

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Interview with local T.D.
- School Library
- Christmas Concert
- School Activities
- Christmas Party
- 50 years of Education at Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh
- Primary School memories

Wishing you all a peaceful Christmas

On behalf of the Board of Management and all of the staff of our school, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and all your family a happy and peaceful Christmas.

Time moves very quickly here in school but we never tire when it comes to the huge excitement that Christmas brings each year. It really is a wonderful time for the boys of our school and it is a privilege for us to witness such innocence and excitement first hand.

It is hugely important that I take this opportunity to acknowledge contributions made by various stakehold-

ers involved in the development of the children here in Spioraid Naoimh. I firstly want to thank my colleagues here in the school. I know that their work is much valued by you and the boys but really this school is extremely fortunate to have a team of such outstanding calibre. I can see first hand the lengths that our staff here go to every day in making sure all of the boys continue to be the best that they can be.

I would also like to say thank you to you our parent body. The school cannot function without your support and I say it always, but I sincerely believe that our boys are fortunate to come from the

homes that they do. I would especially thank the P.A. for all of their wonderful work and support this past year.

Finally, I say to our boys a big well done. I am extremely proud of each of you and I know that you are equally proud to be a Spioraid Naoimh boy. You all are a credit to your families and our school and I know that you are all striving to be the best that you can be. Once you do that then nobody can ask any more of you. Keep up the great work and see you all in 2014.

Brian Cuthbert
School Principal

The School Library

The school library is operating very successfully at the present time. Thanks to the efforts of the Parents' Association the library was refurbished, restocked, with bean bags replacing the more formal chairs that used to be there. It has proven to be very popular with all the boys from Junior Infants to

Sixth Class.

This year it was decided to expand the facility further by allowing books to be loaned out for a week at a time. The Student Council spent much of last Summer's term updating the records, cataloging all books, using the Junior Librarian Cataloguing system which the P.A. funded.

Each Monday after school one of the staff is present in the library. Books can be borrowed in the normal way, a simple scan of the bar code suffices.

This has proven to be very successful and can only help the development and enjoyment of reading throughout the school.

Open Night in SSN

A very successful Open Night was held in the school hall late this November past. The parents of the 2014 Junior Infant classes were invited to come to the school, take a tour of the building, meet the staff, and indeed meet one another.

Mr Cuthbert addressed the parent body, and discussed with the parents the steps the school will take to welcome the new Junior Infants.

Parents' Association chairman, Donal Murray, also addressed the parents, welcoming them to Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh, and outlined to them the work of the Parents' Association.

A welcome cup of tea was had, this informal gathering allowing the parents to meet the staff and principal. The complete staff of Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh was present on the night, and teachers were able to answer any of the questions the parents had.

Mr O Callaghan's fifth and sixth class choir began the night with a short programme to entertain the parents and Mr Cuthbert thanked the boys for coming in to school late in the evening.

The school is going from strength to strength, numbers are increasing all the time, and Mr Cuthbert expects the infant class list to be full before long.

A full cohort of Junior Infants is expected next September and we look forward to welcoming these boys to Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh.

Interview with Jerry Buttimer T.D.

We are very proud to have a former pupil currently sitting as a T.D. in Dáil Éireann. Jerry Buttimer recently called into our school to meet with our student council.

Our council asked Jerry many questions about a life in politics and Jerry was very forthcoming in explaining what his job involved. A number of the council were so impressed that they intimated that they would love

to follow in Jerry's footsteps and pursue a life in politics.

The highlight of the meeting was when Jerry invited the 10 members of council to Dáil Éireann next Spring for a visit to the Office of the Taoiseach and to lunch in the Dáil restaurant. This will be a marvellous day for the boys and we thank Jerry most sincerely for this very kind gesture.



In Class Support System

The in-class support system for children who need extra assistance to access the full curriculum continues to be very successful. The co-teaching model began three years ago, and all staff remain very pleased with its implementation.

The boys now rarely leave the room as the resource and support teachers work in the class

with the various groups, allowing each child to receive support as he needs it.

The resource and support staff, coordinated by Ms. Ní Cheallaigh liaise fully with the class teacher. Regular meetings are held throughout the year, and individual plans are organized for the children.

On occasion the child will need to

be withdrawn from the class when individual support is deemed necessary, but the class teacher and the resource teacher remain in constant communication to minimize any disruption.

It is planned to continue with this system of predominantly in-class support into the future. It is regarded as the gold standard for learning support provision.

Numeracy and Your Child

Continuous evaluation, monitoring and self-assessment are the hallmark of a progressive school. Indeed the Department of Education has recommended that a cycle of self-evaluation be implemented in each school over a three to four year cycle.

In line with these guidelines, and mindful of best practice, the staff of Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh decided to target Numeracy as the first level of the evaluation cycle.

A subcommittee, led by Mr. O Callaghan, and consisting of a teacher from each of the class levels in the school, met regularly during the Summer term of 2013.

The staff were surveyed in school, and an on-line survey of the children was also completed. It was then decided to target a number of areas for attention and improvement.

The area of problem solving was examined and it was decided to implement a number of strategies including dedicated lessons, co-teacher and in-class support and an exploration of different method-

ologies and in-class management systems. A Maths rich visual environment was also recommended. This work, begun by Mrs. Winslow in 2012 will be continued this year.

A number of Maths trails were also set up utilizing the school grounds in full and it is planned to use these in the third term once the weather improves. The very successful Drumcondra Test results show the success of the children in the Maths curriculum. The self-evaluation and implementation of these new strategies can only improve Maths further in the school.

The Book of Short Stories

In a new initiative Mr Cuthbert has championed the idea of a book of the boys' writing here at Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh.

Each boy in the school has been working for the past few weeks to prepare a short story, or another piece of work. The Junior children have been helped by their teachers to write or to colour a short piece.

The Senior boys have been working, under the guidance of their teachers, to complete

a short story of about two hundred words.

All these stories will be gathered together by Mr. Cuthbert and bound into a book.

This book should be available by the time you read this newsletter. Indeed as a stocking filler it may be well worth consideration. It is actually something we are immensely proud of and we would hope that when you read it, that you would get a real understanding of the abilities and the talents of the children.



Welcome to Spioraid Naoimh

Since September you may have noticed many new faces to our school. Firstly, a big welcome to the big cohort of new junior infants to Spioraid Naoimh. You have settled in very well and you are making great progress. To the new mums and dads also a big welcome and hopefully you too have settled

into the idea that your small boy is growing up and thriving in the new challenge that big school brings.

We have many new faces on the staff also. As you know Mrs Egan retired last year and she was replaced by Mrs Curzon, who teaches Rang 5. Ms

O Connell replaced Ms O Callaghan in 1st and Mr O Sullivan, also teaching 1st, begins his teaching career with us. Ms Spillane also joins us in the role of Resource/ Learning support teacher. So, many new faces but certainly all are huge assets to our school.

Sciath na Scol Football Campaign

Football and hurling has always been strong in Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh thanks largely to the dedication of teachers and staff over the years.

This year Mr. McCarthy and Brendan Driscoll have been in charge. Training began in the second week of September. Two challenge games were played against Scoil Barra and Cloghroe NS, and the final panel of players then began their campaign in Roinn A of

the league. The opposition in Roinn A was indeed formidable but the boys acquitted themselves very well indeed, winning two of their six games and only narrowly beaten in two others.

The enthusiasm of the boys was a major factor in the team this year, training sessions were attended well and skills were developed and enhanced.

The training continues throughout the Winter with dedicated PE sessions to develop football and general skills.

Even now in the depths of Winter it is hard to believe that planning is already in place for Spring leagues, but Mr. McCarthy has stated that hurling training will commence before the end of January in preparation for the hurling leagues.

After last year's heroics getting to the final who knows what will be in store for us this year.

Carol Singing in Cork City

This year, in what is becoming a tradition in Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh, Mr. O Callaghan and Mrs. Morley, will take the choir and band carol singing and playing into the city just before Christmas.

They have been invited to play at AIB headquarters at South Mall, and the boys have been busy preparing for the event.

The choir consists of the boys in Mr. O Callaghan's fifth and sixth class and they

have been practising diligently for a month learning the songs and carols. These boys also play the whistle, forming the School Band with Mrs. Morley's accordion players.

The accordion players meet each Monday and Wednesday after school and under Mrs Morley's guidance are progressing well.

We hope the boys enjoy their "day out" on December 19th and we wish them well.



Green Schools

Following the retirement of Mrs. Egan the responsibility for the school's Green Schools' Programme has been entrusted to Ms. Nelligan. Ms. Nelligan has praised the work of Mrs. Egan in the past few years and hopes to continue her good work.

We are currently pursuing our fourth green flag which is a fabulous achievement in itself.

