



# Saint Joseph's Nursery School



**'Nurturing young creative minds'**



*Children learn through doing – play is how they explore their world, learn how to assess risk, try things out and get to know themselves.*

*Bethe Almeras*

# Welcome



*Dear Parent/Guardian,*

Welcome to Saint Joseph's Nursery School. I hope you enjoy reading about our school and finding out about the exciting opportunities we provide for all our children. I look forward to welcoming you to the school and working with you and your child throughout the school year.

St. Joseph's is a Catholic Maintained Nursery School located in Saint Joseph's Parish in Antrim. It is a purpose-built nursery school that caters primarily for the educational needs of children in their final preschool year. We welcome children and families from all faiths.

Staff aim to promote a rich variety of play activities and experiences in an environment which is both supportive and child led and that motivates and challenges children,. It is in this caring and supportive environment that children will become enthusiastic learners so that they can reach their full potential in every aspect of their growth and development.



*Anne Maguire*



# About us

**Saint Joseph's Nursery School** opened in September 1975 and operates a mixed pattern of attendance. We have three classes offering full-time and part time places for 78 children in their preschool year. We have a wide range of learning areas, both inside and out. The nursery school has a welcome play area and two large, bright classrooms with quiet rooms. A further classroom with safety surface flooring acts as a multi-purpose room for a wide range of activities.



Our outdoor classroom boasts a raised garden area including a sand house, role-play area, music corner, messy kitchen, and teepee. Our large playground offers many areas - a cottage, rainbow tunnel climbing frame, gravel workshop water play, mini assault course, reading soft play areas, bird watchers' space, planters and much more.



The woodland garden provides a unique learning environment for the children. It is naturally abundant with opportunities for children to grow and learn through active outdoor play in the messy kitchen, climbing frame, construction area and wildflower and pond areas. The woodland environment provides lots of opportunities for exploration and discovery. Skilled staff encourage, support and help extend children's learning.



# Mission & Aims



## *'Nurturing young creative minds'*

Our mission is to be a family community, providing a child centred approach in which each individual is valued, nurtured and encouraged to reach their full potential. It is within this caring and supportive environment that our children can develop and grow and become enthusiastic and motivated learners. In Saint Joseph's we cherish Christian values and encourage respect and tolerance of others.

### *Our aims are to:*

- Create a happy, safe and child-centred environment where your child feels valued and excited about learning.
- Provide a wide range of experiences which allow children to develop at their own pace, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.
- Create an environment which promotes positive behaviour, allowing children to take responsibility for their own actions - encouraging their self-confidence, self-discipline and independence.
- Build partnerships with parents/carers to establish positive home/school links.
- Create an environment which is inclusive for all, irrespective of need, ability, religion, culture or race. In this environment children will gain an understanding of their background and be respectful of others culture and religion.

# The school day

## *A typical day in Nursery...*

**Welcome Time** - Self registration; a time to talk about our news, visitors and the day ahead

**Playtime** - Free play in classroom and other areas (open plan) including a rolling snack and tidy time - children help to tidy areas

**Outdoor Play** - Time to enjoy the freedom of the outdoors in our playground, sensory garden and woodland.

**Story and song time** - Part time children then go home

**Dinner Time and afternoon play indoors and out** - for Full Time children

*Busy days in school, so don't be surprised when they come home tired!*



# Starting school

## Settling into school

Parents are invited to the nursery for a meet and greet children's visit and an induction meeting in June when they will find out curricular and key information. Parents will also receive their child's starting date and 'Getting to know you' booklet. Parents and children are also invited to the nursery for a 'Stay and Play' day in August.

When your child starts the nursery on their first day they may be a little apprehensive, so it is important that mum, dad or a familiar adult can stay with them until they have settled in and feel happy and secure in their new surroundings. During our settling in time, your child will gradually become more comfortable and will soon be happy to stay for the allocated time.

For the first few days your child will stay for one hour and from then on the time will be increased. A staggered intake programme, which takes place over a few weeks, is used to settle the children in. Children start school in small groups. This allows them and the staff to spend time getting to know each other and to practice and become familiar with daily routines.

