



Prospectus

Abbey Primary School & Nursery Unit

'A place where everyone experiences a sense of belonging to the school family.'

Welcome

Dear Parent,

On behalf of the Governors, staff and pupils of Abbey Primary School, I am delighted to welcome you to our school. We are very proud of all that we do and the reputation we have earned for providing quality teaching and learning.

We have a professional and committed staff who are dedicated to providing excellent learning opportunities for all our pupils in order to enhance their all-round development. I hope our prospectus provides you with a flavour of Abbey life and encourages you to partner with us for your child's primary school years.

As the true ethos of our school can only be fully experienced through a personal visit, you are more than welcome at any time to book an appointment to see the school for yourself. Alternatively, come along to our annual Open Night or one of our PTA events to experience for yourself what makes our school such a special place.

J. Manning, Principal

“...wouldn't want my kids anywhere else.”
(PARENT COMMENT)



Vision Statement



Vision

It is our vision that Abbey Primary is a place where everyone experiences a sense of belonging to the school family.

We are committed to providing a high quality learning environment in which pupils are motivated, challenged and supported so that they can become lifelong learners.

The school aims to maximise pupil potential in a safe, caring and child-centred community, where academic achievement, positive self-esteem, cultural diversity and the rights of all are highly valued and respected.

We believe that pupils, staff, parents and members of the wider community should work together and co-operate with each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect and support, for the benefit of all.

About Our School

Abbey Primary School is situated to the east of Newtownards on the Movilla Road leading towards Millisle.

The school was opened in September 1989 and is set in an attractively landscaped site.

It takes its name from the nearby ruins of the old Movilla Abbey, which was a seat of learning for many years after it was set up by St. Finian in approximately 550AD.

The Abbey was later destroyed in the dissolution of the monasteries under King Henry VIII. The ruins of the Abbey now provide a source of historical research for the present day pupils of Abbey Primary.

Primary colours are used to provide a bright, attractive and stimulating environment for pupils. Present accommodation includes 21 classrooms, 15 of which are in the main school and 6 of which are situated in the "Priory" – a purpose built unit opened in 1992. There is also a learning Support room, Library, PE/ Assembly Hall, Accelerated Reading Area, Kitchen, Dining Hall and ICT Suite.

The teaching staff of 26 is organised into a system of year groups and subject panels led by experienced co-ordinators. The special needs of children are met by one learning support teacher, one intervention learning assistant, as well as other experienced members of staff.

Regular meetings of the staff, co-ordinators and senior management team contribute to the efficient running of the school.

The non-teaching staff of approximately 35 people make a positive contribution to school life; both they and the teaching staff combine to provide a team dedicated to the education and welfare of all pupils.

More information about our School Admissions can be downloaded from our school website page:

www.abbeyprimary.net



Nursery

We are delighted to have an excellent Nursery Unit as part of our school which is situated in the main school grounds. The building has an attractive, welcoming playroom, a quiet room for stories and a safe enclosed outdoor play area.

The Nursery is a warm, safe environment where children can experience learning through play; developing the skills necessary to take them on into Primary School. Our experienced Nursery staff are committed to ensure each child's formative experience of education is a positive one.

Abbey Nursery is a dual day nursery; two classes a day. The morning class runs from 8.50 – 11.20 a.m. and the afternoon session is from 12.30 – 3.00 p.m. Forest School sessions take place in the school grounds.

The Nursery is very much part of our school family and the children regularly use the main school facilities and visit for events throughout the year



Nursery Uniform

Polo Shirt, jumper and
tracksuit bottoms.

“Gave me the best seven years ever!”
“I love this school... amazing memories.”
(PUPIL COMMENTS)

The Curriculum

In Abbey we seek to provide your child with the best possible education. Our teaching is of an extremely high standard and we are continually monitoring and evaluating what goes on in every classroom in order to embrace new ideas and improve the teaching and learning.

