

# St. Mary's BNS Christmas Newsletter 2018



## 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 2018.**

## Please read on...

Welcome to, what we hope, is our last Christmas Newsletter from St. Mary's BNS. Hopefully by next Christmas, we will definitely be in our new St. Christopher's Primary School building and all settled in to our amalgamated school with our fellow students and staff from St. Brigid's Primary School. We are getting excited by the thought of the move and look forward to the wonderful facilities there and the enhanced educational opportunities we can continue to offer our pupils in our new building. The new building company, Ganson Ltd and our architects Coady Architects, are working hard together to get the project finished in summer 2019. In September, as part of our continued preparations for our amalgamation, we mixed our 4<sup>th</sup> classes going into 5<sup>th</sup>, who have now settled in well to their new surroundings in the prefabs on Haddington Place. While it took a little while for us all to get used to the new routines, all is going well and the boys and girls have formed new friendships and bonds. By September 2019, all our classes will be co-educational and we will be ready for our move.

We welcomed Mr. Mike Walsh to our staff this year and he has got to know us all by now. We congratulate Ms. Sheena Noonan and Sean on the birth of their second child, Maggie, a sister for Alice and Ms. Annie McCabe & Thomas on the birth of their daughter Katie. We wish Ms. Alison Reid and Ms. Aoife Mullins all the best as they leave us at Christmas in anticipation of the birth of their babies in the New Year. We look forward to welcoming Ms. Evelyn Healy who will teach 3<sup>rd</sup> class and Ms. Orla Kenny, who will work in Learning Support, to St. Mary's in January and hope they feel the Haddier welcome and are very happy here!

We welcomed many new pupils to our schools this year and hope they have settled in and have made lots of new friends. We are sorry that some of our pupils will not be returning in January as they are returning to their homeland. We hope that they enjoyed their time in Ireland, learned lots of new skills and made lasting memories. We hope they will call to visit us in the future.

## Christmas Fair 2018

Thanks to our wonderful parents and other volunteers, and to the drive by our pupils to bring in their old books, toys, bric-a-brac, etc., we had another very successful Christmas Fair to raise funds to help fund the many activities provided free in our schools. A special thank you to the Parents' Committee led by Dymphna Collins and Jen Cleary and to our HSC teacher, Liz Gaire, for organising the fair. The Parish Centre, where parents in the café served delicious cakes, tea and coffee and hot food, was buzzing all day with Christmas atmosphere and camaraderie. Thanks to the many parents and children who baked or brought in cakes for the café. Smiling, painted faces of children could be seen during the day, as they wandered through the stalls choosing books, toys etc. We had many generous donations of prizes for our raffle, which was very well supported by all. Our school choir entertained all with a selection of Christmas songs to add to the atmosphere. Thanks also to our wonderful school secretaries Sharon and Frances who helped make the fair a success.



We collected a total of €5,120 for which we thank all involved. We look forward to holding our 2019 Christmas Fair in St. Christopher's Primary School hall!

## Gaelbhratach

This year, both schools are working on a Gaelbhratach initiative. It is a three year programme at the end of which we are awarded a Gaelbhratach (Flag for promoting use of Irish). This is a scheme to promote the use of conversational Irish (Gaeilge) in everyday routines as a natural part of school life e.g. roll call, in the playground, instructions in Irish, lining up etc. It is aimed at promoting regular opportunities for the school community, both staff and children, to enhance their vocabulary and to use the Irish language. All classes recently took part in a "Comórtas" (competition) where they each performed a song in Irish. They had been practising beforehand and loved performing on the day. A vote was held and the winners were 6<sup>th</sup> class! Go h-an mhaith ar fad! We look forward to more initiatives!

## \*Punctuality\*

School opens at 8.40am and we encourage children to come in early and meet their friends for 10 minutes in the playground for supervised play!

Class begins at 9.00am and it is important that children are ready to start the day at 9.00am. If children are late they miss taking homework down and the start of lessons and can interrupt class. While we understand anyone can be delayed from time to time we ask that you do your best to ensure children are in school for start of class.

We appreciate your support.



## Swimming

Our weekly swimming class takes place in Mespil Pool. On Monday mornings, two classes attend an hourly session each with our three coaches, from beginners to improvers. The cost of swimming is €30 for 8 weeks and all children must attend (unless they have a medical certificate). The children love the sessions and learn a very important life skill, while having fun with their classmates. There are a number of pools locally who offer public hour swimming...Sportsco on South Lotts Road, Marian College pool on Lansdowne Road and Markevitz Pool in Tara St.



## 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 for all classes from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, boys and girls.

