



Newsletter - February 2010

Message from Michael Moretta, Head of School

This term is very short as you know, and I wanted to give you news about what has already occurred before the inevitable rush to the end of March and the Easter Holidays begin. Even though we have little more than 5 weeks of term left, there appears to be just as much happening in the school. The week before the mid-term we had a magnificent Celebration of Music in The Church of The Assumption, Howth. We are just about to embark on the Mock exams in the Senior School – always a very stressful time for parents and students. I am sure you will all join me in wishing them the very best of luck over the next 6 days. The 4th Years are away on their Outdoor Pursuits Trip to The Burren in Clare as I write and the preparations are underway for the mock orals and practical assessments for 3rd and 6th Years.

New Staff Member

I would like to take the opportunity of welcoming Ms Richardson who joins our staff to support the teaching of Geography in 4th, 5th and 6th Years. Ms Richardson is a Geography specialist, educated at Trinity College. She will, I am sure, prove to be a significant addition to the staff.

A Celebration of Music

Those who were lucky enough to attend this wonderful event will have cherished the evening long after it finished. It was without doubt a great success. The evening raised 3,000 Euro; 1000 Euro going to the RNLI and 2000 given towards the SPS Grand Piano Fund. However, it was not just the amount raised that made the event special – the atmosphere, range and quality of performance will be what lingers in the mind. The Choir were outstanding and sang beautifully all evening. The exceptionally talented and gifted classical musicians we have in the school shone and displayed their skills to an astounded audience who simply marvelled at the quality of their playing. While Christopher Ellis in our First Year and David Tobin in our Third Year led the way in the Classical performances, the evening was punctuated with a wide range of impressive works ranging from the modern to traditional folk, given by students in every year from First to Sixth. We even witnessed the first ever performance from the Choir of the Church of the Assumption, Howth.

It was so good to see a very large audience made up of families and supporters of the school as well as impressive numbers from the local community. It was one of the intentions of the concert to embed the school in the local community and raise our profile in Howth village and I have no doubt that the evening was a total success in this area as well.

It is probably not common knowledge that arrangements swung into place only two weeks before the date. As you will probably appreciate, to assemble accompanists of the highest standard to perform at this level is never easy as they are usually booked months in advance. The date was determined by their availability.

I want to give very special thanks to all the performers, Ms Howard, our Musical Director who once again was the main source of the magic that was created. Yet none of this would have happened without the work of Michele Lynam, Patricia Flood and Gabrielle Crowe. Their committee provided the direction, thrust, energy and dynamism that makes such an evening a success. In association with the PTA, we once again proved how privileged it is to be part of such a warm and energetic community. Well done everyone.

Pictures from the event can be found on the school website.

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Mock Examinations

Once again I would like to remind everyone in 3rd and 6th Year that these exams are only mocks. They provide a chance to experience the pressures of working under timed conditions as well as the opportunity to learn from mistakes.

The Mocks begin on Wednesday 24th February and end on Thursday 4th March. Some Mocks take place on Friday 5th for the 3rd Year, but these involve small numbers of students.

6th Year Exams take place in **the Library**. Please be aware that the library is closed to all students except 6th Years for the duration of the Mocks. Our Study Hall will accommodate students with exemptions or study periods during period of these exams.

3rd Year Exams take place in **the Music Room**. Music classes will be re-assigned for the duration.

As Friday 5th March has small numbers of examinees, 3rd Years who do not take Spanish, Italian Music or Religious Education do not need to attend school. Of course, if you cannot look after them at home they will be accommodated.

Please also be advised of the following:

- Arrangements for students with Learning Support is co-ordinated by Ms Fee. Readers and scribes etc will be accommodated in the Junior School Staff Room, the small inner library and in Ms Fee's room.
- All students are expected to bring necessary equipment to exams. You will be surprised how many students forget calculators for Maths for instance.
- 3rd Years must attend every session of exams, even if they tell you they have no exam that day. They will be able to use the time in the examination room for study. 3rd Year students can not leave early.
- 6th Year students need only attend exams they are sitting in June. They will need to consult the timetable very carefully. Once an exam has started 6th Years will not be able to leave early, but must wait until the very end and all papers have been collected

A register will be taken at the beginning of each session. Absences will be followed up with a text message.

