



Welcome to  
**St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School**



December 2024

# Information at a Glance

## School Address

St. Joseph's R.C. Primary, Lewis Street  
Stranraer, DG9 7AR

Tel. 01776 703460

Email address:

[gw08officestjosephsr@ea.dumgal.sch.uk](mailto:gw08officestjosephsr@ea.dumgal.sch.uk)

Parent Council Chairperson Ms Donna Westbrook

Parent Council email

[stjosephsparentcouncil@mail.com](mailto:stjosephsparentcouncil@mail.com)

Head Teacher Mandy Whorlow

School Roll 29

Denomination Status Catholic Faith

Status of Gaelic Not Taught

## School Staff:

### Teaching Staff

Principal Teacher/

P5 - 7 Teacher

Miss Lisi

P1 – 4 Teacher

Miss Scott

P1 – 7 Teacher

Mrs Mann (Monday)

P5 - 7 Teacher

Mrs Copeland

(Alternate Tuesdays)

Additional Support for  
Learning Teacher

Mrs Smith

### Auxiliary Staff

Senior Clerical Assistant

Mrs Dougan

Learning Assistant

Mrs McGhie

Mrs Henry

Clerical Officer

Mrs Dougan

If you would like some help understanding this or need it in another format please contact 030 33 33 3000.

Catering Assistant

Mrs Jones

Janitor/Facilities

Mr McGuigan

Cleaners

Miss Byers

Miss Graham

Crossing Patrol

Mr Nesbitt

Parish Priest

Father Ben Lodge

## The School Day

Start time

9.15am

Morning Interval

10.45 – 11.00am

Lunch

12.30 – 1.15pm

Close

3.15pm

School term dates can be found at:

[www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15239/School-term-and-holiday-dates](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15239/School-term-and-holiday-dates)

## Communicating with home

We aim for parents to have a good understanding of what their children are learning at school.

We share school learning experiences via our [school blog](#). Weekly newsletters and monthly calendars are shared along with termly curricular overview sheets detailing the planned learning in class. Our Parent Council also has a closed Facebook page for further communication. Paper copies of communication are available for parents on request.

We offer three learning conversations throughout the course of the school year. This allows learning targets to be set and reviewed for individual pupils through discussions with pupils, parents and teachers.



## Welcome from the Head Teacher

Dear Parent / Carer

Welcome to our school.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with key information you will need as your child starts attending our school. If you have any queries about the content of the handbook, or any questions that the handbook does not answer, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

It is our professional aim to provide a high-quality education for all children. We are all proud of our achievements, attainment and participation of pupils. We aim to offer opportunities for children to enhance their Broad General Education.

You have a significant part to play in supporting your child's education and, through working in partnership with us, we can help ensure we do the very best for your children. We look forward to working with you and welcoming you all to St. Joseph's R.C. Primary.

**Mandy Whorlow**  
Partnership Head Teacher

**For more links and detailed information about how we support parents and work with our schools, please see our [Authority Handbook](#). This also includes a page for financial support for Children and Families.**

## School Aims, Values and Ethos

The West Rhins Partnership is committed to preparing pupils for an ever-changing world. We ensure we deliver excellent and inspiring experiences that equip children with the skills for life, learning and work.

At St. Joseph's, we aim to develop ambition and aspiration in our pupils so that they strive to reach their potential. We want to empower them with the knowledge, skills, values and attributes to shape a sustainable future as a successful learner, confident individual, effective contributor and responsible global citizen.

Underpinned by the UNCRC, as a Rights Respecting School, we aspire towards achieving an inclusive and nurturing ethos which celebrates diversity, faith and difference; where everyone feels valued and is given the same opportunities to succeed.



Our school is at the heart of our community with Christian values being the cornerstone of our ethos. We are supported by numerous organisations and individuals within the village and our local area. This enables us to offer rich experiences for our children and develop their skills in the four capacities for Curriculum for Excellence: Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Effective Contributors and Responsible Citizens. Our parents play a crucial role in the education of their children. Our home-school partnership is a vital element in helping us support children to reach their full potential.

We have a close relationship with our Catholic Church and we actively promote the values and beliefs of our faith. Our Vision, Values and Aims have been created in 2024 in consultation with our pupils, families and staff.

## Contact Us

The school welcomes suggestions and enquiries from parents and carers.

### If you need to find out something

We can be contacted by e-mail, telephone, group call text messages or face to face. Where it is not possible to resolve enquiries straight away, we will make arrangements to follow up as necessary with the most appropriate member of staff.

### Comments, Complaints and Compliments

A comment might be some brief feedback about how we have handled a situation or delivered a service. It is best to pass a comment straight to the school so that we can take any necessary action.

If you are not happy with the response you receive or a decision that has been made, you can 'Ask us to Look Again'. You can do this by contacting [ParentalInvolvement@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:ParentalInvolvement@dumgal.gov.uk). At this point an Officer will contact you, discuss the issue and direct your enquiry as appropriate.

Remember you can also access Dumfries & Galloway Have Your Say at [www.dumgal.gov.uk](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk)

If you remain dissatisfied, the Education and Learning Directorate operate within the complaints handling procedures for Dumfries and Galloway Council. Information on this can be found at [www.dumgal.gov.uk](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk)

## How the School Works

### Class Organisation

For organisational purposes, schools are structured into classes. Each year it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to organise the class structure.

For more information, on School class sizes and grouping please visit [www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/16646/School-class-sizes-and-groupings](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/16646/School-class-sizes-and-groupings)

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St. Joseph's is a small school with pupils organised in two classes, P1 – 4 and P5 - 7. We have a committed staff team who all work together to create a warm and secure learning environment to meet the needs of all our children.

For more information please see the [Education Authority Handbook](#)

### Positive Behaviour and Celebrating Success

The school expects that pupils will conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to maintaining high standards of behaviour. This is equally important in all areas of our school and on excursions outside of school. We hope that parents take an active role in ensuring that their children are well behaved and will help us support and endorse school policy in a positive manner in discussion with their children.

At St. Joseph's there are many different mechanisms in place for us to celebrate the success of pupils – both school based and for wider achievement.

We display achievements on our "proud wall". This may include learning in class, hobbies, and successes. These are all linked to meta-skills development for learning, life and work.

Our "Press Wall" we display any newspaper cuttings which are shared in the wider community, reflecting achievements of pupils at school. We also celebrate our values and success at weekly assemblies.

At the end of term celebration and achievement ceremony in June we formally recognise achievement throughout the session, across the curriculum and in wider achievement.

All of the above are tracked and recorded for each pupil. This serves as a record of achievements throughout their time at St. Joseph's Primary.

For more information please see of the [Education Authority Handbook](#)

## School uniform

All Dumfries and Galloway schools have a dress code which encourages pupils to dress in a way appropriate to attendance at school. For more information on School Uniform, Dress Code, and School Clothing Grants visit [www.dumgal.gov.uk](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk)

Uniform is worn by all pupils and is positively encouraged. It helps foster a feeling of community and is a practical and cost-effective way of equipping pupils with suitable clothing for school.

St. Joseph's Primary School Uniform is a maroon sweatshirt and a white polo shirt and either grey or black trousers, skirt or shorts. No football tops are allowed. Uniform can be ordered directly from WBS (a local supplier).

For PE we ask that the children bring a change of kit including t-shirt and shorts. For outdoor P.E., we ask that children come suitably prepared with appropriate clothing.

We would ask that parents put names on all items of school clothing to allow for misplaced items to be reclaimed.

## Financial Support for Children and Families

### Grants and Bursaries

#### Scottish Child Payment

Scottish Child Payment helps towards the costs of supporting your family. It's a weekly payment of £25 that you can get for every child you look after who's under 16 years of age. You'll get the payment every 4 weeks if your application is successful.

Further information and an application can be made at: [mygov.scot](https://mygov.scot) website or call us on 0800 182 2222.

#### Best Start Grant

Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods are payments that help towards the costs of being pregnant or looking after a child. Best Start Grant is made up of 3 one-off payments:

- Pregnancy and Baby Payment
- Early Learning Payment
- School Age Payment

Best Start Foods is a prepaid card that can be used in shops or online to buy healthy foods like milk or fruit. The payments you can get now will depend on:

- how far along in your pregnancy you are
- how old your child is

Further information and an application can be made at: [mygov.scot](https://mygov.scot) website

#### Clothing Grant

The award of clothing grants is to assist with the cost of school clothing for families who are on a qualifying benefit or on low income. The current award is presently £134 per primary school child and £150 per secondary school child.

