

Gaelscoil & Naíscoil Neachtain

Ní Neart go Cur le Chéile



Tuairisc Bhliantiúil Bhord na nGobharnóirí, 2023 – 2024.

**Board of Governors' Annual Report,
2023 – 2024.**

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Chairperson's Address, 2023- 2024

Gaelscoil and Naíscóil Neachtain opened its doors for the new school year on Friday 1st September, 2023. Our well-attended Breakfast Club resumed, too and our After-School Club went from strength to strength. This extra provision continued to support parents throughout the school year.

Cairde Neachtain, our Parents Association, continued to provide vital fundraising for the Gaelscoil through a variety of activities, starting off with a quiz on 27th October. They supported all school events all year and finished with a lovely Ladies Pamper night in Halla Ghlór DhúnGeimhin Glór, which was very well attended. We are very grateful to local businesses who provided their services free of charge. I would like to thank *Cairde Neachtain* and all the parents for their input, effort and support during the year - it is very much appreciated.

I would like to acknowledge the work ethic of all our teaching staff, teaching assistants, our secretary, caretaker and canteen staff. Teachers continue to promote learning and help each pupil reach their full potential working at appropriate levels. The school strives to create an inclusive, welcoming, stimulating and safe environment for all, with principal Marian at the helm, who always goes above and beyond. Marian is an inspiring leader for staff and pupils and I wish to commend her on her commitment to Gaelscoil and Naíscóil Neachtain, to the children, parents and staff and for all her hard work. Gaelscoil Neachtain and Naíscóil Neachtain prides itself on its open door policy and is a solution based school.

This year's report acknowledges the contributions of everyone in our Gaelscoil and Naíscóil community - staff, children and parents. I also thank my fellow Governors for their service and support. This year, we welcomed three new Governors - Brian McNicholl, Aidan Rafferty and Mary McLaughlin - and look forward to working with them in the future. I also thank our longstanding Governors for their time and for all the individual skills and expertise they bring to the management of the Gaelscoil.

Whilst working within current strained budgets, we are confident that Gaelscoil and Naíscóil Neachtain provide the best possible experience for every child, and family, and add significantly to our community. We look forward to continued development and growth.

I commend this report, and the work of the Gaelscoil to you, and emphasise the importance of the ongoing partnership between home and Gaelscoil.

Is Mise le Meas,

Emma Bn. Mhic Bhloscaidh,
Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors.

Leadership and Management Structure

Board of Governors – Membership

Governors represent trustees, EA, DENI, teachers and parents.

Leas-Chathaoirleach / Vice-Chairperson: Emma Bn. Mhic Bhloscaidh

Ionadaithe Iontaobhaithe / Trustee Representatives:

Emma Bn. Mhic Bhloscaidh

Liam Ó Flannagáin

Brian McNicholl

Aidan Rafferty

Ionadaithe an Údarais Oideachais / Education Authority Representatives:

Déaglán Ó Doibhlin

Mary McLaughlin

Ionadaithe Tuismitheoirí / Parent Representatives:

Sarah Kelly

Seamus McLaughlin

Ionadaí Múinteoirí/ Teacher Representative: Róisín Mhic Thaidhg

Rúnaí / Secretary: Máirín Bn. Uí Cheallaigh. Non-voting Member

Responsibilities of Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective management of the school. They are required to meet for a minimum of three times each year but in practice meet more often than this. Their range of duties and responsibilities are diverse and would include such matters as:

- Oversight of the Curriculum
- Control of the School Budget
- Provision of information to parents
- Selection of staff
- Maintenance of premises - a responsibility shared with Education Authority
- Admissions Policy
- Fostering links with the local community and pursuing the objectives of mutual understanding
- Other duties not specifically listed above

Mission Statement of Gaelscoil Neachtain

Gaelscoil Neachtain is a co-educational, interdenominational, controlled, Irish-medium primary school. Children, parents and staff, supported by the Board of Governors, work together to help each child achieve his/her potential as a confident bi-lingual in a safe and caring environment. Here at Gaelscoil Neachtain, every child is encouraged, every day, to believe in his/her value as a person and, in turn, to value all others. We have high expectations for *all* our children. At Gaelscoil Neachtain, we appreciate the Irish language as a valuable, living heritage, and, embrace it to facilitate and enhance every child's learning potential. We foster, also, understanding and respect for all cultures and traditions and celebrate diversity. Gaelscoil Neachtain is a place of learning led by the Spirit, a place where the Christian ethos is fostered, a place where good character is nurtured.

Aims of Gaelscoil Neachtain

At Gaelscoil Neachtain, we recognise the spiritual, emotional, academic and physical needs of all children. We work together to create an atmosphere and ethos which contributes to their care, safety, well-being and learning. We recognise the place of parents as their children's first teachers and warmly welcome, and actively encourage, parents' participation in their children's learning. The staff work to provide successful learning and to tackle disadvantage so that every child can fulfil his / her potential. We are committed to ensuring continuous high standards through planning, practice, assessment and reflection. Gaelscoil Neachtain is committed to positively addressing all challenges, as they arise, with children's education and welfare being paramount in all decision making. By developing links with the local community, and beyond, Gaelscoil Neachtain aims to enrich the children's cultural and educational experience.

Gaelscoil Neachtain is a place of learning led by the Spirit, a place of kindness, a place where good character is fostered. We welcome pupils from all faith and non-faith backgrounds.

Gaelscoil Neachtain Staffing Complement, 2023- 2024.

Rang	Foireann / Staff	Seomra
Naíscoil	Múinteoir: Aoife Ní Fhlannagáin Cúintóirí: Loretta Mhic Dhaibhéid (P/T), Niamh Ní Ghilín (P/T), Saoirse Nic Íomhair (P/T), Mark McLaughlin.	Naíscoil Neachtain
Rang 1 (Shared Post)	Múinteoir: Danielle Nic Ailín / Máire Mhic Eoin Cúntóir Ranga: Aisling Nic Giollagáin	Leacach
Rang 2	Múinteoir: Róisín Mhic Thaidhg Cuntóir Ranga: Carla Ní Dhochartaigh, Shannon Nic Lochlainn.	Caiseal
Rang 3	Múinteoir: Caitlín Ní Earcáin	Éadan
Rang 4	Múinteoir: Ellen Ní Uiginn Cúntóir: Michelle Mhic Oscair, Cian Mac Bhloscaidh.	Briseadh
Ranganna 5/6	Múinteoir: Gearóid Breathnach Cúntóir Ranga: Caoimhe Uí Mhaoildeirg, Amy Ní Eireamhóin	Seomra 6
Ranganna 6/7	Múinteoir: Fionnuala Ní Dhufaigh Cuntóir Ranga: Colette Mhic Giollagáin, Shonna Uí Cheallaigh, Saoirse Nic Íomhair.	Seomra 7

School Secretary: Mrs. Laoise McKeever

Caretaker: Mr. Anthony McReynolds

Catering Assistants: Mrs. Eileen McElhinney, Mrs. Valerie McCloskey.

Pastoral Care / Child Protection

We have a primary responsibility for the safety, care and welfare of the children in our charge. We take this responsibility most seriously and adhere strictly to our Child Protection Policy, and to our Pastoral Care Policy, which aim to provide a safe, caring and supportive environment in which each child is enabled to reach his/her full potential. All staff working in Gaelscoil and Naíscóil Neachtain, both teaching and non-teaching, have been vetted through Access N.I.a.n.d procedures are in place to protect our children by ensuring that everyone who works in the school, i.e. teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers, have clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. All staff participated in the annual refresher Child Protection training during the school year.

Curriculum

It is our responsibility to ensure that a broad and balanced learning experience is provided for all pupils. To this end the school has implemented the statutory requirements of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum in Language and Literacy, Mathematics and Numeracy, the Arts, the World Around Us, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, Physical Development and Religious Education. The Department of Education have also set targets relating to the knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils are expected to have at various stages of their school life and have determined what the school should teach pupils at various stages.

Structure of the Northern Ireland Curriculum

Foundation Stage: Rang 1 and Rang 2

Key Stage 1: Rang 3 and Rang 4

Key Stage 2: Rang 5, Rang 6 and Rang 7

Curricular Areas of Responsibility and Co-ordination, 2023-2024.

Area of Curriculum	Co-ordinator
Literacy	Róisín Mhic Thaidhg
Maths	Máirín Uí Cheallaigh
Special Educational Needs	Danielle Nic Ailín, Fionnuala Ní Dhufaigh
ICT	Ellen Ní Uiginn
R.E.	Máirín Uí Cheallaigh
Safeguarding and Pastoral Care	Fionnuala Ní Dhufaigh, Róisín Mhic Thaidhg, Danielle Stiobhard
The Arts	Ellen Ní Uiginn / Gearóid Breathnach
Sport	Gearóid Breathnach
The World Around Us	Gearóid Breathnach
Monitoring and Evaluation	Máirín Uí Cheallaigh

The Board of Governors, along with the Principal and Staff, ensure that the school continues to provide high quality education provision through a structured programme of staff development. Listed below are the priority areas during the academic year.

Literacy

During the school year, Literacy focused on the development spoken Irish in all aspects of school life, writing, outdoor learning and handwriting.

Mathematics & Numeracy

During the school year, Mental Maths and problem solving were priorities for Mathematics. Progress Test in Maths (PTM) was implemented in Ranganna 3 -7.

ICT

During the school year, ICT focused on implementation and monitoring of support programmes, namely, *Nessy*, *Mathletics* and *Accelerated Reader* to enhance children's knowledge and learning. Our ICT co-ordinator continued her professional development to support ICT teaching and learning across the curriculum throughout all year groups.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Gaelscoil Neachtain is an inclusive school. Our school curriculum is accessible to all children. Identification of children with Special Educational Needs was carried out by the class teacher in the first instance, and the the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) continued to provide advice and guidance to all teachers. Children identified as having Special Educational Needs received learning support, as appropriate and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) were constructed, and implemented, to support their needs. Parents were consulted, each term, in relation to IEPs.

During the school year, SEN focused on the Professional Development of SENCo and all staff, the delivery of the GL Dyslexia Screener and the implementation of *Zones of Regulation* at an age-appropriate level throughout each Key Stage. SENCos also participated in an Irish Medium SENCo cluster group, organised by Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta.

World Around Us

During the school year, the World Around Us focused on developing a to implement a WAU scheme of work based on *Education for Sustainable Development*, developing the second year of our *SusTrans* programme and reducing GaelscoilNeachtain's carbon footprint.

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU)

During the school year, and following CEA curriculum, PDMU focused on children's emotional and social development, confidence, independence, and health and safety awareness. Their moral thinking, values and actions were also supported as was their mutual understanding in the local and wider community.

Physical Education (PE)

Boys and girls from six Gaelscoileanna throughout County Derry participated in our *Corn Cuimhneacháin Phrionsas Uí Bhrolaigh* on Friday, 7th June, 2024. A very high standard of football was evident on the day and, despite a valiant effort, Gaelscoil Neachtain lost to Bunscoil Naomh Bríd in the final. Nodlaig Ní Bhrolaigh, Francie's daughter, presented the trophies, which included an individual trophy in recognition of spoken Irish. We look forward to many more great days of football, enjoyment and competition for *Corn Cuimhneacháin Phrionsas Uí Bhrolaigh*. We recognize, and appreciate, the support of the Brolly family for this competition. Faoi bhrat Bhríde i measc naomh uile na hÉireann go raibh Francie.

During the school year, the following areas were prioritised in PE – Children's physical development, health and wellbeing; children's experience of a sense of fun, enjoyment and achievement through a variety of progressively challenging and innovative activities; developing children's understanding of the benefits of physical activity and the relationship between physical activity and good health; activities included *Daily Mile*, hurling, football, cross country running and swimming. Girls and boys in Key Stage 2 had opportunities to participate in all-county blitzes in hurling, camogie and football. Children also participated, very successfully, in the *Flahavan's Porridge* Primary School Cross Country League. Rang 7 children participated in swimming at Roe Valley Leisure Centre in Term 1.

The Arts

During the school year, The Arts focused on the development of children's creativity and staff encouraged *all* children to express their ideas, feelings and interpretations of the world through pictures, sound, drama and dance. During the year, the front facing Gaelscoil windows were successfully used as a medium to showcase major themes in learning through art. Seó na Nollag / The Christmas Show took place in Halla Ghlór Dhún Geimhin on 14th December, for children in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The children in Key Stage 2 held a Carol Service in St. Patrick's Church on 19th December. Feis Charn Tóchair was held on 4th May and had a very good entry from Gaelscoil Neachtain.

Cross-Curricular skills:

- Communication
- Using Mathematics
- Using information & Communication Technology

Thinking Skills & Personal Capabilities:

- Thinking, Problem-solving and Decision Making
- Self-Management
- Working with Others
- Managing Information
- Being Creative

Additional Support to Enhance Curricular Provision / Extra Curricular Activities.

All children were given opportunities to participate in, and benefit from, the following activities -

- *Cairde Gael*
- *Gaeilgeoir na Seachtaine*
- Teastas Peannaireachta
- *An Chomhairle Scoile / School Council*
- *An Coise Glas / Eco-Committee*
- *Daily Mile*
- Christmas Show
- *Seachtain na Gaeilge*
- Participation by Rang 7 children in various local post-primary Open Days / Activity Days.
- Breakfast Club
- End of year trips
- Extra-curricular hurling
- Extra-curricular football

Monitoring and Evaluating Procedures

The following Monitoring and Evaluating Procedures remained in place during the school year, 2023 / 2024 –

- Principal met half-termly with Education Sub-Committee of Board of Governors.
- Education Sub-Committee reported to Board of Governors half-termly.
- Staff / Curriculum meetings
- Minutes of staff / curriculum meetings
- Classroom Observations
- Classroom observation feedback.
- Children's feedback
- Half termly evaluation of planners.
- Weekly / half-term review of pupil targets
- Teacher observations to ensure classroom practice reflect short, mid and long-term planning.
- Monitoring of *Friday Review*
- End of half-term assessment

- End of year assessment.
- Ongoing professional development
- Teacher feedback.

Pupil Progress and Standards of Attainment

Baseline Assessments in Literacy and Maths were carried out in Ranganna 3 – 7 in September, 2023. Assessment at the end of each half-term was carried out in Literacy and Maths throughout the school year. Gaelscoil Neachtain’s end of year, standardised assessment took place in May 2024. As happened in the school year 2022 – 2023, the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) informed all primary schools that End of Key Stage data was not required for the academic year 2023 – 2024. Gaelscoil Neachtain continues to closely monitor and track the progress of all our pupils and meet regularly to discuss children’s progress across the Gaelscoil. All assessment results were analysed and informed future planning. Annual written reports were sent to parents on Friday, 14th June, 2024.

Enrolment and Transfer to Post-Primary School

Enrolment 2022 - 2023

Open Enrolment

We were allocated twenty-one places for admission to Rang 1 in September, 2023, and received sixteen applications, all of whom were accepted.

Transfer to Post-Primary

22 pupils transferred to Post-Primary Education in September, 2023.

School	Number of Pupils Transferring
Gaelcholáiste Dhoire.	14
St. Patrick’s College, Dungiven.	5
Loreto College, Coleraine.	2
St. Patrick’s and St. Brigid’s College, Claudy.	1

Faith Development

As is the custom at Gaelscoil & Naíscoil Neachtain, Mass is celebrated every year before the end of Term 1a, to ask God’s blessing on us all and on the work of the Gaelscoil and Naíscoil throughout the coming year. This Mass took place on 26th October, 2023.

Adoration Programme: Ranganna 5,6,7.

Service of Light: 28th February, 2024.

Confirmation: 13th April, 2024

First Sacrament of Penance: 24th April, 2024.

First Holy Communion: 25th May, 2024.

Fundraising and Charitable / Pastoral Events

Gaelscoil Neachtain supported St. Vincent de Paul Society and Trócaire through a number of fundraising events during the school year 2023 – 2024. Children also raised a magnificent £1133.20 for Northern Ireland Cancer Fund for Children through a *Readathon*.

Communication

During the school year, 2022 – 2023, the Gaelscoil Neachtain App, *Class Dojo*, was the main means of communication for parents. *Seesaw* was the main means of communication at Naíscóil Neachtain. E-mail was also used by class teachers to communicate with parents, as appropriate as was communication by phone. Gaelscoil Neachtain's monthly newsletter, Nuacht Neachtain, continued to be issued.

Parent / Teacher meetings were held in Term 1 and in Term 2. Parents were informed regularly that they were welcome to arrange a meeting with their child's class teacher during the year, as need be.

School Attendance

Pupil attendance for the school year 2022 – 2023 was 93.2%.

FINANCE – Local Management of Schools (LMS)

The budget for the school year 2023-2024 was £534 313. The school budget is robustly monitored by the Principal and the Finance Committee of the Board of Governors. The majority of the Gaelscoil budget is spent on staff and running costs, e.g. lighting, heating, etc. Regular meetings of the Board of Governors ensure that the budget is best spent to provide a quality education for our children.

Cairde Neachtain

Gaelscoil Neachtain is very grateful to our parents' association, Cairde Neachtain, for their ongoing support, financial and otherwise, throughout the school year. The Board of Governors recognises and appreciates the ongoing work of Cairde Neachtain, and of all parents and friends, who support Gaelscoil Neachtain in any way. Go raibh céad maith agaibh.

Buíochas / Thanks

The Board of Governors wishes to thank all members of the school community who supported, and contributed to, the development of Gaelscoil Neachtain during the school year 2023-2024:

- The pupils for their enthusiasm, willingness to learn and for their co-operation with teachers and staff.
- The parents for their co-operation, help and support for their

- children, for staff and for the Gaelscoil generally.
- Principal and all teaching and non-teaching staff, for their dedication, hard work and commitment.
 - *Cairde Neachtain* for ongoing support.
 - Local community.

Fr. Séamus Kelly, who has supported Gaelscoil Neachtain over the last number of years, retired in June, 2024. We wish Fr. Séamus a long and enjoyable retirement and sincerely thank him for all his time and support.

Thank-you for your time in considering this report. Dia leat is le do chúram.

Gaelscoil Neachtain
Ní Neart go Cur le Chéile
www.gaelscoilneachtain.com