



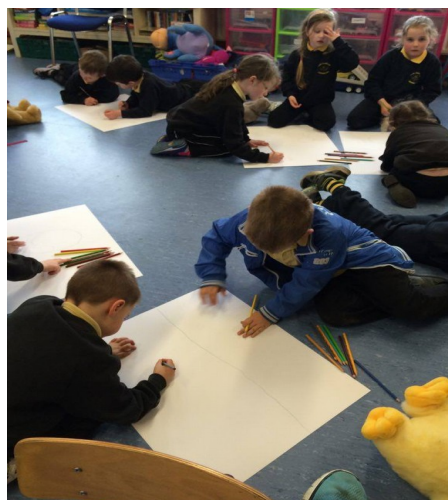
April / May  
2016

**Hello again and welcome to another edition of Acorns. The academic year is flying by and with so much done there is still a whole lot to look forward to.**



There is a lot about Active Schools in the news at present. This is our first year taking part and we are applying for the Active Schools flag. We are holding our own Active Week May 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> culminating with Darrara's got talent on the Friday. This week will see lots of extra physical activity. Our Active School committee are working hard on a programme for the week – so watch this

space for exciting events for all the pupils in the school. We will have the flag and active school's recognition in place for September.



#### **Infants colouring Teddy Portraits**

#### **GAA Coaching U.pdate.**

Since Underage Coaching became irregular in the school in 2013 and stopped in 2014 we have been unable to get an adequate answer from the GAA club as to why this service was removed from the

school. As a result we have not had any news to convey to parents. However, I have, most recently, been in contact with the new management committee in Ahamilla and believe that we will be renewing our association with Clonakilty GAA in the near future.

In the meantime Ms. Hayes, Mr. Coppinger and Ms. Harrington have taken GAA training. They all have the necessary coaching credentials to cover this activity. When Ms. Courtney returns from her career break in September we will have another member of staff with the necessary certificates to coach GAA. Regardless of who coaches the children, our Sciath na Scol teams have continued to do their best in matches and have also continued to bring home the silverware. In the Sept issue of Acorns we asked for parents to help out with training, as had happened in

previous years. No parent was available to help us.

Parents should note also that the school time table allows for only 1hr per week for Physical Education. The PE curriculum contains a number of strands which need to be covered. These are • Athletics • Dance • Gymnastics • Games • Outdoor and adventure activities • Aquatics. We have some discretion to cover these strands creatively and through linkage and integration. However we are limited by available equipment, weather and timetabling. We ensure that over the year children receive their 36hrs of PE. In fact, they receive more than this amount of time. We do not underestimate the value of PE to the children and strive to provide as much physical activity as possible, during PE and in other subjects.

### **Summer Clothes?**

As I write this the sun is streaming through the window – hopefully this is the end of all the wet weather and we can make full use of the pitch. Usually by this stage we have exchanged our long pants for shorts and summer clothes. As the weather is unpredictable parents may use their discretion from now – shorts and tee's can be worn if you think it is warm enough.

### **Communication is Key**

On Thursday May 26<sup>th</sup> Garry O'Sullivan, Life and Parent Coach will give a talk on Communication. This talk is for everybody who is interested in keeping the lines

of communication open between all members of the family. The talk is organised in conjunction with Darrara Muintir na Tire Community Council, Darrara NS Parent's Association and the Board of Management. There will be a raffle and tea and coffee afterwards. Watch out for posters with more information in the coming days.

### **Ink Cartridge Recycling**

If you have empty ink cartridges from your printers or from work send them in to us. A company is willing to give the school a few cents for each cartridge recycled through them.



