**St Patrick’s Primary School, Hilltown**

**PROSPECTUS**



**2021/2022**

**Progress through partnership**



Dear Parents,

May I take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to St Patrick’s Primary School.

We, at St Patrick’s, will do our utmost to help your child realise their full potential. We will encourage and challenge them to explore their gifts, spiritual as well as intellectual, physical as well as social, in a warm and friendly atmosphere and I am sure that the years ahead will be fulfilling and rewarding.

This prospectus will give you an insight into the life and work of our school. This is brought to life in words and pictures on our school website which is well worth looking at: [www.stpatrickspshilltown.com](http://www.stpatrickspshilltown.com)

The website contains a wealth of information which will help you – the school menu, letters, policies, curriculum links and other documents. It is easily accessed through our app which is our main method of sending messages to you.

Our school motto is ‘Progress through Partnership’. This partnership consists of your child, our staff, and you, the parents, working together to ensure that your child is at the forefront of everything we do. We will do all we can to give your child the very best opportunities during their time at St Patrick’s.

St Patrick’s has established itself as a caring educational community placing strong emphasis on the very close links between the school, home and local community. We have a very experienced team of teachers and non-teaching staff. The valuable role which parents play in assisting the work which takes place in school underpins the ideals which we are continually striving to achieve. We provide high standards of Pastoral Care and are proud of the excellent staff-pupil relationships which exist in the school. We value the services and support of our Parish Priest, Father Charles Byrne.

If you have further queries about any aspect of school life you are welcome to arrange an appointment to discuss them with me. You can be sure of a warm welcome.

Yours faithfully,

**Una Lawless**

Principal

**Eugene Byrne**

Chairperson of the Board of Governors

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**INTRODUCTION**

**History of St Patrick’s**

St Patrick’s Primary School is situated in the townland of Ballymaghery, about half a mile outside the village of Hilltown on the Castlewellan Road, just east of the River Bann. The site on which St Patrick’s Primary School stands has been used for educational purposes since 1857. In that year, Ballymaghery Boys’ and Ballymaghery Girls’ schools were built by Rev John McLeigh P.P. On the 5 September 1966 these schools were replaced by the present St Patrick’s Primary School and we celebrated our 50th Anniversary in 2016. The new school had seven classrooms, an assembly hall and kitchen. Canon J Burke P.P. was the priest responsible for the new building programme. The school was extended in September 1977 under the direction of Dean McConville P.P. Two additional classrooms, a medical room and a staff-room were added. 1995 saw the erection of a Mobile Resource Area. In September 1999, a mobile classroom was placed on site and 2002 saw the completion of extra parking facilities and a bus lay-by. A second mobile classroom was added in 2008. A new office and Hygiene Room were built in 2015. In May 2018 an Outdoor Classroom was erected with funding from ‘Awards for All’. In September 2018 a double modular classroom unit with toilets was placed on site and two classrooms were refurbished. In the summer of 2019 perimeter fencing and secure access was provided by the Department of Education.

**Present Day Accommodation**

St Patrick’s Primary School is a 100% Department of Education Funded Catholic Maintained School for boys and girls age 4-11 years. The accommodation comprises of twelve classrooms, a Learning Support room, an ICT room, staff-room, assembly-hall, physical education hall/dining hall, meals kitchen, principal’s office and secretary’s office. There is a conservation area, complete with an eco-system pond in a secure area of the school grounds. 24% of the pupils receive free school meals. The school has the advantage of having unrestricted access to the adjacent G.A.A. complex and the Parochial Hall within the school grounds.

**Staff**

The present staffing complement of the school is the Principal, plus twelve class teachers. The school has an enrolment of 322 pupils. Through intensive teacher discussion, well-defined programmes of work in all areas of the curriculum have been developed for each year group, thus ensuring uniformity and progression in the delivery of the National Curriculum. Children are encouraged to produce their own personal best, dependent on individual ability and aptitude, which is monitored through a programme of detailed recording of pupils’ progress and regular standardised tests. Regular meetings of staff, of co-ordinators and of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) contribute to the smooth running of the school. The school secretary, building supervisor, cleaners, supervisory assistants, classroom assistants, catering staff and the school patrol lady complete a team dedicated to the education and welfare of the children entrusted to their care.

**Catholic Ethos**

Preparation for the sacraments plays a significant role in the ethos of the school. Children are thoroughly prepared for Confirmation, First Communion, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The school year commences and concludes with a children’s mass. We have a Carol Service every year in which our Primary One children participate and all the other children assist our Chapel Choir in singing carols. A very active partnership exists between our Parish Priest and the school community. The school choir assists at all school-related religious ceremonies.

The teachers strive to maintain the highest academic standards in an atmosphere of a believing community committed to the Catholic way of life. In partnership with the home and the parish, the children at school grow in self-esteem and are encouraged to develop an attitude of caring for and sharing with others, as well as cultivating a healthy tolerance for everyone’s beliefs, respect for their property and the environment. Pupils and staff working in harmony together maintain a high standard of work, personal achievement and good behaviour. There is a prescribed school uniform and an alternative tracksuit for PE and leisure pursuits. Attendance is excellent. Average attendance for the year 2019 - 2020 was 96.8%.

**Extra-Curricular Activities**

Extra-curricular activities include choir, orchestra, traditional Irish music groups, camogie, hurling, Gaelic football for girls and boys, cycling proficiency, rugby, lego, karate, multi-sports, ICT, tennis, art, Irish, dance, drama and gymnastics.

