



Orritor Primary School and Nursery Unit



Families First
NI EDUCATION AWARDS

BEST
Nursery Unit

Prospectus

Welcome

DEAR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Thank you for expressing interest in enrolling your child at Orritor Primary School and Nursery Unit. We hope you find our prospectus informative as we try to give you a flavour of life at Orritor Primary School and Nursery Unit.

At Orritor, we strive to provide a caring, secure and friendly environment, within which a child can reach their full potential intellectually, socially, physically and emotionally. We aim to develop the whole child and to pass on the values and attitudes which will enable them to find their place, and play their role as a responsible adult in our society.

As a school, we promote active communication with parents throughout their child's time with us and see this as an essential element in the formation of positive attitudes to school, by children and parents alike. To this end, we look forward to working closely with parents / guardians in forming a partnership which can support and encourage each child in their development.

Although it is hoped that the information in this prospectus serves to showcase many aspects of school life, it cannot show you all. If there is anything further which you would like to know, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Wishing you and your child well at this crucial stage,

Mrs K Black

Vice Principal



Orritor Primary School and Nursery Unit

249 Orritor Road
Cookstown

Tel 028 867 51412

Website www.orritorps.co.uk

Enrolment Number 203

Admission Number 28

POLICY STATEMENT

In line with the Education Reform Order (NI) 1989, this school will provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum, aiming to:

- i Promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils and thereby of society.
- ii Prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

GENERAL AIMS

- 1 The school will implement the Northern Ireland Curriculum, ensuring that the children receive a broad and balanced education.
- 2 The school aims to produce pupils who are self-confident and independent and who have the necessary skills to take their place in the community.
- 3 The pupil should be equipped with a sense of responsibility and discipline and with attitudes, moral values and beliefs based on the Christian religion, that have been arrived at through reasoned thought and experience.
- 4 The children should have gained knowledge and understanding of the world in which we live and have the necessary information to progress further.
- 5 The children should acquire and develop the concepts and skills required of the N.I. Curriculum and be able to apply them with speed, accuracy, understanding and confidence.
- 6 Through practical, worthwhile experience in all areas of the curriculum, the pupils will be encouraged to become independent learners and to take responsibility for organising their own learning.

ADMISSIONS

It is important that parents / guardians read the enrolment information and admissions criteria carefully. Parents wishing to view the school should contact the Principal for an appointment; or visit the school website for details on Open Day arrangements.

Applications for Nursery and Primary 1 are made through the Education Authority website, usually in January. Admission to the nursery class will be allocated according to separate criteria from that of the mainstream primary classes.

The indication of a preference for this school is an acknowledgement that parents accept, and agree to abide by the philosophy, ethos, policies and discipline procedures of the school.



Nursery Unit

Welcome to Orritor Nursery Unit. Here we will care for your children in a warm, welcoming and stimulating environment, where learning is fun.

We are very proud to celebrate that at the most recent 'Families First Awards Northern Ireland,' we were awarded 'Best Nursery Unit!' In addition to this, our Teacher, Miss Thompson, was awarded an 'MBE' for 'Services to Nursery Education' in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, June 2021!

INDUCTION

During the summer term, children to be admitted to Nursery in September will be invited to come to the school with their parents to meet the teacher and be provided with additional information.

In September, induction will be staggered over a 4 to 5 week period. Pupils will be admitted on the basis of their age.

HOME / NURSERY SCHOOL LINKS

When a child begins Nursery, there is an opportunity for an important partnership to be formed between home and school. This vital link enables information to flow freely in both directions. A successful partnership enables parents to understand how they can share in and contribute to their child's education, as well as helping staff to ensure that each child fulfils their full potential at school.

During a normal year, parents are encouraged to come into the classroom in the morning and at home time so good relationships can be formed between teachers, parents and children and that parents can become involved in what their children are doing in Nursery. They are encouraged to discuss children's work, photographs, wall displays and centres of interest, as well as any problems that may arise.

In Nursery, we hope to develop home / school links in several ways, including; visits to the Nursery classroom before starting Nursery, Parents information evenings / afternoons, Stay and Plays, Monthly Nursery Newsletters, Parents Notice board containing all topic based planning and upcoming events, Parent Interviews and encouraging parents to join in and help with outings, events and topics in school. The Nursery also uses Seesaw to communicate with parents and share learning.



THE SCHOOL DAY

The Nursery hours are as follows:
9am – 1.30pm

Children can be collected from 1.10pm to allow parents time to talk to staff about their children's daily progress and special events which may have happened. In the morning, children will not be admitted until 9am and children may arrive any time between 9am and 9.20am.

Snacks A healthy mid morning snack (a selection of breads, yoghurt, cereal and fruits) will be provided for each child at a nominal cost.

Lunch Children in Nursery take school dinners.

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Children are taught through the pre-school Curricular Guidance Document which follows the six areas of the Pre-School Curriculum: Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Early Maths; Language Development; The Arts; The World Around Us; and Physical Development and Movement. These areas are taught through topic based structured play. The aim of Orritor Nursery Unit is the holistic development of each child.

THIS WILL BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THESE OPPORTUNITIES

- A stimulating, happy and harmonious environment in which the child feels secure;
- Encouraging children to develop at their own rate through structured topic based play;
- Helping children to adapt to class and group situations, to be considerate towards others and help develop their social skills;
- Encouraging children to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings clearly and to have these valued by staff and other children;
- To gain confidence through success and be given support in times of need;
- Developing an interest in the environment and to take care of living things;
- Acquiring habits of good health and hygiene;
- Time and assistance to develop and extend their concentration span;
- Encouraging curiosity, observation and interest in what goes on around them;
- Support to develop a love of, and respect for, books, stories, rhymes songs;
- To develop responsibility for themselves and their learning;
- Help to transfer smoothly to their next stage of education.



"Fantastic Nursery School; children and parents made to feel part of the Nursery family. Children are happy to go and don't want to leave!"

At all times, the needs of the child will be a priority. Each child will be considered on their own merits and staff will strive to enable each child to explore and fulfil their full potential.

HOME / SCHOOL LINKS

Parents are most welcome to discuss their child's progress at any time and this can be arranged by making an appointment through the school office. **NB:** *Please do not go directly to the classroom.*

It is always preferable to make contact before a real problem arises. If something prevents a child from being happy, contented and successful, then school and home must co-operate to address this as soon as possible. School will contact you if we identify a problem. We would ask you to ring us if you are concerned about any matter.

"A first class Nursery Unit which provides outstanding education and pastoral care. Staff are excellent and always put the children's interests foremost."





ARRANGEMENTS FOR INDUCTION

During the summer term, children to be admitted to P1 in September will be invited to come to the school for a morning with their parents to meet the teacher and to be provided with additional information. More details will be sent to parents when admission has been approved.

FACILITIES

Orritor Primary School is situated on the Orritor Road, just outside Cookstown and was opened in 1980. The school services Orritor and surrounding districts, and the current enrolment is over 200. The building is of modern design with all of the facilities one would expect. An additional 3 classrooms, which comprise the P1 – P3 classes, a Resource Area and toilets were opened in September 2003.

In 2007/08 a Multi-purpose Hall, Office, SEN room and toilets were opened, which enhanced the school and gave much needed space for P.E., Information Technology and other school events. In 2021, we introduced Activpanel whiteboards in every primary classroom and children also have access to two computer resource areas. A new Play Area was opened in partnership with Cookstown District Council, and this has proven very popular with the children, both in the school, and in the wider community.

In September 2000, the Nursery Unit opened with a capacity for 26 pupils. This class has its own outdoor play and grass area.

Extensive playgrounds, a football pitch, the soft surface play area and surrounding shrubs give the site a pleasant appearance.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

This school believes that each pupil should receive the N.I. Curriculum in the most professional of ways.

Personal values such as tolerance, responsibility, honesty, sharing and endeavour will always be encouraged. Combining these academic and personal development goals with that of physical development through play and participation in games and PE, we aim to equip the child with a complete, all round development of the whole person, which will help prepare him or her for adult life.

At all times, the needs of the child will be a priority. Each child will be considered on their own merits and will be valued equally regardless of their academic ability.

Being a rural school, we believe that the inherent sharing of responsibility and closeness of staff interaction, uniquely provides for this.





