



# ST JOSEPH'S

## LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL





# Welcome to

## St Joseph's Lower Primary School

At St Joseph's Lower Primary School, we all work as a team to create an exciting and challenging learning environment where everyone is committed to the highest possible achievement for all children. We ensure that each child has the opportunity to thrive by developing a wide range of skills within an exciting, nurturing and inclusive environment.

We are delighted that your child will be joining our learning community and we believe in building a strong partnership with parents and carers and value your contribution to our school. We want you to be confident that your child's happiness, safety and development within a high quality teaching and learning environment is our primary concern.

Please be assured that you will be kept fully informed of your child's school-life and progress through regular feedback via our online platform Seesaw, newsletters, meetings, notes, emails and open days. Please feel free to call Mrs Mendez, our school secretary and make an appointment to meet with your child's class teacher or either of us whenever you need to.

We pride ourselves in offering something unique here at St Joseph's through maintaining high academic standards whilst integrating 21st Century skills into the curriculum to ensure that our children are fully prepared for the next stage of their educational journey.

Thank you for placing your trust in us.

**Mrs E. Benzecry - Headteacher**

**Mrs C. Burgod - Deputy Headteacher**

love  
LEARNING

## Supporting and Nurturing the Whole Child

**At St Joseph's we look beyond teaching academics, to also foster children's development in their relationships, identities, emotional skills, and overall well-being.**

We believe that learning is social, emotional, and academic so we focus on the following areas:

- building up positive relationships between the children and their peers and between the children and their teachers;
- inspiring positive emotions, such as interest and excitement which open up the mind to learning and encourage a love of learning;
- encouraging reflection and helping children build skills and awareness to work with emotions in themselves and their relationships with others;
- developing habits, skills, and mindsets that build pupils' social, emotional, and academic competence.

Developing children's social-emotional skills teaches them how to manage stress, while also boosting social skills like collaboration and empathy. In this way, social-emotional skills involve developing greater awareness of oneself and others. These factors are linked to long term academic achievement, productivity and collegiality at work as well as positive health indicators which is why supporting and nurturing the whole child is central to our approach in St Joseph's Lower Primary School.





# Term Dates 2024-2025

| Autumn Term 2024     |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Year 2 Starts        | Monday 2nd September 2024 - 11:00 - 12:00pm   |
| Year 1 Starts        | Tuesday 3rd September 2024 - 10:00 - 12:00pm  |
| Reception Starts     | Wednesday 4th September 2024 Group 1 - 9.30-11.30am<br>Thursday 5th September 2024 Group 2 - 9.30-11.30am |
| Nursery Starts       | Friday 6th September 2024 Group 1 - 9.30-11.30am<br>Monday 9th September 2024 Group 2 - 9.30-11.30am      |
| National Day         | Tuesday 10th September 2024   |
| Mid-Term             | Monday 28th October to Friday 1st November 2024   |
| End of Term          | Friday 20th December 2024   |
| Spring Term 2025     |   |
| Term Starts          | Tuesday 7th January 2025  |
| Spring Bank Holiday  | Monday 17th February 2025   |
| Mid-Term             | Tuesday 18th February 2024 to Friday 21st February 2025   |
| End Of Term          | Friday 11th April 2025  |
| Summer Term 2025     |   |
| Term Starts          | Tuesday 22nd April 2025   |
| Workers Memorial Day | Monday 28th April 2025  |
| May Day              | Thursday 1st May 2025   |
| Spring Bank Holiday  | Monday 26th May 2025  |
| King's Birthday      | Monday 16th June 2025   |
| Term Ends            | Wednesday 9th July 2025   |

