



Mary Queen Of Peace Primary School



P1 Handbook

A guide to
starting our school



Welcome



Dear Parents,

You are very welcome to Mary Queen of Peace Primary School.

Starting school is one of the most important days in any child's life and a very important event for your family. It is also an important day for our school because Primary 1 is a very special year group in Mary Queen of Peace PS.

We hope that the children have seven happy and successful years in school. To help with the transition to primary school we have produced this booklet to give parents relevant information about our school. Partnership with parents is a very important aim for Mary Queen of Peace PS and we look forward to working with you in the coming years. There will be many opportunities for parents to participate in the life of the school. We hope you will share with us in making this a happy and successful period in your child's life.

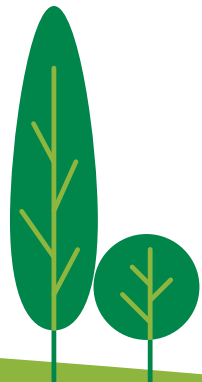
On behalf of the staff, I would like to welcome you and your child to Mary Queen of Peace Primary School and we are looking forward to building partnerships with our families in the years ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Malachy Conlon

Malachy Conlon, *Principal*

and the Year 1 Teacher:
Mrs Hynds



Current School Year Staff List 2024-25

Staff List (Martinstown Site)

Mr Conlon - *Principal*
Mrs Gormley - *P7 Teacher*
Mrs McAlister - *P6 Teacher*
Miss Walsh - *P6 Teacher*
Mrs Duffin - *P5 Teacher*
Mrs O'Mullan - *P4 Teacher*
Mrs Sharkey - *P4 Teacher*
Mrs McKeown - *P3 Teacher*

Denise McAuley - *Senior Executive Clerical Officer*
Steven Beagan - *Building Supervisor*
Bobby Reid - *Cleaner*
Christine McAfee - *Classroom Assistant*
Louise McFadden - *Classroom Assistant*
Pauline Mulholland - *Classroom Assistant*
Claire McLamon - *Classroom Assistant*
Tara McFadden - *Classroom Assistant*
Joanne O'Loan - *Supervisory Assistant*
Úna McCambridge - *Classroom Assistant*
Kara McErlane - *Classroom Assistant*

This is the list of staff for the 2024-25 school year. Changes to the staff list for 2025-26 will be issued to parents.

Staff List (Cargan Site)

Mrs McNicholl - *Vice Principal, P2 Teacher*
Mrs Hynds - *P1 Teacher*
Mrs McLoughlin - *P3 Teacher*

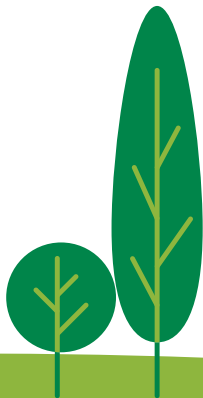
Mary Swann - *Classroom Assistant*
Naimh McAlister - *Classroom Assistant*
Emer Higgins - *Classroom Assistant*
Barbara Donnelly - *Classroom Assistant*
Rita McCollam - *Classroom Assistant*
Karen McIlhatton - *Classroom Assistant*
Laura Lok - *Classroom Assistant*
Philomena Higgins - *Classroom Assistant*
Denise Crossett - *Cleaner*
Bernie O'Loan - *Catering Assistant*



School Aims

School Aims

- A Catholic school for everyone, which will enrich the lives of all pupils and support parents with the handing on of the faith.
- To create the opportunity for each child to reach their full potential: spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally and physically in a safe and caring environment.
- To provide an education which enables every child to be proud of their learning and achievements by delivering a modern, active, broad and balanced curriculum thus ensuring high academic literacy, numeracy and ICT standards throughout the school.
- To promote positive behaviour within the school through a happy and caring environment based on respect, tolerance, co-operation and self-discipline and where all children are valued as equals.
- To provide a positive learning environment where children's attitudes are nurtured to ensure they become independent, confident, resilient and enthusiastic learners for life and the future.
- To develop positive relationships between staff, parents, parish and the community to promote the life, work and values of the school.
- To encourage a positive lifestyle by promoting healthy eating, personal and physical development through the school's curriculum and after-school programme.



Board of Governors

Governor Name

- 1. Mr Sean Harvey, *Chairperson*
- 2. Mr Mark McQuillan, *Vice-Chairperson*
- 3. Rev. Paul Strain
- 4. Mrs Anne-Marie Hoey
- 5. Miss Elaine Higgins, *Secretary*
- 6. Mrs Michelle Carton
- 7. Mr Seamus McMullan
- 8. Mrs Geraldine McKeown
- 9. Mr Matthew Donnelly
- 10. Mr Malachy Conlon

Representing

- Trustees*
- Trustees*
- Trustees*
- Trustees*
- Department of Education*
- Education Authority*
- Education Authority*
- Teachers*
- Parents*
- Principal*

Date of expiry of current term of office: 2028



Settling New Children

At Mary Queen of Peace we try to smooth the path from nursery/playgroup to school. During the first few weeks children are admitted in small groups to ensure that each child has settled reasonably well before any other children come.

This of course means that some children may not start until later in September, so please be patient and understand that we have the interests of your child at heart.

Your child's first day will last until 12 o'clock and I would ask you to stay with him/her a short while, if required, trying to keep out of sight after you leave.

Your child will start school on

in the Cargan building.

