

# Donaghadee Primary School and Killard House School

## Schools involved

Donaghadee PS



Killard House School and Donaghadee Primary School are located just six hundred metres apart in North Down. They have been working together since 2017 as part of a Shared Education Partnership.

Killard House School is a special school supporting pupils with a wide range of additional learning needs. Donaghadee Primary School is a mainstream controlled school. This Shared Education partnership has continued to evolve and strengthen, with a renewed focus this year on purposeful, well-planned engagement that supports positive outcomes for both pupils and staff.

## What activities have you organised / taken part in?

As part of our Shared Education journey, we have explored themes such as Physical Education and PDMU; Literacy (including storytelling, writing and discussion); Expressive Arts (art, drama, and puppetry); ICT (simple multimedia work and digital storytelling); and World Around Us (cultural awareness and community exploration).

Pupils are taking part in regular Pupil Voice sessions, where teachers facilitate small-group discussions to help deepen and extend the learning. Across the year, pupils will participate in a programme of ten to fifteen shared sessions, delivered either at Killard House School or Donaghadee Primary School. Highlights so far have included Japanese pillow fighting, friendship bracelet making and enjoying shared outdoor learning.

## How have these Shared Education activities benefitted the educators and pupils?

The partnership has encouraged a genuine exchange of ideas and expertise and a more inclusive ethos within both schools. This has included attending each other's Christmas concert and Nativity rehearsals, helping to normalise relationships and strengthen connections.

For pupils, Shared Education has supported the development of social communication skills, confidence in new environments and positive relationships with peers from another setting. For staff, it has enhanced collaborative planning and reflective practice. Pupils have benefited from increased empathy, understanding, and cooperation through working alongside peers from a different educational context. Educators have gained valuable experience in inclusive practice, co-planning and adapting learning to meet a diverse range of needs.

## **What have been the challenges?**

One of the key challenges within the partnership has been meeting the diverse range of needs across both school settings. Pupils at Killard House often require additional support, differentiated communication approaches and sensory-based strategies, while pupils at Donaghadee Primary typically learn within a mainstream environment. Ensuring that every child feels included, supported, and actively engaged has required thoughtful planning, flexibility, and ongoing collaboration among staff. Short, sustained sessions have proven to be the most effective way of maintaining meaningful links.

## **Let's hear from the pupils**

'Best day ever!'

'I really enjoyed Shared Education and your school.'

'I love meeting new people.'

'I really loved making bracelets with my new friends from Donaghadee!'

'Yayyy I forgot it was Shared Education today. I'm going to sit with my new friends and build Lego.'

## **Top tips for others**

A key factor in the long-term success of this work has been the dedicated time set aside for joint planning, the sharing of professional knowledge and the ongoing commitment from both schools to sustaining significant connections.

Looking ahead, the most effective practice continues to be rooted in starting small, planning collaboratively, and keeping pupil needs at the centre of every decision. Consistency across classes and clear communication between schools remain essential. Building strong relationships between staff, maintaining flexibility, and allowing time for reflection all contribute to a successful Shared Education partnership. Ultimately, Shared Education works best when it is inclusive, intentional, and grounded in the strengths of both school communities.

## **Project details**

Type of Project

ASPIRE

Academic Year

2025-26