



# St Helen's JNS

Newsletter - December 2020



Gingerbread House by Anna Moore (Room 19)

## Our Seventh Green Schools Flag - Global Citizenship - Marine Environment

We are currently working on our seventh 'Green School flag for Global Citizenship - Marine Environment.' The children in Ms Faughnan's Class have been working on a special project called 'Picker Pals'.

Picker Pals is a new initiative being run by Voice Ireland, a nationwide environmental NGO and Fingal County Council that develops children's awareness and community responsibility around the issue of litter. It helps them to understand how they can make positive changes in their own neighbourhood. The children take home a litter picker and use it to collect litter and plastic waste. Many children have been

using it at the beach to help the marine environment. The first classes have been working on 'The Sea Keepers Project' where the children partake in a series of lessons about some of the wildlife and sea plants native to Ireland. We have also been revisiting past green school themes. Many classes have also planted flowers to take home and replant. In each class, we kept track of the seasons and changes on our grounds during these times. We also continue to recycle paper, batteries, and mobile phones. We have also been working on our new Environmental Policy. Thank you to all the children and teachers for taking on this project.

Read more about the 'Sea keepers Project' and 'Picker Pals' here  
<https://greenschoolsireland.org/the-seakeepers-project/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUrsE4xnd6k>

*Susan Kavanagh*

### Voluntary Contributions

On behalf of the Board of Management we would like to thank you for your huge generosity to the school. We look forward to investing in new resources and equipment for the children and making some essential refurbishments to the school building in the New Year.



## Calendar 2020-2021

### December/ January

Christmas Holidays - Tuesday 22nd December - School will close early on a staggered basis  
School closed 23rd - 5th Jan incl.

Wednesday 6th January - School reopens

### February

Mid-term break: 15th - 19th February  
Monday 22nd February - School reopens

### March / April

St. Patrick's Day: Wednesday 17th March

Easter Holidays: Friday 26th March - School will close early on a staggered basis  
29th March - Fri 9th April (incl) - School closed

Monday 12th April - School reopens

### \*May

Public/School Holiday - Monday 3rd - 7th May incl.

Monday 10th May - School reopens

### June

Public/ School Holiday - Monday 7th June

School closes on Wednesday 30th June for Summer Holidays

\*First Holy Communion date tbc in the New Year



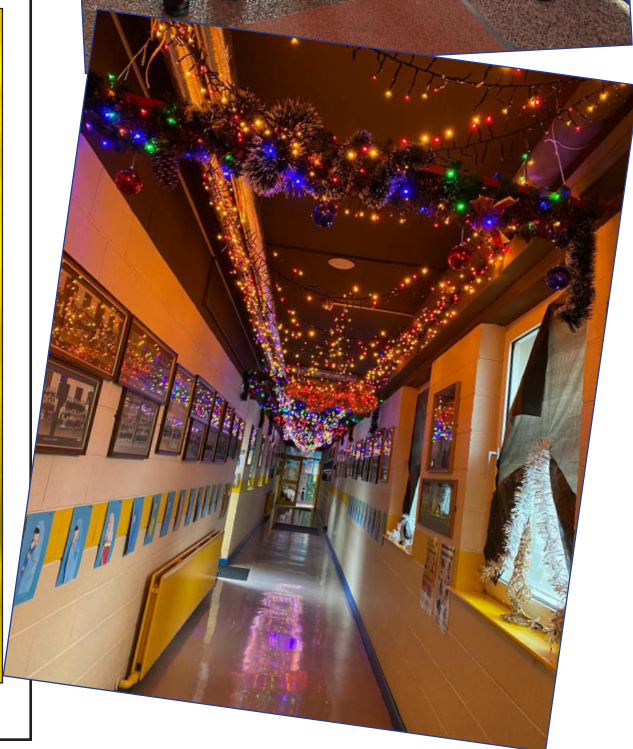


# Christmas Concert and Santa visit!

Unlike other years when we were able to welcome parents and grandparents into our school hall, we had to do things a little differently and so our children have been very busy practising their Christmas songs and poems for an outdoors performance this year!

As always they have adapted wonderfully to a different and new way but were very excited performing their special concert in the outdoor school set which was created and beautifully decorated by Michael, Gwen, and their team! Thanks to all our dedicated teachers and SNAs who have helped the children to make this a special Christmas performance so safe but full of fun.

Marcella sent a special letter to Santa in the North Pole this year and asked if he could visit the boys and girls who have been so good all term and promised that we would meet and greet him in our outdoor grotto. We were all very excited to meet Santa after his safe arrival to St. Helen's Junior School on Thursday 17th December!



Christmas Candy Sticks (Room 14)



## A word from the Chairperson



Christmas Tree (Room 15)



Snowmen Puppets (Room 16)



Nutcracker Soldiers and Wool Art (Room 6)

I want to start by saying the biggest and most heartfelt thanks to our principal and the whole team in St Helen's JNS who have gone to such great lengths to make the school a safe environment for our children, while maintaining a welcoming, peaceful, and learning environment.

