



# Balla N S



## School Arrival / Dispersal

We would like to remind you of our morning schedule to ensure a smooth start to the school day for all students.

- **Formal School Opening Time:** 8:50 AM
- **Arrival Window:** It is anticipated that the majority of children will have arrived between 8.50a.m. – 9.00 a.m.

This arrival window allows 10 mins for children to arrive safely, settle in, and prepare for the day ahead. School finishes at 1.30p.m.(Junior & Senior infants) 2.30p.m. (1st-6th Classes).The Board of Management does not accept responsibility for pupils outside of these times.

Thank you for your cooperation and support in maintaining an efficient and welcoming school environment.



School reopens on  
Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January  
2025

## Save the Date!

### Communion

Saturday 17th  
May 2025 11am



# So many amazing activities this term

As we wrap up this term, we'd like to reflect on the incredible energy and engagement across the school in recent months. It has been a busy and rewarding time, filled with exciting learning opportunities for all our students.



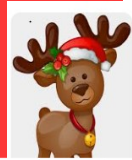
## READATHON 2024



Our students participated in the Readathon challenge in November. For one week they took a break from homework and focused on reading! It was amazing to witness the dedication and enthusiasm shown by each child. We thank all who sponsored our students. They received huge support locally and managed to raise €3,947. This will help support the development of sports and literacy in our school. Each class requested a wishlist of new books for our school library and on Thursday 12th December we gathered in our PE Hall to browse through all our fabulous new books. Thank you to all the parents who supported this initiative!



# READATHON



# More amazing activities this term

## SPORTS

**Swimming** Children from 3rd-6th have just completed a 6-week swimming programme as part of the Aquatic Strand of the PE curriculum, giving them the chance to build confidence and skills in the water while staying active.

**Gymnastics** Children from Junior infants - 2nd class enjoyed weekly visits to **Kids in Motion** in Castlebar, where they have developed balance and key physical skills such as strength, flexibility, speed, coordination, power, and balance through gymnastics

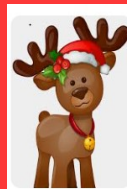
## Soccer / Futsal

Pupils from 3rd to 6th have been honing their soccer skills under the guidance of Nigel Naughton, co-ordinator with the FAI. The talented pupils have been taking part in futsal, (a fast paced variation of soccer). The smaller, heavier ball and limited space force players to focus on precise touches, enhancing ball control and close-quarter skills. The fast pace of the game requires players to think and react quickly sharpening their decision-making skills.



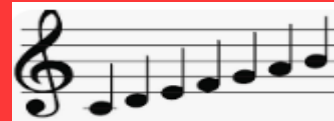
## Cycling Programme

5th Class had the exciting opportunity to take part in a 6-week cycling programme, which focused on safety, road awareness, and developing proficiency in the rules of the road. This has been a fantastic way to equip our students





# LOTS OF GREAT MUSIC IN SCHOOL FOR EVERYONE



## MUSIC

### Ceol na nÓg



One of the highlights has been the commencement of the **Ceol na nÓg** programme for Junior Infants to 2nd Class. This 22-week programme, delivered by experienced professionals, offers a comprehensive and engaging exploration of music, focusing on:

- **Beat, Rhythm, Tempo, and Timbre**
- **Singing and Confidence Building**
- **Instrument Exploration**
- **Listening Skills**
- **Activity Songs and Tune Learning**

The children have thoroughly enjoyed these sessions, and it's wonderful to see their musical confidence blossoming. Ms. Kelly will be in touch with regular updates on their progress in the New Year, so stay tuned!

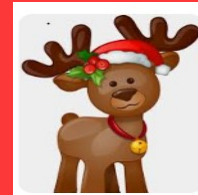


# BEAUTIFUL SONGS/TUNES HEARD THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL



## Music

**Ukulele** - Jamie from Music Generation Mayo is doing a fantastic job fostering musical talent and creativity among the children in 3rd & 4th classes. Learning the ukulele not only introduces children to music but also helps with coordination, discipline, and confidence. The fact that they're already playing tunes shows their dedication and Jamie's excellent teaching. We hope that programmes like this leave a lasting impact on young learners, nurturing a lifelong appreciation for music.



# AND THE AMAZING MUSIC CONTINUES ON FRIDAY MORNINGS IN THE LIBRARY



**Ceol de hAoine** Ceol de hAoine initiative is a fantastic way to bring the community together through music! The combination of fun, informal sessions and the opportunity to build confidence is a great approach. A big thanks to Ms. Reidy, Ms. Kelly, and Ms. McHale for their hard work in fostering and nurturing this wonderful project. Newcomers are always welcome, regardless of their instrument or experience level. Music has a beautiful way of uniting people, and this initiative is surely spreading joy and creativity to everyone involved.





# LOTS OF VARIETY AND FUN WAYS TO LEARN IN OUR SCHOOL

## Languages

**Spanish lessons-** Our children in 3rd to 6th Classes have been immersed in a wonderful opportunity to learn Spanish. Over the past 12 weeks, they have participated in engaging lessons with a dedicated Spanish tutor, broadening their horizons and developing valuable language skills.

**SSE Mé féin-**As part of our school self-evaluation, we are paying special attention to Irish- focusing on verbs and developing informal Irish, or "Gaeilge Neamhfhoirmiúil" thus helping students express themselves more confidently in everyday conversations.

## Languages



# Junior Infants

Junior Infants have truly had a wonderful term - we have made a great start with our phonics and are already able to sound out many words, our number and letter formation are flying, we learned all about different types of houses and homes and are now embracing the wonder of winter! The Christmas spirit has taken over the class with the children playing in Santa's Workshop and the North Pole, singing Christmas songs, producing festive art and spotting our Elf each morning. Happy Christmas!



# Science Week



Science week 2024 took place this year from the 10th -17th November. There were lots of fun experiments happening all over the school that week in all classrooms including; Magic Rainbows, Volcanoes, Magic Milk, Storm in a cup, Candles Need Oxygen Too, to name but a few. Our lovely school scientist Ms. Reidy paid a visit to each classroom to do some exciting experiments with each class. Mayo County Council provided the school with 'The Scientific Sue' Science Kit which provided lots of new learning for everyone. Students watched some of the fabulous live online events that took place including those from 'Curious Minds' and Mayo County Council. There were certainly lots of future scientists to be spotted within the classrooms of Balla N.S during Science Week. The future is bright.



## OUR WOW BOARD SHOWCASES EACH CLASSES AMAZING WORK DURING THE YEAR



## After School Chess Club



**Chess club**-Mr. Byrne has set up a chess club, and he welcomes any new members or those interested in starting. If you're interested



Please contact Mr. Byrne for more details



# Green Schools

The committee has been busy this week gathering all the beautiful entrants we have received from every class for the annual recycled Christmas decoration competition. The standard has been superb again this year and we look forward to hearing who the lucky winners are at the end of the week. Well done to everyone who entered. The decorations have brightened up our reception and library area this week and have brought lots of joy to us all.

Thank you to Ger and the Tidy Towns committee who have agreed to put up our walking to school signs at the pedestrian crossing at the playground. Watch out for them in the coming days as we remind drivers to slow down because we are walking and cycling to school as much as we can.

**Green School Committee** – Luke, Shay, Ruby, Kris, Aine, Craig, Isla, Rian, Evan, Callum, Nicole.



# 5th class

5th class has been very busy in the run up to Christmas. The children have been playing traditional Irish tunes on the tin whistle and singing Christmas carols which has brought a lovely atmosphere to the school. Our amazing writers have produced fabulous procedural pieces in the writing workshop telling readers everything from building a snowman to baking desserts. We continued swimming lessons in December and received cycling certificates for sessions completed last month. After reading about Italy in SESE the children enjoyed a mini aperitivo (little snack) tasting different foods from the country. A lot of beautiful Christmas art was created from our upcycled Christmas decorations, organised by the Green Schools committee, to painting and crafts. The children have also taken part in the A Lust for Life program which builds resilience and increases wellbeing. We will have lots of fun activities in the run up to the holidays. Wishing everyone a lovely Christmas from all in Rang 5. □



# Rang a Trí

Third class had a lot of fun preparing for Christmas. We have been busy decorating and making festive artwork. This week, we will complete our block of swimming lessons for this year- it was great to see the children build on their skill and confidence in the water throughout the weeks.

In Gaeilge, we designed tasty 'Biachláir na Nollag'- you might see one or two of these on your tables this Christmas. Our ukulele lessons with Jamie are so enjoyable each Monday. We are also busy playing festive tunes on the tin whistle and singing carols in the afternoons. Such a talented group of musicians!!

