



St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School
School Prospectus 2017

"Working, Praying, Sharing and Learning Together"
"Gweithio, Gweddio, Rhannu a Dysgu gyda'n gilydd"

Welcome

This prospectus is designed to give you all the information, which you are likely to need about your child's school. We hope to cover every aspect of school life, but if you feel that there are any points, which have not been mentioned, please do not hesitate to ask.

Prospective parents are encouraged to visit the school and to talk to our staff. Schools are more than just buildings and facilities and the quality of the education provided by a school should be judged on the relationships between pupils and staff, and on the involvement and achievements of the pupils. We look forward to meeting you when you come to see our school for yourself.

Important Information:

School Address:

St Mary's RC Primary School
Catholic Road
Brynmaur
NP23 4EF

Telephone: 01495 310596

E-mail: stmarysrc@blaeana-gwent.gov.uk

Head teacher:

Mr T Baxter

Chair of Governors

Mr T Pritchard

(Mr Pritchard can be contacted through the School address)

The Governing Body

Chair of Governors:	Mr T Pritchard
Vice Chair:	Mrs J Williams
Parish Priest:	Fr L Hennessy
Foundation Governors:	Mrs J Williams (Safeguarding Governor) Mr J Cavacuiti Mr J Baker Mr A Nyinaku Mrs S Jones Mr T Uthuppukutty Mr Russell Hathway
LEA Governor:	Cllr Jennifer Morgan
Parent Governor:	Mr S Wilson
Teacher Governor:	Mrs J Fitzgerald
Ancillary Staff Governor:	Mrs C Morgan
HeadTeacher:	Mr T Baxter
Clerk to the Governing Body:	Mr D Seymour

Diocesan Director of Education: Mrs A Robertston

Archbishop's House
41/43 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9HD

Tel: 029 20233838

The School

St Mary's RC Primary School is a Voluntary Aided School, which serves a wide area of Blaenau Gwent.

The school is set in attractive grounds on the edge of the Town of Brynmawr. It has a good-sized dining hall with kitchen attached, eight classrooms four with secure outdoor play area for Foundation Phase, two offices and a staff room, medical room plus a disabled toilet and access. Outside we have large areas of artificial grass for play and a wooden climbing trail. The local welfare park field is used for a variety of team games and sports days throughout the year. We also have access to Parc Nant y Waun a nature trail which pupils use for environmental studies and walks.

The School

We Pride ourselves on being a traditional school with a strong Catholic ethos. We recognise and respond to the needs of the whole child and develop each child's potential as an individual, with staff who have high expectations and who encourage children to become independent, resilient, and well-motivated individuals.

We expect children to be well behaved, to have regard for the feelings, hopes and expectations of other people, and to show care, courtesy and consideration in all that they do.

We maintain good discipline, but hope that our school is a place where children can learn and grow in a relaxed and caring atmosphere, which will encourage self-discipline and mutual respect for both pupils and teachers. These values are reflected in the daily life of our school and in the Home-School Agreement. (A copy of which is included in this prospectus).

St Mary's School is a Roman Catholic School, and welcomes children who are both Catholic or of other faiths or no faith.

We have strong links with the Parish and Fr Hennessy leads Mass on a fortnightly basis, and regularly comes into school to support the Religious Education curriculum. We hold our annual Harvest Festival in St Mary's Church, also other special events such as Christmas Carol Services and Easter Masses.

“Working, Praying, Sharing and Learning Together”
“Gweithio, Gweddio, Rhannu a Dysgu gyda’n gilydd”

Mission Statement

Christ is at the centre of all that we do at St Mary’s RC Primary School. We inspire our children to follow in his footsteps by working, praying, sharing and learning together.

Vision Statement

At St. Mary’s we aim to educate our pupils to be kind and reach for the stars

Aims

- To ensure that all children experience a happy, healthy and safe environment where everyone is a good friend.
- To inspire and support all children throughout the school to develop a love of learning and feel confident in using their God given talents.
- To teach the children about the importance of forgiveness and saying sorry when we are wrong.
- To encourage respect between children, teachers, staff, parents and everyone else involved in our community.
- To follow Jesus example in all that we do and respect that others choose to express their faith in other ways.
- ♦To prepare the children in our care to become independent, caring and responsible members of society

Collective Worship

As a Voluntary Aided School, we regard our daily act of collective worship as an integral part of the day. We put a great deal of effort into planning our worship so that it is meaningful for the children and offers opportunities for spiritual, social and moral development and reflection.

Academic Study and Curriculum

We aim to provide a stimulating environment in which children are encouraged to discuss topics of a wide variety with adults and with their fellow pupils. We aim to fulfil the requirements of the national curriculum and give our children a sound platform in the core subjects. We foster a positive attitude toward academic study so that pupils can take on new challenges with confidence when they move on to Secondary School. As part of our Personal and Social Education and Sex and Relationships Education, we try to equip children for adult life by encouraging good personal qualities and mature attitudes to life.

Equal Opportunities

We are fully committed to the active promotion of equality for all children, families and staff in the school, and have an appropriate Equal Opportunities Policy. The school is committed to giving all pupils every opportunity to achieve the highest standards by:

- taking account of their varied experiences and needs;
- offering a broad and balanced curriculum;
- having high expectations of all pupils

staff

Headteacher: Mr T Baxter

Deputy Headteacher: Mr M Buckley

Teachers: Mrs J Fitzgerald
Miss A Wilcox
Mrs N Waghorn
Miss K Samuels
Mrs K Flynn
Mrs D Hawkins
Mr B Blears
Miss F Johnson
Mrs K Phillips

Support Assistants: Miss H Woods
Mrs C Morgan
Miss G Blackwell
Mrs H Lane
Miss C Gardner
Ms K Thomas
Mrs C Cronin
Mrs C Thurston
Mrs C Bridgeman
Miss K Watkins

School Administrator: Mrs H Evans

Cook: Mrs P Winstone

Mid-Day Staff: Mrs P Williams
Mrs H Fear
Mr N Thomas
Mrs G Evans
Mrs C Davies
Mrs S Paull
Miss E Watkins

Caretaker: Mrs T Evans

Classes in the School

The school roll at present is 227, At present we have eight classes with 8 full time teachers 2 part time teachers and 10 support staff we are therefore able to maintain fairly small classes of under 30.

The School Day

We offer a breakfast club for children between 8.00am -8.30am.

We think that it is important that children should make a prompt start to school and we ask that they are brought to school between 8.50 a.m. and 9.00 a.m.

Breakfast Club 8.00 am -8.30am

Children arrive: 8.50 – 9.00am

Registration: 9.00am

Collective Worship 9.05 – 9.20am

Morning Session 9.20 -10.30am

Morning Break: 10.30 -10.50am

Morning Session 10.50 -12.00/12.15pm

Lunchtime – F. Phase: 12.00 – 1.15pm / Juniors: 12.15 – 1.15pm

Registration/Meditation-1.15- 1.20pm

Afternoon Session 1.15 – 3.20pm (Nursery) 3.30pm (Reception-Year 6)

Extra-curricular Activities:

Monday	Football Club 3.30-4.30pm	
Tuesday	Gypsy Travellers Homework Club 3.30-4.30pm	
Wednesday	Play to Learn 3.30-4.15pm	Drama Group 3.30-4.30pm
Friday	Minecraft 3.30-4.30pm	Judo 3.30-5.00pm

Admission Criteria

Introduction

St Mary's is a voluntary aided school and the Governing Body is the admission authority with the responsibility for determining the school's admission policy.

The Governing Body has an expectation that prospective parents will respect, support and contribute to the Catholic ethos of the school and its importance to the school community. This does not affect the right of parents who are not of the faith of this school to apply for and be considered for a place here. By applying to this school parents, or carers, are declaring their support for the aims and ethos of the school.

Admissions

Admission to the school is for children between the ages of 3 and 11 years. Children of non-Catholic parents seeking admission because of the religious teaching and the Christian ethos of our school will be admitted if there are vacancies.

Admissions to Nursery

Admission to Nursery in September is a full time provision:

- Children will be eligible to start part time at St. Mary's Nursery from the beginning of the term either January or April following their third birthday.
- Parents/guardians who wish their child to attend St. Mary's can complete an application form which is included in the Prospectus or from the School Office.
- A nursery place does not automatically qualify a child for a place in the Reception Class in the main school. All children have to re-apply for a place in Reception.

Application for admission to other classes and at different times during the school year may be made by completing the relevant admission form obtainable from the School Office.

Oversubscription Criteria

Where the number of applicants for admission exceeds the number of places available, places will be awarded to applicants in the categories in the following order of priority.

- The Baptised Roman Catholic children residing in the catchment area of the school. (The catchment area is the parish of Brynmawr and Abertillery).
- The Baptised Roman Catholic children residing outside the catchment area.
- The non-baptised children of Roman Catholic parents residing in the catchment area of the school.
- The non-baptised children of Roman Catholic parents residing outside the catchment area of the school.
- Brothers and sisters of Non-Catholic children who are already pupils in the school.
- The Governors will consider applications for:
 - (a) Non Catholic children whose parents are seeking a Christian education for their children.
 - (b) Children of other Christian denominations.
 - (c) Children of other world faiths.
 - (d) Non Catholic children for social reasons.
 - (e) Children of ethnic or minority origin.

In all the above categories Looked After children (LAC) will take priority and be considered first.

Admission Appeals

If a child is refused a place the parents/guardians have the right to appeal within 14 days. All appeals will be heard by an independent panel:

All appeals must be sent to: The Clerk, Appeals Committee, St. Mary's R.C. Primary School, Catholic Road, Brynmawr, Gwent. NP23 4EF.

Visits

Parents wishing to admit their child to the school are cordially invited to visit and speak to the Headteacher and staff prior to any decisions being made. They will be given an informal tour of the school to observe the teaching and learning taking place in each class and the resources available.

Preparing Your Children for School

From an academic point of view, it is important that you talk to your children, listen to them, and read them stories. Young children can help with cooking and other domestic tasks. Puzzles, drawing, painting and other creative activities will help to stimulate your child's developing mind. When something has been made, encourage your child to talk about it. Always praise your child, praise works wonders with young children, particularly when it comes from the most important people in their lives. You can boost your child's confidence and help them to make a smooth start by letting them do things for themselves, e.g. dressing and putting on shoes, using a toilet and washing hands, using a knife and fork and tidying up toys.

P.E., Games and Swimming

We are proud of our children's sporting achievements and through our physical education curriculum and extra-curricular activities we aim to develop the skills of co-operation, a sense of fair play and a sensible attitude to competitiveness. We also want our pupils to discover the positive effects that exercise has on the body and mind, and want to embed a love of physical activity, which will become lifelong.

Physical activities form an essential part of the curriculum for every pupil and we strongly encourage all pupils to participate. If there is a medical reason why a child cannot take part, we require a note of explanation from the parent.

All pupils need to have shorts and T-shirt in a P.E. bag and all items should be named.

We offer swimming lessons on termly basis to years 2- year 6 a swimming costume and towel will be required.

Fruit and Water Bottles

Every morning at 10.30am, we have our morning playtime. The children are able to purchase from our healthy tuck shop or bring in a piece of fruit to eat at this time. We do not allow crisps, biscuits or chocolate. Nursery children are provided with a selection of fruit, yoghurts or toast and a carton of free milk at their Snack Bar in the morning with a small cost of £1.50 per week.

We strongly promote the drinking of fresh water in school and children are encouraged to bring in water bottles at all times. A water fountain is provided in the Foundation Phase and Junior areas.

Behaviour and Discipline

We feel confident that all parents share the expectations that children behave well at all times, including during the journeys to and from school. Children should realise that a high standard of behaviour is expected of them.

We aim to create an environment in which children's self-esteem is nurtured and misbehavior becomes a less attractive way of obtaining attention. Good behaviour is necessary so effective teaching and learning can take place. The rules of the school are kept to a minimum but children are encouraged to care for their environment, the building, furniture, equipment, books, and most importantly, each other.

Our aim is to praise rather than criticise, to celebrate their successes and endeavours, and highlight their good behaviour. However, if children choose to break rules they must realise that it is only fair that they must face up to the consequences of their actions.

The guidance they receive in school and the examples they are set by adults at home will help to develop good behaviour. If we continually reinforce this then cases of serious misbehaviour will be rare.

The co-operation of parents is of course vital and we will seek your support in dealing with any incidents of misbehaviour that are causing problems in school.

Health/Safety Issues

Safeguarding and Pupil Welfare

School has a duty of care, and the right to take reasonable action to ensure the welfare and safety of its pupils. If a member of staff has cause to be concerned that a pupil may be subject to ill treatment, neglect or any form of abuse the school will follow the school's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. This may mean that we have to liaise with other external bodies. The school's Safeguarding Officer is Mr. T Baxter and the Deputy Safeguarding Officer is Mr. M Buckley the Safeguarding Governor is Mrs J Williams.

Illness and Medicines

If children are ill at school, we do our best to make them comfortable. Our policy is to contact parents promptly so that the child can be taken home immediately. We encourage full attendance at school, but when children are ill, it is usually better for all concerned, if they are cared for at home until they have fully recovered. In our experience, children who feel unwell rarely work effectively and can become distressed. **If your child is absent, please send in a note or telephone the school to explain why, as soon as possible.**

Although it is better for children to be kept at home if they need regular medication, there are circumstances when it is necessary to give treatment in school. If a child needs continuous treatment, you will need to come in to school and give the medication yourself.

Do not send your child to school with over-the-counter medicines, as we are not allowed to administer these.

School Nurse

The School Nurse, calls at school regularly to discuss health problems. She undertakes hearing, sight, weight, and height tests with the children. She also talks to pupils and parents about various health issues.

Asthma

Increasing numbers of children suffer from asthma and it is our policy is to ensure that asthma sufferers lead a full school life, whilst controlling their illness. If your child suffers from asthma in any of its forms, please use our medical information sheet to register them as an asthma sufferer. We monitor children carefully, particularly during physical activities and allow them immediate access to their medication, when necessary. It is essential that your child has extra medication that can be kept in school permanently. If a child has an attack, which does not respond to treatment within a reasonable time, we call the emergency services.

First Aid

The children are supervised throughout the day and their safety is always of prime concern when we are organising activities. If an accident occurs, a member of staff will administer first aid. In the case of minor injuries, no other action is taken, but if it is thought that medical treatment is needed, you will be informed so that your child can be taken to the doctor or hospital immediately. We are particularly concerned about injuries to the head or back. If you cannot be contacted, we will take the child for treatment or call in medical help.

Health and Safety

The school has a detailed Health and Safety Policy, which outlines the measures that the Governing Body, Headteacher, class teachers and all staff take, to ensure that all pupils, staff, visitors and contractors are safe whilst on the premises.

Regular safety checks on equipment, fire drills, appliance testing are carried out routinely throughout the year. Activities that require additional safety measures, such as extra-curricular activities, visits or using specific equipment, are subject to detailed risk assessments.

School Security

All visitors to the school should enter at the main entrance to be greeted by the School Secretary or another member of staff. We ask you not to try other entrances, as these will be locked. Visitors are asked to sign the visitors' book on arrival.

School Uniform

We ask all pupils to wear school uniform. It helps everyone to be clean and tidy in appearance and gives a sense of community.

Boys	Girls
Plain White Polo Shirt	Plain White Polo Shirt
Black /Grey Trousers	Black /Grey skirt or Summer Dress
Royal Blue Jumper	Royal Blue Jumper/Cardigan
Sensible shoes/trainers	Sensible shoes/trainers

- * No jeans
- * No jewellery – except for stud earrings
- * No heeled shoes
- * No make-up (including tattoos)
- * No hooded tops

School sweatshirts, polo shirts, jackets and hats can be purchased via an order form from the School Office.

It is very important that all clothes, bags, purses, sports kit, books and belongings are clearly marked with your child's name, so that we can return lost items with the minimum of fuss.

Children should not bring expensive items or unnecessary amounts of money to school.

Nutrition and School Meals

Nutritious school meals are cooked on the premises and are available, at £2.10 per meal (for all aged children). All money should be sent to school in a named envelope daily.

The choice usually includes two choices. We encourage children to eat school meals, not only because we think they are good value, but because we regard lunchtime as an important social meeting place where table manners, learned at home, can be reinforced amongst peers. Children can bring a packed lunch to school, but we do not allow children to bring sweets, chewing gum or fizzy drinks to school.

Holidays

A list of school term dates is included at the end of this prospectus, and is sent out to parents annually. We strongly encourage families to take holidays during the official school holidays. Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday and consequently any absence due to holidays during term time will not be authorised by the school and could end up in prosecution.

Attendance/Absence

It is the duty of the parent to contact the school if a child is going to be absent for the day. We would ask parents to ring the school secretary or leave a message on the schools absence line before 9.10a.m so that the child's teacher may be notified of the absence. If a child is not present in school and cannot give a valid reason for absence, we must mark the child as an "Unauthorised Absence" in the register. Numerous unauthorised absences may result in a visit from the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the reasons for repeated absence.

Governors have an ongoing target of 95% attendance; we also work closely with the Welsh Government to monitor attendance under the Callio Attendance Scheme. The scheme looks at three bands of attendance i.e. **Red - under 92%**, **Amber 92-96%** and **Green 97% and above**. Letters are sent home termly to families advising parents which category their child falls into.

Friends of the School

The Friends of St Mary's RC Primary School are a group of parents, friends, and teachers who raise extra funds for the school and organise social events for the children and their families. Events include an annual Christmas fayre, an annual summer barbeque and fete, bingo, various raffles to name but a few.

The Friends usually meet once a term and warmly welcome new recruits.

School Term Dates

	TERM BEGINS	HALF TERM	TERM ENDS
AUTUMN TERM	01.09.2016	24.10.2016- 28.10.2016	19.12.2016
SPRING TERM	03.01.2017	20.02.2017- 24.02.2017	07.04.2017
SUMMER	24.04.2017	29.05.2017- 02.06.2017	21.07.2017

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The Foundation Phase

We follow the Foundation Phase's "Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year olds in Wales". This document explains the statutory areas of Learning in the Foundation Phase. These are:

- Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity
- Language, Literacy and Communication Skills
- Mathematical Development
- Welsh Language Development
- Religious Education
- Physical Development
- Creative Development.

The Foundation Phase is an approach to learning for children from 3-7 years of age. It places great emphasis on children learning by doing and experimenting. Young children will be given more opportunities to gain first hand experiences through play and active involvement rather than by completing exercises in books. They will be given time to develop their speaking and listening skills and to become confident in their reading and writing abilities. New parents are given a copy of the Welsh Assembly Government's document "Learning in the Foundation Phase – A Guide for Parents and Carers". This will answer many of the questions parents will have about how and what their children will learn.

Foundation Phase Outcomes

Year 2 Most children will have reached Outcome 5 and many will be working towards Outcome 6+ and the end of Foundation Phase.

The National Curriculum

As children move on from the Foundation Phase, they follow the National Curriculum, which is taught throughout the rest of the school. The National Curriculum includes:

Core Subjects *

English

Mathematics

Science

Foundation Subjects

History

Geography

Physical Education

Music

Technology

Art

Welsh

Religious Education.

The new skills based curriculum in KS2 came into effect in September 2008. This means that teaching and learning will focus on developing children's skills. This means that subjects in KS2 will be taught in a cross-curricular way.

All children experience a wide range of teaching styles. These include whole class, mixed ability groups, pairs and individual approaches.

Children's progress is assessed regularly in Literacy and Numeracy and support identified where necessary. The school also implements various intervention strategies i.e. "Catch Up" for reading, "Letters and Sounds," phonic programme, "Catch-Up and Springboard" for Maths, This supports our endeavours to improve the basic skills of all children in school

National Curriculum Levels

YEAR 3	This is the beginning of Key Stage 2 and children will generally be working at Level 3.
YEAR 4	Children will generally be working at Level 3 and perhaps be working towards Level 4.
YEAR 5	Children will be working towards Level 4.
YEAR 6	Most children will have reached Level 4 and may be working towards Level 5 and 6 at the end of Key Stage 2.

Literacy

Reading: The children have opportunities to read individually, in groups and as a class. They have books to take home and share with parents. They are also encouraged to borrow fiction and non-fiction books from the school library. In the Foundation Phase, the main reading scheme is Oxford Reading Tree, however a variety of different books are also available for reading at home. KS2 pupils also continue following The Oxford Reading Tree scheme before moving onto individual reading books. All children across the school participate in Guided Reading sessions with an adult. These sessions develop pupils reading skills and their understanding of the text.

Spelling: All of the children enjoy daily "Letters and Sounds" sessions. These sessions develop the children's phonological knowledge and their ability to blend and segment sounds. Older and more able children will learn complex spelling rules during these sessions.

Writing: Writing is used across the curriculum and as such is a very important skill. The children write a variety of genres including, reports, instructional writing, discussion, persuasion, recount and explanation. They also compose different styles of poem and write stories to develop creativity and imagination.

We encourage the children to have a pride in the appearance and layout of their work, with neat handwriting. Joined handwriting is introduced in the Foundation Phase and developed through the rest of the school.

Mathematics

Daily mathematics lessons are taught across the school and these cover a range of themes: number, shape, space and measures, data handling and using and applying mathematical skills. Each lesson usually starts with a mental maths session. This is followed by differentiated themed activities. Children are also given the opportunity to use ICT programs linked directly to the topic.

General aims:

For the pupils to:

1. Experience and understand mathematical concepts.
2. Acquire and use written and mental computation skills.
3. Use mathematics in the real world and experience the satisfaction of solving problems.
4. Develop positive attitudes towards the subject.

Religious Education

Religious Education is at the heart of the school ethos. As a Roman Catholic School, we put great emphasis on celebrating the work of God our Father in our lives, through the example of Jesus Christ. We try to live the message that Jesus gives to us "Love one another as I have loved you."

The school uses "Come and See" RE programme approved by the church for use in schools in England and Wales.

We are fortunate to share the same site as the Church giving the children an ideal opportunity to fully participate in Parish life.

Children are encouraged to talk and reflect about their faith and learn about the faith of the Church.

Active links between home, school and parish are encouraged; Children visit St Mary's Church fortnightly on a Friday for Mass with the Parish Priest Fr. L. Hennessy.

The children receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion during Year 3. This means a considerable commitment on behalf of the parents – the school aims to support the parents in making this commitment. This commitment is for life. Children are prepared for these Sacraments by the Parish Priest.

Additional Learning Needs

We are determined to meet the educational needs of all our pupils by promoting a caring and happy atmosphere where all children will be helped to gain the self-confidence and self-esteem, which are the prerequisites for educational and social development.

Some pupils will, permanently or from time to time, have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of their age and will receive additional support through Intervention groups. Some may have disabilities, which prevent or hinder them from making use of the facilities provided for our pupils. We will give these pupils individual consideration and make special provision for them, working in partnership with others as necessary. The governors' intention is that the needs of all pupils are identified and met as soon as possible. All pupils whether they have additional learning needs or not, must have an equal opportunity to participate in the full curriculum of the school (including the National Curriculum) and all activities. Pupils with additional learning needs will be encouraged to become independent and take responsibility within the school. Our Additional Learning Needs Co-Ordinator is Mrs K Phillips and Miss F Johnson.

More Able and Talented Pupils

More able pupils can be defined as pupils who demonstrate a significantly higher level of ability than most pupils of the same age in one or more of the curriculum areas or in any of the following:

Talented children can be identified as pupils who achieve two years beyond their age group in a certain subject. More able and gifted children are identified through teacher assessment and judgements based on a variety of assessments. At all times the needs of the children, whatever their ability, are catered for through careful differentiation and task.

School Report Policy

We report to parents in a number of ways during the year.

1. Parents' evenings - which we hold twice a year.
2. Written reports at the end of the school year.
3. Contacting parents if there is a need for discussion on a child's progress.

Parents' Evenings

Our first parents' evening in November is an opportunity for you to find out how your child is progressing, possibly in a new class, after the summer break. In the spring term, we are able to talk in detail about the progress that has been made during the year. It is important to remember that if you feel your child has a problem at school, you should contact the school straight away and not wait for parents' evening. The school operates an open door policy and parents are invited to speak to staff at the beginning and end of school day. Class Do-jo is also used to send messages to teachers.

HOMEWORK

Homework is set across the school. In setting homework we aim to:

- Promote positive attitudes to work and school.
- Raise achievement of all pupils
- Consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding in literacy and numeracy and across the curriculum
- Encourage and develop independent learning
- Increase self discipline
- Develop the home/school partnership
- Prepare children for secondary transfer in Year 6

Pupil Assessment

We are very proud of the academic standards that our children achieve. Our pupils transfer to secondary education as well-equipped, independent, and confident individuals.

In order to provide lessons appropriate to their needs, we assess pupils formally using various tests and assessment materials in reading, spelling, and mathematics. Teachers also assess pupils' achievements every day, informally and set challenging, yet attainable targets for the pupils to achieve.

At the end of Foundation Phase and Key stage 2 pupils are formally assessed by their teacher.

Arrangements for Transport and Collecting Children from School

If you live in the usual catchment area of the school you can obtain free transport to school if you live more than 3 miles away.

A form to apply for free transport is available from the school. This should be returned to the Transport Department at Blaenau Gwent Council.

We are concerned about the safety of our pupils and we supervise their activities right throughout the school day 8:50am. – 3:30pm. Children should be picked up promptly at 3.20 (Nursery) 3:30pm (Reception–Year 6).

If there is to be any change in picking up arrangements (time or person) you will need to contact the school office in advance either or send a written note to the class teachers.

Eco School

Each year, we hold elections and appoint an Eco-committee. The committee comprises of children and teachers and aims to promote an environmentally friendly approach to the world around us in all our actions. Children are encouraged to recycle, not waste energy and to care for their environment. We have achieved the Bronze & Silver ECO Schools Award, and are working towards our 2nd Green Flag. Foundation Phase children participate in the Welsh Assembly's Government programme "Design to Smile" a toothbrushing programme which is aimed at improving dental health. Foundation Phase children are given their own toothbrush to keep in school and take part in supervised toothbrushing sessions daily.

School Council

The school has an active school council with representatives from the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2.

The school council regularly meets with local councilors and led the whole school in reviewing the school rules.

Educational Visits

All children have the opportunity to participate in educational visits with school. We hold residential visits to Hilston Park and Llangrannog Outdoor Centre other recent trips have included Techniquet, Roman Museum and Cardiff Castle.

Parents are usually asked to contribute towards the cost of these trips, and we are grateful for all contributions we receive.

Complaints Procedure

We hope that all children are happy and thrive during their time with us. However, if you or your child has any problems or anything that you are unhappy about please discuss it with your child's class teacher or the Headteacher. If this does not resolve the matter, the Governors have a formal complaints procedure. Copies of this can be obtained from the School Secretary, Head teacher, or Chair of Governors; it is also available on the School Website.

Anti-Bullying Policy

St Mary's RC Primary School is committed to a policy of inclusion, equality and justice.

We believe that bullying behaviour is totally unacceptable.

We believe that where bullying is challenged effectively, pupils will feel safe and happy and we will demonstrate a school that cares.

Aims

Within St Mary's School we want;

- All children to feel safe and to learn, play and enjoy the company of others.
- All children to be treated fairly, with respect and dignity.
- To listen carefully to what children have to say and to treat all children's accounts with due attention.
-

The nature of Bullying

There are many definitions of bullying, but it is generally accepted to be:

- Deliberately hurtful (including aggression).
- Repeated often over a period of time.
- Difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

Bullying can take many forms, but three main types are:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings.
- Verbal – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks.
- Indirect –unreasonable exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours.

Pupils' understanding varies with age infants may confuse bullying with fighting and nasty experiences generally- making it difficult to identify actual bullying. Junior children tend to develop more mature understanding.

Involving Parents

Parental support is one of the keys to the success of our Anti Bullying Policy.

We aim to consult and communicate with parents on a regular basis.

What should Parents do if they feel their child is being bullied?

Any parent contacting the school with a particular concern will always be taken seriously.

The first point of contact for the parent is the child's class teacher.

As a class teacher we will follow the following steps.

- Recognise that the parent may be angry or upset
- Keep an open mind – bullying can be difficult to detect, so a lack of staff awareness does not mean that no bullying has occurred
- Remain calm and understanding
- Make it clear that the school does care and that appropriate action will be taken.
- Explain the agreed school procedures and policy and ensure these are followed.

If a parent doesn't feel that the class teacher has dealt with the situation adequately then the next stage of the complaints procedure is to contact the Headteacher.

Disability and Accessibility Plan for St Mary's RC Primary School

Introduction

At St Mary's RC Primary School we take account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, and have high expectations for all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter. This policy helps to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995 aims to end discrimination against people with disabilities and to improve access in all areas of life. Since 2002, it has been unlawful for schools and Local Education Authorities to discriminate against pupils with disabilities in admissions and exclusions, in education, and in associated services.

From 1st October 2004 it is unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities by preventing them from having access to premises.

What is disability?

The Disability and Discrimination Act states that 'a person suffers from a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out day-to-day activities'.

Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long term and substantial effect on pupils' everyday lives.

Aims

Our school aims to be an inclusive school. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual pupils, or groups of pupils. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for all our children, and this of course includes pupils with disabilities.

We will ensure that pupils with disabilities have the same opportunities as non-disabled pupils to benefit from the education our school provides.

We will not treat a pupil with a disability less favourably than others because of the nature of his or her disability.

We will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that a pupil or member of staff with disabilities is not placed at a disadvantage.

We will do our best to anticipate the needs of a pupil or staff member with disabilities before he or she joins the school.

Removing barriers

The school must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils and members of staff and of the public are not disadvantaged.

Disabilities can limit the extent to which children are able to participate in the curriculum, and can impede the delivery of information. So, for example, if a child suffers from hearing loss, the teacher will always try and face the child when addressing the class, or, in severe cases, the teacher may wear a microphone and transmitter.

The physical environment

We will endeavour to improve provision for disabled pupils and staff by developing the physical environment of the school, when it becomes necessary and within the limits of the resources available. Where necessary, we will try to improve the following:

- Access to the school, by installing ramps and handrails;
- Movement around the building, for example by adaptations for people with impaired sight;
- Accommodation within the building, by providing toilets for disabled pupils,
- Information and communication technology, by selecting appropriate hardware and software.

Many of the adjustments we make are dependent upon individual needs. Individual Education Plans are effective and manageable.

Information

When necessary, information normally provided in writing (lesson content, texts, library resources and information about school events) will be made available in alternative formats that are clear and user-friendly, such as Braille, audio tape, and large print, or it may be transmitted orally, or through lip-speaking or sign language, or through a recognised symbol system, or through ICT.

We always take account of disabilities, be they the pupils' or their parents'. For example, communication with a parent who is visually impaired may need to be by telephone rather than by letter.

The school will liaise with specialists to support individual pupils. Among these specialists are the following: physiotherapists, educational psychologists, speech therapists, doctors, the school nurse, social workers and the staff of the voluntary and statutory agencies. We benefit from the LEA's advice, and its provision through the Hearing Impaired and Visually Impaired services.

Monitoring

We have high expectations of all our pupils. We monitor a range of data to make sure that all pupils are making the best progress possible, and that no groups of pupils are underachieving.

We monitor:

- Admissions.
- Attainment.
- Exclusions.
- Rewards and sanctions.
- Parental and pupil questionnaires.

Evaluations based on these data are then reported to the governing body, and an action plan will be drawn up if necessary.

Health and safety

Members of staff follow the school procedures both for the storage and for the administration of medicines to pupils.

The school has members of staff qualified in giving first-aid treatment, and the emergency services will be called, should they be required.

The health and safety of all school members is of paramount importance at all times.

Permission Forms

From time to time the children are taken from school to various venues in the locality e.g. Church, the library, the police station and other schools. A permission form is required to be completed when your child enters school to cover local outings. At all times parents will be informed of these visits. Occasionally visits will be further afield and parents will be required to give permission for these individual trips.

Severe Weather

If the weather changes during the school day and we have a heavy snow fall, we may have to send children home. We now have a text service for parents and the first named parent on our database will be contacted. If we have a heavy snow fall during the night, please check for school closures on the Blaenau Gwent website, listen to Radio Wales or visit the BBC Wales website to find out if the school is open.

Access to Information

Below are a list of documents available to all parents who wish to see them. If you do wish to view these documents please give reasonable notice.

- ESTYN reports and Religious Education Inspection Reports
- Policies
- The Governing Bodies Annual Report to Parents

