

Annual Board Report Bennekerry N.S. 2018-2019

Introduction and Overview

Bennekerry N.S. is a co-educational catholic school. The school's enrolment presently stands at 422 pupils. It has 24 teachers comprising of an administrative Principal, 16 class teachers and 7 Special Educational Needs teachers, two of whom are part of a job-share agreement. Ms. Tonia Cleary is the Principal, Ms. Lourda Griffin is Deputy Principal and Mrs. Aoife Rice is Assistant Principal 1. In addition, the school has three Assistant Principal 2 post holders, Mr. John Dennehy, Mrs. Patricia Bowe and Ms. Deirdre Tomlinson. Bennekerry N.S. has two Special Needs Assistants, Mrs. Zelma Lennon and Mrs. Adrienne Connor, a part-time caretaker, Mr. Kevin O'Sullivan and a full-time secretary, Mrs. Deirdre Mullins.

Mission Statement

Bennekerry National School is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed.

While B.N.S is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also has due recognition for all other religions.

Bennekerry National School will strive to promote, both individually and collectively, the professional and personal development of teachers through staff development programmes. Bennekerry National School will encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contact and through their involvement in the Bennekerry N.S Parents Association.

Bennekerry will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.

Bennekerry National School will promote gender equality amongst the teachers and pupils. Déanfaimid iarracht Gaeilge a labhairt.

Board Members & Number of Meetings

Edmund Burke (Chairperson) Tonia Cleary (Principal & Secretary), Sara Byrne (Teachers' Nominee), Fr. Tom Little (Patron's Nominee), Niall Rennick (Treasurer & Community Nominee), Vivienne O'Neill (Parent Nominee) Paud O'Dwyer (Parent Nominee), Maria Galavan (Community Nominee and Safety Officer)

The Board met eight times this year.

Edmund Burke and Tonia Cleary attended board training for Selection Boards and Posts of Responsibility. They also attended training on The Complaints Procedure on 25th September 2018 and a CPSMA training evening on how best we can prepare for the formation of our next boards, updates on current ethos and educational issues and leading and managing our Catholic schools.

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Initiatives supported by the Board

Educational Projects:

- Curriculum requisites purchased: Three Digital Smartboards for classrooms, A portable Digital Smartboard for the hall, Maths materials to the value of €1,500, 4 new ipads, books to the value of over €10,000 for the Book Rental Scheme, additional PE equipment
- New model for SEN allocation implemented in Bennekerry N.S.
- Garden project- funding for plants
- SSE – SPHE, Well-Being and PE
- Mapping of school grounds and software for use in orienteering lessons
- Junior Achievement Ireland Primary School Programme
- Artist in Residence Programme
- “Stay Safe” information evening for parents
- Workshops on “Cyber-Bullying and Safe use of the Internet” for all pupils from 4th-6th class followed up by an information evening for parents on this topic
- RSE workshops for 5th and 6th class pupils

Whole Staff CPD/Training:

- Inservice on Primary Language Curriculum on November 23rd 2018.
- Inservice provided by PDST on Stay Safe and RSE on 5th December
- TUSLA e learning on Child Protection completed by all staff
- Staff training on Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures on March 5th
- Implementing the Primary Language Curriculum
- The Resilient Learner
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Extra-curricular activities and School Celebrations:

This year the pupils of Bennekerry N.S. were involved in a range of extra-curricular activities including Gaelic Football, Camogie, Soccer, Basketball, Athletics, Student Council, Art classes, Taekwon Do, Green Schools initiative, Active Schools initiative, Quiz teams, Tennis, Draughts, Choir, Irish Dancing, Recorder and Brass instruments, Drama, Spikeball, Tag Rugby and the Autumn League. There were several prize-winners in various art/project competitions. The boys’ and girls’ teams both emerged victorious in the Cumann na mBunscol Gaelic Football Division 1 and the Camogie and Hurling Division 1 finals. This is the first time in the history of the competition that this has been achieved by a Carlow school.

