

ST. JOHN'S EARLY YEARS' CLASS



**CLASS
HANDBOOK**

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S EARLY YEARS' CLASS

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am delighted to welcome you and your child to our class. As you enrol your child, you will come to realise that the staff and I wish to work in partnership with you in providing the best educational opportunities for your child. Throughout the session there will be several opportunities for you to actively participate in the various activities of the class and to communicate with the class staff.

Please read the information in this handbook, which may provide answers to any questions you have about the class.

If you require further information or explanation, please do not hesitate to speak with a member of the class staff or to contact me at the school office.

Sincere regards,

Mrs Karen McAllister
HEAD TEACHER

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES STATEMENT

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Our Overall Aim

To work in a sustainable way with our partners to build a better North Ayrshire in which all citizens can participate, learn and contribute to the community.

Our Values

- Seeking continuous improvement in our services.
- Managing our resources efficiently and effectively.
- Working with community partners and external agencies.
- Promoting respect, fairness, inclusion and equality.
- Being a good employer.
- Engaging with stakeholders.

Our Priorities

- Increasing educational attainment and achievement.
- Developing confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors and successful learners.
- Developing skills for work.
- Promoting better health and more physical activity.
- Reducing disadvantage and promoting equality.
- Delivering cultural and learning opportunities to all sections of the community.
- Supporting the professional development of staff.
- Providing high quality facilities and resources.

St. John's Early Years' Class Aims

In our class we aim to:

- provide a safe and stimulating environment in which children can feel happy, secure and confident
- enable successful learners by encouraging, through playful activity, the emotional, social, physical, creative and intellectual development of each child in our care
- encourage informed, positive attitudes towards each other and towards others in our local community and our world

Non-Denominational Status of the Class

The class is non-denominational. We respect and warmly welcome children and families of all religions, faiths, cultures and beliefs.

Equalities

In line with North Ayrshire Council Policy, education within the school is open to all pupils regardless of sex, age, religion, race, disability or any other potential barrier and all reasonable measures will be taken to ensure that the curriculum is available to every child. If parents have any concerns about any aspect of this in relation to their own child, they should contact the school to discuss the matter.



Schools also have a duty to promote equality and to eliminate racist and other discriminatory behaviours.

Our school has a policy on equal opportunities and through our curriculum and resources promote positive images of the various groups in society. We go to great lengths to support our school community with understanding and care.

All pre five services should reflect the council's equal opportunities policies and be anti-racist, anti-sexist, multi-cultural recognising the rights of both men and women to work or to care for children. Provision takes account of the needs of children with disabilities or chronic illnesses. These principles are reflected in the criteria used to admit children to the class and in the curriculum of all the early years' classes.

The staff aims to provide a learning environment which encourages everyone to develop to his/her full potential and where individual differences will be acknowledged and respected.

All children and adults will be treated with respect in a just and fair way. All staff follow North Ayrshire Council's Equal Opportunities and Race Equality Policy.

Class Information

Early Years Class,
St. John's Primary,
Morrison Avenue
Stevenston
KA20 4HH

TELEPHONE NO. 01294 464557

Staff Team

Head Teacher: Karen McAllister

Depute Head Teacher: Joanne Boyle

Senior Early Years Practitioners:
Kaiyliegh Paterson
June Abraham

Lead Early Years Practitioner: Carly Montgomery

Early Years Practitioners:
Marie Garven
Lindsay Dewar

Modern Apprentice: Brandon Shaw

House Keeper: Ellen Keane

We welcome students from universities and colleges for training placements. On occasions secondary pupils may gain a work experience placement in the class.

600 Hour Establishment

Our class provides 600 hours each year of free Early Education and Childcare.

Term Time Model

The Term Time Model means that you will not have Early Education and Childcare sessions during school holidays. You are entitled to 5 sessions per week. Our session times are Monday to Friday 8.45am until 12.15 pm and 1pm-4.30 pm.

Our Session times

Please try to ensure that you are on time to pick up your child as it can be very upsetting for her/him if you are late. If for any unavoidable reason you are going to be late, please phone the school and we will be able to reassure your child that you will be there to collect him/her as soon as possible. Please be aware that staff finish at 18.00 and the building is locked up at this time.

