

# St. Helen's JNS

Newsletter - July 2023



This year our Second Class pupils in Room 6 were given the responsibility, as the school Picker Pals, to keep the school environment tidy and free from rubbish. They headed out regularly with their litter pickers and had great fun being active while doing their bit for the community. Paddy's Hill was tidied regularly while a big clean up job was carried out in the Naomh Mearnóg GAA Club to prepare the grounds for our Sports Day! Their efforts culminated with a recent extensive clean-up of Portmarnock Beach on sweltering hot summer's day. Go raibh maith agaibh Picker Pals for making our community a nicer place to go to school and to live!

## UPDATE from our Parents' Association

Hard to believe we have reached our last week of the school year and what a year it has been! With June in particular being an exciting fun and busy month having being able to have our annual sports day, active week and our wonderful school tours to name but a few!

Our Grandparents' Day, Easter Bunny Day, Halloween Dress up and Christmas events were all able to happen as normal this year. Thank you to all who made it happen helping to create that little bit of magic within our wonderful school community!

Our 2nd class pupils made their First Holy Communion in May which was a beautiful occasion for them all alongside having a school party and photographs in the school the Monday after which proved a massive success as always. They also took part in children's CPR training with local business 'Little Heroes' which is an invaluable skill for them no doubt.

The Parents' Association were also able to help

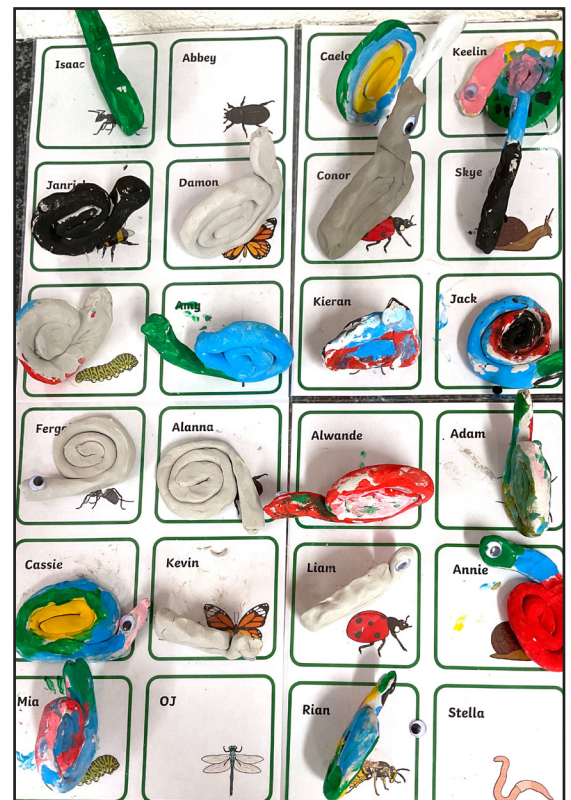
out hosting the annual welcome evening for incoming parents/ guardians of our new junior infants of which there was a huge turnout. Thank you to all who attended on the night.

I have no doubt all of the children are now looking forward to their summer holidays and we wish all of you a wonderful, fun and safe summer break. I would like to thank all of you the parents / guardians for the support you have given on the P.A and look forward to welcoming new members when we hold the AGM when the new school term commences.

Lastly, I would like to thank Ms. Andrea Smith as Acting Principal who has been such a support to all of us along with the wonderful staff of St. Helen's JNS. Thanks to you all for taking such good care of our children and creating a special, unique and fun learning environment for them.

School's out for the summer, enjoy one and all!

**Sarah Murphy**



● Room 5: Snails



## A Word from the Principal...

As another school year comes to a close we are thankful for all the happy and exciting adventures we have enjoyed throughout the year. Our school year seems to have passed by in the blink of an eye but the rewards were many!

We are so proud of our 89 children in second class graduating to the Senior School and our 4 graduates from the Cabhair Centre. We fondly remember their 4 years in our school, treasuring the memorable days partaking in enriched learning, social interactions and fitness activities as well as days out near and far!

We had a busy summer term and the beautiful weather allowed all our pupils to feel the benefits of living in such a beautiful community. A welcome treat from the beach kiosk for our diligent Picker Pals who were always delighted to ensure our community was litter free.

Endless enthusiasm and energy for dance offs, HIIT sessions and zen calming activities with all the benefits to be felt by the body and mind! We are grateful to the many volunteers who gave of their time to spark joy during Active School Week and to Sarah and the PA for their endless support.

