



## **FREE REFORMED SCHOOL ASSOC. (TAS.) INC.**

administering the  
**JOHN CALVIN SCHOOL**

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ABN No 32 415 227 180

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# **Principal's Report to the FRSA (Tas) Inc at the Annual General Meeting on 25 March 2024**

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Prepared by Daniel Coote

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Dear members of our Association,

In the year of our Lord, 2023, John Calvin School focussed on the theme 'I am God's child. Together we are God's family'. This theme gets to the heart of our identity in Christ, individually and collectively. It encapsulates how we strive to live and what we strive to teach the students. They are not their own but belong to our faithful Saviour Jesus Christ (LD 1 – paraphrased). This instils a strong sense of identity and purpose, two things that the world searches for and seeks to construct from their own thinking. Christians are given our identity, and we have a clear and beautiful purpose. We are His, and we are to bring Him glory. The work of the school is to nurture God's children to understand who they are in Christ and to help them explore God's gifts so they can serve Him worshipfully and practically.

That is our vision: To be strongly connected and deeply committed.

*We aspire to be a strongly connected community of learners, deeply committed to our faith and to continual growth, nurturing individuals to be their best in the service of God and to His glory.*

I humbly submit this annual report as a synopsis of the 2023 school year that was possible because of the strongly connected and deeply committed association that ensures the ongoing operation of the school. Thank you for all your engagement and support throughout 2023.

## 1) Student information

Students at beginning of 2023	131
Students at beginning of 2024	133
Students at end of 2023	131
Student mobility in 2023	0% (equal movements in and out)
Tuition enrolments in 2023	34 (26% of student population)
Tuition enrolments 2024	31 (23% of student population)
Male/Female makeup in 2023	72 male (55%) / 59 female (45%)
Male/Female makeup 2024	68 male (51%) / 65 female (49%)
School-wide attendance *	90%
Students with regular attendance >90%	60%
Attendance by year level	
Kindergarten	84%
Prep	84%
Year 1–2	91%
Year 3–4	91%
Year 5–6	92%
Year 7–8	93%
Year 9–10	91%
* School attendance is monitored daily, before 9:30am, and contact is made with parents/guardians if a child has not arrived at school and no explanation has been received. Periods of non-attendance are followed up by the school to ascertain the reason for non-attendance and to negotiate measures to facilitate school engagement and/or attendance.	
Largest single class size	18
Smallest single class size	5
Average single class size	10.9
Largest combined class size	23
Smallest combined class size	15
Average combined class size	19.25
Year 10 Graduates	
Leah Bijlsma, Micah Burley (House Captain), Saffron Buist, Spencer Hart (Dux of the school, House Captain), Ethan Torlach.	
Post School Destinations	
Launceston Christian School	3 (60%)

Launceston College	1 (20%)
Newstead College	1 (20%)
Apprenticeships	0 (0%)
Year 6 Graduates	
Imogen Buist, Saxon Connors, Flynn Groenewold, Georgia Hidding, Eleanor, Huizinga, Charlie Kroeze, Nevaeh Lyons, Jessica McKenna, Taj Swarts, Jyram VanWinden.	

a) Student learning

i) Curriculum

In Kindergarten we provided play-based learning experiences in accordance with the 'Belonging, Being & Becoming Early Years Learning Framework' (EYLF). The National Quality Standards for early years education and care also guide the review and improvement agenda in the Kindergarten.

[EYLF-2022-V2.0.pdf \(acecqa.gov.au\)](#)

[National Quality Standard | ACECQA](#)

In Foundation (Prep) to Year 10 we continue to implement the Australian Curriculum (AC), which stipulates exploration of the following learning areas:

- English,
- Mathematics,
- Science,
- Humanities and Social Sciences,
- The Arts (Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts),
- Technologies (Design and Technology, Digital Technology),
- Health and Physical Education,
- Languages (predominately French)

[Australian Curriculum version 9](#)

John Calvin School also provides instruction in the following:

- Bible Knowledge
- Church History
- Bible text and Psalter familiarisation/memorisation

- Our Year 9/10 learning program also offers a suite of optional subjects aligned with the Australian Curriculum, senior secondary, or vocational pathways, including:
  - Art, Commerce, Drama, Digital Technology, Food Studies, Introduction to automotives, Introduction to metal work, Introduction to construction, Introduction to psychology, Photography, Science Extended, STEM, Textiles, and Woodwork.

