

MEÁNSCOIL NA TRÓCAIRE CNOC AN tSEABHAIC
NUACHT LITIR AN tSAMHRAIDH



Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk

Summer News

2025



NEWSLETTER | VOLUME 21

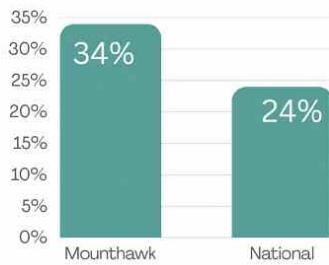
Leaving Certificate 2024 High Achievers



Mounthawk students who achieved 625 Points Leaving Cert 2024
Biye, Róisín, Rachel and Mohamed

Leaving Cert 2024

STUDENTS OVER 500 POINTS



17% of Students over 550 points
(13% nationally)

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GETTING H1 GRADE



	Mounthawk	National
Irish	23%	14%
Maths	13% (50% take Hons.)	11% (36% Take Hons.)
Engineering	44%	14%
Art	30%	15%
DCG	33%	17%
Physics	36%	21%
Construction Studies	24%	8%
Engineering	44%	14%
Biology	20%	19%
Business	18%	12%
Home Econ	23%	13%
English	10%	7%
Music	29%	20%



Evan Boyle, Eoghan Bradshaw, Labhraidh Costello



Rachel Feeley, Evelyn Fox, Biye Guo



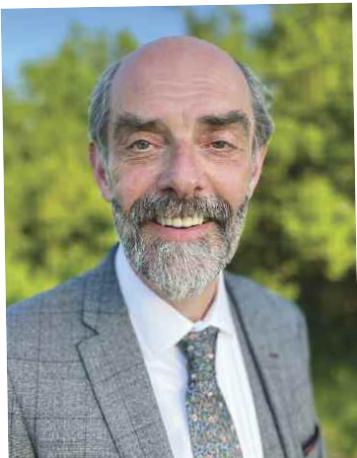
Rhys Maher, Mohamed Abdalla, Cathal Murphy



Jack Murphy, Ciara O'Sullivan, Róisín Rahilly



Congratulations to Elizabeth Burke, class of 2024, who received the Feargal Quinn National Award for Exceptional Performance in the Leaving Cert Applied. She achieved the highest grades in all of Munster, in fact! Pictured with Ms. Bernie O'Shea, LCA Co-ordinator and Mr. John O'Roarke



John O'Roarke | Principal

I am writing my final Summer Newsletter article with a certain nostalgia, but more so with a spirit of gratitude. It does not seem like 24 years since we opened our doors here in Mercy Mounthawk. As we turn into the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the school, it seems like a suitable moment to hand on the baton, and there is much for which I am thankful over that time.

It has been a privilege in my life to have had the opportunity, since my appointment to the management team in the amalgamation of 2001, to contribute to the establishment and growth of this wonderful school. In terms of bricks and mortar, we opened the main building, we developed the centenary hall block, the fitness suite, the recent modular accommodation including special classes, and of course, we look forward to the next multi-million euro extension with enhanced facilities for the practical and STEM subjects. Progress continues...

More centrally, in the amalgamation, we inherited the strong tradition of Mercy education in Tralee from the Mercy sisters, and together with a dedicated staff over those 24 years we have translated that ethos and embedded it in the culture of the Ireland of the 21st century, in a progressive, welcoming and transformative school with the highest of standards. We owe the young people of Tralee the best in educational opportunity and I believe we have grown a school that offers that possibility.

With that educational vision, we introduced a broad curriculum of 22 Leaving Certificate subjects in 2001 and new subjects such as PE, Coding, Performance and Dance, Polish and Chinese have been added to broaden the range

available to students. Our students achieve to the highest levels nationally, with the percentage of those achieving over 600 points consistently above the national 6% norm. Last year 17% of our students achieved over 550 points in the Leaving Certificate and 34% achieved over 500 points against 24% nationally.

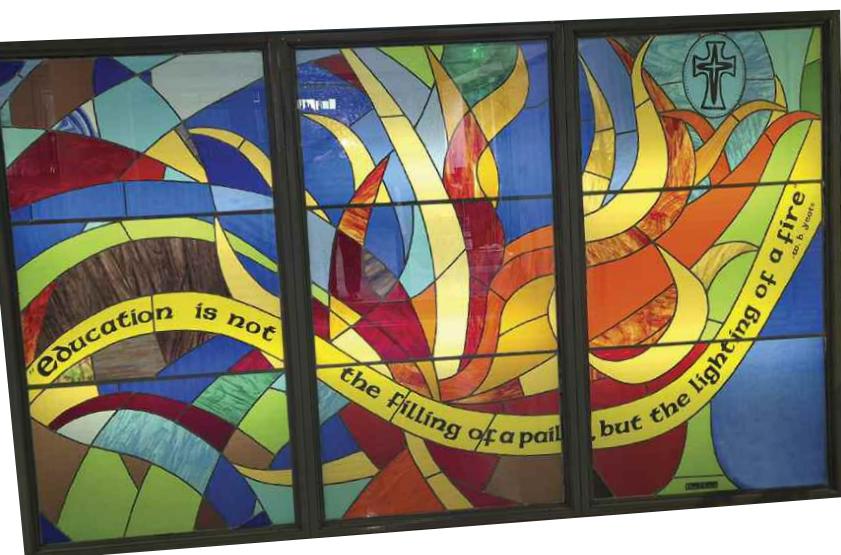
Our co-curricular programme has blossomed also over the years and we feature regularly on the national stage in so many areas. We have won countless regional and national titles in BT Young Scientist, Scifest, Young Social Innovators, Eco-Unesco, Robotics, Can-Sat, Poetry Aloud, Drama and Musical productions, and Choir, with regular All-Ireland level involvement in basketball, football, camogie and athletics also. It has been a joy to witness the energy, dedication and innovation of so many gifted and talented students and teachers over the years.

In all, it has been a fulfilling career in Mounthawk, shared with an enthusiastic and generous staff that has a commitment and dedication second to none. Thank you for your support, good counsel and enthusiasm. I will miss the camaraderie, care and encouragement, and I wish every one of you well in the future as you continue the work in service to the young people who come through our doors.

I want to thank you, the parents of our students, past and present, for entrusting your sons and daughters to us for their education. I hope that we have answered that trust to the best of our ability over the years, and I believe the school will continue to do so into the future.

To the students, I encourage you to search in yourself for the God-given gifts you carry and grow into that capacity. Then you will go out into your lives with hope. Do whatever little act you can do today and every day for good, to transform our society for the best...

John O'Roarke
June 2025





All Ireland Winning Football

Mr. Fleming with our teachers Louise Ní Mhuircheartaigh and Niamh O'Connor and past pupils Róisín Rahilly, Deirdre Kearney, Ciara McCarthy who visited the school in September with the All-Ireland trophy.



Bebas Computing Challenge - National Winner

Benedek Hernold Csorba, 5th year, has been awarded first place in the Senior Section of the Irish Bebras Computing Challenge. The Bebras® Challenge is an international competition that introduces computational thinking through problem-solving tasks and puzzles. It is run in over 60 countries and aims to ignite student interest in computer science and digital technology. This achievement places Benedek among the top young computing minds in the country. Also reaching the finals on the day from Mounthawk were Kai Seino, Justin McCarthy and Samuel Gleasure.

L-R: Charlie Kennelly, Kai Seino, Justin McCarthy, Benedek Hernold Csorba, Samuel Gleasure.



John Drummey from Kerry Mental Health Association presented a tablet to students for their efforts on #TieDayFriday. Funds help to provide free and affordable mental health educational activities and supports in Kerry.



Admin staff Bria and Brenda presented a cheque for over €1000 to Kerry Hospice/Palliative Care after a hugely successful coffee morning fundraiser.



The annual Staff Charity Raffle at Mercy Mounthawk raised €5,000. Cheques were presented to 9 local charities. Cora McElligott and Lyndsey Moriarty, organisers of the raffle, thanked all those who supported the event.

Guidance Counselling

Betty Farrell, Mairead O'Mahony and Grace O'Carroll



With June and the State Exams fast approaching, another school year draws to a close. It has been a productive and very busy few months in the Guidance Department. All applications to the CAO were submitted by the 1st February deadline while Educational Impact Statements for D.A.R.E. applicants were supplied by the 15th March deadline. Information on Post Leaving Certificate courses, apprenticeships, SUSI grants, scholarships, career events and preparing for life after school was circulated to students both in Guidance classes, one to one appointments and on their Google Classroom. We continued to deliver the 'Reach+ Career and College Preparation Programme' to 5th and 6th years through their Guidance classes.

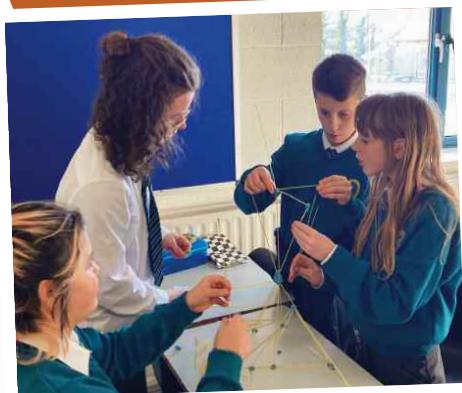
There were a number of invaluable information evenings facilitated by the Guidance Department addressing subject choice for incoming first years, for 1st years going into 2nd year, and the Senior Cycle subject options for 3rd and 4th years going into 5th year. Our sixth years were afforded the opportunity to visit many College open days with the school. We visited University College Cork, MTU Kerry and University of Limerick in October and the Careers Fair in November. Visiting these College campuses is invaluable to the students in helping them decide their future career path. We also gave our sixth years the opportunity to attend the Kerry College open day and brought a group of students to see the incredible facilities and courses on offer in the Monavalley and Clash campus. In addition, we had various speakers from Industry and Colleges visit the school throughout the year to present to 5th and 6th years including Liebherr, MTU, Kerry College, University of Galway and UL.

To initiate the process of getting students to think about their future career paths and help with subject choice, all 4th year students were registered with the Reach programme and given the opportunity to use the Career Interest test and Subject Choice tool. The students will continue to use this programme in 5th and 6th year. The first years were registered with the Reach Junior Cycle programme and will continue to work on this programme in 2nd and 3rd year in terms of Study Skills, Career Options and Self-Assessment. The Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) was administered to incoming 1st years in February.

Fourteen Senior Cycle students took part in SafePass training which was offered in school before Christmas. All students successfully completed the course and received a four year SafePass Certificate. Two Transition Year students were afforded the opportunity to participate in the 'Prep for Med' Day in UCC. They learned Clinical Skills, received a tour of the FLAME Anatomy laboratory and went to CUH to hear from various Medical professionals and watch a live Caesarian Section.

Finally, we would like to thank our colleagues, parents and management for their continuing support. We wish both the Junior and Leaving Certificate students well in their upcoming exams and we bid farewell to another group of Leaving Certificate students. We hope that they will be happy and fulfilled on the individual paths they have chosen. As they begin both their exams, and their journey on from here, we leave them with Winston Churchill's famous words '*Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts*' - believe in yourself and never give up.

Big Brother Big Sister Mentoring Programme



The Big Brother Big Sister mentoring programme kicked off in October. The aim of the programme is to help first years transition smoothly and successfully into Mercy Mounthawk and help them settle into post-primary school life. Participation in the programme gives both first and fourth years the opportunity to develop friendships and increase their confidence and interpersonal skills. 26 students got involved in the programme this year.

The participants met once a week during Thursday lunchtime. During this time, the students played board games, charades, team challenges, 30 seconds, cards, participated in a Christmas cookie decoration competition, went on a treasure hunt and had a chance to chat over hot chocolate and get to know others in the group. Fourth year students also helped first years with any questions they had about school, homework, study or lockers, but the main aim of the programme is to have fun. Both first and fourth years said they really enjoyed their participation in the programme.

Senior Debaters

This year, the halls of Mounthawk Secondary School once again echoed with the quick wit, sharp logic, and occasional dramatic flair of our Senior debate team.

From September to Spring, our 6th year debaters kept minds sharp and audiences entertained with a range of debates that were as thought-provoking as they were contentious.

Among the most heated arguments of the year? The eternal struggle: Which sweet reigns supreme in a box of Celebrations or Heroes? Allegiances were sworn, passions flared, and even the humble Bounty had its day in court. If nothing else, the team proved that no topic is too trivial to dissect with Oxford-style precision and a few well-timed Points of Information.

Though disappointment lingered with the news that the UCC Philosoph Munster Schools Debating Competition would not run this year, our Seniors didn't miss a beat. They continued to refine their rhetorical skills, sparring in classrooms and assemblies alike, ensuring that Mounthawk remained a place where arguments are welcome - as long as they're well-structured.



L-R: Mr. David McElligott, Mariia Suprun, Yasmine Odugbesan, Ms. Maeve Burke

To our 6th year Senior debaters: Mariia Suprun and Yasmine Odugbesan, thank you for your voices, your passion, and your ability to turn even a chocolate bar into a battleground of ideas. We know the world beyond Mounthawk will be all the better (and better argued) with you in it.



L-R: Hazel Guilfoyle, Grace Reilly, Seán Barry and Tom Gleasure.



Front L-R: Grace Reilly, Mariia Suprun, Lucy McGarrell and Bláthnáid Walsh.
Back L-R: Ms. Niamh Fitzgerald, Hazel Guilfoyle, Seán Barry,
Mr. David McElligott, Tom Gleasure, Thomas Brolly, Ms. Maeve Burke.

JUNIOR DEBATING CLUB: A Lunchtime Hit!

by Ms. N. Fitzgerald

Our Junior Debating Club this year was run by enthusiastic TY students. This is a lively and popular lunchtime activity where first, second and third years sharpen their speaking skills, build confidence, and learn to think on their feet whilst enjoying fun topics, friendly competition, and having lots of laughs! Whether you're a future lawyer or just love a good argument, there's a place for everyone at the debate table!

I would like to give a special mention to Ms. S. Curtin, Sophie Mitchell and Thomas Brolly for facilitating the club with me and bringing so much fun and enthusiasm.

Student Testimonial

by Erika Balode, 1.2

"I am a first-year student, and I joined Debate Club a bit later into the year and I loved it. I enjoyed writing speeches, talking, and debating with others on a certain topic. It was nice finding out new information from other debaters on the different topics. I learned a lot about public speaking and how you can write speeches and debate against others. I personally have anxiety when it comes to public speaking, but Debate Club definitely helped me with that. I participated in a few debating events such as the Mock EYP. I probably will do this kind of thing again next year. I really enjoyed my time in Debate Club and would definitely recommend it to others, such as first years that'll be coming in next year. Kudos to the people organising the club and the events, I really appreciate it. Thank you."

Maths Week

The Team Maths competition has been a long-running activity of the Irish Maths Teachers' Association with regional rounds beginning in 1991 and National finals in 2005.

The annual table quiz has teams of 4 students from Leaving Certificate year. The questions are based on the Leaving Certificate Higher Level course. Presentation Tralee hosted the regional round and Mounthawk had a strong representation with 4 teams of students. Representing the school were:

Team 1: Kevin O'Donoghue, Tadhg Moran, Megan Lorenz, Katie Fitzmaurice

Team 2: Sophia Darfoor, Alice Fitzgibbon, Charlie Nolan, Jack Nolan

Team 3: Pádraig O'Halloran, Seán Corkery, Anuska Saha, Jack Barrett

Team 4: Róisín Cantwell, Sophie Hassett, Jack Given, Kealan Lynch



Top right, clockwise: Team 3 - Pádraig, Seán, Anuska and Jack. Bottom right, clockwise: Team 1 - Kevin, Tadhg, Megan and Katie.



Huge congratulations to Kai Seino and Benedek Hernold Csorba who qualified to compete in the national finals of the All-Ireland Linguistics Olympiad in Dublin in March. They placed 11th and 50th nationally earning them the status of Silver Standard and Honourable mention respectively!



1st Year Maths Quiz Winners: Jessica Reen, Ellen Herlihy, Kira Kravchenko, Kelly He, Siun Harty, Maria Gilroy

5th Year Visit to Liebherr for Engineers' Week

As part of Engineers' Week, our 5th Year students got the chance to visit the Liebherr factory in Killarney. The staff were very welcoming and gave the students a great tour of the site.

They explained how the machines are designed and built, and students got to see the different stages of the process up close. It was a really interesting visit, and many of the students said they learned a lot and really enjoyed it.

A big thank you to everyone at Liebherr for taking the time to show us around and for giving the students such a great experience.

Talk from MTU Kerry - Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering

We were delighted to welcome representatives from MTU Kerry to speak to our senior students about the MTU834 Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering course.



They gave an overview of what the course involves and the different career paths it can lead to. Students also got the chance to try out some of the technology used in the course, including VR headsets, which gave them a real sense of what studying Engineering at MTU would be like.

It was a really engaging and informative session - thanks to the team from MTU Kerry for coming in and sharing their time and expertise.

A YEAR OF SUCCESS FOR Mounthawk Masterminds

The Mounthawk Masterminds (Culann Dowling, Francisco Hanafin, Conan Seino, Eamon Kissane, Aaron McElligott and James Daly) have had an incredibly successful year. The dedicated group of students from 2nd and 3rd year have combined engineering, innovation, and environmental awareness to achieve a high level of success in several national STEM competitions throughout the year.

FIRST LEGO League - Submerged Season

The Mounthawk Masterminds were one of 273 teams from across Ireland to take part in this year's FIRST® LEGO® League (FLL) SUBMERGED competition. FLL challenges students to solve real-world problems through four main areas: robot design, robot game, an innovation project, and core values such as teamwork and inclusion.

The team's robot, Jeffrey 3.0, featured a modular design with custom attachments and precision coding. It performed reliably in timed missions during the robot game. The team achieved 1st place in the regional final in TU Shannon & 2nd place in the All-Ireland finals in the robot game.

Their innovation project, 'Ocean Devotion', tackled microplastic pollution by designing a 3D-printed remote-controlled catamaran. The vessel uses a surface net and a ferrofluid-based magnetic filter to collect plastic waste without harming marine life. The project involved expert consultations, community surveys, and real-world testing.

After winning the regional final in TU Shannon in March, the team progressed to the All-Ireland Final in May, where they were awarded runner-up overall, placing them among the top young engineering teams in the country.

Eco-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards

The same innovation project, 'Ocean Devotion', was entered in the Eco-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards, where the team received the Overall Junior Water Category Award in a ceremony held at the Convention Centre in Dublin. Their work combined environmental engineering with education and community outreach.

The project included:

- Conducting a survey of 162 students to gauge awareness of microplastic pollution.
- Creating a collection of short stories about microplastic pollution written by 5th class students from Moyderwell Primary School.
- Organising a schoolyard cleanup and a beach cleanup with 25 students and Tralee Tidy Towns.
- Collaborating with marine conservationists and scientists to validate their design.
- Raising awareness about ocean plastics through presentations, school visits, and online outreach.



The group were also very lucky to be able to spend a day out at the Maharees Waterworld Diving Centre earlier in the year where they got hands-on diving lessons and learned about our local marine life. By blending environmental science with robotics, the Mounthawk Masterminds showed how innovation can contribute meaningfully to solving ecological challenges.

