



This Prospectus is designed to provide you with all the information you need about our school – but inevitably there may be other things you need to know or would like to discuss. We are always ready to meet with parents or carers. A telephone call to the office is the best way to arrange an appointment.

We welcome all new parents and children to the school and hope you enjoy your years as part of our school community.

Lisa Huotari
Headteacher

Our Mission Statement

Our School Mission is what God sent us into the world to do - to help build His kingdom through learning, playing and making friends together.

The tools we will use to do this are:

Caring, Sharing, Love, Trust and Respect.



Religious Education

Stella Maris was built to serve the parish of Our Lady Help of Christians, Folkestone, and St Joseph, Cheriton. Its commitment to serving the local faith community is central to its purpose – and the role of Religious Education within that context is crucial to its success.

The Religious Education that takes place in the classroom is supported and experienced by the children in other aspects of their daily life here:

- when they are taught to love one another as Christ has loved them, they experience that from other members of the school community;
- when they are taught about the forgiveness of a loving God, they experience such forgiveness at school;
- when they are taught that God's goodness to us is a cause for rejoicing, they experience such joy at school.

Parents send their children to Stella Maris because they want them to share in the experience of a faith community. Our Religious Education programme (based on the scheme *The Way, the Truth and the Life*) provides them with both the knowledge needed to become an active member of that community and the experiences that will help their faith take root more firmly in their lives.



We respect the right of any parents wishing to withdraw their child(ren) for the whole or part of collective worship and teachers have the right not to attend acts of collective worship. However, as Stella Maris is a Catholic School, it is expected that parents are in agreement to their children attending acts of worship unless a specific request is made for their child to be withdrawn.

School Organisation

The school is a one-form entry primary school, which can take up to 30 children in each year group.

- Imps' Class is our Reception Class and is our Foundation Stage
- Pixies' Class and Elves' Class are Year 1 and Year 2 respectively and make up our Key Stage 1
- Hobbits', Dragons', Griffins' and Unicorns' Classes are Years 3 to 6 respectively and make up our Key Stage 2



Admissions Policy

The governors of Stella Maris Catholic Primary School will use the following Admissions Criteria for admission in the academic year 2018/2019. It is our intention to work within the admission scheme being operated by Kent Local Authority (LA).

Admissions to the school are made by the governing body.

Pupils will be admitted without reference to aptitude or ability.

The governors intend to admit 30 children in each year group. This is our Published Admission Number.

The governors provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year; parents may also request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

Requests for admission outside of the normal age group should be made to the Headteacher as early as possible in the admissions round associated with that child's date of birth. This will allow the school sufficient time to make a decision before the closing date. Parents are not expected to provide evidence to support their request to defer their application: however, where provided it must be specific to the child in question. This might include medical or Educational Psychologist reports. There is no legal requirement for this medical or educational evidence to be secured from an appropriate professional, but failure to provide this may impede the school's ability to agree to deferral. Parents are required to complete an application for the normal point of entry at the

same time, in case their request is declined. This application can be cancelled if the school agrees to accept a deferred application for entry into Year R the following year.

OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

Where the school is named in the statement of special educational needs, the governing body has a duty to admit the child to the school, without reference to the criteria and procedures outlined in this Admissions Policy. Before the application of oversubscription criteria, children with a Statement of Special Educational Need (or Education, Health and Care Plan) which names the school will be admitted. As a result of this, the published admissions number will be reduced accordingly.

Where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied:

- Looked After or Previously Looked After Children
- Baptised members of the Catholic Church with a brother or sister in the school at the time of entry
- Other baptised members of the Catholic Church
- The presence of a brother or a sister in the school at the time of entry;
- Distance from home to school, measured in a straight line.

In the event of any of the above criteria being oversubscribed, priority will be given based on distance, with the closest being given higher priority. In the unlikely event that two or more children in all other ways have equal eligibility for the last available place at the school, the names will be issued a number and drawn randomly to decide which child should be given the place.

