

ST. BRIGID'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

PROSPECTUS





DEAR PARENT / GUARDIAN,

It is a pleasure to present to you the prospectus for St Brigid's Primary School as the choice for your child's Primary Education. As you read through our prospectus I hope you will gain an understanding of our ethos and vision for our school. The staff and I are very conscious of the trust, which you place in us when you enrol your child in school. It is our belief that school should always be a happy place for children and a welcoming place for parents.

As a Catholic school the core values of respect, tolerance, honesty and inclusivity permeate all relationships and aspects of school life. We put the children at the heart of every decision.

We recognise also that it is only when the school and home work in close partnership that the child's best interests are served. We maintain close links with all our parents throughout the year.

Our school is well regarded within its local community for its strong pastoral care and positive behaviour; its commitment to promoting high standards, its wide range of extra-curricular and extended school activities and its innovative and forward- thinking approach to teaching and learning.

Our prospectus has been designed to give you an introduction to the life of our successful school. It outlines what we stand for and what we will offer your child to ensure that he or she can develop his/her full potential and talents in a safe and happy environment.

No booklet can convey the real atmosphere of our school. I warmly invite you to visit the school where the team at St. Brigid's will be most pleased to meet you.

Dolores Miller
Principal



‘Growing
and Learning
Together.’

School Day	
Breakfast Club	8.15am-8.45am
Children arrive	8.40am (playground supervision)
School begins	9.00am
Break	10.30am- 10.45 am
Lunchtime	12.10- 12.50pm
School Hours	
Year 1	9.00am – 12.00pm (Sept) 9.00am – 2.00pm (Oct – June)
Year 2 & Year 3	9.00am – 2.00pm
Year 4- Year 7	9.00am – 3.00pm Monday – Thursday 9.00am – 2.00pm Friday

MISSION STATEMENT

St Brigid's Primary School is a catholic school which seeks to provide a caring, secure and challenging environment in which all its pupils have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential, spiritually, academically, socially, physically, emotionally, morally and culturally.

The school aims to provide effective education for all its pupils with the cooperation and support of their parents, the parish and the wider community.

ETHOS

Here in St Brigid's the Catholic Ethos of love, care, tolerance and respect permeates every aspect of school life and our dedicated staff seeks to promote the pastoral and learning experiences for your child. We appreciate the uniqueness of every member of our school community and the fact that childhood is a special experience filled with excitement and curiosity. Our catholic ethos is an inclusive one which accommodates children from other faiths within one school community.

Through our Ethos and practice we fulfil our school motto of;

‘GROWING AND LEARNING TOGETHER’.



AIMS

- To encourage all our pupils to fulfil their potential by maximising each individual's talents and capabilities.
- To develop in each child a love of learning, a knowledge of how to learn and the motivation to produce his/her best work.
- To cultivate in each pupil a sense of self-worth, self-discipline, courtesy, good manners and independence.
- To deliver a broad, balanced curriculum which promotes thinking skills.
- To develop a knowledge and understanding of the wider world in which we live nurturing a culture of tolerance, where people of diverse identities and beliefs are recognised, welcomed and respected.
- To strengthen partnership between home, school and the wider community.

ENROLMENT & ADMISSIONS

Enrolment Number: 266
Admissions Number: 38

Our enrolment has been increasing steadily over the last few years. If the school is over-subscribed, pupils will be admitted according to the admissions criteria published by the school and applied in the order set down. We hold an Open Night in December and there is an induction programme for new parents in June each year. Parents and prospective parents are welcome to visit the school at any time throughout the year. Please contact the school office if you would like to arrange to come and see around the school.

CURRICULUM

The school provides a curriculum planned to suit the needs of the individual child. From Year 1 to Year 7 the curriculum focuses on six main areas:

- Language and Literacy or Communication
- Numeracy and Mathematics
- The World Around Us (Science, History and Geography)
- Creative and Expressive (Art, Music and Drama)
- Physical Education
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

ICT

ICT is embedded in to classroom learning and teaching. All classrooms are equipped with Interactive Whiteboards and ipads. Our well stocked and modern ICT Suite allows for the creative teaching of ICT and encourages pupils to develop essential skills necessary for communicating in the modern world. Teachers engage in regular Professional Development opportunities to keep abreast of current technology provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In St. Brigid's primary school, we believe that religion is not just a subject to be taught, rather it is a way to live out our faith and therefore it is an integral part of the life of the school.

We use The Grow in Love and Wonder of my Being programmes in our timetabled teaching of religion. Our children are carefully prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation by committed staff who are values led. Their work is actively supported by the school chaplain.

The children take part in Prayer Services, Masses and assemblies which parents are always welcome to attend.





THE ARTS

We believe that the Arts provides rich opportunities for developing creativity, allowing children to express their ideas, feelings and interpretations of the world through pictures, sound, drama and dance. We aim to give all pupils the opportunity to develop their skills in Drama and Music by performing in Class Assemblies, Christmas Productions and other important Celebrations. In addition to the music offered as part of the curriculum we offer lessons in violin, cello, flute and clarinet. We have our own choir who perform at both school events and as part of the local community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The children are encouraged to take part in a wide range of games, dance, athletics, and gymnastics. With our close proximity to Downpatrick Leisure Centre we are able to offer swimming lessons from Year 5. Complementing our fun approach to Physical Education within the curriculum, we encourage physical activity at break and lunch times through providing equipment and playing games.



ASSESSMENT

Pupils' progress will be continuously monitored throughout the year. This builds on what already happens in the classroom and focuses on continuous monitoring by your child's teacher about each child's knowledge, understanding and skills development. Internal assessment is robustly monitored. Teachers can use different assessments and you will have the chance to meet your child's teacher in the first term and talk through their progress in a meaningful way. Diagnostic assessment will help support your child in their learning by helping teachers to find out if they are having any particular difficulties, or if they are finding their learning too easy and need more of a challenge.

HOW WILL I KNOW HOW MY CHILD IS DOING?

Parent teacher induction meetings are held in September for each class. This outlines the curriculum coverage for the year. Parent Teacher consultations are held in October. An annual written report/pupil profile is issued in June. In addition, the school also participates in the statutory assessment arrangements at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 (Primary 4 and Primary 7).



LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAMME

We, in St. Brigid's, recognise and celebrate the individuality of each child as a person and as a learner. We aim to personalise learning by identifying strengths and giftedness as well as working in partnership with the child and parent to address areas of challenge in learning at the earliest opportunity.

We have excellent Classroom Assistants and Special Educational Needs Assistants who may work with individuals or small groups of pupils. Learning support provision may take place within the classroom or during short periods when pupils are withdrawn from class, enabling them to have more individual teaching. Such additional support does not replace classroom teaching – it is supplementary to it.

There is a Special Needs Policy which details how pupils are supported with their learning and how they may progress through the stages of the Code of Practice.

The school works closely with other professionals and agencies e.g. RISE, Literacy Support Team, School Medical Team, Education Psychology Team, Education Welfare as needed.

Our Learning Support Coordinator monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of provision for each child and ensures that there is on-going training available for staff in several aspects of Learning Support both within school and delivered by outside agencies e.g. ASD Support, Dyslexia Training and Behaviour Support.



LANGUAGES

The school employ an Irish teacher to teach Irish lessons to all classes from Years 1-4 once per week. This is taught in a fun and interactive way to engage and inspire all children.

SCHOOL TRIPS

We organise regular educational visits for our pupils to enhance the learning that they experience as they study various topics. Our Year 7 children also have the opportunity to go on a residential trip where they experience activities that will complement learning and build social confidence.



CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING

Our school places Pastoral Care at the top of its agenda. We set high standards for our children in raising their own personal targets and we recognise that our pupils will not achieve these unless they are happy and well cared for in school.

We therefore have very strong and positive procedures for Pastoral Care throughout our school. Our school is involved in the 'Kidscape Good Sense Defence' programme and the PATHS Programme. (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies)

The school takes the issue of child protection extremely seriously and we have two teachers designated to coordinate this area of pastoral care. All staff are fully trained to an appropriate level in child protection and are committed to looking after the pastoral needs of every child in their class.

Where child abuse is reported or suspected the Designated Teacher or Principal is legally bound to report these concerns to Social Services.

All our safeguarding policies are up to date and shared with our pupils and parents regularly.

We encourage open lines of communication between home and school, so we may share information about pupil welfare and academic progress. It is essential that we are aware of any changes outside of school which may affect your child in school.



POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

We believe that effective learning can only take place where there is a high standard of good behaviour. It is our aim to work alongside parents and carers to celebrate positive behaviour and to provide support when necessary. Our approach to discipline is to encourage and celebrate good behaviour and positive achievements in all children. Some ways we promote positive behaviour are:

- Merit System
- Head Teacher Awards
- Class Awards
- Pupil of the Day
- Pupil of the Month
- Line Up Cup
- Class Contracts
- Parental involvement
- Sanctions when appropriate

A copy of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy can be inspected by arrangement with the Principal.



ANTI- BULLYING

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. Any complaint by a parent that their child is or may be being bullied will be fully investigated and the action taken will be communicated to them.

The sanction taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case but will include loss of privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds within the school.

Every teacher keeps a Pastoral Record for their class where any concerns are documented and a proper record kept of how the concern was addressed.



HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOL

It is the school's policy to promote healthy, positive attitudes. Health is perceived, not so much in terms of illness and disease, but as a more positive state of well-being.

Pupils are encouraged to drink water in class, both after exercise and as required throughout the school day.

Parents are encouraged to support our healthy eating policy by providing a healthy snack for break and a healthy lunch each day. These snacks should not be sweets or chocolate.

School dinners provide a nutritional, well balanced meal in the middle of the day for many children.

We are a 'Nut Free' zone.

We encourage the children to get active, get involved in sport and develop healthy habits through our involvement in the Daily Mile, Sustrans Programme and wealth of sporting opportunities offered.

Drugs education forms part of a comprehensive health education programme, which contributes to equipping pupils with the skills to manage their lives effectively and make responsible health decisions. Guidelines for the management of prescribed medicines are in place and parents must complete a medicine administration form. Full details can be found in our Drugs Policy, available from the school on request.

Smoking is not permitted in any section of the school.



INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

We are fully inclusive and welcome pupils from all faiths and non-faith backgrounds. We have a growing number of children whose first language may not be English. These children are supported by the school's Learning Support Co-ordinator.

We use Circle Time strategies, 'Living Learning Together' resources and such initiatives as European Day of languages, to help children to become aware of the world beyond their immediate environment and to learn about others. We encourage our children to understand similarities and respect differences in people in the local and wider community. Our participation in the Shared Education Programme with Downpatrick Primary School ensures that our pupils have opportunities to not only learn alongside other pupils but also build relationships within our community.

We welcome the cultural diversity that our Newcomer children bring to our school, whilst continuing to nurture and promote our Gaelic culture through Music, Dance, Song and Sport.



EXTENDED SCHOOL PROVISION

In St. Brigid's we believe in educating the whole child. We have a well-established Breakfast Club which is available to pupils from 8.15am to 8.45am daily. We offer the children a wide variety of extra-curricular activities to further enhance the additional activities which take place during the school day. These include; Soccer, Gaelic football, Games, Actisport, Netball, Dance, ICT, Art and Craft, Construction, Gardening and Cookery.

PUPIL VOICE

We believe that every member of the school family has a right to be heard. As a child centred school, we are committed to involving our pupils in discussions and decisions on school life that directly affect them. Through our School Council, Eco Council and our Digital Leader programmes each child is given a voice to contribute to whole school issues.

The school management listens to their views when planning and reviewing school activities.



PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

St. Brigid's school is a welcoming place for parents. We encourage your active participation in the life of the school and we are always most appreciative of parental support on a voluntary basis, e.g. accompanying school excursions, supporting curricular initiatives- reading partnership, art, music and gardening clubs etc.

At St Brigid's we endeavour to keep parents informed of each child's progress through a variety of means:

- Weekly Notes
- Monthly Newsletters
- Meet the Teacher Workshops
- Text to Parents
- Social media – Facebook, Twitter & See-Saw
- Noticeboards
- Curriculum Workshops
- Internet Safety Workshops
- Class Assemblies
- Sharing Learning Workshops
- School Website



We seek and value the opinion of parents and carers and use this information to help meet the individual needs of our pupils. The expectations which school and parents may have of each other could be expressed in the following lists:

PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE SCHOOL:

1. Child to be valued as an individual in a safe, well-ordered, caring environment.
2. Programmes of teaching and learning planned so that pupils are challenged to give of their best.
3. Early warnings of problems with work, relationships or discipline.
4. Teachers to inspire confidence by good teaching of skills at an appropriate pace of learning for each pupil.
5. Good lines of communication to express views and discuss school issues.

SCHOOL'S EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS AND CARERS:

1. Parents to support the work of the school with helpful attitudes and an interest shown at home.
2. Children to be regular and punctual in their attendance.
3. Parents to attend meetings to discuss progress, attainment and the curriculum.
4. Early contact on matters at home affecting a child's progress, happiness or behaviour.

By accepting a place at St Brigid's Primary School, parents accept the policies and procedures set by the Board of Governors of the school.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Both attendance and punctuality are the legal responsibility of the parent. Good school attendance and being on time for school are important factors for the consistency and progress of learning. Parents are strongly discouraged from taking family holidays during the school term. Each child's attendance is monitored by the Educational Welfare Service and should it fall below 85% you will be contacted.



UNIFORM

We are particularly proud of our school uniform and it is the policy of the school that it is worn by all pupils. A school uniform has a positive effect; not only on discipline but also on the child's self-esteem and provides our pupils with an identity.

If a pupil is unable to wear their uniform an explanation should be forwarded.

Boys

School jumper with crest

White shirt

School tie

Grey trousers/shorts

Black shoes

Girls

School jumper with crest

White shirt

School tie

Grey skirt / Pinafore

Black shoes

School Dress (optional for summer term)

An optional School bag and a School Coat are also available.

All items of uniform should be clearly marked with the pupil's name. For safety reasons, jewellery should not be worn. Only stud earrings may be permitted.

PE Kit

White polo shirt, royal blue shorts, Black Plimsolls. Plain navy jogging bottoms and trainers may be worn for outdoor PE. All jewellery must be removed for PE.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

We believe that parents should be actively involved in the daily life of school and in the management structures. Parents are elected as representatives on The Board of Governors and parents are also represented on the sub committees. In this way parents' views are represented at management level.

CURRICULAR CONCERNS

Complaints about the curriculum policy of the school or the exercise of any power relating to the curriculum can be made in writing for consideration by the Board of Governors.



PARENT ASSOCIATION

On a less formal, but still structured level, the school also welcomes parental involvement in our Parent Association.

The Parent Association (PA) provides financial support to enhance the resources within the school. Through active support from school families, and with direction from an annually elected committee, fund-raising events not only raise money to assist with educational purchases but, importantly, strengthen social aspects of the school and help promote a community spirit.

ST. BRIGID'S PRIMARY SCHOOL PROSPECTUS



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