Educational visits form an integral part of the school’s work, with each class undertaking at least one trip annually and others more frequently when required. As part of our PE programme, Primary 5 pupils are given the opportunity to attend swimming lessons at Newry Swimming Pool.

**Music**

The school has gained a notable reputation for the high standard of music achieved at local feiseanna and other competitions. In recent years our school choir has performed on BBC television, in the Peace Proms concert at the Odyssey Arena and has had great success at Newry and Warrenpoint Feis. Annually P.1 – P.3 pupils participate in a Nativity play and P.4 – P.7 pupils participate in a musical. Tin whistle tuition is available from Primaries 5 to 7. Peripatetic teachers from the Education Authority Music Service provide music tuition in flute, clarinet, oboe, violin, viola and cello. A private tutor also provides music tuition in singing and piano.

**Links with Parents**

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their children’s education. We have an active and supportive Parent Association, the ‘Friends of St Patrick’s’. Each September, an ‘Information Meeting’ is held by teachers for each year group of parents. Parent/teacher consultations are arranged in the first term or by request from either party. Parents receive Progress Reports in November and February and a detailed written report on their children’s progress at the end of the summer term.

**Board of Governors**

The members of the Board of Governors have had a long association with the school and are keenly interested in its continuing welfare. They strongly support the work of the school. The governors and staff of the school look forward to welcoming their new pupils and assure them of the highest possible standard of support and care.

**THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF ST PATRICK’S AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

The distinctive nature of St Patrick’s School is expressed in the way our faith affects what we do, how we do it and why we do it. This means that life within our school community is centred on the presence of Christ among our members. The example and values of Jesus Christ permeate all the relationships within the school and beyond it. In becoming man, Christ has made known to us the nobility of our vocation to become fully human. It is therefore the purpose of our Catholic school to bring our pupils to an understanding

* of the world as God’s Creation
* of the sacredness of life
* of their uniqueness and dignity
* of their vocation in Christ and how to fulfil this vocation

This religious dimension constitutes the distinctive nature of our Catholic school.

At St Patrick’s, our mission is to promote and deepen the faith which our young children first received in Baptism and which has continued to mature through the witness of their families and wider parish community. What we teach and how we teach will be permeated and influenced by a commitment to the teachings and values of Jesus Christ.

St Patrick’s will therefore provide a well ordered and caring environment, in which the children will develop, work and play. St Patrick’s will be:

* a community of prayer and worship
* a community of learning in unity and harmony
* a community of caring, of sympathy, of understanding and tolerance
* a community with a perceptible belief in the uniqueness of each child as a cherished creation of God

St. Patrick’s accepts that all children are born equal in the sight of God, and the teachers in our school will genuinely strive to ensure that all have the opportunity to “walk tall” within themselves knowing that they are important, whatever their individual talents or abilities.

Our aim is to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils and to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

**Staff of St Patricks**

**Teaching Complement**

Miss Una Lawless Principal

Mrs Orla Reavey Vice-Principal

Mrs Kate Austin

Miss Kitty Fegan

Mr Shay Flanagan

Mrs Ursula Kearney

Miss Lisa Mc Anulty

Mr Plunkett Mc Conville

Ms Maeve Mc Neill

Miss Catherine Murphy **Senior Leadership Team**

Mrs Sinead O’ Hare Miss Una Lawless

Mrs Sinead O’Neill Mrs Orla Reavey

Mr Nigel Trainor Miss Catherine Murphy

 Mr Plunkett Mc Conville

**Classroom Assistants**

Mrs Deirdre Mc Greevy

Mrs Joanne Mc Coy

Mrs Bridie Branagan

Mrs Aileen Gribben

Mrs Karen Mc Aleenan **Catering Staff**

Miss Aislinn Keenan Mrs Michelle Dougherty

Mrs Susie Hynes Mrs Barbara Killen Miss Sheree Macdonald Mrs Yvonne Burden

Mrs Catherine Mc Bride Miss Shauna Cousins

**Executive Officer**

Mrs Debbie Brown

**Assistant Clerical Officer**

Mrs Bridie Branagan

**Building Supervisor Supervisory Assistants**

Mr Liam Downey Mrs Kathleen Smith

 Mrs Roisin Mc Alinden

**Cleaners** Mrs Caroline Mc Carthy

 Mrs Breege Mc Gaw

Mrs Helena Grant

**School Crossing Patrol Librarian**

Mrs Breege Mc Gaw Mrs Susie Hynes

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Principal Miss Una Lawless

Management Type Maintained

Chairman Mr Eugene Byrne

Secretary Miss Una Lawless

(Trustee) Representative Father Charles Byrne

 Mrs Anne Marie O’Hagan

 Mr Jayme Farrell

 Canon Francis Brown

DENI Representative Mr Eugene Byrne

SELB Representatives Mr Declan Fitzpatrick

 Mrs Caroline Carvill

Parent Representative Mr Damian Fearon

Teacher Representative Mrs Orla Reavey

**PARENT ASSOCIATION, the Friends of St Patrick’s**

We are most grateful for the work of St Patrick’s Parent Association which has been in operation for a number of years, providing vital support to the school. Its main function in the school is to:

* fund-raise
* help out with organised events
* liaise with parents and school management

The Parents’ Association does not at any point get involved in, or make decisions on the general running of the school, or make decisions on any school policies.

The current members of our Parent Association have raised funds for the school by organising non-uniform days, Christmas and Easter Raffles and discos.

**New members are most welcome to join the Parent Association.** Each September an AGM is held at which all are welcome.

Over the years the Parent Association has provided the school with a wealth of extra resources for the benefit of our children.

These include:

play equipment

water fountains

computers and iPads

library and reading books

educational trips

Art equipment

Music equipment

**St Patrick’s Primary School**

**13 Castlewellan Road**

**Ballymaghery**

# Hilltown

**NEWRY**

**BT34 5UY**

**Phone: (028) 406 30061**

**E-mail:** **ulawless418@c2kni.net**

**www.stpatrickspshilltown.com**

**Principal: Miss Una Lawless, BA (Hons), PGCE, M.Ed, M.A., PQH (NI), LGSM, LTCL, LRIAM, LRAM**

**Chair of Board of Governors: Mr Eugene Byrne**

Enrolment Number: 309 Admission Number: 44

 **APPLICATIONS** **ADMISSIONS**

2016/2017 School Year 45 45

2017/2018 School Year 47 47

2018/2019 School Year 47 47

2019/2020 School Year 47 47

2020/2021 School Year 45 45

Actual Enrolment in September 2020: 322 pupils aged 4-11 years (Boys/Girls)

Expected Enrolment in September 2021: 325 pupils aged 4-11 years (Boys/Girls)

School Management Type: Maintained

**ADMISSION CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO YEAR 1**

The Board of Governors of St Patrick’s Primary School, Hilltown, will apply the following criteria in the event of the number of pupils applying for places in Year 1 in September being greater than the admissions number, in the order set down below.

1. Children of compulsory school age who reside in the parish of Clonduff and the traditional catchment area of the school.

2. Children who will have a brother(s)/ a sister(s) or a half-brother(s)/ half-sister(s) in attendance during the 2020/2021 school year.

3. Children whose brothers, sisters, half-brothers/sisters previously attended the school and who are presently living in the traditional catchment area of the school as defined by the map available in school.

4. Children whose parent or guardian is a permanent employee of the school.

5. Children who are the eldest child in the family and who are presently living in the traditional catchment area of the school as defined by the map available.

6. Preference will be given to children with exceptional circumstances (medical, social or other problems) that necessitate admission to St Patrick’s Primary school, Ballymaghery rather than any other primary school. The circumstances should be personal to the child and must be supported by independent and appropriate documentation, providing evidence of the circumstances being described as being exceptional.

In the event of oversubscription priority will be given to those living nearest to the school as measured by Google Maps from the main school gate to the child’s home address as given on the application form using the most direct route by car.

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any application form. Birth certificates are required for all applicants and should be up-loaded to the E.A. with the on-line application form.

**WAITING LIST POLICY**

The school does not operate a Waiting List Policy.

**ADMISSION TO YEARS 2 – 7**

Pupils will be considered for enrolment provided that the school will not exceed its enrolment number as determined by the Department of Education. Pupils will be considered for admission provided that, in the opinion of the Board of Governors, they would not prejudice the efficient use of the school’s resources.

**ADMISSIONS CRITERIA**

The Board of Governors of St Patrick’s Primary School, Hilltown, has determined that the following criteria shall be applied in the order set down below to all pupils seeking admission to Years 2-7.

1. Pupils regarded by the Board of Governors, on the basis of written and other evidence supplied by the parents/guardians and statutory or other agencies, as having special circumstances e.g. medical, social or security reasons.

2. Pupils who live in the parish of Clonduff and the traditional catchment area of the school as defined by the map available in the school.

3. Pupils whose parent/guardian is presently a permanent employee (or who have been appointed to take up imminent employment in the school).

4. Pupils who have brothers/sisters, half-brothers/half-sisters, presently enrolled.

5. Other pupils.

In the event of over-subscription priority will be given to those living nearest to the school as measured by Google Maps from the main school gate to the child’s home address using the most direct route by car.

Application for Primary School places are made digitally through the Education Authority. The Citizen Portal will go-live at 12 noon on Thursday 7th January 2021 and remain open until 12 noon on Friday 29th January 2021. After submitting an application on the Citizen Portal parents will receive a confirmation email. Within 3 days the parent will then receive another email with a unique link where they can securely upload their child’s birth certificate and other supporting documents.

**SCHOOL HOURS AND HOLIDAYS**

**Primary 1, 2 and 3 9.00 am - 1.50 pm Monday to Thursday**

**Primary 4 - 7 9.00 am - 3.00 pm Monday to Thursday**

**All children go home at 1.50 pm on Fridays**

All infant children **must be collected from the school yard** **at 1.50 pm** to enable their teachers to engage in other teaching tasks.

The main entrance to the school is at the gate beside the Parochial House. There is a buzzer to gain entrance. Parents are then required to use the buzzer at the main door to gain entrance to the school building except at the beginning and end of the school day.

On arrival to school pupils hang up their bag and coat and then go to the assembly hall. If it is dry they will have outside play from 8.45am – 8.55am. They will then be taken to class and the school day begins at 9am. For the first few weeks parents may take Primary 1 pupils directly to their classroom, as this will help them to settle in more easily to the school routines. From October parents should say goodbye to their child at the school gate and all pupils enter the school by themselves and follow the morning routine which they will be familiar with.

