

Ashgrove School



Board of Governors Report

for

2008/2009

Ashgrove School

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Board of Governors Annual Report 2008 - 2009

Dear Parent or Guardian

As Chairman of the Board of Governors, it gives me great pleasure to report on another year in the life of Ashgrove School.

The year 2008 - 2009 was one in which Ashgrove attracted record numbers of Year 1 children as well as pupils from other schools, and so the school maintained a healthy enrolment when many schools were in decline. High standards of care and teaching were reflected in the security, wellbeing and learning of our children. Ashgrove remains a thriving, happy centre of learning.

As the chairman I would like to thank my fellow governors and the staff for their continued commitment and hard work. Once again they have given generously to the many needs and opportunities that make the school so important to all of those in the community, and in particular, to the children of Ashgrove.

Yours sincerely

David Ireland

(Chairman of the Board of Governors)

This report has been prepared by the Board of Governors in accordance with Article 125 of the Education Reform (NI) Order and Statutory Rule 2003 378.

Membership of the Board of Governors 2008 - 2009

Transferor Representatives	Mr D Ireland (Chair) Mr R Hogg Mr D Orr (vacancy)
Parent Representatives:	Mrs K McClean Dr K Carlisle (Vice-Chair)
NEELB Representatives	Mr A Kell Cllr Mrs J Crilly
Teacher Representative	Mr M Morrow
Secretary to Board of Governors	Mr P Waddell (Principal)

The present governing body was formed to serve from 2005 until 2009. With his children having left Ashgrove, the chairman Mr Craig retired from the board in September. He was replaced by Mr Orr who, unfortunately, was forced to resign due to poor health. The many contributions of these two men to the governors and to the larger life of the school are greatly appreciated.

Function of the Board of Governors

The governors are responsible for all aspects of school - pupil admissions, the appointment and development of staff, the curriculum, safety and welfare, finance and school/community relations. The governors in Ashgrove aim to provide the highest standards of education and care for each child in the school, and to respond to any encouragement and concerns that you may have.

Permanent Staffing 2008 - 2009

Principal	Mr P Waddell	
Vice-principal	Mr D Graham	
Year 7	Mr N Agnew	Mr D Graham
Year 6	Miss L Quail	Mr M Morrow
Year 5	Mrs S Christie	Mrs V Luney
Year 4	Miss J Wylie	(Head of Foundation Stage & Key Stage 1)
	Mrs M McAllister	Mrs F Mannion
Year 3	Mrs A Blair	Mrs L Torrie
Year 2	Mrs A McBride	Mrs J Copeland
Year 1	Mrs M McCoy	Mrs J Adair
Special Needs	Mrs L Doherty	

The teachers in Ashgrove continued to display a high level of professionalism and dedication. Throughout the school, teaching was conscientious and of a high standard. Once again the governors would like to express their appreciation of the excellent work done.

The school continued to benefit from the excellent work of a number of other people who made up the permanent professional team:

Secretary	Mrs Y McDonald	
Classroom Assistants	Mrs G Finlay	Mrs H Kyle
	Mrs L Lloyd	Mrs C Lowry
	Mrs J McWilliams	Mrs L Noble
	Mrs T O'Donnell	Mrs K Vick
Buildings Supervisor	Mr D Magill	
Cleaners	Mrs L Horn	Mrs L Smith
Supervisory Assistants	Mrs A Bunting	Mrs H Campbell
	Mrs M Cleland	Mrs M Gillam
	Mrs S Maginnis	Mrs G McFerran
	Mrs A McMillan	Mrs L Meehan
	Mrs H Montgomery	

It was with regret that we saw the retirement of our senior supervisor, Mrs Maginnis, at the end of June.

Once again all our children benefited greatly from the invaluable contributions of the cook and her staff, from registered volunteers, from parents and from friends.

Staff and Curriculum Development

Throughout the year, staff ensured that teaching and learning was broad, balanced, challenging and supportive. Teachers met regularly to plan and co-ordinate the curriculum as required by the Curriculum (Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets at Key Stages 1& 2) Order (NI) 1996 and the Education Order (NI) 2006. In response to the strengths and priorities of individual children and of the school in general, members of staff were actively involved in a programme of whole-school development that included:

- Introduction of the Revised Curriculum in Years 2 and 6;
- Preparation for the Revised Curriculum in Years 3, 4 and 7;
- Introduction of a Policy for Gifted and Talented Pupils;
- Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities;
- Audit and planning for school development;
- Training and certification in the use of the interactive whiteboard;
- Anger Management;
- The Health-Promoting School; and
- Review of general non-curricular policies.

