



Dear Parents,

As we approach the end of a very busy first term we would like to thank you all for your support and encouragement.

The boys and girls have been working very hard this advent as they prepare to celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus. Fr. Shane blessed our crib and tree to signal the start of a very exciting season. The P.E. hall was a hive of activity with rehearsals for nativity plays, choir practice, floor-ball and dancing while classrooms overflowed with glitter, pom-poms and cotton wool. The children went on trips to post letters to Santa, to the library and local shops, to see Aladdin in the Helix, Frosty the Snowman in Dunamais Theatre and Rathwood Santa experience in Carlow ... Phew!!

New Staff

We welcome new staff members to St. Joseph's Ms. Claire Connaughton, Mr. David McArdle and Ms. Ruth Mullarkey have joined the teaching staff, Ms. Claire Malone is a bus escort and Ms. Ann Murphy is on our cleaning staff.

Ireland's Fastest Feet



Annalyse McInerney, Tommy Mongan and Cian Horkan on their fantastic achievement at the finals of Ireland's Fastest Feet. They were crowned Offaly's Fastest Feet a few weeks ago when they had the fastest times of all the Offaly competitors following their run in Mucklagh Community Centre. The finals were held at the fantastic indoor arena of Athlone Institute of Technology. They rubbed shoulders with athletes from all over Ireland and it was very exciting to watch as they lined up for the semi-finals to the cheers and applause from proud Mams, Dads and friends. Tommy, Cian and Annalyse ran faster than ever before down the wide blue lanes to the loud cheers and applause from Mams, Dads and friends, we were so proud. Annalyse was very excited to hear that she won a place in the final eight and had to race again. That means that she is among eight fastest eight year olds in Ireland. Over 8000 children

competed at Ireland's Fastest Feed and we are really delighted that our 3 super athletes, Cian, Tommy and Annalyse made it to the top 24. Keep running everyone.

Bradbury's Bikes

Thanks to Bradbury's who gave us two bikes to raffle. All the boys and girls will be entered into the draw on Wednesday which will be held after our annual Christmas Sing-Song in the hall.

Credit Union Competition

Juliet Clear won top prize in the Credit Union Art competition. Not only did Juliet win a prize for herself, she also won €100 worth of art materials for her class. Well done Juliet.

Junior Infants Concert:

Our Junior Infants helped us all to celebrate the true Christmas spirit as they treated us to their Nativity concerts. *"Extra, extra, read all about it"*. So read



the front page of the Angel Express announcing the birth of Jesus. The wonderful cast from Rooms 1 and 2 responded with great excitement as the angels form a choir to sing and celebrate the arrival of Baby Jesus.

Rooms 3, 4, and 5 presented their show, Whoops-a Daisy Angel. This play follows the story of a lovable but disorganised angel. No expense was spared as we had

halos, wings and even camels with special effects!. Special thanks to Mrs.

Long, Ms. Kennedy, Miss Hogan, Mrs. Kelly and Miss Sheridan for all the hard work and to all Mams and Dads for supplying costumes and perfecting all the lines. We are always delighted to get costumes if you don't need to keep them for younger siblings next year. Well done to all of our Junior Infants, you helped all of us to get into the Christmas Spirit.



New Extension Blessing

Fr. Shane blessed our lovely new classrooms on 8th December. The children welcomed our guests including Ciaran Grogan, our builder, Gabriel McGinley, our architect, members of the Board of Management, Parents' Association, Brendan Coyne our caretaker and friends from the Community Play-School and Arden View Resource Centre. Each class sang an advent carol and Fr.

Shane blessed our school crib and tree. This was followed by a short ceremony in our new courtyard to bless our new classrooms. Then the proud children from rooms 22, 26 and 27 showed visitors around their classes. All the children enjoyed a large gingerbread man and the adults enjoyed a festive celebration in the Parents' Room hosted by Mrs. O'Brien, Mrs. Nelligan and the senior children from Athas.



The new extension, our second in recent years blends in very well with our existing school but the rooms also have their own style and identity. The courtyard adds a new outdoor space and is now a very popular play area throughout the day. The new classrooms are bright and spacious with colourful walls and display areas and generous storage facilities. They are well designed with lots of energy-saving initiatives. However the new interactive whiteboards are the most popular feature and they open up a new range of learning experiences. We are working towards upgrading ICT facilities for all classes. Check out the website www.stjosephstullmore.ie for photos.

Multi-Sensory Room

Pfizer Pharmaceutical had a fund raising event recently and raised €600 for our multi-sensory room. We are very grateful to Patrick Scully, Mark McGrath and John Butler. The donation was very much appreciated.

Horse Riding

This year for the first time ever in St. Joseph's six children's names were lucky enough to be picked out of a hat to go horse riding in Annaharvey Riding School for six weeks. The children not only got to ride the horses they had to look after their ponies before, during after their lessons. They learned how to groom, feed, tac and un-tac their ponies. Before this experience some of the children had never been on a horse and they really overcame some initial fears, we may see some future jockeys from St. Joseph's. The children described their experience as "fun", "cool" and "I loved grooming the horses".

Choir

Our school choir brought lots of festive cheer with their performances in Tullamore Hospital and the town library. They sang a medley of Christmas songs including "*Winter Fantasy, We're wishing you a Merry Christmas and Away in a Manger*". All the lunch-time rehearsals paid off and they sounded

great getting lots of compliments from captive audiences. Keep singing during the holidays everyone.

Barretstown

We were delighted to welcome the outreach team from Barretstown to have fun and games and team-building activities in Rooms 6 and 27. Thanks Darragh and Alex for inviting the team and for showing us how to have serious fun with our classmates. We all had a brilliant time.

Home School

Sincere thanks to all the Mams and Dads who helped out with gingerbread baking and pumpkin carving this term. Next term we will have lots of activities to keep both adults and children fit and active so enjoy a rest before a new exercise programme in January.

Green School

This year we combined Multi-Cultural week with the theme of Global Citizenship for Green Schools. We had a lovely week during November 14th to 18th. The theme of the week was "*All different all equal*". The aim of the week was to help the children have respect, concern and empathy towards everyone in the world. There was a fabulous art display on the theme of "All different all equal". Posters were designed at home and displayed in the hall. The standard was excellent. The Green School committee picked out the worthy winners. It was a lovely week and the art displayed in the hall carries the message for all to see.

We had our annual bin competition between the classes in October. Well done to Miss Sheridan, Miss Brady, Mr. Fahy, Mrs. Mulligan and Mr. Hynes.

Our gardening committee of Rose, Claire, Bertie and Penny are keeping everywhere green and seasonal.

Well done to all and we wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Best wishes,

Linda Dowling and staff.



