

St Colman's National School 20353v
Board of Management – Annual Report 2017/18

Health and Safety

For Security purposes all of our school doors are locked daily at 9.30 and Parents are requested to present at the front door to gain admittance to the school.

A Health & Safety checklist was completed on all classrooms.

Fire Drills are carried out once a term and an escape route is on display in all rooms.

Parents are asked to sign pupils out when they collect pupils early. The sign out book is located in the school office.

Our water quality is tested annually by Laois
County Council

Pupil Numbers

Currently there are 259 pupils enrolled in St Colman's NS. There are 37 6th class pupils leaving for secondary school with 40 pupils enrolled for next year- the majority being junior infants.

Education Passports

6th children have filled in their pupil profiles as part of the transition to secondary school. This along with their school report forms part of their education passport. Parents were also asked to fill in a section. Many thanks to the parents for their great response.

Land Purchase

After several meetings with the vendor and the council progress has been made. Planning permission has been lodged including the designated pitches and car-park. Should permission be granted the vendor will be in a position to complete the sale.

Supervision: St Colman's NS provides morning supervision from 9.00 am in the yard and on wet days in the school hall. At lunch times all yards are supervised by teaching staff. The school does not accept responsibility for children who are in the yard before 9am.

Attendance

This year's attendance rate stands at 94.2% compared with 93.5% in the previous year. Automatic texts are sent out when children miss 10, 15 + 20 days. This has helped with improvement in attendance.

Book Fair

The school organised a book fair in November. A story writing competition was organised for each class which proved very popular. 4500 worth of books was sold which meant that the school received €1200 worth of books for the classroom libraries.

New Model of Special Education

In the school year 2018/19 St Colman's will have 5 full time teachers to cater for learning support/resource teaching. This is now called SET teaching. Scoil Mhicil Naofa in Athy will be providing a teacher for 5 hours as we had a surplus of hours in our allocation.

5 A Side Competition

St Colman's competed in the Spar 5 a-side soccer competition this year. The girls won the Laois girl's competition and represented Laois in the Mid-Leinster finals. Two boys teams were entered with one team reaching the Laois finals.

Many thanks to Mr Twomey, Mr Brennan and Mr Hanrahan for training and looking after the teams.

Green Schools

St Colman's school is a green school and actively promotes the areas of recycling, reusing and reducing in line with the policy of the Green School committee. Other green areas that are prioritised are conserving energy usage and water usage.

A competition to encourage green ways of travelling to school was very successful. Mr McEvoy leads the Green School committee ably assisted by children from 4th- 6th class.

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Mindful Tuesday:

Last year we began a trial programme of Mindful Tuesdays. The children had no formal homework on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. They had instead to engage in a family activity and then complete a small activity sheet. The response to this has been very positive and we continued it this year. This year Mindful Tuesday was mainly on the first Tuesday of each month. A big push this year was to make this night a technology free night.

ASD Class

St Colman's opened an ASD class in September 2017. This is to cater for children with a diagnosis of Autism who need to be in a special class. These children attend the special class but are also integrated into a mainstream class. Ms O'Donnell is the class teacher with Rachel O'Brien and Liz Malloy working as SNAs in the class. A second ASD class will be opening in September 2018. Ms Oxley will be teaching this class. Plans for an extension to house these classes have been submitted to Laois county council. At present these classes are using Mainstream classrooms which have been adapted.

Child Protection Mr. Hanrahan is the designated liaison person for Child Protection in St Colman's NS. Mrs Carroll is the deputy liaison person. We fully implement the Child Protection guidelines as laid out by the Department of Education. All staff have completed online modules in the New Child Protection guidelines. Our child safeguarding statement is on display and is also on our website.

Staffing

This year we operated with 10 mainstream teachers and 5 teachers working as learning support/resource teachers. We opened an ASD class and a new teacher and two SNAs were appointed. Ms O'Donnell teaches in the ASD class. We will be opening a second ASD class in September with another teacher joining the staff. Mrs Oxley will be teaching the second ASD class. Over the next few weeks interviews will be held to fill temporary and permanent teaching and SNA vacancies we have.

Parental Communication

This year we have been emailing all school letters and notes to parents. This year we have still sent a paper copy of all notes as we do not have an email address for all families. In future years it is envisaged that we send all letters, reports and notes electronically. This year we will send home school summer reports via email. A paper copy of the reports will also be sent. In recent months we have rolled out the use of the Aladdin Parent App which gives parental access to attendance, school reports and old school reports. It is also a great way to receive instant notifications from the school.

Board of Management Meetings

In 2017/18 our Board of Management will have met 6 times. A meeting will take place over the summer when the teacher appointments have been finalized.