Meals and Snacks

Lunch will be provided for children. Meals are served in our very own dining area. Menus are available for parents to take home. If your child has any allergies or dietary requirements, please inform staff so that we can ensure all needs are being met.

The hot meals have been very successful. Most children eat very well. It has enhanced their ability to use cutlery very well. The children enjoy eating meals together and with staff. We have great discussions about tastes, textures, manners, the need to eat and drink well etc. It is a lovely experience for children and staff.

Snack is provided in both morning and afternoon sessions. A selection of healthy foods and fruit is always available. Water is available at all times, both indoors and outside. Milk is also provided at snack times.

Age and Range of Children in the Class

The class caters for children aged from 3 to 5 years. Children who receive a place will be able to attend the class the term after their third birthday. If your child is 3 on 1st of March or after, their starting date will be the August following their third birthday.

Admissions Policy

All places are allocated in line with the Council's Admissions Policy and the staff will be happy to advise you on how this policy operates when you apply for a place for your child. A leaflet dealing with the Council's Policy is also available from all establishments. If you wish a copy, please ask for one.

Accommodation:

The class is housed within the school. It consists of a variety of diverse spaces. There is a large playroom that encompasses the children's toilets, walk in storage cupboards and a kitchen area for snack. In this room messy play, art/craft, construction, loose part play, home corner etc are available.

This room has patio doors that open into a large canopied area. We store all weather suits and wellies here for all children. There are a variety of activities housed within this area: - water/sand tray, musical instruments, chalkboard, art, construction etc. Children can have an outdoor experience here regardless of the weather. Access to a garden area is provided from the canopy. Our garden offers numerous opportunities for large physical play, role-play, climbing, digging, planting and many more exciting activities.

Our quiet room is tastefully decorated in muted tones and furnishings. The lighting can be adjusted to give children a lesser sensory stimulating environment if required. Children have access to many resources and activities that promote a more focussed space to explore literacy and numeracy.

Our class has its own large dining area with a kitchen. This area can also be used for activities that require a larger space to work in. The children enjoy playing ring games in this area.

Our Parent's Room has a small kitchen, fridge and tea/coffee making facilities. We really want you to use this space as it belongs to you. You might want to come in for a cuppa and a blether with other parents, staff members or just have a space where you would like to chill out. There is a toilet that is accessible to all, with free sanitary products.

Within the school the children have access to the gym hall.

There is disabled access to the school and Early Years Class with ramped access to all and a wheel-chair lift to the lower level gym. Disabled toilet facilities are available.

Registration of Applicants

Registration dates, usually the end of January/beginning of February will be announced in the local press and at various local venues e.g. The Surgery, Library and shops. Places will be allocated in accordance with the Council's admissions Policy just prior to the Easter holidays. Please see the Parents' Leaflet for further details.

Enrolment Procedures

Application forms can be picked up from the school office. If your child receives a place in the class you will be notified by letter and invited to make a visit with him/her to meet other children and to become familiar with the class environment and staff. On this visit you will be given a starting date for your child.

Attendance at Early Years Class

If your child is unable to attend class, for any reason, please make sure you notify staff. A telephone call, a written note or a message passed on by another parent is sufficient. Please let staff know when we can expect your child back at class. Regular attendance is important for the following reasons:

- the early years curriculum is carefully planned to ensure continuity and progression for your child.
- patterns of regular attendance need to be established for children as this will be important throughout their education.

Arrival and Collection of children

It is expected that a responsible adult will bring a child to and from the class. **Please note that no person under 16 years is eligible to collect your child.**

In the interest of your child's safety we would ask that the person dropping off your child at the start of each session write on the allocated space on the register, who will be picking up your child. When you enrol your child for the Early Years class you will be asked which adults are eligible to collect your child. It would be helpful if staff were introduced to these people. If there is any change, please try to inform the school of the person who will be collecting your child and if possible provide a description of the person or set up a password system. This avoids difficult situations when **a child cannot be allowed to leave with an adult who is a stranger to the staff.**

Child Protection

North Ayrshire Council has Child Protection Policy and Guidelines. Staff in Education Services work with other agencies to keep children safe. All school staff receive training each year. Staff must report any concerns they have. In every situation the welfare of the child overrides other considerations.

