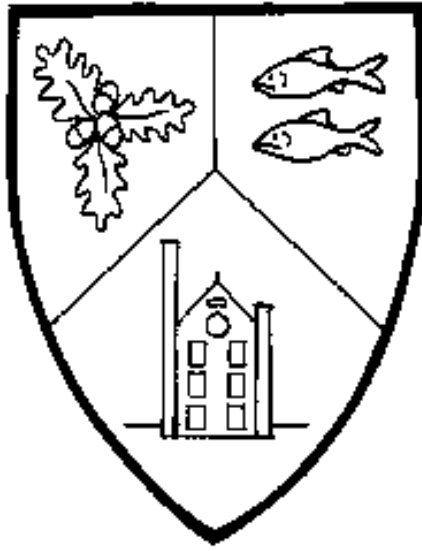


BALNAMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL



ANNUAL GOVERNORS REPORT

2020-2021

Introduction

The Governors of Balnamore Primary School have produced this report in conjunction with the Principal as a record of school life in the academic year September 2020 – June 2021. The report gives an encouraging insight into the life of our school, the attainment and achievements of our children and reflects the hard work and dedication of our school staff.

The report is presented to the parents of children attending the school and recognises the input we all have to enable Balnamore Primary School to allow our pupils to reach their full potential.

Board of Governors

Period of office September 2020– June 2021

The Board of Governors comprises nine voting members and one non-voting member i.e. the school principal. The voting members consist of four transferor representatives, two EA representatives, two parent representatives and one teacher representative.

Transferor Representatives: Rev Murray
Mr F McKinney
Mrs H Wilson
Mrs J McKeeman

EA Representatives: Mr J Devlin
Vacant Post

Parent's Representatives: Miss G Moore
Mrs D Atkinson

Teacher's Representative: Mrs T White

The Board of Governors of Balnamore Primary School was reconstituted in January 2019. Its term of office will be for four years.

Chairperson: Mr J Devlin (Acting)
Vice-Chairperson: TBC June 2021
Hon. Secretary: Mrs A Wilson

Mrs Wilson, as Principal, is secretary to the Board of Governors but does not have a vote.

In May 2021, Mr Bill Watters resigned as Chair of Governors after 25 years' service to Balnamore Primary School. We would like to thank him and his family for their support and strategic development of Balnamore Primary School.

Governors Meetings 2020 - 2021

The Governors met formally on five occasions to discuss school business:

- 1/10/2020
- 3/12/2020
- 21/1/2021
- 11/3/21
- 3/6/2021.

In addition to this some Governors were also involved in subcommittee meetings and also informal discussions and attendance at school functions. Some of the main issues dealt with at Governors' meetings during 2020-2021 are noted below:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies
- Open Enrolment Procedure and Admissions Criteria
- Staff welfare
- Anti-bullying training
- School Development Planning/action plan update and feedback
- School Maintenance
- LMS and Finance
- SEND and GDPR training
- Recruitment of both Teaching and Non-Teaching staff
- Update of a range of additional School Policies including Literacy and Numeracy policies and anti-bullying policy.

The Governors wish once again to record their appreciation of work done by the teaching and non-teaching staff of the school to promote the academic achievement, security and well-being of the pupils.

They also wish to record their appreciation of parental support in upholding the ethos and behaviour policy of the school and especially commend the efforts of the small group of PSA members who have started to plan for fundraising in the 2021 academic year.

School Ethos and Aims

Balnamore Primary School provides a safe and happy environment in which every child is treated as an individual, and is given the opportunity to acquire knowledge, extend and enrich their experiences, and develop all those qualities necessary to make him or her an independent, contributing member of society, summarised in our school motto: 'Nurture, Inspire, Flourish'.

Nurture – we will care for, support and protect our children whilst they are growing and learning with us and encourage them to do the same for each other and the wider community.

Inspire – we will strive to ignite enthusiasm and the desire to explore and learn.

Flourish – our aim is to equip our children to develop academically and socially to succeed in school and beyond.

Ethos Statement

At Balnamore Primary School, we work as a team to create the physical, social and intellectual conditions necessary for enriched learning experiences in a stimulating learning environment. We endeavour to ensure that everyone feels they belong and are valued, secure and respected. At Balnamore Primary School, we encourage excellence, share success and empower all children to realise their potential.

In fulfilling the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and in the belief that children should remain the core focus for education, Balnamore Primary School aims:

1. To maintain and improve its welcoming environment through which all children and parents are aware of the high level of support and opportunities provide for them.
2. To value each child as an individual, promoting the importance of learning and high academic standards in a positive ethos of 'best effort' according to age, aptitude and ability at all times.
3. To provide a variety of rich learning experiences using modern technology and relevant evolving learning and teaching techniques.
4. To create positive school attitudes, which encourage self-discipline through a Christian ethos where self/mutual respect and understanding are central to all learning experiences, helping children become responsible citizens.
5. To provide a wide and varied programme of extended schools' activities in order to further promote the opportunities for physical and social development through dependent and interdependent learning.

