



Welcome to  
**St Joseph's Primary School**



December 2025

# Information at a Glance

## School Address

St Joseph's Primary School,  
Lewis Street, STRANRAER, DG97AR

**Phone:** 01776 703 460

## Email address:

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

**Parent Council Chairperson:** Donna Westbrook

## Parent Council email:

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

**Head Teacher** Mandy Whorlow

**School Roll** 25

**Denomination Status** Catholic Faith

**Status of Gaelic** Currently not taught

## School Staff:

### Teaching Staff

Principal/P5 to 7 Class Teacher Miss Natalie Lisi

P1 to P4 Class Teacher Miss Katie Scott

Class Teacher Mrs Catherine Copeland

RICCT Teacher Mrs Dawn Mann

Additional Support for Learning Teacher  
Ms Gemma Smith

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

## Auxiliary Staff

Clerical Assistant	Mrs Meriel Dougan
Learning Assistants	Mrs Rosemary Henry, Ms Kim Stevenson
Catering	Mrs Elizabeth Jones
Facilities Assistant	Mr Gerry McGuigan
Cleaning	Mrs Conlay Mis Graham

## The School Day

### Primary School

9.15am	Start time
10.45am to 11am	Morning interval
12.30pm to 1.15pm	Lunch
3.15pm	Close

School term dates can be found at:

[www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/schools-learning/schools/school-term-holiday-dates](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/schools-learning/schools/school-term-holiday-dates)

## Communicating with home

We share with parents what their children are learning at school. Our Facebook page shares blogs and school updates, while Class Dojo provides class-specific information. A weekly newsletter is sent on Fridays, and a monthly calendar of events is issued. Each term, a curricular sheet outlines the planned learning for every class. Paper copies of all communications are available on request.

We offer three learning conversations during the school year to discuss your child's progress. Class Dojo e-portfolios are also used to share personal targets and achievements with parents, ensuring you stay informed and involved in your child's learning.

St Joseph's Primary Website – Welcome to our school website [glowscotland.org.uk](http://glowscotland.org.uk)





## Welcome from the Head Teacher

Dear Parent / Carer,

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

This handbook provides key information as your child begins their journey with us. If you have any questions about its content or anything it does not cover, please get in touch.

Our goal is to provide a high-quality education for all our children. We are proud of our pupils' achievements and participation, and aim to offer opportunities that enrich their Broad General Education.

You play an important role in supporting your child's learning. By working in partnership with us, we can ensure the very best outcomes for your child. We look forward to working closely with you throughout your child's time at 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

### Our Vision and Ethos

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

We aim to develop ambition and aspiration in every pupil, helping them reach their full potential. We want to empower them with the knowledge, skills, values, and attributes to shape a sustainable future.

As a Rights Respecting School, our approach is underpinned by the UNCRC. We are committed to creating an inclusive and nurturing environment that celebrates the Catholic faith, diversity and difference. Here, everyone is valued and given equal opportunities to succeed.

Our school sits at the heart of the local community. We are fortunate to be supported by many local organisations and individuals, which allows us to provide rich experiences that develop our pupils' skills across the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence: Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Effective Contributors, and Responsible Citizens.

Our Vision, Values, and Aims were created in 2024 through consultation with pupils, families, and staff. They reflect our shared commitment to fostering a positive, inclusive, and inspiring learning environment where every child can thrive.



## 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 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'. Visit [www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk) to find out how you can do this. At this point an Officer will contact you, discuss the issue and direct your enquiry as appropriate.

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.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.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.

### Primary School Class Organisation

Within education our clear purpose is to bring about success for all our young people through raising levels of achievement, attainment, and participation.

For more information on school class organisation please visit [Class Organisation Leaflet](#)

All St. Joseph's R.C. pupils are organised into P1 – 4 and P5 – 7 classes. Our staff, supported by learning assistants provide a welcoming, safe space where every child can flourish.

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

### Positive Behaviour and Celebrating Success

At St. Joseph's R.C. we expect pupils to behave in a way that supports high standards of conduct. This applies in the classroom, playground, dinner hall, and during excursions. We hope parents will take an active role in supporting their children's positive behaviour and reinforcing our school policies in discussions at home.

We celebrate pupils' achievements in many ways, recognising both school-based and wider accomplishments. Achievements are shared through our school blog, Facebook group, Class Dojo and displays. These may include successes in learning, hobbies, and personal development, all linked to building skills for learning, life, and work.

Our "Press Wall" highlights newspaper articles showcasing pupils' achievements in the wider community. Weekly assemblies provide another opportunity to celebrate both individual and group successes, reflecting the values and accomplishments we hold dear as a school.

By promoting positive behaviour and celebrating success, we aim to create a supportive, encouraging environment where every child can thrive, feel valued, and develop the skills and confidence needed to succeed.

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.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.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 strips are allowed. Orders can be placed directly with 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 clothing and footwear appropriate for activity and for the weather.

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.

For further information and an application please visit [www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk)

Education and Learning Directorate are committed to supporting families through their Anti-Poverty Strategy – details of which can be found at [costofliving.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/cost-living-support](https://costofliving.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/cost-living-support) 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 8,9,10 and 11)**

### 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.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk)

#### 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.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk)

### 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 [www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.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.

**Parents/Carers - Please register your child with the catering team as soon as you are aware of any allergens 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 [www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk)

## 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 [freebus.scot](http://freebus.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.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.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 [Education Authority Handbook](#)

## 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.

Dumfries and Galloway Council have developed a dedicated [resource hub](#) for parents and carers, where you will find support and guidance in relation to supporting your child's regular attendance at school. Resources can be found at:

[blogs.glowscotland.org.uk](http://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk)

## 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.

This stage, called the Broad General Education, allows pupils to learn at their own pace, working through the Experiences and Outcomes that best suit their needs and abilities. Teachers support each child to develop knowledge, skills, and understanding across all areas of the curriculum. Pupils collect evidence of their achievements in their Attainment and Achievement folder, helping them reflect on learning, recognise progress, and celebrate successes throughout their school journey.

We are proud to work in partnership with our local Catholic church to support the spiritual and moral development of our pupils, fostering values, faith, and a sense of community alongside academic learning.

Our school also values pupil voice and leadership. Children take on responsible roles, including membership of the Pupil Council, Eco Committee, Enterprise, Digital and STEM Leaders, and serving as House Captains. These roles help pupils contribute to school decisions, lead initiatives, and develop confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills.

By focusing on individual progress, recognising achievements, and nurturing spiritual, moral, and personal growth, our Broad General Education prepares every child to become a successful learner, confident individual, effective contributor, and responsible citizen.

## 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.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk)

Visit [www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk) for more information on parental involvement.

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 fully engaged in school usually do not require large amounts of extra work at home. Often, children enjoy sharing what they have been learning, and parents can help foster a positive attitude towards schoolwork and learning.

Reading is the single most effective activity parents can do to support their child's progress. We encourage daily reading at home for all ages and stages, helping to develop literacy, comprehension, and a lifelong love of books.

Our Rainbow Spelling scheme supports pupils in learning key words progressively from P2-7. Rainbow Tables and the Big Maths programme help pupils learn number facts, celebrating success with motivational certificates along the way.

Some homework may be cross-curricular or creative, allowing pupils to explore ideas in different ways and giving parents the opportunity to be actively involved in their child's learning.

All pupils are provided with a homework diary to support communication between home and school. Parents are asked to check and sign it regularly and add comments, helping to link home and school learning and support each child's progress, confidence, and enjoyment of learning.

## 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.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.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.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk) and on page 21 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 [www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk)

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 [www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk) Information regarding catchment areas can be found on the Council's website by accessing [Near Me](#).

### 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.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk)

In May, the school publishes a Standards and Quality Report, summarising the school's work and pupils' achievements over the previous year. The report reviews progress against the school's priorities and provides information on pupils' learning and how the school supports their development.

School improvement updates are shared at every Parent Council meeting, and parents, staff, and



pupils are invited to contribute to discussions. This collaborative approach ensures that the school continues to develop in ways that best support pupils' learning and wellbeing.

By keeping parents informed and involved, we aim to maintain a strong partnership that drives ongoing improvement and helps every child achieve their full potential.



## 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.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk)

### Data Protection

Visit [www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk](http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk) for information on how the Council uses personal data.

### 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 [Safe Digital Learning and Social Media Leaflet](#)

