



BLIGH'S LANE NURSERY SCHOOL



2021 –2022

EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Annual Parents' Report for the 2021-2022 Year

Dear Parent,

The Board of Governors have enclosed 'THE GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT' and in presenting this report for your consideration, the Governors intend to give an overall picture of the workings of the school in the year past : 2021-2022.

In this year schools were beginning to go back to a more 'normal' year after the Covid-19 pandemic but it still had an impact on how schools had to operate especially in the Autumn Term of this academic year,

Should you wish to have any additional information or clarification on any aspect of the report, I would be grateful if you would forward your request, in writing, to the Principals, Mrs L Woods or Mrs D Doherty, who will endeavour to address your query. I hope you find this report informative and that it will give you a flavour of the amount of work that goes on 'behind the scenes' in Bligh's Lane Nursery School to ensure that your child is given the best quality Early Years education possible.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Charles O'Donnell
Chairperson
Board of Governors
Bligh's Lane Nursery School



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REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

The 2021 –2022 academic year began for the children on Tuesday 31st August 2021. Fifty-six children were admitted to the school during the month of September, in accordance with our admissions policy, and all settled well into the school environment. The settling-in routine was altered to take into account Covid-19 mitigations with children being dropped off outside and staggered school times. As before, the settling-in procedure extended through the month of September, with the two classes being divided in half – one half attending from 8.45-10.45am and the other half attending from 11.30am – 1.30pm (with extra time being allowed for cleaning between sessions). Both groups were amalgamated on 30th September, with dinners starting the following week.

Covid-19, whilst not having the major impact as in the previous year, remained a threat during this year. The school managed to remain open for the large majority of the time but unfortunately had to have 2 periods of blended learning as we could not provide safe staffing levels. (4 days- 5th-10th Jan due to no SEN assistants available; 4 days 8th-11th March due to 1 teacher and Nursery assistant unavailable). During this period it was impossible to engage temporary teachers and many schools had to close temporarily as a result.

As always the staff would like to thank all the parents for their patience and support during the settling in procedure.

STAFFING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Mrs Woods and Mrs. Doherty (Principals 0.6/0.4 respectively) were the class teachers in Room 1 and Mrs O'Doherty was class teacher in Room 2. Mrs Toland (maternity cover) and Mrs McGilloway returned at Nursery Assistants. But Mrs Meehan returned from maternity leave at the beginning of November.

Ms W Henry, Mrs G Carlin, Ms L Coyle and Ms L Roberts are Special Needs Assistants, each caring for a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Ms Henry reduced her hours to 0.6 after the first half-term with Mrs D Toland covering the remainder of the hours from then.

Miss Cooke and Ms Roberts were appointed to the posts of Extended Schools Assistants. Miss Cooke also supervised the Breakfast Club and was appointed as Language Support Assistant. She began to work with children at the beginning of October. Mrs. Doherty, Mrs Woods and Mrs. O'Doherty began the "WellComm" Language Screening in September in order to identify those children who would require extra language support.

Mrs McCready (secretary) continued to give secretarial support in the school for 12.5 hours per week during this academic year.

- 26th and 27th August All staff took part Child protection Refresher training in school using materials provided by CPSS
- Mrs Woods took part in a Leadership Development Program 'Achieve' which involved a year long project in reflecting on leadership styles and development which she completed in June 2022.
- Mrs Doherty undertook First Time Principal's training which involved 8 days of training covering all aspects of school leadership
- All staff undertook six sessions of Makaton refresher in school during September and October which allowed us to continue to upskill on communication with children with language difficulties
- All staff also attended an update on the new SEND Framework and how this is likely to impact us
- Mrs Woods took part in Principal Child Protection refresher training on 8th Nov
- All staff attended 2 afternoons of NLP well-being sessions during November which was offered as part of the well-being fund



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- Mrs Meehan refreshed her First Aid at work accreditation on 15th and 16th November
- Mrs Woods attended 2 days of SenCo training at the Antrim Board Centre on 8th and 9th December
- All staff undertook an in-house outdoor learning project during the Spring and Summer terms. They have met initially on 9th February to self-evaluate current practice. Clare Devlin delivered training on 14th February on planning for outdoor play and WAU. This was followed by meetings on 23rd and 30th March where we looked at planning and storage/accessibility of resources. There were further sessions in April and May to finalise planning and zoning and we can now offer children more substantial learning opportunities outdoors.

THE PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The staff worked closely in planning the Pre-School Curriculum for the development of all the children, and to ensure the best quality provision, appropriate to each child's needs. They made accurate observations of significant achievements made by the children during play and recorded them in order to inform assessments, future planning and parents meetings. The Block Play Area enabled the children to have space to build and extend their ideas and the staff were able to observe good examples of Shared Thinking; group work; problem solving and Early Mathematical Experiences. As the school is very well resourced, all areas of the curriculum – Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Language (including Listening, Pre-Reading and Writing), Mathematical Development, The Arts, Physical Development and The World Around Us were included and planned for in the daily activities prepared for the children. The "Musical Pathways to Learning" Programme began on 5th October and was delivered by Mrs Una Carlin from the Music Service. It was thoroughly enjoyed by the children. The 'Jo Jingles' music programme and the dance classes continued to be incorporated into the Extended Day and this worked extremely well. Gymnastics by Shooting Starz and football coaching by Maiden City Academy also continued to be available to the children. This provision was paid for in part by the well-being funding and it enabled the children to experience activities they may have missed out on due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the short closure due to the impact of Covid19 the school provided fun, topic-related learning videos and stories for the children on our facebook page. We also provided "Fine Motor Skills" Packs for every child to use at home. These contained scissors, paper, pens, crayons, paintbrushes, playdough, megasketchers, threading activities, beads, buttons, pegs and peg boards, bean bags, weaving activities etc. so that they could continue to develop their pincer grasp and tripod grip with their pens. Numerous activities were also shared with parents on our website.

LANGUAGE PROGRAMME

Our Language Programme was re-introduced this year. This programme involved parents and staff working together to support and encourage children's language development. The programme was explained to parents at two meetings held via Zoom on 14th September. We focused on the 'Language sheet' for each story which included ideas and suggestions for parents enabling them to get the most learning out of each book. Mrs O' Doherty created a display in the porch area each month, depicting aspects of the story and suggested questions to ask the children in order to develop their understanding. This encouraged conversation between parents and children as they passed the display daily. Each child received the 'Story of The Month' in turn to take home and share with their parents. Parents were very good at reporting back in the "Parents Comments Books" provided on how their child reacted to the stories and activities given.

Our own Language Support Assistant, Miss Cooke, worked with groups of children every day in order to help progress their language. The class teachers provided Miss Cooke with detailed and specific weekly plans and activities which were then ably delivered. We also worked closely with the community speech and language therapists and followed closely any of the programs they provided for specific children.)



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“GETTING READY TO LEARN” PROGRAMME

The 'Getting Ready to Learn' programme continued with a particular emphasis on the Big Bedtime Read. Parents were invited to a virtual session on 3rd November which aimed to emphasise the importance of reading and language development for future life chances. It was well attended and parents were very appreciative of the 'lending library, that they could access weekly for the remainder of the year.

SHARED EDUCATION PROGRAMME: “SHARING FROM THE START”

We continued our involvement in the Shared Education project albeit mostly through a virtual platform. The children enjoyed meeting each other online during more than 10 hours of contact but benefitted most from the face-to-face session at Lurgybrack Farm on May 20th.

EXTENDED SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

The program was a huge success and the children really benefitted from taking part in a range of different activities. The following facilitators conducted the sessions: Miss Jamee (Jo Jingles), Miss Katie (Gymnastics), Mrs Carlin (Dance) and Christy (Maiden City Academy). The adult-child ratio was therefore 1:7. The Governors of the school and the parents were delighted with the success of the Programme and attribute this to the excellent level of support given by the staff.

