



## IMPORTANT DATES

### December 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020

School closes at 12 noon for Christmas Holidays

### January 6<sup>th</sup> 2021

School re-opens

### February 12<sup>th</sup> 2021

School closes for Mid-term Break

### February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021

School re-opens

### March 17<sup>th</sup> 2021

St Patrick's Day—School closed

### March 26<sup>th</sup> 2021

School closes at 12 noon for Easter Holidays

### April 12<sup>th</sup> 2021

School re-opens

### April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021

Sacrament of Confirmation

### May 1<sup>st</sup> 2021

First Holy Communion

### May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021

Bank Holiday - School closed

### June 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> 2021

School closed for June Bank Holiday

### June 25<sup>th</sup> 2021

School closes at 12 noon for summer holidays

## MS NUGENT RETIRES

On Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, Ms Teresa Nugent retired after 20 years of service in Clarecastle National School. Her years of dedication and commitment to the school were acknowledged by Mr Moloney and all on her last day and in the weeks leading up to her retirement. Pupils in each class prepared fantastic artwork to say their goodbyes and created lovely displays of this work throughout the school. Ms Nugent was delighted and overwhelmed by their beautiful work. She thanked all pupils, parents and staff, both present and past, for making her years in Clarecastle so memorable and enjoyable. She also had words of praise for the present and past Parents' Associations and Boards of Management and she thanked them for their diligent support and dedicated work during her time at Clarecastle NS. We wish Ms Nugent every success as she embarks on a new stage in her life and thank her for her many years of dedication to the care and education of the children in the school.



## WELCOME MR MALONE

Mr MJ Malone has been appointed to the position of Deputy Principal. He has returned to Clarecastle NS having taught here some years ago before taking up a position with the PDST. He was then appointed principal in Lisdoonvarna NS. Welcome back Mr Malone and we wish you well in your new position.



## PARENTS ASSOCIATION

The Parents Association wish to acknowledge the work done by Martin, the staff and the Board of Management in preparation for the re-opening of the school and the continued efforts by all since September. They extend a big 'Well done' to all the children and to their parents who have accepted the changes to the school environment and worked together to keep our school community safe.

They would also like to extend a big 'Thank you' to all who supported their fundraising initiatives during the year, which included the 'Cash for Clobber' collections and the 2021 school calendar.



Thanks especially to the business owners who generously sponsored the calendar, regardless of the tough times that they are going through at present. Parents are encouraged, where possible, to support these generous sponsors when the opportunity presents itself. A sincere thank you is extended to John Power who once again, took the class photos. While copies of the calendar are selling fast, some are still available from the school office, costing €10 for one, €15 for two and €20 for three.

Parents Association meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month via Zoom. It is a great way to get to know other parents and to find out what is happening in the school. It would be great to have as many parents as possible involved in the meetings and all are welcome.

## OUR NEW ASTRO TURF PITCH

There was great excitement in mid-September when each class gained entry to the new Astro Turf pitch, having watched the completion of its construction in the earlier weeks. The pitch and hurling wall are a wonderful asset to the school as Covid-19 restrictions ruled out the use of the school hall for PE lessons.



Staff and students wish to say a huge 'Thank You' to the Parents Association for their dedication to fundraising and for their generous contribution towards this project and towards the many educational resources in the school that greatly enhance the education of all pupils.

## OUTDOOR CLASSROOM AND SENSORY GARDEN

We are delighted to announce that plans are underway to construct an outdoor classroom and sensory garden on the school grounds.



This will be another great addition to the school and will enable children to continue their learning about the environment and to enjoy a healthy, outdoor place of discovery.

## GREEN SCHOOLS

Our school is hoping to apply for the 7<sup>th</sup> Green Flag - Global Citizenship - Energy. This theme focuses attention on how to conserve energy locally while also engaging and learning about Climate Change on a global level. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, many of our activities will be limited but we are working with Clare Co. Council on what is best practice to ensure a safe environment while also completing the application. Deriving from some of these restrictions, this year's Green School Committee is from one class grouping – Ms. Healy's / Ms. Hayes' Fourth

Class. The other classes will engage in projects that are connected to Climate Change and energy conservation. One example of this is Ms. Casey's Fifth Class who will take part in the Global Goals Virtual Workshops in January which will be run by An Taisce. Students will create an exhibition about the goal they have been allocated which will be entered in an international competition in June 2021. There is also a possibility that they will be creating links with counterparts in Kenya and possibly communicating with some students there. In the New Year, we hope to produce a list of energy saving tips for homes which will not only reduce your energy bills but will also contribute to reducing our national carbon footprint.



Here are some *effective tips* to conserve energy over the Christmas holiday:

- **Turn down room temperatures slightly. Seal off any draughts.**
- **Use timers to set heating and lighting efficiently and effectively.**
- **Switch appliances off when not in use. Use washing machines at peak times.**
- **Maximise natural daylight in your home.**
- **Cook clever and make the most of your oven, hob and kettle.**

## **INCREDIBLE EDIBLES SUCCESS**

Incredible Edibles is a healthy eating initiative for primary school pupils. It encourages schools across the country to get busy growing a variety of fruit and vegetables. Third Class took part in this initiative in 2019 and intended to do so again in 2020 but unfortunately the lockdown last March put an end to their work. Nevertheless, one pupil, Rachel Mulhern, worked away in her own garden at home and she sowed a veritable feast of healthy foods! Photos and a diary of her work were compiled for the entry and the project was awarded a Bronze Award. Well done to Rachel on all her hard work!



The Green Schools Committee have registered Third Class to take part again this year. They are awaiting delivery of their seeds and plants and will be looking forward to sowing their own fruit and vegetables in spring!

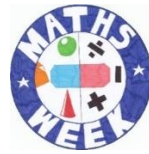
## **SECOND PLAQUE OF STEM AWARD**

Clarecastle National School has been presented with the second Plaque of Stem Award by Science Foundation Ireland. Schools who undertake deeper engagement with STEM are presented with this award and its achievement involves whole school involvement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. Schools must collaborate with other schools, participate in STEM events and associated visits and also invite speakers to school, either in person or virtually. The application showed the evidence

of STEM activities in the school and represented the students' hands-on learning. It included photos, videos, projects and written accounts. Well done to all our pupils who are already enjoying the work which has begun towards achieving the third award.



## **MATHS WEEK AND SCIENCE WEEK**



Maths Week 2020 was held from October 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> and Science Week was held from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> November. Each class had the opportunity to take part in enjoyable and educational activities in the different disciplines. The Maths and Science activities that were carried out during these weeks and additional activities that will be completed during the year will be included as part of our application to gain the third Science Foundation Ireland Plaque of STEM Award.



## **SCHOOL'S PARTICIPATION IN TIMSS**

In spring 2019, Clarecastle NS took part in Trends in International Maths and Science Study. TIMSS takes place every four years and aims to measure how well Fourth Class and Second Year students are

performing in Mathematics and Science. Our present Sixth Class pupils, who were in Fourth Class at the time, were among 4,582 students from 150 primary schools who completed tests in Maths and Science. Teachers, parents and pupils were asked to complete questionnaires about the teaching and learning of Maths and Science, while principals were also asked about the school environment and resources.



The key findings of the 2019 assessments, which were announced recently, include:

- The performance of Irish students in Mathematics and Science has remained stable and strong
- Both primary and second level students in Ireland scored significantly above the average in both Mathematics and Science.
- Ireland is the top performing EU country in Mathematics at both Fourth Class in primary and Second Year in post-primary.
- There are no significant gender differences in performance for Mathematics or Science, at either level.



Ireland was among 33 countries to participate in the study at both levels, which overall included 672,000 students from 64 countries.

Well done to our boys and girls on their performance which contributed to this positive announcement and many thanks to all the parents for participating.

## SCHOOL CHOIR

This year, as with many aspects of school life, the choir has taken a very different format and gone online! Twenty members from Third to Sixth Class rehearsed via Zoom after school since midterm to prepare their Christmas repertoire. While not without its challenges, the children embraced the opportunity to sing and they put a lot of effort into practising the songs between rehearsals.



It was unusual for the choir members not to be able to hear the sounds the other children were making, not to have melody and parts together in one space, to have to be recorded in their own homes and then to submit their video to Ms Parkinson. There is no doubt that everyone did tremendous work and they all deserve great praise! We hope you enjoyed their Christmas performances and well done to all!



## RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS WEEK

Random Acts of Kindness Week was held from November 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>. Pupils were encouraged to partake in activities to promote kindness, both at school and at home. They completed written and colouring activities based on kindness and some lovely displays were created in the school. Well done boys and girls!



Remember, it costs nothing to be nice and no act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted!

## ACCELERATED READER

Since our return to Accelerated Reader this term, pupils have read 2,069 books which totals to approximately 37 million words. Well done boys and girls! Let's hope Santa brings plenty of books to keep you all busy reading during the Christmas holidays!



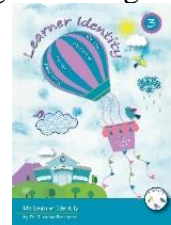
## FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Congratulations to the boys and girls in Third Class who, after a long wait, received the Sacrament of Holy Communion in September. The children were all wonderful on the day and were a credit to their parents. Well done girls and boys!



## MY LEARNER ID

Pupils in Third to Sixth Class are completing the 'My Learner ID' programme, which was introduced into the school some years ago. Created by Ennis resident, Dr Suzanne Parkinson, Developmental & Educational Psychologist, the programme offers a unique, child-centred framework to support children becoming and being learners.



Suzanne was recently presented with the 2020 Psychological Society Award for Contribution to Professional Practice Psychology in recognition of the development of the series. She expressed her gratitude to those schools who were early pioneers of the programme, which included Clarecastle NS. She also thanked school leaders and teachers who supported the very early trialling of 'My Learner ID' and offered meaningful feedback that shaped the refinement and further development of the series.

## CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

This year's Celebration of Christmas will be very different to our traditional school concerts where parents and grandparents were invited to the school or to Clarecastle Church to enjoy an evening of entertainment, provided by our pupils.



A virtual 'Celebration of Christmas' will be made available for all to view and will surely be enjoyed by everyone!



## THANK YOU LIAM!

Many thanks to Liam Hayes for all his work in decorating the school for Christmas. We left the building on Friday December 4<sup>th</sup> and returned on December 7<sup>th</sup> to a magical winter wonderland. Each corridor was decorated beautifully and there was great excitement among the children as they spotted the lovely Christmas touches in their area of the school. Thank You Liam! We really appreciate all your work in making our school so lovely for the children and for the staff in recent weeks.



## CHRISTMAS WISHES FROM ALL THE STAFF

We wish all of you a Happy and Holy Christmas and a Healthy and Peaceful New Year. As we say goodbye to 2020, a year full of unprecedented change, let's hope that 2021 will be a much better year for everyone. Many thanks to you all for your continued support to our school.



**Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliain faoi Mhaise Daoibh go Léir!**

