



**Galliagh Nursery School**  
Play, learn, love and flourish.

**Annual Governor Report  
2020 - 2021**

## **REVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR**

The School Year 2020/2021 will become memorable as a result of Health pandemic which reached our shores in March 2020. Who would have thought that it would have impacted so greatly on all aspects of our lives but particularly on our young children's education.

The school year started well, the children and their parents quickly settled into and became part of the school community. The staff continued to promote its vision of "Play, Learn, Love and Flourish" for all children within the school by providing a holistic play-based curriculum and individual programmes to address each child's needs and interests.

Unfortunately due to restrictions on travel and school trips we had limited opportunities to participate in external visits but were still able to enjoy events such as visits by Banyan Theatre and their fairy tale performances and of course, Doreen and Jo Jingles who are a particular favourite with their weekly musical sessions.

In addition to this, the children enjoyed a trip on the bus to Le Petit Village in Bishop Street in June 2021.

All children and parents participated in "The Big Bedtime Read" and "Education works in Pre-school" programmes. Each child had the opportunity to choose a book daily with their parents to read at bedtime.

The Governors would like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of each member of staff in implementing the school's development plan and helping each child learn and develop in a nurturing environment.

## **School Intake for Year 2020-2021.**

A total of 53 children were admitted to the school during the first two weeks of September. The school's induction process included six meetings for parents and children between June and September including a home/garden visit. Our policy of admitting children into small groups, in addition to an effective induction programme helped the children and parents settle effectively into the school community. The Governors would like to acknowledge not only the support of the parents during this vital settling-in period but also the diligence and enthusiasm of all staff in effectively carrying out the Home/Garden Visits which are an integral part of the school's Pastoral Care Policy.

The annual attendance was adjusted to take account of the school closures in October and January/February with the final figure sitting at 93%. The governors and staff would like to acknowledge the support of the parents in fostering good habits regarding attendance at this early stage in their child's education.

### **TRANSITION PROCESS**

52 children transferred to primary school at the end of June 2021. One child was provided with overage retention status by the EA.

A list of the feeder primary schools and the numbers of children transferring are given below:

St. Therese's PS:	24	Steelstown PS	1
St. Patrick's PS:	13	St. Anne's PS	1
St. Eithne's PS:	3	Hollybush PS	1
St Paul's PS:	1	Greenhaw PS:	1
Holy Family PS	2	Lisnagelvin PS	1
Holy Child PS	1	GNS	1
Bunscoil Cholmcille	1	School in ROI	1

Links continued to be strengthened with all feeder primary schools. The staff met with all the relevant Year1 staff either in the nursery or primary setting and transition reports based on term 2 reports for all children were shared. The school also forwarded copies of Education Plans if applicable.

The Governors and staff would like to acknowledge the continued support of all our local primary schools throughout the year.



## **In Recognition of Mrs Majella McDowell MBE**



On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 our principal retired after 29 years. Since September 1992 she gave herself to our school, the parents and the wider Galliagh Community. Majella gave children a firm foundation for their learning and parents gained invaluable skills from her expertise and knowledge.

Mrs McDowell always made the children her priority, the children were mesmerised by her and her story telling. Majella fought hard to support the children with special educational needs and their families. She provided a warm, safe and nurturing environment for every child to come through the doors of the nursery.

The staff gained so much knowledge and experience working under her guidance. Majella was a very passionate and professional leader and a magnificent role model to the staff who have had the pleasure of working with her over the years.

### **Elizabeth McCloskey – Chairperson Board of Governors**

It has been my privilege to know Majella for over thirty years, firstly as a teacher in Carnhill Nursery School where I was one of her parents and later as one of her governors in Galliagh Nursery School. Even in those early years her professionalism,

love for the children she taught and her calmness and serenity were so impressive.

In the years since Majella has become a renowned educator, an exemplar to all her profession and holds a special place in the hearts of the many children she has taught. We in the Galliagh Nursery School Community are proud to be associated with her and all she has done over many years.

