

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Each year the Governors are required by the Education Authority to publish a report for parents detailing activities in the school during the previous year. Below is a brief summary of events during the school year.

## **ROLE OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

The Board of Governors in a school have overall responsibility for running the school. They oversee the implementation of the curriculum, appoint staff and monitor the schools budget.

Governors meet at least once per term and more often when the occasion requires.

A list of the current governors and who they represent is attached. This year saw the election of a new board of governors to serve for the next four years.

Below is a brief account of the various activities in the school over the last school year. (2014-15)

## **CURRICULUM**

During the previous school year the teachers participated in the SEN (Special Educational Needs) literacy project. This was a major year's work and over the next three years we will try to implement some of the recommendations in areas such as memory difficulties, phonics, the teaching of reading, spelling development and independent writing. Our special education needs co-ordinator Mrs K Comiskey and our newly appointed Literacy coordinator Mrs K Dillon is leading the staff through the process. Mrs Comiskey is completing the course at Masters Level.

This year (2014-15) the school took part in another pilot of the Computer Based Assessments (CBA). This was a very successful exercise and the results were broadly in line with expectations. The annual meeting with parents continues to be held in the autumn term.

The other major change the school had to come to terms with was the changes to assessment at the end of each key stage.

In the past pupils at the end of KS1 (P4) would be achieving level 2 or level 3, while P7 pupils would be level 4 or level 5. With the revised curriculum and its greater emphasis on skills the levels have also being revised so now most pupils in P7 should achieve no higher than level 4 and pupils in P4 getting a level 2.

Like the CBA assessments the new levels have caused a lot of difficulty for teachers. Many schools following union advice did not report by level to parents at the end of this school year. Instead they will use PIE (Progress in English) and PIM (Progress in Maths) for diagnostic and reporting purposes. A major review of using the levels of progression is being undertaken by CEA (Council for Examinations and Assessment). The major issue with these levels is their validity, as many schools do not report the levels with any degree of accuracy.

A couple of years ago the School became involved in the Primary Curriculum Partnership Programme (PCCP).

This valuable cross community project allowed us to complete a number of shared lessons and projects.

To sustain the project we made an application to the Big Lottery fund and received over £9000 to fund the purchase of ipads and run some after schools clubs

In curriculum development our priorities this year were to look at writing standards and mental arithmetic strategies.

We held a number of parent evenings to give information on aspects of the curriculum.

In the Next academic year (2015-16) our key priorities on the school development plan will be implementing the SEN literacy project strategies and reviewing planning for Maths. We will also be completing a project with St Patrick's Grammar on a aspects of literacy and numeracy. The school will also use feedback from surveys of parents and school staff to identify other key priorities.

As the year progresses other areas may need attention depending on circumstances that arise.

### **SCHOOL ETHOS**

As a Catholic School we take pride in our faith. During Advent and Lent we attended weekly Mass in the church. During both these church seasons all children are invited to attend a service of reconciliation (confessions). In May we recited a decade of the Rosary each day. First Communion Celebrations. Other highlights of the year include the opening and closing of the School Year Masses. Our Christmas and summer concert in the magnificent newly renovated community centre was a wonderful success.

One of the highlights of the year was participating in the Peace Choirs project in February at the Odyssey Arena Belfast.

We also provided the music for this year's Confirmation in the cathedral. A very popular event this year was a celebration to highlight the contribution of grandparents. This was combined with a prayer service in honour of St Brigid.

### **SCHOOL BUDGET**

Our budget this year was stretched to the limit mainly due to the employment of a seventh teacher.

On a positive note the governors have agreed a financial plan that will allow us to fund the P5 teacher for four days per week. (Monday-Thursday) On Friday she will teach P1 similar to last year. This is the very best outcome given the finances available.

On Friday P5 will be split between Mr Mallon's class and Mr Kelly's class. This arrangement is very common in schools, for years P7 have been taught by two teachers to allow myself as principal time for administrative duties. With two teachers careful planning between them allows the pupils to benefit from the expertise of two teachers so that the whole curriculum is fully covered.

### **SCHOOL FUNDS**

During the school year the school had a number of fund raising events. (Raffles, Christmas and Summer concerts. Major areas of expenditure this year from school funds has included French at KS2, transport to various events and of course books and equipment. The balance in our private school account at the end of the school year was £9250.00. This balance might seem high but a number of invoices are still outstanding including transport costs of £1290, this also includes £800 Big Lottery Funding which must be spent on Cross Community projects with Drumsallen Primary School.

### **SCHOOL SUCCESS**

Throughout the year the school has had a number of successes both sporting and academic. These included Credit union and GAA quizzes, writing, poetry and public speaking competitions, Armagh Festival and various other local and national competitions. The girls' football team were tournament successful in winning the Moy and Academy tournaments.

The boys' team won the junior section of St Patrick's Grammar School tournament.

The School Council organised the purchase of new football jerseys for the boys and girls teams. They were delighted to receive six offers of sponsorship from

local businesses. In the end a ballot was held to choose two sponsors. JF McKenna for the boys and McElmeel Mobility for the girls.

In the Knights of Columbanus competition P6 pupil Oisin Cahill was awarded first place winning £200 for the school and £100 for himself.

### **P7 LEAVERS**

All 8 boys to St Patrick's Grammar, 5 girls to St Patrick's Academy and 5 girls to St Catherine's College.

### **CONCLUSION**

This is an edited summary of the main events in the life of the school this year. We apologise for any omissions. We hope it gives some insight into what has happened on Our Lady's in 2014-2015.

We as the new governors would like to thank the whole school staff for their hard work and dedication over the last year

### **ATTACHMENTS**

***MEMBERSHIP OF OUR BOARD OF GOVERNORS***

***LIST OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES FOR 2014/15***