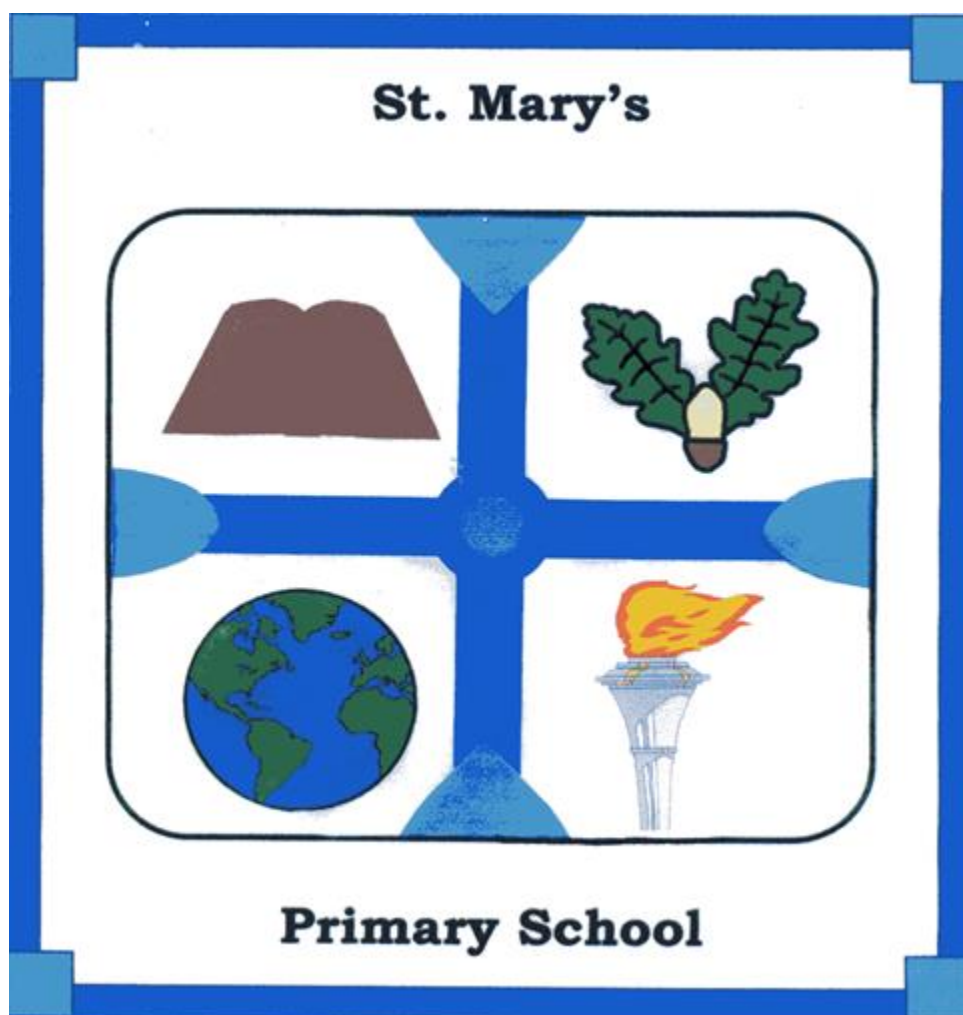


ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL DECHOMET

"WHERE EVERY CHILD MATTERS"



SCHOOL PROSPECTUS 2024/2025

Dear Parents

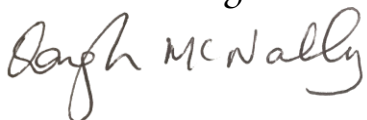
May I take this opportunity of welcoming your child and yourselves to our school. St. Mary's Primary School - Dechomet is a caring school, where the whole school community shares a common goal - to do the very best for all the children in its care.

As a catholic school our aim is to establish and foster Christian values for life and to prepare our children for the challenges of the twenty first century. To do this, it is essential that we work in partnership with all our parents and the parish community. Indeed, the success of our school depends on good co-operation among staff, pupils and parents.

This prospectus is intended to help you know more about the life and work of our school. We have explained the wide curriculum on offer to your child, and how this fits in with recent government legislation for all schools.

Information in this booklet may change during the school year, and you will be notified.

