

ANNUAL GOVERNORS' REPORT

2017 – 2018



*SION MILLS CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL
THE PARK
SION MILLS*

Principal: Mrs O McNelis

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As Chairperson of Sion Mills Primary School Board of Governors I would like to express my appreciation to the Staff and the Board of Governors. Good teamwork continues to be a key feature of our school as everyone strives to build on previous successes. I would like to thank all of the governors for their hard work and dedication of their time and commitment to the work of our school.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all new pupils and parents and wish them a long and happy association with our school. I would like to thank you as parents for your on-going support towards the school.

Finally on behalf of the Board of Governors I have pleasure in presenting this Annual Governors' Report and would commend it to you.

Yours sincerely

Mr. H. Friar.
(CHAIRMAN OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS)

Dear Parents,

I write this Annual Governors' Report, on behalf of the governors to provide you with a summary of events and activities, which take place in school. It aims to give you some information on the organisation and its financing and how the Governors and others with responsibilities have carried out their duties.

As Principal I would personally like to thank the staff for their continued hard work and support. The governors have shown tremendous allegiance to the school and its aims and have worked tirelessly at many late night meetings to support the procedures, practices and governance of our school I would like to thank the Governors both past and new for their support and I commend the report to you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. O McNelis
SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

WHO ARE THE GOVERNORS

CHAIRMAN: Mr. H. Friar 3, Daisy Park, Sion Mills.

SECRETARY: Mrs. O McNelis c/o Sion Mills Primary School.

TRANSFEROR REPRESENTATIVES:

Mrs J Browne

Mr P Miller

Mrs C Cronin

Mr P McNulty

EDUCATION AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES:

Mr. H. Friar

Mr. T Bradley

PARENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Mrs V Patterson

Mr M Gallagher

TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE:

Mrs V Campbell

HEADTEACHER:

Mrs. O McNelis (Non-voting member)

WHAT ARE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governors are ultimately responsible for the overall management of the school.
See: Guide for School Governors.

Some areas of responsibility include:

1. School Development Plan including Education Standards.
2. Oversight of the curriculum.
3. Promoting Equality, Good Relations and Diversity (Shared Education)
4. Oversight of the financial management of the school.
5. Selection of staff and other personnel responsibilities.
6. Admissions Policy.
7. Religious Education.
8. Child Protection & Pupil Pastoral Care.
9. Health and Safety.
10. School Maintenance.
11. Implementation of new legislation.
12. P.R.S.D.

TEACHING STAFF

2017/2018

PRINCIPAL:	Mrs O McNelis
VICE-PRINCIPAL:	Mrs W Kee
ASSISTANT TEACHERS:	Mrs V Campbell Mrs A Maguire (Nursery) Mrs G McAleer Mrs B Sproule Mrs M Hendron Mrs L Kingh Miss K Brown Miss D Walsh (Speech & Lang. Class) Mrs L Lynch (Learning Support) Mrs C McHugh (Miss McGinley's secondment)

STAFFING

Staffing is largely dependent upon the number of pupils enrolled at the school and the number admitted in September 2017 was 37. The school's admission number is 48 and enrolment number 333.

44 children were admitted to the Nursery Unit. There are 10 children in the Speech and Language class.

Staffing Complement for 2016/2017

Teaching Complement- Principal, Vice Principal, 9 teachers and 1 part-time teacher

Ancillary Staff -	1 Full-time Secretary	36 hours p.w.
	2 Full-time Classroom Assistants P1&P2	25 hours p.w.
	3 Full-time Classroom Assistants (Special Needs)	27.5 hours p.w.
	4 Part-time Classroom Assistant (Special Needs)	25 hours p.w.
	1 Term-time Speech & Language C/A	25 hours p.w.
	1 Full-time Nursery Assistant	26 hours p.w.
	1 Full-time Nursery Assistant	6.5 hours p.w.
	3 Part time Cleaners	10 hours p.w.
	1 Building Supervisor with supervision responsibility	36 hours p.w.
	4 Lunch-time Supervisory Assistants	5 hours p.w.
	1 Senior Supervisor	5 hours p.w.

During the year, teachers were actively engaged in weekly Curriculum Planning during 'Directed time'. Directed time operated in line with ever strengthening union directives. 2017 – 2018 continued to be a challenging year as cuts to the overall

education budget impacted more deeply. All staff attended in-service courses, if offered, facilitated by the EA's Advisory Service, the Shared Education team and school based INSET. School based INSET is a planned programme of professional development closely linked to the School Development Plan and shows our commitment to achieving a lifelong learning community.

Snapshots from 2017 - 2018



Mr Ronan McLaughlin, Active Travel Advisor facilitating the Dr Bike session



Mrs FangFang Wu bringing some Chinese culture to our classrooms



Sion Mills Primary School has a Facebook presence 😊



We're out doing our Daily Mile



Olympic Hurdler, putting the children through their paces.



Summary of Year September 2017 – June 2018

This was a very busy year for the school with many achievements and lots to celebrate. I would like to thank all parents, staff and governors for their support to all members of staff.

This is a short summary of some of the highlights during the 2017/1 year.

The year began with a new teacher joining the staff for the year. We welcomed Mrs Carol McHugh onto the staff to facilitate Miss McGinley's secondment. Miss McGinley took up a year's post as Northern Secretary of the INTO (Irish National Teachers Union).

A welcome addition to the educational opportunities in school was the introduction of Mandarin lessons. Mrs Fang Fang Wu, a native Chinese lady, who is part of the Confucius Hub programme at the University of Ulster comes to the school weekly to teach the children Mandarin Chinese and about the Chinese culture.

A new member of the PTFA, who has a wealth of social media experience offered to set up and supervise a Facebook site for the school. This has proved to be a positive addition to our means of communication with the school community. It is now evolving, whereby community events are also shared and highlighted through this medium.

In September, the school began a three year Active Travel Programme with Mr Ronan McLaughlin. Ronan has facilitated assemblies with the whole school on the promotion of walking to school and road safety. He has facilitated a Dr Bike event for P6 children, where he taught them how to care for their bikes. Sixteen children were also provided with 3 days of advanced cycling training.

In September we discovered that one of our long serving and highly esteemed staff members, Mrs Ann Maguire, had been nominated for Nursery Teacher of the Year at the Families First Awards. The ceremony was a formal event, held in the Abbey Hotel, Donegal. Mrs Maguire was one of three nursery teachers nominated and we were delighted that she won the award on the night. A well-earned and deserved accolade.



The Daily Mile. This is an idea that began in Scotland with the main purpose of getting children active. From February, it began as a pilot in Sion Mills P.S. All staff agreed to try to take their classes out for a brisk walk/run for 15 minutes every day. It has proved so successful that the school has now registered on The Daily Mile website so that Sion Mills P.S. can be recognised as part of the growing number of participants. Teachers, classroom assistants and other staff have all reported the benefits to the children; those who are reluctant at P.E. can happily take part, general fitness levels have improved and teachers find it a useful brain break that settles children.

On 23rd May, we had a fundraising visit from Christine McMahon, Irish 400m Olympic Hurdler. Christine and her colleague Cathal certainly put the children through their paces and possibly inspired some of our own young athletes to continue with their sporting pursuits. Christine shared her primary school experiences with the children, telling them it was athletics at school that started her on her journey.

There were many school and sporting activities enabled through Extended Schools and Getting Ready to Learn funding; such as football, netball, ball handling skills, parent programmes, breakfast club, dance classes, sculpture making, speech and language, art club, and homework club. All these have been very successful and enjoyed by children and parents alike. Well done to the children for their sporting success in outside matches against other schools.

Sure Start programmes continue to flourish. The Sure Start Room was completely refurbished during the year and now houses its own toddler-friendly toilet facilities. Baby Yoga, Baby Massage and a Health Promoting Homes programmes are some of the supports on offer to families of young children. There is a 3 day a week Crèche facility. However, due to the refurbishment the Friday, Play and Stay programme for 1 and 2 year olds has moved to the Presbyterian Hall in the village.,

During 2017-2018 the following excellent support programmes continued to strengthen.

Families Together, a five year initiative, continues to grow as a superb resource to the pastoral care needs of the school population. This programme is facilitated by Dr Maria Herron and offers a range of support to parents and children including counselling, workshops for parents and /or children. As the programme has progressed we have benefitted from the weekly presence of an on-site support worker and parents/friends have started a Walking Group. This group is supported by Derry and Strabane District Council staff. In June they headed off to climb Cuilcagh Boardwalk in Fermanagh.

Getting Ready to Learn – This is an ongoing initiative from the Department for Education that provided funding for the purchase of books and support materials to encourage adults to read with Nursery children. Mrs Maguire ran support sessions to promote ideas on making sharing books fun.

Both programmes facilitate parenting programmes.

Visitors to the school included theatre companies Konflux and Aaron Riddle with his Amazing Journey presentation of well-known bible stories. This was an interactive production that was thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils.



Scene from P4K – P7B
Christmas production



Scene from P1S –
P3/4McA Christmas
production

The children were responsible for putting on excellent Christmas Shows which were highly supported by parents, carers, grandparents and wider family circle. Other visitors taught the children about drugs, alcohol, puberty awareness, safety in the community, fire safety and water safety awareness. Our clergy visit the school regularly and are most welcome guests.

The P5C children were involved in the Diwali Festival show in the Alley Theatre and the children especially enjoyed the Indian dancing classes provided by the Strabane Ethnic Minority members.

We continue to support local charities and this year raised money for the Shoe box appeal, Trocaire and Christian Aid. This all requires great effort so well done to all involved.

The P.T.F.A. continue to support the school in many ways both by buying equipment and running events such as the Hallowe'en disco, the Teddy Bears picnic and providing tea/coffee and snacks on Sport's Day. In the summer of 2018 the PFTA hosted a super Summer Fair 'Spring into Summer' in aid of school funds. This event required much planning, legwork and sponsorship. It was a wonderful community event that many villagers enjoyed as an opportunity to renew acquaintances in the school grounds. It is hoped that this will be an annual event that brings the community together and benefits the school.

My thanks to all parents and from the staff, Mrs Hendron and Mrs Maguire for their hard work in liaising with the PFTA.



Trips included, Alley Theatre, Strabane, Redcastle, Londonderry/Derry, Strabane Library, Cinemas in Lifford and Omagh and the P7 residential to Dublin.

We continue to develop our skills and knowledge as a staff. Our Accelerated Reading and Athletics programmes continue to strengthen adding a technological dimension to reading and Maths.

SHARED EDUCATION

The D.S.C. Shared Education programme, facilitated by Miss Brown continues to grow and expand. Four classes now join with their peers from Strabane P.S. to engage in learning projects. The main thrust underpinning this funding is “Better Together” so teachers are required to provide programmes that improve the learning for children because they do it together with new people. As the numbers of children involved increase and they meet year on year new relationships are built and staff can avail of opportunities to develop their professionalism and expertise with colleagues from another school. In addition the staff engage in joint training sessions facilitated through Shared Education funding. Sharing of ideas and expertise at a local level is proving to be an enhancement to the provision in both schools.

Collaboration with St Theresa’s P.S., Glebe, St Columba’s P.S., Clady and St Eugene’s P.S., Victoria Bridge continues to strengthen as part of an Extended Schools’ Cluster Group. The four schools work together to provide joint opportunities for parents and children to work together.



Primary 6 children and a family adult engage in some creative work together through our Extended Schools provision.

PREMISES

After a recent inspection of the school premises, the Governors expressed their satisfaction at the standard of maintenance and cleaning. They wish to thank the caretaker Mr. M. Alexander and the cleaning staff for their continued good work.

ATTENDANCE

TOTAL DAYS ATTENDED BY ALL PUPILS ON ROLL, AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POSSIBLE DAYS ATTENDANCE: 93.9%

The Governors strongly encourage families to take annual holidays during the school holiday periods.

LEARNING SUPPORT

Mrs Louise Lynch was responsible for Learning Support in this year. This help has been expanded to include small group support for aspects of Literacy and Numeracy. We continued Maths is Fun after school classes together with a Lego club as part of our Extended Schools' programme.

CHILD PROTECTION

A Child Protection policy operates here in Sion Mills PS and this is reviewed yearly and approved by the Board of Governors. All parents received a copy of the parents' leaflet. The care, welfare and safety of each child is our overriding concern. Therefore the school shall refer any concerns about the well-being of any of its pupils to the Social Services Department and to the Education Authority, Western Region (EA,WR) to protect pupils in its care and to comply with the Department of Education (NI) regulations. The designated teacher for child protection is Mrs Kee and the deputy-designated teacher is Mrs McNelis. In the Nursery Mrs Maguire is the Designated Teacher. If a parent has any concerns in the area of child protection, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Kee. Parents will receive a summary Child Protection help sheet or can access the policy on the school website. Flow diagrams of how Child Protection procedures operate are on display in all entrance halls.

DRUGS EDUCATION

The school has a commitment to educating children about the dangers of drugs, smoking and alcohol abuse. The school follows the Hope Drug and Alcohol programme. Should any parent wish to receive a copy of these policies please contact the office. There is a continued commitment to overall health and well-being which was reflected in previous years by our Health Promoting Schools (Gold Awards). Although this award is no longer available to schools we have achieved three consecutive awards and continue to promote healthy choices amongst our pupils. Our Extended Schools programme offers extra-curricular activities many of which are sports/health related.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

(As per section 7:5 of the 1998 N.I. Act)

This school operates an equal opportunities policy where there will be no discrimination regarding race, gender, religion, mental and or physical disability.

ACCESSIBILITY

The school will provide, within reason, equal access to all parts of the building and all aspects of the curriculum for pupils with disabilities. There are three disabled toilets with all the required disability access. The school is entirely a single storey building with no steps and therefore wheelchair friendly. There is a ramp in the car park for wheelchair access. All external doors are locked and require an alarm system release button or an adult to open from inside the building. This alarm system was upgraded during August 2018.

CURRICULUM POLICY

The school produces plans and schemes of work in line with the Northern Ireland policy document.

S.E.N.

The school works closely with the Educational Psychology Service to support the children with special educational needs. There are 97 children on the SEN register and this includes the children with Speech & Language difficulties. Mrs L Lynch works two days a week with groups of children from P4 – P7 some of whom are at Stages 1 or 2 of the SEN register. These groups engage in extra Literacy and Numeracy and education plans are drawn up and agreed with parents, teachers and children. Children on Stage 3 of the SEN register are referred to the Education Authority (E.A.) for specific support.

SCHOOL COUNCIL



Our School Council overseen by Miss Brown in Miss McGinley's absence had a very successful year with some very competent boys and girls from P1 - P7 ensuring that the pupils' voice was heard and information was fed back to the pupils. The school council meets regularly and has two representatives from every class. The boys and girls look very smart as they carry out their duties, wearing specially designed t-shirts. The group organised a number of events in school, including the hugely popular Sion's Got Talent at Christmas, and oversaw the selection of the Playground Buddies as well as helping Mrs Sproule carry out the Rights Respecting School Award baseline survey. The School Council facilitated consultation with their peers on the new school uniform which was to be introduced in September 2018. Requests to school

managers were made by the council on behalf of their peers and in 2017/18 saw the purchase of football nets and posts for lunch-time activities.

ECO COUNCIL

The children of the Eco Committee, led by Mrs Kingh and Mrs Shepherd, continued their work on recycling and reusing. Their first job in September was to assist Ronan McLaughlin introduce the Active Travel programme to the school community. Later in the year the Ninjas, as the Eco Team call themselves, were involved in the Big Spring Clean Up around the school and village. In the autumn term the Eco Committee team ran a 'Cash for Clobber' programme which raised funds that they then used to purchase plants for every classroom and for the raised beds outside.

We are extremely proud of our active Eco Team Ninjas who keep us actively involved in important environmental issues.



Prize winners and invited guests, who presented prizes at the Annual Prize giving ceremony in June 2018

SCHOOL FUND ACCOUNT 2016/2017

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
Opening Balance	11,677.06	Books & Equipment	758.42
		Fees/Refunds	363.71
Donations	862.20	Shows	1,084.00
Trips	2,214.00	School Uniforms	734.50
Sports	248.00	Sports	415.75
Shows	1,577.20	Services	129.00
Xmas Show	1,830.00	Swimming Programme	2,375.00
Equipment	36.62	Staff Training	600.00
Trans / Select Acc	1,082.00	Plants	286.11
Photos	420.76	Gifts & Flowers	112.00
Training	1,260.00	Trips/P7 Trip	3,338.95
School Uniforms	1,336.00	Transport	56.00
P7 School Trip	2,865.00	Photos	109.59
Hospitality	109.20	Access NI	33.00
Football	178.00	Charities	1,218.84
Charities	1,554.73	Licence Fees	35.00
		Stamps	362.12
		Hospitality	524.55
		SUB TOTAL	£12,536.54
		Savings C/F 2017/18	£14,714.23
TOTAL	£ 27,250.77		£27,250.77

Prepared by: Mrs O McNelis & Mrs I Lynch

Dated: 02.08.2018

Approved by: Mr H Friar (Chairman of Board of Governors)

Dated: 02.08.2018