

Contact Details

St Mary's Primary School
Altinure
70 Monadore Road,
Park
Claudy
Co Derry
BT47 4DP

Catholic Maintained
Co. Educational

Age Range 4 - 11

Tel 028777 81384

info@stmarysps.park.ni.sch.uk

Chairperson of Governors
Principal
Number on Rolls
Admissions Number
Enrolment Number

Mrs Roisin McInroy
Mrs. Mary Redmond
1st September 2023 - 124
29
200

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Nominated by the Transferors/Trustees
Rev Fr M McGavigan
Mr John Donaghy
Mrs M Gormley
Mr Alfie Dallas

Nominated by Education Authority
Mr Ryan Coyle
Mrs Grace McKenna

Nominated by Department of Education
Mrs Roisin McInroy

Elected by Teaching Staff
Miss Ursula Doyle

Elected by Parents
Mr J.B. Murphy

Principal (Non Voting)
Mrs Mary Redmond

<i>Front Cover – School Crest – designed by Daryl Mullan P7 School Year 2005</i>
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Teaching Staff

Principal	Mrs Mary Redmond B.Ed. M.Ed. PQH
P1/2 Teacher	Mrs C McKenna B.Ed
P2/3 Teachers	Miss B McKinney BDES PGCE/Mrs. A.M. Hegarty B.Ed (job share)
P4 Teacher	Mrs A Boyle B.Ed
P5 Teacher	Mrs Redmond/ Mrs C Hutton BA, PGCE
P6 Teacher	Mrs C McAleer BA. PGCE
P7 Teacher	Miss U Doyle, B. Ed.

Ancillary Staff

School Secretary	Mrs M Moore
Classroom Assistants	Mrs Alice McBride Mrs Pauline McElhinney Mrs Lisa Coll Mrs Rosemary Moore Miss Jill Hasson Mrs SORCHA Brolly Ms Carrie McGillion Ms Mairead Lagan Ms Danielle O’Kane Mrs Una Coll
Cook in Charge Assistants	Mrs Nuala Campbell (based in St Colmcille’s PS) Mrs M McElhinney
Caretaker	Mr Paul McLaughlin
Supervisory Assistants	Mrs M Moore Mrs Lisa Coll Mrs Pauline McElhinney

Meet the Staff



Teaching Staff

Back left: Mrs Boyle, Miss McKinney, Mrs McKenna, Miss Doyle
Front left: Mrs Hutton, Mrs Hegarty, Mrs Redmond, Mrs McAleer



Classroom Assistants:

From left: Alice McBride, Pauline McElhinney, Rosemary Moore, Lisa Coll



Classroom Assistants:

From left: Mairead Lagan, Carrie McGillion, Jill Hasson, Sorcha Brolly



Classroom Assistants:

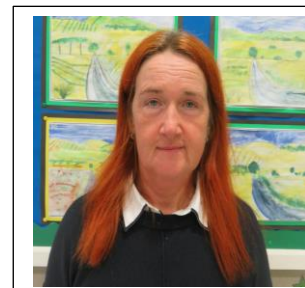
From left: Una Coll & Danielle O'Kane



Canteen lady:
Marie McElhinney



Building Supervisor:
Mr Paul McLaughlin



Secretary: Mrs Martina Moore

Ethos

St. Mary's Primary school is a co-educational Catholic school situated at the foot of the Sperrin Mountains in the parish of Banagher.

The school's catchment area includes Park village itself and the Craigbane area of Claudy parish. St. Mary's is a Catholic school which has strong links with the parish and the community. We welcome children from other faiths.

The school currently has 124 pupils, a Principal and eight teachers, nine classroom assistants and a full time secretary. A friendly, caring atmosphere pervades the school and the entire staff and governors are committed to ensuring the highest possible educational standards and provision for the pupils.

We aim to provide a safe and secure environment and children are encouraged to feel good about themselves and have high self-esteem. The school sees a strong link between a child's self-esteem and his or her academic success and believe that children who feel good about themselves learn more easily. All staff and pupils are valued and achievements are recognised and applauded at every opportunity at assemblies and on our school website. We use documents such as 'Together Towards Improvement' and 'Every School a Good School' to support our self-evaluation and development planning.

Our Vision Statement and Aims

As outlined in our vision statement, 'St. Mary's Altinure, a family of learners' we promote a positive ethos, high achievement and learning for life by:

- Instilling in pupils a love for life-long learning
- Developing advanced technological skills for more effective learning
- Motivating pupils to become independent learners
- Building self-esteem and respect for others and their environment
- Being flexible and adaptable for the 21st century

We believe that each child will achieve success through experiencing:

- A broad, balanced and challenging curriculum
- A stimulating and motivating learning environment
- A varied programme of extra-curricular activities and school visits
- An ethos that is supportive, encouraging and friendly
- An effective partnership between school, home and the wider community
- A variety of teaching approaches and strategies to meet the learning needs and styles of pupils
- Access to a range of varied and up-to-date resources

We demonstrate our commitment to working as a learning community through:

- Ongoing self-evaluation to improve on our previous best.
- Working collaboratively with all our stakeholders

School Profile

We currently have 19 pupils (15%) on Free School Meals. We have continued to qualify for Extended Schools funding in 23-24.

Management Structure and Responsibilities within the School

Currently, staffing in the school consists of the Principal, eight teachers and nine classroom assistants. Key responsibilities are as follows: Mrs Hegarty - Special Needs; Mrs Redmond – Numeracy; Miss Doyle - ICT;

Mrs McAleer - Literacy. These Senior leaders and all other staff have responsibility for delivering the remaining curricular areas.

