

**ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
AUGHLISNAFIN**

LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

Principal : C. Murphy

Revised : May 2022

OUR AIMS AND VALUES

We at St Mary's Primary School believe that the following aims and values underpin Learning and Teaching in our school:

AIMS

What do we want our children to be?

We want our children to be:

- ❑ Happy
- ❑ Feel safe
- ❑ Confident
- ❑ Kind, caring and respectful of others
- ❑ Caring and respectful of their environment
- ❑ Literate and numerate
- ❑ Inquisitive
- ❑ Enthusiastic and eager to learn
- ❑ Prepared for learning
- ❑ Focused
- ❑ Successful
- ❑ Courageous
- ❑ Creative
- ❑ Socially aware
- ❑ The best they can be
- ❑ Healthy in mind and body
- ❑ Spiritually healthy
- ❑ Good citizens
- ❑ Peace-makers
- ❑ Flexible and adaptable
- ❑ Mannerly
- ❑ Tolerant of diversity: cultural, ethnic, religious, (dis)ability
- ❑ Ambitious
- ❑ Emotionally mature
- ❑ Life-long learners

OBJECTIVES:

What do we want our children to be able to do?

We want our children to

- ❑ Become independent learners
- ❑ Analyse and problem-solve
- ❑ Transfer knowledge and skills acquired in one area of learning to other areas of learning
- ❑ Express their opinions confidently
- ❑ Use their time productively
- ❑ Develop relationships with peers and adults
- ❑ Realise their own potential
- ❑ Recognise their own talents and use them
- ❑ Communicate successfully – with skills in listening and talking
- ❑ Interact and co-operate socially
- ❑ Contribute positively to society
- ❑ Live their faith
- ❑ Show initiative
- ❑ Debate appropriately
- ❑ Explore, investigate, research
- ❑ Reflect on and evaluate their own learning
- ❑ Select and use different strategies for different tasks
- ❑ Take responsibility for their own behaviour
- ❑ Share
- ❑ Be aware of their own learning styles
- ❑ Make the links between school, home and real life

VALUES

What basic values and principles do we believe underpin learning and teaching?

We believe that

- All children can learn
- Learning is for life – not just school
- Children have different talents and abilities
- Children have individual learning styles
- Children have multiple intelligences
- Children's needs are constantly changing
- Children can learn from their peers
- Children benefit from constructive feedback
- Each child is an individual
- Children have different home and family circumstances

Children learn best when:

- They are happy
- They feel secure and safe
- The environment is motivating and stimulating
- Work is matched to ability
- Concepts are presented in an interesting way
- Learning is assessed, evaluated and reinforced
- Teaching recognises and provides for different learning styles
- Teaching is broken into small steps
- Previous learning is reviewed and built upon
- There is good home/school support
- There are opportunities to relax
- Work is well-planned and directed
- The planning incorporates progression
- They feel valued, are encouraged and experience praise
- They are actively involved
- Work is varied
- There are incentives and rewards for effort
- Learning is fun
- Learning is practical
- The learning outcomes are shared with them

- They are involved in setting their own goals and targets
- They know that it is alright to make mistakes
- They see the relevance of the learning
- They are well rested and well nourished
- They are encouraged to ask for help
- They experience success
- The learning environment is well ordered, well lit, well ventilated and well resourced
- We have appropriately high expectations of them

DEVELOPING THE INDEPENDENT LEARNER:

At St Mary's Primary School, we intend to develop independent learners.

Independent learners:

- Know how to learn
- Have the disposition to learn
- Can identify the problem, analyse its components and solve it
- Have a sharp curiosity
- Can reflect on what they have learned
- Can explain the processes of learning and its outcomes with their peers
- Can make connections between one aspect of what they are learning and other aspects
- Are aware of their intelligences (know how they learn best)
- Know when it is best to work alone and when in a team
- Are confident in themselves due to secure relationships and high self-esteem

In order to develop the independent learner, St. Mary's Primary School will provide:

- conditions which facilitate the different learning styles: auditory, visual, kinaesthetic
- have opportunities to work in differentiated groups, whole class activities, paired activities and individual tasks
- challenge and reinforcement suited to pupils' needs
- verbal and written feedback that is positive and specific
- nurturing of self-esteem
- regular success for all: academic and non-academic
- lessons of varied duration
- respect for the working pace of individual children
- respect for children's ideas and variety of expression
- learning tasks which are not over-repetitive or mechanical
- opportunities to work independently
- opportunities for co-operative group-work
- examples in context, which broaden views rather than providing rigid formulae: freedom to choose different methods

- a culture of seeing problems as positive opportunities: there are lots of solutions
- freedom to experiment: take a chance!
- trust in the learners
- clear parameters
- high, clear expectations
- cross-curricularity and opportunities to make connections in learning
- to give opportunities to extend achievement at their ability
- further challenge, not “more of the same”
- creative situations following learning of skills and knowledge
- assessments which make the learning better
- assessments which children want to do
- the involvement of parents
- frequent 1:1 teacher / pupil talk
- regular positive class discussion of peers’ work

CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR PUPILS AND STAFF

In St. Mary's Primary School, we will endeavour to provide a learning environment

- Which is warm and welcoming, where children, staff and parents will come to school happy and with a positive outlook
- Which is stimulating and in which pupils will be informed and excited by what they experience; where curiosity and enquiry are nurtured; where self-motivation is encouraged and self-discipline is promoted
- Where expectations are high
- Where relationships are positive and encouraging, respectful, supportive and sympathetic
- Where the classroom is organised so that the children's learning is encouraged in an orderly fashion but also where the children can feel comfortable moving around the class, have access to resources when needed and use the facilities to promote independent learning
- Where classroom and school displays celebrate pupils' achievements; are presented with care and imagination by teachers and pupils; reflect a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities and provide focal points of interest, as well as informing the whole school community
- Where resources promote all aspects of the curriculum, especially Literacy and Numeracy, through ICT, Interactive Whiteboards, class computers, computer suite and laptop room
- Where positive behaviour exists to enhance the opportunities for learning, to care for and protect all pupils and staff and to ensure that pupils have the best opportunities to gain life skills
- Where staff have opportunities for on-going professional development

- Where pupils develop their spiritual, personal, academic, emotional and social competencies

RANGE OF LEARNING STYLES

We receive and process information through all five senses. However, an individual child may learn better through one system than through others.

Therefore the teachers in St. Mary's Primary School provide access to as many different teaching methods, materials, activities and experiences as possible, in order to ensure that children have the opportunity to learn through their preferred learning style.

VISUAL LEARNERS

Visual learners respond well to:

- The written word
- Diagrams
- Pictures
- Charts and posters
- ICT
- TV / video

AUDITORY LEARNERS

Auditory learners respond well to:

- The spoken word
- Lectures
- Discussion
- Audiotapes
- Sound effects

KINAESTHETIC LEARNERS

Kinaesthetic learners respond well to:

- Hands-on experiences
- Practical activities
- Movement
- Design / creative activities
- Role-play / drama

CLASSROOM ORGANISATION, TEACHING APPROACHES and RESOURCES

In St. Mary's Primary School we provide an environment where quality learning and teaching is nurtured. We adopt the following teaching approaches and forms of classroom organisation to encourage the development of the autonomous learner and to cater for the different learning styles of our pupils:

Organisation:

- Whole Class
- Small group (by ability, by gender, by learning style, by mixed ability, by mixed gender, by mixed learning style, by friendship etc.)
- Pairs
- Individual
- Taskboard
- Support from classroom assistant
- Withdrawal support
- Buddies

Teaching approaches:

- Open-ended investigations
- Research and independent learning
- Problem-solving
- Multi-media learning
- Creative tasks

- Role play
- Teacher-led lessons
- Pupil-led lessons
- Reflection on learning
- Circle Time
- Practical activities
- Extending Achievement activities
- Group discussion
- Questioning
- Topic-based, where appropriate
- Exposition and explanation
- Educational visits
- **Resources:**
- Teachers
- Classroom assistants
- Special Needs teachers
- The Peripatetic and Outreach support services
- ICT resources (Interactive Whiteboards, IPADS, Computers, Laptops, Tape Recorder, CD player, Radio, Overhead Projector, DVD, Video, Television, Roamer etc.)
- Printed materials (text books, pictures, diagrams, worksheets, work cards, posters, writing frames, greetings cards, catalogues, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines etc.)

- The school and class libraries
- Practical equipment (for Maths, The World Around Us, P.E., The Arts, music etc.)
- The school grounds
- Educational visits (to the local library, swimming pools, sports facilities, historical houses, museums, the zoo, scientific projects, other schools, music events, nursing homes etc.)
- External competitions (art, creative writing, poetry, sports, the Irish language, music, quizzes, the environment)
- Visitors to the school (parents and grandparents, the school chaplain, experts in subject fields, story-tellers, poets, writers, dramatists, sports coaches, artists, road-shows, the fire brigade, the pioneer association, the police service, the road safety association, zoologists, the electricity board, instrumentalists, business people, medical students etc.)
- Structured play resources (in classrooms, in communal areas, outdoors)
- ICT resources
- The Special Needs Advisory services
- The advisory services of the SEELB and the CCMS

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In St. Mary's Primary School, we recognise the need for us to monitor and evaluate the learning and teaching in our school, in order to ensure appropriate provision for our pupils and to raise standards.