CURRICULUM DELIVERY

At Orritor Primary School, we aim to ensure that children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum as they seek to develop their thinking skills and personal capabilities, alongside developing their cognitive ability. The curriculum for the three key stages is set out in six Areas of Learning. Although the Areas of Learning are set out separately, teachers will, where appropriate, integrate learning across the six areas to make relevant connections for children.

The areas are:

- 1) Language and Literacy (including Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing);
- 2) Mathematics and Numeracy (focusing on the development of mathematical concepts and numeracy across the curriculum);
- 3) The Arts (including Art and Design, Drama and Music);
- 4) The World Around Us (focusing on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in Geography, History and Science and Technology);
- 5) Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (focusing on emotional development, social skills, learning to learn, health, relationships and mutual understanding in the local and global community);
- 6) Physical Education (focusing on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding through play and a range of physical activities).

ORGANISATION OF CLASSES

It is the policy of the Board of Governors that as far as possible, children should be taught in single year group classes, however, at times, it may be necessary to establish composite classes. Regardless of composition, every effort will always be made to ensure that the children receive the best possible education.

Primary school children succeed better with a class teacher who will take the children for all central subjects of the curriculum. The particular skills of teachers, however, will be exploited in late afternoon classes, where teachers will adopt a semi-specialist role in such subjects as Art and Design, Drama, Music, Information Technology and Physical Education.

Parents will be informed of their child's progress by an annual report, a twice yearly interview, and also through information given by the assessment procedures of the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum Examination and Assessment.

Pastoral Care Arrangements



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

As your child progresses through their Nursery and Primary School career, they may be identified as having particular needs which the school will endeavour to cater for. Needs may be physical, social and emotional, behavioural or connected to cognitive ability.

Primarily, the class teacher will meet with you to share their concerns which can be based on professional judgement, recommendations from outside agencies or from school testing. Work will be differentiated according to the needs of your child and they will be given strategies to help them cope with what they are doing.

In addition to this, children may be referred to our Special Educational Needs teacher, Mrs Bell, for some 'out of class' support.

Should this not provide sufficient improvement, the SENCO, Principal and Class Teacher may explore referring your child for formal assessment by Educational Psychology.

At all times, it is our desire that school and home work together for the good and progression of the pupils.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

Each year, the pupils in each class elect a School Council for the year ahead. The School Council is made up of two pupils from each year group, Nursery to P7, and they regularly meet each term. The School Council are responsible for listening to the views of their classmates and bringing suggestions on how the school can be improved, to their meetings. After the meetings, the School Council are able to identify the main proposals and bring these to the Principal for consideration. In addition to this, the School Council are responsible for choosing a charity for the year and assisting with fundraising activities for their chosen charity.



SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

If at any time you are concerned about the safety of your child or another child, you should report your concerns to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Team in school. The team consists of; the Principal, the Designated Teacher, Mrs Black and two Deputy Designated Teachers, Mrs Currie and Miss Thompson.

Please be aware that staff will not be able to receive information confidentially and have a duty of care to act on all information regarding the welfare of pupils. Where things are escalated or progressed, we will take advice from the Education Authority's Child Protection Team and relevant agencies.



HOW A PARENT CAN REGISTER A CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN

- I have a concern about my/a child's safety.
- I can talk to the class/form teacher.
- If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Principal, Mrs Black, the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, or Mrs Currie or Miss Thompson, the Deputy Designated Teachers.
- If I am still concerned, I can talk or write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors.
- ***At any time, I can talk to a social worker (tel 867 62792) or the Police.***

A Day In School

Every day in school is jam-packed full of fun and learning, and each day is like no other! Pupils take part in a range of learning experiences; from working in groups on projects, to independent writing, to play-based learning activities.

In the Foundation Stage the staff work hard to ensure that children settle well into routines and understand what is expected of them. They do this by:

- Talking to them;
- Listening to them;
- Encouraging the exchange of ideas and experiences;
- Developing their powers of observation;
- Developing their memories;
- Encouraging pretend games;
- Doing lots of music and movement activities.



Emphasis throughout is on enjoyment, success and high motivation. In number work, infants begin by forming and developing the concept of number and establishing a clear understanding of notation. In the early stages, the children use all kinds of counting materials and apparatus.

Through our World Around Us programme, the children will be encouraged to look at the world in which they live, and to gain a better understanding of it.

Stories, rhymes and songs are also included in the curriculum.

