

Coláiste Bríde has always promoted teamwork and strong relationships in classrooms, in the staffroom, in activities, on trips etc. It is always a joy to meet students who come to my office with suggestions, new ideas and initiatives. The spirit of reaching out is very strong and the sense of caring, justice and pride is very evident through all the cake sales, raffles, fundraising activities, guest speakers, competitions entered etc.

I congratulate all of the students who took part in any activity where they represented Coláiste Bríde and put their time and effort into writing poetry, entering competitions, turning up at practices, playing on teams, singing in choirs, performing at lunchtime concerts, organising events, welcoming guests, Open Days, designing posters, cards, taking photographs, writing articles, helping out at parent/teacher meetings etc. Through participation our girls develop their personalities, their skills and their relationships. I firmly believe that it is a privilege to work with young people. Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí.

Coláiste Bríde was chosen to launch a government initiative regarding 100mb broadband to schools due to the great work being done by the staff in embracing ICT in the curriculum. Staff and students featured on RTE news showcasing the work in our classrooms for other schools to model. We were part of the pilot project and are recognised as a leading school in the area of ICT in the curriculum. We continue to develop our links through connecting our school with Presentation Warrenmount via videoconferencing between classes, extending the classroom beyond the walls. Our students studying Italian are growing in confidence linking with our partner school in Italy while using Skype in the classroom.

In October 2011 during mid-term a team of staff visited our new sister school in New Delhi, India as part of the Presentation Global Education Experience - Delhi 6 meets Dublin 22. It was fascinating to visit another Presentation school as far away as Delhi and yet at the same time feel so at home, in familiar territory. We experienced a magnificent welcome from Sr Regi, the Principal, all of the Sisters, the staff and the students. Seeing Nano Nagle images, Presentation values being lived out among the school community in ways that can influence and inspire us was most moving. We also visited Presentation Sisters who are working to build communities which experience challenges of poverty, suffering and injustice. The school prefects took so much care of us and explained their school values, introduced us to classes they have 2,000 pupils from 3-18 years of age. We look forward to giving an Irish welcome in return!

Presentation Day in November is a very special day in our school calendar where all members of our school community, stakeholders, past members of staff etc write together in reflecting upon the ethos of our school and in celebrating our identity. This year we were privileged to welcome Sr Teri Abraham, the Congregational Leader of the Presentation Sisters who is from India but lives here in Ireland at the moment while visiting Presentation communities worldwide. Sadia Islam our Head Girl gave a lovely warm welcome on behalf of the students and staff. I wish to thank Sr Concepta for organising Sr Teri's visit to Clondalkin.

Our website, www.colaistebride.com is certainly attracting more traffic and it is always great to hear from past-pupils who log in and send us messages updating us on their chosen paths in life. Most recently we have had occasion to celebrate scholarships awarded to Alanna Roche from NUI Maynooth and Emma Finn from Trinity College Dublin who both excelled in their Leaving Certificates last year. Equally, past-pupils such as Martina O'Brien and Cliana Carroll who have achieved first class honours awards, we have lots of past-pupils achieving Masters Degrees not to mention the very healthy number of girls completing Ph.D awards in universities worldwide. It is so important for our students to have role models in life and it is great to have the wealth of talent and generosity that our past-pupils give.

Recently I had the pleasure of bringing a fifth year group of students to visit Dáil Éireann following up on their TY project which organised the mock election in the school last year. The girls were among lots of other schools and groups visiting that day but after the visit I received feedback that it was commented upon about the excellent behaviour of our students and people wished to know which school they were from as they were most impressive in their uniform and behaviour. I thank Minister Frances Fitzgerald's office for arranging the visit and Senator Ronan Mullen who is on the CEIST Council for their time and encouragement shown to the girls. The students of our school excel as great ambassadors and live up to the high expectations set.

Our school was also selected as one of 40 schools in Ireland to be part of the NCCA New Junior Certificate Schools Network. In 2014 students in 1st year will be facing a new style Junior Certificate with less final examinations in 2017 but short courses and portfolio assessment. For more information see www.ncca.ie

This year was also marked by further cuts in education, the loss of guidance counselling, less support for students with English as an additional language (EAL), and learning support, not to mention financial support. These cuts place additional burdens on staff and students as class sizes increase, students have less subject options and timetables are at full stretch. It is very difficult to offer the high quality of provision when our resources are far less but I must pay tribute to the great sense of cooperation, goodwill and understanding which is experienced in the school.

“Love many, trust few, always paddle your own canoe” is the motto my mother firmly passed on to me in her advice to myself and my brothers as we grew up, encouraging us to be strong, independent, kind and loyal in our relationships. These are words that I too pass on from time to time to students as we chat in my office. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff, parents, students, Presentation Sisters and members of the Board of Management and the Parish of Clondalkin for their support shown to my father, brothers and I as we supported my mother during her illness and sad death. I too am very conscious of all the members of our school community who have experienced illness and loss within their families. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamnacha.

Marie-Thérèse Kilmartin
Principal