

St. Mary School *Choir and Orchestra Program*

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Principal: Kathleen Fraumeni
Secretary: Mary Vergeer
School Council Chair: Roberta Purvis
Parish: St. Mary's Church
Pastor: Father Joseph Dabrowski
Secondary School Affiliate: Catholic Central
School Superintendent: Vince MacDonald
School Trustee: Sandra Cruz
Director of Education: Wilma de Rond

School Hours: 8:55 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Grade Distribution: Grades 5-8
Student Enrolment: 240



About our School

Description

St. Mary School is the home of the *Choir and Orchestra Program* for the London District Catholic School Board. The school draws children from across the district and our students enter at the Grade 5 level, remaining at St. Mary School until the end of their Grade 8 year. The *Choir and Orchestra Program* was established in 1967 and continues to serve students of our district with rich learning opportunities in the arts. One of the mandates of the program is be accessible to all students of our school district entering Grade 5, based on their ability to demonstrate an aptitude in vocal music and their strengths in academics and learning skills.

The curriculum offers a full complement of core subjects in keeping with the Ontario Curriculum, with an emphasis on the Arts; Music, Drama, Dance and Visual Arts. The vocal and string program is the focus of the music curriculum throughout the four years that a student attends St. Mary School. The school provides a wide variety of opportunities for performance at all grade levels, including concerts, string ensembles, music festivals, stage productions, puppetry plays and role play. Students also take part in school liturgies within our school and in many of our diocesan parishes through our Outreach Program. It is the philosophy of St. Mary School to provide students with the learning tools for reaching academic excellence while offering a sound education in the arts, with an emphasis on liturgical music. Our goal each day is to support one another in the welcoming environment of a Catholic school community and to improve learning, with a focus on the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations in all that we do.

In the few past years, we have had the privilege of performing with Orchestra London, the Gerald Fagan Choirs and for Her Excellency Michaëlle Jean, the Governor General of Canada, at Rideau Hall, 2007.

Mission Statement

To foster and promote the development of the spiritual, physical, intellectual and emotional growth of all students.
To provide a distinctively Catholic education through the integration of Catholic beliefs and values in all learning experiences.
To create a positive, secure and caring environment, that promotes positive behaviour through mutual respect and is supported by a code of behaviour, a partnership with parents, Board and community resources in order to assist students to achieve their potential.

Staffing Information

Staff members at St. Mary School are dedicated to providing a quality arts-based education for all students that is firmly grounded in Catholic teaching and values. Our music teachers in both vocal and string are highly experienced in their fields and artists in their own right who are very active within the Arts community. Many of our teachers have specialist training in a variety of curriculum areas including religion, music, dance, drama, visual arts, French, physical education and Special Education. All classroom teachers provide a strong delivery of curriculum while often integrating the arts with core subject material.

Facilities

Our school provides learning space for all areas of the arts. Separate classrooms exist for the study of vocal music, string music, drama and visual arts. Our gymnasium is well equipped for a full physical education program for all grades and the stage is fitted with appropriate spotlights and sound equipment for a variety of stage productions. String instruments are purchased through the fundraising efforts of the parent community.

Transportation Information

All students within the city of London either car-pool or use city transit. All county students are provided with school bus transportation to and from St. Mary School.

Living Our Faith

Links to the Community

St. Mary School has a proud history of community involvement with many of our “out-reach” programs that assist others. This year, 2009-2010, our school is living our motto of “*Giving Back through Time and Talent*”. In keeping with this commitment, our choirs regularly perform at retirement facilities and hospitals. All of our classes visit the London Food Bank on an annual basis and provide much needed volunteer service. We are also committed to supporting community charities that include St. Vincent de Paul, the Children’s Health Foundation and Jesse’s Journey. We also provide annual funding for the Holy Childhood Association, assisting children in need around the world. Our students know and understand the meaning of the motto “Children Helping Children”.

Our St. Mary School choirs lead the music at many parish masses throughout our diocese on many Sundays throughout the school year. As part of our school mandate, we are dedicated to the training of our students in liturgical music in order that they might become contributing members of their own parishes as choristers, cantors, conductors and musicians in the years to come. Our message to one another each day is to be Christ for others and to look for Christ in everyone we meet.

Programs and Services

Curriculum Program

St. Mary School welcomes students from Grades 5 through 8 and provides a full program of curricular subjects as outlined in the Ontario Curriculum. In addition, each student is a member of a choir and plays a string instrument. Our homework policy includes requirements for both the curriculum subjects as well as daily practice for string and vocal. The timetable also provides for special instruction in drama/dance and in visual arts for all students. As a Catholic School, our Catholic beliefs and values are inculcated into the overall curriculum at all grade levels, demonstrating that all of our teaching and learning is Christ-centered in its message and that it supports the spiritual journey of our students.

Teachers have a strong belief in the value of an arts-based education for students. Opportunities are provided at every grade level for students to build on presentation skills with activities in class such as “in-role” writing, role play, poetry and writing for publication. Much of the students’ classroom work includes the use of drama and visual arts skills.

Links to the Arts Community

St. Mary School has a fine relationship with the Arts community of London and area. Our “Guest Artist” program, funded by our School Council, allows for artists in a variety of disciplines to visit our school, working closely with staff and students. Visiting artists over the years have included renowned authors, vocalists, string players, composers and visual artists. We have hosted special guests such as authors Pierre Burton, CBC’s Bob McDonald and Canadian composer Stephen Hatfield and musician Frank Leahy. Authors Barbara Haworth-Attard, David Booth and Larry Swartz, Barbara Reid and Linda Granfield have been frequent Guest Authors in our school in the past several years. We have hosted Orchestra London in our school and our Sinfonia Players have played with the orchestra in May, 2006. Our Grade 5 students were recorded on CBC’s “Here’s to You” requesting that Mozart selections be heard. The two-hour program aired in June, 2006 on CBC Radio II. In 2007, we traveled to Ottawa where our Grade 8 students sang and played for Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada Michaëlle Jean at Rideau Hall. This year, we will be collaborating with the Canadian Opera Company with our Grade 5 students in their “Create an Opera” program. Culminating in a visit to the Canadian Opera company in May.

Co-Curricular Program

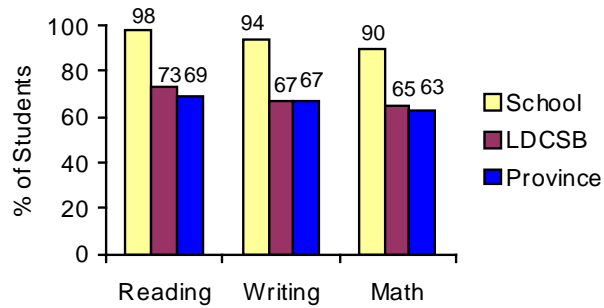
Our school offers opportunities for enrichment in the arts and in many other areas of the curriculum. Intermediate students can take part in our Chamber Orchestra, which performs at a variety of special functions throughout the year. Students also enjoy the challenge of taking part in our Student Parliament, a student-led group of individuals eager to make a positive difference in the student life of the school. The sports intramural program is very strong at St. Mary’s, providing every student with the opportunity to participate in a meaningful and challenging sports program and providing quality physical activity on a regular basis.

School Events

- Annual spring musical production featuring our Grade 8 students
- Liturgies at St. Mary’s Church, St. Peter’s Cathedral and many diocesan parishes
- Christmas and spring concerts for choir and orchestra and an annual “Fiddle Fest”
- Guest Author and Guest Artist programs for Grades 5-8
- Participation in sporting events including inter-school volleyball, basketball, hockey, as well as system -wide events including Track and Field, Cross Country and Dancefest and a strong intramural program.

Results of Provincial-wide Assessments

Figure 2. Percentage of Grade 6 Students at Levels 3 or 4 on the EQAO Assessment Result of Reading, Writing and Mathematics 2008-2009



School Improvement Planning 2009-2010

The improvement in learning and achievement of children and the professional growth of our school communities are directly linked to a school improvement plan that proceeds with precision and focus. The London District Catholic School Board is committed to fostering excellence in achievement through informed understanding and practice with the dynamic objectives that are identified in the School Improvement Plan.

Throughout the school year, our school team will establish goals in the School Improvement Plan that integrate student achievement data, EQAO assessments, report cards and other relevant assessments. The School Improvement Plan will outline our priority goals, strategies and success indicators towards improving student learning and achievement from the coming school year.

Please note that the School Improvement Plan for 2009-2010 will be posted on our school website for your information and consideration. You are most welcome to view all of our documentation at www.ldcsb.on.ca/schools/elementary/stmarychoir.

