

To Mrs Macartney with love...

Good morning! Good afternoon! Good evening! Said cheerily and with a sunny smile.
She is pleasant, charming and witty and exudes her own intrepid style.

She is a leader like no other and exceptional in everything she does.
She has given her life to teaching and it's a vocation that is powered by love.

It was a fabulous day for the profession when she stepped into college on the leafy Stranmillis Road.
She was built for a life educating children and knows it is bound by a solemn and sacred code.

That has involved bringing out the best in others and watching her charges blossom since 1982.
Her career started out in beautiful Minterburn which was special as her first school.

She graced the corridors there as a young teacher leading Primary classes one, two and three.
Before taking on the role of Principal where she would delegate and oversee.

Then the time came to leave that wonderful place and she swapped Tyrone for Armagh.
And came to Saints and Scholars Integrated where she brought her steadfast devotion and charisma.

This is a relationship that has spanned almost 27 years but this September won't be the same.
As Mrs Macartney will be otherwise occupied. She and Claire might even go to Spain!

During her time in post she has gained credibility for many different reasons.
She is a living example of our school motto that strives to include everyone in all seasons.

She wanted to create an environment where children would feel safe and nurtured and loved.
And reach their full potential in an inclusive community known for its excellence that was a cut above.

She is filled with enthusiasm and positivity and is fast paced but measured in all her acts.
She keeps everyone around her on their toes and ensures they get in their daily steps!

She knows her pupils all by their first names and makes it her business to care.
She's a born problem solver and advice giver and she is firm but kind and fair.

She has dealt with parents, agencies and the departmental and auxiliary staff.
They all know she is a pleasure to converse with in any capacity or behalf.

Throughout her time she has had many amazing experiences as an ambassador as important events are launched.
She has held the Six Nations trophy, been introduced to Sam Maguire and gripped the Olympic torch.

She has travelled to China and all over Europe doing research through Erasmus to improve the running of our school.
She has met with the King and the Taoiseach and explored the differences in rules.

She ran a school during lockdown and didn't let the dastardly Covid get the better of her.
She unlocked our doors to the key workers and made homeschooling easy and not a chore.

She has been open to each and every suggestion that has promised to improve the function of our school.
Her pupils have meant the world to her and she has made many sacrifices and spent long hours working for you.

There have been annual trips to Disneyland in Paris which she has looked forward to every year.
She made sure everyone had fun and that the end of school for the P7's was full of cheer.

There have been integrated sporting events that have made the boys and girls shout with glee.
There have been musicals and big performances - The Lion King, Oliver and Alice here for 'one night only'.

However, we can't just talk about all the good stuff that she's known for and forget to give you all a giggle.
Did we ever tell you about the passports going missing in Finland and Mrs Mac getting a ride in a police pickup?

Or the time that she had a fight with a mouse in the bin and the rodent apparently won?
As when Mrs Macartney saw it she climbed on her desk and wouldn't come down.

She is the ray of sunshine that has led us to where we are today.
And our teaching staff are so grateful for her kind and generous ways.

For the friendships we've developed that have survived the course of many years.
For the laughter and the banter and the support and empathy through tears.

For the hours we've had to go Christmas shopping and that extra mile that Julie was never afraid to travel.
Her staff have always been her priority and she has been delighted that it includes, her daughter, Rachel.

For the late nights spent at Governors' Meetings, the training and the celebrations.
She's been with us through each and every milestone and present for all occasions.

So now it's our turn to honour her and commemorate her time here as our esteemed 'head'.
We still can't believe she's leaving us and many tears about her departure have been shed.

She's been a powerhouse to children, parents and staff alike and we will miss her every single day.
Our darling Mrs Macartney we wish you a happy retirement please come back and visit - don't stay away!

We wish you hours of fun with your little grandson and family and hope you get the chance to be a holiday maker.
Just know that Saints and Scholars will always be your home too...it's not goodbye but a fond and much loved 'see you later'.



By Fionnuala Cassidy