Further information and an application can be made at: Free school meals and associated payments - Dumfries and Galloway Council ([dumgal.gov.uk](https://dumgal.gov.uk))

Education and Learning Directorate are committed to supporting families through their Anti-Poverty Strategy – details of which can be found at [www.dumgal.gov.uk/poverty](https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/poverty) Schools should also make parents aware of the School Uniform Bank Project. Donation and Collection information can be found at the above link.

**For more information on financial support please visit the Authority Handbook (pages 8,10 and 34)**

### School Meals

The Naturally D&G local provenance for a sustainable future ensures that meals are freshly prepared with seasonal ingredients and are free from undesirable additives.

Detailed information on school meals is available at [www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmenus](https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmenus)

#### Free School Meals

Free school meals are provided for all pupils in Primary 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Confirmation of when this will be rolled out to Primary 6 and Primary 7 from the Scottish Government has yet to be confirmed.

In Nursery, eligible children can receive up to 1140 hours a year of Early Learning and Childcare. As part of this funded offer, the child will be entitled to one free meal and a snack each day.

Online pre-ordering of school meals is currently being rolled out to all secondary schools, information will be supplied by your school.

Free school meals can lead to a large saving in each year, nursery and primary school pupils can save £361 and secondary school pupils can save £370. You'll also be helping your child's school if you qualify for free school meals. Some Scottish Government funding provided directly to schools is linked to the number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

For more information visit [www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmeals](https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmeals)

#### Special Dietary Requirements

Facilities Services – Catering provide special dietary requirements for food allergy and intolerances; medically prescribed diets; or diets for religious or cultural reasons specific meals for children of different ethnic origin. Simply ask the school for a Special Diet Request Forms to allow us to inform the catering team who will discuss your child's requirements in full. For more information contact [DGschoolmeals@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:DGschoolmeals@dumgal.gov.uk) or the Solutions Centre on 01387 271 112 or [solutionscentre@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:solutionscentre@dumgal.gov.uk) to access the Legislation & Nutrition Officer.

**All Children with allergens should register with the catering team as soon as they are aware that their child has an allergen or intolerance to food.**

#### Scottish Child Payment and Bridging Payments

The Scottish Government's Scottish Child Payment helps towards the costs of supporting your family and, as of 14 November 2022, applications are now open for all children under the age of 16. The weekly value of this award will also increase to £25 as of this point.

## School Transport

Free school transport is available for some school children attending primary or secondary school if they live within the school catchment area and if they meet certain criteria. For more information and guidance visit <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15245/Free-school-transport>

## Free Travel for 5 - 22 year olds

From 31 January 2022 all children and young people aged 5-22 will be entitled to free bus travel in Scotland. You can apply for free travel online from today at [www.getyournec.scot](http://www.getyournec.scot) (This cannot be done through your school)

For more information on Active Travel which is about making journeys in physically active ways like walking, wheeling and cycling, we encourage parents and pupils to walk, wheel, cycle and scoot all or some of the journey to and from school, where it is safe to do so. Please click on this link: [www.dumgal.gov.uk](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk)

## Attendance

It is your responsibility as parents to ensure that your child/children attend school regularly. For the safety of all children it is important for you to telephone the school office prior to/at the beginning of the absence. Absences are recorded in class registers and frequent or irregular absences not supported by a reasonable excuse, will be notified to parents and the matter may be referred to the Opportunities for All Service. If possible please, try to make dental/medical appointments outwith school hours. However, if this is not possible please inform us in writing or by telephone of the appointment and arrange to collect your child from class.

For more information on Attendance, Absences, Lateness and responsibilities of parents please visit [www.dumgal.gov.uk](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk)

## Absence from School

Pupils who need to leave school during the school day ie doctor /dentist appointments, must be collected by a named contact confirmed with the school office. They must also report to the school office on their return to school.

## Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), now known as 'Scotland's Curriculum,' is bringing learning to life in the way education is delivered for all 3-18 year olds in nursery, primary, secondary, at college and via workplace or community learning. It aims to respond and adapt flexibly to meet the needs of an ever changing and evolving world and Scotland's place within it. At its heart lies a constant commitment and drive towards excellence and equity, to raise standards, improve knowledge, develop skills for all learners and close the gap between the lowest and highest achievers by ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity to be successful, no matter what their background or circumstances. Ultimately, it aims to nurture children and young people as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

## Broad General Education

Children and young people work their way through Experiences and Outcomes in each of the five Curriculum Levels (Early, First, Second, Third, Fourth) and in each of the eight Curricular Areas. The five Curricular Levels span pre-school to the end of S3. This is the Broad General Education. Pupils progress at their own pace, working through the Experiences and Outcomes of the most appropriate level for them. Pupils will be supported in collecting evidence of their achievements, with a profile of these being produced in P7 and S3.

CfE also includes Languages, Expressive arts, Religious and moral education, Sciences, Social studies and Technologies. The responsibility for the curriculum offer in your school sits with the Headteacher.

Children and young people work their way through Experiences and Outcomes in each of the five Curriculum Levels (Early, First, Second, Third, Fourth) and in each of the eight Curricular Areas. The five Curricular Levels span pre-school to the end of S3.

This is Broad General Education. Pupils progress at their own pace, working through the Experiences and Outcomes of the most appropriate level for them. Pupils will be supported in collecting evidence of their achievements.

Curriculum for Excellence includes learning within Languages, Maths, Expressive Arts, Health and Wellbeing, RERC (Religious Education in Roman Catholic Schools), Sciences, Social studies and Technologies. The responsibility for the curriculum offer in your school sits with the Head Teacher.



## Parental Involvement and Engagement

### Parent/Carers and the Parent Council

Every parent who has a child at our school is a member of the Parent Forum. The parent council is a group of parents who have chosen to represent the parent forum. As a member of the Parent Forum, each parent can expect to:

- Receive information about the school and its activities
- Hear about what partnership with parents means in our school
- Be invited to be involved in ways and times that suit you
- Identify issues you want the parent council to work on with the school
- Be asked your opinion by the parent council on issues relating to the school and education it provides
- Work in partnership with staff
- Enjoy taking part in school life in whatever way possible

For more information or support for how you can become involved in or to run your Parent Council please visit [www.dumgal.gov.uk/](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/)

For more information on what is meant by parental involvement visit [www.dumgal.gov.uk/](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/)

More information and support for Parents/ Parent Councils is available at <https://connect.scot/>

Parentclub Scotland <https://www.parentclub.scot/> provides support information and guidance to expectant parents, baby, toddler, Child, Pre-teen and Parents and Carers.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland's (NPFS) Curriculum for Excellence in a Nutshell series. Free Downloads for parents/carers: <https://www.npfs.org.uk/downloads/category/in-a-nutshell-series/nationals-in-a-nutshell-series/>

### Parentzone Scotland

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone>

information about the Curriculum and how you can be involved in your child's learning.

### How is my child doing?

There will be several opportunities for you to discuss your child's progress. This may be through informal discussion with the teacher or at Parents' Nights/ Learning Conversations, formal reports or for some it may be through more formal, focussed meetings with other agencies.



## Helping Your Child and Family Learning

Children who are working hard during school do not, generally, need large amounts of extra work at home. Usually, it is enough for their parents to share in what they have been doing in school and to encourage a positive attitude towards work.

We do encourage that daily reading is promoted and supported at home for all ages and stages as reading skills are key to accessing all areas of the curriculum.

Our Rainbow spelling scheme aims to develop individual pupils in learning keywords in a progressive manner from P2-7. Similarly, our Rainbow Tables and Big Maths scheme aims to encourage pupils to learn their number facts through motivational certificates and celebrating success.

Some homework challenges may be of a cross-curricular nature and involve pupils being creative in their thinking. These projects offer an excellent chance for parents to be part of their child's learning. All pupils are given a homework diary as a method of communication between home and school. Please check and sign this regularly and write in any comments you may have.

## Support for All

### Support for Learners

All children receive support at school and nursery to help them learn. 'Additional support for learning' is how we describe any support that is extra or different to the help that most children receive. Most of this additional support is provided by teachers in mainstream classes, focussed on learning and support to be fully involved in school life. For the majority of children and young people this will be delivered in a mainstream classroom supported by their classroom teacher for a few this will mean some additional support alongside the classroom teacher, and for a very few this will be part-time or full-time provision in a school with a learning centre or an inclusion base.