Culann Dowling - BD STEM Stars Award Winner

Team member, 3rd-year student Culann Dowling, won the Overall Software Award at the BD STEM Stars 2025 competition for his health-tech platform Physiopal. Designed as an app and website to support physiotherapy patients, Physiopal allows users to follow personalised exercise plans, track progress, and stay in touch with physiotherapists between sessions.

Culann developed the platform to meet real-world healthcare needs, combining front-end user design with back-end tracking features. His hard work was recognised at Ireland's largest regional STEM competition, which featured over 250 entries from across Munster.

Congratulations to all members of the Mounthawk Masterminds on an outstanding year of achievements. We look forward to seeing even more success from this talented group in the year ahead. To stay updated on their work, visit their YouTube channel: "Mounthawk Masterminds".

CanSat Competition 2025 OUR SCHOOL'S JOURNEY TO THE SKIES

This year, our school proudly launched not one, but four ambitious teams into the regional finals of the CanSat competition - a national STEM challenge that asks students to think like real aerospace engineers... and then build like them, too.

What Is CanSat?

Imagine being handed a soda can. Now imagine turning that can into a fully functional satellite that's launched hundreds of meters into the sky, collects scientific data on its descent, and sends that data wirelessly back to Earth - all in real time. That's CanSat!

It's an incredible opportunity for students to apply science, technology, engineering, and maths in one exhilarating project, from soldering sensors to coding flight software - and all while working as a team.

Our Four Teams - One Mission: Innovation

This year, our students didn't just build satellites - they created mini-labs of the future. Here's a quick look at each team's creative mission:

- The Epic Gamers designed a CanSat that used a solar panel to monitor light intensity during descent. By tracking changes in ambient light, their satellite could help us understand environmental brightness patterns - a concept with possible applications in solar farm efficiency or even smart city lighting.
- Goal Diggers added a clever buzzer-based proximity alert system. When the CanSat approached the ground, it beeped - acting as a low-cost landing alert. While it may seem simple, this idea mirrors real-world tech that could be key in future drone deliveries or even flying cars to help detect safe landings.
- Hexadrive focused on humidity detection, aiming to analyse atmospheric moisture during descent. Their mission was a nod to modern climate science, exploring how miniaturised sensors can support environmental monitoring and even precision agriculture.
- Team Synergy, made up of Matthew Guerin, Eryk Musialkowski and Lewis Hughes, took things to the next level. Their CanSat was equipped to measure and analyse Earth's magnetic field throughout its flight. But this wasn't just for fun - the team was exploring how magnetic field patterns could affect animal migration and plant growth, opening up questions that connect space science with biology and ecology. Their cross-disciplinary mission showed how future satellites could help scientists better understand Earth's natural systems.



L-R: Matthew Guerin, Lewis Hughes, Eryk Musialkowski

Launch Day - High Stakes, High Science

All four teams successfully launched their CanSats, gathered real-time wireless data, and met their mission objectives. The launches were carried out with precision and excitement, as students watched their satellites soar into the sky and return valuable telemetry data back to ground stations they had built themselves.

Conclusion - Future Engineers in the Making

This year's CanSat competition wasn't just about launching cans - it was about launching ideas, ambitions, and the next generation of innovators. Our students showed resilience, creativity, and technical skill throughout the process. With missions that spanned from solar science to magnetic mysteries, they demonstrated that the future of science is not only in safe hands - it's also thinking far ahead.

We couldn't be prouder of what all four teams achieved.



Eamon Kissane at the Maharees Waterworld Diving Centre



Young Environmentalist Award Winners: Conan Seino, Francisco Hanafin, James Daly, Culann Dowling & Aaron McElligott.



BT National Awards

We had another successful year in the world of science. We had 10 successful projects in BT Young Scientist this year who won the following awards:



1st HUMAN HEALTH INTERMEDIATE INDIVIDUAL

Aoibheann Daly and her project entitled:

NeuroVision: An AI-based Tool for Glioblastoma Genetic Analysis and Personalised Treatment

Aoibheann went on to win out the entire Health and Well-Being category.

1st HUMAN HEALTH INTERMEDIATE GROUP

Cathal Fitzgerald and **Donncha Hartnett** and their project: *Pineapple Power: Bromelain Balm for Accelerated Burn Recovery.*

1st SOCIAL & BEHAVIOURAL INTERMEDIATE INDIVIDUAL

Orla Buttmer

The Role of Self-Determination Theory in enhancing Intrinsic Motivation Among Transition Year Students.

EDUCATOR OF EXCELLENCE Ms. Eimear Nolan

HIGHLY COMMENDED Áine Newsome

DISPLAY AWARD

Conan Seino, Torran Millar and Feidhlim Ginty, Molly Brick, Jeri Samonte, Jolin Weng and Abigail Adetunji

We also had great success at Scifest where we picked up 5 awards.

CHEMISTRY AWARD

Abigail Adetunji, Jeri Samonte, Jolin Weng (4th Years) for project: *'Peeling Back the Science: Purifying Fast Fashion Run-off with Orange Peels'*

ISTA AWARD

Gearóid Hingston, Ben Deegan and Cian O'Halloran (2nd Years) for project *'Manual Communication and Learning Device for Children or Adolescents with Intellectual Disabilities'*

MATHS IN SCIENCE AWARD

Kai Seino and Benedek Hernold Csorba for project: *'Fractal Footprints: Mapping the Mathematical Patterns of Cities'*

MALLINCKRODT STEM EXCELLENCE AWARD

Conan Seino, Torran Millar and Feidhlim Ginty for project: *'How can the Mechanics of Origami be applied to Modern Engineering'*

EIRGRID RUNNER UP Moira Butler and Isabel Dillon



HEALTHY HOME CHEF 2025

Well done to 4th Year student Aobhín O'Sullivan, who represented the school at the Healthy Home Chef 2025 All-Ireland Finals in Sligo this May. Out of over 600 entrants nationwide, Aobhín was one of just 16 finalists in the Senior Category - an incredible achievement!

The final took place at Atlantic Technological University (ATU) St. Angela's College, where Aobhín showcased her culinary talents by preparing a nutritious, affordable, and home-cooked meal with a healthier twist. With renowned chef Neven Maguire among the judging panel, the standard was exceptionally high.

Aobhín received fantastic support and guidance from Ms. Breen and all the Home Economics teachers throughout the competition.

A huge well done to Aobhín on this amazing accomplishment!



Chef Neven Maguire,
Aobhín O'Sullivan, Martina Lawless,
Dr Amanda McCloat,
President of St. Angela's College



LISTOWEL FOOD FAIR Orla Buttmer

'I took part in the Listowel Food Fair 'Fake Away' competition where you had to submit an online entry of a healthier version of your favourite takeaway and describe in what ways you made it a healthier option. 10 entries were chosen to compete in the final which took place on the 8th November, 2024 in Presentation Secondary School Listowel. The students had to prepare, cook and serve their dish for the judges.'

'For my fake away I made homemade fish and chips served with homemade mushy peas and tartar sauce. Overall in the Senior Category I came in 2nd place. It was a great day and I was delighted to take part in it, especially because my late Grandmother Sheila Broderick was the co-founder of the Listowel Food Fair in 1995.'

Orla Buttmer (TY) pictured with Mr. Jimmy Deenihan at the Listowel Food Fair.



TRALEE FOOD FESTIVAL

Congratulations to Orla Buttmer, Seoidín McBride and Joel Okuliri for representing Mercy Mounthawk at a sandwich making showcase at Tralee Food Festival!



Mindfulness

Students in 4th Year participated in the 'Back to Breath' program, developed at UCC, which introduces Mindfulness to young people during their Tuesday Wellbeing class.

Mindfulness is a particular approach to lived experience. It helps students to untangle experiences by noticing sensations, thoughts, emotions and impulses to act, so as to savour what is good in life and respond constructively to experiences that challenge us. Stepping back from experience helps participants to relate better to themselves and the world beyond them. The formal practices undertaken in class help students to develop skills when life is calm, that can be used in times of greater challenge.

Some key learnings are that 'thoughts are not necessarily facts', how to decenter so as to take things a little less personally, noticing reactivity and learning to intentionally cultivate a more kindly, patient and gentle way of being with the self and others. Students learn about the stress cycle, how it's showing up for them and in people around them, and look at ways to attend to it.



This year we trialled offering 6th Year students the opportunity to come to a 'Drop In' Mindfulness Meet Up on Wednesdays during Tutor time. In addition to this we set up a Mindfulness Google Classroom with practices students could use at home. The Wednesday sessions were well-attended and focused on helping students learn skills to ground and steady themselves, while cultivating positive attitudes like trust, equanimity and a present-moment orientation to thought. It was hoped that these sessions would offer students a way of supporting themselves further through a year filled with many opportunities and challenges.

Wellbeing Week by Ms. Ciara Lucid

As part of Wellbeing Week 2025, Ms. Lucid's TY Academic English class organised a series of literacy-based games to share their love of literature with their peers. The students created 'The Word Zone', a two-hour event held in the Centenary Hall. It took weeks of careful planning and preparation to ensure everything ran smoothly on the day. Other TY groups were invited to take part in the games, all of which were hosted by Ms. Lucid's students. Activities included Wordle, Countdown, Bingo, Speed Dating, and more. It was an enjoyable event for everyone involved, especially the students who got to show off their karaoke skills after winning a round of Countdown.



Right: Our super first and second year volunteers who helped out on the School Admissions Day:
Regan Zhang, Gearóid Hingston, Cian O'Halloran and Ben Deegan running the Parents' Council tea and coffee stand.

Rumour has it the tea and coffee never tasted better!

Volunteering

These students from first, second and third year showed great community spirit when they picked litter on the entire Mounthawk campus. They did a fantastic job, they did it in style and with smiles on their faces. Well done!





Cineáltais and Health Promotion Week

'Bí Cineálta' translates to 'Be Kind' in English. It is the name of Ireland's national anti-bullying initiative, specifically the procedures and action plan developed by the Department of Education to prevent and address bullying in primary and post-primary schools. The initiative emphasises the importance of kindness, empathy and understanding in building a positive school environment. This year a lot of work was completed as part of a 3-year plan to implement the new procedures in Mounthawk.

As well as work on policy, partnerships, and curriculum, the Steering Committee and the Student Council Wellbeing Committee produced an accessible School Culture and Values Declaration, a Cineáltais Charter. This charter outlines the school's culture and values and how they can help to prevent and address bullying in an age-appropriate manner. There was input from all members of the school community including focus groups with the student council, students, teachers and parents.



The charter was launched on 7th April during our Health Promotion Week. The week saw a series of fun events including a 5km run for 5th years, a quiz for 3rd years, a centenary session, as well as creative competitions and a fun 'Get to know the Staff' treasure hunt.




CINEÁLTAS | CHARTER

In the Mercy Tradition we hold the Christian Values of Respect, Kindness, Community Spirit and Inclusion.

As a school community **we commit to**

- Working together to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and kindness
- Ensuring all in the school community can safely report harmful and bullying behaviours
- Addressing bullying behaviour in accordance with school policy

As a school community **we will not tolerate**

- Any form of bullying, harassment, intimidation or discrimination
- Disrespect for any member of the school community or disregard for their personal property



**REPORTING BULLYING IS A WAY OF HELPING ANOTHER PERSON
SILENCE IS NOT KINDNESS**

Seachtain na Gaeilge

Cúinne na Gaeilge le Ms. Ní Dhubhda



Biongó na Cúigiú Bliana

Mar is gnách bhain pobal uile na scoile súp as na himeachtaí a eagraíodh do Sheachtain na Gaeilge i gCnoc an tSeabhaic i mbliana. Chuir lucht na céadblíana túis beo, bríomhar le himeachtaí na seachtaine agus iad ag baint smúit as an úrlár le céiliúreachtaí Niamh Ní Chonchúir dóibh. Go deimhin d'egraigh sí céiliúreachtaí do gach rang céadblíana agus idirbhliana i gcaitheamh na seachtaine agus bhaineadar sult as na rinní a fhoghlaim agus iad a chleachtadh go fonnmar. Baineadh ceol as na frathacha le linn don dreoilín a bheith á rinnce ach go háirithe.

Reachtáladh réamhhabháta agus babhta craobhíde de thráth na gceist boird i measc daltaí na dara bliana faoi stiúir Ms. Long agus Mr Flavin le cabhair speisialta ó dhaltaí na hidirbhliana. Ba iad Moira Butler, Mollie Sexton, Mia Boyle agus Micheál O Dwyer ó Rang Ms. Ní Dhubhda a tháinig sa chéad áit.

Tionóladh an cómórtas ealaíne agus seansfhocail bliantiúil i measc daltaí na céadblíana agus ba iad Courtney Raymond, Margrethe Al Hadai agus Aoibhinn Corridon buaiteoirí an chomórtais sin. Ina theannta san d'egraigh Ms. Ní Dheargáin seisiún ceoil oscailte do dhaltaí na scoile ar suim leo ceol traidisiúnta le linn am lón ar an Máirt.

Bhain lucht na tríú bliana taitneamh as an tóraíocht taisce a dhear Ms. Ní Dhubhda agus bhí fuadar fúthu timpeall na scoile ag lorg eolais chun ceisteanna a fhreagairt roimh a gcomhscoláirí.

Chaith lucht na séú bliana smut de thráthnóna Déardaoin i halla an cheiliúrtha agus iad saíte sa tráth na gceist boird faoi stiúir Ms. Cronin. Ba iad Chloe Devine, Róisín Cantwell, Sadhbh Cadogan agus Sophie Hassett as rang Ms. Reidy a thug an chraobh leo ar deireadh. Tugadh deis eile do lucht na séú bliana taitneamh a bhaint as imeachtaí na seachtaine nuair a d'egraigh Mr Costello cluiche peile amuigh sa ghort idir ranganna ardleibhéal agus ranganna gnáthleibhéal Gaeilge na séú bliana tráthnóna Dé hAoine. Cluiche dúshlánach a bhí ann ach bhí an lámh in uachtar ag an dream ardleibhéal i ndeireadh na dála.

Is cuid lárnach de cheiliúradh na seachtaine speisialta seo é an seisiún ceiliúrtha a reachtáltar ar an Aoine i halla an cheiliúrtha agus ní raibh aon easpa tallainne sa halla ar an Aoine. Chan múinteoirí ó roinn na Gaeilge Grace le cór na scoile mar chuid de na himeachtaí. Cuireadh clabhsúr le cúrsáid ceiliúrtha le biongó na cúigiú bliana a reachtáil Ms Cronin tráthnóna Dé hAoine. Seachtain ghníomhach a bhí ann gan aon agó agus clár cuimsitheach imeachtaí leagtha amach do phobal na scoile chun an Ghaeilge a cheiliúradh.



Buaiteoirí chomórtais Seanfhocail: Courtney Raymond agus Margrethe Al Hadai. Ar iarradh an bpictíúr Aoibhinn Corridon



Seisiún oscailte, Seachtain na Gaeilge 2025: Mollie Dwyer Diggin, Eva Devine, Thomas Brolly, Kayleigh Enright, Aoife Hobbert, Lile Griffin and Fionn Hassett



Ar a mBealach go Corca Dhuibhne

Gabhan Roinn na Gaeilge buíochas le Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne a bhronn trí leathscoláireacht orainn arís i mbliana. Tréasláimíde Ben Deegan, Íde Hussey agus Aobhín Lawless O'Sullivan a bhuaigh na leathscoláireachtá agus a bheidh ag tabhairt aghaidh ar thréimhse sa ghaeltacht i gcaitheamh an tsamhraidh. Bainigí súp as!

Trad Group

Bliain Iontach Taitneamhach Ceoil

This year we had the most fabulous injection of fresh energy and positivity from our new 1st year and 2nd year members, who met weekly until Christmas.

They were supported and encouraged by our more senior musicians, new tunes were shared, and this encouragement gave such confidence to our Juniors that they took part in: the Patrick O'Keeffe festival, the Carol service and our Seachtain na Gaeilge seisiún.

Is ag dul ó neart go neart a bheimíd leis an dream seo a chairde!

Slán le Seán Michael Redican & Cian Hennessy

For those of you who might not know the boys well, I wanted to remind you all of the insane Covid world that these guys were catapulted into as young first years. I hope this photo shows my appreciation for how they used their music and enthusiasm to encourage and support, not only during that confusing time, but in all their years here at school agus táim ana, ana, bhuioch don bheirt acu dá bharr seo.

I don't think Cian will mind if I mention Seán Michael especially, for his outstanding patience when it came to using his incredible gift and talent to enhance so many of our special occasions, often at a moment's notice.

Beart fhear uasal séimh, le bothar iontach amach rompu.

Ms. Marie Ní Dheargáin



Patrick O'Keeffe Festival, front L-R: Aoife Hobbert, Molly Dwyer Diggin, Kayleigh Enright, Seán Mícheal Redican, Cathal Fitzgerald and Andrew Redican. **Back L-R:** Leona Kelly, Leah Kildea, Aoibhinn Hennessy, Aoife Kennedy, Fionn O'Connor, Mollie Sexton and Lile Griffin



Bonnie



Bonnie joined Mercy Mounthawk from My Canine Companion last September, and in just a few short months, she has truly become part of the heart and soul of the school.

Whether she's walking the corridors, visiting classrooms, or sitting in on assemblies, she never fails to bring a smile to the faces of both students and staff alike. Her calm, friendly presence has had a hugely positive impact on school life - helping students feel more at ease, lifting moods, and creating a greater sense of community.

Students have been incredibly respectful and responsible in how they interact with Bonnie, following her simple rules and helping her feel safe and comfortable in every space. One of the wonderful outcomes of Bonnie's presence has been an increased awareness



of keeping our environment clean. Thanks to Miss Michelle Daly and her Y5 class, the PawsForACause team has been running the "Bin it for Bonnie" initiative, encouraging everyone to keep our halls tidy - not just for ourselves, but for Bonnie too! Special thanks to Eileen Evans SNA, Bonnie's main caregiver, and her main assistant, Mr. Jack Brosnan.

We're so lucky to have her as part of the Mounthawk family, and we're proud of how much love and care the school community has shown her in return. We're already looking forward to more pawsitive adventures next year!

Transition Year

by Mr. Ronan Redican



"Change is the end result of all true learning"

Leo Buscaglia

Every year in Transition Year is different - new faces, new dynamics, and new challenges. But one thing remains constant: the incredible capacity for change and growth in our students. Leo Buscaglia's words resonate deeply as we look back on the TY Class of 2025. Over the course of this extraordinary year, our students have not only learned new skills and gained valuable experiences, but many have also discovered entirely new sides of themselves.

We lit up the stage at the end of October with our Sky Full of Stars fashion show - a spectacular event that celebrated individuality, teamwork, and creativity, in full colour and sparkle. From that night forward, the year unfolded with momentum and meaning.

We built houses - out of cardboard - in partnership with Kerry County Council and Victoria McCarthy, Architectural Conservation Officer. It was a creative and meaningful project that brought sustainability, design, and social awareness together in one unforgettable experience.

TY 2025 was rich in real-world learning. Students heard from Tony O'Reilly on the realities of gambling addiction, engaged in an important session on breast cancer awareness, and learned the ins and outs of taxation from the Revenue Office. Some of our TYs took part in a brilliant work preparation programme run by Tralee Credit Union, which included mock interviews and job readiness workshops - invaluable preparation for the world beyond school.

Cultural experiences were central this year too. We visited the Kerry County Museum, explored Cork City Gaol, learned about life behind bars in 19th-century Ireland, and soaked in the energy and history of Paris on our TY Tour where students explored iconic sights and world-famous museums. We also made a splash closer to home with a fun and well-earned trip to the Aquadome - a great chance to unwind together.

