



St. Colmcille's Primary School

Prospectus



“be the best you can be”





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“be the best you can be”





Welcome to St. Colmcille's, Ballymena

Dear Parent

St. Colmcille's is in the parish of Kirkinriola, serving the community through the provision of a caring and effective Catholic education service, which enables children to make the most of their potential for academic, religious and human development.

Our school is a happy, family environment, hardworking and successful. The child is at the centre of everything we do. Our whole school community shares one common goal – to do the very best for all children in our care. Your child will be made most welcome and I trust the next seven years will be happy and rewarding.

I hope that you will find this prospectus informative and interesting. It is intended to offer you some information about life in St. Colmcille's. It outlines what we stand for and what we offer your child. However, no booklet can convey the 'real' atmosphere of any school. I warmly invite you to visit the school on our Open Night for parents and new entrants, or to arrange a private visit to the school when we will be most pleased to see you.

Mr H. Walls
Acting Principal





School Information

Acting Principal **Mr H Walls**
Chairperson,
Board of Governors: **Mr D O'Loan**

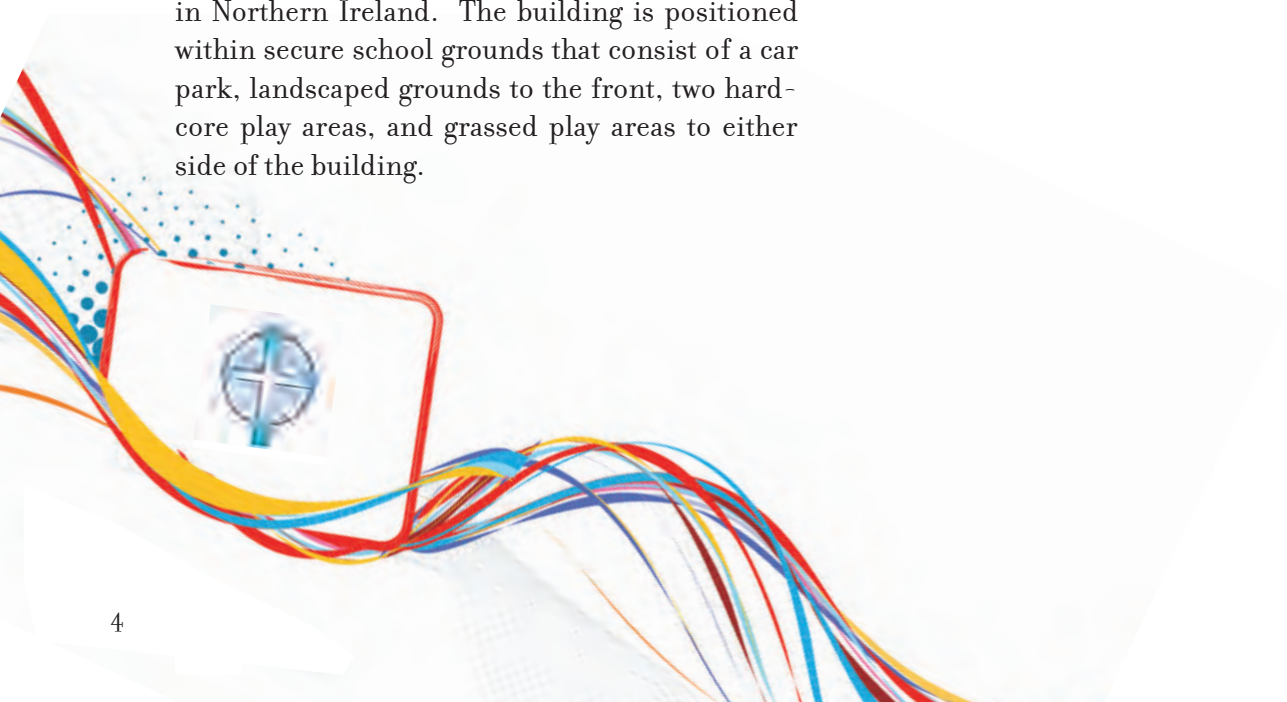
Enrolment Number: 410
Admission Number: 59
Age Range of Pupils: 4-11yrs

St. Colmcille's Primary School is a Catholic Maintained Primary School and enrolls both boys and girls. It supports the people in the parish of Kirkinriola and is located on the Cullybackey Road in the town of Ballymena. The school is presently over-subscribed and parents are asked to take particular note of the admissions criteria set out within.

St. Colmcille's Primary School is situated in a new, state-of-the-art building. It is not only beautifully designed but also incorporates some of the most modern, up-to-date facilities available in a school in Northern Ireland. The building is positioned within secure school grounds that consist of a car park, landscaped grounds to the front, two hard-core play areas, and grassed play areas to either side of the building.

The accommodation comprises of spacious classrooms, resource areas, a large hall, multipurpose rooms, and a computer suite. There is also an attractive welcoming reception area and offices. Each classroom has its own cloakroom and toilet area, with access to purpose built resource areas.

The experienced and dedicated staff have the overall well-being of the children as their priority. A happy atmosphere permeates throughout the school allowing children to relax and effective learning to take place.





School Hours

School Begins:	08.55	
Break:	10.30-10.45	
Lunch:	12.00 - 12.45	(Foundation Stage)
	12.15 - 13.00	(Key Stage 1)
	12.30 - 13.15	(Key Stage 2)
School Ends:	13.55	(Foundation Stage and Year 3 on Thurs & Fri)
	14.55	(Years 4-7 and Year 3 on Mon, Tues & Wed)

Supervision of pupils begins at 08.30 each morning and children are received by their class teacher at 08.45 in order to prepare for lessons. All children should be collected from school at the designated times unless engaged in school organised activities.

The school will be closed during the months of July and August. All other planned holidays are distributed at the beginning of the academic year and in each of the termly newsletters. The enclosed Supplement lists the school holidays for the next academic year.

The school provides child-care provision before and after school and during school holidays. This service is available from 08.00 until 09.00 and from 14.00 to 18.00 every weekday. During school closures, this care provision is extended from 08.00 until 18.00.

It is the aim of St. Colmcille's to fully involve parents in the education of their children and to inform and consult with them regularly about their children's progress. The arrangements are:

Induction Programme

- All parents of Year 1 children are invited to meet the Principal and their child's teacher in June prior to enrolment.

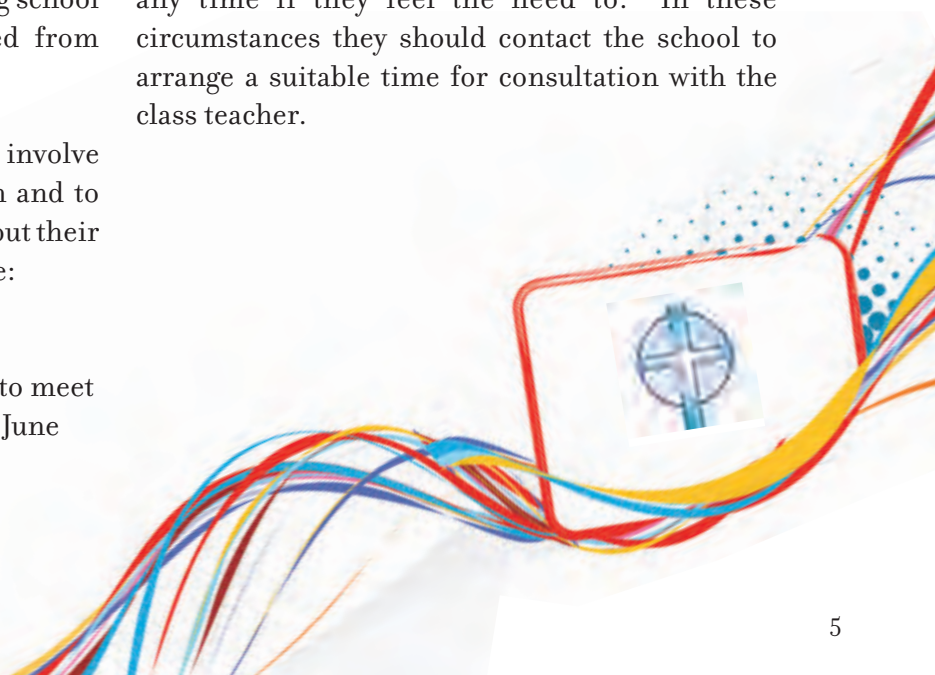
Progress Reports

- During term 1 and term 2, parents are invited to a consultation with their child's class teacher to discuss progress and the programme of study for the remainder of the year.
- A written report is issued in June of each year in which the performance of the child in each of the Learning Areas and Cross-curricular Skills is reported.

Parent Workshops

The school hosts parent workshops to inform parents of how they can support their child in their learning, e.g. Phonics, reading strategies and mental maths workshops.

Parents are very welcome to come to the school at any time if they feel the need to. In these circumstances they should contact the school to arrange a suitable time for consultation with the class teacher.





Visionary Framework

Vision

‘be the best you can be’

Aims

St. Colmcille’s Primary School promotes high achievement and learning for life by working with children to:

- *practice the Catholic faith;*
- *be tolerant and respectful of themselves, others and the environment;*
- *acquire knowledge and skills to be their individual best;*
- *be highly motivated life-long learners;*
- *be able to work independently and collaboratively;*
- *gain technological skills to equip them for the 21st century.*

Mission

We believe that each child will succeed through experiencing quality in:

- *a caring and supportive environment;*
- *a broad and challenging curriculum;*
- *stimulating surroundings;*
- *innovative teaching and an investigative approach to learning;*
- *a learning partnership between school, home and the wider community.*

We demonstrate our commitment to working as a learning school by:

- *striving for continuous improvement in all that we do;*
- *working collaboratively towards common goals;*
- *investing in people.*





Religious Education

Catholic Education is the centre point of the child's personal and intellectual development. The Religious Education of the pupils is accomplished in two equally important and complementary ways:

- through the totality of experience in the school;
- through the religious education programme.

The staff are aware of the spiritual needs of the children and of the important part Religious Education plays in a child's upbringing. With the assistance and encouragement from our school chaplain we ensure that these needs are catered for.

The Alive-O programme is the core resource for the teaching of Religious Education in our school. The title, Alive-O, reflects one of the overriding concerns of Religious Education, namely, to enable people to become fully alive to the presence of God in themselves, in others, in the Church and in all creation.

The Alive-O programme seeks to involve the home, the school and the parish in the task of handing on the faith to primary school children.

The children are prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation in Year 3, First Eucharist in Year 4, and for Confirmation in their final year. The Parish of Kirkinriola support the preparation for the First Eucharist through its Do this in Memory programme. The sixth form pupils of St. Louis Grammar School support the Year 7 pupils through a Faith Friends programme and the parents of the pupils have the opportunity to attend workshops facilitated by the Down and Connor Family Ministry Team.





Pastoral Care

“Pastoral Care permeates every aspect of the life of the school - academic, social, physical, moral and religious. All members of the school community feel valued and sustained as they grow together through their successes and failures.” CCMS

Pastoral Care is about the quality of service we can give to children, to ensure that they come to school to develop to the best of their ability, in a happy and caring environment. Pastoral Care will encompass the needs of both children and adults. All needs shall be responded to in a manner which is respectful and dignified.

We shall provide a happy, caring and secure environment where each pupil is unique and equal to all others in line with our school aims.

The school shall provide a positive, caring and open atmosphere, where each child will be encouraged to contribute to and feel part of the school community. We will provide opportunities for children to develop pride in self, class and school and to respect others and their environment.

The Pastoral Care ethos shall promote attitudes of tolerance, equality and fairness, where values and attitudes are seen to be ‘lived out’ and not merely advocated.

The school shall provide an atmosphere where all members of the school community will be encouraged to treat each other in a caring, courteous and respectful manner.

The school will reflect a feeling of warmth and a sense of pride and belonging. It will strive to achieve this through an attractive and well cared for environment, where children and adults shall have their part to play.





Child Protection

The school will help parents to understand its responsibility for the welfare of all the children and young people in its charge. Parents will be made aware of the school's child protection arrangements, within its pastoral care policy, and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child. **Parents are encouraged to notify the school when someone other than the parent or usual carer will be picking the child up from school.**

Parents should always inform the school of any accidental bruising or other injuries that might otherwise be misinterpreted. They should also inform the school of any changes in home circumstances, such as the death of a member of the family, or separation that might lead to otherwise unexplained changes in behaviour or characteristics.

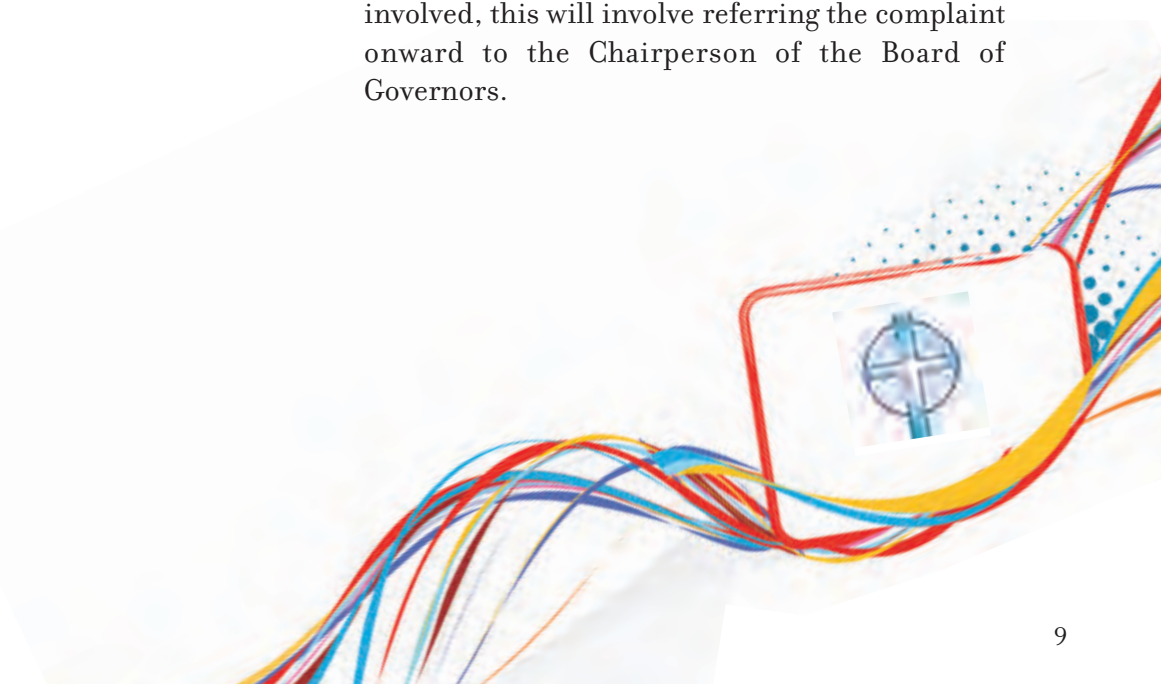
Parents can feel confident that procedures are in place to ensure that all staff appointed have undergone appropriate screening to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

How can a parent make a complaint about possible child abuse?

When a parent is concerned about the safety of their child they can inform the class teacher, the designated teacher (Miss Cunningham), or speak directly to the Principal.

Parents can be assured that the matter will be dealt with as a matter of urgency and a report to the parents on the progress and outcome of their complaint will be made by the school.

In this report the parents will be told what avenues are open to them to pursue their complaint if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome, and how they may do this. If the Principal has already been involved, this will involve referring the complaint onward to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.





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Curriculum

St. Colmcille's is very aware of its statutory obligation to deliver the Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum to all of its pupils. The curriculum is made up of a range of learning areas which foster attitudes and dispositions. These incorporate assessment for learning which aims to promote and encourage learning experiences. These include the following:

Whole Curriculum Skills and Capabilities

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities	Formally Assessed Skills
Managing Information	Communication
Being Creative	Using Mathematics
Thinking, Problem Solving & Decision Making	Using ICT
Working with Others	
Self-Management	

Learning Areas

- Language & Literacy
- Religious Education
- Mathematics & Numeracy
- Personal Development & Mutual Understanding
- The World Around Us
- Physical Education
- The Arts

Curriculum Objectives

To develop the young person as an individual, a contributor to society and a contributor to the economy and environment.

Qualities of confidence, self-esteem and consideration towards others will be developed alongside increasing competence in the basic skills. A variety of teaching approaches centred on practical first hand experience will be pursued.



After School Activities

We offer a wide range of clubs within school and after school. These include:

- Choir;
- Music - string, woodwind and brass;
- Choral Speaking;
- Sport - Gaelic, Hurling, Camogie, Soccer, Basketball, Netball & Athletics;
- Art;
- Drama;
- Dance;
- Cooking;
- Science;
- French Club;
- Competitions - Ballymena Festival, Quizes, Technology Challenge;
- Educational Visits including a Year 7 Residential;
- Shared Education projects with Carniny PS, Camphill PS & St. Paul's PS
- Community Activities - Interfaith Services, Radio Cracker, Charities.

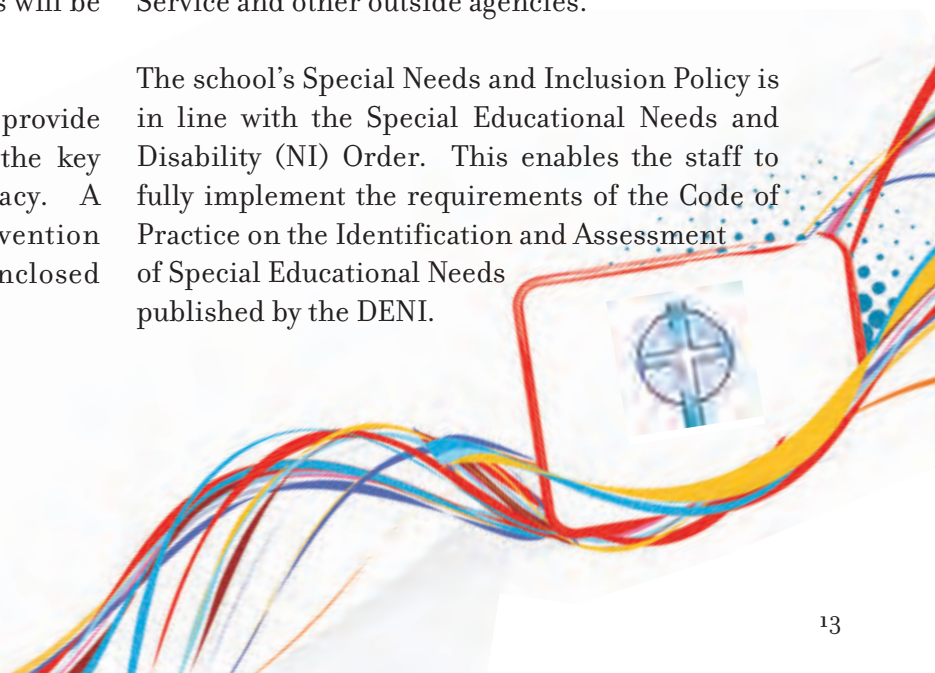
Special Educational Needs

In order to ensure that every child realises his/her true potential at school the teachers will ensure that activities and content of lessons are carefully matched to individual needs. Every effort will be made to provide maximum access to the curriculum for children with Special Educational Needs. Teachers will liaise closely with the parent in drawing up Individual Educational Plans for their child and regular reviews of progress will be initiated.

The school employs a number of staff who provide individual and small group support in the key learning areas of Literacy and Numeracy. A detailed synopsis of these intervention programmes are listed in the enclosed Supplement.

Two members of staff have a certificate of Competence in Educational Testing (accredited and verified by the British Psychological Society) which enables the school to identify barriers to learning at an early stage and provide appropriate programmes of support as required. In addition the outcomes of these tests can be used as part of the referral process to the Educational Psychology Service and other outside agencies.

The school's Special Needs and Inclusion Policy is in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order. This enables the staff to fully implement the requirements of the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs published by the DENI.





Assessment

Detailed monitoring of pupils' progress takes place throughout the school year. Parent/Teacher consultations are scheduled in terms 1 and 2. An end of year written report is issued in June.

Consultations are not limited to these specified times. Teachers may set up further interviews when deemed appropriate. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's education and appointments can be made to discuss progress with the class teacher at a mutually agreed time.

Alongside the formal assessment prescribed by the Department the teachers, are constantly monitoring and assessing work and progress – both formally (with tests/assessment materials) and indeed informally (through observation, evaluation and monitoring of samples of work).

Pupils sit standardised test in English and Maths at the start of each academic year. These tests inform future learning and the results are presented to parents as part of the autumn term parent consultation. The performance of pupils in the end of Key Stage assessment is reported annually to all parents on the end of year progress report.

Pupil Performance

The ultimate aim of the school is to ensure that every child reaches their full potential. The school has a very strong record of academic excellence. We are the largest feeder primary school to the local grammar school. The pupils' attainment levels are well above the Northern Ireland average and in the top 5% of primary schools in key learning areas.



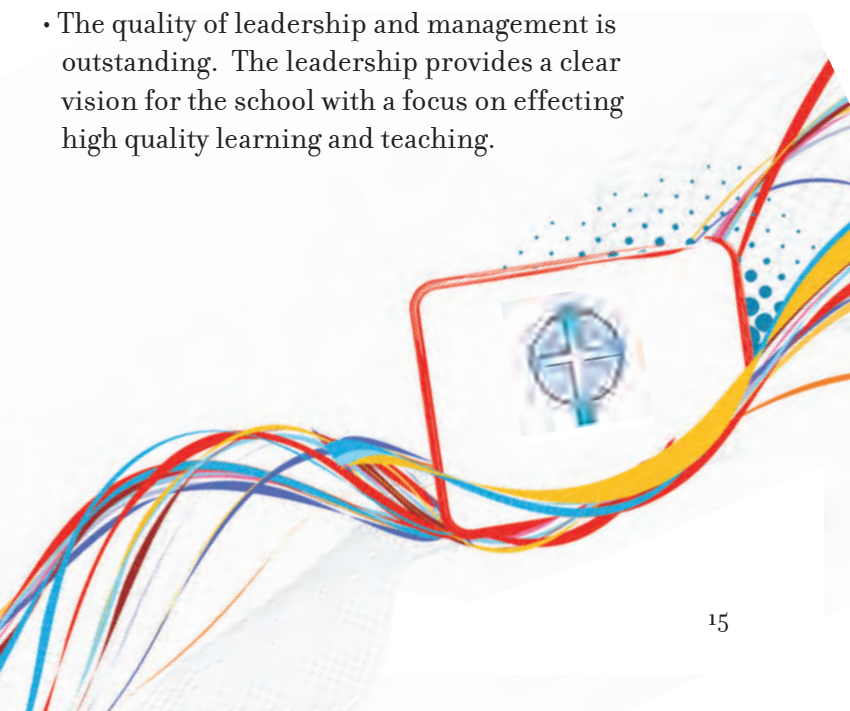


School Inspection

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) provide inspections of schools for the Department of Education. The ETI completed three inspections (Feb 2009, Jan 2013 & May 2016) of the school's educational provision and the summary of the reports includes:

- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. The holistic development of each child is central to the ethos and work of the school and there is a clear focus on building their confidence, self-esteem and their ability to manage their own learning.
- The children are well motivated, articulate and respond positively to the high expectations set by all of the staff, as displayed in the children's high levels of engagement in their learning. The children's behaviour is exemplary.
- The outstanding formal and informal learning experiences, programmes and activities which are matched well to the needs and interest of the children.
- The teachers build well on the children's previous learning; match the learning to the needs of each child; give the children opportunities to set their own targets for their learning; and, plan innovative and creative learning activities that promote connections across the curriculum.
- The school identifies well, and at an early age, the children who require additional support with their learning. The children benefit significantly from the intervention programmes that are in place and the excellent links established with external support agencies and the parents.
- The school has highly effective arrangements in place for communicating with the parents on their child's progress and informing them of curricular developments to help them support their child's learning. There is strong involvement and support of the parents, governors and local community.
- The school has outstanding arrangements to support the children at the key transition stages in their education.
- The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The leadership provides a clear vision for the school with a focus on effecting high quality learning and teaching.

*The ETI uses a benchmark of six indicators to classify schools: with outstanding and very good being the highest descriptors, and poor and inadequate indicating the quality of education being offered is unsatisfactory. **St. Colmcille's Primary School is classified at the highest descriptor level.** This means that the school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.*





Homework

Parents have a wide range of responsibilities in relation to their children and success depends greatly on liaison between home and school. In St. Colmcille's we value co-operation with the parent or guardian. The parent has an important part to play, especially in the area of homework.

Homework is not only an essential part of our pupils' learning but is an opportunity for parents to become involved in their children's learning and progress.

Homework is reinforcement of learning done in school and is an excellent home/school link. Working together, with the pupil's best interest at heart, proves to be a most successful method of helping to educate your child.

Homework can take different forms, both oral and written:

- **Play-based Activity;**
- **Reading;**
- **Maths;**
- **Spellings;**
- **Writing;**
- **Talking & Listening;**
- **Learning songs/poems/prayers;**
- **Research.**

Working together, the school and home can achieve what is best for the pupil.





Behaviour

We believe that a positive approach must be used in maintaining school discipline. Our approach will closely correspond to the aims of the school. We recognise that a consistent whole-staff approach to behaviour is essential and that all stakeholders have a role to play in ensuring that standards are maintained.

We will endeavour to:

- Provide a happy, caring and stimulating school environment;
- Treat children with fairness and consistency;
- Encourage good social and personal skills, self-respect and respect for others;
- Nurture self-esteem, confidence and independence;
- Develop in our pupils a set of moral and religious values in keeping with the Christian and Catholic ethos of the school.

The school has adopted six GOLDEN RULES as a guide for positive behaviour. These rules are universal moral values and essential life-long skills:

- 1. We are gentle.**
- 2. We are kind and helpful.**
- 3. We listen.**
- 4. We are honest.**
- 5. We work hard.**
- 6. We look after property.**

The main elements of this approach will be:

- Good pupil-teacher relations;
- Suitable curriculum content;
- Classroom organisation;
- Teaching methods;
- An awareness of and sympathy towards the needs and requirements of individual pupils;
- Rewards for good behaviour and a positive disposition.





School Uniform

There is a school uniform which is expected to be worn at all times:

Boys: White Shirt & School Tie
Navy Pullover with school crest
Grey Trousers

PE: Children may wear a t-shirt/football jersey and shorts/tracksuit bottoms.
Footwear: All children should wear black plimsolls.

Girls: White Blouse
Navy Pullover with school crest
Grey Skirt

School uniform can be obtained at a variety of outlets but the pullover is embroidered with the school motif and the boys' tie is specially designed for St. Colmcille's. Therefore, we recommend you order these particular items direct from the school supplier – Select Schoolwear, Springwell Street, Ballymena. The uniform helps establish a sense of whole school identity among all our pupils.

Charging & Remissions Policy

Education in St. Colmcille's is provided free of charge for all lessons and activities connected with the child's entitlements under the Education Reform Order.

