



IMPORTANT DATES

Thursday 21st December

Christmas Concert for Junior Infants in the school hall

Friday 22nd December

School closes half day at 12.00 for Christmas holidays

Monday 8th January

School re-opens after holidays

Wednesday 24th January

Whole school professional development day. School closed to pupils.

Mon 12th – Fri 16th February

School closed for Feb mid term

Monday 19th March

School closed for Bank Hol

Friday 23rd March

School closes at 12.00 for Easter and re-opens on 9th April.

Friday 27th April

Confirmation

Saturday 5th May

First Holy Communion

BOOK FAIR

The annual Book Fair co-ordinated by Ms T Nugent, was held in Clarecastle NS from Nov 30th to Dec 4th. The school hall was a hive of activity over the few days as pupils pored over the wide selection of books on offer. It was great to see the genuine interest pupils showed in books and reading, an interest that will benefit all pupils into the future.



The significant sales during the Book Fair means that Clarecastle National School will receive free resources and book rewards from the book company Scholastic that runs the Fair. CCNS would like to thank parents and pupils for their tremendous support of the event.

WE ARE WRITERS

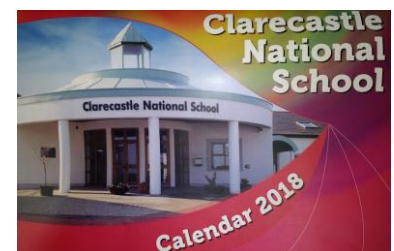
Pupils from 4th – 6th Classes were busy during September/October writing stories and poems which have been compiled into their very own book "We are Writers". Orders for the book were taken at the Book Fair and copies should arrive in the school in time for Christmas. There will be a limited number of copies

still available to purchase from the school office. (€8 per copy)

This is the second time CCNS has undertaken this initiative which offers a unique opportunity for children to see their writing published in a real book. It is also great way to enthuse and excite any child about writing. The School and its pupils also benefit from book rewards that the publishers issue the school based on sales. Everyone is looking forward to seeing the finished product!

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The School and Parents Association have produced the new edition of the school calendar for 2018. It went on sale at the Christmas concerts on 13th, 14th December and will be sold at the Junior Infant concert this Thursday 21st December. These are a nice keepsake for pupils and a useful wall calendar for parents. Copies are also available in the school office. They cost €10 for one, €15 for two and €20 for three calendars.



The Parents Association would like to thank all the sponsors who have advertised in the calendar. Their help is very

much appreciated. We would encourage parents where possible to support the businesses that have sponsored the school calendar.

INTEL MINI-SCIENTIST COMPETITION

Over 100 pupils from 4th – 6th Classes took part in the Intel Mini-Scientist competition this year. The aim behind the Mini-Scientist competition is to have fun while getting some hands on experience of science and technology.

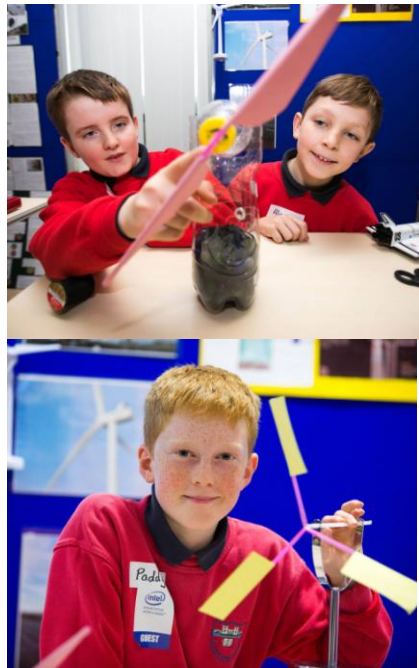


Groups and individuals had to create a science or technology project which was of interest to them. Pupils showcased their work to a team of judges from Intel at an exhibition in the school on 23rd November. The array and standard of projects was very impressive. The ideas included everything from chemical reactions to studies as to what creates power, what floats, how electricity works, how to make a rainbow, how the solar system works and many more.

Pupils benefited hugely from the experience of working in teams to research their projects and presenting their ideas to the judges and visiting parents. Every participating pupil got a lovely bag of goodies for taking part which made their efforts all the more worthwhile.

Fifth Class pupils Darragh O'Callaghan, Paddy Phelan and Alex Borrmann were chosen by the judges to represent CCNS in the regional finals in Intel in Shannon. Their project looked at

how wind generates power. Well done to the boys and all who took part in the Mini Scientist. Thank you to Carmel Duff for co-ordinating the project and the class teachers for their help and support.



SCHOOL MAINTENANCE FUND

CCNS would like to thank all families that contributed to the School Maintenance Fund. It is an important source of income for the school. Those that contribute receive full 24 hour Pupil Personal Accident insurance up to 31 August 2018. Pupils also receive the school handwriting copies and homework diary. The fund also contributes towards the cost of photocopying, art supplies, transport to and from some school events and various other school activities.

ALADDIN

This year the school extended the features of its database Aladdin to include the Parent Portal. The aim of this was to improve communication with

parents and teachers. The school would welcome any feedback that parents might have on the system and how it is working for you.



CCNS intends to roll out electronic payments via Aladdin in September 2018. This will mean that all payments made to the school will be done by electronic means. This will make accounting within the school easier and hopefully will make things simpler for parents also.

SAFETY GUARDS

As a safety measure, the school is installing finger guards on all classroom doors from Junior Infants to Second Class over the Christmas break.

STAY SAFE PROGRAMME

A personal safety education programme called Stay Safe will commence in all classes in January. This programme is part of the Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum which all primary schools are required to implement. Further details will be issued to you before it begins.

AN HOUR WITH MATT GRIFFIN

On 21st November the 6th class children went to Ennis library to meet our local author Matt Griffin. Born in County Meath, Matt now writes and illustrates in Clarecastle. He describes himself as being a dark illustrator, so even when he tries his best to draw friendly and

happy drawings they usually turn out creepy and evil. He told us that he was absolutely obsessed with drawing and sketching from a young age, and that usually he could think up whole stories just from one illustration. He read us an excerpt from a trilogy of books he has written and illustrated. You could tell he was quite passionate about his work.

Then he drew a picture for us of a character, while we pitched in ideas as to what he might look like. This is the result – Pa Jingle Bob.



It is clear from his illustrations that Matt is a talented guy. Afterwards he signed a few autographs and we left with our spirits lifted. We were all dying to read his books after that day!

by Aron Moore, 6th Class

ART PROJECT

Following a training course that Ms Howard and Ms McCannon undertook during the summer in the Clare Education Centre, Clarecastle NS was awarded 20 hours of support by an artist to work with pupils on an art project.

We all have great fun with Ana. She is really nice and amazing at art! She teaches us how to use charcoal, pastels and paints. She also teaches us how to use them properly!

On the first week we used charcoal and it was amazing. She taught us how to make 2-D shapes into 3-D shapes. It was so cool! At the end she let us try whatever we wanted and because of Ana, everyone's was amazing!

The next week we made an amazing and very cool pumpkin patch. All of them looked fantastic. Ana was really nice and helped out anyone in need. In the end it turned out perfect.



Then we started on the puzzle pieces, First we had to sand them and then put on glue to prepare them. Then we all painted them

We learned lots of different artistic techniques and had lots of fun with Ana. We are looking forward to seeing what the final project looks like in the end.

by Shaina Browne, 5th Class

PLEASE SIR, CAN I HAVE SOME MORE!



On 28th November 2017 my class and I went to the Oliver musical in the Coláiste and it was brilliant. There were loads of songs including “Food Glorious Food”, “Everything, anything for You” and “You gotta pick a pocket or two” with amazing instruments like the double bass, piano, violins and drums. My favourite character was Fagan because he was really mischievous and funny. The other main characters were Oliver, Nancy, Bill Sykes and Mr Bumble. The background and scenery were very realistic because they made you feel like you were in Victorian times because there was mist and gritty walls as background scenes. The orphanage was very good and it showed the tables and the gruel as well as how mean the adults were. The lighting and costumes helped set the atmosphere because they had rages, dresses, dirt on their faces, hats, cloaks and beards. When the play ended all the actors got a standing ovation and everyone clapped. I went home that day very happy.

by Alex Sullivan, 6th Class

CROSS COUNTRY RUNNING

Four pupils represented Clarecastle National School in the Clare County Schools finals

in Lees Road. They proudly brought back medals for their great efforts. Well done Aimée, Hayley, Toby and Cian.



SWIMMING

Aoibhínn Cullen, Ellen McEnery and Nancy Collins competed on behalf of Clarecastle National School for the Munster inter-schools competition on 4th November. Aoibhínn came 13th in the butterfly competition and 15th in the back crawl. She has qualified for the Schools All Ireland Swimming competition which will take place on February 18th in Dublin. Ellen McEnery came 18th in the backcrawl and 15th in the breast stroke. Nancy Collins came 25th in the breast stroke and 18th in the back crawl. Well done to all three swimmers! What an achievement!

CLARECASTLE PARENTS ASSOCIATION

The Parents Association held its AGM in November and elected a new Committee for 2017/18. They are:

Chair: Position unfilled
 Vice-Chair: Ruth Sheehan
 Secretary: Sue Eyles
 Treasurer: Claire McEnery

Clarecastle NS continues to be very grateful for the active and progressive Parents Association that we have in our school. Thanks to the continued efforts of parents, we can provide additional resources to benefit all pupils in the school.

CASH FOR CLOBBER

The first Cash for Clobber collection of the school year was organised by the Parents Association after the Halloween break. The support of parents and the community as a whole was once again phenomenal with a whopping 6.14 tonnes of Clobber collected. This brought in over €3000 for the school. The school would like to thank everyone who helped with the organisation of the event and those who contributed. It was such a worthwhile fundraiser.

FUNDRAISING MONIES WELL SPENT

This year the Parents Association has invested much of its hard-earned fundraising funds from the past number of years into equipment for the school.

NEW PROJECTORS

The final six of the old XE40 projectors which had been in-situ since 2007 were replaced with modern equipment. All classrooms now have up-to-date projectors.

PM READERS

As part of the school's continued stride to improve literacy among all pupils, the Parents Association has invested €13,000 in PM Readers. These are recognised worldwide as the number one literacy series to help build a balanced reader. They are meticulously levelled from the beginner through to the more competent reader and link

reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

A huge thank you must go to the parents who volunteered their time to cover all the PM readers. It was a huge task at this busy time of year. Your efforts are very much appreciated.



In conjunction with this investment by the Parents Association, the Board of Management has put a further €3,000 towards additional literacy materials for the senior end of the school. These will complement the PM Reading scheme.

PARENT CHARTER FOR THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

In his address to the Parents Association AGM, Martin Moloney raised an issue of grave concern regarding the use of technology and social media among pupils in CCNS and the negative effects some of the content has had on pupils themselves and on their fellow classmates. While the technology is used in the main outside school, the effects are very much seen within the school. There has been clear evidence of the negative impact on self-esteem, stress and anxiety, fatigue and in some cases a deterioration in academic performance.



A survey was carried out among pupils in 4th-6th class which

showed that a large percentage of this age group had social media accounts on apps intended for children with a minimum age of 13 years. Others had access to apps intended for those aged 17+.

As a result of lengthy discussion with parents, it was agreed that in the New Year the school and parents would work on a charter for social media use. The school will work with Dr Maureen Griffin, Clinical Psychologist and specialist in the area of internet safety for children. Maureen has given talks to children and parents in the school. She has also helped other schools develop charters which give schools, pupils and parents concrete guidelines on what is and is not acceptable and appropriate use of the internet for children of primary school age.

Following this AGM, in recognition of the importance of this issue and the continued contribution that parents make to the school, the Board of Management agreed to fully fund the drafting of this Charter.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT FUNDS NEW COMPUTERS



In addition to investment in new literacy material this term, the Board of Management has invested €5,600 in ten new computers for the library. These will replace older machines that were purchased when the school

opened in 2007 and which are now no longer fit for purpose.

PARKING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL



CCNS asks all parents parking within the vicinity of the school to please be conscious of residents in the area and not to block entrances to their properties. We ask everyone to please remain courteous to our neighbours at all times.

VISIT TO THE DAYCARE CENTRE

Ms O'Connor and Ms Darcy worked with the Trad Group and a group of Irish dancers from the school and brought them to the Daycare Centre on 11th December. There they entertained a large group of clients as part of their Christmas celebrations. Children and adults had a great morning of fun.

CHRISTMAS CHILDREN'S MASS



Some of the children preparing for First Holy Communion on 5th May next year will be participating in the Children's Christmas Mass at 5 p.m. on

Christmas Eve in Clarecastle. Families with small children are welcome to attend this Mass.

APPLICATIONS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

Sixth class pupils will be making applications for secondary schools at this time. The deadline for applications for Ennis schools is Friday 26th January at 4 p.m. Schools outside Ennis may have different arrangements. Application forms can be downloaded on each school's website.



THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT WOULD LIKE TO THANK STAFF FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT AND TO PARENTS FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT.

WISHING YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY AND PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS AND BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR.



SCHOOL RE-OPENS ON MONDAY 8TH JANUARY