
St. MacNissi's

PRIMARY SCHOOL



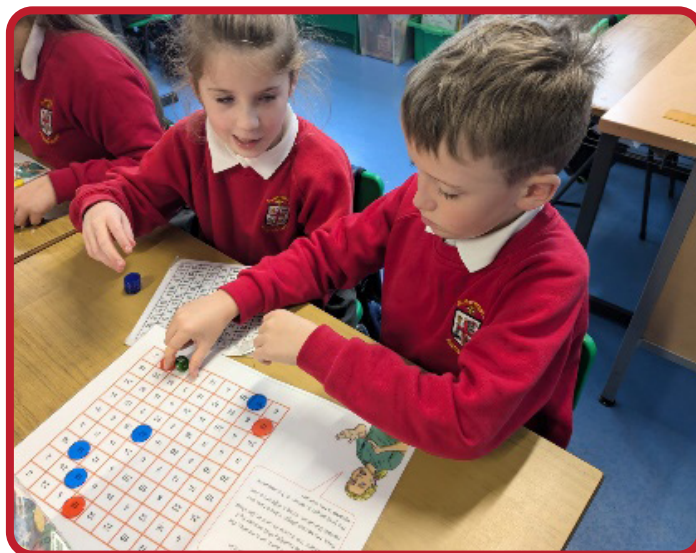
PROSPECTUS

2025 - 2026



Learning every day in a fun & safe way.

“ Learning every
day in a fun
& safe way.”



Dear Parents / Guardians

The Staff and Governors would like to extend a warm welcome to you and your child at St MacNissi's Primary School. We are the only school that has a single class intake which is unique to the other Parish schools. We aim to create an open and friendly atmosphere, which is welcoming to all who enter our school community.

At St MacNissi's we value every child as an individual and see education as a partnership between home and school in which parents and teachers work together for the benefit of the children in our care. It is hoped that by example, from teachers to parents / guardians, we encourage our children in the practice of their faith and that Catholic values become an important feature of each child's development. It is our aim to nurture the individual talents and ability of each child providing a holistic education that prepares them for tomorrow's world and their future in it.

As parents / guardians you naturally want the best possible education for your children and we trust you find this prospectus helpful as it will give you an insight into what makes St MacNissi's Primary School so special and what the school has to offer your child.

J McAuley
Principal

Our Vision Statement

OUR SCHOOL VISION

It is our vision, at St. MacNissi's Primary School, that we create an inclusive environment where our children are:

'Learning every day in a fun and safe way.'

At the core of everything we do are our school values of: Respect; Teamwork; Compassion; Community; Diversity; Independence, as they underpin our teaching and learning.



School Aims

St MacNissi's is a Catholic school where we strive to make education a shared experience between all interested parties in the Community. At St MacNissi's our policy is to develop in our children the capacity to become self confident, contributing members of society, who will have acquired a reasoned set of values, attitudes and beliefs.

In order to develop these qualities in our children we aim to:

- create a happy, stimulating and secure environment for each child.
- offer a well structured and balanced curriculum within the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, which meets the needs of the individual child.
- ensure that the individual child feels a sense of self worth and encourage the development of confidence and self esteem.
- develop an awareness of the need of self discipline, which leads to respect for other people and a sensitivity towards them.
- encourage the children to acquire positive attitudes towards others of differing religious beliefs and an understanding of the wider world in which we live.
- develop a genuine partnership between the home, church and the school.

'Learning every day in a fun and safe way.'

Thinking School

St. MacNissi's, is one of only two schools in N. Ireland to have achieved an Accreditation as a **'Thinking School'** from the University of Exeter. By adopting a **whole school approach** to the teaching of thinking; embedding thinking in the heart of our school and its curriculum, has many educational benefits.