Mocks and some practical exams are also taking place. In the past I have noticed one or two students losing large numbers of marks because they failed to attend their oral or aural. My advice is to check all times of all papers, aurals and orals with your sons and daughters in order that they do not drop marks unnecessarily.

The other main reason why people fail exams is because they leave out large sections of the papers. They will tell you it is "Timing", but very often it is a way of masking gaps in knowledge. When you look at the result after the mocks, look for comments such, "He left out two questions worth 50 marks". These might explain very low marks.

You will have an opportunity to discuss the exam results in detail with individual teachers on Monday 22nd March.

Security

As you are probably aware during the last half term we had a very serious security incident that occurred around the front door and involved two Junior Infants. During the Mid-Term we also had a number of rather intimidating visits from large numbers of adolescent boys [not from our school, but, I understand some past pupils] who were rude and threatening to the staff who were on duty in school.

We have an open site and take pride in the warmth of our welcome and the ease of access, but there are limits to what is safe and indeed, acceptable. The Board of Management have commissioned a committee to report on all aspect of the security on the site. I do not want to pre-empt the findings of this review, but I will say this: There will certainly be changes. I do, however, want to make a number of points immediately:

- You will not be able to gain access to the school from 9:30 – 2:40 during the day without making yourself known at Reception.
- I would advise that you always make an appointment through our secretarial staff before turning up to school. This will save you the trouble of standing around for extended periods of time waiting to see someone who will most likely be in class or otherwise engaged.
- Security over the holidays will be tightened considerably. Any boys on the site during this time will be reported to the Guards or I will report their names to their school Principal.

Security Con't...

Other announcements will follow at the end of term. The Board of Management would, I know, welcome any comments you may want to bring to the discussion. Just send your comments by email to info@sps.ie and I will ensure they are forwarded to the committee.

Lates & Absences and Driving on Site

Good news here. The number of lates and absences has dramatically decreased this term. In the last week of January for example only two cases of lateness occurred in all years.

We are further refining our system. This half-term every form teacher will take the register electronically. Furthermore, you, as parents, will be informed by text if your son or daughter is late or absent without a reason. We will maintain the current clampdown in this area and thank you all for supporting us in this drive against lateness.

Students' driving on the site has also decreased spectacularly since the BOM purchased the clamp and we told everyone about the 50 Euro fine that would be incurred if a student car was parked on the property during the school day.

It has however, been brought to my attention that some parents are allowing their "learner driver" sons or daughters to drive on the property. Two things occur to me here:

Learning to drive on the driveway up to school will not provide much useful experience for real road driving

And

Even more importantly, it is extremely dangerous. We have too many young people walking on the site from very early in the evening until around 5 pm. We as staff are not policemen, but could I strongly urge you not to let "learner drivers" take the wheel on our property. If an accident occurred I have been advised by our Insurers that your insurance could be invalidated.

Sports Report

Athletics

Congratulations to all our athletes who competed in The North Leinster Cross-Country Championships in DCU on Tues 2nd Feb. Particular congratulations to Gavin O'Brien from 1st Year who came 12th out of a field of over 150 athletes in The Minor Boys event. The top 15 individual athletes qualified for the Leinster Championships which will be held after the mid-term break. Gavin will be joined in these championships by Alex Horgan who finished 7th in The Senior Girls event. This is the 5th consecutive year that Alex, a 6th Year student has qualified for the Leinsters. A fantastic achievement.

Equestrian

Congratulations to our show jumping team who came first & second in the recent Inter-Schools Show-Jumping League; India Dawson, Lydia Dawson, Katie Horgan, Georgia Lillis, Sophie Barrett, Alex Richardson, Shauna Richardson, Anna Hayes.

Special congratulations to India who took the individual title. The team are under the watchful eye of Chief d'Equipe, Kim Mc Grane.

Girls Hockey

Senior Girls

The Senior Girls team had an impressive win over Our Lady's Grove in the first round of the Cup. They won 2-0. We were pitted against our local rivals, Santa Sabina in the 2nd Round. Sutton Park were the first to find the net but Santa Sabina equalized before half-time. At full-time the teams were still all-square, so the match went into extra time. Unfortunately it was Santa Sabina who scored the decider and knocked us out of the cup. The Senior Team now have their eyes set on reaching The Northside Hockey League finals

Junior Girls

The Junior Girls started their Northside Hockey League campaign with an impressive 4-0 win over St. Wolstan's (Ysabel Pfeifer 3 Sarah Twaddell 1) Local opposition Santa Sabina were victorious in their second league game. They still have two fixtures remaining to compete for a place in the final

Minor Girls

The Minor Girls began their NSHL campaign with a solid 0-0 draw against St Wolstan's. There is plenty of hockey still to play before the end of the season.

Sports Report Con't ...

Boys Hockey

As we move into February the Cup competitions are in full swing for the Boys Hockey Section.

Sutton Park have been successful in all of their first round matches. The U/13 team defeated St Columbas College and now face King's Hospital in the second round. The Minor Team play against a very strong St Andrews team in their second round challenge. The Junior Team soundly defeated Sandford Park and now move onto St Killians in their round two fixture.

Finally the Senior Team face High School in a home cup tie for the semi-final of the Senior Trophy. The finalists in the Trophy will move on to challenge St Andrews's and Wesley in the Leinster Cup.

I might add that the Senior Team have had their most successful Leinster 'A' League campaigns with wins over Kilkenny, two over Mount Temple and a draw with St Andrews.

Badminton

Since my last report. Three of our teams reached the semi final stage of the league.

The U/19 Girls team captained by Rachael Cull played in Division 1/2 of the league and were unlucky to have been defeated by Our Lady's, Templeogue.

The U/16 Boys 'A' Team played in Division I. This team captained by Conor Scully won all their matches up to the Semi Final stage, when they were defeated by St Colmcille, Knocklyon who in turn defeating Terenure College 5-1 in the final of the league.

The U/16 girls 'A' team also had a good run reaching the semi final stage of Division 1/2. this team was captained by Aishling Kinsella. There was a very good team throughout these games.

The U/14 Boys have got off to a good start in their league. The 'A' team playing in Division 1/2 the 2nd team in Division 3. The 'A' team is captained by Conal Walsh, the 'B' team is captained by Gavin O'Brien.

In the junior school we have seven Leinster players at U/13. They will play in the Primary School's Tournament on 20th February, William Eickholt and Stevie Pitt Lennon, have both been selected to play in the Celtic challenge, which will take place in England this month. This is a great honour.

We wish them the best of luck.

Ms P Spence

Intermediate School

Message from Liam Burns, Intermediate School Principal

In our last Newsletter we were looking forward to the Primary Science Fair in the RDS and I am delighted to report that it was a huge success on many fronts.

Primary Science Fair

Our Grade 6 class made a working model of a lighthouse and it was much complimented by the judges. It was approximately a metre tall, made from rolled up paper and joined together with nuts and bolts. It was then covered in a product called Modroc and painted in red and white hoops. The children then dropped an electrical circuit into the model before attaching the "glass" dome at the top. It really did look well, though admittedly it did begin to sag on one side as the day went on. Obviously a problem to be solved in future tasks!

All children had the opportunity to submit written work on our chosen topic and I was very pleased with the contribution made in this respect by all of our classes. I know many of the children were thrilled to see their work on display at the RDS. It was a real team effort and everyone played their part in making it a most successful venture.

The children seemed particularly delighted with the many free gifts on offer and also with meeting such celebrities as Ryan Tubridy and Daragh Quilty. (I know. I hadn't heard of him either! Apparently he is a DJ on Spin FM)

Nevin Mc Cone from Grade 4 had particular reason to celebrate the Science Fair as he entered a competition requiring him to ride a bike along a computer generated course. Out of the thousands of people who attempted the task Nevin was the most successful and won a Nintendo DS for his efforts. Well done Nev!

May I extend a big "Thank You" to the many parents who attended the Science Fair and offered their encouragement to our boys and girls. It was very much appreciated.

Sea Life Visit

On Wednesday 10th February all boys and girls from Intermediate School took the DART to Bray where they visited Sea Life as part of our Discover Science programme. They thoroughly enjoyed their outing and learned a lot in the process. However, I think the highlights of the trip for them were the DART journey and the visit to the Sea Life shop. I must commend all of our children on their conduct and enthusiasm on this visit. Again their behaviour was exemplary and they make us proud to be associated with Sutton Park.

North Dublin Arts Festival

Friday 12th February saw the Dublin Arts Festival take place in SPS.

