

Welcome to St Columba's Primary School Straw



“Dream, Believe, Strive, Succeed”

Parental Information booklet



We care, We Share, We Learn Together



Dear Parents & Guardians,

We warmly invite you to browse through our information booklet to help provide you with a glimpse into the wonderful life at St. Columba's.

In St. Columba's we strive to help our pupils become the best that they can be.

Selecting a school is a very important decision and we fully appreciate the trust you place in us. By working in close partnership with you, we will ensure that your child thrives at St. Columba's in all areas.

We are committed to providing the fullest of opportunities for all pupils and we aim to allow everyone to develop their full potential in a secure and safe environment.

If you would like any further information, please contact the school and I will happily answer any questions you may have.

Mrs McAlister

Acting Principal



St Columba's welcomes applications for enrolment from all pupils of compulsory school age.

St Columba's Primary School, Straw is a friendly rural, all-inclusive, welcoming school located approximately 1 mile from Draperstown in the village of Straw.

The school's enrolment number is 174 and the school's admission number is 25. We currently operate with 7 straight classes (no composite classes).

What is compulsory school age?

This means that any children who are four years old on or before the 1st July must begin their primary education from the beginning of the school year following their 4th birthday.

How do I apply?

You will need to complete an application. This application is completed online via the Admissions Tab on the Education Authority Website.

What if my child has special educational needs?

If your child is undergoing statutory assessment you still need to apply for a Primary 1 place. This will ensure your child secures a place.

If/when your child's statement is put in place, the application you submit will become null and void.

What happens if St Columba's P.S. is over-subscribed?

The Board of Governors and the Principal will apply the admissions criteria below only if oversubscription arises. *This criteria will be applied in the order shown on the next page.*

Admissions criteria for entry September 2022

1. Children of compulsory school age at the time of application.

In the event of over subscription in the above criterion, the following sub-criteria will be applied in the order set down.

(a) children who have brothers/or sisters (half-brother/sister) enrolled in the school;

(b) children who at the date of application, are the first child of the family to be eligible to apply for admission to a mainstream school;

(c) children whose brother/sister (half-brother/sister), parent/guardian are prior pupils of the school;

(d) children of compulsory school age from other areas within the parish of Ballinascreen;

(e) children of compulsory school age from outside the parish of Ballinascreen

In the event of over subscription in any one of the sub-criteria listed above chronological age beginning with the eldest will be applied by the date of birth as entered on the child's Birth Certificate. In a situation where two children share the same birthday, remaining places will be allocated on the grounds of distance from the home to the nearest maintained school as measured by RAC route finder.

Why chose St Columba's for your child?

St Columba's is a warm, safe and caring school in which your child will flourish we have:



- 2 Consecutive **Outstanding** ETI Reports (2008 ,2016)
- State of art building opened in September 2012
- 7 state of the art highly resourced classrooms
- An excellent P1 induction programme
- Smaller class sizes ensuring maximum teaching time with each child
- Highly skilled teaching staff
- Award winning school across the curriculum
- Newly opened ICT suite (September 2020)
- Large, all weather play areas for each class
- Beautiful outdoor classroom area for foundation stage (P1 and P2) developed 2020
- Key Stage 1 & 2 outdoor classroom, sensory garden & pond area.
- Newly developed outdoor Play Based Learning area with play house, water area, music wall, construction area, Drama and table top area for P1 & 2. (completion in early 2021)
- Polytunnel developed in 2020
- Stay and Play afterschool for P1 & P2
- Breakfast Club operates from Mon to Fri 8.20 - 8.50am.
- Nurture hub room (completed in June 2022)



Primary 1 Induction

St Columba's has a very comprehensive P1 Induction Programme in place. The P1 teacher visits and forges links with the pre-school settings and this helps to create a very smooth transition. In Term 3 we run a Stepping Stones club and this gives both parents and children the opportunity to participate in fun filled sessions in our school. During this time they will become familiar with the school setting and get to know the staff of St Columba's PS.



The P1 Curriculum

Language and Literacy

In St Columba's school we love and celebrate reading. From the first days in P1 we aim to foster a love of books. Reading/library packs are sent home with P1 pupils so that they can share stories with family members. We facilitate a very popular Paired Reading Programme whereby P7 pupils read to P1 pupils.

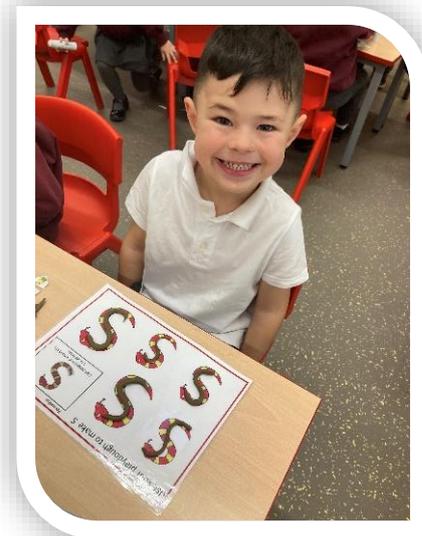
Jolly Phonics

In our school we use the Jolly Phonics Programme to teach Spelling, Grammar and Vocabulary in P1. We have found that pupils learn best through this multisensory, cumulative and structured phonics programme.



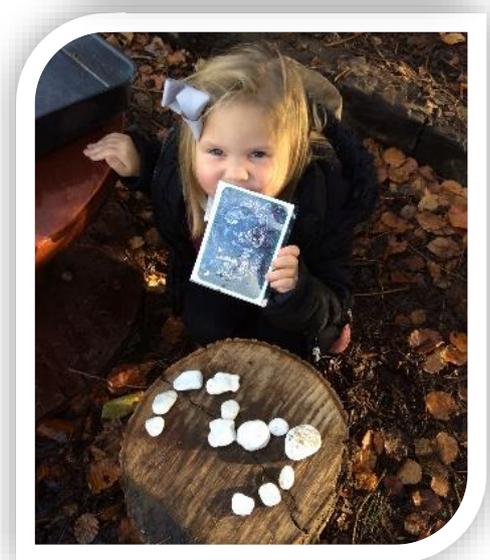
Writing

Right from the emerging scribbles of our P1's our pupils are guided, supported and commended for their writing. Our pupils are taught how to read and write in a wide range of genres such as letter writing, report writing, persuasive writing etc. In teaching these styles of writing we are giving our pupils real 'life skills'.



Mathematics and Numeracy

Numeracy and mathematics is an essential element of everyday life. In St Columba's, we aim to give all children a positive and fun experience of Mathematics based firmly around the aims of the Revised Northern Ireland curriculum. During play based learning in the foundation stage, children in St Columba's have the opportunity to engage in a wide range of purposeful activities which involves them in different modes of mathematical learning including playing, exploring and investigating, doing and observing,



talking and listening, asking questions, reflecting, drafting, reading and recording. These activities also encourage the development of thinking skills and personal capabilities as well as mathematical skills and mental strategies.



Play Based Learning/Outdoor Play/Sensory Garden

Through play, children can discover their own interests, abilities and limitations; they imagine, investigate and explore. They develop memory skills, build vocabulary, learn new skills and knowledge and learn how to get on with adults and other children. Play based learning is a huge component of the P1 curriculum and it has been widely acclaimed by both the Education Training Inspectorate (2016) and private educational consultants as 'Outstanding'. Our sensory garden provides an inspiring outdoor learning area for our P1 children. It is a calm and quiet space can that help to enhance the lives of our children in St. Columba's both socially and academically for generations to come.

"The best classroom and the richest cupboard is roofed only by the sky"



Pastoral Care

As part of our pastoral care and PDMU programme to help to continue the smooth transition into Primary 1, each primary 1 child is paired with a Primary 7 “Cara” (friend). These Primary 7 ‘Cara’s’ will meet with your child as part of their induction day and throughout the school year for a variety of fun learning experiences and activities.



“The provision for pastoral care in the school is outstanding. From an early stage, the children take on responsibilities, developing resilience and a “have-a-go” attitude. Through the school- and Eco-councils, the children develop leadership and decision-making skills and are consulted regularly as valued contributors to school improvement.”

ETI Inspection Report 2016

The Arts

This area of learning comprises the subjects of Art and Design, Drama and Music.

Music

We believe in and deliver high- quality music lessons from Primary 1 through to Primary 7. Alongside our enriching classroom music lessons, P1 pupils also enjoy weekly Primary Movement lessons taught through the medium of music and rhyme. Research indicates that this excellent Primary Movement programme had a significant effect on the development of fine motor control and leads to improved academic attainments in reading, spelling and mathematics.

Art and Design

Displays of pupils' art work can be viewed throughout the school.

We promote creativity and invite pupils to express themselves

through the use of different media.



Drama

As a school we appreciate and understand the importance of drama within our curriculum. Research reveals that drama had a positive impact on children's physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. Drama is developed across the whole school in a variety of ways.



EVERY
CHILD
IS AN
ARTIST
-PICASSO



The World Around Us

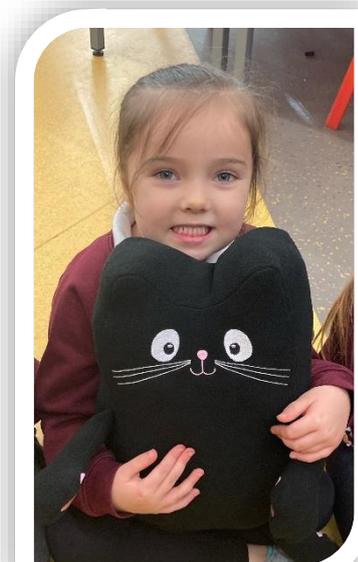
Children are naturally curious about the world around them. The purpose of The World Around Us is to provide children with the opportunities to:

- express and share their thoughts and ideas about the world;
- become aware of themselves and their place in the world, as well as other places, cultures and the environment;



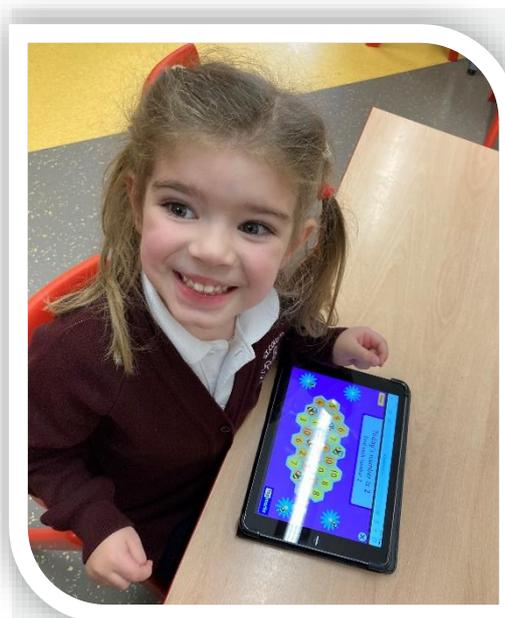
Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

PDMU is an integral area of learning in P1 in St Columba's focusing on developing children's emotional development, health and safety, relationships with others and development of moral thinking, values and actions.



Physical Education and Movement

In St. Columba's we strongly believe that Physical Education and Movement (PE) has a fundamental role to play in the development of the whole child. It provides the foundation for a healthy life style, promotes self-esteem, reduces stress, improves concentration, fosters good behaviour and allows children to develop their understanding of co-operation, fairness and respect for others through active participation.



ICT

At St. Columba's our pupils are fortunate to have access to 40 I-pads, 10 PCs, 10 laptops and an interactive whiteboard in every classroom. Our new purpose built ICT opened in September 2020.



