



St Bernard's

Primary School & Nursery Unit





Mr. Kavanagh
Acting Principal

WELCOME

On behalf of the children, staff, governors and parents, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to St Bernard's Primary School and Nursery Unit.

We are a vibrant and welcoming school that is committed to providing high-quality, engaging learning for our pupils. We have a holistic approach to each child's development and we provide a child-centred, nurturing, inclusive learning environment to ensure that every child makes the best of their unique God given talents.

We have strong links within the local community and recognise that by building effective working relationships with each child's home, we can ensure that, together we are doing the best for every child.

Our staff are delighted that you have shown an interest in enrolling your child in our school and we hope that in choosing St Bernard's you will have many happy years watching your child fulfil their potential.

WHO We Are

We are a Catholic Maintained Co-Educational Primary School and Nursery Unit with an enrolment of 595 children from Year 1-7. Added to this we have a Nursery Unit of 52 children who attend in classes of 26, one morning session and one afternoon session.

We are a large school with many buildings and resources on the estate. Our accommodation comprises a separate Nursery and Year 1 building, the Clairvaux Building which houses Year 2 and 5 and the main school building itself. We have a total of 22 classrooms, a library, well-equipped gymnasium/ Assembly Hall, Medical Room,

Staffroom, Administrative Office, ICT Suite, SEN Room, Multi-purpose Sensory Rooms, Dining Hall and Nurture Room.

Our Nursery Unit which is in the school grounds has its own private entrance with many resources including an outdoor play area and a private playground. The Primary One classrooms are housed in a spacious building which facilitates the children's play-based learning. Year 1 and 2 have their own safe play areas and a recently resurfaced playground and outdoor play area is shared throughout the Foundation Stage.

Our school has full disability access and we are highly regarded within our local community for our high academic achievements, strong positive and pastoral care, our wide range of extra-curricular and extended school activities and our innovative and forward-thinking approach to teaching and learning.



OUR School Values

Children are at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to providing an inclusive, nurturing and safe environment that enables every child to dream, believe, achieve.

Dream We inspire our children to dream big and chase their passions

Believe We foster a culture of belief, empowering our children to reach their full potential

Achieve We provide the nurture our children need to achieve their goals



CATHOLIC Distinctiveness

St Bernard's has been serving the Catholic community of our Parish for over 50 years. In aiming for excellence, our children learn and grow in a happy, secure and nurturing environment with Christ at its centre.

As a Catholic School our overriding aims are to establish and foster Christian values and provide an effective education for all our pupils. Prayer is at the centre of school life. The spiritual development of our children comes through each individual's journey of faith, along with developing a sense of the importance of God's creation and a spirit of social responsibility through the Gospel values.



CURRICULUM

Our **skills-based** curriculum prioritises the development of essential competencies such as critical thinking, communication and collaboration. Integrating these skills seamlessly into subjects like Numeracy, Literacy, The World Around Us and The Arts emphasises **enquiry-based learning**.

Assessment methods focus on both subject knowledge and applied skills, fostering a holistic approach to education. **Differentiated teaching** accommodates diverse learning styles, while technology integration enhances digital literacy. Social and emotional learning components contribute to the children's well-being, and cross-curricular connections demonstrate the practical application of skills.

Teaching and learning **pedagogy** are continually renewed to enhance the educational experience for the children and meet their evolving needs. Our effective **assessment system** allows us to track progress and offer support and extra challenge where needed.







We know that children benefit in many ways when learning outside the classroom and we encourage this as much as possible in the everyday life of the school. Whether this is making use of our extensive grounds, a school trip or just learning in a different way in a different space, our dedicated teachers relish a chance to get outdoors.

There are many advantages of learning outdoors. Our children's physical health is enhanced by the encouragement of active play and exercise, a connection with nature is fostered that improves mental well-being and reduces stress and hands-on experiential learning is enhanced, making lessons more engaging and memorable. Outdoor learning stimulates creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork as children explore and interact with their environment. It cultivates a sense of responsibility and environmental awareness, instilling a lifelong appreciation for nature. Outdoor learning enriches the children's educational experience, contributing to their holistic development and creating a positive attitude towards learning.



INCLUSIVE Education



Every individual child possesses unique qualities and differences. Our curriculum is meticulously crafted to impart knowledge, foster understanding, build confidence, and instil resilience in every learner, equipping them for success in life. We collaborate closely with parents and caregivers to ensure that all children, regardless of any additional needs, develop the attitudes and skills necessary for effective learning.

Our highly skilled teachers

possess a versatile set of skills that they apply with flexibility to deliver exceptional quality teaching tailored to the individual needs of each child. In cases where additional support is required, personalised learning plans (PLPs) are implemented, and class teachers keep parents fully informed about the efforts being made to support both the child and the collaborative achievement of targets set.

Our dedicated Special Education Needs Coordinator



(SENCO) facilitates convenient contact, offers detailed advice on referrals, and ensures a prompt response to the specific needs of children and families, aiming to minimise barriers to learning and well-being. Continuous staff training enhances understanding of various conditions, including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and early childhood trauma, fostering a comprehensive approach to caring for children.

Our commitment extends to the personal development, well-being, and academic success of each child. We cultivate a positive climate of interactions among peers, teachers, and support

staff, tailoring interventions and personal strategies accordingly.

Central to our school's ethos is the belief that everyone should feel safe, happy, and cared for. Our dedicated pastoral team provides unwavering support to children and families throughout their time with us. We prioritise mental health awareness and confidence-building through our Inner Wings curriculum.

Collaborations with external agencies allow us to access additional support whenever needed, ensuring a holistic approach to the welfare of our school community.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION and Sport

At St Bernard's, fostering a lifelong passion for physical activity and sports is a core aspect of our educational philosophy. We aim to instil in children the values of a healthy and active lifestyle, equipping them not only to participate in various sports but also to thrive in external competitions.

Our children engage in a diverse range of sports, including Gaelic, soccer, CrossFit, yoga and handball, often receiving coaching from external clubs or professional sports instructors. Actively participating in inter-school competitions is a highlight, where our emphasis is not only on achieving success but also on the invaluable experience of teamwork.

We believe that through exposure to various sports and collaborative efforts, our students not only develop physical skills but also essential life skills such as teamwork, discipline, and resilience. St Bernard's is committed to nurturing well-rounded individuals who carry their love for sports into the broader world beyond our school walls.

MUSIC

Music holds a prominent position within our school, not only showcased through the exceptional music education within classrooms but also through the diverse array of musical events and opportunities that students actively participate in throughout the academic year. Our commitment to fostering musical talent extends beyond traditional classroom settings, offering extensive extra-curricular

activities. These activities serve as platforms for students to enrich their musical knowledge and gain invaluable experiences.

Our school provides a variety of instruments for students to master, including violin, harp, tin whistle and guitar. The vibrant sounds of our large choir resonate at all major events. The children enjoy numerous opportunities to

showcase their musical prowess, whether through the annual school production, the St. Patrick's Day concert, or the festive Christmas plays.

These events not only celebrate the musical achievements of our children but also contribute to the vibrant and creative tapestry of our school community.



PERSONAL Development

At St Bernard's, our children are presented with numerous opportunities to assume supportive roles. Each year, Digital Leaders, Eco Monitors, School Councillors and House Captains are elected through a democratic process, ensuring that the student voice remains central to our initiatives. These pivotal roles involve regular meetings where children actively engage in discussions, providing feedback on their responsibilities and creating ways to enhance their impact.

One eagerly anticipated aspect of student involvement occurs in Primary 7, where pupils have the chance to become a "buddy" to younger children. In this role, they enthusiastically participate in activities such as reading stories, assisting during lunchtimes, and serving as a warm and welcoming presence for their younger peers. This commitment to fostering a sense of community and mentorship reflects the school's dedication to nurturing well-rounded individuals who contribute positively to the school environment.



Digital Leaders



Eco Team



School Councillors



House Captains

Our NURTURE Approach

St Bernard's places pupil well-being as the focal point of all learning, equipping children with the essential skills, attributes, attitudes, and resilience for successful and positive societal engagement.

To promote mental health, we integrate the "Take 5" steps to well-being into our ethos, emphasising Connection, Physical activity, Taking Notice, Continuous learning and Giving Back. This holistic perspective permeates every aspect of our educational environment. The Grow In Love religion program offers a vibrant and enjoyable platform for children to explore faith both at home and in school.

Our commitment to recognising achievements is evident in monthly award celebration assemblies, highlighting successes in line with our values. Our nine Bernard's Goals of respect, diligence, honesty, forgiveness, patience, responsibility, friendship, caring and courtesy, serve as guiding principles shaping our children's thinking and behaviour.

Together, these elements create a nurturing and empowering educational environment at St Bernard's.



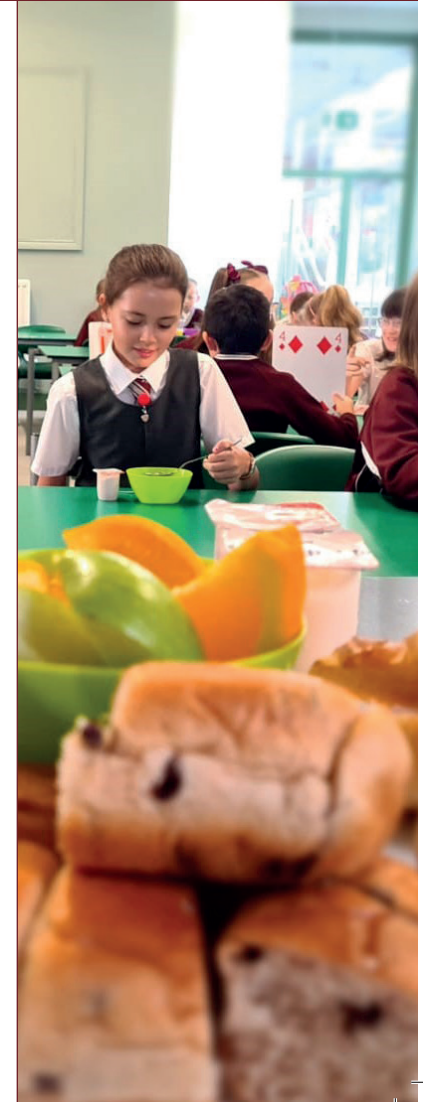
Wrap Around Care

Start the day right with our Breakfast Club, available every day from 7:45-9am. It's not just a meal, it's a supportive environment that kickstarts the day positively. From nourishing breakfast options to a supervised and engaging atmosphere, our Breakfast Club offers a valuable extension of our commitment to the well-being and security of every child in our care.

We take pride in being the hub for four exceptional after-school care providers, each offering unique opportunities for our children:

1. **Sleepy Hollow** - Contact them at 028 90693419 or info@sleepyhollowgroup.com for a comprehensive after-school experience.
2. **ActivityNI** - Join in daily from 2-4pm for a variety of engaging activities. Stay in the loop with notifications about the exciting offerings at the beginning of each term.
3. **Judo Academy NI** - Experience the discipline and skill of Judo every Thursday from 2-4pm.
4. **Rising Stars Soccer** - Take part in soccer fun every Wednesday from 3-4pm and Friday from 2-4pm.

These opportunities will ensure that your child will continue to thrive in a well-rounded and supportive educational environment.





WORKING with Parents

At St Bernard's we acknowledge the pivotal role parents play as the primary educators of their children, and our priority is to collaborate closely with you, throughout your child's educational journey with us. We take immense pride in the invaluable support parents provide, whether it be accompanying us on educational excursions, participating in class assemblies, or attending school performances.

At St Bernard's, the bond between home and school is strengthened by the dedicated involvement of our Parent Teacher Association (PTA), known as Friends of St Bernard's. This dynamic group significantly enhances the school community through a myriad of engaging events, fostering a sense of togetherness. Moreover, the PTA actively raises funds to further enhance the educational experience for our children, exemplifying a collective dedication to enriching the young lives entrusted in our care.



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