

Belmullet - Education

In 1924, the Sisters rented a house in Logmore from Mr. Carter, with a view to the Sisters returning to the hospital but that did not materialise. Instead, they started a Commercial and Music School and later a private Junior School which became a Secondary School for girls in 1943 with Sr. Ann McGoohan as Principal. Sr. M. Margaret Mary Finnerty taught in the Private School.



Logmore House

Boys were enrolled for the first time in 1959 when Sr. Canice Burns was Principal. Thousands of pupils from the Barony of Erris attended the school down the years, some travelling long distances to do so. Extensions were added from time to time, hot meals became available. Sr. Margaret Burke was the last Sister of Mercy Principal there in 2001. The long slow process of acquiring a new school was begun by Principal Pdraig Staunton before 2009 and it was continued by the new Principal Josephine Moran. In May 2015 a State of the Art Secondary school had become a reality. Josephine Moran was an excited Principal seeing her ambition fulfilled.



The long-awaited new "Our Lady's Secondary School" (Photo courtesy of Edmund Holmes)

Mr. Edmund Holmes is the present Principal and Miss Geraldine Walsh is Deputy Principal, both, with all Staff, continue a vibrant Educational tradition, in Erris.

Principals of Our Lady's Secondary School, Belmullet

Sr. Ann McGoohan	1943 – 1955
Sr. Annuntiata Browne	1955 – 1960
Sr. Canice Burns	1960 – 1968 and 1972 – 1981
Sr. Regina Ruane	1968 – 1972
Sr. Breeda Leonard	1981 – 1989 and 1990 – 1991
Ms. Marlene Gannon	1989 – 1990 and 1991 – 1994
Sr. Maureen Kelly	1994 – 1998
Mr. Michael Murphy	1998 – 1999
Sr. Margaret Burke	1999 – 2001
Mr. Pdraig Staunton	2001 – 2009
Ms. Josephine Moran	2009 – 2018
Mr. Edmund Holmes	2018 – continuing

Primary School Education in Belmullet

Following on the death of Archdeacon Hegarty, PP. his successor, Reverend Canon Feeney, in 1940, arranged that Sr. M. Aquinas McNulty would become Principal of the Junior School in Belmullet. The

Church choir was part of her extra duties. Sr. M. Angela Murphy taught with her there until 1956. Sr. M. Francis Coultry replaced Sr. Aquinas as Principal until 1965. Sr. M. Loreto Burns taught in Belmullet for a short while. Srs. Helen Greene and Mary Lou Haverty also taught there in the late 1950's and 1960's. Sr. M. Evangelist Hegarty became Principal in Junior School, Belmullet from 1965 – 1977 and she was Local Leader from 1969 – 1974 in the Convent following Mother M. Muredach Finnerty, who went to Ballina. Sr. M. Perpetua Hynes was Principal in Belmullet from 1977 – 1990. Srs. M. Assumpta Heneghan, Carmel Ruane, Mary Nallon and Aidan Kivlehan taught in that school. Sr. Aidan was the last Sr. Principal from 1990 – 1993.

Convent Living in Belmullet

The Sisters endured cramped conditions in the Convent for many years. A major extension was undertaken in 1962, which resulted in a magnificent Oratory facing out to sea, being built, with bedrooms over it. The Convent discontinued taking in boarders for school in the late 1970's. Sr. Anne Kirwan, when in charge in Belmullet Convent undertook major improvements there. A modern kitchen, a cold room, a dining room and parlour's replaced original accommodation. In the 1980's, a Science room was built over the Assembly Hall. Some prefabs were replaced with concrete classrooms, the better to withstand Westerly gales. The Convent was a popular Retreat Centre and holiday attraction for Sisters.

Other Sisters who were in charge in Belmullet Convent were Srs. M. Catherine Lavan, Muredach Finnerty, Evangelist Hegarty, Martha Hegarty, Aidan Kivlehan, Maureen Kelly and Margaret Burke.

Other Sisters who ministered in Belmullet Convent and Secondary school

Sisters M. Colette Wilson, Raphael Maughan, Mary Heffernan, Vianney Nealon, Christopher Duggan, Antonio Leavy, Rita Duggan, Bernadette Larkin, Benigna Cummins, Monica McGuire, Gertrude Noonan, Maureen McDonnell, Eva Gaughan, Breege Duggan, Marie Celine Halloran, Freda Kenny, Berchmans McCormack, Genevieve Foley, Helen Greene, Bonaventure Byrne, Attracta Tighe, Dominic Savio Forde, Maura Flynn, Margaret McHale, Perpetua Hynes and Kathleen Walsh.

The Community in Belmullet

Numbers dwindled in the Convent there. Sr. M. Monica McGuire went into Ballina Convent early in 2006. The Leadership team provided accommodation for the four remaining Sisters – Canice, Mary

Lou, Perpetua and Bernadette Hoban, in Drom Árd, a double house adjacent to Belmullet town. It was the wish of the Sisters that the Convent would be given over to the Secondary School to which it was attached. The PLT agreed and a meeting was arranged between the School BOM and Sr. Phyllis Kilcoyne, who represented the PLT. The playing fields were handed over to the school also and the remaining piece of land which is still owned by the Congregation, is leased to a local farmer there. Sr. Bernadette retired from nursing in the local Community Hospital in December 2013. In 2016 the Sisters expressed a wish to leave Drom Árd. Sisters Canice, Mary Lou and Perpetua went to Árd Bhríde, Castlebar and Bernadette went to 35 Amana Estate, Ballina. All four Sisters enjoyed their time and space and salt-sea air in Drom Árd.