

Trustees of Friends of Holy Family PS Annual Report March 2025

The trustees of Friends of Holy Family Primary School Belfast submit their report and accounts for the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

Our aims were to:

- Provide and promote programmes and events for members of our school and local community.
- Collaborate with local schools, charities and businesses to provide educational workshops and training courses for children, parents and members of the local community.
- Organise fundraising events to help support local charities and the purchasing of school resources and equipment.

Outlined below are the various activities and strategies Friends of Holy Family (FOHF) was involved in to help develop our aims.

Programmes and services in the local and wider community

Our social media and communication platforms including Facebook, School Website, Seesaw, newsletter, telephone and email are highly effective means for communicating with our children, parents and family members. We continued to provide guidance and online links/ workshops to local community services and online learning tools / resources such as Parenting NI, Wee Chicks, Oxford Reading Owl, NESSY, Doodle, Topmarks etc. This helped strengthen family connections and improve communication, as well as, extending learning at home.

Parent Support Services

FOHF continued to promote and advertise links to relevant services, webinars and posters on our social media from our local support services such as Ashton, Primary Behaviour Support, ParentingNI, British Dyslexia Association, Barnardos, Grace Family Centre, Holy Family Youth Centre, Autism Advisory Intervention Service, PIPs Suicide Prevention Service etc. Our parents and families were very grateful for the additional support services made available to them.

School Uniform Swap

Throughout the year our team promotes and organises a school uniform swap shop in partnership with Holy Family Primary School. Volunteers helped gather up the uniforms and organised them into sizes for the new school year. Families were welcome to come into school on various dates to avail of free school uniform items. We also teamed up with Tesco and Holy Family Youth Centre who provided a free uniform bank for local families.

This year we set up a Christmas Jumper Drive and encouraged families to exchange or donate jumpers that no longer fitted. This was a highly successful project which helped tackle the issue of waste and many children enjoyed donating and receiving a new Christmas jumper.

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Community Events

Our team worked closely with Newlodge Arts and Duncairn Community Partnership to promote the return of their fabulous community events in Term 1 and 2 – Spring Awakening. Girdwood also provided a wonderful community fun day for all our children and families. Ardoyne Youth Enterprise also provided a wonderful Multicultural Community Fun Day.

Bryson Charitable Group

We have built up a strong connection with Bryson Charitable Group and Pathway Adventure. This year the children took part in a complimentary Living Well Programme in Holy Family PS. Family members enjoyed a variety of workshops such as flower arrangements, arts and crafts and fitness. All events were a huge success with a wonderful turn out from our children and their families, as well as members of the local community.

Art Projects

Our children were enjoyed working with local artists from the community and experiencing a wealth of art activities using a variety of media. Art Projects were provided by –

Libraries NI (World Book Week)

Newlodge Arts

Translink / Seedhead Art / Artist - Zippy

ECO

Staff, children, parents, and members of the local community worked hard to receive the school's 7th Green Flag status. Together they worked on sustainability, biodiversity and waste. The team continued to work on their annual community BIG Spring Clean initiative alongside Currie Primary School to help tackle the issue of litter and waste.

Fair Trade

The Eco Council members educated members on the topic of Fair Trade and Fare Aware. They held a Fair Trade bun sale to raise funds for Trocaire.

NI Water

The Eco Council worked with NI Water to spread the word about using refillable water bottles in school and at home and to help reduce the wastage of single use plastic.

Local Sports and clubs

The Ulster GAA, IFA, Creative Coaching Belfast, Our Club Our Community and Gaelfast have provided our children and staff with a wealth of locally funded sporting programmes and experiences such as Gaelic, Hurling, Soccer and Netball throughout the year. Some of our children were experiencing these sporting activities for the first time, whilst others were extending their love for the sport by joining their local club.

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We continue to build on our relationships with our local sports clubs. Many children and their families are active members of McCormick Academy of Irish Dancing, MR Sports, Newington FC, Cliftonville FC, NM Sports, Ardoyne Kickhams, St Malachy's OBYFC, Cumann an Phiarsaigh, etc. The clubs offer activities for all ages and often provide free sessions to learn new sporting skills.

Cliftonville Football Club

We welcomed the Cliftonville Football Team with great pleasure into school to celebrate their Irish Cup Final win. The community and children were elated with the club visit. They enjoyed meeting the manager and players and got to ask questions and have memorabilia signed.

Sustrans Active Travel

Our children and families continue to get involved in our active travel events such as Cycle to School and Walking Bus on a termly basis throughout the year.

Northern Ireland Fire Service and Police Service

P2 and P5 children enjoyed a visit from the local Fire Service and Police Service to learn about the importance of Fire Safety and keeping safe at home and in the local community.

Local Businesses and gifting

FOHF continued to work with businesses in the local community to support our school events. Throughout the year, Morelli's Ice-Cream provided ice-creams to our children during Sports Day, Sacraments and Fun Days. Bryson provided a complimentary Autumn event to all the children in our school and nursery. Pizza Works provided our Primary 7 children with complimentary pizzas for their leavers party. North Belfast Food Bank sponsored our nursery and school Sports Day with complimentary fruit and water.

Newington Credit Union

We are delighted to welcome Newington Credit Union into Holy Family Primary School. This new initiative encourages young people to save some spare cash each week into a saving scheme. It also teaches children about healthy spending habits.

Local Art Competitions

Throughout the year our children joined in fabulous art competitions provided by local businesses including –

Newington Credit Union

Texaco

Translink

JAMDAC – Development

The competitions were a huge success, and children were delighted with their wins and prizes.

Bryson / Play Resource

We were delighted to partner up with Play Resource to provide children with creative experiences lead by local artists. P2 and 3 children enjoyed visiting the centre to engage in

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exciting Art workshops and P1 welcomed the local artist into school who provided a total of 6 art and play workshops between the 3 classes. The reviews were fantastic, and we hope to maintain this partnership in the future.

School and Parent events

Shared education – New Lodge Arts

Our children, staff and parents continue to work in partnership with Currie Primary School. Together they got involved in art, music, eco and sporting events together. This year they enjoyed a joint workshop with Currie PS, provided by Newlodge Arts which developed children's art, dance and drama skills.

Queens University Belfast

This year we welcomed two new programmes, both led by students from Queens University. The programmes delivered biology and physics workshops to children in P6 and 7 and the aim of the programmes was to make physics and biology accessible and exciting for Primary School pupils. The children were in awe of their learning and loved being apart of the workshops.

Home - school projects

We continued to build relationships with parents and families by involving them in the learning at home. Many year groups completed home learning projects which were showcased at year group assemblies i.e. Projects included – P7 Belfast, P6 Rainforest, P5 Pyramids, P4 Volcanoes and P3 Space and Safari.

Additional family events

Our team has thoroughly enjoyed reconnecting with our parents and welcoming them back into school. Some successful events included Parent Curriculum events, PJ Parties, Stay and Plays, Christmas concerts, sacramental events, Sports Days, Book Fair, Shared education projects etc. A new 4 week workshop 'Bring Your Grown Up Maths Programme' was introduced this year which brought children and families together to help enhance children's mathematical skills. It also provided parents with tips and ideas to support their children with Maths at home.

Day Centres

It is an absolute joy to visit local day centres and provide beautiful music to residents of Newington Day Centre, Camberwell Day Centre and Carlisle Day Centre at Christmas time. These visits hold a very special place in our hearts as they are always very well received by the service users.

Clubs

Children thoroughly enjoyed being able to attend free afterschool clubs in Holy Family Primary School. Many children availed of clubs such as Art, Drama, Netball, Gaelic, Soccer, Hurling, Homework, Multisport and Irish Dancing.

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Cultural events

Catholic Schools Week

We held various cultural events to celebrate diversity and inclusion within our school community. During Catholic Schools Week we celebrated the theme 'Alive in Christ' and celebrated a special Grandparents Day service in the local church. Grandparents and families were invited and songs, stories and poems about their grandparents were shared and enjoyed.

Other special cultural events celebrated in school included -

Festival of Diwali

Eid Mubarak

New Lunar Year

European Day of Languages

International Day of Play

Sacramental Life of school

First Confession

First Holy Communion

Confirmation

Children, parents and their families together joined in the three sacramental celebrations throughout the year. All these events were promoted on our social platforms. FOHF members supported catering at these events.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We continued to promote the counselling service 'Time for Me' provided by Barnardos for our children and advertised support services available to parents and families such as AWARE, Women's Aid. Parents and families had access to free online meditation sessions.

We promoted Mental Health Awareness Week by continuing to use our Nurture in Five practices. Our children and families engaged in activities such as yoga, walking, meditation, breathing exercises etc and were encouraged to switch off electric devices and get outdoors.

Children thoroughly enjoyed wearing odd socks on Odd Socks Day to mark Anti-Bullying Week.

We continued to promote the health and wellbeing of our children and families by offering activities such as Jump, Jiggle and Jive sessions, running club, sporting activities and fitness classes.

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Questionnaires

Parents and staff completed an online survey to give their views and offer ideas and suggestions on school affairs. The children completed a PASS survey to indicate their feelings about school and learning. These surveys are extremely valuable in helping us to support and provide for members of our school community.

Fare Share Hub

The Fare Share NI charity offers fresh and frozen food and perishable items at an extremely low cost. The Hub has proven a very successful venture, once again this year, with many families availing of the service every week.

We have had a very successful year of projects and events for our children, parents and members of our local community. We have built strong links with local businesses and groups and look forward to building upon these successful partnerships in the future.

Fundraising and Charity Events

Our members continued to work together to organise and promote a variety of fundraising events at school.

The school held a Halloween and Christmas Fun Day. The children dressed up and enjoyed a visit to the school tuck shop. Donations were made to North Belfast Food Bank and Society of St Vincent de Paul.

During Christmas our families kindly made cash donations in place of Christmas gifts for teachers. The school does not charge for Christmas events. Parents and visitors donated generously to our chosen charities. Our fundraising donations were made to Community Food Bank, St Vincent de Paul and Gaza Paediatric Care Initiative.

The P7 children kindly donated food items to make up Food Hampers for our Christmas Hamper Appeal. All Christmas Hampers were donated to the Morning Star Hostel.

To mark Saint Patrick's Day, the school held a Green Day and children made donations to the Trocaire campaign.

Spring Sponsored Walk – In April 2024, FOHF organised our first whole school sponsored walk which welcomed parents, children and their families to join in our Spring Walk around the beautiful Waterworks. Families came together to help support the local school in raising vital educational funds. We were blown away by the generosity and kindness of our local families and community. The funds raised were used to buy essential books, furniture and equipment for the school.

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Accounts

Our previous year's closing balance for April 2023- March 2024 was £4,882.19

Our closing balance for April 2024 - March 2025 is £2,315.99