

St Mary's
Gortnaghey,
P.S.



SCHOOL PROSPECTUS

2021-22



Welcome to St Mary's Gortnaghey, P.S.

Our original school opened in 1891 and is in a beautiful rural setting in Gortnaghey Village, four miles from the town of Dungiven. The current building opened in 1983 and we enjoy a bright and well equipped school in lovely surroundings. It is a **'community school'** active in the heart of the community and is locally referred to as 'the best little school in Ireland!'

The school has a long and proud history and the staff endeavour to live up to our reputation as a child centred school, which ensures that each pupil achieves their potential in a nurturing, caring and faith based environment.

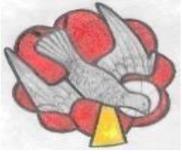
Currently the school caters for 73 pupils with a teaching staff of 5; they are enthusiastically supported by six Classroom Assistants, Caretaker, Secretary and a School Meals Supervisor.

St Mary's Gortnaghey P.S. is a co-educational school catering for pupils from 4-11 years. It is proud of its caring, happy and friendly ethos and we work closely with parents and the local community. The school has 'state of the art' equipment with computers, iPads and interactive whiteboards in each classroom and a fully equipped, modern ICT suite.

The school grounds are spacious and well maintained and provide a stimulating environment for play and recreation. Primary One and Two children have access to a bright and stimulating Outdoor Structured Play Area and Dynamic and Gym area on the school grounds. The school also has access to the Community Centre and Gortnaghey Play Park.

The school is well supported by the community, the local parish and St. Colm's GAC, Drum. Sport plays a significant part of the curriculum and ensures healthy and active pupils.

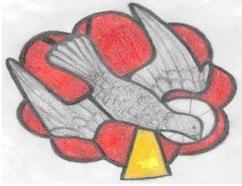
We are fortunate to receive funding for Extended Schools programmes and participate in a successful Shared Education programme with two local schools.



SCHOOL VISION

As a staff, we are all aware of our school's collective past and present achievements. We are striving to contribute for the benefit of future generations to that legacy. In order to empower young people to develop their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives, St. Mary's Gortnaghey PS will help children to:

- achieve values and beliefs in keeping with the school's Catholic ethos
- become autonomous, to grow in self-confidence and begin to establish a sense of independence
- develop their full potential in all areas of their development and foster respective strengths and talents
 - develop respect for themselves and their environment
 - develop appropriate literacy skills and to nurture a love of reading
- develop mathematical concepts and skills and know how to apply and use them in everyday life
- become adept in the safe use of ICT as a means for lifelong learning and communication
- appreciate how others have communicated through the arts and encourage them to utilise the arts for self-expression
- develop a knowledge, understanding and respect of the world and its varied cultures including an awareness of their own culture and identity
- attain and demonstrate high standards of behaviour and cultivate a positive work ethic
 - develop an awareness of healthy lifestyles, options and choices



General School Information

Title: St Mary's Gortnaghey Primary School

Address: 82 Gortnaghey Road
Dungiven
Co Derry
BT47 4PZ

Telephone: 028 777 41984

E-mail: info@gortnagheyps.dungiven.ni.sch.uk

Principal: Mrs Mary Jackson
Mrs Grainne McIlvar (Acting Principal 2021-22)



The Board Of Governors

The Board of *Governors* oversee the general running of the school and are ultimately responsible for the education provided.

The school attempts to attract members with as wide a range of experience as possible on its Board of *Governors*. The term of office of the Board of *Governors* is four years.

Parents have an opportunity to become a *Governor*. Parents can be proposed and elected to the Board of *Governors* and elections are held once every four years.

Current members of the Board of Governors

Representing DENI	Mr Cormac McCloskey (Chairperson)
Nominated by Trustees	Fr Joseph Karukayil Mrs Aine Hazlett Mrs Noeleen O'Hara Mr Shane McCartney
Nominated by EA	Mrs Nolene Burke Miss Julie McCullagh
Elected by Parents	Mr. Eugene Mc Manus
Teacher Representative	Ms. Orla Doherty
School Principal	Mr Grainne McIlvar (Secretary)



Members of Staff:

Principal

Mrs Mary Jackson
Mrs Grainne McIlvar (Acting Principal 2021-22)

Teachers

Mrs Grainne McIlvar
Mr Nathan O'Kane
Ms. Orla Doherty
Mrs Ciara Walsh
Mrs Catherine Craig

Associate Staff

School Secretary

Mrs Nuala Mc Intyre

Classroom Assistants

Mrs Noreen Murphy
Miss Claire Carton
Mrs Katrina Archibald
Miss Aine McCartney
Mrs Josephine O'Neill
Mrs Geraldine Granleese

Breakfast Club Supervisors

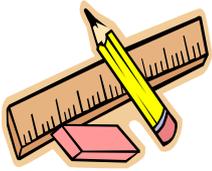
Mrs Noreen Murphy
Mr Seamus McConway

Caretaker

Mr Seamus McConway

Canteen Supervisors

Mrs Marina McEleney
Mrs Noreen Murphy



SCHOOL TIMETABLE



Arrival Time: - 8.00am- 8.55am- Breakfast Club
8.55am-9am Arrival in school

Parents are asked to arrange for children to arrive in school not earlier than 8.55am but before 9am, unless they are attending Breakfast Club.

Morning Break: - 10.45am-11am

Lunch: - 12.30pm-1.15pm (school dinners charged at £2.60)

Class Ends: - P1 children will have a staggered start to the school year. For part of September class for P1 will end at 12.30pm and then 2pm.

For P2 children class ends at **2pm**

For P3 - P7 class ends at **3pm**

Morning Break:

All children have a supervised morning break of 15 minutes.

Healthy Eating and Exercise

In St. Mary's Gortnaghey we promote a healthy lifestyle. Parents are encouraged to provide a healthy break and lunch for their children, and children are taught the importance of eating a healthy balanced diet. Children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day. Exercise and fitness is promoted through P.E., active play at break and lunch and also through participation in after school sports clubs.



SCHOOL UNIFORM

St Mary's, Gortnaghey Primary School has a uniform. The uniform has a School Logo, which represents the school family of St Mary's Gortnaghey. It comprises of:

Pale blue shirt/blouse
Navy trousers/skirt
Royal Blue V-necked jumper
Blue striped tie

Summer Uniform

Yellow polo shirt
Navy shorts
Blue checked dress

Uniform available from:

Groggans, Dungiven
Jon Paul Fashions Limavady

PE Kit

At the current time, due to COVID-19 regulations, children wear their PE uniform to school on P.E. days.

All clothes, especially anoraks, coats and slippers must be marked or labelled with the child's name.

STARTING SCHOOL

Making a good start at primary school is very important. Children need to feel content and secure in their new environment, to build a good relationship with the class teacher and to be able to interact with the other children in the class.

Primary One children will be introduced gradually to school life. During this time parents will be given an insight into how school operates and an idea of the types of activities their child will be engaged in during their child's first year at school.

During September the teacher will observe your child to identify what he/she knows, understands and can do. This will allow us to recognise progress throughout the year. We work closely with parents for the benefit of the children. Parents have many opportunities throughout the year to meet the class teacher and discuss progress.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

We have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of all the children in our care. We aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment where individuals are valued for their unique talents and abilities, an environment in which all our children can learn and develop to their full potential. The welfare of the child is our paramount consideration. For 2021-2022 the Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Mrs G. McIlvar and the Deputy Designated Teacher is Mrs C. Walsh.



Religious Education

The religious ethos of our school provides an environment in which Catholic principles are the guide to all activities. These principles are reflected in the School Mission Statement.

Our Catholic ethos is created through formal and informal religious education. The children follow a structured religious programme entitled 'Grow In Love' supplemented by material from the Diocesan Religious Adviser and the school chaplains. An RSE (Relationship and Sexual Education) component is also included.

Children also experience and participate in a range of special Liturgical celebrations throughout the year. Parents and members of the local community are invited to attend these liturgies.

The promotion of good relationships within the school and between parents and the school and the fostering of the partnership between the home, parish and school contributes to the creation of the overall Catholic ethos of St. Mary's Gortnaghey Primary School.



HOME SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

School is a community and how we interact with each other is important for the overall happiness of the school. We encourage the whole school community to treat everyone

with respect and dignity. Children are taught to respect themselves and to show this self-respect in the way they go about their day-to-day activities in work and play.

Children are also taught to respect others by: -

- Following school /class rules that are made to allow all children to work and play in a secure and contented environment;
- Following the directions given by those in authority;

Teachers and parents work in partnership to help the child develop and to become a caring and considerate person both within and outside the school.

Should the unlikely need for a child's suspension or expulsion arise, we shall follow the procedures laid down by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. Acceptance for admission to the school implies parents' acceptance of our school's Behaviour Policy.



We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. Parents' support is essential in working with the school for your child's benefit. We encourage parental participation in various ways. Parents may contact the Principal with any queries or concerns. We will do all we can to keep parents well informed about what and how their children learn and about life in school. We do this in a variety of ways:

- PRIMARY ONE INDUCTION MORNINGS
- PARENT/ TEACHER MEETINGS
- PARENT INFORMATION EVENINGS
- PARENT WORKSHOPS
- ANNUAL REPORTS
- SCHOOL WEBSITE
- SCHOOL FACEBOOK PAGE
- SCHOOL NEWSLETTER
- SEESAW APP

THE CURRICULUM

"THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM AIMS TO EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL AND TO MAKE INFORMED AND RESPONSIBLE DECISION THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES."

It has three objectives. These are:

1. To develop the young person as an individual.
2. To develop the young person as a contributor to Society.
3. To develop the young person as a contributor to the Economy and Environment.

St. Mary's Gortnaghey Primary School is aware of its statutory obligation to deliver the Northern Ireland Primary curriculum to all pupils. The Curriculum is made up of a range of Learning Areas which foster attitudes and dispositions. These incorporate Assessment For Learning which aims to promote and encourage learning experiences.

WHOLE CURRICULUM SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making
Managing Information
Being Creative
Working with Others
Self-Management

FORMALLY ASSESSED SKILLS

Communication
Using Mathematics
Using ICT

LEARNING AREAS

Religious Education
Language and Literacy
Numeracy
Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
The World Around Us
Physical Education
The Arts

The pupils of St. Mary's Gortnaghey Primary School have many opportunities to enjoy practical and challenging lessons. Children learn best when engaged in active lessons.



OUT-OF-SCHOOL AND AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Many activities take place out of normal school hours. A wide programme of educational visits is also in place for all classes.

- All education visits are planned so as to help broaden the children's experiences and to enrich the delivery of the curriculum.

We currently offer a variety of after school activities. They include:

- *Multi Sports Club
- *Camogie
- *Skills Schools
- *Gaelic Football
- *Booster Clubs
- *Dance

Road Safety

The Governors and Staff of our school believe that we have an important role to play in helping to reduce tragedies on the roads. We believe in educating for life in a very real sense and see Road Safety Education as a basic life skill. We promote this through the cross curricular work and by playing a full part in approved Road Safety Schemes. Our school has a Bronze Sustrans School Mark.

Assessment

All children are continually assessed to enable appropriate planning and in order to provide appropriate feed back to children and parents. This assessment can take many forms:

- Work is regularly marked and positive comments are written.
- Discussion continually takes place between the teacher and child.
 - Children's self-evaluation
 - Standardised tests
- End of Key Stage Assessment (Primary 4 and Primary 7)

Transfer Arrangements

At the end of P7 Key Stage 2 when pupils are transferring to Post Primary Schools the school will follow the arrangements as stipulated by the Education Authority. Children transfer to a number of Post Primary Schools in the local area.

Pupil Performance

The aim of St. Mary's Gortnaghey Primary School is to ensure that every child reaches their full potential. We work closely with the parents to achieve this aim.

Special Educational Needs Provision

St. Mary's Gortnaghey Primary School is an inclusive school. We provide a caring, respectful, creative, welcoming and safe environment in which staff, family and community strive to prepare confident, well-informed, lifelong learners and responsible citizens. We help our pupils develop an understanding of the value of diversity. Care is taken at all times to match the curricular provision for all children to their particular stage of development and to take account of any particular difficulties or special talent, which they show. Where provision, beyond what can be given by the class teacher is required, every attempt is made to provide appropriate help via extra support.

Homework

It is part of school policy that all children are asked to do homework.

Homework provides an important link between home and school. It gives parents an opportunity to see what is happening in school and to share in their children's learning experiences. It also provides an opportunity for children to develop further independence in their own work. We encourage parents to become involved in their children's homework and ensure it is completed each night. We also encourage children to take responsibility for their own homework and learning. Parents should contact the school if there are any difficulties concerning homework.

ORGANISATION OF LEARNING

In St Mary's Gortnaghey PS pupils are taught in composite classes.

The organisation of these classes is reviewed annually so that the needs of the children are met.

APPLYING FOR A PLACE AT ST MARY'S GORTNAGHEY PS

Parents who wish to enrol their child at St. Mary's Gortnaghey PS should:-

- Read the Primary Admissions Guide on the EANI website; www.eani.org.uk
The guide will help parents understand more about the application process and what to expect when applying for a place in primary school.
- Application forms can be completed online using the primary admissions portal.
This opens at **12 noon on Monday 10th January 2022** and closes on **Friday 28th January 2022 at 12 noon.**

More information can be found from the Primary School Admissions Team. The email address is:

primaryadmissions@eani.org.uk

The Admission Criteria that will be used by the Board of Governors in selecting children for admission to the school is given below.

Priority shall be given to children resident in Northern Ireland.

- 1 Children of compulsory school age who normally reside in the following areas of the Parish of Dungiven Gortnaghey, Derryard, Drum, Ardinariff, Ballygudden, Flanders, Bovevagh, Derrylane, Killyblight, Ballyhargan.
- 2 Children of compulsory school age from other areas.

In the event of over-subscription to any one of the criteria, taken in order, the following Sub-Criteria will be applied in the ORDER SET DOWN. If over-subscribed in any one of the Sub-Criteria, taken in order, final selection will be on the basis of the closeness of the home to the school as measured by shortest walking distance.

- (a) children who have brothers/sisters (half-brother/sister) presently enrolled in the school;
- (b) children whose parent/guardian, brother/sister (half-brother/sister) are prior pupils of the school;
- (c) children whose parent/guardian is presently a permanent member of the school teaching/ancillary/auxiliary staff.

Applications and Admissions to Primary 1		
Year	Total Applications	Total Admissions
2018/19	12	12
2019/20	12	12
2020/21	10	10



Charging and Remissions Policy

In line with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Education Reform Order 1989, it is the policy of the Board of Governors to:

- maintain the right to free school education for all children;
- establish that activities organised wholly or mainly during school time should be available to all children;
- require parents to pay charges for board and lodging for their children on residential trips, taking account of any relevant remission arrangement;
- confirm its right to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of activities organised by the school;
- make charges in respect of optional extras, as determined by the Board of Governors.

PFA

In St. Mary's Gortnaghey Primary School there is a strong Parents and Friends Association. The PFA organise many very successful events. These events raise much needed funds which enhance the educational experiences of our pupils. The committee is a voluntary group of parents who are willing to work on behalf of all parents, to plan fund-raising events throughout the school year.

Community Links

St. Mary's, Gortnaghey Primary School has a long history of well-established links with the wider community. The school has close links with:

- Gortnaghey Community Centre
- St. Colm's GAC, Drum
- Shared Education partners
- SUSTRANS

DEALING WITH YOUR CONCERNS

We value parents as partners in the education of our children. The views of parents are significant and we actively encourage positive contributions which parents make to the life of the school. We have a safe welcoming environment where each learner can flourish. We want your child's experience at St. Mary's Primary School to be positive and we want your child to feel happy, nurtured and cherished at our school.

We look forward to meeting you and showing you our wonderful school.

The Open Night video will soon be posted to our school website for those of you who have been unable to visit.

Please see stmarysgortnaghey.com for more information.