Following on from our reading on Denmark, the children were delighted to complete individual projects on the chrome books. These were presented so well and are full of interesting facts and information.

It has been a great term in third class and we wish you all a healthy and happy Christmas and New Year. Beannachtaí na Nollag oraibh go léir!! ☐



## 2ND CLASS

Second Class has been very busy this term. It started with the Readathon. The children read lots of interesting books and they collected an incredible amount of money. Thank you to all their families and friends who sponsored them so generously. We are very grateful to Ms. Kelly for organising it.

Gymnastics commenced again during this term. It is impressive to see the children becoming more agile, flexible and confident.

This term also saw the return of the tin whistles. It was great to hear such lovely music, especially the Christmas tunes!

Second Class really enjoyed Science week especially the skittles, soap and pepper and the dancing raisins experiments. A huge thanks to Ms. Reidy, our science guru.

The children are very excited about Christmas, the elf has arrived in the room and he is very busy keeping an eye on everyone!. The children loved dressing up in their Christmas clothes and taking part in The Reindeer Rally. We would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas.



PIC • COLLAGE





# Students Council



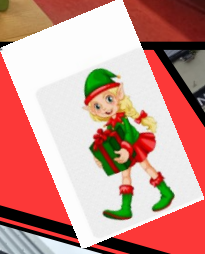
The Student Council will be busy this week selling tickets for their Christmas fundraiser. The Christmas raffle will take place at the end of the week and there is the chance to win one of two hampers and a voucher for one person in each class. There is also the opportunity to win a jar of Christmas chocolate treats if you can guess how many treats are in the jar! Good luck everyone!



## Student Council L – R

Lochlann Howley,  
Peter Bourke,  
Rose Broderick,  
Elijah Basquille ,  
Grace Broderick,  
Grace Pierce ,  
Fionn McDonald,  
Carol Basquille







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# 4th Class

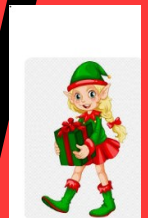
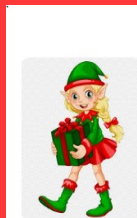


Fourth class have been busy this term with some new and exciting challenges! Our weekly ukulele lessons with Jamie have been a highlight for us. Learning many new chords, tunes, strumming and singing along to many of our Christmas favourites has been great fun. We have also enjoyed our weekly Spanish lessons with Maria. We learned new phrases, greetings, games and vocabulary. We had to say 'adiós' to our wonderful teacher and we hope to see her again in the future! Our swimming lessons in the Leisure Complex at Lough Lannagh have been another highlight this term. We are all learning at our own pace and enjoying the weekly visits. Our confidence in the water is growing each week. We opened our minds to many new books this term, particularly during the week of the readathon. We are now enjoying all the fabulous new books purchased with the funds raised. We think we might even read a few new ones over Christmas. Narrative writing workshops have been great fun, Paddington Bear has got himself into a few scrapes in our stories over the past few weeks! We enjoyed the 'Reindeer Rally' and painted our own Rudolph's to get into the spirit last week. We wish our families and friends a wonderful Christmas and best wishes for a great start to 2025, from all in 4th Class!



# First Class

Time is flying by in First Class. It's hard to believe that term one is complete. We have had a very busy few weeks and have learned lots of new things. We loved learning all about winter, hibernation, birds that migrate to other countries and native plants and trees. We created fabulous artwork of snowmen as we all had great fun in the snow. We have started to learn the tin whistle and everybody is very excited about learning some new tunes. In maths we have learned all about the calendar, number sentences and 2D shapes. We have been reading a lot since the Readathon and have some fabulous new books that have been recently added to our library thanks to your generosity at home. We have also really enjoyed our weekly gymnastics lessons. The children are all very excited about Christmas and the arrival of Buddy the elf has added to this excitement. We are all looking forward to Christmas and the start of a brand new year. Wishing you all a very happy Christmas from all in First Class!



