

GRIFFITH BARRACKS NEWSLETTER

6th February 2020

A Chairde (Friends),

Language Curriculum Training Half Day

A reminder that the first of two language curriculum half day training days will take place next Friday 14th February next, which is the day we break up for the mid-term break. School will close for all children at 12pm that day and will reopen on Monday 24th February.

Junior Infant Parent Teacher Meetings

Parent Teacher meetings for Junior Infants will take place next Tuesday 11th February and Wednesday 12th February. Cathal and Cian have been in touch with parents and explained how you can schedule on the app. Any parents who have not scheduled a time will be assigned a time by Cathal and Cian. We do the Junior Infant meetings later in the year, so all the boys and girls are given a good chance to settle in. I will be around on both days and am looking forward to catching up with everyone.

Re-scheduled Sponsored Walk Day

Our sponsored walk finally took place on Monday. Students walked with their buddies and there was a great sense of togetherness as we made our way along the canal and over Harold's Cross Bridge. Many thanks to all the parents who helped to make the event such an enjoyable one.



Peace Proms

On Saturday last, our school choir took to the stage at the RDS as part of the Peace Proms concert. It was a privilege to accompany choir leaders Jenny and Anne Marie to such an uplifting and amazing event. Many thanks to them both for leading all the rehearsals and early Tuesday morning starts. A big thank you to Deirdre who helped out on the day. The children arrived back to Griffith Barracks to a rousing reception from the parents who had attended the show. Below are some images of the show.



Election Fever hits Griffith Barracks

This week, the children have been holding a mock Election and have been looking at all the candidates in the Dublin South Central constituency. Our WALT (We Are Learning To ...) is that the children will know:

- How the process works
- How the single transferable vote works and the importance of filling in your ballot paper
- The main policies of the parties and candidates.

The children are really engaged, and it has been really enjoyable and thought-provoking working with them on this process.

Chess Competition

Our Chess team take part in the Leinster Chess League next Tuesday in the school. We will welcome four other schools. <https://www.lsca.ie/>

Rang 6

This week, 6th class paid a visit to the Dáil. They are also busy preparing for some big events:

The Musical

6th class students and parents are busy preparing for the school musical "Porridge", which will take place on the 26th and 27th of March. Rehearsals are well under way, the students are learning their lines, their songs, their dance moves and thinking about how to bring their characters to life. Parents are gathering props, building scenery, making costumes and helping the children with the music and stage directions. There is a huge buzz of excitement about it all. Only 7 weeks to go!
Clare

The Junior Entrepreneur Programme

Through the JEP curriculum, games and learning aids, pupils get a clear picture of what creating a business is all about. Every step mirrors strands in the primary school curriculum. This means that pupils are not wasting their time or being distracted from important learning. Instead, they're learning new life skills as well as their core subjects.

Junior Science Blast

ESB Science Blast nurtures STEM skills (Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths) through entire primary school classes investigating a simple question about the world around them. It is a great way to learn science in a fun, non-competitive and hands-on method that has many proven benefits. It culminates in the children presenting their work at a showcase in the RDS.

Irish Conversation Circles (Ciorcal Comhrá)

Next week we will start our Irish conversation circles in Rang 6 with the help of three parents. Many thanks to parents Ailbhe (R6), Donnacha (SI) and Deirdre (R3) who will work with two of our teachers for four weeks. Following this intervention, 6th class will then do conversation circles with 5th class. Really looking forward to getting started.



Creative Schools News by the Junior Creative schools Team:

The Junior (children) and Senior (Staff) Creative Schools Committees met last week and talked about all the creative things we're doing, such as the variety show, the poetry book, bread making, music composing workshops and so much more. We're also doing up our noticeboard.

We're in need of help with our swift boxes. Swifts are an endangered species. Last year, Dublin City Council installed swift boxes with cameras inside them, so we could (hopefully) see baby swifts being born. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to connect the RF cable to our USB ports - so we're looking for a parent to help us please, we would really like to see if any swifts are using the boxes and get a live feed onto the website. If you have tech knowledge, please contact jenny.mccrohan@griffithbarracks.ie



Thank you, Sarah (Creative Schools Associate), Mara, Lois, Beth, Sam, Juliette, Tadhg, Kate, Ted, Jenny, Gina, Sabina and Aisling.

Creative Schools 4th Class update

Gilles (1st and 4th class parent), came into 4th to speak about starter for bread. The class will feed the starter each day this week and over the weekend. On Monday 10th the class will be going to Gaillot and Gray to make bread! A huge thanks to Gilles and Emma for organising the bread making.

