

# **Finaghy Primary School**

Board of Governors



## **Annual Report**

(Abridged due to Covid-19 Protocols and Lockdown during the academic year)

2019-2020

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## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

### **Chairman's Report: 2019-2020**

The academic year 2019-2020 has been like no other experienced by the Board due to the onset of the Covid19 pandemic. The work of Mr Mackay, Mrs Ros Corbett (Acting Principal when Mr Mackay was ill,) and the Senior Management Team at this traumatic time were deeply appreciated by the governors.

Throughout the lockdown period the teachers and their classes continued to work on the curriculum, albeit through remote learning. Work was set via online services such as Google Classroom. Through weekly challenges the pupils were able to engage with each other and the school posting their activities on to the website and social media accounts.

However I am disappointed to report little has changed in the past year with the education budgets facing increased pressures due to Covid requirements and still requiring large cuts.

The plans for the proposed extension to the school were progressing positively until lockdown prevented the expected progress. Fortunately the re-laying of the 4G all weather sports pitch was completed just prior to the cessation of property works by the Education authorities.

With the onset of lockdown there were limited opportunities to show case talents on the sports field. The school has enjoyed another year of achievement and progress in the classroom.

Levels of academic success remain high and our pupils well motivated. AQE results met and exceeded our expectations.

Enrolment remained positive proving the popularity of all that Finaghy P.S. offers to children and their parents.

Throughout the period of this report, much of the non - financial discussion continued to focus on classroom practice and on-line assessment.

The Exceptional Closure Days have been well used by staff to cover a wide range of topics including on-line assessment, literacy and numeracy review. Strategies in support of staff welfare and mental health were also examined. This training and preparation compliments classroom practice and lesson planning

The Christmas concerts promoted the talent amongst our pupils and highlighted the dedication and commitment of our staff, both teaching and non-teaching to provide their pupils with opportunities to have fun and excel. I record our thanks to Mrs Olwen Ditty who resigned at the end of August after 28 years exceptional service to the school and the Music Department in particular. We wish her well in the future.

Our Daycare facility, managed by Mrs Anita Brown and supported by her enthusiastic colleagues, continues to thrive and play an integral part in the life and success of the school.

The new "normal" for schools during this ongoing pandemic is constantly changing and stressful, and far from what the staff, pupils and parents are used to. Whilst school life has changed some things remain constant; the public often overlook the greatest resource a school can have; that is its staff. Principals, Teachers, Classroom Assistants and non teaching staff are often the forgotten victims of the current pandemic. So I record with appreciation the professional and dedicated performance of our staff under continuing difficult circumstances. Every day they are working in the best interests of the pupils as they "prepare today's children for tomorrow's world." Concluding, I take this opportunity to thank my colleague governors who have given so generously of their time and talents, in the interests of the school, staff and pupils.

Finally, to end on a positive note, we are very pleased that Mr Mackay was able to return to on-site work after a difficult period of ill health.

**Peter Breene M.B.E.    Chairman    September 2020.**

## **COMPOSITION OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS 2019-2020**

(Reconstitution of Governors took place during the 2018-2019 session.)

### *Area Board Representatives:*

Mr P Breene MBE (Chairperson)  
Mr T Dale MBE (Vice-Chairperson)

Mr P Bell (Honorary Bursar)

### *Transferors' Representatives:*

Mr P Breene MBE (Chairperson)

Mr D Savage

Rev C Gracie

Mrs N. Vincent

### *Parents' Representatives:*

Mrs D Cheevers

Mr R Rice

### *Teachers' Representative:*

Miss J Mawhinney

### *Co-Opted Governors:*

Mrs R Corbett (Vice Principal)

### *Secretary to the Board (non-voting):*

Mr A Mackay (Principal)

## **Responsibilities of Governors**

- 1 Finance
- 2 Management and appointment of Staff
- 3 Admission of pupils
- 4 Curriculum
- 5 Resources
6. Child Protection, safety and security

Responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school rests with the Principal who advises the Board on issues arising

## **STAFF AND CLASS STRUCTURE 2018-2019**

Principal: Mr A Mackay  
Vice-Principal: Mrs R Corbett

### **Classes:**

P1 Mrs E Brady

P1 Mrs J Gough

P1 Mrs S Watson

P2 Mrs D Adamson

P2 Mrs J Latimer / Mrs S Stevenson

P3 Mrs A Flanagan

P3 Mrs O Ditty

P4 Miss L Moffett

P4 Mr R Falls

P5 Mrs R Corbett

P5 Mrs E Boomer

P6 Miss J Mawhinney

P6 Mrs S Graham

P7 Miss L Watson

P7 Mr K Platt

P2/P4 Jobshare and EAL: Mr David Matchett

Reading Recovery (part-time) Mrs H Currie

English as Additional Language (part-time) Mrs V Kirk

Classroom Assistants: Mrs K Langtry, Mrs A Brown,  
Mr P Murphy, Miss L Chisholm, Mrs F Hillock,  
Miss S Humphries, Ms J Beattie

