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Board of Management – Annual Report 2019/2020

The purpose of this Annual Report of the Board of Management of Saint Michael's National School is to provide a summary of information on the operation of the school in line with the requirements of the Education Act 1998. This Report serves as an addition to the information provided on the school's website www.smnslimerick.ie, the various monthly e-newsletters issued by the school and information provided to parents at parent teacher meetings and various other school events.

A message from the Principal

The school year flies by so fast. This year has been filled with mixed emotions. Excitement, joy and uncertainty. We have had to learn how to adjust our lives to live with a pandemic. Pupils have adapted to home learning. Parents have supported their children at home and teachers have upskilled and reimagined how they can teach and connect with their class. It has not been easy for anyone. It may not have been a perfect solution for all, but we did our best to support and educate as best we could, through the use of technology. I am proud of our school community. Everyone did their best given the difficulties we faced and we made the most of it.

This school year will never be forgotten. No doubt the next school year will look a little different, but we will work together and adapt so that we can continue to nurture the spirit of our very special place – Saint Michael's National School.

Miriam Smyth (Principal)

2019/2020 was another busy and active year for the Board of Management of our school. The following summarises our work

School Ethos

Saint Michael's National School is a co-educational National School under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of the United Dioceses of Limerick & Killaloe, the present Patron being the Very Right Reverend Doctor Kenneth Kearon.

Our staff, in conjunction with the church upholds the ethos. Our children attend assembly each Wednesday in Saint Michael's Church. Our assemblies are led by the following leaders: Dean Niall Sloane, Rev. Edna Wakely, Kevin Fitzgibbon and Paul Ritchie.

We wish Rev. Edna well as she moves to Castlecomer. We will miss her lovely assemblies. We also wish Rev. Paul Fitzpatrick well as he leaves his role in Limerick City Parish to work in Killaloe/Nenagh. Rev. Paul was a frequent visitor to the classrooms and will also be missed.

Under the patronage of the Church of Ireland

Saint Michael's National School, 11, Barrington Street, Limerick V94 A0K7

Board of Management

Patron Nominee / Chairperson - The Very Rev'd Niall J. Sloane
Community Nominee / Treasurer - Neil Keane
Teachers' Nominee - Sheelagh Morrow
Parent Nominee - Jennifer O'Leary
Principal - Miriam Smyth
Patron Nominee - Deirdre Doogan
Parent Nominee - Brian Beck
Community Nominee - Niall Hanley

Health & Safety

At the start of each term the teachers carry out a health and safety audit of the school, schoolyard and grounds. All maintenance issues are addressed in a timely manner. Last year the playground has been divided into two separate areas (Juniors-1st and 2nd to 6th) The staff feel that this is working well. However, in September this may need to be reviewed to adhere to social distancing/Covid 19 guidelines. A fire drill was carried out once per term as standard practice and records of these are kept.

Parent Teacher Association

We are very grateful to all of the parents who take the time to get involved in the PTA. Our Chairperson this year is Jackie O'Regan and she has gotten off to a great start. The dedication of the PTA to our school is fantastic. The Anti-Bullying talk they arranged was very informative and their first ever Festive Family Fun Evening was a huge success! We know their plans for the end of this school year were cancelled but we know they will be back with gusto next year!



Opening of the New Extension

Thomas Nolan and Sons completed the building project in September and we celebrated the official opening on the 11th October 2019. Many thanks to the committee who were involved in the organisation and running of the event. It was a memorable day.

Policy Development

The following policies were developed/reviewed & ratified:

1. Admissions Policy
2. Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
3. Equal Access Policy
4. Acceptable Usage Policy Addendum
5. Administration of Medicines
6. CCTV
7. Critical Incident Management Policy
8. RSE Policy
9. SPHE Policy

Standardised Test Results

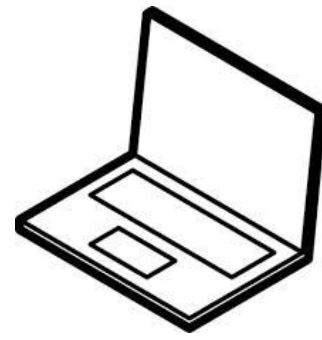
The Principal normally reports the results of the standardised tests in 2nd/4th and 6th class to the Board of Management at the end of each year. However, these tests were cancelled due to Covid 19.

Emergency Works

We were fortunate to be granted funding to upgrade the security on the school site. Des Power and GTA systems installed and completed this upgrade for the school in October. We now have a secure car park for teachers' cars complete with automatic back gate. We also have a pedestrian gate at the rear of the building and an automatic pedestrian gate with intercom at the main entrance.

School Tours

The 5th and 6th class pupils went on their school tour in March just before school closed. All classes went on a virtual school tour arranged by their class teachers in June. Feedback from parents and pupils was very positive.



Child Protection

The school's Designated Liaison Person is the school Principal Miriam Smyth. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Sally Fossitt. They are legally obliged to refer all Child Protection concerns to TUSLA.

Croke Park Hours

Both teachers and Special Needs Assistants have completed their commitment to work their Croke Park Hours for 2019/2020.

Curricular Development

The staff available of PDST support to complete a policy review and upskill in SPHE and RSE.

Staff completed an iPad training session provided by Wriggle in line with the school's Digital Learning Plan.

Staff were due to take two half days to complete training on the new language curriculum. This in-service was completed by staff online during Covid 19.

TUSLA Reporting on Pupil Attendance

The school completed all mandatory reports to Tusla regarding pupil attendance and we will complete the End of Year report at the end of June.

School Enrolments

There are 14 children in 6th class moving on to secondary school in June. Projected Enrolment for Junior Infants for Sept 2020 is 13 pupils. Places have been accepted in other classes and the overall enrolment on the 1st Sept 2020 is projected to be 130 pupils.

Principal Release Day Cluster

Last year Ms Smyth formed a cluster with 10 other schools and Saint Michael's NS became the base school for a Principal Release Day Cluster job. This means that the same teacher covers all of Ms Smyth's administration days. It provides great continuity and has been a wonderful arrangement. We are delighted that the Department of Education granted this job again for the coming school year 2020/2021.

Be Bright

We were fortunate to have Be Bright After School Service running at our school this year providing much needed after school care for parents of children in our school. Many thanks to Mary & Sean Roys providing such a fantastic service.



Staffing 2020/2021

For 2020/2021 we will have the same allocation of teachers. 5 Mainstream Teachers and 2 Special Education Teachers. Our Principal is a teaching principal. We will share a part-time Special Education Teacher with Limerick School Project. We also have 2 SNA's - One for the infant school day and one for the full school day.

Board Finances

The financial management of our school is conducted in strict compliance with the Department of Education and Skills requirements. At each Board of Management meeting the treasurer furnishes the board with a detailed report on finances.

A Special Word of Thanks

We are very fortunate to have such dedicated staff working in our school. This year has been challenging for schools all over the country as we were forced to re-imagine how we teach and upskill in various areas. Our teachers have all risen to the challenge and I am very proud of the efforts made to keep our children learning at home. A special word of thanks goes to our school secretary Ms. O'Neill who is the back bone of our school and continued working from home seamlessly during Covid 19. We are also very grateful to Ms.Coombes and Ms.Hayes who worked on various projects during the closure.

Staff Training/CPD

- Middletown Centre for Autism- Managing Meltdowns.
- Limerick EC- Using a windows Laptop to support pupils with SEN,
- Middletown Centre for Autism - When my worries get too big.
Mayson Hayes Curran - The legal and technical challenges for primary schools
Limerick EC - Kahoot
Clare EC Literacy 2nd - 4th Regina Dunne
- Assessment and planning for SEN
- Autism, mental health and managing anxiety
Apple RTC - Introduction to the iPad
Clare EC Helping Dysregulated Children to Regulate within the School Environment
Clare EC The Word Study approach to the teaching and learning of spelling
- Seesaw - Seesaw Pioneer Training / Seesaw Ambassador training
- Spellings for Me,
- Tralee EC - Creating a Virtual Sports Day
- Reading Supports for using a laptop
- ECDL
- SEN- using a laptop to support writing
- Creating and using digital resources
- Limerick EC - Using seesaw in the classroom
- Guiding Literacy in the Home for 2nd - 4th class pupils; also 5th-6th class pupils
- Visual and Environmental Supports for children with SEN
- Volleyball Ireland - Online Coach Education Programme with Vladimir Grbic
- Tralee EC - Getting Ready for the Return to the Infant Classroom in Sept. 2020
- Teaching Coding in Primary School
- Managing dyspraxia in the Classroom
- Re-opening Schools: Practical Issues for Primary and Secondary School
- Tips and Tricks for Remote Learning

A huge amount of professional development has been undertaken by staff this year in particular throughout Covid 19. This is just a summary of the courses completed.



Information Technology

The school used the ICT grant to invest in a set of iPads provided by Wriggle Learning. Teachers and pupils have been busy becoming familiar with using the iPads to compliment various curricular areas. We look forward to developing these skills in the coming years.

A Message from the Chairperson of the Board of Management

The last academic year in Saint Michael's School has been bookended by two key events - the opening of the new school extension and Covid 19. Both have made a significant impact on how our school functions and have required us all to adapt how we operate. At time of writing, we are still unclear as to what the new academic year will look like; however, I'm sure all of us will do our bit and, most of all, ensure that we continue to have a safe and happy learning facility for our children to grow in and flourish.

You will see from this report that the Board of Management has had another busy year. Preserving and developing the ethos of the school is another key responsibility of the Board and I am pleased to see the often creative ways that our Church of Ireland tradition is being expressed and developed in response to the significant changes in Irish culture and society. Limerick City Parish enjoys a close and growing friendship which bodes well for the cohesion and integration of our school community. Alongside the religious studies curriculum, the weekly assemblies and end of term services provide excellent opportunities for celebrating and engaging with our shared Christian heritage.

On behalf of the Board of Management, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the hardworking, dedicated and committed staff of Saint Michael's, led by the Principal, Ms Miriam Smyth.

We also wish to commend the involvement and work of the Parents who so generously give of their time, talents and treasures. We are grateful to the PTA for their work and I applaud them on their enthusiasm. To those who organise extra-curricular activities, co-ordinate and facilitate fundraising and those in the wider community who support the school we pay special tribute and say, 'Thank you'.

Of course, without pupils there can be no school and I want to thank them for the way they engage in the life of the school. It is our hope and prayer that their experience of Saint Michael's N.S. is one of learning, love and happiness. On a personal note, I am privileged to have the opportunity to speak with them and enjoy my interactions with them as we seek to explore our Christian faith and witness.

Finally, I would like to put on record my appreciation to my fellow Board members who so willingly give of their time and expertise for the benefit of the school. I wish to pay tribute to Brian Gaffney, Keith Benson, Caroline Ritchie and Sally Fossitt who concluded a term of office in December. On behalf of all of us within Saint Michael's, I thank them for so freely giving of themselves to the smooth management of the School. I welcome Deirdre Doogan, Neil Keane, Sheelagh Morrow and Niall Hanley, I'm grateful that they are prepared to serve the school (along with Brian Beck, Jennifer O'Leary and the Principal) in this role. Our work is made easier by Ms Smyth's expertise, professionalism, good humour and the gracious way in which she works along everyone within the school community.

The Very Rev'd Niall J. Sloane,
Chairman of the Board of Management.