



# Ballyvester Primary School

## Prospectus



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## WELCOME TO BALLYVETSER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am delighted that you have taken the time to look through our prospectus. Perhaps you have visited Ballyvester Primary School, if not you are most welcome to make an appointment to view the school where a warm welcome awaits.



Choosing the right school for your child is one of the most important decisions you will make. We hope that this prospectus not only gives you the information that you need, but also a flavour of the caring, friendly atmosphere that exists.

We value every child and aim to give every pupil the opportunity to experience success in all areas of development. But our expectations can only be fulfilled if we work effectively in partnership, with you, the parents. Together we can make the next seven years in school a rewarding experience for your child, and hopefully, some of the happiest times in your child's life.

I hope that you choose Ballyvester Primary School and that this will be the beginning of your child's educational journey with us.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Katrina Hunter  
Principal



## CONTACT INFORMATION

School Address:	Ballyvester Primary School 244 Killaughey Road DONAGHADEE BT21 0NF
Website:	<a href="http://www.ballyvesterps.org.uk">www.ballyvesterps.org.uk</a>
Telephone:	028 9188 2121
Email:	<a href="mailto:info@ballyvesterps.donaghadee.ni.sch.uk">info@ballyvesterps.donaghadee.ni.sch.uk</a>
Principal:	Mrs K Hunter
Chair of Board of Governors:	Mrs C Rankin

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 116 with a teaching staff of five.

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 and four new modern classrooms were built in 2015.

### **Area Board:**

The school is under the control of the Education Authority – South Eastern Region, Grahamsbridge Road, Dundonald, BT16 2HS (Tel 028 9056 6200).

## **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 Carolyn Arnold
	Mrs Lisa Beatty
	Mrs Alison Burgess
	Mrs Lesley Greenald
	Mrs Laura Proctor

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.

Classroom Assistants:	Mrs Sasha Anderson
	Mrs Lois Creighton
	Ms Alison Elliott
	Mrs Margaret MacKinnon
	Mrs Suzanne McDowell
	Miss Sarah Quinn

Lunch Time Supervisors:                   Mrs MacKinnon & Miss Sarah Quinn

School Secretary:                          Mrs Heather Burrows

Building Supervisor:                        Mr Alister Carson

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

## ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Admission no. 16

Enrolment no. 109

### ***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 Children who, at the date of their application, have a child of the family currently enrolled at the school.
- 2 Children who, at the date of their application, are the eldest child of the family eligible to apply for admission to the school.
- 3 Any other children.

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

Priority will be given to the child who lives closest 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 shortest walking distance by Google Maps. If measurement of distance proves inconclusive priority will be given to the eldest child.

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

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
Y1 applications received	17	17	16
Y1 pupils admitted	17	17	16

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

## SCHOOL ORGANISATION

### Daily Timetable

School starts	9.00am
Break	10.30 - 10.45am
Lunch	12.00 - 12.45pm
Home time	12.00pm for Y1 pupils until 1 <sup>st</sup> October 1.55pm for Y1-Y3 pupils 3.00pm for Y4-Y7 pupils

### Punctuality

Punctuality is a valued aspect of life at Ballyvester. We ask parents to ensure that children arrive at school punctually (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 1.55pm or 3.00pm.

### School Holidays

Parents are provided with a calendar in June outlining the pupil holidays for the next school year. This is provided in the Year 1 Induction pack and on our school app. We would ask parents to avoid booking holidays during term time.



### INDUCTION PROGRAMME FOR YEAR 1 INTAKE

Parents will be notified in April if their child has secured a place 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 for an induction afternoon during the month of June so that they can see their classroom. They will meet their teachers, Mrs Hunter and Mrs Arnold, and classroom assistant, Mrs MacKinnon. Parents are encouraged to talk positively to their children about school so that it is an experience they look forward to.

## CLASS ORGANISATION

Currently classes are arranged as follows:

Year 1/2	Mrs Hunter & Mrs Arnold
Year 2/3	Mrs Burgess & Mrs Hunter
Year 4/5	Mrs Proctor
Year 5/6	Mrs Greenald
Year 7	Mrs Beatty

Internally classes are organised in small groups - sometimes according to ability, at other times the grouping may be mixed ability, peer or random to enable 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 NI Primary Curriculum which is set out in six areas of learning:

- Language and Literacy
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- The Arts
- The World Around Us
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
- Physical Education
- Religious Education

Qualities of confidence, self-esteem and respect 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.

### **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 to Greenhill YMCA or The Kilbroney Centre, Rostrevor.



## **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 a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP). Regular monitoring of pupils' progress is carried out and review of progress by the teacher and parents is a regular feature of special needs provision. Where necessary, advice and support is sought from outside agencies e.g. EA Educational Psychology Service or EA Curriculum advisory and support staff.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is set for the following reasons:

- It helps consolidate work which your child has been doing in school. No homework will be set which has not been covered in class
- It lets you, the parent, see what your child has been learning in school
- A project or similar investigative piece of work may be set to allow the child to explore a subject in more depth and for parents and children to work together in a creative way

We encourage parents to:

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

## ASSESSMENT

- Continuous monitoring of pupil progress takes place throughout the year using various class tests and assessments. In addition, pupils in Years 4-7 complete Standardised tests in May.
- Pupils complete Cognitive Ability Tests in January of Year 4 and October of Year 6.
- 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.
- An Annual Pupil 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.

Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils have a minimum of 1.5 hours of PE each week. Key Stage 2 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

## 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 the PSNI to teach the children about Road Safety and Internet Safety, the dental nurse, local council representatives and ministers from various churches.

Our school choir visits local residential homes and 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 Nativity takes place in December at First Presbyterian Church, Donaghadee.

## **CHARITIES**

Various charities are supported throughout the year on a termly basis. Parents and pupils are encouraged to support these charity events and we are always so humbled by the generosity of our whole school community.



## **PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

We are fortunate to have a committed group of parents who form the P.T.A. committee with some of the teachers. As a parent with a child at Ballyvester you are automatically a member. We are very proud of the partnership which exists and this fosters good relationships between staff and parents.

The PTA has been actively engaged over the years in raising funds to purchase extra school equipment - e.g. IMEX boards, iPads, sports equipment, Accelerated Reading programme and books, outdoor play equipment and playground markings. All monies raised are directly used to benefit the children.

## **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 all support 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 a problem arises, 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](http://www.ballyvesterps.org.uk) .



## **DRUGS EDUCATION**

A drugs education programme is delivered to Key Stage 2 pupils within PDMU. 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 week 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**

Whole school agreed rules:

1. Observe the signal for attention (hand raised).
2. Follow adults' instructions.
3. Keep hands, feet, objects and unkind words to yourself.

See more detail in our Behaviour policy on the school website  
[www.ballyvesterps.org.uk](http://www.ballyvesterps.org.uk)

## **ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

Parents should complete an Absence form on the school app or 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 V-neck sweatshirt with school badge  
Pale blue polo shirt (Y1-3)  
Pale blue blouse/shirt with school tie (Y4-7)  
Grey trousers or Grey skirt/pinafore  
Grey tights or socks  
Black shoes - track shoes are NOT acceptable

### **SUMMER UNIFORM (optional)**

Blue and white check dress and white socks (Girls)  
Grey shorts and grey socks (Boys)

### **SPORT/PE**

Y1-3 – slip-on gym shoes  
Y4-7 – blue polo shirt, school track-suit and track shoes

School uniform can be purchased online at Signature Works (or in

**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 £2.60 per day.

## **SCHOOL FUND**

Each family is asked to contribute a small sum of money annually (currently £35 for one child or £50 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.

## **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.

## **SCHOOL APP**

Payment for school meals, milk, school fund and other resources is processed through our school app using you credit/debit card. The school meals menu, annual holiday list, monthly newsletters and other useful information are all uploaded to the app for quick reference. The Ballyvester PS app is available for download from the app store and google play.

## **MORNING AND AFTERNOON CLUB**

Pupils can attend a Morning Club (£2.00 per day) in the Middle Room from 8.00am until 8.45am and is supervised by a member of staff. Pupils in Years 1-3 can attend Afternoon Club (£3.00 per day) from 2.00 – 3.00pm where they are supervised as they play.

## AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

A variety of clubs are offered each term such as Football, Art, Monkeynastix, Dance, Lego, Debutots, Max Coding, Boom and Bloom. There is a charge for these clubs and places are allocated on a first come, first served basis.

## 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 fund

### **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 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.