Students of the Week

Well done to this week's Students of the Week



**Agenda for Parents Association AGM 10th February 2020
at 7.30 pm in the Hall
Griffith Barracks Multi -Denominational School**

1. Welcome and a few words from Eddie
2. Guest Speaker – Tanya Ward, CEO, Children’s Rights Alliance
3. Minutes of last AGM
4. Report of the work of the PA since last AGM
5. Treasurers Report
6. Motions
7. EGM October 2020

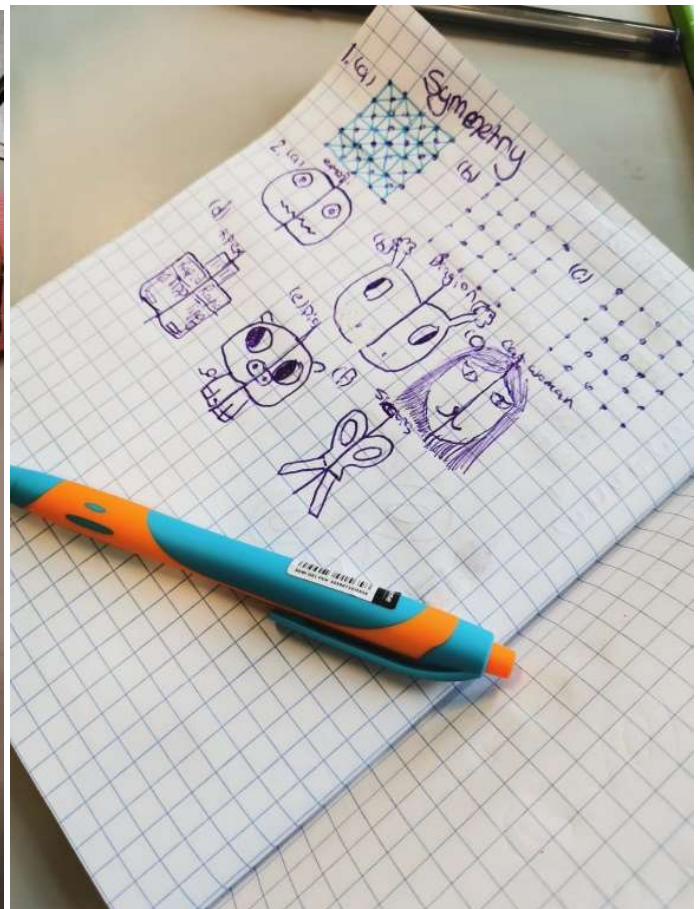
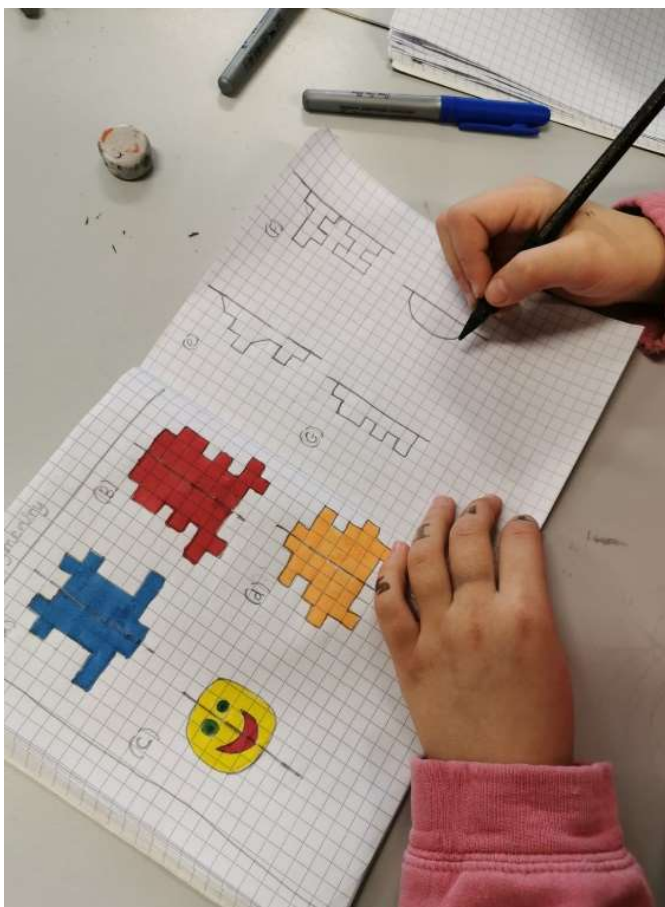
The PA will have their AGM on Monday 10th February at 7.30pm in the Hall. It will be a great opportunity to hear about all the work the PA has done on behalf of the children and the school community over the last year.

This year, we are really lucky to have parent (SI & 3rd Class) Tanya Ward speak to us about her work as CEO of the Children’s Rights Alliance. <https://www.childrensrights.ie/about-us/staff>

I’m also attaching the PA Constitution, which was prepared and ratified by the previous PA Committee. Many thanks to all the PA for their work on our behalf in making the school a happy and inclusive place.

4th Class update

4th Class have been learning about symmetry.



School Self Evaluation Report

Below is our School Self Evaluation Report. Avid readers of the newsletter will recognise many of the themes contained in it. The report gives an insight into our areas of focus as a school. Prioritising areas of focus enables us to meaningfully bring about improvement and change within our school, as opposed to focusing on too many areas but only interacting with them in a superficial way.

School self-evaluation is a collaborative, inclusive, and reflective process of internal school review. An evidence-based approach, it involves gathering information from a range of sources, and then making judgements. All of this with a view to bring about improvements in students' learning (DES, 2017).

Beir bua,

Eddie

Griffith Barracks Multi-Denominational School Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan

Aim: To Increase the use of Arts subjects in thematic project work and play based learning

INTRODUCTION

The last School Improvement Plan focused on the genres of writing and the teaching of them within the school. We have since developed this to include work on the traits of writing across the school along with comprehension strategies. In the last year we looked at the teaching of spelling and introduced an individualised approach with each child based on the *Nessy* programme.

Assessment Tools: Students begin by taking the *Nessy* Challenge to establish their baseline reading and spelling ability. The program then automatically assigns personalized reading and spelling targets.

Reporting: Reporting delivers performance data and analysis in a simple to understand format, and color-coding allows teachers to immediately identify and target areas of individual difficulty. What's more, the initial evaluation helps to create a baseline score upon which progress is measured.

Individualized Approach: Working independently, students' progress through a series of strategy videos, games and worksheets to complete their personal targets.

Rewards: Student progress is rewarded by completing fun game-like activities that then unlock new games, characters and magical worlds.

Development: After completing initial targets, students are reassessed, and new targets are set. Students continue working through the ten islands rapidly developing essential reading & spelling skills, while having fun!

Strategies: Within the animations, *Nessy* embeds memory strategies that help students encode important rules. This year we are looking specifically at the discrete (standalone) teaching of spelling across the school and have a curriculum committee who will look into this in detail which will feed into whole school work.

1. SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION – MAIN AREA OF FOCUS 2019/20

This year the school has the following objectives. The School is part of the *Creative Schools Initiative* which is run by the Arts Council and aims to promote the arts and STEAM subjects within the curriculum.

Developing STEAM subjects within thematic based project work and play based learning. Developing Rubrics for Assessment within these areas. Also looking at exemplars of project and thematic based work.

Gaeilge: To have a school wide approach to Teanga ó bhéal (oral language) within the school. To increase the use of Gaeilge in the school physical and spoken Environment. To increase the scaffolds available to children when speaking Irish and to plan the singing of Irish songs across the school.

Planning: To embed the use of the short-term planning template worked on by the planning committee last year.

Maths: To look at the current Maths Policy within the school and to work on Maths language used across the School.

Spelling: To embed the teaching of spelling through the Nesy programme within the school

SESE: History: To review the History plan within the school in conjunction with wider SESE objectives.

PE: A review of the teaching of PE within the school and work on the Active flag.

SEN: To embed the continuum of Support model throughout the school - through the use of holistic profiles.

Summary

The School has spent the last two years piloting and introducing the Nesy spelling programme and is now on the embedding phase. This involves the discrete teaching of spelling with the focus on each class on different islands within the programme

For the past year the school has been involved in the creative Schools programme beginning in September 2018.

Creative Schools is a flagship initiative of the Creative Ireland Programme to enable the creative potential of every child. Creative Schools is led by the Arts Council in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Creative Schools, formerly Arts Rich Schools/Arís, draws on the commitments set out in the Arts in Education Charter.

This initiative will understand, develop and celebrate the arts and creativity in schools. It will establish a range of collaborative opportunities for schools and will develop and strengthen the relationships between schools and the broader cultural and community infrastructure within which they operate. The long-term aim is for every school to be supported to fully embrace the arts and creativity, ensuring a positive experience and strong outcomes for children and young people.

As part of this process, the staff looked at ways in which this rich vein of consultation and reflection on the arts could be used to improve the learning outcomes for the children. Thematic and project-based learning in the school is a very good way to integrate arts learning within the school whilst at the same time being able to focus on literacy and other objectives within the curriculum.

We looked at Learner outcomes and experiences as well as teacher collective and collaborative practice from the document "Looking at our Schools" (DES, 2016). We hope that focus within these two domains will improve the collaborative and individual practice of teachers in school in terms of learning outcomes as well as self-assessment and assessment practices for the children.

2 THE FOCUS OF THIS EVALUATION

We undertook self-evaluation of teaching and learning of Arts subjects in thematic based learning during the period (November 2018) to (October 2019). We evaluated the following aspect(s) of teaching and learning:

- Integration of Arts Subjects in play-based learning and project work
- Assessment and Self-Assessment of pupil's work in project based and thematic learning

Findings

2.1 This is an effective / very effective practice in our school

- Children across the school really enjoy play based learning and project work
- The writing process and focus on Genre working well
- Team teaching intervention through power hour and team teaching in the older classes has been streamlined and working very well. This early intervention is paying dividends in the older classes
- Poetry has a good focus within the school.

2.2. This is how we know

- Children focus group
- Staff Curriculum Committee
- Staff meeting
- Engagement with the Creative School's Associate
- Analysis of work samples
- Teacher and Student Survey