



Board of Governors' Annual Report

2024/2025



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“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” – Romans 8:28

Dear Parents/Carers,

We began the year with hope for our new Specialist Provision Class and a new School Development Plan and that theme was reinforced when Pope Francis declared a Jubilee Year of Hope. Every year brings changes, this year was no different, but we greeted them with enthusiasm and used them to our advantage, as can be seen in our successes throughout the year, in the happiness and wonderful achievements of our children.

Many thanks to the pupils, staff and parents who make this such a happy school and special thanks to the PTA for their tireless fund-raising efforts on behalf of our school.

Mrs Marion Meyer

Chairperson of the Board of Governors

St. Mary's on the Hill Primary School



It is my pleasure to present this year's Annual Report to the Board of Governors of St. Mary's on the Hill Primary School. This has been a year of significant progress, innovation, and heartfelt farewells, all of which have shaped our school community in meaningful ways.

A particular highlight of this year has been the successful opening of our KS2 Specialist Provision class. This new initiative has already made a profound impact, providing tailored support and opportunities for our pupils who benefit from a more specialised learning environment. The positive feedback from parents, staff, and—most importantly—our pupils, is a testament to the dedication and expertise of our team. The class has quickly become an integral part of our school, reflecting our commitment to inclusion and excellence for every child.

We also mark a moment of gratitude and celebration for two esteemed colleagues. After 33 years of outstanding service, Mrs. Eibhlin Walsh retires from St. Mary's on the Hill. Her unwavering dedication, compassion, and professionalism have left an indelible mark on generations of pupils and staff. On behalf of the entire school community, we extend our deepest thanks and wish her every happiness in her retirement.

We also congratulate Mrs. Barbara Niblock on her appointment as Principal of St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School. During her time as Vice Principal at St. Mary's on the Hill, Mrs. Niblock's leadership, warmth, and commitment to our pupils and staff have been invaluable. We thank her sincerely for her service and wish her every success in her new role.

This year, our School Development Plan focused on four key areas:

- Literacy,
- Nurture,
- Outdoor Learning,
- Specialist Provision.

Through targeted initiatives and collaborative effort, we have seen measurable progress in each area. Our literacy programmes have fostered a love of reading and improved attainment; our nurture initiatives have supported pupil wellbeing and resilience; outdoor learning has enriched our curriculum and engaged pupils in new ways; and our specialist provision has ensured that every child's needs are met with care and expertise.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to building on these successes, always striving to provide the very best for every member of our school community.

Mr Matthew O'Brien

Principal

St. Mary's on the Hill Primary School



School Mission, Vision & Values

Vision Statement

“Learn to Love, Love to Learn”

This vision reflects our commitment to nurturing a lifelong love of learning within a caring and inclusive environment.

Mission Statement

At St. Mary’s on the Hill P.S., we aim to:

- Create a **safe, nurturing, and inclusive** environment.
- Inspire all members of our community to develop their **knowledge** and **skills**.
- Enable every individual to **achieve their full potential**.

Core Values

We promote and uphold the following values throughout our school community:

Respect	Kindness	Resilience	Growth
Curiosity	Creativity	Integrity	Fun

Governance

Board of Governors Composition

The Board of Governors is comprised of representatives from:

- **Trustees**
 - **Education Authority**
 - **Department of Education**
 - **Parent-elected Governor**
 - **Teacher-elected Governor**
- (See Appendix 1 for full details)*



Curriculum Overview

Enrolment

- Total pupils enrolled: 353 (Academic Year 2024/2025)

Catholic Ethos

- Catholic values are **integral** to teaching, learning, and daily school life.

Areas of Learning

The curriculum is delivered through the following key areas:

- **Language and Literacy**
- **Mathematics and Numeracy**
- **The Arts**
- **The World Around Us**
- **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding**
- **Physical Education**



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 and assessment**
- **Catholic life of the school**
- **Whole School Initiatives**
- **Curriculum & Parent Engagement**
- **Student Leadership**
- **Staff Development**
- **Forest School**
- **Financial and Entrepreneurship Education**
- **PTA & Community Engagement**
- **Health & Wellbeing**
- **Shared Education**
- **School Trips**
- **Awards & Achievements**
- **Sports**
- **Music and Arts**
- **Transition (Early Years and KS2/KS3)**

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*)



Appendix 1

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors was reconstituted this year and elections were held for the positions of parents and teacher representatives.

Trustee Representatives

Mrs Meyer (Chairperson)

Mr Wright (Vice-Chairperson)

Mrs O’Hea

Mr Todd

Education Authority Representatives

Mr McCannMr Grehan

Department of Education Appointee

Mr Turner

Governor Elected by the Teachers

Miss J Kerr

Governor Elected by the Parents

Mrs C Lynch

Principal

Mr O’Brien (Secretary)

The full Board of Governors met six times during the period 1st August 2024 and 31st July 2025



Appendix 2

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 ICT Team
P2PMI P2NMN	Mrs Mc Intyre (Miss NcNeill)	Early Years Co-ordinator, SLT Member, Outdoor Learning Team
P2SK	Mrs Keers	Early Years Team, School Council Lead, Literacy Team
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
P4MMA	Miss McAnallen	PTA link, Outdoor learning Team
P5WW	Ms Walsh/Mrs Wilson (Job Share)	Playground Pals Co-ordinator, The Arts Co-ordinator
P5MD	Mrs Dempsey	Autism Advocate lead, Outdoor Learning Team
P6GB	Mrs Brady	Literacy Co-ordinator, Literacy Team SLT member
P6SMC	Mrs McConvey	WAU Co-ordinator, Outdoor Learning Team
P7JK	Miss Kerr	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
EMN	Miss McNamee	Specialist Provision Teacher P5 – P7
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	Executive Officer
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
Mrs Roberts	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P2)
Miss Dempsey	Special/Additional Educational Needs (SP)
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'
Mrs Dougan	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P3)
Miss Smylie	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P5)
Mrs Kearney	Special/Additional Educational Needs SP
Miss Millar	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P5) Breakfast Club Staff
Miss McAllister	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P5) Supervisor of the 'Waiting Class'
Mrs Dowie	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P5)
Mrs Ashe	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P7)
Mrs McNally	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P7), First Aider, Breakfast Club Staff
Mr Ashe	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P7)
Mrs McMaster	Special/Additional Educational Needs (P7)
Miss Gribben	Special/Additional Educational Needs SP
Mrs Turner	Special/Additional Educational Needs SP
Mr Mageean	Special/Additional Educational Needs SP
Mrs Turner, Mrs Kennedy, Miss Smylie, Mrs Beggan, Mrs McAlister Mrs McNally, Miss Kearney, Mrs O'Hagan, Mrs Tierney	Lunchtime Supervisory Assistants



Mrs Butler	Head Cook
Mrs McKinstry Mrs Russell Mrs Hynes	Canteen Staff
A N Other Mr Mousa Mrs L Kelly	Cleaning Staff



Appendix 3

Voluntary Fund (01.09.24-31.08.25)

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, DVDs.

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.



School Development and Improvement 2024 2025

Whole School Initiatives

- All pupils participated in Sustrans events:
 - Bike Safely
 - Walk and Wheels
 - Be Safe Be Seen
 - Walking Bus initiative (conducted three times)
 - European Day of Languages celebrated across the school
-

Curriculum & Parent Engagement

- Class assemblies held for school and parents, focusing on values and religious occasions
 - Curriculum talks conducted for all classes to engage parents in their children's learning
 - Numeracy and Literacy parent workshops held for P1 – P5
-

Student Leadership

- Eco-Council and Student Council elected by pupils
 - Student Council, led by Miss Keers, initiated:
 - Additional playtime equipment
 - Non-uniform days
-

Staff Development

- Staff development days included:
 - Nurture through Theraplay training
 - REN learning for Accelerated Reader
 - Freckle Maths programme
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Forest School

- All classes from SP, P1 to P7 participated in Forest School activities
 - Visits included Clandeboye Forest Park
 - Led by Mrs. Ross, who is pursuing Level 4 Forest School Teacher certification
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Enterprise & Financial Education

- Young Enterprise programmes delivered to P3–P7 via online and face-to-face sessions
- Topics included:
 - Financial Capability
 - Our City
 - Our Community

Religious Life

- Mass in the Class held for P4–P7
- Prayers in the Class held for P3–P7
- Sacramental preparation and celebrations:
 - Penance (P3)
 - Eucharist (P4)
 - Confirmation (P7)

PTA & Community Engagement

- PTA organized events:
 - Colour Run
 - Wonka Bars sale
 - Christmas and Summer Fairs
 - Supported Sports Days, Parent Workshops, Halloween Dress Up, Spring Dance
- Secured Belfast City Council funding for Building Bonds initiative:
 - Activities included bracelet making, sports events, golf evening

Health & Wellbeing

- Flu vaccinations administered to all pupils on 3rd November

Transition & Shared Education

- P7 students visited:
 - Blessed Trinity
 - Edmund Rice College
 - St. Malachy's
 - Fortwilliam
- Shared Education with Carnmoney Primary School:
 - Supported by £10,000 PeacePlus funding
 - Linked P3 and P7 pupils for relationship-building activities



- School Council visited Mossley Mill and met the Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey

School Trips

- P1: Ark Farm
- P2: Carrickfergus Castle
- P3: Armagh Planetarium
- P4: Ulster Folk Park Cultra
- P5: Titanic Museum
- P6: Belfast Giants and Ulster Museum
- P7: Emerald Park
- P4–P7: Movie House Christmas treat

Awards & Achievements

- Spirit of Catholic Education Award (third time)
- Sustrans Silver Award
- Forest School Award
- Take 5 Award – recognition for focus on wellbeing

Sports

- Training provided in:
 - Gaelic Football and Hurling (Eugene McGoldrick)
 - Soccer (St. Mary's FC)
 - Basketball (Mr. Brady)
- Participation in:
 - Cumann na mBunscol tournaments
 - Antrim and Newtownabbey football leagues
 - Basketball tournaments at Newforge
 - Finished top of second division in soccer leagues
- Sports Days held on 29th and 30th May



Music & Arts

- Music lessons for P4–P7:
 - 15 woodwind students
 - 52 string students
- School choir performances:
 - Nursing homes
 - Carol services
 - Peace Proms at SSE Arena
 - Abbey Centre during Christmas
- Hullabaloo pantomime for P1–P3
- Joe the Drummer sessions for P1–P7 and SP

Early Years Transition

- P1 transition activities included:
 - Nursery visits
 - Greenfingers events
 - Induction day for parents and children
 - Meetings with new parents

School Teams – Reflecting SDP 2024 2025 work

Outdoor Learning

Focus Areas:

- Reducing barriers to outdoor learning
- Enhancing school grounds (e.g., playgrounds)
- Developing a sensory garden

Strategies:

- Implementation of key strategies with active involvement from the Eco-Council

Promoted Initiatives:

- Forest School
- Science Week
- Sustrans – Active Schools Programme
- Growing and Planting
- Garden Development



Health & Wellbeing:

- Activities such as the Daily Mile to promote physical health

Specialist Provision

Collaboration:

- Partnership with other schools to enhance provision

Developments:

- Establishment of a KS2 class
- Ongoing building works to support specialist needs

Pupil Support:

- 8 children supported in FS/KS1
- 4 children supported in KS2

Literacy

Teacher Development:

- Focused training on skills development and resource creation

Resources:

- Online access to lesson plans and instructional videos

Planning & Tracking:

- Use of interactive resources for detailed planning and progress monitoring

Curriculum Focus:

- Emphasis on VIPERS strategies to raise literacy standards



Nurture

Skill Development:

- Staff training in Theraplay techniques

Resource Access:

- Use of EA online portal for nurture resources

Recognition & Awards:

- Autism NI Awards
 - Spirit of Catholic Education Award
 - Take 5 Award for wellbeing focus
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