



## **Castle Ward Guardianship**

### **Location:**

Castle Ward, Northern Ireland

### **Background:**

Castle Ward is an 840 acre walled estate with breathtaking views of Strangford Lough. It includes a Mansion, an eighteenth century Corn mill, and magnificent grounds, which offer meadow, wood, Lough shore habitats, lawns and a sunken garden. Downpatrick Nursery School children have become Guardians of the estate and the pupils actively engage with National Trust staff to learn about their local environment and wider environmental issues.

### **The visits:**

Through a series of visits to Castle Ward the children improve literacy skills by listening to stories in appropriate settings and develop knowledge and experience of the environment. Activities have included a Trusty Trail exploring the different habitats, a farmyard visit helping pupils relate to the Castle Ward farm animals, planting annuals in tubs at various locations on the property and exploring sea life on the Lough shore. They also had a fun visit to the adventure playground.

Andy Dainty – Gardener at Castle Ward

“It is great to help kick start a child’s interest in conservation and nature.”

Miss Corkin- Principal of Nursery school

“Castle Ward Guardianship continues to provide exciting experiences for the children. It proves that much of children’s learning can be achieved outside the classroom.”