

Crawfordsburn Primary School



School Development Plan 2026 - 2029



Our Vision and Values

Our vision and values are based on agreed aims and stakeholder consultation. They inform decision making within school and everything that we aspire to develop in our school community.

Vision

At Crawfordsburn Primary School we believe in the importance of learning to care for others, ourselves and the world around us. When we feel cared for, we feel safe and ready to take risks in our learning and are more prepared to creatively approach subjects across the curriculum. Through celebrating success and providing opportunities to be actively involved in school life, we develop our children's confidence and prepare them to positively contribute to the world they live in as caring, creative and confident individuals.

Values

Caring

At Crawfordsburn Primary School we have a strong family ethos. We care deeply about all members of our school and local community. Children are taught to care for themselves, others and the world around them in a friendly, nurturing and encouraging environment.

Creative

We celebrate and develop creativity within our school on a daily basis. Children are encouraged to be independent problem-solvers, and we actively promote the development of creativity through all areas of the curriculum. We recognise, reward and celebrate the achievements of pupils, from both inside and outside the classroom.

Confident

Through feeling and celebrating success in learning, our children develop their confidence and self-esteem. We provide relevant, forward-looking learning opportunities and encourage our pupils to be actively involved in school life through many roles that enable them to share their voice. Our pupils are encouraged to have high aspirations and are given opportunities to develop skills that they will carry with them into later life.

Our Context

The school is located in the village of Crawfordsburn and has served the local community for over 100 years. The school was initially called Ballymullan National School and was situated on a different site within the village as a two-class school. Crawfordsburn Primary School opened in its current building in 1952 and we are on the cusp of moving to our new school building during the 2026-27 academic year.

- We are a single-form entry primary school with 7 classes and our school currently has 189 pupils enrolled, with the catchment area ranging from Crawfordsburn, Helen's Bay and Bangor West to areas across Bangor and the Craigantlet Hills.
- Our P1 first preference applications for 2026-27 (27) were the highest that they have been for several years. We have strong links with Bright Sparks Pre-School, which is situated on our school site and around 2/3 of our pupils join us having attended this setting.
- Key Data: 21% SEN Register, 6% SEN Statements, 9% Free School Meals, 95% Average Attendance.
- The principal has been in post since April 2025. During the 10 years prior to this the school had 3 different principals. Most of the rest of the staff having been at the school for a long period of time.
- The school has strong links with the BayBurn Community Association and our P7s participate in regular beach cleans at Crawfordsburn and Helen's Bay as part of a joint marine litter survey project.
- The school delivers Forest School provision, fostering outdoor learning and environmental awareness and achieved the Eco-Schools Green Flag Award for the first time during the 2025/26 academic year.
- We support our working parents by providing a breakfast club service in the mornings and by partnering with North Down YMCA to provide affordable after-school provision.
- The school has a growing budget deficit which makes the financial position challenging.
- The school is supported by a committed Board of Governors. Many of our governors have served multiple terms, while we also gained four new governors at the most recent reconstitution.
- Our children transfer to a wide range of post-primary schools in Bangor, Ards, Holywood and Belfast. In recent years we have had up to 10 different post-primary schools selected from one class.
- This is the first formal 3-year School Development Plan for the school following a long period of interim 1-year plans and industrial action.

Additional Useful Links:

[School Website](#)

[School Newsletters](#)



New School Building

Our school has waited with anticipation for a new school building from when it was first announced in 2016. 10 years later the school is finally close to taking its first steps in its new home. The 2026-27 academic year will present challenges as we navigate the move to a new school while also managing temporary access arrangements and the final stages of the build project for most of the school year.

With our new building comes massive opportunity. It will provide much of what we currently lack in terms of additional multi-purpose space, greater ability for collaboration with the whole school finally under one roof and improved outdoor space for outdoor education and Forest School provision. It is our goal to take the opportunity provided by our new surroundings to develop a caring and creative new learning environment.

