

# St Mary's RC Primary School

Haddington



## School Handbook

## CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Ethos	5
School Staff	6
School Information	7-10
Road Safety	11
School Curriculum	12-19
Pupils with Additional Support Needs/Child Protection	19
Transition	20-21
School Health Service	21-22
Parental Involvement	23
PTA/Parent Council	23-24
School Improvement Plan	25
Useful Websites	25

See the East Lothian Council Appendix Handbook for:

Communication  
School Ethos  
Parental Involvement  
The Curriculum  
Assessment & Reporting  
Transition  
Support for Pupils  
School Improvement  
Local Authority Policies and Practical Information

Link to handbook: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/SchoolsHandbooks](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/SchoolsHandbooks)

St Mary's RC Primary School  
Haddington Joint Campus  
Tynebank Road  
Haddington  
East Lothian  
EH41 4DN

Tel 01620 823298

Email: [stmarys.ps@st-marys.elcschool.org.uk](mailto:stmarys.ps@st-marys.elcschool.org.uk)

Website: <http://edubuzz.org/st-marys>

Head Teacher: Claire V Graham

## **Introduction**

This booklet has been written to provide children, parents and carers with information about our school. I hope you will find it helpful.

We are a small Catholic school and we have been likened to a 'village school in a town setting'. Our present roll from P1 to P7 is 120. We also have a non-denominational Nursery wing, which caters for 80 children. The information in this Handbook refers to the Primary classes P1 to P7. We have a separate handbook for our nursery class.

Parents and carers who are seeking a place for their child are most welcome to visit us with or without their children.

If you would like more information, you may contact me by writing, telephoning or by e-mail to make an appointment. Our school secretary may be able to answer some of your questions.

## **New School**

St. Mary's, which is a co-educational school, was founded in 1869 by Father John Prendergast, the first Catholic priest resident in Haddington since the Reformation. For the first few years, classes were held in rented rooms near the church of St. Mary's in Poldrate until a school was built close to the church at Tynebank Road in 1966.

We took occupancy of our new building together with Haddington Infant Primary School on Monday 29 October 2012. The new building is two storeyed and occupies the site of the former St Mary's RC School. St Mary's occupies the south west of the site and Haddington Infant School is to the north of the site, along The Butts. St Mary's has 5 classrooms, a nursery, a library, a general purpose room which also serves as a music room, one quiet tutorial room, a meeting room, a staffroom, a resource room, a staff work base and several store rooms. There are breakout areas outside the classrooms which can be used for a variety of purposes such as quiet reading areas, maths and literacy games area, construction, art and craft activities, display etc.

The main office, and head teacher office is located at the entrance of the school. The janitor's office is located in the Haddington Infant School wing. The shared facilities consist of a large, light and airy dining room where children can have a school meal cooked on the premises or eat their own packed lunches. There is a large PE hall with acoustic

panelling and bleacher seating; the hall is partitioned and two classes can have lessons simultaneously or the partition can be opened for one class. The movement and dance studio provides a space where our whole school can come together for assemblies. Classes can dance and partake in a range of activities in this room whilst admiring themselves in a mirror covering one entire wall. We share a medical room and a hygiene room. The nursery classes also share a hygiene room. There are two inner courtyards which children can access for a range of purposes. There is disabled access to our building and the facilities for pupils with disabilities include a lift and hygiene room with hoist.

The outside space is a shared area and has been creatively designed with input from parents to include different activities, challenges and surfaces. There is a large sand pit and pirate boat, an outdoor classroom, a grassy hill, a games pitch and a climbing wall. The area is still under development and we are awaiting the arrival of a trim trail and a wooden train from the old Haddington Infant School. We are hoping this will add some stimulation to the north playground. The sandpit requires some more work to keep the sand enclosed in the pit. Children have access to playground toys at playtimes. There are covered bicycle and scooter racks.

### **Visiting the School**

The main entrances to the campus are protected by secure doors. The pupil doors are for the use of the children only and you should never enter the building with a view to making your way to the main office or a classroom. If you wish to speak to office staff or the head teacher please come to the main office where you will be welcomed in the foyer to which the public have access. Should you wish to speak to office staff about a confidential matter please inform them and they will take you through the secure doors to the meeting room. Likewise if you wish to speak to the head teacher, office staff will find out if she is free. Should the head teacher be unable to speak to you right away an appointment will be made for you to speak to her as soon as possible.

### **School car park**

The school car park is for the use of school staff and visitors to the school **only and parents/carers are not permitted to use the car park**. We are aware that there are times when the bollard is not in operation but please **do not use** the car park for dropping off or picking up children. Not only does this cause congestion but is a health and safety risk. Through the day minor gates and vehicular access gates are padlocked for the safety and security of the children at playtimes. The gate nearest to St Mary's RC Primary School is not padlocked but should always be closed and on the latch. The gate at the Haddington Infant School entrance is also unlocked but on the latch. Both schools can be accessed via both gates. It is important that visitors always close these gates behind them. We advise visitors to park in the Aubigny Sports Centre car park or, if possible, Tesco long stay car park. When coming from the Aubigny Sports Centre you can walk through Neilson Park and enter the playground at the north east corner of the site off The Butts. You can travel on foot or bicycle along Victoria Road or Neilson Park Road. We advise motorists not to drive in these roads at key times when children are coming to school or going home. There is ample bicycle parking.

