

St. Aloysius Primary School & Nursery Unit

Lisburn



**Board of Governors Report
for
2024/2025**

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.

I am delighted to report that the school has embraced such positivity toward the welfare and emotional wellbeing of both children and staff through the 'Being Well Doing Well' initiative. At times we can become too fixated with the academic but forget there is a healthy balance that includes the emotional, social and spiritual health of everyone.

It must be noted; however, academic outcomes remain very positive with our students outperforming compared to the national average in both Literacy and Numeracy.

Our Board of Governors, is newly constituted with some new members (and some who remain in-situ) 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.

Mr M McDonald

Chairperson
Board of Governors

Membership of the Board of Governors

Mr Martin McDonald	Trustee (Chairperson)
VACANT	Trustee
Dr M Daly	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 2024/25 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 2024/25

Teaching

Principal: Mrs. C Milne

Vice Principal: Mrs T McDowell

Ms McMahon Nursery

Mrs Gray P1

Mr Hughes P1

Mrs Hanna P2

Mrs McLaughlin P2

Ms Kearney P3

Mrs Rooney P3

Miss Donnelly P4

Mrs Russell P4

Mr Rafferty P5

Mrs Wright P5

Miss Murphy P5

Mrs Brennan P6

Mr Hanna P6

Mrs Freeman P7

Mr McCann P7

SENCO: Mrs A Mallon

Classroom Assistants

Mrs. A McAdam

Miss Khan

Mrs Nelson

Mrs Reid

Mrs. L O'Brien

Mrs B Kearney

Mrs K Mervyn

Mrs. C Bradley

Miss Jackson

Mrs Gil

Mrs King

Mrs Campbell

Miss R O'Halloran

Mrs. D Elwood

Mrs C Sutherland

Miss Ginesi

Ms A Fitzgerald

Mrs Hale

Mrs Travers

Mrs Skeels

Mrs Tulik

Secretary

Mrs. Coreen Brennan

Caretaker

Mr. Colin McCarroll

Supervisory Assistants

Mrs. C Bradley

Mrs. U Campbell

Mrs. A McKillion

Mrs. B Kearney

Mrs Sutherland

Mrs O'Brien

Mrs McKernan

Ms Roe

Cleaners

Ms Meek

Ms McAllister

Mrs S McKernan

Mrs K Tunstill

Crossing Patrol

Ms L Connolly

Enrolment – September 2024

Including Nursery - Total 438

We extended a warm welcome to our new P.1 pupils and 26 Nursery children who joined us in September '24

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	Sat 31 st May 2025
P3 First Confession	Fri 21 st March 2025
P7 Confirmation	Fri 28 th February 2025

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 being 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

Facilitating early drop-off from 8am.

After School Provision

Ally's 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 2024/25, 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, Blackberry Farm. Police,
 - Sporting Events: Tag Rugby, Sports Days, Soccer tournaments, Gaelic tournamnets for both boys and girls, Netball
- Primary 7 Residential Dublin May 2025.
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 visitors included:

- 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
- Wellbeing
- Physical activity
- Music

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

Getting Ready to Learn (GRtL). Big Bedtime Read - Home story packs were available to borrow.

Supporting Learning:

In 24/25, 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.

THE CURRICULUM: EVALUATION OF KEY AREAS 2024/25

1. LITERACY

Literacy Report Board of Governors

June 2025

Mrs. T McDowell

Targets to bring about improvement

- Develop a Whole School Writing Scheme

Success Criteria

- The current Whole School Writing Scheme will undergo revision to align with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. This updated Scheme will encompass Punctuation and Grammar, Spelling, and Handwriting tailored to each Year Group.
- Each Year Group will feature a clearly defined scheme of work for Writing, organised into three sections: Functional Writing, Creative Writing, and Non-Fiction/Genres Writing.
- Teachers will be informed about the essential features, language, and layout pertinent to each of the six Genres.
- A shared and common language for teaching these Genres will be established across the Key Stages and throughout the school.

Actions to bring about improvement

Literacy training was provided during the week commencing Monday 3rd February, offering each year group an opportunity to revise the literacy scheme. Staff training will specifically focus on planning for each genre of writing that

will be taught within the year group. Additionally, further training is scheduled for 3rd November, centering on Creative Writing.

Future targets

In August 2025, time will be set aside for all year groups to come together and plan for each writing genre. This will help teachers get a solid grasp of each genre and find useful resources to support their teaching. Additionally, we will ensure that extra training is available for staff members who have moved to different year groups. This training will boost their skills and help them adapt their teaching to better fit the needs of their new students, ultimately enhancing the learning experience across the board.

Accelerated Reading Scheme KS 2

	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
Millionaire	3 children	2 children	10 children	11 children
2 Millionaire		1 child	2 children	2 children
3 Millionaire				1 child
4 Millionaire				1 child
7 Millionaire				1 child
10 Millionaire				1 child
Total word count for school year	124,004, 472 words			

Reading

A Key Stage 2 scheme has been purchased, thanks to funding from the Parent, Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA), to ensure that guided reading can continue to be supported in our classrooms. This initiative is designed to enhance the literacy skills of our students and to encourage a love of reading and better understanding of texts. By introducing this structured approach, we aim to create a more engaging learning environment that caters to various reading levels and promotes teamwork among pupils.

Book Fair: Our Annual Book raised £3380 resulting in a credit of £2028 towards books.

Test Data

Target: 60% of pupils at Stanine 5 and above:

- All classes are **above** the target, with many classes nearing the 75% threshold!

A very positive reflection of the school academic standards for 2024/25.

Target: Comparison: National – Group

Yearly Overview

- Year 4/6/7 test data show that they are well above the national average in all areas.

2. NUMERACY

Numeracy Co-ordinator - Mr A McCann – End of Year Report – June 2025

Achievements during 2024 – 25

- The main focus area for Numeracy this school year was on Mental Maths and Financial Education.
- One of our August training sessions was dedicated to mental maths and ‘Number Talk’ strategies and how the staff could implement these in support of their mental maths teaching sessions.
- Implementation of Busy Ant Maths scheme and Collins Connect online platform was still being monitored this year but hampered by Action Short of Strike in the middle of the academic year.
- Due to this ongoing action, I was unable to provide any additional training or fully monitor its effectiveness through observations or through ‘book looks’.
- Maths Week Ireland in October was used to focus on financial education with support from Danske Bank, who came in to run ‘SMART Money’ workshops for P3-P7, led by bank staff.
- Analysis from P4-P7 PTM data is positive again this year as most classes are above the national average in the majority of Numeracy topic areas.
- With the pupil target of achieving 60% of pupils at Stanine 5 and above, similar to last year, we have 8 out of 9 classes that are on target.
- The data for expected progress with pupils showed that the number of ‘Much lower than expected’ progress decreased.
- Freckle data has indicated that the platform continues to be embraced within all year groups from P4-P7 with almost 40,000 sessions again this year and over 145,000 minutes, which equates to 100 extra days of maths.
- I attended virtual online training sessions this year on ‘Enriching Mathematical Thinking’ and ‘Extending Mental Math Skills’ both led by Robert Thompson.
- I attended a 3-day course in January and May ‘Enriching Mathematical Reasoning and Problem Solving’ Led by Robert Thompson and Ashley Maw. Staff provided work samples to support me with feedback on the final day.
- A Numeracy Cluster group reinstated across local schools.

Targets for Next Year

- CEA ‘Maths Think Differently’
- Engaging with Parents using Busy Ant Portal

3. ICT

- **e-Safety/Digital Safety Workshops**
- **Promotion of e-safety to our parent body – seminars and regular updates on safety by way of the weekly newsletter.**
- 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.

- iPads: 30 new devices were purchased to replace those with older iOS systems. Assigned to upper Key Stage 2 given the functionality of apps.
- Audit and redistribution of existing iPads.

4. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

SEN Co-ordinator: Mrs A Mallon

Report To BoG

June 2025

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
- 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.
- 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 24/25, training included:

- ASD support and interventions
- Medical: diabetes, epilepsy
- Preliminary groundwork on wellbeing.
- Compiling Personal Education Plans (PLP's)

Being Well Doing Well (BWDW)

Recognising the importance of wellbeing and positivity, the school will move forward and implement this programme in 2024/25 with a focus on resilience, promoting positive self-image and celebrating efforts.

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 2025

World Around US Coordinator Evaluation

1. Supporting Staff in their teaching of the WAU curriculum:

- Organised workshops with the Linen Museum to enhance the children's learning of Locality, WW2 and Egyptians topic
- Working with SENTINUS to develop STEM in Foundation Stage curriculum – Primary 1 and 2 participated in 'Our Bodies' and 'Little Builder's' workshops.
- Worked with Sentinus in their trial of a new STEM workshop in Foundation stage 'Shape Hunters'. This involved children in P1 and P2, and feedback was given to Sentinus on what worked well / improvements that could be made.
- Assisted staff in lesson plan ideas / resources for new topics including 'Famous Scientists'

2. Eco Schools:

- Eco Council was established and the children participated in a variety of initiatives including LCC's 'Big Wheely' challenge. In school they made bird cakes, daily litter picking and recycling around the school. At Christmas they made reindeers with recycled cloth and bird seeds and sold these at the Christmas plays.

- Organised a whole school poster competition to help design reusable bags for the Book Fair. I provided each year group with an 'Eco' theme and resources to teach their specific topic. The children then created their poster highlighting what they had learned. £180 was raised and will be donated to a local charity at a later date.

3. New Academic Year:

- Middle Management Training scheduled for Term 1
- Renew Eco Schools NI Green Flag Award
- Focus on 'Our Locality' as part of WAU curriculum
- Update WAU Policy.

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 2025, the Primary 7 welcomed parents to their end-of-year production of 'Peter Pan'

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

PeaceProms – SSE Arena - March 2025: A highlight of the year! The St Aloysius Choir managed to secure a place in the prestigious PeaceProms at the SSE Arena. Thousands of young people raised the roof to tremendous cheers and accolades!

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 availed of additional coaching from local organisations including St Patrick's GAC, Antrim GAC and the LCCC.

The Gaelic and soccer teams were very successful during 24/25 and took part in schools' leagues with some success.

Netball with Mrs Mallon & Mrs Hale:

The P6/7 girls trained with gusto and took part in several tournaments and leagues. The girls made such an impact winning all but one of their games. Indeed, many were 'scouted' and encouraged to join youth leagues.

Other events:

- LCCC Swimming Gala
- Tag Rugby
- Netball
- Soccer Leagues
- Gaelic Leagues

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 | • Homework Diaries |
| • School website | • Display Boards |
| • Seesaw | • Prospectus |
| • Facebook | • 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.

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
- Virtual
- STEM

LMS (Local Management of Schools)/School Budget Position 2024/2025

The school budget runs the financial year April – March.

Funds are distributed by the LMS section of the Education Authority.

The Board of Governors administered a delegated budget of £1,693,243. 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 modest sum of £72K - 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, and in particular energy costs to include natural gas (heating) and electricity. Of significance is salaries and recent increases to the minimum wage as well as inflationary increases.

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