**Summer Hours:** (8:30am to 12:00pm daily - 8.30am until 11.45am for Nursery)

**Autumn Term:** 2nd September 2024 to 9th September 2024

**Summer Term:** 17th June 2025 to 9th July 2025

# Meet the Team

**Headteacher** - Mrs E. Benzecry

**Deputy Headteacher** - Mrs C. Burgod

**SENCo** - Mrs N. Risso

**English Coordinator** - Ms M. Allen

**Maths Coordinator** - Mrs B Segui

**Science Coordinator** - Mrs M Piri

**ICT Coordinator** - Ms J Moreno (acting)

**Head of Early Years & PE Coordinator** - Mrs C. De Los Santos

**Head of Year & Humanities Coordinator** - Mrs L. Galliano

**Head of Year & Art Coordinator** - Ms K. Trico (acting)

**Head of Year RE & PSHE Coordinator** - Mrs L. Delgado

**Music Coordinator** - Ms J Sciacaluga

**LSF Class Teacher** - Mrs P. Holmes

**Class Teacher** - Mrs N. Smith

**Class Teacher** - Mrs S.J. Apap

**Class Teacher** - Mrs A. Enriles

**Class Teacher** - Mrs C. Avellano

**Class Teacher** - Mrs K. Boyd

**Class Teacher** - Ms A. Coulthard

**Class Teacher** - Mrs A. King

**Nursery Nurse** - Mrs L. Bado

**Learning Support Assistant** - Mrs Y. Olivero

**Learning Support Assistant** - Ms N. Rowbottom

**Learning Support Assistant** - Mrs N. Lima

**Learning Support Assistant** - Mrs K Taylor

**Learning Support Assistant** - Ms V Hitchcock

**Learning Support Assistant** - Mrs K Sheehan

**Learning Support Assistant** - Mrs N Harrison

**Learning Support Assistant** - Ms S Lima

**School Secretary** - Mrs S. Mendez

**Learning Mentor** - Mr K Pecino

**Speech and Language Therapist** - Ms D. Netto

**Occupational Therapist** - Ms C. Atkins

**Educational Psychologist** - Ms K. Llufrío

**School Attendant** - Mrs R Perez







# School Uniform

## Years 1 and 2

- Navy blue pleated skirt/navy blue trousers/navy blue trousers (shorts in summer)/ tracksuit
- Yellow polo-shirt (school logo optional) /Yellow and white striped dress (summer)
- Navy blue sweatshirt (logo optional)
- Navy blue tights/navy blue socks/white socks
- Black school shoes

## Nursery and Reception

- Yellow polo-shirt (school logo optional)
- Navy jogging suit (winter)/navy shorts/navy skirt (summer)
- Yellow and white striped summer dress (vertical stripes/ not checked) Trainers with velcro fasteners

## Physical Education

- White T-shirt (for Nursery and Reception)
- Colour T-shirt (for Yr 1 and Yr 2)
- Black shorts
- Trainers with velcro fasteners
- Navy jogging suit

Please make sure that all items of clothing are clearly labelled with your child's name. For safety reasons all earrings must be removed for these lessons or alternatively covered with plasters at home.

**Please note that tracksuits can be worn by children in all year groups if this is more comfortable for them.**

# Health & Safety

## Drop Off and Collection

The gates at our forecourt are for security purposes and are not the point at which parents hand over to teachers. We have risk assessed the drop off and collection at school and the safest way to manage this is to ensure the handover point is at the top of the stairs or for nursery at the park entrance in the morning. We do encourage parents to ensure that their child / children safely enters school by watching their children from the forecourt area.

## Attendance

Please note that the Department of Education has set the minimum acceptable attendance at 85%. While Nursery attendance is not compulsory, we believe that good attendance from the very beginning of your child's school life will develop positive routines and attitudes to school. Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance. Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically and we want the very best for your child. Please see the Department of Education's guide by **clicking here**.

## Medicines

It is preferable that parents administer medicines to their children at home but if it is necessary to administer non-prescription medicine during school hours, this can be arranged by providing written consent.

The medicine should be in the original packaging with clear labelling of the contents, child's name and dosage. Medicines should be brought to school by **the parent**, not the child, and delivered personally to the Headteacher or the class teacher. This also applies to inhalers. Medicines will need to be collected by an adult at the end of the school day. Please note that refusal by the pupil to take medication will be respected and parents will be informed. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should any medication or inhalers be placed in satchels or lunchboxes.**

## Accidents

If your child falls in the playground they will be seen to by one of the teachers on duty and if necessary, then taken to the Caretaker. Should the accident be serious, your child will be taken to hospital by the class teacher and an ambulance called if necessary. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

**It is very important that you supply the school with up to date telephone numbers where you can be reached so that you can be contacted speedily in an emergency.**

Please send an email or Seesaw message to school with new telephone numbers if there are changes. In the case of a change of address please contact us to receive a form from the Department Of Education main office which will need to be completed.



# Health & Safety

## School Trips

During your child's time at school, they will have the opportunity to participate in educational trips that enhance their learning experiences. These excursions are designed to provide valuable hands-on learning and broaden their understanding of various subjects. To ensure a safe and positive experience for all pupils, participation in trips requires appropriate behaviour. If a child's behaviour at school raises concerns about the safety and well-being of others, alternative arrangements may be made and parents or carers will be informed.

## Lunchtimes

From Reception, parents or carers may choose whether or not a child stays at school for lunch. Lunch supervisors are employed to supervise the children and these supervisors assume similar duties undertaken by school teaching staff during the morning break.

**If necessary parents will be notified by phone or by note of any of the below:**

- Children who repeatedly refuse to eat their packed lunch.
- Items containing nuts or other inappropriate snacks.
- Children who feel unwell.
- Children who have accidentally dropped their lunch on the floor.
- Children who do not follow the lunchtime guidelines.

Please rest assured that either the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher will always be on the premises during the lunch hour and that your child is being well looked after.



## Lunchtime Information

**Please note the following with regards to lunchtimes in school:**

- The agreement for your child to stay at school needs to be adhered to unless there is a genuine reason for taking your child out at lunchtime on a particular day.
- Children should bring their lunchbox with them at 9:00am when they come to school.
- Forgotten lunchboxes should be brought to school as soon as possible after 9:00am.
- Food must be supplied by parents/carers. This should consist of 'finger foods' or foods that may be consumed with a plastic spoon.
- Please do not include sweets in the packed lunch as these present a choking hazard.
- Please note that we are a **NUT FREE** school.
- For the safety of your children the following must **NOT** be included with a packed lunch: glass containers, flasks with a glass interior (food warmers are allowed but please check that the inside is made of plastic), knives or forks (**even plastic ones are not allowed**)
- Lunchboxes need to be clearly labelled with your child's name and class. Packed lunches should not be brought in a plastic bag.
- The school will not accept delivery of food from home or take-away establishments.

**Please note that children should not be collected from school for appointments during the lunch hour. Please collect either before 12.00pm or after 1.00pm.**







# Promoting Good Behaviours

In order to encourage children to behave well try their best in class we use a variety of incentives:

- Stickers are used in all years to reward good behaviour and work.
- A traffic light system exists within each class wherein children who behave well remain on green, moving to amber and then red if misbehaviour continues. They are encouraged to behave in such a way as to merit returning to green as soon as possible.
- Children who remain on green earn some 'Golden Time' which is fun activity time that takes place once a week.
- Children who show good manners, are helpful or have tried hard with school work or behaviour are chosen to receive a special award certificate which is presented to them in the school assembly.

Parents are expected to actively support the values of the school's behaviour policy as part of our home/school partnership. If parents/carers are concerned about their child's behaviour, whether they are continually making wrong choices, are feeling upset or worried, please speak to your child's teacher as soon as possible. When home and school work together, we can work quickly to put things right.

## School Teams

A traditional House system exists in our school. The four teams are:



Our pupils are divided into these four house teams from Year 1 onwards for various activities and are asked to wear their corresponding team colours for PE lessons. These t-shirts can be purchased from school.

## Homework

There is no formal homework at Lower Primary School.

Soon after they enter Reception, the children will take home a reading book to share with you. **Parents are encouraged to help their children with their reading by:**

- listening to them
- discussing the stories and the pictures
- enjoying the books with them

The books taken home are for practice. Please encourage your child to read more challenging books at home. Children may be asked to collect information or plan some future work. Whatever it is, we hope you will support and encourage them in their efforts.

Occasionally, parents of children who will be absent during term time ask the teachers to set homework. This does not in any way compensate for the absence and is of very little benefit and to discourage absences from school our policy is not to provide homework. In addition, if a child is too unwell to attend school, they are generally too unwell to complete homework.

*#lovelearning*



# Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

**At St. Joseph's we aim to provide a stimulating and well balanced education for all. This includes pupils for whom at any time in their school life may, for whatever reason, need extra support to ensure that they achieve their full potential.**

We are dedicated to ensuring that the whole curriculum is appropriately differentiated in order for all children to experience success. Where further support is needed, additional strategies are put in place. This may include small group support interventions outside of the class room for short periods of time where work is further consolidated.

Early identification is essential in order to find out how best to support the child's needs. Once a child has been identified as needing extra support, parents are fully consulted and are involved in the procedures that follow. A file of concern is opened and the child is placed on a Special Needs Register. This involves setting achievable targets within an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the child to work towards. These targets are reviewed regularly in discussion with parents and any other agencies which may be involved.

At St Joseph's Lower Primary School, our commitment to inclusive education extends to the provision of our Learning Support Facility (LSF). This is a dedicated space designed to cater to the diverse needs of our children who may struggle within the mainstream setting. The LSF serves as a hub, providing bespoke interventions and resources to support pupils with additional learning requirements whilst still allowing for opportunities to spend time within the mainstream setting as appropriate.

**Other agencies which offer further support for your child could include:**

- L.M (Learning Mentor)
- S.A.L.T (Speech and Language Therapist)
- O.T (Occupational Therapist)
- P.T. (Physio Therapist)
- E.P. (Educational Psychologist)

Parents are consulted throughout the process. Together we aim to provide the best education possible for your child.

# The School Curriculum

## Early Years Curriculum

In Nursery and Reception, we focus on the Early Years Curriculum. We plan a range of topics to ensure the children develop their skills and develop their natural curiosity and a love of learning. The topics are chosen to meet the learning needs and interests of our children.

Our approach challenges children and encourages them to develop into independent, motivated learners and thinkers, full of curiosity about the world around them within a fun, happy and secure environment. We focus on ensuring that children settle quickly and have a smooth transition into school life and subsequently, from Nursery into Reception.

**Our Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is based on seven areas of learning:**

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Understanding the World

These skills and competencies will enable them to cope with the demands of later schooling and life generally. Children are encouraged to explore, enquire and to take risks in an interactive hand-on environment. This includes the use of interactive whiteboards and computers, as well as dedicated high quality outdoor learning areas.





# English

At St Joseph's First School we believe that literacy is the key to education and life-long learning. Through the teaching of English, children learn important skills which will enable them to communicate with others and access the rest of the school curriculum. We provide a daily literacy lesson and high quality phonics work which underpins the teaching of reading and writing. Our aim is for children to be able to read, write and speak with confidence.

## Speaking and Listening

In order to communicate effectively with others, children need to develop a range of speaking skills and be able to listen and respond to others with increasing concentration. These skills are developed through a range of experiences, including drama and role play.

## Reading Books

At St Joseph's Lower Primary School, we follow the 'Letters and Sounds' approach to phonics and reading. **This involves the following:**

- Learning the letter sounds – initial sounds, digraphs, consonant blends etc
- Learning letter formation
- Blending – assembling sounds
- Segmenting – breaking words down into their sounds
- Tricky words – irregular words such as 'who' and 'one' are taught as sight words

During the first term of school all children will receive a reading book and reading homework three times a week. This may be a book with or without words. It is important that reading practice is completed but also that the storyline of the book is discussed. Children benefit greatly from visual literacy and by discussing the pictures and storyline you will help broaden your child's vocabulary as well as enhance their understanding. Children also greatly benefit from hearing different stories read to them. We would encourage parents to feel free to read to and with their children in addition to the reading homework. The class teacher or an LSA will hear your child read in school twice a week. In addition, there will be shared reading and guided reading sessions which will take place in school. Please ensure that your child treats their reading folder and book with respect and that is out of the reach of baby siblings. Lost/damaged reading books and protective book folders will need to be replaced by the parents at the school's cost price.

## Writing

Children are taught to write for a range of purposes and audiences. They learn the importance of punctuation and rules of grammar and the key rules to spelling. Presentation is important and a handwriting programme is in place.

## Library

Each classroom has its own class library and there is also a school library, which contains fiction, non-fiction and a poetry section. Year 1 and Year 2 attend the library weekly and can select a book to read and share at home.



# Mathematics

Numeracy teaching at St Joseph's First School is informed by the New Curriculum as well as educational best practice to ensure we deliver excellent Mathematics Teaching and Learning. We use Abacus Activelearn to deliver high quality lessons which ensure that children develop a robust understanding and secure foundation in maths.

## We follow a "four pillars" approach:

- Place value: developing a robust understanding of how our number system works.
- Number facts: developing a really good bank of number facts.
- Models and images: a developmental approach to the use of consistent, solid images and models that grows with each child as they develop their mathematical understanding.
- Doubling and halving: developing a comprehension of the key mathematical functions based on doubling and halving.

Our aim is to ensure that the children develop a positive and confident attitude towards Mathematics. We encourage them to develop logical thinking, enquiring minds and to strive for the highest possible standards. This is achieved through practical work, problem solving and investigational work. By incorporating oral activities, first-hand discovery and games Mathematics is developed as an enjoyable activity.

The Numeracy Scheme of work encourages a lively approach, which develops mental arithmetic skills at an early age. The basic concept of number is introduced gradually through acquiring mathematical language in both its oral and written forms. In this way the children gain confidence in manipulating number and develop a firm understanding before moving on to more advanced work



# Our Interdisciplinary Approach

**At St. Joseph's Lower Primary School, we pride ourselves on our innovative approach to education, which centres around an interdisciplinary learning model.**

Unlike traditional methods, we integrate foundation subjects including science into thematic units of study, enabling a deeper understanding and encouraging a love of learning.

By intertwining various subjects within a cohesive theme, we provide our children with a holistic view of the world, encouraging them to make connections between different areas of knowledge. This approach not only enhances their academic growth but also promotes critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and creativity. Moreover, interdisciplinary learning develops a sense of curiosity and engagement among our pupils, as they explore topics in depth and see the relevance of their learning to real-life situations. Through this method, we aim to nurture well-rounded individuals who are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in an ever-changing world. **Across the following pages are the subjects which make up the curriculum and are the foundation of our interdisciplinary approach:**



## Science

At St. Joseph's Lower Primary School we aim to develop our children's knowledge and understanding of the world and consequently the part they have to play in it. Our approach to understanding is through exploration and through giving children the experience of a wide range of practical and hands on activities as well as developing scientific skills and attitudes. By building on their natural curiosity we encourage positive attitudes of teamwork, resilience, responsibility and independent thought.

We will help children develop their understanding of scientific ideas by using different kinds of scientific enquiry. We will teach pupils to observe and measure accurately, notice patterns or changes, predict outcomes and to classify, record and communicate their experiences by using simple scientific language. We make full use of interdisciplinary projects, encouraging the use of scientific skills in a variety of situations in order to make the quality of children's learning both relevant and of a high calibre.

Real-Life Engagement is integrated into the science curriculum; speakers are invited to address pupils and children also enjoy visits to different locations in Gibraltar. Our pupils are also made aware of the role they play in conservation. Topics covered include recycling, saving energy and litter.

