

# Creagh N.S. Winter Newsletter December 2022

## Message from Mrs. Bleahene

The first term of the 2022/2023 school year in Creagh National School has been filled to the brim with a wide variety of learning opportunities, fantastic field trips/excursions, thematic weeks, successful fund raising events and exciting new initiatives. The Summer building project was successfully completed in time for the first day of term and Ms Cahalan's Senior Infants have settled very comfortably into their new, state of the art classroom. We are delighted once more to have been able to revive the practice of welcoming parents and visitors onto the premises for scheduled events. The school has hosted information meetings/meet and greet evenings for Junior Infants and Senior Infants as well as a Friends for Life Information Night, a Restorative Practice Talk and a Cyber Safety Night for parents this term. There have been a suite of plays and productions in the run up to the holidays (which have included nativity plays, Carol Services, School Mass, Singalongs, Elf Antics) that have all been very well attended and hugely enjoyable. I would like to extend a huge thank you to pupils, staff, parents and community for your continuing support in ensuring that we can provide the very best learning environment possible. We look forward to wonderful things to come in the year ahead.



*Tús maith leath na hoibre*

Acting Principal: Áine Ní Cholleráin (Bleahene)

### First Communion. Confirmation Dates

#### First Communion/ Sacrament of the Eucharist

Venue: St Michael's Church  
Date: Saturday May 13th

Time: 11am



#### Confirmation

Venue: St Michael's Church  
Date: Wednesday 31st May

Time: 3pm



### Calendar Closure Dates for Term 2

- January '23 : Re-opening Thursday 5th January
- February '23 : St Brigid's Day closure : 6th, Closed at 12:30pm on 10th for PLC Staff training Day
- Midterm (Closed Monday 13th- Friday 17th inclusive)
- March '23 Closed Thursday 17th St Patrick's Day
- April '23: Easter Holidays: (Closed Monday April 3rd - Friday 14th inclusive)

The Admissions Notice and Admissions Statement have been published on our school website. The statement has been amended as per Circular 75/2022

**The school will accept applications for admission from 9/01/2023 to 10/02/2023**

Admission/Enrolment forms for 2023/2024 will be available from the school website or to collect from the school from **9/1/2023**

### Parent-Teacher Meetings

Parent Teacher Meetings will take place from the 15th of January to the 3rd of February. We will be using Aladdin Connect to assign meetings this year. Meetings will issue in the new term.

- **4th/5th/6th class: 17th / 19th January**
- **1st/2nd/3rd class: 24th /26th January**
- **Junior/ Senior Infants: 31st January /2nd February**

# The Leadership Team in Creagh N.S.: 2022/2023

**Acting Principal:** Mrs Áine Ní Chollerain (Bleahene)

**Acting Deputy Principal:** Ms Majella O' Rourke: Primary Language

**Assistant Principal 1:** Mrs Caroline Gallagher: Health and Safety/ Art/ Rental Books/Garden

**Acting Assistant Principal 1:** Ms Regina Power: ICT/ Maths

**Assistant Principal 2:** Ms Ann Farrell: Assessment

**Assistant Principal 2:** Mr Shane Dolan: Inclusion and Diversity

**Assistant Principal 2:** Mr Mark Ronaldson: SESE

**Acting Assistant Principal 2:** Ms Laura Gallagher: SPHE



## The Support Team

**School Secretary:** Ann Haynes

**School Caretaker:** Eddie Brady

**School Cleaners:** Tracy Rigney  
Áine O' Neill

**Crossing Guard:** Mary Madden  
**Additional Needs Assistants**

Helena Divilly Sweeney

Siobhán Carty

Sarah Loughnane

Patricia Rooney

Fran Lyons

Aoife Monaghan

Catherina Concannon



## The Creagh Parents' Association

We would like to express our most sincere thanks to the dedicated members of the Parents' Association for all their tremendous efforts this term. From fundraising to tea making and toy selling to WhatsApping, they can always be counted on to lend their support with enthusiasm.

### Parents Association Officers

**Chairperson:** Eimear Connaughton

**Assistant Chairperson:** Joni Sweeney

**Secretary:** Charlene Hurley

**Treasurer:** Emma Noone

**PRO:** Olivia Nolan

### Contacting the Parents Association

Email: [creaghparentsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:creaghparentsassociation@gmail.com)

Or via your class reps on WhatsApp.

