

# Knockavoe School & Resource Centre

## Boards of Governors Annual Report to Parents



**2023-24**



## Chairperson's Address



Welcome to the Annual Report of the Board of Governors for the school year 2023/2024.

This report will provide you with an overview and account of the work and achievements of the school over the past school year.

As the school continues to increase in pupil numbers the principal and governors have worked in partnership with the Education Authority to continue to secure improvements in accommodation and other resources which meet the complex needs of all our children and young people.

During the year the governors met regularly to carry out the full range of their responsibilities including the managing of finances, staff recruitment and management.

As chair I wish to express my thanks to the governors, principal, staff, and others working to provide the highest quality of educational experiences for our pupils.

Finally, I would like to thank the parents and carers for their continued support and engagement with the school which is essential to our success.

June Neill  
Chairperson  
Board of Governors



*Board of  
Governors*



**Chairperson:**

June Neill

**Deputy Chairperson:**

Hayley Devine

Jean Gormley

Eamon Mc Cay

Fergal Leonard

Emma Wallace

Claire Sheerin

Joseph Davis

**School Principal:**

Sharon Cassidy



## *Board of Governors*



## Governors Responsibilities

The role of the Board of Governors is to manage the school with a view to providing the best possible educational opportunities for all the pupils. This involves working with the Principal in:

- ❖ Setting the strategic direction for the school
- ❖ Taking corporate decisions in relation to the statutory functions of the Board of Governors
- ❖ Setting the school's vision and aims
- ❖ Establishing and maintaining the school ethos
- ❖ Setting the school's plans and policies
- ❖ Monitoring and evaluating school performance
- ❖ Promoting self-evaluation to sustain school improvement

Governors give their time freely to the school. They attend relevant training provided by EA during their term of office. Meetings are held regularly during the year. Minutes are recorded of each meeting and forwarded to EA; copies are kept in the school office. There are also several sub-committees for Child Protection & Safeguarding, Recruitment and Finance. As Knockavoe continues to grow so too does the role of our Governors who are dedicated and committed to the role.

*Staff Info  
2023-24*



Staff Position	Number of staff
Principal	1
Vice- Principal	1
Teachers	27
Classroom Assistants	61
Administration officers	2
Building Supervisor (with supervision)	1
Assistant Building Supervisor Part-time	1
Cleaning Staff	8
Canteen Staff	5



**Principal**  
Sharon Cassidy

**Vice principal**  
Grainne Dunne

**Senior Leader**  
Emma McGinn  
Positive Behaviour &  
Wellbeing

**Senior Leader**  
Ciara McLaughlin  
Learning Support/SENCO

**Senior Leader**  
Catherine Burke  
Teaching, Learning &  
Assessment

Head of early Years  
→  
Yasmin Montgomery

Head of key stage 1  
→  
Melissa Parke

Head of key stage 2  
→  
Rachel McConnell

Head of key stage 3  
→  
Melissa McCafferty

Head of Key stage 4/5  
→  
David Loughery

## **Nursery**

Kirsty Henry

## **Class 1A**

Deirdre Coyle

## **Class 1B**

Sharon Holden

## **Class 2A**

Yasmin Montgomery

## **Class 2B**

Judy Duddy

## **Class 3**

Wendy Durnin

## **Class 4A**

Leanne Gallagher

## **Class 4B**

Melissa McCafferty

## **Class 5**

Michelle Walker

## **Class 6/7**

Roisin McKinney

## **Class 7**

Melissa Parke

## **Year 8**

Shauna McNamee

## **Year 9/10A**

Aiden McCrossan

## **Year 9/10B**

Sian Seaney

## **Year 11**

John Colhoun

## **FE1**

David Loughery

## **FE2**

Lynn Gibson

## **FE3**

Peter Doherty

## *Class Information*



## **Sunny Room**

Aaron Doherty

## **Butterly Room**

Elaine Sayers

## **SS1**

Amanda McGinley

## **Glenside Suite**

Roisin McCafferty

## **Acorn Suite**

Gemma Coyle

## **Sunshine Room**

Ciara McLaughlin



*Staff  
Information*

**Secretaries:**

Martina McCauley/Ciara Kelly

**Bus Drivers:**

Harry Mc Dermot

Leo Curley

Ivan Barr

**Bus Escorts**

Majella McCallion

Elizabeth Blee

Helen Devine

Elizabeth Jack

**Building Supervisors:**

Daryl Wallace & Eugene Kelly

**Cleaners**

Paul Bogle

Emeline Campbell

Lorna Gallagher

Amy McBride

Margaret McCausland

Ann Marie O'Neill

Teresa Patton

Michelle Conwell

Martin McDaid

**Canteen Supervisor:**

Ann Quinn

**Kitchen Staff**

Ann Quinn

Amy McBride Baird

Gail Baird

Various taxi companies are employed by EA to provide transport for pupils. Transport is managed directly by EA (02882253018). If any parent has any transport queries, please contact this office directly.



# Child Protection information



## Safeguarding and Child Protection Summary 2024 - 2025

Knockavoe School



### Our School Vision & Mission

'Reaching for a Brighter Future'

Knockavoe School is committed to the nurturing provision of a high-quality education for all our pupils. We believe that the fostering of trust and the development of good relationships with the Parents/Carers of our pupils is very important.

A close partnership between home and school will ensure that all our children learn and develop to their full potential in a caring, nurturing, supportive and rights respecting safe environment.

Good communication is essential if we are to achieve this.

If you have any concerns about any aspect of your child's care or education, please contact the school and arrange a meeting with the Principal (Sharon Cassidy) and/or the class teacher.

We would also encourage you to attend our Annual Review meetings and correspond through Home/School diary so that members of staff can keep you informed regarding your child's progress and development.

If you have any concerns about your child's safety, you should use the following procedure:

I have a concern about my child's safety:

- I can talk to the Class Teacher/SLT
- If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Gráinne Dunne) or Deputy Child Protection teachers (Emma Mc Ginn & Catherine Burke).
- If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Principal (Sharon Cassidy)
- If I am still concerned I can talk/write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors (Jane Neill)

At any time, I can talk to the:

Social Worker in Gateway team tel: 028 71314090 or the PSNI Public Protection Unit tel: 0845 600 8000

This leaflet can only provide a summary of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and a more detailed policy is available on our website. This leaflet is available on school website also. Contact details are provided below.

This policy will be reviewed annually, and a leaflet update issued to parents at least once every 2 years. Should you have any questions to ask or comments to make in relation to the content of this leaflet or the full policy please do not hesitate to contact the school.

The following list details other related Safeguarding policies which are also available from the school website [www.knockavoeschool.com](http://www.knockavoeschool.com)

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Health & Wellbeing Policy
- Nurture Policy
- Administration of Medicines
- Health and Safety Policy
- Internet and Technology Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Intimate Care
- IPD's
- Complaints Procedure
- Acceptable use of IT policy
- Pupil Attendance Policy
- First Aid Policy

Contact Details:  
School Address: 10a Melmount Gardens, Strabane, Co. Tyrone, BT82 9EB

Tel Number: (028) 71883319  
E-Mail Address: [info@knockavoeschool.com](mailto:info@knockavoeschool.com)



### Aims & Principles

Knockavoe School aims to establish a caring, rights respecting environment - within which the emotional, academic, personal, social, and spiritual potential of each child may be developed. We promote the UNCRC rights of the child on all safeguarding matters.

We have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare, and safety of all the pupils in our care and we will carry out this duty through our Safeguarding Policy which underpins everything we do at school to provide a caring, supportive, and safe environment. Our school ethos is based on building positive relationships through our core values.



Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the following Principles:

- The child or young person's welfare is paramount.
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard. (The right to be heard Article 12 UNCR).
- Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped stay together.
- Partnership.
- Prevention.
- Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances.
- Protection.
- Evidence based and informed decision making.

### School Safeguarding Team

Members of the Schools Safeguarding team are:

- The Chair of the Board of Governors (Jane Neill)
- The Designated Governor for Child Protection (Jane Neill)
- The School Principal (Sharon Cassidy)
- The Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Gráinne Dunne)
- The Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection (Emma Mc Ginn & Catherine Burke)

Members of the team have clear roles and responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding of pupils within the school and these are detailed in our Safeguarding Policy.

### Safeguarding Practices

In order to protect our pupils, all staff at Knockavoe will adhere to the following practices and procedures:

- All staff- teachers, non-teaching staff, auxiliary staff and volunteers will have clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect is suspected.
- Staff will only report facts based on observations and/or disclosures and seek advice from EA Child Protection Support Services.
- All staff and volunteers will undergo a vetting procedure to maintain the highest standard of professional care and safeguarding towards our children.
- All teaching and ancillary staff will attend Child Protection training programme annually, organised by the Designated Teacher.
- Children will be supervised at all times while in the school grounds.
- When it is necessary to change the child's normal travel arrangements permission will only be given on receipt of a written request or telephone call by a parent/guardian.

All visitors to the school must report to the Secretary's office, sign in and wear a visitor's badge.

### Bullying Type Behaviour

At Knockavoe School we believe all forms of bullying type behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe, calm, nurturing, and supportive learning environment in line with the school ethos and values that we promote. (All children have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated Article 19 UNCR).

We are committed to a school ethos where bullying type behaviour is unacceptable and where every child and young person feel safe.

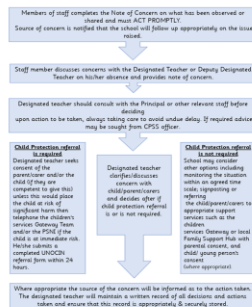
See our Anti-Bullying Policy for further information and advice.

All staff at Knockavoe School will ensure that children are aware of who they can talk to if they are sad, worried, experiencing bullying type behaviour or have any other concerns.

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Gráinne Dunne and the Deputy Designated Teachers, Emma Mc Ginn & Catherine Burke will assume responsibility in her absence, in consultation with the Principal.

### Appendix 6

Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information about the possible abuse by someone other than a member of staff.



It is essential that the school has up to date contact details for all parents/carers with parental responsibility.

Parents/Carers are issued with a leaflet every year outlining Child Protection Procedures within Knockavoe. Staff attend CP updates every year and CP Officers, Principal and Designated Governor attend CP Training every 2 years. The Department of Education requires schools to remind all parents/guardians of the importance of notifying school when someone other than the usual person will be collecting a child from school. All visitors to the school must sign in and wear a visitor badge. Parents/guardians must wait in foyer area until staff member arrives to meet them.

All Volunteers and temporary employees are subject to Access NI Vetting Procedures before working within the school, in line with EA Guidelines.

The school Child Protection Policy is available on the school website @ [www.knockavoeschool.com](http://www.knockavoeschool.com)



## Curriculum

At Knockavoe School we aim to create a nurturing, child centred approach to learning and strive to provide excellent teaching and learning experiences for all our pupils regardless of their ability, needs or background. We recognise that all children have the right to an education, therefore we endeavour to create a learning environment which not only engages and motivates our pupils to learn, but one in which the efforts and contributions of all our pupils are valued and celebrated (Article 28 & 29, UNCRC). Throughout 2023-2024 we had many curriculum successes and we had a strong focus on celebrating.

### **Primary Department**

In the Primary department, we strive to engage learners through a range of lessons and activities that promote their interests and learning styles. We love play and adopt a play based learning approach where children are actively engaged and part of the learning experience. During the 2023-24 academic year, we explored many themes and topics through our learning and activities, including 'People Who Help Us', 'The Farm' and 'Transport.' Also, we enjoyed engaging in lots of school events such as World Book Day where we enjoyed stories and parades showing off our costumes, visiting Santa in his Grotto, wearing yellow and having a disco for Mental Health Day to name a few. We have endeavoured to promote our outdoor learning through a range of play experiences, incorporating the school environment such as the outdoor classroom, sensory walks, the muga pitch and outdoor gym to name a few, where we love to enhance our learning of curriculum areas such as exploring the weather and seasons (WAU), counting and exploring shapes we can find (Numeracy) and using twigs and natural resources to create our sounds and letters we are exploring (Literacy). The Primary department have had an action-packed year full of fun and learning!

### **Key Stage 3**

In Key Stage 3, pupils benefited from a broad and engaging curriculum, delivered through a variety of teaching strategies and resources. The introduction of the new "carousel" teaching strategy this year, allowed for a fresh dynamic within classes, providing pupils with new perspectives and opportunities for growth. The school embraced the sharing of best practices across the Key Stage, further enriching the learning environment.

Nevertheless, challenges, including the impact of industrial action, occasionally disrupted the consistency of routines. Teachers reported facing challenges and encountering difficulties in differentiating instruction across several classes, each with unique pupil profiles and varying dynamics. Despite these challenges, the flexibility of our approach and reflecting on teaching strategy has allowed us to adapt, ensuring that pupils continued to make progress in their learning.



## Curriculum

### **Key Stage 4/5**

The curriculum in Key Stage 4/5 is strategically focused on qualification and accreditation, ensuring that students are well-prepared for future academic and vocational pursuits. Qualifications offered include CCEA ELQ Life-Skills, Mathematics, and Extended Life-Skills, as well as City & Guilds Essential Skills in Communication, Application of Number, and ICT. Through partnerships with South West College (SWC) and 21Training, students also had the opportunity to engage in accredited courses in Occupational Studies and Construction. Additionally, GCSE and ELQ Art and Design with Design and Technology components were available, delivered on-site at the school.

Supporting the academic curriculum, various ASDAN programmes were incorporated into the Key Stage 4/5 provision. These programmes, including the ASDAN LifeSkills Challenge, offered flexibility, allowing for the personalisation of learning to meet the individual needs of our pupils. The “challenges” promoted independent life skills, and the adaptable course structure ensured that all pupils could access meaningful education tailored to their specific needs.

### **Special Events and Extracurricular Opportunities**

Throughout the academic year, pupils were offered a range of special events that complemented and enriched formal instruction. Highlights included Multicultural Day, World Book Day, the Scholastic Book Fair, and the Walking on Sunshine event at the Alley Theatre. The Knockavoe Drama Society’s Christmas Performance was another significant event, allowing pupils to showcase their creativity and talents in a supportive environment.

Additionally, pupils participated in a variety of off-site activities, including sensory and soft-play sessions at Melvin Sport Centre and swimming at Riversdale Leisure Centre. Excursions to local parks, community areas, and sites of interest provided real-world learning experiences that supported the development of independent skills and social interaction.

