

End of Year Board of Management Report

Golf Classic: The Golf Classic was our major fund-raiser this year. It was a fantastic day, blessed by weather and sporting displays. Our hard working committee of Dave Williams, Martin O Grady, John O Halloran and Tony Delaney ensured the financial success of the venture to the tune of **€7,820** towards the Gym Fund. It was a huge show of community support and particularly heartwarming to see past members of Boards of Management and past pupils and parents in the winning teams. Thank you to all who participated and helped out with sponsorship.

Sports: This year has been an unprecedented year in the sports history of the school. The Football season commenced in September, followed by the Hurling/Camogie season in the spring. The Board of Management wishes to express its huge appreciation to coaches Diarmaid Moore and Siobhán Fenton (u10 boys) , Brian Kelly and Gemma Ryan (u11 boys), Denis O'Connor and Aaron Gallagher (u13 boys), Micheál Roseingrave Claire Quinlan and Maggie Moloney (u10 girls), John Nelligan, Yvonne Newman, Sandra Larkin and Sarah Griffin (u13 girls) for the massive work put into training teams this year and a huge congratulations to the school on all the sporting victories. Thanks also to Claire Quinlan and Sandra Larkin for the hard work with basketball training and to Aaron Gallagher and Mark Collins for the soccer training. The Board expresses its appreciation to parents Brian Bennett, Albert Carroll and John Henry for all the rugby training on Fridays. Congratulations to Milford pupils who were put forward for selection for the Limerick City Football teams: Eimar Morgan, Grace Clohessy, Aoife Nelligan, Caoimhe Hackett, Abbie Mc Carthy, Donnacha O Dalaigh, Tom O Hanlon, Jack Oliver and Colm Mohally. Congratulations to Caoimhe Hackett who was selected for the to play in the Primary Game in the Gaelic Grounds at the end of May. Congratulations also to Aoife Nelligan, who was selected for the Mini 7s, to play in Croke park on August 16th at the All-Ireland Camogie Final.

The school's sporting achievements this year have been unsurpassed in the history of the school. The Girls' Mini-7s Camogie players were narrowly beaten by Crecora in the County Finals in UL in April, having won the City Finals easily before Easter. The u11 boys became Limerick City Hurling Champions on May 21st. The u13 Boys were narrowly defeated in the Gaelic Grounds in both the Football and Hurling finals. The u/13 Girls' Team were Limerick City Football champions, Limerick County Football Champions, Limerick City Camogie Champions and, to crown it all became Limerick County Camogie Champions last week, a massive achievement for true champions!. A huge congratulations and "Thank You" to all the coaches who gave so much of their time so generously this year to the children of Milford School. Thank you also to Paul O'Connell who came to Milford NS on June 5th to present medals to all the Milford champions!

Fitzpatrick Cup: This annual competition took place in January as usual. Well done to all the boys and girls who took part and to the winning team, captained by Jack Oliver and many thanks to Mr Nelligan for the impeccable organization of the matches each Tuesday and Thursday.

Milford School Choir and Band: Congratulations to Milford NS Choir on their recent achievement in getting second place in Féile an tSamhraidh in Midleton, for their success in the Limerick Choral Festival, their performance in the Lime-Tree Theatre in February with the Three Tenors and their wonderful participation in Milford Hospice's Positive Aging Week. Thank you to Milford NS Band who supported all school occasions as usual this year, Communion, Confirmation, the Education Minister's visit (and all else) and their recent participation in the Band Spectacular in the Milk Market. Congratulations and "Thank You" to the teachers who gave so much time to all of these endeavours.

The Board gave financial support to many in-school music workshops this year such as the Drumming Workshops and the Music Generation workshops which were ongoing in the school all year, culminating in a fantastic concert in UL at the end of May. Sets of percussion instruments were also bought for all classes. The Community Music Placement with UL students was a great success as was the annual Music In the Classroom Concert in January. Thank you to Angela Reidy for co-ordinating all these musical programmes.

Environment: Minister for Education rightly paid special tribute to the students and staff of Milford NS on its Green Schools initiative and described the school as a "model for environmental awareness and initiative" on her visit in October to raise the school's sixth Green Flag. The next Green Flag programme will be on Energy and Global Citizenship and we appreciate Mr O'Connor's huge work with the children on the programme. Wildlife expert, Geoff

Hunt has been in residence throughout the school year, continuing the themes of “Trees, Seeds and Habitats”, and well done to all the parents and children who continue to support WOW and COW days.

Milford Year of Design 2015: It was a wonderful year of artistic projects also. The Cruinniú na gCrann copper project was a credit to all involved, as inspired by the loss to our community of Aaron O Flaherty, a treasured pupil. The community spirit which inspired the project is testament to the ethos of Milford School. The children’s tree and animal ideas, and the participation of parents and staff in designing copper leaves for the trees, truly embody the spirit which pervades the community of Milford School. The finished wall-mounted trees in our inner courtyard add to the peaceful and meditative environment for all and serve as a reminder of our strength as a school community. The Board acknowledges the tremendous support of Dr Bernadette Walsh and Patricia Moriarty, UL Student Affairs Arts Office and United Metals and Clear Circle Metals for their financial support of this project.

Artist -in-Residence Scheme: Limerick County Council artist-in-residence, Ciara Normoyle, has been working with students in 3rd and 6th classes, in collaboration with the teachers, over a period of 6 weeks on the theme of Biodiversity: Trees and Flying Insects (continuing our Cruinniú na gCrann theme) which culminated in wonderful wall-mounted ceramic leaves in the inner courtyard, as a fitting finish to celebrate Milford NS Year of Design 2015. Thank you to Siobhan Fenton who coordinated all these art projects.

Educational Events Throughout the Year:

Igloo Maths Project: Well done on the fantastic Christmas igloo made of milk cartons, which made Maths magic for all the children involved in building it!

The Board acknowledges and thanks the Parent Council for their very generous support for school resources, through their fund-raising efforts, which has allowed the school to purchase new i-pads, which have been hugely helpful to teachers to achieve targets in digital literacy and numeracy. The Board invested a sizeable amount of school funds in IT support for the school through the updating of the broadband network within the school. The Wi-Fi system has been upgraded to allow pupils access a pupil broadband network which is filtered through the Schools Broadband Programme. This provides an integrated set of services to schools which includes content filtering and security services including anti-virus control and a centralised firewall. These services are managed by the Schools Broadband Team which includes PDST Technology in Education working closely with the Department of Education and Skills and HEAnet. In addition to this, the school now has a separate broadband network in operation which allows the staff to complete administration tasks. This network also acts as an internet backup for teachers. The Board feels that with this investment the broadband network within the school is future proofed for the foreseeable future.

Christmas Events: Christmas events were hugely entertaining- the Junior Pageants, Christmas Choral Night, the Christmas Eve pageant, concerts, Santa visit- thank you to all!

International Day: Well done to Milford School on hosting another International day on Wednesday February 18th within the school, which endorses the inclusive ethos of the school, as depicted in the wall mural at the entrance-“A Place for Every Face”.

Milford Gazette: Well done to the editors and contributors to the school magazine and Ms Elaine Rael for her guidance and direction.

More Tall Tales: As if there wasn’t enough going on, for children from Milford NS, whose stories were not printed in the original book, 40 Tall Tales, the rest of the children’s stories were published in a new book called “More Tall Tales”, which was launched in the school on March 5th and which was the basis for the copper-work project- Cruinniú na gCrann. Congratulations to all authors. We expect to hear more of you in the future!

Well done also to Milford Quiz Team. Congratulations to all quiz members and especially to the u/13 quiz team, Lauren Jackson-Kiely, Conor Hassett, Rory Clothier and Laura McMahon for representing the school so well in the national final in the RDS on 12 April. The team won 200 euro for the school. Many thanks to teachers Sandra Larkin, Elaine Rael and Linda O’Meara for their hard work.

Food Dudes: Many thanks to Ms Áine McHugh for co-ordinating the Food Dudes programme this year, which enhances the school's commitment to Active and Healthy Living.

Student Council: Thank you to the student council and to Ms Ryan and Ms Hogan for their work. The student council organized both Friendship Weeks in order to encourage and promote a happy and safe atmosphere for all the pupils of the school, as well as Seachtain na Gaeilge 2015 and were a big help in the running of all student-related activities in the school this year.

Junior Entrepreneur Programme: 5th class designed and produced a unique mobile phone accessory, *Homez4Fonz*, having gone through a rigorous Dragon's Den process. The Board commends Ms Larkin and 5th class for their business acumen and entrepreneurship.

AWARDS: What a year for Milford School!!

FÍS FILM AWARD: Congratulations to 3rd Class 2013/2014 (current 4th class) and their teachers, Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Moore for winning a Fís award for their film, *One Bad Day*, dedicated by his classmates to the memory of Aaron O'Flaherty, R.I.P. See the film on the school website (<http://milfordns.ie/one-bad-day>)

LIMERICK LIFELONG LEARNING AWARD: Congratulations from the Board to Mr Aaron Gallagher and all involved in the video of this week, which celebrated school-life in Milford NS and which won a prize of €250 for the school. See www.milfordns.ie.

