

St. Kevin's G.N.S.

Autumn/Winter Newsletter 2019



As we approach the end of our first term, we bring you a synopsis of St. Kevin's Girls' School activities and achievements.

Board of Management

Sincere thanks to the outgoing Board of Management for their service to St. Kevin's Girls' School. It was much appreciated. Our new board of has been elected and we wish them every success in their work on behalf of the school community.

Recent Departure

It was with great sadness that we said farewell to Jillian Monahan. She had acted as both Principal and teacher during her twelve years in St. Kevin's. She worked tirelessly for the benefit of pupils, teachers and the school community. During her years in Kilnamanagh she was also instrumental in training the pupils in Olympic Handball. As a result, they won many titles and had great success. On behalf of the school community, we send her our best wishes in her new position.

Aistear

The pupils in Junior and Senior Infants have had a busy first term in school. September saw the return of our Aistear programme and while the Junior Infants were excited to be part of this new adventure, the Senior Infant girls were delighted to be back in action in the Aistear room. Our topics this term have been 'Back to School', 'At the Farm' and 'At the Doctor's Surgery'. The pupils have been involved in socio-dramatic play, construction, table-top activities and Art. We have also incorporated the use of the Bee Bots as part of our problem-solving digital learning in Maths. The pupils even got the chance to do some baking! Aistear is an integral part of the Infant curriculum as it allows the children to work in small groups to experience quality learning in a fun and practical way!

Maths Week

In October, Maths Week was celebrated in St. Kevin's G.N.S., with all classes taking part in a variety of hands-on mathematical activities and games throughout all class levels to encourage the learning of maths and build strong foundations in Maths for future learning!

Throughout the week, classes in St. Kevin's G.N.S. participated in many different Maths-related activities and games. Activities included Maths station mornings, coding Beebots in Aistear, coding using Kodable, Microbits and Scratch, Maths board games, daily problem-solving tasks and more.

Third and Fourth Classes participated in a Maths Table Quiz in the school hall. Our Fifth Class also took part in a Maths Table Quiz with the Fifth Class from St. Kevin's B.N.S.

For the second year running, there was also a whole-school problem-solving poster competition, with prizes for the winners in each class. The winners of the competition were announced at our Maths Week Assembly.

One of the most popular parts of Maths Week was our daily 'Cheesy Maths Joke of the Day'. Laughs and groans could be heard through the school at 11:50am each day, as Fourth Class delighted us with their very cheesy joke offerings!

Thank you to all the pupils and parents for their support with Maths Week and word has it that Fourth Class are already writing their 'cheesy jokes' for Maths Week 2020!

Coding with TU Dublin Tallaght

In November 4th Class had the opportunity to take part in fantastic coding workshops with Karen Nolan from Technical University Dublin in Tallaght. During the 90-minute workshops, the girls coded circuit boards called 'BBC Microbits' and used Bluetooth to make working thermometers for the classroom. They really enjoyed the workshops and look forward to learning more about coding in the classroom this year. We are very fortunate to have developed links with our local university and we look forward to developing these links further in the future.

School Self- Evaluation

Our area for improvement in Mathematics is 'Improving Problem-Solving Skills in Mathematics Through the Use of Digital Technologies in Teaching and Learning'.

Stage Five (Put Improvement Plan into Action) formally commenced after the Easter holidays last year. Throughout this school year so far, our pupils have participated in a variety of Mathematics-related activities to specifically improve problem-solving abilities.

From September to the Halloween break the Senior Classes used IZAK 9 Cubes to develop problem-solving and teamwork skills. Junior and Senior Infants and 1st Class used BeeBots to develop problem-solving and computational thinking skills and 2nd Class used BeeBots in Maths classes and explored coding using the online application 'Kodable'.

Since the mid-term break, the Junior Infants, Senior Infants and First Class have continued to use Beebots in the classroom. Second Class have been continuing to develop coding skills using Kodable and Beebots and Senior Classes have begun learning the basics of 'block coding' using 'Scratch' on the laptops twice a month. Well done to all our pupils for taking part

Science Week 2019

The 10th – 17th of November was Science Week across Ireland and to celebrate classes in St. Kevin's took part in lots of Science-related activities! Here are some examples of the wonderful activities that took place during Science Week in St. Kevin's.

- Junior Infants and Senior Infants baked cupcakes in Aistear, examining the change in food when exposed to heat. They also got to eat the cupcakes!
- First Class explored the area of heat and made paper snakes to test whether heat rises in the classroom by watching if they danced over the heaters. Spoiler alert: They did!
- Second Class conducted experiments with eggs and vinegar. They left eggs in jars of vinegar for two days and observed the changes to their structure of the eggs over the two days. They also examined how plants absorb water by conducting another experiment with flowers and food colouring!
- Third Class explored the concepts of sinking and floating. They experimented with various objects, predicting whether they would sink or float, and then put those objects to the test. They used their observations in designing some very creative boats out of Lego for the "Sink or Float Challenge!"
- Fourth Class explored the science of parachutes and designed parachutes for eggs to be tested this week!
- Fifth Class travelled to Microsoft DreamSpace and learned about the science of virtual reality and artificial intelligence, as well as taking part in coding activities. They even made a podcast about the trip and Science Week. Have a listen to it on our School Website!
- Sixth Class celebrated Science Week with students taking part in science stations. These stations explored many strands of the Science curriculum including the anatomy of the body, Science brain teasers, jigsaws, construction and the engineering of bridges. They also explored the topic of volcanos and conducted 'explosive' Volcano construction experiments.

Fifth Class visit Microsoft DreamSpace

Fifth Class had the opportunity of visiting the Microsoft DreamSpace in Leopardstown in November. After receiving a very warm welcome, with our school name on the welcome screen, the girls received a tour and learned about what it is like working in Microsoft. The girls were given the opportunity to make their own video games and learned how technology can assist them in their learning. They even got to code their own Gameboys using 'Meowbits'. They developed their 21st Century skills in a collaborative and dynamic way. It was a fantastic experience for all.

eTwinning Award

In the 2018/2019 school year, Ms. O'Flaherty's Fourth Class took part in a European schools' project run by 'Leargas' and eTwinning Ireland called 'The Christmas Cards Exchange' project. Due to the success of the project and quality of the work completed as part of the project, this project was one of a handful of schools in Ireland to receive a 'National Quality Label'. Ms. Forde received the award on behalf of the school in Croke Park in October and the plaque is on display in the school hallway. However, there was

also another surprise in store. The project has since been awarded the European Quality Label for the excellence of the work in the eTwinning project. This means the work of the girls involved in the project and the school have been recognised at the highest European level with only nine other Irish schools being awarded this label. Well done to all involved!

eTwinning Pen-Pals

Ms. Forde's Second Class are currently writing and receiving pen-pal letters with a primary school in Northern France as part of another eTwinning project. The girls are practising their writing skills and teaching our French friends a few words and phrases in English and Irish. Well done to all the girls.

Cumann na mBunscol – Corn na Laoch Cup Final

Our school's Gaelic football team was made up of Fifth and Sixth class pupils. They won all of their matches during the months of September and October to qualify for the finals in Croke Park. It was a wonderful day for all in St. Kevin's G.N.S. to witness the spirit in which every one of our girls played in Croke Park. We were thrilled when our captain Aoife Kavanagh accepted the Corn na Laoch on behalf of the school. The cup is now proudly displayed in the school's trophy cabinet. It represents an historic first win for our school in the Cumann na mBunscol competition. Great thanks are due to coach Eamonn Gillen from St. Kevin's/Killian's C.L.G for all his help with team training during the campaign. The local club also helped out the team, while fundraising for a school kit continues. Hopefully we will launch our school kit in the new year.

Active School Flag

Our school is now working on achieving our active school flag. Every pupil and staff member has signed a commitment to being active every day. Classes are setting aside time to incorporate active breaks into their school day. The benefits of physical activity are well documented in terms of physical and mental well-being. Regular active breaks also help improve children's concentration spans. There are two Active School committee members in every class and they are helping to spearhead this initiative by initiating active lines when the pupils line up after their 10:30am yard break and by organising games during the 'big lunch' yard time.

Healthy Lunches

We have revised our school's Healthy Eating Policy which was ratified by the B.O.M during their October meeting. Details of the policy are available on the school website. We ask everyone's co-operation in adhering to the spirit of this policy. Children are encouraged to eat healthily and restrict treats to Friday.

Debate Club

We have a panel of nine pupils drawn from Fifth and Sixth Class who stay behind at 2.30pm for an hour each Tuesday to work on the various motions on 2019/2020 Concern Primary School website. We had our opening debate of this school year in Dublin West Education Centre on November 13th. A team of three of our panel members including Emma Hudecova, Ava Dale and Natalia Morawa won their debate on the topical motion "Homework should be Banned for Primary School Children".

Student Council

Student Council are busy representing their class groups. Council members received their badges in November. The Student Council organised a Penguin Art Competition and two winners were selected from each class. Members decorated the Student Council Notice Board with the winning pictures and we were delighted with the high standard of entries. Well done to all involved.

Science Workshop

Emily from SEAI delivered excellent workshops demonstrating how energy can be conserved and conducted. All the classes that took part thoroughly enjoyed this 'hands on' presentation and were actively involved in meaningful activities around the theme of Energy.

Writing Genres

We continue working on developing our writing skills and since September we have worked on Recount and Report writing. The pupils' knowledge of the different genres is developing well, and samples of their writing can be viewed on the Writing Noticeboard.

Kingswood Christmas Carol Service

Pupils in Second Class have been invited to sing at the Carol Service in St. Kilian's Church on Sunday the 15th of December. This has become an annual event for the school and preparations are already underway, with the classes practising their Christmas songs and carols. The Carol Service takes place on the 15th of December in St. Kilian's Church at 6pm and ends at 7pm. All are welcome!

Laudate Liturgical Music Festival

This year Ms. O'Flaherty and Ms. Collins' classes are taking part in the Laudate Liturgical Music Festival. We are busy preparing a wide and varied repertoire of hymns. The repertoire consists of hymns in Latin, English, Irish and even a Zulu traditional hymn. Fourth Class have been having great fun, while busily preparing for the concert. We are really looking forward to representing our school in the Laudate concert

Carol Service

Our Annual Carol Service will be on Thursday 19th Dec at 11am. This is always a lovely event to get us into the Christmas Spirit. We will be reminded of the First Christmas in a special way. Our choir will lead us in the singing and each class from Junior Infants up will sing their own choice of carol.

All are welcome, but there is no obligation to attend as we realise that it is not always possible to step away from the many commitments that each family has

Annual Shoebox Appeal

It's that time of year again! We are looking for your help in supporting the Capuchin Day Centre for Homeless in Bow Street.

Brother Kevin Crowley established the Day Centre service in the Sixties, serving soup and sandwiches to about fifty homeless people a day and he has worked tirelessly since then to grow the centre, serving hundreds of meals a day and providing over 1,000 food packages a week to people experiencing food poverty.

Fr Bryan Shorthall, who many of you know, has strong ties with the Centre and has delivered our boxes for the last two years.

We are asking for shoeboxes for the homeless. This was very generously supported last year. We hope that you will consider supporting this very worthwhile and much needed charity.

Below is a list of recommended items to put in the shoebox- (it can be a bag either)

Recommended items:

- Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- Cereal bars
- Shampoo/Shower Gel or soap/Baby wipes
- Feminine hygiene products/Roll on deodorants (not spray please)
- 'Treat' personal care items – moisturisers, facial creams, hair gel, etc.
- Treats – selection boxes/sweets/chocolate
- Scarves, hats, gloves, socks
- Penneys' gift cards or vouchers

PLEASE DO NOT INCLUDE CONTACT DETAILS. You do not have to gift wrap, but you may if you wish.

'Get the Christmas Look'

There is a non-uniform fundraiser day on 16th December. A donation of €2 will be collected from those choosing not to wear uniform that day. This year's funds will go to Barretstown Children's Charity.

In- School Demonstration Project for In School Therapy Support

The Speech and Language Therapist and the Occupational Therapist are concentrating on the provision of Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy in St. Kevin's. They are working collaboratively with teachers and school staff. They have provided professional training and guidance for school staff in supporting children's therapy and developmental needs.

Sensory paths and sensory circuits have been set up and a Lego Therapy group are working on a four-week model.

The new Speech and Language initiative is focused on the development of vocabulary. A particular group of words called Tier 2 words, are being focused on and this should prove very beneficial to the pupils.

Junior Infant 2020/2021 Enrolment

Enrolment has taken place, but some additional places are still available.

Christmas Holidays

St. Kevin's School closes for the Christmas holidays on Friday 20th December at 12 noon.

The school re-opens on Monday 6th January 2020.

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and thank you for all your support during the past year.

School Website and Twitter

Keep up to date with school news, events and more through our school website www.stkevinsgns.com and our school Twitter page www.twitter.com/stkevinsgns

