

St. Canice's Co-Ed. N.S. 2021/2022

The school year 2021/2022, despite the ever present Covid-19, saw many of the activities we have always enjoyed in school starting up again.

Management

From a management point of view, the in school management team (ISM) gained two new members, one to replace Ms Lowe and one a new appointment. More good news is that with the new schedule now published, the school will gain two more assistant principal posts this autumn.

We were also pleased that the pupil teacher ratio was decreased by one pupil per class for the 2022/2023 school year. Classes are gradually getting smaller, particularly in the junior end.

During 2021/2022, several policies were reviewed and redrafted. The Child Protection and Anti-bullying policies are reviewed annually. The BOM updated our Health and Safety statement and also ratified the updated Healthy Lunch, Critical incident, Intimate Care, School Tour, Dignity in the Workplace, Equality and Anti-Harassment and Protected Disclosures Policies.

School Self Evaluation (SSE)/ School Improvement Plan (SIP)

The year saw us continue with the language improvements we had set as targets. P.E. was taught in the main through Irish. Staff also engaged with the PDST in developing our planning and strategies for the teaching of language, both Irish and English.

Following our SSE review, we have decided to focus on the area of "Assessment" for 2022/2023 as a new three year cycle begins.

I.T.

We had purchased a set of Chrome books for classroom use and due to their popularity a second set was purchased. These have now replaced the laptops in the classrooms. The ASD classes now all have iPads for their own use.

Our original interactive whiteboards, purchased with the aid of the Parents' Association with funds raised from the Summer Fete, are reaching the end of their life span so a programme is in place to replace them on a phased basis and in line with moving to prefabs and then to new school.

Classes continued to use Google Classroom.

Congratulations to past pupil, Rohan Vargas, brother of Rory and Rionn, who won the World Gold Medal for Microsoft Word during the summer. Rohan recently completed his TY placement in our school.

Attendance

Unfortunately, attendance figures were down this year. This was unavoidable due to Covid restrictions and the requirement to be 48 hour symptom free in order to return to school.

We usually would have approx 60 children with full attendance. This year there were less than 10.

Our attendance rate is usually 96-97% however this dipped to 88.8% in December and 87.9% in January.

This resulted in an unprecedented amount of children reaching 20 or more days absence with the obligatory requirement to submit these figures on the attendance returns. This is standard procedure but if there is a particular concern about your child's attendance you will be contacted to discuss the concern.

Hopefully conditions will be better this year and pupils will be back to full or almost full attendance once again.

Comenius/ Erasmus

For the past 20 years approx, we have been involved in the European partnership Comenius, now know as Erasmus project. This involves schools from different countries around Europe setting up and working on projects together. There has been very limited travel in our current round but in May, teachers from schools in Italy, Greece, Turkey and Poland visited our school to co-ordination the next two years of activities and to see the school in action. The project will resume in the autumn.

SPORTS

On the sports front, most of our usual activities had resumed by the end of the year. As regards Gaelic football, the season passed without external competition but we had 4th, 5th and 6th class leagues and 48 girls participated in the LGFA blitz.

The hurling and Camogie season was particularly successful with 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class internal leagues, two teams entered in the 4th class league and two teams each also in the schools' hurling and Camogie championships. We reached 3 county finals and won both girls and boys Roinn A finals.

Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd were delighted to start their GAA training with the new GPO Philly Campion. This is scheduled to continue this year.

Rugby training also resumed with our ever popular Leinster coach Noel.

Catherine returned for 1st, 3rd and 5th class gymnastics and whole heartedly joined in our Gymnastics as Gaeilge as part of our language development targets.

2nd to 6th classes returned to swimming and we had our own Junior and Senior School Galas. Our teams then competed in the Watershed interschool's gala. ASD classes joined with mainstream and also had their own swimming sessions.

4th class cycle safely lessons were held and in a new departure, both Junior and Senior infants had cycle lessons courtesy of Loreto TY students under Caitriona and Roisin from Cycle Kilkenny.

Another new and very popular departure this year was the Triathlon training in the form of running and cycling.

Also new were the cricket training sessions for 4th and 6th class. 6th class then went to Castle Blunden for a cricket blitz.

Unfortunately, the Inter Schools Cross Country was cancelled on the origin date and as we had our own Sports Day in Scanlon Park on the rearranged date our pupils were unable to compete.

Our Sports Day for 3rd -6th saw over 300 medals being won by various pupils. The Junior classes held their own sports in James Park.

We had great past pupil representation on Kilkenny teams this year. Aoife Prendergast captained the Kilkenny Senior Camogie team to All Ireland victory with Asha McHardy also on the panel. Near neighbour, Padraic Moylan captained the u 20 hurlers to All Ireland Victory also. He was joined by Harry Shine, Niall Rowe, Timmy Clifford and Cillian Hackett . Pupils were delighted to have the trophy brought to the school in June. The Kilkenny Minor Camogie team was captained to the semi final stage by Amy Clifford and the minor hurlers by Tom Mc Phillips who was joined by Mikey Stynes and Evan Murphy. Thanks to all of the past pupils who visited the school with trophies or to present medals. It means a lot to the upcoming stars.

With the children involved in all this activity, it was no wonder that the school applied for Active Flag status. The year's activities were added to by an Active School week in June. We hope to be judged and awarded the Active Flag in the next couple of months.

MUSIC

Everyone was delighted to be able to resume singing in class and some classes staged end of year plays.

Choir also resumed and a wonderful recital showcased the talents and hard work of the choir. This will continue next year and hopefully 5th class will participate in the National Children's Choir as it gets back on the road.

A limited number of music lessons resumed and we look forward to an even greater number from September onwards particularly as this is the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Instrumental Music Programme.

The Sacraments

We celebrated Confirmation, First Confession and First Communion in our own church and with greater family numbers present this year. We had our first school mass in over two years in the church in June for all pupils. 6th and 2nd class had attended the parish 9.10am mass during the year when restrictions allowed.

Other Activities

I could write all night about all the activities that enrich the life of the school but I will just mention them here and apologies if I leave out anything.

5th class returned to debating this year and also took part in Science Blast again.

Science Blast was the last pre Covid trip In March 2020 when 3rd and 5th class went to the RDS with their projects. The online version was still good but hopefully it will be up and running in person again next year again.

Forest School was attended by 4th class who plan to attend this year also.

Knitting Together project was launched with an RTE 2 appearance by Ms O'Brien's class. This class will continue this project this autumn.

RTE, Morning Ireland also visited during the winter months to get a flavour of how schools were coping with the open windows and cold weather. I think we were a bit too resilient!

Kilkenny Fire Station crew paid their annual visit to talk about fire safety.

Parent and author, Eleanor Bolt, who had also run the mini marathon to raise funds for the ASD classes, visited the Junior classes to read from her "Popper Monster" book.

3rd class participated in the "Say Yes to Languages" programme and had 6 weeks of French lessons.

All classes enjoyed the Halloween Parade up and down the front of the school.

Christmas celebrations included our Carol Service, online again, the Orchestra Breakfast and a wonderful online Panto from the Helix.

The Hamper Collection added to the Charity Collections as outlined in June.

TY students from Kilkenny College delivered a very useful set of Online Safety lessons to 1st-4th classes.

The President of the INTO visited several classes.

Student Council was launched and will continue to have a voice into the new year.

6th class Chess league resumed.

School tours by bus resumed for many classes this June.

Parents' Association

In person meetings resumed towards the end of the year and a very successful online talk by Shane Martin was enjoyed by many parents. P.A. assisted with the Junior Infant Induction Day and the 6th class Graduation and had significant input into policy reviews. Second-hand Uniform sales provide great value for parents.

We also saw the introduction of the new school tracksuit which seems to be a big hit.

Staff

Our staff numbers remain constant at 39 teachers, 11 SNAs, 1 secretary, 1 caretaker, 4 bus escorts, 4 cleaners and 2 Access to Employment part time employees.

Whilst you will probably have noticed that I didn't attach any names to the various activities and achievements, I would like to sincerely thank our full staff for their dedication, commitment, good humour and hard work. We have a fantastic staff that makes the school a happy, vibrant place for one and all.

On that note, I take my leave and wish you all the best for the future. I will always be interested in the comings and goings of St. Canice's Co-Ed and I wish you and your children many happy years to come.

Slán agaibh!