**Report by the Board of Management on the Operation of**

**St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School.**

**1st February 2017**

The following is a report, by the Board of Management, on the operation of St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School during the period Jan 2016 to the present. The report serves as an addition to the information provided on the school website, the various newsletters issued by the school, letters to parents, information packs etc.

**School Enrolments** - School enrolments continue to be steady. We accept 55 children most years into Junior Infants. The school gained a teacher in the last year because of improved pupil teacher ratio amendments and it is hoped that we will have 18 mainstream teachers for Sept 2017. Whenever staffing allows, we divide some classes into 3 classes of 20 which greatly benefits the children in their first year of school. Usually this is done at Junior Infant level. This year we decided to divide our third class children into three groups of twenty which was a huge boost to the children in these classes in terms of individual time with teacher and increased possibility of a more varied curriculum. The average attendance remains quite healthy at 94.0% but we still can make improvement in this area. The Board would like to remind parents that children who miss in excess of 20 days are reported to the National Educational Welfare Board (now TUSLA).

**Staffing structure** - There are 28 full time teaching posts on the staff at present. There are 3 Special Needs Assistants, a full time secretary, caretaker and cleaner. A part time contract cleaner is also employed by the Board of Management.

**Management, Representation and Patronage** – The school is under the Patronage of Very Rev. Dr. Michael Smith, Bishop of Meath. A new Board of Management was elected in the Autumn of 2015. The election and nomination of Board members followed the protocols and guidelines as laid down by the Diocese of Meath and the Dept of Education. The Board of Management meets every 5 – 6 weeks and is chaired by Joan Walshe who is a Patron’s representative on the Board. The other Patron’s representative is Fr Louis Illah. The Principal, Fergal Kelly, and Mary Reilly are the two teacher representatives on the Board while Damien Gath and Sinead Corbett are the parent nominees. Collette O’Reilly and Brigid Smith are the community representatives. Fergal Kelly is the secretary of the Board while Colette O’Reilly is the Treasurer. Other positions such as Data Protection Officer, Health and Safety Officer, PRO, Maintenance Officer are delegated to the Board members. The present Board met formally on eleven occasions during the school year 2015/2016 and members of the Board visit the school frequently.

**Financial Management**: The Financial Management of the school is conducted under CPSMA guidelines and is in compliance with D.E.S. requirements. The BoM treasurer, Collette O’Reilly, works closely with the school Principal, Fergal Kelly, and the school secretary, Bridget McDonagh, to ensure that accounts are kept up to date and that budgets are kept. Board member Sinead Corbett, who is a qualified accountant, also assists the treasurer. The treasurer reports back to the Board at each Board meeting. The Board acknowledges the valuable contribution parents and the Parents Association make towards helping to fund school activities. Over the past few years the school been able to access grant aid from other sources other than the staple capitation and DEIS grants. We have secured extra money from the summer works grant and emergency works grant as well as further funding from the devolved works grant which was initially secured in Dec 2012. The replacement of windows project was completed in Autumn 2016 at a cost of €125,000, while the roof works are ongoing.

The Board commends Mr Kelly on his attention to accessing these additional funds.

**Staff Changes:** Ms. Margaret Mc Keown retired at the end of the last school year after many years teaching in St Oliver’s. She was particularly well known to parents due to her work as Home School Liaison Co-ordinator. The retirement also took place of Ms Brenda Hughes who had been teaching in our Special Education Dept for many years. Both teachers are missed by staff and pupils alike and the Board would like to extend our best wishes to them as they embark on this new phase in their lives.

We welcomed Ms. Mc Cormack and Mr. Mc Donagh to the teaching staff in September 2016 while Ms. Mc Carthy happily re-joined us during the year. We also welcomed Mr Mark Whelehan to the staff in November while Precious Orija is our I.T. and P.E. assistant, on placement from Dundalk Institute of Technology.

Ms Mary Reilly and Mr Mc Donagh are shared learning support teachers with St Anne’s, Navan and the LMETB school, respectively.

Ms Ruth Dunne was appointed to the HSCL position from Sept 2016.

**Maintenance and Development**: The Board of Management has been very pro-active with regard to the maintenance and development of the school. Work on our new extension carried on through 2016 and it has been ready for full use from last September.

A new re-vamped parents room and Home School Liaison Room were added in Summer 2016.

New storage areas have been added to a number of classrooms every summer from 2012 and four classrooms were re carpeted. We would like to complete the carpeting of all the classrooms in 2017/18 while storage areas in the older mainstream classrooms remain a priority.

A new fenced off waste area for bins was completed in December. The development of a new running track around the perimeter of the playing field in the Autumn has given further impetus to our active schools programme and our health promotion initiatives.

New water filters were installed for the provision of adequate drinking water in the school.

Bathroom improvements in the older classrooms and lighting outside the building are other projects which the Board of Management hopes to embark on in 2017.

