

MINUTES - AGM for Bishop Galvin & Bishop Shanahan Parents' Association November 8th 2017

Siobhan McCormack introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the AGM. She then introduced Ann Nolan

Ann Nolan gave a quick overview of the past year. She told everyone that this year Bishop Shanahan's has the biggest staff ever, 18 teachers, 10 SNA's and 6 learning support staff. Ann asked all the teachers to review the school, there was very little negative feedback, overall everything was very positive. Ann said that Bishop Shanahan is a very special school and that she intends to grow on this and not become complacent. They have introduced a new programme for language, it helps the teachers to pinpoint exactly what stage a child's language skills are at and bring them forward to the next level. Aistear is ongoing and is proving to be very successful, it promotes great teamwork and creativity. There has been a noticeable improvement in vocabulary and richness of language, resources are in place to continue with this programme with support from the PA.

Mental Maths is ongoing and is showing huge improvements, one area that needs to be concentrated on is problem solving - teachers are going to do dedicated work each day to improve this area.

IT – Ann told everyone about the amount of investment that has gone into IT over the last year, the whole system has been updated. There is a huge increase in communication by email and texts and a twitter account has been set up. The aim is for a paper free environment and greatly improved communication. P/T meetings can now be booked on line, books can be paid for on line. The schools invested in 16 iPads and a trolley for moving them easily around the school, they are hoping to use the iPads as a support to the lessons, keeping in mind how young some of the children are. Ann feels that writing and reading are still the most effective and important way to teach.

SEM - This is a new model for support. It allows support to be given directly to the children, there will be less withdrawal from the classroom. 15% of children in Bishop Shanahan's are receiving some kind of support and it is very important for them to get early intervention. The school are in the transitional period of the old and the new models, unfortunately they did lose a learning support teacher, Ann is working hard to regain this teacher.

A new programme has also been introduced and is designed to help children cope with their own feelings. It involves teacher training and two classes from 1st are involved in the programme for now.

NEW BUILDING – Ann is still not sure of the exact date for the new building being ready, she estimates sometime between Christmas and Valentine's Day. It has gone very well so far with no problems. The grounds of the school will be reviewed when the building is finished, it is intended that 2 soft yards will be installed with play equipment – we will need to do some fund raising down the line to help with these developments.

Ann then introduced Kathryn Corbett.

Kathryn Corbett has now been principal of Bishop Galvin for a full year. She told everyone about some changes that have already been made to the school, the reception area has been totally refurbished, the hall is being done at the moment, they are getting a new floor which will be much more soundproof, doors to corridors have been colour coded. She explained how important it is that the new building and the old one blend seamlessly.

IT – a digital learning plan has been introduced, there is a new website and twitter feed. Kathryn told us how important it is to make computers part of learning every subjects and the school has the resources to do this. Ipads and Bbots are being used to introduce coding and promote logical thinking. The resources are there and Kathryn explained how important it is to use them correctly and make the most of them.

WELLBEING – the overall behavior of children in the school is very good and there is a good anti-bullying policy in place. It is important that children feel safe, happy and important at school and that they learn to cope with conflicts. Keeping children active is also very good for their wellbeing, the school introduced lots of new sports during active week this year which proved to be a great success. They are also developing links with St. Mac Dara’s to help with the transition from primary to secondary school. St. Mac Dara’s have been really supportive with this and they are looking to develop this programme further.

THE YEAR AHEAD - Kathryn told everyone how excited they are about the new building and playgrounds. They are linking with other schools in the area that have developed their play grounds this way and they are looking forward to introducing outdoor classrooms too.

SPECIAL NEEDS Kathryn talked about the importance of Inclusion. She talked about how all the children of the school should feel included and important and that the resources are in place for this to happen.

Kathryn finished up by thanking everyone for all the support she received over the last year.

Ann then got up to thank the PA and gave special mention to Kevin, Pearl and Teresa who are retiring, she gave them gifts from both schools and wished them all the very best.

Siobhan McCormack then briefly ran through the role of the PA. She did a power point presentation on our functions and what we do to help the school. She listed the events we hold throughout the year and spoke about Christmas Cards and Beanie Hats as being potentially part of this year’s fund raising initiative. She then asked for volunteers, especially committee members. We have very little representation from BS so Siobhan asked for volunteers from there specifically.

Siobhan then told everyone the treasurers report could be seen on both school websites – this was proposed by Audrey Priestley, seconded by Nicki Walsh. Last years AGM minutes (also posted on school websites) were proposed by Siobhan Leonard and Seconded by Audrey Priestley . Names of the new Committee members were then read out, there were no objections, committee was proposed by Ellie Turner and seconded by Tara Mullins.

Siobhan O’Rourke than spoke on “Good Enough Parenting & the Perils of Parental Guilt”

Meeting ended at 9.00pm