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Board of Management – Annual Report 2021/2022

The purpose of this Board of Management Annual Report 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 -newsletters issued by the school and information provided via email and the Aladdin Connect Noticeboard.

A message from the Principal

It is hard to believe we are at the end of another school year. I want to thank each and every one of you for the warm welcome I received at Saint Michael's when I joined in September and throughout the year.

The first term of our school year started with COVID restrictions very much still in place but thankfully parents, staff and pupils were well used to the hand washing, ventilation and social distancing measures. We did take a few small steps back to pre-pandemic life, for example, we began having our school assemblies out in the yard, rather than via Zoom. We kicked off these assemblies with a blessing of the school bags in September. Instead of our usual Christmas plays, we enjoyed a virtual panto, Toy Day and all classes took part in 'The 12 Runs of Christmas' in the lead up to the holidays. The start of term two brought plenty of challenges with COVID numbers at record highs across the country. Our older children were very mature when it came to mask wearing. We were all delighted at the end of February to learn that some of the restrictions in place could be relaxed and the one we were most excited by was removing the barriers in the yard so that classes could play together again. Another exciting development in Term Two was the installation of our new AstroTurf surface.

As the year has gone on, more of the normal school activities have returned, such as group work, UL City Sports, Sports Days (both Villiers and in school) and school tours. I am really proud of how, as a school community, we worked hard all year to keep each other safe and support each other during these challenging months. It is with great hope that we now look forward to the summer and the next school year.

I want to say a big congratulations to our outgoing sixth class pupils. I also want to extend my thanks to the staff of Saint Michael's N.S. for their positive outlook, dedication to their pupils and willingness to always lend a hand. I would also like to thank the P.T.A., Board of Management and parents for their support throughout the year. Finally, I wish huge congratulations to Ms. Wallace, Ms. Hayes and Ms. Fossitt on their retirements. We also wish both Ms. Áine McMahon and Ms. Lorraine Moran the very best as they begin a new stage of their teaching careers in counties Clare and Kerry. You will be missed!

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 Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe, the present Patron being the Right Reverend Michael Burrows. Our staff, in conjunction with the church upholds the ethos. The pupils attend assembly each Wednesday. Our assemblies are led by the following leaders: Dean Niall Sloane, the Rev'd Dr Leonard Madden and Mr Paul Ritchie.

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

Secretary / Principal – Kate Gleeson

Patron Nominee – Deirdre Doogan

Parent Nominee – Brian Beck

Community Nominee – Niall Hanley

Under the patronage of the Church of Ireland

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

Parent Teacher Association

Chairperson: Shawn Jamieson
Treasurer: Anya Bialek
Secretary: David Moya
Committee Members: Dearbhla Acheson, Angie Smalis
Teacher nominee: Sheelagh Morrow

Our Parent Teacher Association have been very busy this year supporting our school. The committee have been meeting via Zoom and organised a number of fundraisers to help meet the cost of resurfacing the yard. In the Autumn, there was a Clothes Recycling Collection, and Halloween Dress Up with treats for pupils.

Just before Christmas they published a Festive Recipe book with a wonderful selection of international recipes from the children. At Easter, the PTA held a Bake Sale. This was the first event that parents could attend in the school since lockdown, and parents were delighted to meet for cake and a chat in school.

The highlight of the PTA activities was the Family Fun Evening last week. Families enjoyed a magic show, kids disco, second-hand sale, outdoor games, art display, school choir, bake sale, teas and coffees, burgers and hotdogs, nail art and tattoos and an ice-cream van. It was wonderful for so many families and teachers to meet up on such a beautiful summer's evening.

The PTA wish to thank the staff and parents of the school for supporting their activities and look forward to more events next year.

Croke Park Hours

Both teachers and special needs assistants have completed their commitment to work their Croke Park Hours for 2021/2022.

Health & Safety

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

Until March the playground was 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 60 children playing on yard instead of 120 which for greater space for social distancing.

