

Welcome to our
Newsletter!
January – March 2018

'Scoil Ghormáin Naofa' Newsletter

Castletown, Inch, Gorey, Co. Wexford

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Welcome note from the Principal.....

Despite the attempts of **Storm Emma** to interrupt our term, we have had an exciting and busy couple of months here at Scoil Ghormáin Naofa! We have just finished celebrating **Seachtain na Gaeilge** and as part of the festivities, we welcomed renowned Irish musician, **John Spillane**, to our school for an interactive ceolchoirm. Our students spent the last couple of months learning a repertoire of Irish traditional songs such as 'Trasna na dTonnta' and 'Beidh Aonach Amárach', which they sang along with John. John was very **impressed** by how well they had both sung and learned their songs! **Ms Murphy** coordinated a **wonderful week of events** which included a Tráth na gCeist, ceolchoirm and céilí, to name but a few of the events.

We recognise the importance of fostering **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) learning here in Castletown. As part of **Engineers' Week**, we invited Bricks4Kids to our school to do **Lego engineering workshops** with each class level. The children experimented with axels and gears and engaged in brainstorming activities. This was a brilliant experience for our students and we hope that it may have sparked an interest in engineering.

I am always overwhelmed by the **generosity of spirit** in our parent body. It is heartening to see parents give of their time and energy to be part of Junior Entrepreneur, paired reading and football coaching to name but a few activities. If you would like to **become involved** in any way, we would love to hear from you.

Our students were disappointed that Storm Emma resulted in **Arklow Music Festival** being postponed but we are delighted that it has been rescheduled for the last week in April. The original timetable remains the same. We will advise re arrangements nearer the time. Having seen the performances, you are in for a **real treat!!** Many thanks to all who have helped bring the performances to life.

Our green school council is currently studying **biodiversity** for our **Green School Flag**. **Ms McDevitt** and her team have been working on recording the signs of spring and examining the ecosystems in our environment. It is wonderful to see our students so tuned in to the nature in their locality!

We are very fortunate to have a thriving **Reading Recovery** programme in our school and I would like to acknowledge the work of **Ms. Gilmartin Ryan** in identifying and supporting students with this early intervention initiative.

I have included a piece on our **Crocus project**, which has come to fruition despite Storm Emma's best efforts to destroy our nature! Many thanks to **Ms. Gilmartin Ryan** for her speech on the Holocaust and to **Carmel** for the beautiful nature project.

Our **enrolment night** was a great success. I am very grateful to our teachers and SNAs, parents Aileen and Mary and students Jake and Sofia for representing us so well. It was a joy for me to be part of a team that is so keen to promote the good work that is going on in our school. It is this **dynamism and enthusiasm** that makes Scoil Ghormáin Naofa such a vibrant learning environment.

Grandparents' day was a really special experience for our Scoil Ghormáin Naofa families. The day began with a **beautiful mass** with music and reflections. We are very grateful to **Fr. McCarney** for celebrating and to **Mary Kenny**, sacristan. We then retreated to school where our hard working **Parents' Association** had arranged the wonderful spread donated by school families. Each class performed a party piece for the visiting grandparents. There were **many hugs** that day! The day taught us to appreciate the role that our loving grandparents play in our lives and we are very grateful for them. On behalf of the staff, students and board of management of Scoil Ghormáin Naofa, I would like to wish everyone a **happy Easter**.

Emer Russell
Principal

Reflection

Táthar ag súil go mbeadh:
Sonas na Cásca - Dóchas
Gealltanas na Cásca - Síochán
Spioraid na Cásca - Grá



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



3rd & 4th Class Hieroglyphics

For your Calendar:

May Bank Holiday
Weekend

School Closed
7th & 8th May

Teacher Training
School Closed
2nd May & 4th May

First Holy
Communion

Sunday 20th May
@ 11am

June Bank Holiday

School Closed
4th – 8th June
inclusive

School Tours

Jnr. – 2nd Class 28th June
3rd & 4th June 27th June
5th & 6th 26th June

Graduation Day

6th Class
27th June

Sports Day
TBC

Class News:

Ms Whittle – Junior/Senior Infants

Term 2 is drawing to a close and once again, we were busy in Junior and Senior Infants. With each new term we continue to get busier! Aside from the whole school activities: Dogs Trust visit, Bricks for Kidz and Scooter Day; we took part in many activities unique to our classroom. Once the weather showed signs of warming up slightly we took to the yard for our Chalk Day. The children loved drawing on the yard and working together to create a variety of images. Some of the children even created hopscotch.

Paired reading has begun and the children love going out to Sinéad and Tom. We are grateful to them for all the time and patience they give our emergent readers! We cannot wait until more parents join in also. The children have also been very lucky to have another parent, Pete, volunteer his time and expertise in soccer. Pete has been teaching the children some soccer skills and they have all been enjoying it immensely.



In **Aistear** this term, we covered the Supermarket and the Restaurant. The supermarket topic brought the opportunity for children to create in the junk art station, build in the construction area and pretend play in the socio-dramatic area. Our **restaurant theme** was very busy indeed. We “washed” dishes in the water tray, made starters, main courses and desserts with playdough, wrote menus, built restaurants in the small world area and took part in pretend play in the socio-dramatic area. We love **learning through play**!

We covered plenty of different topics in our core subjects also. Our Gaeilge themes this term were Lá Breithe, Éadaí, Caitheamh Aimsire and most recently, Lá 'le Pádraig agus An Cháisc. In **Maths** we continued to develop our understanding of number, explored weight and focused on the topic of time. We have been discussing the Days of the Week and the four seasons. **English** is always very busy in the infant classroom. We have continued to learn our sounds, learn to read and learn to write while also trying to write our news and learn our tricky words. To try fit it all in, the class have started station teaching. We all absolutely love this, especially because we get to use the **iPads**.

I hope all Junior & Senior Infants, along with their families, have an enjoyable Easter break! I'll see you all in term 3 for another few educational and fun filled months.

Ms. Murphy 1st & 2nd Class

Dia dhaoibh go léir ó rang a haon agus rang a dó.

We have been keeping very busy this term and are thrilled to give a short account on what we've been up to.

We are so glad that **spring** has arrived and we have been learning all about the season through various subjects.

In **Science**, we studied the many different **habitats** of animals and we even **investigated** the different habitats on our own school grounds.

In **Art**, we continue to create masterpieces! There is always lots of colorful work on display in our classroom. As part of our own **Friendship Week**, we painted portraits of our secret friends. We had great fun figuring out who we all painted!



Our **Maths and English stations** have proved very successful too. We work so well in our small groups and have covered the topics of weight, time and capacity in maths recently and we are reading and writing so well in our English groups. It is great to incorporate the **iPads** and **hands-on stations** in these lessons.

We are also becoming very talented **singers and actors** in 1st and 2nd class! There is great enthusiasm for our Irish songs and we continue to practice for the Arklow Festival, portraying the very interesting history story of **Finn and the Salmon of Knowledge**.

We wish you all a **wonderful Easter break** and look forward to welcoming the warmer summer days in school when we return.

Junior Savers

The Credit Union Staff from Gorey continue to come to school every Wednesday.



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

Curriculum News

With **International Women's Day** taking place recently, we saw it as an opportunity to link with the curriculum, specifically **History** and **SPHE**. 6TH class compiled some really interesting projects based on the lives of women in history who made an impact on the world. 5th class explored gender roles and stereotypes through S.P.H.E. Our **Social Justice Wall** is full of projects and opinions and it is wonderful to see our students' minds broaden as they consider social norms and injustices.

We continued to challenge our students in the area of **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) over the school closure during Storm Emma. Having tapped into the **scientific brains** of our students during Engineers' Week, I set some **challenges** for children to complete at home. Alison from Junior Infants created an intricate Hexbug maze using recycled materials. We saw sinking/floating construction challenges from Diarmuid and Niall O'Shaughnessy. Robyn Prendergast constructed a wonderful miniature Lego sleigh for the snow! For more, see our Twitter page @Castletown_NS.

Although **Seachtain na Gaeilge** has passed we hope that the spirit of speaking as **Gaeilge i rith an lae** continues! I have been greeted daily by students who are keen to use Irish to communicate. The learning of the **repertoire of traditional Irish songs** (as Gaeilge) for John Spillane was a very worthwhile project in that it taught the children to **embrace** and enjoy their native tongue and **culture**. Here in Scoil Ghormáin Naofa, we strive to instill a love in Irish in our students.

ASD Class

We are delighted to announce that we will open an **ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) class** in September to meet the growing needs in the county. As a wholly inclusive school, we feel that this provision will have great **benefits** for our students. Our teachers will avail of professional development which will have a knock on effect for the wider school. We will receive **grants** towards special needs education in school. We will also be entitled to more **staff**. I believe that having an ASD class will encourage our students to be tolerant, kind and understanding citizens in general. Having spoken to principals of schools with ASD classes, they tell me that the experience has been **overwhelmingly positive** so we look forward to embracing it. We have seen the far reaching benefits of our

Class News

Mr. Breen's 3rd & 4th Class

Hello from **Mr. Breen's classroom**. It is certainly hard to believe that another term has passed. We have been kept quite busy throughout with many new activities and various topics underway. The class wrote spectacular **procedures** during English especially how to make **pancakes!** **Maths** proved to be rather fascinating with topics such as length, symmetry and fractions. **Estimating** the height of class mates turned out to be **challenging** but and also lots of **fun**. After Christmas we decided to take on our very own **fitness challenge** as the class went against the clock to beat their own personal scores each week and **improvements** were evident on a weekly basis.



During **Geography** we examined the importance of sunlight along with the mountains of Ireland and their features. Egypt was a very popular topic with the boys and girls as we delved into **life as an Ancient Egyptian**. We also learned how to write our names using **hieroglyphics**. Bricks for Kidz also visited our classroom where the class got to experience engineering up close and created some cool racing cars. The class have also been keeping track of their **Lent promises** on a daily basis, whether it is giving up or taking up something they have certainly tried very hard to keep their promises. At the moment we are still practicing our poem for the **Arklow Festival** and we are really looking forward to performing it next month. Finally, we would like to wish all a happy and healthy Easter!

Ms. Russell's 5th Class

Term 2 has been just as **busy and varied** as term 1! Our class had great fun during **Seachtain na Gaeilge** and made great efforts to speak as Gaeilge i rith an lae. We had a **Tráth na gCeist league** as Gaeilge over the week and Joseph, William and Erin emerged as champions. They were awarded with delicious Easter eggs for their efforts.

We also participated in the **Eason Spelling Bee** and as a class are so proud of Aaron who has (at the time of going to print) progressed to the **regional finals** and will represent both our class and school! Aaron has been busy swotting up on difficult spellings in preparation for the event! We wish him every success!



Lego Bricks4Kids was a fantastic experience for our class and it inspired us to learn more about engineering. We studied how engineers for N.A.S.A. work and enjoyed learning more about engineering as part of **Engineers' Week**.

As part of **International Women's Day**, we investigated the changing face of the Barbie Doll and discussed how she has been an unrealistic role model. We examined the role model selection of Barbie Dolls that were released by Mattel for International Women's Day and were delighted to see females like Amelia Earhart there. Our class felt that **Katie Taylor** was missing from the lineup, however!

In **S.E.S.E.** we examined the lives and beliefs of the Aboriginal people of Australia. We learned about their sacred totems and their deep spiritual connection with nature. We also created some lovely earthy art in Aboriginal style. We also studied The Great Famine and explored the notion of cause and effect, making us great critical thinkers! We then engaged in some conferencing and dramatic activities to accompany this topic.

Storm Emma gave us an opportunity to monitor directed numbers (positive and negative), with the plummeting temperatures! We engaged in some very tricky **directed number** challenges and Ms. Russell was highly impressed with our problem solving abilities! We enjoy bringing maths into everyday life.

ASD Class contd.

sensory room facility in school and look forward to providing more for our ASD students. We believe that these **facilities** will benefit mainstream classes too in that there will be more available to ASD children in our mainstream classes.

Spelling Bee

Spelling Bee finalist Aaron Halford, Rang 5.

As you all know, I am going to represent our school for the **Eason's Spelling Bee**. I really didn't expect to win the knockout round. I thought Sofia Church would have



been the winner! Although I am **nervous**, I am also **excited** for the county finals. So thanks for all the **support**, especially Mr. Breen and Ms. Russell.

Sports All Stars

As a school with a **vibrant GAA culture**, we celebrate our many **successes** but we also celebrate **participation**. While it is fantastic to win, I am always equally proud of our students' attitude towards their games.

We also make time to give our students access to **sports/P.E.** activities outside the GAA. Having had **rugby** and **hip-hop** before Christmas, we were delighted to welcome Kalina's Dad to share his expertise in **soccer coaching** with Junior and Senior Infants. If you are a **parent** with a **special skill set**, we would love to hear from you!

Many classes took part in a **fitness challenge** which saw them compete against themselves to improve their running times and fitness levels.

Congratulations to **Mark O'Donnell** in Mr. Breen's class for coming first in a recent **skiing competition**!

GAA

It has been quiet with regard to school competitions between Christmas and Easter; however we are once again coming into another **busy time** with the Mini 7s hurling starting this week as we play host to local schools in the first round. The **Rackard League hurling** will also kick off straight after Easter so we may hit the ground running after the break! The 3rd and 4th class boys are taking part in a **fun competition** every Wednesday for three weeks in Castletown and will come up against Kilanerin, Riverchapel and Tara Hill. During February, Coolgreaney and Tara Hill, along with Castletown, ran our very own **hurling blitz** to keep our eye in. It proved to be a great success with five teams from 4th class up taking part. Each game was very competitive and we could see the level of skill and team work improving as the weeks passed. Congratulations to **Team Galway**.

Class News

Ms. Russell's 5th Class contd.

We were disappointed that the **Arklow Music Festival** was postponed but we look forward to showcasing Macavity, the Mystery Cat by T.S. Eliot at the end of April. We will perform in the **Choral Verse** competition and Ms. Russell is so impressed by our acting abilities. Miaow!

5th class wishes everyone in the **Castletown** community a very **happy Easter!**

Ms. Byrne's 6th Class

Happy New Year everybody! From myself and the students of 6th class, we wish you every blessing, good health and happiness for the year ahead. It has been a busy start to term 2 for the 14 boys and girls of 6th class. We are currently undertaking the J.E.P. (**Junior Entrepreneur Programme**) and are looking forward to the culmination of our efforts on Thursday with **Showcase Day**. We really appreciate the support of all our parents and students.



We very much enjoyed our concert with John Spillane and we were delighted to play the tin whistle with him on the day. It isn't everybody who gets to say they played with **John Spillane**! We are currently in the throws of rehearsals for the Arklow Music Festival which takes place at the end of April. Although we have a small number, we can be very dramatic and our rendition of Roald Dahl's *Three little Pigs* is, without doubt, a performance that should not be missed! Throughout the term, we completed projects on **women in history** and **human rights activists**. In art, we completed many strands, including **clay**. Our clay pots are dry and painted and ready to be filled with some nice treats for Easter. We recently visited **Tobar Patrick**, where the children took in some history and religion, while also getting the opportunity to **meditate outdoors**. You can't top the sound of the birds and water flowing to relax you. As like all other classes, we are learning about biodiversity and ecosystems. Each child drew a map of the school, identifying the various **habitats** that we have at our doorstep! A visit to the beach in term 3 will allow us to study another ecosystem in more detail. We are continuing to learn tunes on the tin whistle and our main focus is on **traditional Irish tunes**. Make sure your child is playing 1 or 2 of these at home for you. Finally, **have a lovely and safe Easter** everybody and we look forward to seeing you all again in term 3.



The J.E.P. consists of 7 main stages. Firstly, the children are introduced to the term '**entrepreneurship**' and what it involves. We identify the traits of a successful entrepreneur. The children then generate their own ideas for a business. Each child or group bring their ideas to a **board of dragons** who, in consultation with the teacher, decide on a main project idea. This task was very difficult this year and hence,

we have decided to run with all ideas. The children must be commended on their ability to present their business ideas clearly and concisely, their confidence and interest. **Garrett and Sandie McCabe** were then invited into the classroom to share their knowledge and wisdom with us. They explained to us the advantages of being an entrepreneur and what it takes to run a business successfully. After completing some market research, the children then worked on all of their individual ideas. Children were given different roles and responsibilities in accordance with their interests and talents. Finally, **Showcase Day** sees all efforts come to fruition. On Thursday the children will sell their products and their profits will be shared between the school, a charity of their choice and of course, a treat for themselves.

I wish to thank all parents and staff for their encouragement and support throughout the process. **A special mention must go out to Garrett and Sandy, Aileen, Aileen, Dónal and Olivia, Carmel and Finola** for their willingness to help and support the children in the various projects. Thanks to all those who donated ribbons, baskets and other items. We look forward to seeing everybody on Thursday.



GAA contd.

Team Galway who finished top of the table. A huge thank you must go to the parents and to the children for their efforts and dedication to make each game and training session, without this commitment none of this would be possible. As we went to print, the girls' Camogie team had commenced the **Mini 7s** tournament and we wish them every success and enjoyment in the tournament. We are very grateful to the teachers and staff who encourage and train our girls! **Beir bua a chailíní!!**

We are delighted to welcome **Anthony Masterson** to school for coaching after Easter as part of the school-club link initiative. Anthony will give blocks to all classes but will work separately with girls and boys from 3rd - 6th to help them to improve their respective game skills!

Niall Breen



Last Tuesday, our Mini 7s camogie girls had a **super win** at Kilanerin where they emerged victorious with a score of 4-5 to 1-0. We wish them luck in the next round!

Active School Flag



The Committee have had another busy term. Firstly, we are delighted to welcome the following **enthusiastic parents** onto the Committee, Aileen O' Shaughnessy, Pete O' Brien and Shane Prendergast. They have great ideas and knowledge to offer. To start, Shane has volunteered to discuss healthy eating with the children at the beginning of next term and we look forward to this.

The Committee also received special Active School Flag badges.

The teachers have been amazing in introducing the '**Move Well, Move Often**' programme since January. This programme looks in detail at the fundamental movement skills. We are lucky to have a staff that is so dedicated to the physical well-being of our children. Thank you!

The Committee organised a **Mini World Cup** this term and there has been great excitement at break time. The recent weather conditions have hampered play so the boy's league is still running. The girls have played all their games and Scotland and Wales will meet in the final. Both boys and girls finals will take place the same day after Easter. We would like to thank Mr. Breen for his help with the games and sixth class who have shown great leadership as captains and referees.

We had a **jersey day** also this term which raised €126. This will purchase prizes for the Mini world Cup winners and it will go to resources needed for Active School Week.

We also held another great '**Bring your Scooter to School Day**'.

The Crocus Holocaust Remembrance Project

The children from Scoil Ghormáin Naofa joined pupils from over 300 schools to plant yellow crocus bulbs last October in memory of 1.5 million children from Jewish and other backgrounds who died in the **Holocaust**. The Crocus Project introduces school children to the subject of the Holocaust by encouraging them to plant the bulbs each autumn. This Holocaust remembrance project began a decade ago in Ireland with the planting of a handful of flower bulbs and now involves over 50,000 young people throughout Europe. The yellow flowers of the **crocus** recall the Stars of David that the Jews were forced to wear by the Nazis.



As the recent snow slowly melted away we were delighted to see our crocuses had **survived** Storm Emma. While the yellow stars they represent, remind us of the harrowing ordeals suffered during the Holocaust their beautiful bright flowers are a welcome reminder to us that spring is well and truly here and the joy and hope that new growth brings teaches us to continue to strive for all that is good. - Carmel

Holiday of a Lifetime by Kiet Purcell, 3rd Class

I went to **New Zealand** and **Australia** in December 2017. I took three planes to get to New Zealand and Australia. My first stop was **Christchurch** and we went to Akaroa. I saw penguins and dolphins. In Queenstown we went on the gondola. In Milford Sound we went on a cruise and saw **seals**. In Shanty town we went **gold panning** and it was fun! In Hamner Springs there were three slides, we went on all three of them. My Mammy's favourite place was Paradise House beside Pancake Rocks. We left New Zealand on 09-01-2018.

In Sydney we saw the **Sydney Opera House** and the **Navy Museum**. We went to the **Great Barrier Reef** where we saw colourful fish and we went snorkelling. I walked through **Daintree Rainforest**. I did not see any snakes. There were lots of different animals at the zoo. I got to pet a **koala** and feed a **kangaroo**. We watched the **crocodile** show and my favourite animal was a crocodile.



A word from our Parents Association

The Parents Association would like to thank **Concepta, David, Sandy, Sinead and little Rachel** who gave all the children and staff a lovely treat on Pancake Day - well done! Also, to all the parents who donated delicious sandwiches and cakes for **Grandparents' day**, it was a tremendous success this year with over 100 visitors to the school! This day is eagerly anticipated and as increasing numbers show. Every year we put the call out for help for the day and would very much like to thank **Eilis, Deirdre, Jan, Eimear, and Concepta** for donating their time - it was very much appreciated.

As discussed in the previous P.A. meeting we have a busy few months ahead. We look forward to **Easter Bunny, Communion Teas, Sports Day, and Graduation**. We also have a Table Quiz in mind as a future fundraiser as it was so well received last time - date to be confirmed. As always, we would very much appreciate help with these events and we would love to see some new parents getting involved. If you feel you could help in any future events, please get in touch, the more the merrier! Hope to see you all at the next meeting. **Rochella Kinsella, Chairperson**



Soccer Coaching with Jnr./Snr. Infants



Junior Entrepreneur Preparation

Active School Flag contd.

In **Term three** we look forward to our annual **Active School Week**. This will be held from **April 30th - 4th May**. We would love parents to volunteer to do a five minute warm up with the children before school starts each morning of this week. We call it 'Wake Up, Shake Up.' Or a warm up for 'Walk a Mile with a Smile!' Please let Ms. Darcy know if you can assist.

Thanks and Keep Moving,

The Active School committee

Green School Flag



Firstly a huge **congratulations** and well done to **Laura Hope**, her **Biodiversity code** was chosen as our school code. She

put in a tremendous amount of effort and well done Laura. We will display it with pride. The **Greenschool Committee** presented their Biodiversity knowledge in assembly and we believe that everyone is becoming more educated in this area all the time. Moving on from this we have just sent in our application to **An Taisce** for our Biodiversity flag, we will wait with anticipation to see if we made the cut. We still have a lot to carry out though like our **action day** which will be a trip to one of our local beaches to check out the local flora and fauna on our doorstep; I'm not sure we all realise how lucky we are. Also Carmel is busy keeping everyone on their toes in **our school garden** and we hope to have our bug hotel and biodiversity corner up and running by the summer months, our vegetable garden is getting well prepared for us to grow some tasty vegetables for us all to eat.

GP Hall news

It is with great excitement that I can announce the school's renewed plans to **campaign** for the building of a GP (General Purpose) hall for our school. We feel hugely disadvantaged in that a school with our talents for sport is without a **P.E. hall**. We would envisage that it would be used for music and drama performances and assemblies to name but a few of the possibilities. We would envisage that we would be able to make this facility available to the **parish** for events such as the Parish Field Day and so on.

Our board of management recently got the ball rolling by meeting with **Michael D'Arcy T.D.** to discuss what options might be available to us. This was a positive meeting and we are optimistic.

We have a **huge task** ahead of us. We will begin our **fundraising campaign** in the near future. We will be appealing to the community for donations, support and ideas and we invite members of the community with any experience/expertise in this kind of campaign to get in touch with us. We truly feel that it will be a facility to service the whole Castletown community.

We can do this!!!

Easter Colouring Fun

