

A close-up photograph of several gingerbread cookies decorated with white icing. One cookie is shaped like a reindeer with antlers, and another is a star. They are resting on a white paper liner.

# St. Fintan's NS

Winter 2025

## A word from our principal

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The last few weeks have been an exciting and joyful time here in St. Fintan's N.S. There is a wonderful festive buzz around the school, and we are very grateful to the parents who helped decorate the building so beautifully.

Our Junior and Senior Infants, along with 1st and 5th Class, have been practicing tirelessly for their Christmas plays. We hope you enjoy their performances as much as the children have enjoyed preparing them. Last week's cinema trip was a great success, and the children had a fantastic time.



We have an action-packed week ahead. Today, our 3rd–6th Class pupils will be singing carols at SuperValu from 10 a.m., with all proceeds going to Médecins Sans Frontières. On Tuesday, children from 1st–6th Class will have their final rehearsal for the upcoming Carol Service. On Wednesday, they will visit the church to listen to the Army Band. Then, on Thursday, our annual Carol Service will take place in St. Fintan's Church at 12.30 p.m. The service will last approximately one hour.

Thank you for your generous donations to the Grafton Street Kitchens. Your kindness makes a real difference.

Please note that this Friday, 19th December, is the final day before the Christmas holidays.

- Junior and Senior Infants will finish at 11.50 a.m.
- 1st–6th Classes will finish at 12.00 noon

We are also expecting a very special visitor on Friday morning—Santa will be arriving with his elves!

You should be incredibly proud of your children. They have worked so hard throughout the term and truly deserve a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas break.

A heartfelt thank-you for your continued support of St. Fintan's National School. It is greatly appreciated. I wish you and your families a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year. School will reopen on Monday, 5th January at 8.50 a.m.

We are already looking forward to an exciting January. We will welcome Emma Kenny from UNICEF, who will host workshops for all classes on children's rights. Later in the month, we will celebrate Science Week, which will conclude with a Science Fair in the school hall on Wednesday, 28th January.

Yours sincerely,  
Ms. Farrell Principal

## World Children's Day

World Children's Day was a tremendous success this year, and the school was filled with joy, colour, and excitement from start to finish. It was heart-warming to see every child dressed in blue, the official colour of child rights and UNICEF, creating a beautiful sense of unity throughout the school.

In the week leading up to the event, our teachers worked hard preparing Happiness Collages featuring each child taking part in an activity they love. These bright and cheerful displays transformed our corridors and set the tone for a very special day ahead.



The celebrations began with our Student Council meeting members of the Parents' Association to accept gifts on behalf of all the children. We were absolutely delighted to receive a giant Connect 4 and a fantastic set of Polydrons for the yard, resources that will be enjoyed for years to come. Our generous PA also organised a special surprise for every child: a pen printed with the uplifting message "You are awesome!"

Next, the Student Council sprung into action once again, assisting Ms Byrne in distributing hot chocolate to every child in the school, a real treat that brought many smiles!

The junior classes enjoyed a fun-filled schedule of outdoor activities, including parachute games, skipping, and chalk drawing. Meanwhile, the older students spent time creating beautiful friendship bracelets and cards, some of which were gifted to their younger buddies during yard time. We also held an extra Yard Buddy session, always a firm favourite, giving younger and older children another chance to connect and learn from one another.

To round off the celebrations, Ms Farrell gifted each child a special "Happy World Children's Day" pencil, a keepsake to remember a very special day. And of course, much to the children's (and parents!) delight, everyone went home with a homework pass!

World Children's Day was a memorable celebration of fun, friendship, and of course celebrated the rights of every child.

A big thank you to the Student Council, the Green Schools Committee, Ms Burke, Ms Byrne and everyone who helped make it such a meaningful and successful event.





## Cross Country Athletics

Our 5th and 6th class children took part in a local 800m cross-country running race in St. Anne's Park. The children were well – prepared for this event by the 5th & 6th class teachers from doing the 'marathon kids' running challenge.

