



Nursery Prospectus





Dear Parent/ Guardian / Carer

Thank you for taking the time to consider Saint Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit for your child's education. I hope you find this prospectus helpful and it provides you with a brief flavour of what life is like in Saint Mary's Nursery.

As a catholic school, our core aim is to establish an environment where children are at the centre of everything we do. Saint Mary's has a committed and caring staff that work closely in partnership with its parents, parish and governors to deliver the highest quality of standards of pastoral, academic and interpersonal education. We seek to nurture the whole child by trying to provide a broad, balanced, challenging, stimulating learning centre within a safe, caring, well-resourced and happy learning environment.

Of course no booklet can convey the real atmosphere of a school and it is only through visiting or spending time here at Saint Mary's that you will discover the wonderful ethos present and the positive relationships between children and adults. All parents, and prospective parents, are most welcome to visit the school and we look forward to meeting you and welcoming your child into the community of Saint Mary's.

Best wishes

Mr P Gilchrist

St Mary's Nursery.

The nursery unit offers 26 free part-time places. St. Mary's is essentially a community school committed to providing the Northern Ireland Curriculum for all the children entrusted to its care, regardless of background.

Staff include Nursery Teacher Mrs Birt and our Nursery Assistant Mrs Denvir.

At St Mary's Nursery we aim to provide an environment where your child will feel happy and secure. We will offer them lots of opportunities in order for them to begin their educational journey, where they will learn, grow and begin to develop their full potential!

We aim to:

- develop self-confidence, self-esteem and growing independence.
- increase their personal and social skills
- develop a sense of responsibility and consideration for others.
- encourage children to be inquisitive, explore and become actively involved in their learning, both indoors and outside.
- encourage children to express themselves creatively and imaginatively.
- extend their thinking and problem-solving skills.
- develop a love and excitement of books, songs, rhymes and music.
- have fun, while learning through play!

Our Curriculum

The curriculum is the sum of all the learning experiences present for each child, those planned by the teacher and those that emanate from our school ethos and environment. Our curriculum takes into account the uniqueness of each child and his/her individual needs. Within the theme of Learning and Development there are six areas covered in the Nursery Curriculum. All of these are connected to one another and equally important.

- Personal, Social and Emotional development
- Early Language Development
- Early Mathematical Experiences
- The World Around Us
- Physical Development & Movement
- The Arts

A typical morning in Nursery

9:00	Come in and self-register
9:00 – 10:20	Activities and teacher focused tasks
From 9:30	Rolling Snack Time
10:20 – 11:15	Outdoor activities
11:15 – 11:20	Tidy up time
11:20 – 11:30	Singing, circle time, music or story
11:30 – 11:40	Table top activities

School Uniform

It is important that children come to school neat and tidy. Our uniform reflects the individuality of Saint Mary's and offers a reasonably priced form of common dress.

BOYS School Sweatshirt (with the school crest)
 White T-shirt
 Black jogging bottoms/trousers

GIRLS School Sweatshirt (with the school crest)
 White T shirt
 Black jogging bottoms/leggings

Shoes should be dark trainers with velcro fasteners

The PSG supplies the school sweatshirt; the rest of the uniform can be purchased locally or in the larger stores.

Child Protection

Our staff are trained in child protection ensuring the welfare of all children in our care.

Special Educational Needs

The early identification of children with Special Educational needs is a priority at Saint Mary's. The Special Needs Co-ordinator liaises with class teachers to identify specific needs and draw up individual education plans for these children. The class teacher will cater for the identified needs of each child. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress during regular consultations. The school also works closely with outside agencies in order to meet the needs of all children.

Parents

Children's education is an on-going partnership between home and school. Parents are the children's first educators and teachers. Home and school share in the child's education. Parents are always welcome at Saint Mary's and the staff are committed to fostering excellent home/school links. Through the use of the Seesaw App, parents are invited to connect with an online learning journal for their child. This gives a great insight into the activities and events that occur during nursery sessions and can provide ways and means to support your child at home. To keep our parents well informed they are invited to the school in the first term for an induction meeting which gives a general outline of the work to be covered and class routines. Also in the first term individual parent interviews are held to discuss and review your child's progress. Parents who have any concerns or worries about their child can arrange further appointments with the class teacher or Principal.

Parents also have a responsibility to the school. We would like parents to;

- Ensure their child has the best punctuality and attendance possible;
- Ensure that their child is well equipped for school;
- Do their best to keep the child healthy and fit for school;
- Inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect performance or behaviour in school; and
- Promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general.

Parents Support Group

We have a very active parent support group who work throughout the year raising money to fund anything from outdoor play equipment to trips and excursions. It is an excellent way to know the school and become active in the school community. Please contact the school and get involved to make a difference in your child's education.

