



# St. John's Primary School Gilford



**School Prospectus 2016-2017**

December 2015

Dear Parents/Guardians,

May I take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to St. John's Primary School.

We value our close relationship with parents and look forward to working with you in partnership to enable your child to achieve the highest standards possible, both in terms of academic progress and all round personal development.

It is school policy to care for all our pupils equally, to ensure a happy working atmosphere, to promote high standards in all that we do and to foster a positive attitude to discipline, ensuring that each child has every opportunity to develop to his/her full potential.

This booklet has been designed to give you basic information about school life which we hope you will find both informative and useful. Should you require further information please do not hesitate to contact me. You are most welcome to make an appointment to visit our school.

It is our hope that when your children eventually leave St. John's they will have evolved as confident, well developed young people who can look back on their primary schooling as a rich and rewarding time in their lives.

C. McCooe (Miss)  
Principal

**St. John's Primary School**

Castle Hill  
Gilford  
Craigavon  
BT63 6HH

**Maintained Primary School**

Enrolment Number: 172  
Admissions Number: 25

**PRINCIPAL:** Miss C McCooe, BEd (Hons), MEd

**CHAIR OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS:** Mr Charles McConville

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**RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND PRINCIPAL IN RELATION TO ADMISSIONS**

The Board of Governors draws up the admissions criteria and delegates to an Admissions Sub-Committee, which includes the Principal, the responsibility for applying these criteria. Any reference herein to the term the Board of Governors includes any Sub-Committee appointed by the Board of Governors for the purposes of applying the admissions criteria set out herein.

**ADMISSIONS CRITERIA**

The Board of Governors will apply the following criteria in the order indicated to identify which children should be admitted either at initial admission to education or on transfer from another school.

- 1 Children of compulsory age who normally reside in the Parish.
- 2 Children of compulsory age from outside the Parish.

In the event of over-subscription in 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 the shortest walking distance. Priority will be given to those living nearest the school.

- (a) Children who have brother/sister (half-brother/sister) presently enrolled in the school.
- (b) Children whose parent/guardian, brother/sister (half-brother/sister) are former pupils of the school.
- (c) Children whose parent/guardian is presently a permanent member of the school/ancillary/auxiliary staff.
- (d) Preference will be given to children with exceptional circumstances (medical, social or other problems) that necessitate admission to St John's PS, Gilford rather than any other primary school. The circumstances should be personal to the child and must be supported by independent and appropriate documentation, providing evidence of the circumstances being described as being exceptional.

## **DUTY TO VERIFY**

The Board of *Governors* reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any application form.

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**

The school currently does not operate a waiting list policy.

## **ADMISSION TO P2-P7**

Children will be admitted using the above criteria provided:-

- (i) The school will not exceed its enrolment number as determined by the Department of Education, and
- (ii) That, in the opinion of the Board of *Governors*, they would not prejudice the efficient use of the school's resources.

<b>APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS TO P1</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>Total Admissions</b>
2013/2014	13	13
2014/2015	17	17
2015/2016	24	22

## VISITING THE SCHOOL

It has always been the aim of St. John's Primary School to actively involve parents in the education of their children and to inform them as fully as possible about their children's progress.

The arrangements for consultation are:

### **Before enrolment:**

All new entrants to Primary 1 will be invited, with their parents, to meet their teacher and view the classroom in June 2016.

Any parents considering sending their children to St John's can make an appointment to meet the Principal by telephoning or calling at the school.

### **After enrolment:**

Parents are invited to attend Parent/Teacher Meetings to discuss their child's progress. Each child also receives a written Report at the end of the school year.

Parents are invited to participate in the life of the school by taking part in various activities throughout the year. These include School Masses, Information Evenings, the Book Fair, Christmas activities, Sports Day and other concerts and events arranged to strengthen the home/school partnership.

Parents of P7 children transferring to post-primary education in 2016 will be invited to a meeting with the Principal at which advice and guidance is given on transfer procedures.

Parents are very welcome to come to the school to discuss their children's progress or any problems that may arise. To avoid disruption of classroom work the following procedures should be followed:

- Emergency - Parents should approach the school secretary or Principal to arrange an appointment.
- Non-Emergency - Parents should contact the school secretary/Principal or class teacher to arrange an interview at a mutually convenient time.

## **Curriculum Policy**

As a Catholic School St. John's will endeavour to bring its pupils closer to God by example and its emphasis on the Catholic way of life.

It is the policy of the Board of Governors of St. John's Primary School that all the pupils will be offered their full entitlement under the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

### **Broad Aims of the School**

St. John's Primary School offers a curriculum that is balanced and broadly based and which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of each child.

This curriculum will seek to prepare the pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The school will also aim to maximise the potential of each child, to develop self-confidence in the pupils and to promote a spirit of tolerance towards others.

St. John's aims to create a caring environment within which children will experience the Christian way of life, based on the belief that every child is of equal worth and every person has something positive and unique to contribute.

### **General Principles**

The acquisition of knowledge and skills will be regarded as important. This acquisition will, however, be placed in the context of the development of positive attitudes to learning and the development of sound moral values based on the Catholic faith. It will be held to be important that children learn to apply themselves to the work in hand and that they assume gradually, responsibility for their own learning.

To keep abreast of educational change policies, resources and methods in use within the school will be reviewed regularly. The staff is committed to ongoing professional development to enable them to deliver the curriculum and to maintain the highest standards of professional competence in education.

## Curriculum Details

### Stages of the Primary Curriculum

The primary phase comprises:

The Foundation Stage:	Years 1 and 2
Key Stage 1:	Years 3 and 4
Key Stage 2:	Years 5, 6 and 7

### Whole Curriculum Aim and Objectives

#### Aim

The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.

#### Objectives

The objectives of the Northern Ireland Curriculum are:

- To develop the young person as an individual
- To develop the young person as a contributor to society
- To develop the young person as a contributor to the economy and the environment

These curriculum objectives will infuse the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics, Using ICT and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities: Managing Information, Working with Others, Thinking, Problem Solving, Decision Making, Self-Management and being Creative.

#### The Areas of Learning

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

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

## **Cross Curricular/Community Links**

St. John's is involved in various projects with local Primary Schools through Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, the Extended Schools Cluster Programme and other established links.

We also liaise closely with schools in the Post-Primary sector, participating in workshops and other projects, in addition to enjoying strong community links with local churches, local businesses, sporting organisations and charity groups.

## **Assessment**

Continuous monitoring of children's work by their teachers occurs throughout the school year.

Standardised tests take place in May for Primary 3 to Primary 7 children.

Running Records (Reading) are completed as and when required.

Parents will be informed of their children's progress in the following ways:

- A yearly interview will be held in October to which parents will be invited to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher.

Teachers are willing to meet parents throughout the year to discuss a child's progress or a concern which has arisen. Please telephone the office to arrange an appointment.

- An annual written report on each child's progress will be issued towards the end of the summer term - June 2016.

## **COMPLAINTS**

Queries/concerns in relation to the curriculum are dealt with initially by the child's class teacher. Further complaints may be referred to the principal. If the matter is not then resolved the complaint must be put in writing to the Chairman of the Board of Governors. Should the matter still not be resolved the parent may request that it is referred for consideration to the Education Authority - Southern Region's Complaints Tribunal for Curriculum Matters.

## **School Hours**

P1 - P3                      9.10 am - 12.30 pm  
                                    1.10 pm - 2.00 pm

P4 - P7                      9.10 am - 12.30 pm  
                                    1.10 pm - 3.00 pm

## **Holiday Arrangements**

The school will be closed for the months of July and August and for all statutory holidays.

More accurate information on holidays and other closures will be made available to parents at the beginning of September, in addition to inclusion in the school's termly Newslink and the school website.

In the event of an emergency closure every attempt will be made to notify parents as soon as possible to enable them to make alternative arrangements.

Parents should check that the school has an up-to-date record of addresses and telephone numbers.

Please note parents are encouraged to organise holidays outside term time.

## **Leaving the School during the Day**

Children are never permitted to leave the school grounds during the day without permission. No child will be allowed to leave the school unless accompanied by an adult who should be known to staff.

Pupils must be signed out of school by the adult collecting them and a reason provided as to why they are leaving in line with Attendance procedures. A book for this purpose will be held in the main office and adults collecting pupils should report there.

## **Religious Education**

As a Catholic School, St. John's promotes the philosophy of religion permeating all aspects of school life.

Our core religious education programme is based on the 'Alive O' series. A new programme, namely 'Grow in Love', has been introduced in Primary One and Two from September 2015. At every level there is a strong emphasis on the personal spiritual growth and development of each child, enabling them to grow in an appreciation of the Catholic faith and in the knowledge and love of God. Pupils participate regularly in a programme of class prayer and school Masses, religious assemblies, prayer services, penitential services, visits to the Church, Carol services and collections for charitable purposes.

The children in Primary 4 are prepared for the Sacraments of Penance and First Communion while the children in Primary 7 are prepared for and receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The school chaplain, Fr. Powell, is a regular visitor.

## **Special Educational Needs**

Some of the children attending St. John's have special educational needs. As it is the intention of the school to maximise the potential of each of the children the school will endeavour, within its resources, to meet these needs.

The needs of children with learning difficulties are the shared responsibility of the whole staff, but this responsibility is co-ordinated by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

Where a child with special educational needs is identified an Individual Education Plan is written. Regular monitoring of the child's progress is carried out and regular contact is maintained between home and school throughout the year.

The school works closely with the Education Authority - Southern Region in determining some children's particular special needs in accordance with the law. This involves close co-operation between teachers, school medical authorities, educational psychologists and parents. The EA will make the final decision about the appropriate form of education.

