

# St. Helen's JNS

Newsletter - June 2024

*Green Schools update...*

## Global Citizenship 2024

This year we have all been working hard to achieve our "Global Citizenship Energy" flag. In order to achieve this flag we had to follow the seven steps of the Green-Schools Programme and implement energy-saving practices throughout the school. In addition to our work on energy conservation we have also been learning about what it means to be a good global citizen. On March 1st we had a whole school Green-Schools action day. We learned about energy conservation and everyone took part in a whole school poster competition. We created a special Green-Schools tree for the school corridor. We enjoyed some Green-Schools themed walks and we also had a lovely time reading Guzzler's Big Book on Energy in the library. On March the 11th we were visited by Róisín O'Connor Flanagan, from Fingal, who came to see all the wonderful work completed by St. Helen's JNS. The Green-Schools committee members were wonderful tour guides. They showed Róisín all the Green Schools project work on the walls, and ably presented photographs and videos of our work including our biodiverse gardens. Róisín conveyed how impressed she was by our efforts. We were absolutely delighted when she returned to the school and gave us the great news that we were being awarded our seventh Green Schools Flag.



*We are very proud of our Global Citizenship Energy Flag which we received this month.*



## Assistive Technology (AT)

This year we were delighted to support our Second Class pupils engage in assistive technology AT. (This opportunity will be extended to other classes next year). AT optimises pupils' experience and participation in education. Laptops were made available for children in classrooms, accessing the TTRS programme (Touch Type Read Spell) from Fingal County Council, using a digital reading pen and accessing their textbooks on laptops. We look forward to offering this programme to more of our pupils in the next school year.

**Philip Horan**



*Room 17 - Ms Walsh - Sports Day*



## A Word from the Chairperson...

The 2nd class children made their Sacrament of Communion in May. I would like to thank Canon John, Ercilia, Norma and the parish team for all the help and support that they provided to the school as they managed the organisation of these Sacraments. I would also like to thank the school for their commitment to the Catholic ethos of the school and the work they do in preparing the children for the Sacraments.

Canon John also visited the school last week and gave the whole-school a blessing to mark the feast of Corpus Christi. Congratulations to Eimear Kane on the recent birth of her beautiful baby Hugo. We also want to wish Mary Ahern all the best as she commences her Maternity Leave in September.

A lot of work has been done over the year on the New Maths Curriculum, supported by Oide. Also, it is encouraging that staff have committed to continue to promote wellbeing as the primary focus for this phase of School Self Evaluation.

There have been many achievements during the year, too numerous to mention! **The recent award of the Global Citizenship Energy Green Schools Flag** Ms Ahern has outlined the terrific work completed by the whole school and I would like to commend Ms Ahern and the student council for presenting so competently to Fingal earlier in the year. Congratulations to all on this wonderful achievement!

**Community Art Competition run by Orpea.** Again well done to all participants. Thanks to the parents for supporting the children, their teachers and SNAs for all the work involved and Graceanne O'Callaghan for coordinating the process.

**School tours** have been a great success with different classes travelling far and wide – great fun was had by all.

**School sports day.** It was a huge success with lots of competition in all the age events, from junior infants to competitive parents' and teachers' races!! Thanks to everyone for the successful preparation and management of the day.

**Summer Improvement Works.** Both the Junior and Senior Schools are currently negotiating with Orpea, the developers of the new nursing home 'The Residence'. Orpea has committed to completing significant work to make much needed improvements to the school avenue which will benefit the whole school community. They will also install another avenue to the junior school from Paddy's Hill which will allow our young children to travel to school on their scooters and bikes. The school will also resume close communication in September with Fingal to progress the Safe Route to School initiative. The Board of Management has prioritised the progress of these items on our agenda throughout the year.

Parents of incoming Junior Infants were invited to an Information meeting in the school which was very well attended. I'd like to thank the Parents' Association who provided tea and coffee at these meetings. The children then got an opportunity to visit their classroom and meet their teachers for next year, and they are very excited to start school on 28th August.

I'd like to thank the whole school community for all their work in providing a safe, healthy and educational setting for our children. In particular, I would like to thank the In School Management Team, Andrea Smith, Susan Kavanagh, Eimear Kane, Graceanne O'Callaghan, Louise Rooney, Philip Horan and Deirdre Magee for all the diligent and conscientious work they do. And, of course, we must send a huge thanks to our Principal Lorna Lavin.

Happy Holidays! I'd like to wish everyone a safe, healthy and happy summer.

**Celine O'Connell** Chairperson BOM



## Active School Week 2024

Active School Week kicked off at the beginning of June with our annual and very successful Sports Day up in Naomh Mearnóg, where again we were blessed with a lovely sunny morning. We want to express our gratitude to Sophie Walsh's Mam, Sharon, Sienna Fitzgerald's Mam, Kim and Michael Harris' Dad, Jamie for coming into school and running fun (and tiring) fitness and dance sessions with the children. We would like to commend the children who participated so well in all the energetic sessions throughout the week. As a staff we are so proud of the children and love to see them giving the events and races a go, getting exercise and most importantly having fun with their friends.

*Louise Rooney*



Room 6 - Ms Ryan - Sports Day





# Communion Party 2024!

The boys and girls in 2nd classes enjoyed many Communion celebrations put on by our wonderful PA.





# Go raibh maith agaibh go léir ó Ms Lavin....

As we approach the end of term and academic year I want to thank all families for your continued support. We have had another terrific year together with the children who light up our lives and the school! There have been so many fond memories over the year and thankfully we have been able to capture and share these highlights via our termly newsletter which Simon Archer comes up trumps time and time again to produce so professionally. Thank you Simon.

I want to thank so many of you who have given so generously of your time and expertise to the school all year. Andrea, Susan, Eimear, Grace, Louise, Philip and Deirdre - an amazing Deputy and ISM team, míle buíochas. I am extremely grateful to all our exceptional teachers and SNAs for their incredible dedication.

A huge thank you to Marcella for her kindness, loyalty and efficiency to us ALL over the school year. Her marvellous work ensures the school runs like clockwork!

Gerry, our wonderful caretaker has worked meticulously throughout the year ensuring that health and safety is present in so many of our systems. As well as the whole school staff, I know the parents and children also appreciate his constant help and caring presence on the school grounds.

We are extremely grateful to our dedicated Parents' Association who have given an incredible amount of support and so generously of their time which has resulted in the success of all events throughout the year.

The Chairperson and all members of the BoM have been magnificent with their constant and invaluable input to oversee the management of the school.

Thanks so much also to the July Provision staff who will work hard to ensure that these two extra weeks are happy and fun for our pupils.

Best wishes to our 2nd class pupils who are moving to Senior Schools next September. We will miss you all but look forward to always keeping in contact with you and your families in the future. To our incoming Junior Infants, we look forward to meeting you again on 28th August!

For most, today is the last day of the term and start of your well-deserved summer holidays.

Boys and girls, thank you for always doing your best. We are so proud of all of you. Have a lovely summer now agus slán go fóill.

**Ms. Lavin**



## Corpus Christi - School blessing from Canon John

Canon John Flaherty visited the boys and girls of second class last week to celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi and to bless the whole school before the summer break up. Norma Morrisson, parent and member of the parish team of St. Anne's organised this peaceful prayer time and supported Canon John in leading the 2nd class pupils in a very moving and calm school procession. The pupils and staff of the Junior school are very grateful to Fr John, Norma and the dedicated team in St. Anne's for their constant support and blessings throughout the year.



Room 21 - Mr Shevlin - Sports Day



# School Self Evaluation (SSE) update

It was communicated last term that as part of our ongoing SSE process (School Self Evaluation) this year we chose to focus on wellbeing as our priority target area. St Helen's Junior School has always had a strong, longstanding and holistic approach to wellbeing.

Each year we commit to delivering a variety of endorsed wellbeing programmes which use positive psychology approaches and are designed to explore feelings and to explore individual character strengths while providing opportunities to spot these strengths in ourselves and in others.

To engage in the SSE process we designed a questionnaire to invite the voice and opinion of pupils, staff and parent body of St. Helen's to enable us to improve on how we support the wellbeing of pupils and staff.

Thanks to all who completed these questionnaires. The honest feedback we received has provided us with insight and the opportunity as a whole school staff to reflect on and plan for how we can further work together to prioritise wellbeing in St Helen's Junior School.

More information will follow next year.



The three First Classes completed a block of five tennis coaching lessons with Tennis Ireland this term. Orla Wright, a past pupil from our school, delivered weekly lessons with the children introducing them to the basics of tennis. They were really engaging sessions which the children enjoyed immensely.

*Louise Rooney*



# Neurodiversity week

In April we celebrated neurodiversity at St Helen's. This coincides with World Autism Month and Autism Awareness Day which takes place every year on April 2nd, a designated United Nations Day of Observance. We are an inclusive school and support differences in all its forms.

Through practical activities, children learnt about our senses, how we communicate in different ways such as our voice, body language and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) used by some children in our school. Children learnt about how our brains all work differently and the ways we support each other. Children in second class discussed some facts about autism, ADHD, DCD and dyslexia.

We ended the week with a school assembly celebration where all the children enjoyed singing the week's theme song: Will.i.am Sings "What I Am".

*Philip Horan*



*Room 16 - Ms McGahon - Sports Day*





# Cabhair Centre Term

We had a fantastic time at our recent Sports Day! Pupils and teachers alike enjoyed a day full of exciting games, races and lots of cheering. Everyone's enthusiasm and sportsmanship made it a truly memorable morning. Our pupils embarked on a delightful trip to the local library. The bus ride was filled with laughter and anticipation and once at the library, the children explored a wide array of books, participated in engaging activities and spent some time chilling out in the sensory pod.



**Thank You, Fingal Libraries, for Your Sensory Backpack Donation!**  
We are immensely grateful to Fingal Libraries for their generous donation of a sensory backpack to our school. We appreciate their commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, especially those with sensory processing needs. The sensory backpack is not just a collection of items; it is a carefully curated set of tools designed to provide comfort, stimulation, and a sense of calm to children who may feel overwhelmed by their surroundings. Inside, we find items such as noise-cancelling headphones, tactile toys, weighted blankets, and fidget tools, all of which play a crucial role in helping students manage their sensory experiences. This sensory backpack will undoubtedly become an invaluable resource, helping us create a nurturing and responsive learning environment. Thank you once again, Fingal Libraries, for your generosity and for helping us support our students in such a meaningful way. With sincere gratitude,  
**St. Helen's Junior School**







**Cabhair Centre  
Graduation Day**



## The New Primary Maths Curriculum

September 2024 will see the introduction of the new Primary Maths Curriculum across all primary and special schools in Ireland. The new curriculum presents a fresh vision for children's mathematical learning that is characterised by playfulness, creativity, challenge, risk-taking, collaboration and opportunities for reasoning and solving real-life problems. It supports children in realising their full potential as individuals and as members of communities and society during childhood and into the future. While maintaining the strengths of the current curriculum a key focus of the new PMC is the 'How children learn is just as important as what children learn!'

In April of this year our teaching staff attended our first PMCTraining Day and all schools will receive further training in the new school year. We look forward to engaging with the new PMC which aims to provide a strong foundation for every child to thrive and flourish.

