

School Newsletter - May 2020

As we head into the summer term and schools remain closed due to the Covid19 restrictions, we thought we would share with you the teachers' and children's experiences so far of teaching and learning from home.

The staff and children of St Patricks National School, like teachers and children all over the country, have had to quickly adapt to a new way of teaching and learning. They have risen to this challenge by using a variety of online teaching and communication tools. Teaching remotely is not what teachers are used to (and is not what they would choose to do!) and many have found it a steep learning curve for themselves and the children in terms of getting to grips with technology and finding the balance between learning needs and available resources. The teachers have been in constant contact with each other to support each other in learning to teach remotely. The children have been very good at engaging with the material that has been sent to them and have been working extremely hard at home - well done kids! Ms Harper and all the teachers have enjoyed seeing the wonderful learning that is going on at home - it has really lifted their spirits!

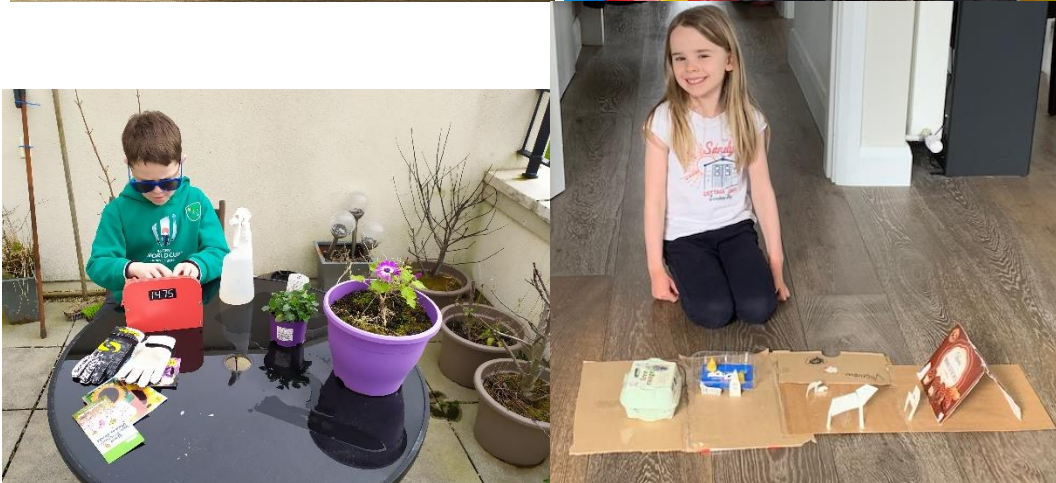
We know this is a really challenging time for families as they balance working from home, teaching from home and a mammoth amount of multitasking under the one roof so be kind to yourselves and avoid putting yourself under undue pressure at this time.

At the junior end of the school, senior infants have been working very hard from home. They have been exploring capacity and length in math, keeping up with their reading and writing and of course having lots of fun. They are also learning about mini-beasts which is a great excuse to spend lots of time in the garden.

The class teddy (his name, Johnny Sexton, was chosen by the pupils at the start of the year) has been joining in on some of the work and sending pictures to his classmates. Johnny recently discovered a 'distant relative' and the children have named him Toffee (he gets up to all sorts of mischief, as you can see from the pictures). Senior Infants have read stories together, danced to the birthday boogie to celebrate a birthday and they even had a zoom catch up with everyone. Ms Murphy and Ms Sheil said it was so lovely to see everyone's happy faces.



Abbey has been up to all sorts. Meanwhile, Eben has designed his own vet clinic.



Leo has been busy gardening and Sophia built a farm



Ellie's palm leaf for Easter

Meanwhile, green-fingered Ms Morgan is putting some of her free time to good use by pursuing her passion for gardening. The school garden has never looked so good!



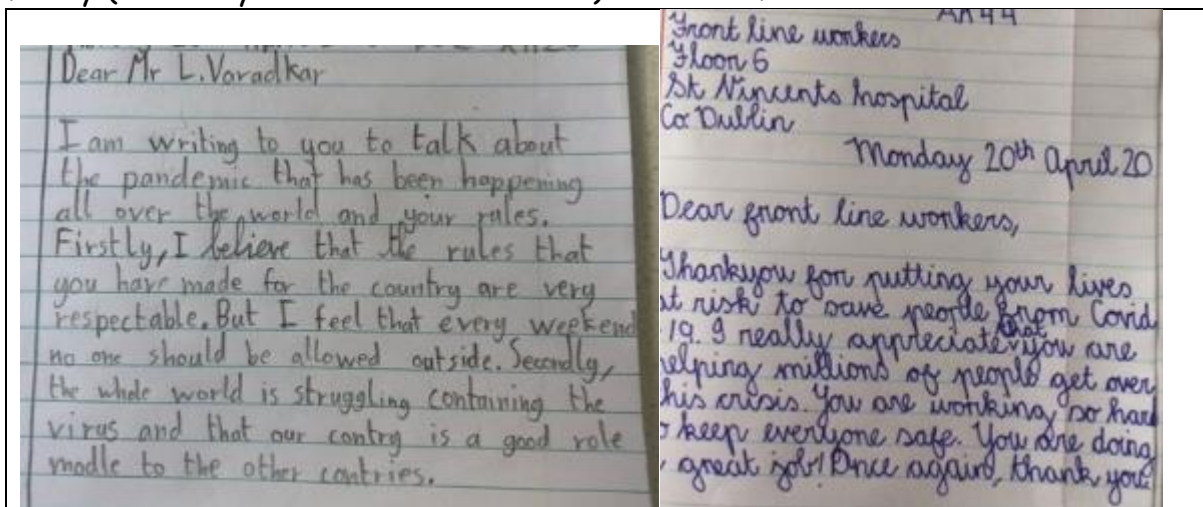
Amy, in 2nd class, has been learning her spellings and helping her younger sister, Lara, to search for bugs.

Ms O'Neill says that the system they have operating in 5th class is working well. However, she acknowledges that 'it is quite challenging for parents when working from home and possibly having a number of children at different stages in their education. I know the children and I are excited about the prospect of returning to the classroom when it is safe for us to do so.'

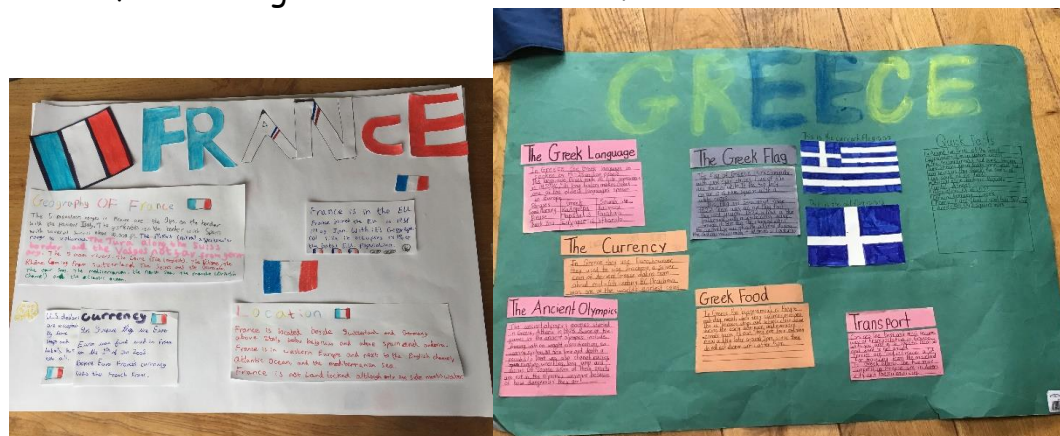
Ms Boland says her class have completed some super work at home; from posting letters to relatives, to completing research projects on the 1916 Easter Rising, they've been busy. On their work lists they've had everything from reading and reviewing a novel, to designing and making a bridge, so it's definitely a little bit different to their normal homework. She says that technology comes with its own difficulties, but it's less challenging dealing with it in a sunny garden than when you have 30 children in front of you waiting for it to work! 5th class have a

daily hour of exercise to complete too - some have been enjoying Joe Wicks P.E. lessons, others have been out walking with their dogs. Their teacher however, prefers sea-swimming on the North beach though to clear her head after much more time in front of a computer than she's used to!

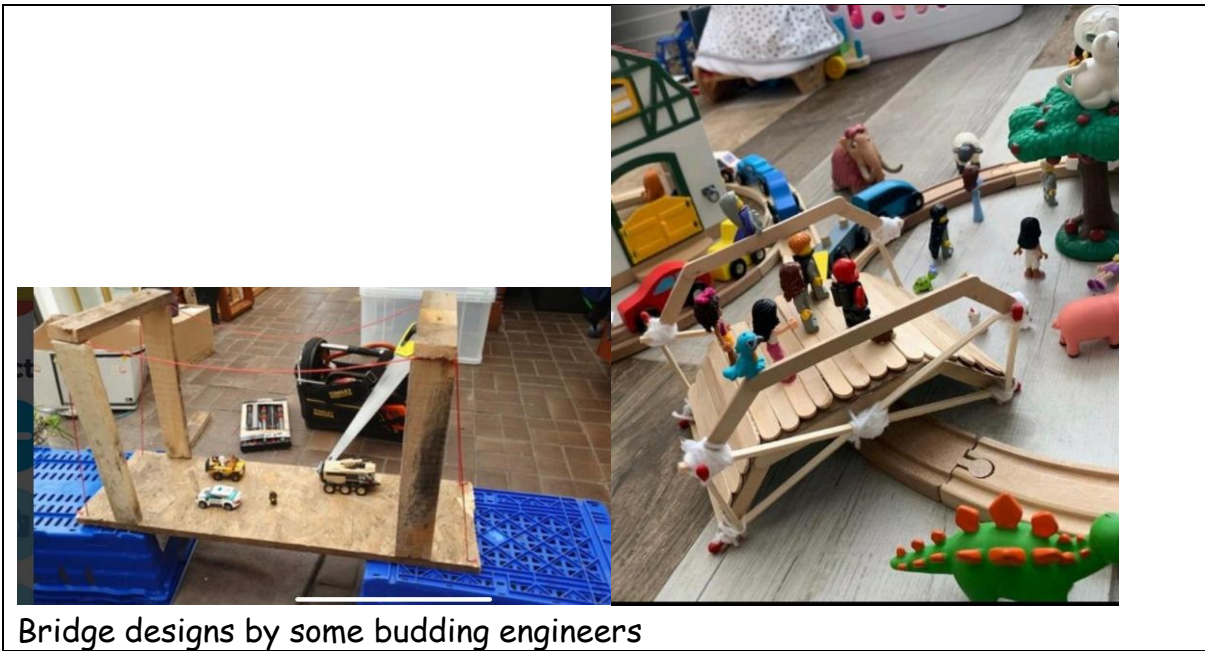
Using an online teaching platform, 5th class have been able to share stories, pictures and videos with their teacher and she said it is fabulous to see their big smiles and happy faces - there was the biltong one child was drying out, the flowers another was planting, lambing season on the farm and lots of messages about how it's easier to work when their teacher is standing over them! Their teacher admits that it's a strange way to be teaching and she really misses the interactions with her students but loves when she bumps into a child and their family (obviously at a 2 metre distance!) when out for a walk.



5th class have written letters to acknowledge the hard work of those working on the frontline against the Corona Virus.



Some super Geography learning



Bridge designs by some budding engineers



Cian, in 5th class, has had his pet snake help him to do his school work! In learning about length, he has compared his height to the length of the skin shed by his snake. His snake also enjoys listening to Cian read. Don't worry, the snake won't be enrolling in St Patrick's anytime soon..

6th class have also been using this time to get creative. Ella and Mathew made these beautiful bug hotels to invite some creepy crawlies into their gardens. Meanwhile, Finian created this Andy Warhol inspired art piece.



Our principal, Ms. Harper, has been using some of her time at the moment to volunteer at the Light House homeless service. This charity provides free meals to the homeless community in Dublin city. Ms Harper says the experience has been a real eye opener to the struggles of many people in our society but it also shows how incredibly kind people are especially in the current crisis. A donation box for food for the Light House service has been set up in the car park of St Patrick's church. The donations are collected from the box on an ongoing basis and taken to the Light House service. Ms Harper says local families have been so generous in making donations. Often the most difficult of times brings out the best in people.



Donations to the Light House Homeless Service

Until schools can reopen, the message from the teachers to the children is; stay safe, take care of each other, be patient with your families and follow the Government's guidelines. We know it might be hard at times and you are missing your friends (and your teachers!) but it won't be forever, and we hope you'll have some good memories from this time also.