



Cavehill Primary School Prospectus

Working Together
Towards Excellence



Welcome to **Cavehill Primary School**

Thank you for considering Cavehill Primary as a suitable school for your child. Our school has a very long history as it opened in 1844 and has served the people of the local area since then. Our new building opened in 2004 and has greatly enhanced educational provision in North Belfast with bright, well-resourced and spacious facilities and environmentally friendly features built into the design.

At Cavehill Primary School we are very aware of the trust that you have placed in us and we will always strive to ensure that we cater for your child's needs. We are confident that children who join us at Cavehill will have a positive primary school experience and develop the skills required to equip them for their next stage of education and later life.

We aim to provide the best possible environment in which high quality teaching takes place, and where every child learns to the best of his/her ability. We are not just providers of subjects and skills; our aim is to help the whole child to develop. In Cavehill we place special emphasis on social development, self-discipline and taking responsibility.

Cavehill is a controlled, co-educational primary school which caters for P1-7 age pupils and currently has an enrolment number of 406 pupils.

We aim to provide a programme of activities and experiences for our pupils which embrace the NI curriculum and foster a love of learning, enabling each child to attain their full potential – academically, morally, socially and physically.

I believe it is essential that children are happy and secure in order that they can succeed academically. Therefore, we strive to ensure that your child receives a high-level,

modern standard of education whilst being cared for and respected as an individual by the entire school staff. We want children to enjoy being in school and we will do all that we can to create a caring and stimulating environment in which the children respect each other and learn to co-operate with their peers.

At Cavehill, we firmly believe that partnership between home and school is vitally important. Active communication is essential in order that our children can develop into secure, happy and socially well-adjusted young people who are proud of their achievements.

I trust that you will be very happy with all that we do in Cavehill but please remember that we are here to help; and if you have any queries or concerns then please do not hesitate to make an appointment to speak with us.

This prospectus only provides a snapshot into life at Cavehill. The best way to experience our welcoming, friendly and child-centred ethos is to arrange to visit us or attend our Open Day for prospective parents (further details will be available from the school office).

I trust that your child will have a very happy and successful time at Cavehill Primary School and look forward to a long and productive partnership between home and school.

Yours sincerely

S Orr
(Principal)

School Aims

Central to the philosophy of this school is the recognition of every child as an individual who should be given regular opportunities to experience success.

The ultimate goal of the school is to help each child achieve his/her true potential in terms of intellectual, personal, social and physical development.

- ▶ To ensure that the school is a place where parents, teachers and children work together to develop each child's potential.
- ▶ To provide a broad and balanced curriculum, with particular emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy, enabling the child to take advantage of every learning opportunity.
- ▶ To ensure that all our children are aware that they are part of a larger society and to equip them to become independent and self-confident, taking responsibility for their future.
- ▶ To acknowledge that children have different levels of ability and to make provision for these factors by careful matching of work to ability.
- ▶ To provide a caring, stimulating and imaginative environment where the highest standards of attainment and behaviour are expected and where each child can achieve success and satisfaction.

Principal

Mr S Orr M Ed, B.Ed. (Hons), PQH (NI)

Chairman of the Board of Governors

Mr B Hunter

Area Board

Information about the Belfast Education and Library Board and the services it provides may be obtained from:

Belfast Education and Library Board
40 Academy Street
Belfast BT1 2NQ
Tel: 028 9056 4000



The School Day

Children arriving early will be supervised in the classroom by their class teachers from 8.45

8.00 - 8.45	Breakfast Club
8.55	Official start of the school day
10.30 - 10.45	Infant break
10.45 - 11.00	Senior break
12.15 - 13.00	Lunch
13.55	End of day for P1 -P3 End of day for P4 (Friday)
14.55	End of day for P5 - P7 (Monday - Friday) End of day for P4 (Monday - Thursday)

A range of extra curricular clubs is provided after school.

Uniform & Jewellery

It is school policy that all children wear our agreed school uniform. This has a positive effect on behaviour and the child's self-esteem and we encourage them to take pride in doing so.

