

Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit



Annual Report of The Board of Governors

School Year 2020/2021

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Trustees' Nominees

Very Rev. Colm Mc Bride
Mrs Josephine O' Boyle
Mrs Anne Mc Court
Mr Donal McLaughlin (Vice-Chairperson)

S.E.E.L.B. Representatives

Mr Henry Phillips (Chairperson)
Mr Christopher Horner

Dept. of Education Representative

Vacant

Elected Parent

Mr Joseph Mulholland

Elected Teacher

Mr Stephen Eastwood

Principal / Honorary Secretary

Mr Daniel Mulholland

The Board of Governors was re-constituted during 2018/2019

Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit

OUR VISION

"Happy Together, Learning Forever"

Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit promotes learning for life and high achievement by working with children to:

- practise the Catholic faith in their daily lives;
- have high self esteem - respecting themselves, others, our local community and the world around us;
- recognise their talents and acquire the knowledge and skills to be their individual best;
- become happy, enthusiastic, highly motivated life-long learners;
- enable them to work independently and collaboratively;
- gain the necessary skills to equip them for our ever changing world.

We believe that each child will succeed through experiencing quality in:

- a Catholic ethos of support and encouragement, where diversity is embraced and success is celebrated;
- a broad and challenging curriculum, ensuring inclusion and equality of opportunity;
- a learning partnership between school, home, parish and the wider community;
- a safe, healthy, stimulating learning environment;
- innovative teaching and an investigative approach to learning.

We demonstrate our commitment to working as a learning community by:

- continually striving for improvement by working together towards common goals.

The Curriculum

The statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum were implemented throughout the school during 2020/2021. The teachers provided a bright, interesting learning environment for the children. Whole class, group and individual activities were incorporated into the teaching strategies, and differentiated tasks ensured provision was made for all ability groups. Realistic, high standards were expected and children were always encouraged to do their best.

School Development

Effective use of Google Classroom for remote teaching and learning was the focus for development in ICT. Mr Geoghegan coordinated this.

Developing reading skills was the targeted literacy focus. Implementation of the Accelerated Reader programme was led by Mrs Clarke. Mr Eastwood led development in maths with a focus on the use of on-line maths resources.

Raising the profile of outside learning was another priority for 2020/2021. Mrs Mc McAllister, WAU coordinator, led this aspect of school improvement.

Special Educational Needs provision was also developed. Mrs Gallagher, SENCO, set up electronic pupil records using the SIMS software. Work was also carried out on the teaching of high frequency words. This was linked to the literacy focus.

Mrs O'Neill led development in The Arts, with particular focus on music. The Nursery, Foundation Stage and Key Stage One classes participated in the Music Makers programme.

Communication

Curriculum Nights were replaced at the beginning of the school year with on-line presentations for parents. Information on the curriculum planned for the year ahead and how parents might support their children's learning at home was included as well as general housekeeping policies and procedures.

Regular bulletins were sent home via the school app and Google Classroom to keep parents informed of ongoing events throughout the year. The school website and a Facebook Page was also used to keep parents informed of school life.

The Seesaw App was used by the Nursery teacher and Google Classroom was used by all other teachers during the second lock-down (term 2) to teach remotely. Children were provided with two live sessions per day with their teachers as well as ongoing support and feedback on their work through private and group messaging.

A written report on each child was issued to parents in June.

Assessing and Reporting

The monitoring of children's progress by class teachers continued during 2020/2021. Observations, testing and assessments were completed at regular intervals during the year and parents were kept informed. Parent/Teacher consultations took place by phone in November. This was an opportunity for a two-way discussion, for the benefit of each individual child's further development. Teachers were available to consult with parents on matters of concern by appointment at other times throughout the year.

Special Needs

Mrs Gallagher, SENCO, coordinated the provision for children with special educational needs including liaising with teachers to plan and implement Individual Educational Programmes. Mrs Gallagher was also employed to teach literacy by way of withdrawal groups.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care holds a central place in Ballymacrickett's policy of education. Every effort is made to lead the pupils to become thinking, caring individuals capable of making correct decisions. In an effort to promote and reward positive behaviour in the children, nominations were made on a weekly basis, mainly using non-academic criteria, and children were presented with certificates at class assemblies to emphasise their important achievements.

Good work was displayed on the 'Good Work Boards' and corridor displays celebrated pupils' work. This helped develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

Healthy eating: the importance of exercise and sufficient rest; and personal safety and road safety were all incorporated into teaching and learning as a means of promoting pupil well being.

As part of promoting good health, we continued a 'Healthy Break Time Snack Policy'.

All classes received lessons on topics such as Anti-Bullying, People Who Help Us, E-Safety and Stranger Danger. A number of individual children received support through nurture sessions, provided by two teachers.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

A programme of 'Circle Time' was used in some classes as a strategy to assist the promotion of positive behaviour and anti-bullying.

Our CAPPY programme of developing character traits in the pupils was also used. A different trait was worked on each month e.g. respect, responsibility, diligence. Parents were informed and encouraged to promote the trait at home.

A very successful Anti-Bullying Week was held in November. Pupils were taught anti-bullying strategies and encouraged to show respect at all times.

The implementation of Classroom Management Plans was used to create a consistent practice across the school in relation to what is expected of children within their classroom environment.

Extra Curricular Activities

Due to the focus on social distancing and keeping children in bubbles, it was not possible to provide extra-curricular activities during the year 2020/2021.

Music

Music tuition in violin was provided in term 3 after Covid restrictions in relation to music were reviewed. Mr Niall Lynch from EA Music Department taught small groups of children. Sixteen children received violin lessons. Two children completed exams; one achieving Grade 1 and one achieving Grade 3.

Caring for Others/Charity

The pupils, parents, relatives and friends of Ballymacrickett once again demonstrated in a practical way their concern for the less fortunate. The following charities benefited from goods/money raised by the pupils in a variety of ways:

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|--------------------------|----------|
| Trocaire | £2012.97 |
| Mencap | £100.00 |
| DEN-L | £100.00 |
| Cancer Fund for Children | £100.00 |

Parental Involvement in Ballymacrickett

Due to Covid restrictions it was not possible to deploy parents in a volunteering capacity during the 2020/2021 school year.

Fundraising Committee

Parents gave generously of their time and effort in order to organise a reduced programme of events to raise funds for extra resources in the school. This help added considerably to the life of the school, and these volunteers deserve great praise and thanks. The pupils benefited enormously from the generosity of the committee and all the parents who supported the events.

Staff

There were no changes in the teaching staff during 2020/2021. Periodic changes were made in Classroom Assistants, in line with allocation of support offered from Special Education, EA.

Staff Development

All teachers received in house training on Child Protection, Teaching Reading, Maths, ICT, World Around Us, and Special Needs.

Some teachers attended training out of school and virtually. This included training in: Health and Safety, Forest Schools, Numicon and ICT.

Pupils

Pupils enrolled at the beginning of the school year September 2020.

| | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Nursery: | Boys 14 | Girls 12 | Total 26 |
| Primary: | Boys 204 | Girls 165 | Total 369 |

Attendance Rate 96.45%

Assessment

End of Key Stage Assessment Outcomes 2020 / 2021

A statutory decision was made by DE that End of Key Stage Assessments for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 were not required in 2020/2021.

Grammar School Entrance Exams

Due to the Covid pandemic, Grammar School Entrance Exams did not take place. All P7 children were allocated places in post primary schools using non-academic criteria. Our leavers' school allocation was as follows:

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|----------------------------|---|
| St. Dominic's Grammar | 5 |
| St. Patrick's Academy | 4 |
| Rathmore Grammar | 9 |
| St. Mary's CBGS | 5 |
| St. Ronan's Lurgan | 6 |
| St. Malachy's College | 9 |
| St. Louise's College | 4 |
| Crumlin Integrated College | 5 |
| Aquinas | 1 |
| St Louis' | 2 |
| Malone College | 1 |
| Dominican College | 5 |

Sacramental Celebrations

Confirmation and First Communion for the classes due to receive these sacraments in the 2019/2020 school year took place during the week beginning 7th September 2020.

The sacramental celebrations for the school year 2020/2021 took place as follows:

First Confession 12th March 2021

Confirmation 15th April 2021

First Communion 8th May 2021

Main Events of 2020 – 2021

Autumn Term

| | |
|---|--|
| 8 th & 9 th | Confirmation for previous year's P7s |
| 12 th Sept. | First Communion for previous year's P4s |
| 14 th – 18 th Sept. | Friendship Week |
| 28 th Sept. | Curriculum Presentations (Virtual) |
| 28 th Sept. | Blessing of Schoolbags |
| 21 st Oct. | Prayer of Enrolment for First Confession |
| 19 th – 23 rd Oct. | Covid Circuit Breaker |
| 26 th – 30 th Oct. | Closed (Halloween Break) |
| 13 th Nov. | First Confession for P4s |
| 16 th – 20 th Nov. | Anti-Bullying Week |
| 9 th & 10 th Dec. | Parent/Teacher Interviews |
| 18 th Dec. | Christmas Celebrations... Nativity etc. (Recordings on GC) |
| 21 st Dec. | Santa Visit |
| 22 nd Dec. | School closed at 12 noon – Christmas Holidays |

Winter/Spring Term

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| 6 th Jan. – 5 th March | Second Lockdown – Virtual Learning for all classes |
| 15 th Feb. – 19 th Feb. | Mid-Term Break |
| 8 th March | School Restart for Nursery, P1, P2 and P3 |
| 12 th March | First Confession for P3s |
| 17 th March | St. Patrick's Day |
| 22 nd March | School Restart for P4 – P7 |
| 1 st April | School Closed for Easter Break |

Summer Term

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| 14 th April | Music Makers Programme for P3 |
| 15 th April | Confirmation Day |
| 22 nd April | Tree Planting Project |
| 8 th May | First Communion for P4s |
| 2 nd – 8 th June | Book Fair |
| 9 th June | Music Makers Event (outside) – Three schools attending |
| 21 st June | End of Year Mass |
| 30 th June | School Closed for Summer Break |

The governors would like to thank the parents of the children of Ballymacrickett for their on-going support shown to the staff throughout the year, and their commitment to the all-round development of the children.

Ballymacrickett Nursery Unit

Ballymacrickett Nursery Unit continued to flourish during 2020/2021. Twenty-six pupils were enrolled for a full time session lasting from 9.00am to 1:30pm.

The Nursery followed the pre-school curriculum, providing opportunities through play and other experiences to develop the learning associated with:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development;
Creative/Aesthetic Development;
Early Mathematical Experiences;
Language Development;
Physical Development;
Early Experiences in Science and Technology;
Knowledge and Appreciation of the Environment.

Pupils, staff and parents worked co-operatively throughout the year and all found the year exciting, rewarding and very beneficial.

Throughout the year children experienced extremely worthwhile activities and developed independence, confidence, knowledge and social skills.