School-Based Summer Programme

We are delighted to be offering a school-based summer inclusion programme this year. This is the first time Saint Michael's N.S. has been able to offer a school-based programme, thanks to the widening of the eligibility criteria.

The programme will run for two weeks. We welcome teacher Caoimhe Kavanagh and S.N.A. Geraldine Keating who will work on this programme. They will be joined each day by a permanent member of Saint Michael's Staff who will act as an overseer for the programme.



Summer Works

Now that our AstroTurf is finished and looking fantastic, we are now hoping to complete the resurfacing of the Junior Yard over the summer holidays.

We are also hoping to improve our outdoor learning space thanks to the enhanced COVID 19 Minor Works grant. Hopefully the outdoor space will look a little different when we come back in September. The pupils will benefit from learning outdoors even more.

School Tours

We were so happy to finally get back to school tours this year and all classes had a great time. The classes went on the following schools tours this year:

Junior Infants, Senior Infants and 1st Class: Bunratty Castle and Folk Park

2nd & 3rd Class: Bunratty Castle and Folk Park

4th & 5th Class: Mitchelstown Caves, Swiss Cottage & Cahir Castle

6th Class: Bowling, pizza making and the special 6th class 'mystery tour'.

Child Protection

The school's Designated Liaison Person is the school Principal Kate Gleeson.

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Sally Fossitt. They are legally obliged to refer all Child Protection concerns to TUSLA. At each Board meeting, the Principal presents the Board with the Principal's Oversight Report.



Curricular Development

Primary Languages Curriculum

All staff engaged with training provided specifically focused on implementing the new Primary Language Curriculum. The school have worked with the PDST this year and have completed year one of a two-year support programme. We will continue to work with the PDST next year on this.

School Self Evaluation (SSE) / School Improvement Plan

While SSE was officially on hold while schools were contending with the challenges presented by COVID 19, the staff in Saint Michael's continued to examine and discuss what area we would like to focus on next for our School Improvement Plan. We examined the strengths and needs across the school and next year the focus for SSE will be on developing pupils' vocabulary, particularly for oral language.

Whole school curricular planning

The In-School Management (ISM) team of Kate Gleeson, Ann Marie Mullane, Maria Robinson and Sally Fossitt have been working together to look at whole school curricular planning. In particular, we have been developing two-year learning cycles to ensure curricular objectives and skills are planned for in multi-grade classes.

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 22 children in 6th class moving on to secondary school in June.

Projected Enrolment for Junior Infants for Sept 2021 is 18 pupils.

Principal Release Day Cluster

This year we were the base school for a cluster of five schools. Ms Bríd Stackpoole was employed to travel between the schools in the cluster covering for the principal when they were on administration days. This cluster will continue in 2022/2023 and we continue to be the base school for this post.

EAL

The school has retained our additional teaching post for September 2022. 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 2022/2023

For 2022/2023 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

As we have members of staff retiring this year, with others moving on to other schools, our staff recruitment is currently ongoing. All parents will be informed of their class teacher as soon as this process is complete. The class splits for next year will be as follows:

Junior & Senior Infants
Senior Infants/First Class
2nd/3rd Class
4th/5th Class
5th/6th Class

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

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

- Friends for Life / Fun Friends
- Mata sa Rang/ Maths 4 All
- Lego Six Bricks
- Lights, Camera, Action: Practical Strategies for Drama in the Primary Classroom
- Explicitly teaching writing genres - Information and Report, Narrative, Response, Explanation and Procedure, Persuasive, Discussion and Exposition
- Writing in the Middle and Senior classes
- Comprehending texts
- Comprehension in the Middle and Senior classes
- A series of 8 webinars - Dyscalculia and Maths Difficulties
- Finding the Gap, a starting point for children with Maths difficulties
- Managing Challenging behaviour
- Introduction to Children First Tusla training (all staff updated their training)
- Team Teaching, In-class Support Models and Differentiation When You Have EAL Children in Your Class
- Working Memory in the Classroom
- Leading the Inclusion of EAL Learners in Primary Schools
- EAL Learners: Beyond Linguistic Needs
- EAL Learners and Direct Provision
- Supporting pupils from Ukraine
- Meeting the Diverse Literacy needs of beginning EAL Learners
- Communicating with EAL Learners and Families
- Learning Through Play for Infant Teachers
- Aistear: Exploring Useful Resources and Tools for Play-Based Learning
- Thematic Play and Integrated Learning
- Developing Vocabulary within a Balanced Literacy Framework.
- Exploring Numicon in the Classroom
- The Regulated Classroom
- The ASD Class



