

# St. Helen's JNS

Newsletter - June 2022



## 2nd Class Graduation

The moment has arrived to bid a tearful farewell to our Second Class students as they leave us to start their new journey in the Senior School. What an incredible four years it has been. This cohort faced huge challenges in their time here, but they have done themselves and St. Helen's JNS proud with the remarkable resilience and fortitude they have shown. We have had a fantastic year in

Second Class, most notably our memorable Communion Day and an unforgettable school trip to the zoo, culminating in an emotional graduation ceremony. The students have always set a great example to the younger children on what it means to be part of the St. Helen's family. While they will be missed by all in the school, they will always be part of the St. Helen's JNS story and we cannot wait to watch them grow and thrive in the Senior School and beyond.

*Ciaran Jennings*



## Cabhair Centre School Tour

The children from the Cabhair Centre went to St. Anne's farm and playground. We all went on the bus together. We saw lots of animals and then we went to the playground and had great fun. We finished off the day with a picnic and ice cream. A great day was had by all!

*Claire McHale*





## Amber Flag Award

We are delighted to announce that our school has been awarded an Amber Flag for 2021/22. The amber flag initiative was launched by Pieta house in recognition of the efforts made by schools to create healthy, inclusive environments that support mental well-being. Our commitment to wellbeing can be seen in the school based programmes we use at all school levels. They include the Welcome to Wellbeing programme with Mo and Ko in Junior and Senior Infants, Fun Friends in First Class and Weaving Wellbeing in Second Class. This year a gratitude tree was created as a whole school display to show our commitment to health and wellbeing at school. Children wrote and coloured leaves with things they were grateful for. We also launched 'Wellbeing Wednesday' where children were able to try different activities in the classroom. They included relaxation stories, yoga poses and wellbeing themed books. We would like to express our thanks to everyone who made a contribution to our fundraising event in March for Pieta house.

**Mary Ahern and Aideen Byrne**

## Update from our Parents' Association

What an energetic, exciting and fun end to another school year. The Parents' Association was delighted to help out with the communion party for the second class children. The traditional recent sports day in Naomh Mearnóg proved a massive success.

The Board of Management and Parents' Association are working continuously in the background on keeping the Cycle to school initiative at the forefront of the agenda. Since the start of the year both Principals, Fingal County Council and Management of the Nursing Home Development are in consultation to come up with a solution that will benefit the whole school community. We are very hopeful and are committed to providing a safe and suitable option for the children to be able to cycle to school in the near future. We will keep families updated with the progress.

The Parents' Association was also able to help out hosting the annual welcome evening for incoming guardians/parents of our new junior infants at which there was a huge turnout. It is lovely to be able to hold these events again.

All in all, we have been able to get back to holding many of the events that have not been possible over the past few years which is very encouraging. I think the children and teachers alike are now looking forward to commencing their summer holidays. On behalf of the PA, I would like to wish you all a fun and safe break.

I would like to thank all of you the Parents/Guardians for the support you have given on the P.A. over the year.

Lastly, I would like to wish Ms Lorna Lavin all the best next year, the work ethic and care she shows to the children in our school is inspiring and I for one feel very lucky to have her and the wonderful staff in St Helen's looking after my children.

Mile buíochas,  
Schools out for the summer ENJOY!!

**Sarah Murphy**

Chairperson Parents' Association

## Food Dudes and Hip Pop in the Yard

We introduced the children to the Food Dudes programme this term.

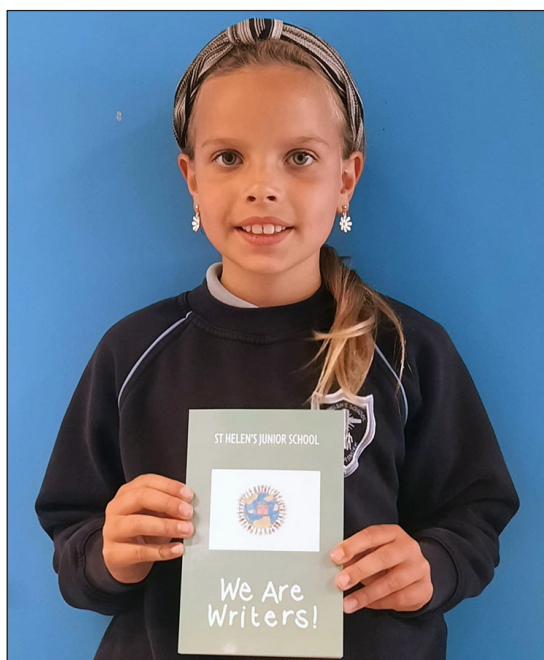
Food dudes is an award winning healthy eating programme developed to encourage children to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables both in school and at home. The programme is managed by Bord Bia in Ireland and is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine with the support of the European Union.

The children were given the daily opportunity to taste fresh produce in school over 16 days. They loved all the awards they earned especially their lunch box and cool insulated drink bottle.

The Food Dudes programme is based on providing positive role models, repeated tasting and promoting a healthy lifestyle. We are so proud of all our pupils for all their efforts and are delighted this week to have been awarded our Food Dudes certificate!

Huge thanks to Kim Walters for our dance day to increase our fitness levels while exercising with our friends in school. A fun day was had by all!

**Andrea Smith**



## We are Writers

This May, the pupils from St. Helen's Junior School experienced the writing process through the We are Writers project run by Scholastic. Each child prepared a piece of writing, supported by their teachers and helpers.

They experienced planning, drafting and editing their work. The final step was to see their beautiful work in print! There was such excitement in school the day the first delivery of boxes arrived! Well done to Anna in Room 6 whose picture was chosen to be the front cover of the book! We hope you all enjoy the book, a lovely memento of the school year!

**Graceanne O'Callaghan**





# School Blessing 28th June 2022

*Gross Motor Room - now called Brendan's Room as a tribute to former Principal Mr. Brendan Hennigan (RIP) who opened the first three autism classes in 2000 and 2003.*





## A Word from the Board Of Management

The children who, due to COVID-19, did not get to celebrate their Communion in the normal time frame finally got to celebrate their communion with ceremonies in September and October. Then this year's second classes made their Sacrament of First Penance and their Communion in May. I would like to thank Canon John, Ercilia and the parish team for all the help and support that they provided to the school as they managed the organisation of these Sacraments. I would also like to thank the school for their commitment to the Catholic ethos of the school and the work they do in preparing the children for the Sacraments.

A celebration and whole-school blessing took place on Tuesday 28th June. This also provided an opportunity to celebrate the renaming of the Gross Motor room (in the Cabhair Centre), now being named Brendan's Room, as a tribute to Mr Brendan Hennigan (RIP), former principal of the school who opened the ASD classes in 2000.

Congratulations to Olive Redmond, working in the school since 2003, and to Adrienne Moore who began in the school in 2004. Wishing them both a very happy and healthy retirement after so many years of dedication and commitment to the pupils of St. Helen's.

A lot of work has been done over the year on the Primary Language Curriculum, supported by the PDST. Also, it is encouraging that staff and children continue to promote the use of spoken language as much as possible throughout their school day and children enjoy practising their *frasaí na coicíse*.

There have been many achievements during the year, too numerous to mention! Amber School Flag (an initiative to raise awareness of mental and emotional wellbeing) has been awarded. A note of thanks to Mary Ahern, Eimear O'Malley and Aileen Byrne for organising resources and events to ensure staff and pupils enjoyed Mindfulness Wednesdays.

'We are Writers' book – a compilation of children's stories published in a book and sold in the school. Thanks to the parents for supporting the children, their teachers and SNAs for all the work involved and Graceanne O'Callaghan for coordinating the process.

School tours have been a great success with different classes travelling far and wide – great fun was had by all

School sports day – a long time since parents have been invited to this event. It was a huge success with lots of competition in all the age events, from junior infants to competitive parents' and teachers' races!! Thanks to everyone for the successful preparation and management of the day.

Minor Works - the school will continue to have some improvements made - classroom flooring will be replaced in 3 classrooms and the exterior paving will be replaced.

Parents of incoming Junior Infants were invited to an Information Session in the school which was well attended. The parents appreciated the opportunity to walk around the school. I'd like to thank the Parents' Association who provided tea and coffee on the evening. The children then got an opportunity to visit their classroom and meet their teachers for next year, and they are very excited to start school on 29th August.

I'd like to thank the whole school community for all their work in providing a safe, healthy and educational setting for our children. In particular, I would like to thank the InSchool Management Team, Andrea Smith, Susan Kavanagh, Eimear Kane, Graceanne O'Callaghan and Louise Rooney for all the work they do. And, of course, we must send a huge thanks to our Principal Lorna Lavin.

Lorna as you will all know is taking a well-deserved career break next year and in her absence Andrea Smith will be 'keeping the show on the road' with the help of Susan Kavanagh as Deputy Principal and Eimear Kane, Assistant Principal 1.

Happy Holidays! I'd like to wish everyone a peaceful, healthy and happy summer.

**Celine O'Connell** Chairperson BOM



*Mr. Shevlin's class celebrate their completion of Fun FRIENDS*

## Fun FRIENDS...

We have just come to the end of completing the Fun FRIENDS programme with our three first classes. FRIENDS is a cognitive behavioural programme designed to combat anxiety and build resilience by teaching specific life skills. Research has shown that up to a quarter of 8-year-olds may experience some form of anxiety disorder. Early intervention and prevention programmes help children build coping skills to deal with the worries and anxieties that they can experience at a young age. The ten week programme promotes self-esteem, problem-solving skills, resilience, self-expression and building positive relationships with peers and adults. Well done to our three first classes for completing the programme and who really enjoyed the fun class-based activities incorporated within. They are now encouraged to use these skills daily.

A huge thanks to Ms. Smith, Ms Kavanagh and Ms Lavin for facilitating the Fun FRIENDS programmes. The children enjoyed the award ceremony and our celebration last Friday to mark the completion of this programme.



*Mr. Kavanagh's class celebrate their completion of Fun FRIENDS*



*Ms. O'Mahony's class celebrate their completion of Fun FRIENDS*





### The Irish Whale and Dolphin Group

The Irish Whale and Dolphin Group visited St. Helen's Junior School. The children learned all about the whales and dolphins on Irish shores. They had the opportunity to look at and discuss whale and dolphin teeth and learned how the whales and dolphins breathe and feed. We are now whale and dolphin spotters. We will keep a look out whenever we are close to the shore and report our sightings to the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group.

*Susan Kavanagh*

## Thank you and Goodbye for a little while....

To all you wonderful children, parents, grandparents, staff- all whom I am very blessed to call my school family.

I am so grateful to you all. I value all that constitutes our school which we know is a very special place.

We have had a terrific year together and the children light up our lives and never fail to keep us on our toes! There have been so many fond memories over the year and thankfully we have been able to capture and share these highlights via our termly newsletter which Simon comes up trumps time and time again to produce so professionally.

I want to thank so many of you who have given so generously of your time and expertise to the school all year.

Andrea, Susan, Eimear, Grace and Louise - an amazing Deputy and ISM team, míle buíochas. I am extremely grateful to all our exceptional teachers and snas for their incredible dedication.

Marcella, where would any of us be without Marcella? Thank you for your kindness, loyalty and efficiency day in and day out.

Gerry, who has worked tirelessly since joining the school has made his mark throughout and we all appreciate your constant help to us which

you always give with a gentle smile.

The Parents' Association and BoM have been forces of great strength to myself and the school over the year and your brilliant support will never be forgotten.

We are still open for July Provision for some of our pupils, please God the four weeks will be successful and happy for our pupils. For most, today is the last day of the term and start of your well deserved summer holidays.

I will miss you all but know that you are going to have another wonderful year and wish all families, Andrea and the team all the best for September. I will be thinking of you all and know that it will feel strange for a while not opening that gate to happy little faces shouting to hurry and let them into the yard each morning! I am delighted to be able to give my two boys some extra time next year and thank you for all your heartfelt, supportive messages and well wishes over the past weeks.

Boys and girls, thank you for always doing your best. We are so proud of all of you. Have a lovely summer now and have a great time until we meet again.

Slán libh agus Beannacht Dé.

*Ms. Lavin*

## School Blessing pics...



*Congratulations to Fiadh on her achievement in the Texaco Art Competition*

## Condolences

The staff of St. Helen's extend our sympathy to our colleagues Philip and Yvonne Cummins on the recent death of their beloved mother Ethna Horan. May Ethna Rest In Peace.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with the families of past pupils, Darren Flynn and Stephen Burke. Ar Dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha dílse.





## Sports Day 2022...

We held our annual Fun Sports Day in Naomh Mearnóg on 16th June. Again, we were blessed with the weather and we were very happy we could welcome parents, guardians and grandparents to attend this year. The children brought such a sense of fun to the day, and as usual showed real sportsmanship in all their races.

*Louise Rooney*

