



2024

NESA Annual Report

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HEAD OF COLLEGE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



Opening Message from the Head of College	3-4
Significance of St Mark's College Logo	5
Introduction	6
About the Board	7
A Message from the Board	8
Workforce Profile <i>Professional Learning, Engagement & Staff Development</i>	9
Curriculum Overview	10
NAPLAN	11
HSC	12-22
Priority Areas <i>K-6</i>	23-25
Financial Information	26
College Policies	27
Framework <i>Educational Reporting and Accountability</i>	28

Opening Message from the Head of College



Dear Members of the St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College Community

It is with deep gratitude and steadfast trust in God's guidance that I present the 2024 Annual Report for St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College. This year has marked a significant chapter in our journey — one defined by purposeful growth, strategic foresight, and a reaffirmed commitment to nurturing our students in faith, character, and excellence.

Throughout the year, our College has continued to champion high standards in teaching and learning, while reinforcing the values and traditions that define our Orthodox Christian identity. Our students have embraced a culture of high expectations, and their achievements reflect the synergy of academic rigour, spiritual development, and pastoral care.

A major educational milestone was the launch of our Senior School Deep Learning Project, delivered in partnership with AISNSW. This initiative is reshaping how we plan and deliver teaching across the senior years — embedding deeper engagement, critical thinking, and authenticity in learning experiences. Through it, we have reaffirmed our commitment to continuous professional growth for staff and to future-focused education for every learner.

The physical and digital transformation of the College has also been a key focus in 2024. We continued our significant investment in infrastructure and resources, including the refurbishment of classrooms, acquisition of new educational tools, and the expansion of our College-wide IT systems. Most notably, we commenced the first phase of a strategic three-year program to upgrade our servers and retire legacy technologies — a bold step toward long-term digital readiness, cybersecurity, and operational resilience.

In addition to these capital improvements, the College saw the full operation of the new canteen, a much-welcomed enhancement to student and staff life. The refurbishment of our Senior Staffroom and the creation of a dedicated Student Services Office further signal our commitment to supporting both staff wellbeing and student care in dynamic, purpose-built spaces.

2024 also marked a powerful expansion of our College's missional heart. For the first time, students and staff journeyed abroad on a mission trip to the Philippines, witnessing first-hand the transformative power of Christian service and global compassion. It was a deeply spiritual experience and a proud milestone in the evolution of our Missions Program.

We also broadened our sporting and co-curricular offerings, strengthening student engagement in physical education, teamwork, and competitive sport. A highlight was the launch of our Adventure Program for Years 8 and 10, offering students meaningful opportunities to challenge themselves through outdoor experiences that foster resilience, self-awareness, and leadership.

Opening Message from the Head of College



A vital contributor to the strength of our community in 2024 has been the **Parents & Friends (P&F) Association**. Their support has extended well beyond volunteering — through a range of fundraising initiatives including the P&F has helped enhance College life in visible and impactful ways. Their commitment to service, generosity, and connection exemplifies the spirit of partnership that defines our school community.

None of this would be possible without the unwavering dedication of our staff — a team of passionate educators and support professionals who continue to model excellence in Christian service. Their commitment to their craft, their students, and their faith remains the bedrock of our College's success.

As we close this year, we give thanks for the abundant blessings God has poured out upon our College community. We are proud of all we have accomplished together — in classrooms, in prayer, in community life, and beyond — and look to the future with confidence, determination, and faith.

Thank you for your continued support. With God's guidance, we look forward to building an even stronger future for our students in 2025 and beyond.

God Bless,

Mr Anthony Deans
Head of College





Significance of St Mark's College Logo

The logo of St Mark's College holds profound meaning and symbolism, reflecting the heritage and values of our institution.

Southern Cross: Surrounding the Coptic Cross, the Southern Cross represents Australia, as it appears on the Australian national flag, highlighting our location and national identity.

Coptic Cross: At the center of the logo, the Coptic Cross signifies the Coptic roots of the college, emphasising our cultural and religious heritage.

Lotus Leaves: Encircling the Coptic Cross, the lotus leaves symbolise Egypt, connecting us to ancient Egyptian heritage and traditions.

Coptic Word "EKHOWAB": Meaning "Holy" in the ancient language of the Coptic Church, this word serves as a reminder of God's presence among us and our call to live a holy life.

Establishment Year (1996): The date signifies the year of the college's founding, marking the beginning of our journey.

Motto "To Live Is Christ": This verse encapsulates the guiding principle and aspiration of everyone at St Mark's College, inspiring us to live by Christ's teachings.

Each element of our logo weaves together to tell the story of St Mark's College, celebrating our Australian setting, Coptic heritage, and commitment to faith and education.



Introduction

St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College (SMC) is a coeducational K–12 independent school that has proudly served the Sydney community since its establishment in 1996. Beginning in temporary facilities in Lidcombe and relocating to our purpose-built campus in Wattle Grove in 1999, the College has grown into a dynamic and faith-centred learning environment. SMC delivers the NSW Curriculum in accordance with the standards set by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and consistently meets all accountability measures through regular reviews and audits.

As a recipient of Federal Recurrent Funding via the NSW State Government, the College satisfies all responsibilities outlined by the Department of Education and Training (DET). While SMC operates independently of the NSW Department of Education and the Catholic Education Office, we remain firmly aligned with the regulatory requirements governing registration and accreditation.

Rooted in the teachings and spiritual ethos of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the College nurtures a strong Christian foundation across its academic, pastoral, and community life. While approximately 70% of our students come from Coptic Orthodox backgrounds, our inclusive enrolment practices welcome families from a rich diversity of religious and cultural traditions. Our student body reflects this diversity, representing 21 faiths and 18 cultural backgrounds drawn from all corners of Greater Sydney.

At the heart of SMC is a commitment to excellence, character development, and service. We cultivate a school culture grounded in faith, learning, and care—where every student is known, supported, and inspired. Our educational philosophy promotes holistic development, encouraging students to grow spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and socially.

Through innovative teaching, inclusive practices, and strong family partnerships, our students are empowered to strive for personal bests while embodying Christian values in their daily lives. From foundational years to Year 12, we foster critical thinking, creativity, and a passion for lifelong learning. Our assessment and reporting practices are designed to capture the full spectrum of student growth and achievement, extending well beyond academic metrics alone.

In all we do, our mission remains steadfast: to provide a Christ-centred education that equips students to thrive with purpose, integrity, and resilience—in both the Church and the wider Australian society.





About the Board

The NSW Coptic Orthodox Board of Education serves as the governing body of SMC. The Board is profoundly grateful for the guidance, prayers and support of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, together with His Grace Bishop Daniel and the Papal Legate Rev Fr Joshua Tadros.

As a Board the vision is to enrich our children with Christian teachings founded upon the Coptic Orthodox faith, becoming value-driven Australian citizens, connected as one body with unique gifts. In this regard there is a commitment to realise that vision by building upon the values of respect, unity, service, resilience and growth.

The Board seeks to foster strong and cohesive relationships among executives, teachers, support staff, and the Board itself, recognising that these relationships are crucial to the sustained success of the College, supported by the unwavering involvement of our community. Together we also seek to cultivate a safe, Christian, and nurturing environment that empowers our students to excel in their education and realise their full potential. We encourage and support students to achieve their best academically, in sports, the arts, and other extracurricular pursuits, all within a Christian framework.

NSW Coptic Education Board (as of 2024)

Name	Area of Expertise	Role
Mr Mahrous (Ross) Nassif	Industrial Relations	Chairperson
Dr Lydia Moussa	Organisational Management	Secretary
Mr Mark Girgis	Building & Construction	Board Member
Dr Emad Awadalla	Finance	Board Member





A Message from the Board

The NSW Coptic Orthodox Board of Education gives heartfelt thanks to our gracious and merciful God for His continued blessings upon St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College throughout the 2024 academic year. As we reflect on this year's journey, it is clear that the College has been enriched by divine guidance, outstanding accomplishments, and the steadfast spirit of our community.

Our guiding vision is:

"To enrich our children with Christian teachings founded upon the Coptic Orthodox Faith, becoming value-driven Australian citizens, connected as one body with unique gifts."