# Mrs Corcoran's Class



We have been very busy this term. We had lots of fun working on themes like The Gingerbread Man, The Snowman and of course Christmas. The children listened to the story of the Gingerbread man and decorated some of their own. We made our own snow during the recent cold weather and did some lovely fine motor work on this theme which we displayed on our noticeboard. We remembered the birds during the cold weather too and made some bird feeders using pipe cleaners and Cheerios. Everyone in our class has been very brave during gymnastics this term and have grown in confidence and strength. Over the past two weeks the children have been busy making decorations for the classroom and getting into the Christmas spirit. We made paper chains and tree decorations and we are all enjoying singing our Christmas songs. We had great fun making Rudolph Rice Krispie treats this week and we look forward to lots more Christmas activities in the days to come. The children have been so good and kind





## Mr. Byrne's Class 6th

This term, 6th class has been busy with a range of exciting activities and learning experiences! The highlight of the term was a fantastic trip to the Shannon Aviation Museum, where students explored Ireland's rich aeronautical history and even got to fly a virtual plane. On the P.E front, the class participated in Swimming, Futsal and benchball, showing great teamwork and enthusiasm. In the classroom, they worked on a fascinating digital project about European countries, developing research and presentation skills while learning about different cultures. They also had their first introduction to coding, creating simple programs and building problem-solving skills. In maths, the focus was on mastering, 2D & 3D shapes, fractions and decimals, with students gaining confidence in these key areas. We learnt a lovely Irish Poem An Spideóg as well as the Robert Frost classic "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening" A big congratulations to Julie and PJ who won the Balla Tractor Christmas Art Competition. It's been a busy and rewarding term for 6th class!



# Senior Infants



Senior Infants have had lots of fun and excitement this term. We loved learning all about the North Pole, arctic animals and endangered animals. Our play table was filled with polar bears, arctic foxes, narwhals, seals and all kinds of ice and snow! The children created some fabulous homes for these animals and we came up with our own simple ways to try to help these animals. We know the importance of recycling and used lots of recycled materials when making our own Christmas stockings from scrap pieces of material. We wrote lovely letters to Santa so we hope he fills these stockings when he comes on Christmas Eve!

The children were very busy elves during our play time as they worked very hard in Santa's workshop. They loved designing their own toys and had fun wrapping toys and putting them into Santa's sack! They enjoyed some STEM challenges and created their own 3D Christmas trees and sleighs. We hope Santa's actual elves are as good as senior infants!





# Shannon Aviation Museum Winners Future

## Pilots/Astronauts Watch this space



Our 6th class group won a visit to the award winning Shannon Aviation Museum for a unique fun day 13<sup>th</sup> November. What an exciting tour for our students



# Notice Board Notifications

## Absenses

Good attendance is crucial for your child's success in school, as it helps them stay engaged with their learning and maintain progress. If your child is absent, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide a reason for their absence through the Aladdin app to ensure accurate records

## Educational Needs

If your child has received an updated report from any agency linked with the school ( e.g. Speech & Language, Psychology, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy) we would be most grateful if you can share this with us. All information is treated confidentially & only shared with parental consent. The relevant staff value this information very much as it can greatly assist with teaching, planning and differentiation of tasks to meet your child's individual needs.

