

## Our Lady of Lourdes NS, Bunclody, Co. Wexford



### **About the school**

Our Lady of Lourdes NS is in Bunclody Co. Wexford. It is a 17 teacher school with a very large PE hall and substantial playing areas with four playing pitches and two basketball courts. The school also has access to two outstanding indoor facilities provided by the Halfway House-Bunclody GAA and Bunclody AFC, just across the road from the school. It has a long and very successful history of participation in Rackard League competitions. The girls have won three consecutive titles in football and camogie recently.

Our motto is *Health is the Prize for More Exercise*. We display trophies/medals in our school hall that pupils obtain for active exercise such as Irish dancing and swimming undertaken outside of the school setting. Active announcements are made as assembly each Friday morning.

### **Ireland's Fittest Family Obstacle Course**

The Kearney family from Bunclody took part in Ireland's Fittest Family for the last two years. Shauna & Leanne attended our school and their sister Laoise is currently in sixth class. The family volunteered to make an obstacle course for our *Active School Week* last year based on their experience of the television programme.

One of the highlights of the course was climbing over two large round bales of straw which were donated by local farmer Mylmar O'Rourke. Each team had to work together to get all members over the bales and this provided great fun and excitement but taught the children much about working together as a team.



Team work was also crucial when they had to navigate through a tunnel made from bales of straw



And then carry a heavy log in a sprint to the finish line.



### **Skipping**

The school invested in 100 skipping ropes to encourage activity during the play breaks and last September *Skipping 4 Life* visited the school for workshops with all the pupils. These workshops were a mix traditional skipping skills together with exciting partner, double Dutch and long rope games to appeal to every child and promote cooperative play. The programme engaged every child and delivered entertaining and amusing sessions, challenging the talented and encouraging and inspiring the not so sporty or reluctant to achieve skills they never knew they had.

We also ran a competition to see how many times a child could skip in one minute. The winners were all able to skip around 150 in one minute.



### **Operation Transformation**

We all had great fun when Eilish Kavanagh and the *Operation Transformation* team visited the school to record some footage. Eilish first joined the junior end of the school for some dancing and stretching exercises. Eilish then joined the senior end of the school for some skipping and for a rather strenuous workout. As part of the programme the school decided to run the equivalent distance from Bunclody to Dublin in the school. The 110km journey was covered by running over 410 laps around the school one frosty and foggy morning.



### **GAA Coaching**

The school participates in Hurling 365 but our local club Halfway-House Bunclody support the school in the implementation of a fun exercise programme. Each week 60 pupils get the use of the new indoor complex and are coached by the GAA coaches, PE teachers from the FCJ Secondary School, local; volunteers and TY students.

### **Walk and Talk**

We introduced a *Walk & Talk* policy at break-times where pupils who don't play games during the breaks are encouraged to get exercise while they socialise.



### **Active Agents**

Our Active School Committee meets every Wednesday after school. Our Active Agents are currently setting up a variety of stations to keep other pupils active during break times. The suggestions they have come up with so far are: tag, tug-o-war, star jumps, jogging on the spot, tip the can, races, skipping, jumping jacks, bean bag challenge, throw & catch, small ball activities and hula-hoop activities. Leaders set up the stations on our basketball courts and the school secretary announces the activity over the school's intercom system.

### **Other Activities**

Other measures undertaken to encourage activity include a Walking Bus to school, volleyball and soccer leagues during lunch breaks, morning exercise before school, walks on Mount Leinster, Futsal soccer, a gymnastics programme for infants, ceili dancing, cycling and the use of dance mats (through Wexford County Council). Fifth class received golf lessons in our local golf club and the school uses the local outdoor swimming pool and tennis courts every June.



***Health is the Prize for More Exercise***