

St. Mary's Parish Primary School

Bryanstown, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

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Annual Board of Management Report: 2022/23

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 2022 was 1037 students with 64 teachers, 10 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 Stuart Connor (Parents' Nominee)

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:

- The enrolment and commitment ceremonies for the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation were held in the Church in Oct/Nov.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation was held in February
- Confirmation: The sacrament of Confirmation was celebrated by Bishop Deenihan in February.
- First Communions were celebrated in May.
- School masses were held monthly e.g. new school year, 6th class graduation, Catholic Schools week
- 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 2021-22. 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 2022/23 will be completed before the end of 2023.

Teaching and Learning

- Policy Development: **The following curricular policies were developed /reviewed and ratified throughout the year:** Digital Learning Framework, Geography plan, EAL Plan, updates to Special Ed policy, History Plan, Drama Plan, Gaeilge Plan, ICT Policy

- **School Self Evaluation:** The staff continued their engagement with the School Self Evaluation (SSE) process this year. Our goal for 2021/22 was to build the school wellbeing back up following Covid. This had a number of components e.g Infant intervention as necessary, re-establishing and re-developing the Clann system. This will be more formally addressed in 2022/23.
- **Enrolment:** 125 Junior Infants enrolled at SMPPS in September.
- The school took part in the DES Say Yes to Languages programme. An external tutor worked with our 4th classes on an 8 week introductory module in Spanish.
- **Standardised Test Results:** Standardised Testing was carried out in May 2023. 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. It was also noted that we had changed the format of the literacy test and that this had resulted in scores which were very far outside of expected norms and that these scores should be viewed with some caution. We will seek more data in the autumn.
- **Organisational Policies:** The following organisational policies were reviewed during the year: Supervision Policy, Critical Incident Management Plan, Admissions Policy and Statement, Anaphylaxis Policy, After School Clubs Policy, Child Safeguarding (annual review of policy and risk analysis), Code of Behaviour, Addendum to Admissions Policy, Code of Behaviour - following review by staff, parents and pupils, Acceptable Usage Policy, Discretionary Leave Policy, Placement / Work |Experience Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy - staff, students and parents were surveyed on our Anti-Bullying policy. A revised draft was ratified by the Board of Management and the Board completed the checklist review of our anti-bullying policy and procedures. A statement to this effect was shared with the parents council and published on our website.
- Parent Teacher conferences were held in November.
- Junior Infants - In June the school held an open day where new parents were able to meet the JI teacher for next year.
- Following an announcement by DES we received funding from DES to cover book / costs.

School Activities and Achievements:

Some examples of activities which were held include:

- **Clothes Recycling:** With the support of the Parents Association we held 3 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 Shows** - We saw a return of Christmas shows in the school for Infants / 1st and 3rd have shows in school. 5th class held a carol service in the church with additional performances by the school choir and some staff members
- **Graduation:** the 6th class graduation took place on the school at the end of June..
- **Charity work-** During the year students led fundraising for several charities and school activities: Gary Kelly Centre, St Vincent DePaul Drogheda Branch, Little Blue Heroes, indoor activity trail , 6th class hoodies, Students from sixth class also facilitated the Team Hope Christmas shoebox appeal. We also recycled computers to go to Africa.
- **Garden of Remembrance.** We worked with a local artist to paint a heading on our garden of remembrance. Small butterflies were painted to represent those in our school community who have sadly passed away.
- All classes from 3rd and 5th classes participated in **cyber-safety workshops** run by Barnardos.
- It was a hugely successful year for our students in sports. Notable were our boys and girls football teams who won all competition in Louth as well as the Cooney Cup and the Jimmy Curran cup in Meath.
- **Theme weeks:** Wellbeing/Friendship week, STEM week, Catholic Schools Week, Anti-Bullying week, Seachtain na Gaeilge.
- **International engagement:** during the year we concluded our Erasmus+ project ‘STEAM TEAMS’ Staff from the school visited partner schools in Antalya and Lisbon. In May the school hosted 16 visiting teachers from our Erasmus partners. Visitors worked in many classrooms and were given workshops in the Irish language, Irish culture e.g Irish dancing and hurling. Our students and teachers made the visitors feel very welcome and it was a hugely successful experience. A highlight of the week was a workshop with our sixth class girls which focused on attracting more young women into STEM subjects. During the year We also hosted a number of interns from a university in Madrid. The students were studying early childhood education and worked as assistants in our infant classes.
- **School lunches.** The school lunch scheme began in mid-May. Parents can order lunches online and they are delivered daily to the school. 5th and 6th classes are doing the distribution. The school receives a 5% return on lunches sold. Some of this will be used for rewards for 5th/6th classes.
- This year saw a return to after-school clubs and Summer and Easter Camps were held during the year.

The Board wishes to congratulate and express its thanks to all staff and parents involved in supporting these activities.

School Development:

- A bike / scooter rack was installed at the junior end of the school.
- Yard development: New astroturf was laid on the senior yard and the junior yard was resurfaced.

Staffing:

- Retirements / Resignations: Ms Denise Kelleher retired after many years of service as a teacher both in SMPPS and St Mary's BNS. Ms Sarah Sheil, Ms Tara McHugh and Ms Kate Byrne all resigned at the end of the year We wish all departing teachers well in the future
- The substitute crisis remained a problem for the school this year. It remains a challenge to fill positions for teachers who are sick or on leave.

Student Council Report:

- Under the guidance of Mr Shaw our student council presented a number of school assemblies during the year. We were successful in an application to the Arts Council for a Creative Schools grant. This grant is worth €4000 and will allow us to work with an artist over the next 2 years. We will be focusing on decorating the school's interior. This will be coordinated by the principal and Mr Shaw in consultation with the student council and the wider student body.
- Our student council hosted an online interview about leadership with Stuart Lancaster (at the time coach with Leinster Rugby). This was shared as a video with the school community

Parents' Association:

The school is supported by a very active Parents' Association. The Parents Association met regularly during the year. The principal attended all these meetings. Some activities which took place:

- Monster Draw: Over €25,000 was raised and these funds went towards the resurfacing of the junior yard.
- Book Fair: A very successful book fair was held in February. It generated almost €8000 in sales. 65% is returned to the school to spend on books. Many thanks to all the parents who gave up their time to man the desks.
- Clothes Recycling Drive - we ran the clothes recycling drive on 3 occasions during the year and raised €2000 for various activities in school.

- Providing refreshments for Sports Days
- Teas / Coffees at Junior Infant open day / Graduation /Grandparents Mass
- 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, 2023