



Building
together
for our future.

Braidside Integrated Primary
and Nursery School



Board of Governors
Annual Report

May 2021

Dear Parents,

During each school year, we publish our Annual Report. This year we have waited until April, following an unprecedented year since March 2020. The last annual report was published in February 2020 and for many of us this may feel like a lifetime ago. Usually the report aims to outline some of the work in school during the previous year, the work of the Governors and Parents' Council, the Extended Schools programme, information on the school community and beyond, SEN provision, future developments and a financial report. This year the annual report may look somewhat different following the significant impact of the pandemic on school. As I write this, we have all returned to school following our Easter break. I am hopeful that things may be turning a corner, as the vaccine programme continues a successful rollout and as we look ahead to some easing of current restrictions. While we will certainly end this school year with all Covid mitigations firmly in place, there may be brighter times to come.

School Vision Statement

“We aim to work together to support each child in reaching their personal and academic potential within a culture of mutual respect”.

Braidside IPS is a place where the ethos and principles of integrated education; of equality, faith and values, parental involvement and social responsibility; have been firmly embedded in all we do and seek to achieve. Our ethos of integration and our vision statement emphasise that we want all children to feel important, to feel valued, to be part of this learning community, to feel that they belong, to reach their personal potential and be proud of their achievements. We seek to do this within a culture of

equality; where all children are aware of their inherent worth and where kindness, responsibility and respect for all is evident across the school.

We do this, in partnership with you, the parents. We encourage you to be involved in the life of the school, to support your children and to help us to continue to build a vibrant integrated community.

J McAuley

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Board of Governors Report

The current membership of the Board of Governors is as follows:

Current Governors

Parents and former parents make up the majority of our Board of Governors, with some valuable help from volunteer representatives appointed by the Department of Education. A list of Governors follows:

Foundation Governors

Stephanie McMullan, Chairperson, Martin McConville, Vice Chairperson, Dr Aisling O'Boyle, Secretary, Maurice Johnston, Dermot Black, Matthew O'Neill

Parent Governors

Pauline McNeill, Linda Loughran, Elaine Hamill, Chris Ryan.

Department of Education nominees

David Wall

There are currently 3 DENI Governor vacancies.

Teacher Governors

Karen Turner, Elizabeth Heffron

Other members

Graham Cochrane co-opted, Treasurer, Ian McKay co-opted
Julie McAuley, Principal.

Chairperson's Foreword

This year, schools have faced a challenge no one could ever have imagined or planned for, and for Braidside, managing a new school build and moving premises at the same time has brought an additional level of pressure.

The new school project has been on the horizon for so long and has faced many delays & challenges, however the completed building has surpassed all our expectations. It has been a wonderful environment for staff and pupils since the move

over the summer, and the state of the art facilities have helped us to keep pupils safe and well.

On behalf of the Board of Governors, parents and whole school community, we need to express sincere thanks to Ms McAuley for the dedication she has shown during the past year. To manage the workload & pressures, while facing such uncertainty, has required strong and consistent leadership as well a commitment to do whatever was needed to adapt to the changing environment. Ms McAuley has been supported throughout this by a fantastic group of teaching & ancillary staff, who have had to adapt to remote learning, support parents with the challenges of home learning and keep pupils motivated to enjoy learning in this new way.

We also need thank parents for being so supportive of the school and teachers during the school closures and new routines & restrictions required when pupils returned after periods of closure. Finally, all our pupils deserve such credit for the way they adapted to home learning and then returning to school in a completely new environment. We hope they continue to enjoy the new school and the opportunities this has offered them.

This year, we have decided it is not possible to hold our usual Annual Parent's Meeting due to the continued restrictions limiting the number of people able to meet in a face to face setting.

We have also been disappointed that we have been unable to allow existing & potential parents and the wider school community to visit the new school. After waiting so long for our wonderful school, we would have taken great pleasure in showing people around. However, we are in the process of planning an event in September to officially mark the opening of our new school which will give us the opportunity to celebrate our wonderful new premises and the positive impact this will have for integrated education in our local area.

We continue to face financial challenges experienced by everyone within the education sector, as well as the ongoing difficulties of the continued restrictions & the uncertainty around the pandemic. We are looking forward to the coming year, hoping that as the pandemic eases we can extend the use of the new facilities for the benefit of pupils and parents.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to my fellow governors for their commitment and support for the school and for the staff during the last year.

Stephanie McMullan (Chair of Board of Governors)

Braidside New School Build

What a momentous time to be a part of the Braidside community, when we moved into our new school in July 2020. While we watched construction since late 2018, and saw this paused by the pandemic, there was much excitement when moving day dawned on 28th July 2020. In the weeks and months since then, we have continued to settle into our new environment and the boost it has given everyone, pupils, staff and parents, has been incredible. The children have adapted very well to their new surrounding and we are all enjoying the benefits of this new accommodation. We look forward to welcoming parents and visitors into school when restrictions ease and to many happy years in our new home.

Extended Schools Programme

During 2019/20 the school received Extended Schools funding of £22,500 and this allowed us to provide additional activities before, during and after school, and to provide these without cost to parents. Prior to the advent of the pandemic activities which have taken place included the Morning Reading Club, reading partners, Playsport (football and dance), Jo Jingles, Gathering drum. During 2018/19 we introduced a school counselling service and we have continued to engage this invaluable provision. Even during the lockdown pupils and families were able to access zoom counselling sessions on a one-to-one basis using the school referral system. Now that we are back in school, face-to-face sessions have resumed. Feedback from parents and children who have participated in the counselling has been wholly positive. Throughout this new school year of 2020/21, we have introduced the Well-being Wednesday initiative and this enabled us to cover aspects of physical, social, emotional and mental health with the children. Together with the counselling service we seek to help and support the children with the variety of challenges they face; which is not confined to curriculum and academic matters. As stated in our school vision statement, at Braidside we are focused not only on enabling children to reach their academic potential but also their personal potential.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the school's ability to have extra-curricular sessions for the children throughout the 2019/20 and 20/21 school years. Just recently though we have received the go-ahead from the Department for outdoor sporting extra-curricular activities and I am delighted we will have Playsport sessions available in the third term and possibly cycling proficiency for our P7 pupils.

Additionally, we have commenced our morning reading club, albeit with different organisation to allow for protection of our class bubbles and Covid mitigations.

Parents will be aware that we intended to launch the “Braidside Breakfast Club” in September 2020 when we had moved into our new premises; unfortunately, this too was impacted by Covid. An online survey back in December 2019, had produced very positive and encouraging feedback, with parents, staff and Governors agreeing that this would be a welcome addition to the provision in school. It is now hoped that we will now launch Breakfast Club in September 2021. We will provide further information to parents later in the third term and offer them the opportunity to register their child/ children for September 2021.

Engage Programme

In September 2020, the Department of Education launched the “Engage Programme” with the objective of supporting children and young people as they returned to school following the first lockdown from March- June 2020. It was the aim that the programme would “limit any long-term adverse impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on educational standards by supporting pupils’ learning and engagement... through provision of high quality one-to-one, small group or team teaching in every school in NI.”

All schools were allocated funding on the basis of their enrolment size and free school meal entitlement. As a result of this, the funding that Braidside received as enabled us to engage a full-time teacher for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. A plan of numeracy support was put in place and children throughout P3-P5 were identified through assessments, who would receive small group support in an intensive manner for a period of 6-8 weeks. These children have received lessons which have focused on key concepts of numeracy, and number specifically, which form the basis of mathematical knowledge and skills. Thereby enabling children an opportunity to develop and reinforce their mathematical knowledge. A review of the programme will take place in June 2021, but there is no doubt the children will have gained much from these sessions. Looking to next year, we hope that DE will once again have the capacity to provide schools with the funding for these type of support programmes, which are incredibly beneficial.

Parental Involvement

As an Integrated School, it is a central principle for parents to be actively involved in their child's education and in the activities occurring in school. During the 19/20 year, and at the start of 20/21, we have had very limited opportunities for parental engagement; due to being unable to have parents/ visitors in the school premises. We were able to conduct Parent Interviews prior to the lockdown last year in February 2020, this year we used a variety of telephone and teleconference platforms to conduct interviews. Annual reports were received in June 2020, albeit without annual standardised scores for English and Maths due to the pandemic. We look forward in the future to having more opportunities for parents/ guardians to be involved in school events and activities and in supporting their children.

Earlier, in February 2021, we carried out a parent and pupil (P3-P7) survey focused on online learning provision which also provided very positive outcomes. We had 64 responses from the Parent Questionnaire and 62 responses to the pupil version. A sample of some questions/responses are provided below:

Question: How many devices do children have access to at home?

1 (30%) 2 (45%) 3 (25%)

Question: What type of device is your child mainly using?

Tablet (41%) laptop (29%) Phone (24%) PC (6%)

Question: Have you used the home learning pack distributed at the start of January?

100% answered yes.

Question: Have you found the home learning pack useful?

98% answered yes.

Question: In comparison to the previous lockdown how has your child's engagement changed?

More engagement (78%) Less engagement (2%) No change (20%)

Question: Has your child received regular feedback from their teacher?

100% answered yes.

Question: Has your child engaged in a live session with their teacher? Meeting/ lesson?

Yes (61%) No (39%)

Question: What method of communication do you prefer?

Email (28%) Telephone (23%) Teams/ Seesaw (48%)

Question: How much time does your child engage in remote learning?

<1hour (2%) 1-3 hours (69%) >3hours (30%)

It was great to get feedback from parents regarding the introduction of Seesaw, Teams and the learning packs. We had reflected and reviewed our processes and remote learning in June 2020 and again on the return to school in August 2020. The changes made, we believe, resulted in much greater pupil engagement during the lockdown in January 2021-March 21. It is hard to know what lies ahead in the Autumn, but we will once again reflect on our provision and consider any adjustments which need to be made. We are very grateful to the parents, grandparents, guardians and children who engaged so well and so positively in their remote learning. We will always continue to engage/ communicate with parents through our Facebook page and school website, school app and the text message service. Having good communication between the school and parents/children remains a priority for Braidside.

At the start of 2019/20, we had many varied and exciting plans in place to celebrate the **30th Anniversary of the school**. As the year began we were able to get some of our events and activities underway. Although our plans for a birthday party in the new school were impacted, we were nevertheless able to mark the anniversary in a positive way. We had:

- a special display in the hall of the new
- celebration hoodies
- a Movie Morning
- 30 things in 30 years' activities
- Coffee Afternoon
- articles in NI4Kids magazine and Learning Together
- 30th anniversary drive-by at the school, with balloons and party bags distributed with Covid measures in place.

Now we are beginning to plan for an official opening for the new school and hope to have this in the Autumn. The nature of this will depend on the restrictions and regulations in place at the time, but we will inform you later in the year. This will be a great day of celebration for all involved in the school both now and in the past.

The school community and beyond

As social responsibility is one of the key principals of integrated education, it remains important to us, as a school community, that we reach out to help and support our local community and those in need. This year, Braidside community has been working to support others through the Rotary Club Hampers appeal, just before Christmas. We were inundated with donations. It is truly integration in action, when the children demonstrate such an awareness of world and local issues and seek to make a difference. We hope that in the future we will look to identify others in need and do what we can to reach out and show kindness and compassion.

During 18/19, we were delighted to offer the children in P4 upwards the opportunity to participate in Musical Theatre singing lessons with local teacher, Mrs Phoebe McDonald. Although lessons did commence before Christmas, these did have to be paused again as a result of the regulations which outlined that children should not be singing individually or in groups inside school. We hope this will re-start when permission is given.

We also have an EA music tutor who provides strings tuition to a small group of children during this academic year, although impacted by the lockdown too.

Throughout 2019/20 and particularly since the Covid pandemic began, Ms McAuley has attended virtual meetings of the local Ballymena Primary Principals' Association as well as the Association of Principal Teachers in Integrated Schools (APTIS), while Mrs Bradley attends the NICIE VP forum. Attendance at these groups allows for inclusion in professional discussion forums as well as the sharing of good practice.

Peace IV: Collaboration in Shared Education Project

As of June 2020, we have now completed 3 years of our partnership in Shared Education with Buick MPS. In the Autumn Term of 2017/18, we started with P1 and P2 with a focus on play. In 2018/19 our partnership expanded to P1-P3 and the focus for year 2 moved to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). In 2019/20, the focus had been on art. Teachers developed teaching and learning plans for the year with the intention that all children would have 30 hours of shared education. Unfortunately, we were only able to achieve 20 hours in 2019/20 and this year Shared Education has been paused too. We look forward to this important programme hopefully restarting in the next academic year. The objectives of the

project are to enable shared teaching and learning sessions; to improve pupil outcomes, build relationships between the pupils, teachers, parents and wider community, to enable continued professional development for teachers and to share in the process of reconciliation.

We know our children thoroughly enjoy meeting up with their Buick friends and we look forward to seeing them in person in the not too distant future.

School Development Plan 2020/21

At the start of August 2020, we were advised by the Department of Education and Education Authority that due to the pandemic, we should plan for a Transition Year in school, which would focus solely on key aspects of work, which were pertinent to the school and to the current world-wide circumstances; given the impact this has had on education in general. At the start of the year, we identified 4 aspects that we wished to focus on this year. This information is summarised in the table below:

<u>Focus for Development Action Plan 2020/21</u>	<u>Further Details</u>
1. Learning and Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *To identify key components of the curriculum and prioritise these as a basis for learning and teaching during the transition year. *To use Teams-Seesaw to facilitate an online learning approach for homework or in the event of a lockdown/ remote-blended learning *To develop a Remote Learning Policy *To provide effective professional learning opportunities for teaching staff in relation to the use of MST, Seesaw and new promethean panels
2. Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *To support pupils' wellbeing through introduction of "Wellbeing Wednesday" initiative *To develop and implement measures to support the health and wellbeing of staff *To incorporate the outdoor environment in promoting the health and wellbeing of the whole school community

	*To support the mental health of all children
3. Numeracy/ Engage Programme	*To utilise Engage funding to provide additional teaching resource for numeracy teaching
4. Transition to New School	*To complete the physical decant to the new school *To use Furniture and Equipment budget to resource the new school *To incorporate the parent community in the process of transition to the new school *To identify new opportunities for learning and teaching through the use of the new school environment/ IT provision
	.

In the last number of years courses and professional development for teachers have become less frequent and throughout 2019/20 any courses which staff attended have taken place remotely using either Teams or Zoom.

Staff attended the following training opportunities:

J McAuley: Safeguarding/ Child Protection, ICT course

K. Bradley: C2k Assessment Training

S Hart: SEND training

Staff have been able to engage in a variety of webinars provided by C2k, in relation to Microsoft Teams and other areas of interest and development too.

Governors too have benefitted from a variety of training opportunities provided through the EA Training Programme and covering Safe-guarding and Child Protection, Induction for New Governors and other relevant matters.

Special Educational Needs

Over many years, staff at Braidside IPS have committed time, enthusiasm and significant resources to meeting the needs of those children who have special needs. We continue to provide additional support for special educational needs at Braidside. This ranges from differentiated work, to a short boost to ongoing support. While most support is offered in class through individual education plans and differentiated teaching, a team of experienced teaching assistants can provide small group support where appropriate. We also have a small number of SEN / Behaviour Support

assistants who work 1-to-1 with specific children. This support team accounts for most of our targeted funding for meeting additional needs. Ensuring that all children access the curriculum, make progress and achieve their best outcomes is key to all provision. As noted earlier we continued to work with a range of external services and had support from RISE NI, Behaviour Support, Autism Advisory and Intervention Service and from the Educational Psychology service.

During the lockdown, we ensured that children who were statemented were supported by regular calls from their classroom assistants. In relation to SEN, there is a considerable amount of work which is required, ensuring that children's needs are identified, met, reviewed as well as liaising with EA SEN Branch and outside agencies. I am very grateful to our teachers for their hard work and especially to Miss Hart for her diligence and commitment.

Sustrans: Active Travel Programme 2019/20

The Sustrans programme was interrupted by the pandemic in 2019/20, however we were grateful that every week during the first lockdown Sustrans sent through online activities and worksheets, together with You tube videos to continue the good work. These were put on our school website every week and it was lovely to see pictures of the children continuing to enjoy Sustrans activities.

We were delighted that as a result of our involvement in the programme we achieved a Silver Award in November 2019. Since the return to school in September 2020, we have once again focused on pursuing the Gold Award and children have participated in The Back to School Challenge and The Big Pedal. Thank you to Mrs Horan, our Active Travel Champion, for her organisation of the Sustrans activities.

Attendance

As 2019/20 began, we continued to monitor pupil attendance closely, endeavouring to meet the target of 94% for the year. Measures employed include regular calls to parents to follow up on pupil absences, monthly reviews of pupil/class attendance, 6/8-weekly meetings with our Educational Welfare Officer and letters/ calls to parents where attendance has become concerning. Monthly tea parties to celebrate the classes with the highest attendance was a popular feature too. Whole school attendance for 2019/20 was 92.71%.

The Department of Education continue to underline the importance of regular attendance at school for children in having a positive impact on progress and outcomes. However as 20/21 commenced attendance has been impacted by the pandemic, as pupils and classes isolated following contact with a positive case and then by remote learning throughout January to March '21. It would be my intention that we can the next academic year may see a return to more usual attendance patterns and procedures and that we can recommence class tea parties.

Braidside Facebook Page and Website

The Braidside Facebook page continues to allow us the opportunity to keep parents up-to-date with the many different activities that go on throughout the week. It also allows you to get a glimpse of what happens throughout various year groups and to celebrate and enjoy school life. Throughout the lockdowns this was an invaluable communication tool for the school, allowing us to keep parents informed of developments and to continue our sense of community, even though we were separated. Our school administrators continued to share ideas and resources, from a great many sources, with ideas for activities at home and remote learning; while also sharing pictures of children and whole school events such as our rainbow pictures, whole school tea party and 30th anniversary celebration in June 20. I am very grateful to Mrs O'Neill, Mrs Young and Miss Hart who oversee and administer the page. Our school website was invaluable during the first lockdown and was used as the primary platform for remote learning. Work was posted on class pages at the start of each week, with messages and pictures from our teachers. Statistics reveal that visits to the website doubled from March 2020 onwards, from 1600 visits per month to over 3200. This numbers have continued recently with visits of 4500+ from January-March 21. We have 320 parents/ guardians who have access to the school app and we have also used it to send alerts and information to parents. Our primary objective is that these approaches will foster good communication links, develop a good sense of community and allow everyone to share in the activities, and events that form school life.

Leavers' Destinations June 2020

In June 2020 we had 39 Primary 7 children leave Braidside and transfer to secondary school. They transferred to:

Dunclug College: 10 (26%)
Slemish College: 21 (54%)
St Louis Grammar: 2 (5%)
Ballymena Academy: 1 (2.5%)
St Patricks' College: 1 (2.5%)
Cullybackey College: 1 (2.5%)
Cambridge House: 1 (2.5%)
Parkhall IC: 1 (2.5%)
Dalriada Academy: 1 (2.5%)

Assessment Outcomes (2019/20)

In common with many schools, continuing industrial action meant that there was a boycott of the CCEA End of Key Stage Assessment process, and end of Key Stage data was therefore not available.

As a school we continue to use GL standardised assessment tests to collect and collate information on progress in Maths (PTM) and English (PTE) tests, and data from this allows us to track attainment. Annual standardised testing was not completed in May 2020 due to the pandemic and school closure. Standardised testing is taking place in May 2021.

During the Autumn term, we have an annual staff development day where we scrutinise and analyse the children's scores. We endeavour to track children's progress individually as well as identifying specific areas within literacy and numeracy for future development. This data is in addition to teacher observations and formative assessment procedures which occur normally through the course of a school year.

**Thanks go to our pupils, staff, parents and Governors
for their support and interest across the school year.**

BRAIDSIDE IPS TREASURERS REPORT 2019/20

Total income for the year, excluding new school build grant, was £1,181,000, an increase of £143,000 on the previous year. Education Authority grant accounted for all but £44,000 of this income. Total staff costs were £990,000, an increase of £56,000 on the 18/19 figure. Expenditure on other operating costs at £177,000 was £10,500 less than last year.

As predicted in last year's Treasurers report, continued under-funding in the education sector finally reached crisis point for Braidside IPS. Towards the end of 2019 we applied for and received Emergency Grant Funding of £83,000 from the Education Authority. This enabled the school to pay staff wages and supplier bills up to 31 March 2020.

Some anticipated maintenance expenditure over the winter of 19/20 was not required and consequently some of the Emergency funding was not spent. Overall, a surplus of just over £14,000 was recorded for 19/20. This cancels out the £13,000 loss in 18/19 and leaves an accumulated surplus carried forward to 2020/2021 of £47,000.

The school was closed for a large part of the 2020/21 financial year due to the Covid 19 pandemic. This resulted in significantly lower expenditure and a healthier financial position is expected at 31 March 2021. However, unless EA grant funding increases dramatically, the financial position will quickly become difficult again.