

# St. Kevin's G.N.S.

## Winter Newsletter 2020



### Literacy

All classes are engaging in the new Language Programme and are continuing to work on our four main comprehension strategies which are:

- Questioning
- Summarising
- Clarifying
- Predicting

The girls are also working on the six writing genres which are:

- \* Recount
- \* Report
- \* Narrative
- \* Explanation
- \* Procedural
- \* Persuasive

Plenty of work is going on throughout the school to develop vocabulary skills using the various English textbooks and class novels. While working on topics in S.E.S.E. the pupils engage in very specific vocabulary and terms.

### Numeracy

#### School Self-Evaluation

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.

#### Maths Week

Even Covid couldn't stop all the fun and games of Maths Week this year! 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 using Lego WeDo, Microbits and Scratch, Maths board games, daily problem-solving tasks, watching MathsWeekTV and more.

Some senior classes participated in a Maths table quizzes in their classrooms and all classes took part in Maths trails around the school.

For the third 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 virtual assembly, with the winning posters compiled and shown to all classes in the school through Microsoft Teams.

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 Third Class are already writing their 'cheesy jokes' for Maths Week 2021!

## **Science Week 2020**

The 9th – 13th 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 completed experiments about floating and sinking and they learned about nocturnal animals.
- Senior Infants learned about arctic animals and explored their five senses.
- First Class made cool lava lamps and even learned how you make tasty butter using cream and a jam jar! They also learned about their heart rate, did a Coke and Mentos experiment, and learned about how sound travels through making paper cup phones
- Second Class made tissue magically disappear out of a bucket of water. They also learned how air takes up space by blowing up balloons and they learned about rainbows!
- Third Class set a challenge of completing one science experiment each day. They examined how precipitation occurs in rain clouds using shaving foam and food colouring. They explored how butter is made as part of a scheme of lessons about the Dairy industry in Ireland. They also learned about the mechanics of a car and aero dynamics, constructing and coding working racing cars using Lego WeDo. They also learned about chemical reactions and watched a volcanic explosion using baking soda, washing up liquid and vinegar.

- Fourth Class explored how the water cycle works by making clouds in a jar. They also participated in Science Week stations exploring topics such as fingerprint detectives, coding, finding out about birthday algorithms and constructing working parachutes for raw eggs!
- Fifth Class also participated in lots of fun activities including making exploding bags, examining the reaction between milk and washing up liquid and making clouds in a jar.
- Sixth Class celebrated Science Week with students participating in a very interesting Science Week table quiz

## **Sport**

### **Active Schools' Flag**

This year we unveiled our Active School Walkway. It has proven to be a very worthwhile resource for all classes who have made significant use of it to get out in the fresh air and get active. We have been so fortunate that P.E. classes have continued outdoors because the weather has been so good.

### **Sporting Events**

Unfortunately, all inter-schools' competitions in Gaelic, camogie and soccer have been postponed until further notice.

## **S.P.H.E.**

Classes have been working through the Stay Safe Programme in line with our school S.P.H.E. Plan. This year as part of our ongoing school self-evaluation, we have placed a greater emphasis in wellbeing so every girl has their own wellbeing textbook and mindful colouring book to help promote mental and physical wellbeing among our pupils.

## **Other School News and Events**

### **Santa Dash Christmas Fundraiser**

As a school community, we have in the past, tried our best to help those less fortunate than us. This year we are unable to collect shoe boxes or food items for hampers due to COVID restrictions, so we decided to run a 'Santa Dash' fundraiser instead. With your support, we asked our students and any willing family members to do sponsored runs/walks or crawls of distance of choice, in aid of Brother Kevin's Capuchin Day Centre for the Homeless families and our own school funds.

Once again, we are blown away by the generosity of our families in the school. We are delighted to announce a donation of **€1000** was made to Brother Kevin's Capuchin Centre and the photos all the girls sent in of their Santa Dash were fantastic.

Thank you to everyone who supported our fundraiser which also raised **€800** for school funds. As you know, we cannot run the school lotto at the moment, so we are so grateful for your ongoing support and generosity.

### **Lego Club**

Mrs Doherty worked with pupils from First, Second and Third Classes every Friday during Lego Club until she retired. The girls worked as a team and each pupil had her own specific role. We had young engineers, suppliers and builders all working together as a team on their Lego project.

### **Coding Unplugged**

We were very fortunate to have Owen Dignam from Microsoft Ireland volunteer to facilitate 'Hour of Code' sessions with Third and Fifth Class. In these sessions, the girls explored real world problems and using collaboration, teamwork and other 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, attempted to find practical solutions to these issues. At its foundation, coding involves writing computer programs using programming languages. Coding for kids is usually taught using content that is high-interest, while creating projects that involve creative input. In short, coding for kids is typically gamified making it fun for kids to learn! These sessions were unplugged sessions, which means 'without a device' and involved developing computational thinking and problem-solving skills, all essential for life-learning learning. Thank you to Owen for facilitating these sessions!

### **Spring Flowers**

We can all look forward to a beautiful display of spring flowers in 2021. All classes from First to Fourth Classes have planted a variety of bulbs around the school grounds including crocuses, alliums, tulips, snowdrops and hyacinths. We also hope to sow wildflower seeds around the school grounds, in the spring to help our pollinators like the bees. We also look forward to maintaining and planting new vegetables and plants in our school garden in the springtime.

### **Retirement of Mrs Gallery and Mrs Doherty**

We bode very fond farewells to two stalwarts of St Kevin's G.N.S. when Mrs Gallery and Mrs Doherty retired in October.

Patricia Gallery has been part of the school staff since 1978 and has worked in Learning Support for thirty years. It is hard to imagine school without Mrs Gallery. Patricia loved the world of education. She brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the Learning Support Team in St. Kevin's and has left us with many special memories of her time with us. The children recognised her love of books and created a special book for Mrs Gallery to enjoy during her retirement. We wish Patricia every happiness and good health as she embarks on the next chapter of her life story.

Helen Doherty was the "baby of the staff" when she joined in 1982. She grew up to be a valued member of the teaching staff and in more recent years, Helen joined the Learning Support Team. She was a natural and nurturing teacher who loved her job. We also wish Helen lots of happiness and good health as she sets off on new adventures in life.

We look forward to celebrating both teachers' retirements whenever restrictions allow.

### **Tommy Moore Retires!**

Barely had the dust settled after the retirements of Mrs Gallery and Mrs Doherty, when Tommy Moore announced he was retiring. Tommy seemed to be such a permanent feature of life in St. Kevin's that we never imagined he wouldn't be around forever!

We are so grateful to Tommy for all his years of service to the school community. Officially, Tommy has worked here since 1990 but his association with the schools goes back even further. He opened the two schools up early each morning and allowed us stay until late into the evening if necessary. His mantra was always that he didn't mind doing it once it was for the sake of the children.

We in the Girls' School knew we could always rely on Tommy to accommodate us for the weeks and months leading up to major occasions such as our shows. Part of Tommy's legacy to our school is the wonderful stage which he and Donie built a number of years ago. Its clever design means it is easily taken apart to be stored until the next musical. We can guarantee we will always remember both Tommy and Donie when it comes to showtime once again

### **New Staff**

You may have noticed many new faces, albeit masked, about the school this term. We are very pleased to welcome Jen Dawson, Suzanne Dunne and Elena Barba Ramos who have joined the school's S.N.A. Team. Suzanne and Elena are attached to our new Butterfly Class which is headed up by Michelle Stone. Michelle is one of three new teachers on staff this year. Rebecca Lawless is teaching First Class and Laura Farrell is teaching Fifth Class. Eleanor Cullen and Angela Jones who both arrived since Hallowe'en have joined the Learning Support Team. We are very fortunate to have such dedicated and caring new staff members working with us.

### **Debates**

Our girls never fail to amaze us with their talent and enthusiasm. This year we have a wonderful group of Sixth Class pupils working together as a team to support the three girls who compete in the Concern Primary School Debate Competition. Emma Hudecova, Lily Hayes, Ava Dale and Grace O'Neill have competed on the school team and have won their first three debates. They were ably supported by a crack research team which included Erin O'Hara, Kirsten Cox, and Sophie Sheridan.

The motions they have debated so far are the following:

The Internet Should Be Banned from Schools

Junk Food Should Be Banned in Schools

Children Can Make A Difference to The Environment

The girls are now into the Dublin semi-finals which will take place in January.

## **The Christmas Nativity**

Junior and Senior Infants were absolute stars in their Christmas video. Both Junior Infant classes excellently performed the poem *This is the Moment*. Senior Infants told the story of Christmas in their poem *The Christmas Story*. The girls all looked amazing in their costumes and sang *Hosanna Rock* with such great energy and enthusiasm. Well done girls! You really got us in the Christmas mood!

## **Santa on Zoom!**

Junior Infants and Senior Infants had a very special guest zooming into their classrooms! On Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December, Santa took time out of his very busy schedule to check in on the girls and see how they were all doing. He called a roll and presented each girl with a very special certificate. He confirmed that all the girls were (of course!) on the nice list! It was such a treat to see Santa and the girls were very excited!

## **Christmas Concerts**

Several classes did their own versions of Christmas concerts which are available to view on the school website and Twitter.

## **'Santa Claus is Coming to town' in Third Class**

Third Class learned how to sign 'Santa Claus is Coming to Town', using *Lámh* which is an Irish form of sign language especially for people with additional needs.

## **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 known as our Butterfly Room.

## **Visits by Authors**

The girls in Ms Collins' Fifth Class were delighted to host a virtual visit to their class by Sarah Moore Fitzgerald. Sarah entertained the girls by telling them all about her writing techniques. She has written two children's books "The Apple Tart of Hope" and "All the Money in the World".

Meanwhile Sixth Class enjoyed a virtual presentation by Nicola Pierce. Nicola writes novels that are set against a historical background. Originally from Tallaght, she has written several novels such as *The Battle for Stalingrad*

## **Landscape Artists of the Year.**

Anyone who has had occasion to pass through the school grounds lately cannot fail to have noticed the beautiful artwork on display on all the windows. The theme is 'A Winter Landscape' and every girl rose to the challenge to produce incredibly beautiful artwork.

## **Credit Union Art Competition**

Once again, we had a number of winners in the Credit Union Art Competition which this year invited entries of posters on the theme *"Imagine More"*.

Second Class could boast a winner in first and second place with Maya Flynn picking up the prize for first place and Francesca Europa won second place in this highly competitive category.

Tosia Furmanczyk in Fifth Class won third prize.

In Sixth Class we had two winners. Emma Hudecova took second place and Emma Moore took third prize.

Congratulations to everyone and a word of thanks to our local chapter of the Credit Union for organising the competition.

### **Virtual Assemblies**

We held a number of virtual assemblies since September to maintain a sense of unity despite all the restrictions that have been put in place to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Sixth Class hosted the first virtual school assembly in October. They welcomed new staff members and pupils to our school community. They extended a particularly warm welcome to both Junior Infant Classes whose experience of *"big school"* is a lot different to what we had come to expect in normal times. Sixth Class brought everyone up to date with news from around the school. They used the opportunity to showcase their own work by letting everyone see their artwork, projects and Irish comhrá.

We also held a virtual assembly on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December to mark the liturgical season of Advent.

### **Wedding Bells!**

Congratulations to Ms Ailbhe Forde on her recent winter wedding and to Ms Emma Garvey who became engaged in November.

### **School in a Time of Covid**

A sincere word of thanks to everyone who has complied with all the new regulations we have had to put in place this year. There was a huge amount of work went into ensuring a safe return to school for all its pupils and staff. We understand how difficult it is for all pupils to have their experiences of school so curtailed by the present restrictions. However, we are delighted to be back in school and look forward to a brighter and better 2021.

All the staff in St Kevin's G.N.S. wish you all a very happy Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.

### **School Website and Twitter**

Keep up to date with school news, events and more through our school website [www.stkevinsgns.com](http://www.stkevinsgns.com) and our school Twitter page @stkevinsgns [www.twitter.com/stkevinsgns](https://www.twitter.com/stkevinsgns)