

BALLYMACWARD PRIMARY SCHOOL PROSPECTUS 2026/27



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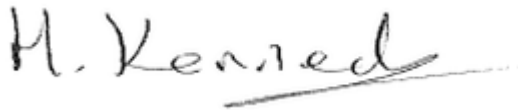
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WELCOME TO BALLYMACWARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARENTS

Ballymacward Primary School (including Ballymacward Pre-School) is the Catholic Maintained parish school for Hannahstown covering the wide geographical area from Hannahstown Hill to Divis, Stoneyford, The Rock and onwards towards Lisburn and Glenavy.

We enjoy a stunning rural location on the western edge of the Belfast Hills with views of Lough Neagh and the Mourne. We endeavour to provide an atmosphere which encourages children to respect themselves and others in an environment in which they can develop physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually and so learn to utilise his or her talents to their full potential. Ballymacward Primary School is renowned for our smaller classes with tailored individual teaching and our true sense of family where each child is nurtured and encouraged to achieve their best.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Mr. H. Kennedy

Principal

LOCATION

Ballymacward Primary School
22 Rock Road
Lisburn
BT28 3SU

 02892 648130

 info@ballymacwardps.lisburn.ni.sch.uk

Website: www.ballymacwardps.net

Principal: Mr. Hugh Kennedy

Chair of the Board of Governors: Mr. Paul McConnell



Ballymacward Primary School is a Catholic co-educational maintained primary school in Hannahstown Parish. The school is located in a rural setting in the grounds adjacent to St. Peter's Church, The Rock. The present school building was constructed in 2002, the latest in a series on the site dating back to 1859. It is attended by children residing in Hannahstown Parish and onwards towards Lisburn, Glenavy and Crumlin.

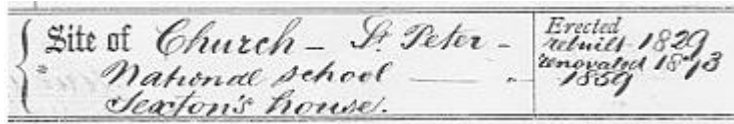
The school is located in Locality East of the Education Authority.



Close links are maintained with **Ballymacward Pre-school Playgroup** which is located on the same site.

HISTORY OF BALLYMACWARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our school, as it stands now, has gone through many changes over the years.



The first school was built during Victorian times in 1859 and stood in the grounds of the present chapel. However, it was condemned by Belfast Water Commissioners and a new school was built in 1906 from funds supplied by the Parish and the Belfast Water Commissioners. This small school consisted of two rooms, one 20ft x 20ft, the other 20ft x 11 ft.



Spring water was supplied to the school daily by Annie Magee, a local shopkeeper. However, eventually a spring was divined by Joe Lavery and sunk in front of the school in 1955.

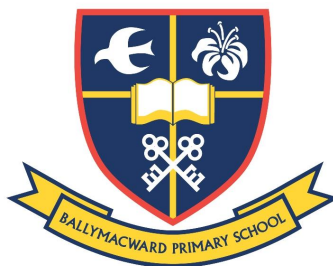
On Saturday 15th September 1973 the school was destroyed by fire and had to be rebuilt with mobile buildings. In 1994 a new classroom was added to the school, which brought the total of classrooms to five, and there was also a staff room and a dining hall.



Then, on Wednesday 9th February 2000 great news came. We were getting the money to build a new school!

For lots more historical information, please visit our website: www.ballymacwardps.net





The Board of Governors is constituted as follows:

Trustee Representatives

Very Rev. Father Patrick Devlin (Vice-Chair)
Mrs Fionnuala Ferrin
Miss Brónach Kelly
Mrs Lisa Bowes (Parent Trustee)

Education Authority Representatives

Mr John Brankin

Miss Fiona Donnelly

Department of Education Representative

Mr Paul McConnell (Chairperson)

Parent Representative

Mrs Caroline Tracey

Teacher Representative

Mrs Emma McGuigan

School Principal

Mr Hugh Kennedy (Secretary)

Mr. Kennedy/Mr. Buchanan – Year 6/7

Mrs McGuigan – Year 4/5

Mrs Mallon – Year 2/3

Ms Keenan – Year 1

Mrs Yakdan – Social Communication Unit

NON-TEACHING STAFF

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

Ms Hogg
Mrs D. Shepherd
Ms Steele
Miss Brown
Mrs Quinn
Mrs B. Shepherd
Mrs Camlin

SUPERVISORY ASSISTANTS

Ms Hogg

BUILDING SUPERVISOR

Ms Hogg

DINING ATTENDANT

Mrs Crean

SECRETARY

Ms Campbell

RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND PRINCIPAL IN RELATION TO ADMISSIONS

The Board of Governors draws up the admissions criteria and delegates to an Admissions Sub-Committee, which includes the Principal, the responsibility for applying these criteria.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

During the admissions procedure when applying the criteria punctual applications will be considered before late applications are considered. The application procedure opens on 7 January 2026 at 12noon (GMT) and an application submitted by the closing date of 21 January 2026 at 12noon (GMT) will be treated as a punctual application. An application received after 12noon (GMT) on 21 January 2026 and up to 4 pm on 26 January 2026 will be treated as a late application, this is also the last date and time for processing a change of preference in exceptional circumstances. After 4 pm on 26 January 2026 no applications will be processed until after the close of procedure on 23 March 2026.

COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

Any child who reaches their 4th Birthday on or before 1st July 2026 is of Compulsory School Age. Under the School Age (NI) Act which became law in Northern Ireland in April 2022, 'compulsory school age' also includes those children who deferred commencing Primary 1 in September 2025 as defined by the new School Age (NI) Act (both groups to be treated equally).

Priority will be given to children resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the school before those who are not so resident.

If the school is over-subscribed pupils will be admitted according to the following criteria applied in the order set down.

Year 1 Intake

- 1 Children who normally reside within the parish boundaries of Hannahstown, i.e. St Joseph's Hannahstown and St Peter's the Rock.
- 2 Children who have an older brother/sister or half-brother/sister presently enrolled at the school. These criteria will include children fostered to families with children presently attending the school.
- 3 Children who have previously attended Ballymacward Pre-school Playgroup.
- 4 Children from outside the Hannahstown parish.

Within each of the above criteria, priority will be given at all times to children regarded by the Board of Governors, on the basis of supporting evidence given by parents and/or statutory agencies, as having special circumstances, e.g. medical, social.

Tie Breaker Criterion

In the event of over-subscription in any one of the criteria taken in order, final selection will be on the basis of the closeness of the home to the school as measured by the shortest walking distance using Google Maps.

DUTY TO VERIFY

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any application form.

If the requested evidence is not provided to the Board of Governors by the deadline given, this will result in the withdrawal of an offer of a place. Similarly, if information is supplied which appears to be false or misleading in any material way, the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

WAITING LIST POLICY

This Policy is available from the school.

Applications for admission to Y1 after the beginning of the school year.

Criteria as above.

ADMISSION TO P2 – P7

Criteria as above.

APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS TO PRIMARY 1

Year	Total Applications	Total Admissions
2023/2024	14	14
2024/2025	9	9
*2025/2026	10	18

****The Total Admissions for year 2025/2026 includes all P1 children admitted to the school including those who have a statement of special educational needs and/or may be attending SPiMS.***

(SPiMS = Specialist Provision in Mainstream School)



As a Catholic School, our aim is to draw on the shared experience of home, family and parish and to provide a broad balanced curriculum:-

- By creating a happy, secure and effective working environment where each child has the opportunity to develop physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually and so learn to utilise his talents to their full potential.
- By promoting effective learning and set high standards by providing a broad and balanced curriculum designed to meet the child's individual needs and, at the same time, fulfil the Northern Ireland Curriculum requirements.
- By consolidating community links with the school by utilising the community and the environment to assist learning.
- By encouraging parents to be active partners in the education of their children.
- By building up a caring Catholic community within the school by handing on the faith by the example given by all in our daily lives.