Grades 4, 5 and 6 gave a musical presentation of "Songs from the Shows" with hits including "Any Dream Will Do", "Consider Yourself" and a medley from "High School Musical". Soloists included Jonathan Andrews, Alexandra Malone, Kamiel Houben, Angelica Tozzi Spadoni, Ali Harding and Jessica Donohoe Maiti. We also had dancers from Grade 4 and Grade 6 who were superb. They all performed with distinction and can be very proud of themselves. I would also like to congratulate the children who made up the Chorus. As in the Christmas play, they brought a great vitality to the production and contributed massively to the success of the show. Well done to all!

From a visual arts perspective, congratulations go to Robbie O' Hanlon from Grade 6 who took second prize in his category. Also well done to Eline de Vries for her entry, which was highly commended.

Many thanks to Ms. Fiona Hauer and her team of musicians for all their efforts in preparing the children for their production. Their work is very much appreciated.

Global Feast

Friday 12th March is the date set for this year's Global Feast. Parents are asked to prepare a dish from around the world and bring it in to school on that day. Please see Ms McGuire's text under 'Fundraising' for full details of the event.

Dates For Your Diary

- Global Feast – Friday 12th March
- Drumcondras – w/c Monday 19th April
- Parent/Teacher meetings – Wednesday 28th April
- Grade 6 – Confirmation – Thursday 29th April
- Sports Day – Wednesday 19th May
- Gala Day – Friday 21st May

Liam Burns
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Junior School

Message from Geraldine McGuire, Junior School Principal

Fundraising

On Friday, January 29 the Nationwide programme on RTE 1 was devoted to coverage of the ongoing work of Irish agencies in providing aid to various parts of Africa. We have been giving our support to the children of Chimteka, an area in Malawi, for a number of years and during that time, we have helped to provide the funding for a community building, fresh water wells, sports equipment and many other essential items. An RTE crew spent the morning of September 23rd filming in the school and the programme, featuring the children of Grades 2 & 3 was broadcast on Friday, January 29th. We are very proud of what we have helped to achieve in Chimteka and our fundraising will continue with our annual Global Feast on Friday, March 12th. For the Global Feast all parents are invited to provide a sweet or savoury dish from their own country of origin or a dish which they particularly enjoy cooking. When the food arrives in school, it is displayed on tables in the corridor and class by class the children have the chance to select the food they would like to eat for their lunch and in return make a financial contribution to the CCS- Chimteka Children Support.

The terrible earthquake in Haiti prompted us to do some impromptu fundraising and over a period of two weeks the school managed to raise over €5,000 which I have been told is enough money to build a house in Haiti. The money has been given to the Haven, an Irish organisation working in Haiti.

Rainbows Group

The Rainbows support group, which helps children who have suffered a significant loss to put their feelings into words, began their weekly meetings on Tuesday, February 9th. This year the group is facilitated by Ms Jane Cullen.

Junior Play Area

The play area at the front of the school is finished and ready for use. The children will now be able to enjoy the playground, free from mud. Many thanks to the PTA for providing the funding and for organising the work.

Wednesday Enrichment Programme

The Wednesday Enrichment Programme was changed slightly to include the teaching of knitting to the children of Grades 2 & 3. I am happy to report that they are making great progress after losing and gaining many stitches. A trip to the Ark theatre in Temple Bar was added to the programme. Having booked our tickets we were then invited to participate as a filmed audience for a special feature on "The Girl Who Forgot to Sing Badly". The National Lottery Skyfest 2010 and for further promotional use. Having been featured on Nationwide we now look forward to another T.V appearance.

Many thanks to all those who continue to help with the cookery classes and as escorts and drivers.

North Dublin Arts Festival

The term ended with our annual North Dublin Art Festival, now in its 17th year. The number of entries continues to grow with more than 20 schools represented at the prize giving and the Gym Hall swathed in works of art produced by children from age 3-12. Una Sealy, a renowned artist and past pupil did the arduous job of choosing the winning entries, an almost impossible task.

Congratulations to all those from Sutton Park who won prizes; Cara Parkins, Blainaid Killeen, Matthew Conway, Harry Gorman, Dylan Eustace, Tom Reuveny, Eline de Vries and Robbie O'Hanlon. The overall winner was Juliette Cunnane from St Oliver Plunkett NS. The presentation of prizes was preceded by a memorable, musical presentation by the pupils of Grades 4, 5 & 6 conducted by our music teacher, Mrs Fiona Hauer. The success of the festival relies on a number of volunteers to mount the work and to decorate the hall. Many thanks to all who helped.

Geraldine McGuire
JUNIOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL