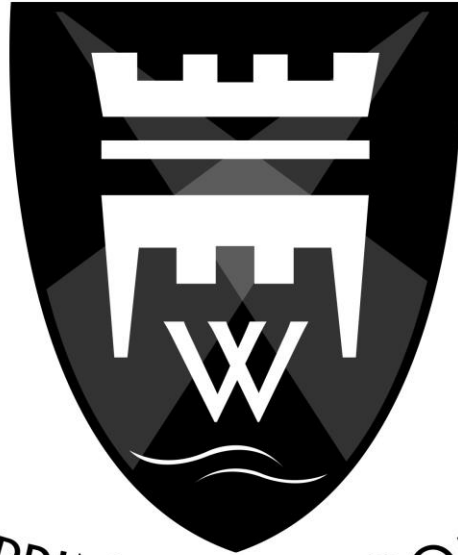


WHITEABBEY



PRIMARY SCHOOL

BOARD OF GOVERNORS'
ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

Welcome from the Chair, Mr Mark Chambers,

Dear Parents,

The Board of Governors are pleased to present the **2024/25 Annual Board of Governors Report** to the parents of pupils attending **Whiteabbey Primary School**. We trust that it will help to keep you up to date on ongoing school business, developments and overall progress throughout the school year.

The **2024/25** Academic year was another year of many highs for the school including the completion of our refurbished and extended play areas for our children costing over £66,000, Our school achieving the Silver Level of the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award, the refurbishment of our canteen, the further refurbishment of our classrooms and the commencement of the Library Corridor Extension in October 2024. Sadly we continued to be badly impacted in our school and local community by storms in December and again in January damaging trees in our grounds.

Our Governors were reconstituted this year and we welcome Mrs Russell, Mr Hendron, Mr McCrisken and Mr Tierney as new governors on to our Board for the first time. Our governors have continued to work closely with the Principal and staff throughout the school year. This year we conducted face to face and online meetings and catered for a wide range of topics including Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Recruitment, Sport, Finance, and various building works happening in our school this year.

The Senior Management Team in the school, work tirelessly to ensure that Mr Wysner is supported in all aspects of our school life. The children continue to be at the heart of every decision that is made.

Our Board of Governors fully recognises the enormous challenges that our Principal continues to face on a daily basis. With such difficult financial constraints and budget cuts, careful financial management has and will continue to be required whilst we also provide the best opportunities possible for our children.

In a year that has seen over £1,500,000 of investment by the school, our PTA and the Education Authority our Board of Governors would like to thank Mr Wysner for all his hard work and leadership throughout the past year. He leads a very dedicated and hard-working team of teaching and non-teaching staff who always do their best for each and every child.

Our Board of Governors fully appreciates and thanks all our parents for your ongoing support for our hard-working staff and also our PTA Committee lead by volunteers Mrs Dwyer and Mr Baxter. This support is vital in ensuring that our pupils are given the very best possible opportunity to succeed.

Finally, Whiteabbey PS is, once again, very fortunate to have a dedicated and passionate group of Governors that care about the children and the school. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their support and dedication.

I hope that this report will be useful in providing parents and friends alike with a brief synopsis of life in Whiteabbey Primary School.

Mark Chambers

Chair of the Board of Governors

COMPOSITION OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS & STAFF:

Composition of Board of Governors & Staff:

TRANSFERORS' REPRESENTATIVES 2024-2028

Mr M Chambers (Chairperson)

Prof N Blair (Vice Chair)

Mrs S Boal

Mr M Hendron

EDUCATION AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES 2024-2028

Education Authority Representatives:

Mrs P Barr & Mrs S Russell

PARENTS' REPRESENTATIVES 2024-2028

Mr J McCrisken & Mr M Tierney

TEACHERS' REPRESENTATIVE

Miss S Kidd

SECRETARY TO THE BOARD (*NON-VOTING*):

Mr K Wysner

Our governors were invited to attend a variety of Governor training sessions organised by the Education Authority e.g., First Time Governor Training, Financial Management, Recruitment & Selection and Safeguarding/Child Protection training both online and in person.

Our governors are also given regular updates on school policies and issues by the Principal and Staff of the school.

COMPOSITION OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS & STAFF:

STAFF & CLASS STRUCTURE

Principal: Mr K Wysner

Vice-Principal: Miss S Kidd

Head of Foundation Stage: Mrs M McCallan

Head of Keystage 1: Mrs H Halliday

Head of Keystage 2: Mrs V Miller

Classes:

P1 Mrs J Beggs / Mrs C Currie

P1 Mrs M McCallan

P2 Miss H Glasgow

P2 Mrs N Gray / Mrs L Houston

P3 Mr I Hanvey

P3 Miss S Wylie

P4 Mrs C Ashe

P4 Mrs H Halliday

P5 Miss S Kidd

P5 Mrs V Miller

P6 Mrs L McCormick

P6 Ms J Moge

P7 Miss H Halliday (Covering for Mrs H. McGinn)

P7 Mr C Murtagh (Covering for Mr P Hill)

Part Time Learning Support: Mrs E Blacoe

Classroom Assistants: Mrs D Burke, Mrs J Burns, Mrs G Butler, Mrs S Campbell, Mrs A Crowe, Mrs A Davidson, Mrs T Dixon; Miss B Fraser, Mrs H Graham, Miss I Gray, Mrs J Hinton, Mrs J Huntley, Mrs L McConnell, Mrs K McCullough, Mrs S. McFeeters, Miss R Morrow, Miss A Nicholl, Mrs H Nixon, Miss H Owens, Miss E Potter, Miss L Shephard, Mrs M Templeton, Ms L Thabeth,

Secretaries: Miss D Bradley & Mrs C Crawford

Buddies Daycare Staff: Ms S Arbuthnot, Miss JL Rodgers

Housekeeping Team: Mr M Broadhurst; Mr G Oldham, Mrs Y Strange, Ms S Taylor, Miss D Wallace

Head Cook: Mrs H Delaney

RESPONSIBILITIES & DUTIES OF OUR GOVERNORS

Responsibilities & Duties of our Governors

RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR GOVERNORS

The appointment and overseeing of staff.

The admissions policy.

The overseeing of the curriculum.

The fostering of links with the community and the furthering of the objectives of mutual understanding.

The maintenance of the premises.

The control of the delegated budget.

DUTIES OF OUR GOVERNORS

The Board met regularly throughout the year in person. Sub-Committees met as and when necessary.

At each regular meeting of the Board consideration is given to finance and the Principal reports on all aspects of the work of the school. The Board also responds to documents prepared by the Department of Education and the Education Authority and conducts interviews for staff teaching and Non-Teaching vacancies when required.

The Finance Committee meet as and when necessary.

The Safeguarding Team meet termly during the school year. In this team are the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection, the Designated Governor for Child Protection and the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

An Appointments Committee may make non-teaching appointments, if required, on behalf of the Board of Governors.

There were no claims made by Governors for expenses.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES - TEACHING & LEARNING

School Activities - Teaching & Learning

THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM & SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The Northern Ireland Curriculum is fully implemented. Revised annual reporting and planning formats are working well. Teachers have spent many hours revising curriculum notes and restructuring schemes of work, with a focus on Literacy, Numeracy, ICT and Special Educational Needs. End of-Key-Stage testing also remained contentious in 2024-25 due to action from teachers' unions. Our school did participate in trials for the new standardised tests being developed by the Council for Curriculum Examination & Assessment (CCEA).

The Literacy curriculum is being revised to take into account best practice and available resources, particularly in reading and writing. Our Literacy coordinator Mrs McCormick and Learning Support Coordinator Mrs Halliday have been working closely with our staff to further develop all our understanding of conditions like dyslexia and neurodiversity and how these impact on our children's learning approaches and how our staff can best provide for this in the modern classroom.

