



**Board of Governors'
Annual Report
2023/2024**

Chairperson's Welcome

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15)

Dear Parents/Carers,

This so encapsulates the community of St Mary's on the Hill. Every member is a special gift and has a special gift which makes up our wonderful school. This has been a challenging year for us all in one way or another, but we have supported each other and made it another landmark year, with the opening of our first SPiMs Class to cater, as we always have, for all children, whatever their needs. We, the governors have to thank the pupils, staff and parents for their commitment to the ethos of our school:

Learn to love, Love to learn

Which is a challenge to us all for the next year with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the patronage of Mary, our Mother



Marion E Meyer

Chairperson, Board of Governors

As the school entered the 2023/2024 academic year, we looked forward to the beginning of a new chapter of support our school would offer our community. Our Specialist Provision class for P1-P4 began operation. The beginning of the Specialist Provision in Mainstream class combined our history with the contemporary education system of our school, as we utilised the National School for the provision. The school's willingness and desire to embrace the challenges that taking on Specialist Provision, highlights the dedication of all in our school to help provide a first class education for all our pupils.

With the Specialist Provision in Mainstream class in operation it offered the opportunity of a new post within the school. We wish Mr McEvoy every success in his role as our new Specialist Provision in Mainstream Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 teacher.

The school would like to thank Mrs Nuala Nolan for service to the school. We wish Mrs Nolan a long, healthy and happy retirement.

We would also like to thank and wish every success to senior teacher of the school Mrs Karen Carey. Mrs Carey secured the post of vice-principal in St. Malachy's primary school, Coleraine. We would like to sincerely thank Mrs Carey for her leadership skills and the excellent co-ordination of ICT which she brought to the school over her many years of service.

Our school community has continued to develop, and we have offered more opportunities to bring the wider community into our school throughout the year, whether it be through our Summer and Christmas Fairs, P7 Concerts, the Carol Service and our P2 Christmas Performance. It was wonderful this year to have family members in our school and being able to enjoy life in St. Mary's on the Hill P.S.

Due to the challenges this year faced with ongoing industrial action, it was felt it was prudent to continue with a one-year plan for the school. In light of this the 4 key areas we wished to develop included

- Outdoor Learning
- The Arts
- Physical Education
- Shared Education

The school continues to seek the best outcomes for all our learners and with addition of our Specialist Provision, the school embarked in achieving the Autism NI award also. We were delighted to receive this award in June and is testament to the inclusive and pastoral nature of our school.

The following areas outline the mission of the school and how this is managed through the Board of Governors and delivery of the curriculum.

School's Mission Statement

- **Community Focus:** Vital part of the Catholic Community in the Parish of St Mary's on the Hill.
- **Inclusive Environment:** Supportive, inclusive Christian school community where all members are valued.
- **High-Quality Education:** Central motivation is high-quality teaching and learning.
- **Student Development:** Encourage pupils to develop spiritually, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically.
- **Positive Contribution:** Pupils to contribute positively to the world, economy, and environment.
- **Catholic Ethos:** Committed to Catholic values and helping children grow in awareness of God.
- **Community Integration:** School is part of the community, responsible to it, and provides an important service.
- **Parental Involvement:** Seek involvement and interest of parents and others in the welfare of children and the school.
- **Caring Service:** Recognizes the human value of pupils, teachers, and parents.
- **Educational Excellence:** Planned, developed to high standards, and constantly evaluated for maximum benefit.

Board of Governors

- Trustees, Education Authority, Department of Education, a parent-elected Governor, a teacher-elected Governor. (*See Appendix 1*)

Curriculum

- **Enrolment:** 343 students for 2023/2024.
- **Catholic Values:** Teaching and expression of Catholic values are integral.
- **Areas of Learning:**
 - Language and Literacy
 - Mathematics and Numeracy
 - The Arts
 - The World Around Us
 - Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
 - Physical Education

Impact of Union Action 2023/2024

Strike action undertaken by staff deepened and had a direct and difficult impact on the school. The teaching and non-teaching staff both engaged in action short of strike. Along with this the union of school leaders also directed its members to engage in action short of strike. The reasons behind this were well documented across national news, as the teaching profession of Northern Ireland was being left behind their counterparts in regard to pay and conditions across the islands. The action short of strike was escalated to strike days across the academic year on four occasions by teaching, non-teaching and school leader unions. Strike Days also came about in the Spring Term.

