

**St. Bernard's**



**Primary School**

## **PROSPECTUS 2025-2026**

**'Be the best that you can be!'**



**Principal:** Mrs Jenni Maguire

**Chairman of the Board of Governors:** Mr Jon Paul Shields

**Principal:** Mrs Jenni Maguire  
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c/o St. Bernard's Primary School  
Wynchurch Walk  
Belfast  
BT6 0JS



## GENERAL INFORMATION

St. Bernard's P.S. is a Catholic, co-educational primary school. It is situated off the Upper Knockbrea Road, beside St. Bernadette's Church. It affords a fine panoramic view of the city. The spacious church car-park greatly facilitates the dropping off and collecting of pupils. Our current enrolment is 435 pupils.

The school aims to bring each child to their full potential; morally, socially, physically, emotionally and intellectually. We endeavour to nurture in each child the concepts, skills, knowledge and Christian/Gospel values, which will enable him/her to live in harmony with other people and the environment and yet confidently pursue a wide range of personal interests, challenges and responsibilities with success and adaptability. We welcome children from all faiths and none. As an inclusive school, St Bernard's welcomes children from all cultural backgrounds and endeavour to cater for the different learning styles of all children.

Staffing consists of the Principal and Vice-Principal plus 15 full-time teachers, 1 full-time learning support teacher SENCo, 19 learning assistants, 2 secretaries, 1 building supervisor, 5 cleaners and 5 playground supervisors and 3 catering assistants.



**Vision Phrase:**

*Be the best that you can be*

**Vision:**

We will strive to create an inclusive, secure and supportive environment where we seek to nurture each child to achieve his/her full potential by providing innovative practices, inspiration and challenge and opportunity for all. Learning is personalised according to need and diversity is valued.

**Mission Statement:**

**St. Bernard's Primary School is:**

- A caring place, inspired by the Spirit of Christ, in which everyone feels a sense of belonging - a Catholic Community living and working together for the benefit of all.
- A place where the children and staff learn to know, love and imitate the life of Christ through the expression of Gospel Values.
- A place where the culture of tolerance is created where people of diverse identities and beliefs are recognised, welcomed, respected and cherished.
- A school where the children, staff, parents and visitors feel happy, safe, motivated, supported and are keen to engage in all aspects of the life of the school.
- A school constantly striving to enrich pupils' lives morally, socially, spiritually, intellectually, physically and emotionally through the promotion of dignity, self-esteem and provide a sound foundation for their future.



## Ethos and Aims

We seek to provide an education that:

- (a) is caring, sympathetic and understanding, and appreciates the uniqueness of each individual pupil, teacher and parents;
- (b) appreciates childhood as a special experience of excitement and curiosity;
- (c) treats education as a partnership between teachers and parents.

We seek to provide an effective education service developed to the highest professional standards to maximise the benefit each pupil receives from his experience at school.

In conjunction with our ethos, our general school aim is to enable each child:

- (a) to fulfil his / her innate potential in an environment that is educationally rich and stimulating;
- (b) to pursue confidently a wide range of personal interests, challenges and responsibilities with success and adaptability;
- (c) to develop the Christian attitudes, concepts, skills and knowledge which will enable him / her to live in harmony with other people and the environment.

The staff, pupils, parents and governors are fully committed to the aims of the school and have a strong sense of loyalty to the school. Parents and staff work well together in partnership in the children's education. Parents are welcome in the school and are given clear information about their children's progress, the school's curriculum and the day to day organisation of the school. Parents' views are taken into account in the School Development Plan and parents are kept informed of the progress of the plan's implementation.

### Admission Numbers

In September 2025, 60 applicants were accepted into St. Bernard's, forming two Primary One Classes.



## Meet our Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective management of the school. It is composed of nominees of the Trustees, the Education Authority and the Department of Education, a parent elected by the parents and a teacher elected by the teachers. The members hold office for four years.

### **Members of the Board of Governors**

Mr Jon Paul Sheilds  
(Chairperson)

#### **Nominated by Trustees**

Rev. Brendan Hickland (Co-opted)  
Mr Michael McKavanagh  
Ms. Kiera Lee (Parent)  
Mrs. M Curran (Vice-Chair)

#### **Nominated by Education Authority, South Eastern Region**

Mr Neil McGivern  
Mr Jon Paul Sheilds (Chairperson)

#### **Nominated by DENI**

Miss Geraldine Smith

#### **Elected Parent**

Mrs Nicola Tinney

#### **Elected Teacher**

Mr Ciaran Pierce

#### **Secretary**

Mrs Jenni Maguire (Principal)

The Governors as a group work together in partnership with the Principal and staff to ensure the provision of good education for our children. They have particular responsibilities in relation to the curriculum, the financial management of the school, the appointment of staff, admissions to the school, discipline, building and maintenance, the parents' annual meeting and community links.