# Nursery



## NURSERY CLASS 2023-2024



- All pupils made the transition into Knockavoe School very well.
- The Nursery Class enjoyed taking part in World Book Day, dressing as '101 Dalmatians' as part of a school wide costume.
- Nursery worked on following a series of daily timetabled activities, transitions to other parts of the schools and engaging in class circle times and meal times etc.
- All pupils were introduced to the curriculum through a variety of sensory learning opportunities
- Nursery artwork and mark making was displayed as part of the schools "Walking On Sunshine" event.
- All Nursery pupils took part in an end of year graduation ceremony to mark the end of their time in nursery, transition to Class One, and all the successes they have achieved along the way.



# Class 1A



Class 1A have enjoyed a busy year of fun and engaging and active activities.

In the classroom the pupils were always eager to learn, and they embraced fun and engaging Literacy, Numeracy, Art, and Cookery activities. We enjoyed making buns, cakes and tasting new foods. Over the last year pupils in Class 1A have been working hard on, pre-writing skills, numeracy, cutting skills and fine Motor skills.

Class 1A had a new pupil attend Knockavoe School and all the pupils welcomed him and were super happy to have them in their class. There were lots of friendships formed and lots of long-lasting happy memories were made throughout the year.

Class 1A had the super opportunity of meeting with their friends in Class 2A on a weekly basis and socialising with their friends in Melvin Soft Play every Thursday.

Class 1A pupils have enjoyed exploring the different resources in Learning through play inside and outside of their classroom. From having fun doing sensory circuits to their favourite play day yet which was the Water Play Day.

We had the amazing opportunity and have eagerly participated in and really enjoyed; Jo Jingles sessions, and they just loved moving, dancing, and singing to all of Jo Jingles songs and rhymes.

Class 1A have also enjoyed physical movement in their outdoor play area as well as at the mugga pitch and the hall and recently had a fantastic school trip to Bready Park where they had a Teddy Bears Picnic. Class 1A has had a very happy, fun, and successful year and look forward to all of the fun adventures to come in Primary 2.



# Class 1B



- Class 1B have had a brilliant fun year, all pupils have transitioned well from Nursery into Year 1 with a new classroom and class team.
- Pupils have made excellent progress with their IEP targets which have focused on independence, communication and social and emotional awareness skills (finding their belongings/beginning to put them on, responding to their names/verbal instructions, using PECs/verbally asking for their snack, being aware and displaying a number of feelings).
- A skills-based approach was used for planning, this was collaboratively done with other Foundation Stage teachers. This worked well and provided a good focus for activities during our daily learning through play sessions. Pupils completed 1:1 literacy and numeracy activities, these were planned according to individual ability levels and based upon q-skills identified within the NI curriculum. It is lovely to see the progress pupils have made with these and the improvement in their level of engagement and participation during these.
- Throughout the year our timetable has been evaluated and reviewed, as a result some changes were made which worked and flowed better for the class (e.g. introducing more full class group activities on days we had student support and as the year progressed as pupils were more able for this.)
- Pupils have enjoyed exploring the school grounds this year. We have been able to visit Soft Play, Sensory Room, Muga Pitch, etc. They have worked well on transitioning to and from these places. We have also enjoyed full school activities e.g. World Book Day, Water Day, Sun Day, etc.
- The class has enjoyed a number of special activities throughout the year, our highlights include trips to A-Space, Jo Jingles, visits from Poga and out Teddy Bear picnic at the park which linked well to our 'In the Garden' theme.



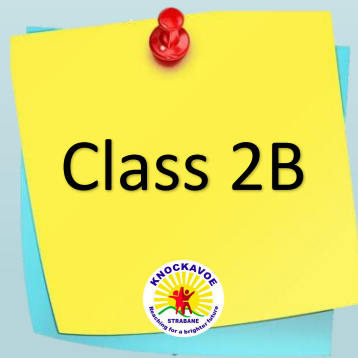
# Class 2A



## Class 2A Successes This Year

- Class 2A have made a fantastic transition into class 2A in the main school building and have had lots of fun this year.
- We have worked so hard on developing our literacy skills, with many pupils developing a love for books and enjoying exploring through song and activities all our phonics!
- We have developed amazing improved concentration and focus during class activities, remaining engaged for longer periods of time and so much enthusiasm for everything we do!
- Amazing use of PECs and class timetable from all pupils, now needing less support and prompting !
- Improved communication from everyone in class, from non-verbal and PECs to using phrases and sentences to communicate wants and needs.





The Class 2B team this year consisted of Judy Duddy (class teacher), and Elaine Gore, Amanda Allen and Elizabeth Mc Gerrigle. The team worked well together, promoting a positive working environment in order that the boys in the class were given the best possible conditions in which to learn. As a new teacher to Knockavoe School I felt extremely welcomed by the class team, Senior Leaders within the school and the school community in general. We have all agreed within the team that it has been extremely fulfilling to see the progress which the boys within the class have made. This has been wide ranging; from academic progress, social and emotional targets met, as well as physical milestones which we have been privileged to be part of such as toilet training, climbing the steps of the bus unaided, as well as pedalling the trikes unsupported in the outdoor playground.

The boys settled quite quickly into the routine of Class 2, after moving classrooms and meeting a new teacher. Soon we were all great friends. During September we began our first of 4 class trips to Aspace Sensory Centre, just outside Derry. We have found this to be a very valuable place for us to visit. The sensory needs within the class were well met in this centre and the staff were excellent. These trips were organised in conjunction with Class 1 B, and it was great for the boys to mix with other members of the school in a social setting. During the first term we also worked hard on settling in and independent self-care. Many of the boys have made and continue to make excellent progress here.

The first term concluded with our Christmas Stay and Play. It was so good to have our parents visit the classroom. We performed some songs and rhymes for them, played together and had so much fun.

The arrival of Poga after Christmas was an exciting start to 2024. This also saw us allow the boys input in the development of their skills. They are encouraged to show us which materials they want to use, either through PECS, spoken language or by pointing. The boys have really loved Creative and Expressive activities such as Music and Art. They enjoyed painting inside and outside the classroom and this has really developed their mark making and expressive language. The boys loved the 101 Dalmatians themed World Book Day and enjoyed seeing Poga, the star of the show.

Our impressive creative skills were on display in the Alley Theatre during the Walking on Sunshine event. Although we were not performing in person, we felt included through the video which we took part in and the lovely songs we learned.





# Class 3



## Class 3 Successes This Year

- Integrating year 3 pupils into a full school day.
- Teaching pupils with a wide range of abilities to participate in class circle times.
- Teaching pupils to try new foods and break and dinner times.
- Supporting and encouraged transitioning to a range of activity areas in school i.e soft play, hall
- Providing and implementing supportive behaviour plans for pupils with severe challenging behaviours.
- Going on a weekly outings in Strabane to Melvin Sport Complex soft play.



