

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

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



**Newsletter
Issue 37 – June 2014.**

A Message from Mr O'Reilly

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As the school year comes to an end we can look back with satisfaction on a busy and progressive year in St. Mary's N.S.

It was a memorable one with many notable achievements. We launched 'Ceiliúradh na nÓg' Irish music C.D. and had two wonderful nights of traditional music in our school hall. The Nore Valley Farm 'Chick Hatching Project' created great interest. Our Green School committee were very busy in year one of our work to achieve a 5th Green flag for Biodiversity and our Under 13 Hurling team won the Cumann na mBunscol Port Láirge division 1 hurling title for the first time!

The Department of Education Inspectorate conducted a Whole School Evaluation follow-up visit in term one and reported 'significant progress made' in three key areas as follows: the development of independent and higher order thinking skills, pupils' problem solving capacities in Mathematics and greater emphasis on developing pupils' personal writing skills. We look forward to presenting a

school self-evaluation report on this year's creative writing project and a school improvement plan focusing on an area of numeracy to our school community in term one of the 2014/15 school year.

We have completed extensive work on our revised School Anti-Bullying Policy and I wish to acknowledge the contribution of all stakeholders. This is an essential policy in every school.

I am pleased to inform you there will be a Summer Works Building Programme over the holidays. We received Department of Education and Skills funding to upgrade the electrical works in the older sections of our school building.

I wish to thank our Board of Management for their support and guidance, all our school staff for their commitment to our pupils and all of you our parents/guardians for the interest you have in your child's education. Also, a sincere thanks to our dedicated Parents Association.

I wish our departing 6th class pupils the very best as they move to Secondary School. They are a hard-working and focused group of children who are a credit to their families. Indeed, I wish to compliment all our pupils on their many notable achievements this school year.

I would like to remind you all that our school website www.ballygunner.ie has been redesigned and contains all essential school policy and information. It will be updated fully for September. For those of you who tweet please follow us on @BallygunnerNS! Finally, I wish all associated with St. Mary's N.S. a restful and enjoyable Summer holiday. Here's hoping the sun will continue to shine and we will all return refreshed on Thursday 28th Aug 2014.

Killian O'Reilly,
Principal Teacher

Communion & Confirmation Classes:

Congratulations to all our pupils who received the Holy Sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation in St. Mary's Church, Ballygunner in May.

School Tours

Some exciting school tours have been taking place over the last number of weeks. This year, our pupils visited interesting places including Castlecomer National Park, Trabolgan, Lismore, Limerick and Fota Island. Many thanks to our teachers for organising such fun trips again this year.

6th Class Disco

The Annual 6th Class Disco took place on Friday 6th June in the Scout Hall, Ballygunner. The Parents Association organized the Disco as a **Big Thank You** to our 6th Class pupils for their help with and support of our Junior Infants through the Buddy System.

Parents Association AGM

The AGM of the Parents Association will take place in early October. All parents are encouraged to attend the meeting and are welcome to join the Committee.

Graduation Mass:

A special graduation mass took place on Wed 18 June for all our 6th Class pupils who are leaving us this year. We wish all of them well as they start Secondary School this September

Coffee Morning

Thanks to everyone who attended the coffee morning in June for parents of children with extra educational needs. Looking forward to getting things up & running with the group in Sep. Have a great summer. Anyone wishing to join the group contact ruthcurran@upcmail.ie Ruth Curran.

School Concert Ceiliúradh na nÓg



The amazing Tin Whistle Project coordinated by Mr O'Neill culminated in two wonderful nights of entertainment in June as our 3rd – 6th class pupils & our teachers performed a selection of musical pieces from the CD collection. Particular thanks to Mr O'Neill for his dedication to this project.

A special mention for Mr *Bob Dylan* Walsh, Ms *Sharon Shannon* Moore, Ms *Carole King* Kearney and Ms *James Galway* McSweeney for the extra bit of magic on both nights! A huge thank you to the special guests also, Gretta & Tom Mackey and Una McSweeney for their amazing musical prowess on the accordion, uilleann pipes and harp respectively.

Finally well done also to our set dancing teachers who have denied rumours that they have been approached by Riverdance. A fantastic achievement by all – well done everyone!

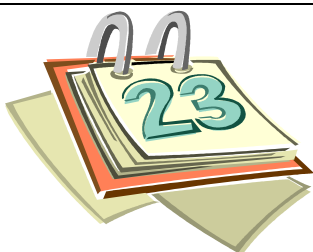
Car Parking

Well done to all of you for adhering to our new car parking system at the school. The traffic flow has improved greatly. We would urge you to take special care however and not allow children to walk behind cars as they are reversing out of parking spaces. A special thank you to Havenwood who continue to allow us to use their carpark. Once again we urge you not to walk through the shrubbery at Havenwood but to use the correct paths.

Answer to Easter Brainteaser:

How many seconds are there in a year?

Ans: 12 (2 Jan, 2 Feb, 2 March)



Dates for your Diary:

Fri 27 June:

12.00pm School closes for Summer Holidays

Thurs 28 Aug:

9.00am School reopens for New Term

Oct Parents Association AGM

GREEN SCHOOLS



A huge thank you and well done to our hardworking, enthusiastic Green Schools committee members. Thanks to you and to all the classes throughout the school who have done great work this year in developing biodiversity in our school grounds.

We have created many new habitats in recent months. Some children created log piles along the hedgerows to attract hedgehogs. Miss Hayes and her pupils in First Class created a fabulous "Bug Hotel" which already has many guests occupying it! Amy Farrell from 3rd Class, with the help of her dad, made a beautiful "bug hotel" which is in the school garden. Brooke Hanrahan from Miss Moore's

4th Class made a terrific bird house feeding station. Shay and the committee members put bird feeders and nesting boxes around the school grounds which hugely increased the bird activity at school with lots of chaffinches, gold finches, blue tits, great tits and sparrows enjoying their daily nuts and seeds! The window boxes on the front windows have attracted many day and night time visitors including bees, butterflies and moths. We have two nests in the school garden at the moment - one in the potato growing container and the other on a climbing plant!!

Well done to all the pupils, parents and staff who continue to promote the Green Schools themes of litter and waste management, water and energy conservation and sustainable travel. Don't forget to keep your used batteries, stamps and ink cartridges during the holidays as they can be recycled in the collection boxes in the main entrance hall.

We wish our 6th Class committee members the very best of luck in secondary school and hope that you will continue to be involved in environmental issues in the future. We will really miss you next year on our committee and look forward to welcoming new members. Enjoy the Summer!
Fionn Smith

Horse riding

A huge thank you to Bausch & Lomb who kindly sponsored horse riding lessons for our Junior & Senior autism classes.

Sports News

Congrats to our U13 Hurling Team who won the County division 1 hurling title for the first time for our school. The boys defeated Lismore 2-10 to 1-3. Well done everyone!

Athletics News

St Mary's yet again showed their talent in athletics. Boys and girls recently competed at St Augustine's College in Dungarvan in the Waterford County championships.

Despite the very high standards seen on the day, St Mary's brought home a large collection of medals. Sprints medals were won by Tom Gallagher, Lauren Sheils, Kelsie Obanya and Laura Flynn. The Under 9 girls relay team Laoise Forrest, Kelsie Obanya, Laura Flynn and Niamh Brenner won their race in style. Mary Olarewaju, Katie Nolke, Orna O Reilly and Lauren Sheils won a well deserved silver medal in the Under 10 girls relay.

The Over 12 boys sailed through the finish line in 1st place. They have remained unbeaten for several years at city and county level in the relay. Tom Gallagher and Gavin Corbett have been consistent members of this team all the way up through primary school. We regret that we have to say goodbye to these boys this year along with a fine group of 6th class athletes. Both boys and girls have brought so much to our school athletics in their time at St Mary's. They played a huge part in securing the silverware for Best School for the past 6 years.

We'd like to wish them the best of luck with their move to secondary school. We hope they continue to partake and be successful in sporting performances



Garden News

The School Garden is blooming at the moment. A big thank you to each and every staff member and child for what has been achieved so far. All the hard work has paid off! Some very tall sunflowers are basking in the sun while more are on the verge of opening. Much of what was planted was harvested this week and the long awaited potato wedges were sampled with great relish| Salads can be enhanced with delicious nasturtium flowers. Some people were brave enough to taste them for the first time and were pleasantly surprised to discover how peppery they are. The onion sets, parsley and chives have been a great success. A lot of plants will not be harvested for a

few more weeks – children attending in July may enjoy the peas, beans, tomatoes and lettuce as well as the fragrant jasmine, honeysuckle and lavender. Indoors we are trying our hand at growing root ginger for the first time – we'll know in the autumn how that goes. In September we hope to return to pumpkins marrow, artichokes, celery, cabbage, cauliflower leeks, beetroot and more!

There have been many visitors to the garden, the numbers of greenfly are low due to garlic and French marigolds planted strategically. Slugs have been feasting on some plants but the resident birds will hopefully deal with them to feed their babies. Butterflies and honey bees are no strangers either. The entire garden is watched over by four resident scarecrows provided by Mrs O'Shea's class and they are doing an amazing job of keeping the larger birds away.

We have heard no news on the grant application to the GIY fund as yet but we remain hopeful. It is hoped to put more grow beds in place in late August and next School year we will begin work on a Sensory Garden. The children really enjoy being outdoors and are learning a lot about growing foods, do encourage them in any way you can at home from a pot in the window sill to a small bed in the garden.

If anyone is available to help water the garden during August please give your contact details to Anne or Tara in the office. There will also be an opportunity to help with making the new beds in later August and later we would welcome help with work on the Sensory Garden. If you have the time why not take a stroll through the garden and see it for yourself.

Maura Upton

Kids Corner:

Q. What is black & white & red all over?

A. A panda bear with sunburn!

Q. How do bees go to school?

A. By school buzz!

Brainteaser:

What five letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?

Answer in next newsletter!

Have a great summer holiday!