



# St. Mary's Junior NS

Rowlagh, Clondalkin, Dublin 22

## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL REPORT ON OUR 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

**A summary of activities and achievements this year.**

### ***Another Eventful Year at St. Mary's Junior National School***

Summer Holidays are here! ☀

Thankfully this academic year was more consistent, allowing for children to complete a full year on site. Here at St Mary's JNS the staff continually go above and beyond to ensure the health and safety of the children.

Huge credit goes to the families and in particular, the children of St. Mary's JNS who have continually shown to be flexible by adapting to continuous change. Throughout the year, the children have skipped through the gates of the school eager to get into their classrooms to see their friends, teachers, and SNA's.

As a result of being more consistent, we have managed to have a wide range of activities and events happening throughout the year. While activities took extra planning and consideration we held events like Wellbeing Week, Friendship Week, Science and Maths Weeks, Active Schools Week and Sports Day.

We also saw a return of educational tours linked with our Creative School's journey, a return to swimming in 2<sup>nd</sup> Class and a return to school tours. These are all very welcome and it brings great excitement and joy to the children.

This year we continued our Creative Schools journey. This came at the perfect time for us as it takes learning outdoors. Our hope of creating the perfect outdoor space with sensory garden for the school community to enjoy has become a reality and we look forward to continuing this next year. Volunteers are always welcome if you feel you can help with outdoor space.

We hope that this newsletter will help parents, teachers and children look back on what has been a very eventful year.

### ***Marion Byrd Retiring:***



You may already be aware that Ms. Marion Byrd is retiring this summer. Marion has been an SNA at St. Mary's for many years and during this time has been

such an inspiration to her colleagues and all the children who have been lucky enough to be in her care. Her talent as an SNA is exceptional and any child that has been in her care has excelled socially, emotionally, and independently.

Marion is extremely professional and presents for work every day with a positive attitude. Her caring nature and consistency in work have ensured the children strive in her care. Marion's dedication as an SNA at St Mary's JNS has ensured the children can develop holistically to achieve their full potential.

I speak on behalf of the children, school staff and the wider school community when I say Marion will be sorely missed. We are delighted however that she is beginning a new chapter and wish her many happy adventures. Don't forget to drop by every now and then!

Best wishes to you Marion:

***Congratulations on your Retirement! 🌟***

## ***Back to School Grant***

Don't forget to apply for this grant on time. This grant is for back-to-school expenses and should be used for book rental, uniforms, tracksuit etc... **Please note all children must pay book rental in September to be included in the scheme.**

## ***School Uniform***

**School Uniform:** Navy jumper, trousers/skirt, white shirt. Tracksuits are available from:

*School Wear House, Unit D7 Ballymount Cross Ind. Est., Ballymount, Dublin 24*

**Email:** [info@schoolwearhouse.ie](mailto:info@schoolwearhouse.ie) **Tel:** 01 4604371.

## ***Child Protection***

Our Child Safeguarding Policy is reviewed each year. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is the Principal, Maura O'Shea. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is the Acting Deputy Principal. Any concerns are referred to a Tusla Social worker for advice. The school always follows this advice.

## ***Home School Community Liaison***

Many thanks to Ms Méabh O'Connor who is our Home School Liaison Teacher. Méabh has certainly exceeded expectations and managed to build strong relations with the parents of the school and the wider school community. Let us reflect on some of the initiatives and programmes as part of the HSCL scheme this year.

### ***Bord Bia Bloom in the Phoenix Park***



We entered the postcard garden category in this year's Bord Bia Bloom in the Phoenix Park. The theme of our entry was 'Sensing our way through

the Rumbles of the Jungle' based on the popular children's book 'Rumbles in the Jungle' by author Giles Andreae.

We identified an opportunity to further promote Literacy and enhance links with North Clondalkin Library by integrating Literacy through gardening to

connect with people in a meaningful way. We would like to thank Julie from North Clondalkin Library.

Well done to our students and teachers who created many crafts to include in the display including creative butterflies, birds, jungle animals and painted rocks.

Thanks to Lucan Garden Centre, Men's Shed for their contributions and one of our parents Ami O'Brien, who created the fabulous sign for the back board using a range of recyclable materials.



Thanks to the parent's group who attended the trip to Bloom on Friday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June. An enjoyable day was had by all.

We were delighted to successfully be awarded as 'Best in Show' and given a 'Certificate of Distinction' for our entry. This was a wonderful achievement for our students, parents and the wider school community involved. Well done to all the children who contributed.

### ***Walking on Thursdays***



A community walking group met on Thursday mornings throughout the school year at the playground entrance of Collinstown Park at 9.15am for a walk followed by refreshments at a coffee morning in North Clondalkin Library. Well done to all those who participated throughout the year.

### ***Links with Archways/Blue Skies***

Blue Skies facilitated the parent course 'Circle of Security' in term one this year. Well done to those who participated in the course. Blue Skies facilitated a staff workshop in 'Restorative Practice', an approach we foster across the school for building positive relationships and dealing with conflict in a creative and healthy manner. Blue Skies also facilitated a workshop on 'Restorative Practice' for the Parents Association Committee. We would like to thank Sarah Thornberry and Jess Tobin from Blue Skies for their continued support.

### ***Links with North Clondalkin Library***



This academic year we have continued to forge links with North Clondalkin Library. Our classes attend the library and enjoy listening to stories being read and selecting books to borrow. The library held a pop-up library in our school garden and each class enjoyed visiting it and reading for enjoyment in the great outdoors. We would like to thank the staff of the library for liaising with us throughout the year and for inviting us to collaborate with them on a number of programmes. The library run a range of different adult education courses and family friendly events. Call into the library for more information.

### ***Links with Community Gardaí***



In December Santa made a special visit to St. Mary's JNS to see the boys and girls. Santa left a selection box for each child for doing great work in school. He enjoyed listening to the children and singing Christmas songs out on the yard. Thank you to the community Gardaí who ensured Santa arrived safe and sound to the school.



We also held a fundraiser for the Irish Red Cross Ukraine Appeal. A wonderful €288 was raised and presented to the Irish Red Cross.

### ***Senior Infants Christmas Arts and Crafts Activity***

As part of our home-school links, our Senior Infant students brought home a Christmas themed activity to complete with parents/guardians at home. Thank you to all those who uploaded a photo of their completed activity via Aladdin Connect.

### ***School Completion Programme (SCP)***

The Collinstown Park School Completion Programme is a programme that helps students to attend school, focus on completing school, get involved in class and school activities and get the most from their education.

Emma Kiernan is the Collinstown Park SCP Co-ordinator. Yvonne, Ciara and Emma are our part time project workers who facilitate several workshops, groups and programme as part of the School Completion Programme.

SCP funded Laura Walsh and our after school clubs.

### ***Community Gardening Group and Workshops***

We had a number of workshops facilitated by Biodiversity Expert and Horticulturist Joan Power where we focused, on rejuvenating the raised beds at the side of the school. Thanks to our gardening group. Joan guided us in planting and developing our new sensory garden and outdoor classroom which was our project under Creative Schools and the Arts Council of Ireland.

Joan facilitated some parent-child workshops. Well done to all who participated in plant potting. Thanks to all the families who donated fabulous plants to our garden.



### ***Visit to the National Botanic Gardens***

In November, as part of our Creative Schools research trips, we visited the Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin where we were given a tour by an expert guide. We learned about various plants and gained inspiration for our 'Classroom in the Sun' design. We enjoyed walking through these magnificent gardens. The trip was greatly enjoyed by all.

### ***Visit to IMMA Irish Museum of Modern Art***



In November, both the children and the parents group got a chance to visit IMMA and explored the fabulous grounds and gardens.