There are 112 pupils in total playing chess this year, including 38 girls. We have 6 different leagues which are concluding just before Christmas. Competition has been fiercely contested! Our school chess team competed against 9 other teams in Division 1 at the Leinster Schools' Chess

competition. We were the top qualifying team of the 4 teams who will play in the finals in February 2019.

This year, there are 8 boys on the team, with very strong competition for places. The team included Benjamin (Captain), Eric, Yubo, Daniel, Cian, Yanbo, Unai and Noah. Charan, Cathal, John and Jasper make up our sub panel. We hope to qualify for another All-Ireland final and we will also have two teams in the National Checkmate competition.

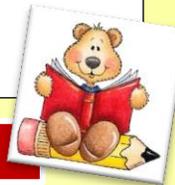
## Dance/Fitness with Elaine

Once again, our children from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes enjoyed their dance/fitness class with Elaine from ChappieFit. The children bopped, leapt and pirouetted to the beat of many genres of music....no doubt we will see some of them perform in the future on TV! This dance class has become a popular weekly activity with both boys and girls. We look forward to seeing some of the routines in our Christmas performances!

## Homework Clubs

We provide HW clubs for a small number of children who may need a little support or observation while doing HW. The clubs, junior and senior, run on Mondays and Wednesdays. Numbers in these clubs are limited as you will understand so that teachers can offer the support needed.

It is important to set up a routine around doing HW which the children can then use at home.



## Basketball

Stephen, our basketball coach from Rip'n Run, worked with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> classes this term, and also with our school basketball team from 6<sup>th</sup> class. Stephen has been with us a few years now and has vast experience at coaching at all levels of basketball, including our national underage teams. His company Rip'n Run, also run a basketball "academy" on Saturday mornings for children. Our team, along with their manager, Mr. Kevin Moran, have played a number of matches in the Dublin League and have had quite a bit of success. Their next match is in early January 2019. Our children love to get in early for playtime in the playground in the mornings from 8.40am to 8.50am to work on their basketball skills!

## Gaelic Football



## GAA

This year, once again, under the expertise of Ms. Aileen Ryan and Ms. Laura-Anne Regan, the children from 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> classes took part in GAA training in Herbert Park. Each Monday, the children were accompanied to the park and worked on their skills, doing drills and playing friendly matches. Our school Junior Team played in the Dublin League, winning some of their matches against strong opposition. Some of the boys and girls are members of Clanna Gael GAA club on Alfie Byrne Road in Ringsend, training weekly and playing matches at weekends. If you are interested in further information, please talk to Ms. Ryan in 4<sup>th</sup> class.

## HSCL Update

Ms Liz Gaire, our Home, School, Community Liaison teacher has been busy getting to know the parents of our new Junior Infants and also those parents of children who have joined us in other classes this year. We hope you are all settled into life in St. Mary's/St. Brigid's now. Our parents' classes in Art, Fitness, Yoga and Pilates continue weekly with John, Elaine and Tara. All classes will resume in January, please contact Ms. Gaire if you would like to join. The classes are free.

Children from both schools have also been involved in a number of initiatives organised by Liz. Kaelen, Tristan, Rhys, Royette, Lee, Ishan, and Sean participated in Universal Children's Day, a day celebrating the rights of the child.

Pupils in 5<sup>th</sup> class visited CBS Post Primary School in Westland Row for their OPEN DAY to try taster classes and see what awaits in secondary school.

A Quiz for 6<sup>th</sup> classes and 1<sup>st</sup> years in local primary and secondary schools was held recently. Well done to the boys in 6<sup>th</sup> class, some of whom were on the winning teams!

Laura, Andrea, Grace, Mollie May, Brodie, Daniel, Jian and Prakhar are attending Book Club in the library with Ms. Gaire and are enjoying the experience, while getting to read and discuss a variety of books.

Boys from 5<sup>th</sup> class were invited to Marian College to see their Transition Year musical performed with the girls from Muckross College. The musical "School of Rock" was a wonderful production and it was great to see some of our past pupils, Tiernan and Justin, in lead roles! We look forward to seeing some of our current 5<sup>th</sup> class take part in the musical in the future!

## Blue Star Programme

### What is the Blue Star Programme?

The Blue Star Programme is an education initiative for primary school pupils across Ireland. The idea of the Programme is simple: to foster better understanding and knowledge of the European Union and how it affects the lives of Irish citizens among primary pupils through classroom projects and activities. Pupils of all ages, from primary schools all over Ireland, are challenged to get creative and think about Europe by carrying out projects in relation to four key elements: the history, geography, culture and creativity, and Institutions of the EU.