On the day, the boys' team finished 2nd overall earning the silver team medal for St Fintan's. The girls' team finished in 3rd place overall, earning the bronze team medal for St Fintan's. This was a challenging course, where each child had a super run in the hilly, muddy conditions!

A special congratulations to Aria from 5th class, who ran an exceptional race, finishing 3rd overall in the girls' event.

Well done to all the runners who took part for representing St Fintan's so well. We are so proud of you!



## Our Child Rights Journey

Since our last newsletter, we have been very busy continuing our journey toward achieving the UNICEF Gold Award for being a recognised Child Rights School. This is an exciting whole-school effort, and we're delighted to share some updates with you.

### Working with Our Parent Association

We were delighted to involve our Parent Association in our World Children's Day celebrations this year. Their support helped make the day both meaningful and memorable for the children, and we look forward to continuing this partnership as our child rights work grows.

### Student Council & Green Schools: Helping Others Together

A wonderful example of teamwork this term was the collaboration between our Student Council and the Green Schools Committee. Together, they organised a collection of toiletries and warm clothing for Grafton Street Kitchens to help people experiencing homelessness. This project not only brought two important school initiatives together, but also reflected one of our core goals: supporting children and families in the wider world to enjoy their rights, especially the rights to shelter, health and dignity.

### Carol Singing in Aid of Médecins Sans Frontières



Our annual Carol Singing at SuperValu will once again take place this December. This year, all donations will go to Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) an international, independent medical charity that brings emergency healthcare to people affected by conflict, disasters, and disease outbreaks. Their work helps protect some of the world's most vulnerable children, making them a charity that truly reflects our child-rights mission.

Learn More About Child Rights

If you would like to explore child rights further, we encourage you to visit the UNICEF child rights website: <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. Together, we are helping our children understand not only their own rights, but also the importance of respecting and protecting the rights of others.

## Junior Infants

The boys and girls in Junior Infants have had a very busy and exciting few Winter months! In November, we kicked things off by making beautiful reindeer Christmas cards to share with our families and friends. We also learned all about new topics from The Construction site to Santa's Workshop.

World Children's Day was a big hit! We enjoyed drinking hot chocolate, made beautiful chalk drawings, and had loads of fun playing with the parachute. We've also been very lucky to have three new teachers - Ms. Phelan, Ms. Hamilton and Ms. Murray, who have been helping us learn through plenty of hands-on activities.

December was full of Christmas fun. The children created winter trees, wreaths and even turned themselves into elves to decorate our door! Our first school trip to see 'The Grinch' at the cinema was so exciting.

We made special Christmas care packages with our buddies for people in care homes, and we hope they love them just as much as we loved putting them together. We also worked so hard on our Nativity Play and made our teachers and families very proud.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of us in Junior Infants! ❄️🌲





## Senior Infants

The children in Senior Infants have had a fun filled few weeks. We have been busy learning about the Vet and the important job that they do looking after sick animals. The children have worked as receptionists, pet owners and the vet to care for all the sick animals. We also used lots of materials in art to create our favourite pets.

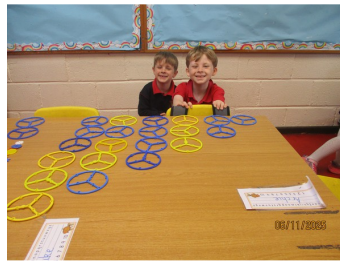
Senior Infants have been working really hard in Maths exploring patterns, collecting and recording data and measuring length. The children are enjoying using hands on resources to explore these topics.

We were very excited to make beautiful Christmas cards to send to Care Home residents in Cork and Galway to brighten up their Christmas.

Our class have been transformed into mischievous elves who have taken over our classroom door! Preparations are ongoing for our Christmas play, Ralph the Reindeer and the children are busy practising their lines and songs. We can't wait for you to see it!