STEM AWARD: The Board congratulates Ms Quinlan and Ms Munnely and all the staff of Milford NS for the huge work done towards achieving this prestigious award for excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

ACTIVE SCHOOL FLAG AWARD: The Board congratulates all the staff of Milford NS for its work towards achieving this flag. The inspector was hugely impressed on her visit to the school on June 24th on the level of activity and encouragement towards sports and healthy lifestyle evident in the school. Congratulations to Mr Gallagher for all his work towards winning the flag.

THE BOARD WISHES TO EXPRESS ITS DEEP APPRECIATION TO ALL TEACHERS WHO GIVE SO MUCH OF THEIR TIME TO EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, THE SPORTS TRAINING, SHAKIN'WITH SHAKESPEARE CLUB, KNITTING CLUB, SCRATCH COMPUTING CLUB, SCIENCE CLUB, THE BAND, THE CHOIR, RAINBOWS AND MUCH MORE.

Great Limerick Run and UL SPORTS KIDS RUN: Thank you and well done to all the children who took part in the run on Saturday May 2nd and to the adults who participated in The Great Limerick Run on Sunday May 3rd, in spite of the terrible weather conditions. The school received €775 from the Great Limerick Run committee at a presentation in the White House, UL, on Monday morning. Many thanks to all.

Policy Update: In 2014/2015 the Board has reviewed and updated the following policies: Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Enrolment Policy, Accident and Injury Policy, Managing Chronic Health Conditions in School Policy and the Health/Safety Statement. They may be viewed on the school website.

School Self-Evaluation and School Improvement Plan:

SAT results for all classes were reported to the BoM. The results this year show improvement in all areas. The Board expresses its appreciation to all the staff for their hard work toward the achievement of targets identified in the School Improvement Plan (c.f. www.milfordns.ie)

Drumcondra Primary Reading Tests: (Literacy Improvement Plan was started September 2012)

Improvement in overall average from 2013 to 2015 of 6 percentile points (by 16.39 since June 2012)

Improvement in vocabulary average from 2013 to 2015 of 7 percentile points. (by 13.59 since June 2012)

Improvement in comprehension average from 2013 to 2015 of 4 percentile points (by 14.05 since June 2012)

Sigma-T Maths SATs: (Numeracy improvement Plan was started in September 2013)

Overall Average: overall average improvement in Sigma-T Maths test of 12 percentile from 2013 to 2015

Concepts: overall average improvement by 8%(Sigma-T test) 2013-2015

Computation: overall average improvement by 6%(Sigma-T test) 2013-2015

Problem-Solving: overall average improvement by 5% (Sigma-T test) 2013-2015

Measure: overall average improvement by 6% (Sigma-T test) 2013-2015

Number: overall average improvement by 6% (Sigma-T test) 2013-2015

The BoM commends the school on its progress towards the achievement of Action Plan targets on the Numeracy SIP- the provision of a Maths information booklet on the school web-site and also the provision of a Maths methodology and Maths Language Booklet to each family in September (also available on school web-site) for which many parents have expressed appreciation this year. The Igloo Maths project in December and Maths trails in the summer term, as well as the use of i-pads and improved proficiency in Maths , should do a lot towards achieving another important target- making Maths more fun and enjoyable for children.

Financial report:

A huge thank you is due to all the parents that supported fund raising efforts during the year. We have seen an increase in the contributions by parents to the gym fund via standing order or annual donation. For every donation of €250 or above the school can claim a tax refund from the Revenue Commissioners and during the year we received a payment of €5,736 from the Revenue Commissioners which is a welcome boost to the gym fundraising efforts. In addition we got great news earlier this year when the parish finance committee agreed to the waiving of the Salesian gym loan. A total of €8,500 was owed on that loan which we now do not have to repay. The Ulster Bank loan on the gym now stands at €404,200. The school's financial year ends on 31 August and the last set of accounts to 31 August 2014 showed the school operating at a loss of €3,262. The BOM expects that for 2015 the school will be closer to a break even situation. A large number of activities are provided by the school and it is important that the running of these activities does not place an additional financial burden on the school. The BOM will continue to review these activities to ensure that the appropriate costs are charged for extra activities.

Thanks to all the staff in Milford School for the tremendous dedication and commitment toward upholding the philosophy of the Milford Mission Statement- "providing a holistic education for our children, where potential and uniqueness of mind, heart, body and spirit are fostered and celebrated", while also upholding our strong academic ethos.

Wishing you all a safe and enjoyable summer holiday.

Liam de Búrca, Dave Williams, Diarmaid Moore, Karen Frawley, Valerie O'Hanlon, Kathryn O'Mahony, Fr John Horan and John Field, Board of Management, Milford National School.