All learning areas at John Calvin School are taught through a Reformed Christian worldview. Parents are encouraged to view the Christian worldview statements under ‘curriculum’ on the school website as an indication of the underpinning of teaching and learning with scripture.

[John Calvin School | Curriculum \(jcs.tas.edu.au\)](https://jcs.tas.edu.au).

ii) Assessment and reporting

Assessment practices and methodologies are regularly reviewed by staff to ensure we implement contemporary best-practice, whilst also ensuring parents have access to understandable information about their children on a regular basis. The school continues to improve in its data collection and observations that inform decisions about student learning, and to assist students to pursue continual growth.

Full reports on student learning are sent home at the end of term 2 and 4, with other interim reports issued in term 1 and 3. Reports assess against the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards, translated to easily understandable language for students and parents. Parent-teacher interaction is critical to ensuring learning is optimised, so we strongly urge parents to make use of formal meeting times as well as informal communication with the teachers. A little, often, is far better than a lot infrequently.

iii) Standardised Testing program

Formal testing against recognised standards helps the school identify teaching and learning strengths and challenges. This data informs the

differentiated teaching and learning programs and helps set improvement targets at the individual student, class and whole-school level.

Kindergarten uses the Kinder Development Check at the beginning and end of the year, a language screener and Letters and Sounds progress check in Term 4.

Prep use the BASE assessment at the beginning and end of the year to check student achievement and progress in literacy, numeracy and personal and social development.

Year 1–10 students engage in a standardised testing regime early in Term 4 each year, including testing on numeracy, reading, grammar and punctuation, spelling and vocabulary.

Data from John Calvin School students is compared to nationally acquired data to provide statistically robust comparisons with other students. The majority of our standardised testing is conducted online, yielding immediate data to work with. Data is analysed by teachers at the beginning of each new school year, to help them target their teaching and learning to their new class cohort.

iv) National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

- (1) NAPLAN is conducted annually in Year 3, 5, 7 & 9. John Calvin School performs well compared to National minimum standards, Australian averages and other similar schools.
- (2) John Calvin School performance in NAPLAN can be viewed at <https://www.myschool.edu.au/>
- (3) A summary of results from the past 2 years are provided below. A change to the reporting was made in 2023, with students identified as 'needing additional support' (NAS) rather than students 'at or above the national minimum standard' (AANMS).

### Summary of 2023 data

	Reading	% NAS	Writing	% NAS	Spelling	% NAS	Grammar & Punctuation	% NAS	Numeracy	% NAS
JCS Year 3	491	0	454	0	461	0	449	9.1	475	0
Similar school	459	4.4	439	2	434	4	443	7.1	445	3
All students	405	9.1	416	6.1	404	11.1	411	13.3	407	10
JCS Year 5	549	0	501	0	549	0	541	0	515	0
Similar school	529	4.5	492	7	522	7.5	524	6.8	504	5.3
All students	496	7	483	9.6	489	8.7	497	10.1	488	9.3
JCS Year 7	533	12.5	508	25	525	12.5	550	0	538	0
Similar school	544	2.7	527	3.7	536	4.8	549	4.8	546	4.4
All students	536	9	534	10.9	539	7.5	539	10.6	538	9.3
JCS Year 9	598	0	603	0	599	0	607	7.1	602	7.1
Similar school	593	4.1	594	4.3	587	4.3	586	5.7	590	3.3
All students	564	10.6	567	12.1	568	7.9	557	12.9	568	10.1

% NAS; Percentage of students at a standard that indicates they need additional support according to the minimum Australian standard.

