

**Parents Association  
St. Mary's National School,  
Ballygunner.**

**Telephone: 051-878388  
E-mail: office @ballygunner.ie  
www.ballygunner.ie**



**Newsletter  
Issue 36 – Easter 2014**

**A Message from Mr O'Reilly**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

It has been an extremely busy Spring term here at St. Mary's N.S. and we are all looking forward to the Easter holidays on Friday.

I am pleased to inform you that our Patron has appointed Mr John Goff as Chairperson and Fr Liam Power P.P. as Patron nominee on our school Board of Management. I wish to acknowledge Fr John Treacy's work on our Board of Management, most especially since Fr Cooney's death in May 2013 (R.I.P.). While Fr John is no longer on the Board he will continue to serve as School Chaplin.

I am extremely satisfied with the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate Whole School Evaluation Follow-up Report which we received recently. You will recall we had a Whole School Evaluation (WSE) in May 2012 and the inspectorate returned in November 2013 to review progress on WSE recommendations. Our School Self Evaluation Plan is working well. Significant progress has been achieved in developing pupils' independent and higher order

thinking skills, pupils' problem solving capacities in mathematics and pupils' personal writing skills. The inspectorate has commended us on our work which is pleasing for all concerned.

It is my intention to upload a draft copy of our Anti-Bullying Policy to our school website after Easter. There will be a period of consultation and parental feedback will be most welcome before the final policy document is ratified by our Board of Management in June.

I wish to acknowledge all the wonderful initiatives which have been on-going this term. Namely, Tin Whistle C.D. Project, Nore Valley Farm 'Chick Hatching' Project, Green School Biodiversity Flag Programme and Waterford City Council Environment Department Garden Mural. Collectively they have brought a great 'buzz' to our school as we begin to appreciate the brighter days and the arrival of Spring.

I wish to compliment our pupils on all their hard work. There were many notable achievement this term, special mention goes to all those who performed at our 'Seachtain na Gaeilge Ceolchoirm' in March and pupils who worked to make 'World Autism Day' such a success on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Best wishes to our second and sixth classes as they prepare for the Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation in May.

Our Board of Management was successful in our application to secure Summer Works 2014 grant funding for electrical upgrade in the older section of our school building. This project is currently going through the tendering process. Sincere thanks to our Parents Association for their continuing support and organising a very successful fundraiser quiz on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> March.

Finally, I wish everyone a Happy Easter and a restful holiday. We return to school on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April.

Killian O'Reilly  
Principal Teacher

## **First Penance**

Congratulations to all our pupils who received the sacrament of First Penance on Tuesday 25 February last. The pupils are to be commended for this very moving and spiritual event and in particular for their beautiful singing. A sincere thank you to our Second Class teachers for preparing the pupils so well. The pupils were treated to a lovely class party in the school the following day.



## **Music in the Classroom**

Mr O'Neill launched a tin whistle project among all Senior classes (3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> and Senior ASD class). Each class had three tunes to practice, most of which are traditional tunes. In recent weeks the children have been accompanied by various musicians to prepare for a recording. The musicians are Ms Moore (Concertina); Ms McSweeney, (Flute); Ms Kearney, (Piano); Mr Walsh (guitar), Gretta Mackey (Accordion), Tom Mackey (Uilleann pipes), Una McSweeney (Harp), Mrs McEvoy (Viola) and Niamh McCann, past pupil (Concertina).

There is great credit due to all class teachers and pupils involved for the work they have done to bring this project to fruition. Recording has been taking place in recent days. The entire staff have been very co-operative and supportive throughout the process. Sincere thanks to all the musicians for their involvement. The CD will be ready for release after Easter.

## **Fun Table Quiz Fundraiser**

A huge thank you for supporting our Table Quiz in Becketts last month. €2,520 was raised for the school towards improving school facilities. This fun event was really enjoyed by all and a huge thanks to everyone involved in organising it.

## **Seachtain na Gaeilge**

Bhí Seachtain na Gaeilge ar siúl sa scoil seo againne ón 10ú lá go dtí an 17ú lá de Mhí Márta. Bhí comórtais, tráth na gceist, am scéalaíochta, céilí agus ceolchoirm ar siúl i rith na seachtaine. Tá súil agam gur bhain na páistí go léir sár -thaitneamh as na himeachtaí go léir. Maith sibh!

## **World Autism Day**

St Mary's NS celebrated World Autism Awareness Day in true Blue style on April 2<sup>nd</sup> last with hundreds of children donning a blue nose to highlight Autism Needs throughout the world. The school's Autism Classes were a hive of activity all day as the school community learnt about Autism through music, songs, presentations and integration.

Evan Burke and Donald Ogugua gave inspirational talks on what Autism means to them in their daily lives; speeches which moved many listeners to tears at times. Teachers throughout the school dedicated their SPHE classes to teaching their children about Autism. Special mention to Ms Cullen's class who created a true masterpiece of a display on Autism which is exhibited inside the school foyer for all to see. Well done everyone!

## **New mural for our school Garden**

Have you seen the lovely new mural in our school garden? Last October, 1<sup>st</sup> Class (Miss Hayes) were awarded with a prize of a mural for winning the Anti-Litter Competition with Waterford City Council. They created monsters out of waste material. The artist Ruth Flynn and her team created this masterpiece mural in one weekend! We would love if you could drop in to our garden to see the mural as well as all the great garden projects in operation.

## **Visit from the Guide Dogs**

Junior Classes (Infants – 2<sup>nd</sup> Class & Junior Autism Class) were treated to a visit from the Guide Dogs Association on Friday 28 February last. Many thanks to all involved in organizing this treat in particular to the doggies themselves.



### Dates for your Diary:

**Fri 11 April** School closes for Easter Break from 12 noon – 12.30pm

**Mon 28 April** School reopens at 9.00am

**Mon 5 May** School closed for May Bank Holiday

**Sat 10 May**  
**11.00am** First Holy Communion

**Fri 23 May**  
**11.30am** Confirmation  
**School Closed for Local Elections**

**Fri 30 May** School Closed  
**Mon 2 June** School closed for June Bank Holiday

**June 6th** Confirmation Classes Disco

### Hatching Chicks



In conjunction with the Nore Valley Park we undertook a very *eggs-citing* project this Spring. We took delivery of an incubator and 20 eggs on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Each day the children monitored the eggs in the incubator and checked for little cracks. The incubator kept the eggs warm at 37<sup>o</sup>C and turned the eggs daily, as Mother Hen does on the farm. When the “candling” process took place only 14 eggs had a growing chick inside. After 21 days our first chicks hatched causing great excitement throughout the school. Within a few hours of hatching the chicks were moved from the incubator into their brood box and were fed and watered by the children every

day. It was amazing to see the tiny chicks grow so quickly and the children were able to track their growth and development each day. Last Friday all 14 happy healthy chicks were returned to the Nore Valley farm and each child in our school received a voucher for a free farm visit! If any families do go and visit the farm we would welcome any photos of the “Ballygunner Chicks”!

### SPORTS NEWS

#### *Camogie News*

Congratulations to the Camogie squad involved in the Indoor Camogie tournaments in Butler Community Hall in February. After notching up 8 back to back victories, the girls were crowned Champions after beating Presentation Primary School in the final.

#### *Third Class Hurling*

A team of Third Class boys put in a fine performance in a recent Hurling Blitz in Walsh Park in March. The team remained undefeated throughout the tournament putting teams like Mount Sion, Holy Cross and St Stephens’ to the sword on the day.

#### *U’12 Boys Hurling*

The U’12 Boys’ Hurling team had a superb victory in their Easter Hurling Final against Holy Cross in early March. The boys notched up 6 victories on the road to this final and brought home the bacon with a fine display in the final. Unfortunately, they were beaten by Lismore in the subsequent County Final.

#### *Best of Luck*

This week marks the beginning of the serious competitions on the Cumann na mBunscol Hurling and Camogie fixture list. U’13 Boys face St Stephens, U’11 Boys are in action in a Hurling Blitz in Walsh Park and the Camogie Squad cross swords with Holy Cross. Best of Luck to all teams involved.

#### *Basketball*

Our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class Basketball teams were in action in blitzes in February. Fielding both a boys’ and a girls’ team, St Mary’s NS can be very proud of both teams who played very well on the day. Well done to all involved.

## Garden News



A big thank you to all the staff and children who are ensuring that the garden blooms again this year! This is no small task after the long wet and windy winter. The corridor is filled with trays of young plants almost ready to plant outdoors and there are as many more being carefully looked after in classrooms all over the school.

A few classes have sprouted potatoes and have planted them in the garden, some in pots, old shopping bags and in raised beds. Strawberry plants have been lifted from beds and trimmed before being planted in new window boxes. We started out with only six strawberry plants a few years ago and now we have more than a hundred!!

We look forward to watching the wide variety of crops growing in the garden, from beetroot, peas, beans and carrots to cabbage, courgettes, tomatoes and edible flowers. The apple trees and black currant bushes are doing well, as is the rhubarb. Our herbs too, are showing signs of growth now that the weather has improved.

We have applied for funding for expansion of the garden from the GIY Grow Fund and if successful we can add some more raised beds in the present garden and possibly develop a further area in the school to grow even more fruit and vegetables in the coming year. We also hope to invest in sets of tools and gloves etc. for the children's use along with a new hose. The children enjoy seeing the plants growing and it is an added bonus when they can eat what they have grown. Maybe you could try your hand at growing some fruit or vegetables at home too.

Maura Upton.

## Athletics - Waterford Primary Schools

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, our athletes raced against other Waterford city schools in the RSC and came home with a total of 63 medals. The events included sprint, long race and relay. There were individual gold medals won by Tom Gallagher, Aaron O Neill, Lauren Sheils and Laura Flynn. Silver medals were won by Katie Nolke, Orna O' Reilly, Amina Shvarikova, David Leavey, Robbie Duffy (2 silvers!) and Emma Caulfield. Bronze medals were awarded to Orna O Reilly, Kelsie Obanya, Niamh Brenner, Ali Ferguson, Eoin Cuddihy, Caoimhe Houlihan, Nathan Mackey, Aaron O Neill, Mary Olarewaju, Emma Caulfield, Maeve O Sullivan and Daniel Kiely. Super performances!

All our relay teams did us proud. Well done gold medals winners Over 12 Boys and Girls and the Under 9 Girls. Silver medals – Under 12 Girls, Under 10 Boys and Girls, and Under 9 Boys. Congratulations to the Under 12 Boys, Under 11 Boys and Girls who showed great teamwork winning bronze.

The boys of St Mary's gained the highest number of points at the event to receive the cup for Best School in the boys category. The girls were also very high up winning a plaque for 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall in their category.

Again this year, we were very lucky to have a team of parents who gave great assistance on the day. Thanks to Claire Corbett, Ray Leahy, Janet Obanya, Cáit Caulfield and Yvonne Nolke. The next event will be the Waterford County Schools. Date to be confirmed.

### Kids Corner:

Q. How did the soggy bunny dry himself?

A. *With a haredryer!*

Q. How many Easter Eggs can you put in an empty basket?

A. *One – then it's not empty anymore!*

### Brainteaster:

*How many seconds are in a year?*

Answer in next newsletter.

Happy Easter Everyone!!!