This year Ms. Nelligan is to concentrate on the theme of travel. This will involve an education programme based on 'greener ways to travel' which obviously means more walking and cycling.

The programme's main feature is WOW, which is walk on Wednesday which obviously means that children make an effort to walk to

school or park and stride.

More information will follow after Christmas and very soon Ms Nelligan will be putting together a committee to help her to run the programme. We are all looking forward to getting a bit fitter and maybe also easing the parking issue around the school gates. If the programme does nothing else but help ease this problem then it will be really worthwhile.









All Photos are compliments of Sheenagh Morley of Bis-mark Wedding Photography. We very much appreciate the generosity of all of the people who helped to make this day so special. Again, a huge debt of thanks to the organising committee. Well Done.

Christmas Concert

Our annual Christmas Concerts will be held in the school hall on Wednesday and Thursday the 18th and 19th of December at 10 am.

The concert features pieces from every class group and preparations are well under way here at the moment.

It is amazing to see the variety of performances, from nativity plays right through to a performance of Grease with a twist. Certainly the children love

A beautiful way to start your Christmas week.

getting the opportunity to perform on stage and it is something that we believe is very important for them to participate in.

The concert always has a lovely Christmas feel to it and certainly it is something that has been enjoyed by all over the last number of years. Tickets are on sale in the school.



Basketball Tournament in Mayfield

Ms. Holden has taken over the responsibility for the school basketball team this year. You will remember, I'm sure, our great success last year. This year Ms. Holden has great hopes for our team. A dedicat-

ed group of fifth and sixth class boys has been training over lunchtime in the school hall for the past two weeks. These boys will take part in the Cork City basketball Tournament in Churchfield on the 6th of December. We know

that the boys chosen will represent the school with distinction and we also know that they will enjoy themselves on the day.

Good luck to all involved.

The Student Council

The school council, introduced by Mr. Cuthbert three years ago, continues to work for the good of the pupils of the school

Ten boys from fifth and sixth classes were elected by their classmates last September. There was indeed great excitement as the results came in. The boys have been working enthusiastically since that time. The school library is their special responsibility. The student council has ably assisted the school staff in this area.

Mr. Cuthbert has also asked the boys to organize the moving of the various classes from school assembly to their classes, and, on a number of occasions, they have been of valuable assistance in the school hall.

Meetings are regularly held with Mr. Cuthbert and various topics discussed. A suggestions and ideas sheet is now in each class and the student council hopes to act on these suggestions in the new year.



50th Anniversary at Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh

It all began in 1964. Two small brown prefabs (of happy memory to some I'm sure) were set up. Originally it was just the one system for boys and girls under the stewardship of Bean Uí Ríordáin until the boys' and girls' schools were set up in 1965.

Mr. Con Burns was the first principal, ably assisted by Bn. Uí Mhurchú as deputy principal. This was the time of an ever-expanding Bishopstown, and by the time Mr. Frank Murphy was appointed in 1975 over nine hundred boys were attending the school.

Many of you will remember the ever increasing number of prefabs. Indeed some of the staff would spend their entire career in these prefabs without ever entering the main building.

Ms. Dorothy O Sullivan was appointed as deputy principal in 1978 and would ably assist Mr. Murphy, and later Ms. Darina Callanan who was appointed in 1988.

The big change in 1999 was the amal-

gamation of the school with the boys and staff of Scoil Cholumbáin.

The year 2002 was a strange one for staff and pupils. Large hoardings were erected in preparation for the brand new extension, and the school hall, much to the delight of Ms. Callanan and staff.

This year also saw the last of the prefabs come down, and it was indeed a momentous day to see all the boys in the school in permanent and comfortable accommodation.

By 2004 Mr. John Meaney was principal, assisted by Mr. Don Lynch and later Mrs Eileen Kehily (a daughter of the school's first principal). The school went from strength to strength, although the number of boys dropped considerably as Bishopstown's population declined.

Mr Brian Cuthbert is the current principal and he continues the good work of his predecessors, assisted now by Mr. Eoin O Callaghan as deputy prin-

cipal. Numbers are on the increase again, with the four hundred mark now an achievable target.

Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh has been part of the fabric of Bishopstown for fifty years now. Through its games, its links with the local clubs, through its band, its music, drama and other activities it has enhanced the lives of generations of boys in Bishopstown.

The buildings have changed, many of the teachers and staff have moved on, but the quality of education and the commitment to the pupils of the school remains.

