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behind the school's motto:

'Learn to Love, Love to Learn.'

Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) 2016/2017



ST. MARY'S ON THE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL Prospectus



LEARN TO LOVE, LOVE TO LEARN



Our School Prayer

Bí liom a fósa
Bí liom gach lá
Bí liom a fósa
Bí liom gach oíche

Be with me Jesus
Be with me every day
Be with me Jesus
Be with me every night

Amen

Principal's Welcome

DEAR PARENTS/CARERS,

Thank you for taking the time to look at our school prospectus, which I hope you will find informative. As you browse through these pages you will get a sense of the life of our school and an understanding of our procedures, as well as the breadth of experiences available to our children.

There is a distinctive ethos in our school where our staff, parents and parish enjoy a strong partnership which keeps the child at the centre of everything we do. It is through visiting our school that you will understand and feel the atmosphere that the children work in and enjoy. I invite you to attend our Open Morning for parents and carers, the date and time is attached. If this date doesn't suit, please feel free to arrange a visit at any point in the year.

I am confident with the strong relationships we enjoy throughout our school community, we will achieve the vision for our pupils that they will reach their full potential. We work hard to create a safe and secure environment and through our emphasis on strong pastoral care, our motto is lived:

“Learn to Love, Love to Learn.”

Yours Faithfully,

Matthew O'Brien, Principal





INSPECTION

In the school year 2016 / 2017, the school was inspected by the Department of Education. The Inspection Team reported,

“The quality of the pastoral care provision is outstanding.”

“Across all Key Stages, the standards achieved by the children in Literacy are very good. From an early age, the children interact very well with one another and with adults and are keen to talk about their work; they express clearly their ideas and opinions.”

“Across all Key Stages, the standards achieved by the children in Mathematics are very good. The children draw upon a wide range of mathematics strategies to perform calculations, and can provide logical reasons for their choices.”

“The school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children.”

They also commented on the high level of appreciation expressed by parents in the Department of Education (DENI) questionnaires and especially by the parents who took the opportunity to make written comments to them.

Full copies of the report are available at - www.etini.gov.uk - and hard copies are available in the school office.

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

Enrolment No: 430 Admission No: 60

Application for a place in PI can be sought in December/January of the year in which admission is required. In selecting children for admission to the school the Board of Governors will apply the criteria as set down by the school in the Education Authority's booklet, 'Admission to Primary Schools', which can be obtained from the school office. In the event of over-subscription, a sub-committee of the Board Of Governors will apply the criteria as set out in this booklet. Application for a place in any other year can be made to the school office at any time.

Visionary Framework

The governors and staff of St. Mary's on the Hill Primary School believe the school to be a vital part of the Catholic Community living in the Parish of St Mary's on the Hill.

Our aim is to create a supportive, inclusive Christian school community, in which all members are valued and where pupils are encouraged to develop to their fullest potential and to contribute positively to the world in which they are living.

In order for each child to reach his/her full potential we aim to:

- Develop the pupils' self confidence and foster self esteem
- Develop qualities of confidence, independence, perseverance and cooperation with others
- Encourage the children to value themselves and each other
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum
- Ensure that Literacy and Numeracy form the core focus of the primary curriculum
- Encourage the use of ICT to enhance learning
- Help the children grow in awareness of the presence of God in themselves, in others and in the world around them
- Promote an inclusive school community in which staff and children are encouraged to recognise and value diversity in their dealings with others including those of different faiths and ethnic origins
- Build tangible links between the school, home, parish and wider community
- Promote physical activity, physical development and a healthy lifestyle
- Develop an understanding of the relationship between physical activity and good health
- Optimise learning through the enthusiastic, dedicated and committed approach of staff





RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Catholic Education is the centre point of the child's personal and intellectual development. The Religious Education of the pupils is accomplished in two equally important and complementary ways;

- **Through the total experience in the school**
- **Through the religious education programme**

The staff are aware of the spiritual needs of the children and of the important part Religious Education plays in a child's upbringing. With assistance and encouragement from our school Chaplain, we ensure that these needs are catered for.

Our Religious Education programme, based on the 'Grow in Love,' series, extends beyond the requirements of the core RE syllabus agreed by the main churches. It prepares each child for participation in the liturgy and sacraments of the Catholic Church. It enables the teachers and the priests to share their faith with the children. The Religious Education programme includes prayer services, assemblies and class Masses to all of which the parents are invited. It reflects the needs and aspirations of the entire community of the Catholic School.

PASTORAL CARE / SAFEGUARDING

Pastoral care

At St. Mary's on the Hill, pastoral care permeates all aspects of school life. It reflects the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic faith and involves all members of the school community - children, parents, teachers, and all other adults who contribute to the well-being of each child.

In St. Mary's on the Hill each teacher strives to assure pupils that we are deeply concerned not only with their educational progress but also about their total well-being as unique individuals. We take the view that effective teaching is the highest form of care, and that good teacher-pupil relationships lie at the heart of effective teaching and learning.

Each teacher in the school works very hard to create and maintain a caring and supportive environment in which all pupils can develop the personal and social skills needed to play a confident and responsible role in society. We are also very aware of the need to help pupils manage their lives, as well as helping them prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Much time and effort is devoted to ensuring the development of each pupil as a person, as well as a learner. Towards this end, the school also engages the support services provided by the Education Authority - nurse, health visitor, speech therapist, Educational Psychologist, and Educational Welfare Officer. The school chaplain also takes a keen interest in the development and welfare of the children.

'The quality of pastoral care provision is outstanding.' ETI 2016 / 2017

Safeguarding

At St. Mary's on the Hill Primary School we ensure that we deliver a curriculum designed to offer opportunities for pupils to develop the skills they need to stay safe from abuse. We have very clearly identified procedures in place, whereby children know that if they are worried and they approach any of the adults in the school, they will receive a consistent, supportive response. Copies of all the Safeguarding Policies including the Misuse of Drugs, are available from the school office.





MUSIC PROVISION

We are very lucky to have a school that excels in music. All pupils have the opportunity to experience and develop their skills in music. We provide specialist tuition from a team of skilled musical tutors in brass, wind and string Instruments. Many of the pupils are entered annually for the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music exams.

One of the highlights for the school is the musical celebration – an opportunity for the children to perform all that they have learnt in the year.

All year groups contribute to concerts and performances throughout the year. Our school choir performs at various school and parish events.

SPORTING AIMS

- To provide a range of sports and sporting activities as part of the Physical Education (PE) curriculum
- To promote positive attitudes to PE and sport
- To develop the awareness of the need for PE for physical well-being and a healthy lifestyle
- To promote a sense of enjoyment and achievement and develop confidence
- To promote co-operation and teamwork.



THE CURRICULUM

Revised Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum

All the teachers in St. Mary's on the Hill have been fully trained in the delivery of the Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum:

Curriculum and Skills Capabilities

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities	Formally Assessed Skills
Managing Information	Communication
Being Creative	Using Mathematics
Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making	Using ICT
Working with Others	
Self-Management	

The curriculum is set out in six areas of learning:

- **Language and Literacy**
- **Mathematics and Numeracy**
- **The Arts**
- **The World Around Us**
- **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding**
- **Physical Education.**

Curriculum Objectives

This curriculum promotes children's self-esteem by concentrating on activities and learning experiences which encourage confidence, curiosity and creativity. It encourages children to take an active responsibility for their own learning.

Children learn best when learning is interactive, practical and enjoyable. In St. Mary's on the Hill, pupils are given opportunities to learn in a variety of ways and in different social groupings. Teachers employ a wide range of teaching methods, balancing whole class, group and individual activities to engage pupils in effective learning. The children are encouraged to make choices and decisions about their learning.





ASSESSMENT

Assessment of children's work is an integral part of our teaching. The main purposes of assessments are to:

1. **Ascertain, through a variety of means, the achievements of each child.**
2. **Indicate possible ways of further attainment.**
3. **Assist the teacher in planning the next stage in each child's learning process.**

INFORMAL ASSESSMENT:

To ensure effective teaching and learning, pupils are assessed by the teacher at regular intervals through observations, weekly and end-of-topic assessments and a variety of formal tests. Pupils are also encouraged to take responsibility for their learning through self-evaluation methods:

How did I do? What did I do well? What could I improve? What do I need more support with?

ACCOMMODATION AND RESOURCES

St. Mary's on the Hill is a co-educational day school which was opened in September 1973. It is one of three schools which have been established to serve the parish of St Mary's on the Hill, Glengormley.

The staff includes the Principal, Vice Principal and 15 teachers. A school secretary, caretaker, cleaners, classroom assistants, supervisory staff and school meals staff complete a team dedicated to the education and welfare of children entrusted to our care.

The main building comprises 10 classrooms, a dual purpose sport/dining hall, a staffroom, administrative offices, a medical room and meals kitchen. Each classroom has its own storage and display areas, opening onto a common assembly area. A library area has been established within the school.

In addition to the main building, the school has five new modular classroom units, one of which is a computer suite. Children have access to a variety of educational resources that include interactive whiteboards, iPads, science/technology equipment and computer work stations in every classroom.

A happy atmosphere permeates the school, allowing children to relax and effective learning to take place.



HOMWORK

We recognise the importance of parental support in the education of our pupils. The school also recognises the fact that a child's education does not end when he/she leaves school each day. Homework is regarded as an integral part of every pupil's learning. Homework is set Monday to Thursday nights. Tasks may include written work, learning at home or research activities. The purpose of the tasks is:

- To encourage parental involvement in the child's work.
- To make parents aware of the standard of their child's work.
- To encourage the child to work independently of the teacher.
- To give the child confidence in his/her ability.
- To reinforce facts or skills learned in school.

Homework set by the school should be supervised and signed by parents. We would encourage you to contact the child's teacher if there are any difficulties regarding homework.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

In order to ensure that every child realises their full potential at St Mary's on the Hill, the teachers will ensure that the activities and the content of the lessons are carefully matched to the individual needs of the child. Children with additional needs will be identified through teacher observation, assessment, and performance in standardised tests. Parents will be made aware of any concerns as soon as possible. In accordance with the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, the identified educational needs of each child will be catered for by his/her class teacher, who is supported by relevant outside agencies and support within the school where appropriate. Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator ensures that appropriate Education Plans are drawn up for every child who has been identified as having difficulty in his/her learning. The Special Needs Policy is available on request.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The school organises After - School Clubs throughout the year. A variety of activities are offered to pupils in years 1- 7. The range includes:

Gaelic Football, Dance, Hurling, Soccer, Drama, Coding, Multi Sports, Lego, Science Club, Dodgeball, Art and Crafts.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

It is our aim to involve parents in the education of their child and to keep them as fully informed as possible about their child's progress at school. Parents are encouraged to contact the class teacher to discuss aspects of their child's education or school life which may be of concern. In addition we have more formal opportunities throughout the year for parent-teacher communication.

INDUCTION PROGRAMME

All Parents of Year 1 children are invited to meet the Principal and their child's class teacher in the June prior to enrolment. Pupils take part in a Green Fingers Day – where they plant a seed and see how it has grown over the summer.

PROGRESS REPORTS

All parents are invited to have a consultation with the class teacher to discuss their child's progress. Curriculum meetings for year groups also happen during Term 1 and the Curriculum Booklets can be downloaded from the school website.

A written report is issued in June in which the performance of the child in each curricular area is reported.

PARENT WORKSHOPS

We host a range of workshops that inform and support parents - for example workshops in Phonics, Reading Strategies, Mental Maths or Problem Solving.

Parents are very welcome to come to the school at any time. We would request that parents contact the school office to arrange a suitable time for consultation with the class teacher.

Parents are invited to attend a range of events which may include - School Open Days, Musical Concerts, Curriculum Talk, Assemblies, Sports Days, Book Fairs, Christmas Plays, End - of - Year Concerts, School Trips, Masses, Summer Fairs and Sacramental Meetings.

PARENT - TEACHER ASSOCIATION

A strong, enthusiastic, hard-working team of parents forms the St. Mary's on the Hill Parent -Teacher Association (PTA). The PTA organises various fundraising and social events throughout the school year which raise much appreciated funds for the school. They also help with charitable work and assist at a variety of school events. Information will be sent home to notify parents of meetings and fund - raising events.



OUR SCHOOL UNIFORM

We are proud of the school and want our pupils to be proud of their uniform. In the interest of Health and Safety we request that, with the exception of a watch and stud earrings only, jewellery is not worn to school.

Blue polo shirt with school logo
Grey trousers / Grey pinafore or skirt
School sweatshirt with logo
Black shoes

PE UNIFORM

Plain white polo shirt
Navy shorts / plain, dark tracksuit bottoms
Black Plimsolls / Dark Trainers

As you can imagine, sometimes clothing does get lost or mixed with other pupils. Therefore we would ask that all items of clothing be clearly marked with your child's name. Please check regularly as labels come off and writing may fade!



OUR SCHOOL RULES

In St Mary's on the Hill we have Work, Behaviour and Movement rules which are promoted throughout the school.

OUR WORK RULES:

We always try our best.
We are good listeners.
We are ready to learn.
We work well with others.
We ask for help when we need it.

OUR BEHAVIOUR RULES:

We respect and care for each other.
We respect and care for our school.
We show good manners.
We play safely and fairly.
We enter classrooms politely.

OUR MOVEMENT RULES:

We line up quietly when the bell rings.
We walk safely in and around our school.
We use our 'stop points' and wait for the teacher/supervisor.

BEHAVIOUR

'The behavior of the children was exemplary.'

ETI 2016 2017

Our Positive Behaviour Policy is based on the school's Christian values and beliefs. A positive approach to discipline is adopted by the school, which promotes positive behavior by rewarding good behavior. We want our pupils to behave in a responsible manner, showing consideration, courtesy and respect for others at all times. This high standard of behaviour is expected from pupils, both in school and whilst on their way to and from school. The co-operation of parents is sought in relation to maintaining this high standard, including pupil attendance, punctuality, personal appearance, coming prepared for school and the supervision of homework.

Through our positive behaviour policy we aim to:

- Create a warm and welcoming environment in which effective learning for all the pupils can take place.
- Establish a positive climate in which the teachers can teach effectively.
- Enhance the pupils' self-esteem and foster self-respect and respect for others.
- Empower the children as responsible learners and encourage independence.
- Develop the pupils' interpersonal skills of co-operation and play.
- Establish a set of rules and procedures which will be endorsed and supported by all members of the school community.



THE SCHOOL DAY

School begins at 9.00am. Classes end each day at 2.00pm for all Primary 1 and Primary 2 pupils, and on Fridays for Primary 3 to Primary 7 pupils. Otherwise, schools ends at 3.00pm.

To support families with multiple pick-ups we have the Waiting Club. This operates from 2.00pm to 3.00pm Monday to Thursday.

The school is open to receive pupils from 8.45am when staff supervision is provided. For those wishing to avail of the Breakfast Club this operates from 7.55am to 8.45am – further details regarding this can be accessed via the school office.

In addition, 'Sleepy Hollow Wrap Around Care' operates an After - School supervision. Details of this service may be obtained from the Sleepy Hollow Group (www.sleepyhollowgroup.com).

The lunchtime break lasts for 40minutes with staggered start times depending on the year group. Children may choose to have a packed lunch or a school dinner.

Parents in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance or Pension Credit are eligible to apply for free meals for their children. Dinners are available on a daily basis and are cooked on site. A copy of the dinner menu is sent home and payment can be made online via school money. Log in details for which will be sent home. Thursday's Chicken Curry is a particular favourite!

