

**FOURTOWNS PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2024/5**



*In accordance with the Education Reform Order (NI), the Board of Governors of Fourtowns Primary School takes pleasure in presenting their report for the year 2024/5  
This report reflects the management of the school in all its aspects as carried out by the Board of Governors. It is intended to give you an overall view of the workings of the school and how the Governors and all the others with responsibility for the school have carried out their duties.*

*Yours sincerely  
Claire Calderwood  
Chairperson of the Board of Governors*

**INTRODUCTION**

This report is produced by the Governors of Fourtowns Primary School for the period September 2024 to June 2025 and is an account of the work that has been undertaken in carrying out the responsibilities of the Board of Governors for the management of the school.

All parents of registered pupils at the school will receive a copy of this report.

**THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

It is made up of nine members and the Principal. All except the Principal, are voting members.

**Board members were as follows in the period Sept – April :**

**Chairperson:** Mrs Stevenson

**Vice Chairperson:** Mrs Calderwood

**EA REPRESENTATIVES**

Mrs Stevenson, Mr Brown

**TRANSFEROR REPRESENTATIVES**

Mr Mc Farland, Rev Neilly

**PARENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Mrs Calderwood

**TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE**

Mrs Bovill

**SECRETARY (non-voting)**

Mrs Parker

The Board of Governors was reconstituted during 2024/5. We would like to express our sincere thanks to outgoing governors Alison Stevenson (chairperson) and Leigh-anne Bovill, (teacher representative) for their commitment and contribution to this important aspect of school management.

**Board members were as follows in the period from April – end of term:**

**Chairperson:** Mrs Calderwood

**Vice Chairperson:** Mr Moody

**EA REPRESENTATIVES**

Mr Brown, Mrs Calderwood

**TRANSFEROR REPRESENTATIVES**

Mr Mc Farland, Rev Neilly , Rev Moody

**PARENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Mrs Barry, Mr Pedlow

## **TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE**

Mr Wilde

## **SECRETARY (non-voting)**

Mrs Parker

## **DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

- a) *The determination and delivery of the curriculum as laid down in the Education (NI) Order 2006. The Educational Needs and Disability Order (NI) 2005. The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, the Code of Practice for Children with Special Educational Needs and Pastoral Care in schools: Child Protection DENI 1997/4.*
- b) *Under the Open Enrolment System, to set criteria for the admission of pupils to the school.*
- c) *The appointment of staff, teaching and non-teaching.*
- d) *The management of funds allocated to the school under the Local Management of Schools' System.*
- e) *To set in motion disciplinary procedures if the need should arise.*

During the school year 2024/ 25 the Board of Governors met formally on 3 occasions. In addition to this the governors were also involved in informal discussions, attendance at many school functions, and some made visits to their linked classes.

Some of the main issues dealt with at the governors' meetings during 2024/25 are noted:

- Budget and Finance
- Attendance
- Open Enrolment
- Admissions Criteria and Procedures
- School Development Planning
- Staffing
- Policy development and Curriculum
- Child Protection
- GDPR
- Special Needs provision
- Health and Safety
- School premises and maintenance.



The governors wish once again to record their appreciation of the work done by the teaching and support staff of the school to promote the academic achievement, care and personal development of the pupils enrolled at Fourtowns Primary school. On-going success reflects the partnership between school and home. The governors wish to acknowledge all the investments made in this relationship between staff and parents and offer particular thanks to the 'Friends of Fourtowns PS' for its endeavours in this important area. We thank them for helping to organise valuable social opportunities eg Christmas fair, Summer fair and end of year party, and for their valuable fundraising efforts.

## **STAFFING**

The teaching staff at Fourtowns Primary School during 2024/5 consisted of Principal, Vice principal and 14 additional teachers.

The non-teaching staff consisted of 5 General Classroom assistants and 19 SEN assistants, 2 Building Supervisors, 2 cleaners. 1 senior supervisor, 4 lunchtime supervisors and 2 executive officers.

Some members of non-teaching staff cover a number of posts.

## **ENROLMENT and ATTENDANCE**

The maximum enrolment for the school year 2024/5 was 300 with an admissions number of 45.

There were 50 applications for places and 48 children were admitted.

Our enrolment number in June 2025 was 272.

The average daily attendance for the year 2024/2025 was 95%

This is above the Department of Education's benchmarking statistics, 94.5%, when compared with schools in group 2 with Free School Meals of 10-19.99%.

## **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

2024/5 saw the implementation of our first year of our new School Development plan.

Self-evaluation and review, staff training and professional development remains a key feature of School Improvement and raising standards for the teaching and non-teaching staff at Fourtowns Primary School.

During 2024/5 staff worked on the following areas:-

- School Ethos/aims/Objectives
- PDMU – Take 5 level 2
- Outdoor learning
- Sensory provision
- Child Protection
- First Aid
- Special Needs
- Literacy – handwriting
- Numeracy – Orienteering
- PE – assessment

### **Special Curricular Weeks**

#### **Literacy Week**

We celebrated Literacy week 2025 with several special events to encourage children's love for Literacy and reading. Our focus this year was 'VOCABULARY'. During the week we enjoyed a local author visit from Kerry-Ann Young, our annual year group spelling bees and a vocabulary parade. The children enjoyed completing Boggle competition sheets at home which raised some money for literacy resources in school and the scholastic book fair also returned and was enjoyed by all. This book fair earned our school £1250 worth of library books for our class libraries. We also celebrated pupil success and improvement of handwriting skills at assembly with pen licence certificates, tea with the principal invites and spelling bee medals.

#### **Numeracy Week**

Another very successful Maths Week was enjoyed by all classes. Practical lessons, online games and quizzes, a fireside quiz and the 'Mystery Mad Mathematician' captivated attention and helped improve confidence and enjoyment in Maths. The ever-popular tuckshop and fireside quiz raised funds for new numeracy resources and enabled the registration of P4-7 pupils in Times Table Rock Stars. Mr Wilde's P6 class were very successful in Target Boards and finished in the top ten in Ireland.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The school endeavours to make reasonable adjustments to enable pupils with a disability to have the same access to education as the pupils who do not have a disability and to make school life more accessible generally. The School operates a Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy. Children with special educational needs will be admitted to Fourtowns P.S, unless educating a pupil in mainstream is incompatible with the provision of efficient education for the rest of the children with whom the pupil will be educated. Parents of children with an identified statement of special educational needs inform the school of their child's special needs when applying for admission in order that suitable adjustments may be made.

In 2024/5 Special Needs provision in Fourtowns P.S was provided in Literacy, Numeracy and Behaviour Support. Differentiated work across the curriculum was provided by class teachers. Ms Kincaid withdrew children for short periods from class to work in small groups or individually.

Ms Kincaid worked closely with the class teachers and, where appropriate, with the EA Psychology Service and the Board's Special Education Department, R.I.S.E NI, Literacy and Language & Communication services. Parental consultation is an important part of the Special Needs programme, and parents of children involved were offered regular interviews throughout the year.

All children have access to sensory areas within their classrooms when required, and the sensory room is timetabled to provide regular daily support for specific children. A new Sensory room and SEN teaching room were added to the school which offers more space and a separate, updated sensory experience.

In June 2025, Fourtowns PS had 33 children at stage 1, 2 children at stage 2 and 17 children on stage 3 of the Special Needs Code of Practice. The register is continually reviewed and updated as needs change.

## **CHILD PROTECTION/PASTORAL CARE**

We at Fourtowns Primary school have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. We carry out this duty through our Pastoral Care policy which aims to provide a caring supportive and safe environment where children are valued for their unique talents and abilities, and can learn and develop their full potential. The school implements fully a Child Protection policy in line with the requirements of DENI. All our staff and volunteers have been subjected to background checks. All staff have adopted a code of practice (ref appendix 9 Pastoral Care in school DENI) for their behaviour towards children.

During 2024/5 the safeguarding team at Fourtowns Primary School was made up of Mrs Bovill, designated teacher for Child Protection; Mrs Whann, deputy designated teacher for Child Protection; Rev Neilly, the governor in charge of Child Protection and Mrs Parker, Chair of the Safeguarding Team.

High quality pastoral provision is a priority of the school, with a number of key annual planned events contributing to the overall ethos.

In 2024/5: -

- All primary 1 children were linked with a primary 7 buddy to induct them into life at Fourtowns Primary School;
- Mrs Bovill delivered 'Playground Pals Training' to primary 6s;
- A first aid programme was delivered to primary 7 children;
- Our Primary 7 pupils joined with Portglenone PS and Buick PS for the 'Love for Life' programme at Buick PS;
- Scripture Union led a series of 'It's Your Move' workshops to prepare primary 7 for the transition to post primary school;
- All classes provided entries to the 'Ballymena Show';
- The School Council met at intervals throughout the school year adding a pupil voice and influencing many decisions made;
- The School Eco committee worked hard to retain the school Eco flag status;
- Mrs Whann organised a very successful 'Child Protection Awareness week' on the theme of 'Be the 'I' in Kind' in January 2025, where trained primary 7 helpers delivered the 'Helping Hands messages' and associated activities in each of the classes;
- Mrs Hull led the school in marking Internet Safety Day and primary 7 delivered the internet safety messages through a very entertaining and informative assembly.

### **'Helping Hands' Messages**

- |   |
|---|
| <input type="radio"/> There is nothing so awful or so small that we can't talk about it with someone.                           |
| <input type="radio"/> We all have the right to feel safe.   |
| <input type="radio"/> Others have the right to feel safe with us.   |
| <input type="radio"/> If someone says something I do not like, before going to a teacher I can say, 'Stop it, I don't like it!' |

## **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

In Fourtowns Primary School we endeavour to provide and a wide variety of extra-curricular activities which we feel are important for the all-round educational and personal development of the children. The governors commend the work of all staff in this provision. The following range of extra-curricular activities and events were arranged throughout the year:

- **Orchestra**
- **Choir**
- **Netball**
- **Hockey**
- **Football**
- **Scripture Union**
- **Minecraft**
- **Primary 7 SEAG preparation**
- **Cycling Proficiency**

The school choir and orchestra were busy performing at various events over the Christmas period including Open Day, Radio Cracker and the school carol service in 1st Ahoghill.

We are grateful to the dedication and musical talents of Mrs Stevenson, Mrs Whann, Mrs Murdoch and Ms Kincaid who trained and accompanied the children during this busy time.

## **Football**

The **P6&7 mixed (boys and girls)** team missed out on the annual footballing curtain raiser in November, the Owen Daley Cup, due to the school being closed.

The **P6&7 mixed team** took part in an afternoon of 7 aside friendly matches at Fourtowns in November, in preparation for our qualifying group for the 7 aside Ballymena Finals. Unfortunately, the team missed out on the finals on goal difference. A **P6&7 mixed 'B' team** also had the opportunity to represent the school in November, at an afternoon of friendly fixtures at Cullybackey College.

In March, our **P5,6 & 7 girls** took part in an afternoon of friendlies against Buick PS. This is an annual event that our schools have organised over the last three years, and this year's matches saw the largest turnout that we've had to date - with 60 girls taking part! The Fourtowns girls won one and lost two matches. The afternoon finished 4-4 on aggregate. There was some great football on show, but importantly lots of smiles and positive attitudes during what, for many, was their first experience of competitive football. It was lovely to hear so many positive comments such as, "Can we do this every week!?!", "I'll definitely be going to after school football now!" and "I would like my own pair of boots now!" Our after-school girls' football club remain ever popular.

Later in the month, our **P5-7 girls' team** took part in a friendly football competition in Cullybackey. The girls played four matches in total - two against Moorfields PS and two against Clough PS. The positive experience supported our girls' preparations as we approached a number of competitive tournaments that were coming up.

The Buick Memorial PS also returned, for an afternoon of footballing fun for our **P4 and P5 boys**. Three friendly matches in total gave around 30 of our boys a taste of what competitive school football is like.

Our **P6&7 mixed team** qualified for the Senior Cup Finals at the end of March. The team were drawn together with St Brigid's PS and Broughshane PS in their qualifying group. The team started with a 2-2 draw against St Brigid's, before beating Broughshane 3-1, which was enough to see them top the qualifying group and advance through to the finals. **It was also a chance for the team to wear our brand-new kit, which was kindly supplied by Ahoghill Thistle and embroidered and printed by Zala Sport. We are very grateful for strong community links.**

The **P6&7 mixed team** attended the Ballymena Senior Cup Finals in April, finishing runners-up. The showcase event took place at Ballymena Showgrounds. In the semi-final, the team earned a 1-0 victory against close rivals Gracehill PS. After a tense 0-0 draw in the final against St Mary's PS, a penalty shootout was needed to separate the two teams with St Mary's coming out on top.

