



Bennekerry N.S. Newsletter



March 12th 2019

St. Patrick's Day is almost upon us and while I thought about leaving our newsletter until Easter, the term has been busy as always and if I leave it any longer, there simply won't be room to include everything!!

SSE: The planned activities which were outlined in our letter in January were implemented over the past three months and proved to be very worthwhile. Our Gratitude Tree, which reminded us of the positives in our lives has only recently been taken down while our Growth Mindsets encouraged our pupils to always do their best and to believe that, for each of them, there are endless possibilities. We focussed on healthy eating and Mrs. Brennan's 1st class and Ms. Griffin's 4th class were the winners of our Junior and Senior Fruit and Vegetable Class Tracker competitions. This has been a very valuable initiative and the pupils are certainly more aware of why it is important to eat healthily. With this in mind, we remind you of our Healthy Eating Policy which allows **treats only on Fridays and even then, the treat should be simply a small bar**. Sweets are not allowed, and sharing is not permitted as the parents/guardians of each child should be able to monitor what his/her child has eaten in school. Move to Music Mondays and Fun Day Fridays were big hits with our younger pupils while many classes took on the 10 at 10 challenge and the 1st classes started a new initiative which they called 2 at 2. At 2pm each day, weather permitting, they completed two rounds of our walking track before returning to class feeling fully refreshed and ready for further learning. The information evening for parents on the Stay Safe programme was well attended and workshops for 5th and 6th classes on the sensitive areas of the RSE programme were also well received. Stay Safe and RSE are being taught in the designated classrooms at present in line with our revised SPHE School Plan.

Rialacha na Scoile: The recent inquest into the death of a young student in UL following a "domino effect" fall on a staircase served as a stark reminder of the importance of keeping what may seem to be relatively insignificant rules. Pupils are constantly being reminded to walk on footpaths, hold the rail on the stairs, not to bunch together when going through narrow entrances, walk on the walking track, not to run on the courts at morning assembly time etc. but some continue to do so despite these repeated cautions. Behaviour Report Cards may be given so that pupils will take these rules more seriously, as we want to ensure that our school environment is as safe as possible and the chances of accidents happening are reduced. Remember, these cards are simply a communication between the school and home and an opportunity for you to talk to your child about his/her behaviour, how it might be improved and why it is important to do so. If you have further queries in relation to this matter, please read Appendix 1 of our Code of Behaviour which is available on our website. If you have difficulty accessing it, please ask at the office for a hard copy. Your co-operation in these matters is vital if our pupils are to be allowed to feel safe, happy and be provided with the best opportunities for learning so as to reach their full potential.

Comhbhrón: The entire school community was shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Brendan Lennon, loving husband of staff member Zelma and devoted father of our past pupils Sinéad and Cadi. The pupils and staff gathered in the hall for a special prayer service to pray for the repose of his soul, and members of staff and the Students' Council represented the school at the funeral which took place on 14th February. Brendan will be remembered among his friends and acquaintances for his kindness, his commitment to his job and his family along with his quick wit and understated humour. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Cuairteoirí: We have had many visitors to the school over the past few weeks and each brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise which they shared with our pupils.

Tim Kavanagh, engineer and Dad of Luke and T.J., conducted workshops in Senior Infants and 2nd Class during Engineering Week.

David Lawlor, Dad of Lucy, Hannah Beth and Eve, is presenting the Junior Achievement Programme in conjunction with MSD to pupils in Seomra 6. The programme will be delivered to Seomra 5 during the coming term.

Sandra McAllister, Artist in Residence, is working with pupils in Seomra 11 and Ms. Griffin and Mrs. Byrne are mirroring this work in Seomra 12.

Ann Tully and students from St. Leo's College delivered taster sessions of German to 6th class pupils.

Lauren Dwyer, international soccer player and past pupil, spoke about her sporting career and the opportunities it has brought her way to the girls in 5th and 6th class as part of International Women's Day celebrations.

Gearóid Dunbar, from Leinster Rugby is working with the 5th and 6th class pupils at present, while students from IT Carlow have been passing on their soccer skills to pupils from 1st- 4th class. 3rd class have been exceptionally lucky as they have also had hurling coaching with Benny Kenny through an initiative run by Carlow G.A.A.