The arts were alive and well. Our WhistleBlast music project returned, bringing students together with their peers from St. Ita's and St. Joseph's special school for an unforgettable performance in

Siamsa Tíre. Some of our musicians even travelled to Galway's Town Hall Theatre to perform for a live audience. Ger Carey's comedy day, also in Siamsa, had everyone in stitches, while the Battle of the Bands - organised with style and energy by Sophie Mitchell and Sam Fitzgibbon - saw a record number of TY entries and a night to remember.

There were moments of deep reflection too. Our annual Donal Walsh Retreat to Knock offered students time for personal and spiritual growth - a day that left a mark on many. Our Road Safety Day at the INEC was sobering and powerful, reminding students of the very real responsibilities that come with growing up.

Outdoors, our students embraced the challenge of the Gaisce walk from Dingle, with tired legs and wide smiles. Others helped plant over 1,000 trees at the John Mitchels complex as part of a local biodiversity programme - planting roots in more ways than one.

And, as always, there were the joyful, small moments - skating on ice in Killarney before Christmas, cheering each other on at sports events, collaborating on projects, building friendships that will last well beyond TY.

I want to sincerely thank our school management and every staff member who contributed to the success of TY 2025. Special thanks to our incredible Core Team - David Smith, Cora McElligott, Mairéad Ryan, Mari Kearney, Rachel O'Neill, and Lyndsey Moriarty - whose hard work, creativity, and passion made this year possible.

As we close the chapter on TY 2025, we return to the wisdom that guides us every year: you get out of TY what you put in. Our students showed up - with curiosity, with heart, and with courage, and in doing so, they've grown in ways that will stay with them for years to come.

Here's to the TY Class of 2025 - and to the next adventure for the incoming Transition Year Students. We can't wait to see what comes next.

TY Young Social Innovators Projects 2025

'Tap Trap' *by Ms. Rachel O'Neill*

This year, our Transition Year students took part in the national Young Social Innovators competition with their campaign entitled 'Tap Trap'.

The 'Tap Trap' team, better known as 'The Scroll Patrol' spent the year educating and empowering their peers to disconnect from their screens and reconnect with the real world. The group inspired their school community and beyond to become more mindful of how time is spent online, encouraging everyone to "break the tap trap" by managing screen time wisely, promoting a healthier digital-life balance.

To promote real-life conversation, as part of their YSI Week Initiative, the team launched the 'Conversation Station' campaign, posting talking-point prompts around the school to encourage face-to-face chats. They also ran a powerful initiative - the 24-Hour No Phone Challenge, where students voluntarily gave up their phones. Many students even extended the challenge for over 48+ hours!

Another of their highly successful initiatives was the 'Back to Basics' fundraiser in aid of Jigsaw Kerry Youth Mental Health Services. This screen-free event included karaoke, Just Dance, board games, workshops and competitions, raising over €550 and promoting fun, connection, and wellbeing-without the use of phones.

In April, the group were honoured to be shortlisted for the National YSI Awards and nominated for the 'Digital Innovator Award' sponsored by Virgin Media. Arie O'Shea, Seoidín McBride, Lisa O'Shea, Katie Teahan, and Annie Brassil represented the team admirably in a live virtual pitch presentation.



L-R: Annie Brassil, Lisa O'Shea, Katie Teahan, Seoidín McBride and Arie O'Shea

The Tap Trap team has shown how innovative action, youth voice, and creative thinking can tackle real-life issues affecting today's teens. Their message is simple but powerful: control your scroll, reduce your use, and rewind your mind because sometimes, the best way to connect is to disconnect.

Follow their journey and more campaign content on social media.
 Instagram: @taptrap2425 TikTok: @taptrap2425
 #RewindYourMind #ReduceYourUse #BreakTheTapTrap
 #DontBeAScreenager #ControlYourScroll



L-R: Tuoyo King, Favour Roberts, Hazel O'Sullivan, Jocelyn Cushen, Maria Walsh and Taylor Stack Shanahan

'Paws for a Cause!' *by Ms. Michelle Daly*

Paws for a Cause! is a youth-led social innovation project focused on raising awareness about school therapy dogs and ensuring their successful integration into school communities. Inspired by the arrival of Bonnie, our school's therapy dog, we quickly identified a lack of understanding around her role and how to behave around her. To address this, we launched a number of initiatives including a fundraising bake sale which raised almost €600, and the 'Bin it for Bonnie' campaign, encouraging students to keep the school clean and safe for Bonnie.

We surveyed our entire school community, students, teachers, SNAs, and staff, to gather honest opinions and questions. Using this data, we have been developing a first-of-its-kind, one-off lesson plan and how-to video to help other schools welcome a therapy dog with confidence and inclusivity.

Our team travelled to Cork City Hall to take part in Speak Out, where we proudly presented our project. Most recently, we were honoured to be shortlisted for the Open and Equal Communities Award and invited to pitch virtually to a panel of YSI judges. We are passionate about spreading this idea nationally and believe every school deserves the knowledge to support a therapy dog like Bonnie.

Battle of the Bands 2025

A Night to Remember!

by Ms. Rachel O'Neill

Centenary Hall, 10th April 2025



On 10th April, Centenary Hall was bursting at the seams with energy, talent, and an enthusiastic crowd, all gathered for our annual Battle of the Bands; a spectacular evening filled with music, fun, and fundraising! This year's event had an extra special purpose: to support our Senior students embarking on their once-in-a-lifetime diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes.

With our esteemed judges - Head Girl Maeve, former Head Boy Ethan, and Deputy Principal Mr. F - watching closely, ten student acts (plus a show-stopping teacher performance!) gave it their all. The variety, creativity, and sheer talent on display had everyone on their feet. Here's a look back at the unforgettable night:

Cathal, Sam, Dan, and Molly kicked off the show with powerhouse performances of Paramore's 'Hard Times' and 'Still Into You'. With Sam's smooth vocals and piano skills, Dan's tight drumming, Molly's electric riffs, and Cathal's commanding stage presence, they wowed the crowd - even throwing in a funky costume change mid-set!

Molly, Tamera, Roanna, Aoife Kate, Aine, and Rory brought both groove and grace. Tamera's vocals soared over Molly's piano melodies and Roanna's violin harmonies, while Aine and Aoife Kate shredded electric guitars, and Rory kept it tight on drums. Their performances of 'Brazil' and 'Stand By Me' left a lasting impression.

Julia, Fionn, Tyberiusz, Fabian, and Charlie's band called 'Stellify' electrified the stage with Green Day classics 'Brain Stew' and 'Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)'. The performance featured not just musical talent, but unforgettable dance moves that had the audience roaring in approval.

Aobhín, Roanna, Nicole, and Laura were born performers. Their set - 'Pink Pony Club' and 'Applause' - was a masterclass in choreography, charisma, and costume, earning them thunderous applause and a well-deserved Second Place!

Led by Sophie on vocals and rhythm guitar, V92 brought the house down with 'Grace Dance' and 'Sweet Child of Mine'. With special guests filling out the band, the crowd could feel the rock gods smiling down - an epic moment in the night.

Sam G and Sam F paid a moving tribute to Bob Dylan, performing 'It Ain't Me Babe' and 'Hurricane'. Their stripped-back, soulful performance captured hearts and demonstrated the power of simplicity.

We were treated to a breathtaking classical moment from Mako and Bogdan who performed a piece from Howl's Moving Castle - Mako on flute and Bogdan on piano. The hall fell into a reverent hush, captivated by their harmony and grace.

Dylan, Marc, and Jamie brought some serious rock energy with Metallica's 'Enter Sandman' and Green Day's 'Basket Case'. It was loud, bold, and brilliantly delivered - headbanging was unavoidable!

With Laura, Bey, Bláthnaid, Grace (aka Freddie Mercury), and Tom (whose saxophone solo is still echoing in everyone's minds!), this Queen Tribute Band rocked us with 'I Want to Break Free' and 'Radio Gaga'. The crowd went wild - and so did the judges, crowning them First Place!



Nikita stunned everyone into silence with an emotionally powerful piano performance of 'Zombie' and 'Requiem for a Dream'. His control, musicality, and even a moment playing with his hands crossed earned him a well-deserved Third Place!

A showstopping surprise! Our very own teachers took to the stage with an Eras Tour Megamix, featuring Ms. O'N, Ms. B, Ms. C, Ms. L, Ms. M, Ms. D, and surprise Depeche Mode tribute from Ms. O'N and Mr R. Mr. McE and our triple-threat backup dancers - Tyberiusz, Fabian, and Charlie - brought glitz, glam, and major fun to the stage!

The judges gave a huge shoutout to Molly, Tamera, Roanna, Aoife Kate, Aine, and Rory for their outstanding performance and musical versatility. An incredible showcase of teamwork and talent!

First Place: Queen Tribute Band (Laura, Bey, Grace, Bláthnaid & Tom)

Second Place: Aobhín, Roanna, Laura, Nicole

Third Place: Nikita

This year's Battle of the Bands wasn't just a competition; it was a celebration of creativity, passion, and community spirit. Congratulations to all our performers and thank you to everyone who attended and supported the fundraising cause. Lourdes 2025 is going to be unforgettable - just like this night! Until next year... keep rocking!

Mercy Mounthawk School Celebrates 3 Years of Polish Language Education



We are excited to announce that Mercy Mounthawk has successfully offered Polish language courses for three years now, providing students with the opportunity to learn this beautiful and rich language. This year marks a special milestone, as for the first time, our students will take the Polish language LC exam as part of their school curriculum.

Under the guidance of Aneta Truchan, the Polish language lessons are both engaging and diverse. Mrs. Truchan ensures a well-rounded approach to language learning, incorporating various activities that foster linguistic skills and cultural awareness.

One of the highlights of this year was the "Dublin in Polish" excursion. During this trip, students had the opportunity to visit the Polish Embassy in Dublin, where they engaged in discussions with the Ambassador as well as Embassy staff. They were then brought to the National Museum of Ireland, where a Polish-speaking guide presented the museum's most significant artworks and their fascinating histories.

Students also met with the Polish Dance Folk Group "Koniczyna." The group introduced them to traditional Polish folk costumes, performed several folk dances, and most notably, led a dance workshop where students learned to dance the Krakowiak and Polonaise. A wonderful celebration of Polish culture and language!



Chess Club

by Mr. Noel O'Sullivan & Ms. Ellen McKenna

Chess Club meets every Monday in Rm 45, students from across all year groups are welcome to join and no experience is needed.

We held our annual In-House Chess Tournament on November 28th in Centenary Hall. 54 students participated in a 6-round competition with a series of intense play-offs between the final 8. The winner on the day was Joel O'Gulairi (4th Yr), second was Torran Millar (3rd Yr) and third was Isabel Araiza (4th Yr). Well done to all participants and we look forward to welcoming everyone back after the summer break and to further competitions in the year to come.

CITY FINAL 2024

Junk Kouture

DUBLIN FINAL - October 1st 2024

DAIRY GIRLS MAKE MOUNTHAWK HISTORY REACHING THE FIRST CITY FINAL

In a dazzling display of creativity and ingenuity, two secondary school girls from Mercy Mounthawk, Niamh Rice and Holly O'Brien, have soared through the ranks to clinch a coveted spot in the Dublin final of the prestigious Junk Kouture competition. The final was live streamed on RTE Player on 1st October 2024. Their creation, aptly named 'Dairy Girls', has not only captured the imagination of onlookers but also carries a profound message advocating for healthy dietary habits among teenage girls.

Under the guidance of their exceptionally creative teacher, Stacey O'Leary, Niamh and Holly poured their hearts and minds into crafting an outfit that not only stunned judges but also encapsulated a crucial health message. Their entry stood out amidst a staggering 1,200 submissions from across the nation, securing them a place among 80 finalists who will vie for a spot in the world finals.

The Dairy Girls ensemble isn't just a sartorial marvel; it's a symbol of empowerment and health advocacy. Constructed from over 200 milk carton labels sourced from their local creamery, Lee Strand, the outfit serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of supporting community-centric businesses while promoting the consumption of dairy products for bone health among adolescent girls.

'At the heart of our creation lies a deep-seated belief in the significance of calcium-rich diets and regular exercise for teenage girls to prevent Osteoporosis,' explained Niamh Rice. 'Through our design, we aim to inspire young women to embrace healthy lifestyles from an early age.'

The journey to the Dublin final was one fueled by passion, collaboration, and unwavering support from the Mercy Mounthawk community. Junk Kouture is rooted in the Transition Year programme in Mounthawk and supported by TY Co-ordinator Ronan Redican. Stacey O'Leary has taught the programme for a number of years and her classroom is alive with creativity and passion for sustainable fashion. Staff collaboration and support for the project included the technical intricacies of costume construction under the guidance of Jack Brosnan and Mairéad Ryan, to choreography for the catwalk by the incredibly talented Emma Nolan and Rachel O'Neill, hair and makeup by Bernadette O'Connor and of course the wonderful photographs taken by Will Nolan. Teachers and fellow students rallied behind Niamh and Holly every step of the way.

The school is incredibly proud of Niamh and Holly's achievement. Their dedication, coupled with the support of our school community, exemplifies the spirit of creativity and collaboration that defines Mercy Mounthawk.

Our journey through Junk Kouture was not just about creating a show-stopping design, it was an experience that opened doors to new friendships, broadened our horizons, and revealed the vast potential of the world of textiles. During the production of our outfit we met a number of amazing people like Don O'Neill and his husband Pascal, and took lots of inspiration from others like Colin Horgan.

Reaching the national final was a dream come true, one that would never have been possible without the help of our fabulous, creative, and inspiring teachers: Ms. Stacey O'Leary and Ms. Mairéad Ryan. The experience gave us a platform to share our vision, connect with other young creatives from across the country, and gain a deeper appreciation of the impact of eco-conscious design.

Looking back, we describe our Junk Kouture journey as one of the most unforgettable parts of our school experience.

by Holly O'Brien



L-R: Stacey O'Leary, Don O'Neill, Niamh Rice, Holly O'Brien, Mairéad Ryan, Pascal Guillermie



TY Fashion Show

Taking inspiration from Coldplay's sold out world tour during the summer of 2024 - our TY Students took to the stage 'under a sky full of stars' to showcase some of the amazing fashion for the upcoming year from our local shops in Tralee.

Under the guidance of the collaborative fashion show team the show came to fruition. Ms. Mari Kearney & Ms. Leonora Breen coordinated the show. Ms. Mairéad Ryan provided the most vibrant stage design and beautiful decorations. Ms. Emma Nolan, Ms. Rachel O'Neill and Ms. Molly Giltenane were all involved in producing amazing choreography and music for the show. Mr. Declan Dowling, our caretaker, helped the team to set up the stage.

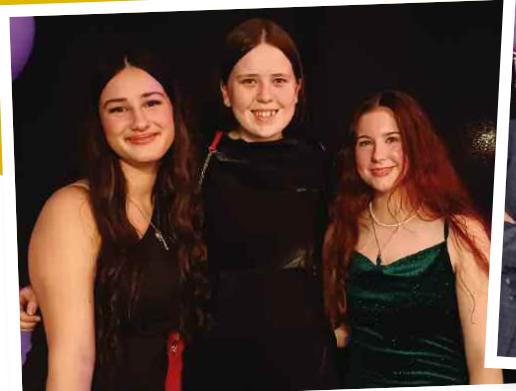
A huge thank you to Mr. Ronan Redican for all his help throughout the running of the fashion show. We would also like to thank our Senior Management team in the school and to all the teachers, office staff and SNAs who also helped us out on the night.

We are so grateful to all of the shops that allowed us to showcase their designs, among them Dunnes Stores, Sinead's Boutique, Celsius Menswear, That's Perfect & Shaws to name but a few. We are also very grateful to the families of the TY students and local businesses who provided a range of spot prizes on the night.

Our students also incorporated some sustainable fashion designs by dressing up in their own clothes on various themes including sports stars, Hallowe'en stars & stars of the circular economy. This was an opportunity for students to 'shop' in their own wardrobes and promote sustainability in our clothing choices.

This year's fashion show raised vital funds for three charities: Bru Columbanus, My Canine Companion & The Kenya Education Project. We were delighted to make a generous donation to such wonderful causes.

Works are already in progress for next year's show - Watch this space!!



Art

Áine Newsome and Naomi Osibodu came to national attention in the Community Games Art Competition for their awesome talent that greatly impressed not only the county and national judges, but also the then Minister for Education Norma Foley.

Áine and Naomi won 1st and 2nd place respectively in Kerry and both artists then went on to represent their County at the National Finals in Carlow. It was there that Naomi won the National Gold which is a monumental achievement.

Congratulations Naomi!



Junior Cert Art Award Winner
Aoibheann Daly



Leaving Cert Art Award Winner
Claudia Crowley

National Circus Festival Parade

As part of the Irish National Circus Festival 2024, artist Caoimhe Dunn collaborated with a group of Transition Year students from Mercy School Mounthawk.

Together, they designed and created costumes and illuminated Props for a pageant inspired by the Skellig Islands and the puffins that nest there.

On Friday, 1st November, during the night parade of the Circus Festival, the students showcased 'Puffins on Parade' in the streets of Tralee!

This vibrant youth engagement initiative was supported by funding from Kerry County Council and Creative Ireland Kerry.



Transition Year Student Áine Newsome was chosen to complete a painting of Carlo Acutis, who is soon to be canonised a saint.

Fr. David McGovern, the new Prior of Holy Cross Dominican Church in Tralee said that Áine achieved 'a remarkable likeness of Blessed Carlo' in her work. Áine's painting was used as the centrepiece of the Shrine dedicated to Carlo Acutis in the Dominican Church in Tralee.



Make a Town! A Hands-On Architecture Experience for TY Students Exhibition

As part of the Architecture Kerry 2024 programme, Mounthawk TY students joined other post-primary schools across Tralee to design and build large-scale, student-made structures. Each school constructed parts of a fictional town, with Mounthawk students focusing on creating a full-sized model of a house. These unique, interactive structures were exhibited at Tralee Library on Friday 27th and Saturday 28th September 2024.

Guided by Chris from MakerMeet, in collaboration with Architecture Kerry, Kerry County Council and funded by Creative Ireland, students explored the principles of architecture and engineering, learning about structural integrity, fabrication, and the practicalities of large-scale design. To enhance their builds, students used 3D-printed hinges, brackets, corners, and joins - giving them a

taste of how digital fabrication can support modern construction techniques.

The experience was not only educational, but full of creativity and teamwork. The exhibition gave the public a chance to enter and explore the student-built environments, celebrating the imagination and innovation of Mounthawk's young makers.

Students that participated in 'Make a Town!' with Makermeet: Aoife Cooper, Tamera Dagesen, Jack Duggin, Katie Enright, Cathal Fitzgerald, Matthew Guerin, Donncha Hartnett, Jessica Leen, Orlaith McGrath, Bogdan Meriakri, David Mullins, Tadhg Murphy, Eryk Musialkowski, Harry Neale, Mako Numata, Naoise O'Carroll, Michael O'Keeffe, Joel Oguilar, Katie Teahan.



*From Left:
Mounthawk showcased their Junk Kouture designs at Culture Night in September. Our students are pictured with their teacher Ms. Ryan, Don O'Neill Designer and his husband Pascal.*

Soracha Thibeaud poses in her Junk Kouture outfit with Don O'Neill and Pascal at Culture Night in September.

