

# THE DIAMOND PRIMARY SCHOOL

[www.diamondps.co.uk](http://www.diamondps.co.uk)



We are all DIFFERENT  
We are all UNIQUE  
We are all SPECIAL

# Welcome



Thank you for showing an interest in The Diamond Primary School. Whether you already have a child at The Diamond, or this is your first step on the primary school journey, you are equally welcome.

This brochure has been designed to give you a succinct insight of everyday life within our school. A much more detailed prospectus in PDF format is available for your perusal on the school website and can also be downloaded directly from [www.diamondps.co.uk](http://www.diamondps.co.uk)

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

*M Beattie*

Principal

The Diamond Primary School is a co-educational, controlled primary school situated in a rural environment approximately two miles from Cullybackey village. Originally called The Diamond Public Elementary School, the school officially opened on 30th October 1938 when the Loan and Moyasset schools amalgamated. An extension of the existing building in 2003 included a new classroom, library and computer suite. A further extension in 2011 included a new staff room, new general office, new Principal's office and a new reception area. Simultaneously, there was a total refurbishment of the school assembly hall and both pupil and staff toilets. A new state of the art mobile was sited in January 2013 as a class base. The former modular building is now a play-based learning centre and an educational support base.

Enrolment has generally been increasing over the last number of years and the catchment area is drawn mainly from the local area but many children travel from further afield.

The school's efforts to develop relationships in the local community are particularly valuable. Members of the community are welcomed to school events and on occasions are asked to assist with the delivery of the curriculum. The school website [[www.diamondps.co.uk](http://www.diamondps.co.uk)] and the production of our termly school magazine, The Diamond Times, have proved to create major bonds with the community.

# School Ethos and Aims

At The Diamond we pride ourselves in providing a happy, caring and safe environment for everybody - where a love of learning is fostered and everyone is valued for their unique talents and individual abilities.



## ETHOS

At The Diamond Primary School we are committed to the education of the children regardless of race, religion, sex or status. Our ethos is founded on Christian principles where tolerance and respect for others is paramount. It is our intention that everyone feels valued and our pupils are encouraged to develop their full potential in a caring and supportive atmosphere.

The school is highly regarded by parents and the community and we aim to provide a high standard of care for our children in a friendly, positive and structured environment and to develop all pupils academically, socially, physically and emotionally whatever their perceived abilities.

At The Diamond Primary School we aim:

- ◆ to help each child develop his/her individual potential to the full through acquisition of the skills of literacy and numeracy by high quality teaching provided by an enthusiastic, highly motivated and reflective staff.
- ◆ to provide a positive school atmosphere in which each pupil is not only preparing for the next stage in his/her education but is thoroughly enjoying the one through which he/she is passing.
- ◆ to offer a curriculum that is balanced and broadly based and is designed to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils at the school and thereby, of society.
- ◆ to help pupils acquire knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and employment in a fast-changing world.
- ◆ to ensure that the highest standards of pastoral care and child protection are in place.
- ◆ to encourage each child to take account of the feelings, views and needs of others, respect diversity and develop in each child the social skills required as a member of the community, both in and out of school and to foster, value and encourage partnership between school, parents, families and the community.
- ◆ to help develop personal qualities such as self-confidence, independence and self-discipline through praise and positive reinforcement.
- ◆ to develop each child's confidence, ability and maturity in using ICT across all aspects of the curriculum and at home.
- ◆ to enable children to appreciate their environment and to show consideration to others.



# The Curriculum

The Board of Governors and Staff of The Diamond Primary School believe that the curriculum is all the activities, opportunities and experiences, planned and incidental, available to the children through school and are committed to providing pupils with access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.

## LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Literacy is at the heart of primary education. The Literacy Curriculum provides opportunities for children to read, write and to engage in talking and listening activities. The school places emphasis on the building of a sight vocabulary through the use of a structured guided reading scheme and to the development of word-attack skills through phonics. Children are also encouraged to read widely fiction and non-fiction texts both for pleasure and to seek information. Books are brought to life through drama and initiatives such as our annual World Book Day event.

Our newly refurbished library has been re-organised and catalogued to tie in with The Accelerated Reader programme. This programme has been specially designed to further encourage the children's love of books and motivates children to read by awarding points which, at a given time, can be exchanged for prizes. The programme carefully charts the progress of the children as they undertake online comprehension 'quizzes' and alters the levels of difficulty, challenging each child to improve.

## MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

As part of the NI Curriculum the school offers a wide variety of opportunities in this important area of study. Activities are made relevant to the five Attainment Targets - Processes, Number, Shape and Space, Measures and Data Handling. Our World Maths Day provides pupils with the opportunity to use these mathematical skills in a real life context.





If children are to cope effectively with the practical demands of everyday life they need to be at ease with numbers in computation, measurement, data handling and problem solving. Mathematics contributes to many other subjects of the curriculum. Other subjects can provide the opportunity to develop and enhance mathematical thinking skills and knowledge. Mathematics also makes a significant contribution to the development of Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. Pupils will be involved in activities which promote the skills of managing information, solving problems and being creative, whilst developing their abilities of working with others and self management.

*The more that you read, the more things you will know.*

*The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.*

### **USING ICT [Information and Communications Technology]**

Computer literacy is an essential skill in the modern world and all children have the chance to work with computers and digital equipment. The Diamond has a full complement of networked computers and iPads on which children can access their work with their own unique username and password. Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard and all classes are timetabled weekly to the ICT suite.

The children are taught how to use ICT tools safely to find, explore, analyse and present information. Frequent opportunities are given to produce work in a variety of word processing, presentation and database packages. Children develop research skills through the use of filtered internet provision. At the end of Key Stage 2 children have the opportunity to gain their CCEA ICT Accreditation Certificate.

### **THE ARTS [including Art and Design, Drama and Music]**

Art stimulates originality and imagination. During their time in school, children are introduced to a wide range of creative activities including drawing, painting, modelling, printing and needlecraft.

The school has a range of tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments that are used by classes for creative music and appreciation. The pupils have occasion to showcase their musical and acting talents at school events such as Grandparents Day, Harvest Thanksgiving, Christmas Plays and the Summer Concert. Children from P1 to P7 are trained for the annual Ballymena Festival and gain tremendously from this experience, helping to develop not only their communication skills, but also their confidence and esteem.



### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education [PE] is viewed as an important part of the curriculum in which we aim to develop agility, physical co-ordination and the ability to express feeling through movement. P1-P4 PE lessons are complemented by weekly coaching visits by an Irish Football Association [IFA] representative or by volunteers from Coaching for Christ. P4-P7 have the added benefit of swimming lessons for one term each year with many developing their skills and gaining distance awards by the end of the year.

### THE WORLD AROUND US [Geography, History, Science and Technology]

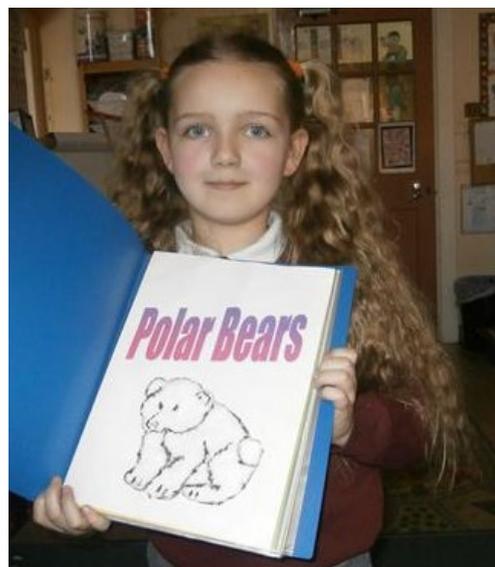
Each class uses a 'themed' approach to The World Around Us. These themes fire the children's curiosity about the past and help them consider how the past influences the present and what past societies were like. The children develop knowledge of places and environments throughout the world and explore what products are used for and the needs of the people who use them. This topic work promotes investigative and problem-solving skills and the school aims to use the immediate local area to extend the children's knowledge and experience.

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education enables children to acquire a knowledge and understanding of religious insights, beliefs and practices, so that they are able to continue in, or come to, their own beliefs. Collective worship is also conducted two mornings per week at the School Assembly.

### PDMU [Personal Development and Mutual Understanding]

PDMU aims to give children the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident and independent lives, and become informed and responsible citizens. They also learn basic rules for keeping themselves healthy and safe and for behaving well. Good citizenship is encouraged by our BEAM rewards programme where Behaviour, Endeavour, Attitude and Manners are acknowledged publicly in front of the entire school. The emphasis at The Diamond is always on the positive approach of encouragement and praise.



# Other Activities



## FRIDAY CLUBS

Friday afternoons are always a cause of great excitement for the P4 to P7 pupils. The children are split into four groups where they follow a ten week session in a variety of activities which may include Scripture Union, iPad Club, Greenfingers, Textiles, French/Spanish, Dance and Drama, Technology, First Aid and Cookery.

## AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS

A range of extra curricular activities are provided for children from P4 upwards. During the year pupils are able to take part in:

- Choir
- Netball / Hockey
- Cycling Proficiency [last term for P7 only]
- Football

When the opportunity arises the school believes in giving children the opportunity to compete in a competitive situation. The boys compete in local Ballymena Primary School 7-side tournaments and the girls in the Netball League.

Cycling proficiency teaches our children how to ride safely and responsibly on the road.





### **MUSIC TUITION**

We provide tuition for piano, singing, clarinet, flute and saxophone. These lessons are offered to children in P4-P7 [subject to availability]. Expert private and Education Authority tutors provide the tuition and prepare children for ABRSM/Trinity Guildhall examinations when ready.

### **SCHOOL TRIP**

In both P6 and P7 children have the option of going on a residential school trip. These trips may take the form of an activity-based stay or an historical based trip.

### **EDUCATIONAL VISITS**

We are fortunate to be able to organise many exciting trips/visitors during school time, as these stimulate interest and enhance our children's educational experience. Details of the trips are given to parents beforehand and parental permission is always sought. We are also able to hold video conference calls using Skype to allow interaction with people/agencies further afield whose work or life relates to the theme in the classroom.

### **CHARITIES**

Our school is involved in helping others and each year the children support charities through specific fundraising events.

# Our Local Environment



At The Diamond we place a huge emphasis upon environmental work and are proud to display the Eco-Schools Green Flag which is a recognised and respected eco-label for environmental performance. The Eco-Schools programme aims to improve the local and global environment through education and practical action and the pupils are actively involved in all aspects of the ecological improvements carried out.

At the beginning of every new school year the School Eco-Committee is voted on by their peers and meet regularly to produce an action plan specifying steps to be carried out by both pupils and staff.



## THE DIAMOND SHINES

'The Diamond Shines' is our slogan and we aim to achieve this by:

- ◆ Saving Energy
- ◆ Healthy Lifestyles
- ◆ Ideas to keep our school tidy
- ◆ Natural Resources re-used
- ◆ Encouraging others to be eco-friendly and
- ◆ Showing respect for school property.

Each of the classrooms has a different area of responsibility with set targets for evaluating and monitoring progress. Collectively we are focusing on promoting healthy living, reducing litter and waste management.



We have colour-coded our bins to match those collected by the council and so each classroom now has a black bin for general waste, a blue bin for paper waste and a brown bio-bin for food waste. We also have regular litter picking sessions to keep the school grounds tidy.

The children take great pleasure in feeding the birds over the winter months and planting produce and flowers in the raised beds using our very own compost! A water butt has been installed to collect excess rainwater to water these plants.

We have reduced our energy consumption by using low energy lighting and the installation of solar panels on our roof allowing us to generate our own power.



As well as recycling paper and cardboard, collection bags are available all year round from the School Office for recycling unwanted clothes. Parents are encouraged to send old batteries to school for proper disposal and we are happy to receive old children's books [in good condition] that may be incorporated into our Accelerated Reading Library or class reading resources.

We have close connections with the Ballymena Foodbank and were in fact the first local primary school to sign up to provide regular donations. Children are encouraged to bring in non-perishable items of food and toiletries and place them in the container box in the corridor. These are then collected by Foodbank representatives and taken to the depot for distribution to families in need.

We are developing a conservation area within the school grounds and hope to encourage biodiversity with our addition of a 'bird village', bug hotel and a small wire-covered fish pond.

Within the classroom our children are actively encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles and pupils are well-informed on how to keep fit in body and mind. They are taught about the importance of a eating healthy diet, the importance of regular exercise and guarding their mental attitudes.

We often make use of recycled materials in our art and design classes and examples of our creative work are displayed around the school. Parents and visitors to the school are kept up-to-date with all our environmental initiatives in our dedicated eco-corridor leading down to the Assembly Hall.

# In and Around The Diamond



## THE SCHOOL TIMETABLE

9:00am	Outdoor Play
9:10am	School commences
10:45am	Break
11:00am	Midday Classes
12:00pm	Quiet Reading Time
12:15pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Afternoon Classes
2:00pm	P1, P2 finish P3 finish [Wed & Fri]
3:00pm	P4-P7 finish
3:05pm	Selected after-school clubs
4:00pm	Clubs finish



### HEALTHY BREAK POLICY

We want to encourage healthy eating among both pupils and staff. It is our policy to only eat fruit, vegetables or bread-based products at break time and only drink milk or water. Milk is available to order on a termly basis and water is available all day. Children should bring an empty water bottle to school every day.

### LUNCH PROVISION

School meals are available each day in school and each family is provided with a monthly menu plan. If you prefer your child can bring a packed lunch and arrangements are made for these to be eaten in the classroom.

### HOMEWORK

All children undertake homework to help consolidate and reinforce the learning in class. It will encompass reading, learning or written work in any of the subject areas, but concentrates mostly on the basic skills of reading, writing, spelling and mathematics.

### WORKING TOGETHER

At The Diamond, we want to work with parents and the community for the benefit of all our children. We aim to keep parents and families well informed in all aspects of school life and the door is always open if you have any questions.





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