## The Teaching Team : 2022/2023

**Junior Infants:** Ms Emily Lohan, Ms Kiara Barrett, Ms Orla Carty

**SET:** Ms Majella O' Rourke, Mr. Shane Dolan

**Senior Infants:** Ms Fionnuala Colohan, Miss Aisling Connaughton/Ms Klara Donohue, Ms Sinéad Cahalan

**SET:** Ms Karen Dooley, Mr Kevin Barrett

**First Class:** Ms Ria Curtin, Ms Grace Carey

**SET:** Ms Ann Farrell

**Second Class:** Ms Laura Gallagher, Ms Jennifer Fox

**SET:** Ms Rachel Coen

**Third Class:** Ms Caroline Gallagher, Ms Regina Power

**SET:** Mr Kevin Moloney

**Fourth Class:** Ms Antoinette Blade, Mr Mark Ronaldson

**SET:** Mr Matthew Comerford

**Fifth Class:** Mr. Alan O' Donovan

**SET:** Ms Emer Moran

**Sixth Class:** Ms Sinéad Kenny, Mr Liam Geraghty

**SET:** Ms Carol McCann

**Shared SET:** Ms Mary McCarthy

**Supply Panel:** Ms. Ciara Duffy, Ms. Cassandra Mitchell, Ms. Kathy Daly



## Creagh N.S. Board Of Management 2019-2023

**Chairperson:** Mr Frank Gallagher

**Secretary/ Principal:** Mrs Áine Ni Chollerain (Bleahene)

**Treasurer:** Ms Rita Moore

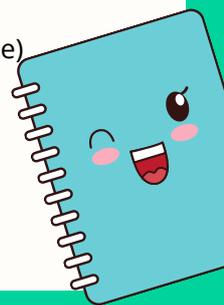
Mr Aidan Curley

Fr. John Garvey

Mrs. Miriam Comerford

Mrs. Carmel Stack

Mrs. Caroline Gallagher



## The Student Council

Our Student Council consists of twelve pupils from 5th and 6th classes, who were elected to the roles by their peers. The Council members have been very busy in the first term. In late October they organised a hugely successful fundraiser for local girl Robyn Donoghue. They have also been involved in assembling toys and other resources for the infant classes, meeting and greeting parents and other guests attending the school, collecting and counting of money relating to other fundraising events, and forming a link between pupils and staff through regular communication. The Student Council are very eager, hard-working and have already shown themselves to be a great credit to our school and they have many other projects in the pipeline for the new year. Many thanks to **Mr Dolan** for all his work with the Student Council this year.

### Student Council 2022-2023 with Mr Shane Dolan

*Carly Furey, Ava Grenham, Danny Mulcahy, Hashir Muhammad, Oisín Murphy, Leah Kelly, Oskar Zawada, Layla Moylan, Tiernan Nevin, Sarah Ward, Tyler Garvey, Seán Murray*

## Ethos

We celebrated our return to school with a whole school mass in September. Our Junior Infants joined us for the first time and were welcomed to the school community in song. We have continued our practice of Weekly class-led Zoom assemblies. During these wonderful occasions, children have also had the opportunity to learn some sign language. Many thanks to Ms Lohan, Aoife and Oliver for facilitating this. The term closed with another whole school mass to celebrate Christmas. We would really like to acknowledge the help, support and guidance of Fr Garvey and Fr Charles throughout the year. Many thanks also to Ms Lohan, Mr Comerford and the 4th/5th and 6th class pupils and teachers for enhancing the celebrations with their singing. We continue to celebrate and acknowledge the wonderful diversity of all our school community.