### Summary of 2022 data

	Reading	% AANMS	Writing	% AANMS	Spelling	% AANMS	Grammar & Punctuation	% AANMS	Numeracy	% AANMS
JCS Year 3	475	100	457	100	450	100	446	100	417	100
Similar school	463	97.4	436	97.9	425	95.9	446	96.5	415	97.8
All students	438	95.5	422	96.2	418	91.9	433	94.1	400	95
JCS Year 5	556	100	510	100	532	100	521	100	534	100
Similar school	528	97.2	493	95	508	95.8	506	97.2	497	97.8
All students	510	95	484	92.6	505	94.1	499	94.9	488	95.1
JCS Year 7	557	100	526	100	545	85.7	581	100	586	100
Similar school	548	95.1	530	93.4	539	92.9	531	92.3	547	94.9
All students	543	94.2	530	90.6	547	92.9	533	92	546	92.0
JCS Year 9	596	100	597	83.3	627	100	613	100	615	100
Similar school	598	95.4	579	91.6	582	95.2	587	92.3	590	98
All students	578	89.6	560	84.1	577	91.8	573	86.5	584	95

% AANMS; Percentage of students at or above national minimum standard

v) Teaching and Learning enrichment

In addition to the class-based teaching and learning programs the school seeks to enrich the student experience through a variety of additional initiatives or programs. For example:

(1) Student Representative Council (SRC)

SRC members are elected by their peers and must provide a written submission regarding their plans for the SRC and their capacity to make a positive contribution. Engagement with the SRC helps to develop leadership and committee skills, good communication and a servant heart. The SRC work with the input of their peers and in collaboration with staff representatives to positively impact the school culture and student experience. SRC members are also expected to represent the school at formal functions and events.

(2) Assembly program

Whole-school assemblies are conducted at the beginning and end of each term, as well as on special occasions. These are conducted by school leaders or individual classes and their respective teachers in turn, providing students with the opportunity to develop their public speaking skills. Secondary students engage in a Pastoral Care session each week, with content focussing on the current school theme, topics of interest and relevance to adolescents, and goal-setting and growth.

(3) Whole-school / special events

Each year a number of whole-school events are organised. These events provide opportunity for students to showcase their God-given talents and to work together to achieve common goals. Some events are held each year, while others are held every 2 years. In 2022 these activities included:

- Whole school art exhibition;
- Drama presentations
- Learning extravaganza
- Swimming, cross-country and athletics carnivals, including relevant interschool activities;

5) Inter-school activities

A number of inter-school activities throughout the year enabled our students to test their abilities against students from other schools. These activities included swimming, cross country, futsal and athletics with other Christian schools. A number of secondary students also engaged in STEM projects that competed against other schools nationwide.

6) Excursions/Incursions

Class teachers utilise excursions, usually on a termly basis, to enrich the learning program and build student connection and well-being. Secondary classes tend to integrate their excursions to explore multiple learning areas in the one excursion. A variety of organisations or guests visit the school each year to enrich the learning program or help to deliver specific content. Teachers take great care in vetting excursion or incursion programs for suitability, and proactively equip students for what they might encounter with a secular experience or visitor.

7) School camps

In Primary school, school camps are sometimes organised from Year 3 up, depending on the cohort and preferences of the teacher. Year 7–10 students engage in a school camp in term 1 to build connections and challenge themselves outside of their usual environment. Year 10s also join John Calvin Christian College from WA in July to tour Canberra and the Snowy Mountains snow fields. Year 10s also enjoy a finishing camp in the days prior to their graduation to add a cherry to the cake of their schooling experience, and to add finishing touches to their speeches for the graduation ceremony.

8) Community service

We take opportunity to engage in community activities and community service, including ANZAC Day, tree planting, Clean Up Australia Day and assistance with other local not-for profit organisations. In 2023 a number of visits to Uniting AgeWell at Newnham were conducted. These visits were a blessing to residents, students and staff alike. We receive regular positive feedback about the engagement of our students with



the community, and we are pleased that they represent Christ and the School appropriately.