Culture Night at Siamsa Tíre

On Friday, September 13th, Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk, in collaboration with The Arts Council, proudly took part in Culture Night 2024 by hosting a spectacular Junk Kouture Kerry Showcase at Siamsa Tíre. Culture Night is a nationwide celebration of Ireland's rich cultural diversity, offering free artistic and creative events for all. This year's theme, 'One Night for All,' truly came to life through the ingenuity of our students.

As part of this creative celebration, talented students from Mounthawk unveiled a dazzling array of sustainable fashion designs - each crafted entirely from recycled and repurposed materials. The show not only celebrated creativity and style, but also emphasised a vital message about sustainability within the fashion industry.

A highlight of the evening was the presence of internationally renowned fashion designer Don O'Neill, who generously offered his support to the students. He was full of praise for the originality, craftsmanship, and eco-conscious innovation demonstrated in the designs.

The audience was captivated by the students' creativity - each outfit was a powerful reminder of how fashion can be both expressive and environmentally responsible. Culture Night gave our students the opportunity to showcase their talents to a wider community, while also engaging in an important cultural and environmental dialogue.

Bravo to all our young designers for their inspiring work and to everyone involved in making the night a resounding success!

Creative Schools Programme

(Arts Council)

Creative Sparks Flying at Our School

A Look Inside the Creative Schools Programme



This past year, our school proudly participated in the Creative Schools Programme, an exciting initiative led by the Arts Council that places creativity at the core of students' educational journeys. The programme aims to give young people meaningful opportunities to explore and express their creativity as an integral part of their learning experience - and here at our school, it has done just that.

We are currently drafting our Creative Schools Plan, a strategic roadmap that sets out clear goals and targets to guide the future of creativity in our school. This plan reflects our ongoing commitment to nurturing imagination, innovation, and collaboration across all areas of learning.

Creative February: A Month to Remember

A highlight of our year was Creative February, a week-long celebration filled with energy, imagination, and artistic flair. Over five days, we hosted 23 different activities ranging from workshops and competitions to daily creative challenges for students and staff alike. This vibrant programme was led by the Student Council Creativity Team, who played a central role in planning and coordinating events - showcasing incredible student leadership and vision.

Spotlight on Innovation: The Creative Arcade

One of the exciting projects underway is our Creative Arcade led by our Tech Wizard Will Nolan - a bold and collaborative initiative bringing together students and staff from Coding, Computer Science, Woodwork, and Art. Students are designing and coding

original games, which are then brought to life through custom-built arcade cabinets. These will feature repurposed computers, arcade-style controllers, and striking hand-crafted artwork.

This project is a shining example of cross-curricular learning and student creativity in action. It offers hands-on, real-world experience and will leave a lasting legacy in the form of interactive, playable art that the entire school community can enjoy.

Moving to the Rhythm: Contemporary Dance

Thanks to the efforts of Charlotte Tansley, we welcomed choreographer Joanne Barry to run contemporary dance classes. These sessions introduced students to new and expressive forms of movement - encouraging confidence, creativity, and connection through dance. For many students, it was their first encounter with this unique art form, and it left a lasting impact.

History Meets Hollywood

Creativity made its way into the History Department as well, where teacher Niamh Fitzgerald tasked students with producing their own medieval movies. In groups, students researched roles in medieval society and brought them to life through short films using drama, animation, and voiceover narration. It was an engaging way to explore the past - through the lens of the future.

As we continue our Creative Schools journey, these experiences remind us how vital creativity is - not just in the arts, but in how we learn, collaborate, and grow. We look forward to seeing even more innovation, expression, and imagination in the months ahead!



School of Excellence in Creativity Award

SECA Pilot Programme Flourishes in Our School

Last year, our school proudly began its journey as part of the SECA (Schools of Excellence in Creativity Award) Pilot Programme - an exciting national initiative that promotes innovation and creativity in teaching and learning. We are delighted to announce that this programme will continue into the next academic year, building on the many successes and lessons learned so far.

At the heart of our school is a vibrant culture of innovation that continues to flourish. From Lego Club and STEM Academy to BT Young Scientist Awards, school musicals, Art and Home Economics competitions, chess, debating, creative writing, book and songwriting clubs - creativity is not confined to one classroom but celebrated across all corners of our school community.

Our staff set high expectations and provide students with an education that is both engaging and challenging. Teaching and learning are continually evolving through carousel in-house training days and regular CPD sessions, particularly in the integration of digital technologies. A strong sense of professional collaboration exists among our teachers, who openly share best practices and support one another's growth.

As we continue our SECA journey, we are also reflecting on how we can grow further. Priorities for improvement include nurturing a deeper culture of reflection and collaboration among staff, encouraging students to develop creative and critical thinking skills in line with the Junior and Senior Cycle curriculums, and addressing students' fear of peer judgement, which can sometimes hinder creative risk-taking. A key focus will be on developing a whole-school strategy to promote higher-order questioning and support students in taking ownership of their creativity.



The Creativity Wheel

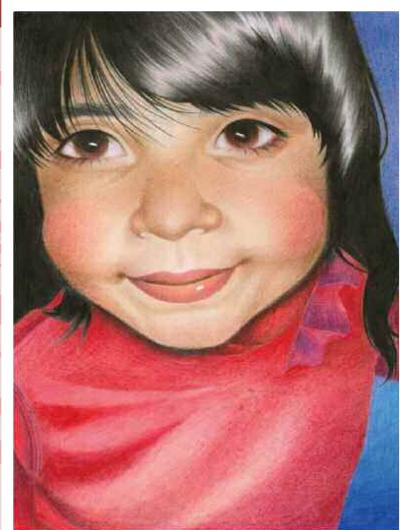
Raising Creative Thinkers

To support these aims, several initiatives will be implemented, including:

- The introduction of a "WonderWall" page in student journals to spark curiosity and encourage questioning.
- Whole-school strategies identified by teachers to foster critical thinking and creativity.
- A "Questioning Toolkit" for teachers to enhance classroom dialogue and inspire imaginative thinking.

We are incredibly proud of the progress made so far and excited about the opportunities ahead. The SECA Pilot Programme has already enriched our school culture, and with continued commitment from staff and students, we look forward to an even more creative and innovative future.

Texaco Art Competition



ROSY CHEEKS - Special Merit Award
Esha Shet, Mercy Mounthawk
Age 15



NATURAL BEAUTY - Special Merit Award
Nicole Ladjusenkova, Mercy Mounthawk
Age 13



BOUNDED BY LOVE - Special Merit Award
Jolin Weng, Mercy Mounthawk
Age 15

School's Self-Evaluation 24/25: REFLECTING, REVIEWING AND RENEWING



As we arrive at the end of another academic year, we share with you an overview of our School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process for 24/25. Under the SSE process 2022-26 and the Strategic plan for the school 24/27 endorsed by the new Board this year, we had School Improvement Plans (SIPs) in four key areas of school life: **Attendance, Wellbeing, Digital Literacy and Learning** and **Teaching** using the 6 step process and the data to guide meaningful improvements in our school.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SIP) 1 ATTENDANCE

Attendance has been prioritised as one of the key areas in our School Strategic Plan. Based on the data collected in 23/24 in step 3/4 of the SSE cycle, the implementation step (5) of the SIP in 24/25 focused on identifying, supporting and re-engaging individual students with patterns of poor attendance.

Students identified were individually supported through **early interventions**, typically involving initial supportive conversations with Assistant Year Heads. These meetings aimed to understand and address underlying challenges, while building daily routines for the students. **Regular informal morning check-ins** were introduced to create a welcoming environment, reinforce student-teacher connections, and encourage consistent attendance. Where poor attendance continued for some students, Year Teams extended their supports to include **structured meetings** with both students and their parents/guardians. These meetings aimed to strengthen home-school partnerships and were deliberately framed in a supportive and solution-focused manner.

One key development this year has been the creation of our Mercy Mounthawk student-centred intervention tool, '**Enlisting the Voice of the Student' Toolkit**'. This resource has been designed to enable more meaningful dialogue with students and their families and to guide the co-construction of personalised attendance improvement plans. Following evaluation, this Toolkit has been piloted and is now scheduled for full implementation with 2nd, 5th and 6th Year cohorts in September 2025.

We will also implement the 'Enlisting the Voice of the Student' toolkit across identified year groups and evaluate its impact. This work will allow us to develop a school-wide attendance policy rooted in restorative, inclusive practices, and continue to develop home-school links, particularly with families where attendance challenges persist.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2 WELLBEING

The school engaged with the **Bí Cineálta** process this year. In Step 2 of the SSE cycle, through a comprehensive consultation process with our staff, students and parents, our **Anti-Bullying Bí Cineálta charter and policy** were created and ratified. The Charter outlines the school's culture and values and how we can help to prevent and address bullying in an appropriate manner. The charter was launched for Mounthawk's Health Promotion Week on April 7th, marked by the raising of the Cineálta flag.

We are fortunate to have an active **Student Council Wellbeing** Committee who hold weekly lunchtime meetings. This group has been involved in the organising of a number of wellbeing events including **Anti-Bullying Week and Wellbeing Week**. During the weekly **Wednesday Assemblies** Deputy-Principal Mr. Kissane and Ms. McBride continued to provide advice to students regarding their mental health, eating well, the importance of exercise and acknowledging the achievements of their fellow students, which has proven to be hugely positive for our students' overall wellbeing. **Mindfulness workshops** were provided to our students by Ms. McKenna, which were immensely popular.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 3 ICT AND DIGITAL LITERACY

As part of our ongoing SSE process, Digital Literacy has been a core area requiring targeted development based on the imminent changes to the **new Senior Cycle** - which will see a significant increase in project work for our students going forward, and consequently, an increased demand on the ICT resources we currently have in our school. In step 2/3 of the SSE cycle in 24/25, a school-wide consultation and research process took place to explore possible strategies for improving student access to devices. Based on this, for the 25/26 school year, the school has initiated a **Chromebook purchase scheme** for incoming and existing Senior Cycle students on an opt-in basis, with parental engagement and guidance provided.



The school's **Digital Learning Team** is currently updating our **Digital Learning Plan (DLP)** to incorporate this initiative and to extend structured digital skills development across all years. Plans are in place (stage 4 of the cycle) to trial a new course in TY for 25/26 to address the identified deficit for students in IT skills sets (such as typing skills, filing, research and analysis, image process, etc.). Staff CPD is also planned in the use of technology and AI in the classroom, especially in light of the challenges managing the integrity of student work in the production of projects for the State Examinations.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 4 LEARNING AND TEACHING - CREATIVITY

Allied to the changes in curriculum and the skills sets published for the new TY curriculum and the new LC curriculum, teachers identified a need to focus on the development of critical thinking and creativity skills for students. This has become the focus for our SIP on creativity.

In 24/25, we participated in a pilot project with the Department of Education to explore methodologies which would help promote Creative Thinking called '**Schools of Excellence in Creativity**'. A full 6 step SSE cycle was run in this project in 24/25 and a report on the cycle was submitted to the inspectorate in May co-ordinated by the core team. Following research, the teacher team adopted a methodology called the '**Wonder Wall**' poster as a means of encouraging creativity in our students, along with other methodologies in scaffolding questioning. The data gathered as part of the research with students into their attitudes towards creative thinking will now guide the project next year in developing the link between Creative and Critical Thinking skills, by creating a learning environment for our students where higher order reasoning and problem solving will be encouraged and celebrated as part of the Creative process.

As part of the project, the **Student Council Creativity Team** was also created who, guided by our Creative Co-ordinator, Ms. Ryan, ran a most successful **Mounthawk Creativity Festival** for both students and staff.

MERCY MOUNTHAWK STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2027

Under the Strategic plan for the development of the school, 24/25 saw the **delivery of the modular building** (comprising 3 classrooms and 2 special classes). This allowed us to engage with the NCSE in the opening of two Special Classes for students with Autism. The classes have opened successfully and we have filled the spaces available at this point. This is a very important development in the support and service that we are able to provide for our students and in meeting students' needs in an optimal fashion.

The school also participated this year in the **COTHÚ initiative** with our trust body CEIST. A core group of teachers from the school participated in this pilot project which provided a chance to explore the possible approaches that might be taken within our school to work with staff on the area of school ethos. This initiative will be developed next year with an initial process on ethos taking place with staff over the course of the year. It is important that we can identify as a school what is central to our ethos as it is lived on a daily basis and that we have a chance to discuss and encourage that living out of the values which underpin our school.



Making History: Kerry Camogie Leagues Now Established Across All School Grades



This year marked a major milestone for camogie in Kerry's Post-Primary schools. For the first time, we had a fully established Kerry Colleges' Camogie League running across Senior, Junior, and 1st Year levels - a tremendous step forward for the sport in our county. In previous years, schools had to travel to neighbouring counties for competitions, so the creation of our own local leagues across all grades is a huge achievement.

This league was developed through the dedicated efforts of our coaches here at Mercy Mounthawk, working closely with Ms. Jackie Horgan (Causeway Comprehensive), and supported throughout by County Chairperson Annemarie Russell and Development Officer Siobhán O'Donoghue.

Scollard Cup Senior Champions - March 2025

A standout moment this year was our Senior Camogie team's thrilling victory in the Scollard Cup Final - Kerry's premier schools' competition, now in its 2nd year. In a closely-fought battle, they triumphed over Causeway Comprehensive to bring the cup back to Mounthawk for the second time.

Led by co-captains Orla Leahy and Maeve Trant, the team showed great heart and determination. A special mention to our brilliant 6th years Ruth O'Connor, Róisín Quinn, and captains Orla and Maeve, who made their final league game one to remember. What a way to finish - champions once again!

Munster Finalists - Hayes Intermediate Cup March 2025

Our Senior team also represented the school with pride in the Munster Final of the Hayes Intermediate Cup, where they gave a heroic performance against a strong Buttevant side.

Despite the narrow loss, the team showed relentless drive, equalising the match several times and fighting right to the final whistle. A late goal and point saw Buttevant take the win, but we could not be more proud of the Mounthawk girls' resilience and effort. Heads held high!

Kerry Group All Schools Junior Cup & Shield Champions - April 2025

April was a huge month for our Junior Camogie teams, who claimed both the Junior Cup and Junior Shield titles in the Kerry Group All Schools competition held in Caherslee. With 11 teams from 6 schools participating, it was a fantastic celebration of camogie - proudly hosted and organised by Mercy Mounthawk.

A huge congratulations to Hayley Fitzgerald-O'Connor, who was named Junior Player of the Tournament, standing out among 96 players across the county - a phenomenal achievement! Thanks to Kerry Group and Ruth Colleran, Head of Group Tax, for their ongoing support and for presenting the trophies on the day. Their commitment to supporting girls in sport is deeply appreciated.

Kerry Colleges Junior League - Semi Finalists

Our Junior Camogie team put in a fantastic performance throughout this year's Kerry Colleges' Junior League, showing great commitment, teamwork, and skill on the pitch.

They progressed strongly through the competition and made it all the way to the semi-final, where they faced a tough and talented Presentation Tralee side. Despite a hard-fought effort, our girls were narrowly defeated.



Back row L to R: Daniel McCarthy, Martina Lawless, Orla Leahy, Maeve Trant, Emma Bodenham, Katie O'Donoghue, Jessica Leen, Keira O'Sullivan, Aobhín O'Sullivan, Rachel O'Donoghue, Caoimhe Nolan, Hayley Fitzgerald O'Connor, Millie Raggett, Róisín Quinn
Front row L to R: Ruth O'Connor, Emma Buckley, Sarah Harris, Clara Daly, Nicole Power, Emma Gaynor, Muireann Hussey, Rachel Lennon, Máire O'Connor, Emily O'Donoghue.

We're incredibly proud of how they played - not just in the semi-final, but throughout the entire league. Their passion, determination, and sportsmanship were clear in every match. Huge congratulations to the whole squad for a brilliant campaign.

Kerry Colleges' 1st Year League - Cup Finalists

Our 1st Year team had a fantastic introduction to competitive camogie this year, taking part in the inaugural 3-day Kerry Colleges Blitz League - designed to give younger players a platform on which to develop and shine.

After a strong campaign, our team made it all the way to the Cup Final, where they were narrowly defeated by a very strong Causeway side. A great experience demonstrating plenty of promise for the future!

Mounthawk Allcare Pharmacy Minor Camogie Blitz Finalists - February 2025

We were proud to host the Allcare Pharmacy Mounthawk Minor Camogie Blitz this February, welcoming ten talented teams for a fantastic day of competition, skill, and sportsmanship.

A huge congratulations to our own Mercy Mounthawk team, who delivered an outstanding performance throughout the day and battled their way to the finals. The players demonstrated incredible team spirit, resilience, and skill, making us all immensely proud.

We extend our sincere thanks to Allcare Pharmacy Mounthawk for their continued generous sponsorship. Their unwavering support plays a vital role in promoting girls' sport and making events like this possible. We are incredibly grateful for their partnership and commitment to our students.

Farewell to Our 6th Year Camogie Leaders

As we close out the 2024/2025 school year, we bid a fond farewell to our incredible 6th Year camogie players: Gráinne Duggin, Maeve Trant, Róisín Quinn, Ruth O'Connor, Orla Leahy, and Rachel Sargent.

These girls have made a lasting impact on Mounthawk camogie through their talent, leadership, and dedication. We thank them for their commitment and wish them every success in the exciting paths that lie ahead - both on and off the field. *Go raibh mile maith agaibh, a chailíní - we are so proud of you!*



6th Year Camogie Players

Back row L to R: Casey Ryle, Amy O'Loughlin, Maeve Trant, Róisín Quinn, Ruth O'Connor, Rachel Sargent
Front row L to R: Gráinne Duggin, Rachel O'Donoghue, Orla Leahy, Ciara O'Sullivan

Girls' Football



by Kelly Fitzgerald and Kate Collins

Our Senior Ladies' football team is one that is bursting with skill, talent, leadership, determination and friendship. This year the team had excellent performances within the Munster group stage games, but narrowly fell short of qualifying for a Munster semi-final after losing out by a 2-point margin. However, this team continues to have promise for the future.

For us sixth year girls who are leaving, although we could not finish this year on a high, that is not to say we will be leaving empty handed. We are fortunate enough to have gained invaluable knowledge and experience under the excellent coaching of Ms. Ní Mhuircheartaigh and Ms. Brosnan. Our years playing football in Mercy Mounthawk have been filled with highs and lows ...

In March of 3rd year, we began our winning streak in September and continued it throughout the year, as we won the All Ireland Junior C final after progressing from winning the Munster final. It was an incredible, unforgettable experience which we will carry with us as we move on from Mounthawk. Our successes did not end there, winning the Kerry Schools' Competition that same year. Transition year saw us win the Senior Munster B final and being finalists in both the Junior Munster final as well as the Senior B All Ireland Final.

Our years in Mounthawk have undoubtedly been filled with long-lasting memories as we progressed from the C division up to A throughout our time in Mounthawk, ultimately losing out on a Munster A title in 5th year.

To have the opportunity to put on the black and green jersey for Mounthawk has been one thing, but to wear it with an incredible group of girls, making ever-lasting friendships and memories while being fortunate to have many successes along the way will be an invaluable experience that we will carry with us as we depart Mercy Mounthawk.