This vision is anchored by the College's core values: **Respect, Unity, Service, Resilience, and Growth**—principles that underpin our planning and influence every aspect of College life.

Our focus continues to prioritise:

- Student academic development and achievement
- Staff empowerment and professional excellence
- A rich and responsive pastoral journey
- Holistic wellbeing
- Curriculum innovation and delivery
- Community engagement
- Sustainable resource stewardship

In 2024, we celebrated a number of milestones that reflected the fruit of these efforts. Among the most noteworthy was the **St Mark's Debating Team** claiming the **Division title in the HICES Debating Competition**, prevailing against over 270 teams from more than 50 schools. This triumph not only showcased academic excellence, but also embodied the teamwork, resilience, and confidence we aim to instill in every student.

The Board sincerely acknowledges and appreciates the unwavering support of our staff, leadership team, students, and families. Your dedication, commitment, and prayers have been instrumental in nurturing a thriving school community deeply rooted in the Coptic Orthodox faith.

As we move forward, we remain prayerfully committed to the College's continued success, faithful to our spiritual mission, and ever grateful for the partnership we share with all members of the St Mark's family.

With prayer and gratitude,
The NSW Coptic Education Board





Workforce Profile

Professional Learning, Engagement & Staff Development

In 2024, St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College continued to advance its strategic learning agenda with a strong focus on **student achievement**, **staff professional growth**, and **data-informed practice**. Building on the foundation of the 2020–2023 Learning Goals, the College entered a new cycle of continuous improvement — guided by high expectations, evidence-based teaching, and a culture of innovation.

Professional development remained a cornerstone of this strategy. Throughout the year, teachers across all stages and faculties participated in targeted learning opportunities designed to enhance both individual expertise and collective instructional practice.

Professional learning was delivered through a blended approach, combining in-house workshops, instructional coaching, online modules, and collaborative learning communities.

Ongoing professional growth is essential to the effectiveness of educators. By engaging with current research and evidence-based practices, our teachers not only strengthen their own capacity but also model lifelong learning for students. This commitment ensures that teaching at St Mark's remains informed, reflective, and responsive to the evolving needs of learners in a dynamic educational landscape.

Key areas of focus included:

Professional Learning Activities	Hours	No of Staff	Professional Learning Activities	Hours	No of Staff
Assessment Design in Modern Languages	5	1	CERN Physics Masterclass	6	1
AIS Educational Leaders Conference	10	2	Dysgraphia: Written Expression and Handwriting	6	1
AIS Navigating the Changing Landscape of Economics	5	1	Graduate Certificate of Career Development	13	1
Education Perfect Conference	6	2	Welcome to HSC English: The Craft of Writing 2024	4	1
Powerful Conversations	3	1	AI for Managers by Microsoft and LinkedIn	4	1
Mastery and Leadership Bootcamp	10	1	Teaching HSC Business Studies for the First Time	5	1
Stg 6 History Teachers Association	6	1	Enhancing Curriculum Planning with ChatGPT	2	1
Teacher Training for Students With Neurodiversity	9	1	ASET Conference Species survival and sustainability	14	1
Oz Lit Writing Traits Masterclass	1	22	Careers Adviser Annual Conference 2024	7	1
Early Career History Teachers Day	7	1	Foray into Phonics - (Oz Lit Teacher)	6	1
Artificial Intelligence in Education Conference	9	1	Preparing for the New 7-10 Science Syllabus	6	1
Digital resources in SCIS	45	2	Data Science in the New 7-10 Syllabus	3	1
Technology in Music Education	19	1	Deep Learning - Leading School Transformation 2 Days	15	5
CAA's New Career Advisers Days	14	1	IEU Reps Training	6	1
Business Report Writing in HSC Business Studies	6	1	2024 CAA Annual Conference (Careers)	7.5	1
Preparing for the New 7-10 Science Syllabus	6	1	Peer Support Aust. SRC Workshop	2	1
English: Planning for the New 7-10 Syllabus	6	2	Planning and Programming English 3-6 Syllabus	4	1
HSC English: The Craft of Writing (Std and Adv)	7	1	NESA Teaching Grammar 7-10 English Syllabus	6	3
Stg 5 Chemistry Experiments for the New 7-10 Syllabus	6	1			

Whole School K-12	Hours	No of Staff
First Aid Training	12.5	67
Analysing and interpreting HSC data	7	67
Artificial Intelligence	1	67
Programming: Reviewing, critiquing, refining and creating	7	67





Workforce Profile

Professional Learning, Engagement & Staff Development

Teacher Attendance, Retention, and Workforce Stability

St Mark's College sustained strong staffing stability in 2024, with an **average daily teacher attendance rate of 90%**, ensuring consistent classroom presence and instructional continuity.

The **staff retention rate of 91%** reflected high levels of job satisfaction, professional engagement, and alignment with the College's mission and values. This continuity positively influenced the College's academic culture, wellbeing framework, and student outcomes.

Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff Composition

To meet the learning and operational needs of its K–12 community, the College employed a dedicated and highly qualified team of educators and support personnel. As of 2024, the workforce profile was as follows:

- **Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teaching Staff:** 60.4
- **Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Non-Teaching Staff:** 25.24
- **Full-Time Teachers Employed:** 49

Teacher Accreditation Status

The breakdown of teacher accreditation categories at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College in 2024 is as follows:

Accreditation Category	Number of Teachers
Proficient	46
Provisional	2
Conditional	1

These staffing levels reflect the College's commitment to maintaining optimal staff-to-student ratios, fostering collaborative teaching environments, and ensuring that students are supported both academically and pastorally. Looking ahead, St Mark's remains committed to investing in staff development, wellbeing, and leadership capability—prioritising sustainable workforce growth and retention into 2025 and beyond.

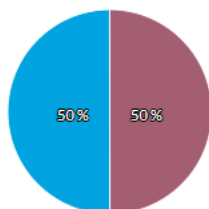
Curriculum Overview

Professional Learning & Staff Development

Enrolment Information

Total enrolments: 855

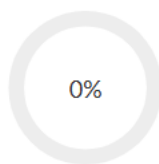
- Boys 425
- Girls 430



Full-time equivalent enrolments: 855.0

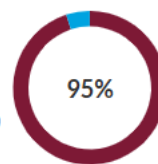
Indigenous students

[No Title]



Language background other than English

- Yes (95%)
- No (5%)
- Not stated (0%)

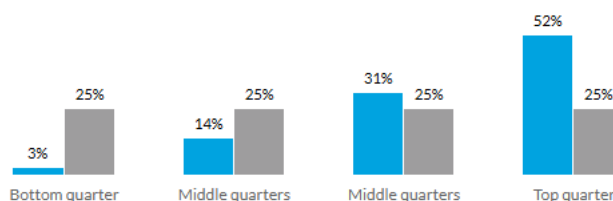


Student Background

Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)

School ICSEA value	1131
Average ICSEA value	1000
School ICSEA percentile	91

Distribution of Socio-Educational Advantage (SEA)



■ School distribution ■ Australian distribution

Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100

The distribution of Socio-Educational Advantage (SEA) indicates a strong academic support base

These figures reflect the College's demographic context, highlighting a student population with strong community and educational support, alongside a significant number of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Student Attendance

St Mark's maintained an average student attendance rate of 91% in 2024. This strong attendance reflects the school's emphasis on student engagement, wellbeing, and the importance of regular classroom participation.

Attendance is monitored daily through roll marking, with follow-ups conducted for unexplained absences. Strategies include parent contact, formal note collection, and escalation to appropriate authorities where necessary.

The College remains committed to supporting attendance through proactive pastoral care, early intervention, and fostering a positive school culture that encourages students to be present, punctual, and engaged.

HSC Minimum Standards Testing

St Mark's College continued to deliver the **HSC Minimum Standards tests** with strong success. In 2024, over **90% of students met the required standards** in literacy and numeracy on their **first attempt**. This result underscores our commitment to early intervention, high-quality instruction, and equipping students with the foundational skills needed for Stage 6 and beyond.