Religious education is taken throughout the week and consists of simple Bible stories and some moral training, eg “People who help us”, “How can we help others?”

During the week, time is devoted to creative activity/structured play. Children can choose from a great variety of constructional toys: painting, sand, water, jigsaws, shops, etc. This is an important part of the timetable as the children have the opportunity for experiment and discovery. The happy and relaxed atmosphere promotes imaginative thinking and language development.

THE FIRST MORNING

The transition from the home environment to school represents a very big change for the young child. The teacher understands this. She handles the situation every year with great skill, and you will find her most sympathetic. There are some things which you can do to help ease the ordeal for the apprehensive child.

Try to keep out of sight after you leave the classroom. The sight of Mum or Dad actually going away upsets some children. Before you leave, explain to your child exactly where and when you will meet him/her. Try not to be late when collecting your child.

Most children make the transition quite easily. Don't be too worried if your child cries. This happens in one or two cases every year, but seldom lasts longer than a few minutes after parents have gone.





CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Parents may request a copy of this policy from the Principal.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education, in the form of undenominational religious instruction, shall be given in this school, in addition to collective assemblies. Ministers of religion will be granted reasonable access, at convenient times, for the purpose of giving religious instruction to children of their own denomination or inspecting the subject. If a parent of any pupil requests that the pupil should be wholly, or partly excused from attendance of RE or assembly, then the pupil shall be excused until that request is withdrawn.

HOMEWORK

At Orritor Primary School, we see the value in children engaging in homework as a means of revising work done, in discovering information unavailable in school, in involving parents in their child's studies and in the development of good work habits. Against this, however, must be balanced each child's need for recreation and the homework should not exceed that which can be done in under 30 minutes in the infant classes and 60 minutes in P4 – P7 classes.

ECO SCHOOL

As a school, we are very proud to have achieved our 'Eco-School' status and to have been awarded a coveted 'Green Flag Award'. We take an active interest in ensuring that we are contributing in a positive way to the environment through turning off lights, recycling and developing our outdoor space in an environmentally friendly way. To help with this, we also have an Eco-Team who play an active role in promoting the ways in which the school can continue to make a difference.



School Discipline

DISCIPLINE

The school has produced a separate booklet on discipline and this is available to all stakeholders.

It is the school policy that discipline should be based on respect for self, respect for other pupils and respect for adults. In those cases where a child has transgressed the school rules, there is a graded set of sanctions involving various members of staff, in order of seniority. In any case involving a serious breach of rules, parents will be involved either by receiving a written report from school, or by being invited to come to school to discuss the matter.

SPORT

Orritor Primary School aims to provide its pupils with opportunities to:

- experience a range of sport and sporting activities as part of the curriculum for physical education and as extra-curricular activities;
- be aware of the benefits of sport and sports activities in terms of healthy lifestyles and physical well-being;
- develop sports skills;
- create an awareness of the benefits of teamwork, cooperation, etc.

Each class will receive two P.E. sessions per week. The time involved will vary according to the age of the child (e.g. P1 may receive 60 mins per week, P7 may receive 2 hours).

Pupils are encouraged to participate in PE and take an active role in all lessons. Non-participation will only be acceptable when a note from a parent or guardian explains why the pupil cannot take part, or if the teacher decides the pupil is unfit to do so.

Currently, the school utilises its Multi-purpose Hall, Assembly Hall, playgrounds and football pitch for these activities, as well as making use of the local swimming pool. The sports undertaken at this school include athletics, dance, gymnastics, hockey, netball, rugby, football and swimming. Some of these sports are also pursued in extra-curricular clubs.

EXTRA CURRICULAR CLUBS

As a school, we know that children require access to more than just the core, academic skills throughout their education. As a result, we have a range of after school clubs in place to develop skills beyond the classroom curriculum. We are delighted to be able to offer clubs such as Rugby, Football, Netball, Hockey, Multi Sports and Arts and Crafts. In addition to this, we have been able to have Cookery and Scripture Union in the past, and would hope to be able to offer these again. Clubs take place on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons and are split between P1-3 and P4-7.





