

Principal's report 21st January 2016

Pupils

There are **421** pupils in the school, 232 boys and 189 girls.

Staffing; 16 class teachers, 1 principal, 1 Homeschool community liaison, 4 EAL, 2 resource and 3 GAM teachers

Projected numbers

We will be taking in 28 in each of the Junior Infants. We probably need a minimum of 411 next year and we are very likely to have more than that. Delighted with the reduction of numbers we should be in a position to reduce some of our class sizes going forward.

Curriculum Issues

- **Mother Tongue Week:** week where we emphasise the importance of the child's home language-lots of different activities with Parental involvement. Parents teaching songs to groups. All the classes worked on a particular country, learning about that language and country and doing artwork to decorate the hall and the school, celebrating what a truly international community we are. Children were given passports and went around to see other classes, learn a couple of facts about the country they were doing and get their passports stamped. Parents came in to read to language groups in their home language.
- **Mother tongue concert.** What a wonderful way to end our first term with a very successful Mother tongue concert. Thanks to Virginia and Zedd who taught the Lithuanian Da Gaideliai to Lithuanian speakers; Serena for her Christmas song, Mos Caciun mosul bun for the Romanian group; Karolina for the Polish song, Domowa Piosenka; Monserrat for Bata Mi for the children speak Yuroba and Shandana for Pakistani anthem in Urdu. There were even parents who performed themselves. Thanks to Sophie who gave a haunting rendition of an eighteenth century traditional Mandarin song about the beautiful jasmine flower, Mo Li Hua. Her performance with the Mandarin group brought tears to our eyes. This was wonderfully contrasted with a stirring performance by our new family, the Mastrominicos from Italy who performed a rousing Italian song Me so 'mbriacato as well as preparing a group for an extremely lively traditional Italian dance, the Tarantella, which was greatly enjoyed by the dancers and audience alike. Class teachers also prepared the children with many different language performances also, including the Latvian chant Es bi j puka, O le le from the Congo, Hung chai may may from China. Adula, a traditional Ugandan chant, Ta San Nichloas ag teacht as Gaeilge, Frere Jacques in ten different languages, Jambo (Swahili) from Kenya, Padesneig from Poland and La Vague Noire from France. The two 4th classes did a wonderful Bollywood style dance Jai Ho which was a firm favourite with many of the audience. Second class did a great version of Hello to all the children of the world. Bell ringers and tin whistle players added to the merriment on the day.

- **New Language Curriculum**

DES are introducing a new language curriculum in all primary schools commencing next September. The new Primary Language Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile for English and Irish has been developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). This curriculum is for teachers of pupils of all abilities in the junior primary years, i.e. from junior infants to second class inclusive. Teaching of English and Irish.

School Year 2016/17

There will be an initial emphasis on the Oral Language/Teanga ó Bhéal strand. From September 2016, this strand will begin to be implemented for infants to second class.

School Year 2017/18

From September 2017 the Reading/Léitheoireacht and Writing/Scríbhneoireacht strands will begin to be implemented for infants to second class alongside the oral language strand.

School Year 2018/19

From September 2018, there will be full implementation of all strands for infants to second class.

School Year 2019/20

From September 2019, implementation of Primary Language Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile for third to sixth class will begin.

Year 1 November 2015 to June 2016

Familiarisation with the curriculum and initial preparation for schools, introduction to and planning for teaching and learning using the learning outcomes and the progression continua of the oral language strand. Implementation will involve

a) a half-day information seminar for school Principals (facilitated by PDST), followed by a **half-day school closure for in-school, whole-staff CPD through use of on-line supports. This will take place on Wednesday next here. School closed at 12:pm**

and b) one subsequent full-day seminar for school Principals and one other teacher (facilitated by PDST),

followed by a second half day school closure for in-school, whole-staff CPD through use of on-line supports. Substitution for attendance at seminars, where required, will be provided.

SO for this school year two early closings, one next Wednesday and the other to follow further training for myself and Catherine (Literacy post holder)

School Self Evaluation: School Planning and the Introduction of Guided reading

At the moment we are implementing vocabulary development in literacy and problem solving strategies in Numeracy. These initiatives are continuing. We have also decided to roll out Guided reading, which is a very specific way of teaching reading. Children are tested prior to grouping and then they are very tightly grouped according to their reading and comprehension levels. Classes from 2nd to 6th will be involved in this new initiative. Each class will have help from a member of the support staff twice a week to implement four groups using the 5 step classroom plan for guided reading. Involves a huge investment of personnel and funds. We have purchased about €10,000 worth of books which we are currently getting covered. We are asking the PTA to cover the cost of covering the books, which is happening at the moment. All children from 2nd to 6th have been individually tested and graded at levels appropriate to their instructional level

Music Generation

Sourced ready steady sing programme Once a week high quality singing lessons, heavily subsidised U2 actually. One euro per child per week. in 2 fourth classes. 18 weeks from now to June once a

week, 680 euro paid for by the PTA. Teachers speak very highly of the course so far. If its good we will do it for two fourth classes every year.

Mary Poppins

Auditions for main parts and rehearsals have begun on a production of Mary Poppins for the end of the year. Children from 2nd to 6th choose into it Friday afternoon rehearsals in golden time

After school clubs

Football, drama, art, keyboard, tin whistle, Irish dancing, chess, basketball.

Catholic instruction underway. Islamic instruction not happening this year.

Homework club twice a week for selected children run by Leah and Liz.

SEN Applications

Parents have flagged concerns about 6 children coming into the school in September, some autism and some Speech and Language issues. I am meeting with parents of all of them this week with a view to seeing what resources we might have in place for September. SEN applications have to be in during February.