- 9) In recent years our Year 9/10 students have been quite successful with their engagement in STEM, both in the state Science and Engineering Challenge and in state and national STEM competitions. These are competition-based engagements that push students to their capacity and teach them to work effectively in a team.

#### 10) Personal Learning Project and Work Placements

In 2023 the school continued to offer an open-ended approach to learning for Year 9–10 students, with the Personal Learning Project in Term 3 and 4. Students were guided to select a learning project of interest and to engage rigorously with this topic, ending in a learning extravaganza to share the outcomes. We frequently receive positive feedback about our students and workplace hosts are happy to have our students. A number of students demonstrated excellent endeavour and impressed their classmates and younger students.

#### 11) Pathway Planning

At the end of each year, Year 7–9 students are engaged in a week of activities related to pathway planning. This is more than career advice and research, it is focussed on helping students consider God's plan for their lives, God's gifts to them and what opportunities lie ahead for them to serve Him faithfully in all contexts.

Students use the myfuture, and TASC resources to plan their next few years of educational engagement, and listen to guest speakers who share their stories of being led by God on various paths.

We greatly appreciate the willing participation of community members who come in to share. In 2023 our guests were Rev Anson VanDelden, Steve Thompson, Herman Mills, and Leonie Duff.

#### 12) Home Reading program

Throughout the school, students are encouraged to engage in reading at home as well as at school on a regular basis. Reading to others, with others and listening to others read is an integral part of a child's

language development. In the primary school a regular reading routine is supported by a formal home reading program. The secondary students are also encouraged to read with engaging reading activities in their English class and other subjects. Reading is held in high esteem at the school, as it is a key skill for exploring and understanding God's Word.

### 13) Student support team

In 2023 the school continued with its consultative approach to student support, regularly engaging with students and parents about any additional supports needed to facilitate learning. We greatly appreciate the active engagement of parents in the learning process, and have valued the insights parents provide on how best to support their children. This partnership in providing reasonable adjustments helps the school to nurture each student as God's precious child. We are thankful that learning difficulties are not viewed with the same stigma as in the past, and that parents are taking their role as leaders and advocates in their children's learning seriously, being supportive of classroom and out-of-class supports.

The school is required to report annually on students receiving reasonable adjustments to the learning program or environment through the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for students with disability.

<https://www.nccd.edu.au/for-parents-guardians-and-carers>

Our student support is applied according to a three-tier approach. Tier 1 is additional support in the classroom. Tier 2 may be small group or individual support in the classroom or a nearby space. Tier 3 is specialist support on an individual or small group basis usually separate from the rest of the class.

Our Teacher Assistant team was again critical to helping teachers implement the learning program. In 2023 our team consisted of Mrs Drew, Mrs Mulder, Mrs VanWinden, and Mrs Brouwer. These Teacher

Assistants are invaluable in maintaining momentum with student support plans and initiatives.

Where external services are required, the school facilitates this in collaboration with parents and students, with strong partnerships with local agencies bearing fruit for many of our families.

## 2) Staff

### a) Staffing arrangements

Staffing arrangements are publicised in the Parent Handbook. I refer you to the 2024 edition on the school website for further details.  
(<http://www.jcs.tas.edu.au/documents/JCS%20Parent%20Handbook.pdf>).

### b) Staff composition

Teachers	13*
Teacher and Resource Assistants	9
Administration	3*
Made up of:	
Male	4
Female	20

\* One teacher also fulfils an admin role

### c) Teachers 2024:

Kinder	Hannah Coote (BEd)	
Prep	Joanne Hart (BEd)	
Year 1 / 2	Evelin Sutcliffe (BBA–marine resources, M.Teach–primary)	Cassandra Kroeze–1 day (BEd)
Year 3	Lisa Taleghani–3.5 days (BEd, MSocSc(Cnslg&Psychpy))	Hannah Coote–1.5 days(BEd)
Year 4	Danielle Thompson (BEd)	
Year 5–6	Nick Gunnink (BEd)	
Secondary	Samuel DeRuitter (BHM)	Daniel Coote (BHM–Hons)
	Laurence Huizinga (BEng, M. Teach)	Karen Wielstra (BBus, DipEd, BEd (Leadership), M.Ed (Leadership)).
	Dini Plug (BEd, BA–Cont Arts)	Irene Eilander (Bed)

