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Board of Management – Annual Report 2020/2021

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 via email and the Aladdin Connect Noticeboard.

A message from the Principal

Another busy year for Saint Michael's National School. Re-opening the school safely took a lot of planning and preparation by all staff but we did it! The children skipped through the doors in September. Within days the hand washing, hand sanitising, pods and bubbles were a normal part of school life. The children adjusted very well to the new normal. We did our best as teachers to ensure that the children experienced all elements of the curriculum in a Covid Friendly way.

In January we reverted to remote teaching and once again we were Zooming and using Seesaw daily. Again, the children adjusted and while they missed school they fully engaged with the online learning platform. Thankfully school re-opened in March and we got to enjoy most of the remainder of the year together.

Miriam Smyth (Principal)

2020/2021 was another busy and active year for the Board of Management of our school. The following summarizes 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 via Zoom Saint Michael's Church. Our assemblies are led by the following leaders: Dean Niall Sloane and Paul Ritchie. We are also joined by Rev Bernie Daly who has joined Limerick City Parish.

Board of Management

Patron Nominee / Chairperson – The Very Rev'd Niall J. Sloane
Community Nominee / Treasurer – Neil Keane
Teachers' Nominee – Sheelagh Morrow
Parent Nominee – Anne Holmes Siddle
Principal – Miriam Smyth
Patron Nominee – Deirdre Doogan
Parent Nominee – Brian Beck
Community Nominee – Niall Hanley

Croke Park Hours

Both teachers and Special Needs Assistants have completed their commitment to work their Croke Park Hours for 2020/2021.

Under the patronage of the Church of Ireland

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

Parent Teacher Association

Dearbhla Acheson: Co-chairperson
Angie Smalis: Co-chairperson
Frances Loneragan: Treasurer
Joanne Meaney: Member
Rebecca P. Tumwebaze: Member

Our Parent Teacher Association have been very busy this year supporting our school. The committee have been meeting via Zoom and doing their best to make sure the pupils of Saint Michael's enjoy the year. At Christmas they organised some lovely treats for us when we watched the Virtual Panto. They did not let school closures or lockdown hold them back! They met regularly on Zoom and held a series of Zoom talks for parents and children alike! The children particularly enjoyed the art zooms that were arranged! The PTA have plans in the pipe line to make the end of year memorable also.

Understandably one or two members stepped down for personal reasons. We thank them for their commitment to our school and hope they re-join the committee in the future.

Health & Safety

At the start of each term the staff carry out a health and safety audit of the school, schoolyard and grounds. All maintenance issues are addressed in a timely manner.

Over the last year the playground has been divided into three separate areas using bollards. We also have two separate yard times for Juniors to 3rd and 4th to 6th. This has meant that we have approximately 65 children playing on yard instead of 130, allowing for greater space for social distancing.

A fire drill was carried out in Term 1 and Term 3 as standard practice and records of these are kept. School was closed for most of Term 2 .

Standardised Test Results

The Principal reported the results of the standardised tests in 2nd/4th and 6th class to the Board of Management. We encountered some difficulties administering standardised tests this year as a number of classes were closed due to Covid 19.



Emergency Works

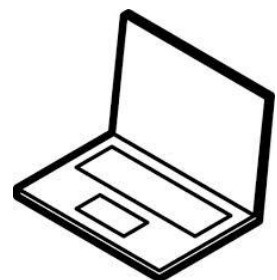
Our pipework in parts of the building is very old and our heating system began to leak in Term 2. The leak turned out to be quite substantial and we had to apply for Emergency Works to cover the cost of replacing all of the radiators and pipework in the whole school. This work will be completed over the summer and will hopefully be ready in September 2021.

School Tours

This year our school tour came to us ! A mobile farm visited the school grounds in June and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Class teachers also took their class on walking tours and for picnics locally as we could not travel on buses for our tours due to Covid 19. Hopefully next year we will return to our traditional form of school tour.

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. The BOM engaged in specific training this year in relation to Child Protection and the Stay Safe Programme.



Curricular Development

Leadership

The staff availed of PDST support in regards to Leadership skills – specifically the In School Management team took part in Forbairt – a programme designed to support school leaders. The team found the course very beneficial.

ICT – School Self Evaluation

Throughout remote teaching this year staff engaged in a number of courses which enabled them to upskill further in relation to ICT. Various in-house professional development sessions were held also giving staff the opportunity to learn from each other.

