



sessions. Music and drama are a particular strength, with specialist teachers offering everything from violin, piano and drum lessons to drama – all designed to build confidence from an early age.



The children also enjoy extraordinary access to the wider Stonyhurst campus. From weekly swimming lessons in the indoor pool to visits to the College Museum, the opportunities are remarkable. Where else can a four-year-old come face to face with the extraordinary collection of pioneer explorer Charles Waterton’s – widely regarded as an inspiration to David Attenborough – or learn about history through fossilised dinosaur poo? These experiences spark awe, build knowledge and connect children with the richness of learning in the world around them.

Spiritual formation is gently woven into daily life, reflecting the school’s Catholic identity. Through prayer, reflection and class worship, children are encouraged to grow in kindness, empathy and gratitude. The Jesuit Profile, which guides children to be loving, hopeful and attentive, forms the foundations for character development and helps young minds in exploring the meaning of faith: “Even the youngest children are encouraged to reflect on their day with a focus on gratitude, generosity and thankfulness,” says head of Pre-Prep Sarah Gibson, who adds that the

Stonyhurst motto ‘Quant je puis’ or ‘As much as I can’ is just as relevant to the children in Pre-Prep: “It’s an achievable, living motto and we have high expectations of our children, who aim to accomplish as much as they can in every activity.”

One of the greatest strengths of Stonyhurst St Mary’s Hall Pre-Prep is its strong sense of family. Warm, trusting relationships between staff, children and parents create a nurturing community where each child feels secure, supported and truly known. Teachers work in close partnership with families, fostering a spirit of collaboration through regular communication, progress updates, assessments and thoughtful personalised care.



Now marking over 20 years since its opening in 2004, Pre-Prep is a well-established and highly regarded entry point to one of the UK’s leading Catholic independent schools. Recent refurbishments have introduced thoughtfully enhanced resources and bright, adaptable learning spaces to an already vibrant setting.



The facilities are impressive, but it is the people – their shared purpose and the joy they radiate – that truly make this place so warm and welcoming.

For families exploring independent education, Stonyhurst St Mary’s Hall Pre-Prep offers more than a start – it offers a springboard into a lifelong journey of wonder, growth and discovery. ■

“ THE FACILITIES ARE IMPRESSIVE, BUT IT IS THE PEOPLE - THEIR SHARED PURPOSE AND THE JOY THEY RADIATE - THAT TRULY MAKE THIS PLACE SO WARM AND WELCOMING ”

As children move through Pre-Prep and prepare to step up into Year 3 at Stonyhurst St Mary’s Hall Prep School, the transition feels natural and exciting. Familiar faces, familiar spaces and consistent routines ensure continuity and confidence.



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THE FIRST CHAPTER...

For a joyful start to lifelong learning, youngsters flourish at Stonyhurst St Mary’s Hall Pre-Prep

The environment here is as inspirational as the ethos. Light-filled classrooms, vibrant learning spaces and open-plan areas invite exploration, creativity and collaboration.



“ DAILY OUTDOOR PLAY AND WOODLAND CLASSROOM SESSIONS OFFER ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR FRESH AIR, DISCOVERY AND HANDS-ON LEARNING ”

Outside, the experiences expand – daily outdoor play and woodland classroom sessions offer endless opportunities for

fresh air, discovery and hands-on learning, from tending vegetables in the Mission Garden to nature trails: “The outdoor space is an extension of the classroom,” explains Charina Hartley, Early Years Foundation Stage Co-ordinator, who adds: “Children can play in the mud kitchen and in the sandpit plus they can take part in den-building – we have a whole range of activities that are made relevant to academic learning.”

Strong academic foundations in Pre-Prep are created through a rich curriculum that includes phonics, early reading, numeracy, French and technology, all delivered in engaging, age-appropriate ways. Small class sizes mean teachers truly get to know each child, adapting their approach to suit individual needs. The result is a learning environment where children feel safe, brave, inquisitive and develop a lifelong love of learning.

But what truly sets Pre-Prep apart is the way it blends strong academic and pastoral care with an exceptional enrichment programme. Children can try judo, gymnastics, tennis or yoga, develop rhythm and expression through musical theatre, get involved in the regular concerts and the annual nativity or get creative with craft

Set in the heart of Stonyhurst’s spectacular 1,000-acre estate is St Mary’s Hall Pre-Prep – a place where childhood is cherished, curiosity is nurtured, and young minds are inspired. For families seeking a warm, values-led foundation to early education, the Stonyhurst St Mary’s Hall Pre-Prep offers a joyful and enriching experience that shapes young confident learners and adventurous, thoughtful individuals.

At Stonyhurst St Mary’s Hall Pre-Prep, which welcomes children from age three to seven, the ethos is rooted in the Jesuit tradition of cura personalis – care for the whole person – the Pre-Prep champions each child’s unique personality and learning journey. Whether they are a budding artist, an eager reader, a future scientist or natural explorer, the dedicated teaching team ensures every pupil is seen, celebrated and supported.