



Whitehead

Primary School & Nursery Unit

Prospectus



Welcome

Dear Parent / Guardian

Welcome to Whitehead Primary School. Whether you are visiting the school or just reading about it, I hope you will enjoy this opportunity to get to know us.

As a school we believe that we are 'United yet Unique'. We are a team working in partnership with parents to provide a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment, where children can attain their full potential and pursue excellence. In order to achieve this we consider every child to be an individual with his or her own special gifts and talents. In my desire to get to know children personally, I spend a substantial amount of time visiting classrooms and teaching the children. That's the part of my job that I enjoy the most!

We offer a broad and balanced curriculum designed to challenge the children academically. We also have a wide range of extra curricular activities encouraging teamwork and social as well as physical development. We believe in the balanced development of all pupils, including the personal qualities that will prepare them for life in the community.

Mr J. Loughins BEd MEd PQH(NI)
Principal



Inspection Report



In November 2012 we were inspected by The Education and Training Inspectorate. We were delighted when the inspectors stated:

“The quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.”

The inspection report stated,

“The whole school self-evaluation and school development planning (SDP) are very good. There is a well embedded culture of self-evaluation across the school to effect improvement; in particular the use of classroom observation to improve further the quality of the provision and the standards attained by the children.”

In questionnaires completed by the staff they

“indicated that they are happy and proud working in the school, feel valued and supported by the management and appreciate the opportunities for staff to plan together and their involvement in the whole-school decision making process. The staff are totally committed to providing the best both academically, socially and pastorally for all the children.”

With reference to the Nursery Unit the inspectors stated,

“The nursery unit has a very positive ethos and the working relationships at all levels are characterised by mutual respect which promotes the children’s self confidence, self esteem and very good behaviour.”

In addition, **“The children are making very good progress, particularly in their early language and communication skills and in mathematical understanding.”**

In terms of Pastoral Care the children are very well cared for. The inspection report stated,

“The outworking of the school’s anti-bullying policy is very good. This is evident through the excellent behaviour of the children and the welcoming ethos. The school has created an atmosphere in which the children are valued and supported in their learning and their achievements are well celebrated.”

In terms of the quality of teaching throughout the school it was stated,

“The teachers use a range of active and practical learning and teaching strategies to engage the children, to empower them to manage their own learning, to challenge their thinking, to extend their learning and to promote their oracy skills.”

Referring to the pupils the inspectors stated,

“The children express themselves with clarity and increasing fluency, participating well in group work and class discussion. They read with a very good degree of confidence.”

The work of Special Educational Needs was highly commended with the inspectors stating,

“The children who have been identified as having additional learning needs are well supported by the teachers and learning support assistants. Assessment data is used well by the staff to both identify early the children who require additional support and to identify specific targets which are appropriate to the individual needs of the child: these targets are reviewed regularly and used effectively by the teachers to inform classroom practice.”

The Inspectors met with some of the Y6 children and recorded that they

“spoke enthusiastically about many aspects of school life including their enjoyment of learning, the kind, supportive teachers and their appreciation of, and participation in the wide range of extra curricular activities open to them.”

The very effective self evaluation procedures within the school had correctly identified writing & problem solving as areas for further development and once again this was recorded in the report.

“The school has identified writing as an area for development and the inspection findings would endorse this, for example to provide more opportunities for extended writing, in particular for the more able children.”

“The school has identified appropriately the need to provide more open ended opportunities for children to apply their learning in problem-solving and investigative work.”

Writing & problem solving have subsequently been our foci for the last year and we are delighted with the progress that the children have made in these areas as we strive to be outstanding. The report can be accessed at www.etini.gov.uk





Aims & Mission Statement



Mission Statement

To provide, in partnership with parents, a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment where children can achieve their full potential and pursue excellence.

Aims

- To provide opportunities for children to engage in active learning contexts across all areas of the curriculum, developing skills and capabilities for lifelong learning.
- To develop communication skills in order to express themselves socially, emotionally and physically, to develop as individuals and engage with others.
- To engage children in effective learning by using a wide range of teaching strategies, balancing whole class, group and individual activities.
- To provide a safe, enriching and stimulating environment where children can achieve their full potential, develop self confidence, self esteem and self discipline.
- To provide opportunities for individual success while promoting enthusiastic, independent and enquiring attitudes to learning.
- To foster the acquisition of social skills and prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- To promote positive attitudes towards an active and healthy lifestyle, relationships, personal growth and change.
- To encourage children to develop an awareness of right and wrong and understand how their actions can affect others.
- To make children aware of some of their rights and responsibilities in order that they might contribute to creating a better world for those around them.
- To develop an awareness and respect for the similarities and differences in families and people involved with school and living in the wider community.
- To develop an effective partnership with parents and strong links with the community.

