

# St. John the Baptist Junior Boys' School Newsletter

June 2019

A thuismitheoirí agus a chaomhnóirí,

## **First Holy Communion ceremonies:**

This year we celebrated our First Holy Communion ceremonies on 11th May. We had Ms. McCaughey's, Ms. Oonan's and Ms. Daly's classes in St. Gabriel's. It is a tradition in many parts of the country still that on the night before a wedding or other important event someone 'puts out the Infant of Prague' to bring beautiful weather. We were surely blessed with the best day that has come our way for some time.

The ceremonies marked the culmination of a journey which started back in September when parents who wished their child to receive the sacraments met with the teachers and parish pastoral teams in the Girls' School Hall. On that night, Parents volunteered to help prepare the 'Do This in Memory' Masses which were celebrated in the parishes throughout the year. They prepared readings and prayers with the children and worked with the parishes and teachers on the programme. On behalf of the staff here, I wish to thank those parents who volunteered- it really made a big difference to have your support. Boys and girls were very well prepared by their teachers, sang and read beautifully and were a credit to all who worked with them- as well as to their parents. Frs. Pat McManus conducted a beautiful and child-focused ceremony. I wish to thank all staff and anyone who helped to make the day the success it was.

## **Post-communion refreshments:**

After the ceremonies were over, we returned for some much-needed refreshments. For the families who had been up at dawn, for Darkness into Light, it had already been a long day! I wish to thank the Parents from the school who helped to prepare lovely food, tea, cakes and as well as refreshments for the boys. I know that everyone appreciated the cup of tea!

I have been asked to thank the organisers specifically for including gluten-free cakes for members of our school community who are coeliac.

The whole event was organised by Amanda Ward who co-ordinated volunteers, hall access, and the set-up on the day. A big thank you from all here to you Amanda as well as Joanne & Aisling and all the members of the the Parents Association who have been an ever-present support for school activities throughout the year.

## **New Junior Infant visits:**

On Monday and Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> May, the junior infants who will start school in August had their induction session with their new teachers. Every boy seemed very happy to be in his new class and there were very few tears shed- and none by the boys! Members of the Parents' Association provided teas and coffees and O'Farrell School Uniform Suppliers were on hand to kit the boys out. A big thank you again to the Parents' Association for refreshments on the day.

## **Arts Day 2019**

On Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May we celebrated our annual Arts Day in the School. We had an array of hard-working face painters in action and the Arts Day Committee under the wise and enthusiastic guidance of Ms. Kate Martin had sourced clay so that our visiting ceramic artists could work with each class group on preparing good art.

## **Johnny the Juggler**

Johnny regaled the boys with many tricks- everyone waited with anticipation to see if the knives and flaming lamps were going to be put to use..... and even some audience participation...



**Face painters:** A big mile buiochas to the many face-painters who helped adorn the faces and arms too of the boys with various emblems, crests and washable tattoos on Arts Day

## **Evacuation drill:**

Conducting regular evacuation drills is a key aspect of ensuring that your child is safe in school and that everyone here knows how to respond if we need to leave our school building in an emergency of any sort. This skill is a literally a skill for life and we hope the good habits boys learn here- 'fireman's push' when opening a fire door, walking briskly to assembly point, NEVER returning to a building until it is safe to do so, bringing no personal belongings with you- will remain with them always and 'rub off' at home too. We held our final evacuation drill of the year in mid-May. This was by far the greatest test of our response to the evacuation siren- no staff or boy had advance warning of either the day or the time of the drill. I am delighted to say that the boys conducted themselves excellently and we evacuated the entire building safely in 4 minutes or so. Please discuss with your son how you as a family might evacuate your home were you faced with an emergency situation.

## **Parents' association**

Next event will be the new infants afternoon before end September. On behalf of all in the school, I wish to thank the PA for their unstinting support of the school, its teachers and their work throughout the past year. A sound and solid PA is a key element of maintaining a cohesive school community. We are very lucky to have an excellent PA.

## **Active school week**

Active school week has now become a solidly established brand within our school. This week it ran from June 16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> and each day promised and delivered a wide variety of engaging, challenging but fun activities. As always, the Active School motto of 'more kids more active more often' informed our choice and range of activities throughout the week.

## Monday-

Monday started as every day of active school week does with a daily bootcamp. We had new recruits this year so Gavin's place as the bootcamp caller is by no means secure!! We had Gavin, Collette Maxwell, Emma McAleese, Priya Buckley, and Niall McAndrew As Gaelainn on Friday. Gavin is not an easy act to follow but well done to all!!!

Monday bootcamp over, our infants went to St. Anne's Park to engage in orienteering with Eileen and Ciarán from Orienteering Coaching Fingal who put the boys through their paces using mapping and tracking technology. Ms. Kate Martin had already brought up the essential PE equipment so all was ready for 9:30. There were 3 activities organised and boys rotated from activity to activity after 25 minutes.