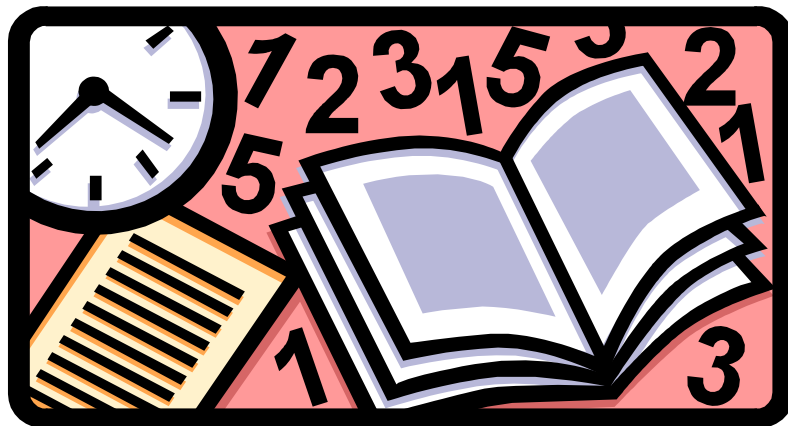
With sincere good wishes

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Oonagh McNally'. The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name 'Oonagh' written in a larger, more prominent style than the surname 'McNally'.

*Mrs Oonagh McNally
Principal*

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- 1 Our Vision, Values, Mission*
- 2 Our Aims and Purposes*
- 3 General Information*
- 4 The Curriculum*
- 5 Organisation of Classes*
- 6 Pastoral Care*
- 7 Final word*



Our Vision :

St Mary's Primary School is committed to providing a happy, caring environment where all are valued and every child matters and where children are prepared for the challenges of education, work and life in the twenty first century.

Our Core School Values Are

- 1) *Security/Happiness*
- 2) *Realise Potential*
- 3) *Life skills/Health*
- 4) *Respect/Tolerance/Good Behaviour*
- 5) *Catholic/Christian Values*
- 6) *Empowerment*
- 7) *Self-Esteem*
- 8) *Team, School, Community Spirit*
- 9) *Equality*
- 10) *Independence/Courage*

Mission Statement :

We the Governors and staff of St Mary's Primary School, Dechomet are committed to providing the best possible education for all children and to developing each child's full potential.

We aim to work with home and community to :

- ❖ lead all children to a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith and to foster respect for other religions and cultural backgrounds*
- ❖ expect the highest standards of achievement through a broad and challenging curriculum*
- ❖ create a calm, disciplined and positive atmosphere where praise and reward enhance the children's confidence and self-esteem*
- ❖ provide an enriching programme of extra-curricular activities and visits*

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, DECHOMET

6 Closkelt Road

Ballyward

Castlewellan

Co Down

BT31 9QE

Tel No: 028 406 50426

Website: www.stmaryspsdechomet.com

Principal:

Mrs Oonagh McNally

Chairman of Board of Governors:

Mr Eamonn Kennedy

School Management type: Maintained



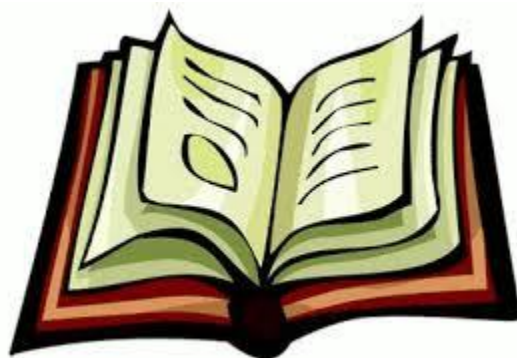
Admission Criteria *(Initial and Transfer from another school)*

1. *Children of compulsory school age who normally reside in the Parish of Drumgooland and in the historical catchment area. (The details of this are available from the school).*
2. *Children who have brothers/sisters (including half-brothers, half-sisters, step brothers, step sisters, foster brothers and/or foster sisters) currently enrolled in St Mary's Primary School.*
3. *Children of permanent employees of the school.*
4. *Children for whom St Mary's Primary School is the closest voluntary primary school to their home.*
5. *Children who live closest to St Mary's Primary School based on distance between the child's place of residence and the entrance gate of the school as measured in a straight line on an Ordnance Survey Map.*
6. *In the event of a tie for last place at criterion 5, pupils will be selected for admission on the basis of initial letter of surname (as entered on Birth Certificate) in order set out below:*

HADPRTYEWQSJLBVCXZFMOWIGKN

For further information please see EA 'Primary Schools Information and Admissions Policies'

www.eani.org.uk/admissions



Date of Admission

Children will be admitted to P1 if their fourth birthday has fallen on or before 1st July 2024.