We have just heard that we have been awarded our 5<sup>th</sup> Green Flag. Gemma, Oran and Grace will go to the Ceremony in Cork to be presented with the flag on our behalf. Last year Ms. Hayes and the Green school's committee commenced the first year of a two year process to enhance biodiversity in the school grounds and to increase awareness amongst children staff and parents of the importance of biodiversity in our environment. They created bug hotels and each class spoke about animals

and plants in the area and around their homes. Ms. Roycroft and a new committee took up the gauntlet this year and built on the incredible work started last year. As you know we welcomed experts for talks, we catalogued all the animals in the immediate school environment and engaged in other lessons and surveys. We are so proud of the committee and all the children in the school who worked so hard. We received more good news this morning. Sarah Coakley, in her capacity as committee member was asked by Ms. Roycroft to write to Coillte and Future Forests to tell them about the loss of our trees in the storms in recent years and that the damage necessitated the removal of all the boundary trees. Amazingly both Coillte and Future Forests have offered to donate trees to the school. Arriving this week are 100 native trees from Coillte. That is more than one per child and staff member in the school – what a wonderful gift. Future Forest will donate trees in the autumn – Sarah already has the date in her diary for getting back in touch with them next year. We are so thrilled to see the beginning of our new boundary hedgerow. Well done Sarah – we are so proud. What a legacy from this year's Green School's team!!!

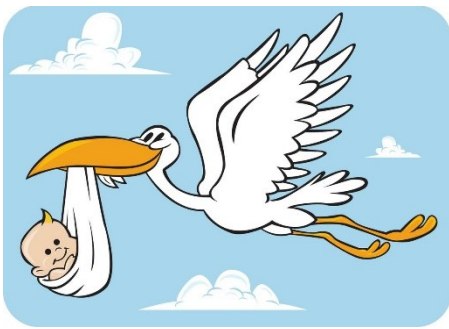
### **Four Year Plan**

A huge thank you to everyone who sent ideas for our inspiration wall – we got loads of great feedback which will go to the BoM for discussion and consideration as we draw up our plan for the next 4 years.

Preparations are almost complete for the school tour. We will have exact times and cost for you shortly.

### 30 Bliain ag Fás

Our 30yrs celebration culminates on Sat. 25<sup>th</sup> June, this will also be the day of our end of year mass and farewell to 6<sup>th</sup> class (but NOT their last day) – put the date in your diary as plans are afoot for a great day out for all the family and the community.



### Our growing community

Ms. Roycroft got an emotional and excited send off from the children and staff last Friday. We will miss her and wish both Conor and herself lots of love as they await the arrival of their baby. We welcome Mr. Murphy in whose capable hands Ms. Roycroft's work will continue. We cannot wait to meet her little one.

### News from the Middle Room

Maths Recovery: Throughout this term, the children in 1st, 2nd and 3rd class are taking part in Maths Recovery twice a week. Maths recovery is a unique approach to extending children's number knowledge, understanding and strategies. They are all really enjoying the challenges of the carousel of activities, as well as

completing mathematics work independently.

As the weather is beginning to improve, the children will be able to enjoy more outdoor teaching and learning. We had great fun this week painting pictures for our Butterfly Garden classroom display. Also the children enjoyed colouring in 'Sally's Supermarket' for our Money topic that the Transition Year students drew for us! Thanks Zoe and Chloe.

The 2nd class children received their First Confession this month and they are now looking forward to the Communion preparations. Thank you to the children who came along to sing on the choir. The Communion class really appreciated your support. We look forward to seeing you all for the Communion Mass in May

### More Dates for your Diary

First Holy Communion for 2<sup>nd</sup> class takes place on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 11am in Darrara Church. After the fantastic turnout for the First Confession choir that made such a difference to the ceremony we look forward to all the children taking part again this year.

Don't forget the two bank holidays are extended to include Tuesday this year.

### BE THOU WHAT THOU ART, FOR WHAT THOU ART IS WORTH

**Yvonne Walsh**

Our school, though small in size is mighty in stature. To be able to accommodate and

serve the families in our immediate environment and beyond is a privilege for all of us who work in Scoil Dhaibhreach. In a competitive world it is easy to be drawn into comparing ourselves with other schools but in reality no two schools are the same and each and every one of them offer the best they can give to pupils.

The obvious advantage our school has aesthetically is location. The beautiful rolling countryside flowing down to the bay can be easily viewed from the play areas.

We have oodles of outdoor space which allows all pupils great scope for adventures and exploring in the summertime. Genuine concern and care for each and every child is in constant evidence from the start to the finish of each day. Subsequently our children grow positively in confidence and ability as their talents emerge throughout the primary years.