With Strike Action ensuing throughout the year, the school still managed to develop areas and work to ensuring the best possible outcomes for learners. However, the work which was undertaken was largely down to the goodwill of staff members. Strike action in turn had an impact on curriculum development and in-service training. Below you will read the initiatives and work which still went on in our school in spite of strike action existing for most of the academic year.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Below you can read headings of areas of development and improvement within our school. These areas were developed by our dedicated staff (see *Appendix 2*).

- **Planning, Assessment and Reporting**
- **Active Schools Sustrans Award**
- **Autism NI Impact Award**
- **Forest School NI**
- **Cultural**
- **Music**
- **Opportunities for celebration**
- **Religious Events**
- **Young Enterprise**
- **Parental Involvement**
- **School Teams – Outdoor Learning, Shared Education, Physical Education, The Arts**

If you would like to read further detail about the school development and improvement, please see *appendix 4*.

FINANCE

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the allocation of the budget, but on a day-to-day basis this responsibility is exercised by the Principal. The budget is calculated by the Education Authority using a formula which applies to all schools in its area. The main elements in the formula are the number of pupils, the number of pupils entitled to free school meals and factors related to the size and design of the school buildings which affect running costs.

The Board of Governors would like to thank parents and carers for responding so generously to the various fundraising activities during the year. (*see Appendix 3*)

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Trustee Representatives

Mrs Meyer (Chairperson)

Mr Wright (Vice-Chairperson)

Mrs O’Hea

Mr Todd

Education Authority Representatives – N E Region

Mr McCann

Mr Grehan

Department of Education Appointee

Mr Turner

Governor Elected by the Teachers

Mrs Niblock (Secretary)

Governor Elected by the Parents

Mr Feeney

Principal

Mr O’Brien

The full Board of Governors met five times during the period 1st August 2023 and 31st July 2024

Teaching Staff and their Additional Responsibilities

Class	Teacher 2021-2022	Curriculum Responsibility
P1KR	Mrs Ross	Early Years Team, Outdoor Learning Team, Forest School Lead
P1MMC	Mrs Mc Cluskey	Early Years Team, and PE Team
P2PMI	Mrs Mc Intyre	Early Years Co-ordinator, SLT Member, Outdoor Learning Team
P2MMA	Miss McAnallen	Early Years Team, PE Team, PTA Link
P3SR	Mrs Reddick	Shared Education Team
P3MM	Mrs Magee	Co-ordinator of Religion, Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Shared Education Team
P4RT	Mrs Thompson	Numeracy Co-ordinator, Student Placement Co-ordinator, SLT Member. Shared Education Team
P4AW	Mrs Wilson	The Arts Co-ordinator and The Arts team leader
P5NW	Ms Walsh/Mrs Nolan (Job Share)	Playground Pals Co-ordinator, The Arts Team
P5MD	Mrs Dempsey	School Council Co-ordinator, Fundraising Co-ordinator, Outdoor Learning Team
P6JK	Miss Kerr	P.E. Co-ordinator, PE Team
P6SMC	Mrs McConvey	WAU Co-ordinator, Outdoor Learning Team
P7KC	Mrs Carey	ICT Co-ordinator, SLT Member, Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection/ PE Team
P7MOB	Mrs O'Boyle	Assistant Literacy Co-ordinator, PE Team
DME	Mr McEvoy	Specialist Provision Teacher P1 – P4
VP	Mrs Niblock	Learning Support Co-ordinator Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Withdrawal Support Teacher

Non-Teaching Staff and their Responsibilities

Name	Responsibility
Mrs Mason	Secretary
Mr Martin	Building Supervisor
Miss Dallas	Foundation Stage (FS) Classroom Assistant (P1), Supervisor of the 'Waiting Class'
Mrs Prendergast	FS Classroom Assistant (P1), Classroom Support, First Aider
Miss Dempsey	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P1)
Mrs McAllister	FS Classroom Assistant (P2), Classroom Support, Breakfast Club Supervisor, First Aider
Mrs Beggan	FS Classroom Assistant (P2)
Mrs Strain	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P3)
Mrs O'Hagan	FS Classroom Assistant (P2) Supervisor of the 'Waiting Class'
Miss Smylie	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P4)
Mrs Kearney	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P4)
Miss Millar	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P4) Breakfast Club Staff
Miss McAllister	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P4)
Mrs Ashe	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P6)
Mrs McNally	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P7), First Aider, Breakfast Club Staff
Mr Ashe	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P6)
Miss Gribben	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P7)
Mrs Turner, Mrs Kennedy, Miss Smylie, Mrs Beggan, Mrs McAlister Mrs McNally, Miss Kearney, Mr Carter, Mrs O'Hagan, Mrs Tierney	Lunchtime Supervisory Assistants
Mrs Butler	Head Cook
Mrs McKinstry Mrs Russell Mrs Hynes	Canteen Staff
A N Other Mrs Tierney Mrs Dougan	Cleaning Staff

Appendix 3

Voluntary Fund (01.09.23-31.08.24)

The school has a Voluntary Fund:

Monies in:

- Year 7 Educational Trip;
- Monies contributed to defray costs of other educational visits;
- Course Fees;
- PTA Fund Raising Activities;
- Monies raised on behalf of various charities;
- Sale of Book bags;
- Book Fairs;
- Sale of Photographs.

Monies out:

- Year 7 Educational Trip;
- Educational Visits (Other);
- Monies Donated to Various Charities;
- Purchase of Sundry Items for School;
- Payment of Photographs;
- Current Account Fees;
- Book Fair Monies;
- Transfer of Monies to LMS Account;
- School Web Site;
- School Money;
- Annual Playground Equipment Report.

Active Schools Sustrans Award

- **Application Process:** Submitted by Mrs McIntyre and Mrs McConvey, accepted by Sustrans.
- **School Involvement:** Beverly Gaston from Sustrans explained the involvement to the children.
- **Promotion of Active Travel:** Encourages walking, cycling, scooting to school; aims to reduce driving.
- **3-Year Process:** Enhancing school provisions like bike racks to support active travel.
- **Award:** Bronze award achieved in June 2024

Young Enterprise

- **Programme Access:** Available to all year groups.
- **Business Understanding:** Teaches aspects of running a business and its community impact.
- **Facilitator:** Sessions run by Emma Crawford.

Autism NI – Impact Award

- **Staff Training:** Developing skills to support children with Autism.
- **Training Sessions:** Delivered by Autism NI, with an action plan to support autistic children.
- **Specialist Provision:** Training impacts staff skills in Specialist Provision, ensuring school-wide engagement.
- **Award:** Achieved in June 2024 and will last for 3 years.

Forest School

- **Programme Growth:** Continued and expanded this year.
- **Leadership Training:** Mrs Ross trained Mrs McConvey and Miss Kerr as a leader.
- **Participation:** P1, P2, P3, P4, P6 and P7 classes took part. P5 went on a trip to Clandeboye and took part in Forest School activities.
- **Awards:** Secured an Elder Award for the programme.

Music

- **Music Tuition:** Over seventy pupils received tuition.
 - Instruments: Flute, clarinet, oboe, baritone, tenor horn, trumpet.
- **Choir:** Conducted by Mr McEvoy, learned new pieces.
 - Performances: Peace Proms at SSE Arena, Ashwood, Glebe, and Dunanney Nursing Homes, Tesco Northcott.

Cultural

- **European Day of Languages:** Lessons from Ms Walsh and collaboration with Fortwilliam Dominican College and St. Malachy's.
- **Belfast Feis:** Prepared by Ms Walsh, 7 out of 8 participants received medals.

Planning

- **Collaborative Planning:** Teachers plan together weekly, review, and evaluate every eight weeks, including assessment methods to track progress and identify additional help needed.
- **Cluster Meetings:** Led by Mrs Niblock, included local schools.
- **Focus Areas:** Play/Activity Based Learning, Literacy, Numeracy, SEN.
- **KS2/KS3 Link:** Collaboration with local post-primary schools.

