



Whizzing to our Winter Wonderland

This Friday sees the start of our Winter Wonderland celebrations!

Our school will be transformed with Christmas decorations, Chanukah menorahs and Kwanzaa symbols.

On Friday, the children in our school will get to enjoy the Winter Wonderland.

On Saturday, our children will be singing their hearts out at the Carlow Shopping Centre. Parents, please come along and join in. We're only a small group so extra voices are needed!

Sunday is the big finale. From 2pm to 5pm, the school will open up to the public for the first time. We want to showcase all our hard work over the last term and show everyone what a great school we have. The parents along with members of the Board of Management have organised lots of market stall selling some

last minute gifts, cakes and breads. We'll be hosting a fun-filled Christmas disco, a Christmas cinema and Santa Claus will be sitting in our Winter Wonderland cooling down before his big night.

Children from Simon's class have also been writing projects about what goes on around this time of year in other countries. Look out for information on Yule, Chanukah and Kwanzaa. They also have looked at different traditions around the world at Christmas. So, if you've ever wondered what Christmas is like in 35 degrees of heat—be sure to visit!



Quick News

School Mural

A big thank you to John who painted our mural in the foyer of the school. John volunteered his time to display our logo and vision to all our visitors!



Bad News About Bus

Unfortunately, we received bad news about getting a bus between Athy and Carlow. We do not have enough children registered in the school yet as we need 7 families living in the area. As soon as we get enough numbers, we will apply again. We only need another 2 children so we're close!

After-School Club

Catherine Tierney will open an after school club in September 2009. She sends her thanks to all parents who returned their forms and looks forward to working with you next year.

Policies

School Policies can be viewed on our web site in the B.O.M. section.

Panto Trip

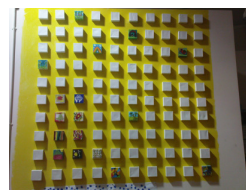
Last Wednesday Simon's class took a trip to Eire Óg to see "Sweeping Beauty" which is a pantomime performed by the Carlow Club Players. One of our pupils, Kaylynn, was starring in the panto. In fact, most of Kaylynn's family were involved in the panto. Kaylynn's mum and granddad were acting and her granny produced and directed. However, it was Elly in Senior Infants and Kaylynn's sister, that came up with the name for the panto. So a big well done to all the O'Brien family!



Kaylynn (3rd Class) acting in Carlow Club Players Pantomime, "Sweeping Beauty".

100-square Project

Our 100-square project (below) is still ongoing. If you know someone who can sponsor a square let Simon know. Any reasonable donation will suffice.



Impact of the Budget

Firstly, a big thank you to the parents who travelled to Dublin last weekend to protest at the government's cutbacks on education. Over 60,000 people marched in Dublin, most of them parents and children. Carlow was well represented and a great day was had by all.

Before this, an information was held in Carlow to highlight how the budget will affect children in the coming year. Two parents, a principal and the secretary of the INTO union spoke strongly about how at the end of the day, the budget "is going to rest in the pockets of parents" The chairperson of St. Fiacc's NS PTA announced that they have already started fundraising the €14,000 that was instantly cut from their school.

The next step is for parents to go to their local politicians and keep the pressure on. We haven't heard from any of our local TDs—Mary White and MJ Nolan are keeping very quiet. Parents need to visit their clinics and demand they do something.

Board of Management News

This is a short summary of the Board of Management meeting last Monday. The full minutes can be downloaded from our web site in the "Board of Management" section.

- Policies were handed to the Board for ratification in February
- Parents are invited to raise their concerns with parent representatives.
- An IT solution for the school is underway and in progress.
- Interview for ASD teacher goes ahead on Thursday
- Budget condemned by Board. Measures to cover sick leave were discussed

Next meeting is scheduled for February 2nd at 7pm in school. Items for agenda by Jan 21st to Simon.



Parents' Meeting

On Friday, a small number of parents met with the school's parent representatives to discuss some of the issues that were brought to the Board of Management meeting.

The group decided that a fundraising committee would be established separate to the coffee morning. This committee will be responsible for organising fundraising events in the school.

Coffee mornings will be back to the way they started off. On Fridays just after drop off, coffee and chat will be served.

Parents who have concerns or issues with anything that goes on in the school should speak with our parent representatives. Parents have the democratic right to work as partners in the school and we welcome them as equals.

Issues surrounding the teaching of children should be discussed with

the individual teacher. A complaints procedure has been brought to the Board for ratification. Please have a look at it for our own protection.

Meanwhile, a suggestion box will be erected outside the parents'/staff room, if anyone wishes to anonymously leave suggestions.

Photos from the protest



Educate Together getting their banner ready!



Speakers at the rally

Class News

Aisling's Class...

are very busy leading up to the holidays! They are learning lots and lots of Christmas songs for our Carol Singing on the 20th December and they've made some lovely magical musical Christmas cards. Next week they're going to make some decorations for our Winter Wonderland!

Anything to add?

If anyone wishes to add anything to our newsletter, for example an article or advertisement, please talk to Simon. We can offer you an advertisement in our newsletter for a reasonable price. Articles, of course, won't cost you a penny!

Simon's Class...

have entered the Irish Aid competition and are awaiting results. They have started a new project all about the different festivals that are going on in December. So far, they've looked at Kwanzaa, Chanukah, Yule and Christmas in Ireland, Poland, Lithuania and Brazil. They'll be doing some more work on their blogs too!

ASD Class Update

A big thank you to Sinéad, Lisa, Aisling and Clare for all their hard work in helping to set up our ASD outreach class. They have put in lots of hours after school getting our rooms ready. We will be showing off the classroom on the day of our Winter Wonderland.

We have interviewed for the position of teacher in this class. We are in the process of finalizing details and this new teacher will begin in our school as soon as possible.

Graigucullen Christmas Tree Lighting

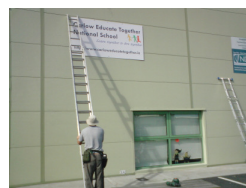
At time of print, a Christmas tree lighting ceremony was happening on Friday at 7pm. However, the weather doesn't seem to be too good so... we'll keep you posted!

Congrats...

To Ollie on the arrival of her new baby sister!

Clare's Classes...

are going great! Our ESL children are learning loads of English and improving. It's great to see the huge progress made in such a short time.



Family Contribution

Every week, parents are asked to donate a small sum of money to the school. This money is used to pay for utility bills such as ESB, gas, phone and water charges.

This is because the Irish government only contribute a fraction of the cost it takes to run a school. Every school in the country must rely on parents to raise money and most use a "Voluntary Contribution Scheme".

Our school asks parents to donate anything from €3 upwards per week.

A tax scheme, which allows you to claim back charitable donations is applicable in Educate Together schools as we are a recognised charity. If you wish to claim tax back on your contributions, please talk to your tax advisor and we will help you with the rest.

So far, family contributions have reached €431.20, which is very good for such a small school. However, since our monthly ESB bill is almost €600, we still need your help. Thanks!

Some random photos



Our "grand" entrance



Speakers at the parents' information evening in the Dolmen Hotel