Secretaries: Mrs S McCurdy, Mrs B Darling

Daycare Manager: Mrs A Brown

Caretaker: Mr T Courtney  
Head Cook: Mrs Angela Brown

## **Staff Changes**

Governors reviewed staffing and made forward plans for the academic year 20-21

Mrs Olwen Ditty (P3) retired after 28 years' service to the school

Mr Valerie Kirk retired as EAL teacher (2 days per week)

Mr David Matchett was appointed to P3 emergency-temporary) from September 2020  
Mrs Sian Stevenson became EAL teacher from September 2020 (Internal appointment)

With regret, Governors sanctioned reduction from three to two P1 classes for September 2020 (by internal reorganisation – no redundancies required)

## **School Activities 2019-2020**

We operate as a 'full-service extended school' providing:

- Breakfast Club from 8.00am
- Daycare Centre operating until 6pm throughout the year
- Finaghy SportsZone, open to the community each night and during weekends.
- Public Library
- Benmore Community Pre-School Playgroup
- Evening classes including adult education, recreation classes and youth clubs.
- . Governors sought EA approval to use private funds accumulated to build an extension to house a computer suite, small-group tuition rooms and a counselling room. We are pleased to report that permission has now been granted to pursue the extension. Mr Mackay is working with EA officials to pursue planning permission and set up a design team.

Our range of extra-curricular activities included sports (football, hockey, athletics, badminton, rugby and cricket), computer club, cookery, fitness and gardening. Our Eco-Garden also continues to serve as a great resource for teaching and learning.

Unfortunately, sporting, musical and residential events were greatly curtailed due to Covid restrictions.

Our PTA continued to prosper and provided a vital service for fund raising and the integration of pupils, parents and teachers, despite activities being curtailed by Covid.

## **Teaching & Learning**

The Northern Ireland Curriculum is fully implemented. Revised annual reporting and planning formats are working well. Teachers have spent many hours revising curriculum notes and restructuring schemes of work, with a focus on Literacy, ICT and Assessment for Learning. End-of-Key-Stage testing also remains contentious due to action from teachers' unions. The school has implemented online assessment and a 15-laptop suite has been installed in a section of our Special Needs room.

In Key Stage 1, in addition to the revision of activities to promote independence and discovery-based learning, there has been further development of play and in-situ assessments. P1

baseline assessment using iPads is also being trialled.

In Key Stage 2, the Literacy curriculum has been revised to incorporate new activities that reflect the enhanced areas of learning outlined above. In ICT, development of iPad usage has continued, including installation of Apple TV systems. We continue to invest in iPads, as their usefulness as a learning tool continues to grow. Activpanels have now replaced Activboards in all classrooms.

Continued School Development priorities included Assessment, Target Setting, and The World Around Us. A comprehensive School Development Plan is presented annually to governors.

### **Open Morning**

Our Open Morning and Family Fun Day attracted a great attendance and was very effective in promoting the school to potential parents.

By the end of June 2020 our school enrolment had reached 420 pupils

### **Academic Statistics**

#### **End Of Key Stage Assessment (P4 and P7) 2019-2020**

Due to industrial action and also Lockdown we were unable to publish End-of-Key-Stage assessment result for this period. The majority of NI primary schools have now refrained from engaging in this process due to concerns over the educational validity of the system. Parents can be assured that our internal assessment and reporting systems are as robust as ever, and that every child continues to have the opportunity to reach their full academic potential.

#### **Attendance and Enrolment:**

Annual Attendance:	2016: 95.9%	2017: 94.7%	2018: 94.2%	2019: 93.1%
On Roll (adjusted)	418			

### **Accounts**

Financial summaries have not been included this year due to Lockdown and limited access to EA Financial Services. However, all accounts (FMS and Private Income) can be made available for audit by EA at any time if necessary.

School bank accounts are monitored by the Salaries and Finance Committee of the school's Board of Governors, reconciled by the school's honorary bursar and signed off annually by the Chair of Governors. Income derives from community services, school fund contributions and fund-raising initiatives. Delegated budget funds are allocated by DENI annually and are managed by governors through the accounting offices of EA (Local Management of Schools: LMS)

An audit was conducted by Mr Nigel Vance (Senior Finance Officer at EA) in 2019 in preparation for proceeding with our planned building extension, and resulted in a positive report.

### **Maintenance of Child Protection Records**

Concerns, referrals and contacts with outside agencies maintained and documented as appropriate.

Class teachers received updates throughout the year on a need to know basis.

Mrs R Corbett and Mrs D Adamson serve as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Officers for Child Protection. Governors, Principal and staff were made aware of the (updated) requirements of DENI circulars:

Vetting of school governors

Acceptable use of the Internet

Child Protection – Training requirement for Governors on staff selection and recruitment panels.

Also: Use of pupil and staff images, Extended Schools and Child Protection, Cyberbullying and Disposal of Records schedule.

All policies, circulars and advice circulated to governors and awareness raised with staff.

Teaching staff received full update training in March 2019 from Mrs. Corbett and Mr Falls using material provided by DENI.

Volunteers and non-teaching staff received Child Protection training in school in May 2019 and was updated again in May 2020.

Policy Review and Update:

The policy was reviewed and updated in September 2019.

Information was received throughout the year from Theresa Moran and Lorraine O'Neill, Child Protection Officers with Education Authority (Belfast Region)

### **Additional Needs**

Mr R Falls now serves as SENCO. Mrs H Currie continues to assist with Reading Recovery on a part-time basis.

Mr Falls' role is to identify children who have an additional educational need and liaise with class teachers, parents, educational psychologist and outside agencies to ensure adequate provision, and to supply and maintain appropriate documentation.

The school works with a BELB psychologist, BELB Peripatetic service, Children's Inter-Disciplinary Teams (CIDS), Harberton Outreach and other agencies to provide individual assistance for children. We also employ a part-time teacher to assist with English as an additional language.

A number of volunteer helpers (parents, grandparents and friends of the school) have undergone training in Reading Partnership and provide excellent support for a number of children. The Time to Read project also continues to operate in school. These activities were also curtailed by Covid restrictions in 2019-20

All children with an identified additional need (academic or behavioural) is internally assessed for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which is constructed and reviewed on a half-termly basis in consultation with the teacher, child and his/her parents/guardians.

Mrs V Kirk continued in the role of EAL teacher (2 days per week) but retired in June 2020.



## **Extended School Projects**

### **Daycare Centre**

Our Daycare Centre continued to run excellent services during the year. Managed by Mrs Anita Brown alongside her deputy leader Mrs Karen Langtry, the centre employs 7 members of staff.

The centre operates from 2.00pm until 6.00pm term-time, from 8.00am to 6.00pm during school holidays and remains open for exceptional school closure days and half-day holidays. The Daycare Centre is a fully integrated feature of the school, providing an informal yet structured environment in which children are assisted with homeworks and offered a choice of activities including sports, art and craft, IT, toys, games and outdoor play.

During the summer there was an extensive programme of trips out, visiting coaches and special activities.

The facility is run as a community business by a sub-committee of the school's Board of Governors.

Trevor Dale

Chair of Daycare Management Committee

### **SportsZone**

The SportsZone has now been operating successfully for 11 years. During term-time it has doubled the opportunity for pupils to participate in physical activity and broadened the range of sports on offer. It is also used in partnership with other schools for tournaments and competitions.

The SportsZone operates from 5.00pm – 10.00pm as a community sports resource. The range of user groups includes churches, youth clubs, mini-soccer, dads' team, cross-community projects, coaching clubs and 'works' teams.

During school holidays a range of clubs operate.

Our charging and booking policy enables equality of access for all users and facility administration is conducted by Mrs B Darling in the school office. Income from the SportsZone enables us to employ part-time caretaking staff, secretarial staff and to maintain / replace equipment. In the longer term, savings need to accrue for maintenance and upkeep.

The 3G refurbishment had required substantial ongoing fixes and maintenance. These had been mostly completed under warranty but we are pleased to report that a completely new 3G surface was sanctioned and installed by EA in 2020.

In general, the facility is treated with respect by all users, with virtually no reports of vandalism, or of disruptive / unruly conduct by any user groups. The SportsZone committee are delighted that the facility is continuing to be such a major asset for both the school and the wider community.

### **Eco-Garden**

Assisted by Awards for All funding, the Eco Garden is now in full use to support environmental education and received the Eco-Schools' prestigious Green Flag accreditation in 2017.



### **In-Service Training 2019 / 2020**

Aside from statutory in-house and EA-facilitated training in Child Protection, Special Needs and First Aid, our training and development programmes were curtailed by Covid.

Principal successfully completed PRSD (Performance Review and Staff Development) cycle for 2019 / 2020.

5 'Baker Days' and 5 'Staff Development Days' utilised for developing schemes and policies, Termly notes and IEPs adapted to reflect changes made to practice. Dissemination of new practice, Assessment, PDMU, ICT, Special Needs and Child Protection updates, team development and Key Stage meetings.

### **School Security**

Main front door is locked. Access to visitors is granted by office staff, who release door remotely. All exterior doors are locked during school hours (can be opened from inside.)

Staff hold key-fobs which can release certain locked doors from exterior. Front door and most of school site is covered by CCTV.

The school has security risk-assessments in place and an emergency action plan for evacuation, lock-down and an off-site 'place of shelter.'

All contractors are signed in and briefed by caretaker or principal.

All unexpected visitors to site are challenged

During community use of site, a caretaker is present.

## **Covid**

The school entered lockdown in March 2020. Online Learning via Google Classroom was adopted by all teachers and CAs. For resumption in September, many Covid related risk-assessments, policies and new practices were undertaken. All staff demonstrated great resilience, teamwork and diligence in adapting to the unique and very challenging circumstances. All pupils had access to online learning and live online interaction with teachers and CAs. Vulnerable pupils, pupils with statements of additional needs and families on our Child Protection and Social Services registers received additional contact and interaction. Governors maintained socially-distanced and online contact whilst both Chair and Vice Chair stayed in weekly, sometimes daily contact with the Principal, Vice Principal, Senior Management Team and staff.

As noted in our Chairman's Report, staff deserve to be highly commended for all aspects of their work during unprecedented and very challenging circumstances.