Our catchment area is tightly bordered by Timoleague and Barryroe to the east and Clonakilty Bay and town to the south and west. Therefore we have always been dependent on local families for our numbers and, in recent years we have become an idyllic option for families of children of special needs. This is utterly wonderful for us because it affirms the kind, holistic approach taken by the school in the care and guidance of its pupils. Our school family can face challenges in the form of social and emotional needs,



movement needs and learning needs at times, but we always include and engage with and facilitate as much as possible. All pupils benefit from appreciating the diversity of strengths and personalities in our school community.

Along with limited staff numbers, some of these demands make it difficult to outwardly compete and perform in all the opportunities that come our way. We nevertheless, endeavour to always do what's right for our children, our school community (staff and parents) and our locality.

Recent focus on staff training has directed us back to making real and genuine connections with our pupils. At times as professionals we overly focus on the subjects we teach and the importance of knowledge. Academic development can take precedence at the cost of pupils' social and emotional development. This real adjustment is critical to tackle the challenges of today's world. An appreciation of and a valuing of the uniqueness of each child under our care is essentially important to their sense of self-worth; self-belief and confidence. With these aspects of their being enhanced our children can achieve incredible standards academically.

Don't ever underestimate the power of praise and a kind word. We, as adults can also learn a lot by being encouraged to learn simple lessons from our children. Live as they live with joy,

love, energy, positivity, forgiveness and kindness.

## Parent's Association News

The Parents Association is holding a book fair again this year. Last year's fair was a great success which helped us to keep the school library in new books. Stock up on books for summer and help out the school. Books for every level of reader. **The dates are: after school today: Tuesday 26/4 1:40 - 3:10pm and evening Wednesday 27/4 7:00-8:30.**

First Holy Communion: The Parents Association is once again hosting this year's celebration. We need the whole parent body to help - a letter will be coming home next week - we need food for the day, help with setup and clean-up, and help in the garden to show off our school at its best. It's a wonderful tradition that we want to keep but we can only do that if YOU help.

## And now the Senior Room

Mr. Coppinger also has a busy time ahead. He is just back from Dunmanway where the class displayed the Irish Language books that they wrote. They had a great time looking at the books written by children in other schools. Sam gave an Irish Dancing display to the 100 children present and the surprise guest this year was our own Tommy Lyons.



## Scríobh Leabhar, Dunmanway

This Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class will travel to Ballinascorthy for a qualifying blitz for this year's Sciath na Scol competition and on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class take part in a Tag Rugby blitz in Clonakilty RFC. There are exciting projects being finished, they have set up the hall for the PA Book fair and they are starting the 6<sup>th</sup> class year books – shhhhhh!

There is no sailing course for 6<sup>th</sup> class as they prepare for the move to 2<sup>nd</sup> level as Kim has retired from Courtmacsherry sailing school. We have made alternative plans for this year – they are sure to have an even stronger bond when they leave.

We were delighted to have Enda Boyle Chloe Kelly and Zoe Coakley back to do their TY work placement with us over the last few weeks. They supported the teachers both in class and with various jobs and most importantly they shared their experiences of secondary school with 6<sup>th</sup> class.

## Incredible Edibles



We have taken part in and planted our seeds for the Incredible Edibles programme again this year. We will be sending the seedlings home this season so that the children can tend and harvest them over the holidays. We have lettuce, carrot and turnips planted. This week the seedlings are bursting through the soil. There are no sign of shoots from the potatoes yet but the strawberry plants are settling well after being couriered to the school in a sealed plastic bag.



This ties in with our status as a Health Promoting School. This title covers all aspects of health – food and nutrition as well as mental and physical health. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class are

taking part in the Friends for Life programme aimed at self-esteem and positive mental health. Infants and 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> have been doing the Zippy's Friends programme. Mrs. Walsh is completing the Incredible Years training – these are all aimed at self-esteem and wellbeing. This applies to all members of our school community and our talk by Garry O'Sullivan is also tied to this. There has been a healthy lunch culture in place for a number of years – in the next few weeks I hope to do the initial preparations to update this and put in place a Healthy Eating Policy. I will be looking for your feedback through a parent survey and through consultation with you when the draft is ready for your consideration. It is becoming increasingly clear that it is the duty of all of us to nurture the whole child as much as possible. We need to remember to celebrate the small things and as Ms Walsh puts it above 'Live as the children live, in joy, love and energy'