## Some Sign Language we have Learned



thank you



HOUSE



Santa

## Science Week

Creagh NS held an eventful Science week in November. The children showed great interest, imagination and knowledge when completing a range of Science activities over the course of the week. 3rd and 4th Class attended the Bin It Recycling Roadshow where they learned all about the importance of discarding litter correctly during an entertaining show. 5th and 6th Class showed their creativity when creating airplanes in a Lego workshop. Each class enjoyed the fun experiments and lessons that Professor Messer taught in his interactive and educational Science exhibition. The children really showcased all their talent when completing the Design and Make Homework Challenge where they had to invent a new trophy for the World Cup. The standard of entries was amazing, once again proving that Creagh NS is full of budding scientists and engineers. **Many thanks to Mr Ronaldson for co-ordinating this terrific event.**



## Green School Committee



We have recently formed a Green-School Committee as we look to attain our next Green Flag which focuses on the theme of Litter and Waste. Congratulations to **Maeve Duffy, Ben Kelly, Nik Aimal Andik Najib, Alice Nery Pyles, Alex Sheridan, Shaniya Ward, Aoibheann O'Connell, Dylan Greene, Anas Fanta, Victoria Zdziech, Tahmid Chowdhury Olshorjo and Amy Brannelly** who were elected as our Green-School Committee for the coming year. This committee will be the driving force of our efforts to obtain our next flag. Watch out for many fun and educational initiatives which will be run by the Green-School Committee in the new year.



## Internet Safety Week

The internet is a fantastic resource for the children in our school. However in an ever-changing world, ensuring pupils' safety online has never been more important. **With this in mind Ms Power organised an 'Internet Safety Week' from the 17th to the 21st of October.**

All children engaged in activities, during the week, which explored using the internet safely, communicating online, playing/learning online and getting help and support. The activities included engaging with webwise.ie resources, reading Internet safety books on EPIC, creating Internet Safety Slogans using Chatterpix, Playing 'Interland' – an internet safety game, taking part in Kahoot quizzes and creating posters. The children from 3rd to 6th engaged with 'Safer Internet' Workshops presented by Shamira from Barnardos. The workshops focused on making good choices, being kind online and thinking critically and smart about the information they see online.

There was a very informative workshop for parents, again presented by Barnardos, on Tuesday the 18th of October. At the workshop parents learned practical tips to help them keep their children safe and resilient online. Resources for parents, to help with the area of Internet Safety, were shared with all parents on Aladdin.

The week was very successful with the children developing their skills to use technology safely and responsibly.

## Friends For Life and Fun Friends

Huge thanks to Mr Dolan and Ms O' Rourke who have been facilitating **Fun Friends and Friends For Life**, with 1st Class, 2nd Class and 5th class this term. **This is an evidence based Wellbeing and Resilience programme** that is highly recommended by NEPs and we are confident that it will equip children with the skills they need for successful management of future stressful situations in life. The programme culminated in a highly enjoyable party on the last day.



## Fundraising and Social Action in Creagh N.S.

There have been lots of activities going on throughout the school to raise funds and make collections for a variety of good causes in our community and the wider society. It is a huge testament to the generosity of all those affiliated with our school that these altruistic events have all been so well supported. These types of activities are very much grounded in our ethos and we are proud of our track record for extending a hand of friendship with compassion and kindness. 3rd and 6th class have also taken part in Social Action in the Community and the 5th and 6th class choir participated in the Turning on of the Christmas lights in Ballinasloe.



### The Toy Sale.

On the the 29th of Septemer there was a great air of excitement in our school with the return of the 'Toy Sale'. Ms Blade and her class transformed the school hall into an Aladdin's cave of toys, books and bric a brac. All classes got their turn to visit the hall to go shopping and take part in the raffle and competitions organised for the day. Ms Power's 3rd class were very excited to be the shopkeepers on September 30th- the Sale Day! All left over toys were sold at a stall, in town, on Country Fair Day. It was a hugely successful venture with a fantastic sum of **€5,332.20** raised. This money will go to providing **Sensory Play areas in our school.**

A sincere thanks to the pupils, parents and members of our community who supported the endeavour with their donations and money. A special thanks to the staff (In particular Ms Blade and Ms Power) and Parents Association who volunteered their time to make the event such a success.

We had lots of winners on the day. The raffle winners were **Oisín Murphy, Dylan Greene, Alan Lenovos, Paul Óg Flynn, Sally Browne, Bart Polak.** The winners of 'Ireland's Fittest Pupils - Wall Sit Challenge' were **Cian Casey, Iarlaith Hurley and Conal Flynn.** The winner of 'Guess the Weight of the Pumpkin' was **Mr O' Donovan** and he was presented with a life size teddy. The pumpkin, which was grown by Mrs Gallagher's class (2021/22), weighed a whopping 23.4kg. **Nevin Smijo** was the lucky winner of the pumpkin itself and he went on to retrieve 117 seeds from it. There will be no shortage of pumpkins next year in Creagh!



