

St Mary's PS Newtownbutler

St Mary's Primary School was originally in the yard beside the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Newtownbutler. It is reported that in those times, like today, pupils enjoyed the close proximity to the church which among other benefits, allowed them to watch guests arrive at weddings. At that time there was on large room where Mrs McCormack taught the girls on one side and Mr Corcoran taught the boys on the other. Pupils brought bread and butter to school for lunch and sometimes they had fresh milk from the creamery, which was owned by Jimmy McGilly. Children were expected to bring turf for the school fire and they swept the school floor with heather besoms. The children sat in long desks with about 6 or 7 to each one. Older children wrote with pens, using ink from the inkwells which were set into their desks. It was a mixed religion school with the pupils only being separated for prayers. Many children walked to school barefoot, especially in the Summer months.

In 1934 a new school was opened on the current site. At the time it was considered very modern with four classrooms and running water. These rooms are now used for Primary 4,5 and 6 classes. In 1973 the school was renovated. At that time extra classrooms, a dinning-hall and offices were added.

When Drumlone and Wattlebridge schools closed, pupils were brought by bus to the newly renovated St Mary's. The principal of Wattlebridge Primary School, Mrs McGahy also transferred to Newtownbutler at that time.

In the 1980's an additional classroom (the current P7 room) and a large mobile (the current library) were added.

St Mary's Primary School is ever evolving, while continually nurturing and complementing the values of the home and parish. Today the school has 7 classrooms, an ICT suite, a library and a resource room for small group work. There are 8 teachers, 10 Classroom Assistants, a Secretary, a Caretaker, 2 Cleaners and a Lolli-pop person. There is also a Catering Supervisor, supported by 3 Catering Assistants. While pencils and paper are still very much part of school life, staff and pupils also increasingly use digital technology such as laptops, ipads and interactive whiteboards. An application is currently under consideration by the Department of Education, for a further extension and major renovation works, to meet the ever changing needs of the 21st Century.