Primary Languages Curriculum

All staff engaged with training provided specifically focused on Planning for the Primary Language Curriculum. The school have secured PDST support for the next school year to focus on the English curriculum.

TUSLA Reporting on Pupil Attendance

The school completed all mandatory reports for Tusla regarding pupil attendance and we will complete the End of Year report on the last day of school.

School Enrolments

There are 18 children in 6th class moving on to secondary school in June.
Projected Enrolment for Junior Infants for Sept 2020 is 14 pupils.

Principal Release Day Cluster

This year we were the base school for a cluster of 5 schools. Ms Doran was employed once again to travel between the schools in the cluster covering for the principal when they were on Administration Days. This Cluster will continue in 2021/2020 and we continue to be the base school for this post.

EAL

The school has been granted an additional teaching post for September 2021. This teacher will be responsible for helping children who have English as an Additional Language. This will be an invaluable resource for our school as we have a high number of children for whom English is their 2nd and in some cases 3rd language.



Staffing 2021/2022

For 2021/2022 we will have

- 5 Mainstream Teachers
- 2 Special Education Teachers
- 1 part time shared Special Education Teacher
 - 1 EAL teacher
- 2 SNAs – One for the infant school day and one for the full school day

Class Allocations

Junior Infants - 14 - Miss Wallace
Senior Infants/First Class - 25 - Miss Smyth
2nd/3rd Class - 26- Teacher will be appointed over the summer
4th/5th Class 27- Ms.Fossitt
5th/6th Class - 28- Ms. Doran
EAL post - Ms Mullane
SET posts - Ms Robinson & Ms Morrow

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. Accounts are audited each year.

Staff Training/CPD

Exploring Numicon in the Classroom
Gramadach gan Gràin
Organisational skills and Dyspraxia/DCD
SET Policy Development
Provision of SEN in Mainstream Schools
CBT for Children
Dyspraxia
Movement and Sensory Breaks
Sensory Processing Disorder
Record keeping / Report Writing and Observation.
Understanding Dyspraxia.
Professional Learning Day for Special Needs Assistants.
Integrating Sensory Play in the classroom setting
Remote PE,
Social Distance PE
Pop in for PE
Engaging Activities for live Zoom calls
Nurturing a sense of well-being
Drama without the stress
My Learner ID
Primary Language
Dyslexia Awareness
Restorative Practice
Seesaw Pioneer Course
Living with Covid
Returning to school safely



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.

Policy Development

The following policies were developed/reviewed & ratified:

1. Covid Response Plan
2. Covid Policy Statement
3. Covid 19 Risk Assessment
4. School Re-opening Plan
5. Child Safeguarding Statement
6. Critical Incident Policy





Information Technology

The school has invested in a 2nd set of iPads provided by Wriggle Learning. Teachers and pupils have been busy becoming familiar with using the iPads to compliment various curricular areas. The school also purchased a 2nd Interactive Panel this year which is currently in use to great effect in 2nd/3rd class.

Sensory Garden/Outdoor Classroom

Our amazing Sensory Garden and Outdoor Classroom opened shortly after school reopened in September. Throughout the year staff and pupils have made great use of the space which is a fantastic addition to our school and one that we are truly grateful for.

Creative Schools Funding

Our school was granted Creative Schools Funding in September 2020. The school are working with Joanna Parkes (Creative Schools Facilitator) who is guiding us through a consultative process where the children are given input into how we use the funding granted to the school. Most of our sessions this year have been online via Zoom but great progress is being made. We look forward to seeing the fruits of our labour next year!

A Message from the Chairperson of the Board of Management Chairman's Report

It is hard to believe that we are once again at the end of another academic year. It has been another active season in the life of Saint Michael's National School most of which has been shadowed by the pandemic.

You will see from this report that the Board of Management has had a busy year. Preserving and developing the ethos of the school is another key responsibility of the Board and I am pleased to see the 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. To those who organise extra-curricular activities (albeit virtually), act as class representatives, 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 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.

I wish 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. During the last year we bade farewell to Ms. Jennifer O'Leary as Mother's Nominee and in her place welcomed Ms. Anne Holmes Siddle, we thank both for their service to the school. Our work is made easier by Ms. Smyth's expertise, professionalism, good humour and the gracious way in which she works alongside the Board.

Finally, may I commend the entire school community for the positive way in which they have responded to the pandemic. Life has been challenging for everyone since March 2020 and I have been encouraged by the co-operation and enthusiasm of everyone thus ensuring that we continue to provide a safe and happy environment for learning in Saint Michael's.

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