## Meet our Staff

<b>Principal:</b>	Mrs Jenni Maguire
<b>Vice-Principal:</b>	Mrs Catherine Maguire
<b>Teaching Staff:</b>	
<b>Primary One</b>	Miss Ciara O'Neill & Miss Elena Knowles
<b>Primary Two</b>	Mrs Katherine Weir & Mrs Marion McGuigan
<b>Primary Three</b>	Mrs Mary Trainer & Mrs Blathnat McCarry
<b>Primary Four</b>	Mrs Joanne Smyth & Mrs Bradley
<b>Primary Five</b>	Mr Daniel Coogan, Mr Stephen O'Connor & Miss Charlotte Harding
<b>Primary Six</b>	Mrs Catherine Magee & Mr Connor McGowan
<b>Primary Seven</b>	Mr Niall McGinn & Mr Ciaran Pierce
<b>SENCo</b>	Mrs Niamh Rye
<b>Office Staff</b>	Ms Ann McCarron & Miss Ciara Schiefer
<b>Lunch- Time Supervisors</b>	Miss Imelda Walker, Mrs Rosie Gallagher, Mrs Linda Scott,
<b>P1 &amp; P2 Learning Assistants</b>	Mrs Maura Murphy, Mrs Isabel White, Mrs Sinead Miller, Mrs Oriana Lopez Perez & Miss Sarah O'Rouke
<b>Learning Support Assistants:</b>	Miss Imelda Walker, Mrs Michaela Sadlier, Miss Christine Morton, Mrs Siobhan Kelly, Mrs Margaret Barry, Mrs Rose Gallagher, Mrs Oonagh Gunn, Mrs Leeanne Hadaway, Ms Martine McCartan, Miss Hollie McCluskey, Mrs Sabeena Rakeeb Ahmed, Mrs Aisling Whyte, Mrs Catherine Diamond, Mrs Ciara Collins, Mrs. Emma Cassidy, Mrs Ellie Rafferty
<b>Building Supervisor</b>	Mr Tom Keenan
<b>Cleaning Supervisor</b>	Ms Louisa Griezel
<b>Cleaning Staff</b>	Mrs Linda Scott and Miss Imelda Walker.
<b>Canteen Supervisor</b>	Barbara McCleary



In our last ETI Inspection Report from November 2016, the overall findings and overall effectiveness of the school were outlined as:

**Overall findings of the Inspection**

Overall effectiveness	High Level of capacity for sustained Improvement
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and Management	Very good

**Overall Effectiveness**

St. Bernard's Primary School has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

The above overall effectiveness reflects that our school has the highest effectiveness rating for continued and sustained improvement.

The full inspection report can be downloaded from the Department of Education website.

## Accommodation and Resources

Our school offers excellent facilities designed to create a vibrant and supportive learning environment. The accommodation includes 14 classrooms, a dedicated Primary One Unit with two classrooms, a bright play and learning resource area with easy access to outdoor spaces, a Music Room, Computer Suite, Learning Support Room, Nurture Area, Sensory Room, and a spacious Assembly/PE Hall. We also have offices for the Principal, Vice Principal, and Secretaries, as well as a conference room. Dining facilities are located in a separate building beside the school, and every classroom has its own storage and display areas.

Over the years, we've continued to enhance our school environment:

- In 2007, we opened our Primary One Unit, giving children easy access to outdoor play and a colourful resource area, helping to make the transition from Nursery to Primary smooth and enjoyable.
- In 2008, we celebrated St. Bernard's 50th Anniversary and opened our beautiful Anniversary Garden, named after our first Principal, Mr James Whyte.
- By 2009, every classroom was equipped with SMART Interactive Whiteboards, thanks to the incredible support of our Parent Teacher Association (PTA).
- We've upgraded our heating system, replaced the roof and windows, and refurbished our playground to include sports courts, a bicycle track, quiet seating areas, games zones, and even a drama stage.
- The school canteen was fully refurbished in 2013, supporting our Breakfast Club (8:00–8:45am) and Afterschool Club (Sleepy Hollow, 2:00–6:00pm).
- Our PE Hall was refurbished in 2017
- Our outdoor learning spaces for P1–P3 now feature a playhouse, sand area, and garden for planting.
- We're proud of our ECO-Committee, which has earned the prestigious Green Flag in 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2022.
- We've added a sound system and projector for school shows and PTA movie nights, climbing wall bars in the PE Hall, and a bicycle shelter through our work with Sustrans.
- Security has been improved with CCTV and an alarm system.
- Most recently, all SMART boards have been replaced with Clevertouch Screens, ensuring every child benefits from an interactive and modern learning experience.
- Technology continues to grow with an additional 30 new iPads and charging trolley, funded by the PTA between 2023–2025.
- Outdoor Play Area has been enhanced with a mud kitchen, sand pit and play house, as well as an outdoor classroom and sensory den
- Thanks to the amazing fundraising efforts of our PTA, we were able to install a fantastic new Trim Trail, giving pupils an exciting and active outdoor play experience.

At St. Bernard's, we are committed to providing the very best facilities to support learning, creativity, and well-being for every child



## Admissions

In selecting children for admission to the school, we will apply the criteria as set out by our Board of Governors in the Education and Authority's handbook. Copies of the criteria are available on the EA web-site as well as our own school website under 'Parents, Admissions.'

### The School Hours

Primary 1 to Primary 3 pupils	-	9:00 am	to	2:00 pm
Primary 4 to Primary 7 pupils	-	9:00 am	to	3:00 pm

### The School Day in St Bernard's Primary School

<b>8:00am - 8:45am</b>	Breakfast Club	
<b>8:45am - 9:00am</b>	Supervision for all pupils in the school playground	
<b>9:00am</b>	Class begins for all pupils	
<b>10:15am - 10:30am</b> <b>10:35am-10:50am</b>	Morning Break (P.1-P.3) Morning Break (P.4-P.7)	Healthy Eating Policy
<b>11:45am-12:30pm</b> <b>12:20pm-1:05pm</b>	Lunch Time (P.1-P.3) Lunch Time (P.4-P.7)	Children will have the choice of school dinners or a packed lunch
<b>Monday – Friday 2:00pm</b> <b>Monday – Thursday 3:00pm</b> <b>With a 2:00pm finish on Friday</b>	School Finishes (P.1-P.3) School Finishes (P.4-P.7)	P1-P7 finish at 2:00pm on a Friday
<b>2:00pm-3:00pm</b> <b>3:00-4:00pm</b>	After School Clubs (P.1-P.3) After School Clubs (P.1-P.3)	There are a variety of afterschool clubs available each term
<b>2:00pm-4:00pm</b> <b>2:00pm – 6:00pm</b>	Homework Hub (P.1-P.7) Sleepy Hollow After School Care (P.1-P.7)	Operates in the Parish Hall Situated in the school canteen

## Wrap-a-Round Care

### Breakfast Club (P.1-P.7)

St Bernard's operate a **Breakfast Club** from 8:00am. to 8:45am for children from P1-P7. This is situated in the School Canteen and children will be offered a selection of cereal, toast, fruit, milk and water.

Cost: £2 per day

### Homework Hub Kids Klub

The children from St Bernard's have the opportunity to attend the Homework Hub Kids Klub from 2:15pm-3:15pm and 3:15- 4:30pm P1-P7. This is situated in St Bernadette's Parish Centre.

Contact Ciara Faloon on 07502218142 or at [homehubkidsklub@gmail.com](mailto:homehubkidsklub@gmail.com)

### Sleepy Hollow After School Club

Sleepy Hollow are a fully registered childcare provider who operate each day from 2:00pm-6:00pm for children from P1-P7. This is situated in the School Canteen. Sleepy Hollow also operate during the school holidays.

Contact Joanna or Victoria (Administration) on 02894 339031 or [info@sleepyhollowgroup.com](mailto:info@sleepyhollowgroup.com)



## Classes

The children are organised into seven year groups in the school, arranged according to the number of children in each year group. There are two classes per year group with three Primary Three classes and three Primary Six classes.

Since it is our policy to do the best for each child, teachers will organise their classes in a variety of ways in order to cater for the individual needs of the children in their care. Teachers adopt a variety of teaching & learning strategies; this will involve individual attention, group work and whole class teaching.

## Curriculum

The school has always provided a broad and balanced curriculum. As a result of the Education Reform Order 1989 and 2006, the content of the curriculum is more formalised. Programmes of Study indicate what should be taught, and Level Descriptors describe the level of the knowledge, skills and understanding the children should have in English, Mathematics & ICT.

The school implements our Learning and Teaching policy. The school will regularly revise practice and schemes towards developing the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

The revisions to the curriculum aim to retain the best practice while seeking to give greater emphasis to important elements, such as children's Personal Development and Mutual Understanding and the explicit development of Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. The school aims to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible.



## Stages of the Primary Curriculum

The Foundation Stage:	Primary One and Primary Two
Key Stage One:	Primary Three and Primary Four
Key Stage Two:	Primary Five and Primary Six



## Structure of the Primary Curriculum

The curriculum for the three stages is set out in six Areas of Learning. Although the Areas of Learning are set out separately teachers will, where appropriate, integrate learning across the six areas to make relevant connections for children.

The Areas are:

- Language and Literacy (including Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing);
- Mathematics and Numeracy (focusing on the development of mathematical concepts and numeracy across the curriculum);
- The Arts (including Art and Design, Drama and Music);
- The World Around Us (focusing on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in Science and Technology, Geography and History);
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (focusing on emotional development, social skills, learning to learn, health, relationships and sexuality education and mutual understanding in the local and global community);
- Physical Education (focusing on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding through play and a range of physical activities).

**ICT permeates and is developed through all areas of the School Curriculum.**



## Learning Support

At St. Bernard's, we provide additional support for any child identified with special educational needs, ensuring they can access the curriculum and reach their full potential. Early identification is key, and once a need is recognised, the class teacher and our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) work closely to decide the best way forward. This may include creating an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with clear targets, which is shared with parents.

Our SENCO supports teachers and pupils both in the classroom and through small group or individual sessions. Strong communication between parents, teachers, and the SENCO is central to the success of every support programme.

Support typically focuses on Literacy and Numeracy, alongside social groups and well-being sessions to nurture emotional health. We also follow the Catch Up Numeracy Programme and use blended learning through the Lexia Core Reading Programme to strengthen key skills. In addition, a Numeracy Support Teacher comes into school one day per week to provide targeted help.

We work in partnership with outside agencies, including RISE NI, Aware NI, and programmes such as Dot-to-Dot, to meet the individual needs of every child.

A full Learning Support Policy is available from the school.

## Supporting Newcomer pupils with English as a Second Language

The school has developed an inclusion policy. We have signs in different languages around the school to identify rooms and New-Comer areas.

A base-line assessment of educational need will be carried out by a support teacher on a child's arrival at the school. There will be an early interview with parents to establish the child's background and ability.

We offer a translation service as required. An individualised programme of support is then put into place.



## Religious Education

Our Religious Education programme, using the Grow in Love Series, goes beyond the requirements of the core R.E. syllabus agreed by the main Churches. Religious Education is not confined to the timetabled programme within the school, but pervades the whole life of the school. Religious meetings, involving the priests, teachers and parents will be held as your child progresses through sacraments in the school. It is important to take an active part in these meetings.

Children make their First Confession during P3 and receive their First Holy Communion in P4. Parents are encouraged to attend a short Penitential Service involving the children, which precedes their First Confession. Parents are asked to encourage their children to establish a regular pattern of attendance at the Sacrament of Penance.

First Holy Communion Day is a memorable occasion, with the children participating in the music, Readings and Offertory Procession, and the school choir singing hymns. In conjunction with the P.T.A. the parents provide refreshments afterwards in the parish centre. There is usually a photographer in attendance.

Confirmation takes place for pupils in their final year in the school. It is preceded by a series of meetings and Prayer Services which involve children, parents, teachers and Priests. Parents and relatives are invited to meet the Bishop after the Confirmation ceremony and have refreshments which are provided by the parents of the P6 children.

## Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Given today's media culture it is easy for young people to receive mixed messages about relationships and sexuality. This makes it essential to have effective teaching and learning on the subject if they are to make responsible and well informed decisions. Through Religious Education, Health Education, Physical Education, Circle Time and PDMU the pupils in St. Bernard's PS have already been involved in learning about relationships and about how to make positive and responsible choices about themselves and the way they live their lives. The teachers in St. Bernard's have implemented the RSE Programme developed by the Diocesan Advisers: "The Wonder of My Being".

