

St. Mary's BNS Christmas Newsletter 2017



Attendance Drive

What can I say about our fantastic pupils and their families when it comes to regular attendance! We encourage regular attendance and ask that a note/call be sent if pupils are sick or absent for any reason. We run many incentives to encourage pupils to come to school as it is well known that those who attend regularly have the best chance of progress in school. Each month, we give a trophy and 'Homework Off' vouchers to the class with the best average attendance. Each term, we reward the children who have not missed a day and at the end of the year, we give a gold medal to those who have not missed a day and a silver medal to those who missed from 1-4 days. Of course we understand that children get sick and for this and other reasons, cannot come to school.

We ask that, if possible, holidays are not taken during school term as children can miss a lot of work. I send a note to parents to remind them when children have missed 10/15 days and am obliged to make a report to TUSLA (child and family agency) when children have missed 20 days. If your child has a doctor or hospital appointment, please try to send them to school afterwards and let the teacher know they will be coming in, so that they will be marked present. Thanks so much to all the parents too, for ensuring that children come to school every day. We appreciate your effort too!

Welcome to our annual Christmas Newsletter where we bring you up to date on events in St. Mary's BNS since September 2017.

Please read on...

This year was an historical year for St. Mary's BNS as we welcomed girls from St. Brigid's Primary School into 2nd and 3rd classes as we prepare for our eventual amalgamation with St. Brigid's. All boys and girls seem to have settled well into St. Mary's. They are keeping in touch with their classmates in St. Brigid's and have had a few "get togethers" in the playground and for school activities. They are also looking forward to seeing each other's Christmas performances this week. We welcome all the children who have joined us from other schools this year too, either in Ireland or abroad and we hope they are enjoying their new school! I hope they have felt the "Haddier" welcome! Our 1st class boys remained in St. Brigid's

this year, another new for us, but Mrs. Hogan and I keep in touch regularly about their progress and I love to call to see them! We are always sorry to say goodbye to pupils who have had to leave us for many different reasons, and hope that they will keep in touch and call back to visit. Our 2016 6th class, who are now in secondary schools in the area, call back regularly to see us and keep us informed of their progress.

We are delighted to welcome back Ms. Sheena Noonan and Mrs. Alison Reid after the births of their babies Alice and James. We said goodbye to our SNA, Stephen Kenny as he moved to take up a new position.

New School Building Update

Unfortunately, as you all know by now, progress on our new school building has stopped and the builder has left the site. A meeting was held recently between the Department of Education and Skills, the design team and Boards of Managements of both St. Brigid's and St. Mary's to outline the plan from now on. Regular updates on the situation have been mailed to parents. We are really disappointed with the current situation but life goes on in both schools and staff, parents and children are continuing with the good work done in our schools! Much preparation has been done over the past number of years in anticipation of our eventual amalgamation and Principals and teachers are working together towards this. Boys and girls from our 2nd and 3rd classes meet regularly to keep in touch with their friends!

We hope to have a new school by September 2019 and look forward to moving in! For the moment, we have stopped all fundraising for our new school and have almost €100,000 in our joint fundraising account which will be used specifically for the "extras" on our Wish List for St. Christopher's Primary School! What an amazing amount of money to raise in such a short time by a fantastic school community. We thank all of you who have contributed in any way, big or small!

Fundraising at our Annual Christmas Fair

This year, a decision was made, to direct all funds raised at our Annual Christmas Fair towards the large cost of providing extra activities in both our schools...basketball, tennis, dance/fitness, chess, drama, art/crafts, choir, GAA, swimming etc. While the Department of Education provides some funds, it is never enough to pay for all expenses. Our Christmas Fair, held on 2nd December, attracted many visitors. There was a wide selection of stalls, art and crafts, cakes and goodies, cards, bric-a-brac, toys, books, face-painting, pastries, a Café and lots more. Thanks so much to the parents who prepared the crafts, to those who worked on the stalls, to those who organised the printing of flyers and posters, to the parents who delivered the flyers in the neighbourhood, the face painters, the "baristas" in our Café, the tarot card reader, those who organised and sold raffle tickets, and the many other helpers on the day. A special thanks to the organising committee, Dympna, Petra and Jen! Let's not forget our fab secretaries Sharon and Frances who work so hard in preparing for the fair! Without the help and enthusiasm of our school community, we couldn't have done it! Thanks to the boys and girls for their donations of toys and books to sell. We were entertained on the day by the boys and girls from our school choir, led by Ms. Aoife O'Flynn! Thanks to the choir too. Lots of families from both schools supported on the day and got some great Christmas gifts. An amazing sum of over €6,550 was raised and will be divided between the schools.



