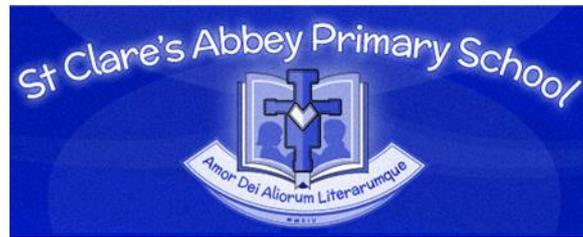


St Clare's Abbey Primary School



Annual Board of Governors' Report 2014/15

Approved by Governors: 04/04/16

St Clare's Abbey
Primary School, Newry

Governors' Report 2014/15

Dear Parents

I am pleased to have this opportunity to present to you the first ever *Governors' Report* for our brand new school St Clare's Abbey Primary School.

It is our intention that you should be kept informed about the development of the life of our school and this report is one of a number of ways in which the information will be provided.

I thank you for taking the time to read this report and for the interest and support you show to the school community of St Clare's Abbey.

Yours sincerely

Canon Francis Brown

Rev Canon Francis Brown (Adm).
Chairman

St Clare's Abbey Primary School

Board of Governors: 2014 - 2018

Trustees:

Rev Canon Francis Brown (Chairperson)
Sr Julie Mc Goldrick
Mr Gerard Keenan (Vice - Chair)
Mrs Siobhan Gorman

SELB Representatives:

Mr Brendan Keenan
Mrs Karen Mc Nally

Department Representative:

Mrs Ciara Reilly

Parent Representative:

Mr Shane Comer

Teacher Representative:

Miss Patricia Mc Coy

Principal

Mrs Michelle Monaghan (Secretary to the Board of Governors)

What Are Their Main Responsibilities?

The Governors are ultimately responsible for the overall management of the school. They are required to meet a minimum of three times each year, but in practice may meet more often than this.

Some Of Their Duties Include:

- The oversight of the curriculum.
- The control of the budget.
- The provision of information to parents.
- The selection of staff.
- The maintenance of the premises (shared responsibility with SELB).
- The Admissions Policy.
- Fostering links with the local community and pursuing the objectives of Mutual Understanding.

Warmest thanks are extended to our governors who give so freely of their valuable time.

STAFFING COMPLEMENT 2014/15

NAME	POSITION
1. Mrs Michelle Monaghan	Principal
2. Mr Eddie Sweeney	Vice Principal
3. Mrs Catherine Bennett	Head of Nursery
4. Miss Blanaid O Shea	ECPD teacher (Education Centre for Physically Disabled Children.)
5. Mrs Caitriona Cribbin	Member of School Leadership Team, Head of Foundation Stage, Joint Literacy Co-ordinator & Primary 1 Teacher - Abbey site
6. Miss Eimear Mc Shane	Primary 1 Teacher- St Clare's site
7. Mrs Toner	Member of School Leadership Team SENCO Primary 1 Teacher -on release from class duties for the year to lead SEN ,Mrs Niamh Trotter = substitute teacher - St Clare's site
8. Mrs Kathy Crozier	Primary 1 /2 composite class teacher- Abbey site
9. Miss Niamh Mc Nally	Primary 2 Temporary teacher - Abbey site
10. Mrs Helen Mc Goldrick	Joint Numeracy coordinator Primary 2 Teacher- St Clare's site
11. Mrs Emma Mc Keown	Primary 2 Teacher - St Clare's site -on maternity leave - Miss Monica Mallon = substitute teacher
12. Mrs Geraldine Tierney	Primary 3 teacher - Abbey site
13. Miss Roisin Rocks	Joint ICT co-ordinator Primary 3 Teacher -Abbey site.
14. Mrs Jayne Davey	Primary P3/4 composite class Teacher -St Clare's site. -on maternity leave - Miss Adele Griffin = substitute teacher
15. Mrs Katharine Doherty	Member of School Leadership Team Coordinator for Newcomer Provision, Religion and

	Pastoral Care. Primary P3/4 composite class Teacher -St Clare's site. -on maternity leave - Miss Aoife O Hanlon = substitute teacher.
16. Mr David Henry	Primary 4 Temporary Teacher - Abbey site
17. Mr Mark Digney	Primary 5 Teacher - Abbey site
18. Miss Elayna Duffy	Coordinator of The Arts Primary 5 Teacher - St Clare's site
19. Mrs Sonya Crawley	Coordinator for World Around Us Primary 6 Teacher- Abbey site
20. Mrs Michelle Mc Parland	Joint ICT co-ordinator Primary 6 Teacher - St Clare's site
21. Mrs Clare Donnelly	Member of School Leadership Team Head of Key stage 1 Joint Literacy Co-ordinator Primary 7 Teacher
22. Miss Patricia Mc Coy	Member of School Leadership Team Head of Key Stage 2 Joint Numeracy Co-ordinator Primary 7 Teacher
23. Sr. Rosemary Lynchehaun	Special Needs Support -Voluntary support- St Clare's site: Tues / Thurs

AUXILIARY STAFF

NAME	POSITION
24. Mrs Anne Hayes	Senior Clerical Officer - St Clare's site
25. Mrs Mary Treanor	Senior Clerical Officer - Abbey site Retired term 2, replaced temporarily by Mrs Bridie Downey.
26. Mr Cormac Murphy	Building Supervisor - St Clare's site
27. Mr Edmond Heaney	Building Supervisor - Abbey Site
28. Miss Louise Vardy	Classroom Assistant - Foundation Stage- Site A
29. Mrs. Catherine McQuillan	Classroom Assistant - Foundation Stage- Site A
30. Mrs Amanda Keenan	Classroom Assistant - Foundation Stage- Site A
31. Mrs Anne Doyle	Classroom Assistant - Foundation Stage- Site B

32. Mrs Lorraine Mc Cann	Classroom Assistant - Foundation Stage- Site B
33. Ms Martina Fearon	Classroom Assistant - Foundation Stage- Site B
34. Mrs Deirdre Murtagh	Classroom Assistant - SEN. Site A Absent on long term ill health term 2 & 3, replaced temporarily by Mrs Colette Lundy.
35. Miss Therese Kelland	Classroom assistant - SEN Site A
36. Mrs Patricia Gray	Classroom Assistant- SEN Site A
37. Mrs Nuala Rafferty	Classroom Assistant - SEN Site A
38. Miss Orla McDonald/(Mrs Mulholland Feb 15)	Classroom Assistant - SEN Site A
39. Mrs Marie McCartan	Classroom Assistant - SEN Site A
40. Mrs Aneta Palis	Classroom Assistant - SEN Site A
41. Mrs Mella Cunningham	Classroom Assistant - SEN Site B
42. Mrs Fiona Mc Govern	Classroom Assistant - SEN Site B
43. Mrs Maggie Rogalska	Classroom Assistant - SEN Site B
44. Miss Julie Hewitt	Classroom Assistant - SEN Site B
45. Mona Mc Ardle	Classroom Assistant - Nursery/ SEN Site B
46. Mrs Eilis Clarke	Classroom Assistant - SEN Site B
47. Miss Tara Hollywood	Classroom Assistant- SEN Site B
48. Mrs Breege Mc Anulty	Clerical Assistant & Library Assistant - Site B
49. Mrs Joanne Fallon	Assistant - ECPD - Maternity leave
50. Mrs Phyllis O Hare	Assistant - ECPD
51. Mrs Teresa Hollywood	Assistant- ECPD
52. Mrs Attracta Byrne	Assistant -ECPD - temporary.

CLEANERS

NAME	POSITION
53. Mrs McFee	Cleaner Supervisor- Site A
54. Mrs Clarke	Cleaner -Site A
55. Mrs Doherty	Cleaner - Site A
56. Mrs Mc Shane	Cleaner Supervisor - Site B
57. Mrs Gallagher	Cleaner- Site B
58. Mrs Clarke	Cleaner - Site B

59. Mrs Rooney	Cleaner- Site B
60. Miss Mc Shane	Cleaner- Site B

SUPERVISORS - DINING HALL /YARD

NAME	POSITION
61. Mrs. E Kay	Senior Supervisory Assistant Dhall/Yard Site A
62. Mrs R Doherty	Dhall/Yard Supervisory Assistant Site A
63. Ms J Grant	Dhall/Yard Supervisory Assistant Site A
64. Miss Woods	Dhall/Yard Supervisory Assistant Site B
65. Mrs Woods	Senior Supervisory Assistant Dhall/Yard Site B
66. Ms Mc Shane	Dhall/Yard Supervisory Assistant Site B

STAFF IN DINING HALL/KITCHEN

NAME	POSITION
Mrs Jacqui Graham & Her team	School cook

SCHOOL CROSSING PATROL OFFICER

Mr Andrzej Sobala

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Mrs Caroline Flynn

SCHOOL CHAPLAIN

Fr Krzysztof

Staff news:

The Board of Governors was delighted that the staffing complement was able to be maintained in the amalgamated school. The 3 year staffing plan has shown that this will be the case for the next three years. There were actually two temporary additional teachers appointed in St Clare's Abbey during its first year, to accommodate the management of the split site. This will be a temporary measure.

- We congratulate Mrs Michelle Mc Parland, Mr Mark Digney and Miss Eimear Mc Shane who were appointed as permanent members of our school staff and took

- up post on 01/09/14. They are the first teachers to be appointed to St Clare's Abbey and we are delighted to have them.
- We thank the temporary teachers we had in school during 2014/15 for the effort they invested into helping establish our early practices and procedures:
Miss Adele Griffin - substitute teacher for Mrs Katharine Doherty
Miss Aoife O Hanlon - substitute teacher for Mrs Jayne Davey
Miss Monica Mallon - substitute teacher for Mrs Emma Mc Keown
Mrs Niamh Trotter - substitute teacher for P1
Mr David Henry - substitute teacher for P4
Miss Niamh Mc Nally - substitute teacher for P2.
 - Teachers were appointed to leadership positions within the newly established management structure for our amalgamated school. All appointments were made in term 1 and we applaud our co-ordinators for the overwhelming workload they have undertaken to help us amalgamate effectively and successfully. *See staff member allocated to each role in the table above. This was a huge administrative undertaking in the midst of the busy school year and the governors are most appreciative of the effort of all involved, all in all interviews for 20 posts were held and successfully populated.*
 - We congratulate Mrs E Mc Keown, Mrs Jayne Davey and Mrs Katharine Doherty and their husbands on the birth of their new babies, Shea, Lucia and Ava respectively..

Enrolment:

Our enrolment in June 15 was 504 pupils and we thank our deeply committed staff for the tireless work they have carried out throughout the year. Their dedication to our pupils is unwavering.

An overview of achievements of 2014/15:

The school year 2014/15, the first year of St Clare's Abbey's existence, has been a very successful one in which many noteworthy achievements were made in all aspects of school work and life. Some of these are listed below but they are only a snapshot of the tremendous work done. It would be impossible for external observers to imagine the enormity of the work involved in amalgamating St Clare's and St Colman's Abbey into one school, whilst operating as two single gender schools on two separate sites, and simultaneously planning the new build, due to open in term 1 of the 15/16 school year. The Board of Governors is fully aware of the magnitude of the work involved and is deeply appreciative of the focussed dedication and commitment of the school leadership team and all the staff, invested into making sure that St Clare's Abbey made the best start possible. The Governors also feel that it is important to point out that traditionally additional funding would have been available from the outset of an amalgamation to allow non contact time for Senior Leadership to be released from the day to day running of the school. This would have facilitated the strategic development of an amalgamation and allowed teachers release time from class to come together from their respective schools to work out shared approaches to developing teaching and pastoral practice. However such was not made available to St Clare's Abbey until the final stages of the first year and even at that point the amount made available was significantly less than what had originally been expected and applied for. Therefore whilst the Board of Governors does not wish to dwell on the less than positive aspects of the amalgamation it is very important that the reality of the staff workload be fully

recognised, they had to create a new school with access to no additional resource, whilst still doing their 'day job' of teaching the children in their classes every day. The reality of this took its toll on staff, but they invested way beyond the call of duty and gave endless amounts of their own free time to make a good start and they deserve to have their efforts fully acknowledged.

Key milestones:

- 1. A programme for merging the boys and girls into mixed gender groupings was implemented. It was in two phases:**

Phase A: Children joined together as boy/girl classes each Thursday to work on inputting into key pastoral policies. Half the boys travelled to the St Clare's site each Thursday and half the girls travelled to the Abbey site and worked together getting to know each other and allowing staff to grow accustomed to the dynamics of teaching mixed gender classes. Throughout the year the pupils contributed to the development of:

- Our School Crest and Motto (Based on a study of the values of our shared founders: Blessed Edmund Rice, Sts Clare and Francis)
- Anti Bullying policy
- Creation of school uniform
- Policy for Promoting Positive Behaviour
- E- Safety Policy
- Our School Website.

Phase B: Children merged into full time mixed gender classes at the end of term 3 in preparation for the first term of year 2 which would necessitate the year starting with class groupings established from the outset as they would exist when we moved into the new build. Huge consultation was required at this stage to ensure that parents and their children were content with the class make up and the transfer of 50% of the girls to the Abbey site and 50% of the boys to the St Clare's site. This also had huge implication for allocation of staff to a new site, meaning that many were transferring to 2 new sites within 5 months, a physically daunting task, but one that was embraced with common sense and quiet recognition that it could not be avoided. Again, huge appreciation is due to staff.

An audit undertaken with our pupils at the very beginning of the amalgamation indicated that whilst many were very excited about joining together, a significant number were worried about a wide range of issues. These concerns were taken on board by staff and the pace and direction of all pastoral work undertaken during year 1 was directed to reassuring pupils and ensuring that the process was child centred and comfortable for them. This was a huge priority for all adults working in St Clare's Abbey.

- 2. A programme for developing shared high quality teaching and learning within St Clare's Abbey was developed with staff:**

The reality of amalgamating two schools and especially two single gender schools is that two very different cultures and approaches had to be merged. Whilst an initial screening of staff perception undertaken prior to amalgamation suggested that staff were

confident that their curricular approaches could be easily merged during amalgamation, the process was unsurprisingly much more complex in practice.

In the summer term of 2013/14, prior to amalgamation, the existing curriculum coordinators for Literacy and Numeracy and the principal reviewed the teaching practice on each site. It emerged that the approaches on each site were very gender specific and it became immediately evident that the best way forward would be to create new planning and lessons from the outset that promoted the very best in terms of active, exciting teaching that catered for all ability ranges in the class. **Originally it had been anticipated that the new curricular schemes might be devised most efficiently and effectively by taking the 'best' of what each school had and merging them. However this proposal was changed as the staff did not want to 'settle' for anything less than 'best practice' simply to expedite the process.**

Therefore the coordinators devised examples of really high quality lessons and when we amalgamated in August they 'taught' these to all the teachers, setting the expectation from the very beginning that this was the calibre of curricular experience that we wanted our children to be experiencing in each class. Throughout the year we implemented a very intensive programme of curriculum development, where staff in each year group came together to share their expertise and develop really exciting teaching and learning contexts. Regular sharing of good practice sessions were held, in which teachers 'taught' their lessons to colleagues and gave feedback on how their children had responded to the lessons. The creation of these plans was very time consuming and expensive as we had to release teachers from class to come together, but it was very successful in terms of setting high expectation and building lots of year group/ key stage teams all focussed on making learning exciting and relevant for our children. It is important to realise however that simultaneously teachers also had to proceed with their day to day planning and organising for the single gender class that they were currently teaching. The governors are keenly aware that our teachers were doing two jobs throughout 2014/15: First their 'normal' day to day job, which was as time consuming as ever and second their investment into 'getting the amalgamation work 'right' for the new school year of 15/16, when boys and girls would be fully merged into mixed gender classes and all practice would have to be shared. 14/15 was undoubtedly a year in which two programmes of work were being devised and implemented, but the staff committed wholeheartedly to the process. The governors are very appreciative.

Throughout term 3 an even more intensive planning programme was engaged in by each year group which facilitated all planners for term 1 of 15/16 being prepared for Literacy/ Numeracy and World Around Us. This period also saw the appointed coordinators for Literacy, Numeracy, Special Educational Needs and ICT sharing with staff their aspirations for the development of a range of practical matters within their subject areas. The coordinators had worked shoulder to shoulder with each year group throughout the year and whilst the teachers themselves had not been aware of the disparity in their practice the coordinators, viewing it from a detached perspective, were and were able to make recommendations for the way forward based on the detailed observations they had undertaken throughout the year. We now had a very concrete, shared basis for moving forward consistently in delivering the curriculum. To get to this point with agreement at the end of year one is remarkable and is testimony to the gentle hands on approach to leadership adopted in St Clare's Abbey. Consensus is very important and the fact that our shared understanding and agreement has been achieved in such a quiet and understated way augurs well for the way forward.

3. A programme for developing shared high quality pastoral practice within St Clare's Abbey was developed with all stakeholders:

As with curricular development, staff were audited prior to the amalgamation to identify their priorities for developing the pastoral life of the new school. Whilst there was consistency in identifying which strands needed developing first, there was a definite lack of understanding as to how different current approaches on each site were. Staff initially felt that their existing procedures could be easily merged to develop a consistent approach. However the method for developing shared practice in the first instance ie in developing our '**Anti Bullying**' policy, showed immediately that the approaches on each site were very different and that the effect of teaching in a single gender school had shaped this. It became evident immediately to the Principal and Vice Principal that developing a shared understanding and approach pastorally, was going to be a very important piece of work for the future development of our school.

SLT engaged with the EA, Southern Region's working group in this field and all members of SLT participated in the training programme. Once SLT was united in approach, it was 'rolled' out to all staff and there followed a comprehensive and time consuming staff development programme. This was integrated with a programme to give pupils and their parents input into the development of this key pastoral policy. The whole process took almost 4 months but it was time very well spent as it set the tone for how St Clare's Abbey is to develop pastorally and gave a very tangible 'touch stone' for developing further pastoral policies, eg **Policy for Promoting Positive Behaviour**., **Child Protection Policy** and **Safe Use of the Internet policy**. The same process was adopted to develop our school Visionary framework:

- Crest,
- Motto: '*Amor Dei. Aliorum. Literarumque*' - '*Loving God, Loving Others and Loving Learning.*'
- School Aims and Mission Statement,
- Code of Conduct (Staff and Pupils).

The result is that we have developed a very strong pastoral basis in year 1 and it has been linked to the value systems of our founders: Blessed Edmund Rice, Sts Clare and Francis and accordingly is very meaningful to us all. Having invested so heavily to establish our visionary framework, we have created the signposting for all future development. We are clear in our direction and that is a very strong position to be in at the end of year 1.

4. A programme for developing shared high quality ICT practice within St Clare's Abbey was developed:

School website: Our new website www.stclaresabbeyps.com under the guidance of Mrs Catherine Mc Quillan, was created and used to excellent effect as a platform for:

- engaging with our parents to showcase the work their children were undertaking to further the successful amalgamation.
- getting each family involved in making key decisions pertaining to the new school, eg we had an online vote for selecting our new uniform and over 400 votes were cast which was a great indicator of the high level of interaction and interest among our families.
- Showing the physical development of the new school building. The site did not allow site visits but photos were uploaded on a monthly basis that ensured all were kept informed and enthused.

