



**Annual Report of the Board of Governors
of
Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School
Antrim Road
Belfast
for the School Year 2019 - 2020**

Catholic Education - The Vision Statement

Catholic Education takes place in communities inspired by the Spirit of Christ.

Christ's commandment to love God and neighbour inspires a caring ethos, which is expressed in relationships within and beyond Catholic schools.

Catholic Education is person-centred. It promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each person who is made in God's image and uniquely loved by God.

Catholic Education is inclusive. It is respectful of, and engages with people of all beliefs; it encourages the religious development of all in their own faith.

Catholic Education is rooted in the Gospel values of Respect for Life, Love, Solidarity, Truth and Justice; it aims to harmonise faith and culture, build a better society and pursue the Common Good.

Together, **Catholic Schools** provide high quality, rounded education for all young people, so that they develop their full uniqueness and potential.

In Catholic Schools the person and message of Christ find expression in:

Communities of Faith, Service, Prayer and Worship.

The development of each person's full potential in a climate of joy, freedom, respect, challenge, co-operation and celebration.

The enrichment of pupil life - intellectual, physical, spiritual, moral, social and emotional.

The promotion of a spirit of charity, social justice, global awareness and concern for others leading to practical outreach and partnerships.

A culture of tolerance where people of diverse identities are recognised, welcomed, respected and cherished.

Listening, mutual understanding, trust, reconciliation, healing and peace.

The preparation of pupils to lead fulfilling and purposeful lives which will contribute to the common good.

Sources:

Proclaiming the Mission - The Distinctive Philosophy and Values of Catholic Education, The Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland, (Ara Coeli, Armagh 2001);

Building Peace Shaping the Future, The Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland, (Ara Coeli, Armagh 2001)

Life to the Full: A Vision for Catholic Education, CCMS, endorsed by the Catholic Bishops of NI. (Veritas 1996)

The Board of Governors

There are ten members of the Board of Governors of Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School. Governors represent trustees, EA, DENI, teachers and parents.

Mrs C Nagle	[Chairperson]	Trustee Representative
Fr K Browne	[Vice chairperson]	Trustee Representative
Mr V Cochrane		Trustee Representative
Dr G Doherty		Trustee Representative (Parent)
Dr C Zubier		Education Authority Representative
Mrs L MacAteer		Education Authority Representative
Mrs G McGowan		DENI Representative
Mrs O McCormack		Parents' Representative
Mr A Boyle		Teachers' Representative
Mr S Merrick	[Secretary]	Principal

The Responsibilities of a Board of Governors include specific duties that they are obliged to carry out in relation to:

- admission of pupils using agreed admissions criteria;
- financial control of the school's budget in allocating funding, agreeing the school's staff pay policy and managing the use of school facilities;
- delivery and assessment of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in all year groups;
- appropriate provision for children with Special Educational Needs;
- management of staff, including the appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff, disciplinary and grievance procedures;
- school inspections and acting on the outcome of these;
- the Annual Board of Governors' Report to Parents;
- maintenance of school premises, including health and safety and security and
- pastoral care, including child protection, safeguarding and discipline.

The Board of Governors was reconstituted in October 2018 and acts for a period of four years. The present members' term of office [excluding the Principal] expires in December 2022. The parents' representative is nominated and elected. Anyone who has a child attending the school at the time the Board of Governors are being reconstituted can be nominated and vote in the subsequent election.

The role of the Board of Governors is to oversee the management of the school in conjunction with the principal and they benefit from detailed first-hand evidence provided by school staff. A meeting of the full Board of Governors takes place once a term. The governors have also established sub-committees to deal with particular aspects of the school's provision. These include sub-committees for finance, safeguarding and child protection, health and safety and staff appointments.

The finance sub-committee meets once a term and other committees meet when appropriate. Minutes from sub-committee meetings are put on the agenda of the full Board of Governors meetings. In this way all the governors become directly involved in aspects such as safeguarding, health and safety,

curriculum provision and assessment. The school community can have complete confidence in the aspects of governance.

During its initial meetings this year the governors ratified the following documents:

- the School Development Plan for 2019 to 2022, which sets out a clear strategic vision for sustained improvement, based on a well-embedded culture of reflection and continuous professional development for staff;
- its 2018/2019 Annual Report to Parents;
- Admissions Criteria for Primary One Admissions in September 2020;
- an Anti-Bullying Policy;
- holidays for the 2020/2021 academic year and
- a general awareness letter to parents regarding Social Media.

At the start of the academic year schools continued to be challenged by pressure on their budgets and teachers taking part in legitimate industrial action short of strike action. The latter was finally resolved with agreement between unions and the management side of the employers.

There was nothing remarkable about the year until we got to March 2020 and COVID-19. Back in September no one could have foreseen how this year was going to develop. On 23 March, when schools were instructed to close, lessons moved to distance learning using a combination of learning packs and online platforms and resources.

The Board of Governors recognise the tremendous contribution of the principal, vice-principal, the senior leadership team and all staff for their dedication and commitment to ensure children remained highly motivated and progressed with their learning consistently across the year groups. School staff were impressive in the way they adapted to the new structure that was unplanned and, if truth be told, very unwelcomed.

The Board of Governors recognise that the transformation in learning from classroom to the kitchen table or living room was not always smooth; and what was truly impressive was the way that the majority of the children and their parents adapted to the significant challenges posed by the new delivery of lessons.

The Board of Governors have nothing but admiration for the endeavour of everyone; and in particular, from parents in supporting their children by a means that is perhaps totally foreign to some. Online teaching landed in parents' laps without any preparation or real understanding of what was ahead. If nothing else, COVID-19 has shown how we can all rise to the challenge and overcome adversity.

The Board of Governors are grateful that the principal and the senior leadership team worked tirelessly throughout the summer to consider Public Health and Department of Education guidance and produce a detailed Restart Plan. By communicating and implementing this plan the school was able to successfully return in August, with an appropriate remedial curriculum in place to manage any issues resulting from the extended closure.

The Board of Governors want to thank every member of staff for their dedication and commitment to the school's Mission Statement ensuring all the children are inspired and motivated to achieve their full potential.

School Development Days

All schools were able to avail of five exceptional closure days during the past year. These days were used in the development of the following areas:

- Guided Reading 1 day
- Mathematics 1 day
- Child Protection/Safeguarding 1 day
- Remote Learning 2 days

Attendance

Regular attendance is crucial in ensuring every child has full access to the school curriculum and reach his or her full potential. School staff strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure. In the 2019/20 academic year, the attendance percentage for the school was 96.2%.

Assessment results at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

Due to the 'Lockdown' of all schools from 23 March to 30 June 2020 End of Key Stage Results for 2019/20 have not been published. The Minister of Education also agreed that schools provide a bespoke version of the End of Year Pupil Report in June 2020.

Financial Report

	2020/2021	Financial Year 2021/2022	2022/2023
Teachers at September	25.8	23.8	22.8
permanent teacher additions			
temporary teacher additions			
permanent teacher reductions			
temporary teacher reductions			
Pupil/Teacher Ratio	24.46	26.39	27.37
	Sept. 20	Sept. 21	Sept. 22
pupil numbers	631	628	624
Initial Budget	£1,721,483	£1,736,300	£1,728,891
expenditure (as per budget breakdown for 2019/2020 before savings)	£1,804,518	£1,818,655	£1,826,757
+ additional expenditure in running costs			
+ additional expenditure in support staff			
+ additional expenditure in permanent teaching			
+ additional expenditure in temporary teaching			
- savings in running costs not being repeated			
- savings in support staff			
- savings permanent teaching		-£62,878	-£139,230
- savings in temporary teaching			
Total expenditure after savings	£1,804,518	£1,755,778	£1,687,528
year end surplus/-deficit	-£46,890	-£66,369	-£25,006
DE % surplus/-deficit	-2.7%	-3.9%	-1.5%

Figures rounded to the nearest pound.

Additionally:

A grant of £9,798. from the North Belfast Primary Principals Support Programme was used to provide counselling, numeracy and literacy support and behavioural and nurturing support.

The combined school and Eco council raised £3,024 from a clothing appeal and this money was used to develop the science garden and other areas of the school.

Three of the playground areas were resurfaced during the year.

Special Educational Needs

There is a very positive ethos in Our Lady of Lourdes which enables all our pupils to feel valued. They are encouraged and supported to achieve to the very best of their ability. Intervention strategies are reviewed rigorously with the view to enhancing the children's achievements and promoting their holistic development. To this end there is provision for those children who require additional support in aspects of their learning. The arrangements for addressing special educational needs are set out in our policy.

Through a mixture of teacher judgement and diagnostic assessment, children are identified at an early stage. The school's two SENCOs liaise with and support the teachers in the development and implementation of IEPs. They ensure a well-balanced blend of individualised and small group programmes, including carefully tailored withdrawal sessions and the support of relevant external agencies. Teachers working with classroom assistants meet the children's literacy, numeracy, social, emotional and sensory needs. Classroom assistants provide high levels of support for the children and are involved in a meaningful way in planning for, and delivering, important aspects of individual and group education plans. Systematic analysis and tracking of the children's progress, as well as focused targets are shared with the children and their parents regularly.

In addition, the principal and SENCOs ensure the provision of appropriate staff training and professional development in order to raise staff capacity to meet the needs of the children.

During the current academic year of this report SEN provision included:

- the development of IEPs and groups EPs;
- differentiation of work within classrooms;
- the identification of and support for those children deemed to be under-achieving;
- withdrawal support for targeted children, provided by: SENCOs, VP, specialist peripatetic and outreach teachers;
- Reading Partnerships, provided by trained volunteers and classroom assistants;
- counselling and resilience training for specific children.

The Board of Governors recognise the tremendous effort the two SENCOs made during lockdown. They ensured that additional support for those who required it was highly effective by tailoring it to individual needs. They ensured colleagues, both teachers and classroom assistants, had access to high quality and relevant training so that they were able to provide outstanding levels of support. The children's progress was well monitored and information was shared with them and their parents.

Security

Our Lady of Lourdes has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. A sub-committee of the Board of Governors convenes at least once a year to review arrangements and ensure they reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The building supervisor and the designated fire warden undertake weekly checks of alarms and safety procedures. The pupils and staff carry out an emergency evacuation procedure once each term. From discussions with children and through feedback they appear to be content and secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

Thanks

The Board of Governors wishes to thank all the members of the school community who have contributed to the school over the past year:

- The staff for their dedication and hard work and for the personal interest they take in each pupil. We thank particularly Miss Barton who retired in June.
- We also thank the auxiliary and ancillary staff who contributed so much to the smooth running and friendly atmosphere in the school.
- The parents for their co-operation, help and friendliness on which the school can always depend.
- The pupils for their enthusiastic response and willingness to co-operate with teachers and staff.