Teaching and Learning

Our school delivers the Northern Ireland Curriculum through six Areas of Learning: Language and Literacy; Mathematics and Numeracy; The Arts; The World Around Us; Personal Development and Mutual Understanding and Physical Education. In the Foundation Stage, pupils engage in practical activities that are challenging, creative and enjoyable and encourage independent learning. We encourage children's curiosity and interest in the world around them and motivate pupils to develop Literacy and Numeracy skills in meaningful contexts. In Key Stages One and Two, we build on the experiences provided at the Foundation Stage and promote personal, social and emotional development as well as the development of skills in Communication, Using Maths, Using ICT and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. We seek to establish and maintain the highest standards of education which are in keeping with the aptitudes and needs of individual children and prepare them for further educational experiences and for adult life. We recognise that our well qualified, highly motivated and committed team of teachers and support staff offer quality learning experiences to pupils. The school is a self-evaluating school and, as well as constantly reviewing and improving its own performance, it has sought and gained external recognition on many occasions. Our School aims to develop autonomous learners.

We believe that pupils learn when they are motivated, feel secure and understand the purpose of learning. Our ultimate aim is to develop profound learning.

Our inspectorate report in June 2015 deemed us outstanding in all areas (Achievements and Standards, Provision, Leadership and Management and Child Protection) and the report stated:

'In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.' (p.5)

Results of our parental survey completed in June 2023 were overwhelmingly favourable, with parents commenting positively on all aspects of school life. The results of this survey are available on request.

Extra Curricular Activities

The school provides opportunities for pupils to experience a broad and balanced curriculum, both during school hours and after school. As well as the statutory curriculum, the school offers a variety of enriching curricular and personal experiences for the children. The cultural life of the school is rich and varied, offering each child the opportunity to participate in a range of activities and experiences e.g. Literacy Fair and Culture Quarter workshops providing musicians, artists and story-tellers.



After School Yoga

The school also provides opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of sports as part of the physical education curriculum and as extra-curricular activities. The sports activities available include Athletics, Cross Country, Gaelic Football, Hurling, Games and Dance. Yoga, Gymnastics, Gaelic, Basketball, Literacy and Numeracy Clubs are on offer after school in 23-24. The variety and details of these activities will change from time to time depending on the expertise and availability of staff.

Health Education is promoted and encouraged through Healthy Breaks, participation in Health Action Awards, Road Safety Awards and numerous health promotion workshops. Mental Health and Wellbeing development is hugely important – in 23-24, we will provide Art Therapy to support the most vulnerable pupils as well as resilience workshops for classes facilitated by RAPID and via our PATHS programme.



Our Cross Country Team



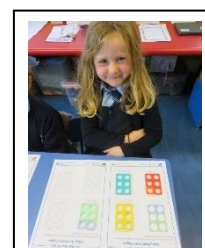
Irish Lessons with Mairtin



Shooting Starz Gymnastics

Assessment

In St. Mary's P.S., assessment is an integral part of the planning, teaching and learning process. Teachers use a range of assessment procedures which comply with the age and ability of their pupils. These include regular and consistent marking of written work, observation on a daily basis, weekly class tests and termly unit of work assessments. Baseline Testing is carried out in October and May as appropriate in Year 1. Year 1 pupils (and Year 2 as appropriate) are assessed in Linguistic Phonics and key words as appropriate to determine progress. Year 2 pupils also complete written standardised tests (GL English and Maths). CAT online tests (IQ) are completed by P4 and P6 pupils each year. Standardised online tests (PTM and PTE) are completed from Year 3 - Year 7 in the month of May. NGST (GL online spelling test) or an equivalent written test (Parallel or Single Word Spelling) is completed also to identify progress in spelling in P2 -7. Literacy and Numeracy data is published as appropriate and is available to parents on request. Data is collated, analysed and benchmarked where possible and targets are set to improve whole school and individual pupil performance.



Using Numicon to support learning in the Foundation Stage

The staff is also committed to the development of pupils' ICT skills and all pupils undertake ICT Levels of Progression which are internally standardised.

Positive Behaviour

Our school operates a Positive Behaviour Management Programme based on Rules, Rewards and Consequences which is designed to promote good behaviour and raise self-esteem. Positive Behaviour Management promotes the core values of the school as expressed in our mission statement, "St Mary's Altinure, a family of learners". It is based on a whole school approach with a strong pastoral ethos and it is adopted by Governors, staff, pupils and parents through a process of consultation. It is dependent on a shared understanding of what is acceptable behaviour among members of the school community. It has effective links with the school's Anti Bullying, Child Protection, Reasonable Force and Safe Handling and SEN Policies. We have been awarded the PATHS Model School status and the positive ethos of our PATHS programme strongly influences our approach to behaviour management. PATHS strategies are used in all classes. Staff have also completed Calm Plan and Nurture Training and these principles inform our daily practice.

Child Protection and Pastoral Care

The Child Protection programme in our school seeks to support the child's development in ways which will foster security, confidence and independence. As it is central to the well-being of the child, it will form an intrinsic part of all aspects of the curriculum. Children's self-esteem is enhanced through praise, rewards and various activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing and pupil achievements are recognised at assemblies, through our PATHS Pupil of the Day activities, on the website, the school's social media page and in the school newsletters. We in St Mary's P.S. have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge and we will carry out this duty through our Child Protection and Pastoral Care Policies. We consult parents on these policies and they are reviewed regularly.

