

Board of Management, School of the Divine Child, Annual Report 2020

School of the Divine Child (SDC Lavanagh, Lavanagh School) has 38 pupils in the 2019/2020 School year. We have a staff of 7 class teachers, 3 part time teachers for Home Economics, Music, Science, and Physical Education), 13 SNAs, 11 Bus Escorts, 1 Part time caretaker and 1 part time school secretary and an administrative Principal. The NCSE visiting teacher service calls to the school several times a year to advise on the education of pupils with hearing and visual difficulties. The School Inspector is Paul Stephens.

School of the Divine Child is a special school designated by the Department of Education and Skills to provide an education to boys and girls from 4-18 years who present with physical disabilities and complex medical conditions. The school is a Roman Catholic School under the Patronage of the Diocese of Cork and Ross. As a school community we foster inclusiveness, independence, individuality, and ability. We strive to ensure that each student can become as independent and interesting as possible despite the challenges of life. We are proud of the friendly atmosphere in the school where everybody is valued as an individual and all students have their own Individual Education and Care Plan.

The Board of Management is:

Chairperson (Patron's Nominee): Dave Ronayne

Patron's Nominee: Miriam Murphy

Community Nominee: Jim O'Shaughnessy

Community Nominee: Kate Creedon

Parents Nominee: Colleen Worthington

Parents Nominee: Terry O'Neill

Teacher Nominee: Mary McAuliffe

School Principal: Patricia Harrington

Projects and Events in 2019/2020

- JCSP (Junior Certificate Schools Programme) – Write a Book, Visit to a Gallery (virtual), Drop Everything and Read
- Junior Cycle – Level 1 and 2 Projects
- Junior Cycle – level 3 Junior Certificate Examination Preparation in Mathematics and Home Economics (assessed in school as examinations did not take place)
- Annual School Mass in School Dining Room
- Incredible Edibles
- Hallowe'en Party
- Attendance at Everyman Pantomime (courtesy of Biomarin)
- Shopping trips to Douglas and Wilton
- Visit to Douglas Community School to see their School Theatrical Performance

- Christmas Nativity Show
- Christmas Fair
- Chinese New Year
- Pancake Tuesday
- Valentine Parade
- Music Mash Up Concerts as part of Music Generation Programme for Schools)
- Creative Schools Partnership
- Aistear
- Maths week
- Collection for St. Vincent De Paul
- Construction Projects
- Science Experiments with Oran
- Cookery and craft lessons with Nora
- PE activities in School, outside Pairc Ui Chaoimh and in Douglas Community School
- Music and Performances with Oran
- First Holy Communion and Reconciliation Preparation in association with Scoil Ursula, Blackrock
- Confirmation Preparation with Beaumont Boys and Girls National Schools.

We incorporate Lámh signs, Objects of Reference, PECs and Augmentative Technology into all of our activities.

In addition, each pupil works in class on group and individual activities. We teach language, mathematics, SESE, SPHE and RSE, art, music, PE. Pupils use iPads, touchscreens and laptops. SNAs and Teachers assist and encourage pupils in postural management, SLT and other therapeutic programmes.

We provided work experience opportunities to students from a range of other educational institutions – Teacher Education programmes; CIT and UCC childcare programmes; Ashton, Douglas Community School and St. Angelas.

In addition, we hosted an afternoon visit from Teachers attending UCC Special Education Course.

This year we had a very special visit to our School from the Ombudsman for Children, Dr. Niall Muldoon. His visit took place on 6th March, just four days before we had to close because of the Covid 19 Pandemic.

None of these events would have been possible without the continued support of the Parents Association, which has grown in strength this year.

In curricular areas we continued our focus on communication and the power of being a good communication partner. In numeracy, we continued with our development of maths for life opportunities, focussing as always on shopping and identification of money and time.

Assessment is ongoing in School of the Divine Child and although we do not record formal testing, we use a range of resources to track and document individual student's progress. All progress is documented on Aladdin and in student paper files. We offer parents two parent/teacher meetings annually where progress and future planning is discussed.

Our digital strategy is well advanced. Under infrastructure we have commenced the move from a solid state server to a VPN. Our plan is to move to wireless availability throughout the building as soon as possible. We intend upgrading teacher laptops in the coming month in order to meet distance learning requirements in the event of a further closure.

Schools were closed in Ireland on 12th March because of the Covid 19 Pandemic. We explored a range of learning platforms and met weekly to discuss our findings. We initially used See Saw but moved to Padlet as a means of putting weekly/monthly plans together. This year we used Telephone, email, zoom, What's App to keep in touch with our pupils and their families.

The Board of Management ratified and /or reviewed the following Policies during this school year:

- Admissions and Enrolment Policy
- Protected Disclosures Policy
- Child Safeguarding
- Anti Bullying Policy Checklist
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection

In addition our school learning plan is constantly upgraded and amended by Teachers.

Building – We moved senior school to the area of the school that we acquired when Enable Ireland vacated the building. Mirrors have been installed in the playground and are loved by the pupils. Thanks to Biomarin for renovating these two new classrooms over one day in October mid-term.

We are pleased to report that we received approval under emergency works funding for improvements to fire safety and replacement of our boiler.

The school accounts have been verified by external auditors, F.J. Forde and Company, Accountants.

Your cooperation as parents and guardians is also vitally important and we thank you for your continued support in the coming school year.