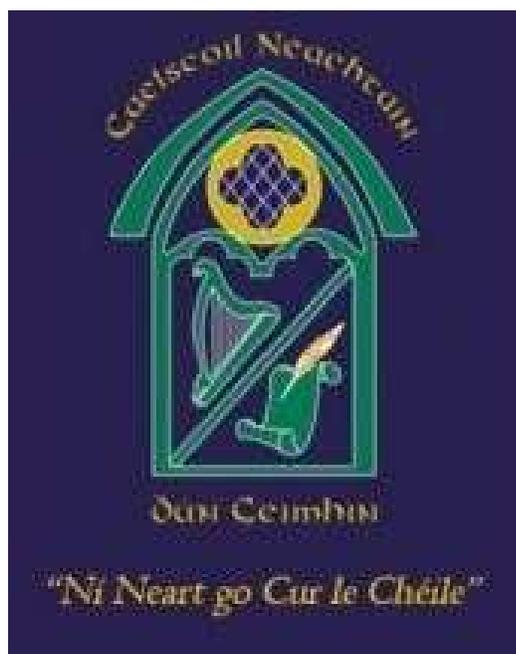


# Gaelscoil Neachtain

*Ní Neart go Cur le Chéile*



## **Tuairisc Bhliantiúil Bhord na nGobharnóirí, 2022 – 2023.**

**Board of Governors' Annual Report,  
2022 – 2023.**



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### Chairperson's Address, 2022- 2023

Gaelscoil Neachtain was established on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2012. The school year 2022 – 2023 was a milestone, therefore, since we had now achieved ten years of Irish medium primary education provision within the Dungiven community. There was a theme of celebration throughout the year with a variety of events acting as vantage points to view what had been achieved since September 2022.

From the beginning of the year, our outside banner proudly proclaimed, *10 mBlíana Ag Fás / 10 Years Growing!* And we certainly have been...

Our tenth anniversary Mass of thanksgiving, celebrated in October, was a very sacred and special occasion for all of us. The congregation on the day was testament to the growth of the Gaelscoil - 123 pupils and 20 staff were joined by parents, families and past pupils. With our Naíscóil staff participating in the Mass, we were reminded of Naíscóil Neachtain becoming a statutory nursery in September 2018. This was also a time for reflection and to remember those who started out on the Gaelscoil journey but who are now no longer with us. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anam usal.

Coming back to the Gaelscoil for refreshments, one could not help but think of our journey from the mobile classrooms at Curragh Road to the beautiful, refurbished Gaelscoil building on Chapel Road in 2014, since extended in 2018.

Our tenth anniversary celebrations would not have been complete without giving recognition to the hard work, commitment and great contribution of our late vice-chair, Francie Brolly. Given Francie's own background and great interest in Gaelic football, it was agreed to establish an annual Gaelic football blitz to which all Gaelscoileanna in County Derry and Derry City would be invited. The inaugural *Corn Cuimhneacháin Phrionsas Uí Bhrolaigh* took place on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2023. With teams from six Gaelscoileanna in attendance, the day provided a point of reflection not just on the development of Gaelscoil & Naíscóil Neachtain but on the development of Irish medium education in County Derry. This day also assumed an extra-special dimension with Gaelscoil Neachtain winning the first *Corn Cuimhneacháin Phrionsas Uí Bhrolaigh!*

The Gaelscoil Oíche Airneáil / Social Evening at the end of the school year brought the tenth anniversary celebrations to a very fitting end. We were joined by members of the Gaelscoil community, past and present, staff, parents and Governors, who, after the buffet were entertained by pupils, past and present. There was much delight in catching-up with old friends on the night, much discussion about where we had been and where we are ten years on. There was a tangible sense of celebration throughout the night - a real sense of achievement, of confidence, of a Gaelscoil community celebrating the past and very much looking forward to its future.

In the classroom, Gaelscoil Neachtain worked to provide the highest possible standards of education for all our children. With the impact of the COVID-19 virus significantly reduced in day-to-day life at school, staff focused on the education, good health, safety and well-being of our whole school community – children, staff and families. We continued to address any gaps, and challenges, in educational attainment and continued to review practice in the core curriculum subjects. Teachers continued their professional development and, as always, the budget was managed in the most beneficial way for all.

This year's report acknowledges the contributions of everyone in our Gaelscoil community - staff, children and parents. I also thank my fellow Governors for their service and support. As the 2022 – 2023 school year came to an end, we bade farewell to Governors Mr. Tim Gordon and Mrs. Celine McKenna. Tim had served as Governor since the Gaelscoil was established in 2012 and acted as Chair, 2019 - 2022. Celine had served since 2017 as Governor for Child Protection. We gratefully acknowledge their hard work and support over the years and offer our sincere thanks. Buíochas ó chroí leo agus Beannachtaí Dé orthu beirt.

I commend this report and the work of the Gaelscoil to you and emphasise the importance of the ongoing partnership between home and Gaelscoil.

Is Mise le Meas,  
Emma Bn. Mhic Bhloscaidh,  
Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors.

## **Leadership and Management Structure**

### **Board of Governors – Membership**

Governors represent trustees, EA, DENI, teachers and parents.

**Leas-Chathaoirleach / Vice-Chairperson:** Emma Bn. Mhic Bhloscaidh

**Ionadaithe Iontaobhaithe / Trustee Representatives:**

Emma Bn. Mhic Bhloscaidh

Mrs. Celine McKenna

Liam Ó Flannagáin

**Ionadaithe an Údarais Oideachais / Education Authority Representatives:**

Déaglán Ó Doibhlin

**Ionadaithe Tuismitheoirí / Parent Representatives:**

Sarah Kelly

Seamus McLaughlin

**Ionadaí Múinteoirí/ Teacher Representative:** Róisín Mhic Thaidhg

**Rúnaí / Secretary:** Máirín Bn. Uí Cheallaigh. Non-voting Member

## **Responsibilities of Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective management of the school. They are required to meet for a minimum of three times each year but in practice meet more often than this. Their range of duties and responsibilities are diverse and would include such matters as:

- Oversight of the Curriculum
- Control of the School Budget
- Provision of information to parents
- Selection of staff
- Maintenance of premises - a responsibility shared with Education Authority
- Admissions Policy
- Fostering links with the local community and pursuing the objectives of mutual understanding
- Other duties not specifically listed above

## **Mission Statement of Gaelscoil Neachtain**

Gaelscoil Neachtain is a co-educational, interdenominational, controlled, Irish-medium primary school. Here at Gaelscoil Neachtain, every child is encouraged, every day, to believe in his/her value as a person and, in turn, to value all others. Children, parents and staff, supported by the Board of Governors, work together to help each child achieve his/her potential as a confident bilingual in a safe and caring environment. We have high expectations for *all* our children. At Gaelscoil Neachtain, we appreciate the Irish language as a valuable, living heritage, and, embrace it to facilitate and enhance every child's learning potential. We foster, also, understanding and respect for all cultures and traditions and celebrate diversity. Gaelscoil Neachtain is a place of learning led by the Spirit, a place where the Christian ethos is fostered, a place where good character is nurtured.

## **Aims of Gaelscoil Neachtain**

At Gaelscoil Neachtain, we recognise the spiritual, emotional, academic and physical needs of all children. We work together to create an atmosphere and ethos which contributes to their care, safety, well-being and learning. We recognise the place of parents as their children's first teachers and warmly welcome, and actively encourage, parents' participation in their children's learning. The staff work to provide successful learning and to tackle disadvantage so that every child can fulfil his / her potential. We are committed to ensuring continuous high standards through planning, practice, assessment and reflection. Gaelscoil Neachtain is committed to positively addressing all challenges, as they arise, with children's education and welfare being paramount in all decision making. By developing links with the local community, and beyond, Gaelscoil Neachtain aims to enrich the children's cultural and educational experience. Gaelscoil Neachtain aims to be a place of learning influenced by the Spirit, a place of kindness, a place where good character is fostered.

Gaelscoil Neachtain is a place of learning led by the Spirit, a place where the Christian ethos is fostered, a place where good character is nurtured. We welcome pupils from all faith and non-faith backgrounds. We serve the spiritual needs of each child according to the wishes of the parent.

**Gaelscoil Neachtain Staffing Complement, 2022 – 2023.**

<b>Rang</b>	<b>Foireann / Staff</b>	<b>Seomra</b>
Naíscóil	Múinteoir: Aoife Ní Fhlannagáin Cúntóirí: Michelle Uí Chonchúir, Loretta Mhic Dhaibhéid (P/T)/ Niamh Ní Ghilín (student)	Naíscóil Neachtain
Rang 1 (Shared Post)	Múinteoir: Danielle Nic Ailín / Máire Mhic Eoin Cúntóirí Ranga: Carla Ní Dhochartaigh, Shannon Nic Lochlainn.	Leacach
Rang 2	Múinteoir: Róisín Mhic Thaidhg Cúntóir Ranga: Loretta Mhic Dhaibhéid (P/T)	Caiseal
Rang 3	Múinteoir: Corrie Ní Mhuirí Cúntóir Ranga: Michelle Mhic Oscair	Éadan
Rang 4	Múinteoir: Ellen Ní Uiginn Cúntóir: Caoimhe Uí Mhaoildheirg	Briseadh
Ranganna 5/6	Múinteoir: Gearóid Breathnach Cúntóir Ranga: Amy Ní Eireamhóin	Seomra 6
Ranganna 6/7	Múinteoir: Fionnuala Ní Dhufaigh Cúntóir Ranga: Amy Nic Bhloscaidh	Seomra 7

**School Secretary:** Mrs. Laoise McKeeever

**Caretaker:** Mr. Anthony McReynolds

**Catering Assistant:** Mrs. Eileen McElhinney, Mrs. Valerie McCloskey.

## Pastoral Care / Child Protection

We have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the children in our charge and we carry out this responsibility through the Pastoral Care Policy and Child Protection Policy which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment to enable each child to reach his/her full potential. All staff who work in Gaelscoil Neachtain, both teaching and non-teaching, have been vetted through Access N.I. Structures and procedures are in place to protect our children by ensuring that everyone who works in the school, i.e. teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers, have clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. All staff participated in Refresher Child Protection training during the school year.

## Curriculum

It is our responsibility to ensure that a broad and balanced learning experience is provided for all pupils. To this end the school has implemented the statutory requirements of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum in Language and Literacy, Mathematics and Numeracy, the Arts, the World Around Us, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, Physical Development and Religious Education. The Department of Education have also set targets relating to the knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils are expected to have at various stages of their school life and have determined what the school should teach pupils at various stages.

### Structure of the Revised Curriculum

Foundation Stage: Rang 1 and Rang 2

Key Stage 1: Rang 3 and Rang 4

Key Stage 2: Rang 5, Rang 6 and Rang 7

### Curricular Areas of Responsibility and Co-ordination

Area of Curriculum	Co-ordinator
Literacy	Róisín Mhic Thaidhg
Maths	Máirín Uí Cheallaigh
Special Educational Needs	Danielle Nic Ailín
ICT	Ellen Ní Uiginn
R.E.	Máirín Uí Cheallaigh
Safeguarding and Pastoral Care	Róisín Mhic Thaidhg / Fionnuala Ní Dhufaigh / Danielle Stiobhard
The Arts	Ellen Ní Uiginn / Gearóid Breathnach
Sport	Gearóid Breathnach
The World Around Us	Gearóid Breathnach
Monitoring and Evaluation	Máirín Uí Cheallaigh

The Board of Governors, along with the Principal and Staff, ensure that the school continues to provide high quality education provision through a structured programme of staff development. Listed below are the priority areas during the academic year.

### **Literacy**

During the school year, the following areas were prioritised in Literacy – Continued reinforcement of Polasaí na Gaeilge throughout Gaelscoil Neachtain to support children's recovery of spoken Irish; update and completion of a new Scheme of Work for English. To use dictation to support the development of children's listening skills, phonic skills and sentence formation.

### **Mathematics & Numeracy**

During the school year, the following areas were prioritised in Mathematics – Identification and provision of intervention for gaps in children's Maths learning; R.1 – R.3: development, with increasing accuracy, children's formation of figures, 0-9. R.4 – R.7: development of written layout, to support understanding of Place Value, when recording Maths; Development children's measuring skills with particular attention to time; development of children's Mathematical language to support development of problem solving skills.

### **ICT**

During the school year, the following areas were prioritised in ICT – Development of Gaelscoil Neachtain's online platforms – *Class Dojo*, Gaelscoil Website and Facebook; further development of practical ICT skills in every Key Stage with a view to achieving the Digital Schools award; further development of online learning provision across all year groups.

### **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

Gaelscoil Neachtain is an inclusive school. Our school curriculum is accessible to all children. Identification of children with Special Educational Needs was carried out by the class teacher in the first instance. If appropriate, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) offered advice and guidance to the teacher. Children identified as having Special Educational Needs received learning support, as appropriate. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) were constructed, and implemented, to support their needs. Parents were consulted, each term, in relation to IEPs.

During the school year, the following areas were prioritized in SEN – Identification of children with Special Educational Needs; provision of appropriate support for children with Special Educational Needs; further implementation of the SEND Act; continuous Professional Development of SENCo and all staff; preparation and implementation of various elements of the new SEN Framework and Code of Practice; PLP training and dissemination to school staff as appropriate; development of an SEN Provision Map.

### **World Around Us**

During the school year, the following areas were prioritized in the World Around Us – Ongoing development of Eco-Schools within the school community to maintain standards of the Green Flag award; further development of the outdoor classroom; maintenance and development of Gairdín Neachtain; ongoing development of knowledge and understanding of Climate Change.

### **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU)**

During the school year, and following CEA curriculum, the following areas were prioritized in PDMU –

Support for children's emotional and social development, confidence, independence, and health and safety awareness; support for developing of their moral thinking, values and actions; development of children's mutual understanding in the local and wider community.

### **Physical Education (PE)**

Planning for our tenth anniversary celebrations, we considered it timely, and fitting, to establish a memorial, through Gaelic football, in memory of Francie Brolly, RIP, our dedicated and inspiring Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors, who died on 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2020. Boys and girls from six Gaelscoileanna throughout County Derry participated in the inaugural *Corn Cuimhneacháin Phrionsas Uí Bhrolaigh* on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2023. A very high standard of football was evident on the day and we were delighted that Gaelscoil Neachtain won a hard fought final! Nodlaig and Áine, Francie's daughters, presented the trophies, which included an individual trophy in recognition of spoken Irish. We look forward to many more great days of football, enjoyment and competition for *Corn Cuimhneacháin Phrionsas Uí Bhrolaigh*. We recognize, and appreciate, the support of the Brolly family for this competition. Faoi bhrat Bhríde i measc naomh uile na hÉireann go raibh Francie.

During the school year, the following areas were prioritised in PE –

Children's physical development, health and wellbeing; children's experience of a sense of fun, enjoyment and achievement through a variety of progressively challenging and innovative activities; developing children's understanding of the benefits of physical activity and the relationship between physical activity and good health; activities included *Daily Mile*, hurling, football, cross country running and swimming. Girls and boys in Key Stage 2 had opportunities to participate in all-county blitzes in hurling, camogie and football. Children also participated, very successfully, in the *Flahavan's Porridge* Primary School Cross Country League. Rang 7 children participated in swimming at Roe Valley Leisure Centre in Term 1.

### **The Arts**

During the school year, the following areas were prioritised in The Arts –

Development of children's creativity and encouragement to express their ideas, feelings and interpretations of the world through pictures, sound, drama and dance. During the year, it was also agreed to use front facing Gaelscoil windows as a medium for showcasing major themes in learning through art. This proved very successful and the windows continue to be used for this purpose.

**Cross-Curricular skills:**

- Communication
- Using Mathematics
- Using information & Communication Technology

**Thinking Skills & Personal Capabilities:**

- Thinking, Problem-solving and Decision Making
- Self-Management
- Working with Others
- Managing Information
- Being Creative

**Additional Support to Enhance Curricular Provision / Extra Curricular Activities**

All children were given opportunities to participate in, and benefit from, the following activities -

- *Cairde Gael*
- *Gaeilgeoir na Seachtaine*
- Teastas Peannaireachta
- *An Chomhairle Scoile / School Council*
- *An Coise Glas / Eco-Committee*
- *Daily Mile*
- Christmas Show
- *Seachtain na Gaeilge*
- Participation by Rang 7 children in various local post-primary Open Days / Activity Days.
- Breakfast Club
- End of year trips
- Extra-curricular hurling
- Extra-curricular football

**Monitoring and Evaluating Procedures**

The following Monitoring and Evaluating Procedures remained in place during the school year, 2022 - 2023 –

- Principal met half-termly with Education Sub-Committee of Board of Governors.
- Education Sub-Committee reported to Board of Governors half-termly.
- Staff meetings
- Minutes of staff meetings
- Evaluation of staff workshops
- Classroom Observations
- Half termly evaluation of planners.
- Weekly / half-term review of pupil targets
- Co-ordinators monitor weekly / half-term plans against the agreed success criteria and provide feedback to teachers.
- Teacher observations to ensure classroom practice reflect short, mid and long-term planning.
- Classroom observation feedback.

- Book trawl
- Monitoring of *Friday Review*
- End of half-term assessment
- End of year assessment.
- Teacher feedback.

### **Pupil Progress and Standards of Attainment**

Baseline Assessment in Literacy and Maths was carried out in Ranganna 3 – 7 at the beginning of September, 2022. Assessment at the end of each half-term was carried out in Literacy and Maths throughout the school year. Gaelscoil Neachtain’s end of year, standardised assessment took place in May 2023.