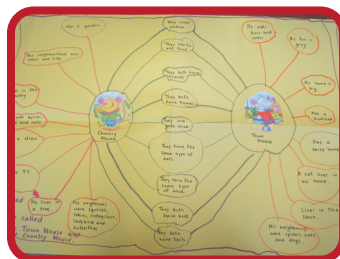
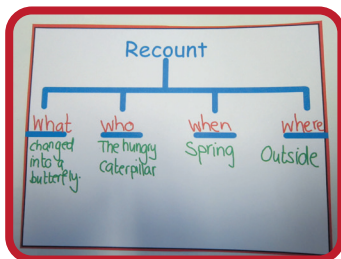
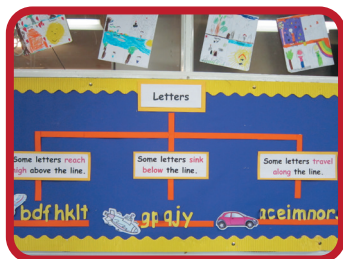
What we have noticed is that, for our pupils Thinking Tools have been quite amazing. The children enjoy using the strategies and show:-

- High levels of motivation in their work
- An increase in their ability to manage their own learning
- More confidence in risk taking

When they were asked to describe what Thinking Maps meant to them they said:-

'Thinking Maps are the paper of my mind...'

“ Give Students a thought for a day and they’ll learn for a day. Teach them to think and they’ll learn for a lifetime. ”



Through our planning we support our children's thinking by introducing strategies linked with 'Assessment for Learning', and three thinking tools; David Hyerle's 'Thinking Maps', Edward De Bono's 'Thinking Hats' and 'Philosophy for Children'. The strategies are used throughout the school to develop and organise the children's Mathematical and Literacy ideas and language. They empower the pupils to produce their own thinking in a unique and valuable way.



Academic Achievements from GL Standardised Assessments

| End of Key Stage 1 | N.I. Average | St MacNissi's Average |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Literacy | 100 | 108 |
| Numeracy | 100 | 108 |

| End of Key Stage 2 | N.I. Average | St MacNissi's Average |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Literacy | 100 | 112 |
| Numeracy | 100 | 110 |



Assessment

At St. MacNissi's Primary School we understand that assessment lies fundamentally at the heart of the teaching and learning process.

The key purpose of assessment is to develop children's learning potential. It provides opportunities for pupils to demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and skills they have acquired and offers teachers the opportunity to reflect, evaluate and interpret individual pupil's strengths and weaknesses. Assessment is on-going and can be informal or formal.

Assessment for Learning (AfL) is firmly embedded in classroom practice. It enables staff to scaffold children's learning and move them on to the next stage. This involves sharing 'Learning Intentions' (WALT) and 'Success Criteria' (WILF) with the children. Through our marking Policy we aim to be informative, highlighting our pupils' strengths and showing how they can further make improvements.

Assessment and Observation of Learning begins at Year 1 with staff establishing a base line for each child and this continues until Year 7.

Internal Moderation of pupil's work in Literacy and Numeracy forms an integral part of our whole school Assessment Programme. Children from Primary 3 to Primary 7 complete CCEA and school tasks, in line with N.I. assessment requirements in Communication and Using Mathematics, to enable staff to make a summative judgement about the level each pupil has achieved.

Each child from Year 3 to Year 7 complete standardised tests in Literacy (PTE), Numeracy (PTM) and outcomes are matched against Northern Ireland Standardised data. Staff use this data to ensure that all children are fulfilling their potential.

Wraparound Care

Wrap Around Childcare facility is available from 8:00am – 6:00pm in St MacNissi's. Sleepy Hollow is currently providing a Breakfast Club and After School care provision in our Pre-School unit. For further information, please contact 028 94453976.

St MacNissi's Extended School Day

It is hoped that all pupils will benefit from the activities, which the school has to offer. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their talents through activities such as, Inter-School Sports, Field and Outdoor Activity Trips, Football, Irish Dancing, Traditional Irish Music, School Plays and Concerts. The school is also involved with KidZ Academy who through their After Schools Programme, their Halloween and Summer Camps aim to encourage young people to participate and enjoy all activities.



