

St. Kevin's G.N.S.

Summer Newsletter 2020



Booklist Information

Booklists and sundries are currently under review. Every effort is being made to keep booklists to a minimum, to reduce the costs of returning to school in September. We have a wealth of supplementary texts which, in conjunction with rental books, will allow us to tailor next year's programme to take account of this year's disruption. All staff members are busy working on plans to cover every eventuality for the year ahead.

Plans are being put in place to help the pupils to make up for the time lost in school since March. Our aim for September and October is to complete some unfinished topics in textbooks from this school year while at the same time gently proceeding onto the 2020/21 curriculum. We have stored unfinished textbooks from this school year in the school.

Individual class teachers will go into greater detail with you about their plans for your daughter's education in the new school year. Rest assured we are doing everything in our power to progress your daughter's education in the new school year.

Well-being

The well-being of the students is at the centre of all our planning. Teachers carry out regular class surveys to assess how pupils are managing. Children report feeling happy and content in these class check-ins. The one common issue raised by pupils in the past few years was that they felt they didn't have a voice or say in their school day. In response to this feedback, we set up our Students' Council and Active Schools' Committee. Class contracts are drawn up at the start of each school year in conjunction with the pupils. Our new well-being policy is being drawn up according to D.E.S. guidelines and will go before the board for ratification. The guidelines provide practical guidance on how primary schools can promote mental health and well-being. Our school aims to nurture a safe and supportive environment for building life skills and resilience, as well as a strong sense of belonging to the school. In January, the staff spent some of the Croke Park hours at a seminar about the Weaving Well-being Programme. Learning support staff attended a "*Get Up, Stand Up*" talk to help them implement this eight-week programme to prepare sixth class students for secondary school.

Literacy

We would like to compliment the pupils on the amazing work they did over the school year. It comprised of two phases: in-school and home-schooling. During the time in school, the pupils in the middle and senior classes worked formally on four comprehension strategies using a variety

of texts. The four strategies are predicting, clarifying, questioning and summarising. The mastery of these strategies helped the pupils greatly in their independent comprehension of all text types while working at home. This was clear from their work during the home-schooling period. Mastery of these strategies is a wonderful, lifelong skill which pupils can use in all subject areas both in primary and secondary school. Together with this they also worked on 'Talk Time' which enables the pupils develop their vocabulary. This was a very popular programme with the pupils. Story maps and word maps were also used to strengthen the pupils' skills in clarifying and summarising. Story maps use visuals/pictures to help pupils organise important elements in the story. Pupils learn to summarise the main ideas in a text very successfully using this method. Word maps enabled the pupils to enhance their vocabulary thus improving their comprehension levels.

The writing genres worked on in school during this year were narrative, report and recount. The pupils in all classes worked on these genres and presented their work which was displayed on the Writing Noticeboard. The samples obtained were excellent. During the home-schooling period the classes worked mainly on procedure and persuasive writing. The pupils presented their procedural and persuasive texts with clarity and in the case of persuasive texts with conviction. It was very rewarding to see the pupils present their work so confidently. The structure, the vocabulary and the phrases used in the selected class writing topics were of a very high standard and it was also very heartening to note the information that they had acquired from their family members while working on their written texts. The pupils' standard of writing poetry was highly commendable. The pupils' poems were a joy to listen to. They created mood, tone and images very effectively and used alliteration, personification and rhyme to give their poems depth. The pupils in middle and senior standards certainly produced some amazing work and they enjoyed the process so much.

World Book Day

The stage was still in place from *The Wizard of Oz* so we put it to great use to celebrate World Book Day on Friday 6th March. Children from all classes told the whole school assembly about their favourite books. Junior and Senior Infant pupils weren't a bit fazed by their huge audience. We were all so impressed by the confidence with which all the girls expressed themselves. It was great to see the genuine love of books by the pupils. The two sixth classes decided to entertain the school with a dramatic reading of their class novels *Grandpa's Great Escape* by David Walliams and *An Eagle in the Snow* by Michael Murpurgo.

Numeracy

School Self Evaluation

This year, St. Kevin's G.N.S. completed Year Two of our chosen School Self Evaluation (SSE) area in Numeracy: 'Improving Problem-Solving Skills in Mathematics Through the Use of Digital Technologies in Teaching and Learning'.

Stage Six of the SSE process is in progress (monitor actions and evaluate impact). The actions have been monitored as they have been rolled out. Some of the actions taken included:

- The experiences of all teachers and pupils (3rd-6th Class) were gathered through Maths' surveys in January 2020.
- The SSE plan for Numeracy was then adjusted to take these experiences from Year One into account.
- Our targets and actions for the SSE Improvement Plan were then adjusted and amended.

Numeracy activities for our pupils

Throughout the year, our pupils have participated in a variety of mathematics-related activities to specifically improve problem-solving abilities. These activities have included using Beebots, Microbits, Izak9 Cubes, coding and using specific problem-solving strategies across the school. This year, we were also able to purchase a class set of Lego WeDo. Teachers from different class levels participated in training to ensure effective use of the Lego in the classroom. A number of whole school initiatives to promote the enjoyment of Maths have also been implemented during this school year. Among others these included: Maths Week, 'Maths at Home' Week, Maths Eyes, Engineers Week, coding sessions with T.U. Dublin and trips to Microsoft in Leopardstown.

We are looking forward to continuing with our SSE in Numeracy in September. Thank you to the students, parents and staff for their support in this process this year.

Maths at Home Week

In June, St. Kevin's G.N.S. hosted a fun 'Maths at Home' week to continue to promote positive attitudes towards Maths and Maths-related areas in the school. 'Maths at Home' week also aims to show how Maths is integral to our daily lives at home and to reinforce practical problem-solving skills in fun and interactive ways. The whole week was deemed very successful with lots of fun hands-on activities and, as an added bonus, there was NO written Maths work set for any class during the week! Activities included daily practical tasks and activities, Maths trails, and a whole school St. Kevin's Bake Off! A big thank you to all the parents/guardians for helping their child participate in the week in these exceptional circumstances. We loved seeing all the photos of the girls baking and completing fun games and tasks. Check out the school Twitter @stkevinsgns and the school website for a selection of the fantastic work our pupils completed during the week.

ESB Science Blast

On Wednesday the 4th of March, girls from Fourth Class presented their project 'The Microbit Bin: Life on Land: Can a BBC Microbit help the UN Global Goal?' at the ESB Science Blast in the RDS Dublin.

Their project investigated whether a BBC Microbit could improve levels of recycling in their classrooms. Through the project they created and coded a device that could easily be placed on a recycle bin and record levels of recycling within their classrooms. They also investigated attitudes towards recycling, levels of recycling in their classes and whether the implementation

of a device could improve these levels and attitudes. The girls chose this project as it links easily with the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 14: Life on Land.

The girls had a fabulous day in the RDS. After an early start, they arrived at the RDS and set up their project. They explained and demonstrated how their Microbit Bin worked incredibly well, wowing the judges with their scientific investigation skills. They went to shows such as 'The Science of Soccer' and visited various exhibits, collecting lots of 'free stuff'! Well done to the girls involved. Once again, they represented themselves and our school so well. As such, we're all looking forward to Kilnamanagh's first Nobel prize in the future!!

Engineers' Week 2020

In March, St. Kevin's G.N.S. celebrated Engineers' Week. Across St. Kevin's, many activities and lessons took place centred around the importance of engineers in our everyday lives. Many classes looked at the impact of female engineers on society and took part in engineering-based activities.

During the week, students in 2nd, 3rd and 4th Class designed and created engineering projects as part of an Engineering Fair. The standard was exceptional. Each student explained their project, how they created it and how it worked very well to the other classes and teachers who visited the projects on display. There was a prize-giving for winners and highly commended projects at assembly on Friday. Well done to the girls who worked so diligently on displaying their projects. It's safe to say, the future of engineering is safe in the hands of our fabulous students in St. Kevin's.

Sport

Equipment

Ideas were sought from teachers and pupils on the type of sports' equipment which they thought would most benefit the school. Lots of new equipment was bought in response to their feedback. The new adjustable basketball hoop in the hall was proving a real favourite with all classes.

New Sports' Kit Provided by The Parents' Association

We are eternally grateful to everyone who helped run fundraising events to buy a full set of jerseys, shorts and socks for the school Gaelic games' teams. The kits are absolutely beautiful and future generations of St. Kevin's girls will wear them with pride on the field of play.

Soccer at St. Kevin's G.N.S.

F.A.I. Coaching for Third to Sixth Class Pupils

During the months of February and March we were lucky enough to have been offered training sessions by F.A.I. coaches for all pupils from third to sixth class. The sessions were very popular with the girls.

School Soccer Team

Soccer training and trials were well underway when the schools were closed. As in previous years, we were very fortunate to have had two coaches of the calibre of Paul Murray and Damien Power willing to give up their time to prepare the school team for the highly competitive primary schools' soccer league and championship competitions. We had high hopes for this year's squad and were due to play our first competitive game on Thursday 12th March. Again, we are indebted to Kilnamanagh A.F.C. for the use of their newly refurbished all-weather facilities for all school training sessions.

Gaelic Games

Club coach Eamonn Gillen had moved from coaching the girls in second, third and fourth class to the senior classes early in January. Hot on the heels of our success in Croke Park, there was great enthusiasm among the girls to improve their Gaelic football skills' set.

Camogie

Eamonn had dedicated the lunchtime sessions to selecting and training our school's camogie team for the Cumann na mBunscol competition which was due to throw in after Easter. Unfortunately, once again it was a case of best laid plans.

Active Schools' Flag (A.S.F.) Application

Our school is in the process of applying for our Active Schools' Flag. It is a Department of Education and Skills initiative supported by Healthy Ireland. There is a wealth of resources available to schools who participate. The advantages of being an Active School are backed up by international research and extend beyond physical well-being to positive benefits for teaching and learning. *Active Breaks* are listed among pupils' favourite school activities in their class check-up surveys.

A.S.F provides schools with a definite set of targets to work towards in four areas:

- Physical Education
- Physical Activity
- Partnerships
- Active Schools' Week

A.S.F Self-Evaluation

Once normal service resumes, online surveys will form part of our A.S.F. application. We will be in touch in the new school year to ask for feedback from parents as well as pupils of St. Kevin's G.N.S.

Physical Education

We are currently updating our school's P.E. plan which will be presented to the B.O.M. for ratification in the near future. It will include a section relating to inclusive physical education and our Active Schools' activities. It will also reflect the need for a virtual P.E. programme.

St Kevin's Active School's Committee, Active Breaks and Active Yards

Part of the A.S.F. process is to build more physical activity into the school day. Classes committed to three *Active Breaks* involving running, dancing and exercise during the school days since October 2019. Each class had two members who attended regular A.S.F. meetings during part of their lunch break. As members of our *Active Schools' Committee* they helped to plan activities and organise equipment. The senior committee members were invaluable when organising activities in the yard. Volleyball, German Jumps, skipping and hula hoops were among the most popular activities.

Active Schools' Partnerships

The involvement of pupils, parents and wider school community with St Kevin's G.N.S. in the provision of sports and physical activity is viewed as an important partnership. The Parents' Association often helps to fundraise for new equipment. They also help run the annual sponsored walk around the locality. As mentioned already, St Kevin's G.N.S. has well-established links with local sports' clubs such as St.Kevin's, Killian's G.A.A. Club and Kilnamanagh A.F.C. We had hoped to rekindle interest in basketball by partnering with a local club just before the schools' closure. We look forward to pursuing basketball in the new school year.

We are always keen to hear from local clubs and physical activity organisations who may like to offer taster sessions. If you know of any clubs who would be interested in developing links with the school, please let us know in September.

Active Home Week

There is a long tradition in St Kevin's of holding an Active Schools' Week in April with great engagement by pupils and parents alike. This year we remodelled it as our Active Home Week and the Challenge Charts formed part of everyone's homework. Some classes were already using padlets as part of their online homework so they were delighted to use the Active Home Week padlet too.

Expect P.E. to feature more regularly as part of your child's weekly homework in the year ahead.

Virtual Sports' Days in June

Under normal circumstances, we would be busy preparing for our annual sports' day at this time of the year. This year we have decided to run a virtual sports' week. It is an initiative designed by Sligo Education Centre. It provides everyone with a "buffet style menu" from which to select activities. There are links to event explainers and video clips. Everyone is invited to try out some of the activities as outlined on the timetable using everyday items as sports equipment. Details

have been emailed to all parents and can be found on the school website. It will form part of our A.S.F. submission so please forward us photographs of the different activities.

Sacramental Classes

First Holy Communion

Congratulations to all the girls in Second Class who made their First Confession on the 10th of March 2020. They were a credit to their families and to their teachers. They have also made such wonderful progress this year in preparing for their First Holy Communion. We are so proud of them for all the hard work they have put in. We were so grateful for the beautiful videos made by the two Second Classes to mark their original First Communion day in May and we hope to have a date for First Communion very soon, following public health advice. We will inform parents and guardians as soon as we know.

Confirmation

The girls had been busy preparing for their Confirmation by following the 'Grow In Love' programme, working on their projects and attending Mass in St. Kevin's during the school week. The girls really liked the trips to the church because the congregation always rewarded their singing with a hearty round of applause at the end of each Mass. They also enjoyed the talks afterwards by Fr. Murphy and Natalie which were designed to prepare the girls to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Unfortunately, we have still had no definite word on when the Service of Light or Confirmation will be held.

Other School News and Events

The Wizard of Oz

After many months of preparation, the school musical, *The Wizard of Oz*, took place on March 2nd-5th 2020. The girls from 4th, 5th and 6th class put on an excellent show each night to a very enthusiastic and supportive audience. The show was a great success and we are so proud of all the hard work and dedication from the girls. We had many laughs along the way and made lots of memories that we will always treasure. Thank you to all the staff, parents and everyone involved for all their support.

Fifth Class in Microsoft DreamSpace Promotional Video

Well done to our fantastic Fifth Class and their teacher Ms. Garvey, along with Ms. Forde, who featured in promotional video about the importance of promoting STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects to primary school students. In the first week of January, a film crew and representatives from Microsoft Ireland visited St. Kevin's and spent a day filming the Fifth Class participating in various STEM activities, as well as interviewing class members about their experience of STEM in school and at the Microsoft DreamSpace. The video was officially released on Monday the 22nd of June and received a fantastic response. As a thank you for taking part in the filming process, we even received a complimentary promotional video

about our school from Microsoft Ireland and the film crew in McCann Dublin. We were also delighted to receive BeeBot mats for our school, designed and made by McCann Dublin. We will put them to great use in the coming months and years. These videos are available to view on our school website, Twitter page @stkevinsgns or by following this link. <https://youtu.be/7SA3nlaApj0>

Visit by The Garda Band

Music was certainly in the air in St. Kevin's in January. Not only were rehearsals for the school musical well underway but the Garda Band had swung into action in the hall to provide the whole school with a fabulous medley of musical numbers. It is always one of the highlights of the year. We were delighted to learn that one of the band members was a past pupil of the boys' school.

Harry Potter Quiz

Teams drawn from Fifth and Sixth Class competed in the Tallaght Library's annual Harry Potter quiz. The standard was extremely high and the questions required a really in-depth knowledge of the books and films. Although they didn't win, our girls acquitted themselves very well.

Sixth Classes' Visits to the Dáil

The girls from both sixth classes went on guided tours of Dáil Eireann in February. It was a really interesting tour of Leinster House. The guide complimented the girls on their behaviour and on their knowledge of matters historical and political.

Student Council

Well done to all the girls who took part in the student council during this school year. Student Council is a great way for students to represent their classes and become involved in affairs of the school. It has really benefited the school this year. Thank you to Ms. McDonnell, Ms. O'Flaherty and Mrs. Gallery who volunteered their time in facilitating the Student Council at lunchtimes.

Fourth Class Conference Calls

The 4th class girls have worked incredibly hard over the last few weeks. We have loved receiving pictures of what they have been up to at home. We also kept in touch through weekly video conferences. It has been so lovely to check in with the classes and hear what everyone has been up to!

The classes prepared fantastic work for each conference call. We have had very interesting debates on motions like "Cats are better than dogs – discuss" and "Reading is the best hobby a child could have" with everyone sharing excellent and well thought out opinions.

We were also so impressed with the amazing poetry the girls have written over the last few weeks. For World Oceans Day on 8th of June the classes prepared beautiful and powerful poems urging us to protect and respect our magnificent oceans.

We are so proud of all their hard work! Well done everyone!

Debates

The girls of St. Kevin's debate never fail to make us proud when they go into verbal combat with schools from all over Dublin. This year's team drawn from fifth and sixth class were no exception. They were so dedicated, giving up break times to work on their speeches and turning in fine performances. They got to the quarter final stages of this year's competition. Well done girls.

New School Tracksuit

To go with our new school crest, we have a new school tracksuit. Please note, there is no requirement to buy the new tracksuit yet, and our usual one will be perfectly acceptable for as long as is needed. The new tracksuit is now available from our normal uniform providers.



School Tours

Usually our summer newsletter is full of details about lots of lovely school tours. The current health crisis meant that most classes had no school tour this year. The sixth classes were the exception. Normally the students pay for their tour but this time their two teachers decided to treat the girls to a virtual tour of an alpaca farm in Co. Wicklow. It was a lovely experience and went some way towards compensating the two classes for all they had missed out on in their last months of primary school.

Sixth Classes

We bid a fond farewell to our wonderful sixth class girls. They were excellent role models to the younger girls and they ably led many initiatives within the school. Everyone in St Kevin's felt very sad that they missed out on a special time in their primary school lives and wished them every happiness and success in secondary school. They leave behind wonderful, warm memories of their time with us. They participated in two school musicals and The National Children's Choir. They helped to set up our Active School Flag Committee and were key members of our Student Council. Many of these girls lined out on our first ever school soccer, camogie and Gaelic football teams. They were among the first girls from our school to ever lift trophies in Gaelic football and soccer.

Sixth class pupils collaborated to produce a lovely collage of rainforest creatures. This piece of art will soon be unveiled in the school yard and will form part of their legacy in St. Kevin's.

Class Teachers and Rooms 2020/21

Every class was assigned their new teacher last Friday 12th June. There will be an addition to the current teaching staff in September and the newly appointed teacher will be teaching First Class next year.

The following is an overview of the location of all classrooms for the new school year:

- Upstairs: Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Classes
- Downstairs: Junior Infant and Senior Infant Classes
- Office Corridor: First, Second and Third Classes.

ASD Class

The Department of Education and Skills has sanctioned an ASD Class for children with autism to open in St. Kevin's G.N.S. in the new school year. It is already fully subscribed and will be located in the room that housed our library. Work is currently underway to modify the room. As you can imagine, the costs of setting up a new classroom with specific equipment and resources to cater for students in our ASD Class will be very high. Consequently, we are putting out a call to any businesses who might sponsor an item in the ASD class. Please contact the school at info@stkevinsgns.com if you know of any individual or businesses that might be interested.

School Calendar

The school calendar for 2020/2021 is available to view on the school website; please remember it may be subject to change.

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 @stkevinsgns www.twitter.com/stkevinsgns