



Blessington Educate Together NS

Red Lane,
Blessington,
Co. Wicklow.
W91DK23

Phone 045 865 281
Email office@betns.ie
Website www.betns.ie
Roll number 20242M
Charity number 20139407

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Introduction

There's been loads going on in BETNS and we have a busy few weeks ahead. See below!

Upcoming Events

25th and 26th November – BETNS Fundraiser in Dunnes packing bags. Please sign-up to support your school! A sign-up sheet is at the front door.

28th November – School Open Day for prospective families.

15th December – Winter Concert in the Avon Ri at 6.30pm. Further details to follow.

Staffing for 2022-23

David is now a permanent member of our teaching staff after our small-school developing teacher post was confirmed by the Department. We're delighted.

Curricular developments, staff training and policy updates

Cricket began on November 16th for children from 1st class upwards. This will take place for four weeks.

Music Generation – Progressing well across all classes.

GAA – finished at halfterm.

Biodiversity workshops happened for all classes on November 16th with a focus on trees.

The Ash Room won their second debate on November 17th against Killashee Multidenominational School and progress to the next round! The children were amazing!

Wholeschool training by In-School Therapy Project happened on 10th November 2022 from Occupational Therapist Elizabeth. This explored in-class and external movement breaks and the resulting motor skills and academic benefits for children.

Nombulelo and Martina attended two days of training related to supporting interaction, language and communication for minimally speaking autistic students on 12th and 13th October.

Primary Language Curriculum Training – we will close for a full day to explore two webinars after midterm on January 23rd.

The annual review of our child safeguarding and risk assessment, and anti-bullying policy is complete and is available on our website – www.betns.ie

School development and building works

Works on the Sensory and Play areas are almost complete. The Play area is now open in front of the Ash and Oak Rooms. A climbing frame and spinner will be added within the next two weeks. The Sensory Play Area, in front of the Hazel and Birch Rooms, should be finished this Friday.

Permanent Extension – We've sent out acceptance letters to the Design Team, QS, and various engineers. So, work on the design should happen very soon on our extension. This will include two autism classes, a mainstream classroom, an activity space, a sensory room, a staffroom, offices, ancillary rooms, a new basketball court and further external play areas.

We have been granted a temporary mainstream classroom in advance of building works described above which will be in place for September 2023. This means we will have four mainstream classrooms and two special classes. As well as the Hazel and Birch Rooms, we will have an infant class, first/second class, third/fourth class and fifth/sixth class next year.

Exciting times!

Finances and Resources

We continue to purchase learning resources for the children –

- Readers have been purchased for the Oak, Hazel and Birch Rooms.
- The Spellings For Me Programme has been purchased at a wholeschool level for first class upwards. This is a brilliant programme as it is differentiated at the child's level so every child has a unique list of spellings.
- Further furniture will be purchased for the Birch and Willow Rooms.
- A PA System has been bought which will be beneficial for assemblies, open days, sports days, winter concerts etc.

Parents Association

The PA met on November 14th to discuss and organise the Bag Pack fundraiser, Open Day and Winter Concert. Our PA can be contacted at pa@betns.ie

Student Council

The Student Council met on November 18th to discuss fundraisers and ideas. It has been agreed that monies raised from the Bag Pack will go to new school jerseys and potentially a new school logo and motto.