### **Mrs Sarah Kelly – Board of Governors**

I taught in secondary schools for nearly forty years but Majella McDowell taught me that the most important years in education are early years in the nursery school. I watched in awe as she gave language and expression and confidence to three year olds – sometimes three year olds who were non-verbal. I learnt that we can all be educators – when filling the washing machine, separating the whites from dark colours, choosing fruit from a bowl, counting out the blocks, listening to a story read with love, reacting to that story with the child beside you. Sometimes we struggled in the secondary school with the concept of ‘Maths across the curriculum’ – Sometimes we employed educational gurus to show us how, we should have just asked Majella.

I always felt sorry that children had only one year with Mrs McDowell before they went to the hurly burly of primary school and testing and competition.

Her retirement is a loss to us all.

### **Marie-Ann Jennings - Principal**

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, Mrs Mc Dowell said a fond farewell to Galliagh Nursery School and handed over the reins to myself. Mrs Mc Dowell carefully considered the children, families, and staff throughout this seamless transition. She dedicated many hours to planning this process, ensuring that the children were at the centre of every decision she made. Truly living and

breathing the school motto she brought to life on a daily basis; play, learn, love and flourish.

I feel very fortunate to be in the privileged position of continuing Mrs Mc Dowell's legacy and guiding Galliagh Nursery School forward in our future together.

On a personal note, Mrs Mc Dowell kindly entrusted me with her outstanding life's work and all that she did for early years' education, for this I am truly grateful.

The entire Galliagh Nursery School Community wish Majella and Paul well in the next chapter of their lives.



## **STAFFING, CURRICULUM AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In light of the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic the staff and Governors continued to work as a team to devise and carry out the actions within their Recovery/Transition School Development Plan. The following areas - were given priority throughout the year:

- Creating a safe environment for all in the school context.
- To ensure continuity of learning
- To support children and staff with their mental health and wellbeing in light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite the interruption of the Covid 19 pandemic, the professional development of staff remained a priority. The following training was accessed by staff:

The professional development of staff included

- Whole staff training on safeguarding and Child Protection.
- Designated Teacher's Child Protection and Safeguarding training provided by EA
- All staff attended training provided by EA SENEYIS throughout the third term

The principal continued to serve on a number of working groups focusing on early year's initiatives namely

- DE: Early Years Learning to Learn Strategy - Derry Pre-school cluster
- GSAP: Talk to our Babies Campaign
- Early Education North West Branch



The Governors would like to commend the staff for their continued professional development and their enthusiasm for implementing the school's development plan. Their commitment and team work impacts positively on the children's learning experiences within the school. (The full range of in-service training undertaken by the Governors and staff can be found in the Calendar of Events in this booklet).

We continue to be grateful for the funding provided through the DE's Extended School's programme. The main focus of this programme is the promotion of early language development. Mrs. Cosgrove - speech and language therapist works with the children and their parents either on an individual basis or within small groups to ensure that their early language and communication needs are met. . Evaluations undertaken at the end of the school year reflect the value and benefit of this programme. Mrs Cosgrove also supports the staff within the school to ensure that their Communication Friendly school status remains high on the School Development priorities.

In addition to retaining the services of Mrs. Caroline Cosgrove, Speech and Language therapist, the school also worked in partnership with the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership (GSAP) within the community to implement their "Play together, Learn Together" programme and "Talk to our Babies" campaign.



## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY ORDER**

The school's admission policy welcomes applications from all regardless of disabilities or special educational needs. The ethos behind our Special Educational Needs and Disability Order policy is to ensure that each child's individual needs are identified early and support provided within our daily programme. If a child requires additional support, during the year the governors and staff will endeavour to provide this. Where the staff feel that a child would benefit from additional professional support we will discuss this initially with the parents. The school will always seek parental consent before a referral is made. Many of our referrals to external professional support agencies are speech and language related. During the year 2020/21, 28 **children (52.8%)** were initially placed on our learning support register during the Autumn Term. Twenty one of these children were registered at stage 1-2: the vast majority of these children experienced difficulties in the areas of language and communication. A further 4 children were registered at stage 3 and three children had statements of SEN (stage 5): these children had a range of more complex needs.

This year our support programme including our speech and language therapy / intervention was impacted by the abrupt school closure in January 21. However, by that stage some children had made sufficient progress through their support programmes to be taken off the Learning Support Register. By end of March 21, 15 (**28.3%**) children remained on the register. This figure included the seven children registered at stages 3-5 above.

Onward referrals were provided for those children who required further support. Information was also provided with parents' consent to the primary schools to which the children transferred.

The staff regularly update their training in the area of SEN and liaise closely with the Speech and Language Therapy services, Educational Psychology Service, Community Paediatric Service, RISE and the Peripatetic support teams within the EA.

The Governors are satisfied that many of the alterations made to the school's premises facilitate easier access to the school for those children or parents with disabilities. Previous work has included-acoustic ceilings and flooring to all areas, disabled access for parents/children, disabled toilets for children and adults.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

The Governors and staff fully believe that ongoing parental involvement is the key to the child's success throughout his/her school life. Therefore we actively seek to involve parents in the school community during their child's pre-school year. We hope that by doing this, parents will realise the vital role that they play in their child's education and be empowered to play a strong partnership with their child's future educators.

From the first parent meeting, the school staff encourage active involvement from the parent and their views of their child's development and interests to date are recorded. This helps their child's keyworker when the child is admitted. The school invests a long period of time during this initial induction period which lasts over 6 meetings throughout May, June and late August-September.

Unfortunately due to the COVID 19 pandemic our opportunities for parental engagement programmes and face to face meetings were limited. We were fortunate enough to be able to offer the GRtL "Big Bedtime Read" initiative prior to lockdown in the second term. The school has invested greatly in books over the past few years and each child now receives a book on a daily basis.

## **COMMUNITY/ENVIRONMENTAL**

The school continues to promote health and environmental issues through the school curriculum and daily routines.

Environmental visits play an important role in promoting the young child's awareness of the community and world around them. As a result of health pandemic, the educational visit programme was cut short, however, the children did get the opportunity to go to Le Petite Village in Bishop Street.

In addition, the children also experienced a range of visitors to the school including weekly visits from Jo Jingles, two productions from the Banyan theatre Company and a visit from Kidz Farm.

The children's excellent behaviour was commented on by the community: they thoroughly enjoyed their visit and received valuable learning experiences.

The Governors facilitate placement facilities within the school for a small number of students throughout the year. During the school year 2020/21, the school facilitated work experiences to students from local post primary schools and the North West Regional College. The school community would like to take this opportunity to thank all the students for their dedication and hard work during their placements.

The School has developed close links with some of the other pre-schools, primary and post-primary school in the area through their participation within the Derry Pre-school cluster group and Sharing from the Start programme.

We have also continued to work with community services within the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership through our involvement in the extended school's programme. A specific focus has been on serving on the steering group and supporting the "Talk to our Babies Campaign" which has now spread to other areas of the city.

## **PREMISES**

The Governors and staff would like to convey their thanks to the EA Maintenance officer and team for organising personnel to respond to the school's request to carry out the following work during the year.

- Exterior Painting.
- Social Distancing Marking within school grounds.
- Essential Maintenance within school.
- Yearly maintenance/servicing of fire extinguisher and electrical appliances.

Article 15 of the Education order '98 requires the Board of Governors to include within their Annual Report the arrangements, in general terms made for the security of their children and staff at the school.

Among the safety issues we have addressed at Galliagh Nursery School are:

- Access control- a safety system is installed restricting access to the building.
- Restricted access to school grounds- only staff and parents with disabilities or parents with children with special needs are permitted to park in the school grounds.
- Fire Safety- Professionals check all fire equipment and appliances annually. An emergency evacuation system exists within the school and fire drills are carried out termly.
- The outdoor play area is checked daily and broken glass or other dangerous objects are removed.
- All repairs to the building are carried out promptly and incidents reports are forwarded to the EA.
- Where transport is required the school will follow the guidance received from DE. Risk assessments are available for all school trips.

The Governors are satisfied that the above arrangements are meeting the needs of the children, parents and staff at the present but will continue to review the situation on a regular basis.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2020/21

### AUTUMN TERM

August 19	All staff return – Classroom set-up / Planning
August 21	Pastoral Care – Home Visits
August 24	New School Term Begins
September 25	Child Protection Training
September 17	Play Together, Learn Together 8 Week Programme
September 18	Nursery Principals Meeting
September 21	Board of Governor Meeting
October 1	Staff Development Day
October 2	Staff Development Day
October 3	Learning to Learn Cluster Group Meeting
October 3	Extended Schools Meeting - GSAP
October 8-10	Health Visitors Carrying out Reviews with the children
October 19	School closed to all pupils for an extended Halloween break to facilitate a circuit breaker due to the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic
November 2	School re-opens for all children
November 7	Big Bedtime Read
November 20	EA - Leading Together Conference
November 27	Puppet Show – ‘Goldilocks and the Three Bears’
November 26	Talk on Transition from nursery to primary school-Mrs Karen Boyd
November 28	Meeting GSAP
December 11/13	Performance of The Nativity Play – Nursery 2 – video uploaded to Class Dojo for parents

December 17/18 Performance of The Nativity Play – Nursery 1 – video uploaded to Class Dojo for parents

December 18 Santa Visits Nursery School / Children’s Christmas Party.

### **SPRING TERM**

January 4 Staff Development Day

January 5 Term 2 Begins – School Closed to all pupils except children of key workers and children with SEN, all other children being taught remotely

February 9 Board of Governor Selection Committee Meeting via Zoom

February 23 Board of Governors Meeting

March 8 School re-opens to all pupils

March 9/10 Parent/Teacher Meetings

March 12 Parent/Teacher Meetings

March 16 St Patrick’s Day Shindig

March 31 Mrs McDowell – Principal retired

April 1 Mrs Jennings – New Principal takes up post

April 21 New Principal Training

April 22 Banyan Theatre – Puppet Show

April 30 Kidz Farm visit the nursery

June 15/16 Visit to Le Petit Village

June 18 Board of Governor Meeting

June 24 Parky the Magician

June 29 Children finish school





**GALLIAGH NURSERY SCHOOL**

**SCHOOL FUND FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2020/2021**

**INCOME**

Opening Balance@10Sept 2019	1,099.10
Snack Money	4,025.00
Santa Money	96.00
Extended Schools	1080.00
DVD (Year End)	159.00
Petty Cash Transfer	170.64
Reimbursement from school budget	789.26
Compensation from bank	200.00

£ 7,619.00  
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**EXPENDITURE**

Children's Resources	3,060.76
News Letter/Booklets	70.00
Books for Children	100.00
Extended Schools	1080.00
DVD (Year End)	180.00
Petty Cash Transfer	170.69
COVID resources for school	789.26
Bank Charges	103.65
Links with Community	98.50
Gardening Materials	25.93
Internet security	89.99
Fish Food etc	8.58
O2 top up for school mobiles	10.00
Amazon Music	115.88
Balance @ 11/08/19	1715.76

£7,619.00  
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Balance as per Bank Statement at 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021 - £1715.76

**Cash Transactions Carried out this year due to bank account changeover issues.**

Money raised for the sponsored cycle - £1, 5080 & €15

Donation made to SANDS - £790

Donation made to Children's Heartbeat Trust - £790 & €15

Snack money & Photo profit

£1,121.76

Money Spent on Resources - £1.070.62

Cash difference - £51.14 – to be carried over and lodged

Signed off by Board of Governors . *Flora M'Elroy*