

# Ballygar National School



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## A Message From Our School Principal!

*We are now drawing close to the end of what was a very busy first term in Ballygar National School. On behalf of all the staff I would like to thank you, the parents for your continued support and wish you all a very happy Christmas and peaceful New Year*

## Our New Playground Equipment



Our new playground equipment (school bus, post office, garda station and shop) has just been installed. A special thank you to our Parents Association for organising a table quiz to help fund the equipment. The table quiz was very successful and enjoyed by all who attended. A sincere thank you to everyone who supported our PA. The winning team on the night kindly returned their winnings to the school in exchange for a homework pass for the students on the following Monday morning which went down a treat! Congratulations to the Mahony family on winning the signed Connaught rugby ball. Pictured below are some members of our PA (Ava Galvin, Iuliana Naughton (Treasurer), Demelza Muldoon (Chairperson), Deborah Holmes (secretary), and Mairead Molloy (Assistant Treasurer) presenting the cheque to our Principal Mrs. O Connor.

The children are really looking forward to playing with their new equipment.



# National Science Week

All classes were very busy throughout science week this year (November 11<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup>).

A huge variety of experiments were undertaken by the boys and girls during the week. 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> class also completed science projects where each child chose and researched an experiment and showed it to their classmates.

On Tuesday the 15<sup>th</sup> of November, in association with NUIG and Galway Science, the science show 'Xperimental' visited our school. We learnt all about air and air pressure and had lots of fun helping to conduct lots of very cool experiments during Science show. We even made a hovercraft and some of us were very lucky to get to try it out.



Our 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class pupils also participated in a Science themed table quiz. Well done to the winning team Hayden Naughton, Niall Dowd, Angela Krzak, Alyssa Galvin and Patrick Zwierkczyk.

Over the last number of years we have put an increased emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). We are working towards our 5<sup>th</sup> award of Excellence in the area of Science and Maths.

Everyone had great fun participating in Science Week. We are already looking forward to next year!!!

## Carol Service

On 17<sup>th</sup> January, we held our annual carol service in St. Mary's Church.

The service began with a beautiful performance by some of our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils who played 'Joy to the World' on the tin whistle and chime bars. This was followed by some prayers and reflections to remind us of the true meaning of Christmas. Our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils also acted out the story of the nativity.



All children from infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class then sang a number of well known Christmas carols with great passion. They sang

## Reindeer



We got involved with an exciting art project this term. In conjunction with Visit Galway City, our school designed and painted a life size reindeer for display at the Galway Christmas markets. Every child in our school was involved in designing and

painting the reindeer. It is on display in Eyre Square at the bottom of the Christmas market adjacent to the entrance of Eyre Square

beautiful renditions of O Come All ye Faithful, O Holy Night, Silent Night, Westminster Carol, The First Noel, Away in a Manger before a lively upbeat version of Mary's Boy Child.

Well done to all the pupils (and teachers!!) who took part. A great night was had by all and we are already looking forward to next year.

shopping centre and will be displayed until 10<sup>th</sup> January. Well done to everyone and a special thank you to Ms. McManus for coordinating the project within our school.



## Active Schools

This year we are taking part in the Active Schools initiative aimed at increasing physical activity within our school community. With the help from our teachers, parents and wider community we hope that our school will be recognised as an official 'Active School' in 2019 and will be awarded an Active school Flag.

### Active Schools Committee

Meet our Active School Committee. Our committee work alongside Ms. Hanley our active schools co-ordinator to ensure that the staff and pupils of our school are active throughout the school year in a fun and exciting way.

One of the many jobs of the Active Committee is to discover ways we can become a more active school.

As part of our drive towards receiving our Active Flag, we are currently working on new innovative exciting ways to encourage all pupils to become more active. These include:

### Active Break Everyday

The weather has turned wet and cold and some days we are not able to get outside to play, so to maintain our active lifestyle in school we have committed to the Active Break Every Day challenge for the month of December. Each day, the classes take part in an activity/exercise break and record their activity on a chart on each classroom door.

### Run Around Europe Challenge

To make every count, we took to the school tennis court and challenged



ourselves to run around Europe in just 4 weeks. Each lap of our tennis court is equivalent to 1km. We ran over 5,500km which is the equivalent of running to Yerevan, Armenia We have noticed a huge improvement in our fitness levels and have really enjoyed the journey! We are looking forward to a new challenge in 2019.

### **Santa Dash**

We will having a Santa Dash through Aghrane forest on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> December. This is a fun run/walk to mark the end of our Run Around Europe Challenge. Children can wear festive attire on the day (for example Christmas jumpers/Christmas colours/santa hats).

## **Friends for Life**

All children from 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class completed the Friends for Life Programme (also known as FRIENDS) this term. FRIENDS is a school based positive mental health programme which promotes social emotional wellbeing and resilience. We have two teachers who are specially trained to deliver the programme in our school, Ms. Mannion and Mrs. O Connor.

During this programme the children were taught a number of effective strategies to cope with difficult situations, and to manage all kinds of emotional distress, including worry, stress, change and anxiety. Topics covered included: learning to deal with difficulties, recognising signs of anxiety, relaxation strategies for staying calm, developing positive thinking, how to focus on solutions to problems and not the problems themselves, how to face their fears as well as learning conflict resolution strategies. It is hoped that the skills learned throughout the programme will help students both now and in later life.

## **Infants Nativity Play**

Junior and Senior Infants have been very busy learning lines and singing songs for their Christmas play. The Fairytale Land Nativity is sure to be a magical show with characters like Snow White, Little Red Riding Hood and Jack and the Beanstalk taking to the stage. They will perform the Christmas Nativity with a little bit of a twist on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December! Well done to the children for all their hard work.

## **Santa Claus**

Santa Claus will visit all the classes in the school on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> December. The children can wear their Christmas jumpers or dress in Christmassy colours on this day. All of the children are looking forward to seeing him. Keep an eye out on our school website and twitter account for pictures.



## **Poetry Workshop**

On Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November, Poets Margaret Hannigan Popp and Pete Mullineaux visited our school to hold a poetry workshop with our 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Class. This workshop was part of 'Ballygar Eco Cultural Groups' Galway 2020 project entitled 'The Other: Together.' This project is inspired by a poem about Ballygar 'Beal a Ghártha' written by Raftery 200 years ago. The projects aims to explore identity and inclusion within the community of Ballygar



through the medium of poetry.

During this workshop the children learnt a little bit about the poet Raftery and examined his Poem 'Beal A Ghártha' (Ballygar). Pete Mullineaux also read a number of his own poems each with a contrasting style.

He encouraged the children to think about their senses, and feelings when writing poetry. Each child was provided with a notebook in which to write their poetry and wrote their own poems about Ballygar. Margaret and Pete encouraged the children to keep these notebooks and to write some more of their own poems over the coming weeks. We are looking forward to reading and hearing some of these poems.

## Enrolment

Our enrolment evening for September 2019 will take place on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 7pm. Please pass on the message to friends, neighbours, and family members who are looking to enroll their child in our school for next September



## Puppet Show

Our junior and senior infants attended the annual Christmas puppet show in the Mattie McDonagh Centre on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December. They had so much fun singing and dancing along to their favourite Christmas songs.

They all loved Frosty the Snowman. He was the star of the show.

Thank you to the Parents and Toddlers group for organising the show. We cannot wait for next years show.



## Credit Union

### Competition Winner

Well done to Ruth Kelly who won the Credit Union Art competition. This year's theme was Force of Nature. Ruth was awarded her prize at a special award ceremony in Athenry. This is a fantastic achievement as hundreds of pupils from schools all over the county entered the competition.



## Construction Safety Week

All classes took part in Construction Safety Week poster competition sponsored by Glan Aqua Ltd and Meic Ltd. It was aimed at creating an awareness of the dangers on construction sites. Well done to Evan Doyle, Hazel O' Malley, Jamie Mulrooney, Grainne Geraghty, Liliana Staniak, Simone Carty, Amelia Lopakta and Tiernan Keegan who were our construction safety week competition winners.



## Decoration Time

Every year we take great pride in decorating our school for the festive season. This year was no exception. Our fifth and sixth class worked hard painting the wonderful Christmas scenes which can be seen on our windows. They also decorated our beautiful Christmas tree which is on display for all to see



## RSE

As part of the SPHE curriculum, all classes will be completing The RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) programme in January/February. All schools are required by the Department to teach this programme. RSE aims to help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships and to promote an understanding of and a healthy attitude towards human sexuality. Parents can familiarize themselves with the contents of this programme in our RSE policy which can be found on our school website. Our policy outlines the content of the lessons to be taught along with vocabulary to be taught at each class level. The HSE have recently published a booklet to help parents engage with their children on this topic entitled 'Talking to your young child about relationships, sexuality and growing up' which can be downloaded from [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie). Should you have any further questions or wish to discuss the programme further, you can contact your child's teacher

## School Notices!

Ballygar N.S. will close on 21<sup>st</sup> December at 12 noon for the Christmas Holidays and will reopen on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January

### Important Dates:

Communion Saturday May 11<sup>th</sup> in St. Mary's Church, Ballygar  
Confirmation Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March at 4pm in Newbridge Church  
February Midterm- closed 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> February



### Reminder: School lunches

A drink is no longer provided with your child's school lunch. Please ensure that you send a drink with your child to school each day. Your child will receive their lunch as normal.

### School Website and Twitter!

Don't forget to check out our fantastic website for updates on school events, pictures and news at [www.ballygarNS.ie](http://www.ballygarNS.ie). **School policies can be accessed (including Procedures on Child Protection, Anti-bullying policy, Code of Discipline) on our website.**

Don't forget you can also follow us on twitter for all the latest news at [www.twitter.com/BallygarNS](https://www.twitter.com/BallygarNS)

All the staff of Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál are very proud of all our students for their fantastic success and achievements this term. **We would like to wish all our students a safe and Happy Christmas and we hope for continued success in 2019.**