Religious Education

In St. Columba's we aim to develop children's awareness and understanding of religion. We follow the Northern Ireland Syllabus for Religious Education and The Grow in Love Programme.

It focuses on encouraging each child to

become informed and inquisitive about

their own religious

beliefs and practices

and those of others.



Special Educational Needs (SEN)

We aim to support the learning needs of all our pupils, whether they are exceptionally gifted or whether they have particular academic difficulties. The staff of St Columba's provide a differentiated curriculum in every class, at all levels of ability. Mrs Patricia Mc Alister is currently our Learning Support Coordinator and is available to discuss any concerns or queries that parents may have regarding Special Educational Needs. She is assisted by Miss Glass.

We have a comprehensive monitoring and screening programme in place from P.1 to identify children with individual needs.

Pupils' special educational needs are initially identified by the class teacher as the result of observation or information provided by parents or other agencies.

Children may be withdrawn individually or in small groups. The Education Authority and its various outreach support units provide additional support and advice for our school. Pupil progress is regularly monitored and parental consultation and home school links are valued as key features of this process.

Parents and pupils are encouraged to participate in the planning and implementation of individual plans of work. Individual Education Plans (IEP) are designed for those children showing specific needs or areas requiring particular support. These plans offer a sharp focus on the needs of the individuals to ensure that appropriate progress is made. As each child is given the opportunity to experience success, self-esteem and confidence can be developed.

Meet the P1 Team



Mrs O Bradley
P1 Teacher

Hello!

My Name is Mrs Bradley and I am the Primary 1 teacher. I am passionate about teaching and I love being a part of the Primary 1 team. Primary 1 is a warm and loving environment where our children are happy and enjoy coming to school each day. I enjoy getting to know all the unique personalities of the children in my class and how best to help them grow and succeed in their learning. I feel it is important that each child in my care feels valued and happy. I want to instil a love of learning and curiosity in each child. In Primary 1 we are a family and together we have lots of fun growing, learning and celebrating each child's success together.



Mrs S Reid
P1 Classroom Assistant

Hello!

My Name is Mrs Reid and I am the Primary 1 classroom assistant. I have a wealth of experience supporting the teaching and learning in Primary 1. I love getting to know all the children in P1 and helping to ensure their Primary 1 year is a special experience.

The Primary 1 Classroom



P1 & P2 Outdoor Classrooms



In St Columba's our dedicated staff really do go above and beyond to provide your children with the best possible academic, emotional and social opportunities,

“to be the best the best they can be”,

and we are very proud to have received the following achievement and awards.



St. Columba's Primary school was chosen from **817** primary schools in Northern Ireland to feature as the **one** Case Study School for Education in the Primary Sector in Northern Ireland as part of the Chief Inspectors Report 2016-2018. This was a great commendation and recognition for the school. We are very privileged and happy to have been chosen as an example of outstanding practice. The whole school community can be very proud of themselves; governors, our families and extended families, children, the community and all members of the extremely dedicated staff of TEAM STRAW!!

Friends of Straw Parent Teacher Association



The PTA (Parent Teachers Association) is a wonderful partnership between mums and dads, carers and teachers at St Columba's. The PTA provides a unique opportunity to strengthen the home school links as it brings staff, parents and teachers together socially in support of the school, working towards a common goal. We are always on the lookout for new mums and dads to join the PTA! Contact the school for further details.



"There is helpful and regular communication with parents and the PTA support generously the work of the school"

ETI 2016

Keep in touch

There are numerous ways to keep in touch with our school or to find out more information:

- Visit our regularly updated website www.stcolumbasstraw.com. There is a live link here to our very impressive **school prospectus**
- Email us at info@stcolumbasps.magherafelt.ni.sch
- Follow us on Facebook at Straw PS
- Follow on x @StrawPS
- Contact us at 028 796 28655



St Columba's Primary School Straw, leading the way in outstanding education.



**We look forward to welcoming you
and your child on the 1st September.**