### School Hours

**Full Time Class:** 9.00am - 1.30pm

**Morning Class:** 9.00am - 11.30am

**Afternoon Class:** 12.15pm - 3.00pm (Mon- Thurs)  
12.15pm - 1.45pm (Fri)



**Points to remember!**

### Arrival to school:

The classroom doors will open at 9.00am and 12.15pm. It is important your child arrives to school promptly Each day. **Please bring your child into the classroom.** Each child must be accompanied by an adult (over 16 years) and never left at the school door. It is important your child comes to school every day. If they are ill please contact the school on their first day of absence.

### Collection from School:

Children must be collected from school by an adult (over 16 years). Please ensure you are on time so that your child does not become upset. Staff also need time to plan and prepare resources and equipment for the next session at this time. If your child is going to be collected by someone not on the collectors list please let their teacher know at the start of the day or phone to let us know. This helps us keep your child safe.

### Snacks & School Fund:

Each day your child will receive a healthy snack which includes fruit, raw vegetables, cheese and a variety of breads, crackers and cereals. Children are encouraged to visit the snack table and follow the routine of selecting items from our food and drink choices (milk and water). Children sit in small family groups eating and chatting together. The snack table provides an ideal opportunity to develop social skills and independence. Children are also encouraged to pour their own drink and wash their cup when they have finished. As part of our healthy snack programme we want our children to understand the importance of eating healthily so they are encouraged to think and talk about healthy eating and dental care.

To cover the cost of snack and other school activities including ingredients for dough, visitors to the school, parties, trips, treats and Christmas/Birthday presents, **£5.00** will be collected every Monday morning. This can also be paid monthly or termly. Each child will receive a school fund card and money bag.

If your child has any particular allergies (food or otherwise) please let us know as soon as possible. Children are not permitted to bring sweets into school.

### Dinners:

Children in the full time class receive a school meal at midday. This is a well-balanced and nutritious meal. School dinners cost **£2.50** per day. Free school meals forms are available from the Education Authority - [mealsanduniform@eani.org.uk](mailto:mealsanduniform@eani.org.uk)

If you think you are entitled to free school meals and your child is attending the morning, afternoon or full time class please contact '**Free Meals**' **02825661355** as this can provide additional funding to the nursery





## Points to remember!

### Nursery Uniform:

The nursery school uniform is durable, comfortable and warm and allows the children to move freely in and outdoors. The nursery uniform can be purchased from: **Thousand Stitches, located in Unit 7, Antrim Enterprise Park, 58 Greystone Road, Antrim. Tel: 07580 136883**

The uniform consists of a navy sweatshirt with Nursery crest (£12.50)  
Emerald green polo shirt (£7.50)  
Navy jogging bottoms (£10.00)  
Trainers with velcro fastening for health and safety reasons.



### Footwear:

It is important children wear the correct footwear to school as they will be involved in a wide selection of activities both indoors and out. Footwear must be well fitting and appropriate. If wellington boots are worn to school please bring a change of footwear. Slippy soles and open toed sandals are not suitable. Trainers with Velcro fastenings are preferable as they help to encourage independence and are much safer for climbing, wheeled toys and physical play.

### A change of clothes:

We encourage each child to be independent and learn to be responsible for their own personal needs as much as possible. Accidents do happen. Each child has a coloured nursery 'change' bag hanging on their peg with their name and symbol. Parents are asked to provide a spare set of clothes for this bag, with their child's name clearly marked on them in case it is required. We sometimes find that children are reluctant to wear the clothes that we have in school, preferring their own clothes.



### *Jewellery & Personal Possessions:*

Children are not permitted to wear jewellery in school. Necklaces, bracelets, rings and hooped earrings can catch on equipment. Small stud ear-rings are permitted. Personal possessions such as small toys and money can be easily lost. These items should be kept at home.

**Points to remember!**



### *Outdoor Play:*

Our outdoor play area encourages children to explore and be imaginative. It includes a cottage, a learning pod to stimulate creative play, gravel area, sand house, climbing frame and much more. The school grounds also includes a Poly tunnel for the children to plant and grow fruit and vegetables and a woodland area which helps them learn to appreciate a natural environment. Children will be involved in outdoor play on a daily basis and can wear school fleeces which the nursery provides. Children may prefer to wear their own coat, hat, scarf and gloves, which should be labelled. Appropriate outdoor footwear should be worn.



### *Sickness Procedures:*

Please send your child to school every day unless they are feeling unwell. If your child has any history of illness, please make your child's teacher aware of this, as special arrangements may need to be made before they start school, e.g allergies etc.

