



6 Glenburn Park, Bangor, Co. Down. BT20 5RG

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

**ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS
2025/26**

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I am one of the few people who get to come into school and see first hand, teachers interactions with pupils and then sit among them in the staff room. I have to tell you that there are very few conversations about last night's TV, or the news, or a funny clip on social media. Most of their conversations are about their pupils and what they are trying to do to help them be the very best they can be. You'll more likely hear words about sharing plans, strategies, courses and articles that may contribute to your child's education. They work every hour they are meant to and then they do more as they take their role very seriously.

Of course, they are part of a much larger team of support staff ~ classroom assistants, clerical officers, playground assistants, cleaning and maintenance staff who carry that same ethos of creating an environment for your children that is safe, fun, stimulating and educational. They aim to give your children a sense of wonder and curiosity at the world in which they live.

I want to thank you, as parents, for the vital role you play. Your encouragement, interest and support make a world of difference. I know life can be busy and demanding, yet your involvement in your children's learning underpins everything that happens in the classroom. The influence of your interest in and the encouragement you give to your children as they pass through their education is invaluable. Your kind words and practical help mean a great deal to our staff, who are always encouraged by your appreciation and trust.

It is no surprise, then, that our pupils continue to make us so proud — not only in their academic work but in the many other ways they express their talents and character. I love how the school recognises achievement in all its forms, giving every child the opportunity to shine in their own way.

I want to express my sincere thanks to my fellow Governors for the time, expertise and commitment they give to the school. Each brings their own strengths and insights, and together we share a deep pride in what Ballyholme Primary School continues to accomplish.

Finally, I am aware that this is the last report being made while Mrs Rothwell is Principal as she prepares to leave us at the end of 2026. So, I want to finish by giving a few words of tribute to her. She has been outstanding in every way. The school has been very fortunate to have such a capable Principal who has brought an amazing range of professional and personal skills. I have been so privileged to have had the chance to work alongside her and see her in action from her eye for detail in a spreadsheet, to managing her staff, to handling a sensitive pastoral matter, to caring for your children, and to maintaining and enhancing Ballyholme's reputation. I, we and you will miss her presence around the school very much. We wish her well in all her future endeavours of which I am sure, there will be many.

We also look forward to Mrs McCullough joining us in January with much anticipation and a firm confidence that she will carry the school forward in the coming years.

Peter Lyle
Chair of Governors

BOARD OF GOVERNORS 2024 – 2028

Board Representatives: -	Mr C Moran Mrs E Adair
Transferors' Representatives: -	Mr I Bailie Rev S Doogan Rev P Lyle (Chair) Mr N Devlin
Parents' Representatives: -	Mr N McCavery Mrs J English
Teachers' Representative: -	Mrs S McFerran
Co-opted: -	Mr D Stewart Mr P Hopkins
Principal	Mrs P Rothwell (Hon Secretary)

Governors' Main Responsibilities

The school's Board of Governors plays an extremely important role in supporting schools to ensure that pupils have every opportunity to develop to their full potential within a caring and stimulating learning environment. As schools are accountable for what they do, governors must work in close partnership with the principal, staff, parents and pupils to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their school in providing the best quality education for all pupils within the school.

The governors and principal work in partnership to manage the school. This involves meetings dealing with issues such as determining staffing levels, recruitment, formulating and reviewing policies and drawing up and implementing the school's admissions criteria. The governors are also responsible for the overall allocation and management of the school's budget. Further to this, the governors also respond to proposals from a range of educational agencies and comment upon issues which may have an impact on the provision of education for the local community.

Principal's Report – School Year 2025–2026

The 2025–26 school year began with the usual sense of excitement and anticipation as staff prepared to welcome pupils back to school. Alongside classroom preparations, our teaching staff participated in a range of professional development opportunities during the final week of August, including training on the effective use of data, sensory room support, Outdoor Learning, the SEN Graduated Response Framework, and the safe administration of medication.

We were delighted to welcome several new Classroom Assistants to Ballyholme Primary. Their contribution has been invaluable in supporting children with additional needs and enhancing the learning experiences of pupils across the school.

A vibrant programme of after-school activities was once again delivered by staff throughout the year. Pupils enjoyed a wide range of clubs, including cookery, drama and a variety of sports. External coaches also worked alongside staff to further strengthen our sporting provision.

The year was marked by outstanding sporting achievements across many disciplines.

- Our girls' football team competed successfully in the North Down League, while our boys' team enjoyed another exceptional season, winning the league and retaining the prestigious Gerry Armstrong Cup.
- Ballyholme Primary continued its tradition of excellence in athletics, winning the North Down Primary School Sports Hall Athletics Trophy, the Strathearn Fun in Athletics competition and securing medal success at the North Down Championships.
- Our swimmers performed superbly at the Ulster Schools' Swimming Gala, earning numerous medals, with several pupils also qualifying for the Irish Schools' Swimming Gala in Dublin.
- In trampolining, Louis Hedley represented the school at the British Schools Finals.
- Our gymnastics teams enjoyed an extraordinary year. The Under-11 Girls' A Team and the Under-11 Pair both won gold medals at the British Schools' Gymnastics Championships in Stoke-on-Trent, an incredible achievement which saw Ballyholme Primary crowned British Champions in two events.

Our musicians also enjoyed a highly successful year. Many pupils achieved excellent results in music examinations and took part in a variety of performances for parents and the wider community.

The festive season was particularly memorable. In December, our P1 pupils delighted audiences with their Nativity production. Our choirs were actively involved in community events, including the Love Ballyholme Christmas Lights Switch-On, performances at Bangor Railway Station and the St Columbanus Senior Citizens' Lunch. They also contributed to church services at Hamilton Road Baptist Church and Ballyholme Presbyterian Church.

One of the highlights of the Christmas period was our Intergenerational Coffee Morning. P7 pupils welcomed members of the local community, providing refreshments, entertainment and companionship. It was a truly heartwarming event that reflected the caring ethos of our school.

In December, our Senior Choir received the special honour of performing at the Speaker's Christmas Tree Switch-On at Stormont. Later in the year, they returned to perform alongside the Belfast Pops Orchestra, providing the children with two unforgettable musical experiences.

The crowning moment of the year was undoubtedly the P7 production, *Back to Ballyholme*. Every pupil in P7 played a part in the performance, and the school hall was filled to capacity for both shows. The production was a wonderful celebration of the talents of our pupils and highlighted the dedication of staff and the invaluable support of parents in bringing the event to life.

We remain deeply grateful to all parents for their continued support throughout the year. Whether attending curriculum events, providing transport, supporting school activities or engaging in their child's learning, their contribution is greatly appreciated. We would also like to thank our PTA Committee for organising a range of highly successful events that not only raised substantial funds for additional resources but also created many enjoyable opportunities for families to come together as a school community.

At the end of the academic year, we said farewell to several valued members of staff. Miss Taylor and Mrs Campbell retired from teaching, while Mrs Lacey and Mrs Wright retired from their roles as Classroom Assistants. We thank them for their dedicated service and wish them long, happy and well-deserved retirements. We also bade farewell to Mrs Wingfield, who has relocated to County Fermanagh, and we wish her every success and happiness in the future.

The 2025–26 school year has been another remarkable chapter in the life of Ballyholme Primary School. As we look ahead, we remain committed to providing a broad, balanced and enriching educational experience for every child. By nurturing pupils academically, socially and emotionally, we will continue to equip them with the confidence, skills and resilience they need to thrive in the years ahead.

Child Protection Legislation

If there is concern about a child's welfare the relevant contact people are:

- 1.** Designated Teacher – Miss R Taylor (Wednesday – Friday)
Mrs H Stephens (Monday/Tuesday)
- 2.** Deputy Designated Teachers – Mrs H Stephens, Foundation Stage, Mrs S McFerran KS1,
Mrs L Kennedy, KS2.

Appointed governors also sit on the school's Safeguarding Team ensuring that pupils remain safe and secure, and all needs are catered for.

School Aims

1. To provide a secure and caring learning environment which promotes respect and co-operation within the school community.
2. To deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, which fulfils the requirements of the Education Order.
3. To encourage independence, self-worth and self-discipline in preparation for adult life.
4. To help each child achieve full potential through the promotion of spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development.
5. To develop high personal standards of work and behaviour.
6. To develop a partnership between home, school and the wider community.

Vision Statement

Ballyholme Primary School is a caring school where everyone is welcomed, valued and respected.

It is a happy school, where all, individually and together, play a part in developing pride in self, in school, in others and work towards developing their potential in becoming responsible future citizens.



The Curriculum

In addition to the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, we endeavour to build self-confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of responsibility and a respect for the property and feelings of others.

A variety of teaching approaches is adopted, based on practical experience whenever possible, with children working in class, small group and individual situations. All classes go on educational visits, the Primary 6 and 7 classes enjoying residential experiences.

There are 21 classes of mixed ability plus specialist teachers for music and physical education.

The Vice-Principal has responsibility for Pastoral Care, Special Educational Needs and Assessment. Two part-time teachers provide literacy support and several outreach teachers from the Education Authority provide additional teaching for a small number of pupils.

The statutory assessment procedures are in place with each child receiving an Annual Report, and the Primary 7's receiving a Record of Achievement at the end of June. Parents also have an opportunity to meet with their child's teacher on 2 formal occasions in the year to discuss progress. Parents are encouraged to maintain contact with their child's teacher and the principal is happy to meet with parents who may have a concern about their child's progress or welfare.

SEN Accessibility Arrangements

Ballyholme Primary School seeks to promote the inclusion of pupils with Special Educational Needs &/or Disabilities in all aspects of school life. This includes, where possible, eliminating any barriers that pupils may have in accessing the curriculum and the physical school environment.

Current Status/Reasonable Adjustments

At present pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities have equal access to all areas of the school building. This is reviewed on an annual basis and contact is made to the EA as required. Should a child apply to the school with special educational needs or a disability they are treated fairly. A risk assessment will be undertaken, and reasonable adjustments will be made to enable that child to learn alongside his/her peers.

To Pastures New

The process of transferring is still unregulated with a new system of academic selection being run by Grammar Schools known as SEAG (School Entrance Assessment Group).

While this puts undue pressure on our children, we as a staff try to support them in preparing for the tests. Additional teaching is available for pupils who decide not to take the tests.

In September 2026 our P7 pupils will commence learning in 11 post primary schools.

	No of Pupils		No of Pupils
Bangor Academy	23	St Columbanus College	6
Bangor Grammar	21	Strangford College	2
Bloomfield Collegiate	1	Strathearn	1
BRA	1	Sullivan Upper	6
Campbell College	6	Regent House	4
Glenlola Collegiate	19		

In 2025-26 there were, on average 610 pupils on roll with the attendance percentage being 95%.

Financial Statement 2025/26

EA Delegated Budget Figures

Delegated Budget Share	£2,391,688
Carry Forward	£ 23,026
Expenditure	£ 2,434,819
Closing Balance	-£20,105

Summary of School General Funds Account for the period 1st August 2025- 31st July 2026

Opening Balance	£ 19,142.47
Income	£ 304,533.00
Expenditure	£ 316,570.86
Closing Balance	£ 7,104.61