We welcomed our incoming Junior Infants and Cabhair Centre children. Our school was adorned with a magnificent balloon arch and 2 balloon pedestals thanks to Abbey's Amazing Everything, much appreciated as always.

We would like to thank Fran and all the team in Moyclare for their professionalism. Fran has transported our pupils, teachers and SNAs on school tours for the past 25 years. We wish him all the best as he retires this month and we appreciate his top class transport recommendations for our future school trips.

This month we are remembering our friend and colleague Adrienne Moore who sadly passed away in January this year. We have fond memories of Adrienne and particularly recalled her sporting expertise when we were preparing for our Sports Day this year. Adrienne is forever in our thoughts.

Huge appreciation and thanks to our Lollipop lady Claire for providing a warm welcome and a safe arrival to school for all our pupils. Challenging at times due to the changing environment but Claire's dedication and passion always shine through.

Lastly, I wish to thank all of our wonderful parents for their continued support and trust in working in partnership with us, to help us to provide the best educational and fun experiences for all.

I have thoroughly enjoyed this year and I wish to extend a special thanks to Susan Kavanagh, Acting Deputy Principal, Eimear Kane, Acting AP1 and our dedicated InSchool Management team Graceanne O' Callaghan, Louise Rooney, Philip Horan and Deirdre Magee for their strength and support all year.

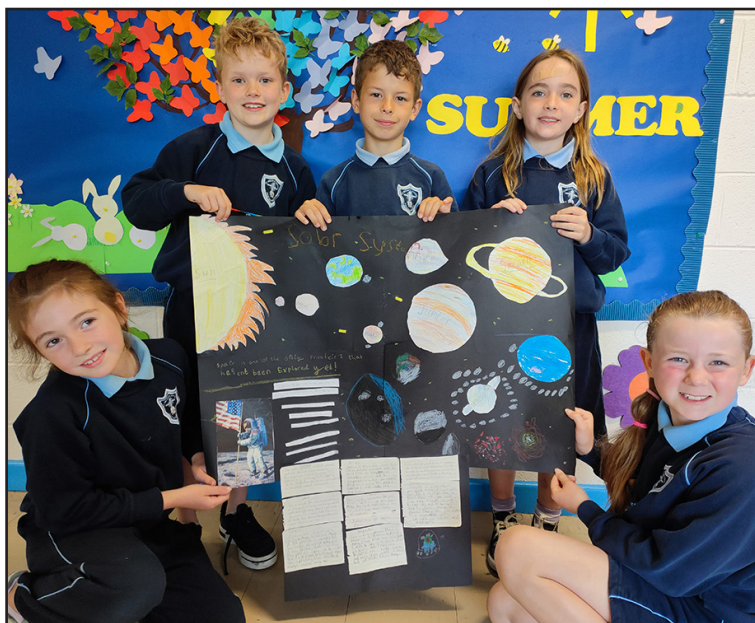
Our amazing team of teachers, SNAs, Marcella and Gerry for their commitment and dedication in delivering a successful year for the benefit of all our young pupils.

The team approach by all within our school means that everything is possible and the stars are never out of reach!

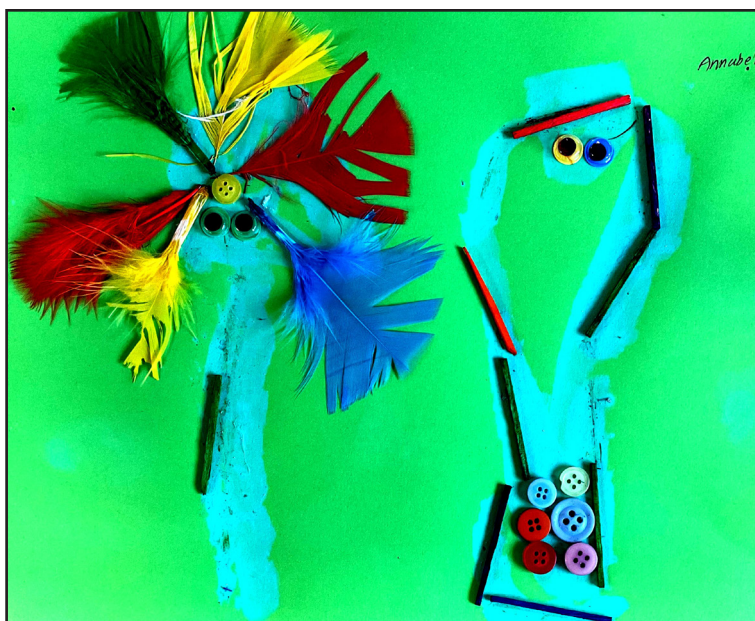
The boys and girls bring a smile to our faces each morning in our Tír na nÓg, the land of eternal youth. We are so proud of them!

We wish you all a healthy and happy summer filled with sunshine, fun, laughter and lots of ice cream!

**Andrea Smith and the staff of the Junior School**



● Room 6: Solar System Projects



● Room 11: Peacocks by Annabelle



● Room 16: Summer Sun





● Room 7: Matisse



● Room 12: Yayoi Kusama

## First Holy Communion 2023

The boys and girls in Second Class were busy as bees this Spring, making art and practising their hymns and prayers for their First Holy Communion. The adults were abuzz also, getting ready for the big day; the Parents' Association were decorating the church, the mummies and daddies were busy organising their homes for the special celebrations and the teachers were making lists and checking them off! When the big day finally arrived everyone was ready! We could all pause and enjoy all the beautiful moments of this very special day. The teachers could feel the excitement of each child as they walked into the church. It was such fun seeing everyone arrive, looking their best and wearing their brightest smile. The mummies and daddies beamed with pride as their little angels took their seats. The boys and girls sang out their opening hymn 'Bring Flowers of the Rarest (Queen of the May)' and filled the church with their voices. Canon John led a beautiful mass along with his helpers; the church stewards, Gerry Jennings and Kim, our cantor. When Canon John invited the children up to the altar for a fun and interactive homily the children participated with enthusiasm and respect. After mass the families took photos of the First Holy Communion children with their friends, family and teachers. The fun continued on Monday with photographs, a Communion party and a magic show! It was a wonderful occasion and we were very proud of all our boys and girls.

**Ms O'Callaghan**

### "Our Communion Party" by the children in Room 7

"First of all we went to school and got to admire dresses and suits. Then we went to play with toys. After that, we went to the hall to get our pictures taken. We got a photo taken with our hurls! Then we got our class photo taken. Then some of us changed into our own clothes.

We came back and it was nearly time for lunch. Then we went to the yard and played 'last to stop spinning'. It was really fun. When we went to the hall we got lots of treats and we saw a magician do loads of tricks. At the bottom of the avenue we twirled! It was a great day!"

**By Lexie and Megan**

"We were both trying to figure out how the magician was doing his tricks! In our party bag there were Penguin bars. We read out the jokes and laughed with our friends. We also had a Capri Sun, crisps and jellies!"

**By Finn and Aaron**

"We loved it when we had a party for our Communion at school. We got to change into whatever clothes we wanted after the photo. It was so much fun. Jamie the magician came in. We got crisps, a bar of chocolate and a drink. We all got our picture done. After we got a class picture done! It was a fun day for everyone".

**By Harry, Juliette and Luke.**

## A message to our Second Class children

The moment has arrived to bid our farewell to our fantastic boys and girls from Second Class, as they spread their wings and fly off to the Senior School. The children have really grown up and had great adventures together. We are so proud of the young people they have become.

When I asked the children about their most memorable moments in the Junior School, I heard tall tales of Tayto Park, ice cream trucks and magicians. They spoke about fun walks out on Paddy's Hill, dressing up for World Book Day and Sports Day races. The children even mentioned some exciting project work and great class competitions they entered.

We are privileged to have had the opportunity to get to know the children and be part of their journey. Our Second Class children have



always shown great example to the younger children in our school family and we are sure that they will continue to shine as they enter into Third Class. We cannot wait to watch them grow and thrive in the Senior School and beyond. The children chose the song

'A Million Dreams' for their graduation song. This song is so inspiring and expresses the many different creative ideas and dreams these wonderful children possess. They can indeed live in a world that they design.

**Congratulations.**





## A Word from the Chairperson...

First I'd like to thank Andrea Smith for 'stepping up to the plate' this year - we're very lucky to have such a strong staff and there has been another very successful year in St Helen's for all the children, thank you.

There's been lots of activities in the school and a lot of people to thank for all the organisation of these events.

This year's second classes made their Sacrament of First Penance and their Communion in May. I would like to thank Canon John, Ersilia and the parish team including the parents group 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 children for the Sacraments.

Adrianne Moore sadly passed away in January this year. Adrianne began working in the school in 2004 and this time last year we celebrated her retirement. Her loving husband Dermot and her treasured sons Eoin and Cian are always in our thoughts and her memory will forever live on in St. Helen's.

A lot of work has been done over the year on the Primary Language Curriculum, following support from the PDST and an inservice day. The staff and children continue to promote the use of spoken Irish throughout the school as much as possible throughout their school day with a continued focus on the transfer of skills between languages. The children enjoy practising their frasaí na coicíse gach lá.

The Active School Flag (a Department of Education initiative promoting physical activity in a fun, positive and inclusive way) was awarded to St. Helen's Junior School this term. A note of thanks to Laura Walsh, Ciaran Jennings, Louise Rooney, David Shevlin and Deirdre Magee for organising resources and events to ensure a whole school approach to physical activity. Thanks also to Ronán Mc Donald and Ciara Holland for their weekly GAA coaching sessions. Active Week was a huge success and was supported by many parents who gave generously of their time, bringing a smile to all.

The Green Schools team and committee members continue to promote the positive messages about our role in saving our environment by trying to reduce, reuse and recycle. The Picker Pals are to be seen regularly on patrol keeping our community litter free.

School tours have been a great success with classes travelling to Red Mountain Farm and Dublin Zoo this year. Great fun was had by all at our annual school sports day with the children enjoying a refreshing ice lolly after racing in the hot sun. Thanks to everyone for the successful preparation and management of the day.

Parents of incoming Junior Infants were invited to an Information Session in the school which was well attended. The parents appreciated the opportunity to see the school and the improvements from works over the last few years. I'd like to thank the Parents' Association who provided tea and coffee on the evening. The PA also organised Little Heroes CPR training for our second class children in April, a priceless investment.

The children then got an opportunity to visit their new classroom and meet their teachers for next year. They are very excited to start back to school on the 30th August.

I'd like to thank the whole school community for all their work in providing a safe, healthy and educational setting for the children. In particular, I would like to thank Andrea Smith and the InSchool Management Team, Susan Kavanagh, Eimear Kane, Graceanne O'Callaghan, Louise Rooney, Philip Horan and Deirdre Magee for all the work they do.

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

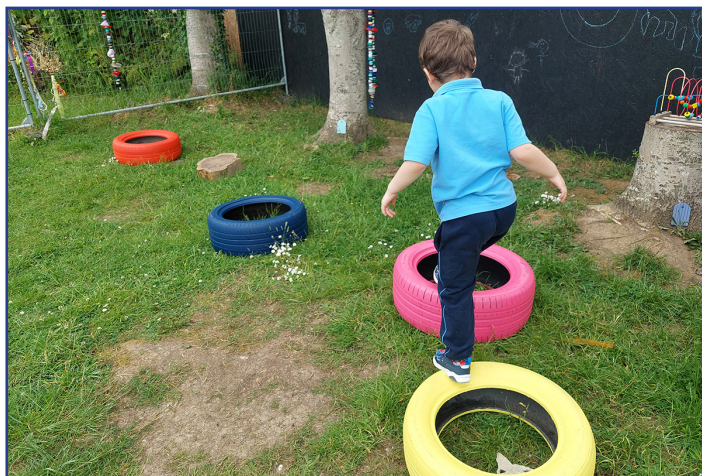
**Celine O'Connell** Chairperson BOM



## Active School Flag

St. Helen's Junior School has been awarded our first Active School Flag!!! We are so proud of all the effort the children have put in helping us achieve this special award. We had a sun drenched, fun-filled 'Active School Week' at the beginning of June, along with Sports Day the children took part in obstacle course races, musical statues and 'Kids v Teachers' dance offs and mindfulness activities! We are so thankful to the parents that came in to do exercise, yoga and dance sessions with the kids, Sharon Walsh, Kim Walters, Gayle Kelly and Jamie Harris - thank you for your time and for sharing your expertise with the children. Thanks to Ms. Walsh, Mr. Jennings, Mr. Shevlin for all their hard work in helping us achieve our Active School flag.

**Louise Rooney**



## Tyre Project



Many thanks to the Men's Shed in Portmarnock for helping us with our "Tyre Project" for our Sensory Garden, in particular Gerry McHugh, Frank Brady and Cecil Barron who put a huge amount of time into sourcing the correct paint type and painting them in bright and vibrant colours for our children. A special mention to Dave from Crown Paints in Clarehall for donating the paint for our project. These tyres have added some much needed colour and fun to our garden. The staff and the children love them.

**Ms Ryan**



# Neurodiversity Week

In April we celebrated neurodiversity at St Helen's. This coincides with World Autism Month and Autism Awareness Day which takes place every year on April 2 and is a designated United Nations Day of Observance. We are an inclusive school and support difference in all its forms. Through practical activities, children learned about our senses, how we communicate in different ways such as our voice, body language and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) used by some children in our school.

