

**St. Aloysius Primary School  
Lisburn**



**Board of Governors Report  
for  
2023/2024**

Dear Parents/Guardians

I am presenting this Annual Report on behalf of the Board of Governors of St Aloysius Primary School and Nursery Unit.

The purpose of the Annual Report is to give you an overview of the work of the school during the past year and an account of how the Board of Governors, school management and staff have carried out their responsibilities.

The year opened with some optimism as schools returned to some degree of normality after the pandemic. However, industrial relations took their toll in this academic year. Disputes with employers resulted in 'action short of strike' across all school sectors. While core work continued, opportunities for school development work were curtailed. Outcomes remained very positive with our students outperforming compared to the national average in both Literacy and Numeracy.

Our Board of Governors, while in their final year before reconstitution, recognise the commitment and ongoing support of the parents and the wider community. It is through working together in partnership that enables our school community to thrive.

Finally, I must pay tribute to the school governors for their commitment, enthusiasm, and dedication in carrying out their responsibilities – all done on a voluntary basis. In addition, the Parent Teacher and Friends Association for the enormous contribution they make to the success of the school.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

*Dr M Daly*  
Chairperson  
Board of Governors

## Membership of the Board of Governors

Dr. Mary Daly	Trustee ( Chairperson )
VACANT	Trustee
Mr Martin McDonald	Trustee (Vice-Chair)
Mr Philip Fitzsimons	Trustee
Mr Rodney Dowling	DENI
Mrs Geraldine Clenaghan	Education Authority
Mr. Martin Busch	Education Authority
Mrs Louise O'Brien	Parent Representative
Mrs Jolene Russell	Teacher Representative
Mrs Catherine Milne	Principal

### The Role of the Board of Governors

A schools' Board of Governors is made up of representatives from a wide range of interests and backgrounds with the shared goal of providing the best possible education and educational opportunities for all pupils.

Governors are involved in setting the strategic direction for the school and taking corporate decisions in relation to the statutory functions of the Board of Governors. Example areas of responsibility include:

- Setting the school's vision, aims, plans and policies
- Establishing and maintaining the school's ethos
- Monitoring and evaluating school performance
- Managing school funds economically, effectively, and efficiently in line with published guidance
- Curriculum planning, including examinations management and administration policy
- Admissions
- Employment issues
- Pupil pastoral care and protection issues

The responsibility for governing the school is shared by the whole Board of Governors. Governors participate in the decision making for a wide range of proposals and issues, and ultimately vote on and agree important changes which impact the school, pupils, and staff. The day-to-day operation of the school is delegated to the principal.

The full Board of Governors met at least termly and often more in 2023/24 to discuss many aspects of school life and to hear the principal's report on the day-to-day management of the school.

In addition to the regular termly meetings, Governors were involved in the following: Admissions to preschool and Primary One, recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff, premises, Health and Safety, pastoral provision, disciplinary matters and links with the community.

### Mission Statement

***To live, love and learn in a caring, Catholic community.***

St. Aloysius provides a happy and secure atmosphere in which the Catholic ethos permeates all levels of your child's experience.

Through this we strive to:

- Deliver a rich, balanced, and creative curriculum, enabling all children to achieve high standards and celebrate success.
- Maintain the highest quality of learning and teaching to ensure children achieve their full potential and become motivated, ambitious, and confident lifelong learners.
- Develop each child spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically in order that they may realise their full potential and have an appreciation of their self-worth.
- Encourage qualities of initiative, independence, resourcefulness, and self-confidence in each child.
- Help children to develop an understanding of their own culture and tradition and promote an environment where children and families of diverse identities are recognised, welcomed, and respected.
- Foster productive partnerships connecting the school, the family, the parish, and the wider community in the education of the whole child.
- Promote positive behaviour within a happy and secure school environment where the pupil voice is valued.
- Nurture a spirit of charity and a respect for the environment and concern for others.

