



Sandbrook Nursery School

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

The Board of Governors is required to give parents an Annual Report so that they know what is happening in the Nursery School.

The report cannot cover every aspect of school activity. If there are any issues which you feel to be important, please contact the Principal who will notify the Board of Governors.

The future begins here

Dear Parents and Carers,

As Chair of the Boards of Governors, it gives me great pleasure to present the 2024-25 Annual Report.

The highlights of the year, as always, were the Christmas Nativity/Winter Celebration and the Graduation Ceremony with the children showcasing their talents to a captivated audience.

I'm delighted to say that Sandbrook Nursery continues to build upon the solid foundations set by Mrs. Cromie in conjunction with the previous Board. I would like to thank Gareth Beattie and Amanda Smith for their efforts as Members of the previous Board of Governors and to wish them well for the future.

I want to thank all our staff for all that they do on a daily basis to make Sandbrook such a great place to be, delivering child centred learning that captivates the imagination, welcoming Miss Rodney who this year joined the staff team here at Sandbrook.

As your child moves on, they go with not only our best wishes, but with a foundation that will stand by them as they progress on to the next stage of their education.

Stephen Warke

Chair, Board of Governors

Membership of the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors of Sandbrook Nursery School has overall responsibility for the management of the School. They work in partnership with the Principal who translates this shared responsibility into the day to day management and organisation of the Nursery.

Under the Terms of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, the Board of Governors met at least termly during the school year. The present Board of Governors was reconstituted during 2025-2029 and the Board will serve a four-year term.

Representing

Chairman and EA Representative	Mr. Stephen Warke
Vice-Chairman and Parent Representative	Mr. Christopher Eisenstadt
Governor responsible for Child Protection and Safeguarding /DENI Representative/PRSD Governor	Mrs. Jill Hughes
EA Representative /Designated Governor for Health, Welfare and Attendance	Mrs Nicola Kirkwood
Parent Representative/PRSD Governor	Mrs. Helen Dodds
Teacher Representative	Mrs. Padrine Gorman
Secretary	Mrs. Lee-Anne Cromie

The Governors have particular responsibilities in relation to:

- The Curriculum
- Pastoral Care with specific reference to Safeguarding
- Open enrolment and admissions procedures
- Behaviour Management
- SEND
- Financial procedures
- The appointment of staff
- The school building and site

The Board of Governors work closely with the Principal to further develop a framework of management for the school.

Pupil Admissions

During the year 2024-2025 a total of 52 children were enrolled in two classes of full-time sessions. Annual attendance of children was 91%.

The Staff Team

Teaching Principal/ Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs. L Cromie
Assistant Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs. P Gorman
Temporary Job Share Teacher	Miss. K Rodney
Nursery Assistant	Mrs. S Forsythe
Nursery Assistant	Miss. M Astbury
General Assistant/SEN Assistant	Mrs. P Cooke
SEN Assistant	Miss. E. Weatherup
Secretary	Mrs. P Cooke
Building Supervisor	Mr. J McConkey
Catering Assistant	Mrs. C. Neill

Staffing and Staff Development

Mrs Cromie is the class teacher in Nursery 1 and Mrs P Gorman and temporary teacher Miss K Rodney are class teachers in Nursery 2. Mrs Cooke has continued in clerical position on a temporary basis 12 hours per week and took on the role of SEN 22.5 hours as a temporary cover position.

Staff Development Days and Baker Days

The staff team are fully committed to updating and increasing their expertise. In- service training takes place in a variety of ways; during the statutory non-teaching days and School Development Days. During 2024-2025, in addition to attending a small number of training courses delivered through EA (online).

Bakers Days	Day	Date	Focus of Staff development
1	1	20.8.24	Risk Assessment Classroom organisation and curriculum planning
2	2	21.8.24	School Calendar Planning Classroom organisation and curriculum planning Staff Handbook and School Policies
3	3	22.8.24	Prep for induction Day (23.8.24)
4	4	27.8.24	Epi-Pen training/Child Protection Training/Asthma/Epilepsy SDP/Self evaluation
5	5	28.8.24	Classroom organisation and curriculum planning Child Protection and Safeguarding

SDD	Day	Date	Focus on Staff Development
	1	3.1.25	Wellbeing for staff and children
	2	6.1.25	Planning and curriculum development- linking with SDP
	3	18.3.25	Bilingualism Training RISE NI
	4	6.5.25	SEND legislation – focus on SEN provision mapping and also SEN audit for next school year
	5	6.5.25	Self-evaluation and school development planning for new cycle

Training included:

Bilingualism	Epilepsy Awareness	Anaphylaxis Training
Safeguarding and Child Protection	Graduated Response	Middletown Training-ASD Awareness
Designated Teacher Training	TinyLife	Breastfeeding Awareness Scheme
NI Hospice-Bereavement Training	Food and Hygiene	

The Pre-School Curriculum

The school curriculum is based on the N.I. Pre-School Curriculum Guidelines. The aim of the Board of Governors is to provide a stable and nurturing environment in which the potential of each child is realised in all aspects of their development. For young children, a play-based curriculum is essential to their learning process and affords them an appropriate way to progress and flourish. The staff work as a team to deliver a rich, challenging and motivating curriculum appropriate to the child's age and stage of development.

Although young children learn in a holistic way, the Pre-School Curriculum recognises the need for progression in learning and so is organised in six discrete areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional development
- Language development
- Early Mathematical development
- Physical development and Movement
- The World round Us
- The Arts

The staff team planned a framework for potential progression in learning incorporating these areas but one that also responded to the needs and interests of the children.

Mrs Cromie is the Designated Teacher to whom all Child Protection referrals should be made and in their absence, Assistant Teachers Mrs Gorman and Miss Rodney are the Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection.

Special Educational Needs

Children with special educational needs were identified, assessed and Individual Education Plans were devised to meet their needs, 6 children were placed on the register (3 Stage 3, 2 Stage 2, 1 Stage 1). Regular contact was maintained throughout the year with outside agencies including

Speech and Language therapists, Autism Advisory Service, Education Authority Language and Communication Service Educational Psychologists, Early Years Special Educational Need Inclusion Service, Health Visitors and members of the N.I. R.I.S.E. team.

All professionals contributed advice and assistance for specific individuals and this multi-agency approach proved effective in collaborating to adequately meet the range of diverse needs.

Parental Involvement

Partnership with parents is steadily becoming an important part of Nursery life again. Seesaw communication app continued to enhance communication with parents.

Parents and carers contributed to the School Fund which pays for the children's daily snack and enrichment activities including cooking and tasting activities, aspects of play, art and craft resources and visitors to school, i.e. Wee Critters; World of Owls, Mr Hullabaloo and any other topic based visitors. Nursery also purchased Christmas and end of year gifts for the children and provided party food.

A play based information session was held for parents – one morning. This was a 1-hour informal session that taught parent how to make playdough and the benefits of playdough. There was 2 'Stay and Play' sessions for parents that was well attended and also an opportunity through Getting Ready to Learn for parents and children to come to the nursery an evening before Christmas for an information session on the benefits of reading to your child and the opportunity to take part in an interactive story with 'Make a Sound'.

Fundraising events were limited this year due to cost of living crisis, the children did raise money for NI Children's Hospice, £216.43

We enjoyed our 'Winter Celebration' at Strand Presbyterian Church this year and this was really well supported by parents. We also continued with 'Graduation' and held this once again in

Strand Presbyterian Church to allow us to have an increase in numbers of people who could attend. This was well attended by the parents and enjoyed by everyone.

Parents do have opportunity to discuss their child's needs and progress throughout the year in a range of ways. These include:

- Informal daily contact
- Telephone calls
- Arranging a meeting via telephone call with the child's teacher as the need arises
- Parent/Teacher meeting Term 1 – face to face or phone call
- Report Term 1
- Parent/teacher meeting Term 2 – face to face or phone call
- Transition report in June

The Class Teachers offered consultations Term 1 and Term 2 to share with parents how their child had settled and progressed in all areas of learning throughout the school year. Teachers also completed transition reports in Term 3. With parental consent, transition forms were forwarded to their chosen Primary School in the summer term. Children transitioned to a variety of Primary Schools; in total 9 different schools.

These included:

1. Victoria Park Primary School
2. Dundela Infants Primary School
3. Belmont Primary School
4. Elmgrove Primary School
5. Springhill PS (Belfast) (SPSC)
6. Malvern PS (Belfast) (SPSC)
7. Lisnasharragh Primary School
8. Portavogie Primary School
9. Donaghcloney Primary School

External Relationships and Partnerships

Sandbrook Nursery School is an integral part of the community, thus effective links continue to be maintained with outside agencies and local Primary Schools. The Nursery promotes continuity of experience between the Pre-School and Primary One. Part of this process is Transition meetings between the Principal, Assistant Teacher and staff from the receiving Primary Schools. We were fortunate enough to take the children moving on to Victoria Park Primary School for an outdoor playground visit to meet their teachers. Another step in building relationships for pre-school/primary school transition.

School has had support from many professionals this year including the Special Educational Needs Early Years Inclusion team, the NI RISE team and the Educational Psychology Department at EA.

The school also had work experience students from Ashfield Girls High School.

The nursery linked in with Euro Spar Holywood Road who provided the children with medals and a banner for sports day.

We continued to build our connections in the local community alongside Eastside Early Years Network.

The Premises

Essential maintenance took place with external store doors being replaced, safety surfaces power washed, gas checks and boiler checks. The school had the roof replaced May 2023. Regular fire alarm and fire extinguisher checks.

The School Budget

The Board of Governors is responsible for the use of funds allocated to the school by the Education Authority, Belfast Region. The school receives money from the Department of Education on an age weighted pupil unit basis and on the number of pupils in the school. Other factors considered include special needs and factors relating to the size and design of the building which affect running costs. The Governors, in partnership with the Principal are responsible for managing this delegated budget, centrally held by the Education Authority. The Common Funding Formula Budget available for 2024-2025 was:

£258,364

This covers staff salaries, utilities, grounds maintenance, school repairs, equipment and resources.

Financial Summary – The school works on a 3 Year Financial Plan

Common Formula Budget 2024-2025 £258,364

Proposed Expenditure 2024-2025 £284,636

Success and Achievement at Sandbrook Nursery School

We continued our journey with Schools of Sanctuary completing an audit with staff to keep us focused on where we are and where we need to be. With an ever-increasing diverse cohort of children and families we welcome the support and knowledge from this scheme to develop and enhance our school and make it as safe and welcoming as possible. The IES Pre-School Toolkit for Diversity was launched by EA.

The staff navigated another year with an increase in admissions of children with complex needs. With limited funding from Department of Education and Education Authority this was a challenge for the staff. With limited staff numbers and high needs, the staff were able to meet children's needs as much as possible and all children with complex needs were able to access Special Education for their Primary 1 placement. Staff completed training and changed practice to ensure an inclusive safe environment was achieved.

Although a challenging year the nursery continues to go from strength to strength with great team work and staff relations. Another successful year in Sandbrook Nursery School.