Children learned about how our brains all work differently and the ways we support each other. Children in first and second class learned some facts about special needs such as Autism, ADHD and dyslexia.

We celebrated the end of the week with a school assembly and the week's theme song (Sesame Street: Will.i.am Sings "What I Am").

**Philip Horan**

## Summer walks and school trips

What great weather we have had in term 3. Here in St Helens JNS, we are blessed to have such great amenities on our doorstep. The children in our classes have enjoyed trips around Paddy's Hill and to Robswall Playground. During May and June, each child also went on a school trip. The Cabhair Centre, Junior Infants and Senior Infants went to Red Mountain Farm. Whilst First and Second Class children went to Dublin Zoo. Such great memories.

**Eimear Kane**

## Little Heroes First Aid

Our Second Class pupils were lucky participants in a special First Aid workshop, facilitated in the school by our friends at Little Heroes First Aid. They were put through a detailed and practical training programme, where they were educated on basic life saving first aid skills. Every child was put through their paces and given the opportunity to perform basic CPR and other practical responses to high risk situations. The kids learned so much and thoroughly enjoyed the experience, proudly receiving their First Aid Certificates upon completing the course. Huge thanks to Sarah Murphy and the Parents' Association for organising this workshop for our Second Class pupils.



## Summer Stars Programme

If you are looking for an activity or outing over the summer, why not try the Summer Stars programme in any of the Fingal Libraries. This is a free activity, where the children receive a Reading card that the librarian stamps whenever they take out and read a book of their choice. There are prizes and certificates at the end of the summer.

You can travel anywhere in a book!

Read more about it here: <https://www.librariesireland.ie/services/right-to-read/summer-stars/more-about-summer-stars>

**Ms Kavanagh**

## Congratulations!

Congratulations to Ms Dee Magee on her marriage to Mr Gerry O'Connor last week. Wishing them both and their family many years filled with health and happiness together.

Exciting times ahead in St. Helen's Junior School with lots of exciting events taking place next year!



● Paul Klee



● Room 14: Flat Stanley



● Room 17: Summer Meadow





● Room 24: Our Summer Garden



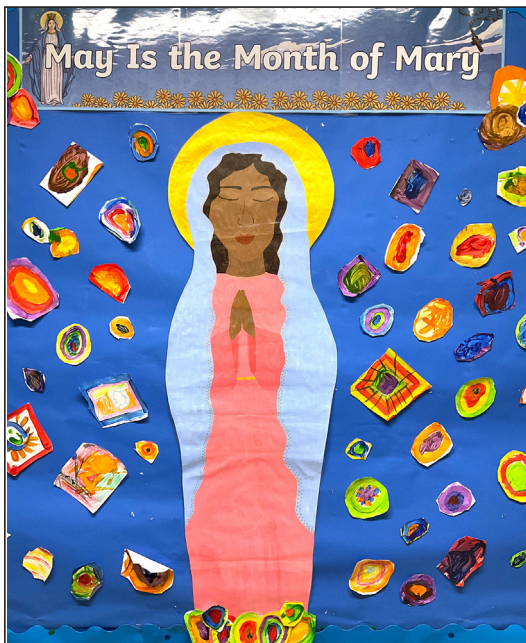
● Room 19: Castles



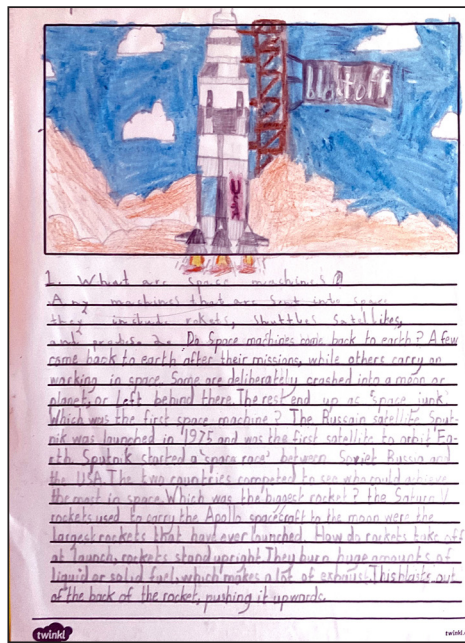
● Little Heroes First Aid



● Room 27: Caterpillars



● Room 20: May is the month of Mary



● Room 13: Space by Cillian Hall



● Room 21



● Room 25: Summertime



● Front Door Summer Display