

Welcome to our
Newsletter!
Winter 2029

'Scoil Ghormáin Naofa' Newsletter

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Welcome note from the Principal.....

We made it! A full and happy first term with all in good health – what a success! I would like to **commend all our staff and students** on their **bravery, resilience and dedication** as they returned to an unknown situation back in September. All adapted incredibly quickly to the most surreal of situations. Our little **junior infants** were welcomed by masked faces on their first day of school and we look forward to the day that they can see our smiles! We are so proud of them, they have taken it all in their stride. Pods, bubbles, sanitising, social distancing – we hope that in the near future these words will become obsolete but in the meantime, they have been **embraced** so correctly. All children accepted the importance of their role in **keeping Covid out of our school**.

Despite so many restrictions, we have found many ways to keep school **vibrant and interesting**. Now, more than ever, we are committed to **creating a space** that is **fun and worry free** with a **structure of learning** that was missed during lockdown. The creation of our **outdoor classroom**, a work in progress, has been a huge hit. I have heard **tin whistles** being played there, lunch being enjoyed there and **outdoor lessons** being conducted there. It is such a great asset to our school and we look forward to **developing it further** in future. Many thanks to parents who donated so generously to it. **Movement breaks** too have been quite the revelation! As **Active School flag holders**, we have a disposition towards outdoor activity but the introduction of the timetabled daily movement breaks has had a positive knock on effect for **learning and motivation**. After the break, children are **refreshed and energised**. We will certainly keep them up after COVID!

Parents and grandparents – we miss your physical presence! We look forward to a time when we can resume **paired reading** and so many other wonderful initiatives that you are involved in. Thank you to those who have been working remotely to continue the great work of the Parents' Association. Their generosity has enabled us to provide an **exciting elf visit** and **hot chocolate and Christmas cupcakes** for our older classes with more activities to come in the new year.

As Christmas approaches, I hope that students, staff and families enjoy a well-earned rest. We think of those who are **separated from loved ones** this Christmas and hope that you will be reunited soon. We look forward to the **prosperity and hope** that 2021 brings.

Merry Christmas, Emer Russell

*Junior infants dressed up for Festive Friday!



Reflection



Dates to Remember

School Closes for Christmas;
Tuesday 22nd December at 12 noon

School Re-opens;
Wednesday 6th January

Mid-Term Break;
February 18th and 19th

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

Mass Times

9pm Christmas Eve (fully booked)
11.30 Christmas Day (places free at time of going to press)

School email address:
cns.iaswx@gmail.com



School website address:
www.castletownnationalschool.ie
School Twitter account:
[@castletown_ns](https://twitter.com/castletown_ns)



**Dr. Tom Kennedy's visit to
Ms. Byrne's class**

Class News:

Ms Hearne – Junior/Senior Infants

Well, what a fantastic term we have had in Junior and Senior Infants! **Junior Infants have settled in so well** to school life and are working very hard and learning lots. **Senior Infants are the perfect role models** for our 18 new children and they too do great work each day.



One of our favourite times of the day is our **Aistear** time and we have had fun, incorporating themes like The Café, The Doctor's Surgery and most recently, Santa's Workshop.

Our **reading** is coming on in leaps and bounds, especially in senior infants but in junior infants we have started blending our sounds to make words and have begun our **very first stories!**

We are learning lots of **new words and phrases in Gaeilge** and love using these throughout the day. We have talked about *bréagáin* and all about the *bronntanais* we will hopefully receive from *Daidí na Nollag*.

Our classroom is always full of colour with our **beautiful art work** and we have enjoyed painting the different animals and birds we learn about in **SESE**.

Everyone in the classroom is looking forward to Santa's visit and to spending some **time with our families** over the holidays but we also can't wait to get back in the new year and continue all the lovely learning in our busy little classroom.

Mrs. Byrne – Snr infants/1st Class

As we approach the end of our first term, I would firstly like to **congratulate the boys and girls** of senior infants and 1st class on their **ability to adapt** to all the new procedures and routines in line with COVID-19 safety guidelines. I am **very proud** of you all. I think everyone has really enjoyed the movement breaks and I am sure these will continue way beyond this pandemic. I think it is important that we take something **positive** from this whole experience. We all work extra hard (teacher included), when we know we will be rewarded with some extra outside time!

