

**St Mary's Primary School  
and Nursery Unit  
Cushendall**

**Annual Report  
of the  
Board of Governors**

**2016 - 2017**

## **INTRODUCTION**

2016-2017 sees our school continuing to face the challenge of the gradual reduction in pupil numbers. This of course directly affects the annual school budget and the ability to provide single stream classes to all pupils.

Whilst we have been able to avoid compulsory staff redundancies, the Board of Governors have agreed that the re-introduction of a composite class is required for the forthcoming school year (2017-2018) due to the reduction in our annual school budget. Please be assured this does not affect the school's ability to continue to deliver an effective educational programme for our children.

In May 2016 we lost the services of one of our Governors, Mrs Eileen Kane who was one of the Trustee representatives on the Board. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Eileen for her service to the school. We hope to replace Eileen as soon as possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Parent Teacher Association who continue to give their valuable time and effort to raise funds for the benefit of the whole school. These efforts do not go unnoticed and are very much appreciated.

This Annual Report is for your information, please read it as the content will be of interest and do not hesitate to contact either myself or Mrs Smart should you have any questions or concerns.

***Mr Alastair McKillop***  
***Chairperson of the Board of Governors***

In this our seventeenth Annual Report, the Board of Governors believe that you as parents should be aware of what the school believes in, what it aims to do for your children and what values we want to give them.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

“At St Mary’s Primary School we are firmly committed to promoting the spiritual, academic, social, physical and aesthetic development of all our children. We wish to create a safe, caring and Christian environment where all our children will have the opportunity to develop individual talents and realise their full potential. We wish to nurture in every child a positive self-image, a respect for others, their property and environment. We aim to establish a community wherein pupils, teachers, parents and support staff are valued and enjoy a sense of belonging.”

### **The Aims Of The School**

- We at St Mary’s are aware of the need to help our children manage their present lives, as well as to help them prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, so we endeavour to provide for the development of the child as a person as well as a learner.
- We aim to develop our pupils’ ‘life skills’ - critical thinking, decision making, effective communication, learning from mistakes, which are so necessary for their health and safety in today’s society.
- We aim to provide a caring commitment to guide and advise our pupils on both personal and educational matters and seek to build a community of children who care about each other and show respect for themselves and others.
- The Staff of St Mary’s aim to build a special relationship with, and a knowledge of, the children in their care and thus endeavour to raise the pupils’ social awareness, promote positive attitudes and build their self-esteem.
- Pastoral work of the class teacher will come from their partnership with colleagues, local priests, educational welfare officers, community police, the school nurse and other outside agencies.
- We aim to promote a partnership and a close working relationship with parents / guardians whose views and wishes as prime carers will be heard and respected to enable us to support their children’s learning.
- We aim to offer a framework of values and positive behaviour enabling our children to be self-reliant, motivated, self-disciplined and to make choices in a moral context.

## **ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT**

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective management of the school. It presently consists of eight voting members - three appointed by the Trustees, two appointed by the Education and Library Board, one appointed by the Department of Education, one elected by the parents and one elected by the teaching staff. The Principal is also a non-voting member of the Board of Governors. The Board, therefore, represents all the main interests concerned with the school.

### **Members of the Board of Governors**

<b>Representing the Trustees:</b>	Rev. L. McWilliams (Vice-Chairman) Mrs E McCurry Mrs A McDonnell Another member to be appointed
<b>N.E.E.L.B Representatives:</b>	Mr A McKillop (Chairman) Mr R McDonnell
<b>D.E.N.I Representative:</b>	Mr P McAlister
<b>Parent Governor:</b>	Mrs C McLaughlin
<b>Teacher Governor:</b>	Miss L Lennon
<b>Non- Voting Member:</b>	Mrs A. Smart (Principal)

This Board was constituted in May 2015 and will serve for a period of 4 years.

The Governors' particular responsibilities relate to the curriculum, the appointment and dismissal of staff, admissions to the school, discipline, school finances and buildings. An important function of the Governors is to consider the needs of the school in terms of staff, buildings and other resources and to advise the various other authorities if they believe that these needs are not being met. An equally important function is to ensure that the resources available to the school are being effectively used.

## **THE CURRICULUM**

The curriculum is not just about formal lessons. It includes all the opportunities for learning provided by the school, including sport, music and cultural activities, educational field trips etc. The Education Reform Order requires us to provide our pupils with a broad and balanced learning experience, which not only fulfils all the statutory requirements of the revised N. Ireland Curriculum but also provides opportunities for our pupils to enhance their spiritual, cultural, personal and physical development in the context of our Catholic faith.

