



# **JORDANSTOWN SCHOOL**

*A specialist school for children who  
are deaf or visually impaired*

## **ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS 2019-20**

**November 2020**

## Jordanstown School

Jordanstown School is a specialist school for pupils with an auditory or visual impairment. We give access to the full Northern Ireland Curriculum to all of our pupils and we offer a wide range of both academic and vocational examinations.

The Education (School Information and Prospectus) Regulations (NI) 2003 requires Boards of Governors to provide access for parents and others to information about the educational provision and opportunities offered by individual schools. This report gives an overview of the work of the school during the 2019-20 academic year in line with these regulations. It reflects the commitment and professionalism of all members of staff and the invaluable contributions of many individuals and agencies.

### Membership of Governors

<b>Governor</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Nominating authority</b>
Mrs Wendy Newbronner	Chairperson	Elected by parents
Mrs Carole Magowan	Vice Chairperson	Board of Trustees
Mrs Joanne Dickson		Parent, co-opted by Board of Trustees
The Very Reverend Father Patrick Devlin		Board of Trustees
Mr Gareth Adams	Teacher Representative	Elected by staff
Mrs Colette Grey		Education Authority
Mr Bryan Symington		Education Authority
Reverend Glen Jordan		Board of Trustees
Mrs Deirdre Byrne		Board of Trustees
Dr Patrick Johnston		Board of Trustees
Dr Catherine Scully	Principal and Secretary to the Board of Governors	Non-voting member

The Board of Governors takes a central role in decision-making on strategic matters relating to the future direction of the school. These include the curriculum, finance, welfare and academic achievement of the pupils, teaching and learning, staffing, and various policies and resources.

During the school year 2019-20 the Governors ensured that the school was providing a sound education service for all of the pupils and their parents/carers. This included the period from March 23<sup>rd</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>, when the school was closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and remote teaching and learning took place on digital platforms. The full Board met in the school on 6 occasions from September to February, and remotely on the Zoom meeting platform on 2 occasions during the lockdown. There were also sub-committee meetings to deal with teaching and non-teaching appointments. In between meetings, the Governors were consulted by the Principal via email or telephone.

### **Staff information**

Full time Teachers	12 FTE
Part time Teachers	3 (5 days funded by the Board of Trustees)
Outreach Teachers	2 FTE
Classroom Assistants	12 FTE
General Assistants	2 (15 hours per week)
Discretionary Support	247.5 hours
Sign Language Assistant	1 (funded by the Board of Trustees)
Bursar	1
Clerical officer	1
ICT technician	1
Building Supervisor	1
Cleaners	7
Lunchtime supervisory assistants	2

In addition, funding from the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme paid for 30 hours of classroom assistance and 1 day of teaching assistance for part of the year.

The following positions of responsibility were appointed or extended in Jordanstown School in 2019-20:

- Mr Gareth Adams – Outreach and Transport Co-ordinator (permanent)
- Mrs Jill McClelland – Primary Co-ordinator (temporary)
- Mr Kevin Stitt – Assessment Co-ordinator (temporary)
- Mrs Jill McClelland – Extended Schools Co-ordinator
- Mr Colin Hughes – Numeracy Co-ordinator (temporary)
- Mr Kevin Stitt – Newtownabbey Learning Community Co-ordinator (temporary)
- Ms Catherine Keery – Examinations Officer (temporary)

The following appointments were made in Jordanstown School in 2019-20:

- Miss Shannon McCall – Primary Teacher (permanent)
- Miss Leah Smyth – Primary Teacher (temporary)
- Mr Lee Dougherty – Art and Primary Teacher (temporary)
- Ms Catherine Keery – Teacher of Literacy and Numeracy (part-time temporary)
- Ms Catherine Keery – Curriculum and Careers Development (part-time temporary)
- Miss Kerry Glass – Classroom Assistant (permanent)
- Miss Sarah Lawther – Classroom Assistant (permanent)
- Mrs Lynsey Njukullah – Classroom Assistant (permanent)
- Mrs Rachel Peacock – Classroom Assistant (permanent)
- Miss Hannah McConnell – Classroom Assistant (temporary)
- Miss Ashley Kerr – Classroom Assistant (temporary)
- Mrs Heather Jamison – Classroom Assistant (temporary)
- Miss Amy Mc Larnon – Classroom Assistant (temporary)

### **Valete**

Following 25 years as a Speech and Language Therapist in Jordanstown School, Mrs Yvonne Kerrigan retired in August 2020. We thank her for her important contribution to our pupils over so many years of service, and we wish her a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Miss Leah Smyth secured a permanent position in another school from September 2020 and therefore resigned her temporary position at Jordanstown School. She made a first-rate contribution to the Primary Department in her four years as a member of staff here and we wish her well in her new role.

Mrs Rachel Neill left her position as a Classroom Assistant at the end of the year, to take up employment elsewhere.

### **Obituary**

Mrs Clair O'Neill, a Classroom Assistant at the school for 3 years, sadly passed away in May. Her funeral service was streamed live and observed by a large number of staff, many of whom were present outside the funeral home. A eulogy was given by Mr Adam Smith, Principal of Jordanstown School from September 2016 to August 2018.

### **Continuing Professional Development**

Classroom assistants and teachers completed a variety of professional development courses during the year. These included qualifications in British Sign Language, Team Teach training, and Visual Strategies for Pupils with Autism led by staff from Middletown

Centre for Autism. During the staff development days throughout the year, staff were consulted on a range of policies. They discussed and implemented new initiatives in school, and completed relevant internal training. During the school closure, classroom assistants undertook a wide range of online courses including in Braille, autism and various digital applications.

## **Pupil information**

Jordanstown School had an enrolment of 75 pupils at the end of 2019-20. Five pupils left the school at the end of the year. One of these pupils is attending Belfast Metropolitan College where she is enrolled in the Independence for Life and Work course, while one is enrolled in the Aspire 2 Work course at the Northern Regional College. Two pupils transferred to another special school and one into a mainstream Sixth Form.

The overall rate of attendance across the school from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 was 86.4%. The Principal liaised and met with the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) on a regular basis during this period. During term time from 23<sup>rd</sup> March until 30<sup>th</sup> June, pupil participation in remote learning was encouraged through the digital platforms and by regular pastoral telephone calls by Primary and Form teachers.

## **Curriculum**

The aim of the curriculum is to enable pupils to achieve their potential and to prepare them for life beyond school. A broad and balanced curriculum within a caring and secure environment, in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum ([www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk)), is delivered across the school. The curriculum provision is differentiated to meet the special needs of the pupils. Whole class and group teaching methods are used as well as the provision of individual support when necessary.

In Jordanstown School we offer a wide range of vocational and academic qualifications. Pupils are entered for the appropriate external examinations. All pupils follow an individual examination pathway we recognise and celebrate the achievements and success of our pupils at special assemblies and during Prize Days.

Qualifications achieved in 2019-20 were:

GCSE English: 4 pupils (4 at grade C or above)

GCSE Mathematics: 6 pupils (3 at grade C or above)

GCSE Single Award Science: 4 pupils (3 at grade C or above)

GCSE History: 1 pupil (1 at grade C or above)

GCSE Geography: 4 pupils (3 at grade C or above)

GCSE Art and Design: 4 pupils (4 at grade C or above)

Short Course GCSE RE: 3 pupils (3 at grade C or above)

Entry Level Science: 4 pupils

Entry Level Geography: 1 pupil

Entry Level Life Skills: 4 pupils

Level 1 Creative Crafts: 5 pupils  
Level 1 BSL: 4 pupils  
Level 1 Performance Skills: 4 pupils  
Level 2 Performance Skills: 5 pupils  
Essential Skills Literacy Level 1: 1 pupil  
Essential Skills Literacy Level 2: 3 pupils  
Essential Skills Communication Level 1: 1 pupil  
BTEC Home Cooking Skills Level 1: 4 pupils  
BTEC Home Cooking Skills Level 2: 5 pupils  
ASDAN – Short Course Science (1 pupil)  
ASDAN – 4 units from Towards Independence (5 pupils)  
Riding for the Disabled Association Level 1 and Level 2 Certificates (9 pupils)

Six pupils undertook at least one GCSE. Of these, three achieved 5+ GCSEs or equivalent including English and Maths, including one pupil who achieved 7+ GCSEs or equivalent including English and Maths. All six pupils progressed to 16+ education, five at Jordanstown School and one at a mainstream school.

