

ST. BRIGID'S PRIMARY SCHOOL



BOARD OF GOVERNORS ANNUAL REPORT 2020 - 2021

'Learning and Growing Together'

Dear Parents

Each school is required to give parents an annual report, so they may continue to know what is happening and be involved in the education of their child.

We, the Board of Governors, are delighted to take this opportunity to report to you on the successes and achievements of your children and your school between September 2020 and June 2021. No one can underestimate the challenges that have been faced by the pupils, staff and parents in the current year and we thank you all for your continued support in working through these challenges together. In the midst of this, our young people have been commendable. They have continued to laugh, learn and enjoy life.

The staff of St Brigid's Primary School have risen to the challenge with great professionalism and commitment. Their preparation and delivery of the curriculum using blended learning demonstrated our Mission Statement. It is a year that we were certainly "Learning and Growing Together."

As Chairperson of the Board of Governors of St Brigid's Primary School, it is my privilege to work with the Principal, the staff and wider community to ensure the best education for the children in our care. St Brigid's continues to ascertain that the school provides a climate where the children feel safe, valued, respected and challenged to do their best.

The Board of Governors deeply appreciates the work of the Parents Association in their fundraising efforts and their support and encouragement for the school.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you the parents for your support throughout the year, the staff for their continued dedication and hard work and my fellow governors for their commitment to St Brigid's.

We know you will read this report with interest, and we thank the Principal for her assistance in guiding us through this year and preparing this report.

Yours sincerely

B Smyth
Chairperson

INTRODUCTION:

We are a Catholic school, committed to the Statement of Aims of Catholic Schools, and to the promotion of an ethos throughout the school which reflects the Christian teaching and values of the Church. Our aim is to provide an educational experience within a caring community in accordance with our Catholic faith.

Specifically we aim to:

1. To provide a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum suited to the needs of the child which fulfils the requirements of the Northern Ireland Education Order;
2. To develop each child spiritually, morally, socially, intellectually, emotionally and physically, so that by realising his/her potential he/she can have an appreciation of his/her self-worth;
3. To encourage qualities and attitudes of initiative, independence, resourcefulness, self-esteem, imagination, enthusiasm and self-confidence in each child;
4. To help children to develop an understanding of their own culture and tradition and to foster tolerance by promoting respect and understanding for that of others;
5. To develop home/school links so that children can benefit from their teachers and parents working together as partners in their education;
6. To establish and maintain acceptable forms of behaviour within a secure and well-ordered school environment by encouraging self-discipline;
7. To develop children's awareness of their local and wider environments and of the effect which their action can have on both;
8. To maintain effective links with nursery and post-primary schools to which our children transfer;
9. To develop an enjoyment of learning and experience success.

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective management of the school. As well as nominees of the Trustees, the Education Authority and the Department of Education, its membership also included an elected parent governor and an elected teacher governor. The Principal of the school who is a non-voting member, completes the team. The members hold office for 4 years. Governors are invited to attend the necessary training provided by the Education Authority. The varied professional expertise within the Board of Governors has been most useful in achieving targets to be met within the governing body's wide remit. The full Board of Governors met on five occasions to discuss many aspects of school life and to hear the Principal's report on the day-to-day management of the school. Issues such as the school curriculum, staffing, health and safety,

enrolment, new initiatives, administration, pastoral care, child protection and community links have been dealt with. The sub committees met as required.

The current Board of Governors in St Brigid's Primary School was re-constituted in 2018 and is made up as follows:

Nominated by Trustees

Fr Maurice Henry
Brendan Smyth (Chairperson)
Michelle Clancy
Michael Robinson

Nominated by Education Authority (EA)

Patricia Martin
Phil Mulhall

Nominated by Dept of Education

Cahal McKervey

Elected Parent

Laura Higgins

Elected Teacher

Grainne McNamara

Secretary

Dolores Miller (Principal)

The Governors have particular responsibilities in relation to the curriculum, the appointment and dismissal of staff, admissions to the school, discipline, complaints, school funds and buildings.

An important function for the governors is to consider the needs of the school in terms of staff, buildings, and other resources and to advise the various other authorities if we believe these needs are not being met. An equally important function is to ensure that the resources available to the school are being effectively used.

The day-to-day running of the school has been delegated to the Principal of the school. A School Management Team consisting of the Principal, Vice-Principal and three senior teachers provide a framework for the management of the school.

Subject coordinators had specific responsibilities relating to curricular areas and ensured that the curriculum was delivered to your child in as meaningful a context as possible, while at the same time attending to pastoral, administrative and managerial duties. These responsibilities were continually reviewed in light of changing circumstances.

These organisational structures within the school strengthen the school's ability to manage changes arising from Government Policy and to respond appropriately to them.

Staffing

Class Teachers 2020/21

Principal	Mrs D Miller
Vice Principal	Mrs A Lloyd
P1	Mrs C Mc Cavera
P2	Miss R Cunningham
P2/3	Mrs G Mc Namara (Acting VP)
P3	Mrs D Fegan & Mrs Y Finnegan
P4	Miss S Braniff
P4/5	Mrs L Devlin
P5	Mr C Mc Cormick
P6	Mrs A Lloyd
P6/7	Mrs V Cunningham
P7	Mr C Fitzsimons

Literacy Support Miss N Canavan

Numeracy Support Mrs Y Finnegan

Ancillary & Auxiliary Staff

The current non-teaching staff (2020/21) consisted of the following:

Secretary (First Aid trained) Mrs D Moore
Building Supervisor Mr R Swail

Classroom Assistants:

Miss C McQuoid (First Aid trained)
Ms S Rogan (First Aid trained)
Mrs S Mc Convey
Miss R Brown
Mrs Hanna
Mrs A Morrison
Mrs V Budriene
Mrs M Maguire
Mrs E Flanagan
Mrs Baillie
Ms K Rogan
Mrs N Magee
Mrs O Breteche (First Aid trained)
Mrs McLaughlin

Cleaning Staff:

Mrs Pleasants
Ms A Morrison
Mr C Lennon

Leadership & Management

All schools are legally required to formulate a SDP which details the school's priorities for a three year period. The school year 2020/21 was due to be the third year of the implementation of this plan. However, due to the challenges faced by the pandemic and guidance from DENI, a one year Covid plan was devised in consultation with staff and governors. This plan focused on 3 main areas:

- To implement a Restart Curriculum focusing on supporting the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of pupils and staff;
- Developing effective approaches to remote/blended teaching and learning;
- Identifying and addressing underachievement, particularly for those pupils who have experienced barriers to engaging in remote learning.

Detailed Action Plans, necessary to implement a Restart Curriculum, mitigate against transmission of the virus, plan for future remote learning and bring about improvement and raise standards within the school curriculum and provision were drawn up and ratified by governors. These Action Plans determined the extensive curriculum development programme and staff training for the year ahead. The implementation of these plans were monitored by the governors.

The governors have linked with teaching staff who have areas of responsibility to support staff through the implementation of their Action Plan and to further develop the partnership between governors and staff.

Teaching Staff	Area of Responsibility	Link Governor
Mrs D Miller	Principal - Positive Behaviour/Discipline Strategic Vision & Management Numeracy coordinator	Mr Brendan Smyth
Mrs A Lloyd	Vice Principal – P6 teacher Special Needs coordinator. Designated teacher for Child Protection. Pastoral Care coordinator.	Miss Michelle Clancy Mrs Patricia Martin
Mrs Mc Cavera	P1 teacher – ICT coordinator	Mrs Laura Higgins
Miss R Cunningham	P2 teacher Maternity cover for Mrs Lopez School Council	
Mrs G Mc Namara	P2/3 teacher (1 management point) Music coordinator 2/5 literacy coordinator	

	Extended Schools coordinator	
Mrs D Fegan/ Mrs Y Finnegan	P3 Teacher - (3/5 Management Point) Literacy coordinator PE coordinator	Mr Phil Mulhall
Miss S Braniff	P4 teacher RE/PDMU coordinator	
Mrs L Devlin	P4/5 Teacher – Numeracy coordinator Shared Education coordinator Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection Nurture coordinator	Mrs Patricia Martin Fr Maurice Henry
Mr McCormick	P5 Teacher - (1 Management Point) Assessment coordinator	
Miss V Cunningham	P6/7 teacher WAU coordinator	Mr C Mc Kervey
Mr C Fitzsimons	P7 Teacher –	
Mrs N Canavan	Literacy Support Teacher	

Pupil Enrolment

In 2020/21 the class structure consisted of one Primary 1 class, a Primary 2 class, a composite P2/3 class, a Primary 3 class, a Primary 4 class, a composite P4/5 class, a Primary 5 class, a Primary 6 class, a composite P6/7 class, and a Primary 7 class. Each class is of mixed ability and sex. Children coming from other schools were placed in the correct class for their age. The enrolment figure for 2020/21 was 259.

September 2020

Year	Reg	Males	Females	Total
Year 1	C Mc C	6	21	27
Year 2	R C	9	16	25
Year 2/3	GMcN	15	10	25
Year 3	DF/YF	11	13	24
Year 4	SB	12	16	28
Year 4/5	LD	9	15	24
Year 5	CMc	12	14	26
Year 6	AL	7	21	28
Year 6/7	VC	9	15	24
Year 7	CF	15	13	28
	Totals	105	154	259

We extended a warm welcome to 6 new pupils who joined us from other schools between September 2020 and June 2021.

Attendance

The attendance for 2020/2021 was 96.2%. This is a 0.6% increase on the previous year.

Attendance is monitored regularly by the Principal and in partnership with the teaching staff. The Principal is made aware of concerns regarding attendance by staff and liaises with parents to address these issues. The Education Welfare Service supports St. Brigid's in maintaining and improving attendance. The Principal met with the EWO in November and March. Should school intervention fail, the Education Welfare Officer will address attendance issues directly with parents.

Transfers to Post Primary Education 2020-2021

The Table below shows the Post Primary schools to which the Primary Seven children transferred in September 2021.

Leavers School	
Black Water Integrated College	1
St Colmcille's HS	1
Assumption Grammar	6
Knockevin Special School	1
Down HS	4
St Mary's HS	15
De La Salle HS	9
St Paul's High School Newry	1
St Patrick's Grammar	6

School Development Days

In accordance with Department of Education guidance five non-contact days and five school development days were used in 2020/21 school year.

Dates of School Development Days & Baker Days	Focus of Training
17 th August 2020	<i>Staff Meeting, Restart Planning, Roadmap to recovery</i>
18 th August 2020	<i>SEN update, Child Protection, Planning</i>
19 th August 2020	<i>Blended Learning, Risk Assessments</i>
20 th August 2020	<i>Class Transition meetings</i> <i>Welcome video's</i>

2 nd October	<i>Well Being Session James Hamilton</i>
5 th October	<i>Newsdesk</i> <i>Target Setting</i>
23 rd October	<i>Parent Interviews (Completed via phone in two Twilight sessions)</i>
26 th May	<i>Report Writing</i>
29 th May	<i>Blended Learning-</i>

The Curriculum

When we speak of the Curriculum at St. Brigid's we are referring to the learning experiences afforded to each child within the school. These learning experiences include those planned by the staff and those gained from our school ethos and environment. In a Catholic school such as ours, the teaching and expression of our Catholic values is an important element of the curriculum.

