

Piercestown Post March 2024

Welcome to the seventh edition of the Piercestown Post for the school year 2023-2024. March was a short month with Easter being early this year. But for a short month, March is always a hectic one. As you saw from last month's newsletter, it kicked off straight away with a love of all things reading, and then somersaulted into all things green and Gaeilge with Seachtain na Gaeilge. Finally, we got caught up in our 'Lots of Socks' Day and Purple day before we took a well-earned rest for Easter. It is hard to believe we have two terms under our belts! Two down and one to go, so we better recharge the batteries before the final term gets up and running!



Lots of socks Day March 21st

Formerly known as 'Odd socks day' and now rebranded as 'Lots of Socks' Day it is tradition in Piercestown National School to celebrate all days of which our school community are part of. March 21st celebrates World Down Syndrome Day. This year to add an extra fun element as well as inviting people to wear odd socks on this day, there was a fun competition for the children. Staff members sent in pictures of themselves wearing 'odd socks' at home and they were featured on a display in school. The task was to try and guess what teacher were wearing which 'odd socks' – there were prizes for the winners to add to the fun of it. Many thanks to Bryan Barnes for adding this one into the mix this year! Check out the blog if you did not make it into school www.piercestownns.com As this newsletter was going to press, the prizes had made their way to the class winners. Congratulations to Rian in Mr Lehane's class, Conor in Ms Sinnott's class, Ellie in Junior Infants, Kate K in senior infants, Conor in 1st class, Meabh in 2nd class, Lorna in 3rd class, Kyle in 4th class, Daniel in 5th class and Séamus in 6th class on being able to identify the most correct number of feet with the correct staff!

Shine, Bright Theatre

Junior and Senior Infants were treated to a puppet show by Shine Bright Theatre on World Down Syndrome Day. Some of the characters included Timmy, Pirate, King Fancy Pants, Bunny, Nutty, Lisa and Ms Chatterbox. The interactive puppet show explored the theme of friendship. Some of the children's favourite parts included a very rude pirate who was taught manners by the children of Piercestown. Many thanks to Lisa Gould and her puppets for bringing an extra fun factor to our 'Lots of Socks Day' 2024.

Zeeko Seminar – Safety on the internet

On March 12th, an expert in the area of internet safety arrived at our school to carry out sessions with 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class. While Lisa acknowledged that in comparison to some schools around the country Piercestown NS did not stand out alarmingly, she *was concerned* about the number of children at primary age level accessing devices. While we acknowledge that these are indeed parental decisions, from the school perspective of teaching internet safety, when children are accessing games and apps that are illegal for their age, it makes our teaching difficult around these areas. Teachers work to the best of their ability to inform and educate the children about internet safety and in particular cyberbullying through SPHE however, ultimately it is the responsibility of parents as the primary educators to help us, the school, in this area. We hope that by working with you the parents as a team, that going forward our children will be able to make the correct decisions, and exhibit resilience in what can only be described as challenging circumstances. This is something that needs to be monitored carefully and constantly and conversations need to take place to ensure the safety of our young children as they grow up in an ever changing and ever challenging society.

Chess Presentation

Congratulations to the winners of our chess tournament 2023-2024. We were delighted to welcome chess guru and former principal Mr. Eamonn Barrett back into the building yesterday to present our chess awards. In total over 400 games had been played throughout the tournament. Prior to the presentation we also received the results of the recent Ficheall tournament with both our Masters team, 'The Rookies' and our Budding Masters 'The Gallant Knights' coming top of their leader boards. The Masters have been invited to a next day out in Oylegate on April 9th to compete against other Ficheall teams from outside of Wexford. We look forward to hearing how they get on. But for this week our focus was on the chess presentations of our in school competition. And so, the medals winners from 3rd to 6th

class were as announced as follows: 3rd class, bronze medals for – Amara Duffin, Ashton Duffin, Aaron Butler and Tom Hubbert, silver medal for Oisin Quigley and the gold medal for Levi Devereux. From 4th class, silver medal winners – Heath Mahony, Santiago Fortune, James Devereux and Eoin Durnan and gold winner Donnagh McGee. From 5th class silver medal winners Emmet Marcus and Tiarnan Quigley and gold medal winner Rogan Sunter. From 6th class bronze medal for Seán Power, silver medal for Joseph Collier and gold medal winner Jack Sunter. Finally, the overall medals were given out. In 3rd place overall, bronze medals were awarded to Rogan Sunter and Donnagh McGee, silver medal was awarded to Joseph Collier and the overall winner and second name to go on the Eamonn Barrett plaque for the year 2023-2024 is Jack Sunter. Congratulations to all our medals winners and special shout out to Jack Sunter, our newest chess champion! Many thanks in her absence to Ms Hearne who ran the chess competition and to all the staff who facilitate the tradition of chess to not only continue but to flourish in our school! Big shout out to Amara for flying the flag for the girls, as our only female medal winner this year!! Come on girls let's get practicing our chess moves!

Purple Day – Celebrated 22nd March (but is the 26th of March on the calendar)

Epilepsy day is marked in Ireland on March 26th annually. It is associated with the colour Purple and so today we invited all members of our school community to 'get their purple' on. Today, we got lots of 'purple pictures' for our school blog and various classes learned in an age-appropriate manner about Epilepsy. Many thanks to all who participated and a special shout out to Ms Taylor, Pat and Shelly and 4th class.

Speaking of Calendars - Planning ahead for next year

While we are planning for term 3, the Board of Management have also planned for the next school year by ratifying the school calendar. In a follow-on email shortly, you will receive the School Calendar for next year 2024-2025, which looks a little different to last year's due to a particularly long term two next year. One date of significance for people is usually our return date so we return on Wednesday 28th August 2024.

Walking Tour 4th Class

On Wednesday, 20th March, 4th class set off on their educational trip with Ms. Taylor, Ms. Lyttleton and Pat. They went on the 'Wex Walks' tour with the amazing Paul Walsh. They heard stories of the Normans and Vikings, ghost stories in some of our local graveyards scattered across Wexford Town and had a tour of the Wexford Arts Centre and Wexford Opera House!! They discovered throughout the walking tour just how amazing Wexford Town is, steeped in history and stories!! They finished off their trip with a stop off at Min Ryan Park en route back to school, where they all had a go on the swings, slides, zipline and climbing frames. A great day was had by all!!

Rounders will be kicking off in term three

The summer term brings with it extra sports and Active Week. Another tradition associated with Piercestown NS is that of the Gaelic Game rounders. Ms Lyttleton is back in the management seat this year accompanied by Ms. Lehané. Ms. Caldicott will be taking on the boys' team. Due to Rackard league being delayed with poor weather in term two, training for rounders for the first few weeks will take place at lunchtimes.

Class of the Month – Who will it be?

It was all to play for with the month of March as it was another short month. It can be a hard month to succeed in as often the months that have more celebrations and events than usual can be harder to score points in. But the scores are in, and the results have been totted up.... but the winner will not be revealed until we return to school after Easter. All will be revealed at our assembly on Mindful Monday on April 8th when we return.

Hot meals – Recruitment process to begin from FRESH Today

The initial timeline for the hot meals was post Easter. However, due to the large number of schools in this phase, the need to upgrade kitchens and install ovens, recruit staff for the service and so forth, **this deadline has now been moved by a few weeks**. FRESH today have informed us that the recruitment process for the Canteen Operative Position is due to be advertised. **This advertisement should any member of the school community wish to apply will be available on the website Indeed.com** We will update you when further information is available.

12th March Green Committee Action Day – Update from Mrs Ryan and the Green Committee

We had a very successful 'single use plastic free' lunchbox day!! We saw lots of children using different options such as paper bags and kitchen paper instead of tinfoil or cling film. We saw some children using beeswax cloths to wrap their sandwiches, and a lot had 'depotted' their yogurts from a large carton into smaller reusable containers. The Green Committee also did a survey of reusable water bottles to see how many pupils use reusable and refillable water bottles. A HUGE 98% of the pupils surveyed use these. Well done Piercestown NS!!

Classroom Door Competitionand the winner was...3rd Class! Congratulations!

The standard of competitiveness this year was exceptional! Debbie Devereux from Sunny Days was invited to be our adjudicator this year. She was faced with the task of having to select only one door from ALL classes who took part. The decision was so difficult to make. Junior infants transformed their door into 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Senior infants took the famous author Dr Seuss and transformed their door into 'Horton Hears a Who', 1st class took their novel, which was an extremely clever idea and made their door into the cover of their novel 'The Hundred Mile an Hour Dog'. 2nd class were deterring people from even entering their room as their door was converted to 'The World's Worst Children'. 3rd class got lost down a rabbit hole with the theme of 'Alice in Wonderland'. Ms Taylor and 4th class had been first out of the traps with their door and their Harry Potter theme 'Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban'. 5th class held an internal competition before their door was converted into the 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid', 6th class tried to use a little corruption and bribery with their effort at Wonka and their door 'Charlie and the Chocolate factory'. Mr. Lehane and the team can hear EVERYTHING these days as their door is home to two giant ears, with the theme of the 'B.F.G.' and finally Ms Sinnott and the team, not to be outdone converted the windows of the modular (showing great outside the box thinking) and joined Junior infants with their effort of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. But there could only be ONE winner and after many sleepless nights and strong deliberations Debbie informed Ms Walsh of the result. Congratulations to Ms Roche and 3rd class who were crowned the champions this year and enjoyed their 'ice-cream party' on 'lots of socks' day!

Eason's Spelling Bee- Piercestown Spelling Bee 2024

Malachy Reynolds from 5th class headed to Gorey on Wed 13th March to represent Piercestown NS and take on the spelling bees from other schools in the County final. The atmosphere was tense, but the children had nerves of steel. Malachy represented our school proudly making it through several rounds before being knocked out. Well done to Malachy for representing our school this year and to all who took part in our in school Spelling Bee competition!

Sports Update

Input from Mr Murphy

As March draws to a close, our school's hurling fever is at an all-time high! Over the past few weeks, we have been hard at it with tough training sessions, exhilarating matches, and outstanding victories, it's been a month to remember for our budding hurling stars. Throughout March, our teams have showcased their determination and skill on the field. Every week, rain or shine, our players have showed up to training. In the heat of competition, our teams have shone brightly. Securing victories over Barntown and Rosslare in thrilling encounters, showcasing their talent and teamwork. Additionally, our Rising Stars team achieved a remarkable victory against Bree, displaying their skills and hard work on the field.

Input from Ms. Sheehan

The girl's camogie team continue to work hard at training every week. This month we started our first round of Rackard League games. We played Barntown and Bannow. The girls went up to Barntown on the 12th of March, unfortunately they were not victorious on this occasion. The girls also played Bannow at home on the 19th of March winning by a few goals. We look forward to playing in the next round of Rackard League when the fixtures are announced.

Conor McDonald Active Workshop with FRESH Today

Also, this month, we had the pleasure of hosting Wexford hurler Conor McDonald from Fresh today. Conor engaged fourth, fifth, and sixth-class students in a lively discussion about the importance of health and fitness. He led fun

exercises and activities that had the kids moving, before hosting a simple competition to win a hurley to two lucky students from each class. It was great to have such a notable Wexford player in the school and will only help to aid our young players with his inspirational words on playing and training.

Hurling 365 Piercestown NS style is complete for the Junior end BUT.....

Hurling 365 really showcased the improvement over the five weeks of regular hurling and the terrific work and input from the staff willing to coach and the amazing kids willing to come and practice their skills. **With the senior end still a few weeks behind due to weather we hope after Easter we can continue to grow this passion and will return on Wednesdays for another four sessions.** We did manage to sneak two sessions in despite the bad weather but with Rackard league and Mini 7's to go full steam ahead, the extra sessions could literally be a game changer. Huge thanks to all the team of staff involved! We have no doubt that Ms Hearne would be delighted to see that her plan not only came to fruition but was extremely successful.

Big Birthday Shout Outs - April!

We would like to wish the following children a big happy birthday: Enzo and Conor from Ms. Sinnott's class, Cara and Lexi from Junior infants; Daithi from Senior Infants; Reuben and Anna from 1st class; Beth and Kate from 2nd class; Amelia, Aaron and Polly from 3rd class; Aoibhinn F. from 4th class, Tiarnan and Roan from 5th class; and Callum and Rian from Mr Lehane's class, We hope you all enjoy your special day!!!



*"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday dear Enzo, Conor, Cara, Lexi, Daithí, Reuben, Anna, Beth, Kate, Amelia,
Aaron, Polly, Aoibhinn, Tiarnan, Roan, Callum and Rian,
Happy birthday to you."*

Seachtain na Gaeilge (SNAG 2024)

With book day behind us, SNAG 2024 was upon us. While keeping up tradition with some of the much-enjoyed traditions of 'An tusa an Gadaí Gaelach?' and the 'Comórtas Selfie' we decided to up our game this year and put an even greater emphasis on providing opportunities where all members of our school community (staff and students alike) had to be 'ag caint' as ghaeilge. And so, at 11.15am daily, the Irish dancing music was blasted out over the intercom, followed by Ms. Walsh leading by example and speaking as ghaeilge to the children and staff. The timer was then set and for the next 'deich noiméad'/ 10 minutes all talk was as ghaeilge. There were many resources utilised to ensure that children of all ages, levels and abilities could participate and it proved to be a great success. The tráth na gceist took place for Junior and senior end, and there were opportunities for children to go to the hall to be ag léamh as ghaeilge. A highlight this year was Biongó that zoom (over zoom) for 3rd to 6th class. Ms Walsh made sure all classes experienced the 'Bingo Buzz' and went into the four junior rooms to play Bingo with them in person. Our Lá Gaeilge was amazing and if you haven't already checked out our performances, it is worth going to the blog to see a video from each class on the home page. www.piercestownns.com The week finished off with the Bronnadh na Duiseanna (presentation of prizes) and we were all set for a long weekend and the enjoyment of the parades. Many thanks to the children, staff and parents who embraced our SNAG with such enthusiasm and effort.

Léamh le Lámh- Junior Infants headed to the 'leabharlann'

On Thursday March 14th, the anticipation was palpable in the Junior Infants classroom. It was the day of their first adventure on a bus to travel to the library. This event was to celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge 2024. Two of the boys from Ms. Sinnott's class & Bryan joined their friends in Junior Infants when they left the school around 10.30am. After the excitement of the bus, the children were welcomed by a lovely lady dressed in a very ornate, highly decorated cape. Each child then introduced themselves and shared their favourite thing about St. Patrick's Day. Many of the children mentioned the parade and more said they just enjoy spending time with their families. It was then time for the fun "scéal as Gaeilge le Lamh" about a swordfish with a big nose, followed by the making of St. Patrick's Day cards. The creativity of the children was very impressive. They became totally engaged with the task at hand and produced such beautiful cards, which they got to bring home to their families.

Soon, it was time to make our journey back to school. The children didn't seem to notice the rain, because they had enjoyed the entire experience, and arrived back to the classroom, just in time to enjoy their lunch. Thanks are due to Ms. Lyttleton, Ms. Whelan, Teresa and Bryan for keeping everyone safe. Junior Infants, also, appreciated Ms. Walsh for organising this adventure for them. As one child said "it was the best day ever

School Self Evaluation update- what next?!

Under circular 0056/2022 schools engage in School self-evaluation over a cycle of up to three years. As per our last newsletter, as a staff we have identified 'Gaeilge' / Irish as our area in need of improvement. With school closures during covid in recent years, remote learning and prioritising of literacy and numeracy upon re-opening, as a staff we feel this area now needs our attention. As part of SNAG 2024, all children completed a survey on the iPads on the last day of 'Seachtain na Gaeilge' and as a staff we will use this evidence. Many thanks to all the parents who completed our google doc parental survey. This is invaluable information. As we are in the gathering evidence phase, we are hugely grateful for the data returned. We hope to take a focus group of pupils after Easter for a further interview and then take all our evidence and move to phase 3 when, as a staff, we hope to 'analyse the evidence and make judgements'. If you didn't complete the survey, there is still time, and we would be very grateful.

Handwriting Competition

Another area prioritised for improvement this term, was that of handwriting. Under the direction of Ms. Caldicott a massive effort in handwriting was put in by all classes from 1st to 6th class. The competition deadline was in time for the long weekend in March and the results are in. Our last day of term two saw the presentations being made. Overall, it must be said that the standard of handwriting improved across ALL classes. We were delighted to be supported and sponsored by Green Tech HQ. Green Tech are Ireland's first sustainable innovation hub in Enniscorthy. Their focus is to educate and promote young people in Wexford to become innovators, especially in sustainability and renewable energy sectors. The school and Board of Management of Piercestown NS would like to thank Green Tech and in particular the director Mr. Ed. Murphy for teaming up with our school and so generously sponsoring all the awards for this wonderful new initiative for 2024! Congratulations to all the recipients. We had 33 certificates presented for excellence in their improvement of the handwriting. And the drum roll for the class winners please....1st class Cara Marcus, 2nd class Holly McCann, 3rd class Kayla Walsh, 4th class Emily Cooper, 5th class Abbie Walsh, 6th class Caoimhe Keating and the award for most improved in SET is Oisín Quigley. Finally, like all competitions children do like to know who won at the given time. So, the award for overall best handwriting in the school went to Oliver Hayes in 2nd class. Huge congratulations to all 180 children who took part.

Easter Treats – Sponsored by KC Waste Disposal

Many thanks to Kieran Creane and KC Waste Disposal who have sponsored our school for the second time this year. At Christmas, a Christmas meal was sponsored for the children in both of our special classes. We have now been treated to a generous donation of Easter eggs again for both special classes in our school and there was an Easter egg to be raffled among each mainstream class in our school too. This offered another fun factor to our last day of this term. Huge thanks to KC Waste Disposal for their generosity and support to our school. It is greatly appreciated.

Daffodil Day March 22nd

Today is also recognised annually as Daffodil Day. This is a day that touches the hearts of many. Following on from last year and led by Ms. Lyttleton, a staff fundraiser was organised and a daffodil pin was gifted to all children in our school community. A donation box was on display this morning at the front of the school and the generosity was second to none! We will update you in next months newsletter with the final count but a huge thank you to all who donated.

A word from the principal

Two terms complete and one to go. How fast time goes! For our newest members in Mrs Larkin and Ms Sinnott's class, it is hard to believe that they nearly have junior infants under their belt. For our most senior pupils in 6th class, it is hard to believe that in just a matter of weeks, graduation will be on the horizon and you will be part of the history of Piercestown NS as you begin the next chapter of your lives and education! I would like to take this opportunity to thank you the parents. We are always aware that when our tempo increases with World Book day, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Lots of Socks, Purple Day, so does yours. We thank you for always working with us as a team to give our

children the best opportunities for all types of learning. The staff, the Board of Management and I work hard on our communication in terms of transparency and planning ahead. My effort at the newsletter hopefully mirrors this. I hope that you all have a restful Easter break and look forward to what term three has to hold. Our candles still light daily in our classrooms for Ms Hearne and Conor and she continues to be in our thoughts. Finally, before I finish, I would like to bid a very fond farewell to a 4th class pupil Santiago. Santiago leaves us after Easter to move to a new school with his family. Santiago has been a much-loved member of our school for the last two years and will undoubtedly bring his amazing chess prowess and skillset with him! Maybe the boys and girls of Piercestown NS will have the opportunity to play with Santiago at future interschools tournaments. Santiago, we miss you already, best of luck and keep in touch!

“At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child’s success is the positive involvement of parents’ – Jane D. Hall

Dates for your diaries so far this year:

- March 22nd Purple Day (26th March) for Epilepsy
- School closes for Easter holidays on Fri 22nd March
- School reopens April 8th
- Mindful Monday 8th April
- World Autism Day will be celebrated 9th April (2nd April)
- 65 Roses Day (Cystic Fibrosis) will be marked on April 12th
- Annual Art Exhibition 25th April (evening event)
- Day off Friday 3rd and Public Holiday Monday 6th May 2024
- Confirmation – Friday 10th May 2024 11am
- Week of Standardised testing May 13th 2024
- First Holy Communion – Saturday 25th May 2024 11am
- June mid-term 3rd- 7th June 2024
- Active Week 17th – 21st June 2024
- Graduation Tues 25th June 2024