



# Newsletter - October 2009

## Message from Michael Moretta, Head of School

I would like to begin this newsletter by thanking all of the students and teachers for making our Open Evening such a success on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October. If you were lucky enough to attend and see the school that evening you will understand my pride and the sense of achievement we all Teachers, Students and Parents felt for our School. The building was dynamic, vibrant and alive, full of purposeful activity and colour. As usual, the students acted as guides to our visitors, escorting them around the site and pointing out the variety of curriculum areas, answering the myriad of questions prospective parents throw out on such occasions. All bar around 30 students were involved – 65 acting as guides, the rest responsible for an area of display and many doubling or trebling up in their roles. Indeed, such was the volume of interest from prospective parents that I had to ask often very shy students to act as guides. I am very happy to report that everyone asked at such short notice to lead a family through the school did so with great confidence and enthusiasm.



The evening culminated with the formal opening of the new science block.

The Minister for Children, Mr Barry Andrews T.D, spoke eloquently and passionately about his time as a Teacher at Sutton Park and then presented a plaque naming the building ‘The Alumni Science Block’. This title is in recognition of the selfless contribution of 100,000 Euros by a former student who wished to remain anonymous.

There is no greater statement of the powerful influence that a school can have on the life experience of young people than that gesture. The extraordinary generosity, yet the modesty of wishing to remain anonymous, speaks volumes for the spirit that this school instils in its students.

## Significant Achievements

It is wonderful to be able to report some outstanding achievements in the school in the first half-term. For a small school we always seem to perform remarkably well in a wide range of areas and I always like to celebrate some of these achievements with you as and when they happen.

### SCIENCE AWARD

Early in September we received notification of Robert Flood’s Second Prize in a National Short Story Competition held as part of the McWilliams Young Science Writers’ Competition. You can read his entry on the link provided on the website. He was asked to attend the award ceremony on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September and presented with his award by Minister for Education and Science Mr Batt O’Keeffe T.D. The story is really impressive and shows a maturity and insight well beyond Robert’s years.

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# Happy Halloween



# Significant Achievements Cont' ....

## MUSIC

We have a number of extremely talented and impressive musicians in the school. However in Christopher Ellis and David Tobin we have two outstanding musicians. Both have performed at the highest level in the National Concert Hall this half term. Indeed both also performed for the Open Evening. I would like to invite you to the Christmas Concert on December 18<sup>th</sup> in the Church of The Assumption, Howth when you will be able to hear them again. You will not be disappointed it is a magnificent occasion but come early because the small church fills up very quickly indeed.

## SPORT

On the sporting front I am again very happy to report that the Senior Boys' Hockey Team once again qualified for the All Ireland's in Belfast. At the time of writing they have just left and were all looking forward to this important competition. We are now firmly in the top ten of Hockey Schools in the Island of Ireland. I am sure you will join with me in wishing them every success in the three day competition.

## SAILING

Finally Shane Diveney, Luke Malcolm and Chris Malcolm performed exceptionally well in the National Sailing Championships held locally in Howth. They came 2<sup>nd</sup> in their class. Very well done boys and an excellent performance.

## Transition Year Newspaper

You may not be aware that as part of the new Transition Year Programme the 4<sup>th</sup> Years are putting together a newspaper. I think this is an excellent project, giving the 4<sup>th</sup> Years experience in layout, writing, copy and editorial skills. Hopefully we will be able to put each copy on the website and you can chart the progress and hopefully watch it develop month by month. Many thanks to Ms Saunders and Mr Bohan for overseeing the project.

I also want to congratulate the 4<sup>th</sup> Year on their initiative and hard work in organising the 'Battle of the Bands' competition on the last Friday of the Half Term in support of a Breast Cancer Charity. The cause is excellent and I know a great deal of very hard work has gone into organising the project. I am sure the report will be written up in the next edition of the TY News. Well done to Aisling Hurley and Glen Guerin for taking an active role in making this event happen and many thanks to everyone else involved. I trust the evening will be a great success.