Summer Works/Buildings/Extension

Last summer we painted 3 of the classrooms and this will be the case again this summer.

We are also converting one of the mainstream classrooms to room to house our second ASD class on a temporary basis.

Neville Conroy architects were appointed to design our extension to house our ASD classes. Planning permission was lodged in late February and we hope to get the go ahead to proceed to the building tendering stage in the next few weeks. This extension is being built under the Devolved Building Scheme and is fully funded by the Department of Education.

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Catholic Schools Week

This week focuses on the unique features of Catholic schools. The central part of this celebration is Grandparents day. On this day we hold a prayer service in which all grandparents of schoolchildren are invited to attend followed by visits to the classrooms by grandparents. Refreshments were served.

Gymnastics, Rounders and Athletics

All classes received 6 gymnastics lessons this year. These lessons were very well acknowledged by the pupils and their teachers. The lessons were funded by the parents' association and are something we hope to continue next year.

Our Rounders teams have done really well this year. They trained after schools on Wednesday in May and June. Thanks to Ms Carroll, Mr Brennan and Ms Fitzpatrick for looking after them. One team has qualified for the semi-finals.

On Tuesday the 12th of June our Athletes took part in the Laois Schools Athletic Day. Ms O'Connor and Mr Twomey have been training the Athletics squad this year. Nearly 50 boys and girls from 4th-6th took part in the training.

Seachtain na Gaeilge

The week leading up to St Patrick's Day saw the school a hive of Irish activity as classes got ready for the Seachtain na Gaeilge concert.

5th and 6th class took part in an Irish table quiz. All activities were superbly organized and coordinated by Mrs Ashe.

Sports

The year 2017/18 has been a very busy year for GAA activity in St Colman's NS. In September our boys and girls gaelic footballers began training straight away. We entered two boys' teams in the Cumann na mBunscol competition and one in the girl's competition. One of our boys' teams won the division 2 final with a great win over Ballyadams NS.

Over the winter months an indoor basketball league was arranged for boys and girls in 4th-6th class. This proved very popular and games were held every lunch time. Many thanks to all the teachers who refed and organised these leagues.

Indoor hurling and camogie training resumed in January in preparation for the Cumann na mBuncol competition. Outdoor training started in March and the boys and girls began their games in April.

Our girls did brilliantly and reached the final where unfortunately they played a very good Rosenalis team. Ms Butler and Ms O'Connor did a great job training the girls' team.

Mr Twomey, Mr McEvoy, Mr McEvoy, Mr Prendergast and Mr Hanrahan did a huge amount of work training the boys from 3rd-6th class. Our boys were narrowly defeated in the Plate final by Mountmellick Boys School.

School Choir

Our school choir under the guidance of Mrs Ashe ably Ms Fitzpatrick began practising as soon as the school returned in September. Their hard work was on display during the sacraments of Confession, Holy Communion and Confirmation. They also took part in an ecumenical concert alongside the children of Cosby NS before the Christmas. John Maher as always gave great assistance to our school choir and his involvement in our school choir is greatly appreciated.

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School Ethos

The children from 2nd and 6th class attended several masses in preparation for making their respective sacraments.

2nd class made their first Holy Communion on the 5th of May. Fr Kelly celebrated the mass

6th class received the sacrament of Confirmation on the 11th of March. Bishop Denis Brennan celebrated the mass.

School Inspection

On the 16th of November our school was visited by a school inspection team who undertook a follow up inspection on the Whole School Evaluation of 2015. The inspection's points can be found online on www.education.ie – the inspection found very good and good progress had been made on recommendations from the 2015 WSE.

This year our school has taken part in the Droichead model of probating newly qualified teachers. Three of our teachers undertook four days of training and form the

Board of Management 2017/18

Chairperson	–	Anne Buggie
Treasurer	–	Zandra Horgan
Secretary	–	Andy Hanrahan
Teacher Rep	–	Aisling Kelly
Parent Reps	–	Alina Deegan
		Damien McArdle
Community Reps	–	Damien Mc Donald Valerie Sheehy

Book Rental Scheme

In September 2016 we rolled out our new loan/rental book. It has proved very successful and this year the school is continuing on with it. The cost for buying all items through the school has been reduced to €100 through the school getting some deals from book companies. The scheme also includes school costs such as photocopying, tests and art materials. All the stationery the children will use in school is also included. This scheme has continued in 2017/18 and is still very popular. We will continue to roll it out next year with the online payments proving particularly popular. Due to the rising cost of some books some of the senior class costs have risen to €110.

Policy Development

The following is a list of all policies worked and approved by the BoM during the year. Thanks all the members of the school community who took part in forming these policies.