After Schools Clubs (Primary 1- Primary 3)

| Activity | Day |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| KidZ Academy - Multi Sports | Tuesday 2pm – 2:50pm |
| KidZ Academy - Robotics | Wednesday 2pm – 2:50pm |
| KidZ Academy - Art / Craft | Thursday 2pm – 2:50pm |
| Irish Dancing | Monday 2pm – 2:50pm |



After Schools Clubs (Primary4- Primary 7)

| Activity | Day |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| KidZ Academy - Multi Sports | Tuesday 3pm – 4pm |
| KidZ Academy - Robotics | Wednesday 3pm – 4pm |
| KidZ Academy - Art / Craft | Thursday 3pm – 4pm |
| Irish Dancing | Monday 3pm – 4pm |



Summer Camp

This runs during July and August. A full programme of activities, are sorted for all children Primary 1 to Primary 7. These programmes normally run from 9:00am to 3:00pm

Pastoral Care

St MacNissi's is a community where we encourage children to live together to work and play in a friendly atmosphere, one which is based on good relationships between staff, children and parents / guardians.



We value the role and contribution made by parents / guardians therefore we always make the effort to welcome parents / guardians and encourage them to become more aware of their child's education.

- Through our positive relationships in school with parents / guardians and the wider community, we aim to foster self respect, self discipline, tolerance, equality and fairness to ensure that each individual feels valued and cared for at all times.
- Through the daily experiences, in addition to curriculum activities, all staff aim to communicate positive values and beliefs. These values include for example, sharing, taking your turn, listening, being grateful, good manners, honesty, forgiveness, reconciliation and healing.
- To promote our children's positive self-esteem we will encourage our children to think positively about themselves and to accept their own uniqueness. Our school will provide opportunities for the children to feel valued and important by creating an awareness of the positive contribution they can make towards school and the community. To give our children a voice, within each year group, we have established 'Class Councils' from which representatives are elected to sit on the 'School Council'.

School's Positive Behaviour Programme

At St MacNissi's we take the view that bullying behaviour, whatever form it may take is totally unacceptable. A positive approach to discipline and the pastoral care of pupils, emphasising praising and rewarding good behaviour, is adopted and encouraged throughout the school.

Our School's 'Positive Behaviour Policy' aims to make children understand that discipline comes from within and is based upon Christian standards and behaviour and with this in view the staff attempt to give constant positive encouragement to all children. The class teacher aims to develop in each child a sense of self-worth and encourages the development of the pupils' confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline.



The children are involved in and made aware of certain rules, which help to create and maintain a caring, truthful and respectful community in which they can learn effectively. Copies of the 'Positive Behaviour Policy' and the 'Policy on Use of Reasonable Force', are all available at the school.



Acceptance of admission to the school implies the parents / guardians acceptance of the 'Positive Behaviour Policy' and related policies.

To promote and support Positive Behaviour the school operates a House Merit System involving all the pupils within the school. The school also implements a playground "Buddy" scheme involving our Primary 6 and Primary 7 pupils to support and care for younger pupils within the playground.

The school places great importance in the fostering of the personal and social development of each child through pastoral care. A copy of the school 'Pastoral Care Policy' is available at the school. Also available is the school's procedures for dealing with 'Child Protection'. In these matters the Designated Teachers, Mr McAuley and Mrs R Mitchell, ensure that procedures are correctly followed.

“

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”



The Religious Programme in Our School

As a Catholic school St. MacNissi's plays an important part in the complex process of Christian Education. At the centre of the child's development is faith in Jesus, therefore the place of Religious Education as part of our curriculum is of great importance. Religion permeates the whole curriculum and our programme, based on the "Grow in Love" series is intended to lead each child to an awareness of God's love and to help foster and deepen their own faith.

Two mornings a week the school comes together to pray and throughout the year classes present their own assemblies. Pupils from Primary 4 to Primary 7 attend Masses and have the opportunity to participate fully by helping to prepare the Liturgy.



