

# STRANMILLIS PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Board of Governors' Annual Report to Parents 2019/20 Academic Year

The 2019-20 school year began much as any other: new children going to new classes with new teachers and undertaking new learning. The Board of Governors, constituted in the previous year (2018-19), was well-established and settled quickly into its usual routine of reviewing and ratifying the latest School Development Plan and a myriad of other policies including Health and Safety; Equality, Inclusion and Diversity; Personal Care; and Critical Incident Management, amongst others. Safeguarding Training and Safeguarding Policy review were also undertaken by governors, as they always are on an annual basis.

Sadly we lost one governor this year with the resignation of Mr Paul Mifsud, a transferor governor from Stranmillis University College. Paul's knowledge and expertise, within the area of estates management, were invaluable to our school and he will be greatly missed from our Board. We thank him sincerely for all his hard work on our behalf and wish him well for the future.

Paul was replaced in early 2020 by Mr Darren Feely, the Academic Registry Manager of the University College. With a whole new skills set and knowledge of enrolment and associated regulations, Darren also has much to offer our school and we welcome him warmly to our Board of Governors. Darren attended his first meeting on 2nd March.

And then, on 23rd, the world stopped.....

Esteemed educationalist Michael Fullan writes compellingly about the nature and stages of change, change management and how change is institutionalised over sometimes lengthy periods of time. However, I doubt that even he could have anticipated how the rest of the year 2020 would unfold. Terms such as lockdown, face mask and social distance have taken on whole new meanings. Zoom is suddenly no longer a type of camera lens but a means of communication and new way of managing business and other work activity. Making money is arguably now best achieved through holding shares in technology or a delivery company! The only certainty with Coronavirus and Covid-19 is that there is no certainty, at least until a vaccine is produced. We are living in unprecedented times with unparalleled challenges.

However, it is striking that in the face of adversity there is something intangible about human nature which seems to ensure that certain individuals and groups will always rise to the challenges and fight for the greater good of us all. We have all praised and thanked our NHS and frontline

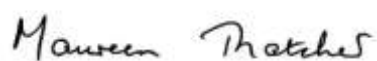
workers for their courage and dedicated commitment to helping others, and rightly so. Their work has been unenviable, downright dangerous for some, and demanded so much personal sacrifice on the part of many.

Yet to a large degree we seem to have somewhat overlooked another group equally worthy of our praise and thanks: our teachers. Charged with the almost impossible task of keeping children's learning on an even keel from a distance, they too have faced adversity and challenge with the utmost dedication and courage throughout the entire pandemic. Parents, in the early stages of lockdown, quickly discovered that teaching is not an easy task! The fact that our teachers make it seem so is attributable to the immense amount of time, energy, training, hard work and dedication they commit to the children in their care, often at great personal expense. Many of our teachers in Stranmillis are classified as having underlying health problems, vulnerable or living with someone who requires shielding. Yet despite their individual, personal situations, each and every one of our staff rose to the massive challenge of providing extensive work packs for every child in their class and faced the not inconsiderable challenges of up-skilling so that further work could be provided and marked remotely, through the Seesaw platform. Similarly our Principal, Mr Wallace, and his Senior Leadership Team worked tirelessly throughout the months of school closure to consider, discuss and write a highly detailed, reflective School Reopening Plan which has been the envy of many, many other schools! Work continued throughout the summer months to ensure a successful return to school in September, with appropriate curriculum in place to manage any issues resulting from the extended closure.

In summary I have to reiterate that the level of dedication and commitment demonstrated by our staff throughout this pandemic has been truly phenomenal and it is incumbent on all of us in the school community, including the Board of Governors, to record our thanks to them for everything they have done, and continue to do, for our children.

May 2020-21 be a healthier and happier year for us all.

Stay safe!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maureen Thatcher".