We also enjoyed visiting the art studio of our Creative Schools Associate Clodagh Emoe and saw the wonderful creative and innovative work that Clodagh was working on. We were



inspired on this trip with amazing ideas for the design of our outdoor classroom.

### **St. Mary's JNS Parents Association Committee**



This year we established a school parent's association committee. In advance, parents interested in becoming involved completed a training course held by the National Parents Council in June last

year. I would like to thank those parents who volunteered their time and support to the committee and attended the monthly committee meeting. We will be looking for more parents to become involved next academic year.



This year we held three events; Creative Pumpkin Event, Santa Hat Event and Easter Colouring Competition.

Donations were put towards purchasing sensory and interactive resources for the Junior Infant corridor by 'Halls of Fun.' The Santa Hat Event was held in December. €315.95 was donated on the day.

Thanks to the Parents Association Committee who served tea, coffee and refreshments on the day of the grand opening of the sensory garden and outdoor classroom.

### **Stepping Stone Forests**



Stepping Stone Forests brought a wonderful team of experts and volunteers to plant 508 native Irish trees in the shared green space

between both our schools. Thanks to the school and wider school community for all their support with this project.

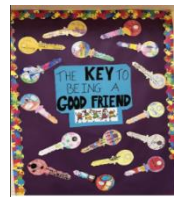
### **CLOVER Project (Children Learn On Very Early Reading)**



Junior infants take part in the Clover Literacy project. The aim is to instil a love of reading. Aoife in North Clondalkin Library facilitated a parents'

workshop on story reading. Each Junior Infant received a Clover pack to bring home with a Literacy focused story book, a Numeracy focused story book, a colouring book and pack of colouring pencils.

### **Friendship Week (Anti-Bullying Week)**



We held our whole school Friendship Week at the end of January. As part of our Friendship Week students took part in a range of activities including Circle Time, friendship themed Literacy and Arts and crafts. We wore odd socks on the Friday to celebrate that we are all unique and different but we are all connected as friends.

We held an iNet Safety Talk for Parents facilitated by Ger Brick who gave practical information and guidance for parents on keeping children safe while online.

### **BLAST Initiative**



We were delighted to have Eliya Lavine, who is an outdoor teaching and learning expert, working on some very interesting projects with our

Senior Infants. Eliya and the Senior Infants put the new outdoor classroom space to great use. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to work with a professional artist on unique projects.

### **Catholic Schools Week and St. Brigid's Day**



As a whole school we marked Catholic Schools Week through prayer, activities and marking Grandparents Day through arts and crafts. We also celebrated St.

Brigid's Day. We made St. Brigid's Day crosses and we held a whole school mindfulness activity.

### **Healthy Food Made Easy Cookery Course**



Healthy Food Made Easy is a six-week cookery course which was held on Thursday mornings in Rowlagh Community Centre. This highly interactive course gave opportunities to develop household healthy cooking plans on a budget, healthy eating tips, and cooking of a weekly recipe. Each participant received a cook book resource. This course offered a chance to chat and learn in a fun, relaxed environment. Well done to all the parents who engaged with this course.

### **Transitions Across the School**

In September by welcoming the parents of our current Junior Infants to a small group coffee morning with Meabh and Maura in the Parents Room. This was a great opportunity for parents to visit the school and ask any questions. We had settling in meetings at the end of term one where class teachers, Meabh and Maura were able to share information about teaching and learning in Junior Infants and offer advice for supporting your child's learning journey at home.

The month of June is a busy month for transitions. Our current 2<sup>nd</sup> class students visited the Senior School where they met Ms. Bower the HSCL in the Senior School and had a tour of the corridors, classrooms, yard and PE hall. Our current 2<sup>nd</sup> class parents were invited to a transition coffee morning in the Senior School. Many thanks to all of those who attended.