## Staff 2023/24

### Teaching

Principal: Mrs. C Milne

Vice Principal: Mrs T McDowell

Ms McMahon Nursery

Mrs Gray P1  
Mr Hughes P1

Miss Donnelly P4  
Miss Murphy P4  
Mrs Russell P4

Mrs Hanna P2  
Mrs McLaughlin P2

Miss Dornan P5  
Mrs Wright P5

Mr Hanna P3  
Mrs Rooney P3

Mrs Freeman P6  
Mr McCann P6

Mrs Brennan P7  
Mr Digney P7

SENCO: Mrs A Mallon

SEN Engage Support: Mrs Wright

### Classroom Assistants

Mrs. A McAdam  
Mrs Reid  
Mrs. L O'Brien  
Mrs Campbell  
Mrs B Kearney  
Mrs K Mervyn  
Mrs. C Bradley  
Miss Jackson  
Mrs. K Marshall  
Mrs Hale

Miss R White  
Mrs. D Elwood  
Mrs C Sutherland

Miss A Fitzgerald

Mrs Travers

Mrs Tulik

### Secretary

Mrs. Coreen Brennan

### Caretaker

Mr. Colin McCarroll

### Supervisory Assistants

Mrs. C Bradley Mrs O'Brien  
Mrs. U Campbell Mrs. K Marshall  
Mrs. A McKillion  
Mrs. B Kearney  
Mrs Sutherland

### Cleaners

temporary

Mrs S McKernan

Mrs K Tunstill

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**Enrolment – September 2023**

**420 plus 27 Nursery pupils Total 447**

We extended a warm welcome to our new P.1 pupils and 27 Nursery children who joined us in September '22.

### **Catholic Ethos**

Developing each child to their full potential continues to be the primary objective in St Aloysius. Our ethos embraces this holistic approach. The children are encouraged to reach high academic standards, whilst enjoying a range of sporting, music and drama-based activities. Throughout this enriched curriculum the pupils are continuously growing in their awareness of God and well as developing personal skills and nurturing a respect for others.

As part of our Catholic tradition, our Religious Education programme, 'Grow in Love' is used extensively across the school with opportunities for parental engagement, especially in sacramental years.

Attendance at Mass was promoted and we were able to celebrate First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation.

P4 First Communion	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
P3 First Confession	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
P7 Confirmation	14 <sup>th</sup> March 2024

We welcome children from all faiths and none. Parents are free to exercise their right to opt out of the Religious Education Programme and any celebratory events in the church.

St Aloysius Primary School welcomes a diverse pupil population. We feel honored that all children feel happy and secure with many life-long friendships forged.

### **Charity Work**

Every year, Christmas Hampers are donated to St Vincent de Paul. In addition, we were able to support Trocaire and Action Cancer.

### **Pastoral Care**

At Saint Aloysius pastoral care permeates all aspects of school life. It reflects the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic faith and involves all members of our school community: children, parents and all other adults who contribute to the well-being of each child.

Summary copies of our Child Protection Policy were distributed to new families and leaflets are available on the school website, with the full document in the foyer. Every teacher regularly reminded children what to do if they were unhappy in school and who they can talk to reflecting Anti-Bullying approaches and legislation.

### **Morning Club**

The club resumed in 2023/24 and opened from 8am.

### **After School Provision**

After School's Club is also available in St Aloysius: 2-6pm daily. Staff are employed by the school but due to employment contractual issues, the After-schools will transition into an independent business with Mrs Bradley as Manager.

### **Parents and Community**

Teachers were able to outline the content of the curriculum for the year ahead. In addition, parents were informed of new teaching approaches. Parents were also given the opportunity to meet with class teachers for Parent-Teacher Meetings mid-year and in June, pupil Reports were issued.

### **Children: Community, Trips & Learning Beyond the Classroom**

In 2023/24, trips and in-school events included:

- Trips (mostly Term 3): Streamvale Open Farm P1/P2, Planetarium/P3; Titanic/P5, Hillsborough Castle, Stormont – School council.

- Pantomime at the Grand Opera House – P6
  - Sports coaches
  - Book Fair
  - Maths Week, Maths Challenges; Sentinus STEM workshops, Maths workshops
  - Visits from Action Cancer, Fire Authority
  - Sporting Events: Tag Rugby, Sports Days
- Primary 7 Residential Dublin May 2024.  
Most of the Primary 7 children travelled and the highlights included Emerald Park, Dvlinia, Croke Park, and Jump Zone.

#### **School Council;**

- Class representatives from P4-7

#### **Eco-Council;**

- Green Flag status upheld.
- Recycling projects
- Clothing bank
- Awareness raising: the Council were able to promote environmental issues as well as actively engage in litter picking, engagement with LCCC.

#### **NURSERY UNIT**

The nursery unit was again oversubscribed. The Pre-School Curriculum was delivered through a variety of topics with both indoor and outdoor play. The Nursery had a number of visitors:

- Music – Mrs Hamilton – the children also developed their listening skills as well as turn-taking.
- Drama – Mr Hullaballo – in-class productions reflecting topics such as Fairy Tales, Holidays etc
- PE/Movement:

Visitors:

- World of Owls
- Blackberry Farm

Activities were offered to promote:

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| • Listening Skills | • Physical activity |
| • Wellbeing        | • Music             |

The children had a wonderful year and with access to the full Pre-School Curriculum made significant progress.

**Getting Ready to Learn (GRTL).** With not being able to bring parents into the nursery setting, the focus was the promotion of storytelling. Home story packs were available to borrow.

#### **Supporting Learning:**

In 23/24, those pupils with communication needs were able to access Early Talk Boost with the input from the SENCO and trained classroom assistants. In addition, early listening and communication skills were identified using Teddy Talk which was administered by the nursery teacher.

#### **Pre-school Support Network:**

Like all schools, accessing services is increasingly difficult. However, we have the support of a nominated Health Visitor who can help us link with parents if required.

**Educational Psychology:** as a nursery, we have some capacity to refer to Educational Psychology. Typically, any referrals are those children who may have speech and language difficulties or require specific strategies.

The school Learning Support Co-ordinator (SENCO), along with the nursery teacher co-ordinated supports and referrals.

## SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The purpose of a school development plan is to identify key areas for improvement and map how they are to be addressed over a period of time. Each target will be 'actioned' by a key member of staff or co-ordinator. The co-ordinator will draw up an Action Plan outlining the 'what', 'why', 'how' and 'who' involved in addressing this target.

In 2023/24, due to industrial action, school development issues were curtailed. Combined with post-pandemic recovery, there was a sense of 'taking stock' and a focus on pupil wellbeing and their ability to engage more positively as individuals as well as promote social skills.

We look forward to reengaging with a school improvement agenda in 2024/25.

## THE CURRICULUM: EVALUATION OF KEY AREAS 2023/24

### 1. LITERACY

Literacy Co-ordinator: Mrs T McDowell

Literacy overview

June 2023

#### TEST DATA

The comparison to Group (St. Aloysius)-National (All schools) highlighted that we were above all areas apart from a slight dip in spellings.

#### Areas of strength

- Evidence of progression in majority of classes and evidenced by assessment data.
- All classes continue to achieve well above the national average across the majority of literacy categories. If we notice a decline in expected, that area will receive a focus. Such timely interventions have proven productive.
- Spelling strategies – change of approach has yielded dividends (suspect spelling may have suffered during lockdowns). Spelling is no longer an area for development, but the Literacy Team will continue to promote strategies.
- Ongoing pupil tracking proving successful.
- Wide range of writing styles evident.
- Independent writing continues to develop in the majority of KS1 / FS classes.
- Reciprocal reading strategies well embedded by teachers as well as assistants trained to support the teacher.

#### *For Development in 24/25*

- **Handwriting:** *having decided on an approach, this will be rolled-out in P1-3 using a resource called PenPals.*
- **Writing:** *evaluating current provision with a view to a comprehensive review of all genres and their links to other areas of the curriculum (Cross-Curricular Links).*

**Book fair** – This year the fair was incredibly successful, raising £3718. The school receives commission by way of books. We were able to replace books and add to the range of guided reading books.

#### **Accelerated Reading Scheme (AR)**

With Accelerated Reader, a student reads a book, takes an online quiz, and gets immediate feedback. Students respond to regular feedback and are motivated to make progress with their reading skills. Together with Star Reading by Renaissance, it forms a complete reading practice and assessment solution. We introduce AR in Primary 4 and facilitate its development across P4-7. AR promotes independence and motivation, and with in-class comprehension strategies such as Reciprocal reading, we find the children make great progress.

Accelerated Reader gives teachers the information they need to monitor students' reading practice and make informed decisions to guide their future learning.

A comprehensive set of reports reveals how much a student has been reading, at what level of complexity, and how well they have understood what they have read. Vocabulary growth and literacy skills are also measured, giving teachers insight into how well students have responded to reading schemes and class instruction. There is always a degree of challenge, and teachers will monitor progress to ensure the balance between enjoyment, progress and challenge is maintained.

Many books are aligned to AR. This includes non-fiction and factual titles so lending itself to motivate all children to become readers. *Libraries NI* recognise AR and many of the titles available to lend are AR books.

AR continues to a highly successful scheme. Indeed, it is one of the best initiatives we have ever adopted. Success is not all about the volume of reading but meeting individual targets in order to provide encouragement and praise for efforts.

## 2. NUMERACY

### Numeracy Co-ordinator - Mr A McCann – End of Year Report – June 2024

#### Achievements during 2023 – 24

1. The main focus area for Numeracy this school year has been **the introduction of the new Busy Ant Maths** scheme at the beginning of September to supplement some of our older NHM and Abacus schemes that are still being used in some classes.
2. The scheme has been embraced by most year groups, with the majority finding it very useful and a great addition to their teaching facilitating practical approaches and enquiry-based learning.
3. **Analysis from P4-P7 PTM data** has been very positive this year as the majority of classes above the national average in all Numeracy topic areas.
4. With the pupil target of achieving 60% of pupils at Stanine 5 and above, all on/above target.
5. Freckle data has gone from strength to strength this year with data showing over 2500 hours and over 40,000 sessions spent on the platform by the pupils. This was up from 25,000 sessions and 1500 hours at the end of its initial year.
6. **Financial Education:** Young Enterprise - roll out in 24-25.
7. **Maths Week Ireland** in October focused on Maths and Sport, with year groups competing in events that encouraged counting, tallying and collecting data etc. Medals were given out to the 'Best Mathlete in every class'.
8. **Primary Maths Challenge** was carried out by Primary 7 pupils in November. This is the first year that we had four P7 pupils that scored highly enough to make it into the Bonus Round with one pupil achieving a Bronze Medal Award for his exceptional performance in this round.

## 3. ICT

### ICT Co-ordinator/Mrs D Brennan

### Report to BoG – June 2024

#### ***Main Objective/s 2023/24***

**Re-establish Year group consultation meetings- staff commit to ICT tasks to be carried out and provide a sense of monitoring.**

#### Achievements:

Although a very simple objective it requires financial resourcing and time commitments from all staff involved. It has also been a few years since completed (pandemic)and much staff movement has occurred.

Conducted in September 2023, coOrdinator/teacher meetings were an effective way to observe the content and breadth of ICT being planned by all year's groups and ensuring progression throughout the school and providing the support where it is best placed.

In the execution of monitoring, it was noted that some older iPads are displaying performance issues. Approach made to management for replacements.



The **Digital Leaders** continued to provide support and guidance to younger pupils. Their purpose is to support with iPads. They will meet once a fortnight with the support of a classroom assistant and teachers will send a support request.

#### **e-Safety:**

Efforts continued to ensure the pupils are aware of digital safety. Participation in Internet Safety Day and associated activities.

As a school we continue to promote e-safety with parents with awareness raising, Safer NI app, and reminders around age limits and setting parental controls. In addition, attendance at C2K seminars and overview on new EdIS system.

## **4. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

**SEN Co-ordinator: Mrs A Mallon**

**Report To BoG**

**June 2024**

### **With the new SEND legislation – The Special Educational Needs & Disability Act (NI) 2016:**

- 5 categories reduced to 3
- School SEN profile is compared against national figures as well as school size and catchment. Indeed, our SEN is lower than the national average.
- Categories of need inc  
Cognition  
Social, Emotional  
Speech, Language & Communication  
Sensory  
Physical

### **Interventions:**

- Literacy Support
- Talk Boost
- Early Talk Boost
- Booster Classes facilitated by teachers.
- WellComm (Speech & communication)
- Teddy Talk

### **External Agencies:**

- RISE NI – low-level support and advice for pupils in P1-3 with Nursery coming on-board in 2023.
- ASD support – EA
- Speech & Language
- Literacy Service – supporting those with significant Dyslexic tendencies.

### **EA Educational Psychology:**

- Referrals to Educational Psychology are restricted in terms of ‘hours’ allocated by way of school data. St Aloysius PS & NU has limited capacity to refer only after all other interventions have proven ineffective. However, the SENCO is very thorough and will liaise with staff and parents to refer those with a clear need.
- Consultations: with a firm body of evidence and assessment data. Pupils can be forwarded for referral.

### **In-School Support:**

- Classroom Assistants have been trained to deliver Talk Boost/Early Talk Boost
- Lego Therapy
- All assistants trained in higher-order reading skills.
- Booster Classes (delivered by teachers) to include Phonics, Early Reading Skills, Early Maths Skills.

- Differentiated in-class support.
- Withdrawal support with SENCO.

### **SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disability Act)**

With the introduction of SEND, policy and practice is under review and is adapted after the introduction of each part of SEND. Implementation has been delayed due to delay in the introduction of new computer system EdIS.

#### **Training:**

Specific training has been sourced to support children or raise awareness.

In 23/24, training included:

- ASD support and interventions
- Medical: diabetes, epilepsy
- Preliminary groundwork on wellbeing.

### **Being Well Doing Well (BWDW)**

Recognising the importance of wellbeing and positivity, the school will move forward and implement this programme in 2024/25.

#### **Assessment**

Pupils are assessed constantly. P3-7 pupils undertake standardised tests each May.

Pupils continue to perform above the national average in both English and Maths. The information gained from the analysis is reported to parents by way of parent-teacher meetings and the end of year report. We were able to identify children requiring support through data analysis as well as track school performance for school improvement and target-setting.

#### **Meeting Educational Needs**

Teachers plan and differentiate work to meet all levels of ability. We have two additional teachers who, on a part-time basis, support learning for individuals/groups as well as language development.

In terms of Special Needs, the SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator), oversees provision and maintains records in accordance with the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs.

Teachers are aware of the abilities of all their children and plan so that all are challenged as well as supported.

#### **Early Support:**

Children with language deficits are targeted in nursery and Primary 1/Primary 2. As part of Early Intervention Lisburn, we are part of the Help Kids Talk initiative.

Early Talk Boost and Talk Boost are widely used. In addition, we have our own targeted programmes and booster classes.

## **5. The World Around Us (WAU)**

*Mrs Russell*

*June 2024*

### **Main objectives 2023/24:**

#### **Achieving our 5<sup>th</sup> Green Flag Award**

The Eco Council was reestablished with 1 child representing their class from P4-7. I created an audit and action plan as part of the Green Flag application process. Under my guidance and support the Eco Warriors took part in various projects to promote an Eco Ethos in the school. These included:

- \*Making bird feeders
- \*Making reindeer food bags, using recycled hessian cloth and junk art.
- \*Designing and making reuseable bags to sell at the book fair
- \*Designing posters to highlight to parents the dangers of leaving car engine switched on outside the school
- \*Using the money they raised, the children decided to buy "Eco" fact books to create a mini library.
- \*Speaking with Eco Schools representatives as part of the assessment visit and gave them a tour of the school

The coordinator invited Lisburn City Council and Debbie Doolittle to visit our school to teach the children, in different year groups, about biodiversity and recycling. A display board was created to highlight all the work of the Eco Council this year and photographs were taken and shared on social media.

## 6. The Arts

Within the Northern Ireland Curriculum, Music, Art and Drama are delivered under the umbrella term of The Arts. Teachers plan for each of the above but often within a cross-curricular/topic approach.

The children regularly showcase their talents and abilities. Each Christmas, the Nursery and P1/P2 pupils invite their parents and families to their Christmas productions. The older children will present assemblies to the whole school..

In June 2024, the Primary 7 welcomed parents to their end-of-year production of the 'Aladdin'

Our choirs take part in events and are invited to many local venues in December.

## 7. PE/Physical Development & Health Promotion

We are a Healthy Eating School and actively promote healthy lifestyles. All children take part in an active PE curriculum and swimming is available to those children in Key Stage 2. We avail of additional coaching from local organisations and the LCCC.

Participation in sports and activities is promoted. From Nursery and Primary 1, outdoor play is promoted, and now with the new P1/2 playground, there has already been investment in climbing frames, bikes, trikes, scooters.

The Gaelic and soccer teams were very successful during 23/24 and took part in schools' leagues with the girls making it to the finals.

Netball:

The P6/7 girls trained with gusto and took part in a number of tournaments and leagues. They rounded off a very successful year as winners of the Lisburn Tournament!

Other events:

- LCCC Swimming Gala – with much success –  
*1<sup>st</sup> P4/5 Mixed Relay*  
*2<sup>nd</sup> P6 Mixed Relay*  
*3<sup>rd</sup> P7 Mixed Relay*
- Cross-Country
- Tag Rugby

Every year the school Sports Day is arranged over several days. Activities with the younger children are about enjoyment and like all sporting organisations, less about competition and 'winning'. However, as the children move up, Sports Days are a little more competitive with medals awarded.

While competition isn't for everyone, care is taken to promote activity and movement such as The Mile Walk. After-school's clubs will include gymnastics, dance, Nerf etc

Ally's After-schools will be outside daily. The children have access to sports equipment, bicycles, Berg go-karts and trikes.

### The School in the Wider Community

St Aloysius endeavours to build links with its local community and we have strong relationships with St Mary's University College, Stranmillis College, University of Ulster, Edge Hill University and South-Eastern Regional College (SERC) which are mutually beneficial.

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

- Newsletters
- School website
- Seesaw
- Twitter/X account
- Homework Diaries
- Display Boards
- Prospectus
- Parish Bulletin

### **Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA)**

The PTFA had less of a presence in school but still managed to support the pupils and fund-raise.

**Celebratory Events:** with PTFA funding and support, we were able to celebrate and reward pupil participation and achievements such as: Accelerated Reading, First Communion, First Confession, P7 Leavers events.

### **P1/2 Outdoor Play Space:**

The PTFA have continued to provide additional resources.

**Netball:** with the relaunched coaching, the PTFA were able to purchase netballs, bibs, and finance thermos-plastic netball court markings.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

Children continue to benefit from an extensive, inclusive, and diverse range of activities suiting all interests and ages. Our children have the opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities that complement and extend the learning that takes in place in our school on a daily basis.

A few of the activities on offer include:

- Soccer
- Gaelic
- Multi-skills
- Dodgeball
- Gymnastics
- Dance
- Art
- Tin Whistle
- Multi-sports
- ICT – Coding
- Lego Club

### **LMS (Local Management of Schools)/School Budget Position 2023/24**

The Board of Governors administered a delegated budget of £1,476,782. The school's financial position over the last number of years has been well within the tolerance level set by the EA for sound financial planning and was deemed a Category 4 school. This 3-Year Financial Plan, based upon the current LMS funding scheme, met fully the requirements to remain within budget while at the same time maintaining the challenging targets of high performance within the school, without affecting any child's educational development.

The budget surplus was a very modest sum of £40K - smaller than anticipated due to increased costs of gas, oil and electric.

**Future challenges:** going forward we need to be mindful of events that could impact on the school budget.

Schools have been advised to be very cautious as costs remain high and unpredictable.