



Welcome to the third edition of our monthly newsletter. With November completed, we are truly into the festive season. Our attempts to batten down the hatches, failed to some extent as some of the elves have still managed to get in. We are just glad that our parent teacher meetings had been completed as some of the elves have been up to devilment in the classrooms! Anyway, with the busy season upon us, why not grab a cup of tea and take a few minutes to catch up with what we have been up to in Piercestown N.S.. But before we get stuck in let's start with the birthday wishes for December!

Big Birthday Shout Outs December!

We would like to wish the following children a big happy birthday: Fianna, Chloe, Rory and Leon from Junior infants; David, Nuria and Harry from Senior infants; Páidí, Méabh and Gracie from 1st class, Saoirse from 2nd class; Eve and Ella from 3rd class; Mia, Emmet and Lily from 4th class; Lucia and Lucy from 5th class and Cillian and John from 6th class. We hope you all enjoy your special day!!!



*"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday dear Fianna, Chloe, Rory, Leon, David, Nuria,
Harry, Páidí, Méabh, Gracie, Saoirse, Eve, Ella, Mia,
Emmet, Lily, Lucia, Lucy, Cillian and John
Happy birthday to you."*

Sing Out Loud! Saturday 19th November 2022

The children were buzzing with excitement as they gathered in the auditorium of the National Opera House on the morning of Saturday 19th November. After many fun-filled weeks of preparation, their big day had finally arrived. They had one last rehearsal (check out the school website for a sneak peek of this) and then congregated backstage upstairs to have their lunch. From 1:30pm onwards they kept a keen eye on the street below and spirits were high when they began to see family and friends arriving. Shortly before 2pm they went downstairs and took their places on stage to make their debut performance. And what a performance it was! They well and truly gave it their all, singing and dancing, and enjoying every minute! There was something for everyone – rock classics, pop favourites, Disney tunes and much more, not forgetting traditional Christmas songs like 'Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer' and 'Santa Claus is coming to town'. One of the highlights for many was the John Lennon song 'Imagine'. As the children sang this special song, with its very special message, members of the audience lit up the auditorium with torch lights on their phone, making it a truly breath-taking experience for all. As well as performing themselves, the children had a birds-eye view of other artists on the night. They especially loved Extreme Rhythm and could be seen bopping enthusiastically to the beat. All in all, it was a wonderful experience for the children and their families, one they will never forget!

Lunchtime league Final

The last day of November saw us host our eagerly awaited Football Lunchtime League Final. The two semi-finals were very closely fought matches before Team 2 and Team 4 booked their place in the decider. The weather was on our side as the two teams took to the pitch to the music of the Sunday Game and a huge round of applause from the rest of the school there to cheer them on, Team 4 donning the Shels jerseys for the day and Team 2 in the familiar Martins colours. The Martins got off to a flying start and were quickly off to a 2-1 lead before the 'Shels' team got their first score. Half time saw both teams on level scores at 2-1 apiece. In the second half the 'Shels' team really got into their stride and despite some great defence and some lovely taken scores by the 'Martins' there was no stopping the 'Shels' as they ran out as winners on a score line of 4 -3 to 3-2.

St Martin's Club Chairperson Kevin Waters was on hand to present, for the very first time, the 'Daithí Waters' Lunchtime League cup to the victorious team of Tommy Codd, Amy Newport, Gi-Gi Cleary, Lucia Moore, Rory O'

Connell, Jack Brennan, Eva O'Mahony and Maebh Ahern. Kevin offered some words of advice to all the players and spectators and was very impressed by the talent on show on the day, from goal saving clearances to some well taken scores and the level of teamwork on display. Gi-Gi, on behalf of the winning team, thanked Kevin, Ms. Walsh, Ms. Hearne and all the teachers, and congratulated all the teams that participated in the league, giving a huge three cheers to the unlucky finalists, who fought valiantly and showed a great amount of skill in the final but were pipped in the second half. Well done also to all of 6th Class who acted as referees, lines people and umpires throughout the competition. A huge thank you to Kevin for joining us on the day and adding so much to this occasion and to the St. Martins Club for sponsoring the 'Daithí Waters Cup.' It is great to have such a supportive club within our community. Special thanks to Ms. Hearne, without whom these lunchtime leagues would not take place. A final congratulations to all 54 participants in this very competitive competition and we look forward to showcasing their sporting talents in other Lunchtime Leagues later in the year. It is great to see the boys and girls, experienced players and new beginners, take to the field together to show their skills and to see the sportsmanlike way in which all interact with each other and offer encouragement to all teammates. Follow this link to see a highlights of the final and a photo of the winning team! <https://piercestownns.com/>

Chess

November saw Chess season get into full swing in Piercestown N.S. After a hiatus due to covid, it has been great to bring the chess boards back into the classroom and see the children develop their skills. All classes from 3rd to 6th had been practising before the school competition got up and running in the middle of the month. This week we hold round 3 of our chess tournament. This tournament will see every child from 3rd to 6th play one game per week for at least 8 weeks before we are ready to crown our Chess Champion of 2022/2023. Every class will also have gold, silver and bronze medal winners and this tournament will decide who makes our School Chess Masters Team (5th and 6th Class) and our Buds Team (3rd and 4th Class), to compete in an interschools chess competition in early February. However, win or lose, it is great to see so many of our students enjoy learning the wonderful game of chess and develop their logical thinking skills while just having fun. This year we have also introduced a new initiative - Chess Club on Wednesdays where children from 3rd to 6th can come together in the hall and practise their chess moves. Keep a lookout on our newsletter as we keep you updated with our Chess leader board. We look forward to following this tournament closely and seeing who will be crowned Chess Champion of 2022/2023? It's all up for grabs, watch out as this competition will be fierce!!!

Class of the Month – Hot off the press...

This month saw two teams tied at the top. The worthy winners unveiled at our assembly today were 2nd class and for the second month in a row, 1st class!!! Well done to both classes who worked hard to earn themselves the coveted title of Class of the Month. Miss Sinnott's class are part of 2nd class and will join in the celebratory pizza party. The children will receive their certificates and a homework pass. Word has it, with two teams from the junior end of the school winning, that the senior end of the school is more determined than ever, to get their foot across the line for the December competition!

Eason's Spelling Bee 2022!

There was great excitement among 5th and 6th class, with the return of the Eason's Spelling Bee Competition. This competition is in its 13th year and is open to any boy or girl in 5th and 6th class who wishes to participate. The spelling booklets were given out and a week later, we held our in-school spelling bee competition. The winner of this competition would be crowned Piercestown N.S. spelling bee and go on to represent our school in the County Final which will take place in the New Year. 15 brave pupils stepped up to the plate, as the in-school competition took place in the hall on Thursday December 1st. 4th class pupils were also in the audience as they eagerly watched what opportunity lies ahead for them in 5th class. It was one of the closest and most intense competitions we have seen over the years with the 15 contestants finally being whittled down to two 6th class boys, Arvin Boodhoo and John Kenny. Having found ourselves in a 'sudden death' scenario, you could cut the tension in the room with a knife. But after several rounds of going head-to-head, John Kenny emerged victorious. Well done to ALL of our pupils who volunteered to take part, it takes guts and stamina and nerves of steel alongside good spelling technique!!!

Congratulations to John, our 2022 Piercestown N.S. Spelling Bee and we look forward to updating you when the County Final date is announced.

Science Week 2022- Field Trip for 5th class

The morning of Tuesday 15th November saw Rang a Cúig make their way up the road to visit Teagasc, as part of science week. They were prepared for whatever the weather might bring but as luck would have it, the day turned out to be fine! On arrival, they were welcomed by Anna Healy and some of her colleagues. She began the day by asking the children what environmental issues they thought were most current and relevant today. There was no shortage of answers as the children identified issues such as global warming, increasing world population and deforestation. Next there was a talk on the functions of soil and this was followed by a practical session in the lab where the children donned their white coats and did some hands-on investigations to identify soil types. At the end of the day this session was named by some as their favourite part! After a lunch break, when the children were treated to sweets and hot chocolate with marshmallows, they put on their wellies and took a tour of the dairy farm. For others, this was their favourite part as they thought the calves were very cute and the bull was very big and impressive! The first few drops of rain fell as they made their way back to the bus, perfect timing! Many thanks to Anna for organising this enjoyable and informative day for the children. Check out the 5th class blog to see a video of the day! <https://piercestownns.com/classes/fifth-class/>

Science Week 2022 overview

Field trips aside, the school was alive with amazing projects and experiments during Science Week 2022. It was wonderful to hear the buzz of learning from the children and see the connection between school and home as various children brought in 'experiments' to share with their classmates each day. 6th class put on a science fair for some of the younger classes and the collaborative learning was commendable. Science week kicked off with the entire school participating in the planting of daffodils also. Roll on Spring time so that we can appreciate the beauty that emerges from our planting experience. The week finished off on a high, with a visit from the Nutty Scientist who literally set (maybe not the world) but definitely himself on fire! Boys and girls, do not, I repeat, do not attempt to recreate that lesson at home. Huge well done to all the staff, children and parents who took on Science Week with gusto. There is no doubt that a lot of evidence was gathered for our STEM submissions later in the year.

BLAST programme 2022

This year is the first year that Piercestown N.S. has applied for the BLAST programme. We applied to have an expert come to do some workshops on the specific craft of comic writing. We were delighted to be successful in our application. I am now pleased to inform the children and school community, that our artist (and comic writer) in residence will be Mr. Colum Kavanagh. Colum will give two visits to the school to introduce his own work and whet our appetite, and prepare us for our Comic writing projects on Monday 19th and Tuesday 20th December. The classes will be offered to 4th, 5th and 6th class. While the project is process based, i.e. to learn the craft of comic writing, we are also looking forward to the product side of things and sharing our comic strips (hopefully) with the wider community. We look forward to updating you as the project progresses and there is no doubt that we are going to have a 'BLAST!'

