

Welcome to our
Newsletter!
November/December 2017

'Scoil Ghormáin Naofa' Newsletter

Castletown, Inch, Gorey, Co. Wexford
0402-37596
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Welcome note from the Principal.....

Dear Parents/Guardians,

What an **exciting term** we have had! We have such energetic students and teachers here to be able to keep up with all the activity that has been going on!! We were thrilled to welcome **Big Bear Planetariums** to our school – this interactive, 3-d experience was a real hit with our students. The feedback from students and parents has been phenomenal, thank you. From an **educational perspective**, I was really impressed by the level of questioning that I witnessed from the children. They were thoroughly engaged and their enquiring minds were in overdrive. I would love to think that this has inspired a **love of astronomy** in our students. Who knows, we may even have tapped into a future Neil Armstrong or Carl Sagan! This educational treat wouldn't have been made possible without the dedication of our **Parents' Association** whose fundraising sponsored the planetarium. We are very grateful, thank you.



Our students have had their dancing shoes on for the last few Wednesdays and have had great fun learning **hip-hop** with the Frances Ryan school of dance. Again, this has been paid for by our Parents' Association. We love being able to provide those extras that children would not generally access in school.

We had a **civic reception** for our victorious **Mini 7s** team recently. It was a pleasure to welcome parents and board members to mark this special occasion. It was Castletown's first time to win the Mini 7s cup, emerging victorious out of 70 teams and we are so proud. There is so much sport happening in our school, we are so deserving of our **Active School flag**. We have been enjoying hurling, rugby and dancing. Thank you to Ms D'Arcy for all the Active School work. We also welcomed the **Sam Maguire** cup into our school, thanks to Dylan's dad Paul Bealin. It was a great thrill to see the Sam Maguire next to the Mini 7s cup. Who knows, in a few years, maybe our players will be lifting it again!

On Friday 8th December, we hosted the **Tríona Byrne Kelly memorial blitz** in honour of the beloved sister of our wonderful teacher Nicky and Mum to Daniel and Lee. Many thanks to Mr Breen and Michael Kavanagh for organising this event. Our team really enjoyed it! We also thank Ballygarret, Kilanerin, Tara Hill and Coolgreaney for competing in this event.



It was a pleasure to meet so many of you at our recent **parent teacher meetings**. We aim to keep the channels of **communication** open all year. Teachers will see your housekeeping and general messages on **dojo** a little before and after school and will check it periodically during the day. If you have a concern and need to raise it with the teacher, please contact the office to make an appointment. We have received very positive feedback about dojo and love to bring you news of what exciting activities are going on in our school!

Our biannual **Christmas concert** will take place in the church on **December 20th at 7.30**. Each class will perform a festive piece and it promises to be a real treat! We will have also performances by Johanna, Mary Alice Murphy and Domhnall McArdle, Castletown adult choir and Cruinniú female chamber choir. Thank you to all our teachers, students and guest performers for their hard work! Admission is €5 with proceeds going to the school. Admission is payable at the door on the night.

We regularly update our **website** www.castletownnationalschool.ie and **Twitter** feed @Castletown_NS with pictures and accounts of what we are doing so do have a look!

I would like to take this opportunity to wish our children, teachers, staff, board members, parents and friends of Scoil Ghormáin Naofa a **merry Christmas** and a peaceful and prosperous new year. Is mise le meas, Emer Russell

Reflection

WHAT IF *Christmas,*
He thought, *doesn't come*
from a store.
What if *Christmas,*
PERHAPS, *means*
a little bit more.
-Dr. Seuss

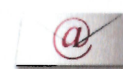


Our School Office is accessible from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Monday to Friday and Siobhán will be happy to help you in any way.

Meet the Staff of 2017/2018

Ms. Whittle: Junior & Senior Infants
Ms. J. Murphy: 1st/2nd Class
Mr. N. Breen: 3rd/4th Class
Ms. E. Russell: 5th Class and Principal
Ms. Byrne: 6th Class
Ms. V. Kinsella: S.E.T.
Ms. Ryan: Deputy Principal & S.E.T.
Ms. McDavitt /Ms. D'Arcy: S.E.T.
Carmel Duke, Finola Quirke and Fiona Byrne are our S.N.A. team.
Siobhán is our Secretary

School email address:
cns.iaswx@gmail.com



School website address:
[www.castletownnationalschool](http://www.castletownnationalschool.ie)
[.ie](http://www.castletownnationalschool.ie)

School Twitter account:
[@castletown_ns](https://twitter.com/castletown_ns)

For your Calendar:

School Christmas Concert
20th December 2017 @7.30
pm in the Church

School Closes 22nd December
at 12pm and re-opens 8th
January 2018

Mid-Term
15th & 16th February

St. Patrick's Weekend
School Closed 19th
March 2017

Class News:

Ms Whittle – Junior/Senior Infants

Where has the time gone? It feels like only yesterday we were celebrating Hallowe'en! Junior and Senior Infants are really looking forward to Christmas and have enjoyed learning all about it! We've been learning about **Advent** and the special role Holy Mary played in the **Christmas story**. We've also been busy practising for our **Christmas concert** and we cannot wait to perform for our families.



For November, our **Aistear theme** was the library. We were very lucky to visit Gorey library before the midterm break and we were keen to create our own library and put out new knowledge to good use. We role-played the library in the **socio-dramatic area**; built libraries in the **construction area**; and designed fictional story book covers in the **art station** (to name just a few of the activities we took part in!)

Our **Gaeilge** topic has been **An Aimsir**. We loved learning our songs and discussing the weather every day. We've been saying "Tá sé fuar" a lot lately! In **Maths** we've continued our learning of numbers but also looked at 2D shapes. We even took part in a Shape Hunt! (Pictures can be seen on our class Dojo). In **Science**, we tested materials to see if they were waterproof. Both classes have worked very hard this term and I can't wait to see what learning we get up to in Term 2! I'd like to wish all children and their families a very Happy Christmas! Ms. Whittle

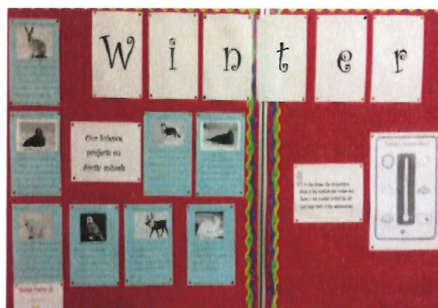
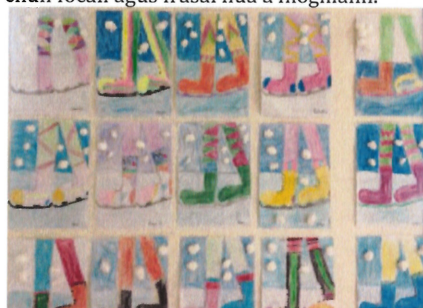
Ms. Murphy – First/Second Class

How time flies when you're having fun!

The 1st and 2nd class classroom has been very busy lately and we have been enjoying learning new things while having great fun.

Our **English** reading and writing has come on in leaps and bounds and we have been reading winter poems and writing our own versions to celebrate the season.

Tá ár gcuid **Gaeilge** ag feabhsú lá i ndiaidh lae freisin. Bímid ag canadh agus ag rá dán gach lá chun focail agus frásaí nua a fhoghlaim.



Our **Art** work brightens up our classroom and corridors and we have been making our own **Christmas decorations** that will be ready to take home on the last day of term. We have been painting, constructing and drawing expertly this term!

In **S.E.S.E.** we have been learning about Arctic animals and how much colder the weather is there and in other countries around the world compared to Ireland. We completed our own projects which turned out very well and we have carried out experiments on the warmest material to wear in cold weather.

We have all been practicing very hard for our **Christmas concert** in the church and we can't wait to recite our nativity poem and sing our Christmas song!

Nollaig faoi sheán is faoi mhaise daoibh go léir. Ms, Murphy

Mr. Breen's 3rd /4th Class

Hello from Mr. Breen's class! Time has really flown by from Hallowe'en to Christmas, mainly due to the fact that we have been kept extremely busy! **Science** has been lots of fun as we created our very own **lava lamps** and had the opportunity to show them to the rest of the school and parents during science week along with a visit from 'Big Bear Planetarium' where the class received astonishing information about our solar system. The children investigated all about the life of **Christopher Columbus** and his explorations. We are enjoying reading interesting **novels** where the class have become very independent readers through their reading groups. We have seen the creative side to the class in **Art** as we took on some interesting tasks such as our graffiti and Christmas jumper designs. Our voices were certainly

Junior Savers

Each Wednesday **Credit Union** staff come to school.



This teaches our children the value of money and the **importance of saving**. If you wish to sign up, please contact Siobhan for information.

Sensory Room

We are thrilled to show you our sensory room! It is a welcome place of **sanctuary** for those who may find the school environment a little overwhelming.



We are gradually giving all of our students time in the room as they are all so curious about this beautiful space! Thanks again to all who helped to create this facility.

Curriculum News

SPHE

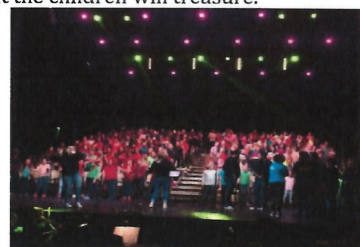
We socked it to racism! Well done to all who dressed in red for our recent '**Show Racism the Red Card**' day in school. We explored what racism is in S.P.H.E. and our children were rightly outraged at what experiences some people have to endure.



We spoke about it at assembly and watched Joella's video. We are proud to say that the students of Scoil Ghormáin Naofa will not tolerate racism!

Music

Sing Out Loud was a triumph! Our children performed beautifully and behaved impeccably. We were so proud of them! It was super to see so many parents at the event. What an experience to be able to perform in such a stunning venue! This is truly a memory that the children will treasure.



Class News

Mr. Breen's 3rd /4th Class contd.

pushed to the limit over the past several weeks as we prepared for our Christmas concert and Sing Out Loud where the class showed their fantastic singing skills. P.E. has proven to be lots of fun through hip hop and hurling. The Sam Maguire cup even made an appearance in our classroom thanks to Paul Bealin. The boys and girls have worked very hard throughout term one and are looking forward to a well-deserved break. Finally I would like to wish the entire school community a Merry and Joyful Christmas! Mr. Breen



Creating our Lava Lamps



Fun with the Sam Maguire Cup

Ms. Russell's 5th Class

5th class have worked really hard this term. We have been busy writing our **individual books**, 'The Snowman'. We are making sure that we write **imaginatively** and with our neatest handwriting as we want these to be Christmas souvenirs to treasure for years to come. Teacher is really impressed with our **vocabulary**. We are beginning to use the **thesaurus** to develop our creative writing. We plan to read our books to our families over hot chocolate on Christmas Eve!

We have recently signed up to a **penpal exchange** with Mr Plé's class in France! We excitedly read their letters and have responded to them both as a class and individually. We can't wait for the next parcel to arrive!! This will be a great way to **enhance our literacy** through letter writing and to learn more about the culture in France.



We are engaged in our class production of **The Grinch** and having great fun with it! Siofra is perfecting her grumpiness as she takes on the part of the Grinch and our students are working on their chirpiness in their role as 'Whos'. We can't wait to perform it for everyone at the school concert!

We have conquered **long division**! What a slog! Teacher is delighted with the positive attitude that everyone showed towards this difficult concept. Make sure to check out the maths games site that was posted on dojo to keep the cogs turning!

In preparation for the Planetarium visit, we studied the **Solar System** and completed mini projects on the planets. We love the Story Bots song/rap and it was a cool way of learning more facts about the solar system! I think that as we move on from the topic, that we have more questions than answers! What a mind blowing study!

Congratulations to Dylan Treacy and Wayne Mullen who won the recent Christmas decorations competition with their fantastic 3-d light up constructions! The classroom looks great!

Ms. Byrne's 6th Class

Well, that has been a busy 2nd half to our first term in 6th class! From diving into **long division** and **fractions**, making a start on our irregular verbs in **Irish** and exploring some fun Science experiments, we have also had time for some music and drama along the way. We are busy preparing for our upcoming Christmas concert in the church. This promises to be an excellent night's entertainment and you would be crazy to miss it! We are now in the depths of our **Junior Entrepreneur** programme and are awaiting the visit of our board of dragons. We are very grateful to Gareth McCabe once again for his interest and dedication in implementing this programme. I certainly don't envy the dragons as they choose one of the many fantastic

Curriculum News cont'd. Continuous Professional Development

Here at Scoil Ghormáin Naofa, we strongly believe in continuous professional development. This term our staff have been engaging in **training** for Reading Recovery, Physical literacy: Move Well Move Often, Leadership and SEN training

Paired Reading

We are planning to re-introduce paired reading with **volunteers** from the parent (and grandparent!) body. If you are interested in becoming **involved**, we would really love to hear from you. There is a statutory requirement to have Garda vetting clearance so please contact Siobhan, who will guide you through the process. It can take a couple of weeks to process so the sooner you sign up, the quicker we can bring you in! We think that this is a brilliant opportunity to make **connections between school and home!**

Sports All Stars

GAA

Since the Hallowe'en break the football teams were still in the thick of it. The **mini 7s** team went all the way and finally got their hands on the cup! The team **made history** being the first Castletown mini 7's team to win the county final. This was a huge **achievement** without any stretch of the imagination. The competition is extremely competitive and started out with seventy schools competing; however there can only be one winner and our boys achieved just that! We played a quality Rathangan side in the final and came out on top with a final score line of 2-9 to 1-2. It was a complete performance of skill, discipline, work rate and team work. The panel certainly did the school, their families and club very proud.



The **Rackard League** team also came very close to making history to be the first Castletown team to reach the Roinn A final. We narrowly lost out to a very strong Piercestown outfit that went on to win the final. The panel of players showed great **commitment and skill** throughout the year and they can hold their heads up high.

Thanks to all who helped out especially the parents for their great support, Carmel, Ms. Russell and Michael Kavanagh for all the organising, training and support throughout the term. We are already looking forward to the **Rackard league hurling and camogie** after Christmas.

Well done to Conor Fanning and Sophia White (below) who represented Scoil

Class News

Ms. Byrne's 6th Class contd.

business ideas that the children have come up with. Our **class set of novels** has arrived and we are excited as we await a visit from the author to our school in January. Thank you to everyone who supported our **Bake Sale** in October. In **Art**, we are focusing on the theme of winter. We made our own puffy paint to create snowflakes and coloured Christmas themed stained glass windows. Everyone used oil pastels to create their own interpretation of The Northern Lights. Finally, we want to wish everyone a **happy and safe Christmas** and we look forward to lots of new and exciting learning in 2018.



Science Week

Once again we were very busy this Science Week! In fact we were so busy we had to turn it into a Science Fortnight! Every class worked very hard and completed a few **experiments** throughout the week. The children were very eager to show off what they had been doing and the **Science Fair** provided them the perfect opportunity! Every class was thrilled to see what had been done in the other classes over the week.

We were also very lucky to have the support of so many parents who visited the Fair. The children were happy to explain the experiments, demonstrate and even encouraged some parents to take part! Parents were very good to take part in blind taste testing, swinging buckets of water and floating ping pong balls!

This is a brilliant day which is made more special by the enthusiasm and interest shown by the whole school community! Your **continued support** on this day encourages the children to engage further with their learning and we're all very much looking forward to seeing you again next year!

Christmas Cheer

Thank you to Julie and Sophie's Dad, Eftim Ivanoff who generously donated our Christmas tree. It adds a really festive feel to our school.



The **knitted crib** was created by Ms. Russell's grand aunt who was an evacuee during WW2. 5th class have been learning about WW2 and evacuation in connection with their class novel, Safe Harbour. 5th class students constructed the scene. It reminds us of the true meaning of Christmas.

Christmas Choir

Castletown adult choir will be singing at the 9pm mass on Christmas Eve. Ms Byrne will be very busy as she is also taking the children's choir on Christmas Day at 10.30 am. She would love more children to come along! If you would like to join her choir, please let your teacher or Ms. Byrne know!

St. Stephen's Day Walk

The annual walk starts at **The Golden Anchor** at 1pm for walkers and children and at 2pm for runners. There will be refreshments in The Golden Anchor afterwards. Funds raised this year will go towards the purchase of equipment for the new school/GAA link up which will be starting in the New Year.

A word from our Parents' Association

The Parents' Association would like to take this opportunity to thank all parents for their **continued support** with our fundraisers, I hope by now you will have all heard the great reports back from the children about their dance classes and the super **voyage through space** with the planetarium we are very lucky to be able to provide our children with these extra modules throughout their school year. We would like to thank Concepta who has taken charge of the **Christmas Cards** and has done an exceptional job. The children love presenting their cards to family and friends. Thank you to all parents who have supported and we would like to wish you all a very **Happy Christmas and New Year**.

Ghormain Naofa in the **Rackard League 3rd/4th Class Skills Competition** at Buffers Alley complex. You both did us proud!

Niall Brennan



Rugby

We extend our **gratitude** to Michael Bolger of Gorey Rugby Club who coached our students for a block of classes. Michael brought great enthusiasm to us and the coaching block culminated in a **rugby blitz** in Gorey for our senior classes. The weather was horrendous but our **tenacious students** played on, equipping themselves with numerous wins on the day!

Active School Flag



It has been a busy few weeks for Active school flag activities. To begin with, we had our **'Bring your scooter to school day'**, which was a great success and we look forward to doing it again. We have also selected a **new committee**; our members are Michael Kavanagh, Shayla Donnelly, Jennifer Allen, Sophia White, Niamh Kavanagh and Harry Nicholls.

Our new committee has been busy with the ASF motto competition and listening to ideas for Active Ideas from their peers. We have had great suggestions and we hope to get to some of these in the New Year. As our school is always so active in so many ways it is not always easy to fit it all in.

Parents Needed; We are looking for a parent for our new committee. So if you are interested in helping in a small or big way please let Ms. D'Arcy know.

Sam Maguire dropped in for a quick visit too. We live in hope that our rising football stars will bring him back to Wexford some day!

The pupils have been busy with Hip Hop and hurling since Halloween as well.

The Junior and Senior infants have had **fun with chalk** also. On Friday 8th December they were let loose with chalk to draw pictures or games on the yard. Great fun was had by all.



We had some lovely entries for our **Active School Motto** competition and choosing a winner was not an easy task. The winner was **Caití Gregan** 6th class with the motto; **"Hop, skip, jump and play let's get Active every day"**.

The following are the list of winners and all received wonderful sporty prizes such as, footballs, basketballs, huge tennis ball, shin pads, sporty drinks bottles.

2nd places: PJ Crotty and Aedin Condren

3rd places: Ross Higgins and Lizzy Morris

Runners up: Shane Ivanoff, Robyn Prendergast and Ruby Fegan.

The **winning entries** can be seen on our ASF notice board.

A huge well done to the mini 7's boys' team on their great win and finally, well done to all the children who represented our school at different sporting events in 2017.

We wish you all a **Merry and Active Christmas**
The Active School Flag Committee.

Christmas Fun

Word Search



Twelve Days of Christmas



1

6

12

10

4

2

3

11

CALLING BIRDS
CHRISTMAS
DAYS
DRUMMERS
DRUMMING
FRENCH HENS
GEESE

8

GOLDEN RINGS
LAYING
LEAPING
LORDS
MAIDS
MILKING
PARTRIDGE

9

PEAR TREE
PIPERS
PIPING
SWANS
SWIMMING
TURTLE DOVES
TWELVE

7

5

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What do monkeys sing at Christmas? Jungle bells

Who hides in the bakery at Christmas? Mince spies

What do elves eat for breakfast? Snow Flakes

How did Santa Claus open the front door? He used a tur-key

What motorbike does Santa ride? A Holly Davidson!

What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck? A Christmas quack-er

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas

Green School Flag



As we all know by now **Biodiversity** is our theme for our upcoming flag renewal.

We have elected a **new committee** which includes the following people: Katie Kinsella, Jack Kenny, Harry Ryan, Conor Fanning, Aaron Halford, Erin Cunningham, Niall O'Shaughnessy, David Byrne, Carmel, Ms McDevitt and Ms D'Arcy. They are going to fill us with all the knowledge they are learning about Biodiversity throughout the year. We have all undertaken a survey with **"The Great Plant Hunt"** to find out what our knowledge of Biodiversity is and we will retake this survey in June hoping to see a big improvement. We plan on keeping a small **corner of the field for wildlife** and possibly have a bug hotel to encourage more wildlife to visit. When the weather improves in the spring we will take part in another programme called the **Eco Rangers** which involves us recording things we find on various nature walks. Any **parents** that would like to help out with this exciting flag please contact Ms McDevitt.

Shoobox Appeal

The **Christmas Shoobox Appeal** was run again this year and, of course, there was a huge response! 89 shooboxes were collected from our school which are now on their way to **Africa and Eastern Europe**. This is a fantastic response from a school of our size and it shows the power we all have to make a difference. This initiative encouraged the children to take part in charity and there was an atmosphere of giving felt across the whole school during this appeal. On behalf of the school, I'd like to thank every family who took part. I am overwhelmed by the response our school community shows to this initiative! Ms. Whittle



Update from the Board of Management

It has been another very busy term in school life in Castletown, with so many wonderful activities happening in school, we really are very **thankful to all our staff** for their hard work and dedication to all the students.

We must **congratulate** all our students who have taken part in the recent Rackard League games and our Mini Sevens Boys team who won the tournament out of the 75 schools taking part. We had a lovely celebration and medal presentation in the parish hall. Thank you to Mr Breen, Michael Kavanagh and Carmel for organising the team. **Thank you** to our Parents Association for another great Halloween disco which was a great success.

We would like to wish our whole school community a very **Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.**