6. To encourage parental responsibilities through an active and positive partnership in the life and work of the school.
7. To encourage all children to have an awareness of, and respect for, the world we live in and a sense of responsibility for their local environment, both inside and outside of school.
8. To promote positive working relationships between all members of the school community whilst also maintaining and further developing links with the local and wider community.

Curriculum

An interim School Development Plan was created for 2020 – 2021. This was based on guidance from the Department of Education and in light of Covid-19.

During the school year 2020-2021 we focused on a number of main areas:

- Health and wellbeing of staff and pupils
- Review of planning and monitoring for improvement
- Numeracy: Word Problems
- Literacy: Writing
- To develop the outdoor area and encourage outdoor learning.
- SEND: up to date training in light of new legislation as well as the development of a sensory room for sensory regulation.

During 2020-2021, staff focused much effort in the development and improvement of Literacy and Numeracy planners - incorporating more detailed evaluations at the end of each half term as well as incorporating data to ensure more individualised teaching.

Staff development and training continued to be encouraged with all staff participating in Child Protection Training. The Principal and the Literacy and Numeracy co-ordinators involved in Continuing Professional Development days in conjunction EA advisors supporting School Improvement.

Samples of training involved this year:

- Joan Henderson – outdoor learning play
- Child Protection and Safeguarding, Signs of Safety
- Anti – Bullying legislation update
- SEND Legislation training and update
- Energise Programme training
- GDPR training
- Promethean training
- Epilepsy and Epi pen training
- Attention Autism and Training in transition SEN to Primary one
- Accelerated reading
- Izak 9
- CERF training
- News desk/Gsuite, learning

There was a key focus this year on coordinator accountability with the following becoming implemented at whole school level:

- Coordinators to review planning and feedback to staff
- Trusted colleague networking and Learning walks
- Internal standardisation on Literacy, Numeracy and ICT
- Book Scoops
- Sensory profiles and Pupil voice groups
- IEP/UAPs in place

The Principal recognises the commitment of staff in managing change in the best interest of our pupils.

Pupil Achievement

All children in school are regularly monitored and their achievement recorded and celebrated. This information is used to inform planning to best meet the needs of the children. 57% of children at end of KS1 achieved level 2 or above in English and 85.7% at level 2 or beyond in Maths. 44.4% of at end of KS2 children achieved level 4 or above in English and 55.5% at level 4 or beyond in Maths.

Extra-Curricular Activities

We have 32.7% of children on free school meals and therefore, we do not meet the threshold for funding via extended schools

With thanks to the dedication of all staff we were able to provide a number of additional activities after school for our pupils. Pupils evaluated these clubs throughout the year.

We were successful in the application of £1000 from Kellogg's Breakfast Funding to support resources and items to be able to run a 5 day a week breakfast club.

During the school year 2020-2021 we were able to run the following after school clubs for a variety of year groups:

- Science Club
- Creator Club
- Performing Arts Club
- Multi-Skills
- Eco Club
- Forest Club
- Maths Zone
- Nerf Club
- Transfer Club

The feedback from staff and pupils have been noted to ensure clubs provided next year continue to be in the interests of our children.

Covid

During the pandemic, Balnamore Primary School recognises the difficulties placed on our children and their families. We remained open for key worker and vulnerable children and placed some activities to connect with our students whilst not in day to day routine at school:

- Work packs
- Zoom meetings weekly and during periods of isolation
- Socially distanced home visits
- Strava challenges – walking family challenges
- Guess the staff baby photograph challenge
- Creative challenges
- Regular communication via dojo

Based on the uptake of pupils involved, we feel that these strategies were successful in continuing to connect with our community.

School Staff

Teaching Staff

2020-2021

Year Group	Number of Pupils	Teacher
Primary 1	6	Miss C Martin
Primary 2	5	Miss C Martin
Primary 3	9	Mrs S Graham
Primary 4	7	Mrs S Graham
Primary 5	12	Mrs A Shears
Primary 6	6	Mrs T White
Primary 7	10	Mrs T White

Non-Teaching Staff

School Secretary: Mrs A Kane

Classroom Assistants:

Primary 1 and 2 Mrs L Hunt

Covid funding assistant: Mrs R McAuley

SEN Assistants: Miss K McIntyre
Miss N McGilligan
Mrs G Wallace

Building Supervisor: Mr A Robinson

Cleaners: Mr A Robinson

Cook in Charge of School Kitchen: Mrs J Wilson
School Kitchen Staff:
Mrs M Gordon

Attendance:

The annual attendance rate for 2020-2021 for 97.6%. A high level of school attendance level makes a significant contribution towards the achievement and attainment of children. Conversely absence from school disrupts the pattern of learning. Attendance is monitored on an individual and regular basis.

Security

The Board of Governors take the safety and security of pupils, all staff and the school premises very seriously and as such undertake this responsibility in a thorough and professional manner.

