



## Christmas Newsletter 2023

Dear Parents: Here is a flavour of some of the activities going on in the school at the moment.

### Pre-school: Anne Marie

- Well done to all of preschool who have settled in so well into their new school
- We have had such a busy term in little acorns!
- We love learning about shapes, colours, numbers and letters
- We got new playground equipment and love going on the tricycles, scooters and cars. We are learning how to pedal the tricycles ourselves
- We really enjoy it when our speech therapist, Jenny comes to visit us every fortnight. She always has such lovely activities and toys for us to play with
- We have been learning about space. We love the planets and we can name them on our AAC devices or using mouth words
- Baking is our favourite time of the week. We help to add in, mix and spoon out ingredients.

### Junior Infants: Aoife's class

- Well done to all the Junior Infants who have settled in so well in their new school!
- We have enjoyed learning lots of new things in Junior Infants which included learning new sounds, new tricky words and learning about the numbers 1 - 5. We have even begun writing different letters!
- We are enjoying learning about Winter and have created some beautiful art pieces based on Winter
- We really enjoyed the math's fair as part of maths week and loved playing different maths games with the 6th class children
- We love going out on nature walks and we even got to pick our own apples from the orchard at school!
- We have been having lots of fun this term with our new friends and cannot wait to learn and experience new things in the new year!



### Junior Infants: Aisling's Class

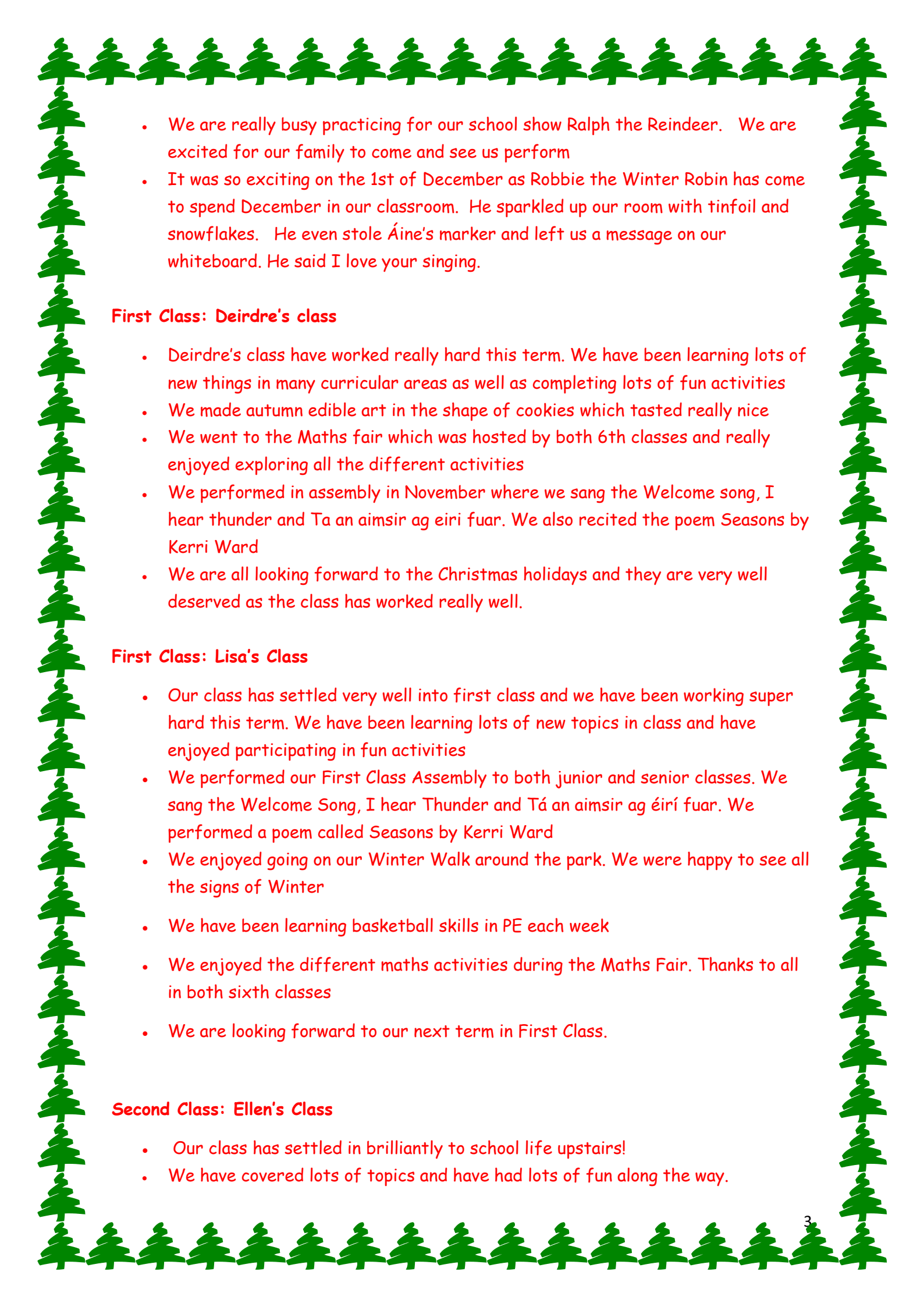
- We have had a great start to our school life in Junior Infants!
- We can now write our names, and we know lots of new letters and their sounds
- We've done lots of cool Science experiments like making lava lamps, and using a hairdryer to test how strong our Lego, straw, and paper houses we built were!
- We also went on a 2-D shape scavenger hunt around our school. We now know all about squares, rectangles, circles and triangles!
- We've been on lots of trips to the Tiny Forest to collect Autumn leaves and to scatter bird seeds for the birds to keep them fed this winter!
- We are busy preparing for our winter play, The Arctic Mystery now. We have worked so hard and we hope you enjoy our show!

### Senior Infants: Yvonne's Class

- We had a lovely winter term in senior infants. We have such a beautiful view from our classroom window we decided to learn the names of the clouds we see in the sky. Cirrus are our favorites
- In S.E.S.E. We have learned about Tom Crean, Antarctic Explorer. He had a fascinating life with many trips to Antarctica. He was a real hero
- We learned about life in the Arctic and Antarctic and what animals we would see there. We had great fun drawing all these animals
- We are getting ready to perform our Christmas Play, Ralph the Reindeer, on Tuesday. The stage is set, the songs are learned and we are really looking forward to performing for our parents
- On Thursday, the 21st December, we are going on a Winter Solstice Walk around Mungret Park, to mark the shortest day of the year. For centuries people have been celebrating this solstice day all over the world. To warm us up afterwards we are having hot chocolate and smores.