NAPLAN

Performance Summary

The 2024 NAPLAN results highlight areas of both strength and targeted improvement across the school. Our students showed consistent growth in literacy and numeracy from Year 3 to Year 9, with strong progression evident across all domains.

In **Year 3**, student performance was close to students from similar backgrounds across all areas, providing a solid foundation for future learning.

In **Year 5**, results indicated areas requiring additional support. While Spelling, Writing, Grammar, and Numeracy were slightly below similar-school averages, Reading was identified as significantly below, signalling an opportunity for focused intervention. These results are being used to inform targeted literacy support programs.

By **Year 7**, students demonstrated substantial improvement, with performance in all domains either close to or above national benchmarks. Notably, Reading and Numeracy both improved significantly, reflecting the effectiveness of intervention strategies implemented in earlier years.

In **Year 9**, students achieved strong results across all domains, performing well above national expectations. Grammar (623), Numeracy (621), and Writing (608) were standout areas, showcasing the strength of our teaching and learning practices in the upper years.

To support continued growth, the school will maintain its use of **the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)** alongside **literacy rotations** focused on reading comprehension, fluency, and writing. In Numeracy, we continue to emphasise **hands-on, practical learning experiences** that engage students and deepen conceptual understanding.

These results underscore our commitment to continuous improvement, data-informed teaching, and providing all students with the opportunity to succeed.

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar	Numeracy
Year 3	426	447	437	453	421
Year 5	500	492	498	518	500
Year 7	556	574	572	579	571
Year 9	600	608	595	623	621



HSC

Performance Summary

In 2024, students at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College sat for the Higher School Certificate (HSC) across a diverse range of subjects, reflecting the breadth of our academic offerings and student interests. The following table outlines the subjects in which students were examined, with the number of candidates indicated in brackets:

Biology	(15)
Business Studies	(19)
Chemistry	(26)
Design & Technology	(8)
Economics	(6)
English Advanced	(34)
English Ext 1	(1)
English Ext 2	(1)
English Standard	(22)
Food Technology	(7)
Legal Studies	(11)
Maths Advanced	(15)
Maths Ext 1	(26)
Maths Ext 2	(20)
Maths Standard 2	(23)
Modern History	(5)
Orthodox Studies	(56)
PDH&PE	(13)
Physics	(21)
Serbian Continuers	(3)
Studies of Religion I	(8)
Studies of Religion II	(16)

HSC Band Summary

71 Students

300 HSC Band Scores

Overall Band Attainment Charts:

2 Unit Subjects Band Attainment - 252 Scores



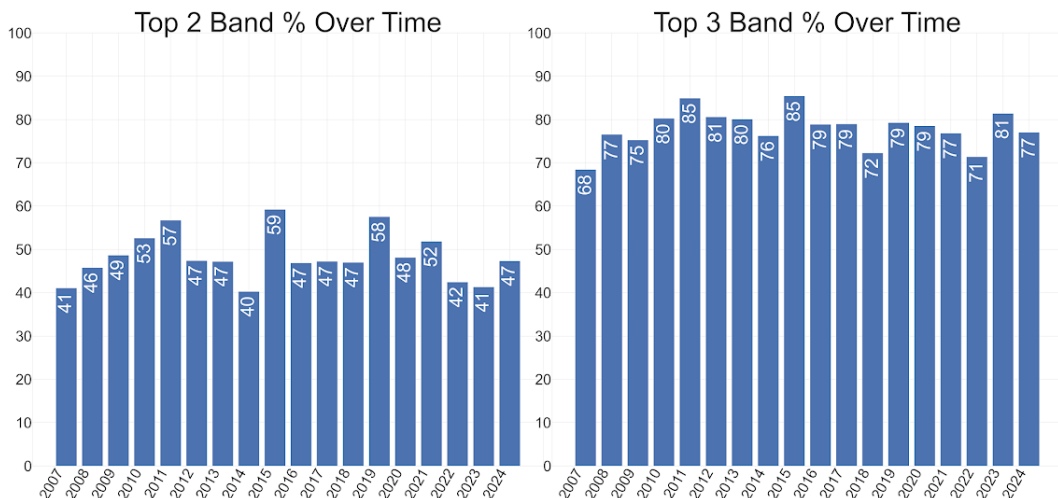
Extension Subjects Band Attainment - 48 Scores



Top Two Bands:



Top Three Bands:

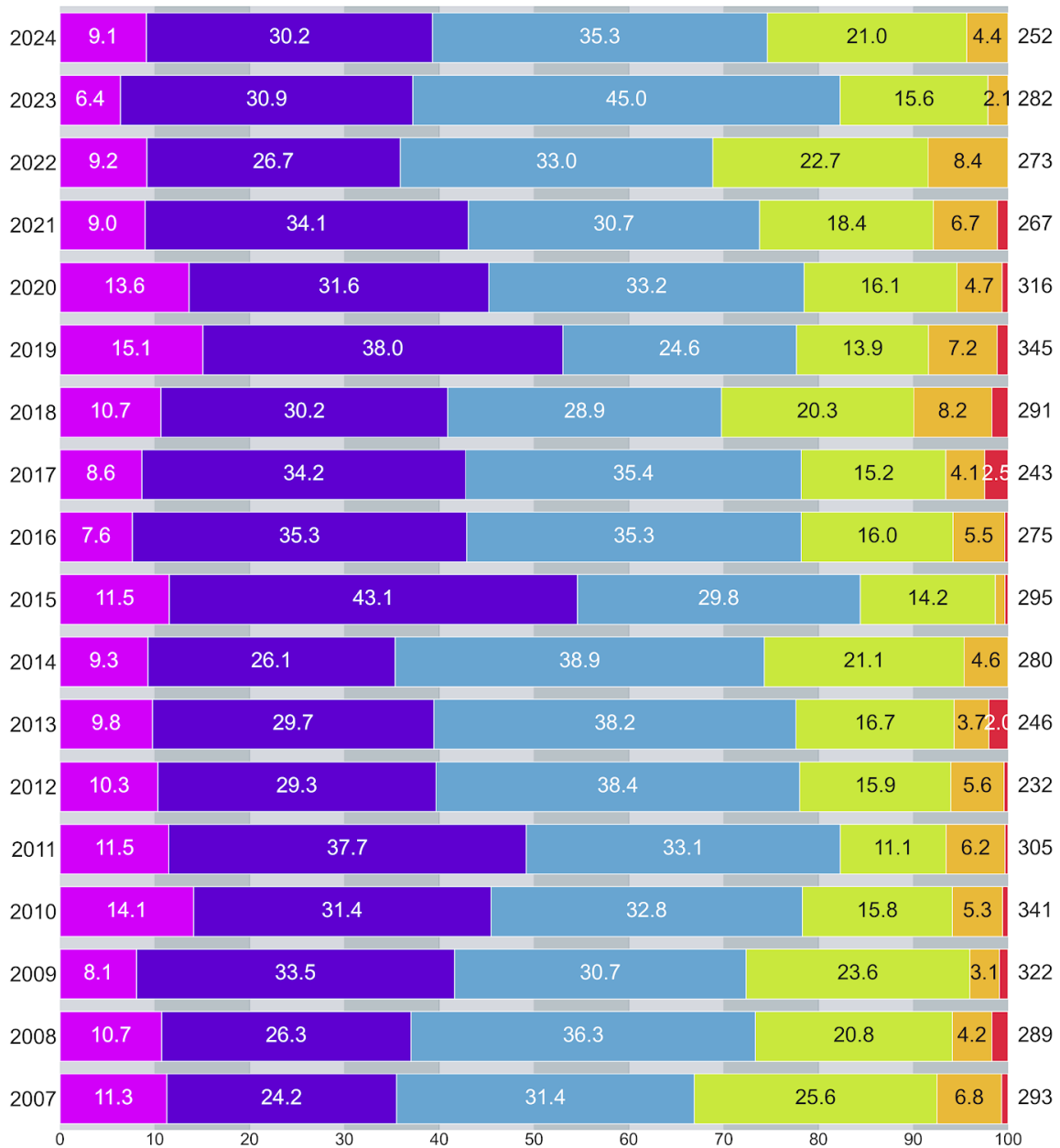


HSC Band Ranges

Subject	B6	B5	B4	B3	B2	B1
All Subjects	6.5% (23)	21.3% (76)	32.3% (115)	19.7% (70)	4.2% (15)	0.3% (1)
Biology (15)		53.3% (8)	26.7% (4)	13.3% (2)	6.7% (1)	
Business Studies (19)		26.3% (5)	42.1% (8)	21.1% (4)	10.5% (2)	
Chemistry (26)	19.2% (5)	26.9% (7)	23.1% (6)	26.9% (7)	3.8% (1)	
Design & Technology (8)		12.5% (1)	50.0% (4)	37.5% (3)		
Economics (6)	16.7% (1)		50.0% (3)	33.3% (2)		
English Advanced (34)	20.6% (7)	50.0% (17)	29.4% (10)			
English Ext 1 (1)			100.0% (1)			
English Ext 2 (1)			100.0% (1)			
English Standard (22)		18.2% (4)	68.2% (15)	13.6% (3)		
Food Technology (7)			57.1% (4)	42.9% (3)		
Legal Studies (11)	9.1% (1)	45.5% (5)	36.4% (4)	9.1% (1)		
Maths Advanced (15)	13.3% (2)	20.0% (3)	33.3% (5)	33.3% (5)		
Maths Ext 1 (26)			53.8% (14)	30.8% (8)	11.5% (3)	3.8% (1)
Maths Ext 2 (20)			50.0% (10)	45.0% (9)	5.0% (1)	
Maths Standard 2 (23)	13.0% (3)	21.7% (5)	30.4% (7)	26.1% (6)	8.7% (2)	
Modern History (5)	20.0% (1)	20.0% (1)	20.0% (1)	40.0% (2)		
Orthodox Studies (56)						
PDH&PE (13)		23.1% (3)	38.5% (5)	38.5% (5)		
Physics (21)	9.5% (2)	42.9% (9)	19.0% (4)	14.3% (3)	14.3% (3)	
Serbian Continuers (3)		33.3% (1)	33.3% (1)	33.3% (1)		
Studies of Religion I (8)	12.5% (1)	25.0% (2)	12.5% (1)	50.0% (4)		
Studies of Religion II (16)		31.2% (5)	43.8% (7)	12.5% (2)	12.5% (2)	

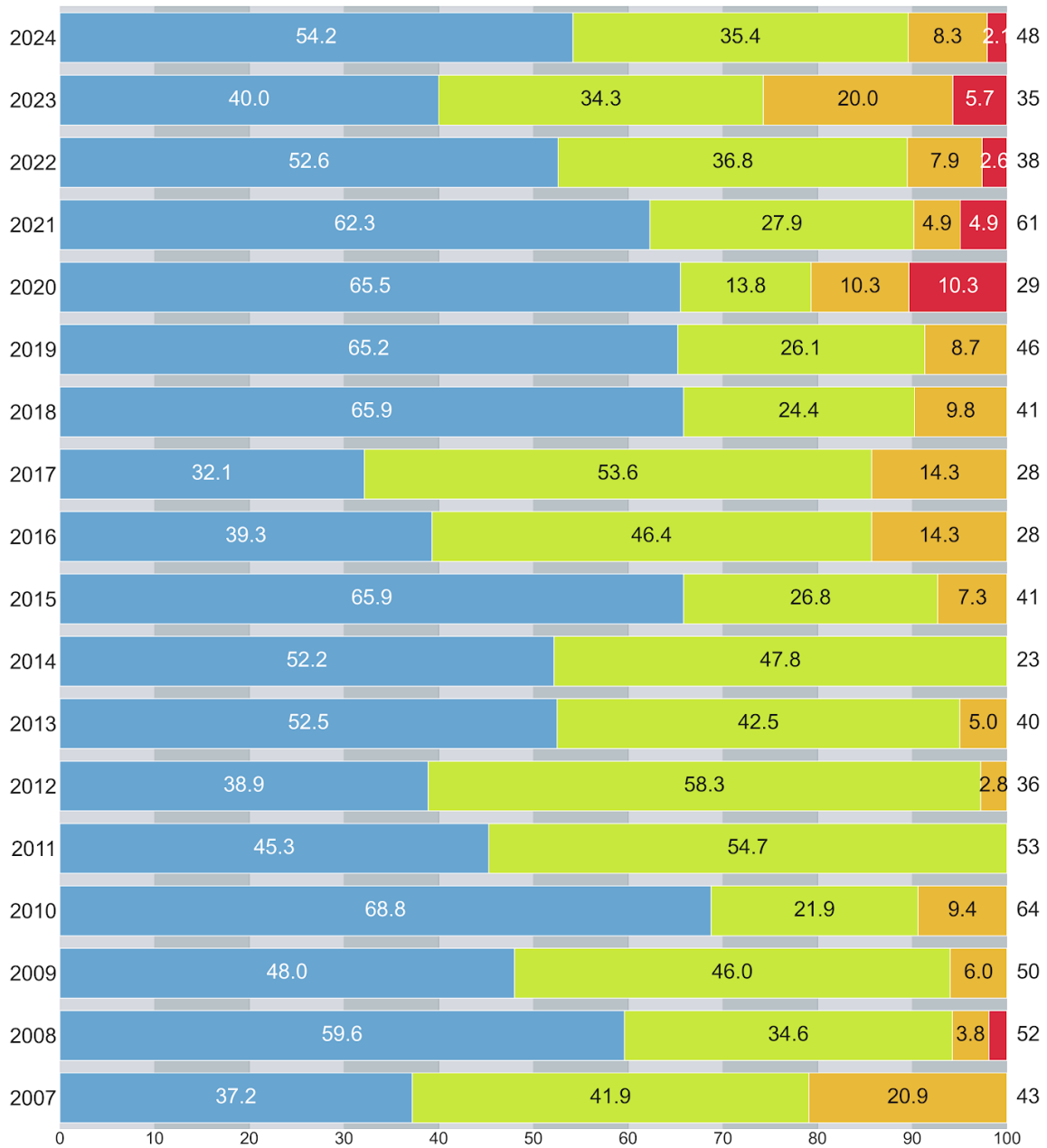


Band Percentages - 2 Unit Subjects





Band Percentages - Extension Subjects



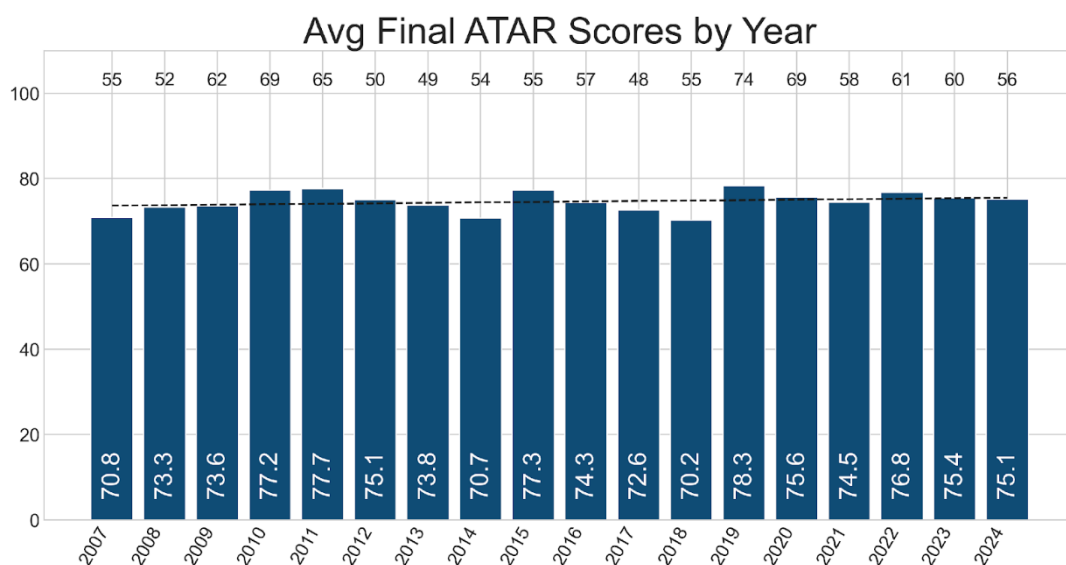
HSC

ATAR Summary



The table below presents summary statistics for **all** Year 12 students at SMC who were eligible to receive an **ATAR** in **2024**.