**Appointments:** Some staff appointments were made in August and we would like to congratulate Caoimhe Faughnan, Carine Natin and David Shevlin on their fixed term appointments. The Board of Management also wish to congratulate Juliet Fleming on her permanent position and wish Monica Lucey all the best in her move to Wexford.

### Implementation of the School's Covid Response Plan:

An Inspector visited the school on 27th November 2020 to complete an assessment of the Covid response plan. The report Supporting the Safe Provision of Schooling (SSPS) assesses the safe and sustainable working environment to support the ongoing provision of schooling. The checks are grouped into 4 main areas: 1) planning 2) appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) 3) provision of staff training and 4) implementation of control measures. The inspector determined that the school was fully compliant in each of these areas which is a great comfort to all in the school community.

**School Improvements and Maintenance:** There have been a number of small but significant ongoing improvements in the school: hot water to all toilets, paper towel dispensers, roof repairs and new windows. The purchase of a new front door, new yard markings as well as the refurbishment of the school hall is planned for the new year. An application has also been submitted to the DES under Emergency Works to upgrade the fire alarm and install emergency and LED lighting throughout the school. The school website has also been updated with lots of news about the school and has regular COVID updates. The Parents' Association continues to play such an important role in the school and have recently welcomed new members. The Board of Management would like to acknowledge their support to the school since opening last August.

**Child Protection:** The Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment are displayed inside the school in the reception area and have been posted on the school website. These were reviewed by the Board of Management in September. Lorna Lavin is the Designated Liaison Person and Andrea Smith the Deputy Designated Liaison Person. Teachers are made aware on a regular basis of their responsibilities as Mandated Persons. Catherine Treacy, the school Inspector, has completed a Child Protection Level 1 inspection and the school is fully compliant. I would like to wish, on behalf of the BOM, a healthy and happy Christmas and New Year to all staff, children and their families.

Celine O' Connell  
Chairperson of the Board of Management





## A little snippet of what the **Parents' Association** have been getting up to.....

The last day of September was Jersey day for the children in aid of Crumlin Hospital. The children, parents and guardians were greeted coming to school in the morning by the wonderful voice of Mark Walsh. This was a very special morning in the school. The children were all simply mesmerized and were skipping, smiling and dancing their way into class. We could all get very used to this on our morning drop off to school. It was a very moving morning for all.

In October for Halloween we were invited to school to decorate the porch for all the children and staff alike which was very spooky and created an exciting atmosphere for all the children passing through. On Dress up day in school we called to each classroom to deliver chocolate treats to all the children for all their hard work during the term, needless to say they were gratefully received by all. We were greeted by witches, ghosts, ninjas, superheros, american presidents and Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz to name but a few!! We held our first virtual AGM mid-November which proved a huge success and we are delighted to welcome new members and volunteers.

For the first time in the school all of the budding artists created their own personalized Christmas Cards. This proved a huge success and there was a phenomenal response by way of orders from all of you parents. Your support for this initiative is most appreciated; it just shows the wonderful school community spirit that is amongst us all. We are awaiting the final tally and will advise you all of same in due course.

On Thursday there were a few elves doing the rounds in school helping Santa Claus while he visited the boys and girls in the school.

All in all, for what has been a very different and challenging year for all the school, it has been extremely busy keeping the environment for all of the children as safe and as fun as possible. For that as parents we are so very grateful to Lorna and all of her Staff.

Thank you all so much for your support and wishing you a happy, healthy and safe Christmas

**Sarah Murphy**

Dear Santa Claus,

My name is Thomas

I am 6 years old.

I live in Portmarnock

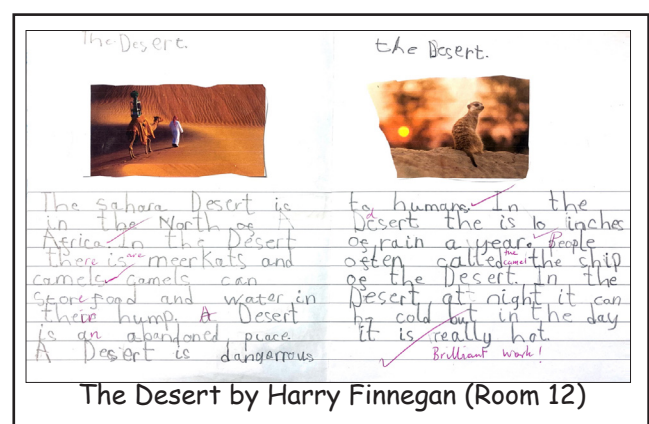
This year, I have been really Good

I would really like it if you could bring me:

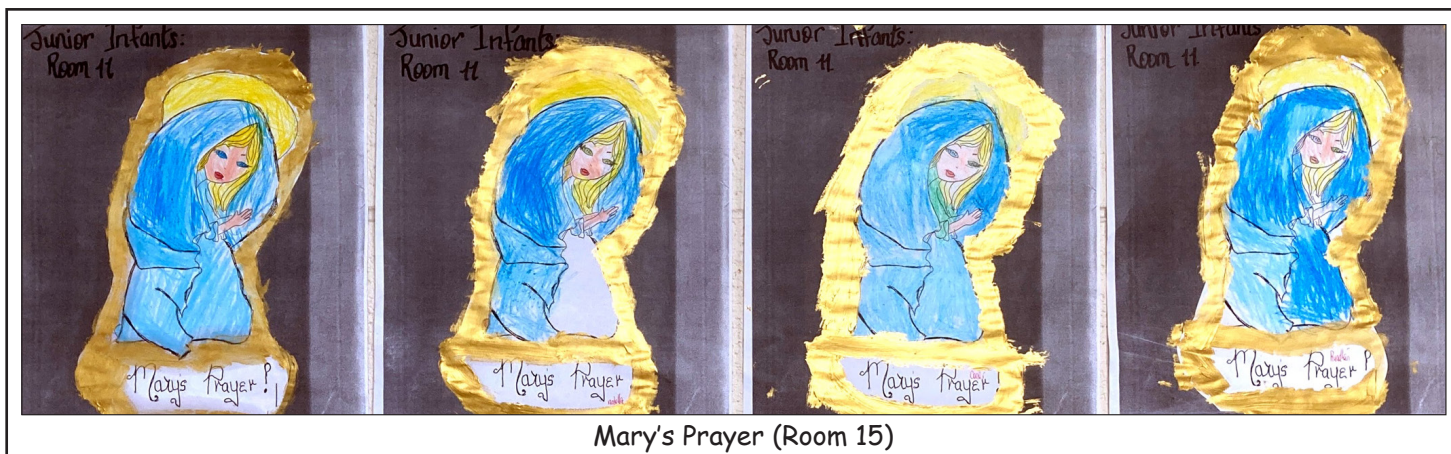
Champions League book  
a remote control car  
Hot wheels  
I will leave 6 treats  
for you

Thank you and Merry Christmas!

A Letter to Santa by Thomas (Room 18)







Mary's Prayer (Room 15)



## Advent Prayer Services

Thank you to all our pupils and staff for their participation & beautiful art contributions for our Advent celebration on December 8th. Each of our individual class Advent prayer services were very special and peaceful.



Advent Wall



Clay Snowmen (Room 21)



Snowmen (Room 7)



# Well-being

SPHE has featured high on our priority list since our return to school in September.

The children in our first classes are engaging in the Fun FRIENDS programme. This programme helps guide the social and emotional development of young children by using fun, play-based group activities. These activities are designed to help children to develop resilience skills while supporting their well-being. The children are really enjoying these fun sessions and are using the skills in everyday life.

In the second classes we are engaging in the Weaving Well-being programme. This programme gives children the opportunity to weave positivity into their daily lives through a range of activities. These engaging activities allow the children to explore their own character strengths. They complete a personal journal which guides them on their personal journey of discovery.

A new version created by the authors of this programme called "Meet Mo and Ko!" is becoming available in January for the junior classes.

**Andrea Smith**

## Nollaig Shona agus athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every member of staff for their commitment and wonderful work that has taken place over what has been quite a challenging term. To the parents, grandparents, creche facilities and other minders, a huge thank you for adhering to all the control measures which have been put in place. We are all very grateful and appreciate being able to come to work everyday knowing that we are in a safe environment.

We would all like to thank you for your continued and generous support to us here in the junior school over the past term. We especially want to acknowledge your wonderful children who have been outstanding since we returned to school and they never cease to give us such joy everyday.

The staff of St. Helen's Junior School would like to wish all our families a very happy, peaceful and safe Christmas.

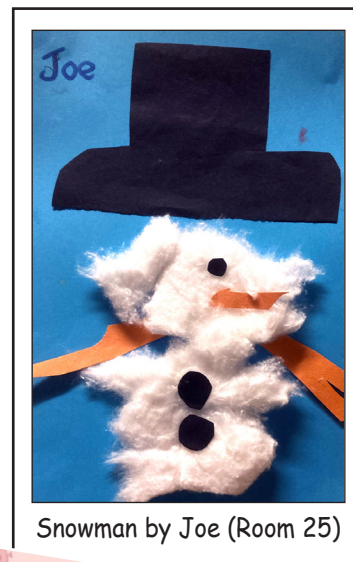
**Lorna Lavin and the staff of the Junior School**



Elf on a Shelf (Room 20)



Happy Christmas (Room 23)



Snowman by Joe (Room 25)



Gingerbread Men (Room 24)



## School website

We hope you're enjoying our new school website. As well as being an effective communication tool for parents and the whole school community, it's also a lovely way of viewing photographs and videos of the children's work and what activities they are doing in class. (sthelensjunior.com)

**Louise Rooney**