Sportswoman of the Year 2024/2025 - Lucy O'Connor

School football in Mounthawk allowed me to make amazing friends, develop as a player and ultimately boost my confidence. We are so lucky here in this school to have such experienced coaches. Having the likes of Louise Ní Mhuircheartaigh, Amanda Brosnan and Niamh Ní Chonchúir teaching us all they've learned from their experience in playing at the highest level has really allowed us to develop as players.

The highlight for me in school football was winning the Munster and All Ireland 'C' final. I'll never forget the day up in Ballinasloe in County Galway. The sun was shining and everyone was in such great spirits as we headed in to play Maynooth Secondary School in the 'Post Primary Schools All Ireland Junior C' Final. The nerves had built up from all of the great things that we had heard about Maynooth and the players that they had... but the teamwork that we displayed on the pitch that day was second to none and when that final whistle blew we all breathed a sigh of relief. Funnily enough, I think Mr. O'Roarke was the most stressed and hyper up in the stand that day, roaring us on to bring the school home some silverware!!

The development that the school Ladies' football team went through over the years was incredible, going from the 'C' All Ireland, to the 'B' All Ireland, all the way up to competing in the 'A' competition in our final year. I will always be grateful for the amazing memories and days out that we've had with the school football team here in Mounthawk, and for all the lols we've shared with Lou Lou and Mandy :)



An Outstanding Year for our U14, First and Second Year Ladies' Football Teams

2025 proved to be an exceptionally successful and memorable year for our U14, First Year, and Second Year Ladies' Football teams. From the moment training began in early October, over forty enthusiastic and committed girls came together to represent our school in both the Munster B and C competitions, as well as in the First and Second Year Kerry Schools' tournaments.

Throughout the season, the players showed tremendous dedication, teamwork, and passion for the game. Despite facing tough opponents and often having to contend with challenging weather conditions, our Minor B team demonstrated resilience and spirit in every match. Their hard work and determination paid off as they progressed all the way to the Munster Semi-Final, which was held in Cahir, County Tipperary. There, they gave a valiant performance against a strong Coláiste Dún Iascaigh side. Although they narrowly missed out on a place in the Final, the girls can be incredibly proud of their achievement in reaching that stage of the competition.

Meanwhile, our Second Year team enjoyed a remarkable season, displaying skill, teamwork, and confidence in every game. Their efforts culminated in a fantastic victory in the Division One Kerry Schools' Competition, where they triumphed over a talented Presentation Milltown team in a thrilling Final. This well-earned

win is a testament to their hard work throughout the year and highlights the bright future ahead for these young athletes.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the students who have been recognised at County level for their talent and commitment to football. Special congratulations to Amy Noonan and Sadhbh Dowling, who have been selected for the Kerry Under 16 team. In addition, we are proud to celebrate the achievements of our Kerry Under 14 representatives: Holly Costelloe, Lexi Keane, Nessa Kirby, Sarah Slattery, Roisin Reidy, Ruth Dowling, Amelie O'Sullivan, and Sophie Constable. These selections reflect not only individual talent but also the strength of our school's football programme.

A huge thank you must go to all the girls for their incredible effort, team spirit, and dedication throughout the year. Their commitment both on and off the pitch has been inspiring, and they have been wonderful ambassadors for our school.

We look forward to building on this year's successes and to another exciting and rewarding season ahead in 2026.

Well done to all involved!

Corn Uí Mhuirí & O'Sullivan Cup Champions 2025



Back row L-R: Gavin Casey, Alex Tuohy, Donnacha Buttiner, Ben Sharp, Conal Savage, David Lucid, Harry Murphy, Mark O'Connor, Darragh O'Callaghan, Aaron Harty, Séan Corkery. **Middle row L-R:** Aidan O'Shea (Coach), Steven Conway, Daniel Kirby, Micheál Savage, Conor McGibney, Kevin O'Donoghue, Séán Sargent, Ben Murphy, David Sargent, Mícheál O'Connor, Eoghan Crowley, Luke Mulligan (Coach), Kieran Costello (Coach). **Front row L-R:** Billy Doyle, Jake Hoare, Odhran Kerins, Pádraig O'Halloran, Paddy Lane (Capt.), Tomás Kennedy, Ruairí Kennedy, Tommy Sheehy, Breandán Meehan, James Fisher, Conor Dennehy, Luke O'Sullivan. Missing from photo: Tom Long, Jake O'Connor, Sam Fitzgerald.

Senior Boys' Football by Mr. Kieran Costello

When this team arrived in our school six years ago, we had a total of 0 A titles. Fast forward to this year and we are the proud holders of six titles: a Frewen Cup, Dunloe cup, two O'Sullivan cups and two Corn Uí Mhuirí. The achievements of this group of players cannot be overstated. They put this school on the footballing map.

We have had joy, laughter, tears, heartbreak, but above all friendship. This team smashed barriers, rewrote stereotypes and set new targets. They redefined success in the school.

Winning a double Corn Uí Mhuirí, winning 12 games in a row is a feat unlikely to be seen here for a long time to come.

We have had some special days. Paddy leaves as the Corn's top ever scorer. We have competed at the very highest level, but alas, all good things come to an end.

Rather than lament the 6th years' departure, we must celebrate their achievements and contribution to the school. 7 finals over three years including a trip to Croke Park. A Tralee derby that captured the imagination of the town last year was another massive achievement.

But it was the moments shared away from the limelight that will last longest in memories. The 80+ early mornings, training in the dark, the hard yards, the freezing cold, the shared breakfasts, the social life, the support for one another through life's ups and downs. That's what dedication is. That's what positive school life is. That's what being part of a team is.

This year was another rollercoaster with 9 straight wins to lift the O'Sullivan Cup where we comprehensively beat Tralee CBS in the final at a score of 3-8 to 1-9, and then lifted the Corn Uí Mhuirí in February when we defeated The Sem Killarney in the final, 2-11 to 0-10.

Mr. O'Shea, Mr. Mulligan, Mr. Costello, Phil Stack and Buddy O'Grady would like to thank the group for its commitment. We wish you all the best in the future.

Mounthawk Abú

We were delighted to have 5 of this year's Leaving Cert cohort join 5 from last year's group to have 10 Mounthawk players on the Kerry u20 panel this year. This was a remarkable achievement unmatched by any other school.

Paddy Lane, Daniel Kirby, Tomás Kennedy, Ben Murphy and Gavin Casey were part of the Kerry team who beat Cork, Tipperary and Clare before beating Cork again to become Munster champions.

A huge congratulations to them and a massive honour for the school. We hope to see some players make the step up to the Kerry Seniors in the near future.



Back row L-R: Conor Nolan, Donnchadh Noonan, Liam Swords, Alex O'Flaherty, Jamie Harrington, Jayden O'Dowd, Ahmed Abdalla, Billy Kirby, Eamon Kissane, Xavier Kurowski, Liam Corkery.
Front row L-R: Rory Bowler, Blake Bowler, Diarmuid Hennessy, Mikey Somers, Gearóid O Connor, James Daly.



*Great to see our students representing their county.
 Congratulations to our Kerry Minors:
 David Sargent, Alex Tuohy, Conor McGibney, Séan Sargent and Ruairí Kennedy.*

Mounthawk U15 Boys' Team

The Mounthawk Under 15 Boys' Football team, coached by Mr. Fell, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Flavin, enjoyed a strong and competitive season.

The panel of 30 boys showed great heart, commitment and camaraderie throughout the year. They played close matches against St. Michael's Listowel and Abbeyfeale. They performed especially well in the Super 9's tournament, highlighted by a memorable comeback win against Ballincollig.

Led by captain Michael Somers, the team showed great spirit and commitment, with strong turnouts at Monday after-school training. Many players have since progressed to Kerry development squads, marking a very successful year for the team. There's no doubt we will see many of these boys gain more success for the school at under 17 and senior levels.

Making Waves at the Munster Schools Swimming Gala

by Ms. Fionnuala Casey



L-R: Kayla Pigott, Ellie Lyons, Lainey Costello, Saorlaith Costello, Kate O'Shea. Missing from the photo is Tenzin Kunzey Tsering.



L-R: Luke O'Donoghue, Séan Murphy

Back in November, a group of dedicated and enthusiastic students from our school travelled to the University of Limerick to take part in the Munster Schools' Swimming Gala. The event brought together swimmers from schools all across Munster, creating a fantastic atmosphere filled with talent, teamwork, and competitive spirit.

Students represented our school across various events and distances, and they made us proud. The standard of competition was incredibly high, but our swimmers rose to the challenge, with many achieving new personal bests in their respective categories - a great reward for all their early mornings, training sessions, and commitment to the sport.

A special congratulations goes to Séan Murphy, who had an outstanding performance in the pool, earning a bronze medal in the 100m breaststroke. It was a hard-fought race and a well-deserved result for Séan, who continues to build on his success as a competitive swimmer.

Another highlight was Luke O'Donoghue, who not only competed at the Munster Gala, but also travelled to Barcelona to take part in the 2025 Para Swimming World Series. Luke had the opportunity to race against some of the best para swimmers in the world - an incredible experience that will no doubt inspire his future in the sport. His participation at such a high-level international event is a huge achievement, and we're all incredibly proud of him.

Overall, the Gala was a brilliant day of swimming, sportsmanship, and school spirit. Well done to all of our swimmers who took part - your hard work and dedication truly showed in the pool.

Girls' Basketball



U19 - Back row L to R: Róisín Quinn, Emily Flynn, Laura Sugrue, Ciara Costello, Aoibheann McCarthy.

Front row L to R: Kelly Fitzgerald, Holly O'Brien, Grace Lucid, Anna Collins, Lucy O'Connor. Missing from photo: Kara Kirby.

This year was another strong one for girls' basketball at Mercy Mounthawk, with all teams competing at the highest level in the A competition. While no titles were brought home, the dedication and passion shown by the players throughout the season were truly commendable.

The Senior Girls' team had an impressive run, reaching the South-West Final, the All-Ireland Cup Semi-Final, and the All-Ireland League Semi-Final. Their commitment to training and their determination on the court were a credit to the school. Many of these players were in their final year, and their leadership and work ethic set a strong example for the younger teams. They are a talented and driven group with great potential, and they leave behind a lasting legacy in Mercy Mounthawk basketball.

The 1st Year, 2nd Year, and U16 teams also competed in the A division, showing great promise and spirit throughout the season. These younger players trained consistently and brought great energy to every session and game. It's inspiring to see so many girls getting involved in basketball and contributing to a growing culture of teamwork and sporting excellence in the school.

Boys' Basketball Teams Shine in 2025

by Alberto Redondo



Back row L-R: Seán Cantwell, Conor Galvin, Seán Heaslip, Paddy Lucid, Johnny Dawson, Samson Abubakar, Ruairí Kennedy
Front row L-R: David Lucid, Ryan Sheehy, Sam Boyle, Conor McGibney, Ródhan Culloo

This year has been a strong and encouraging one for our boys' basketball teams, with solid performances across all age groups. The U14, U15, and U16 teams continued their development throughout the season, showing great commitment, teamwork, and steady progress on the court.

A special mention goes to our U16 team, who had an outstanding season. Their commitment and determination led them all the way to the Southwest Final, and from there they advanced to the All-Ireland semi finals in Tallaght. Competing

at this level is a major accomplishment and a credit to the players whose performance was a shining example of resilience, sportsmanship, and school pride.

The U15 team faced a challenging season, particularly during the most decisive part of their campaign when injuries took a heavy toll on the squad. Despite this setback, the team delivered incredible performances, showing determination, teamwork, and heart in every game. Their resilience and spirit have not gone unnoticed—they are one of the most promising teams in the school, and we are very much looking forward to following their continued progress next season.

Our U14 team also had a standout experience this year, taking part in the Basketball Ireland Post Primary School Minor A Competition in the University of Limerick. There, they competed against some of the best school teams from across the country. While the competition was fierce, the players rose to the challenge and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to play at a national level, gaining valuable experience and making great memories along the way.

Huge thanks are due to our dedicated players, coaching team and all the supporters who cheered the boys on our home games. With such strong talent and commitment across all age levels, the future looks bright for basketball in our school.



Mounthawk U14 Basketball Team

Girls' Soccer - Mounthawk on the March!



Nessa Kirby, Eabha Maguire, Arina Sucaci and Eve McEvoy represented Kerry U14 soccer in the National Final

It's official: girls' soccer at Mercy Mounthawk is on fire. This year has been nothing short of historic, filled with passion, pride, and some serious footwork. From first-year phenoms to seasoned seniors, our players have shown the rest of Munster (and beyond) that Mounthawk means business.

Senior Team - Leading with Heart (and Hammer Passes)

We say goodbye this year to two legends of the pitch: Mollie Duggan and Aoibhín O'Connor MacCarthy, who have represented Mercy Mounthawk with relentless commitment and class over the years. Mollie bossed the midfield like a general, captaining the Senior squad to a Munster A semi-final. Her trademark laser-guided passes (which we suspect may have had GPS) will be sorely missed. Aoibhín, our lightning-fast winger, tormented defenders all season and scored the crucial goal in the Munster Cup quarter-final. Her sideline sprints and quick feet could probably set off speed cameras. Both girls have set the bar high - and leave behind a legacy to inspire future teams.

Under-17s - Making History One Goal at a Time

For the first time ever, a Mounthawk girls' team reached the Munster A Final - and it was the U17s who made it happen! Beating six schools on their journey, this team was a force of nature. Their final was a heart-pounding clash with Scoil Mhuire Carrick-on-Suir. After a long-range belter from 2nd year Arina Sucaci brought us to extra time, the team eventually fell short - but not without giving every last ounce of effort.

This group was a mix of ages, from 1st to 5th years, proving teamwork doesn't need a birth year. Defensively, we were like Fort Knox - Grace Reilly, Bláthnáid Walsh, Ashlyn Falvey, and Nicole O'Connell Healy formed a back four that might've been carved out of granite. And behind them? Grace O'Regan - our very own triple-threat goalkeeper who managed to play for the U15s, U17s, AND U19s this year. We're not saying she lives in goal... but we haven't seen her anywhere else.

We also saw the rise of 1st year Nessa Kirby, who answered the call-up mid-season, earned her spot in the final, and went on to win Player of the Match. That's how you make an entrance. And of course, no season recap is complete without Laura Falvey, who casually knocked in 18 goals in 7 games like it was a walk in the park.

1st Year Team - Future's Bright, Boots Are Laced

If the Senior girls are the standard, the 1st years are clearly paying attention. In their first-ever tournament as a team, they reached the semi-final, opened with a 9-0 win over Abbeyfeale, and even almost scored an overhead kick - courtesy of Tia Falvey, which went just wide but would've made any highlight reel on Sky Sports. In fact, the game's highlights racked up 30,000+ views on TikTok - not bad for a debut!

The enthusiasm, energy, and sheer number of first-year girls getting involved is a testament to the growing strength of girls' soccer at Mounthawk. Let's just say: the future looks very, very exciting.

From historic firsts to show-stopping goals, this season has proven that girls' soccer at Mercy Mounthawk isn't just growing - it's exploding. We're inching ever closer to that first piece of major silverware, and with talent like this, it's only a matter of time.

A huge thank you to every player who pulled on a Mounthawk jersey this year - your dedication, skill, and love for the game have made this a season to remember. (Seriously, we could've written another five pages naming all the standouts... but we're trying to save paper.) Here's to another unforgettable year - and to keeping girls' soccer at the very top where it belongs!



Grace O'Regan, Sadhbh Dowling, Sofia Rabanska, Taylor Kate Leane (captain), and Malwina Jankowska - represented Kerry in the Copa Daurada Cup in Salou in April. They finished second, narrowly losing to Galway in the final. Great achievement girls!

Hurling



The Senior hurlers played in both the Munster and Limerick Colleges' competitions this year. The team were beaten in the second round of both competitions. We would like to thank our outgoing Leaving Certificate students Billy Doyle, Donnacha Buttiner, Seán Michael Redican, Jack Costello and Odhran Kerins for their great service to hurling in the school over the last six years.

Mercy Mounthawk Golfers Shine on the National Stage



A huge congratulations to Lucy Grattan of Mercy Mounthawk, who has been crowned the Irish Schools' Senior Girls' Golf Champion following a brilliant performance at Milltown Golf Club, Dublin.

Lucy delivered a composed, level-par round of 73 to win by four strokes over a field of elite under-18 golfers. Her focus and determination were key, guided by her personal mantra: "I am responsible for my own golf, and what's happening around me is not my distraction." Her victory is a proud moment for both herself and the entire Mercy Mounthawk community.

Equally impressive is fellow student Ema Vinarcikova, who qualified for the All-Ireland Schools' Final for the third consecutive year - an extraordinary achievement. Remarkably, Ema is still eligible to compete at the under-15 level, underscoring her exceptional talent and bright future in the sport.

Both Lucy and Ema have shown that dedication, discipline, and belief can lead to great success. Mercy Mounthawk is proud to support these rising stars as they continue to excel in Irish golf.

Lucy Grattan and Ema Vinarcikova Senior Girls' Final Golf



Athletics at Mounthawk

It was another great year for Mounthawk athletics. Well done to all of those who competed. The year started off with Kerry cross country, with a team of around 25 taking part. A number of athletes fared very well with Eamonn Óg McElligott being the pick of the crop and subsequently representing the school very well in the North Munsters. This year there was no Munster indoor competition so we had to wait for the Kerry Schools' competition for our next major outing. We had huge success on those 2 days with 19 gold, 12 silver and 5 bronze medals. We also retained the Best Girls' School shield with the award being presented to the team by Adrienne McLoughlin.

In the North Munster Schools' competition, there were impressive performances from our athletes and the proof was in the pudding when it came to medal haul. Four relay teams medaled and qualified for the Munster competition which is an impressive feat and great credit must go to them all. Multiple individual medal winners include Bao Foley, Eoin Malik, Lucy Mulgrew, Sophie Mulgrew, Victor Malakhov, Aoibhinn O'Driscoll, Kevin O'Shea and Niamh O'Shea, just to mention a few. On the day Kevin O'Shea broke the Intermediate Boys' javelin record that had stood for 18 years and this was a tremendous achievement. Gold medal winners included Amanda Duyile, Ike Echeme, Victor Malakov, Eoin Malik, Lucy Mulgrew, Sophie Mulgrew, Kevin O'Shea, and relay teams. A silver medal went to Ruby Crean. Bronze medals were won by Ike Echeme, Bao Foley, Laurel Mason,



Eoin Malik won bronze in the Senior Triple jump



Kevin O'Shea won gold in the Intermediate Boys' javelin in Tullamore

Lexi O'Connor, Niamh O'Shea, Cameron Quirke and Laoise Walsh. We are proud of everyone who took part and all the members of the relay teams.

The Munsters took place in Cork on a very warm day for athletes. Munster Gold medals for Bao Foley, Eoin Malik, Eamonn Óg McElligott and Kevin O'Shea, made a beautiful sunny day even more glorious, along with silver for Niamh O'Shea and both of the Boys' Intermediate and Senior Relay teams. Kevin O'Shea also won bronze and he advances to the Tailteann Games in June. We also had many other excellent performances from several others who were unlucky on the day given the very high standard.

At the end of May, Tullamore was the venue for the All Ireland Schools' Championship. One Gold medal was won by Kevin O'Shea in the Intermediate Boys' javelin. He also won bronze in the Intermediate Boys' discus. Eoin Malik won bronze in the Senior Triple jump. Both sported the new Mounthawk athletics strip which will no doubt bring success to athletes for many years to come.



Mounthawk Badminton Club - A lunchtime smash hit!

