



# St. Malachy's Primary School



[www.stmalachysprimary.org](http://www.stmalachysprimary.org)



# **Welcome Bienvenue Bienvenido Witamy Willkommen Welkom Merhaba Shalom Labas Fáilte 歡迎光臨 Üdvözlet Bine ai venit Hoş geldiniz**

## **Principal's Introduction,**

Thank you for taking the time to read through our prospectus. We hope it enables you to gain insight into the life of our vibrant school.

The prospectus has been designed to give you the basic information that we think you will need to ensure your children's happiness during their time at the school. Education is our core business. We aim to provide a safe and happy family environment for each child under our care whilst sustaining high standards. Our Catholic ethos is reflected in our work ethic, in how we treat each child and in how we contribute to the life of our parish. We pride ourselves in being a family and we foster this family environment where each child is valued.

We have begun an exciting era in the long life of St Malachy's Primary School. As one of only a few Digital Schools of Distinction in Ireland, we continue to provide an excellent education for our children. In our recent history we were awarded first place in a UK wide Minecraft competition and achieved third place overall in a similar Northern Ireland competition.

Our Assessment Data continually demonstrates that our results in both literacy and numeracy far exceed the Northern Ireland average, a credit to our staff. You can be confident that your child will receive the highest standard of teaching from our team of very committed teachers and classroom assistants in a happy, friendly atmosphere. Be assured also that your child's happiness and well-being will be our first concern at all times during his or her years at our school.

If you find you require more information about any particular aspect, please come to see myself or a member of the staff. It is through easy communication between home and school that we can build the close relationship which will both support and be an encouragement to your children while they are at St Malachy's.

Yours sincerely

**Paul Duggan**  
Principal



**"There is evidence of appropriate, ongoing child-centred improvement work in the school, led effectively by the SLT and informed through the effective analysis of the school's data and high quality self-evaluation. The key priorities identified in the coherent school development plan concentrate appropriately on improving further the quality of the children's learning experiences and the outcomes that they attain. The co-ordinators are empowered to lead on their areas of responsibility and there is a shared strategic vision for future developments in the school." ETI 2019**



**“A group of children from year 6, who met with the inspectors, talked positively about their experiences in school. They highlighted, in particular, their enjoyment of learning, the extensive opportunities they have to engage in a range of activities beyond the classroom and the support they receive from their teachers.” ETI 2019**

## Mission Statement

We at St Malachy's Primary School endeavour to promote a welcoming community based on trust and mutual respect, where all individuals feel that they are valued and belong. We develop our spirituality through prayer, reflection and celebration, whilst living out our faith.

As a community of learners, we strive for excellence, unlocking the full potential of each individual, developing confident and independent learners.

As we journey together with Christ, we seek to engender the joy and wonder of learning through celebrating God's love in our lives. We invoke the intercession of Saint Malachy as we journey together in faith and we hope that all may say "Truly God is in this place."



# The School Curriculum

It is the policy of the Board of Governors of St. Malachy's Primary School that all the pupils receive their full entitlement under the Northern Ireland Curriculum and that the school go beyond that entitlement in areas where there are particular abilities among the staff.

The School provides a balanced and broadly based curriculum promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual, physical and social development of the pupils. This curriculum will seek to prepare the pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. It is also the aim of the school to maximise the potential of each pupil, to develop self-confidence in the pupils and to promote a spirit of tolerance towards others.

The 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.

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

## The curriculum is set out into six areas of learning:



**"They develop well their skills in listening, thinking, planning, working with others, problem solving and designing as they progress through the school. They are able to apply their learning in literacy and numeracy across other areas of the curriculum, especially within the high quality arrangements for science and information and computer technology."**

ETI (Education Training Inspectorate) 2016



## ICT

Using Information and Communication Technology (U ICT) is one of the three statutory cross-curricular skills of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

In 2016 St Malachy's was one of only ten schools in N. Ireland to be awarded the Digital School of Distinction. The school was highly commended on the provision of ICT throughout the school and how well ICT was integrated into the curriculum to support teaching and learning. All classes have the use of the latest technology in interactive whiteboards, computers, laptops, and access to iPads. As part of the school's E Safety Policy our cartoon mascot 'Tony the Cyber Tiger' promotes safe attitudes to online use, both in school and at home.

As part of ICT provision, the school offers a Coding Afterschool Club. This provides pupils with the opportunity to work with software such as Scratch, Sphero SPRK+ and Drones. During this time, children solve problems using algorithm, demonstrating their creativity in developing simple interactive games. In doing so, they develop skills that are essential in the technologically advanced world in which we live.

We have recently achieved national success in 2 Minecraft competitions, coming first place overall in the United Kingdom and third place overall in Northern Ireland.



# Music Provision

St Malachy's has a proud music tradition and is fortunate to have the services of EA music tutors on a weekly basis.

Children in P5-7 receive EA music tuition in a selection of brass and woodwind instruments. We provide this service for free. Pupils also can learn to play the tin whistle and sing in the school choir, which performs at both school and community events. Our school choir takes part in the Schools' Singing Programme hosted by the Archdiocese of Armagh and the annual inter-denominational Carol Service.



## PE

In our school we place a great emphasis on the teaching of PE and Sport, both within the normal curriculum and as an extra-curricular activity. All classes take part in at least 2 PE sessions per week taught by their class teacher or a specialist coach.

Through the range of activities, we make available to our pupils we aim to give them opportunities to develop:

- **The skills associated with these activities**
- **Enjoyment in participating**
- **An awareness that taking an active part in sport could lead to a healthier lifestyle.**

In the summer term, all classes participate in our annual Sports Day.

## Homework

We recognise the importance of parental support in the education of our children. Homework is an integral part of every pupil's learning and an opportunity for parents to become involved in their children's learning and progress. It reinforces the learning done in school and is an excellent home/school link.

Children also need time for recreation and the development of their own interests so homework is assigned Monday to Thursday. The recommended time spent on homework should be within the following ranges.

- P1: 10-15 minutes
- P2: 15-20 minutes
- P3: 20-30 minutes
- P4-5: 30-45 minutes
- P6-7: 45-60 minutes



## Assessment and Reporting

Detailed monitoring of pupils' progress takes place throughout the school year, both formally and informally. This information is discussed with parents at parent/teacher meetings held at the beginning of the spring term. An end of year written report is issued in June. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's education and appointments can be made to discuss progress with the class teacher at any mutually agreed time.



## Religious Education

Religious Education will be available to all children at St. Malachy's Primary School. The Religious Education of pupils will be accomplished in two equally important and complementary ways.

- Through the totality of experiences in the school
- Through the religious education programme.

Staff are aware of the spiritual needs of the children and the important part Religious Education plays in a child's upbringing. The Grow in Love programme is the core resource for the teaching of RE, linking the home and school in the task of handing on the faith to the children.

The school chaplain is a regular guest in the school, visiting all classes and assisting the respective class teachers in the preparation of children for First Communion and Confirmation.



## Special Educational Needs

In order to ensure that every child realises his/her true potential at school the teachers will ensure that the content of lessons are carefully matched to individual needs. Every effort will be made to provide maximum access to the curriculum for children with Special Educational Needs.

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. The identified needs of each child will be catered for by his/her class teacher using a wide range of provisions within the school including withdrawal for interventions, sensory motor group, access to programmes such as NESSY and Dynamo Maths. The school will also source support from relevant outside agencies such as the EA Literacy service and RISE NI. The Special Needs Co-ordinator supports staff in ensuring that all needs for SEND children are met.



# Pastoral Care and Child Protection

At St Malachy's, 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 overall well-being of each child. Each teacher works very hard to create and maintain a caring and supportive environment in which all pupils can develop as person, as well as a learner.

**"..the highly effective pastoral care arrangements are a significant strength of the school's provision and enhance the children's educational and social experiences."** ETI 2016

All Primary 1 children are assigned a P7 'Buddy' to be their friend and mentor throughout their first year at St Malachy's. This reinforces the ideas of friendship and responsibility and helps the younger children to become more comfortable at school.

## Child Protection

The school follows the Education Authority's recommended procedures for Safeguarding and Child Protection. Copies of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Anti-Bullying policy are available on the school website.

**"..the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children...the children ...reported that they are happy and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being."** ETI 2016

## Behaviour

The school adopts a positive attitude to discipline, based on respect for self, respect for other pupils and respect for adults. A copy of the school Positive Behaviour Policy outlining the school rules, rewards and consequences of undesirable behaviour, is available to parents. It is based on a sense of community within the school and values which all of its members share. The support and co-operation of parents is a very important element in achieving the aims in our Positive Behaviour Policy.



**"The promotion and reward of positive behaviour develops well the children's self-esteem, encouraging them to achieve at high levels."** ETI 2016

**"A group of children from year 7, who met with the inspectors, spoke with enthusiasm about their experiences in mathematics. They enjoy the challenge of practical activities which are focused on using mathematics in practical, real-life situations. The children show positive dispositions to numeracy and are secure in their knowledge of key mathematical concepts. They use mathematical language competently and successfully apply a range of strategies to solve problems."** ETI 2019



**"A group of children from year 7, who met with the inspector, spoke positively about the reading opportunities available in school. They read from a wide range of genres and authors and are able to: explain and justify their reading preferences; read with fluency and expression; and, read for inference. The children report their enjoyment of the computerised reading programme."** ETI 2019

## Extra Curricular Activities

St Malachy's is aware of the importance of visits and other enrichment activities in the development of our children. These form a key part of the children's education and are usually closely linked with class topics.