- i) Qualifications – All teachers continue to be registered with the Tasmanian Teachers Registration Board (TRB) which means that they are at least 4–year trained or the equivalent. Teachers are supported to progress from provisional to full registration through a process of mentoring, observation and coaching.
- d) Administration
  - i) Monica Kooistra (Mon–Wed); Therese DeRuiter (Wed–Fri)
  - ii) Karen Wielstra, Business Administrator/Executive Secretary (5 days per week)
- e) Teacher Assistants/Resource Assistants
  - i) Chandell Dekker, Trudy Drew, Ingrid Mulder, Sonya VanWinden, Bernice Heys, Matthew Griffioen.
  - ii) Wilma Veldhuis and Chelsea Lyons (Resource Aide – Library)
- f) Staff absences – relief staff
  - i) Accumulated staff absences for 2023 totalled 104 days. We have a number of staff available to help as required. Part–time staff make themselves available for relief work, and all staff demonstrate flexibility and a willingness to help as they are able.
- g) Staff development framework
  - i) All staff are required to participate in the staff development process, engaging in reflection, goal setting and professional development. Our co–coaching structures facilitate this and help to build greater collaboration and professional conversations. Interaction with staff from other Christian schools is also a valued part of staff development, as well as engagement in various teacher association activities.
  - ii) In 2023, engagement in professional development included:
    - (1) Crafting transformational teaching and learning in–school program
    - (2) Whole–school approaches to curriculum, leading to a suite of curriculum scope and sequences and related unit plans with an explicit Christian worldview.
    - (3) Student support training with online modules from NCCD.

- (4) Teacher Registration Board – provisional to full registration process engagement
- (5) Australian Curriculum version 9 familiarisation sessions
- (6) Strategies to support students with ADHD and other learning difficulties.
- (7) Job-alike sessions with teachers from other local Christian schools.
- (8) Reportable conduct scheme, conducting an investigation training by UTAS and TAS Police.

#### h) Volunteers

Community involvement in the school enriches the education experience. Parent-helpers are a valuable resource that greatly assists the teachers to support the learning of each child. Involvement in the school is dependent on the volunteer having 'working with vulnerable people (children) registration', as well as other requirements from time-to-time, as the circumstances require. For information regarding WWVP registration see:

[http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/working\\_with\\_children](http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/working_with_children)

### 3) Review and Development

#### a) School Improvement:

In 2023 the school focussed its energy on the Teaching and Learning component of the new FRSA TAS strategic plan. In particular, we implemented greater opportunity for our staff to collaborate with teachers from other Christian schools, and we conducted a review of our student support systems. Both initiatives have led to ongoing improvements in practice.

#### b) Strategic Planning:

The Board has been diligent in attending to its strategic plan, with the school staff taking a lead on the Teaching and Learning component. A number of objectives were achieved or initiated in 2023, with 2024 set to consolidate these and expand its efforts to others.

#### c) OER-NGSRB:

The school is currently registered through until 2025, when a re-registration application will be submitted in March of that year.

The school has been busy updating policies and practice, especially as they relate to student safety and well-being.

d) Satisfaction surveys

No survey was conducted in 2023. Every second year the school conducts student and parent satisfaction surveys. These are scheduled to be completed towards the end of 2024. However, the People and Culture committee of the Board will be conducting a culture survey in 2024, to ensure we stay in touch with the thoughts and values of our association.

God's blessings have been evident throughout 2023, and we are grateful for the resources and opportunities He provides us to nurture His covenant children. We will continue to seek ways to improve, and look forward to taking positive steps in 2024.

Thank you for your ongoing prayerful and practical support.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Coote', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel Coote