Pastoral Care

In Whitehead Primary School children will feel secure, will be valued as individuals and will be encouraged in their learning, growth and social development within a healthy, safe and caring environment.

Golden Rules

Our School Council has devised our Golden Rules based on the acronym

B behaviour
E endeavour
A attitude
M manners

Our desire is that each one of our pupils is a little beam of light making a difference in someone else's life. Springing from the acronym are the Golden Rules:

- Do be kind – help others.
- Do show good manners.
- Do look after property.
- Do walk quietly in the corridors.
- Do be gentle – don't hurt others.
- Do wear school uniform.
- Do be honest.
- Do work hard, always try your best and never give up.
- Do respect others – listen to new ideas.

As children keep the golden rules they are rewarded with "Golden Time" when as a class or individuals they get to choose an activity in which they would like to participate.



The School & the Community

Every opportunity is taken to involve the children in the local community and to invite members of the community to visit classes in school.

Parents and the School

All parents are encouraged to take an active part in their children's education and are welcome to visit the school. This may be on a casual basis or for a formal interview, by appointment, with a teacher or the principal.

Parents are invited to become involved in the life of the school. Currently, a number of parents come in during the day and help in many ways. Teachers welcome the offer of assistance with the organisation of class library periods. Help with photocopying and general assistance in classrooms is also appreciated, while parents are required from time to time to accompany school parties on educational visits. All offers of help are greatly valued and this scheme provides an opportunity for further contact with the teachers and the children. Parents willing to volunteer for these activities will be required to undergo a police check.

Support for Charities

Each year the School Council, which represents the pupils, chooses a charity to be supported. They are also responsible for organising a sponsored event in order to raise money for the charity. Last year we supported Northern Ireland Hospice and raised an incredible £6360.



Uniform & School Day



Uniform

We believe that children who develop an interest in their appearance carry this attitude into other areas of school life. We prefer uniform and we urge parents to send their children to school in uniform every day. An exception is made when a non-uniform day is declared. Uniform is practical and emphasises the school policy that all children are treated alike.

Boys:

White shirt
School tie
Navy blue pullover or sweatshirt
White Polo shirt
Grey trousers
Black shoes

Girls

White blouse
School tie
Navy blue cardigan or sweatshirt
White Polo shirt
Grey skirt or pinafore
Black shoes

(A blue and white striped dress may be worn by girls in the summer months).

For PE lessons pupils are asked to wear white polo shirts and navy blue shorts. Football shirts are discouraged for PE lessons. They may be used for after school activities. We discourage the wearing of sports kit carrying advertisements for tobacco or alcohol products.

School Hours

Morning Nursery: 9.00am – 11.30am

Afternoon Nursery: 12.30pm – 3.00pm

Year 1 9.00am – 12.15pm
(September)

9.00am – 2.00pm
(October – June)

Year 2 9.00am – 2.00pm (All year)

Year 3 9.00am – 2.50pm
(Monday & Tuesday)

9.00am – 2.00pm
(Wed, Thurs & Friday)

Y4, Y5, Y6 & Y7 9.00am – 3.00pm (All year)





Summary of the Curriculum Policy

This school provides a curriculum planned to suit the needs of the individual child. From Y1 to Y7 the curriculum focuses on six main areas:

Literacy and Language

Numeracy and Mathematics

The World Around Us

The Arts

Physical Education

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

A managed computer system provides two computers in every classroom to apply information and communication technology skills across the curriculum. In addition we use laptops and ipads which can be set up in any room for use by all children. All computers allow supervised access to the internet. Large Interactive Whiteboards in every classroom support ICT and enhance learning opportunities in the school.

Special Educational Needs

The school has always given a high priority to providing support for children with special educational needs. All teachers recognise the importance of identifying and addressing the specific needs of pupils early in their school career. Effective support on an individual basis is then planned for these children. The Code of Practice, NI (special needs) is adhered to throughout the school and information exchanged at review meetings between teachers and parents is written up in Individual Education Plans.

Trained classroom assistants provide additional reading boosts with selected children, using paired and shared reading activities. The school also takes pride in challenging children who are of above average or exceptional ability. Care is taken to ensure that the level and the amount of work set match the child's ability.



