St. John’s Primary School



Annual Governors’ Report to Parents

Sept 2022 – June 2023

*‘Educating for Today and Tomorrow’*



Dear Parents

On behalf of the Board of Governors, I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the Academic Year Sept 2022 until June 2023; its purpose is to keep you informed of what is happening in school and to foster your participation as an important partner in the education of your child or children.   I trust that you will find this report informative.

I would like to thank Mrs Kearney, the teaching staff and support staff in promoting our pupils’ academic achievements, safety and personal development. All staff play an essential role in the running of the school and their contribution is gratefully acknowledged alongside the efforts they put into providing a stable and stimulating learning environment in which our children may grow.

I would also like to thank you, the parents, and guardians, for the on-going and generous support for all the activities engaged in by the school and we look forward to your continued interest and support for the school going forward.

Sean McNicholl

**Chair of Governors**

## Board of Governors - Constitution 2018-2024

**Trustee Reps**

Fr. C. Keaney (Oct 2017)

Caroline Kearney (since 2012 Resigned May 2023 and to be replaced by Sean McNicholl)

Liam Kearney (since 2012). Resigned January 2019.

Martin Turner replaced Liam Kearney April 2019

David Reid (2014 Resigned Sept 2022)

Tracy O’Kane (Oct 2022 to replace David Reid)

**Board Reps**

Sean Kearney (since 2009 Resigned June 2023)

Ciaran McGuckin (since 2012 Resigned June 2023)

Co-opted in Feb 2023, Dermot Quinn and Robert Bannon to replace the Board reps above following their planned resignations for June 2023)

**DENI Rep**

Lorna McMullan (2012-2013/14 Resigned october 2022)

Seamus Bradley (February 2023 replacing Lorna McMullan)

**Parent Rep**

Paul Kearney (since 2012 Resigned June 2023)

**Teacher Rep**

Sheena McCullagh (since 2014)

**Principal and Secretary to the Board**

Fiona Kearney (since 2002)

The Board of Governors and the Principal share responsibility for the strategic management of the school, acting within the framework set by Department of Education NI (DENI), CCMS and other local authorities. The internal management of the school is the responsibility of the Principal. The Board of Governors meet at least once a term, usually more frequently. In addition, sub-committees meet regularly to discuss specific issues.

## Our Vision

St. John’s Primary School has a Rights Respecting approach underpinning its strong catholic ethos, where all teachers and governors are committed to The Catholic Statement of Aims, whilst pursuing the highest standards of education for the pupils. We are an inclusive school.

The learning environment is happy, secure and stimulating. All staff including auxiliary and ancillary, teachers and classroom assistants, aim to make each interaction with children, a learning opportunity.

We aim for high morale at all times. Relationships are based on Christian and Catholic principles, underpinned by love and forgiveness. Expectations of pupils and staff are high and are made explicit through the School Aims, Mission Statement, our Core Values and in everyday dealings with children in and outside the classroom.

**Our Mission:**

We believe that each child will be safeguarded and will succeed with our dedication and hard work through:

* A wide variety of activities implementing the broad and balanced curriculum.
* A happy, safe, secure and stimulating environment
* Close links between home, school, parish and community
* A positive attitude towards health and fitness

**Our Core Values:**

* We listen to each other with sensitivity
* We celebrate difference
* We can accept and enjoy praise
* We can deal with advice on how to make things better



## Our Aims

At St. John’s Primary School we set high expectations and aim to deliver the highest standard of education and learning for life by working with the children to: -

* Develop morals and values, consistent with our Catholic ethos
* Develop ICT skills to prepare for life-long learning
* Achieve potential and experience success in a variety of contexts
* Use and develop individual talents
* Develop and learn to their full potential
* To respect themselves and each other and the environment
* Have self-confidence, independence, self-discipline and high self-esteem
* Develop personal and social skills

