

MERCY

Primary School



“A key strength of the school is the development of the children’s self-confidence and resilience.”
ETI 2015



“Mercy Primary School is a caring community where every child is valued and respected in an environment which embraces diversity, nurtures talents and celebrates the achievements of all”.



“In our school we treat each other kindly.”
Frances P7



WELCOME TO MERCY PRIMARY

We understand how making a decision about the right school for your child is a difficult one, so I hope this prospectus gives you an insight into the life of our school and the opportunities for learning that we provide here.

Mercy Primary School strives to place the individual child at the heart of our provision, leading to a school where every child feels valued as part of our school family. We are a warm and caring school with a reputation for high standards and excellence. We have a highly committed and skilled team of teaching and support staff, who will work together for the benefit of all children in our care. We nurture the talents of all our children and endeavour to make each child feel valued, safe and happy.

We are a Catholic school and as such we promote Gospel Values including respect and tolerance. We welcome all those of other faiths and cultures. As a Mercy school we strive to create equality for all who are disadvantaged. Our pupils care for others and are developing their global responsibility for others through charity work and being involved with local community links.

We have a calm yet stimulating learning environment which prepares our pupils for the challenges of future life and tomorrow's world. We have a technology rich environment where Ipads and interactive whiteboards are standard in every classroom. Our pupils are ambassadors of the future.

Our past pupils give a small indication of the potential developed here at Mercy Primary School. We are honoured to include Mary McAleese (Former President of Ireland) and Nichola Mallon (Former Lord Mayor of Belfast) and Nuala McAllister (also a Former Lord Mayor of Belfast) as among many successful, past pupils who began their education here at Mercy Primary.

Of course to become familiar with our school, come along for a visit and experience the warm and caring environment for yourself. Our partnership with families begins the moment you walk through the door and become part of our school family. We look forward to meeting you.

We hope you enjoy finding out more about Mercy Primary.

Elaine Loughran
Principal



MISSION STATEMENT

At Mercy Primary School it is our privilege and responsibility to bring children to know God and understand the teaching and tradition of the Catholic Church. We are committed to offering a high quality educational experience to enable our children to become full contributing members of society.

Mercy Vision

“Mercy Primary School is a caring community where every child is valued and respected in an environment which embraces diversity, nurtures talents and celebrates the achievements of all”.

Aims

- Create a warm welcoming atmosphere and extend this to all.
- Value and support each other in a caring school community, which strives to live by and foster Gospel values.
- Recognise and celebrate the gifts and talents of all.
- Help the children to extend the respect and understanding they experience within the school to the wider community.
- Work in partnership with our local parishes to support parents in their task as primary educators of their children.



ETHOS

Mercy Primary School is an all girls' Catholic school where our special Mercy philosophy underpins the school vision. This philosophy is inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley who founded the Sisters of Mercy (1831).

“ Mercy education is committed to the holistic development and the achievement of the full potential of every student.” , particularly those who are disadvantaged or

marginalised.”

We have the privilege and responsibility to bring children to know God and to understand the teaching of the Church in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy through prayer, sacramental preparation and collective worship.

Mercy Primary is an inclusive school. Collectively we promote and encourage a warm and welcoming atmosphere, which we extend to our pupils, parents, extended family members, and all visitors to our school. We nurture our well established ethos of pastoral care. We maintain high standards of behaviour and as a school community; we work diligently to promote self-esteem and self-confidence in our pupils.

Mercy Primary promotes high levels of academic achievement, in an atmosphere of encouragement and affirmation, promoted by high standards of teaching and learning. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively, where they show respect for the values and contributions of others. All pupils are given many opportunities and challenges to meet their full potential and are valued for their individual talents and abilities.

Parents of our children are their first educators and we strive to maintain strong partnerships with them. Families are welcomed into our school, where we continue to include them in school life during the year.

Our ethos is an evolving reflective process, which we continually evaluate to ensure sustained school improvement.





“We have great respect for ourselves and others and we always try our best.”
Olivia, Primary 7

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

We are a Mercy School and as such we follow the example of Catherine McAuley who founded the Sisters of Mercy in Dublin in 1831. We follow her example to promote education to all our girls, to encourage them to work hard to do charitable works for others less fortunate. We aim to be caring and kind to others.

We follow the Grow in Love Diocesan Religious Education Programmes to prepare our pupils for the journey of faith and education.

We work with the Parish of Holy Cross, and parents, to prepare our pupils for the sacraments of Reconciliation, the Eucharist and Confirmation.

THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM

All pupils have full access to the Northern Ireland Curriculum which is primarily concerned with removing the early experience of failure and the promotion of children’s self-esteem by concentrating on activities and learning experiences which encourage confidence, curiosity and creativity. It encourages children to take responsibility for their own learning.

The Primary Curriculum is set out in Six Areas of Learning:

- Language and Literacy
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- The Arts
- The World Around Us
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
- Physical Education

At the heart of the curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and operating effectively in society.

Through opportunities to engage in active learning contexts across all areas of the curriculum children will progressively develop:

Cross Curricular Skills:

- Communication
- Using Mathematics
- Using Information and Communications Technology

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities:

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

Teachers plan together each week and agree on clear learning intentions which are shared with the pupils. Work is carefully reviewed and evaluated half termly. Assessment procedures, formal and informal, are used to evaluate the teaching and learning process.



“ICT is used innovatively and effectively to support the children’s learning.”

ETI 2015



ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

Assessment of children's work is an integral part of our school curriculum and is used to:

1. Establish each child's level of achievement
2. Assist the teacher to plan and meet the needs of each child

Assessment at the Foundation Stage

Assessment in Primary 1 and Primary 2 is mainly observation based. Adult observations are carried out with the children in an unobtrusive way and inform future planning. Children are made aware of their progress by receiving positive feedback and work together with their teacher to suggest ways to improve. Teachers assess pupils' cross curricular skills, thinking skills and personal capabilities, levels of concentration and involvement and emotional development.

Formal Assessment

As with all schools in Northern Ireland, Mercy Primary follows the End of Key Stage Assessment Procedures for P4 and P7, as legislated by the Department of Education and the Curriculum Education and Assessment Council. In addition we carry out NFER Progress Tests in English and Mathematics in term 3 of each year P3 to P7. All P4 to P7 pupils throughout Northern Ireland are involved in computerised based assessments.

These are statutory assessments taken in the autumn term. The assessments are used within the primary school for diagnostic purposes and to inform future planning.



"Our teachers are nice and we have lots of these days and special occasions like World Book Day and Odd Sock Day."
Faye, Primary 6

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR PROGRAMME



In Mercy Primary we are proud of the excellent behaviour of our pupils and frequently visitors to our school comment on the excellent behaviour and good manners of our girls.

We believe that bullying behaviour, whatever form it takes, is totally wrong. We take a positive approach to discipline and the pastoral care of our pupils. We believe in:

Praising and rewarding good behaviour

Developing and encouraging good behaviour throughout the school.

Our school's 'Positive Behaviour Policy' helps children to understand that discipline and positive behaviour provide a secure and happy atmosphere, where every member is respected and valued. Each class teacher aims to develop in every child, a sense of self-worth and encourages them to develop self-esteem and self-discipline.

We all follow our school Golden Rules to keep our school happy and safe.

Our golden rules are:

We are gentle

We listen

We are kind and helpful

We are honest

We work hard

We look after our property

- Each week our girls are rewarded for keeping our school rules by having "Golden Time".
- Each class has a golden time chart and we choose an activity to celebrate the end of the week.
- Our "Golden Time" also extends to our playground where the Golden Rules also apply.
- We have a special golden table in the lunch room and dinner hall to reward good behaviour.
- As a whole school reward system we collect golden stars tokens both in class and around the school.
- The winning class gets a special treat!
- Certificates are given out weekly and monthly for star pupils.

"The best way to make children good is to make them happy."

Oscar Wilde



PASTORAL CARE

Mercy Primary School is a community where all are valued and respected. Every person in our school is concerned about creating a caring, secure and happy environment, where every member feels valued, supported and happy. We work together to create a warm, friendly and secure atmosphere, where we promote good relationships between staff, children and parents. Through these positive relationships we encourage children to develop self-respect, self-discipline, tolerance and equality to ensure each individual feels cared for and valued. Within a Christian environment, we promote honesty, forgiveness, sharing, turn taking and good manners. We are so proud of the polite and courteous girls in Mercy Primary, who share a sense of responsibility and pride in their school.

We encourage children to develop an awareness of their own unique talents and abilities and to strive to reach their full potential, while respecting the uniqueness of every individual. We help children to think positively about themselves and we create opportunities for children to contribute to school life and the life of the wider community. Children are encouraged to develop a positive attitude to learning in a calm and inclusive school environment. We promote effective relationships between school and home and value collaboration with parents, guardians and family members.

In Mercy Primary we are concerned with the social and emotional needs of our pupils in addition to the development of their personal and academic goals. Unfortunately, there are times when children experience difficulties in their lives. We are here to support the children and their families during these difficult times, in a spirit of Christian love. We provide a confidential counselling service, facilitated by an external professional organisation, which is available to pupils, on the request of a parent.

The safety and welfare of every member of our school community remains of paramount importance to all.

Mrs Loughran, Principal, Ms Owens, Designated Teacher for Child Safeguarding and Mrs Millar, Deputy Teacher for Child Safeguarding, are always available to speak to children and parents if they have concerns.



“The quality of education in this school is very good.”
ETI 2015



“Mercy girls are respectful, kind and smart. We never give up!”
Ava, Primary 6

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Our school family values individual differences. All children are supported, throughout their time in Mercy, to ensure that they reach their full potential.

We encourage pupils to be resilient, happy and self-confident individuals, who develop social skills, communication skills and assertiveness, alongside academic achievement.

It is estimated that 1 in 5 pupils need extra support at some time in their school lives. In Mercy Primary we work in partnership with parents. We monitor pupil progress closely and develop suitable programmes and support to meet pupil needs. We provide additional learning support for children who may struggle with aspects of learning. This takes the form of small group sessions, where children can benefit from specialist teaching. The Special Needs Coordinator, works closely with class teachers, parents and external educational professionals to plan and access support for pupils.

As a school, we promote a caring and supportive learning environment, where we help the girls develop their full potential. As an inclusive school, we have disabled access externally and internally, with a lift to access the first floor of our school.



EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Mercy Primary School provides a number of enrichment opportunities for our pupils and offers an extensive range of extra-curricular activities that run after school hours. They are organised by staff and out-door agencies. Through these activities, we encourage and enable our pupils to learn new skills, meet new friends and develop their confidence. These are also an extension of the official curriculum.

Our comprehensive programme of activities meets the needs and interests of each individual. In addition to our wide range of clubs, we also organise visits, trips and workshops to support topics studied in class and which provide opportunity and inspiration for pupils to further develop their skills, knowledge and experience.

The wide range of extra-curricular activities offered at Mercy Primary School means that there is something for everyone and ensures girls can be busy after school.

Girls participate in pursuits which develop their talents, teach them new skills and test their initiative. These activities provide a good opportunity for younger girls to get to know each other.

Typically, the school has art music, science, sport and dance clubs, more formal groupings for public-speaking. Girls can also become members of the ICT Crew, where they learn to use programmes on the iPad and computer; in turn learning audio-visual, sound and lighting techniques to assist with school productions or they can join the Gardening Club and help tend the School's garden.

There are numerous opportunities for girls to participate in a variety of sports outside the curriculum, whether they wish to take part competitively or just for fun.

Mercy Primary School regularly competes against other schools in a range of sports including netball, cross country, swimming and Gaelic.

Non-competitive clubs are offered for all abilities and include dance, multi-sports and gymnastics. Girls in Primary 1 and 2 are also able to attend after school clubs in short tennis and mini-games.

The opportunity to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities is an integral part of a broad, balanced education. No matter where an individual's interests and talents lie, every girl is sure to find something in our extra-curricular programme that will enable her to develop existing interests and to discover completely new ones.

From the Choir and Brass Band to Dance and Drama, Mercy Primary offers a rich and varied programme which all girls are encouraged to participate in, enjoying invaluable experiences and gaining skills which will remain with them long after they have left school.



Educational Visits

Mercy Primary provides educational visits throughout all year groups to allow pupils to develop social and interpersonal skills in a range of different environments. Visits are planned to link with cross-curricular themes in each year group and so to extend the pupils understanding of their classwork in real life situations. We have a Year 7 residential trip each year which builds up team work and relationships.

Parental support

We have strong, established home-school links and parents are kept up to date on their child's progress with an annual parent interview, an open door policy and an end of year report.

Parents are also welcome to attend many events throughout the year including, the Christmas fair, class assemblies and parent activities.

We have a parent officer who arranges many parental activities such as cooking with your child, iPad training, planting bulbs with your child and 'bring your parent' to school day.

We also have a newly refurbished Parent's Room and a "Friends of Mercy" active parent group who are involved in fundraising and organising school events.

Community Links

Our school works with local businesses and organisations which include

Queens University Medics in Primary School, PAX

University of Ulster – Tutoring in schools

Allen and Overy – Time to Read Programme and Time to Compute.

We also have well established links with local nursery, primary and post primary schools.

Policy Documents

We have a wide range of policy documents available for parents on request from the office.

A copy of our Admissions Policy, Complaints Procedure, Child Protection and Positive Discipline Policies are available on request or to download from our school website.





“We have a Rainbow room and Calm Room which are great to visit!”
Carmen, Primary 6

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Happy and contented children

Ensuring a happy, healthy environment in which our children enjoy learning is central to our ethos. We develop positive relationships with the children so they feel happy to approach staff if they have concerns or problems. We teach that bullying is never acceptable behaviour. We are pleased that we have a whole school Barnardo's project named 'Pathways' where children are taught to develop positive relationships with others and where self-esteem and confidence is developed.

Healthy eating

We promote healthy eating, through healthy breaks and promoting healthy lunch boxes and children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day. A choice of healthy meals are cooked on the school premises and are served in the dining hall, while packed lunches are eaten in adjoining lunch room.

We have a strict nut free policy, in order to support children who may have an allergy.

We make the most of our wonderful outdoor surroundings and, weather permitting, play and explore outside.



SCHOOL UNIFORM CODE

Pupils enrolled in Mercy Primary School are required to wear the school uniform as listed below. This is available from Tiny Togs, Crumlin Rd. Tel: (028) 90 391114

We are proud of our uniform and expect children to wear it with pride and respect.

Girls are required to wear:

- Royal blue shirt
- Royal blue jumper school jumper
- School tie
- Navy / skirt or pinafore
- Navy socks or tights
- Black shoes
- Black plimsolls
- Navy or royal blue coat
- Navy/Royal Blue school coat
- Optional: Blue gingham summer dress for hotter weather.
- School Book Bag – Purchase at school office.

P.E Uniform

- White polo shirt
- Navy P.E. shorts or track bottoms
- Trainers for outdoors and plimsolls for indoor PE

For health and safety reasons we do not permit jewellery, nail polish or high heeled shoes. We recommend that long hair is tied back neatly.



OUR SCHOOL DAY

Children are welcome in school from 8.45am

8.55 am	Welcome and Prayer
9.05 am	Lessons begin
10.30 am – 10.45	Healthy Break
12.15 -12.55pm	Lunchtime
2.00 pm	School Finishes for P1 & 2 Mon – Fri. (P3 Thur & Fri)
3.00 pm	School Finishes for P4 – P7 Mon – Fri. (P3 Mon – Wed)

The whole school finishes on Friday at 2pm

There are a wide range of 'Afterschools Clubs' and Activities available daily between 2-4pm.

Breakfast Club

There is a breakfast club on from 8am each morning where children can come to school and have a warm nourishing breakfast prepared by our canteen staff.



Bus Route

Morning

North Queen Street

New Lodge Road

Cliftonville Road

Alliance Avenue

Afternoon

Ligoniel

Oldpark Road

Cliftonville Road

New Lodge Road

North Queen Street



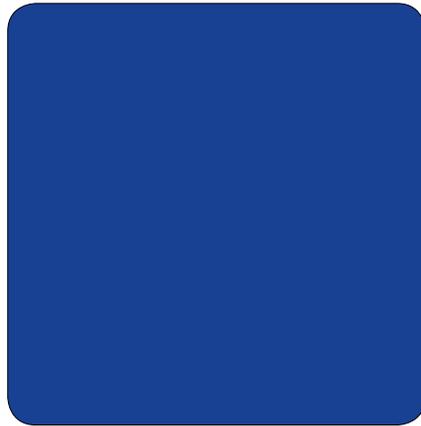
“Our grounds are brilliant for playing, exploring and taking part in our Forest Schools.”

Patti, Primary 6



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www.mercyprimary.org.uk



MERCY

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