

Welcome to Ballyvester Primary School

Prospectus



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CONTACT AND REFERENCE INFORMATION

School Address: Ballyvester Primary School
244 Killaughey Road
DONAGHADEE
BT21 ONF

Website: www.ballyvesterps.org.uk

Telephone: 028 9188 2121

Fax: 028 9188 4418

Principal: Mrs K Hunter

Chairperson of the Board of Governors: Mr B Brown

General:

Ballyvester Primary School is a controlled, co-educational primary school situated approximately 1 mile from Donaghadee.

The present enrolment of compulsory school age children (4-11 years) is 112 with a teaching staff of six.

The school opened as a National school in 1842 and is pleasantly situated in a rural setting. The present listed building was built in 1906. It includes a classroom, office, dining-room, ICT suite, cloakroom and kitchen. There are five large classrooms and a SEN room in well-kept grounds. The pupils come mainly from the local scattered country area.

Area Board:

The school is under the control of the South Eastern Education and Library Board, Grahamsbridge Road, Dundonald, BELFAST BT16 2HS. Telephone 028 90566200. The Area Board publishes details about education in its area and a copy of this information can be obtained from the above address.

Interested parents are welcome to visit the school and can make arrangements by contacting the school principal.

VISION AND AIMS

Vision

At Ballyvester Primary School we aim to provide a happy, secure environment in which children can learn effectively to realise their full potential as unique individuals at each stage of their development.

This aim permeates the ethos of the school, the teaching styles and approaches and the pastoral care arrangements. As our children have different abilities, aptitudes and needs, every opportunity is taken to allow children to experience individual success.

Ballyvester has a reputation for placing pastoral care and high academic achievement at its heart. We foster an atmosphere where the educational needs of children growing up in a multi-cultural society are met and that they are well-prepared for a creative and satisfying life.

Mission Statement

Ballyvester Primary School promotes learning in a caring and sensitive environment in which all members of our school community are valued, motivated and encouraged to fulfil their full potential.

Aims:

1. To create a happy, secure, stimulating environment in which all pupils can learn effectively and become clear, confident communicators.
2. To encourage the children to have an independent and responsible attitude to school, the community, and to show respect for themselves and others.
3. To present children with a variety of challenging, activity based learning experiences incorporating all areas of study required by the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
4. To encourage children to recognise the value of developing a healthy mind and body and to foster, within each child, a positive self-image.
5. To encourage parents to have a constructive and positive role in the school.
6. To place the school at the heart of the local community.

STAFF AND ORGANISATION

The Board of *Governors*, consisting of representatives of the Area Board, Transferors, parents and staff, have responsibility for the appointment of staff and the general running of the school.

Principal: Mrs Katryna Hunter

Teachers: Mrs Lisa Beatty
Miss Emma Dorrian
Miss Chrissie Dugan
Mrs Lesley Greenald
Miss Alison McKnight
Miss Amanda Robinson
Mrs Marion Winter

The Principal and two teachers form a Senior Management Team. They are responsible for curriculum policy, general administration of the school and pastoral care.

The teaching staff is responsible for the planning, organisation and evaluation of the teaching programme in each area of learning. They also bear overall responsibility for the pupils' progress and for communication with the parents and school principal on all academic and pastoral matters.

School Secretary: Mrs Heather Burrows

Classroom Assistants: Mrs Margaret McCullough & Miss Sarah Quinn

Lunch Time Supervisors: Mrs Deborah Fulton &
Miss Sarah Quinn

Building Supervisor: Mr Alister Carson

The secretary and ancillary staff facilitate the administration and smooth running of the school.

THE SCHOOL FUND

Each family is asked to contribute a small sum of money annually (currently £15, or £20-£25 if two or more children in the family attend the school). This money is used to help finance educational outings for the pupils and to purchase extra materials not covered by our requisitions.

ADMISSIONS

Admission no. 16

Enrolment number 109

Criteria for Admission

Year 1 Intake

If the school is over-subscribed, applications from pupils will be considered according to the following criteria, applied in the order set down.

Priority will be given to children:-

- 1 Whose brother/sister, half brother, half sister, step brother, step sister is currently enrolled at the school (please list name(s) and current class(es));
- 2 Whose brother/sister, half-brother/sister is a former pupil of the school (please list name(s) and current class(es));
- 3 Whose parent/guardian is a former pupil of the school (please list name(s) and last year of attendance);
- 4 Whose parent/guardian is presently an employee or Governor of the school;
- 5 Who are the eldest or only child in the family.

