



From the Principal's Desk

After a very busy year last year, with the celebration of our 25th anniversary and the 1916 commemoration, we thought that the 2016/2017 school year might be a quiet one. However, early in the year we became aware of the Blue Star Programme for schools and thought that it might be a good project to involve ourselves with, given that it was very curriculum focused yet had a whole school and project based aspect which suits our way of learning. We were very soon fully immersed in the programme, with every class taking an aspect that suited them, and gradually a fabulous, whole school project began to emerge. As the year progressed we moved on from the classroom based curriculum work to broadening our learning by inviting a TD, a European Ambassador and an MEP to our school to tell us about their work. Two members of the Blue Star Programme visited the school to assess our work and after the completion of the final report we were delighted to receive a European Union flag for our school along with an official certificate of achievement signed by the Minister of State for European Affairs, Data Protection and EU Digital Single Market, Dara Murphy TD. These awards will be proudly displayed to mark this great achievement.

Achievements and thanks

As always, there has been a whole range of individual and group achievements throughout the year, and I would like to congratulate the children for their brilliant efforts, their great team spirit, their kindness and support of each other during the year. Well done to all the student committees who excelled in their work for the school, always trying to find ways to extend their role for the improvement of the school experience for the students. Thank you to all the parents who gave their support in many different ways, giving up their time for the good of all the children. This year in particular it was great to see parents and staff join together in social events, which doubled up as fund-raisers, and we hope to see more such events next year. Thanks also to those who couldn't take part in the events but who contributed so generously in financial terms to our fund-raising efforts. Thank you to RETNS Board of Management for their tremendous support of the school during the year. Board members have worked tirelessly to ensure that all members of the school community are safe in school and that all management aspects of the school are carried out effectively. I would like to thank each of them for their dedication and commitment and for the many long nights spent on making the best decisions for the good of the school. Thank you to the PA who, as always, have supported the work of the school and ensured maximum parental input when required. As Sharon, the PA chair, moves on from RETNS, I would like to pay particular tribute to the amazing support which she has given us during the past eight years, always responding immediately to any requests for parental help, organising teams of people to make coffee, help out in classrooms, at whole school events. In fact, whenever we needed parental support Sharon just had to be asked and it was supplied. The work of the staff is much enhanced by the amazing support given by parents and Sharon has been pivotal to organising that support. I wish Sharon well as herself and Ciara move on from our school. I would also like to thank all those families who are now leaving the school who have given us so much time and effort during their years in RETNS and wish them and their children the best of luck in the future.

I would like to say goodbye and thank you to our fabulous group of sixth class students. They have contributed so much to the school during their time with us, and it has been a pleasure to watch them grow and mature into the young people that they are today, full of confidence and vitality, ready to take on the next part of their educational journey.

As we reflect on another great year in RETNS, none of it would be possible without the unwavering dedication of the staff team- our great stalwarts, Dennis our caretaker, Carol in the office, classroom assistant Liz and Sarah, our dedicated library volunteer and enrolment officer; our brilliant team of SNAs and our fantastic teachers. They all make up the great team that works as one for the good of all the children in our care, and it is due to the commitment and dedication of each member of this team that we have a school of which to be proud.

Retirements

Sadly, this year we are losing two of our long-standing, wonderful colleagues, Geralyn and Margaret, who have decided to retire from teaching at the end of the school year. Geralyn, as Deputy Principal and first member of teaching staff appointed to the school in 1990, has been known and loved by countless generations of children, parents and grandparents and her unique contribution to building our school into the great school it is today can never be fully acknowledged. She has dedicated her working life to the children of RETNS and has inspired countless numbers of children by the total generosity of time and effort which she has given to every young member of our school. To the staff also, Geralyn has been mentor, motivator, confidante, support and friend, unendingly generous with her time and availability to colleagues, and we will all miss her calm, yet so strong, presence in RETNS.

Margaret joined RETNS in 1999 and has taught almost every age group during her time in the school. Margaret has been an exceptionally strong classroom teacher in RETNS, with a wealth of experience that will be hard to replace, but it is the children's description of Margaret that really sums up this wonderful teacher. All children who were asked to describe Margaret said first of all that she is 'very kind' and then said she is 'very fair' and 'very helpful' and that indeed has been Margaret's hallmark in her dealings with children, always taking so much time to discuss, direct, explain and help children assess their behaviour to enable them to be balanced, fair and considerate in their dealings with each other. Margaret is also such a special member of the staff team and her gentle, supportive presence will be so missed by us all. Geralyn and Margaret have much in common and are different in many ways, but they have been similar in their total dedication and commitment to generations of children who have come through RETNS. We all wish them both a wonderful retirement, with lots of time to pursue other interests and enjoy time with loved ones. I know that they will come back and visit often.

New appointment

Despite the obvious space that will be left on our staff with the departure of Geralyn and Margaret, the school has a great strong team with lots of ideas for developing the school into the future. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome onto the RETNS staff, Aileen Cronin, who has secured one of the permanent positions which have become available. Aileen was instrumental to the achievement of the European Blue Flag this year, and will be a great asset to our staff team. I would also like to congratulate Anna O'Herlihy on her appointment as Deputy Principal.

Due to a delay in schools receiving Department sanction to advertise further posts, the recruitment process will continue into the summer.

To The Future

In every school there is always room for improvement and an RETNS school development committee is now in place to have a look at where we need to go as a school and what improvements we need to make. As we work together into the future, staff, parents and children will continue to build a school in which children achieve their best selves, staff are happy and motivated in their work and parents are encouraged to get involved where their own time and skills permit, to enhance the learning experience for all the children.

As the school year 2016/2017 draws to a close I would like to wish all children, staff and families a very enjoyable and restful summer holiday and look forward to seeing everyone back refreshed on Thursday, August 31st.

Mary

Teacher Allocations 2017/2018

J1 – Katie Doyle

SI – Brian Ramberg

1st Class – Rebecca Errity

2nd Class – Patricia McManus

3rd Class – Aileen Cronin

4th Class – TBC

5th Class – Anna O’Herlihy

6th Class – Ronan Barrett

Have a safe and fun-filled Summer!!



Dab a dab a doo

From Senior Infants !!

Message from the Chairperson

Another year has passed in the life of RETNS and, as in all years, things change. There are goodbyes and thank yous. We say farewell to GERALYN and MARGARET with more fondness than we can truly express, wishing them every happiness in retirement. They are moving on, but their shadows will continue to fall upon our school for years to come. We say goodbye and thank you too to Sharon, for her years of enthusiastic stewardship of the Parents Association. Thank yous should be extended also to so many who have given their time, effort and money to help RETNS in so many different ways this year. Whatever size the individual contributions, in combination they are mighty. We have raised thousands to improve our school, and will have to do more again next year. But not yet; enjoy the summer.

“Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under the trees on a summer’s day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky is by no means a waste of time.” – John Lubbock (1834-1913).

Pete Lunn, Chairperson, RETNS Board of Management.







Our farewell assembly for GERALYN and MARGARET was a cornucopia of song, poetry, speeches and heartfelt gifts – given and received! The assembly was followed by dancing, music and ice-pops. Thanks to all, who in the usual generous RETNS fashion, made the day such a great celebration.



RETNS's work for the Blue Star Programme culminated on Europe Day, Tuesday, May 9, 2017. The day began with an **Open Morning** to which parents, guardians and members of the local community were invited to view the children's work and talk to our student 'guides' about what each of the classes have been doing as part of the programme. Displays included written work, art work and projects as well as videos of dramas enacted by the children, a specially composed Rap and some PowerPoints presenting work completed as part of the programme. Later we gathered on the playground to have an aerial photograph taken with a specially commissioned drone, which caused great excitement! Can you spot the Gold Stars?



Blue Star Programme

Next came our main event to mark Europe Day and the 60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. Everyone – students and staff - dressed in blue. The children also wore blue headbands with a blue star in the centre. We then walked through the local housing estate, joined by parents and some local residents, making our way to the local park where we sang Happy Birthday EU and did our *Handshake for Europe*. ★

Euro Wave

<https://vimeo.com/216723902>

Handshake for Europe

<https://vimeo.com/216666366>

Raising the Blue Flag

The outcome of all the work throughout the year was that the school received a special certificate signed by Minister of State for European Affairs, Dara Murphy T.D. showing that RETNS had successfully completed the Blue Star Programme. The school also received its first ever Blue Flag which was raised at a special ceremony in the presence of all students and staff on the morning of June 18, 2017.

6th class trip to Carlingford

By Eve Leslie

On the 14th of June, 6th class met at school bright and early for our end of year trip to Carlingford Adventure Centre. We got on our bus and drove one and a half hours to Carlingford in County Louth.

Our first activity of the day was canoeing! We got changed into our wet suits, helmets and life jackets and were given paddles for the canoes. The canoes we were using were Canadian canoes, which were like 3 canoes put together.

We rowed across Carlingford Loch and the instructors showed us a secret waterfall. It is believed that a king who lived in Carlingford hundreds of years ago bathed in the waterfall every day and lived an extra 20 years. We were told that if we put our heads under the water for 5 seconds we would live an extra year! We all put our heads under the water, and it was very cold!

We swam in the sea a bit before canoeing over to the trampolines in the middle of the lake. We got to jump off them into the water!

We then canoed back to shore and got changed. We were all very hungry after our busy morning, and went to get some hot food in the centre.

After our food we got into camouflage suits and went on a walk to the laser tag area. We split into 2 teams and got our laser guns. The laser tag was really fun! We played lots of different rounds. Clodagh, Brian and Katie were also enjoying the laser tag and were very good!

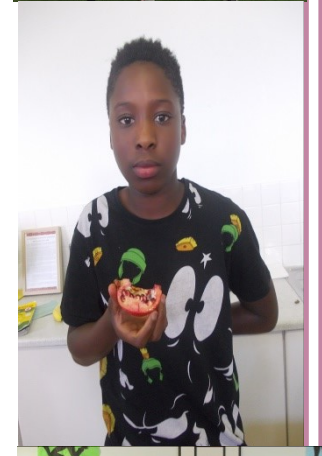
Finally we left Carlingford at around 5 pm. We had a really fun day!

GRADUATION

By Jessie

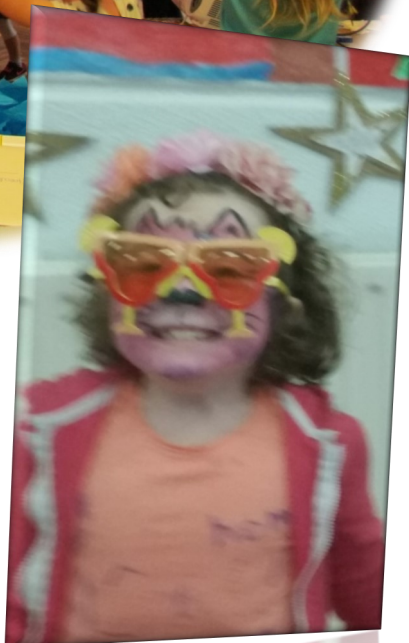
Graduation this year was a great success and the 6th class of 2017 pulled off an amazing play about a class hoping to get into RETNS which would make them famous but their teacher had other plans to do with him ,not them!!Their RETNS Roulette gameshow made them realise that they were a team. They made it to RETNS in the end after a long and embarrassing audition for their teacher. An amazing dance to Fame was what got them in. The ceremony at the end celebrated their 8 years together with students coming and going. We hope you enjoyed our play and will remember us when we`re gone.

SEE ALL OUR BEST MEMORIES OF THE YEAR ON THE NEXT PAGE!!





SUMMER FUN At W5 AND ON THE SPONSORED WALK!!



MORE
ASSEMBLY
FUN!!!

A fond farewell

What can I say except that that was one amazing party. When it comes to celebrating RETNS sure knows how to kick off it's shoes and dance!

Thank you to the children who worked so hard and so inspiringly to make this celebration one which Margaret and I will treasure the memory of forever. Children your presentations and your precious gifts are beyond words – I will be unwrapping and rereading for a long time to come.

To my colleagues what can I say – at this time of year you pulled the inspiration and energy from some deep place that I can't imagine! Thank you for a joyous day filled with emotion and remembering. And what fun we had along the way!

To all of the parents who have shared the journey – thank you. To have the privilege of being a part of your children's lives is a life's gift.

And now as I pack my bags and swap my old Doc Martens for a new pair of green suede ones (thanks guys!) I want to take this opportunity to wish all in the RETNS community well in your future and to thank so many of you for the support, generosity and many kindnesses of the past 27 years. I feel privileged to have worked most of my working life within this community and to have shared the journey with so many creative, compassionate, open-minded and generous people.

I will miss the daily buzz, the early morning chatter, the morning greetings and the afternoon goodbyes, games in the wildlife garden and stories in the library, the sounds of the playground and the rare moments of quiet, the children's laughter and energy, their kindnesses and insights, the September beginnings, the year's endings.

I will miss breakfasts in the staffroom where stories were shared, plans made, advice given and taken, with support, generosity and kindness at the root of it all.

I will miss our many celebrations and weekly assemblies, birthday pencils, Halloween parading, cake selling, talent showing, write-a-booking, story sacking, walking bussing, planting and harvesting.....

But mostly I will miss being part of a school which I have loved and of which I am so proud.

Wishing you all a lovely Summer and many happy years ahead,

Geralyn

Happy years in RETNS

As I reflect on the past seventeen and a half years of my teaching career here in RETNS, I realise how lucky I am to have had the opportunity to be part of such a wonderful school community.

From the day of my first visit, before starting officially, I knew by the warmth of welcome I received from Paddie, Geralyn and the staff at the time that, yes this was the place for me! My decision to move from Glenasmole, a beautiful small two-teacher school up in the Dublin Mountains to South City School Project, as it was then named, was a good one!

I soon lost track of the years in the vivacity of school life here. When our dear Nuala, who looked after our building with such loving care, asked me one evening how long I had been here I answered maybe five or six years. The following evening she came along and told me it was eight years – EIGHT years!! I felt as if I were just settling in!

Nothing much has changed for me. Each year has been charged with the energy, enthusiasm, vibrancy which makes RETNS the fantastic place that it is. I have never considered it a 'place of work'. RETNS is a hive of activity – learning, playing, discovering, creating – a place I have loved coming into each day. This has been created by so many people- the amazingly talented, professional, kind, caring, considerate people I am so proud to have called my friends and colleagues through the years. Their dedication is total commitment to what they do. It has been created by the wonderful children with all their talents, creativity, sense of fun and love of learning those who have passed through and those who are currently in our school. It has been created by parents who support both their children in their learning and development into strong, capable young people and the staff as they go about their daily work. RETNS is very much a team effort from everybody involved and I feel extremely privileged to have been a part of it all for so long. I would like to wish Mary and The Board of Management continued success in their guardianship of RETNS into the future.

Thank you all for the wonderful memories and especially the outstanding, amazing tribute that was our farewell assembly.

I will treasure all the memories. *Margaret*



Thank you for the days,

Those endless days, those sacred days you gave us

We 're thinking of the days

We won't forget a single day believe us!!

Go dté sibh Slán i gconaí!