

St Joseph's Primary School



Annual Report
of the
Board of Governors
for the school year
2024–25

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1. Vision for St Joseph's

St Joseph's Primary School is a Catholic School community, where the Board of Governors is passionately committed to promoting the spiritual, academic, social, physical, and emotional development of all our children. We seek to create a safe and happy environment, informed by our Christian ethos, which permeates everything we do. Each child is encouraged to fulfil his/her potential, have a positive self-image, while displaying self-confidence, self-respect, and respect for others.

2. Aims

- Fostering a love of learning in our children and encouraging them to become lifelong learners.
- Valuing each child for his/her unique set of talents and gifts.
- Delivering a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to the needs of each child.
- Maintaining an effective partnership with parents/carers.
- Promoting the continuing professional development of all our staff.
- Setting and maintaining the highest standards of teaching and learning.
- Working towards appreciating our shared and diverse cultures and promoting a spirit of co-operation and tolerance within our school, with other schools and with the wider community, in order to foster mutual respect and understanding.

3. Guiding Principles

The staff, pupils, parents, and Governors of St Joseph's Primary School are fully committed to the aims of the school and have a keen sense of loyalty to it. Parents and staff work in close partnership to ensure that each child enjoys the best educational experience possible and:

- Our pupils are at the heart of our school community.
- Parents are valued as active partners in the education of their children.
- Our staff work hard to create a stimulating learning environment.
- Our parish priest works closely with the school in the faith development of our children.

4. Role of the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective management of the school. As well as nominees of the Trustees, the Education Authority (EA) and the Department of Education (DE), its membership also includes an elected parent Governor and an elected teacher Governor. The Principal completes the team, which represents the main interests within the school.

The Board of Governors was constituted in Autumn 2024 to serve for four years. Governors have accessed relevant training provided by the Education Authority to support their role. Its membership for the 2024/25 school year included:

Governor	Representing
Reverend Fr. Conor McGrath	Trustee
Mr Shan Matthew	Trustee
Mr Martin Reynolds	Trustee
Mr Matthew Hutcheson	Trustee
Mr Peter McKeown	Department of Education (DE)
Mrs Anna Smyth	Education Authority (EA)
Ms Alison McDowell	Education Authority
Mrs Ashleigh Cullen	Teacher Representative
Mrs Loraine Patterson (Chairperson)	Parent Representative
Mr Paul Donaldson (Principal) Until 31 03 2025 Mr Conor Donnelly from 01 04 2025	Secretary (Non-Voting)

The Board of Governors, which met regularly throughout 2024-25, has overall responsibility for the management of the school in the following areas:

1. Catholic Ethos.
2. School Development Planning.
3. Curriculum and Educational Standards.
4. Pastoral Care.
5. Employee Practices and Staff Relationships.
6. Area Planning.
7. Enrolment and Admissions Policies and Practices.
8. Financial Management.
9. Annual Report to Parents.

The minutes of all meetings of the Board of Governors are to be found on the school's website. In addition, the work of Governors also takes the form of meetings with members of the school staff and external stakeholders. This work is not always the subject of a formal record, but any significant development arising out of such meetings will normally be reported by the relevant Governor to the full Board at its meetings and will be recorded in the minutes of the Board of Governors' meetings, or in associated papers.

If any member of the school community has any question or concern relating to the management of the school, they are welcome to approach any Governor at any time. Governors may be contacted through the Principal's office.

5. Staff

The teaching staff for 2024/25 consisted of the Principal – Mr Donaldson, 13 full-time teachers and 3 permanent job-share teachers.

Name	Class	No. of pupils	Additional Responsibility
Mrs Herbert	P1A	24	Play
Miss Crawford	P1B	25	Eco-Council
Mrs Petticrew	P2A	25	Head of Foundation/Senior Management Team (SMT) The World Around Us (WAU)
Miss McCreanor	P2B	27	The Arts (Art) Play
Mrs McAlister	P3A	29	Head of Key Stage 1 (KS1)/SMT Mathematics and Numeracy
Mrs Irvine	P3B	29	The Arts (Music)
Miss Byrne	P4A	28	Religion
Miss Magee	P4B	27	PDMU/EHW
Mrs Cullen	P5A	28	Communication Choir
Ms McKinney	P5B	28	Language and Literacy/SMT
Mr Donnelly (Mr Wright 01 04 2025)	P6A	26	Vice Principal Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection C2K Manager
Mr McBride	P6B	28	Shared Education Assessment
Mrs Duffy	P7A	32	Head of Key Stage 2 (KS2)/SMT After Schools Clubs Physical Education
Mr Wright	P7B	29	Information and Communications Technology (ICT)/Website
Mr Donaldson/ Mr Donnelly	N/A	N/A	Principal/SMT/Pastoral Care/Discipline Designated Teacher for Child Protection
Mrs Abram	N/A	N/A	Learning Support Coordinator (LSC)
Mrs Tully	N/A	N/A	Newcomer Support Teacher
	Total	386	

Non-Teaching staff consisted of:

Role	Name
Classroom Assistants	Mrs Chambers Mrs Noonan Mrs Nixon Mrs Toyoda
Special Needs Assistants	Mr Allen Mrs Boyle Miss Delaney Mrs Dharam Mrs Donaldson Mrs Pelu Miss Shaw Mrs Haughey Mrs Hayes Mrs Heatley Miss O Leitch Miss McCartney Miss G McCullough Miss N McCullough Miss S McGrath Miss McKnight Mrs McPeake Miss Meldrum Mrs Noonan Miss Palmer Mrs Smyth Mrs Taylot Mrs Trainor-Orlova Ms Valeria Miss Weir Ms Zanker
Canteen Staff	Mrs Connolly Ms. Shields
Cleaning Staff	Ms Fay Mr Ferguson Mr Hayes Ms. Shields
Secretary	Ms Warke
Building Supervisor	Mr Fay

Happy Kidz	Mrs Hayes Miss N McCullough Miss G McCullough Miss Meldrum Miss Parker Miss Patterson Miss Leitch Miss McCartney Miss Delaney Miss Weir
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6. Enrolment and Admissions

The enrolment and admissions numbers for 2024-2025 were 386 and 51, respectively.

7. Attendance

The school's annual attendance figure for the academic year 2024-25 was 94.6%.

8. Holidays

Staff and parents received a list of the annual holidays at the beginning of the school year. The list also included 'Baker' & School Development Days (staff training days when pupils do not have to attend school).

9. 'Baker' Days and School Development Days

Below is a list of the 'Baker' and Staff Development Days and the relevant topics or issues that were addressed by the staff:

Date	Type of Day	Focus
22 August	Baker Day 1	Staff/ SMT meetings. Dyslexia Friendly Classroom Training Planning & classroom organisation.
23 August	Baker Day 2	Assessment Class Behaviour Plan Training Lexia Training (SEN) Planning & classroom organisation.
26 August	Baker Day 3	Curriculum Teams' meetings ETI Update Anaphylaxis Training Planning & classroom organisation.
27 August	Baker Day 4	RSE Fire Safety Training Key Stage meetings Planning & classroom organisation.
28 August	Baker Day 5	Safeguarding Training & GDPR Dyslexia Training – Classroom Assistants Staff Photograph Training Planning & classroom organisation.

3 January	School Devel Day 1	Being Well Doing Well Audit Reciprocal Reading Review SEN Update/ Lexia Planning & classroom organisation.
4 January	School Devel Day 2	Parent/Teacher Meetings
26 March	School Devel Day 3	Staff/ SMT meetings. Collegiate Book Monitoring Review of 6 Weekly Plans Internal Standardisation
27 May	School Devel Day 4	PLPS Review GL Data Analysis Begin Transition Folders
28 May	School Devel Day 5	Report writing

10. The Curriculum

The Governors of all Catholic maintained schools have a responsibility to ensure the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and the teaching of Religious Education. At the heart of the curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and for contributing effectively to society. These whole curriculum skills and capabilities consist of the Cross-Curricular Skills and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. They are embedded and infused throughout the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum at each Key Stage, and pupils have opportunities to acquire, develop and demonstrate these skills in all areas of the curriculum.

11. Cross-Curricular Skills

Schools are required to assess and report annually on each pupil's progression in the Cross-Curricular Skills. In Key Stages 1 and 2 this is with reference to Levels of Progression frameworks.

The Cross-Curricular Skills are:

- Communication.
- Using Mathematics.
- Using Information and Communication technology (U ICT).

The curriculum for the three Key Stages - Foundation (P1 & 2), Key Stage 1 (P3 & 4) and Key Stage 2 (P5, 6 & 7) is set out in six Areas of Learning:

- Language and Literacy.
- Mathematics and Numeracy.
- The Arts (including Art and Design, Drama and Music).
- The World Around Us.
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding.
- Physical Education.