As happened in the school year 2021 – 2022, the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) informed all primary schools that End of Key Stage data was not required for the academic year 2022 – 2023. Gaelscoil Neachtain continues to closely monitor and track the progress of all our pupils and meet regularly to discuss children’s progress across the Gaelscoil. All assessment results were analysed and informed future planning. Annual written reports were sent to parents on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

### **Enrolment and Transfer to Post-Primary School**

#### **Enrolment 2022 - 2023**

#### **Open Enrolment**

We were allocated twenty-one places for admission to Rang 1 in September, 2022, and received sixteen applications, all of whom were accepted.

#### **Transfer to Post-Primary**

Twelve pupils transferred to Post-Primary Education in September, 2022.

<b>School</b>	<b>Number of Pupils Transferring</b>
Gaelcholáiste Dhoire	12
St. Patrick’s College, Dungiven	1

#### **Faith Development**

Mass for Beginning of School Year 2022 – 2023: 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2022.

As is the custom at Gaelscoil & Naíscail Neachtain, Mass is celebrated every year before the end of Term 1a, to ask God’s blessing on us all and on the work of the Gaelscoil and Naíscail throughout the coming year. The Mass was an extra-special celebration this year when the Gaelscoil community came together to mark its tenth anniversary on Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> October, in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Gortnaghy. Chief celebrant, Bishop of Derry, Dr. Dónall McKeown, was joined by Fr. Séamus Kelly, PP, Dungiven, Fr. Joseph Varghese, CC, Dungiven, Fr. Art Ó Reilly, PEm. Banagher, and Fr. Pat Ó Hagan, PP, Bellaghy-Ballyscullion Parish. Pupils and staff were joined by past pupils, parents, grandparents, governors, past and present, and friends of the Gaelscoil and Naíscail down through the years. Thanksgiving was the central theme of the Mass with representatives of the school community including staff, pupils, governors and parents, taking part. All were invited back to Gaelscoil Neachtain for light refreshments.

*Adoration* Programme: Ranganna 5,6,7.

Service of Light: 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2023.

Confirmation: 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2023.

First Sacrament of Penance: 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2023.

First Holy Communion: 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.

### **Fundraising and Charitable / Pastoral Events**

Gaelscoil Neachtain supported St. Vincent de Paul Society and Trócaire through a number of fundraising events during the school year 2021 – 2022.

### **Communication**

During the school year, 2022 – 2023, the Gaelscoil Neachtain App, *Class Dojo*, was the main means of general communication at Gaelscoil Neachtain. *Seesaw* was the main means of communication used at Naíscoil Neachtain. E-mail was also used by class teachers to communicate with parents, as appropriate. Communication by phone was also used as appropriate. The Gaelscoil newsletter, Nuacht Neachtain, continued to be issued monthly, for the most part.

Parent / Teacher meetings were held in Term 1 and in Term 2. Parents were informed regularly that they were welcome to arrange a meeting with their child's class teacher during the year, as need be.

### **School Attendance**

Pupil attendance for the school year 2022 – 2023 was 92.9%.

### **FINANCE – Local Management of Schools (LMS)**

The budget for the school year 2022-2023 was £635 468. The school budget is robustly monitored by the Principal and the Finance Committee of the Board of Governors. The majority of the Gaelscoil budget is spent on staff and running costs, e.g. lighting, heating, etc. Regular meetings of the Board of Governors ensure that the budget is best spent to provide a quality education for our children.

### **Cairde Neachtain**

Gaelscoil Neachtain is very grateful to our parents' association, Cairde Neachtain, for their ongoing support, financial and otherwise, throughout the school year. The Board of Governors recognises and appreciates the ongoing work of Cairde Neachtain, and of all parents and friends, who support Gaelscoil Neachtain in any way. Go raibh céad maith agaibh.

## Buíochas / Thanks

The Board of Governors wishes to thank all members of the school community who supported, and contributed to, the development of Gaelscoil Neachtain during the school year 2022-2023:

- The pupils for their enthusiasm, willingness to learn and for their co-operation with teachers and staff.
- The parents for their co-operation, help and support for their children, for staff and for the Gaelscoil generally.
- Principal and all teaching and non-teaching staff, for their dedication, hard work and commitment.
- *Cairde Neachtain* for ongoing support.
- Fr. Kelly for his ongoing support.
- Local community.

Thank-you for your time in considering this report. Dia leat is le do chúram.  
Gaelscoil Neachtain

*Ní Neart go Cur le Chéile*

[www.gaelscoilneachtain.com](http://www.gaelscoilneachtain.com)