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**seoladh:** Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche  
Bunkers Hill  
Castlewellan  
Co. Down  
BT319EB



## Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche



**Eolas Scoile**  
**School Information**



### Background:

Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche was established in 1999 by a group of parents who wanted their children to be educated through the medium of Irish. Our founder parents had a clear vision for the education they wanted for their children, and the whole school community has worked tirelessly to make their vision a reality. We moved to our purpose built school on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010.

Our aims are:

- That we educate our children to achieve their full potential through the medium of Irish;
- That we value and seek a high level of parental involvement in their children's education;
- That children are bilingual when they leave Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche at the end of Rang 7.



**At Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, we have well established links with other schools and community organisations in the community.**

- Key Stage 2 pupils take part in cross-community soccer, Cumann na mBunscoil Gaelic and hurling tournaments with local primary schools
- Rang 6 and 7 pupils regularly participate in quizzes and activities with St.Malachy's High School, Castlewellan, Shimna Integrated Collage in Newcastle, Bunscoil Mhuire agus Phádraig in Downpatrick an Bunscoil an Iúir, Newry.
- Children from R5-7 take part in an All-Ireland Drama competition Féile Scoildhrámaíochta
- Rang 6 agus 7 pupils are given the opportunity to visit the Donegal Gaeltacht to experience the spoken language amongst native speakers





### Parents:

We have a caring, friendly ethos at Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche where each child is valued and difference is celebrated. We acknowledge the children's successes in School Assemblies and we invite parents to join us for Special Assemblies to celebrate with us on special occasions.

We strive to involve parents in the life of the school. Parents help with breakfast club, after-school activities and assist on school trips and events. Parents are employed in the school as lunchtime supervisors and classroom assistants. Parents are also involved in fundraising and school development, and we have a very active and vibrant parents' group 'Cairde' who organise activities and fundraising events and help subsidise school trips and equipment, and new members are always welcome.

We believe that happy children are more effective learners. Parents are always encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have either with the class teacher or with the principal. Whilst having Irish in the home is not a prerequisite to attend Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, parents are strongly encouraged to avail of the many great Irish language classes that are available in the area in order to be able to support their child's learning.



### Extra-curricular activities:

- Club Bricfeasta - every morning from 8am - 9am
- Afterschool Club - every afternoon from 2pm - 4pm  
Spanish/ French, hurling/camogie, Explorers- STEM activities, Art, Cookery, library and Gaelic football are offered in BBB as afterschool activities
- Club Mata - helps Key Stage 2 pupils improve their Maths skills
- Summer Scheme - having fun and speaking Irish in July
- Choir - Our choir successfully support Rang 3 at First Confessions, Rang 4 at First Holy Communion and perform at other school functions throughout the year
- School Council comprising of representatives from Rang 4 - 7
- Eco-School Committee - pupils work to improve the ecology and efficiency of our school
- An Ghairdín - our very own school garden project







### **Sport:**

At Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, pupils experience a wide range of sporting activities.

- Foundation Stage children participate in a 'Huff agus Puff'- 10 minutes of daily physical exercise before morning lessons
- A coach from the GAA Ulster Council visits once a week for hurling/camogie and Gaelic football.
- Key Stage 2 pupils play Gaelic football, hurling and soccer for the school in local inter-school and Cumann na mBunscoil competitions.
- Promotion of wide range of sports, such as rugby, netball and athletics with guest coaches coming in to school regularly
- Key Stage 2 pupils travel to Down Leisure Centre in Downpatrick every spring for swimming lessons.
- Every year pupils are given the opportunity to participate in the Cycling Proficiency Programme.



In PE, teachers follow a movement and athletics scheme which ensures continuity and progression of core skills and competences.



### **Transition from Naíscoil to Bunscoil:**

Naíscoil Bheanna Boirche is our feeder Nursery. Children who have attended Naíscoil Bheanna Boirche are well prepared for the transition to Rang 1 in Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche. They participate in a language-rich immersion programme in Naíscoil Bheanna Boirche, where they experience a play-based learning environment through the medium of Irish, developing their language skills so that they are ready for the Rang 1 curriculum.

