



# **ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC LOWER SCHOOL**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**With Christ at the centre of our lives  
we gather together in love and faith  
growing closer to God  
through knowledge and learning.**

**As a Catholic school we aim:**

- **to develop as a Christian Community**
- **to provide a stimulating education through which all pupils have the opportunity to do their best.**
- **to sustain an environment in which each individual has the opportunity to develop and is encouraged to contribute to the life of the school.**

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# SCHOOL STAFF

<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Mr. J. McGivern
<b>Acting Headteacher:</b>	Mr. S. Fry
<b>Acting Deputy Head:</b>	Mrs. L. Hewitt
EARLY YEARS	Mrs. E. Snyman
NURSERY NURSES	Mrs. S. D'Souza Mrs. C. Paci
YEAR 1	Mrs. C. Tiddeman (Healthy Schools) Mrs. M. Onione (Art) Mrs. T. Lovell (Special Educational Needs)
YEAR 2	Miss G. Rentle (NQT) Miss R. Arnold (R.E. / P.E. / School Council)
YEAR 3	Mrs. L. Hewitt ( Maths / Teaching Assistants) Mrs. E. McMullan (ICT)
YEAR 4	Miss N. Mann (Science) Mrs. R. Devonshire (Literacy)
MUSIC	Mrs. C. John
ADMINISTRATOR & FINANCE MANAGER ADMIN ASSISTANT GENERAL ASSISTANT	Mrs. K. Martin Mrs. A. Rahman Mrs. L. Jarvis
SITE AGENT	Mr. R. Spyer
KITCHEN MANAGER KITCHEN CASHIER	Mrs. M. D'Argenio Mrs. D. Castro
SPECIALIST TEACHER ASSISTANT TEACHING ASSISTANTS	Mrs. C. Walsh Mrs. E. Anstee Mrs. C. Ariano Mrs. M. Ariano Mrs. D. Doherty Mrs. P. Fulton Mrs. K. Gandy Mrs. L. Jarvis Mrs. T. Lancaster Mrs. G. McLoughlin Mrs K. Milligan Mrs. A. Rahman Mrs. J. Rogers Mrs. M. Sulston

# INFORMATION ABOUT ST. JOSEPH'S

St. Joseph's has been established on its present site since 1964, but its existence dates back to 1863. The main school provides for boys and girls between five and nine, whilst the Early Years Unit accepts children from the age of 3½ years.

The building is large, light and airy with a central library, hall, gymnasium and a heated outdoor swimming pool. Meals are prepared and cooked on the premises. There are separate playgrounds for the younger and older children with shared access to an adventure playground.

St. Joseph's is part of the Bedford pyramid of four Catholic schools. These schools share the same moral and spiritual values and close liaison ensures academic continuity and progression. The majority of our children transfer to St. Gregory's Middle School at the end of Year 4.

## ADMISSIONS

Boys and girls are accepted into the Early Years Unit on a part-time basis from approximately the age of 3½ years and may be offered a full time place for the term in which they turn five. ***Attendance at the Early Years Unit does not automatically qualify for entry into the school.*** Children will be formally admitted at the beginning of their Reception Year but for organisational purposes will continue to be accommodated in the Early Years Unit. The Local Education Authority co-ordinate all school applications and parents will be required to complete the Common Application Form. Places will be allocated on an equal preference basis.

In keeping with the Roman Catholic status of the school, pupils will be accepted in the following priority order:

1. Catholic 'Looked After' children.
2. 'Looked After' children, other than Catholic.
3. Catholic siblings of children attending the school (whose application is supported by their parish priest or priest known to them).
4. Catholic children of practising families from the parishes of Bedfordshire (whose application is supported by their parish priest or a priest known to them).
5. Catholic children of practising families from other parishes (whose application is supported by a priest).
6. Other Catholic children.
7. Siblings other than Catholic attending the school.
8. Children from other Christian denominations whose parents wish them to receive a Christian education.
9. Children from other faith backgrounds.
10. Any other children.

Each term new parents are invited to a meeting when school policies and procedures are explained. This also gives parents the opportunity to meet their child's teacher, ask questions and provide additional information on health, emotional or social concerns. New pupils meet their teacher and become accustomed to their class environment during an afternoon visit shortly before they start school. Parents and children are welcome to visit at any time to see the school in action. Please telephone for an appointment.

# THE SCHOOL DAY

## Timetable:

9.00am	School commences
10.30 – 10.45am	Playtime
12.05pm	Lunchtime
1.15pm	Afternoon school starts
3.15pm	School finishes

Supervision is provided on the big playground from 8.45am. Those children who travel by school transport and arrive early are looked after in the library area. Parents who bring their children to school should accompany them to the gate at the end of the car park. Children will be supervised indoors from 8.30am at a cost of £1.00 per week payable on Mondays – non-returnable and regardless of absence.

