

Castlehackett NS

Our School Newsletter

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A chairde tá súil agam gur bhain sibh taitneamh as an Nollaig agus nár chuir an drochaimsir isteach oraibh mórán. Tá an bhliain nua tagtha anois. Bíodh ceann sonasach, sláintiúil agus síochánta agaibh go léir.

I hope you all had a lovely Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Note of Condolence

Before we commence with the December newsletter, it is important that we address the loss of our dear friend and neighbour, Paddy Costello who passed away on 04 January.

The whole school community expresses their sincere sympathy to Paddy's wife Freda and their sons John, Tommy, Brian and daughter Ann.

The Costello family are our nearest neighbours and have always been a fantastic support to Castlehackett NS. They are in our thoughts and prayers at this difficult time. Ar deis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.



Annual Card Game

Well done to the Parents Association for organising our fundraising Progressive Card Drive on 06 December. It was another hugely successful event for Castlehackett NS despite the weather and we would like to thank all those who travelled despite heavy rain and floods. The atmosphere was, as always, very jubilant and festive in our jam packed PE hall. More than €2000 was raised on the night and this money will be spent on various projects for the children in our school.

We would like to thank our generous sponsors for their support every year. And thanks also to the school staff for getting furniture set up for the night and for making fabulous art pieces with the children and taking the time to display them.



Christmas Art

Here is a sample of our Christmas art. I think the photographs speak for themselves! We also made Christmas Tree and Christmas Logs we made before our holiday. As you can clearly appreciate construction is an integral part of our art education programme in Castlehackett NS.



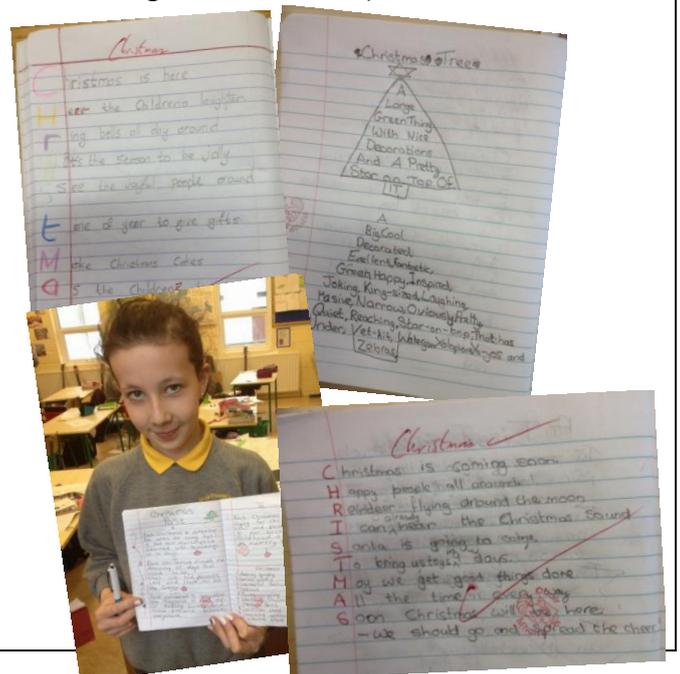
Christmas Mugs

Here is just a sample of some of the designs the pupils created and had turned in to Christmas mugs that the school then ordered along with our Christmas cards. Very professional! Many thanks to Noelle Gannon for organising this well worthwhile activity for us every year.



Christmas Poetry

From acrostic poetry to poetry with catchy shapes we've written them all this year and we've had great fun in the process



Tiny Tots

The children have been very busy in Tiny Tots. Here's a sample of the work they've been working on; there's dinosaurs and Christmas arts & crafts. And there were Christmas games such as "Which elf am I?", where one child wore a blindfold and had to guess which elf spoke to them! There was also an obstacle course gift delivery and "Elf Check", where children used tools to check all toys before Santa gave them out!



