

# Castlehackett NS

## Our School Newsletter

Castlehackett NS • Belclare • Tuam • County Galway • e: [info@castlehackettns.ie](mailto:info@castlehackettns.ie) t: 091 791708 Roll No. 18289D

### Issue No. 15 – January 2016

Tá fáilte romhaibh go léir arais i ndiaidh na Nollag! Tá sé deacair a chreidiúint go bhfuil Mí Eanáir caite againn agus An tEarrach díreach timpeall an choirnéail!

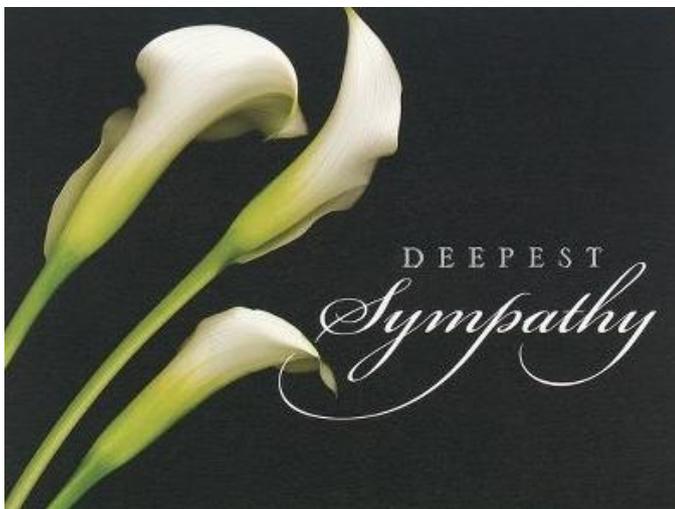
We've had a fabulous start to our New Year. The inclement weather conditions have by no means deterred our teachers and pupils from engaging in some excellent teaching and learning. Well done to all.

Remember all of the previous newsletters issues are available on [www.castlehackettns.ie](http://www.castlehackettns.ie) along with further information relating to our school. Be sure to check out our Facebook page too!

### Note of Condolence

The whole school community wishes to express our deepest sympathy to Lena and Jim Donnellan on the death of their son Seamus.

Lena & Jim are our school bus drivers and our thoughts and prayers are with them and their family at this difficult time.



### Junior Infants 2016 Open Morning

An Open/Enrolment Morning for new Junior Infants will take place on Monday the 22 February starting at 10:15am sharp. This information morning is for parents only. The new Junior Infants themselves will be welcomed for a half day in June before they commence officially in September 2016.

Bringing prospective parents to the school during daylight hours affords the staff the opportunity to showcase the very best of what Castlehackett NS has to offer in terms of facilities and pupil's learning.

The morning will conclude at 11:45am. We expect everybody to play their part in ensuring a large attendance so start inviting now! We look forward to giving everybody a warm welcome on the day. Refreshments will be served.

**Castlehackett National School**  
**Open Enrolment Day**

Castlehackett National School  
Belclare • Tuam • Co Galway

t: 091 791708  
e: [info@castlehackettns.ie](mailto:info@castlehackettns.ie)  
w: [www.castlehackettns.ie](http://www.castlehackettns.ie)

**Monday 22nd February • 10:15 - 11:45am**

Enrolment forms available from the school or for download on our website  
[www.castlehackettns.ie](http://www.castlehackettns.ie)

*Primary school is where your child will lay their roots for learning.  
Here at Castlehackett National School, we nurture all of our seedlings until they are ready for replanting to secondary school.*

## Our bookworms need feeding

The staff and pupils are eager to acquire new books for our school library. We have lots of very voracious readers in Castlehackett NS, something we wish to encourage in every way we can. Our Parents Association are currently working on sourcing books from a list of desired titles compiled by Ms Lucy Fleming. The pupils are really excited about this news. We will be the envy of many when this library book drive/investment is complete!

In order to keep costs to a minimum, we're also asking you for donations of books. So if you, or anybody you know, have books that they may be finished with we'd be delighted to get them for the school library. Books can be donated to the school during opening hours. Many thanks in advance for your help.

The **MORE** that you **READ**,  
the more **THINGS** you will **KNOW**.  
The **MORE** you **LEARN**,  
the more **PLACES** you'll **GO!**  
~ Dr. Seuss

## Teaching Practice

Ms Lisa St John returned to her alma mater in early January to complete her teaching practice. Her mentor and former teacher Ms Mary Kelly was hugely supportive to her; many thanks to her for this. Lisa's inspectors were hugely impressed with her teaching. It was 1st class honours all around and why wouldn't it be, isn't she a Castlehackett NS girl after all?



## Stay Safe Programme

The pupils in the senior room have just completed The Stay Safe Programme as part of their Social Personal & Health Education (SPHE). This programme taught the pupils to make good decisions and to be assertive in social situations they may find themselves in at some point the future.



## Talking the talk

Our 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils will take part in the preliminary round of the inter schools debating competition for the first time next month. This competition is organised by Tuam Education Centre. Public speaking is a very important life skill. Thanks to Ms Lucy Fleming (debating coach) for leading the charge and harnessing the potential of our pupils. She will be affording the pupils valuable lectern time in the weeks ahead. Don't be surprised if we progress to the county finals and beyond! Up Castlehackett NS!

## Balancing Acts

Strength and balance, the pupils have this in abundance! It was remarkable to see the progression as we conclude a series of gymnastics classes recently. We all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.



## Muddy creations

It was soil for our science theme last month and now it's clay for our Art classes this month! Is there any getting away from the stuff! All said and done however it is a fabulous art medium. All of the pupils' pieces would cause anybody to stop and stare and "fill their eye." This is the true test of any art piece. None of ours ever fail the test!



## Professional Development

We wish to thank members of our Board of Management, who attended Training in Tuam on 27 January. A special mention also to staff engaging in Professional Development for the New Primary Language Curriculum and who have also attended night courses in our local education centres. Together we are a formidable team!



## Best foot forward!

The double sided race clock has been booked for Sunday 12 June from Red Tag Timing! Athletes are being spotted in their high-vis gear taking part in early morning jogs! Have you got 20 minutes? Then if you have, surprise yourself and let a 1k walk followed by a 1k jog be your target for this month! Let's all get active and challenge ourselves; together we can complete the 8k course this year.



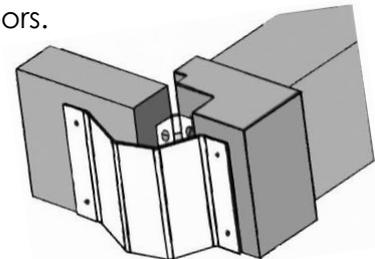
## GAA training recommences

The weather has certainly not made it easy on our pupils as they prepare early for this year's GAA competitions, but here at Castlehackett NS, nothing holds us back! Fr Hughie Loftus dropped by recently to take a session! Expectations are high and as always there's a marvellous team spirit in the camp. It will be hard to stop us this year!!



## Safety first

Finger protectors amongst other door safety interventions will be fitted to the internal doors in the coming weeks in an attempt to minimise the health and safety risks associated with heavy fire doors.



## Jolly Phonics

The Infant Room is engaging in a new phonological programme for alphabet and sound acquisition. The programme has been received very well by both pupils and parents alike. The staff looks forward to investing further in this programme shortly so that additional resources can be purchased to aid the pupils' learning.



## School Self Evaluation in PE

Our school self evaluation (SSE) in PE is going very well. Both staff and our Parents Association have contributed very positively to the process. Similar to the Mathematics SSE report and plan that was made available for parents to read the details relating to SSE in PE will be made available in due course. We thank all of our contributors to the process.

Parents are advised that pupils are to wear their school tracksuits for PE. The relevant days are:

- Junior room – Wednesday & Thursday (half hour each day)
- Middle room – Thursday (hour long)
- Senior room – Friday (hour long)



## School Closure

Please note that the school will be closed on Friday 26 February to accommodate the General Elections.

## Running Track

The construction of our running track will commence as soon as our playing field dries out and the weather improves. All the pupils can't wait to get running on it. Staff and parents are getting itchy feet too!



## St Jarlath's Credit Union School Quiz

Congratulations to our two quiz teams that recently took part in the St Jarlath's Credit Union Schools Quiz. Both Senior and Junior teams secured a top five finish, with our junior team finishing third in their category! This was a fantastic achievement for both teams considering there were over 30 teams in each category. We thank all of our parents who accompanied our pupils on quiz night.



## Super Sub!

It's super having Mrs Noelle Gannon back after a brief absence. Ms Louise Tierney below was her substitute. Well done to Louise on an excellent job over the week. We hope to see her back in Castlehackett N.S. at some stage in the future.



## Making a splash in class

There is no better way of learning than by self discovery. The pupils will never forget that water expands when frozen after engaging in the following experiment. It's a pity there aren't experiments for everything we learn! The pupils also learned just how powerful ice can be after discovering it can shatter glass!!

For those of you who have climbed Croagh Patrick, you now know how all the loose limestone as you approach the summit was formed!

The pupils now know the power of freeze/thaw action in our environment. They've learned the geographical term "weathering". Sometimes we integrate our subjects eg science and geography in this case, because it make perfect sense!



## Fun making CO<sub>2</sub> in Science Class

Mix yeast and sugar into a water solution. Leave to incubate in a basin of warm water. Watch the balloon inflate to a size many times larger than that recorded in photograph below. The pupils noticed how much heavier this balloon was compared to another balloon of the same size inflated with air!

We suspected that we had made CO<sub>2</sub> and we were able to prove it by extinguishing a lighted match in a cup full of this gas! Had we had the time to distil and collect the mixture remaining in the bottle we would have made poitin!



## Placing our orders

Ms Fleming takes a group of pupils to discuss with them what books etc might be nice to have in the school library. Many thanks to Mrs Breda McHugh also for ordering all the catalogues that you see the pupils reading in the photographs. Education is about offering as many different experiences as possible to our pupils!



## Health Eating = Healthy Hearts

Information re healthy lunches was disseminated once again this month. Let's all focus the minds again! Pay particular attention to including fruit, reviewing/providing varying lunch options for your child and giving water as a drink. Please be mindful also of the correct portion sizes. Many thanks.



## Going Solo

Pupils are been encouraged to perform individually on their guitars! From John Denver to Lady Gaga they are able to perform them all. We may well have the next big singer song writer in our midst. When that happens I hope it's not forgotten where it first began!



## Special Needs Department

Our Special Educational Needs Organiser praised the work of all the staff in her recent visit. All children's needs are being catered for and monitored in a discrete, professional and hugely efficient manner. Significant improvements were noted in most cases. All of this extra resourcing is offered in individual and in integrated settings. A massive amount of organisation and strategising goes into this seamless provision. Keep up the good work.

## Sylane Hurling Club Visit

Management and players from Sylane Hurling Club visited our school to promote their club and to inform us of their playing in the All Ireland Junior club semi-final. All the pupils of the school assembled to welcome the club members. An invitation was extended for more boys and girls from our school to register with the club. Great credit is due to Sylane and Annaghdown hurling clubs who have done so much to promote hurling in North County Galway and for making pupils from our school always feel so welcome.

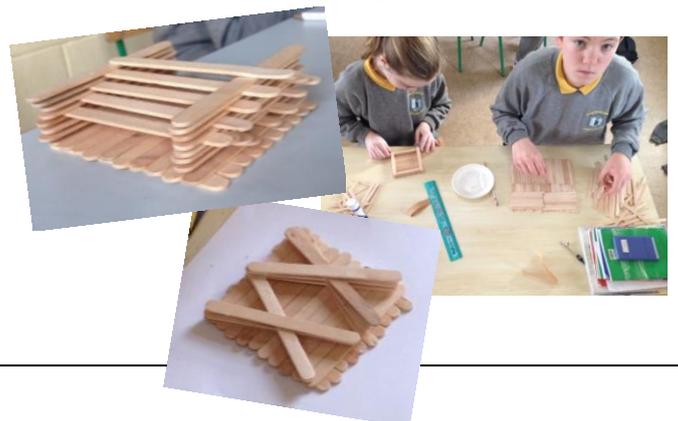


## Lollipop Art

All from lollipop sticks! A sight to behold (and not a single lollipop was eaten to make these works of art!)



And now we've gone 3D. We hope to explore ideas further in the coming weeks!



## Catholic Schools Week

Catholic schools week ran from 01 to 05 February 2016. There was a different theme for every school day. Our Christian calling to be kind, merciful, forgiving and reconciliatory best summarises the trust of this celebration.

# Catholic Schools Week



## Visit from Sr Nuala

Sr Nuala Glynn, a Franciscan Missioner, visited the school to tell the pupils about her Order's work in some of the poorest areas of the world, often without access to water or electricity in sweltering temperatures in excess of 40°C.

Sr Nuala's visit highlighted all we take for granted in Ireland and how grateful we should be for all of the comforts and opportunities we have been afforded. We should all slow down and take stock more often; we might stop complaining then...



## Dodgeball

All of our wet breaks have fostered an interest in playing indoor games in our school hall. Dodgeball has grown to become very popular! The skill levels are improving all the time. We have a senior men's and women's national team. Who knows we may well have pupils playing for Ireland when dodgeball becomes an Olympic sport!



## Horticulturists in the making

All the Junior Room planted seeds in biodegradable pots recently. The intention is to get all of the planted vegetables transplanted when the power comes back in the sun, in our vegetable garden. The infants learned that the 3 conditions necessary for seed germination are water, oxygen and heat. Conditions are therefore perfect in the junior room for our seeds to sprout!! Light will be necessary only when the plants start growing for themselves and making their own food!



### **Pupils take the floor**

Pupils from Ms Mary Kelly's room make jigsaw puzzles. Cooperative play, socialisation and turn taking; here you have it all! These are hugely important life skills and it's important to give the pupils the opportunity to practice these.



### **Richard Clancy & cousins**

Our very generous benefactors Richard Clancy and his Bligh and Anderson cousins have been asking about everything to do with Castlehackett and the education of the pupils in a recent telephone conversation I had with them. We are all looking forward to welcoming them to their ancestral home when they visit in June. It's always a pleasure having them call. We really appreciate the genuine interest they take in our school. It's very touching.

### **Work Experience**

We all welcome Geraldine Fitzpatrick to our school on work experience. It's brilliant having the extra support in the school and she's doing a marvellous job; all the teachers are fighting for her!



### **Barometer**

The pupils made some barometers for science class. We were able to compare air pressures by marking the yellow backing cards in the picture. Still air exerts high pressure and the straw marker goes up; this is a sign of good, settled weather to come. Moving air exerts low pressure and the straw goes down; this is a sign of unsettled, blustery and stormy weather to come! So far we have observed nothing but falling air pressure readings! Brace yourself for more winter storms. That's all from the weather room for now!



### **Green Schools 2016**

This year as part of the Green Schools initiative we will be launching WOW COW Day on Wednesday 17 February (Walk on Wednesday, Cycle on Wednesday). The aim is to get as many children and their families as possible to travel to school via sustainable and active modes of transport on this day and every Wednesday thereafter. Not only is this a fantastic way to reduce carbon emissions from destroying our environment, it is also a great way to get active and healthy. We are hoping that by mid February we will see some improvements in the weather so let's all make the effort to get involved. A photograph will be taken of all those who participate on 17 February. We are indebted to Ms Aislinn Flaherty and her brilliant committee for leading this initiative.



## Confirmandi 2016

We wish all of our Confirmandi every blessing as they prepare for their Confirmation on Thursday 11 February. It promises to be a very special occasion for all the families involved.





## Just Dance!

Have you got the moves? The pupils of Castlehackett NS certainly have! Hip hop dancing is the theme for our next PE module. It's boosts coordination and raises stamina, strength and speed levels. It also happens to be great fun; try it out!



## Newsflash for September 2016

Bus transport can now be organised for any pupil that lives 3.2km or further from our school from September 2016. The only criteria required is that our school must be the nearest school to where that family resides.

Bo-Peeps Childcare facility has also confirmed that it will be in a position to mind pupils until 6pm every day from September 2016. All of this comes as very good news. Spread the word! All enquiries can be directed to the school.



## Note from the Principal

Gnóthach, sin focal a dhéanann cur síos maith ar ár Scoil agus ní fhaigheann tú sa nuachtlitr seo ach blaiseadh beag de na scéalta i gcónaí! Bainigí sult as an méid atá faoi iamh anseo agus mar is gnáth scaipigí na deascéalta ó Scoil Naomh Iosef i gcéin agus i gcóngair! Míle buíochas as bhur tacaíocht i gcónaí.

Beir bua agus beannacht,

*Fergal Ó Neachtain*

## Shoe the Children Appeal

One of our parents is looking for your help... Martina Griffin is coordinating a collection of children's shoes as part of a nationwide collection organised by 'The Jacket off Your Back' charity. These shoes will be sent to under developed countries where some children have never worn a pair of shoes – a luxury we take very much for granted. So if you have any shoes that your children have outgrown, please consider donating them to this worthy cause. Your help is very much appreciated.

[www.jacketoffyourback.com/shoe-the-children](http://www.jacketoffyourback.com/shoe-the-children)

**How you can help**

Schools & Clubs:

- Start a Shoe-Drive
- Encourage children to donate new/part-worn clean shoes.
- Fundraise towards the cost of shipping, which is approximately 50c per pair of shoes.

Shops & Shoe Manufacturers

- Encourage parents to buy an extra pair of kid's shoes or to donate their kid's part-worn shoes when buying their new ones.

Workplace

- Encourage employers and employees to start a Shoe-Drive or to engage in fund-raising activities.

Individuals

- Start your own Shoe-Drive or find the nearest drop-off point to donate new/part-worn clean shoes.

Unit 2,  
Strawhall Business Park,  
Athy Road,  
Carlow.  
Tel. 059-9132586  
Mobile 086-8988137  
[www.jacketoffyourback.com](http://www.jacketoffyourback.com)

**The Jacket Off Your Back**

Shoe the Children Appeal

*Giving a child a pair of shoes this year not only will make you feel better, it could save a CHILD'S LIFE!!!!!!*

**If someone injures their foot like this in the developed world, they will go to the hospital to treat the wound and be given antibiotics to prevent infection. However in the Third World, it could prove fatal.**

**What could prevent this from happening???**

**A pair of suitable footwear. It's as simple as that.**

[www.jacketoffyourback.com/shoe-the-children](http://www.jacketoffyourback.com/shoe-the-children)

## Thought for the month

Promise me you'll always remember:  
You're braver than you believe, stronger  
than you seem, and smarter  
than you think



*A A Milne*