

# ST MARY'S PS NEWTOWNBUTLER

## Easter 2023 Newsletter



Thank-you to everyone in the St Mary's community for working together to make this another successful term. There have been lots of exciting learning opportunities along with friendship building and of course, some fun. Please sit back, relax and enjoy a journey through just some of the news from St Mary's.

### **Easter Celebrations**

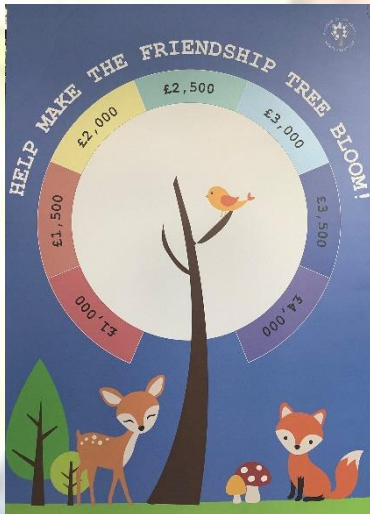
There is a great sense of fun in school as we approach the Easter holidays. We have had our award ceremonies, with certificates issued for full attendance, 100% Golden Time, Accelerated Reading and Athletics. The Eco Council organised a Recycled / Reused Easter Bonnet / Crazy Headgear Day. We all enjoyed the parade in the playground and some of the spectacular creations are pictured here. The Easter Bunny left some eggs for an Egg Hunt and P7 proved able helpers for the younger classes. The school council organised a raffle the proceeds of which will be forwarded to Trocaire, as we remember those less fortunate than ourselves at this time.







## Friends of St Mary's



Our Parent Support Group has been established, with an elected committee and constitution. The group aim to raise £4,000 to sustain 21<sup>st</sup> Century provision for our pupils, by purchasing much needed new computers and i-pads,. The 'Last Man Standing' competition has already raised £1400. Pupils who sold tickets were entered in a raffle and 1 name from each class was then picked out to have

their handprint used in the new Friends of St Mary's Logo. The group have designed a fundraising board to share progress towards our £4,000 target. This is displayed in the school foyer. The next fundraiser will be a raffle for family days out in Fermanagh.

£1400  
already raised  
towards our  
new ICT

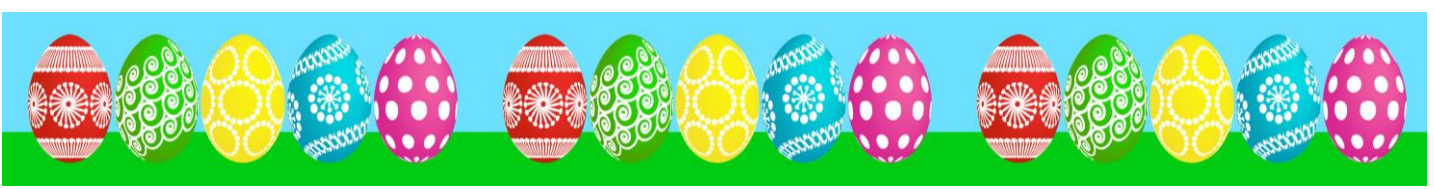


## Remembering Mickey McPhillips - Friend to St Mary's

Money raised from the 2019 Concert DVD was used to make a donation to Oak Healthy Living Centre, in memory of Mickey McPhillips who had been a friend to the school, supporting with productions, religious ceremonies and history projects among other things. Mickey's sister Cora joined us at Assembly for the presentation.







## Children's Mental Health, Wellbeing and Nurture

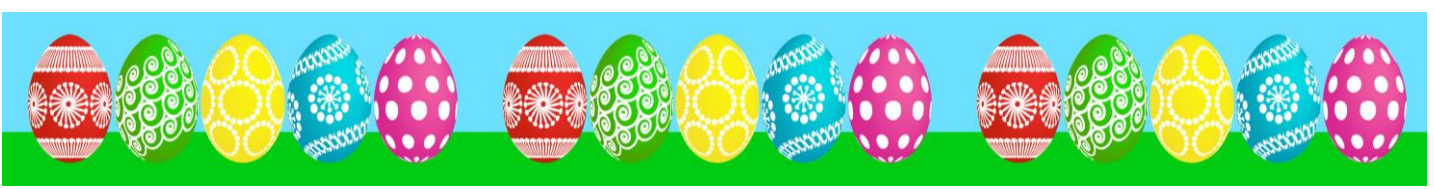
Our school was recently selected by the Education Inspectorate, for a case study on good practice in developing children's mental health, wellbeing and nurture. The study highlighted the intensive training received by staff; the support offered through whole class, small group and individual nurture strategies; resources in which the school has invested, including additional books, multi-sensory toys and fidgets and the repurposing

of spaces to offer break-out areas and Zen Dens for children.

Most children's self-regulation, motivation and readiness to learn has improved over the past 2 years. 95% of pupils are working within or exceeding their predicted cognitive ability and average scores are above the NI average. The Whole School Nurturing Approach in St Mary's has been credited with contributing to these high standards.







## Autism Awareness



This year as a school, we celebrated World Autism Awareness Day. Several members of our school community have been diagnosed with Autism and supports are in place to ensure that all children are included in both learning and recreational activities in our school. On Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March every child designed and wore a colourful jigsaw piece, to demonstrate awareness of Autism and support for those of our friends who have the condition.



**WORLD AUTISM  
AWARENESS DAY**



PIC•COLLAGE



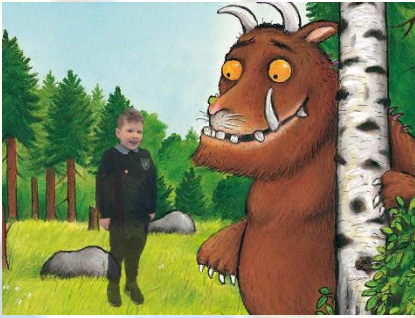


## Developing 21<sup>st</sup> Century ICT Skills

This year staff have received training from the AmMA centre Creative Partnerships Programme, to develop approaches to digital



storytelling. One of the skills which has been used effectively is 'Green Screen Technology'. From as young as P1 pupils have been introduced the green screen to create magical Mother's Day cards.



P4 and P5 have completed after school ICT clubs to develop their skills in coding and powerpoint.

P6 have continued to develop the use of microbits to extend their coding skills. On Children's Mental Health Week they created a code to help slow their breathing and stay calm, as they count the digital movements on their microbits.



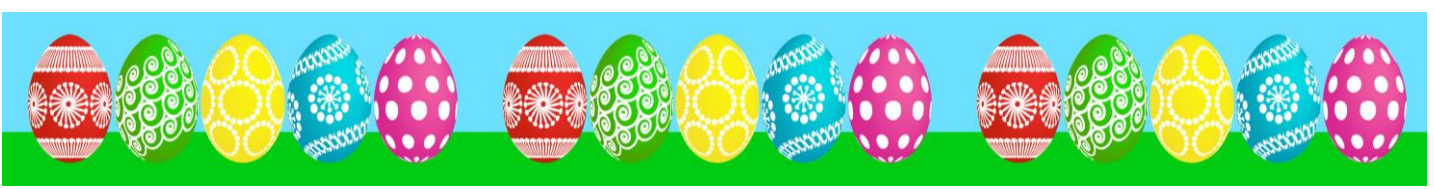
Please don't park in the bus stop when collecting pupils

## Verbal Arts Reading Rooms Transition Programme

Our P7s have enjoyed weekly visits from Nuala Plunkett this term, during which they had opportunities to explore stories centred around themes of transition, as part of their preparation for moving to post-primary school. Next term they will continue to complete further transition activities with Mr Sludden.