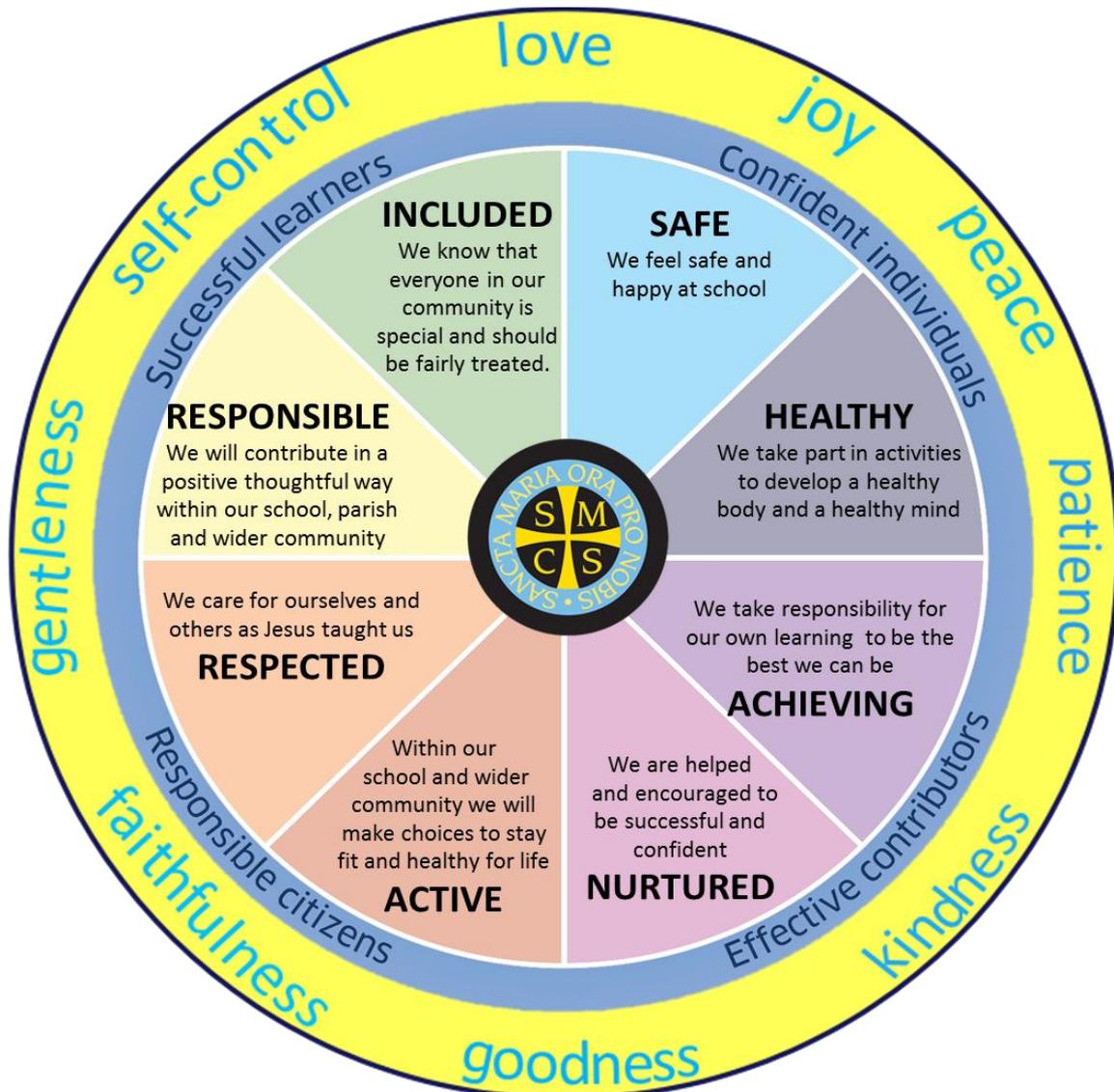
# Our Vision

At St Mary's our vision is to work together as a strong, vibrant community to create a positive, inclusive and productive place where children will be nurtured to grow and learn; a place where all pupils, staff and parents are supported and encouraged to develop all positive opportunities in and out of school. In our school, all children will be provided with high quality and challenging learning experiences to meet their individual needs and to help them be the best they can be. In St Mary's we grow together with respect and love.

## Our School Motto: 'Respect, Cooperate, Achieve!'

At St Mary's our values reflect the Fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control.

Our aims embrace the SHANARRI principles of Getting it Right for Every Child.



## **SCHOOL STAFF**

### **Head Teacher**

Mrs Claire V Graham

### **Principal Teacher**

Mrs Helena McHugh

### **Class Teachers**

Mr Mark Tierney

Mr Rod Cowie

Mrs Helena McHugh

Miss Maria Bertolani

Miss Emma Glen (NQT)

Mrs Emma McManus

Miss Kirsty Carlyle

Miss Eimear Brownen (Currently on Maternity Leave)

### **Nursery Staff**

Mrs Lesley Martin Senior Early Years Practitioner

Mrs Janice Blair Nursery Nurse

Mrs Karen Wilson Nursery Nurse

Mrs Barbara Hippe Nursery Nurse

Mrs Julie Flockhart Nursery Nurse

Mrs Julie Cunningham Nursery Nurse

### **Support for Learning**

Mrs Susan Whiteford

### **Support staff**

Mrs Lynn Soulsby Admin Assistant

Mrs Helena Walker School/ASN Auxiliary

Miss Zsuzsa Hajto Classroom Assistant

Mrs Christian Ellis ASN Auxiliary

Mrs Eileen McEwan Playground Supervisor/School Auxiliary

Ms Denyse Boyd Dining Room Supervisor

Mr Davy Hogg Janitor

### **Visiting Specialists**

Mrs Salyen Dick Music Specialist (one morning per week)

Miss Janine McDougal PE Specialist (one morning per week)

Mr Dave Robb (instrumental tuition - Brass)

Mrs Fiona Smith (instrumental tuition - Cello)

### **Other key staff**

Mrs Della Oliver dining room supervisor (HIS)

Janice Chmylowshyj, cook/supervisor

Mrs Marabecca Watt, Katherine McKenna, catering assistants

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

### Classes

We have five composite classes. The maximum number permitted in these classes is 25. They are currently arranged as follows:

P1/2                  P2/3                  P4/5                  P5/6                  P6/7

Although we are a Catholic school we have a large number of non-Catholic children. Priority is given to Catholic applicants.

### Enrolment

Children who are attending primary school for the first time are enrolled with effect from the first day of the session, in August. If your child's fifth birthday falls on or before the end of February of the following year, he or she will be able to start school the previous August. Nevertheless you are not legally obliged to send your child to school until the start of the session following the child's fifth birthday.