	All	Boys	Girls
Count	56 (60)	35 (32)	21 (28)
Avg ATAR	75.08 (75.43)	72.2 (78.7)	79.87 (71.69)
Med. ATAR	75.72 (76.74)	73.59 (79.2)	81.88 (72.72)
St. Dev.	17.18 (14.34)	17.34 (15.38)	16.18 (12.26)
Min ATAR	36.72 (37.83)	36.72 (37.83)	41.66 (48.11)
Max ATAR	99.82 (98.85)	99.82 (98.85)	99.43 (90.1)



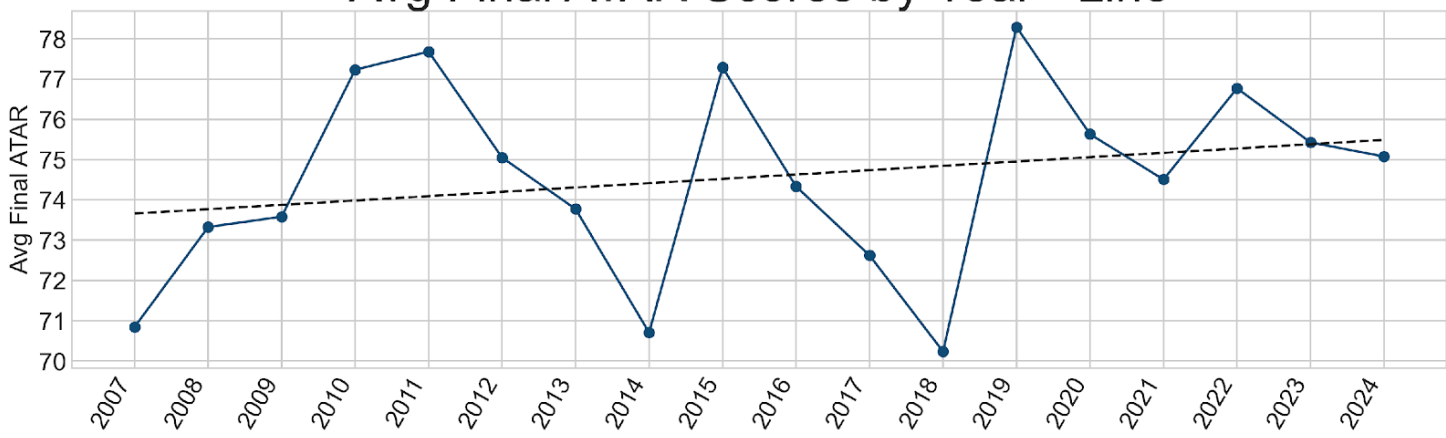
Over the past five years, the College has observed a modest downward trend in average ATAR outcomes, with an average annual decline of 0.02 ATAR points.

HSC

ATAR Summary

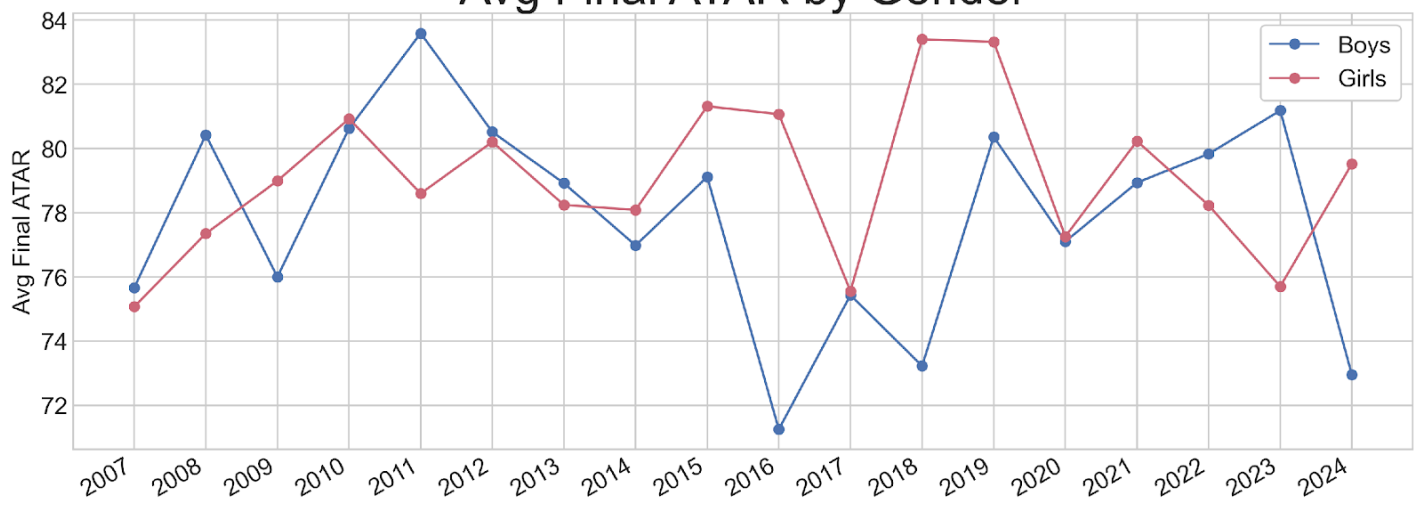
The line chart provides a detailed view of the trends in average final ATAR scores achieved by St Mark's students from 2007 to 2024, highlighting year-on-year fluctuations and long-term performance patterns.

Avg Final ATAR Scores by Year - Line



The chart below presents a focused analysis of gender-based ATAR performance trends over time. In 2024, the average final ATAR for girls was 79.52, compared to 72.95 for boys, reflecting a gender performance gap of 6.56 points.

Avg Final ATAR by Gender



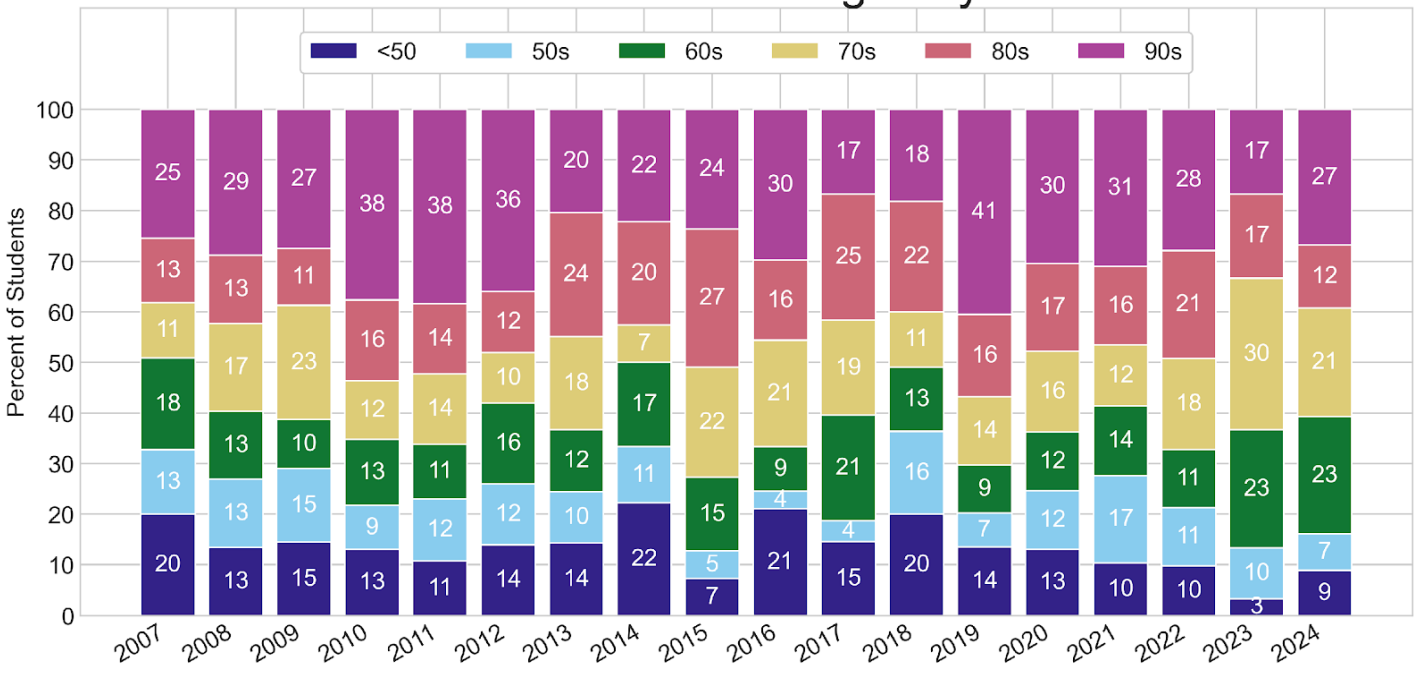


HSC

ATAR Summary

The chart below enables a comparative analysis of ATAR outcomes across past cohorts. Each colour band represents the proportion of students within a given year who achieved an ATAR within a specific 10-point increment, offering insights into shifts in overall performance distribution over time.

Final ATAR Percentages by Year



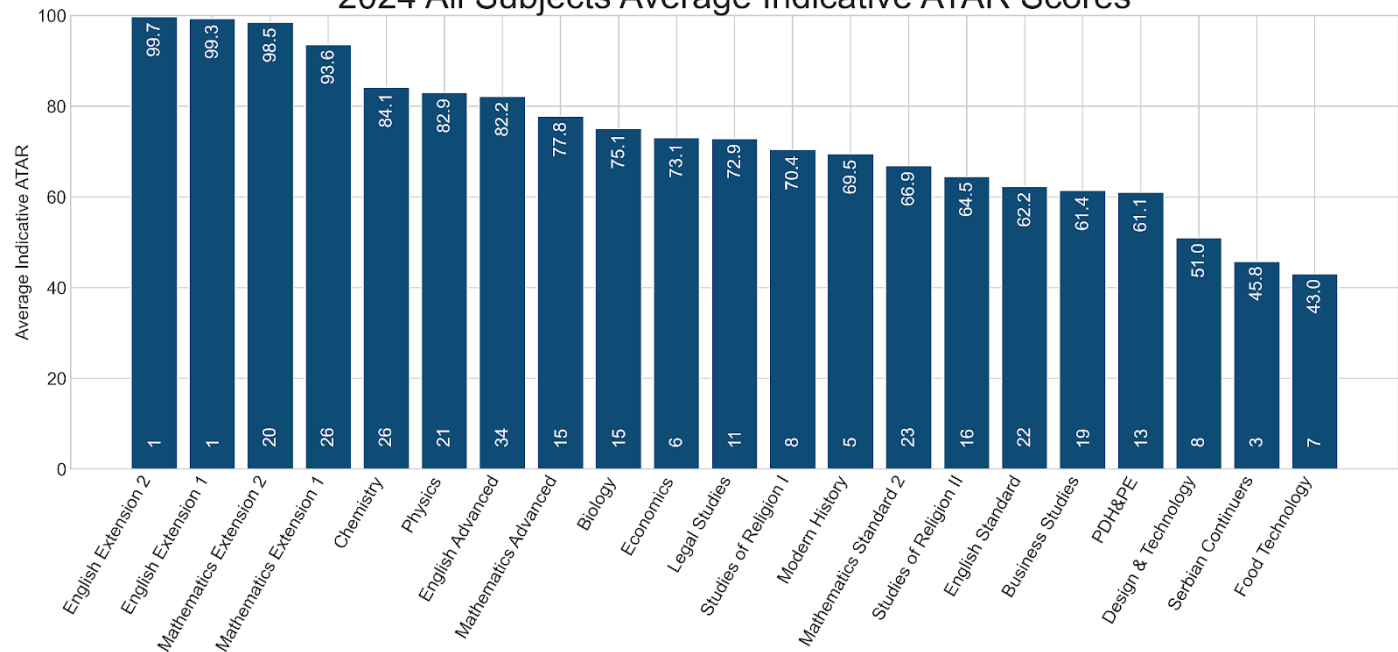
Indicative ATAR Ranges

Subject	90s	80s	70s	60s	50s	<50
All Subjects	28.7% (86)	16.3% (49)	13.0% (39)	17.0% (51)	15.0% (45)	10.0% (30)
Biology (15)	13.3% (2)	26.7% (4)	26.7% (4)	13.3% (2)	13.3% (2)	6.7% (1)
Business Studies (19)		15.8% (3)	10.5% (2)	26.3% (5)	26.3% (5)	21.1% (4)
Chemistry (26)	46.2% (12)	11.5% (3)	15.4% (4)	26.9% (7)		
Design & Technology (8)				12.5% (1)	37.5% (3)	50.0% (4)
Economics (6)	16.7% (1)		16.7% (1)	66.7% (4)		
English Advanced (34)	38.2% (13)	26.5% (9)	8.8% (3)	17.6% (6)	8.8% (3)	
English Ext 1 (1)	100.0% (1)					
English Ext 2 (1)	100.0% (1)					
English Standard (22)		9.1% (2)	27.3% (6)	13.6% (3)	36.4% (8)	13.6% (3)
Food Technology (7)					42.9% (3)	57.1% (4)
Legal Studies (11)	9.1% (1)	27.3% (3)	27.3% (3)	18.2% (2)	9.1% (1)	9.1% (1)
Maths Advanced (15)	13.3% (2)	33.3% (5)	20.0% (3)	33.3% (5)		
Maths Ext 1 (26)	80.8% (21)	11.5% (3)	3.8% (1)			3.8% (1)
Maths Ext 2 (20)	95.0% (19)	5.0% (1)				
Maths Standard 2 (23)	13.0% (3)	21.7% (5)	8.7% (2)	21.7% (5)	17.4% (4)	17.4% (4)
Modern History (5)	20.0% (1)		20.0% (1)	20.0% (1)	20.0% (1)	20.0% (1)
PDH&PE (13)		15.4% (2)	7.7% (1)	23.1% (3)	15.4% (2)	38.5% (5)
Physics (21)	33.3% (7)	33.3% (7)	14.3% (3)	14.3% (3)	4.8% (1)	
Serbian Continuers (3)			33.3% (1)			66.7% (2)
Studies of Religion I (8)	12.5% (1)	25.0% (2)		12.5% (1)	50.0% (4)	
Studies of Religion II (16)	6.2% (1)		25.0% (4)	18.8% (3)	50.0% (8)	

HSC

ATAR Summary

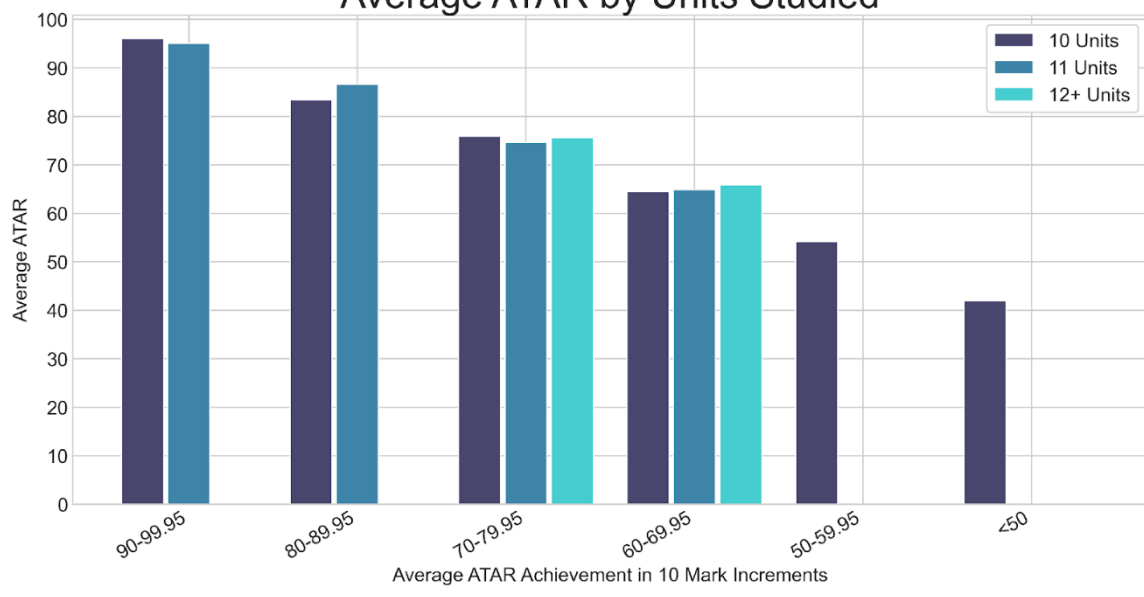
2024 All Subjects Average Indicative ATAR Scores



This report presents an analysis of the 2024 HSC results across 21 subjects undertaken by students at St Mark's. The highest-performing subject was **English Extension 2**, with an outstanding average indicative ATAR of **99.7**. In contrast, **Food Technology** recorded the lowest average indicative ATAR at **43.0**.