However, from time to time the school will request a voluntary donation towards costing in relation to educational visits, residential trips, and other activities. Parental consent will be required before a child participates.



Admissions Information

If the school enrolment (410) and admission (59) numbers have not been reached the school will enrol all the children whose parents wish them to attend. In any year when these numbers are exceeded the Board of Governors will use criteria in deciding which pupils should be admitted.

Year 1 Admissions Criteria

1. Children of compulsory school age.
2. Children who currently have a sibling in attendance at the school.
3. Children who have parents on the permanent staff of the school.
4. Children who previously had a sibling at the school.
5. Children who are the eldest/only child of the family and St Colmcille's Primary School is the closest maintained primary school to their home address
6. Children whose home address is the shortest distance, as measured along the public road from the school - as decided by a digital measurement using 'RAC Route Finder'.

Please note that the parent/guardian may be required to produce documents verifying information pertinent to the school's admission criteria.

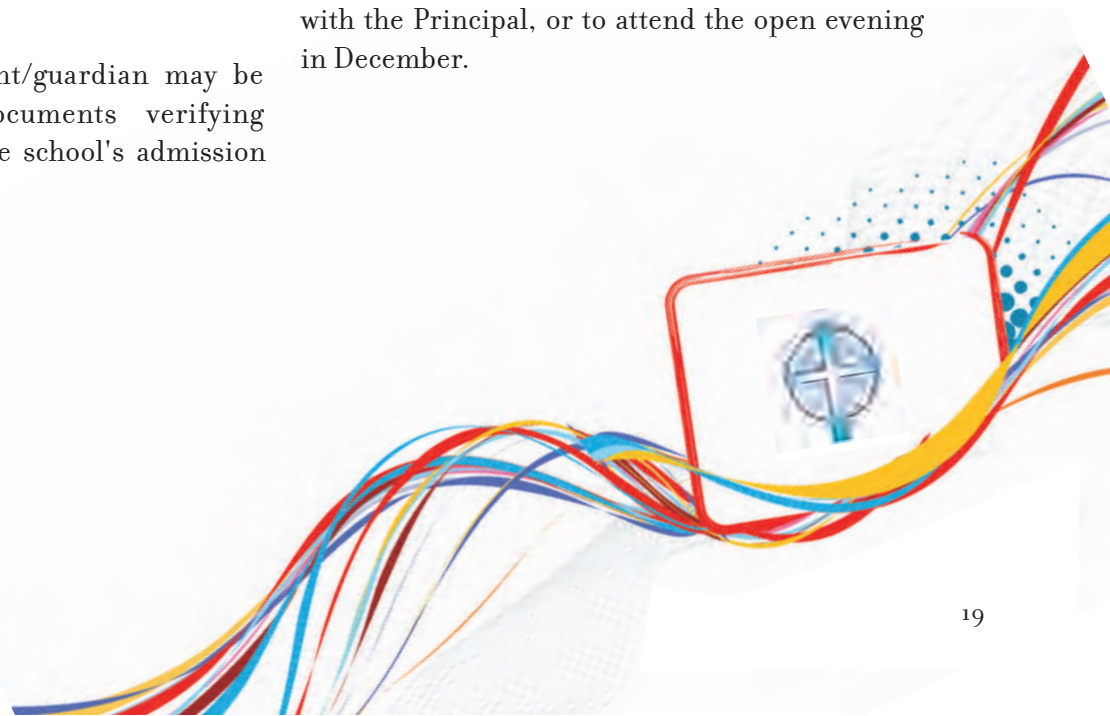
Years 2-7 Admissions Criteria

These are available on request from the school office.

Enrolment Procedure

Parents wishing to commence their child's schooling in September of any year must complete an official application form. Such a form may be obtained from the school or Education Authority. This enrolment form, when completed, should be sent to the Principal.

If parents wish to discuss the enrolment of their child to St. Colmcille's Primary School they are advised to contact the school to arrange a meeting with the Principal, or to attend the open evening in December.



“be the best you can be”





St. Colmcille's Primary School

Ballymena

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