## Computing

At St Joseph's Lower Primary, we place a great emphasis on learning about how computers work. Children will continue to use tools to find, explore, analyse, exchange and present information responsibly and creatively. They will also use Beebot's to support the excellent starting point for teaching control, directional language and simple programming.

Here at St Joseph's we have a computer suite which contains fully networked computers for children to use within lessons and our classrooms are all equipped with Smartboards or Smart TV's that will support and enrich the learning taking place making learning much more exciting and engaging.

In addition, we have class sets of iPads and we use these to ensure that teaching is transformed to enable a more creative, innovative and accessible learning experience throughout the curriculum and across the year groups. All online access is supervised by teachers but is also further regulated and protected by security software on all school machines and on the server.



## Art & Design Technology

At St Joseph's we believe that art and DT both have a vital role to play in the education of all our children and contribute to all the themes and topics the children explore. We aim to provide opportunities to enable each individual to reach their full potential. These subjects engage, inspire and challenge pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to experiment, invent and create their own works.

### **We aim to ensure that all pupils:**

- Produce creative work, exploring their ideas and recording their experiences.
- Become proficient in drawing, painting, sculpture and other art, and design techniques
- Evaluate and analyse creative works using the language of art, craft and design technology.
- Learn about great artists, craft makers and designers and understand the historical and cultural development of their art forms.

## Geography

Through our interdisciplinary approach, our Geography curriculum aims to inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people. Pupils will gain a basic knowledge about diverse places, people, resources and natural and human environments. As pupils progress, their growing knowledge about the world should help them to deepen their understanding of the interaction between physical and human processes, and of the formation and use of landscapes and environments.

## History

Our History curriculum, also covered through thematic based work, helps pupils gain a knowledge and understanding of our local past and that of the wider world. It inspires pupils' curiosity to know more about the past. Children will be given the opportunity to question and think critically. History helps pupils to understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time.

## Music

Through their music lessons, children will learn about the basic elements of music and be given opportunities to play different percussion instruments and learn to sing. We have a school choir which is made up of some Year 2 children. Music plays an important part in interdisciplinary learning as pupils learn a great deal through educational songs.

## Physical Education (P.E.)

Throughout their time at St. Joseph's children will have experience of dance, gymnastics, athletics and outdoor games. Coaches from local sporting organisations come into school to work with our children and teachers to help develop sporting skills and give them the opportunity to try out sports that they might like to pursue outside school. These promote the children's physical development, and awareness and understanding of the body, the development of skills and imagination and an appreciation of creative performances.

## Religious Education

At St Joseph's we aim to develop a respect for religious and cultural differences. During their time with us pupils learn about different celebrations, forms of worship and beliefs in Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism. They will also visit different places of worship to learn how different religions worship and pray locally.

## Personal, Social And Health Education

Through the teaching of PSHE and Citizenship we aim to give pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active and responsible citizens, who are aware of their duties and rights as part of this ever-changing society we live in. PSHE is taught throughout the school through our interdisciplinary approach as well as through designated sessions which include circle time and assemblies wherein a variety of issues are explored with due regard to children's age and stage of development.





# ST JOSEPH'S

## LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL

South Barracks, Gibraltar, GX11 1AA

Telephone: 200 78515 | Email: [sjfs.secretary@schools.edu.gi](mailto:sjfs.secretary@schools.edu.gi)

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**School Hours:** 8:45am until 3:15pm (8.45am until 11.50am for Nursery)

**Morning Break:** 10:20 – 10:35am

**Lunch Break:** 12:00 – 1:00pm

The school gates open at 8.30am. Between 8.30am and 8.45am children stay in the playground /park and at 8.45am the children are taken into their classrooms. Lessons start promptly at 9am each day.

For safety reasons, you are asked not to leave your child alone outside the school, and to be on time to collect your child at the end of each session.

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