

Summer Newsletter, June 2023

Principal's address

We cannot believe our 2022- 2023 academic year has almost come to an end. We have had another wonderful year here in Athlacca N S. It has been a busy year with lots of wonderful learning and fun filled activities for all our children.

For me, it has been such a privilege to work with you all as acting principal since 3rd October 2022. We have a super team in Athlacca NS and a wonderful school community with whom we all work closely with. This year was emotional at times and often challenging for our school and school community. Thank you to all the staff of Athlacca NS for all your hard work, commitment and dedication throughout the school year and in preparation for the coming year. The team spirit in Athlacca is special and it is incredible to see you all consistently pushing the bar. Thank you all sincerely. Ms. Ryan has been a wonderful support to us all as Acting Deputy Principal and Christy as our stalwart secretary. All staff have helped in so many ways so thank you all from the bottom of my heart. Thank you for all your exemplary work over the entire year. Thank you also to Letita and her team in Star Kids for their help and support over the past year. United we all stand!!

Our Board of Management (2019- 2023) now enters its final few months of governance of our school. We all appreciate their time, support and efforts. We must acknowledge that it is a voluntary commitment to our school and school community. Many thanks to our Chairperson, Maria Hennessey and our BOM for your dedication and hard work over the last four years. Thank you all.

Our active Parents Association have helped us greatly again this year. They helped fundraise for resources and equipment for our school. They hosted the refreshment side of Fr McCarthy's leaving party, Grandparents Day and helped us in celebrating special moments such as sacraments. Their fund raising financed the ice- cream truck on 23rd June. The PA who is comprised of all the parents of pupils in the school is as effective as the time committed by members. We have all benefited immensely from all of your hard work and efforts.

We had many fund raising initiatives this year in school. We had jersey days/

colours days, two clothes collections, a bake sale, Halloween raffle, Christmas cards, raffle at our Christmas show, donation box at the church for our Carol Service and an Easter raffle. The funds raised have helped finance the ever-increasing cost of busses and enabled us to buy resources and equipment for our children. We donated some of the funds raised to Barnardos and to the Scott Coscoran appeal. Our whole school community also gave generously to Team Hope for the Christmas Shoe Box appeal again this year. Currently, six of our Fourth Class girls are fund raising for Irish Guide Dogs. We had a visit from Peaches and Maria recently to our school. This was a memorable event for us all and Peaches melted our hearts!!

Our active Students Council deserves a special mention for the positive changes, which they have introduced to benefit the pupils that they represent. We have ten members from Fifth and Sixth classes. The bake sale was a huge success and it helped towards the cost of our class of 2023 hoodies from Cobi Sports. They planned and organised Halloween scavenger hunts, Christmas quizzes, Easter egg hunts and games. They planned our very successful and memorable sports day on June 21st. Thank you all.

Thank you to Fr. McCarthy and Fr Kirwan who help us to live our Catholic faith in a true way and who helped us prepare for sacraments. We all enjoy your visits to the school for a cuppa and a chat. We hope Fr McCarthy has settled well into his new life in the US.

Free Book Scheme

Due to the introduction of the Free Primary Schoolbooks Scheme earlier this year, the school has purchased books, copies and workbooks for your child/ children. Your child received a booklist from the school to show parents/ Guardians what books will be in use next year. The books, workbooks and copies will be distributed to children on return to school. You will find further information below if required.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/933a9-free-primary-schoolbooks-scheme/Summer>

Reading Stars in a Library near you

Your child has worked hard all year, improving his/her reading. It would be greatly beneficial if he/she could continue to read throughout the summer. Reading to develop fluency, comprehension and confidence is highly recommended. One of the main reasons we read is for enjoyment, and all children love a good story. Children absolutely love listening to stories being read aloud for them. Many of you might enjoy this together over the summer months. Summer Stars runs from 12th June - 31st August 2023. Please contact your local library for further details!!

On Tuesday 27th June we treated our deserving super stars in Athlacca N S to some fun activities as part of Active Week. We invited School Fitness Ireland coaches, Gill and Cathal to our school. They organised a 3 session sports day for the children. The children enjoyed box aerobics, gymnastics and fun fitness with the coaches.

I would like to wish you all the very best summer holiday possible. I hope you get to enjoy plenty rest, relaxation and beautiful sunshine. To the families leaving us, on behalf of us all here in Athlacca N S we want you all to experience only the best in your new secondary schools and for the future. For our returning families, we look forward to welcoming you back to school at the end of August.

Our school will close at 12pm on Wednesday 28th June for the summer holidays. If you need to contact the school before re-opening, please email athlaccans@gmail.com as this email will be checked before reopening on 31st August. I would like to take this opportunity to wish Orla McEvoy our principal, all the very best as she extends her career break next academic year.

With renewed and continued thanks to all. Go raibh mile maith agaibh as chuile rud i mbliana agus bíodh samhradh deas agaibh go léir.

Kind regards,

Michelle Ryan Lonergan

(Acting Principal)

Showcasing our school

So much wonderful learning takes place in our school daily. Children are encouraged to work independently, in pairs and in groups. Station teaching in Literacy and Numeracy have been very beneficial to our learners. Ms Davis, Ms Carroll and Ms O' Sullivan have been assessing and recording children's needs and progress. Helping pupils to cope with and overcome problems that arise because of learning difficulties. Developing and fostering the appropriate skills and social abilities to enable the optimum development of our pupils. All our staff in Athlacca N S endeavour to develop each child's potential to the full; encourage a love of learning and help children develop lifelong skills.

We are blessed to have 30 chrome books in the school. Regeneron also donated two laptops to us this year. I am sure you have been keeping a close eye on our Facebook page all year. It is full of all our events and activities. Thank you to Ms Ryan for all her hard work with Facebook throughout the year. We are working closely with Noel from Design Locker currently. He is helping us to design a new school website. This is very exciting for us all in Athlacca N S.

Monthly assemblies give us the opportunity to gather as a whole school. They instill a sense of belonging and motivate the children towards making the best of the opportunities the school has to offer. School assemblies provide the opportunity for pupils to develop their confidence by speaking up and sharing their ideas. Children love to celebrate their birthday at school assembly and learn from each other.

Here are some of the many events we all enjoyed this year in our school.

Geoff Hunt



Our nature and biodiversity expert, Geoff Hunt visited our school again this year and worked with all classes. The 5th and 6th classes enjoyed their day at Enda Bulger's river where they got to look at and learn about river life and examine the underwater creatures at the river side and back in school under the microscopes.

Our 3rd and 4th classes enjoyed bird watching and learning about leaves and trees in our environment.

Our Juniors, Seniors, 1st and 2nd classes met Geoff in Lough Gur in May. They looked at underwater creatures and learned about the history of Lough Gur from a guide based there.

Children enjoyed follow up project work after Geoff's visit. We look forward to welcoming Geoff back to school for our senior classes in September.

Simone Artist



Simone from Story Gate visited our school this year. She worked closely with our Junior and Senior Infants. They created sock puppets with her and made a home for their sock puppet (a diorama). This linked in very well with our Green Schools. We are always trying to reduce, reuse and recycle materials in school. Thank you to Ms Ryan for organizing this wonderful initiative.

Dance teacher



Dance workshops for 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes took place this year. Professional dancer and teacher Olwyn Lyons delivered all workshops. The dance workshops

and performances took place in February in the parish hall. Dance improves balance and flexibility and leads to increased aerobic fitness. The children had a super time and were encouraged to express themselves freely!!

Scór na bPáistí



Scór na bPáistí - babhta ceannais contae Luimní took place in Askeaton on 28th January 2023. Thank you to Ms O' Dwyer and the children involved for all their hard work and commitment. We had children take part in the ballad group, solo singing, recitation and playing music. Táimid chomh bródúil asaibh go léir!!

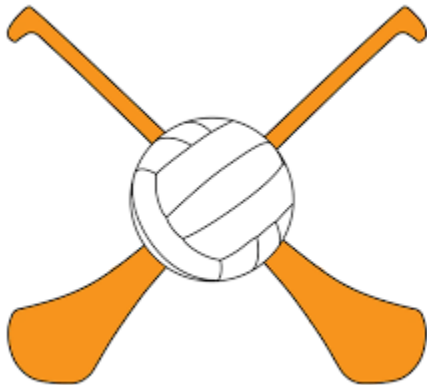
School Choir



A huge thank you to Ms O' Dwyer who led our school choir this year. They sang at our First Holy Communion mass. They are already preparing for Confirmation next year. They entertained us at school assemblies and at our 6th class graduation

on 14th June. Some of our choir members entertained the residents of Dawn Court in March as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge. Maith sibh!!

Community Games



We took part in a "Wear your Jersey to school/Colours Day" on Friday 5th May. This was a Community Games fundraiser. The Croom- Banogue- Athlacca -Dromin Community games group ordered a generic sports kit for the first time for our children to wear when competing in group games when representing Croom-Banogue-Dromin-Athlacca. Our children have competed in many sports and activities this year. Art, handwriting, singing, playing music, drama, hurling, football, basketball, pitch n putt, quizzes are just some of the many competitions our children have entered. Well done to all the competitors!! Please refer to our School's Facebook for further details and photos.

Internet safety



We welcomed Jackie from Barnardos to our school on 25th May. She worked with children from 3rd to 6th class in their classrooms. Our children need to be aware of how to be safe and resilient online in our modern world. Jackie looked at how to be a STAR online. S = Stay safe, T = think smart, A = ask for help and R = reach out. We were delighted to welcome parents to the parent's workshop also.

Online Safety - Tips for Parents

Now that the summer holidays are fast approaching you may be concerned about increased screen time for children. Barnardos have a range of resources on their website, which will provide practical, easy to follow advice to parents on topics such as: General Online Safety Tips, Screentime and Digital Wellbeing and Parental Controls. Let us be safe together!!

1st and 2nd class wrote a book



This year Ms. Brudair's 1st and 2nd class had the opportunity of becoming authors and taking part in the writing and publishing experience. They chose to write about their favourite animals. The students were excited about writing and so proud of the finished product. Now they have a keepsake they will always cherish. Well done boys and girls and Ms Brudair!!

Christmas play and Carol service



Our Juniors, Seniors, 1st and 2nd class performed in a Christmas production " The Magical Christmas Jigsaw" on Friday 9th December. The children were extremely

busy for many weeks in preparation for their Christmas play. They were busy gathering costumes and props and they were absolutely fantastic on the day!! Our 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th classes enjoyed a Carol Service in our church in Athlacca on Monday 20th December. Having a real live audience in front of the children makes the experience all the more worthwhile and enjoyable for the pupils.

Wellbeing weeks

The children really enjoyed Wellbeing week in February and June. They took part in karaoke, Zumba and they wrote about what they are grateful for and put leaves on a gratitude tree in each classroom. Some classes went on school walks. Children also enjoyed spot the difference games and class quizzes. We focused on paired and group work throughout the week.

All classes enjoyed the BAKE SALE on 15th February. 6th class and our Students Council were fantastic in organising such a successful and enjoyable event. Children spent hours baking and making and designing posters to advertise the event. They even had a TIP JAR on their tables!! The children bought sweet treats, entered a raffle, guessed how many jellies were in a jar and guessed the filling in cupcakes.

Junior and senior infants, First and Second class enjoyed a Teddy Bear's picnic on Friday 23rd June. They loved sharing treats and cuddling and showing off their precious teddies on the grass areas in school.

Catholic School's Week and Grandparents Day

As part of our Catholic School's week, we welcomed Grandparents to our school. We began our celebration with mass in our church in Athlacca and this was a wonderful experience for all present. The theme of our mass was "Walking together in faith and love". Fr Kirwan welcomed all our grandparents to the special mass and led us in prayer and song. A huge thank you to our wonderful Parents Association for the beautiful refreshments at school following mass. Thank you

also to the children for their beautiful artwork and invitations they created for their grandparents.

Balor – storyteller



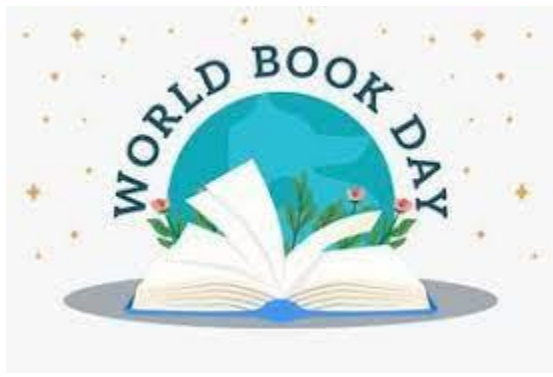
We welcomed Balor to our school on 12th May. He delivered stories as Balor, a druid like figure who brought the children into the world of ancient Ireland. He visited all classes in the school. His sessions were engaging, entertaining and impactful for all. He explored how fairies shaped our Irish culture. He looked at the Great Famine- fact and fiction. He examined how Irish Sport inspired the GAA and the Olympics. We are already looking forward to welcoming Balor back to our school on 20th October 2023.

Green Schools



Our very active Green Schools Committee kept us all on our toes this year. They acted as "Bin Police" and regularly checked the bins in our school to ensure we were disposing of waste and recycling materials correctly. They encouraged us to use recycled materials for art projects. With help from John Buckley, our wonderful caretaker they planted a holly tree/ crann cuilinn this year. The Junior Infants were invited to be part of this lovely experience. This was as part of the Spar National Tree Day. We discussed how the trees absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen and help us to fight *Climate Change*. A new flowerbed has been incorporated into the front of our school. This will help with future pollination and plants and flowers are a great way to enhance green spaces. They offer beauty with benefits!! We all enjoyed Bike Weeks in school this year in term 1 and term 3. Many children cycled and scooted to school and parked up in our bike/ scooter bay!!

World Book Day



All classes celebrated World Book Day on Thursday 2nd March this year. Children dressed up at their favourite book character and brought their favourite book to school that day. Some classes enjoyed World Book Day quizzes with their teacher. To make it an extra special day, award winning presenter and Children's author, Anthony Garvey delivered a virtual book reading session on zoom for our 3rd to

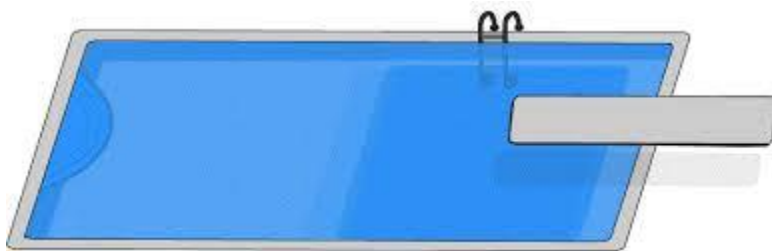
6th class children. We purchased some of his books for our 5th and 6th class libraries.

Niamh Curran and Pat O' Dea

We would like to thank Niamh Curran, our GAA coach for all her wonderful skills and drills in Term 2 and Term 3. All the pupils really enjoyed her football and hurling sessions on Wednesdays. Wishing Niamh the very best of luck back in U.L for her final year and with the Waterford senior camogie team this summer.

Pat O' Dea has been coming to our school for many years now to teach Sean Nos dancing. The children adore Pat. They have learned so much from him. All classes made great progress developing their rhythm, steps and dance routines again this year. We were blessed to be able to hold our dancing classes in the parish hall. Many thanks to the Hall Committee for your ongoing support.

Swimming



Swimming returned this year for 3rd and 4th classes. Children enjoyed 6 weeks of swimming lessons in Bawnmore swimming pool from April 27th until June 1st. Swimming provides an all-over body workout, as nearly all of our muscles are used during swimming. Swimming is part of our P E curriculum also.

School Tours



Children all enjoyed their school tours again this year. They were able to enjoy the days with their peers, develop new passions and enjoy new experiences.

- Junior and Senior infants went to Stonehall Farm on 22nd June.
- 1st and 2nd class went to UL for the Adventure World Camp on 1st June.
- 3rd and 4th class went to Mary I College on 12th June for their Just 4 fun school tour.
- 5th and 6th class went to Kilfinane Outdoor Centre on 15th June for a river walk and many other fun activities.

Please refer to Facebook for photos of all the school tours.

SPORT continued

Primary Games

Well done to Seán Storan and Freya Walsh from 6th class who represented the school and parish on the Limerick Primary Games teams this year. They played at half time during Senior Football and Hurling matches. It was a great experience for

Seán and Freya and a massive achievement to be part of the teams. We are delighted for you both!!

Neville Cup (Camogie) and Larkin Shield (football)

A huge congratulations to Kate Sherin, Saoirse Conaghan, Ellie Ryan and Freya Walsh who played on the South teams this year. They received their medals on Monday 29th May in Bulgaden Castle. John Kiely was there to present the medals and to celebrate with the teams.

Blitzes

Our boys and girls entered many blitzes this year for hurling and football. A huge thank you to Ms Carroll, Ms Hennessy and Sandra and Áine for all their wonderful help and support.

Our 4th and 5th class boys and girls entered a blitz in Coláiste Chiaráin on 9th May. President of the GAA, Larry McCarthy was present on the day. The children has so much fun!!!

Our 5th and 6th and some of our 4th class boys played in a blitz on 22nd May in Martinstown and brought home the Primary schools hurling trophy to our school and parish. We are so proud of our team. Well done boys!! Sean Storan was our team captain.

Our 3rd and 4th class boys took part in a hurling blitz in Martinstown on 9th June. This tournament gave a chance to some of our younger pupils to represent their school in the South competition. Our team got to the final but were beaten by Hospital N S. Well done boys!!

EL Classico soccer tournament

This soccer tournament was organised for 3rd to 6th class boys and girls. It began after the June Bank Holiday Weekend. Mixed teams enjoyed soccer matches at the

pitch and on the astro turf, which we are blessed to be able to use. Jamaica and Argentina played in the final and it went to penalties!!! Jamaica won the tournament!!

Science/ Engineers Week



We had a fabulous time in school celebrating Science /Engineers Week. We used many skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, planning, designing, creating, and reflecting as we worked on some STEM Challenges. Huge thanks go to our amazing teachers for challenging the students. 6th class enjoyed their visit to Kilmallock Secondary School on 16th November for Science week. Geoff Hunt was with 3rd to 5th class in November for Science week. They looked at native birds and trees in our locality. Please refer to our school Facebook for further information.

We are very thankful to all families who donated lego, knex and meccano to our school. The lego, knex and meccano has been put to great use by the children. Already we can see the many benefits of it including helping to develop our students' problem-solving, communication, teamwork, independence as well as enhancing their imagination and creativity. We look forward to continuing to incorporate Lego into our learning in the future.

Seachtain na Gaeilge 2023

To celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge together we enjoyed some whole school activities such as a Tráth na gCeist, Céilí, Lá Glas srl. The children enjoyed many activities during the week in each of the classrooms to celebrate the Irish language, culture and music. The children loved the games, lessons and activities.

Tráth na gCeist (quiz) - The Students Council and other volunteers held a Tráth na gCeist for 1st to 6th class.

Léitheoireacht - 3rd and 4th class joined the Junior and Senior Infants and read Irish stories to them from their levelled readers (Sona ag Léamh). This was a wonderful initiative organised by Ms O' Leary and Ms Ryan this year.

Lá Glas - The children wore green, white, gold, orange clothing coming to school to celebrate SnaG and St Patrick's Day.

Céilí - The school came together for an outdoor céilí to learn Ballaí Luimní. Junior and Senior Infants were paired with 3rd and 4th class. 1st and 2nd class were paired with 5th and 6th class.

Buddy Reading



Older children reading to younger children has many advantages. Our 3rd and 4th class teamed up with Junior and Senior infants this year for reading sessions and it was enjoyed by all involved. The children looked forward to their weekly meet-up and the excitement was palpable during the sessions as the children chatted about their books. Both young and old benefited greatly. Our 5th class read with some of the pre- school children and this was a wonderful experience for all involved also. Keep up the reading this summer!

New infants

Ms Ryan and Ms Ryan Lonergan met with the parents of our new Junior Infant children on Friday 26th May. We were delighted to welcome our Infants for 2023/2024 to the school on Monday, 29th May. They made a great impression on their first day. They had so much fun with their teacher Ms Ryan and our current Junior Infants with whom they will share a classroom next year. We are looking forward to welcoming the children to our school when we return on 31st August.



6th Class Graduation

It was so wonderful to gather with our 6th class and their families and the whole school on 14th June. We are most proud of our 6th Class children who were surrounded by family, friends, staff and all the children in our school. The 6th class entertained their audience with music, songs, poetry, acknowledgements and memories of their time in Athlacca N S. The 6th class delighted in sharing their talents and creativity with their guests. Their hard work and enthusiasm was clearly evident. The class of 2023 were presented with a certificate, a 2023 wrist band and the year book that they designed using our chrome books. Thanks to all who baked for the special occasion (5th and 6th class families). Refreshments and treats were enjoyed following the graduation in Ms Ryan's classroom. A massive thank you to Ann, Sandra and Áine for their help and hard work on the day. 6th class you have been a pleasure to teach and fantastic role models and leaders in our school this past year. We wish you and your families continued happiness and every good wish for the next exciting chapter in your lives. The door is always open for you in our school!! Go n- éirí linn sa mhéanscoil!!

Sports Day as part of Active Week

Sports Day took place on Wednesday 21st June. The children enjoyed participating in a variety of activities at the GAA pitch as well as the school grounds and in some classrooms. A massive thank you to our Students Council who organised the stations and created the timetable for all classes to follow. The children enjoyed spud and spoon and 3 legged races, obstacle courses, tug of war, capture the flag, soccer tournament, rounders and water games outdoors. The children enjoyed indoor activities such as zumba, dance and making and creating with the plus plus boxes(new purchase from NEXUS) . Great fun was had by all the children on their Sports Day.

WELL DONE TO ALL!!!!

Have a great summer holiday!!!!