Security

North Ayrshire Council has introduced procedures to ensure the safety and security of children and staff when attending or working in a school/class. A number of security measures are used including the use of visitor's books, badges and escorts while visitors are within school class buildings. Normally anyone calling at a class for any reason will be asked to report to the school office. The staff will then make any necessary arrangements in connection with the visit to the class.

Procedures relating to anyone visiting this class are:-

- to go to the entrance if arriving at the beginning of the class session or collecting your child at the end of the session. The buzzer has CCTV so staff can ensure that the door is opened to recognised people.
- out-with the class arrival and collection times all visitors should go to the primary school main entrance and ring to gain access to the building.

Transport

Transport is not normally provided for children attending nursery. The Council, may, however, provide transport to and from the class for children with additional support needs who may require to travel some distance to take up their place. All such arrangements are subject to regular review. Transport is also provided to ensure that children living in rural areas have access to early year's classes. Transport will be provided for pre-school children where the nearest validated class is more than 5 miles away from home.

Emergencies

We make every effort to maintain a full educational service but, on some occasions circumstances arise which lead to disruption. Nurseries may be affected by, for example, severe weather, temporary interruption of transport, power failures or difficulties of fuel supply. In such cases we will do all we can to let you know about the details of closure or reopening. We will keep in touch by using phone calls, letters, SMS Texts, Twitter, notices in local shops and community centres, announcements in local churches and announcements in the press and on West FM.

Appropriate Clothing

Most children have the best fun when they are doing messy work. We will always try to make sure they are wearing aprons but accidents happen so please dress your child in suitable clothes. Please provide a full change of clothing for your child, including socks. Clothes should be comfortable and easy to manage to assist your child's independence. We ask that you purchase a pair of sand shoes or slippers to be changed into upon entering the class. There are canvas bags provided on each peg for shoe/clothing storage. The class has rain jackets and wellingtons for children but please make sure your child has his/her own suitable outdoor clothing if you prefer. North Ayrshire Council has a dress code policy that states that children in educational establishments should not wear team colours.

Safety

In the interest of safety it would be appreciated if all jewellery could be removed before children come to the class each day.

Insurance Policy

It is appreciated that parents and pupils can be distressed over the occasional loss of children's clothing and/or personal belongings. Parents are asked to assist in this area by ensuring that all items of clothing have the child's name on them and that valuable items of clothing or personal belongings are not brought to school/class. The authority does not carry insurance to cover loss of such items.

Medication

If your child is in need of medication during his/her time at the class you should discuss his/her requirements with the Senior Practitioner. You will be asked to complete a form that authorises staff to administer medication to your child.

If your child has any medical condition, you will be required to note this down in the admission form. The Senior Practitioner will discuss this with you, and work together with you to make a care plan to ensure that your child's needs are met.

If Your Child Becomes Unwell

Please notify the school office if your child is suffering from childhood illnesses e.g. measles, mumps etc. It is a medical requirement that the parents of some pupils are informed if contagious or infectious diseases are active in the school. The staff will also give you guidance as to how long your child should be absent, referring to the Community Health guidelines.

If your child is suffering from sickness or diarrhoea please ensure he/she is kept from class until he/she has had a clear 48 hours. This prevents other children becoming infected.

If your child becomes ill while at class we will try to contact you by telephone. If we cannot contact you in person we will try to get in touch with one of the emergency contact persons you named when you enrolled your child. **Please ensure that contact numbers are up to date.** We will keep your child as comfortable as possible until you are able to collect him/her.

Minor Accidents and Upsets

Any minor accidents will be dealt with by staff, and you will be informed of the action taken by a member of staff when you come to pick up your child. You may be required to sign an accident or incident form if staff feel that this is needed. If it is felt necessary for your child to see a doctor we will follow the procedure above to try and contact you. If we are unable to contact you we will take your child to the doctor or hospital as required.

Visit to the Early Years Class by Medical Staff

Eye tests are carried out by the optometrist in your child's pre-school year.

Looking After Teeth

The children participate in the daily routine of brushing their teeth after snack time. Our aim is to foster good habits in looking after teeth. The dental hygienist will visit the class and talk to your child. At enrolment time all parents are requested to complete a consent form to permit their child to participate in this programme.

Promoting Positive Relationships

In our class we focus on the principles of Getting It Right for Every Child. Each child is entitled to be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

In early years it is of vital importance that each child is cherished for the special little person that they are. As a staff, we passionately believe in nurturing our little ones. We know that being an attachment figure is a priority as we understand that when children feel safe and secure, they are more able to form positive relationships with others. Connection underpins all aspects of our children's care. We use restorative conversations to help children with distressed behaviours, to understand the need to follow rules to stay safe, why they need to look after the class environment etc.

The Class Curriculum

Learning in the Early Years

Children learn most effectively through their play and children will be given a variety of experiences; some activities will be "free play" whereby children choose areas to visit and find out things for themselves. Other activities will be more structured; children supported by an adult are encouraged to experiment and develop their own ideas.

The play activities organised in the class will fall into one of the following areas:

- Expressive Arts
- Literacy
- Numeracy and Mathematics
- Health and Wellbeing
- R.M.E
- Science
- Social Studies
- Technologies

There will be a balance of activities covering the above areas to ensure your child is gaining a variety of learning experiences and that we are catering for your child's development needs. You will therefore see your child playing in the sand, painting, making dough models, reading a book, singing songs, playing matching games, going to the gym hall or playing outside. All these things contribute to your child's development.

Outings and Excursions

When outings or excursions are planned for the children, the staff will advise you in advance. You will be asked to complete consent forms that give your permission for your child's participation. Please note that children cannot take part in outings unless completed consent forms have been submitted by their parent/carer. Parents are invited to accompany children on the outings. Due to the guidelines on taking young children on excursions many parents are required; adult/child ratio for class excursions is one adult to two class pupils. Normally parents enjoy this wonderful opportunity.

Assessment

Assessment of developmental milestones takes place while your child is involved in many of the everyday play activities. We concentrate on what your child can do and celebrate the achievements with your child. Snapshots of your child's development are kept together in your child's folder. Staff build up a picture of your child's development and progress through observation and interaction with your child.

Parents are invited to discuss their child's progress four times per year, in September, January, April and June. These meetings are very informal and are an excellent opportunity for parents and staff to share information, comment on progress and negotiate areas where extra help and support may be desired. Pre-school children will receive a written report in the summer session and this will be discussed at the June Parents' Meeting.

Supporting Children

Through ongoing and continuous assessment staff very quickly notice if any children are experiencing difficulties. Parents will be contacted and invited to discuss the difficulties with their child's Key Worker. Children will be carefully observed while taking part in activities in order to identify the nature and extent of additional support needs. Parents will be invited to become involved with the staff in structuring and implementing a programme tailored to suit the needs of the child. Where it is felt additional support is required for a child, over and above the existing provision, the Head Teacher, EY Staff and parents would meet to discuss this. Arrangements would then be made to liaise with the appropriate service i.e. speech and language, psychological or medical service.

Psychological Services

What is the Psychological Service?

The Psychological Service is a statutory part of North Ayrshire Council's Educational Services and is mainly staffed by educational psychologists who use their knowledge of psychology, learning and education to provide a service through schools and pre-five establishments. They work together with staff, teachers, parents and other professionals to help children and young people reach their full potential, particularly in educational settings.

When does an educational psychologist become involved?

St. John's Primary School and Early Years' Class already has a system in place for identifying, monitoring and reviewing the progress of all children and young people. As part of this wider system of support, each school has a link educational psychologist who visits on a regular basis. Our educational psychologist is Kim Whitehead.

When concerns arise about a particular pupil the school/EYC takes action to address these concerns. If the concerns continue, staff may have an informal discussion with the educational psychologist. However, if the educational psychologist is to become more involved this will be discussed with the parent/s beforehand by school staff and a joint meeting arranged.

Through this process the educational psychologist can contribute to the ongoing assessment and support for the child.

Transferring from Class to Primary

At the end of your child's pre-school year information regarding your child's progress and achievement will be passed on to the receiving primary. Each primary will have its own arrangements for induction.