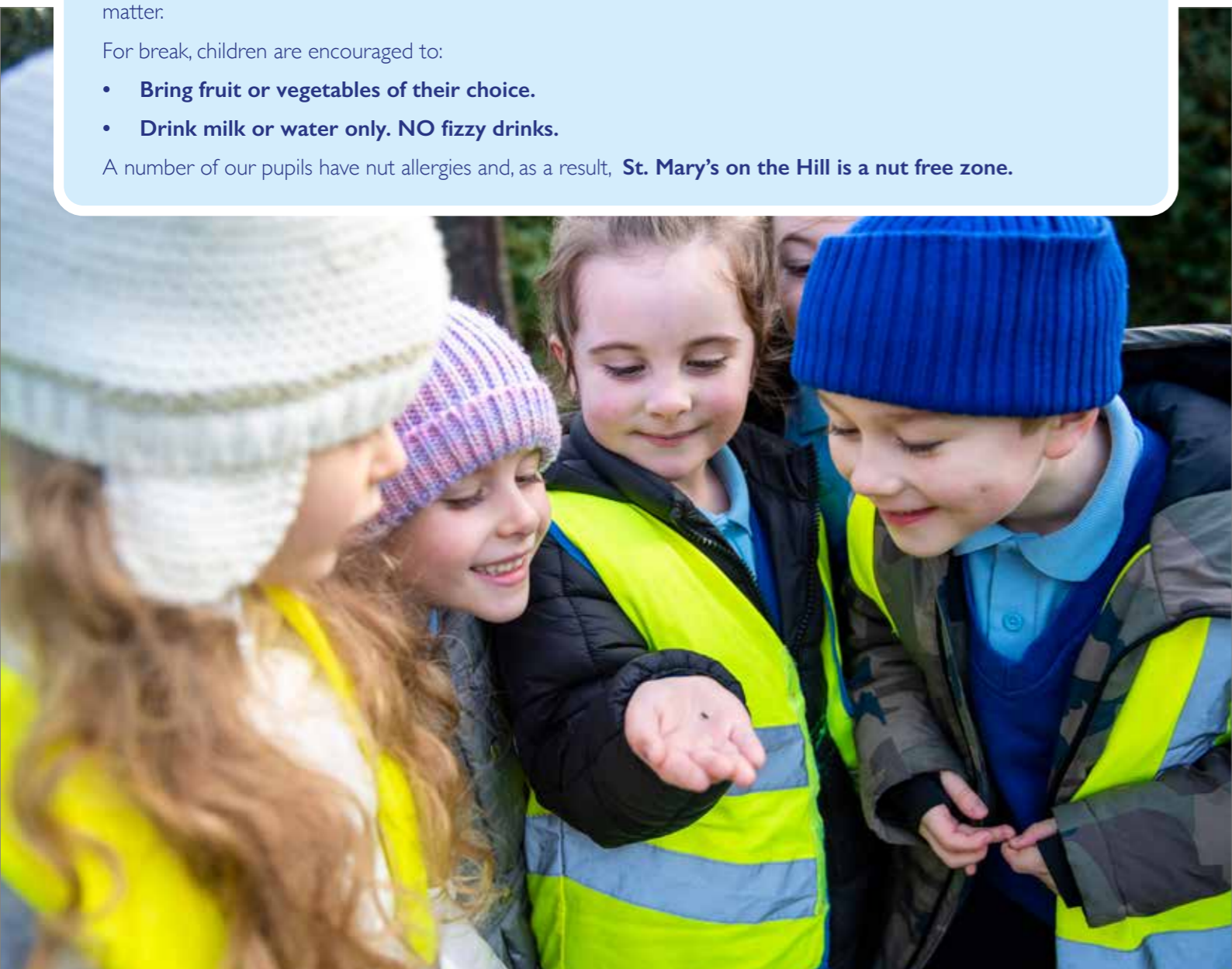
HEALTHY EATING

As a school we employ a healthy eating policy. In order to be successful, we ask for your support in this important matter.

For break, children are encouraged to:

- **Bring fruit or vegetables of their choice.**
- **Drink milk or water only. NO fizzy drinks.**

A number of our pupils have nut allergies and, as a result, **St. Mary's on the Hill is a nut free zone.**



E - SAFETY

As part of the pupils' use of ICT, they have access to the internet. However, the school takes steps to ensure that we protect children in School.

Access to the internet on computers and laptops is provided through a filtered service. All access is provided through the C2K service, which is designed to filter out unsuitable material. iPads are also filtered by C2K and children's use of the internet is supervised by an adult/teacher.

- Use of the internet is a planned activity. Children are taught to use the internet in response to a need e.g. a question which has arisen from work in class.
- Websites are previewed by teachers and revisited to ensure that they are suitable for children's curriculum needs and ability levels.
- Search engines are used selectively. Teachers will choose the search engine and topic and discuss sensible search words which have been tried out beforehand.

If you would like more information about the use of the internet, guidance documents are available from the school.



COMMUNITY LINKS

We have strong links with the pre-school settings from which our pupils come.

Our incoming P1 pupils attend a Green Fingers Day in May, during which they plant sunflower seeds, and spend the morning with the Year 1 teachers. This provides the children with an opportunity to meet their teacher and experience the Primary School setting.

Induction days for the P1 children take place in June.

Positive links are also enjoyed with local primary schools throughout the year, and our pupils participate in various outside sporting and artistic events.

Pupils use the facilities in the local community including Glengormley Library and the Valley Leisure Centre. They avail of programmes such as 'Bee Safe' and 'Citizen and Safety Education'. Health Education talks are presented to the children by the Belfast Giants and the Dairy Council and Internet safety talks are hosted by NSPCC/O2. In addition, the school hosts student teachers and work experience pupils.

Our Year 7 pupils participate in a variety of activities which provide them with opportunities to visit local post-primary schools. They attend taster sessions, school productions and meet pupils and staff prior to their transition in September.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

Pupils feel happier and participate more effectively in their education when their ideas are listened to and their opinions are valued. In St. Mary's on the Hill, we believe that pupils should have their voices heard. The School Council is a formal group of pupils from Year 4 to Year 7, elected by their peers to represent the student body. It is a forum through which the pupils can contribute to the life of the school.

‘Through the highly effective school council, the children undertake leadership roles, which have brought about improvement in lunch provision and play facilities and in addition, have informed school improvement.’ ETI 2016 2017

ECO SCHOOL

We joined the Eco School programme in January 2012. In 2022, we were awarded our third prestigious Green Flag which is displayed on the school site. Through the initiative we help the pupils extend their learning beyond the classroom and develop responsible attitudes and commitment to environmental issues, both at home and in the wider community.

FOREST SCHOOL

St Mary's on the Hill is delighted to be one of the few schools in Northern Ireland which is recognised as an Official Forest School. Due to our high level of commitment and care, we aspire to provide rich learning opportunities for every child who attends St Mary's on the Hill. It is recognised that broad and stimulating curricular experiences should not only be provided within the indoor environment but also the outdoor environment. The children in St Mary's on the Hill have the opportunity to learn outdoors by our trained Forest School teachers. Forest School lessons give the children opportunities to 'ignite the spark' in their learning outdoors by building upon outstanding practice in our learning through play endorsed by the ETI.

There are many wonderful benefits to learning outdoors:

- Greater opportunity for physical activity which is of benefit to children's health and well-being.
- Development of skills in risk taking and problem solving - when children have the freedom to explore and manage risk outdoors, they develop greater self-confidence and the determination and resilience to overcome challenges.
- Educational experiences provided within the forest schools area are carefully planned to capture children's interests and provide a holistic learning environment.
- Activities are appropriate for the different needs and abilities of each child, resulting in the inclusion of all.
- Teaches children to explore and experiment with the 'real world', develops a mindful appreciation of nature and fosters a sense of responsibility for our natural environment.

“The best classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky.”

Margaret McMillan, Early Years Advocate for Outdoor Learning



ST MARY'S ON THE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL RECEIVE DIGITAL SCHOOLS AWARD

We are very pleased to announce that we have been awarded the very prestigious Digital Schools Award. The Digital Schools Award is a national award which promotes, recognises and encourages a whole school approach to the use of digital technology in primary and secondary schools.

Dr Victor McNair of Digital Schools said,

“It was a pleasure to visit St Mary's On the Hill Primary School and hear about the many excellent examples of ICT-enriched teaching and learning. My discussions with staff proved to be an insightful professional dialogue about engaging learning. Clearly, leadership in the school supports digital learning with great enthusiasm and is prioritising this area for development. I am confident that given this excellent leadership and the strong collegial approach ethos, the school will continue to develop and deepen its effectiveness in the use of ICT and continue to provide its children with cutting-edge opportunities for digital learning.”

The digital leaders team, comprised of pupils drawn from P6 and P7, provided me with amazing insights into how they understand their role in supporting younger pupils and their teachers. They are exceptionally mature, committed and insightful about how digital technologies can help them learn and showed remarkable wisdom in their comments to me. More importantly, however, they understand the importance of being part of a team of learners and how to support those less advanced in the digital journey than themselves.”

ICT has been a significant focus for the school over the past number of years and we embrace new and emergent technology and embed it in our lessons to ensure that children are learning to use ICT throughout the curriculum. We aim to ensure that our children are equipped to become effective contributors to society and, in a world where now more than 70% of the jobs that the pupils in our school will be carrying out in their adulthood are ICT based and have not even been created yet, it is encouraging for us to know that we are providing these children with the very best experiences in using ICT.

Our Digital Leaders work superbly as a team and support the teachers and pupils with ICT in their classrooms. As a whole, the ICT team work tirelessly to ensure that all of our children are having an excellent digital experience. We extend our congratulations to the team, the teachers and the children who have helped us to progress so significantly in ICT.



The children are welcoming, considerate and respectful to one another and to adults. There is a notable maturity in the children's attitude to learning and they exemplify very well the aspiration behind the school's motto: 'Learn to Love, Love to Learn.'

Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) 2016/2017



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LEARN TO LOVE, LOVE TO LEARN

