

Welcome to our
Newsletter!
Autumn 2019

'Scoil Ghormáin Naofa' Newsletter

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Welcome note from the Principal.....

Hello everyone,

We have reached midterm and it has been an action filled year so far! We aim to provide children with a variety of academic, sporting, artistic, musical, technological and holistic experiences here at Scoil Ghormáin Naofa and with our **enthusiastic staff**, we really are achieving this! So far this year, we have embraced The Big Sing, Concern Debating, library visits, digital Maths trails, whole school circuits, Rackard League and Mini 7s games to name but some of what is going on in school. It is my aim that we can provide **opportunities to pique the interest of each individual child**.

We were thrilled to welcome **Music Generation** to our school, a programme that it is envisaged will embed in our school's culture and add to the tapestry of arts opportunities that already exist for children here. 3rd and 4th class children are **enthusiastically strumming their ukuleles** which they get to keep for 28 weeks. I am deeply grateful to our supportive **Parents' Association** for their support in financing this wonderful venture. **Ms. Ní Shuilleabháin** was central to us securing this initiative and I am very grateful to her for that. Diarmuid is proving to be a hit with the children who are progressing really well!

I have enjoyed witnessing the buzz of interest in school on Tuesday mornings when parents and grandparents join us for **Paired Reading**. Hearing reading is hugely beneficial to **developing literacy skills** and I am very grateful to Kate and the crew who give of their time. Aside from the academic benefits, it has a **social element** too – for both parents and children who enjoy seeing one another each week.

As we went to press, we were judging the **literacy competition** for the term. The classes have put so much effort into writing in a **Persuasive Genre**. Judges will need to be convinced that Hallowe'en should be banned or that only fruit and nuts should be given to trick or treaters! The standard of entry is really high – well done to all.

Before I sign off, I would like to draw attention to **safety at Hallowe'en**. Long capes and lighting pumpkins are a dangerous mix. We have talked at **assembly** about being careful at Hallowe'en. Children have been urged to wear reflective strips, dress safely and avoid any candles – especially ones at low levels on doorsteps etc. We have reminded children to tell their parents if they are ever in the presence of a child with fireworks. **We hope that this helps Hallowe'en to be fun and safe**. I wish you all a lovely break. Emer Russell



Autumnal excitement on yard!

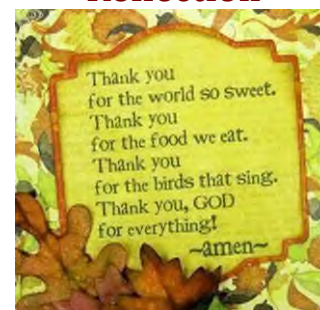


Pictured: Girls' Rackard League Team

Sustainability

We are **striving to be more mindful** of our responsibilities as a school with regard to **saving the planet**. Each week at assembly, we consider ways in which we can make **small changes** that will make a big difference. We remember to close doors to keep the heat in and if it is too hot, that we reduce the heat on the radiator rather than opening a door. We were inspired by **Greta Thunberg**, a young person, just like our students, who is making a change. We marked the **Global Strike for Climate Change** by putting our pens down and watching a clip about Greta's work. As part of our green school work, we enjoyed studying the **local biodiversity** at Clone beach with Éanna ní Lamhna and it gave us a **fresh appreciation** for the beauty of nature in our locality. We try to **eliminate single use plastic** by encouraging students to purchase the school water bottle. We are always open to ideas about how to improve!

Reflection



Dates to Remember

School re-opens;

4th November

Parent Teacher Meetings;
November (dates to be confirmed)

School Closed; 16th December –
Primary Language Curriculum
Development

Christmas Concert; 18th
December

School Closes for Christmas;
Friday 20th December at 12

School Reopens; Monday 6th
January

Meet the Staff 2019/2020

Ms. E. Russell: Principal

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

Mrs. J. Hearne: Junior Infants

Ms. N. Byrne: Senior Infants

Ms. D'Arcy/Ms. McDevitt: 1st/2nd
Class

Ms. N. Ní Shuilleabháin
3rd/4th Class

Mr. N. Breen: 5th/6th Class

Ms. Morris: ASD class teacher

Ms. L. Whittle/Ms. Carroll: S.E.T.

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

Siobhán Geoghan is our Secretary

School email address:
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School website address:
www.castletownnationalschool.ie

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

Class News:

Mrs. Hearne – Junior Infants

We have all **settled in very well** here as Junior Infants in our new school. Since starting in September, we have learned so much and we have made such good friends too. *Ms. Hearne is so impressed with how well we listen, how we love to do our work and how kind we are to each other.*

We are learning **new sounds** every week and we have started to write and draw in our lovely books. We play **counting games** and have **created patterns** as well as **2D shape creatures** in our Maths lessons.

We are really enjoying our **Aistear time** with Senior Infants too. So far we have explored autumn, we have worked in a doctor's surgery and we are now busy in our Halloween costume shop. We have also created lovely art pieces during Aistear and we learn how to **construct different buildings** each week as well.

In **Science** we are learning all about our **5 senses** and have done **experiments for touch and taste**. We had great fun testing the difference between the taste of chocolate and lemons!



We love listening to **stories, reciting rhymes and singing songs** in the classroom. We also love to **dance** after working hard to give our brains a break! We have met Teidí, Oisín and Niamh in our **Gaeilge** lessons and in the last couple of weeks we received a visit from a scary púca and a cailleach for **Oíche Shamhna**.

We were very lucky to have had our **first school trip** this term. We went to the library where we heard lovely stories, including **Room on the Broom** by Julia Donaldson and we had the chance to browse through all of the children's books there. The library has invited us back again in November so we look forward to that.

It has been a busy but an exciting couple of months with a great bunch of children and we look forward to lots more fun and learning when we return after the break.

Ms. Byrne - Senior Infants

Well, what a start to our new school year! It has been a very busy few months and the senior infant boys and girls have **really taken on the responsibility** of no longer being the youngest children in the school.

In **English**, we have revised all our small letters and vowel digraphs, before moving on to our capital letters after mid-term. We have already moved onto our second reader and the children are working their way through sight words, word boxes and extra readers. Thank you to everyone who helps us with our reading. Senior infants love to read to different audiences! **We enjoyed persuading Ms. Russell about 'what the best toy is'** and are eager to await the results of the writing competition next week. Our **trip to the library** was also so much fun. In **Maths**, we have focused on number. Ms. Whittle comes into our class every week and we do lots of fun games with her (and some work too!). We are really improving and our counting forwards and backwards is much better now. We even have a **counting choir**! We also looked at **patterns** and made some very colourful patterned fish. We do some calendar questions every morning. In **Gaeilge**, we have learned lots of new words around the topics of 'Mé Féin', 'Ar Scoil' agus 'Bia'. The children have become really eager to use their Gaeilge neamhfhoirmiúil throughout the day and most visitors now get a '**Fáilte romhat isteach**'. Teacher really loves to hear this and encourages the children to **use their new vocabulary at home**.



Curriculum News

Maths Week

Following on from a very successful Maths Week we are developing a Maths space in our corridor. It is envisaged that this space will be used to **develop Mathematical thinking** outside the Maths lesson. We hope that it will be an **appealing wall of interest** for those passing by. It is aimed that the wall will be used to **promote whole school thinking** around a given topic at any given time of the year. Here is an account from Ms. Carroll who coordinates the wall and makes it so attractive for our young learners. *'This year, there will be special maths wall in the school. Each fortnight brings a new topic and display for whole school use. Students can use the maths wall to support learning and there are some competitions and prizes also. The most recent topic is in relation to Maths Week! As part of Maths Week, students from 1st - 6th took part in iPad maths trails around the school where they scanned the codes and answered the questions. There was great team work shown by all class groups. Well done all!'* Thank you Ms. Carroll!



Debating News

We are currently putting our team together for the Concern Debate tournament. The aim of the Concern debates is to **engage young people with social justice issues**, empowering them in the process. The team will hone their **public speaking skills** whilst the class will **engage in research** around topics of current relevance globally. It is a hugely beneficial experience from a developmental, social and academic perspective. We look forward to watching our team progress and wish them well.



Class News contd.:

Ms. Byrne – Senior Infants contd.

We are learning all about the **history of toys** at the moment. We can see that toys today are much different to toys from years ago. Some toys use a **push force** while others need to be **pulled** or some toys use a combination of both. In **Aistear**, we learned all about autumn, the doctor's surgery and now we are focusing on the Hallowe'en theme. We have experimented with lots of different **percussion instruments** to keep the beat while performing the various songs we have been learning in music. The children are learning a variety of songs and rhymes all the time, so there will be no end to the talent when they go trick or treating! Make sure you hear **'There was an old Witch'** and some Irish Hallowe'en songs and rhymes have been learned also. In **Art**, we made scarecrows, pumpkins, autumn trees and clay hedgehogs, among other projects. This is probably our favourite time of the week! We are making our way to London to see Big Ben in our **Tour of Europe Challenge**. The children complete laps of the basketball court and every 12 laps equates to 1 kilometre. Only another mere 400 km to go! We are continuing to focus on **balancing and landing** and are enjoying some circuit games to help with this.

As you can see, the senior infants' classroom is a busy one and we cannot wait to see what November has in store! I hope everyone has a very safe and enjoyable mid-term break.

Ms. D'Arcy/Ms. McDevitt – 1st & 2nd Class

Well what a busy few weeks - we cannot believe we are only back in school a little while. We are enjoying getting **active inside and out of our classroom** doing our **'Just Dance'** and **'Go Noodle'** activities every day; we do love to shake our moves between our lessons! We have started **running to Paris** now and we are trying to improve our fitness each day by running that extra lap around the basketball court. We love to take part in our **mindful activities** during the week because we know how important it is to look after our minds and give us strategies to deal with our busy everyday lives. We learned the **Haka in Irish** in keeping with the Rugby World cup theme and designed our own rugby jerseys... 'Come on Ireland'.



In Science we are investigating **what a plant needs to grow**, we have planted some seeds and we are recording what happens to the seeds that don't have all they need to grow. We went on a **nature hunt** in the school field to see what insects, bugs and materials we could find. We then compared what we found in the school to what we found on our beach trip. It was great fun and we found some very interesting things. We then made some **mini beasts from clay** and painted them during our art lesson; some of us were very creative. During **Drama** we met a very sad clown but we are trying our best to cheer him up and are creating our own **freeze frames of circus scenes**. We have played many fun drama games also. The Hallowe'en fever has hit us early this year and we have learned a few songs especially one about a witch called Winnie ☺. We have also begun our **Hallowe'en art** and made a spooky Hallowe'en silhouette.

Ms. Ní Shúillebháin – 3rd & 4th Class

3rd and 4th Class have had a great beginning to the new school year! **Ms. Ní Shúilleabháin's** class have enjoyed researching for their projects about Co. Wexford this term. Hook head, The Saltee Islands and the Blackstairs Mountains were all areas of interest to us.



GAA News

Boys GAA:

A couple of weeks back to school our GAA teams were back into the thick of it. **The Mini 7s team** got through their first round with great wins over Tara Hill and Ballygarret. Unfortunately, our Mini 7s roll came to an end in the next round as we narrowly lost out to Kilanerin in a **hard fought encounter**.

The **Rackard League team** is also progressing very well with fantastic wins over Ferns and Bunclody. These wins put them through to a **B quarter final**. Once again the teams are showing **great interest, discipline, work rate and team work** during each and every day they take to the field.



We also attended the **Creagh annual football blitz** and competed with great enthusiasm playing against Kilanerin, Monamolin and St. Joseph's. (See picture above).

Finally, I would like to **thank all** who help out with the GAA, especially the parents for their great support along with Carmel, Ms. Russell 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:

What a **great bunch of footballing girls** we have this year. The girls have fought with all their hearts and put in every bit of energy they have into each and every game they have played even though they are a younger group and still **developing their skills**. We just got unlucky in our Mini 7s qualifier, our dreams being squashed by an older and stronger group of girls. Next year!!! In Rackard League we reached the semi-final and were sadly beaten by 1 point. I saw the girls play their best game all season and can see how they are **learning to work as a team and support each other**. Onwards and upwards for next year!!

I personally would like to thank all parents involved with these girls. It is difficult to organise trips to and from matches but believe me it is all worth it when you see all those girls **improve their skills and grow in confidence** on and off the pitch. And remember girls keep practicing those 'solos' over the

Class News contd.:

Ms. Ní Shúillebháin – 3rd & 4th Class contd.

In **music** we began Ukulele music lessons with our tutor Diarmuid Comerford and Music Generation Wexford. We have already had 4 lessons and learned so much! It's such an exciting initiative to be involved with. The students also sang their hearts out at **"The Big Sing"** for **Mental Health** on Friday 11th October in The Arklow Bay Hotel and we were so proud of them singing the song *"I'll be there for you"*!

This class are very **artistic** and have already experimented with lots of colour mixing. The children have produced some lovely autumn art. In **Literacy**, we have just finished our essays in the **Persuasive Writing** genre for the school Halloween competition entitled *"Only fruit and nuts should be given to Trick or Treaters"*.

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.

Finally, we loved the County Final Celebrations! Go Castletown! Enjoy your mid- term everyone.



Mr. Breen – 5th & 6th Class

We have had a busy and exciting first few weeks in Scoil Ghormáin Naofa. The boys and girls have settled in very well and are working exceptionally hard. **History** has been very interesting as we examined **the work of an archaeologist** and the first **emperor of China**. Some other interesting topics that we have been enjoying up to now are gymnastics and games during **P.E** where the class are showing great skills, painted fall swirls in **Art**, a discovery maths trail, passports as **Gaeilge** and we examined the characteristics of some unusual plants during **Science**.



The class also really enjoyed their trip to the beach to examine biodiversity up close along with their trip to the Library to meet **author and storyteller Patrick Ryan**. Congratulations to all who attended the Big Sing in Arklow (pictured above) as they performed excellently. Finally, a huge well done to all in 5th and 6th class, keep up the great work!

Ms. Morris' Class

A big welcome back to all of our brilliant students. We have had a super start to our new school year here in the Ahare room. All of the children came back to school **full of enthusiasm and delight** at seeing their friends again. We are all looking forward to a wonderful and exciting year ahead.

We are **learning about our timetables** since September and working hard at our **work stations**. We are learning lots of new things at **Circle Time**. The boys love singing their Good Morning song and telling their news. They also love the interactive books that we read at Circle Time and they especially loved "Don't hog the hedge", a story about a hedgehog that shows great kindness to his friends who need a cosy place to stay for hibernation!



We have learnt lots about **Autumn**, the Autumn colours, the changing leaves and the animals that hibernate. When some more colourful leaves fall we hope to go outside and make a **Hedgehog Hotel**...prices and rates will be competitive so look us up on Trip Advisor!

Sports News



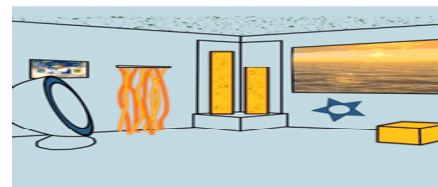
We had a wonderful week marking **European Week of Sport**! Many thanks to Mr. Breen who coordinated a **whole school circuit** including all ages and abilities. We pride ourselves on being an **inclusive school** and it was super to see all children accessing the same event with equal enjoyment. Thanks to Ms. McDevitt for the super soundtrack! Other activities included a **tag rugby lunchtime league** which was successfully run by our senior students. We feel it is important to **empower leadership in our students**. After Hallowe'en, **tag rugby coaching** in association with Gorey Rugby Club will begin. We thank Mick Bolger for his coaching in previous years and welcome Conor Savage to coach us this year. 3rd/4th class will commence **swimming lessons** after Hallowe'en. Such an active school!

Sensory Room

Our sensory room is a special space dedicated to **stimulating, developing and relaxing the senses**. While it provides relaxation by **eliminating distraction**, it also combines a range of stimuli to help children engage their senses.

Recently we have installed a tactile board on one of the walls in the room. The board contains items of different shapes, colours and textures which **aid fine and gross motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination**.

Individual sensory boxes are filled with items that are both visually and texturally attractive to children e.g. kinetic sand, fidget spinners, puzzles. Our **low lighting** includes a bubble tube light with fish which changes colour. This creates a calming environment which the children love to be around. **Fiona Byrne SNA**



Food Dudes Initiative

I am excited to welcome to Food Dudes initiative to our school. Food Dudes is an award winning curriculum-linked evidence-based **healthy eating programme**, developed to encourage children to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables. It is based on repeated tastings of fresh fruit and vegetables, rewards and positive role models. From November 18th, **daily deliveries of crisp, fresh fruit and vegetables** will be delivered to school. As an **active school**, we recognise the importance of a healthy diet and hope that this initiative will support that goal!



Student Council

A new Student Council has been elected. Ms. Whittle is delighted to welcome Diarmuid O'Shaughnessy, Kitt Kavanagh, Lee Kelly, John Allen, Robyn Maguire & Stephen O'Flaherty to this year's Council. The first meeting has taken place and it is clear that all members are **enthusiastic and eager to get to work**.



Our first activity as a Student Council will be to **listen to the suggestions of our peers** and work towards making our school a happier place for all. We are also coordinating the annual **Christmas Shoebox Appeal**. Notes have gone home and we would encourage you all to follow the 4 Ws. Something to write with, wash with, wear and a WOW item too! Please return all shoe boxes to school before **Thursday 7th November**.

Active School Flag



Pictured; Active School Flag Committee

More to follow in future issues on their plans for 2019/2020

Castletown Abú

We were delighted to welcome the **victorious County Final Castletown team** to our school. The team was delighted to display their silverware and the children were thrilled to share their celebrations! We were delighted too to welcome **Joe O'Shaughnessy**, GAA legend and our own board of management chairperson! The team requested another **rendition of the rousing rap** written by Ms. Ní Shuilleabháin. This rap was first performed for the team two days before the match and we are taking **full credit for the win** based on our motivational rap!! The rap went viral on Twitter with over 2.5 thousand views! Check out our Twitter for updates @Castletown_NS



Welcome to our new staff



A word from our Parents' Association

We would like to wish all our students a Happy Hallowe'en. We hope you really enjoy your mid-term break and get some well deserved rest after a **fantastic start to the school year**. Before the mid-term, we will have our **annual Hallowe'en Disco on Friday 25th at 5pm in The Golden Anchor**.

The Hallowe'en Disco is a hugely important and enjoyable event for our school. We encourage all students and parents to attend. The raffle **contributes to several events** in the school year. We hope to see you all there. **Spot prizes for best fancy dress which includes parents!!!**

Our **first PA meeting** for this school year was on Thursday the 10th of October, we thank all who came and especially thank new parents who came to help out.

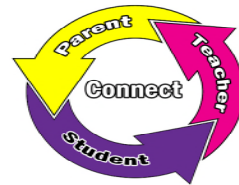
All parents are welcome to attend or add your number to our text group, all help is greatly appreciated. At last week's meeting we discussed our events for the following year including your Croghan Walk, Sports Day, Grandparents' Day etc. We were delighted help bring Ukuleles to our school and look forward to sponsoring more instruments in the future. Finally, we have to mention our village's **Senior Football County Triumph**, this is something that we have to cherish.



To see the school dressed in your team's colours, your reception for the team and the music and crafts you offered in support was truly special. Be very proud.

Oíche Shamhna Shona Daoibh.

James Neville, PA Secretary



Board of Management – a word of thanks

I would like to thank our **outgoing Board of Management** for their support, dedication and genuine interest in promoting our school to be the best that it can be. It has been a pleasure to work alongside Joe O'Shaughnessy (Chairperson), Mary Hearne, Louise Whittle, Concepta Church, Noel Ivanoff and for a block of time, Niamh Ní Shuilleabháin. I hope that they will **continue to be involved in the life of our school community**.

Details of elections for new board representatives will be communicated shortly.