Sport in St. Mary's BNS

Tennis

Our 3rd classes enjoyed Tennis with Debbie from Tennis4kids every Friday morning. The children look forward to their lesson and their skills are improving all the time. Debbie will be back after Easter when the sun is shining, to work with 2nd classes! In the meantime, check out the Parks Tennis at www.parkstennis.ie for lessons in Herbert Park on Saturday mornings for boys and girls of all ages. There is a nominal charge for these lessons and well worth checking out! Many of our pupils take part in the Tennis coaching and leagues in the Parks Tennis...a great, and cheap way to improve on those skills learned in school, and good fun!

GAA

This year, once again, under the expertise of Ms Ryan, Ms Regan and Ms. Mc Manamon, our GAA training took place in Herbert Park and Clanna Gael Football Club. Each Monday, the boys practised their skills and matches took place weekly in the Dublin League. The boys from 5th and 6th class played as part of the senior football team. They played 3 matches and while they did not progress to

the later stages of the league, they enjoyed the experience and some of them have joined the local GAA club, Clanna Gael, where they are now playing on teams in a local league. If you are interested in information about Clanna Gael, you can contact them on 01 6604064 or Ms. Ryan can put you in touch with the coaches there.

The boys from 3rd, 4th and 5th class played in the Go Games South. They played 5 games in total and made great progress over the tournament and will no doubt be ready for next year's senior competition.

Coaches from Clanna Gael are currently working with children from 2nd classes in both schools so we look forward to very promising players for our school team in the coming years!

Thanks to all our regular supporters and those who gave lifts! We appreciate your support!

Chess Club

Once again, we are so lucky that the fantastic Mr. Peter Lynch, a retired past teacher in St. Mary's, returned again in a voluntary capacity, to run our very successful Chess Club, each afternoon from Tuesday to Friday for all classes from 2nd to 6th. Mr. Lynch also, very kindly works with some children helping them with Maths and English.

There are 106 children playing chess this term from 2nd to 6th class. We are delighted too, to welcome our girls to the leagues. Mrs. Hogan has also employed a chess coach, Ms. April Cronin, to work with the girls in St. Brigid's. Our term leagues are reaching their conclusion and our main leagues will start in January. There are 32 children in our "Starters League" for 2nd class pupils.

Our school Chess Team, Benjamin, Sanjay, Yubo, Eric and Shane are leading the Leinster Schools' Primary League after 3 matches, having won every match 4 - 0! There are 6 more matches to play. We are hoping to win this competition for a second time. We hope to progress to defend our amazing achievement of All-Ireland Champions, for the 4th year in a row!

Most impressive performances this year have come from five 2nd or 3rd class pupils who are playing in our highest leagues...

Cian Mc Murray Munn, Yanbo Yu, Nathaniel Untalan, Urvaksh Rattan and John Sibi.



Dance & Fitness

Elaine Chapman, of ChappieFit, a parent in St. Brigid's Primary School, worked with several classes this term. This term 4th, 5th and 6th bopped, leapt and pirouetted in time to some funky beats in their dance exercise class, some great movers in these classes...watch out "Strictly Dancing"!!

It is lovely to see the creative side of the children and they really enjoyed the sessions. We hope to have Elaine work with some other classes in the New Year.

We are also very lucky to have the expertise of Eabha, our project worker from the School Completion Programme (funded by the Department of Education), who also works with classes doing dance/drama. She too, will return in January 2018.



