



Blessington Educate Together NS

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Introduction

It's been a very busy and exciting start to 2022-23. Below is a summary of information shared at our Board of Management Meeting. We've opened our second autism class. We've seen significant increases in both pupil and staff numbers over the last three years. The former has doubled while the latter has tripled! We're also in the final, middle and beginning of various building works for the school. Below is a snapshot of developments and news.

Enrolment

90 pupils

Staffing for 2022-23

We appointed five new staff members this summer bringing our total to 14.

Staffing in 2022-23 as follows –

- Oak Room teacher – Emma
- Willow Room teacher – Fiona
- Elm Room teacher – David
- Ash Room teacher – Claire
- Hazel Room teacher – Eadaoin
- Birch Room teacher – Nombulelo
- Special Education Teacher and Deputy Principal – Lynn
- Mainstream SNA – James
- Hazel Room SNAs – Dorothy and Glynis
- Birch Room SNAs – Miriam and Martina
- Secretary – Pauline
- Principal – Jonathan

Curricular development and updates

Music Generation – Kevin will teach all classes for the full school year. This comprises early music skills for Infants up to 3rd class and ukulele lessons for 4th to 6th class.

GAA – Paul is training pupils up until half term.

Swimming – We're close to booking Naas Pool for January/February.

Staff Training

A broad range of training has already occurred and is booked including aspects of leadership, special education services, participation and engagement with the In-School Therapy Project, and autism and language.

School development and building works

The roof over Jonathan's office and the boiler room was replaced in August.

Works on the Sensory and Play areas will begin in November.

Permanent Extension – We're currently tendering for design consultants in relation to our permanent extension. This will comprise two autism classes, a mainstream classroom, an activity space, a sensory room, a staffroom, offices, ancillary rooms, a new basketball court and further external play areas.

We may also require a temporary mainstream classroom in advance of building works described above.

Finances and Resources

There has been considerable spend on ICT including laptops and desktops, two interactive classroom boards, rewiring and WIFI points within classrooms. A classroom set of tablets were also purchased last year.

Specialised adjustable furniture was purchased for the Birch Room as well as furniture for mainstream classes.

Transport

A mainstream bus and transport for our autism classes is up and running from Bus Eireann. I know there have been issues and these mirror those happening across the country. Hopefully these will be resolved in the coming days.

Afterschool Activities

There has been interest from musician Mo Sheerin looking to begin music lessons (guitar, piano, ukulele) after halfterm – November 7th. Information has been sent to families.

There will be potential board games and table-top roleplaying games run by parents. Details are being finalised.

Jonathan will run a beginner chess afterschool in January for pupils from 1st class upwards.

Parents Association

The PA are meeting on Tuesday 4th October to get things up and running this year again.

Student Council

We will have a new Student Council ready to start on Friday October 7th.