An advertisement will be placed in the local press in November advising parents and carers of the enrolment arrangements and when to come into school and complete an enrolment form; usually in November. New Primary 1 pupils will be invited to visit the school on several occasions in May and June to meet their class teacher and each other. The class teacher visits the nursery school during the summer term to meet and learn about the children they will be teaching.

For the first two weeks the children will attend school for mornings only. No children attend school on Friday afternoons. If parents or carers are unable to take advantage of the planned arrangements, please get in touch with the office to make an alternative arrangement.

### New to the Area

If you are moving into the school's catchment and your child is already enrolled in another school please contact the school office. You will be invited to meet with a member of the leadership team. Enrolment procedures will be explained.

### Nursery Class at St Mary's

We have a non denominational nursery class which takes 40 children in the morning and another 40 in the afternoon. This is referred to as 40/40. We currently have one full time Nursery Teacher, 2 full time Nursery Nurses and 3 part-time Nursery Nurses in the nursery. A Nursery Handbook is available from the school on request.

The number of teaching and support staff changes from session to session depending on the number and needs of pupils.

### Secondary Education

The majority of our children transfer to Knox Academy, Haddington. Tel 01620 823387. The nearest Catholic Secondary is St. David's, Abbey Road, Dalkeith. Tel 0131 663 1962.

## School Dress Code

We look for parental support to ensure all children adhere to the school dress code. The school dress code is navy, black, grey trousers, (not jeans, joggers or leggings unless leggings are worn under a school skirt) skirt or pinafore. White or navy polo shirt, shirt or blouse (tie optional) and a school sweatshirt. **PLEASE ENSURE THAT CLOTHING IS LABELLED OR MARKED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.** Please also ensure that your child is dressed accordingly for the weather.

## Gym Kit

All children are expected to wear navy/black shorts/leggings/joggers and a plain white t-shirt and trainers in case of outside activities. Clothing with logos eg NIKE and football team clothing is not permitted. Our PE teacher is in school on Thursday mornings but children may participate in other physical activity with their teacher or a visiting specialist on other days.

## Office Opening Hours

The school office is open:

Monday and Tuesday 8.30am - 3.45pm

Wednesday 8.30am - 3.20pm

Thursday 8.30am - 3.30pm

Friday 8.30am - 12 pm

If the office is unmanned you can leave a message on the answering machine and someone will call you back if appropriate.

## The School Day

### Monday - Thursday

Morning:	Classes P1 and P2	8.55 am - 12.05 pm
	Classes P3 to P7	8.55 am - 12.40 pm

Afternoon:	Classes P1 and P2	1.20 pm - 3.20 pm
	Classes P3 to P7	1.20 pm - 3.20 pm

### Friday

Morning:	Classes P1 and P2	8.55 am - 12.00 pm
	Classes P3 to P7	8.55 am - 12.10 pm

Afternoon: Staff only in school

## Intervals and lunch breaks

P1 & P2 Break 10.30 - 10.45 am Lunch 12.05 - 1.20 pm

P3 - P7 Break 10.30 - 10.45 am Lunch 12.40 - 1.20 pm

## School Meals

Children taking school lunches or packed lunches are accommodated in our shared dining hall and supervised by dining hall supervisors. School meals are prepared on the premises. P1 to P3 receive free school meals. The cost to P4 to P7 is £2.00. Parents can now order and pay for their child's meal via the SchoolPay online payment system. If your child does

not have their lunch money, you will receive notification via text in the first instance. Please ensure that all monies owing are paid promptly to the School office.

We will inform you if your child is not eating their lunch. Children bringing their own packed lunches should not bring fizzy drinks or drinks in glass containers. Please ensure your child's lunch box is clearly marked with their name.

### **Playground supervision**

When pupils are at school, the responsibility for their safety rests with the Council. The head teacher and staff, including playground supervisors if appointed, undertake this responsibility as the Council's representatives. This means that reasonable steps should be taken to prevent any pupils suffering injury and to ensure that accidents or difficulties can be reported to a responsible adult and appropriate action taken. Our Primary 7 pupils act as buddies for the new Primary 1 children when they come in to school in August.

### **Milk**

Semi-skimmed milk is available to all children in primary education at prices subsidised by EEC grants. Milk letters are sent home at the beginning of each school year and each term quoting the price. This can either be paid by the term or parents can pay the full amount at the start of the year.

### **Fruit**

In accordance with the Scottish Government's 'Free Fruit Initiative' all P1 - P3 children receive fruit three times per week, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

### **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones, and any other items you consider to be valuable or precious to your child or family, must be handed in to the class teacher at the start of each day. The teacher will return the items at the end of the day. Should you wish to convey an **urgent** message to your child, please do so via the school office.

### **Allergic Reactions**

Please inform us before your child starts school, if your child has any life-threatening allergies.

### **Medicines**

No form of medication is kept in school, should your child be required to take any medication we must have your written permission to administer it. This includes lotions, creams and ointments. Forms are available in the school office.

### **Illness/Accident in School**

A first-aid kit is kept in the school for use in the case of minor accidents. If an injury is serious or if symptoms develop, it is school policy to contact parents/carers who can then take their child home or to the doctor/hospital. If staff believe the illness or injury requires immediate attention by a doctor then arrangements are made to transport the child from school to the local clinic at Newtonport or to the Sick Children's Hospital in Edinburgh. Parents are contacted and told where their child has been taken. **It is very important to inform us of any change of address, telephone number, emergency contact or doctor.** If at all possible the name of a second emergency contact should also

be provided. Please inform the school if your child has any special medical conditions or requirements (e.g. epilepsy, asthma etc).

### **Absence and Attendance**

If your child is absent, the school should be notified before 9.30 am on their first day of absence. If your child does not arrive at school and we have not heard from you, we will phone/text you or your emergency contact to find out why your child is not at school. This is to ensure that nothing untoward has happened to your child on their way to school. Your child's attendance is monitored and should it fall to 90% or below you will be contacted by the Head Teacher.

### **Early and Emergency Closures**

Very occasionally it might be necessary to close early, e.g. owing to extreme weather conditions. Notice to parents will be given as quickly as possible to ensure all children are able to return home safely. No child will ever be sent home to an empty house. East Lothian Council use the media, particularly Radio Forth and Radio Scotland, to broadcast messages about schools. The school will use the text messaging service to inform parents/carer directly.

### **Parent/Carer Concerns**

If you have any concerns about any aspect of your child's school life please do not hesitate in contacting the school to make an appointment to speak to your child's teacher or, if appropriate, the head teacher. In the first instance concerns may be discussed and resolved with your child's teacher however if you feel that your concern has not been addressed or are of a serious nature please make an appointment to speak to the head teacher.

You can expect the teacher and/or the head teacher to listen to your concerns take them seriously and tell you what action they will take to resolve them. If your concerns are about your child's learning we will consult with the support for learning teacher and may carry out some assessments. Friendships often present children with some difficulties and they will be supported in working through them. For more serious concerns regarding behaviour, bullying, health or social and emotional well-being the school may call on a range of people to give advice and support.

### **Parent/Carer Complaints**

If you are unhappy about an action or lack of action by our school or the standard of service provided by us please let us know. We will work hard at school level to resolve any complaints you have within five working days. If however you remain dissatisfied you should contact the council and you should receive acknowledgement of your complaint within three working days and a response within 20 working days.

You can find details of the complaints procedure in the Local Authority's section of this handbook.

### **Other Schools**

Regular contact is made with other primary schools through sporting and musical activities and joint educational excursions. Shared in-service training courses are organised by the head teachers who meet on a regular basis.

## Road Safety Around Our School

St Mary's together with Haddington Infants aim to help make the journey to school safer and more enjoyable for everyone. The travel plan is presently under review following our move to our new campus.

Driver behaviour around the school can severely compromise child safety. We encourage all parents and carers who have to drive to school not to drive in Victoria Road or Neilson Park Road. These streets become severely congested at peak times and vehicles present an obvious danger to young pedestrians, so drivers please remember:

**Do consider parking further away from the school and walking the rest of the way 'park and stride'.** Space on Victoria Road and Neilson park Road is severely limited so you may find it less stressful to avoid these streets altogether and you will certainly be making life less stressful for other people.

**Don't park on the yellow zigzags.**

**Don't turn your vehicle in the school entranceways.**

**Do think about how your manoeuvres may affect those around you.**

Local police do respond to complaints about inconsiderate parking in the vicinity of the school. The school has a designated area for cycle and scooter parking but does not take responsibility for bikes and scooters left there. Padlocking your bike is strongly advised. Cycling in the playground is not permitted, please dismount and push your bike.

Road safety procedures are taught as part of the curriculum. Teachers reinforce the message at regular intervals. Please do the same to help your child learn this essential life skill. Whenever possible, use the school crossing patrol officers positioned at Sidegate, Station Road by Peachdales, the Railway Hotel, Knox Place and Court Street. There are pedestrian crossings at Rosehall, the Railway Hotel, Market Street/Hardgate junction, Court Street and on the High Street.

There is now a crossing from the Aubigny car park to the entrance of Neilson Park. Please take great care if using the little lane which runs between the school playground and Neilson Park. Don't allow your child to run out onto the roadway. The lane is too narrow for the installation of staggered barriers to prevent children running onto the road. The area to the south of this lane is private property and barriers cannot be installed there.

## THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The Curriculum for Excellence is now being implemented across Scotland for all 3-18 year olds - wherever they learn. It aims to raise standards, prepare our children for a future they do not yet know and equip them for the jobs of tomorrow in a fast changing world.

Curriculum for Excellence enables professionals to teach subjects creatively, to work together across the school with other schools, to share best practice and explore learning together. Teachers and practitioners will share information to plan a child's 'learning journey' from 3-18, supporting progression from nursery to primary, primary to secondary and beyond, ensuring the change is smooth. Curriculum for Excellence balances the importance of knowledge and skills.

Each child is entitled to a broad and deep general education, whatever their level and ability. Every single teacher and practitioner will be responsible for literacy and numeracy - the language and number skills that unlock other subjects and are vital to everyday life. The statements of the experiences and outcomes within the Curriculum for Excellence describe national expectations of learning and progression from the early to the fourth curriculum level, during the period from the early years to the end of S3.

It develops skills for learning; life and work to help young people to go on to further study, secure work and navigate life. It brings real life into the classroom, making learning relevant and helps young people apply lessons to their life beyond the classroom. It links knowledge in one subject area to another helping children understand the world and make connections. It develops skills so that children can think for themselves, making sound judgements, challenge, enquire and find solutions

### Levels of Learning

The experiences and outcomes are grouped into five levels

Level	Stage
Early	Nursery and Primary 1 or later for some children
First	P2 - 4 but earlier or later for some children
Second	P5 - 7 but earlier or later for some children
Third and Fourth	S1 - S3 but earlier for some
Senior Phase	S4 - S6

For further information parents can find out more at: [www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk](http://www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk)  
[www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk](http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk)

### Assessing Progress and Achievement

We use a variety of approaches to assess progress and plan future learning to ensure children achieve their full potential. The profiles built up in nursery, along with the learning journals, are used to provide valuable information for the Primary 1 teachers. At the start of P1, children undertake an assessment called Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPs). PIPs is used to assess early literacy and numeracy skills at the

early stages of Primary 1 and this is repeated at the end of Primary 1. The PIPs data, along with other assessment information and teacher judgement is used to identify children who need extra support or challenge. Towards the end of Primary 3, 5 and in the Autumn term of Primary 7 the pupils are assessed again using PIPs, which provides an overview of continued progress.

Continuous assessment is a vital part of our teaching programme. We use both formative assessment, where children are provided with clear information regarding what they are learning and how to improve their learning and more formal summative assessment, which provides written evidence of a child's learning. These forms of assessment allow us to track learning and ensure our pupils receive appropriate support, pace and challenge. This enables the teacher to ascertain the child's progress, diagnose any difficulties and decide on appropriate future work.

Assessment information is passed to the child's next teacher within the school.

### **Reporting to Parents**

Building the Curriculum 5: a framework for assessment outlines the key purposes and features of reporting within Curriculum for Excellence. The focus of reporting is to support and improve learning:

*"Reporting has two main purposes. Firstly, it provides clear, positive and constructive feedback about children's and young people's learning and progress, looking back on what has been achieved against standards and expectations. Secondly, it creates an agenda for discussions between learners and those teaching and supporting them about their next steps in learning."*

Reporting allows information to be shared and exchanged among children and young people, parents and staff. At the centre of reporting are informed discussions between teachers and parents on their child's learning. It focuses on what information is needed to ensure that parents know what their child has achieved and how well he/she is doing against expectations. It provides a summary of what the learner has aimed for; describes progress in terms of what the learner has achieved so far and sets out for the learner, parents and staff what needs to be done to ensure continued progress and improved standards of achievement. Reporting makes the child's or young person's learning and achievement explicit to all and helps engage parents actively in their child's learning. It encourages active parental involvement as well as providing information and feedback to them on their child's progress and achievements. At St Mary's RC Primary School a yearly report is issued to parents and carers in June. Parent / carer consultations take place twice a year, once in October and once in March. It is expected that any concerns about a child's progress are shared immediately with parents and steps are taken to support progress in school and advice given to parents to help at home.

Every child will have a learning Journal that contains key pieces of work undertaken by the child. This will contribute to the child's developing profile and contain information about the child's out-of school achievements.

Ultimately, Curriculum for Excellence aims to improve our children's life chances, to nurture successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors, and responsible citizens, building on Scotland's reputation for great education.

### **Teaching Methods**

Learning is based on a range of strategies, including investigating, problem solving and discussion, in addition to direct teaching. Children may be taught individually, in groups or as a whole class in order to tailor the curriculum, as far as possible, to fit the needs of each child. Work is often differentiated to provide different levels of challenge within one class.

### **Home Learning**

Homework has several purposes: to strengthen skills, knowledge and understanding, to extend school learning, for example, by additional reading. Home learning work can involve the use of parents' skills and knowledge, reference books etc. During their progression through the school, pupils develop the confidence and self-discipline that is needed to study on their own in order to become life-long learners. We urge parents to take an active interest in their children's home learning. Regularly reading with your child and discussing stories will help to develop an interest in reading. The school's home learning policy is available on the school website, alternatively a hard copy can be requested from the school office.

### **Religious Education**

Our RE curriculum teaches Catholic Christianity. Our primary aim in religious education is to help the children to become aware of God's presence in their lives and to respond to his invitation to enter into a personal relationship with him. We recognise and respect the fact that our families hold a wide range of beliefs and in line with Catholic national guidance we also explore the beliefs, values and practices of other world religions.

We teach RE as a subject. It is important that children have accurate knowledge of our Catholic beliefs and ask challenging questions. We also believe that our faith is more than a collection of knowledge; it guides us in the way we behave in our everyday lives. Christ said that we should love others as we love ourselves; every human being, without exception, is valuable and precious and we should always try to treat others as Christ would have done.

All Catholic primary schools use the CfE Religious Education Experiences and Outcomes for Catholic Schools along with the document *This is Our Faith* published by the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES). [www.sces.uk.com](http://www.sces.uk.com)

No matter how well it is taught in school, the most crucial area for religious education remains in the home. The co-operation and support of parents are indispensable at every stage of the children's religious and moral education. Catholic children in our school make their First Communion, Confirmation and First Confession in P4.

We hold regular religious assemblies, services and when possible or appropriate attend Mass. We encourage the children to help others by prayer and by fundraising for various charities. Whilst we would expect all children who are placed in a Catholic school to

participate in RE, parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from religious education lessons and from religious observance. Children who are withdrawn may be asked to spend time in another classroom during RE.

### **Literacy**

The development of each child's language is carried out through an integrated programme involving talking, listening, reading and writing. All of the children's learning experiences will involve aspects of literacy.

### **Talking**

The children are encouraged to express themselves clearly and confidently. Class and group discussions take place at all stages. Children regularly have the opportunity to tell other children about something they have made, or to read aloud a story or poem they have written. Children may be asked to present an argument for or against a particular topic or to present their class or individual project to other pupils or adults.

### **Listening**

The ability to listen is developed as part of the normal work of the classroom. The children learn to listen to their teachers and to each other, particularly in group discussion or class debates. The use of listening centres (a tape recorder with earphones) allows children of varying abilities to be given listening experience appropriate to their abilities. Children may also be asked to carry out specific listening activities.

### **Reading**

Using a variety of pre-reading experiences children in P1 are gradually introduced to a graded reading scheme. Our main scheme is The Oxford Reading Tree. Other reading schemes and books may also be used where appropriate. Children also learn phonics, which are the sounds in words. You can help your child to read by reading stories to them as they are sitting beside you. Place your finger under the words as you read them to your child.

Once the children achieve a reasonable degree of fluency they move away from the reading scheme and begin to read short novels. As children progress with their reading we develop their higher order reading skills.

A wide range of books from East Lothian Council Library augments our own school library and the children are encouraged to join the local public library.

### **Reading Difficulties**

Our Support for Learning teacher provides additional help for children who have difficulty with reading. This help is very structured and focuses on phonics. It usually takes place away from the classroom in a small group setting. We will inform you should we think your child would benefit from additional support.

### **Writing**

The children are taught the skill of handwriting in a systematic fashion from Primary 1. We do not expect children's first attempts at writing to be perfect, we prefer that they are excited and enthusiastic about learning to write but as they progress through school they are encouraged to present their work neatly.

Different types of writing require different techniques. The children learn how to write instructions, reports, poems and stories. Children are introduced to, phonics, spelling patterns, sentence structures, grammar, punctuation and dictionary skills.

### **Numeracy and Mathematics**

In addition to numeracy (arithmetic), the children learn about money and measure, shape position and movement and information handling. They also participate in mental maths. A variety of learning approaches are used which include practical active problem solving, asking the children to explain their thinking and the use of technology. As with literacy, maths and numeracy may be linked to other areas of the curriculum. We provide Maths Recovery for children who require support with basic numeracy.

### **Maths and Technology**

Calculators are used as a mathematical tool. These will in no way replace the learning and use of multiplication tables and division, or the teaching of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The calculator can be used to speed up the solving of problems. Calculators are available and used occasionally in all classrooms. The children also use computer games and packages, eg when producing graphs or looking at databases or when learning about multiplication.

### **Problem Solving**

A group of children are given a problem to solve e.g. making a boat from a flat sheet of paper. Does it float? The children discuss the problem and try to solve it with as little help from the teacher as possible. These activities may be linked to other curricular areas such as the class social studies project, maths or science.

### **Health & Well Being**

We teach children from P1 to P7 how to live healthy, active lives in order to improve their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future. They learn about healthy foods, balanced diets, the benefits of physical exercise, how to look after their emotional health and substance misuse. Our older children learn about sexual relationships and parenthood.

### **Personal and Social Development**

We use a variety of resources to develop these skills, including 'Cool in School', which helps children to recognise and understand their own feelings and emotions and those of others. Children's personal and social development is also supported by "Circle Time" where children sit in a circle with their teacher and have the opportunity to discuss issues, which concern them. Children also learn how to keep themselves safe and how to avoid dangerous situations. This includes the steps they should take if approached by an unknown person via the internet. We use certificates, stickers, gold medals and points systems to celebrate a wide range of achievements and to motivate and raise self-esteem.

### **Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport**

Physical Education skills are taught by a visiting specialist and by the class teacher. Children require shorts, T-shirt and gym shoes. These should be kept in school.

Children have the opportunity to take part in a variety of sporting activities including swimming at P4, netball and football. P6/7 participate in the annual East Lothian Athletics Festival which is held at Meadowbank.

Our active schools coordinator organises visits from local specialists eg dance, judo, karate, rugby. Following these visits, the children are given details of local clubs they may wish to join. Our P5 children are introduced to the basics of golf.

We encourage children to play outside every day unless the weather is severe. Please send your child to school with suitable clothing and footwear so that they can play outside.

### **School Camp**

Every second year children in P6/7 have the opportunity to attend School Camp. The children engage in a wide variety of exciting physical activities all of which have been risk assessed. Camp can provide opportunities for learning which cannot be provided in school and it gives many children the opportunity to excel. Camp is also an excellent opportunity for children to meet and socialise with their peers from other schools. In exceptional circumstances a grant may be available to help meet the cost of your child attending camp

### **Expressive Arts**

In recent years all the children have participated in productions involving art, music, dance and drama.

### **Music**

Our music specialist visits the school once a week. As well as singing and learning about music, all children make music using tuned and untuned instruments. Our specialist also offers all children the opportunity to learn the recorder. Visiting instrumentalists teach bagpipes and drums to older pupils who are encouraged to join the Haddington Pipe Band. There are also opportunities for some children to learn, cello, violin, brass and wind instruments. All children who learn an instrument are encouraged to perform in informal and occasionally more formal concerts and, if they move on to Knox Academy, they are expected to join the school orchestra.

### **Art & Design**

Class teachers provide art and design experiences for our pupils. This includes design technology. A full art education involves much more than painting and drawing, the children are constantly learning about shapes, colours, weights and textures of materials, of their similarities and differences and how they may or may not be used. This involves a range of activities e.g. collages, modelling, puppetry and building. Teachers use the Borders Art Programme in conjunction with CfE.

We have strong links with 'Peter Potter' our local art gallery and children exhibit there from time to time. We take advantage of workshops offered to classes by our local authority. An old shirt or cagoule worn on top of school uniform helps to keep clothes clean. If you can provide either of these for classroom use we would be most grateful.

## **Drama**

Class teachers encourage self-expression, spoken language, creativity, role-playing and the use of the imagination. Their acting and presenting skills are developed through participating in scripted or improvised drama. A variety of teacher resources are used, including materials from East Lothian specialists. East Lothian's Drama teachers provide our classes with specialised workshops. From time to time we have visits from Theatre groups who perform for our pupils.

## **Recitation**

Children from P3 to P7 are encouraged to compete for a Burns Federation Certificate, which is awarded for the recitation of Scots verse.

## **Dance**

Our PE specialist teaches the children basic patterns of movement and simple dance routines. All children learn some ceilidh dances. Our active schools coordinator organises visiting dance specialists.

## **Social Studies**

Social studies are organised into three main areas:

- people, past events and societies
- people, place and environment
- people in society, economy and business

The class and teacher choose and plan a class project together. Each project should arouse the children's curiosity and make them think, question, infer, deduce and work co-operatively. Each project develops skills and concepts appropriate to the abilities of individual pupils. Several areas of the curriculum can be developed through class project work. Projects studied include: The Second World War; The Victorians; Scotland. From time to time children may work on individual projects of their own choice.

We are pleased to welcome parents and friends into school to talk to the children about their work or interests e.g. shepherding, mountaineering, being a GP.

Visits to museums, farms and other places of interest are arranged. Parents are asked to contribute part of the cost and permission forms are issued. Photographs and school-produced videos give us a permanent record of most activities.

## **Science**

We promote an investigative approach to science teaching. Through learning about science, children develop their interest in, and understanding of, the living, material and physical world. The five key areas which the children learn about are:

- Planet Earth
- Forces, electricity and waves
- Biological systems
- Materials
- Topical Science

In learning about science, children also develop their investigative skills and scientific analytical thinking.

## **Technologies**

CfE defines technologies as 'the application of knowledge and skills to extend human capabilities and to help satisfy human needs and wants'.

Children learn how to use laptops, electronic games, remote controlled or programmable toys, digital cameras and video recorders. These resources are also used by children as tools for learning across many areas of the curriculum including business enterprise. As they develop their knowledge and skills they learn how to share experiences, ideas and information in a safe and acceptable manner.

All of our classrooms have large interactive whiteboards which are used by pupils and staff.

## **Citizenship and Enterprise in Education**

Children have opportunities to take part in projects and class work related to Citizenship and Enterprise. e.g. Playground Buddies, Fundraising, Mini-business projects.

## **Pupil Council**

From time to time pupils may be consulted on school issues e.g. playground provision, anti-bullying etc. The children in each class vote for 2 pupils who will sit on the Pupil Council.

## **Eco Group**

We have a group of children who are interested in ecological issues. They meet regularly and they agree on a project to be undertaken which will benefit our environment. A member of staff facilitates the group.

## **Pupils Who Have Additional Support Needs**

Children who experience learning difficulties are given extra help from our Support for Learning teacher. This usually takes place in very small groups in our support for learning base. We will speak with parents/carers first before the child attends these classes.

Provision and resources are accessed through the local authority's processes of resource allocation and Staged Assessment and Intervention, in consultation with professionals, the child or young person and their family.

The Council's Policy document "Framework for Meeting Additional Support Needs" provides a framework for full and effective inclusion of pupils who have additional support needs

## **English as an Additional Language**

Staff are able access a range of resources and help/advice to support children and pupils from a wide variety of nationalities and cultural backgrounds who attend schools in East Lothian, and who are bilingual or whose first language is not English.

## **Accessibility Strategy**

East Lothian Council has an Accessibility Strategy. The Disability Discrimination Act requires all schools to provide access to the School building and access to the curriculum and associated services for children with disabilities.

### **Consulting with Pupils**

Under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 the views of children should be taken in to account when major decisions are being made which will affect their lives. Generally children over 12 are presumed in law to have a view but younger children may also be mature enough to have a view and should be given the opportunity to express it. While schools may not be bound by this they do consult with their pupils and the methods used should be included in the handbook. This could include formal consultation through Pupil Councils, pupils co-opted to Parent Councils, questionnaires, suggestion boxes, review and planning meetings, as well as arrangements to consult with individual pupils at appropriate times (subject choice, exclusions etc).

### **CHILD PROTECTION**

The council has a range of duties and responsibilities in relation to the child protection procedures for all pupils which include having regard for their right to be protected from harm or abuse. The school's duties and responsibilities for this are set out in the Edinburgh and Lothians Child Protection Committee's 'Child Protection Procedures' which are used by all Midlothian schools and our partner agencies.

In circumstances where a school has a significant concern that a child or young person has, or is at risk of, being harmed or abused, the school is required to pass information to the Police, Social Work Department and Health colleagues who have a legal duty to investigate further. While we always endeavour to work in an open manner with parents and guardians, there are some circumstances when it may not be appropriate to inform the parent or guardian that a Child Protection referral has been made or that information has been passed on to these agencies. Under these circumstances, the decision as to when and how parents and guardians will be informed is the responsibility of the Police, Social Work and Health Services as part of their investigation and the school will be informed by these services of the action that they have taken.

Should you wish to discuss this or any associated matter further, please contact the Head Teacher, the school's designated Child Protection Co-ordinator or the Education Officer, Pupil Support Services.

### **TRANSITION**

#### **Nursery to Primary 1**

The Primary 1 teacher visits children in the nursery and discusses their progress with the teacher. Nursery children visit their classroom several times prior to starting school. The nursery staff complete a profile, which is passed to the P1 teacher. The children are allocated a buddy from P6/7. Their buddy will look after them in the playground.

#### **Class to Class within St Mary's**

Children visit their new classroom in the third term. As we are a small school most children will have already been in their new classroom on several occasions prior to this visit. Teachers provide key information to the child's new teacher to enable a smooth transfer.

### **Primary 7 to Secondary School**

At the end of P7, pupils may transfer to Knox Academy where places are reserved for them if they live in its catchment area. Parents will be informed of transfer arrangements by December of the pupil's last year in Primary School. Included in this information will be notice of the parent's rights to request admission to the school of their choice in accordance with the provisions of the Education (Scotland) Act 1981. The nearest Catholic Secondary School is St. David's in Dalkeith.

Pupils transferring from St Mary's to Knox Academy receive talks from members of guidance staff who visit the school during the summer term and the Head Teacher of Knox Academy arranges a meeting for the parents of pupils due to transfer. Pupils visit the secondary school during their final term at St Mary's.

### **Records**

Each child has a Record Wallet containing copies of report sheets issued by the school/s attended. It shows information regarding the child's address, date of birth, emergency contact, family doctor and parents' place of work. This wallet is sent to any other primary school the child subsequently attends, and to the secondary school to which he/she transfers, together with the P7 profiles which were introduced in the summer term of 2012.

## **THE SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICE**

Throughout your child's years at primary and secondary school, a team of specialist Health Service and Education Department staff will be seeing him/her as part of a planned programme to make sure that he/she benefits as much as possible from all that school has to offer, and to help prepare him/her for life after leaving school. The School Health Service is a part of the Community Child Health Service and has direct links with those who carry out health checks on children before they start school.

Many different services are provided. The issue of maintaining confidentiality is taken seriously by the School Health Team at all times. The staff involved makes every effort to work closely with parents and with others who are caring for your child, both at school and in other branches of the Health Service.

Some of the staff concerned and the parts they play are as follows:

**School Nurses** are involved with health promotion and education, prevention of ill health, immunisation, health surveillance and screening. The attention of School Doctor is drawn to any possible problems and parents and the family doctor are informed if any further action is considered necessary.

The **School Nurse** may be helped by a **Health Assistant**. The School Nurse acts as an important link between home and school. She visits the school regularly and liaises with teachers to find out whether any pupils have a health need medical that requires to be addressed. The School Nurse can link with other members of the health team, in the community or in hospital, concerned with a child's health. The Nurse reviews the notes of all children in Primary 1,4,7, and S3 as well as those of all new entrants.

An information booklet about the School Health Service is issued to all Primary One pupils and any new pupils coming outwith the Lothian area.