Visiting the School

It is the aim of St. Mary's Primary School - Dechomet to involve parents in the education of their children, and to inform them as fully as possible about their children's progress.

Before Enrolment

- (a) We will contact you before your child is due to start and invite you to meet the teacher and see the classroom.*
- (b) Entrants who have previously attended another school*
 - (1) An interview will be arranged with the Principal.*
 - (2) Parents will be welcome to view the school premises.*
 - (3) A meeting can be arranged with the prospective teacher/s of the child or children.*

After Enrolment

Once your child commences school there are many opportunities for staff and parents to meet. Some of these will be on a formal basis, and you will be notified in due course of the dates; i.e. Parent Interviews.



Parental Visits to the School

Parents play a vital role in the education of the child. We endeavour to ensure that parents feel welcome and that they are kept informed about all aspects of school life. Parents are very welcome to come to the school to discuss their children's progress, or if a problem arises. To avoid disruption of classroom work, the following procedure should be followed.

- (a) Emergency - Parents should contact the Principal, who will arrange a discussion with herself or the class teacher.*
- (b) Non-emergency - Parents should contact either the School Secretary or Principal, who will arrange an interview with the class teacher at a mutually convenient time.*

*If parents visit the school, they **must** contact the Principal before going to the class teacher.*

Phone calls are necessary, but during the school day a teacher's responsibility is with the children. Teachers may take brief and urgent phone calls, otherwise, it is more convenient to telephone after school hours (3.15 pm to 3.40 pm)



CURRICULUM

General Aims

It is the policy of the Board of Governors of St Mary's Primary School, Dechomet, to educate the children in the fullest possible sense, having regard for the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of the pupils.

Therefore, it is important that we are sensitive to individual, class, school and locality needs, in planning a balanced and broadly based curriculum, where no subject area is neglected.

The curriculum will seek to prepare the pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. It will also be the aim of the school to maximise the potential of each pupil, to develop self-confidence and to promote a spirit of tolerance towards others.

A Catholic school should instil in its children an awareness of and a love of Catholic values. Therefore children should acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of their Catholic faith. Each child should develop self-respect and respect for others.

If you wish to withdraw your child from Religious Education and/or collective worship please inform the principal in writing.



NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM

All pupils will receive their full entitlement under the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

The Curriculum is divided up into the following areas of learning:



Language and Literacy

Mathematics and Numeracy

The Arts

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

Physical Education

The World Around Us

Religious Education

The Curriculum is delivered in three stages:

<i>Primary 1 & 2</i>	- <i>Foundation Stage*</i>
<i>Primary 3 & 4</i>	- <i>Key Stage One</i>
<i>Primary 5, 6 & 7</i>	- <i>Key Stage Two</i>

** The Foundation Stage was introduced in September 2007 - Please find enclosed information leaflets providing extra information on the Revised Curriculum.*

Within these areas of learning are compulsory subjects for each of which there will be programmes of study which contain statements of attainment.

St. Mary's Primary School - Dechomet has always encouraged pupils to develop their musical ability. The younger children work

on pitch, rhythm and tone. As the children get older they learn to read musical notation. As well, Education Authority tutors provide weekly lessons in stringed and woodwind instruments.

Parents will be informed of their child's progress by:

- a) An annual interview at which parents will be informed of the school's view of the child's progress.*
- b) Parents will receive a written report on each pupil's progress.*