## Parent Teacher Meetings

I want to remind you that the first of our Parent Teacher Meetings take place on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> of November. I have sent out 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year reports. I have not included comments by the Academic Advisors because they will be meeting you on Tuesday.

I am afraid that nationally the main teaching unions have issued a directive to all teachers in secondary schools instructing them to meet with parents only during school hours. This means I am unable to implement the "1/2 in 1/2 out" times required for such meetings. The meeting will therefore take place Tuesday afternoon between 1:30 – 3:45. If for whatever reason you cannot attend this meeting please contact the school and we can arrange a meeting at a time that is mutually convenient.

**Please note that Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> of November during the afternoon will be a Half Day for all students in the Secondary School.**

## Future Communication with Parents

In the secondary School we have been trying, with only very limited success, to compile a list of every parent's email address. Once we have these entered into our system I will be able to send a copy of whole school communications directly to your email. This would make, I believe, communication much smoother and much more efficient. The parents in the entire Junior School have signed up to this programme and it has been working very well. After the mid-term, at all Parent's meetings, we will try again to compile a definitive list of emails. Thereafter, I am afraid that if you do not give us your up-to-date email, you will have to go to the website for items such as the newsletter. As a school we have pledged to cut down on large mail shots. Indeed it is our intention to dispense with them altogether in 2010.

# Access To The School

In both of our recent inspection reports our evaluators drew my attention to the fact that access to the school was extraordinarily easy. Unlike most schools that I have ever worked in and certainly unlike most schools I have visited in Ireland, it is possible to walk freely onto the site and gain access to every area in the school, without having to report to reception. We have no bell or buzzer at the front door and there are multiple points of entry.

During the mid-term the Board of Management has instructed me to place a bell on the main door in reception and close off the other points of access as far as possible. Visitors will now have to report directly to Reception. I envisage that in most cases as parents will have an appointment and so we can anticipate the flow of visitors day by day. The School will in effect be closed to anyone who has not got an appointment from 9.30am - 3.30pm every day.

I will monitor the progress of this new initiative and will give you a progress report in my next newsletter. Can I thank you for your support in this matter. I trust you recognise that we are responding to health and safety directives and merely bringing our school policy in line with other schools.

# Drugs and Alcohol Policy

During the week of Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October and the 9<sup>th</sup> Ms Ryan co-ordinated a comprehensive programme of raising awareness regarding the misuse of drugs and alcohol. In the last academic year we revisited the original policy and after consulting with various professionals and stakeholders in the school, reviewed and rewrote sections of the piece. This policy can be viewed on the website at the start of the new term and has now become school policy.

As part of the week of talks and events, Ms Ryan organised an Information Evening for parents. I thought it was very informative and useful and I would urge you, if you were unable to attend, to come to the follow up evening that is being arranged. I will post the finalised date on the website as soon as it is confirmed. This is an area that requires up to date information and there are so many aspects of modern culture that simply pass us by that if we remain in ignorance we could miss important.

# Forthcoming Dates

## November

- 3rd Nov** - 5th & 6th Year Parent/Teacher Meeting - Library - Time: 1.30-3.45
- 4th Nov** - Wed Jnr/Inter Staff Meeting - PM  
- PTA Meeting - PTA Members Only
- 5th Nov** - Board of Management Mtg - BOM Members Only
- 14th Nov** - Lighthouse Scholarship Exams - Library - 9.00am-12.30pm (Open to all entering 1st Yr Seniors)
- 18th Nov** - 2nd & 3rd Year Parent/Teacher Meetings - Library - Time: 1.30-3.45  
- Jnr/Inter Parent/Teacher Meetings - Time: 12.00 27 Fri
- 27th Nov** - Grade 4 Assembly - Venue: Hall - 8.45am (Parents welcome)
- 30th Nov** - 3rd, 5th & 6th Year Christmas Exams Commence

## December

- 2nd Dec** - Jnr/Inter Staff Meetings - PM
- 7th Dec** - Board of Governors Mtg - BOG Members Only
- 9th Dec** - Senior School Staff Meeting - Library - Time: TBC
- 10th Dec** - Board of Management Mtg - BOM Members Only
- 10-18 Dec** - 1st, 2nd, 4th Year Christmas Exams Commence
- 10-18 Dec** - SS Christmas Exams
- 16th Dec** - PTA Meeting - PTA Members Only
- 18th Dec** - Jnr Christmas Concert - Main Hall - Time: 9.00am  
- Carol Concert - Church of The Assumption, Howth - 8.00pm
- 22nd Dec** - SS Christmas Exam Marking Day & Resits
- 23-6 Dec** - Wed \*\*\*\*CHRISTMAS BREAK\*\*\*\*

# Intermediate School

## *Message from Liam Burns, Intermediate School Principal*

This term the Intermediate school introduced a new, dynamic structure to the school day, particularly for the children of Grades 5 and 6. The new timetable introduced the boys and girls to Senior School staff and their subjects. The children have undoubtedly benefitted from their expertise and I would like to take this opportunity to commend the children for the manner in which they have adapted to these new arrangements. It has been challenging for them to find their way around the school site, adapting to a more formal time-table and also adjusting to the different ways of individual teachers. However, as the term progressed, they appear very comfortable with the new arrangements and indeed have welcomed the sense of independence it gives them. Initial settling in difficulties are well on their way to being resolved and, generally speaking, the children are now demonstrating a mature approach to all aspects of school life.

Our Grade 4 class are a most pleasant group and it has been a pleasure to welcome them to the Intermediate section of the school. I know Ms Loftus is thoroughly enjoying her time with them. I am pleased to report that she will remain in charge of the class until the February mid-term as Ms. O'Brien has had a request for extended leave granted.

## Sports

I would like to congratulate the boys and girls of Grade 6 who have stepped up to the Senior School hockey team and who are performing superbly at this level. Luke O'Driscoll-Downes, James Burns, William Eickholt, Harvey Mc Cone, Ciaran Mc Hale, Kamiel Houben and Robbie O'Hanlon have all been involved this year and have certainly not looked out of place. Stevie Pitt-Lennon, Imogen Guinness, Hayley Newman and Amy Reynolds have also represented the Senior School girls' team and have earned rave reviews from their coaches.

Mr Stewart speaks most enthusiastically about team prospects for the future based on the development of our current Grade 6 class. Congratulations to all concerned.

Football is still very popular among many of the boys and girls and we have a few games pending in the near future. Willow Park Boys' School will visit Sutton Park in November for matches against our teams. We shall have a return fixture with them later in the year. We also are maintaining our link with Saint Bernard's School from Glengormley (near Belfast) and they will be visiting us when mutually convenient and we shall have a return fixture with them sometime in term 2 or 3.

## Discover Science Award

Part of our Wednesday afternoon programme involves working towards the above award. The school can get recognition as a "Discover Science School" if we complete a given number of prescribed experiments, attend a science exhibition/fair and undertake an educational visit to nominated attractions. To this end, we shall be visiting the marine centre in Bray and also visiting Dublin Zoo in term two. Children are asked to keep a log of these experiments and visits and they may supplement their logs with photographs of these events. Please encourage them to bring in their cameras on Wednesday afternoons for this purpose.

## Open Evening

I would like to pay tribute to all children from Intermediate School who made such a positive contribution to this evening. Our Grade 6 boys and girls were marvellous guides and all children engaged in classroom activities were the finest of ambassadors for our school. I thank them for giving up their time and for their outstanding efforts on the night.

## Mathletics

This initiative is up and running across both sections of the primary school and is proving to be very popular with all children. I would like to thank Ms McGuire for liaising with our P.T.A. in providing this wonderful resource for our children. As ever our P.T.A. have been invaluable in this effort and their hard work is always appreciated by all members of our school community.

# Waterstones Big Book Bank

All children took part in this initiative and, on completion of some follow-up work, were presented with a free book by Waterstones. The children had an opportunity to share their love of their favourite books with each other and those parents who attended the presentation ceremony could only be impressed by the passion with which the children discussed their books.

I would like to thank Valerie Richmond, our librarian, for her tremendous work in co-ordinating this project and also to Michele Ridgeway for presenting the children with their books. Each child also received a personalised bookmark and this was down to the creativity of Rachel Kummert. Many thanks Rachel.

## Homework Club

A little reminder that children may remain in Homework Club until 4.45pm on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday each week. As we move towards darker evenings I ask you to ensure that your child remains in the school building until they are collected. If you wish them to meet you at the gate or to make their own way home please confirm this in writing to me.

## Contact Details

Please see the section in Mr. Moretta's message pertaining to this. It is essential that we have all parents' e-mail contact details. At present we have approximately 65% of these.

## Dates for Your Diary

<b>Saturday 14th November</b>	Scholarship Exam (Open to Grade 6 Pupils)
<b>Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Parent/Teacher meetings
<b>Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Ice Skating at Charlestown
<b>Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Helix Pantomime (Cinderella)
<b>Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Christmas Play Friday

# Junior School

## *Message from Geraldine McGuire, Junior School Principal*

### Enrichment Programme

A series of very enjoyable outings as part of our Wednesday Enrichment Programme took place over the half term

We chose the most beautiful September day to walk to the Burrow Beach. The walk allowed us to practise the Green X Code and the beach provided the perfect location for a sand castle competition.

All classes, including Junior Infants visited Trinity College Science Gallery for The Bubble Exhibition. The children all had a wonderful time creating bubbles, studying bubbles and being inside a giant bubble. Many of the children decided that they would be going to TCD because you get to do great things like play with bubbles.

Those who visited The Chester Beatty Library saw just a small selection of priceless artefacts on display as well as having to walk through the grounds of Dublin Castle.

## Enrichment Programme Cont' ....

At The Hugh Lane gallery opinion was divided as to what was best. Many loved the stained glass and others thought that the Francis Bacon Studio was the best room they had ever seen.

Donal Skehan, a past pupil, joined us to do a cookery demonstration and to talk to the children about his work. Some time ago Donal started his own blog entitled The Good Mood Food Blog. His blog attracted a great deal of attention and he was approached by a publisher to produce the Good Mood Food Book. The book launch is scheduled for the end on October and we all wish Donal every success.

We do have a number of parents who organise the cookery classes for the children and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their work. The classes are enjoyed by all the children.

The trip to the Lambert Puppet Theatre was another great adventure to bring the first half term's activities to a close.

Many parents have joined us on our trips and I would like to thank them for all their help. If you are available and would like to accompany us on a trip, please contact either a class teacher or myself.

## Mathletics

Thanks to the generosity of the P.T.A. all pupils enjoy using the Mathletics website in school and at home, it really has been a great addition to support the curriculum and to maintain enthusiasm for Mathematics. What is especially impressive is that this software is progressive and crosses over all phases of the Curriculum. Pupils in the Intermediate School are using the same software but obviously at a higher level.

## Fundraising

The ongoing fundraising which we do brought us to the attention of R.T.E. The Nationwide crew were in the process of making a programme about the connection between Sutton and Chimteka in Malawi. As well as filming the work of the local committee of CCS, the camera crew came to the school to film Brian Cramner, who has worked in Chimteka, showing slides of Chimteka to Grade 3. The camera also followed Grades 2 and 3 as they created a collage of letters and photographs to send to the children in Chimteka. The programme will be transmitted in January 2010.

## Music Teaching

We are delighted that our music specialist, Fiona Foley, is continuing to teach music to all classes. Necessary cutbacks in expenditure meant that we would lose the services of a specialist music teacher but major timetable changes in the Intermediate and Senior Schools made it possible while still staying within budgetary constraints.

## Dates for Your Diary

**11th November** –Trips to the Hugh lane, Chester Beatty and the National Gallery

**18th November** - Parent-Teacher meetings by appointment starting at 12 noon

**9th December** - Trip to Charlestown Ice Rink

**18th December** -The Christmas Concert starting at 9a.m

## 2010 Junior Entry Applications

We will shortly be commencing the processing of our Applications on file for 2010 entry, if you have a child wishing to start with us next year, please ensure that we have your full application form received. Forms can be downloaded from the Admission page of our website.



**“We nurture all that is best in all of our Students”**