Some key features include:

- 8 classrooms
- Shared resource areas
- Sensory room
- Improved multi-purpose hall and storage
- Multi-purpose rooms
- Improved outdoor space
- Meeting space
- Improved parking and access arrangements



Self-Evaluation

Our school is committed to a process of continuous self-evaluation. We see monitoring and evaluation as central to the success of an effective school and through the implementation of our Monitoring and Evaluation Schedule we assess pupil progress, review learning and teaching and adapt our teaching methods and priorities accordingly. We have close links with other local schools in our area and attend curricular cluster groups and training.

During the 2025-26 academic year the school completed extensive stakeholder engagement to inform the planning of this School Development Plan. This School Development Plan along with our move to a new school building provides a natural opportunity to review practice across the school. The school used a range of methods to capture the thoughts of the school community. This included informal conversations and one-to-one meetings with staff, a blue-sky thinking event, online questionnaires and pupil focus groups.

Stakeholders	Engagement type		
	Surveys	Conversations	Meetings/Focus Groups
Children			
Parents/Carers			
Teaching Staff			
Non-Teaching Staff			
Governors			

Detailed summary reports of all surveys have been retained for reference by the school along with the outcomes of meetings and the blue-sky thinking event.

Summary of Findings

The table below captures broad themes for celebration as well as pointing to areas for future actions the school needs to consider in this SDP process and beyond. The areas below have been identified through the engagement methods previously mentioned. Appendix 1 captures the prioritisation process for this SDP.

Clear Strengths	Areas for Action
➤ Strong pastoral care and safeguarding. ➤ Pupils feeling safe, cared for and happy. ➤ Staff committed to school values. ➤ School commitment to improving academic standards and having high expectations of pupils. ➤ School's approach to promoting environmental responsibility and citizenship. ➤ Pupil behaviour. ➤ Supportive and responsive school leadership with a clear vision for the future.	➤ Transition to new learning environment. ➤ Consistency of approach to learning and teaching. ➤ Review of literacy and numeracy approach linked to TransformED. ➤ Review of school's approach to homework. ➤ Extension of Forest School and outdoor learning provision. ➤ Development of pupil voice opportunities. ➤ Communication consistency in relation to what goes on in class. ➤ Development of eSafety and digital skills. ➤ Continued development of curricular leaders.

Key High-Level Priorities 2026-29

Priorities	Rationale	Success would be...
Create a caring and creative new learning environment.	Our school is about to embark on a transition into a new school building. This presents a unique opportunity to rethink and reshape our learning and teaching practices. The enhancement of indoor spaces will provide greater opportunity for creativity, collaboration and the development of digital skills, while the improved outdoor spaces will provide opportunities to enhance our Forest School provision and outdoor learning. This strategic intent focuses on making the most of the opportunity provided by our new school. Our caring ethos will be vital in supporting our whole school community through the transition to our new school building and establishment of new procedures.	• Maximising the use of our building for learning. • Expanding our indoor and outdoor learning provision. • Developing a whole-school approach to playful learning. • Establishing a new Forest School area. • Developing pupils to be confident, safe and responsible online users. • Establishing an annual Digital Ethics and Responsibility overview for all year groups. • Developing the digital skills of our pupils and teachers for learning, living and working. • Updating our preventative curriculum.
Empower confident and collaborative school leaders and teachers.	Empowering confident, collaborative leadership and teaching is critical to sustaining school improvement and delivering high-quality outcomes for all pupils. Effective schools are driven by skilled leaders at all levels. In a school of our size, Middle Leaders, supported by all staff, are vitally important in driving curricular improvement. Our move to a new school building, along with establishing permanent leadership roles, provides a natural reset point for the school in terms of curricular practice, monitoring and evaluation and learning expectations. This combined with the phased introduction of the new curriculum requires us to review and update our approach to learning across the curriculum. The emergence of GenAI tools provides an opportunity for learning, teaching and leading to be supported and enhanced.	• Curricular Leaders will feel empowered to lead their curriculum areas. • Investment in Middle Leader training. • Teachers' planners will be updated to reflect the new curriculum. • Approaches to literacy and numeracy will be informed by guidance from Transformed Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. • Pupil voice opportunities will increase (inside and outside the classroom). • Reflective monitoring and evaluation will drive improvement. • GenAI tools will be incorporated into learning and teaching.

Priorities	Rationale	Success would be...
Develop creative and confident readers and spellers.	Developing strong literacy skills is fundamental to pupils' success across the curriculum and in later life. A strategic focus on phonics and spelling, comprehension and guided reading, ensures a clear, progressive approach to reading that supports all learners from early decoding to deep understanding. Data collected during 2025-26 found that our P3-7 classes were performing below the national average in spelling. Furthermore, at the start of the 2025-26 year, only 61% of P3-7 pupils were reading at a level in line with or above their chronological age. Our staff are committed to having high academic standards and promoting high aspirations in our pupils. We feel that a focus on these areas will provide strong foundational skills in phonics and spelling, structured practice and support in guided reading and develop deeper understanding of reading through comprehension. This will be achieved through the roll-out of a new spelling scheme supported by staff CPD, a review of guided reading practice and a focus on developing comprehension skills.	• New spelling programme established in line with Transformed Literacy Guidance. • Class averages in spelling will improve to be in line with the national average by June 2029. • Reading support through Reading Partnership will be embedded within school. • 80% of reading interventions will see an increase of 6 months or more in reading ages over the duration of the reading support programme. • A central, well-resourced guided reading store will be established. • Agreed expectations of guided reading lessons will be embedded. • Pupils will confidently apply comprehension skills. • 80%+ of pupils in P3-7 will be reading at a level in line with or above their chronological age.
Enhance pupils' problem-solving, thinking skills and creativity by providing rich, open-ended learning experiences.	Creativity is fostered when pupils are given the freedom to explore ideas, make choices and approach tasks in different ways. Within mathematics, mental maths and problem-solving are interdependent. Mental maths develops quick recall, reduces cognitive load and allows pupils to focus on solving a problem. By developing pupil problem-solving and thinking skills through open-ended learning experiences we will develop learners who are confident when faced with a problem and able to apply their knowledge, think critically and solve problems in a range of contexts. The skill of problem-solving is transferrable to learning across the curriculum as it relies on the same underlying thinking processes.	• Teacher planning will show evidence of planning opportunities for problem-solving. • Problem-solving will be linked to the school's development of a playful continuum for learning. • All classes will teach mental maths strategies with clear expectations. • Pupils will report confidence in applying mental maths strategies. • Opportunities for the development of STEM will be embedded within the curriculum.

Key High-Level Priorities 2026-29

Priorities	Actions in Year 1 2026/27	Actions in Year 2 2027/28	Actions in Year 3 2028/29
Create a caring and creative new learning environment.	➤ Managing the transition to a new school building. ➤ Establishing processes and procedures in a new learning environment. ➤ Establishing/Resourcing Forest School/Outdoor learning areas. ➤ All staff to complete NIFSA Forest School Level 1. ➤ Additional staff members identified to be mentored to become Forest School Leaders (Level 3). ➤ Trauma Informed Practice CPD. ➤ Development of digital ethics and responsibility.	➤ Digital skills development. ➤ Review of whole-school approach to indoor and outdoor playful learning opportunities informed by CEA's 'A Playful Learning Continuum'. ➤ Further staff members identified for Forest School Leader mentoring. ➤ Explore collaborative learning opportunities.	➤ Embed and develop playful indoor and outdoor learning opportunities. ➤ Updating of Preventative Curriculum in line with the new learning area of Personal, Social, Citizenship and Careers (PSCC). ➤ Further embed digital skills informed by actions and outcomes in Year 2.
Empower confident and collaborative school leaders and teachers.	➤ Develop the role of the Curricular Leader. ➤ Embed the expectations of the Learning and Teaching Policy. ➤ Further Middle Leader CPD. ➤ Pupil voice opportunities increased. ➤ GenAI Lead appointed and CPD completed. ➤ Teachers introduced to EdIS GenAI platform.	➤ Develop role of link governor. ➤ All teachers to complete GenAI training and begin to incorporate its use. ➤ Continued embedding of pupil voice opportunities. ➤ Reflective monitoring and evaluation embedded.	➤ First year of phased implementation of new curriculum. ➤ Continued development of GenAI. ➤ Review of teacher planning informed by new curriculum and literacy and numeracy strategies.

