

BELLAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL



*Bellaghy Primary School
where
'children come first'*

PROSPECTUS

www.bellaghyps.co.uk

TEACHING STAFF

Principal - Mrs ML Richmond

Full Time Teacher Foundation Stage - Mrs ML Richmond

Teacher Key Stage One - Mrs A Cameron

Teacher Key Stage Two - Mrs J Torrens

NON-TEACHING STAFF (Part-Time)

Classroom Assistants: Mrs Y Davidson, Mrs I Deans, Mrs C Mulholland,
Mrs A Vicente

Secretary: Mrs R Hamilton

Caretaker: Mrs M Johnston

Lunchtime Supervisors: Mrs C Mulholland and Mrs I Deans

Meals Kitchen: Mrs M Clarke

BOARD OF GOVERNORS 2018 - 22

Chairperson: Mr T Dowie

Secretary (non voting): Mrs ML Richmond

EA Representatives: Mr J Graham (retired 2019), Mr M Clarke

Parent Representatives: Mrs J McKeown, Mr T Dowie

Transfer Representatives: Mrs P Donnelly, Mrs K Overend
Mrs W Bruce, Rev G Jordan

Teacher Representative: Mrs J Torrens

HISTORY OF OUR SCHOOL

The current Bellaghy Primary School is the result of an amalgamation between the local Church of Ireland School and Glenvale Primary School. The current building was opened in 1966 under the leadership of Master R Turner who had been Principal in the Church of Ireland school. Since then, the school has been led by a number of Principals, namely Mr J Wilson, Mr S Loughlin, Mr D Harkness and Miss S Lyons.

The present Principal Mrs Mary-Lou Richmond took up the post in January 2005 and she works alongside her colleagues, Mrs Judith Torrens and Mrs Alison Cameron. The school has faced many crises during the troubled past of Northern Ireland and this alongside a demographic decline in the locality resulted in a dropping enrolment in the nineties and up to 2004. Since then, the school has enjoyed a growth in pupil numbers.

Currently there are 46 pupils on roll with the short-term outlook, indicating stability in pupil numbers.

While the school remains small with composite classes, the dedicated and hard-working staff offer a wide range of teaching expertise and extra-curricular activities, catering for the needs of every individual pupil.

We are a controlled co-educational school accepting pupils between the ages of four and eleven years.

MISSION STATEMENT - 'CHILDREN COME FIRST'

The staff's vision for this small village school is encapsulated in the school mission statement:

The mission of Bellaghy Primary School is to provide, in partnership with parents, a broad, quality education so that all pupils can reach their full potential within a caring, secure environment which promotes self-discipline, motivation and individuality.

We believe that:

- A working partnership and purposeful relationship between all staff, parents, pupils and the community is essential to provide the optimal learning experiences for everyone.
- Everyone learns best in a stimulating, attractive, supportive environment where individuals are acknowledged, accepted, and respected for their uniqueness.
- Every individual needs success to grow.
- Children should have an active role in the learning process.
- Through realistic expectations of each individual pupil, we can achieve a good standard of work.
- Co-operation, relationships and respect shown at all levels reflects our positive approach to discipline.
- It is our moral purpose to make a difference in the lives of our pupils and to help produce citizens who can live and work productively in an ever changing society.

AIMS OF OUR SCHOOL

- To ensure that the child's introduction to formal education is a happy and caring experience where each child experiences enjoyment and success
- To offer a broad, balanced curriculum which is designed to promote the social, educational, physical, moral, cultural and religious development of each child
- To help pupils acquire knowledge and basic skills relevant to adult life
- To maximize the potential of each individual, to develop self-confidence, self-respect, self-discipline and to promote a spirit of tolerance towards others
- To promote a curriculum where a desire to learn is encouraged and where thinking and reasoning skills are stimulated

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Our school is exceptionally well-off for resources. We have four large well equipped classrooms, staffroom, good sized Assembly/Dining hall and several storage areas and recently refurbished bathrooms.

Over 90% of our children take school dinners on a regular basis. Meals are brought to our school from Magherafelt Primary and they are of a very high standard.

Our school Assembly Hall is suitably sized for P.E. lessons and Drama. We also use the hall for Assembly (two times weekly), Circle Time and Parents' meetings. The stage with its PA system is used for concerts and other performances.

We have recently transformed one of our spare classrooms into a 'Hub Room.' This room contains play areas, library area, construction area and two computers, including an Interactive White Board. This room is used for working with small groups, instrumental lessons and our After School Child Care facility.

We have extensive grounds around our school all of which are enclosed with a blue fence. All children play in two playground areas where they can engage in a variety of playground games. The school has recently acquired playground equipment for lunchtime play to stimulate the children's outdoor play.

The National Lottery Fund funded a high drainage football pitch which is a fine asset to our school. This surface can be used all year round (weather permitting).

All staff and pupils alike take great pride in their school grounds and every year we adorn our windowsills and entrance with a variety of flowering plants grown from seed and cared for by the pupils.

PERSONNEL WITHIN OUR SCHOOL

- **TEACHING STAFF**

All three members of our teaching staff offer expertise in a variety of areas. As well as being highly skilled teachers in delivering the curriculum in core curricular areas, each teacher brings her personal strengths to her position. All teaching staff members are talented musicians, and the school enjoys a well-known reputation for its musical performances. Mrs Torrens' ability in ICT along with her artistic flair are reflected in her teaching while Mrs Richmond delivers a comprehensive Drama programme. Mrs Cameron has a great interest in active learning and her class engages in a wide range of hands-on learning activities.

The school has a long-standing Christian ethos and through their daily teaching, all staff emphasise the importance of spiritual and moral issues. Self-respect, the importance of good manners, courtesy and consideration for others are encouraged at every opportunity.

In addition, all children are taught in a caring, supportive environment where individual needs are identified and catered for.

- **ANCILLARY STAFF**

All class teachers are supported by three part time Classroom Assistants, Mrs Yvonne Davidson, Mrs Imelda Deans, Mrs Cynthia Mulholland and Mrs Alison Vicente. These assistants support individual and group learners under the direction of the teacher. Their role is particularly valuable at activity based learning time when they are actively engaged in supporting the pupils' learning experiences. They also help with photocopying duties, preparing and tidying up materials, supervising and displaying children's work.

The school office is staffed by our Secretary Mrs Ruth Hamilton who works three mornings each week. She deals with routine queries, correspondence and general administrative duties.

We have one experienced Lunchtime Supervisor Mrs Cynthia Mulholland who looks after the children during lunch time. Mrs Mulholland is ably supported by Mrs Imelda Deans.

Our Building Supervisor/cleaner Mrs Margaret Johnston keeps our school in immaculate condition.

Mrs Michelle Clarke serves up nutritious meals brought to our school from Magherafelt Primary, which are enjoyed by many of our children on a daily basis.

SCHOOL ORGANISATION

As in most Primary Schools, children are placed in classes by age group and move up a class from year to year. In our school, we have three classes - Foundation Stage, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. Class sizes at all stages are small, therefore although your child will be in a composite class, he/she will receive individual support and one to one attention. We always strive to cater for any child's unique requirements, whether that be special needs, average ability or 'gifted' ability.

ADMISSION TO OUR SCHOOL/TRANSFER TO POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL

Normally children who are four on or before 1st July have reached the compulsory age to begin school on 1st September, following their birthday. After completing seven years at primary school, pupils are transferred to local secondary education establishments. Most of our pupils transfer to one of the following:

- Rainey Endowed Grammar School
- Magherafelt High School
- Sperrin Integrated College

BIRTH CERTIFICATES

A birth certificate will be required for each child prior to enrolment. A photocopy of this certificate will be retained on file in school and the original will be returned.

ENROLMENT OF NEW PUPILS

Enrolment takes place in January for the following September. In June, new pupils will be invited to spend a morning in school, while parents attend a parents' meeting.

THE CURRICULUM

At Bellaghy Primary School, you can be certain that each child will receive a broad and balanced education based on the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. By the time our children leave Bellaghy Primary School, they will have experienced a wide range of learning in English, Maths, The World Around Us (Science, Geography, History), Religious Education, I.C.T., Music, Drama, P.E, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (P.D.M.U.) and Art. We as a staff are constantly reviewing the curriculum and as part of our school development plan, we reflect on the teaching and learning within a specific subject on a yearly basis. We always strive to keep abreast of current educational developments.

In addition, our curriculum goes beyond what is laid down in the statutory Programmes of Study... we strive to give our children opportunities to participate in educational visits, perform on stage, participate in after school sports and take part in other cultural pursuits, like public speaking, craft, cooking etc.

In essence, we seek to recognise and celebrate the special worth and talents of each pupil, developing each individual to his/her full potential.

HOMEWORK

All children receive homework depending on their age and ability. As well as strengthening liaison between home and school, homework is good for developing self-discipline and study habits. Homework may involve reading, words, sentence building, tables, written exercises or information gathering activities. The length of time will vary according to the age of your child, from a few minutes to up to an hour. Parents can assist with homework by providing a quiet place to work, by supervising the accuracy of the work and signing the homework, thus indicating to the class teacher that you are satisfied with the standard of your child's work. Some homework is completed and submitted on our online platform - Seesaw.

ACTIVITY BASED LEARNING

In the early years, Playtime is an integral part of the children's learning and much of their learning, as well as the acquisition of social and language skills, is initiated through well planned and well structured play activities.

The play areas in our school are:

- Sand
- Water
- Creative play
- Construction play
- Clay, dough, plasticene
- Imaginative play
- Reading/Writing area
- ICT
- Small world - Jigsaws, dolls' house etc

OUTDOOR PLAY

Weather permitting, we take some of our play equipment outside where play takes on a whole new prospective. We have also purchased a variety of outdoor play equipment and games which the children play with outside. This equipment is organised by our P7 pupils who have a very important role as Playground Friends.

ICT

All classrooms have at least one computer. All PC s and laptops are networked together by a centrally controlled server. Children have access to a wide range of programs, supporting many areas of the curriculum. In addition all computers are linked to the Internet. Children also have access to iPads to assist with their learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All pupils take part in a comprehensive Physical Education programme from P1 to P7, with teaching in the four core areas of the P.E. curriculum - Gymnastics, Games, Athletics and Dance. Through funding from the Big Lottery Fund, we have acquired a high drainage football pitch which greatly enhances all aspects of sport within our school.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

During the year, we offer the following extra curricular activities which are enjoyed by many of our pupils.

- Art and Craft
- Sport - Football, Hockey
- Drama/Music
- Cookery
- Good News Club
- Movie Club

SWIMMING

Swimming is available as part of our normal school timetable. We are in the fortunate position that all our pupils from P5 to P7 attend swimming lessons on a weekly basis all year round, so by the end of P7, we find that most, if not all, our pupils are competent swimmers. There is a small charge for swimming lessons and transport to and from Greenvale Leisure Centre, Magherafelt is supplied by the school.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

We believe that 'learning through experience' is the best way for children to find out about their environment. To make learning more meaningful, day trips are organised to places of interest both locally and across the Province.

In addition, our P6 and P7 pupils participate in a residential trip, where they enjoy a variety of outdoor pursuits, including abseiling, canoeing, climbing and so the list goes on! This trip provides the children with a great opportunity to enjoy a final educational and social experience with the many friends they have made in primary school.

ASSESSMENT

Children's progress is continually monitored by the class teacher and children also engage in self-assessment strategies, where they reflect on their own learning, identifying where they see areas for improvement. Maths and spelling tests are carried out weekly from P3 -P7 and other half term or end of topic informal assessments are carried out under the

teacher's discretion. More formal tests are set in Feb/March and again in May/June. As part of the NI Curriculum, end of Key Stage Assessment for P4 and P7 children is carried out annually.

PARENT INTERVIEWS

Parent Interviews are held in October and again in February/March. At these interviews, parents will be given the opportunity to discuss their child's academic progress and personal development.

Reports are sent home in June.

We have an 'open door' policy in our school whereby if a parent has a particular concern regarding any aspect of his/her child at our school, we encourage the parent to make an appointment to speak to the Principal.

ATTENDANCE

The attendance statistics at our school are excellent. Obviously good attendance is encouraged at every opportunity. Where absence is unavoidable, an absence note should be completed and submitted on our school app.

APPOINTMENTS/ILLNESSES

If your child has to leave school for an appointment, we would like you to write a note of explanation. Please note, your child must be collected from and returned to the classroom on these occasions.

Should your child take ill during the school day, he/she will receive attention from a member of staff and we will endeavour to contact you, to keep you informed.

From time to time, children are seen by the school doctor, nurse or dentist. Such examinations include medical inspections and routine eyesight, dental, hearing and oral hygiene checks.

If your child requires medicine during school hours, it is essential that the teacher receives all the necessary information via the school app.

SEESAW (online learning app)

This is an online app which you can use on your Smartphone or tablet. Your child and staff will upload various items of interest for you to view

online. These include photographs of your child in school, a nice piece of work or a recording of your child's voice telling you something about his/her learning. It will also be used to assign homework or to facilitate home-learning in the event of unscheduled school closures..

SCHOOL APP

This can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play store - search for Bellaghy PS. Access to the app is 11111. The app holds lots of information about our school, including policies, weekly news sheets, holiday lists etc. Parents can submit forms to school via the app.

SCHOOL WEBSITE www.bellaghyps.co.uk

The school website is a valuable resource for parents. The website is updated by a volunteer parent.

THE SCHOOL DAY

Early Birds (£1 per day) starts at 8.15p.m. and the school day starts at 8.55a.m.

Parents are welcome to accompany their child into the classroom until they become familiar with their surroundings. P1 and P2 pupils are dismissed at 2.00p.m. every day. All other classes conclude at 3.00p.m. On Fridays, school closes at 2p.m. for all children.

2 O'CLOCK CLUB

We operate a 2 o'clock club, whereby if your child is dismissed at 2p.m. he / she can go to 2 o'clock club until 3p.m. This club is run by Mrs Davidson and Mrs Mulholland. The cost is £2 per day. Many parents avail of this club as it means only one pick up at 3p.m.

HUB CLUB - after 3pm child care facility - Monday - Thursday

This is an after three childcare facility we operate in school for working parents or those who cannot pick up at 3 o'clock.

BREAK TIME

We have our morning break at 10.45a.m. and all children are expected to play outside, so it is important that your child has a coat for colder days. Before the children go outside, they eat a small snack brought from home or toast/pancakes can be purchased at 20p, smoothies - 50p.

We encourage healthy eating in our school every day, so we would suggest that each child has a e.g. piece of fruit, yoghurt, vegetable snack and a drink for their morning snack. Friday is 'TREAT DAY' when children may bring a treat for morning break.

We operate a water on-the-desk policy, so we encourage children to bring a bottle of water to keep on their desk. Extensive research indicates that drinking plenty of water encourages better concentration and improved thinking skills.

LUNCH TIME

Your child will be offered a school dinner; meals are transported from Magherafelt Primary School. This year they cost £2.60/day. If you need an application form for free meals, these are available on the E.A. website. Alternatively, your child can bring a packed lunch to school.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

We expect all children to come to school wearing school uniform, which is available at Select Kidz, Magherafelt.

Boys - Pale blue polo shirt
Blue sweatshirt with
school crest
Navy trousers

Girls - Pale blue polo shirt
Blue Sweatshirt with
school crest
Navy skirt, pinafore
or navy trousers

PE UNIFORM

Children can wear tracksuit bottoms and trainers on P.E. days.

NAMING PROPERTY

Please ensure that all items of uniform are labelled with your child's name.

JEWELLERY/VALUABLES

It is preferable if jewellery is not worn in school for Health and Safety reasons. Valuables/toys of any description are discouraged at all times.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

School is closed during July and August. Other holiday information is available on the school website or app.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Our dynamic Parent Teacher Association organises a variety of events every year to raise funds for our school. These events are always well supported and are enjoyed by the whole school family.

**IN COMMON WITH ALL SCHOOLS, WE ARE REQUIRED TO
INFORM PARENTS OF VARIOUS POLICIES. A SUMMARY OF
THESE POLICIES IS INCLUDED OVERLEAF FOR YOUR
INFORMATION. THE DETAILED POLICY IS AVAILABLE AT YOUR
REQUEST OR ON THE SCHOOL WEBSITE OR ON THE SCHOOL
APP.**

www.bellaghyps.co.uk

PASTORAL CARE

Teachers are concerned, not only with the academic progress of pupils, but also with the happiness of each pupil attending our school. If you have any concerns about the welfare of your child at school, you are asked to approach the Principal without delay.

BEHAVIOUR

The behaviour of the children at our school is exemplary. We appreciate the co-operation we receive from parents in encouraging children to treat others and their property with respect. The staff encourage good behaviour and self-discipline through praise for effort, progress, honesty and kind behaviour.

On the very rare occasion where a behaviour is unacceptable, teachers will respond in an appropriate manner. The response will be determined by the misdemeanour of the pupil and may include being withdrawn from an activity like play time, PE or given extra work. A child may be asked to write an apology and have it signed by a parent. If the problem persists parents will be asked to assist the teachers to reach an appropriate conclusion. We have recently introduced a *Golden Time* for each class on Friday. This is half an hour of play/fun time to reward children who have showed a consistent standard of behaviour all week.

CHILD PROTECTION

In common with all schools, we are required to have arrangements in place for child protection. It is therefore important that the school should be notified when someone other than a parent or usual carer will be collecting a child. Should parents have a concern about child abuse and the school needs to be informed, this should be done by arranging an appointment with Mrs Torrens, the designated teacher for Child Protection. In her absence, the assistant designated teacher is Mrs Richmond. The designated teacher will report back to parents on the progress and outcome of their complaint within two weeks. If a parent is still dissatisfied, they may refer their complaint to the Board of Governors. All staff and volunteers working in the school in any capacity are subject to a criminal records check by PSNI.

ANTI-BULLYING

Bullying constitutes a form of abuse by one person on another. It may be defined as 'deliberately hurtful behaviour' repeated over a period of time.

All staff aim to foster a culture where bullying of any form is not tolerated. Children and staff need to know that they will be listened to and that appropriate steps will be taken according to our school policy.

DRUGS EDUCATION

It is a legal requirement that all schools have a drugs' education programme and policy. This covers not only illegal drugs but also 'legal' drugs such as solvents, alcohol and cigarettes. Our programme forms part of a health education programme throughout the school where we endeavour to teach the merits and attitudes of a healthy life style. As with all schools, we will not condone the possession of an illegal substance, cigarettes or alcohol. At all times, we will follow steps recommended by the EA and in accordance with our school policy.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

When a child fails to make satisfactory progress, we seek outside help from the Psychology service and from specialist teachers. The parent of any child experiencing difficulty will be kept informed at every step.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ARRANGEMENTS

We have Assembly two mornings each week. Local ministers from Bellaghy Baptist and Bellaghy Presbyterian lead our worship. Children also have RE lessons in class each week. For reasons of conscience, parents may request that their child be excluded from religious teaching by contacting the Principal.

CROSS-COMMUNITY WORK

Through this programme we give our children the opportunity to meet with pupils from other schools. Our cross-community partner is St John Bosco Primary School, Ballynease.

We aim to develop in each child the capacity to co-operate with others and show understanding and tolerance of those whose beliefs and culture differ from our own.

For any additional information about our school, please visit our website www.bellaghyps.co.uk or make an appointment to speak to the Principal.

PROSPECTUS - Updated - 2021