In the event of over-subscription in any of the above criteria, the following sub-criterion will be applied:-

The proximity of the child's home to the school as measured from the school front gate (Killaughey Road) to their home. Distances will be determined on the basis of measurements using walking distance by Google Maps.

The Governors do not consider children below Compulsory School Age for admission.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Y1 applications received	18	24	23
Y1 pupils admitted	18	20	16
Percentage attendance	96%	96.5%	

Applicants should note that they may be required to produce documents verifying their address.

SCHOOL ORGANISATION

Current Daily Timetable

School starts at	9.00am
Break	10.30 - 10.45 am
Lunch	12.00 - 12.45 pm
Home time	12.00pm for Y1 pupils until 1 st October 2.00 pm for Y1-Y3 pupils 3.00 pm for Y4-Y7 pupils

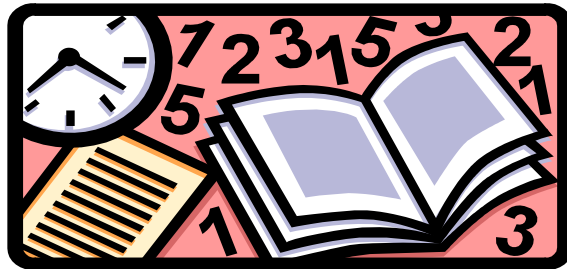
Punctuality

Punctuality is a valued aspect of life at Ballyvester. We ask parents to ensure that children arrive at school by 8.55 am (but not before 8.45 am) in order to be ready for registration at 9.00 am. Children arriving at the last minute or after tend to be unsettled for some time.

We would also ask parents to collect children promptly at 2.00 pm or 3.00 pm.

School Holidays

A detailed list of school holidays is issued at the beginning of each school year. There is also one at the back of this booklet. Parents are asked to keep this for future reference.



INDUCTION PROGRAMME FOR YEAR 1 INTAKE

Parents will be notified in April if there is a place for their child at the school and they will be invited to a meeting to discuss how children can be prepared for starting school.

The children will be invited along to school one afternoon during the month of June so that they can see the classroom, sample the play materials and meet their teachers, Mrs Hunter and Mrs Winter, and classroom assistant, Mrs McCullough.

Parents are encouraged to talk positively to their children about school so that it is an experience they look forward to.

CLASS ORGANISATION

Currently Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 are taught as single classes, and Year 6 and Year 7 form a class group.

Internally classes are organised in small groups - sometimes according to ability, at other times the grouping may be mixed ability, peer or random - this flexibility enables the teacher to effect the most efficient form of learning.



CURRICULUM

Our aim is to offer children a broadly based, well-balanced curriculum which develops the whole child. This is achieved by ensuring all pupils study the Primary Curriculum which is set out in six areas of learning. These are Language and Literacy, Mathematics and Numeracy, The Arts, The World Around Us, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding and Physical Education.

The Religious Education programme, devised by SEELB, is followed and pupils also have the opportunity to enhance their learning through an established French programme which is integrated into the N.I. curriculum.

Qualities of confidence, self-esteem and consideration for others will be developed alongside increasing competence in the basic skills. A variety of teaching approaches, centred on practical first-hand experiences i.e. activities on a class, small group and individual basis, will be pursued. Effective teaching will be achieved by the careful matching of activities and content of lessons to individual needs.

Details of the curriculum taught in each class are available for inspection in school.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

These form an important part of the general curriculum and include visits to places of local interest such as the Folk and Transport Museum, W5, Castleward, Mount Stewart, Exploris in Portaferry, Crawfordsburn Country Park, Well Teddy Clinic and Little Wings Pizzeria.

A residential trip is organised annually for the Key Stage 2 pupils as part of a long-standing cross-community programme with St. Anne's Primary School in Donaghadee.



CO-ORDINATION

All teachers ensure that each class programme has both continuity and progression within Key Stages and between one Key Stage and the next. The Principal and individual subject co-ordinators share responsibility for the co-ordination and monitoring of Policy and Programmes of Study throughout Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

All teachers provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum for all children in their class.

Where pupils with special educational needs are identified, they will be allocated individual action or education plans. This includes children who have been absent from school for a prolonged period because of illness. Regular monitoring of pupils' progress is carried out and review of progress by teacher and parents is a regular feature of special needs provision. Where necessary, advice and support is sought from outside the school - e.g. SEELB Educational Psychology Service or Curriculum advisory and support staff.

HOMework

Each pupil has homework to do at least four evenings per week. The workload increases as the child progresses from class to class.

Homework gives children an opportunity to practise what has been learned in class and encourages independent learning.

We believe that parental interest in homework is vital and would encourage parents:-

- to provide a quiet place for children to work
- to praise and encourage children to always do their best
- to ask questions and talk about the work
- to contact the teacher if children are having problems
- to sign all written homework examined and approved by them.



ASSESSMENT

- Continuous monitoring of pupil progress takes place throughout the year. In addition, pupils are involved in class tests in January and Standardised tests in May
- Computer Based Assessments take place in October each year and results are reported to parents at the October Parent Teacher Interview
- Parents are invited to an interview with their child's teacher in Term 1 and Term 2
- During Term 2 parents of Year 7 pupils meet with the Principal to discuss the transfer of their children to secondary education
- End of Key Stage assessment is carried out in Years 4 and 7 at the end of Term 2
- An Annual Report is issued to parents of all children at the end of Term 3

Parents are also encouraged to arrange meetings throughout the year to discuss their child's progress.



SPORT

Sport is important in the life of our school. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in and enjoy a variety of sporting activities.

Aims:-

- To encourage enthusiasm and a positive attitude to exercise and personal well-being.
- To encourage individual pupils to interact and co-operate with other pupils in an effort to realise shared goals.
- To provide an opportunity for pupils to participate in sports identified in the Northern Ireland PE curriculum.
- To develop a pupil's personal qualities of self-esteem, self-confidence, tolerance and empathy.

FS and KS1 pupils have a minimum of 1.5 hours of PE each week.

KS2 pupils have a minimum of 2 hours of PE each week.

All pupils take part in dance, gymnastics, athletics and games at appropriate levels. Foundation (Years 1 and 2) and Key Stage 1 (Years 3 and 4) take part in the IFA Fundamental Skills Programme. Key Stage 2 pupils (Years 5, 6 and 7) play netball and football and have the opportunity to play matches with other schools. Football, Netball, Hockey and Dance after-school clubs take place during the year.

Facilities:-

- School playground for outdoor PE
- Middle room (Foundation and KS1)
- Pupils from Years 5-7 attend weekly swimming sessions at Bangor Aurora Leisure Centre.
- Occasional use of facilities at local special school and/or Ards Arena



LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY

Individuals from the local community are invited to come into school to share their knowledge and experience. We have had visits from the dental nurse who spoke on the care of teeth, the police who ran a course for older children on playing safely, and a local council representative who spoke about litter and pollution.

Our school choir visits local residential homes and local shopping centres. We also take part in a variety of other community ventures such as the RNLI Sporting Challenge, National Spring clean, public speaking competitions and sports tournaments.



The annual Carol Service takes place in one of our local churches - First Presbyterian, Church of Ireland, Shore Street Presbyterian or Methodist Church.

CHARITIES

Children are encouraged to make a small contribution to charity each week at assembly. A different charity, addressing a range of needs, is supported each term. Charities are occasionally supported through special events such as a Non-Uniform day, the collection of food at Harvest time, and fun days.



PARENT-TEACHER GROUP

COMMITTEE 2014/15

Chairperson:	Lyndsay Walker
Vice-Chairperson:	Shelley Nelson
Treasurer:	Lesley Keenan
Secretary:	Lois Creighton
Auditor:	Alison McCaw
Independent Auditor:	Derek Anderson
Committee:	Paula McCullough Sarah Thompson Mandy Roycroft Jenny Reid
Teacher Representatives:	Mrs Hunter Miss Dorrian

Our PTA warmly welcomes all families whose children attend Ballyvester Primary School. A close bond has been formed between parents and teachers which help co-operation and respect to flourish. The PTA has been actively engaged over the years in raising funds to purchase extra school equipment - e.g. four interactive whiteboards, computers, televisions, sports equipment, books, an electronic keyboard, outdoor play equipment and iPads.

We encourage new parents to become associated with the PTA. The events are generally well attended and have included a fashion show, cookery demonstration, table quiz, family fun night and beetle drive. Each year a visit from Santa Claus is organised.

Ballyvester Primary School PTA encourages all parents and friends to support us in the events we organise. By doing so, you help us to improve the quality of life in our school and show your child that you are interested in his/her new school.

