Annual School Report 2021 School Year

St James' Primary School, Yamba





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About this report

St James' Primary School is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Diocese of Lismore 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 to the Parish School Community for this year provides the parish school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The *Report* also outlines to the parish school community information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance and the achievements arising from the implementation of the School Improvement Plan.

The *Report* demonstrates accountability to the Federal and State Government regulatory bodies, the parish and school community and the Catholic Schools Office (CSO). This *Report* has been approved by the CSO which monitors school processes to ensure compliance with all NESA requirements for Registration.

This *Report* complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, yearbooks and other regular communications. The *Report* must be available on the school's website by 30 June 2022 following its submission to NESA.

The contents of this Report may be tabled for discussion at various parent forums and all information is public.

Further information about the school or this *Report* may be obtained by contacting the school on 02 6646 3266 or by visiting the website at moodle.yamplism.catholic.edu.au.



1.0 Messages

1.1 Principal's Message

The primary purpose of St James' Primary School is to support the members of the parish community in providing a faith formation for their children. The school fosters a commitment to the individual person and provides opportunities for academic, cultural and sporting achievement. St James' Primary School offers students a quality Catholic education based on the teaching of the Church and within the context of a strong faith community.

Our parish school continued to provide many opportunities for the students to excel in academic, cultural and sporting areas. All of these areas combined to ensure that our school's mission was lived out daily in the life of the school.

The students' achievements and accomplishments were showcased throughout 2021. Student work was proudly displayed in classrooms, on school noticeboards and in the school office. School achievement was highlighted and celebrated at many school assemblies. Our focus was to continue to build on the reputation that St James' Primary School has earned as an exemplary school. The following list provides an indication of the school's academic achievements. In 2021 the school:

- Continued to embed Writing Beliefs in the curriculum with Stage 2 and 3 children entering scripts in the Long Way Home Writing Competition.
- Students from St James placed second and third with an additional seven scripts being published in an anthology.
- Had scripts entered in the Dorothea Mackellar Writing Competition with a Year 1 student being successful in gaining a Highly Commended in the Kindergarten to Year 3 section.

There were many opportunities throughout the year for our school to be represented at community and cultural events. The following list provides an indication of the school's cultural program and community involvement. In 2021 the school:

- Linked online with the local aged care centre to maintain connections and support the residents through writing and art which were sent as installations when access was limited.
- Moved to online assemblies where parents and extended families could engage and celebrate with access limited.
- Offered an online newsletter where the students took a greater role in offering regular video inputs to maintain connections beyond school into the community.
- Was represented by fifteen indigenous students and two staff members attended the Closing the Gap Day in Maclean.
- Worked with local pre-schools to ensure that the staff and students of the school where better connected through online book readings and zoom catch-ups in Term 2 and 3.
- Linked with the community to showcase the work of Process Drama in Stage 3 with the Change Makers project and presentation as a result of the collaboration work with Sydney University.

Students performed well at various sporting events throughout the year. The following list provides some examples of sporting highlights. In 2021:

- St James had seven students qualify for the Diocesan Swimming Carnival. Two students qualified for the Polding Swimming Carnival and one student qualified for the PSSA Swimming Carnival.
- St James had eight students qualify for the Diocesan Cross Country Carnival and one student qualify for the Polding Cross Country Carnival.
- Athletics representative carnivals were not held last year due to C -19 restrictions.



There were many people who assisted in the school's quest for excellence. In particular, special thanks are extended to the parent body and the school staff for all their generous efforts. St James' Primary School is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

Ann Dawson Principal

1.2 A Parent Message

The Parish School Forum saw a change in direction in 2021 with a need to reflect on *where* the school parent engagement was focused, in light of the changes in leadership and the emerging challenges in school access and events.

This process of revitalisation began with the support of the Catholic Schools Office Parent Partnership Mission Consultant Janita Thompson and the Parent Assembly representatives from the diocese and school. Three notable events were offered.

- A Parent Conversation Evening to reinforce the need to work collaboratively with all families and with all staff for inclusion, transparency and genuine partnership. This evening sought to gather authentic voice with a series of provocations for long term and sustainable growth while recognising the opportunities for quick wins to build momentum.
- Parent Assembly representatives remained active within the school supporting the 100 days of Kindergarten and online learning opportunities.
- The annual disco was held with the support of the parent body and once again offered a social evening for the students and the families.

