

Christmas Newsletter 2021

As we come to the end of another year, we reflect back on a year that brought many challenges and many blessings. The challenges associated with the pandemic has been an ever present this year. However, as a school, we have been at our very best, working together to create a safe learning environment for the children. These challenges have only served to strengthen our sense of togetherness as a school community.

We acknowledge the efforts of the teachers, SNAs, management team, Board of Management, bus drivers, escorts and the parents this year. Their careful adherence to the guidelines has meant the school has been able to continue with minimal impact on the children's experience and enjoyment of their education. Most importantly, we acknowledge the outstanding effort of each and every child who attends St Mary's. They have been able to adapt to the "new normal" of school life and have continued to thrive in their education. As a school, we are very proud of each and every child that attends St Mary's. Together we will continue to meet the challenges with resilience, optimism and hope for the New Year.

We wish all the pupils, parents, teachers, SNAs and all who are involved with St Mary's a very happy, peaceful and joyous Christmas. We wish you every success, happiness and Blessings in the New Year.



Santa Claus, Principal Maria and a helper from the North Pole!



Principal Maria

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year. Thank you all for your support and encouragement. As you can see from the newsletter we have been very busy! I would like to thank the students and teachers for their dedication and hard work.

Christmas Fair:

A sincere thanks to all our families and staff who supported this cause. €795 was raised. Thank you to all who made a contribution to this event.

Christmas Door competition

This year all the classrooms made a special effort to decorate their doors for our Christmas Door competition. We had lots of very festive and creative ideas, with the children's work on display.

Well done to Class 3 who won our competition, congratulations!!!

Christmas Jumper competition

A selection of festive fashions were on display with both pupils and staff wearing their festive Christmas Jumpers for competition. There were Santa's, elves and many other jumpers to be seen in the school on the day.

Virtual Christmas show & Nativity .

After hours of editing, planning and rehearsing the final product will bring a tear to your eye. Well done everybody on this year's fantastic production.

Hot chocolate and mince pies for Bus escorts and drivers.

Our annual event was done outdoors to ensure compliance with Public Health Advice. Thanks to all our bus escorts & drivers who ensure that your child travels happily and safely from and to school. Hot chocolate and tasty treats were provided on the day.

Santa's Visit

Santa Claus made his usual visit to the school. All the pupils were delighted to welcome this visitor. As usual, the occasion was filled with joy for all our pupils



Santa Claus arrived at St Mary's School in style this year

Christmas Raffle

Our annual Christmas Raffle was very well supported by parents and staff. This year we raised a sum of €1,125.

Bake Sale

Our bake sale raised €595 this year. Thank you to everyone who baked or purchased the tasty treats.

To the staff :

It has been a different year with all of the many changes and restrictions that have had to be put in place for our school to reopen and remain opened. I would like to thank all my colleagues for their commitment in making this happen. In addition, the cooperation of families and visitors to the school has also contributed in a successful first term in difficult circumstances for all.

My message:

I am looking forward to the Christmas Break. It is a time to share with family and friends. Like last Christmas, our Celebrations will be different in a lot of ways and my hope is that we will all act in accordance with the Public Health advice. We have good systems in place in our

school, however, the reality is that without our collective adherence to the wider public health guidelines these systems will not work.

St Mary's staff have been working very hard and thanks to all our families whose compliance with the health advice and understanding of its importance; we have had very little incidence of Covid 19. I thank you all for that.

Finally, I would like to wish all our school community a happy and peaceful Christmas.

Season's Greeting



Seasons Greetings & A very Merry Christmas from Santa Claus and his helper



Deputy Jean Marie

I would like to thank everyone for being the greatest team during Maria's absence. It was a privilege working alongside everyone. Thank you to the most amazing pupils who add such meaning to the word -Teacher! It was a joy to see how well everyone did in working so hard in class; producing great Crafts for our Fair and super performance for our Christmas Show. What an amazing achievement. *Remember that Jesus is the Reason for the Season.*



Teacher Nieves

In class 5, we were busy decorating our class for Christmas and designing our own Christmas tree. We made delicious rice-krispies bums and enjoyed sensory activities with water, sand and foam. We also coloured advent candles and glued and stuck tissue paper in our Christmas wreath remembering the coming of God into our world through the baby Jesus.



Beautiful artwork created by the children – A Christmas Tree



Teacher William

Class A5 has been very busy this term working on our school curriculum. As a group, we made some lovely pieces of art, supported by our Art teacher, Ina. As a Green School, we make a special effort to be environmentally friendly and sustainable in our work. Class A5 follows the guidelines of reduce, re-use and recycle at every opportunity. This means that as a class, we can minimise our carbon footprint and help to care for the world. At Christmas

time, all of us in class A5 give thanks for all the Blessings we have. We pay tribute to our wonderful team of SNAs, in class A5, who help all the pupils every day to reach their full potential every day. We also thank the parents and of course the pupils for bringing joy and happiness to the school community every day.



Teacher Bernie

In September, Scott and Liam joined our class along with Isabella, Michelle, Troy, Calum and Hasan. Jenny, Yvonne, Natasha and Ruth, our fabulous SNA team have been busy beavers working with the children over the past few months.

In October we celebrated a big day for Calum and Troy when they made their Confirmation. It was a lovely day for all their families. Fr. Sebi and Bishop Deenihan celebrated the Sacrament on 1st October in St. Oliver's Church in Navan. We want to say a big thank you to both of them for a lovely ceremony and congratulations to Troy and Calum on making their Confirmation.

In November, the children took part in the Christmas shoe box appeal for "Team Hope" and they enjoyed making up the boxes for other children around the world. They also took part in showing how they care for the environment by taking part in class jobs, planting bulbs and learning how to recycle.

In December, we celebrated the season of Advent and had our Christmas Mass in our classroom with Fr. Noel. Our graduates, Adam and Cian joined us our altar servers. Jenny and Ann sang the Christmas carols and everyone helped with the readings and prayers.

The children enjoyed taking part in our Christmas festivities, taking part in the Christmas concert, dressing up in their Christmas jumpers to sing "Santa Clause is coming to town." They also enjoyed the cake sale and the craft fair. This year they made snow men at woodwork with Tommy for the craft fair and in class they made scented hearts and picture frames. Class 4 are super.

Communion and Confirmation.

Congratulations to all the children who made their First Holy Communion on 24th September, Sophie, Eli, Kaci, Rose, Chloe, Lucy, Ava, Rian, Kayleigh, Evan, Oscar and Penny. You were all amazing and beautiful on the day.

Congratulations to all the children who made their Confirmation on 1st October, Calum, Joe and Christopher, Jasmine, Ryan, Troy, Dave, Bradley, Darragh, Edvardas and Seán. We are all immensely proud of you. A big thanks to Fr. Sebi, Fr. Noel and Bishop Deenihan for all their

pastoral care and for celebrating the Sacraments with the children of St. Marys Special School.



Teacher Olga

Class A2 enjoyed and explored sensory -time in the garden. The dinosaur man visited the school and the children enjoyed looking and touching the dinosaur. We made and ate chocolate rice crispy buns and treats. The students of A2 helped decorate the classroom and made Christmas Snowman. The students enjoyed Colouring Christmas cards and decorating their cards with glitter. We enjoyed listening to Christmas songs. In sensory time we played with coloured rice and the sensory lights in the classroom.



Teacher William M

This term has been very eventful for everyone in Pine class. In November Pine class did a lot of art-work on our theme for the month of Dinosaurs. We made lots of different types of dinosaurs in Art. Lots of different colours were used to make the dinosaurs stand out.

Everybody in Pine Class is looking forward to Christmas. For the craft fair we made some calendars with a picture of Santa Claus along the side of it. Each student in the class painted Santa Claus's red hat. Some cotton wool was stuck on to represent Santa Claus's beard. For the last few days in Art we have been making some Christmas cribs. We are using lollipop sticks to do this. The classroom is decorated with lots of tinsel and there is a picture of Santa Claus on the classroom door.

The students in Pine Class had the part of the angels for the Nativity play. Each student made an angel with a picture of themselves put onto it to represent themselves. For our class school play a short video was made. The music of White Christmas was played in the background. The video showed the staff and students singing along to the song. Each member of staff and student were shown to be in a different place in the video.

Everyone in Pine class would like to thank all of the staff in the special care unit who are always very kind and helpful to us. We hope that everyone enjoys their Christmas holidays and we hope to see everyone again in January 2022.

Happy Christmas and A Happy New Year from everyone in Pine Class.



Teacher Mary

At class 1, the elves were busy this Christmas season making festive decorations for sale at our Christmas craft fair. We made festive hearts, ninja turtles, snowballs, coasters and bauble decorations, to hang on the Christmas tree. We thank you for all the support you have given us this Christmas season. Santa also visited and added festive cheer gifting presents and surprises; leaving smiles and happiness. We enjoyed supporting our bake/cake sale and sampled the gingerbread men on sale. We especially enjoyed decorating our door for Christmas to the gingerbread theme. We made gingerbread decorations from clay, adding ribbons. We also loved our gingerbread man story with puppets and had fun dancing to the gingerbread man break dance!

We also recorded our Reindeer Hokey Pokey dancing which we hope you enjoy watching on our website. Sending lots of well wishes this Christmas season, Ciara, Claire, Martina and Mary.



Teacher Anthony

It has been a great start to the year for all in A6. We have three pupils doing Junior Cycle and three graduates doing ASDAN. It's a big year for our graduates as they move to Adult Services next year. The pupils have been doing Cookery and Woodwork and we have been walking daily around the ALC to keep fit. As we approach Christmas we have put up our decorations, made videos and participated in the Christmas Nativity. All in A6 wish everyone health and happiness for 2022.



SCU Teacher Elsa

We have had a busy term in the junior room of the SCU. The children have done lots of nature and science work. At Halloween they each painted their own life size paper costumes. We read lots of dinosaur facts, made clay fossils, and playdough footprints, and painted really tall dinosaurs. Each child mixed a tray of mixed objects, which were photographed for their

Christmas cards. All on top of a foundation of communication and sensory learning. Lots more exploring to come in January. A merry Christmas to you all.



Teacher Sinéad

The children have settled back to school and are working so hard this year. We are visiting the local shops learning to count and use money to buy items and sometimes get the mummies items on their shopping lists. We try to visit the coffee shop for a little treat on Friday's when the weather permits. The students have been working very hard at preparing craft items for the Craft Fair helping to fill scented decorations as well as sewing buttons on scented sachets. The students enjoyed preparing for our digital Christmas Concert and did a great job recording their part in the show. Adam, Cian, Kaif and Eoin are currently completing their Asdan Transition Challenge folders in class this year, whilst Eric and Dylan are working so hard at completing year 2 of the Junior Cycle programme. We continued development of fine motor skills involving the creation of wonderful art using the techniques of diamond painting skills, a sample will be sent home as a special Christmas picture for 2021. The students also love our daily GoNoodle dance off and participated in a Tik Tok challenge choreographed by the great Jenny in class. A big thank you to the team Caroline and Jenny, who help look after the students in class. We would like to wish each and everyone a wonderful Christmas and a healthy, peaceful and Happy New year



Teacher James

The great young men of Class 6 have had a marvelous first term and made great achievements in their learning. Graduate students Pádraic, Conor and Jack are making strong headway in their School leaver's 'ASDAN' Transition Challenge programme with its focus on life and work independence skills. Also the three younger students, Darragh, Cillian and Cian are enjoying their Short course for the Level 1 Learning programme: 'Keeping well, Looking good and Being great!' as part of the Junior Cycle curriculum. They said a fond farewell to their new friend Rioghan who departed for his new school in Australia. We all wish him and his family every success. Exciting projects this year include helping the whole school community with our green flag which is all about Biodiversity. To this end the boys worked very hard to clear out old raised beds in the playground and are ready to build the new

garden growing beds with Tommy our woodwork teacher guiding us in the Spring so we can get growing in the garden!

Best wishes to you all for a lovely Christmas and a happy, healthy year ahead in 2022 from Class 6!



Teacher Siobhan

Class 3 settled well into December and our Winter theme. We learned about the clothes we can wear in this cold month such as coat, hat, gloves and scarf. We enjoyed practicing and performing The Snowflake Song in our festive jumpers, completed lots of Winter and Christmas art themed projects such as fork painting, bubble wrap mark making. We made blue snowflake shaped ice cubes, felt how cold they were and used them to create a snowflake effect on paper plates. We enjoyed a Sensory version of The Gingerbread man with story spoons and baked and decorated our own gingerbread. Of course our highlight was Santa's visit! The boys all greeted the Big man and his elves with glee.. HO HO HO..... Oh.. And did I mention that we won the Best Christmas Decorated Classroom Door. The boys and girls in Class 3 are most definitely on Santa's NICE List.



Teacher Jenny

Class A1 had a great term, they advanced a lot in different aspects and abilities. They also enjoyed the different activities we did, especially going to the shop and on our daily walk (when the weather allows it!). They developed a lot of new skills and they have enjoyed their time in class. They enjoyed the Halloween party before the mid-term and they came back in great form after the break.

We have to make a special mention of Rose and Sophie as both of them did their Holy Communion and to Matthew as he is getting ready for his Confirmation this school year. All of them are really enjoying December with all the Christmas activities in school and they loved to see Santa around a couple of times!

All the team in A1 want to wish you all a Merry Christmas and looking forward to seeing you in January!



Teacher Rhian

This year some of us were at home learning. We had lots of fun making lots of art, doing experiments, singing lots of songs and reading many stories. Ryan particularly liked circle time and joined in with lots of zoom lessons. Eoin and Myles did an amazing job at home. Myles celebrated a big birthday!! We loved playing with sensory and water was a favourite of many. We miss you all and can't wait to see you soon. Merry Christmas!!



Teacher Ina

In line with the Junior Cycle Curriculum the post-primary pupils at St. Mary's SS are engaged with

This semester their Units of Learning have been inspired by major artists of our time including Andy Warhol and Gustav Klimt. Using the work of these arts as inspiration a wide variety of art mediums and processes were used to create interesting and diverse art works.

Klimt's portrait of Adele Block Bauer and Tree of Life, led to studies of shape, colour and texture. The children of Classes 4 and A2 printed and collaged shapes, stencilled their own Tree of Life and used Klimt's vibrant colour pallet including Reds, Golds and Coppers.



Focus on Shape and colour

Andy Warhol and Pop Art provided the inspiration for Class 5. Here the focus is on bright colours and images from popular culture.



Using stencils, paints, photographs and collage, the children created lovely interpretations of Warhol's work (above) . These artworks are currently on display in the school and will find their way home in the new year.

As well as using a wide variety of painting and print techniques, these activities are designed to provide experiences of sensory materials and opportunities for fun and social interaction.



Teacher Siobhan

We have had a busy and productive first term in Class 2. The Pupils participated daily in Aistear themed play activities where we focus on building relationships and communication skills through play. Pupils also worked on individual learning targets and life skills daily. We have enjoyed a variety of physical activities including football and games in the meadow, developing balance and gross motor skills in the playground and cycling with increased independence. We also enjoy a weekly trip in the local community to visit the Church for quiet prayer and to take turns going into the shop to buy a special treat. We finished the term with some colourful and creative Advent art, recording our masterpiece for the Christmas concert and each pupil making a beautiful and unique piece of Christmas wood craft for their families. Well done Class 2, Happy Christmas and may the new year bring fun, friendship and new learning experiences.



Teacher Valerie

Class A3 have had a lovely first term. We spent the first few weeks getting to know each other – new classmates, new SNAs, new teacher, new room. All children settled down very well and participated in work, group activities, art and sensory time. Caitlin, Jasmine and Chizzy loved tacpac and looked forward to that each day after lunch. Jake our only boy enjoyed OT and sensory activities. Lucy impressed us all with her super reading, Jasmine made new friends and Amy showed us her skills using her device. The children all enjoyed Attention Autism activities – which were often messy but always great fun. We had fun playing drama – we played doctors and each child visited the doctor and got a check-up and an injection! Chizzy was the doctor –she enjoyed giving me a check-up. Caitlin and Amy got

their arms bandaged. We played witches stirring up a brew – Lucy, Caitlin and Chizzy all took turns at being a witch and adding gruesome items to the pot. We discovered fabulous singers in class A3 – Jake, Lucy, Chizzy and Caitlin all take turns at singing in class. They are fabulous.



A Christmas Blessing

May your world be filled with warmth and good cheer this holy season, we wish you a joy-filled Christmas. May the joy and peace of Christmas be with you all through the New Year. May God bless you with a festive, loving, and peaceful celebration this Christmas and all throughout the year.

From everyone at St Mary's we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New year.

