



## ***DARRARA NATIONAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER***



*Cruary, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, P85VX62*

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### **TERM 1 NEWSLETTER**

#### **Note from the Principal**

As we approach the festive season, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the families and the wider community for the incredible support you have shown our school throughout the year. Your involvement and encouragement make all the difference, and it is truly appreciated by staff and pupils alike.

A special congratulations to our new pupils who have settled into school life so wonderfully. Your enthusiasm, curiosity, and cheerful presence have brought so much joy to our classrooms. Well done to each of you for embracing this new chapter with such positivity.

As we look forward to Christmas and the New Year, I want to wish all our pupils, parents, guardians, and community members a very happy and peaceful holiday season. May it be filled with warmth, joy, and cherished moments with loved ones.

Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year for an exciting and productive Term 2!

Warm regards,

**Claire Higgins**

**Principal**

#### **School Fete**

Our school fete was another huge success this year. A heartfelt thank you to our Parents' Association who organised a wonderful fun family day out, which included something for all ages.



There was a great turnout from the community and as always, we appreciate your continued support. The total figure raised was €2810, presented in the picture below by Sarah Pierce and Amy Lyons.



#### 5k/10k Fun Run

Thanks to the amazing efforts of Donal & Liam Lyons, the school has benefitted from funds raised in May 2024. The event was a huge success and an amazing €1775 was raised for the school.



## Rugby Blitz



We were delighted to take part in the School Rugby Blitz again this year. Clonakilty RFC organised a wonderfully inclusive day of fun for everyone. We even got to show off our dance moves at the end of the day. Thank you to Josh and Paul for helping us practice our skills.

## West Cork Rapid Response

A big thank you to the West Cork Rapid Response volunteers who visited our school recently with the Rapid Response jeep.



The children loved exploring the jeep and its equipment, as well as learning about all the amazing work you do. Thank you for providing an incredible service for our whole community.

## Santa Dash

We teamed up with the Preschool to raise funds for this wonderful service which relies heavily on donations from the public. The Santa Dash was a wonderful success and was enjoyed by all. A very worthy local cause. Thank you for your support.



## Matilda

The pupils from 1st-6th class were highly entertained at the Sacred Heart Secondary School production of 'Matilda'. We are very grateful every year to be invited to the matinee performance, and enjoy bumping into some past pupils while there.





### Science Week 2024

The children had so much fun exploring science in different ways for Science Week. We carried out lots of different experiments and investigations. We definitely have some future scientists here in Darrara N.S.

### School Policy Updates

Staff and the Board of Management have reviewed and updated the below policies this term;

- The Behaviour of Concern Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Health & Safety

### A Note from the Parents Association

Sincere thanks from the PA for a successful start to the school year. We'd like to thank all parents and the wider community for their contribution. New P.A members are always welcome and we looking forward to seeing all the faces at the St. Stephen's day swim!

### Greenschools

We've enjoyed lots of lovely Greenschool activities this term. A special thanks to our committee members. We went on a Beach Clean-up in Ring, we did a walk and Hedgerow survey for Walk to School week, with the help of Catherine Russell.



We had a bike and scooter day to celebrate our new bike shelter, kindly funded by Greenschools.



We also learned about why it is important to reduce emissions and try to keep our air clean. We learned about air pollution and we are campaigning to stop car engine idling outside our school, and beyond.

Thanks to parents for signing our No Idling Pledge. A special thank you to our Greenschool committee for all their hard work doing traffic surveys and keeping an eye on cars leaving their engines running! The results of our Clean Air survey have been returned and we are delighted to announce that of the schools that were surveyed, we are 3<sup>rd</sup> on the list for Cleanest Air! Go Darrara Go!!!

### **Artist in School**

We were delighted to be approved by Cork County Council to take part in the Artist in School scheme this year. We worked with local artist Mark Dougherty and every child made a mask, inspired by our very own, favourite, Oak Tree. We were delighted that so many families came on board with the project and took part in the Samhain Parade in Clonakilty on the 3rd November. A fantastic evening was had by all.



### **Maths Week**

We took part in Maths Week in October. All children enjoyed a week of hands-on learning, and fun activities around our school, using maths eyes and maths challenges!

## Halloween Party

The pupils enjoyed another fantastic Halloween party hosted by our wonderful Parents' Association.



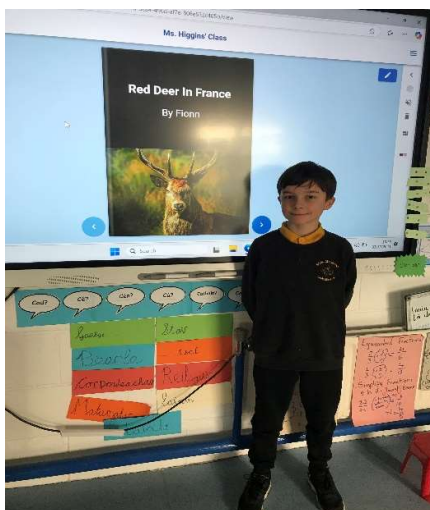
Thanks so much for all the fun and healthy, spooky treats. The children also created incredible Pumpkin carvings again this year. Well done to all!