At a Focused Inspection the Education and Training Inspectorate found that the strengths of the school include:

- the inclusive ethos which is underpinned by the very good quality of pastoral care provision and the excellent working relationships at all levels;
- the courteous and well-motivated children who have a very good disposition towards their learning and work very well both independently and in groups;
- the commitment and strong sense of collegiality of the teaching and non-teaching staff who work very hard to meet the needs of all of the children;
- the quality of the teaching observed which was very good or outstanding in the majority of the lessons;
- the very good standards attained by the children in literacy and numeracy and the very good quality of the special educational needs provision; and
- the effective leadership provided by the Principal and his dedicated service to the school and the community.

An inspection of the Nursery Unit gave the provision an outstanding report.

We recently achieved the Eco-Schools Green Flag Award (2017), Silver Award. (2014), and the SSE Airtricity Award (2015).

Saint Mary's Primary School

53 Windmill Hill

Portaferry

BT22 1RH

Telephone 028427 28278

Email: pgilchrist570@c2kni.net

Principal: Mr P Gilchrist

St Mary's Primary School Nursery Unit
53 Windmill Hill
Portaferry
BT22 1RH

Maintained Nursery Unit
Admissions No: 26 (Part-time)
Session Times: 9:00am – 11:40am

Principal: Mr P Gilchrist
Chair of Board of Governors: Mr Peter Merron

Telephone: 028 4272 8278
Fax: 028 4272 9650

Respective Functions of the Board of Governors and the Principal in relation to admissions.

The Board of Governors draws up the admissions criteria and delegates the responsibility for applying these criteria to a Selection Committee consisting of the Principal and three Governors, subject to the final approval of the Board of Governors. If parent(s)/guardian(s) have any difficulty in completing the form they should consult the Principal.

Visiting St Mary's Nursery Unit

Prospective parents are welcome to visit St Mary's by contacting the Principal for an appointment.

In response to the Regulations issued by the Department of Education, the Board of Governors have drawn up the following Admissions Criteria.

Admissions Criteria

A timetable of pre-school admissions procedures setting out the dates by which an application is to be submitted is available at www.eani.org.uk/admissions under 'Pre-School Admissions'. During the admissions procedure when applying the criteria punctual applications will be considered before late applications are considered.

The application procedure opens on 10 January 2023 at 12noon (GMT) and an application submitted by the closing date of 27 January 2023 at 12noon (GMT) will be treated as a punctual application. An application received after 12noon (GMT) on 27 January 2023 will be treated as a late application.

As the pre-school admissions procedure is in two stages the timetable also specifies the relevant dates at Stage 2 which will determine if an application is to be considered as punctual or late.

Children who are not normally resident in Northern Ireland at the time of proposed admission will not be considered for places until all children who reside in Northern Ireland have been considered. The Board of Governors have determined that, in the event of more applicants than the places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set down, to select children for the available places.

- 1 Children from socially disadvantaged circumstances who were born between 2 July 2019 and 1 July 2020 who reside in the Parish of St Patrick's Ballyphilip.
- 2 Children from socially disadvantaged circumstances who were born between 2 July 2019 and 1 July 2020.
- 3 Children born between 2 July 2019 and 1 July 2020 whose parent(s)/ guardian(s) reside in the Parish of St Patrick's Ballyphilip.
- 4 Children born between 2 July 2019 and 1 July 2020 who have a brother or sister enrolled in St Mary's Nursery Unit or Year 1 – Year 7.
- 5 Children born between 2 July 2019 and 1 July 2020 whose parent/guardian is currently a permanent employee in the school or a member of the Board of Governors.
- 6 Children born between 2 July 2019 and 1 July 2020.
- 7 Children born between 2 July 2020 and 1 July 2021.

Note: Children from ‘socially disadvantaged circumstances’ means a child whose parent has an entitlement to (i) Income Support, or (ii) Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance, or (iii) Income related Employment and Support Allowance, or (iv) Universal Credit. When parents apply for places for their child on this basis they must provide Benefit Verification to confirm that they have an entitlement. The application procedure for Pre-School will outline how Benefit Verification can be submitted.

Sub-Criteria

In the event of over-subscription in any of the above criteria 1-6 children will be admitted in accordance with the following sub-criteria in the order stated:

- (a) Children who have/had a brother/sister enrolled in St Mary’s Primary School.
- (b) Chronological age starting with the eldest. In the event of a tie between 2 children having the same date of birth, preference will be given to the child that lives closest to the school.

In the event of over-subscription in criterion 7, sub-criterion (b) will apply.

It is important that parent(s)/guardian(s), when submitting the application form, give all the relevant supporting information and written evidence that may be needed, including the child’s birth certificate. If a place is offered on the basis of incorrect or misleading information then the Board of Governors may withdraw the offer. All criteria will apply as at the closing date on the application form.

Duty to Verify

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any application form.

If the requested evidence is not provided to the Board of Governors by the deadline given, this will result in the withdrawal of an offer of a place. Similarly, if information is supplied which appears to be false or misleading in any material way, the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

Waiting List Policy

The Waiting List Policy is available directly from the School.