Extra-Curricular

Educational Visits

At some stage during the year all pupils will have the opportunity to reinforce some work being undertaken in a particular subject area with an educational visit.

The visits range from part-day expeditions to the local town, woods, seashore, zoo and farm for younger children to a three-day trip to Bushmills Outdoor Education Centre for Year 6 pupils, when the children undertake activities such as canoeing, abseiling, archery and climbing.

The Year 7 pupils go on a four day trip to London when they visit all of the main tourist attractions including Madame Tussauds, The Tower of London, London Eye, Houses of Parliament and of course Hamleys. They even get to see a West End show.



Sport & Extra-Curricular Activities

On Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday afternoons from 3.00pm to 4.00pm children in the Y4 - Y7 classes have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These vary according to season but include football, hockey, badminton, cricket, netball, horse riding, golf and an art club.

We have teams representing the school in a variety of leagues, for example hockey, netball, badminton, football and cricket.

In addition we offer Irish Dancing, Jujitsu, Short Tennis, Table tennis & French Club through privately run organisations who use the school premises.

Music

In addition to the music offered as part of the curriculum we offer lessons in piano, guitar, violin, flute, clarinet, trumpet & trombone. We have our own orchestra who perform at school engagements and a choir of over 60 pupils who perform at both school events and as part of the local community.





Nursery Unit

Opened in 2001, the nursery unit caters for 52 children attending on a part-time basis i.e. morning and afternoon sessions. It comprises a cloakroom area, large, well-resourced classroom, carpeted quiet area, children's toilets, storage facilities and staff-parent room. Great emphasis is placed on the outdoor learning environment, which includes static climbing equipment, a playground with markings for wheeled toys, art and design areas, a growing garden, a playhouse and sand and bark areas.

Adhering to the curricular guidance for pre-school education (DENI 2006), our carefully planned programme takes account of children's age, stages of development and interests to provide extensive opportunities for them to learn in a fun and stimulating way. They have spontaneous choice of activities at all times, both indoors and outdoors. The 6 areas of the curriculum are presented in a holistic way through the experiences children have and activities in which they engage. This facilitates the development of skills, knowledge and understanding as well as ensuring the promotion of sound relationships, attitudes, independence and self-discipline.

Linking closely with our topics, throughout the year; the children go on a variety of educational trips. These include monthly visits to the library, trips to the local bakery, the fruit and flower shop and outings to either Streamvale Open Farm or W5. We also have visitors from a range of agencies and services including the Northern Ireland Fire Service, PSNI, postal workers, Belfast Zoo and World of Owls.

We work closely in partnership with parents to ensure that every child settles both quickly and happily into Nursery; that they regularly experience success and make steady progress with the aim of achieving their full potential.

The Nursery staff has attained a high standard of qualifications and, together, has extensive experience of working with and educating young children including those with various learning difficulties. Ongoing training and professional development is undertaken regularly, during school development days and by attendance at training courses provided by NEELB and other agencies. These courses focus upon aspects including special educational needs, curriculum development and Nursery leadership / management.

Research indicates that there is a close correlation between staff education/training and the quality of early education, ultimately ensuring the best long-term outcomes for children. We believe that our setting is best placed to provide the greatest opportunities for young children to learn and to have their individual needs met effectively, thus achieving their full potential in all areas of development.





The Role of Staff

The nursery team is viewed as facilitating learning and their roles include:

- Carefully planning, implementing and evaluating the pre-school curriculum based on observed interests, abilities and requirements;
- Organising space, time and materials and equipment effectively to enable children to make full use of all available resources;
- Engaging children in conversations to promote language skills and to develop enquiring minds;
- Regularly monitoring individual progress throughout the year by way of planned and incidental observations;
- Supporting and challenging children using a wide range of strategies and;
- Raising self confidence and self esteem through regular celebration of children's efforts and successes.

Other adults, such as parents and students, may come in to work with the children under the close guidance and supervision of the nursery teacher.

The Nursery Unit and the Primary School

The nursery, as an integral part of Whitehead Primary School, is involved as far as possible in all aspects of school life. For example, we attend special assemblies and events such as Sports Day, Christmas concerts, and make regular use of the gym hall, interactive whiteboards and school grounds. This ensures that children become familiar with the rest of the school, which is of particular benefit for the majority of children, who make the transition into Year 1.

Further Information



Information in this prospectus is limited. Therefore, we would be delighted for parents to visit the school to discuss our plans for meeting your child's needs. An appointment may be made by telephoning the Principal on 028 9335 3280 or by email to jloughins453@c2kni.net



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