



Mitchell House School Board of Governors Annual Report 2022-2023

The Principal and Governors of Mitchell House School are pleased to present this report as a summary of the life of the school during school year 2022-2023.

The Board of Governors

Chairperson	Mr William Haughan	EA Representative
Vice Chairperson	Mrs Diane Eakin	DENI Representative
	Mrs Clair Whiteside	EA Representative
	Mrs Lois Totton	DENI Representative
	Vacant	Parent Representative
	Mr Jonny Collins	Parent Representative
	Miss Deborah Graham	Teacher Representative
	Mrs Nuala Crollly	EA Representative
	Mrs Alison Montgomery	Co-opted Representative
	Miss Miriam Donnan	Secretary

The next election of date of reconstitution of Governors will be during school year 2022-2023* *postponed until 2023-2024 by the Education Authority*

Mitchell House School Staff

Principal
Vice Principal

Miss M Donnan
Mr Iain Shanks

Senior Leadership team

Mrs L Boyd
Mrs A Thompson (Temporary)
Miss D Graham (Temporary)

Assistant Teachers

Mrs L Boyd
Mrs P Collins
Miss E Coote (temporary)
Mr B Gordon
Miss D Graham
Mr D Kennedy
Mrs G Magowan
Mrs C Martin (temporary)
Mrs N Milligan (4 days flexible working)
Mrs M Murphy
Miss C McCay
Miss C McIlwaine (3 days part-time permanent)
Mrs T Robinson (2 days part-time temporary March – June)
Miss Z Ryan (3 days part-time permanent)
Mrs Angela Thompson
Mrs Alison Thompson (4 days flexible working)
Miss E Watterson (3 days part-time temporary)

Classroom assistants

Miss E Algar
Miss P Bell
Mrs H Brownlee/Mrs A Matchett (job share)
Mrs J Coey
Mrs R Cooper/Miss S Henderson (job share)
Mrs C Donaghy
Mrs H Devlin
Mrs D Fox
Miss R Kelly
Miss R Laurie
Mrs D Moffett
Miss A Miskimmin
Miss L McCullugh (resigned Dec 22)
Miss D Orr
Mrs E Peterson
Mrs S Perrott
Mrs A Shields
Mrs S Spratt (Adoption Leave)
Mrs M Stewart
Mrs K Thompson/Vacancy (job share)
Miss Z McGrath
Mrs K Wallace

	Mrs C Walker Mrs W Wilson Mrs S Wilgar
General Assistants	Mrs M Boyd (4 days per week) Mrs G Lucas Mrs W Halliday Miss J Halliday Miss D MacMahon (1 day per week)
Senior Clerical Officer	Mrs A Miller/Mrs G Elliott (job share)
Clerical Officer	Mrs P Hull
Technician	Mr B Soley
<u>Ancillary staff</u>	
Building Supervisor	Mr K Comfort
Cleaning Supervisor	Vacancy
Cleaning Staff	Ms M Knihinicka Mrs S Laverty Mr N Stanislaw Vacancy

TRUST STAFF

School Nurse	Miss M Payne
Physiotherapists	Mrs C Haighton Mrs A Wilson Mrs T Weston Mrs V Clarke Mrs K Johnston (Assistant)
Speech & Language Therapists	Mrs L Bloomer Mrs C Parsons Mrs S McCrory (Assistant)
Occupational Therapists	Mrs S Bryans Mrs J Hewitt (maternity Leave) Mrs S Taylor Mrs N Stringer (Assistant)

PUPIL REPRESENTATIVES 2022-2023

Head pupil Scott Robb
Deputy Head pupil Demi Rooney

House Captains Shorts Joshua McCann
 Lewis Dylan Caughey
 Peters Thomas Martin

School Council representatives:

Scott Robb	Chairperson
Louise Eccles	Deputy Chair
Freddie Malcolm	Kestrels
Ethan Rea	Colts
Zechariah Dickson	Jaguars
Ally Swain	Falcons
Katie Millar	Panthers
Joshua McCann	Seahawks
Max Thompson	Sparrows

Our school council were delighted to send their chair and deputy to a joint East Belfast Area Learning Community School Council meeting held in Strathern School.

SCHOOL ENROLMENT

The school accepts pupils with a physical disability and associated learning/sensory needs aged between 3 and 19 years old. Admission is by application to Education Authority Belfast region, 40 Academy Street, Belfast BT1 2NQ

Enrolment	June 2020	June 2021	June 2022	June 2023
Nursery	7	9	6	6
Primary	44	51	55	57
Post Primary	35	36	40	43
Total	86	96	101	106

SCHOOL BUILDING

A capital works project is planned for the replacement of two mobile blocks. A significant amount of time has gone into the planning with the architect team in EA. The business case is to be presented to DE for funding approval before works can start.

Work was carried out in the Post Primary playground to install fencing and a gate to make it a safer area for our pupils to play in.