COMPLAINTS RE: THE CURRICULUM

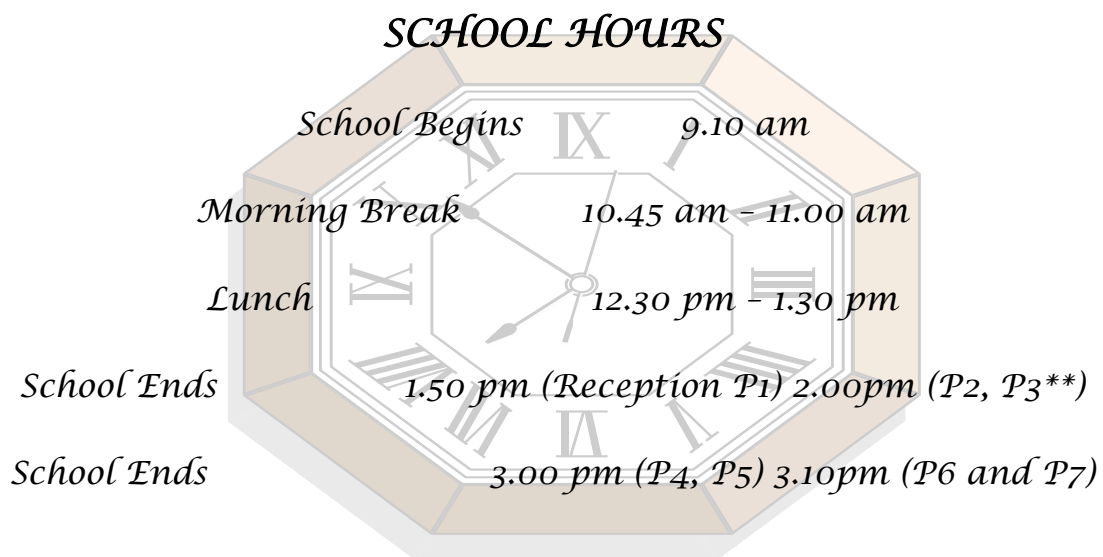
In accordance with the school's policy of involving the parents in the education of their children in those cases where parents consider that the curriculum provision is not satisfactory, they are welcome to express their concerns. This should be done in accordance with the following procedure. In the vast majority of cases, the problems will be solved at Stages 1 or 2. In the cases of serious complaints, the concerns should be specifically detailed in writing and given to the principal to enable the matter to be examined, and a reply to be made.

Please refer to the school's Parental Complaints Policy which is available on the school website.

HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS

The school will be closed for the months of July and August. Information about other holidays i.e. Christmas, Easter and mid-term breaks will be sent to parents at the beginning of September.

In the event of an emergency closure, every attempt will be made to notify parents to enable them to make alternative arrangements.



***Three days per week school ends at 3.10pm for Primary 3 pupils*

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance, punctuality and your continued interest are very important. Lateness and absences are recorded in class registers. Please telephone the school or send a note of explanation to the class teacher when this arises. It is distressing for a child to arrive late, work will have begun in class and the child will have missed the initial explanation. Dinners are booked, based on the children in attendance at registration, so a child who arrives late can cause disruption. Whilst it is unwise to send children to school when they are ill, it is important that they do not lose days unnecessarily as every day is important in a child's educational development. There will be no supervision of pupils before 8.50 am and after 3.25 pm with the exception of children who are attending Breakfast or After School Clubs. No responsibility for children will be accepted outside these times. Please refer to school website for Attendance Policy.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Our religious education programme based on the 'Grow in Love' series goes beyond the requirements of the core Religious Education syllabus agreed by the main Churches. It prepares each child for participation in the Liturgy and Sacraments of the Catholic Church. Religious Education is not confined to the timetable programme within the school, but pervades the whole life of our school.

CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN

Each year we fundraise/collect for a specific charity. It is important that the children feel that they are helping other children who are less fortunate than themselves.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Whilst the staff seek always to meet the individual needs of every child, sometimes a child may experience difficulties which give teachers and parents cause for concern. The school will endeavour within its resources to meet these needs. After close consultation with parents, the Education Authority may be called upon to help and recommend strategies which may be used to overcome difficulties.



At pre school stage your GP should be contacted if you have any concerns re your child's language and communication development.

Early identification and intervention is always advisable.