If your child is on medication please speak to the class teacher. A Medical Form will need to be completed if medicines are to be administered by a member of staff. In line with our school policy staff generally do not administer medicines however may do so in special circumstances.

### *Tissues:*

We would be grateful if each child would bring in one box of tissues at the beginning of the school year - we need so many especially during the winter months.

### *Parking / Road Safety:*

In the interests of your child safety we ask all parents, who are car users, to use the outer car park. The inside car park beside the nursery is for staff and deliveries only! As you accompany your child to and from school each day, this is an opportunity to talk about road safety—Stop, Look, Listen and Think!

# The Nursery Curriculum

In Saint Joseph's we appreciate a child's parents/guardians are their very first teachers. Each child coming to the nursery already has a wide variety of experiences which lay the foundation on which the nursery will build. Staff aim to provide a rich variety of pre-school activities and experiences through a structured play programme which includes social interaction, language development, maths; world around us, art and physical development as well as developing pre-writing and reading skills and imaginative play. Children's progress will be monitored through our observations and assessment and will inform our future planning.

<https://ccea.org.uk/pre-school/curricular-guidance-pre-school-education>

"Play is our favourite way of learning."

Dianne Ackermann

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Through personal, social and emotional development children will learn how to build relationships, grow in their independence, understand who they are and have a positive image of themselves. Children will gain an understanding of their own and other's feelings. They will build their self-control and ability to co-operate and be respectful of others as well as being enthusiastic towards their learning.



## Language Development

When starting the nursery each child's language development will be at a different stage. This will be our starting point. Through our stimulating play environments children will enjoy interacting with each other, building their language and communication skills. During welcome, story time and during freeplay children can share personal stories and experiences and talk about their thoughts, ideas and feelings. It is also a time for them to explore themes and topics and a way to improve their listening skills and vocabulary. Staff are very supportive of children who have English as a second language.

The Nursery has an extensive range of books, activity bags and storybags, including story, rhyme, information books, games and puppets. Through our daily story/rhyme time, staff, hope to instil in children a love for books. Favourite stories will be read and reread, providing opportunities to recall, make predictions and ask questions. Children freely access books during free play and through lending library services each week.

Children will gain an awareness of print. They will learn that pictures, symbols, and words have meaning helping them to become readers and writers. Children will have many opportunities for developing mark making skills to represent ideas.

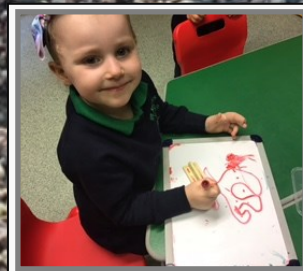


# The Nursery Curriculum

## The World Around Us

Through a wide variety of play activities and experiences children can begin to make sense of the world around them. Their natural curiosity will encourage them to observe, experiment and ask questions. Children often ask why? how? what? when? It is important the nursery environment, resources and interactions with teachers and peers help to answer some of these questions.

Play experiences and opportunities allow children to talk and learn about a variety of topics such as ourselves and our families, weather, healthy lifestyles, road safety and people who help us. Children will also learn to show respect for living things and their environment by planting, observing life cycles and becoming aware of environmental issues like energy, recycling, water and transport.



# The Nursery Curriculum

## Early Mathematical Development

Children will begin to understand and use mathematical language by experimenting and problem solving with a wide range of materials and resources. Indoor and outdoor experiences will help children to gain an awareness of early number, shape, space, size and quantity, pattern and time.

Children will be given lots of opportunities to revisit activities so they can consolidate their understanding of concepts and as a way to use mathematical language naturally during their play and through their conversations.



## The Arts

Children will have many opportunities to develop their imagination and creativity. They can express their ideas and thoughts through music and movement, role play, dance, art and craft and other play experiences. Using natural and man-made materials and a range of medias, such as paints, dough, clay, crayons, coloured pencils, model making materials, printing equipment and junk resources children will have the freedom to experiment and problem solve. Children will learn to take risks and have the confidence to try new things and so experience enjoyment, success and self worth.

Children can experiment with musical instruments, making and creating their own music and adding them to familiar songs, rhymes and stories. Music, sound, beat and rhythm is explored further through our school based music and movement programme and Jo Jingles.



## Physical Skills

Children have many opportunities to enjoy physical play in the nursery, both indoors and out. Fine motor and manipulative skills help to develop finger and hand movements which is linked to children's emerging writing skills. Through a carefully planned program they develop gross motor skills, coordination and an awareness of size, space and direction. The outdoor environment provides wide green and varied spaces to run, explore, be creative and imaginative. Children enjoy the freedom of the outdoors and participating in play that is inventive, adventurous and stimulating.



# What do our children say...



# Pastoral Care & Child Protection

## *Pastoral Care*

In Saint Joseph's Nursery we believe pastoral care infuses into every aspect of school life and affects how we look after each child's whole development in a positive way. We aim to create an environment which allows children to build positive attitudes and understand and have respect for themselves and others. Through our wellbeing program children explore four key emotions, happy, sad, frightened and angry. This program helps children to get in touch with their own feelings, accept them and gain the confidence to express them.



# Safe Guarding and Anti-bullying

## Safeguarding

In Saint Joseph's Nursery all staff consider each child's welfare to be paramount. Through our curriculum and rights respecting school program children begin to understand what appropriate behaviours are and those which are not. Our safeguarding procedures ensure all child protection concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which support the needs of each child. Practices in place safeguard the pupils and ensure we act upon any concerns reported by parents and children in line with our Child Protection procedures.

Our safeguarding team includes - Mrs Maguire (Designated Teacher); Mrs Goss and Miss Lambert (Deputy Designated Teacher) and Mrs Briega McWilliams (Board of Governors).

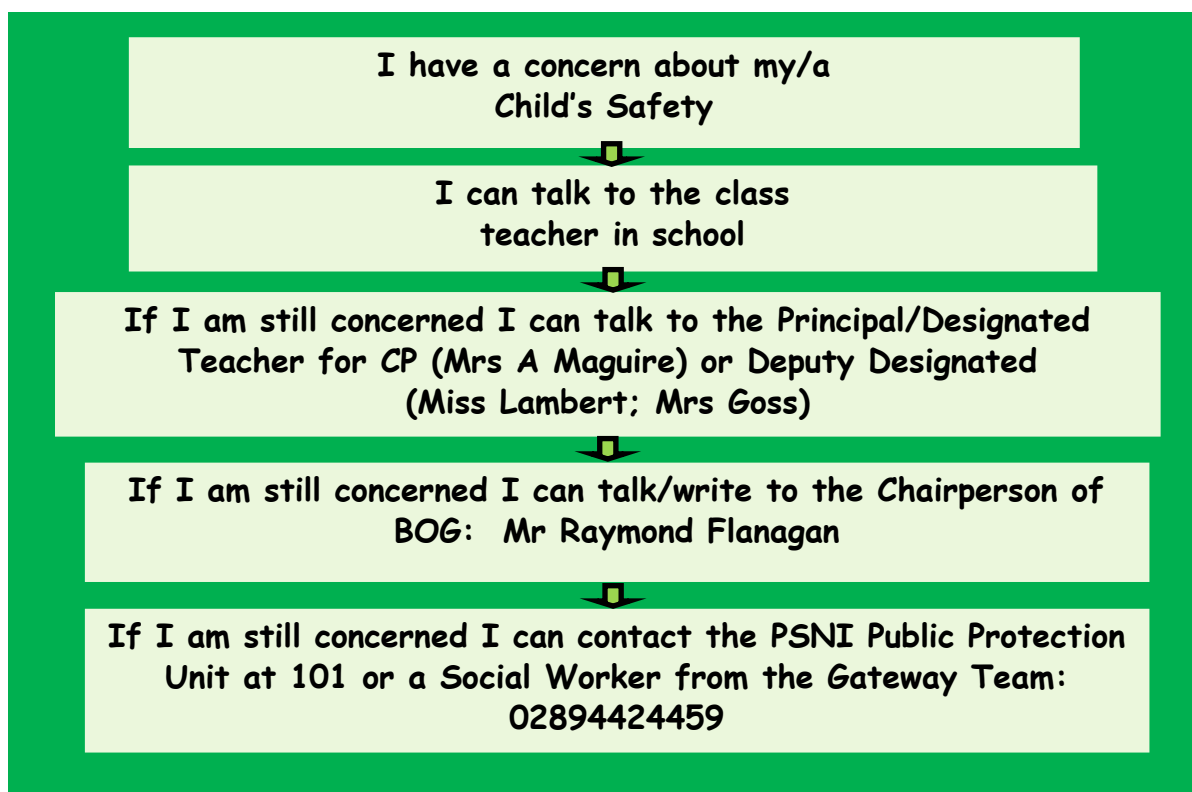
## Anti-bullying

Saint Joseph's Nursery has a positive anti-bullying policy. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Positive school practices aim to prevent bullying:

- by providing a supportive, caring and safe environment for children without fear of being bullied.
- by providing opportunities and experiences through story time, drama, role play and small group work which allow children to explore and talk about their feelings and help promote and reinforce positive behaviour.
- through staff who listen to and encourage children to be open about their feelings.
- through staff who are vigilant for signs of bullying and always take reports of incidents seriously.

The policy includes the procedure parents should follow when reporting concerns or bullying incidents.

The flow diagram below outlines this procedure for any parents who wish to highlight a concern.





# Positive Behaviour



## Positive Behaviour

St. Joseph's Nursery endeavors to provide pupils with a secure, well ordered school environment which allows for the development of their spiritual, social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth. Our behaviour policy promotes positive attitudes towards behaviour and encourages positive relationships between peers and adults in nursery. The nursery recognises the individuality of children and how children achieve at different rates based on their experiences, interests and abilities. We expect different levels of Behaviour and understand,

"Being fair is not giving children all the same but giving them what they need."

Bill Rodgers

Rules, routines and positive behaviour management procedures in school are necessary for everyone's safety, well-being and enjoyment.

Staff aim to provide a rich variety of play activities and other experiences which motivate and challenge children in an environment which is both supportive and child led. If children are to develop in such an environment, they need to have daily routines and be aware of their boundaries. Children will be expected to behave in an acceptable way and are regularly reminded of our 'rainbow rules and routines' in the nursery. This a simple but effective code of behaviour. Parents are encouraged to reinforce this code at home.



## 'Rainbow rules' and routines

In Nursery School we must try to do...

- good listening
- good playing
- good sharing
- good sitting
- good walking
- use quiet voices



We encourage the children to take responsibility for their own actions. They learn from an early stage that positive behaviour is about making good choices. We also help children to understand the consequences of poor choices. We have a positive approach to discipline and reward the children for their efforts, progress, and good behaviour which helps to promote and raise self-esteem and confidence.



## Parental Involvement

A child's nursery year is very special. In Saint Joseph's Nursery we offer a variety of experiences and opportunities for parents to get involved and share in their child's progress and achievements. We believe it is important to build strong partnerships with parents and we value **parental involvement** in the life of the school. We recognise that parents are their child's first educators and therefore we appreciate the knowledge and expertise they bring to us about their child/children. This information helps to inform our planning and the learning opportunities we provide for our children in the nursery.

Before the children start the nursery, parents are invited to attend an Open Afternoon, meet and greet and Induction Meeting. Staff will also carry out a home visit on request. Parents are also invited to take part in stay and play sessions with their child throughout the year. These meetings and visits allow us to get to know you and your child and also helps us plan an appropriate and suitable programme to meet your child's needs. It also gives you and opportunity to be part of your child's learning in school.



## Eco Schools

Through our eco schools programme we aim for children to become more aware of their environment and begin to develop responsible attitudes towards caring for the world around them. Topics and activities are centered round Energy, Waste, Biodiversity and Transport. Our eco-code rap helps to reinforce the importance of recycling, saving energy, water and being kind to flowers and plants in our school environment.



## Forest School

Our woodland Forest School area provides a unique learning environment that is naturally abundant with opportunities for our children to grow by solving problems, working together, learning from mistakes, exploring and making choices. Our Forest School approach aims to raise children's confidence and self-esteem, through participation in hands-on learning experiences. The forest school program provided is play-based and child-led. It allows children to work independently, with a friend or in groups. Children can build together, run, balance and jump and so become more spatially aware. Children can enjoy climbing trees, making shelters, moving/balancing on logs, gathering pine cones, experimenting in the messy kitchen as well as experiencing the space and freedom the woodland provides. The woodland forest school also includes an outdoor classroom, covered pond, building and construction areas, arts and craft, mini beast hotels, book areas and bird watching zone.

# Toy + Book Library, Shared Ed & Extended Schools

## Toy and Book Library

The Toy and Book Library, offers a wide variety of stimulating and structured play activities. Children have the opportunity to engage in art and craft activities, story time, interactive song and rhyme sessions and much more. Children can also borrow a toy and book to take home and enjoy each week.



The toy and book library runs every Tuesday from 10.00 - 12.00 (Age 0 - 3). For more details please contact Mrs Fiona Campbell - 07821528021

## Shared Education

Through our shared education program we are partnered with Steeple Nursery School and Riverside Special School.

Since 1992 all three schools have engaged in many different projects over the years such as EMU and CRED. In 2015 we got involved in the Shared Education Program. The ethos of our program is developing mutual respect for others and a willingness to work together between the schools. We aim to build positive relationships and friendships between our children, parents and staff through activities including trips, play visits, parent courses and coffee mornings. The schools also benefit from joint staff professional development.



## Extended Schools

Extended schools activities are designed to support learning, raise school standards and promote healthy lifestyles, enabling our school to work closely with

members of the wider community and connect local people with local services. Some examples of activities we have provided in school are:

- Parenting programs e.g Mindfulness; Cook it; Delta; Families First
- Music programs - Jo Jingles; Fun with Drums
- Sport - Playsport; Judo
- Art - Young at Art;
- Drama - Jump Jiggle and Jive; Mini Me Yoga



# Moving Forward Together (MFT) and Getting Ready to Learn

## *Moving Forward Together (MFT)*

Saint Joseph's Nursery is part of Moving Forward Together. This is a large group of schools from all sectors and stages working in partnership to promote, "good relations among children, young people and the wider community in the Antrim and Randalstown Area".

## *Getting Ready to Learn*

Through our Getting Ready to Learn (GRtL) programme we aim to encourage and develop parental involvement in children's early learning. This program focusses on raising parent's awareness of how they can support children's learning at home through-out the pre-school year. We are developing four key themes:

- Education Works in Pre-school
- Happy Healthy Kids
- Ages & Stages, 3-4
- Big Bedtime Read



I hope that you have found our school prospectus useful and it has provided you with an insight into the opportunities and activities on offer in Saint Joseph's Nursery.

If you require any further information and would like to discuss your child's placement or visit the school, please get in touch - [stjosephsnursery@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stjosephsnursery@yahoo.co.uk)

Our website will also provide you with additional information and our latest news -

[www.stjosephsnurseryschoolantrim.com](http://www.stjosephsnurseryschoolantrim.com)

# School Closures

## Holidays 2024 - 2025

(all dates are inclusive)

<b>Hallowe'en</b>	28th October - 1st November (Staff Development Day Mon 4th Nov)
<b>Christmas</b>	24th December - 2nd January (Staff Development Day Fri 3rd Jan)
<b>Mid Term</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> February - 14th February
<b>St Patrick's Day</b>	17th March - 17th March
<b>Easter</b>	18th April - 25th April
<b>May Day</b>	5th May - 6th May (Staff Development Day Wed 7th May)
<b>Mid Term</b>	26th May - 30th May (Staff Development Day Mon 2nd & 30th Jun)
<b>Summer</b>	30th June - 31 <sup>st</sup> August

Parents will be notified as soon as possible of other school closings for staff in-service training days.

All information in this booklet was correct when this issue was published, however changes may occur, in which case you will be informed.

# What do Parents say...

We are delighted to share the views of our parents with you. This is what they said...

My little girl was quite shy when she started nursery. Her confidence came on so much with the help of the great nursery staff.

St Joseph's is a fantastic nursery with lovely staff and facilities. A lot of time is spent organizing activities and making the nursery a fun and happy place for the children. All the effort is really appreciated. My daughter has thoroughly enjoyed her time at nursery

PARENT

VOICE

Staff would always go above and beyond.

My child has really enjoyed being in the nursery. He has gained in confidence and I have noticed a great improvement in his speech and language. Thank you so, so much.

Staff were excellent with my son and met all his needs especially when there were times when he got upset or worried about something.

Our time in Saint Joseph's will be cherished forever.

St Joseph's nursery has very high standards and offered an excellent first step into education for our son. They offered a wide variety of activities and experiences throughout the year. We were regularly kept up to date through newsletters and messages on the school app. We would highly recommend the nursery.



# Saint Joseph's Nursery School

52 Greystone Road,  
Antrim  
BT41 1JZ

Tel: 02894462437

[stjosephsnursery@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stjosephsnursery@yahoo.co.uk)



[www.saintjosephsnurseryschoolantrim.com](http://www.saintjosephsnurseryschoolantrim.com)