# Class 4a



## Class 4A Successes This Year

- Taking part in the Sunshine event
- Pupils making their first Holy Communion
- Pupils using the communication board effectively
- James Curran learning to use the toilet
- Odhran Robinson over coming many anxieties and taking part in new experiences



# Class 5



## Class 5 Successes This Year

- 6 members of class 5 completed horse riding lessons at RDA
- Visited ASpace for a class trip
- Pupils are effectively using communication tools
- Pupils formed positive relationships with staff and each other
- Pupils continue to display positive behaviours

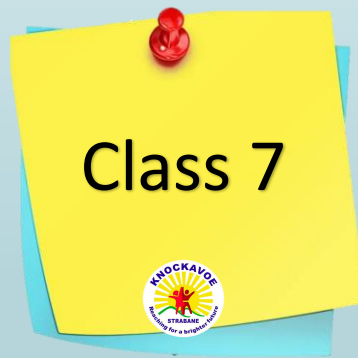




## Class 6/7 Successes This Year

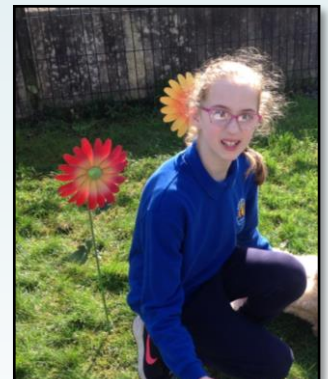
- JW is now out of nappies and independently toileting! Also has managed so well with SLT – 5 new Makaton signs!
- CP has managed super well without a key adult – coping amazingly in the classroom!
- BD can write her own name with only verbal prompts!
- DC has found a love for presenting Class Assembly – greatly expanding her vocabulary!
- KB, NB, JMcD and BD have developed their confidence in performing and singing – Knockavoe's best singers/soloists!





### Class 7 Successes This Year

- Class 7 have been working hard on our life skills this year. We have been working together as a team to keep our classroom clean and tidy. The pupils complete a different class duty daily; some duties have been trickier than others, but we have continued to practise and try our best.
- This year class 7 have been getting involved in more activities outside of the classroom and beyond our daily timetable. This is such a big achievement for the pupils; it was lovely to watch them engage in yoga, breathworks, Gaelic, the Fan the Flame mass, celebration days and so much more.
- We have been working on our communication skills throughout the year. Pupils have become more comfortable and confident in sharing news during class assembly and talking about how they are feeling. Pupils in class 7 have been exploring what helps them when they are in the red or blue zone, sometimes this may be a movement break, or some time to relax on a bean bag away from their peers or it may be playing with a certain toy.
- We have been preparing for our big move to the secondary department and look forward to starting our journey as a senior pupils.



# Year 8



## Class 8 Successes This Year

- PD is transitioning to different rooms within the school.
- RMcK is building relationships with his friends in his class – he is approaching pupils for conversation.
- JMcC has built relationships with staff, showing elements of trust and respect.
- All pupils have developed excellent social skills, building on friendships with staff and pupils.

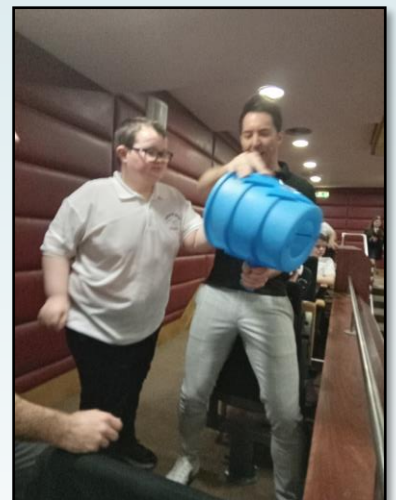


# Year 9/10a



## Class 9/10A Successes This Year

- Our many school trips such as to the Ulster American Folk Park, Water Warriors and to see the pantomime Jack & The Beanstalk
- Learning to play games such as musical chairs, pass the parcel, tag, curling
- The pupils using colourful semantics successfully



# Year 9/10b



## Class 9/10B Successes This Year

- Developing community links, eg visit to Omagh Fire station, Strabane Academy Christmas party, visit to Butterlope Farm, Gortin Glen on a mini beast safari, Outdoor learning day at Benone Beach, and trips to ASPACE
- Pupils requesting help and time out for personal issues.
- Promoting independence e.g. independent self-care, going to the canteen and make choices regarding lunch.
- Participation in sporting events & sports coaching: Badminton, GAA, Soccer, swimming Gala, Boccia competition, GAA blitz.







## Class 11 Successes This Year

Year 11 has had an outstanding year marked by significant social and academic growth. The students have demonstrated remarkable maturity, developing into responsible and capable young men and women. This year, they have achieved significant academic milestones, most notably securing accreditation within CCEA and ASDAN.

In addition to their academic achievements, Year 11 students have actively engaged in various activities that have contributed to their self-esteem and physical wellbeing. They participated in training sessions with the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), the Irish Football Association and badminton, showcasing their commitment to physical fitness and teamwork.

Throughout the year, the pupils have been provided with numerous opportunities to express their creativity by engaging in both Art and Technology. These activities have allowed them to explore different mediums, develop their technical skills and apply their imaginative ideas in practical ways.

The students have embraced opportunities to connect with nature and support the school's eco-friendly ethos. Their visit to Bradkeel Social Farm allowed them to experience and appreciate sustainable farming practices. The class also used their skills to build bird boxes and bird feeders to contribute to the conservation of local birds.

Year 11 students strengthened community ties through their participation in choir performances at various local venues, including care homes, Lidl, Asda and the Alley Theatre. These performances not only entertained the community but also highlighted the students' dedication to contributing positively to society.

Pupils have been provided with valuable opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities, which have been crucial for their emotional wellbeing. Art and Lego therapy sessions, in particular, have been excellent in helping pupils express themselves, even though they previously struggled to do so.

It has been a truly remarkable year for Year 11. The staff are incredibly proud of the students' achievements and their development into mature individuals. Their hard work, dedication and willingness to embrace new experiences have set a solid foundation for their future endeavours. We look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in the coming years.





## Class FE1 Successes This Year

**Class Teacher:** *David Loughrey*

**Classroom Assistants:** *Róisín McDaid, Kellyanne Sharkey, Ashleen Edgar*

- A considerable reduction in behaviours that challenge, for pupils who require behaviour support plans and risk management plans.
- Great friendships and relationships formed between pupils.
- Class social inclusion and integration across the wider school community – Walking on Sunshine Event, School Choir and School Formal.
- Class hosted and organised the School Book Fair.





The Pupils have also enjoyed therapeutic activities such as swimming, PE, DT, Art and Cookery and have demonstrated great enthusiasm within each of these subjects. The pupils have also been working on looking after their mental wellbeing by participating in wellbeing workshops with Joanne which opened up possibilities for discussion and the exploration of their emotional wellbeing.

There has been many highlights of the year, in which the pupils have created two business. As part of young enterprise, they have created Knockavoe Kraft's and have attended Markets in Belfast, Derry/ Londonderry and Walking on sunshine show. Pupils created a wide range of Winter and Spring crafts and have made a very healthy profit. Pupils have developed fantastic numeracy, communication and problems solving skills as well as team building skills. Knockavoe Krafts were delighted to win an award for team work at the young enterprise event in the Tullyglass hotel.

A second business that pupils started was Rise and Shine Café. This business has been very beneficial in developing pupils understanding of Food hygiene, creating menu's, taking orders, adding costs, making tray bakes and hot food, making cold and hot drinks. Pupils have also developed money budgeting skills and using spreadsheets to keep track of profits and outgoings. The cafe has not only been important for FE2 pupils to develop their employability skills, but it has been beneficial for other pupils in the school as this has developed their ability to transition into a café environment, develop their money, communication and social skills. The café has also made a healthy profit.

A Major highlight not only for the class but for the school has been to achieve Eco School Green Flag award and awarded Best Eco School in Derry/ Strabane District Council. Over the past two years pupils throughout the school have been working towards the three topics of Bio diversity, Recycling and Outdoor learning. All Key stages have enjoyed gardening with Iris/ June and participating in outdoor learning day (World water day, beach day) and a wide variety of workshops.



The FE3 class at Knockavoe School experienced an extraordinary school year, marked by remarkable achievements and vibrant activities. Our pupils embarked on a unique journey, following individual qualification programs tailored to their aspirations and skills. A significant part of our curriculum included Occupational Studies at South West College, focusing on hospitality, creative arts, and design. This allowed our students to explore their talents and gain hands-on experience in these dynamic fields, preparing them for future careers and personal growth.

Our academic endeavours were further enriched by a qualification in Digital Technologies through 21 Training. Under the guidance of the exceptional tutor, Paddy Danagher, our pupils delved into the intricacies of digital skills, enhancing their proficiency and confidence in a tech-driven world. This program was instrumental in equipping them with the knowledge and capabilities needed to navigate and excel in the digital landscape.

Beyond the classroom, our students engaged in an array of extracurricular activities that broadened their horizons and enriched their cultural experiences. We attended several musical performances at esteemed venues such as the Millennium Forum and the Alley Theatre. These outings not only provided entertainment but also exposed our pupils to the arts, fostering a deeper appreciation for music and performance.

In addition to these cultural excursions, our students successfully completed a Level 1 qualification in Essential Skills ICT. This achievement underscored their commitment to enhancing their technological competencies, ensuring they are well-prepared for the demands of modern education and employment.

Our dedicated hard work to Asdan Life Skills challenges was another highlight of the year. These challenges offered our pupils practical opportunities to develop essential life skills, promoting independence, problem-solving, and resilience. Completing these challenges was a testament to their hard work and determination, showcasing their ability to apply learning in real-world contexts.

Throughout the year, we celebrated numerous successes together, fostering a strong sense of community and teamwork. Our students acted as role models for the younger classes, exemplifying leadership, responsibility, and cooperation. Their positive influence and mentorship contributed significantly to the nurturing environment of Knockavoe School.

The events planned by our nurture provision added a special touch to our school year, offering our pupils emotional and social support. One of the standout moments was celebrating the success of our new therapy dog, Poga. Poga's presence brought joy and comfort to our students, playing a crucial role in promoting well-being and emotional stability. Students played a pivotal part in the 'Cloud Drop' program where we delivered food packages to local care homes. Students also contributed to our eco school initiative where they carried out recycling every Monday.

This wonderful year was made possible by the unwavering support of various outside agencies. Their contributions were instrumental in our pupils' success, providing resources, expertise, and opportunities that enriched our educational experience. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who assisted us in achieving these milestones.

In conclusion, the FE3 class at Knockavoe School enjoyed a fantastic year filled with learning, growth, and celebration. From academic accomplishments to cultural experiences and life skills development, our pupils thrived in a supportive and dynamic environment. The collective efforts of our dedicated staff, external partners, and enthusiastic students made this year truly unforgettable, setting a high standard for future endeavours.

# Butterfly room



## Class Highlights 2023 - 2024



### Butterfly Room Successes This Year

- Being able to get out and about in our local community and visit Melvin Soft play every Tuesday! Each week our pupils have enjoyed the sessions more and more with the support of visuals and Social Stories. Class 3 pupils have become special friends. A big thank you to Gráinne and Shaun for securing the funding to make it happen.
- Having our classroom Sensory Room updated with a new Bubble Tube has brought lots of smiles to us all! Our pupils have enjoyed the opportunity to relax with the bubbles and they have learnt to operate the Cause and effect switch to enjoy the bubbles in a variety of colours.
- We also received a new portable Light projector to share with Glenside. The projector has allowed our pupils to use their movements to create dynamic images, from catching butterflies to making ripples in the water they have enjoyed exploring the World Around them!
- Story Massage has become the Butterfly Rooms golden moment each day. Our pupils have enjoyed stories accompanied with 10 massage strokes. It was a fun way of bringing storytelling and positive touch to encourage relaxation, wellbeing, emotional regulation and relationship building.



I BELIEVED I COULD



Sit back and relax, you're in for a treat  
When you hear some of this year's memories, of the fabulous Glenside Suite  
From International Dot Day when we made our unique little marks  
To visits from the Mayor, where we pushed for inclusive play parks  
We created harvest hampers, for those in need in our community  
We made a video about antibullying and raised the importance of strength and unity  
For Children In Need we attended a danceathon, boogieing away in the hall  
And doggy themed activities during Mental Health Week, sure were enjoyed by all  
We shared how every voice matters by creating a lovely display  
We showed the Secretary of Education our favourite rights, ensuring we had our say  
Our Nurture Extravaganza was organised by sunshine and All State  
A fun gathering for all, it sure was enjoyable, truly great  
We dressed as 101 dalmatians on Knockavoe's World Book Day  
We raised money for the Rare Disease Partnership with our beautiful rainbow array  
And let's not forget Walking on Sunshine for Póga, so close to all our hearts  
Where we spread lots of sunshine and happiness as we danced, created music and art  
Our topics this year were great such as pop, nautical and eco schools  
And biodiversity, climate change and living things were also very cool  
World Water Day, was a good little day for us all  
And our Multicultural Show was fantastic, we sure did have a ball  
We wore yellow for World Mental Health Day. It was such a beautiful sight  
And we rocked our socks for World Down Syndrome day, dancing with all our might

We had a visit from Grainne the bee keeper it was such an enjoyable session  
We even had a fun Bubble Day it sure was an entertaining lesson  
We visited the Rise and shine Cafe and Autism Awareness we raised  
And our Easter Bake off a success with 3rd place we received our praise

Our extended schools activities were captivating such as the magical Debutots  
And Jo and drumming and Cookery and the good old Ulster Scots  
There were some special 18th birthdays this year and a lovely Formal Night  
And looking through Glenside's ASDAN books is such a glorious sight

# Glenside suite



Another highlight for our class was the creation of our own sensory room  
It's added such magical experiences and its helped sensory exploration to bloom  
The Stunning crafts and creative work completed by the lovely Glenside  
Has made me so so proud and filled my heart with pride  
Let's not forget all this would not be possible without the lovely parents and the amazing  
Glenside team  
Who go over and beyond each day for the pupils. Working together is a dream  
So well done to the best class in Knockavoe the fabulous Glenside Crew  
I'm so proud of how amazing you all are, truly inspirational through and through



# Sunny Room

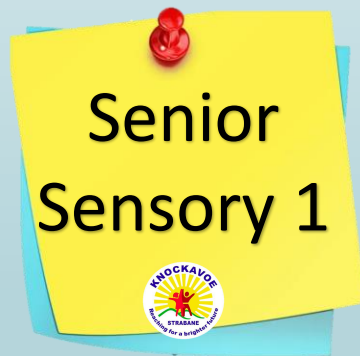


## Sunny Room Successes This Year

- The biggest success this year has Riley taking on and excelling at drumming with Ronan especially taking part in “walking in Sunshine!”
- Riley’s maths targets in IEP have been fully achieved. Working well at time and multiplication.
- Riley has made great progress in his tolerance for other pupils using sport.
- Basketball, football, badminton, Gaelic Coaches and their sessions have improved skills and Riley’s acceptance of losing and disappointments.