SCHOOL HOURS AND HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS

The Nursery hours are as follows:

Commence	Dismissed
9.00am	1.30pm

The School hours are as follows:

	Entry	Commence	Dismissed
P1-P3	8.45am	9.00am	1.50pm
P4-P7	8.45am	9.00am	2.50pm

Morning Break

10.30am – 10.45am (P1-3) and 10.50am – 11.05am (P4-7)

Parents are encouraged to provide a healthy snack.

Lunch Break

12.00pm – 12.40pm (P1-3) and 12.30pm – 1.10pm (P4-7)

School Meals

School meals cooked on the premises are of a very high standard. The money for the week or days in the week on which dinner is required should be brought on Monday morning. Parents in receipt of limited income can apply for Free School Meals. It is requested, if possible, that the correct money be sent on Monday mornings for dinners.

Packed Lunches

Children bringing lunches to school are supervised at lunch time.

Property

All articles brought to school must be clearly marked with the child's name. Whilst every care is taken of pupils' property, no responsibility can be accepted for loss or damage.

Absence

No pupil is permitted to leave school before the regular time, unless with the Principal's permission. Parents are requested not to ask for such permission, except in very special circumstances. When a pupil returns after such an absence the parents should fill in an absence form on the school website.

Holiday Arrangements

The school will be closed for the months of July and August and for all statutory holidays. Information about other holidays i.e. Christmas, Easter and Mid-Term breaks will be sent to parents at the beginning of September.

In the event of emergency closure, every attempt will be made to notify parents to enable them to make alternative arrangements.

School Uniform



There is a school uniform which all pupils are required to wear.

Pupils should have the following:

For Physical Education pupils in the school require (Boys/ Girls):

Black shorts, gym shoes, socks, red polo shirt, track bottoms and swimming costume (P4-7).

Grants towards the cost of uniform may be available to those entitled to benefits.

ASSESSMENT, REPORTS AND BOYS

- Red v-neck jumper
- Red/black/white tie
- White shirt
- Grey trousers
- Grey socks
- Black shoes

GIRLS

- Red v-neck jumper or cardigan
- Black/red/white tie
- White blouse
- Grey skirt or pinafore
- White socks
- Black shoes

INTERVIEWS

A child's progress will be continually monitored throughout the year and detailed assessment will be carried out during the Summer term.

Attainment and diagnostic tests are used to provide the teachers with information on each child. To this end, we use a range of Standardised Tests, as well as class tests and teachers' professional evaluation of each child. These provide teachers with invaluable information which will influence their lesson planning, as well as providing a guide to each child's progress for parents, teachers and the child themselves.

Parents are informed of progress during interviews in October and February, when they are advised on how best they can assist their child. They will also receive a written report of their child's progress in June, every year. If there is a need to talk to the teacher at any other time regarding progress, parents can arrange an interview by telephoning the school to set up an agreed appointment.

HOME / SCHOOL LINKS

Parents are most welcome to discuss their child's progress at any time. We ask you to telephone to make an appointment any morning between 9.00am and 9.30am on 028 867 51412.

NB: *Please do not go directly to the classroom.*

It is always preferable to make contact before a real problem arises. If something prevents a child from being happy, contented and successful, then school and home must co-operate to address this as soon as possible. School will contact you if we identify a problem. We would ask you to ring us if you are concerned about any matter.





BUSES

Children arriving by bus will be left off inside the school gates to avoid accidents. At the end of school, similar arrangements exist and the buses will pick the children up inside the school gates. Children must remain inside the school until the bus stops completely and the door is opened for boarding.

Behaviour on the bus should be exemplary. The first bus should arrive no earlier than 8.45am when supervision begins.

CHILDREN ARRIVING / DEPARTING BY CAR

Parents are asked to ensure that their children proceed safely into the school building. Children should not be on the premises more than 15 minutes before the commencement of classes.

After school parents are asked to convey their children from the school to their cars for their safety. Parents should not drive vehicles into the school grounds at any time.

PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Within our school community, we are very fortunate to have a very well-established and well-supported Parent Support Group. The Parent Support Group meet once per term to discuss ways in which they can support the school; this could be through financial fundraising or providing manpower for events. All parents, from Nursery to P7, are welcome to join this group and attend.

We want to thank you, once again, for considering Orritor Primary School and Nursery Unit as the best setting for your child's education. If there is anything further which you would like to know, please do not hesitate to get in contact with the school.



"Fabulous rural school providing excellent care, education and development for the young children!"



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