At the end of the day pupils travelling by school transport are escorted out by members of staff. Parents collecting their children should wait outside the designated doors. Proper supervision is provided during lunch and play times. In the interests of security all parents and visitors must check in at the school office.

# THE CURRICULUM

The National Curriculum identifies five key stages of schooling:

Foundation Stage:	3-5 years
Key Stage 1	5-7 years
Key Stage 2	7-11 years
Key Stage 3	11-14 years
Key Stage 4	14-16 years

Children in Early Years Unit and Reception follow the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 and 2, Key Stage 1 is completed. Third and fourth year pupils commence studies at Key Stage 2 which will be continued at Middle School.

The children study four core subjects – Literacy, Numeracy, Science and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plus the foundation subjects of Art, Geography, History, Music, Physical Education and Technology.

As a Catholic School, Religious Education is considered to be a fifth core subject.

All children are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum with activities matched to their individual levels of attainment. In every class a Teaching Assistant supports learning and teaching.

Teachers use a variety of styles and strategies appropriate to the subject and to the needs of the children. Classes are organised on a mixed ability basis, but children may be grouped by attainment for some activities.

Parents are invited to discuss their child's progress during the Autumn Term and again in either the Spring or Summer Terms. A written report is sent home annually.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

*Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us,  
by letting us be called God's children; and that is what we are.  
My dear people, we are already the children of God  
but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed;  
all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him  
because we shall see him as he really is.*

*1 John 3:1-2*

Religious Education is at the heart of our curriculum and is the fundamental reason for our existence. Our purpose is to meet each child on its journey of faith and provide opportunities to bring them to a closer relationship with God. In addition to being a timetabled subject, the spirit of Christ permeates our entire school experience.

Religious Education is centred on the national scheme 'Here I Am'. Firmly based on Scripture, this scheme encourages the children to relate their own experiences to the Christian message, recognise the presence of God in the world around them and to respond to his invitation to become active members of his family.

We believe strongly in the importance of the partnership between home, parish and school. Parents are always welcome to share in special activities and members of the local clergy are frequent visitors. Holy Days of Obligation are always celebrated with Mass in school.

During Year 3 we support the parish based programmes in preparing the children to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

# ENGLISH / LITERACY

At least an hour each day is dedicated to developing skills in reading and writing. Great importance is also attached to helping children improve their ability to listen carefully and to express themselves clearly and confidently.

Within the literacy session, children work as a whole class, in a group or individually. The lesson often opens with the class sharing a Big Book where the text provides the stimulus for phonic or grammar extension work.

Writing and reading activities follow, the tasks differentiated according to ability. Children may share a common text in a guided reading session. One lesson each week is devoted to a piece of extended writing.

Children in Reception and Year 1 follow the Early Reading Research Programme to support phonic awareness and reading skills.

Parents are encouraged to hear their children read at home from a wide range of fiction and non-fiction material. All books are colour coded and stored centrally. Younger pupils follow a structured programme, but as they become more confident and proficient they are encouraged to make their own selection from the appropriate level.

## **MATHEMATICS / NUMERACY**

St. Joseph's was a pilot school for the National Numeracy Project which was introduced in September 1999. We are proud to have the strategies well embedded in our classroom practice.

Daily lessons have a common structure, with great emphasis placed on developing mental skills. The children are encouraged to explain their working methods and develop their own techniques in problem solving.

Lessons are divided into three strands:

- mental / oral starter
- main teaching activity
- plenary session

Children are taught in mixed ability classes.

## **SCIENCE**

The children are given a wide range of experiences to discover and understand scientific concepts. When undertaking practical experiments they are taught to observe, interpret, communicate and record their findings. Our expanding environmental area gives ample opportunity for putting these skills into practice. In addition to these discovery methods, staff use class teaching to direct learning and reinforce scientific principles. The school is well supplied with instruments, equipment and materials.

## **INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The Computer Suite is fully equipped with sixteen workstations which are constantly being extended and updated. Learning is also assisted by interactive whiteboards which allow for effective group or whole class teaching. Every class spends a minimum of one lesson a week in the ICT suite acquiring knowledge, consolidating skills and developing confidence. All curriculum subjects are fully supported by appropriate software and, in addition to the Computer Suite, each class has a minimum of three computers and an interactive whiteboard.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

The pupils have many opportunities to plan, design and make models, using a variety of tools and materials. Projects vary, from the totally practical to the purely creative. As the children become more confident with equipment and learn to handle tools safely, they are able to undertake more ambitious tasks. They are encouraged to evaluate their work and recognise the criteria for success.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

As part of their studies, the children are actively involved in community projects to improve the environment. Looking at the wider world, the pupils learn how to make comparisons with their own lifestyle. The local area provides a rich source of information on the urban environment. Children in Key Stage 2 enjoy active links with local farms.

## **HISTORY**

Younger children study recent times and learn about people and events in the past through stories and legends. As they become older the children research local history and undertake projects on Egyptians, Romans and Saxons. They are encouraged to look critically at evidence, examine artefacts and develop an awareness of lifestyles in the past. Visits to local museums give opportunities to handle rare and unusual items of historical interest.

## **MUSIC**

Our main aim is to help the children to enjoy music through raising awareness, providing opportunity and nurturing talent. Lessons concentrate on composition, notation, singing and playing a wide range of tuned and untuned instruments. By practical experience and by listening to music of different cultures and styles, the children learn to appreciate the quality and diversity of the creative world. Pupils at Key Stage 2 learn the recorder. Small group tuition is available in various instruments for a termly fee.

## **ART**

Through art we can marvel, enjoy and explore the wonders of shape, colour and texture. Through appreciation of beauty and originality, the children's spiritual experiences are fostered and broadened. In the Art Room, using a variety of materials, pupils are encouraged to learn skills and techniques, while developing their own styles and talents. The works of established artists are studied, compared and discussed. The influences of other ages and cultures are recognised.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Every effort is made to encourage fitness and healthy living. The children take part in gymnastics, movement, dance and games. Skills for team sports such as Unihoc, football, short tennis, rounders and netball are introduced gradually, leading to small team games in Years 3 and 4. During the summer term all classes enjoy swimming in our heated pool. After school clubs offer dance, gym, football, netball and athletics. In addition each class follows a ten-minute exercise programme three days a week.

## **PERSONAL & SOCIAL EDUCATION (PSHE)**

Throughout the year the children have opportunities to understand issues concerned with health and personal safety. The children begin to develop an awareness of the rights and responsibilities which characterise a good citizen.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

The school has a comprehensive policy for identifying and providing for those children who have individual needs, including those who are exceptionally able. Parents are informed and consulted should any behavioural, academic or physical difficulties be recognised and asked to support their child's learning. With the agreement of parents, outside agencies may be involved to gain additional help and advice. Parents are always welcome to discuss individual concerns with the class teacher, Headteacher or Special Needs Co-ordinator.

## **TRANSFER TO MIDDLE SCHOOL**

The majority of our pupils transfer St. Gregory's Middle School at the end of their fourth year. During the first term in Year 4, parents and children are invited to middle schools to look around, gather information and ask questions. The close links we have with this school ensures that transfer is completed smoothly with continuity in curriculum content, values and expectations.

## **PASTORAL CARE AND DISCIPLINE**

With Christ as our example, we aim to promote self-esteem, responsibility, mutual respect and courtesy. Common beliefs and values shared by children, parents and staff provide a firm foundation for spiritual and moral development.

School rules are brief and simple, based on safety and politeness. High standards of behaviour are expected using a positive approach of praise and fairness. Sanctions will be imposed if behaviour is deemed inappropriate. If problems persist, parents will be invited into school to discuss ways of improving the situation.

At lunchtime each class is supervised by their own Play Leader and enjoy a variety of activities including board games, football, volleyball, computer and traditional playground games. Pupils in Year 4 act as Buddies, helping Play Leaders and younger children.

We work hard to ensure that play times are enjoyable experiences for all children and are proud of the standard of behaviour on the play ground.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Teachers constantly assess children so as to assign work appropriate to individual need. We have high expectations and encourage each child to achieve their potential.

A variety of strategies are used to assess individual progress including observation, practical activities and tests.

On completion of the Foundation Stage, children are assessed against criteria appropriate to their age and development contained in the Foundation Stage Profile.

During Year 2 the children complete Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) which complement on-going teacher assessment. Results reported to parents. We believe that the joint system of teacher assessment and standardised testing provides the most effective profile of individual progress.

Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to be assessed using QCA optional national tests.

## **HOMEWORK**

Children take home reading books to share with their families. Spelling and tables are given to be learnt and practised.

Parents are encouraged to support any research required during topic work. Other homework is given to the children as appropriate.

## **CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Educational visits are arranged, with costs kept to a minimum. Parents are requested to make voluntary contributions to support these events. Cases of financial hardship are dealt with in confidence. No child will be penalised for non-payment, but if insufficient contributions are received then visits may have to be cancelled at short notice.

Those children who receive musical tuition on school instruments will be required to pay a termly fee.

# UNIFORM

The wearing of school uniform is strongly encouraged. Most items can be obtained from the PTA Shop which is open on Tuesdays from 9.00am – 9.15am and on Thursdays from 2.45pm – 3.15pm.