12. Literacy and Numeracy

Progress Tests in Maths and English (PTE and PTM) were carried out in September to obtain a baseline and establish key areas of learning that needed addressed. These were measured against same tests in May to track progress. Additionally, the NGRT and NGST tests were carried out to support these. Staff received a data presentation from the Assessment Coordinator, demonstrating appropriate

targets set for and achieved by pupils. Reading Comprehension, Spelling and Data Handling were highlighted as main areas for development in Literacy and Numeracy respectively.

The school funded the Engage Programme for Numeracy and Literacy. As part of this initiative, teachers provided support to small groups of pupils from P2 – P6 on a weekly basis.

Groups of Primary 4 pupils were given numeracy support from the Numeracy Coordinator twice a week.

The whole school took part in Maths Week from 12 - 20 October. Teachers planned for a fun and exciting week incorporating maths trails in Shape and Space, Problem Solving and Thinking Skills. During Maths Week, a Mathletics competition was run, with the pupils accumulating the highest points total since the beginning of September, in each class, awarded a certificate and a prize.

A *Back on Track* volunteer assisted pupils on a 1:1 basis in Numeracy and Literacy. This is a support programme organised by Solas, which consists of a volunteer retired teacher working with pupils in Literacy and Numeracy.

A new yearly subscription for Mathletics was purchased in September 2024. All teachers and pupils were assigned Mathletics logins to be used in school and at home. Teachers assigned Mathletics tasks on a weekly basis as part of homework for the week. Mathletics logins were used in the classroom and ICT Suite.

A subscription for White Rose Maths was repurchased for every teacher in January 2025; this subscription provided access to a range of maths videos, PowerPoints and pupil workbooks.

Two Izak 9 cubes were purchased along with access to online resources. A timetable was set up for each term to allow all classes access to the cubes. Teachers received training on how to access the online resources and how to use the cubes in their classroom.

To support the focus on reading comprehension, reciprocal reading training was delivered by the Literacy Coordinator. Action short of strike in 2023/2024 limited the roll out of this training and it was relaunched in 2024/2025

A Travelling Book Fair visited the school in November 2024 and raised money to spend on new Scholastic reading resources. The money was used to fund new reading material for class libraries, a sets of class novels, sets of decodable reading books for P1 and P2, as well as new paired reading resources for Key Stage One and Foundation Stage.

The use of decodable reading books was rolled forward into P2, having been embedded in P1 in 2023-2024. An order of Big Cat readers at pink and red band was used to support this transition to phonetic reading resources.

The whole school participated in World Book Day. The children enjoyed the opportunity to dress up, learn more about different books and celebrate their love of reading.

The SENCO and Literacy Coordinator worked together to identify children with specific literacy difficulties in P3-P7 and put together an action plan for 2024-25.

Writing for pleasure was promoted through whole school initiatives such as *Writer of the Month*. Two internal writing competitions were run at Hallowe'en and St. Patrick's Day to promote writing for pleasure.

PRSD observations were carried out for teachers in early professional development and those who have not yet reached the top of the scale. This reflected the Literacy and Numeracy action plans.

The Literacy Coordinator completed the *STEPS into Leadership* training for middle managers, run by the EA to support the development of her role in the school.

The Numeracy Co-ordinator attended online training on Mental Maths Strategies.

The Numeracy Co-ordinator attended a 2-day course on 'Mathematical Reasoning and Problem Solving.'

13. The Arts

Tuition in string, woodwind and brass instruments continued for selected pupils in Primary 4 – 7.

The online music scheme *Charanga* was introduced to help support the teaching of music in the classroom; teachers received training on this from a member of staff.

The school choir (P5 – P7 pupils) played an important part in the musical and liturgical life of the school, performing at our Open Morning (28 11 2024), the George Best City Airport (05 12 2024), Dean Crooks Nursing Home (11 12 2024), Grandparents' Day (21 01 2025), the Peace Proms in the SSE Arena (09 03 2025) and the Sacraments of Confirmation (05 02 2025) and First Holy Communion (17 05 2025). The choir also performed at a special leaving mass for Mr. Donaldson in St Colmcille's Church on 28 03 2025.

The annual pupils' Talent Show (P4 – P7) was held on 16 05 2025, showcasing some of the excellent talent we have in St Joseph's.

14. The World Around Us (WAU)

The World Around Us comprises the subjects of History, Geography, Science & Technology and is taught through a topic-based approach.

To increase thinking skills in science, staff continued to use Explorify, which is a free online resource, to support science teaching.

Primary 2 participated in an Engineering workshop facilitated by Sentinus based on the Three Little Pigs story.

P4 explored Hillsborough Castle as part of their topic on Castles.

P5 received a visit from a zoologist who ran an Amazon Jungle show.

P5 also hatched caterpillars and watched them grow and change into butterflies. They released them into the Church gardens.

P6 participated in the Engineers Ireland Project and completed a range of challenges and activities.

P7 took part in the Titanic Schools project. They participated in a range of activities and demonstrations put on by local Engineering firms.

P7 also participated in the Medics in Primary School Programme through QUB.

15. Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU)

PDMU focuses on encouraging each child to become personally, emotionally, and socially effective, to lead healthy, safe, and fulfilled lives and to become confident, independent, and responsible citizens, making informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.

In St Joseph's we have a proactive curriculum, enabling us to limit the number of bullying incidents that occur within the school. The PDMU programme, circle time activities, religion programme and Using Information and Communication Technology (UICT) lessons, were all used as opportunities to discuss relationships, deal with conflict, and highlight positive ways in which problems can be solved and communication enhanced.

Anti-Bullying Week was held from 10 – 14 November, with a whole school focus on bullying. As part of this, P7 showcased in assemblies the issues around bullying and how it can be eradicated.

Relax Kids sessions - teaching children mindfulness and relaxation techniques - were held in school during the Autumn and Spring Term. A teacher worked with both P6 classes during the Autumn and Spring Terms in the delivery of the Paws b curriculum.

A counsellor, funded from the school's budget, worked with individual pupils during the Spring and Summer Terms.

P3B partnered with their respective class in Elmgrove Primary, to participate in the *Buddy Up Celebrating Diversity* programme during the Autumn Term.

Road safety was promoted throughout the year, with a particular emphasis on Road Safety Week, from 17 11 2024 – 23 11 2024. Our P7 pupils also participated in the Road Safe NI Quiz at the Titanic Building on 31 01 2025 and in the finals in Cookstown on 10 03 2025. The PSNI were regular visitors to the school at drop off time to remind parents of the need for safe practices around St Joseph's.

Active travel by cycling, walking and scooting to and from school, was promoted through participation in the Sustrans Active School Travel Programme. Activities included:

- *Sustrans Scooter Skills* day on 19 02 2025 and Dr Bike attended St Joseph's on 02 10 2024
- *A Be Seen Be Bright Day* on 23 11 2024, where all pupils and staff were encouraged to wear bright colourful clothing to school.
- Participation in the *Big Walk and Wheel Challenge* from 03 04 2025 to 07 04 2025.
- Volunteers from the NSPCC visited the school on 29 04 2025 to deliver the Speak out. Stay safe programme to P3, P6 and P7 classes.

A Smokebusters Virtual Workshop was held on 05 11 2024 with P6 and P7 pupils, to promote health and wellbeing, and highlight the dangers of smoking.

To support the health and wellbeing of the pupils, the following fun days were held in the Summer Term: an Ice Cream Van and Bouncy Castle Day, and *Dance with Duffy Day*.

To help prepare the P7s for their move to secondary school, they participated in a number of transition programmes organised during the Summer Term, including:

- A P7 Parish Retreat Day in the Parochial Hall on 14 05 2025.
- Transition lessons provided by the East Belfast Area Partnership during May and June.
- *The Better Together Programme* ran through April and May 2025 for P7 pupils.

Our Shared Education partnership with Ashfield Boys High School and Mitchell House Special School, remained in place for the school year 2024 – 2025. Some of the original activities planned for were curtailed due to transport issues experienced by Mitchell House.

16. Physical Education (PE)

Sport and leisure activities were an important aspect of the life of the school throughout the year. All classes received regular PE and games lessons as part of the curriculum.

Participation in the following sporting events occurred throughout the year:

- Friendly football matches against Strandtown and St Matthew's.
- Girls football matches against Strandtown PS and Lowood PS.
- The Campbell College Boys' Soccer Tournament.
- The Galactico Soccer Tournament for boys and girls.
- P7 Sports Hall Athletics at Strathearn School.
- The Belfast Schools' Indoor Football Tournament at Shankill Leisure Centre.
- Primary Schools' Cross Country running events at Orangefield Park and Mallusk Playing Fields.

- St Matthew's Boys' Soccer Tournament at Avoniel Leisure Centre
- P7 Football sessions at Harland & Wolff Welders x 6 as part of Shared Education project with Ashfield Boys' School.
- Netball blitz at St Joseph's and at Strandtown PS.
- Participation in the East Belfast Cup.
- P6/7 Cherryvale Cup in Gaelic Football.

Two in-school tournaments were also held during the Summer Term:

- Mr Ryan Cup (annual in-school soccer tournament).
- St. Joe's Basketball Blitz (annual in-school Basketball Tournament).

The following Sports Days were held during the Summer Term:

- P1 - 3 in Strandtown Playing Fields.
- P4 - 7 in Strandtown Playing Fields.

17. Religious Education

The programme for Religious Education was based on the P1-7 Grow in Love series, enabling children and families to learn about faith, both at school and at home.

Regular prayer, sacramental preparation, liturgical and church celebrations were all an integral part of the Religious Education curriculum. These included:

- Mass to celebrate the start of the academic year on 18 09 2024.
- A Carol Service for P5-7 on 18 12 2024.
- The celebration of Catholic Schools Week from 20 01 2025 until 24 01 2025, concentrating on the theme of Catholic School: Alive in Christ.
- The Ceremony of Light for P7 pupils on 18 01 2025
- The Sacrament of Confirmation for P7 pupils on 05 02 2025.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation for P3 pupils on 02 04 2025.
- First Holy Communion for pupils of P4A on 17 05 2025.
- Mass to celebrate retirement of Mr. Donaldson on 28 04 2025.

As part of their preparation for First Communion, Primary 4 pupils and parents attended the *Do This in Memory of Me* programme at several Sunday masses throughout the year.

The thanks of the school community must be extended to the Parent Teacher Association for their valued support in providing refreshments for pupils and their families in the Parochial Hall after the Sacrament of First Communion.

The main charity supported during the year was Trocaire; a total of £1,087.01 was raised - thanks to all of the school community for your generous support.

Catholic Schools Week was celebrated from 20 01 2025 to 24 01 202, concentrating on the theme of Catholic: Alive in Christ. The following events were held:

- Grandparents Day, 21 01 2025, where all grandparents were invited to visit the school for refreshments and entertainment in the school hall, followed by an opportunity to walk around the school, visit the classes and meet their grandchild(ren).
- Mass on 22 01 2025 with the teachers and pupils from P3 – P7 (all family members were also invited to celebrate this ceremony).
- Special school assemblies.

18. Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The LSC (Learning Support Coordinator) continued to monitor and evaluate the use of Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) by teaching staff and regularly updated the School Information Management System (SIMs) ensuring all additional, learning needs for pupils are recorded and shared appropriately with class teachers.

Pupils with additional learning needs were identified by class teachers in Primary 4-7 and the LSC created a timetable for Primary 1-3 teachers to provide one hour of weekly support in the form of small group and one-to-one provision.

Extra support in Literacy and Numeracy was provided by additional teachers brought into the school, who provided lessons on a weekly basis for small groups of pupils.

Early intervention support in numeracy was also facilitated by participation in the *Back on Track* programme, where a retired teacher provided weekly one-on-one lessons to individual pupils, with a tailored programme to meet their identified needs.

St Joseph's also availed of support from the *Business in the Community* initiative that facilitated volunteers, working with small groups of pupils, to foster a love of reading (*Time to Read*) and enhance basic skills in maths and numeracy (*Time to Count*).

Some of our pupils were assessed through the year by the EA's Educational Psychology service, subject to the availability of their resources, and additional support was provided by peripatetic teachers from Outreach Support Services, as well as classroom assistants within the school. In December, following consultation with the Educational Psychologist, pupils were identified for possible referral to the Psychology Service for the academic year 2024-2025.

The LSC liaised with class teachers to identify pupils with additional Literacy needs; she then assessed the pupils highlighted using The *Developmental Reading Assessment* (DRA) and identified pupils with the greatest needs. Referrals were then made to St. Gerard's Outreach Support Service, who provided one-to-one support once a week for one hour for each pupil.

Clarawood School and Special Service have continued to provide support and guidance for one pupil in Key Stage 2. An outreach teacher visited the school regularly, providing one-to-one sessions and additional support and guidance for class teachers.

Advice and guidance was also provided by the EA's Behaviour Support Team and Language and Communication Service for individual children.

The LSC continued to liaise with coordinators from other schools in order to learn from best practice.

Data from NGRT, NGST, PTM, PTE, PASS and COMET, to identify needs and monitor progress of children on the SEN register, was collated in Term 3.