The uniform consists of the following items:

Girls

- ▶ School sweatshirt
- ▶ White polo shirt
- ▶ Grey skirt or pinafore
- ▶ Dark-coloured, 'sensible' shoes
- ▶ Summer Dress - red/white check
- ▶ White/grey socks
- ▶ Plain grey tights

Boys

- ▶ School sweatshirt
- ▶ White polo shirt
- ▶ Grey trousers
- ▶ Grey socks
- ▶ Dark-coloured, 'sensible' shoes
- ▶ Summer - grey cargo shorts

All articles should be marked with the child's name. Please note that while we do all that we can to ensure that clothing does not go missing and try to locate anything that has been lost, school is not responsible for, nor will we offer to replace any lost item.

Due to Health and Safety concerns it is the policy of the school that **no item of jewellery other than a watch and stud earrings will be permitted** and children will have to remove any items that do not conform to our policy. All jewellery must be removed for P.E. We appreciate the support of parents regarding this matter.

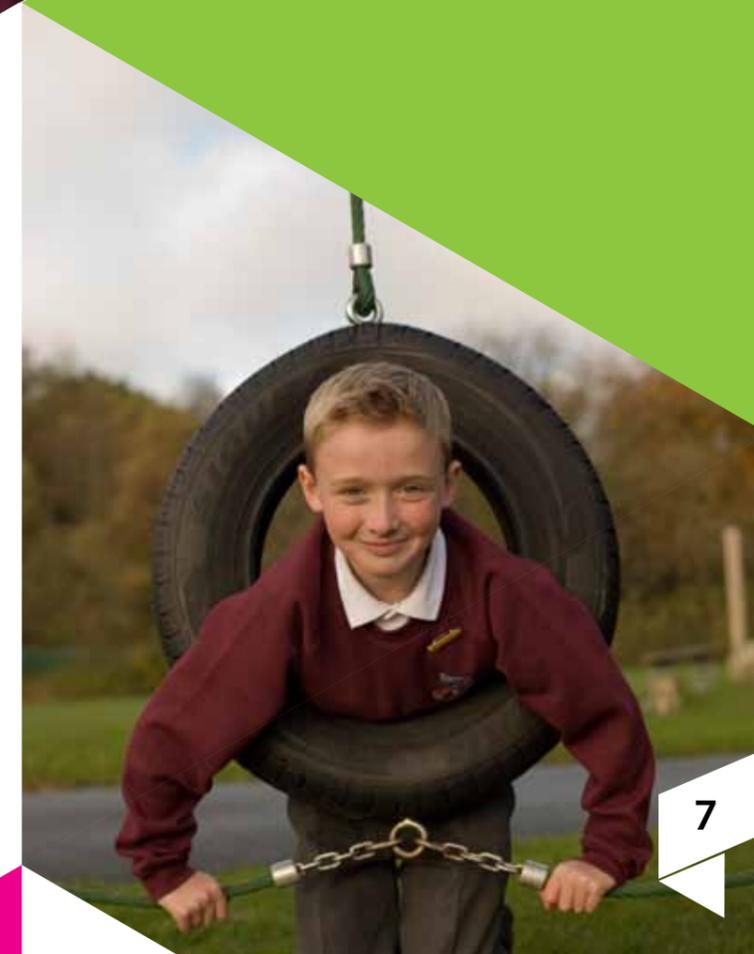
Please note that children should not bring items of value to school. The school will not take responsibility for loss or damage to any article.