In May our **P5-7 girls' team** attended the annual Coaching For Christ Girls' Tournament. The girls won all of their group games - the only team on the day to do so - 2-0 vs Diamond PS, 3-0 vs Ballymena PS and 2-1 vs Ballykeel PS. The team finished top of their group and qualified for the quarter-finals. The girls won their QF against Dunclug PS 2-0. In a tense semi-final, our girls took the lead against Moorfields PS, but eventually lost 3-1. The girls didn't let their heads drop though and came back fighting, drawing their 3rd/4th playoff match against Kells & Connor PS 1-1, meaning the girls finished joint 3rd overall!

A week later, the **P5-7 girls' team** attended the Ballymena Girls' Cup. In the group stages, the girls won two matches, lost two and drew one. In the quarterfinals, the girls beat Moorfields PS 1-0, before losing out to Clough PS in the semi-final, 2-1.

Our **P6&7 boys team** also attended their annual Coaching for Christ Boys' Tournament. After the initial four group games, they qualified from their group in 2nd place. In the quarter final, the team beat Moorfields after an epic penalty shootout that lasted for 9 penalties! The team eventually came up a little short, losing to eventual winners Portglenone in the semi-final 2-0.

## **Coaching For Christ**

Our relationship with Coaching For Christ continued through the academic year. The coaches worked with all of the classes in the school during the course of the year, for around 6-8 lessons. In May, CFC hosted a Football Fun Day at school. They held a whole school assembly in the morning and then took each class for a session of fun football activities

The p5-7 boys and girls continued to enjoy after school hockey sessions, despite having no local district tournaments in 2024/5

Our annual Sports' Day was held in June and was very well supported by parents, and friends of Fourtowns PS.

## **Music**

A number of P4-7 pupils availed of music lessons (strings, brass and woodwind) from the EA peripatetic music service. We are pleased to congratulate the children on their excellent achievements and acknowledge the work of the peripatetic teachers and Mrs Stevenson, Ms Kincaid for their time given in support and exam preparation.

Primary 1 and 2, and Primary 3 and 4 put on very successful nativity performances and primary 5-7 held a Carol Service. We are very thankful for the use of First Ahoghill church for our Carol service. All performances were warmly received by parents, family and friends.

## **School visits**

School visits are an enjoyable way of extending learning, strengthening relationships and developing social skills and independence. The governors are grateful to the teaching and non-teaching staff who plan and prepare so diligently for the care of the children on these trips and ensure they have the best experiences possible. Special thanks are due to Mr Wilde his time and commitment to organising a very successful residential to The Wild Atlantic Centre Donegal.

## **SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

Community Relations is an integral part of school life. Within the school, teachers promote Mutual Understanding in class through group work and discussion and through assembly topics and PDMU. Visitors to the school further add to this Learning Area. We welcome close links with parents and the community.

Primary Liaison with local secondary schools continued as in previous years with pupils attending Open Days and availing of the 'Taster days' to assist them in their post primary school selection: -

- Cullybackey Science Day for primary 6;
- Cambridge House Taster Day for primary 6;
- Ballymena Academy Taster Session for primary 6;
- Primary 7 Induction Days; Cullybackey, Cambridge House, Ballymena Academy;
- InOV8 Science Day for primary 7.

This year 41 school leavers transferred to a range of secondary and grammar schools: 13 to Cullybackey High School, 5 to Ballymena academy, 19 to Cambridge House, 4 to Slemish College.

We wish them well in the next stage of their school career and look forward to hearing of their future successes and achievements.

Parents were given a number of opportunities to meet with class teachers throughout 2024/5: -

- Primary 1 Baseline interviews were conducted during the first week of September allowing parents and teachers to share information and ensure a smooth transition into primary 1.
- Parents' Information Sessions for primary 2-7 classes were held in September allowing parents to meet their child's new teacher and get a synopsis of the year ahead.
- Parent interviews took place for all classes in October. We welcome the opportunities these interviews bring to strengthen relationships with parents and build partnerships.
- In February and June teachers conducted SEN interviews with parents to review progress and agree new individual education plans.
- All Parents received their child's annual report at the end of June.

Our annual school Open Day took place in November, where parents and pupils were given opportunities to mix with prospective pupils and teachers and engage in many different interactive activities.

Induction Days was held June giving pupils who had gained admission for 2025 a valuable opportunity to meet with their new teacher and class members. Pupils were able to sample a little of life in primary 1, while their parents received a presentation in the assembly hall.

We acknowledge the commitment and support of the local churches (Brookside Presbyterian, First Ahoghill Presbyterian, Trinity Presbyterian Ahoghill Gospel Hall and St Colmanells, Church of Ireland) Scripture Union, and Stand by Me, who address our whole school assemblies on a rota basis.

We also thank Scripture Union for their delivery of the 'It's your Move' programme in primary 7 and the Ahoghill Gospel Hall for the annual provision of bibles to all primary 4 children. A return of the Amazing Journey exhibition in June 2025 and Grange Baptist was very much enjoyed by all the boys and girls.

We also very much appreciate the attendance of parents, family and friends at class and year group assemblies.

It was lovely to welcome Parents of primary 7 children to a special Leavers assembly at the end of year where primary 7 children led a programme of entertainment, and prizes were distributed.

We believe that an awareness and support for charities is an important part of PDMU programme demonstrating care for others and the environment in a real and practical way. During 2024/5 children were given the opportunity to help organise a Macmillan Coffee Morning; take part in 'Children in Need'; donate to Christmas Hampers organised by the Rotary Club and give to the Earl Haig 'Poppy Appeal'.

### **CHARGES AND REMISSIONS**

It is the Governors' belief that education should be free of financial charge to parents. However, parents will be requested to make voluntary contributions to assist with the cost of trips and other outings. Such trips, which are seen as an important part of the children's education, could not take place without the additional contributions from parents.

- ❖ Swimming lessons, which take place during the school day, are provided for primary 5- 7 pupils. Children are required to contribute to the cost of entry to the pool and transport.
- ❖ The Music Service of the EA provides instrumental tuition. A charge is levied for tuition as well as for insurance and hire of instruments which all participating pupils are required to pay.
- ❖ Parents will continue to be invited to contribute towards school funds through fundraising activities.

### **PREMISES AND SECURITY**

In accordance with the recommendations of the 'Security and Personal Safety in Schools' guidelines published by EA the following security measures are in operation:

- ❖ Security locking for all external doors, restricting access to the school
- ❖ Entry control monitors at the reception desk.
- ❖ All visitors are asked to report to the school office
- ❖ CCTV cameras around the school
- ❖ Perimeter Fence
- ❖ Signing in at reception and issue of visitor badges.
- ❖ Fire drills conducted termly throughout the year
- ❖ All staff have received Fire Safety training via EA portal

In conclusion, the Governors would like to thank the Principal and staff, who have continued to provide a sustained, high quality education for the pupils. The Governors acknowledge the commitment of the conscientious, dedicated and hardworking staff, the high quality of planning and teaching and the excellent pastoral care. The Governors would also like to thank all those who contributed to the life of the school and in particular, parents, for entrusting us with the education of their children and for their support throughout the year.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT 2024/5**

The Board of Governors continues to exercise a prudent financial policy as there remains considerable concern over the budget allocation.

As with the vast majority of schools, Fourtowns PS is unable to operate within this budget allocation.

Below is a summary of the LMS Funding account for Fourtowns Primary School.

<b>FOURTOWNS PS – INCOME/EXPENDITURE 2024-2025</b>	
	£
Teaching Staff	823,688
Non-Teaching Staff	179,666
Total Staff Costs	1,003,354
Running Costs	70,566
Less Income	-8472
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	1,065,448
ANNUAL BUDGET	901,240
2024-2025 Carry Forward	-164,208
INITIAL BUDGET	954,119
OVERSPEND 23-24	-69,463
ADDITIONAL FUNDING	16,584
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	901,240

### **School Fund Accounts 2024/5**

Money from donations and fundraising efforts is paid into this account. It is used to make donations to charities, provide school prizes, purchase equipment and meet general expenditure.

This money has been saved up over several years with some large purchases in mind :-

In 2024/5 we used the school accounts to pay for a new sound system for the assembly hall, to buy PCs for our new computer suite and to repair the FS playframe and to pay for landscaping in the FS outdoor play area.

Out priority for 2025/6 is to replace flooring in the classrooms. We are very thankful to parent school fund donations to enable us to make these additional purchases that would not be possible through the school's allocated budget. This account is audited by 2 members of staff and a governor.

<b>Opening balance</b>	<b>£83,002.20</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£26,425.88</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£6209.65</b>
<b>Closing school Balance</b>	<b>£103,218.43</b>