## School Staffing Structure



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Principal | Mrs. F. Kearney |
| Year 1 | Ms. U. Logue  |
| Year 2 | Mrs. E. Kelly (Maternity leave covered by Miss Kate Lagan) |
| Year 3 | Mrs. S. McCullagh Mrs. S. Kelly (Job share x1 days per week) |
| Year 4 | Mrs. K. McAllister (Vice-Principal)Mrs. S. Kelly (Job Share x2 days per week) |
| Year 5 | Mrs. S. CoyleMrs. S. Kelly (Job Share x1 day per week) |
| Year 6 | Mr. D. McEldowney |
| Year 7 | Mrs. S. McNicholl |
| Special Educational Needs  | Mrs. C. Blaney |
| Classroom Assistants  | Mrs. G. Smith, Mrs. J. Moore, Mrs. F. O’Hagan, Mrs. C. Agnew, Mrs. D. Kearney, Mrs. G. Crawford, Mrs. P. McLean, Mrs. L. McGuckin, Mrs. A. O’Kane. Mrs. D. Margey, Miss Orlaleigh McAtamney, Ms Rebecca Redmond |
| Administration & Support Staff | Mrs. B. McEldowney.Mrs. L. KearneyMr. B. ConveryMrs. E. McGuckin |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Males** | **Females** | **Total** |
| Year 1 | 16 | 15 | 31 |
| Year 2 | 14 | 22 | 36 |
| Year 3 | 13 | 15 | 28 |
| Year 4 | 17 | 17 | 34 |
| Year 5 | 17 | 16 | 33 |
| Year 6 | 15 | 19 | 34 |
| Year 7 | 13 | 9 | 22 |
| **Totals** | **105** | **113** | **218** |

Overall the school continues to experience a significant increase in numbers. The school year began on Thursday 1st September.

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**Attendance**

We appreciate your support with ensuring that your children have the very best chance in their education by being punctual and having excellent attendance. Our attendance for the year was 95.6% which is still slightly down on the years prior to Covid. This may well be due to caution by parents, as a result of the pandemic. However, we should be aware that the average primary school attendance across all six counties, was 91.6% and we are happy to have a favourable comparison.

**Year 7 - Transfer**

### Having concluded their time at St. John’s early, the Year 7 pupils transferred to the following secondary schools:

St. Patrick’s College: 19

St. Conor’s College: 2

 Kilronan 1

We are in a non-selective area, served by schools, (St. Patrick’s College, Maghera and St. Conor’s College, Kilrea), which do not operate any unregulated unofficial tests in order to select pupils and in accordance with guidance from the Bishop.

**Child Protection**

Child Protection has a high place on the agenda for training, for discussion at Governor and staff meetings and in our everyday activities in school. All visiting tutors, student teachers etc. are provided with the Policy as we apply it in St. John’s. Staff and volunteer helpers in the school are issued with a Code of Conduct. Vetting by AccessNI complies with the latest regulations from DENI.

1. The Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs McNicholl
2. The Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs Coyle
3. The Child Protection Officer on the Board of Governors: Mr Paul Kearney

The Pastoral Care approaches embrace Safeguarding, Child Protection, Anti Bullying Strategies, and Positive Behaviour. Policies are rigorously applied, monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. All teachers, the support staff and kitchen staff receive updated Safeguarding Training in line with DENI guidance. Lunchtime Supervisors continue to employ strategies to promote positive playground behaviour. They have excellent relations with pupils and teachers, which allow them to provide early indications, if they think a child’s welfare is at risk.

The school had a ‘Safer Internet Day’ in February with a special focus in every class on how to stay safe on the internet. However, this work continues throughout the academic year and each class has specific resources and activities to highlight the key learning.

To assist with pupil welfare, we ask that if a child is to be absent, a parent telephones or gets a message to the secretary. This is important in case a child leaves for school but does not arrive. If the system is in place, missing pupils can be quickly identified as such. In addition, we ask that if a parent plans for a pupil to leave the school outside of normal hours, that the secretary is notified in advance. Notification should also be given to the secretary when a child arrives at school outside of normal times, late, or on return from an appointment. Attendance registers can then be updated, which is vital in evacuation circumstances.