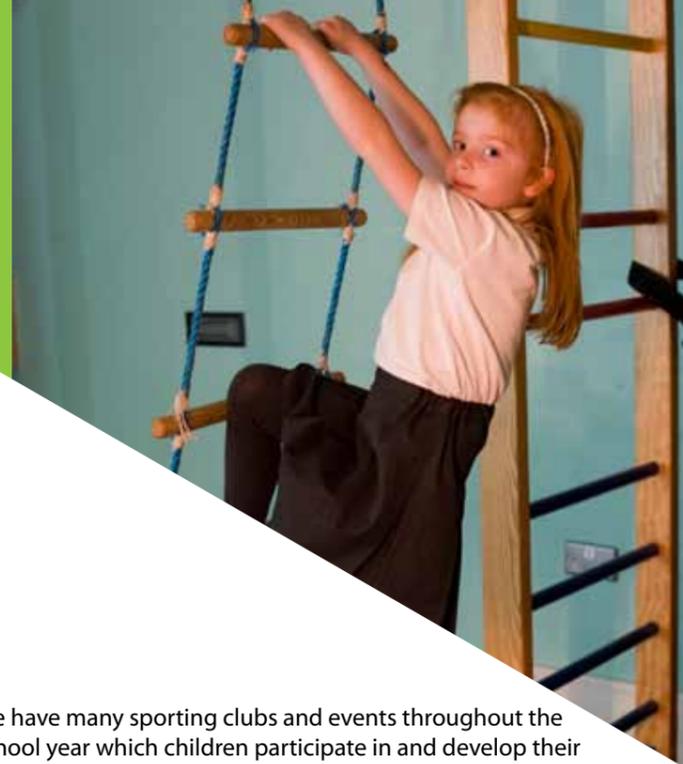


Absences

Parents should inform school on the first day of a pupil's absence and, on return, must bring a note of explanation signed by the parent/guardian. If a child has to leave school early, a note or appointment card must be provided and parents should collect a young child from the general office. We ask that, when possible, appointments with doctors, dentists etc. are made outside school hours to minimise disruptions to your child's learning and school day.

The school cannot sanction holidays during term time unless there are very exceptional reasons and such cases will be judged on their own merits (this may involve consultation with the Educational Welfare Officer); nor can teachers be expected to provide work where this advice is ignored. Such holidays can place children at an educational disadvantage when they return to school and therefore should be avoided.





Curriculum

The school is committed to providing pupils with access to a broad, balanced and relevant programme of study centred on meeting the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum as set out in the following areas:-

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

All these subjects and related activities are statutory and therefore compulsory. Through this curriculum, all children develop their cross-curricular skills of Communication, Using Mathematics, ICT, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.

Literacy

At Cavehill Literacy is taught on a cross-curricular basis in practical and investigative contexts. Talking and Listening skills are fostered and developed through relevant and meaningful activities throughout the school.

Reading is highly valued and central to the ethos of the school. A structured and varied reading programme is well established at all levels, teaching children the linguistic aspects of reading, promoting fluency, whilst encouraging an understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of literature.

Writing is constantly developed throughout our pupils' time at Cavehill. The technical aspects of writing are taught using a structured approach that analyses, shares and models areas of writing excellence. Creative skills are developed by encouraging children to draft, edit and publish their work using stimulating and interactive contexts and for differing audiences and purposes.

In all Literacy activities, children are encouraged to have fun whilst acquiring new and exciting skills and at the same time developing their own ideas, knowledge and confidence.

Numeracy

Children are encouraged to develop a love and appreciation for maths and a sound understanding of mathematical principles through first-hand investigation and problem-solving in real life contexts. We also work hard to ensure that the basic table facts and methods of computation are clearly taught and emphasised.

The place of mental mathematics is highly valued as it promotes quick and independent thinking as well as being an invaluable life skill.

Children are provided with opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to practical activities and therefore understand the relevance of using mathematics in every life.

Information & Communications Technology (ICT)

ICT is an integral part of our curriculum and the school is extremely well-equipped with a wide range of ICT resources including interactive whiteboards, computers, Apple TV and an extensive number of iPads.

Children have computers in each classroom and we are in the enviable position where we also have a fully equipped computer suite. Pupils have opportunities to develop word-processing skills and use programmes relevant to the curriculum and class topics. They are given a variety of experiences to enable them to develop knowledge, skills and understanding of ICT in its various forms. We ensure

that pupils are taught about the importance of using the internet safely. Controlled, filtered and closely supervised access to the internet allows the pupils to develop research and communication skills within a meaningful context.

The World Around Us (History, Geography, Science and Technology)

The World Around Us allows children to explore a range of meaningful topics and develop their thinking and self-management skills within an interesting and motivating real life context. Through a process of active learning in Science and Technology, the children will be encouraged to develop lively, enquiring minds and to acquire scientific skills which will enable them to explore and interpret their world.

