

TRANSITION PROGRAMME

Ms. McPaul, Mr. Nugent and Ms. Horan (Mainstream) and Ms Craig, Ms Gavin and Ms McDonagh (Special Classes) have developed a transition programme for Sixth Class pupils moving onto secondary school. Transition to secondary school is a time that may induce worry and anxiety in some pupils and they may need help with developing certain skills such as organisational or social skills prior to their progression to secondary school. Hopefully they feel more confident as a result and also more familiar with their new school. So far, booklets have been developed for mainstream pupils. The Term 1 programme has worksheets and information needed for transition in general. The Term 2 programme, which we are now engaged with, focusses more on the skills the children need and information on the particular school they are transitioning to. Individual programmes are in place for the Special Class Pupils and linkages have been established and visits planned with their new schools.

HOST EVENTS - A NEW INITIATIVE WE ARE HOPING TO BEGIN SOON

Our school has excellent facilities and could act as a base to host events that other schools could come to. This could include schools with Special Classes or Special Schools and allow staff to build up relations and share expertise. In the future this may include an Easter Egg Hunt, a Teddy Bear picnic for younger children, Halloween Discos etc.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

For many children with ASD, play is hard work and play skills need to be taught explicitly. Also, it is very good for everyone's wellbeing to have a hobby. We are delighted to report that some of our resource children are now actively participating in extra-curricular activities and after-school programmes.

SOCIAL TRIPS

Children with ASD in particular, need explicit teaching of certain social skills that other children learn by 'catching'. Skills can be taught in the classroom but are really reinforced when used in the community environment. In the past, Special Classes and resource children have gone on social trips to playgrounds, Supermacs, trips to supermarkets or shops, the Youth Café and Tons of Fun. There is great potential here for real learning experiences. Again the ASD Team are working to develop a Social and Community Living Programme over the coming months.

DEAF-HEAR SIGN LANGUAGE

Ms. McDonagh shared links and videos with Sign Language from Deaf-Hear. This is an excellent way to raise children's awareness of the variety of communication methods people use. It teaches values of respect for others by knowing a few simple phrases in their language that would help a lot.

BILLY DOLLS

Ms. McDonagh received a donation of beautiful Billy Dolls last year. These are recycled dolls and a local lady, Winnie O'Neill, links with the local knitting group and they knit clothes for the dolls. There are 'girl' and 'boy' dolls and they come in all sizes. These are an excellent resource for teaching self-care and independence skills. The dolls are very good for practicing dressing, using buttons, zips, putting on socks and shoes, hats and coats etc. They are also a great resource for introducing a 'new baby' and how to handle and care for a new baby. If any parent would like to donate dolls or source further information, please see Facebook page 'Billy Dolls of Comfort'.

NURTURE AFRICA

As a Global Citizenship School we believe in treating all people with fairness and respect. We believe in building a better and fairer future for everyone. We are becoming more aware of people who have different socio-economic backgrounds to us and how we can act to stand in solidarity with them. We learn about poverty, human rights, climate change and responsible citizenship. Mr. Casey has worked on many projects with his class and other classes since last year. He will continue to engage the school in various projects to develop these important values in children.

SCOIL BHRÍDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Killane, Edenderry, Co. Offaly.



Special Edition
Newsletter Issue No. 27

Inclusion Programme – Activities and initiatives

Dear Parent(s), / Guardian(s)

As we launch our inclusive playground we thought it was timely to inform you of the variety of initiatives which are ongoing here in Scoil Bhríde to ensure all our children receive an inclusive and positive school experience.

The following are some of the initiatives that have been undertaken by the whole school to work towards a more inclusive learning environment for all.

Inclusive education is a human right and the responsibility of the education system in cooperation with parents. The school and individual teachers endeavour to respond to learner diversity. We work in cooperation with parents to identify opportunities to encourage greater understanding in the wider community.

Over the past school year a number of initiatives have been undertaken as part of our Inclusion Programme. These are briefly outlined in this Special Edition of our school newsletter.

*Is mise le meas,
Caoimhín Ó Dúfaigh (Príomh Oide)*

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INCLUSIVE STRUCTURED PLAY

Children with English as a second language (EAL) have been attending early morning play sessions with pupils attending the Special Classes for the past few months. This is interactive play where both groups benefit with pupils from the Special Classes gaining play skills from good role models and EAL children gaining an opportunity to practice their language skills. All children and teachers report this to be a very positive experience.

FUNCTIONAL LIVING SKILLS

Children from Special Classes and Mainstream Resource pupils are using the servery as an inclusive space to develop their functional living skills – setting the table, cooking, baking, tidying up, eating in a social space etc.

This type of teaching and learning works alongside the primary school curriculum (SPHE). The ASD Team are working to put in place a School Programme for Functional Living and Life Skills which will guide and support teaching going forward. This will be a great addition to our current teaching programmes.

PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION

Pupils with additional needs from special classes integrate with mainstream classes to receive the Sacraments in a manner that is most inclusive and suitable for them and their families. We are looking forward to both Communion and Confirmation ceremonies over the coming weeks and would like to take this opportunity to wish all the boys and girls in Second and Sixth Classes a lovely memorable experience for their First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

ATHLETICS WITH OAKLAND'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Transition year students from Oakland's Community College worked with Aoife Byrne from Offaly Sports Partnership to deliver inclusive sports activities for pupils in our Special Classes. Transition year students set up games and activities in the Halla over a 3-4 week period in October and again in more recent weeks. Pupils from Special Classes attended these sessions and resource pupils in Fifth and Sixth Classes had the opportunity to assist the Transition Year students. There was then an inter-school event where pupils attended a ceremony in Oakland's and received a Certificate of Participation. This was reciprocated recently with the event being hosted by Scoil Bhríde.

LINK TO MUIRÍOSA FOUNDATION

The Muiríosa Foundation provide a range of services and supports to persons with an intellectual disability (and their families). They want to promote a view of the person with an intellectual disability as a valued and participating citizen and member of society. Participation is embedded within a broad range of community roles and relationships. Scoil Bhríde has links with the Muiríosa Foundation and recently the idea of an exchange programme has been developed. This is currently being piloted with the view that going forward the exchange might be reciprocated and some of our staff and pupils may benefit from visiting the Foundation.

REVERSE INTEGRATION TO PLAYGROUND

Mainstream classes are now linked with Special Classes for sessions on the Special Class playground. This allows for modelling of good language, play and social skills for children in Special Classes and gives children from mainstream classes greater awareness of additional needs and values of tolerance, respect and responsibility. Many of the projects undertaken in the playground have involved Special Class pupils working with their mainstream peers e.g. painting the bus shelter.

SOCIAL BREAKS TO MAINSTREAM CLASSES

It is important that all children feel included in the whole school environment in a manner that best suits their strengths and needs. Through the recent SEN Team Meetings, a new initiative has been introduced to facilitate children from special classes who are not themselves integrating to visit mainstream classes. The idea is that the Special Class teacher can work with class teachers of age appropriate peers for social integration i.e. for games activities, to eat snack and lunch; to go on walks etc. Through these activities the Special Class pupils will get more experience of the whole school setting.

PLANTING ACTIVITIES FOR PLAYGROUND

Pupils from Special Classes and resource children painted tyres for the special class playground. This was a project that linked together children from all parts of the school and developed the skills of working collaboratively, turn-taking, waiting and planting to name but a few. This initiative will be ongoing as the seasons change and will be a practical environmental learning experience which the children will have and will be responsible for.

BUILDING BRIDGES TO SECOND LEVEL MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Ms. Mc Donagh with support from the SENOs has been busy trying to develop linkages to second level mainstream and special schools. It is important that we become a feeder school to schools with special classes. Currently relations have been established with schools in Ferbane, Clara, Tullamore, Killina and our local second level schools. Linkages to schools in Kildare, Westmeath and Laois is facilitated through our membership of NABMSE.