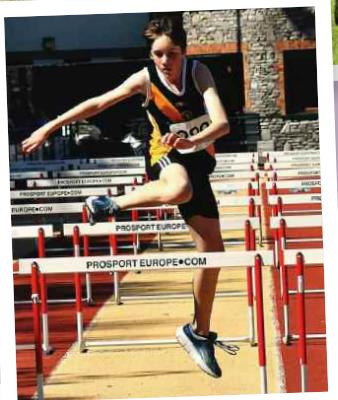
If you've ever walked past the Sports Hall on a Tuesday lunchtime, you've probably noticed the buzz of energy, the whack of shuttlecocks, and the occasional cheer or burst of laughter echoing down the corridor. That's the sound of our Badminton Club in action - and it's become a popular lunchtime activity in the school.

Running every Tuesday at lunch, the Badminton Club offers students a fun and inclusive space to get active, unwind, and connect with others from all across the school community. What makes this club really special is the mix of year groups who take part. From first years to sixth years, everyone is welcome, and it's not unusual to see students who might not usually cross paths teaming up for a doubles match or chatting between games.

The club is always buzzing with activity. Some students come to sharpen their skills and work on their technique, while others just enjoy having a hit around and socialising with friends. There's a fantastic balance between competitive spirit and relaxed fun - no pressure, just plenty of encouragement and enthusiasm. And if you're new to the game, don't worry! There are always friendly faces willing to show you the ropes or help you improve.

On December 10th 2024, a group of our keenest badminton players travelled to the Killarney Leisure Centre to take part in the Kerry Schools' Badminton Annual Competition. Interest in the event was high, and while many students were eager to compete, we were limited to just one team per year group. Despite the tough selection, our students represented the school brilliantly and showed great sportsmanship throughout the day. The standard of play was high, with some very competitive matches against schools from across the county. Our Under-14 team in particular put in a fantastic performance, battling hard and securing an impressive third-place finish! It was a fun, rewarding day for everyone involved, and we're already looking forward to next year's competition.

For many students, the Badminton Club has become more than just a sports activity - it's a place to unwind, build confidence, and meet people in a friendly and positive environment. It's been great to see students grow more comfortable with the game week by week, and even better to see friendships form over shared rallies and laughs. New members are always welcome.



More action from our Athletics Team

Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk

PRESENTS

The WIZ



by Conor O'Sullivan

Coming from a rural Primary School into the sea of students in Mounthawk can be exciting, yet can also create a slight sense of apprehension. However, as soon as you step foot into a room of fellow castmates in a Mercy Mounthawk production, those perturbed thoughts of not finding your people are instantly diluted by a joyous community of acceptance and celebration. Reflecting on my years in this school, I don't find myself reminiscing upon the long hours of studying or the stressful exams - despite their importance - but I ponder upon the infinite laughs and lifelong friendships I have found through past productions such as '*High School Musical*' along with '*Hairspray*' and of course this year's production of '*The Wiz*'.

From the moment auditions began the excitement was palpable, as students stepped outside of themselves to embrace this bold and lively musical. The dedicated cast, from students that have never stepped foot on stage, to seasoned thespians like myself, went beyond their comfort zones to find their true selves through this touching storyline. The magic of this show is not limited to the cast,

as our immensely talented team of teachers worked tirelessly to bring this powerful story to life on the Siamsa Tíre stage. Although managing the 120 students involved in this show was undoubtedly challenging, our core team composed of Molly Giltenane, Caitríona O'Sullivan, Frank Houlihan, Rachel O'Neill, Sharon Courtney, Janette Condon, Mairéad Ryan and Elaine Costelloe, along with a team of over 20 teachers, invested countless hours into creating this show for us.

The Wiz is a reimagined, soulful take on the classic Wizard of Oz. It is all about finding your way home, discovering courage, learning to trust your heart, and recognising the strength that lives within you. The themes couldn't have been more fitting for a cast made up of students preparing to step into their future. From the heartfelt ballads, to the spectacular choreography, this production is a true testament to the passion of our students and school community. It was our final bow, a celebration of everything we've learned and created together.



Rehearsals were filled with long hours of hard work, and moments where it felt like we'd never get that dance right or remember that tricky harmony. But we also laughed, bonded, and built something truly incredible together. We supported each other through every mistake and celebrated every small victory. Although an unfortunate snow storm stole some rehearsal time, we still persevered to opening night. Our first show was pure magic. As the lights dimmed and the first notes played, we weren't nervous. We were ready. We were proud. Our transformative costumes helped us completely embrace our characters and take the audience on a journey to Oz through a whirlwind of glitter, song, fog machines, and the occasional technical difficulty. When the curtain finally fell, we stood together, hand in hand, feeling like we had accomplished something bigger than ourselves.

On behalf of the entire cast I would like to thank everyone who made this show possible; the teachers who believed in us and worked behind the scenes with costumes, sets programmes, and of course our Principal Mr. O'Roarke for granting us this creative outlet. I have been involved in many shows with Mercy Mounthawk, but can sincerely say that *The Wiz* was more than just a musical. It was a farewell and an accumulation of everything we've become. As we pass the torch on to the younger years we hope they cherish these moments together on stage and continue this legacy, because before you know it you'll be moving on. As we ease on down the road to whatever comes next - college, work or travel, we take with us the lessons this show taught us. We've learned that sometimes the hardest journeys lead to the most rewarding destinations, that friends can become family, that you are stronger "if you believe".



LONDON CALLING ... OUR 6TH YEAR ADVENTURE

by Sasha Stack



What a way to kick off the year! Back in September, I was lucky enough to head off with my friends on the 6th year trip to London. With our outfits planned, speakers charged, and energy sky-high, we left school and made our way to Farranfore. Not a moment was wasted, from the second we touched down in Stansted we were in full adventure mode.

Our first stop? The magical Harry Potter World, where we wandered through the sets of Hogwarts, Diagon Alley, and even 4 Privet Drive. We sipped (overpriced!) Butterbeer and let the nostalgia sink in. Aboard our tour bus, the ever-knowledgeable Mr. O'Roarke gave us a full guided tour via loudspeaker, pointing out iconic sights like Tower Bridge and Big Ben - sorry, The Elizabeth Tower - and only managed to get lost a few times... That evening, we saw *Wicked* in the West End, a truly spectacular show, before returning to our hotel in Elephant and Castle.

I shared a room with five lovely ladies, and we proudly dubbed ourselves the 'Bad Yung Tingz.' Sleep was scarce, mostly due to deep, meaningful conversations (DMCs) and mysterious late-night communications with the Swiss boys in the room below us.

There's something special about sixth year. Everybody starts to come together. You begin to realise that most of your school days are behind you, and that makes moments like these even more meaningful, and more fun.

Day two kicked off with a spirited karaoke session on the bus (how could we resist *Someone Like You* by Adele?) on our way to Shakespeare's Globe. There, we toured the theatre and took part in a King Lear Workshop, learning about meter and how the play is brought to life on stage. Afterwards, we headed to the Borough Market, where we indulged in gourmet mac and cheese, açai bowls, kebabs, and chocolate-covered strawberries - a true foodie's dream.

Next stop; The London Dungeon, where we were tried as witches, chased by plague doctors, and watched on as Ms. Courtney got casually locked in a cage. After all that excitement, we regrouped at Pizza Express for some well-earned downtime. That evening, we returned to the Globe for a standing-tickets-only performance of *Princess Essex*, which we thoroughly enjoyed, back pain and all.

By day three, we were seasoned city explorers. We started with the Science Museum, leaving much more 'knowledgeable-up' on all things STEM. Then came Oxford Street, where my friends and I proudly competed in the 'Wasting Money Olympics.' We wandered through Selfridges and picked up some London-themed glasses to commemorate the trip. A visit to Buckingham Palace followed, where we treated ourselves to posh scones with jam and butter overlooking the Royal Gardens.

Our final activity was the Jack the Ripper Walking Tour, which, for me, was a highlight. The chilling atmosphere of Whitechapel in the September dusk set the perfect spooky tone. So spooky in fact, that some people jumped so hard, their knees hit my back (you know who you are). It was the perfect ending to a trip packed with history, atmosphere, and most importantly, laughs with friends.

We flew back through Luton, exhausted but happy after three unforgettable days. The London trip gave me memories I'll always treasure and helped forge friendships that made my final year even more special.

To any future 6th years reading this, who are on the fence about going - I have one word for you: GO!



Junior History Quiz 2025

Mercy Mounthawk is thrilled to recognise the achievement of our third year students who took part in the History Teachers' Association of Ireland Junior Cycle Quiz 2025. A huge congratulations to Feidhlim Ginnity, Christian Gleasure, Francisco Hanafin and Torran McKenna Millar who came first at the Kerry Branch Quiz. We would also like to congratulate Aine Griffin, Sarah Brick, Zofia Sosnowska and Michalina Zalewska for narrowly missing out on third place to qualify for the final.

The final took place in Coláiste Íosagáin, Dublin on the 29th March and Feidhlim, Christian, Francisco and Torran demonstrated excellence in their knowledge of History with questions ranging from the Junior Cycle History course and general knowledge history questions to be awarded second place in this national competition.



Young Historians



Young Historian of the Year - Rory O'Flaherty



Medieval Movie Creator Winners Rian Tuohy, Callum Lacey, Conor Brosnan, Jane Marie Cantwell, Dayna O'Connor, Nicola Corridon, Isabelle Freeman, Safira Ekren. Missing from photo: Fia Ferris, Nessa Kirby

Congratulations to our Young Historians who were honoured at a presentation ceremony in the Kerry County Museum!

Sophie Canty was highly commended for her project on The Barton Family. Áine Newsome's project on Annascaul Post Office won her the Junior Category.

Rory O'Flaherty won the Senior Category as well as the overall title of Young Historian of the Year for his project: Tales of the soldiers in Tralee during the War of Independence. Well done to our students and their teachers!

Mercy Mounthawk Choir



This academic year has been an incredibly busy and rewarding time for our school choir. Their dedication and talent have shone brightly through a series of remarkable performances, enriching our school community with their melodious voices and harmonious tunes.

Performances

This year, the choir has graced numerous significant events with their performances, from the Mercy Day Mass and the JCPA ceremony, to the annual Dónal Walsh Day in Knock, their presence has elevated each occasion. They also performed at the School Awards Ceremony and the Graduation Ceremony, among many other events.

The Annual Carol Service

One of the standout events of the year was our Annual Carol Service, which took place in St. Brendan's Church last December. This service is a highlight of the school year, bringing the community together in celebration. The evening was a resounding success, with a fantastic turnout. The service featured a delightful mix of Christmas carols, instrumental pieces, drama performances,

liturgy, poems, and reflections, ensuring there was something for everyone. The choir's harmonious renditions of traditional carols, combined with the poignant reflections and spirited drama pieces, created a truly magical and thought-provoking atmosphere. Special thanks to Fr. Pádraig, the Religion Department and to Ms. O'Sullivan and Ms. Giltenane for helping us prepare for the Christmas Carol Service.

Launch of Choir CD

The choir launched a fantastic new CD this year entitled '*Music from Mercy Mounthawk: Carols for Christmas*', featuring recordings of the choir singing over the past ten years. All proceeds went to the Kerry Hospice Foundation. The CD was met with a tremendous response and was played on Radio Kerry several times last Christmas.



Acknowledgments and Gratitude

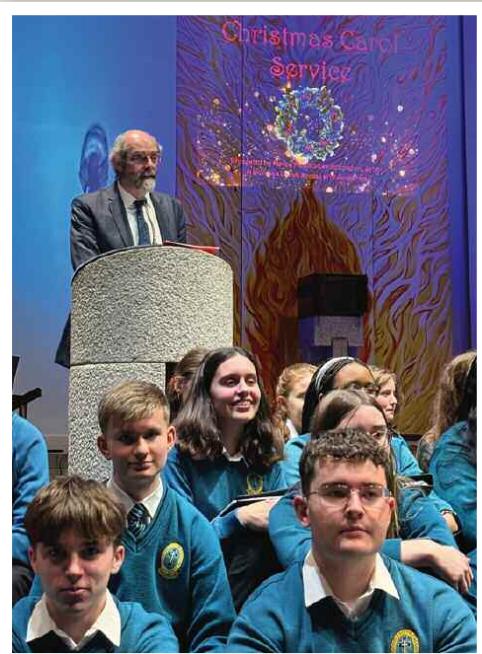
The success of the choir's new CD, and indeed all choir performances, is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our students and teachers. Special thanks of course go to Ms. O' Sullivan and Ms. Giltenane for their unwavering dedication to choir year after year, to Stephen Andreucetti for recording and mixing the choir CD, to Ms. Ann O'Shea Daly and Dominika Matysek for the artwork for the choir CD, to Bria Keane, Annie Lyons and Brenda Litchfield for co-ordinating sales of the CD in the local community and to Mr. O'Roarke who was a driving force behind putting the choir cd together.

We would also like to give a special mention to our departing sixth-year students: Isabelle Graham, Shannon Scanlon, Maeve Trant, Emma Ryan, Conor O'Sullivan, Amy Heaphy, Elena Garkalne, Gráinne Diggins, Maria Samy, Amy Behan, Geraldine Knott Fitzgerald, Caragh Kenny O'Sullivan and Caoilinn Kenny O'Sullivan. These students have been instrumental in the choir's success, contributing significantly through their singing, solo performances, and instrumental accompaniments. Their talent and dedication have greatly enhanced our performances. We extend our heartfelt thanks to them for their generous contributions to school life in Mounthawk and wish them all the best in their future musical endeavours.



Looking Forward

As we reflect on this year, we are incredibly proud of what the choir has achieved. Their performances have not only entertained but also brought a sense of unity and joy to our school community. We look forward to another year of beautiful music and continued success.



LCA 2 Tell Their Story

And Inspire Young Minds

This year, the LCA 2 class took on the task of doing a creative and meaningful ICT project: making a collection of audiobooks for children aged 4 to 12. Each student wrote their own short story, recorded themselves reading it aloud, and designed illustrations using Canva. After students had designed and created their own individual stories, they collaborated to create a collection of short stories that showcased the hard work of the entire class group.

The topics were wide-ranging and showcased their creativity, personality, and voice. From thrilling tales of GAA and sports, to magical fairy tales, music-themed adventures and inspirational journeys, the collection offered something for every young listener.

Through this project, students didn't just work on storytelling, they built up their confidence, learned new digital and creative skills, and had the chance to make something lasting for younger children to enjoy. This project was a shining example of what LCA is all about: hands-on learning, creativity, and real-world impact. They showcased their audiobooks to staff and management through organising a book launch, everyone was extremely impressed with their work! Well done all.

As part of their community module in Vocational Preparation, LCA2 students sent care packs to nursing homes within the Tralee area. The students sent a total of six carepack hampers to residents in various nursing homes and day centers, which consisted of sweets, biscuits, playing cards, books, toiletries, rosary beads and handmade cards. We hope the residents enjoyed receiving these care packs.



LCA SafePass



LCA2 Christmas Care Packs



Back L-R: Leon Sweeney O'Connor, Wanessa Sas, Natasha Egan Moynihan, Ajlina Isufi, Ms. Brosnan, Rachel Dooner, Mollie Duggan, Isabel Clifford, Isabell Burke, Grace Dooner.

Front L-R: Cameron Conway Danagher, Patrick Burke, Cormac Bastible.

Kenya Education Project



In order to raise funds for Comfort for Chemo Kerry and The Kenya Education Project, approximately 20 brave and fearless staff members donned these ridiculous, inflatable suits and participated in all manner of obstacle races. Students paid two euro each to come into the gym and have a good laugh at the staff, whilst cheering them on of course! Ms. Niamh O'Connor and her Active Leisure class helped out on the day and Frank Houlihan was, as usual, a wonderful compère.

LOURDES 2025

by Deirdre Quigley

Where do I begin?

I was so fortunate to be chosen as one of the four students able to go on a pilgrimage to Lourdes in the South of France. Although it was a Catholic pilgrimage, it wasn't solely about the significance of the holy event that occurred in Lourdes.

Upon arrival at the airport, I felt it was a trip to remember, from making new friends to strengthening bonds that we already had. I immediately felt part of a community. We spent our days attending Mass, sacraments, and spending time with other pilgrims while exploring the small town.

There was never a dull moment. We spent our nights with the students from other schools, exploring the restaurants and more! Lourdes is one part of school I will never forget! I am so thankful for the opportunity that I was given by the school and Sister Bernadette.



L to R: Seán Michael Redican, Deirdre Quigley, Sr. Bernadette, Sophie Hassett, Jack Barrett

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK



Mercy Mass with Bishop Ray Browne

From January 19th to 25th this year we celebrated 'Catholic Schools' Week'. During the week we asked students to consider what it means for them to be 'Fully Alive in Christ'. Students were asked to reflect on what makes them feel really alive, positive and connected, here at school, in their homes, in their community and in their faith.

Catholic Schools' Week is an important event in our school calendar where we invite students to reflect, experience and participate so that our Mercy Ethos can be experienced by everyone.

As part of the week, students in 4th Year organised a Battery Drive to show care for the Earth, they participated in a Treasure Hunt to learn more about our school's Catholic ethos and took a friendship quiz in their classes to promote connection and community.

Ms. Carey's classes made videos about experiences of joy, hope and courage that were meaningful to them. Students undertook a letter writing activity too. They wrote to an older relative based on the prompt 'My favourite memory with you is...'. The intention here was to acknowledge the importance of students' relationships with grandparents and older members of the community. In addition, students in various year groups undertook a walking debate on issues of social justice and were involved in a clean up in our local area.

The following week we celebrated 'Ceiluradh Ceist' with a service for 5th Years on the theme of 'Home, School and Parish, working together'.



sustownability



L-R: Leila Halloran, Billy Cashman, Sam Gleasure, Zofia Lange, Tomasz Bryk, Abigail Adetunji, Adrian Bijelic, Musa Hossain.



Tom Gleasure 5th Year interviewed for Radio Kerry's 'Green Teens: Local Roots, Global Impact' upcoming series. Photographed with journalist Joe McGill.

Mounthawk Cycles to School

As part of our new long-term 'Sustownability' project, for the last six months Mounthawk students were encouraged to cycle to school as often as possible. Each Friday, during the cold weather, cyclists were greeted with cups of hot chocolate topped with cream and marshmallows. On the more recent sunny, warmer days, all those who cycled received tokens for ice cream at break time. The students from the Student Council Environment Committee met early every Friday morning to undertake this awareness-raising venture, and their videos on social media have garnered thousands of views. On Friday 23rd May we held a cycle to town, to highlight the new cycling infrastructure that will be put in place by the County Council, the National Transport Authority and the Safe Routes to School Programme. Tomasz from ATOM Bicycle Repairs came to the school on the day before the event and carried out minor repairs/adjustments to students' bicycles.

After the cycle, students met with County Counsellor Angie Baily and Engineer Joyce O'Boyle from the County Council. Joyce has been working with the school to develop the plans for making cycling and walking to school safer. The new plans were put on display in Centenary Hall and the students were given a presentation on what the Council and school hope to achieve with respect to sustainable travel to and from school.

We will be developing a new cycling/walking entrance to the school from the greenway while at the same time installing traffic calming measures in the vicinity of the main entrance on the Caherslee road. The cycle lanes will be widened and will be segregated from motor traffic. Students from all parts of town are encouraged to cycle to school every day, and to further help things along, the school will be installing new bicycle shelters to help keep bikes safe and dry.