Christmas Carol service

Christmas Carol Service 2022 preparations are well under way. The corridors are alive with the sound of song, percussion, and excited voices. While the virtual carol services were a wonderful option when we could not be together, the children literally cannot wait to return to their live performance. What better way to get into the spirit of Christmas, than by taking some time out of the busy commercial side of things, to spend time with each other, singing together and reminding ourselves of the true meaning of Christmas. So, pop it into the diary and we look forward to seeing you for our Christmas Carol Service 2022, in St. Martin's Church at 7pm on Wednesday December 14th. As always, for those who cannot make it, they will be able to access it using the webcam on <http://piercestownmurrintownparish.ie/>

Enrolment for Piercestown N.S. – Opens Monday December 5th 2022 with an OPEN NIGHT ON WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 7TH 2022 AT 7PM

Our Admissions notice and enrolment form and policy are available on www.piercestownns.com Why not come along to our Open Night, this Wednesday, December 7th at 7pm (before the Christmas madness!). After two years of virtual Open Nights, we are once again delighted to open up the doors and welcome people back into our physical building. Tea and coffee will be available from 6.30pm and the talks will begin at 7pm sharp. The night itself, is an adult only event as it allows for you to hear what our school has to offer. There will be opportunity for questions and answers sessions, as well as a tour around the building. For further information, call our office on 0539158854.

Parent Teacher Meetings 2022

Many thanks to everyone for participating in our recent parent teacher meetings. It was so lovely to have the face to face contact again. Any required follow up from these meetings will take place in the coming weeks. As always however, if you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Festive Fever

Having managed to contain ourselves for the last few days of November, and not mention the 'C' word, Ms. Walsh whipped out the Christmas gear on December 1st and the 'C' word is now in full flow around the building. Christmas cheer can be felt far and wide taking the form of letter writing, art work, carol rehearsals, tyre painting, elf excitement and much more to come! Keep an eye on the blog for more festive fun in the coming weeks. While it can feel hectic in the lead in, it truly is the most wonderful time of the year, especially for children. We also however, take a moment to reflect on how difficult it can be for people who have suffered recent bereavements. We especially share a thought for Kayla and her family this Christmas and all those who have recently lost loved ones.

16th December – CPD for staff, half day school closure

In accordance with DES guidance, school will close on 16th December to take a half day for staff to participate in Primary Language Curriculum webinars. The rest of the year will see two other webinars, as a requirement for staff. The Board of Management will liaise with staff to put dates in the diary to cover the other two webinars. As per previous correspondence, these can be taken as two half days or combined to make one full day closure. As soon as a decision has been made, we will be in touch.

Wedding Bells are in the air!

It is not every year that wedding bells are in the air! But we are on the final countdown with Ms. Taylor as she prepares to become Mrs. Byrne on December 9th. On behalf of the entire school community, I would like to wish Ms. Taylor the very best on her big day and wish both her and her future husband a life of love, laughter, good health and happiness. We have no doubt that Ms. Taylor is going to be a most stunning bride! We cannot wait to see the photos. Ms. Taylor will finish up for work on Tuesday 6th to complete her final preparations. Ms. Taylor will remain on leave until after the Christmas holidays when we look forward to welcoming her back on January 5th.

A Word from the Principal

With the dark month of November over, December promises to be full of fun, song, lights and excitement. It was lovely to have the building filled with parents once again during PT meetings and return to the good ole days! Things we took for granted such as carol services and open nights are returning with a great appreciation from us all. The children have been so wonderful since our return in August and it is hard to believe that we have almost the first term completed. Plenty of excitement left before we get to the finish line however! So, as we make our way through December madness, let's enjoy all the good times. Life at times can be full of challenges, ups and downs. For this month, I am going to finish on what I think is such a true quote, that at times, we should remind ourselves of.

"Life is amazing. And then it's awful. And then it's amazing again. And in between the amazing and awful it's ordinary and mundane and routine. Breathe in the amazing, hold on through the awful, and relax and exhale during

the ordinary. That's just living heart-breaking, soul-healing, amazing, awful, ordinary life. And it's breathtakingly beautiful." L.R. Knost.

Dates for your diaries so far this year:

- GAA coaching continues with football on Tuesdays
- Board of Management meeting 6th December
- Open Night Wednesday 7th December at 7pm
- Christmas Carol Service December 14th 2022 at 7pm
- Half day closure 12.30pm for Primary Language Curriculum Webinar 16th December
- School closes for Christmas holidays with a half day on December 21st 2022 and reopens on Thursday 5th January 2023