19. Using Information and Communications Technology (UICT)

Pupils participated in UICT lessons, with at least one visit to the UICT suite per week. Lessons involved the use of desktop computers, laptops, iPads and interactive whiteboards. With formal assessment continuing to be paused, UICT assessment tasks were not completed.

The East Belfast Online Safety Curriculum continues to be used in the teaching and learning of each year group. Pupils participated in regular e-safety lessons with a different theme each half term. This continued to be monitored and evaluated by the UICT Curriculum Team.

The teaching of online safety was further supplemented by P5 and P7 pupils participating in several E-Safety workshops (delivered by Allstate and Ebeam Creative), with the aim of developing awareness of online dangers.

To mark *Safer Internet Day 2004* on 06 02 2024, assemblies and activities with an online safety focus, were led by the co-ordinator and the Digital Leaders team (P4-7 pupils). Google's *Be Internet Legends Day* (28.11.23) was also marked by organising a poster competition to promote online safety. The winning entries were enlarged, framed and displayed in the ICT Room.

Supported by the PTA, the school invested in the provision of 15 Promethean Panel boards. One board was installed in every classroom and one in the Newcomer Room.

An After-school Coding Club, delivered by *Activity NI* was also facilitated in the school, throughout the year.

20. Safeguarding and Child Protection

The Safeguarding Committee, consisting of the Principal (Designated Teacher), Vice-Principal (Deputy Designated Teacher), Chair & Safeguarding Link Governor, Newcomer and P1 teacher, met regularly to monitor Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures within the school. Other members of staff attended meetings if the subject matter was relevant to his/her area of responsibility. Details of all safeguarding and child protection measures are recorded in the Designated Teacher's Annual Report to the Board of Governors. As of March, Acting VP assumed the role of DDT and Acting Principal assumed the role of DT.

21. Assessment

The assessment of each pupil's progress is an essential aspect of any good learning and teaching programme. In St Joseph's Primary School, we assess and report to parents/carers using a wide range of approaches.

Due to ongoing industrial action and based on guidance from the various teaching unions, we only facilitated one formal Parent/Teacher Meeting to discuss pupil progress; this was held in February. However, parents were encouraged to arrange an appointment with their child's teacher at any time during the academic year when they were able to discuss their child's progress. Parents of pupils with a Personal Learning Plan meet regularly with teachers to discuss their child's progress.

Annual Pupil reports were sent home at the end of the academic year as usual. These included GL scores in English and Maths for pupils in P3-P7. Levels of Progression were not included due to industrial action.

Throughout the school year we assessed our pupils' individual work within Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT to monitor their progress.

On a day-to-day basis, each teacher used regular assessment, appropriate to the age group, to monitor the progress of each pupil, thus informing planning and classroom teaching; this information was supplemented by gathering samples of work from each pupil. These were shared in their Assessment Folders. Samples were not shared with co-ordinators due to industrial action. Baseline assessment of pupils (COMET) was carried out in Primary 1 and Primary 2.

We continue to use the GL Digital Assessment Package as the school's main form of Year 3-7 standardised assessment. Class and online standardised assessments were completed in September, January and in May 2025. Target Groups were established based on a rigorous analysis of the data and targets were set for pupil, class and whole school improvement. Underachieving pupils were

identified and supported in small group sessions as part of the Engage Literacy and Numeracy programmes.

The standardised assessment procedures from P3 – P7 helped teaching staff to assess individual pupil's ability, attainment and barriers to learning at regular intervals. There were a number of elements to this online assessment which included:

- Cognitive Abilities Test: Fourth Edition (CAT4). This identifies a pupil's developed abilities and likely academic potential, highlighting strengths, weaknesses and learning preferences.
- Progress Test in English (PTE) and Progress Test in Maths (PTM). These are used year-on-year to support teachers in identifying current levels of attainment and track progress in the core subjects.
- New Group Reading Test (NGRT). This allows teachers specifically to screen and monitor the reading ability of pupils at a group level.

In St Joseph's Primary School, we continue to invest time into preparing children for the SEAG (Transfer) Assessment tests in both P6 and P7. Below is a breakdown of the KS3 destinations of our pupils in 2025.

KS3 Destination	Number of Pupils	Percentage %
Our Lady & St Patrick's College	15	24.6%
St Joseph's College	7	11.5%
Bloomfield Collegiate School	12	19.7%
Campbell College	5	8.2%
Lagan College	2	3.3%
Grosvenor Grammar School	2	3.3%
St Malachy's College	3	4.9%
Edmund Rice College	1	1.6%
Strathearn School	4	6.6%
Priory College	2	3.3%
Ashfield Girls	1	1.6%
Ballynahinch High School	1	1.6%
Wellington	2	3.3%
Victoria College	1	1.6%
St Mary's Magherafelt	1	1.6%
Dundonald High School	1	1.6%
RBAI	1	1.6%
(schools - 17)	Total: 61	

Children going to a Grammar School at KS3 – 46 = 75.41%

Children going to a Mixed Ability College at KS3 – 4 = 6.6%

Children going to a Secondary School at KS3 – 12 = 19.6%

Initial Preference 2025	Number of Pupils	Percentage
First	44	72.1%
Second	6	9.8%
Third	8	13.1%
Fourth	2	3.3%

Eighth	1	1.6%
Not Placed	0	0.00%

End of Key Stage Levels of Progression were shared with the Department of Education in May 2025. Only a general level for Communication and Using Maths was shared and this was the first time this data has been shared in 6 years.

22. Spanish

During the year, P2-6 classes experienced Spanish language teaching as part of their curriculum – the lessons were taken by a visiting tutor, Ms L Zanker.

23. Extra-Curricular Activities

At St Joseph's we recognise that classroom-based learning is just one part of the education process. A number of educational visits, designed to enhance the children's learning, took place. These provided both enjoyment and valuable learning opportunities for our pupils, and included:

Year Group	Extra-Curricular Activity
Year 1	Cinema (April) W5 (May)
Year 2	Cinema (April) Ulster Museum (March)
Year 3	Cinema (April) Belfast City Airport (May) W5 (June)
Year 4	War Memorial Museum Library Visit (December +) Cinema (April) Hillsborough Castle (June)
Year 5	Cinema (April) Museum on the Move (February) Ulster Folk and Transport Museum (March) Belfast Zoo (June)
Year 6	North Down Museum (November) Cinema (April) Museum on the Move (March) Stormont Park (June) Dundonald Ice Bowl (June) P6 Taster Days, Girls – Strathearn, Boys - Campbell (June)
Year 7	Cinema (April) Airtastic (June)

A range of after-school clubs were also offered to the children. Through these we sought to:

- promote fun.
- increase a child's range of experience outside the classroom.
- develop a child's full potential in all areas of their development.
- increase social awareness, social skills, group responsibility and empathy.
- foster individual talents and interests.

- encourage children to develop friendships between age groups and work together co-operatively, often as part of a team; and
- enable the children to actively contribute to the school through their participation.

The after-school clubs on offer throughout the year were as follows:

Club	Class
Art	P1-3 & P4-7
Choir	P5-7
Dodge Ball	P4-5
Lego	P1-3 & P4-7
Nerf Wars	P4-7
Netball	P5-7
Soccer	P2/3
Soccer	P4/5 & P6/7
Spanish	P2/3 & P4-7
Task Masters	P1-3 & P4-7
Tech	P1-3 & P4-7

24. Communication with Parents

Curricular meetings for parents of each year group were held in September. The purpose of each meeting was to inform parents about the curriculum in the relevant year group, give them an opportunity to meet the teacher and raise any concerns or ask any relevant questions in relation to the curriculum.

Parents were given an opportunity to discuss with the class teacher their child's progress during parent/teacher meetings in February; other opportunities throughout the year to meet the teacher were also available by appointment.

The annual written reports, which covered all the subjects specified in the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum, were issued to parents in June.

A meeting for P7 parents on the Transfer Procedure was held on 28 01 2025.

Throughout the year, parents were kept informed about the life and work of the school through the School's Website and App. The Seesaw App was also used by teachers for information specifically relating to their classes.

25. New pupils

On 28 11 2024, the school held an Open Morning for new and prospective P1 parents, giving them an opportunity to visit St. Joseph's and see the school in action on a normal working day.

A P1 Induction meeting was held on 10 06 2025, to enable our new P1s to meet their new teacher and spend some time in their new classroom, while their mums, dads and carers were given key information relating to P1. A mop up session was held on 19 06 2025.

26. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The PTA are a group of parents and teachers who work together to organise a programme of events throughout the school year. These events provide social activities for children and parents, building community spirit both within and outside the school, and of course raise much needed funds for St Joseph's. Throughout the year, a range of events were organised with the focus on raising money for Promethean Panel boards for the school.

