"Your school days are the best days of your life". Time and time again, when we are children, we hear this said with utmost sincerity and think, 'Yeah right'. But it is when we leave school, when we look through the gates from the other side, that we realise the truth in these infamous words.

When I was asked to write about my experiences and memories in Balrothery N.S., I was baffled as to where I would even begin. I started to think of my eight years spent in the school, making friends for life, picking up new hobbies and sports and of course learning new and interesting facts. My time at St. Oliver Plunkett's began with Ms. Larkin welcoming me into her classroom, whose kindness, patience and generosity helped immensely to everyone's transition from playschool into 'big school'. This set the tone for eight busy, hugely enjoyable and unforgettable years. My experiences while I attended this school made sure that they were just that — unforgettable.

From Junior Infants right through to 6th Class, I had the time of my life. I jumped at the opportunity to take part in the school plays and the extra curricular activities. I had the privilege of being on the Credit Union Quiz Team that managed to reach the All Ireland Finals in the RDS. This annual quiz is still, I am delighted to say, taking place. School plays were, and still are, a major part of the school year. Learning lines of songs, making costumes and dress rehearsals occupied kids and teachers for the months of November and December. Learning to swim on a Thursday, running in the countless cross country events and trying to help Mr. Keary achieve his dream of managing a 'winning GAA team' by scoring the odd goal or two were the foundation for my love of sport. These excursions were always highly anticipated and, of course, hugely enjoyed.

However, school isn't school without the academic part! From numerous art classes with Mr. O'Sullivan and an introduction to classical music with Ms. Carew to having `Na Briathra Neamhrialta' imprinted permanently on my brain by Mr. Caffrey, a wide range of subjects were covered. Between 5th and 6th class, I was given a solid foundation for secondary school. Mr. Caffrey and also Mr. Keary helped us all to appreciate maths and Irish in particular, which gave me a head start in First year, without a doubt. Debating was one of Mr. Caffrey's fortes, and he introduced us all to public speaking with the familiar topic of 'The countryside vs the city'.

I can't write about my time spent in this school without talking about Muriel - 'the real boss' - and of course Tommy. Anytime that I happen to call into the school, I am always warmly welcomed by these two. Muriel sits in the newly revamped office with a permanent smile and Tommy is sure to be found outside inventing an artistic use for old pipes. Tommy has brought life and colour into the building, with umpteen illustrations on the walls of the school, which include The Smurfs and an aquarium! The knights who stand guard at the entrance of the school are also Tommy's creations, inspiring awe on the faces of the younger children.

So when I was asked to write a piece about Balrothery N.S. it was not so much where I would start but more, where 1 would end. Challenging and fulfilling, both academically and physically, there are limitless things to talk about but these are my most memorable experiences. So it is now I can say truthfully that, yes, my schooldays were the best days of my life, but only because they were spent in Balrothery N.S.