#### If you have a concern about your / a child’s safety: -

* talk to the class teacher
* If you are still concerned, talk to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection
* If you are still concerned, talk to the Principal
* If you are still concerned, write to the Chair of the Board of Governors



**Budget Overview**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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| --- | --- |
| **CFF Final Allocation 2022-2023** | ***673,824*** |
| **Carryover Surplus/Deficit - 2021-2022** | ***2,656*** |
| **Other Funds** | ***43,450*** |
| **Total Budget** | ***719,930*** |

Expenditure:£714, 322The Principal and Governors monitor spending allocations in a judicious fashion in the context of continued underfunding of education. It is expected that the school, like many others, will have a deficit next year and increasing thereafter.**School Funds**This income from parent donations and assorted fund-raising ventures is very important in light of underfunding.Income £40 711.27Expenditure £30 200.29Donations and costs for swimming, Irish, coaching, music, transport, Y7 hoodies, all go through the School Fund account.Additional purchases include:* Footballs
* Other outdoor resources
* Noticeboards, wall coverings
* Licenses
* Rewards and stickers
* Website
* Information Commissioner
* Trophies, medals, certificates
* Library
* Parent-kind registration
* Young Enterprise
* Additional computers and repairs on older tech items.
* Bus costs for additional events, sports etc.

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**Curriculum and Staff Development**

Teaching staff, in conjunction with the Principal, normally agree and set targets for their annual Performance Review and Staff Development Plan (PRSD) which emanate from the overall School Development Plan.

Teachers often work on joint targets.

This Performance Review is affected by ongoing industrial actions by the teaching unions.

**Staff Development**

Staff development is based upon the needs of teachers and pupils and relates to the SDP (School Development Plan). Needs are identified through:

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* PRSD (Performance Review and Staff Development)
* Co-ordinator Action Plans
* Discussions with the Principal.
* Training needs audits.

Teachers, assistants and support staff continued to participate in a range of training

 such as:

* Special Educational Needs
* Autism
* Meeting the Medication Needs of Pupils including;-
	+ Epilepsy Awareness
	+ CPR
	+ Use of the auto-injector pen
* PATHS
* Tinylife Premature Awareness
* Nurture in Education
* Subject specialisms
* Primary Movement
* Talk Boost
* RISE courses
* Outdoor Learning
* RSE
* Leadership and Management issues

All training opportunities are monitored and evaluated by staff so that the impact can be identified and measured where possible to better understand the benefits provided to the school.

Priorities for future staff development are always linked to the School Development Plan.

 The School Development Days were used to work on a range of issues.

These included:

* Ethos, Roles and Responsibilities
* Preparation for Parent Interviews
* Preparing for Reports and Assessment
* Fire Safety Awareness
* Olive Training (Microsoft)
* Outdoor Projects (DAERA and EA)
* Superheroes (PE)
* Barefoot (ICT)
* PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies)

Also included were

* Child Protection.
* Nurture in Education
* Pupil Well-being

**Nurture and Well-Being**

Our training focus was on PATHS ((Providing Alternative Thinking Strategies). This is an intervention that aims to improve children’s social and emotional competence, promoting self-control and reducing challenging behaviours.

 **Key Areas & Objectives for Improvement**

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2022-23 was used for a final Transition Plan in accordance with guidance from the Department of Education.

Our two strands continued to be;-

1. Well-Being
2. Academic progress

Teachers continued to use formative assessments and their own professional judgement to monitor pupil progress. The data from end of year GL testing indicated continued improvement since Covid and lockdown across the majority of cohorts.

We benchmark our data alongside the four other local cluster schools which feed into St. Patrick’s College, Maghera.

That process provided good validation of our performance in both Literacy and Numeracy when compared to similar schools.

Our results in stanines 5 to 9 also compared well to the ‘national average.’

Our results at the upper end, stanines 7 to 9 were not as favourable in the younger classes but moving up the school they improved, eventually surpassing the ‘national average’ of 23% by a considerable margin.

Performance was very pleasing when consideration is given to the percentage of pupils making ‘expected’ or ‘higher progress’. The greatest majority of pupils/ classes well exceeded the 75% regarded as the ‘national average.’

There was a wide-ranging consultation of stakeholders seeking views on ways to improve the school and its provision for children. The responses fed into the drafting of the new School Development Plan for 2023-2026.

**Parent Meetings**

1. Parent meetings were held via telephone in October. Teachers and parents had the opportunity to exchange views on progress and to discuss targets in learning and social development.
2. Curriculum presentations were created and made available online, for parents of pupils in each of the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key stage 2. The aim was to assist with parental understanding of how their children learn and develop at this stage, as well as what to expect in these times of pandemic.
3. There was an induction meeting in June, for parents of new entrants. Parents heard about school routines and policies and received tips about how they could help their child settle through digital platforms and presentations.
4. A small number of meetings relating to Spiritual Development were very well attended by families supporting their child through Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation and were supported by the Derry Catechetical Centre.

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**Literacy Support**

We continue to implement the Reading Partners, Toe by Toe and Stareway to Spelling programmes with classroom assistants trained in each strategy to encourage pupils’ literacy skills, as and when possible, in periods of disruption from lockdown.

These are short intervention programmes which target pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2. Each pupil works one-to-one with the assistant three times per week. By the end of the programmes, children make significant progress in their reading. We are grateful to the trained Assistants who support the delivery of these interventions.

**RISE**

We have continued to liaise with RISE (Regional Integrated Support for Education) to provide pupils with Speech and Language and other therapies in school and indeed parents received advice on how to continue support and strategies at home where possible. RISE is a valued service and enables parents and staff to work in partnership to support Speech and Language or Occupational Therapy needs of the pupils involved.

# Description: C:\Users\lorna\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\ETPJTQUT\parents-day-clip-art4[1][1].gifEducational Partnerships and School Links

School links with the parents of our school and the wider community, including the business community and other schools are vital to our success.

The school was very pleased to host three students from St. Mary’s College on teaching practice, in addition to study placement by a student from University of Ulster.

There was also a number of school students on work placement at various times of the year.

The school has been a partner with St. Patrick’s College as part of a joint venture with local cluster schools which traditionally feed into the college. This strong link with the college has proved very beneficial for the school and the pupils during the transition period. We remain focused on continuing to develop the transition period and experience for our pupils in keeping with our Policy for Transition.

# Parents and Community

St John’s has a well-established Parent Support Group which involves over 20 parent members and several teachers. This group works very hard for the benefit of the school, when called upon.

Fund raising ventures included a Sponsored Walk in Fancy Dress, Christmas and Easter Raffles and a Quiz which was possible with the expertise of parents Aodhan Convery and Mary Carland.

Monthly SWAY newsletters continue to provide parents with a wide range of information about all aspects of school and this is a very successful way for the school to communicate with families about school life.

Our website has been beneficial in keeping parents up to date with what’s happening in school and is a useful way for parents to make suggestions or comments. See

[www.stjohnsswatragh.com](http://www.stjohnsswatragh.com)

Class Dojo with its instant messaging and access to learning portfolios has proved invaluable as a communication platform. It is immediate, clear and allows parents and teachers plus pupils to stay in touch in a meaningful way.

**RSE**

Parents were consulted on the new Flourish programme which was devised to support the delivery of RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education), within our Catholic ethos and teachings.

Responses highlighted some initial concern on the part of a very small number of parents, but consent was overwhelming for the school to deliver the information to pupils. Parents had the right to withhold consent for their pupil to participate in the programme and this will continue to be the case.

 **ICT (Information and Communication Technology)**

Our Digital Schools Cyber Resilience and Internet Safety Badge is an indication of how important pupil safety in the online world is to us here in St. John’s.

Securus is the c2k monitoring package used by the school leadership as a way of tracking pupil internet searches to ensure the strongest of protection for them and to highlight any areas of concern we need to address in our E-Safety teaching.

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**Special Needs Education**

At St. John’s Primary School, we pride ourselves in being a positive advocate for providing a structured and encouraging educational experience for our pupils with additional needs.

Teachers continued to teach pupils with special educational needs within the classroom setting. In addition, we have the advantage of our Learning Support Teacher, Mrs. Blaney, who works with withdrawal groups and individuals as well as liaising with class teachers and assistants on the best ways to tailor our curricular and pastoral provision. The SENCO, Mrs. McAllister, has oversight of procedures, approaches and resources. This team effort allows us to provide targeted individual and group support including the creation of an Individual Education Plan which records specific learning outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy and in other areas which need to be addressed to remove barriers to learning.

The suitability and effectiveness of our special education needs provision is demonstrated by the variety and level of detail in the Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Many are for short term periods and can also relate to areas other than literacy and numeracy. Examples include motor skills, organisational skills, homework completion etc. Finances for SEN are allocated appropriately with some provision coming from the main budget at times. This allows for the payment of additional hours for classroom assistants. The school makes provision for SEN a high priority with spending, often exceeding the minimum allocation required.

There was additional help in the form of advice from LTSS. (Literacy Targeted Support Service), provided by the Education Authority following assessment of needs.

There were eight pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs and thirty one other pupils on our register of SEN, representing 4% and 14% respectively.

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**School Council**

Pupils elected pupils onto the School Council, guided by Mrs. Coyle and who then conveyed the outcomes of discussions to the Principal. There was a range of issues which formed the basis of healthy discussions about how to make the school a better place.



**After School Provision and BRIGHT START**

The school continued to benefit from a DE grant for funding towards staff and running costs for wraparound childcare provision through BRIGHT START.

This means that we can offer a high quality, social services registered service to families on a long-term basis or ad hoc, day to day, to meet the needs of working parents or those in need of short term, short notice childcare when appointments crop up or when working patterns change.

There are excellent, well-qualified staff who provide support with homework as well as a range of enjoyable play activities including a Lego Programme delivered by Aodhan Convery too. Opening times were 2.00pm - 5.00pm daily.



**Maintenance of School and Grounds**

The school grounds are regularly maintained by staff from EANI (NE) and paid for out of the school LMS budget.

The pitch is maintained by a specialist company and is paid for by school funds.

The development of the outdoor learning space continues to be a work in progress.

![Description: C:\Users\lorna\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\H81KH0GP\66d45-primriaeducacic3b3nreligiosa[1].jpg]()**Catholic Schools’ Week**

All classes were involved in activities related to our annual celebration of Catholic Schools. There was a special on-line Mass from St. Eugene’s Cathedral



**Music**

Instrumental Provision

We encourage the learning of musical instruments such as violin, viola and flute. Tuition starts in Year 4 and pupils are tested by EA Tutors and those who are successful are given the opportunity to learn these instruments.

Many of our pupils are keen to learn drumming from resident tutor Fionnbharr and there is a great record of exam success in this and all instruments, from our pupils.

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**Charities**

Through a range of pupil-led activities we were able to help out local charities with...

Maghera Food Bank

School Aid Romania (£232)

# Security

The safety of our pupils is of utmost importance to the staff of St John’s Primary School. It is important that all parents adhere to our procedures in relation to this matter. During the school day anyone wishing to gain access to the school should do so by pressing the gate buzzer. Visitors will be admitted to the school grounds by office staff. They should then ring the front doorbell and the secretary or other adult will admit them and they *remain at* *reception.*

We do not permit pupils to admit adults regardless of who they are, in order to re-enforce the message about school security procedures.

Visitors sign in and out at the secretary’s office and wear an identity badge as part of our procedures for child protection.

When pupils are being collected early for or returned from medical appointments, parents need to notify the secretary so the attendance records can be updated to assist with roll calls if there is an emergency evacuation.

**Fire Drills and Evacuation**

The school is very vigilant in carrying out regular fire drills. This is to ensure that pupil safety is always uppermost in everyone’s mind and so that children and adults will be familiar with routines and will be able to respond appropriately should there be the need for an emergency evacuation of the building. These exercises are in line with the school’s policy for Evacuation.

Drills are carried out each term, with dates recorded and procedures evaluated. Some drills include advance warning and preparation while others are unannounc![Description: C:\Users\lorna\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\H81KH0GP\children-fire-safety5b15d[1].jpg]()ed.