

16th June 2014

Dear parents,

As we come to the end of yet another school year, on behalf of the school Board of Management I would like to thank you all for the very helpful support you have given the school throughout the year. In particular I wish to highlight the very positive way you represent the school in the community. The evidence of this close co-operation between school and community was clear in the way you turned out for the turning of the sod on the GAP, the St. Patrick's Day parade and more recently for the official opening of the new school extension. All these major projects come to fruition as a result of a can-do attitude among parents and a very generous commitment of time and energy to ensuring the best possible outcome. All the changes which have been successfully implemented are as a result of having a positive outlook and a belief that by working together we can achieve results which will have a positive impact on the learning outcomes of our children. There is a very serious body of research which states that by being involved with your child's school you as a parent enhance their learning and enable them to reach their potential.

Some of you will recall that in 2012 the Parent Association put huge effort into collating a **survey** around school activities. In order to get all of your views every parent was surveyed and the results were collated and presented to the Board of Management. I wrote to you at the time indicating that the Board would work its way through the areas which parents deemed needed attention.

We were asked to improve the outside environment. You will have noticed that we have planted additional trees, removed trees, planted fruit trees and moved our kitchen garden into the playground. The Parent Association spent many hours weeding, digging, painting and cleaning in order to bring about this objective. The Parent Association completely refurbished beautiful park benches and they are sited in various places around the school. This work was conducted over many evenings and we are very grateful to all the parents who gave their free time to doing this work. The Parent Association also took responsibility for decorating the hall and social space for each of the receptions we held during the year as well as providing refreshments for our guests. Overall the school is looking very well and we are very thankful for all the voluntary help of parents and the Board in achieving what we set out to do.

Another item suggested was to develop our sports provision. In the interim the Board have worked together with NADDCo and various church and state agencies in order to provide the spectacular Greenway Activity Park which will be available to the school and community shortly. The Parent Association also provided funds in order for us to replace and buy additional PE equipment. Our sporting achievements in recent years reflect the commitment of teachers and parents to enhancing childrens' experience of sport. A big thank you to teachers and parents, who travelled to many venues with children on their own time to train and participate in competitive events. The Board also undertook the upgrading of the servery kitchen in the P.E. hall and also installed a wonderful new sports floor in the hall. Again the Parent Association set about fundraising for this project and made a contribution of €1,000 towards the refurbishment cost.

Our lack of proper accommodation for children with autism was a concern voiced by many. We are delighted to be in a position to offer the best possible facilities for all our children as a result of the very fine extension recently officially opened by An Taoiseach. The Department of Education provided almost half of the money with the remainder being fundraised locally in the community. This is a terrific achievement in a very short space of time and one of which every member of the school community should be proud. When you were asked you dug deep to ensure that we are in a position to offer a high quality education in a well resourced comfortable working environment. We had two visits from the schools inspector this year. On both occasions the school was commended for its commitment to continuous improvement.

Some areas of curricular development were identified for improvement. To this end the Board has provided funding to upgrade the libraries in each classroom. We have extended our stock of laptops and iPads and are in the process of upgrading our wireless provision. White boards and IT are used extensively throughout the school. Evidence of our commitment to science and technology can be seen in our involvement with the Discover Primary Science exhibition, IT and photography projects. Many visitors have admired the Greenwave photographic exhibition we have in the PE Hall, with most being amazed that this is the work of the children themselves. They are also delighted to learn that the photos actually track the arrival of Spring/Summer to Newport!

In line with a government directive on school improvement, our school is focussing on the area of literacy. We are implementing a comprehension programme, a peer-tutoring initiative, and focussing on reading for pleasure through all the classes.

We offer a broad and comprehensive curriculum and our children are a happy progressive bunch of students. We are very happy with the open and welcoming culture we foster in the school. We have a complaints procedure which enables a parent to make an appointment to discuss an area of concern with the child's teacher. We are thankful to you all for always bringing matters to our notice through the correct channels. The Board is committed to ensuring that our Child protection, Code of Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies are implemented.

The parent body asked that the profile of the school be developed. To this end, parents receive regular communication about events through newsletter, text, letter and website, and our website is continually being updated. We have engaged with media (Mayo TV, local radio and newspapers), who have all circulated news about our school at regular intervals.

Of the very extensive list of jobs which we prioritised back in 2012, all that remains to be addressed is the issue of drainage and access. I am happy to report that we will be doing work in July which will hopefully alleviate these problems.

Finally I would like to thank each and every person who made a contribution to ensuring that we kept on track and within budget. All of the people who planned and worked on the projects did so in a voluntary capacity and are worthy of our admiration and thanks for all they sacrificed in order to give time to school improvement. While every initiative instigated by the Board is not perfect, it is worth bearing in mind that each new change is done following reflection and discussion and at its core is the notion that it will benefit our children. The work done by the voluntary help is very rewarding and we hope that with continued support Newport NS will continue to flourish into the future.

Yours sincerely,



Bríd Chambers, Principal
on behalf of the Board of Management