### Senior Infants: Áine's Class

- We have been so busy this term in school. Learning lots in Maths, English and Irish
- We had a visit from our friends in Cliodhna's 5th class who played Maths games, board games and Halloween games. We are looking forward to more visits during the year
- We learned how to make ourselves jam sandwiches. They were so tasty.

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- We are really busy practicing for our school show Ralph the Reindeer. We are excited for our family to come and see us perform
  - It was so exciting on the 1st of December as Robbie the Winter Robin has come to spend December in our classroom. He sparkled up our room with tinfoil and snowflakes. He even stole Áine's marker and left us a message on our whiteboard. He said I love your singing.

#### **First Class: Deirdre's class**

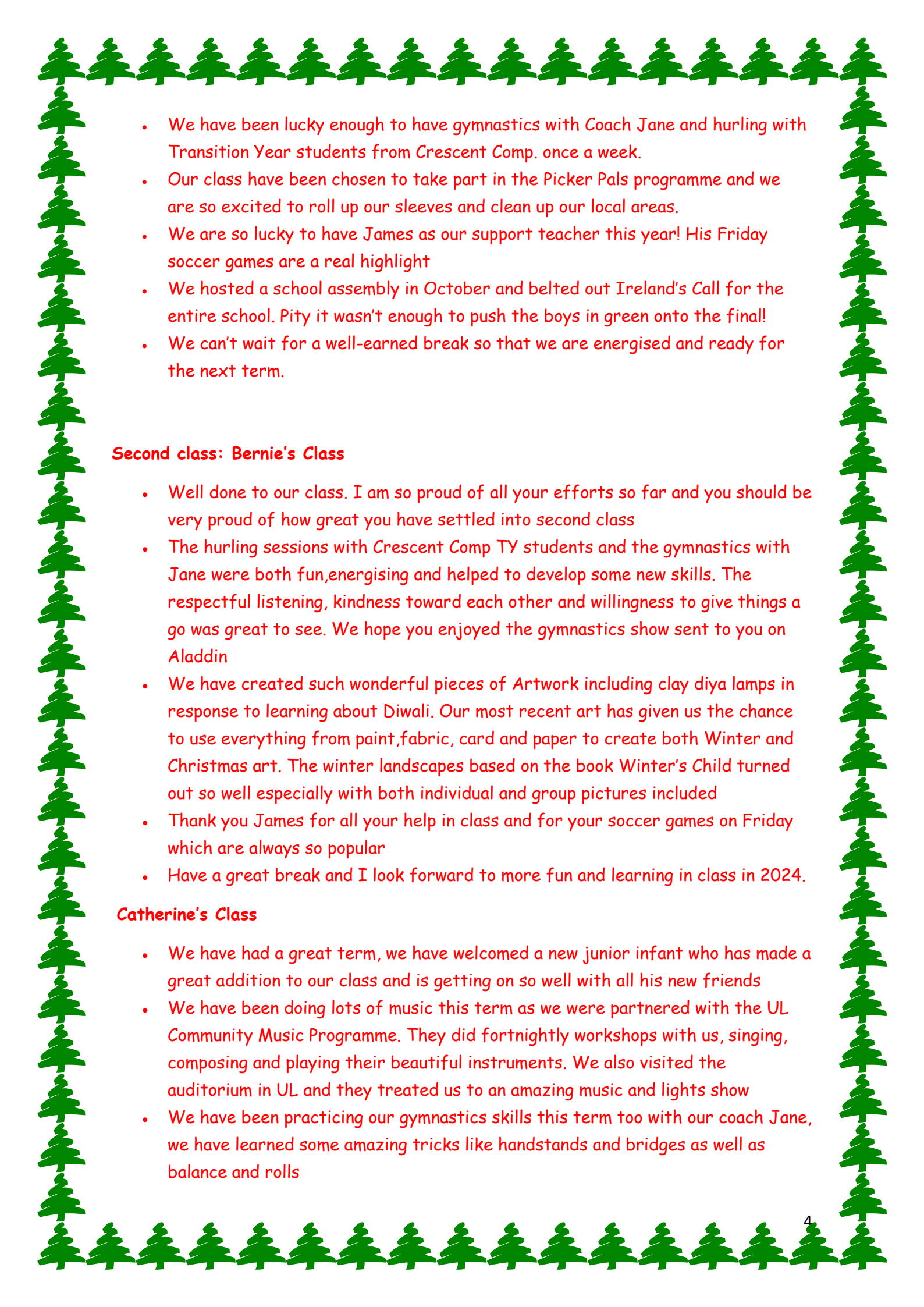
- Deirdre's class have worked really hard this term. We have been learning lots of new things in many curricular areas as well as completing lots of fun activities
- We made autumn edible art in the shape of cookies which tasted really nice
- We went to the Maths fair which was hosted by both 6th classes and really enjoyed exploring all the different activities
- We performed in assembly in November where we sang the Welcome song, I hear thunder and Ta an aimsir ag eiri fuar. We also recited the poem Seasons by Kerri Ward
- We are all looking forward to the Christmas holidays and they are very well deserved as the class has worked really well.

#### **First Class: Lisa's Class**

- Our class has settled very well into first class and we have been working super hard this term. We have been learning lots of new topics in class and have enjoyed participating in fun activities
- We performed our First Class Assembly to both junior and senior classes. We sang the Welcome Song, I hear Thunder and Tá an aimsir ag éirí fuar. We performed a poem called Seasons by Kerri Ward
- We enjoyed going on our Winter Walk around the park. We were happy to see all the signs of Winter
- We have been learning basketball skills in PE each week
- We enjoyed the different maths activities during the Maths Fair. Thanks to all in both sixth classes
- We are looking forward to our next term in First Class.

#### **Second Class: Ellen's Class**

- Our class has settled in brilliantly to school life upstairs!
- We have covered lots of topics and have had lots of fun along the way.