We welcomed our incoming Junior Infants this month too. They will join us in Junior Infants when school re-opens on Monday the 29<sup>th</sup> of August. The children saw the PE hall and their classroom and received a welcome pack and preparation for school at St. Mary's booklet. Thanks to the library who provided us with a 'My Little Library' bag of books for the incoming students.

### **Pothole Trip for Parents**



On the 28<sup>th</sup> of April a group of parents visited the Phoenix Park on a walking trip. Thanks to Ian from the Sports Partnership who provided us with a pack of fitness materials, information and who funded the transport for this trip.

The walk around the park was enjoyed by all and was followed by a light lunch in the Phoenix Park Cafe.

### **Links with the Local Community**



friendships with peers.

The local Men's Shed constructed two buddy benches for our newly developed garden. These buddy benches bring a splash of colour to our garden but also provide a space for students to build



school to present the bird houses to us with their students.

The students of St. Kevin's Secondary School who designed and created wooden bird houses for our garden space. Thanks to Deirdre and Darach, the teachers from St. Kevin's, who came to the

### **Roots of Empathy**



Méabh is a trained Roots of Empathy facilitator and rolled this programme out this year with Ms. Naughton's Junior Infant Class. This is an evidence-based programme that has shown a significant effect in reducing levels of aggression

among primary school children while raising social and emotional competence and increasing empathy resulting in more respectful and caring relationships. At the heart of the programme is a volunteer parent and infant who visit the classroom. The baby is the 'tiny teacher' who helps the children to identify and reflect on their feelings and the feelings of others. A huge thank you to Sandra and baby Chidera for volunteering.

### **School Website**

<https://www.stmarysjns.ie>



Last year we saw St Mary's JNS launch our brand new website. The site is very user friendly and filled with useful information and up to date news. Check it out to see what's happening.



## Creative Schools Initiative



Our school got the opportunity to participate in the Creative Schools programme 2020-22 through the Arts Council of Ireland. This initiative aims to put the arts and creativity at the heart of children's and young people's lives. Over the last two

years we worked with our Creative Associate, Dr. Clodagh Emoe (Artist and Lecturer at IADT). Clodagh sought enhanced Arts Council support and funding and thus created our Classroom in the Sun collaborative project. She connected us with ecologists, botanists, horticulturists, designers and artists and the children took part in trips to IMMA, the Walled Garden in the Phoenix Park and the National Botanical Gardens.



Horticulturist Joan Power facilitated active outdoor workshops for our children, staff, parents and community members. We had the professional services of

bespoke carpenter Barry Rogerson to construct our 'greenhouse' and Paul Mahon filmmaker and visual artist to document our incredible journey. We even had a visit from RTE's Nationwide for a sneak peak into the wonderful work the children were doing in the garden! We officially opened our Classroom in the Sun on June 2nd 2022.

*Check out our website under Creative Schools to see what the children got up to!*

## Green Schools



Thanks to Ms Naughter who set up our Green School Committee. They have organised many excellent initiatives to date such as the Clothes Donation drive which

raised money to aid those in Ukraine. The children also

took part in the Recycled Art Competition with €130 euro raised for Lauralynn.

## Maths Week



Maths Week took place in October this year. The children enjoyed daily activities in school and on the school grounds. They also took part in at home activities and using the environment to spot every day Maths.

## School Tours



It was great for the children to be able to go out on School Tours again this year. The Junior Infants and First Class went to Newbridge Farm.

Senior Infants went to the Zoo and Second Class went to Sea Life in Bray. The children had a great time!

## Bouncy Castle



The children had a great surprise of a bouncy castle in the school this week. They really enjoyed all the fun!

## Athletics



The children experienced different methods of running and relay team races using all sorts of equipment

during their Athletics training sessions this term. The sessions were delivered in partnership with Athletics Ireland and South County Dublin Sports Partnership.

## Literacy and Numeracy

Children received books from North Clondalkin Library this year and accessed the wide variety of books available in the school library. Children read a wide range of books and wrote in different styles and for

different audiences. Teachers follow the Jolly Phonics, First Steps Reading and First Steps Writing programmes.