In St. John's, children in their pre-school year may attend assemblies, have opportunities to play in the playground, visit the different areas of the school and have informal meetings with the wider school staff. Parents and children will also attend an induction programme in the primary where they meet with staff, become familiar with the primary 1 classroom and open areas, and get to know their classmates for the coming year. The induction time is also beneficial to parents as they have the opportunity to get to know each other in an informal setting over a cup of coffee.

Data Protection

Transferring Educational Data About Pupils: Education authorities and the Scottish Education Department (SEED) have collected data about pupils on paper forms for many years. We are now working together to transfer data electronically through the ScotXed programme.

What pupil data will be collected and transferred? Data on each pupil is collected by local authorities and SEED. The data collected and transferred covers areas such as date of birth, postcode, registration for free school meals, whether a pupil is looked after by his/her authority, special educational needs including disability, attendance, absence and exclusions from school. Pupil names and addresses are collected by the school and education authority but they **are not** passed to SEED. Your postcode is the only part of your address that is transferred.



Data is held securely and no information on individual pupils can or would be published by SEED. It is used for statistical and research purposes only.

Providing national identity and ethnic background data is entirely voluntary. You can choose the 'not disclosed' option if you do not want to provide this data. However, we hope that the explanation contained in this message and on our website will help you understand the importance of providing the data.

Why do we need your data? In order to make the best decisions about how to improve our education service, SEED and education authorities need accurate, up-to-date data about our pupils. We are keen to help all our pupils do well in all aspects of school life and achieve better exam results. Accurate and up-to-date data allows SEED, education authorities and schools to:

- plan and deliver better policies for the benefit of all pupils
- plan and deliver better policies for the benefit of specific groups of pupils
- better understand some of the factors that influence pupil attainment and achievement
- target resources better

Your data protection rights: The collection, transfer, processing and sharing of Scotxed data is done in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018). We also comply with the National Statistics Code of Practice requirements and other legislation related to safeguarding the confidentiality of data. The GDPR Act gives you the right to know how we will use your data. This message can give only a brief description of how we use data. Fuller details of the uses of pupil data can be found on the Scotxed website. (www.scotxed.net)

SEED will not publish or release any information that allows an individual pupil to be identified. Data will not be used by SEED to take any action in respect of any individual pupils. Data will only be shared with **bona fide** partners, such as HMIE and the SQA. Any sharing will be done under conditions of strict control and with the prior agreement of the Data Controller.

Concerns: If you have any concerns about the Scotxed data collections you can email the Data Controller, Pete Whitehouse, at EDData.Controller@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to the ScotXed Support Office, SEED, Area 1B, Victoria Quay, Leith, EH6 6QQ. Alternative versions of this page are available on request from the ScotXed Support Office, in other languages, audio tape, braille and large print. Please allow up to 10 days for requests to be processed.

Want more information? Further details about ScotXed data exchanges are available on the ScotXed website, www.scotxed.net. The website also contains answers to commonly asked questions about ScotXed.

Home – Class Partnership

Home – Class Links

Once your child has been allocated a place, arrangements will be made for you and your child to visit the class to meet the staff and children.

When you bring your child to the class daily you will be able to see the early years' practitioners and exchange news or information about anything special which has happened. In this way we can build up links with the home and help your child to feel secure in the class environment. The Senior Practitioner will let you know who your child's key worker will be. In addition, she will assess how your child is progressing and keep you informed.

Parents are welcome to assist in the class if desired. Anyone interested, should discuss this with a member of staff.

During the session you will be invited to come in for Stay and Play experiences. The children really enjoy showing their environment and favourite activities to you. We also have an active parent group which is led by our family learning team on Thursdays. Activities include Make and Taste sessions, PEEP groups, arts/crafts and many other exciting experiences. Again, the children love to have parent/s, Grandparents, Aunties etc to come along and spend this lovely time together.

On occasions the staff will ask for parent helpers to assist with special events e.g. setting out the party food, at Christmas time, Sports Day and excursions outside school.

There will also be an opportunity to attend an open session at the class to see what is going on. Explanations of the various activities will be given and your child will be able to show what he/she has been doing.

We have learning bags/folders that will be sent home with your child from time to time. Each activity will be clearly explained and we hope that you and your child have lots of fun learning together.

