

Welcome to our
Newsletter!
Winter 2019

'Scoil Ghormáin Naofa' Newsletter

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Welcome note from the Principal.....

Season's greetings to all!

We have had a most **productive term** and the children and teachers are deserving of a well-earned rest! We have **diversified further** in the experiences that we offer students here at Scoil Ghormáin Naofa this term. We further developed our **debating interests** and are delighted to have progressed from the group stage. **Instrumentation has really soared** with the embedding of the ukulele in the culture of our school. We were thrilled to see it expand from Ms. Ní Shuilleabháin's room to accompanying junior infants in the Christmas concert. It is so hard to believe that the children are playing less than ten weeks!

We were delighted to have purchased **ten brand new iPads** for our students to use. This was in part, thanks to a **generous donation** from an anonymous benefactor – we are so grateful! This will serve to underpin the delivery of the **Digital Learning Framework** for schools which is currently being rolled out. While we love the use of iPads in moderation and in relation to education, we are mindful of the message that we give about the dangers of excessive screen time and address it regularly at Assembly. With this in mind, we **set a family Art challenge** in December for children and their families to create a Christmas decoration from **recycled materials**. We saw this as an opportunity to promote family time and less screen time, whilst continuing our journey to become a more **sustainable school**. We hope you enjoyed the challenge as much as we loved seeing the entries!

Once again, our **Christmas concert** was a huge success and I would like to acknowledge the work of all the staff and students in staging this event – a lot of work goes on behind the scenes! I would like to thank Fr. Eugene for allowing us to use the church for it. **Thanks also to Fr. Eugene, Fr. Pádraig, Fr. Hayes, Fr. David, Fr. Michael and Margaret Drew** for all their pastoral support this year. This is an extremely busy time for them and I hope they enjoy the rest in January!

I would like to **thank everyone** who has supported us in school in so many ways this term. There are too many to name individually such is the **enthusiasm and support** of all parents and staff.

I wish you all a peaceful Christmas and happy new year.

Emer Russell

Christmas Decoration Challenge



A sample of the entries from our **Christmas decoration challenge**. All items were made from recycled materials! **Well done to all families.**

Winter Illness.....

The season of winter brings a variety of illness and it tends to spread like wildfire in school. If your child is presenting with illness, please keep them home until they are better. For further information, please see the letter from the HSE on our website.



Reflection

Advent

Advent is a time to wait –
It's not a time to celebrate!
Count the days down one by one
Until the Advent time is done.
Christmas Day will soon be here!
Time for joy and time for cheer!

Grow in Love, Junior Infants



Dates to Remember

School Closes for Christmas;

Friday 20th December at 12 noon

School Re-opens;

Monday 6th January

Primary Language Curriculum Training;

Dates to be confirmed – 1 in Term 2 and 1 in Term 3. School will be closed for both

Mid-Term Break;

February 20th and 21st

St. Patrick's Day Bank Holiday;
16th and 17th March

First Confession for 2nd Class;
31st March 7pm

First Holy Communion;
24th May 11am

School email address:
cns.iaswx@gmail.com



School website address:
www.castletownnationalschool.ie

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

Class News:

Ms Hearne – Junior Infants

We are really looking forward to Christmas time here in Junior Infants. We have been learning all about the **story of Christmas** and learning about ways to prepare to **celebrate Jesus' birthday**. We have been busy learning our Christmas songs to sing, we have made decorations for our Christmas tree and we have been talking about how lucky we are to share this **time with our families**.

In **Aistear** this month, we were in charge of a Post Office and we talked to our local postman, Paul, about his job and about how busy the post office is at this time of the year. We posted a very important **letter to Santa** in the North Pole and we made Christmas cards and really enjoyed posting them to our families.

We also worked as elves in **Santa's workshop**, making toys and putting them in his sack for boys and girls. It was such a busy time!



We are learning more and more sounds each week and we are making a great effort to read words. It won't be long before we can read books all by ourselves!

In **Maths**, we have been **playing counting and adding games** and we now know how to write the numbers 1-5. It's fantastic!

In **Gaeilge**, we have learned about our bosca lóin and the lovely food we bring to school. We can also talk about the weather and each day a weather forecaster from the class tells us if the day is fuar or te, fluich or tirim.

We have been **hopping and jumping in PE** and have loved taking part in **Food Dudes**, getting the chance to taste lovely fruit and vegetables. We reached Paris in our *Run around Europe* challenge and celebrated with croissants by the Eiffel tower!

We are making great progress and are really enjoying our days in school. We can't wait to see what the new year brings.

Le gach dea ghúí don Nollaig agus guím gach rath oraibh go léir san athbhliain.

Mrs. Byrne –Senior Infants

How time flies! It really doesn't seem that long since our last newsletter. Senior infants have been very busy, learning and having some fun along the way! In **November**, we **especially remembered** all our loved ones who are no longer with us. We designed a flower for each one and made our own **Garden of Remembrance**. We have been doing lots of winter art and had some great fun making snow with shaving foam and glue. In **Aistear**, we looked at the theme of **The Post Office** and even had a visitor from our very own Paul the Postman, who was very accommodating in answering the many questions we had for him! We are now working away in **The Toy Workshop**, preparing all the gifts for Santa's arrival on the 24th. Once again, we have enjoyed **Ms. Whittle and Ms.**

Gilmartin Ryan coming to our classroom to help us with our Maths and English. We have also enjoyed reading with Harry and the parents. Thank you to **Anna and Kathleen**, mummies of Cian and Niall, who came to our classroom to tell us all about feet and teeth.



You all play such a big part in helping us to learn and we really appreciate everybody's input. We have begun forming our **capital letters** and we are learning all about full stops, question marks and excited marks (a.k.a. the exclamation mark). We went to the church last week to look at the **Advent wreath** and learn about the candles and what they symbolise. We are counting down the days on our Advent calendars in class. We wrote to Santa and are eagerly awaiting his reply. We know he is a very busy man this time of year! Finally, we have been working so hard in preparing for our Christmas performance on the 18th, we hope everyone will enjoy it. **Nollaig shona daoibh go léir!**

Curriculum News

New Primary Language Curriculum

As you will be aware from Dojo posts, we are working hard to engage in the implementation of the new **Primary Language Curriculum**. The new curriculum **focuses on the language learning journey** and its development. The **rationale** underpinning the new PLC looks at how language shapes who we are, how it is a developmental and integrated process, how language is contextual and how children learn best through interactions. We see the **Aistear** model as being extremely effective for the promotion of **language development through play**. The new PLC has now been opened up to senior classes so we will be working to learn more about how to embed it in our teaching of older students in the coming months.



To facilitate this process, there will be **two half day closures**; one in term 2 and one in term 3 for professional development in this area. As soon as we have dates, we will inform parents. If you would like to learn more about this new curriculum, have a look at the following website :

<https://www.ncca.ie/en/primary/resources-for-parents>

What is the Digital Learning Framework?



The **Digital Learning Framework** has been developed to assist schools in effectively embedding digital technologies into teaching and learning. It provides clarity for school leaders and education providers in how to create a shared vision for how technology can best meet the needs of all learners.

Maths Wall

Our most recent focus for maths is **Fractions and Decimals** which brings a new maths competition! **Volunteers from 5th and 6th class** have been very helpful in running the competition and **supporting the younger classes** in making an entry. Both the junior and senior competition questions are **very tricky** for this topic so best of luck to all involved. It is great to see so many making such an effort in trying to solve the problems. Well done and thank you to all the volunteers!

Class News contd.:

Ms. D'Arcy and Ms. McDevitt 1st & 2nd Class;

Another busy term and the **excitement of Christmas** is truly on its way in our classroom. We have been working very hard. We were **developing our poetry skills** by writing our own poems, we adapted 'Mary had a Little Lamb' by putting in different names and animals some of them sounded very funny! We also wrote some poems about our favourite colour. In SESE we read about a girl who was **homeless in Ireland** and it made us all realise **how lucky we all are** to have a cosy home with nice warm dinners each day and a loving family, especially at this time of the year. We looked at different countries around the world and researched some of their **traditions at Christmas time**. We all told teacher about our Christmas traditions at home too. We had lots of stories. We are still **running to Paris** - we must be nearly there at this stage!! With all the wet weather, Ms D'Arcy and Ms McDevitt seem to be very fond of doing lots of guided dancing in the classroom. We really do love it but we are not so sure about the squat workouts!! During art we learned about the **artist Van Gogh** and discovered that his brother encouraged him to be an artist and his painting only became famous after he died. We then recreated one of his most famous paintings '**Starry Night**' using the **swirling effect** with our paint brushes that Vincent Van Gogh used himself.



We have created many winter art pieces and especially loved creating our decorated trees with crepe paper on a winter background. We were also **developing our drawing skills** by drawing the main reindeer himself 'Ruldolf'. So that's a wrap for an exciting term!

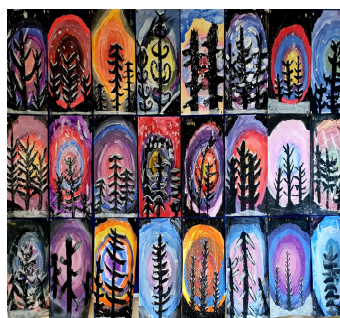
Happy Christmas to everyone ☺

Ms Ní Shúilleabháin – 3rd & 4th Class

We have had an exciting and busy term. **In History**, we learned about **The Stone Age** and **The Bronze Age**. We also delved into the fascinating world of **The Vikings** and researched our family names. We found out that many of us are of Viking and Norman descent. In **PE**, we were **running to Paris**- we should arrive there in time for Christmas! We have also enjoyed swimming this term.

This term we have been also working hard on the basics! **Tables, Mental Maths, Reading, Irish Vocabulary, Handwriting and Neatness** are all so important and 3rd and 4th have made good progress. The students have really become experts in the genre of **Persuasive Writing** at this stage and they **WILL** convince you that **"Winter really is the best season of all!"**

The theme of **Winter** has inspired some very **creative art** in our classroom. Our painted **Winter Trees** are beautiful. We made candles **in Religion** and discussed the season of Advent. We are so excited about Christmas and cannot wait to perform **"Let it Snow"** at the concert for you! All of the rehearsal is paying off for these budding musicians. Enjoy your break everyone and see you in the New Year!



GAA News

Boys GAA;

Since Hallowe'en it has been an exciting time on the GAA front as the boys Rackard League team **made history** by winning the B football championship in a hard fought encounter in St. Patrick's Park. The team progressed to the final with wins over Bunclody, Crossabeg and Ballindaggin in the semi-final. These wins set us up for the final against Adamstown.

It was a very hard fought encounter in a wind-swept St. Patrick's Park. The boys had to put in a very strong performance, especially in the second half to overcome the Adamstown outfit. They had to use all their **skill and teamwork** to break down the opposing defence. The entire panel put in great performances which is a **true reflection of the effort and dedication** shown by them in their training, leaving them worthy winners on the day.

They showed great interest, discipline, work rate and team work during each and every day they took to the field and represented their schools and club with pride.

Finally, I would like to thank all who help out with the GAA, especially the parents for their great support along with Kevin Morris, Patricia Sadlier, Matthew Meleady, Carmel, Ms. Russell and Michael Kavanagh for all the organising, training and support throughout the term.

We are looking forward to the **Rackard League hurling and Mini 7s competitions** in the New Year.

Mr. Breen

Girls GAA

Well what a **fantastic year** for the footballing girls of Castletown, Tara hill and Coolgreany. As a mentor/coach I couldn't be prouder of the **effort, skills and team spirit** these girls have developed over the year. Reaching the **semi final of the 'Rising Stars' competition** was the highlight of the year. The girls fought hard and showed **great determination** on the field. They encouraged each other throughout and our opponents got lucky leaking in two goals. Losing by a point was hard but hopefully has made the girls more driven to win next year. I think 2020 is our year. **Castletown abú!**
Berney White

Parking at School Gates



We are imploring parents to park carefully and safely at home time. The designated **disabled parking spot** is needed for some family members so should not be used by others, please. Not all disabilities are visible.

With limited parking spaces, we urge parents to park further down and walk to school gate rather than on double yellow lines. We worry that about children crossing between illegally parked cars and possible accidents. **Please put children's safety first.**

Class News contd.:

Mr. Breen – 5th/6th Class



Mr. Breen's class have had a very eventful term in school with lots of **memorable experiences**. They have all worked extremely hard and here is a little reminder of some of the things we have been up to in 5th and 6th class. The children have been really enjoying their art work while creating cool **paint swirls, rainbow names, portraits and tessellation** just to mention a few. The class have been tackling **division, lines and angles, multiplication and shapes during Maths** and have shown great enthusiasm during our **table shootouts!**



Science proved to be very interesting as we completed experiments during science week along with examining various **famous scientists**. The boys and girls also created impressive group projects on the **planets in our solar system** while making **good use of the school's iPads**. We have also enjoyed our **lunch time Rugby blitz** where the boys and girls have shown excellent team work and co-ordination. Well done to the eventual **winners, South Africa**. They also have put fantastic work into preparations for our **Christmas concert** and showed very impressive dramatic skills. The class are undoubtedly looking forward to a well-deserved break. Merry Christmas!

Ms. Morris' Class

What a great half term we had here in the Ballynacree room. The boys worked extremely hard on all the work that they were doing and gave everything their best effort.

The boys tried really hard at Food Dudes. While some of the fruits and vegetables were not too popular everyone at least tried the different foods. They all got their rewards and are looking forward to getting their lunchboxes in the New Year.

We have been learning about the Zones of Regulation in class. The Zones help people to identify how they are feeling at that moment and if they are in a calm and relaxed state, ready to work. It also helps people to identify different triggers which may cause their mood to change and also ways of changing your mood. We have found that exercise is a great way of bringing your mood into a relaxed state.

Everyone in the class is very excited about Christmas and we have been learning about the Post Office, sending letters and receiving them. In Aistear some of the boys have tried making toys in the Toy Shop area. We have also been learning about different animals that enjoy the colder weather.

We are all looking forward to Christmas and we wish all of you a very Happy and Peaceful New Year. See you in 2020!



Music and the Arts

Christmas Concert rehearsal! We hope you enjoyed our rendition of Let It Snow!! We thought 3rd/4th were super on ukulele and glockenspiel!



Shoebox Appeal

A word from the organisers.....I would like to thank you very much for **taking part in the Christmas Shoebox Appeal** this year with Team Hope. I am delighted to say that **9678 gift-filled shoeboxes** are on their way from Co. Wexford to some very grateful children who will be very excited to receive them. 7898 are heading to Swaziland, Africa with the remaining 1780 to Moldova in Eastern Europe.

If you would like any more information about the work of Team Hope please contact me or go online to www.teamhope.ie. Thanks again for all your help in making this possible.
Lorna Burt, Christmas Shoeboxes Appeal coordinator Co. Wexford



Student Council

Students' Corner

Photos of some of our successful teams.....



Rising Star GAA Semi-finalists



Rackard League Roinn B Title Holders



Victorious Debating Team

We are so **grateful** to our teachers, SNAs, secretary and coaches who all **worked so hard** to coordinate games and activities for our students this year. Thank you all – Emer Russell

Green School Flag

This term has seen our Greenschool Committee becoming more present in our school. They are taking on the job of **checking our bins randomly** during the week very seriously. As a school we are making a **conscious effort to bring home our lunch waste** and only put in the bin school waste such as paper, pencil parings and classroom waste. This will therefore reduce our school waste. As we are a world now that realises we all need to make an effort we encourage **parents at home to talk to their children** about what things are recyclable, this is a life skill in itself. Our focus with this year's flag is **litter and global citizenship**. The Greenschool Committee do have to make a comment though when they started checking the bins....the staff room was the worst!!! *'Teachers you need to make more of an effort!!!'*.



Christmas Day



Ms. Byrne is looking for lots of singers to sing at **Christmas Day Mass**. Mass will **take place at 11.00am** and singers should be at the church by 10.45am. Ms. Byrne would love a good turnout as she knows there are **so many great singers** in Scoil Ghormáin Naofa!



St. Stephen's Day Walk

Please support this fundraiser for Castletown Liam Mellows GAA Club!

Active School Flag

This term we have elected a **new committee**, the following are the new members; Dylan Bealin, Cillian Blackwell, Lizzy Morris, Bill O' Brien, Fraya O' Brien, Kayleigh Kavanagh, Caoimhe Jordan. As their first task, they had to introduce themselves to the classes and highlight that if anyone had **Active School suggestions** they should come to them with it. Their second and very responsible



job was to help Ms. Byrne with **Food Dudes**. As well as being active and moving, Active Schools promotes **healthy eating** and therefore a **healthy lifestyle**. Each morning they had to distribute the fruit and vegetables to the classes and after lunch collect up all the packaging for recycling.

In **curriculum news** the primary literacy fundamental movement skills worked on this term have been walking, running, landing, balancing, skipping and hopping.

The strands taught this term have been games, gymnastics, athletics, dance, aquatics.

Classes have also been **'Running Around Europe'**. Each class has chosen a destination and landmark in Europe and must jog that distance from Ireland so, for example 1st/2nd chose Paris and the Eiffel Tower. The wet weather has hampered us but the classes are getting there!

Next term we look forward to **Climbing the Heights** where each class chooses a mountain height and we skip that distance.

Mr. Breen also rang a lunch time **tag rugby blitz** which was thoroughly enjoyed by classes from 3rd to 6th. South Africa and Ireland were in the final, South Africa were victorious!

Ms. D'Arcy and The Active School Committee.

A word from our Board of Management

Thank you and Welcome. We have reached the end of the current term for our board of management. I would like to **sincerely thank** the outgoing board on both a **personal and professional** level. They gave me the warmest of welcomes to our school and have **wholeheartedly supported the work of the school** along the way. I have at all times found our meetings to be pleasant, constructive and respectful and I am very appreciative of this. I wish them all the best.

Outgoing board members: Joe O'Shaughnessy, Louise Whittle, Mary Hearne, Concepta Church, Noel Ivanoff, Niamh ní Shuilleabháin (pre-appointment)

I am **delighted and confident** about our newly formed board of management for the 2019-2023 term. They have volunteered of their **time and expertise for the good of the school** and I look forward to us having a fruitful term.

Incoming board members: Joe O'Shaughnessy (Chairperson and Patron's rep), Fr. David Brough (Patron's Rep) Louise Whittle (teachers' rep), Sinéad Fanning and James Neville (parents' reps), Séamus Kavanagh and Mary Hearne (community reps).



A word from our Parents' Association

We kicked off the school year with our annual **Hallowe'en School Disco** at the Golden Anchor which was an **outstanding success** with a fantastic attendance on the night. Thank you to all the parents, teachers and most importantly our children who supported us at this event- great fun all round. Because of our **funding raising efforts** on the night, we were able to contribute towards **"Music Generation"** which the 3rd/4th Class kids are really enjoying at the moment! But lots more fun and events to follow in the new year.

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The **role of the Parents' Association (PA)** is to work in partnership with the whole school community to add that little bit extra to our children's time at Castletown NS. It acts as a **forum to support and empower parents** to be active in the best interests of their children's educational experience. We would like to thank each and every parent for their support during these **fundraising activities** and as always there are parents who go above and beyond to help out and we are extremely lucky to have such a fantastic group of parents in our school. We are looking for a parent to act as Secretary on our PA. If you would like to **volunteer**, we would be delighted to hear from you. **Please contact me or Caroline Dixon (Treasurer).**

We will hold our **next PA meeting in January 2020**. The final date will be confirmed early in the new year. We have lots of events to look forward to in the new year such as Grandparents' Day, Easter Egg Hunt, Communion Celebrations, Croghan Walk and Sports Day. Again we would really welcome the continued support from all of our parents during these events.

We would like to wish our children, teachers and parents a very Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year.

Margaret Tallon, Chairperson