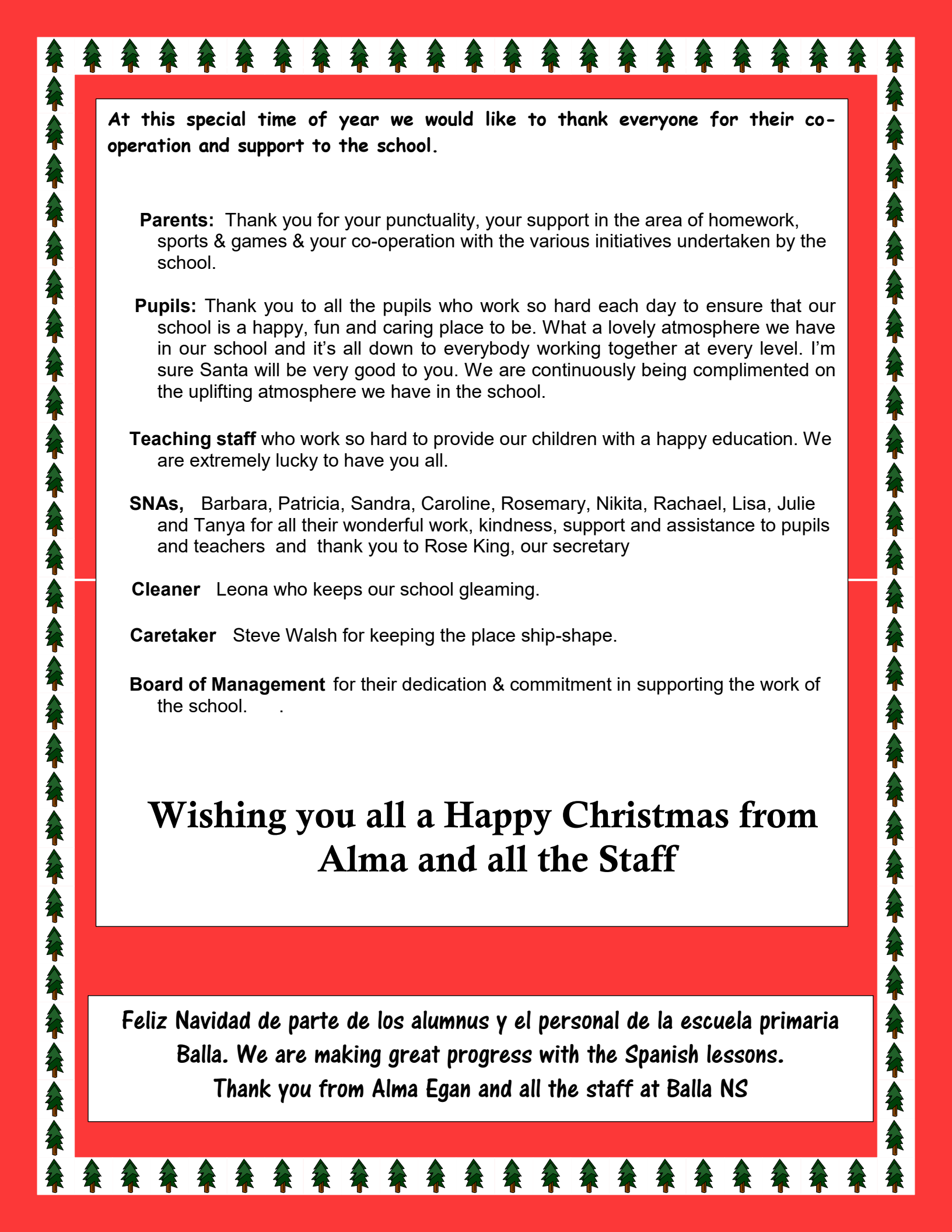
## Contact Information

Reminder; If you wish to contact a member of school staff,

- Write a note in the homework journal or on Aladdin
- Email [office@ballans.ie](mailto:office@ballans.ie) and the relevant staff member will be contacted and will respond to your enquiry
- phone Rose in the office 094 936 5280

It is vital that we are able to contact you in case of an emergency. We require a minimum of 3 contact numbers. Please contact Rose at the office email address [office@ballans.ie](mailto:office@ballans.ie) to inform her of emergency names and relationship to the child e.g. grandparent, aunt, neighbour. If you recently changed home address, phone number or email, please let us know. All this information is necessary for communication and Child Protection.

Please follow us on Instagram to keep up to date with all the events happening in the school. [@balla\\_national\\_school](https://www.instagram.com/balla_national_school)



At this special time of year we would like to thank everyone for their co-operation and support to the school.

**Parents:** Thank you for your punctuality, your support in the area of homework, sports & games & your co-operation with the various initiatives undertaken by the school.

**Pupils:** Thank you to all the pupils who work so hard each day to ensure that our school is a happy, fun and caring place to be. What a lovely atmosphere we have in our school and it's all down to everybody working together at every level. I'm sure Santa will be very good to you. We are continuously being complimented on the uplifting atmosphere we have in the school.

**Teaching staff** who work so hard to provide our children with a happy education. We are extremely lucky to have you all.

**SNAs,** Barbara, Patricia, Sandra, Caroline, Rosemary, Nikita, Rachael, Lisa, Julie and Tanya for all their wonderful work, kindness, support and assistance to pupils and teachers and thank you to Rose King, our secretary

**Cleaner** Leona who keeps our school gleaming.

**Caretaker** Steve Walsh for keeping the place ship-shape.

**Board of Management** for their dedication & commitment in supporting the work of the school.

**Wishing you all a Happy Christmas from  
Alma and all the Staff**

*Feliz Navidad de parte de los alumnos y el personal de la escuela primaria Balla. We are making great progress with the Spanish lessons.  
Thank you from Alma Egan and all the staff at Balla NS*