Parish School Forum

2.0 This Catholic School

2.1 The School Community

St James' Primary School is located in Yamba and is part of the St Mary's Parish, Maclean Parish which serves the communities of Yamba, Wooloweyah, Angourie, Palmers Island, Palmers Channel, Harwood, Maclean, Iluka, from which the school families are drawn.

Last year the school celebrated 24 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest Father Nicolas Maurice is involved in the life of the school.

St James' Primary School is a parish school with strong links to the parish family. The school aims to involve the children and their families in the life of the parish through activities such as:

- Building links with the parish for our families, especially during COVID-19, where whole school Masses were unable to be celebrated, and the school became "the face of the parish/ Church".
- Supporting the missionary work of the Catholic Church, through Mini Vinnies' Winter Appeal and Mini Vinnies' Christmas Appeal, as well as CARITAS fund-raising and Socktober fund-raising for Catholic Mission.
- Engaging students in retreats that support the student discipleship program for Catholic schools, such as Accendere (Year 4), Exuro (Year 5) and Incitare (Year 6).
- Promoting parish links through Sacramental programs and retreats to prepare students to receive the Sacraments of initiation/ healing (Confirmation, First Communion, Reconciliation).



- Building parish connections with St Joseph's School, Maclean (who are part of the St Mary's Parish) through the celebration of Sacraments, such as Confirmation together.
- Expanding staff and student knowledge of our patron Saint, St James the greater through engagement in professional learning days, as well as a whole school celebration of the feast of St James.
- Developing regular updates on Religious Education, including parish links (such as Mass times/celebrations) in the weekly school newsletter.

The parish school uses the mandated Diocesan Religious Education curriculum and the resource text "To Know, Worship & Love". Catholic life and culture permeate school life with two and a half hours of religious education taught formally each week. The Diocesan Daily Prayer guidelines support the school's prayer life. The aims and direction of our parish school are guided by *The Mission of Jesus Christ Foundational Values Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore*. This Framework underpins all policy, planning, roles and processes within the parish school. Our aim is to increasingly integrate the essence of this statement into all aspects of school life. Religious Education is given priority in our school and classroom curriculum and planning.

The parish school Mission Statement highlights the nature and calling of the school.

2.2 School Enrolment

St James' 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 2021	TOTAL 2020
Male	10	11	14	8	10	9	10	72	66
Female	9	15	13	11	10	14	7	79	78
Indigenous *	1	1	4	1	2	3	2	14	9
EALD *	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0

^{*} count included in first two rows

NB: EALD refers to students who have English as an Additional Language or Dialect.

2.3 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 monitor attendance each day as a part of their duty of care. 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 2021 is shown in the following table.

	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	All Years
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94.0%	89.0%	91.0%	92.0%	92.0%	91.0%	89.0%	91.1%
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2.4 Teacher Standards and Professional Learning

All teachers employed by the School are qualified to teach in NSW. Additionally, all teachers at this School who are responsible for delivering the curriculum are accredited with NESA. Effective from October 2007, the minimum qualification for a teacher in a systemic school in the Diocese of Lismore is a four year teaching degree. Teachers at this School are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the <u>NSW Teacher Accreditation Act 2004</u>. Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher are voluntary. The number of teachers within the Diocese at these levels is as follows: Conditional 57 teacher(s); Provisional 44 teacher(s); Proficient 1486 teacher(s); Highly Accomplished 1 teacher(s); Lead 1 teacher(s). Teacher status at individual schools can be sourced directly from the School.

At this school there are 16 teacher(s) accredited with NESA, 10 teacher(s) with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education, 1 Indigenous staff and 8 non-teaching staff.

2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention

The average teacher attendance figure is 94.0%. This figure is provided to the school by the CSO.

There were no significant staffing changes in 2021.

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:

- All staff teams develop a Climate Statement which is reviewed every five weeks to support a team
 approach to supporting student engagement and agency. These statements are shared with the
 school community and support staff to maintain a focus on improvement in every aspect of school
 life.
- All learning groups develop charters of behaviour which are displayed prominently within the
- classrooms in line with the Pastoral Care (Leading to Wellbeing) Policy.
- Every five weeks the academic assembly includes the St James Award, Be Your Best Self and Making Jesus Real awards to acknowledge students who have been positive role models in our school community.
- Mini Vinnies continues to support our local St Vincent de Paul in the Christmas Appeal and engagement with our local Aged Care Centre. This instils in students our responsibility to support others who are less fortunate.

2.7 Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

The school uses a variety of methods to gauge parental, student and teacher satisfaction with school operations. The school understands the importance of regularly reviewing approval and satisfaction levels. Last year the following formal and informal opportunities allowed the school to test reaction to decisions, policy and school procedures.



- Due to the health emergency parent satisfaction was gauged by the use of online tools and regular calls to parents across all terms. Seesaw and the introduction of an online newsletter allowed children to reflect their learning and share their achievements "beyond the school gate."
- The introduction of regular school leaders meetings with the principal allowed student voice and agency in working with big ideas from all the learners.
- Interviews with class groups were undertaken within the school planning days to ensure that all children had voice and agency as learners.

3.0 Teaching and Learning

3.1 School Curriculum

The school provides a comprehensive educational program based on and taught in accordance with the NSW Education Standards Authority (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.

Teachers planned balanced Literacy blocks for their students using rich literature. Student data informed their teaching and assisted with flexible groupings within each class.

Maths has been a curriculum focus in PLTs (Professional Learning Teams). Teachers have had access to professional learning from Peter Sullivan requiring rigorous inquiry into student data.

Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3 students have access to robotics, which encourages innovation and critical thinking, and also facilitates Maths learning and problem-solving. It teaches teamwork and promotes socialisation.

Our learning support programs, MacqLit, EMU and STAR, supported learners to achieve one year's growth.

Our enrichment program for High Potential Learners(HPL) in Stages 2 and 3 in Literacy and Numeracy, allows students to access high-level curriculum and associate with students with similar ability.

Blended learning provided equity and access for all students, as each child was able to take home either a school laptop or iPad. They were able to access the learning tasks through Seesaw, Zoom and Classroom platforms. Literacy and Numeracy packs were provided to ensure that every child read and was able to access the Mathematics curriculum.

St James School pedagogical approach is designed to maximise the learning potential of our students. To become lifelong learners who are actively engaged in their learning, to be able to think critically, apply new knowledge and skills, communicate effectively and creatively and be a lead learner in our society is the collective goal for our students.

Inquiry cycles in our collaborative teams (PLTs) where we begin with the relevant data to improve instruction and reflect on progress to move forward is the how.

In 2021 St James school continued linking the Early Learning Framework, Australian Education Data Collection information and the school context, the emphasis on deliberate age appropriate investigations in Early Stage and Stage One embraced inquiry and play based personalised learning. This shift saw eight staff members trained in this pedagogy and offered the children opportunities to develop life skills through investigations and builds on other skills in literacy and numeracy.

This pedagogy is complementary to the work in co-planned, cross-curricula learning that is visible in all other stages.



The parish primary school offers a strong co-curricular program including student participation in:

- Little J's Transition where staff worked to review past practises in the transitioning of new learners into the school. While the previous programs were well regarded, the school focused efforts in responding to the AEDI data for the region which identified a sense of belonging as the biggest hurdle to school success. This led to a relentless focus on developing strong partnerships with the local pre-school providers and connecting with parents at a much deeper and more individual level. The involvement of all staff and all stages in developing real connections to incoming students was notable.
- Developing environmental spaces and outdoor learning areas. The design and opening of the Bush Playground and Bike tracks engaged learners and staff in considering how the surrounding bush and playground areas could be made accessible for leisure and learning. The development of a series of trails, jumps, and play spaces was led and informed by the students who sought voice in the opportunities that these spaces could offer.
- STEM club which continued to engage the learners in Stage 3. Students were given the
 opportunity to compete in design and video programming challenges as well as the robotics
 program offered by the enthusiastic staff.

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, 16 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 19 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.

In both Year 3 and Year 5 there are six achievement bands with Band 6 being the highest level of attainment in Year 3 and Band 8 the highest in Year 5.

The Commonwealth Government has set minimum acceptable standards for reading, writing and numeracy at particular ages.

At St James' 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 James' Primary School students in each band compared to the State percentage. Please note that due to the possible rounding up or down of numbers or students who achieved results outside of these bands the total percentage figure may not be 100%.



Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy Percentage of students in Bands 1 to 6

BAND	•	3	ţ	5	4	1	;	3	2	2	1	i
	State	School										
Reading	22.0	25.0	22.0	18.8	19.0	37.5	13.0	18.8	8.0	0.0	3.0	0.0
Writing	20.0	18.8	37.0	37.5	23.0	25.0	9.0	18.8	4.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Spelling	23.0	18.0	23.0	25.0	20.0	32.3	13.0	12.5	7.0	12.5	5.0	0.0
Grammar and Punctuation	22.0	25.1	24.0	31.2	19.0	18.8	10.0	18.8	6.0	6.3	4.0	0.0
Numeracy	14.0	0.0	22.0	17.6	27.0	41.2	19.0	35.3	10.0	5.9	3.0	0.0

Year 5 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy Percentage of students in Bands 3 to 8

BAND	3	3	7	7	(6	į	5	4	ļ	3	3
	State	School										
Reading	16.0	20.0	25.0	40.0	27.0	20.0	18.0	15.0	8.0	5.0	3.0	0.0
Writing	8.0	0.0	17.0	5.3	33.0	21.1	27.0	57.9	10.0	10.5	3.0	5.3
Spelling	15.0	5.0	28.0	25.0	24.0	25.0	17.0	30.0	8.0	10.0	4.0	5.0
Grammar and Punctuation	13.0	0.0	21.0	20.0	27.0	40.0	20.0	35.0	9.0	5.0	5.0	0.0
Numeracy	10.0	9.1	21.0	9.1	29.0	40.9	24.0	22.7	10.0	18.2	3.0	0.0

As the data indicates the focus on writing across the school in all cohorts has seen growth in the top bands and a significant reduction of students at or below minimum standards in writing. This goal has been the focus of all PLT processes and significant professional learning for all teachers who have completed at least 12 hours of NESA accredited learning to support all learners to achieve this improvement.

Growth in numeracy for individual students indicates the renewed focus in mathematics and the developing of rigorous learning cycles based on the data gathered in Mathematics Assessment Interviews and monitored through PAT assessments each year.

Careful analysis of individual data "putting faces to the data" has offered insights for future planning to ensure that all cohorts show consistent growth through the use of tier two interventions.

3.3 Teacher Professional Learning

All teachers have been involved in professional learning activities during the year. These activities are designed to develop the professional skills and understandings of staff so as to improve student outcomes. Professional development can take many forms including whole-staff development days, subject specific in-services, meetings and conferences.

Whole staff development day professional learning activities in 2021 were:

Staff Professional Learning Activity	Date	Presenter
Foundation Day- Worlds of The text	25/06/2021	school staff
Staff Retreat	16/08/2021	School principal
High Impact Mathematics	24/03/2021	Peter Sullivan

Additionally, staff attended either singly or in groups a range of professional development opportunities including:

Activity	Staff numbers	Presenter
Play Based Learning	4	Walker Learning
RENEW	6	Michael McDowell
Child Protection	25	Ray Fairweather

The professional learning expenditure has been calculated at \$4555 per staff member. This figure has been calculated by the CSO and reflects expenditure on casual release days and professional development activities in particular categories.

4.0 School Policies

4.1 Enrolment Policy

Parish schools were established as places of educational excellence and places that transmit the faith, in the mission entrusted to the Church by our Lord Jesus Christ. They form part of a tradition of Catholic education provided by religious and lay teachers in the Diocese of Lismore for over 150 years. They also fulfil parents' rights to choose the schooling for their children which reflects their own faith, values, beliefs and hopes. Catholic schools have a particular responsibility to provide a Catholic religious education to children baptised in the Catholic faith and to support parents in honouring the commitments that they made on behalf of their children at baptism. The Catholic school is also "open to all who want to share its educational and faith goals inspired by Christian principles" (Congregatio de Institutione Catholica 2009). Most importantly, there is a special place in parish schools for those with the greatest need, especially in areas of lesser educational options or lower socio economic circumstances, and efforts should be made to encourage such enrolments, within the vision of the Bishop of Lismore for the poor. Every new enrolment at St James' Primary School requires parents to attend an enrolment interview. The interview provides an opportunity to learn more about the educational experience provided by the school, specific school procedural policies and current school expectations. The School Enrolment Policy explains the Parish enrolment guidelines. A copy of the enrolment policy is located in the school office or it can be accessed on the school's website. There have been no changes to this policy this year.

4.2 Pastoral Care Policy

The school's Pastoral Care Policy is based on the principles of restorative justice and procedural fairness. The policy reflects the vision and mission of the Catholic Church and is characterised by safety, trust and mutual respect. To live out this policy the school has adopted various programs aimed at helping students value themselves and experience wellbeing. These include programs focusing on self-esteem, social relationships, moral development, vocational awareness, sexuality, anti-bullying, drug awareness, health and personal safety. The school's pastoral care program has been developed in consultation with staff, parents and students and is available on the school's website. There have been no changes to this policy this year.

4.3 Discipline Policy

The school does not sanction corporal punishment or allow parents to administer corporal punishment in the school.

The school policy is based on procedural fairness and ensures that school practices respect the dignity, rights and fundamental freedoms of individual students. Students are required to abide by the school rules and to follow the directions of teachers and other people with delegated authority. Where disciplinary action is required any penalty imposed will vary according to the nature of the breach and/or the student's prior behaviour. The policy is discussed with students, staff and parents on a regular basis. Reminders about the policy are regularly included in school newsletters. There have been no changes to this policy this year.

4.4 Anti-Bullying Policy

The school's Anti Bullying Policy fosters a cohesive approach to the issue of bullying and includes specific initiatives that are designed to promote pastoral care, wellbeing and safe school communities. This policy covers the bullying of students with disabilities. Disabled children and young people need to know they have the right to be safe from bullying, what bullying is, how to keep safe and what to do if adults do not do enough to stop the bullying. The dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and intrinsic to our education ministry. There have been no changes to this policy this year and it is available on the school website.

4.5 Complaints and Grievance Policy

The school policy is based on procedural fairness and recognises that parents and caregivers must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory environment. Any concerns raised are responded to promptly and fairly, and confidentiality is always maintained. There have been no changes to this policy this year and it is available on the school website.

5.0 School Determined Improvement Targets

Each year the school implements the School Improvement Plan. 2021 was a very rewarding year.

Key improvements achieved this year	Key Improvements for 2022				
Mission of Jesus Christ	Mission of Jesus Christ				
Create school community partnerships that nurture and support life formed in the Mission of	school where service is central to who we are				
Jesus Christ. This is a continued goal focused on the Catholic Identity of the school.	and our collective endeavour.				



Evangelisation. Staff developed their knowledge of our school foundations leading to understanding their role as Catholic educators to lead others to "fullness of life".

Catechesis. Staff developed a stronger curriculum and pedagogical understanding in religious education through involvement in the RENEW project.

Learning and Teaching

Build a learning community that values continuous improvement, collaboration and feedback which responds to the needs of all learners, promoting intellectual rigour through a rich and inclusive curriculum.

Numeracy. Collaboration and feedback loops in place and documented for numeracy.

Literacy. Increased engagement in Literacy through the deliberate implementation of the literacy block where children of all abilities are catered for through the High Potential Learners Action Research.

Pastoral Care

Developed the Pastoral Care Team model and processes and practices ensuring that school community relationships and student wellbeing are central with the intended outcome that student wellbeing initiatives are well documented, resourced, strategic and families and students are engaged.

Leadership

Cultivated a school climate that values appraisal and recognition and promotes a culture of collective responsibility with the intended outcome that staff demonstrate and articulate role clarity.

Family School Partnership

Fostered partnerships between family and school that are built on trust, shared responsibility and faith, with children and their learning at the centre with the intended outcome that channels of communication are reviewed to ensure that they are meeting the goals assigned.

Learning and Teaching

Build student capacity to actively respond to feedback to ensure growth in literacy and numeracy (Parameter 6 Clarity)

Improve mathematics success. All students achieve one year's expected growth in numeracy.

Improve literacy success. All students achieve one year's expected growth in literacy.

Pastoral Care

Embed the Pastoral Care Team model and processes and practices ensuring that school community relationships and student wellbeing are central with the intended outcome that student wellbeing initiatives are well documented, resourced, strategic and families and students are engaged.

Family School Partnership

Families. Build the threads of collective endeavour in supporting their children as learners.

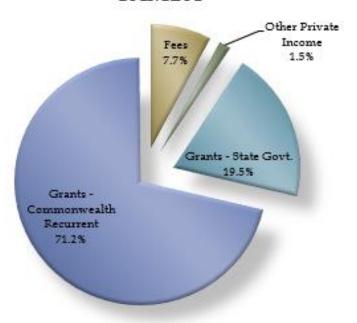
Reconfigure the parent body in line with Foundational Values. Shift thinking from aspiration to service.

6.0 Financial Information

Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Lismore Catholic Schools Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary 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 2021 is presented below:

2021 INCOME - St James Primary School YAMBA



2021 EXPENSE - St James Primary School YAMBA