Swimming

Our weekly swimming lessons take place in Mespil Pool. This pool is a short walk along the canal and lessons take place on Monday mornings from 9.30 to 11.30. There are three coaches, who work with children in small groups from beginners to more advanced swimmers. 5th and 6th classes are currently attending lessons and the children look forward to Monday mornings! All classes from 2nd class upwards will attend 8 weeks of lessons. There are a number of pools locally who offer public hours...Sportsco on South Lotts Road, Mespil Pool, and Markevitz pool near the city centre. All children must attend swimming lessons unless they have a doctor's note, outlining a reason for not attending. The cost is €30 (which is subsidised by the school). If any parent is in financial difficulty, please speak to Mrs. Brew as we may be in a position to help. We feel it is a really important life skill for all children to learn.

HSCL Initiative

Ms Liz Gaire is working once again as Home, School, Community Liaison teacher for both St. Brigid's and St. Mary's. Liz has been busy getting to know the pupils and parents in both schools, particularly the parents of new children to the schools, and encouraging them to get involved in school life. Classes in Art, Yoga and First Aid, for parents, took place this term with many improving their skills and adding to their qualifications. Some of the wonderful art work of the parents' group is on display in the Bank Of Ireland exhibition this week! Body conditioning and aerobic fitness classes with Elaine, from ChappieFit, take place weekly and on Fridays, a parent running group prepare for a "Couch to 5K" run! Classes will continue next term. If you are interested, please contact Liz on 086 0235305 to sign up. Congratulations and a huge thank you to our representatives on the Children's Council in The Ark Children's Theatre, Aoibhe, Karinova, Thomas, Shayne, Jian, Taylor, Trajan and Anthony, who recently met Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, on Universal Children's Day. Well done to all for taking on the project and hearing what young people around Ireland have to say and then taking their questions to the Taoiseach. It was a wonderful experience and a very enjoyable day. We are so proud of our children!

Thanks to our parents who helped out during Maths Week, playing some Maths games with the children. The children also enjoyed some Maths Trails in the locality. Ms Gaire and a group of 5th class boys have been attending Pembroke Library monthly to take part in a Book Club. Ms. Mc Manamon's 4th class also had a tour of the library with librarian Angela O'Connell who was delighted to introduce them to the joys of reading and being a member of a library.

Thanks to our parents, Ceinwyn (Mam of Oisín), Christine (Mam of Matthew) and Liz (Mam of Owen) for the Halloween Party! Our staffroom took on a scary theme and boys enjoyed a hot chocolate and a treat. Photos of the fantastic costumes are on display in the corridor! Well done to all involved. Please contact Liz on 086 0235305 if you are interested in getting to know some other parents or if you wish to join a class.

Basketball

Under the expertise of Stephen, our coach from Rip'nRun, all children from 2nd to 6th class have basketball coaching during this year. Our senior team have taken part in the Dublin League and also a tournament in the National Basketball Arena in Tallaght. Stephen has lots of experience working with other teams at many different levels and his lessons are always a popular feature of our Physical Education (PE) programme. He is with us every Wednesday afternoon. It is lovely to see the happy faces of the children as they improve their skills!



Some Class News

2ND CLASS MS. RYAN/ MS. SWEENEY

This year, we merged our 2nd and 3rd class boys with the girls from 2nd and 3rd classes in St. Brigid's in a "first" for both schools. As explained already, we had hoped to move into our new school building this term. The girls have settled in very well and were delighted to re-join the boys they had been in class with, in Senior Infants! They have also made new friends and are taking part in lots of activities together. Some of the highlights of this term, in 2nd class, are outlined below....

2nd classes had an excursion to Merrion Square with Ms. Murphy's 2nd class where they completed a nature survey. For Art and Technology they designed and made wonderful rockets as part of their Space theme. They have been very busy learning about different elements of Science. They grew grass-heads, explored their senses, experimented with the properties of materials and designed a lunchbox for the light-keeper. In Geography they explored their local community and sketched buildings. In History, they worked on interview skills and interviewed their principal and grand-parents. They also made butter (the old-fashioned way!) which they sampled on crackers!

2nd classes have welcomed an "Elf on the Shelf" into their class for Christmas. He is keeping a close eye on the boys and girls and will let Santa know who has been good! These elves have been up to a lot of mischief in the classes overnight! We never know what to expect in the morning. They will soon be heading back to the North Pole to help Santa during his busiest time of the year!

classes. They have met several times, as part of lessons, activities or just to play together! They are delighted to meet up with old friends.

3rd classes have taken part in Tennis coaching with Debbie from Tennis4Kids and have really enjoyed the experience. It is evident that their skills are improving and they can now play a rally quite easily across the net with each other, using forehand and backhand strokes!

They have also had basketball coaching with Stephen on Wednesdays which they look forward to.

This sporting class also took part in Gaelic Football in Herbert Park with some of the teachers, in October and November. We hope to renew our GAA coaching in the summer term when the weather is more favourable! As part of Geography, 3rd classes researched and completed a project on different counties in Ireland. They learned about lots of attractions and landmarks around the country and then presented their projects to their classmates. For Science Week, the children attempted to build a tower from spaghetti and competed to see which tower would stretch the highest before collapsing! They visited a Water exhibition in Beggar's Bush and learned a lot about water conservation and how to conserve it in our homes. They are all busily preparing for their Christmas Performance "The Magical Christmas Jigsaw" which they will perform next week. We hope to see lots of parents there, (if they can get time off work). The children have made all the props themselves as well as learn lots of lines! We look forward to the show.

3RD CLASS MS. O'FLYNN/ MS. REGAN

Ms O'Flynn, Ms. Regan and Ms Dermody (St. Brigid's) have been working together this term as the boys and girls in our 3rd classes are also merged and have settled into their new



School Choir

Following auditions by lots of excited children in October, Ms. O'Flynn and Ms Mullins got to work with the school choir which included the girls from St. Brigid's...another first for us all! Thanks to all the children who auditioned. They have been working on Monday afternoons on a repertoire of songs and performed for us at the Christmas Fair and this week, in CPL Recruitment for their Craft Fair. They hope to take part in Cór na nOg in the new year, which is a choral festival for children. Beautiful melodies can be heard from Ms O'Flynn's room!



Staff 'Mystery Weekend'

This year, the staff of St. Mary's headed off on a "Mystery Tour"! On Friday 17th November, we headed off on a bus to Dublin airport, where our "organisers", Ms Sweeney, Ms. Regan and Ms. Maughan, unveiled the surprise destination! We were off to Munich! We had great fun, exploring the sites of Munich, visiting the Christmas markets, and sampling the local foods! Our Open Top Bus Tour gave us a taste of the cultural sites, beautiful buildings and we finished with a trip around the shops and a typical German meal served by staff in traditional dress! A great weekend was had by all!



More Class News

4TH CLASS MS. MAUGHAN/ MS. MCMANAMON

Ms. Mc Manamon's and Ms. Maughan's 4th classes have had an exciting term. They have enjoyed their dance classes with Elaine (ChappieFit), and particularly the Zumba and Hip-Hop moves! They have been on nature walks with our "expert", Ms. Irwin, as they get to know the local natural environment, naming plants and trees and sketching along the canal. Science Week saw them working on a number of experiments in class, the most favourite one involving a glass and a balloon where they explored the effect heat has on gas molecules. In November, a guest speaker from E-Safety spoke to boys from 4th, 5th and 6th classes about online safety, how to use social media, how to be safe online, and the hazards of putting up information or photos about yourself. The boys found it both informative and interesting and we hope they took away some facts to ensure their online safety.

We are all looking forward to their performance next week of "The Polar Express". They have been working hard learning lines, preparing costumes and props and singing lots of songs! Should be a great show!

5TH CLASS MS. SHANAHAN

This year, 5th class went to visit CBS Westland Row Open Day where they met the staff and pupils and took part in a number of activities to give them a taste of secondary school life. They also enjoyed a trip to the National Art Gallery to see the painting of the "The Marriage of Strongbow and Aoife" as part of their study of The Normans in History. We are lucky to have such an array of cultural venues close to the school and love to take advantage of this.

During Science Week, they took part in lots of STEM activities, made and tested catapults, built towers from marshmallows and spaghetti and examined their fingerprints.

5th and 6th Book Club got underway with a reading of David Almond's book 'Skellig' with Ms Shanahan on Tuesday afternoons monthly.

We look forward also to their Christmas Performance "The Thieves of Father Christmas" next week!