What a busy year for SS1, we welcomed Pádraig to the class and bid farewell to Seeva, what an adventure that has been. We focused mostly on communication, independence, and life skills this year and have had beautiful moments where the hard work has been evident. With it being Seeva's last year we focused topics on her interest's completing activities associated with The Circus, Africa, Space, Alice in Wonderland, Wild West and Under the Sea.

Holly has started to complete tasks as cutting up food, tidying her desk without prompting. Ben continues to develop his communication skills and will mostly now remove himself from a task without displaying behaviour for a quick walk, swing, or rest until he is ready to return. Eoin's transitions around the school have been easier and we have discovered that he loves his own space when eating. Pádraig's time at school has transformed, he responds so well to PECs and built up his reduced day within 12 weeks to a full day again, he soon became familiar with the structures and routines of SS1 and being part of the room has been a positive experience for him. We said farewell to our Seeva, she has tried her best throughout the year to make the right choice and has completed many simple jobs independently but with adult supervision from a distance.

Another amazing year in Senior Sensory 1!

# Acorn

## Acorn Suite

### Summary of year 2023/24



This academic year Enda progressed into Year 14 and stayed within the accommodation of the Acorn Suite. He has experienced a lot within this time. Enda explored a wide range of topics to include Witches and wizards, Space, Musicals and lots more. A sensory rich curriculum was delivered to make Enda's learning journey fun, exciting and accessible to his complex needs. Enda entered an external art competition in which he was voted by the wider community as first place. Enda won himself and his peers in the senior department tickets to go to the Millennium Forum and watch 'Jack and the Beanstalk' pantomime. Another key highlight was before the Christmas holidays Enda was able to enjoy the Strabane brass band playing festive tunes in the front foyer of our school. Another key date and one for the memory book is the 2024 Formal which was organised to perfection. Enda attended along with his close family circle and was certainly a night to remember. We danced and enjoyed the music and enjoyed all the craic and joy in each one of the pupils faces. Throughout the term Enda has been fortunate to be given amazing 1:1 sessions from Debutots. Each week Imelda immersed Enda in a story telling session. She tailored each session to suit the needs of the pupil. Each story was exciting, interactive and themes which were age appropriate and relevant to enhancing key life-skills. This academic year Enda enrolled and achieved 8 ASDAN life-skills accreditations.

These include:

- Engaging with supportive objects linked to story
- Participation in hand and foot massage (Grainne who is our trained reflexologist carried out multiple session which Enda absolutely loved and was so relaxed)
  - Experience and engaging in musical sessions
  - Creative Sensory Literacy- Printing
  - Sensory Laundry- Textures and smells
- Join in and explore contrast through sensory activities
  - Experience using domestic appliances
  - Experience activities related to shopping

Enda has shown great charisma when carrying out each task, with adult support. Although Enda has faced many challenges with his health towards the end of the school term, we have no doubt he will continue to be his bright, positive and resilient man and return to Knockavoe with a huge smile ready to embark on his final year at school.



Sadly, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June Enda passed away peacefully surrounded by his loving family. We will always remember Enda and he will hold a special place in our hearts.



## **Sept- Oct**

Set up new room in Design & Technology, ensuring all Machinery checks completed, appropriate storage of tools, equipment and materials and registration of governing bodies.

This also involved reading and implementing BSI standards publication and ensuring compliance.

The following has been implemented:

Curriculum at all levels was reviewed and amended.

Files set up to monitor and track ongoing H&S checks and risk.

All machinery maintained and signed off by a registered company.

RA's implemented.

Membership of CLEAPPS governing H&S body

Completed Saw course for safe use of Circular and Band saw which is recommended and updated every 5 years.

## **Nov-Dec**

Attended CCEA conferences/ Agreement trials in order to implement new GCSE specification which combines Art/Technology skills.

Developed & implemented new KS3 carousel curriculum to combine Art/Technology effectively in projects.

Artist Geoff from -Tulip Wood Crafts visited and led a workshop on wood carving which fed into the accredited programmes.

Introduced traditional crafts to the department with the use of wood lathe and basket weaving techniques.

All classes completed initial H&S booklet for D&T to raise awareness.



### **Jan-Feb**

Competitions for Texaco Art and Fuelling the Future with KS2/3 classes

Journey based learning approach with agreed targets and theme to suit interests of individuals continued through ASDAN challenges @ KS4.

### **March-April**

Collaborated with FE2 on Eco schools and Young Enterprise projects.

Talking and Drawing with pupils from KS3/4/5 to aid communication through art.

ELQ pupils completed Experimental portfolios which was a culmination of 2 years work

GCSE Contemporary Craft pupils completed wooden table lamp project.

### **May-June**

Showcased students work to visitors from Stormount

ELQ displayed, assessed, standardised and moderated- 1 pupil's work has been recommended for agreement trials and sharing of good practice

Others pupils work were marked up

Sand sculpture workshop at Benone beach outdoor learning day

Moderator for GCSE Art & Design( CCEA) to equip dept with good practice.

Involved with Poga art projects for Alley fundraiser

Organising laser cutter training for core group of staff



## *Extended Schools*



Our Extended Schools programme finished in June 2024 after another successful year with a variety of activities taking place over the course of 7 months. We have continued to strengthen our community links supporting our School Development Plan by inviting local facilitators in to deliver fun and engaging activities to all pupils aged between 3 to 19.

Programmes last year have included developing life and cookery skills with Kate Allison with skills and recipes that are transferable to home life for our pupils. We have supported the health and wellbeing of pupils through Yoga with Edel where activities have included stretches, mindfulness and breathing techniques to maintain regulation. Debutots came on board to deliver interactive storytelling and Jo Jingles continued to provide music and dance throughout all Key Stages. Our music tutors, Mark Carmichael and Drumming with Ronan have provided life enriching lessons to our pupils through a variety of group music sessions and 1:1 tuition. Pupils have taken part in guitar, drum kit, harmonica and folk singing sessions with both tutors.

Our highlight of the year was showcasing our programme and school in the Walking On Sunshine concert in May 2024. This event allowed us to show the hard work and dedication of our staff, pupils and the wider Knockavoe family to the public.



As the sun sets on the end of another school year it is important to reflect on our Sunshine Room, nurture provision of Knockavoe school.

The staff in the sunshine room are so grateful to end a term with a smile as we consider the role played this year in the lives of the pupils.

The nurture principles are embedded throughout our school and in every class the zones of regulation support and equip our pupils with their ability to express their emotions and identify ways to regulate in a safe way.

Many pupils visit the Sunshine room for either core group, 1:1 sessions, nurture breakfast, or have availed of opportunities such as;

Reflexology

RDA

Art therapy

RINKA fitness

Drawing & Talking

Mindfulness

Yoga

Lego therapy (20 trained staff throughout school now who will further offer this wonderful opportunity for the children)

We have been lucky to work alongside the FoodCloud partnership with our local LIDL store which provides us with a wide variety of food & stock to promote the importance of sharing meals together, preparing foods through cookery & pupils partaking in roles & responsibilities of stock taking, distributing and supporting local communities such as the residential care homes.