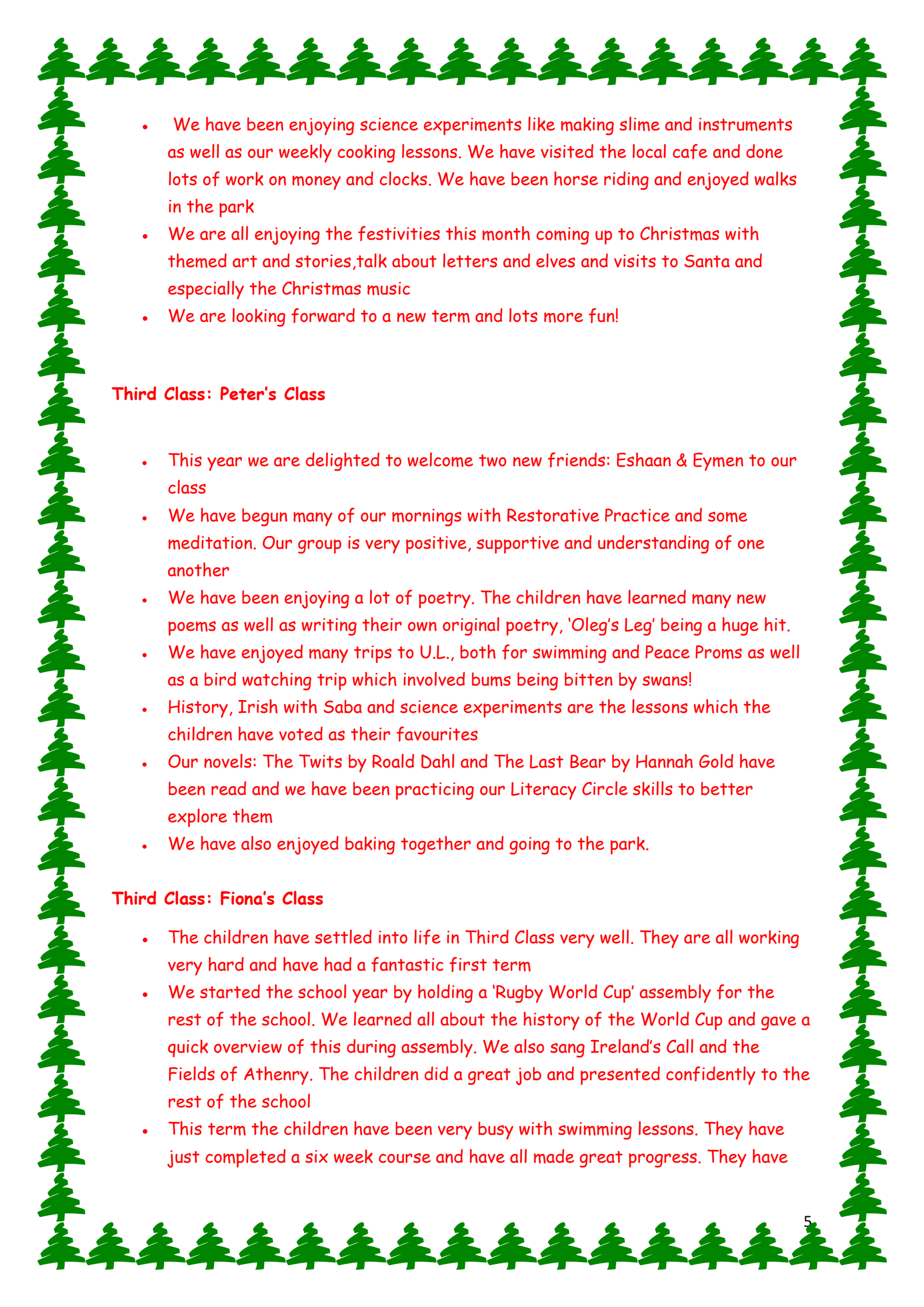
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- We have been lucky enough to have gymnastics with Coach Jane and hurling with Transition Year students from Crescent Comp. once a week.
  - Our class have been chosen to take part in the Picker Pals programme and we are so excited to roll up our sleeves and clean up our local areas.
  - We are so lucky to have James as our support teacher this year! His Friday soccer games are a real highlight
  - We hosted a school assembly in October and belted out Ireland's Call for the entire school. Pity it wasn't enough to push the boys in green onto the final!
  - We can't wait for a well-earned break so that we are energised and ready for the next term.

### **Second class: Bernie's Class**

- Well done to our class. I am so proud of all your efforts so far and you should be very proud of how great you have settled into second class
- The hurling sessions with Crescent Comp TY students and the gymnastics with Jane were both fun,energising and helped to develop some new skills. The respectful listening, kindness toward each other and willingness to give things a go was great to see. We hope you enjoyed the gymnastics show sent to you on Aladdin
- We have created such wonderful pieces of Artwork including clay diya lamps in response to learning about Diwali. Our most recent art has given us the chance to use everything from paint,fabric, card and paper to create both Winter and Christmas art. The winter landscapes based on the book Winter's Child turned out so well especially with both individual and group pictures included
- Thank you James for all your help in class and for your soccer games on Friday which are always so popular
- Have a great break and I look forward to more fun and learning in class in 2024.

### **Catherine's Class**

- We have had a great term, we have welcomed a new junior infant who has made a great addition to our class and is getting on so well with all his new friends
- We have been doing lots of music this term as we were partnered with the UL Community Music Programme. They did fortnightly workshops with us, singing, composing and playing their beautiful instruments. We also visited the auditorium in UL and they treated us to an amazing music and lights show
- We have been practicing our gymnastics skills this term too with our coach Jane, we have learned some amazing tricks like handstands and bridges as well as balance and rolls

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- We have been enjoying science experiments like making slime and instruments as well as our weekly cooking lessons. We have visited the local cafe and done lots of work on money and clocks. We have been horse riding and enjoyed walks in the park
  - We are all enjoying the festivities this month coming up to Christmas with themed art and stories, talk about letters and elves and visits to Santa and especially the Christmas music
  - We are looking forward to a new term and lots more fun!

### **Third Class: Peter's Class**

- This year we are delighted to welcome two new friends: Eshaan & Eymen to our class
- We have begun many of our mornings with Restorative Practice and some meditation. Our group is very positive, supportive and understanding of one another
- We have been enjoying a lot of poetry. The children have learned many new poems as well as writing their own original poetry, 'Oleg's Leg' being a huge hit.
- We have enjoyed many trips to U.L., both for swimming and Peace Proms as well as a bird watching trip which involved bums being bitten by swans!
- History, Irish with Saba and science experiments are the lessons which the children have voted as their favourites
- Our novels: The Twits by Roald Dahl and The Last Bear by Hannah Gold have been read and we have been practicing our Literacy Circle skills to better explore them
- We have also enjoyed baking together and going to the park.

### **Third Class: Fiona's Class**

- The children have settled into life in Third Class very well. They are all working very hard and have had a fantastic first term
- We started the school year by holding a 'Rugby World Cup' assembly for the rest of the school. We learned all about the history of the World Cup and gave a quick overview of this during assembly. We also sang Ireland's Call and the Fields of Athenry. The children did a great job and presented confidently to the rest of the school
- This term the children have been very busy with swimming lessons. They have just completed a six week course and have all made great progress. They have



really enjoyed this and many have commented that they are already looking forward to next year's lessons

- In November, third class enjoyed a trip to Curraghchase with Geoff Hunt. Although we were unlucky in our search for squirrels, we did manage to see some swans and plenty of frogs along the way. It was a great day out and the muddy puddles added to the fun!
- Since October, Third Class have been learning songs in preparation for our Peace Proms performance in January. In November, the children participated in a group rehearsal in UL along with many other schools. We got a real taste for what is to come and the children are so excited to perform alongside a real orchestra in January
- The children are currently enjoying all the fun activities in the build up to Christmas. They are creating some lovely Christmas themed art and finishing off projects that we have worked on for a while
- It's been a fantastic year so far and we look forward to having lots more fun in the New Year.

