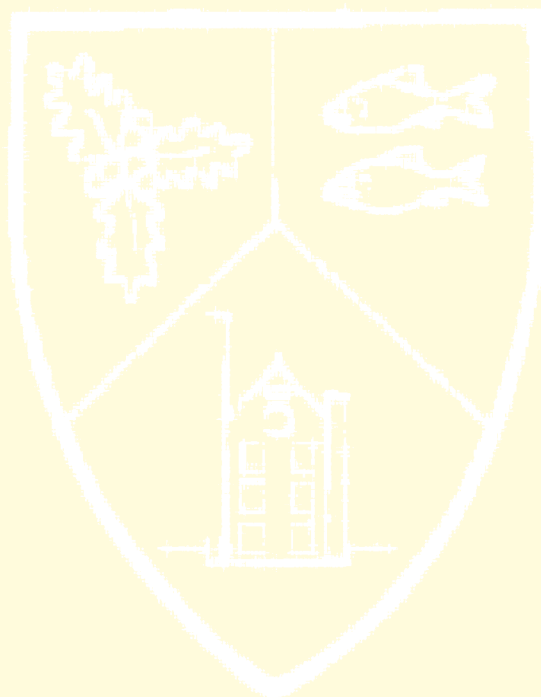


Prospectus

Balnamore Primary School

Nurture, Inspire, Flourish







Welcome

Balnamore Primary School is a co-educational controlled Primary School in Ballymoney.

Our School motto: Nurture, Inspire, Flourish aims to create a vibrant and progressive culture and a climate of continuous innovation.

Our ethos is one of ambition and achievement, striving for high standards and the maximum for every learner. Balnamore Primary School has a strong tradition of high standards of pupil attainment and this is reflected in the expectations held by staff for pupils, in terms of their attitude, approach and application to learning, school discipline, respect for others, appearance and attendance.

We aim to create an orderly, caring and calm environment where teachers can teach and children can learn. We aim to establish a community wherein pupils, teachers, parents and support staff enjoy a sense of belonging and have an important part to play.

Our school welcomes all denominations and everyone is celebrated for their personal views and opinions as well as their academic and social achievement.

Admission Criteria

Starting school is a very important time for you, your child and the school. We all need to work together to make the transition smooth and rewarding. In the event of the school being oversubscribed the Board of Governors will apply the following criteria. The criteria are listed in order of priority.

The Principal shall consider applications for admission using the criteria set out below. The Governors will be consulted should any difficulties arise.

Admissions criteria in order of priority:

- Children who are of compulsory school age.
- Children who have siblings already at the school.
- Children whose parents are employed at the school.
- Children who live within 6 miles of the school.

In the event of a tie when all previous criteria have been used, preference will be given to those children living nearer to the school than others as measured along a public road.

Note: The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine necessary to support or verify information on the application form.

If the requested evidence is not provided to the Board of Governors by the deadline given, this will result in the withdrawal of an offer of a place. Similarly, if information is supplied which appears to be false or misleading in any material way, the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on or attached to the application form. Parents should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the school's admissions criteria is stated on the application form or attached to it.

Waiting List Policy:

The school does not operate a Waiting List Policy.





Admission Timeline

We hold our Open Evening in November.

If you are finding it hard to make up your mind, we will give you an opportunity to visit the school again and meet with the Principal.

Application forms become available from schools or from the Education Authority portal. These are normally available in January.

Parents complete their preference of school on the online portal.

We will inform you of our decision towards the end of April.

If you are unsuccessful, you may appeal the decision

If you are successful, the Principal and the P1 teachers will begin visiting nurseries and playgroups so we can begin the process of getting to know your child.

Learning

In Balnamore Primary School we consistently review and revise our curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of all our children and reflects our professional beliefs about the skills, competences and knowledge that are necessary for reaching full potential. Not only do we want our pupils to be the best they can be academically, we also want them to believe in their own self-worth.

Foundation Stage

Primary 1 and Primary 2 forms the Foundation Stage and seeks to build on the pre-school experiences of our children and to provide a smooth transition into school life. Play Based Learning forms much of the 'work' in Primary 1 and the children will be given a variety of learning experiences both during play and in planned activities across the curriculum. Opportunities are taken for outdoor learning as much as possible. Readiness for reading, for writing and for number work lie at the heart of these experiences and our children will engage in activities that will develop positive attitudes and early success. We encourage our youngest pupils to reach a high standard by the end of Foundation Stage so that a strong platform is built for the rest of their time at Primary School.

We have a dedicated learning through play room at Balnamore Primary School

Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1 our children build on and develop the learning achieved in the Foundation Stage in a more formal way. Continued emphasis is placed on personal, social & emotional development as well as explicit emphasis on the development of the cross curricular skills of Communication, Using Mathematics, Using ICT and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. In Key Stage One our children have opportunity to develop their thinking skills and problem-solving strategies through Activity Based Learning.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2 children extend their skills and knowledge across all the learning areas and increasingly are challenged to make connections between their learning. We believe that our children are the citizens of today as well as of tomorrow and should increasingly take responsibility for their own learning. We aim to prepare all of our pupils for the next step in their education should they choose to sit the transfer test or not.

Transfer

In Primary 6 we begin the process of preparing our children for the AQE transfer test. We work closely with parents to decide if this is the right path for their child. Children who do not sit the AQE test are fully supported in their learning. We know that every child is different and progresses at a different rate. Our transfer results are extremely good but we also want our children to be confident, well rounded and ready for the challenge of moving to 'big school.'



Balnamore Primary School has a dedicated library as well as a resource room where transfer practice papers occur



Assessment and Reporting

All of our pupils are asked to complete homework.

The amount and level will depend on the stage of primary school they are at but we believe the link between home and school is vital. This partnership is what enables all of our pupils to develop and flourish. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Children are assessed on an on-going basis by their class teachers which enables them to monitor, consolidate, develop and improve children's achievement and performance in school.

Our assessment arrangements include the following:

- Daily marking of classwork and homework and the preparation of teaching programmes targeted at the needs of the individual.
- Weekly, Monthly or End of Term Assessments in English and Mathematics.
- Key Stage Assessment: End of Key Stage Assessments in English, Mathematics and ICT for P4 and P7.
- Special Educational Needs Assessment. Should your child need additional help we will discuss this with you.
- Written Reports: A variety of written reports are sent home throughout the year. A summary of end of term assessment results is sent home in February for P3-6. All children, P1-7, receive an annual written report in June of each year

After School Activities

We are very fortunate to have a highly dedicated and professional staff who provide so many enriching activities that go beyond the classroom such as extracurricular activities.

Each year we offer a range of extra-curricular activities. Some of these are run by outside providers so will incur a cost.

Others are run by our dedicated teaching staff. Examples of some of these are:

BREAKFAST CLUB

FOOTBALL

SCHOOL COUNCIL

CYCLING PROFICIENCY

NERF CLUB

VIOLIN TUITION

MULTISPORTS

ECO CLUB

We hold our Green Flag Award at Balnamore Primary School. We also have a dedicated outdoor area which is cared for and looked after by our Eco Committee.





Parental Engagement

Children gain the most out of their time at school when home and school work in partnership. This partnership is highly valued at Balamore and we are fortunate to have such supportive parents.

They also support us when we ask our pupils to dress up for a special occasion or day with their class or if they need to bring an item to school to assist with a project.

Parents also take an active interest in many of our school activities such as Christmas events, concerts, and Sports Days and are extremely generous in supporting both charity and fundraising initiatives.

Parents receive frequent written communication and can access our regularly updated and informative website. To create opportunity to partner with parents, Parent Information Meetings are held for each Year Group in October and March. These aim to deliver the vital messages and information to enable parents to provide the appropriate support for their children as they start each new school year. From time to time, parental consultations take place about such issues as school ethos, homework, anti-bullying, behaviour, post primary arrangements and questionnaires help us to collate parents' views on these important elements of school. The outcomes of such questionnaires contribute to school decision making.



Pastoral Care

We know how important Pastoral Care is in that learning can only take place when children are catered for emotionally, socially and physically. The pastoral dimension of the school involves all staff, teaching and non-teaching and we take this responsibility very seriously. We value every child and want to nurture the unique skills and talents that each person has. Pastoral care is a thread that runs through every element of school life.

It begins when the Principal and Primary 1 teachers visit our new pupils at their nursery schools so that we can start the process of getting to know them even before they start school. This continues throughout their time at primary school.

Our arrangements for Pastoral Care are also evident in all of our school policies, all of which are available to our parents. Class teachers are primarily responsible for the pastoral care of children in their classes. As one of the caring professions, we observe the behaviour and note the concerns of our children and make a point of contacting home when policy dictates or when we feel it is necessary. Children are encouraged to share their problems. We have a designated teacher for Child Protection and comprehensive arrangements for Safeguarding our pupils. If there is a concern, children, staff and parents are encouraged to communicate this. Please be assured that sensitive matters will be given due and appropriate confidentiality.

We have our very own Discovery Room at Balnamore Primary School. This supports all our children for sensory needs as well as an area for completing topic work and de-escalation or relaxation. This is so beneficial to support all our pupils mental health and well being

Finally

Thank you for taking the time to read our prospectus. We hope you are impressed with what we have to offer. However, no prospectus can ever provide a complete picture of the life of a school. In addition, no prospectus can ever be definitive because as a school we are always trying to make things better for our children and sometimes we have to make changes to improve what we are already doing. We look forward to inspiring excellence in your child, providing loving and caring examples of manners and behaviour, ensuring that your child understands the importance of hard work and endeavour and giving your child the support and encouragement to be the best they can be.





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