To improve our Safeguarding procedures fobs were installed in all of the Post Primary classroom doors.

Soft play room was moved to allow for an additional class to be created in Primary. It was moved into the Vice Principal's office. The resource room upstairs underwent a significant upgrade to create an area for Trust staff to complete admin, it will be a shared education and Trust working space.

The PHA removed the requirement for AGP rooms to be used, however there may be a need for them in the future. We have repurposed one of the rooms into a temporary sensory room with the idea that it could easily be changed back to an AGP room.

The sensory room had significant investment to improve the resources, much of the equipment was broken or outdated. This is a great resource for classes to use on a daily basis.

The Sensory Garden is undergoing a makeover. The older pupils have been involved in creating a space that will be enjoyed by everyone in school. We are expecting to continue to develop this area during the new school year.

SCHOOL YEAR

Miss Donnan was asked to help out at Fleming Fulton School for a number of weeks during a period of absence by the Principal. Mr Shanks willingly stepped into the Acting Principal position during Miss Donnan's absence.

In the November meeting the Board of Governors received the annual update from nursing managers. This was informative for the Governors, helping them understand the current nursing needs of the pupils and the demands on the daily task list for the nurse in post.

Staffing pressures were a big challenge this year. The lack availability of substitute staff for teachers and classroom assistants meant that classes had to be closed on occasions. Everyone was very aware that this was not an ideal situation for parents or for pupils therefore the decision to close classes was not taken lightly.

Unfortunately, there were a number of inappropriately placed pupils by the Education Authority despite reservations being expressed. This caused major challenges for the staff and other pupils during the year. The Governors engaged in dialogue with the Education Authority and the Department of Education to resolve the individual cases.

We were delighted to host a group of medical students from Queens University for the first time. This was a really successful placement with positive feedback from staff and the students themselves.

A number of our computers came to the end of their life and were no longer working, therefore a large amount of money had to be invested in replacing some of them. The new computers are greatly appreciated by staff and pupils too.

We were delighted to be able to go back to in person Assemblies during the year, however we recognised that we couldn't safely fit the numbers into the hall that we had prior to COVID. Each week a group of pupils come to the hall and the remainder of the pupils watch Assembly from their classroom.

A visit to Ysgol Y Deri in Wales was arranged and the details shared with staff and Governors afterwards. It was very interesting for everyone to hear how another Special School in the UK operates.

The school formal was back again not having been able to run over the last few years. The pupils really enjoyed their evening celebrating, we were pleased to see some of our past pupils attending too.

The impact of strike action by teachers and classroom assistants resulted in school being closed for a number of days. We are conscious that as yet a resolution has not been agreed and it is likely that the action will continue in the new school year.

The Hearsay project has been running in all the East Belfast Primary schools. We were delighted to be involved. The programme was adapted for our Year 3 pupils and involved input from the Speech and Language Therapy team.

Fundraising events were organised by Friends of Mitchell House at various times during the year, these included: the Christmas Fair and Sponsored Walk.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Due to COVID 19 an interim action plan was drawn up to address the immediate needs of the school and navigating pandemic situations.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is a key priority at all times in Mitchell House School. We recognise how vulnerable our pupils can be and all staff are vigilant in watching for signs of abuse or neglect and listening to the pupils. We maintain clear procedures for receiving, recording and reporting disclosures. Mrs Collins is the Designated teacher. Miss Donnan and Mr Shanks are the Deputy Designated teachers. Mr Collins continues in the role of Designated Governor for Safeguarding. Staff received updated training in August 2022, this was done in small groups to facilitate room sizes. The safeguarding team have met at least once monthly throughout the year and Mrs Collins has met with Mr Collins (Safeguarding Governor).

Referrals were made to the appropriate services for family support when required.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Every teacher has an area of responsibility and takes responsibility for action planning and developing their allocated area of curriculum. The Governors were allocated areas of interest and had the opportunity to meet with the teacher/s to discuss the progress during the year. This year PRSD was put on hold as agreed by the trade unions, however we encouraged the informal sharing of good practice across the school.

We are involved in our local Area Learning Communities for Post Primary, Primary and Special Schools. This provides teachers the opportunity to engage with their colleagues at cluster meetings. These meetings were held using a blended approach this year – some joining face-to-face and others virtually.

Staff were given the opportunity to engage in a number of training sessions during the year including:

- Nurture in Five
- Sensory Circuits
- Sensory room
- Living with Autism

The Shared Education programme resumed again this year. The contact between the schools was limited however it was nice to see pupil interaction restarted again following COVID. The schools involved in the partnership are; Mitchell House, Ashfield Boys' High School, St Joseph's Primary, Ballyhackamore and St Joseph's College, Ravenhill Road.

We continued to run our shared classes with Ashfield where a number of our pupils were able to engage in subjects and qualifications that we can't offer in MHS.

CURRICULUM

Pupils are offered a full range of subjects in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. These may be adapted to suit the individual needs of the pupils.