ADMISSIONS TIMETABLE

In addition to the Common Application Form (CAF) supplied by the LA, the Supplementary Information Form (available from the school or the LA) should be completed and sent to the Headteacher at the school not later than the closing date published by the LA. This should be done even if the CAF is completed online.

The Admissions timetable for the school is the same as the timetable adopted by Kent LA. After a place has been offered, the school reserves the right to withdraw the place in the following circumstances:

- When a parent has failed to respond to an offer within a reasonable time; or
- When a parent has failed to notify the school of important changes to the application information; or
- When the place has been offered on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application from a parent.

IN-YEAR APPLICATIONS

Applications for a place at the school in-year must be made using the common application form of the LA where the child resides. This form must be returned to the school. The school's supplementary form should also be completed to enable the governors to rank the application in the event of there being more than one application for a place. The governors will use the same criteria to rank the application as those listed above. The offer of a place at the school will be made by the Governors. In the event of the Governors deciding that a place cannot be offered, parents will be offered the opportunity of placing their child's name on the waiting list. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

Parents have the right to appeal against any refusal by the governors to admit their child, by writing to the Clerk to the Governors at the school by the date specified in the timetable adopted

by Kent LA, or within 21 days of such refusal being notified to them for applications made at other times.

If parents are unsuccessful in applying for a place at the school, details will be held on a prioritised waiting list – this will be in rank order, according to the oversubscription criteria outlined above. If places subsequently become available at the school for whatever reason (parents moving out of the area, for example) the place will be offered to the child who is top priority on the waiting list. Parents will be invited to say whether they wish their child to be included on the waiting list for Stella Maris if they are offered a place at an alternative school. The prioritised waiting list will be maintained by the school.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Looked After or Previously Looked After Children: children under the age of 18 years for whom the LA provides accommodation by agreement with their parents/carers (Section 22 of the Children Act 1989) or who are subject of a care order under Part IV of the Act. This applies equally to children who immediately after being looked after by the local authority became subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order (as defined by Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 or Section 8 or 14A of the Children Act 1989).

Brothers or sisters already in the school: a brother or sister attending the school when the child starts. In this context, brother or sister means children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers and sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters. The sibling link is maintained as long as the family live at the same address as when the first child applied, or has moved closer to the school than when the first child was offered a place, or has moved to an address that is less than 2 miles from the school using the distance measured by the method outlined in the distance/nearness of children's home to school criterion.

Distance from home to school: the distance will be measured in a straight line from the home to the school. The measurement will be obtained from Kent LA, using the service they offer to local schools. A block of flats has a single address point reference, so applicants living in the same block will be regarded as living the same distance away from the school. In the unlikely event that two or more children live in the same block and in all other ways have equal eligibility for the last available place at the school, the names will be issued a number and drawn randomly to decide which child should be given the place.

Home: a pupil's home address is considered to be a residential property that is the child's only or main residence and not an address at which your child might sometimes stay or sleep due to your own domestic or special arrangements. The address must be the pupil's home address on the day you completed your application form and which is *either* owned by the child's parent, parents or guardian, *or* leased to or rented by the child's parent, parents or guardian under a lease or written rental agreement. If parents live separately from their partner but share responsibility for their child, and the child lives at two different addresses during the week, the home address will be regarded as the one at which the child sleeps for the majority of weekdays.

Baptised Catholics: evidence of baptism will be sought in the form of a copy of the baptismal certificate. The Governors may accept a written reference from a Catholic priest, which confirms that the child is a baptised Catholic, if a baptismal certificate is not available. 'Catholics' includes members of the Ordinariate and the Latin and Oriental Rite Churches that are in union with the Bishop of Rome.

The School Day

This is our usual timetable. Sometimes we have to change arrangements for playtime and lunchtime because of in-school activities, but the starting and finishing times for the school day are always the same, unless we have notified parents in advance of any alternative arrangements.

Morning Sessions

- 8:45 a.m. Children come into school for the start of the morning session.
- Lessons begin at 8:50 a.m.

NB: the registers close at 9:00 a.m. Any children arriving after that time but before 9:15 a.m. will be marked 'unauthorized late' in the school register: those arriving after 9:15 a.m. will be marked 'unauthorized absent'.

Morning break

- 10:20 a.m. until 10:40 a.m.

Lunch Times

- Infant lunch time: 12 noon until 12:45 p.m.
- Junior lunch time: 12:30 p.m. until 1:15 p.m.

Afternoon Session

- Infant play time: 2:00 p.m. until 2:15 p.m.

End of the school day

- 3:15 p.m.

Before School

Please note that the school only provides supervision of children before 8:30 a.m. for those who attend the Breakfast Club. If your children do not have breakfast at school, please don't bring them before 8:30 a.m. If you do, we cannot be held responsible for your child's safety. This is also unfair on those who do pay for the Breakfast Club - parents who persistently allow their children to arrive on foot before 8:30 a.m., may be asked to pay for attendance at the Breakfast Club.

Attendance

If your child is absent from school for any reason, please remember that we need some form of official notification. The best way to do this is to 'phone the school office and select option 1 to leave a message reporting your child absent. Alternatively, you can send a letter into school with them on their return. A verbal message from your child, however, is not acceptable.

It is worth remembering that children constantly absent from school without good reason are, generally speaking, less likely to succeed in life than those with a good attendance record.

Family holidays should be taken during the school holidays, and we are only able to authorise a **maximum of 10 days additional leave per year** during term time, provided parents fill in the proper Application for Exceptional Leave (copies are available from the school office).

Authorisation will only be given when parents can show that there are exceptional reasons for taking time out of school during the term and a child's attendance record otherwise is good. Parents of children in Year 6 should remember that we cannot authorise **any** absence apart from absences due to sickness during SATs week.

Penalty fines

Penalty fines can now be issued to parents whose children regularly miss school without good reason.

Penalty Notices are issued in consultation with the Educational Welfare Officer. On receipt of the Notice, the penalty is £60 rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 42 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 42 day period may result in prosecution by the local authority.

The following circumstances will be considered appropriate reasons for the issuing of Penalty Notices:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Excessive term-time holidays
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed (registers close at 9:00 a.m.)

If you need to collect your child for an appointment (at the doctors, for example) please make sure that a member of staff knows about it beforehand. We require a copy of letters/appointment cards for hospital appointments.

Health and Safety at school

We try to make our school as safe and healthy an environment as possible. The children are encouraged to develop good habits for health and hygiene and many of our school rules have been formulated to protect them from potential hazards. Regular fire drills are held and children are expected to move sensibly and carefully around the school site at all times.

Accidents

Accidents do happen, however, and if children suffer a minor accident in school they will be attended to by a first aider. If the accident is more serious, particularly if it involves a bump on the head, parents are informed by a note or in person. If a more serious accident occurs it is vital that we are able to contact parents/carers immediately, in case the child needs to go to hospital. It is therefore essential that you keep the school up to date with changes to contact and emergency numbers.

Illness

When children are taken ill at school we will contact you so they can be taken home. In such cases, please obtain details of the symptoms from the school office.

Children who suffer from asthma and need to use an inhaler should be able to use them under supervision. Inhalers will be kept in the school office, readily to hand whenever needed.

Medicine

Medicines should only be administered at school when it would be detrimental to a child's health or school attendance not to do so;

No child under 16 should be given prescription or non-prescription medicines without their parents written consent (see template B) - except in exceptional circumstances where the medicine has been prescribed to the child without the knowledge of the parents.

With parental written consent Stella Maris will administer non-prescription medicines (but not those medicines containing aspirin unless prescribed by a doctor). Medication, e.g. for pain relief, should never be administered without first checking maximum dosage and when the previous dose was taken. If the medication is to be administered 'in case of need', parents should be informed whenever that takes place.

Full details of our policy for Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs can be found on our website.

School Medical Service

The children regularly receive routine medical screening at school from the school nurse, doctor and dentist. We will let you know when this is due.

School Security

The main entrance to the school is fitted with a security system. If it is necessary to take your child out of school during the school day, please wait in reception and a member of staff will fetch your child. When dropping your child off at school, please make sure you leave the site promptly. The playground gate will be shut at 8.50 a.m. to keep all the children safe.

CARS IN PARKFIELD ROAD

Cars present a real hazard at the end of the school day. Please try not to bring your car up Parkfield Road. If it is impossible for you to walk to school to collect your child, consider parking in the space opposite the road, on the other side of the stream. Whenever you drive up to the school you should remember the speed limit (5 m.p.h.) as children may be leaving the school at any time for a number of reasons.

You should also use common sense when parking - in particular, avoid blocking the pavement for parents with pushchairs and do not park on the yellow lines.

Equal Opportunities

Equal opportunities are very important to us at Stella Maris. As Christ's teachings are the foundation of everything we do, we are committed to promoting:

- The uniqueness of the individual – every person is a unique individual, created in God's image and loved by Him. We are therefore committed to treat every person with equality of esteem and the respect and dignity due to a child of God.
- The search for excellence – we are called to seek perfection in all aspects of our lives. We are committed to ensuring that all are given every opportunity to develop their talents to the full.
- The education of the whole person – as members of our Christian community we strive to provide pupils with all the skills and attitudes they will need to live in a culturally diverse society.
- The education of all – we accept the duty to care for all within our community, with preferential consideration for the poor, and to ensure that we provide for those who are socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged.

Because of this, we are committed to:

- actively tackling all forms of inequality, including racial discrimination, and promoting equal opportunities and good race relations;
- encouraging, supporting, and helping all pupils and staff to reach their potential; and
- working with parents and carers, and with the wider community, to tackle racial discrimination, and to follow and promote good practice.

Racial Incidents

No form of racial harassment or abuse will be tolerated at school. Measures will always be taken to deal with such incidents immediately and seriously.

We also strive to help the children understand and value other cultures, as part of our Personal, Social and Health Education programme.

Special Education Needs

While recognising that in many ways all the children have special needs, we do make special provision for those who have particular difficulties which could hold back their progress at school, to help them overcome any barriers to their learning. Additional funding provided by the Government for children identified as having Special Educational Needs is used to support these children in a variety of ways. Currently, we employ thirteen Teaching Assistants (TAs) to provide support both in the classroom and with smaller groups.



The work of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) department is co-ordinated by Mrs Archibald, the Inclusion Co-ordinator, in accordance with our Special Needs policy. There is also a Governor (Mr Ciantar) with responsibility for monitoring Special Needs provision at the school.

We believe that providing children with the basic skills they need for learning, particularly in terms of literacy, is essential if they are to make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. Our special needs provision is geared to providing tailor-made learning programmes for those children who struggle most, to help them keep up better with their peers in all the other school work they tackle in the classroom. Problems with fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination can also be a bar to success in the classroom, and we provide programmes of occupational therapy to some children when a need like this has been identified. Where children have problems which can be helped through speech therapy we are able, in co-operation with the local health authority speech therapist, to put suitable programmes in place.

We do our best to communicate fully and regularly with parents whose children have been identified as having special needs. If you have any concerns about the provision for your child, please discuss them with the Inclusion Co-ordinator or Headteacher.

Accessibility Plan

The governors have an accessibility plan to ensure that access is possible for all children.

At present, provision is as follows:

Curriculum

- Data is obtained on future pupils to facilitate advanced planning – including pupils entering the Foundation stage and those transferring from other schools

- There are established procedures for the identification and support of pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Detailed pupil information is given to all relevant staff
- There is regular home/ school liaison
- We have a differentiated curriculum to enable all pupils to feel secure and make progress
- Learning support assistants are deployed to cover a range of curriculum needs e.g speech and language, occupational therapy, literacy and numeracy.
- We provide special considerations for pupils taking part in tests e.g. adult readers provided for mathematics and science
- We have strong links with outside support agencies e.g. educational psychologist, speech and language therapy, community paediatrician.
- We take consideration of children's preferred learning styles

Physical Environment

- Wheelchair access to all areas of the school site
- We have a programme of redecoration to improve acoustics and lighting wherever necessary to improve access for those with sensory difficulties
- All corridor areas are painted in light colours to provide good contrast for signs/labels.
- Steps are edged in contrasting colours to support any members of the school community with poor vision

Information

- There is provision of information to pupils with a disability – this is currently provided by offering one-to one explanations to pupils and their parents. If necessary, information can be made available in a range of formats
- The school makes full use of the skills of support teachers who work with pupils and families who have English as an additional language. If necessary, meetings can be arranged to ensure that they have access to information to enable the pupil to participate fully in the life of the school.

Behaviour

At Stella Maris we place great emphasis on good behaviour, and we believe that it should be founded on self-discipline and high self-esteem. Our approach is based on the principles of Supportive Behaviour Management. According to our school Behaviour Policy, our aims in this area are:

- To make school a happy place where children feel able to express themselves, make mistakes and seek help.
- To adopt a positive attitude which enables the children to grow and change in an atmosphere that reflects Christ's love.
- To make sure that the Catholic ethos of the school is reflected in the way we talk to and deal with other members of staff, the parents, visitors to the school and, above all, the children.

To encourage and promote the best possible standards of behaviour, we will:

- 'Look for the good' in what the children do
- Use stickers and individual sticker charts to reward targeted pupils
- Distribute Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum 'merit cards' at Friday assemblies for pupils who achieve the following 'milestones' using 'green slips' on the class tally chart (see below):

- Bronze: 20
- Silver: 50
- Gold: 100
- Platinum: 150



We only have two school rules:

- Treat others the way you would like to be treated yourself
- Act sensibly at all times

and to support these two rules, we have five words that we think all of our children would want to make part of the things they do on a daily basis

Care Share Love Trust Respect

When behaviour is not acceptable, we have a system of 'coloured sheets' that are completed with a teacher (or the Headteacher). These set out the nature of the problem, how it will be resolved, and how we can avoid it happening again. When poor behaviour is regular, or of a very serious nature, the resolution is likely to include a meeting with the parents. We do expect parents/carers to support us with this as we believe that communication between home and school is vital if children are to get the same messages from parents and teachers. A copy of the full behaviour policy is available on request from the school office, and can also be downloaded from the school web site.

Exclusion is rarely used but the Headteacher does have the right to exclude immediately in the event of a very serious breach of discipline, particularly where the health and safety of other children or members of staff are at risk.

Bullying

There is no place for bullying at Stella Maris. It is in direct contradiction of the Gospel Values on which our community is based.

We are determined to deal effectively with bullying of any kind, however it arises.

We will not tolerate bullying by anyone within the school community and we will work to support any member of the community who is subjected to bullying by anyone else.

For further details on our approach to bullying, please refer to the school Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

School Uniform

As well as helping our children to look smart, our school uniform has been designed to be simple, easy to wear and look after, and helpful to parents worried about what clothes to buy for school.

Grey trousers (long or short)

Grey pinafore dress or skirt

Blue and white checked or striped dress (for Summer Term)

White, grey or blue shirt

White or blue blouse

Royal-blue cardigan or school sweatshirt

White, blue or grey socks, or tights

Plain white or black PE shorts

White PE T-shirt

White or black plimsolls

Upper Juniors may also need football kit for the winter months.

Prices

The following items are available from Channel Uniforms in Cheriton Place, Folkestone:

- Sweatshirt: £9.99
- Cardigans: £12.50
- Fleece jackets: £14.99
- Reversible waterproof jackets: £20
- Book bags: these are provided free for all Reception children, thanks to the Parents Association - replacements cost £7.99 each

Shoes

Sensible school shoes (brown, black or navy) should be worn - trainers are not allowed, unless the children wish to change into them to play football at lunch time.

Sweatshirts and school T-shirts for PE are obtainable from the school office.

Each child must have a shoe bag and all clothing should be marked with the child's name.

Jewellery

For safety reasons, jewellery of any kind is not allowed, apart from watches, and small studs or sleepers for earrings. Children with studs or sleepers must be able either to remove them or to cover them with tape for PE lessons.

School Meals

We are lucky enough to have our own catering staff at Stella Maris, who cook the meals on site. The cost of school meals is kept in line with what is charged in other local schools - at the moment this is £2.30 per day or £11.50 per week. The money should be sent in on Monday morning or, if you prefer, you can pay in advance by cheque for a half term (about six to eight weeks). Exact amounts can be obtained from the school office and cheques should be made payable to Stella Maris Catholic Primary School. Some parents may be entitled to claim free meals for their children. The office staff are able to advise on this. All enquiries will be dealt with in confidence.

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are currently entitled to a free school meal in line with a government initiative introduced in September 2014.

Children may also bring in a packed lunch. These should be in a lunch box clearly marked with the child's name. Please make sure packed lunches are healthy and nutritious – they should not include sweets or fizzy drinks.

Our menus follow the government's nutritional standards for school meals - the meals are healthy and enjoyable, with plenty of variety.

Sample Menu

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cod fish fingers or Cheese & tomato quiche • Creamed potatoes • Broccoli/sweetcorn • Mixed salad • Bread basket • Fruit crumble & custard or Yoghurt or Fresh fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beef fajitas or Creamy veg pasta bake • Rainbow rice • Vegetable medley • Mixed salad • Bread basket • Jam tart & custard or Yoghurt or Fresh fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roast turkey with stuffing and yorkshires or Quorn sausages • Roast/boiled potatoes • Carrots/cabbage • Gravy • Mixed salad • Bread basket • Chocolate sponge & Chocolate sauce or Fresh fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ham, pepper & sweetcorn pizza or • Red dragon pie • Jacket wedges • Baked beans • Grated carrot/Mixed salad • Bread basket • Crispy square & half an apple or Yoghurt or Fresh fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butcher's sausages or Vegetable parcel • Chips or half a jacket potato • Peas • Coleslaw • Mixed salad • Bread basket • Peaches with Ice cream/frozen mousse or Fresh fruit

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club is run by school staff. It is open from 8:00 a.m. each morning. Breakfast consists of Cereal, Toast and squash. After eating, children play board games and take part in other quiet activities. The cost is £1 per session. Please see the school office if you would like a place for your child. Pupils who are in receipt of Free School Meals (or have been at any time in the past 6 years) are entitled to attend the Breakfast Club free of charge.

Timetable

Note: all times are approximate and are dependent on traffic conditions

Charging for School Activities

In common with other maintained schools in England, we make no charge for any materials or equipment essential to the children's education. On some occasions, the school relies on voluntary contributions from parents to help pay for trips, outings and certain visitors to the school, to give 'added value' to the children's learning experiences. No child will be excluded from such an activity if their family is unable to make a contribution. If insufficient funds are forthcoming for any planned event, however, it may have to be cancelled. Notice is always given of any proposed events, with all necessary details on times, transport etc.

Starting School

Starting school is a big step for your child - and for parents, too! It is important for them to settle down quickly to the routines of school life. This means that much of our work at the beginning of their first term focuses on social skills, listening to simple instructions and following them, and getting used to school routines (lunchtime, going to the hall for assembly, and so on). To help the children cope with starting school we offer them the chance to experience a series of 'taster afternoons' in the Reception class during the term before they are due to start. This gives them the opportunity to meet their new classmates and their teacher, while parents can also come and see them in their new surroundings and ask any questions which may still be troubling them.

There are many ways in which you can help prepare your child for school. For example:

- Show them how to get dressed on their own
- Teach them to use the lavatory properly, to flush it and wash their hands as a matter of habit
- Give them plenty of practice tidying up toys and clothes
- Teach them to use a knife and fork



Take every opportunity to talk to and with your child from the very earliest age. This is the foundation of all their literacy skills and there is no substitute for this essential early learning activity. There are many excellent pre-school TV programmes, but please use these carefully. You should watch them with your child and discuss them afterwards. Try not to use DVDs as babysitters.

By all means share books with your child. Try to read to them every day and introduce them as early as possible to the fun of choosing books. Don't feel under pressure to get them reading before they come to school - it is more important that you teach them an interest in books at this stage.

Curriculum Statement

The school curriculum comprises all the learning and other experiences that a school offers its pupils. We make the learning fun and engaging by teaching through a wide range of projects. The curriculum offered by Stella Maris will promote:

- The highest standards of achievement by all pupils, regardless of ability, ethnic origin, gender or social background;
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, preparing them for life as effective citizens, able to respond positively to the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly changing world;
- A commitment to lifelong learning.

Structure

In order to achieve these aims, we work in collaboration with pupils, parents and the community to provide a curriculum which:

- is sufficiently broad, balanced and flexible to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding through learning programmes and experiences appropriate to their ages and abilities, regardless of their gender, ethnic or social background and taking account of any talents and special educational needs;
- provides children in the Foundation Stage (aged 3 –5) with a wide range of planned activities and experiences which help them to develop and make progress towards meeting the Early Learning Goals;
- satisfies the requirements of legislation relating to the National Curriculum and religious education (RE), ensuring that sufficient time is allowed for all aspects of the curriculum and the development of essential skills especially literacy, numeracy and the use and understanding of information and communications technology (computing);
- engages learners and provides for continuity of experiences and progression within, between and beyond the key stages and promotes lifelong learning;
- promotes pupils' self-esteem and challenges them to achieve the highest standards, taking account of ability and aptitude;
- offers opportunities to assess the progress and attainment of each pupil to determine whether learning objectives and any agreed targets have been achieved and what should be the next steps in learning;
- includes a means of recording the progress and attainment of each pupil and reporting these to parents and pupils, and informing parents and the community about the achievements of schools;
- prepares pupils for the responsibilities and opportunities that arise throughout life in a democratic, multicultural and technological society.
- extends knowledge, experience, imagination and understanding in ways which develop creative, critical and analytical capabilities combined with an awareness of moral values and a capacity for the enjoyment of learning;
- develops positive attitudes and qualities through spiritual awareness and aesthetic appreciation;
- fosters respect for the environment and an understanding of the ways in which human activity can affect the local, regional, national and global environment;
- promotes equality of opportunity, develops understanding of and respect for the rights and views of others and emphasises the value of personal relationships based on mutual respect;
- promotes the importance of healthy living;
- works in partnership with the family, the business community and society at large, leading to an appreciation of the value of co-operative sustainable development and the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen;
- prepares pupils for the next stage of learning;
- promotes pupils' understanding of their roles as members of the school, local, national and international communities;
- promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Reading

- Phonics is taught using the *Letters and Sounds* approach (www.letters-and-sounds.com).

- Reading is supported using the Oxford Reading Tree books, plus a wide range of quality children's literature used in Guided Reading sessions.
- We use approaches promoted by 'The Power of Reading' to maintain pupils' enthusiasm for reading and to link literacy with the wider curriculum.

Homework

We expect children to do some homework to support their learning and understanding of different curriculum areas. Most frequently this will involve reading, learning spellings and practising maths ideas. Children may also have to research an idea or topic to bring in information to the class. We encourage parents/carers to support their children with work at home and to send it back as required.

Relationships and Sex Education

Sex Education forms a significant element in our Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum, it is only part of what we should teach the children. The Catholic Church believes that schools should give children positive guidance in the field of personal relationships, teaching them a true appreciation of all their human gifts in that context.

At Stella Maris we teach Relationships and Sex Education through a scheme of work called 'A Journey in Love'. It is designed to enable the holistic growth of children. It connects every aspect of growth: physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual with the theme of love.