This programme is presented as part of the Religious Education Programme. Thus, the lessons for each year group are linked to corresponding Grow in Love lessons as well as PDMU. Primary 6 & 7 lessons have links to the Love for Life resources – 'Inside Out'. The Policy for RSE is currently being revised and updated.

## Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU)

The school follows the **PATHS** (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) programme developed by Barnardos, which focuses on building emotional literacy, self-control, and positive social skills. As part of this programme, pupils take turns being the "Pupil of the Day", receiving compliments from classmates to boost confidence and foster kindness. Daily activities encourage children to express feelings, solve problems constructively, and celebrate positive behaviour, creating a supportive and respectful classroom environment.



## Pastoral Care

At St. Bernard's, pastoral care permeates all aspects of school life. It reflects the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic Faith, and involves all the members of our school community; children, parents and all other adults who contribute to the well-being of each child. The school has a **Safeguarding Policy** (Child Protection) an extract of which is published annually in the Annual Parents Report. This covers areas such as bullying and various forms of abuse.

Arrangements for pastoral care are integrated with, and reflected in, day-to-day teaching and learning; consequently, the children take great pride in their work, they recognise the importance of high standards of presentation and behaviour, and they are courteous and attend school regularly. The children are rewarded with the 'Pupil of the Week,' for displaying the core values during our Friday assembly.

The school fosters a positive atmosphere built on strong relationships between staff, pupils, and parents. Teachers are dedicated to meeting each child's individual needs and well-being, while carefully planning approaches and programmes that support personal growth and development. Parents frequently express that they feel welcomed and find the teachers approachable and supportive. Daily life at St. Bernard's is characterised by a happy, relaxed environment where children, parents, and staff feel valued and connected.

## Positive Behaviour

Our school Positive Behaviour Policy is based on the school's Christian values and beliefs. The general aim within the school is the creation of an atmosphere of mutual respect and collective responsibility. To achieve this, we provide a supportive environment which fosters the growth and development of caring and responsible pupils; we create an environment in which pupils can learn effectively; we develop in our pupils a sense of self-worth and self-control. Copies of the school's Anti-Bullying and Positive Behaviour policies are available at the school. Pupils are fully involved in developing class rules and routines.

If problems do arise, we like to involve parents at an early stage. Communication between home and school and working in partnership with you the parents is key to ensuring everyone is fully informed and the correct support systems are in place.



## St Bernard's Code of Conduct

### CARING

- We are kind to each other
- We care for everything in our school
- We tell the truth
- We show good manners

### WORK AND LEARNING

- We are on time for school
- We are prepared for school
- We work hard in school and also complete our homework
- Work talk is soft talk
- 

### PLAYGROUND

- We walk to our lines and stand quietly
- We play in our special areas
- We are happy and play safely
- We let others play in our games

### SAFETY AND MOVEMENT

- We walk quietly in school
- We knock the door before entering another classroom
- We use the toilets properly
- We need special permission to leave school



## School Uniform

School uniform can be purchased from Truly Fare, Ormeau Rd. Parents may also buy part of the uniform from one of the chain stores and are asked to observe the following colours:

### Normal Daily Uniform

Grey skirt or pinafore/trousers  
White blouse/shirt  
Red 'v' neck jumper with school crest/Red Cardigan with school crest  
School Tie  
White/Black or Grey socks/ Black/Grey Tights  
Black Shoes

### P.E. Uniform

White polo shirt/Red sweatshirt with crest  
Black Track Bottoms  
Trainers/Plimsoles

We have a school raincoat which can be purchased at Truly Fare. The school tie can also be bought; an elasticated version is available for the younger children. On days when the class does P.E. children should wear black track suit bottoms. Track suit bottoms with overt brand names should not be worn. All items of clothing should be clearly labelled with the child's name! Stray items of clothing are kept in a lost property area. Clothing etc left in the lost property, will be donated to St. Vincent de Paul of during the summer holidays.



## Contact with Parents

At St. Bernard's, we value strong partnerships between home and school. Open communication between parents and teachers is key to supporting every child's learning and well-being.

Parent/Teacher meetings are held each year, at the end of October for Primary Two to Primary Seven, and in January for Primary One. These meetings give you the chance to chat about your child's progress across all areas of the curriculum. In the third term, you'll also receive a written report and pupil profile/tracking form.