## Bumbleance Fundraiser

The Student Council have been very busy in the first term. In late October they organised a hugely successful fundraiser for local girl Robyn Donoghue. A 'Dress-Up' day was held in the school and **€1,250** was raised towards Bumbleance trips for Robyn.



## Lion's Club Christmas Food Appeal

Creagh N.S. sent out our annual request for the school community to donate goods towards our traditional Christmas Food Appeal again this year. **We have been humbled by the extraordinary generosity with which our call has been answered.**

A most sincere thanks to all those who have contributed and a special word of thanks to Ms Gallagher who co-ordinated the event for the Ballinasloe Lions Club in the school again this year.



**Ms Gallagher and members of second class with a small sample of goods donated towards our Christmas Food Appeal.**

## Christmas Jumper Day

We are delighted to announce that our school raised **450** euro for local causes, (**Ballinasloe Social Services and Galway Hospice**) when we all left aside the school uniform and put on our Christmas Jumpers.



## Mr. Geraghty's class are Rocking their Christmas Jumper Style!



### 3rd Class go Carol Singing in the Ballinasloe Social Services

As part of their social action for Advent, third class visited the Social Services Centre and the neighbouring preschool. After practicing for many hours in school, they dressed up in their Christmas jumpers and hats and sang a beautiful repertoire of Christmas hymns and Carols. The audience clapped along and enjoyed the Christmas cheer. The children experienced the feel good factor, they were very proud of their efforts and felt they brought some Christmas cheer to others. Well done 3rd class. **Many thanks to Ms Gallagher, Ms Power and Mr Comerford** for their great work on this project.



### Parents' Association Fundraiser

675 euro was raised during the Arts and Hobbies 'Dress Up Day' in aid of the Creagh Parent's Association.



### 4th Class Athletics Programme in TÚS, Athlone

For the first time this year, fourth class attended a 6 week Athletics programme in TÚS (Formally AIT Athlone)



### Peace Proms Choir

**The children in 5th and 6th class from Creagh NS will be participating in the Limerick based Peace Proms on January 21st 2023.** Peace Proms is a free resource and choral education project for Primary Schools. The musical programme is tailor made to ensure it is fun and engaging for children, fulfils important educational requirements, is very rewarding to teach, and the end performance is an inspirational and thrilling experience for choirs, teachers, parents and audiences alike!



## Sensory Spaces and Becoming an Autism Friendly School

We are currently embarking on the journey towards becoming an **Autism-Friendly School**.

This initiative is run by the organisation 'As I Am' and is a very worthwhile, self-reflective project. For much of this process we will identify what we are doing well as a school in how we cater for autistic people, while pinpointing where there is room for improvement and make adaptations to our school environment accordingly. We have established that there is a great need for the development of sensory areas both inside and outside the school building, specifically an indoor sensory pathway, an indoor calming area and an outdoor sensory area. We are very fortunate to have the funds raised from our hugely successful Toy Sale, which has been ring-fenced for this purpose. (Thanks Ms. Blade and Ms. Power!) However we are currently investigating other sources of funding as we have very ambitious plans. Many thanks to the members of our 'Sensory Committee' and also to our caretaker Eddie Brady who has already started to prepare our indoor sensory pathway. **Sincere thanks to Mr Dolan who will be leading this initiative in the school.**

## A CALM SPACE



## FISHY LIGHTS



## OUR BLANK CANVAS



## Growth Mindset

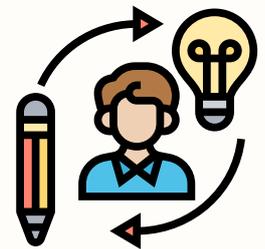


### Developing growth mindsets:

At our initial staff meeting in late August, we spent some time looking at ways to enhance our learning culture by developing growth mindsets. How the brain 'works', is central to the notion of mindset. People with a fixed mindset believe that they are born with a certain amount of intelligence and that it is fixed for the rest of their lives. People with a growth mindset, however, know that intelligence is not fixed and that you can 'grow' your intelligence. All it takes is time, effort, practice and input. Pupils with a growth mindset want to learn more, they embrace challenges and persist in the face of setbacks and they are willing to put in effort.

