

Welcome to our  
Newsletter!  
Autumn 2018

# 'Scoil Ghormáin Naofa' Newsletter

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## Welcome note from the Principal.....

Hello everyone and welcome back. We have had a busy and exciting first term. I am delighted to see that our **new staff and students** are settling in so well and all are contributing to the life of our lovely school community. Ms. Morris' students are settling well into school and are **enriching the school community** greatly. Many thanks to the **pastoral council** and **Fr. Eugene** for the generous use of the hall which has been renovated to suit our new class. I extend a **special welcome** to our Spanish exchange student, Jesus. We are learning just as much from him as he is from us! Jesus has already immersed himself in GAA and even enjoyed cabbage that Ms. Byrne gave him! His host siblings Kyle and Ruby have been great in helping him. We will definitely **stay in touch** with him.

This year, we have selected **STEM, Physical literacy** and the **genres of writing** as our specific areas of focus. We have purchased **new resources**, our teachers are engaging in **professional development** and the staff is so enthusiastic in buying in to our **collaborative view** for our school. We look forward to welcoming **Discovery Primary Science** who will run three workshops to train teachers further in the teaching of Science. With generous sponsorship from our P.A., we are excited about the upcoming visit from a **mobile science workshop** in late November! Later in the year, we will also welcome a facilitator from the **PDST** (Professional Development Service for Teachers), to enable us to upskill in the area of **numeracy**. Our school has engaged with the **School Self-Evaluation** programme and we have identified Physical Literacy as our area of focus. Ms. D'Arcy and Mr. Breen will spear head this initiative. The programme aims to teach the **fundamental skills of movement** to children in the hope that it will encourage movement and activity for life. Ms. Gilmartin Ryan has been supporting staff in the implementation of the **genres of writing in literacy**. This term, we have been focusing on the Narrative Genre and this culminated in a **school-wide narrative writing competition**. Results were not in as newsletter went to press but Ms. Gilmartin Ryan and Ms. D'Arcy have been having a tough job adjudicating!

Ms. Byrne organised a visit from Castletown native, Lena Leonard for **Intergenerational Day**. Lena told the children about **life before technology** and they were engrossed in her description of how she lives without the level of technology that they do!

We have been immersed in **music** this term and I was extremely proud of our students and teachers for how they performed at **The Big Sing for Mental Health** in St. Mary's College, Arklow. They sang a moving arrangement of True Colours and were accompanied by the very talented Aaron Halford (bongos), Joseph O'Flaherty (guitar), Ms. Byrne (piano) and Ms. Ní Shuilleabháin (violin). After Hallowe'en, our senior classes will continue to practice for **Sing Out Loud** in Wexford Opera House. This was such a memorable experience last year; we look forward to performing again on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. Thanks to Siobhan and the teachers for all the administrative work and preparation in organizing this event. I am delighted to announce that we will also host a **Christmas Concert** in our church this year. Each child and class will participate. Date to be confirmed.

We promote **positive mental health** and our **weekly assemblies** are one way to affirm all that is good in our lives and in our school. At assembly we offer a prayer, sometimes a song, children give thanks for specified good things that happened during the week and we award winners in categories both academic and holistic. We have **set meditation times**, 'Stop everything and breathe', twice a week and we encourage children to never keep an anxiety inside. **World Mental Health Day** on Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> October, was an opportunity for us to celebrate our commitment to positive mental health. We have displayed useful posters on our **wellness notice board** to remind children to talk and who they can talk to.

We wish **Ms. Hearne** (formerly Ms. Murphy) all the best as she goes on maternity leave and look forward to hearing her good news! The children will be in great hands with Ms. Carroll.

I am grateful to all who make our school such a **vibrant and stimulating environment** for our students. I would like to thank **Joe O'Shaughnessy** and the members of our **board of management** for their ongoing support of our school. I would also like to thank our hard-working **Parents' Association** for all they do in the interests of our pupils. I would like to wish **Ro-chella Kinsella** all the best as she retires from her role as Chairperson after three busy years! She has been a huge support to me and the school in general, always ready to help at the drop of a hat. Best wishes to incoming Chairperson **Margaret Tallon** and to **Anne Kavanagh** who remains treasurer for the year ahead.

I hope all families enjoy a **fun and safe Hallowe'en break**. Emer Russell, Principal

## Reflection



*Bionn sé go maith a bheith  
ag caint  
#mentalhealth*

## Dates to Remember

**School re-opens;**

5<sup>th</sup> November

**Sing Out Loud**, Wexford Opera House (3<sup>rd</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> classes); November 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Parent Teacher Meetings;** November (dates to be confirmed)

**School Closes for Christmas;** Friday 21<sup>st</sup> December at 12.

## Meet the Staff 2018/2019

**Ms. E. Russell:** Principal

**Ms. A Gilmartin Ryan:** Deputy Principal & S.E.T.

**Ms. L. Whittle:** Junior & Senior Infants

**Ms. J. Hearne:** 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Class

**Ms. N. Ní Shuilleabháin:** 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Class

**Mr. N. Breen:** 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Class

**Ms. N. Byrne:** 6<sup>th</sup> Class

**Ms. Morris:** ASD class teacher

**Ms. M. McDevitt /Ms. P. D'Arcy:** S.E.T.

**SNAs:** Carmel Duke, Finola Quirke, Fiona Byrne, Sharon Power, Angie Barnes

Siobhán Geoghan is our Secretary

**School email address:**  
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**School website address:**  
[www.castletownnationalschool.ie](http://www.castletownnationalschool.ie)  
**School Twitter account:**  
[@castletown\\_ns](https://twitter.com/castletown_ns)

## Class News:

### Ms Whittle – Junior/Senior Infants

We certainly started this year with a bang! 16 new Junior Infants joined us and the 11 Senior Infants have really settled into their position as **role models**! The juniors are enjoying getting to know each other and have made lots of **new friends** already.



Over the last two months we've been learning our sounds in English, we've been **matching in Maths** and we've been learning lots of new **words in Irish**. The Junior Infants have started to read already! Such excitement! Senior Infants have continued their reading practice and are becoming more and more confident each day. Well done.

Senior Infants took part in a **shared writing lesson** where they wanted to tell you all about our Aistear theme this month.

Our **first Aistear theme was autumn**. We had lots of fun. We learnt about leaves, hedgehogs and hibernation. We did hedgehog art, hedgehog playdough, jaggo blocks and sand.

Aside from all this, we made leaf rubbings, created leaf men, created autumn trees using playdough and also searched for autumn items in the sand. We've all loved learning about the **changes that autumn brings** and have filled our nature table with pine cones, conkers, acorns and multi-coloured leaves.

### Mrs. Hearne – 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Class

We have made a great start to the school year in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class. We are working so hard on our reading and writing and our Maths work is also going great. In Gaelige we have been learning about the season of **An Fómhar** and we are learning new words and phrases through games and **fun language activities**.

Our work on autumn has also carried through to science and art. We completed our first **group projects** on hibernating animals and created fantastic pieces of **pottery** and colourful paintings based on the theme.



In PE, we have been very lucky to have **Kalina's dad, Pete**, coach us in soccer and we are working on our running skills to make us faster and fitter! We are also enjoying our coaching each week with our GAA coaches.

We have already had our first trip of the year for Maths Week where we were fortunate enough to be invited to the **library in Gorey** to take on a **Lego challenge**. Everyone worked really well and enjoyed taking learning out of the classroom.

Most recently, we have turned our focus on Halloween and are learning songs and poems to have ready for the 31<sup>st</sup>. Our spooky narrative stories also turned out so well and no doubt, our art work will soon be hanging as decorations at home before we go trick or treating!

## Curriculum News

### Maths Week

For Maths Week 2018, students from all class groups were involved with a number of projects that gave them an opportunity to use their **maths skills** in a fun and creative way. Using their 'maths eyes', many sent in photos of where they saw maths all around them. Students used the **iPads** to put their maths skills to practice and answered a number of questions based on the school and its surroundings. Once they found the **QR codes** placed around the school, they scanned them and answered the questions in groups.



There was a great sense of **team work and collaboration** and prizes were given out to teams that worked really well together. Students thoroughly enjoyed using the iPads as well as finding ways to solve the problems. A massive thank you to Clara, Ciara, Diarmuid and Shane who helped to run the lunch time maths challenge where students looked at the given photograph using their 'maths eyes' and wrote down questions based on the photograph. There was a wide range of questions and areas of maths mentioned in their entries and I was very impressed by the efforts made by all involved. **Ms. Carroll**



Maths Eyes Competition Winners

### Debating News

We are very excited to be entering the **Primary**

**School Debating Competition** this year. Our first debate will take place in November against Bunscoil Loreto N.S. Gorey and preparation is now underway. A really excellent standard of speeches was completed by many of the 6<sup>th</sup> Class Students and our motion of "*School Uniforms should be banned*" sparked a lively and passionate debate among the students.

The team of 6 students chosen to represent Scoil Ghormáin Naofa are Erin Cunningham, Joseph O' Flaherty, Síofra Higgins, Rachel Wolohan, Dylan Treacy and Aedín Condren. Ms. Ní Shúilleabháin, Ms. Darcy and Ms. Byrne look forward to preparing the team for the competition.



## Class News contd.:

### Ms Ní Shúilleabháin – 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Class

What a busy beginning to the school year 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Class have had! **Ms. Ní Shúilleabháin** has been getting to know all the new faces here at Scoil Ghormáin Naofa, thank you for your kind welcome. We began the year by getting to know our local area of Castletown and **we became historians**. We investigated all there was to know about local sites; the church, the school, Joffre Rose shipwreck and Liam Mellows. The children really enjoyed speaking to family members and researching for their projects- well done to all!

In **music** we have been singing every day! Did you know that there are many health benefits to group singing? The students sang their hearts out at **"The Big Sing"** for **Mental Health** on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October in Arklow and we were so proud of them, even the rain didn't dampen our spirits! It is full steam ahead for **Sing Out Loud** after mid-term.

This class are very **artistic** and have already experimented with lots of colour mixing. They have produced **Colour Wheels, Autumn Trees and Spooky Haunted Castles** in art class.



In **Literacy**, we have replenished our **library** with lovely new books and we are avidly reading every day. We began the **"Rock and Read"** programme this term, which is an exciting way to practise our **comprehension** and dictionary skills. The children are reading in pairs- they have been very enthusiastic about collecting stars on their reward card to claim their prize! **Narrative writing** has been our main focus for September and October and I am really noticing lots of improvement in their skills already. The class have finished drafting their **Scary Essays** for the Halloween Competition and they are displayed on the corridor- well done.

We really enjoyed **Maths Week** last week- especially the outdoor Math's Trails- well done to Ms. Carroll for all her preparation. Topics we have covered this term include Lines and Angles, Place Value and Time. In **Gaeilge**, we have been building vocabulary on the topics of **"Mé Féin"** and **"Bia"**. The children have created their own restaurant menus for **"An Bhialann"**, and enjoyed ordering their food as **Gaeilge** this week. *"Ar mhaith leat bagún, cabáiste agus prátaí le do dhinnéar?" "Ba mhaith liom!"*

### Mr. Breen – 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Class

We have had an exciting first few weeks in Scoil Ghormáin Naofa. The boys and girls have settled in very well and are working extremely hard. **History** has been very interesting as we delved into the local history and examined the influence of the famous **Liam Mellows**. The class also produced outstanding projects.



Some other **interesting topics** that we have been enjoying up to now are GAA and games during P.E where the class are showing great skills, pop out shapes in Art, a discovery maths trail, pen pal letters as Gaeilge and we examined the human breathing system during science. Congratulations to all who attended the Big Sing in Arklow as they performed admirably. Finally, a huge well done to all in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> class, keep up the great work!

## GAA News

### Boys GAA:

Straight from the first week back our football teams were right in the thick of it. The **Mini 7s** team got through their first round with great wins over Loreto, Gorey and Gaelscoil, Gorey. They are now hoping to go a step further in the second round of the competition.

The **Rackard League** team is also progressing very well with fantastic wins over St. Josephs of Gorey and Buncloody. These wins put them through to an A quarter final against Ballindaggin. The Teams are showing great interest, discipline, work rate and team work during each and every day they take to the field. The school also ran our own All Ireland series during lunch, which proved very popular and served up some very exciting games. A lot of credit must go to both 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class who helped run the competition. Well done to all the boys and girls who took part from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class. A special congratulations to Dublin who came out on top after a hard fought final game against Wexford.

A boys and girls team also attended the Creagh College annual football blitz. It was a very enjoyable day with both teams representing the school superbly. Finally I would like to thank all who help out with the GAA, especially the parents for their great support, Carmel, Ms. Russell, Kevin Morris and Michael Kavanagh for all the organising, training and support throughout the term.

We are looking forward to what the GAA will bring after the mid-term break.

### Niall Breen

### Girls GAA:

The girls Rackard league football team have been super! Having played 4 matches, they won 3 out of 4 games, beating Crannford, Monageer and Oulart. Our Mini 7's team had one enjoyable day out. They played Tara Hill and Ballythomas in the blitz. Both tough games. We overcame Tara Hill but Ballythomas were in a league of their own having lost only two players from last year and being defending County champions.

Maith thú cailíní.

Huge thanks to Berney White for giving his time and help with Rackard league and Mini 7's.

The girls had great success at the Creagh college blitz as well. They reached the final and played magnificently against a strong Monamolin team. Usha and Julie made the cross bar challenge final also with Usha taking the title. Both girls were super. **Paula D'Arcy**

## Class News contd.:

### Ms. Byrne – 6<sup>th</sup> Class

Well, what a busy first term we are having! Children of 6<sup>th</sup> class are already deciding about their **choice of secondary school**, as they listen to many principals who have come to visit us and attended open days in nearby secondary schools.

We have been enjoying G.A.A. coaching each Friday, received tips from Fiona about running and many students have been taking part in Rackard League and Mini 7s matches. What an active school we are!

Following on from Mental Health Week, we know that being active is very important for us. During this week, we took part in The Big Sing, where the children performed *True Colours*, accompanied by Joseph and Aaron on guitar and bongos. I was so proud to be part of this, where the children represented our school so well with beautiful singing and playing, and exceptional behaviour. We designed our own shoes during Mental Health Week, taking on the theme of **'Walk a Mile in my Shoes'**. We have started reading our Headbomz book also. This short story reflects on the many issues that can be going on inside our busy minds. We know the importance of **speaking to a trusted adult or friend** if we are worried about something.



In maths, we have been learning about angles, lines and shapes, collected data and drawn trend graphs and we are now working on long multiplication, our favourite chapter of the book! Our **Halloween stories** have been the main focus of our English lessons this week and we are sending our final versions to Ms. Russell very soon. The children are making good use of their synonyms, contractions and speech marks, which they have been learning about. We had **great fun with idioms** this week also. In Art, we have studied drawing and shading and the children drew some fantastic images of famous faces. This tied in nicely with symmetry in maths. We explored the theme of autumn with leaf pictures. We painted leaves white and pressed them onto black sugar paper and then sponge painted around them with the autumn colours. We were very impressed with our results. In Irish, we have been working on **Mé Féin**, with help from Ms. D'Arcy and Ms. McDevitt each Friday morning during station teaching.

Thank you to Ms. Kinsella who has been here for three weeks and made learning very interesting and fun for 6<sup>th</sup> class, focusing on topics such as **Oíche Shamhna** and **World War II**. We will miss her and wish her all the best in her future endeavours. We are already looking forward to returning after Hallowe'en to begin our **Junior Entrepreneur** journey and attending the Big Sing in the National Opera House in Wexford.

### Ms. Morris' class

We have had a **wonderful start** in our exciting new school! The boys have made new friends and love seeing each other everyday and getting to play together. They have worked hard on their routines and they are learning how our new classroom works! The boys **love our back garden** where they get to go outside and play on the lovely grass each break time. We got a special delivery of new furniture during September and the boys absolutely love their new offices! They have their own space and their own set of drawers where they keep their work. The boys enjoy seeing some other children coming over to visit and play with them. I never knew a game of **"duck duck goose"** could get so intense!!! The boys also love going for a **big walk all around the pitches** in the main school. Sometimes the cows are out and the boys will have a look over the wall to say hello to them! There is always a good race to see who will be first up the big hill at the end of our walk! I may start my hill running training as I can never seem to beat the boys! The boys enjoy saying "hello" to Maximo each morning! He has helped us learn how to do the Hokey Pokey and the Macarena among other dances! We always slow ourselves down by finishing with a little **yoga practice with Maximo** before we return to work!



The boys have been brilliant since starting in September. I am **extremely proud of them** all for all the hard work that they are doing and I look forward to an exciting year ahead!



## Sports News

After Hallowe'en, we look forward to starting **rugby** on Fridays (1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class). **Michael Bolger** from Gorey Rugby Club will once again be here to give children a flavour of rugby and I know that this will go down really well with our students! We also look forward to Tiernan Gleeson's mum Susan bringing her skills to teach our classes **aerobics to music**! We can't think of a better way to **combat the winter cold** than engaging in rugby and aerobics on our school yard!

We are very grateful to **Paddy Brady** for his recent coaching stint in the area of GAA.

## Students Corner

### Music and The Arts

Last Friday to celebrate **Mental Health Week** we went to Arklow for **The Big Sing**. It was very exciting, we even sang The Wheels on the Bus....on the bus!! We were the second last school to sing so we had a great time listening to all the other schools perform. We might have been the most **talented school** because we were the only ones that played instruments for our song '**True Colours**'. Then we all sang 'This is me' and everyone danced around, it was **so much fun**. In November we are also doing **Sing Out Loud**, this is my second time doing this concert and I am really looking forward to it. We are practicing all our songs every day and can't wait to perform in **Wexford Opera House** for all our Families, it's going to be so much fun!

Written by **Charlie Church, 4<sup>th</sup> Class**



Performing at "The Big Sing" Arklow

## Student Council

Hi, my name is Usha and I am the 6<sup>th</sup> class representative on the newly formed 2018/2019 Student Council. The Student Council consists of a **student from each class**, voted in by their classmates. **Ms Whittle** is the teacher responsible for the Student Council. The Student Council is looking forward to a busy, positive and constructive year of activities. First up is the **Christmas Shoe Box Appeal** which aims to brighten Christmas for less fortunate children.

As the **voice of the student body** we are keen to hear your comments, suggestions and feedback. To ensure that everyone feels they can speak freely we have placed a **suggestion box** in the corridor so please don't be shy!!

**Usha Daly O'Toole, 6<sup>th</sup> Class Student Council Representative**



## Active School Flag

This is an exciting school year for Active Flag as we look to apply for our **flag renewal**. We are very optimistic that our application will be successful and are lucky to have our wonderful principal and staff's **full commitment**. This is very apparent as our school development plan's focus is on PE and the **Move Well, Move Often Programme**. The staff have also taken on the PE/SPHE programme of **Land Paws** (water safety on the farm, rivers, sea, at home). This will be taught at a time suitable to the class teachers during the school year.

We also have a **new enthusiastic committee** ready to work; Joseph O' Flaherty, Ciara O' Connor, Lee Kelly, Conor Treacy, Emer Ivanoff, Tom Tallon, Eabha O Shaughnessy. We are also delighted to welcome back parents Shane Prendergast, Aileen O' Shaughnessy and Pete O' Brien. Any other parents or grandparents interested in getting involved please let us know. Mr. Breen has kindly offered to help us out too.

This year we will have an **activity of the month**. In September we had our GAA league - thanks to Mr. Breen. In October we had scooter day and the Hallowe'en disco and we look forward to our **Run Around Europe** in November. This will involve each class choosing a country in Europe and running, jogging or walking that distance from Wexford to this country in the month! Thanks again to our teachers for their support!

The committee have been busy working on selecting a **new Active School Motto**. The winners will be chosen after the mid-term break. All prizes will be sporty!

We are also in the process of recruiting '**Playground Leaders**,' from 6<sup>th</sup> class. This is an important, responsible job and we are looking for leaders to set up and teach the infant classes playground games at break time. We received wonderful applications and I'm sure we will select a great 'playground leader,' team. Successful applicants will be informed this week and training commence. A **child and parent survey** will be sent home shortly too so keep an eye in the school bag for it and fill it in please. Your opinions matter to us.

**Stay Active!!!**

**Ms D'Arcy and the Active School Committee.**

## Welcome to our new staff



We are delighted to welcome our new permanent teachers, **Ms. Ni Shúilleabháin** and **Ms. Morris**. They bring a huge amount of experience, expertise and enthusiasm to our school. We welcome **Ms. Carroll** who is settling in brilliantly and will be replacing Ms. Hearne in November. We welcome our newly appointed SNAs, **Sharon Power** and **Angie Barnes** and congratulate **Fiona Byrne** on returning to us in a permanent capacity who are all working so hard! It is an exciting time for our school. There is a real **dynamism** about the place and I am grateful to all staff for their **individual and collective contributions**.

## A word from our Parents' Association

Many thanks to all the parents who attended our **Parents' Association AGM** on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018. We were delighted with the attendance and to see some new faces there on the night. The PA would like to acknowledge our outgoing Chairperson, **Rochella Kinsella**, who stood down last June 2018 after 3 very successful terms. In addition to this, she continues to go above and beyond what is expected of our parents by giving her time, commitment, support and energy to our school. Thank you Rochella for your **contribution, support and dedication** to our school to date.

I was delighted to be nominated to the Chair for the next term (2018/2019) and Ann Kavanagh has also agreed to remain on as Treasurer for the next term. The position of **Secretary** has yet to be determined. All **nominations** are greatly welcomed!

For all **new parents** to the school, the role of the Parents' Association is to **work in partnership** with the principal, board of management and the whole school community for the betterment of the children in the school to support and empower parents to be active in the best interests of their children's educational lives. Throughout the year the school holds various opportunities for parents to come together to **fundraise**. All monies raised are given directly to the school. As ever, thanks to all of existing parents who continue to support the PA each year. Your **support continues to be vital** in our fund raising efforts year on year.

We are kicking off the school year with our **Hallowe'en School Disco** at the **Golden Anchor** on **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2018** from 5.30pm to 7.30pm. So we are really looking forward to seeing you all there on the night. Guaranteed fun with food, DJ and **prizes for best costume** as well as our fantastic raffle.

More information on future PA meetings and events to follow in the next school newsletters.

Finally a big **thank you** to Emer and the teaching staff for all their continued help and support.

**Margaret Tallon, Chairperson**



## A word from our Parish Pastoral Worker



### Blessing of Pets

Some of us have wonderful furry friends who are there for us when we come home from school or work. The church of Sts. Mary and Peter Arklow are holding a blessing service for our furry friends on **Sunday 4th November at 2pm in the presbytery gardens**. So come along and bring your pet. Weather permitting.

### Family Mass

St. Patrick's Church will have a family friendly Mass every second Saturday of the month at 8pm. We are inviting families of all ages to participate especially the sacramental classes. The dates are:

**10th November, 8th December, 12th January, 9th February, 9th March, 13th April, 11th May, 8th June.**

We do need children and parents to help at this Mass, with processions, art, reading, drama and music. If you can assist in these small ways please contact the school.

### Kids' Family Mass Club

If you have a child in 2nd class and above we are starting a **Kids' Family Mass Club** on Wednesday **7th November 5pm - 6pm** in Arus Lorcaín. Art, games, prayer and music. If there are children from the Castletown, Johnstown, Coolgreany area joining the Arklow group we will try and find a venue for a Kids' Club nearer you later in the year. For now we would love to see you all in Arus Lorcaín Arklow.

Thank you, **Margaret Drew, Pastoral Worker**