

“What Happened?”

Firhouse Abuzz with Science

It's fantastic to see the culture of scientific enquiry that has been built up over the years in our school reaching such amazing heights, with FOUR distinct projects, involving seven students, now going forward to this year's national Stripe Young Scientist and Technology exhibition.

Just have a read of these titles to see how advanced and in tune with our world these budding problem solvers and world changers are:



Alanna Baronova displaying the app that she and Beth Pouch have been developing to detect Asian hornets

1. Can detecting Asian hornets' buzzing frequencies to alert beekeepers save the bees? (from Alanna Baronova, Beth Pouch)
2. Should Ireland Rethink Reforestation? An Investigation into Soil Quality in the Dublin Mountains (from **Conor O'Farrell** and **Guido Emmanuel Garcia Acosta**)
3. Which Kind of Ad Most Effectively Informs People on Climate Change? (from **Arlo Liddy**)
4. Can we find a more efficient and sustainable alternative to air conditioners for heatwaves? (from **Tyla Botha** and **Dian Dunne**)

Possibly speaking for everyone involved, Beth is very pleased with the experience: "It's been a lot of work, but I think it will be worth it on the day", with Alanna reminding us that "a lot of that work was done outside school hours" and facilitated by science teacher, Deirdre Brennan. "We are excited to see it all come together in the coming weeks".

Deirdre knows from experience how such quality and achievement have a ripple effect on other students and is already seeing the archimedes-like impact of the work "lifting all boats" in the Science department.



Principal's message

As we lean into the winter break and the end of the calendar year, nature reminds us that it is a time for rest and reflection. The daily life of school is full of special moments and challenging ones, times of joy and of sadness, such is the beauty and complexity of human connection in a place of learning and care. My hope for all of us over the break is to take the opportunity to spend time with loved ones, have an opportunity for quiet reflection on our growth and resilience, and be reminded of the renewed sense of hope that comes with the new year and all that is yet to come.

Thank you for your continued support of our wonderful school community.

I hope that you enjoy reading this newsletter and that it gives you a greater sense of what has been happening in the school since the beginning of term in August. A special word of gratitude to all of those that have contributed to this newsletter and to our editorial team, Paul O'Connor and Rebecca McGlynn. So many wonderful things happening in our creative and progressive school, and this is just a snapshot.

Be Your Best Self,
Claire.





School Musical *High*

It's a big year for any school to have its first musical, and this is ours: thanks to the passion of music teacher, Eimear Mac Court, the first Firhouse ETSS musical will take place in March 2026. Our FETSS take on the hugely popular 'High School Musical' will involve approximately 60 students in the cast and 50 in the crew, that's about one third of the student population involved.

The cast is split into different social groups: cheerleaders, jocks, thespians, brainiacs, teachers and others. Starring, as leader of the brainiacs, we have Alannah Halpin as Gabriella Montez, and as leader of the jocks, Cai Prys Cummins playing Troy Bolton.



Rehearsals are well under way, and needless – but important – to say these involve several teachers giving of their time to help arrange songs and dances, direct the acting, design sets and costumes, and organise logistics.

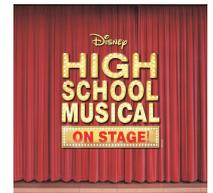


First full table reading. Photo by Alex Whelan

There will be three performances: **a matinee and an evening show on Monday 23 March, and an evening show on Tuesday 24 March in the Civic Theatre, Tallaght.**

Tickets will be available in the new year through the Civic's website – watch out on VSmile for the release!

CHRISTMAS CALL OUT: to help fund the show, we will be running raffles during the show intervals, and would really appreciate if families end up with any unwanted/unused gifts over Christmas – no matter how small – if they would consider donating them to us to add to our prize bundles.



Student-led Teacher Workshop

by Jael Pila di Wumba

My fellow Transition-Year students, Safia, Cai, Jakub, and I had the very exciting opportunity in November of presenting at this year's Educate Together conference at the Louis Fitzgerald Hotel, Dublin 22. What made this event extra special was that it was us teaching teachers: actually running a workshop for teachers on student-led learning.

One of the student-led projects we featured was "Operation Stop Single" – a campaign currently in development at Firhouse ETSS to stop single-use plastic at school. We got to share hard-hitting information about recycling in Ireland.

Another project we featured was our plant propagation, showing our audience how we have "greened" our school with new plants from cuttings; and even giving out fresh cuttings for them to take to their schools and keep the process going.

It was a special feeling seeing how interested everyone was and how open teachers were to learning from students.



Cai, Jakub, Jael and Safia about to turn teachers into students



Sports Update

The **u15 boys football** team had a run in the cup competition, winning their first two ties and competing well in the league.

The newly promoted **u17 boys team** kicked off their campaign with a convincing win 10-4 over Adamstown CC, and have since qualified for the regional quarter finals. The **u19 boys** also qualified for the regional quarter final after a thrilling 5-5 draw in their last league game.



Firhouse ETSS, Under-17 Boys

The **senior girls and boys basketball** teams competed well in their leagues and gained vital experience. In the new year, it is the turn of the junior teams who will be looking to defend their 2024-25 title.



Congratulations to a group of sixteen girls from 1st and 2nd year who competed in the Dublin City Sport and Wellbeing Partnership event, especially to **Amelia, Ellyn, Freya and Kara** (pictured, left) who took the gold medal in the relay. They represented the school admirably and we are all looking forward to more athletics events in the new year.

Field trip to inner city



As part of their investigation of social values in their Ethical Education course, two fifth-year classes visited a number of sites in inner city Dublin this month, including the Garden of Remembrance, Blessington Street Basin, and the 14 Henrietta Street social history museum.



Listening to stories of life 100 years ago in Dublin's tenements, while surrounded by the objects

Between the official commemoration of "all those who gave their lives in the cause of Irish freedom" (Garden of Remembrance), plus the change of purpose from a drinking water reservoir to a community park (Blessington Street Basin), and the story of how Georgian mansions became dilapidated tenements for the oppressed (14 Henrietta Street), the students acquired transformative material for learning in the short and long term.

Goggles on, scientists!

As part of Science Week, Firhouse ETSS accepted an invitation from the National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training (NIBRT) in Belfield to attend a special science event.

Ten students across 4th, 5th and 6th year took part in the visit, and had the opportunity to hear talks from researchers working in a range of scientific fields, including cell therapy and biochemistry, and take a guided tour of NIBRT's state-of-the-art facilities in Belfield to see how medications are developed and manufactured.

"It was great to be able to get a real picture in your head of what was involved in that world, the processes and the machinery, and how scientists bring it all together," explained Paige.

Meanwhile, other students had the opportunity to attend STEMfest, which took place in the Big Picture, Tallaght. As well as engaging with a range of interactive talks focused on science and the wide variety of careers available within STEM fields, students got down and nerdy on internet safety with an engaging Microsoft hacking workshop and with the world of coding during a hands-on game-building workshop with Amazon.



Tyla, Stanislav, Isabelle, Sarah, Halle, Adam, Saul, Saoirse, Paige and Esme visiting NIBRT



The Magic of Maths



Maths Week was sum-thing special this year as students put their problem-solving skills to the test across the school. Throughout the week, students played probability games, tackled Sudokus, solved word searches, battled it out in card games and Kahoots, and kept their maths eyes wide open for patterns, shapes and sneaky numbers hiding in plain sight.

Whether they were adding excitement, subtracting boredom, or multiplying their brainpower, our students proved that maths really does count!

We were delighted to welcome Mr Math Weeney back to our school for an engaging Maths talk with our 1st-year students. The aim was to prove mathematics can be fun, sociable, and full of surprises.

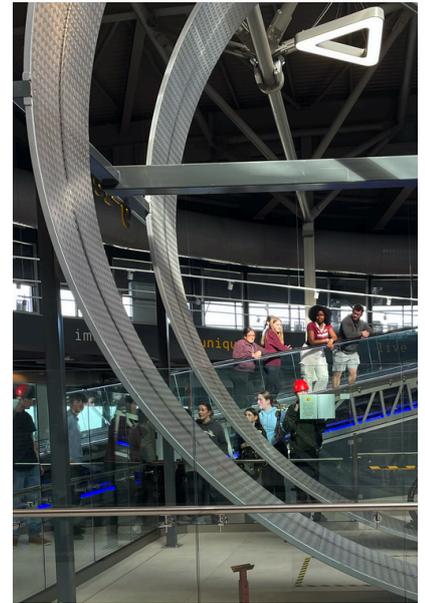
Involving a variety of interactive activities, including card games, magic tricks, and clever volume deceptions, all of which demonstrated how maths can be used to spark curiosity and connection. The session was highly engaging and encouraged students to see mathematics in a new and enjoyable way. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience for all involved, and we thank Mr Math Weeney for an inspiring and entertaining visit.

Meanwhile, our TY students took hands-on learning to a whole new level as they joined Mr Math Weeney for a juggling workshop. Not only did they learn how to keep three balls in the air (some more gracefully than others!), they also discovered that juggling isn't just a circus trick it's a quadratic function in action.