Priorities	Actions in Year 1 2026/27	Actions in Year 2 2027/28	Actions in Year 3 2028/29
Develop creative and confident readers and spellers.	➤ New spelling programme introduced (The Read Write Company Ltd) in line with Transformed Literacy Guidance. ➤ Embedding of Reading Partnership reading support. ➤ Audit of comprehension learning and teaching approach. ➤ Establishment of central reading store.	➤ Embedding of spelling programme. ➤ Development of creative comprehension skills. ➤ Audit of guided reading practice/resources.	➤ Development of consistent guided reading practice.
Enhance pupils' problem-solving, thinking skills, and creativity by providing rich, open-ended learning experiences.	➤ Development of a whole-school approach to the teaching of mental maths skills.	➤ Development of a whole-school approach to the teaching of mathematical problem-solving.	➤ Development of transferrable problem-solving skills linked to STEM and outdoor learning.

	Year 1 2026/27	Year 2 2027/28	Year 3 2028/29
Short/Medium Term Projects	• PLP introduction. • Whole school assemblies/assembly themes introduced. • Homework Policy and Schedule. • Introduction of Staff Handbook. • Improved communication consistency- i.e. Seesaw posting. • SEN Policy developed.	• SEN audit of staff and pupil needs completed. • Renewal of Eco-Schools Green Flag Award. • Review of Bullying Prevention Policy and Positive Behaviour Policy.	• Healthy Eating Policy established. • Review curriculum policies in line with new DE Guidance.

Monitoring and Review

Each priority area will have a designated lead responsible for implementing and tracking progress. Action plans will be created annually with regular reviews planned throughout the year to allow adjustments to be made as required. The action plans will be formally reviewed at the end of each academic year. Action plan targets and progress will be shared with all school stakeholders.

Appendix 1- Categorisation of Priorities based on all areas that emerged from SDP Engagement Review

High Level Priorities	Short/Medium Term Projects	Delay
➤ Transition to new school building. ➤ Development of Curricular Leader role ➤ Further Middle Leader training. ➤ Consistency of learning and teaching approaches. ➤ Pupil voice opportunities increased. ➤ Review and update teacher planning. ➤ Development of a creative learning environment. ➤ Whole-school Forest School approach. ➤ Increased outdoor learning opportunities. ➤ Digital Skills/eSafety development. ➤ Curriculum reform/phased implementation of new curriculum. ➤ Review of literacy and numeracy approach. ➤ Updating of PDMU/Preventative Curriculum. ➤ Review of literacy and numeracy approach within school linked to Transform Ed literacy strategies/Guidance docs. ➤ Continued development of trauma informed practice.	➤ PLP introduction ➤ Whole school assemblies/assembly themes introduced. ➤ Healthy Eating Policy established. ➤ SEN audit of staff and pupil needs. ➤ SEN Policy ➤ Review Anti-Bullying Policy ➤ Review of curriculum policies. ➤ Improved communication consistency- i.e. Seesaw posting. ➤ Homework Policy and Schedule. ➤ Introduction of Staff Handbook.	➤ Local charity link. ➤ Potential to access counselling. ➤ Review of WAU/Topic Overlap. ➤ Review of RE Policy and RE Curriculum. ➤ Improving provision in Music. ➤ Improving provision in PE. ➤ Review of extra-curricular provision.