The boys’ and girls’ basketball teams both made the Division 1 finals and the girls had a great win while the boys just missed out to a very strong team from Gaelscoil Eoghan Uí Thuairisc. Our quiz teams finished in first and second place in the Spraoicheist and the tennis team won the Leinster Primary Schools mixed-doubles competition.

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Other memorable occasions for Bennekerry N.S. included the Christmas performances for Junior Infants- 2nd classes, Christmas Carol Service and combined Parish/school Carol Service, Science/Maths Week, Active School's Week, Grandparents' Day, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Reading Resolutions initiative, Trips to the GB Shaw Theatre for performances and Kite making in the Visual, Environmental Workshops, Hosting the County Carlow Spelling Bee, Visit of engineer Tim Kavanagh, Series of science lessons in 1st class in conjunction with Junior Achievement Ireland, Artist in Residence lessons in 4th class, Choir competition in Kilkenny, Performances by our own brass instrument players as well as "Boom Brassic" in conjunction with MGC, end of year music recital involving the choir, recorder groups, brass ensemble and piano players, "Popera" in GB Shaw Theatre, Fun Days organised by the 6th class for the rest of the school and the 6th class Graduation Ceremony.

Religious ceremonies:

Ms. Evelyn Whitney is our Religion Co-ordinator. This year we drafted a new RE policy which was ratified by the BOM and was sent to the patron.

Fr Little and Fr. Dillon visited the school regularly and Christmas was celebrated with a Christmas Carol Service in the Church. Following on from the Enrolment Ceremony, Advent and Lenten preparations, a class retreat and the Ceremony of Light, pupils celebrated Confirmation on 24th May this year. The First Communion Class also had an Enrolment Ceremony and were involved in Sunday masses right throughout the year before their First Confession and First Holy Communion which was held on 12th May 2019. Prayer is a feature of school life both in class and at assemblies and special prayer services to mark occasions. The Liturgical seasons were marked with Catholic School's Week, Mass and the distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday and pupils attended masses on Thursdays during Lent. Our Sacred Space, which is refreshed regularly to reflect the Liturgical Year, serves as a daily reminder of our Catholic Ethos.

Improvements to facilities:

- Provision of All-weather Pitch
- Provision of walking/jogging track around the pitch
- Repairs to faulty window fastenings
- Marmoleum on corridors, staff room, secretary's office and 4 classrooms sealed.
- CCTV upgraded
- Trophy display cabinet installed
- All interior woodwork painted
- Repairs to heating system

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- Repairs to toilets
- Tiling in Seomra 9
- Extra storage provided in kitchenette
- Updating of coms room
- Regular maintenance of Fire-safety and Intruder Alarm systems
- Improved signage

Policies and procedures reviewed and ratified by the Board:

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk assessment (updated and review checklist completed)	March 2019
Code of Behaviour (adjustments to Appendix 1)	October 2018
Administration of Medication Policy	October 2018
Critical Incident Policy	October 2018
Accident and Injury Policy	October 2018
Safety Statement and Risk Assessment	October 2018
Enrolment Policy	November 2018
Special Education Policy	October 2018
SPHE Policy	January 2019
RSE Policy	January 2019
Stay Safe Policy	January 2019
Religious Education Policy	January 2019
Protected Disclosure in the Workplace Policy	April 2019

Policies/items to review next year:

- Circular 70/2018
- English
- Gaeilge
- Assessment Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy (Review Checklist)
- Child Protection Policy (Review Checklist)

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Curriculum Plans which were reviewed or updated:

Geography Plan	January 2019
History Plan	January 2019
SPHE Draft Plan	January 2019
PE Plan	Ready for ratification
Science Plan	Ready for ratification

School Self Evaluation

Bennekerry N.S. has re-engaged with the School Self Evaluation Process and this year our focus was on SPHE, Well-Being and PE. We began last year by identifying this area of focus as a staff. Towards the end of the last school year and at the beginning of this school year we gathered evidence by asking parents, pupils and staff to complete questionnaires, using focus groups, consulting with the Students' Council and seeking the opinions of the stake-holders within the school. The evidence was analysed, and led by Tonia Cleary in consultation with Lourda Griffin, Deirdre Tomlinson and the whole staff, a report was drawn up. Based on our findings a School Improvement Plan was put in place.