Policy Development

The following policies were developed/reviewed & ratified:

- Covid Response Plan - review
- Covid Policy Statement - review
- Covid 19 Risk Assessment - review
- School Re-opening Plan - review
- Child Safeguarding Statement and annual review
- Anti-Bullying annual review
- Health and Safety annual & termly reviews
- Critical Incident Policy -review
- Admissions Notice
- Volunteers in School – new policy
- Mobile Phone / Electronic Devices – new policy
- Assistive Technology – review
- Healthy Eating – review
- Dress Code – new policy
- SEN / Inclusion – review
- Student Council – new policy
- Brief Staff Absences – new policy
- Droichead (Teacher Induction) – new policy





Green Schools

This year the school restarted our Green Schools journey, working towards the Litter and Waste flag. As we could not arrange a cross-school committee, Ms. Halpin and 2nd & 3rd class took on the role of leading our Green Schools journey this year. They created a lovely display, made posters to let everyone know what rubbish should be recycled and every classroom began monitoring bins to make sure rubbish was going to the correct place. Senior Infants & 1st class and 2nd & 3rd class also took part in the Picker Pals programme and had great fun taking the 'Picker Pack' home to clean up outside their own homes.

Creative Schools

This year marked the second and final year of our participation in the Creative Schools programme. Throughout the past two years we have been guided and supported by our Creative Schools Practitioner, Joanna Parkes and we would like to thank her for all her help and enthusiasm.

This year, the pupils have taken part in workshops with Joanna, had dance lessons with Dance It Our Ireland and all classes walked to Limerick Print Works to take part in a printmaking workshop. 2nd – 6th classes took part in animation workshops in December, Senior Infants & 1st class did a willow weaving workshop (in partnership with Heritage in Schools) and 5th & 6th class have paid many visits to our local gallery, Limerick City Gallery of Art. A huge thank you to Mairéad Doran for all her hard work as our Creative Schools co-ordinator.

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

As I write, yet another school year is drawing to a close. It only seems like yesterday that I was blessing the school bags!

As the academic year ends, a number of changes are about to take place within our school family. Ms Fossitt, Ms Wallace and Ms Hayes are to retire – between them they have nearly 70 years of service to the School. Our Deputy Principal, Ms McMahon is moving to pastures new. So to them all we extend a very sincere and heartfelt, THANK YOU!

Despite all the challenges posed by the pandemic, the Board of Management has had a busy year. We are particularly pleased to see the resurfacing of the school yard and look forward to the completion on the Junior yard over the summer. 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 Kate Gleeson. As she completes one year in office, we wish her every blessing in the role. I also thank my fellow Board members for the time and expertise they invest into Saint Michael's.

We also wish to commend the involvement and work of the parents who so generously give their time, talents and treasures. To those who organise extra-curricular activities, 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. 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.

Saint Michael's is a very special place – situated in the heart of the European Union's third largest English-speaking city, we are relatively small in number and yet are proud to have over thirty nationalities represented within the school community. The diversity of our make-up is one of our many strengths, coupled with the fact, that we have a wonderful team at the helm ensuring that our children receive a first rate educational experience. And so, we look to the next academic year and all the opportunities and joys that it will bring, with renewed strength and vigour.

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