Please encourage and support your child at all times. Show an interest in his/her school work and praise him/her when s/he tries. Interest and encouragement help in producing success.

As a parent you can ensure:

- your child gets an adequate amount of sleep;
- is not too rushed in the morning and is provided with an adequate breakfast;
- when homework does commence ensure that it is well done;
- all belongings are labelled and packed carefully.

Y1 Staff

Mrs Hynds and the Learning Support Assistant is **Emer Higgins**.



The School Day

School Start	9.00 a.m.
Morning break	10.45 - 11.00 a.m.
Lunchtime	12.15 - 1.00 p.m.
Finishing Time	2.00 p.m.

From Monday 25th September Year 1 children will be in school until 2 p.m (To be confirmed). From this time onwards we would ask that you leave your child at the front gate, from where they will be collected and brought in by the class teacher. In this way you will help develop your child's confidence and independence.

School start at 9.00 a.m. for all pupils. Children should not arrive in school before 8.50 a.m. because there will be no supervision.

Morning Routine

In good weather the children should remain outside the school building after leaving their bags in their classroom. Once the bell rings the children should line up in their class line in the playground and wait to be escorted by their teacher to the classroom. If you wish to speak with the class teacher please ring the office to arrange a suitable time to chat. The mornings can be busy and teachers must ensure the children are safely escorted to their classroom.

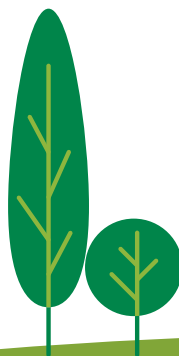
Wet Mornings

On wet days the children will be met at the doors by staff and led to their classrooms where they will be supervised. Supervision will be in place from 8.50 a.m.

School Contact Details

Address:
Mary Queen of Peace Primary School
2 Lisnamanny Road
Martinstown
Glenravel
Co. Antrim
BT43 6QH

Tel No: 028 2175 8619 (Cargan)
Tel No: 028 2175 8358 (Martinstown)
E-mail: info@mqpps.glenravel.ni.sch.uk
Website: www.mqpglenravel.com



2025 - 2026 Holiday List - Pupils

First Term

Friday 29 August – Friday 19 December 2025 [inclusive]

Primary 1 Pupils Only Induction	-	Friday 29 August 2025
Primary 2 – 7 Pupils	-	Monday 1 September 2025
Hallowe'en	-	Monday 27 October- Friday 31 October 2025
Staff Training	-	Monday 17 November 2025

Second Term

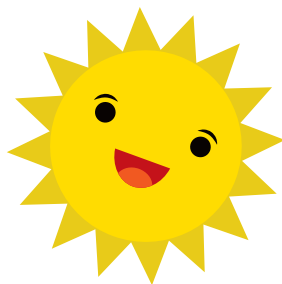
Tuesday 6 January – Thursday 2 April 2026 [inclusive]

Mid-Term Break	-	Monday 9 - Friday 13 February 2026
St. Patrick's Day Holiday	-	Tuesday 17 March 2026

Third Term

Monday 13 April – Tuesday 30 June 2026 [inclusive]

May Day Bank Holiday	-	Monday 4 May 2026
Staff Training	-	Tuesday 5 May 2026
May Bank Holiday	-	Monday 25 May 2026



This is a provisional list and subject to change

School Uniform

Mary Queen of Peace Primary School uniform consists of:

Boys

- Navy sweatshirt (with school crest)
- Green polo shirt (with school crest)
- Navy trousers
- Black shoes
(trainers to be brought to school for PE days)
- Navy school coat (optional)
- Unbranded navy knee length shorts
(optional) **Please note navy not black for shorts**

Full school uniform should be worn at all times.

Jewellery is not to be worn in school.
Children with pierced ears must only wear studs.

For PE days the children should come to school dressed in their full school uniform. Pupils will wear their school polo shirt and change into shorts and trainers.

Girls

- Navy sweatshirt (with school crest)
- Green polo shirt (with school crest)
- Navy skirt/pinafore or navy trousers
- Black shoes
(trainers to be brought to school for PE days)
- White socks or navy tights
- Navy school coat (optional)
- Blue & white checked summer dress
(optional)
- Unbranded navy knee length shorts
(optional)
- Leggings are not part of the school uniform

Please ensure that all items of clothing, especially sweatshirt and coats have your child's name clearly marked.

The school uniform supplier is Select Kidz, Church St, Ballymena.

Applications for assistance with school meals and uniform are available on-line at:
<http://www.eani.org.uk/i-want-to/fsm/>



Meals and Lunches

Break

Mary Queen of Peace is a Healthy Breaks School, this means that milk or water, fruit or yogurt should be consumed at this time. Milk is available for morning break (paid termly).

School Dinners

A school dinner is available for those who wish to use this service. Please book and pay for dinners via the ParentPay app. This should be done before 9 a.m. on a Monday and should be for any bookings you wish to make during the whole school week. The Education Authority will inform schools of the costs of school dinners for the 2025-26 school year. A copy of the canteen menu will be sent to you monthly and posted on the website.

You may be entitled to free school meals and forms are available to download from the Education Authority website. Forms should be completed and returned to the Education Authority at North Eastern Region. Applications can also be made on-line at: <http://www.eani.org.uk/i-want-to/fsm/> For administrative purposes this should be done by 8 September 2025. It is in the parents' interest and the school's interest that every child who is entitled to free school meals is registered. Your child may not want to take a school meal every day but they could use this service, for example, when they forget their lunchbox or they want to go to Christmas dinner.



Mary Queen of Peace PS is a cashless school, we use the ParentPay School Gateway app. The app may also be used to text message parents. Please download the app to your phone (it is free).

The set-up process is simple and will take no more than a couple of minutes:

1. Search for "School Gateway" in the Apple App Store/Google Play or on your phone go to www.schoolgateway.com/apple (Apple) or www.schoolgateway.com/android (Android).
2. Install the app and if you are asked then say yes to "Allow Push Notifications".
3. When you launch School Gateway for the first time, please select 'New User' and enter the email address and mobile telephone number you have registered with the school. If you get an error message this means that the email address is not the one registered with the school or the email address is not the Primary Contact. If in doubt, contact the school secretary.
4. The system will send a PIN code to your phone; please enter this PIN code and the app will be activated for you.

Packed Lunches

Children should be given lunchboxes that they can open and close themselves. Your child's name should be clearly marked on the lunchbox. Please follow good healthy eating practice and provide one treat for your child in their lunchbox.

Allergies

Extremely important: We have a nut free policy in school and any products containing nuts are not to be brought into school.

School Information

Morning Club

The Morning Club provides supervised care for children from 8 a.m. at the Martinstown site (only). It is managed by Learning Support Assistants. This gives parents peace of mind, safe in the knowledge that their child will be provided with a breakfast and will be cared for until the school day begins at 9 a.m.

The charge will be £2.00 per day to cover the cost of running the service only.

Charging and Remissions Policy

In line with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Education Reform Order 1989, it is the policy of the Board of Governors to: -

- maintain the right to free school education for all pupils;
- establish that activities organised wholly or mainly during school time should be available to all pupils;
- Please book and pay (£2 per day) for a place in the Morning Club, via the ParentPay app. App booking available up until 7.30 a.m. on the morning you require the service;
- request voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of activities organised by the school; make charges in respect of optional extras, e.g. After School Activities, school outings, etc. as determined by the Board of Governors.

Transport

If you live more than two miles from the school you will be entitled to transport. Application forms for assistance with travel are available on-line at:

www.eani.org.uk/transportapp

Absences & Punctuality

All pupil absences must be reported to the school either by speaking to the class teacher, a note to class teacher or by phoning the school office.

Children who arrive into school late can get quite upset. Late arrivals also disrupt the rest of the class and this is not fair on the children who arrived in school on time. We want to ensure that children start the school day happy and are ready for learning. It is a parental responsibility that children start school on time.

Medication

At the beginning of the school year there will be a meeting with the class teacher to discuss how your child is settling into school. At this meeting you can advise us of any specific needs; for example information of allergies, inhalers, hearing or sight. You will also be issued with a data collection form to record medical information. If there are any changes to medical information or emergency contact information please keep the school informed.

Mary Queen of Peace has an Administration of Medication Policy. You will receive a copy of the policy when your child starts school.



School Information

Leaving School Early

If your child needs to leave school early we would ask you to notify us in advance, either a note or a telephone call. We do not have a full-time office or secretary on the Cargan site. Please ring the buzzer to the main school building and a member of staff will come and meet you. You should not go directly to the classroom.

This is a time of change and we may not know all of the parents, carers and grandparents straight away at the Cargan and Martinstown sites.

Taking children out of school on a regular basis, not only disrupts your child's education, but also disrupts the routine of the classroom.

Collecting Children from School

At the start of each school year you will be asked to list the names of other adults who have permission to collect your child from school. If there is a change to names on the list or contact details (in particular mobile telephone numbers) you should inform the school's secretary.

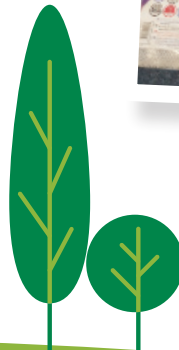
It is important that we know who is collecting the children.

Parents/carers who collect their children in the afternoon should wait at the school gate and the children will be escorted out.

Encourage your child to respect and obey the Patrol Person. His/her safety depends on this in later years.

What to Bring to School

- Please take a coat (labelled) because we will spend time outside everyday and need to be prepared for all weather.
- PE days – trainers, shorts.
- No School Bag – rather children bring an A4 plastic folder, with a handle. The size can be hard to source so available to purchase from school @ £7.
- Lunch Bag with a strap - this allows children to have hands free to carry their folder.



Child Protection

Pastoral Care

Keeping your child safe and happy is a key aim in Mary Queen of Peace PS and Pastoral Care Policies will help us achieve this goal.

In September, we will send you a copy of the Child Protection procedures for the school. See Child Protection below.

We will also issue an Anti-Bullying Guide for Parents, which outlines our anti-bullying policy.

Child Protection

Mary Queen of Peace's Child Protection Policy will help support each child's development, their welfare, care and security. You will receive a Child Protection leaflet at the start of the school year which will outline the school's Child Protection Policy & Practice:

Safeguarding Team

Mrs Shauna McNicholl
Designated Teacher (based in Cargan)

Mr Malachy Conlon
Deputy Designated Teacher

Mrs Michelle Carton
Designated Governor for Child Protection

Mr Sean Harvey
Chair of the Board of Governors

How A Parent Can Express Concern

I have a concern about my/a Child's Safety



I can talk to the **Class Teacher**



If I am still concerned I can talk to:
Mrs S McNicholl **Vice-Principal**



If I am still concerned I can talk to the
Mr M Conlon **Principal**



If I am still concerned,
I can talk/write to the
Mr S Harvey
Chairman of the Board of Governors



Curriculum

The development of teaching and learning is a School Development Plan (SDP) priority for Mary Queen of Peace PS.

Curriculum development is led by subject co-ordinators:

Mrs McNicholl - **Maths**

Mrs McKeown - **Literacy**

Mrs Hynds - **Foundation Stage**

Mrs Gormley - **ICT**

Mrs McAlister - **Special Educational Needs (SENCO)**

Mrs O'Mullan - **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU)**

Mrs Sharkey - **The Arts**

Mrs McLoughlin - **Religious Education**

Mrs Duffin - **Physical Education**

Problem Solving

Raising the profile and importance of problem solving will be a school priority. The children will develop a range of strategies for solving problems from Y1 to Y7.

Regular opportunities to problem solve will help to promote the development of children's thinking skills in all areas of the curriculum. The promotion of thinking, problem solving and investigation skills will develop through Science and Technology.

Outdoor Play

Mary Queen of Peace staff believe that the outdoors can provide young children with one of the best possible environments in which to learn. Consequently, children in the Foundation Stage will have outdoor play. The outdoor play offers children the opportunity to use effective modes of learning: play, movement and sensory experience. It will also reflect the learning environment indoors promoting creative, imaginative teaching and learning outdoors.

"...the best kept classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky."

Margaret McMillan, 1925



Curriculum

School Books

Children in Year One are able to borrow books from the class library and we would ask that you encourage your child to take good care of these books. Please share the books with your child.

‘The earlier children are introduced to books and start playing around with words and language, the more they will benefit in their later school life.’

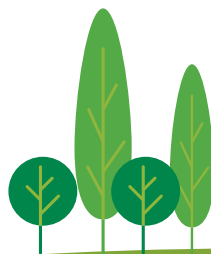
Peter Bryant Watts (Professor of Psychology, Oxford University)

Interactive Whiteboard

The Year 1 classroom has an interactive whiteboard. An interactive whiteboard is a surface onto which a computer screen can be displayed. Interactive whiteboards can help teachers deliver exciting and engaging lessons to children of all ages. They can also improve teaching and learning by increasing pupil motivation and involvement. It's touch sensitive and is used by the pupils themselves.

Shared Education

Our school, from Year 1 to 7, shares a very successful Shared Education link with Camphill PS (Ballymena). The staff work in partnership, to plan meaningful learning experiences for the children. During the year the children will work together remotely, visit each others' schools and go on joint educational visits.



Assessment

Children come to school with a wide range of experiences, skills and attitudes. Teachers need to find out what children know, understand and can do in order to be able to plan appropriately for them. This is known as assessment.

Why are schools carrying out assessment?

Assessment has two main purposes:

- to gather information about each child in order to enable teachers to plan effectively for each child's learning needs;
- to help teachers monitor children's progress as they move through the primary school.

When will the children be assessed?

Assessments will be informally carried out throughout the school year.

What will be assessed?

While the teacher will form a picture of the child's all round development, the following areas are a focus:

- personal, social and emotional development
- language development
- early mathematical development
- ICT skills

How will children be assessed?

Children will normally be observed over a period of time as they play indoors, outdoors and when they take part in other classroom activities. They should be unaware that they are being assessed. This is certainly not something that you or your child should be worried about.

How will parents be involved in their child's assessment?

An important part of the assessment process is to talk with parents about their child.

The class teacher will arrange to meet with you before the process begins to give you an opportunity to provide information about your child. Furthermore, an additional parent/teacher meeting later in the first term will provide time for discussion about your child's skills and competencies so that together we can give your child the best possible start to school.

Parents will receive a written report at the end of the school year about their child's progress in all curricular areas.



Special Educational Needs

Special Educational Needs

The school implements the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order.

We aim to identify those children with Special Educational Needs as early as possible and provide for those needs. The responsibility for each pupil's educational needs lies with the class teacher. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) liaises with the class teacher to ensure the correct provision is provided.

Parents are kept fully informed throughout the year and are requested to attend meetings with the Class Teacher and SENCO.

External agencies give direct input to identified pupils who require their support. This support will vary depending on the needs of the individual child.

When necessary, the school will refer individuals to the Educational Psychology Service or to other external agencies.



Help from Home

Some things to practise at home!

Can your child...

1. Cope efficiently with going to the toilet?
2. Wash and dry his/her hands?
3. Use his/her own handkerchief?
4. Remove his/her coat and hang it up?
5. Put on and remove his/her shoes?
6. Tidy up his/her toys?
7. Use a knife and fork?
8. Share his/her toys and be prepared to take turns?

If the answer to these is "yes", then coping in a Year One class will present fewer problems.

Manipulative Exercises

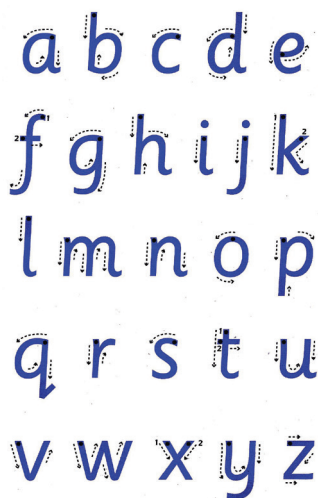
Your child needs experience in handling lots of different objects in order to get his/her hands, eyes and mind working together.

Let your child practise with pencils, crayons, paintbrushes, scissors (safety scissors are best).

This is early training to help him/her when it comes to writing, cutting and painting. Together with your child you can make books. Let him/her cut from magazines, papers and comics, and, using a safe adhesive, mount these together to form a picture or collage.

As they stick in each picture, you may wish to write a word or short sentence below, which describes the picture. When writing use lower case letters (see right).

Due to the complexities of the writing process, we would ask you not to teach your child handwriting at home. Children frequently develop bad habits e.g. starting letters in the wrong place, and mixing lower and upper case letters, which are extremely difficult to eradicate when learning to form letters in school.



Help from Home

Homework

Homework should not take longer than 15 minutes per night and is only given Monday to Thursday inclusive. Homework consists of mostly short, practical activities that are used to extend the learning into the home environment. Guidance accompanies each homework ensuring that parents know exactly how to help and support their child. Initially, reading books are sent home for sharing with parents. As the school year progresses your child will eventually read the books independently.

Early Mathematical Experiences

The following suggestions are designed to assist you in helping to develop your child's early mathematical skills.

They are not to be seen as a series of lessons but rather everyday opportunities where you could highlight some aspect of mathematics, which will benefit your child.

Remember, the most important thing is to make learning early mathematics fun.

Our mathematics scheme is **Mathematics Mastery**, a structured, modern programme which will guide your child's mathematics work, from Primary 1 - 7.



Sorting/Classifying

The ability to classify/sort information or objects is a very important life skill. In the home there are many opportunities to develop this skill.

When tidying toys away, consider putting all the toys which are soft and furry in one box, those which have wheels in another box and those we can use to build in another box.

Setting the table involves matching. Has the child enough cutlery? Who will sit beside whom? Can the child carry some dishes to the sink for washing? Are they heavy to carry?

When sorting the washing your child could help e.g. all the white clothes, all the sheets or towels. Allow your child to sort the clothes pegs by colour or size. Can we put all the socks into pairs or have we some odd ones?

Ask your child questions as you both put the toys away, e.g. Is the box full? Is there room for more toys in it? Will the lid fit onto the box if we put more toys in? Doing this activity will assist your child in developing some early ideas of volume and capacity.

Do remember that playing with construction toys e.g. duplo/lego and building bricks will assist children in developing an early understanding of space. Girls should be encouraged to play with construction toys.



Help from Home

Measures/Shape and Space

Shopping provides another opportunity to develop maths. At the supermarket ask your child to help get different groceries for you. Ask questions such as: Are these fruits or vegetables? Are they soft or hard to touch?

On another visit, you could ask can they reach all the products? Which ones are on the lower shelves? How can they reach the higher shelves?

Perhaps another visit could involve the child looking at different packaging of the products. Which products are in boxes, in bags, in tubes or cans? Which ones are red, green or have lots of colours?

Do not expect your child to be able to count all the different colours - that is for you to do. At present you are only making your child aware of number and counting. There is a lot of work to be completed in school before your child will be able to fully appreciate the value of numbers.

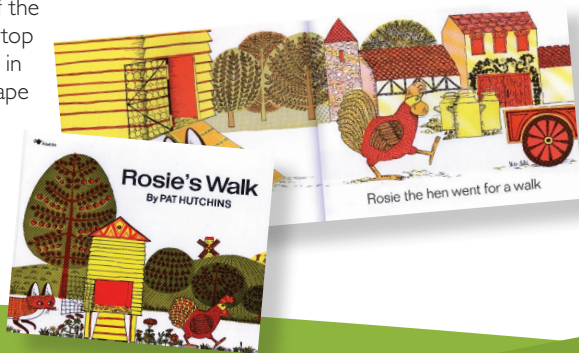
When the shopping is carried home, are the bags heavy or light? Ask what happens to your arm when you carry a heavy bag. This is an early understanding of weight. When putting the shopping away look at the shapes of the containers. Which ones can we put on top of each other? This will assist your child in developing an early understanding of shape and space.

Volume and Capacity

Bathtime is a suitable occasion to develop early mathematical skills in capacity. A collection of plastic bottles and some sponges are all that is required. The large milk jug type bottles which have a handle are especially good. Some children may require assistance in filling a bottle to the top and then stopping. Many children enjoy watching the bottle overflow with water. On some occasions you may say that you want to see if they can fill the bottle to the top and then stop. Perhaps on another occasion, the child may wish just to pour water from one container to another. Either way your child is developing early mathematical skills.

Developing Mathematical Language

Counting rhymes will be beneficial in helping children learn to develop early mathematics. Stories such as 'Bears in the Night' and 'Rosie's Walk' will assist children in developing an awareness of positional language. Often there will be opportunities for talking about putting the plate on the table or standing at the door. It is important for young children to develop this language of position.



Help from Home

Money

Sort coins according to colour or size. When shopping allow your child to pay for some items e.g. sweets or a comic. This will assist in developing their knowledge of money.

Time

Time is a difficult concept for young children but you can help your child to develop an early understanding of the concept. In the morning, ask what will we do first? When dressing, ask which clothes will we put on first?

Often children go to the park or the swimming pool on a Saturday. These are opportunities for you to help your child develop early appreciation of the order of the days of the week e.g. 'Today is Sunday and we go to Granny's house. Tomorrow is Monday and you go to school.'

Do not expect your child to remember and understand the days of the week.

It is essential that children are able to follow sequential directions. All of early mathematics is dependent on the ability to follow multi-step directions.

Encourage children to retell stories or events independently. Ask children to follow one or two related directions e.g. go to the door, open it, go to the hall cupboard and bring back your coat.

When the child is able to follow a series of related tasks successfully, s/he is then asked to follow a series of unrelated tasks e.g. 'Put the toys away, bring me your blue jumper and then go and draw in your colouring book.'

Many computation and problem solving activities involve a series of steps that follow each other in time and demands an appreciation of what comes first, second and third.

Playing games involves learning rules and the order of play will also help to develop these skills. Games will assist in developing memory skills as well as social skills.



Help from Home

ICT

Information and Communications Technology across the curriculum has the potential to transform and enrich pupils' experiences and environments. It can empower pupils, develop self-esteem and promote positive attitudes to learning. Additionally, the creative use of ICT has the potential to improve pupils' thinking skills, providing them with opportunities to become independent, self-motivated and flexible learners. ICT forms a substantial element of your child's curriculum in Mary Queen of Peace PS.

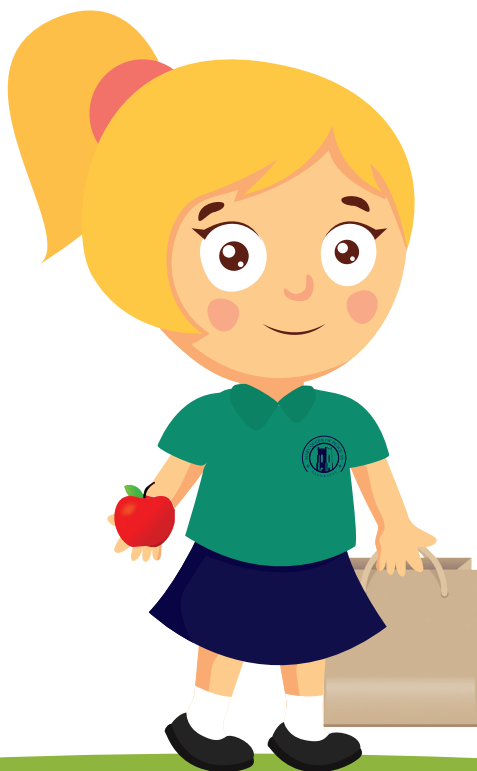
Our school website:

www.mqpplenravel.com

will keep you informed about school events. It will also act as a platform for the pupils to exhibit their work and exchange it with you at home. Exhibit and exchange are two important e-skills pupils will need to develop through the ICT curriculum.

We want to keep the children safe when they are on-line. Therefore, at the start of the school year every family (parents and child), will read and sign an ICT Code of Practice Agreement to ensure that children know how to safely use the internet.

The rules help keep everyone safe and help us be fair to others.



Help from Home

ICT Code of Practice Agreement for Pupils and Parents

- I will access the system with my login and password, which I will keep secret.
- I will not access other people's files without permission.
- I will only use the computers for school work and homework.
- I will not bring in software or disks/CDs into school without permission.
- I will ask permission from a member of staff before using the Internet.
- I will only e-mail people I know, or my teacher has approved.
- I will not open e-mails sent by someone I don't know.
- The messages I send will be polite and responsible.
- I will not harass other users (e.g. unwanted e-mails and messages).
- I will not give my home address or telephone number, or arrange to meet someone.
- I will report any unpleasant material or messages sent to me.
- I understand that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the Internet sites I visit.
- I will not use Internet chat-rooms in school.
- I will never give out personal information or passwords.
- I understand that if I do not keep to this agreement I may be denied access to the Internet in school.

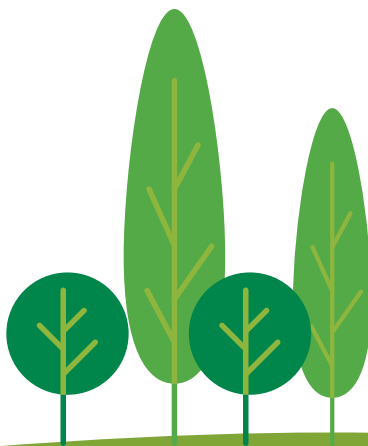
You will also be asked to read and sign the School Website Agreement

School Website Parental Agreement

I agree / do not agree that my child's photograph, video clip or examples of their work can be used on the school website.

Names will not be used alongside photographs.

When a child is included in a news item report, only their first name will be used.



Help from Home

Early Literacy Development

Talking and listening

TALK with your child, LISTEN to him/her, answer all questions and try to ask some too.

TALK in an adult way and don't talk down to him/her. Try to avoid using baby language such as "din dins", "biccies", "seeties" and "ta-ta".

Listening is a two-way process. Children are expected to listen to adults... sometimes we forget that it is equally important that we listen in turn.

LISTEN to what s/he has got to say to you. Encourage him/her to tell you what she did with his/her friends, about the games s/he played, the story s/he heard or perhaps the programme s/he watched on television.

The child who is talked to and listened to, has their questions answered, has an interest in books, likes listening to stories, knows some nursery rhymes, is the child who starts school with the greatest advantage.

Suggested talking/listening games for playing at home

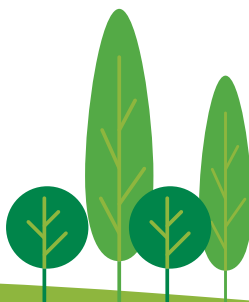
Learning to read can be fun, however it is not always easy and involves many skills, many of which you can help your child with at home or even in the car.

Some of the games that follow can help your child acquire important skills for reading.

By playing these games together, the skills needed for reading will be strengthened, enabling your child to approach reading with confidence. The games are best played for short periods of time, but as often as possible.

If you find your child isn't interested then it's best to leave it and perhaps try again later.

Don't forget games are fun!
If they are, your child will ask you to play them.



Help from Home

Early Literacy Development

Listening Games

WHAT AM I?

Give some details about a person or object e.g. I am small, I have feathers, I can swim and quack! What am I?

O'GRADY GAME

You are O'Grady and the game is played:

'O'Grady says clap your hands twice.'

The child then carries out what O'Grady has told them to do.

OUT SHOPPING

A shopping list is made by talking aloud:

'I went shopping and I bought two apples and three oranges'.

Your child repeats: 'I went shopping and I bought two apples and three oranges.'

The number of items is increased to the number the child feels happy with.

In learning to read your child needs to be able to distinguish sounds, to be aware of sounds, to remember patterns of sounds and the order of those sounds.

Your child needs to be able to hear the way words are built up, and finally to be able to put those sounds together to make words. Try these games:

SOUNDS AROUND US

Ask your child to close their eyes, let them tell you what sounds they can hear all around them. Make the sounds we hear every day like tearing paper, brushing your teeth, pouring water etc. Don't let your child see what you are doing. How long does it take them to guess the sound?

REMEMBERING

Say rhymes and sing songs that are repetitive e.g. 'Here we go round the Mulberry Bush', 'Here we go looby loo'.

Play singing songs and mime the actions e.g. 'The Grand Old Duke of York', 'The wheels on the bus'.

Tell stories which have a chorus where the children can join in e.g. 'The three little pigs'. 'I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down'.

'The gingerbread man' - 'Run, run as fast as you can...'

Say action rhymes to help children follow the actions and remember them, e.g. 'I'm a little teapot'.



Help from Home

Early Reading Experiences

It is never too early to start showing a baby books. Look at them together as soon as you can balance both the baby and the book on your knee!

The pleasure these books give will help to build the foundations for a love of books and of reading when the child gets older.

To start with, choose a few books that have clear, simple and colourful illustrations of objects or animals that are part of a baby's everyday world.

Action rhymes and nursery rhymes help develop listening skills and are an essential aspect of reading.

Whilst your child is sitting beside you, you could use the following technique to introduce a book. Focus on different aspects of the book and its cover.

You could do any of the following:

Point to the title.

What's happening in the pictures?

What do you think it's going to be about?

Do you like this cover?

Children do not need to read 'good' books all the time. Sometimes they like to read comics or joke books or even computer manuals! It doesn't really matter what they read as long as they are reading and are enjoying it. Our most important task as parents is to give our children the opportunity to get hold of all the books they want and to let them see you enjoy reading.

There are three main phases of reading which we are concerned with at the early primary school stage, these are as follows:

- Role Play Reading
 - Experimental Reading
 - Early Reading
- (See overleaf for more details)



Help from Home

Early Literacy Development

Role Play Reading

At this stage your child will:

- Show an interest in books and in the print they see around them.
- Imitate the things they see adult readers doing such as holding a book carefully, turning pages and talking out loudly as they do so.
- Retell stories they have heard as they pretend to read aloud.

At this stage of the reading process you can support your child by:

- Reading to your child as often as you can
- Enrolling your child at the local library
- Making sure your child sees you and other members of the family reading
- Helping your child to recognise his/her own name
- Selecting books that use repetition
- Helping your child to tell the story from the pictures
- Pointing to words as you read
- Placing labels around the house e.g. This is Sam's room
- Taking books with you where ever you go.

Experimental Reading

At this stage your child:

- Will have memorised some familiar stories
- Can match some spoken and written words
- Will realise that the words of print always stay the same
- Will begin pointing to words.

At this stage of the reading process you can support your child by:

- Encouraging him/her to join in when you are reading a familiar story
- Point out interesting or long words in books
- Write shopping lists in front of him/her and talk about what you are doing
- Encourage him/her to find words that begin with the same letter as his/her name
- Encourage him/her to look at the title and cover of a book and guess what it might be about.



Help from Home

Early Reading

At this stage your child may read slowly and deliberately as they try to read exactly what is on the page, rather than concentrate on the meaning. He/she is beginning to realise that it is good to comment on books they have read or listened to.

At this stage of the reading process you can help your child by:

- Emphasising the importance of making sense from his/her reading
- Encouraging him/her to take risks and 'have a go' at unknown words
- Encouraging him/her to write notes and messages for other members of the family (only when letters have been taught in school!)
- If your child makes a mistake when reading allow time for self-correction
- If the mistake makes sense, ignore it
- Playing number plate games e.g. VIW- very interesting worms!

MOST IMPORTANTLY, ENSURE THAT ALL READING EXPERIENCES ARE ENJOYABLE.

Gradually your child will progress from early reading to the transitional stage and finally on to independent reading.

If at any stage you are concerned you should consult the class teacher and your concerns will be addressed.

YOU are very important to your child in the whole reading process and please don't ever underestimate the important role which you play.

Watching Television

There is a great variety of programmes, on all channels, which are designed for entertaining and educating young children: - Alphablocks, Numberjacks & Sesame Tree (BBC/Cbeebies).

However, we would urge you to think carefully about what your child watches. A programme watched with you is a shared experience, but one watched without you is, at best, keeping them quiet and, at worst, positively harming his/her very impressionable mind.

Teach your child to listen to a radio programme e.g. Hurly Burly (Radio Ulster), as distinct from having the radio on as background noise. There are also some excellent story CDs available for children to listen to their favourite stories.



Music Provision

All pupils have access to musical provision as part of the NI Curriculum. In addition, specialist provision is also available from a team of musical specialist in: piano, singing and violin. There is a charge for the tuition service.

After School Clubs

There are up to 18 after school clubs in a school year. The majority of coaching/ instruction is provided by the teachers and supported by coaches from the Council and members of the Glenravel community.

The range of after school clubs include sporting, quiz, artistic, environmental and ICT activities.

School Teams

Mary Queen of Peace Primary School participates in sport, music and quiz competitions throughout the year. The school is very successful in Feis na nGleann; Ballymena Speech & Language Festival; Credit Union and Cumann na mBunscol quizzes; and Cumann na mBunscol Gaelic games tournament in football (girls and boys), hurling and camogie.

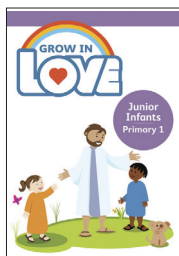
Blended Learning

In Mary Queen of Peace, we blend learning in school with learning online. There are 2 apps used in the Foundation Stage, which support blended learning and home - school communication.

- **Seesaw** - a platform that allows pupils, teachers and parents/guardians to complete and share classroom work. It is also a very effective platform for home – school communication.
- **Mathseeds** – is an online maths program developed for use in the classroom and at home. Work can be set which will reinforce fun practice, as well as challenging thinking with problem-solving. Children will be rewarded each week with points and encouraged to achieve bronze, silver and gold medals.



Religious Education



Our Religious Education programme is called Grow in Love. If you wish to speak to the principal or class teacher about your child's participation in the Religious Education programme then you should contact the school.



Communication with Parents

In Mary Queen of Peace PS our aim is to establish strong links with our parents to ensure that we are doing all we can, parents and school, for every child. We will do this by:

- Creating an ethos in whichh parents and the school can work together through shared values and goals;
- good communication, which will ensure that there is a good relationship between home and school;
- recognise and value the different roles pupils, parents and school play in contributing to an effective partnership.

In order to build theses links, parents will have opportunities to become involved in the life of the school.

- Before your child starts school our Primary 1 teacher will arrange for the children to visit their new classroom. The children will meet their new teacher, assistant and be introduced to their new surroundings.
- A meeting will be organised for the parents of our new Primary 1 to visit their child's classroom; and be introduced to the Primary 1 teacher and classroom assistant. At that meeting the teacher will make a presentation to the parents about the procedures for starting school, the Primary 1 curriculum, the school day and the playground.
- We have produced this booklet to provide you with information about starting school and the ealy years' curriculum.
- Parents will meet with their child's teacher shortly after they have started school to talk about how your child has settled into school and to pass information to the teacher which will help us care for your child. For example medical information, what they like to eat etc.
- Later in the school year you will have an Annual Parent/Teacher meeting at which, you and the class teacher will discuss your child's academic progress and pastoral care needs.
- Parents will receive a monthly newsletter updating our school community on key dates and reports and pictures from life in Mary Queen of Peace PS.
- Towards the end of the school year you will receive a written Pupil Report outlining your child's progress in all of the key areas of the school's curriculum as well as their personal development.
- Parents will always have the opportunity to discuss problems or concerns with their child's teacher. Please contact your child's teacher to organise a meeting.
- You will be invited to join Mary Queen of Peace Parent Teacher Association and provide practical help and support for our new school.
- Mary Queen of Peace has its own website to update you on key dates, events and news:

 www.mqpplenravel.com

Conclusion

During the 2024-25 school year the Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspected Mary Queen of Peace Primary School. The inspection report can be viewed on the ETI's website: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/>



Education Training Inspectorate

It was an outstanding inspection report.

The Inspection Team gave feedback to the school at the end of the process and amongst the highly positive comments they noted:

- School's vision for each child is being made a reality. The pupils are achieving their full potential, in every single class.
- Pupils: Very focused, confident, fully engaged with their learning and happy children; strong relationships with each other and with the staff; high expectations for behaviour; exemplary the way they speak to each other; supportive and caring towards each other; kindness as they watch out for each other.
- A culture of excellence and a model of best practice.
- Leadership of the school, at every level, is a model of professionalism, continuous improvement and commitment to high quality teaching and learning.
- Pupils are safe, cared for; staff create a lovely caring environment.

- A pupil during an interview with an inspector, 'There is everything we need here'.
- Children are cherished and treasured in this school.

The Education Training Inspectorate recommended that the teachers in this school should share their practice with other schools. The whole school community is rightly proud of the inspection report.



Starting school is a happy time and parents help by playing their part. Remember you are placing your child into the trust of qualified teachers who are always willing to discuss any of your child's problems in a confidential manner at an appropriate time.

These parental contacts are actively encouraged by the teaching staff. Parents' support is essential in working with the school for your child's benefit.

Working together we can strive to provide the best quality education for your child. Many thanks for taking the time to read our booklet. Hopefully you are now better prepared for your child's entry in the new academic year.





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