This term we selected a number of strategies for developing a school-wide growth mindset culture. We have a bank of lessons, resources, video clips for each class to encourage growth mindset thinking and classroom discussion. Teachers are using praise language which focuses on achievement and effort and we have displayed colourful posters to reinforce the message. We celebrate mistakes as proof of trying. Children's comments give us great insight into the impact of our focus on growth mindsets: we have recorded pupils saying, 'I don't know these words YET,' 'I made a marvellous mistake' and 'I had a go and it worked!' These pupils are developing the appropriate attitude and self-belief. Next term we will continue to develop our learning culture with a focus on our 'learning powers.'

## Assessment



### CAT4

In November and early December students in 2nd and 5th class took the Cognitive Abilities Test Fourth Edition (CAT4) which assesses how well a student can think about tasks and solve problems using a range of different questions. Student feedback was positive, they were happy to complete the digital version using the iPads. This test replaces the Nonverbal Reasoning Test (NVRT) and the Non-reading Intelligence Test (NRIT); both pencil and paper tests were used in our school for almost two decades.

CAT4 is used in many schools across Ireland to provide information to teachers, students and parents that, with other information, forms the basis for discussion about how best an individual can learn and reach his or her potential in school.

CAT4 does not require any prior knowledge and you cannot 'learn' how to answer the questions in CAT4. It is therefore a good test because everyone starts at the same place.

CAT4 contributes to setting targets and allows an individual's progress to be monitored. CAT4 results will help teachers decide about the pace of learning that is right for an individual and whether additional support or challenge is needed. CAT4, unlike an English or maths test, is not a test of what the student has learned. It tests how an individual can think in areas that are known to make a difference to learning and achievement. **During the parent/teacher meetings in January/February '23 parents of pupils in 2nd and 5th class will receive feedback on this test in conjunction with other tests and teacher observations.**

**Many thanks to Ann Farrell** for her immense work in co-ordinating Assessment in the school.



## Literacy and Numeracy in Creagh N.S.

We place a huge emphasis on hands-on learning for Maths and the Ready Steady Maths and Mata sa Rang programmes from Junior Infants to Second Class have been heavily resourced with Extra SET support and physical resources so that children are enabled to learn according to their ability / potential and taught according to best practice.

### Readathon to Support MS

This November the pupils of Creagh NS took part in the MSReadathon. This is a great cause and a fantastic way to encourage children to read. The pupils in Senior Infants, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth raised €1,148 and the money has been sent to MS Ireland in Dublin 4. A huge thank you to everyone who took part and best of luck to everyone entered into the draw which takes place on Monday 19th December.



## Reading Recovery

Our school has been very lucky in being offered an additional Reading Recovery position for a teacher this year. Reading Recovery is a licensed, school-based, short-term, early literacy intervention. It is designed for children aged around six who have completed 12 months of school. Reading Recovery involves intensive one-to-one lessons for 30 minutes a day with a specially trained Reading Recovery teacher. This series of lessons is individually designed for each child, based on moment by moment observations and skilled teacher decisions. The Reading Recovery teacher creates opportunities for the child to problem solve and provides just enough support to help the child develop strategic behaviours to use on texts in both reading and writing. Next June Creagh NS will have three fully trained Reading Recovery teachers.

### Gaelbhrtach

Our school has registered for Gaelbhrtach and looks forward to beginning the process to achieve a special flag to show that we as a school teach certain lessons through Irish and promote the use of Irish throughout the school day.



gaelbhrtach

### Investment in Literacy in 2022/2023

In November Creagh NS invested in Folen's **Comprehension boxes** from 1st to 6th. This series is a set of six boxes, designed to support the teaching and learning of nine different comprehension strategies. It is fully aligned with the **Building Bridges Programme** already in use in the school and should enhance the comprehension skills of children in the school. It consists of eighty-one original fiction and non-fiction texts that covers a wide range of genres, on cards and within the teacher guide. These texts are anchored by the nine key strategies to entice children of all reading levels.

