



Letterfrack National School  
Connemara, Co. Galway.

Tel: 095 41034 Email: [letterfrackns@yahoo.ie](mailto:letterfrackns@yahoo.ie)  
PRINCIPAL: Olivia Kerrigan CHAIRPERSON: Brian McDermott

June 2020

Dear Parents,

We are now drawing to the end of one of the most historical school years in living memory. You have had your children home for more time now than you would if they were on summer holidays. You have protected, nourished, educated, supported and entertained your children during a period of national and international uncertainty and fear. You have achieved something no other parent ever has. You have faced this time unable to take your child or children anywhere, no parks, holidays to break up the boredom, no day trips, no family to help. Even getting food for your family to eat has been a major drama. History will show you for your courage and your children will remember this period as a time knowing they were safe and loved. Us teachers are deeply grateful that you were there for your children educationally when we would love to have been but couldn't. You have made it, so be proud of yourself!

Although the academic year of 19/20 will go down in history for closing on March 12<sup>th</sup>, there were many other exciting memories that we should also remember. In September the pupils of Letterfrack NS made us proud by taking part in the strike for climate change. They prepared banners and chants and at 1:30 pm on Friday September 20<sup>th</sup> our pupils marched through the village and gathered on the green, where our 6<sup>th</sup> class students educated those who gathered on their reasons for striking.

In October we celebrated Maths week, our 6<sup>th</sup> class were given the responsibility to organise a fun maths activity hour for the younger classes and our 5<sup>th</sup> class created a maths trail for all classes to participate in outside. Also in October we celebrated school library month by visiting the local library in GMIT for a special reading from the accomplished children's author Alan Durant. October continued to be a busy month, as we neared midterm we celebrated sea week and enjoyed visits from artist and ecologist Gordan D'arcy and Noirin from Atlantaquarium and took part in the After the light Parade. October closed with our annual dress up day for Halloween where each class took part in a costumes parade and danced to some spooky hits.

In November we celebrated science week, which started with a visit from Carol from our local national park and two other rangers from Parks Canada. They gave us a wonderful presentation about their park in Canada and its similarities and differences to our local park. Our Infants celebrated science week by becoming astronauts and learning about the solar system as their Aistear theme was Space. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> learned about the Antarctic and the explorer Tom Crean and also had loads a fun doing some weather experiments. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> visited Kylemore abbey where they took part in an outdoor classroom and learned about gardening, bug hotels and wild woodland. Our 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> kicked off their Connemara Young Scientist Programme (Sponsored by the Whalen Foundation) with workshops on energy, environment and climate change. We also had a workshop with Will from Brigid's Garden on saving energy as part of our green school's flag programme. November also saw our 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> take part in the FAI futsal tournament for the first time and they really enjoyed it.

December kicked off as it always does with our Annual Christmas Jumper day in aid of the Laura Lynn Foundation. This year we also enjoyed a zumba workshop, where everyone showed off their best hip hop moves. As a thank you from GMIT for hosting their students, our 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> had a lovely visit to the GMIT Library, where they listened to The Polar Express story while enjoying hot chocolate and cookies. The children worked hard all of December preparing for our Granny and Grandpa's day performance in the Ellis hall. Our 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> worked with our infants to put on a beautiful performance of the musical Penguin Pete, our 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> were our interval act and gave a very memorable & tear-jerking performance of the song A Million Dreams and Our 3<sup>rd</sup>

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CHILDHOOD SHOULD BE A JOURNEY NOT A RACE

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Board of Management – Brian McDermott, Fr. Boyle, Olivia Kerrigan, Liv Heneghan,  
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& 4<sup>th</sup> concluded the show with the musical The 12 days of Christmas. In the middle of this very busy month we had a follow through school inspection which involved a review of school documentation, records and pupils' work, observation of teaching and learning and interaction with the pupils. Thankfully this inspection went very well, with very good progress made in the implementation of recommendations made in the original whole school evaluation in 2017 and no further recommendations necessary. December ended with a visit from Santa, a very special day on our school calendar with the magic of Christmas bringing term 1 to a close.

Term 2 brought the stormy month of January, another busy month in the school but thankfully we had some helpers from Aquinas College, Natalie & Sarah. Math for fun took place in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classroom with the help of parent volunteers. Shared reading activities took place between 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and between our 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and our infants. Also our 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> kicked off our project presentations of the year with their projects on Australia.

February began with the excitement of Harry Potter Day, with all children enlisted into different Hogwarts houses and took part in many activities which saw the school transform into a school of witchcraft and wizardry, thanks to the hard work of 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> class and their teacher Fiona. The pupils also busied themselves with making Valentines decorations for the Valentine's disco organised by the Parent's Association. This took place in the Ellis hall and was a wonderful occasion thanks to the hard work of our wonderful PA who did an amazing job transforming the hall into a beautiful fairy lit room. Just before midterm the children visited the Ellis hall again to watch a nail biting performance from a travelling circus. February was brought to a close with Pancake Tuesday, where the pupils in Liv and Maire's room donned the aprons and with the help of our Aquinas students flipped pancakes for the whole school.

With March came Seachtain na Gaeilge and our 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> travelled to a hanger in Galway Airport to experience Sruth na Teanga. This experience was part of the Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture Programme and brought the evolution and life of the Irish language alive for the children. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> class celebrated their first confession in March and afterward travelled to Kylemore Abbey to plant trees as part of tree week and enjoyed some tasty homemade treats in the café. The pupils were also busy in march preparing for our annual Taispeantais Seachtain na Gaeilge, learning new dances such as the Siege of Ennis and Shoe the Donkey but unfortunately this is where our school year came to an end, in school at least.

Many more memories should have been made and many important events had to be cancelled as a result of the school closures. It has been a very tough time for our whole school community and although we have been safe at home and away from most of the devastation this virus has caused, we have been lonely and we have missed our friends, our teachers, our colleagues, our granny and grandads and many more. We missed the memories we could have, would have, should have made. However, I think when our children are asked in years to come about the time Covid-19 shut down our country, they will be able to look back fondly and tell stories about learning from home and all the activities they did as a family that might never have happened in the busy world we are usually a part off. Time stood still for a while and many happy memories were made at home.

As the Academic year of 2019/20 comes to a close and we reminisce on some of the events that took place, I'm reminded of how lucky I am to be part of such an amazing school. Our team of teachers always go above and beyond for their students, our parents and Parents Association are always willing to give a helping hand and support our school. I'm thankful for our pupils, who fill us with pride in everything they do, their wonderful attitude to learning and their skills in being a good friend and looking out for each other. I would like to thank you all in all that you do, I would also like to thank our Board of Management in supporting the ethos of our school and their endeavour to make our school a happy and safe place for everyone. Thanks also

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to the wonderful support teachers we have who share their expertise with the children, Shona & Liz with their music, Susan with yoga, Stephanie with sport and the rugby and GAA coaches. And of course our Auxiliary staff, thanks to Mary for cleaning the school, to Brendan for looking after our yard and Pauline for making everything run smoothly behind the scenes and for always bringing a smile to everyone's face.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank our wonderful 6<sup>th</sup> class, they were amazing leaders in our school this year and did a wonderful job around the school helping out and looking after our younger pupils. They were our biggest class and we will miss all 13 of them greatly and wish them lots of fun and excitement on their new adventure. We look forward to having them back in order to give them a proper send off.

We also missed out in having our usual Induction evening for our new infants. So far we look forward to welcoming 7 new infants into our school in September and hope there might be more that are yet to make contact with us. Unfortunately, with our biggest class leaving this year we are at risk of losing our 4<sup>th</sup> teacher in September 2021. At present we are three students short so fingers crossed we'll be able to recruit a few more students.

Finally, I want to finish by thanking our teachers again as without their hard work and dedication none of the above memories would be possible. Distant learning has been a challenging time for all teachers and they have had many sleepless nights in the past few months worrying about their students. With September comes many challenges but I know that our teachers will face them head on and will create many happier memories in the new academic year.

I wish you all a safe and happy summer and look forward to having our school community together again,

Olivia

P.S. There are lots of pictures on our website of all these happy memories thanks to Liv who works relentlessly updating our wonderful website.

P.P.S I've still not heard anything about the rescheduled date for the Confirmation & Communion but as soon as I do, I'll be in touch.

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