

Holy Cross Nursery School



Annual Report of the Board of Governors 2017 - 2018

Dear Reader,

Welcome to our 2017 - 2018 annual report. The Education Reform Order of 1989 requires the Board of Governors of our nursery school to present an annual report on the management of the school to our parents.

This Annual report summaries information about the management, achievements and events of the school year.

The commitment of staff, parents and partners helped to make 2017 - 2018 school year a successful year for Holy Cross Nursery School. I wish to thank them all for their support and dedication to the children. I also wish to extend my sincere thanks for the warm welcome I received from staff, parents and the community when I took up the post of Principal in September 2017.

Everyone involved in the school contributes to creating a school where everyone feels welcome and enabled to be the best that they can be.

Mrs Cushla Mallon

Principal

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective management of the school. They represent the various bodies concerned with the running of the school - parish trustees, parents, teachers, Department of Education and Education Authority -Belfast Region, and will hold office until July 2018.

The board of governors meet at least once per term and are responsible for:

- School aims and policies re curriculum, pupil admissions, school discipline, health and safety, special educational needs and pastoral care.
- Selection and appointment of staff
- Maintenance of the school building
- School Finance
- Promoting good relations between the school and the community
- Annual report

The current Board of Governors is as follows:

Chairperson

Rev. Fr. Eugene Mc Carthy

Vice Chairperson

Mrs. Maura Mc Nally

Trustee Representatives

Mrs N. Stroud - Parish Trustee

Mrs C. Quinn - Parent Trustee

DE Representative

Mrs. A. Chapman

EA Representative

Mrs. M. Mc Nally

Mrs. G. Mc Nally

Elected Parent Representative

Mrs. M Mc Elroy

Teacher Representative/Secretary

Mrs. S Di Lucia *(since retired)*

Principal

Mrs. C. Mallon

In September 2018 the Reconstitution of the Board of Governors will take place. Mrs Geraldine McNally, a dedicated and long serving member of the

board of governors in Holy Cross is stepping down, as is Mrs Colette Quinn and Mrs Madalene McIlroy. I wish to thank them for their commitment and continued support to our school.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

'In Holy Cross Nursery School we work in partnership with parents to create a safe, happy, inclusive and respectful learning environment where every child is encouraged to develop to their full potential as children of God'

SCHOOL AIMS

In Holy Cross Nursery School we aim to:

- Offer a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum following DE pre-school guidance, which takes account of each child's individual needs, character, talents and abilities and provides challenge and progression throughout the year
- Create a welcoming environment where each child is valued for his/her uniqueness and in which there is tolerance, caring, encouragement, fairness and generosity shown towards all
- Help children to develop a loving relationship with God their Father within the community of Holy Cross Parish
- Work in partnership with parents to enhance their knowledge, skills and confidence to enable them to support their child's education and development
- Establish and develop links within our community and on a cross community basis for the benefit of our children, parents and the wider community.

ADMINISTRATION

Attendance Rate for 2017-18: 91%

Free school Meals for 2017-18: 77%

Enrolment for 2017-18: 52 pupils

STAFFING 2017 - 2018

Current staffing:

- Principal/teacher: Mrs Cushla Mallon
- Teacher: Mrs Arlene Murphy (*temporary post*)

- F/T Nursery Assistants: Mrs Noreen Lehane
Miss Christina Harmon
- P/T Nursery Assistants: Mrs Terri Coogan
Miss Leanna Bradley (*Miss Bradley is covering a maternity leave for Miss Andrea Doran*)

- Home/School Support Worker: Ms Joleen Braniff
- Shared Education Parent Worker: Ms. Anne Mc Laren
- Secretaries : Mrs ÓLabhradha & Mrs Emma Dickson
- Dining Attendant: Mrs. Doreen Cassidy
- Building Supervisor: Mrs Bridget Osborne

On the 1st June 2018 we interviewed for the full-time permanent teacher post, and are delighted to announce Mrs Arlene Murphy was the successful candidate. She is already a firm fixture of our nursery team and from September 2018 will be permanently employed.

CURRICULUM

2017-2018 saw the beginning of a new 3 year School Development Plan. The main focus for this academic year was the induction of a new principal - building relationships with staff, families and the Board of Governors, as well as, allowing time for a full audit of resources and routines etc...

Action plans for the year focused on:

- Ethos and Pastoral Care

- Curriculum
- Teaching & Learning
- Staff Development

This year staff have reviewed the current monthly planning and observation methods to compose a more robust system for weekly and monthly plans across all areas of the curriculum. We are also trying to extend our use of ICT in the classroom. We have updated the school photocopier to allow I-pads to print directly from the classroom using 'Pic Collage' as a means of recording children's observations. Furthermore, we are hoping to secure funding from The Big Lottery to buy Interactive Touch Screens for both classrooms.

In 2016 - 2017 staff created and implemented a whole school 'SEN Structured Learning Programme' to meet children's learning needs. In 2017 - 2018 we have continued to develop this by creating a 'Nurture Space' for children with sensory needs. This is used on a daily basis.

In July 2017 an application for funding was submitted to Urban Villages to create a Community Garden, this has been on-going all year and staff have been researching and visiting other Community Gardens to gauge best practice. We hope this project funding will be successful and start to see the creation of our community garden 2018 - 2019.

This year staff carried out an audit of indoor resources in the learning environment and continue to reflect on new ideas to expand and scaffold children's curiosity and imagination. The staff also reorganised the layout of both classrooms/stores and organised resources more structured into curriculum areas.

We have looked at our yearly overview of topics and themes, and decided to restructure for the next academic year.

ETI INSPECTION

ETI inspected the nursery on Thursday 17th May. The lead inspector was Mrs Brieger Lyttle. The inspection report indicated the nursery 'demonstrated the capacity to identify and bring about improvement'.

Outcomes for learners - very good

Quality of provision - good

Leadership and management - good

The staff worked very hard and we presented a very normal and typical day keeping with daily routines. The children were excellent on the day, there was good attendance and all children's attitudes, manners and behaviour was exceptional, and they sustained this throughout the whole day. Mrs Lyttle commented "At this time of year the children are where you would want them to be, they have a Readiness for Life".

The inspectors were very complimentary on the relationships between staff and children, and the stimulating positive ethos within the nursery.

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING TO PARENTS

This year we set learning potentials in each curricular area to integrate observation of children's learning more effectively into the curriculum. This has given us a more systematic method of assessing children, which ensures progression in each curricular area throughout the school year.

Teachers continue to report to parents each term on their child's progress and devised new formats for the 'Settling In' meetings in October based on '2 stars and a wish', and the midterm report in February which is similar to the 'traffic light system'.

PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

It is our aim to serve the pre-school children and parents of our nursery school; to involve parents in the life of our school and to play an active role in the life of our parish and the wider community.

This year we asked parents to complete a detailed questionnaire in February. Over 50% of parents took part. The findings will be collated into a graph and used to help inform areas of the SDP moving forward. All responses and comments were very positive. An end of year questionnaire was also completed by parents.

SHARED EDUCATION SIGNATURE PROGRAMME

This year we have continued to develop our community relations programme with Edenderry Nursery School through the SESP programme.

We met regularly with our project co-ordinator, CRIS partners and Ann McLaren - our Shared Education Parent Worker - to plan our community relations programme of events and courses for parents and children for this year.

Children participated in:

- Eight "play days" in their buddies school
- Outings with their buddies to - W5, Fun Day at Valley Leisure Centre
- Evening outing with their dads/significant male to - Play Zone at Valley Leisure Centre

Parents participated on a cross community basis in:

- Community Relations workshops
- "Cook-it" sessions
- Zumba classes
- Driving Theory classes
- Corrymeela Residential for 9 parents & children per school
- Corrymeela Celebration Evening
- End of Year Evaluation
- Celebration of 20th Anniversary

'BUDDY UP' RECOGNITION

2017 -2018 is the 20th Anniversary of the Partnership between Holy Cross and Edenderry. It has been a very exciting year with recognition for our 'Buddy Up' programme.

- *Innovative Peacebuilding Award* - The 'Buddy Up' initiative won third place at the Intercultural Innovation Awards, at the United Nations headquarters in New York in November . CRIS (Community Relation in Schools) who work tirelessly with both nursery schools in co-ordinating Buddy Up represented us in New York.
- *Tánaiste Visit* - Mr Simon Coveney, Minister for Foreign Affairs, requested a meeting with Mrs Magrath and Mrs Mallon, as well as some parents to hear about the experiences of the Buddy Up system and how it impacts everyone. He was very interested and impressed at the hard work of both communities, and has invited the parents to Dublin. We were immensely proud that in his busy schedule he took time to visit us.
- *Spirit of NI Award* - We were nominated, along with CRIS, for the Spirit of Education Award as part of the Sunday Life Spirit of Northern Ireland Awards. The award ceremony took place on 24th April and 'Buddy Up' won the Spirit of Education Award.

EXTENDED SCHOOL PROGRAMME

We received £5302 Extended Schools funding which was used (coupled with Flax Trust Funding) to employ a 'Home School Support Worker'. The Home School Support Worker was able to deliver an "Early Starts" programme in the morning to accommodate working parents and those with other early morning school runs. She also worked with teaching staff to deliver a home/school learning programme of support for SEN children. This involved small group sessions, individual work at a workstation, visual schedules, home/school behaviour strategies and learning activity bags for parents to support their child's learning and development at home.

In addition we received £450 funding from the 'Getting Ready to Learn' initiative which was used to purchase sensory resources for our 'Busy Bee Activity Bags'; as well as £400 from the Edina Science Trust. We used this for Science Starz to deliver some nursery workshops and buy resources; this was great fun and we hope to invite Science Starz back in the future.

Our £1590 Extended Schools Cluster funding was used to organise educational outings for parents and children to Streamvale Farm and Belfast Zoo.

SCHOOL EVENTS

We would like to thank parents for their involvement in the life of the school by providing support for our many school outings, celebrations and social events this year.

Highlights of the year included:

- "Life as I See It" - a photographic, arts and crafts exhibition of the work of parents involved in the SESP programme this year in the Houben Centre.
- "20th Anniversary Celebration of Buddy up" - Children from Holy Cross and Edenderry performed their Buddy up songs and some new songs from the Corrymeela Residential for their families and many more who have been involved in Buddy Up over the years.

We worked with a variety of voluntary, community and statutory groups to deliver our parent and child programmes throughout the school year - including CRIS, local primary schools, Ardoyne & Shankill Health Partnership and Glenbrook Surestart.

We offered training placements to students from Mercy College and St. Louise's Secondary Schools this year.

FINANCE REPORT

<u>L.M.S. Budget 2017-2018</u>	£218,856
<u>Surplus 2016-2017</u>	£3711

EXPENDITURE:

Staff Costs	£ 216,804
Recurrent Costs	£ 13,489

TOTAL :	£230,293
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BALANCE C/F 2016-17	£13,762
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Each week the parents pay £5.00 which goes towards the varied morning snack the children have; this can range from a choice of fruit each day coupled with pancake, sandwich, crackers & cheese or bread sticks. The money also goes towards any additional costs on school outings, educational visitors to the school, birthday parties, fun days i.e bouncy castles, presents and any other small resources needed for the school.

SCHOOL FUND BALANCE (25/06/18): £ 4,818.96

We wish to thank all parents and supporters who raised the following amounts for school funds, their generosity and support throughout the year was outstanding as always.

Autumn Walk (Cavehill):	£794.85
Christmas Ballot:	£273.00
Christmas Concert DVD:	£109.00
Guess Sweets in a Jar:	£25.50

TOTAL:	£1202.35
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This year fundraising went towards the creation of the new school Nurture/Sensory Space beside the Parents Room.

As part of our Catholic ethos we encourage children to care for those less fortunate than themselves and this year parents and children raised the following amounts for our chosen charities:

Children in Need (Pyjama Day):	£68.53
Macmillan Cancer (Coffee Morning):	£108.99
NI Children's Hospice (Easter Ballot):	£260.00
TOTAL:	£437.52

BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENT

Minor works orders were submitted for a new sandpit in the outdoor environment and for new lighting throughout the nursery school. Both of these applications were made on health and safety grounds.

An application for a major refurbishment of our outdoor environment to create a community garden was submitted under DSC Urban Villages Initiative, this continues to be on-going.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT 2017 - 2018

Non Class Contact Days

22 - 23 August 2017 - Long Term Planning & Classroom Organisation

6 November 2017 - Medium Term Planning

5 January 2017 - Term 2 Planning and Classroom Organisation

9 April 2017 - Term 3 Planning and Outside Organisation

Staff Development Days

13 November 2017 - Jenny Mossley Conference

19 February 2018 - SESP Staff Wellbeing

10 April 2018 - SESP Teambuilding

25 May 2018 - School Development Plan 2017-2018 Evaluation

29 May 2018 - School Development Plan 2018-2019