**HOLIDAYS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR**

Parents will be given a school calendar of closures in May for the in-coming year and timely notice of any changes that may be necessary.

**COMPOSITE CLASSES**

With the school comprising of twelve classrooms (nine in the main school building and three mobile classrooms) it is necessary to operate composite classes. These classes are **usually** determined by the age of the pupils. At the end of each school year classes will be carefully reviewed and this will determine your child’s placement for the coming year. **Research has proved that a child is not educationally or socially disadvantaged in any way by being placed in a composite class.**

**CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY**

Children may be asked to replace or pay for lost property or damage to property.

All pupils in Primary 5 will be taught to play Tin Whistle. These can be bought from the school. Pupils in Primary 5 have swimming lessons at Newry pool. Parents are asked to pay for the lessons and the bus transport. Pupils in Primary 6 and Primary 7 have football, hurling and camogie lessons from trained GAA coaches. Parents are asked to pay for these lessons.

**HOMEWORK POLICY**

Homework is anything that children do outside of the normal school day that enhances their learning under the guidance of the school.

**Purpose and value of homework:**

* Teachers see homework as an integral part of the child’s educational development
* It enables children to practice skills and concepts taught in school
* It enables children to work independently of the teacher
* It helps parents to become aware of what their child is doing in school
* It provides the opportunity for individual children to get extra help in areas of difficulty

The teachers of St Patrick’s Primary School see a value in children having homework as a means of extending and consolidating the work done in school, in discovering information unavailable in school, in involving parents in their children’s studies and in the development of good work habits. Against this must be balanced each child’s needs for recreation and the development of private interests and hobbies.

A copy of the school’s Homework Policy is available on the school website or from the school office.

**PARKING REGULATIONS to ensure pupil safety**

**It is strictly forbidden for any parent or child-minder to drive into the school grounds at any time.**

There is ample space for all parents to park in the two Chapel car parks.

In the mornings parents have a choice:

1. Park in the Chapel car park and then walk with their child/children down the pathway in front of the Parochial House, leaving your child at the school gate.

2. Drop children off at the **pedestrian gate** in the bus lay-by.

**Option number 1 above is the safest and best.**

Between 8.30 – 9am leaving the car in the lay-by to come into school for any reason **is prohibited** as buses will be dropping pupils off between 8.30am and 8.55am.

* Parking in the lay-by at home-time is prohibited as it causes serious traffic congestion and greatly increases the risk of accidents.
* Parking along the main road in the morning or at home-time is prohibited as this blocks traffic in both directions and causes danger to all road users.
* Turning your car at the main school gate is prohibited. It is very dangerous to reverse into a busy main road.

**Please be courteous to all road-users at the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times.**

**For the safety of all our children we urge you to abide by these rules.**

Adults who hold a Disability Badge are requested to consult with the principal about the safest drop-off and pick-up arrangements.

We are immensely lucky at St Patrick’s in that we have a large, clearly signed car park at the church for all our parents to use. This is connected to the school by a secure pathway well away from the traffic on the road, so our children are completely safe walking to the school if parents leave them at the gate of the church car park. Our Parent Association supplied bollards along this path some years ago and they also paid for the ‘in’ and ‘out’ signage in the church car park, the yellow box at the top and the one-way directional arrows. This makes the drop-off and pick-up times very safe, if parents follow the rules of the road.

**The school day officially commences at 9.00 each morning.**

The teachers officially start work at 8.40 am. It is therefore reasonable to expect your child to come to school between 8.40am and 9.00am. However we appreciate that at times due to work or other commitments you may have to bring your child to school earlier. He/she may sit in the Assembly Hall where supervision by a teacher will begin at 8.30am. At 8.45am the teacher on duty will be joined by three other members of staff and weather permitting, will bring the children outside to the designated yards where they will benefit greatly from fresh air and play before they begin the day’s work at 9am.

**SCHOOL UNIFORM**

**P.1 and P.2**

Bottle green tracksuit with school crest

Yellow t-shirt with school crest

**P.3 – P.7**

On P.E. days (twice weekly) pupils wear the green school tracksuit and yellow t-shirt.

On the other three days they wear full school uniform, as follows:

**Girls**  **Boys**

Bottle green pinafore or skirt Bottle green trousers

Yellow blouse Yellow shirt

Bottle green cardigan/pullover Bottle green pullover

Green/yellow tie Green/yellow tie

Green socks/ tights

**P.1 pupils should wear the regulation school tracksuit and school t-shirt from their first day in school and all articles of clothing should be clearly labelled.**

**PLEASE put name labels on all track-suit jumpers and coats**.

* School uniforms can be ordered from McEvoy’s or Daisy’s, Newry and Saints and Scholars, Newry. They are also available from SM Shoes in Rathfriland.
* Raincoats or anoraks should have a strong tag for hanging on a coat hook and be clearly labelled.
* Jewellery and Personal Decoration – ear studs are the only form of ear decoration that may be worn at school. For Health and Safety reasons it would be advisable for children to leave ear studs at home on Sports and P.E. days. Finger jewellery is not permitted at school.
* The school disclaims all responsibility for loss of items of personal jewellery e.g. watches, bracelets, ear-studs or rings.
* Make-up of any form is not permitted - your child will be asked to remove it.
* Pupils are not permitted to bring any form of electrical or battery-operated device to school at any time. This includes i-watches, i-pods, i-pads, tablets, Nintendo DS and mobile phones.

**MEALS**

School meals costing **£2.60** are provided on a daily basis. (£13.00 per week or pay monthly). Dinner money MUST be paid on Monday for the week ahead.

We strongly encourage all families of pupils who are eligible for free school meals to apply for them even if the child will rarely or never take school dinners. It is beneficial to the school in a number of ways to have a high percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals.

Application forms for free school meals and school uniforms can be downloaded from the EA website: www.eani.org.uk/i-want-to

Parents/guardians in receipt of:-

(a) Income Support

(b) Income Based Jobseeker’s Allowance

(c) Income Related Employment and Support Allowance

(d) Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit

(e) Working/Child Tax Credit with an annual taxable income not exceeding £16,190 are eligible for free school meals and uniform grants for their children. OR

(f) Parent/Guardian is an Asylum Seeker supported by the Home Office Asylum Support Assessment Team (ASAT).

(g) The parent/guardian/pupil to be in receipt of: Universal Credit and have net household earnings not exceeding £14,000 per year.

The school promotes a healthy break policy. Children are encouraged to bring fruit to eat and water to drink at break-time. Due to the number of pupils in our school who have allergies, we do not allow pupils to have healthy bread snacks, yoghurts or other types of snack foods for break – just fruit or vegetables.



## INFORMATION ABOUT PUPIL PROGRESS

1. Opportunities will be available after school for brief informal parent/teacher contact.
2. Parent/Teacher meetings for P.7 pupils take place at the start of October.
3. Parent/Teacher meetings for P.1 – P.6 pupils take place in the middle of November.
4. Parent/Teacher meetings for pupils who have an Individual Education Plan take place three times each year, in October, January and March/April.
5. Detailed Progress Reports for Literacy and Numeracy are sent home to parents in November and February. Parents go through these reports with their child, check them carefully, sign and date them and return them to school.
6. At the end of the third term parents will receive a written report on their child’s educational progress.
7. In addition to the above, if a parent wishes to meet with a class teacher they may send in a note requesting a meeting and the teacher will then arrange the meeting for a mutually convenient time and date.

**Parents should never disturb the teacher during class teaching time.**



Parents have the right to:

* consultation about their child’s progress
* access to their child’s academic records
* consultation if outside agencies are involved with their child
* access to School Development and Action Plans (on school website)
* access to school policies (on school website)
* access to ETI Inspection Reports (on school website)

##### POLICY STATEMENT ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The school recognises that parents are the first educators of their children and acknowledges the enormous contribution that parents make to their children’s learning. We are therefore committed to involving parents in the life of the school by establishing and maintaining a productive partnership, in which the contribution of the home is valued.

AIMS:

* To maintain and develop the friendly family atmosphere of the school where

 parents and teachers feel at ease with each other and can communicate freely.

* To help parents understand the aims and policies of the school and the

 implications of these for the education programme their children follow.

* To foster awareness that education is a three-way process between children, home and school and that parents have a shared responsibility in the education of their children.

• Parents will be encouraged to share in the responsibility of their child’s religious

 Education, especially in preparation for Confirmation, First Communion and the

 Sacrament of Reconciliation.

• Parents will be invited to school events and celebrations such as masses, concerts

 and assemblies.

• Parents may be asked to accompany school trips, or help with make-up or costumes

 for concerts (staff will always be present on these occasions).

• Parents will be issued with a calendar of school closures and kept fully informed,

 well in advance, of all activities throughout the school year.

• Parents will be encouraged to attend visits by medical or educational professionals

 for their child, as appropriate.

• Parents are encouraged to look on the school as part of the community and parish.

**You are Welcome to Visit Us**

Before deciding to apply for a place in Primary One, parents are welcome to contact the school, to make an appointment to meet the principal and to view the Primary One classrooms and play areas.

All parents of prospective P.1 children will be invited to the school in June for a talk given by the principal and teachers about general school policies, procedures and preparations for Primary One.

A parent may ring at any time to arrange a meeting with the Principal.

**Atmosphere**

Visitors to the school will be made to feel welcome by the Principal and staff.

Pupils will be encouraged to act in a courteous and helpful manner to visitors. The Principal and staff will work towards maintaining an attractive entrance and corridors and keeping the school environment tidy.

**PASTORAL CARE ARRANGEMENTS**

The staff of St Patrick’s have at heart the interests of the whole child and recognise that we have a responsibility to do everything possible to care for each child’s physical and emotional well-being. Each class teacher is responsible for the pastoral needs of the children in his/her own class.

When a child is sick or injured the school will endeavour to contact the parents or the contact person given in the Parent Information Form. If the child is in need of immediate attention an ambulance may be called. In all cases it is school policy to act in the best interests of the child.

All current members of staff have received a half day training in First Aid and four members of staff attended a three day training course which is up-dated in line with EA regulations. A classroom assistant with first aid training is on duty at break-time and dinner time to deal with any cuts or bruises.

**Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Safeguarding and Child Protection receives very high priority in the school. Our Safeguarding Team consists of the Designated teacher for Child Protection, Mrs Orla Reavey, the Deputy Designated teacher for Child Protection, Ms Maeve Mc Neill and the Principal, Miss Una Lawless. This core team is supported by Mr Shay Flanagan (E-Safety) and Mr Plunkett Mc Conville (Key stage 2 advisor). The Governor for Child Protection is Mrs Anne-Marie O’Hagan and she visits the school regularly in her capacity as Child Protection Governor. We receive regular and excellent support from CPSS services. All members of staff and volunteers receive Child Protection training annually. Our Child Protection Policy is fully implemented and reviewed annually. It contains clear guidance for adults should they wish to bring a safeguarding or child protection issue to our attention.