## GIRLS

### Winter Uniform

Anderson Tartan Skirt  
White blouse  
Navy school sweatshirt or  
navy cardigan  
Anderson tartan tie  
White socks or navy/black tights  
Sensible shoes

### Summer Uniform

Dress with small blue/white check  
White socks  
Sensible shoes or sandals

<p><b>All clothing must be clearly marked with your child's name.</b></p>
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## BOYS

### Winter Uniform

Grey trousers  
White shirt or school polo shirt  
Navy school sweatshirt  
Anderson tartan tie  
Sensible shoes

### Summer Uniform

Grey trousers (preferably shorts)  
School polo shirt  
Navy school sweatshirt

## P.E.

All children require shorts, T-shirt and plimsolls or trainers.

The wearing of jewellery is not allowed. For safety reasons, those children with pierced ears must wear small stud earrings. Hooped earrings are not allowed.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## TRANSPORT

Details of bus routes, timetables, entitlement and costs are available on request at the school office. The pupils are supervised by staff when both alighting and boarding buses. Parents who drive their children to school may not park in the school car park or bus bay, and should bear in mind the safety of all pupils and the convenience of our neighbours.

# SCHOOL MEALS

Children may bring sandwiches or make their selection from hot meals cooked on the premises. School dinners currently cost £1.60 per day, which includes a drink. Money should be sent in on Mondays in a clearly marked sealed envelope and cheques should be made payable to 'Eden Foodservices'. Two weeks notice in writing is required if children change from dinners to sandwiches, or vice versa. For reasons of safety, children may not bring glass bottles to school and only children eating packed lunches may bring their own drinks. Each Friday a 'Fun Lunch' allows those children who generally have packed lunches to have the opportunity to share a cooked meal.

# HEALTH & ATTENDANCE

It is important to establish regular attendance from the beginning of the child's school career. We are required to keep careful records of reasons for absence. Please notify us on all occasions of non-attendance, otherwise these absences will be regarded as unauthorised. The school office should be informed by telephone before 10.00am on the first day of absence. After this time Office Staff will contact parents by telephone to ascertain the reason for absence. A letter should be sent to the class teacher on the day your child returns to school.

In cases of prolonged or regular absence a letter will be sent home requesting detailed reasons and emphasising the importance of attendance. The Education Welfare Service regularly monitors registers and will contact parents in cases of persistent absence.

**DRINKS:** Children are allowed to bring bottles of water to keep on their desks to drink during lessons. This is particularly important during the hot summer months.

## ATTENDANCE

- We strongly recommend that all children who are sick during the night should be kept home on the following day.
- Prescribed medicine will be administered only when an indemnity form has been signed.
- Please notify the school promptly in cases of infectious diseases.
- It is important that the details of emergency contact telephone numbers are kept up to date in case of sudden sickness or accident.
- The school nurse visits regularly to monitor the children's health.
- The Education Welfare Service will be happy to give any advice on health or social problems.
- With regard to health and sexual education, positive attitudes are taught through all relevant curriculum areas. Particular issues are treated in an appropriate and sensitive manner by the class teacher.

## **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Throughout the year a variety of clubs and activities are organised by staff and volunteer parents. Most take place at lunchtime and some arranged for after school. While some groups run throughout the year, others may last for six to ten weeks. Clubs include chess, art, origami, football, computer, Multi-Sports, Gym, Dance, Netball, Athletics and Rainbows.

Various short sports courses are run throughout the year and are open to children in all year groups.

## **PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

Every parent is automatically a member of the PTA and is welcome to play a more active role by joining the Committee. The Association not only organises a variety of events to raise funds for the school, but also gives families an opportunity to get together socially. Meetings are usually held half-termly, but the Committee maintains a list of volunteers who, though unable to attend meetings, are willing to help at specific events or activities. Events include discos, biscuit sales, family nights, bingo, and barbecues.

## **PARENTS IN SCHOOL**

Parents are always welcome to come in and share the life of the school. There are a great many ways that you can help out, so if you have the time please do volunteer. All adults having regular contact with the children will be required to be cleared with the Criminal Records Bureau.

**Parent Talk** – Regular courses and talks are arranged on a range of topics including parenting issues, ICT, First Aid, Drugs Awareness and demonstrations on hairdressing and cake decorating. The aim is to provide a support network for parents and to encourage self-esteem and confidence in children. We also run regular programmes to assist parents in developing Literacy and Numeracy skills.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Parents who are unhappy with aspects of the curriculum or other related matters should initially discuss the problem with the Headteacher. If dissatisfied with the response a formal referral, in writing, should be made to the Chairman of the Governors. If the complaint remains unresolved, then approach should be made to the Local Education Authority at County Hall.

We hope that the strong partnership which exists between home and school would enable us to overcome any worries at an early stage.

## *Your Child .....*

*If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.*

*If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.*

*If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.*

*If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.*

*If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.*

*If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.*

*If a child learns with praise, he learns to appreciate.*

*If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.*

*If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.*

*If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.*

*If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,*

*he learns to find love in the world.*