With the support of our PTA we have been following the British Dyslexia Associations guides for best practice and in June 2025 just as the school year was drawing to a close, we were assessed externally and were awarded the Dyslexia Friendly School quality mark for our provision throughout the school in support of children with specific difficulties in Literacy.

The numeracy curriculum is being monitored, evaluated and developed by Mrs McCallan who has in 2024/25 been developing our school teaching of number and measure. The school has also been imbedding White Rose Maths resources and attempting to source additional appropriate resources for our classrooms. Cost and flexibility of materials continue to be the largest obstacles.

In ICT, significant investment by school continues to provide additional hardware in our classrooms and new Active Promethean panels in all our classrooms. The new library corridor extension has also provided three additional panels which will be used in our SEN Learning Support Room, the new *Glenavna Room*, a multipurpose meeting room in the new extension and the third panel will remain on a trolley for use in rooms and spaces where there isn't a permanent panel already located.

SUPPORTING OUR CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS:

SEN provision grew within 2024/25 with Miss Glasgow joining our SEN Team as *Assistant Learning Support Coordinator*. Miss Glasgow has been developing our Sensory Room provision this year and activity programmes for our children who require a sensory diet of activities to help them regulate and access the curriculum within their mainstream class. We hope to launch a new sensory trail within our main building in the 2025/26 school year.

Also, in 2025/26 we hope to utilise our new *Glenavna Room*. This space will allow us additional teaching facilities for our available staff and peripatetic staff to be timetabled with our children on a 1:1 and small group basis.

Mrs Halliday, as our Learning Support Coordinator, continues to lead a busy and growing area of our school community. Provision for our children with additional needs continues to be an under resourced area of the education sector in Northern Ireland. However, within Whiteabbey PS, our governors are committed to continuing to fund and support this critical area for our children as and when funding can be identified or generated and appropriately allocated to meet the needs of all our children.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – OTHER AREAS:

School Activities – Other Areas:

ENROLMENT AND ADMISSIONS

2024/25 Enrolment Number: 425

P1 Admission Number: 58 of a possible 60 places

2024/25 Average Attendance for P1-7: 96.6%

93 children had at least 99% attendance in 2024/25

Our school has high expectations of every child and family with regards to pupil attendance and we have a policy available on our school website that details this. We close our whole school at 2pm every Friday and this is an ideal time for our parents to arrange routine appointments so our children can remain in school during the normal school day.

We expect our children to attend school *every* day that we are open, unless they are sick and we will be in contact with our parents if any child's attendance is at risk of falling below our expected norms.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING

School Development Days in 2024/25 were used for training in Safeguarding for our whole staff. Pupil Assessment, Literacy, Numeracy, SEN and ICT training for all teaching staff. Monitoring of staff performance is usually through Performance Related Staff Development however with Action Short of Strike during 2024/25 this was not possible this year. We hope for a return during 2025/26.

Teaching Staff, Non Teaching Staff and Key Stage meetings occur on a regular basis to discuss new initiatives, educational innovations and to keep abreast of current issues impacting our learning community.

COMMUNITY LINKS

Our school maintains strong links with the nursery, secondary and special schools in the local area. Our children are active within the local community and continue to be provided with opportunities to be involved in music, sports and other events throughout the Council and wider Belfast areas. We endeavor to support projects organised by the community close to the school and those arranged by Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council.

Through participation in various events organised within school and by outside agencies, our children build relations with their wider local community.

We are a government controlled school and by virtue established as a school with Christian ethos and values. These values and ethos shape our policies, celebration of festivals and decision making. We are however not religiously *exclusive* and encourage our children of other faiths and none to follow the spiritual pathway of their family. Regular visitors to our Christian Assemblies include representatives of local churches and Christian charities and organisations.

POLICY REVIEW

During 2024/25 our Board of Governors have supported management with ongoing policy review with the introduction of weekly review meetings with the Principal in order to identify priority policies requiring implementation and the monitoring and review of established policies. This has addressed a number of the priorities created as a result of Action Short of Strike Action and we hope this level of support will continue during 2025/26.

SAFEGUARDING & SECURITY:

Safeguarding & Security:

CHILD PROTECTION, SAFEGUARDING & ASSOCIATED RECORD KEEPING

The safeguarding and welfare of our children is paramount over: any other benefit the school may offer our children, or indeed the privacy of the individuals and the reputation and good name of our school.

Within Whiteabbey Primary School, on a day to day basis, the Principal is responsible for Safeguarding ably supported by a Safeguarding Team led by Mrs Viv Miller who is Designated Teacher for Child Protection and leads the broad area of Safeguarding within our school. Mrs Miller is supported by all our Senior Management Team who are all trained as Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.

Our Board of Governors have a Safeguarding Sub Committee who are reported to on a regular basis and at every meeting of our full Board of Governors the Principal will report on Child Protection matters and Safeguarding in general within our community.

All staff and regular volunteers are Access NI checked and receive Child Protection training on an annual basis. They can issue a *Note of Concern* to Mrs Miller if they are in any way concerned about a child in our care and the Safeguarding Team then proceed and lead with the matter from then.

In every classroom our children are taught, in an age appropriate way, how they and others should behave to maintain their safety and who in our school they can seek help from if they are concerned about how others are presenting around them. Each class has a poster identifying who our children can talk to if they need help, as well as their class teacher.

Notes of Concern, referrals and contact with outside agencies is maintained and documented as appropriate in our school. First Aid notes are sent home and the school operates a strict *"Head bumps need a phone call policy"*.

While we attempt to be as thorough as possible, we also respect the privacy of our children and their families and information relating to ongoing safeguarding matters is kept on a need to know basis. The private life of our families is just that, private, although again the safeguarding and welfare of our children takes paramouncy over even the privacy of a family involved.

SCHOOL SECURITY

During the school day our main front doors are locked and gates into the playgrounds closed. Access to visitors is granted by office staff, who release the doors remotely. All other exterior doors facing the staff car park are locked during school hours (can be opened from inside.) Most of our school site and communal areas are covered by CCTV. The school has security risk-assessments in place and an emergency action plan for evacuations, lock-down and a planned off-site 'place of shelter' within our local community should the need arise.

All visitors and contractors are signed in, given a visitor pass and briefed by our office staff, caretakers or Principal.

We have a separate fire alarm system to the school *class change* bells and we regularly test our evacuation procedures on a termly basis.

Further information regarding our school organisation and policy statements are readily available on our school website or from our school office staff.

Finance & Accounts

GOVERNMENT BUDGET/LMS BUDGET

The government budget is formally called the *Local Management of Schools* budget (LMS). Our Board of Governors is responsible for the financial management of the school and it delegates responsibility for the day-to-day running of the budget to the Principal. This account is externally supervised by the Education Authority.

The figures below relate to the financial year **April 2024 – March 2025**

Reported Deficit for 2023/24: -£183,628.00

Total LMS Budget for 2024/2025: £1,454,779.00

Total Expenditure for 2024/2025: £ 1,550,163.00

This resulted in a reported deficit of: -£ 279,012.00

SCHOOL PRIVATE FUNDS

The School Private Funds Account consists of money donated by the Parents & Teachers' Association, profits from Buddies, After School Clubs and the sale of school photographs, merchandise etc.

At the end of June 2025 there was a balance of £53,575.11 in the account.

The money in this account is used to refurbish playgrounds and classrooms within the school, make donations to charities, provide trophies and prizes, subsidise class trips, purchase equipment, provide additional books for our libraries and meet general classroom expenditure above and beyond the limitations of the LMS Budget above.

This account is externally audited and a certificate is awarded and presented to our Board of Governors each year to verify this. Accounts are available on request to view in school.