More information is available at [www.dumgal.gov.uk](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk) and on page 18 of our [Education Authority Handbook](#)

### Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

You are the expert on your child and what you think matters. Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) means that the School will always seek to involve you, to listen to your opinions and take them seriously.

More information is available at [www.dumgal.gov.uk/girfec](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/girfec) and on page 20 of our [Education Authority Handbook](#)

### Child Protection

All children have the right to be protected from harm, abuse and neglect. The vision for all children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway is that they should be: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected and responsible and included. Schools and front-line education and child care services will play an important role in ensuring all children and young people are safe and well.

Further information can be found at <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/16640/Support-for-children-and-families>

Parents, carers and pupils have a key role in keeping the school community safe. We would therefore urge parents to share any information which would keep everyone safe, and to support and encourage their child(ren) to do the same.

### Enrolment in Schools - School Places

Information on enrolment in school and catchment areas is available at <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15241/School-places> Information regarding catchment areas can be found on the Council's website by accessing "Find My Nearest".

### School Improvements

Each year the school will publish a School Improvement Plan which outlines the key priorities for the school during the year ahead, following engagement with staff, pupils and parents. The plan indicates the expected impact of priorities on pupil learning, as well as providing brief information about the key tasks to be taken forward. Both the report and the plan are published on the school's web-site and are also available in hard copy, on request. A copy can also be found by searching for your school at [www.dumgal.gov.uk/schools](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schools)

Each year, the school publishes a Standards and Quality Report providing a comprehensive summary of both the school's work and learners' achievements over the last year. The first part of this report provides an overview of the school's progress in addressing its key priorities, while the second part gives information of pupils' achievement and details how the school is supporting children/young people to develop and learn.



In June, we publish a School Improvement Plan which outlines the key priorities for the school during the year ahead, following consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The plan indicates the expected priorities for on pupil learning, as well as providing brief information about the key tasks to be taken forward. Pupils views are regularly sought on Learning and Teaching and Health and Wellbeing as part of ongoing self-evaluation and moderation activities.

School improvements are shared at every Parent council meeting and parents, staff and pupils are invited to participate in the dialogue to enable us to work together to take the school forward.



## Health and Safety

### Emergency Procedures (including Safer Together Guidance)

If your child feels unwell or have hurt themselves during the school day they must report this to an adult in the school. If we feel that they would be better at home we will telephone you or your emergency contact. Minor accidents, e.g. cuts, bruises, are dealt with by the school staff. Serious accidents are few, but should one occur your child will be immediately taken either to your doctor or to hospital, if necessary, and you or your emergency contact will be notified. We cannot stress enough the importance of supplying the school with the relevant information we require in such a situation, i.e. your own home and work number and a telephone number of an emergency contact. **Please remember that if your child stays in more than one home setting contact details should take account of this.**

### Health Care (inc First Aid)

Many children will require their health care needs to be met at sometime within the nursery/school environment, for most children this will be for short periods of time only, but for some children this may require more long-term planning and support. If your child has any health care needs, please contact the school to discuss arrangements. Full details of the support available and your role as a parent and the role of your child are contained within Health Care in Schools 3-18 (NHS and Dumfries and Galloway Council) which is available from the school.

For more information see our [Authority Handbook](#)

### Severe Weather and School Closure Arrangements

Headteachers are authorised to make an emergency closure when the state of the weather or any other exceptional circumstance make it necessary in the best interests of the pupils. In these circumstances parents will be communicated with in a variety of ways including text messages/ phone calls and emergency contact arrangements. All school closures will be notified on the Council Website.

[www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15240/Emergency-school-closures](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15240/Emergency-school-closures)

### Data Protection

Information on how the Council uses personal data is available at [www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15129/Data-protection](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15129/Data-protection) and [www.dumgal.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/privacy)

### ICT in Schools

For more information on ICT in school please see page 14 of the [Education Authority Handbook](#)

### Use of the Internet, Social Networking Sites

As part of the process of learning we allow our children supervised access to the Internet and e-mail. The authority runs its own filter system to ensure that young people are not at risk from exposure to inappropriate material. This filtering system is regularly being upgraded. We have a policy for use of the Internet and a contract for responsible use, which we ask parents and young people to sign up to.

For more information visit our [Education Authority Handbook](#) and [Safe Digital Learning and Social Media Leaflet](#)