If you ever have concerns or simply want to talk about your child's progress, we're here to help. You can arrange a time to meet the class teacher when they're free from teaching duties, and the principal is always happy to meet by appointment.

Your first introduction to the school will be at our Primary One Induction Meeting in early June. This is a lovely opportunity to meet the principal and your child's teacher, and to get a feel for life at St. Bernard's.

We ask parents to share any important information about their child such as health issues, allergies, fears, or emotional needs that might affect learning. Rest assured, all details are treated with the utmost confidentiality.

In September, we host a Curriculum Meeting, where teachers outline what's ahead for the year. To keep you up to date, we use the School App, Seesaw, and Google Classroom, along with our website and monthly newsletter, so you'll always know what's happening in school life.

## Parent-Teacher Association



We have had a dynamic Parent-Teacher Association since 1986. It has provided a tangible link between parents and teachers and fostered better understanding and co-operation between them. Since its establishment many valuable social, educational and fund-raising functions have been organised. The following are examples of some of the events which have taken place in the past:

*Annual Dinner Dance/Casino Night*

*Table Quiz*

*Night at the Races*

*Annual Raffle*

*St.Patrick's Night Ceili*

*Halloween Disco*

*Christmas Fair*

*Summer Fair*

*Colour Run*

The Annual General Meeting of the P.T.A. is held each September and a Committee is elected. Committee meetings are held at approximately monthly intervals. All parents are encouraged to be fully involved in the activities of the P.T.A.

Working in partnership with the P.T.A. over the last thirty years, the school has been able to develop many fantastic initiatives to enhance the learning environment for our children. These include the development of:

The Computer Suite, School Garden, Installing Interactive White Boards throughout the school, School Library, Playground Areas, Outdoor Play Areas, the installation of a Sound System and Projector in the School Hall, embedding iPad technology, refurbishment of the P.E./Assembly hall, building the Mud-Kitchen, enhancing the music provision across the school, purchasing 64 iPads and replacing the Interactive White Boards with Clevertouch Screens in all classrooms.



## Home Learning

### Value of Home Learning / Homework

We see seven possible benefits arising from the use of home learning / homework.

- 1] To give children practice in skills and concepts learned in school;
- 2] To develop further a topic begun in school;
- 3] To carry out assignments not appropriate to or inconvenient in school;
- 4] To enable children to use their initiative in research and independent study;
- 5] To develop in children good study habits;
- 6] To enable parents to augment the work done in school;
- 7] To enable parents to see what work is being done in school.

### Extent of the Home Learning /Homework

Home Learning / Homework will comprise of either oral, written or digital work or a combination of these. Written homework should only be given on week-nights, Monday to Thursday. On these nights the recommended average times to be spent on home learning /homework are as follows:

P1	-	10 minutes
P2	-	15 minutes
P3	-	20 minutes
P4	-	30 minutes
P5	-	40 minutes
P6	-	60 minutes
P7	-	60 minutes



### Role of Parents

Parents will be encouraged to help in the development of their children's reading ability and reading habits and offered advice on how to do so. They will be encouraged to supervise the written homework and help in a beneficial way. They should sign the homework if they wish or at the teacher's request.

If parents take children on extended holidays term time, teachers will not give home/school work for these periods nor will they be expected to make up the shortfall of work missed during the holiday absence.

## Assessment and Record Keeping

Each child is assessed informally throughout the year by his / her class teacher. In addition, children from Primary Two upwards undertake standardised assessments in May. The assessments in Literacy and Numeracy are used to set targets for children. A record of each child's achievement, plus some levelled samples of his / her work will be passed on to the next teacher.

Each child from Primary Four to Primary Seven will carry out computerised assessments in October and in April/May. Parents of children from Primary One to Primary Seven will receive a written report towards the end of the third term with a Tracking Grid for pupils, Primary Three to Primary Seven.

The pupils will be formally assessed at the end Key Stage One & Two, that is in Primary Four and Primary Seven.

Their achievements are celebrated at our End of Year Prize Giving Ceremony.

## Pupil Voice

The **Student Council** serves as a representative body for the student community, giving pupils a voice in school decisions and fostering leadership skills. Its role includes organizing events, promoting school spirit, and addressing student concerns to improve the overall learning environment. Student council members lead initiatives that encourage inclusivity, responsibility, and positive change within the school. By taking on these responsibilities, the student council helps create a supportive and engaging school culture where every student feels valued and heard.

The **Eco Council** plays an important role in promoting environmental awareness and sustainability within the school community. Its members work together to encourage eco-friendly practices such as recycling, reducing waste, and saving energy. They often lead projects like creating wildlife areas, organizing litter picks, and running campaigns to reduce the school's carbon footprint. By taking action and educating others, the Eco Council helps make the school a greener, more responsible place while inspiring everyone to care for the planet. We are very proud to be an ECO-School.

**DreamSpace Ambassadors** play a vital role in inspiring and empowering students and educators to explore technology and develop digital skills. They act as advocates for STEM education, promoting creativity, problem-solving, and innovation through hands-on experiences and workshops. Their mission is to create inclusive opportunities for all students, fostering confidence and curiosity in areas like computer science and digital literacy. Our DreamSpace Ambassadors serve as mentors and role models, encouraging the next generation to thrive in a technology-driven world.

**Well-Being Ambassadors** support the school in creating a safe, happy, and caring environment for all pupils. They help promote kindness, inclusion, and positive mental health by encouraging children to look after themselves and each other. Ambassadors assist with activities that build confidence and reduce stress, and they know when to guide a child to a trusted adult for further support. Their role is to make sure every child feels valued and supported, helping the school community thrive.

Primary Seven pupils are given the opportunity to support the school and other pupils in their role as ECO Warriors, School Prefects and Reading Buddies.



## **Transfer Arrangements**

The Transfer Assessment Arrangements to Post-Primary Schools has recently changed to one single test provider in 2023, Schools' Entrance Assessment Group (SEAG) which is used by all sixty-three academically selective schools in Northern Ireland.

## **Shared Education**

The governors and staff of St. Bernard's Primary School are committed to developing opportunities for Shared Education within the school community and beyond. Presently we are delighted to be working with our partner schools in this area in two separate projects.

Our Key Stage Two partnership is with Cregagh Primary School and Lisnasharragh Primary School.

The shared project has brought the teachers of the three schools together to plan, prepare and develop their skills in the use of iPad technology. Further the teachers, staff, pupils and parents of Primary 4,5, 6 and 7 are working together on an ICT/iPad project, this year developing Personal Development & Mutual Understanding.

Our Early Years Shared Education project is with Knockbreda Nursery school, St. Bernard's Pre-School Education Centre and Knockbreda Primary School. This project develops and improves transition at Primary One. The focus this year is in the development of Numeracy and Play Based Learning in the early years, with training for teachers, assistants and parents from the four schools.

## Educational Visits

During the school year, a number of educational visits are organised by the staff for various classes. These aim to combine both enjoyment and educational value for those taking part.

Among the places of interest visited on single day trips in recent years have been the Transport and Folk Museum at Cultra, the Belfast Zoo, Streamvale Farm, the Ulster Museum in Belfast, the Ulster/American Folk Park and History Park, W5, Navan Fort, the Giant's Causeway, the Odyssey Centre, Dublin, the Armagh Planetarium, Emerald Park and Dublin Zoo. These educational visits are very well supervised, with a ratio of one adult to every ten children.

We also invite specialist facilitators into school to bring World Around Us topics to life. These visitors provide exciting, hands-on experiences for the children, such as learning about animals with Wee Critters, exploring sweet-making at Aunt Sandra's, discovering Birds of Prey, and enjoying storytelling with Mr Hullabaloo, among many others.

## Charging and Remissions Policy

By the Education Reform Order, 1989, all schools are required to have a Charging and Remissions Policy which governs mainly the financing of school educational visits, but also covers the provision of certain materials and charges for breakages.

### Non-Residential Activities

Where the activity is wholly or mainly during school hours, parents will usually be asked for a voluntary subscription covering the cost of the activity. In some cases, the whole or part of the cost will be borne by the school.

A full copy of the Charging and Remissions Policy is available on request.



### School Clubs and Extra Curricular Activities

St Bernard's offers an extensive range of after school activities that are delivered by the teaching staff as well as a range of external providers and coaches. This varied programme caters for the wide range of interests of our pupils and is updated on a termly basis.

Our extra-curricular activities include, Play Ball, Irish dancing, gymnastics, coding club, soccer, Gaelic football, golf, art & design, orchestra, choir, traditional Irish music group, netball, Lego Club, Irish Language, Speech and Drama, tennis and Basketball

A copy of our latest After School Programme can be found on our school website or by scanning the QR Code.

