

Board of Governors' Report Rosstulla School

2023/24

Statement of Ethos

At Rosstulla, we are committed to being a welcoming school in which everyone feels valued, respected and supported. We aim to provide a nurturing, inclusive learning environment where each child is enabled to reach their full potential. We will strive to develop the life skills each pupil needs to become a valued member of their community, celebrating individual success and achievement along the way.

Values

Safety & Security

Teamwork & Support

Respect & Kindness

Vision statement

At Rosstulla we strive to provide an inclusive, safe and nurturing environment with respect for the individual needs of each pupil. We aim to provide a flexible, holistic and fun curriculum which will help to build confident and happy young people, prepared for life beyond school.

Mission statement

We work collaboratively in staff teams, with parents & other agencies.

We take a supportive, nurturing and caring approach.

We centre all our decisions around the needs of the pupils.

We provide flexible, fun and skills-based learning opportunities.

TAG: TOGETHER TOWARDS TOMORROW

Membership of the Board of Governors

Dr. A. Preston (Chairperson)-member nominated by EA

Mrs. L. Stewart (Vice-Chairperson and Child Protection Governor) member nominated by EA

Mrs A. Magee member nominated by EA

Rosemary Craig Dept. of Education

Karen Mace Dept. of Education

Laura Porter elected by parents

Mr Andrew Vance elected by parents

Mr W Shirlow member elected by teaching staff

Miss L. Matchett (Secretary to the Board of Governors and non- voting member)

The Board of Governors was reconstituted in January 2025. The current term of office is 2024-2028.

Introduction

Dear Parents/Carers

As Chairman of the Board of Governors of Rosstulla School it gives me great pleasure to introduce our Annual Report for the year 2023/24. The Annual Report normally provides an overview of important events in the school calendar during the past academic year and contains information about the life of the school and it's management. In particular, can I draw your attention to a number of important initiatives:

- 2023/24 saw the start of our new 3-year School Development Plan where the school draws up plans of what it hopes to achieve over the next 3 years and, perhaps more importantly, how it expects to do this. The outworking of this plan saw the development of a more flexible curriculum, shaped by the needs of pupils

– Staff have attended a 'Whole School Together' programme that has led to a review of school practices and procedures for better supporting the children and young people to reach their educational and personal goals

– Safeguarding and Child Protection remains a top priority for the school community and one area that has received much attention this year has been e-safety with it's focus on the safe use of the internet

– Our partially delegated finances continue to remain on a sound basis and in particular, I would like to acknowledge and thank all those supporters of the school this year who have donated over £16,500 to our Private School a/c that is used exclusively to enrich the learning experiences of our children and young people here at Rosstulla.

– Finally, in line with the ongoing task of embedding our school ethos across all that we do, more skills-based programmes have been developed to support our pupils in becoming valuable members of their community

As ever, a very busy and challenging year that is typical of life at Rosstulla school.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Governors I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our principal Miss Laura Matchett and staff, both teaching and non-teaching, for their dedication to the school, for the sacrifices made, and for their commitment to the individual needs of each and every pupil. None of the good work highlighted by the report could be accomplished without the combined effort of all members of the school community.

Dr Alan Preston (Chair, Board of Governors)

Enrolment

The school has places for 150 pupils aged between 3 and 18 years old and placement is by request of Special Education at EA, North Eastern Region.

In 2023-24 we had 155 pupils on roll.

Staffing Allocation

The staffing budget remains under the control of the Education Authority and was agreed as followed for the year 2023-2024

1	Principal
1	Non-Teaching Vice-Principal
20.6	FTE Teachers
1	Discretionary Teacher School refusers' support
1	Discretionary Classroom Assistant School refusers' support
1235	Hours Classroom Assistance 38 FTE
50	Hours Classroom Assistance 2 x 25 hour posts (Early Years)
130	Hours Classroom Assistance Discretionary Allocation for named pupils
27.5	Hours Behaviour Support Assistance
36	Hours Executive Officer
15	Hours Clerical Officer
36	Hours Building Supervisor

The Education Authority completed a review of management points allocated to special schools which resulted in some additional management points for Rosstulla. These were recruited under a new agreed management structure to start in September 2024.

School Finance

The school continues to have a partially delegated budget.

Article 60 Allocation	
Pupils' allocation @ £376.39 per pupil	£59538
Non-controllable costs including services	£75,434
Entitlement Framework	
Extended Schools	£11,577
Shared Education	£4024
Summer Provision	£30,000
SEND funding	£15,000
Getting Ready to Learn	£875

We would like to thank all the individuals and agencies who donated or raised money for the school this year and in particular to the parents for their generous donations to the school.

Donations for 2023-2024 – Private School Account

1000.00 – Bursary for Gardens – Lorraine
 300.00 – Enkalon – for Christmas
 6043.13 – PFR
 1500.00 – PFR – Residential
 1350.00 – MAC computers
 1000.00 – Forever Manchester – Breakfast Club
 50.00 – Irene Pritchard – John Smyth
 170.00 – John Smyth – from Funeral Directors
 20.00 - John Smyth – from Funeral Directors
 70.00 - John Smyth – from Funeral Directors
 5000.00 – Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council – In school clubs

Total - £16503.13

School Development Plan

In September 2023 we started a new 3-year cycle of School Development for Rosstulla School. A 3-year overview of this plan can be viewed on the school website.

We identified 5 main areas for development including:

- Classroom management
- Developing communication strategies
- Developing indoor & outdoor play/active learning
- Curriculum review including Assessment & Accreditation
- Wellbeing and Support for Pupils, Staff & Families

For each of these areas we have identified our desired outcomes under priority headings:

- Child Centered provision
- Teaching and Learning
- Leadership and management
- Community Links

Staff worked within Departmental Teams, led by departmental leaders to produce action plans relevant to the department and to progress these actions to achieve our intended outcomes.

Teaching, Learning & Curriculum

During 2023-24 school year we introduced a wide range of new initiatives in Rosstulla, in response to the changing needs of our pupils.

We have introduced a flexible curriculum which is fluid, shaped by the needs of the pupils. Our timetables ensure the pupils have more time with form teachers, meaning they can feel safe and secure with the class staff team and have better opportunities to build relationships with peers and key staff within the class. Within Secondary, we have balanced this with opportunities to access specialist subjects such as technology and Design, Music, PE and Art.

For all pupils we have introduced more opportunities for active learning, often providing movement breaks and brain breaks throughout the school day.

Pupils have enjoyed a wealth of extracurricular activities through in school clubs and after school clubs including Gardening club, Archery club, Sportstopia, Gaming club and Pamper room. Year 10 class thoroughly enjoyed the Into Film animation project.

Many of our programmes have been set up through Extended Schools funding. In particular our primary students have had sessions with Little Learners, Popping Pilates, Soft Play bus, The Sensory Coach, Messy Minda and Jump, Jiggle, Jive.

We are proud to have become a Special Olympics school. A number of staff are now trained as leaders and had a fabulous launch day in March.

We have developed our sensory provision across the school through additional resources, creating break out spaces and sensory spaces for the pupils, and through training for staff.

Primary have continued to embed consistent use of Tuft, Trays, Attention Autism, Curiosity Approach, Sensory play, Sensory stories and Outdoor Learning. The common thread through all of this work is building on the communication skills of the pupils.

We have rolled out Attention Autism within Secondary and introduced 6 bricks strategies. Cross curricular learning has been a big focus ensuring learning is connected to real life experiences. This also encourages pupils to work alongside peers and in groups.

Pupils' voices are increasingly important in the development of the school. Our Schools Council & Eco Schools group organised a Healthy Eating week which encouraged students to try a range of different healthy foods each day. They completed a fantastic recycling project in school and achieved the Green Flag award for all their endeavors.

We celebrate the success and achievement of pupils through daily wow moments, weekly assemblies, pupil of the week awards. One of the highlights of the year was the interhouse Dodgeball completion which involved all Secondary pupils and staff. We were delighted to have such a good turn out by parents for Secondary Prize Day in November and Primary fun day in May.

Staff Continual Professional Development

Our main focus for all staff training was the Whole School Together Programme which was delivered over 6 sessions by EA Primary Behaviour Support Service. As an outcome we have reviewed our practices and procedures for supporting our pupils and updated our Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy.

In addition to this relevant staff have accessed training in the following areas:

Safeguarding
Curiosity Approach
Zones of regulation
Widgit online
Attention Autism
Sensology
Forest schools
Gestalt Language processing
Leaders as Coach
Supporting wellbeing
Team Teach
Special Olympics

There has been a great emphasis on building staff teams and on staff working in collaboration with each other, with pupils, families and with other agencies. Staff have supported each other by disseminating training and sharing good practice.

Accreditation 23-24

Our Key stage 4 and 5 worked hard to achieve the following results and we celebrated with families at Prize day Wednesday 8th November 2023.

OCN NI Entry Level Certificate in Essential Skills Literacy:

Entry Level 1: 5 students

Entry Level 2: 5 students

Entry Level 3: 1 student

OCN NI Entry Level Certificate in Essential Skills Numeracy:

Entry Level 1: 17 students

Entry Level 2: 8 students

Entry Level 3: 7 students

CCEA Entry Level Art: 8 students

CCEA Entry Level Life Skills:

Level 1: 5 students

Level 2: 22 students

PRINCE'S TRUST Level 1 Certificate in Personal Development and Employability Skills: 15 students

Voluntary Impact Award: 6 students

Developing skills for Life (2 units): 6 students

Accommodation

We have had a further minor works project completed in the school to support us in accommodating the more severe and complex needs. Early years classrooms have been extended, and a swing room and soft playroom

were built into each room. We have made good use of last year's minor works through the set-up of the wellness room, chill room and sensory room along Key stage 3 corridor.