For the string course, boys in pairs went along a roped path and registered a fob on a fob-reader at each station along the route. Each pair of boys completed the route 3 times and tracked their time after each run. Essentially, boys were trying to see if they could, in pairs, improve their time on each run, rather than competing against others. This participation-based approach is key to the success of Active School Week.



Another activity which the boys really enjoyed was using a map to design a teddy bear- using bean-bags, quoits, hoops and other pieces of PE equipment.



I want to thank all the parent volunteers who assisted on the day- it made a great difference to the success of the events.

### Tuesday

On Tuesday, each of our 4 year-groups in turn travelled the short distance to Castle Avenue to Clontarf RFC for a coaching course organized by the club. Many of the coaches were dads from the school here supported by a number of the under-20 players from the club. Feedback from teachers and boys was very positive- a big *Go raibh Míle* to the Club.

### Wednesday

On Wednesday, we had our school sports day on the Astro pitch. Mrs. Anne McCarthy kindly gave us the uninterrupted use of the pitch and this was a great help in terms of setting up and maintaining stations there.

We had...

- Parachutes
- Novelty races
- Obstacle course
- Javelins- technique and targeting

- Frisbees- special thanks to Abbie who is a champion frisbee thrower
- Football- using the new target wall on the astro.

I want to thank our Special Education Teachers who facilitated several events and whose help made for a very enjoyable day.

## Thursday

On Thursday, it was the turn of our first and second classes to go orienteering, again in St. Anne's Park. Like the infants, these boys participated in the 3 variants of orienteering which were organized on the day...

- A string orienteering course using SD cards
- A map orienteering course using controls and punches
- Map making using a key- this was the one where boys make a face from PE equipment using a map.



Eileen, who co-ordinated the day sent a lovely email and said

"I just want to say it was a pleasure dealing with your school. It is very encouraging that the energy I put into creating suitable activities for your students worked out so well. The real rewards was seeing happy children enjoying orienteering and learning a few things too. All of us including the teenagers have fun stories about the children from the two days coaching" I want to thank Eileen and Ciarán young, but also their two daughters Orla and Sinead and by their nephew Odhran and Kevin O' Kelly who helped on Thursday.



## Friday

Each year, the Active School Team seek to incorporate new ideas. Orienteering was a new event for us this year but by far the most exciting was superstars. Again, this activity was set up with an emphasis on participation, teamwork and inclusion- especially of our pupils with additional needs. Teams of 8 comprising 2 boys each from each year-group were organised and took part in 14 stations around our yard. Among the array of activities were..

- Bench Shuffle
- Stepping-stone relay
- Javelin tower
- Unihoc dribble
- Giminy cricket
- Bean-bag toss
- Fish for bean-bags
- Unbreakable
- Bean-bag balance

At the end of the week everyone was really tired after all our activities- but it was surely the best ASW ever!!!!

Our parent volunteers made all the difference- we really appreciate your help.

Clontarf RFC, Dublin City Council and Clontarf GAA shared their facilities with us- Many thanks!

Finally, special thanks MUST go to the organising Active School Team- Áine Duffy, Kate Martin, Maria O' Dwyer, Gavin Synnott and Joan Leahy. Special mention to Áine, Kate and Maria who showed great commitment in organising the week by holding daily after-school meetings each day to review and plan.

## **Sunday Miscellany**

Belgrove featured in last Sunday's Sunday Miscellany, 23rd June. Conall Hamill, brother of former Parent Aobhinn is the contributor.

<https://www.rte.ie/radio/radioplayer/html5/#/radio1/11051362>

## **Mighty Mouth**

On the Monday of final week, our senior infant classes had a visit from Naomi, who is a representative of the Dental Health Foundation Ireland. Naomi had given resource and other materials to Áine Duffy, Nichola Breen & Róisín Gray teachers of senior infants, who had done much work with the boys on dental care, careful diet and so on. For information on how to help your child with dental care, please log on to <http://youtu.be/CmJX4GEg-h0>

## **Swift visit by Aebhín Cawley**

On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, we had a very interesting visit from Aebhín Cawley, Ecologist and Parent who spoke to all the boys about steps we might take to conserve swifts which are under threat due to a reduction in the nooks where they traditionally roost. She gave a short presentation to each of our year-groups in turn and feedback was very very positive- Thank you Aebhín!

Here is the link to the webcam in Galway showing swifts in flight

<http://www.swiftconservation.ie/gmit-swiftcams/>

I want to acknowledge Lynda Huxley of Swift Conservation Ireland (<http://www.swiftconservation.ie>) who kindly gave us the material for the talk and is giving advice and support on the ordering and positioning of a nest box which we hope to install early next year-



### SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

- ☒ Swifts nest in old buildings
- ☒ Old buildings are being knocked down or repaired destroying nest sites
- ☒ New buildings have no nooks and crannies for Swifts
- ☒ They breed in the same nest every year
- ☒ So when Swifts arrive back from Africa to raise a new family, they find their nesting places have gone ☒they are homeless!