## SNA Appreciation Day

We couldn't go without celebrating and thanking our three SNAs, Tina, Karen and Áine, for the wonderful work they do every single day in Darrara National School. The kindness they show each and every child is so appreciated by all. We are grateful to have such brilliant SNAs.

## French Classes

French Classes have been a roaring success with the Senior Pupils again this year. Our visiting French Teacher Trish was well impressed with the progress made over the past ten Tuesday sessions. The term culminated with an impressive presentation of French projects created by the pupils using their Write Reader resource on their laptops. They are all able to say hello and tell a little about themselves in French now. All you need do is ask them!



## Buddy Bench

Two years ago, we painted and decorated one of our wooden picnic benches to be an outdoor Buddy Bench for all pupils to avail of, when they want to indicate that they need the company or support of a friend. It has been well weather beaten since so we will need to repaint and decorate it in the Spring. Any and all inspirational ideas are welcome!



### **Wellness Wednesdays.**

We are continuing to excel as an Amber Flag School that focuses on everyone's overall wellbeing and mental health. Under the guidance of Ms.Twomey and the Amber Flag Committee we are striving to maintain our achievement and earn a replacement flag as Storm Bert ripped ours to shreds last month.

The pupils have been enjoying Wellness Wednesdays on the last Wednesday every month at school that are filled with heart-warming, fun and mindful activities. This focus will continue for the school year.



### **Credit Union Art Competition.**

We had three winners! Ena Barrett from 3<sup>rd</sup> Class, Rebecca McCann from 4<sup>th</sup> Class, and Olesya Foley from 6<sup>th</sup> Class all won prizes in their categories in the art competition. They each show amazing talent and it was wonderful to see their classmates so proud of and delighted for them.

All the entries were amazing and unique. It must have been really hard to judge them but everyone enjoyed participating in this local competition.



### **Trip to Dunmanway**

There was great excitement when Garda Ryan arrived in the Community Bus to take Ms. Courtney's Class and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Class to Dunmanway Swimming Pool. The pupils loved diving down for rings and splashing around in the pool. Afterwards, they walked to the playground for some playtime and to have a picnic. What a lovely day out!



### **Relay Take Over**

As part of the Active Flag, pupils took part in the Relay Take Over event to celebrate the success of our athletes in the European Championship and the Olympics. The pupils worked in teams and enjoyed playing some relay games. There was great encouragement and teamwork on show.



### **SSE**

As a school we are constantly evolving and developing our approaches to teaching and learning. At a whole school level, we are focusing on handwriting and spellings. We have introduced some new online spelling resources to improve and standardise our practice across the school. Pupils from 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class log in to their own accounts regularly and practice their spelling in a fun and engaging way. The feedback has been very positive from the pupils and they look forward to doing their spelling activities.

We continue to focus on handwriting and letter formation throughout the school, with specific time being dedicated to develop fine motor skills, finger dexterity and strength, typing skills as well as print/cursive writing.

### **Active Schools Walking Challenge**

Cork Sports Partnership and the Active Flag teamed up for this challenge. The pupils took to walking during their movement breaks throughout the school day. One lap of the yard is 100m so the pupils worked together in their classes to walk as many kilometres as possible. Walking and talking was



encouraged to make this a social interaction. This challenge also tied in with the Green School Beach Clean-up and hedgerow study with Catherine Russell.



### GAA Coaching



Conan continues to visit the school every Tuesday to teach the pupils GAA skills in both hurling and football. These skills tie in with many areas of the PE curriculum such as throwing and catching, striking with the hand and striking with an implement. Participation and having fun are at the forefront of these sessions.

### Bushmount



We mobilised the troops on Monday and spent a festive afternoon in Bushmount Nursing Home. The children were wonderful and brought the true spirit of Christmas to the residents there, most notably with the chats and giggles after our performance of songs, poetry and music.

### Charity Fundraisers

Thank you to all of our families for your continued support in our fundraising efforts this year. There was a great response to our call out for donations to the Gift Mass on the 15<sup>th</sup> December. We also celebrated the enrolment of our two First Holy Communion candidates at this mass, and wish them the very best in their preparations for their big day in May.

### Sewing With Sarah



We are so lucky to have such a talented parent body! We are so grateful to Sarah Pierce for so willingly giving her time, patience and expertise to the children. We learned lots of different stitches and most importantly how to sew a button! As a green school, with an awareness of the negative impact of 'Fast Fashion', these are skills that will definitely be put to good use by our pupils.

Thank you Sarah!

*WISHING ALL OUR STUDENTS AND  
THEIR FAMILIES A VERY HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS AND EVERY GOOD WISH  
FOR 2025  
FROM THE STAFF OF DARRARA  
NATIONAL SCHOOL*

