



# **Preschool Prospectus**

# Welcome

Dear Parent/ Carer,

The staff and I are very conscious of the trust that you place in us when you consider enrolling your child at Bangor Abbey Preschool Centre.

Bangor Abbey Preschool Centre is a preschool centre with children always at the heart of it. We love to share in your child's educational journey through our motto of PLAY. LEARN. GROW.

In our preschool every child is treated as precious, and we aim to support the development and ability of each and every child as an individual.

We believe strongly in a close school and home partnership, so that we can do the very best for every child in our care. We aim to develop the whole child through our outstanding setting, both indoors and outdoors but also with an excellent staff team.

This prospectus is intended to give you a small glimpse into life at Bangor Abbey. It outlines what we stand for and what we can offer your child as the start of their educational journey.

It is my personal passion that every child who enters our doors will leave that little bit more creative, imaginative, explorative and passionate about learning through play.

I very much look forward to welcoming you into our Bangor Abbey Preschool family.

# Introduction

We are a preschool centre in Clandeboye Primary School in Bangor Co. Down. The preschool was established over 40 years ago and has had a few different locations until finding our permanent home within the primary school in 2012.

The preschool is owned and lead by Mrs Nicola Coulter (BA Hons). Mrs Coulter is a qualified Early Years Specialist and teacher with vast experience in all areas of early childhood care and education. Mrs Coulter is the winner of Families First Nursery Teacher of the Year! 🙌

At Bangor Abbey we are funded by the Education Board and also governed by Social Services. All reports from both agencies can be viewed online. We currently have a very good report from the Education Authority in which we were praised for our use of natural learning materials and staff interactions. Some quotes from this inspection:

"Wonderful opportunities for learning in all areas of the preschool curriculum with language acquisition a particular strength"

"interactions and involvement of staff with the children of high quality"

"good links and very close relationships with parents, a real family feel"

"comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding of children"

Our latest report from Social Services was superb quoting us to be above standard in many areas including facilitating children with additional needs and pastoral care.

At Bangor Abbey we offer, 2 preschool classes (fully funded by the EA)  
Our maximum class size is 16.

We operate out of bright and very spacious classrooms which are fully accessible to both classes. The outdoor facilities we avail of include a large playground, woodland area and play area and also the first ever free flowing large pond in Northern Ireland which is fabulous for pond dipping and exploring the nature in and around. We also have a separate Bangor Abbey preschool area in which includes, a large play frame, digging patches, mud kitchens, stage area, a boat, outdoor library, outdoor sand and building areas and also a loose parts area to name but a few. Being within a primary school allows us the use of other wonderful resources,

including the PE hall which we use once a week throughout the year and arrange physical development and ball skills in conjunction with North Down Borough Council. There is also the school library which we visit once a week for a story telling session. We have close links to St Andrews Church next door and have numerous community opportunities. We also hold many of our plays and graduation ceremony here.

We have a full sensory room here used by all the children as well as specifically by any children with additional needs. This room is a dark room lit only by soft lighting. We have bubble lamp, light box, sensory table, hide outs, dark tents and lots of wonderful sensory resources and books.

All of these resources allow us to provide every child with a wealth of learning opportunities and experiences everyday. We pride ourselves on our high adult to child ratios and currently have 6 fully qualified members of staff who are all extremely passionate about childhood care and education.

At Bangor Abbey we currently hold awards with The Woodland Trust, Eco Schools, Forest Schools NI and we are also a registered Gold award winner as an International School. We are currently working towards our gold award of Excellence! We recently won 2 Families First Awards, Best Preschool for Outdoor Learning and Best Nursery Teacher!





# Our Ethos

***“We are a child centred, care and education, school based setting, striving to deliver high quality inclusive environments both indoors and outdoors for preschool aged children through rigorous self evaluation. We are passionate about natural materials and encouraging learning through children’s instinctive curiosity and sense of awe using an explorative approach to play.”***

## Our Aims and Objectives

- To provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment which enhances child development and education.
- Promote the way in which children learn through play and first hand experiences
- Act as positive role models
- Plan effectively for the needs of all children through the Preschool Curriculum NI
- We will encourage children's confidence and self esteem and prepare them for the next stage in their learning
- We consider each child as an individual and value the qualities each brings to the preschool
- To work in partnership with parents and carers
- Continually reflect on our practice as a setting and as a staff team to ensure continual improvement
- Implement our policies and procedures consistently and review them regularly



## Preschool

We offer 26 funded preschool places available to all children in their immediate year before primary school. These places are applied for from January of the year they would be due to start. We hold an open day in December where advice and help with the application process will be available. Your child's birth certificate must be left into us before the closing date.

The preschool operates Monday to Friday 8:50am to 1:20pm with children attending every day. With the option of breakfast club and afterschool club available (subject to demand)

All staff work in line with the NI Preschool Curricular Guidance. We have very strong links with all our parents and highly value their input and involvement in preschool life. At Bangor Abbey we operate an open door policy and welcome any prospective parents to call and see us anytime that suits them.

In our preschool the children will learn through play in a carefully structured programme, suitable to their age and stage of development. We aim to provide a happy and secure environment where the child will experience success and have fun while learning many new concepts. The play activities fall into the following main areas:

Imaginative Play - eg house, dressing up, hospital, garden centre, shop, Hairdressers, builders yard, dentist, school, post office

Natural materials - eg water, sand, clay, peat, bark and an array of sensory materials

Physical Play - eg climbing, balancing on our outdoor play frame and balance beams, our bikes and trikes, throwing and catching, ball skills, exploring our outdoor woodland area.

Construction Materials - both large and small, Lego, magnetic polydron, wooden blocks, builders blocks, ice blocks, to name only a few

Sand and water play - exploring the properties on both through capacity, weight, going through, imagination, fine motor skills, small world

Table Top - eg matching and sorting games, jigsaws etc

Library - picture books, story books and CDs, non-fiction books

Sensory Room - area containing a wide selection of sensory resources

They are categorised under SIX AREAS of learning:

### Physical Development & Movement

#### Opportunities to:

Gain body control and confidence

Develop social awareness and manipulate skills

Develop awareness of safety routines

Develop sense of health and well-being

### Language Development

#### Opportunities to:

Develop language skills and self expression

Extend and enrich vocabulary

Develop concentration and listening skills

Enjoy rhymes, songs, stories and books

### Early Mathematical Experiences

#### Opportunities to:

Understand early mathematical concepts through play activities and daily routines

Develop early logic and reasoning skills

Develop observation and discrimination skills

Participate in number rhymes

### The Arts

#### Opportunities to:

Develop creativity and imagination through play

Enjoy exploring and experimenting with materials, tools, colours and junk materials

Promote the child's abilities to represent their ideas and feelings through a range of media

Enjoy listening and responding to media





## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

### Opportunities to:

Develop self-esteem, confidence and independence.

Develop secure relationships and an awareness of the needs of others

Develop a sense of responsibility

Develop positive attitudes to learning

## The World Around Us

### Opportunities to:

Enhance the child's natural curiosity about how things work

Explore and observe the natural environment

Promote a sense of caring for the environment

Develop understanding of the four seasons, weather, plants and animals

Develop an early awareness of Information Technology

Become aware of their world and the roles that people play in the community.



# Observation and Reports

We are continually observing the children in preschool in order to plan appropriately for each individual child's education. This includes observations in all six areas of preschool child development in accordance with the Preschool Curriculum NI. Parents have access to all observations on request however we do have 3 reports and consultation times throughout the year where your child's development will be discussed.

In October/November we have a settling in report and consultation, this is a basic report concentrating on how your child has settled in with us.

The second report is in February/March where we go into detail in each of your child's area of development and discuss any possible targets.

In June we compile a preschool transition report which is the report that is passed to your child's Y1 teacher and this will give all the vital information to help your child move to Y1.





## Communication with Parents

We communicate with our parents through a digital app called Dojo. This app builds a learning journal for each child. Staff post pictures videos and comments daily to each child's journal. Perfect for those parents of children who tell them they 'nothing' today! On the app there is also the facility to directly message your child teacher at any time.

Being an eco school means we try to keep our paper usage to a minimum. All letters, newsletters and notes from a teacher will all be done via the app meaning they can't get lost and you always have them to look back and check.



# Outdoor Play Ethos

At Bangor Abbey we are huge advocates for children playing and learning outdoors in nature. We have one of the largest outdoor preschool play facilities in NI which comprises of a 1 acre plot of natural grassland and forest where play stations have been added. We have mud kitchens, water play areas, a train, a boat, sand hut, digging and planting areas, bug hotels, a very large play frame with slide house and climbing facilities....and there is also a real car to explore!! All of these facilities allow us to be able to offer the same curriculum when we are outdoors as when we are in....a very unique quality. Most importantly every child just loves spending time there! We provide each child with their own puddle suit for their year with us so that enables to be out all year around!!





# Forest School

We are very excited to be a forest school setting. Using our amazing 1 acre outdoor site which includes a small wooded area we love carrying out our forest school activities. Here is a brief example.





Forest School Awards - The outreach programme for Learning Without Walls

## CAMOUFLAGE



The birds cannot look when the worms are being hidden





Forest School Awards - The outreach programme for Learning Without Walls

## STAYING SAFE



We put out our boundary flags for us to stay inside





Forest School Awards - The outreach programme for Learning Without Walls

## RULES



We listen to our rules – 1 whistle = stop, 2 whistles = back to base and 3<sup>rd</sup> rule = have fun and learn. We also remember to respect nature





Forest School Awards - The outreach programme for Learning Without Walls

## SCAVENGER HUNT



Today we start by a big stick and small stick. This allows us to explore our Forest School





Forest School Awards - The outreach programme for Learning Without Walls

## LEAVE NO TRACE



We have to tidy up afterwards to make it safe for wildlife





## **Additional Needs Provision**

At Bangor Abbey Preschool our additional needs policy states that every child is treated as an individual and this statement is across all our children including those who may be identified as having additional needs prior to coming to us or during their time with us.

Any child coming to us with additional needs will meet with Mrs Coulter (SENCO) to discuss in detail any requirements and provisions that we need to make for that particular child and a plan is put in place and reviewed regularly in consultation with parents.

During the school year it is our first priority is to identify those children in a class who are displaying difficulties. Once this has been identified, evidence of progress is collated and Mrs Coulter who is our Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) will meet with the parents to discuss support.

The provision for Special Educational and Additional Needs will be reviewed and assessed and a decision will then be taken as to whether the child should/should not be placed on the Special Educational Needs Register.

The identified educational needs of each child will be catered for by his/her key worker in consultation with Mrs Coulter. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Group Education Plan (GEP) is prepared for all those requiring additional help.

There is close liaison with parents and children at all stages. Bangor Abbey Preschool also caters for the needs of Gifted and Talented children. Play is differentiated and designed to be challenging.

If at any stage during your child's time with us you become concerned or your child begins support with any outside agency, please let us know.

## **Sensory Room**

We have a completely separate sensory room used by all children in small groups or individual children when needed.

This room has opportunities for calm with bubble lamps, a light box, a hideout and reading nook lit with fairy lights, dark tents with glow in the dark accessories. We also have opportunities to swing, spin, bounce and a sensory footpath! A truly magical sensory experience.

## **Full Time Preschool**

We are a full time preschool and so our children stay for lunch. Your child can have a hot school dinner provided by our canteen at a charge determined by EA (Free school meals applies where applicable) or they can bring a healthy packed lunch.

We adopt a family service routine during our dinner time where children are encourage to help out with getting the table ready and clearing up when they have finished. Staff eat with the children and serve the children dinner to replicate a family dinner time.

It is a wonderful opportunity for relaxed conversations and opportunities for children try foods they do not normally eat. Current menus can be found on the EA website, preschool uses the single choice menu.

# Prepre Places

We are able to offer some prepre places each year. These children are integrated into our preschool classes and are a wonderful introduction for children coming to us for preschool.



The curriculum and expectations for prepre children is very different from preschool, however they benefit considerably from having the preschool curriculum happen alongside.

Our prepre hours are 9:00 - 1:30, prepre children bring a packed lunch daily. Each child will settle in gradually and when ready they will stay the full session.

# General Information

UNIFORM (Only available from Signature Schools, Balloo, Bangor)

- Yellow polo shirt with logo
- Burgundy sweatshirt with logo
- Burgundy joggers
- Velcro trainers or shoes
- Outdoor burgundy coat (optional but advisable)
- Wellies (to stay in school)

PRESCHOOL DAY

- 9:00am to 1:30pm

COMMUNICATION

- We aim to be as paper free as we can so we use an app called Dojo. Here we will share photos of your child and what they have been up to in preschool (with your permission) and also keep you up to date with important information.
- We provide a monthly newsletter to keep you informed of what lies ahead that month in preschool life
- We have a parents board in our hallway which contains all the information you will need about our topics and play planning.
- Our PTA also communicate using the parent notice board and Dojo.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

- Please view our latest admissions criteria online at [www.eani.org.uk](http://www.eani.org.uk)

## A final note.....

No prospectus can even come close to convey the real atmosphere or where we go above and beyond the curriculum. So please visit us to witness first hand the joy filled, positive and stimulating environment we promote daily.

There are always new and exciting initiatives happening at Bangor Abbey Preschool as part of our continual development to maintain our high standards. Please check out our facebook page and website for regular updates on whats happening and on all our recent achievements.

On behalf of myself and the entire staff team may I personally take this opportunity to wish you and your child a very happy and successful start to education wherever that journey may begin.

We very much hope that we can welcome you into the Bangor Abbey Preschool family.

With every best wish for the future,

*Mrs NJ Coulter*

Head Teacher/ Proprietor