Education Authority - Southern Region

**St. Brigid’s Primary School**

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30th August 2022

Dear parents/guardian,

This is my final letter as Principal of St Brigid’s Primary School and it is with mixed emotions that I am writing this – whilst I am very excited about the opportunities in the next chapter, I am also very sad to be saying goodbye to a place filled with many happy memories, and somewhere I have felt was my second home for many years.

As I worked in school over the summer months, I was filled with great pride looking at the work and achievements of the staff and pupils, and how the school has developed over recent years. We created an outstanding School Development Plan alongside many school policies, to underpin the academic success of our pupils, which was reflected in our very good inspection results over the years, offered after-school clubs in arts & craft, sport, music, gardening, health & wellbeing to enhance extra-curricular skills, extended our school buildings and grounds to accommodate the increasing number of children applying to St. Brigid’s and fostered an environment of support, diversity and inclusivity for all.

On a fantastic note, I was really impressed at the recent assessment scores for Literacy and Numeracy, and the great standards pupils achieved despite the disruption to their learning over the previous few years due to COVID-19. This is testament to the great work of the teachers and classroom assistants, alongside the huge effort by parents/guardians during those days of lockdowns and thereafter.

I am delighted to tell the Student Council that the football nets they requested for our goalposts have finally arrived. I will leave them in school and no doubt they will be put to great use during the 2022/23 academic year. Very well done to the Student Council for co-ordinating this purchase for the benefit of the school community.

Most recently, the Student Council requested school funds to be given to various charities. In collaboration with the Student Council, we contributed to Time2Play and Newry Hospice.

**Acknowledgements**

As part of my retirement celebrations, we had a beautiful mass in school with Fr Dermot and all children from P1 to P7. I was presented with books of memories from each class, and these are something that I will always treasure. It is lovely to read the stories that remain in children’s memories – some very funny and others showing my serious side. In the P1 book, one girl said I was “beautiful” and another child showed me being “six” years old - I can always dream…

I would like to thank all our staff for their hard work organising the wonderful celebrations in school. Everyone read beautifully in mass and the stories were very touching. We had some refreshments after mass with staff and Fr. Dermot, and it was lovely to reminisce about the past forty years as a teacher in both Ballynaclosha and St Brigid’s Primary School and as a Vice-Principal and Principal in St Brigid’s Primary School.

I would like to thank all parents/guardians for the beautiful morning myself and my family had in Silverbridge clubrooms. I mentioned to Colleen Albert (parent/Governor) that I would like to have a get-together with parents before I leave St Brigid’s. I never imagined that everyone would go to such bother. Thank you to our parents and hospitality groups in St Brigid’s, Glassdrummond Community Association and Silverbridge football club for their huge efforts preparing and serving food and drinks throughout the morning. I had a wonderful morning chatting to parents/guardians, past pupils, present pupils and the lovely grandparents that I have built up a great relationship with during my years in school.

I would also like to thank all our parents and school community for the beautiful and very generous gifts that I received for my retirement. I have had beautiful bouquets of flowers and floral arrangements in my home during June and July, eaten delicious cakes and tray bakes that were made for me and look forward to using the gift vouchers I received over the coming months – which will remind me of the generosity of the pupils and parents of St Brigid’s. A big thank you again!

**Best wishes**

I wish Mr Mc Caul my very best wishes as he settles into principalship of St Brigid’s, and I am sure that he will settle in quickly and be very happy in St Brigid’s.

I would also like to offer my huge congratulations to Mr Rooney as he takes on the role of acting Vice Principal in St Brigid’s.

And to each and every member of staff, that they continue to make St. Brigid’s a very happy place for all children, and maintain the very high achievements, both academically and in our extensive extra-curricular activities.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your support throughout my 33 years in St Brigid’s Primary School. I leave with very happy memories and wish St. Brigid’s all the very best in the future.

I am sure that I will meet many of you at community events and football matches in the future and I will always be very keen to know how all my past pupils are using their knowledge and skills from St. Brigid’s going forward in their lives.

Good luck for the new academic year!

Kind regards

Mary Keating