

Ashgrove Primary School

Ashgrove Road, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim, BT36 6LJ

Principal: Peter B Waddell MEd BEd DipScEd

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Dear Parent/Guardian

On behalf of everyone at Ashgrove Primary School, I extend a warm welcome to you and your child. This prospectus has been compiled to provide the basic information that you may need and to help your child profit from a happy time at the school. Full details of the school's policies are available on request or from our website.

Ashgrove has a well-established reputation as a school where the children and staff enjoy excellent relationships based on respect, care and learning. As the principal I am proud of my professional team and together we aim to combine the best of both educational tradition and innovation within an ethos that responds to the strengths, needs and unique personalities of our children.

We believe that all children are born with a natural curiosity and the ability to learn. Each child has much to offer. Our challenge in Ashgrove Primary is to give children the confidence, skills and experiences that will inspire them to excellence and to develop their individual abilities with breadth and imagination. We present pupils with a broad and balanced range of learning experiences as required by the Northern Ireland Curriculum and expect children to leave Ashgrove, confident in the skills and knowledge that they have gained, and in their ability to make the most of life's opportunities.

Over the years a genuine partnership has been developed between parents and the school. We would encourage you to become involved fully with your child's education and to enjoy the social opportunities of our community. If you have not yet had a chance to visit the school, or if we can be of assistance in any other way, please do not hesitate to contact me or another member of staff.

Yours faithfully

Peter B Waddell
(Principal)

Ashgrove is a controlled co-educational primary school. It opened in 1978. Our children are drawn from a wide area with admission applications being received from greater Newtownabbey and further afield. For a number of years we have operated a double class intake with an admissions number of 54 and a maximum enrolment of 374.

Membership of the Board of Governors

Chair	Mr D Ireland
Vice-Chair	Dr K Carlisle
Parent Representatives:	Dr K Carlisle Mrs K McClean
Transferor Representatives	Mr W Edwards Mr D Ireland
NEELB Representatives	Cllr J Crilly Mr A Kell
Teacher Representative	Mr M Morrow

The present governing body was formed to serve from 2010 until 2013. There are currently two vacancies.

Permanent Staffing

Principal	Mr PB Waddell	
Vice-Principal/Head of KS2	Mr D Graham	
Head of FS & KS1	Miss J Wylie	
Year 7	Mr D Graham	Mr N Agnew
Year 6	Miss L Quail, Mrs H Kyle	Mr M Morrow
Year 5	Mrs L Douglas, Mrs S Christie	Mrs V Luney
Year 4	Mrs F Mannion, Mrs M McAllister	Miss J Wylie
Year 3	Mrs L Torrie, Mrs H Kyle	Mrs A Blair
Year 2	Mrs A McBride, Mrs K Cartmill	Mrs J Copeland
Year 1	Mrs M McCoy	Mrs J Adair
Special Ed. Needs	Mr M Morrow (SENCo)	Mrs L Doherty
Classroom Assistants	Mrs G Finlay Mrs C Lowry Mrs L Noble Mrs J Torrens	Mrs L Lloyd Mrs A McMillan Mrs T O'Donnell Mrs K Vick
Secretary	Mrs Y McDonald	
Buildings Supervisor	Mr D Magill	
Cleaners	Mrs L Horn	Mrs L Smith
Supervisory Assistants	Mrs L Noble (Senior) Mrs H Campbell Mrs G McFerran Mrs L Meehan	Mrs A Bunting Mrs M Cleland Mrs A McMillan Mrs H Montgomery

Premises and Facilities

The school consists of eleven classrooms; a central hall used for PE, assemblies and concerts; a separate dining hall and a variety of ancillary rooms and stores. Classrooms are in groups of three and four and enclose practical tiled areas with cloakrooms and toilet facilities. We have been provided with five mobile classrooms to facilitate our increased enrolment, and a permanent library.

Ashgrove occupies an attractive site on the Ashgrove Road with expansive grounds providing excellent opportunities for sports and studies. The school has its own running track and football pitch, which prove popular with boys and girls alike.

Within the grounds is Ashgrove Nursery School. It has very close ties with the primary school but operates independently. The nursery may be contacted at 028 9084 3178.

The School Day at Ashgrove Primary

Doors open	8:40 am
School begins	8:55 am
Break	10:45 -10:55 am
Lunch	12:30 - 1:15 pm
Afternoon school begins	1:15 pm
Years 1 and 2 finish	2:00 pm



(Until Hallowe'en, Year 1 children go home before lunch at 12:30 pm.)

Year 3 finishes	2:00 pm on Monday and Thursday 2:50 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
Years 4, 5, 6 and 7 finish	2:50 pm

A prompt start is made at 8:55 am. We appreciate parents having their children in school on time as latecomers disrupt classroom procedures and miss out on lessons.

A breakfast club operates from 8:10am each day to facilitate parents who need to be in work early. The 2-3 Club offers after-school childcare for children in Years 1, 2 and 3.

Open Enrolment – Admissions Information

It is the intention of the Board of Governors to admit pupils to Ashgrove Primary School according to the wishes of parents. The Board of Governors and principal shall, in the event of the school being over-subscribed, review all applications in relation to the criteria set out below. The criteria are listed in order of priority.

1. Of compulsory school age and resident in Northern Ireland at the time of application;
2. Brother or sister of a pupil currently at Ashgrove Primary School or who has previously attended the school;
3. Child or grandchild of a current member of teaching or other staff;
4. Previous attendance at Ashgrove Nursery School;
5. Proximity of home address to the school, measured by public road and/or footpath - front gate to front gate.

Uniform

The full Ashgrove uniform includes:

- black shoes
- sweatshirt or pullover or cardigan (bottle green)*
- white polo shirt with school badge*
- tights (green) or socks (green, grey or white)
- skirt or pinafore or trousers (grey)
- optional summer dress (green and white check)
- PE kit (Years 1 & 2: gym shoes, polo shirt. Years 3 to 7: T-shirt, gym shoes or trainers; shorts, jogging bottoms or tracksuit)
- a strong (named) slipper bag

(* These items are sold in school.)

We greatly appreciate the support of parents with uniform. It contributes to a settled, working atmosphere, it presents an appropriate image and it helps prevent the self-consciousness that can be associated with changing fashions.

Please label all items of personal property. Items of value should **not** be brought to school.

Jewellery should be minimal, safe and inoffensive.

School Induction Programme



The principal and staff endeavour to make each child's start at Ashgrove as smooth and enjoyable as possible. Care is taken to ensure that new pupils are given time and opportunity to become acquainted with new friends, new surroundings and new teachers. Happiness and a positive attitude are essential for effective learning. To this end an induction programme is operated in May and June preceding the enrolment of Year 1 in September. Children are allocated to classes to ensure an even spread of age, boys and girls and, where appropriate, special educational needs.

Pastoral Care

Ashgrove recognises the importance of safeguarding (child protection) and pastoral care in promoting the personal development of pupils. In doing so, we acknowledge the opportunities and needs of childhood as much as the future needs of adult life.

The class teacher has a unique knowledge of a child's needs, aspirations, interests and academic progress and can integrate the contributions of school, parents and others to support the learning and development of each pupil. We ask that teachers are kept aware of any external influences or situations that may affect a child's well being and to offer appropriate support.

The school takes a proactive approach against bullying and works hard to develop self-respect and respect for others. Pupils are encouraged to share, to co-operate and to enjoy company.

Each family is issued with a copy of "What Should I Do?" This is a child-centred guide for pupils to help them keep safe in school, look after themselves and get the advice and support they may need.

Absence and Withdrawal

Parents are asked to inform the school on the first day of any absence. This should be followed up with a brief, explanatory note upon return to school. Children are not allowed to leave school unless parents request a withdrawal. On such occasions parents are expected to report to reception before collecting their child from class. Should a child not return after lunchtime,

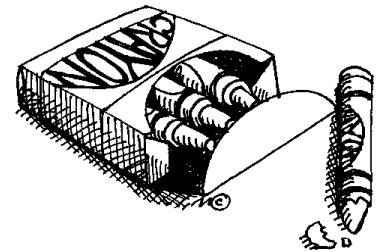
parents are asked to telephone school to explain the absence. Last year the average attendance was 93.2%.

Parents and School

We are keen that children come into school on their own as this fosters the independence that is so important in their development.

Parents are, however, encouraged to develop the relationship between home and school and are welcome to discuss any concerns with the class teacher or the principal at any time. In addition to such ongoing communication, formal interviews are arranged to discuss children's progress.

It is helpful if parents send their children to school with the essential equipment. Please make sure your child has pencils, a ruler, an eraser, colouring pencils and any other basic item that might be requested.



Newsletters are sent home at regular intervals to inform parents about what is happening in school. These are also available on-line.

Many parents become actively involved in the life of the school. It is not possible to list all the ways in which parents help but the following are examples of current support: librarians, members of the PTA, sports coaches and helpers on educational visits. In line with child protection policies every volunteer must pass a criminal record check by Access NI and provide two good references.

We have a flourishing Parent Teacher Association. All parents are welcome to attend the popular social and educational meetings that are held each month. Funds are used to benefit the children in school.

Illness and Accident Procedures

Pupils should not be sent to school when ill. If a doctor advises pupils to attend school while taking medication for a chronic condition (such as diabetes or asthma) or because they are recovering from a short-term illness, the following procedures will apply:

- a parent or other adult with responsibility should come to school to administer the medicine;
- if a parent prefers, medication may be administered by member of staff acting within the principal's authority. The parent is required to complete a form giving signed consent and specific written instructions. In this case the parent should bring the smallest practical dose to school in a clearly labelled container. It should not be left with the pupil but given to the class teacher to store securely; or
- where parents feel older children can cope with their own medication, such as asthma inhalers, written permission is required.

Pupils are well supervised throughout the school day but on occasions emergencies can arise. It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to make arrangements for any pupil who becomes unwell or sustains a minor injury. This would normally mean collecting the sick child and taking him/her home,



to the doctor or to hospital. In the unlikely event that a pupil appears to be seriously ill or injured, an ambulance will be called without waiting for parental permission. The parent, guardian or contact person will then be informed by telephone and asked to accompany the child to the accident centre. Should listed contact not be available, two members of staff will accompany the child to the hospital and a school representative will continue to seek contact with the parent or guardian before, during or after treatment has taken place.

Children's Behaviour

The school's approach to discipline is positive, with the emphasis being on praise and reward rather than punishment. We promote, expect and achieve good behaviour from our pupils. Confidence and independence are fostered and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. Levels of self-discipline are good. Children are expected to behave in a courteous and responsible manner towards each other, to staff and to all visitors. The children are taught to respect school property and they are encouraged to keep the building and grounds tidy.

Our discipline policy is flexible. It allows teachers to deal with each situation on merit. Rules and regulations are kept to a minimum but, when needed, they are applied fairly and firmly. In rare cases where pupils

continue to misbehave, parents are consulted and kept fully informed of the measures taken.

In some cases it is appropriate to support children with emotional and behavioural difficulties through our policy for Special Educational Needs.

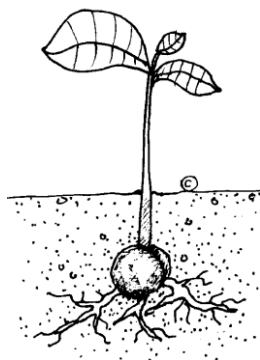
Curriculum

The school subscribes to the criteria contained in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. We place emphasis on *Language and Literacy*, *Numeracy and Mathematics*, and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*. Play is a vital component.

In *Language and Literacy* we emphasise the skills of talking and listening. Opportunities for writing are developed across the curriculum and in a wide variety of forms. The vital importance of phonics and reading is recognised and a love of books is fostered. Children are encouraged to use class, school and local libraries, with parents being asked to provide additional reading material at the home.



Mathematics and Numeracy is made meaningful and related to the child's environment. Emphasis is placed on a sound understanding of number facts and mental calculation. Pupils are given ample opportunity to measure, weigh and work with calculators. In addition, children play mathematical games, and deal with money, shape and space, and a wide variety of mathematical concepts.



ICT is a core subject that is valued for itself and as a learning tool across the curriculum. Software is used that reinforces children's previous learning and challenge their understanding. From the earliest days in Year 1, pupils are given hands-on experience of computers. As they move up through the school learning is extended to the *5-Es*, ICT skills in which children explore, express, exchange, evaluate and exhibit. Pupils in every class have access to the school's excellent computer network. Much work is done through e-mail and Internet websites. Each year group is well resourced with an interactive whiteboard.

Building on these areas, children are introduced to a broad and balanced curriculum. This includes cross-curricular topics involving thinking skills and creative experiences as well as work that is more discretely related to areas such as *Music, PE, Art & Design, Science & Technology, History, Geography* and *Personal Development & Mutual Understanding (PDMU)*. Specialist teachers and visitors complement our teaching staff when delivering subjects such as *Spanish* and *German* at Key Stage 2.

Children are taught in mixed-sex classes according to age. Learning activities are planned for individuals, groups and classes according to ability and need.

Assessment, Examinations And Reports



A range of assessment tools is used to record children's progress; others are employed to identify the strengths of individual children and the areas that require support and challenge. Whenever possible, children are involved in the cycle of planning, teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation, now known as *Assessment for Learning (AfL)*.

Pupils are assessed formally and informally throughout the year. Parents are invited to interviews in the first and second terms and they receive annual reports on their children at the end of June.

Children's progress is tracked in a number of ways. Standardised tests are used annually to monitor progress. Children in Years 4 and 7 (the ends of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 respectively) are formally assessed and the levels achieved in *Language and Literacy* and in *Mathematics and Numeracy* are included in the annual report.

Sport In Ashgrove

In addition to regular PE lessons, pupils in Key Stage 2 normally have opportunities to participate in athletics, 'Kwik Cricket', badminton, rugby, football, hockey, netball and swimming. We aim to introduce all pupils to a range of sports and sporting activities. Ashgrove is involved with inter-schools competitions for football, rugby, hockey, badminton, athletics and netball. With careful coaching we



try to develop the performances of pupils who show interest and flair in particular sports. While winning is a valid aim, it not seen as the sole reason to become involved; it is just as important for children to do their best, to have fun, to try something new, to develop a healthy lifestyle and to enter into the team spirit.