Throughout the year there are regular Liturgical and Sacramental celebrations. St MacNissi's is part of St Mary's on the Hill Parish and contributes to the life of the Parish. Together the teachers, parents and school Chaplin, Fr. B Beagon, provide the support and security that our children need to grow and develop in a caring community.

St MacNissi's is fully committed to the health promotion of its children.

Health Education

St MacNissi's is fully committed to the health promotion of its children. Each child is encouraged to bring water for consumption during the day. Parents are encouraged to support our Healthy Eating policy by providing healthy food at break and lunch time for children.



Whole School Skills and Capabilities

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

- Managing Information
- Being Creative
- Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Working with Others; Self Management



Cross Curricular Skills

- Communication
- Using Mathematics
- Using ICT



All classrooms are equipped with Interactive Whiteboards, Laptops and iPads.

All children have access to the Computer Suite and make good use of the Internet facilities available to support and enhance their investigative work. The children have the opportunity to further develop their skills through the, 'ICT After School Club'.



The Curriculum

St MacNissi's Primary School promotes high achievement and learning for life by working with children to achieve a well structured and balanced curriculum delivered with the support and encouragement to succeed.

The school is very aware of its statutory obligation to deliver the Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum to all of its pupils. In planning to deliver of the Curriculum the staff aim to:-

- Create a stimulating and challenging learning environment;
- Continually strive for improvement, working together towards common goals.

The curriculum is made up of a range of learning areas which foster attitudes and dispositions. These incorporate assessment for learning which aims to promote and encourage learning experiences.



Learning Areas

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ○ Language and Literacy | ○ Physical Education |
| ○ The World Around Us | ○ Religious Education |
| ○ Mathematics and Numeracy | ○ Personal Development and Mutual Understanding |
| ○ The Arts | |

Music provision

Our Gaelic culture is extremely important in our school and is nurtured through Music, Dance, Song and Drama. An After School Class in Irish Dancing is held in the school hall for classes Primary 1 to Primary 7. With support from, East Antrim Traditional Music we offer tuition in Guitar, and Ukulele. Our school Traditional Group share their talents through a number of school events. St Patrick's Day is celebrated through Prayer, Dance and Music

The school's very accomplished choir takes part in a variety of activities. Apart from its involvement in Christmas, end of Year School Productions, Parish Liturgical Services, Cross Community projects.

"The choir sings well in tune and is obviously enjoying it. Lots of concentration and a lovely tone from the soft singing"

M. J. Smith- Hollywood Music Festival adjudicator

Other Music provision includes, specialist tuition offered in violin and cello provided by the Education Authority.



Learning Support

In St MacNissi's we pride ourselves with having a very vibrant and flourishing Learning Support Programme. Our Learning Support Team, work in partnership with all professional bodies to support your child in their need. We have built up a very strong working relationship with external agencies e.g. MASTS, ASD Team, School Medical Team, the Education Psychology Team and work closely with them when necessary.

Staff training is available for teachers in several aspects of Learning Support both within school and delivered by outside agencies e.g. ASD Support, Dyslexia Training

and Behaviour Support.

We have a Literacy and Numeracy support area and a Multi-Purpose Room that children and adults can avail of if necessary. Our Learning Support Programme consists of many forms with the child always being the central focus. We see the child and their parents as integral to our whole Programme. Through our Intervention and Remediation programme, children are supported in withdrawal groups from Foundation Stage up to key Stage 2.

Games and Physical Education

All classes have P.E. Pupils must participate in these lessons unless they are unable to do so for medical reasons. Children should have suitable clothing for P.E. and games lessons:-



Polo Shirt, Shorts and Gym Shoes



Pupils in Key Stage 2 (P5-P7) have the opportunity to have swimming lessons at the Valley Leisure centre.

Links With Other Agencies

We co-operate with and fully support the work carried out by the Local Health Authority personnel and when necessary we seek the help and advice of other statutory agencies. Visitors such as the School Nurse, Dentist, Doctor and Educational Psychologist call at the school in order to cater for the needs of your child. Our 'Business in the Community' links are developed through the First Trust Bank saving scheme available to all pupils within school.



Links Within the Community

Through the Primary Partnership Programme, with local Secondary schools, the pupils have the opportunity to visit and use the resources of Edmund Rice College, Trinity College, Dominican College Fortwilliam, Mercy College and St Malachy's College. Opportunities have been provided in the development of life skills for P6/P7 in our programme with 'Education 4 Eye' consultancy. We work closely with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council to develop a number of activities within the local Community.

School Policies

School Policies and general information about school life can be viewed on the School's Website, these include:

- Drugs Education
- Homework
- Charging and Remissions
- Child Protection

Summary Report

ST MACNISSI'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, NEWTOWNABBEY SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM INSPECTION NOVEMBER 2024

- o The school's child-friendly vision is fully realised in the children's evident enjoyment of their learning.
- o The well-embedded processes for monitoring all aspects of the provision are extensive and robust.
- o A key strength of the provision is the whole-school focus on the development of thinking skills which enables all of the children to structure their thought processes, reflect on their learning, develop ideas and solve problems.
- o Assessment for learning strategies are highly effective and consistently applied across the year groups.
- o The early identification of, and support provided to, the children who have additional needs in their learning is a key strength and is having a positive impact on the children's outcomes.
- o The skilful teachers and classroom assistants use a range of effective strategies, including active learning and multi-sensory approaches, to meet the children's individual needs.
- o The children at all key stages are confident, attentive, fully engaged in their learning and responsive to their teachers.
- o The senior leaders have fostered a vibrant and inclusive community of learning which prioritises the ongoing professional learning of all staff.
- o At the time of the inspection, the evidence provided by the school demonstrates that the arrangements for child protection align to the current statutory guidance.

St MacNissi's Parents' Association

The Association aims to give support and encouragement to the school. The P.A. functions include social and fund raising events. Volunteers are most welcome. A number of family events are organised throughout the school year as well as fundraising events within school. The monthly Newsletter informs our school community about current celebrations, achievements and events. Funds raised by our Parents' Association have enabled us to purchase many extras for the children. We rely on parental support for this Association and are grateful for the time and effort freely given.

| Date | Event |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| September | Annual General Meeting |
| October | Tesco's Book Sale Halloween Disco |
| November | Cash For Clothes |
| December | Christmas Productions |
| January | Grandparents' Assembly |
| February | Cake Sale Social Evening |
| March | Non-Uniform Day |
| April | Cash For Clothes |
| May | Sponsored Bounce Sports Day |
| June | Non-Uniform Day Leavers Play |



Organisation and Management

A senior Management Team consisting of the Principal, Vice-Principal and one member of staff provides the framework for the management of the school. Subject and Key Stage Co-ordinators have specific responsibilities relating to curricular areas and ensure that the curriculum is delivered to your child in as meaningful a context as possible, while at the same time attending to pastoral, administrative and managerial duties. These responsibilities are continually reviewed in light of changing circumstances.

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective management of the school. As well as nominees of the Trustees (x4), the Education Authority (x2) and Department of Education (x1), its membership also includes an elected Parent Governor and an elected Teacher Governor. The Principal completes this team which represents all the main interests concerned with the school.

The School Day

Times

Children are welcome into school from **8:45am**. Classes begin at **9.00am** and all pupils are expected to be punctual and in their classrooms at that time.

