

## Rathfeigh National School from Seamus Tansley

With restrictions being lifted by the government we were delighted to be able to announce last Friday that we would be able to have our sixth class graduation in the school on Wednesday July 1<sup>st</sup>. Numbers attending would have to be restricted but everyone was very supportive and understanding of the situation. A huge amount of preparation went into organising the graduation. Many “zoom” meetings were held with the teachers to try and organise the event and to make it as special as possible. All teachers, staff and the Parents’ Association played a vital role in the organisation of the event for which I sincerely thank them. We always felt that having a graduation in the school building was important for the children as the school was where they spent the last eight years. We were happy that we didn’t have to do a “zoom” ceremony as the children deserved more.

The children started arriving for their socially distanced graduation at 7pm on Wednesday. On arriving there was a mixture of excitement, nervousness and anticipation. Some children on arriving felt a little awkward as they hadn’t seen their classmates for over three months. Within a few minutes it was like they were never apart and they were laughing and joking with each other as they would have done in school. The ceremony was very emotional with the children reading their memories of their time in Rathfeigh. The “memories” summed up their time perfectly in our school – making friends, playing games, going on school tours, rainbow runs, pancake Tuesday, jumble sales, fancy dress, talent shows etc etc etc. They also presented their symbols of Rathfeigh – football jersey, school bell, class photographs (Junior Infants, Communion and sixth class), football, trophies, candles and Bible. Katherine (parent) spoke about her thirteen continuous years having children in Rathfeigh. Listening to her reminded me that graduation night is not just emotional for the children!!

The graduation finished with the presentation of certificates to the children. They were all surprised and astonished to also receive a beautiful individualised piece of artwork from Ms Reynolds. It was a lovely gesture from Stephanie and will be treasured by the children for many many years to come. Thanks Stephanie.

The night got even better for the children when our fantastic Parents’ Association surprised the children with pizzas and drinks afterwards. The children were now in their element. They were overcome with excitement and their smiles were as wide as the Grand Canyon. If I had to put words on their smiles it would have been – “It’s such a perfect day, I’m glad I spent it with you”.

It was a perfect end to the perfect day. We all wish the children safety and happiness as they embark on the next chapter of their lives. There will be ups and downs but I am extremely confident that they will all achieve their goals in life. I know they had a great eight years in Rathfeigh. Now is the time to look forward to new beginnings.

**“Don’t cry because it’s over, smile because it happened” (Dr Seuss).**

Best of luck. - Áine, Cara, Conor, Madison, James, Chloe, Cormac, Róisín, Bryn, Amy, Adam, Gracie, Pádraig, Hannah, Alisha, Danny, Nini, Robyn, Emily. You all made the school a better place. Thanks.













