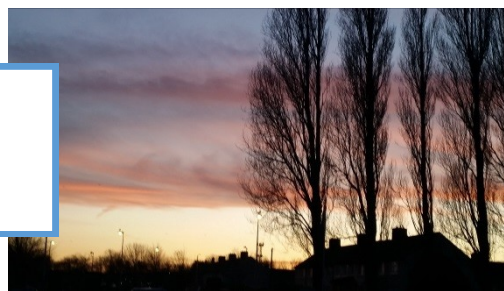


From the Principal's Desk

Solstice
Dawn



First term round-up

As we come to the end of the first term in our school year 2017/2018 I would like to congratulate all the staff and children for a great term's work. All classes have been working really well and there is a great atmosphere of co-operation and 'industry' throughout the school. We welcomed a new group of Junior Infants and their parents into the school in September and I would like to thank all the senior pupils who have helped them to settle in and become a great addition to our school community.

At this stage all our **student committees** and **student teams** have been formed and they are each busy with their own particular tasks. The children are delighted that we have finally managed to purchase our first set of tablets for use in school. These will be used in a number of ways to enhance teaching and learning as we take advantage of the rich and meaningful educational experiences which tablet technologies can offer. Lots of ideas are being put forward for **student fund-raising** to increase the number of tablets in the school. The initial fund-raising efforts were given a great boost by a generous contribution from the PA and this has motivated the children to build on their efforts so that they can add to the stock of 6 tablets already bought.

Forest learning was a feature of the first term for a number of classes, when they went out and about in the local environment to learn in a motivating, cross-curricular way. Many more forest learning opportunities are planned for the next two terms. **Science** was a big feature of the term also, with a science fair organised by fifth and sixth class drawing a record number of visitors. Photographs of the science fair can be seen on our website under **principal's blog**.

During the term we undertook a parental survey on attitudes to **homework**, the results of which can also be viewed on principal's blog. We also surveyed children and staff and have a set of recommendations which will inform our next steps. It was good to get very valuable feedback from parents and we are grateful to all who took the time to respond to our survey.

This term also saw a fantastic whole community event in our first annual **RETNS Craft Fair**. The school management really appreciates the generosity of staff and parents who gave so much in terms of money, time and effort to make the craft fair a huge success. As well as exceeding expectations in monetary terms, the craft fair was also a great success in terms of our school community as it was an event at which pupils, staff, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings, past parents, former staff, friends of parents and staff, teachers from other schools and members of the local community came together to make it a true community event. We hope the craft fair goes from strength to strength as an annual RETNS event and it is now firmly marked on the calendar for next year.

We are delighted that a new RETNS **Garden Group** has been formed and we look forward to working on ideas for the development of our small and large 'green' areas.

We are delighted to be able to announce the launch of our new look **website**. Thanks to those who gave of their time and expertise to develop a very modern looking, mobile friendly website, which we hope will be a great source of information on our school for many years to come. Check it out now at www.retns.ie.

As for **Winterfest** - what more can be said? The children surpassed themselves with a performance of Peter Pan that was truly magical and thoroughly entertaining. Thank you to all the families who came and supported the children and of course a genuine and sincere thank you to our amazing RETNS staff, who pulled out all the stops in terms of props, music, dance routines and songs to make this a Winterfest to remember. DVDs of Winterfest are available to buy at €10 each.

Thanks

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the Board of Management for their continued dedication and commitment to the school, and for the invaluable work they do in keeping the school running so well. Thank you to Claire Branagan and Sarah Benson who left the board during the year due to other commitments. They both contributed enormously to the school while on the board and continue to support our efforts to develop our school. We welcome Jane Sweetman and Paul Walsh onto the board and thank them for their interest in working on the management side of the school. It is a privilege for our school to have the support of such a dedicated group of people as our current board of management.

I would like to thank the members of the PA committee and individual parents who give up their precious time to work for the good of all the children and the benefit of the whole school community during this term. A special thank you must go to all those parents who worked so hard behind the scenes to ensure that the craft fair was a success, and to those who have spent hours in the school, and at home, helping the children to prepare for this year's Winterfest celebration. Parental involvement is a very strong and vital element of the success of our school. If you would like to be involved in the school in the coming term please give your name to your child's class teacher, contact your PA class rep, or get involved in the school development committee, which will be continuing its work to prioritise what is needed in school and ensure that we have available funds to meet all our objectives.

To the pupils, well done on a great term's work! As always, the children continually strive to do their best and to build a school community where there is enjoyment in learning and a real school spirit. They show great enthusiasm for all whole school events and it is great to see the commitment and enthusiasm they have for all they undertake.

I would like to thank our fantastic staff for their whole-hearted dedication and commitment to every single child in the school, and for their caring and support of each other. Their fabulous team spirit continues to grow and is what makes our school the great learning environment that it is, and a fabulous workplace to come to each day. The discipline, achievements and happiness of the children in school can be attributed to the hard work, living example and dedication of each member of RETNS staff.

Going Forward

We look forward to next term when we will continue to find innovative ways to use our **tablets** to enhance teaching and learning, we will increase our range of activities to achieve our next **Green Flag** and we will work towards our aim of achieving an **Active School Flag for RETNS**. We will continue to mark Mindfulness Monday and celebrate our group and individual achievements during our weekly assemblies. Our newly developed website will allow us the opportunity to showcase more often the exciting work that is going on in our school, and at all levels we will continue to work towards school development in ways that will improve the teaching and learning experience for all our pupils.

On behalf of the staff I would like to wish all our families a very enjoyable and safe festive season, with lots of family fun, and look forward to seeing everyone again in January 2018.

Nollaig Shona. **Mary**

Message from the Chairperson-BoM

Another eventful year at RETNS draws to an end. Some things change, but much stays the same. We said goodbye to two much loved and long serving teachers. We resurfaced the area in front of the school. We raised thousands to pay for it, running mini-marathons, putting on a comedy night and packing shopping bags. We ran a first craft fair. We redesigned our website. We upgraded the sound system. And in this final week we cheered a whole-school Winterfest. A lot can be done when people pull together.

We look forward to doing more together for our school in 2018, but before then it is time for a well-deserved break. The Board of Management would like to wish all members of our school community a very happy Christmas. On which subject, here is a thought, due to Andy Rooney, a well-known American broadcaster with a reputation for wisdom: ***“One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas Day. Don’t clean it up too quickly.”***
Pete Lunn

Photos from our first term



Peter Pan – Winterfest 2017

If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a whole school community to raise that most elusive of children, Peter Pan. Winterfest 2017 had its genesis in a skilful rewriting of J.M. Barrie's classic tale and included all the traditional elements, along with some surprising, and welcome, modern additions. The play opened with an enchanting song and dance scene and the action moved swiftly to the traditional nursery scene. From there we flew to Neverland to meet the Lost Boys and Girls in their hideout. Next up were some fearsome pirates and scary crocodiles, followed by the beautiful creatures of the Mermaid's Cove. A modern ecological twist was provided by the busy bee colony of Bee Hive Bay, where Queen Bee and her helpers withstood the unwelcome attentions of Captain Hook and company with the help of "the flying boy from across the ocean". The action concluded in the Lost Boys' Hideout where the dastardly Captain Hook was foiled and Peter Pan's faith in magic was restored. Hook met his nemesis in the form of an "alarming" crocodile and the Darlings prepared to fly home.

Fifth class joined sixth class on stage for the finale, a beautiful rendition of "Second Star to the Right". The music and dance enhanced the show throughout, from the opening sequence with its haunting "Lost Boy", key board accompaniment and elegant ballet interlude, through to upbeat numbers such as "Shake it Off", "A Pirate's Life", "Never Smile at a Crocodile", "I Won't Grow Up", "Under the Sea", "Dancing Queen", "Do you Believe in Magic?" and "Build me up Buttercup". We will miss all the snatches of tunes that have been floating around the school for the past few weeks!

Along the way we met an array of gorgeously costumed actors, singers, gymnasts and dancers. Transformed by skilful make-up, fearsome Captain Hooks, winsome Tinkerbells, irrepressible Peters and beautiful Wendys were joined by smart soldiers, cuddly teddies, graceful ballerinas, industrious bees and dastardly pirates –to name but a few!. An elf who had definitely fallen off her shelf and a bewildered bunch of fairies added great humour to the action. All actors delivered their lines with aplomb and conviction and really made us believe in Neverland and, of course, magic!

To all the set designers, word refiners, make –up and costume whizzes, those who calmed our many tizzes, those who worked on many scenes and of course the dancing queens..... We say go raibh mile maith agaibh!!The final word must go to the children themselves.....

"I think everyone had their moment and I loved my part" Ilana 6th

"I thought it was very enjoyable and a good choice for our last year" Meadhbh 6th

"I really love the movie so I really enjoyed it. Like Meadhbh I think it was a great play for our last year" Lola



Comments Corner

“My favourite thing about Winterfest was my Mum seeing me on the stage” says Cameron

‘My favourite thing about Winterfest was going on the secret stairs’ says Evie
SI

‘I liked being Tinkerbell for winterfest and it was lots of fun’ says Simone.

‘Winterfest was loads of fun and I really enjoyed it’ Maya says.

2nd

Bria says ‘I liked being a pirate!

3rd

Connie says ‘I liked being Captain Hook

4th

Sarah says’ Winterfest was loads of fun! I liked being a bee

5th

Kaitlyn says ‘Winterfest was fun. And Peter Pan was great!!” (Peter Pan
Herself!!)

6th

Jude says ‘The jokes were a bit cringey’ (But he was great delivering them!!)

Winterfest—The Anticipation and the Action!!













Class Round-Up



We asked each class for their highlights of the term so far. Halloween Dress-Up and Winterfest preparations were main highlights, but a few other special times were recalled, such as making hedgehogs and squirrels with leaves in **Junior Infants**, sharing toys on a Friday, 'learning to take care of each other', making Rainbow the scarecrow and going to visit him in St. Enda's and the visit to Imaginosity. **Senior Infants** have really enjoyed their first term and said they love their teacher! They too enjoyed Imaginosity and learning all about their bodies before their visit. They had fun learning about space and the planets and loved drawing the owls which are displayed in their classroom. In **First Class**, learning how to make new decorations has been a highlight, while the children also loved baking. Mindful eating was a memorable occasion, as was the day Rebecca introduced healthy brownies, though not everyone was a fan! The children also enjoyed the Lego workshop, the day they watched Peter Pan and the special day with cake when Jack was leaving!

Second Class have a number of highlights of the term so far. They enjoyed making the sock snowman and snow globes, they loved their portrait drawing and they said that the day doing their Jackson Pollock pictures was very messy and 'the best fun ever'. The art project with Tunda is very popular in the class, as was the day they made lemonade. The children are enjoying lots of their lessons, and have loved Hannah coming to teach them with Patricia, but making scarecrow Ophelia 'was one of the best things ever'.

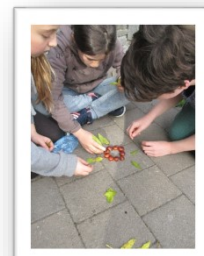
In **Third Class** 'art in general' is deemed to be one of the highlights of the term, along with visiting the science fair, going to the craft fair, the wildlife garden clean-up and the elections for the school committees. Possibly most memorable of all in the term was the Book of Kells project and competition, and the class visit to Trinity to see the Book of Kells.

Fourth Class are really enjoying their preparations for the Peace Proms concert on February 4th and love their weekly swimming lessons. Many of the children mentioned doing their Rathfarnham project as a highlight of the term and they can be very proud of their work on this project. There was a personal highlight for a member of fourth class as Liam Kirwan received a Special Merit Award from DLR for his Recycled Christmas Tree Decoration. Many of the children are getting excited about their upcoming Write-A-Book competition next term, but feelings are mixed on the subject!

Fifth Class pupils have just finished making and decorating Gingerbread houses, always a highlight of the first term. They have also put their hike with Margaret and GERALYN at the top of their list of highlights! Other events which got a mention as being among their favourite parts of the term were their Roman project, Forest Learning, Cycle Safety, and Golden time. They have enjoyed getting to know the new Junior Infants and taking part in choir. PE, art and 'Weaving Wellbeing' were also among the highlights, with their debate about homework and their Learning Logs and Gratitude Log among their choice of favourite activities of the term. Getting a mention also was the project on natural disasters, with a particular emphasis on understanding Storm Ophelia! The Sport against Racism workshop was a highlight, as was the craft fair, the maths trail with Junior Infants and their own science fair. Pupils also enjoyed making props for Winterfest as well as preparing for the performance itself.

In **Sixth Class**, winning the scarecrow competition was a big highlight of the term, with the forest learning trips to St. Enda's and the Pádraig Pearse project also being mentioned. Pupils enjoyed the visits to their class by Neil Richmond, Úna Ní Dhubhghaill and Claire Matthews and had good memories of their own trip to Dáil Éireann. They enjoyed the Pollinator talk in class as well as the science fair and light for doing the Google X project. Getting on to the student committees was a highlight for many, as well as getting the Irish Club properly set up and running, while others enjoyed the fund-raising efforts and being able to raise enough money to buy tablets.

All of the classes realised that there were many highlights of the term just look forward to creating many more good memories next term.



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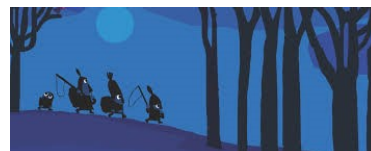


George and friends!!



Chris, George and Sophie Meehan. Sophie is a past pupil and author . She currently works in "Tales for Tadpoles" on Drury Street and enjoys writing about authors like Chris on the shop's website.

Chris Haughton's visit to RETNS.



Thursday 21st was a fun-filled and relaxing day after the busyness of Winterfest. The children enjoyed a visit from renowned children's author and illustrator, Chris Haughton. London –based Chris has created favourites such as **"Oh No George"** and **"A Bit Lost"**. He told the children that he is "a designer who has got into writing" and that he likes to keep his artistic style as simple as possible. He told the children that drawing is so important for designing and telling stories.

For all the budding authors and illustrators in the audience, he described the creative process from generating ideas, drawing on paper, scanning in his work and then using technology to produce the finished product. A range of puppets accompany him to book festivals and workshops and he showed us a video of George being created in Kathmandu ,Nepal. The very same brightly-hued George delighted the audience with his antics in pursuit of cake! Chris has also created an app called "Hat Monkey" which allows you to text or call a monkey. You might need an interpreter to understand the monkey chatter!

Thanks to staff members ,Jan Feeney (sister of Chris) and Anne Bradley for organising the visit . Find out more about his work on chrishaughton.com and as an added bonus his books are available as Gaelige!!



Sophie later visited fourth class to tell them a bit more about her work and her plans to publish a collection of poetry. She told them that she was always writing stories as a little girl and advised all budding authors to do the same!

She then told the class about all her great memories from her time in the school from 1997-2003.