The education programme for the primary phase of the revised N. Ireland Curriculum now comprises:

The Foundation Stage	-	Years 1 and 2
Key Stage 1	-	Years 3 and 4
Key Stage 2	-	Years 5, 6 and 7

The N Ireland Curriculum makes compulsory the following learning areas:

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

The N. Ireland Curriculum focuses on the development of the following skills and capabilities:

Cross-curricular Skills, including:

Communication  
Using Mathematics  
Using Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities, including:

Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making  
Self Management  
Working With Others  
Managing Information  
Being Creative

Detailed policies and schemes currently in place to ensure proper progression throughout the school are kept under review to ensure we continue to meet the requirements of the NI Curriculum.

The school began a new Three Year Development Plan in September 2016 which set out priorities for the period 2016-2019. This was the first year of the new plan and the key areas under review for the Primary School and Nursery Unit for 2016-2017 were:

Primary School

## Curriculum & Assessment

Literacy	-	Further development of strategies to improve outcomes for comprehension
	-	Review of FS/KS1 reading resources
Numeracy	-	Further development of strategies to improve outcomes for problem solving
	-	Continue to develop use of Alta Maths to identify targets
I.C.T.	-	Develop whole school progression for UICT
	-	Develop Coding Club & use of Scratch/KS2
W.A.U.	-	Continue to develop practical science & technology P1-7
	-	Audit geography strand and review whole school planning
Staff Development	-	Participation in Year 2 of CEA KS2/3 Cross Phase Project
Pastoral/Ethos	-	Implement new Policy for Positive Behaviour (reviewed 2015/16)

## Nursery Unit

Curriculum & Assessment	-	Develop planning & progression for 'Music Play'
Staff Development	-	Develop the role of the adult in 'Music Play'
Parents/Community	-	Develop the use of parents to support topic work

Each year DENI allocate 'Exceptional Closure Days' to facilitate school development issues. The allocation for 2016-2017 was 5 days and the following dates were identified in the school calendar.

26<sup>th</sup> September 2016, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2017, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and 26<sup>th</sup> May 2017

However, due to on-going industrial action by teaching unions, it was agreed by the staff and approved by the Board of Governors, that time allocated for these days could be redistributed and used to have regular staff meetings.

Matters considered at staff meetings included:

- Internal Moderation of Term 1 focus areas for Literacy, Numeracy & ICT
- Internal Moderation of Term 2 focus areas for Literacy, Numeracy & ICT
- Other priority areas on the school development plan

(This arrangement was also used by staff in the Nursery Unit to further the development of key areas in their development plan as set out above.)

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

The Special Educational Needs Policy was implemented in the Primary School and Nursery Unit by teaching staff and additional support was provided for all teachers by Mrs Magill, Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator. Pupils with special educational needs were identified and placed, if appropriate, on the school's SEN Register. Individual Education Plans with short-term, achievable learning targets were

drawn up by Mrs Magill in consultation with the class teachers. These plans were reviewed twice yearly to ensure progress. In general, provision was made within the class, using differentiated work, while at other times targeted support for literacy and numeracy was provided through withdrawal sessions for individual children and outside agencies were also involved as necessary.

## **SCHOOL BUILDINGS**

### **Minor Works Application for Replacement Fire Alarm System In Nursery Unit**

There has been no further communication for the Department of Education regarding this matter since the letter of November 2015 from DENI Estate Operation Team confirming their approval of the progression to Pre-Tender stage of our Minor Works Application for a Replacement Fire Alarm System for the Nursery Unit which was submitted in November 2013. The estimated cost of the scheme was £6,800 ex VAT.

### **Refurbishment of Children's Toilet Facilities & Associated Works**

Ongoing maintenance concerns continued with the security doors on the new corridor which involved the contractor being recalled to the site on several occasions until the fault was resolved.

A further health and safety matter has arisen which requires a canopy to be installed above the double doors to prevent rain coming into the building and making the surface of new corridor unsafe to walk on.

Concerns have also been raised about items of equipment which have not been installed in the new Hygiene Room i.e. a shower curtain and a changing bed.

Barton Industrial Services informed the School on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017 that the Fall Arrest System which was installed as part of the new works was condemned at last year's inspection and no remedial action had been taken to rectify the problem to date.

The architect has been contacted about these matters but there has been no further progress.

### **School Pond**

In November 2016 the Glens Heritage Trust provided funding for the installation of a new school pond. This was sited in the area adjacent to the school garden and is used by the children as part of the WAU activities. The school grounds were further enhanced in the Spring of 2017 when the Glens Heritage Trust returned to plant trees with the help of the children and parents. They also installed bat boxes on the school building.

### **Nursery Sign**

A new sign was erected at the Nursery Unit at a cost of £275 +VAT. Funds for this work was provided from the School Fund Account.

Unfortunately, we have to report that no further progress has been made on either of the following matter:

Our application for a new school building. The Governors wrote to CCMS on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2009 to ask them to consider the use of the site at St Aloysius for a new building. CCMS, in their letter of 5<sup>th</sup> June 2009, acknowledged that the availability of a site represented a significant opportunity and would ensure it was factored into any discussions on Feasibility Study and Economic Appraisal options.

## **ENROLMENT**

Our school enrolment for the year 2016-2017 was Primary/130, Nursery/52. The projected intake into Primary 1 for 2016-2017 was 16 and 20 children would be leaving the school from Primary 7 in June 2017.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance rates are traditionally very high at St Mary's and the figures quoted below are excellent.

### **Primary School**

The percentage attendance rate of pupils for the academic year 2016-2017 was 94.2%.

### **Nursery Unit**

The percentage attendance rate of pupils for the academic year 2016-2017 was 92.2%.

## **TIMETABLE AND HOLIDAYS**

### **Primary School**

<b>9.15a.m.</b>	<b>School commences for all pupils</b>
<b>10.45a.m. – 11.00a.m.</b>	<b>Morning Break</b>
<b>12.30p.m. – 1.15p.m.</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>
<b>2.00p.m.</b>	<b>P1 /P2 pupils finish</b>
<b>3.00p.m.</b>	<b>P3 – P7 pupils finish</b>

### **Nursery Unit**

<b>9.00a.m. – 11.30a.m.</b>	<b>Morning Session</b>
<b>11.30a.m. – 12.00noon</b>	<b>Staff Preparation Time</b>
<b>12.00noon – 12.30p.m.</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>
<b>12.30p.m. – 3.00p.m.</b>	<b>Afternoon Session</b>

Parents received a list of school holidays at the beginning of the school year. The list included the training days for staff when pupils did not have to attend school. Parents also received regular reminders of these dates in the monthly Parent Information letters and termly Newsletters from the Primary School and the Newsletters issued every half term from the Nursery Unit.

## **STAFFING**

The teaching staff for St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit for 2016-2017 was Principal and eight full-time permanent teachers: **Mrs A Smart (Principal)**, **Mrs C Magill (Vice-Principal) (P2)**, **Mrs C Parker (Nursery)**, **Mrs C Boyle (P1)**, **Mrs E Black (P3)**, **Miss L Lennon (P4)**, **Mrs G Fyfe (P5)**, **Mr D McGinley (P6)** and **Mrs L McLoughlin (P7)**.



However, Mr McGinley resigned at the beginning of February 2016 and Mrs A O'Broin taught P.6 for the remainder of the 2016-17 school year.

We must not forget the invaluable help given to the staff and pupils by our nursery assistant **Mrs C McCambridge**, our classroom assistants in the Primary School **Miss M Jamison, Miss K McAlister, Mrs O McDonnell, Mrs E McCurry, Miss O O'Hara**, our secretary **Mrs S McCambridge**, our building supervisor **Mr M Jamison**, our school cleaner **Mrs B Sheppard** and our lunch time supervisors **Mrs R McDonnell, Mrs S McCambridge** and **Mrs O McDonnell**.

## **PASTORAL CARE**

In line with statutory requirements the school has produced, and updates annually, policies for Child Protection, Pastoral Care and Anti-Bullying. All parents were provided with a copy of these policies. Parents were also provided with a copy of the new Positive Behaviour Policy, following extensive consultation with parents, pupils and staff and reviewed annually. This policy includes the provision of a reward system in every class and the presentation of Achievements Awards and Headteacher Awards.

Parents were informed in September 2016 and January 2017 of the appropriate procedure (detailed below) to be followed where there was any concern regarding the welfare of a child.

Designated Teacher	-	Mrs. C.Magill (Primary), Mrs C. Parker (Nursery)
Deputy Designated Teacher	-	Mrs. A. Smart

- Speak to the Class Teacher, the Designated Teacher or the Deputy Designated Teacher.
- Contact the Chairperson of the Board of Governors Mr A McKillop Tel. No. 028 2177 2645.
- Serious concerns may also be brought to the attention of:-

Ballymena Police Care Unit:	Tel. No. 0845 600 8000
Social Services, Ballymoney:	Tel. No. 028 2766 4101

## **ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING**

Knowing how your child is doing at school is important and monitoring progress has always been a key responsibility for teachers.

### **Internal Assessment**

During the year, each teacher used assessment appropriate to the age group of their class, to record the progress of each pupil, to inform planning and classroom teaching, as well as gathering material and samples of work that formed a pupil's record of academic achievement. Standardised tests, including those for Literacy and Numeracy, were also used to monitor how pupils were progressing. The outcomes of these tests were used to identify whole school targets for Literacy and Numeracy as well as specific targets for individual year groups – if this was deemed to be appropriate. These targets were then included in the School Development Plan for the in-coming year.

Outcomes of these tests were also reported to parents in their child's Annual Report in June and parents were then given the opportunity to discuss these outcomes with the teacher if they wished to do so.

Staff also carried out internal moderation on samples of Literacy, Numeracy and UICT work from all year groups. This enabled the school to track performance in each of these areas across all year groups.

Statutory assessment refers to assessments carried out on children at the end of Key Stage 1 (Primary Four) and Key Stage 2 (Primary Seven) in Communication and Using Mathematics. These assessments place each child on a Level from 1 to 5 and the results from our school can then be compared with the results from all other primary schools in N. Ireland shown as a percentage of the children who achieved each level. However, due to on-going industrial action by teaching unions this was not carried out during the 2016-17 year and as a result it not possible to publish results for St. Mary's. This is the case for the vast majority of schools in N Ireland at present.

### **Statutory Assessment Outcomes for 2016-17**

#### **End Of Key Stage 1 Assessment 2016-2017 (Primary 4)**

Due to on-going industrial action the school was unable to take part in these assessments for Key Stage 1 pupils and subsequently there is no data to report for St Mary's.

#### **End Of Key Stage 2 Assessment 2016-2017 (Primary 7)**

Due to on-going industrial action the school was unable to take part in these assessments for Key Stage 2 pupils and subsequently there is no data to report for St Mary's.

### **REPORTING TO PARENTS**

Parent/Teacher meetings for parents with children in Primaries 4, 5, 6 & 7 were held in Term 1. All other parents were invited to attend Parent/Teacher meetings in February to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher. In June all parents received end of year written Annual Reports on their child's progress. The school also provided two days in September to facilitate parents who wished to meet their child's teacher to discuss any concerns they might have regarding how their child had settled into their new class or any other pertinent issues.

Parents were also able to visit the school at any time to meet with their child's teacher, by prior arrangement with the Principal.

### **EDUCATION FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING**

One of the compulsory requirements of the NI Curriculum is the learning area Personal Development and Mutual Understanding. This is not taught as a separate subject but as a cross-curricular theme, in

other words through the medium of other subjects. This has always been the approach taken in St Mary's.

Commitment to the Catholic system of education should never imply a disregard for the religious and cultural traditions of other people in our community. It is our Christian duty to respect, and teach our children to respect, our neighbours, regardless of their differing views or traditions. The theme of respect enjoys a high priority in what we teach our children. We believe that before our children can respect others, they must first learn to respect themselves. We teach them to respect their own property and the property of others. This is regularly reinforced in class and at whole school weekly assemblies. Each week classes take it in turns to present an assembly to the rest of the school and the theme of their assembly always includes themes of respect, tolerance and mutual understanding.

In 2016-2017 St Mary's worked in partnership with primary schools from Co Antrim when teams took part in the Credit Union Quiz and the Cumann na mBunscoil Quiz. Children also went to the RADAR Centre in Belfast to take part in a range of interactive activities to develop their safety and life skills. RADAR (Risk Avoidance Danger Awareness Resource) enables young people to explore dangerous situations in a risk free setting.

### **SPORTS AND AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Sport and leisure activities are an important aspect in the life of the school as it is the policy of St Mary's to develop the whole child. St Mary's has traditionally offered a wide range of After-School Clubs for pupils in P5-7 which included a selection of the following activities: music, games, art, cookery, netball, drama, football, needlework & ICT. In addition, ICT was also offered to pupils in P4 as an after school club.

However, due to on-going industrial action by the teaching unions we had to suspend our After-School Club activities until further notice.

Overall St Mary's had a busy year taking part in gaelic football, hurling and camogie competitions and our activities in this academic year included:

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| - INTO/GAA North Antrim Gaelic Football   |                                   |
| - Cumann na mBunscoil North Antrim League | Hurling & Camogie                 |
| - Cumann na mBunscoil North Antrim League | Indoor Hurling & Camogie          |
| - Cumann na mBunscoil North Antrim        | Primary School Skills Competition |
| - St Patrick's Primary School, Glenariffe | Netball tournament                |
| - Ballymena Schools Netball               | Netball tournament                |

In June, pupils, parents and staff enjoyed another highly successful Sports Day held in the grounds of Ruairi Og GAA Club.

### **P.7 RESIDENTIAL FIELD TRIP**

Following yet another successful trip last year, we took our P7 pupils on a residential field trip to Bushmills Outdoor Education Centre. This involved a three day and two night stay in Bushmills for the children accompanied by two teachers. While they were there the children took part in a wide range of challenging outdoor activities which included canoeing, bouldering, orienteering, cycling, archery and high rope climbing. On their return to school everyone agreed it had been a wonderful experience and thanks is due to both teachers for accompanying the children.



School finances showed a marked decrease in the surplus at March 2016 of £76,364 to a projected surplus of £57,174 at March 2017. This decrease in funds which could be carried forward into 2017-2018 to cover contingencies and buy essential resources will be vital as we continue to manage a decrease in funding due to a gradual decline in pupil numbers.

The school budget for 2016-2017 was based on 184 pupils, (132/Primary School and 52/Nursery Unit) i.e. the number of children on the school roll on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

This shows a decrease in pupil numbers in the Primary School from the previous year when the budget for 2015-2016 was based on 192 pupils, (140/Primary School and 52/Nursery Unit) i.e. the number of children on the school roll on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

<b>School Budget</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Funds available including LMS Delegated Budget Share 2016/2017 **	534,195	
2015/2016 Carry Over	76,364	
<b>Total Resources Available</b>	<b>610,559</b>	<b>610,559</b>
<b>Accrued Expenditure</b>		
Teaching Staff	450,774	
Non-Teaching Staff	94,682	
Non-Staff Costs	23,345	
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>568,801</b>	
Less Income	(15,416)	
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>553,385</b>	<b>553,385</b>
<b>Balance carried forward at end 2017/18</b>		<b>57,174</b>

\*\*An actual breakdown of these funds was not possible as the EA had not published an Outturn Statement for the 2016/17 Financial Year.

The figures set out above are as reported to the Principal by the LMU Department, EA at March 2018. An LMS Outturn Statement for the 2016/17 Financial Year has not been published.

### **PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

An extra special word of thanks must go to the committee members of St Mary's Primary School P.T.A. who, once again, gave so much of their time and effort to help organise events to raise funds to be used for the benefit of all of the children throughout the year. During 2016-17 they continued to sponsor an event each term for the children which included our annual Family Table Quiz and catering for

everyone in the Parish for on the day of Confirmation. This year the P.T.A. also continued to subsidise the annual trip to the Christmas Pantomime in Belfast.

We are extremely grateful to our Parent/Teacher Association for their hard work and continuing support.

Several of our parents also gave freely of their time during the year to accompany and help supervise pupils on class outings and school trips. We thank them also for their assistance and support throughout the year. Without their support such outings would not be possible.

## **CONCLUSION**

As we move forward into 2017-2018 we continue to manage change as we re-introduce composite classes into the school and will, as always, strive to provide the best possible experiences for all children in our care and encourage them to be the best that they can be.

Whilst we are a Catholic school, our door is open to all and we are proud of the fact that St Mary's has always had an inclusive and welcoming ethos. Each year, we strive to provide a comprehensive and exciting curriculum for our pupils in a friendly and caring atmosphere. We are also proud of the support and encouragement that we continue to have from our parents. We hope you enjoy reading this report. Please feel free to seek further clarification about any issue addressed in the annual report. We look forward to your continued support and co-operation in the year ahead.

Finally, we also thank all the staff, teaching, administrative and supervisory for their dedication, good spirits, perseverance and valued contribution during the 2016-2017 academic year.