## **Class Organisation**

All classes are mixed ability. Some classes can be composite of two year groups but this depends on the number of pupils in each year group and may vary from year to year. Teachers use a combination of group and class teaching. Extra consideration is given to children with specific learning needs.

## **Homework**

St. John's regards homework as an important part of the school day. The school sees a value in children engaging in homework as a means of:

- Consolidating work done in school
- Promoting the discipline of home study and developing good work habits
- Providing opportunities for independent learning
- Involving parents in their children's studies

The responsibility for overseeing the completion of homework tasks lies with parents.

## **Pastoral Care Arrangements**

The school recognises its responsibility to do everything possible to nurture each child's physical and emotional well-being and with this in mind, will endeavour to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment for learning. The pastoral care policy of St. John's is closely linked to the ethos of the school and all staff contribute to the delivery and development of pastoral care. It is the responsibility of each class teacher to look after the pastoral needs of the children in their care.

In St. John's all members of staff have a caring commitment to every aspect of school life. The school is a community, an extended family where everyone works for the common good and in partnership with parents, staff strive to create an open, welcoming atmosphere where educational co-operation can take place.

When a child is sick or injured the school will, in the first instance, attempt to contact the parents/guardians or agreed representatives. The parent should then arrange for the child to be collected at the school.

Please ensure that the school has an up-to-date record of addresses and telephone numbers. It would be appreciated if parents would nominate an emergency contact.

In all cases it will be school policy to act in the best interests of the child.

## **Child Protection**

In St. John's we support the principle that every child has the fundamental right to be safe from harm. A Safeguarding Policy has been drawn up in accordance with current regulations. If parents have any concerns they should contact the school and speak to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mr Battersby or in his absence, Mrs Power, the Deputy Designated Teacher.

The Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually and all staff participate in relevant training accordingly.

## **Drugs Education**

The school has developed a Drugs Education Policy which is integrated into our Personal Development programme. This programme emphasises the dangers involved in the misuse of tobacco, solvents, alcohol and medicines and while cross-curricular in nature, many aspects of it are delivered through health education and the science curriculum.

The programme is intended to equip our children with the skills to respond and react appropriately to situations which are hazardous to their health.

We recognise this as a partnership between the school and the parents, where we work together in educating and preparing our children for each stage of their lives.

## **Positive Behaviour**

Good discipline is essential for effective learning and helps to develop in our children responsible attitudes and values for life. St. John's aims to secure positive discipline by creating an environment within our school that allows each child to grow and develop within rules and guidelines that are fair, effective and consistently applied by members of staff.

It is school policy to promote courtesy, good manners and consideration for others at all times. The school expects pupils to show respect to one another, to the teaching and non-teaching staff and for school buildings and the property of others.

Our School Positive Behaviour Policy actively promotes positive discipline by acknowledging, highlighting and rewarding appropriate behaviour.



## Extra-Curricular & Extended School Activities

A wide variety of activities of an academic, sporting and cultural nature take place within and after school hours under the guidance of staff, tutors and volunteers. These activities are considered to be an important part of school life and aim to foster the development of independence, team spirit and enhance the physical well-being of each individual, in addition to raising pupil self-esteem.

Opportunities to display and celebrate the pupils' range of talents and skills are provided through participation in Sporting Competitions, local Festivals and other parish/community events.

Funding from the Extended Schools' Programme also enables St. John's to promote a healthy break policy. The school provides fresh fruit for all pupils three days per week with parents supporting this policy by supplying healthy break on the two remaining days. This arrangement is reviewed each year.

## School Uniform

It is the policy of St. John's that all children wear school uniform. Wearing school uniform helps children identify with the school, its tradition and its standards.

<b>Girls' Uniform</b>	<b>Boys' Uniform</b>
Navy skirt/pinafore	Navy trousers
Blue shirt	Blue shirt
Navy cardigan/jumper	Navy jumper
Navy/blue striped tie	Navy/blue striped tie
White socks/Navy tights only	Navy coat (optional)
Navy coat (optional)	
Blue/White Dress (summer)	

The school tie can be purchased from the office as can a school badge, which may be sewn on school knitwear if parents wish. In recent years parents can also order a coat bearing the school crest through the office in the summer term. This is optional.

Trainers should be worn for PE.

To avoid confusion parents are asked to mark all items of clothing with their child's name.

## **Charging and Remissions Policy**

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

- Maintain the right of free education for all pupils
- Establish that activities organised wholly or mainly during school time should be available to all pupils
- Confirm its right to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of activities organised by school
- Make changes in respect of optional extras, as determined by the Board of Governors.

Written parental/guardian consent will be required before a pupil participates in school trips.

## **Mid-Academic Year Changes**

If there are any changes to the above information due to unforeseen circumstances during the school year 2016 - 2017 all parents will be informed in writing of the nature of such a change.

## **Further Information**

The Board of Governors of St. John's Primary School realises that the information given in this prospectus is limited. Parents are very welcome to make arrangements with the principal to visit the school and discuss further our plans for meeting your child's needs.