Our Child Protection/Safeguarding leaflet t is issued to all families annually. Our Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy is issued to all new pupils and to each family bi-annually. Our Intimate Care Policy is issued to all P.1 pupils.

All our Pastoral Care Policies are available to read on the school website. We are happy to provide copies of any policy on request, from Mrs Brown, in the office.

**Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying**

Our Positive Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures are reviewed regularly. The policies highlight strategies for ensuring good discipline within the school, through the use of praise, motivation stickers, certificates, stamps, awards and rewards. They are based on the belief that every teacher has the right to teach and every child has the right to learn unhindered. We believe that good discipline practices create the conditions for effective learning and help our pupils to develop responsible attitudes and values for life. We consistently encourage high standards of behaviour within the school and beyond, in the interests of the pupils and of society. There are excellent relationships between pupils and staff and good order is maintained by encouraging self-discipline.

**St. Patrick’s School Council**

To enhance the standard of behaviour and encourage pupils’ contributions to a positive learning environment, a School Council has operated since 2009. The School Council provides pupils with opportunities to discuss relevant school issues under the direction of the Pastoral Care Team and to contribute to the decision-making processes within the school. The council represent the ‘pupil voice’ very clearly and are a valuable asset to the school.

**Rights Respecting School Award**

St Patrick’s received the Silver Award from UNICEF in April 2019 and the school is currently working towards achieving the Gold Rights Respecting School Award. This initiative involves all pupils, staff, parents, Governors and the local community and is a worthwhile project with many benefits for pupils and for the school.

**Eco School**

We received our second Green Flag in April 2020. Our Eco Programme makes a positive contribution to our environment and is an ideal way to foster environmental awareness throughout the entire school. The work is integrated into many curriculum subjects and we aim to make environmental awareness and action an intrinsic part of the life and ethos of St Patricks.

**Anti-Bullying Ambassadors**

We have had an Anti-Bullying Ambassadors Team in St Patrick’s for the last two years. This team of eight P.7 pupils lead pupils in an awareness of bullying issues and the consequences of these. The team ensure that an anti-bullying focus is maintained throughout the year.

**THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

The staff of St. Patrick’s implement the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The Northern Ireland Curriculum sets out the minimum requirements that should be taught at each Key Stage.

**The Primary Phase Comprises of:**

The Foundation Stage Years 1 and 2

Key Stage 1 Years 3 and 4

Key Stage 2 Years 5, 6 and 7

The curriculum for the 3 stages is set out in 7 Areas of Learning which are supported through ICT.

1. **Communication through Language and Literacy**: including Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing
2. **Mathematics and Numeracy**: focusing on the development of mathematical concepts and numeracy across the curriculum
3. **The Arts**: including Art and Design, Drama and Music
4. **The World Around Us**: focusing on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in Geography, History, and Science and Technology
5. **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding**: focusing on emotional development, social skills and relationships, learning to learn, health and sexual education, mutual understanding in the local and global community
6. **Physical Education**: focusing on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding through play and a range of physical activities
7. **Religious Education**: Grow in Love and Alive O! Religious Education Programmes and parish based education

**Aims and Objectives**

The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to develop their potential and to make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.

Our delivery of the curriculum should help young people develop as individuals, contributors to society and contributors to the economy and environment.

**Whole Curriculum Skills and Capabilities**

At the heart of the curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and the skills for operating effectively in society. Through opportunities to engage in active learning contexts across all areas of the curriculum, children should progressively develop:

a) Cross Curricular Skills

* Communication
* Using Mathematics
* Using Information and Communications Technology

b) Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

* Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making
* Self-Management
* Working with Others
* Managing Information
* Being Creative

In St. Patrick’s we will make use of a wide range of teaching methods. We will balance whole class, group and independent activities to engage children in effective learning. We aim to provide an environment where children are actively engaged. We intend to make the learning relevant, enjoyable and motivational.

**Assessment for learning and Assessment of Learning**

Through various forms of testing we build a comprehensive picture of the progress and learning needs of each child in order to plan future work and ultimately improve learning. We endeavour to develop the active involvement of children in their own learning by:

* sharing learning intentions with children;
* encouraging awareness of the skills and knowledge that are being developed;
* developing their awareness of the strategies they employ in their learning.

Further development is encouraged through the provision of effective feedback to children. We recognise the profound influence this can have on motivation and self-esteem of a child.

We aim to develop children’s ability for peer and self-assessment by helping them to:

* review and evaluate their own and others’ work
* set their own goals following effective questioning and feedback
* understand how to improve

The use of outcomes of assessment informs future teaching and learning and we use a varied range of assessment techniques:

* observation
* class discussion
* oral, written, visual presentations or physical demonstrations
* independent or group tasks
* project work
* homework
* diagnostic and/or standardised tests.
* teacher assessment, including use of NIC Levels of Progression

**Language and Literacy**

Literacy focuses on developing children’s ability to understand and use language as an integral part of learning in all areas in order to interact effectively with the world around them, to express themselves creatively and to communicate confidently through talking and listening, reading and writing, using a variety of skills and media.

To further encourage the above aims, we provide our children with an oral introduction to Irish. We enable our pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing through the use of up-to-date and stimulating resources.

We recognise that communication is central to the whole curriculum. Children should be able to communicate in order to express themselves socially, emotionally and physically, to develop as individuals, engage with others and contribute as members of society.

**Mathematics and Numeracy**

Our children will engage in a wide range of purposeful activities which will involve different modes of mathematical learning, including playing, exploring and investigating, doing and observing, talking and listening, asking questions, reflecting, drafting, reading and recording. We aim to introduce mathematical ideas to children in meaningful contexts. In creating a well-resourced and stimulating environment, our children will learn through taking part in oral work and a wide range of practical activities, including games, which will develop and consolidate their learning. In St. Patrick’s our schemes of work are based on the N.I. Numeracy Strategy and Lines of Development which have been produced by CEA.

**The Arts**

Creativity is developed through every area of the curriculum. Art and Design, Drama and Music provide rich opportunities for developing creativity, allowing children to express their ideas, feelings and interpretations of the world in diverse ways, through pictures, sound, drama and dance. We will involve children in a wide range of activities that continue to develop their imagination and natural curiosity, and that allow them to express and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings with confidence.

**Art and Design**

In the foundation stage, skills will be developed through Art and Design activities. During Key Stages 1 and 2 continued involvement in direct sensory experience will develop children’s visual, spatial and tactile awareness and manipulative skills and promote their self-esteem and confidence. Children will be encouraged to express their ideas through colour, line, shape, space, form, pattern and texture and will have the opportunity to handle art and design tools. Our school Art and Design Scheme of work covers the statutory requirements for the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

**Music**

Music will involve the children in simple ways of making their own music and in responding to the music they hear. They will be encouraged to compose and perform their own music and to listen to a variety of different types and styles of music. Through musical activities we aim to develop aural awareness and communication skills, and enhance children’s self-esteem.

**Instrumental Music**

All pupils from Primary 4 to Primary 7 have the opportunity to play string instruments (Violins, Viola, Cello and Double Bass) with the support of the E.A. Music Service. The E.A. Music Service teachers also provide Woodwind tuition (oboe, flute, clarinet) for pupils from P.4 – P.7 and pupils undertake ABRSM grade exams. All pupils in Primary 5 have the opportunity to learn how to play the tin whistle and may improve their skills by joining with Primary 6 and Primary 7 pupils in the Traditional Music Group. A private teacher also visits the school one day each week and provides individual piano and singing lessons.

**Drama**

Drama is a powerful and effective way of learning and has much to offer in enriching the curriculum for our children. Dramatic activities contribute to the development of our children’s self-esteem and confidence, as well as enhancing their oral language skills. It helps children to learn about themselves and the world around them and also contributes to their social and emotional development as they experience and act out different situations. The emphasis in all activities should be on enjoyment and the learning that is taking place. Opportunities will arise throughout the day for children to communicate through drama, for example, during play-based/activity learning, story and rhyme time, shared reading and circle time. Children will have opportunities to work as individuals, in pairs, in small groups and as a whole class. At our Annual Dramas and Assemblies, pupils have the opportunity to develop dramatic skills appropriate to audience, context, purpose and task by exploring voice, movement, gesture and facial expressions.

**The World Around Us**

The World Around Us encompasses the subjects of Geography, History, Science and Technology. The purpose of this area is to help children explore and find age appropriate answers to many profound questions about themselves and the World Around Them.

Our pupils will develop:

* self-confidence and self-esteem in expressing and sharing their thoughts and ideas and an appreciation of the beauty and wonder of the world
* an awareness of themselves and their place in the world, as well as of other places, cultures and the environment
* an awareness of Information and Communication Technology and its impact on society and the world around them

**Personal Development and Mutual Understanding**

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding focuses on encouraging each child to become personally, emotionally and socially effective so that they may lead healthy, safe and fulfilled lives. It further encourages them to become confident, independent and responsible citizens making informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.

As a catholic school we deliver much of the PDMU curriculum and content through the Grow in love and Alive-O programmes and other religious educational resources. We use ‘The Wonder of My Being’ to support our teaching of RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education). PDMU also has implications for our pastoral care system, for our school discipline policy and for relationships within the school and beyond.

**Physical Education**

Physical Development and Movement is about experiencing and developing a range of fundamental skills that will improve co-ordination, locomotion, control, balance and manipulation. Pupils should develop social skills such as taking turns, sharing, co-operating and negotiating, and values such as trust, fairness and respect for others.

Through a broad and balanced Physical Development programme children should develop their knowledge, understanding and skills, enabling them to perform competently and confidently in a range of physical activities. All children should experience a sense of fun, enjoyment and achievement through a variety of progressively challenging and innovative activities. Physical Education provides rich opportunities for children to think in different ways and learn to be creative and imaginative. P.E. also allows them to express their feelings and interpretations through a variety of movement contexts. Our children will have opportunities to explore, plan, practise, improve, perform, evaluate and appreciate the performances of themselves and others.

Our P.E. scheme is based on the Val Sabin Programme which incorporates the fundamental movement skills and covers Athletics, Dance, Games and Gymnastics.

Gaelic football, camogie, hurling, tennis and swimming are encouraged in St Patrick’s. Training and coaching for football, hurling, camogie and cycling will take place both during school hours and on allocated days after school.

