

# 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

**LIVE, LEARN, GROW.**



# 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.”

Mercy Primary is an inclusive school. Collectively we encourage a warm and welcoming atmosphere, which we extend to our pupils, parents, extended family members, and all visitors to our school.

Mercy Primary promotes high levels of academic achievement. All pupils are given many opportunities and challenges to meet their full potential and are valued for their individual talents and abilities.



# THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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

We also follow a RSE programme called Flourish or the Wonder of My Being. RSE is essential for the development and long-term wellbeing of children and young people.

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

### 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.



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

## THE BIG PICTURE

### FOUNDATION STAGE

Our Foundation Stage provides a rich, nurturing and exciting educational environment underpinned by play-based learning. The children develop their personal, social and emotional skills. They grow in confidence and their self-esteem flourishes as they concentrate on activities and learning experiences which encourage curiosity, independence and creativity.

### KEY STAGE 1&2

Our KS1 children continue to build their skills through a range of formal and activity-based learning. Through our dynamic and rich curriculum our KS2 pupils become equipped with life skills enabling them to transition to post primary with ease and independence.

### OUTDOOR LEARNING

At Mercy we make full use of our outstanding natural environment. Through our Forest and Eco Schools programmes we frequently take our learning outdoors exploring our extensive grounds and outdoor classroom.

### INVESTING IN OUR CHILDREN

Our school believes in fulfilling every child's potential through a multi-sensory approach. We have heavily invested in online platforms such as Reading Eggs, Edshed, Times Table Rockstars, all with an aim to reinforce learning and develop independence.

We empower children's lifelong reading skills through championing the use of the Accelerated Reading programme. This approach extends beyond the classroom as we have strong links with our local Library and host a parent/staff book collection.

All staff are trained in teaching the Maths Mastery approach. This is an extensive and worldwide programme dedicated to the development of children's maths skills. Here at Mercy Primary, we believe that all children can succeed at Numeracy.

### NEWCOMER CHILDREN

We welcome and celebrate children of all faiths and cultures, in doing so, we strengthen our own beliefs and enrich our education and knowledge of the world.

### SHARED EDUCATION

We are proud to be part of the Shared Education Programme which fosters respect, tolerance and acceptance of each other.



"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 GL Progress Tests in English and Mathematics in term 3 of each year P3 - P7.

Assessments are used within the primary school for diagnostic purposes and to inform future planning.



“Our teachers are nice and we have lots of theme 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. Frequently visitors to our school comment on the respectful and kind learning behaviours.

The purpose of our Behaviour Policy is to promote a positive attitude towards behaviour in which the whole school community can develop a safe, secure and caring environment. We believe that children flourish best when their personal, social, spiritual and emotional needs are met through interaction with caring adults who show them respect and value their individual personalities.

Positive behaviour is promoted in each class, through relationships and connection with each other and clear boundaries.

We have 3 magic rules that apply everywhere in school:

## **Be safe, ready and respectful.**

- We acknowledge on-going classroom behaviour and efforts on a daily basis in small personal ways. A smile, well done or comment from staff. We continue to promote recognition, reinforcement and praise.
- We celebrate Pupil of the Week Certificates at assembly.
- Parental support is essential to enable children to do their best in school.

## **Sanctions**

Here at Mercy Primary, we adopt a restorative approach to behaviour and work with all our children, helping them make good choices. There will be times when children must follow sanctions because of inappropriate behaviour. We teach that all behaviour has consequences.

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

Our Anti-Bullying Policy follows legislation Addressing Bullying in Schools Act NI (2016). We work hard to ensure that every child can be free and safe from bullying. We celebrate Anti-Bullying week each year and teach Personal Development Mutual Understanding and Promoting Positive Thinking Skills through Barnardos Paths Programme.

“The best way to make children good is to make them happy.”

Oscar Wilde



# PASTORAL CARE

One of the great strengths in Mercy Primary is the level of pastoral care provided by all members of staff. We see our school as a family. We work with children and parents to promote good relationships and care.

## **Staff**

Our staff are easily identified by our school colours. We are available each morning to meet and greet our girls as they come to school. Our pupils receive the same care at the end of the day when they are handed over to family or travel on the bus with our supervisors. Our staff communicate regularly with families and value the relationships created here. We use a CPOMS system to record and respond to any concerns or needs that arise. This level of communication ensures pastoral supports are quickly identified and implemented in a caring and nurturing way.

## **Nurturing School**

We have a whole school nurturing approach. 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.

## **Counselling**

We provide a confidential counselling service, facilitated by an external professional organisation, which is available to pupils, on the request of a parent.

## **Art Therapy & Lego Therapy**

We provide opportunities for children to participate in Art therapy and Lego therapy.

## **Safeguarding**

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**

## SUPPORTING ALL LEARNERS

Our school family values individual differences. All children are supported, throughout their time in Mercy. As a school, we promote a caring and supportive learning environment, where we help all girls to develop and 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.

At times we may need to provide additional support for children; this might take the form of sensory breaks, small group support or additional specialist teaching.

The Learning Support Coordinators, work closely with class teachers, parents and external educational professionals who access, plan and provide support.

As an inclusive school, we have disabled access externally and internally, with a lift to access the first floor of our school.



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





# EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

## EXTENDED SCHOOLS

We provide an extensive array of experiences for our children. We offer Breakfast Club every morning and a range of afterschools clubs: Sports including Gymnastics, Multi-Sports, Mini-Games (P1).

Creativity is developed in Art Club, iPad Club, Homework Club, Stay and Play, Library Story Time Club, Lego Club. We are always improving and developing our range of extended school clubs.

## SUSTRANS

We are proud to be part of the Sustrans Programme. This provides our children with extensive knowledge of road safety, bike safety and how to keep safe while outdoors. We celebrate theme days like Ditch the Dark, Ditch the Stabilisers and Walk to School Week.

## GARDENING

Making the most of our beautiful grounds at Mercy, we have incorporated Gardening into our curriculum. The children love getting involved in maintaining and caring for our school garden. Our pupils love to cook their produce in our cookery club kitchen.

## BUDDY UP

Buddy up is a cross-community programme with Edenbrooke Primary School which develops friendship, understanding and instills mutual respect with and to our friends at Edenbrooke. Teachers and pupils work collaboratively to create fun and exciting activities.

## MUSIC

We are very proud of our music curriculum and being able to showcase our talents. Our girls are given the opportunity to take part in instrumental lessons and play brass and string instruments. Children can become part of our school choir and on occasions throughout the year take part in assemblies, concerts and festivals such as The Peace Proms.

## OUTSIDE AGENCIES

We have a range of outside agencies who work with us or visit our school to deliver bespoke programmes: Action Mental Health, CRIS, NSPCC, Sports Coaches, Music tutors and Business in Schools to name a few.



## 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 to extend the pupils understanding of their classwork in real life situations. We have a Year 7 residential trip each year which builds up teamwork and relationships.

## Parental Support

We have strong, established home-school links. We use Class-DoJo and a text messaging service to enable two-way communication with parents and staff. We have monthly newsletters and a vibrant school website to keep up to date with school events.

Parents are kept up to date on their child's progress with parent interviews, curriculum meeting and an end of year report.

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

We also have a dedicated Parent's Room in which we host a variety of parent workshops and parent and child events. We encourage parent volunteers who are involved in fundraising and organising school events.

## Community Links

Our school, works with community organisations including:

**The Community Hub**

**The North Belfast Foodbank**

**Ardoyne Library**

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

**Queen's University, Stranmillis University College and Ulster University.**

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 Behaviour Policies, Drugs Policy, Charges and Remissions are available on request or to download from our school website.







# 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 have invested a lot to ensure the happiness of our children. Children can avail of sensory walks, use our in class sensory boxes or have a session in our state of the art Cubbie. We teach Mindfulness Strategies in Schools to our pupils to improve concentration and focus.

## Healthy Eating

We promote healthy eating, through healthy breaks and promoting healthy lunch boxes. 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. Alternatively children can bring their own packed lunch.

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

## Daily Mile

Whenever possible our pupils partake in the daily mile; this not only boosts their physical fitness but also gives the pupils a chance to talk about their feelings, enjoy the fresh air and finish their mile with a general sense of well-being.



# 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 9039 1114 and Truly Fare Tel: 028 9023 6374

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
- 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. Sweatshirt with 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

8.55am	Welcome and Prayer
9.05am	Lessons begin
10.30am – 10.45	Healthy Break
12.00 -12.40pm	Lunchtime FS/KS1
12.10 - 12.50pm	Lunchtime KS2
2.00pm	School Finishes for P1 & 2 Mon – Fri.
2.15pm	School Finishes for P3
2.50pm	School Finishes for P4
2.55pm	School Finishes for P6 & P7

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 8.10am 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."

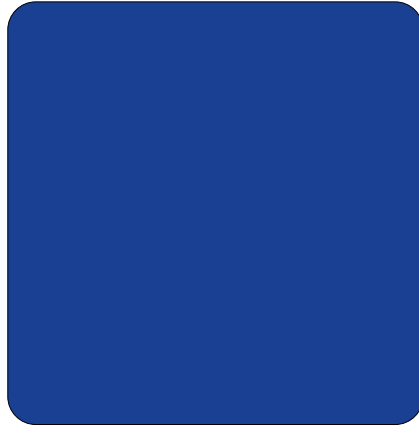
Patti, Primary 6





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[www.mercyprimary.org.uk](http://www.mercyprimary.org.uk)



# MERCY Primary School

612 Crumlin Road  
Belfast

County Antrim BT14 7GL

028 9039 1670

[eloughran657@mercy.belfast.ni.sch.uk](mailto:eloughran657@mercy.belfast.ni.sch.uk)