Inclusion

Ashgrove is an inclusive school and during their seven years with us all of our children are involved in activities designed to develop respect and understanding for others regardless of social, religious or cultural background. We enjoy positive links with our neighbouring primary school, St Mary's-on-the-Hill.

Children with disabilities are fully integrated within mainstream classes to the benefit of all children and staff.

Religious Education

RE is taught in accordance with Education Reform (NI) Order 1989. Classes use a prescribed syllabus and NEELB materials written from an interdenominational Christian viewpoint. Pupils are taught in mixed groups regardless of church affiliation.



Unless withdrawn by parental request to the principal, all pupils attend regular communal worship. Ministers visit regularly to contribute to whole-school assemblies. Classes lead key stage assemblies in rotation. Harvest and Christmas are marked by special services to which parents are warmly invited.

Special Educational Needs

Children with special educational needs are those who have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age, and/or those whose disabilities limit or deny their use of educational facilities. We believe in early identification and we endeavour to provide the most appropriate support for children with learning difficulties; social,

emotional and behavioural difficulties; medical conditions; speech and language difficulties; visual and aural impairments; and physical disabilities.

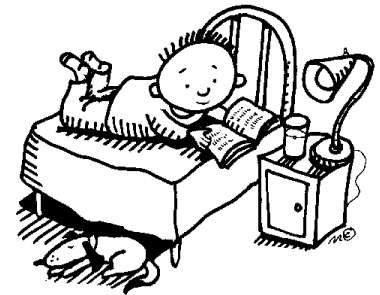
Carefully planned support is provided in accordance with the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. Parents and teachers work closely together with advice and help being requested from NEELB and other outside agencies as necessary.

Gifted & Talented Children

Children with exceptional abilities are identified, challenged and supported in ways appropriate to their individual strengths and ages.

Homework

Homework is gradually introduced to younger children and is planned by the class teacher within key stage policy. On occasions written work is replaced by practical activities, eg pupils may be asked to find out information or bring in objects that are connected with classwork. In the senior classes children are given homework most nights, the amount gradually being increased with age.



Parents are asked to discuss and sign an agreed homework policy statement.

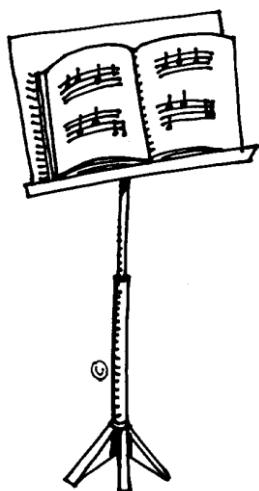
Educational Visits

Educational visits play a vital role in the life of Ashgrove Primary School. They contribute to our delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and to the social development of the children. They include study visits, cross-community trips and sports events. Most are day visits but residential trips are offered to senior classes.

Members of staff follow the safety precautions and organisational procedures outlined by the North Eastern Education & Library Board.

Parents and guardians are informed in advance of any trip. A signed consent form must be returned to school before any child is taken off the premises.

Extra-Curricular Activities



In Ashgrove each teacher contributes to the range of after-school activities that is offered to children from Years 4 to 7. They can change from year to year but may include:

art
computers
claywork
football
hockey
netball
Scripture Union

badminton
Cycling Proficiency
drama
French
library club
rugby
strings orchestra

Charges And Remissions Policy

The Board of Governors affirms that all compulsory school subjects will be provided free of charge.

The Governors will invoke the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 to request voluntary contribution equal to the full per capita cost in respect of examination fees for music, educational visits or any other activity which the school is not legally obliged to provide.

No pupil will be excluded because of parental reluctance to meet the per capita cost of such activities but it is expected that such instances will be few in number. Where appropriate, the governors may decide to subsidise part of the cost of the activity out of school funds.

Drugs Policy

The school has well-established procedures for dealing with any drugs-related incident that might arise. It delivers a programme of age-appropriate drugs education. The principal acts as the designated teacher for drugs in association with the vice-principal.

Road Safety and Parking

Parents are asked to encourage children to use the footpaths and crossing patrolmen at all times. Cars are not allowed into school grounds except on school business and never during start and finish times when the gates are closed. Considerate parking is essential and parents are asked to observe the zigzags and the yellow no-parking lines, and to leave the entrance gates clear of cars. Traffic police officers patrol the Ashgrove Road!

The governors and staff at Ashgrove Primary School consider that the information contained in this prospectus is correct at the time of publication.