For students who must be dropped off by car, we encourage parents to drop their children away from the school entrance and that students make the rest of their way to school on foot. The school entrance and the 150 m length of roadway immediately

MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL MOUNTHAWK ENVIRONMENT PROJECT 2025 - 2030

outside the school gate will be redesigned and improved to ensure students are safer when they walk or cycle. We will also ask that parents in cars do not approach the school entrance at the end of the school day. Students will walk to meet their parents at a place of their choosing. The segregated cycle lanes will not be available for car-parking.

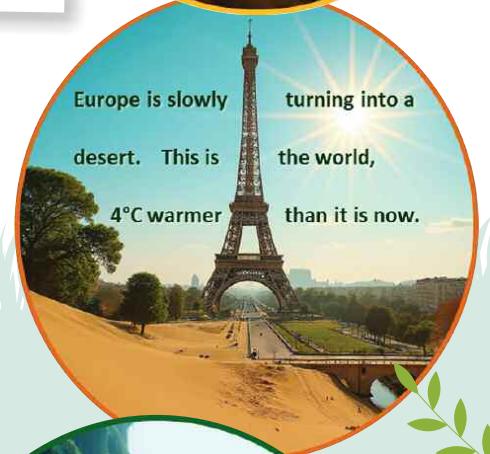
When we return to school in autumn and before the new infrastructure is in place we will hold information meetings for parents and students in the school.

Garden and Pond Re-Development

Over the past few months, we have re-developed the pond, garden and orchard. On a number of consecutive Saturdays the Student Council Environment Committee came to school to begin this part of the "Sustownability" project. They worked closely with Ian McGregor from Gortbrac Organic farm who guided the group on how to trim trees and hedges without causing long term damage. We were shown how to make a dead hedge and began the placement of one by the pond and another at the front of the school by our small grove. The native species grove was planted by students in 2021 and is doing very well indeed as can be seen by the before and after pictures from this year and 2021.

We are also in the process of refurbishing the raised beds and have completed the purchase of 100m of pressure treated timber which the Environment Committee will use in the autumn to replace the old rotting timbers.

The pond has been carefully cleared out, while being extremely mindful of the frogs who use it, so we did not commence this until April/May after the frogspawn had turned into little frogs who then departed for their preferred habitat of the damp areas in the long grass. Frogs don't actually live in ponds, they go there mainly to breed but on occasion they go just to hang out!



The students also cleared a pathway through the orchard towards the proposed new entrance gate. This gate was installed in Summer 2001 and has never been used or indeed opened. It will come into use during the next academic year as part of the Safe Routes to School Programme upgrade of the cycling and walking infrastructure inside and outside of the school grounds.

Planting trees is always a good idea, so we planted almost one hundred trees at one of the school boundaries. Species include: Hawthorn, Oak, Alder, Silver Birch and Beech. The trees were small with bare roots and the students were shown how to properly place these in the ground. They learned that the trees will slowly establish roots over two or three years and will then begin to show themselves properly at about four or five years after planting. The trees were supplied free of charge by Easy Treesie (<https://easytreesie.com/>).

Coming next year:

We will begin our education outreach to local primary schools, community groups and within Mercy Mounthawk. Our students have already formed workgroups based on some of the Sustainable Development Goals: Climate Change, Life on Land, Sustainable Towns and Cities (looking at transport and sustainable food systems), Life Below Water and Quality Education. They have produced learning materials/tools which they will use for their presentations over the next few years. One of these will examine what the world might look like at 4°C warmer than it is now. Others will examine and promote home composting, while the Quality Education group has researched the benefits of fulltime education in poor countries with a particular emphasis on the education of young women. The food group will begin the process of integrating vegetarian/vegan options into the school canteen. We will work with students, parents and the canteen providers to provide a number of sample menus to see which is the preferred

option. We aim to have new canteen items on the menu before October break.

The work of the Environment Committee goes under our own project name of 'Sustownability' which will run from 2025 until 2030. We received grant funding of €2,500 to implement the project from the Department of Education: Education for Sustainable Development.



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education and Youth

ESD to 2030
Second National Strategy on
Education for Sustainable Development



easy treesie



Culture Day

by Aishling Hammed | 6th year

I reflected on my journey at Mercy Mounthawk, and my involvement in cultural events has become a significant part of my life. From the very first moment I stepped into the school I never liked talking about where my family came from, Nigeria, but being a part of these cultural events has taught me so many lessons about leadership and pride. I've learned that leadership in these events is about inspiring others to share their lives and celebrate their family's origin. It's about showing every single person that our origins shape who we are and that every culture holds something beautiful and meaningful to each and every one of us.

One of my favorite things to do during culture day was cooking and sharing food with everyone, as well as dancing to our traditional music in the centenary hall, regardless of the classes beside us! As I look back, I feel a sense of accomplishment. I believe I've set a good example for the younger students, and I'm confident that they will continue the tradition of hosting cultural events. My little sister often watches me prepare for these events and I just know she will continue it for myself and my sister Aoife and every other Senior student who has to leave Mounthawk.

I can't even express the profound gratitude I have for Mr. Kissane, Ms. N. Fitzgerald, Ms. D. Buckley and Ms. B. O'Shea. I truly would never have cared as much about my culture if they hadn't invited me to participate and to take an interest in who I really was. If it weren't for them, I would still be the same shy girl I was in first year! I will truly miss it because I never know when I'll get the chance to celebrate my culture in this way again. It was genuinely and truly one of the best things that ever happened to me at Mercy Mounthawk.

by Emmanuela Ayomiyode Martin | 2nd year

Culture Day was one of the most exciting and exhausting days I've ever had at school. I came in early that morning, way before most people, to help set up the different foods we were showcasing. I must've made at least 20 trips to the Home Ec. rooms! I kept checking on the dishes because I was worried something might burn. Every time I walked away I thought: what if it gets too hot? So back I went, again and again. It was stressful, but also kind of funny when I look back on it. I just really wanted everything to turn out right. Once everything was set up and people started arriving, the whole place was alive with colour, music, and the smell of amazing food.

Then came the dancing at the start. I honestly didn't dance that much because of my outfit, but later on my friends dragged me out to dance. I didn't even realise how wrapped up in it I had actually become until I saw myself in some of the videos later; smiling and totally in the moment. It was one of those rare times where everyone was just having fun and being themselves.

I tried so many different dishes; some I'd never even heard of before. It felt like I was travelling the world just by walking from one table to the next. I also made sure to take loads of pictures and videos throughout the day of the food, the decorations, people dancing, and even behind the scenes moments while we were setting up. I wanted to capture every bit of it so I could look back and remember how much work and fun went into the event.

By the end of the day I was completely exhausted, but also really happy. I helped bring something special to life, and I got to experience so many different cultures all in one place. Culture Day was definitely one to remember!



SECOND YEAR CULTURAL TOUR TO MADRID



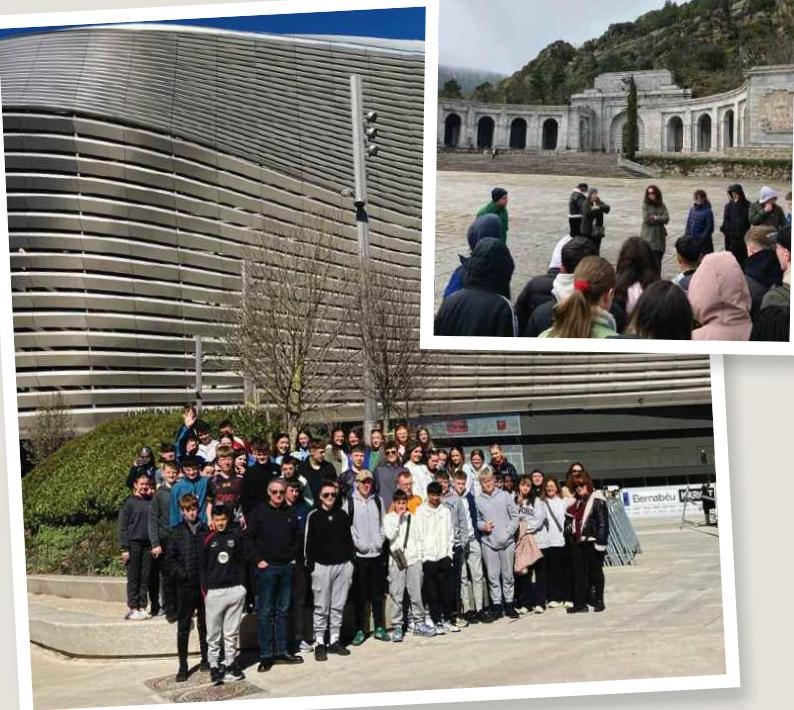
In March, our second-year students had the opportunity to take part in the annual five-day cultural tour to Madrid. This much-loved trip offers students a chance to experience the history, art, and vibrant life of Spain's capital and surrounding areas - and this year was no exception.

Over the course of the trip, students explored three of Spain's most historic and picturesque cities: Salamanca, Toledo, and Segovia. These day trips allowed students to step back in time as they walked through ancient streets, visited magnificent cathedrals and palaces, and admired the unique blend of Roman, Moorish, and Christian architecture. The cathedral in Segovia provided an unexpected treat for all space fans in the form of an 8m diameter, high definition replica of the moon.

A visit to the Valle de Cuelgamuros provided a moment for reflection and historical insight, while back in Madrid, students enjoyed a guided walking tour of the city's charming old town. Cultural enrichment continued with visits to two of the world's most renowned art galleries: the Reina Sofía Museum, featuring Picasso's powerful Guernica, and the El Prado Museum, home to works by Goya, Velázquez, and many other masters.

An evening flamenco dancing show offered an unforgettable glimpse into the passion and rhythm of Spanish culture, and no trip would be complete without some fun and excitement at the Warner Bros Theme Park, which was a definite highlight for many. There was also time for some retail therapy, giving students the chance to pick up souvenirs, sample local treats, and practise their Spanish in real-life settings.

The tour was a fantastic success, filled with learning, laughter, and lasting memories. It was a wonderful opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of Spanish culture while enjoying the company of their peers in a truly unforgettable setting.



Awards Night

2025

This year we gathered to honour the remarkable achievements, unique talents, and special gifts of our outstanding students during our Annual Awards Ceremony, held on 13th May in the school gym. This event is a pinnacle of the school year, marked by celebration and joy as students, parents, and teachers come together to reflect on and appreciate the dedication, kindness, leadership, diligence, and overall excellence of our students here in Mercy Mounthawk. The evening was expertly hosted by Mr. Pat Fleming and Ms. Eimear Nolan, both of whom added their own flair to the night, along with our feathered friends who graced the event with their presence in the gym this year! Our school choir opened the evening with a beautiful rendition of 'Thankful' by David Foster.

The first award presented was to former Leaving Cert. student Cathal Murphy, who accepted an award for his phenomenal success at LC in 2024 in which he got first place in Ireland in not one, but two of his Leaving Cert subjects: DCG and Construction Studies.

Following on from Cathal's success story, Mr. Fleming alluded to different paths that can lead to success, regaling us with the story of his very successful cousin Larry. He encouraged us all to take the next step and wait for our path to reveal itself. Unlike his cousin Larry, it may not be the path that leads to being a millionaire, but it will hopefully be a path that leads to fulfillment.

The evening began with the presentation of Christian Leadership Awards by Ms. Breda Cronin. These were awarded to:

1st Year: Aoibhinn Corridon, Conor Brosnan, Erica Weng, Jane Marie Cantwell, Maria Gilroy, Nicola Corridon, Oleksander Samoilenko, Samuel Smith, Saoirse Moynihan, Séamus Hingston, Tenzin Tsering.

3rd Year: Abbie Crowley, Ben Litchfield, Caragh Kelliher, Ciara Quilter, Córta Meehan, Elizabeth Sullivan, Feidhlim Ginty, Lainey Costello, Lauren Lawlor, Molly Scally, Panna Hernold-Csorba, Sadhbh Walsh, Valeria Taran.

6th Year: Caitlín O'Sullivan, Deirdre Quigley, Jack Barrett, Laura Sugrue, Maeve Trant, Mark O'Meara, Millie O'Brien, Orla Leahy, Pádraig O'Halloran, Róisín Cantwell, Seán Heaslip, Sean Hennessy, Tomás Kennedy.

Ms. Noreen Somers then took to the stage to present the Comhar awards to:

1st Year: Alice Kennedy, Caitlyn Dennehy, Clodagh Kennehy, Dayna O'Connor, Dominik Nowak, Eoin Wrenn, Iseult Brick Dunne, Jay Dooley, Kate Swan, Kinga Sliwka, Liam O'Sullivan, Naomi Mitchell, Nessa Kirby, Phoebe Hussey, Rian Tuohy, Safira Ekren, Sophie Ferriter.

3rd Year: Adam Robinson, Amelia Gieraltowska, Ashlyn Falvey, Ella Dennehy, Emma Hayles, Esha Shet, Ava Devine, Francisco Hanafin, Keira O'Sullivan, Mona Abdalla, Paddy Rusk, Rachel Lennon, Sara Abdalla, Sarah Breen, Sophie Culloty, Taylor-Kate Leane, Torran Millar, Vilte Kuraite, Zofia Sosnowska.

6th Year: Alice Fitzgibbon, Aoibhín O'Connor MacCarthy, Barry Nagle, Caitríona Doyle O'Brien, Charlie Nolan, Chloe Devine, Donnacha Buttiner, Jack Nolan, Jack Rusk, Liepa Kaletkaite, Lily Collins, Lucy O'Connor, Mollie Duggan, Yasmine Odugbesan, Zach Griffin.



Ms. Bernie O'Shea presenting Caragh Kenny O'Sullivan and Caoilinn Kenny O'Sullivan with an Exceptional Achievement Award as they are Gold Medal Gaisce Award Winners



Right: Cathal Murphy who got 1st place in his Leaving Cert in DCG and Construction Studies.

The official presentations of the night continued, honouring students for their Academic Excellence with the Senior Maths Award going to Charlie Nolan. Jack O'Donoghue received the Excellence in Engineering Award. The Junior Science Award recipient was Aoibheann Daly, 3rd Year and Yasmine Odugbesan, 6th Year, earned the Senior Science Award for her significant contribution to Science throughout her time here in Mercy Mounthawk. Torran Millar, Feidhlim Ginty and Conan Seino were also recognised for their continued excellence in Science. Anuska Saha, 6th Year, received the Tadhg O'Connell Memorial Award for Excellence in Physics.

Students were then celebrated through the presentation of School Spirit Awards. The recipients were:

1st Year: Calum Lacey, Eamonn Óg McElligott, Edvinas Revotas, Erika Balode, Fia Ferris, Fiadh Nelan, Iona Carmody, Kate O'Shea, Liam Corkery, Róisín Reidy, Sarah Jane Slattery, Sennait Forster, Shane Carey, Shauna Quigley, Eugene Nechypor

3rd Year: Bienheureuse Kolapnu, Caoimhe Nolan, Cathal Carr, Conan Seino, Dan O'Connor, Dionne Rogers, Emma Bodenham, Emma Gaynor, Kate Fitzgibbon, Nicole Power, Samuel Gleasure, Seán Sargent

6th Year: Aishling Hammed, Amy Heaphy, Aoife Hammed, Billy T Doyle, Emma Ryan, Kate Collins, Paddy Lane, Seán Michael Redican, Sophie Hassett, Tom Long, Holly O'Brien

Mr. Shane Kissane then presented students with awards to recognise their diligence. These were awarded to:

1st Year: Adriana Araiza, Cillian Quirke, Daragh Sheehan, Emilia Ryan, Eva Fitzgerald, Iseult Brick Dunne, Jane Marie Cantwell, Jay Dooley, Joshua Bamigbade, Kate O'Shea, Kate Swan, Mohammed Rahman, Nessa Kirby, Niamh Butler, Nikola Vinarcikova, Rian Tuohy, Safira Ekren, Sennait Forster, Siun Harty, Sophia Polak, Sophie Mulgrew

3rd Year: Abigail DeLeon, Ali O'Dwyer, Christian Gleasure, Ellie Lyons, Emma Hayles, Emmet Carmody, Feidhlim Ginty, Laura Buckley, Lauren Lawlor, Mena Lane, Michalina Zalewska, Penny Costello, Rachel Lennon, Sarlote Babarskaite, Vilte Kuraite

6th Year: Alva Daughton, Amy Behan, Caoilinn Kenny O'Sullivan, Caragh Kenny O'Sullivan, David Slattery, Ella Griffin, Forat Al Janabi, Harry Rusk, Katie Fitzmaurice, Kelly Fitzgerald, Liepa Kaletkaite, Lucy O'Connor, Niamh Rice, Rachel Sargent, Róisín Cantwell, Seán Corkery, Sinéad Cassidy, Sophie Hassett, Tomás Kennedy, Yasmine Odugbesan



Front L-R: Yasmine Odugbesan, Tomás Kennedy, Mr. John O'Roarke, Mr. Pat Fleming, Lucy O'Connor, Séan Hennessy.

Back L-R: Forat Al Janabi, Sophie Hassett, Maeve Trant, Jack Barrett, Conor O'Sullivan, Caragh Kenny O'Sullivan, Caolínn Kenny O'Sullivan

The ceremony then moved to some more individual awards. In Art this year, two students were recognised. Aoibheann Daly won the **Junior Art Award** while The **Senior Art Award** winner was Claudia Crowley. Barry Nagle received the **Construction Studies Award** and the **History Award** was presented to Francisco Hanafin, Torran McKenna Millar, Christian Gleasure and Feidhlim Ginty who won 2nd place in the Irish History Association National Quiz Final.

Gach uile blhain mar chuid de cheiliúradh oíche na ngradam bronntar dhá ghradam Gaeilge ar scoláirí árdteiste. Bronntar Gradam in omós do Mháire Úí Gheiní ar an té a fuair an marc is airde sna bréagscrúdaithe Gaeilge. Bronnadh an gradam seo ar Chloe Devine i mbliana. Bronntar Gradam in omós do Sr. Joan ar dhalta árdteistiméireachta a leiríonn díograis, suim sa chultúr agus grá don teanga. Bronnadh an gradam seo i mbliana ar Donnacha Buttiner. Guímid gach rath orthu arao.

Academic Awards were then presented to the following students:

1st Year: Aoife Hobbert, Daragh Sheehan, Darragh Kennedy, Eimear Kenny, Ellen Herlihy, Emilia Ryan, Erica Weng, Fiadh Nelan, Iona Carmody, Nafees Raahman, Naomi Mitchell, Natalia Hennig, Nathan Osibodu, Róisín Rice, Róisín Reidy, Saorlaith Costello, Tenzin Tserin.

3rd Year: Amelia Gieraltowska, Anna Corridon, Aoibheann Daly, Culann Dowling, Emma Gaynor, Faye Moloney, Francisco Hanafin, Lainey Costello, Molly Scally, Nicole Hennig, Panna Hernold-Csorba, Sadhbh Sheehan, Sadhbh Walsh, Samuel Gleasure, Torran McKenna Millar, Zofia Sosnowska.

6th Year: Alice Fitzgibbon, Anuska Saha, Charlie Nolan, Chloe Devine, Jack Barrett, Jack Given, Jack Nolan, Jack O'Donoghue, Natalie Naing, Sadhbh Cadogan, Sadhbh Slattery, Sophia Darfoo, Yuya Weng.