We recognise the uniqueness of each individual child and plan to provide for his/her needs accordingly.

The Primary Phase comprises three areas namely:

- Foundation Stage: Primary One and Two
- Key Stage 1: Primary Three and Four
- Key Stage 2: Primary Five, Six and Seven

The curriculum covers six areas of study:

- Language and Literacy (Including Talking & Listening, Reading & Writing)
- Mathematics & Numeracy
- The Arts (Including Art & Design, Drama & Music)
- The World Around Us
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
- Physical Education

At the heart of the curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for operating effectively in society. Through opportunities to engage in

active learning across all areas of the curriculum, children in St. Brigid's progressively develop skills in Communication, Using Mathematics and Using Information and Communications Technology. The Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities are promoted through planning and are developed in a cross curricular fashion.

The curriculum promotes children's self-esteem by concentrating on activities and learning experiences which encourage confidence, curiosity and creativity. It encourages children to take an active responsibility for their own learning.

In St Brigid's Primary School, pupils are given opportunities to learn in a variety of ways and in different social groupings. Teachers employ a wide range of teaching methods to ensure the children have opportunities for interactive, practical activities where children are encouraged to self-assess and plan for improvement.

Teachers ensure pupils' learning intentions are agreed whilst individual class needs are catered for. They ensure that work is planned, reviewed and evaluated every eight weeks. Teachers include assessment methods for each 8 weekly planners. These assessments provide teachers with information on how each pupil is progressing and also identify areas which may require additional help.

Curriculum Planning & Staff Development

Curriculum Development and In-Service Training were ongoing throughout most of the year. The Principal and the Senior Leadership Team met with all staff to provide guidance on what the curriculum would look like following the lockdowns and to effectively implement the Road Map to Recovery.

On the children's return to school in September the emphasis was on reassuring the children and supporting them to reconnect socially, build positive relationships and engage enthusiastically with learning as they returned to the school environment. The staff supported the children's emotional health and wellbeing, helping them to be engaged and motivated to learn and ensured they had the tools and skills they required for learning.

Initially, activities focused on getting pupils used to school routines interacting appropriately with others and a gentle encouragement to engage with activities and sustain concentration. Teachers took the time to re-establish existing routines, introduce new routines and set the expectations of behaviour necessary to support all pupils as they returned to school. Social interaction within the protective bubble of the class were centrally important for our children.

While many pupils coped well with engagement in remote learning, some pupils returned to school disengaged and required extra support to be motivated to learn. We identified and supported those pupils who were most likely to experience difficulties in engaging with learning. Staff stayed connected to parents via Seesaw. Some activities continued to be presented via Seesaw and Microsoft Teams.

Parents were encouraged to contact their child's class teacher if they had any concerns or worries.

Provision for Mental Health and Wellbeing

When planning for our Return to School in August 2020, the wellbeing of our pupils, staff and parents was at the forefront of our minds. We aimed to re-engage our pupils at a pace appropriate to the individual, while providing holistic recovery for all. From the outset, we wanted to equip the children with the space, time and skills to rediscover self-image, self-esteem and confidence. We engaged with a number of external support agencies, including Barnardo's who completed a BOUNCE workshop with our Year 4 to Year 7 pupils. 1:1 counselling sessions were provided for a number of children. Weekly drop in sessions for our P7 children was also provided through Barnardo's. In the first term of 2020, the whole school celebrated World Mental Health Day by taking part in a 'get active lesson' and lots of mindfulness activities throughout the day on the 9th October. We also further promoted PDMU activities providing opportunities through weekly lessons to address feelings and emotions that some may find at times, difficult to talk about.

Each class also availed of two Nurture lessons per week.

The children completed the daily mile every day. All staff took part in an online Well Being seminar.

When the second lockdown began in January 2021, we quickly recognized the demands on children and families managing this more structured remote learning experience and saw the need to adapt and refine the learning experience. Rather than introducing new formal learning on a Friday, we used it as a catch up day. This was received very positively by parents, children and staff. Indeed, on the return to school in March we introduced a Feel Good Friday, which ensured all children availed of Actisport sessions and outdoor learning provision. Primary six children took part in a wellbeing/familiarization day at the end of May in preparation for the formation of two new P7 classes.

Catholic Ethos

Our Catholic Ethos, permeates every aspect of our school life and relationships. The RE Coordinator continued to use the framework to lead staff through the evaluation of the strengths within the school ethos. It is therefore with great pride that we received the 'Spirit of Catholic Education' Award. In June the school was visited by Joan Mc Combe from the Diocesan Support Service and we were presented with a framed certificate in recognition of the outstanding work and commitment to Promoting the Ethos and Values of Catholic Education. The judging panel awarded St Brigid's a 'distinction' the highest award given and one of only four distinctions awarded in the primary sector for the whole diocese.

This year our focus was the promotion of diversity and inclusion across the school. We took part in recognizing Down Syndrome Day by wearing odd socks and Autism Awareness Day by dressing up as our favorite superhero.

Religious Education is taught as a separate subject although the opportunities for cross curricular work are many and varied especially in relation to the Arts, The World around Us, PDMU and Literacy.

All children from P1-P7 followed the Grow in Love programme. Children and parents took ownership of their commitment to this programme by signing a charter at the start of the year. This

has promoted the importance of Grow in Love as a community programme between the child, school and home.

All children attended an online weekly assembly to pray together as a school community and to celebrate our successes and achievements. On a weekly basis, each class recognized and celebrated a worker of the week and a pupil was also nominated for displaying the character trait of the month. Each class led an assembly throughout the year, these were recorded and uploaded so our parents and grandparents were able to share in the experience and connect with school life.

Due to covid, the children could not attend monthly face to face Mass. However, they tuned into Parish Mass via the webcam.

We celebrated Catholic Schools week from Sunday 24th January to Sunday 31st January. The theme was Communities of Faith and Resilience. Although the school was in Lockdown, staff shared powerpoints and the children designed posters reflecting the love and learning shared in our communities.

This year all religious ceremonies were held in class bubbles in St Patrick's Church. We had four Confirmations. These were held on 11th October for our June P7 leavers, and on 7th June for our P7 pupils.

The children in P5 children celebrated their postponed First Communion on 19th September 2020, while the P4 children received their First Communion on 22nd May 2021.

P4 children made their postponed First Confession on 22nd April 2021 and P3 children made their First Confession on 29th April 2021.

We especially thank Fr Henry for his spiritual guidance and support and to the parish volunteers for their presence throughout the services ensuring that we all adhered to the covid guidelines. The services, as always, were very special and enjoyed by children and parents.

Safeguarding

A strong safeguarding ethos is promoted within St Brigid's PS. The Designated Teacher delivered training to all teaching staff on 18th August 2020. The Safeguarding Team met as needed to review allegations made about possible Bullying Incidents. They also met formally on 23rd November. The Safeguarding Audit was conducted.

Safeguarding/Child Protection and Intimate Care policies were distributed to parents of new children. Permission for use of images for the website was sought. Our Safeguarding Policies which include; Child Protection, Positive Behaviour, Visitors policy, ICT policy & Health & Safety policy were amended to reflect changes due to covid.

In November we took part in the National Anti-Bullying Week where through role play, art, discussion, poetry and circle time children were able to begin to understand bullying and the trouble it causes, how to stop/prevent it and who to talk to when they need to. The theme this year was United Against Bullying. The P5 children also attended an Anti- Bullying Workshop provided by HIP.

Risk assessments were methodically conducted; for the safe return and operation of school and all clinically vulnerable & extremely vulnerable staff and pupils. All new staff completed appropriate Access NI checks and were informed of child protection procedures during their induction. The DT/DDT liaised with social services, Family Intervention Team, made referrals and attended LAC review meetings as required. These LAC review meetings were conducted online. Regular contact was maintained between the DT and social services during the lockdown period. The majority of our vulnerable children attended school for supervised learning during lockdown.

The governors were updated at each meeting of any child protection/children in need concerns. They received copies of:

Circular 2020/07 Child Protection & Record Keeping in Schools.

Circular 2021/04 Suspension & Expulsion Arrangements for pupils in grant aided schools in NI

Circular 2021/12 Addressing Bullying in School Act (2016) Responsibilities of Schools & Board of Governors

Circular 2021/13: Interim Guidance on the Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Educational Settings

Pastoral Care

Our Pastoral Care Policy is designed to reflect the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic faith and involves all members of our school community – children, teachers, parents and all other adults who contribute to the well-being and happiness of each child. We strive to create a Christian atmosphere where God's love is experienced by all members of the school community through their relationships with each other, where Christ is an example to all and where each child is supported to develop his/her full potential in every aspect of development – intellectual, social, physical, moral and religious. To achieve this, children are made aware that they all have something to contribute to society. We aim to give them an awareness of their own special skills and talents for their own fulfilment and for the benefit of the community. The implementation of the PATHS programme (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) throughout the school is now an integral part of our PDMU programme. In St Brigid's Primary School, we place a great deal of emphasis on our preventative curriculum. Therefore, through PDMU, Circle Times, Assemblies and PATHS we focus on building positive relationships.

Following on from in house nurture training delivered by Mrs Devlin to staff, each class implemented nurture lessons twice a week this year. This involved children talking in nurture sessions about comfortable and uncomfortable feelings. These sessions helped children discuss and make sense of their world and various scenarios they have faced. Each session involved a hype activity, calming activity, compliments and a snack. The children really enjoyed these sessions and were quick to remind teachers when it was "nurture day". Further to this, many classes experienced regular sessions on Cosmic Kids Yoga, daily mile and more regular PE sessions. Children completed wellbeing questionnaires.

We recognise the valuable and important role that parents play in their child's education and wellbeing. We try to ensure that parents are made to feel welcome, that they are aware of the

school's aims, objectives and policies and of their child's individual needs, progress and achievements and we encourage parents to support the school in achieving these goals. Parents were supported regularly throughout lockdown from help with ICT problems, teachers printing and delivering packs, weekly check ins with children and families and even offering support by bringing children into school were certain families were struggling during lockdown.

Pastoral Care in our school also extends to all the staff. Support, whether internally or from outside agencies, is readily available as and when the need arises. Staff engaged in a well-being session in August and participated in Mental Health Activity Day in October. Staff have often been reminded of the services of INSPIRE. Staff were supported by the principal in feeling safe in work. Risk assessments and wellbeing questionnaires were completed. Staff had regular weekly Friday catch-ups on zoom during lockdown. Staff benefitted from trusted colleague networks in testing out online learning platforms in a safe non-judgmental manner. Staff had weekly coffee and scones mornings. They were presented with a treat hamper from BOG, enjoyed a quiz and pizza afternoon and shared positive attributes about their colleagues in "say something great about your mate day!"

Pupil Voice

During September we had nominations and elections to fill the roles of School Councillor, Eco Councillor and Digital Leaders. Twelve positions were available on each committee. The manifestos were once again of a high standard. Prior to the Covid 19 school closure, they met regularly each half term with Miss R Cunningham, Miss V Cunningham & Mrs Mc Cavera respectively to discuss fund raising events for the school to express concerns from their peers and suggest ideas for improvement.

The school councillors campaigned for new school P.E equipment and iPads. They organised fund raising events every Friday in the month of December. They also created child friendly posters to advertise the events each week and to raise awareness for the school. The Eco councillors also assisted with helping each class deliver Christmas post cards around the school. They had planned to organise a healthy tuck shop during break, however this was postponed due to Covid restrictions.

The Eco Council promoted Earth Day and helped educate their peers on the important issue of Climate Change. They also helped to look after our school flowers and planted vegetables in our school poly tunnel.

This year we made a conscious effort to develop the role of our Digital leaders to support and enhance the digital learning environment in our school. Twelve children were appointed as Digital leaders following a competitive application process. Digital leaders have contributed to the creation of a digital mascot- Techno Turtles. Digital leaders collaborated with Rory Rea (Funky Doodles) to design and create a digital mascot. Unfortunately, due to COVID 19, there were at times, limited opportunities to extend their role due to Apple Store visitation cancelled/No mixing of bubbles.

Literacy

The literacy focus for the 2020/2021 school year was to review and update the literacy policy, continue to raise standards in reading and comprehension and to incorporate ICT into the planning and teaching of literacy. All teachers were trained to conduct running records to correctly identify a child's reading level. All teachers submitted reading scores from the beginning of the year and children were tested again at the beginning of term 3. Teachers have been using Seesaw and Newsdesk to create at least one online literacy homework per week. Differentiated homework activities matched learning outcomes which were covered in class that week with the learning intentions in planners. All staff received Newsdesk training. An online reading resource, Bug Club was purchased to ensure children could continue to have access to a levelled reading programme during periods of school closure. Teachers incorporated bug club into daily lessons during lockdown. During school closure five literacy lessons were recorded and uploaded each week via the online learning platform. Nesy, a reading and spelling programme, was incorporated into lessons in the third term for primary 3 – 5 as part of a university study.

We celebrated Roald Dahl Day in September. The children came to school dressed as a character from their favourite book and enjoyed many Roald Dahl books.

The Travelling Book Fair took place in September 2020. Unfortunately, we are unable to invite parents into school to share this experience with their child. However, an online brochure allowed parents to help their child select enjoyable books. It was a successful fair. We managed to raise £440 worth of books which was used to supplement each classes' library.

End of year PTE scores show good progress in literacy and an increase in the number of children reaching the top stanines (7-9).

Numeracy

The focus in numeracy this year was to ensure planning included differentiation and ICT links. Data was analysed and following staff questionnaires and meetings, teachers felt children lacked skills in word problems and applying the skills to work through problems independently.

Teachers focused on the RUCSAC approach. Staff received training on the variety of strategies to support the solving of word problems. Key stage 2 introduced the strategy of Bar Modelling. Displays throughout the school and in classrooms showcase the progression of work on word problems.

Mathletics was purchased in September 2020. It covers the whole NI curriculum in a fun interactive way. Children were set up on the programme at their level. Teachers assigned regular online homeworks using this app. Children throughout the school P1-P7 enjoyed this programme and it ensured the delivery of the numeracy curriculum throughout lockdown. Classes throughout the school were regularly in the top schools in the UK and even in the world. Children's achievements in Mathletics (gold, silver and bronze awards) were celebrated weekly in assembly as well as in our weekly SWAY. Mrs Devlin's class were rewarded with a McDonalds at the end of the year for the most gold awards.

The Engage programme focused on withdrawal for selected children for numeracy support. This was the first that extra withdrawal support has been provided to children in numeracy. Mrs McNamara and Mrs Devlin delivered an intense programme of numeracy to children in P2-P6.

On 19th May, children celebrated National Numeracy Day. They watched videos delivered by celebrities outlining the importance of number in the world of work. Children enjoyed practical numeracy sessions and challenges. Mrs Devlin visited classes to deliver an “Escape Rooms Challenge” to key stage 2.

End of year PTM scores show good progress in numeracy and an increase in the number of children reaching the top stanines (7-9).

ICT

A whole school approach to the planning, teaching and assessment of all desirable features was a key focus for the development of ICT this year. Feedback from teachers indicated that there had been an increase in pupil engagement and attainment as result of planned and focused lessons in the key areas. Children are more confident in using computer programs/age appropriate apps and devices relevant to the key areas. For instance, children in Key Stage 2 are confident using Scratch/Spheros/Dash Dots when exploring ‘Computational Thinking and Coding’. Children are using digital skills appropriately while engaging in meaningful and purposeful activities. Children throughout the key stages are aware of/ demonstrate appropriate language/terminology associated with each focus area.

Moderation in the area of ICT was also a key focus for the year 2020/2021. Internal moderation took place on May 18th. ICT coordinator hosted a moderation session within each key stage. Each teacher brought a sample of ‘Film and Animation.’ Using the levels of progression provided by CCEA, samples were moderated. Clear progression was evident throughout the Key Stages, with teachers moderating and levelling appropriately. Feedback from teachers indicated that the session was extremely beneficial and worthwhile. Teachers are now confident and competent in their ability to level samples of work appropriately. Moderation sessions will continue in the next academic year to ensure good practice continues.

As a staff we examined our current provision of our online learning platforms. As a staff we wanted to ensure our school community (teachers/children/parents) were prepared for a period of remote learning. The ICT coordinator and a number of FS staff members availed of the ‘BlendED’ training sessions. These sessions proved invaluable and helped transform our integration of the ‘Seesaw’ app into our home learning. Initially we had been using the app as a line of communication between home and school (parent/teacher) but as the period of remote learning began we were able to use the app as a platform for teaching and learning. Sharing teaching videos and work that could be completed online. During the period of remote learning KS1/KS2 teachers used MS Teams. This proved an invaluable online platform for teaching and learning

Throughout the academic year our school community prioritised the purchasing of new digital devices. The school has now purchased 16 new iPads, 8 of these have been funded by the PTFA, the other 8 of these funded by the school. The school has also invested in new interactive whiteboards.

Four new Acti Inspire boards have been purchased and are now installed in P1/, P2/3, P4/P5. Teachers are confidently using a wide range of new apps to support teaching and learning as a result of the new devices purchased. Feedback from teachers has indicated that use of new devices/apps has enhanced their teaching and learning. Feedback from teachers has indicated that there has been an increase in pupil engagement and attainment as result of new devices to support their teaching and learning.

Digital Devices were made available to students to support our whole school approach to blended learning. The Education Minister agreed criteria for the distribution of devices. Priority was given to children currently in year groups 7 & 4 in this order; and categories: free school meals, special educational needs, Newcomer target groups (including Asylum Seeker, Refugee & Roma children), Looked after Children and children considered vulnerable. The EA established an online process to enable schools to indicate the number of devices required for pupils struggling to access devices. The EA provided a number of devices for the pupils within the identified criteria. A total of 14 devices were received from EA, 11 of which were distributed to pupils within our school. Following the announcement of a delayed return to school in January. We contacted our parents to ensure they could access work online. A number of parents raised concerns about this. We prioritised this issue and ensured all children within our school could access online learning. A total of 8 school laptops were placed on loan to our pupils. Relevant paperwork was completed by parents/guardians including loan/user agreement and copies of relevant school policies. Parents were requested to sign a copy of the Loan/User Agreement. Pupils were requested to sign the Pupil Usage Agreement form. This is continually under review. We continue to collaborate with our parents seeking feedback to ensure our ICT provision is meeting the digital needs of every child within our school.

The World Around Us

This year, the focus was on the development of STEM opportunities and the embedding of Global Learning within cross curricular topics. The variation of the topics taught, reflect a broad range of history, geography and science opportunities as well as learning in our outdoor classroom. All children celebrated Outdoor Classroom Day on 5th November by participating in a wide range of outdoor learning activities. The Junior Entrepreneur Programme was introduced within the Primary 7 class. The children established businesses and sought to raise as much profit as possible. At the close of business, the children chose to spend their profits on a P1 Buddy party, footballs and an iPad for school.

The Arts (Music & Drama)

Covid restrictions, impacted heavily on the music and drama areas of the curriculum. We were unable to have our school choir. Musical tuition from EA and GH Music Company was significantly reduced. Some pupils were able to continue with lessons virtually. However, each class did continue to perform a class assembly during the course of the year, which was recorded and shared with

parents and the school community. At Christmas, each class performed a poem, song or carol which again was recorded and shared with our local care homes.

The primary one children performed a Christmas Nativity. Both P7 classes held an individual leavers assembly outside which their parents attended.

Shared Education

Throughout this academic year, there was no face to face or arranged shared activities. The focus on Shared Education was on upskilling coordinators to develop their skills to support the delivery of Shared Education.

Mrs Devlin attended online training modules on nature inspired storytelling and outdoor learning. "A trip to somewhere special" focused on bringing storytelling to life focusing on a book by local author, Declan Carville. The training highlighted a cross curricular approach to storytelling incorporating nature, geography, art and music.

Special Educational Needs Provision

The Special Needs Coordinator continued to engage with outside agencies to provide support for those children who needed it. This was particularly important for many children due to the prolonged lock down periods the year before. Over the course of the year contact was made with the Educational Psychologist. Seven children were discussed in the December consultation meeting. Two children, who had been referred during the previous lockdown were assessed and two further children were assessed during the course of the year. One child received a statement to meet their needs, one child received Spld support from Literacy Support Service, (LTSS) and statements are pending for the other two children.

Further support was sought from agencies such as Autism Advice and Intervention Service (AAIS.) and 'RISE' (Regional Integrated Support for Education) and the Behavioural Support Team.

In Term two, Mrs Mc Namara took over the role of SENCo.

During the school year, twelve annual reviews were conducted for those children with statements of Educational Need.

Children with learning difficulties were identified at an early stage and were supported by our Learning Support Teacher and Classroom Assistants. This support involved both withdrawal in small or individual group teaching and differentiated activities within the classroom. The work carried out in learning support is in conjunction with and additional to the work carried out in class and is always driven by the needs of the child as laid out in their IEP. During lockdown in January 2021, the learning support teacher continued to support these children both online and providing worksheets. Many of these children, however continued to attend school and availed of their usual support classes.

Children with Specific Literacy Difficulties were provided with outreach support. Two children received this support. Children used assistive technology to aid their learning and one child received a laptop.

The Speech & Language Service delivered weekly speech therapy sessions to 11 children.

In addition, three of our classroom assistants provided the Reading Partnership programme to children over an intense ten-week period to support reading. Eighteen children benefited from this programme. All children made progress with their reading.

At the end of June 2021 we had 60 children on the Special Needs Register and 21 on the Medical Register. Of the children on the register 12 children have a Statement of Educational Needs and have additional adult assistance in school to help them access the curriculum.

St Brigid's continued to be an inclusive school providing opportunities to all our children. We liaised closely with our parents of newcomer children so they could support their child's education and belong to the school community. At the end of June 2021 we had 12 newcomer children. Support for these children was provided through the Inclusion and Diversity Services.

The children explored the different learning styles and challenges facing those with dyslexia and autism by taking part in Dyslexia Awareness Day in October and Autism Awareness Week in February.

Assessment & Reporting

The school completed standardised testing for P3- P7 pupils in October/November 2020. The data was used to see gaps in learning due to the first lockdown from March 2020. Further standardised assessment in PTE, PTM, and CAT assessments took place in May 2021. This information will be used in conjunction with Cognitive Ability Testing (CAT) and will be used to set targets for pupils, year groups, curriculum areas and whole school. All data available has been uploaded to SIMS for tracking.

Primary one parents attended a socially distanced 1:1 meeting to discuss baseline needs and support in early September.

Parent Interviews to inform on pupil progress were conducted by telephone during the week 9th November 2020. In addition, a formal written report on each child's progress was issued to parents during June 2021.

Remote Learning

From the start of the academic year, staff had planned and prepared for another period of remote/blended learning. Planning in literacy and numeracy incorporated apps and online resources which could be used to meet the learning intentions being taught. Staff received refresher training in the use of Newsdesk and all staff and children were introduced to the online resources of Mathletics and Bug Club. Staff worked with a trusted colleague to develop competence and confidence to plan, record and upload a learning video to Seesaw or Microsoft Teams. Staff

developed a blended/remote learning policy which parents consulted on. Pupils had begun to complete some homework online to build familiarity with the variety of learning platforms.

As a result of the imposed school closure, staff at St Brigid's Primary School were able to provide planned learning experiences and support to our pupils using remote learning. All learning was conducted using Seesaw for Years 1, 2, 3 pupils and Microsoft Teams for Years 4, 5, 6 and 7 pupils.

Staff uploaded two teaching lessons per day, following a structured programme. Teachers were able to schedule learning in a manner that did not overwhelm or concern our pupils. Teaching and learning was tailored, changed and updated to meet the needs of the children and their parents. Difficulties with access to resources were addressed and both parents and children were supported in the use of the new learning style. Work packs were also provided on request.

Pupils were also supported pastorally while engaged in remote learning. Teachers did weekly live catch ups with their pupils, with games, quizzes and treasure hunts providing much needed fun and laughter. External agencies continued to provide support via zoom and telephone to ensure that vulnerable children were emotionally supported while they learnt from home. All staff provided daily supervised learning for those children who needed it.

At the end of each week a Remote Learner of the week from each class was identified and received a congratulatory phone call from the principal. The children and parents really appreciated the recognition of their work and efforts in these challenging times. These awards encouraged home learning to continue.

Engage Programme

St Brigid's Primary School received £5,400 to deliver a new government initiative, The Engage programme. This was equivalent to 30 substitute teaching days. Using our data SLT agreed that the Engage Money should focus on Numeracy and Nurture support. We ran two programmes, one delivered by Grainne Mc Namara for P2, P2/3 and P3 children. The second programme delivered by Lynsey Devlin for P4, P4/5 and P5 children. Programme 1 ran for 13 consecutive days (least disruption to own class priority). Three sessions of Numeracy delivered in the morning and an afternoon session on Nurture. The programme provided a perfect boost for children. Nineteen children were targeted for Numeracy boost and six children targeted for Nurture boost. Within the small group sessions over 13 consecutive days, the teacher could clearly see development and progress.

Due to staffing and the lockdown from December 2021 to March 2021, the programme for Key Stage 2 was delivered 2 days per week.

However, we found that small group intervention was successful for both the children being targeted and those who remained within the class.

The expertise of the teacher delivering the programme impacted the success achieved. The programme initiated valuable conversation among SLT regarding the teaching of number concepts.

Within both programmes the value of Nurture sessions could not be over-estimated.

Health Education

The importance of healthy lifestyles and healthy choices continues to be a priority focus within the school. All classes implement the preventative curriculum through their PDMU programme and the PATHS programme. The Daily Mile initiative was implemented throughout the year in St. Brigid's Primary School. This programme has had a positive effect on both physical health but also on pupil wellbeing. Our Breakfast Club ran each morning to provide a healthy start to the day. This club operated at a reduced number through a booking system, to ensure social distancing and bubbles could be maintained. Children were encouraged to drink water during the school day and parents supported guidance on providing no fizzy or sugary drinks. Our Extended School activities were cancelled due to the covid pandemic. The P7 children attended a resilience workshop: Working under Pressure in October. The medical assessments for children in P1 were cancelled due to covid in the 2019/20 year. These medicals took place on 14th September 2020. The flu vaccination was administered on 2nd December.

Sporting & Extra Curricular Activities

Due to covid, there were no sporting or Extra Curricular Activities this year.

Each class ran their own individual Sports Day. Unfortunately, parents were not able to attend this year, however the teachers sent parents lots of photos. The PTA bought medals for the children and they were awarded certificates also.

School Trips and Visits

Due to the covid pandemic, school trips and visits were very limited. Our primary five children attended the cinema on 21st September 2020 as a treat following the celebration of their First Communion. Both P7 classes had a leavers trip. Mr Fitzsimons class went to Let's Go Hydro and Miss Cunningham's class went to Greenhill YMCA in Newcastle.

Induction Programme & Open Night

We enjoy good relationships with our feeder pre- schools and local nurseries. Due to Covid - 19 restrictions, our Induction Programme for children starting in St Brigid's Primary School 2020 and 2021 had to be adapted. However, we have worked hard to ensure that the children have the best possible transition experience under the current circumstances and that their parents also found this a positive rewarding process. Prior to the P1 children starting school in September 2020 the following procedures took place.

- P1 teacher contacted with all relevant preschool providers;
- P1 class teacher visited each child at home with a welcome gift.
- Photograph of Year 1 staff and Year 1 classroom - sent to anxious children for further familiarisation.

- Communications sent to parents – policies and Google Forms for data collection;
- Welcome video;
- Staggered small group start dates, with welcome balloons and bubbles;
- Parent - Teacher 1:1 baseline meetings in August;
- P1 Teddy Bears picnic on 17th September to introduce school dinners.

Due to the pandemic restrictions our usual 'Open Evening' was cancelled. However, we organized a promotional video to share with perspective parents. This provided a flavor of our school ethos, values and principles. It proved to be an invaluable opportunity for prospective parents to see the facilities and wonderful opportunities which exists in the primary school. From this, 38 applications were received for P1 admission in September 2021. In June 2021, we ran a summer scheme session to facilitate a play date for our September 2021 intake.

Communicating with Parents

Our weekly sway provides parents and carers with detailed information on the life of the school, celebrates pupil achievements and provides information on how parents/carers can support their child's education. General school notes are now emailed or shared with parents via Seesaw.

In addition, the following approaches are used to keep the community involved and informed:

Website with photographs and information from the school

Facebook/Twitter/See-Saw app

Parish Bulletin

Photographs and articles in local newspapers

Prospectus

Annual Governors Report

Parent Teacher Meetings

Parent-Teacher consultations were held via Telephone in November 2020. A detailed report was issued to parents in June 2021. The school continues to regard this report and consultations as a vital part of good communication between the home and school. The school also encouraged parents to consult with teachers on a regular basis throughout the year.

Parent Teacher Association

The Board of Governors wishes to extend its thanks to the members of St Brigid's PTFA for their continuing interest and help in the school. They not only support the school through the financing of resources, they also contribute to the life of the school and wider community. Such activities included the monthly Bonus Ball, Spooky Trail, Winter Wonderland, Raffles, Tinsel Tuck and Fun Day. Their hard work, dedication and genuine commitment to the school is greatly appreciated. This year the PTFA has helped the school purchase the large outdoor play frame, iPads, P1 Bears for the Teddy Bear picnic, Christmas Crackers, class party's, Communion treats, cream eggs, and subsidized the Leaver Hoodies for the P7 children. The PTFA also secured funding for the school through successful grant applications.

Links with the Community

We are proud of our local and extended community links with our primary and post primary schools. There is no doubt that these links do help children and their parents make better informed choices for post-primary level education and this contributes to the smooth transition from primary to secondary education.

Throughout the pandemic we continued to work to develop links with the local community. In the following ways:

Name of link	Link summary
Pastoral Care	
School Chaplain: Fr Henry Parish Priest: Fr Murray	Preparation and celebrating sacraments, school masses, Faith development.
Diocesan advisors	Advice, training, support materials and school visits
Barnardos	Counselling- Time for Me Programme
Child Safeguarding	Link Summary
Education Authority	Child Protection training and support.
Education Welfare Officer	Monitoring attendance
Social Services	Referrals and support
PSNI	E- Safety Workshops, advice, Road Safety

Learning Support	Link Summary
Education & Training Inspectorate	District Inspector Support.
Education Authority	Behaviour Support
Educational Psychology	Consultations, assessments and statements of educational need
ASD Service	Pupil support, advice and support materials for children with Autism/Aspergers
Speech and Language – Mary Cahalane	In-school support for children with Speech and Language difficulties
Curriculum Enrichment	Link Summary
Invited guests	Nurse, photographer.
Sport	Link Summary
Newry and Mourne Council	Polling Station
The Arts	Link Summary
Education Authority	Peripatetic support for children learning to play the violin, cello and woodwind instruments
Other Schools	Link Summary
St Patrick’s Grammar School	Transition Programme
De La Salle High School	Transition programme
St Mary’s High School	Transition Programme
Health Promotion	Link Summary
School Nurse	P2 medicals, Flu vaccine
Public Health Agency	Covid guidance
INSPIRE	In-service training for staff on pastoral issues
CAMHS	Counselling and advice on children’s mental health issues
Charities we have supported	
Trocaire	

Summer Scheme

This year, the school offered a Summer Scheme in response to requests by the Department of Education. The main purpose of the Summer Scheme was to help pupils make a successful return to learning in September 2021. There was a focus on emotional health and wellbeing, as well as activities, which were interactive and fun, with plenty of scope for outside play, and for learning activities as and where appropriate.

The Summer Scheme ran for three weeks and was offered to all children from P1-P7. Around 90 children attended the summer scheme each day.

Building & Security Arrangements

The children and staff are kept safe on our school premises at all times. Exterior doors are kept locked and there is a buzzer system in place for visitors to the school.

All visitors to the school must report to the secretary's office and login to track and trace. Children are collected from allocated destinations within the school. It is then the parent's responsibility to accompany their child(ren) home or to their car. Older children are allowed to walk home with parental permission.

The school continues to be maintained to the highest standards. This is a reflection of the respect and care shown by the children for their school and also of the high standard of care-taking in the school.

LMS Budget Report

St Brigid's is allocated a sum of money to pay for all staffing, maintenance and running costs. The Delegated Budget for 2020/21 was £883.489. The Board of Governors has the overall responsibility of managing this budget. The Total Spend was £892.150 of which £818.887 was staffing costs.

The Carry Forward to 2021/22 is £-8,661. It was then confirmed that the school's covid 19 budget would be adjusted to align with additional costs incurred. This carry forward to 2021/22 has been adjusted to £2,198

School Funds

The school also operated a school fund account for incidental expenses and immediate requirements. In 2020/21 the School Fund account had a starting balance of £14,645.16 and an expenditure of £9,420.58. The balance of school funds at the 31st August 2021 was £ 5,224.58

We thank the parents for their on-going support to the school in these very challenging financial times in education.