Curriculum provision at Key Stage 3 was enhanced in 2019-20 through our involvement with Newtownabbey Learning Community (NLC). Pupils from Rosstulla school joined one of our Key Stage 3 classes to successfully complete their Level 1 qualification in Creative Crafts. They also participated in BSL classes led by our senior pupils. Pupils from Thornfield School came to Jordanstown School to join a Key Stage 3 class in Technology and Design.

Religious Education continues to be a compulsory subject under the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Three pupils were withdrawn from RE classes at the request of parents. Individual pupils were prepared for the sacraments of First Confession and Holy Communion.

Guide Dogs NI continued to provide individual sessions of orientation and mobility education to pupils. These skills were then enforced by all school staff and parents.

Swimming lessons in the hydrotherapy pool took place for a range of pupils in Primary and Post-Primary classes.

In addition to the Northern Ireland Curriculum, the staff of Jordanstown School work in partnership with outside agencies to deliver the Expanded Core Curriculum for pupils who are deaf and the Expanded Core Curriculum for pupils with a visual impairment. This trains our pupils in skills for overcoming the challenges of their sensory loss, while developing their independence and empowering them for the future.

Teachers reported outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2 and 3 in the areas of Using Maths, Using ICT and Communication in pupils' annual reports.

## **Curriculum enhancement activities**

The pupils continued to be given opportunities to participate in many activities to foster their academic, personal and social development, and their independence. This included regular visits for different classes to supermarkets and horse riding. A trip to a garden centre took place for some Primary pupils.

Our Pupil Council met regularly and continued to give pupils a voice. It also developed their confidence and skills. This year the Pupil Council was led by Mrs McNeill. Pupil voice was also included in the Individual Education Plans.

A Super Learning Day with a theme of 'Investigation' took place for all pupils in December. Activities included exploring hearing impairment or visual impairment, and taking fingerprints to investigate how everyone's fingerprint is unique.

## **Competitions**

Our pupils continued to enter and excel in competitions. Our pupils achieved highly in the NDCS Young Authors and Artists Competition, when Miss Stroud also won a special prize, the NDCS Commercial Connections Trophy, awarded in recognition of her contribution to the education of children who are deaf. Oliver Colman and Emma Dickson came in the top four entries in the special schools category of the Fairhill Story Wall Competition. Emma Dickson won a Newtownabbey Rotary Young Writer Competition, and a Road Safety Poster Competition organised by the Newtownabbey branch of Road Safe NI. Oliver Colman was a Top Performer in the Healthy Kidz Virtual Sports Day in June.

## **Extended schools**

The extended schools programme co-ordinated by Mrs McClelland provided a range of activities for our pupils this year. Pupils were able to take part in after-school clubs including Forest Schools, Animation, Multi-Sensory Art, Lego and Music Fusion. Group 'music tuition' sessions in guitar, ukelele and keyboard were available over lunchtime. The whole school enjoyed two masterclass events in violin and singing along with a Scottish ceilidh. They also enjoyed a drumming workshop with 'Fun with Drums'. Pupils enjoyed taking part in Boxercise and Monkeynastics as part of our healthy lifestyle action plan. A Film Club was run to facilitate the attendance of parents at evening meetings of our parent-staff association, Jordanstown Together. Primary pupils benefitted from individual counselling sessions and PDMU class-based activities delivered by Family Works, whilst parents were invited to sessions relating to issues such as resilience and anxiety. Unfortunately, some other planned activities were postponed due to the school closure.

## **Community links**

Jordanstown School is a full and active member of the Newtownabbey Learning Community. This year we offered a qualification in Creative Crafts and classes in Technology and Design to the NLC.

All school staff and parents continue to work together in the best interests of the pupils. In order to maintain these vital links, we held a parent workshop, two Parent-Teacher Consultation sessions and Annual Review meetings. Parents were invited to a number of school events throughout the year.