PARENTAL ASSISTANCE

The teaching staff also appreciate parental assistance in school to support small groups of children e.g. for sports coaching with the netball team or football team. If you are interested in being involved please let us know. Parents need to register as volunteers if they wish to help in this way or accompany pupils on class visits.

PASTORAL CARE

Our pastoral care policy is centred on the pupils.

The policy involves pupils, teachers and ancillary staff. It provides for the creation of a supportive and caring atmosphere for all within the school.

Our aims are:-

- To create a happy environment where self-respect and respect for others is paramount
- To promote respect and desire for high standards in every aspect of school life
- To develop positive relationships within the whole school community so that mutual understanding prevails
- To promote an atmosphere in which pupils feel confident to approach any member of staff about a personal concern which they may have
- To work in partnership with parents to ensure mutual understanding with regard to their child's development and to help them recognise the importance of their influence and example

Parents are seen as a vital part of this aspect of school life and the teachers are available for consultation concerning pupil's progress and welfare. Parents are also encouraged to take a keen interest in affairs of the school and their support in attending various school functions is much appreciated.



POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

The staff at Ballyvester Primary School adopt a Positive Behaviour policy, expecting pupils to behave in a responsible manner by showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other people at all times. We believe that good behaviour is found where teachers enjoy good relationships with their pupils, have high expectations of their pupils' work, and provide a curriculum and teaching methods well-matched to pupils' needs.

The co-operation of parents is sought in relation to maintaining high standards of pupil attendance, punctuality, personal appearance, the wearing of school uniform, having the proper equipment for lessons and supervision of homework. If problems do arise we like to involve parents at an early stage rather than leave it until later and we hope that you as parents will do the same with us. An upset at home can cause your child to behave differently at school just as worry over schoolwork can cause you problems at home.

Our Positive Behaviour Policy is available on our school website www.ballyvesterps.org.uk.

DRUGS EDUCATION

A drugs education programme is delivered to Key Stage 2 pupils within the context of Health Education. Key Stage 1 pupils will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own well-being through having an awareness of what is good or harmful to their bodies.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is taught through an agreed syllabus which is Christian and non-denominational.

Each class spends some time every day on Religious Education and all classes take part in assembly once a week. Clergy from local churches take part in assemblies on a regular basis.

If parents do not want their child to be taught the Religious Education curriculum or to take part in assembly they must speak to the Principal concerning the matter. It is your right to withdraw your child from religious education classes.

SCHOOL RULES

Our school rules are easy to understand and we expect all pupils to keep them.

- Arrive at school on time 8.45 - 9.00 am in order to be ready for class to start at 9.00 am.
- When you are moving around the classroom walk quietly - never run or shout.
- Use the litterbins provided.
- At playtime, make sure there is no rough play which might hurt someone and remember to go to the toilet. Bad language is forbidden.
- If you are absent from school for any reason bring a note from home to explain why.
- Do not leave school grounds at going home time until the adult who is collecting you has arrived. Use the small gate on Ballyvester Road when entering or leaving the school.
- Make sure all your belongings are clearly named.
- Wear your school uniform.
- Always behave in a polite, respectful and responsible way.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Parents should telephone school before 9.15 a.m. on the first day of absence. A written explanation should be provided on return to school. We would also appreciate it if parents informed us about children who are expected to be absent from school for a long time because of illness.

We discourage parents from taking children on holiday during term-time. Parents who do decide to absent their children from school for this reason should inform the Principal in writing in advance. Work is not set for pupils to do during such absence.

We would ask parents to avoid making appointments (e.g. dental) for their children, during the school day, when possible. Pupils who have such appointments should bring a note from a parent/guardian to let the teacher know when the pupil should leave and who will be meeting them. Please report to the school office if you are collecting your child early or if you arrive late.

The Education Welfare Officer monitors attendance of all pupils on a monthly basis.

Collecting pupils from School

Parents are asked to ensure that pupils know who will be collecting them from school each day. Teachers should be made aware of any changes in the normal collection arrangements.

UNIFORM

All pupils are expected to wear school uniform.

Navy fleece with school badge (optional) Navy v-neck sweatshirt with school badge Black shoes - track shoes are NOT acceptable
Grey trousers or Grey skirt/pinafore Grey tights or socks Pale blue polo shirt (Y1/2) Pale blue blouse/shirt with school tie (Y3-7)
SUMMER UNIFORM (optional)
Blue and white check dress and white socks (Girls) Grey shorts and grey socks (Boys)
SPORT/PE Y1/2 - slip-on gym shoes Y3/4 - blue polo shirt, navy shorts/jogging bottoms, slip-on gym shoes Y5-7 - blue polo shirt, navy shorts/jogging bottoms and track shoes

School uniforms can be purchased from Buywell, Donaghadee or Roberts in Bangor.
Other local shops are also able to supply items of uniform.

ALL ITEMS OF SCHOOL CLOTHING MUST BE CLEARLY NAMED.



LUNCH TIME

Children may bring a packed lunch or purchase a school dinner - these are cooked at Donaghadee Central Kitchen and served in school. The present cost is £2.40 per day. Please pay on a Monday for the days on which meals are required. Payment may also be made one month in advance. A menu is given to each child at the beginning of the school year and a copy is on display on school notice boards.

MILK

School milk is available for all pupils - present cost 20p per carton. Payment is made a term in advance and we need to be informed a week in advance if milk is to be ordered or cancelled.

MONEY

All money should be sent to school in an envelope or money wallet with child's name, amount enclosed and what it is for clearly noted on it. It should be given to the class teacher on Monday morning or the first day back to school after holidays or illness.

BOOK CLUB

We run book clubs which cover all age groups at our school. This is a good source of reasonably priced, up to date books to encourage children to be interested readers. Please discuss with your child which book to buy and share the delight of reading it with him or her.

SCHOOL MEDICALS

The School Nurse visits our school annually to check on the general health of our pupils. All Year 1 pupils are given a medical examination. During a preliminary visit the school nurse checks the children's hearing and vision. A review list is kept by the nurse for all children who require hearing and vision to be monitored annually. Other pupils have a routine vision check.



CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Residential Trips

Where a school activity involves pupils in at least one night away from home, the Board of Governors will make a charge for board and lodging including any other sums to cover refreshments on the journey. Other costs including travel will be charged to the parent (if a chargeable activity) or be the subject of a voluntary contribution from the parent (if a non-chargeable activity - e.g. it takes place during the school day, it is in relation to the Northern Ireland Curriculum, it is in relation to the preparation for a public examination).

Charges for board and lodging will not be made for a pupil whose parents are in receipt of income support. For pupils whose parents are in such circumstances, board and lodging charges will be remitted by the Board of Governors.

Day-trips/Non-residential trips

Non-residential trips will be deemed to take place during school hours if 50% or more of that period spent on the activity occurs during school hours. In these cases it will be necessary to ask for voluntary contributions to ensure that the activity takes place. If substantial parental contributions are not forthcoming for a proposed trip then the Board of Governors will look at the viability of the activity taking place.

Visiting Groups

In relation to other planned activities during the school day e.g. music ensemble, drama group, magician, etc. the Board of Governors will invite parents to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of providing such activities.

In respect to voluntary contributions the Board of Governors will take account of the following factors:

- the need for long term planning;
- the right for parents to withdraw their voluntary contributions before the booking has been made;
- the availability of other sources of funding to subsidise the activity e.g. school funds or the Cross-Community Contact scheme.

Breakages and Fines

The school may ask parents to pay for damage to school property or equipment where this is a result of a pupil's misbehaviour.

The Board of Governors reserve the right to amend the above policy in the light of any changing circumstances during the year.

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

There is a statutory requirement to make certain information readily available to parents. This includes curriculum details, statements of school policy, formal papers sent by the Department of Education to the Principal and procedures for complaints about the school curriculum and related matters. Copies are held in the school office and can be viewed by arrangement with the Principal.



Please note.....

The information provided in this prospectus is correct as at 1st November 2014. It should not be assumed that it will remain current throughout the school year. If any significant changes to the above information are envisaged, notice giving details and effective dates will be circulated in advance through our regular news sheets.

BALLYVESTER PRIMARY SCHOOL



Revised Holiday Dates 2014-2015



Return to school	Monday 1st September, 2014
Half Term	27 October 2014 – 31 October 2014
Christmas	22 December 2014 – 2 January 2015
Half Term	16 February 2015 – 20 February 2015
Easter	30 March 2015 – 10 April 2015
Bank Holidays	4 May 2015 & 25 May 2015
Teacher Training (No pupils attend)	Tuesday 5 May 2015 Tuesday 26 May 2015
School Finishes	26 June 2015 (12 noon)