

Principal's Report to Parents' Advisory Council

Thursday 6 April 2017

Dr Fergus Heffernan/Parents' Advisory Council

A very special word of thanks is due to the Parents' Advisory Council for organising the visit of Dr Fergus Heffernan to the school on Thursday 9 March. Every girl in the school had an opportunity to hear his talk that was age-appropriate and the feedback from students was extremely positive. The huge number of parents from all of the post-primary schools who attended that night was very gratifying for all concerned. Dr Heffernan's unique presentation style on mental health issues and insights into the Irish family was very well received and appreciated. It is noteworthy that Loreto Education Development Officer, Triona Barrett invited Fergus to the Loreto Principals' Conference last September and as a result, I was in a position to recommend him to our own parents.

I also record my thanks on behalf of the PE Department for the sponsorship by PAC of extra lockers where students can safely store their PE gear.

The Students' Council also requested the purchase of two microwave ovens for heating lunches and these were also very kindly agreed.

Sporting Achievements

Equestrian Events

We had teams competing in Mullingar Inter-schools competition in Mullingar Equestrian Centre in mid March but no success story to tell this time round.

Basketball

Our second year basketball team played St Leo's College, Carlow on Monday 6 March and are now in the regional semi-finals. Unfortunately the team lost in the regional semi-final to Cross and Passion, Kilcullen.

Camogie

20 first and second year students, as well as Emma Moran and Anna Murtagh, who are senior prefects, training the junior camogie team travelled to Heywood last Friday the 3rd of March. In very poor weather conditions the team only scored 1 point in the first half. However, we put in a much better performance in the second half, scoring 3 goals and 2 points. Final score: Heywood 6-2 Loreto 3-3.

Athletics

Our students competed in the All-Ireland Cross-Country Championships on Saturday 11 March in Belfast. The senior team of Claire Fagan, Andrea Brady, Laura Shaw, Allana Bate

and Daria Fidgeon retained their All-Ireland title and Jennifer Fidgeon, Karla Cunningham and Meabh Killalea came second in the Junior competition.

Congratulations to Aoife and Caoimhe O'Brien who represented Ireland in a series of cycling qualifiers on Saturday and Sunday 11/12 March.

Running and Walking Clubs are continuing every Tuesday at lunchtime.

Guidance Counsellor, Sinead Hyland is busy assisting students with the SUSI grant application at the moment.

The Mary Ward Conference of St Vincent De Paul organised a table quiz on Friday March 24th for Fifth Year Big Sisters and their Little Sisters.

Teaching & Learning Report

WSE/MLL Follow-Through Inspection

Ms Maria Lorigan notified the school on Monday 27 March that she would be undertaking a Follow-Through inspection based on the recommendations from our WSE/MLL inspection carried out in January/February 2015. Out of the five main recommendations she reported very good progress on four, with a few further recommendations around team teaching in Special Needs classes.

Examinations/Reports

Junior Certificate Home Economics Practical Examinations and Music Practical Examinations for Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate students as well as Oral Examinations in Irish, French, German, Spanish and Russian for Leaving Certificate students took place in the two weeks 27 March -7 April.

Teachers and students have also been busy putting finishing touches to projects and coursework journals in various subjects for both Junior and Leaving Cert for State Examination Commission deadlines.

Teachers deserve special thanks for their huge extra commitment in preparation for these exams.

The final Parent-Teacher meeting of the year for first year parents took place on Wednesday 14 March and all Spring Reports have been issued to parents concluding with Mock Examination reports.

Preparations for September 2017

Application forms for Transition Year have been completed and numbers are up again this year in keeping with recent trends. There will be in the region of 80 students joining the programme next year.

Our subject choice for first years moving into second year is complete.

Subject choice forms have been completed for next year's fifth years and all final subject choices will be confirmed by students and their parents before Easter.

DES Circular 0015/2017 requires that all schools have 40 minute or one hour classes from September 2017. This means that our current timetable, a mixture of 35 and 40 minute classes must be changed. We currently have 24 x40 minute classes and 21x35minute classes making a total of 45 classes. The minimum required teaching time per week is 28 hrs per week and our timetable is currently 15 minutes over that time.

Mandatory 40 minute classes will reduce the number of class periods to 42 per week. We currently have nine classes each day and we are now compelled to alter the weekly timetable.

Possible changes:

4x 9 classes + 6classes

2x9 classes +3 x 8 classes

3x9classes 1x8 classes + 1x 7classes

PE Classes

First years are completing swimming classes in Mullingar pool as part of their PE programme.

Enterprise Awards

This competition took place on March 10th in Athlone and congratulations to Aoibheann Regan and Oonagh Waldron who were placed 2nd in the Junior contest with their company **Patch** and Anna Flynn and Makayla McCormack who won 'Most Commercial Enterprise' with their company **Cake Cosmetics**.

Development Education

The fifth year Development Education class have been running a campaign to raise awareness and funds for Trócaire with sponsored fasts and sponsored silence.

Languages

First year students took part in a Francophone French Table Quiz on Wednesday 8 March in Tullamore College. Congratulations to Tara Fagan, Mary Nally, Robin Wrafter and Caoimhe Tuite who were placed joint second in the competition.

Students from Germany and their teachers paid the return visit to us in the week leading up to St Patrick's Day. It was wonderful to welcome them back to Mullingar and I acknowledge the host families who gave the Germans a taste of Irish hospitality. Hopefully this long-standing exchange will continue for many years as it is so beneficial to both schools.

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Public Speaking

Marta Geszczak and Niamh O'Reilly represented the school with great distinction at the mental health public speaking competition in the opulent surroundings of the Mansion House in late March.

Music

The newly formed school orchestra and our well established traditional group are holding rehearsals every week at lunchtime in preparation for various competitions. Huge congratulations to our traditional group who came first in the Wesley Schools Competition on Saturday 4 March.

Loreto Link: TY students have completed the work on their annual magazine with the invaluable support of Ms. Dolores Nulty and Ms Laura O'Toole. The magazine will be available from the second week in May.

T&L Lunchtime Clubs

Homework Club; Spanish Culture Club; Art Club; French Oral Classes; Club Gaeilge; German Club; Ukulele Group; Lunchtime Choir; Orchestra.