We have agreed this range of strategies for the process of monitoring and evaluation. We will select the strategy to suit the area of focus.

Monitoring and evaluation is carried out by the Board of Governors, the Principal, Vice Principal, Key Stage Co-ordinators, Subject Co-ordinators, the Teachers.

Strategy for Monitoring and evaluation of ...	Learning	Teaching
Assessment Units (if required)	√	
Audit leading to School Development Plan (SDP)	√	√
Benchmarking	√	√
Reporting to Board of Governors	√	√
Book Calls	√	√
Circle Time	√	
Classroom observations	√	√
Co-ordinator observation and feedback		√
Co-ordinators files		√
Dissemination of good practice: visit other schools / classes	√	√
ELB guidance		√
Evaluation of the Action Plans of the SDP		√
Feedback from other professionals		√
Feedback from parents	√	
Individual evaluation of progress against planning	√	√
Inspections	√	√
Liaison with previous teacher	√	
Marking of work	√	√
Monitoring by Principal and VP	√	√
Outside agencies' assessments e.g. behavioural, medical, educational psychologist	√	
Parent meetings	√	
Strategy for Monitoring and evaluation of ...	Learning	Teaching
Peer support / team teaching		√
Plenary sessions	√	
Professional Review Staff Development (PRSD)		√
Pupil feedback	√	√
Pupil interviews	√	
Pupil profiles (if required)	√	
Pupil self-evaluation	√	
Pupil's response to comments	√	
Questionnaires: parents, pupils, parents, teachers, governors	√	√

Record keeping	√	
Reporting by teachers in year-group meetings		√
Reviews of Education Plans	√	
Reward systems	√	
Sharing of good practice		√
Standardised tests	√	
Target setting and review	√	√
Teacher's self-evaluation		√
Tests: weekly / monthly / termly	√	
Transfer Procedure	√	
Use of level descriptors	√	
Wall displays and classroom environment	√	√

AGREED FORMAT FOR PLANNING

Whole-school planning is contained in the three-year School Development Plan. It is broken down into one-year Action Plans, and these are evaluated against their success criteria. (See Action Plan exemplar, Appendix 1.)

What children learn is central to our work in St. Mary's Primary School. Therefore our planning formats focus on Learning Outcomes and activities. (See Planning exemplars-Appendix 2)

Subjects are planned in half-termly blocks, and at the end of these blocks the plans and outcomes are reviewed and evaluated. The evaluation then serves the preparation of subsequent planners.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The quality of learning and teaching at St. Mary's Primary School is enhanced through our strong community partnerships with:

- Parents (formal and informal meetings with teachers; curricular meetings; open days for P1 and Reception intakes; reporting to parents, oral and written; the school newsletter, monthly Newsletters, regular information notes sent home;
- Our Parents' Association (which organises fund-raising and social events)
- Our Parish (sacramental rites, preparatory meetings with parents)
- Sports Organisations such as Cumann na mBunscol, local GAC clubs and Down County board (providing coaching during and after school)
- The School Medical Service (providing assessments and advice)
- Other Schools (linked in local cluster groups and DCU clusters)
- Charities (fund-raising for Trocaire and other charities)
- Local artists (musicians, writers, poets, dramatists and theatre groups who give talks and workshops on their area of expertise)
- Local Businesses (Bag packing in Tescos; participation in their competitions, collecting and redeeming their tokens)
- Community Utilities and Services (Fire Brigade, Road Safety Organisation, the Police Service, all of whom advise and guide our pupils on how to keep themselves safe and how to act as responsible citizens)

EXTENDED SCHOOL

The Extended School and Extra Curricular Activities:

St. Mary's Primary School is an **Extended School**. An **Extended School** is one that offers services for the pupils, parents and the wider community so that

- the school day is lengthened and activities take place from 8.00am to 4.45pm
- the school building and expertise can provide parents with services such as parent workshops, support groups, educational and fun activities for parents. These activities will help parents in developing their own children's education and will take place both during the school day, while the children are in class learning and possibly in the evenings.
- the school works in greater partnership with other schools and agencies to raise educational standards and provide opportunities for the pupils, parish and community.

These activities are designed to improve the children's learning opportunities and to raise academic standards

The school now provides:

- **A Breakfast Club from 8.00am to 8.45am.** This promotes healthy eating and fitness
- **A Afterschool club, GAA, Guitar.** These promote learning in Literacy, Numeracy, Music and The Arts and PE.
- **Parent Workshops and Support Groups.** These provide opportunities for the parents to help their children in their learning
- **Educational and fun activities for parents.**

St. Mary's Primary School will work with other schools in the area. This will ensure that we provide the best possible services to the people of the parish and provide further learning opportunities for the children.

Extra curricular activities include

- Camogie, Hurling, Gaelic Football, Guitar and Lego.

Sporting Competitions

The children compete in various competitions throughout the school year in Cumann na mBunscol competitions for Gaelic Football, Hurling and Camogie. These include for:

Gaelic Football Down Blitz (9-a-side);

Hurling Down League;

Camogie Down League

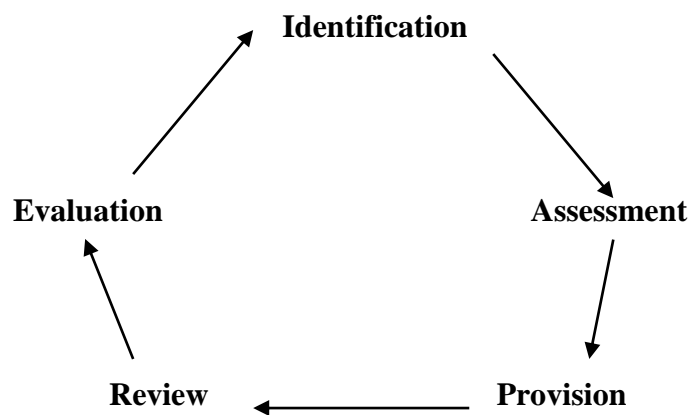
Drama

St. Mary's has a strong commitment to drama. All teachers share the vision that drama helps the children's team building, confidence and development of voice . This includes Christmas plays and talking and listening opportunities.

STRATEGIES FOR PROVIDING FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

In St. Mary's Primary School we recognise that children have different learning styles, different rates of learning and different needs. We endeavour to provide for the needs of all our pupils, irrespective of their abilities, disabilities, strengths or difficulties. At all stages, children experiencing learning difficulties are supported by their class teachers.

In line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO) and the related Codes of Practice, we seek to identify as early as possible, to assess and to provide for our pupils with Learning Difficulties.



- Initial assessment is by the class teachers, in consultation with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo). Where possible, the principal will discuss each child in the school with the class teacher to help identify and special needs or causes of concern
- Learning Difficulties are assessed in the course of normal class work. Standardised screening tests are also carried out (in Numeracy, for P3 to P7, once per year in May. Diagnostic testing through PTE/PTM can be carried out in term 3 and reported to parents. Children's potential and intelligence are also tested through NRIT (P4 and P6).

- Results are analysed by the teachers, the Special Needs Team and the SENCo, and a decision is made as to whether to make special provision or not.
- If it is considered that a child has Special Needs, this is recorded on the Special Needs Register, which also records actions taken and progress made.

Special Needs Code of Practice:

- Special provision at Stage 1 is in the form of additional support in class, differentiation and the use of appropriate teaching approaches and materials
- If required, from Stage 2 upwards, Special Literacy Support is provided on a timetabled basis by the SENCO and part-Time Special Needs teacher. Materials and resources are suited to the child's age and ability and target the raising of self-esteem as well as standards.
- From Stage 2 on, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are drawn up, with specific targets to be achieved within a stated timescale. Education Plans are shared with parents. They are reviewed at the end of the stated period and a decision is made as to whether to remain at Stage 2, revert to Stage 1 or come off the register.
- Within Stage 2 the pupil's needs are assessed by the Educational Psychologist, who gives advice on appropriate provision, which may
- include intervention by specialist outside agencies (e.g. the Peripatetic and Outreach Services, the Autistic Spectrum Disorder Advisory Service)
- Where a child's needs are more complex or severe, or where it is considered that (s)he will need the support of a dedicated classroom assistant, we move to making an application to the SEELB to consider assessing the pupil for a Statement of Special Educational needs. At Stage 3, the SEELB issues a Statement , identifying the child's needs and the special provision that has to be made.

