

# The Federation of St Mary's Catholic Schools



***As the family of Jesus, we learn and  
love together.***

**Parents Handbook**

**2017 - 2018**



### **Contact Details**

General Enquiries need to be made to **Mrs Morris** (Business Manager) at the Infant Site or to **Mrs Corrigan** (Office Manager) at the Junior Site within the school offices.

<b>Infant Site</b>	<b>Junior Site</b>
Victoria Road Newton le Willows Merseyside WA12 9RX Tel:01744678357 Email: <b><i>stmaryrcni@sthelens.org.uk</i></b>	Barn Way Newton Le Willows Merseyside WA12 9QQ Tel: 01744678603 Email: <b><i>stmaryrcnj@sthelens.org.uk</i></b>

Website: [www.federationofstmarys.co.uk](http://www.federationofstmarys.co.uk)

# A warm welcome to our school .....



September 2017

Dear Parents

Welcome to the Federation of St Mary's Catholic Schools. We look forward to meeting your child and hope this will be an inspiring and very successful time for them. We hope that you find the information in this prospectus useful and that it gives you a flavour of what our school has to offer.

St Mary's Catholic Infant School and St Mary's Catholic Junior School became a Federation in September 2015. Both schools have long, strong and proud histories of serving the Parishes of St Mary's, St David's and St Patrick's and each has their own unique identity. We operate together as one organisation, with one Governing Body and an Executive Head teacher. Our schools are situated in close proximity to each other and staff and children have opportunities to work across the two sites.

Our Federation prides itself on providing a welcoming, friendly, caring family environment within which children can flourish. We seek to stimulate the love of learning in our children so that they want to learn for themselves and achieve to the very best of their abilities. Every child is valued as an individual and encouraged to 'be the best you can be' where they are happy, well cared for and most importantly, where they care about each other. Together with parents and the parish, our school prepares children to learn and grow in the Catholic Faith. The beliefs and principles of the Catholic Church are endorsed, not only by Religious Education, but also by encouragement, support and example of our community with the Federation. Our aim is to hand on our Catholic ethos to the children, so that it becomes a way of life.

Further information is available on our school website at [www.federationofstmarys.co.uk](http://www.federationofstmarys.co.uk)

Kind regards

Rebecca Dean

Head Teacher

## **Mission Statement**

***As the family of Jesus, we learn and  
love together.***

## **Our Aims and Objectives**

### **Faith**

***'Life is a promise, fulfil it'*** (St Theresa of Kolkutta)

- We are a community of faith.
- 'Love one another, as I love you.'
- Our faith in Christ is at the heart of all we do.
- We will help children to understand and know the gospel values taken from the beatitudes.
- We will strive to develop closer links with our three parishes.
- We will support parents in their role as the first educators in the faith of their children.
- We will celebrate and pray together, in school, in church and in our homes.



## **Community**

***'It is only the way we love and serve, that we truly witness to the Christ who served and invites us to do likewise.'*** (Archbishop Oscar Romero)

- We are a family.
- We will strive to be welcoming.
- We will work hard to ensure that all children feel valued and wanted.
- We will foster tolerance, harmony and peace.
- We will value positive home, school links.
- We will build a stronger unity between our schools.
- We will be actively involved in our local community.

## **Education**

***'If you are, what you should be, you will set the whole world ablaze.'***

(St Catherine of Sienna)

- All things grow in love
- We will ensure that all our children see school as a place of enjoyment and enthusiasm.
- We will invest in everybody.
- We seek a commitment from all staff, parents and children to strive for the best.
- We have high expectations for all our children.
- We will strive for outstanding.
- Religious Education is our core subject.
- We will develop the whole child
- We will seek challenges and opportunities for all our children.

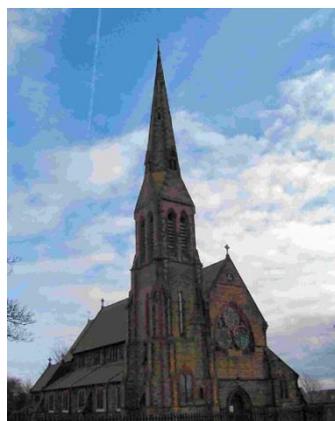
## Vision Statement

*Love, Laugh and Love together as one.*

## Home and School

At St Mary's we value and appreciate your support. We offer a wide range of opportunities for parents to actively participate in supporting their children in school. These include:-

- Parent Consultation meetings – this is an opportunity to find out how your child is doing in school. These take place in the Autumn and Spring terms.
- Annual school report – these are sent home in the Summer term, they will include progress to date together with targets for future progression.
- Parent workshops – these are run through the year and include aspects of Maths and English as well as new information about new initiatives in schools.
- School newsletter – there is weekly newsletter which is sent to all parents it includes dates of upcoming events and general information about what is going on in school.
- School website – the website has all the school policies and further information about the school. Download the school spider app to receive further information via your tablet or mobile phone.
- Parent volunteers – parents are warmly welcomed to come into school to support children in their learning. They can help by listening to children read, art work or times table testing. Please register your interest with the school office.



# **Foundation Stage**

Our Early Years provision is spread across a 52 place nursery and 60 places in reception. The indoor and outdoor space is designed specifically to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

The 7 areas of learning that makes up the Foundation Stage Curriculum are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts & Design

## **Learning**

### ***Curriculum***

We work hard to ensure that all our pupils receive a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum which engages and challenges learning.

### ***Inclusive Provision***

Within each class work is differentiated to meet the needs of the individual child. Some children may have Special Education Needs which require additional resources or support. We may have children who are gifted or talented and require enrichment to maximise their strengths. Regardless of the ability of each of our children, we strive to ensure their individual needs are met.

### ***Home Learning***

Children throughout the school are encouraged to read at home. We have a library at both sites where the children can borrow books. We ask parents to support their children's reading and work with us to develop 'lifelong readers' who enjoy a wide range of reading materials.

The school has a homework policy which outlines the types of homework we set. As well as reading, we focus on spelling, times tables and the children also get opportunities to complete home learning projects at different times throughout the year

## Forest Schools

Forest Schools is a learning woodland environment which is used to develop children's confidence, self-esteem and independence by encouraging, inspiring, engaging and motivating them through exploring and experiencing the natural world. It is delivered regularly by a qualified Forest School teacher. We are able to offer this for all our children from Nursery to Year 6.



St Mary's Forest Schools takes place within our beautiful Junior site woodland throughout the seasons and in all weathers. Through Forest Schools activities we aim to provide the children of St Mary's with opportunities to develop relationships with others, understand the needs of others and co-operation.

Activities are diverse and numerous, but it should be remembered that we are trying to create independent learners who are inspired to try out their own ideas and explore their own interests. Activities may include, shelter building, fire lighting, tool use, studying wildlife, team games, cooking on an open fire, rope & string work, woodland & traditional crafts, developing stories & drama and PE.

***St Marys believe Forest Schools is essential for the good growth of our children, nurturing the whole child enhancing them socially, emotionally, academically and spiritually.***



## **Catholic Life**

The Federation of St Mary's Schools is a secure, friendly and faith-centred community. United in our faith in Jesus, our school family will love, nurture and inspire every child to reach their full potential

All our work with children and their families, staff, governors, parishioners and the wider community is influenced by Gospel values.

## **Religious Education**

As a Catholic School, Religious Education and collective worship are an integral part of the everyday life of the school.

### **Our Values**

We aim to work as a family with a shared set of values. These values are what everyone in our schools tries to show every day to make it a welcoming, happy place to be.

### **Our values are:**

- Love
- Honesty
- Respect
- Kindness
- Forgiveness
- Trust
- Patience & Tolerance

By carrying these out daily it allows us to be 'proud as peacocks'.

### **Outcome of Religious Education**

*The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.'*

Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools 2012

### **The following strategies and aims underpin the effective delivery of Religious Education at St Mary's Catholic school.**

Religious education will be taught discretely and developmentally. It will include the deepening of knowledge, and understanding of key theological ideas and their application to life.

- Ample opportunities will be offered for children to apply and use their knowledge and skills in cross-curricular studies to deepen their understanding of religious truths and think creatively.

- Engagement with their own and others' beliefs and values will help to develop good attitudes and dispositions so that children are instilled with a love of learning and a desire to go on learning.
- Engagement with difficult questions of meaning and purpose which everyone has to face will enable them to think critically about their own questions of meaning and purpose.
- Offer the children a sense of self-worth through their experience of belonging to a caring community and an awareness of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

We use the Come and See Programme recommended by the Archdiocese

## **Collective Worship**

We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective worship may involve all members of the school or a class coming together and participating in an act of worship. All children take part in daily Collective Worship in their classes. We celebrate the Gospel and the word of the Lord in Collective Worship as a school on Mondays (Juniors) and Fridays (Infants)

## **School Levy**

We are happy that you have chosen to send your child to a Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided School. Such choice brings with it not only evident benefits but also responsibilities and commitment not faced by those being educated in the community sector.