The **overall average indicative ATAR** across all subjects in 2024 was **75.06**, reflecting a slight improvement from **74.4** in 2023 and indicating a positive shift in subject-level performance.

Average ATAR by Units Studied



The chart above illustrates the average final ATAR outcomes of students, segmented by ATAR score ranges and the number of units studied. This breakdown provides insights into the relationship between study load and ATAR performance, based on student data from the 2020 cohort.



HSC

Summary of Results

In 2024, the Year 12 cohort at St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College comprised:

- **8 46 students** who studied **10 units**
- **students** who studied **11 units**
- **2 students** who studied **12 units or more**

Strategic Performance Targets

1. Close the Gender Performance Gap

In 2024, the average ATAR for girls was **79.52**, compared to **72.95** for boys—reflecting a **6.56 point difference**. Targeted interventions will be implemented to reduce this gap and support equitable achievement across genders.

2. Lift Performance in Underperforming Subjects

Subject-specific improvement plans will be developed and enacted to address areas of lower performance, with a focus on teaching strategies, assessment design, and student engagement.

3. Improve Overall ATAR Outcomes and Reverse the Downward Trend

The average ATAR increased modestly from **74.4 in 2023** to **75.06 in 2024**. While encouraging, this remains within a broader declining trend. The College is committed to increasing the proportion of students achieving ATARs in the higher performance bands (80–99) through targeted academic support and enrichment.

Post-School Destinations

In 2024, Year 12 graduates from St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College pursued a range of post-school pathways. Of those eligible to receive an ATAR, approximately:

- 65% enrolled in university programs
- 20% entered TAFE or vocational education and training (VET)
- 10% gained direct employment
- 5% were undecided or pursuing gap years

These outcomes reflect strong academic and career counselling support provided throughout the senior years.



Priority Areas

K-6

1. Reading as a Key Focus

Reading remained a key priority across K–6. In 2024, we continue to implement **Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)** across all years. The DRA is an individually administered reading assessment used to determine students' instructional levels and track their growth over time. This replaced the use of the PAT-R, enabling a more diagnostic, data-driven approach. Teachers utilised the data to set realistic, personalised learning goals and plan targeted instruction.

2. Word Study Program

The SPALDING program was replaced with a structured **Word Study** approach focusing on **phonemic awareness, phonological processing, decoding, and word analysis**. This aligns with our commitment to evidence-based practice and builds foundational literacy skills essential for reading comprehension and writing.

3. Learning Intentions and Success Criteria

These continue to be embedded in daily classroom practice to support student ownership of learning. Students clearly understand the purpose of lessons and the steps needed to achieve their goals.

4. Mathematics – Problem Solving and Reasoning

A strong emphasis was placed on **hands-on maths** activities, with real-world problem-solving embedded across lessons. Teachers used a variety of formative assessments to monitor growth in mathematical understanding and ensure individual needs were being met.

5. Data-Driven Practice

Our practice is guided by ongoing **data collection and analysis**. Tools like DRA, student work samples, and formative classroom assessments inform planning and intervention. A **Data Wall** is used to visually track student progress in reading, allowing for real-time adjustments in support and instructional focus.

6. Deep Learning and the 7C's

In 2024, we embedded **Deep Learning** practices with a focus on the **7C's: Christianity, Character, Citizenship, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, and Critical Thinking**. These principles are woven through our teaching and learning programs, encouraging students to become globally aware, innovative problem-solvers.

7. Project-Based Learning

Authentic **Project-Based Learning (PBL)** experiences have been implemented to foster critical thinking, teamwork, and inquiry. These projects encourage students to explore real-world issues and apply their learning in meaningful ways.



Priority Areas

K-6

Enhanced Support Initiatives

In 2024, St Mark's College enhanced its support for student wellbeing and learning:

- **Targeted Intervention:** Tailored support was delivered through small-group programs aligned with the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) framework.
- **Individualised Education Plans (IEPs)** were developed and regularly reviewed to ensure students with additional needs received appropriate adjustments and interventions.
- **Student Growth Monitoring:** Every student's academic and wellbeing progress is closely monitored to ensure measurable growth in all key learning areas.

Primary Curriculum and Pedagogy

At St Mark's College Junior School, our educational philosophy is grounded in nurturing the whole child. Our curriculum is designed to:

- Promote **security, confidence, and wellbeing**.
- Foster **independence, responsibility**, and a love of learning.
- Provide **hands-on, stimulating learning experiences**.
- Encourage **experimentation, discovery**, and **problem-solving**.
- Deliver **personalised and differentiated learning**, allowing each child to thrive.
- Emphasise **collaboration, communication**, and **respect**.
- Engage families through ongoing communication and partnership.

Key Learning Areas

- **Literacy** (Word Study and Guided Reading)
- **Numeracy** (Hands-on, real-life application)
- **Science and Technology**
- **Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)**
- **Health and Physical Education**
- **The Arts** – Music, Visual Arts, Drama
- **Coptic Orthodox Studies and Coptic Studies**
- **Drama and Debate**
- **STEM and Inquiry Projects**





Priority Areas

K-6

Extra-Curricular Enrichment

We strongly value extracurricular engagement. Opportunities in 2024 included:

- **Debating**
- **STEM Clubs**
- **Chess Club**
- **Choir and Performing Arts**
- **Representative Sports**
- **Outdoor Education and Camps**

Assessment & Monitoring

Assessment is continuous and forms the backbone of our planning and teaching. Teachers use multiple modes of assessment to inform their instruction:

- **Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)**
- **Observation and Anecdotal Notes**
- **Student Work Samples**
- **Spelling Tests and Quizzes**
- **Topic Tests** (with tiered levels of challenge)
- **Projects and Presentations**
- **Formative Assessments**
- **Diagnostic and Curriculum-Based Tests**
- **Parent/Teacher Interviews**

Assessment Procedures

- All assessments are created and reviewed by classroom teachers and approved by the **Literacy Coach** and **Stage coordinators**.
- Tests are tiered to cater for a broad range of abilities:
 - **Foundational** (60%)
 - **Intermediate/Challenging** (20%)
 - **Extension** (20%)