Using ICT as a means of overcoming the barriers presented by operating from 2 sites: Whilst the children merged into mixed gender classes across both sites most Thursdays, inevitably adverse weather impacted negatively on this. Very early on

teachers found it very frustrating when their planned work could not take place because it was too wet to swap sites. However 'necessity became the mother of invention' and staff turned to ICT using webcams and Fronter rooms to facilitate cross site communication and engagement. This really enhanced the quality of ICT being used across the school and led to all being more creative and innovative than they might otherwise have been had the very real need not been there. The two newly appointed ICT co-ordinators used this very pressing context to really lead our use of ICT in a very progressive way and actually wrote up an account of our developing ICT expertise to submit to the NI Excellence in ICT awards 2014/15. When we started year 1 of our amalgamation we had not envisaged the development of ICT as being one of our curricular priorities however our circumstances presented us with the opportunity and we rose to it and have learnt so much because of it.

5. A programme for developing shared high quality SEN practice within St Clare's Abbey was developed:

The SENCO, Mrs Toner was released from class teacher duties, initially for term 1, then as the term progressed and the enormity of the workload became more evident, for the remainder of the year. The reason for this was that:

- Mrs Toner had no knowledge of the SEN of the boys and the SENCO who had been working in Abbey site had retired at the end of the 13/14 school year. Therefore Mrs Toner needed to familiarise herself with the very intricate needs of over 50 boys who were based on a different school site to the one she was based on.
- Each school had had different areas of expertise within their SEN provision, so there needed to be a planned programme for sharing pockets of good practice in an effort to up-skill staff and help our struggling pupils as best we could.

Mrs Toner did this by developing a 'shoulder to shoulder' support programme, wherein having spent a half term familiarising herself with the wide range of needs, she then met with the teachers and classroom assistants working with each child, to discuss the child's needs and signpost key means of gaining advice for helping him/her. A high priority was developing a team approach and making sure that all individual education plans prepared for children consisted of sensible achievable targets and adopted strategies that were truly workable and understood by staff.

In term 3 Mrs Toner undertook a huge programme of support aimed at working on the new IEP for each child, using the expertise and insight gained by the staff that had worked with him/her throughout the 2014/15 school year and sharing this with the new team that would be working with the child in 15/16. This was a labour intensive programme and logistically was very complex to implement, but the SENCO persisted realising that it showed clearly the need to make the most of each member of the team's insight into the child's needs and challenges.

The Board of Governors recognises how tirelessly the SENCO has worked with staff, the hours she has invested into developing staff expertise in a very 'hands on' and needs based way. Our staff have gained greatly from her dedication and this has obviously benefitted our pupils. The pursuit of high quality SEN provision is a high priority for St Clare's Abbey and a great start has been made in our work. The Governors are keen that all staff be applauded for their commitment in this area.

6. A programme for developing inclusivity among Newcomer families within St Clare's Abbey was developed:

Our newly appointed coordinator for Newcomer provision, hosted a series of meetings for Newcomer parents aimed at gathering their views re what we are doing well and what we need to develop further. Mrs Doherty incorporated some of these findings into work undertaken in terms 2 & 3 (especially pertaining to the homework club, which was an area of concern raised several times) and used them to inform her action plan for 2015/16.

7. A programme for developing Eco schools work within St Clare's Abbey was developed:

Under the guidance of Mr Henry and Miss Mc Shane St Clare's Abbey was awarded its first 'Eco Schools Green Flag.' This was a great achievement for a school in its first year of existence.

8. A programme for establishing the base line provision for Art, Drama and Music expertise was undertaken by Arts coordinator- Miss Duffy.

She will use the findings to prioritise and pace future development.

9. A programme for establishing the base line provision for World Around Us teaching and learning was undertaken by WAU coordinator- Ms Crawley

She will use the findings to prioritise and pace 2015/16 development.

10. A programme for establishing the base line provision for ICT teaching and learning was undertaken by ICT coordinators- Miss Rocks and Mrs Mc Parland

They used the findings to prioritise and pace 2014/15 term 2 and 3 development and 15/16.

To develop each of the areas above staff engaged in a comprehensive professional development programme, (See samples shown below).

The Board of Governors is aware that this work was undertaken to address amalgamation development and that it was done above and beyond the day to day planning and meeting in year groups/ key stages typical of 'normal' day to day school life. There is very clear understanding that this 'typical' development work was undertaken by staff in their own spare time after all other development work listed here was completed and once again Staff deserves recognition for this. In an ideal world the only developmental work being undertaken would have been for the newly amalgamated St Clare's Abbey, however the reality was that in year 1 two concurrent systems were running; First, the aspirational relating to when we merged within our mixed gender classes across the two sites and operated as one brand new entity with shared practice, Second, the day to day reality of operating our two single gender sites from different school buildings. It was impossible to merge all day to day practice as teachers had finite time to come together and plan, so the process required a lot of prioritising for joint work and a lot of grind for the other work

that is such a part of 'normal' school life. The governors appreciate that it is difficult for observers to appreciate how labour intensive year 1 was for staff but wishes to reiterate the analogy that teachers were 'working two jobs' where previously they had worked one. Their commitment is greatly appreciated. The Board of Governors is also keenly aware that all this extra planning time was required within the context of Trade Union advice calling for 'Action Short of Strike'. This presented a moral dilemma for many teachers, yet they could see the enormity of what had to be done for St Clare's Abbey's development and made their decision based on that. It was a very difficult time.

NB Most staff development undertaken in 14/15 was in-house and tapped into the expertise existent within the two staff groups coming together. This was a very important approach for us to adopt as it helped us appreciate how strong our team will be and helped us to develop a culture of trust and set high expectations for ourselves. We used insight into high quality practice gleaned from the Principal's work with ETINI as an Associate Assessor to ensure that we were setting our bench mark at an appropriately high level. At the end of year 1 there is a culture of mutual respect among staff and an awareness of the talents and areas of special interest that each person brings to the team. This is what we had hoped for from the outset, but seeing it translate into reality is a wonderful thing and once more augurs well for the future development of St Clare's Abbey.

11.A programme for establishing strong parental and community links was developed.

Given that we were creating a brand new school this was a very important piece of work as we had to ensure that our parents and community partners felt part of the process as it was a period of huge change and one in which parents could have lost confidence.

To foster this collaboration with parents we:

- Involved parents in the development of all key policies by inviting participants onto working groups for: Homework/ Healthy Food/ Anti Bullying/ Promoting Positive Behaviour and Safe Use of the Internet Policy.
- Urged all families to work with us in developing our: School crest. Motto, uniform and school aims. The uptake was significant.
- Audited our parents about their anxieties at the start of year 1 and kept them fully on board as we entered each new phase of the amalgamation, offering them a voice. At the end of year 1 we asked parents to review year 1's work and make suggestions about the pace and direction planned for year 2. Some quotations selected from the parental feedback show how involved and listened to parents felt. This was most affirming for school leadership and the Board of Governors and staff as a whole wish to thank parents for working so well with them to 'get it right' for our children.

QUOTES:

' Further to the work that has taken place to date, which from the regular updates from school, I feel has been thorough, I would like to see continued introduction of the children to each other.....'

'I think what has been done so far with introducing the girls and the boys to each other has worked extremely well. To actually have the classes amalgamate in September is an excellent idea.....'

' I think the gradual process thus far has been successful....'

' We are very happy with the school's progress so far with mixing the boys and girls one day per week.....'

' As I have two children currently on one site, I would be concerned that they might end up on different sites, this would be problematic for 'drop off' and 'pick up.'

' I think it would be best for the children to know and meet with their new teacher ASAP, it would also be good for them to be settled into their new class before the summer holidays so that they could become familiar with the layout of a new school building if they are moving to a different site.'

'I am confident that my son will find September's changes quite smooth because of your efforts all year to make it as smooth as possible for all the children.'

NB in this same audit parents raised lots of practical suggestions that we incorporated into the final month of 14/15 to help make the transition into mixed gender classes and the change to a different site for many children and staff as straightforward as possible. The governors affirm School staff's belief that things worked so successfully for St Clare's Abbey because parents really committed to making a very complicated process work. Common sense truly prevailed and the Board of Governors, as already intimated, is most eager that parents be recognised and valued for this.

We also worked extremely hard in our first year to develop strong links with educational partners in our locality.

To foster this collaboration with other partners we:

- Participated in the EA 'transitions' project with local post primary partners. As a newly amalgamated mixed gender school it was very important for us to link with the boys' and girls' post primary schools in a way that hadn't been developed sufficiently by either St Clare's or St Colman's Abbey, nor their post primary partners. Our link schools were St Mary's High School and St Joseph's High school and senior staff worked together to establish an action plan aimed at enhancing curricular transition practice. Literacy and Numeracy coordinators and principal attended a training programme in terms 2 & 3 and the action plan prepared will be implemented in the 15/16 school year.
- Made links with a wider range of pre- school partners. Prior to amalgamation because St Colman's Abbey had its own Nursery most pre-school transition work

was done in-house, however since St Clare's had not had its own on site Nursery, links with other local pre-school providers had been made. The newly appointed Head of Foundation Stage worked throughout term 3 to enhance these. Efforts were made to ensure that there was an exchange of curricular as well as pastoral information.

- Engaged with a local community play group (Windmill) to implement an early intervention Speech and Language support programme. St Clare's Abbey leadership team had gained funding to finance this as part of a bid made by the Education Sub Group for Neighbourhood Renewal in Newry and Mourne. This project was overseen by SENCO, Mrs Toner and great professional exchange and links were developed with Windmill playgroup because of it. This is very important as a lot of Windmill Pre school pupils transfer to St Clare's Abbey and it is highly beneficial that these pupils are accessing the same level of support as those who attend our own nursery.
- Made links with other Educational institutions: During the year there were many people on placement in the school. They came from a combination of colleges and an Adult education centre: -
St Mary's College, Belfast - Six students completed teaching practice
SRC - seven students were accepted on work placement.
Links - Two students came on work placement.
PGCE - Three students were accommodated.

12.A programme for establishing clear financial management was developed.

LMS budget

Since the introduction of Local Management of Schools each school is given a budget, which is under the control of Governors. The school must live within this budget.

Establishing our definitive budget this year was very complex for a variety of reasons including the fact that:

- Some costs were still being attributed to the pre amalgamation cost centres, so the carry-over was not accurate. (It took some time for this to come to light)
- There was uncertainty about any funding that might be made available to facilitate amalgamation.
- It was difficult to predict what the running costs for years 2 & 3 of the plan would be when we changed from two sites to one brand new site.

In actual fact several financial plans were issued during this year and the final one was actually only prepared towards the end of the 14/15 financial year. So this was a year of great financial uncertainty which made key decisions harder to make eg

- *Should SENCO remain relieved from class duties for the full year?*
- *Could subs be employed to release teachers from class to work on key aspects of amalgamation ie pastoral and curricular practice?*
- *Could Principal be afforded non contact time to oversee aspects of the amalgamation and manage the new build?*
- *Should additional teachers be appointed?*

Please see 3 attached plans, all of which were issued during 14/15:

Version 1:

Version 2:

Name of School: St Clares Abbey Primary, Newry
Cost Centre: 0558

A Enrolments	Nurs	Nurs	Rec	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Nursery & Primary	FT	PT								
Act October 2013	0	52	0	74	75	44	46	62	59	64
Est October 2014	0	52	0	81	75	76	47	49	63	61
Est October 2015	0	52	0	60	81	75	76	47	49	63

B Enrolments	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13-14	LSCs	TOTAL ENR	PUPIL TEACHER RATIO
Post Primary									
Act October 2013	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	483	23.00
Est October 2014	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	509	24.24
Est October 2015	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	508	24.19

C Teaching Staff April (excluding LSCs)	ESTIMATED		
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Teaching Staff April (excluding LSCs)	21.00	21.00	21.00
Teaching Staff Sept (excluding LSCs)	21.00	21.00	21.00

D Estimated Closing March Balance as a % of funds avail

	ACTUAL	ESTIMATED FUNDING	
	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £
Carry Over From previous schools Sept 14	96,898	101,431	47,409
Common Funding Scheme from previous schools 7/12th	936,989	1,462,000	1,462,000
Less 2014/15 Transitional Funds - 1 year only		0	0
2015/16: Adjustment for Enrolments Est October 2014		63,616	
2016/17: Adjustment for Enrolments Est October 2015			61,344
Entitlement Framework (Post Primary only)	0		
E TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS	1,033,887	1,627,047	1,570,753

ESTIMATED SPEND

Teaching Staff for 7/12ths 21 FTE	601,000	1,040,000	1,070,400
Substitution (£1k per teacher per year)	12,000	21,000	21,000
Non-Teaching Staff - Auxiliaries per projections, less	148,000	256,251	258,813
Non-Teaching Staff - Ancillary extended schools costs	48,000	82,000	83,000
Running Costs (based on 13/14 plus 2% inflation)	114,000	200,000	204,000
Capital (only individual items greater than £3k)			
Income (-)			
Other			
F TOTAL ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE For Financial Year	923,000	1,599,251	1,637,213

Please see bottom of 2nd page to review estimated March closing balance for each financial year. If no changes are required by your Board Of Governors please sign and return to LMS as soon as possible but no later than 30 September 2014. If you wish to make changes please do so in the appropriate boxes on the 2nd page.

YOUR CHANGES	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
G TEACHING NUMBERS (Increases/Reductions)			
Teaching Numbers at Apr excl LSCs	21.00	21.00	21.00
Teaching Numbers at Sep excl LSCs	21.00	21.00	21.00
H TEACHING SALARY Adj. (Increases/Reductions/Increments)			
Principal increment - L24	6,800	11,782	11,900
VP Increment - L14	-3,000	-5,000	-5,000
TA2 - 2 extra	5,656	9,696	9,696
*Increments have only been included for the 2014/15 year on M1 to M6. Please add in additional spend for increments for all other pay scales and years if significant.			
SUB TOTAL FOR ADJUSTMENTS - TEACHING	9,456	16,478	16,596
TOTAL ADJUSTED TEACHING COSTS	610,456	1,056,478	1,086,996

NON TEACHING (Increases/Reductions)			
I Auxiliaries (eg Classroom Assistants, Clerical etc)			
SUB TOTAL FOR ADJUSTMENTS - AUXILIARY	0	0	0
TOTAL ADJUSTED AUXILIARY COSTS	148,000	256,251	258,813

J Ancillary (eg Cleaners, Caretakers, Supervisory Assts etc)			
SUB TOTAL FOR ADJUSTMENTS - ANCILLARY	0	0	0
TOTAL ADJUSTED ANCILLARY COSTS	48,000	82,000	83,000

K RUNNING COSTS			
SUB TOTAL FOR ADJUSTMENTS - RUNNING COSTS	0	0	0
TOTAL ADJUSTED RUNNING COSTS	114,000	200,000	204,000

L OTHER ADJUSTMENTS			
Small schools support reduction		36,967	36,967
Teachers salary protection reduction		16,976	16,976
Principals' release reduction		14,450	14,450
Newcomer pupils increase - 44 pupils extra + split site		-104,484	-104,484
SUB TOTAL OTHER ADJUSTMENTS	0	-36,091	-36,091
TOTAL ADJUSTED OTHER COSTS	0	-36,091	-36,091

M TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS	9,456	-19,613	-19,495
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Version 3:

The disparity between these 3 plans prepared for the same financial period, especially the significant range in the year 3 carry over position shows how complex the financial context for making key decisions was during 14/15. Following much discussion the Board of Governors took the decision to spend as needed to release SENCO and Class teachers as the amalgamation work simply could not happen without this. Fortunately, as it turned out, this decision did not compromise the 3 year budget position but the Board of Governors does feel that the stress of working within such uncertainty needs to be acknowledged as it made key decision making re managing amalgamation much more complex than anyone had ever anticipated, when initial bids for amalgamation set up costs were prepared and submitted prior to the amalgamation commencing.

13. A programme for establishing clear fundraising procedures was developed.

The school council selected charities/ fundraising efforts to be supported in 14/15. They set a financial target and organised a fundraiser for each month of the academic year. The main beneficiary for 14/15 was the St Mary's Church refurbishment fund. The pupils selected this as their number 1 charity because the church means so much to the children in our school, as it is where they all receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist. In total £4000.00 was raised to help with the refurbishment costs. The children were very proud of themselves.

Other charities assisted in 14/15 are shown in the table below:

Charity	Amount
Southern Area Hospice Services	£ 165.70
St Vincent De Paul	£200
Cancer Research UK	£200
Autoline Charity Appeal	£40
Friends of Africa	£150
St Mary's Church Restoration Fund	£4000

- Sincerest thanks to parents for their generous contributions to each of the above funds

14. A programme for establishing clear Assessment procedures was developed.

Prior to amalgamation St Colman's Abbey and St Clare's used a variety of standardised assessment tools for a variety of purposes. To ensure a unified policy henceforth it was agreed that the new GL assessment tools for Literacy (PTE) and Numeracy (PTM), just recently launched and standardised specifically for the NI setting should be implemented. The core subject coordinators, Literacy, Numeracy, SENCO and Newcomer Provision coordinator, along with the Principal and Vice principal formed the data group and they invested heavily in analysing assessment outcomes within each class, year group and key-stage to ensure that realistic targets for school improvement were devised to be actioned in 2015/16 and to ensure that all available resource was deployed in the most sensible direction. This was a very important area of shared understanding to develop and a good start has been made.

15. A programme for promoting enhanced pupil attendance was developed.

Average attendance was 93.9%.

We have adopted the following attendance objective: **'To promote good attendance and improve the percentage attendance of our children so that we reduce the number with attendance of 85% or less.'**

We appointed a parental engagement coordinator, Miss O Shea, as a temporary member of our management structure and a significant part of her work is aimed at helping us achieve the above attendance objective, by working closely with 'at risk' families in terms of their child's attendance levels and the EWO, Education Welfare Officer.

We will continue to seek parental assistance in helping us to increase the attendance rate for 2015/16.

Conclusion:

Thank you for taking the time to peruse this report. The Board of Governors trusts that it gives a good insight into the successful and highly complex year that was the first year of the newly amalgamated St Clare's Abbey PS. Throughout it the Governors have recognised the huge contribution made by staff, parents, pupils and indeed the whole governance team. This was very important as amalgamation is an incredibly overwhelming process that actually runs alongside the normal day to day life of any school, yet all involved with St Clare's Abbey are honoured to be part of creating something very new and special. They are determined that our amalgamation will be a great success characterised by a community determined to give our precious children the very best education possible. A greater than hoped for start has been made and we are all very proud, knowing that from this auspicious beginning a truly wonderful school will grow,

If you seek clarification on any of its contents please feel free to contact:

- School Principal - Mrs Michelle Monaghan

Or

Chairman of St Clare's Abbey Board of Governors - Rev. Canon Francis Brown (Adm.)