Foundation/Key stage 1 & 2	Key stage 3	Key stage 4
Language & Literacy	English	English
Mathematics and Numeracy	Mathematics	Mathematics
The Arts	PE Art & Design Music	P.E.
Physical Development and movement	Modern languages	Modern languages
The World Around Us (WAU)	History & Geography Science & Technology & Design	Environment and Society Science & Technology
Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU)	Learning for Life and Work	Learning for Life and Work
R.E.	RE	RE
	Home Economics	Home Economics
	ICT	ICT

There are no statutory requirements for Curriculum at Post 16 but in addition to the core subjects we offer a variety of Occupational Studies units both in school and at other facilities. We also offer involvement in the XL club (Princes Trust) and time for the development of Independent Living Skills.

Leavers have had the opportunity to attend sampling days at for example; BMC, People First, Mencap, Job Club and Edgecumbe Day centre – many of these were virtual tours or information sessions. Some work experience and other STEM events restarted again this year, the pupils enjoyed engaging in these activities.

Physiotherapy Team, Speech and Language Therapy Team and Occupational Therapy Teams support the pupils in accessing the curriculum and work closely with teachers in doing so. The Physio team also facilitate Hydrotherapy sessions and Horse-riding sessions through RDA. We were pleased to get both these activities up and running again after lockdown.

COMMUNITY LINKS & EXTRA CURRICULAR

The school has a range of extensive community links, including meaningful links with George Best City Airport, Tesco and IKEA. Live Active NI are regular visitors in the school and organise a range of sporting activities for the pupils both in and outside of the school. We are well supported by the local churches Knocknagoney and Belmont Presbyterian Church, St Marks Church and the local clergy are regular visitors to the school – this year they provided online videos for our weekly assemblies at the beginning of the year. Towards the end of the year we were delighted to welcome them back into school for our face-to-face assemblies. We have a variety of other organisations who support our assemblies and lessons in school including: Scripture Union and Crown Jesus ministries.

Our extended schools project provides pupils with a variety of after school's clubs and funds various extra-curricular activities such as; yoga, crafts, sports, ICT. Happy Days Children's Charity have been a constant support to us, providing funding for many outings and projects as have the local Rotarians who support us by funding a number of activities

in school. We have been able to use our funding to support the children in school even though we couldn't run the after schools clubs.

As part of our Entitlement Framework arrangements, KS4 pupils in our Enrichment Class attend Belfast Met to study Art.

ATTENDANCE

CLASS	% ATTENDANCE
Ducklings	92%
Robins	76%
Toucans	83%
Swans	82%
Starlings	85%
Penguins	75%
Puffins	77%
Sparrows	79%
Kestrels	70%
Colts	72%
Jaguars	85%
Falcons	73%
Panthers	80%
Seahawks	87%
Total	77%

ASSESSMENT & ACREDITATION

Each pupil at end of Key Stage 1, 2 & 3 are levelled in the areas of Using Communication, Using Mathematics. Levels were not completed due to COVID-19.

Key Stage 4 and Post 16 pupils achieved accreditation in March and June 2023.

Exam Board	Qualification	Subject	Level	Number of Pupils
Pearson	BTEC Level 3	Sport	Merit	2
CCEA	Entry level	History	1	1
CCEA	Entry level	English	1	1
CCEA	Entry level	Science	1	1
CCEA	Entry level	Life Skills	1	1
CCEA	Entry level	Geography	2	1
CCEA	Entry level	Maths	2	2
CCEA	Entry level	Maths	1	1

CHARITY 2022-2023 (August 22 – July 23)

Donations Received

NICVA Donation	£100.00
Mr and Mrs Gillespie	£100.00
Mr and Mrs Maginness	£400.00
George Best Belfast City Airport Staff Donation	£50.00
Rotary Club	£500.00
Dreams Employee	£250.00
Penryn School	£1,760.57
Total	£3160.57

Donations Made

Shoe Box Appeal	£140.00
NI Children's Hospice	£216.00
Dementia UK	£88.00
NSPCC	£50.75
Meningitis Now	£121.00
New Life	£87.68
Jeans for Genes	£95.00
Total	£798.43

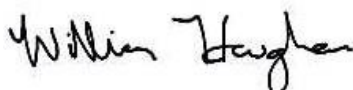
ARTICLE 60 (PARTIALLY DELEGATED) BUDGET ALLOCATION FROM EA TO MITCHELL HOUSE SCHOOL

Funds Allocated	£124,208
Amount Spent	£126,980
Overspend	£2,771

Other earmarked funding for financial year ending March 2023

Extended Schools*	£23,967
Entitlement Framework	£6,427
Shared Education	£404
Engage	£14,621
Happy Healthy Minds	£4,276
SEND	£30,000
Home School Link	£14,086

**Note: We are the cluster lead for Extended Schools therefore a higher budget is given to provide materials/training for the cluster of schools.*



Chairperson's Signature:

Date: 18 September 23