## First Class

Life in 1st class has continued as it began, with lots of energy and a bundle of enthusiasm for all that comes with these busy months. November saw the weather change and as temperatures dropped 1st class were busy learning how to answer the question: *Cén aimsire atá ann inniu?* They also learned some fun songs as Gaelige, why not ask them to sing a verse of 'An Bricfeasta' or even tell you what they had for their *lón*?

In maths, both classes enjoyed participating in lots of Mata sa Rang activities and even brought home a Math's Folder to continue practicing these activities at home. But it hasn't been all hard work in room 5 and 6, time was also spent celebrating World Children's Day and welcoming players from the Dublin Ladies GAA football team to our school. The children were dressed head to toe in blue and made great posters to celebrate the player's success.

The last few weeks have also been a busy time for a very special member of Ms Treleaven's and Ms. McGinn's class. Bob, our class teddy, has had lots of great adventures with children from the class. He's really looking forward to going on many more adventures over the coming months. Ms Foley's class have been busy 'picker pal-ing' around the local area. The picker - pals made it to local parks and even other counties! Each picker - pal has made sure to make the world a safer place by cleaning up rubbish and recycling. In school, we are learning about the importance daily of disposing of rubbish correctly to protect the environment. The green school's team gave us a compost bin to help us in the classroom.

GAA with Mark, our wonderful Games Promotion Officer, was also a great success. When these sessions ended our time in the hall switched to rehearsing our Christmas play, *Straw and Order*. The children put such hard work into these rehearsals that our show on Wednesday 10th December was a roaring success. A well earned trip to the cinema was enjoyed the day after our big performance. The children loved relaxing while enjoying some treats and watching *The Grinch*! Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas from everyone in Room 5 & Room 6





## Second Class

We've had a hectic but very exciting few weeks in Rooms 7 & 8! We welcomed some new members to our classes; Jingle and Máirtín, our elves. They've been entertaining all the boys and girls whilst causing absolute havoc in the classrooms. They certainly are cheeky chaps!



Our cinema trip was a great success. We watched The Grinch animated movie and it was a day to remember. The boys and girls played a blinder and represented St. Fintan's superbly. We were very proud of them.

This year marks a very special first for our school — our inaugural Christmas Door Decorating Competition! The excitement in Rang a 2 has been building as the children worked together to transform our classroom doors into wild festive masterpieces. We went a little rogue with our theme, "Jungle Bells" but no harm in living on the wild side for a while! We've loved being part of



this new school tradition and can't wait for everyone to see the magical doors created throughout the building. Well done to all the boys and girls for bringing such joy and imagination to our first ever decorating competition!

Ms. Moran's class took on a very exciting challenge: designing and building their own marble runs! Working in small groups, the children planned out their ideas and experimented with different materials to see how they could create twists, turns, tunnels and ramps that would keep a marble moving. The classroom was buzzing with teamwork as each group tested and improved their creations. The children showed great imagination and perseverance and the results were fantastic!

Ms. Tarbett's class had a wonderfully festive morning recently when we teamed up with some very helpful 6th Class students to make our own clay snowman decorations. The children loved rolling, shaping and creating their masterpieces.

Our 6th Class helpers were fantastic role models and provided wonderful guidance. It was lovely to see such cooperation and kindness between the classes. The finished snowmen will make lovely keepsakes to bring home for Christmas. Well done to all our talented artists — big and small!

Our class mascots, Billy the Bear and Páidí have been on some fabulous adventures with the children. Páidí has been globetrotting to wonderful places such as London, Center Parcs and most recently, Lapland.....to name but a few! He's one lucky bear! Billy has also been having a ball with his friends in Room 8.

We're really looking forward to Christmas week in St Fintan's. With the Carol Service and lots of other lovely things happening, it's sure to be a special time for everyone.





