



ANAHILT
Primary School



Dear Parents and Carers,

Well, here we are at the end of another school year—and what a year it has been! As we get ready to head into the summer holidays, I wanted to take a moment to look back and celebrate everything we have achieved together over the past year. There has been so much to be proud of, and it is all thanks to the amazing pupils, staff, and of course, you—the parents and carers who support us every step of the way.

Academic Highlights

Let's start with the classroom. This year, we have continued to raise the bar as to how we track and support pupil progress. Thanks to excellent data analysis, we have been able to spot where children needed a bit of extra help and step in early. The results have been very good. A big thanks to Mrs. Huddleston, whose booster sessions have made a real difference—so many pupils have grown in confidence and ability.

Next year, we are hoping to get you more involved too. We will be running some parent sessions to help you support learning at home, and we would love to see as many of you as possible join in.

Also a massive well done to the 18 pupils who sat the SEAG test—15 of them secured places in grammar schools! That's a brilliant achievement and a real testament to their hard work and determination.

Clubs, Sports & Creativity

Outside the classroom, our extracurricular clubs have been buzzing with activity. From football and hockey to LEGO, NERF battles, science club, and Taskmasters, there has been something for everyone. It has been great to see so many pupils getting involved and trying new things.

We also had some sports coaching this year. Dromore Rugby Club ran a 12-week block of sessions, and Derriaghly Cricket Club brought their energy and expertise to our PE programme too. The pupils loved it—and we have got some future sports stars in the making!

Our school choir had a fantastic year, performing beautifully at the Carol Service and again for the 80th anniversary of VE Day at The Church of the Ascension. Their voices filled the church and made us all proud.

And who could forget the school talent show? What a day! From singers and dancers to comedians and magicians, our pupils showed just how much talent we have in our school. It was a joy to watch.

Performances & Competitions

Our two Nativity plays—*Shiek, Rattle and Roll* and *A Miracle in Town*—were such a hit that we are joking about needing the SSE Arena next year to fit everyone in! The performances were full of heart, humour, and festive cheer.

We also took part in a range of competitions this year. Academically, we did well in the NI Road Safety Competition, coming 3rd in the Lisburn area. In the Environmental Youth Speak competition, Anna and Holly did us proud with their thoughtful and passionate speeches. We did have a win – our P6/P7 team won the Lisburn Schools' Quiz. A great achievement.

On the sports side, we competed in the Lisburn Tag Rugby Tournament, the Dromore Rugby Blitz, and the Dromara Boys and Girls Football competitions. We are getting stronger and more competitive every year—long may it continue!

Sports Day was another resounding success where the weather stayed good, the parents came out in force and the races took place with competitiveness and sportsmanship.

Pupil Voice

The School Council met monthly to actively contribute to the development of a positive school environment. They were responsible for setting the school's core value for the month, promoting a shared focus across all year groups. Council members from P4-P7 reviewed and discussed pupil voice suggestions, ensuring pupil ideas were heard and considered in decision-making.

The Council organised regular litter picks to maintain a clean and welcoming school environment. They also planned a successful Clean-Up Day, encouraging teamwork and responsibility. Wellbeing initiatives included a dedicated Wellbeing Day, featuring no homework and opportunities for outdoor learning to support mental health and engagement.

To promote creativity and individuality, the Council introduced themed days such as Be Yourself Day and Non-Uniform Days. They also arranged Playpark Time for each class in June and an Ice Cream Day to reward positive behaviour and foster enjoyment. Outdoor Learning Days were always a welcome treat.

One of the Council's standout contributions was suggesting an Easter Fun Week, filled with engaging activities to celebrate the season and build school spirit. They have made a great contribution to school life this year. Well done.

School Trips

Our class trips this year were a real highlight:

- **P1** had a brilliant day at the beach in Newcastle.
- **P2** explored the great outdoors at Spa Forest School.
- **P3** visited Ark Farm and met some furry friends.
- **P4** took a step back in time at the War Museum.
- **P5** had a blast at W5.
- **P6** explored the Titanic Museum and Navan Fort.
- **P7** enjoyed a fantastic residential at Delamont and took part in the BeeSafe community event. They also went to the Grand Opera House to see a special production of The Lion The Witch and The Wardrobe.
- The residential trip was at 'home' this year to Delamont and was a great success. The P6 & P7 enjoyed adventure walks in Tollymore, a Sea Safari in speedboats on Strangford Lough and many more challenging outdoor activities that brought them together as a group and more importantly tired them out for the sleep overs!

Celebrating What Matters

Throughout the year, we have also taken time to focus on what really matters—kindness, wellbeing, and community. We celebrated Mental Health Week, Anti-Bullying Week (with our colourful Odd Socks Day), Ditch the Dark Road Safety Day, Wellbeing Day, Be Yourself Day, and Commerce Day for P7. These events helped our pupils grow in confidence and compassion.

Staff & Pupils – Hellos and Goodbyes

This year we welcomed two fantastic new staff members—Mrs. Lenzi and Mrs. McDowell. They have both made a big impact and we are sad to see them go, but we wish them all the best in their next adventures.

In September, we will be welcoming Miss Carson and Miss Smyth to the team, and we are excited to have Mr. Shields with us full-time. We also welcomed three new pupils during the year and will be adding another eight in September—our Anahilt family just keeps growing!

Visitors & Community Support

We have had some special visitors this year, including Education Minister Mr. Paul Givan, EA Chair Mr. Mervyn Storey, and former Principal Mr. Richard Reid, who ran a brilliant workshop for P7 on moving on to secondary school. We also had past pupils back for work experience, student teachers from Stranmillis and Ulster University, and visits from local churches, youth groups, and the Anahilt Community Association.

Speaking of the Community Association—they have been amazing. From organising events to helping behind the scenes, their support means the world to us.

Our New Board of Governors

This year also saw the reconstitution of our Board of Governors. First, a heartfelt thank you to those who are stepping down. Mr. John Harshaw has been a terrific Chair and a huge support to me personally during my first few years here. I will be forever grateful for his wisdom and guidance. We also say goodbye to Mrs. Annett and Mr. Gowan, who have both contributed so much as parent representatives. Thank you for everything you have done for the school.

Looking ahead, we are excited to welcome our new parent governors—Mr. David Smyth and Mrs. Vonla Gregg—who I know will be real assets to the school. And I am absolutely delighted to see the return of Reverend Leslie Patterson to the board. With this new team in place, we're in a strong position to keep moving forward.

A Huge Thank You to Our PTA

Finally, a massive thank you to our incredible PTA. They have been absolute stars and regardless of personnel on the PTA their contribution since I have arrived has been enormous —redecorating and reflooring the FS/KS1 building, supplying interactive whiteboards, redesigning the library, redecorating KS2, providing classroom essentials, and even gifting our P7s their leavers' hoodies.

They have also organised a whole host of events—discos, fairs, gala balls, BBQs, movie nights, country nights, balloon arches, line dancing classes, the SoapBox Derby, and Pre-Loved Uniform sales. Their fundraising has made a huge difference, and every penny goes straight back into making our school even better for the children.

So, as we head into the summer holidays, I just want to say thank you. Thank you for your support, your encouragement, and for being such an important part of our school community. Have a wonderful summer—rest, relax, and enjoy time with your families. We cannot wait to see you all again in September for another exciting year at Anahilt Primary.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Smyth', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.