Four main targets were set and within each target proposed actions were suggested and the person/people responsible for carrying out these actions were identified. Time-scales were also included in the plan. Our four targets related to

1. All strand areas of the PE curriculum will be adequately covered in every class (except aquatics in the Infant classes and 6th class).
Teachers will meaningfully differentiate content and activities in order to cater for the varying needs and abilities of pupils within these strands.
2. To raise activity levels among the less active pupils
3. To give children the opportunity to weave positivity into their daily lives through a range of activities in a variety of areas.
4. To ensure that all strands of the SPHE curriculum are taught in two-year cycles so that the personal development, health and well-being of the child will be fostered, and he/she will be helped to create and maintain supportive relationships so that he/she is enabled to become an active and responsible citizen.

The plan was acted upon, roles and timescales were assigned, and the actions were monitored. Towards the end of the year we evaluated the impact of the actions and have identified areas for further improvement. We will endeavour to embed those actions which were deemed a success into normal practice within the school. The school inspector, Ms. Jean Pender, visited the school in June and was impressed with our level of engagement and progress to date.

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Standardised Tests:

These were administered in all classes from 1st-6th during the weeks 13th -24th May. The average results in Bennekerry N.S. for Numeracy and Literacy were.....

Sigma T- (Maths) Standard Score 113 (81st percentile)

New Drumcondra Reading Test – Standard Score 107

Confirmation:

The Board has met its obligations in respect of Child Protection & Anti-Bullying procedures. Tonia Cleary was ratified as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Lourda Griffin as Deputy DLP 8th February 2018. The Board has reviewed Standardised Test Results and Pupil attendance returns during the course of the year.

Our attendance rate last year was 3137 while 19 pupils missed over twenty days. The school accounts for 2017-18 have been certified.

Conclusion

The Board wishes to acknowledge the commitment of staff, the support of the Parents' Association and parents/guardians, and the enthusiastic co-operation of the pupils who strive to make our school a centre of excellence in Catholic primary education.

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**Continuing Professional Development Courses Undertaken By
Staff During Summer 2018**

- ICT in SESE and STEM
- Utilising ICT to enhance Literacy, Numeracy, Gaelige and Stair Áitiúil
- Creating and Using ICT Resources in Literacy & Numeracy
- ICT in the Primary Classroom
- Digital Framework to Embed Digital Technologies in Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- My Learner ID- Beyond Sten Scores – Developing Learners for Life
- Looking and Responding – a springboard for creativity
- Infant Education: Literacy Across the Curriculum
- Calm Bootcamp
- Weaving Wellbeing – Using Positive Psychology in School
- Weaving Wellbeing – Positive Psychology, Relationships and Resilience
- Managing Behaviour: Stop, Think, Do
- Irish in The Senior Classes
- Tin Whistle and The Music Curriculum
- Bullying Prevention – Cultivating Friendships and Inclusion in the School.
- Enhancing the Delivery of P.E. and integration with Other Curriculum Subjects
- The Special Education Teacher
- Struggling Readers
- Maths Strategies for Teaching Maths in the Primary School

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Professional Development undertaken by staff throughout 2018-19 school year

- Droichead Principal's Information Session
- Primary Support Team Training (4 days)
- Stay Safe/RSE Stay Safe PDST
- First Aid Fundamentals for Schools
- IPPN Network Meeting
- Reading Recovery (6 days)
- Misneach (2 Days)
 - Managing Finances
 - Reflective Practice
 - Current Issues
 - Leading Well-Being
 - Leading SSE
 - Technology in Education
- National Induction Programme for Teachers (4 days)
- Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures
- Training for Selection Boards
- Framework to Embed Digital Technology for Learning and Assessment
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections Seminar
- School Leadership
- Managing Concussion
- Primary PE Workshop 'Gymnastics rolling variations and sequences'
- PDST Training on the Primary Language Curriculum (in school)
- Primary PE workshop: Folk Dance
- Training in use of Digital Touchscreens
- "What's a Storysack"

Commented [TC1]: