

January saw us move back to school following works necessitated by Storm Ophelia. Storm Emma followed quickly but afforded our pupils the chance to play in large snow. We waved goodbye to 25 pupils and welcomed 19 juniors. During the year we bade farewell to our esteemed colleague Anna and welcomed back Miss Melody, Miss Moore, Miss Mitchell and Mr. O'Cuírrín. Mr Early from Clerihan joined the staff. Brendan Reilly and Eleanor Muhlwald both left our BOM after serving 7 and 3 years respectively having given tremendous service. We welcome Breda Houlihan and Andrew Ryan on board.

**Environment:** We continue to promote Green policies in relation to litter reduction, water conservation and energy reduction. We are now in the process of acquiring our 5th Green Flag on Bio-diversity and the Green School's Committee is working diligently to this end. We also liaise with the Tidy Towns on its annual application and engage in projects to try and have the school look its best. Congratulations to them on successes in 2018.

**Religion:** 2018 was a busy year sacramentally with 4 events taking place locally in May. Bishop Cullinan, confirmed our Fourmilewater candidates and their Nire counterparts on the same day. First Communion was administered by Fr. Kelleher and Fr. Desmond. Our religious inspection occurred in June when we held a farewell mass for Rang 6 and retirement mass for Anna. We welcomed our Grandparents in January as part of Catholic Schools' Week. We held a prayer service for the repose of the soul of the late Gerard Kiely, Curtiswood and Newcastlewest after Easter. As I write, Nire Communion has been scheduled for Sun 19th May and FMW one week later, Sun 26th May. We liaise well with both parishes in sacramental preparation and I thank both staff and parish volunteers for their assistance.

**Sport:** Our pupils excel both in and out of the classroom. We encourage our pupils to be active and find their preferred sports / pastimes. We thank all those who help in any way to encourage sport at our school; our staff, including Mrs Byrne, Mr O Cuírrín and Mrs Coffey, our local clubs, our coaches Barry Dunne, Eoin Wall and parents. We are traditionally very successful at this level, but it is the competing which is so important.

In 2018 we won the Girls West Football Competition but were unlucky in the County Final when bowing to Ballygunner NS by 2 pts. It was a very close match and could have gone either way. Our boys reached both Western A finals in 2018 but were narrowly defeated on both occasions. We did present our 2017 medals in June and our guest speaker on the night was local Gael Michael Ryan. We wish Michael well in future endeavours and congratulate him on his recent tenure as Lake county manager.

In May we swept the boards during the Athletic Club Race meet. We partake in swimming annually in Clonmel and have a designated Active Week each June. Weekly, we hear of our pupils excelling in team and individual sports. We congratulate them as we do, the Nire/FMW /Ballymacarbry Ladies and all other local clubs on their successes and wish them well for the coming year.

**The Arts:** The arts are catered for admirably at school. Numbers in our Banna Ceoil under Mrs Kelly & Niamh Fenton are very high, playing a range of musical instruments. They assist in times of sacraments as well as other functions. We were guests at the recent Nire Fair. Oidhreacht Fr. Bracken was again held in our school in July, where the music and songs of our former priest were played and learned. It was a week of gaeilge, cluichí, craic agus ceoil and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Ar aghaidh leis an gceol.

Clan Cluana staged Fionn Mac Cumhaill from Irish History and Mythology. As is tradition at our school, we would have staged our Annual Céilí prior to St Patrick's Day. This affords our pupils an appreciation of dance and an opportunity to experience all that is culturally great about our area. Our Christmas concert involving

Jun. to Rang 2 is scheduled for Wed. 19th Dec. in the Nire Church and after the festivities our senior pupils will stage their concert on Tues 19th Feb. at the Centre.

**Visitors:** Visitors who called during the year would include Michael Langton - Clann Cluana, Alma Jordan - Agri Kids for Farm Safety Week, Cathal McCarthy - Road Safety Authority, Robyn Barry - Waterford City & Co. Co. in relation to attaining our 5th Green Flag, Dungarvan Fire Service in relation to Fire Safety in the home, Garda, Phil Dee in relation to Drug Awareness and Road Safety. Edel Burke – RSE talk to Rang 6 and local First Responder Alan Walsh spoke to Rang 3 on CPR / First Aid matters, while the staff also availed of group tuition on this.

We facilitated placements for student teachers and transition year past pupils during the year. I hereby acknowledge their help. This brought additional inspectors with a visit from our cigure when she finalised our recent WSE Report which was very complimentary towards us. Our Religious Inspection was also of a very high standard. On a negative note, we had some unwelcome visitors, when the premises was robbed for a second time in 3 years. Fortunately only superficial damage was incurred as no monies or valuables are ever held onsite.

**Activities:** Some of the activities staged this year would include Grandparents' Day, Pancake Tuesday, Food Dudes, School Tours, 6th Class Excursion, Active Week, Green Flag, Graduation Mass, PA Cake Sale, Maths Week, Science Excellence Award, Christmas Shoe Box and Christmas Hamper Appeal, Open Morning, Coding Day, BOM Parent Elections, Retirement Function, and undertaking a place-names of the locality project in conjunction with Waterford City & Co. Co. 6th Class pupil Tommy Power entered us into a competition on Today FM with the chance of winning €10,000 worth of PE equipment for our school. We were unsuccessful but we did make the last 5 shortlist and our ears were glued to Ian Dempsey's Breakfast Show that morning. Glad to report, we are planning for 2019 and more visitors calling.

**Enrolment:** Those intending to enrol their children at our school are urged to do so by contacting Rose at 052 6136349. An Open Day will be held in June for new pupils and their parents.

**Appreciation:** I take this opportunity to thank all staff for their work, our teachers, our SNA's and ancillary staff. We are blessed to have such an enthusiastic bunch. I thank Thomas and the Board, Katie and the P.A. and Fr. Desmond for his support. I also want to mention Majella, Tina, Darren and Rose who work diligently behind the scenes. A special mention also to our bus drivers and last but not least, the parents who are the primary educators and who help the school immeasurably.

**Conclusion:** I often use the sailing analogy of a school being like a ship. My job as captain at the rudder is trying to plot a safe and enjoyable course, trying to keep an even keel. Sometimes we endure rough waters and more times full steam ahead in calm and peaceful seas. The pupils are our passengers who are with us on an 8 year cruise and our staff is there to broaden horizons and cater for needs. Many staff are required, with various responsibilities but each so important in the round. We encounter ports along the way; some disembark, some come aboard. For us it's a privilege to serve and for them hopefully it's the cruise of a lifetime; one we hope they will always remember. But alas, they descend the gangway in Rang 6, when we wish them "Bon Voyage" as they sail the seven seas with other liners.

In moving from Advent to Christmas, we wish our entire school community a happy, peaceful and holy Christmas. Nollaig beannaithe agus athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh go léir.

M.S.O'R.