

# Rathfeigh National School from Seamus Tansley

On behalf of the staff and Board of Management of Rathfeigh National School I would like to express my condolences to the Gray family on the recent passing of Jimmy. Jimmy had a long link with Rathfeigh. Only a short number of years ago Jimmy stepped in at the last minute to play the piano for us at our First Communion in Rathfeigh Church. He did a marvellous job for us on the day. The word “gentleman” is often over used but in Jimmy’s case it is entirely merited. May he Rest in Peace.

## Sixth Class Pupils

At this time of year we should have been getting prepared for the end-of-year graduation celebrations. Of course this isn’t a normal year. Instead of experiencing the varied emotions of the children leaving Rathfeigh with a mixture of tears and laughter our sixth class pupils haven’t been inside the school gates since March 12<sup>th</sup> and we will have to think of alternative ways of saying goodbye. The graduation Mass in Rathfeigh is always the highlight of the school year for me. Our school motto is “Great Oaks from Little Acorns Grow”. On graduation night the children in 6<sup>th</sup> class reflect on the eight years that have passed since they came into Rathfeigh as innocent four and five year olds. They talk about the memories and friendships that were created in their time in Rathfeigh. Memories are very powerful and are personal to us all. The American author Og Mandine said that “ **the greatest legacy we can leave our children is happy memories**”. I’d like to think that we do this well in Rathfeigh. The children will definitely look back positively at the last eight years in Rathfeigh and the memories will be too numerous to mention. In that time most will have received their First Communion and Confirmation. They will have enjoyed the centenary of the 1916 celebrations, the numerous tours and field trips, the retirement party, sports day, rounders and football matches, the “Beast from the East” and of course the ice-cream vans!! Unfortunately, a blight in this will be the coronavirus pandemic. All these experiences, good or bad, have moulded them into the fantastic young adults that they now are. I personally will miss them hugely having thought the class in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. I will remember their laughter on a daily basis and the occasional tears. Although the year is not ending satisfactorily it is not the end. We hope to have a graduation when it is safe to do so and the end-of-year booklets are currently being prepared. President Higgins has written a nice message to 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils.

## MESSAGE BY PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS

May I send my very best wishes to all of you children as you enter the final weeks of your primary school years.

I know that these last two months have been difficult for you, for your teachers and your parents. To those of you who have lost loved ones may I offer my deepest sympathies. Many of you, I know too, are worried about relatives who are ill or maybe lonely. I know, from so many who have written to me, that you are of course missing grand-parents, cousins or neighbours that you haven’t seen for some time.

All of you will have greatly missed being with all your school friends and teachers. For example, the cancellation or postponement of Confirmations, sports days, school concerts, graduation ceremonies and other events which would traditionally mark and celebrate the end of your time in primary school will, no doubt, have been a source of disappointment for so many of you.

As President of Ireland I have been very impressed with the way in which all of you have responded, risen to the challenges, continued to learn at home, working with your teachers and parents. You have found all sorts of imaginative ways to remain in touch with your

friends and pursue your hobbies, while at the same time always putting the safety of others, including your relatives and neighbours, ahead of your own wishes and plans. Those are achievements of which you can all be very proud indeed.

While this last term in primary school has, in many ways, been difficult for you, it is my great hope that it has also allowed you to experience something very important about your school days. You have learned that your school is not just a building containing a series of classrooms where lessons are held, tests are sat and homework is corrected. A school is so much more than that.

School is where you have been making friends, working together in teams, discovering your talents and developing them to the best of your ability. School is where we celebrate all that we have in common with each other while recognising and respecting the differences that make each of us unique.

School is where we learn how to be part of a community and, most importantly, how to include others in that sense of community, by being kind and supportive and generous.

School and home are places where we release our creativity and begin to realise our great potential as citizens, and the importance of becoming a person who works with others to make our society a better place.

Although your school buildings have been closed now for many weeks, the fact that you have remained united has shown that there are some things that no lockdown can ever postpone, shut down, cancel or take from you, including the connection you share with your fellow pupils, your teachers, and with all those who have made school and your community such an important part of your life.

In September you will be commencing a new and exciting chapter of your lives during which I hope that all of you will be able to look back on your years in primary school with gratitude, affection, and humour too.

As you now say goodbye to your primary school years, and look forward to your first year in secondary school, may I wish each and every one of you every happiness as you continue your educational journey.

President Michael D. Higgins

### **School closed – Work continues!**

I would like to thank Mrs Vaughan, Mrs Campbell, Ms Reynolds, Ms Ward, Helen (secretary) and Jackie (caretaker) for their dedication and commitment to the school during these difficult times. Despite the school being closed all our school staff are working very hard. All teachers are currently preparing their school reports and working on booklists for September. They are continuing with Zoom sessions and the online learning platforms with their pupils. Helen is busy doing a million and one things in the office and Jackie is flat out organising the school inside and out. Thanks everyone!!!

### **Art Competition**

We had a great response from all classes to the “Keeping Connected” art competition. The variety of entries

was amazing and it's going to be difficult for the class teachers to choose a winner from each class. Some of the entries from the various classes can be seen below.

### Parents' Association

We are lucky in Rathfeigh to have a positive and vibrant Parents' Association. Our Parents' Association, and in particular Bridget Copeland, does a mammoth job ordering, covering and labelling books to be ready for all pupils for the start of the 2020/21 school year. We will let parents/guardians know in the next few days the procedures that will be in place for the return of school books to the school.





