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## April Newsletter 2020

### Closure

We hope everyone is keeping safe and well during this school closure. Once again, we are very grateful for the hard work and cooperation that we have received from parents and pupils during the closures. It is not an ideal situation for anyone but everyone has made a great effort to engage with the activities and tasks set by the teachers. We understand that distance learning is a challenge with issues around broadband, parents working from home and older children studying for exams. We will continue to look at how distance learning is working in Bruree N.S. The government will advise us again shortly on what will happen with regards to schools and we will be in contact with parents if there are changes around current restrictions. We may be able to organise collection of school books if there is an ease in restrictions. Well done to the entire school community for working so well together.

### School Garden

In March 2019, the 21 pupils who were in 2nd class at the time, took over the maintenance of our school garden. Over a period of nine weeks, they went from planting seeds to holding their harvested crop in their hand. They weeded, watered and cared for their vegetables throughout the weeks along with getting help from Mr. Sexton in the setting up of a rainwater harvesting container. This project was hugely rewarding and thoroughly enjoyed by all the boys and girls.

In the March 2020 edition of the teachers' union (INTO) InTouch magazine, the class got a two-page feature which detailed every stage of their project. This was a fantastic achievement as it is quite an honour to get a feature in the magazine. Well done to all the boys and girls and to Ms. Hannon who organised and helped the pupils with the project.

### Robotics

In February, 6th Class received a robotics workshop hosted by LearnIt on behalf of Analog Devices. This workshop explores all of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects. The children were taught the basics of robotics, using Lego Mindstorms technology.



Each student worked to design, build, and test their own robot in a team and at the end of the workshop they competed against each other. Based on design time, accuracy and teamwork, Grace Weaver, John Hayden and Jamie Heffernan were picked to represent Bruree NS in the 2020 Analog Devices Primary Schools Robotics Final Competition.

This day-long competition, which attracted 32 primary schools across Limerick City and county, started with an Advanced Robotics Workshop where teams of 3 or 4 students designed and built their own innovative robots for a sumo wrestling style competition. In the afternoon, each team played 3 matches as part of the pool stages with the top 16 teams going forward to tense and exciting knock-out rounds where the final points were allocated. At the end of the final, the team with the highest points was crowned the overall winners. Not just judged on their robot's performance, the teams were also awarded points for teamwork as well as design and innovation.

After a highly competitive finale, John, Grace and Jamie from St Patricks N.S Bruree emerged as the 2020 Analog Devices Primary School Robotics Champions. This was a super achievement. Well done to John, Grace and Jamie. They really did us all proud.

### **eTwinning**



Just as we began our school-from-home status, we got the great news that we had been awarded the eTwinning School label for 2020-2021. eTwinning is an online platform for schools in Europe and beyond where schools can communicate and collaborate on projects in a secure network. Teachers in Bruree have been incorporating eTwinning since 2015 when the school was awarded the Digital Schools of Distinction.

Achieving the eTwinning School label was a great achievement for the school and recognition of the work on eTwinning projects that goes on, particularly in the senior half of the school. To be awarded the eTwinning School label, the school had to meet certain criteria - multiple teachers being involved in eTwinning projects, two or more teachers working on a collaborative project, evidence that e safety is taught and embedded in school policies and completion of CPD by teachers in relevant areas. Previous projects undertaken also had to have been awarded the National Quality Label, two projects that pupils in Bruree were involved in included an idioms project entitled "I've Got A Frog in My Throat" and "Ireland & France, an exchange of place, culture & stories", both of which were awarded the National Quality Label. Teachers in 3rd-6th class have been working on a collaborative project with a school in Spain since September. This has involved the pupils creating PowerPoint presentations, creating a digital book, making video explanations, making cards and writing letters to their eTwinning partners. It provides an audience for pupils' work and it also gives the opportunity to learn about other cultures as seen through the eyes of children their own age.

We look forward to continuing our eTwinning journey in the coming years.

### **Active School Flag**



In further great news, the school was awarded its first Active School Flag in February. This followed nearly 16 months of very hard work by our Active School Flag committee, coordinators Mrs. Murnane and Ms. Cussen and all the teachers and pupils in the school. As you are aware, the school organised and took part in many activities during this time to encourage the children to become more active in their daily lives. Being active became very much part of the school day in St. Patrick's N.S. and our assessor was very impressed with the standard of our application. Well done to all involved and we would encourage our pupils to stay active during this closure. We

would love to raise our flag before the summer holidays but if this is not possible we will raise it during the next school year.

### **First Holy Communion**

Unfortunately, as a result of the current closures, our Communion has been postponed for the time being. When we know more regarding a new date we will let our parents and pupils know. Bishop Leahy penned a lovely letter for all the pupils in second class and this is available on our school closures mini site in the 2nd class section. I would encourage our pupils to take the time to read it.

### **Admissions Policy**

Following recent changes to legislation by the Department of Education, the school is required to update its Admissions Policy. A link to the draft policy is attached here.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=18oL0GtnFLqAu9Yui7swOBDGbEzHZWPhh>

Please take the time to read and if you have any queries, do contact the school on the email above. The staff and board of management are also currently reviewing the policy and it will be forwarded to St. Senan's Education office for approval before the 30th April.

### **Finally...**

On behalf of everyone on the staff and the Board of Management of the school, we hope that everyone keeps well and safe over the coming weeks. We are all really looking forward to opening the doors of the school again and welcoming back our pupils. We know that everyone is missing their friends and favourite school activities. Keep safe.