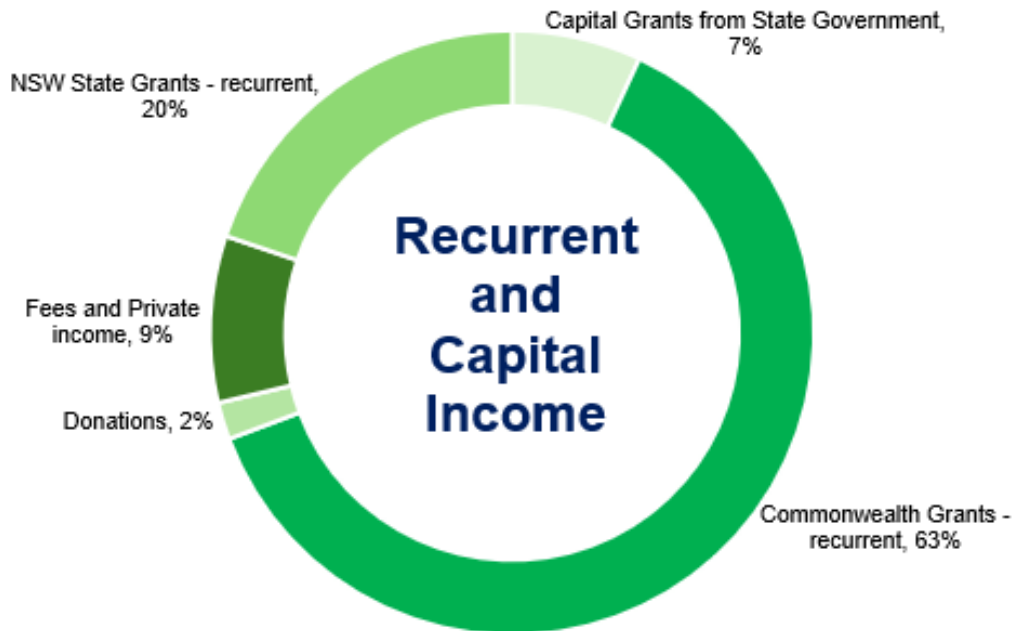
In 2024, we held a series of parent information workshops and seminars run primarily by our Allied Health team and some external providers. These covered topics to help support carers and family mental health; understanding and strategies to support their child/sibling; and respite and community connection for family members.

### **Teacher and Staff Satisfaction**

Staff satisfaction in 2024 was measured in a number of ways. Exit interviews with the Principal are offered to all teaching and support and operational staff who leave the school. Staff satisfaction is also measured by the retention of staff at the end of 2024 with only 1 staff member leaving due to retiring at the end of 2024.

## Summary Financial Information

### 2024 School Year – Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure



## Total Income

In 2024, 90% of St Gabriel's School's income was derived from the Commonwealth and State Government funding. The remainder of the income was generated through tuition fees and generous contributions from the wider community. Fee waivers, which provide critical financial relief to families in need, accounted for 11% of total tuition income, an increase from 8% in 2023. This reflects the school's commitment to accessibility and equity, particularly in light of the challenging economic climate that has impacted many families. By offering increased fee waivers, St Gabriel's ensures that all students, regardless of financial circumstances, can continue to benefit from the school's specialized programs and resources.

As a Special School, St Gabriel's School is highly reliant on community support to fund the purchase and upgrade of resources and facilities. Donations experienced a positive increase, contributing 2% of total revenue in 2024, up from 1% in 2023. This reflects growing community engagement and underscores the importance of philanthropic support in sustaining and enhancing the school's infrastructure and educational offerings.

## Total Expenditure

Salaries and associated employment costs continued to form the largest component of the School's recurrent expenditure, aligned with the school's commitment to maintaining a favourable teacher-student ratio of 1 teacher to 5.6 students. In 2024, the Enterprise Agreement for teachers led to an average salary increase of 3% and for support staff 4%. This reflects our school's investment in attracting and retaining high-quality educators to support its specialised programs.

## Capital Expenditure

In 2024, St Gabriel's School further enhanced its campus infrastructure to improve convenience and safety for students, staff, and parents. A key upgrade included the expansion of the main driveway, streamlining traffic flow during peak drop-off and pick-up times to reduce congestion and ensure a smoother experience. Additionally, the school added seven new dedicated parking spaces, providing extra convenience for both staff and visiting parents. These improvements reflect St Gabriel's ongoing commitment to fostering a more accessible and efficient school environment.