Working Together to Support Learning

In the class we recognise that parents are the first educators of their children. We are delighted to be involved in your child's education. It is therefore necessary that every parent continues to work with us in providing the best educational experiences for their child. We will keep you informed of what is happening in the class through newsletters, the noticeboard in the class cloakroom and our Twitter account @ StjohnsRC.

Sometimes your child will bring home a painting, drawing or a model. It is important and beneficial to your child that you talk about what he/she has made. Your child should be given the opportunity to chat to you about what is happening in the class on a daily basis. Your interest and the praise you give your child for all the good work he/she is doing is important to your child's development.

Should you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff.

Fundraising

From time to time the class organise fund raising events. Participation in such events is voluntary. However, these events are usually fun for the children and the money raised is used to purchase items for the class or subsidise outings of entertainment for the children. Parents will always be notified of the amount collected and how the money has been utilised. Parents' ideas for fundraising are most welcome please let staff know.

Sun Cream

In the Spring and Summer months it is important that children come to nursery wearing sun screen as they will be playing outside without large jackets, suits etc. You will be asked to sign a permission form for staff to apply additional sun cream throughout the day.

The Wider Community

Class – Community Links

St. John's Early Years' class has been developing good links with the wider community. Police, fire officers, local librarians, dental health team and many others play an active part in your child's education. When the weather is good we also try to take the children out into the community to make them more aware of their local environment. On occasion the class welcomes students and secondary school pupils in work experience placements.

Links With Primary School

Throughout the year the children in the class become involved in some of the events in our primary school, for example, participating in our Christmas Show, and joining the assemblies and other celebrations. On occasions the children will visit primary classes and sometimes primary pupils will venture to the class to share stories or news. This makes the transition into school very easy for the children who will be attending St. John's Primary. We also liaise with the local primaries in Stevenston, which your child may attend on leaving our class. In the summer term we invite the teachers from other primary schools to meet with the children who will be moving to Primary One classes.

Listening and Learning

It is the policy of North Ayrshire Council to try to encourage feedback on the education service from parents and pupils. This is part of our overall commitment to giving the best possible service and to working in partnership.

We are therefore very interested in feedback of all kinds, whether it is compliments, suggestions or complaints. If you wish to register a comment of any type about the school class you can do this by writing, telephoning or making an appointment to see someone. All feedback is welcome and helps us keep in touch.

If, in particular, you have a complaint about the school/class, please let us know. It is better that these things are shared openly and resolved fairly, rather than being allowed to damage the home/school/class relationship. There will be no negative consequences arising from making a complaint and we will deal with the issue as confidentially as possible. If we have made a mistake we will apologise quickly and clearly and try to put things right.

There are some things which you should take note of in relation to making complaint:

- It is helpful if complaints are made initially to the Senior Early Years' Practitioner, Depute Head Teacher or Head Teacher. This makes sure that the school/class knows what is going on and has an opportunity to respond and resolve the issue.
- We will try to respond as quickly as possible, but often issues are complex and need time to investigate. It is therefore helpful if you can give details of the issue and ask for an early appointment to discuss it.
- If you are not satisfied with our response then you still have the right to take up the matter further with the Head of Education and Youth Employment at Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 BEE (01294324400).

You also have the right to raise unresolved concerns with your local councillor or MSP/MP.

They can be contacted at Member Services:

North Ayrshire Council, 3rd Floor Cunninghame House, IRVINE, KA12 8EE
 Tel: 01294 324100

Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS)

Our Class is registered with the Care Inspectorate. If your concerns have not been resolved by the above procedure then you may wish to contact: **The Care Inspectorate, Sovereign House, Academy Road, IRVINE, KA12 8RL. Telephone No: 01294 323920**

IMPORTANT ADDRESSES:

Audrey Sutton Corporate Director Education and Youth Employment North Ayrshire Council Cunninghame House IRVINE KA12 8EE Tel. No. 01294 324411	Andrew McLelland and Caroline Amos Heads of Service Education and Youth Employment North Ayrshire Council Cunninghame House IRVINE KA12 8EE Tel. No. 01294 324413
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Although this information is correct at the time of printing, there could be changes affecting any of the matters dealt with in this document

- a) before the commencement or during the course of the school year in question
- b) in relation to subsequent school years.

Mrs Karen McAllister
 Head Teacher