Children are grouped into three Key Stages within the Primary school:

P.1 and P.2 are The Foundation Stage

P.3 and P.4 are Key Stage 1

P.5, P.6 and P.7 are Key Stage 2

Within each Key Stage these are the main areas of learning:

Language and Literacy

English is highly valued and central to the ethos of Abbey Primary. It is divided into three components of Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing. Through the teaching of English, the pupils develop a positive attitude towards Literacy. They are encouraged to communicate effectively, appropriately and accurately in a variety of ways both oral and written, and are encouraged to read, understand and engage with various types of text for enjoyment and learning. English is essential as a subject in its own right. It also, however, has a vital part to play as a medium through which all other subjects are taught, and aspects of English are introduced, developed and reinforced through other areas of the curriculum.

The Accelerated Reader Programme is used from P5 - P7. This increases the children's love for reading, improves reading ages and comprehension ability. It also provides the opportunity for peer tutoring.



Mathematics and Numeracy

Acquiring mathematical skills is a vitally important part of a child's education and as such, skills are utilised daily in adult life. Maths is a core subject in its own right as well as being integrated into other subjects in a cross curricular context. The Maths curriculum covers the areas of Number, Measures, Handling Data and Shape and Space. Processes permeate all of these areas. Teachers make use of a variety of teaching strategies and seek to foster in the children a positive attitude towards the subject. There is an emphasis on relating the content to real life situations, and so, investigations and puzzle work are an important part of the curriculum. Children work as individuals, in pairs and in groups to develop problem solving skills. Mental strategies and the ability to make mental calculations are developed through the use of a wide range of games. The appropriate use of ICT resources, including, iPads, Interactive Whiteboards, Bee-Bots and Probots enriches the learning experiences of the pupils.



The World Around Us

(incorporating History, Geography, Science and Technology)

From Foundation through to Key Stage 2, pupils develop their skills and experiences. They are encouraged to explore, observe and question, and work is often enquiry-based to promote investigative and problem-solving skills.

The Curriculum: The Arts



Art and Design

Art is a fun and enjoyable activity which encourages children to express their creativity.

In the Early Years, children experiment with a wide variety of materials and create both two and three dimensional pieces of art. This progresses through the years with children being taught basic skills and techniques while still allowing them to express their own creativity. All children are encouraged to look at and appreciate the work of other children along with the work of artists and designers and to appreciate the role art plays in creating a colourful and attractive learning environment.



Music

Music provides opportunities for each pupil to appreciate, explore and express themselves. Lessons will develop creativity and confidence in music appreciation. All pupils participate in singing, composition and performance. Lessons are relevant and a much loved subject in the school curriculum.

Our children have the opportunity to join the Senior or Junior Choir and the school Orchestra and play a variety of musical instruments.

Throughout the school year we have had many music productions from all key stages. We are fortunate to have had drumming workshops and orchestral sessions to inspire and encourage musical development. These are extremely important elements in children's overall development and an important part of the life at Abbey.



Drama

Children learn so much about themselves and others by participating in Drama activities. Through role play, they learn to empathize with peers and see things from another's point of view. They also learn to turn take, speak clearly for an audience and express themselves confidently. Self-esteem and the fulfilment that comes from working with others towards a common goal is a great motivator for success and we, at Abbey firmly believe that the acquirement of such skills will be invaluable to our pupils as life long learners. Our hope is that all of our boys and girls in Abbey will be confident but empathetic individuals with a strong sense that they can make a difference in the world.

We are proud that every child, from Nursery through to P3 will perform each year in a Nativity Play and thereafter, participate in an annual Carol Service and shows from P4-7.

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU)

Focusing on emotional development, social skills, thinking skills, health, relationships and sexuality education and understanding of others.

PDMU is linked to all aspects of life and work in school, flowing through activities and discussions in class, to learning how to interact with others in the playground and social situations. It is concerned with establishing a sense of personal responsibility, self-esteem, sensitivity to the needs of others and being part of a community both within the school and beyond it. Through a variety of activities children will gain a sense of self-value, allowing them to grow in confidence and become familiar with issues concerning their own physical and mental health. PDMU takes place via Circle Time, visits by outside agencies, storytelling, practical activities and is intrinsic to daily school life.



P.E. (Physical Education)

Our core Physical Education curriculum is delivered through regular lessons and is comprised of the five main elements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum- Games, Dance, Gymnastics, Athletics and Swimming (at Key Stage 2). All year groups have access to our large school hall for P.E. and P6/7 classes have an outside games session, timetabled for one hour, one afternoon per week.

R.E (Religious Education)

Religious Education in Abbey is based largely on the Christian faith. (Parents are entitled to withdraw their child from R.E. if they wish).

Through religious education children develop a positive sense of themselves and their beliefs, along side a respect for the beliefs and values of others.

Weekly assemblies are taken by teachers, classes or visiting speakers with separate assemblies for Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils. Children are encouraged to participate through singing and drama and every year, each child, from Nursery – P3 participates in a Nativity Play. P4 – P7 perform in a Carol Service each year for friends and family in one of the local churches.



At Abbey we believe that purposeful access to ICT across the curriculum will motivate and increase engagement and achievement in our pupils and prepare them for the future.

Creativity and digital literacy are becoming vital skills for the 21st century and will be valued in all areas of employment. It is with this in mind that we, at Abbey, have decided to invest in our pupils' future and provide the children with the necessary tools to promote optimum learning.

Each class has Apple TV, Interactive Whiteboards, 8 - 10 iPads, several desktop computers as well as a variety of coding devices.

With the use of an iPad, all pupils are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in any area of the curriculum through creative means and teachers are offered the opportunity to access a wealth of resources and information that can support pupil led learning and a variety of learning styles.

This effective use of technology has been an exciting development and has presented both pupils and teachers alike with opportunities to enhance their ICT skills in a creative and productive way. We are continually undergoing training and upgrading and adding to ICT equipment to ensure that we are always up to date with the latest technology.



Forest Schools

Our school has worked in partnership with NIFSA to become an official Forest School. Children are given the opportunity to be involved in weekly Forest School sessions using our extensive outdoor facilities.

Children play co-operatively and creatively with their peers and enjoy being outdoors whatever the weather! Our Forest School programme is a brilliant way of taking our children out of the classroom and re-introducing them to the natural environment. It allows pupils to enjoy the freedom of directing their own learning without inhibitions, whilst developing their own personal skills.



Tracking Pupil Progress

The progress of each individual child is closely monitored throughout their time at Abbey. This is to ensure that every boy and girl reaches his or her full potential. Alongside the class teacher each child will highlight areas for improvement in Literacy, Numeracy and another area of school life. This provides a focus for each child to work towards and a sense of achievement as targets are met. Achievements are acknowledged and celebrated within the classroom and beyond, and children grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Each class also produces a 'Learning Journal' on a weekly basis. This provides the children with a further sense of achievement as they record their learning experiences and development of skills.

Learning Support

At Abbey, we are committed to meeting the specific individual learning needs of all children whether they are achieving significantly beyond the rest of their year group (More Able /High Performers), or experiencing learning difficulties. Some children progress within their own peer group in which the class teacher provides a range of differentiated activities. Other children require more specific help. In consultation with the parent and class teacher, some children may receive additional input from the Learning Support Team or relevant outside agencies. We aim to ensure that every child can access the curriculum to the best of his or her ability and is nurtured and supported in their learning. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be drawn up for these children and their progress will be monitored and assessed. Parents/guardians will receive copies of these IEPs and be kept informed of their child's progress throughout the year.

Every child in our school is part of the Abbey family and can expect to be provided with a suitable environment and level of learning experiences appropriate to his/her ability.



Enriching the Curriculum

In Abbey we believe in fostering the development of the whole child. While academic achievement is important we also place great value in promoting the physical, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of each boy and girl. To this end we support the excellent teaching and learning that goes on in our classrooms with a wide range of extra-curricular and supplementary activities.

These include:

- **Music Tuition (including brass, strings, drums, guitar and piano)**
- **After school sports (including football, athletics, tag rugby, netball, gymnastics, tennis, badminton, dance and hockey)**
- **Other after school clubs (Choir, Scripture Union, ICT Animation, Cookery, Technology, Theatrics, Clayrazy, ECO are amongst the many on offer)**
- **An active Student Council and School House system with House Captains.**
- **'Buddy' system in our playgrounds**
- **Visitors to school (eg the local vet, optician, foremen, grandparents, mayor, newspaper journalists etc)**
- **Educational School trips (including Streamvale Farm, Exploris, Castle Espie and Mountstewart)**
- **Residential Visits (P.6 to Greenhill for outdoor pursuits and P.7 to Edinburgh.**
- **School Productions and performances**
- **Breakfast Club and afterschool and holiday wrap-around care**
- **Digital leaders helping to develop pupil leadership and ICT skills**
- **Assemblies**

Our school choir consists of around 50 pupils from P5-7. We meet each week building our vocal skills and working together as a team. We enjoy singing in school, for our peers and family. We love getting the opportunity to sing; performing in various public venues.

From P3/4, pupils are given the opportunity to learn an instrument. Those who have musical flair for a particular instrument can have private music lessons. Children can participate in our school orchestra, building their confidence and ability to play their instrument.



After School Activities

In Abbey we believe in developing the whole child, and are very proud of the wide range of after school activities which we offer, catering for children interested in Sport, Music, Eco, Cookery, Technology and Art.

Many of our teams and groups are encouraged to enter competitions, with great success, while others simply foster enjoyment and lead to life long interests.

Many of the activities are taken by teachers within the school, but for some, external specialists are used.

There may be some variation from year to year, but they include the following:

**Tag Rugby Hockey Cricket Athletics Netball Tennis Football
Dance & Fitness Monkeynastix (P2) Eco Club Cookery Choir**

Educational Visits

Educational visits are a fun and exciting way of widening pupils' experiences, promoting relationships, stimulating new interests and setting challenges in new situations. They make a vital contribution to our pupils' personal and social development, foster independence and help develop positive attitudes towards the environment.

The trips range from day trips from Primary 1 to Primary 7 to residential trips in Primary 6 and 7.

All trips are linked to the curriculum and topics taught within each year group, and they act as an interesting, stimulating and activity based way to reinforce topics.

In Primary 6 the children are given the opportunity to attend a three night residential in Greenhill Outdoor Centre. What fun! Activities include adventure walks, rock pooling, nature walks, treasure hunts in the dark to name but a few! The trip also reinforces aspects of The World Around Us in a fun and practical manner.

The Primary 7 residential is a four night stay in the fabulous city of Edinburgh! Excitement from teachers and pupils is apparent during the trip as the children visit places, such as Camera Obscura, Edinburgh Castle and Dynamic Earth and of course the coffee and fudge shops on The Royal Mile.

Saving schemes are put in place the previous year for both residential trips to spread the cost.

The Daily Mile

The Daily Mile is an initiative to encourage pupils to exercise for 15 minutes every day as part of their routine. We have decided as a school to implement this idea across the school from Primary One to Primary Seven. Each year group will have a daily slot to walk, jog or run around the school perimeter. Their aim will be to complete as many laps as they can within the time and make small improvements each week. To reach a Daily Mile, pupils need to complete 7 laps around the school each day. This activity will benefit the children both physically and mentally. It can help children to focus and concentrate in the classroom and raise their attainment. As a school we are really excited about this new opportunity for both staff and pupils.



Positive Behaviour



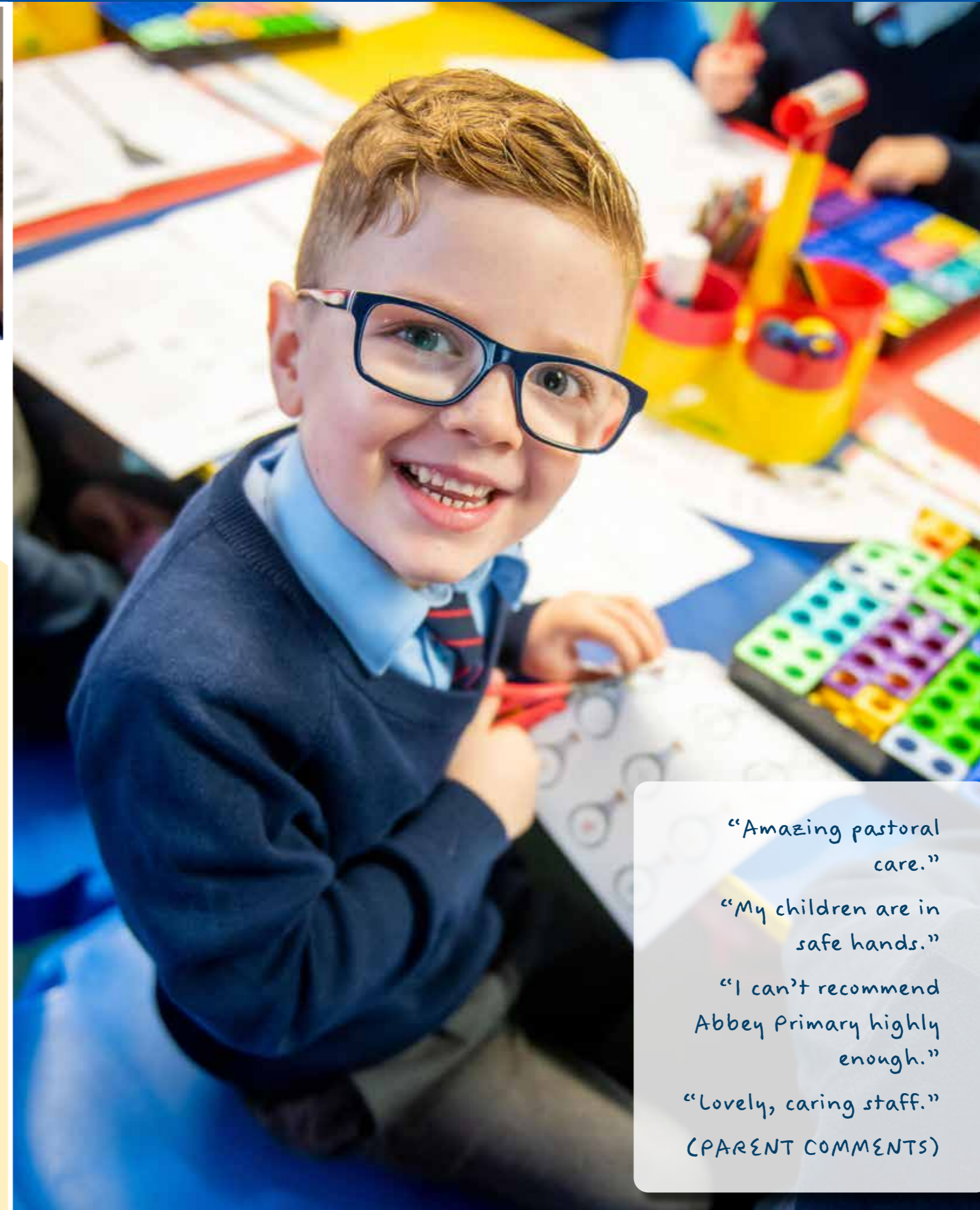
We believe that effective learning can only take place where there is a standard of good behaviour. Every pupil has the right to be educated in an atmosphere which is conducive to learning, and there is an expectation that every pupil has a responsibility to contribute to the creation of such an atmosphere. Our positive behaviour policy aims to cultivate in pupils an acceptance and recognition of responsibility for their own decisions and actions - and indeed for their consequences.

Positive behaviour leads to a happy and orderly school environment in which:

- **everyone feels safe and cared for**
- **good personal relationships can be developed**
- **there is mutual respect among all members**
- **effective learning can take place**

Behaviour in Abbey Primary is of a very high standard and is promoted through:

- a positive atmosphere where praise, encouragement and rewards are given
- the involvement of children in the rule making process
- communication with parents
- an awareness of preventative measures
- corrective action when necessary
- supportive actions from appropriate agencies for behaviour of serious or ongoing concern
- sanctions when appropriate



“Amazing pastoral care.”
“My children are in safe hands.”
“I can’t recommend Abbey Primary highly enough.”
“Lovely, caring staff.”
(PARENT COMMENTS)

Communication with Parents and Friends



At Abbey our aim is to work closely alongside parents in their child's education. To this end we believe that excellent communication is vital. We operate an 'open door' policy; parents are welcome to speak to staff at the beginning and end of the school day about minor matters or to make an appointment to discuss more serious issues. We also hold parent - teacher consultations twice a year to enable parents to meet with their child's teacher to discuss his or her progress and wellbeing.

Beyond this we seek to communicate effectively with parents and indeed the wider community in a variety of ways.

- We have a widely used Facebook page which is updated regularly with pupil achievements and news about what is going on inside and outside the classroom.
- Our School Website provides information about each year group, after school activities and key dates and events.
- We use the SEESAW APP to share pupil progress and work with parents. It can also be used to communicate with parents and celebrate positive achievements
- Each week we produce a 'Friday Bulletin' which can be viewed on the school website, on the noticeboard outside the school or as a printed copy, on request. The bulletin allows us to share photos and information of what has taken place in school each week as well as letting parents know about upcoming events. It also provides the perfect forum on which to celebrate all that our children are doing.
- We feel strongly that as the primary school in this area we are an integral part of our local community and it is important that we get involved with the people who live around us. We participate in local church services, our choir sings in the shopping centre and the nearby nursing home, our children contribute articles regularly to The Newtownards Chronicle and we often support local charities. Members of the community are invited into our school throughout the year; to our Christmas concerts, Open Night, coffee mornings, Grandparent afternoons and PTA events. We foster a family ethos and this extends beyond our doors to all.

PTA

We are very fortunate at Abbey to have a well organised and highly motivated group of parents who run our PTA. Over the course of each year they organise a wide variety of fundraisers which not only provide much needed funds for our school and its pupils but also some great days out and fun filled activities. Regular events include our Spring Fun Day, Easter Egg Hunt, Christmas Craft Fair, P7 Leavers' Disco and Mother's Day Initiatives.

New members and helpers are always welcome.

For more information, please contact:

Facebook page: Friends of Abbey PTA

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors play a very active and supportive role in all that we do, here at Abbey. They take a keen and dedicated interest in all areas of school life and work closely with the Principal and staff to ensure that, not only does each child fulfil his/her potential in all areas of the curriculum, but that all staff and pupils feel valued and respected within Abbey.

The Governors undertake considerable responsibility for the school and along with the Principal, make decisions about community links, pastoral care, staffing, curriculum, financial management, building maintenance and many other aspects of school life. They visit the school regularly and are very much a part of our school family.



"The teaching staff are extremely friendly, reliable and approachable."
(PARENT)

Uniform & School Day



At Abbey Primary School, our uniform gives the children a sense of identity and belonging. The children take pride in wearing their uniform and visitors often comment on how well turned out our children are.

Girls:

Primary 1-3 Abbey Polo Shirt & Sweatshirt

Primary 4-7 Blue blouse (short /long sleeved)

Navy cardigan or jumper

School tie (may be purchased in school office)

ALL Grey pinafore or skirt (blue and white gingham dress in summer term)

Grey or navy socks/tights

Black shoes

Boys:

Primary 1-3 Abbey Polo Shirt & Sweatshirt

Primary 4-7 Blue shirt (short /long sleeved)

Navy jumper

ALL Grey trousers (shorts in summer term)

School tie (may be purchased in school office)

Grey socks

Black shoes

A school coat, with the school badge, is also available to buy from local suppliers.

PE Uniform

P1-3: Normal school uniform WITH Plimsolls.

P4-7: Abbey PE KIT – Pupils arrive into school in PE KIT

Abbey Polo shirt, Abbey Hoodie, Navy shorts/Tracksuit bottoms/ Leggings, Trainers

The School Day

Breakfast club	7.45am
School begins	8:45am - 9am
Break time	10:30 - 10:45am
Lunch time	12:15 - 12:50pm (P1-P3) 12:50 - 1:25pm (P4-P7)
P1 – 3 finish	2:00pm (P1 at 12:15 in September)
P3 finish	3:00pm Mon & Wed in the 3rd term to prepare pupils for the longer day in Primary 4.
P4 – 7 finish	3:00pm

Sparkles

After School Provision	2pm - 6pm
Holiday Provision	8am - 6pm

Sparkles

Sparkles is our before and after school provision run by our own staff. It provides outstanding care for all of the children who attend. The parents who use Sparkles are confident and secure that their children are receiving high quality provision on the school site at a reasonable price.

Sparkles' new bespoke premises is open for Breakfast Club at 7.45am and our afterschool provision runs from 2pm to 6pm.

Parents can also avail of full school holiday provision from 8am - 6pm.



Finally

I hope you have enjoyed browsing through our prospectus.

More information about Abbey Primary School may be found on our school website www.abbeyprimary.net and the school's Facebook page.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thankyou.

J. Manning



Prospectus

Abbey Primary School & Nursery Unit

'A place where everyone experiences a sense of belonging to the school family.'

Abbey Primary School & Nursery Unit

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Abbey Primary School, Newtownards

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