Although school life may be slightly different to previous years, we have had many great experiences to date; **Science week** and classroom experiments, a visit from **Little Medical School and RTE**, a **Hallowe'en disco**, weekly bubble assemblies, library story times and most recently, our Christmas concert. We have enjoyed the many new themes we have encountered in **Aistear** this year and a **visit from Dr. Tom Kennedy** last week was very interesting. We enjoyed looking inside his doctor's bag and trying out his stethoscope. We have studied animals who live in very cold climates; the polar bear from the Arctic and the penguin from the Antarctica. We then created these animals using puffy paint in **art**. Other seasonal art lessons have included winter birds, winter window scenes and mischievous elves. We have just recently completed 3D creations, linking maths and art. I must commend all children on their efforts. A special well done to **Henri, Bart, Izzy and J.J.**, who were the overall winners, with many deserving runners up also. Well done to everyone.

Class News contd.:

Mrs. Byrne –Snr infants/1st Class contd.



Bart's Rocket Scene



Izzy's Bethlehem Scene

Thanks to **Ms. Carroll** who keeps us focused with regular maths competitions around the various curriculum topics. The pupils of senior infants and 1st class complete calendar questions in English and Irish each morning and they are really beginning to grasp time telling. We are currently working on our **narrative theme** in English and are busy creating Christmas stories. Our repertoire of Irish poems and songs is growing weekly. During November, we **focused on our loved ones** who are no longer with us and the whole school worked together to create a Garden of Remembrance. We studied some of the saints during this month also. We have now progressed to **Advent, a time for preparing for Christmas and the birth of Jesus**. A very unwelcome visitor appeared in our classroom recently. Yes, the Elf! He is getting up to **all sorts of mischief** and we look forward to seeing his antics each day.

I would like to take this opportunity to **wish you all a very happy and safe Christmas**. Thank you all for support to date, Nicky



JJ's Farm



Henri's Castle



Curriculum News

STEAM – Science, Technology, Art, Engineering, Mathematics

We have had a very **enriching term of STEAM** here in Scoil Ghormáin Naofa. We began with a visit from the **Little Medical School**, a visit that was even more exciting as it was recorded for **RTÉ's News2day** programme. Students learned about the pre frontal cortex and other **parts of the brain**. They enjoyed experiments about the spinal cord and some got to try out the brain helmets!

We enjoyed a different sort of **Science Week** this year, with the use of very interesting **webinars**. Thanks to **Science Foundation Ireland**, we had access to some gross, some thrilling and some interesting tutorials! We learned about germs, mammals, electricity and forensics to name a few topics.



6th class were lucky enough to secure a booking with the highly sought after **Microsoft Dream Space workshops**. This **interactive** 2-hour workshop enabled the class to engage with **coding and algorithms**. It was great to have access to so many ipads after the recent purchases of more!

Literacy Genre for the term: Narrative

Well done to our winners in the Narrative writing competition and thank you to Ms. Gilmartin Ryan for coordinating.

Jnr infants: Hayley

Snr. Infants: Anna and Rachel

1st class Robert and Fiadh

2nd class: Kate and Lily Mae

3rd class: Hannah and Éabha

4th class: Ellen and Isabelle

5th class: Cathar and Jessica

6th class: Cillian and Charlie

Commendation: Eoghan, Leon, Ella, Ross, Neasa, Eleana, Cian, Christopher, Lexi, Millie, Micahel, Caoimhe, Kayleigh, Harry, Thomás, Fraya, Sophia, Mary, Jamie.

Class News contd.:

Ms. D'Arcy and Ms. McDevitt 2nd and 3rd Class;

It has been wonderfully, heart-warming for us to welcome back all the boys and girls to school, especially our class. We missed them so much. Despite the year we have had and COVID restrictions the **children have been fantastic in embracing their new environment**. Also, despite the restrictions 2nd/3rd have safely had a super, busy, fun, and active term with their friends. We were very happy to welcome new student, **Hannah D'Arcy to 3rd class and Oliver O' Reilly back to 2nd class.**



Since our return in August, we have really enjoyed the curriculum, learning so much **Gaeilge**, reading fact and fiction stories, writing stories and poems. In **Maths** we have learned so many things about time, shape and space, length, money etc... We finished the **Stay Safe** programme at the end of November and learned so many important things about keeping safe and protected, remember the rule, **Say No, Get Away, Tell**. We really enjoyed **Scooter day** and look forward to the next one. At **Hallowe'en** we rocked the Ghostbusters dance and song. We also dressed up and had an outdoor disco. **Science week** was a real hit too learning lots from **online tutorials** and we did a variety of experiments and activities in our pods too. We have never been **so active** doing gymnastics, athletics, dance, games etc... We love our daily movement breaks and the fresh air. We have enjoyed so much fun art as well such as clay pencil holders, lollipop pumpkins, Greek scratch pots, chalk Northern Lights, penguins with personality etc... We even managed to squeeze in lots of history and geography too.

We were so happy to have our annual **Christmas concert** this year albeit with a twist. We hope you like our catchy 'Santa Bring me a Dinosaur,' song and 'Silent Night,' in English and as Gaeilge. Feel free to join in and clap along.



The following children from 3rd class made their long-awaited **First Holy Communion** on the 9th December Aidan Hempenstall, Caoimhe Kinsella, Stephen O' Flaherty, Oisín White, Lillian Scallan, Éabha O' Shaughnessy, Jack Tallon, Charlotte Walsh, Ellie Byrne, Kayleigh Kavanagh. A Communion at Christmas is a first, one they will never forget. They were all wonderful and it was **joyous occasion**. Tabitha Byrne, Michael Kenny, Caroline Kelly, Patrick Fanning and Jim Kinsella look forward to making their communion in April.

We all look forward to what will hopefully be a better 2021.

Nollag Shona agus Athbhliain Faoi Mhaise ó Rang a 2 agus a 3

Class News contd.:

Mr. Breen – 4th and 5th 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 4th and 5th class. The children have been really enjoying their art work while creating cool **paint swirls**, **Minecraft**, **portraits and tessellations** 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 timed tables challenges!



Science proved to be very interesting as we completed experiments during science week along with viewing various online **webinars** on topics such as the **power of electric currents**. 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 ball games and team circuits during **PE**. They also put fantastic work into preparations for our **Christmas performance** and showed very impressive dramatic skills. The class are certainly looking forward to a well-deserved break. Merry Christmas!



Class News contd.:

Ms. Ní Shúilleabháin – 6th Class

6th Class have enjoyed a **great beginning** to their final year at Scoil Ghormain Naofa. This class is one bursting with **enthusiasm and talent** in so many areas- **art, sport, drama, academics, debating** (team pictured right) and even **painting benches** outdoors!

The seasons have inspired some very **creative artwork** in our classroom. **Autumn trees and beautiful winter scenes** were proudly displayed. These children are inspired artists and continue to improve their skills.

In **Science**, we enjoyed webinars and zoom lectures on many topics during science week. The highlight was an online workshop with the Blackrock Observatory, Co. Cork about the **NASA Space Station**. This integrated with our research about Space and The Moon.

Narrative Writing was our main focus for this term and we have produced excellent Halloween and Christmas essays.

In **music**, we have enjoyed lots of **"listening to music"** lessons (no singing- Covid restrictions!). We listened to spooky classical music at Halloween and really enjoyed learning about the life and music of **David Bowie** and the band **Queen**. We also performed a recitation of **"Song of the Witches"** from Macbeth in costume, which was enjoyable.



Our **Santa 5km Dash** was the highlight of this term. I cannot believe that we raised over **€3,000** for **St. Vincent de Paul** charity. The combination of community spirit, fitness and fun, beautiful views and lovely weather made for the perfect day. Well done to everyone!

We are so excited about Christmas and really hope you enjoy our recording of **"The Grinch"** in the school concert DVD. We certainly had a great time performing it! Enjoy your break everyone and looking forward to **lots of hard work... and fun** in the **New Year!**



Class News contd.:

The Ahare Room

Guten Tag. Hola. Olá. Dia Dhuit. Ciao. Salut. Hello!

We have had a really busy but brilliant first term. Congratulations to the boys for showing such wonderful resilience and coping so well with all the new procedures in line with COVID 19 safety guidelines and a new teacher as well. Thanks to Finola for all her kindness, work and support. Together we have made our classroom a place of learning, respect and fun. We have had many great experiences to date; Science week and our fantastic classroom experiments. Hugo and Nathaniel acted as engineers and tested '**the strength of paper**'. We have learned about **Number**, Time and **Shapes** in Maths and made posters of **2D shapes** and actually constructed several **3D shapes**. Nathaniel has learned about a great Greek mathematician called **ERATosthenes**. We are looking at **Tessellations** [courtesy of the imprint of a soccer ball on our window] and we have been linking maths and art. Nathaniel won a prize for his work with Equivalent Fractions, while Hugo won for his writing, both boys won prizes for Science.



Some of the highlights in **Geography** have been learning about Castletown, We have learned about many Wexford towns and landmarks such as Ferns castle, Enniscorthy castle and the majestic **Hook Lighthouse** and then Leinster and all the provinces of Ireland. We have taken a virtual tour of **Paris, London** and **Rome**. We can now say '**Hello**' in many different languages. We have studied The Solar System and have learned a **Mnemonic** to remember the order of planets from the sun. This led us to look at the seasons and we have integrated SESE with Art. We have studied animals around the world from **Mammals, Vertebrates, Invertebrates, Amphibians** and **Marsupials** and we focused on animals living in Ireland, Australia and those who live in very cold climates; the polar bear from the **Arctic** and the penguin from the **Antarctica**. To help the small winter birds we set up a feeding table outside and the boys are often '**on guard**' keeping the big birds away. We have learned about the **7 continents** and the **5 oceans**. Nathaniel continues to produce wonderful cartoons and scripts each day.

Active School Flag

COVID has done nothing to dampen our love of activity! In October, we enjoyed **Scooter Day** and an outdoor **Hallowe'en disco!** **Basketball** and **football** are enjoyed on yard daily. Regular PE lessons are beneficial in terms of fitness and **both mental and physical health**. After Christmas we look forward to resuming **tag rugby** and **GAA coaching** in school. We hope to take up **swimming** again in the next academic year



Board of Management

Many thanks to the members of our Board of Management for their **ongoing support** of our school. We have always been fortunate in working with a team who want only the **best for our school**. We wish them a very Merry Christmas.

Chairperson: Joe O'Shaughnessy (pictured right with Ms. Ní Shúilleabháin), Séamus Kavanagh, Sinead Fanning, James Neville, Mary Hearne, Louise Whittle/Paula D'Arcy



A time to give.....

Traditionally our school donates generously to the Shoebox Appeal. The physical shoeboxes were not an option this year so our noble 6th class students under the direction of their very charitable teacher undertook a **5km Santa Dash** in aid of **St. Vincent de Paul, Gorey**.

A **fantastic day** was had by all. Classes (in their bubbles!) danced on yard to Christmas music as the atmosphere built up to a crescendo! We were delighted to welcome the **Gardaí** to give some motivational words and the siren to start the run. The **sun was shining** and the mood was just great.



Our **super parents and teachers** ran and stewarded encouraging the children as they ran and walked. **Donal Molloy** provided a delicious lunch for afterwards and **Fiona Blackwell** donated yummy hot chocolates to all the participants.

The benefits of the run were far reaching. There was an atmosphere of **solidarity and friendship**. The **training with Fiona** and the run itself were advantageous for **fitness and mental health** and it was all topped off with the incredible raising of **€3,088 for Vincent de Paul!** We are told that times are especially tough this year and that the centre is most grateful to the class.

Well done everyone!

Parents' Association

Seasons Greetings All,

As 2020 comes to a close we can all agree it has been a very different year for parents, teachers/support staff and students alike. One thing is for sure, we appreciate the great job our school does even more, now we have had a **taste of home schooling!**

We would like to **thank everybody** who has supported the Parents' Association in 2020 and look forward to 2021 and what it brings us. We would also like to thank Ms. Russell and all the staff of the school for a **fantastic Christmas production** and a great year of adapting to change so well.

There will be communication in January about our next meeting and as always we **welcome new faces and ideas**.

From all in the Parents' Association, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