Junior Cycle Results and Explorium

On Wednesday 8 October, we celebrated another great set of Junior Cycle examination results in the school. These represent one component of the students' learning over their first three years and alongside their CBA results and Other Areas of Learning form the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA), which we look forward to presenting to the group in the new year. Our students, now in Transition Year, of course, did us proud and we were delighted to be able to celebrate with them with a trip to the sports and science centre, Explorium, in Sandymount.

Well done to all of our Junior Cycle 2025 students.



Gus and Sienna playing mind games. Or is it Guido and Conor in control?

Horticulture class

Our TY Horticulture students were invited to Knocklyon Park in September by the Dodder Action and Woodstown Village Residents Association to help prepare soil for a 'Stepping Stone Forest'.

Clare Hamilton, Biodiversity Officer with Dodder Action and consultant with The Heritage Council, was full of praise for the students: "We all loved your students, they showed lots of initiative, were busy with wheelbarrows and mulch all morning. We'd love to have them back to plant the trees in March 2026".

Meanwhile, the class has begun filling our beautiful new corten steel planters with hyacinth, tulip, allium and daffodil bulbs, all at different depths. The top is covered with heather and woodchip. The bulbs will flower at different times between spring and summer and against the rusted steel will make dramatic sights.



Firhouse ETSS students, including Gabriel, getting stuck in

Simon, James, Tyla learning from Michelle how to plan and plant a planter





Réaltchomharthaí ón bl. 6



An Gabhar (Capricorn)
(22ú Nollaig - 19ú Eanáir)

Is duine freagrach agus ceanndána thú. Faoin mhí seo chugainn, gheobhaidh tú dea-chomhartha a bhaineann le hiompar. Dá dtaistleoidh tú, bí cinnte go dtógfaidh tú hata mór leat. Is iad 50, 7, agus 28 d'uimhreacha ádhúla, agus is é gorm do dhath ádhúil.



An tiasc (Pisces)
(19ú Feabhra - 20ú Márta)

Is duine neamhspleách thú, ach ag an am céanna, is duine teasaí tintrí thú. Inniu, eagraigh an obair atá le déanamh agat agus éist leis an mbean aisteach. Ná hoscail d'fhuinneog mar beidh drochaimsir ann lasmuigh. Is iad 59 agus 70 d'uimhreacha ádhúla.



Iompróir an Uisce (Aquarius)
(20ú Eanáir - 18ú Feabhra)

Is duine neamhspleách agus loighciúil thú. Am dóchais agus athnuachana atá ann duit. Díriú ar do shaol gairme, scoile, nó sóisialta faoin am seo, agus feicfidh tú torthaí iontacha. Ná bí santach, agus bí cúramach faoi na daoine a bhfuil muinín agat astu. Tóg am duit féin. Is iad 4, 7, 11, 22, agus 29 d'uimhreacha ádhúla.

Traenáil na noifigí le Emmet Lucas

Ar an 18ú deireadh fómhair, chumar chuig oifig Chonradh na Gaeilge ar shráid Camden (**Emmet, Goodluck, Valentine agus Sam.**) Bhíomar ag foghlaim faoi Ghaeilge, agus conas is féidir linn spread a thabhairt chun daoine á labhairt sa scoil mar dhaltá. Is linne í a dúirt siad agus ní mór dúinn í a chosaint. Bhí cúpla múinteoir ann agus bhí siad an-chairdiúil. Fuaireamar lón, deochanna blasta agus t-léinte, bhí áthas orainn. Rinne mé a lán cairde sa Ghaeltacht agus bhí cúpla acu agus rinneamar cúpla cairde nua. Rinneamar cúpla tiktoks don Conradh na Gaeilge agus tá siad ar liné anois. Tá bród orainn anois chun gaeilge a scaipeadh sa scoil agus tá a lán smaointe againn don athbhliain.

A Latte Learning

On November 5th, Firhouse's Transition Year students took part in a barista course organised by Eoin. There were two stations where students learned how to steam milk, measure coffee shots, and make lattes with creative designs on top. In the second group, students explored the origins of coffee, coffee exporters, and many other interesting facts about the industry. They also had the opportunity to taste-test different types of coffee as if they were professional coffee graders.



Roni's turn to be barista

After completing the workshops, students were told they would receive a certificate recognising their participation and engagement in coffee-making and tasting activities. This certificate can later be added to their CVs and may help them find future employment.

Photo Wall



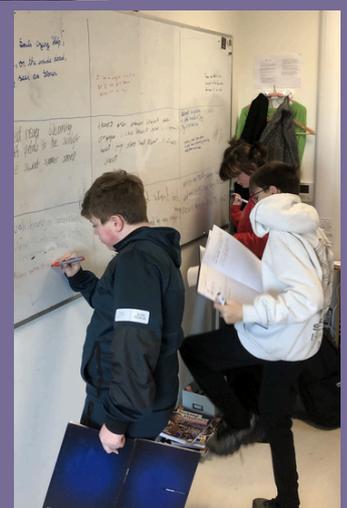
6th Leaving Cert. Applied students developing cooperation skills and trust at Dublin Climbing Centre as part of their task for Leisure and Recreation



Jason setting out his plot idea for a film workshop



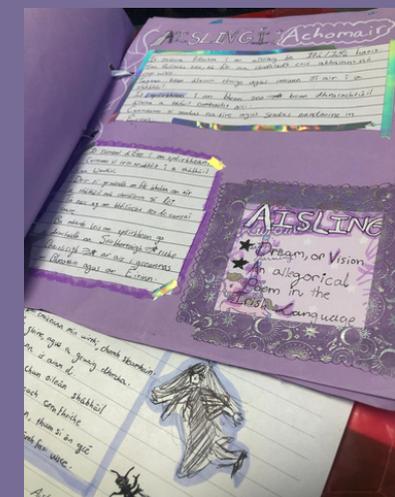
Autumnal themed poems adorn classroom wall



Nathan, Daniel and Meredith sharing their haikus



Mirroring the Oisín Kelly sculpture of the transformation of the four children of Lir into swans



Alanna's aising!



Broadening horizons together and sustainably

An Eoinnal (!) tradition at this stage and always on public transport, mid-September saw both groups of Leaving Cert. Applied students off on life enhancing outings. First, by train to "the Ploughing" in the heart of rural Ireland in Screggan, Co Offaly. This is character-building stuff just to experience, and while the National Ploughing Championship is an agricultural show at heart, it offers much more than just farming with a plethora of organisations and enterprises helping to inspire students to think as widely as possible about their futures.

Similarly, the World Skills event at the RDS is reachable by Dublin bus and a chance for students to find out about the full range of apprenticeships available in Ireland. All about raising the profile of skills careers, students discovered how vital these are to society and how personally fulfilling they can be.

In early November, all 5th-year students participated in a senior cycle open morning at TU Dublin's Tallaght campus, and had the opportunity to tour the facilities and engage with student ambassadors representing various departments. In addition to the tour, students attended talks on a variety of courses, gaining insights into future study options.

Later in November, again by train, a group of 5th- and 6th-year students visited the stunning new Ulster University. Schools liaison officer, Conán Mehan, guided us through the Fine Arts block, showcasing the graphic design lab and a purpose-built courtroom. The tour concluded with a presentation on the UCAS application process for UK universities.

For more information on careers and educational opportunities, please visit our school website. Navigate to the Curriculum section, then click Guidance to find details about CAO, DARE, and HEAR for 6th year students, as well as open days and events relevant to Transition Year and 5th year students.



Mary Ellen, Penelope, Eoin



Kelly in virtual reality



Innocent or guilty? SpongeBob in Court over Squidward's Broken 'Foot'

SpongeBob Squarepants appeared at Dublin's Central Criminal Court this month, charged with an assault on Squidward's tentacle at The Square Shopping Centre car park, Tallaght, on the night of 27 August 2024. SpongeBob had been charged under Section 3 of the Non-Fatal Against the Person Act of 1997, which states "a person who assaults another causing harm shall be guilty of an offence".

Proceedings were tense as lawyers put their clients' cases. Barristers for the prosecution argued that SpongeBob was shoved by Squidward during the altercation, causing Squidward to fall and break his foot. The defence countered that Squidward had slipped and that SpongeBob "never put a hand on him".

After deliberation, the jury returned a unanimous verdict of innocent, its foreperson stating, "we found reasonable doubt as to whether SpongeBob caused the injury".

The judge thanked the members of the jury for their service and released SpongeBob without prejudice.

- by Luke Cole



Live courtroom sketches by Kathlín



Griffin cross-examining Emily as Kermit

Rise and Dine

BREAKFAST BOOST

What is it?
Arrive early and enjoy a warm breakfast before school.

When is it?
On a few surprise mornings during these winter months.

What time?
Before school! From 07:45 to just before the first class!

What day?
That's a surprise!!!!—so you need to be on time every day!!

Start your day right, bright and early with a warm, tasty breakfast before school!! Hope to see you there!!