Curricular: History, Geography, SPHE, Gaeilge- oral , English Writing Genres, Stage Approach to Learning Support, Planning for the New Language Curriculum

Non-Curricular: Child Protection, Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment, Anti-Bullying, Code of Discipline, Grievance Procedure, Aladdin Usage, Standardized Testing Updates, Enrolment and ASD enrolment, Homework Policy, trialling Discipline for Learning.

School Self-Evaluation

As the INTO directive on SSE has been lifted the school has re-engaged in the process. The school had already been doing a lot of work on the Writing Genres process and this was the focus for the remainder of the school year 2017/18.

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Parents' Association

Our Parent Association have done tremendous work in the school this year. At their monthly meetings all issues relating to the school were discussed with the principal or deputy attending. The annual Christmas raffle was a huge success and monies raised have gone towards funding gymnastics lessons for the whole school as well as helping pay for the buses that we use to bring pupils to the various sport events throughout the year.

The Parents' Association also have provided lovely refreshments for the families of second class after their first confession. They also did this for 6th class after their Service of Light.

They bought 6th class their Hoodies which are always greatly appreciated.

The tickets for Electric Picnic Tickets raffle are currently on sale.

Parental Survey of Writing, Library Reading and Electronic Devices

Many thanks to our Parent body who took part in our online survey. Below you will find some of the main points that have emerged

- 75% of children enjoy writing stories. The children's favourite genres are Narrative- 30%, Recount 28% and Report 22%
- 72% of Parents would like to see story writing included as part of homework
- 86% of children read outside of school. 57% of children read between 10-30 minutes outside of school work a day
- 41% of Parents regularly visit a library with their child
- 79% of parents agree that library reading should be part of homework
- 99% of parents agree with the school's ban on mobile phones

Standardised Tests

Our standardised tests were administered in the first two weeks of June. As in previous years the results were positive.

- 32% of children scored a Sten of 8-10 compared with a 16% National Norm in English. This has increased by 5% compared with last year.
- 3% of children scored a Sten of 1-3 compared with a 16% National Norm in English. The amount of children scoring in these Stens has decreased by 6% which is indicative of the great work being done by our SET team.
- 28% of children scored a Sten of 8-10 compared with a National Norm of 16% in Mathematics. This has increased by 1% thus year
- 6% of children scored a Sten of 1-3 compared with a 16% National Norm in Mathematics. This Sten group has seen a drop of 3% which supports the whole school approach to Maths that has been in operation this year
- This year the children completed the Drumcondra Spelling Test. 19% of children scored a Sten of 8-10 compared with a national norm of 16%. While this is excellent it does show that our Spelling results while very good compared with National Norms are below their Reading Results. One of the focuses over the next few years will entail an Action Plan for A New Whole School Approach to Spelling

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Curricular Development

A huge amount of work has gone into preparation for the new oral language curriculum which started in September for Junior -2nd class. This year our staff attended a whole day in-service on the new curriculum in October. The school was closed for this day. Over the next two years the staff will receive more whole staff in-service as the Reading and Writing parts of the curriculum are rolled out.

The whole school has been implementing an approach to Writing Genres. As part of this each class gets a chance to read their finished stories at assembly over the year.

The Junior and Senior Infants have fully implemented the Aistear Curriculum.

SVT Funding

In May this year our school received a sizeable donation towards upgrading some of the sports facilities in our school. New sets of goalposts have arrived for the sports hall as have basketball nets, badminton nets, Athletic equipment and funding towards the purchase of items for the ASD classes. Our Board was delighted to get this help and hopes that St Colman's and SVT will continue to work together on various projects in the future.

Retirement

The 29th of June will mark the retirement of Ms Fennessy. Ms Fennessy taught in both the boy's school and Scoil Aonghusa before the amalgamation. She has taught a number of classes but has been associated with teaching our infant classes for several years. As well as being a dedicated and caring teacher she has acted as a mentor for several of our teaching staff who began their teaching careers in the junior end of the school. The Board of Management wish her the best on her retirement and thank her for everything she has done in our school.

School Calendar 2018/19

**Return to school on Thursday,
30th Aug, closed on Friday the 31st due
to EP, Junior Infants to start on Monday
the 3rd at 10am**

Monday 29th October 2018 to Friday 2nd
November 2018- Halloween

All schools will close on Friday 21st December
2018, which will be the final day of the school term. All
schools will re-open on Monday 7th January 2019.-
Christmas

Two Days in February Mid Term- **Thursday &
Friday, 21st & 22nd Feb**

All schools will close on Friday 12th April 2019 .All
schools will re-open on Monday 29th April 2019- Easter

Add an extra day' to either the St Patrick's
Day or June Bank Holiday weekends.

- *Close on Tuesday the 25th of June*

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