Jordanstown Together continued to meet regularly and organise events. A coffee morning for parents was held and funding was secured for the purchase of a swing for the primary playground. Unfortunately, a number of planned activities were unable to take place due to the lockdown and subsequent restrictions.

The school's involvement in the Erasmus project continued, enabling our staff to share their expertise with other European Schools and learn from best practice across Europe. A planned conference due to be hosted by Jordanstown School in May, involving schools from across Europe, had to be postponed.

Speech and Language Therapy continued to take place within the school, with three Speech and Language Therapists. Play Therapy took place in school, run by Action Deaf Youth, and sign language classes for parents took place, organised by the BDA. Music Therapy took place, funded by RNIB.

There were two School counsellors. One was for Post-Primary pupils, provided by Barnardo's. A Primary counsellor was funded through Extended Schools.

## **Safeguarding pupils**

We have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the children in our charge. Through the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the Pastoral Care Policy, the Positive Behaviour Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy, we aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment to enable each child to reach their full potential.

Child Protection procedures continue to be fully implemented and appropriate background checks through AccessNI are carried out on all members of staff and volunteers. Procedures have been set up to further protect our children by ensuring that everyone who works in the school is aware of the reporting and recording procedures in place. The school has a confidential recording system for information about suspicion of abuse, disclosure of abuse and complaints against members of staff.

In 2019-20, Miss Ruth Sturgeon was the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, and Mr Gareth Adams, Mr Sam Murray and Mrs Sarah Adams were the Deputy Designated

Teachers for Child Protection. Dr Patrick Johnston remained as the Designated Governor for safeguarding pupils.

An internal audit of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures took place in 2019-20 and a small number of adjustments made.

## **Premises**

The Principal and Governors oversee the upkeep of the school buildings, with maintenance works carried out by the Education Authority's Property Services.

The health and safety of all pupils and members of staff is paramount and procedures are continually reviewed. The school closely follows the guidelines of the Health and Safety Policies of the Education Authority. All portable electrical appliances are regularly checked to ensure they comply with regulations and are safe to use. Maintenance is kept up-to-date and safety is continuously monitored. Fire drill procedures are regularly reviewed and a full drill took place in Term 1. There are written procedures in place with allocated assembly points clearly signed.

The school premises were used outside school hours by RNIB, Guide Dogs and Angel Eyes. The hydrotherapy pool was used by community physiotherapists from the Northern Health Trust.

## **Security of pupils and staff**

- The exterior of the school is monitored by an extensive range of CCTV cameras.
- Access through all exterior doors is controlled by means of an electronic security mechanism.
- All visitors are asked to report to the school Reception where their visit is recorded by the Vis-Ed computer system. They receive a visitor's badge which they are required to wear for the duration of their visit.
- Staff are on supervision duty in the dining room, corridors and playgrounds during the morning break, lunchtime and end of the school day.
- The Building Supervisor is on duty around the school during the day and will escort contractors as necessary.
- The school premises are made secure by the Building Supervisor/ Principal/ responsible person in the evening and/or weekends.

## **Finance**

Jordanstown School operates a partially delegated budget which is delegated by the Education Authority using the formula applied to all other special schools. The Board of Governors are furnished with a detailed transaction report as available from the Education Authority.

Throughout the year the school is fortunate to be in receipt of a small number of donations from organisations and individuals. Donations such as these enable us to enhance the provision available for the pupils through extra-curricular activities and the purchase of additional educational resources.

## **Conclusion**

The Board of Governors wishes to thank all the members of the school community who have contributed to the work of the school over the past year:

- The teachers for their dedication and hard work and for the personal interest they take in each pupil.
- The support staff who contribute so much to the smooth running and welcoming atmosphere in the school.
- The members of Jordanstown Together for their interest, support and hard work.
- The parents for their cooperation and support on which the school can always depend.
- The pupils for their enthusiasm and willingness to cooperate with all of the school staff.

We would also like to thank The Ulster Society for Promoting the Education of the Deaf and the Blind for their continued support. Their support is essential to enhance the education of our pupils.