

St Brigid's NS.



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Dear Parents,

As we come to the end of this school year, it is time to reflect on the work and activities that have taken place during the year. No doubt your children are tired and ready for their Summer break – I'm sure you are too as are all staff members. It has been a very busy year and hopefully we will all have plenty of time to re-charge our batteries and enjoy the sunshine.

Based on the number of Pupils on roll on 30th September 2016, we will have an extra Mainstream class teacher from 31st August this year. The appointment is not yet made but it will be completed in plenty of time for September! The Board of Management have applied to the DES for additional accommodation, but there has been no response from them yet. Therefore, the present Learning Support Room and children's Library will become a Mainstream classroom in September and the Maths store room will be altered to become a Learning Support room until more suitable accommodation is provided. Until the DES has given instruction on provision of the extra accommodation, the Board of Management cannot make any decision on developing the site where the prefab was situated as a playing area.

We were very fortunate to receive funding from Carlow Co. Council, under the Local Agenda 21 project to re-develop the back of the school after the last building project. It is a beautiful "Seomra Ranga sa Chlós" - outdoor classroom – now. A sincere word of thanks to all the Parents, Grandparents, Pupils, Teachers, SNAs and our Secretary who helped with this project and to Maria Cullen for all her advice and support.

On an academic level, the Standardised tests have been completed in English, Maths and Spellings. Once again we are very happy with the results which reflect the high level of teaching and learning which has taken place in the school, during the year alongside all the other activities and projects which were undertaken. Thank you to the teachers and pupils for all the hard work involved and to you, the Parents, for your support of the work.

We again received a school of Excellence Award from Waterford IT. This year we received the award for the work in the school garden. Mrs Sheppard and I attended the workshops during the year and presented a report on the work at the final session. We also received the Discover Primary Science and Maths Award again this year. Our Science day is part of that award and your great support for the children and the school on science day is always appreciated. They really enjoy and benefit from having an attentive audience to listen to their scientific explanations and stories! The school hosted Science workshops, provided by ESERO during the year and they were also attended by the staff of Kildavin NS. We also hosted a workshop based on the new Religion programme for local schools and a workshop for teachers of 1st and 2nd class based on the "Grow in Love" programme. Teaching Staff worked all the Croke Park hours required and were engaged in School Planning, Training and Policy Review. SNAS also provided a very valuable service to the school in working their Croke Park hours. A sincere thank you to the Parents Council who organised information sessions on Internet Safety and Mental Health.

Music Generation Carlow provided singing tuition to all pupils in the school. The Concert in Bagenalstown Church and our own Concert in St. Brigid's Church provided a wonderful musical experience for the choirs and for the audience. On 6th December we held our Christmas Carol Service in St. Brigid's Church. All of these events are part of our music curriculum and we endeavour to introduce our pupils to as many aspects of music as possible.

All aspects of sport were well catered for during the year. Beginning in September, pupils from 1st – 6th class and all pupils in the ASD classes attended 10 weeks of swimming lessons in Graiguecullen pool. They did their swimming exams and received certificates for them. Pupils received coaching in Basketball, hurling, camogie and football. They participated in the Cumann na mBunscoil hurling, indoor hurling, football and camogie leagues and in the Basketball League. Congratulations to the boys team who were finalists in this league. We are grateful to the local GAA club who are currently providing football training to Infants and 1st class during school time and after school training for 2nd – 4th class pupils. Carlow GAA also provided hurling training during school hours earlier in the year. A sincere thank you too, to the staff members who provided hurling, camogie, and football training during lunch time breaks and after school – Hurling & Camogie – Mrs Sheppard, Football – Mrs Austin, Basketball – Ms O' Brien & Ms Cauley. Mrs Sheppard was assisted at after school training sessions by a Parent, Ceara Dillon, and we are very grateful to her for her help and support. Thanks to Mrs Warren who organises the soccer league every year and who accompanied pupils to the FAI matches and the schools athletic event. All classes will go on school tours with Junior and Senior Infants visiting Woodfield House, 1st and 2nd class will go to Lullymore while 3rd to 6th class will attend Avon Rí activity centre. Our sports day is coming up with the emphasis on participation. The sixth class girls and 6th class boys race is always a very exciting event and will be held on Sports Day. We aim to encourage participation in all forms of exercise as it is so important for a healthy lifestyle. We also engaged with the Food Dudes again this year to encourage all pupils to include fruit and vegetables in their lunches each day. It is so important that the children become aware of the need for a healthy lifestyle and healthy food.

We celebrated Catholic schools Week with a Parish Mass. All pupils participated – reading, saying Prayers of the Faithful, bringing up gifts and singing in the school choir. We also celebrated Grandparents day during that week and once again we were delighted to welcome so many grandparents to the school. It is impossible to underestimate the importance of grandparents in the lives of young children and as I've said so many times – their memories are real history for the children. They are fascinated by the simple stories and recall them in the days and weeks following Grandparents day. Another important event in our school calendar is the visit of the Fire Officers to third class each year. They explain the importance of fire safety and of course the children enjoy seeing their breathing apparatus and fire fighters uniforms.

During the year, our pupils in 2nd class received the Sacraments of Penance and Communion for the 1st time. The school choir sang at all religious ceremonies.

Well done to Ms Cauley's class who participated in the Bunclody Bake Off competition and won it! Their cinnemapple bread has been on sale in SuperValu Bunclody since Christmas and all profits will be paid to the school at the end of the year. They have also been very busy producing beautiful door signs as part of the Junior Entrepreneur Competition. They held a very successful showcase day in the school and also attended the Carlow Showcase day in Visual Carlow.

Mrs O' Meara's class participated in the "Someone like Me" competition. This competition aimed to promote inclusion and understanding of children with special needs. They produced some excellent work and Carla Byrne won a national award for her work. Congratulations to her and her teacher.

This year we have been awarded a Blue Star Flag – thanks to the work of Mrs Sheppard and her class. They did tremendous work based on the EU and the celebrations on Europe Day were enjoyed by the children and their Parents and some Grandparents. The visit of Deputy Pat Deering was very much appreciated and the children really enjoyed the trip to Leinster House which he facilitated for them.

This year, we introduced Mindfulness and Yoga classes for all pupils in the school. This was introduced as we believe it is really important to give the children skills to promote mental health and well being. We hope the classes will help them develop resilience and coping skills that will remain with them throughout their lives. A big thank you to a Parent, Breda Murphy, who ran the London Marathon to raise funds for similar classes next year.

Science week and Engineering Week were very exciting in the school as pupils participated in really interesting activities. A big thank you to Chris who visited on 2 different occasions to introduce the children to the wonders of engineering. Mrs Warren's class had a very exciting day in Carlow IT where they met Scientific Sue and enjoyed her science activities. Mrs. Sheppard's class also had good fun when they visited Bunclody Library during the year.

We celebrated Seachtain na Gaeilge with "Trath na gCeist" - a table quiz and a Ceilí. Pupils also dressed for "Lá Glas" and we walked to Huntington. It is very important that pupils continue to strive to speak "as gaeilge" outside of the classroom.

As always, the Parents Council played a very important role in our Christmas activities this year. The visit of Santa is always a highlight and they organise it. They also organised to send letters to Santa this year and even persuaded him to reply to every child! Also the children raise funds for Bóthar, the school's chosen charity and send 2 goats to poor families each year. The response to the Christmas Shoe Box appeal was tremendous again this year and is a testament to your generosity and the generosity of your children.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped the school in any way during the year. So many of you are always available when help is needed and this is very much appreciated. A very sincere thank you for your support of the school and the staff. I want to say a personal word of thanks for your support of my work as Principal of the school. It is a very demanding job and your words of appreciation and encouragement often make it easier to continue when the workload seems insurmountable. Thanks to all staff members – as I've said so many times and always mean it – we are indeed blessed to have such an enthusiastic and committed team. Thanks to the Board of Management for their tireless voluntary work on behalf of the school and for their support and loyalty. Thanks to the Parents and the Parents Council for all their work and support. Thanks to our

secretary Mary who is always immersed in the life of the school and to Helen who sings her way through her work in keeping the school so clean and neat. Thanks to Gary for all his help and work in the gardens. Thanks to Alex and Claire who always make us feel very welcome when we visit the Castle at Halloween and Christmas and on our "Walk on Wednesday". Our school website is up to date and full of news and information – thanks to the great work and commitment of Eveline – we couldn't do it without her and her work is greatly appreciated.

Our school magazine goes on sale before the holidays. Thanks to all who wrote poems and stories for it, to the teachers for their work in encouraging the children to work for the magazine and to all who collected advertisements for it. A special word of thanks to Ms O' Brien who produced the magazine this year.

As we finish another year, we say goodbye to Mrs Mapolisa who replaced Mrs Nolan while she was on Maternity Leave and to Mrs Lacey who was one of our Resource teachers. We want to thank them for all their wonderful work and for their friendship. We wish them well in the future and of course we congratulate Mrs Nolan on the birth of her beautiful daughter. We look forward to the arrival of our new mainstream teacher in September.

Swimming lessons will commence for pupils from 1st – 6th class and for pupils in the ASD classes on 12th September. Each child will need swimming togs, swim hat and towel. They may also decide to bring an extra towel or turban for their hair, goggles and swim socks – but these are optional. It is essential that we have 2 parents on the bus each week to help with the younger children. Only parents who have been Garda vetted may travel. If you haven't already volunteered to get Garda vetting perhaps you could do so now. Forms may be collected in the school.

At our recent Board of Management meeting, the Board conveyed it's congratulations and appreciation to all staff members for their great work during the year. They also expressed gratitude and appreciation for the work of the Parents Council and all those parents who help out when needed.

Finally, I wish each of you a very happy and safe Summer holiday period. Enjoy the break from routine and make lots of happy memories with your children.

School closes at 12.00 on Friday 30th June.

School reopens on Thursday 31st August

Le gach dea-ghuí

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Anna Cosgrave