ORGANISATION OF CLASSES

For 2024 - 2025

For the most part, the children are taught in the following composite groups:

<i>Mrs Lavery</i>	<i>Reception</i> <i>Primary 1</i>
<i>Mrs Fegan</i>	<i>Primary 2</i> <i>Primary 3</i>
<i>Mrs McNally</i>	<i>Primary 4</i> <i>Primary 5</i>
<i>Mrs O'Callaghan</i>	<i>Primary 6</i> <i>Primary 7</i>



Support Staff

Miss S Cunningham – Classroom Assistant/Supervisory Assistant
Mrs G O'Hare – Classroom Assistant/ Supervisory Assistant
Dining Room Assistant/Breakfast & After School Assistant
Mrs M McCrickard – Classroom Assistant
Ms V Wilson – Classroom Assistant
Ms Leona Burns – Classroom Assistant/After School Assistant
Ms Paddy McCausland – Classroom Assistant
Mrs M Doyle – Secretary
Miss Carly McGarry – Caretaker

Since it is our school's policy to do the best for each child, teachers will organise their classes in a variety of ways to cater for the individual needs of the children in their care.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is regarded as an integral part of every pupil's learning. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's homework. Homework set by the school should be supervised by parents. Pupils must get used to the discipline of home study and accept it as an extension of their school work. We encourage our parents to contact their child's teacher if there are any difficulties regarding homework. It may also be necessary for the teacher to contact the child's parents about any problems arising. It is suggested that time spent on homework should be:

Primary 1-3

30 minutes

Primary 4-7

45-60 minutes

LOOKING AFTER BOOKS

The school cannot afford to buy new text books every year for each pupil. It is important that parents encourage their children to take care of their text books and exercise books. It would be appreciated if the books could be covered at home.



PASTORAL CARE

All staff in the school have as one of their responsibilities the day to day care of all children in the school. Each child is treated as an individual and the interests of each child are foremost in the minds

of those who are working in school. If you have any worries or concerns about your child in school or at home please speak to the class teacher or principal. It is important that your child is happy and confident in school and that can be achieved if parents and teachers work together.

Mrs McNally is the designated teacher in charge of the schools Pastoral Care Policies. All statutory requirements regarding Pastoral Care and Child Protection are outlined in these policies and are fully implemented in this school. Mrs Paula Fegan is the designated teacher and Mrs Fiona O'Callaghan the deputy designated teacher for Child Protection. All staff including ancillary staff follow these procedures closely.

When a child is sick or injured the school will endeavour to contact the parent. If this is not possible the child will be brought to hospital.

*Parents should leave an **Emergency Contact Number** with the Principal.*

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

We have very few rules. Those that we have are to enable a large community to work together safely. Some rules are based on our expectations of any individual, others are based on respect and care for others.

We encourage children to work and play together, accept responsibility for their own actions, and show concern for themselves as well as caring for others. Parents and pupils must accept the values of the school and the classroom. Good behaviour is that conduct which assists the school to fulfil its function, namely the full development of the potential of all its pupils.

The school has produced a separate policy on positive behaviour, and this is available on request to all actual or prospective parents. It can also be viewed on our school website.

Pupils are not allowed mobile phones in the school.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

St Mary's Primary School considers the extra curricular activities it offers add a very valuable dimension to the education of the children. These activities may include outdoor pursuits, swimming, Cycling Proficiency, football, netball, hurling/camogie. Introduction to the Spanish Language and drama (school plays).

School Trips

There is usually an annual school trip and occasionally a Christmas trip to a pantomime. We also try to arrange as many educational trips as possible to compliment 'World Around Us' topics. Teachers will inform parents of:

- 1. Destination*
- 2. Time of departure*
- 3. Time of return*
- 4. Place(s) to collect children*
- 5. What children must bring with them*



Each teacher must have a list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the children in their care.

Visits by Outside Agencies

Regularly, we request additional personnel to visit our school to enhance the curriculum such as nurses, musicians, health and safety officers, story tellers to mention but a few. Such visitors enrich the curriculum.

Breakfast Club and After Schools Clubs

Breakfast Club runs each morning from 8.00am – 8.45am. Children can avail of a choice of breakfast consisting of fruit juice, milk, cereal, toast, pancakes etc at a cost of £2.00 per day.

We also run a variety of 'After Schools' Clubs'. These include a daily Foundation Club for our Reception to Primary 3 children which runs from 2.00pm to 3.10pm, an After School '3 to 4' Club from 3.10pm – 4pm and a '3 to 5' Club from 3.10pm – 5pm each day throughout the school year. There is a small charge for each of these clubs.

All pupils can avail of a variety of sports clubs, as they become available during the school year.