We seek help for pupils with barriers to learning such as family circumstances or emotional problems. New pupils are made welcome in the school especially our Year One pupils who visit the school as part of their Induction

Programme in the summer term. Pupils transferring from other Primary Schools are supported by pupils and teachers through close liaison with their previous school and their parents to make this transition as easy as possible. We liaise closely with external support agencies eg Gateway, RISE, EA and LAC services to support vulnerable pupils.

The welfare of staff is also of prime importance and arrangements for promoting health and well-being of staff are outlined in our Staff Health and Well-Being Policy. We plan regular workshops to promote positive health among staff and encourage staff to avail of training opportunities where possible. We have a Staff Wellbeing noticeboard in the staffroom. Staff satisfaction rates are regularly obtained through staff questionnaires and all staff have opportunities to be listened to and contribute to decision-making through planned meetings. All pastoral and safeguarding policies (Child Protection, Attendance, Positive Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Health and Safety, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Critical Incident, Intimate Care, First Aid, the Administration of Medicines, Educational Visits etc...) are available to parents on request. They can also be found on our school website.

Drugs Policy

Schools have an important role to play in enabling children and young people to make informed and responsible decisions and helping them to cope with living in an increasingly substance-tolerant society. In St. Mary's P.S. we have a clear and agreed understanding among everyone in the school community about the implications and possible consequences of drug use/misuse and the important role of drugs' education. Drugs education forms part of our World Around Us scheme in Key Stage Two and our Drug Policy ensures that procedures and protocols are in place should an incident arise. Our Drugs Policy is available on request and is reviewed regularly. It is closely linked to our Pastoral Care, Child Protection and other safeguarding policies.

Special Educational Needs

In line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO), this school believes in an inclusive ethos. We aim to educate all pupils by ensuring access to a broad and balanced curriculum, suitably differentiated to meet individual needs so that all children may achieve their potential.

Where provision beyond what can be given by the class teacher is required, every attempt will be made to provide this by the other staff in the school. If necessary, the specialist services of the Board's Special Education Section will be used such as the EA Literacy Service.

Under the guidance of the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) Mrs AM Hegarty, staff follow procedures for early identification of children with specific learning difficulties under the terms of the Code of Practice for SEN. We currently have 9 pupils with statements of Special Educational Need.

We encourage parents to work closely with us in supporting children with learning difficulties and involve them at each stage of the process.

Individual programmes of support are implemented using differentiated teaching materials, one to one or small group sessions with the SENCO or Foundation Stage teacher, a designated Classroom Assistant or external agencies where appropriate (e.g. Literacy Service/Speech and Language Outreach/RISE team/ASD Service etc...). Individual Education Plans are prepared in liaison with the child's parents and plans are reviewed twice a year. Pupil views are taken into account when planning. The child's progress is closely monitored by the class teacher and SENCO and the parent is kept informed.

Our Special Needs Policy is updated annually and is available on the school website/on request.

Attendance

All attendance is recorded on our computerised attendance register for both the morning and afternoon sessions. We generally have excellent pupil attendance figures in St Mary's Primary School, Altinure, (on average approximately 95%+), although post Covid, it has been more challenging to obtain these figures. and we acknowledge excellent attendance annually (97%+) at an end-of-year school assembly. EA Certificates are also issued where appropriate. All children should attend school unless they are ill. If children have to miss school, for illness or any other reason, then parents should telephone the school or send in a note explaining the absence.

We liaise closely with the Education Welfare Officer regarding pupil attendance and she has full access to pupil attendance statistics at any time. Pupil percentages are reviewed termly in conjunction with the EWO. Pupils whose attendance has fallen between 85 and 90% are issued with a school letter to encourage improved attendance. Pupils whose attendance has fallen below 85% must be formally referred to the Education Welfare Officer, unless specific reasons for absence are provided *eg medical grounds*.

The Teacher Attendance Procedure has been adopted by the Governors to promote attendance and teacher welfare and ensure that teachers are treated fairly, consistently and with sensitivity during times of illness. The Principal and BOG liaise closely with CCMS to manage teacher attendance. The EA Managing Attendance at Work Policy is also adhered to by the Governors as this provides a clear framework for managing ancillary staff absence at local level.

Staff Development

Staff development is the process of staff learning which aims to increase the effectiveness of all staff and governors both as individuals and as team members. It thus enables them to contribute to the school's vision and goals and to fulfill its guiding principles. The staff development process will ensure mutual benefit for the individual and the school.

All staff development activity is planned in the context of the school's vision, goals and guiding principles. Staff development needs are identified through review of the School Development Plan together with PRSD. Resources are prioritised to achieve school goals. Financial and other resources for staff development are allocated annually and apportioned in accordance with school priorities for strategic development, continuing professional development and succession planning. Additional staff development opportunities may also arise throughout the year, provided by EA, DENI, CCMS or ETI, and staff are encouraged to avail of these opportunities where possible.

Board of Governors

A Board of Governors meeting takes place at least once per term and the Governors are involved in the preparation of the School Development Plan and the monitoring and evaluation of this Plan. A review of the previous year's plan is carried out in June each year and the priorities for development agreed by SLT, Co-ordinators and staff. These priorities are then approved by the Governors in October. A transitional plan has been developed for the 23-24 year, to supplement the last three-year plan and this year's priorities are managing the deployment of resources effectively, continuing to promote positive mental health and well-being among pupils and staff and promoting skills in Numeracy, ICT and Literacy, particularly in comprehension and spelling. Action Plans are produced as part of the School Development Planning process and these are implemented throughout the year. The Principal and Co-ordinators report to the Board of Governors on progress within the plans and an end of year written evaluation of teaching and learning is presented by the Principal to the Governors and Staff. The Governors are informed of any amendments to the plans during the year or over the three-year period. Results are benchmarked to compare progress with national averages (if this benchmark data is available) and whole school standards are communicated to the Board of Governors on an annual basis.