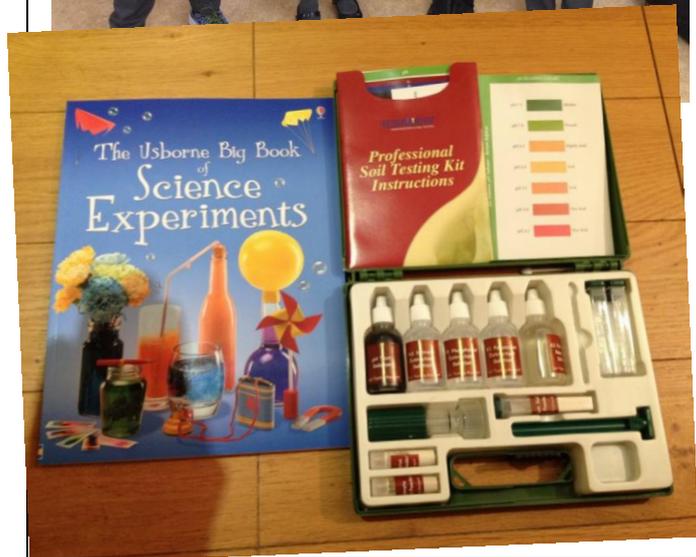
Knex Workshop

What an engaging knex workshop all the children had as part of the Galway Science Festival recently. It was fantastic. Many thanks to Lucy Fleming for organising the day for the school.



Fun with Science

We all know that oil floats on water (see picture below). What's interesting is to observe what happens when you put a thumb size piece of dried wood on the oil that's sitting roughly 3 centimetres deep above the water. We discovered that the wood sinks in the oil but floats on the water underneath! The result can be accounted for by the fact that materials all have different densities. This is just one of the interesting experiments we performed last month!



Visiting Science Teacher

We were delighted to welcome Malachy Naughton to the senior room on 10 December. The focus of this lesson was on soil pH. We tested soil samples to ascertain their pH levels. We also discovered why obtaining this information is useful, particularly to farmers.



Work Placement

We thank Sinéad St John, a past pupil of our school for all of her help in all the classrooms before the Christmas holidays. She is a gifted musician and is seen seated far left in the photograph below. She is a student in Presentation College Secondary School, Headford. We wish her well in all of her future studies.



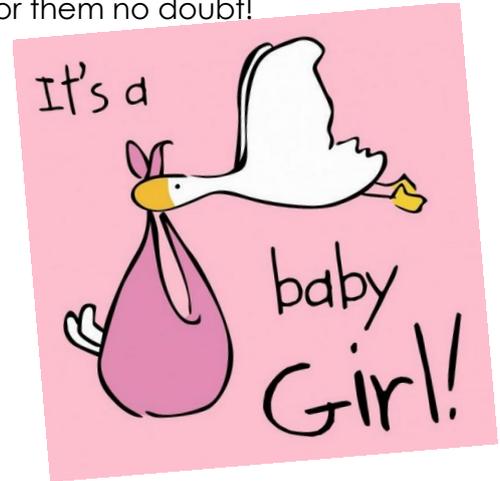
Musical Maestros

The best traditional Irish musicians on our island, in our opinion anyway, Matt Cunningham and Seán Keane, crossed paths in the senior room before the Christmas. It was a memorable encounter and one which the pupils cherished. We all congratulate Matt on a fabulous documentary about his life and times over a fifty year period that was aired on TG4 on St Stephen's Day. How fortunate are our pupils to have Matt share his talent with them.



New arrival

We congratulate our Resource Teacher Elizabeth Keady and her husband Ronan on the birth of their baby daughter on New Year's Eve. It will be a Happy New Year if not a little busy for them no doubt!



Teacher Talent

We thank Ms Eimear Coogan, pictured, for covering Ms Elizabeth Keady's maternity leave before the Christmas. She is an inspirational teacher and we wish her well in her new post in Galway city which she has already commenced. Ms Aislinn Flaherty has now been appointed as her very capable replacement until the end of June 2016. We wish her the best of luck in this role.



The Feeragh Pipe Band

The Feeragh Pipe Band derived some notoriety from the late 1800s right up until the band disbanded in the 1960s for their piping, drumming and marching all over Ireland. Most of the band members were past pupils of Castlehackett N.S. A local committee has been given permission to wall mount and display the treated drums in the main school corridor. Please bring this initiative to the attention of anybody including past band members in the area who might be interested. Any donation to help offset the cost of constructing the wall-mounted glass cabinet to house the drums would be really appreciated by the local committee. Please contact the school for any further details.



Christmas by the Hearth Concert

Our senior pupils had a really memorable experience in The Town Hall Theatre, Galway for their 'Christmas by the Hearth' concert performance alongside Seán Keane on 11 December. Phil Coulter had to relinquish his spacious private dressing room backstage to accommodate the might of Castlehackett during pre-rehearsals! The pupils did themselves and their school proud. We are really grateful to all our parents, extended families, friends and school staff for supporting this night. Thank you to Seán Keane also for the invitation to join him and his band.

Who knows what this taste of stage performance has started for our pupils?



Enrolment for 2016

80 copies of an enrolment letter were circulated in our local child care facilities before the Christmas Holiday. Feedback to date has been very positive. Let's all do our bit to ensure we have another large enrolment for September 2016! No better way of achieving this than by telling prospective families what they're missing by not choosing our school if it is their nearest primary school. When we've finished telling our great story, we'll just keep telling! Our official enrolment morning will take place on Monday 22 February at 10am for parents only. All the staff are really looking forward to this. Our new infants will be invited into the school for a half day in June. Spread the word!

Art Competition Winners

Congratulations to Zoe Griffin and Sarah Morris who both won prizes in the Headford Enterprise Christmas Art competition sponsored by the Bank Of Ireland in Headford. Well done also to their infant teacher Mrs Noelle Gannon.



Professional Development

All teachers will be engaging in training for the new Primary Language Curriculum in the coming months. Evaluation followed by adaptation and change are the cornerstone of educational progress. Many thanks to our staff for always embracing new ideas so enthusiastically; they are simply the best.

Matt Biggins Cup winners

Congratulations to all the Gaelic footballers who won the Matt Biggins memorial cup last Autumn. Let's hope the rain stops soon so that we can start training again soon!



Sylane Hurling Club

Proud Sylane Hurling Club members show off their medals after they won the u-10 Ger McHugh Cup. Congratulations to them



Health & Wellbeing Sessions

Well done to the Special Needs Department for completing an individual Health & Wellbeing session with each of our pupils before the Christmas break. We are grateful to Ms Lucy Fleming for leading this initiative. This forms an important part of our Social Personal & Health Education (SPHE) programme in the school. We really do care about our pupils' welfare in Castlehackett NS.

Nicely done

Our school was particularly well decorated this year. The whole school is indebted to our staff and parents for doing all this work and in doing so creating a lovely atmosphere. A special mention must be given to the Curran family who provide the Christmas Tree every year. It's a pity we now have to take all these beautiful decorations down!

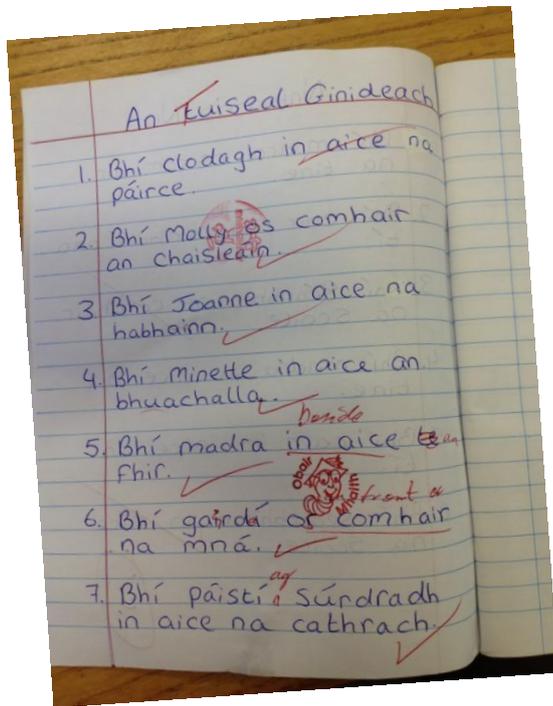
Save the Date!!!