The Blue Star Programme aims to introduce participants (pupils, teachers, parents and the wider community) to the EU, what it means and how it works. The Programme also aims to foster a strong sense of awareness of the EU among its participants that reaches far beyond the school walls and out into the wider community. The Blue Star Programme has **creativity** at its core and its structure and project work encourage teachers and pupils from all corners of Ireland to 'think outside the box'. The wider school community is also encouraged to get involved and contribute to the Programme. Ms Ryan is co-ordinating the project for St. Mary's and is working with the staff on our Action Plan. We will then work on the Blue Star programme integrating our curricular areas and working on projects across the 5 areas.



## Ukulele

This year, we welcomed Sheilagh Fox, our ukulele teacher, who worked with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> classes. Our ukuleles were purchased with a grant from Dublin City Council in June 2018. The children loved the classes and many have bought their own ukuleles and tuners and are practising at home with the help of tutorials on YouTube. The lessons culminated with a ukulele recital for parents, friends and other classes on December 7<sup>th</sup>, when all classes involved played and sang a number of popular tunes, much to the delight of their audience!



## Now for some news from our Classes

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Ms. Regan and Ms Mullins

The 3<sup>rd</sup> classes have enjoyed many fun and exciting activities and events this term. Every Friday they had tennis lessons with a tennis coach. They have made great progress, developed their serves and had lots of fun along the way.

This term both 3<sup>rd</sup> classes have honed their dance moves with Elaine. They participated in fun and creative dance-offs and routines, some of which will feature in 'Bethlehem's Got Talent' as part of our Christmas Play. We all took a trip to Herbert Park back in late October where we went on a scavenger hunt and autumn nature walk. We observed the beautiful autumnal colours, wildlife and mini-beasts that can be seen during this beautiful time of year.

As part of Science Week the children participated in a STEM project where they had to work in teams to design, plan and build a bridge of their choice made from recycled materials. This was an exciting and engaging project which allowed the children the opportunity to be creative while also working scientifically.

As we come to the end of this term we are all looking forward to our Christmas play 'C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S Spells Christmas'. The children have been working very hard on their parts and we thank all the parents for their help and support. The show features all their talents, such as acting, singing and dancing. We hope you enjoy!





## PenPal Exchange

Ms. Maughan's class have been busy writing and receiving pen pal letters from children in a school in Helsinki, Finland. They are very interested in how we live in Ireland and what we do in our spare time. We have also been learning about their school life, culture and Christmas traditions.

On Friday 7th December, they too, participated in a ukulele performance. The children had been practising very hard since September so put on a great show! We were all very proud of their achievements. Our audience seemed to enjoy it too!



## More from 4<sup>th</sup> Class

They also attended a wonderful live music event in 'The Ark' recently which was provided by a folk music group from Scotland called 'Routes Quartet'. The group were in Ireland performing for Saint Andrew's day and the class were lucky enough to catch them perform for 4 schools in Dublin. The children learned about the 4 instruments in the quartet and about key differences between traditional folk music and classical music.

In Art they have sewn their very own Christmas stockings for the festive season. These will be on display during the Christmas performances next week and the boys and girls are hoping they will be overflowing with gifts on Christmas morning from the man himself, Santa Claus!

All are looking forward to sharing their performance of 'The Magical Christmas Jigsaw' with everyone next week.



## More Class News

### 4<sup>th</sup> Class...Ms. Maughan, Ms. Ryan & Ms. O'Flynn

4th Class have had a very busy first term. In September, some players from Clanna Gael football club in Ringsend brought the Sam Maguire All Ireland Football Trophy to the school to celebrate Dublin winning it for the fourth year in a row! We had an interesting outing with our nature expert Ms. Irwin in Airfield Farm. We learned about the farm animals and plants and watched the jersey cows being milked before tasting the spoils. We had great fun learning and performing music this term including Bruno Mars 'Func Anseo' as part of our Gaelbhrtach, as well as our Ukelele performance for our parents which included "Froggy went a Courting", "Shoo Fly" and "We will Rock you".

We really enjoyed Science week and were very lucky to partake in a variety of experiments in St. Brigid's. We also visited the Geographical Services building in Beggars' Bush, to learn about the Water Cycle. Our pen pals in the Czech Republic have been teaching us all about their country and their traditions while we've described our life in Dublin.



Some of the children in Airfield Farm



Sam Maguire comes to St. Mary's

### Science Week

For Science week in November Ms. O'Flynn's class were treated to a talk from author Owen O'Doherty who has just published a book called "*Bright Sparks - Amazing Discoveries, Inventions and Designs by women*". He spoke to us about how scientists need to be constantly curious, and good problem solvers. He also taught the children about patents and copyright to protect their ideas. The children then worked in groups in order to create and present their own inventions to each other. It was a really enjoyable day.

They also attended a 'Discover your tap water' exhibition in the Geological Survey of Ireland building in Beggars Bush. The children learned about the water cycle, which appliances at home use the most water, capillary action in water and underground water.

During Science week they also conducted a few experiments in the classroom. The best one was balloon rockets which the children really enjoyed!

In History this term they have been learning about Early Christian Ireland, the Book of Kells and life in an Irish monastery. The children learned about the solitary life of monks and compared their life with ours today.

In Geography they have been learning about weather and climate change. We watched David Attenborough's iconic UN speech last week urging leaders to take more action in combating climate change for the future of our natural world. They examined what they could do at home and in school to tackle climate change.



### 5 Class...Ms Shanahan, Ms Leyden, Ms Murphy

This term, Horizon Pharma in conjunction with Trinity College, organised a series of workshops with all of the 5th classes. The workshops involved learning about DNA, how clinical trials are conducted, how medicine is made from plants and bacteria. The children carried out a series of experiments to enhance their learning, DNA was extracted from strawberries, mock clinical trials were carried out and bacteria was collected and observed over a period of time. All of the 5th classes went to Trinity College to learn more about how plants are used to make medicine and to complete the project, the children worked in teams to present their own projects to the staff of Horizon Pharma on what they had learned.

Over the last number of weeks, all of the children in 5th class have been learning the Ukulele. It has been a fantastic opportunity for the children to learn how to play an instrument. Through hard work and perseverance, the children from all the three 5th classes learned how to read music and to play several songs. No mean feat when you have to remember where to place your fingers and to sing at the same time! There were sore fingers to begin with, but the children achieved great success with learning how to play and performed in front of their parents and some of the other classes from both schools. Well done to everyone, you were all fantastic!





## Finally....

I would like to say a special word of thanks to our wonderful staff of teachers, SNA and secretary, Sharon, for their commitment and dedication to St. Mary's BNS/St. Brigid's. To our dedicated Board of Management members and especially to Fr. Patrick Claffey, our chairperson, I extend a thank you. We all work together with parents and wider school community to offer our pupils the best possible educational opportunities in a loving and caring atmosphere, where pupils feel cherished and happy. We have had a very productive term, with all working hard and making great progress. Our new school is nearly ready and we look forward to celebrating Christmas there in 2019 as St. Christopher's Primary School.

I wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year and hope you get to spend some family time together, and some rest and relaxation. I hope Santa Claus is good to all our wonderful children. There are many names on the "good" list! On behalf of myself and staff...**a BIG THANK YOU TO ALL!**

*Maeve Brew*

## 6<sup>th</sup> ... Class Mr. Moran

6<sup>th</sup> class have been very busy during the start of their final year in St. Mary's. By now, all the boys have chosen their secondary school for next year. If, for any reason, you have not secured a place in secondary school, it is essential that you let us know immediately.

A large number of boys took part in the Dublin Mini Basketball League. They played a series of challenge matches against nearby schools and have been training after school with Stephen, our basketball coach. A rescheduled match in the National Basketball Arena, Tallaght will take place in January. Lessons will Stephen for the whole class will take place during the school day.

As part of our bid to achieve a Gaelhratach award, all classes took part in an Irish language singing competition. After a huge amount of effort and practice, 6<sup>th</sup> class were voted the winners with their rendition of George Ezra's 'Shotgun' as Gaeilge. Even non-Irish speaking boys took part, and their performance was fantastic.

The Catholic boys have also started to prepare for Confirmation, a very important celebration in the Christian calendar. Confirmation this year takes place on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April. The next mass to take place will be the Commitment Mass on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> January. It is expected that boys attend mass regularly and are familiar with the responses and prayers.



St. Mary's BNS & St. Brigid's Primary School

## CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCE 2018



Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> December  
11.30am

Ms. Mullins & Ms. Regan  
3<sup>rd</sup> Classes

'CHRISTMAS  
Spells Christmas'

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> December  
1.10pm

Ms. Ryan & Ms. Maughan  
4<sup>th</sup> Classes

'Away With The Manger'

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December  
11.30am

Ms. O'Flynn 4<sup>th</sup> Class

'Magical Christmas Jigsw'

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December  
1.10pm

Mr. Moran 6<sup>th</sup> Class

'Mr. Scrooge'

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> December  
11.30am

Ms. Leyden & Ms. Shanahan  
5<sup>th</sup> Classes

'Stable Manners'

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> December  
1.10pm

Ms. Murphy & Ms. Little  
5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Classes

'Stable Manners'

Performances will take place  
in the Community Room  
situated at the back of  
St. Mary's Church.

We look forward to  
seeing you there!

St. Mary's BNS  
will be  
closing on

FRIDAY 21<sup>st</sup>  
DECEMBER 2018  
at 12.00 and  
re-open on

MONDAY 7<sup>th</sup>  
JANUARY 2019