#### **Fourth Class: Sarah's Class**

- 4th class had a fun and enjoyable 1st term. We went pond dipping in Adare with Geoff Hunt. We learnt all about plants and animals. We got to see what we caught through the microscope back in the classroom
- We enjoyed both maths and science weeks this term. We conducted various experiments in the classroom and we got to display these experiments during our assembly in the halla. We played lots of maths games during maths week and we also got to sign up to "ttrockstars" where we competed in tables games with other classes in the school
- During our assembly we sang Trasna na dtionnta, we played tin whistle and presented experiments in front of the school
- We completed procedural writing in October and we also got to make spooky chocolate apples. We used book creator to write up our recipes
- We presented projects on animals, famous people and we learnt all about World War 1 and 2
- We started learning how to play the tin whistle. We can now play Twinkle Twinkle and Jingle Bells
- Our Christmas yuletide logs with holly and flowers looked so beautiful
- We took part in Gaelic Football. Many thanks to Mungret Community College Transition Year Students who coached us every week.
- Well done to all the children for improving so much at swimming

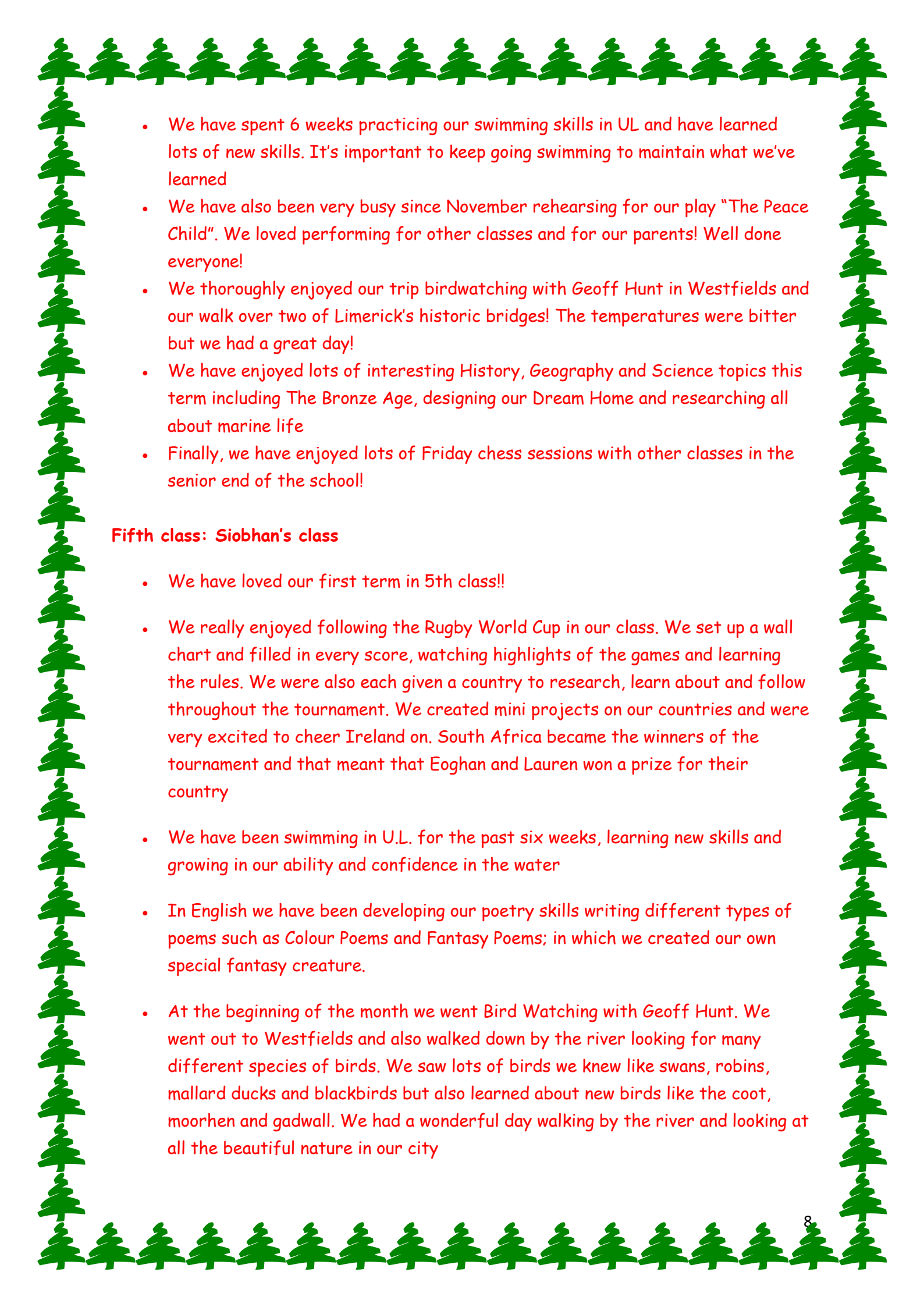
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- Maggie's sixth class students have been showing us how to play chess.

#### **Fourth Class: Pamela's Class**

- We have a super fun filled first term in Fourth class. We have worked as diligent scientists exploring many STEM projects ( making catapults, building towers from spaghetti and creating pyramids from toothpicks, to name but a few) as well as creating some wonderful presentations of our work. We also used our science knowledge of chromatography to make lovely Halloween-inspired art. We were lucky enough to go Pond dipping with Geoff Hunt where we learned all about the plants and animals in our local pond. We also got to use a microscope for this activity and learned how to make microscopic slides in class. Science week was a huge success, thanks to Siobhán for organising it. During the week we worked on the Colour Wheel and learned about Newtons reversed colour experiment. We also made robots (Drawbots) and presented both of these experiments at Assembly
- Ancient Egypt played a huge role in our learning of history throughout the first term we had lovely history stations and used Green screen technology to create mini-movies on aspects of Life in Ancient Egypt
- In geography, we have been learning the counties of Ireland as well as the mountains. The children created wonderful 3D relief maps of Ireland showing the mountain ranges
- We explored the work of many artists, from Kandinsky, Mondrian & Yayoi Kusama to the Fauvism movement
- In music we have started learning the tin-whistle, we can now play twinkle twinkle and Old Mc Donald
- Our class is involved in the Litter Pickers campaign. A huge thanks to the families who have already taken part in the project. We are grateful for your help and support
- We took part in Gaelic Football with thanks to Mungret Community College Ty Students, we had yoga with Coach Jane, swimming at UL and a special thanks to 6th class & Maggie for teaching us how to play chess and letting us participate in Fun Friday chess.
- Well done to everyone, I look forward to next term Pamela.

#### **Fifth class: Clíodhna's class**

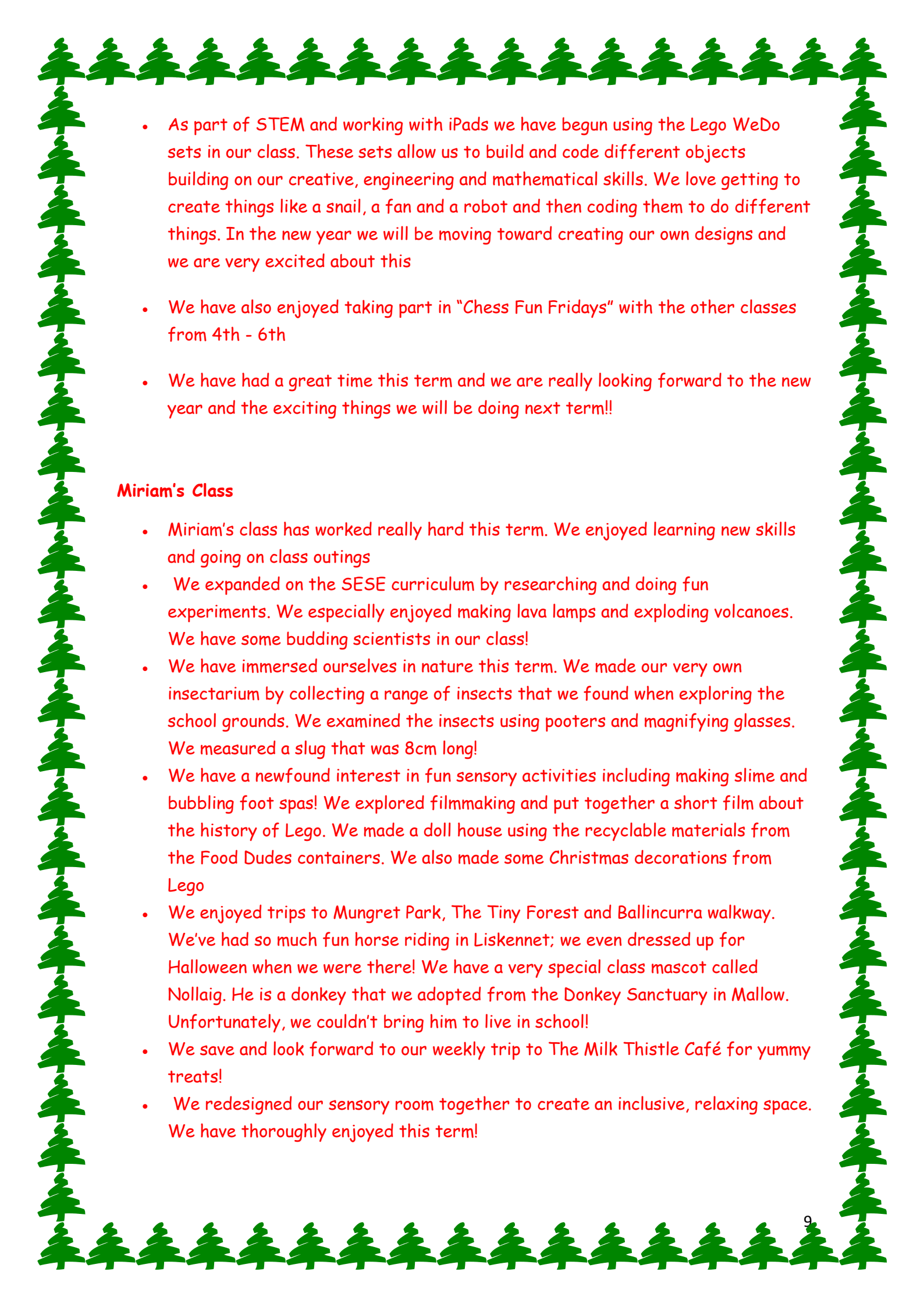
- We have had a great term this year in 5th class! We have enjoyed lots of activities and are looking forward to more fun in the new year!

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- We have spent 6 weeks practicing our swimming skills in UL and have learned lots of new skills. It's important to keep going swimming to maintain what we've learned
  - We have also been very busy since November rehearsing for our play "The Peace Child". We loved performing for other classes and for our parents! Well done everyone!
  - We thoroughly enjoyed our trip birdwatching with Geoff Hunt in Westfields and our walk over two of Limerick's historic bridges! The temperatures were bitter but we had a great day!
  - We have enjoyed lots of interesting History, Geography and Science topics this term including The Bronze Age, designing our Dream Home and researching all about marine life
  - Finally, we have enjoyed lots of Friday chess sessions with other classes in the senior end of the school!

#### **Fifth class: Siobhan's class**

- We have loved our first term in 5th class!!
- We really enjoyed following the Rugby World Cup in our class. We set up a wall chart and filled in every score, watching highlights of the games and learning the rules. We were also each given a country to research, learn about and follow throughout the tournament. We created mini projects on our countries and were very excited to cheer Ireland on. South Africa became the winners of the tournament and that meant that Eoghan and Lauren won a prize for their country
- We have been swimming in U.L. for the past six weeks, learning new skills and growing in our ability and confidence in the water
- In English we have been developing our poetry skills writing different types of poems such as Colour Poems and Fantasy Poems; in which we created our own special fantasy creature.
- At the beginning of the month we went Bird Watching with Geoff Hunt. We went out to Westfields and also walked down by the river looking for many different species of birds. We saw lots of birds we knew like swans, robins, mallard ducks and blackbirds but also learned about new birds like the coot, moorhen and gadwall. We had a wonderful day walking by the river and looking at all the beautiful nature in our city



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- As part of STEM and working with iPads we have begun using the Lego WeDo sets in our class. These sets allow us to build and code different objects building on our creative, engineering and mathematical skills. We love getting to create things like a snail, a fan and a robot and then coding them to do different things. In the new year we will be moving toward creating our own designs and we are very excited about this
  - We have also enjoyed taking part in "Chess Fun Fridays" with the other classes from 4th - 6th
  - We have had a great time this term and we are really looking forward to the new year and the exciting things we will be doing next term!!

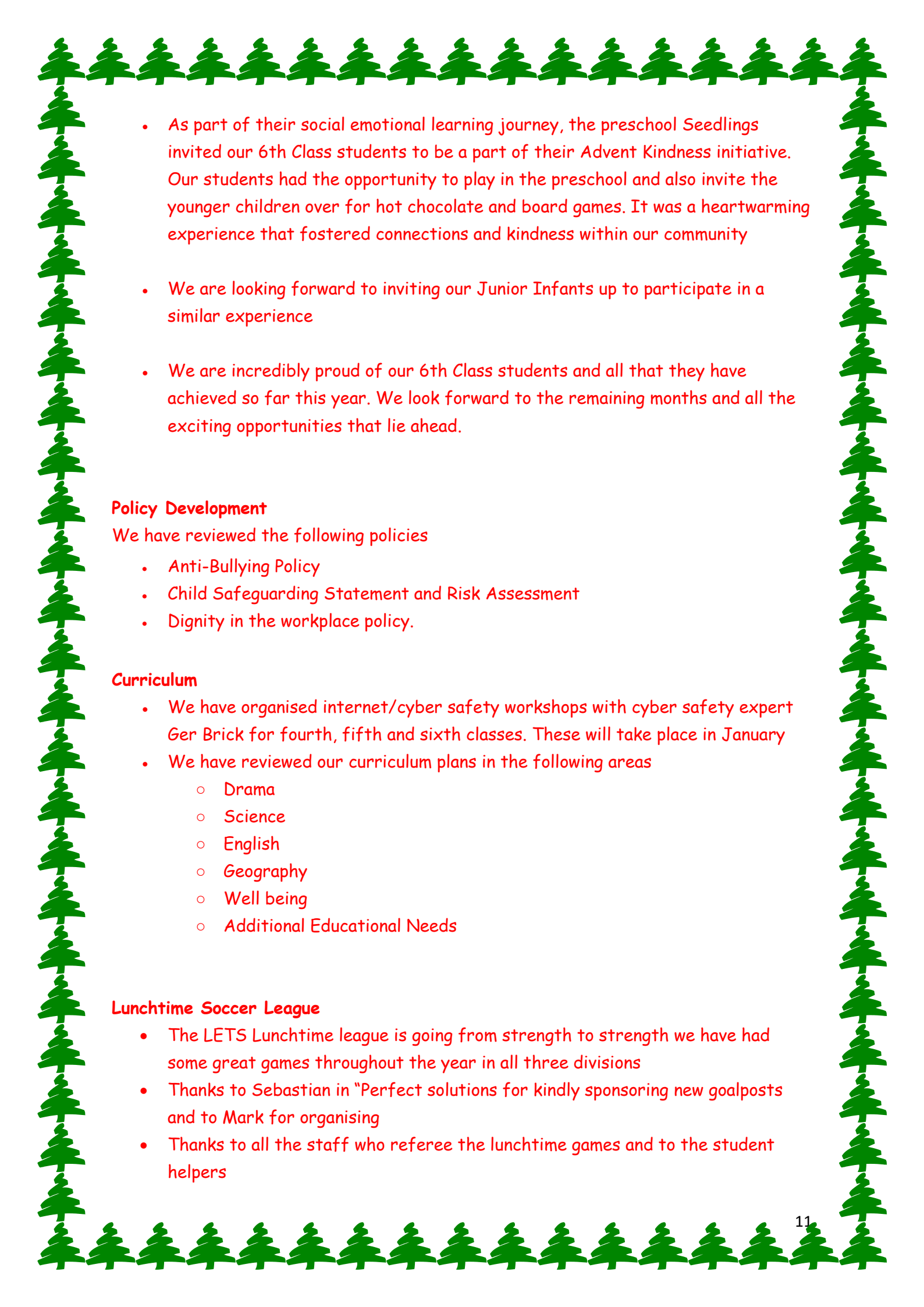
### **Miriam's Class**

- Miriam's class has worked really hard this term. We enjoyed learning new skills and going on class outings
- We expanded on the SESE curriculum by researching and doing fun experiments. We especially enjoyed making lava lamps and exploding volcanoes. We have some budding scientists in our class!
- We have immersed ourselves in nature this term. We made our very own insectarium by collecting a range of insects that we found when exploring the school grounds. We examined the insects using pooters and magnifying glasses. We measured a slug that was 8cm long!
- We have a newfound interest in fun sensory activities including making slime and bubbling foot spas! We explored filmmaking and put together a short film about the history of Lego. We made a doll house using the recyclable materials from the Food Dudes containers. We also made some Christmas decorations from Lego
- We enjoyed trips to Mungret Park, The Tiny Forest and Ballincurra walkway. We've had so much fun horse riding in Liskennet; we even dressed up for Halloween when we were there! We have a very special class mascot called Nollaig. He is a donkey that we adopted from the Donkey Sanctuary in Mallow. Unfortunately, we couldn't bring him to live in school!
- We save and look forward to our weekly trip to The Milk Thistle Café for yummy treats!
- We redesigned our sensory room together to create an inclusive, relaxing space. We have thoroughly enjoyed this term!



**Sixth Class: Laura, Maggie & Noreen**

- It has been an exciting start to the final year of primary school for our 6th Class students. They have experienced a range of emotions as they navigate this important milestone in their educational journey
- Firstly, we would like to acknowledge the departure of Brian, who has moved on to his next big adventure. While we are saddened by his absence, we warmly welcome Laura to our class with open arms. We are excited to have her join our 6th Class family
- One of the major highlights of the year so far was the hugely successful maths fair hosted by our 6th Class. They showcased their own mathematical skills and knowledge while motivating others to participate in activities from Junior Infants to 5th Class. We also mentored the Junior Infants in math's art activities and games to celebrate Maths Week. It was a fantastic opportunity for our students to share their passion for mathematics with the younger students
- In addition to their academic achievements, our 6th Class has taken on the responsibility of organizing playground games. They have been working hard to create a fun and inclusive atmosphere during break times, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate and enjoy themselves
- Our students also had the honor of leading the Halloween Parade. They demonstrated great leadership and creativity in organizing the event, making it a memorable experience for all
- Alongside their academic and extracurricular activities, our 6th Class has been developing their swimming skills. They have been attending regular swimming lessons, building their confidence in the water and improving their technique
- Furthermore, our students have been dedicating a significant amount of time to social emotional learning. They have been focusing on developing and sustaining healthy relationships with their peers, teachers, and others in our environment. This work is crucial in preparing them for the transition to secondary school and beyond

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- As part of their social emotional learning journey, the preschool Seedlings invited our 6th Class students to be a part of their Advent Kindness initiative. Our students had the opportunity to play in the preschool and also invite the younger children over for hot chocolate and board games. It was a heartwarming experience that fostered connections and kindness within our community
  - We are looking forward to inviting our Junior Infants up to participate in a similar experience
  - We are incredibly proud of our 6th Class students and all that they have achieved so far this year. We look forward to the remaining months and all the exciting opportunities that lie ahead.

