



Welcome to Ballykeel Primary School and Nursery Unit

Dear Parents and Friends,

Thank you for considering Ballykeel Primary and/or Nursery Unit as a suitable school for your child. You will have many questions about our school, how it operates and what you and your child can expect when you begin here. I hope this prospectus will go some way in providing you with this information.

It is our priority to ensure that your child is happy here, so we aim to provide a safe, secure and caring environment where effective learning takes place and where each child is valued as an individual. Your involvement in the school is very welcome as we believe that partnership between home and school provides valuable support for children in these very important years. We will inform you regularly about events in school, about how your child is progressing and we will deal with any issues or concerns sensitively and promptly.

We are very approachable in Ballykeel and have a happy, hardworking team of staff committed to ensuring that our children develop to their full potential. We hope this prospectus gives you a 'flavour' of life in our school and the door is open should you wish to visit or seek clarification about any issues. Further information can also be found on our website, www.ballykeelps.org.uk.

I look forward to welcoming you and your child/children to Ballykeel School.

S. SHEERAN
(Principal)



BALLYKEEL PRIMARY SCHOOL / NURSERY UNIT

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PRINCIPAL: - Mrs. S. Sheeran, B.Ed.(Hons), P.G.Dip.Ed., M.Ed.





OUR SCHOOL

SCHOOL STATEMENT OF ETHOS

In Ballykeel, all staff are highly committed to the care and well-being of each child, have a deep sense of pride in our school and community, and work together to create a happy, collegiate and supportive team. The professionalism, hard work and unique talents of each member of staff help contribute to the holistic development of all the children entrusted to our care. We seek to celebrate and reward the successes of every child and instil in them a love for learning. We are a welcoming and inclusive school and our identity is demonstrated through the promotion of the Christian values of respect, tolerance, kindness, truthfulness, forgiveness, friendship, responsibility, trust and perseverance. With the aim of inspiring everyone to become a lifelong learner, pupils and teachers are encouraged to embrace all the positive opportunities and challenges that the school and local community provide.

SCHOOL MOTTO



OUR SPECIFIC AIMS ARE:-

Our aims are outlined by means of an acrostic, using the first word of our school motto, 'EDUCATE' - the core business of Ballykeel Primary and Nursery Unit.

- **Educate** – provide a broad, balanced and stimulating education to all our children that fulfils the requirements of the Northern Ireland curriculum.
- **Develop** – help develop each child to their full potential, through a range of moral, spiritual, intellectual, social, physical, cultural and aesthetic experiences.
- **Unite** – create a friendly, warm and united learning community where children feel safe, happy and secure in an atmosphere of positive discipline.
- **Community** – foster, value and encourage effective partnerships between school, parents, families and the community.
- **Achieve** – ensure that sustained improvement is achieved through continual self-evaluation and self-assessment.
- **Teachers** – help each child reach their full potential, particularly by securing fundamental skills in Reading, Writing and Mathematics, through the delivery of high-quality teaching provided by an enthusiastic, highly motivated and reflective staff.
- **Esteem** – encourage pupils to develop their self-esteem and confidence through a range of enriching experiences that improve their independence, thinking skills, initiative, determination and motivation.

OUR VISION

We aim to be an outstanding school, at the heart of the Ballykeel community, that continually strives for excellence by providing a rich, broad and balanced education which meets all our children's needs, interests and aspirations.

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

We envisage achieving our vision by creating an environment which is child centred and where pupils feel secure, valued and cared for. Through high quality, creative and forward – thinking teaching we aim to **educate** and **inspire** every child to reach their full potential and offer them a wide range of **enriched** opportunities for their personal development and well-being. Ultimately, we wish to enable all our children to confidently transfer to secondary school and help to equip them to achieve happiness, success and fulfilment in adult life.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Type of School: Controlled Primary

Enrolment No: 406

Admissions criteria will be used in the event of the school being oversubscribed. The criteria are listed in order of priority.

Admissions Criteria Ballykeel Primary School

1. Children of compulsory school age.
2. Children who have a brother/sister currently enrolled in the school.
3. Children who are the eldest/only child in the family.
4. Children for whom Ballykeel Primary is the nearest school.
5. Children whose brother/sister/parent is a former pupil of the school.
6. In the event of a tie, chronological age, beginning with the eldest will be applied.