### Funding for Literacy Resources

A once-off funding has been made available to enable all recognised primary and post-primary schools in the Free Education Scheme to purchase books, audio books and other media for the purposes of improving their existing literacy resource banks. The funding provision will be supported by public libraries under the Public Library Supports for Schools, in order to assist schools in planning expenditure of the grant funding. Creagh N.S. is currently compiling wish lists of appropriate literacy materials in consultation with teachers and pupils in the school. We plan to have purchased new literacy resources for each mainstream class in the New Year. Many thanks to Ms O' Rourke for co-ordinating Primary Language in the school.



## Friendship Week

In September, we celebrated Friendship Week which was led by our wonderful Student Council. In Creagh National School, we place great importance on this week as we know how hugely important friendships and relationships are for our wellbeing and happiness. We decided to weave some themes of Restorative Practice into our daily activities, including; kindness, empathy, patience, courage and open-mindedness. Our daily Circle Times were a helpful way to create discussions and build connections with one another. Check out some of our snaps below.



## 6th Class trip to Ericssons

Both 6th classes were fortunate to be invited to attend a Coding Day in Ericssons, Athlone this November. It was a really fun and educational field trip and we would like to express our thanks to BOM Treasurer, Ms Rita Moore for organising for us to participate. We would love to make this an annual event!



## Visit from Heather Payne

Past pupil extraordinaire and member of the highly successful Irish Soccer Team, Heather did us the honour of taking time out from her incredibly busy schedule to visit us again this year.

Thanks to Heather for her continuing support!! She is a brilliant role model for all athletes and we are proud to claim her as one of our own!! We look forward to following her on her adventures 'down under' during this year's World Cup. Heather presented **Ms Klara Donoghue with a bunch of flowers in honour of her becoming an All-Ireland Champion with Sarsfields for the second year running.** We are proud of both of you!!



# FESTIVE ACTIVITIES

## Report from the First Class Mystery tour..... To the Athlone Post Office Sorting Office

We had a wonderful day at our secret location in Athlone, the Post Office Sorting Centre!. When we arrived we posted our Christmas cards. Arthur the postman collected them. He put them on a conveyor belt and the children watched as the cards travelled through a special sorting drum. We saw the names of towns all around Ireland and how the postal staff organise the post to arrive at the correct location. Most importantly we spotted the address for Santa Claus in The North Pole! Would you believe, Santa dropped by and said hello to all of the children! We couldn't believe our eyes!! Finally, we had treats and drinks in the canteen. It was a fantastic day, take a look at our photos..... great times and great memories for first class.

**Special thanks to Andrew Naughton (father of Kate), Betty, Eileen, Arthur and all the staff for their warm hospitality.**



# Christmas Singalong



6th Class headed off to Ballinasloe Town Square on Monday the 19th of December armed with cookies, collecting boxes and beautiful singing voices. Although the weather was atrocious, their spirits were raised throughout and they managed to spread Christmas joy to all those lucky....and brave enough to chance the elements. Both classes sang their hearts out and did the school and their families great credit with their fantastic efforts. Well done, sixth class and thanks to Mr, Geraghty, Ms Kenny, Mr Comerford and Mr Barrett for their enthusiasm and support. **The children raised 360 euro for the Tanzania on the day.**

Plays, Productions and activities  
Senior Infants





### Elf Antics with Ms Blade's Class

Ms Blade's Fourth Class got up to lots of Elf Antics with their Elf Workshop. The younger classes had terrific fun making, building, painting and even throwing snowballs at each other. This terrific activity is the brainchild of Ms Blade and has become a firm favourite with children and staff alike! Well done to all the elves for adding to the fun of the festive season.

Plays, Productions and activities  
Second Class



Plays, Productions and activities  
Fifth Class



Fifth Class



**Plays, Productions and activities  
Junior Infants**



**Plays, Productions and activities  
First Class**



**Message from The Chairperson of the Board of  
Management; Mr Frank Gallagher**

*As the year draws to a close and we enter the festive season, on behalf of the Board of Management I wish to thank everyone who has worked with us and supported us over the past year. I wish everyone a very festive holiday season and a prosperous New Year*

*Beannachtai na Féile*

*Frank Gallagher*

*Chairperson of the BOM.*