The breadth of extra-curricular involvement in Mercy Mounthawk continues to expand each year, as highlighted by Mr. Fleming in his overview of the year's activities and accomplishments. We have celebrated a wide range of achievements this year and it has undoubtedly been one of our most successful years to date.

We were regaled with a mindblowing production of *The Wiz* in Siamsa Tire in January. Our choir and Trad Group have travelled the country participating in various different events, and their performances bring any event to 'next-level' status. The sale of the choir's CD raised an incredible €3,000 for Kerry Hospice. Our artists have been celebrated locally and nationally, from being invited to design Christmas cards for Palliative Care, to receiving prizes in prestigious national competitions such as the Texaco Art Competition. Our budding chefs have advocated for healthy eating and home cooking by participating in events such as Listowel Food Fair and the Healthy Home Chef Competition. Our Scientists have demonstrated their intellectual prowess at Scifest, where they won 5 awards and in BT Young Scientist, where an incredible 10 projects made it to the finals. Our young Historians won both Senior and Junior categories in the Kerry Young Historian Competition as well as taking home the overall title of Kerry Young Historian of the Year. Not one, but four teams of future Engineers reached the regional finals of the Can-Sat competition. One of our students was selected from Munster to attend the national session of the European Youth Parliament in Dublin.



Senior Music Award: Amy Heaphy



Ms. Córta McElligott presenting Shannon Martin with the Martha Brassil Award



Ms. Bernie O'Shea presenting Mollie Duggan and Rachel Dooner with the LCA Award



Mr. John O'Roarke presenting Maeve Trant with the Principal's Award



Head boy Jack Barrett with Student Choice Award winner Forat Al Janabi and Head Girl Maeve Trant

On the sporting front, it has been another bumper year. Our Senior Boys' Footballers defended their O'Sullivan Cup and Corn Uí Mhuirí titles, our Senior Camogie players retained their Scollard Cup title and very narrowly missed out on a Munster title also. Our Senior Girls' golfers reached the national final again, and Lucy Grattan brought home the title of National Champion. In the water, our swimmers have represented their school, county and country and will continue to do so throughout the summer. Our athletes are enjoying their season, bringing home title after title and demonstrating their commitment to the pursuit of excellence. Our basketballers know the route to the National Arena in Tallaght by heart as they have reached so many National Finals at this stage. Our Senior Ladies' Footballers waged a valiant campaign in Munster and our Minor B's reached the Munster Semi-Final. Sports like badminton and chess are also growing from strength to strength year by year.

If we take a moment to reflect on all of this, it seems the choir's choice of opening song was indeed apt, as we undoubtedly have so much to be thankful for in our school community.

The following Extra-Curricular Awards were presented in recognition of these students' contribution on the sporting front.

Boys' Soccer: Zach Kearney, Karol Kowalski, Seán Sargent

Girls' Soccer: Nessa Kirby

Golf: Ema Vinarcikova, Lucy Grattan

1st Year Camogie: Éabha-May Horgan

Junior Camogie: Rachel Lennon

Senior Camogie: Ruth O'Connor and Róisín Quinn

1st Year Girls' Basketball: Abby Crowley and Holly Costello

1st Year Boys' Basketball: Shane Carey and Rian Tuohy

Junior Girls' Basketball: Ashlyn Falvey

Junior Boys' Basketball: Kevin O'Shea

Senior Girls' Basketball: Holly O'Brien

Senior Boys' Basketball: Seán Heaslip and David Lucid

Senior Hurling: Billy Doyle

Junior Ladies' Football: Lexi Keane, Grace O'Regan

Senior Ladies' Football: Kate Collins, Lucy O'Connor, Kelly Fitzgerald, Aoibhín O'Connor MacCarthy

Junior Boys' Gaelic Football: Michael Somers

Senior Boys' Gaelic Football: Tomás Kennedy, Daniel Kirby, Paddy Lane, Daniel Kirby

Athletics 1st Year: Sophie Mulgrew

Junior Athletics: Ruby Crean, Kevin O'Shea, Eamonn Óg McElligott

Senior Athletics: Jack Barrett

For their outstanding contribution to the school's traditional music group over the past six years, Seán Michael Redican and Cian Hennessy were awarded the **Traditional Music Award**. The **Choir Award** went to Isabelle Graham and the **Senior Music Award** was presented to Amy Heaphy, 6th Year, who starred as Dorothy in *The Wiz*. The **Drama Award** for 2025 was given to Conor O'Sullivan, who has been integral to our drama and musical productions over the past six years, most recently starring in our production of *The Wiz*. Sam Gleasure, Cathal Carr and Dan O'Connor shared the **Junior Drama Award**. Nikita Tokarchuk received a **Special Recognition Award** for representing Ireland at a Ukrainian competition in Italy this year and bringing home a silver medal. A **Student Initiative Award** was presented to Aishling Hammed, Aoife Hammed, Immanuella Ogundele and Niamh Abdul in recognition of their phenomenal contribution to Intercultural Events throughout their time in Mercy Mounthawk.

The evening then moved on to the special individual award winners.

The first of these awards was the **Martha Brassil Award**. This year the recipient was Shannon Martin. The **Student Council Wellbeing Award** was presented to Iona Carmody and Esha Shet. Forat Al Janabi received the **Student Choice Award**. Lucy O'Connor and Tomás Kennedy were awarded **Female and Male Sportsperson of the Year** respectively. LCA co-ordinator Ms. Bernie O'Shea presented the **Leaving Cert Applied Award** to Rachel Dooner and Mollie Duggan. **Exceptional Achievement Awards** went to Gold GAISCE Award winners Caragh and Caoilinn Kenny O'Sullivan.

The **CEIST Award** had three deserving recipients in Seán Hennessy, Tomás Kennedy and Yasmine Odugbesan. Kathleen Holmes presented the **Board of Management Awards** to Sophie Hassett and Conor O'Sullivan.

And finally, although we were unaware of this on the night, Mr. John O'Roarke made his final presentation of the **Principal's Award** and the **Catherine McAuley Award**; the deserving recipients being Maeve Trant and Jack Barrett respectively.



Ladies Gaelic Football Awards

Kelly Fitzgerald,
Kate Collins,
Aoibhín O'Connor
MacCarthy,
Lucy O'Connor

Gradaim Gaeilge 2025

Gach uile bhliain mar chuid de cheiliúradh oíche na ngradam bronntar dhá ghradam Gaeilge ar bheirt scolairí ardeiste.

Bronntar Gradam in omós do Mháire Uí Ghéiní ar an té a léiríonn ardchumas agus ard chaighdeán i labhairt agus i scríobh na teanga agus a ghnóthaíonn an marc is airde sna bréagscrúdaithe Gaeilge. Bronnadh an gradam seo ar Chloe Devine i mbliana.

Bronntar Gradam in omós do Sr Joan ar dhalta ardeistiméireachta a léiríonn diografais, suim sa chultúr agus grá don teanga. Bronnadh an gradam seo ar Dhonnacha Buttimmer. Guímid gach rath orthu arao.



Left:
Ms. Mary Reidy and
Chloe Devine



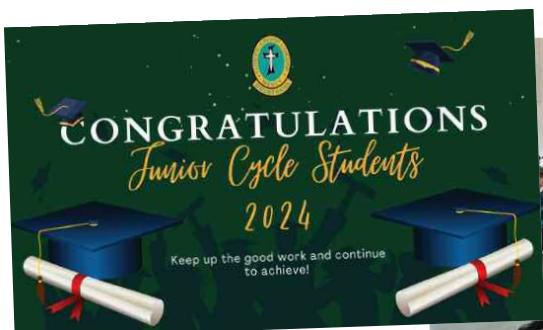
Right:
Ms. Mary Reidy and
Donnacha Buttimmer



Tom Gleasure and Ri-Ann Zhang who will be Head Boy and Head Girl for the coming academic year with Mr. Kissane Deputy Principal



Health Promotion Bealach Glas 5k Fun Run



Congratulations to all our Junior Cycle Students 2024



Graduation Day

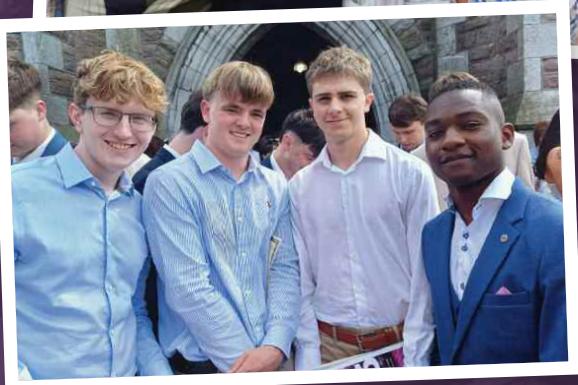
As our 6th Year students marked their last day of school in Mercy Mounthawk, we took the opportunity to hold an informal reception where students got to gather in the school as a group and chat amongst themselves and with their teachers, before leaving us for what will hopefully be greener pastures.

A wave of nostalgia swept through Centenary Hall as we reflected on the incredible journey they have had, from their early days as First Years until now. It's heartwarming to see how far they have come and what they have achieved thus far.

During the reception, they received their class photos, as well as the letters they had written to their future selves when they were beginning First Year. These letters were filled with the hopes and dreams they had from their earliest days in Mercy Mounthawk, and also contained perhaps a touch of youthful optimism and curiosity.

They also serve as a poignant reminder of the progress they have made throughout their time with us here in Mercy Mounthawk. It is our sincere hope that they were as successful as possible in realising these hopes and dreams during their time with us, and that just maybe, they realised many more ambitions than their First Year selves ever imagined possible at that time.

As they step into the next chapter of their lives, we cherish these memories and celebrate their achievements, wishing them all the very best for the future.



*Top: Maeve Trant, Isabelle Graham, Shannon Scanlon, Magdalena Knysak
Bottom: Jack Given, Luke Bentley Curran, Diarmuid Waugh, Samuel Akinyemi*

On Friday 23rd May, the community of Mercy Mounthawk gathered to celebrate the Leaving Certificate Class of 2025. This event honoured our students' five or six-year journey through Secondary Education and looked forward with hope to their futures beyond the corridors of Mercy Mounthawk.

The ceremony took place in the beautiful surroundings of St. John's Church, where the sun shone down welcoming all those graduating, along with their families. Our Head Girl and Head Boy, Maeve Trant and Jack Barrett, began the ceremony with speeches reminiscing about their time in school, covering fun in classes, the moments shared with friends and other special memories of their time with us.

Fr. Pádraig Walsh celebrated the Mass and the Mercy Mounthawk choir enriched the ceremony with beautiful melodies and harmonies. The theme for the ceremony was "Hope," emphasising the importance of showing up, speaking out and keeping hope and optimism in our hearts. As the 6th Years prepare to embark on their next adventures beyond the school gates, this theme of hope takes on added significance. It reflects not only their journey thus far, as well as the hopes and aspirations they have already attained, but also provides sustenance for their future endeavours.

Mr. O'Roarke spoke to the graduates about the journey ahead, encouraging them to seize the day, and act with hope and optimism every day. Together, they have weathered many challenges to date, celebrated successes great and small, and grown in resilience and solidarity as a group. As they step into the wider world, they carry with them the knowledge that they are each part of something greater - a community where they are cherished, supported, and empowered to thrive; to live and act in hope.

Following the presentation of certificates, the class received their Class of 2025 pen and their Mercy Mounthawk yearbook, which we hope will serve as a treasured momento of their time with us. We wish the Class of 2025 all the best in their lives beyond our classrooms and corridors. May you embrace life and all its opportunities, live and act in hope, and if the winds of life ever blow you back in our direction, our door is always open to you.



*Clockwise: Aoibhín O'Connor MacCarthy, Jake O'Connor
Oluwasegun Akintope and Daniel Aneke
Caragh Kenny O'Sullivan, Katie Fitzmaurice, Caoilinn Kenny O'Sullivan, Sophia Darfoo*

European Studies

There were many great achievements by the TY EPAS (European Ambassador School) this year. Ten students represented the school at the Munster Session of the European Youth Parliament in Cork. Aoibheann McCarthy was selected from Munster to attend the National Session of the Parliament in Dublin.

Sophie Mitchell, Joel Ogualiri and Risteárd Harty represented Cyprus at a Model Council event in Dublin Castle. A lot of preparation went into the event which included a zoom with the ambassador for Cyprus, Louis Telemachou. The team had an outstanding performance on the day which involved 6 hours of active debates.

To end the year the class organised a Mock European parliament for Junior Cycle students to debate issues relating to the environment, mental health and gender equality. MEP Seán Kelly was the guest speaker at the event. The class completed all pillars of the Ambassador School Programme and were certified as Junior Ambassadors for the European Parliament at the end of the final term.



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

In May, we invited guest speaker Baisat Alawiye from Minority Teachers Ireland to the school to deliver three workshops on EDI.

Baisat is a newly-qualified teacher and her workshops are informed by her experience of being Black and Irish, a student and a teacher. The first workshop was on Allyship, and on fostering whole-school inclusivity. We spoke about covert and overt racism, how to support ourselves and our friends when we see racism occur, and about intercultural understanding and respect. The second workshop was about Taking Up Space as students from minority backgrounds and Baisat discussed barriers that minority students face, the importance of representation, and she also encouraged more students like her to enter into teaching - because representation matters! The third workshop was for teachers on What I Wish my Teacher Knew, and it fostered greater understanding of the lived experience of minority students in the education context. We explored micro-aggressions, the importance of valuing cultural traditions and norms (everything from names to hair, to food and assertiveness), and the need to decolonise our curriculum and classrooms in tangible ways.



It was a fantastic day of learning, and another important day in Mercy Mounthawk as we strive to foster a truly inclusive school community where everyone belongs and feels respected and valued.

Mercy Mounthawk's Spanish Immersion Trip to Madrid



From February 8th to 22nd, 14 students from Mercy Mounthawk took part in an unforgettable Spanish immersion programme in Madrid. Organised in collaboration with Language Activities International (LAI), the experience offered us a unique chance to live with Spanish host families, attend a local secondary school, and fully immerse ourselves in the culture, language, and daily life of Spain.

Life with Host Families

Our arrival in Madrid was met with warmth and kindness from our host families. They welcomed us into their homes like one of their own, helping us settle in and encouraging us to practice Spanish in real, everyday situations. Sundays were dedicated to quality time with our hosts - often involving sightseeing and enjoying traditional homemade Spanish meals together.

Cultural Discoveries

Twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, we took part in cultural excursions around Madrid. These outings included walking tours through the heart of the city, visits to the Royal Palace, Retiro Park, the National Archaeological Museum, and the Prado Museum.

School and Daily Routine

Each morning, we commuted to school either on foot or by bus, where we joined local students in class. The Spanish school environment was welcoming and provided an authentic insight into daily academic life. During breaks, churros and coffee at nearby cafés became a cherished ritual, and after classes ended around lunchtime, we were free to explore the city. Whether it was shopping, sightseeing, or just soaking up the Madrid atmosphere, every afternoon brought new adventures.

Gaining Independence

This trip wasn't just about improving our Spanish - it was also a major step in personal growth. From navigating airports and managing our own travel to confidently using Madrid's Metro system, we learned how to be independent and responsible in a new country.

This two-week immersion left a lasting impact. We returned home with stronger Spanish skills, greater independence, better understanding of the language and a newfound appreciation for Spanish culture. Many of us have been invited back to Madrid to our host families whenever we please.

Parents' Council

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Carers,
Congratulations on making it through another academic year! To those students and parents moving on from Mercy Mounthawk, we wish you and your child all the very best in your future endeavours.

Our parents

Last year, we said goodbye to our Treasurer Jill Kenny after 3 years. Jenny Carne took over this role and we are also delighted to have Natalie Deegan as our PR and Fiona Leahy as our new secretary. We were devastated earlier in the year on the tragic death of our dear friend Anila Mucaj. Anila was a regular attendee at our Parents' Council meetings, always bringing cakes and treats. We will miss her dearly. May she rest in peace.

Our voices were heard

You may remember that in December 2023, the Parents' Council initiated a petition for parents to address safety concerns outside the school and to expedite work on the Safe Routes to School Programme. This year we were thrilled to hear that funds had been secured and routes had been selected. The Parents' Council, together with Engineer Joyce O'Boyle from Kerry County Council, met with the students in May to present the details of the proposed infrastructural works which will be carried out in the 2025 – 2026 school year. We hope that works will start as soon as possible and that more of our students will be able to access a safe cycle or pedestrian route on school days.

Fundraising and guest speakers

We held a very successful bucket and bag packing collection at SuperValu Tralee and we also held our annual quiz night, raising



more than a thousand euros in the process. A huge thanks to everyone who supported us. Our second-chance uniform sale will take place this August 12th from 10am until 12 midday in the school. Unwanted uniforms can be donated to the school. We also had a very interactive and engaging talk on LGBT+ from Daniel Quirke in the Listowel Family Resource Centre.

We were very happy to be part of the Cineáltais anti-bullying initiative by taking part in one of the focus groups organised as part of this national strategy. The Cineáltais charter has been formulated based on the voices of parents, students from all year groups, as well as teachers, and will be displayed in all locations in the school beginning in September 2025.

Our Parents' Council meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm in room 35, and we'd love to see you there from September! To get involved, please send an email to mmparentscouncil@gmail.com.

We look forward to meeting you,



Mercy Mounthawk Parents' Council
Angie Baily, Jenny Carne, Natalie Deegan and Fiona Leahy

Outline Calendar - September 2025 to June 2026

SCHOOL RE-OPENING DATES

Friday 22nd August	Transition year students begin school (08.55-3.50pm)
Monday 25th August	1st and 6th year students return to school (08.55-3.50pm)
Tuesday 26th August	3rd and 5th year students return to school (08.55-3.50pm)
Wednesday 27th August	2nd year students return to school (08.55-1.30pm)

HOLIDAYS

October Mid-Term	Closing Friday 24th October. Reopens Monday 3rd November
Christmas Holidays	School closes Friday 19th December. Reopens Monday 5th January
St. Brigid's Day	School Closes Monday 2nd February
Spring Mid-Term	School closes Friday 13th February. Reopens Monday 23rd February
St. Patrick's Day	School closed on Tuesday 17th March
Easter Holidays	School closes on Friday 27th March. Reopens on Monday 13th April
May Public Holiday	School closed on Monday 4th May
Summer Holidays	Last day of term Friday 29th May

IMPORTANT DATES

Tuesday 12th August	Second Chance Uniforms on sale in school 10am-1pm
Tuesday 12th August	New Uniforms on sale in school 10am-3pm
Wednesday 24th September	Mercy Day
Friday 26th September	School closed
Wednesday 8th October	Parents' Council AGM
Saturday 18th October	Open Day
13th - 17th October	Maths Week
Monday 10th November	School closed, staff training
11th - 14th November	Science Week
Friday 12th December	School closed, staff training
19th - 23rd January	Catholic Schools Week
22nd - 24th January	School play in Siamsa Tíre
5th - 13th February	Mock Examinations
9th - 13th March	Seachtain na Gaeilge
Sat 28th March - Thurs	Leaving Cert Oral Exams
2nd April inclusive	School closed, staff training
Tuesday 28th April	6th year graduation
Friday 22nd May	Last day of term
Friday 29th May	State Exams begin
Wed 3rd June	



MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL MOUNTHAWK

MOUNTHAWK, TRALEE, CO. KERRY | 066 710 2550

www.mercymounthawk.ie