Whole school events are organised and reflect the principles of our nurture and provide the pupils of school to celebrate events in a safe home like atmosphere as the family we are.

Our events this year have once again grown and had a ripple effect throughout the school, linking with our local community and extending the power of relationships-

Hello Yellow Day; Mental Health Awareness (bringing little pockets of sunshine to each pupil in school);

Well-being Wednesdays; Nurture Christmas Extravaganza in partnership with our wonderful friends from AllState and parents connected to Friends of Knockavoe and FAST;

World Book Day whole school celebration; multicultural celebration day; charity events; Family First success, welcoming pupils and staff from local schools and extending our family ethos through the children of our staff joining us on many special events and extending friendships.



Ending 2023 in Sunshine brought the announcement of our newest family member Póga. With special thanks to the amazing ADNI, training our staff training and ultimately providing our school community the opportunity to have our very own Assistance Dog.

The impact of Póga in our school has been instrumental in further developing and providing our pupils with experiences and therapeutic benefits.

In such a short time the presence and impact of Poga through learning and experiences that will last a lifetime:

Our school embarked on this journey together from puppy themed pancakes, art competitions, taking part in our 101 Dalmatian theme book day, spending time with Poga in class and focus groups.

Our event of 'Walking on Sunshine', brought the entire school and local community together as we raised vital funds for the cost of Poga. We are eternally grateful for the support, work and dedication it took to host this event and ensuring that every pupil played a part in their own magical way. The event was a huge success and a wonderful opportunity to showcase our talents, abilities and enhance our pupils rights to express themselves in their unique ways and celebrate together.

From the success of the event we were then delighted to be invited to the Summer Jamm event in Strabane once again supported by our amazing friends of the Strabane Brass Band to bring music, love & performance to the streets of Strabane and put smiles on the faces of many spectators including the newly appointed

Derry City and Strabane District Council Mayor to represent Cllr Lilian Seeno Barr. Our vision and motto of "Reaching For A Brighter Furure", grasped the mayors attention from our first greeting and a shared ethos of promoting to "lead with ambition to drive real change, ensuring that all voices within our vibrant community are heard and represented."

To summarise our school year is not an easy task and we can only thank once again every single pupil, person and puppy for making the magic happen. Our goal is to always support and equip our pupils with their right to education and having their voice heard, committed to working closely together to overcome challenges and remove barriers that inspires and places social and emotional well-being at the core of who we are.

As our pupils sang to Dr Mark Browne, Permanent Secretary of Education on his recent visit to school we were reminded what is important in life and spreading kindness is key;

"Use your mind to be kind  
Be smart use your heart  
Intend to be a friend  
Then do it all over again  
Use your mind to be kind  
Be smart use your heart  
Intend to be a friend  
Kindness never ends". 🧡☀️

(Joe Reilly)



## Shared Education

- Action Plan created and devised with a co-ordinated scheme of workshops to be delivered to 8 classes of Knockavoe School Children in partnership with St Marys National School. (application deadline Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November )
- Shared Education Application Training attended by Deirdre.
- Online Shared Education attended by Deirdre through teams, exploring residential shared education experiences for pupils within the Shared Education co-hort.
- Links created with Holy Cross College and St Marys Primary School ; pupils visited Knockavoe School
- Deirdre attended relevant shared ed meetings with staff from Holy Cross, Castlederg High School
- Counselling sessions ongoing offered through Shared Education

## What's Next

- Action Plan for 24/25 to be submitted to Education Authority
- Funding for the academic year 24/25 to be released
- Shared Education Scheme of work to be created – (Wellbeing focus “Being well – Doing Well)
- Facilitators of programmes have been contacted and arranged
- Class Teachers to be informed of children and programmes involved in 24/25 Shared Education Programme
- Shared Education Celebration event to be organised – BOG, local media invited to share in successes
- Links with outside agencies and wider community to be strengthened, through the Shared Education Programme
- Shared Education monitoring and evaluations to be completed to feed into next year's programme.



# Friends Of Knockavoe



Friends of Knockavoe held their Annual General Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and was very well attended by the school community of friends and parents of the pupils and staff.

There has been a complete restructure of the committee, with new Chairperson, Majella O'Neill taking over the reins from Hayley Devine. Majella's daughter attends the school and Majella is very keen on taking on an active role in promoting the vision of the Friends of Knockavoe, to support the school and local community. She will be supported in this role by newly elected Vice-Person David Loughrey, (Teacher and Head of Key Stage 4 and 5), Secretary Kellie McGowan (Classroom Assistant), Vice Secretary Bernadine Arnold (Parent), Treasurer Emma McGinn (Senior Teacher), Vice Treasurer Julie Hamilton (Parent), Public Relations Officer Gavin Lee (Parent) and Child Protection Officer, Hayley Devine (Parent).

Friends are currently going through a transition period establishing the new roles of committee members and are looking forward to fundraising and supporting the pupils and staff of Knockavoe school, ahead of their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year.



# Special Celebration



## Knockavoe School



Pupils and staff at Knockavoe are experiencing magical moments with their new assistance dog, Póga...

As a teacher in Special Education for 17 years I can honestly say that the benefits to our pupils spending time with a therapy dog are endless, writes Ciara Mc Laughlin.

Our journey started when we were blessed to have Koko, an assistance dog with the charity Assistance Dogs Northern Ireland, visit school on occasions with handler Clare McShane and Lewis Harpur, a pupil in the school.

From witnessing the positive impact on behaviour, attendance and emotional regulation from spending time with Koko, I was eager to apply for our very own therapy dog.

Getting the call before Christmas from Geraldine at ADNI was the most special call I have received and announcing the news to pupils and staff was a day I will never forget.

From the very first moment Póga joined our family he was destined to make a difference, as a pupil Dylan who was a non-verbal child,

spoke for the very first time and the magical moment was caught live on camera!

From his arrival, the encounters and positive impact he has had on the staff, pupils and wider community is simply amazing and inspirational.

### A Brighter Future

Póga joins us in our mission and journey together in Knockavoe as we strive to ensure we are all 'Reaching for a Brighter Future.'

Not only in school will Póga be cherished, but he is also the newest member of our home and our three children are in love already!

I can't wait to share the journey and impact Póga will have on everyone and this can also be followed on Instagram with a previous page I had started to help parents in lockdown now called

its\_notjustplaywithpoga

Our aim is to provide the best for our children and families and I am beyond amazed at the impact Póga has had on the whole school since his arrival.



### A Night to Remember

To celebrate the arrival and impact Póga has had on our whole school community we wanted to showcase our amazing pupils in a night filled with music, song and dance on Wednesday, 15th May.

Every pupil will be showcased throughout this celebration in the form of their words, drawings, Makaton signing, part of the ensemble of the night, or captured in photos and videos as we prepare for the big event. The money raised will of course go towards the vital costs of Póga



that can be best summed up by our pupils - so come and be entertained and informed of the positive changes being brought by Póga.

The photos of rehearsals show only a snippet of the amazing efforts our staff and pupils are going to, in order to make this a night you won't forget.