A sincere thank you to all our visitors, as fresh voices, with well-honed skills and a wealth of experience, generally bring a new perspective, be it in the classroom or on the pitch.

Comhghairdeas: Congratulations to Ms. Niamh Dempsey and her partner Rory Byrne who recently announced their engagement. We wish them well during this exciting stage of their lives as they plan their future together.

Cúrsaí Spórt: Congratulations to sisters **Samantha and Hannah Hennessy** who competed in the All Ireland Karate Championships in Kilkenny. They won gold in the team kata event and Samantha won silver in her individual kata. Well done girls, great achievement!

Well done also to **Ben Cioladis** who reached the semi-finals of the U14 Phoenix Tennis Competition in Bray. He competed in matches over an entire weekend and gave a great exhibition of skill! Maith thú Ben!

Many of the sporting and artistic successes over recent weeks are part of the Community Games competitions. While we could not possibly keep track of, let alone name, all the successes at local level, we will endeavour to include all pupils from the school who win medals at a county level. I sincerely hope I am not missing anyone.

U-13 Girls Basketball: 1st Place for Bennekerry/Tinryland – **Ava Lynch, Katie Bowe, Grace Kennedy, and Éabha McConnon**

U-13 Boys Basketball: 2nd Place for B/T- **David Farrell, Kyle Broderick, Owen O'Neill, Oran O'Boyle, Fionn O'Toole and Ryan Gordon**

U-13 Boys Soccer: 2nd Place B/T – **Joe Bermingham, Sam McHugh, Aidan Ryan, Oran O'Boyle, Lorcan Kelly, Conor Buggy and Eoin Ryan**

U-13 Girls Futsal: 2nd Place Askea -**Samantha and Hannah Hennessy, Áine Fallon, Kate Culleton and Róisín Kennedy**

U-8 Freestyle Swimming: 1st Place **Mia Donoghue**

U-12 Breaststroke: 1st Place **Sarah Whelan** 3rd Place **Róisín Brennan**

U-10 Girls Model Making: 4th Place **Ciara Culleton**

U-12 Girls Model Making: 3rd Place **Róisín Brennan**

U-10 Boys Model Making: 3rd Place **Conor Whelan**

U14 Model Making: 2nd Place **Eoghan Brennan** 3rd Place **Luke Campion**

U-10 Boys Handwriting: 1st Place **Senan Kavanagh**

U-12 Girls Handwriting: 2nd Place **Mia Dalton** 4th Place **Emma O'Neill**

U-12 Boys Handwriting: 4th Place **Kiegan Lawlor**

U-10 B/T Draughts Team: 1st Place **Paidí Breen, Joshua Crosby, Eddie Keenan and Danny Donegan**

U-12 B/T Draughts Team: 1st Place **Mark Buggy, Cormac McConnon and John O'Neill** Askea 2nd Place **Róisín Brennan and Sarah Whelan**

U-14 B/T Draughts Team: 2nd Place **Brooke Rea, Keira Doyle, Jake Costello. Anna Crosby and Alex Loughman**

U-16 B/T Draughts Team: 1st Place **Seán Breen, Marie Cranny, Chloe Ryan, Conor Buggy and Quinn Morrissey**

Tráth na gCeist Eile: Three teams from the school took part in a bilingual quiz organised by Glór na nGael for Seachtain na Gaeilge. All three teams did exceptionally well with **Ewan Breen, Alex Gordon, Marie Cranny and Brooke Rea** finishing in 1st place, **Áine Fallon, Seán Breen, Aidan Ryan and Laura Broderick** finishing in 2nd place while **Marc Mulhall, Joe Bermingham, Owen O'Neill and Kevin McGinn** were just pipped into 4th place. Ar fheabhas ar fad! **Marie Cranny** and **Seán Breen**, along with past pupils James Cranny and Darragh Brennan, as members of Palatine GAA club, represented Co. Carlow at the Scór U-17 quiz competition in Castlebar. Although they were unplaced, they performed well and gained valuable experience as they are exceptionally young to be competing at this level.

Comórtas Ealaíne: Comhghairdeas le **Emily Long** (2nd class) who was a prize-winner recently in the "Fairtrade Art Competition". She was delighted to be presented with her award in the Cathedral Parish Centre on March 7th. Tonight, other budding artists **Hannah Beth Lawlor and Tara Webb**, (4th class), **Emma Doyle** (5th class) and **Chang Egan and Anna Crosby** (6th class) will also pick up prizes i gComórtas Ealaíne an Earraigh. The winning pictures from both competitions are on display in the library at present and are well worth viewing.