Dr Maureen Thatcher (Chair of Governors)

### **Membership of the Board: 2018 – 2022**

EA Representatives	Dr Maureen Thatcher (chair) Dr Andrew Charles
Parents' Representatives	Mrs Jane Moriarty Mr John Murray
Teacher Representative	Mrs Deirdre Hill
Transferor Representatives	Miss Denise Elliott Mrs Rachel Campbell Mrs Dawn Brown Mr Darren Feely
Honorary Secretary	Mr Jackie Wallace

### **School Development Days (Exceptional Closures):**

As for all schools, we closed for five exceptional closures during the past year. These days were used in the development of the following areas:

- |      |   |            |
|------|---|------------|
| i.   | Effective communication with parents      | One day    |
| ii.  | Sensory Lounge Training                   | } One day  |
|      | World Around Us development               |            |
| iii. | Establishing and managing Remote Learning | Three days |

**Financial report:**

	<b>Financial Year</b>		
	<b>2019/2020</b>	<b>2020/2021</b>	<b>2021/2022</b>
Initial Budget	1,318,529	1,323,468	1,323,468
Carry Over from previous year	12,520	-15,683	-27,085
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>1,331,049</b>	<b>1,307,785</b>	<b>1,296,383</b>
<b>expenditure</b>	<b>-1,346,732</b>	<b>-1,334,870</b>	<b>-1,343,482</b>
<b>year end surplus/ - deficit</b>	<b>-15,683</b>	<b>-27,085</b>	<b>-47,099</b>
<b>% surplus/ - deficit</b>	<b>-1.2%</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>	<b>-3.6%</b>

Additionally:

- the current PTA 'Illuminate' project is seeking to raise £25,000 (over three years) to fund the replacement of whiteboards with new interactive touch panels;
- £10,000 has been set aside from Private Funds for resources for WAU; and
- the Educational Trust Fund, consisting of voluntary donations from parents, provides an additional £3,000 for Reading and Accelerated Reader Books.

### **Special Educational Needs and Inclusion:**

As a school committed to developing all our pupils in a holistic manner, we recognise that all pupils are unique and develop at varying rates. We aim to cater for all these individuals, including the most able and those who are experiencing learning difficulties. We have high expectations of all our pupils and a determination that each child will achieve to his / her full potential, and that any barriers to learning will be identified and overcome. The arrangements for addressing special educational needs are set out in our Special Needs Policy. In particular:

- We aim to identify as early as possible, children who are experiencing difficulties with their learning. Such early identification of need will be achieved through a mix of teacher judgement and diagnostic assessment.
- We recognise that all teachers have a collective responsibility for the special needs of our pupils.
- The SENCO will liaise with and support the class teachers in the development and implementation of Individual Education Plans and to ensure that each child follows an agreed programme of work designed to address his or her educational needs.
- The support provided will be matched to the needs of the child and will be focused on tackling any barriers to learning that have been identified.
- The Principal, SENCO and SLT will ensure the provision of appropriate staff training and professional development in order to raise staff capacity to meet the needs of the children.

Currently SEN provision includes:

- the development of IEPs and group EPs;
- differentiation of work within the class;
- targeted support through Lexia and Mathletics websites / programs.
- withdrawal support for targeted children, provided by our SENCO;
- withdrawal support provided by specialist peripatetic and outreach teachers
- Reading Partnerships, provided by trained classroom assistants; and
- the identification of and support for those children deemed to be under-achieving.

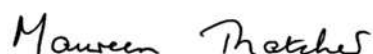
### **Security:**

At Stranmillis the safety and security of all the children remains our prime responsibility. Accordingly, all the entrances to the school, including the nursery and mobiles, are secured by magnetic locks, with quick release switches to allow easy exit from the building as required. Any visitor seeking to gain access to the building must be screened by the school secretary or other member of staff before being permitted entry. The perimeter fencing has recently been replaced, further enhancing the security of the site.

### **Attendance:**

Excellent pupil attendance is strongly promoted at Stranmillis. In the 2019/20 academic year, the attendance percentage for the school was 98%.

Warm Regards,



Dr Maureen Thatcher (Chair of Governors)