Annual Inter Schools Sports Day

The Annual Inter Schools Sports Day takes place in the third term. This involves pupils from Dromara Primary School, St Michael's Primary School Finniss and ourselves joining together to have a 'Fun Sports Day'. Parents are more than welcome to attend.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

All Pupils must wear the following school uniform

Boys

*White Shirt
Red tie
Navy V-neck jumper with school crest
Grey trousers*



Girls

*White blouse
Red tie
Navy V-neck jumper with school crest
Grey pinafore or skirt
Gingham Dress (blue/white available from Tesco -
can be worn during September, May and June)
Navy socks/tights*

Good quality trainers should be worn by both boys and girls

*PE Uniform worn on PE days which will be advised at the
beginning of each term.*

*White crested polo shirt
Plain navy track-suit bottoms
Navy V-neck jumper with school crest*

Our school uniform is available from :

*Tesco.com/ues or through school website
www.stmaryspsdechomet.com - Parent area - Uniform
McKenny Drapers Main Street Castlewellan*

HELPING CHILDREN TO LOOK AFTER THEIR OWN COATS AND SHOES

Our Cloakroom

At the beginning of the school year each child is allocated a numbered coat hook. It helps the child to have a special numbered hook on which to keep his/her own personal possessions.

Name tags should be attached to all articles of clothing.

SCHOOL MEALS

If children wish to have school dinners parents are requested to pay dinner money via ParentMail, an online app, on Monday mornings or to pay for the meals on a daily basis. Free school meal forms are available from the Principal. All children are supervised in the dining hall while having their dinner, and they are encouraged to eat the meals available.

Children who bring their own lunch to school will be able to eat this in their classroom. These children will also be supervised while eating their lunch. It is much more practical for young children if their refreshments are in plastic containers rather than in glass bottles. School lunches must not be put in school bags.



School Milk

There will be a carton of milk available for each child at break-time. If parents would like their children to have milk please inform their class teacher. Milk must be paid for on a termly or half termly basis (parents will be notified by letter of the amount) and the total amount must be paid at the beginning of each term. The Principal must be informed immediately if you wish to cancel your child's milk

Charging & Remissions Policy

Education in St Mary's Primary School Dechomet is provided free of charge for all lessons and activities connected with the child's entitlement under the Education Reform Order. A Parents' Support Group in the school has helped 'funding' in the past but it is stressed that no child will be disadvantaged in any way, if parents choose not to make a contribution.

The school may take part in 'optional extras' which are not connected with the school's formal curriculum, such as visits to a museum. Charges will be made for these, but it is again stressed that failure to participate in these will not affect a child's performance at school.



School Website

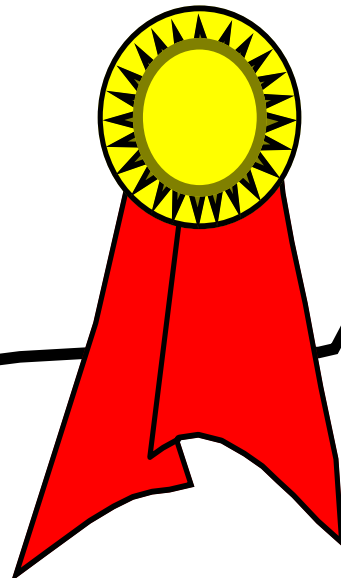
Our school website which is regularly updated contains lots of information about life in St Mary's Primary School. It can be accessed by logging onto www.stmaryspsdechomet.com . You will find a copy of our most recent Etí Inspection Report in the 'Parent Area'.

FINAL WORD

Now that you have read this School Prospectus, I hope you will have an idea of the rich and varied life your child will have whilst attending St Mary's Primary School, Dechomet. You can rest assured that his/her well-being will be our concern at all times during his/her years with us.

With Sincere Good Wishes

*Mrs Oonagh McNally
Principal*



Children Learn what they Live

*If children live with criticism
They learn to condemn*

*If children live with hostility
They learn to fight*

*If children live with ridicule
They learn to be shy*

*If children live with shame
They learn to feel guilty*

*If children live with tolerance
They learn to be patient*

*If children live with encouragement
They learn confidence*

*If they live with praise
They learn justice*

*If children live with security
They learn to have faith*

*If children live with approval
They learn to like themselves*

*If children live with acceptance and friendship
They learn to find love in the world*