

Dear Parents,

As we come to the end of another year, it is a good time to look back at the events that kept us busy and to acknowledge the work and commitment of all concerned.

Teaching & Learning.

Teaching and learning is the real business of our school, and certainly both of these were prioritised by everyone during the year. Well done to all the girls and boys who worked very hard, but also enjoyed spending time with their friends, playing games, singing, dancing and making memories. The excellent results in the standardised tests are an indication of the high standard of teaching and learning that is going on in the school and the teachers can be justly proud of the work of their pupils and their own dedication.

Sacraments

This was a very important year for pupils from 5th and 6th class who were confirmed by Bishop Nulty and for pupils from 2nd class who received the Sacraments of Penance and 1st Communion. We also celebrated our beginning of year Mass in September and a special Mass during Catholic Schools Week. Our celebration of Grandparents Day and the blessing of Grandparents during that week is a very enjoyable event in our school calendar.

Building Project.

Our building project has been completed and we are very happy to have an extra mainstream classroom and an extension to our staffroom. We were very honoured to welcome Bishop Nulty to our school to bless the new extension and to celebrate our End of Year/Graduation Mass on 28th June. Very soon, the rented cabin at the back of the school will be removed, and we will have extra play space for the junior classes. The children from Mrs. Nolan's class will be very happy to join their friends in their new classroom in the main school building.

Green Flag

We achieved our 5th Green flag for bio-diversity this year. Great credit is due to the children on the Green Schools Committee and to Mrs Sheppard who worked with them. Thank you to all who entered our Garden Competition. As usual, the standard was very high and it is wonderful to see families designing imaginative containers and plant displays. The pupils who entered the competition were presented with medals/trophies in recognition of their work. The overall winning entry was a joint effort from Aoife and Niall McGrath and Oliwia Romaniec. Well done to everyone!

Physical Activities.

As usual, there was a lot of emphasis placed on physical activities during the year. Thank you to the teachers who, in their own time, provided training in various games – Ms O' Brien and Ms O' Donoghue – basketball, Mrs Warren – soccer, Ms Hourigan – football and Mrs Sheppard – hurling and camogie. For a healthy lifestyle, physical activity is very important and hopefully the children will enjoy playing, running, jumping etc during the Summer and limit the time spent sitting, watching television or playing computer games. Pupils from the school participated in Cumann na mBunscoil leagues in football, hurling and camogie, the inter schools basketball league and the FAI soccer blitz. This year, they didn't progress to finals in their games, but participation is it's own reward – and a healthy lifestyle is more important than winning matches. Swimming lessons were enjoyed by all pupils from the ASD classes and by pupils from 1st to 6th class. Our WOW – Walk on Wednesday – continued this year and was enjoyed by all. Our Sports Day was a great success and we were blessed to have a lovely fine day. Thank you to Ms Hourigan who organises our Sports Day each year. Congratulations to Darragh Bolger who won the 6th class Boys Race, to Clodagh Hayden who won the 6th class Girls Race, to Sarah Kirwan who won the Mothers Race and PJ Dunne who

won the Fathers race. Well done and thank you to all the Parents who took part in the races. School tours were enjoyed by all and the high level of physical activity involved ensured tired happy children returned to Clonegal that night. Thanks to Ita, our basketball coach who worked with the various classes during the year and was here again to ensure our Basketball league was a great success. Thanks to Mrs Warren who organised our soccer league. GAA training was provided for the junior classes from September to November and was enjoyed by all. As the building works are now completed, it will be safe to return to Park and Stride in September.

Music and Drama.

All pupils enjoyed participating in “Music Generation Carlow” vocal classes during the year. The standard of singing was very high and the experience of choral singing to large audiences is a wonderful way to develop confidence. The Music Generation concert in Bagenalstown Church and the concert in our local Church were both very enjoyable events. The senior classes also participated in the Peace Proms in Dublin. A group of 12 pupils from the school, represented Carlow at an official event in the Convention Centre Dublin, on January 1st. The special Peace Proms concert, hosted by Heather Humphries TD, marked the beginning of the year of celebrations of the 1916 Rising. All children participated in our Christmas Concert, in St. Brigid's Hall Clonegal – performing to a packed hall on 3 occasions. Our school choir sings at all religious ceremonies and add to our celebrations of the sacraments. Children from 1st – 6th class continue to learn the recorder and children who learn to play other instruments are encouraged to perform at school events and celebrations.

Christmas.

Christmas is always a wonderful time in school and it is a pleasure to share the children's excitement. Their generosity is always amazing and again this year 113 shoeboxes were collected for the Hope Christmas Appeal. In addition we purchased 2 goats for Bóthar and the arrival of the goats was a highlight – especially when they “did a runner!” and escaped down the village. Santa was another welcome guest and everyone enjoyed our Santa walk down to the Castle. A very genuine thank you to Alexander and Claire who allow us to use their grounds for our Christmas Walk, our Halloween Walk and our Seachtain na Gaeilge walk. It is always wonderful to see the children dressing up for Halloween and Seachtain na Gaeilge and of course we all enjoyed our Ceili in the hall. Seachtain na Gaeilge provides a good opportunity to encourage the children to “bí ag caint as gaeilge sa chlós agus sa bhaile”

Tullow Show.

Congratulations to all the pupils who won prizes in the Tullow Show for art, handwriting poetry and essay writing. The school was presented with the best large school award. Well done to the teachers who helped and encouraged the pupils. We also had many prize winners in art competitions organised by the Bank of Ireland Tullow and the Credit Union Bunclody.

1916 Celebrations

Schools across the country celebrated the centenary of the 1916 rising and we were no exception. Congratulations to Ms O' Brien, Mrs Sheppard and Mrs Warren and their classes on their great success in the 1916 Project Competition organised by the Teachers Centre in Enniscorthy. It was a great achievement for them to win their categories. In the weeks preceding the Easter holidays, every classroom was a hive of activity as children wrote their own Proclamations, learned about the 1916 Rising, designed posters and sang songs related to that period in history. All this work was celebrated on Proclamation Day, when we raised the National Flag which had been presented to the school by personnel from the Army, read our proclamations, displayed projects and sang songs related to 1916.

Junior Entrepreneur Project.

Pupils from 5th and 6th class participated in the Junior Entrepreneur Project this year for the first time. They met the dragons, listened as a local business lady spoke to them about running your own business, invested in their own company, designed and made “Crazy Spoons”, produced a business plan, sold their produce, made a healthy profit and won an award for their Marketing Skills. It was an amazing experience for them and a really worthwhile activity. Thank you to our local business person Stephanie Stone, from Sha Roe, and Mary O' Rourke (School Secretary) and Bernie Foley from Maizetech who were very helpful and encouraging Dragons. Thank you to all who placed orders with the children and added to their profit.

Discover Primary Science and Maths Award.

We are very happy to have received a DPSM Award again this year, in recognition of our work in Maths and Science. Science Day is part of our application and is always a very exciting day in the school. It is wonderful to see the children doing their experiments and to hear them explaining their work to their Parents. They always sound very confident and sure of their knowledge. Our After Schools garden Club members worked very well in our school gardens and learned Geography, SPHE and Science in a very practical way. Following our recent building project, there is a lot of work to be done to return our front lawn and our herb and sensory garden to their former beauty, but it will be done eventually.

Library – Summer Reading Challenge.

Congratulations to the many children who completed the challenge last year. Please encourage your children to participate this year. If you haven't already joined the library please do so during the Summer. Reading extensively during the Summer is really beneficial to your children. The local libraries have a lovely selection of children's books and the library Challenge is an excellent way to encourage reading.

Congratulations.

Congratulations to Mrs O' Meara and her husband on the birth of their wonderful son during the year. We wish them lots of love and happiness and a good night's sleep! Thanks to Ms O' Donoghue who taught Mrs O' Meara's class during her absence and we wish her all the best in the future. We send our thanks too, to Mrs Mapolisa and Mrs Kavanagh, our part time Resource Teachers who have done great work during the year.

Retirement.

As you know, Mrs Paraskeva is retiring at the end of this school year. We thank her for her work in the school during her 7 years with us and we wish her good health, happiness and fun in her retirement.

Welcome

We welcome Mrs Cawley to our staff. She will join us in September and will teach 5th and 6th class. We will also welcome a new SNA to our staff after the Summer holidays. The appointment hasn't been made yet but will be done during the holidays.

Thank You.

A very sincere thank you to all who have contributed in any way to the effective running of the school during the year – to all the staff, teachers and SNAs, who have worked extremely hard to ensure your children receive the best education possible, to Mary our Secretary who always “keeps the show on the road” and is kind and helpful to everyone, to Helen who sings as she works and keeps the school clean and neat and to Gary and Billy who are always available when we need maintenance work taken care of. Thank you to the Parents Council,

especially Catherine, Siobhán and Teresa who work extremely hard on your behalf and are always helpful and considerate in their dealings with the school. They are very committed to helping us provide as many resources as possible for your children. Please support them in their work – they deserve your support. Thanks to the Board of Management for their support of the school and the staff. I want to say a personal thank you to all, for your support of me in my work as Principal of the school.

School Magazine

School Magazine will be on sale on Thursday - €5 per copy. Thank you to all those who collected advertising. Please support the school and encourage the children in their writing by purchasing the Magazine.

Holidays

School closes at 12.00 on Thursday. Re-opens on 31st August. Have a wonderful Summer, enjoying simple activities with your children. These are the memories that will last.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

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Anna Cosgrave