6TH CLASS MR. MORAN

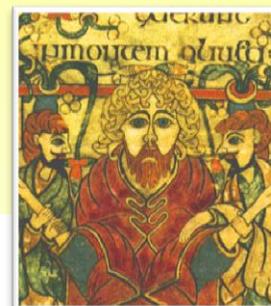
6th class have been busy this term, a very important year for the boys as they pave the way for Secondary School. By now, all boys in 6th have chosen their Secondary School. If, for any reason, you have not secured a place in secondary school, it is essential that you let us know immediately.

This has been a very busy term for 6th class. They took part in the 'Trinity College Book of Kells Creative Competition'. After paying a visit to Trinity College to learn all about the Book of Kells, they created pieces of artwork and written work that showed their own modern interpretation of one of Ireland's most famous archaeological treasures.

6th class also took part in the Dublin Mini Basketball League. They played a series of games in SportsCo (ESB Sports Complex) before taking part in the finals in the National Basketball Arena in Tallaght under the coaching expertise of Stephen and Mr. Moran.

We can see the boys in 6th class maturing and growing in responsibility as they prepare for the transition to secondary school. Our Transition Programme, run by Julie, (School Completion Programme Co-Ordinator) will take place in the summer term and will address any concerns the boys may have and introduce them to the routines, expectations and life in secondary school.

The Catholic boys have also started to prepare for Confirmation, a very important celebration in the Christian calendar and for our 6th class boys. Confirmation this year takes place on Thursday 22nd March at 11.00am in St. Mary's Church. The Enrolment Mass has already taken place, with three more preparatory masses due in the New Year before the big day. It is expected that boys attend mass regularly and are familiar with the responses and prayers of the mass.



Our School Garden

We are very proud of our School Garden which is an integral part of life in St. Mary's. Boys love to spend time here planting and harvesting. Many hours are spent in the sanctuary of this space, drawing and sketching, creative writing, and just chilling here. It is lovely to see boys relaxing here. See pictures below of our Halloween Garden...many parents dropped in to view!

Dublin City Council have, once again, given us a Community Grant of €350 towards the upkeep of our garden. Owen, Janjan and Jader are busily creating their own special seats, based on the artists Monet, Jack B Yeats and Mairie Jellett. They look very happy as they work away!





Our annual Christmas Performances will take place this year on Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th December. We look forward to seeing all the fun!

TUESDAY 19TH DEC.

4th class will perform at 11.30am
'The Polar Express'

6th class will perform
'Mr. Scrooge' at 1.10pm.

WEDNESDAY 20TH DEC.

2nd class at 10.00am 'Elves on Strike'

3rd class 11.30am
'The Magical Christmas Jigsaw'

5th class 1.10pm
'The Thieves of Father Christmas'

We would like to invite all parents and family to see the children performing. However, we completely understand that due to work commitments, all may not be able to attend. This year, we have organised our performances so that parents will come just to see their own child's class perform and will be able to leave then. Each performance will take about 30mins.



Please remember Pat French and his family Liz, Owen and Katie in your thoughts and prayers over Christmas & New Year.
RIP

We will be closing on
FRIDAY 22ND DECEMBER 2017 at 12.00
and re-open on
MONDAY 8TH JANUARY 2018.

OTHER NEWS

Congratulations to Ms. Sheena Noonan and Sean on the birth of their daughter Alice.

Congratulations too, to Ms. Michelle Mullaney, who left us in the summer to take up a teaching position in Galway, on her engagement to Mike!

It is with sadness that I tell you of the death of Ms. Irwin's mother this week.

We are all thinking of her Dad and extended family at this time and will remember them in our thoughts and prayers.

May I, once again, take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support for St. Mary's, particularly in our fundraising campaign. I would like to pay a special word of thanks to our wonderful, committed staff, who care for our children with such kindness and work so hard to offer them the best possible educational opportunities here in St. Mary's BNS.

A word too, for our wonderful secretary Sharon, who is so patient and always available to us with a smile on her face! Thanks Sharon!

We are lucky to have such a wonderful school community, Board of Management, parents, past pupils, friends, priests, pupils, teachers, SNAs, secretary and the wider community. St. Mary's is a special place for us all.

We wish you a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and hope that Santa Claus is good to all the wonderful children! There are many names on his "good" list!

On behalf of myself and the staff,
A BIG THANK YOU
Maevie Brew