Pastoral & Safeguarding

Safeguarding and child protection practices remain a top priority in Rosstulla. The safeguarding team for 23-24 includes Dr Preston (Chairperson of Board of Governors), Mrs Lynda Stewart (Child Protection Governor), Mrs Caroline McCarthy (Designated Teacher), Mrs Suzanne Sloan and Mrs Nichola Shannon (Deputy Designated Teachers) and Miss Laura Matchett (Principal).

E-safety awareness is a key area of need for all our pupils and therefore we have been developing support in this area in particular through school assemblies, class circle time discussions and planned lessons. We have continued to use the Safer Internet App and resource to support with this. We have facilitated workshops on antibullying, safe use of internet, and provided focused programmes in relation to relationship issues, social media and self-management.

The PSNI delivered some sessions to our older pupils on the dangers of using drugs and alcohol. EA youth serviced offered some sessions to our year 11 groups on 'Motivating Learning'

We support the emotional and social needs of our pupils through nurturing approaches and have continued to use attachment and trauma sensitive approaches and have continued to embed the take 5 steps to wellbeing programme.

We were able to access some additional counselling sessions for our Secondary pupils. Primary pupils' accessed play therapy through WayMaker child therapy group. We continue to have the therapy dogs visiting through Pets as Therapy and we also invested in some music therapy for individuals. Some pupils benefited from the Learning with horses' programme at Laurelvale which is of great therapeutic value.

New to 2023-24 and thanks to some additional funding we were able to offer a support service for pupils in the school who suffer from school-based anxiety. Some pupils who were non-attenders began to re-engage and others at risk of becoming school refusers, got the support they needed to help maintain their attendance. We place a high value on working alongside parents and families in creating a wraparound support for wellbeing.

Community Links

In line with our statement of Ethos we have prioritised more life skills-based programmes for our pupils in recognition of the need for them to develop independent skills to support them in becoming valuable members of their community. For this reason, we endeavor to provide regular and varied opportunities for our pupils to get connected with the community.

During 2023-24 pupils have enjoyed a range of educational visits to The Ulster Museum, Kilcreggan Farm, Jungle NI, Colin Glen, W5, local parks, local shops and cafes.

Our residential trip took place on April 24 to Greenhill YMCA with our year 8,9 &10's.

Pupils also access swimming in Ballyclare Leisure Centre and senior pupils have access to leisure studies in our local gyms.

Our fantastic school choir took part and won the Ballyclare music festival and also sang for the residents in Jordanstown Care home.

Key stage 3 engaged in a fantastic programme called 'Linking generations' also with Jordanstown Care home.

Our year 13 group have been involved in community-based outing on a weekly basis for example to local care homes, Antrim Gardens, Council offices at Mossley Mill, Ballyearl Arts and leisure facility.

We have also had a range of outside providers into school to support individuals and groups of pupils.

The Replay Theatre Company presented an immersive, sensory experience for some of our autistic and non-verbal students.

The Ulster Scots agency offered drumming workshops to some Secondary music groups.

The Fire Service NI brought a Fire Engine on site, much to the delight of our Primary students.

The Ulster University Students hosted a Christmas Party for Key stage 3 pupils and then organised a party in school for the primary students.

We are also grateful to the Ulster University for providing the facilities once again for our Sports day which was a huge success in the Summer term.

Secondary pupils have accessed accredited courses through a number of outside providers such as Access Employment Larne, Belfast Metropolitan College, Newtownabbey Regional College, Restore Ballymena. They have also been able to access some work experience opportunities through local hairdressers, primary schools, local retail businesses, farms, horse riding centres and gyms.

Secondary pupils took part in the interschools sports programme including Dodgeball competitions, Football Competitions and Games competitions, organised by the PE teachers across several Special schools.

We continue to build our shared education programme with Hill Croft school and have further developed our extended School programme to include neighbouring schools Thornfield and Jordanstown. We continue to work within the area learning community which includes Glengormley High School, Belfast High, Newtownabbey Community College, Hill Croft, Thornfield and Jordanstown School.

We would like to thank the volunteer groups DSV and Price water House who gave up their time to come out to school to complete clean-up projects around the school grounds and heavy-duty landscaping to create some usable play spaces for the pupils.

We wish all our school leavers every success for the future and look forward to welcoming a group of new students for 2024-25.

**Dr A Preston
L Matchett**

**Chairperson of Board of Governors
Principal**