



Newport|NS
 Learning Together in Harmony
 Newport National School, Newport, Co. Mayo

Newsletter no. 33: October 2016



Mural by 5th class



... from **Newport NS**

A very warm welcome back to all our students, who have settled back to school, during this wonderful Indian summer. I extend a particularly warm welcome to our 29 junior infants. Welcome also to new staff members: SNA Ann Chambers and teachers Máire McLoughlin and Martina Conlon. We hope you all enjoy your time in Newport NS and find that we offer a high quality learning environment and a broad learning experience. We wish all our parents, pupils and staff a fruitful and enjoyable school year.

School Improvement

You will all have noticed the magnificent enhancement work carried out on the school throughout the summer. In September we opened the Explorers' Centre which adds to the facilities we provide for children with autism. We have extended our centre to provide an additional classroom, two resource rooms, a withdrawal room and sensory room. Facilities provided in the Explorers Centre are available to all children in the school.

Extensive new windows were fitted on the two stairwells in the school. These new windows create a wonderful view out onto our surroundings and contribute to heat retention in the whole building. We have managed to exclude all draughts and heat retention features have made our building considerably warmer.

We are continually working on upgrading the classrooms. This summer an additional two classrooms were fitted with new carpet.

A complete upgrade of our electrical provision is being carried out at present. This is a costly and invasive business as all cables and sockets are being refurbished. Some of the conduits are over thirty years old and are in need of replacement. As many of you will appreciate old buildings are in constant need of restoration and replacement work.

We are delighted too with our fabulous new sports hall. We have recreation facilities on our school campus which are second to none. In our new block we have provision for social gatherings as we have a fully equipped kitchen and toilet facilities. The PA has very kindly contributed towards the cost of installing a Lincat water boiler. The hall is available for hire and is currently being used for a wide range of activities.

The external collonade provides shelter for children as they assemble for class. Children travelling by car should be accompanied to and from the playground as the car park can be very busy at drop off and collection times.

Most of the work was carried out when the school was not in session in order to minimise disruption to pupils. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the huge contribution made by staff during their holidays in order to ensure that the building was fully furnished, cleaned and ready for pupils' return in

Autumnal Walk for 1st class



Volcanic Eruptions In 5th Class





Junior Explorers!

September. In particular **Martin Maguire** our dedicated caretaker took no holidays. He worked tirelessly all summer in at times stressful conditions overseeing what was a massive undertaking. So if you meet Martin, be sure to compliment him on the building and on the grounds which look so well. He certainly made my job a lot easier this summer as he was so generous with his time and skill.

Green Schools

A new green schools committee was formed under the stewardship of Ms McAuley. The group includes representatives from all classes and they are very enthusiastic about delivering the green message to the wider community. This year we are working towards our eighth green flag. The theme is Marine life. We are blessed to be surrounded by the sea and have the wonderful resource of the Marine Institute on our doorstep. (Names of committee)

Information Technology

We are always updating our IT provision. We invested heavily in replacing laptops and purchasing ipads last year. All children access the curriculum through a range of strategies including technology. We are in the process of redesigning our website. We are blessed that both Maria Molloy and Fiona Hopkins have the skill and expertise to create and maintain the school website. They both give very selflessly of their time to ensure the information published is current and relevant.

Maths Week

Maths week will be celebrated in all classes with the focus firmly on maths for fun and maths as an everyday feature. Last year our sixth class took third place on the leaderboard nationally for online maths activities. Ms Finnerty and Ms O'Malley will be hoping to hold their title again this year!

Parent/teacher meetings

The annual parent/teacher meetings take place during the week commencing November 14th with most appointments being arranged for the evening of Thursday November 17th. Teachers will contact you in advance of this week to arrange appointments. The school will close at 2.45pm (in line with Department of Education rules) on Wednesday November 16th and Thursday November 17th in order to facilitate meetings. Please collect your children promptly in order to ensure appointments run to schedule. These meetings provide a formal opportunity for you to meet your child's teachers and you will be given an outline of their progress since the beginning

of the year. If during the year you have a concern about your child please arrange a meeting with your child's teacher. A prior appointment is always necessary as teachers can not be replaced in their classrooms at short notice and an unannounced visit, however brief, disrupts learning for all students. You can do this by writing a note in the homework journal or by ringing Fiona, the school secretary.

Complaints procedure

We have a complaints policy in place which broadly directs parents or pupils to bring an issue to the attention of the class teacher at the earliest possible stage. The vast majority of incidents which cause concern can be sorted at this early stage. Over the years we have found that that problems addressed by a class teacher are easily resolved with no long term fallout. It is natural and anticipated that there will be occasional disruption to relationships and we are well placed to deal with issues as they arise once we are informed of the problem.

Child Protection Policy

Our Child Protection Policy is available on our school website (Downloads section) and I would encourage all parents to familiarise themselves with it. Bríd McAuley (Deputy Liaison Person) attended training last year, and has advised class teachers on the procedure in relation to identifying and reporting cases of child abuse which includes neglect as well as physical and emotional abuse. Reports of such concerns are to be made to either myself or Ms. McAuley. We do not make any judgements but pass on the information to the relevant authority.

Opening Times and Safety

The school opens to receive pupils each morning at 9:20am. Supervision is provided from 9:10am by one teacher and one SNA. No responsibility is accepted by the Board of Management for pupils arriving before that time. Please ensure that you see an adult staff member in the yard before driving off and leaving your child. Class Assembly time is from 9:20 to 9:40am and formal lessons begin at 9:40am. No pupil should arrive any later than 9:30am. Classes end each day for Infants at 2pm and for all other children at 3pm. Parents of infants meet their children at the classroom door and the other children are met in the school yard.

We are governed by the Education Welfare Act and all absences are recorded. Children are prone to childhood illnesses and regularly need to be cared for at





Science Fair

home. Please send a note explaining each absence. Should your child miss in excess of twenty days, we are obliged to inform the National Education Welfare Board (Tusla). We ask you to ensure that your child arrives at the school at 9:20am as the admittance of all children together cuts down on the disruption to the class. Should your child get delayed, a note is sufficient to explain what has happened. There is no need to interrupt the class at that point.

School improvement plan

Newport NS is continuing our school improvement plan. This year we are introducing a focus on Numeracy. In literacy we continue to focus on comprehension and reading for pleasure as well as working on an improvement in individual achievement. Each class teacher is explicitly teaching comprehension skills and we have a Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) slot allocated to reading for pleasure in each classroom. In mathematics all classes are going to work on improving number through games, competitions and the learning of tables. Maths language is explicitly taught and problem solving strategies are learned by pupils. Parents can play a major role in this initiative by tracking which tables are being taught and by timing your child or downloading an app to help them with the tables. A dedicated School improvement/DEIS (delivering equality of opportunity in school) notice board is located on the ground floor corridor. Regular updates are posted here.

Autumn Walk

First Class went for a walk to Princess Grace Park. We were looking for signs of autumn. We saw lots of evergreen trees and gathered some pine cones which had fallen off them. There were also some deciduous trees whose leaves were changing colour and falling off. We kept our eyes open for animals and spotted a burrow but the animals all stayed hidden. We will return to the park in January to see what seasonal changes winter will bring.

Cross country

56 children competed in the annual cross country team selection process at the GAA pitch. This event is run by a committed group of volunteer parents. The parent group then accompanied the four teams who represented the school at the West Mayo finals in Ballyvary. Our teams achieved very commendable times as a result of all the effort put into their training where nothing was left to chance. Congratulations to Niall McLoughlin who was

selected to represent the school at the Mayo cross country event in Ballina where he came fourth, and on to the Connacht Championships where he earned a Silver Medal!

After School Classes

Teachers, parents and outside providers provide a broad range of after school classes. We receive excellent feedback from the children in those classes and thank all involved for sharing their talent to enhance the lives of our pupils. I am still on the lookout of a guitar teacher and will shortly announce details of a choir group.

Science Fair

On Monday 3rd of October, 6th class hosted a science fair. Declan Holmes of Science Ireland visited 6th class in our new school hall to demonstrate various science principles.

The class were then divided into teams and given stations. Each station had some experiments to explain. As each class visited the hall they were divided into groups of 2/3 and visited each station in a round robin style.

The boys and girls from 6th class did a fantastic job of explaining the experiments at their stations to all the different classes and the teachers.

They learned about principles behind pendulums, inertia, potential and kinetic energy, refraction, how cameras/magnifying glasses/the eye works, how magnets behave, static electricity and friction, how 3-D glasses and sunglasses work AND they got to handle the air bazooka! Nearly all the various different principles were demonstrated using basic household and everyday materials to show that science is all around us.

6th class put great energy and enthusiasm in their explanations and were happy but exhausted at the end of the day. Sincere thanks to Declan for offering his services free of charge to the school.

On a separate note 6th class have also applied to display a project at the Young Scientist's Exhibition in the RDS in January 2017, but have not received confirmation at the time of publishing.

Uniform

Sports clothes are worn on P.E. days only and no branded sports clothing is worn in order to ensure uniformity. Parents experiencing financial hardship in relation to purchasing the correct uniform shoes should make a confidential telephone call to either me or Fiona and assistance will be arranged immediately.

Lost property

The lost property box has filled since term commenced. It is located at the Rosmore side entrance. Please put names on all clothing so that we can reunite lost property with their owners!

Mini-7s

On Friday 14th October the girls' football team attended the Mini-7s tournament in Kilmeena. Their first match was against a well-prepared Brackloon team but the girls stayed focused despite slippery conditions and secured a win. Next up were Louisburgh who forced some fantastic saves from Eleana Chambers. The girls were delighted to make it out of our group and into the semi-final against Fahy. This was a hard-fought match under tough conditions and in the end Fahy were victorious. The girls were gracious in defeat but bitterly disappointed, however, they have learned a lot from the experience which will stand to them in 2017. The school is very proud of their efforts and we sincerely thank Brian McLoughlin for his coaching and management and the parents who braved the cold on the day. Squad: Eleana Chambers, Alana Mc Donnell, Emily Chambers, Ruth Chambers, Ava Kelly, Ava Palasz, Aoibhin Chambers, Aoibheann McManamon, Anna Chambers, Alice Chambers, Hanna Sheehy and Ellie O'Malley

Volcanic Eruptions!

Fifth Class recently undertook a project that integrated the subjects of history, geography, art and science.

The children learned about the eruption of Mount Vesuvius that destroyed Pompeii, Italy in AD 79. They also learned about why volcanic eruptions happen. The children then created their own volcanoes using clay and then participated in a science experiment whereby a chemical reaction between an acid (vinegar) and alkalis (washing-up liquid and bread soda) combined with red and yellow food colouring caused the volcanoes to erupt.

Board of Management

Our Board of Management has put a lot of time into overseeing the governance and smooth running of our school. We thank all those voluntary workers who attend numerous meetings and fulfil their role so conscientiously. Their good work is in evidence in every aspect of school life. As is proper, the children are the benefactors of their input and industry. A report of the Board of management's progress is available on the school website in Downloads section.