Parents are also asked to complete a health questionnaire about their child at Primary 1,7 and S3 and asked if they would like their child to have a medical consultation with the School Doctor. **The School Doctor** is trained in community paediatrics and is part of a team of doctors, including a **consultant community paediatrician**, for your area. In addition, the doctor may ask for your consent to examine your child if his/her medical records are incomplete or if the doctor particularly wishes to check on his/her progress. You will be invited to be present at any medical examination and kept informed if the school doctor wishes to see your child again or thinks that he/she should be seen by your family doctor or a specialist in paediatrics. You can, if you wish, arrange for your family doctor to undertake the examinations instead of the school doctor but you may be charged a fee for this. In secondary schools the school doctor may consider whether any special information should be provided for the Careers Service.

The school doctor will be pleased to see you and your child at a mutually convenient time if you are concerned about his/her health or general progress at school.

With your consent, the school doctor also carries out immunisations to protect against various diseases:

Age 12 - 14 Testing for resistance of tuberculosis and immunisations (BCG) where required.

Age 14 - 15 Booster immunisations against diphtheria, tetanus and polio.

The **audiometric team**, who check children's hearing, will not visit the school to check pupils hearing. Instead they will provide a local clinic based, appointment only service for all school aged children requiring a hearing assessment. These include:

- All children who are due to have a routine re-test as a result of being found to have a hearing loss at a previous test in school or as a pre-school child.
- All school age children newly referred for assessment, either Primary 1 or other years.
- The school medical officer will inform schools of the result of any assessment.

The **speech and language therapist** can provide assessment and, if necessary treatment, if you, a teacher, your GP or the school feels that your child may have a speech or language problem.

Any enquiries concerning the provision of dental service should be made to the Director of the Community Dental Service, 16 Duncan Street, Edinburgh EH9 1SR. (Tel 0131 667 7114).

We hope that the School Health Service can, together with yourselves, contribute to your child's overall well-being and development. Please do not hesitate to arrange through the Head Teacher to see the school doctor or school nurse if you want any more information."

### **Head Lice**

Schools no longer check children's hair for head lice. This is now your responsibility.

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We strongly encourage and welcome all parents and carers to become involved in the life and work of the school. As well as your general interest we appreciate practical help in the classrooms, library and on outings. There are many situations in which the expertise of particular parents would be of considerable benefit to the school! The more that parents can contribute in positive ways the better we will be able to provide the best education for the children. Participation and ideas are warmly welcomed and all help is greatly appreciated. Parent volunteers never work alone with individuals, groups or classes. If they have undergone a Protecting Vulnerable Groups check they may work in breakout areas out with the classroom.

### Communication with Parents

Regular newsletters keep parents informed about school activities. Twice a year, in October and just prior to the Easter holidays, there is an opportunity for parents to discuss their children's progress with their teachers. In addition, parents may make an appointment with any teacher at any time during the year. Towards the end of the school year you will receive a written report on your child. The children will have seen the report before it goes home and will have commented on it. You are asked to sign and return the comments slip.

We are always happy to see parents who wish to discuss any matter relating to their child's education. Parents can also visit the school.

Please visit our school website and comment on the work of the children -

<http://edubuzz.org/st-marys>

## PARENT COUNCIL

### CHAIRPERSON

Barbara Hippe

### CLERK

Kim Smith

### CHURCH REP

Michael McHugh

### MEMBERS

Dervilla Bray, Aileen Doctor, Allison Cosgrove, Claire Melville, Fiona Bain, Gillian Ball, Nicola Swan

### STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

Vacant (Teaching) Mrs Lynn Soulsby (Support Staff Non-teaching)

### Summary of Contacts with Parents

Contact	Timing
School newsletter	Monthly
Class activities	Class activities are posted on the school website
Curriculum evening	September

Nursery and Primary 1 Induction Talks and Visits	June
Reports	Summer term
Parental Consultations	Winter and Spring terms
Parent Council	Throughout year
PTA	Throughout year

### **PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

The Parents Association was formed in 1990 and became The PTA in 1991. All parents are asked to try to support the activities arranged, either by attending the events or helping at them. The PTA organise a family Halloween Party, Christmas Disco for children, Annual Jumble Sale, a Café during Haddington Festival Week and on occasion a Family Ceilidh.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

Louise MacDiarmid

#### **SECRETARY**

Pauline Goldie

#### **TREASURER**

Kim Smith

#### **MEMBERS**

Mrs Helena McHugh, Salyen Dick, Fiona Fisher, Joyce Lukkes-Presley, Kerry Swinburne, Alison Francois

All parents are most welcome to attend PTA and Parent Council meetings.

### **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

The main achievements of the school in the previous 12 months are summarised in a Standards and Quality Report.

Over the past two years the nature of the school environment and its context has been quite exceptional. Children, staff and parents/carers have been through the closure of our original school, re-location to Kings Meadow Primary School and ultimately the move into our beautiful new St Mary's RC School in the Haddington Joint Campus with Haddington Infant School.

Through self-evaluation, working together, taking account of the development needs of the school, the Local Authority Service Improvement Plan, National Priorities and Curriculum for Excellence we have identified three priorities to be developed:

1. **Effective systems and strategies to assess and track progress**
2. **A smooth and organised move to our new premises and establishing an effective learning and teaching environment**
3. **To formulate a policy for Promoting Positive Behaviour**

In the future we would like to further develop our approaches to teaching reading, writing and more active approaches to maths.

## School Policies

Our school policies can be found on the school website.

## USEFUL WEBSITES

East Lothian Council

[eastlothian.gov.uk](http://eastlothian.gov.uk)

St Mary's Primary School

<http://edubuzz.org/st-marys>

Knox Academy, Haddington

[ka-net.org.uk](http://ka-net.org.uk)

St David's RC Secondary, Dalkeith

[stdavidsdalkeith.co.uk](http://stdavidsdalkeith.co.uk)

Learning and Teaching Scotland

[ltsotland.org.uk](http://ltsotland.org.uk)

Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES)

[www.sces.uk.com](http://www.sces.uk.com)

Homework sites

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/dynamo>  
[www.primarygames.co.uk](http://www.primarygames.co.uk)