Geographical and historical investigations and interpretation of their findings are provided and children are encouraged to make use of their local area and develop a sense of responsibility for looking after the environment. Opportunities to develop their understanding of the past, their own country and other parts of the world are provided.

At Cavehill we recognise the importance of widening our pupils' vision of the world beyond their immediate locality and therefore participate in various events such as European Languages Day. Various class trips promote environmental awareness as does our Eco-friendly building and active Eco-Committee.

Physical Education

Children are offered the opportunity to acquire competence in a wide range of physical skills. Our PE programme includes a skills based games programme, gymnastics, movement/dance and swimming. We are fortunate to have a sports hall and excellent outdoor facilities which the children use extensively for this subject.

We have many sporting clubs and events throughout the school year which children participate in and develop their expertise.

Children in P5, P6 and P7 attend swimming lessons at the Grove Leisure Centre. All children are required to participate in these lessons as they are a statutory element of the NI Curriculum. Transport is provided and a minimal tuition cost is covered by parents.

Religious Education

The school provides Religious Education in accordance with the agreed syllabus developed by the main churches. This is provided in the form of assembly and/or class periods. Parents may exercise their rights of conscience to withdraw children from this by informing the Principal and signing a written declaration to this effect.

We will endeavour to provide alternative accommodation for children whose parents have requested that they be withdrawn from assembly. Pupils will remain with their class but be given other work to do during RE lessons. We have a number of Church visitors and organisations who come into school throughout the year to support the delivery of this subject area.

The Arts (Music, Drama, Art and Design)

Children are provided with wide and varied opportunities to express themselves creatively and expressively. Opportunities in addition to the normal classroom music teaching include:

Instrumental Tuition

Tuition in Brass and Strings is delivered throughout the year by Belfast School of Music tutors for an additional charge. In addition to this, Brass and Strings instrumental groups meet regularly for rehearsals and play in school assemblies, services, concerts and festivals.

School Choir

Our choir rehearse regularly and participate in assemblies, services, competitions and carol singing.

School Plays

At various times throughout the year, the children have opportunities to perform in public. These events are enjoyed by children, parents and relatives and help us to further our aim of promoting the self-esteem of all our pupils.

Art and Design

Opportunities are provided in Art and Design to explore and use a range of materials, tools and processes such as: drawing, painting, printmaking, textiles and use of malleable materials. Children produce 2D and 3D pieces of art and are encouraged to discuss and make informed comments on their work and the work of others.

PDMU

(Personal Development and Mutual Understanding)

PDMU helps children learn about themselves and others, encouraging every child to become personally, emotionally, socially and physically effective to lead healthy, safe and fulfilled lives. Confidence, independence and self-esteem are promoted through our positive school ethos and further developed through a range of activities such as discussion, debate, role-play and Circle Time in PDMU lessons.

Children are encouraged to explore and understand their feelings and emotions, to respect others, manage conflict effectively, make healthy choices and contribute positively to their class, school and wider communities. Teachers guide pupils to become tolerant and responsible citizens who are aware of the impact their behaviour has on others and the environment.

Special Educational Needs

We aim to support the learning needs of all our pupils, whether they are exceptionally gifted or whether they have particular academic difficulties. Differentiated work is provided each day, in every class, at all levels of ability.

Individual Education Programmes are designed for those children showing specific needs or areas requiring particular support. These programmes offer a sharp focus

on the needs of the individuals to ensure that appropriate progress is made. As each child is given the opportunity to experience success, self-esteem and confidence can be developed.

The Belfast Education and Library Board and their various outreach support units provide additional support and advice. Pupil progress is regularly monitored and parental consultation and home school links are valued as key features of this process.

Pupils' special educational needs are initially identified by the class teacher as the result of observation or information provided by parents or other agencies. Children may be withdrawn individually or in small groups, or may be helped by specialist outreach support teachers. Parents of children assessed as needing further help are fully involved in the process of referral to those outside agencies who are available to assist the development of individual pupils.