School Partners

(a) Parents

Parents are our partners in educating children and we welcome and plan for parental involvement in their child's education. Communication with parents is maintained on an ongoing basis through the use of the school website, assemblies, monthly newsletters, School Prospectus, Parents' Noticeboard and Annual Report to Parents. There are also formal meetings with parents at least once a year, usually in October. Parents of pupils on the Special Needs Register are in contact more frequently to discuss Individual Education Plans. We also communicate through Induction, Linguistic Phonics and Transfer meetings as well as meetings to discuss curriculum areas. Parents of Year 4 and Year 7 are invited to attend a Mass to help them to prepare their children for the Sacraments of First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation. P4 parents are also encouraged to bring their children to a Do This In Memory Mass once a month in St. Mary's Church, Altinure.

Parents are represented on the Board of Governors by a Parent Governor. Our Parents Association, Friends of St. Mary's P.S., organises fund raising events and the principal takes on board the viewpoints of members when making decisions.



Internet Safety Workshop for Parents

Parents are consulted about the effectiveness of the school through questionnaires which are completed in a three-year cycle. Questionnaires are also issued during Anti-Bullying week, following the Literacy Fair and following school initiatives such as Shared Education.

Parents are consulted in the development of relevant policies such as the E-Safety and the Use of Digital Devices Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy, Child Protection Policy, Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy and the Parental Complaints Procedure. We also avail of our parents' expertise to support curricular areas such as The World Around Us, STEM and the Arts.

(b) Pupils

Pupils are highly involved in their learning. At the beginning of each school year, pupils help to devise their own class rules, rewards and consequences as part of the school's Positive Behaviour Programme. They contribute to the topic based learning approach by expressing their views and ideas on what they would like to study. All pupils are encouraged to self-review and set personal targets and pupils on the Special Needs Register are consulted about their IEPs. Pupils are also involved in decision-making processes within school through class councils, the eco-council and various questionnaires.

(c) The Community

The school maximises opportunities to make links with the community. Members of the community have been elected to our Board of Governors and have specific areas of responsibility eg Child Protection and Health and Safety. We work closely with the Learmount Community Group and use the Local Recycling Centre, Learmount Resource Centre and people from the local community to support the curriculum. Local businesses and sports clubs sponsor school events and we cluster with other Primary Schools to share expertise and generate new ideas. We link with Park Community Playgroup and other playgroups to ease transition of pupils from pre-school to Year One. We also work closely with local Post-Primary Schools to ease transition for Primary Seven pupils. We collaborate with many different agencies such as CCMS, DE, CCEA, EA, the Literacy Service, RISE, CAMHS, Psychology Service, Health Service, Speech and Language, Cedar, PSNI, Fire and Ambulance Service, Public Library Service, RAPID and Derry City Council to enhance the curriculum and support pupil needs.



Presenting a Cheque to Trocaire

We also fund-raise annually for various local and global charities and this year, RAPID helped to fund occasional healthy breaks for pupils to help parents with the ongoing cost of living crisis.

Our school is also available to the community for social events.

Shared Education

The school has worked closely with Cumber Claudy Primary School for many years through CRED and Shared Education projects. In 23-24, Shared Education face-to-face visits will unfortunately be limited due to current lack of governmental funding for the Shared Education programme. However, we are keen to maintain the excellent relationships developed between staff and pupils over many years. Year 5, 6 & 7 will continue to participate in the STEM programme (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) in their own schools but they do the same lessons on the same days - they then chat to their friends in their link school to discuss how the lessons went. Staff from both schools will come together to plan these shared lessons. We also hope to facilitate a shared school trip by the end of the year. We will also continue to capitalize on shared staff development opportunities with Cumber Claudy staff where possible.

*Making
Mechanical Hands
in STEM
In P7*



*Virtual Shared
Education Lessons in
P6*



Finance

At the end of the past financial year (31st March 23), we closed with a surplus of £73,955. This covered the cost of five full-time permanent teachers and three part-time permanent teachers. Composite classes continue to be necessary in Year 1/2 and 2/3 in order to achieve a sustainable three-year financial plan for our school. A detailed outline of the School's Financial Position and Projected resources for 23-26 can be made available on request.

Sustainability

We are committed to the promotion of Sustainable Development and aim to develop in our young people the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to help them make their own informed decisions relating to the world around them and be willing to take appropriate action. Planning is carried out using a thematic approach which provides opportunities for connected learning and incorporates issues affecting the economy, society and the environment, now and in the future. St. Mary's is an Eco School and we were re-awarded our Green Flag in June 2021. We aim to reapply from this award in 23-24. We continue to strive to promote health, links with the community, energy efficiency and management of waste and resources and our Eco-Council actively strive to educate the whole school community about ways to become more environmentally friendly. We have a school pond and grow our own flowers and vegetables in our poly-tunnel and vegetable beds. We also have a mini-woodland called Little Learmount which has been used recently by the Woodland Trust as a tree nursery where young saplings are grown before being transplanted elsewhere.

Awards

St. Mary's seek external accreditation to promote the profile of the school within the community and secure our sustainability. External assessment processes enable us to reflect on current practice and self-evaluate which informs future planning. Pupils are encouraged to enter competitions at individual and group level which fosters self-esteem as well as achieving recognition for the school. Competitions include sporting blitzes, quizzes, Road Safety events, Young Inventor Awards and the Junior Entrepreneur Award among others.



*Our Junior Entrepreneur Project in P7-
Making Wax Melts*



*Violin Accreditation from the
School of Music in P6*

Challenges

With a decrease in local employment and average family size, we have experienced a decrease in overall enrolment. We strive to maintain our enrolment by positively promoting our school in the community, involving parents and partners at every opportunity and ensuring that we provide a high standard of education by constantly reviewing and improving our teaching and learning. Due to financial constraints, we anticipate the continuation of composite classes for the foreseeable future.

The impact of coronavirus disruption on teaching and learning has been huge. We have emerged from the pandemic with a child-centred focus on identifying areas of improvement and providing the best education we can for all. Pupil and staff attendance may be challenging post pandemic as both may struggle with physical and mental difficulties and some parents have become used to having their children at home during periods of home learning. Declining budget allocations have impacted on resourcing but we have built up excellent resources over the years and can therefore still deliver a high quality education. Funding allocations for Engage and Healthy Happy Minds programmes are no longer available so it will be more challenging to provide support for pupils with social and emotional difficulties. Face to face training and support are also limited now due to education cutbacks but we avail of all appropriate training opportunities via ETI, EA and other agencies to ensure teachers are kept abreast of educational changes. Without a Learning Support teacher, we aim to maximise opportunities to provide this necessary support through provision of SEN support from Mrs McKenna, our Foundation Stage teacher, our classroom assistants and external agencies such as the Literacy Service, Speech and Language Outreach and the Behaviour Support Service. Our Literacy Co-ordinator and Year One teacher are trained in Reading Partnership and a Classroom Assistant will continue to deliver this programme to P3-7 pupils most in need, following the great success of this programme in previous years. We also hope to maximize opportunities for Year Two who are taught in composite groups to come together as a whole class for shared opportunities in 23-24.

Opportunities

We offer an excellent range of after-school activities, particularly Yoga and Gymnastics which are provided by very experienced instructors who provide wonderful coaching. Derry GAA has also provided us with PE coach Eimear to teach Gaelic to all classes on Wednesdays and this has been very useful for skills development in Hurling, Gaelic and Athletics. Last year, Craigbane GAC provided free after-school gaelic coaching for pupils and we are hopeful that this may continue in future. We promote PE and physical activity through twice-weekly PE lessons and participation in the Daily Mile scheme. We encourage pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, to participate in both internal and external competitions in order to improve their confidence and enhance their self-esteem. This year, we are excited to continue our PATHS programme with pupils, having become a PATHS Model school, and we will be offering art therapy support to pupils most in need in Term One. We are looking forward to entering new staff partnerships with primary schools in Glenullin and Gortnaghy through the Pathways to Partnership programme and we will strive to maintain current close relationships with Cumber Claudy PS through Shared Education. We also hope to build upon new connections with Straidarran Playgroup in the coming months.

Mrs Redmond has been trained as a Forest School leader and lesson plans and strategies from Forest School have been shared with all staff so that pupils in all classes enjoy the benefits of the outdoor classroom. We have also developed our school woodland, Little Learmount, as a valuable area for play and to facilitate outdoor teaching and learning. We also have a volunteer gardener who shares her expertise with pupils and encourages them to plant seeds and care for the environment. We work closely with Eco-schools NI via our newly appointed World Around Us Co-ordinator, Mrs Hutton, and we avail of global learning opportunities for pupils wherever possible. We have also embraced all opportunities for staff development in ICT skills and will aim to develop publishing skills and Digital Art & Music in particular this year. We also provide software such as Nessy (Reading and Spelling support), Mathletics and Accelerated Reader to support pupils' Literacy and Numeracy needs.

Using ICT to Support Learning in Foundation Stage



Schools Council/ Eco-Council

Involving pupils wholeheartedly in decision-making processes is very important to us at St. Mary's P.S. We have regular class council meetings where pupils make suggestions on how to make our school a better place. Voted representatives from each class then report to Mrs McAleer via our School's Council where appropriate actions and decisions are made. Primary 1 – 7 pupils are also represented on our Eco-council where pupils carry out environmental reviews and monitor energy and water consumption in order to help us become more

and litter
at
school.



environmentally friendly. They record amounts of recycling collected around the school and report back to classes at assembly on ways to be more environmentally friendly we are as a



Our Eco-Council Making Plans!

Litter-picking in the School Playground

External Recognition

20-21

Virtual Cross Country Competition – P5 Boys 4th place, P5 girl 5th place and P6/7 girl 6th place
Housing Executive Eco-Hero Winner – P7 pupil– Overall Winner
Housing Executive Eco-Hero Competition -P7 pupil _ Highly commended
P5 pupil – Winner of Road Safety Poster competition – Derry and Strabane heat
Eco-Schools Green Flag Award – June 2021



Winners of the Fr Gallagher Shield - 2023

21-22

P6 pupil – Overall Winner of Paint by Pixel Challenge competition
P5 pupil – Highly Commended Paint by Pixel Challenge
PATHS Model School Award
Housing Executive Eco-Hero Winner – P5 pupil– Overall Winner
NI Water 'Protect our Peatbogs' Poster competition – P5 pupil - Second place
Girls Gaelic North Derry Championship winners – P6/7 team



*Road Safety Quiz Winners-
Derry & Strabane 2023*

22-23

Road Safety Quiz- Winners of the Derry and Strabane Heat – 4 P7 pupils – Feb 2023
Winners of the Father Gallagher Shield in Faughanvale – Boys' Gaelic team -April 2023
A P4 and a P5 pupil highly commended in the Ulster Farmer's Union Photographic competition -May 2023



*Siblings Highly Commended in the
Ulster Farmers Union Photography Quiz*

School Hours

The school day begins at 9.20 a.m. and children should be in their classroom by this time. Children can arrive at school from 8.40 a.m. where they are supervised in the assembly hall by members of staff.
All children have a supervised playtime for 10 minutes in the morning. Break-time takes place between 10.50 and 11am. Pupils usually have snack-time ten minutes before break.
Lunch-breaks are also staggered in 20 minute slots from 12.20 p.m. - 1.00 p.m. Pupils eat for 20 minutes and then play or vice-versa. The Primary 1 and 2 classes finish their school day at 2.00 p.m. and Primary 3 –7 classes finish their school day at 3.00 p.m.