Lunchtimes are as

Primary 1 – Primary 3

12.00noon – 12.45pm

Primary 4 – Primary 7

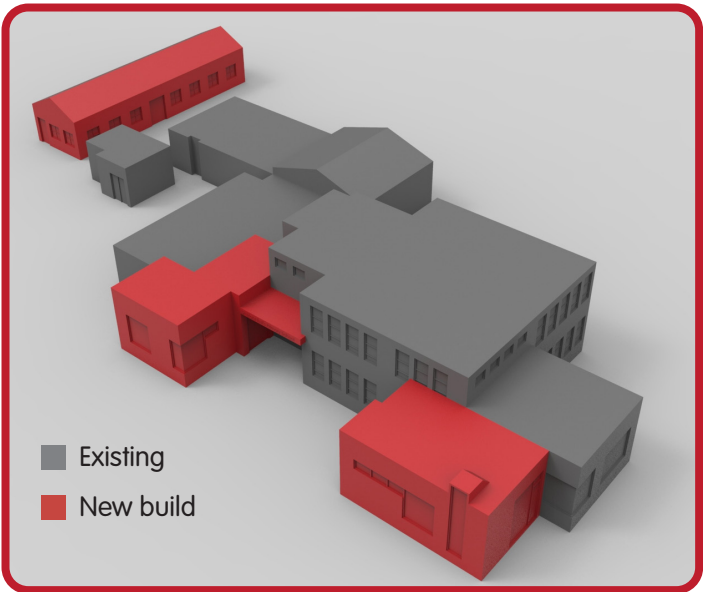
12.15pm – 1.00pm

- Pre-School Class finish school at 1:30pm.
- Primary 1 – Primary 3 children finish school at 2.00 pm.
- Primary 4 – Primary 7 children finish school at 3.00 pm.
- A range of 'After School Activities' for Primary 1 – Primary 3 pupils are available from:- 2:00pm – 3:00pm and for Primary 4 to Primary 7 are available daily from:- 3pm – 4pm
- Sleepy Hollow Wrap around Care 8:00am – 6:00pm.



General Information

St MacNissi's is a Catholic co-educational Primary School and is one of three primary schools in the Parish of St Mary's on the Hill. Additional accommodation of extra classrooms and an administration block were completed in May 2017.



| | Total Applications | Total Admissions |
|-----------|--------------------|------------------|
| 2023/2024 | 19 | 19 |
| 2024/2025 | 25 | 25 |
| 2025/2026 | 27 | 27 |

Admissions

The Primary School can accommodate up to 210 pupils with an intake of 30 pupils at Primary One. A further 24 pupils can be admitted into the Pre-School setting. In selecting children for admission we will apply the criteria as set out by the three parish schools, in the Education Authority handbook, copies of which are available at the school, or on the school website.

Accommodation and Resources

St MacNissi's Primary School is a two storey building and contains a dual purpose hall/ P.E. facility, staffroom and Computer Suite. Classes, Primary 1 – Primary 3 are situated on the ground floor, whilst Primary 4 – Primary 7 are on the first floor. Outdoors we have 2 large multipurpose play areas, a quiet area and grass pitch.

Pre-School Class

St. MacNissi's offers a Pre-School Class for 24 children in their final Pre-School year. The children are taught by Mrs P. McCorry, assisted by Mrs. D. Lavery, Miss T. Meshesha. Further information can be accessed through the school website.

Absence

After any absence, a pupil must produce a note giving a reason for the absence. In the interest of safety a child may not leave school without permission from the Class Teacher or Principal.

If you have any queries about these arrangements, please telephone the school and speak to our secretary, Mrs Angela Morgan, who will deal with the issues raised.

Holidays

A provisional list of school holidays will be sent to each family and be made available on the school’s website, at the beginning of the school year. This should enable parents to plan holidays well in advance, but I would stress that, occasionally, slight alterations may become necessary.



School Staff

The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools employs the teaching staff, of Principal and 8 full-time teachers. All other staff are employed by the Education Authority.

| Teaching Staff | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Mr J McAuley | Principal |
| Mrs R Mitchell | |
| Mrs D Burns | |
| Mrs P McCorry | |
| Mrs O McCormick | Vice-Principal |
| Mrs J Elliott | |
| Mrs B. Rea | |
| Mr D Kennedy | |
| Mrs A McKeown | Senco |
| Miss S Beattie | |
| Miss T Meshesha | |
| Ms K McKinney | |
| Mrs D McMeekin | Classroom Assistant |
| Ms L McManus | |
| Miss H McAreavey | |
| Mrs B McClean | |
| Mrs M O’Hagan | |
| Mrs L O’Neill | |
| Ms V Mealey | |
| Miss C Bunting | |
| Miss M Hamilton | |

| Non-Teaching Staff | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Mrs A Morgan | School Secretary |
| Mr B Strain | |
| | School Caretaker |

School Uniform

All the pupils at St MacNissi's are expected to wear the school uniform, to allow the children to be identified with the school.

