Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Chiarraí
Kerry Education and Training Board

Tahilla Community National School

Newsletter

Issue 31st December 2025



Photo: A Rainbow over Tahilla School by Fiona Moran

Principal's Address

As 2025 has drawn to a close we can look back on an amazing six years+ since the school became part of the Community National School Network under the patronage of Kerry ETB.

On Monday 26th August 2019 Tahilla school took on a new lease of life and is now thriving. The children enjoy a vibrant school experience with a dedicated and talented team of adults working on their behalf. You will see throughout this edition of our Newsletter that creativity is a key element and we are especially grateful to all the parents who have given of their time to support the various activities over the years and particularly in the lead up to both the official opening and the Christmas period just gone.

As principal of Tahilla CNS I can honestly say that it is a privilege to lead a Community National School. The CNS model allows a principal to create a caring, joy filled, nurturing environment where children get to be themselves. While Covid 19 came and delayed the official opening till Friday 14th November 2025 it was wonderful to be able to show case the great work that has taken place in the meantime. The children were fabulous on the day and I'm sure it will be a day they will remember for years to come.

Erasmus+ Internships

Lara has returned to Germany and we are very grateful to her for all the efforts she made to support the students in Tahilla CNS. We have a new arrival who started on Monday 5th January 2026, Falk, our first male Erasmus+ Intern. We are really looking forward to getting to know him. He will be with us until the Easter break.

Official Opening of Tahilla CNS

Kerry ETB was delighted to welcome Minister for Education and Youth, Helen McEntee TD, to Tahilla Community National School on Friday 14th November 2025 to officially open the school under Kerry ETB patronage. The event brought together pupils, staff, families, and the local community to celebrate this important milestone for the school.

Minister McEntee toured the building, met with students, staff and members of the school community and unveiled a commemorative plaque, and enjoyed performances that showcased the creativity and spirit of Tahilla CNS. This marks a new chapter for our school as part of the Community National School network, supporting inclusive, multi-denominational, child-centred education in South Kerry.

Principal Máire de Cógáin said, "Is mór an ónóir dom a bheith mar phríomhoide ar Scoil Tathuile, Scoil Náisiúnta Phobail i gCiarraí Theas, ár scoil álainn tuaithe. It has been such a privilege for me to lead Tahilla Community National School as principal for the past six years. As a Community National School, under the patronage of Kerry ETB, we have been able to build an inclusive, nurturing learning environment where every child is valued and supported to thrive. The official opening marks a new chapter in Tahilla's long history of providing education and celebrates the success of the past six years, growing from an enrolment of 7 to 36 at our highest point."

The Official Opening was a testament to the links with the community. Our local postman, bus inspector, fire brigade service all showed up in support of our school.
Local principals also joined us, Áine Murphy – Sneem, Marian Hanley - Cahir, and Dermot Healy - Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who helped prepare the school for this special occasion. A huge thank you to Fiona Martin, who kindly painted the ceilings in the hallway, senior room and toilet; Veronika Romashyn for cleaning the windows all around the school; Annie Dunnebacke for cleaning all the internal glass; Luba and Andreas Gruber for kindly loaning us their microphone and amp; Jim for playing guitar; Jennifer Cooney for donating a crate of cookies and brownies; Fiona and Auke Schots for coming early and staying late, helping to plate up the delicious baked goods on the day and cleaning up afterwards; and to all those who baked the treats for everyone to enjoy on the day. Your generosity and support were truly appreciated.

A very special thank you goes to our wonderful neighbour John Gleeson, who went above and beyond to help make the school look its best. John took the time to cut the hedge along the road, clear debris from tree cutting, mow the grass, and even planted up two beautiful flower pots for the front of the school. We are extremely grateful for his kindness and continued support.

And in true Irish fashion, nothing beats an occasion to get jobs done. We now have 3 Finger Posts in place, one at either end of the road leading to the school and another at Blackwater Bridge. Our logo design is complete!! The logo was displayed beautifully on the commemorative plaque, on our new signage in the school hall and on a delicious celebratory cake. Thanks to Louise Foley for organising the cake, just in the nick of time!!! Paul Fairbairn fixed the ropes on the flag poles and flew 4 flags on the day of the opening. This all added a special element to the day.

Thanks also to Blackwater Women's Group for the comfy chairs, Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine for the lectern, Rural Social Scheme for cleaning all the school yard, pavements and school frontage, Kerry County Council for sweeping the road and putting up the fingerposts, Teddy McCarthy, and Paul Fairbairn for providing a shuttle bus on the day, along with many parents and neighbours who sent in baking or came to create a wonderful atmosphere on an historic day.

The school currently serves families from Sneem to Kilgarvan, Tahilla to Tuosist, and Bonane to Blackwater, offering inclusive, co-educational, multi-denominational education under Kerry ETB patronage. A Bus Éireann service operates from The Kenmare Bay Hotel via Rossacoosane, Templenoe, and Blackwater, along the coast road to Tahilla.









Vincent Hyland

We had the pleasure of a visit from Vincent Hyland in November, when he kindly dropped off his book *Wild Derrynane: A Visual History of the Skellig Coast*. This beautiful book was later presented as a gift to Minister McEntee on the day of her visit to the school. Vincent took time to share his work with the children, showing them the book and explaining how the photographs were captured. He also showed the pupils an exciting video of himself underwater in Kenmare Bay, searching for and observing a variety of marine creatures. The children were completely fascinated by the images, videos and stories, and really enjoyed learning more about the rich marine life and natural beauty of our local coastline.



Shoe Box Appeal

Tahilla CNS proudly took part in the Shoebox Appeal once again this year. A number of families generously got involved in this very worthy cause, helping to bring joy to children less fortunate both at home and abroad. The Shoebox Appeal encourages families to fill a shoebox with gifts such as toys, school supplies, hygiene items and small treats, which are then distributed to children in need during the Christmas season. The pupils were delighted to

bring in their shoeboxes and learn about the importance of kindness, generosity and helping others. Pictured below are the pupils with their shoeboxes (Arthur is missing from the photograph).



Getting crafty

Over the course of a number of weeks, the children produced a wonderful selection of handmade items including charming gnomes, festive Christmas trees and beautifully crafted tea coasters, using their crochet and knitting skills. These unique creations were on sale at the Sneem Christmas Craft Fair, where they helped to raise funds for the school. A sincere thank you to Liz Coffey and Trish Collier for teaching all the children how to crochet and knit and for supporting them in creating these beautiful designs. A total of €143.50 was raised on the day of the craft fair. However, there were some items pre-sold and more sold at the coffee morning which brought the total to €218.60 so far. Many of the crafts were also sold during the busking at SuperValu. It was our first year taking part in the Sneem Christmas Craft Fair and we are grateful to the Parents Association for organising and manning the stall.













The Seatbelt Sherriff

We were delighted to welcome the Seatbelt Sheriff to Tahilla CNS. He spoke to the children about the importance of staying safe on the roads, whether walking, cycling or travelling in a car. The pupils listened attentively and learned valuable lessons about road safety and responsible behaviour.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the visit and was thrilled to receive their certificate, pin and workbook for becoming a Seatbelt Sheriff. A big well done to all of our safety champions for successfully completing the quiz and showing excellent understanding of road safety.









Christmas Jumper Day

On the 10th of December, the children of Tahilla CNS dressed up in their finest and most festive Christmas jumpers for Christmas Jumper Day. Each child brought in a €2 donation in aid of the very worthy charity St. Vincent de Paul. It was a great day, enjoyed by all, while also supporting an important cause within our community.



Christmas in Tuosist

On Thursday the 11th of December, the whole school headed across the bay to Tuosist Community Hall to attend a performance by Tuosist NS and Lauragh NS. They put on an excellent show for us and we all really enjoyed it. It was a great opportunity to see other local schools in action. After the show the children were very lucky to be treated to some chocolate chip cookies and sweets which were greatly appreciated. A big thank you to the staff and pupils of both schools for inviting us to see their dress rehearsal and for such a warm welcome.





Christmas Talent Show & Coffee Morning

The pupils of Tahilla CNS put on a fantastic display of their many talents at our Christmas Talent Show on Friday the 12th of December. Family and friends of the pupils were treated to a wide variety of performances, including tin whistle by the junior room pupils and Matthew & Avenir, violin performances by Eimear & Alvina, concertina by Leo, a whistling performance by Anabelle and beautiful singing by: Beth, Esmé, Ruby, Rosa, Julia, Alvina, & Anika. The audience also enjoyed Taekwondo demonstrations by Freja & Yngvi, Irish dancing by Anika, Julia, Esmé & Alvina, and gymnastics performances by Julia & Esmé. The show concluded with an impressive grand finale featuring front-flip skills by Kyle.

A sincere thank you to Patrikas's mum Elizabeth, Maksym and Argun's grandmother Iryna and Erik's mum Veronika for staying on afterwards to help tidy up. Your support was greatly appreciated.





















Busking in SuperValu

Thursday 18th December: The plan was to get the TFI bus at 10.20am from the main road into Kenmare. However, due to the extreme weather on the morning we forged a new plan!! Rather than getting the Local Link we organised a Teddy McCarthy mini bus and opted for door to door delivery of the children to the venue!!! The children were fantastic. We had 3 collection points. The fiddle case in front of the children playing music, singing and dancing. A bucket directly inside the main door. And a bucket next to the crafts display near the Christmas tree. I think it's safe to say we had all angles covered… 😅 In total we collected a whopping €500. A wonderful achievement.

The children were also treated to a hot chocolate from Café James and a few sweets from Matthew's dad. Everyone had a great day.





Pyjamas and Breakfast

The children got to wear their comfiest PJs to school during our last week of term and were treated to a delicious breakfast with a number of options, pancakes, waffles, cereal and juice. It's safe to say the children really enjoyed this as you can tell by the pictures.









Senior Room News

River Mapping

This term, the senior room pupils were delighted to welcome a visitor from the Kenmare River Mapping Project. She spoke to the pupils about river habitats and the impact humans can have on their local rivers. The pupils had the opportunity to observe a variety of creatures from the local river up close, making the learning experience both engaging and memorable. It was an enjoyable and educational visit, and a great time was had by all.



Blackrock Observatory

Our school tour to Blackrock Observatory in Cork with Cahir NS was a fantastic experience for all involved. The pupils took part in an interactive science workshop where they designed and built their own rockets, encouraging creativity and hands-on learning. And there was a chance meeting when Julia's first cousin happened to be on work experience. They were both pleasantly surprised to meet each other.

We also enjoyed a guided tour of Blackrock Castle, during which the pupils learned about the rich history of the castle and its role over the centuries. The day was both educational and enjoyable.







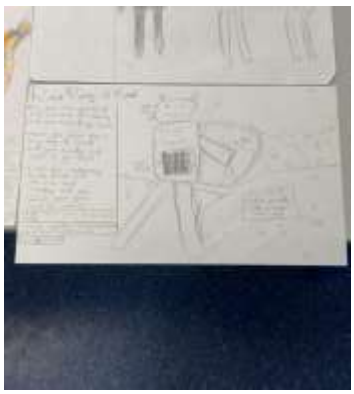




Persuasive Writing Posters

The pupils in the senior room had great fun creating persuasive advertisements for their own inventions designed to make household jobs easier. They used their imagination to come up with clever ideas and worked hard to explain how their inventions would help people at home. The children used eye-catching pictures, catchy slogans and persuasive words to encourage others to buy their products. It was wonderful to see their creativity and enthusiasm as they proudly shared their work with the class.









Solar System

As part of our continued study of the solar system, the children in the senior room explored space in a fun and hands-on way. They created their own constellations using paper and torch light, casting star shapes onto the classroom walls and bringing the night sky to life. The children also designed colourful 2-D planets for a class display titled *"Our Solar System."* This activity allowed them to use their creativity while learning about planets and constellations, and they were very proud to see their work displayed for everyone to enjoy.



Christmas Art

In the lead-up to Christmas, the children enjoyed getting creative by making their own Christmas decorations to brighten up the classroom. They used a variety of materials to design colourful and festive pieces, filling the room with Christmas cheer. The children showed great creativity and teamwork as they worked, and they enjoyed creating a warm, welcoming and festive classroom environment.







Junior Room News

Birthdays

We celebrated several birthdays in the junior room over the past two months. On the 8th of November, Nesuhi turned 7 years old. On the 17th of November, Vlad celebrated turning 9 years old. On the 9th of December, Rufus turned 8, and on the 14th of December, Patrikas also celebrated his 8th birthday. These special occasions were marked in school with treats and celebrations, to make the day feel extra special for them.







Science Week

The junior room took part in Science Week by engaging in a variety of fun and hands-on science experiments. The children explored static electricity by rubbing balloons and observing how they could make different materials such as cardboard, ribbon and tissue, move and stick, which led to lots of excitement. They also learned about fire safety and

discovered that fire needs oxygen to stay alight through a simple demonstration using a glass and candle.

The pupils experimented with colour mixing by using paper towels, water and food colouring, watching as the colours travelled and mixed together to create new shades. Another experiment involved placing eggshells in different liquids, such as coke, vinegar, water and milk, to observe how they changed over time, helping the children learn about the effect liquids can have on materials. These experiments encouraged questioning, observation and discussion, and the children thoroughly enjoyed learning science through hands-on discovery.









Getting Ready for Christmas

The junior room has been very busy over the last few weeks preparing for Christmas. The children worked hard on a variety of festive arts and crafts, using different materials and techniques, including some groovy Santas, winter trees and winter robins. The children also had great fun decorating our classroom with lots of different Christmas decorations.













Music with Aoife

The children have been enjoying music lessons with Aoife in the classroom every Friday this term. They have been learning all about beat and rhythm in songs, singing a wide variety of songs, and exploring movement to music. First and Second Class pupils have also continued learning the tin whistle and had the opportunity to show off what they have been practising during our recent talent show.



The Panto: Little Miss Muffet

The junior room headed off to the Carnegie Arts Centre in Kenmare to watch the Panto *Little Miss Muffet* on Thursday, 4th December. The children thoroughly enjoyed the interactive performance, with our very own Norah getting the exciting opportunity to join the cast on stage to help pull the spider out of the well. After the show, the children spent some time exploring books in the library before catching the Local Link bus (the highlight of the day for many) back to Tahilla followed by a short walk to school. It was a fantastic day out!













Baking with Lara

We were very lucky in the junior room to get the opportunity to do some baking with Lara over the last few weeks. The children made pancakes, banana biscuits and pizza bites with her. Our favourite part was decorating the biscuits with icing, sprinkles and smarties, and of course tasting all the yummy treats. Thank you, Lara, for all the fun over the last number of weeks and for helping all the children with their reading during your time with us. We will miss you.

