

EASTER NEWSLETTER 2022

HAPPY EASTER!!

Welcome to our Easter Newsletter for 2022. This has been a very busy term for all the staff and children alike with lots of learning and fun. The children and staff enjoyed a the Christmas and St Patricks day celebrations. While Covid 19 proves to be an on-going challenge for the school community, school life is gradually returning to the “new normal”.

Well done to all the children for their efforts this term. We hope you enjoy our newsletter which includes news from the classroom teachers, Green schools, graduates, Food Dudes and lots more!

**ST. MARY'S
SPECIAL
SCHOOL**



A FEW WORDS FROM OUR PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents / guardians,

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very happy Easter!

As we continue to adjust and hopefully settle into our new reality, I wish good health and well-being for all of you. In challenging times information and connection are important to providing comfort and assurance. From time to time, I will continue to write letters to provide updates and express appreciation.

I continue to communicate with parents through email, letters, phone and face to face. You have shared your appreciation for the efforts and commitment the staff are making to ensure the continuity of your children's learning. Your kind and thoughtful comments are appreciated and go a long way to lift our spirits. It is our hope and intention that we in turn are providing comfort and support to you and your children through the connection and instruction we are providing.

On a final note, we are approaching the Easter holidays. As is the case with our daily routines and experiences, this Easter will present changes to the way we typically celebrate, as Covid is still very present in our society. St Mary's is a strong community. I encourage all of us to reach out to one another to wish each other a Happy Easter and to especially keep in our thoughts and prayers those who will be working away from home and those who are alone during this period .

The Easter message of rebirth and renewal may have greater relevance this year. As we acknowledge and celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus this Easter , let's rely on our faith and the Easter theme of renewal to give us hope and optimism that we will come out of this challenging time with a renewed outlook and appreciation for each other, our school community and well-being.

We look forward to seeing all our students return to the school after the break.

Remember to stay safe and take care as you enjoy a well -earned break.

I will leave you with the following quote from Pope Francis:

"We proclaim the resurrection of Christ when his light illuminates the dark moments of our existence."

God bless you all.

Maria Corredor



OUR LATEST NEWS

Fundraiser We have some tasty goodies to be won this year, with some fine bottles of whisky up for grabs! Be sure to get your tickets to be in with a chance to win a prize.

Ukraine Our hearts go out to all those impacted by the awful events unfolding in Ukraine. As a school community, we thank all those who contributed to our Ukraine appeal.

Food Dudes We welcome the return of the Food Dudes programme to St Mary's this year. This is a programme which encourages the children to eat healthy and to taste a variety of foods. The children receive fresh fruit and vegetables during the programme. They are encouraged to taste them with the help of the Food Dudes programme. The children learn that eating healthy is a fun and delicious activity.

Green Schools St Mary's is proud to be part of the Green Schools initiative which encourages us to look after our environment. The children are taking part in recycling programmes where they separate the waste so it may be recycled. This year, we have also introduced food waste bins. In St Mary's School, we always strive to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Parents Open Day We plan to host an open day in the school this coming term. Parents will have the opportunity to visit the school, meet the teachers and have a cup of tea or coffee. We hope to see you on the day. Details of the event to follow in the new term.

St Patricks Day This year, staff and pupils wore green to celebrate St Patrick's day. The pupils learned the story of St Patrick. Our in school parade made a welcome return this year, with some fantastic creations on display for all to enjoy. The children also enjoyed a surprise visit from an Irish dancer!

New Classroom The pupils of class A3 will benefit from a brand new classroom this term, complete with state of the art facilities. This classroom has direct access to a green space and is a welcome addition to the learning environment in St Mary's.



NEWS FROM OUR CLASSROOMS

Teacher Siobhan M:

Class 2 have had a busy term. We have all enjoyed the arrival of Spring and began with making our St Brigid's crosses on Feb 1st. Pupils worked on new life and growth, using the outdoor classroom and Spring planting.

All pupils participate in daily Aistear play stations and continue building friendships with their peers through play. We are a very active bunch so cycling, climbing in the playground and playing football continue to be a big part of our weekly timetable. We have also worked on making choices, using money and communicating with others in the community during our trips to the local shop. All pupils look forward to our trips in the local community and often request a walk to the Church using pecs and lamh.

We have celebrated many individual achievements over the term including cycling independently, developing accuracy in lamh signs, using pecs, reading first 50 words, toilet training, life skills- eating & drinking independently, setting table, washing dishes, recycling and managing personal belongings. We'll finish our term with an Easter egg hunt and some well deserved chocolate treats.

Teacher Valerie:

This term A3 have been working on the Keeping Well Looking Good programme. We learned about taking care of bodies and ourselves and recognising our own feelings and emotions. We talked about the people who help us to look after ourselves and we role played going to the doctors. Amy and Caitlin made super doctors and bandaged Theresa's sore arm.

We practiced washing our hands, face and teeth and we also role played going to the hairdressers. Jasmine loved getting her hair done! We all had some lovely hairstyles in A3 and Carmel even had a makeover courtesy of Chizzy. We touched/smelled/tasted lots of new foods and practiced our washing, peeling and chopping skills.

We had a class ceilidh for St Patricks day - Lucy and Jake were super dancers. All of class A3 worked hard on their counting and measuring in maths this term. Lucy practices her reading most days and we are all super impressed with her! We're delighted with Jasmine who is now making more requests for various items and choices and Jake for finding his voice and using it.

We now have three fabulous singers in A3 - Caitlin, Chizzy and Jake. In keeping with the Irish love of weather Amy continues to be our very own weather lady - with twice daily (and sometimes hourly) updates on our weather board. Our inspiration in Art this term has been Frida Kahlo - a mexican artist - whose art is inspired by nature and Mexican artifacts. Everyone enjoyed making self portraits and picture frames using beautiful bold flower prints and bright colours.



NEWS FROM OUR CLASSROOMS

Teacher James

We are having a fantastic and productive term in Class 6. Conor, Jack and Pádraic have done brilliant work to complete their School leavers' curriculum which is called the ASDAN Transition Challenge. Well done boys!

This week we welcomed Conor Staunton in to school to team up with us for his work experience. The boys of Class 6 are doing a great job to show him around in St Mary's.

The students of Class 6 and Class A4 are the school leaders for our Green Flag in 2022. They held a lovely zoom meeting with the Green Flag Inspector, Bernadine from the Meath County Council. The students told Bernadine all about their great work helping the Biodiversity and wildlife around St Mary's gardens. They are feeding the birds regularly and growing lots of food crops (potatoes and strawberries so far) and wildflowers in the various areas around the garden this year. They are hoping to earn the new Green Flag for Biodiversity this year with An Taisce's Green Schools Programme.

Thanks for all the great support from families in collecting the Bio Dive stickers for the Applegreen competition. Also we will participate in the Supervalu Tidy Towns Save the Bees Campaign in April and May. We can all make a big difference in helping nature and addressing climate change by doing many little things at home and in school. This year the school community are working hard to make sure we are streaming all our recycling and food waste efficiently. The focus is also to help the bees and wildlife around our school grounds by planting plenty of wildflowers and tasty food crops.

Best wishes to all for the Spring term and Happy Easter everyone from all of us in Class 6.

Teacher William P

We have had a very busy term so far. We have learned about our colours and shapes in Maths. We have explored a range of stories. We have done art work and music. Every day, we made a special effort to go out into the garden to do our exercise. On days when it was raining, we did our dancing indoors. We enjoyed our Food Dudes programme, where we had the opportunity to taste a range of fruits and vegetables. This was a very nice experience for the children who enjoyed tasting different types of food. We celebrated Christmas, Valentines day and St Patricks Day. We wish you all a very Happy Easter!



NEWS FROM OUR CLASSROOMS

Teacher Rhian

We have had a very busy term in SCU 1. We have had lots of fun with the topics Birthdays, garden, Pond and Easter.

We did some amazing art which we really enjoyed creating. During birthday's we looked at star signs, which was really interesting. We actually had 2 birthday's in the class this term so plenty of celebrations.

Talking of celebrations our St Patrick's Day party was so much fun, we loved listening to the Irish music, having a dance and parade. We wore green and made some fun art and decorations to do with it. Valentines was also fun as we looked at the story Twit Twoo and the owl's love. We grew vegetables, went on a picnic and looked at so many fruit, vegetables and plants. Our art has been amazing and we are very proud of all we have done. We welcomed back Rhian who had been off for a little. It wasn't all fun and celebrations in class as we did have some sad news throughout this term, for which we did lots of prays and our warm thoughts went to the people involved. Despite everything we are very excited about Easter, we have had rabbit and chick races, looked at Jesus and made bright colorful Easter art.

Our favorite thing though was to look at all the the pictures taken this term and make it into a fun collage of all the amazing communication, sensory, creative, topic, cause and effect and all the other fantastic work we have done. Happy Easter Everyone!!

Teacher Elsa

Up here in the senior room in the SCU, we have been busy reading about Irish wildlife. Irish native birds, the fox, the badger, the kingfisher and the heron, among others.

The children were quite taken with a short video showing the plumage and songs of birds they might see and hear in their gardens. We also looked at the life cycle of the frog. In science we read about seeds and how they are scattered , we brought real floating seeds into our water play. In art, we have been busy decorating the seasonal Easter silhouettes. We will be going on an egg hunt soon.



NEWS FROM OUR CLASSROOMS

Teacher Anthony

2022 is an exciting time for A6, We have three school leavers who are graduating in June. They have been completing their ASDAN certificates as part of the graduating process. Our other children have started their L1P1 Junior Cycle folders.

I introduced the OSMO Little Genius Starter pack for them - this app sets up numeracy, literacy, science and art tasks which the children do using physical objects and the IPAD camera detects whether the task has been completed or not. Fascinating stuff! Have a lovely Easter

Anthony, John, Mary and Deirdre

Teacher Nieves

In class 5, we were very busy learning about different clothes that we wear in spring and special occasions, and the difference between clean and dirty clothes.

Also we enjoyed messy play such as shaving foam and water and our cookery class cooking pancakes and Easter biscuits. Finally, we talked about Easter painting yellow chicks, decorating Easter eggs with salt and food colourant and reading the Holy Easter story at circle time".

Teacher Olga

All the children in class A2 have been busy learning this term. There has been many fun activities including sensory tasks, water play and work on the computers. The children have enjoyed being outdoors in the garden, where they have learned about nature. All the children took part in their literacy and numeracy activities also.

As a class, we have created some beautiful art and enjoyed listening to music, dancing and taking part in action play. At Valentines day we made cards and on St Patricks day, we all had great fun dressing up in green costumes. Wishing everyone a lovely Easter break from the children and staff in class A2.



NEWS FROM OUR CLASSROOMS

Teacher Siobhan D

Class 3 were busy this term!

We enjoyed lots of fun activities around Chinese New Year, making lanterns, a Chinese dragon and watching a parade. We read 'The Tiger who came to Tea' and sampled lots of the treats which the tiger also ate. In our exploration of Spring we learned about flowers, frogs, ladybirds, butterflies and snails and enjoyed collaborative art activities.

We read The Lazy Ladybird, The Snail and the Whale and Lucy Ladybug. We had a blast making shamrocks and flags for our school St. Patrick's day festivities. We are enjoying the good weather walking in our community, visiting the local church, shops and pharmacy. We had great fun at the 'hairdressers' in Class 3 where the boys enjoyed getting a new hairstyle!

Teacher Bernie

The pupils in class 4 made lovely cards for Valentine's Day for their families. They also took home their spring flowers they planted in class for Valentines.

They all enjoyed nature walks and social outings in the local community with their class peers and staff. Scott is preparing for his Confirmation in May. Fr. Noel has come in to see the pupils.

All of the children are enjoying the Grow in love lessons. The pupils are engaging in PE activities and are enjoying the Spring sunshine playing ball games. In class they are enjoying tabletop games, like connect four, learning the rules of games and having fun together. They are all looking forward to Easter and having an Easter egg hunt at school.



NEWS FROM OUR CLASSROOMS

Teacher Sinead B

Class A4 Teacher Sinéad Barrett Since January the senior students have been working so hard in class.

They learned all about the Butterfly Cycle making a wonderful display board to show off all their learning for everyone to enjoy. Reading and engagement with the Edmark Reading program has seen great strides in literacy skills for all students. Learning to use money is central for life skills development and frequent shopping trips to Johnstown Centre have allowed the students to develop their money skills. The students are learning to count out money to pay independently for items on their shopping list, and of course buying those special pressies for the mammy's and a little treat for themselves in Costa Food Dudes was a great success with the students, exploring new fruit and vegetables to taste, smell and feel.

The fine weather also enabled the students to do lovely outdoor gardening projects and planting in class, sowing baby lettuce, planting potatoes and onions and potting our favourite pansy flowers to welcome us to class each morning . Special activities included making lovely Valentine's day cards and buying chocolates, St. Patrick's Day Flags for the parade, potting Muscari bulbs for Mother's Day and creating Easter crafts. Our Graduates, Adam, Cian, Eoin and Kaif have completed their Asdan Transition Challenge and are awaiting moderation, whilst Eric and Dylan are continuing to work hard at completing year 2 of the Junior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme. Exercise is central to our learning and participation in class.

The students engage in several weekly walks and we also took a trip to Blackwater Park and enjoyed a lovely walk and the boys hit the outdoor gym! 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 Easter and we are looking forward to a sunny summer term.

Teacher Jenny

Class A1 had a great second term, they enjoyed all activities in and out the class. All of them are getting really good in different aspects and they are enjoying this year.

They love outside activities like yard and playground, and they love to go to the church and the shop to get some treats! At the same time they are getting ready for summer with all our walks!

They really enjoyed St.Patrick's Day and all the goodies they got!

We have to do a special mention to Matthew that he is doing his Confirmation on the 13th of May and he did a great work!

All of them are doing great and growing up a lot! Well done Class A1!



NEWS FROM OUR CLASSROOMS

Teacher Mary

Class 1 have really enjoyed making the best out of term two. We have enjoyed the Spring theme, and have had fun planting flowers, and learning about bumble bees and other insects. The children enjoyed stories such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and we have had fun learning about the colour yellow for Spring. We have made everything from sensory Caterpillars, to butterflies, bumble bees, and more recently Easter bunnies in art, creating a lovely display.

We really enjoyed the book 'Dee the Bee' by Dolores Keaveney, and we look forward to a visit from Dolores soon to the school. We learned about what other flowers we can plant to attract bees and insects, and about the importance of biodiversity. All the while, we have been working hard to express our preferences, and make choices, focussing on Pictorial exchange communication.

We have enjoyed celebrating St. Valentine's Day through music, art and story. St. Patrick's Day was also a big celebration in the school. The children thoroughly enjoyed the Irish traditional music, making cards, Irish dancing and of course St. Patrick made an appearance at our school parade! With Easter holidays just around the corner, we look forward to an Easter egg hunt later this week.

Wishing you all an eggcellent Easter holiday!!

Lots of love and best wishes,

Class 1



In Memory of:

We remember Paddy who was a valued member of the St Mary's School team for many years.

Our pupil Alex who is sadly missed by the staff and pupils of St Mary's.

We remember any family member's of the school community who have passed away this term.

May they Rest In Peace



An Easter Prayer

My Lord, Jesus, You have risen to new life! Give me new eyes with which to recognize your presence in the world around me.

Sharpen my vision so that I see beyond the ordinary events of each day and into the extraordinary reality of your grace.

Brighten my view of the world with renewed hope in the coming of your Kingdom. Soften my gaze so that I view others with the kind of tenderness and compassion you showed to so many.

May each day of this Easter season provide glimpses of your glory. In your sacred name, I pray.

Amen.