School Term and Holiday Dates

Below is a list of all the holidays for school year 23-24.

Term One

Hallowe'en - Half Day Fri 27th Oct 2023

Closed Mon 30th Oct – Fri 3rd Nov 2023 (Hallowe'en)

Back to school Mon 6th Nov

Christmas - Half Day Thurs 21st Dec 2023 (Christmas holidays)

Closed 22nd Dec – Wed 4th Jan

Return to school Fri 5th Jan 2024



Dressing Up for Hallowe'en

Term Two

Mid Term – Mon 12th Feb – Fri 16th Feb 2024

St Patrick's Day Mon 18th March 2024

Easter – Wed 27th March – half day.

Closed Thurs 28th March – Fri 5th April 2024

Return to school Mon 8th April 2024



Playing in the Snow

Term Three

May Bank Holidays – Mon 6th May 2024, Mon 27th and Tues 28th May 2024

School Closes – Half day Fri 28th June 2024

Communication Key Stage Results 22-23

There were no Key Stage assessments completed in 22-23.

	Key Stage One				Key Stage Two					
Levels	W	1	2	3	W	1	2	3	4	5
Our School		n/a	n/a	n/a			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Using Maths Key Stage Results 22-23

	Key Stage One				Key Stage Two					
Levels	W	1	2	3	W	1	2	3	4	5
Our School		n/a	n/a	n/a			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

School Leaver's Destinations

Year	Number Leaving	St Columb's College	Thornhill College	St Pat's Maghera	Lumen Christi	St Pat's & St Brigids	Other
2017	20	5	6	0	4	5	0
2018	27	6	7	1	5	8	0
2019	20	5	3	2	1	9	0
2020	25	2	8	8	2	3	2
2021	27	2	8	1	2	12	2
2022	20	1	6	2	4	6	1
2023	27	3	8	2	0	12	2

A record of progression is collated for each child containing samples of work from Primary 1 – Primary 7. In Primary 7, children compile a portfolio of work, which is a celebration of their personal achievements, skills and talents (both academic and non-academic, inside and outside the school) called a Record of Achievement. These are formally presented to the children at our Leavers' Event in June of the summer term.

Religious Education



*P7 Pupils Receiving the
Sacrament of Confirmation*

The school is committed to the creation of a believing community, committed to living out in its daily operation the Christian way of life. Each child will be encouraged to get to know Christ as a person and follow the way of life he taught by word and example. A carefully structured Religious Education programme – The Grow in Love Series – is taught in our school, supplemented with the Alive O scheme, the 'In the Beginning' RSE scheme and other resources. Children are prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. Year 4, 5, 6 & 7 pupils usually participate in Adoration once a month which is wonderful. P4 pupils have the opportunity to participate in a Do This in Memory Mass once a month. Strong links between home, school and parish are encouraged. We also support the local church by organizing altar servers to assist Fr McGavigan at weekend Mass. (*Under Article 21(5) of the Education and Libraries NI*

Order 1986, parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of collective worship and/or RE lessons.)

Homework and Accelerated Reading

All members of staff believe that homework can play an important part in the education process. It allows pupils to practise, apply and consolidate what has been learnt in school and at the same time facilitates parental involvement in the child's learning.

The type of homework set will range from informal and practical tasks in the Foundation Stage to a more formal arrangement in the Key Stage 1 and 2 classes. Each class teacher will decide on the most appropriate tasks in her class and will take into consideration the needs and abilities of the pupils. Parents and teachers need to work in partnership to encourage effective learning.

Homework tasks will generally cover a wide range. Children will be asked to research topics, make observations, gather and record data, collect materials and conduct interviews. They will sometimes be asked to practise musical instruments, learn spellings or tables, create posters or practise handwriting.

At all times, children will be encouraged to take home books to read. Pupils from Year 3–7 will participate in the Accelerated Reading Programme where pupils can read books and do computer quizzes related to the stories. Children are set achievable targets in AR and are awarded points according to their successes. Their achievements are recognized at school assemblies, in a wall display and on the school website and Facebook page. They also receive prizes funded by our Parents Association. Parents are encouraged to find the time to read with their children and discuss their books with them.

Year 2-7 pupils also participate in Mathletics. Teachers assign tasks to pupils who enjoy accumulating points and earning certificates by completing Maths challenges. Mathletics achievements are rewarded through certificates and website photographs. Highest award winners also receive an annual prize from our PTA. Mathletics is an optional alternative to written Maths homework once per week. Parental support and encouragement is vital for the success of the homework programme.



*Proud of Achieving
Mathletics Gold Prizes!*



*Enjoying the After-School Literacy Club
in P2/3*

Uniform

Boys

Navy trousers
Navy jumper with school crest
Pale blue shirt and school tie

Girls

Navy skirt/pinafore or trousers
Navy cardigan or jumper
Pale blue blouse and tie

Footwear

Black shoes/ trainers



Looking good!

School uniform can be purchased from Select Kidz Derry, Groogans Fashions, Dungiven or the School Uniform Company, Lisnagelvin. Sportswear is now also available online from O'Neills. This year again, pupils are permitted to wear sporty clothes on PE days to limit the risk of COVID 19 transmission and encourage good uniform hygiene practices. **Please ensure that all clothing is labelled clearly with your child's name and class.** Children are discouraged from wearing jewellery to school for Health and Safety reasons. Stud earrings are acceptable for girls. There is no specific PE uniform requested – shorts/tracksuit bottoms and T-shirts/jerseys are acceptable. Proper footwear with effective grips on the soles are essential for PE. Please ensure your child wears/brings a PE uniform on the appropriate days.

School Rules

Children are expected to behave in a way which shows consideration for other people and their property. We expect them to treat both other children and adults with politeness and kindness and to have a regard for the safety of themselves and others. It is expected that pupils make good behaviour choices at all times in school, on the bus and on school outings.

School Milk

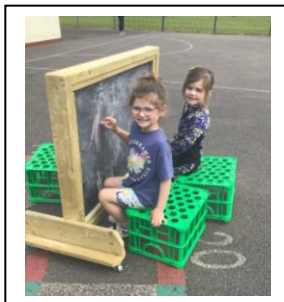
Milk can be purchased by those who wish to have it at breaktime. The charge is currently £5.00 per month and it is due at the beginning of each month.

Credit Union

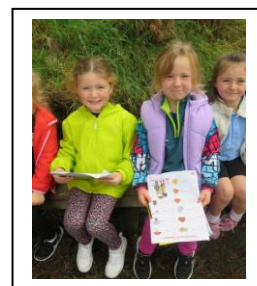
Pupils usually can avail of a Credit Union Saving Scheme. Books are collected by 9.30am on a Tuesday morning and returned to pupils on Thursdays. There is a maximum savings limit of £5.00 per week. This is a great opportunity for pupils to develop a saving habit and we encourage as many as possible to participate.



*Odd Socks Day during
Anti-Bullying Week*



*Outside Play in
Foundation Stage*



*Enjoying Nature Trails
In Little Learmount*

Admissions Procedure

If you wish to enrol your child in St Mary's Primary School, Altinure, you must complete an online application form on EA Connect (*see the Education Authority website*). You must also bring your child's birth certificate to school as proof of eligibility.

For admission into Year 1 in September 2024, applications should be made by 12 noon on Friday 26th January 2024.

Parents of Year 1 children will receive an invitation to our Pre-School Induction Programme in May/June at which they will receive a Sure Start Pack. Staff will provide details about many aspects of school life and your child will get an opportunity to visit his/her first classroom and play in the hall and school playground. The opportunity for parents to see around the school can be availed of at this time.

School Year (Year One pupils began)	2010- 11	2011- 12	2012- 13	2013- 14	2014- 15	2015- 16	2016- 17	2017- 18	2018- 19	2019- 20	2020- 21	2021- 22	2022- 23
No of applications	22	25	20	22	21	21	32	15	19	18	17	21	21
No accepted	22	25	20	22	21	21	32	15	19	18	17	21	21

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA – YEAR 1

The Board of Governors of St Mary's Primary School, Altinure has determined that the following criteria shall be applied by them in the event of the number of pupils applying for places in Year 1 being greater than the admissions number in the order set down below.

Within each criterion priority will be given to those pupils regarded by the Board of Governors, on the basis of supporting written evidence provided by parents/guardians and/or statutory agencies as having special circumstances, ie medical, social or security factors.

During the admissions procedure when applying the criteria punctual applications will be considered before late applications are considered. The application procedure opens on 9 January 2024 at 12noon (GMT) and an application submitted by the closing date of 26 January 2024 at 12noon (GMT) will be treated as a punctual application. An application received after 12noon (GMT) on 26 January 2024 and up to 4 pm on 31 January 2024 will be treated as a late application- this is also the last date and time for processing a change of preference in exceptional circumstances. After 4 pm on 31 January 2024 no applications will be processed until after the close of procedure on 25 April 2024.

Priority will be given to children who will have attained compulsory school age at the time of their proposed admission, including those children whose parents deferred their admission to primary school in September 2023 as defined by the new School Age (NI) Act (both groups to be treated equally).

Priority will be given to children resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the school before those who are not so resident.

The criteria are listed in order of priority

- 1 Applicants residing in the village of Park and the following areas of the Parish of Banagher:

Altinure Upper, Altinure Lower, Ballydonegan, Claggan, Dreen, Eden, Kilcreen, Loughlilube, Magherabrack, Moneyhaughan, Straid, Straidarran, Tamnagh, Umrycam (in no order of priority).

- 2 Applicants residing in the following areas of the Parish of Claudy:

Tireighter, Lear, Learmount, Kilgort, Munigh, Carnanhill, Carnanreagh, Crockmore, Stranagalwilly, Altaghoney, Sallowilly, Duneady, Lyng, Carnanbane, Gortscreaghan, Slieveboy, Ballyrory, Teenaght (in no order of priority).

- 3 Applicants residing in other areas.

In the event of over-subscription in any of the above criteria, taken in order, the following criteria will be applied in the order set down.

- (a) applicants who have a sibling currently attending the school.
- (b) applicants who, at the date of their application, are the eldest child of the family to be eligible to apply for admission to the school.
- (c) applicants who are a Looked After Child.
- (d) other children of compulsory school age, including those children whose parents deferred their admission to
primary school in September 2023

In the event of over-subscription in the last criterion which can be applied, then selection for all places remaining in this category will be on the basis of the initial letter(s) of the surname (as entered on a Birth Certificate), in the order set out below:

P Mac L Mc G E D U Y B C X I Z R S Q F H K M T V N O A W J

The order was determined by random selection.