*Louise Rooney*



*Room 18 - Ms O'Callaghan  
Sports Day*





*Room 11 - Ms Fleming - Sports Day*



*Room 13 - Ms Manning - Sports Day*



*Isabella Rusk Room 7, 2nd Class*



*Léana Branagan Room 14, 1st Class*



*Rudhán Morgan Room 6, 2nd Class*



*Lily Murray-Matthews Room 18, Senior Infants*

# Orpea Art Competition

During the month of March the children in St.Helen's JNS were creatively working on preparing their entries for the art competition run by Orpea, the company responsible for The Residence, the nursing home development in Portmarnock. The children were invited to create pictures depicting famous landmarks around Dublin and local landmarks in Portmarnock. Pieces had to be A3 size and completed using colouring pencils or acrylic paint. The children could only use the colours green, blue and yellow! Our young pupils rose to the challenge, creating beautiful depictions of local landmarks, making them come alive using only three colours!

Orpea had decided that the winning pieces would form their art portfolio for the corridors of the nursing home. In doing so, they hoped to bring the community inside the nursing home and that the pieces will allow residents to associate these landmarks with memories while walking the building. We thought this was a lovely idea! This competition afforded our pupils the opportunity to create something long lasting within the walls of the nursing home.

Usually when reporting on an art competition, we would display the winners' work in the Catch Up newsletter but these pieces have a special job on the walls in the nursing home! For this reason, they will not be returned to us. Luckily, I snapped a few photos before I sent them off!! Isabella's work was actually one of the 31 winners! I also had a photo of Lily in my class creating her winning masterpiece!! I've included some pictures to show examples of the very high standard of the work. The Junior School was excited to have 31 of the 42 winners. We were delighted that all our entrants received a prize for taking part! The winners won vouchers for Emerald Park, The Zoo or Smyths! Huge Congratulations to all!

*Graceanne O'Callaghan, Art Coordinator.*





**Art Competition Winners**



# Food Dudes 2024



St Helen's Junior School participated in Phase 3 of the Food Dudes programme on the 29th April 2024. The aim of this programme is to promote healthy eating by providing opportunities for repeated tasting of fruits and vegetables. Each day a variety of different fresh fruit and vegetables were delivered to each classroom and sampled by the children. The children learned about the health benefits of eating a variety of fruit/veg as part of a healthy diet. A food passport gave them the choice to record their progress throughout the week. We were hugely impressed by the positive attitude displayed by all the children and by the enthusiastic smiles that greeted the daily delivery in anticipation of our fruit/veg break which happens at 10:30am everyday. It was so encouraging to see the positive relationship which the children have already developed with food and their understanding of how healthy eating can benefit their overall health and wellbeing.

**Andrea Smith**



*Thank you Sarah and Keith for our beautiful balloon arch to celebrate Sports Day 2024!*





## The Ark, Puddenhill

There was a little bit of everything on our day at The Ark, Puddenhill- farm animals, playgrounds, a play centre, tractors, cute bunnies and of course the total and utter excitement of going on the top deck of a double decker bus!!!

A thoroughly enjoyable day was had by all.

**Ms. Rooney.**



Please click on link to hear the pupils from First Class in Mrs. Manning's class enjoy singing en francais!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrEjGCmtIAU&authuser=0>



**Room 20, Junior Infants - Nature Walk with Butterfly Art,**



**Room 11 - Ms Fleming Red Mountain Farm**



### Condolences

The staff of St. Helen's Junior National School extends our sincere sympathy to the family of Mr Bryan Walsh. May Bryan Rest in Peace.

We also want to express our condolences to Paddy Gorey and his sons Daniel and Sean on the recent passing of Clare.

Our prayers are with their families during this sad and difficult time.

Ar Dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha dílse.



**1st Class visit The Lark**





**Our Wonderful Clock Display French Style!**  
Room 13



Room 18 - Ms Ahern - Sports Day



**Comhghairdeas!**  
Comhghairdeas to Ms Kane and Liam on the recent birth of baby Hugo who we were very excited to meet today in school!