**Red School Sweatshirt, White Shirt or School Polo Shirt,
Grey Trousers / Grey Skirt or Pinafore.**

On occasions the School Choir will be required to wear a white shirt and red tie.

Visiting Arrangements

School visits are arranged when parents of prospective Pre-School or Primary 1 pupils are invited to bring their child to meet the Principal and Class Teacher, early in June. At this meeting you may discuss any relevant information about your child with the Class Teacher. In October a 'Curriculum Meeting' is held inside your child's classroom when the teacher will make you aware of the planned curriculum being provided for your child.

Later, in the academic year, there will be an opportunity for parents / guardians to meet formally with their child's Class Teacher. Our policy is to ensure that, as parents / guardians, you are kept well informed of your child's progress. Interviews are arranged, in which you have the opportunity to discuss your child's progress with the class teacher. A detailed Annual Report is sent home for inspection in June.

Throughout the year meetings are held for staff and

parents / guardians of the Primary 3, Primary 4 and Primary 7 children as part of the Pre-Sacramental preparation. Other meetings can be arranged by mutual request by contacting the School Secretary.

Contact Details

St MacNissi's Primary School

Christine Road

Newtownabbey

BT36 6UE

T: 028 90 342166

E: info@stmacnissisps.newtownabbey.ni.sch.uk

www.saintmacnissis.com
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day in a fun
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Sleepy Hollow Group

Quality Childcare Provision

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🌐 www.iamzenni.com

✉ iamzen_ni@outlook.com

🏠 24-26 Hightown Rd,
Glengormley



OPEN ENROLMENT – ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

St MacNissi's Primary School

The Principal will consider the acceptance of each pupil to the school within the confines of the published criteria for admission, but any decisions will be subject to the ultimate approval of the Board of Governors. St. MacNissi's Primary School is one of the three primary schools in the Parish of St. Mary's on the Hill.

Any child who reaches their 4th birthday on or before 1 July 2026 is of Compulsory School age. Under the School Age (N.I.) Act, April 2022, 'compulsory school age' also includes those children who deferred commencing Primary 1 in September 2025, as defined by the new School Age (N.I.) Act (both groups will be treated equally).

Admissions criteria to be used in the event of the school being oversubscribed. The criteria are listed in order of priority.

The following criteria will be applied in order set down 1-5 by the Board of Governors of St. MacNissi's Primary School.

1. Children of school age who reside in the Parish of St. Mary's on the Hill.
2. Children of school age who have a sibling enrolled in the school.
3. Children of school age who are the eldest child of their family. Each family circumstance will be taken into consideration related to the eldest child – as defined in DENI Guidance Circular Number 2025/13. Applicants who consider that this criteria applies to them (as the 'eldest' child of the family), must provide a verifying letter written on headed notepaper, and signed by one of the following, who is not a member of the child's family:-
 - Educational Professional / Pre School/ Nursery/Playgroup leader
 - Family doctor
 - Parish Priest/member of clergy known to the family.
4. Children of school age transferring from the St. MacNissi's Pre-School Class.
5. Children of school age who live outside the Parish of St. Mary's on the Hill and for whom St. MacNissi's P.S. is the nearest Maintained School, within driving distance, as measured on Google maps.

In the event of oversubscription children will be selected for admission on the basis of initial letter of surname (as entered on Birth Certificate) in the order set out below:

Mc E J M H N Q C Z Mac D W U X B O' A G F O P L I S K R Y V T

In the event of surnames beginning with the same initial letter the final selection will be on the basis of a child whose home is closer to the school within driving distance, as measured from the school gate, on Google maps, to the child's home address.

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