	TOTAL APPLICATIONS	TOTAL ADMISSIONS
2014/2015	53	53
2015/2016	51	51
2016/2017	56	56

BALLYKEEL NURSERY UNIT

Type of School: Controlled Nursery Unit

Enrolment No: 52 (Full Time)

Time: 9.00am – 1.30pm

Age Range: 2-4years





BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Chairman: Mr A Kennedy

Vice-Chairman & Transfer Representative:

Rev M McNeely

Parents' Representatives:

Mrs L-A Holmes, Mr M Glenn

Transferor Representative:

Mrs M Quigley, Mr T Wray

NEELB Representative:

Mrs I Allen, Mr T Todd

Teachers' Representative:

Mr J Fisher

TEACHING STAFF

Mrs S Sheeran (**Principal**)

Mr J Fisher (**Vice-Principal**)

Teaching Staff

Mrs K Henry

Miss K McGlaughlin

Mrs J Thompson

Miss A Stewart

Miss D Hill

Miss L Kane

Mrs C Montgomery

Mrs J D Thompson

Mrs C Allen

Miss C McConnell

Mrs S McKeegan

Mr J Hughes

Mrs B Esler

Mrs S Gregg

Mrs R McKelvey

Mrs D Ritchie

Special Needs Teachers

Mrs H Young

Mrs D McIlwaine

Mr M Elliott

Nursery Unit

Mrs S Muller (Head of Unit)

Mrs K McGuckin (Teacher)

NON-TEACHING STAFF

Senior Clerical Officers

Mrs S Blaney and Mrs T Millar

Building Supervisor

Mr F McKendry (supported by cleaning staff)

Nursery Assistants

Mrs K Richmond, Miss K Cameron

P1 –P3 Classroom Assistants

Mrs I McQuillan, Mrs E Ewart, Miss S Stewart,

Mrs K Halliday, Miss G Parker

SEN Assistants

Mrs R McBurney, Mrs G Wilson, Mrs H Elder,
Miss Z McPeake, Mrs D Blaney, Miss M Bamber,
Miss L Anderson, Mrs D Backus, Miss J L Bailey

Literacy Support Assistant

Mrs R McBurney

Supervisory Assistants

Mrs K Halliday, Mrs D Blaney, Mrs E Ewart,
Mrs I McQuillan, Mrs S Stewart, Mrs D Backus,
Miss L Anderson, Miss M Bamber, Mrs G Wilson,
Miss Z McPeake, Miss G Parker, Miss J L Bailey,
Mrs H Elder, Miss S Stewart

Cook In Charge

Mrs G Bradley (supported by her staff)

NEELB Music Service

P/T Instrumental Tutor (Strings)

Miss S Bell



Ballykeel Primary School 2017-2018



BUILDING & RESOURCES



BACKGROUND – 'THE OLD SCHOOL'

Ballykeel Primary School first opened for business in September 1966 on a spacious site close to Ballykeel 1 housing estate. With the establishment of Ballykeel 1, and Ballykeel 2 to follow in subsequent years, a centre of education was urgently required to serve the area. Hence, a maze of wooden mobile classrooms were hastily erected on a temporary basis.

In their latter years the original school buildings did fall into a poor state of repair and were 'patched up' on many occasions but the school did cater for over 700 pupils at its peak and older members of staff still remember it affectionately. It took nearly 33 years for a permanent purpose built school to replace the old one.

ACCOMMODATION AND RESOURCES

In November 1998 pupils and teachers moved to the new school building that was located a few hundred yards up the Crebilly Road from the old one, adjacent to Ballykeel 2.

We are now extremely fortunate to have a beautiful, modern and well-designed school set on a huge site with ample playgrounds and great scope for the development of our environmental objectives.

THE MAIN BUILDING:

- 14 classrooms (all with interactive whiteboards)
- 4 learning support classrooms.
- Computer suite
- Spacious, well resourced library
- Large gymnasium / assembly hall
- Separate dining hall
- Board room, offices and staff room
- 4 resource areas

THE NURSERY UNIT:

- 2 classrooms
- Story rooms
- Separate kitchen, laundry and office.
- Parents' area

SCHOOL GROUNDS:

- 2 all-weather mini-soccer pitches
- 2 large playgrounds
- Spacious all-weather and grass areas
- A traditional apple orchard
- 'Tree-Lined Avenue' with flower beds
- 'Golden Jubilee Courtyard Garden'
- 'Bird & Butterfly Garden'
- 'Bird and Minibeast Hotel'
- Vegetable patch
- 'Secret Garden' and Quiet Play Area
- A wildlife pond
- Large wooden shelter
- Wooden playhouse
- 6kw Proven Wind turbine
- Various items of permanent play equipment in the Nursery

Overall our facilities and accommodation provide a bright, safe, pleasant and stimulating environment, well suited to supporting the curricular and extra-curricular needs of our children.





THE SCHOOL DAY

Breakfast Club	8.00am
Gates Open	8.45am
Classes Start	8.55am
Breaktime	10.35am – 10.50am
Lunch Time	(P1-P3) 12.30pm – 1.15pm (P4-P7) 12.45pm – 1.30pm
Home Time	(P1-P3) 2.00pm (P4-P7) 3.00pm

NURSERY UNIT commences at 9.00am and finishes at 1.30pm

LEAVING SCHOOL

Nursery and P1 – P3 children should not be expected to go home themselves. In the interest of safety your child will not be allowed to leave the premises during school hours unless a written request / phone call is received. Parents are then expected to personally collect their child from school.

THE SCHOOL YEAR 2017/2018

29 th Aug 2017	Term starts
29 th Sept 2017	<i>Staff Training</i>
30 th Oct – 2 nd Nov 2017	Mid-Term Break
3 rd Nov 2017	<i>Staff Training</i>
21 st Dec 2017 – 1 st Jan 2018	Christmas holidays
2 nd Jan 2018	<i>Staff Training</i>
3 rd Jan 2018	Term starts
12 th Feb - 16 th Feb 2018	Mid-Term Break
26 th Mar – 6 th Apr 2018	Easter holiday
9 th Apr 2018	Term starts
7 th May 2018	Bank holiday
25 th May 2018	<i>Staff Training</i>
28 th May 2018	Bank Holiday
29 th May 2018	<i>Staff Training</i>
29 th June 2018	Term ends

(NB. All dates are inclusive)

MAIN SCHOOL EVENTS 2017/2018

HARVEST SERVICE	25 th Oct 17
NURSERY CHRISTMAS FAIR	24 th Nov 17
NURSERY NATIVITY & OPEN MORNING	7 th Dec 17
P1/P2 NATIVITY	12 th & 13 th Dec 17
P3 NATIVITY	14 th Dec 17
CAROL SERVICE	15 th Dec 17
EASTER SERVICE	21 st Mar 18
SUMMER FAIR	May 18
SPORTS DAY	May/Jun 18
PRIZE DAY	Jun 18

SCHOOL UNIFORM

All children must wear school uniform as it is practical, economical and ensures that all children feel equal. Jumpers and Polo Shirts are available to purchase in school at the beginning and end of each school year.

GIRLS

Red jumper
Yellow polo shirt
Grey skirt or trousers
Grey tights, grey or white socks
Black shoes
Dress (optional for summer)

BOYS

Red jumper
Yellow / Black polo shirt
Grey or black socks
Grey trousers
Black shoes

School coats, fleeces and schoolbags are also available.

P.E.

Shorts, tee-shirts and P.E. slippers

NURSERY UNIFORM

Red sweatshirt and black trousers / jogging bottoms.



Eco-Schools



BREAK & LUNCH

BREAKFAST CLUB

The Breakfast Club is open from 8.00am each morning for Nursery – P7 children. The cost of a breakfast is 70p. Children are also encouraged to revise their reading, spellings and tables and read to younger children.

SCHOOL MILK

Milk is available daily and is paid termly on a Wednesday. (Nursery milk is free)

BREAK-TIME

The school has a healthy eating policy that is supported by all parents. At break-time only healthy snacks are permitted. P3 – P7 children can go to the canteen to buy poached eggs, toasted bagels and crusty bread etc.

SCHOOL DINNER

The school canteen offers healthy, balanced and nutritious meals at lunch times. Nursery – P3 children must pay on Monday for the week (to the class teacher) and P4 – P7 children can pay daily at the canteen.

PACKED LUNCHES

Children from P1 – P7 can bring a packed lunch instead of taking a school dinner. Parents can decide what to include in these but the school recommends healthy choices.





THE CURRICULUM

The school follows the Programmes of Study laid down in the New Revised Curriculum Northern Ireland Curriculum. There are co-ordinators for each subject area and detailed policies and schemes of work.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Collective worship at morning assembly and the curriculum for religious education are entirely non-denominational. Parents who object to the attendance of their children at assembly or R.E. lessons have the right of withdrawal. Arrangements can be made with the Principal.

SPECIAL NEEDS PROVISION

Throughout the year all pupils are continually assessed by the class teacher. Through this assessment any difficulties a pupil is experiencing will be identified. The school has three Special Needs teachers, (Key Stage 1 Literacy, Key Stage 2 Literacy and Maths) as well as a Literacy Support Assistant.

Parents are regularly consulted and updated on their child's progress. Parents may obtain a copy of the school's Special Needs Policy upon request.

HOMEWORK

Homework is, an important aspect of school life, will be given regularly, and from P3 – P7 will include some written work. All homeworks are graded to each child's ability. Whilst children should be encouraged to work independently, time spent explaining points and encouraging effort is a worthwhile investment. Further details in relation to homework can be found in the school's Homework Policy.

SWIMMING

All children go swimming from P4 through to P7.



ASSESSMENT & REPORTS OF PROGRESS

Teachers continually monitor and assess children's work. Assessment impacts significantly upon school improvement plans and helps to determine the learning experience we offer to our pupils.

Pupils' progress and their standards of attainment are measured in the following ways:

- Baseline assessment
- Standardised tests
- Class tests/topic tests
- End of year exams
- End of key stage assessment
- Teacher observations
- Teacher marking
- Pupils own assessment / assessment for learning
- Classroom displays
- On-going monitoring and evaluation of pupils' work

Parent interviews are held twice yearly.

A written report of progress is sent to parents every June.



ENRICHING THE CURRICULUM

PASTORAL CARE

The pastoral care of our pupils is central to the ethos of the school and all staff are committed to it. The environment is always welcoming and children feel safe and secure in the happy, caring and ordered atmosphere, which exists in the school. The pastoral care co-ordinator and the Principal ensure that comprehensive policies are in place, which are reviewed regularly, and all staff incorporate personal development into their teaching.

We aim to reassure our children that their worries and concerns will be listened to sensitively and sympathetically, and we encourage them to respond appropriately in situations affecting their welfare. The safety and welfare of children is paramount and risk assessments are carried out in relation to health and safety.

We have a School Welfare Officer, Mrs D McIlwaine, who children can speak to if they have worries or concerns.



CHILD PROTECTION

The most important role of the school lies in the protection and safety of the children in its care. The N.E.E.L.B's Health and Safety Policy, which has been adopted by the Board of Governors and is reviewed annually, outlines procedures for the general safety and welfare of pupils on a day-to-day basis. The moral responsibility for the protection of children, however, extends beyond this and is the duty of every adult in the school. Childhood is a wonderful yet vulnerable part of life. Children deserve the full protection of society, its institutions and their personnel, particularly those who comprise the caring professions and are regularly in contact with them. All children should be protected from violence and kept safe from harm in an environment where they are properly cared for, without fear, and feel secure. The school will endeavour to uphold these standards and to ensure that decisions made by the Governors, Principal and members of the teaching staff have the welfare of the child as their paramount consideration.

We ensure that all staff and others who are invited to be involved as volunteer helpers/leaders on trips, residential visits, or other out of school activities are

subject to vetting procedures in keeping with current arrangements for the care and protection of young people.

Parents are regularly sent a copy of child protection procedures and the policy, which is in line with the requirements of DE circular 99/10 Pastoral Care, is reviewed regularly by the designated teacher, the Vice-Principal, Mr J Fisher. The Deputy Designated Teacher is Mrs J Thompson.

A summary of the school's Child Protection Procedures are at the back of this prospectus. Copies of the full policy are available on request.





POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

At Ballykeel Primary School we aim to create a caring, secure environment where all our pupils feel happy and valued. By promoting self-esteem, responsibility and consideration for others we will encourage our pupils to achieve their potential in all areas of their development. Central to achieving our goals will be the co-operation and partnership between members of the whole school community.

Strategies for the promotion of good behaviour and discipline are highly effective as there is a strong sense of calm and order inside and outside of every class in the school. The Positive Behaviour Policy, strategies and school rules have been agreed and are being reinforced consistently by all staff.

High priority is placed on a positive approach to discipline. Extensive use is made of praise, encouragement and rewards.

Minor difficulties, worries or incidents involving any child, which arise within the classroom or in the playground are dealt with by the class teacher or the member of staff on duty. The child/ren concerned are always fully involved in any discussion about an incident or concern. More serious incidents or concerns about a child's behaviour, health or welfare may be referred to the Head of Key Stage 1, Vice-Principal or Principal. A child's parent or guardian may be contacted if it is deemed necessary to involve them when dealing with a particular incident or concern. A copy of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy can be obtained from the school.



REWARDS

In school we are particularly concerned with good behaviour. We believe that good behaviour needs to be carefully developed.