We have an exciting oral language programme through Irish called Bua na Cainte. We are engaged in Aistear to encourage learning through play. Staff will continue training on the *New Language Curriculum in September*.

## Music Generation



Music Generation, a co-funded project between South Dublin County Council and schools took place in Junior and Senior Infants this year at St. Mary's JNS. The children

really enjoyed their lessons with Laura throughout the year! They showcased their talents at the opening of our Classroom in the Sun.

## Active Week



The children took part in a Wellness and Active Week this month. The children enjoyed lots of different activities throughout the week and even a visit from the ice cream van! The

children enjoyed taking part in activities in the school yard throughout the day and we had races on Friday. The children were great supporters of their classmates. Well done to all!

## Seachtain na Gaeilge



Bhí Seachtain na Gaeilge againn i mí Márta. We had Seachtain na Gaeilge in March. Children in all classes enjoyed a wonderful two weeks of caint, comhrá agus

ceoil. We had a parade, led by Garda Tom, and concert to celebrate. It was great to have the whole school together enjoying the celebration, dressed in green and performing as Gaeilge. The wonderful headbands and flags made in classes showed how creative the children are. Maith Sibh!

## Computers & ICT

The school brings IT into the classroom with a variety of interactive technology including 'BeeBots', computers, and iPads. We have a range of software for educational use. There is an interactive whiteboard in every classroom. Children right across the school use iPads as part of learning activities and in class station activities. Under the government Digital Strategy for Schools ICT grant funding, we were able to update our school Wi-Fi system with all classrooms now accessing internet services. We envisage increased opportunities for children to engage with ICT in the coming school year. Teachers and parents communicate using the Aladdin Connect App. We regularly update our school webpage and share school e-mail addresses with parents.

## Wellbeing & Amber Flag



We celebrated 'Wellbeing Week' in the month of June. Students engaged in daily wellbeing activities. We continued to work on to keep our Pieta House Amber Flag, an initiative which aims to promote positive mental health in schools. Wellbeing week was thoroughly enjoyed by all 😊

## Attendance and Punctuality

A special programme is in place to support children and families around attendance.

The average attendance so far this year is 84.6%. This is lower than we would normally have but it is good considering we were still in a pandemic which required pupils to isolate. I would like to thank all the families of St. Mary's JNS for showing such care and consideration to each other and ensuring not to send children into school if unwell.

Hopefully next academic year brings new hope and we can improve on this next year with parents' help. A sincere thanks to all parents and children who support our efforts to improve attendance. Don't forget that our children, because of their age, depend on parents to get them to school.

## Student of the Week

In continuing to promote and encourage Wellbeing at St. Mary's, we remind the children each week how well they are doing. Ms. Hogan and SNA Claire hold Student of the week each Friday. Claire ensures each week's winners are proudly displayed outside Miriam's office for all to see and each child receives their photo to bring home after this week. The children really enjoy the time they spend in the Nurture Room decorating their certificates.

## Standardised Tests & Learner Experiences

**Standardised Tests** have been completed and results have been reviewed by teachers. The results are also presented to the Board of Management. Summer reports give children's **STEN** scores in reading and numeracy.

Parents can speak with the class teacher about their child's results. We are happy to report that the children performed really well considering all the disruptions to school days throughout the pandemic. Huge credit goes to parents also for linking in with teachers throughout school closures.

### **Learner Experiences**

Team teaching, station teaching and paired reading have helped to greatly improve the quality of independent writing and reading. All children really enjoy reading and writing and experiencing success.

The teachers would like to thank parents for supporting children by listening to their reading, and encouraging reading at home.

## Learning Support and Special Educational Needs

The school follows 'The Continuum of Support' Model. This has three stages.

Stage 1 is where the teacher or parent sees that a child is having some difficulties. They meet to discuss these and put a plan in place.

Stage 2 the concern is referred to a Learning Support Teacher who offers advice or support.

Stage 3 is where the child is referred to outside professionals for assessment e.g. for speech and language etc.

We have been very successful in identifying needs at an early stage and putting support structures in place. Parents have a very important role to play and should discuss any concerns with the class teacher, home school teacher or principal.

### **Reading & Maths Recovery**

Reading Recovery is an intensive programme which runs for about 18 weeks. It provides children with a great opportunity for 1:1 support with reading. If you have concerns about your child's reading please speak with his/her teacher.

The Maths Recovery programme provides intensive support to individuals, small groups and whole classes in Maths. If you are concerned about your child's Maths speak to the class teacher.

Teachers engage in 'team teaching' which means smaller groups for Maths and English.

### **Speech & Language Service**

If you have concerns about your child's speech you should consider the following:

Can your friends or extended family members easily understand what your child is saying? If not you should seek advice.

Don't forget the importance of Reading for developing a child's language. In books children can learn about wizards, trolls, big bad wolves etc. i.e. things that they hopefully won't meet around Rowlagh!!!

### **Delivering Equality in Schools: (DEIS):**

Our school is part of the DEIS Programme. This supports smaller classes, school lunches, after school clubs, tours and trips, summer camps, in-school and after school activities. We try to ensure that all the children benefit as much as possible. This programme also ensures we have extra learning support staff and special posts such as Home School and Support Teacher.



### **Medical / Care needs**

If your child has Medical/Care needs e.g. diabetes, arthritis, anaphylactic shock, please inform your child's teacher and the school before the child returns to school in September.

### **Nurture Room**



We introduced a Nurture Room into the school this year. This has been an exciting new addition to our school. The Nurture Room enables the school to help:

- children in the transition back to school.
- support pupils who need to 'settle to learn'.
- support 'at risk' children.
- Teachers and SNAs who want to adopt a more nurturing approach while working with children who have social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, attachment difficulties, low self-confidence, low self-esteem, low resilience, self-regulation and/or self-expression difficulties.

### **You might like to know:**

- Staff meetings take place outside of school times under the Croke Park Agreement.
- We have increased the amount of time spent on Literacy and Numeracy activities.
- Team Teaching allows teachers work with small groups giving more individual attention.
- We meet parents of new infants in June & September.

### **New Infants enrolled**

We have 3 new Junior Infant classes starting in September.

School re-opens for children on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2022.

We will be in touch via Aladdin / website regarding start and finish times for class levels.

The school will follow department guidelines on this matter.

As you know the children will be getting their summer holidays on Wednesday, June 29<sup>th</sup>.

**The school will close at 12 o'clock on Wednesday June 29<sup>th</sup> and will re-open on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> of August.**

### **Message from the Principal, Ms Maura O'Shea**

*Dear Parents and Guardians,*

*Summer Holidays are here. After a successful year, filled with fun, learning and meaningful teaching, we made it to the summer holidays!!!!*

*It remained a difficult year with covid restrictions and your patience, understanding and cooperation have been greatly appreciated. So a big thank you to all of you. 😊*

*As you can see from all the activities that have taken place the staff of St Marys have done their utmost to ensure the children have sampled plenty activities in a safe way.*

*For this, I would like to thank the teachers, the SNA team and all the management and staff at St Mary's JNS for all their help in getting us all safely through the year.*

*A big thank you also to families at home for all their support and hard work in getting you here.*

*Finally a special thanks for every member of the school community in making more happy memories for the children of St. Mary's JNS.*

*To all the children, enjoy your Summer, get plenty of fresh air and don't forget to help out at home whenever you can.*

*Take care, stay safe and be kind,*

*Le gach dea-ghuí,  
Maura O'Shea*



We hope you and your families have a lovely summer.

***The Board of Management & Staff of***

***St. Mary's Junior School.***