Achievements at the Ends of Key Stages 1 and 2

In the school year to which the annual report relates progress remained good and was generally commensurate with ability. The Ashgrove catchment is changing, with a broadening range of abilities now evident in most classes, yet the results at the end of each key stage have remained almost universally above the Northern Ireland average.

Key Stage 1	English	98% achieved Level 2 or above*	(94%)
		43% achieved Level 3	(41%)
	Mathematics	98% achieved Level 2 or above*	(95%)
		46% achieved Level 3	(48%)
Key Stage 2	English	74% achieved Level 4 or above	(79%)
		21% achieved Level 5*	(29%)
	Mathematics	79% achieved Level 4 or above	(80%)
		39% achieved Level 5	(41%)

Figures in brackets are the Northern Ireland averages. Those marked * are improvements on last year. Statements in **bold** are achievements above NI average.

23 of the 48 pupils who sat the transfer tests were awarded grammar school places (42%).

Antrim Grammar	2	Crumlin Integrated College	1
Ballyclare High School	4	Glengormley High School	23
Ballyclare Secondary School	5	Hazelwood Integrated College	1
Belfast High School	6	Larne Grammar	1
Belfast Royal Academy	8	Monkstown Community College	2
Campbell College	1	Royal Belfast Academical Institution	1

There was an average of 67 children (19%) with special educational needs recorded on the register during the course of the year.

After School Activities

For part of the year the teachers provided a programme of extra-curricular activities as a valuable extension to children's learning. The governors commend members of staff for their commitment through the following clubs:

Art	Badminton	Clay	Cycling Proficiency
Computers	Drama	Football	French
Hockey	Netball	Rugby	Scripture Union
Strings Orchestra			

Team Theme ran a series of eight weekly coaching sessions for P1-P7 children during the winter. The group also ran holiday coaching schools at Easter and during July.

Music & Drama

One child passed the Grade 1 Cello examination, another passed Grade 1 Violin with merit and another passed Grade 1 Violin with Distinction.

The choir performed at our Harvest and Nativity services, our Leavers' Assembly and at local nursing homes and shopping centres.

Mrs McKay provided tuition in strings, Mrs Rogers provided tuition in wind instruments and Mr Barnes provided after-school tuition in piano.

Educational Visits, Visitors, etc

During the year many organisations visited the school, including Wildlife Volunteers, West Midland Theatre, Hullabaloo Theatre, the fire brigade, the dental hygienist, the school nurse, local clergy, Go Kids, Tennis Fundamentals, PSNI Community Branch, Thornton's, Bryson House, Think Differently and BT Roadshow. All classes took part in educational visits outside school:

- Year 1: Streamvale Farm, Carnfunnock Country Park
- Year 2: Tayto Castle, Belfast Zoo
- Year 3: Cavehill Country Park, Crawfordsburn Country Park
- Year 4: Castleward, Castle Espie, Belfast Central Station
- Year 5: Belvoir Park, cinema (National Film Week)
- Year 6: residential educational visit to the NI Scout Centre, Crawfordsburn, the cinema (National Film Week)
- Year 7: Victorian Day at the Ulster Folk Museum, Sentinus Klixi Challenge, the NEELB 24 Game competition, Sentinus Technology Challenge, Newtownabbey Borough Council's Bee Safe event, residential educational visit to Manchester, road safety quiz, Sentry Hill, Ballyearl Business Masterclass, Sports Bowl, cinema (National Film Week)

Once again the school was able to acquire items of sports and ICT equipment with tens of thousands of Tesco tokens collected by the children, families and friends.

Sports

Badminton: Years 6 and 7 pupils participated in badminton after school.

Football: The school team participated once again in the Newtownabbey School League and cup competitions. Pupils from Years 1 to 7 benefited from coaching by Team Theme. The Irish Football Association provided grassroots coaching for Primaries 3 and 4.

Netball: Years 6 and 7 pupils participated in netball after school. Teams were entered in local league and cup competitions.

Hockey: The girls and boys teams both competed in provincial hockey tournaments with the boys team reaching the Northern Ireland finals for the second time.

Rugby: Grassroots coaching was provided by Irish Rugby Football Union.

Swimming: All pupils from Primary 5 - 7 took part in swimming lessons at the Valley Leisure Centre during school hours.

Parental Involvement, Including Parent Teacher Association

Once again the partnership between home and school was demonstrated through valued support with homework and uniforms; preparation and cleaning of infant equipment; voluntary library duties; and the shared supervision of educational visits. The governors consider parental participation an extremely important feature of the school's life and would like to express their appreciation for all support, including financial.

Chaired by Mrs Margaret Abernethy, an enthusiastic committee contributed greatly to the life of the school. Many PTA events, both social and fundraising, were held throughout the year and the PTA committee contributed generously to many more: annual general meeting, Halloween disco, Christmas fair, Valentine's Day disco, Thorntons Easter Egg Day, treasure hunt, Family Fun Night, Primary 7 barbecue, Primary 1 induction afternoon, book fair.

In another year of continuing financial stringency within the education sector, the PTA made a significant difference to the provision of experiences and resources for our children with major donations towards interactive whiteboards and sports day medals.

Parents were invited to contribute to the school audit through a questionnaire distributed in the summer term. There was a return of 116 completed questionnaires representing 74% of our 159 families. The exercise was generally positive, while raising a number of issues for consideration in relation to information about the curriculum and the role of the Board of Governors.

Links with Charities and the Local Community

An extensive programme of outside visits and visitors to the school enriched the curriculum of each class. As well as choral visits, harvest gifts were donated to deserving people in the district.

£100 was raised through the sale of seals for the Northern Ireland Council for Orthopaedic Development. Children continued to collect used postage stamps for the Dogs Trust, and

dog food, blankets, etc for the local dog shelter. As is our tradition, the Royal British Legion was supported through the sale of poppies.

Schools Community Relations Programme

Inclusion, tolerance and co-operation have always been key values in Ashgrove and cross-community contact schemes continued during the year. Once again pupils, parents and staff benefited from a joint programme of activities involving Years 4, 6 and 7 pupils from Ashgrove and St. Mary's-On-The-Hill; parents from both schools shared an evening session looking at on-line safety; and we were pleased to facilitate St Mary's sports day in the grounds of Ashgrove. Both principals worked together as part of the NEELB *Questions of Difference* project.

Security / Personal Safety

The following measures (additional to those included in our health and safety policy) were taken to improve the security and personal safety of all within school:

- an up-to-date risk assessment was maintained;
- requests were again placed with NEELB for a drop-off lay-by and for a permanent structure to replace the mobiles;
- assistance was sought from the Traffic and Community Branches of PSNI in relation to anti-bullying, stranger danger, drugs awareness and road safety;
- our Designated Teacher for Child Protection remained up-to-date with training and monitored the school situation effectively;
- the security system controlling access to the school was upgraded;
- pupil attendance during 2008/2009 was 95%;
- the principal monitored pupil attendance monthly and worked with parents and the education welfare officer in relation to any children below 85%;
- first aid training was updated;
- emergency evacuation drills were conducted each term;
- parents were reminded to report to reception upon arrival at the school;
- annual criminal record checks and references were obtained/updated for all volunteers wishing to work in the school; and
- a state-of-the-art hygiene room with disabled access was installed by NEELB.

LMS and Allocation of Delegated Budget Share

With finance greatly restricted it proved necessary for the school to operate within a significantly more limiting budget during 2008/2009.

Budget and Expenditure Report for the 12 Months Ending March 2009

Description	Budget For Year	Expenditure For Year	Expense Balance
Salaries	831897	834608	-2711
Premises	18461	23115	-4654
Books, Tools & Materials	16389	25147	-8758
Miscellaneous Expenses	29281	37591	-8310
Income	-31289	-20929	-10360
Grand Total	<u>864739</u>	<u>£899532</u>	<u>-£34793</u>

LMS accounts were scrutinised by the Board of Governors, NEELB and C2K. School Fund, Parent Teacher Association and educational visit accounts were audited through the Board of Governors.

Complaints Procedure

Any parent with concerns about a child's safety should consult the class teacher. If this is either unsatisfactory or inappropriate the parent should speak to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mr Graham, or the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Miss Wylie. If issues remain, the principal should be consulted. Any matter not resolved by this stage should be addressed by writing to the Chairman of the Governors.

Conclusion

Finally, I wish to place on record my thanks to all members of the school community who have worked so conscientiously to ensure that pupils at Ashgrove Primary School receive the best possible care and education.

As Chairman I recommend this report as a true record of the discharge of the functions of the Board of Governors at Ashgrove Primary School during the school year 2008/2009.

David Ireland, Chairman, January 2010

School Closures 2007/2008

Christmas Term

start back	Thursday 30 August 2007
half-term holiday	31 October - 2 November 2007
start back	Monday 5 November 2007
Christmas holiday	24 December 2007 - 4 January 2008

Easter Term

start back	Monday 7 January 2008
half-term holiday	15 - 19 February 2008
start back	Wednesday 20 February 2008
Easter Holiday	21 March - 4 April 2008

Summer Term

start back	Monday 7 April 2008
May Day holiday	5 May 2008
start back	Tuesday 6 May 2008
last day of term	30 June 2008

Teacher Training (Baker Days) (24, 27, 28, 29 August 2008)
(1 flexible day in July/August 2008)

Teacher Training (Exceptional Closures) (14 February 2008)
(20 March 2008)
(1, 2 May 2008)
(30 June 2008)