Comórtas Litriú/Spelling Bee: On Wednesday February 27th the Co. Carlow final of the Eason Spelling Bee competition was held in Bennekerry N.S. Our school was ably represented by **Charlie Deacy** (6th class) and though he was not in the final shake-up, Charlie was pleased with his performance and did us proud. Maith thú.

Draughts: Well done to **Seán and Paidí Breen, Eddie Keenan and Danny Donegan** who recently competed in the Kildare Open Draughts Competition. Seán came 2nd in the U15 category, Paidí and Eddie came 1st and 2nd respectively in the U10 category and Danny was 4th in the U9 category. **Seán Breen, Marie Cranny, Conor Buggy and Mark Buggy** will represent the school at the Irish Primary School Draughts League on Friday March 15th. **Chloe Ryan** was a close contender and is a worthy sub should any team member be forced to drop out.

Snámh agus Dráma: Seomra 6, Seomra 9 agus Seomra 14 are mid-way through their eight swimming sessions while the last block of ten drama lessons has just begun. Our Junior Infants as well as our 6th classes are enjoying the sessions with Keelin Mc Donald and Seomra 3 are also involved this term.

Cór na Scoile: Following on from their exciting appearance on Junior FM Radio on Christmas Day, the choir have been diligently practicing a lively but quite complex song entitled Kusimama. They performed this in the Soroptomist Kilkenny City and County Shield competition on Saturday March 9th, and although they were not winners on the day, they delighted the audience and did themselves and choir director Mrs. Ann Brolly proud. Thanks also to the teachers who travelled with the choir, giving up their Saturday afternoon to lend their support and ensure that all choir members were well fed, well looked after and returned safely to the school.

Rúin Leitheoireachta/ Reading Resolutions: Our reading initiative proved so popular and worthwhile last year that we decided to run it again this year. It started on 25th February and has been running for three weeks. Our aim was that the children would read high-quality books, become familiar with the works of good authors and overall become a community of readers. Thanks to the SETs and especially Mrs. Patricia Bowe who helped encourage these activities and brightened up the corridors with eye-catching promotional materials. Our pupils relished having some nights free from written homework so that extra time could be spent enjoying books.

Seachtain na Gaeilge: Seachtain na Gaeilge may well have to be renamed Coicís na Gaeilge as it now stretches across two weeks. This provides us with even more opportunities to celebrate all things Irish; our music, dance, national sports, literature and of course our language. It was lovely to walk around the school over the past few weeks and hear so many activities going on which did just that. Hopefully the pupils will continue to use the “cúpla focal” as often as possible outside of school and we ask you to encourage and support them in their efforts. Is cumhacht na teanga sibh.

Sacramintí: The pupils in 2nd class will receive the **Sacrament of Penance for the first time in St. Mary's Church, Bennekerry on Wednesday 27th March at 7pm**. The 6th class continue with their **preparations for Confirmation with a special service in Holy Family Church, Askea tonight, Tuesday 12th March at 8pm** which will focus on the Stations of the Cross. All pupils in the school partook in a prayer service to mark Catholic Schools Week in January and the theme for the week was “Celebrating the Work of Our Local Catholic School”. Ash Wednesday was also marked with a ceremony in St. Mary's Church and Trócaire boxes were distributed for use in the homes during Lent.

Lá na Sean Tuismitheoirí: As part of our Catholic Schools' Week celebrations, the 5th class pupils welcomed their grandparents to the school. We began with a prayer service followed by some songs and poems and then a tour of the school grounds. The grandparents then had the opportunity to enjoy a cup of tea, a chat and a chance to view the projects which were done by the pupils. We were delighted that so many grandparents were able to be present and it was also lovely to trace the links as several grandparents had themselves attended Bennekerry N.S. The pupils had put together a booklet of poems which was given as a memento to each set of grandparents, and one was reserved also for each of those who could not be with us. A special word of thanks to the Parents' Association and especially parents Olive Fanning, Nicola Connolly and Micha Donegan who provided the tea/coffee and cleaned up afterwards.

Turasanna Scoile: The Senior Infant classes, to complement their participation in the Aistear programme, recently visited the Post Office and the library and even managed to make a quick stop at Brownseshill Dolmen before returning to the school. The two 6th class groups will attend the George Bernard Shaw Theatre tomorrow to view the St. Leo's and St Mary's Academy's joint production of “Fame Academy”.

Gradam Crógachta: Two very brave Bennekerry students were honoured recently with an award from Scouting Ireland after their child minder became very ill. Anna and Joshua Crosby acted quickly and calmly and made a significant difference to the situation they found themselves in. Well done Anna and Joshua!

Spraioicheist: What an absolutely fun night we had on 1st March when the Parents' Association ran their annual Family Fun Quiz. One could have been forgiven for thinking we were at a disco rather than a quiz as quizmaster Peter McConnon had everyone up on their feet and dancing in the aisles during the music round. The Wall family emerged as winners on the night with the Scully family and friends in second place. There was a tie for third place between the Doyle/McGarry family and the Lynch family. In truth though, everyone was a winner as the spirit of community and co-operation, which was the driving force behind this event, was very much in evidence. Our sincere thanks go to the committee and team of volunteers whose meticulous preparations ensured that everything ran smoothly and efficiently. Thanks also to our sponsors and the many parents who donated prizes. A special word of appreciation to Peter whose questions were perfectly balanced to suit young and old alike and were just testing enough to separate the quite knowledgeable from the very knowledgeable.

Baillíúcháin Éadaí: Following on from a very successful used clothing collection in the autumn, the Parents' Association have decided to have another collection from 28th-31st March. If you decide to do a bit of spring cleaning, please keep this in mind and save your bags of unwanted clothes for us at the school.

Crannchur na Cásca: The very popular Easter Draw is underway, and cards have been distributed to each family.

Druil Dóiteáin: A fire drill took place on 7th February and the pupils followed the procedures correctly ensuring that the building was evacuated safely and everyone was accounted for within the recommended time of three minutes. All fire-safety equipment has been serviced and the staff received training in fire-safety measures and evacuation procedures.

Clár bán idirghníomhach: Over the Christmas holiday period, the Board of Management arranged for the installation of new smart boards in three classrooms. These boards do not require the presence of a projector, which reduces noise levels significantly, and the visual quality is excellent. We also acquired two new iPads, the purchase of which was partially funded by a voucher for Morris Homevalue Hardware which was won by **Christine Cassidy** (2nd class) in the Beat FM Fairytale Competition last year. Buíochas mór leat a Christín. Mr. Dennehy and I took part in a training workshop entitled "Using The Digital Framework to Embed Digital Technology, Learning and Assessment" on January 23rd and Mr. Dennehy was instrumental in drawing up our new Digital Learning Plan.

Scrúduithe Iontrála: The 6th class took a step nearer to making final decisions about choices for secondary schools as they sat the entrance exams on Friday March 1st. We are blessed to have so many great options here in Carlow and are quite sure that our pupils will go on to make positive contributions and participate in the many activities which are on offer in each of these schools.

Trialacha Caighdeánaithe: The Senior Infants completed the MIST tests prior to the Infant Parent/Teacher meetings in early February. **Standardised Tests will be administered in all classes from 1st-6th between 13th-23rd May and it is important that pupils be present at school for these tests.**

Ceardlann na Sábháilteachta Idirlín: A reminder once again that Internet Safety workshops will be delivered to 4th-6th classes on 3rd and 4th April and **an information evening for parents will take place in the school at 7pm on Thursday 4th April at 7pm. It is strongly hoped that at least one parent from each family will be present as this is such an important issue for our young people.** An Garda Síochána will be represented on the night as they take their role in community policing very seriously and welcome this opportunity to engage with the school community. We also ask that all parents should check any "fitbits" or smart watches which your child may be wearing. If it is capable of taking photographs or sending or receiving messages, it should not be brought to school as, in line with our code of behaviour, such electronic devices are banned. This measure was brought in with the strong support of parents based on the results of a survey carried out last year.

Finally, I wish to remind you that the school will be closed from 14th- 20th March while our Easter holidays will begin on Friday 12th April at 12 noon (11:40am for Infants and their siblings). We will return after the Easter break on Monday 29th April. Go dtí sin, beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig daoibh go léir.

Tonia Cleary (Principal)