22 WE ARE SWIFTS - WE ARE IN TROUBLE

### Maths eyes

During Maths week last year, Ms. Róisín Gray who holds the special duties post covering Maths in the school entered the Maths Eyes competition which is organised by the DES, and The Technological University Dublin, Waterford IT and co-ordinated by Maths Week Ireland. Her entry was a very simple but captivating photograph on the topic of counting in twos..



Róisín's entry won the category 'Family/Community'. Winners were invited to the Department of Education and Skills HQ in Dublin for a prize-giving and reception today. Minister McHugh was due to make the presentation but we were told he was unavoidably absent. Here are Cristian and Peter- drawn out of a hat- from Róisín's class with the winning entry.

But that was not all..... on our way out, Minister McHugh was near the famous sculpture of the bronze hand. He very kindly posed for a photo with the boys



We were in great company- some schools from Mayo were represented and had to leave at 4 this morning. As soon as all the photos are published, I will post a link so everyone can see the standard!

### **Potatoes**



During the year, Ms. Maeve Daly SET planted potatoes in the raised bed outside Mr. Harvey's room. She returned to us on 26<sup>th</sup> June to harvest the crop- thanks to Ms. Daly for all her work during the year



### **Google Eyes**

On June 12th the Junior Infants classes had an opportunity to try out Google's Virtual Reality Cardboard glasses. Dónal (Evan's dad) and Edwin (Justin's dad) both work with Google and in they morning they arrived with a box full of the glasses. The kids got a chance to immerse themselves in many different scene's including:



The waters of the Galapagos where they swam under water with fish and turtles  
A lifeguard helicopter on a rescue mission  
Space and the planets of the solar system  
Families of monkeys in Gombe National Park  
Runway in Schiphol Airport

Great fun was had by all the kids as well as the teachers.

### **Ann Marie Haverty**

Ann Marie Haverty who has taught in Belgrove for 23 years finished with us on the day of the holidays. On the Monday of the final week, boys she had taught read memories of their time with her. Staff had also been seeking out and surreptitiously recording her past pupils who did video-recordings á la *This is your Life* recalling in a most moving way their memories of her work with and care of them over many years, Ann Marie worked in our Special Education Department and was a 'go-to' member of staff with any query on learning issues or on how to help a pupil with a particular learning difficulty. The whole event was a very fitting, moving and well-deserved testimony and tribute to a very dedicated and skilled teacher for whom the children and their needs were always a priority. We will miss you Ann Marie.

### **School Tours:**

This year, the teachers at each class level collaborated and planned their school tours in year groups.

The junior infant classes went to Imaginosity

The senior infants went to Airfield Estate.

The first classes went to National Sports Campus.

The second classes went to Causey Farm.

**Graduation Ceremony:** Our annual Graduation ceremony for our 2<sup>nd</sup> classes took place on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June. This was our first year trying something different to mark the conclusion of the boys' 4 years with us. The ceremony was a very meaningful reflection on memories of the times the boys had with us, beautiful singing and prayer. We were delighted to have Fr. Pat too to address the boys.

**Sharing the bounty:** By tradition, we ask the boys who have made the Sacrament to donate a portion of their 'bounty' to two named charities- Barretstown and the LauraLynn Children's Hospice. I want to thank the boys for this very generous gesture of €2,700. Information on both charities can be found on [info@barretstown.org](mailto:info@barretstown.org) and [info@lauralynn.ie](mailto:info@lauralynn.ie)

**Data transfer:** We wish each boy every success as he begins the next phase of his education whether in the Senior School or elsewhere. If your son is transferring to a school other than the Senior Boys' School in Belgrove, you need to sign a letter in order for us to release information and his new school needs to write requesting such. Contact the office for more information.

**Boys in first Class 2019-2020:** To help ease them into the longer day, these boys will be dismissed at 1.20p.m. until Friday 6th September. From Monday 9th September they will be dismissed at 2.20p.m. as normal.

**Boys leaving Belgrove?:** If a boy from junior infants, senior infants or first class will not be returning next year, please let us know immediately as it will have implications for those waiting for places in the School.

## Summer stars Reading Programme



The Summer Stars Reading Adventure programme provides the whole family with an opportunity to explore the full range of events and facilities which are available in their local library, such as story time sessions, children's activities, access to talking books and games, computers and Internet access, and of course children's books for all ages.

Exciting events for children will also be held in public libraries during the summer. Check out your local library service or local library website for further information on local activities and events. check out [www.summerstars.ie](http://www.summerstars.ie)

**During the summer:** If you need to contact the School during the summer, the best way is by email to [johnosullivan@belgrovejbs.ie](mailto:johnosullivan@belgrovejbs.ie)

**On behalf of the Staff and Board of Management, may I wish each of you a happy summer.**

**Don't forget.....we return on Thursday August 29<sup>th</sup>!!**

**Date for Diary - New Junior Infants run around day. Saturday 7th September. Note to follow in September.**

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Don't forget to check out the photos of all events on [www.belgrovejbs.ie](http://www.belgrovejbs.ie) !