

NEWSLETTER

Sutton Park School



April 2009



Message from Michael Moretta, Head of School

We have certainly had a momentous term. In the three months and especially since the term began in January, so much has taken place in the school that I scarcely know where to begin in this newsletter. First and foremost the term has been dominated by a series of inspections and evaluations in which every aspect of the school has been extensively and thoroughly examined. Areas as diverse as the range of our extra-curricular activities and the quality of the educational resources we offer at Sutton Park, to our timetable allocations and the number of option subjects we run, have been audited, reviewed and analysed. At all times everything that was reviewed in the system was measured from the perspective of the impact of our systems on the quality of the teaching and learning in the school.

We appear to have suffered a strange quirk of chance in that our two regulatory authorities - The Irish Government Inspectorate and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and the Council for International Schools (CIS) both chose the month of March to inspect the school. To put this in context - the last time the NEASC/CIS reviewed the school was 11 years ago. The Irish inspectors go into 36 schools across Ireland every year to conduct a whole school evaluation and Sutton Park has never before been through the process. Both bodies will issue reports towards the end of April and at the beginning of May and these reports will form the basis of our future planning over the next 3 years at the very least.

On Thursday 23rd April the team of Irish Inspectors will give verbal feedback on their findings to the staff - at 3:30 in the afternoon - and then to the Board of Management at 5pm in the evening. Once this verbal feedback has been completed, a written report will be sent to the school after the summer holidays. The NEASC/ CIS will send us a written report again offering commendations and recommendations around the beginning of May. I do not want to pre-empt these two reports, but I will say this: both bodies have affirmed my belief that one of the school's major strengths is in the teaching and learning that goes on in all subjects and in all academic departments and divisions of the school. Standards were deemed to be very high and the quality of the lessons and the quality of the teaching was judged as very good across all the subjects that were observed. Inspectors sat in on all classes at some time over the two full weeks of inspection and had nothing but praise for what they saw. Moreover, the students were lauded throughout the process - for their politeness, inquisitive minds and the way they worked closely with their teachers in order to maximise their potential.

I want to add that these two reports and, in particular, the report from the Irish inspectorate, will lead to very significant changes in the way that we run the school. All of the recommendations will, I believe, lead to positive benefits both to you the parents and to further improve the students' learning. In validating our teaching and learning I have a mandate and a platform to further develop the quality of the teaching and learning for the entire school community and, I have no doubt, the school will continue to go from strength to strength. Rest assured this is just the beginning of a process of change and I believe that the outcomes of all this self-evaluation and inspection this last month will provide a real springboard for ongoing improvement.

With this in mind it is worth pointing out the tangible expression of the way we have been quietly building up our reputation in a variety of ways and in a wide range of areas over the last few years. The often hidden and quiet work of quality teaching, coaching and training are definitely beginning to come to fruition.

Inside this issue:

Message From Michael Moretta
Head of School

Celebration of Outstanding
Achievements

New Governing Bodies & PTA

Driving on the School Site

Uniform

Technical Design Students Awards

Young Scientist Competition Winners

Homework Club

Substance Abuse Policy

General Information

School Reports

Grand Piano Fundraiser

Senior Sports News

Message From Liam Burns
Intermediate School Principal

Curriculum Priorities

Under 12's Hockey Champs

French Day

Global Feast

Non Uniform Fundraiser

Message From Geraldine McGuire
Junior School Principal

Various Topics

PTA News

Celebration of Outstanding Achievements

Throughout the calendar year and indeed during both inspections it has been my privilege to preside over a series of assemblies where I have been able to celebrate quite extraordinary achievements in every sphere of school life. You will see more detailed accounts of these achievements in this newsletter. However, it is worth listing some of the activities we have celebrated in this section because it illustrates my point that we are emerging as a quite exceptional school that fosters and develops students to achieve extraordinary things.

The year began with the school winning 2 first prizes and a commendation in the Young Scientist competition. On top of this, one of last year's winning entries, Designing a Website for the Colour Blind, was entered into the Young Scientist Competition in Belfast the team responsible for the project won the Young Scientist of the Year Award outright. The team were, as a consequence, invited to attend the Young Scientist competition in London where they won a major innovation award. Year on year our science teachers have achieved a pattern of extraordinary success. Some 1600 entries from all over Ireland are submitted for the Young Scientist competition in Dublin and of these only 500 are selected for exhibition at the RDS. Of these only 72 are awarded prizes and very few commended. To achieve two first prizes and a commendation is extraordinary indeed. At the time of writing new teams are busy planning their entries for January 2010. Stunning achievements and ongoing success certainly create a dynamic of creativity.

