

**DATES FOR THE DIARY**

**31ST OCTOBER - 4TH  
NOVEMBER**

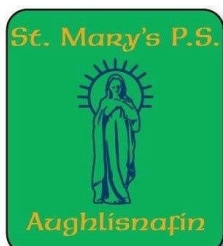
**HALLOWEEN BREAK  
SCHOOL CLOSED**

**7TH OCTOBER  
SCHOOL REOPENS**

**10TH NOVEMBER  
HAPPY HEALTHY MINDS  
WORKSHOP  
PRIMARY 7**

**7TH-9TH DECEMBER  
LITTLE HEALTHY ME  
PRIMARY 2/3 & 4**

**30TH JANUARY  
HAPPY HEALTHY MINDS  
WORKSHOP  
PRIMARY 6**



## News at Saint Mary's Primary School

### Principal's Message

Hello everyone. My vision for the Finn is to provide a school that is 'Engaging hearts, inspiring minds and serving our community.'

Through engaging hearts we care for the pupil's spiritual, moral, social and physical needs. We have a happy and secure school where our children feel valued and special.

By inspiring minds we have created an environment in which each child will enjoy the full range of learning opportunities in order to grow in confidence and independence. The high quality teaching and learning provided at St Mary's ensures our pupils are well equipped to thrive throughout their time in primary school and beyond.

In serving our community we wish to work in collaboration with all of our parish as a Catholic school and to foster a respect for the local community and the wider world.

My staff and I will always be available to discuss any aspect of your child's development.

If you wish to avail of the school's breakfast club or after school services please phone 02843778460 or email the office at [hcairns221@c2kni.net](mailto:hcairns221@c2kni.net)



### Book Fair Rewards

Pupils from Primary 5/6 will be enjoying a new set of class novels which were ordered through the school's Book Fair. We were able to purchase over £500 of novels for the class.



## Back to school in the Finn



**David Walliams Letter**  
**Daniel Stratton from Primary 7** appeared in this month's local newspapers, as the letter he wrote as part of a Primary 6 project to a famous author received a reply. David Walliams gave Daniel a great insight into life as a successful author. Well done Daniel!



## Daniel Stratton in the Down Recorder

It's not every day that an award-winning children's author takes time out to write to you, but that is exactly what happened to one very surprised, but delighted, local schoolboy.

Daniel Stratton — a P7 pupil at St Mary's Primary School in Aghliscnafin — wrote to the celebrated author to say that he really enjoyed reading his Billionaire Boy book and was delighted when the author sent a touching reply.

Daniel (10) has read a number of Walliams' books including Mr Stink and is keen for his two young brothers to also enjoy the author's work.

He said that he enjoyed reading Billionaire Boy so much that he wrote to the author to tell him in person.

"It was the first time that I had ever written to an author, but I really enjoyed the book and wanted to tell David," said Daniel who leaves primary school next June.

Daniel says he is a keen reader and hopes that his two younger brothers will follow in his footsteps and read some of Walliams books in particular.

He said a copy of the author's letter has been put up in his school with the other at his home which he is so pleased about.

"I was delighted to receive a response from David and he also gave me a few top tips if I ever want to write my own books," Daniel continued.

Thanking Daniel for being a super fan, Walliams explained how he comes up with his ideas for his many books and generously gave Daniel some top tips for his own writing.

The author said he was very pleased that the schoolboy took the time to write to him and that Daniel enjoyed reading his books.

"I love writing the books and I hope to write many more to keep you entertained," he continued.

"Unfortunately, it does take a bit longer for me to write the books than it takes you to read them, so please, please try and be patient for the next book.

"I am going as fast as I can," he told Daniel.

The author also explained the reason he started writing children's books.

He said that one day an idea for a story just popped into his head and he thought what if a boy went to school dressed as a girl?

The author said the Boy in the Dress was subsequently published over a decade ago.

"From that moment on, I began dreaming up more and more stories," his letter to Daniel continued. "Now the stories have become TV shows and stage musicals. It is magic."

Providing Daniel with some exclusive top writing tips, the author told him that there was no magic formula and that all he had to do was be original.

"Stories are like dreams," the author continued. "They are whirling around in your mind. All you have to do is catch them."

Walliams said he also loves visiting schools, especially surprise visits, but explained that, sadly, he cannot visit every school as there are thousands of them and only one of him.

But he did suggest to Daniel to look out for book events and signings on his website in case he may be able to attend one.

"This is the next way to meet me," Walliams added.

**Bike M.O.T. check**

The pupils from the Primary 6 and some of the Primary 7 class are pictured with Ian Sneddon from Sustrans who visited St Mary's to carry out a bike M.O.T. and to give an assembly to all the pupils about keeping safe on the roads.



**Acti Sport & Lego Club**

On Friday's Graham Croy and his team at Acti Sport host a sports club and lego sessions for wraparound. We have seen a great turnout with lots of happy faces.



**Mona's Guitar Club**

Guitar with Mona has returned to St Mary's on Thursdays. Mona Owens takes guitarists from 2.45pm - 3.45pm. The cost is £32 for each 4 week block of lessons.

**BeeActive on Wednesdays**

We are pleased to announce that every Wednesday the school will take part in fitness sessions for all classes, hosted by Anto Moran's Bee Active NI. P.E. sessions will be on Tuesday and Wednesday in term 1.



### Neala's Dancing Success

Congratulations to Neala Baker, who was successful this weekend in her Irish dancing competition in Dublin. Neala took home two bronze and a gold medal! Very impressive Neala!



### Sustrans National Cycle Training

The pupils who took part in National Standard Cycle Training performed very well, with all pupils achieving Level 2 accreditation. The pupils have learnt the benefits for the environment and their own health through safe cycling.



### Friends of the Finn return to school BBO

Many thanks to all those who donated their time and money to the Friends Of The Finn fundraiser. A lovely night where we got to catch up with pupils past and present. We managed to raise £814.20 towards school funds.