Children learn best when they are clear about what they are supposed to do. Teachers are constantly looking for valid reasons to praise children for their achievements and to reward them. They also refer to good behaviour as an example to others.

Pupils are praised and encouraged in many ways including...

- A quiet smile or friendly look
- Verbal praise or speaking to their parents
- Visit to Principal
- Class reward systems including stickers, certificates, prizes
- Having a night off homework
- Whole class treats, such as a 'Chill Out Day' or DVD afternoon
- Work displayed on 'Work of the Week' board, the outside school board or on the Principal's 'Wall of Fame'
- Being awarded 'Pupil of the Week' or 'Pupil of the Month'
- 'Golden Class' of the month
- End of Year Prizes



AFTER SCHOOLS CLUBS

(For Primary 4 – 7 Pupils)

The curriculum extends beyond school hours, with the expertise of our own staff utilised in a wide selection of extra curricular activities. The school views these clubs as widening the learning experiences of our pupils as well as helping to develop their confidence and self-esteem. They include:

Sporting Activities

- Hockey
- Netball
- Football



The school has football, hockey and netball teams that regularly participate in local leagues and cup competitions.

Non-sporting Activities

- Super Heroes
- Spanish
- The Cooking Crew
- Choir
- Art
- Clarinet
- Dressmaking
- Board Games
- Scripture Union
- Film Club
- Violin
- Flute
- iPad
- Eco Club



SCHOOL COUNCIL

At Ballykeel PS we are very proud to have our own School Council for pupils from Primary 4 to Primary 7. Council members consist of two pupils from each year group allowing all pupils to have a representative voice. Each year we hold Council Elections through which candidates will canvas for votes, conduct election speeches and other forms of promotion to showcase why they would be good for the job. Following this period a formal election process takes place where all pupils in P4 – P7 vote for who they think will best represent their class throughout the year. The School Council meet once every term to discuss issues, make suggestions and put forward ideas for change and improvement to help enhance and enrich the school experience for pupils at Ballykeel. It is a wonderful opportunity to develop skills of decision making and independence. We have also a joint school council with representatives from Ballykeel and our Shared Education partner school St Brigid's.





EXTENDED SCHOOLS

(For Nursery – P7 pupils & all Parents)

Our school is in the very fortunate position of being funded under the Extended Schools Initiative. The initiative provides the children with an extensive and wide-ranging programme of additional clubs and activities. Added to this there is support for parents and pupils through a Family Support Worker and parent literacy & numeracy support, through added resources and workshops. This programme has been specifically designed to complement the extra-curricular After School Clubs that are already offered by school staff. Extended Schools activities are often taken by the school staff but can also be supported by paid professionals, depending on the nature of the club.

Activities include:

- School Welfare Officer
- Reading Partners
- Boost Club
- Mad 4 Maths Club
- 2-3 Club
- Breakfast Club
- Accelerated Reader
- Barnardos Family Worker
- Numeracy & Literacy Bags Lending Library



Children are given the opportunity to participate in drama through the school production. Our most recent production was The Sound of Music.





TRIPS AND VISITORS

- All classes undertake **educational trips** to places / events in the locality and beyond. Recently these have included: The Ecos Centre, Portglenone Forest, Arthur's Cottage, Carrickfergus Castle, Watertop Farm, Giant's Causeway, Dunluce Castle, The Causeway School, Ballymena Library, Ballymena Museum, Elliot's Wind Farm, Odyssey Arena, Oxford Island Nature Reserve and Springhill House.
- As a Christmas treat the pupils enjoy an annual trip to the pantomime at the Grand Opera House, Belfast.
- Participation in **local events** such as the Feis.
- The school welcomes a wide range of **visitors** to the school on a regular basis as a means of enriching the curriculum on offer. Recently these have included local church representatives, a local artist, the emergency services, PSNI road safety officers, Bryson House recycling, local storytellers, local business representatives through the Young Enterprise Scheme, RNLI, Belfast Zoo, TACT wild animal sanctuary, NIE, Basketball coaching.
- P7 pupils go to an Outdoor Education Centre every year on a residential trip. Amongst other activities, the children are given the opportunity to partake in abseiling, sailing, canoeing, orienteering, archery, power boating, high-ropes challenge, an obstacle course and visits to various local attractions.





ECO – SCHOOLS

"This must be one of our top Eco-Schools in the country" (Fiona North, Head of Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland, 'Tidy Up Bulletin'.)

The creation of a sustainable community school and caring for the environment is fundamental and central to the ethos and culture of Ballykeel Primary. We have communicated this mainly through our participation in the European wide "Eco Schools" initiative since 2001. In April 2008 we were delighted to obtain Permanent Eco-Schools status, there finishing a process that lasted seven years. The assessors made the following comments...

'Ballykeel PS is a model Eco-School. The pupils' enthusiasm, knowledge and understanding are excellent and they are a credit to the teachers. The Eco-activities are well integrated into the school curriculum from Nursery to P7.'

An Eco Schools committee that is chosen by, organised and made up of the pupils themselves has, over the years, driven developments in a huge range of environmental topics including litter, energy, water, waste, transport, healthy living, development of the school grounds and biodiversity.

The Eco-Schools Programme has also contributed to the on-going programme of work to develop our school grounds (see our Buildings & Resources section.)

Each year we maintain our connection with Eco-Schools and ensure that new environmental projects are undertaken and successfully completed. In 2017 we successfully renewed our ECO Schools status.



RENEWABLE ENERGY IN BALLYKEEL PRIMARY

In 2008 the school's environmental focus was to look at energy consumption within the home and school and work at ways to reduce this. Staff felt it was extremely important to set an example to our pupils and the local community by embracing a renewable 'clean' energy. Our research showed us that wind energy was one of the most cost-effective options for generating electricity in a school and together we agreed that a wind turbine would be one of the most tangible and 'obvious' sources of renewable energy that could be used with primary school pupils. A 6kW Proven wind turbine on a 15 metre free-standing mast now stands proudly in the school grounds and produces about 3500 Kwh of electricity annually. An output display panel, located in the school foyer, shows the children the amount of electricity being produced by the turbine at any time and this can be compared with current wind speeds. Pupils are therefore able to collect, monitor and use the data produced, thereby ensuring the turbine is a sustainable educational resource.

The wind turbine project is very visible to the local Ballykeel community and has gained good support from them. We feel that by actively using renewable energy in such a visible way that we are a positive role model for the school pupils and all the local community.

Due to the success of the wind turbine the school has invested in a 10kW PV Solar Panel System. This is producing more clean, free and sustainable electricity for the school.



SECRET GARDEN

The Secret Garden is a quiet and private area at the rear of the school building used by the pupils during playtime. The children using the garden can read, draw, play board games or simply have a quiet chat away from the hustle and bustle and noise of the main playground. There is a large octagonal 'Outdoor Classroom' in the middle of the garden, that is hidden by the surrounding trees that is used as a meeting area and shelter. The Secret Garden, and adjacent pond, are also a haven for a wide variety of wildlife and birds.



SUSTRANS

Ballykeel Primary successfully applied to be a part of the 'Sustrans Active School Travel Programme.' The idea behind this is that we help educate pupils and parents of the benefits of walking, cycling and scooting to school and thereby cut congestion and stress levels at the school gates!

The school was involved in the programme for two years (Sept 14 – June 16) and had the assistance of Mr Johnny McCrystal, a Sustrans Active School Officer to help run the initiative. He supported us in organising a fun programme of activities and events to promote active school travel. There were also lots of opportunities for parents and carers to get involved. We have now achieved our Silver Mark.





BEST KEPT SCHOOL AWARDS

Our extensive environmental and play developments in the school grounds have helped us to be very successful in the Best Kept School Awards organised by the Northern Ireland Amenity Council.

- 2004 – Runner up in NEELB
- 2005 – Highly commended
- 2006 – Runner up in NEELB
- 2007 – Winner in the NEELB (at last!)
- 2008 – Winner in the NEELB and awarded 'Best of the Best' in NI
- 2009 – Winner in the NEELB



CONTACTS WITH THE COMMUNITY THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS, COMPETITIONS AND SCHOOL GROUNDS DEVELOPMENTS

- ❖ Winner of B&Q 'Better Neighbourhood Grant'
- ❖ Winners of many competitions in Ballymena Garden Club's annual Spring Show
- ❖ Recycling (Ballymena Borough Council, Ecos Centre, Bryson House, Cartridge World, Cookstown Textile Recyclers)
- ❖ Healthy Living (Sainsbury's)
- ❖ Renewable energy (Sentinus, Horizon Solar, Power N.I. NEELB)
- ❖ Winner of Firmus / Ballymena Guardian grant
- ❖ Winner of Cookstown Recycling Competition
- ❖ Regional winner of 'Yellow Pages' recycling competition
- ❖ School Grounds (Prince's Trust, Northern Ireland Conservation Volunteers, Peace II European Fund, Irish Seed Savers Association, The Woodland Trust).





PARENTS AND COMMUNITY IN PARTNERSHIP

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Regular notes are sent home and parental permission is always sought for activities outside of school. The 'Ballykeel Bugle' is sent home monthly and contains a wide range of information regarding up and coming events, celebration of achievement, school news, reports on past events, appeals for recycling items, healthy recipes, sporting news etc. We also have a texting service.

There is an outside notice board at the top of the school path which celebrates 'Pupils of the Week', 'Pupil of the Month', and examples of good work. It also contains photographs and information on events occurring in the school and community. Our website is update regularly and is an excellent source of information in all aspects of school life.



PARENT / TEACHER CONSULTATION

A 'meet the teacher' at the beginning to the school year and twice yearly parent/teacher interviews insure that information is effectively shared regarding children. Parents are given clear information about their children's progress and achievements at these interviews and in school reports. Targets on IEPs for SEN children are communicated to parents at the start of each year and SEN teachers also conduct parent/teacher interviews twice yearly.



APPOINTMENTS WITH THE PRINCIPAL / TEACHING STAFF

Parents are welcome to talk to the Principal at any time to obtain information or discuss any matters relating to their children. Appointments can be made by telephoning the school secretary. Prospective parents are also most welcome to visit the school.

Class teachers are generally available at the beginning and end of the school day to speak briefly to parents. If it is necessary to discuss something in more detail with the teacher arrangements can be made to do so via the Principal or by sending a note to the teacher.





PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Ballykeel Primary School is committed to the view that an effective partnership with parents is a fundamental educational principle. On-going parental involvement is actively encouraged in many ways.

- The school operates an 'open door' policy whereby parents are welcome to make arrangements to see the class teacher or Principal at any time.
- Parent / Teacher consultations are held twice yearly. A formal written report on every child's progress is sent home near the end of the academic year.
- The school has its own website, www.ballykeelps.org.uk
- When formulating school policy parents' views and opinions are sought. Recent examples of this are the creation of the school's Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies, the school's Development Plan and the content of the Extended Schools' Programme. Parents are made aware of all the various school policies and are welcome to come in and take copies from the school entrance hall.
- An Information Board at the school gate keeps parents up-to-date with all the latest news and events.
- A monthly newsletter, 'The Ballykeel Bugle', contains a wide range of information for parents and pupils, many of the articles being written by the children themselves.
- Parents are offered the opportunity to partake in a range of workshops and classes organised through the school e.g. Internet Safety, Phonics & Numeracy, Reading, Art & Craft, Sewing, Drugs Awareness, Incredible Years Programme, Strengthening Families Programme, Lending Library, Money Management.
- Parent volunteers are consistently used to assist with trips and outings, library duties, school productions and a variety of other educational, cultural, social and fund-raising events.
- Parents are invited to school events e.g. Carol Services, Productions, Special Assemblies, Fashion Shows etc.
- The Prospectus and Induction Information Booklet inform current and prospective parents about the school.
- Regular notes are sent home and parental permission is always sought for activities outside of school.





FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER

Linda Calderwood is the Jigsaw Family Support Worker in Ballykeel Primary School and Nursery Unit. Her role is to help address the barriers to educational achievement and improve the experience of school for children and their families. We achieve this by working in partnership with parents/carers to empower them and to enable them to achieve better outcomes for their children.

She can provide support through individual and group work with children and their parents focusing on their social and emotional development, delivering information sessions, organising health initiatives, promoting school attendance as well as finding out what is out there for you in the local area.



Linda Calderwood



CHARITY

The school supports at least two different charities every year and carries out a variety of fundraising activities for them. Recent examples of these charities include, Age Concern, The Royal National Lifeboat Institution and Multiple Sclerosis, Heartbeat, Stand by Me, RAF Wings Appeal, Poppy Appeal, Diabetes UK, Down Syndrome Association and Care for Cambodia.

We also sponsor a child in a Romanian orphanage and pay a teacher's salary in Cambodia.

Over the past 3 years over £30,000 has been raised for charities.





OTHER COMMUNITY LINKS

- Our school choir is active in the local community. It sings at Ballymena Feis, care homes for the elderly and nearby shopping centres.
- Local clergy are invited on a weekly basis to school assemblies.
- The Emergency Services are in school on a frequent basis to talk to the children on a range of issues.
- Pupils are given the experience of learning from members of the local business community through the 'Young Enterprise' project, which is supported by Invest Northern Ireland. At least 3 classes are involved on an annual basis.
- Close links are maintained with local community organisations such as Ballykeel Youth Club, Ballykeel Community Centre, Surestart, The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy Partnership, Women's Aid, Hope Centre, PSNI
- Positive links and relationships have been established with the other Primary and Secondary schools in the area.



CRED

Promoting equality, good relations and diversity are important issues for our school, its' parents and the local community. Over the past few years Ballykeel Primary School have been promoting equality, good relations and diversity in many ways. We are aware that the schools' ethos, policies and practices, and particularly their implementation need to collectively and consistently value all children.

Ballykeel Primary School recognises the need for CRED to be embedded throughout all areas of school life and over the past few years we have been promoting inclusion and diversity through meaningful interaction, mainly with our partner school St. Brigid's PS in Ballymena.

We have been involved in a range of programmes namely; The Pushkin Project, Incredible Years, The Media Initiative for Children, Peace Players: Basketball Twinning Project, IFA: Football for All, as well as the on-going support that is given by our Jigsaw Worker.

Over the past four years Ballykeel PS has been working very closely with the staff and pupils from St. Brigid's PS. We have participated in a range of different programmes with St. Brigid's and this year is no different! Most of the shared work we do with St. Brigid's relies upon us receiving funding and we are delighted that we have secured funding for the incoming year to do such work. The funding will enable us to pay for projects, transport and trips. Every class from P1-P7 will meet classes from St. Brigid's PS at different stages throughout the year, so please keep an eye out for more information in due course and on the class pages.

We are aware that our school environment should be positively welcoming to all, whatever their identity and we value the contribution of a diversity of cultures.





GENERAL INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINES

If it is essential that your child takes medicine during the school day, parents should endeavour to make the necessary arrangements themselves. If this is not possible, the class teacher should be provided with a completed medication consent form (obtainable from the school) detailing the name of the medication, administration times and dosage. It should then be signed by the parent.

Parents of pupils requiring personal inhalers should ensure each class teacher is issued with an inhaler (clearly named) at the beginning of each term.

It is important that you keep the school updated regarding any medical issues in relation to your child.

ANTI-BULLYING

The school is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. Any inappropriate behaviour that gets in the way of teaching and learning in the school and interferes with the well-being of pupils cannot be accepted. The school's detailed policy is available on request.

DRUGS

A drugs education programme has been incorporated within the school's Health Education and Pastoral Care programme in which the emphasis is on prevention of harmful drugs, experimentation or use. Pupils are taught to develop self-respect, self-esteem and assertiveness and to adopt a healthy lifestyle.





BALLYKEEL NURSERY UNIT

It is accepted that the greatest and most positive influence on the early development of the young child, apart from his/her parents, is the nursery experience. In the Nursery Unit, through a wide variety of play activities, each child will be supported to reach his/her full potential.



STAFFING

There are two nursery rooms in Ballykeel. Each room is staffed by a team of one teacher and one nursery assistant who are qualified, experienced and highly motivated.

THE CURRICULUM

The nursery offers a broad and balanced curriculum planned to meet the needs of pre-school children aged 3 – 4 years. It is our aim to support children as they develop socially, emotionally, creatively and intellectually at their own rate and through activities and experiences that are meaningful to the young child. Our planning is guided by the NI Pre-school curriculum which is set down by the Dept of Education for NI. It covers the six learning areas of early experiences in Mathematics, Language and Literacy, Physical Development, The Arts, The World Around Us and Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

The children are encouraged to be responsible for their own learning. They are encouraged to become confident and independent in all aspects of nursery life.





PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

Partnership with parents/carers is an extremely important element of pre-school education in Ballykeel. We recognise that the parents/guardians are the children's first educators. We aim to build upon the early experiences already offered by the parents/primary caregiver and to work closely with all concerned to ensure that learning is extended from the home into the nursery and from the nursery into the home.

We have a well-established and recently updated Lending Library which is operated within school hours. We are always welcoming of parent volunteers to support this. Our 'Maths in a Bag' programme encourages children to take home a wide range of maths related games, books and activities which allows parents/carers to participate in and promote the development of early numeracy skills.

As well as individual support, we offer a range of parenting programmes and information sessions to support what we are doing in nursery. These include:

- Induction information sessions
- Parent play times
- Various parent information sessions

The local Sure Start group works in partnership with the nursery in order to support the children and parents.

Communication with parents is important and we do this in a number of ways:

- Parent/teacher meetings
- Newsletters and notes
- Song & Rhyme sheets
- Certificates and notelets
- Daily interactions
- Parent's Information Board
- School text messaging service
- The school website