Extra-Curricular activities add a valuable dimension to the education of children. We join with quality external agencies to provide a wide range of sporting and creative activities. At different times this will include:

- Inter-schools Gaelic Football League
- Soccer coaching
- After school hurling & camogie coaching
- Schools swimming gala
- Athletics - Cross Country and Road Running
- Basketball
- Choir
- Coding Club/Minecraft
- Stem KEX/Science club
- Lego Club
- Art & Craft





## Parental Involvement

It is our aim to involve parents in the education of their child and to keep them as fully informed as possible. We host a range of workshops to inform and support parents including Mathematics and E-Safety. Parents are kept up-to-date through the school website, the school App and Facebook. They are also kept informed of workshops organised by outside agencies such as Parentline NI and RISE NI.

The school has a strong, enthusiastic and hard-working team of parents who sit on the Parent-Teacher Association. They organise various fundraising and social events through the school year, which raise much appreciated funds for the school.

## Pupil Voice

Pupils are given a voice through the School Council that is elected annually with representatives from P4 -7. The Eco Council is also made up of representatives from P6 - P7, who mentor children from Foundation Stage and KS1, encouraging everyone to think about preserving and protecting our environment.

We endeavour to extend the pupils learning beyond the classroom, developing responsible attitudes and commitment to environmental issues both at home and in the wider community. In 2023 we were prizewinners in an NI Water conservation project.



## Community Links

St Malachy's has strong links with the local community. We support a range of local charities, contributing to annual appeals. Alongside this we fundraise for charities that are important to pupils and the wider school community.

The school choir performs in the local community throughout the year, including annual Christmas Carol Services in local nursing homes.

The school uses facilities in the local community such as the Armagh City Library, whilst the local Fire Brigade come to school annually for a fire safety talk. Pupils also take part in various local competitions including the Armagh International Road Race, Credit Union Quiz and the Speech and Drama Festival.

Our Primary 7 pupils participate in a variety of activities which provide them with the opportunity to visit local post primary schools. They attend taster sessions and meet staff prior to their transition in September.

The school has been involved in the Young Enterprise project for a number of years. This provides children with a truly innovative learning experience, enabling them to develop the knowledge and attitudes they need to succeed in the world beyond the classroom.



**“The children are developing well as independent learners, reflecting the school’s mission statement “unlocking the full potential of each individual, developing confident and independent learners”. The school’s internal assessment data shows that most of the children perform at the expected level or above the expected level in both literacy and numeracy.” ETI 2019**

# Admissions Information

Application for a place in P1 can be sought in January of the year in which admission is required. The admissions criteria will be available to parents in advance of the application process.

Requests for places in P2–P7 classes will be considered, provided that the maximum enrolment number has not been reached and that additional enrolments will not significantly increase individual class numbers or exceed a maximum of 30 pupils in any Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 class.

## Visiting the School

It is the aim of St. Malachy's Primary School to 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

An Open Day takes place in January when parents have the opportunity to visit the school to experience the richness of St Malachy's and the talents that the children have to offer.

### Entrants to Primary 1

In June the Primary 1 teacher visits Nursery Schools to meet the children to be admitted in September and to gather any necessary information to make the transition as smooth as possible. At the end of the summer term, the children are then invited to a Stay and Play session where they have the opportunity to see their classroom, meet their teacher and peers as they sample some of the activities available to them.

Entrants who have previously attended another school;

- An interview will be arranged with the Principal.
- Parents will be welcome to view the school premises.
- A meeting can be arranged with the prospective teacher/s of the child/children.

### After Enrolment Parental Engagement

Parent Teacher meetings are held at the start of the Spring term for parents to receive a verbal report on their child's progress to date. This is followed by a written report in June. Parents are welcome to discuss their child with the class teacher at any time throughout the year that is mutually convenient.



## The School Day

<b>School begins:</b>	<b>9:00am</b>	
<b>Break:</b>	<b>10:30- 10:45am</b>	<b>(P1 – P3)</b>
	<b>10:45- 11:00am</b>	<b>(P4 – P7)</b>
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>12:00- 1:00pm</b>	<b>(P1 – P3)</b>
	<b>12:30- 1:30pm</b>	<b>(P4 – P7)</b>
<b>School ends:</b>	<b>2:05pm</b>	<b>(P1 – P2)</b>
	<b>3:00pm</b>	<b>(P3 – P7)</b>

The school offers a Breakfast Club, available to everyone from 8 am - 8:45 am daily, where children can enjoy a healthy homemade breakfast before school.

Our After School Club, supervised by qualified staff, is available from 2pm to 5.30pm daily, where children are able to complete their homework and play. Children also receive a nutritious snack.

We keep the costs of these services to a minimum as we are conscious of the many financial demands on our parents. The Breakfast and After School Clubs run concurrently with our other After School Activity programme.



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