

**Kirkistown Primary School
Annual Governors' Report
2024-2025**



**Learning together,
building for the future**

<https://www.kirkistownprimaryschool.com>

Vision Statement

As a school, we aim to create independence and inspire lifelong learning.

School Ethos

As a community, we will provide an environment that caters for the intellectual, physical, spiritual, moral and cultural development of all pupils.

Mission Statement

- We strive to ensure that the learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of all members of the school community are valued.
- We provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will actively encourage everyone.
- Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility and be encouraged to make a positive contribution to their learning, school, and the wider community.
- We are committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle and the wellbeing of the whole child.
- Staff, pupils, parents, carers and governors work together to build a learning community that celebrates the values we share.

The Board of Governors

<http://www.kirkistownprimaryschool.com/introduction-to-the-governing-board.html>

The present Board of Governors was constituted in 2024 for the period 2024 to 2028.

Elected by the parents of the school: Mrs Kerry Miles
Mrs Rebekah Milne

Elected by the teaching staff of the school: Mr Steven Irwin

Appointed by the Education Authority: Mrs Jacqueline Gordon

Transferor's Representatives*: Mrs Charon Spence, Ms Michelle Stewart

*Transferors' representatives reflect the local churches and community.

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors from November 2024 is Mrs Charon Spence. Governors are to elect a new Vice Chairperson following the resignation of Rev Neil Stewart.

The Principal is an ex officio member of, and secretary to, the Board of Governors. The Secretary to the Board of Governors in 2024/25 was Ms Natasza Rudewicz, Principal. As such the Principal is a non-voting member of the Board.

The Governors are responsible for...

Governors attend regular meetings of the Governing Body. They are expected to show an interest in all school activities and to be informed about education in general. Governors are also invited to attend regular training courses provided by the Education Authority.

Governors' responsibilities include:

- Overseeing the School Development Plan

- Staff appointments
- Admission of pupils
- Preparation of the Annual Report
- Financial management of the school
- Effective use of resources
- Pupil discipline
- Overseeing the curriculum, policy and procedure
- Responding to Education Authority and Department of Education initiatives.

The school continues to be indebted to the Governors who willingly give of their time to ensure the administration of Kirkistown Primary School proceeds smoothly and effectively.

More details of the school's development can be found in the 2023-2026 School Development Plan and related yearly Action Plans which can be viewed upon request. The Board of Governors reviews this document annually and a summary overview is included under the 'Curriculum' heading of this report.

The Governors wish to record formally their appreciation of the work carried out by the teaching and non-teaching staff of the school. The Governors acknowledge the dedication and expertise of the staff, who each play their part in helping to make Kirkistown Primary School a successful, happy school.

Financial Information

The total budget share allocated to this school for the financial year 2024/25 was £271,355. The budget allocation is based on pupil numbers reported in the annual school census taken in October of the previous school year, size of premises and other factors such as the number of pupils receiving free school meals.

The school's 3-year financial plan predicted Kirkistown Primary School would finish 2024-2025 with an in-year deficit of £155,311.

PT&F Group

We have a vibrant and very supportive PT&F Group who have helped raise vital funds for the School. Events organised throughout the year included a Halloween Pumpkin Party, Christmas Fair, Valentine Disco and Quiz Night / Summer Serenade.

Opening balance: £1839.16

Credits to account 2024/25:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| • P7 Leavers | TBC |
| • Pumpkin Party | £125.00 |
| • Christmas Fair | £2695.00 |
| • Valentine Disco | £60.20 |
| • Quiz & Summer Serenade | £285.35 |

TOTAL CREDITS: £3165.55

Debits to account 2024/25:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| • Ganaway subsidy | £625.00 |
| • Rec/P1/P2 trip subsidy | £300.00 |
| • P3/4/5 trip subsidy | £70.00 |

- Quiz Night Prize £60.00
- Summer Serenade Catering & Prize £50.00
- Christmas Raffle Prize £1000.00

TOTAL DEBIT £2045.00

Closing balance at end of 2024/25 (16th June 2025) = £1120.55

Governors would like to express their continued appreciation of the PT&F Group for their vital fund-raising work throughout the school year.

Kirkistown Primary School Staff

Teaching Staff 2024/25

Principal	- Ms N Rudewicz
Seashells EYFSP	- Ms P Murray
Reception &	
Primary 1 / Primary 2	- Miss S Taggart
Primary 3 / Primary 4	- Mrs A Harbinson
Primary 5	- Ms N Rudewicz / Mrs G Cole
Primary 6 / Primary 7	- Mr S Irwin
SEN Teacher (Autumn & Spring Term)	- Mrs C Starr

Governors would like to place on record their thanks to the teaching staff for the continued dedication to helping the children achieve their potential.

Classroom Assistants (General & SEN)

Seashells EYFSP	- Miss E Doherty (SEN), Mrs S Farrell (SEN), Miss O Friel (SEN)
Reception &	
Primary 1 / 2	- Ms J Matthews
Primary 3 / 4	-
Primary 5	- Ms E Ryan (SEN), Mrs D Stewart (SEN) / Miss S Gilmore (SEN)
Primary 6 / 7	- Mrs Andrews (SEN), Miss L McAllister (SEN)

Secretary

Mrs M O'Lone

Supervisory Staff

Ms J Matthews & Mrs M O'Lone

Ancillary Staff

Building Supervisor & Cleaner - Mr F Adair

Canteen Staff

Mrs M Brown

The school could not function happily or effectively without the help of all staff who each play a significant part to ensure the best possible experience for our pupils and their families. Their contributions continue to be very much appreciated by Governors.

Attendance

Overall KPS Attendance 2024-25

% Attendance	Seashells (4 pupils)	Rec – P2 (13 pupils)	P3 & P4 (15 pupils)	P5 (12 pupils)	P6 & P7 (16 pupils)
95+	2	8	6	7	13
90+	0	3	3	1	3
85+	2	2	3	4	0
80+	0	0	3	0	0
75+	0	0	0	0	0
-70	0	0	0	0	0

Standardised Tests & Assessment

Assessment forms an integral part of the teaching and learning at Kirkistown Primary School. Pupil attainment is continually monitored and assessed. Records of pupil progress and achievement are maintained whilst the data is used to set future targets for whole school, groups and individuals.

Primary 1

- Base-line Test (Sept & June)

Primary 2

- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- Single Word Spelling Test (SWST)

Primary 3 to Primary 7

- CAT4 (P4 & P6 pupils only)
- Progress Test English (PTE)
- Progress Test Maths (PTM)
- Single Word Spelling Test (SWST)
- New Group Reading Test (NGRT)
- CCEA Literacy Adaptive Assessment (Pilot Scheme 2025)

Shared Education Programme

Kirkistown Primary School continued to participate in another successful Shared Education Signature Project with our partner school St Patrick's Primary School, Ballygalget. Funding was increased this year so Primary 4 – Primary 7 pupils benefitted. Pupils participated in a 'get-to-know-you' session followed by two further days investigating aspects of friendship.

Primary 7 Children

We wish our Primary 7 pupils every happiness and success as they move on to post-primary school. Staff from these post-primary schools visited the transferring pupils in the final weeks of this academic year with familiarisation visits being organised also.

Once again, the Primary 7 children were a credit to the school, taking an active role in school life through the School Council, House Captain roles and the Buddy System.

Pupils enjoyed a residential trip to Ganaway Activity Centre in March 2025. They experienced many activities such as archery, climbing wall, high ropes, zip line, lazer tag, caving, a night line, beach art and they toasted marshmallows and made smores over a campfire.



A Primary 7 Leavers' Assembly was held on Tuesday 24th June 2025 to mark the closing of the school year and to say goodbye. The leavers event was an opportunity to pay tribute to the role the Primary 7 children played in the life of the school and to celebrate their growth as individual members of our society. Children sang songs, read original poems and shared memories. The event was followed by a Leavers' Pizza Party and Disco. Primary 7 pupils enjoyed the pizza themselves but everyone in school was invited to the disco. Pupils played party games and Miss Taggart was DJ. The PT&F Group provided an 'ice-cream factory' complete with toppings plus juice and donuts for added sweetness!

Curriculum

Communication

Priority Areas (2024-25):

- Review and further the development of spelling strategies throughout the school
- Develop and implement a whole school approach to planning and teaching simple and complex inference skills
- Provide withdrawal sessions for those children who require additional support



Using Mathematics

Priority Areas (2024-25):

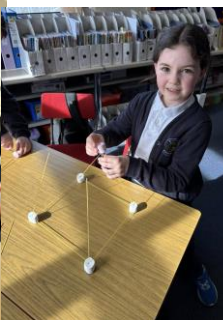
- Review and prioritise the Mathematics and Numeracy curriculum to ensure continuity and progression throughout school
- Numeracy Co-ordinator to lead the development of Numeracy across the school
- To improve the teaching and learning of Measures across the school
- To further enhance Number skills and Mental Calculations within each class



Wellbeing

Priority Areas (2024-25):

- Improve pupil engagement with school curricular & extra-curricular activities
- Improve pupils' self-perceptions and expectations
- Promote mindfulness within the classroom
- Increase non-contact time for staff to plan, evaluate & enhance work/life balance



Specialist Subject Teaching

Throughout this academic year pupils experienced specific, weekly classes in the following subject areas. These extra-curricular lessons were delivered by the teaching staff:

Cool Sport – Miss S Taggart

Drama – Ms N Rudewicz

French – Mrs A Harbinson

Music – Mr S Irwin

Library Visits

All pupils enjoyed Monday visits from the Mobile Library Van. Pupils took time to select books based on their interests and experiences. It's a great way of widening horizons and encouraging independent reading.



Anti-Bullying, Friendship Week & Art Therapy

At Kirkistown Primary School we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment:

- We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
- We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels safe from bullying.
- We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.
- We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.
- We value the views and contributions of children and young people. We will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account.
- We understand that everyone in our school community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Christina Johnston, art therapist, worked with all our pupils during January and February.



Our new EYFSP – Seashells

- Our Seashells class opened in September 2024. We currently have four pupils with many more applications being received. Our pupils enjoy purpose-built facilities and resources. Our key curricular areas include:
 - Personal, Social, and Emotional Development
 - Physical Development
 - Communication and Language



Health Education

EANI REACH workshops have been delivered to P3/P4, P5 and P6/P7 classes. They are designed to support pupils to develop positive emotional health, increase their readiness for learning and build their resilience. These weekly sessions took place during Jan-Feb 2025.

P6 children were helping to plant new hedgerows of native species trees at Cloughey Football Field. Thank you to the Cloughey & District Community Association and Ards and North Down Borough Council for the experience.

Thanks to Starling Bank and Mount Stewart Education Centre our P5, P6 & P7 pupils had a fantastic time connecting with the natural world.



Sport

Our Football and Rounders Teams participated in local tournaments and thanks to Brian McLaughlin and his Sports Outreach Team from Regent House our P5,6&7 pupils enjoyed a Tag Rugby workshop in the sunshine!



SEN Support

Kirkistown Primary School is an inclusive school and seeks to ensure all pupils fulfil their potential.

During the academic year Ms Rudewicz (SENCo) attended training sessions as part of her ongoing professional development and to assist in establishing an EYFSP within Kirkistown PS.

Staff are skilled at early identification of needs and strive to identify underachievement and low achievement, drawing on their professional judgement and the data available from classroom observations and from standardised scores. There continues to be a close liaison between the SENCo, Ms N Rudewicz, and staff preparing and reviewing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in consultation with pupils and their families. Evidence is collected by the SENCo to help inform discussions with parents and to assist with the Annual Review process for children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. School remains committed to providing a dedicated time in the week to allow teachers to work with children on the Special Educational Needs register on a 1:1 or small group basis.

There continues to be close liaison with the Educational Psychologist from whom advice was sought and referrals made. School continues to work closely with speech therapists, the AAIS Support Team and the EA Literacy Support Unit.

Children who appeared to be underachieving were also monitored with Targeted Progress Plans (TPP) put in place to assist teachers to focus on areas for development to help pupils reach their full potential.

During the Autumn and Spring Terms, Mrs Starr was employed, using SEN Funding, to work with all pupils on the school's SEN register. These sessions were invaluable and allowed children dedicated weekly time to work with the SEN teacher on their IEP targets. In addition, children were able to work with their class teacher on a 1:1 or small group basis during the SEN hour each week.

Safeguarding

Child Protection procedures continue to be fully implemented and criminal background checks are carried out on all newly appointed staff and volunteers. Mrs Harbinson is the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Mr Irwin is the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection. All staff and governors have updated child protection training biannually.

The School's Safeguarding Team is made known to children through information posters and termly assemblies with pupils reminded they may approach any teacher and in particular the Designated Teachers if they wish to discuss any concerns. Child Protection notices are displayed in prominent places around school and in every classroom. Families are kept informed of the team and have immediate access to important documents through the school website.

The schools Safeguarding Team consists of Ms N Rudewicz (Principal), Mrs Harbinson (Designated Teacher), Mr Irwin (Deputy Designated Teacher), Mrs C Spence (Chair of Governing Board) and Mrs K Miles (Designated Governor for Child Protection). Yearly reports are prepared and the relevant staff meet with the Designated Governor for Child Protection, Mrs Miles.

The pastoral care of our pupils remains central to the ethos of the school and all staff members are committed to it. We aim to reassure our children their worries and concerns will be listened to sensitively and sympathetically. Worry boxes in Key Stage 2 classrooms encourage children to write their worries down and share their problems with the class teacher or the Designated Teacher.

All staff attended Safeguarding plus Anaphylaxis Training sessions in August 2024.

List of policies that have been written from Sept 24 - June 25

- Dogs on School Grounds policy

List of policies that have been reviewed, updated and put onto the School website from Sept 24 – June 25:

- Child Protection Policy (Jan 2025)
- Staff & Volunteer Code of Conduct (Jan 2025)
- Data Protection Policy (Nov 2024)

Kirkistown's Pastoral Care Policies are available via the school website or in writing upon request.

Substantial work was, again, undertaken on the preventative curriculum during the 2024-2025 academic year.

Preventative Curriculum work as follows:

- PDMU lessons being planned and delivered in each of the classes.
- Weekly celebration assemblies are ongoing. They help to promote self-esteem and confidence in the children. Reception to Primary 7 meet together. Children have been reminded in Assembly who is part of the Safeguarding Team in School and who they can go to/ what they can do if they are worried about something.
- Buddy Team is currently operating from Monday to Thursday each week. Children from Primary 7 were able to apply for the post and then receive training. Four children applied and all were successful in their application. They have been members of the 'Buddy Team' in both the Foundation Stage class and the KS1 class. They eat their lunch with both classes and then play with them during their lunch break in the playground. Children benefit greatly from this experience.
- School 'House System' continuing to be used effectively throughout School, encouraging children to make good choices by following our six Golden Rules. Incentives, created by the school council last year, such as park visit or 25p token to spend in the tuck-shop for the winning house each half term - all linked to our Positive Behaviour Policy. Children from Primary 7 are voted in as House Captains by the children from their respective Houses.
- School Council - elected representatives from each year group meet to discuss and make decisions together based upon ideas and opinions from their peers in class.
- Friendship week (Anti-Bullying Week) was held in March this year. An assembly focused on this topic during this week. Children in each class had the opportunity to report back about what they had been learning.
- Fire Safety Awareness P5 class - Local Fire Officers attended school and the children explored different ways to Stay Safe.
- A Harbinson & S Irwin delivered the 'Growing Up / Puberty' talks to children in P6 & P7 (April 2025).
- Designated Teacher is the Period Dignity Champion for the school.
- REACH workshops from EA have been delivered to P3/P4, P5 and P6/P7 classes. They are designed to support pupils to develop positive emotional health, increase

their readiness for learning and build their resilience. These weekly sessions have taken place during Jan-Feb25.

- In Jan Feb 2025 all our pupils participated in six weeks of art therapy sessions taken by Christina Johnston, BA (Hons), MSc Art Psychotherapist. CLA Funding was used to provide this therapy for KS2 pupils while TSN Funding was used for the EYFSP, FS & KS1 classes. Art therapy in primary schools involves using creative processes, like drawing, painting, or sculpting, as a way for pupils to express their emotions, thoughts, and experiences. A qualified art therapist guides the process, helping pupils explore these expressions and make connections between their art and their lives. This can lead to improved emotional regulation, self-awareness, and overall well-being, particularly for pupils facing challenges.



- Cycling Proficiency training offered in Term 3 to children in Primary 6 and 7. Three children are currently completing the course.
- All children in P5-7 have the opportunity to attend Swimming lessons each Monday from April - June.
- Primary Behaviour Support & Prevention (PBSP) Team from EA delivered workshops April – June 2025
- Bee Safe programme was attended in February 2025 by children from Primary 6 and 7. This event incorporated subjects such as road safety, drug awareness, fire safety, internet safety and safety within the home etc.
- Primary 7 children attended a three-day residential at Ganaway Outdoor Centre. This was an invaluable experience for all pupils who attended. They had opportunities to overcome their fears and build upon resilience in all the activities they experienced. The children were a credit to themselves and the school.
- Locally based Ministers and Youth workers deliver a message each week at our school assemblies. Children are encouraged to consider how special and unique they are. They are reminded about the importance of making good choices.

Security Arrangements

We continue to be ever mindful of the need to protect our children at all times when they are in school. Kirkistown Primary School operates a controlled access system throughout and visitors can only gain access when this is granted from staff members.

All visitors must sign in, receive the red identification tag and keep it on show if working on school premises. Volunteers wear a black identification tag highlighting their role whilst all staff wear a blue identification tag.

In June 2025 the school was fitted with a new phone system. Now every classroom plus staffroom and kitchen benefits from having a telephone for internal and external communication. The school now has nine phones.

Buddy System

We continue to operate the 'Buddy System' in the playground.

Through looking after and caring for younger, more vulnerable children, older children learn the skills associated with empathy and compassion and create a caring ethos in the playground.

Younger children feel safe and cared for while the Buddies feel valued and respected.

Our Buddies are easily identified in the playground by their bright yellow caps. These caps are a new look for 2024-25 and beyond!



School Council

One child from each year group (Primary 1 to Primary 7) continues to be elected by their peers - a total of 7 elected representatives that form the School Council. The Council aims to meet half termly and have a voice in school life.

Children were given a voice when continuing to decide upon what new playground equipment to order.

House Captains

'Community' is important to us and our Positive Behaviour Policy reflects this. We seek to identify, spot and praise all the good things that happen around us because we recognise that these things don't happen accidentally.

Our House Captains set an example for our younger children by modelling good decision making and offering both praise and encouragement to others who do the same. We want and expect our children to be good citizens.

House points are awarded for displaying 7 very simple traits:

- 1- Being gentle with each other
- 2- Being kind and helpful
- 3- Listening well (to each other and to staff)
- 4- Being honest
- 5- For working hard
- 6- For looking after property (our own belongings, those of our friends and those belonging to school)
- 7- For completing homework to a good standard

Our House Captains are democratically chosen by their peers. They are responsible for totalling the weekly house points to determine which house has won the weekly award. Our School Council decided the winning house, at the end of each half term, deserves a treat and suggested a Park Visit or Tuck Shop Treat (25p value) as the prize.

Helping Others

At Kirkistown Primary School we encourage our pupils to think of others less fortunate and through various charities the school was able to show how generous our pupils and families are.

- Macmillan Cancer Coffee Morning - September 2024 (£289.00)
- Newtownards Food Bank, Harvest Assembly food collection - October 2024
- Poppy appeal - November 2024 (£65.00)
- Children in Need - November 2024 (£90.00)
- NI Children's Hospice - December 2024 (£181.00)
- Autism Awareness NI Superheroes - Feb 2024 (£144.00)
- Comic Relief - March 2025 (£63.60)

Total amount raised for charities 2024/2025 - £833.40

A dedicated display in school continues to highlight the thoughtfulness of our school community.

Home – School Links

The Board of Governors would like to acknowledge the vital contribution made by parents in supporting their child's education.

Parents of pupils from P1 – P7 met with teachers in the early part of the Autumn and Spring Terms to discuss individual pupil progress. Prospective P1 parents met with their child's class teacher and classroom assistant. The children engaged in a play afternoon whilst Ms Rudewicz met with parents for refreshments and to talk about expectations for the year ahead.

Parents received the Annual Pupil Report in June.

The School's Facebook page continues to grow. It is an excellent source of news for parents and the wider community thus raising the school's profile and aiding PR work.

Community Links

During the 2024/25 school year, Kirkistown Primary School benefitted from important links with the following groups:

- Cloughey and District Community Association
- Blair Mayne Leisure & Wellbeing Centre, Newtownards (KS2 Swimming Programme)
- Local Foodbank, Newtownards.
- PSNI Community Police
- St Patrick's Primary School, Ballygalget (Shared Education Partners)
- Piano Tutor: Mrs C Williams
- Kirkistown Castle Golf Club
- IFA
- North Down & Ards Borough Council (Climate Change workshops)
- Fire Safety Outreach Team (Portaferry Fire Station)
- Danske Bank (Money Smart Programme)
- Mount Stewart Education Centre

The School Year 2024 / 2025

During the year many other events took place in Kirkistown Primary School. These included:

• Forest School	September – June
• Curriculum Evening	17 th September
• European Languages Day	26 th September
• Macmillan Cancer Care Coffee Morning	27 th September
• World Mental Health Day	10 th October
• Flu Vaccinations	21 st October
• Parent/Carer/Teacher Consultations	WB. 21 st October
• Pumpkin Party	21 st October
• Harvest Assembly & Donations	25 th October
• Travelling Book Fair	19 th – 26 th November
• Christmas Fair	27 th November
• Open Day	4 th December
• Community Association Christmas Tree Singing & Children's Party	4 th December
• Nativity (F/KS1)	10 th & 11 th December
• Carol Service (KS2)	11 th December
• Grand Opera House Panto Trip & Mc Donalds Lunch	12 th December
• Christmas Jumper Day	20 th December
• CAT 4 Assessments	January (P4 & P6 pupils only)
• Health & Wellbeing Workshops EAREACH	Jan – Feb 2025 (6-week programme)
• Art Therapy Workshops	Jan – Feb 2025 (6-week programme)
• Parent/Carer/Teacher Consultations	WB. 3 rd February
• Valentine Disco	7 th February
• Autism Awareness Superhero Day	7 th February
• Ganaway P7 Residential Trip	26 th – 28 th March
• World Book Day	7 th March
• SEAG P6 Information Evening	9 th April
• P3, 4 & P5 Folk Museum Trip	9 th April
• Growing Up / Puberty Talks P6&P7	10 th April
• P4-P7 KS2 Swimming Lessons	April – June
• RHS Tag Rugby Coaching	9 th May
• Football & Rounders Competition, Glastry School	12 th May
• Football & Rounders Competition, Portavogie PS	14 th May
• Sports Day	18 th June
• Rec, P1 & P2 School Trip	19 th June
• Prize Day/ Leavers' Service & Party	24 th June

Educational Visits

Reception Primary 1 / 2 [Aunt Sandra's Candy Factory, Botanic Gardens & Stormont Park \(19th June\)](#)

Primary 3, Primary 4 & Primary 5 [Ulster Folk Museum Trip \(9th April\)](#)

Primary 6 & Primary 7 [Ganaway Activity Centre Residential Trip \(26th – 28th March\)](#)

Primary 5 – 7 [Swimming at Blair Mayne Wellbeing & Leisure Complex \(April – June 2025\)](#)

Whole School Trips:

- [Grand Opera House Panto Trip & Mc Donalds Lunch \(12th December\)](#)

We were very grateful to take advantage of our wonderful school setting with all classes regularly visiting Cloughey Beach, Calhame Pitch and the surrounding area on wellbeing walks and as part of their curriculum.

Extra-Curricular Activities

- Sport-A-Thon
- Cycling Proficiency
- Lego / Construction
- SEAG
- Tech Club
- Choir / Music Club
- Kids' Club Wrap Around Care

Thank you to the teaching and nonteaching staff who have generously given of their time throughout the academic year to facilitate these clubs.

Thanks also to:

The ministry team who provided assembly visits: Mr Robert McConnell, Mr Jim Patterson Rev Neil Stewart and leaders from Cardy Gospel Hall. Members of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Cloughey, are thanked for their continued support again this year.