- St. Mary's Primary School has, within its budget, funds for the support of children with learning difficulties. These are used to provide specialist teaching, materials, equipment and additional adult support.
- More details of the provision for children with Learning Difficulties can be found in the school's Special Educational Needs Policy.

EXTENDING GIFTED and TALENTED PUPILS

At St. Mary's Primary School, we recognise that some pupils have gifts (the ability to achieve at an academic level in advance of their peers) and/or talents (special abilities in creative and expressive subjects).

Teachers cater for gifted children by providing differentiation and enrichment, including extension activities and independent study tasks, which challenge such pupils at their level. A policy document is being considered by the staff.

In particular we

- develop sporting excellence, including participation in inter-school competitions. Children are assisted in taking their skills to a higher level by recommending them for representative places on higher teams, for example on county Gaelic teams

APPENDICES

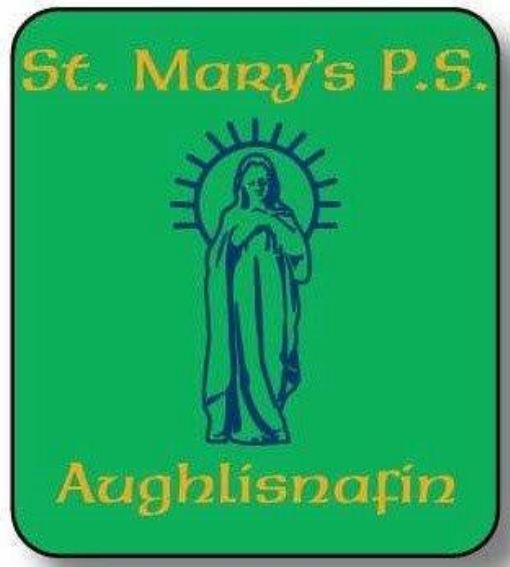
Appendix 1: Action Plan for
School Development Plan

Appendix 2: Half-term
Planning Templates

APPENDIX 1

ACTION PLAN

TEMPLATE



ACTION & OUTCOME PLAN PLAN

School Name: Saint Mary's Primary School,
Aughlinnafin

Year:

Issue:

ISSUE:

<p>Specific Objective(s) Targets. <i>What are we aiming to achieve and by when?</i></p>	
<p>Baseline reference point: <i>How well are we going at the moment?</i></p>	<p>This is based on the recognition that;</p>
<p>Success Criteria: <i>Quality we expect to see improve for pupils. Improvement in learning.</i></p>	<p>The principal will All Staff will All Pupils will</p>
<p>ACTIONS - (What are we going to do in order to achieve our objectives and the targets stated within our success criteria?)</p> <p><u>Term 1, 2 & 3</u></p>	

MONITORING (How are we going to monitor the implementation of the programme?)

Evidence collected by:	Assessment Coordinator / Principal
By means of : (How and when)	
PROGRESS STATEMENT	We have made Outstanding / Very Good / Good Progress
FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. What changes need to be made to bring about improvement?	

APPENDIX 2

HALF TERMLY PLANNERS

TEMPLATES

World Around Us

History

Geography

Science

Personal Development & Mutual Understanding

Cross-Curricular Skills

Communication

Using Maths

Using ICT

The children will . . .

The Arts

RE

PE

Thinking Skills & Personal Capabilities

Expected Outcomes taught through Shared /Guided Reading	Titles	Sample Activities	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the four reading Strategies <p><u>Text Level work</u></p> <p><u>Sentence Level work</u></p> <p><u>Word Level work</u></p> <p><u>Shared ReadingResources</u></p>		4 Reading strategies:	
		4 Reading strategies	
		4 Reading strategies	
		4 Reading strategies	
	<p><u>Organisation:</u> <u>Guided Reading</u> <u>Shared Reading.</u></p>		
Learning Intentions		Approaches/Activities	Talking and Listening Focus (strategies/appr

Writing	MODELLED/ SHARED		
Success Criteria			
	GUIDED		
Evaluation			
	INDEPENDENT		

TOPIC:								
LEARNING OUTCOMES								
RESOURCES								
WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<i>NHMS</i>								
LEARNING ACTIVITIES								
MENTAL ARITHMETIC <u>Resources:</u> <u>Strategies:</u>								

TOPIC:								
LEARNING OUTCOMES								
WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<i>NHMS</i>								
LEARNING ACTIVITIES								
MENTAL ARITHMETIC								
<i><u>Resources:</u></i>								
<i><u>Strategies:</u></i>								