In generations past, a Catholic community would have had to cover the expense of schooling for their children in its entirety. We are more fortunate; the State Education provision covers all internal requirements for the school and 90% of external (Capital) expenditure. Therefore, this means that we need to find 10% of any repairs, maintenance or extensions to the actual buildings. We make this financial commitment to preserve the Catholic status of the school.

The Archdiocesan Levy is charged at **£10 per family** each academic year. Parents are asked to pay this for the eldest child that they have in the school.

## **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)**

Relationships and Sex Education is taught throughout the year through 'Come and See', but also taught independently through 'Journey in Love'. It is taught from Early Years up to Year 6.

Parents are welcome to request samples of the resources we use for 'Journey in Love', should they wish to look in more detail at the content. If you do need any extra resources, please see Miss McCormack.

## **Information Technology**

All our classrooms have interactive whiteboards, 32 computers at each site so that a class can individually access a computer. We have a computing suite at both sites which is used by every class in the school and is used to develop the computing curriculum. We also have ipads and kindles which are accessible in each class.

## **Extra-Curricular Clubs**

We offer a wide range of activities after school. Some are run by teaching staff at the school and there is no cost for these activities. We do have a number of clubs run by external providers and there is a cost attached to these activities. Clubs vary on a half-termly basis.

## **Breakfast and After School Provision**

We have a breakfast and after school club which operates from 7.45am until 5.30pm on school days. This is based in the school hall at the Junior site. Information and further details can be found on the school website, under 'parent information, and 'extended schools' tabs..

Website: [www.federationofstmarys.co.uk](http://www.federationofstmarys.co.uk)

Alternately, you can contact either the Infant or Junior school office for information and registration forms.

## **School Meals**

### **Dinner Money**

Children at the Infant school site are entitled to Universal Free School Meals.

Children at the Junior school site pay £11.50 per week.

Children at both sites will have the opportunity to choose their meal. This will be done on a half termly basis.

### **Free school Meals**

Registering for free school meals could raise an extra £1,300 for school, to fund valuable support such as extra tuition, additional teaching staff or after school activities.

This additional money is available from central government for every child whose parent is receiving one of the welfare listed below. It is therefore important to sign up for free school meals, even if your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2, so your child's school receives as much funding as possible.

## **Eligibility criteria for other groups**

Existing entitlements to Free School Meals for disadvantaged pupils at Key Stage 2 will continue as now, based on the existing free school meals eligibility criteria.

In England, children at Key Stages 2-4 in state-funded schools are entitled to receive FSM if their parents or carers are in receipt of any of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provide they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by HMRC)
- Working Tax Credit run-on-paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- During the initial roll out of the benefit, Universal Credit

If you think you may be entitled to Free School Meals, you need to contact the ***Education Benefits Office at St Helens Council on 01744 675216***. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the department of any changes i.e. a new child starting school or a change in benefit entitlement.

No distinction at all is made at lunchtime between those children who receive a free meal and those who pay.

## **Packed Lunch**

Children may also choose to have a packed lunch at school – please see the packed lunch booklet for advice on the contents.

Children wishing to move between packed lunch and school dinners or vice versa should ideally give **half a term's notice**, in writing. Some allowances can be made for quicker changes in exceptional circumstances. Forms can be obtained from the School Office.

## **Milk in School (Infant Site only)**

Children in Nursery or on free school meals are entitled to free milk each day. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children at this site have the option of having milk at school, which is subsidised by the local authority and costs £6.00 per year.

## **Fruit in School**

Each child in at the Infant Site is given a piece of fruit from the 'Free Fruit Scheme' Government initiative. Children at the Junior Site are allowed to bring in a piece of fresh fruit for morning break time. Other snacks for break time are not permitted, this decision was taken to promote healthy teeth, prevent food wastage at dinner time and reduce the problem of litter.

## **Water in School**

Children should bring a water bottle to school so they are able to access water during the school day. Bottles are available at both school offices at a cost of £2.00.

## **Behaviour**

We take great pride in the behaviour of our pupils. The emphasis in the school is to praise positive behaviour. We have a code of conduct which the whole school follows.

Across the whole school, we use the ClassDojo system to focus on good behaviour. ClassDojo is a communication app for the classroom. It connects school to home so you never miss a special moment. We use ClassDojo to work together as a team, share in the classroom experience, and bring big ideas to life in their classrooms and homes. Each parent/child has a unique code that will be sent home in a letter, you can use this code to access the app and see your child's rewards and, if required, any consequences. Find the ClassDojo app available for your smart phones on both Apple and Android devices, or access [www.classdojo.com](http://www.classdojo.com) online or on your tablet.

The app also allows for communication to be sent from teacher to parent and vice-versa. More information will follow as you receive your code, which we must stress is unique to your child and is a safe and secure platform. For any more information, contact Mrs. Lancashire.

## **St Mary's PTFA**

Our PTFA organises a range of events during the year. They have raised a huge amount of money for the school and provide our children with additional equipment and facilities. We are very appreciative of all out volunteers and the fantastic work they do. We hope all our new families support our fund raising events or become active members of the PTFA.



## **Pupil Voice**

Children's opinions about how the school is run are listened to at the School Council. Meetings are held ½ termly and representatives from each class in Y1-Y6 are elected by the children. The School Council work to ensure that every voice in our school is heard, with the sole aim of improving our school for everyone.

In previous years, the school council have asked for new, improved toilets, playground equipment and scented hand soap in the toilets.

The School Council work alongside the staff as well as the Head Boy and Head Girl and we look forward to welcoming our newest additions to the school.

## **Year 6 Additional Responsibilities**

Dinner servers – Year 6 children work with lunch time supervisors in the junior hall to ensure a smooth and swift service for children.

Librarians – Year 6 children can apply for the role of Librarian. They will work with Mrs. Taylor to order books, create displays and keep the library tidy.

Buddies – Our Year 6 children are buddied-up with a Year 3 child in September, this helps the littlest people of the junior school feel more at home. Buddies often read with each other and look out for each other on the playground.

## **Head Boy/Head Girl**

Each year the children in the school will elect a Head Boy and Head Girl who will be the face of St Mary's at community events etc. The children who would like to make this commitment to the school will need to go through a series of tasks.

They will initially write a letter of application stating the various reasons why they would make the best choice.

The candidates will then be interviewed by a member of the Leadership Team, a Governor and a number of School Council members. There will then be 4 boys and 4 girls put forward to campaign for the position across both sites. There will then be a formal election process carried out.

# Every Day Life at St Mary's

## **School Day**

<b>Infant Site Day</b>	<b>Junior Site Day</b>
Doors open at 8.40am Registration at 9am <b>Collective Worship – 9.05 – 9.20</b> Year 1 Morning break at 10.30 – 10.45 Year 2 Morning Break at 10.45 – 11.00 Year 1 & 2 Lunch 12.00 -1.00 School ends at 3.15pm	Doors open at 8.50am Registration at 9.05am <b>Collective Worship – 9.05 – 9.20</b> Year 5/6 morning break – 10.10 – 10.25 Year 3/4 morning break – 11.00 – 11.15 Lunch 12.15 – 1.15 School ends at 3.30pm

<b>Reception</b>	<b>Nursery</b>
Doors open at 8.40am Lunch 11.30 – 12.30 Schools day ends at 3.15pm	8.40 – 11.40am – AM COHORT 12.20 – 3.20pm – PM COHORT

## **School uniform**

Uniform is worn at St Mary's to develop a sense of pride in being part of the St Mary's family. Uniform lists are available at the school office or on our website. Our children wear royal blue cardigans or sweatshirts and grey trousers or skirts. The children in EYFS wear white polo shirts and the children in Key Stage 1 & 2 wear shirts and ties. School uniform can be ordered from our school wear provider.

## **Hairstyles & Jewellery**

All long hair should be tied back (shoulder length and above). **We do not allow any 'extreme hairstyles'** including tramlines, mohicans or partly shaved styles. If your child's hairstyle is unacceptable for school you will be invited in to school to discuss it. Jewellery is not allowed to be worn in school other than a watch. **Smart watches are not allowed.**

**Earrings -stud earrings only** and they need to be covered for P.E. and **must** be removed for swimming lessons

## **Safeguarding**

St Mary's is committed to the safeguarding of all pupils and adults, all staff and volunteers are appointed using safe recruitment practices in line with national guidelines. The site is kept safe at all times as the health and safety of our school family is paramount.

## **Transition**

Before your child starts school in Foundation stage, there will be a number of opportunities for them to familiarise themselves with their new environment as well as home visits. As children move through the school, they will meet their new teachers in the summer term. Those children moving from Y2 to Y3 which involves moving from the Infant site to the Junior site take part in a number of transition visits. Our school is linked with Hope Academy and our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils take part in a number of programmes during the school year.