A new height restriction sign was erected in the car-park last Autumn due to the deterioration of the old sign. This sign is now more visible and is safe and secure.

The Board of Management remains committed to ensuring the delivery of the best possible building and resources for the school community of St Oliver’s.

**Community Links:** The Board is active in the promotion of links with the community of Blackcastle and beyond. We have enjoyed contact and integration with various local charity organisations plus groups such as third age Active Retirement Group and the Catholic Grandparents Association.

We hosted a congratulatory assembly for the victorious Simonstown GAA club on the occasion of their County final success in 2016. The promotion of diversity in the yellow flag programme will enhance the development of yet more community links in 2017.

**Our work with other agencies:** The school works in conjunction with many outside agencies to help to provide a cohesive service to the children. The school realises that to care for the child there must be intercommunity links and effective partnerships between school and other organisations. In the area of special needs we work in collaboration with the SENO;NEPS; psychologists, therapists, social workers and other HSE personnel in drawing up individual educational plans for the children.

The *Mighty Mouth* dental programme is just one example of a health initiative that the school supports and is pro-active in accessing for the children.

The Board has also participated in the school lunch programme for the school year 2016/17. Every child in the school gets a substantial lunch under the Dept of Education and Skills programme for disadvantaged children. The Board has appointed Glanmore, who have won awards for hygiene and quality, as their preferred supplier.

**The School Completion** **Programme** is supported by an agency that works internally in the school with a key worker supporting targeted children from the disadvantaged community. She works directly with them with a view to keeping the child in education. The key worker works in partnership with the HSCL Co-ordinator.

A non-exhaustive list of agencies with which the school also works in partnership includes:

DES-Dept of Education and Skills.

NCSE -National Council of Special Education.

NEPS- National Educational Psychological Service.

An Garda Siochana.

TUSLA- The Child and Family Agency.

CAMHS-Childhood and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

NCCA-National Council of Curriculum and Assessment.

PDST-Professional Development Service for Teachers.

Local sporting organisations such as GAA, athletic, and soccer club.

MLSP-Meath local sports partnership.

***Don’t be mean behind your******screen*** anti-bullying programme

**Information Technology**: Interactive Whiteboards are installed in every classroom and supplemented by a computer room. The Board of Management has made a considerable investment in iPads which are a brilliant resource in supporting our literacy and numeracy programmes. This year thirty new iPads were purchased which means that each child in the school can be timetabled for iPad usage at least once per week. The iPads are also a fantastic tool for helping the achievement of children who have special needs.

A pupil management system has been installed and this makes for more effective monitoring of the daily attendance and punctuality of all students. Text alerts are sent to notify parents of certain school events or reminders of meetings.

The ***pod*** system has been linked with our pupil information system and this involves the centralisation of data on pupils to be held by the Dept of Education. This will aid the Dept in compiling statistical information and perhaps tracking children when they move school. The Board would like to thank the parents for their help in providing the school with the requisite information that was needed in setting up this system over the past two years.

The school website provides updates and regular information for the parents and is updated weekly while our school twitter feed sends on-the-spot updates of children’s work and daily events that are happening.

**Curricular/Extra Curricular activities**: The Board of Management expresses its gratitude to the staff for the organisation of the many sporting, musical and pastoral events throughtout the school year. These activities are highly important in ensuring that there is connectivity between the pupil and school and they help to foster a sense of pride in the school. In particular we would like to commend the flexibility and willingness of the staff to participate in preparation of the children for sacraments, school choirs, school football and sports teams, Christmas plays, the many Green School activities including various awareness days, Active schools and Health Promotion activities and the fabulous musical which took place for 6th class at the end of the year.

The Board would like to support the green schools team in their efforts to secure a fourth green flag for the school.

In 2016 The Board continued to make considerable investment in our recorder and violin programmes which are directed by Ms Cahill Gregg

We also acknowledge the hard-working staff in our EBD class who have established our newly refurbished unit on such a sound footing.

Finally, thanks to all staff for helping our school achieve very commendable results for both literacy and numeracy. The school is achieving scores ahead of national norms for a school of our profile in both curricular areas.

**DEIS PLAN:** The process of formulating a new Deis plan for the period 2016-2019 started early in 2016. Thanks to staff and pupils, parents, members of the Board and various focus groups for helping to formulate the plan. This is a working document which provides the focus and framework for continuing to improve the teaching and learning in the school for this three year period.

The plan focuses on Literacy, Numeracy, Partnership with parents and others, Attendance and retention, Educational progression and Parental involvement.

The plan can be viewed on our website, in our downloads section.

**Parents Association:** The Board would like to thank the Parents Association for their work throughout the year. The children and staff benefit from their support which comes in many forms. The Board would like, in particular, to thank the P.A. for their financial support towards our Active Schools programme and their work on our Action Team Partnership group which discusses policy and procedure on a more informal level.

The Parents Association held fundraisers throughout the year and supported the school on their special flag raising days which was invaluable in the success of these days.

The Parents Association raised money for a defibrillator by hosting a successful bingo night which was well attended by the community. The defibrillator is situated in the school foyer and staff have been trained in its usage.

**Child Protection:** *Notification regarding the Board of Management’s annual review of the Child Protection Policy.*  The Board of Management wishes to inform the Parent Body that the school’s annual review of the Child Protection Policy was completed at the Board meeting of 8th June 2016. This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 2 of the DES ‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools’. The next review will be conducted in April/May 2017.

The full child protection policy can be viewed on the website stoliverplunkettnsnavan.ie The designated Liaison Person is Fergal Kelly and the Deputy Liaison Person is Mairead Traynor.

**Work of the Board of Management:** The policies on Admissions, Admittance of parents and visitors, Use of school premises, Intercultural focus, Administration of medicine, Child Protection, Attendance, Tobacco Free Campus and Data Protection were all reviewed in the past year.

The Board carried out its annual review of the school’s standardised test results for literacy and numeracy in its process of formulating the DEIS plan. The Board is actively involved in monitoring the schools progress and development. All policies are available on the school’s website stoliverplunkettnsnavan.ie. Parent feedback forms are also sent home on a regular basis but there has been some diluting of this due to the current moratorium on staff participation in self-evaluation put in place by the I.N.T.O. The Board would like to thank all those families who took part in the surveys. The feedback received will now be used to inform future planning.

The Board has been pro-active about Garda Vetting. The vetting circular 31/2016 informed all schools of the new statutory requirements for Garda Vetting and the Board of Management ensures that these requirements are in place for all staff and volunteers.

The Board supports development work in numeracy and literacy. For example, some literacy support requires individual guided reading that is in place across the junior classes and will be extended through the school over the coming years. A considerable financial commitment is needed for these initiatives and the Board of Management, with help from the Parents` Association, has been pro-active in supporting these.

The Board is aware of the many programmes in place throughout the school that serve to enhance the teaching and learning of the school and compliments the staff on the implementation of these programmes.

A non-exhaustive list includes –

Friends First

Zippy’s Friends

Fun Friends

Friendship Week

Power Hour

Maths 4fun/ Ready Steady Go Maths

Science4fun

Animal care programme

**Book Rental:** The Book Rental Scheme has proved very successful and has made a considerable financial difference to many families. Book Rental will further be extended to include other books next year. The Board would like to acknowledge our book rental committee for all the work over the holiday period to ensure our books were ready for use in Sept.

**Communication**: To enhance communication between the school and the parent body, a meeting of parents of Junior/Senior Infant children was held in October. Coffee Mornings for all other classes were held during the year.

The Principal attends most monthly Parent Association meetings and communicates all relevant information to the parents at these meetings.

A monthly newsletter is sent out to the whole parent body and this newsletter can also include some items of community interest. Parents attend the school for Christmas plays, X-factor and many other school celebrations.

Parent teacher meetings are held as normal in November. Should parents wish to meet with their child`s teacher at another time, they may make an appointment to do so.

School report cards are sent during the second last week of the final term to facilitate parents who wish to meet teachers.

A comprehensive survey for parents was collated and analysed as part of our Health Promotion plan for 2016.

**Staff In-service:** The Board of Management is committed to the promotion of personal and professional development of staff. Staff training sessions were organised in the areas of health and safety, staff wellness, stress management and first aid as well as seminars on managing children with behavioural difficulties. Staff went on individual courses on HSCL and educational disadvantage as well as curricular programmes to upskill in areas such as literacy, SPHE and mathematics.

The Principal is currently training in the Centre for School Leadership (CSL) to be a mentor for new principals.

**Festivities and Occasions**.

The school held a hugely successful Health Promotion/Green flag day in June which was attended by members of the Board of Management and other dignitaries.

The 2016 centenary celebrations were evident in St Oliver’s and there were activities in every classroom. There is a permanent display in the corridor to mark this year of huge historical significance.

We also opened our lifeskills room in June. The lifeskills room is a huge resource to the school. It has a full kitchen installed which has been a great success and is a great resource for all the children in the school. We cook and bake and teach the children valuable life skills which are crucial for the children’s development.

**Conclusion:**

St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School is a Catholic school which aims to provide children with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to grow to be integrated members of the community and self reliant individuals.

The B.O.M. would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the community who actively support and assist the school in fulfilling this aim.

The Board acknowledges the excellent behaviour of the children. We thank them for coming to school each day ready and equipped for the day ahead. We are very proud of the feedback we receive from post-primary schools concerning the academic and extracurricular achievements of our past pupils.

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Fergal Kelly Joan Walshe

Príomhoide Chairperson B.O.M