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**Information and Communications Technology (ICT)**

ICT is a tool to assist teaching and learning across the curriculum and provide opportunities to enhance and enrich children’s learning experiences across the curriculum. ICT is integrated into curriculum planning, classroom teaching and the assessment of children’s work. St Patrick’s Primary School provide supervised access to the internet and we seek permission from parents to enable their child to use the internet from P.4 – P.7. We have a highly effective ‘Digital Leaders’ Team of P.6 and P.7 pupils who help younger pupils learn new ICT skills.

**DRUGS EDUCATION**



St. Patrick’s Primary is a caring, responsible school with the children at the core of our activities. We strive to respond to the personal, emotional, social and educational needs of our

pupils through our interaction with them in the classroom and

beyond. The emphasis of our drugs education programme is on the dangers involved in the misuse of tobacco, alcohol and medicine. As our programme responds to need, we will include other substances when appropriate. This programme is deliveredmainly through health education and the science curriculum. All other subjects contribute to this, where and when appropriate. We do not condone the misuse of drugs nor do we wish to sensationalise or dramatise the drugs situation.

We believe in providing a drugs education programme which is appropriate to the experience of children in school. The programme we provide helps to equip our pupils with the skills to respond and react appropriately to situations which are hazardous to their health. Underpinning our teaching is the belief in building the children’s self-esteem; in helping them to value themselves and others; in giving them a sense of their responsibility to themselves and others.

We recognise this as a partnership between the school and the parents, where we work together towards educating and preparing our children for each stage of their lives.

**ROAD SAFETY**

One of the greatest social problems in our society is the number of people, many of them children, who are killed or injured on the roads of Northern Ireland each year.

The Governors and Staff of this school believe that we have an important role to play in helping to reduce this tragic and unnecessary waste. We believe in education for life in a very real sense and see Road Safety Education as a basic life skill. At school we promote this ideal through the cross curricular nature of the subject by playing a full part in approved Road Safety Schemes. Our Road Safety Policy is available on the website or from the office. We have very thorough practices in place to ensure safety of pupils at home-time. All pupils in P.1 to P.3 must be collected from the school playground where they are handed over by the teacher to the person with parental responsibility. If parents judge that their child has sufficiently developed road sense they can choose to allow pupils in P.4 – P.7 to walk to the church car park or to walk home. The school grounds are fully supervised until every child has left school. A member of staff supervises children as they get on to the school buses and ensures that they have their seatbelts fastened before the bus departs. Parental responsibility resumes when the children leave the school grounds. All pupils in P.7 have the opportunity to take their Cycling Proficiency test each year and this is a fantastic and highly enjoyable way to finish their road safety education at our school.

**Religious Education**

In St. Patrick’s Religious Education has a significant place in the overall curriculum of the school. Our aim is to help our children: -

* become familiar with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ
* develop a habit and love of prayer in order to grow in a loving relationship with God
* come to a simple understanding of what it means to belong to the Church and its sacramental life
* become aware of their own personal worth and the dignity of others
* realise that we are all part of one community
* The Religious Education syllabus is based on the Grow in Love and Alive O Series. Each year-group has a structured programme to follow. Children are prepared for the sacraments at the appropriate stages.

**Arrangements for Religious Education**

Full School Assembly for all children is held on Friday at 1.10 pm

All classes start and finish the school day with prayer. We have regular whole-school assemblies throughout the school year.

*Non- Catholic children are permitted to withdraw from religion lessons.*

Parents’ meetings are held in preparation for children preparing for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The work of the class teacher is extended and supported by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and a variety of Learning Support Programmes. Progress is carefully monitored and assessment regularly made.

**ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL NEEDS**

**Introduction**

In Northern Ireland 24% of the whole-school population have currently been identified as having special needs. St Patrick’s currently has 15% of its pupils on our Special Needs Register.

The Code of Practice has been adopted for the identification of children having learning difficulties, the assessment of their special educational needs and the making of whatever special educational provision is necessary to meet these needs.

**Stage 1** - Teachers identify and register a child’s special educational needs and consulting with the school’s special educational needs co-ordinator, take initial action.

**Stage 2** - The SENCo takes lead responsibility for collecting and recording information and for co-ordinating the child’s special educational provision, working with the child’s teacher.

**Stage 3 - specialists from outside the school support Teachers and the SENCo.**

**Stage 4** - The Board considers the need for a statutory assessment and if appropriate, makes a multi-disciplinary assessment.

**Stage 5** - The Board considers the need for a Statement of Special Educational Needs. If appropriate, a Statement will be written and the special educational provision specified will be arranged, monitored and reviewed.

In a minority of cases children may demonstrate such significant difficulties that this school may consider it advisable to refer the child to the Board for statutory assessment without going through the school-based stages.

**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

At St Patrick’s Primary School we are committed to improving our service. We use information from all stakeholders to help maintain and improve the work carried out in school. We encourage and welcome all comments and views, positive and negative. Our Complaints Policy outlines a clear mechanism for the resolution of complaints. The policy is available on the website or by request from the office.

**CONCLUSION**

Now that you have read this Prospectus, I hope you will have some idea of the rich and varied life your child will have during their time at St Patrick’s Primary School.

You can rest assured that their well-being will be our concern at all times during their years here.

I look forward to meeting you and thank you for entrusting your child into our care.

Una Lawless

Una Lawless

Principal