St. Mary’s Primary School, Rathfriland

 calls out for votes to get a share of Tesco’s Stronger Starts fund

St. Mary’s Primary School is bidding for a cash boost from the Tesco Stronger Starts scheme.

Stronger Starts provides grant awards of up to £1,500 to local community projects, with a particular focus on children and young people.

Three groups in every community have been shortlisted to receive grant awards and Tesco customers can vote for the group they think should take away the top award in their local Tesco store.

**St. Mary’s Primary School is one of the groups on the shortlist in our area.**

 **Please see below a list of stores taking part in the voting on our project.

2057    Banbridge    Large Unit    BT32 4AX
2922    Newcastle N I    Large Unit    BT33 0GW
4506    Banbridge Extra    Large Unit    BT32 4LF
5031    Newry Downshire Extra    Large Unit    BT34 1EE**

Our project will improve our outdoor space to support learning outside the classroom and provide opportunities to promote healthy lifestyles.

“St. Mary’s Primary School understands the importance of the outside environment in providing children with opportunities to learn, play and develop. Stepping outside the traditional classroom often leads to remarkable transformations in pupils. We notice improved behaviours such as enhanced focus and reduced disruptions. By engaging in outdoor activities, challenges and teamwork, children can grow in confidence and self-esteem. Healthy eating and physical activity in primary school has an important role to play in encouraging healthy lifestyles and exercise as part of a rich, broad curriculum.”

(St. Mary’s Primary School)

Voting is open in all Tesco stores from early January until the end of March. Customers will cast their vote using a blue token given to them at the check-out each time they shop.

Tesco’s Stronger Starts – previously known as Tesco Community Grants - has already provided over £110 million to more than 60,000 projects across Britain.

This £5m Stronger Starts grant programme, delivered in partnership with Groundwork UK, helps schools and children’s groups provide nutritious food and healthy activities that support young people’s physical health and mental wellbeing, such as breakfast clubs or snacks, and sports equipment for after school clubs.

**Claire de Silva, Tesco UK Head of Communities and Local Media**, said: “Helping schools and children’s groups access the food and resources they need is vitally important in getting children a stronger start in life. Children with enough food have more energy, better concentration, and ultimately achieve more too."

**Graham Duxbury, Groundwork’s UK Chief Executive, said:** “As a community charity, we have seen first-hand how schools and other groups supporting young people have been playing a much bigger role in ensuring children are getting a healthy start to the day and getting access to spaces and services to support physical activity and mental health. Family budgets are tight and school budgets are tight, but it’s so important that children stay fed, fit and focused, so we’re delighted to be able to prioritise these activities alongside Tesco with the Stronger Starts programme.”

Funding is available to community groups and charities looking to fund local projects that bring benefits to communities, particularly those helping to provide food and giving children the support they need for a good start in life.

Anyone can nominate a project and organisations can apply online. To find out more visit [tescoplc.com/strongerstarts](http://tescoplc.com/strongerstarts)