Our Graphic and Design students seem also to be operating at the cutting edge of developments in education. Our school is one of the very few in the country that has both piloted and adopted the new syllabus in the country. I speak with the co-ordinators of this project on a regular basis and they tell me that the work they see our students undertake is some of the very best they have seen. Their projects and the quality of detail and research reflect levels approaching 3rd Level assignments in many cases. In the last week of term, 4 of our students out of 16 selected from an initial entry of 1600 were short-listed in a national design competition. We not only won first prize in the competition, but two of our other students were awarded major awards.

One of our 2nd year students, David Tobin, recently won a significant bursary in order to support his burgeoning career in Music. He played a short violin piece to us in assembly and we all simply stood in awe at the quality of his playing. He is already developing an International reputation. Next year he will be joined by another exceptional musical talent who will take up a place in first year. The impact of their combined skills will be to further lift and inspire an already thriving musical department.

Two of our 6th year students have recently gained places at the prestigious National College of Art. I understand that every year over 6000 students apply for 90 places. I personally witnessed the hours and hours of selfless dedication and hard work that went into the production of their portfolios.

For the first time in 50 years our U13 Boys Hockey team won the Leinster cup, defeating St Andrews in the final and Wesley College in the semi-finals. Our U12 team retained the Leinster hockey title beating St Andrews. In these two phenomenal achievements the years of hard work, coaching and training are paying off and we are becoming a major force in Hockey. That such success is being achieved among the younger students means we are building a bedrock of talent. You can also see the girls winning cups and beating so called superior hockey schools by winning the North Leinster trophy for the first time. There is now real strength in the depth of our squads.

Our badminton teams seem to win competition after competition and during the term I have been presented with no less than 5 trophies. The success here ranges from the U19 team to the very youngest participants. Ms Spence tells me the school has never before reached so many finals and won so many cups. Once again we are becoming a major force in this sport, triumphing over much bigger schools on a regular basis.

None of these extraordinary achievements are possible without the hard work and dedication of the teachers and the students. However, most importantly, they provide the spur for the rest of the community. We are creating a culture of achievement and we are beginning to think of ourselves as a can do school – anything is possible. We have established an Equestrian team and we have begun competing in events, reaching the top 4 in two recent competitions. A special feature of this team is that it contains students ranging from 1st Year - 5th Year. This is a characteristic of all our teams and helps generate a culture of achievement in the younger members. I know we shall have many students entering sailing competitions and they too will perform to high standards in a range of events.

WELL DONE TO ALL

Composition of the new Governors' Bodies & the PTA

At the beginning of the year there were significant changes in both our Boards of Government and in the PTA. I outline here the composition of the new boards for your information.

<u>BOARD OF GOVERNORS</u>	<u>BOARD OF MANAGEMENT</u>	<u>PTA</u>
Mr David Brophy, Chairperson	Ms Michele Ridgway, Chairperson	Ms Nicola Gorman, Chairperson
Mr Clive Lucas, Secretary	Mr Michael Moretta, Head of School	Ms Karen Sweeney, Treasurer
Ms Michele Ridgway, Chair BOM	Ms Geraldine McGuire, JS Principal	Ms Laura Haughey, Secretary
Mr Malachy Taaffe, Chair Finance	Mr Liam Burns, Inter School Principal	Mr Liam Burns
Mr Leo Martin, Chair Communication Com.	Mr Mark Newman, BOG Rep	Ms Mairead Byrne
Mr Eoin Scott	Ms Patricia Flood, BOG Rep	Ms Majella Doherty
Mr Nick Pheifer	Ms Christine Ellickson, Staff Rep	Ms Wende Gripenrog
Ms Deirdre Ferns	Mr Patrick McLoughlin, Staff Rep	Ms Deirdre Houlihan
Ms Patricia Flood	Ms Gabrielle Crowe, Parent Rep	Ms Rose Lindsay
Mr William J Hannan	Ms Jayne Economos, Parent Rep	Mr Peadar McKenna
Prof. Ferdinand von Prondzynski		Ms Lisa O'Connor
Mr Mark Newman		

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the outgoing Chair of Governors, Mr Larry Quinn, the outgoing Chair of the Finance Committee, Mr Jerry McCrohan and the outgoing Chair of the Board of Management, Mr Eoin Scott.

For those of you who have never felt the inclination to serve as a Governor, I can tell you it is a pretty thankless task. It is often forgotten that these are voluntary positions, taken up by very busy professional people and extremely time consuming. You have to be constantly available at the end of the phone and always available at times of crisis.

Mr Quinn and Mr McCrohan are departing the Board of Governors after many years selfless service to the school. They have been a constant support to me personally, but also committed and dedicated to improving the performance of the school. Staying in post long after their children left, their tireless efforts have placed the school in a stable financial position after many years of turmoil. Their combined legacy is a school that has been extensively refurbished and improved – a process culminating in the development of the L-Shaped block of 7 classrooms this summer and the re-design of the last Science Lab in June.

Mr Scott remains on the Board of Governors and his advice over the last two inspections has been particularly appreciated. Our systems of governance are fairly complex and he has negotiated me through the thickets of our articles and terms of reference with great clarity.

We now have two new Boards, with two new Chairs. I know that Mr David Brophy and Ms Michele Ridgway are committed to further developing and improving the communication of the Boards with the wider school community and next term you will begin to see significant changes in this area. Moreover, you will find that we all will begin to work more closely with the new Chair of the PTA, Ms Nicola Gorman and the new committee to bind the various bodies of Parents, Staff, Governors and Students more closely together.

Driving onto the School Site

We will be restoring the cones during the first few weeks of school in the new term. I am continuing to receive complaints about some of the parking and the cones seemed to ease the flow of the traffic around the main entrance. Doubtless this is a theme to be revisited by the Board of Management – but anyway – you have been warned!

Uniform

With the warm weather arriving I have noticed some of the students taking liberties with the school uniform. This is certainly a theme I shall be returning to and next term the School Council and the Board of Management will review our changes in rules. In the August newsletter we will be sending out exact statements about the kinds of Jeans and shoes allowed as school uniform. One parent has suggested that we send out a picture illustrating what is acceptable and what is not. It seems a great shame that one or two serial offenders put considerable strain on our very liberal uniform by wearing tattered jeans or shoes that are little more than trainers. We will also be reviewing the sanctions for rule breakers. Here are the uniform regulations for your information so that you can remind the students about what they can and cannot wear.

School Uniform from First to Fifth Year Students

- Dress and appearance must always be neat and tidy.
- Students should come to school dressed in a manner appropriate to an atmosphere of work and study.
- Any student who is not dressed in accordance with the dress code may be sent home or offered clearly marked lost property to wear for the day.
- The only logo allowed on clothes worn to School is the SPS logo.

School Uniform is Compulsory for students in First to Fifth Year

- **Top:** Students must wear a School crested top at all times. Plain (white, School blue or red) shirts, blouses and polo shirts are acceptable when worn under a School crested sweatshirt.
- **Trousers or skirt:** Navy trousers or skirt (not above knee height), or plain respectable* regular cut, single shade (of mid to dark blue) denim jeans may be worn.

* No torn hems, or waists below the hips, no logos or patches are permitted.

- **Shoes and socks:** Plain black or navy low heeled shoes, worn with socks. The shoe should not come above the ankle. No runners or runner-like shoes may be worn except during PE classes or sporting activities.
- **Jewellery:** Only discreet ear piercings may be displayed by all students, male and female. Other piercings, such as lip or nose piercings are not part of school uniform and must be covered. In regards to eyebrow piercings, taking consideration of the face that the piercing may close up if not allowed in school, a see-through bar may be worn.
- **Hair:** must be neat and clean, and may not fall in front of the eyes. “Raw” and “Blade 1” haircuts are not permitted. Hair colouring and highlighting should be as close as possible to the student’s natural hair colour.
- **Jackets:** must be dark blue - both the School jacket and the school PE jacket are acceptable.
- **Makeup:** must be appropriate to school environment.
- The Hoodies produced as part of our 50th Anniversary last year may remain school uniform.

Dress Code for Sixth Year Students

Sixth Year students are not required to wear the school uniform. However, as the most senior members of the school community, Sixth Year students must set a good example by wearing clothes that are clean, neat and appropriate for a learning environment.

- Ripped clothing and clothes that expose the midriff or inappropriate amounts of flesh are not acceptable.
- Skirts worn without tights must be knee-length
- Casual shorts may be worn but they must be respectable
- Any form of beach/swim wear is not allowed.
- Flip Flops are not allowed as part of the dress code. However smart, appropriate sandals may be worn.
- The same hair and jewellery rules for 1st -5th Year apply to 6th Years.

This Policy is a Sixth Year privilege. Any violation of it may result in the student being required to wear official School uniform for a minimum period of one week. They may also be sent home or offered clearly marked lost property to wear for the day instead of the inappropriate clothing.

Awards for our Technical Design Students



Some 1,600 students registered for the first 'Imagine' design competition, organised by NUI Maynooth recently. They were then whittled down to a shortlist of 16. Four students from Sutton Park School made it onto this shortlist. The winning senior entry, a Zen workstation, was proposed by Zachery Holmes. It is a device which is designed for the classroom of the future and is ergonomically designed to meet the needs of every student. His prize included a cheque for €500, a video Ipod, a stunning trophy, a 3D model of his winning design and an interactive whiteboard for the Design & Communication Graphics Department in his school.

Adam Kielty was awarded 3rd place in the junior category and Niamh Lowney took the overall award for the best poster in the competition.

"In a time of such economic gloom it is terrific to receive this excellent news" said Peter Timmins, their design teacher. "We are immensely proud of these four students for even making it to the shortlist of 16. It is a terrific achievement for such a small school like Sutton Park. There were schools from Belfast to Kerry and Mayo to Wexford at yesterday's ceremony and for these students to scoop the top awards is truly phenomenal".

Young Scientist Competition 2009

Sutton Park Students had remarkable success at this year's BT Young Scientist Competition which was held in the RDS from January 7th – January 11th. Out of the 1600 + entries into this year's competition only 500 projects were accepted. The students worked hard over their Christmas holidays to write up their projects and had a hectic week in the RDS explaining all their scientific procedures to the panel of judges.

Out of the 3 projects submitted by Sutton Park School they came away with 2 First prizes in their Categories and a Highly Commended – amazing achievements.



Sile Stafford (5th Year) & Rebecca Kummert (4th Year)

'A Study of Cystic Fibrosis and Ways of Improving Mucus Detachment' Won 1st Prize in the Senior Biological Sciences. The girls did experiments to find which frequency of oscillation was best at removing simulated mucus from hemispherical smooth surfaces. Using these results they went on to develop a CF Physiotherapy vest.

Robert Flood & Stephen Palminteri (2nd Year)

'An Investigation of Shock Absorbency in Non-Newtonian Fluids' Won 1st Prize in the Junior Mathematical/Chemical/physical Sciences. The boys researched how much force is absorbed when 5N weights are dropped from a height on bags of Non-Newtonian Fluid.



They found the bags of Oobleck absorbed considerable force and showed that it was possible to improve the shock absorbency in protective sports gear by implanting bags of the fluid into regions of impact.



Caoimhe Barnes & Lisa Rogers (2nd Year)

'A Study of Factors Affecting Hand Grip Strength' Received Highly Commended in the Junior Biological Sciences Using a Hand grip sensor linked to one of the science department's data loggers the girls tested their subjects of different ages for handgrip strength looking at the differences between genders and ages. They asked some of their subjects to do daily exercises by squeezing squash balls and found that they could improve the hand grip strength this way.

WELL DONE TO ALL



Homework Club

I have sent First Year Revision Packs with the newsletter in order for you to see exactly what kind of revision will be required for all first years. I will be monitoring First Year prep throughout the first two weeks of the new term in order to evaluate their work habits. I believe that many are still not writing down the exact nature of assignments as well as completing learning tasks and homework very quickly, sometimes giving the impression that they have no homework. In initial conversations with some first years I have seen erratic evidence of extensive note-taking and developed written work and I want to take the opportunity of showing them some revision techniques before they sit these important exams. Please go through the topics with your sons and daughters. It will help you understand both the amount of work they have to review and revise as well as give you some insight into their current state of preparedness for these papers. They have 5 weeks to get everything in order when they return next term.

Substance Abuse Policy

One immediate outcome of our working together towards common goals will be the revised Substance Abuse Policy. Ms Ryan has formed a committee containing representatives from all our stakeholders to review the existing policy and produce new guidelines and procedures in this important and often difficult area. A draft policy will be presented to the staff for consideration at our next Staff Meeting and I hope to publish the ratified document in the new handbook this summer. One outcome of all these inspections is that I have gained a very clear picture of the enormous work that has been completed over the last few years. So many aspects of the school have been revised and reviewed in a short space of time. I want to thank everyone involved in this inclusive and collaborative planning process.

Please note that we have 'A Guide For Parents' available in small booklet form available to take from our school reception area. This booklet is a Guide which outlines the most common questions asked to the Helpline which is a confidential helpline to all parents. Please feel free to take one when visiting the school.

General Information

Important Dates

Planning the new school calendar will be an important activity for us next term. The summer term, as you know is extremely busy and full and I enclose reminders regarding the most important dates with this newsletter.

There are two extra events that need to be placed in this busy schedule. The first is an information evening on Transition Year that will be open to all parents. I will let you know when this will take place early next term. It will provide everyone with the opportunity to understand the concept of Transition Year and, as this has been an area of review for the Board of Management all year, we are anxious to communicate our thoughts on how the year will operate in future.

Monday, 27th April - Senior School Staff Meeting - 1:30-3:30pm (Senior School finish at 1:00pm)

Holiday dates

Monday, 20th April

Monday, 4th May

Thursday, 28th May

- School returns from Easter Holidays

- May Bank Holiday

- Last day of School, Students leave for Summer Holidays

Exam Dates

3rd-19th June

3rd - 18th June

- Leaving Cert Written Examinations

- Junior Cert Written Examinations

School Reports

The reports contain a combination of percentage and grades. The percentage reflect class tests or averages of class tests. All these students will be sitting exams at the end of the next term and all will have a percentage included in their reports.

Please note that Reports for Home Economics will be sent out to parents the first week of the new term after Easter.

Help! We Need A Piano! Help! A Grand Piano! And We Need Some Money Too... (To the Beatle's song "Help!")

Sutton Park Music Department is trying to buy a Grand Piano. This is extremely important as the piano we currently own is not in the best condition and we do a lot of recitals. Ms Howard also thinks it would be better for students to learn on a Grand piano as it offers a better experience. In order to buy a Grand Piano we need to raise €20,000. After thinking long and hard, we decided to sell each key on the new piano. With the help of students, we figured out it would take 88 keys at €230 each to raise enough money. Currently we have €1,000 from the PTA for middle C. We will be holding various musical events through the summer term to raise money. We hope to buy the Grand Piano over the summer so that the music class of 2010 can use it for their Leaving and Junior Cert. Practicals. There will be a sign displaying our progress on show in reception. Please help us – we can't play any songs with just middle C!

Many thanks from The Students.

Senior Sports News

Boys Hockey

The boys hockey season has finally come to an end, and what a fantastic season Sutton Park School has had. The Senior Team have held their own in the Leinster 'A' League and also competed so well at the All Ireland Championships in Limerick last October. Thank you to our leaving sixth year players who have represented the school so professionally-Mark Guerin (Cap), Jamie Carr (v.cap.), Simon Walsh (v.cap), Ian Martin and Robbie McKiernan.

The Junior Team finished third in the Leinster 'A' League and also made it to the Quarter Final of the Leinster Cup. Our Minor Team once again played strongly in the 'A' League and were unlucky to be 'knocked out' in the Semi-Final of the Leinster Cup.



SUTTON PARK U/13 TEAM WIN THE LEINSTER CUP FINAL

History was made with the U/13 Team. For the first time in the school's hockey history Sutton Park, led by Mark Bergin and Cillian McGreer won the Leinster Cup Final.

This superb result was quickly followed by the Sutton Park Intermediate School Team retaining the Leinster 'A' League Junior School Championship. Congratulations to Captain's Jack Ryan, Keith O'Hare and Gavin O'Brien and the squad.

Individual congratulations must go to Mark Ryan who was recently named on the Irish U/16 Hockey Squad. We wish Mark all the very best for his upcoming International matches.

Finally a massive thank you to all the staff and parents for their valuable support throughout what has been a gruelling yet historic season. A VERY special thanks to Mr. Ronan Walsh who has done so much over the years to bring hockey to 'where it is today' in the school.

Girls Hockey

The highlight of the season was undoubtedly the Senior Girls triumph against Mount Temple in the final of the Premier section of the North Dublin League. In a tense and exciting match, we twice went behind - but goals from Shannen Price and a late equaliser from Rebecca Cull brought the game into extra-time, where a golden goal from Rebecca gave us a memorable win.

The season will also be remembered for a thrilling win against Loreto Bray in the Senior Cup, our first in that competition. The Juniors and Minors also had progressive campaigns, with the latter qualifying from their section in the Leinster League. Our Senior B team, who were excellently captained by Julie Thornhill made it all the way to the Leinster Quarter-final, where we beaten 1-0 by Newbridge.

A major Thank You to the departing 6th Years, who have given fantastic service to the school. Claudia Martin, Julie Thornhill, Lara Taylor, Lisa Keegan, Holly O'Grady, Sophie Moran, Sinead Brophy, Shireen Bhujwalla and Anne-Marie O'Driscoll.

Badminton

Sutton Park School took six titles in the Dublin & Leinster Leagues. Two of our teams will now go on to play in the All Ireland Final to be held in Gormanstown College on Saturday 28th March 2009.

Under-19 Boys

The Under 19 Boys playing in Div I won the Dublin and Leinster Leagues. This is the Premier League in Badminton and a first for Sutton Park.

Under-14 Boys "A"

The Under 14 Boys "A" playing in Div II took the Leinster title. They will also go on to play in the All Ireland Finals.

We wish both teams the very best of luck.

Under-14 Boys "B"

The Under 14 Boys "B" Team took the Dublin and Leinster titles.

Under-14 Girls

The Under 14 Girls took the Dublin Div II Title.

Some of the Schools we defeated along the way were: St Fintan's High / Wesley College / Terenure College / Gormanstown College / De La Salle / St Colmcille / Kilkenny College / Wexford / Dundalk to name but a few.

This is a record of titles taken by Sutton Park in one year.

Equestrian

This year a new sport has taken off in the school. The Equestrian Team has started up for the first time in over 30 years. We have exceeded expectations on every level.

Our first competition was on 1st March in Killossery Lodge Stud this year and we took third place against some very good schools that have long established teams. Our team consisted of Georgia Lillis, Shauna Richardson, Alex Horgan and Kim McGrane with substitute Eimear Howard, who jumped in the individual competition. The team's performance was outstanding and we were all chomping at the bit for the next competition.

Our second competition was a return to Killossery where we took fourth place in the competition, which was the last event of that season. All of the teams competing were of the highest level. Our team was again outstanding and lived up to our motto "Yes We Can". The team had changed this time and was made up of Georgia Lillis, Katie Horgan, Shauna Richardson and Sophie Barratt, the individual jumper was Sarah Twadell. We would like to thank our Chef d'equipe Kim McGrane for keeping us all in check on the day!

The team hopes to continue to train and compete together next year and to represent the school as best we can, hopefully with some assistance for the entry fees. We would encourage anyone with an equine interest to come and support us.

Michael Moretta
HEAD OF SCHOOL

Intermediate School



Message from Mr Burns, Intermediate School Principal

May I first of all begin with an apology for the lengthy nature of my correspondence in this newsletter. I am conscious that it has been some time since the last edition and there are several important matters I wish to share with you.

As part of the planning process there has been a considerable amount of work done in developing schemes of work, identifying areas for improvement and generally reflecting on how we can enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Intermediate School. I would like to take this opportunity to give you an overview of the key outcomes of these plans.

Children in Intermediate School enjoy a wide range of subjects. As well as the core subjects our children experience French from Grade 4 to 6 and in Grade 6 they have weekly classes in Graphic Design. They also enjoy specialist tuition in both music and P.E.

Curriculum Priorities

As outlined in Group Parents meeting in October our emphasis in Intermediate School is focused on prioritising the subjects of English, Mathematics, Irish and Science and Technology. These subjects will form the basis of our children's educational experience throughout the remainder of their time in Sutton Park even into Senior School.

Optimum attainment in English and Maths in particular is essential if children are to realise their potential in all other curricular areas and in life in general.

As acknowledged in the Irish Primary School Curriculum document;

“The acquisition of Literacy and Numeracy skills is central to effective learning in every area of the curriculum and to the child’s social and community life outside school. The successful development of these essential skills during the primary school years will be crucial for educational success in post primary school and in enabling every individual to realise his or her social and vocational potential.”

This is a position I have always fully subscribed to as a primary school teacher and Principal and it is the importance of these areas that informs much of what we do in Intermediate School.

Key features of our provision are;

Mathematics

- Introduction of a new scheme of work.

A scheme of work defines the structure and content of a curriculum area. It maps out clearly how resources (e.g. books, equipment, time) and class activities/teaching strategies (e.g. teacher-talk, group work, practical tasks, discussions) and assessment strategies (e.g. tests, observation, Q&A, homework) will be used to ensure that the learning aims and objectives of the course are met. It defines what we expect our children to learn (Learning outcomes) and identifies the skills we intend to develop. The scheme of work is our interpretation of the syllabus outlined in the “Primary School Curriculum” document and will be used as a guide throughout the year to monitor progress against the original plan.

- Provision of many practical resources to accommodate different learning styles.

Children generally learn in three ways, visually, auditory or kinesthetically . An awareness of a child's preferred learning style allows the teacher to connect more effectively with each individual.

- ⇒ **Visual learning** is a teaching and learning style in which ideas, concepts, data and other information are associated with images and techniques.
 - ⇒ **Auditory learning** is a learning style in which a child learns most effectively by listening to information delivered orally, in lectures, speeches, and oral sessions.
 - ⇒ **Kinesthetic learning** is a teaching and learning style in which learning takes place by the child actually carrying out a physical activity, rather than listening to a lecture or merely watching a demonstration.
- Differentiated activities so that children are challenged at their own level.
 - Emphasis on problem-solving and investigations.
 - Additional support in terms of practical resources and Learning Support.

English

- Reading identified as the priority area within this subject area.
- Introduction of novels to form the basis of our English scheme of work.
- Emphasis on developing Literal, Inferential, Evaluative and Appreciative comprehension.
- Differentiated activities to challenge and support every individual.
- Allocation of some Library time to task related activities aimed at developing study/research skills. This is a significant means of developing our children as independent learners.

Science

- Acquisition of many practical resources so children have the opportunity to engage in scientific experimentation.
- Use of science laboratories, as part of a planned programme, to conduct these experiments. Grade 6 have used the labs extensively in term one. Grades 4 and 5 will have regular activities in the laboratories throughout terms two and three.
- Acquisition of technology equipment (Knex and construction apparatus) and recent introduction of technology Club as part of Wednesday Club provision.
- An emphasis in lessons on experimentation and investigations as opposed to text related activities.

Irish

The Gaeilge curriculum is based on oral and conversational work, in order to develop a more natural approach to the language, with complex grammar coming in at a late stage. The lessons are taught mainly through Irish with miming or enactment of situations by the teacher, for example, the teacher says "Tá mé ag rith" (I am running) whilst running on the spot. Grade 4 use the Treo Nua series, which is used from Junior Infants level through to Grade 3 in the Junior School. Grades 5 and 6 use the Sin É series, which is more focussed on writing and grammar, as well as listening comprehensions. Students in Grades 5 and 6 therefore have an introduction to the methods used in secondary school and state exams but at a significantly simpler level.

Pupil Assessment

Assessment of pupils' attainment is an essential element of improving educational provision and you will have noticed an increasing focus on this as the year has progressed. This will be formalised in school policy which will be presented to you in May of this year. This is a general overview of priorities in Intermediate school. It is designed with the primary purpose of enriching the educational experience and developing our children as independent individuals.

Clearly the ideals articulated in the Sutton Park mission statement to develop the whole-child and nurture all that is good in every one of our children are central to all aspects of our practise. I firmly believe that the approach advocated in this section of the school is a natural progression from the wonderful experience provided by our Junior School and the strongest of foundations for transition to Senior School.

Class Sizes

Classes in Intermediate School are capped at 24 pupils. At the end of the last academic year it appeared that pupil numbers in the current Grade 5 class would allow us to split them into two classes of 14/15 children. Unfortunately the expected pupil intake was lower than anticipated, making this proposal unviable. This is something we will continue to look at going forward.

Clubs 2.45-3.30

These Clubs sessions are a key element of our curriculum and one of the features that differentiates us from other schools .Many children are being routinely excused from these classes or are not properly attired and therefore unable to take part. I would ask that all parents continue to support these activities if they are to remain as a viable proposition.

Homework Club

This continues to be very popular and in order to improve its function I now intend to use this opportunity to give some additional tuition to children who may be experiencing difficulties with elements of their homework.

Children attending the Homework Club are also now required to “sign in” each morning. This allows a greater degree of flexibility as there is no commitment for children to attend on set days. If your child has “signed in” and has to leave before attending the Homework Club I would ask you to let me know that you are taking them. It does reduce the element of panic I feel in this particular situation!

Forthcoming Events

- Football - Belfast Grade 4 and 5 (Wednesday 22nd April)
- G4 - Carlingford Outdoor Pursuits - (Date TBC) / Grade 5 - (Trip TBC) / Grade 6 - Killary Adventure Centre, 21st / 22nd May

Under 12's Hockey Champs



I am delighted to report that the Under 12 boys' hockey team retained the Leinster Hockey title in a tense 1-0 victory over Saint Andrew's. The team, ably captained by the excellent Jack Ryan, held firm throughout and relied heavily on Man of the Match, goalkeeper Ben Pheifer, to keep on level terms.

Early in the second half Evan Christian continued his happy knack of finding the net when giving our boys the lead. After that it was very much "backs to the wall" with our defensive four of Alex Brown, Gavin O' Brien (Joint Capt), William Eickholt and Brandon Pray holding firm. In front of them, in the midfield positions, Keith O' Hare (Joint Capt), Jack Ryan and James Hurley battled heroically and proved more than a match for the opposition.

Goal scorer Evan was ably assisted by Ross Hastings and Daniel Holmes while Luke O' Driscoll –Downes, Robbie O' Hanlon, Justin Andrews, Sean Finn and Kevin Connolly all contributed significantly to a wonderful team effort.

Special congratulations also to our Grade 6 boys who were part of the historic victory for our U-13 senior school team in their recent Leinster final. Keith O'Hare, Jack Ryan, Gavin O' Brien and James Hurley were all key members of the squad who again beat St. Andrew's in the final. Two Leinster winners' medals in one year. Very Impressive!

French Day

Grades 4,5 & 6 enjoyed a day of French culture and cuisine. Dressed in traditional French costume the children served up many wonderful dishes. (I particularly enjoyed the Apple Tart). The day was a great success and we look forward to similar experiences in the future.

Global Feast

Many thanks for your generous donations which made our Global Feast a very special event. A special thank you to Ms McGuire for coordinating this wonderful effort.

Non Uniform Day

Just a quick note to inform you of the Intermediate School Non-Uniform Day on Friday, 24th April. This fundraiser is in aid of Special Olympics Ireland and all donations are gratefully appreciated.

Liam Burns
Intermediate School Principal

Junior School



Message from Ms McGuire, Junior School Principal

While it has been one of the coldest winter terms, the cold weather did not diminish our enthusiasm and we have had another busy term with much accomplished.

Our Wednesday afternoon enrichment programme continues and in the course of the half term; Junior Infants learned a little more about some of the paintings in the National Gallery, Senior Infants discovered a great deal about the Vikings in Ireland during their visit to the Archaeology Museum and Grade 3 viewed costumes from the past when they visited Collin's Barracks.

The cookery skills of the pupils in Grades 1 & 2 were further improved when they managed to coat pieces of fresh fruit in melted chocolate-it looked delicious.

With the help of many parents we had a great time celebrating the Chinese New Year. I am sure that you saw the lucky red envelopes and the Chinese Dragon Puppets that all the children made. What you may not have seen is the dragon which now hangs from the ceiling in the Resource Room. The dragon's head was made by the pupils of Junior Infant's and every other pupil helped to paint the sheet which became the dragon's body.

The half-term ended on a high note! All the classes combined to produce, 'The Tadpole Rag' under the guidance of our Music Teacher, Fiona Foley. This was our presentation to entertain the audience who had assembled for the North Dublin Arts Festival. We have been organising and hosting the festival for the last sixteen years. All schools in North County Dublin receive an invitation to submit art work from their pupils ranging in age from 4 to 12. This year over twenty schools entered.

The judging and presentation of prizes was done by local, professional artist, Una Sealy. We are indebted to Una for the enormous contribution which she makes each year to the success of this festival. After the judging comes the mounting of the work in the gym hall. This is a huge task and the help of many parents is very much appreciated. The prizes were sponsored by Office Art at Sutton X, Sutton Park School P.T.A., Star Art supplies and the Unicorn Restaurant. Sutton Park had a winner in almost every age category and the announcing of winners was greeted by squeals of delight.

On the first Wednesday after the half term break, the author, Maeve Friel came to the school, visited all classrooms and read extracts from her entertaining books. Junior Infants and Grade 3 also enjoyed another cookery class.

On Friday, February 27th a Spanish feast in Grade 3 rounded off their study of Spain. The class enjoyed tortillas, paella and other beautiful dishes provided by parents.

While Grade 3 were enjoying their meal, Grade 2 were visiting 'Imaginosity' and enjoying a great learning experience.

The ECIS visiting team really enjoyed visiting our classrooms where they were given a very warm reception and taught a few useful Irish phrases. During the week they joined the Grade 1 parents to watch the class present their annual Assembly. The theme was colour and this was explored through song, poetry and an endless imparting of very interesting information.

A round of applause went to all the pupils who over the course of the term have contributed their 'birthday money' to various charities.

After enjoying the assembly, Junior Infants, Grade 1 and Grade 3 departed for visits to Collin's Barracks, the National Gallery and the Archaeology Museum. Senior Infants and Grade 2 stayed behind to enjoy another cookery class, this time making dishes from India and Belgium. At our weekly assembly, Grade 3 treated us to a display of set dancing which was a most appropriate way to start celebrating the feast day of St Patrick.

A busy week came to an end with our annual Global Feast. Once again we had food representative of many, many countries. The children had a thoroughly enjoyable time tasting all the dishes which had been created by the parents. I do realise the amount of time and effort that parents contribute and it is greatly appreciated by the children and the staff. €1,140 was raised for Chimteka which was added to the €1,000 raised at Christmas by the raffle of the hampers, this figure was further boosted by a birthday donation of €605.00 giving us a grand total of €2,745. The money we have raised this year will be used to purchase educational and recreational materials for a new kindergarten in Chimteka, Malawi.

We returned from a long weekend in time for Junior Infants, Senior Infants and Grade 2 to enjoy visits to Collin's Barracks, the National Gallery and the Archaeology Museum while Grades 1 and 3 stayed behind to create platters of sushi. More platters of sushi were created the following Wednesday to set the tone for our afternoon of Japanese culture. All staff were resplendent in kimonos. We were joined by Shino from the Senior School who conducted tea ceremonies all afternoon. Junior Infant's classroom became the Tea House complete with authentic tatami mats and Japanese crockery. The children were very adventurous with many of them tasting the green tea. Dr Aileen Pearson Evans visited every class to teach them some spoken Japanese and to tell them about daily life in Japan. Some children managed to make an origami crane and many made kimonos from Japanese newspapers.

The children of Junior and Senior Infants managed one more trip before the end of the term, they visited Fun Galaxy in Swords and Malahide Castle playground.

A most enjoyable term ended with the traditional Easter Egg Hunt with the chocolate eggs kindly supplied by the P.T.A. Many thanks to all of you who very generously helped on the school tours and with the weekly cookery classes.

Happy Easter

Ms Geraldine McGuire
JUNIOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

PTA News

Summer Night Out

The PTA would like to inform you all of a Summer Social Night out.

The event will take place in The Marine Hotel on 22nd May next from 8 - Late. Boogie on down to the sounds of "Abba Vous" followed by a D.J to round off the evening till late.

Tickets are €40 and will be available from Sutton Park School reception after Easter. All are welcome.

Finger food buffet will be available on the evening.

Look out for posters which will be displayed around the school shortly.

We look forward to seeing you all there.

The PTA



HAPPY EASTER