Assessment and Reporting

- **Evidence of Achievement:** Teachers keep up-to-date pieces of pupils' work.
- **Progress Files:** Transferred to new teacher at year-end.
- **Parent-Teacher Meetings:** Held via telephone for Years 2-7 in Term 1; Year 1 meetings in January 2022.
- **Annual Reports:** Sent to parents/carers in Summer Term.
- **Records of Achievement:** Awarded to P7 pupils after remote Leavers' Mass in June.
- **Standardised Testing:** Completed for P4-P7; data used for setting targets.

Religious Activities

- **Online Masses & Prayer Services:** Organized with Fr Pat, including:
 - Opening of the New School Year Mass
 - Prayer Service for Years 1-3
 - Class Masses
- **Sacraments:**
 - Holy Communion for Year 4 in June
 - Confirmation for Year 7 in May
- **Catholic Schools' Week:** Celebrated remotely, highlight was Grandparents' Day.

Opportunities for celebration

- **Maths Week Ireland:** Problem-solving activities and Maths Week TV shows.
- **School Council:** Active role, outings to Stormont and Mossley Mill, developed outdoor learning.
- **Anti-Bullying Week:** Activities and assemblies, began with Odd Socks Day.
- **Year 2 Concert & Year 1 Prayer Service:** Performed in school and church, respectively.
- **Carol Service:** Led by Year 5, in St. Mary's on the Hill church
- **Safer Internet Day 2024:** Celebrated with theme "All Fun and Games".
- **Sports Day:** Inclusive events for P1-P3; P4-P7 events at Carnmoney Primary School.

Parental Involvement

- **Induction Programme:** Ensured smooth transition for new pupils and parents.
 - EA training, preschool contacts, Greenfingers session, induction video, and more.
- **Before and After School Provision:**
 - After school activities resumed for all year groups.
 - Breakfast Club and Waiting Class resumed.
 - Sleepy Hollow provided Wrap Around Care.
- **Parent Teacher Association (PTA):** Organized fundraising and social events.

- Party for Year 4, Bounce-a-thon, Winter and Summer Fair, Year 7 Hoodies.
- **Communicating with Parents:**
- Monthly Events Newsletter – through Microsoft Sway
- School website with detailed information and pupil links.

School Team Outcomes

Outdoor Learning

- **Focus Areas:**
- Reducing barriers to outdoor learning.
- Enhancing school grounds (e.g., playgrounds).
- Developing a sensory garden.
- **Strategies:** Various key strategies with Eco-council involvement.
- **Promoted Areas:**
- Forest School
- Eco-Flag application and achieved flag for another 2 ear
- Science Week
- Sustrans – Active Schools Programme
- Growing and Planting
- Garden Development
- Eco-teacher of the Year – Mrs McConvey achieved this award for 2024
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Activities like the Daily Mile.

Shared Education

- **Collaboration:** Ongoing with Carnmoney PS.
- **Activities:** P3 assembly attendance, workshops with NEST partnership.
- Complete ‘Diversatree’ picture and display.
- Liaise with Carnmoney teachers.
- Film a video for buddy class.
- Write thank you cards.
- Exchange emails.
- Invite buddy class to assembly.
- Carol singing together.
- Nursing home cards.
- Christmas cards to buddies.
- Forest schools in Term 2.
- Share a story for World Book Day.
- Record book quiz.
- Community/parent links (e.g., gardening get together, outdoor craft day, coffee morning).
- Joint workshops for parents.

Physical Education

- **Teacher Development:** Skills development and resource creation.
- **Online Resource:** Access to lesson plans and videos.
- **Planning and Tracking:** Detailed planning and progress tracking through interactive resources.

The Arts

- **Skill Development:** Focus on painting skills.
- **Online Portal:** Provides understanding and development of painting skills.
- **Exhibitions:** Funded the portal through pupil exhibitions, well received.
- **Awards:** Belfast Feis winners 2024