

First Newsletter
Scoil Iosa - New Co-Ed. School
Christmas 2007

Welcome to our first, historic Newsletter! It is a busy and exciting time as we work, learn and play together.

As you know, the boys of the former Scoil Iosagáin and the girls of the former Scoil Iosa came together on September, 3rd, 2007 and became a new school - Scoil Iosa.

It is interesting to observe the boys and girls from Junior Infants to First Class "getting to grips with one another".

At this stage of the year, it is an advantage to be called a Co-Ed school. We had no difficulty picking the cast for our "Christmas Story"!

It is my honour to serve as Principal of Scoil Iosa and I congratulate Sr. Nancy on becoming Deputy Principal. We are privileged to have such dedicated, enthusiastic and hard-working staff - Teachers, Secretary, SNAs, Caretaker and Cleaner who all contribute to the smooth running of the school.

A special welcome to all our new pupils who joined us for the first time this year. We have 50 new Junior Infants and 10 children from other European countries who joined various classes. Fáilte roimh go leir!

Farewell and every success to the 6th Class Girls who completed their primary education in Scoil Chroi Iosa, graduated in June and are now attending second level schools.

Welcome to our new staff members: Miss Horkan, Miss Foody, Miss Howley, Miss McCabe and Miss Moran.

Congratulations to Ms. Mulligan whose daughter was born last April. Congratulations also to Ms. Claire Mitchell whose daughter was born in November. Miss Burns is working with First Class in Ms. Mitchell's absence.

We welcome Ms. Mulligan back and wish Miss Bourke well in the future.

Congratulations to our Speech & Language Therapist, Sinead Nicholson, on her recent engagement.

Welcome to Fr. Gerry O'Hora, our School Chaplain, who has already started with the preparations for First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

Thanks to Sergt. Tony Lavelle for his continuing input with the Traffic Wardens Scheme.

We welcome back, Mr. Tom Doherty, our traditional music teacher, Jimmy Martin, our camogie trainer and Barry Murphy who does football coaching.

We have had many new and varied experiences this year. We have enjoyed swimming lessons in Ballina Pool, gymnastic lessons with Laura Moran of Nadia Gym. The Basketball lessons with Pete have been a great success. The commencement of After School/Homework Activities has also been very successful. Already, the 5th and 6th Class pupils are hoping to be selected for the next session after Christmas!

We look forward to September 2008 when our present First Class boys will be able to remain on into Second Class and when our school - Scoil Iosa - will be open to enrol boys from Second Class to Sixth Class. This is definitely new - guaranteeing a busy and exciting time in the life of Scoil Iosa!

Speaking of busy and exciting, you will see from the various activities and events all that has been happening in Scoil Iosa since our return to school.

In September we took part in the Cross-Country Running Competitions, set up new Traffic Warden teams, had our Sponsored 3-mile Walk, our beginning-of schoolyear Mass in St. Patrick's Church. We took part in various competitions and won many prizes.

Fred, The Magician, entertained us as did the Anti-Litter Show sponsored by Ballina Town Council.

The annual fund-raiser, organised by The Parents' Association, was held in Tesco in November. 'Thank you' to all who helped out.

The formation of our new Board of Management took place in November. Mrs. Esther Cummons and Mr. James Maughan were elected as Parents' Representatives. This Board will operate until November, 2011.

A very enjoyable night to mark our amalgamation took place on 23rd Nov in Paddy Jordan's. Thanks to everyone who made it a memorable occasion.

We congratulate the "Western People" on their celebration of 125 years of service and we thank David Farrell for doing the photo-shoot! We were very happy with the results! We look forward to seeing more of the Senior Classes photographs in future editions!

We would like to thank our hard-working and dedicated Parents' Association which adds so much to the life of Scoil Iosa!

At present, all classes are busy making recyclable decorations for a Christmas Tree Competition organised by Ballina Town Council. Children in Infant - 1st class are busy preparing for "The Christmas Story", and "The Infant Boy" in 2nd - 6th Classes.

Mrs. Duffy's, Mrs. Thornton's and Miss Keane's classes had an opportunity to attend Sr. Nancy's Playroom. Junior Infants will be accommodated after Christmas.

Over the last few weeks, Junior and Senior Infant Classes have enjoyed Funfit with Laura Moran.

David Farrell, Photographer with the "Western People" took photographs of the children in conjunction with the special supplement in the paper re Scoil Iosa. Their photographs appeared in two issues of the paper.

First Classes have been busy practising for the Nativity Play. The Junior and Senior Infants provided the choir.

In September, girls from 5th Class went to see an Art Exhibition in the Newman Institute. It was an exhibition of paintings by children from all over Ireland depicting their impressions of well known paintings by famous artists. Third, Fourth and Sixth Classes also attended this exhibition with their teachers.

Fifth Classes went to the Whistle Blower Quartet in the Newman Institute in November. It was great fun and we learned how to play the French horn.

The Annual Book Fair was held for one week in November. Lots of wonderful books were bought by the children and Scoil Iosa got over €800.00 worth of books for the school library. Thank you, to all who bought books!

The Setanta Book Club has had one order this term and this also gives us free books. Thank you for your support!

This school has been networked and this means that each class has Internet access under supervision of the teacher. The school website is being built and can be found at www.scoiliosaballina.com.

Fifth and Sixth Classes have had some Camogie training from September to Hallowe'en.

Pete Strobl, an American team player with Team Merry Monk, has been training Fifth and Sixth Class Girls in Basketball and we have really enjoyed it. The girls are becoming experts at dribbling and shooting!

Rehearsals are nearing an end as our Christmas performance is to be presented on Wednesday, 19th Dec. in St. Patrick's Church at 12.00 noon. The children have worked very hard at singing sweetly and learning the words of many new carols.

Cross Country Running:

Last September Scoil Iosa took part in North Mayo Cross Country Running in Belleek. Seaфра Barrett, Aoife Bonner, Niamh Bonner, Maria Carroll, Aisling Higgins and Rachel Scott were on the Senior Team. Aoife Bonner attained 7th place, Niamh Bonner attained 12th place and both received individual medals. The Senior Team were placed 2nd and each member of the team received a medal.

The Junior Team was represented by Rachel Cawley, Mary Selina Collins, Clodagh Hopkins and Sinead Mahady. Jenna Walsh attained 6th place and received an individual medal. The Junior Team attained 3rd place overall. Each member of the team received a medal.

Congratulations to all who were involved.

Moy Valley Resources ran a Schools-Against-Racism Poetry Competition. From over 250 entries, Colleen Finnerty was selected as a runner-up (Top 10 selected). She and her family and friends attended a prize-giving ceremony in the Kennedy Glasgow Centre on Friday, 23rd November. Congrats Colleen!

6th Class Girls participated in Design a Book Mark Competition run by Mayo County Library. Congrats to Niamh Bonner and Clara Hickey who were two finalists and attended a prize-giving ceremony in Castlebar Library on Wednesday, 12th December.

6th Class Girls attended Science Week in Moyne College. Tara Butler was the winner of a raffle held and she has been invited to a prize-giving ceremony on Tuesday, 18th Dec. in Moyne College.

The Big Ballot - 5th and 6th Class Children took part in the big ballot national survey / poll to find out what children and young people have to say in relation to some issues.

Irish Dancing Classes have re-commenced in the Junior P.E. Hall on Tuesdays, from 3.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.

Christmas Baking - Some parents availed of the opportunity to make Christmas puddings in the Parents' Room. This proved both enjoyable and worthwhile for all involved.

Fundraising - We held our Annual Sponsored Walk on 29th September. Peter Ruddy collected the most money.