Engage program

From our allocation of almost £6000 for the year we were able to offer a range of initiatives to support parents and children in the post-Covid time. We had a major focus in school on outdoor play and learning and therefore we joined a Forest schools program. This enables children and staff to access invaluable experiences and learning which they were then able to replicate at school. We also partly funded our after school facilitators so that children could experience and engage with a range of activities to promote the development of the whole child. Our school website was re-built in a much more user friendly interface and is a hub of information for our parents and community. John Curran facilitated a four week children's behaviour program for parents which was very well received.

Well-being initiative

We were allocated funds to promote the well-being of pupils and staff. We have spent the allocation on a program of mindfulness sessions called 'Relax Kids' for the pupils; Training for staff on outdoor play which will enhance the children's experience outdoors; two sessions of NLP for staff and a treat for each staff member in afternoon tea and a treatment of their choice. Governors felt it is wholly appropriate and right to give something to staff after all their hard work during Covid.

Eco-Schools

Mrs Doherty enrolled the school and has been towards Eco-School accreditation. The focus of our work has been on learning about our environment and how we can take care of it. The children were part of an eco-team who had a great understanding of how and why we recycle and how we can do more to protect the environment. We gained our bronze status at Christmas and Silver status just before the Easter break. We involved local community groups such as the Triax team, Creggan Country Park and The Men's Shed in our work and we also had many visitors and visits out to teach us about different aspects of our environment such as NI Water, Wee Critters and a program at the Forest School at the Playtrail.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The school is proud of its excellent reputation for supporting children with Special Needs. In the 2021-2022 year, four of the children had a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Children with Special Needs require detailed written Individual Education Plans which are prepared by the class teacher. As always the staff ensured that these children had access to the same activities that were provided for their peers. Educational Psychologists, Speech and



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Language Therapists and a range of other professionals liaised with the school regularly to assist the staff in assessing the progress of specific children, and in order to discuss this progress with their parents.

VOLUNTEERS

We were delighted this year to welcome back our regular volunteers, a retired teacher and a retired nursery assistant, both of whom brought a wealth of knowledge and experience. This voluntary assistance was invaluable and very much appreciated. Mrs S O'Donnell and Mrs M Barr came into our setting on a weekly basis specifically to assist children with Special Needs who were awaiting assessment. These children very much needed one to one support and benefited greatly from the skills and experience of both volunteers. They also worked with the whole class during morning sessions, supervised during outdoor play and assisted with the dinner routine.

PARENTS

Parents continued to be a source of invaluable support to the staff of the school, both in providing information about their child, which enables the staff to provide experiences necessary for each child's learning, but also in practical ways, such as supporting staff on Environmental Visits and especially on Sports Day – bringing food etc for the staff to sell back to them and participating in all of the races. At Christmas time parents were extremely generous as they made contributions towards our Saint Vincent de Paul Appeal. Unfortunately parents were unable to come into school regularly, as in previous years, due to the continued impact of Covid-19. We hope to return to activities such as 'Come Dine with Me' and breakfast club helpers in the next academic year.

Monthly newsletters continued to inform parents of school events and aspects of the curriculum, as did the Parents' Notice Board, our Facebook page, regular texts and our new school website. Two Parent / Teacher meetings – in October and February – were held so that parents were kept informed of their child's progress and were given an opportunity to support the work being carried out in school. From February onwards, parents were involved in the Language/Maths Programme (explained to them at the February meeting), by working with their children using the Literacy folders and Maths packs which were sent home each week. The parents provided us with invaluable written comments following each activity.

Parents also received a copy of a progress report and a "WellComm" Language Assessment in June, which was forwarded to the child's Primary School.

School Policies that have a direct impact on children – such as Child Protection; Health and Safety; Special Educational Needs; Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying etc - are always available for parents to read and are located in the entrance hall.

Parents whose children were due to start in September 2021 attended an information meeting in May via Zoom and then brought their children to meet the staff later in May and also in August. Home visits had to be cancelled this year due to Covid-19.

The Governors would like to express their appreciation to all the parents, since their support is a source of encouragement for all the staff as they endeavour to provide an environment of care and education for each child.

GOVERNORS

The Governors of the school gave of their time freely in the interest of the children, parents and staff. We welcomed back our EA representative and DE representative governors. They attended meetings during the year which focused on for example, the general management of the school (especially in light of Covid 19) new admissions, new staff appointments and budget deployment. The dates of all Governors meetings are recorded in the Calendar of Events, minutes of these meetings are forwarded to the EA, and copies are held on file in the school.



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THE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF THE SCHOOL

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The staff and Governors of the school worked closely together so that all members would be clear about their roles; the continued development of teaching and learning; the aims of the school and the importance of protecting children at all times. The children and staff in the school are protected on a daily basis by a Security Entry System, which allows staff to restrict admittance to the building if necessary. A high priority is given to the promotion of health in the school. The staff continually talk to the children about health and healthy eating as part of the curriculum. The children had access to fresh fruit daily and are encouraged to eat a balanced school dinner. The building's alarm system is activated when the building is closed for the night and is connected to the PSNI and Group 4 Security. A fire drill is conducted each term.

ORGANISATION OF STAFF

The staff work together in the afternoons when the children leave in order to prepare for the following day, reflect on practice, devise new teaching strategies and discuss children's progress on an individual level. The Nursery assistants stay in school until 4.45pm one day each week to assist the teachers in planning for progression. The staff work an additional 5 days per year (Baker Days) taken from their holiday allocation during which time they engage in staff development and training as well as preparing the school for the children at the beginning of the new academic year.

FINANCE

The Education Authority continues to support the school in all financial matters and the Schools Financial Systems continued to be monitored closely to ensure the efficient deployment of the Budget. The school's budget continues to be healthy.

THE COMMUNITY

The community continued to play a vital role in the life of the school and the staff endeavoured to use every opportunity to use the community to develop the curriculum further. The school worked closely with the following groups and professionals during the year:

- Speech and Language Therapists
- Educational Psychologists
- Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists
- Health Visitors
- Social Workers
- St John's Primary School
- Schools Library Service
- 'Jo Jingles'
- Dance Instructor
- Gymnastics Instructor
- Maiden City Academy
- Playgroup Leaders (St Johnston and Buncrana)
- Covid Link Officer
- "Musical Pathways to Learning" Instructor

Work experience was provided within the school for students from various colleges in the city at different stages of the year. We also had a final year BEd student from St. Mary's College in the Spring Term.



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TRANSITION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Primary One teachers and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator from St John's Primary School met Mrs M O'Doherty, Mrs D Doherty and Mrs Woods in June to discuss the individual needs of the children. The teachers then brought the children to a Stay and Play session in St John's and the parents visited with their child near the end of June. The teaching staff also completed a Transition Form for every child which was forwarded to the relevant Primary School.

. The vast majority of our children transition to St John's each year and this meeting with the Primary One teachers and SenCo is invaluable each year. The February Reports and Speech and Language Therapy Reports were passed on (with parental permission) to the P1 teachers.

The Reports of children transitioning to other Primary schools were posted to the Primary One teachers in each case. 38 of the 56 children enrolled in the 2021-2022 School Year, transitioned to St. John's Primary School. Three children went to Ardnashee Special School, three to St Anne's, three to St Eithne's, three to Longtower Ps, two to Holy Child PS, one to Nazareth House, one to Holy Family PS, one to Rosemount PS and one to Hollybush PS.

SCHOOL POLICIES

The following School Policies are displayed for parents to read in the entrance porch and a copy is available on request:

- Child Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Special Needs Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Policy on the use of Reasonable Force
- Complaints Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Privacy Notice

The Freedom of Information Act requires publicly funding bodies, including nursery schools, to be clear about the information they publish. We have produced a publication scheme setting out all the information we publish on a regular basis and where to find it. Please ask the Principal if you wish to see, or be provided with a copy of the scheme.

SCHOOL HOURS

The school hours are 8.45am – 1.15pm

The Extended Day operates from 1.15-2.15pm



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CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

The Board of Governors has adopted the following Charging and Remissions Policy.

A Charging Policy

Free milk is provided daily for the children attending the nursery. In addition all children are provided with a snack daily and parents are asked to contribute £2.00 per week towards the cost of bread, fruit, biscuits etc. Surplus monies are used for the following:

- Parties (Birthdays, Halloween, Christmas, Summer)
- Picnics and School Trips
- Contributions towards family bereavements
- Items that are bought regularly e.g. Flour, salt etc. (for dough), bulbs, seeds, books

B Voluntary Contributions

The Board of Governors reserves the right to seek voluntary contributions from parents in support of any school activity or for the benefit of the school. Pupils whose parents are either unwilling or unable to make such contributions will not be treated differently. However, the school reserves the right to cancel planned activities if the voluntary contributions are insufficient to meet the costs of the planned activity.

C Breakage / Losses

The Board of Governors reserves the right to seek to recover from parents the whole or part of the cost of breakages and losses incurred as a result of a pupil's behaviour.

THE SCHOOL GOVERNORS 2019-2020

CHAIRPERSON: Mr C O'Donnell

SECRETARY: Mrs L Woods

REPRESENTING EA : Mrs R Mc Gill
Mr C O'Donnell
Mrs P Logue

REPRESENTING DE: Mrs M Shields
Nr G McGowan

REPRESENTING PARENTS: Mr K Dunne
Mr J McDevitt

REPRESENTING TEACHERS: Mrs M O' Doherty

PRINCIPAL: Mrs L Woods and Mrs D Doherty (Non-Voting Member)



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WHAT ARE THEIR MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES?

The Governors are ultimately responsible for the overall management of the school. Some of their responsibilities include:

1. The management of the school budget
2. School maintenance
3. Implementation of new legislation
4. Selection of new staff and other personnel responsibilities
5. The oversight of the curriculum
6. Admissions policy
7. Fostering links with the community and pursuing the objectives of mutual understanding
8. Responding to consultative documents

STAFFING 2020-2021

Staffing Complement 2021 – 2022:

Teachers: P/T Principal and class teacher (0.6)
P/T Principal and class teacher (0.4)
Class Teacher

Mrs L Woods
Mrs D Doherty
Mrs M O'Doherty

Ancillary Staff: Nursery Assistant (32.5 hours per week)
Nursery Assistant (32.5 hours per week)
Nursery Assistant (covering maternity)
Special Needs Assistant (22.5 hours per week)
Special Needs Assistant (22,5 hours per week)
Special Needs Assistant (12 hours per week)
Special Needs Assistant (maternity cover)

Miss M Mc Gilloway
Mrs M Meehan
Mrs D Toland
Ms W Henry
Ms L Coyle
Mrs G Carlin
Ms L Roberts

1 Clerical Assistant (12.5 hours per week)
1 Building Supervisor (20 hours per week)
1 Dining Attendant (7.5 hours per week)
Extended Schools Assistant (3 hours per week)
Extended Schools Assistant (3 hours per week)
Extended Schools Facilitator (1 hour per week)
Language Support Assistant (15 hours per week)
Breakfast Club Assistant (5 hours per week)

Mrs M Mc Cready
Mrs M Doherty
Mrs M Harkin
Ms L Roberts
Miss S Cooke
Mrs G Carlin
Miss S Cooke
Miss S Cooke



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Autumn Term

August: 25: Staff Development Day:
26: Stay and play sessions; Staff Child Protection training
27: Stay and play sessions; Staff Child Protection training
31: Autumn Term begins: Intake Group 1

September: 1: "WellComm" Language Screening begins Group 1
8: Intake Group 2
14: Reading Meeting for parents
29: Makaton refresher training session 1
30: Amalgamation of Class Groups

October: 4: Breakfast Club begins
4: Language support begins
5 : Musical Pathways begins
5: Makaton refresher training session 2
7: Dinner Routine begins
13: Makaton refresher training session 3
20: Makaton refresher training session 4
22 : Halloween break for children begins

November: 1: Extended Day starts
3: Makaton refresher training session 5
8: Mrs Woods to Principal CP refresher training
10: Visit to St Columb's Park
10: Makaton refresher training session 6
15/16: Mrs Meehan First Aid Refresher
24: NLP well-being session
25: Forest School program begins

December: 1: Christmas Theme begins
10 : Christmas Dinner
9/10: Nativity Plays
13/15 Visit to Creggan library
20: Visit to Creggan Chapel
22: Last Day of Term

Spring Term

January: 4: New term begins for children/ Winter Theme begins
5-10 : School closed and remote learning in place due to staff shortages caused by Covid-19
12- Session 1 of 4 Behaviour Support by John Curran begins
20: Educational Psychologist Consultations

February: 7: 8 week Relax Kids Program begins
9: Initial meeting for Outdoor Learning Project
14 : Staff training on outdoors by Clare Devlin, Team building at Evergaldes
16-18: Mid Term Break
22: Annual Reviews
25: Banyan Theatre visit



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March: 3: Farm/Spring Topic begins
8- 11: School closed and remote learning in place due to staff shortages caused by Covid-19
17 and 18: St Patrick's Day holiday
21: World Down Syndrome Day celebration
29: Easter theme begins
30 and 6 Apr: Visit to Creggan Country Park

April: 05: Visit to Milk Bar Farm
06: Governor Meeting
13: Last Day of Term
14-25: Easter Break

Summer Term

April: 25: Summer Term and Minibeast Topic begins
27: Letters of offer to New Parents

May: 18: New Parent Meeting at St. John's
19: Visit to Shooting Starz Gym
20: Shared Education Visit to Lurgybrack Farm
27 : Sport's Day at St. Mary's Youth Club

June: 6: Beach Theme Begins
7,8: Stay and Play visits
9: Final Shared Ed session
15: Governor's Meeting
15 and 16: P1 teachers visit
21: Groups to visit St Johns
28: End of School Year
29,30: Baker Days- Outdoor learning project



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SCHOOL BUDGET

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
School Budget for Year	£316,516.00	Staff Costs	£222,532.00
		Premises & Maintenance	£8,424.00
Income	£466.00	Books, Materials & Equipment	£9,550.00
anomaly due to rounding up	£2.00	Operating Costs	£8,860.00
		Non capital purchases	£471.00
		Re allocation of costs	£8,815.00
		Capital expenditure	£5,185.00
		carry over	£53,147.00
TOTAL	<u>£316,984.00</u>	TOTAL	<u>£316,984.00</u>

Carry Over £53,147.00

SCHOOL FUND ACCOUNT

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
Bank Balance @ 01.04.2012	£9,047.21	Resources	£3,518.43
income received	£4,030.90	Breakfast/Snacks	£816.28
Other income:	£4,020.55	Trips & Parties	£895.00
Donation 200		Charity	£545.00
Petty Cash 150.95		Sundry	£851.17
		Petty Cash (staff refunds)	£3,260.28
DVD Sales 117.70		balance c/f	£7,212.50
Early Years 640.55			
GRTL 1933.19			
		balance c/f	
TOTAL	<u>£17,098.66</u>	TOTAL	<u>£17,098.66</u>

Balance c/f £7,212.50
plus uncleared cheques £787.45

Bank Balance @ 31.03.2022 £7,999.95



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