

St. Mary's Parish Primary School

Bryanstown, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

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Annual Board of Management Report: 2021/22

Purpose of the Annual Report:

The purpose of this annual report is to provide a summary of the Board's work for the school year. This report serves as an addition to the information provided on the school website www.smpps.ie, the various newsletters issued by the school, the information booklet issued to all new parents and any other information provided to parents on all other occasions.

Our School Context:

St Mary's Parish Primary School enrolment at the end of Sept 2021 was 1069 students with 64 teachers, 9 SNAs and 10 ancillary staff.

The Board of Management for the school year was comprised of the following:

- Ms. Anne Phillips (Patron's Nominee / Chairperson BOM)
- Mr John Weir (School Principal / Secretary BOM)
- Ms Agata Laszczynska (Community Representative / Treasurer BOM)
- Mr Gerry Smith (Community Representative)
- Fr John Conlon (Patron's Nominee)
- Ms Laura Hunt (Teachers' Nominee)
- Ms Emer Sullivan (Parents' nominee)
- Mr Brendan Stephenson (Parents' Nominee)

Mr Brendan Stephenson stepped down from the Board at the end of August as his children have now finished primary school. The Board would like to express its gratitude for his outstanding service to the school over many long years. A meeting to elect a replacement parents' nominee will take place shortly.

Throughout the school year the Board held 5 regular meetings and a number of additional meetings to ratify appointments or consider appeals in relation to school enrolment.

Our Ethos:

St. Mary's Parish Primary School is a Catholic school and aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupils: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As a Catholic school we provide Religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and we promote the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

This past year our Catholic ethos was evident in many ways including the following:

- Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Confirmation: The sacrament of Confirmation was celebrated by Bishop Deenihan in February.
- First Communions were celebrated in May..
- School masses were held once Covid restrictions were eased e.g. 6th class graduation.
- Students in 6th class completed the RSE programme with Accord in November

Child Safeguarding and Anti Bullying:

The Board of Management confirms that it has met its obligations in respect of Department of Education Child Safeguarding and Anti-Bullying Procedures. A full annual review of these was carried out by the Board and notification was published on the school website.

School Accounts:

The financial management of our school was conducted in strict compliance with Department of Education requirements. The treasurer issued a financial report at each Board of Management meeting, and prepared annual accounts for the school year 2020-21. These were examined and certified by a local accountancy firm, W.O. McGrory, and all was in order. Our accounts were submitted to the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU) of the Department of Education. The process of certifying the accounts for 2021/22 will be completed before the end of 2022.

Teaching and Learning

- Continuing Impact of Covid: Without doubt the pandemic continued to impact on the normal functioning of the school. Nationally there was a severe shortage of substitute teachers and this impacted on teaching and learning as SET teachers were frequently required to cover absent mainstream class teachers. The school continued to follow its Covid 19 Response Plan based on the Department of Education's "Roadmap to Reopening Schools" document. During the year mask wearing for students from 3rd to 6th class was strongly advised by the HSE / Department of Education and the vast majority of students adhered to these requirements. As the year progressed restrictions that were impacting negatively on the day-to-day running of the school were removed e.g. class pods and bubbles.
- CLASS - A new programme called Covid Learning and Support Scheme (CLASS) was put in place to help schools mitigate the adverse impacts of Covid-19 on pupil learning and wellbeing arising from the periods of school closures in 2020 and 2021. Unfortunately it proved impossible to find substitutes to cover the school's allocated hours
- Policy Development: The following curricular policies were developed /reviewed and ratified throughout the year: Special Education Policy, EAL Policy, English Policy, SPHE Policy, RSE Policy
- School Self Evaluation: The staff continued their engagement with the School Self Evaluation (SSE) process this year. The focus was on the teaching of Irish in the school.
- Enrolment: 117 Junior Infants have started at SMPPS in September.

- **Standardised Test Results:** Standardised Testing was carried out in May 2022. Scores were reported to the DES as required. The results were above average in both literacy and mathematics. Individual scores were reported to parents on the end of year school report card.
- **Organisational Policies:** The following organisational policies were reviewed during the year: Child Safeguarding (annual review of policy and risk analysis), Code of Behaviour, Anti-bullying Policy (and annual Board review), Critical Incident Management Plan, Health and Safety Statement, Admissions Statement 2021/22, Discretionary Leave Policy, Administration of Medicine Policy, Protected Disclosure Policy

School Activities and Achievements:

The implementation of measures to limit the spread of Covid-19 e.g. social distancing and restrictions on the interactions between bubbles continued to impact negatively on school activities during the year. No after-school clubs were run and many activities were limited as classes could not mix. However some examples of activities which were held include:

- **4 - week Draw:** The Parents Association managed to complete their 4 week draw.
- **Clothes Recycling:** With the support of the Parents Association we held 2 clothes recycling drives which raised almost €2000 for additional resources for the school.
- **6th Class Hoodies** - the 6th class fund-raised towards the purchase of class hoodies for the graduating class.
- **Christmas Concert** - while it was not possible to do our regular Christmas concerts, the school created a video with a mix of classroom activity and music.
- **Graduation:** the 6th class graduation was able to resume in person.
- **Charity work-** During the year students led fundraising for several charities and school activities: Drogheda Animal Rescue, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Children's Ward, PM readers, 6th class hoodies, Red Cross Ukraine Appeal. Students from sixth class facilitated the Team Hope Christmas shoebox appeal. Almost 500 boxes were filled, a new record. We also recycled 35 computers to go to Africa.
- **Erasmus** - the current project, STEAM Teams, was able to resume fully. During the year there were two exchanges hosted by partner schools in Spain and Italy and a number of teachers participated in these.
- All classes from 3rd to 6th participated in **cyber-safety workshops** run by Barnardos.
- Extra-curricular **sports** activities resumed towards the end of the year. Students participated in a range of sporting events such as GAA, cross-country etc.
- A number of staff-led **summer camps** were held during the holidays
- The junior infant yard was resurfaced and the grass on the senior play area was replaced with **astroturf**.

The Board wishes to congratulate and express its thanks to all involved.

Staffing:

- **Appointments:** Mr Chris Anglim was appointed as a permanent member of staff. Ms Alison Furey and Ms Ellen Butterly were awarded Contracts of Indefinite Duration.

- **Retirements:** Ms Bernadette Sweeney retired after many years of service as a teacher both in SMPPS and Scoil Mhuire Fatima. Ms Margaret Hetherington retired as assistant secretary. We wish Bernadette and Margaret good health and great happiness in the years ahead.
- **In-school management:** Mr Ronan Kelly was appointed to an Assistant Principal (grade 1) post and Ms Nicola Veale, Mr Colm Hanlon and Ms Laura Hunt were appointed to Assistant Principal posts (grade 2).

Student Council Report:

The Student Council recommenced (albeit with limitations on meetings due to Covid). Under the guidance of Mr Shaw they worked with an artist on the creation of a school mural based on our clann system.

School-Home links:

Covid continued to limit the amount of face-to face interaction between parents and teachers during the year. Great use was made of platforms such as Seesaw and Google Classroom to maintain good channels of communication between home and school..

- Parent Teacher conferences were held in November. Due to Covid-19 restrictions these were again held by phone.
- Junior Infants - In June the school held an open day where new parents were able to meet the JI teacher for next year. There was also an online webinar for those parents.

Parents' Association:

The school is supported by a very active Parents' Association. The pandemic did unfortunately limit the activities/events undertaken by the Association during the year. Despite this, the PA met monthly both online and in person. The principal attended all these meetings. Some activities which were able to take place:

- 4-week draw: Over €14,000 was raised and these funds went towards the astro-turf in the senior yard.
- The annual book fair was held in November. it was decided that it would not be possible for children to browse books on shelves in the normal manner. With the help of 6th class students a number of presentations were created to allow parents and students to browse the books online along with descriptions. Orders could then be placed through a dedicated book fair website which has been set up for that purpose.
- Clothes Recycling Drive
- Providing refreshments for Sports Days
- Teas/ Coffees at Junior Infant open day
- Presentation to incoming parents at Junior Infant open day
- Reception in school following First Communions

The Board wishes to express its thanks to the members of the Parents' Association for giving so willingly of their time and talents throughout the year. Their support for the school is very much appreciated.

Finally, the Board wishes to acknowledge the outstanding work of staff to provide the highest level of education to the children on a daily basis. The Board would also like to very highly commend all pupils and parents for the great work they do and their support in building a strong and vibrant school community.

Board of Management, SMPPS

31 August, 2022