27. The School Council

The pupils' School Council was elected in September and met regularly throughout the year. The children were given the opportunity to have their voice heard and input into the decision-making process.

28. Accommodation and Maintenance

Work on progressing the School Enhancement Programme and Improved Access Control continued throughout the year.

A School Enhancement Project Board planning meeting was held on 09 12 2024; however, the project remains at Stage 1, with no agreed plan in place.

The upgrade to Access Control was originally scheduled for 2023 – 2024. The Department of Education's Estates Operation Team informed the Board of Governors on 19 09 2023 that the decision had been taken to pause this project, due to insufficient capital funding available within the education budget to meet the needs across the education sector. The school were finally notified in June 2025 that the access work was to begin, and the scheduled start date is 04 08 2025.

29. LMS Budget Report

The Board of Governors administered a delegated budget of £1,373,789. Details of the three-year plan, 2024 – 2027 are as follows:

SCHOOL FINANCIAL PLAN 2024 - 2027

		THREE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN			
School: St Joseph's Primary (Holland Dr)		Cost Centre: 21206			
EA Locality: East					
		Please complete cells in yellow only			
A Pupils and Teachers		Year 1 (2024-2025)	Year 2 (2025-2026)	Year 3 (2026-2027)	
		Oct 2023	Oct 2024	Oct 2025	Oct 2026
1	Full Time Equivalent Enrolment (excluding Spec Unit pupils)	377	385	376	377
2	Planned Teaching Complement <small>(after amendment to Variables as below)</small>	15.70	16.80	16.80	16.80
3	Planned Pupil/Teacher Ratio (September)	24.01	22.92	22.38	22.44
B Changes in Teaching Staff		Year 1 Change in Staff	Year 2 Change in Staff	Year 3 Change in Staff	
4	Increase in Teachers				
5	Decrease in Teachers <small>(enter as positive Grade must be included to calculate savings)</small>				
C Planned Expenditure		Year 1 (2024-2025)	Year 2 (2025-2026)	Year 3 (2026-2027)	
		£ %	£ %	£ %	
6	Staff Costs - Teaching	1,140,447 84.3%	1,171,360 84.6%	1,171,360 84.5%	
7	Staff Costs - Non Teaching	216,876 16.0%	216,878 15.7%	216,878 15.7%	
8	Staff Costs - Other	800 0.1%	800 0.1%	800 0.1%	
9	Premises, Fixed Plant and Grounds	37,265 2.8%	37,638 2.7%	38,014 2.7%	
10	Operating Costs	39,913 3.0%	40,312 2.9%	40,715 2.9%	
11	Non Capital Purchases	9,535 0.7%	9,630 0.7%	9,726 0.7%	
12	Capital Expenditure	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
13	Less Income <small>(enter as negative figure)</small>	-91,862	-91,862	-91,862	
14	Total Planned Expenditure	1,352,974	1,384,756	1,385,632	
Estimated Savings <small>(enter as a negative figure)</small>					
15	Reduction in Teaching Staff (as per Variables)				
16	<i>Please specify</i>				
17	<i>Please specify</i>				
Estimated Additional Expenditure <small>(enter as a positive figure)</small>					
18	Increase in Teaching Staff (as per Variables)				
19	<i>Please specify</i>				
20	<i>Please specify</i>				
21	Total Planned Expenditure after Savings and Additional Expenditure	1,352,974	1,384,756	1,385,632	
D Budget					
22	Common Formula Funding (CFF)	1,364,986	1,390,037	1,361,855	
23	Other Funding (please specify): SEND	8,803	8,803	8,803	
24	Other Funding (please specify):				
25	Split Site Schools ONLY				
26	Total Budget	1,373,789	1,398,840	1,370,658	
E In Year Movement					
27	In Year Underspend / (Overspend)	20,815	14,084	-14,974	
F Cumulative Position					
28	Carry-over from previous year	631	21,446	35,530	
29	In Year Underspend / -Overspend of delegated resources	20,815	14,084	-14,974	
30	Closing Cumulative Surplus/-Deficit @ 31 March	21,446	35,530	20,556	
31	% Carry Over	1.6%	2.5%	1.5%	
G CATEGORY		Category 5b			

30. Conclusion

If you need to seek further clarification about any issue or topic addressed in this Annual Report, please do not hesitate to contact the current Chair of the Board of Governors, Mrs Patterson, or the Principal, Mr Donnelly. All contact details can be found on the school's website <http://stjosephsps.co.uk/>

We look forward to your continuing support and co-operation in the year ahead.