### Moon Walk

Following our staff January Step Challenge, staff, pupils, and families have also been taking part in a step challenge that coincides with our walking on sunshine event in a Walk to the Moon!

How many steps are there to the moon? It's 238,855 miles, which equates to 477,710,000 steps.

If 100 of us take part and we take on average 10,000 steps per day, then it would take just over one year for us to reach the moon... but we will achieve this with our strength and determination before our event.



### Training Dogs to Transform Lives

**ADNI (Assistance Dogs Northern Ireland)** is a charity which aims to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities within Northern Ireland.

Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) is simply more than spending time with an animal. It involves specific therapeutic goals and strategies and outcome measures.

It improves mental, physical, social and emotional functioning with the aid of animals, and AAT is now gaining traction in numerous settings.

Some of the benefits of animal assisted therapy include:

- Improve motor skills
- Improved balance
- Increased focus and attention
- Increased self-esteem, self-confidence
- Reduced anxiety, grief and isolation
- Increased trust, empathy
- Greater self-control
- Improved social skills
- Reduced need for medication

Assistance Dogs Northern Ireland has a wealth of experience supporting children with assistance dogs and has several Animal Assisted Therapy programmes throughout Northern Ireland.

For more information, call 028 7776 8761 or visit the website at [www.adni.org.uk](http://www.adni.org.uk)





Knockavoe **FAST** (Families and School Together) is a peer support group set up by parents of children with special needs who attend Knockavoe School, Strabane. The group was established in 2017 as the need to provide practical and emotional support to parents was very evident.

The group is made up of (but not exclusively) parents who have children in school or parents with children hoping to join school in the near future.

In May 2022 FAST was awarded charity status by the Charity Commission NI, this will open many doors for our group as it will give us opportunities to access services and apply for funding to run more for parents.

The group currently has 115 members and a working committee of 18 people, who run the charity.

In the last year 2023/2024 we have provided a drop-in support group in the school every Wednesday and Friday morning 10.30am-12.30pm. Through drop-in sessions, this year we have enjoyed Art therapy, Samba drumming classes, Mindfulness sessions, cooking with an Air fryer, aqua fit class, Christmas wreath making and arts, Makaton training, Child protection training, Managing challenging behaviour course, understanding neurodiversity workshop and as a group we have recently started a 12 week course on supporting children's learning. To add to our drop-in sessions parents regularly meet up for coffee mornings and lunch out for support through social interactions.

Throughout the year we have worked in partnership with school staff to help organise various activities for the children, participating in harvest festival celebrations, setting up Santa's grotto, the children's Christmas show and the Lidl charity collection among other activities.

We organised and run a magical Christmas day out to Oakfield park for the children, their parents and siblings. This was a lovely day enjoyed by all.

We organised and run a 5 week FAST summer scheme In July and Aug 2024 for children, their parents and siblings. Our summer scheme hosted 4 weeks of exciting actives for the children and families in the local cricket club grounds. We had Inflata fun with loads of inflatable obstacles, beach party with karaoke and disco, sensory messy play session, petting kids farm with pony rides, finishing off our summer scheme with a bus trip to Lurgybrack Farm for a lovely family day out for all.



Going forward in consultation with parents, We plan to facilitate lots more opportunities for parents to support their mental wellbeing and address issues faced on a daily basis. We hope to run Aqua fit class weekly, walking club, continue Makaton training, Dance fitness classes, art therapy, budgeting/funding information sessions, IT aware training, selfcare information and days out, support available information sessions, peer information drop in sessions, we look forward to working along side members of staff to address issues faced by parents i.e emotional regulation, behaviour management, feeding, toilet training, communication etc.

Our drop-in sessions are relaxed and place no pressure on anyone to participate-Parents just come along, have a cup of tea and a chat! As parents who share a common bond, we can offer practical help and advice on many issues that they may face. This ongoing support has been identified as a life line for many parents and a great way of meeting new people who just basically understand!

#### *What the parents have to say:*

*“Coming to the group has really helped me realise I am not on my own, every issue I have faced with my child someone else has too, I will never feel alone again.”*

*“What a great way to start the weekend, lots of laughs and good crack with all the girls this morning.”*

*“I’ve never realised the importance of having some time to myself away from the house, talking to others is so uplifting.”*

*“I have never been a confident person, joining FAST has giving me so much confidence when speaking to professionals or asking for help from others.”*

*“This group is just what the doctor ordered. My friends and family never understood my thoughts and feelings. These girls do. They have been so helpful and kind to me. We really have bonded so well.”*

*“The content of our projects is irrelevant, getting together with others in a priceless priority.”*

*“I come out of FAST feeling like I’m ready to take on the world.”*

## Class Funds



Class Funds	Total income	Balance June 2024
Nursery	£390	NIL
Class 1A	£520	NIL
Class 1B	£550	NIL
Class 2A	£465	NIL
Class 2B	£580	£27.05
Class 3	£550	£26.38
Class 4A	£640	£0.38P
Class 4B	£710	NIL
Class 5	£652	NIL
Class 6/7	£510	-£33.33
Class 7	£560	£3.21p
Year 8	£530	£0.17p
Year 9/10A	£715	NIL
Year 9/10B	£780	-£3.92
Year 11	£750	NIL
FE 1	£660	NIL
FE 2	349.35	-£5.57
FE 3	£370.00	-£14.17
Butterfly	£600	NIL
Glenside	£480	-£11.43
Acorn Suite	£100	NIL
SS1	£440	NIL

# Financial Report



Main Costs/Expenditure:	Amount Spent:
Toilet Requisites	£1381
Staff Uniforms/protective clothing	£3373
Conference fees	£220
Fuel Oil	£32,179
Electricity	£41,768
Water	£1763
General Waste	£3366
Cleaning materials	£1396
Dry Recyclable Waste	£318
Hazardous Waste	-£969
Repair of Equipment	£210
Telephone	£4111
Computer Consumables	£7638
Postage	£128
Stationary & Office Requisites	£10,996
Photocopying charges	£10,836
External Consultancy Fees	£600
Road Tax	£588
Fuel - vehicles	£1156
Insurance - vehicles	£1969
Repairs - vehicle	£160
Hire of private operator buses	£240
EA Bus usage	£3586
Books , Materials and Teaching Requisites	£18,130
Licenses/Subscriptions	£492/1160
Exam Fees	£32,309
Furniture & Fittings	£6402
Equipment <£1000	£7759
Computer equipment <£200	£40
Computer equipment >=£200	£2999
Equipment >£1000	£44,856
Grounds Maintenance	£6615
Tuition Fees	£1050
Capital Funds from other bodies	-£33,787


Private School Account	Balance:
Business Current Account (28 <sup>th</sup> March 2024)	£4846.60
Business Reserve Account (28 <sup>th</sup> March 2024)	£25,037.56

<b>Article 60 Budget Allocation:</b>	£197,654
Total spend:	£219,689
Overspend:	-£22,035

## Earmarked Funds



Main Costs/Expenditure:	Amount Spent:
Summer Provision	£13,920
Extended Schools	£11,834
Entitlement Framework	£6575
Home to School Link	£18,500
Learning to Learn	£200
Provision for Period Poverty	£137
SENCO- Implementation of SEND Act (NI) 2026	£15,000
<b>Earmarked Funds Total</b>	<b>£66,166</b>



Thank you  
For taking the time  
To read our report.

