

St Brigid's Primary School

Annual Report

2014/15



Dear Parents

This report is designed to give you a brief overview of activities in St Brigid's Primary School between September 2014 and June 2015. As Chairperson of the Board of Governors of St Brigid's Primary School, it is my privilege to work with the Principal, staff and wider community of St Brigid's to ensure the best education for the children in our care and ensure that the school continues to provide a climate where the children feel safe, valued, respected and challenged to do their best.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you the parents for your support throughout the year, the staff for their continued dedication and hard work and my fellow governors for their commitment to St Brigid's. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Miss Magee onto the staff on a permanent basis.

Yours sincerely

B Smyth

Chairman

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective management of St Brigid's Primary School. They meet at least once per term and on other occasions when it is deemed necessary. The Governors work in partnership with the Principal and staff to ensure the provision of good education for our children. They have particular responsibilities in relation to the curriculum, the financial management of the school, the appointment of staff, admissions to the school, pastoral care and discipline, buildings and maintenance, Child Protection and community links. It is composed of nominees of the Trustees, the South Eastern Education and Library Board and the Department of Education, a parent elected by the parents and a teacher elected by the teachers. The members hold office for 4 years. The current Board of Governors in St Brigid's Primary School was re-constituted in 2014 and is made up as follows:

Nominated by Trustees

Martina Evans
Patricia Martin
Patricia Fermor
Canon Conway

Nominated by SEELB

Brendan Smyth (Chairperson)
Roisin Gaffney

Nominated by Dept of Education

Paul Galloway

Elected Parent

Laura Higgins

Elected Teacher

Catherine Rodgers

Secretary

Philip Artherton (Principal)

Our aim is to provide an educational experience within a caring community in accordance with our Catholic faith.

Specifically we aim to:

- 1 To provide a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum suited to the needs of the child which fulfils the requirements of the Northern Ireland Education Order**
- 2 To develop each child spiritually, morally, socially, intellectually, emotionally and physically, so that by realising his/her potential he/she can have an appreciation of his/her self-worth**
- 3 To encourage qualities and attitudes of initiative, independence, resourcefulness, self-esteem, imagination, enthusiasm and self-confidence in each child**
- 4 To help children to develop an understanding of their own culture and tradition and to foster tolerance by promoting respect and understanding for that of others**
- 5 To develop home/school links so that children can benefit from their teachers and parents working together as partners in their education**
- 6 To establish and maintain acceptable forms of behaviour within a secure and well-ordered school environment by encouraging self-discipline**
- 7 To develop children's awareness of their local and wider environments and of the effect which their action can have on both**
- 8 To maintain effective links with nursery and post-primary schools to which our children transfer**
- 9 To develop an enjoyment of learning and experience success**

Management Structures and responsibilities

The teaching staff (2014/15) and their responsibilities consisted of the following:

Mr P Artherton	Principal - Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection
Mr C Fitzsimons	P6 Teacher - Maths coordinator
Mrs Y Finnegan	P1 teacher - Structured Play coordinator
Mrs C Kelly	P1 teacher – ICT coordinator
Miss N McKenna	P2 teacher – Eco schools coordinator
Mrs A Lloyd	Vice Principal and P5/6 teacher- Special Needs coordinator Designated teacher for Child Protection. Pastoral Care coordinator
Mrs D Fegan	P4 Teacher - PE/Art coordinator, Literacy coordinator
Miss G McNamara	P3 Teacher - Music/RE coord. Extended Schools coord
Mr McCormick	P7 teacher - Assessment coordinator
Miss Rodgers	P5 teacher - World Around Us coordinator
Miss Magee	P1 teacher
Mrs Redmond	SEN teacher

The current non-teaching staff (2014/15) consisted of the following:

Mr G McCartan	Building Supervisor
Mrs D Pyper	Secretary (First Aid trained)

Classroom assistants: Mrs M Breen
Miss L Magee
Mrs McDonald (First Aid trained)
Mrs O Breteche (First Aid trained)
Miss C McQuoid (First Aid trained)
Ms Rogan
Mrs Morrison
Mrs O'Brien
Mrs Fitzsimons

Cleaning Staff: Mrs Pleasants
Mrs McGouran
Mrs Stevenson

Finances

St Brigid's is allocated a sum of money to pay for all staffing, maintenance and running costs. The Board of Governors has the overall responsibility of managing this budget. The following is a summary of how this budget is spent.

2014/15

Total budget for the year	£796,196
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Expenditure

Salaries (teachers)	£560,045
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Salaries (auxiliary staff)	£73,658
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Salaries (ancillary staff)	£50,617
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Premises, fixed plant and grounds	£19,434
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Supplies and services	£27,507
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Transport	£658
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Establishment expenses	£10,606
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Total expenditure	£739,108
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Surplus	£57,088
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Other Income

EC milk subsidy	£3416
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School Fund

Our Parents Association donated £2500 to school funds this year. Our sincere thanks to our Parents Association for the great support they give to our school both financially and at the many functions throughout the school year.

In 2014/15 the School Fund account had an income of £22498.58 and an expenditure of £22730.50. This account is available to parents for inspection on written request.

The Board of Governors is responsible for ensuring that the curriculum is being delivered to the pupils throughout the school.

The curriculum has six learning areas.

The Arts

Language and Literacy

Maths and Numeracy

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

Physical Education

The World Around Us

In 2014/15 the class structure consisted of two Primary One classes, one P2 class, a Primary 2/3 class, a P3 class, a P4 class, a P5 class, a P5/6 class, a P6 class and a P7 class. Each class is of mixed ability and sex. Children coming from other schools were placed in the correct class for their age. Subject leaders worked closely together and in consultation with teachers to see to it that the schemes of work in the school ensure continuity and progression. All policy statements take into account the need for cross curricular work and this is encouraged by individual subject leaders.

In all areas the schemes of work will take into account the values and attitudes to be acquired. Teachers are engaged in on-going assessment and folders are provided in which samples of pupils' work will be stored. Assessment took place during and on completion of particular tasks, topics etc. and teachers will have their own and agreed methods for recording. Towards the end of the Summer term parents were given a written report informing them of their child's progress. A copy of this report is retained for school purposes.

Teaching methods employed were aimed at encouraging the full and active participation of all pupils. Language played an important part in this and children have become accustomed to talk and discussion in whole class, group and individual situations. During 2014/15 our school was able to avail of Speech and Language support for children in P1 and P2 who were in need of such support. Regular meetings occurred between teachers in separate Key Stage areas and as a whole staff to coordinate planning. Review of methods used and successful methods were discussed through Key Stage, Staff and teacher to teacher meetings. All staff are encouraged to further their professional development in making application for relevant courses. On the Baker Days and School Development Days training was organised for whole staff development using our own expertise, invited personnel, CASS field officers and SEELB programmes.

Curriculum leaders and individual teachers made a number of requests for additional resources. Many of these were provided through amounts set aside in the budget for classroom use.

Enrolment and Admissions

The overall enrolment number for St Brigid's Primary School is 266. The admissions number is 38. At the start of the 2014/15 school year there were 268 children enrolled in the school. This included 10 children with a statement of Special Educational Needs.

In the Spring term (2014) the Board of Governors had considered applications for admission to Primary 1. There were 47 applications and after application of the admissions criteria 43 children were admitted. A small number of children were also admitted to other year groups throughout the year with a number of others being placed on a waiting list.

Reporting to Parents

During the school year formal and informal opportunities were available for parents to meet teachers to discuss the progress of their children. At the beginning of the school year parents were invited to attend year group curriculum information meetings. In October and February formal Parent/Teacher consultations were arranged to discuss progress. They were extremely well attended and Governors and staff appreciate the high level of support and cooperation from our parents. Annual Reports were issued in June. Meetings were also arranged for parents of children starting school in September 2014, Information meeting regarding special needs provision, transferring from primary to post-primary education and a meeting regarding the P7 residential trip to the SHARE centre. A number of parent meetings regarding Sacramental preparation were also held.

In June 2015 192 questionnaires were sent out to parents seeking their views on three main focus areas:

Leadership and Management
Quality of Provision for Learning
Quality of Achievements

A number of questions were asked under each heading and a 4 point scale was given to indicate a response to each question. A facility was also provided for additional comments. 95 questionnaires were returned. The responses were extremely positive and affirmed the confidence the parents have in the school to deliver a high quality education. An analysis of the questionnaire can be found on the school website.

(www.stbrigidsprimaryschool.com.)

Staff Development

Staff are encouraged to undertake development where it meets the needs of the school and their own professional needs. In the school year 2014/15 staff attended various training in numeracy, Literacy, data analysis, ICT, ECO schools, Extended schools provision, child protection, special needs and inclusion.

Through the PRSD scheme introduced in Sept 2005, future training needs are identified to support professional development. Opportunities for professional development through attendance at CASS in-service training and school based in-service training were offered to teaching and non-teaching staff. A Staff Development Policy and record of staff development is available for consultation. For the 2014/15 year staff development in Literacy focused mainly on the development of handwriting and in Numeracy the focus was mainly on Measures. In ICT, the NERVE Centre delivered training on 'Scratch', ipad and Lego. All staff were also given training on the development of the school's new website. The school also linked up with Barnardos to engage staff in training for the PATHS programme (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies). Assessment moderation of children's work was also carried out in ICT, writing and numeracy.

Special Educational Needs

Data collated from NRIT, NFER and various diagnostic tests were used to identify at an early stage, children with special educational needs. They are then placed on the Special Needs register according to the Code of Practice. Data analysis was also used to support early identification of under-achievers. Intervention programmes are then put in place to address the special needs these children have. The SEN teacher was able to provide individual support specific to the child's needs. Extended Schools and Neighbourhood Renewal funding enabled us to put in place an extensive Reading Partnership Programme which provided reading support to 54 children during the course of the year. The school also availed of Speech and Language support for children in P1 and P2. A Maths club was organised to target under-achievers in Maths. The Homework club focused mainly on giving support to children with ASD. Regular liaison was maintained with the Educational Psychology service and other outside support agencies such as ASCET to add to the support given to SEN children in the school. Parents were kept informed on a regular basis about the progress of their children through face to face meetings and written reports.

Curricular and Extra curricular activities

We continued to offer a wide range of curricular activities which aimed at encouraging children to recognise and develop their special talents to their full potential. The curriculum was, as far as possible practical, building on the interests and experiences of the child. The Cookery club continued until Christmas. Other clubs such as tennis, football, gardening, Film, Tin Whistle, ICT, Irish and netball continued at various times throughout the year. The school football and netball teams took part in a number of tournaments throughout the year. At Christmas the P1 to P3 children put on a production of '*Off to Bethlehem*'. The P4 to P7 children staged a

fantastic production of 'Aladdin' in St Patrick's Grammar School in February 2015. The two nights of the production were completely sold out. We would like to thank St Patrick's GS for allowing us the use of their facilities.

Following on from the success of the previous year's Speech Festival, we held another very successful festival in March 2015.

Our pupils are given the opportunity to recognise, understand and respect the different traditions in our community. In 2014/15 we had 3 Polish, 7 Latvian, 1 Chinese and 2 Lithuanian children on our role. Children were given the opportunity to fundraise for those less fortunate than themselves at home and abroad. Our school's Lenten appeal raised £1670 for Trocaire. A non-uniform day raised a further £244 for Mencap.. We aim to foster in our pupils a set of moral values and confidence to make and hold moral judgements and develop habits of self-discipline and acceptable behaviour.

We pursue an active PE policy helping children to become aware of themselves and being able to enjoy movement, shape and space without feeling they have to be experts. Children in P5, P6 and P7 were timetabled for swimming lessons in the local Leisure Centre.

Pastoral Care

Our Pastoral Care policy is designed to reflect the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic faith and involves all members of our school community – children, teachers, parents and all other adults who contribute to the well being and happiness of each child. We strive to create a Christian atmosphere where God's love is experienced by all members of the school community through their relationships with each other, where Christ is an example to all and where each child is supported to develop his/her full potential in every aspect of development – intellectual, social, physical, moral and religious. To achieve this, children are made aware that they all have something to contribute to society. We aim to give them an awareness of their own special skills and talents for their own fulfilment and for the benefit of the community. We believe that our children have the right to succeed and be protected from failure.

We recognise the valuable and important role which parents play in their child's education and wellbeing. We try to ensure that parents are made to feel welcome, that they are aware of the school's aims, objectives and policies and of their child's individual needs, progress and achievements and we encourage parents to cooperate with the school in achieving these goals.

Pastoral Care in our school also extends to all the staff and support, whether internally or from outside agencies, is readily available as and when the need arises.

Promotion of good behaviour and discipline

The discipline in St Brigid's aims to provide a framework for the social, personal and moral development of each child. It is our aim to stress at every opportunity the application to life outside school of acceptable habits and practices acquired in the school. We have a merit system which rewards effort and good behaviour and culminates in a head teacher's award at assembly. We also have a 'pupil of the month' which highlights an area of focus for the pupils to work towards. Examples of foci are good manners, courtesy, caring for others, respect for the environment. We aim to promote the 3Rs of Respect for yourself, Respect for others, and Responsibility for your own actions. To encourage good discipline we have endeavoured to:

- create good relationships with mutual respect between teachers and pupils and other adults in the school
- have realistically high expectations of pupils' academic and social abilities
- match our curriculum and teaching methods to pupils' needs
- nurture pupils' growing maturity and self-esteem
- create an attractive environment for learning
- make pupils feel that their teachers are willing and ready to listen to them.

In Parental questionnaires 94% of parents believed the school was good at promoting positive behaviour. 90% believed that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour.

Attendance

Good attendance by both staff and pupils is greatly encouraged. Parents are reminded throughout the year of the importance of good attendance so that their child's progress can be sustained. In 2014/15 the pupil attendance was 95.47%. Parents/guardians are requested to provide a reason for absences either in writing, in person or by telephone.

On a return to work after an absence staff are required to meet with the principal for a back to work interview. In a majority of cases this will take the form of an informal discussion. Where there is deemed the need a more formal approach may be taken in line with Attendance Policy. Management is always vigilant when attempting to identify underlying causes for absences such as difficulty at work, a more serious health condition or a personal/domestic problem. Support is readily available in such circumstances.

The Promotion of Health and Well-being

Healthy eating is strongly encouraged by St Brigid's. Pupils are encouraged to drink water and eat fruit and vegetables instead of crisps and other foods of high fat and sugar/salt content. Following on from the previous year, we again received an S.O.S. (Save Our Smiles) Gold Award for healthy eating in the school. Parents have been made aware of our drive towards encouraging healthy eating and have been very supportive of our efforts. We have two water coolers located in the school corridors which provide a ready source of fresh, cool drinking water for the children.

School's Accommodation

In March 2015 a newly built classroom was completed at the back of the school. The 10 classes in the school each have their own designated classroom. Each classroom has been equipped with an Interactive Whiteboard. Due to additional funding through the Neighbourhood Renewal programme and the Extended Schools programme the school was able to add significantly to the number of computers contained in our library/ICT suite. Rathkeltair Cross Community Playgroup availed of 1 room on the bottom corridor of the school. There are 8 children's toilets – 4 girls and 4 boys, located in different parts of the school. The outdoor woodland area at the rear of the school is very popular with the children both as a play area and as an outdoor classroom area. The middle and top corridors were re-painted and re-floored. New handrails were also installed.

The school also has on the premises a central meals kitchen which not only provided meals for our school but also for a number of smaller rural schools.

Our School in the Community

Our school continues to receive excellent support from our parents. We have a very active Parents Association who help us out at special events such as sports day, religious celebrations and at a number of social events organised throughout the year. In 2014/15 they donated £2500 to school funds. Their support also extended to functions such as First Holy Communion, First Confession and the end of year Mass. Our parents also give us excellent support in raising funds for charities.

We value our close links with local secondary schools. In 2014/15 we continued our link with St Patrick's Grammar School (SPGS). A Paired Reading Programme involving upper sixth students from St Patrick's and our P4 children was carried out in the second term. 6 students from SPGS delivered a Reading Partnership Programme to P3 children and our P7 children took part in the McGrady Debating Cup and Peer Ministry organised by St Patrick's Grammar. The P6 class also had some numeracy support from 4 upper sixth students. Our P7 children visited a number of post primary schools in the area for various events and this contributed to the smooth transition from primary to secondary education. Class assemblies were very well attended by parents throughout the year. We also had a very successful 'Come Dine With Me' day when parents and grandparents joined our P1 children for dinner. In March the PSNI conducted a drama workshop on e-safety for our P6 and P7 children. The P7 children also attended the Bee Safe event organised by the local council.

We also receive great support from the local business community. They supported us financially at events organised by our Parents Association and businesses such as the Post Office sorting office, opticians, dentists and the florist hosted visits from various classes throughout the year to support their learning. We also hosted several visitors to the school such as a fireman, a postman, a nurse, a farmer, a chiropractor, a falconer, a Spanish tutor, charity representatives and sports coaches. Various classes paid a number of educational visits to places of interest such as the museum, the

Titanic Centre, the Planetarium and Castle Ward. Our school also took part in many sporting events such as football, netball and athletics and in other events such as quizzes and debates.

The School Leavers transferred to the following schools:

St Patrick's Grammar School	4
St Mary's High School	5 (includes 1 child with SEN statement)
Assumption Grammar	5
Down High	2
De La Salle High School	12 (includes 3 children with SEN statement)
St Colmcille's High School	3
Blackwater College	1 (includes 1 child with SEN statement)

School Development Days

School Development Days	Focus
28 th October 2014	Numeracy –Measures audit. ICT – Programming/Working with Images
8 th December 2014	Literacy – Handwriting, Phonics, Spelling Assessment – Measures progression
5 th January 2015	PATHS training – Key Stage 2 Literacy – Foundation and Key Stage 1- Handwriting, ICT
5 th May 2015	World Around Us – Review of progression
26 th May 2015	School Development Plan review 2014/15 School Development Plan 2015/16



St Brigid's Primary School links with the Community

Name of link	Link summary
Pastoral Care	
School Chaplain: Fr Henry Parish Priest: Fr Murray	Preparation and celebrating sacraments, school Masses, Faith development, Do this in Memory of Me programme
St Patrick's Grammar School	Faith Friends, P4 and P7 retreats
Diocesan advisors	Advice, training, support materials and school visits
De La Salle Pastoral Centre	P7 Confirmation retreats
Barnardos	Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies Programme (PATHS). Staff training and provision of resources.
Child Safeguarding	
Link Summary	
Education Authority	Child Protection training and support. Bereavement support
Education Welfare Officer	Monitors attendance and provides advice and support
Social Services	Referrals and support
NSPCC	School visits, resource materials
ChildLine/Bryson House	Support materials and advice
Newry and Mourne Council	Bee Safe workshops for our P7 children
PSNI	e- Safety workshops, advice, Road Safety
Learning Support	
Link Summary	
Education Authority	In-service training for coordinators
Educational Psychology	Consultations, assessments and statements of educational need
ASD Service	Staff training, pupil support, advice and support materials for children with Autism/Aspergers
Longstone Outreach Service	Support for children with social and behavioural difficulties
Speech and Language – Anne McKeever	In-school support for children with Speech and Language difficulties
ASCET (Additional Support for Children in Education)	Multi-disciplinary team which works alongside teachers and parents to support children
Curriculum Enrichment	
Link Summary	
Class visits	Titanic Centre, Armagh Planetarium, Castle Ward, SHARE Outdoor Pursuit Centre, Downpatrick Library, Castlewellan Forest Park, Opticians, Ark Farm, Northern Bank, Credit Union, Post

	Office
Invited guests	Authors, Fireman, Chiropractor, Nurse, Falconer,
Conservation Volunteers	Enhancing our school garden area
Sport	Link Summary
Russell Gaelic Union, Down County Board	Gaelic coaching, football tournaments
Downpatrick FC	Soccer coaching P4 to P7
IFA coach	Fundamental skills coaching for Foundation Stage/Key Stage One children
Newry and Mourne Council	Swimming lessons, Cross country running
Netball coach	Netball coaching and tournaments
Tennis Coach	Tennis coaching for children from P1 to P7
The Arts	Link Summary
Tin Whistle Tutor	Tin whistle tuition for P5 to P7 children
Education Authority	Peripatetic support for children learning to play the violin, viola, cello and woodwind instruments
Patrician Youth Club	Attendance at drama productions
Cinemagic	Cinemagic provide films throughout the year for the children to write reviews on.
Irish tutor	After school Irish language classes P2 to P7
Other Schools	Link Summary
St Patrick's Grammar School	Sixth Form students engage in Reading Partnership with our P3 children and in Maths support for our P6 children. Peer Ministry for P7 children. Use of Sporting and Drama facilities. Student work experience placements
De La Salle High School	Use of Drama facilities and extended school cluster cooperation
St Mary's High School	Extended School cluster cooperation and Transition work between Year 7 and Year 8. Student work experience placements.
Downpatrick PS	Joint sacramental preparation, sporting events, WAU cluster
Other Schools	Open Days and visits for drama productions. Work experience placements.
Knockevin Special School	Joint activities with our P5 children
Health Promotion	Link Summary
School Nurse	Provides training, talks and support for teachers and our children on health issues
Save Our Smiles	Provides dental care advice and support

Public Health Agency	Provides literature on health promoting issues and wellbeing for children, staff and parents
Dairy Council	Health promoting presentations
Carecall	In-service training for staff on pastoral issues
CAMHS	Counselling and advice on children's mental health issues
Charities we have supported	
Action MS	
NSPCC	
Action Cancer	
Third World Group	
Trocaire	
Romania Appeal	