To celebrate the 50 years of Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh, we plan to have a number of events in 2014. One event for your diary is a Gala Dinner Dance in the Rochestown Park Hotel next October. More information will be available later on in the year. **If you have any old photographs of events in our school over the years, we would be delighted to copy same.**

The First Boys in Our School, 1964



Christmas Fun Day at Bishopstown GAA Club

All who attended the Christmas Party could only marvel at the wonderful day that the children of the boys and girls schools enjoyed. It was a feat in organization and certainly it was obvious the amount of work that was put in to making sure the day was to be a success.

The array of activities was second to none, whilst the 'locals' in the GAA club were gob-

A day to remember for the boys and girls of our school.

smacked at the efforts of parents and especially the level of detail and presentation of all the grottos.

All we can say in the school and on behalf of everyone is a big thank you and well done. The children of our school are fortunate to have people who give so much to ensure their happiness across all facets of their

growing up.

I must say, the atmosphere on the day was a joy to behold, people giving of their free time, people volunteering, people dressed as elves, Santa's helpers and even Mickey Mouse and Dora made an appearance.

So well done to all involved, it was a huge team effort and certainly it was a day to remember for the boys and girls of Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh.

Vincent de Paul Food Appeal

As we do every year, we will run a food appeal for local families for Christmas. We liaise closely with our local Lions Club and together we do our very best to make Christmas a better time for families who may be finding it difficult right now.

It actually would amaze you if

you could witness the generosity that we see here every Christmas. The Lions Club certainly are always delighted to come and collect all of the hampers that we make up. Last year alone, we managed to help 30 families in the Bishopstown/Wilton area. All non-perishable food items will be gratefully accepted.



New School App

We hope that you have heard at this stage about our new school app. It is available free on iTunes or in the Google play store.

Basically it is another strand towards improving communication between home and school. It has some brilliant features and we urge you check

it out.

It has a facility for notifying the school regarding pupil absences, messaging, picture gallery, latest news and many other very useful features.

We would hope that you will find the app helpful and that in time it will become a main point of communication be-

tween home and school.



Hold the Back Page !!

Primary School Memories by David Lynch

Spioraid Naoimh has a stratified presence in my head: I spent my final two years in the lightbox of bright paint and liberating glass that was the 'new' building and which, by the time I left it, had hardly been reconciled to the presence of young people, being clean and intact and still smelling mostly of itself. The main part of that smell was whiteboard markers – confusing to a nose better schooled in the earthiness of chalk – and through its chemical tang I watched adolescence storm up, my childhood interred, somewhere behind me, in the soot of clapping dusters.

That's the topmost layer. The previous six years are compacted discretely underneath, and I find them harder to dredge. There are cold milk bottles and old rads coiled on walls like iron rope. There are brass hooks in the cloakrooms. The architecture made corridors of classrooms;

every day you had to walk the gauntlet of the big boys' faces and tried to concentrate on your shoes, until you too were big, obliged to stay in an hour and a half longer, and basked as class paused for the faltering single file. Rubbers fell off the legs of chairs and if you leaned back – a forbidden luxury that more than once sent me toppling onto my pride – the bare metal bit greedily, marking the floors with little crescents. A fire drill was an oasis of incident. Christmas was managers, Alive-O! stories, self-made cards, demands that Teacher adjudicate in debates on the reality of Santa, fogged windowpanes, rain, warmth, lightbulbs buttering a dim afternoon.

Every teacher I had, from Ms Ní Cheallaigh to Mr Cuthbert, imprinted me with his or her own wisdom, personality, humour and philosophy, and though they are too many to name individually here I pay homage to all. If this clutch of images and sensations that consti-

tutes my memory of Spioraid Naoimh seems reductive or fragmented I can only say that I remember it with a greater and more overarching appreciation than can be encompassed in a few lines. I'm happy to report that it was as fine a place to begin to grow up in as I could have found.

By David Lynch

David Lynch is a past pupil of our school and as you can judge from this piece of writing, he has a unique talent. Many of the staff here would have fond memories of essays that David handed up for correction (not that we had to correct them !!!!). At the time it was extremely obvious that David would become the writer that he is today. When this piece was submitted for our newsletter, by our request I may add, it was like travelling back in time in terms of the vivid pictures David's words painted. We are very proud of all of our pupils here in Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh and certainly David Lynch, we are extremely proud to say that you are one of our own.