To help achieve these aims the staff requires the support of parents, pupils and school management.

MISSION STATEMENT

As a Catholic School our policy is to encourage the practice of Christian values and attitudes.

We aim to provide:

- An atmosphere which encourages children to respect themselves and others
- An environment in which our children can learn and grow spiritually, academically, aesthetically and physically.
- We aim to build a system whereby staff members may develop professionally in order to facilitate the needs of our pupils.



SCHOOL HOURS

The School Hours are as follows;-

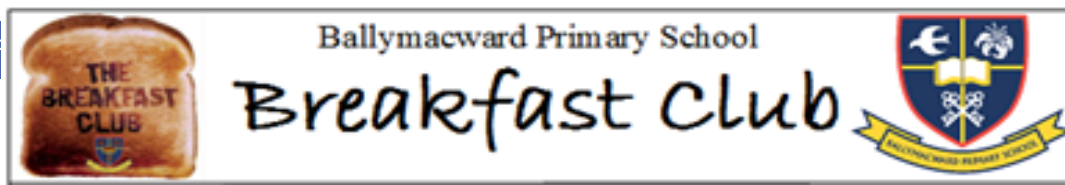
Years 1 – 2	9.10am – 12.25 pm 1.00pm – 2.00 pm
Years 3 – 7	9.10am – 12.25 pm 1.00pm – 3.00 pm



HEALTHY BREAK

There is a mid-morning HEALTHY BREAK from 10.30am to 10.45am during which children are encouraged to eat a piece of fruit.

Pupils are requested to be punctual each morning and lined up in the yard (or hall depending on the weather) for 9:10am. As teachers are engaged in other duties, supervision of pupils before 9.10am is in the breakfast club only. Pupils should be collected promptly at the end of the day unless they are involved in after school activities.



Our Breakfast Club operates each morning from 8am – 9.00am. It works on a 'Pay as you go' basis at £2 per day.

WAITING CLASS

For Years 1-2 children from 2.00pm until 3.00pm each day. Pay as you go – £1.50 per day.



Ballymacward Primary School

Holiday List 2026/27

TERM 1

Pupils start back on Thursday 27th August 2026
Pupils in half day on Friday 28th August 2026
Children back as normal on Tuesday 1st September 2026.

School Closed

Monday 31st August – Bank Holiday
School will be closed on Friday 25th September 2026 re-opens on
Monday 28th September 2026 at 9.10am

Mid-Term Break

School Closes for pupils at 3pm on Wednesday 28th October 2026 and re-opens at 9.10am on
Thursday 5th November 2026

Christmas Holiday

School closes for pupils at 3pm on Friday 18th December 2026

TERM 2

Pupils start back at 9.10am on Monday 4th January 2027

School Closed

School closed to children on Monday 25th January 2027

Mid-Term Break

School closes for pupils at 3pm on Friday 5th February 2027 and re-opens at 9.10am on Monday
15th February 2027

St Patrick's Day

School will close at 3pm on Tuesday 16th March 2027 and re-opens at 9.10am on Thursday 18th
March 2027

Easter Holiday

School closes for pupils on Wednesday 24th March 2027

TERM 3

School re-opens for pupils at 9.10am on Monday 5th April 2027

May Bank Holiday and Teacher Training

School will be closed for pupils on Monday 3rd May 2027 and Tuesday 4th May 2027
School re-opens Wednesday 5th May 2027 at 9.10am

Spring Holiday

School will close for pupils on Monday 24th May at 3pm and will reopen on Tuesday 1st June
2027 at 9.10am

Summer Holiday

School closes for pupils on Wednesday 30th June 2027



Ballymacward Primary School is a Catholic School where the teaching staff is dedicated to working in partnership with parents to hand on the faith to the children. We seek to bring the children to know God, to love Him, and to follow his example as revealed by Jesus in the Gospels. The Grow in Love programme is followed by Years 1-7 pupils; however religious education permeates all aspect of school life.



The children attend monthly School Masses, Prayer Services and an annual Christmas Celebration. Parents are encouraged to attend these events. Children are prepared for the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Year 3, First Holy Communion in Year 4 and Confirmation in Year 7. The Parish Priest, Very Rev. Father Patrick Devlin, supports the work of the teachers and visits all classes on a regular basis. There is also a parish-based programme of preparation for the sacraments. The staff in Ballymacward Primary School place a strong emphasis on pastoral care. The class teacher, who is happy to meet parents to discuss the child's progress, looks after the day-to-day needs of each child.

An important element in the curriculum is the promotion of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU). PDMU is about self-respect, respect for others and the building up of good relationships between those of differing cultural traditions. It is school policy to promote PDMU through all aspects of school work, encouraging the pupils to respect and value themselves and others. At the same time, the pupils are encouraged to value their own culture and to show respect for those with different cultures and traditions.



ATTENDANCE

Pupil attendance at Ballymacward Primary School is very good and generally above 95%. We have monthly attendance awards for the class with the best overall attendance.



DISCIPLINE & SCHOOL RULES

The Discipline Policy is designed to ensure that all pupils have an environment where they can work to the best of their abilities, both working independently and with each other. We have a policy that encourages all pupils to have respect for themselves, respect for other pupils and a respect for adults, teaching and non-teaching staff. A copy of the discipline policy can be obtained from the school office or on our website. All relevant school policies can be viewed at: <https://www.ballymacwardps.net/policies>.

At the beginning of each year, we ask the children, their parents and their teacher to revise "A PROMISE" to remind them to care for others and their school. The teachers also revise the 'TEACHERS' PROMISE' in which they promise to help the children.



SCHOOL UNIFORM

We are very proud of our school uniform and likewise the children take great care to keep their uniforms clean and tidy. School uniform consists of: -

BOYS	GIRLS
White / navy polo shirt	White / navy polo shirt
Red school sweatshirt	Red school sweatshirt
Navy trousers	Navy pinafore / skirt
Navy socks	Navy socks (knee length)
	Navy or red tights

Black shoes	Navy or black shoes
Black slip-on/Velcro non-marking plimsolls (Year 1 only)	Black slip-on/Velcro non-marking plimsolls (Year 1 only)
Red school outdoor coat (optional)	Red school outdoor coat (optional)
Red P.E. T-shirt & navy shorts (optional)	Red P.E. T-shirt & navy shorts (optional)

No parent is under any obligation to purchase school crested items. Iron-on badges are available from the office at £2 each. School crested uniforms items can be purchased from McCall's Lisburn.

Year 1, 2 and 3 pupils must change into their plimsolls in the cloakroom areas on entering the school building.

PARENTS

Parents are our partners in the education of their children. We aim to involve parents in the life of the school and to inform them as fully as possible about their children's progress. Notes should be written if a child has been absent from school, if homework has not been done, or if a child is required to stay in the school building during break/lunch. We ask that you don't make appointments with doctors or dentists, etc. for your child during school hours (except in an emergency), but if your child has to leave school to attend an appointment, the Principal will sign a "Permission to leave school early" form, which you will then be asked to countersign at pickup.

Parents are kept informed of school events and activities by means of notes, texts and Seesaw. Reminder slips will be sent home as appropriate and detailed information is also available on our website: www.ballymacwardps.net. We have a regularly updated Facebook page and a Twitter feed.

The principal is always happy to discuss parental concerns as soon as possible, should they arise. A meeting can be arranged via the school office.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (FRIENDS OF BALLYMACWARD)

The Friends of Ballymacward is a voluntary organisation comprising parents, teachers and members of the local community. Activities are planned throughout the year for the children or as family events. Funds raised are used to support the children's learning experiences. The PTA also provided much needed assistance with refreshments at various school events. All parents are encouraged to get involved with the group.

HEALTH & SAFETY

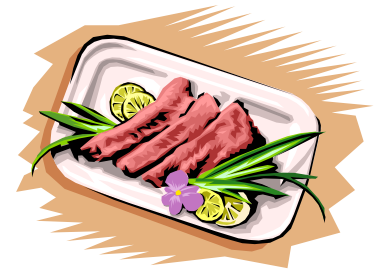
We take the safety of our pupils very seriously. Parents/Child minders etc. are asked not to drop-off, collect or park in the school car park, with the exception of the Breakfast Club, post 3pm after-school activities or on consultation with the principal. All signage should be followed and the church car park should be used. Children should be escorted to the playground in the mornings and enter the school building via the classroom doors at the rear of the building. Obstructing our laneway or gates is dangerous and puts children at risk.



Our building is securely locked during class contact hours. Visitors should report to the main reception area. All visitors are required to sign in for their visit and are identified by their visitor's badge. CCTV is in operation 24hrs per day. At the end of the day, parents collect their children from the playground entrance and escort them back to the church car park.

SCHOOL MEALS

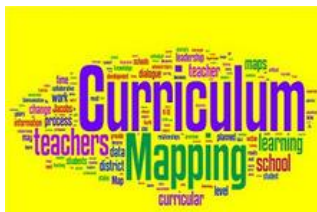
School Meals are provided by the Education Authority (EA) from a central meals kitchen in Lisburn each day and a menu is provided for each term. All pupils are supervised during the lunch period including those who have a packed lunch. The pupils are not permitted to leave the school during lunchtime unless they are collected and returned to the school by their parents.



CURRICULUM POLICY

It is the policy of the Board of Governors of Ballymacward Primary School that all pupils receive their full entitlement of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

All pupils will follow a curriculum that is balanced and broad and promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of the individual. It is a curriculum that seeks to prepare each pupil for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities of living now and later as an adult.



The Northern Ireland Curriculum is a common curriculum for all pupils at Ballymacward Primary School. We recognise that children learn at different rates and the school will offer experiences designed to meet the needs of each child.

It is the policy to provide maximum access to the curriculum to pupils who are physically handicapped and pupils with special needs.

Ballymacward Primary School is committed to providing a curriculum designed to:

- Assist pupils to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to live in an ever changing world
- Encourage pupils to develop enquiring minds, with the ability to question, to think for themselves and formulate their opinions
- Help pupils develop personal values and beliefs and learn to respect the beliefs of others
- Help the children to come to know about Jesus Christ and to live by his Gospel teachings
- Enable pupils to work to the best of their ability both independently and with others
- Help pupils develop a sense of self-respect, self-confidence, an awareness of others and an appreciation of the world around them.

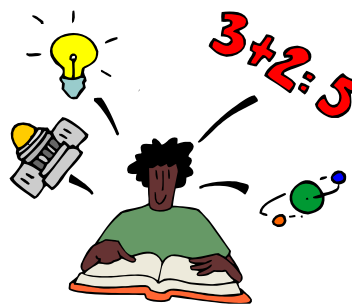


The Primary phase of the curriculum is divided into three stages:

Foundation Stage	Year 1- Year 2
Key Stage 1	Year 3 - Year 4
Key Stage 2	Year 5 - Year 7

There are seven *Areas of Learning*.

- Religious Education
- Language and Literacy
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- The Arts (Art and Design, Drama and Music)
- The World Around Us (Geography, History and Science)
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
- Physical Education



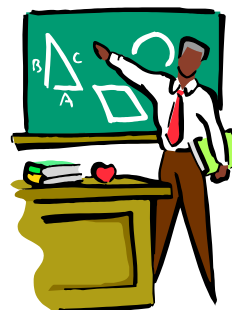
Teachers will employ a variety of teaching strategies appropriate to the needs of the children in their care.

Fundamental PE skills development is supported by IFA/GAA/Gaelfast coaches. Children also participate in Cumann na mBunscol Aontroimh. All children from Years 4–7 attend swimming lessons at Lisburn LeisurePlex.

All pupils from Years 4–7 are taught to play the tin whistle by Mr. P. Davey. The school choir is made up of pupils from all year groups.

CLASS ORGANISATION

Children are taught in straight and composite classes (e.g. Year 1, Year 2/3). This means that, children may be working in year groups, ability groups, mixed ability groups and interest groups. The variety of groups allows the teacher to provide the most efficient form of learning for all pupils in his/her care.



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

While each teacher will provide a full programme of work for all children in their class, additional provision may be required for some pupils. It is school policy to identify the special needs of a pupil as early as possible in the Primary School. Standardised tests are given as recommended by the Education Authority. On the basis of these tests, and the Class Teacher's professional opinion, if the special needs of a pupil are identified parents are consulted. It is our policy to monitor the pupil's progress, inform the parents of the progress and enlist their active support for their child's work in school. If necessary, advice is sought from the EA Support Service and Educational Psychology Service as well as the RISE NI team.



Annual Reviews for children maintaining a Statement of Educational Needs are held during the school year.

ASSESSMENT / REPORTING

Assessment is a central part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. It is school policy to have both formal and informal assessment of all pupils. The school will generally undertake End of Key Stage Assessments and STAR Reading and STAR Maths for Years 4-7.

Children in Years 3-7 are assessed in May with the Progress Test in English (PTE) and Progress Test in Maths (PTM). These are computer based assessments in Literacy and Numeracy. Years 4 and 6 also undertake CAT4 tests to identify ability levels for each individual child. The purpose of these tests is to identify children's strengths and weaknesses in order to set individual and year group targets to support each child's learning. The results of these assessments will be shared with parents in the end of year reports.

During the course of the year, there will be one Curriculum Meeting, two parent teacher meetings and one written report. Parents are encouraged to come to the school to discuss their child's progress.



It is necessary to make an appointment in advance with the teacher. Also, teachers may invite parents to the school to discuss their child's work or behaviour.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an important part of school activities. It provides the pupil with the opportunity to revise work done, to find out information for himself / herself, and to prepare for new work in school. Parents have an opportunity to see what their children are doing in school, to show an interest in their work and to support the work of the school. Homework is normally set each night from Monday to Thursday and is matched to the pupil's age and ability.

Parents can assist with the school's reading programmes (BUG Club Years 1-3 and Accelerated Reading Years 4-7) by listening to their children read, by encouraging them to read and by reading with/to them. We would ask parents, when checking homework, to use the opportunity to check that school books are being kept in good condition and that homework is being neatly presented.



EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extra-curricular activities include Gaelic football and hurling, Eco-Club, Digit Club, Accelerated Reading Club, art, athletics, soccer, film club and Year 6/7 transfer preparation class. Year 6/7 pupils are offered the experience of an outdoor educational visit in June.



The school has Gaelic football and hurling teams for children in Years 5–7 which take part in Cumann na mBunscol tournaments.

We also have an elected School Council by which the children have a direct role in decision making. The Council also has a leading role in developing environmental awareness among pupils, including overseeing our wildlife garden, vegetable plots and recycling and energy saving schemes. We are currently working towards the Eco-Schools flag.

Children take part in various competitions in art, writing and science & technology. We also foster close links with post-primary schools and various events take place throughout the year.

We host an annual Book Fair where pupils are given an opportunity to purchase books and other small items. Books for school are purchased from the commission raised.

CONCLUSION

The information contained in this prospectus is correct at the time of printing. Access to a range of school policies is available on request.

We have tried to give you an insight into our school and school life, but to really appreciate the rural setting and understand the wonderful atmosphere within the school, please contact us to arrange a visit.

We hope to have an Open Day this year, along with our Playgroup and you are very welcome to come along and view both. Information will be sent out regarding the date and time when confirmed.

