

St Mary's Newsletter September 2024



At St Mary's RC Primary School and Polbeth Nursery we aim to create an inclusive learning community where we are Building for Success

We aim to provide high quality education that meets the needs of all learners, based on Gospel values, enabling them to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and able to make an effective contribution to society, now and in the future.

Our values are focused on:
Trust & Honesty, Respect, Friendship, Safety & Perseverance.



In St Mary's RC Primary School and Polbeth Nursery, our aims are building blocks towards our vision, 'Building for Success':

Our Aims:

Successful Learners

To provide the highest quality learning and teaching experiences which meet the needs of all learners in an inclusive, safe and nurturing environment.

Confident Individuals

To encourage success, promoting confidence, independence and creativity in our learners to build resilience and develop a growth mind-set.

Effective Contributors

To equip every pupil with skills for life by investing in them as individuals by creating a foundation to build skills for learning in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing.

Responsible Citizens

To build and maintain effective partnerships between the school, the home, the parish, partner agencies and the wider community.

1 - School Vision Values and Aims

Diary Dates

Wednesday 11th September - 5.30pm Primary 5 Parents School Camp Information Session - (Primary 5 Classroom for 30 mins)

Wednesday 11th September - Meet the Teacher 6-7pm (school hall then visit classrooms)

Friday 13th September - School Holiday

Monday 16th September - School Holiday

Tuesday 17th September - School Holiday

Wednesday 18th September - Thursday 19th September - P5 School Camp

Friday 27th September - Big Family Breakfast (free breakfast for all families 8.15am) followed by Sharing Our Learning in classrooms (Head Teacher/Partners Input for parents at 9am with class visits from 9.15-10am)

School Improvement - How did we do last session? What are our priorities for this session?

Opportunities for personal achievement

Interdisciplinary Learning

Ethos and life of the school as a community

Curriculum areas and subjects

The Curriculum
'the totality of all that is planned for children and young people throughout their education'
#buildingforsuccess

Every year, we produce a Standards and Quality report, which provides an evaluation of the work we have carried out in the session just ended and a summary of the developments that we have planned for the year ahead.

See the information leaflet below.



Standards & Quality Summary for Parents 2023/24

Every year we produce a Standards and Quality report, which provides an evaluation of the work we have carried out in the session just ended and a summary of the developments that we have planned for the year ahead. You will find a copy of the full report on the school website if you would like more details of how we intend to achieve our aims. At St Mary's RC Primary School and Daughters Nursery we aim to create an inclusive learning community where we are **#Building for Success**

How did we do last year?
2023/24 we:

- ✓ Had a very successful authority led validated self-evaluation exercise which highlighted the range of positives that were being developed across our school. Our Partnership working was rated as a very good strength.
- ✓ UNCRC – Silver Rights Respecting School Award received
- ✓ Appointed Literacy and Numeracy leads who have led a range of professional learning opportunities for staff, including PM Writing, 'Bump it Up', Higher Order Thinking Skills, Reciprocal Reading, PM (P) and Maths No Problem. This is building consistency of practice and staff confidence throughout the school
- ✓ Core Reading Accreditation achieved
- ✓ P1-3 developed consistency of practice and pedagogy through Read Write Inc.
- ✓ Maths programme has a daily focus on the application of transferable skills such as problem solving and working with peers.
- ✓ School garden area created, promoting sustainable education.
- ✓ Family Link Worker continued in post, supporting many individuals and families.
- ✓ 98.7% of learners in Primaries 5-7 reported that they had a trusted adult they could talk to if upset or worried.
- ✓ 97.55% of learners reported that they felt safe in school.
- ✓ 83.13% of parents reported that the school deals well with bullying, (this is above the WL average of 74.62%).

In 2024/25 we will:

- ✓ Build links with St Margaret's Academy as we are now part of this cluster.
- ✓ To embed consistent approaches in literacy and numeracy and how they can be used to extend skills to raise attainment.
- ✓ To explore our approaches to developing skills in listening and talking to ensure progression
- ✓ To participate in staff professional learning in 'Building Thinking Classrooms' and introduce and evaluate suggested pedagogical approaches.
- ✓ Ensure all classes participate in regular, high quality, outdoor learning opportunities.
- ✓ continue to develop as a community of faith and provide opportunities for children to participate in and lead Masses and liturgical events.
- ✓ Reduce the cost of the school day.
- ✓ Work with partners to provide services that are of benefit to our families.
- ✓ Revisit our positive relationships blueprint to build consistency of practice amongst staff.
- ✓ Further develop our school garden and promote sustainable world goals.
- ✓ Aim for UNCRC gold award and aim for Silver Reading award.

1.3 Leadership of Change	Very Good
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Very Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Very Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good



P5-7 Achieved John Muir Award



Parent Timeline



Shannon has created a 'parent timeline'. The aim is for this to be an interactive, continuous working document throughout the year for parents/carers to access information on things that are happening in St. Mary's, i.e. any events that are going on, anything that may occur costs, and anything Parents are welcome to attend. Please Click on the Link below to check it out.

[Parent Timeline](#)

Meet the Teacher 2024



A reminder that we are holding a 'Meet the Teacher' event on Wednesday 11th September at 6pm. All parents/carers are invited along to meet the teaching staff team and also to see your child's classroom for this session.

Primary 5 Residential Experience

Mr Elliott will hold an information session with parents/carers of Primary 5 children who are intending to participate in the upcoming residential experience on Wednesday 11th September at 5.30pm (prior to the Meet the Teacher event that evening) and this will allow for any questions.

Sacramental Preparation



Our Sacramental Preparation programme for 2024/25 will begin shortly.

*The Rite of Enrolment for all candidates to Sacraments of Christian initiation (Reconciliation, Holy Communion, Confirmation) will be on **Sunday 27th of October 2024** at 11am Sunday Mass.*

*Enrolment Forms should now be completed by parents online via the Parish website at the following link:
<https://www.westcaldercatholicchurch.org/enrolments.html>*

These should be completed prior to the Enrolment Mass to ensure Father is aware of all children making each of the Sacraments.

Dates for Sacraments are as follows:

First Reconciliation – 8th March 2025 after Saturday vigil Mass

First Holy Communion – Sunday 25th May 2025

Confirmation – 11th June 2025 at 7pm (Our Lady & St. Bridget's, West Calder)

Whole School Masses for 2024/25

We are delighted to welcome families and parishioners into school to celebrate School Masses this session. We look forward to seeing many of you there. Please see important dates of Masses below and details of which classes are leading them:

St. Mary's Primary School Masses 2024-25

11 th October 2024	First Friday Mass	Primary 7
1 st November 2024	All Saints Day	Primary 6M
6 th December 2024	First Friday/Advent Mass	Primary 6R
7 th February 2025	First Friday Mass	Primary 5
5 th March 2025	Ash Wednesday	Primary 6M
2 nd May 2025	First Friday Mass	Primary 4
29 th May 2025	Feast of the Ascension	Primary 6R
25 th June 2025	Leavers' Mass (<i>in Church</i>)	Primary 7

Sharing Shelves

Our children will be setting up St. Mary's new Sharing Shelves. Realising the impact hunger can have on learning and family life, we have set up our shelves for people to take or to donate food and hygiene essentials. Whether you're struggling or just caught short some days. Please come and take what you need. No judgement and no cost. Non-perishable items are recommended such as tins/pasta/rice/cereals. This will be inside the main entrance.

We also have Hallowe'en on the horizon so if anyone has any costumes that no longer fit, please can these be handed into Shannon and we can put a rail out so that they can be reused.

Attendance Matters - Supporting Parents/Carers



Please take a few moments to watch the video on attendance and its importance using the link below.

Attendance Matters

Here is a resource containing links and information to support you with issues which may be impacting on your child's attendance. The negative impact of late coming and regularly missing school is well known and we wish to avoid this. Children are much more settled when they join their class lines in the morning as coming in late can be very upsetting for them and can often lead to gaps in learning if happening on a regular basis.

Parent Supports

Shannon, our Family Link Worker can work with families to support attendance. Please do not hesitate to contact Shannon for advice and support.

Nut Allergies in School



2 - Please be aware of the advice regarding nut products in schools.

Family and young people advice

Advice on current grants available

Benefit Advice

Disability applications

Help to appeal decisions

The cost of the school day

Families and Young People's Advice Service

Now in **YOUR School**

For more information call **01506 283 000** option 4
Email **FYPAS@westlothian.gov.uk**
or speak to your school

 West Lothian Council

Some of the things we can provide advice or support on:

Advice on which benefits you may be entitled to and support to claim them if required.



Information provided on any grants available, referrals and support to claim can also be provided.



Help with claiming support for the cost of the school day – Free School Meals, School Clothing Grants, School Clothing Bank referrals, EMA's (Education Maintenance Allowance).



Support to challenge unfair decisions and provide assistance to lodge an appeal.



Help to apply for disability benefits.



If you are struggling with your Money, Benefits or Debt, Housing or Energy, Give us a call on **01506 283 000** option 4.

Communication Strategy St. Mary's Polbeth

School email or telephone	<p>If parents/carers have information to pass on e.g. change of contact information, questions to ask, comments to make or concerns to raise please email the school/nursery stating which member of staff you would like to contact you and why. We will be in touch ASAP. You can of course call the school but this will allow the opportunity to gather information you need before responding to you.</p> <p>If parents/carers need to inform school of changes to pick up arrangements at end of day please phone the school office.</p>	<p>School – 01506 280170 wlstmaryspol-ps@westlothian.org.uk</p>
School App	<p>All teachers have access to our school app and we will share notifications from this regularly. Community and parish notifications may also be sent via this app. There will be whole school news, events and information. There will also be individual class/ after school club updates and reminders. Please download onto your phone and filter as appropriate.</p> <p>THIS WILL BE THE BEST WAY TO KEEP UPTODATE WITH SCHOOL NEWS AND EVENTS AS WELL AS SHORT NOTIVE ALERTS.</p>	<p>To download our app search 'school app for parents' in the Apple or Google Play app stores on your device. Once you have opened the app search for 'St. Mary's Primary Polbeth'. Username: stmps Password: 1967</p>
Groupcall	<p>This service will be used if the school has very important information that must be shared ASAP. It can be in the form of a text or email format. Sometimes groupcall messages will come from the school and sometimes from the central team at the Civic Centre. This is the service the school will use to contact you if your child is absent from school without notifying us.</p>	<p>Please make sure the contact details we have for you are up-to-date at all times. Groupcall emails may go to your junk folder, please select move to inbox to ensure you receive all future emails.</p>
Seesaw for P1-3	<p>This is for pupils to use in class and access home learning tasks. Achievements will be shared on this and pupils are welcome to share their achievements from home on here too!</p> <p>This will not be used as direct communication between parent/carer and class teacher – please use one of the methods above.</p>	<p>Your child has their own login details. If they forget or lose them they can ask their teacher for another copy or a request can be made by parents via the school office email.</p>
TEAMS for P4-7	<p>This is for pupils only. Pupils are asked not to share their passwords. This platform is for learning and teaching in school and accessing home learning tasks.</p> <p>This will not be used as direct communication between parent/carer and class teacher – please use one of the methods above.</p>	<p>Your child has their own login details. If they forget or lose them they can ask their teacher to reset or a request can be made by parents via the school office email.</p>
Twitter	<p>This is used by the school to share. Follow us on twitter to see a snapshot of learning activities, class achievements and links to our blog.</p>	<p>Our twitter handle: @stmaryspolbeth</p>
Parent Consultations	<p>These are held twice a year (November and March). They are returning to face to face and held in school.</p>	<p>Details of how to book will be shared nearer consultations</p>
Parent Council	<p>The Parent Council contribute hugely to the school community. They aim to represent views of the parent body while offering practical support. They organise annual events such as the Christmas Fayre and Bunny bingo and use funds to support a variety of school initiatives. Please get in touch with the Parent Council/ School if you wish to join.</p>	<p>Parent council chair: christopherjohnferguson@gmail.com</p>
Newsletters	<p>Regular Newsletters are shared by the Head Teacher and contain the latest updates on class and whole school events.</p>	<p>Shared via email – please ensure your email details are up-to-date</p>
Blog	<p>Each class posts weekly on the school blog and this is a great snapshot of class and whole school events.</p>	<p>Blog: https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/wlstmaryspolbeth/^[1]</p>
Termly Sways	<p>These are shared by School and Nursery to keep you up-to-date with your child's learning and class/nursery events.</p>	<p>Shared via email – please ensure your email details are up-to-date</p>
Sharing our Learning	<p>Sharing our Learning events are held termly and details of these can be found on the app, newsletters and annual calendar.</p>	
Website	<p>This contains a variety of information regarding the school and nursery and links to the blog, twitter, school handbook and contact information.</p>	<p>https://stmarysprimarypolbeth.westlothian.org.uk/^[3]</p>

3 - [1] <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/wlstmaryspolbeth/> [2] <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/wlstmaryspolbeth/> [3] <https://stmarysprimarypolbeth.westlothian.org.uk/> [4] <https://stmarysprimarypolbeth.westlothian.org.uk/>

Coffee Mornings with Shannon	Shannon has an open door policy to any and all parents/carers who wish to pop in for a chat, find out more about the school events or share time with other adults.	
ASN Support Group	Our ASD parents group is returning and welcoming all parents/carers from Nursery, Mainstream and the ASD Resource to come along and discover supports available, find out more about curriculum/events and share experiences with others in a similar position.	Updates will be found on the app, school twitter, nursery Facebook and newsletters.
Digital Profiles	All children have their own digital profile. Links are sent out to parents so that it can be used to highlight strengths in learning and any achievements (within or out with school)	Links shared by email. Please contact the school office if you cannot access your child's profile.

A reminder that if wishing to speak to your child's teacher or a member of the management team, please make an appointment at the school office rather than e.g. when lines are being dismissed or coming in first thing to the office as these are very busy times and we want to make sure we can give you our full attention. We endeavor to uphold appointment requests or respond to any complaints within 5 working days.

Notifications

Breakfast Club

A reminder that pupils can have breakfast at the start of the school day in the dining hall between 8.15am and 8.45am. Children who attend will be directed to their lines for the start of the school day. Please do not drop your child off before 8.15am.

Uniform

All children are expected to wear school uniform.

A royal blue sweatshirt with the school badge and a white polo shirt with grey trousers/skirt/dress.

A white shirt and school tie with a royal blue jersey or cardigan and grey trousers/skirt/dress. Pupils should not wear jeans, football tops or fashion bottoms e.g. tracksuit trousers with stripes of more than one colour.

For PE days, a white T-Shirt or Polo Shirt with grey/royal blue bottoms. Ideally, if they can dress in the appropriate gym clothing on allocated days so that they can just remove a school jumper to ensure that they get maximum learning time.

School uniform may be ordered online via - [Border Embroideries](#)

Alternatively, buy from a clothing store of your choice and jumpers/T-Shirts can be taken locally to [Topstitch Embroidery](#) for the school badge to be embroidered on.

We have a stock of school ties available from the school office priced at £4.

Shannon (our Family Link Worker) is available to support families with school uniforms. We have a large bank of nearly new uniforms available and Shannon can also seek assistance from the School Clothing Bank for those needing support with this.

Please follow the link below for more information.

[School Clothing Grants & Free School Meals](#)

Playground

A reminder to encourage pupils to walk with their scooters and bikes when inside the school grounds to keep everyone safe, especially at the end of the school day.

Dogs are not allowed in the school grounds, both for the nursery and primary.

Medication

Wee reminder that all medication must be signed in via the school office. Pupils should not be bringing medication in their school bag and no medication can be administered without the relevant forms.

Pupil Absence

*If your child is absent from school, please contact the school as early as possible, **before 9.00am** on the first day of absence.*

When a pupil has been recorded as absent, and no prior notification has been given of the absence by the parent/carer, the school shall attempt to contact the parent/carer, using the Group Call system. Parents/carers are responsible for providing and updating emergency contact information for use by the Group Call system. Parents/carers are responsible for responding promptly to contact from the school if contacted via group call.

Car Park Safety

Please do not drop off/pick up your child from the school car park. We have a taxi drop off area for identified pupils and this area can become congested and we want to prevent any potential accidents. As far as it is safe to do so, children and parents/carers are encouraged to travel to school on foot, bike, scooter or park and stride. No child should be walking through the school car park. I'm sure you'll all agree that the safety of our children is paramount.

Family Prayer



Dear God, we lift up our children to you. Please protect them and keep them safe from harm. May they grow in wisdom and understanding, and may they always turn to you for guidance. Please give them strength when they face challenges, and help them to have the courage to stand up for what is right.

Amen

Thank you all for your continued support.
Head Teacher

Helen Pritchard,
#building for success