## Third Class

This term Ms Flynn's 3rd class focused on communications through the ages, starting right back at pictograms on clay tablets all the way to the modern phone. In art, some of us made clay tablets with pictograms while others chose to decorate clay pots with them instead. We also looked at Morse Code and the telegraph.

We looked at Sound in science and made string telephones and tested them out in the yard. As part of sound, we also looked at orchestral instruments and practised different rhythms on boomwhackers, chime bars and wooden percussion instruments.

We also learned some debating techniques like how to express our opinion clearly and give reasons. We also practised the challenging skill of arguing for an opinion that you disagree with! We held some mock debates on the motion "Homework should be banned" as well as some walking debates informal debates on various motions.



The children of both third classes have had an action-packed few weeks, enjoying exciting soccer sessions and fun team games with Tony, our visiting Shelbourne coach, as well as energetic GAA activities led by Mark, our GAA coach. Alongside all the sporting excitement, the boys and girls of Mr. Vereker's class have also been busy creating stunning artwork — their vibrant chalk Northern Lights pieces have brightened our corridor and showcased their amazing creativity.







## Fourth Class

Ms. Smith's 4th Class have had a busy and exciting few weeks. The children have been learning all about the *Titanic*, exploring its history, its voyage, and the stories of the people on board. As part of their work, each group even designed and built their own Titanic ship from cardboard, showing fantastic creativity and teamwork.

As a reward for filling the bead jar through their hard work and excellent behaviour, the class enjoyed a special trip to Insomnia last Friday. It was a well-deserved treat and a lovely opportunity to celebrate their efforts together.

The children are not only busy practicing their Christmas songs for the upcoming carol service, but are also learning songs and actions for the Peace Proms in February. They are very excited to be attending a Peace Proms choir workshop this Thursday, where they will have the chance to rehearse and prepare for the big performance!

Ms. Mc Hugh's 4th class have had a busy run up to Christmas. We have been surrounded by music, practicing for our upcoming Peace Proms, Carol Service and carolling in the community later in the year. We learned all about The Titanic and put our engineering skills to the test, building creative structures from bits and bobs around the classroom. We started GAA with Mark and have been taking part in activities for the school's Active Flag. Our creative writing and readings skills are continuously developing as we finish up the first novel in our book club, 'Bill's New Frock'. With our cinema trip, peace proms workshop, carolling, a visit from the army band and our class Kris Kindle coming up soon, it will be a festive end to the year! Enjoy the break everyone





## Fifth Class

5th Class has had a busy and exciting term! The students worked extremely hard preparing for our Christmas play, *"The Wizard of Claus"*. We are unbelievably proud of each of the children for their wonderful performance. Their hard work really paid off!

In between rehearsals, we've been debating, enjoying orienteering adventures, and completing the Marathon Kids programme where every pupil ran the distance of a full marathon!

Well done, 5th Class, on a fantastic term full of energy and achievement!







## Sixth Class

This was a really busy term for 6th Class students. The three classes had great fun celebrating Halloween and everyone made a great effort dressing up – even the teachers went all out!

### Orienteering

The children took part in an Orienteering event at Corkagh Park. It was a fantastic day out and the children had great fun navigating their way through the park, reading maps and completing the



course as fast as they could against the clock!

### Yoga

The children were given a great opportunity to take part in a six-week yoga programme in school. They learned all different yoga movements and learned about the importance of relaxation for their well-being. They have become very zen!

### Marathon Running

5th and 6th Class students took part in the Marathon Kids programme which affords them the opportunity to build their running strength and stamina on a daily basis with organised and timed runs on our track in the yard. The children gained knowledge on the importance of warming up and down, pacing, stride, safety when running, nutrition and wellbeing.

The children finished the Marathon Kids programme with a final 2km run in Howth Celtic at the end of November and were gifted a running t-shirt to mark the achievement of completing the Marathon distance.

And finally the 6th class children seem absolutely thrilled with their 6th class hoodies. I have to say they do look very smart!



**Linda Maher**

Linda is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters