



St. Malachy's Primary School Armagh



As a family we learn, play and do our best every day!

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.

At St Malachy's Primary School, children are at the heart of everything we do.

Our goal is to deliver excellence in child-centred education by creating a nurturing environment that supports growth, learning, and achievement for all pupils, regardless of ability.

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. Our school is more than a place of learning - it is a family. We work in close partnership with parents, parish, and the wider community to create a sense of belonging where every child feels valued and cared for. Together, we celebrate achievements, share in faith, and support one another, building strong relationships that last well beyond the school years.

Our outstanding assessment results speak for themselves: year after year, our pupils achieve literacy and numeracy scores that surpass the Northern Ireland average. This success reflects the passion and expertise of our dedicated staff. When you choose our school, you're choosing exceptional education in a warm, welcoming environment where every child feels valued. Most importantly, your child's happiness and well-being are at the heart of everything we do—because we believe confident, happy learners achieve their very best.

Warm regards,

Catherine Kearney, Principal.

Beyond the classroom, we offer a wide range of extracurricular activities designed to nurture talents and interests. From sports and music lessons to art clubs, coding and Knex, there is something for every child to enjoy. These opportunities help pupils build confidence, develop teamwork skills, and discover new passions in a supportive environment. As one of only a few Digital Schools of Distinction in Ireland, we continue to provide 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.

As Principal of this vibrant and welcoming school, I am delighted to extend a warm invitation to you. We would be honoured to be part of your child's educational journey. While a prospectus can offer a glimpse into our ethos, it cannot fully capture the spirit of our school. If you would like to learn more or arrange a visit, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you for considering St Malachy's Primary School. We look forward to welcoming you into our school family and working together to give your child the best possible start in life.

"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



Catholic Ethos

At St Malachy's Primary School the Catholic Faith is not only taught, but nurtured and reflected in the daily life of the school. The Faith, we uphold, underlies every relationship so that all are respected and loved as children of God.

We cherish the role we play in helping our children to develop his/her Catholic faith and daily relationship with God. Together we:

- Pray daily in class and in the dining hall
- Enjoy weekly assemblies
- Make use of prayer spaces throughout the school
- Prepare our pupils for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation
- Celebrate the Liturgical year together as a school
- Enjoy School Masses

Values

We have worked with pupils, parents, staff and governors to create our school Values that underpin everything that we do in St Malachy's. These are Family, Respect, Kindness, Hard work and Teamwork.

'Our School Values'



“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

‘Child centred at every point.’ (Parent)

Motto

As a family we learn, play and do our best every day!

Mission Statement

As a school family we are guided by St Malachy as we grow in faith, love, and learning.

Our mission is to provide a safe, happy, and inclusive environment where every child is valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Together, we learn, play, and do our best every day!

Aims

We will work with our parents and the wider community to:

- Promote a spiritual and moral awareness in our pupils based on the values of respect, empathy and kindness
- Spark curiosity and develop motivated, independent children who have a love of learning
- Promote academic excellence for all children, meeting them at their own starting point and enhancing the quality of children's learning through effective teaching, enabling all pupils to reach their full potential



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:

Language & Literacy	Mathematics and Numeracy	The Arts	The World Around Us	Personal Development and Mutual Understanding	Physical Education
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"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 (UICT) 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.



Parent Testimonial: “It’s a city school but with a country school family feeling, everyone knows everyone.”



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.

Parent Testimonial: "Inspiring Teaching and Learning and a great sense of community"



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.

Parents of children from a non-Catholic background can contact the school regarding religious instruction.



Special Educational Needs

At our school, we are committed to providing an inclusive and supportive learning environment where every child can thrive. We recognise that some pupils may require additional help to reach their full potential, and we work closely with parents, carers, and external agencies to ensure individual needs are met. Our dedicated staff implement a wide range of provisions within the school including withdrawal for interventions, Sensory Motor Group and access to programmes such as Nessy and Dynamo Maths as well as a Sensory Motor Room. Where further assistance is required, we work in collaboration with external agencies such as the Education Authority, Health and Social Care Trusts, and Local Impact Teams (LITs), which provide targeted support and guidance. Through early identification and personalised learning plans, we aim to remove barriers to learning and celebrate the unique strengths of every child. We value strong partnerships with parents and carers and keep you involved every step of the way. Together, we aim to create an inclusive environment where every child can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Parent Testimonial: **"Staff are kind and compassionate towards children who have difficulties with learning. They are exceptional at identifying any additional learning needs a child has and implementing ways to enhance their learning experience."**



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 KNEX/Science club
- Lego Club
- Art & Craft
- Irish Dancing



Breakfast and After Schools Club

We offer a welcoming Breakfast Club each morning from 8:00am-8:45am, providing a healthy start to the day with a nutritious breakfast and a calm environment before lessons begin. Our Afterschool Club runs from 2pm until 5:30pm offering a safe, enjoyable space for children to relax and take part in a range of activities. These include support with homework, arts and crafts, games and sport. Healthy snacks are provided to keep children energised throughout the session. Both clubs are supervised by caring staff and designed to support families by offering flexible, affordable childcare in a familiar and friendly setting.



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 E-Safety. Parents are kept up-to-date through the school website, the school App, seesaw 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 fund raising events through the school year, which raise much appreciated funds for the school and work to support the school and enrich the educational experience for pupils. They also act as a link between parents and the school, fostering a strong sense of community.



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 P4 - P7, who mentor children from Foundation Stage and KS1, encouraging everyone to think about preserving and protecting our environment.

Our Digital Leaders are a dedicated team of pupils who promote safe and responsible use of technology across the school. They play a key role in delivering important internet safety messages to their peers and helping to create a positive digital environment for everyone.

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

We value strong connections with local nursery schools to help children make a smooth and happy transition into primary education. Throughout the year, we invite nursery classes to join us for special sessions, such as Learning Through Play and PE Activities. We then visit nurseries in the summer term to meet our new pupils and invite them to a 'Stay and Play' session in their new P1 classroom. These visits allow children to become familiar with our school environment, meet staff, and build confidence before starting P1. Our aim is to make the move from nursery to primary school a positive experience for every child.



Parent Testimonial about what makes St Malachy's special: "The community spirit, the parent involvement, the kind and compassionate atmosphere and staff."



"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

Before Enrolment

An open day will take place in December 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



The School Day

Pupils are supervised by staff from 8:45am in the playground or school. Teachers collect their class at 9am when lessons then begin.

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



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