

2022-2023  
ANNUAL REPORT

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

THORNFIELD HOUSE SCHOOL



***“Building confidence in communication”***



*Principal:* **Mrs Louise Creighton** *B.Ed. (HONS) (Acting)*

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**Thornfield House School**

**8-12 Jordanstown Road  
Newtownabbey**

**Co Antrim BT37 0QF**

October 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

It is with great pleasure that we present this 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Board of Governors of Thornfield House School. This report will provide you with a summary of the work of the school during the past year. We invite you to read the report and to contact the principal if you require any additional information or clarification on any aspect of the Annual Report. On behalf of the Board of Governors, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your past support and look forward to your continued support and cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Rev. Nigel Baylor Chairperson of the Board of Governors

Mrs Louise Creighton Principal/ Secretary to the Board of Governors

# THORNFIELD HOUSE SCHOOL

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

2019– 2023

Term of office ends: 2023

Department Representatives: Rev N. Baylor (Chair)

Mr J. Marley

EA Representatives: Mrs R. Glenn

Mrs N. Ayre

Parent Representatives: Mrs I. McMullan

Mrs M. Pearson

Teacher Representative: Mrs A. Kirk

Secretary/Principal: Mrs L. Creighton

### **ORGANISATION, DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the management of the school in keeping with Thornfield House School's educational philosophy and the requirements of the Department of Education. This includes overseeing the curriculum, admissions, staff appointments, management of school funds, Child Protection and the provision and maintenance of school buildings. Responsibility of the day to day running of the school rests with the principal who advises the Board of Governors of any matters arising.

# Staff Thornfield House School

( FOR 2023-24)

**Principal ( Acting)** Mrs Louise Creighton

**Vice Principal ( Acting)** Mrs Alex Kirk

**SENCO:** Miss Sophie Hutchinson

Teaching Staff			Learning Support Assistants	
Mrs L Cassidy	Mrs A Kirk	Mr P Cordoba	Miss E McClean	Mrs D Anderson
Mrs C Murray	Miss S Hutchinson	Miss R Martin	Miss N Ashe	Mrs M Grant
Mrs J Morgan	Mrs R McAllister	Miss C Spence	Mrs A McLaughlin	Mrs G Karaiskos
Mrs J Graham	Mrs D Logan	Miss N Leckey	Miss R Stewart	Mrs L Nesbitt
Mrs L Heron	Mrs L Finnegan		Mrs J Robinson	Mrs L Smyth
Mrs J Logue	Mrs L McAllister		Mrs K Magee	Mrs A Bowers
Mrs A Russell	Miss R Martin		Mrs P Sullivan	Mrs M Atcheson
			Mrs K Cullinan	Miss S McKibben

Speech and Language Therapists	Clerical and Auxiliary Staff
Mrs R Hanley	Mr R Sargent
Mrs F McKeown	Miss J Green
Mrs A McTeggart	Miss D Hamill
Miss R Coulter	Mr M Stevenson
Miss A Kyle	Ms T Wilson
Assistant: Miss G Crowe	Mrs J Downing
	Mrs R Stevenson (SLT)

## Staff Changes

- Mr Colm Burns – Principal - will retire on 31/10/23
- Mrs Brid Tate, lead SLT, retired July 2023
- Mrs H Harper retired May 2023 – Classroom Assistant
- Mrs L Bruton continues a Career Break

## **School Activities/Services 2022/23**

### **Canine Therapy**

Through grant funding secured we were able to continue with our Canine Therapy Programme with Lexi and Gary visiting each Monday. Lexi and Gary worked with several groups of children to help with social and emotional regulation, anxiety, speech, language, and Communication Development.

### **Noodle**

We were delighted to be able to get our own school assistance dog Noodle in April 2023. A huge thank you to our parents and friends who supported a huge fundraising initiative to be able to avail of Noodle. Noodle is still participating in training and attends every Friday in Belfast with Miss Hutchinson and Mr Cordoba.

### **Lego Therapy**

We have 6 trained teachers in Lego Therapy. We were able to implement Lego Therapy Sessions for selected children in Term 3 of 2022-23. We also had whole class sessions in Lego based therapy with "Calm with Carole"

### **Christmas Play and Fair**

We were delighted to hold our Annual Christmas Play. We were so proud of the wonderful performance and how brilliant the children were. This was followed by a Christmas Fair in the hall well attended by parents and friends. We are thankful to Mr and Mrs Quinn for leading this event.

### **Prize Day and Summer Fayre**

Our Annual Prize Day was a super morning as always and took a slightly different approach with singing and dancing acts from each class during the awards. The Summer Fair was a fantastic way for our school family to get together and celebrate the wonderful achievements of our pupils. The sun shone which added to the lovely atmosphere.

### **Sports Day**

We held our Annual Sports Day in June – another successful event enjoyed by all and attended by parents, family, and friends. Thanks to Mr Cordoba for all his hard work in organising this.

### **Riding for the Disabled**

Our class 2/3 pupils attended riding sessions every Monday at Laurelhill Riding Centre. It was wonderful to watch the children grow in confidence and ability each week. Well done to 2 of our pupils – Alex and Holden for being selected to participate in a regional riding competition and finishing 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

### **Extended Schools**

Extended Schools Funding was used for the following programmes:

#### ***FamilyWorks Counselling***

Our primary pupils were able to use a drop-in counselling service as well as some pupils attending regular sessions. We were also able to use this for family support sessions.

### ***Sports coaches***

All pupils accessed several coaching sessions in basketball, netball and Yoga.

### ***Jump Jiggle and Jive***

The lower primary classes enjoyed sessions of Jump Jiggle and Jive

### ***Resources sports music art***

We were able to purchase valuable resources to enhance music, art and PE

### ***Health and well being Club***

Pupils could avail of a health and well being club at lunchtimes where they got to experience cooking, baking, learn about healthy lifestyles and choices.

### ***ICT Club***

In ICT club children were able to learn essential skills in ICT as well as participate in Coding activities.

### **Hockey All Stars**

Mossley Ladies Hockey Club approached us to work alongside them in their community participation programme which we gladly accepted. Pupils had the opportunity to develop hockey skills over a period of 3-4 weeks in each class in weekly sessions.

### **Cricket Coaching**

Using funds raised from our Summer Fair we were able to fund a cricket coach from Templepatrick CC to come in and teach the children some cricket skills, get outside and have fun in the sun.

### **Summer Scheme**

We were delighted to have the first ever Summer Scheme at THS thanks to DE funding and Council funding. Thanks to Miss Morgan and all the staff that made this happen for the children.

### **Woodhall Residential**

P7 children enjoyed their Annual Trip to Woodhall. This is an invaluable experience in allowing the children to learn new skills, make new friends and develop their independence. Once again thank you to all staff who give up their free time to allow our children to have this opportunity.

### **School Swimming Programme**

Pupils from P5 to Year 12 participated in the EA swimming programme. We are grateful that our pupils can avail of this vital life skill.

### **School Counselling Service**

Post Primary pupils had the services of Carlene, our wonderful school counsellor each Friday. We hope to increase this service in the incoming year.

### **Parent Coffee mornings**

As part of our counselling programme, we were able to hold parent/carer coffee mornings as well as support sessions for parents and carers who may need advice with various needs such as behaviour support, school support or general support from other parents.

### **School Choir**

Our school choir had a very successful year winning the Ballyclare Music Festival. We are very proud of their achievements. Thank you to Miss Martin and Miss Spence for leading them.

### **Rotary Club Fun Day**

Thank you once again to the Rotary Club for hosting a fun day for all local Special School P7 pupils and providing lunch. Our pupils had a fantastic time.

### **Team Enterprise**

Our year 10 pupils once again participated in this programme and sold their products at St Georges Market and our school Xmas Fayre. Our school won their section of the programme.

### **Charities**

Every year we participate in various charity events. This academic year included Christmas Jumper Day, Doodle Dander and our biggest was for Assist Dogs NI to get our dog Noodle. We also fundraised for our own school which is a registered charity through our Xmas and Summer Fair.

## **Pupil enrolment, attendance, and exam results**

### **Current enrolment**

Current enrolment 30/09/23 is 105. This is the highest enrolment in many years in Thornfield House School. Pupils can only be enrolled in Thornfield after statutory assessment by an Educational Psychologist and must have a statement of SEN primarily in Speech, Language and Communication needs. In September 2023 we welcomed 2 classes of pupils with additional needs, complementing our main school intake. Our enrolment is fluid throughout the school year and pupils can transfer to Thornfield at any point following assessment.

### **Return to Mainstream Education**

We take pride in many of our children being able to return to mainstream education each year. In June 2023 we had 9 pupils return to Mainstream Education and 6 pupils progressing to Further Education.

### **Attendance**

The average whole school attendance for 2022/23 was 87.1% - It should be noted that this % is has been heavily influenced by EA transport issues.

Thornfield House is committed to a positive policy of encouraging pupils to attend school regularly. The school will work with parents, pupils, and outside agencies to secure this aim. This includes working very closely with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Parents/carers of pupils of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school. THS is responsible for supporting the attendance of pupils and for responding to difficulties and issues which might lead to non-attendance. We believe that schools which adopt a positive and proactive approach towards attendance matters and encourage parents to take an active role in the schooling of their children, can play a major role in improving levels of attendance.

### **Grounds and Building**

In 2022-23 the following improvements were made to our school grounds and building:

- New Forest School Outdoor Learning Area and accredited Forest School Award
- 3 newly refurbished classrooms
- 6 new Interactive whiteboards
- New tarmacked area at the rear of the building
- A fully equipped Sensory Room



## **Finance**

The school continues to have a partially delegated budget.

### **Total budget for 2022-23**

**Article 60 Allocation** £83,617

**Entitlement Framework** £6,629

**Extended Schools** £5,829

**Healthy Minds** £4726

**Engage Funding** £26,917

**SEND funding** £30,000

**Home School Link** - £18,301

A massive thankyou to all the individuals and agencies who donated or raised money for the school this year.

## **Private Funds**

### **School Account**

Opening Balance September 2022: £7602.68

Closing Balance August 2023: £9347:47

### **Friends of Thornfield Account**

Opening Balance September 2022: £27, 167

Closing Balance August 2023: £19, 885.02

Private school funds help the school to purchase items / resources and activities which help advance the education of pupils. These resources would not normally be afforded through the allocated school budget. The purpose of these funds is to enhance, improve and enrich the children's educational experience and emotional wellbeing in the school. Examples include extra-curricular activities, and the purchase of additional resources and "experiences" to support learning.

## **Accreditation**

### **Year 12 results August 2023**

Subject	Level / Grade	Examining body	Candidates
Occupational Studies (2021/22) <i>(In either: Design and Creativity, or Business and Services)</i>	Level 2 Merit Certificate	CCEA	5
Occupational Studies (2022/23) <i>(In either: Engineering Services or Business and Services)</i>	Level 2 Merit / Pass Certificate	CCEA	5
GCSE Maths	C, E, F	CCEA	3
Essential Skills - Communication	Level 1 Certificate	OCN	1
Developing Skills for Life	Level 1 Diploma	OCN	1
Vocational Skills	Level 2 Certificate	OCN	5
	Entry Level Award		1
Religious Studies	Level 2 Certificate	OCN	5
Creative Arts & Digital Technologies	Level 2 Certificate	OCN	6
Employability Skills	Level 2 Certificate	OCN	6
Employability Skills	Level 1 Certificate	OCN	6
English	Entry Level 3	CCEA	6
Maths	Entry Level 2 / 3	CCEA	6
Home Economics	Entry Level 3	CCEA	6

## **School Development Plan**

Considering the current circumstances, the Department of Education and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) communicated that they recognise the need to continue with a flexible approach to school development planning in the academic year 2022-23. We did however Focus on the Curricular Areas of Literacy and Numeracy – Implementing the Read, Write Inc programme across the school as well as the development of Numicon in Mathematics. We also focused on beginning to develop Whole School Ethos which we plan to take forward. We continued to develop the SEND implementation throughout school with various training sessions.

## **Teaching & Learning**

Pupils continued to access all areas of the NI Curriculum and had specific targets set though Individual Education Plans. Both individual and group speech therapy programmes remained a significant focus in each child's learning plan.

## **Staff Training**

Staff training included the following in 2022-23:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Numicon training
- Read, Write Inc training
- SEND training – implementation of PLPs and Online Annual Reviews
- Speech and Language training

## **Friends of Thornfield**

Traditionally school has had a very proactive group of parents and friends to help raise funds and run charity events. Since the Covid 19 Pandemic however this hasn't been as active as we would hope. Mrs Creighton has now generated interest in a new group of parents to come on board and we hope in 2023-24 the FOT will be up and running again.

On behalf of the Board of Governors, I hope this has given you a flavour and insight into everything we achieved in 2022-23 and we look forward to more successes in 2023 -24

If you have a question or comment with regard to any aspect of this report then please feel free to put this in writing to the Principal, Mrs Creighton.