Our Castlehackett 8k (with junior 1k event) will take place on Sunday 12 June. Please spread the word. Run, walk or jog our race, let this be your goal for 2016. We can all do it; no excuses. Christmas is over! Further particulars will issue nearer the time.



Tuiseal Ginideach

Tuigeann ár ndaltaí "An Tuiseal Ginideach" ach an dtuigeann tú An Tuiseal Ginideach? Déanann cleachtadh máistreacht!



School Assemblies

We continue to make very good use of our school assemblies once a month. During this time we pray together, share all the positive stories from Castlehackett NS, recount memorable moments from our classes and finally and perhaps most importantly discuss areas for improvement!

All the staff members make contributions as do our 6th class pupils; it's a team effort after all!



Clothes Collection

The Lenrec recycled clothes collection raised €290. Well done everybody. We've started to collect again! Please spread the word.

New Gate

Burke gates did a marvellous job fitting our new school gate. Classy craftsmanship is always nice to behold.



Altar Servers

It was an all girls affair when it came to serving mass in Corrandulla Church on Christmas morning. They all did a super job. Well done.



Confirmation Enrolment

Our 6th class pupils are now enrolled for the Confirmation Preparatory Programme. I'm grateful to Marieann Monaghan and Mary Glynn for taking up the leadership roles in this programme. The big day will take place early next month! It will be all systems go in the meantime!



Belt Up!

As part of the SPHE Curriculum, all classrooms engaged in training regarding the importance of wearing your seatbelt. Pupils also learned tips about safe travelling by bus. Let's all try and be more safety conscious in the New Year.



Christmas Prize Winners

We held our annual Children's Christmas Raffle and had a 'no uniform' day on the last day of school before the holidays. We raised €141 which will be donated to the LauraLynn Children's Hospice (www.lauralynn.ie).

Congratulations to our prize winners pictured below. Many thanks to the Parent's Association for their involvement.



Yoga for youngsters

Sometimes it's necessary to slow everything down. The senior pupils loved this yoga class!



A lesson in history

Our local historian Anna McHugh has been conducting research about our school in the National Archives and discovered the following:

As a passionate agriculturalist Denis Kirwan was intent on educating young people in the rudiments of agriculture. With that in mind he opened a Model Agricultural School on the estate, in the townland of Biggera Beg, on 26 September 1844. It was a two-storey building and operated as a mixed school until 1861. Later, two schools, a female and a male school operated under the same roof, girls were upstairs and boys were downstairs. In 1897, the two schools amalgamated and in 1905, the school was connected to the National School System. There were 49 males and 39 females in attendance at the time. The school served the educational needs of the children for 114 years, until a new school was built in 1958.

Márla Art

Márla was the perfect medium for a series of recent art classes!



Busy at Work

Pupils are seen in the pop up Christmas Log workshop. The mess is always worth it! When everything was tidied up the pupils retired to their classroom for a closely contested End of Year table quiz. The competition was fierce!



Gymnastics

4th, 5th and 6th class pupils will be engaging in gymnastics for their PE classes for a number of weeks. We're very fortunate to have gymnastics equipment and a school hall. Balance, strength and agility are the required skills and as you can see our pupils have these skills in abundance!



Note from the Principal

That's all we have for the December newsletter issue. I hope you enjoyed reading it. Together we've made all these interesting news items happen. Well done. Once again I'd like to wish you all a very Happy and Healthy 2016.

Fergal Ó Neachtain

Thought for the month