A health and safety visit from the Education Authority was requested in September 2020 with concerns raised around:

- Lack of fencing between the car park and playground
- The fencing level from playground to road
- The front entrance security

The report stated that the fencing from playground to road was adequate. There was a business plan submitted to the EA for fencing between playground and car park – this is delayed due to a legal stance between contract renew in the EA.

A further request to review the CCTV cameras was completed in May 2021 with an outcome of the need for an updated system. This has been raised with the Education Authority

Pupils are supervised by adults at playtime and accompanied to exit gates each afternoon – All visitors to the school, including parents, are required to report to the main reception throughout the school day.

Risk assessments were created throughout the school from classroom to operational level.

We are grateful to the Education Authority for funding the removal of trees from our back play area. This was causing a slip hazard during our wetter climates.

Thank you to Mr Bill Watters for funding £560 to place a grill over our nature pond as part of our Eco studies.

Pupil Activities: 2020 -2021

Due to covid we have not been able to receive our weekly assemblies. However, we have maintained this in our own classroom each Friday morning.

Pupils took part in a number of activities to enhance their curriculum experiences such as:

- Healthy me workshops with the Nursing Team for p1 and 2
- Mr Hullaballoo Half term celebration
- Virtual Harvest Assembly led by the Rev Murray
- Violin Tuition provided by the Music Service
- Freddie Fitness school fundraising event
- Action mental health workshops p5 – 7
- Halloween fancy dress and disco
- Freddie fitness mental health workshops p 5 -7
- PSNI p5 – 7 Anti-bullying workshops
- Football Fridays with Kick about Kids
- Parent workshop – sensory learning – p1 – 4
- Pupil groups – supporting learning through covid
- Pupil groups – numeracy, word problems
- Odd socks day – anti-bullying awareness day
- PSNI – p5 – 7 – Drug awareness
- Decoration of Balnamore Village tree
- Christmas Cards sent to Radius Housing
- Christmas Showcase
- Pen pals to St Patricks Primary as well as to a school in London
- Roe Valley Art Exhibition
- Christmas Dinner celebration of the pupils
- Creation of a sensory garden through play resource funding
- Internet Safety Day
- PSNI – Internet safety workshop p3-7
- Primary one health appraisals
- Bouncy castle celebrations from the return from covid
- Pupil voice groups – safeguarding
- Outdoor classroom day
- World book day events
- Attendance at Brooklands official store launch
- Number Day
- Releasing Rhythms drumming workshops
- Sports Day
- Cultural Day – supported by Ulster Scots Agency
- Primary Seven Leavers Assembly

Fundraising Event

Defibrillator fundraising: It is with much sadness that in August 2019, one of our pupils lost his Grandmother. Balamore Primary School is extremely blessed to have been involved in fundraising for a defibrillator in memory of Mrs Lorna Davis. This will be placed in the school grounds with a workshop for both staff and the community to upskill.

Freddie fitness: Our children took part in a sponsored event to raise funds for our outdoor play area. £500 was donated towards a new hexagonal shelter on the school grounds.

Outdoor play: We appealed to the families and community for support in the development of our outdoor play area. As a result, the community donated tyres, pallets, planters with some parent's/community members making us outdoor weights, two stage areas and vegetable patches.

Community

Brooklands Todays Local provided a planting workshop for primary 3 – 5 children. We also attended the official opening of the newly named store.

The PSNI completed a series of workshops with our children which have been outlined in our pupil activities above

Our school enjoyed being a part of the local Christmas festivities by decorating the village tree.

Tesco champions – during lockdown we were extremely grateful when we received fruit and water from Tesco in supporting our key worker children.

Parents

A big thank you goes to a small group of parents who have supported and events such as fireside quizzes, primary seven end of year trips - raising much needed funds for school. Thank you to all parents who help make this possible, it allows us, as a school, to afford 'extra' things for our pupils.

Policies

A range of policies are kept in school and these were revised during this academic year. These include but not only, Child Protection, Positive Behaviour, Attendance and policies for the full range of curricular issues. Any parent requiring a hard copy of any policy can obtain one by calling at the school office.

Transfer

Primary 7 pupils transferred in June 2020 to the following schools:

14 leavers:

Dalriada Grammar School – 3 pupils

Ballymoney High School – 8 pupils

Ballycastle High School – 2 pupils

Coleraine Grammar School – 1 pupil

North coast integrated college - 1 pupil

Finances

The Board of Governors is grateful to Mrs Wilson for the day to day management of the school finances.

Total budget allocation 2020-2021 £279,313

Carryover into 2021-2022 £33,751

Additional finance was received for the Engage Programme as well as covid related PPE.

The Education Authority funded:

- £9756 Sensory Room which was installed in December 2020
- for our pupil toilets to be repainted in February 2021
- for the removal of the trees
- for new fencing to be placed around the school grounds

This Annual Report is only synopsis of the achievements and activities that took place in the academic year of 2020 - 2021