At regular intervals throughout the year the Naíscoil pupils attend storytime and play sessions in the Rang 1 classroom to get to know Máire Boden, the Rang 1 class teacher, Martina Lenaghan and Louise Dornan, the classroom assistants and the current Rang 1 pupils. The transition into Rang 1 is easily made.



We usually have a short induction programme at the start of September to settle the pupils quickly and easily into Rang 1.



## Uniform:

### Our uniform consists of:

- Navy sweatshirt embroidered with the school logo and motto (available from O'Hare's Clothes Shop in Castlewellan, Co. Down);
- Grey trousers, skirt or shorts;
- Green polo shirt embroidered with the school logo and motto;
- Navy school coat (optional);
- Black shoes;
- Girls may wear navy/grey knee socks, navy/grey tights or navy/grey/white ankle socks;
- Girls may wear navy or green gingham dresses in the summer time;
- During periods of cold weather, girls are permitted to wear trousers.

### P.E. uniform consists of:

- Grey/ navy track bottoms, or grey/navy shorts;
  - Suitable trainers
  - Green polo shirt embroidered with the school logo and motto OR school O'Neills jersey (optional)
- Children change for P.E lessons in school



## The School Day:

Class begins at 9.15am. Children are supervised in the clós (playground) from 9.00-9.15am. Parents can avail of our daily breakfast club, pupils can be dropped off at the school from 8.00 am where they will receive a healthy breakfast, which costs £1.50 per morning.

Breaktime is from 10.30-11.00am.

Lunchtime is from 12.15-1.00pm.

At Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, we pride ourselves in our healthy eating policy. Our school dinners come from St.Malachy's Primary School in Castlewellan and are of a high standard. It is recommended that pupils eat fruit, a yogurt or a small sandwich at breaktime. Water is always available, and school milk can be ordered termly. We discourage sugary/fizzy drinks, crisps, chocolates and sweets as these can impact on the children's behaviour. We do not have any children with a nut allergy at present but we discourage bringing nuts to school.

Rang 1 and Rang 2 go home at 2.00pm.

Rang 4 - 7 go home at 3.00pm.

Rang 3 go home at 2.00pm until Christmas. From January onwards, Rang 3 go home at 3.00pm.



### Curriculum:

There are three stages in Primary School:

- Foundation Stage (Rang 1 and 2)
- Key Stage 1 (Rang 3 and 4)
- Key Stage 2 (Rang 5, 6 and 7)

We follow the Northern Ireland Curriculum: Literacy, Numeracy, The World Around Us, The Arts (Art & Design, Music and Drama), P.E., Religious Education, ICT.

We have an Irish immersion programme in Rang 1 and 2, and we begin to teach English formally in Term 2 of Rang 3.

Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche assesses pupils in the same ways as pupils are assessed in any other primary school in Northern Ireland - Irish or English medium.

In accordance to the NI Curriculum, in Years 1 - 7, teachers must assess your child's learning.

In Years 1 & 2, this predominantly takes the form of ongoing individual classroom observations. However, in Rang 1 & 2, pupils are also assessed on a 6 - weekly basis on their key literacy and numeracy skills/targets, albeit in a very informal style, such as structured games and 1:1 activities.

In Years 3 - 7, pupils undergo standardised tests in the summer term in English, Irish and Maths, which give a more formal indication of progress. These scores are then analysed by the teachers, and used to plan the future teaching and learning of our pupils. Additional support is provided on a weekly basis to help raise standards in Numeracy and Literacy.



A significant proportion of the curriculum in Rang 1 is delivered through play-based learning. Children learn to problem solve, take turns, share, explain their methods and extend their vocabulary and communication skills through language rich, adult supervised/led play experiences.

At Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche we are very well resourced with ICT equipment, with an average of 2 PCs, 2 laptops and an interactive whiteboard in each classroom, as well a set of iPads and Easi-Speak voice recorders for whole-school use.

We are in inter-denominational school, and we follow 'Living Learning Together', a pastoral care programme which encourages personal development and mutual understanding of the world and the wider community. We also prepare children for the Catholic sacraments if their parents so wish, following the Veritas 'Beo Go Deo' Catholic Education Series. We also cater for children who do not wish to participate in R.E.