In the event of surnames beginning with the same initial letter, the subsequent letters of the surname will be used in alphabetical order. In the event of two identical surnames, the alphabetical order of the initials of the forenames will be used.

In the event of a tie-breaker, applicants will be prioritised by age (eldest first) established by date-of-birth as entered on a Birth Certificate.

In the event of a further tie-breaker, random selection using a computerised method will be used.

DUTY TO VERIFY

Applications will be online for 2024/2025.

When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on the application. Parents should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the school's admissions criteria is stated on the application. Examples of such information include whether the child has siblings attending the school.

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any applicant's Application. Documentation submitted in support of your child's application should be provided directly to the school of first preference. Birth certificates continue to be required for all applicants and should also be provided.

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

Should a vacancy arise, all applications for admission to St Mary's Primary School, Altinure that were initially refused, new applications, late applications and applications where new information has been provided will be treated equally and the published criteria applied. Our waiting list policy is available on request. The above criteria will be applied to select pupils from our waiting list.

YEAR 1 ADMISSIONS – AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

If a place(s) become available after 1 September 2024 and there are more applicants than places, then selection of pupils will be made on the application of the Year 1 Admissions Criteria to those pupils seeking admission at the time the place(s) become available.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA – YEARS 2-7

Pupils will be considered for enrolment provided that:-

- (i) the school would not exceed its enrolment number.
- (ii) in the opinion of the Board of Governors their admission would not prejudice the efficient use of the school's resources.

If at the time of the consideration of the application, there are more eligible applicants than places available, then the Admissions Criteria for entry to Year 1 pupils of compulsory school age will be applied.



*Donating our
Shoeboxes to the
Samaritan's
Purse-
Operation
Christmas Child*



*Cycling Proficiency Skills
in P7*



Pond-dipping at Butterlope Farm



Parachute Fun in P1/2

Complaints Procedure

All complaints with regard to the curriculum or any other matters should be made in the first instance to the Principal.

If the matter is still unresolved then the complaint should be made in writing and sent by recorded delivery, addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. The matter will then be dealt with by the Board of Governors, CCMS or EA as appropriate.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can refer the matter to the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO). The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction.

A complaint should normally be referred to NIPSO within six months of the final response from the School. The school must advise in its concluding letter that the complaint may be referred to the NIPSO if you remain dissatisfied.

From time to time something may arise which gives cause for concern, but may not be classified as a formal complaint. This concern should be made known to the class teacher or Principal as appropriate, either in person, in writing or by telephone. The matter will be dealt with and reported on within 48 hours.

Charging and Remissions Policy

The Board of Governors have adopted the following Charging and Remissions policy:-

A Charging Policy

It is the policy of the Governors to charge for:-

- Board and lodgings on residential visits
- Costs associated with the provision of individual tuition on a musical instrument whether inside or outside school hours unless it is provided as part of the syllabus for an approved public examination or to meet the requirements of Article 11 (1)(b) of the Order.
- Optional extra activities which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours and are additional to the education provided by the school for the purposes of preparing pupils for an approved public examination, or for the purposes of meeting the statutory requirements imposed by Articles (1)(a) and (b) of the 1989 Order. Participation in any such activities is to be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet such charges are made.

B Voluntary Contributions

In cases of activities within school time which the school cannot afford, the school will attempt to subsidise these by asking in advance for voluntary contributions from the parents of those children directly involved. Such requests for contributions will indicate the actual costs to the school and suggest this as a suitable contribution. All the children in the group will take part in the activity, whether their parents have contributed or not. In cases where contributions are such that the school (through the school fund) cannot make up the short fall, the activity will not take place and all contributions already made by the parents for the specific activity will be returned to them.

C Breakage/losses

The Board of Governors reserves the right to seek to recover from parents the whole or part of the cost of breakages and losses incurred as a result of pupils' behaviour.

Inspection of Documents

A number of documents are available for inspection at the school should parents request this. Parents wishing to inspect any of the following should give written notice to the Principal at least three clear school days in advance of the time they wish to see them. (This does not preclude an informal request to the Principal, who may make the documents immediately available if this is convenient). Copies of the documents may also be made available if a week's clear notice is given. Payment for copying will be required. The documents available for inspection are:

- a) The Governors' statement of the aims of the school.
- b) Any statutory documents, D.E.N.I. circulars or administrative memoranda sent to the Principal or Governing Body in relation to Part 3 of the 1989 Order.
- c) Any published ETI reports referring to the school.
- d) Any management plans or subject schemes which are drawn up with respect to the Curriculum by the Board of Governors.

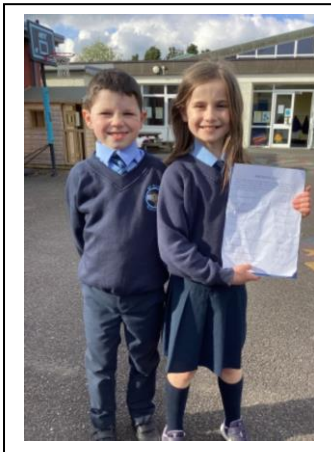
Conclusion

Now that you have read this School Prospectus, I hope you will have an idea of the rich and varied life your child will have whilst attending St Mary's Primary School, Altinure. You can rest assured that your child's well-being will be our concern at all times during their years here. I look forward to welcoming you and your child or children to our school.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Redmond

PRINCIPAL





*Presenting
Hampers at
Christmas to St.
Vincent de Paul*



*Current
P7 Pupils-
Proud of
their Leavers'
Hoodies*



*P7 Leavers 2023
at their
Leavers' Mass
Ceremony-
June 2023*