Assessment Recording and Monitoring Process

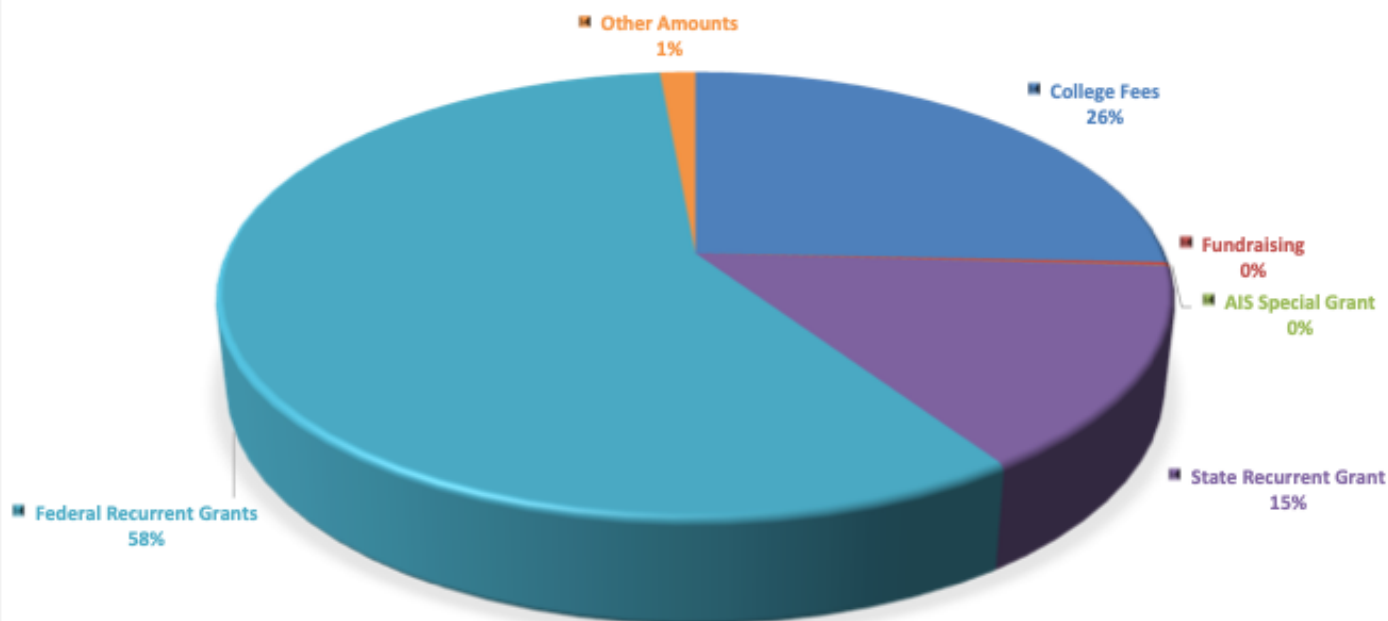
- Assessment results are first logged in teacher chronicles and then uploaded to **SEQTA** for ongoing tracking.
- Progress is reviewed regularly to ensure appropriate intervention, support, and enrichment is provided across all stages.



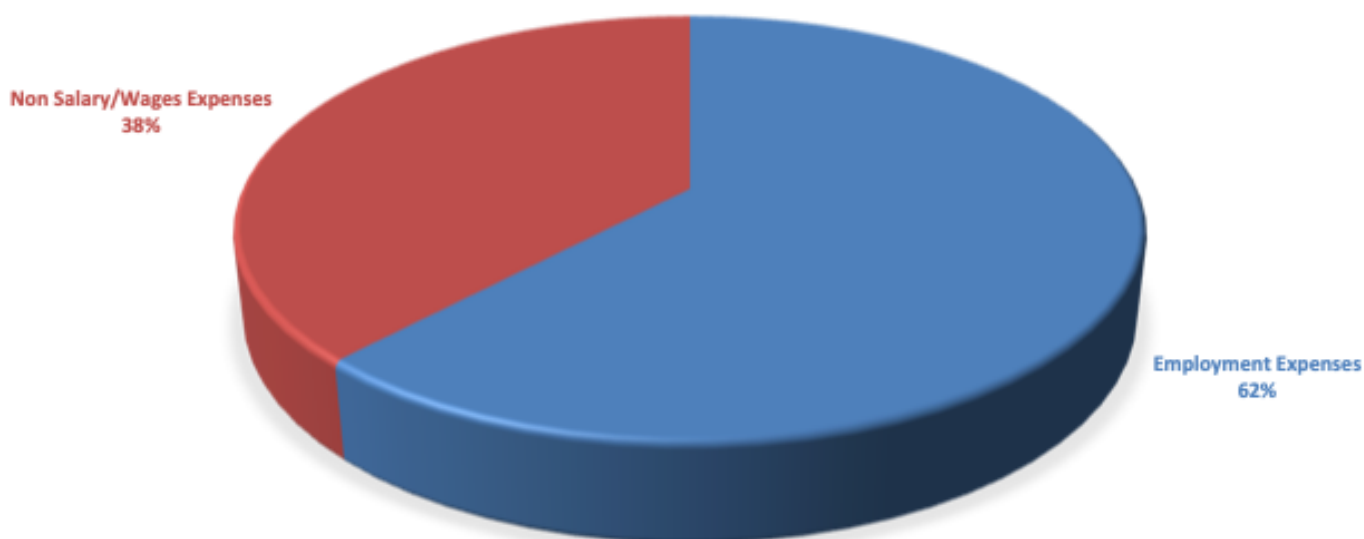
Financial Information

Summary

SAINT MARK'S COPTIC ORTHODOX COLLEGE - INCOME



SAINT MARK'S COPTIC ORTHODOX COLLEGE - EXPENSE





College Policies

St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College maintains a comprehensive suite of policies that ensure the safety, wellbeing, academic integrity, and respectful conduct of all members of the school community. These policies are regularly reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team and the NSW Coptic Education Board to ensure alignment with legislative requirements, sector best practices, and the values of the Coptic Orthodox tradition.

In 2024, the following key policies were linked to the College's operational, pastoral, and educational framework, and were available to staff, students, and parents as part of our ongoing commitment to transparency and community engagement:

Key College Policies (Click on each link to view)

Child Protection	Student Welfare
Privacy	Student Discipline
Anaphylaxis	Student Code of Conduct
Uniform & Grooming	Student Attendance
Acceleration Policy	Use of Technology
Complaints Handling	BYOD

Complaints and Grievances

St Mark's College has established procedures for handling complaints and grievances from students, staff, and parents. These are managed in accordance with the College's published Complaints Handling Policy. In 2024, no formal complaints were received. The College remains committed to resolving issues respectfully, confidentially, and in a timely manner.

Policy Access Statement

These policies are implemented through staff training, student orientation, handbooks, and digital communication platforms. Compliance is monitored by relevant leaders within the College, with oversight provided by the Head of College and College Board.

All College policies referenced in this report—including Child Protection, Student Welfare, Discipline, and Complaints Handling—are available upon request. Parents may access current policy documents through the Head of College Office or by visiting the College website at www.stmarks.nsw.edu.au.



Framework

Educational Reporting and Accountability

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

Throughout 2024, feedback from students, parents, and staff was gathered through surveys, informal discussions, and event participation. The results indicated high levels of satisfaction in the areas of student wellbeing, classroom learning, and pastoral care. Areas for improvement included enhanced communication regarding assessment timelines and more student-led leadership opportunities.

About this Report

This Annual Report provides a comprehensive overview of St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College's operations, achievements, and compliance for the 2024 academic year. It draws on a range of data sources including standardised national assessments, internal performance measures, and qualitative insights gathered through school-based evaluations and stakeholder engagement.

Contributors

The following members of the College Executive Leadership Team have contributed to the preparation of this report:

- **Mr Anthony Deans** – Head of College
- **Fr George Nakhil** – College Chaplain (Spiritual & Pastoral Leadership)
- **Mrs Deborah Grohala** – Deputy Head of College
- **Mrs Silvia Nada** – Head of Primary School

Their combined leadership, insights, and oversight have ensured the accuracy, integrity, and strategic alignment of the information presented.

Governance and Ownership

St Mark's Coptic Orthodox College operates under the ownership of the **Coptic Orthodox Church (NSW) Property Trust** and is governed by the **NSW Coptic Education Board**. The Board acts as the authorised body responsible for governance, compliance, strategic oversight, financial management, and capital works—exercised through delegation to the Head of College.

All Board members have undertaken formal induction through the Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW), and have signed the **Responsible Persons Declaration**, confirming their understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and confidentiality obligations.

The Head of College provides regular monthly reports, and additional updates as required, to ensure the Board is fully informed of all aspects of school operations, including performance, compliance, pastoral matters, and alignment with the school's Coptic Orthodox ethos.

Endorsement and Publication

This report has been reviewed and endorsed by the **NSW Coptic Education Board** and is publicly available via the College website and has been submitted to the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) in compliance with reporting requirements

Date of Publication: 30 June 2024