#### **Policy Development**

We have reviewed the following policies

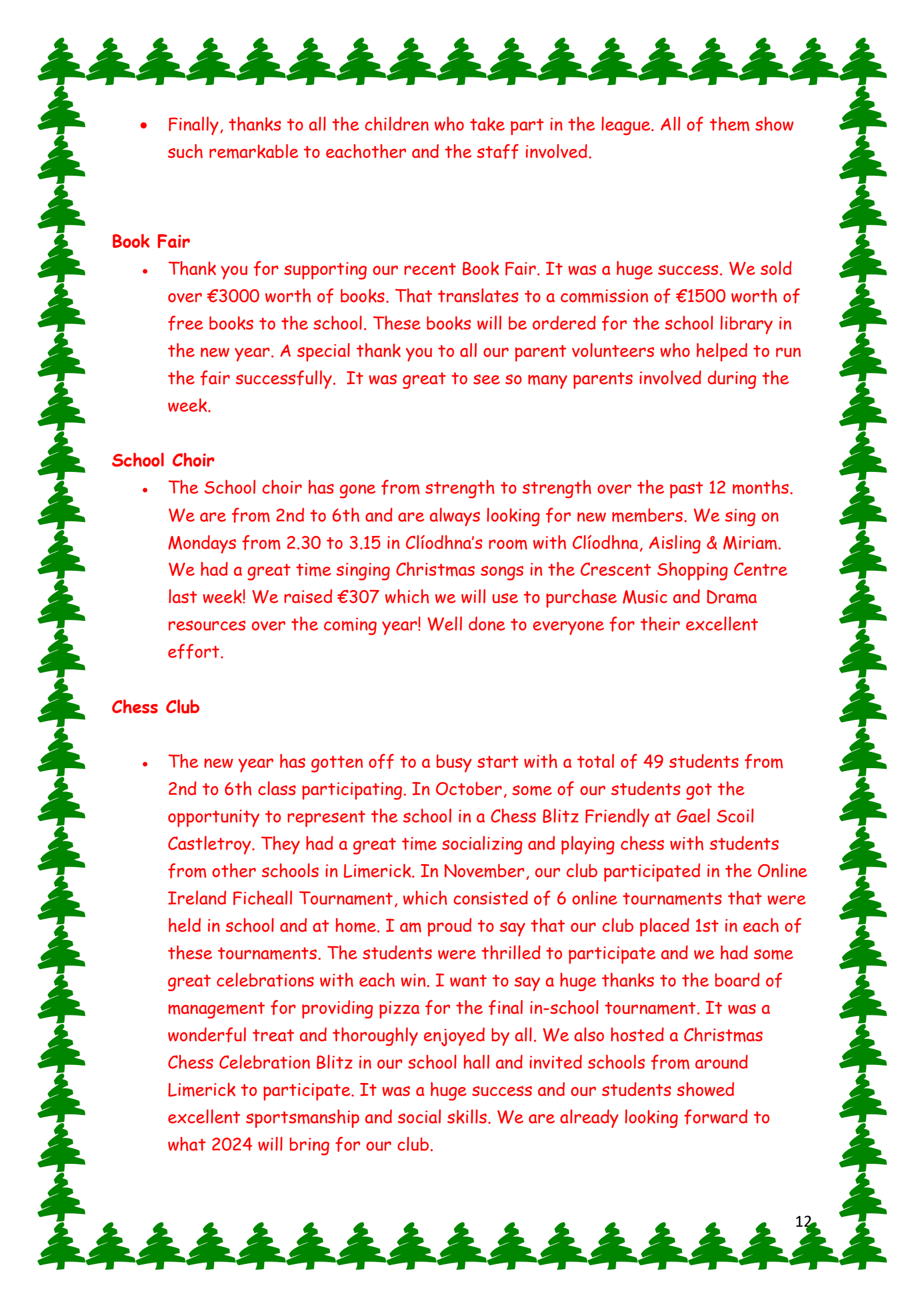
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Dignity in the workplace policy.

#### **Curriculum**

- We have organised internet/cyber safety workshops with cyber safety expert Ger Brick for fourth, fifth and sixth classes. These will take place in January
- We have reviewed our curriculum plans in the following areas
  - Drama
  - Science
  - English
  - Geography
  - Well being
  - Additional Educational Needs

#### **Lunchtime Soccer League**

- The LETS Lunchtime league is going from strength to strength we have had some great games throughout the year in all three divisions
- Thanks to Sebastian in "Perfect solutions for kindly sponsoring new goalposts and to Mark for organising
- Thanks to all the staff who referee the lunchtime games and to the student helpers

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- Finally, thanks to all the children who take part in the league. All of them show such remarkable to eachother and the staff involved.

#### **Book Fair**

- Thank you for supporting our recent Book Fair. It was a huge success. We sold over €3000 worth of books. That translates to a commission of €1500 worth of free books to the school. These books will be ordered for the school library in the new year. A special thank you to all our parent volunteers who helped to run the fair successfully. It was great to see so many parents involved during the week.

#### **School Choir**

- The School choir has gone from strength to strength over the past 12 months. We are from 2nd to 6th and are always looking for new members. We sing on Mondays from 2.30 to 3.15 in Clíodhna's room with Clíodhna, Aisling & Miriam. We had a great time singing Christmas songs in the Crescent Shopping Centre last week! We raised €307 which we will use to purchase Music and Drama resources over the coming year! Well done to everyone for their excellent effort.

#### **Chess Club**

- The new year has gotten off to a busy start with a total of 49 students from 2nd to 6th class participating. In October, some of our students got the opportunity to represent the school in a Chess Blitz Friendly at Gael Scoil Castletroy. They had a great time socializing and playing chess with students from other schools in Limerick. In November, our club participated in the Online Ireland Ficheall Tournament, which consisted of 6 online tournaments that were held in school and at home. I am proud to say that our club placed 1st in each of these tournaments. The students were thrilled to participate and we had some great celebrations with each win. I want to say a huge thanks to the board of management for providing pizza for the final in-school tournament. It was a wonderful treat and thoroughly enjoyed by all. We also hosted a Christmas Chess Celebration Blitz in our school hall and invited schools from around Limerick to participate. It was a huge success and our students showed excellent sportsmanship and social skills. We are already looking forward to what 2024 will bring for our club.



### School Garden

Yvonne and Paula have been busy every Friday afternoon with gardeners from every class given the option to come and help. Projects to date have been

- Planting strawberry runners into pots
- Planting garlic into beds
- Covering unused beds

We will be in touch with parents who have volunteered to help next term.

### Student Council

- Our student council includes children from first to sixth
- The student Council are currently engaged in learning Green Screen Technology with the help of Pamela & Jason, they are hoping to create a monthly Student News reel that will be sent to all the families.
- The student council would like to thank all who supported the Simon Community food drive
- Our Christmas raffle was a great success. We raised €457, thanks to all who donated prizes and bought tickets!

### Board of Management

- The Board has had three meetings this term and the minutes of these meetings have been sent to all through Aladdin
- The BOM has been newly constituted and will sit for a four year term the members of the Board are as follows
  - Marek McGann/ Chairperson
  - Emilia Pustkowska/ Patron Nominee and Treasurer
  - Mike Quealy/ Secretary
  - Siobhan Costelloe/ Staff nominee
  - Gillian Walsh/ Parent Nominee
  - Kevin O'Shaughnessy/Parent Nominee
  - Joe Leddin/ Community Nominee
  - Mary Larkin/Community Nominee

### Parents Association

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- Thanks to everybody who helped out at our events and a happy Christmas to everyone!

### **Fundraising**

- The school received €1500 from the Analog Community Awards fund many thanks to Richard Finn who nominated us for this. The money will be used to cover part of the cost of a trampoline in our sensory area.
- We raised €821 for Temple Street Hospital. Thanks to all our families who supported this and for all the children who came to school in fancy dress!

### **Drop Off/Collection Area**

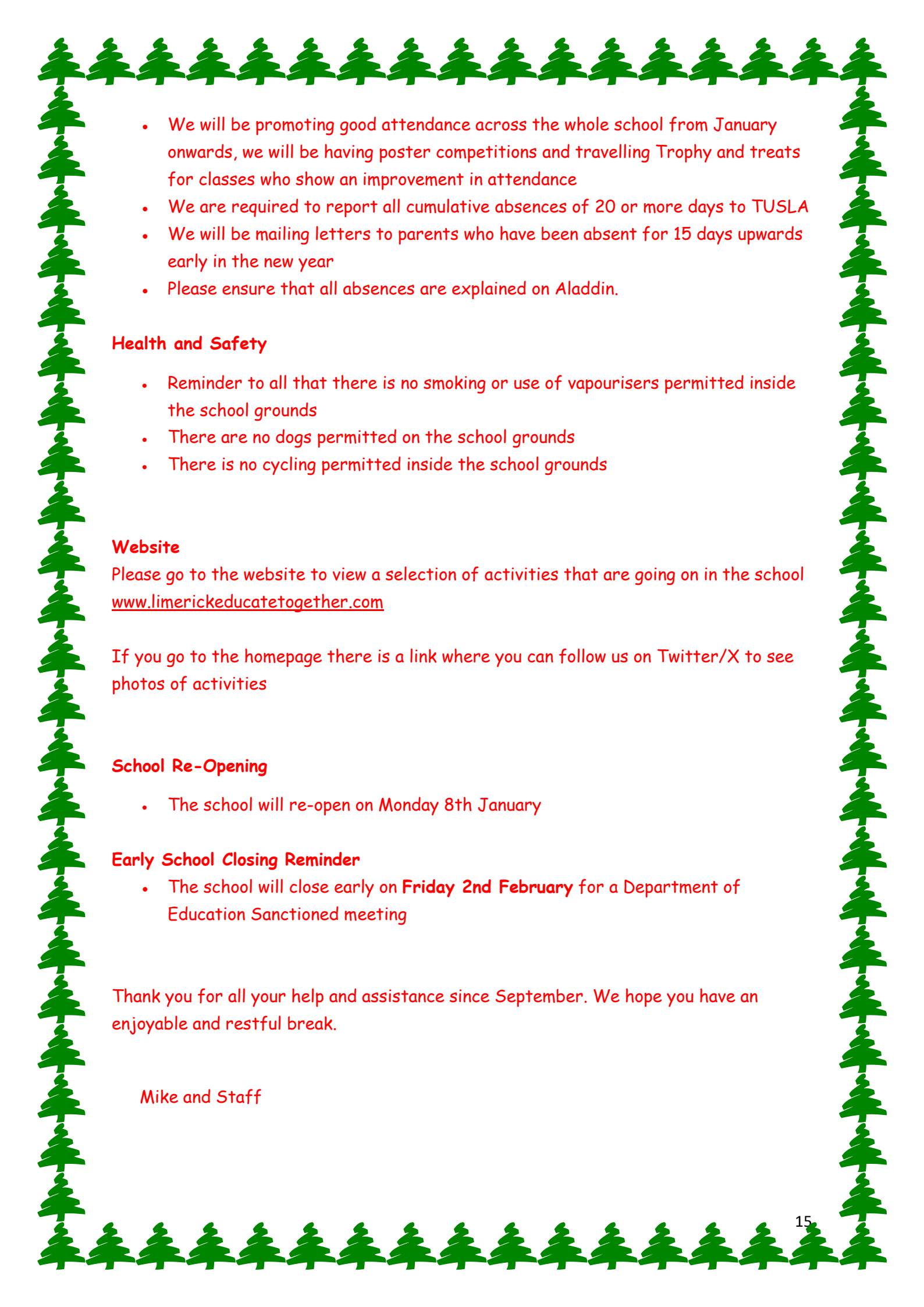
- Thanks to everybody for making this work so well
- Please remember
  - No entry to staff car park
  - No parking on footpaths
  - Only parents of children in the special classes should go beyond the pedestrian crossing
  - Drive slowly in and around the school grounds
  - If you cannot find a space to drop off just continue around
  - Parking available Outside Gaelscoil and Old School car park.
- Thanks to the PA for funding the purchase of the barriers at the top of the drop off area. Pedestrians should never cross at this point.

### **Drop Off-Time**

- School doors open at 8:30 and close each morning at 8:40, please ensure that your child arrives at school on time.

### **School Attendance**

- The Department of Education has organised a National Attendance Campaign with the aim to increase/improve attendance across all schools in the country.
- Poor attendance is defined by a child missing only 2 days per month over the year

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- We will be promoting good attendance across the whole school from January onwards, we will be having poster competitions and travelling Trophy and treats for classes who show an improvement in attendance
  - We are required to report all cumulative absences of 20 or more days to TUSLA
  - We will be mailing letters to parents who have been absent for 15 days upwards early in the new year
  - Please ensure that all absences are explained on Aladdin.

### **Health and Safety**

- Reminder to all that there is no smoking or use of vapourisers permitted inside the school grounds
- There are no dogs permitted on the school grounds
- There is no cycling permitted inside the school grounds

### **Website**

Please go to the website to view a selection of activities that are going on in the school [www.limerickeducatetogether.com](http://www.limerickeducatetogether.com)

If you go to the homepage there is a link where you can follow us on Twitter/X to see photos of activities

### **School Re-Opening**

- The school will re-open on Monday 8th January

### **Early School Closing Reminder**

- The school will close early on **Friday 2nd February** for a Department of Education Sanctioned meeting

Thank you for all your help and assistance since September. We hope you have an enjoyable and restful break.

Mike and Staff