## After School Club

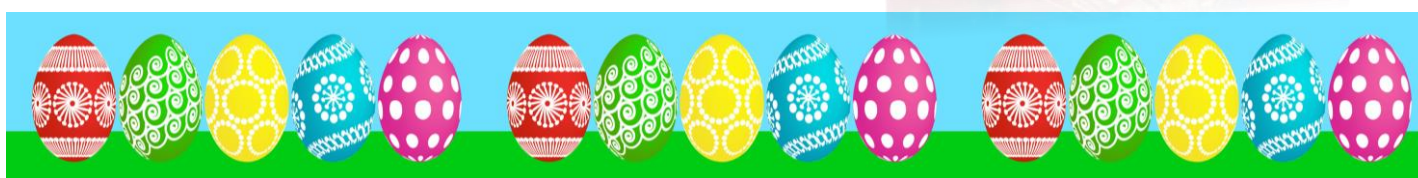
Our Afterschool Club continues to offer pupils opportunities to socialise and develop new skills. The club runs daily with a variety of activities to suit all interests, including homework, cookery, fitness and art. Remember to book early to reserve your place and bring a snack if staying after 3pm!



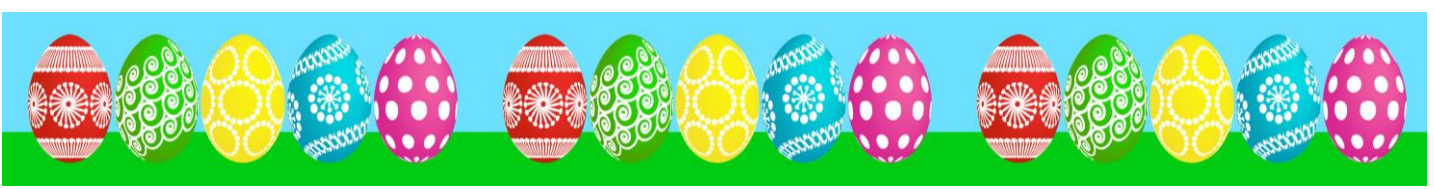
## Shared Education

We are pleased that our Programme with Newtownbutler PS and St Joseph's, Donagh is being funded again this year. P3 and P5 have both completed a programme of work and had trips to local forest parks.

Plans are in place for P2 to commence their programme after Easter.







## Religious Ceremonies



**Pre-Confirmation Retreat**



PIC-COLLAGE

Well done to our P4 pupils who made their First Confessions on 1<sup>st</sup> March. Fr Kevin organised and led a pre-Confirmation retreat in Monaghan for our P7 pupils. During the day they took their pledge to abstain from alcohol and illicit drugs and completed their Service of Light. We look forward to celebrating Confirmation on 21<sup>st</sup> April and First Holy Communion on 6<sup>th</sup> May.

## SUSTRANS

Our Eco Council continues to promote active travel. Pupils were invited to participate in the Bike Spring Clean, Ditch the Stabilisers and the Big Walk and Wheel recently. Our P6 pupils also completed cycle training earlier in the year.



**Big Bike Spring Clean**



PIC-COLLAGE



**Big Walk & Wheel**

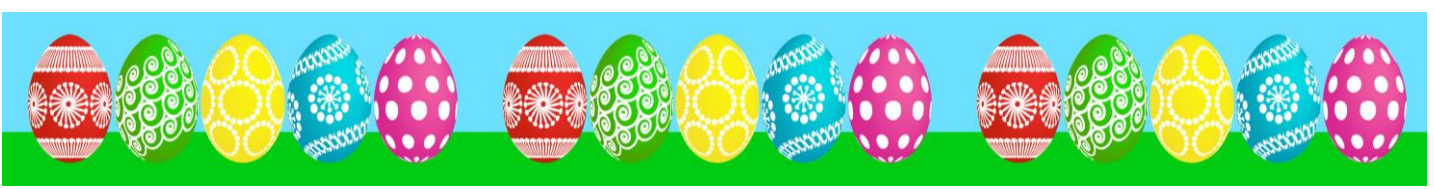


PIC-COLLAGE

**Odd Socks for Down's Syndrome Day**  
Well done to all those pupils who wore odd socks to school to mark World Down's Syndrome Day.







## World Book day 23



## World Book Day 2023



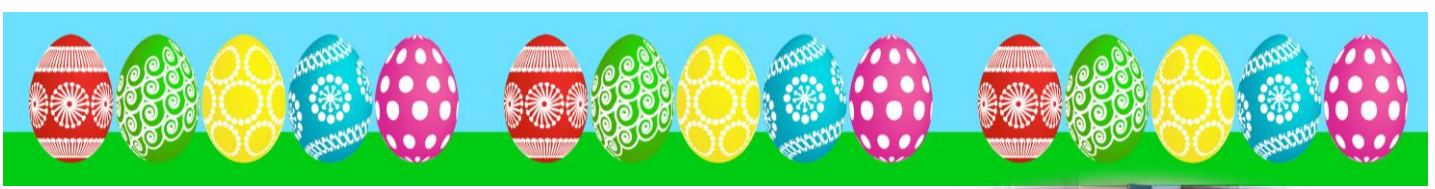
As we continue to promote a love of books, staff and pupils stepped into the magic of Literature for World Book Day, dressing as their favourite characters. We had 2 author visits, one from Esther Robinson who read her book written around the theme of inclusion to P1-4 pupils. Successful local Author, Laura Quinn also visited, shared her books and discussed the process of writing with the pupils. Laura also judged our 'Potato Character Competition', the winners of which are pictured here. P5 visited the Play Group for World Book Day to read stories. This is part of our transition programme, as next year, this class will be the Playground Buddies for the younger children.

Help support us when you shop online:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stmaryspnewtownbutler/>







## Celebrating Irish Culture

Great fun was had by all at our concert to celebrate the many and varied talents of the pupils. There was a wonderful mix of music, dance, verse speaking and the Irish Language.

P7 have been building on the Irish skills they learned last year, as they have had lessons during and after school with Miss McCaughey this term. Some of the children who have been learning an instrument in school (violin with Pat McCabe and Piano with Grace Reekie) shared their musical talent. Many others who attend music and drama classes outside school also entertained their peers.

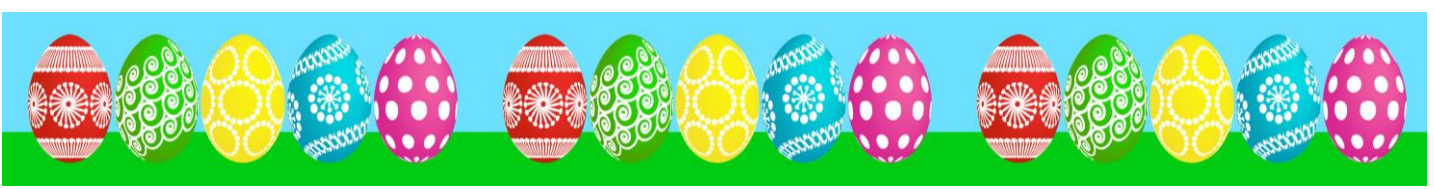


## Sports At St Mary's

P3-7 continue to receive Gaelic coaching from Mr Pat Cadden, who also organised a Blitz in Donagh, which our P6 pupils attended. Mr Sludden led after school Gaelic coaching this term. Our P7 girls and boys participated in football competitions, including indoor 5-a-sides, in which our Boys team won the local heat and progressed to the Fermanagh final Stage. All classes also receive Healthy Kidz coaching from Miss Orlagh Leonard, this term focusing on gymnastics and dance. Next term Orlagh will focus on Athletics and will provide 2 after school clubs: 'Get Sports Day ready' for P1 and 2 and Netball for P6 and 7 girls.





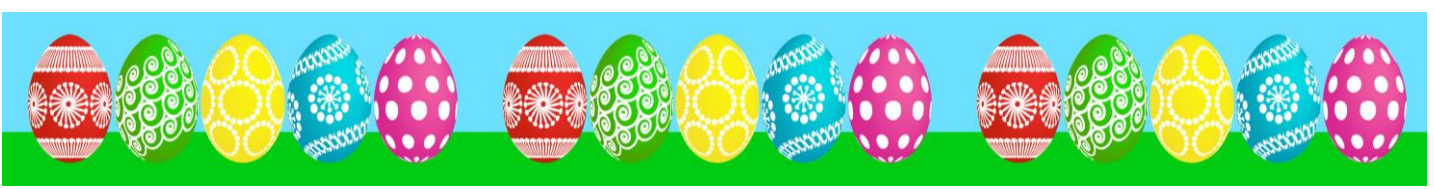


## Mandarin Language and Culture

We continue to benefit from the SWC Confucius programme. P1-4 have had Mandarin Culture awareness raising, while Key Stage 2 are learning the language and some Year 7 pupils have opted to take a Mandarin exam at the end of the school year. This year our tutor Annie and her friends provided a special event when they performed traditional music and dance. Afterwards the pupils participated in art workshops.







## Getting Ahead in English and Maths!

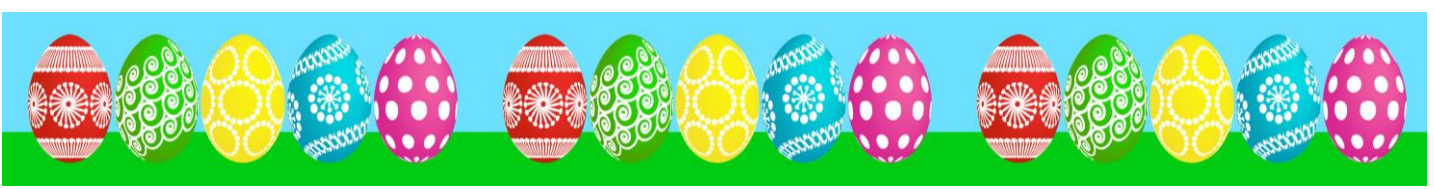


Congratulations to all the pupils who have put in extra effort to practise their Literacy and Numeracy skills. The school has invested in licences for Mathletics, Accelerated Reading, Lexia and Active Learn, to provide pupils with opportunities to extend their learning. Teachers have observed over the years that those pupils

who best avail of these licences tend to have better attainment overall. Special Congratulations to Emma, Grace, Danny and Tiernan who have already read 1,000,000 words and earned their place at the Millionaire's tea party with Mrs Kelly at the end of the year.







## Parent and Child Cookery



This term we offered family cookery lessons for our P6 and 7 pupils. Children attended with an adult member of their extended family. The lessons took place after school, in the Home Economics facilities of

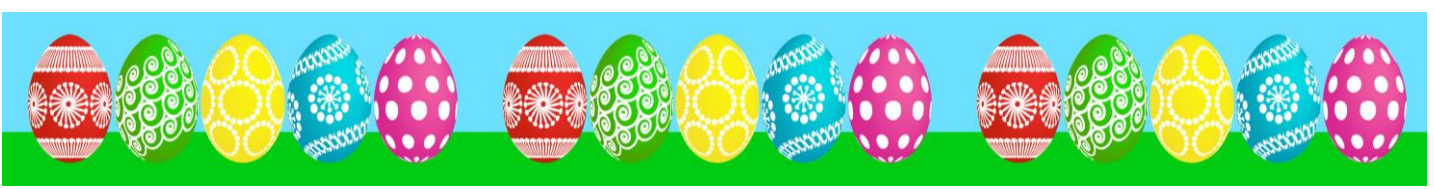
St Kevin's College for 6 weeks. Miss Beagan from the College led the class. This was an opportunity to develop cookery skills, to spend quality time together and to prepare for transition as the children became familiar with the environment of a post-primary school. Feedback was very positive and we hear that some children used the skills that they learned to treat their family to delicious creations at home.



PIC•COLLAGE







## Numeracy

St Mary's continues to promote a range of strategies to develop skills and enjoyment of maths. Earlier this term we celebrated Number Day and more recently World Maths Day. We were delighted to receive an email from the organisers to acknowledge that we were one of the top participating schools. Our Numeracy Co-ordinator, Miss Mallen created teams throughout the school, so that we could enjoy an internal competition. Members of the winning team won Easter Eggs. Top participants in Mathletics were awarded gold certificates in assembly. After Easter we plan to again run after school Maths and English Study Clubs for P6 and the Parents Involved in Numeracy Programme for P3 and 5.