Complaints in Connection with the Curriculum

Complaints in connection with the curriculum should be made initially to the Principal. The school's complaints policy is sent home periodically to parents and is also available from the office and online.

In the first instance, parents should contact the school secretary to arrange an appointment with the class teacher. If this matter is not resolved at that stage, then a meeting with the Head of Key Stage or the Vice Principal can be arranged and then, if necessary, a meeting with the Principal can follow. The vast majority of matters can be easily resolved if they are addressed promptly.

Organisation of Education

Children are arranged in year groups as far as is possible, with progression from Year 1 to Year 7 in successive years. It may sometimes be necessary to have composite classes where there would otherwise be too many children for one class. Children are taught in classes appropriate to their year group and within the class they may be taught as a whole class, in groups or individually.





Community Links

Children at Cavehill are given opportunities to interact with the wider community through a variety of projects. The range and scope of these projects will vary from year to year depending on the opportunities available. In recent years school has had links with: local churches, local primary and post primary schools, North Belfast Food Bank, The Northern Ireland Hospice, MacMillan Cancer, Sustrans, Eco-Schools, North Belfast Active Communities etc.

Trips and Visits

Children enjoy and benefit from a range of educational visits throughout the year linked to topic work or seasonal events. In addition to this, we also have many visitors who come into school to speak with the children and share from their life experiences. There is a regular residential trip offered to P7 pupils.

Homework

Pupils are regularly set homework, both learning and written with the expectation that this is completed punctually. As homework is important, it is crucial that parents take an interest in this by asking relevant questions and enquiring about what their child has been doing at school. If possible, pupils should be provided with a quiet place to work with minimal distractions. Parents will receive annual information about homework from their child's class teacher regarding length, type and expected standard and a copy of our homework policy may be obtained by contacting the school office.

Activities and Clubs

We have a broad range of after school activities which vary on a termly basis and are determined by teacher expertise

and the children's interests. These form an important part of school life and help to foster the self-esteem of our pupils. Previous activities offered include Football, Rugby, Gardening, Film Club, Cross Country, Maths Club, Art, Cookery, Short Tennis, 2-3 Club, Brass Group, Strings Group, Cycling Proficiency and Musical Theatre.

School Dinners

Freshly cooked meals are provided by the School Meals Service and are served on a daily basis to children from P1 to P7. The menus are always nutritionally balanced and very popular! The Belfast Education and Library Board set the cost annually and dinner money should be brought to school on a Monday morning to cover the entire week. If your child has any special dietary requirements e.g. food allergies or religious observance then please ensure that you inform the school about this situation.

Free School Meals entitlements are available to qualifying pupils and an application form may be obtained from the school secretary.

Breakfast Club

We have a very popular Breakfast Club operating each morning. Children from P1-7 come to the Canteen from 8.00am and have a healthy breakfast of cereal, toast, fruit juice/ milk etc. for a small daily charge. They then finish in time to go straight to their rooms ready to begin lessons at 8.55am.

Healthy Living

At Cavehill we are conscious of laying foundations for a healthy lifestyle at an early age. Healthy Eating is encouraged through our Healthy Break Policy and pupils may drink water throughout the day to promote concentration. We have links with a variety of programmes such as Sustrans which promotes cycling and scooting to

school. Initiatives including a 'walking bus' have also been used to increase the number of pupils who walk to school. Various visitors to school promote healthy living through puppet shows and multimedia presentations and fun, Fitness Days encourage everyone at Cavehill to get active.

Home School Partnerships

The very supportive and positive partnership between home and school evident at Cavehill is one of the contributing factors to our continuing success. Parents are valued as 'co-educators' with the teachers and as such will be kept well-informed regarding the life and work of the school in general, and their child's progress in particular. We also endeavour to support our parents by providing a range of workshops, classes, courses and opportunities to meet with other parents.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Each parent and teacher is automatically a member of the PTA. A committee is elected bi-annually to co-ordinate the fun events which are organised by the PTA to bring parents, teachers and children closer together so that everyone feels that they belong to the Cavehill 'family'. Fundraising from this very active and committed group has helped to provide many valuable and appreciated resources which greatly enhance the school environment and experiences for our pupils.

Parent Helpers in School

A group of parents regularly give of their time to help with photocopying, as library assistants, helpers on school trips etc. This helps to involve parents more closely with the life of the school and enriches the educational experiences of our pupils.

Pastoral Care/Child Protection

At Cavehill we aim to provide a friendly and caring environment where our children are happy in their learning, highly stimulated and encouraged as they grow and develop.

We aim to raise the self-esteem of all our pupils and to help them feel secure in the knowledge that they are valued and respected members of our school community. This is fostered in several ways, including:

P1 Induction - Buddy Scheme

To ease transition from pre-school to primary, each P1 pupil is paired with a 'buddy' from P6. They meet on two occasions in the child's pre-school year and again on their first day in September. This has proven to be a great success for all the children involved and provided a sensitive start to Cavehill Primary. There are a number of 'Buddy' events throughout the year to encourage and maintain this connection between P1 and the older pupils such as: a Teddy Bears' picnic, end of term parties and our P7 Leavers' Assembly in June.

Behaviour

The school adopts a positive approach to discipline, frequently praising and rewarding children for good behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to behave responsibly by showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other people at all times. Children will be aware of the expectations and consequences concerning their behaviour and staff will follow our Behaviour Policy consistently and fairly. Our ultimate aim for each child is the development of self-discipline. Good behaviour is rewarded through our use of Golden Time each week and by presenting certificates to our Pupil of the Week from each class during our school assemblies.

House Point System

Each child from P5-7 becomes a member of one of our four houses: Stirling, Donegal, Wallace and Chichester. House Points are regularly awarded for good behaviour and work and celebrated routinely in school.

The school actively discourages all forms of bullying and intimidation. We also benefit from the services of an

independent pupil counselling service which operates in the school on a weekly basis.

The school policy on drugs education sets out guidelines on the information to be made available to children through PDMU programmes. It also lays out the procedures to be followed when dealing with those using or misusing drugs on school premises. The school will take an uncompromising stance on the use of tobacco and alcohol, and any illegal drugs on the school premises during school hours.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

A Safeguarding Team is in place comprising the Principal, Designated Governor, Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher. This team is responsible for Child Protection and parents are periodically provided with copies of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is also available online.

We actively promote the importance of keeping safe. Internet Safety training and involvement of other organisations help us to highlight and discuss this important issue with our pupils. We support opportunities provided through Kidscape and Anti-bullying weeks to help teach our pupils how to respond and pass on any concerns that they may have in a safe way. Copies of various Pastoral Care policies are available from the school office on request.

School Council

The School Council is a valued group within the school which ensures that our children are provided with 'a voice' and are encouraged to participate in planning and implementing new initiatives. They meet regularly and pass on their ideas and suggestions to the Principal throughout the school year.

Assessment and Reporting

Teachers continually assess children's progress (formally or informally) as an integral part of the teaching process. Progress is annually monitored using standardised tests in Literacy and Numeracy for P3-7 pupils.

In addition, a range of diagnostic tests are used with those children who are experiencing particular difficulties with their work or who are already receiving special needs support.

Pupils in P4 and 7 complete CCEA assessments in line with statutory requirements.

Children's progress is annually reported to parents in June and a copy of the P7 report is forwarded to the child's post-primary school.

Group curriculum meetings are held in the autumn term to inform parents regarding the curriculum being covered during the year and provide opportunities for teachers to clarify routines and expectations for their class. Formal individual parent interviews are also offered to provide specific information on pupil progress and development.

Charging and Remissions Policy

The school has the right to charge for certain activities, or to waive charges in certain circumstances.

It is the decision of the Board of Governors that a charge should be made for:

- **Loss of or damage to schoolbooks or to the school structure. The cost should not exceed the actual amount needed to replace the damaged items.**
- **Some extra-curricular activities**
- **Instrumental tuition**
- **Educational trips and visits**
- **Swimming tuition**

A copy of the full policy is available from the school.





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