



Education and Training Boards Ireland

**Bolton Street Technical  
School in the Firing Line  
EASTER RISING 1916**

**DIGITAL STRATEGY  
FOR SCHOOLS**

Enhancing Teaching,  
Learning and Assessment

**REFLECTIONS ON  
ESRI REPORT ON  
School Completion Project**



**etbi**  
Education and Training  
Boards Ireland  
*Boird Oideachais agus  
Oiliúna Éireann*

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# Editorial

The ETBI FET Conference on November 26th was attended by 280 practitioners from the Further Education and Training (FET) sector across all member ETBs. This event was both successful and significant as it brought together every element of further education and training to address common issues of concern and to bring greater coherence to diverse and different FET programmes. Building mutual understanding builds coherence, and this was a key objective of the conference, which will now become an annual feature on the ETBI calendar.

The complexity of the FET sector reflects the complexity and variety of need in our society. It is very evident over the past few years that the spotlight has focussed on FET as a means of addressing national community needs, especially skills needs. Government sees skills enhancement as necessary to maintain inward investment. Various communiqués from the European Commission highlight the importance of Vocational Education and Training (VET). In Ireland and throughout the European Union, the need to increase the attractiveness of FET (or VET) has been identified as a key priority.

The re-evaluation of FET as a learning pathway of equal value with higher education has been highlighted by Senator Jim D'Arcy in recent Seanad debates on the Education (Welfare) (Amendment) Bill 2015. Senator D'Arcy noted: "In Ireland, everyone aspires to third level as the summit of educational achievement. We need a change of attitude which values all forms of

education equally.... In this respect, it is worth noting the skills and training sector has traditionally provided the entrepreneurs and wealth creators that our country so badly needs."

The challenges are great and the targets are being set higher and higher. The education and training sector needs to have the flexibility to respond to the real needs of employers and employers must give realistic commitments to engage with the further education and training providers. The development of Regional Skills Fora has been devised as a platform through which FET providers and the business community can engage and liaise in respect of skills training.

ETBs and their schools, colleges, and education and training centres, have a unique role to play in skills enhancement as they are closest to the world of business. Education is about developing the whole person to lead a fulfilled life. To really achieve that fulfilment, many adults will need to have gainful employment. Our FET colleges and training centres need to maintain their focus of equipping people with real and tangible skills, and with the capacity to meet the challenge of evolving societal pressures.

When ETBs are so much engaged in the change process, it is not easy to see where the sector will be in five or ten years. But committed leadership laced with passion and foresight can ensure that the sector will continue to provide the entrepreneurs and wealth creators that Senator D'Arcy mentions above. In this context, ETBI is looking forward to

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piloting the new Edison Entrepreneurial Programme in schools and colleges in 2016, as this programme is all about cultural change and self-realisation.

As we reach the centenary of the 1916 Rising, it is worth noting that the sector predates the 1916 Rising. As they evolved the Technical Instruction Committees (to 1930), the Vocational Education Committees (to 2013) and the Education and Training Boards (from 2013) have delivered education and training programmes to their local communities over the generations, when part of the British Empire and the Irish Free State, and since Ireland was declared a republic. As we recall the seismic events in 2016, we should also remember the generations of teachers, trainers and public servants who served in the TICs, VECs and ETBs over many decades past.

Michael Moriarty,  
General Secretary.

"Building mutual understanding builds coherence, and this was a key objective of the conference, which will now become an annual feature on the ETBI calendar."



# Reflections on ESRI Report on School Completion Project



By Mary Kenny, Youth in Education and Research Officer, Kildare and Wicklow ETB

## INTRODUCTION

ETBI welcomes the publication of the ESRI Report on the Review of the School Completion Programme (SCP). The report, which is the first external review of the programme since its inception in 2002, provides a unique insight into the operation of SCP across the 124 clusters and in the 694 schools, both primary and post-primary. SCP Annual Reports estimate that the programme delivers educational

supports to approximately 36,000 students within the school system, and to almost 800 young people who are out of school, throughout the academic year and during holiday time.

The position of SCP as an integral part of the DEIS strategy, which is the government's policy framework to tackle education disadvantage, is demarcated from the outset. Addressing Early School leaving, (ESL),

which is education disadvantage at its most manifest, is a major problem in Europe and across the developed world. Ireland's rates of school completion are comparable to the educationally high-performing countries such as Austria and Finland. An ESRI report commissioned by the DES and published in April 2014, entitled Learning from the Evaluation of DEIS, highlights the increase in DEIS schools' retention rates, which in recent years,

has been significantly higher than the overall improvement nationally. The improvement trend in student retention rates in DEIS schools is also captured in the DES report entitled Retention Rates of Pupils in Second Level Schools, January 2014. The report tracks the 2007 entry cohort and concludes that the average retention rate for DEIS second level schools continues to increase and is at a rate of 80.4%, which is up from 68.2% for the 2001 intake.

The improvements in student retention rates in Ireland, particularly since 2000, are worthy of exploration and this review makes a very valuable contribution to a deeper understanding of what is effective in terms of tackling ESL. By examining what is being done at school level to counter disengagement, which is the prelude to ESL, a deeper understanding of the more effective strategies should emerge.

## MESSAGES FROM THE LITERATURE

The literature accessed in the review explores the matrix of interrelated influences that combine to create barriers to educational success. The theoretical underpinnings of programmes such as SCP are mirrored in the recent work of Downes (2011). Downes is an exponent of a preventative strategy which draws on international evidence to outline a range of components on which initiatives aimed at raising school retention rates should be based. The theoretical underpinnings of programmes such as SCP are mirrored in the recent work of Downes (2011). Downes is an exponent of a preventative strategy which draws on international evidence to outline a range of components on which initiatives aimed at raising school retention rates should be based. Programmes which address a number of dimensions of student's lives, including attendance, behaviour, socio-emotional wellbeing, cognitive development, host language acquisition, motivation, social development, family engagement, and transitions, are demonstrably more successful in relation to retention. The messages from the literature also reiterate an established educational

"SCP is a targeted resource. The review captures the commonalities in approaches to targeting across the SCP clusters and highlights the universal emphasis on poor attendance as a criterion, followed by family history of ESL, lack of family support, lack of engagement by student and poor behaviour."

premise that school policy and practice are found to have a significant influence on student drop-out. Retention rates are found to be higher where there is a positive school climate with good relations between teachers and students and a greater sense of ownership on the part of students over school life.

The review is comprehensive in scope and examines all aspects of the programme thus adding to the validity of the findings. The authors acknowledge the difficulties in assessing the impact of SCP in a narrow way and to counteract these challenges an approach which focusses on documenting the processes through which SCP operates was adopted. The study builds on the extensive research which ESRI has conducted on education disadvantage in Ireland which is referenced throughout the Growing Up in Ireland survey. The review was constructed on nine key questions which covered every facet of the programmes and facilitated a broad and deep enquiry into the functions, the effectiveness and the outcomes of SCP. The questions related to the aims of SCP from the perspectives of the stakeholders. The stakeholders are the source of the data for the nine questions which drive this study and relate to aims, the targeting of resources, the interventions delivered, the cluster size and variations, the relation between SCP and other elements of DEIS, governance and the role of the Local Coordinator and LMC. Resource application along with the associated student outcomes and the strengths and the weaknesses of the programme were also scrutinised.

## AIMS OF SCP

Not surprisingly, the findings indicate wide variations in the perceived aims of SCP among the respondents. The variation in how SCP is conceptualised between primary and post-primary is noted. Primary schools indicated

a stronger focus on social and emotional supports while attendance and retention were emphasised at post-primary. SCP has evolved to become a multifaceted operation, reflecting the shaping influences of the stakeholders, particularly at school level where interventions have been developed which are student-driven and very often individually tailored. The review does not explore the reasons for such variations in the perceptions of the aims of the programme but it is possible that the broad scope and the flexibility of the programme may be contributory factors. SCP is essentially a local stakeholder's response to early school leaving. There is flexibility to devise a local response to ESL as part of the SCP retention plan and this process has contributed to variations in the perceptions of and the design of the programme. Another possible explanation for variations in the understandings of the aims of the programme is the multiple moves of SCP across Departments and agencies. There is an obvious need for a broadly-accepted understanding of the aims of SCP which informs the delivery of the programme in a more consistent way at cluster and at school level.

## TARGETING

SCP is a targeted resource. The review captures the commonalities in approaches to targeting across the SCP clusters and highlights the universal emphasis on poor attendance as a criterion, followed by family history of ESL, lack of family support, lack of engagement by student and poor behaviour. Other factors considered include socio-emotional well-being (e.g. trauma) and being in care, low academic attainment, being a member of the Travelling community, immigrant students and students with Special Education Needs. At cluster level the Local Management Committees (LMCs) are charged with devising criteria to target students who are in need of additional supports to enable them



to attend, participate and remain in the school system right up to Leaving Cert level. The national perspective on targeting criteria emerging from this review will be helpful towards building consistency of practice in the programme.

The various models of targeting adapted and refined by schools and clusters are described in the review. The models guiding the delivery of educational supports range from universal provision to preventative interventions and intensive assistance, reflecting the theoretical tenets of the Hardiker (1991) model which delineates thresholds of need. There is a worthwhile exposé of the tensions in trying to balance need against the constraints of provision. These tensions are evident where the reduction in funding has forced projects to make budgetary adjustments resulting in the curtailment of educational supports. The four pillars of SCP, which are: in-school, out-of-school, after-school and holiday provision, are based on a comprehensive approach to addressing ESL which is rooted in empirical studies and research, some of which are referenced in the available literature accessed in this review. At its outset, SCP aimed to have balanced and proportionate provision of educational interventions under the four pillars. The budgetary cutbacks have disturbed the equilibrium with greater priority currently being given to in-school and after-school supports, while holiday and out-of-school provision have diminished. For the child who is marginalised, who is at risk of disengagement and where there are difficulties at family level in terms of the ability to support the child's schooling, the reduction in holiday programmes and out-of-school supports impairs the effectiveness of the initiative.

## CLUSTERING AND DEIS PROVISION

This review provides a very helpful examination of the clusters, and gives a very useful national overview of their size and composition. With clusters varying in size from two to twelve schools, comprising mainly DEIS but some Non-DEIS schools, both primary and post-primary, and schools in the ETB, Voluntary secondary and Community and Comprehensive



Monopoly at the Games Club in Piper's Hill College.

sectors, a complex picture emerges. There is universal consensus among the respondents that the cluster arrangements operates most effectively where there is a high level of student transfer between the participating primary and post-primary schools, thus enabling early and sustained intervention, which is strongly indicated in the literature referenced to be the most effective approach in tackling educational disadvantage. However, the cluster arrangements reach their optimal limits where the boundaries do not reflect student transfer patterns between primary and post-primary schools, which is more likely to occur in rural areas. The boundaries that oriented this enquiry may not have extended to the exploration of how to devise structures which enable the resources to follow the child as opposed to the child following the resources in order to access DEIS provision. These findings will give impetus to the professional dialogue about how strategies can be formulated and refined to facilitate the alignment of resources with needs of the child.

**The Role of the SCP Coordinator**  
Each of the 124 clusters has a local coordinator. The coordinator has an overarching managerial role in the project. This review conducts a systematic analysis of the work of the coordinator. For the first time, a composite picture of the SCP local coordinator's role emerges. The data on time spent per week on a range of

tasks and activities yielded the very encouraging finding that the greatest amount of the local coordinator's time was spent in face-to-face contact with students. This approach mirrors the assertion by a number of the principals interviewed as part of the review that skilled personnel working with at-risk students secures the best outcomes for the young person. The findings also indicate that the coordinator is perceived differently to the teachers by the students and this is based on their personal relationship with the target children. The breath and scope of the coordinator's role is captured in the review. Concerns were expressed by a variety of stakeholders regarding the ever-burgeoning burden of administration work which curtails the amount of the coordinator's time which is available to work directly with target students. The focus of the local coordinator's work has become more "paper tracking" than "pupil tracking". While it fell outside of the parameters of this review to proffer solutions to the expanding administrative demands that prevent local coordinators from engaging in the more productive face-to-face work with students, this key finding should add urgency to the need to create a more centralised and harmonised management system to support SCP nationwide.

## GOVERNANCE

The legal status of SCP projects, the complex HR issues and the

requirements for appropriate financial oversight appear to cascade into one central issue, namely governance, which has been identified in this study and elsewhere as one of the biggest weaknesses of the programme. It is along this major governance fault-line that many SCP projects are precariously operating. The review contains searing criticism from stakeholders in relation to the dysphoric situation that pertains to SCP projects whose LMCs are attempting to exemplify corporate governance functions without any legitimate underpinning. The lineage of the difficulty is traced to the multiple moves that the programme has endured since its removal from what many stakeholders aver is the rightful motherhood, namely the DES.

The palpable disquiet about SCP being placed outside of the DES is encapsulated by one stakeholder who contends that the programme ...has become completely derailed with the establishment of Tusla...moved further from the centre...it is not a priority with Tusla...an urgent need to look and see where it should be housed...its natural home is Education. The report concludes that the transfer of SCP to different government departments over time appears to have caused much confusion and uncertainty.

With almost half of the SCP projects under the remit of ETBs, the benefits accruing from the excellent support in relation to employment and finance as well as recruitment and contracts were acknowledged by the local coordinators. This review documents in a detailed way the difficulties and concerns that beset SCP projects particularly the LMCs and chairpersons who endeavour to oversee, guide and direct projects without an overall governance strategy. These key findings should incite urgent action with regard to addressing the major governance deficiencies which are so cogently portrayed in this research. The recommendations include possible options particularly in relation to employment. One of the recommendations is to place the projects under the ETBs. This recommendation has eminent merit and an exploration of the benefits of this option would be worthwhile. Not only would SCP projects derive the benefits of the existing ETBs' comprehensive governance



A game of Connect 4 at the Games Club in Piper's Hill College.

infrastructure, the programme could become fully embedded on a stable footing in the education system. The ETB option would offer resolution to the issues pertaining to all matters of governance and it would support the more central positioning of SCP in DEIS and in schools. Furthermore, this option would get governance off the backs of the LMCs and allow them to focus on developing the best possible local responses to early school leaving by utilising the resources to the maximum benefit of the target group and by building synergies with the relevant agencies to enrich and extend educational supports for the relevant students.

The belief that the SCP is disadvantaged by being under the remit of an agency which is outside of the DES is a recurring assertion throughout the report. While it is an integral part of the DEIS strategy, it is the only government programme with a singular and sole focus on addressing early school leaving. However, the positioning of SCP outside of the DES places it at a distance from its strategic siblings, namely HSCL, NBSS and JCSP, and creates a fractured policy framework for combating educational disadvantage

## FUNDING AND RESOURCES

The review alludes to the Pobal Governance Survey, 2013, which indicated that over 2,000 people were employed through SCP. The size of the

workforce alone would indicate the critical need for governance solutions to be formulated for the SCP programme. In a lengthy chapter on resources which sets out what funding SCP projects are granted and how the allocations are deployed, the impact of the ongoing cuts to SCP since 2008 when the budget went from €32.9 million to €24.7 million in 2015, – a substantial decline in the programme's finances – is explicated.

The profound impact that the major budgetary cuts in SCP is evidenced throughout the narrative of the stakeholder interviews. We are reminded of the impact that the recession had on lower income families. We are also reminded that adverse material conditions impoverish children's educational outcomes and their socio-emotional development. Children attending DEIS schools who live in disadvantaged communities have experienced deteriorating socio-economic circumstances as a result of the recession and present with a greater need for support from programmes such as SCP which has suffered serious funding cutbacks. One principal pointed out that 12% of the families in the school are homeless. Rising unemployment plunged more families into poverty and put more students on target lists needing SCP supports such as Breakfast and Afterschool supports, which have to be provided for from reduced budgets.

Commentary on the pressures that schools are under to meet the most fundamental needs of children from disadvantaged families converges with the views emanating from the Ombudsman for Children. In his address to the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) Annual Conference of 2015, Dr Niall Muldoon exhorted the government to act on the issue of child poverty. The Children's Ombudsman declared that the impact of the recession on children has been "enormous" and that the "impact on the poorest and most disadvantaged children had been disproportionate to all others"

The report catalogues the changes in educational policy which impacted on disadvantaged schools such as the removal of the ex-quota guidance counsellors and the disbandment of the Visiting Teacher Service for Travellers. With greater concentrations of immigrant and Traveller students in DEIS schools, the withdrawal of dedicated supports for these groups results in greater demands being placed on the SCP resources to meet the shortfall in provision.

The report draws on the contributions from the stakeholders and particularly the principals in DEIS schools to elucidate the impact of the cuts. The critical need for the additional supports from SCP is expounded and the anxiety in relation to the future funding of SCP receives considerable comment

With no guarantee of the continuation of SCP funding and without any policy or strategic roadmap for initiatives to address early school leaving or to offer the level of support that SCP provides, the findings in this section should motivate the education partners to proactively engage with the policy makers. Strategies need to be developed that will ensure that the level of educational interventions required in our schools to service disadvantaged communities, is secure and supported by robust programme management and policies.

## STUDENT OUTCOMES

By examining the student outcomes the review drills down to a more fine-grained level of the SCP operations within schools and clusters. While

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acknowledging the improvements in student retention and attendance rates since the inception of DEIS, the multifaceted nature of SCP means that it is difficult to disentangle which elements of the programme are the most effective. The improved educational outcomes in DEIS schools may reflect the comprehensive package of supports put in place (Smyth et al, 2015). It is conceded in this research and elsewhere that SCP has contributed to the overall enhanced retention and attendance levels in the relevant schools. The focus on student outcomes constitutes a penetrating analysis of the SCP processes that combine to make schools a more attractive option for children who were otherwise disengaged, thus fostering higher attendance levels. A clear set of messages emerge from the analysis of how SCP resources are used at school level to support the attendance, the participation and the retention and in many cases the progression to Further or Higher Education.

There is an abundance of evidence here to show that systematic monitoring, supporting, rewarding and pro-actively following up on attendance at an individual and family level reduces student absenteeism.

The principals interviewed highlighted the contribution that SCP interventions are making to student well-being, to confidence-building, to morale-boosting and to overall enhanced student engagement in education.

A chairperson captured the interrelated nature of the impact of the SCP interventions by referring to the higher CAO output in terms of the average points gained. Other chairpersons and coordinators commented on the reduction in the difficult behaviour of students and a decrease in the number of expulsions was observed. The provision of counselling was highly valued by principals, particularly the immediacy of access to the service. The salient message from this chapter

indicates that programmes designed to ameliorate student drop-out must devise strategies to enhance student engagement which go beyond a narrow focus on attendance. Engagement is intertwined with student well-being which is not amenable to simple assessment techniques and is connected to what are termed "softer measures" which this review notes are more difficult to gauge than attendance and retention but are key drivers of these behaviours.

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The strengths and weaknesses of SCP, unearthed in the course of this research, creates a useful lens for a school or cluster to assess the programme and for policy makers to take a more overarching view of the initiative. The exercise illuminated the positives of SCP that schools believe that they could not do without, such as the access to skilled personnel, the instant responses which are needed in crisis situations, the counselling services and the provision of basic requirements such as food, clothes, books and uniforms. The flexibility of SCP to respond to local and emergent needs and to crises was highly valued by principals. The scope to tailor individualised interventions where and when needed was another noteworthy strength.

A number of the principals recognised the critical importance of the additional supports that SCP provided for management and for teachers which expanded the school's capacity to deal with severe behavioural issues.

The positive effects that SCP had on the day-to-day life of the school was reflected in a number of principal and LMC member responses. It appears that the programme has infected school cultures in a favourable way around relationships and collaboration between principals in clusters, and with cooperation between teachers and SCP personnel. The move to greater integration of supports in schools was viewed as a welcome development.



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The most lauded strength of the SCP by the principals was the scope and flexibility to respond immediately. The immediacy of response was signalled, particularly in relation to counselling, which as one coordinator reported could be made available "within the hour." A similar viewpoint was echoed by a principal who described the counselling as "fantastic" as it was very difficult to access elsewhere. *and it's fantastic to be able to get that person counselling within a short time...we've had several self-harming, tried suicide etc...they've pretty much all been resolved.* In a related vein, a principal admitted that he relied on SCP to provide instant supports when child protection issues arose as the response from external agencies was too slow and "so all over the place."

Identifying the weaknesses of the SCP initiative is hugely instructive for future planning and development. The most frequently-raised concern by all stakeholders was the damaging effect of funding cuts to the programme. The relentless funding cuts have led to a lack of long-term planning and uncertainty about the future and the associated undermining of staff morale was viewed as extremely problematic. The misalignment between the cluster boundaries and the school transfer patterns was highlighted.

Reflecting on the shortcomings of SCP, the stakeholders asserted their dissatisfaction both here and throughout the review process with the governance arrangements and lamented the lack of national vision and the inadequacy of back-up from Tusla.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusion that the early identification of need coupled with the flexibility to respond at local level, pinpoints one of the most valued features of SCP. The programme adopts an approach which is primarily preventative and differs from crisis intervention and the compensatory models used across Europe in response to ESL. The review notes that

preventative approaches are more cost-effective and produce better education and social outcomes. This conclusion should add weight to the argument that SCP should continue to focus on educational supports which are preventative in nature while dealing with crisis situations on a needs basis.

The emphasis that principals place on the importance of access to skilled personnel who can work with students in crisis and challenging situations points to the need for ongoing high quality CPD for SCP personnel. The inadequacy of the current CPD provision has been documented in the review. The need for greater role definition for local coordinators and chairpersons of LMCs is highlighted.

The issue of an integrated approach to supporting the target group is alluded to frequently in the research. It is clearly evident that an integrated approach has evolved at school and project level and has enabled schools to address the socio-emotional difficulties which are a barrier to engaging in education and learning. What is less clear is the status of an integrated approach to managing the educational welfare services. The Integrated model known as OCOTOP (One Child, One Team, One Plan) receives scant mention. OCOTOP or the One Child Model was the subject of a very substantial human and monetary investment and seems to have disappeared from the policy radar. There would appear to be a compelling argument in favour of an integrated approach to the management and to the delivery of the educational welfare services as the evidence in this review suggests that it secures better outcomes for children. Greater consistency regarding the way SCP is embedded in all DEIS activities, including in the planning processes, is strongly advocated.

The case for urgent action on the governance structures of SCP is overwhelming. That one clear and consistent governance and employment structure be applied across all clusters is a key message

from this review. Three models for these structures are set out. Each model would need to be assessed in terms of capability to provide governance structures that cover HR expertise, financial management and oversight, legal expertise and CPD. The capacity to support the continued embedding of SCP in the school and community so as to deliver maximum educational supports for at-risk young people should also be an important consideration.

Cluster boundaries which take account of student transfer patterns and the matching of resource allocation to need are challenges set out in the review.

With the impending DEIS review announced by the DES, this report will prove to be an invaluable source of information on how one of the central DEIS initiatives perform in relation to addressing educational disadvantage. The up-to-date and comprehensive data which is collated on targeting criteria, the activities and their effectiveness, the size and composition of clusters, the relationship between SCP and other DEIS provision, the governance issues, the resources, the impact of the budgetary cutbacks, the impact of SCP on student educational outcomes and the overview of the strengths and weaknesses, provide ample scope for a robust professional dialogue on how we support marginalised students in our schools. The key messages particularly in relation to the strengths and weaknesses of SCP merit scrutiny by the educational partners and policy-makers so that the future development of the programme is informed by the successful elements of the initiative and that the weaknesses are addressed. The imperative for the provision of high quality educational support programmes for young people who struggle in schools is firmly established in this report. These programmes need to be supported by appropriate governance, guided by highly evolved policies, informed by research and delivered by high-calibre personnel who receive ongoing training and development. To derive real benefits from this ESRI review, the ensuing debate will need to be situated in the wider context of how we formulate policy and implement and resource strategies that continue to address education disadvantage in this country.

# ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015

The revised programme for the 2015 ETBI Annual Conference, held in the Radisson Blu Hotel in Galway, reflected the diversity of provision by ETBs. The Conference theme – Leading the Transformation of Education and Training – certainly reflected the reality of the current transformation process ongoing in member ETBs.

The plenary session on day one, Wednesday 23rd September, focussed on the past strengths and future potential of the sector.

On day two, Thursday 24th September, Conference explored the characteristic spirit of publicly-managed schools. The focus then moved to the unique situation of offshore island post-primary schools, all of which are managed by ETBs.

Delegates next availed of one of two parallel sessions – Schools of the Future/The Digital Classroom, and Governance and ETBs.

As the ETB sector has a unique relationship with the business sector, the case for business-education links was presented by Danny McCoy, CEO of IBEC, while Professor Tom Cooney presented on developing an entrepreneurial culture in education.

The current controversy about Junior Cycle reforms ensured there was keen interest in this final session before the Presidential and Ministerial addresses.

## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE

The keynote address by President Pat Gilmore was presented to a packed conference of 300 delegates and guests. While acknowledging the context of a near-collapsed economy, the cutbacks and moratorium on appointments, Mr Gilmore argued that



ETBI President, Pat Gilmore, addresses the Conference.

"Strategies, plans and policies...will fail at implementation stage if resources at delivery stage are inadequate and insufficient to deliver practically on the promise of policy."

if ETBs were to lead and transform education and training, the economic recovery currently underway must be accompanied by a systemic and orderly rolling back of education cutbacks.

Mr Gilmore highlighted the impact of the moratorium on ETB staffing and called for a fit-for-purpose management team in each ETB. He expressed concern about the inadequacy of resourcing of ETBs and stated that "strategies, plans and policies... will fail at implementation stage if resources at delivery stage are inadequate and insufficient to deliver practically on the promise of policy."

The President then focussed on the legislative reforms since 2014, which established new governance

systems while a shared service model of delivery is also in development. The widespread reform agenda comprehended the transfer of (former FÁS) training centres to ETBs, the building of a quality assurance framework, the publication of new operational guidelines and codes of governance for Boards of Management.

Reforming middle management in schools was also highlighted as a priority issue for the education sector. The President argued vehemently that the leadership of schools, educational reform, and teaching and learning, were being undermined through inadequate staffing at school management level. He referred to the submission by ETBI and other school

management bodies which realistically addressed this lacuna.

He noted that the need for management supports to coordinate the revised Junior Cycle at whole-school level. The President argued that the implementation of the Junior Cycle framework would entail extra demands on school management and leadership which need to be addressed.

Noting that Ireland was now the fastest-growing economy in Europe, the President called for the restoration of the pupil-teacher ratio in schools and colleges to their pre-cutbacks rates.

The Presidential address further focussed on the reform of Further Education and Training (FET). Mr Gilmore observed that skills development would be supported by ETBI's project on Entrepreneurial Education, to be rolled out in 2016. He noted the current vacancies in central posts in the training centres and highlighted the significant decrease in the number of Senior Training Advisors at a time when apprenticeship registrations nationally were projected to increase by 95%.

The President argued the case for significantly extending the Community National School (CNS) model, with ETBs as patrons, which he said was essential if communities were to have real choice in terms of primary education.

Mr Gilmore also made a case for additional supports for ETB island schools.

In conclusion, the President stated that ETBs, as local education authorities, were at the heart of local communities. In this context, he said that, if adequately resourced, ETBs would continue to improve individual empowerment, social inclusion, and economic prosperity in their communities.

### MINISTER JAN O'SULLIVAN'S ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE

In her address to Conference, Minister O'Sullivan lauded the ETBs and their predecessors, the VECs, as the bedrock of the education system over



Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O'Sullivan T.D., addresses the ETBI Conference

"While identifying a bright future for ETBs in the primary sector ...  
'It will require parents to be better informed of the existence of an  
alternative multi-denominational model.'"The Minister highlighted  
her intention to reinvigorate the divestment process and develop  
a roadmap for advancing the divestment agenda.

the previous 85 years. Referencing recent ETB responses to the resettlement of refugees in Ireland, the Minister stated, "This is just another example of how your organisations step up when our nation needs you."

In the context of the patronage of primary schools, the Minister referred to the development of the Community National School (CNS) model as a further example of how ETBs have responded to national needs. She characterised this as a "quiet and gentle revolution" which needed to find a louder voice. While identifying a bright future for ETBs in the primary sector, she noted, "It will require parents to be better informed of the existence of an alternative multi-denominational model." The Minister highlighted her intention to reinvigorate the divestment process and develop a roadmap for advancing the divestment agenda.

Minister O'Sullivan also praised the

co-patronage model at school level. She addressed the Junior Cycle reform process and stated that students' interests would "be to the forefront of my thinking on the way forward in implementing Junior Cycle reform in the coming weeks."

She referred to the review of PLC provision and the ETBs' involvement in submissions to the Apprenticeship Council regarding new apprenticeship proposals. She highlighted the proposed establishment of Regional Skills Fora. The impact of the current reform process on ETB staff was acknowledged by Minister O'Sullivan.

The Minister did review the government's investment in education and expressed satisfaction that there was growing consensus emerging around education as a priority area for investment. She committed to invest in education "to build better, brighter futures for all of our people."







# Iarbhunscoil ar Oileán - Dúshlán ar Leith

## Offshore Island Post-primary School - A UNIQUE CHALLENGE

By Bríd Ní Dhonnacha, Príomhoide, Coláiste Ghobnait, Inis Oírr, Oileáin Árann, Co. na Gaillimhe

There are currently five offshore island post-primary schools in Ireland, Coláiste Naomh Éinne (Inis Mór), Coláiste Ghobnait (Inis Oírr), Coláiste Naomh Eoin (Inis Meáin), Gairmscoil Mhic Diarmada (Oileán Árann Mhór), Coláiste Pobail Cholmcille (Oileán Thoraí).

Tagann 3 cinn de na scoileanna seo faoi chúram Bhord Oideachais & Oiliúna na Gaillimhe agus Roscomáin agus iad lonnaithe ar chaon cheann de thrí oileáin Árann, tagann an péire eile faoi chúram Bhord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Dhún na nGall agus tá siad san lonnaithe ar Oileán Árann Mhór agus ar Oileán Thoraí.

These five schools are unique, with the Atlantic Ocean separating them from the mainland. The schools on these islands are the heart and spirit of their respective communities and for these schools to survive, the following proposals need to be implemented as a matter of urgency:

- + Ensure Air Service, including transport links, is compatible with education requirements
- + Increase ex quota Island Teacher
- + Allocation per school from 1.0 to 2.5 (WTE) to allow curricular provision
- + Reinstate Island allowance (€1,658) for offshore Island Teachers
- + Appropriate Increase in Schools' ONP Budget by a minimum of €10,000 each per annum to offset additional transport and servicing costs.
- + Increase the national number of the one year residential Scholarships from 30 to 60 students
- + Ensure that at least two persons have management responsibility (ie Principal and at least one other), to



ensure that when principal is away at meetings, or absent through illness, an appropriate person is designated in charge.

These are not wants, they are needs for Island schools to survive.

All small schools on the island of Ireland face challenges but our five tiny island schools with between 5 and 65 pupils, face additional unique challenges that come with the beauty of island life.

Tá na scoileanna an-tábhachtach le pobal a choinneáil beo ar Oileáin. Tá sé fíor-thábhachtach go mbeadh oideachas caighdeánach iarbhunscoile atá dlíte do scoláirí, á thairiscint do na scoláirí ar an hOileáin seo. Níor cheart go ndéanadh an tAigéan Atlantach aon idirdhealú nó tanú ar oideachas scoláirí ar Oileán.

Dearbhú go bhfuil an tseirbhís afarantóireachta agus aeir

ag freastal ar riachtanais Oideachais na n-Oileáin

Mar gheall ar an mbagairt a bhí faoin tseirbhís aeir agus atá fós mar gheall ar an gconradh bliantúil, beidh bunshraitheanna inmheánacha ar n-Oileáin i gcontúirt agus riachtanais Oideachais na n-Oileáin go háirithe. Aithnítear tábhacht na seirbhíse aeir dár gcuid scoileanna agus do phobal na hOileáin. Táthar ag brath ar an tseirbhís aeir chun riachtanais Oideachais a chomhlíondh. Braitheann gach rud ar an tseirbhís aeir – múinteoirí a mhealladh chuig an oileán, soláthar seirbhísí, obair chothabhála 7rl.

Ar dúl ar dháileadh múinteoirí ex-quota gach scoil oileanda ó 1.0 go 2.5 WTE

Tá an leithroinnt múinteoirí ina chnámh spáirne lá i ndiaidh lae, bliain i ndiaidh bliana do phríomhoidí scoileanna dara leibhéal ar Oileáin. Tá fhios againn ar fad go bhfuil an dáileadh seo bunaithe ar líon na scoláirí atá ar an rolla. Is dúshlán dúinne uimhreacha arda a

bheith ag scoileanna Oileánda agus ní bheidh uimhreacha arda go deo, mar sin teastaíonn go dtuigfear é seo agus an leithroinnt mhúinteoirí á dháileadh ar scoileanna Oileánda. Tá achainní úr againne, scoileanna dara leibhéal Oileánda – ag lorg leithroinnt, sé sin go nardofaí é ó 1.0 go 2.5 WTE.

### Reinstate Island allowance (€1,658) for offshore Island Teachers to compensate for transport costs.

It is not attractive for teachers to apply for a job on an island school. With it comes leaving your family on the mainland and relocating to the island. It would not be feasible to commute on a daily basis to the islands and often there are not full teaching hours with the vacancy. For teaching on an island to be enticing, we need to have the Island allowance (€1,658) reinstated for offshore Island Teachers with a matter of urgency.

### Appropriate Increase in Schools' ONP Budget by a minimum of €10,000 each per annum.

An appropriate proportion of the budget should be devoted for the provision of education for offshore island post-primary schools. The budget allocation needs to reflect the extra costs that are involved when it comes to the provision of education on offshore island post-primary schools. The cost of goods and services can be up to 30% to 40% extra for a school on an island.

### Ensure that a minimum of two persons have management responsibility.

If the principal of an Island school attends an ETB management meeting, CPD, or is absent sick, the duty of care to pupils remains and cannot be discharged on a grace and favour basis. An appropriately qualified designated person must assume responsibility. Consequently, a second person on each school's staff must have management responsibility.

### Líon na scoláireachtaí cónaitheacha a mheadú ó 30 go 60

Is cuid dár gcultúr í an teanga Gaeilge. Is



Clockwise from top left: Christmas Eve 2013 at Inis Oírr. The U2 Wall. Coláiste Naomh Eoin, Inis Meáin taking first prize at ECO UNESCO. BT Young Scientist of the Year. Young Environmentalist awards 2015 with Minister Sean Sherlock TD.

tobar í an Ghaeltacht do na foghlaimeoirí Gaeilge. De réir An tAcht Oideachais 1998 tá sé mar dualgas ar an Stat agus ar an bpobal "Cuidiú leis an nGaeilge a choinneáil mar phríomhtheanga an phobail i limistéir Ghaeltachta".

Is scéim uailmhianach í seo agus tá sé de chumas ag an scéim seo fíor dhifríocht a dhéanamh i leith scoileanna Oileánda. Is comhartha láidir féinaitheantais í an Ghaeilge. Impimid ar an Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta cluas éisteachta a thabhairt dár nachainní, sé sin an líon scoláireachtaí a mheadú ó 30 go 60 agus go gceadófaí é don scoilbhliain 2016/2017.

Ag an bpointe seo, ní mór a lua agus aitheantas a thabhairt do shárobair Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna na Gaillimhe agus Roscomáin, chun cás na nOileán a chur ar bhord na gcinntí ag na húdaráis chuí, d'fhonn iad a chur san áireamh nuair atá cinneadh á dhéanamh.

Impimid riachtanais na noileán maidir le:

- + Dearbhú go bhfuil an tseirbhís aer agus farantóireachta freastal ar riachtanais oideachais na nOileáin

- + Ardú ar dháileadh múinteoirí ex-quota gach scoil oileanda ó 1.0 go 2.5 WTE
- + An Liúntas Teagaisc ar oileán de €1658 a ath-thosú
- + An dáileadh airgid neamh-phá a ardú ar a laghad €10,000 sa mbliain do gach scoil
- + Líon na scoláireachtaí cónaitheacha a mheadú ó 30 go 60
- + Cinntiú go bhfuil beirt ar a laghad ainmnithe le cúram bainistíochta i ngach scoil.

Is tráth cinniúnach é seo do scoileanna Oileánda. Anois an t-am ag an Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna agus ag an Roinn Ealaíne, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta gnímh a dhéanamh lena chinntiú go ndéanfar freastal go cothrom ar Oideachas gach scoláire atá sa chóras oideachais ar na hOileáin. Iarraimid na cuinsí atá pléite thuas a chur san áireamh agus leasaithe chun feabhais á bheartú do na chúig scoil Oileánda.

De réir a chéile a thógtar na caisleáin ach mura dtógfar na caisleáin ar na hoileáin go luath ní bheidh scoil ná pobal fágtha ann.

# Recollections and Reflections on the 2015 John Marcus O'Sullivan Conference

At Piper's Hill, Naas 12-13 Nov 2015

Theme: Religion, Diversity & Publicly-Managed Schools

By Barney O'Reilly, Tralee. 30 November, 2015

The 2015 John Marcus O'Sullivan Conference held at ETBI Headquarters on the 12th and 13th of November proved to be a lively, illuminating and socially enjoyable event. It was clear that the theme was of importance to the large attendance – a full house of seventy-plus for the main lecture theatre in ETBI headquarters.

ETBI President, Pat Gilmore, opened proceedings with a reminder that the school tradition inherited by ETBs from VECs was primarily characterised by:

- Openness to all, regardless of social class, gender or religious affiliation.
- The responsiveness and flexibility of the system that arises from the representative and democratic governing structure of VECs.

The relevance of these traditions in the new context of ETBs and the current cultural and religious diversity of Irish society was the focus of the conference and an area in which ETBI was keen to provide assistance and support to schools and to ETBs.

In the regrettable but unavoidable absence of DES Assistant Secretary, Gary O'Donnachadha, Pat O'Mahony of ETBI set the scene for discussions on Religious Education in ETB schools by drawing attention to the content of the Circular Letters currently in place on the subject. CL 73/74 was issued in 1974 and expanded upon in 1979 by CL 7/79. These circular letters were published following a decision to establish boards of management for VEC schools in 1974, and the 1979

circular letter was issued on foot of an agreement between the Department, IVEA, the CEO's association, the teachers' union and church authorities. This circular provided, among other things, for:

- A recommendation for two hours per week religious instruction on the VEC school timetable
- Representation for the appropriate religious authority on the selection boards for the appointment of teachers of religion.
- The approval of the appropriate religious authority regarding the "acceptability" of a candidate for appointment as a religion teacher
- The inspection of the teaching of religion in Vocational schools – this to be the responsibility of the catechetical inspectorate.

The guidance provided in these circulars has not been updated and it was presented to the conference as context for the treatment of religion in ETB schools currently and for the ideas presented in the subsequent papers delivered to the conference.

Speaking at the next session, Margaret Gorman, Head of Education Practice in the law firm Eversheds, returned to themes articulated in the opening address by the President. Under the heading of Inherited Ethos she referred to the "responsiveness" of ETB schools to the needs of their students and pointed to the following characteristics of ETB schools: In her view, ETBs are:

- Public and democratic
- Non-political

- Non-sectarian
- Accommodating and supportive of difference and diversity
- Concerned for the individual welfare and development of learners and staff
- Committed to excellence in lifelong and life-wide learning
- Flexible in delivery

And she identified their values as:

- **Brave**
- **Committed**
- **Positive**
- **Leaders**
- **Inclusive**
- **Innovative**
- **Caring**

Ms Gorman concluded by pointing to continued responsiveness and adaptability as the key to the future, quoting Andreas Schelicher, special adviser on Educational Policy to the OECD:

*"Success will go to those individuals and nations which are swift to adapt, slow to complain and open to change. The task for educators and policy-makers is to ensure that countries rise to this challenge."*

Dr Eoin Daly, Law Lecturer at NUIG, centred his lecture on the inherent difficulties he perceives in the laudable and understandable aspiration to provide religious instruction and formation to all students in publicly-managed schools, as is offered in Community National Schools. Because of the nature of religions and their inherent diversity – diversity *between*





major religion/belief systems, and diversity *within* each religious/belief system – he argues that any such effort is doomed to generate resentment and inadvertent injustices, even sectarian strife. Which beliefs are to be included? Which variant of a particular belief system is to be included? Who is to decide? According to Dr Daly, any attempt to select for a religious/belief-formation curriculum runs the risk of the categorisation, segregation and division of children, of inadvertent discrimination and inequality, of stoking resentment and disharmony.

The well-meaning state initiative being undertaken by Community National Schools, and indeed, the more general national approach in this state to provide choice between school types on the basis of their provision of belief-formation in different schools, are misconceived. Both are based on the historically understandable but erroneous assumption that all religions and belief systems are like the Catholic Church, with a recognised figure or body that can speak authoritatively for its members. Such is not the case in Islam, nor in most other Eastern religions, nor in Evangelical Christianity, nor is it the case among Humanists. Choice, based on belief-difference, however well-meaning, will inevitably lead to alienation and resentment and will, he argued, inevitably stoke strife. States like France and the United States do not allow public schools to engage in belief formation – but some are quite happy to allow parents and belief organisations to use publicly-

*Above left:* Dr Marie Clarke of UCD (left) and Professor Áine Hyland who is Professor Emeritus at UCC await the start of the JMOS Conference. *Above right:* Dr Deirdre Keyes of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB leads a parallel session at the JMOS Conference.

"Success will go to those individuals and nations which are swift to adapt, slow to complain and open to change. The task for educators and policy-makers is to ensure that countries rise to this challenge"

owned schools for belief formation where parents and belief affiliations bodies or churches take responsibility for that belief formation. The policy option is not necessarily either aggressively secular or faith-based, but a more civic-minded alternative.

Responses and views on Ms Gorman's and Dr Daly's papers surfaced in virtually every session over the two days, woven into exchanges over tea-breaks and the conference dinner – with many participants voicing contending views. Indeed, one of the features of the conference was the extent to which the participants debated opposing points of view cogently and respectfully, both in formal and informal sessions, as they sought a solution to a problem that Irish society has to resolve if our schools are going to meet the needs of 21st century Ireland.

The next session looked at a particular segment of the VEC tradition, and in the process illustrated how social values and attitudes of the day influence curriculum and school organisation. Dr Marie Clarke of UCD presented a wealth

of archival data and general background in her energetic and enlightening presentation, *Education for Rural Girls: Vocational Education in Rural Ireland, 1930-1960*. In a fascinating presentation, she highlighted how the influence of Catholic social teaching, the prevailing view about the subordinate role of women in the family, economy and social life, and the primacy of motherhood impacted on the curriculum and on the organisation of the lives of young women who formed the majority of students in vocational schools in those years. This, and the gap between the household furnishings and equipment in the rural homes of these young women, compared with the equipment and processes in the various elements of Domestic Economy taught in the schools, left Dr Clarke with a question she found hard to answer: Was the Vocational school a good or bad experience for these young rural women? The question posed and the data presented engaged the attendance in extended and lively discussion.

One is left with the thought that an answer to her question may be found



by undertaking research interviews with the women who survive from that era. A project for ETBI?

Áine Hyland, Professor Emeritus of Education at UCC, concluded the first day's session with a rich presentation which included:

- a summary of the treatment of religion from the 19th century National Schools system up to the introduction of the "Integrated (Religion and Secular Subjects) Curriculum", Rule 68, introduced in 1965 with a revision of the Rules for National Schools in that year
- a brief introduction to the establishment of the Dalkey School Project (DSP) by parents unhappy with this provision and the centrality of religious interests in the National Schools (DSP was the first multi-denominational school and led to the subsequent founding of Educate Together)

Prof Hyland went on to point out the key distinction between the *RE Core Curriculum and Denominational Instruction* in the DSP:

- The *R.E. Core curriculum* neither presumes nor precludes a religious affiliation
- *Denominational Instruction* is specific in its aim of teaching children the doctrines and beliefs of a particular religion with a view to achieving belief in and commitment to that religion

And drew the attention to the provisions of the Section 30 (2) e of the Education Act 1998 which says:

*"The Minister shall not require any student to attend instruction in any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parent of the student or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years."*

Prof Hyland left the conference attendees with two quotations to ponder. The first was from the Report of the Constitution Review Group 1996 (p. 375):

*...the present reality of the denominational character of the school system does not accord with Article 44.2.4.*

The situation is clearly unsatisfactory. Either Article 44.2.4 should be changed or the school system must change to accommodate the requirements of Article 44.2.4

And the second from Supreme Court Justice Barrington, cited in D. Glendenning: *Education and the Law*, p.451):

*...the Constitution contemplated that if a school was in receipt of public funds, any child, no matter what his religion, would be entitled to attend it. But such a child was to have the right NOT to attend any course of religious instruction at the school.*

This presentation and the subsequent discussion focussed considerably on the issues of religion, diversity and school in primary context – and ensured that the conference dinner was both a gastronomic treat and a scene of vigorous debate.

The Friday morning programme commenced with the senior researchers, Dr Joanne O'Flaherty and Dr Orla McCormack from the University of Limerick, presenting an interim report on a UL-based and ETB-funded research project entitled: *'Exploring and Expressing Characteristic Spirit in Publicly-Managed (ETB) Schools'*.

Involving eighteen ETB schools across six ETBs and with support from ETBI, the project addresses four key research questions:

1. What are the cultural, moral, religious and spiritual values and traditions of publicly-managed ETB schools?
  - as perceived by teachers, students, parents, boards of management and co-trustee (if applicable)
  - as enacted by teachers and schools
  - as articulated in available documentation
2. What issues do ETB publicly-managed schools experience in expressing their cultural, moral, religious, and spiritual values and traditions?
3. What are appropriate normative philosophical, political and social principles to guide the articulation

of the ETB characteristic spirit?

4. What are the appropriate educational, curricular and pedagogical principles to guide the articulation of a characteristic spirit for publicly-managed ETB schools?

The work of the researchers has been underway since the beginning of the 2014-15 school year and involves what might be termed three distinct phases. Phase 1 of the work programme set out the overall framework for the project as follows:

Values are identified as core values emerging from the data and as underpinning characteristic spirit in the participating schools. The researchers provided illustrative quotations from the data to flesh out the expressed understandings of the values and how they linked with characteristic spirit.

Among the items raised in the discussion was the possible influence on the number of Designated Community Colleges participating in the study. For Designated Community Colleges, an explicit commitment is made to privilege the denominational interests of the partner trustee in the school. This may help explain the prominence given to Catholic/ Christian values in the reported data.

In the subsequent wide-ranging discussion, it was suggested that while the number of Designated Community Colleges in the sample was significant (five), the historical tradition of VECs and the ongoing influence of 1970s circular letters would also be factors to be considered.

The next presentation, by Patrick Sullivan, Director, Primary Curriculum and Assessment with responsibility for *Education about Religions and Beliefs and Ethics* (ERBE) at the NCCA and a former principal of a Community National School, focussed directly on current work on religion in the curriculum at the primary level. While the direct opportunity to explore the issues relating to religion in the post-primary curriculum receded into the background, it is reasonable to assume that similar principles apply in both sets of schools, and the discussions are critically inter-related.

## RESEARCH PROJECT ORGANISATION

### Phase 1:

Exploration and Data Collection with eighteen schools across six ETBs to explore how they perceive their characteristic spirit

### Phase 2(a):

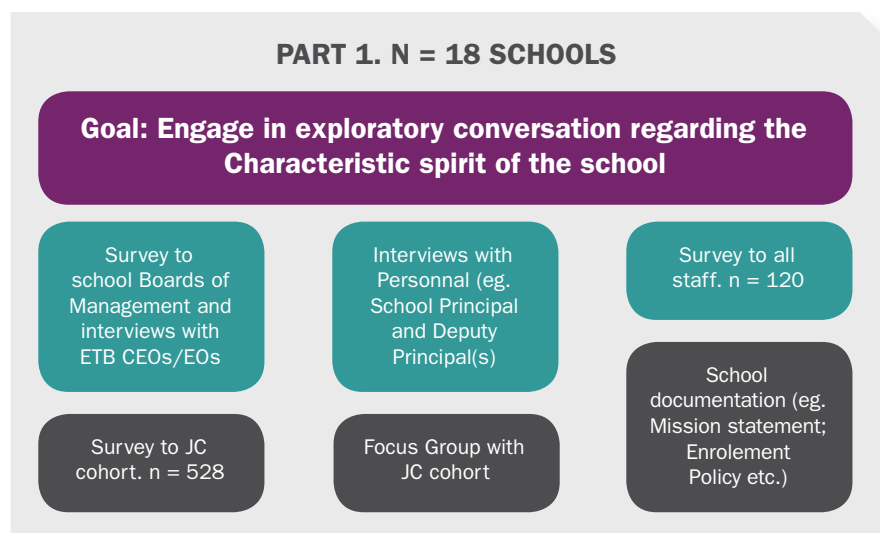
Consultation to identify areas to strengthen articulation and expression of Characteristic Spirit Consultation informed by research reports from Phase 1

### Phase 2(b):

Team of teachers to develop individual school responses to support the expression of a/the/their? school's characteristic spirit and to evaluate process

The following slides (from the presentation) summarise the data collection processes and presents a graphical summary of the analysis undertaken to date:

#### Slide 1. Data Gathering Processes



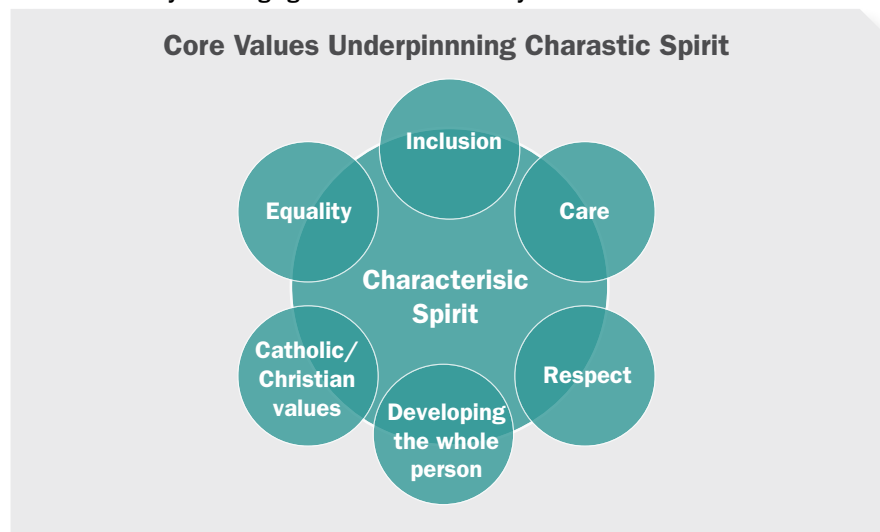
Mr Sullivan presented enlightening detail on the religious education programme for Community National Schools – 'Goodness Me, Goodness You' (GMGY) – under progressive development with the support of the NCCA, as well as details on the new programme proposed for implementation in all primary schools on the recommendation of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector Report, 2012, Education about Religions and Beliefs and Ethics(ERB and Ethics), currently under consultation by the NCCA.

Speaking of the characteristic spirit of the Community National School, Mr Sullivan pointed to *Respect for plurality of faiths is seen as integral to the daily routine of the school* as the particularly distinctive characteristic. The other elements –

- The school becomes a centre of the local community
- Children are encouraged and supported in living their lives to the full
- High standards are the goal in teaching and learning
- Everybody is valued and treated with respect
- Diversity is recognised and celebrated

– might be found in the statement made for any Irish School, he suggested.

#### Slide 2. Summary of Emerging Core Values from Analysis to Date.



He also outlined how the language of Community National School has evolved since 2008:

- + from *religious education* to a *multi-belief programme*
- + from referring to *faith formation* to speaking of *belief nurturing*
- + from *sacramental preparation*, to *sacramental education* from *differentiation* to *belief-specific teaching*,
- + and from imposing to *supporting*, the *ethos* of the CNS school.

Interestingly, the term *ethos* continues to be used rather than *characteristic spirit*, the terminology of the 1998 Education Act, a point that might merit reflection, as Prof. Karin Fischer

<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum\\_and\\_Assessment/Early\\_Childhood\\_and\\_Primary\\_Education/Primary-Education/Primary\\_](http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Early_Childhood_and_Primary_Education/Primary-Education/Primary_)

### Slide 3: Goodness Me, Goodness You and ERB and Ethics

#### GMGY and ERB and Ethics?

Goodness Me, Goodness You!	Education about Religions and Beliefs and Ethics
For Community National Schools	For all schools
Underpins the ethos of schools	Contributes to inclusive school environments
Belief nurtures	Educates about religions and beliefs
Narrative and poetics approach	Experiential and conceptual approach
Pluralist approach	Pluralist approach
Values approach	Values approach

ncca.ie/primary



NCCA

Na Blianta Náisiúnta le hAisdeán agus Measúnú  
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

suggested later in the conference. The rationale for the development of the *Education about Religions and Beliefs and Ethics* (ERB and Ethics) programme and a progress report of its development to date and the NCCA consultation process – now open until Spring 2016<sup>1</sup> - was also presented.

Presenting the comparative aspects of the two programmes, both relating to religious/belief education at the primary school level, and both under development under the aegis of the NCCA, Mr Sullivan presented the following slide which can be read to suggest a high level of commonality the between the programmes:

Subsequent discussion suggested interest in and support for the developments and also drew attention

to the commonality between the programmes, raising the questions, *Is there a need for two programmes? And could they be developed as a single programme?* While engagement with parents and individual school-level stakeholders was transparently central to the development of the GMGY programme, concern about the lack of a more general public consultation, as in the usual NCCA procedures for programme development, was remarked on and regretted in the course of the debate.

Patrick was followed Prof. Karin Fischer<sup>2</sup>, Professor of Irish Studies at the University of Orléans, France, who made the final presentation of the packed conference programme. Her thought-provoking paper, delivered at high speed, challenged the audience

with its rich store of provocative ideas. Linking with Patrick Sullivan's presentation, she pointed out that in the Irish context, the word *ethos*, in its common usage, has quite specific connotations. It has been closely associated with religion on the one hand, and on the other hand, more recently, with a top-down, patron-oriented conception of school culture that is inherently sectional. In this context, she argued, it makes sense for public schools to avoid referring to their own characteristic spirit as yet another *ethos* because of this strong association with particular religious messages and with this top-down and sectional conception of school culture. Religious diversity is one of those traits that public (and other) schools should be aware of and deal with, but without losing sight of the more complex and rich reality of life and study in schools, especially public schools.

Prof. Fisher went on to argue that it is legitimate – and in fact necessary – to define and assert the distinctive contribution of ETB schools, as the only schools whose patrons (another concept she suggests would be better dispensed with and replaced with something less patronising) may be broadly considered as representative in democratic terms. Characteristic spirit in public schools should aspire to be a potential by-word for *equality and integration*.

It is necessary, she argued, to recognise that for public schools in a changing environment, there must be founding principles, but there can be no fully written road-map or recipe in the sense that there is no pre-existing recipe for perfect pluralism or democracy. There can only be an ongoing process to try to adhere to and be guided by all-inclusive, non-discriminatory, democratic principles

<sup>2</sup> A new book by Prof Fischer: *Karin Fischer, Schools and the Politics of Religion and Diversity in the Republic of Ireland: Separate but Equal?* (Manchester University Press, forthcoming in 2016)

*Schools and the politics of religion and diversity in the Republic of Ireland: Separate but equal?* focusses on the place of religion in the Irish education system from the perspective of children's rights and citizenship. It offers a critical analysis of the political, cultural and social forces that have perpetuated the system, looks at how the denominational model has been adapted to religious and cultural diversity in the wake of increased immigration and secularisation in Irish society and shows that recent changes have failed to address persistent discrimination and the absence of respect for freedom of conscience. It relates current debates on the denominational system and the role of the State in education to Irish political thought and conceptions of national identity in Ireland, showing that these debates reflect a tension between nationalist-communitarian and republican outlooks. The patronage model, historically an institutional device that allowed for Church control of state-funded schools, has now been turned into a form of public-private partnership in education, while still largely fulfilling the purpose for which it was set up originally. As a result, and despite efforts towards accommodation and against instances of discrimination within the system, Irish educational structures still privilege communal and private interests and hierarchies over equal right.

"It is necessary ... to recognise that for public schools in a changing environment, there must be founding principles, but there can be no fully written road-map or recipe in the sense that there is no pre-existing recipe for perfect pluralism or democracy"



Above left: Ian Murphy, CNS Manager for the DDLETB area (left) with Dr Gerry Jeffers, educational researcher and lecturer at the JMOS Conference. Above right: Dr Orla McCormack of UL and Pat O'Mahony of ETBI enter the conference centre.

and values, serving society and children as part of society. Catholic schools, she pointed out, are said to welcome all children as they are open to dialogue with *the other*. In public schools, all children being treated equally, their backgrounds and specificities should be recognised, but *there should be no 'other' as such* with respect to their characteristic spirit.

Drawing the conference attendees' attention to the provisions of Article 14 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)<sup>3</sup> and the ideas developed by Garrett Fitzgerald and Iseult Honohan (who was in the audience throughout the conference) about civic morality, public ethics, ethical principles in a pluralist state and civic republicanism, Prof Fischer proposed that ETBs and their schools should define what they are and what they strive for, in terms of democracy in action built on a substantial conception of what a child-centred education might mean – while acknowledging that there are challenges to be addressed within the widely-held assumption that active democracy is not possible in a school environment that is necessarily based on hierarchy of transmission and authority/discipline between adults and children or young people. Expressed like this, the challenge to ETBs and ETB schools are substantial.

The conference concluded with two hours of facilitated discussions. Participants were led and supported in their discussions of the conference papers and themes with a particular focus on matters of Governance in Workshop 1, facilitated by Dr Deirdre Keyes (Dublin & Dún Laoghaire ETB), and Guidelines on Inclusion and Diversity in Workshop 2, led by Aiveen Mullally (Marino Institute of Education).

A final plenary session had concluding observations from a five-person panel consisting of Professors Hyland and Fischer, accompanied by Cynthia Deane, Chief Executive of Kilkenny and Carlow ETB and Chair of the ETBI Chief Executives Forum, Dr Iseult Honohan of the Department of Politics and International Relations at UCD, and Reverend Dr Tom Deenihan, member of Cork ETB and General Secretary of the Catholic Primary School Managers Association.

In the course of these discussions, the broad range of personal views among attendees on matters relating to the relationship between religion/beliefs and schooling were on full display. Those who were zealously atheistic,

those who were committed adherents to various faith systems, and those whose focus was primarily the pursuit of equality, social solidarity, autonomy and freedom: valuing young people, all raised their voices and were heard. All, from their disparate positions, were engaged in the search for and creation of respectful, inclusive educational spaces for the youth of Ireland. There was a strong sense, also, of the importance of the exchanges taking place for ETBs and their schools. In this final session, there was a reminder of the significant place of Designated Community Colleges in the VEC tradition, as well as a reminder of the significance of context and the extent to which the application of general principles to any given school needs to be sufficiently nuanced to respond to the circumstances of each school. Probably the most important statement of the final session was the commitment of Cynthia Deane as Chair of Chief Executives Forum to the ongoing support of ETBs and their Chief Executives, and of ETBI, for the ongoing development and maturing of the debates which the conference had advanced in such a vigorous, wide-ranging and enjoyable way.

<sup>3</sup> Article 14 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, (1989):

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.



# BOLTON STREET

## Technical School in The in The Easter Rising 1916



By Jim Cooke, Historian

The 1916 Rising in Dublin, from Easter Monday, April 24th 1916 until the surrender on Sunday 30th April, was spread across the city, from the Pembroke Technical School (Ringsend) in the east to the Bolton Street Technical School in the northwest, and across the Liffey to the Kevin Street School, close to Jacob's Biscuit factory. The only school to be occupied was the Bolton Street School, so only the Bolton Street story is told here.

The Headquarters Battalion of the Irish Volunteers (the 'Soldiers' or 'military' refer to British forces) occupied the G.P.O. The 1st Battalion under Commandant Ned Daly occupied the Four Courts, and his command area stretched from the river to Bolton Street, which continues on into North King Street, with a left turn down Church Street (see map).

The Fr Matthew Hall, Church Street, near the junction of North King Street and Church Street was used, with the very active support of the resident Capuchin Friars, as a First Aid post

during the Rising, a second headquarters for Daly's men. There are now available many books detailing every place and stage of the Rising, but I will only give an account of the Bolton Street/North King Street/Church Street area, where the fighting was very fierce.

*Easter Monday,  
24th April 1916*

On Easter Monday a pre-laid plan was carried out by a group of Volunteers who started a football game close to the Magazine Fort (of explosives) in the Phoenix Park. When the ball was kicked over the entrance gate "by mistake", a Volunteer was allowed enter the Fort by the sentry, who was immediately captured, and the Volunteers took over the Fort and blew up part of the Fort before retreating to the Four Courts, under the command of Ned Daly. Barricades were put up at the river end, Arran Quay/Inns Quay,

### POBLACHT NA H EIREANN. THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty: six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,

THOMAS J. CLARKE.  
SEAN Mac DIARMADA, THOMAS MacDONAGH,  
P. H. PEARSE, EAMONN CEANNT,  
JAMES CONNOLLY, JOSEPH PLUNKETT.

# Firing line 916

and at the top end, Church Street/  
North King Street end of Church Street.

*April 24th and 25th 1916*

During most of Monday and Tuesday, the Volunteers were occupying houses and strengthening the barricades. There was plenty of material to hand, as the houses in Church Street opposite the church were only in the course of erection. In fact, there were barricades everywhere around, covering the most likely routes of enemy approach. No tenanted houses were occupied. The occupiers who were dispossessed were helped to bring their belongings to the North Dublin Union or to the Technical School in Bolton Street, and they were housed in the School.

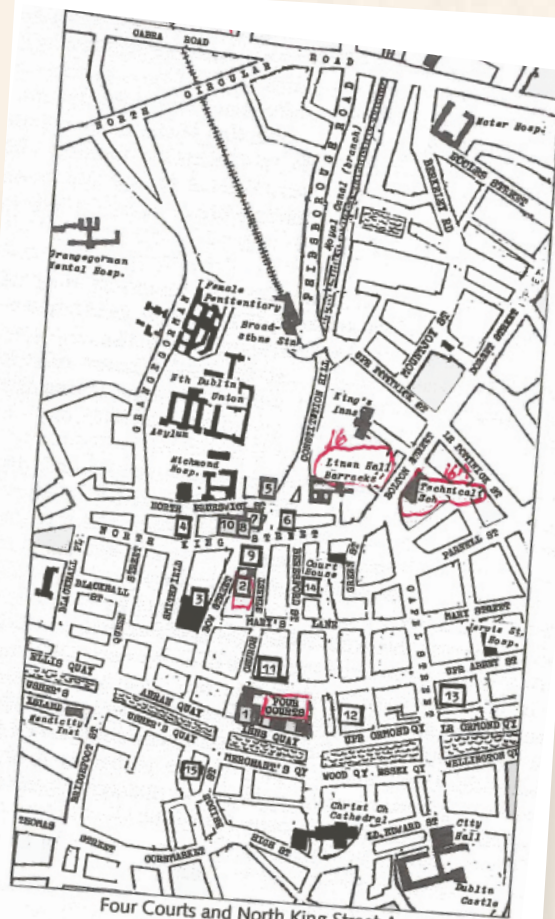
The first skirmish occurred on the quays, shortly after noon on Easter Monday. A party of the 5th and 12th Lancers, on horseback, escorting five London and North Western lorries coming from the North Wall with munitions, were fired on from the Four Courts. The battle was on. The soldiers took cover and the released horses galloped about the streets for hours.

*Tuesday 25th April 1916*

On Tuesday a party of Volunteers and Fianna was picked to reconnoitre Broadstone station, but the military had got there first and shot a Volunteer through the lung. So the Volunteers retreated and made North Brunswick Street their northern line of defence, and kept up a constant fire on Broadstone Station, inflicting casualties on the garrison.

*Wednesday 26th April 1916*

On Wednesday Volunteer pickets patrolled the streets, and maintained



- |                         |                        |                   |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Four Courts Hotel     | 6 Monks's Bakery       | 11 The Bridewell  |
| 2 Father Mathew Hall    | 7 Clarke's Dairy       | 12 Charles Street |
| 3 Jameson's Distillery  | 8 'Reilly's Fort'      | 13 Strand Street  |
| 4 Red Cow Lane          | 9 Blanchardstown Mills | 14 Malt house     |
| 5 Moore's coach factory | 10 St John's Convent   | 15 Brazen Head    |

1



## 1. Map of Four Courts command area Vicinity of Bolton Street

**Technical Schools:** Map of Four Courts District (including Bolton Street Technical School) under the command of Commandant Ned Daly of the 1st Battalion of the Volunteers

## 2. Commandant Ned Daly, 1st Battalion, Four Courts

(by Sean O'Sullivan). [Courtesy of the Irish Capuchin Provincial Archives, Dublin]

communication with headquarters at the GPO. It was reported that an armoured car had been seen in the vicinity of Bolton Street. Some of the outposts were under constant fire from positions located in Christchurch and in Power's Distillery.

It had been ascertained that there were isolated enemy garrisons in the Bridewell and in the Linenhall Barracks,

and it was decided to round them up. A party was detailed to capture the barracks. The garrison, which numbered some forty unarmed men in the Army Pay Corps, were summoned to surrender, but refused. Gelignite was placed in position in the wall facing Lurgan Street, and the barracks' door was burst open with sledge hammers. The garrison then surrendered. At the Bridewell a number of armed



**3. Linen Hall,** coloured by Pat Liddy  
The Linen Hall, Dublin, Yarnhall Street (off Bolton Street) was burned down in 1916.



policemen, found in the cellars, were disarmed and brought into the Four Courts.

At 3 p.m., Linenhall Barracks was set on fire, to prevent its reoccupation by the encircling forces, and in the course of the day the blaze assumed large proportions. During Wednesday night it lighted up the streets with a murky glow. By Thursday it had travelled to Messrs. Moore's, the druggists, in Bolton Street, and then became really spectacular. Large barrels of oil were tossed into the air and exploded.

*Thursday 27th April 1916*

Nine o'clock in the morning of Thursday brought another skirmish to the men at the Church Street Bridge barricade. Twenty soldiers were seen advancing in single file along Usher's Quay on the south side of the river. Fire was immediately opened on them, and they took cover behind the stone pillars at Ganly's wool stores.

It was on this day that the British plan of cordoning off the Four Courts was seen taking shape, the intention being to occupy Queen Street as far as North King Street to Bolton Street. They must not have been aware that North King Street was strongly held, and that the garrison in North Brunswick Street was outside the cordon.

*Friday 28th April 1916*

From dawn on Friday until the end, the attacks all over the city became intense. Heavy firing was heard from all directions. In the afternoon, the

**5. DIT Bolton Street, today** before the College moves its operation to the new Grangegorman campus nearby, which also was drawn into the conflict of 1916.

5



4



#### 4. The Linen Hall, Dublin, 1916; burnt-out shell.

The Linen Hall was built in 1726 as a government initiative to promote and improve the Irish Linen trade. Linen from all part of Ireland, especially Ulster, had to be passed for export. Many of the adjacent streets – Coleraine Street, Lisburn Street, Lurgan Street- led to the towns of Ulster. A Yarn Hall was added in 1740, to monitor the quality of yarn (the thread spun from flax). In 1806 a large Cotton Hall was added. When the Ulster linen merchants refused to come to Dublin ca 1780 (and built their own Linen Halls in Belfast and Derry), the Dublin Linen Hall began to decline; in mid-19th Century, it was converted into an army barracks, and in 1916, it was the offices of the Army Pay Section. Most of the four-acre site is now a Collen-built Corporation estate. The old Yarn Hall which survived is now an annexe of DIT Bolton Street for Architecture and the wet trades. It is wrongly referred to as the Linen Hall Annexe.

attack finally came towards North King Street. The military advanced via Capel Street, and at about 6.45 pm, an armoured car arrived at the Technical Schools, which were occupied by the evacuated tenants. They were once again evacuated, and the schools made military headquarters. A barricade was made with the school furniture, which was thrown out of the windows. It extended from the schools to Yarnhall Street opposite. About 250 soldiers under Lieutenant-Colonel H Taylor arrived and immediately busied themselves with rounding up the local residents and interrogating them. The armoured car was active all the evening, rushing troops into Bolton Street.

At dusk, an armoured car rushed from Bolton Street but was pulled up by the barricade at Langan's, across North King Street at Coleraine Street. In the ensuing exchange of fire, one soldier was killed and the machine gun fire killed a Volunteer.

When night came, the attack was resumed. It had been anticipated; a

further barricade had been constructed across the North King Street end of Beresford Street. An armoured car appeared again, and its fifteen occupants jumped out and proceeded to fire into every house along North King Street, the few occupants lying face down whilst the bullets pounded the walls over them. At the same time, fire was opened from the Malt House and from the Coleraine Street barricade and several soldiers fell.

The attacking British clambered to the roof tops, and from this vantage rained down bombs on the street until the answering bullets dislodged them. One group of British succeeded in making a lodgement [area in a hostile territory that, when seized and held, makes the landing of troops and materiel possible and provides manoeuvre space for subsequent operations] in a house between North Anne Street and Church Street, and bored through house after house to near Church Street. Attackers and defenders were now opposite one another on each side of the narrow street, and the din became infernal. The sound of crashing timber, the



**6. Street barricade, Bolton Street/North King Street**  
Street barricade at junction of Church Street and North King Street, Easter 1916. Note line of Volunteers lying low behind barricade facing down the street [National Museum of Ireland]



**7. Fr Mathew Hall, Church Street**  
Fr Mathew Hall, Church Street. Used as a First Aid Station. [Courtesy of the Irish Capuchin Provincial Archives, Dublin]

shouted commands of the officers in charge of the attack, the scream of bullets resounded continuously. The battle was waged all night, with many casualties on both sides.

### *The North King Street Massacre of Fifteen Civilians*

It was on this day, between 6 pm on Friday evening and 10 am on Saturday, that the soldiers, as they burst through the dividing walls between the still-occupied houses, shot dead fifteen civilians who occupied their own homes. This was the most mercilessly savage incident of the Rising, which later the British commander, General Maxwell, first sought to deny, and then conceded without taking responsibility: "...possibly, some unfortunate incidents which we should regret now may have occurred ... It is even possible that under the horrors of this attack some of [the troops] 'saw red'; that is an unfortunate consequence of a rebellion of this kind. It was allowed to come into being among these people and could not be suppressed by velvet glove methods."

### *Saturday 29th April 1916*

At dawn on Saturday, the position was that several houses on both sides of North King Street were occupied by the British and the Malt House in Beresford Street was coming under heavy fire from the backs of the houses in North Anne Street and the south side of

North King Street. The battle went on all day.

Meanwhile, the military attack on the west side had developed. The Staffordshires and the Sherwood Foresters were transported in armoured cars on Friday evening towards Smithfield by way of Queen Street. They occupied various houses in the neighbourhood, and erected a barricade from Queen Street to George's Lane opposite. Late on Friday night, under cover of darkness, they advanced towards Church Street, firing into houses along the way. From their new positions, and advancing, they fought all through Saturday.

Father Albert, one of the Capuchin priests, had been on duty in the Richmond Hospital, and on Saturday afternoon he heard rumours of the surrender at the GPO. With Dr O'Carroll and Dr Myles, he proceeded to the outpost in North Brunswick Street to confirm it, but they had heard nothing of it.

Another Capuchin priest, Father Augustine, was greatly concerned about the safety of the wounded, a large number of whom were in the Father Matthew Hall. At 4 pm, he sent a message to the British military commander by a Volunteer Red Cross man asking for an interview. The messenger returned and said the reply was: "You are all rebels and outlaws, and you will get none of the amenities of war." However, a truce to remove the

wounded was agreed, to last until 10 am on Sunday morning.

On Saturday evening, Commandant Ned Daly in the Four Courts had been brought orders of surrender by Nurse O'Farrell from the GPO and they reluctantly surrendered their arms and the Volunteer garrison was marched to the Rotunda. Volunteer Paddy Holohan (later Army Commandant) still held out in charge of a unit in North Brunswick Street.

### *Sunday 30th April 1916*

An official copy of the order for surrender in Pearse's own handwriting was brought in by one of the Capuchin Fathers to the North Brunswick Street position on Sunday morning. The Father had had a personal interview with Commandant Pearse at Arbour Hill barracks, where he was then confined. On reading this, Holohan decided, after consultation with his men, to surrender, and intimation to this effect was conveyed to the military. The garrison, numbering fifty-eight (58) were then marshalled into military order, and marched under guard to the Castle. Thus ended the last resistance in the Four Courts area. Commandant Ned Daly, as one of the leaders of the Rising, was executed, with others, in Kilmainham Jail on May 4th 1916.

1. "The Easter Rising" by Michael Foy and Brian Barton (1999).

2. "Four Courts Area", Easter Rising 1916. The Capuchin Annual, 1966: Frs. Vergilius O.F.M. Cap., and Henry, O.F.M. Cap.

3. Acknowledgement to Dr Brian Kirby, Provincial Archivist, Irish Capuchin Provincial Archives, Capuchin Friary, Chu



# Minister English Hosts North Kildare Chamber Breakfast Briefing at ETBI

**N**orth Kildare Chamber hosted a breakfast briefing on “Addressing skill shortages in Kildare” at the ETBI Offices in October.

Speakers at the briefing were Damien English, TD and Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation, Sean Ashe, CE of Kildare and Wicklow ETB, Des Kavanagh, MD, Jungheinrich Ireland, and Anthony Lawlor, TD.

The North Kildare Chamber host monthly briefings on an array of topics of interest to local business. Allan Shine, CEO of the Chamber, addressed the briefing and re-stated the importance of collaboration between all key stakeholders in the county. Skills Shortages is an extremely important issue for business and the debate highlighted the real need to address the skills shortages in the construction, pharma and ICT sectors.

Minister English noted that whilst Government have made huge efforts with results in this area, there is a need for both the education and business sector to work more closely in the forthcoming years. The briefing was attended by over 80 people who represented both education and business alike.



*Left to right:* Martin Heydon TD, Vivian Cummins, President of North Kildare Chamber, Allan Shine, CEO of North Kildare Chamber, Damien English TD, Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation, Des Kavanagh, MD of Jungheinrich Ireland, Seán Ashe, CE of Kildare and Wicklow ETB, Anthony Lawlor TD and Michael Moriarty, ETBI General Secretary.



## NEWS SHORT

### **The "Revised Procedures for Suspension and Dismissal of Teachers and Principals" Information Session**

Photographed at the "Revised Procedures for Suspension and Dismissal of Teachers and Principals" Information Session were (l to r): Cynthia Deane, CE of Kilkenny and Carlow ETB, Margaret Gorman, Margaret Gorman, Head of Education at Eversheds and Fionuala McGeever, CE of Tipperary ETB.



## Interview with Philip Gurnett, Head of Sourcing Education, Education Procurement Service (based in the University of Limerick)

By Gwen Moore, Public Sector Reform Coordinator, ETBI

### What is the Education Procurement Service (EPS)?

The Education Procurement Service (EPS) is the Education sector's sourcing hub under the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) model.

### What is the role of EPS in terms of the new procurement model established by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP)?

Under the OGP model, EPS as the sector hub is responsible for the tendering of contracts, framework agreements and the completion of mini-competitions for all of the public sector, for Laboratory Equipment & Diagnostics, Veterinary and Agriculture,

Library and other education strategic procurements.

As EPS/OGP cannot contract on behalf of public sector institutions, bodies, Local government (LG), Health Service Executive (HSE), etc., the OGP model requires EPS to facilitate the procurement process through the operation of user groups and category councils made up of representatives from the contracting authorities. The users develop the specification and EPS runs the procurement process on behalf of the contracting authorities. Once the competition is completed, each individual contracting authority is responsible for signing the contract for

the supply and ultimately the payment for goods and services.

EPS is responsible for promoting, implementing and operating the OGP procurement model across the entire education and training sector, including ensuring compliance with the model within the sector, ensuring that the OGP meets its obligations to education and that the model effectively services the education sector across all sixteen OGP categories.

We aim to provide value for money for our customers in reducing the cost of goods and services as well as reducing the administrative overhead

in undertaking procurement to a professional standard.

**I understand that strategic education procurements will remain within the Education Sector – can you explain more about this?**

Certain goods and services considered of strategic importance to Education will be sourced by the EPS. These commodities are critical to education and any impact in regard to delivery, quality, timing and security would compromise achievement of educational objectives.

**The OGP was established in 2013 and commenced operations in 2014 – how would you rate its progress to date?**

The process of creating and staffing a national public sector shared service procurement function through the utilisation of existing resources is an unprecedented task. The project timelines have proven ambitious and difficulties have arisen in communicating adequately with public sector customers. The project may have benefited from more engagement with stakeholders prior to setting the project timelines and more focus on the change management aspects of the project.

Nonetheless, the model and the organisation are now in place and significant progress is being made in completing frameworks across all sixteen categories, allowing OGP to complete mini-competitions on behalf of multiple customers across the public sector. While it may be that savings targets have not been achieved and it is likely that the model will need to be further enhanced to deliver all customer requirements, progress continues apace and will continue to be made as the model is rolled out and delivers to substantial numbers of customers across the public sector.

The benefits to customer organisations of being able to concentrate on core activity and allow the EPS/OGP to provide the expertise to deal with complex procurement procedures, associated supplier challenges and in some cases litigation, will become apparent as the model moves from implementation to operation.

**The EPS recently assisted ETBs and other school sectors in a stationery procurement – can you explain the**



EPS Team Photo (left to right) - Back row: Sheila Broderick (Category Manager), Gerry Kennedy (Category Specialist), David Mangan (Category Manager), Neil McCarthy (Category Specialist), David Keane (Category Specialist)

"We aim to provide value for money for our customers in reducing the cost of goods and services as well as reducing the administrative overhead in undertaking procurement to a professional standard."

**background to this?**

Stationery and Office Supplies are one of the OGP commodities. However, following the early termination of the existing contract for ETBs and schools, the EPS, with education partners, undertook the project as OGP were unable to complete the tender in time for the new academic year. EPS had already completed a mini-competition for higher education stationery requirements as part of the transition to the OGP model and managed the implementation of a new Stationery and Office Supplies contract. We expect to transition to a new OGP arrangement in mid-2016.

**ETBs are based in the heart of their communities and some have expressed concerns regarding the effect of large centralised procurements on local businesses and SMEs – what's your opinion?**

At present, evidence provided by the OGP indicates that a large portion of procurement expenditure in the Irish public sector is with local SMEs. The OGP are committed to facilitate and assist SMEs to participate in OGP-led competitions. Engagement by public bodies with the OGP model especially

in the provision of resources with the correct expertise to develop category strategies, detailed specification of requirements and expertise in the evaluation of tenders and mini-competitions then Irish SMEs providing "value for money" will win an even higher proportion of public procurement expenditure.

**How do you see procurement in the ETB Sector in 5 years' time?**

Based on the OGP model, most of the sourcing of goods and services will be from frameworks completed by the OGP sourcing function. The OGP operations team will run mini-competitions for individual or aggregated requirements from customers across the public sector.

The procurement strategy and specification for frameworks will be developed at a strategic/high level by customer representation from across the public sector sitting on category councils and sourcing teams. In the case of the mini-competitions, the OGP/EPS in cooperation with customers, will develop the specification of requirements and evaluate the responses.



# CSL – The Centre for School Leadership

**T**he new Centre for School Leadership (CSL) is a joint collaboration between IPPN, NAPD, and the DES. The Centre has an initial staff of three seconded school leaders. They are Ms Mary Nihill, Principal of Calasanctius Secondary School in Oranmore, who has been appointed as National Director, Ms Máire Ní Bhróithe, Principal Ratoath College and Education Officer and Leadership Officer in Louth and Meath ETB 2013-2015, holds the Deputy Director Post-primary position and Anna Mai Rooney, Principal in St Louis Senior Girls School, Monaghan, is the Deputy Director Primary. The role of the Centre, overseen by the Steering Committee, is the development of a coherent continuum of professional development for school leaders commencing with pre-appointment training through to induction of newly-appointed principals to continuous professional development throughout the leader's career. The Implementation Group makes recommendations and provides support and advice to the Steering Group and Clare Education Centre ably provides the administrative support.

The Centre for School Leadership's first responsibility is to develop a formalised mentoring system for newly appointed

principals. Training will take place after Christmas for forty-plus Post-primary and sixty Primary principals who have been invited to express their interest in being mentors. The trained mentors will begin their work during 2016. International research points to the benefits of a formalised system of mentoring and the numerous ways in which having access to an effective mentor can improve confidence, reduce stress and anxiety, and work as a mutually successful learning opportunity for both the mentor and the mentee.

Coaching is emerging as a very effective tool for overcoming challenges, improving performance and enhancing communication in many different professions. The Centre for School Leadership will tender for professional coaches to assist principals experiencing challenge and those who perceive that they might need some extra support. The tender is currently being prepared and details of this coaching service will be issued to ETBI after Christmas.

The Centre will also develop a third-level qualification for aspiring school leaders. Once again CSL is preparing a tender seeking colleges and universities who would be willing to provide such a programme. The

inclusion of practitioners in this programme both working and recently-retired will be essential in its success. Details in relation to this programme and its commencement date will be available in the New Year.

Finally, the new Centre will complete a review of all CPD currently provided for school leaders. This review will serve as a basis for recommendations to the Steering Committee on the learning opportunities currently available, the gaps in this provision and the avoidance of duplication. This work will also include the development of a Quality Framework against which all CPD for school leaders will be measured. The development by the DES of the new Standards for School Leaders which are to be included in the next phase of School Self-Evaluation in Management and Leadership underpin the entire work-plan for the Centre.

Over the past month the directors of CSL have met with many stakeholders and consulted with them on the above priorities. They met with all the management bodies, trust bodies at post-primary level, the PDST, the Teaching Council, the IOTI, the IUA, CHOICE and the teacher unions. Feedback from these meetings will inform the work of the centre. Recently the directors also visited the Scottish College for School Leadership and this trip proved to be very fruitful.

Irish school leaders deserve the very best support possible in their challenging and demanding roles. They have a right to professional development which will assist them in their everyday work, inspire staffs and school communities and have a direct and positive effect on the outcomes for their pupils. The Centre for School Leadership will build on the important work already undertaken to make this a reality.

**See [www.cslireland.ie](http://www.cslireland.ie) and [@cslireland](https://twitter.com/cslireland)**



*Above left:* The 3 directors of the CSL (left to right): Máire Ní Bhróithe, Mary Nihill and Anna Mai Rooney. *Above right:* John Irwin, ACCS Assistant General Secretary (left) chats with Michael Moriarty, ETBI General Secretary at a recent CSL Consultation Meeting.



# Healthy People in Healthy Workplaces

## A Partnership Initiative between educational employees and employers

**H**ealthy People in Healthy Workplaces is the goal of a new workplace health and wellbeing initiative that is the subject of a feasibility study in the first and second-level education sector. This programme aims to go beyond the traditional occupational health and safety route to include a broader health and wellbeing promotion element as well as safe and timely return to work practice. This approach reinforces the link the work environment has with the individual employee, and with the aim of having more people at work for more of the time doing more fulfilling work.

Implementing this programme should not involve extra work for Principals/Managers or Boards of Management/ETBs as it is envisaged that staff trained specifically in the procedures of the programme will organise it at school or centre level. These trained personnel will draw on a range of external resources to help and guide them in the tasks of the programme.

Dr Richard Wynne of the Work Research Centre has provided the group with his expertise both in an Irish and European context. The group are currently investigating the possibility of designing a pilot programme which will be built on three pillars:

1. **Health and Safety**
2. **Health Promotion**
3. **How to manage return to work**

There are precedents for this approach in other European countries where the research points to significant lowering of absences from work. The initiative will be proactive and focus on identification and prevention as well as

addressing difficulties when they arise. It is proposed to have five strands to the proposal:

- Integrated Workplace Health management policy and methodology development
- Health needs screening module
- Health promotion module

- Occupational and safety health module
- Absence management module

The working group are currently meeting with stakeholders and other interested parties with the aim of developing and implementing a potential pilot project in the next academic year.



Workplace Health Promotion Initiative Working Group: from left Deirdre MacDonald ASTI, Richard Wynne Work Research Centre, Patricia McDermott ETBI, Siobhan Corry JMB, Annette Dolan TUI and Shay Bannon Shaka Educational Consultancy. Missing from photo: John Irwin ACCS.

Supported by:



# The QQI Award Brand: Know It When You See It

By Susan MacNeill



*QQI launched a promotional campaign for its award brand in November 2015 which will continue over a 20-month period. Here, Susan MacNeill (Strategic Planning and Communications Unit), who is leading the campaign project for QQI, explains to readers the intention behind the campaign, what it's hoping to achieve, and how providers across the ETB sector can participate.*

## TRANSITIONING TO THE QQI AWARD BRAND

As those working within the ETB sector will be aware, QQI was established as a result of the amalgamation of a number of predecessor organisations, amongst them two awarding bodies well-known to the sector and to learners, FETAC and HETAC. QQI was conscious that for learners, providers and employers, it was very important to ensure that the value of the qualifications awarded by these bodies was maintained in the transition to a new QQI award brand. To help to build that understanding and confidence, we first coupled the QQI Award brand with references to FETAC and HETAC. Following this transitional period, we now believe that it is time to fully promote the statutory QQI Award brand in its own right.

## PROMOTING THE QQI AWARD BRAND: THE CAMPAIGN

Creating awareness of any brand can take a period of time and needs to be approached in more than one way. In autumn 2015, a number of initiatives were undertaken at both a national and a provider level which will be built upon over the duration of the 20-month campaign.

The strapline for the promotion campaign is QQI Award: Know it when you see it. Building on this idea, a series of promotional images have

been designed which focus on the QQI certificate and on a series of characters that speak about reaping the benefits in their chosen paths. These images are being used as advertisements in national newspapers and for promotional posters. The stories created around the characters are also the subject of radio advertisements which have commenced on national radio stations.

In order to further highlight the centrality of learners and providers to the QQI Award brand, a promotional event has formed part of this campaign and took place on 18 November in the Aviva stadium. We were very pleased that the Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O'Sullivan TD, was in attendance to present commemorative certificates to learners from across the country who represented

achievement at every level of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The ceremony was attended by the learners' providers and by their families. Representatives from across the further and higher education and training and qualifications system were also present. The event was a keen reminder of the significance of qualifications to learners and the importance of ensuring that the national, statutory and quality-assured nature of QQI awards is known to learners, providers, employers and the general public.

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO PROMOTE THE QQI AWARD BRAND

Press, radio, and events are obviously important elements in this promotional campaign. However, there is also a very



QQI Award holders representing achievements across all levels of the NFQ at the recent QQI Award launch at the Aviva Stadium, Dublin, where they were presented with QQI commemorative certificates by the Minister for Education and Skills Jan O'Sullivan TD.



fundamental piece of work which needs to be undertaken in partnership with public and private providers in ensuring that QQI awards are consistently referred to on websites and programme promotional materials.

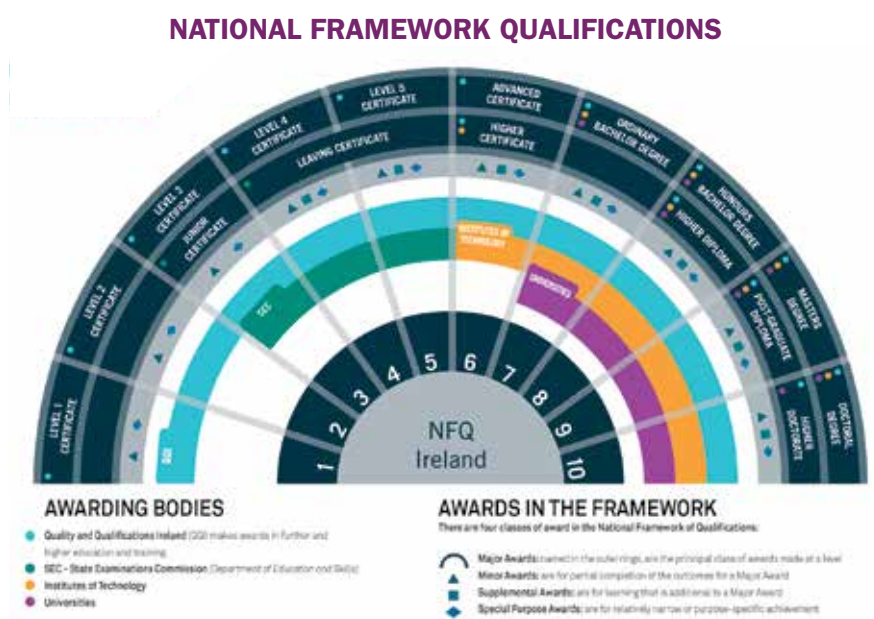
In November, every provider offering programmes leading to QQI awards was sent a promotional box which included an explanatory leaflet, campaign posters, the NFQ diagram and other promotional materials. Primarily this investment was made in order to ensure that all providers are aware of the campaign and to encourage a partnership approach to embedding the QQI Award brand, an outcome that will ultimately benefit learners.

We are also increasing our use of the QQI website to promote the brand and to direct providers to further information on usage of the Award brand and logo. The carousel at the top of the QQI website [www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie) draws direct attention to the promotional campaign. From here, a mini website is accessible which provides some provider-oriented information about use of the QQI Award brand and accessibility to the logo. It also includes downloadable images of the campaign posters.

We are now asking all providers in the ETB sector and other readers that make reference to awards, to ensure that your websites and easily-updateable information are referring to the QQI Award brand. We appreciate that some of your materials will be printed and that it may not be feasible to update these immediately, but please take the opportunity now to inform those responsible for printed materials of any description, that the **QQI Award brand is the only brand to be used from hereon in when referring to programmes leading to these statutory awards.**

### FEEDBACK ON THE CAMPAIGN

QQI is very happy to be continuing its work with the ETBI and ETBs through our joint forum. As part of this work we were very grateful for the advice and suggestions of a cross-sector group which attended a workshop with us on the promotional campaign in September. We look forward to reconvening this group as the campaign progresses and to benefitting from



the further insights of providers in the sector on how best to continue to promote the QQI Award brand.

In addition, if you have suggestions for how the campaign can evolve further or if you have specific requests for posters or other materials, please contact us at [communications@qqi.ie](mailto:communications@qqi.ie).

### TOWARDS 2016: QQI STRATEGY AND PLANNING

The QQI Award brand campaign will continue into 2016 and will contribute to one of the goals that is highlighted in our recently published Strategy Statement 2016-2018:

*"We will provide clear, authoritative and comprehensive information to our stakeholders and the public regarding our roles, responsibilities and activities."*

Our ambition to increase our information and communication activities and to improve the quality and effectiveness of our interaction with providers and others, is of course only meaningful in terms of the support these actions provide in fulfilling our qualifications and quality assurance functions. In this context, it is important to also highlight our organisational goals in these areas to 2018:

**Qualifications:** We, in association with stakeholders, will ensure that the NFQ and its qualifications are used to develop:

- ◆ Education and training programmes with clear occupational and/or educational purposes and learning outcomes for informed career and other choices
- ◆ Lifelong learning pathways for personal, social and professional development

**Quality Assurance:** We will oversee an improved quality assurance system that is comprehensive and balances accountability and enhancement and promotes local responsibility

Our full Strategy Statement 2016-2018 is available on our website at the following link: <http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/Strategy-Statement-2016-2018.aspx>. Our Corporate Plan for 2016, which will contribute to achieving our Strategy Statement, is near completion and will be published to our website in January. It will highlight our plans for policy development and implementation and provider-engagement activities over the year. It will also identify the units within the organisation that will be progressing these objectives. The Corporate Plan 2016 will be widely circulated as soon as it is available.

### AND FINALLY...

We'd like to thank ETBI for inviting us to contribute to this excellent publication and hope that further opportunities will arise in the future. We look forward to working with you in 2016 as individual ETBs and providers and through the ETBI/QQI Forum.

## CASE STUDY

# FET Teachers Develop Shared Resource Lists to Support Delivery of FET Programmes Nationally

By Miriam O'Donoghue, National Manager, Further Education Support Service (FESS).



### BACKGROUND

FESS recently set up a new section on [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie) to provide an extensive library of resource lists for FET teachers to support delivery of their programme modules leading to a range of QQI components. FET teachers have been requesting subject content support for their programmes for some time now and FESS is delighted to be able to provide this support and co-ordinate this resource list initiative.

In Phase one of the initiative, over 100 resource lists have been uploaded to [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie). The resource lists have been written by FET teachers for FET teachers. They will be of particular benefit to those teaching programme modules for the first time or for those looking for new ideas. The resource lists across Levels 2/3 and 5/6 identify themes and topics from QQI components and suggest relevant websites, books, leaflets, organisations etc.

This is the first phase of development and it is hoped to continue to meet FET teachers' needs by adding further

### HOW TO ACCESS THE RESOURCE LISTS //

1. Go to [www.fess.ie](http://www.fess.ie)
2. Within the 'resource library' under 'subject specific resources', the resource lists can be downloaded.
3. Alternatively the following link will bring you directly to the list of resource lists: [www.fess.ie/resource-library/subject-specific-resources](http://www.fess.ie/resource-library/subject-specific-resources)

resource lists during 2016 across all levels including Level 4.

### FORMAT OF THE RESOURCE LISTS

All resource lists have been uploaded to the FESS website as word documents. This means that they can be added to or updated easily at local level and FET teachers can continue to add in their own resource ideas and links as required. Resource lists can also be copied into local VLEs.

Each resource list is organised under the following headings: Theme/Topic; Type; Relevance; Author/Source; and Web Link. Reference in the resource lists is made to themes/topics only rather than learning outcomes. This is

to avoid resource lists going out of date when changes are made following any review of programmes.

### STAGES INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESOURCE LISTS

1. During the summer of 2015, FESS developed:
  - a. a document to advertise the report writing process to interested FET teachers
  - b. an application form that FET teachers could use to express interest in writing specific resource lists
  - c. guidelines for FET teachers to follow when writing and submitting resource lists. This also included information about the fee being paid for writing a resource list and

Minor Award name	Communications
Minor Award theme	5N0690
Level	5

### Suggested resources to support delivery

Theme/Topic	Type	Relevance	Author/Source	Web Link
Interpersonal Skills	Website	Engaging resources and short video presentations on life skills such as appropriate language, speaking with clarity, eye contact, body language and dressing appropriately for success.	Barclays	<a href="http://www.barclayslifeskills.com">www.barclayslifeskills.com</a>
Communication Skills	Website	This website provides helpful advice on personal, interpersonal, presentation, writing and learning skills. It contains interactive material, in particular, an interpersonal skills self-assessment to get started with.	Skills You Need	<a href="http://www.skillsyouneed.com">www.skillsyouneed.com</a>



- d. the estimated time it should take a template for writers to support consistency of format, approach and design
  - e. a completed exemplar resource list to act as a benchmark for FET teachers when writing their own resource list.
2. At the beginning of September 2015, FESS put out a call for interested FET teachers to write resource lists. A special email address was set up to help to manage the receipt of applications and later collection of resource lists:  
**fessresources@gmail.com**

Given the huge amount of change that had been experienced in the FET sector, and particularly with the move to the CAS awards, our teachers and tutors have long been asking for resources that will support them in offering the **best possible learning experience** to their students. The subject-specific resources are a hugely welcome and valuable addition to our sector, and have been warmly welcomed by our teachers and tutors. They will be invaluable to new teachers, but equally will be a boon to experienced teachers who are seeking to **update** and **revitalise** their teaching materials.

Clodagh Beare, DDLETB

3. A significant number of applications were received with some programmes receiving multiple applications for resource lists to be written to support it. Following an extensive review of all applications by FESS over several weeks, offers to start the process of writing were sent out to approximately 120 FET teachers in mid-October 2015. The selection criteria used to select the writers of each resource list included:

- what did the FET teacher write the programme module in this area?
- what experience has the FET teacher of delivering a programme in this area or a related area?
- how many resource lists has the

FET teacher expressed interest in writing overall? In the interest of giving as many FET teachers as possible the opportunity to get involved in the writing initiative it was decided to cap the writing allocation at a maximum of two resource lists per person in Phase One.

- what ETB/Provider employs the FET teacher? This was relevant to ensure that there was a spread of writers appointed from across the country and across providers.

4. In a small number of programme modules such as Work Experience, where a large number of teachers are involved in delivery, it was decided to appoint more than one writer. Resource lists from the individual writers were merged before uploading to the FESS website.

The resource lists published on the FESS website will be **very useful** for teachers and tutors in FET, giving them many resources at their fingertips - a sort of 'one-stop shop' for resources when you're short of time. It is an updatable, **dynamic source of information** and ideas for teachers and tutors, which can be downloaded and personalised for their own use.

Angela Higgins, KWETB

## INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO WRITERS OF RESOURCE LISTS

Writers were:

- directed to the guidelines and exemplars provided to clarify how to complete the resource list template
- advised that the resource list should include sufficient resources to address all aspects of the themes or topics in the learning outcomes and that it was envisaged that the compilation of the resource list would take approximately 2 days.
- instructed that the resources they listed should draw on their experience as an FET practitioner

involved in the delivery of the programme-module leading to the relevant component and that all resources identified should link to supporting the delivery of one or more learning outcomes from the relevant component specification, but they should not make reference to a learning outcome by number, for example LO5, so to ensure that that resource list did not become dated if an award was reviewed in the future which may result in learning outcomes being revised.

- given a deadline date of 1st November 2015 for the work and details of remuneration.

## NEXT STEPS

- FESS is currently disseminating information to teachers and providers about the new resource lists. The resource lists have been extremely well-received by the sector and feedback has been very positive.
- As resource lists are a work in progress, FESS is welcoming feedback on current resource lists including any additions or suggested edits.
- The QQI/ETBI Forum has congratulated FESS on this initiative and is recommending that the development of resource lists continues in 2016.
- FESS will liaise with QQI to identify the most popular award areas so that these can be targeted for any future call for resource list writers.

The resource lists provide a **comprehensive** and **live listing** of **relevant** and **up-to-date** materials which are accessible to all teachers and tutors in the FET sector. This will prove **invaluable** to new practitioners as well as to those who are possibly stuck in the comfort zone of reusing tired and outdated materials. It will also be one spoke on the wheel of ensuring **consistency in standards**, delivery and practice across the sector."

Deirdre Hehir, LMETB



# An online tourism programme to promote and inform transition year about career opportunities to influence career choice

## INTRODUCTION

The Irish Hospitality Institute (IHI, a professional body for the hospitality/tourism sector) has undertaken the development of a new online Tourism Insight Programme in conjunction with Institute of Technology Tralee and supported by Fáilte Ireland. Other educational providers are also involved as part of the development and research.

The national need to promote the sector has been a discussion as part of recent policy drivers (People, Place & Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025, EFSGN research 2015 and the Government “Action Plan for Jobs”). A structured approach such as this programme allows for clear collaboration and outcomes for the first time to involve state, education and industry in its completion at national level.

## RESEARCH COMPLETED

IHI have conducted research and piloted modules developed amongst schools in Kerry, Dublin and Shannon, involving both transition year students and their teachers. The outcome of this research has provided extremely positive results in terms of the need for such a programme which not only facilitates the learning of all students in a new way but assists and informs



**Minister Joan Burton TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection launches TOURISM INSIGHT Pilot Programme at National Hospitality Manager's Conference 2015.** Pictured at the Conference were (from left): Natasha Kinsella, Chief Executive, Irish Hospitality Institute (IHI), Minister Joan Burton TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection, Dr. Tom Farrelly and Mary Rose Stafford both of Institute of Technology, Tralee.

teachers and parents about the career opportunities that exist. Some key outcomes were that 89% of TY student said they would complete a placement in the sector given the opportunity to do so as part of TY, and following

the pilot, 79% stated they would consider the sector as a career choice. Comments from guidance counsellors noted the programme as an excellent teaching resource giving real purpose and clarity about the sector.

IHI formally seek the support from industry to secure completion and roll out nationally from 2016. Contact [chiefexecutive@ihi.ie](mailto:chiefexecutive@ihi.ie) or **0868377286** to discuss how you can get involved.

MODULES	TOPICS	ACTIVITIES
<b>Module 1.</b> Tourism Induction The Irish Tourist	Who are the 6.7million visitors who come to Ireland every year? What do they do here? Where do they go? What impact do they make? Visitor Attractions	All modules contain activities to encourage integration between online element and work book
<b>Module 2.</b> Careers in Hospitality Your Career Starts here	What Skills I need. Personality Test. 10 Career Paths Videos and Interviews. Access and offerings (PLC/CAO/DIRECT)	Opportunity to build in-site visits to industry, businesses and/or guests lecturers
<b>Module 3.</b> Customer Service The roles we play	Ireland's Best Service standards. Top Tips dealing with Customers Basic Customer Interactions. Basic to deal with Complaints. Scenarios	Profile Business opportunities for career choices
<b>Module 4.</b> Tourism Landscape Key influencers	Representative Bodies (IHI, IHF, RAI, VFI, ITIC, ATTA, IFSA) Fáilte Ireland. Tourism Ireland. Department of Tourism	Encouragement for placement as part of TY in industry





# EFEE Study Visit to the European Commission and European Parliament

The European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) recently organised for its members a study visit to DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) and to the European Parliament (EP). At DG EMPL, EFEE and its members were provided with an extensive introduction to the new ESCO project of the European Commission.

Pedro Chaves, Policy Officer of DG EMPL explained that ESCO is the multilingual classification (in the 24 EU official languages) of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations. It will be a common reference terminology to exchange information between actors in the labour market and in the education and training sector. ESCO is expected to boost job-matching services by increasing geographical and occupational mobility, reduce skills-gaps and improve the functioning of the European labour market. Furthermore ESCO will help education and training providers to obtain high quality information on current and future labour market needs, as a basis for the further development of curricula and to increase the visibility of the qualifications they award. All EFEE members have been invited to contribute actively to the ESCO project by providing input to the online consultation platform.

After the visit to DG EMPL, the participants headed towards the European Parliament. The visit offered the participants the opportunity to attend the plenary meeting. Furthermore EFEE had arranged a meeting with Silvia Costa, Chair of the EP Committee on Education and Culture and a few other Members of the EP. After exchanging views on educational



The EFEE Delegation at the European Parliament

"ESCO is expected to boost job-matching services by increasing geographical and occupational mobility, reduce skills-gaps and improve the functioning of the European labour market."

topics that are high on the EU agenda (such as promoting lifelong learning, improving transition from education to employment and supporting entrepreneurship in education), Ms Costa concluded that she would be very much open to further cooperation with EFEE.

Finally, the EFEE delegation, led by their President, Michael Moriarty, met with the Irish MEPs Sean Kelly, Matt Carthy

and Liadh Ní Riada.

EFEE is very pleased with this positive outcome of the meeting and will continue its efforts to strengthen its relations with Members of European Parliament.





# Edison - An Update



By Joan Russell, Project Officer for Instructional Practice



*Pictured left:* ETBI's Michael Moriarty and Joan Russell join Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O'Sullivan TD, as she welcomes the Edison CPD Programme to assist in developing entrepreneurial skills & attitudes in classrooms.

Ms Joan Russell, Project Officer for Instructional Practice, ETBI, Ms Jan O' Sullivan, TD, Minister for Education & Skills and Mr Michael Moriarty, General Secretary, ETBI.

The Teaching Council Ireland held a National Celebration of Teachers on October 3rd 2015, to coincide with World Teachers Day. The aim of the event was to celebrate creativity, commitment and good practice of teachers. The event was attended by 1,500 teachers, primary, post-primary, further education and third level. ETBI displayed the work of the European Edison Team and invited expressions of interest from teachers to participate in the programme from 2016 onwards. Féilte also provided a programme of eighteen workshops, spread out through the day. As part of this programme, ETBI facilitated a Lego Serious Play workshop for seventy-three teachers, the response to which was extremely positive.

In September 2015, The Department of Education & Skills, Ireland, hosted a consultative forum regarding the development of a Strategy for Entrepreneurial Education at post-primary, Further Education and Higher Education level. Key educational stakeholders were invited to attend to share their expertise and ideas. The Minister for Education & Skills,

Ms. Jan O' Sullivan TD, and her officials, were present at the forum and Education and Training Board Ireland (ETBI) took the opportunity to present the Minister with a copy of the Draft Edison Programme before briefing her on the plans to further develop the programme before making it available to all teachers across all sectors of education in Ireland.

## NEWS SHORT

### **GRADUATION CEREMONY AT THE HONORABLE SOCIETY OF KINGS INNS**



ETBI's Deirdre Keogh (left) and Gwen Moore pictured following their graduation ceremonies at the Honorable Society of Kings Inns. Deirdre's field of study was an Advanced Diploma in Employment Law, whilst Gwen's was an Advanced Diploma in Public Procurement Law.

# Digital Strategy for Schools

## Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Assessment



By Dr Michael Hallissy, Founding Partner with H2 Learning

### INTRODUCTION

On 7th October, 2015, the Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O'Sullivan, TD launched the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020: *Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Assessment*<sup>1</sup> at Mercy Secondary School in Inchicore, Dublin. *The Digital Strategy for Schools* charts how the Department of Education (DES) plans to integrate Information Communications Technology (ICT) into primary and post-primary education over the next five years.

This Strategy is the latest in a series of DES strategy and policy statements focused on the use of digital technology in schools, dating back to December 1997, when the policy framework document *Schools IT2000*<sup>2</sup>, was launched.

The content of this strategy is based on evidence that was gathered over a three-year period and it informs the vision and plan of action the DES will implement over the next 5 years.

### STRATEGY ORIGINS

In 2013, Dr Deirdre Butler and her colleagues in St Patrick's College and the Educational Research Centre, based in Drumcondra, carried out a comprehensive census on the level of

ICT in primary and post-primary schools and how it is being used<sup>3</sup>.

The resultant ICT Census in Schools Report found that, in the main, digital technology was being used in a limited way and that many teachers and principals wanted much more explicit guidance and support to maximise its potential. The census provided a strong evidence-base for the formulation of the policy document and it identified a number of key themes that were subsequently carried through to the

"The report found that in the main, digital technology was being used in a limited way and that many teachers and principals wanted much more explicit guidance and support to maximise its potential"

Digital Strategy for Schools.

Following on from the census report, Dr Butler and her colleagues developed a consultative paper<sup>4</sup> that was used to launch a period of public consultation on the use of digital technology in schools. This document framed the discussion

around ICT in schools and raised a series of questions to assist the DES in obtaining the views of the public.

The DES received 124 submissions arising out of this public consultation and these were subsequently reviewed and analysed in the course of compiling the strategy. In addition, the DES established a number of focus groups with young people<sup>5</sup> and adults and these views were also considered during the development of the strategy.

### THE STRATEGY

The Strategy's main focus is on achieving ICT integration in Irish schools. It has been informed by the needs of numerous stakeholders as well as both Irish and international research and existing policy on digital technology in education, (see Figure 1 overleaf).

The Strategy locates the use of digital technology in the context of teaching, learning and assessment practices and focuses on the skills and knowledge our young people will require to live and work in 21st century society. The Strategy is up front in recognising that ICT is not a cure-all and that achieving ICT integration is a complex challenge that needs to be linked to a range of changes that are already taking place across the system. These include

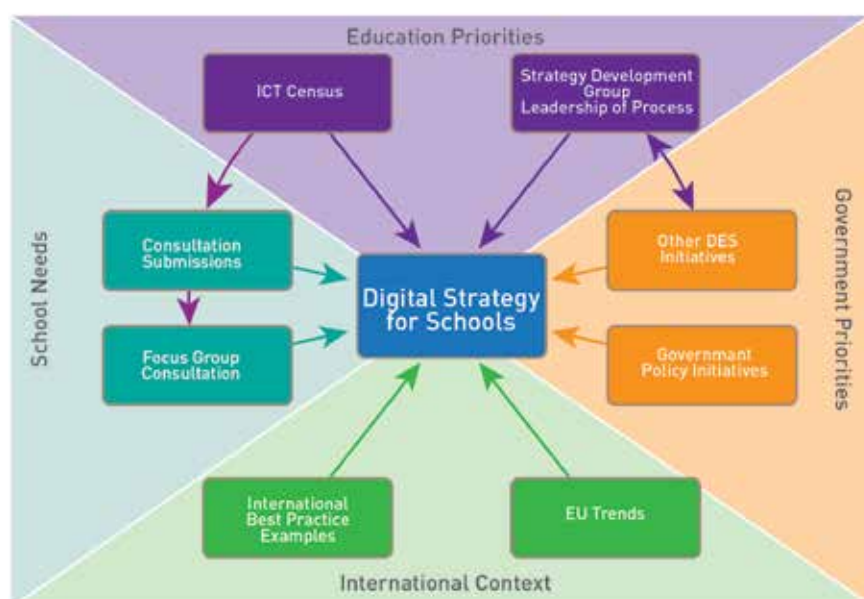
1 Digital Strategy for Schools, [www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Digital-Strategy-for-Schools-2015-2020.pdf](http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Digital-Strategy-for-Schools-2015-2020.pdf)

2 Schools IT2000, [www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Schools-IT2000.pdf](http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Schools-IT2000.pdf)

3 The 2013 ICT Census in Schools, [www.erc.ie/documents/ict\\_census2013\\_mainreport.pdf](http://www.erc.ie/documents/ict_census2013_mainreport.pdf)

4 Consultative Paper, [www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Information-Communications-Technology-ICT-in-Schools/Digital-Strategy-for-Schools/Building-Towards-a-Learning-Society-A-National-Digital-Strategy-for-Schools-Consultative-Paper.pdf](http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Information-Communications-Technology-ICT-in-Schools/Digital-Strategy-for-Schools/Building-Towards-a-Learning-Society-A-National-Digital-Strategy-for-Schools-Consultative-Paper.pdf)

5 Young People Consultation Report, [www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Report-on-the-Consultation-with-Young-People-on-the-Digital-Strategy-for-Schools.pdf](http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Report-on-the-Consultation-with-Young-People-on-the-Digital-Strategy-for-Schools.pdf)



**Figure 1: The Strategy Development Process**

changes in how we teach, what we teach and how we assess student learning into the future.

**The Strategy's vision is to:**

Realise the potential of digital technologies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment so that

Ireland's young people become engaged thinkers, active learners, knowledge constructors and global citizens to participate fully in society and the economy.

All too often the term, 'ICT integration', is not defined in government policy

documents. The Strategy's authors acknowledge this and set out five key principles to guide ICT integration in schools. These are outlined below in Table 1.

The principles set out in Table 1 place ICT integration in a much broader discussion around issues such as curriculum and assessment, teacher professional development, school planning and beyond. It goes beyond a narrow narrative around funding and the procurement of devices and infrastructure.

Furthermore, the Strategy has been developed around four themes that emerged from the Census Report.

There is a need to invest in ICT Infrastructure but evidence suggests that money has been wasted by introducing technology into schools without proper planning and support. This was a key finding in the recent OECD report, *Students Computers and Learning*<sup>6</sup>, which made the case that schools need to change how they use digital technology if they are to deliver on its potential.

By embedding the Strategy in a much wider context, the DES recognises that all stakeholders, including the entire DES and its various support services, have a role to play in achieving ICT integration. The Strategy's authors recognise that ICT integration needs to be part of a wider modernisation agenda within the DES and this point is articulated in the strategy document.

## SO WHAT IS NEW AND DIFFERENT IN THIS STRATEGY?

Firstly, the DES sets out plans to constructively address the issue of ICT integration in this Strategy. In doing so, articulates what is meant by ICT integration so schools, support services, the inspectorate and others are clear as to what is expected of them. The *UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers*<sup>7</sup> (Figure 2, right) will be used as a starting point to help schools better understand how ICT can be used in teaching, learning and assessment. Furthermore, the UNESCO

**TABLE 1: Key Principles informing the Digital Strategy for Schools**

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTOR
<b>1.</b> A Constructivist Pedagogical Orientation underpinning the embedding of ICT in schools.	A constructivist pedagogical orientation supports teachers in effectively using ICT with their students i.e. learners are actively involved in a process of determining meaning and knowledge for themselves.
<b>2.</b> The use of ICT in teaching, learning and assessment can enhance the learning experiences of all students.	ICT plays an important role in supporting inclusion and diversity for all learners by enhancing learning opportunities for all students.
<b>3.</b> The use of ICT in teaching, learning and assessment is embedded in school curricula, DES policies and teacher education.	The DES and its agencies will play a proactive role in implementing the Digital Strategy for Schools.
<b>4.</b> ICT is used in an ethical and responsible way.	Schools and the DES enable all users to employ ICT in an ethical and safe way.
<b>5.</b> ICT Planning is required to ensure ICT integration in teaching, learning and Assessment.	All levels of the education system are engaged in inclusive planning for the effective integration of ICT.

<sup>6</sup> Students Computers and Learning, [www.oecd.org/education/new-approach-needed-to-deliver-on-technologies-potential-in-schools.html](http://www.oecd.org/education/new-approach-needed-to-deliver-on-technologies-potential-in-schools.html)

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO ICT Competency Framework, [www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/publications-and-communication-materials/publications/full-list/unesco-ict-competency-framework-for-teachers/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/publications-and-communication-materials/publications/full-list/unesco-ict-competency-framework-for-teachers/)



**TABLE 2: Themes and subthemes identified in 2013 ICT Census in Schools**

BROAD THEME	SUBTHEME
<b>Theme 1</b> Teaching, Learning and Assessment Using ICT	Use of ICT in teaching and learning. Developing 21st century skills Using ICT. Assessment and ICT. Internet safety (critical and ethical use of the internet) Digital content for schools. Inclusion.
<b>Theme 2</b> Teachers' Professional Learning	Specifying teacher professional knowledge. Supporting teacher professional learning.
<b>Theme 3</b> Leadership, Research and Policy	School leadership, planning and research as a driver of policy
<b>Theme 4</b> ICT Infrastructure	Internet connectivity. Access to computing devices and other technologies. Technical support and maintenance. Purchasing and procurement.

At the Strategy launch, a 17-year-old student, Harry McCann from Scoil Mhuire Community School Clane, spoke of how digital technology is a part of his life outside of school but he is still restricted from using these powerful tools to support his learning in school.

Digital technology is all around us and it is transforming how we live and how we work, yet all too often, it is not being actively used in schools. The OECD and others have spoken about the potential of ICT to deliver great results for education, and this Strategy was created to provide the right environment for this to happen.

Unlike previous ICT-focused policy papers and strategies, the Digital Strategy for Schools does not lead with headlines about how much funding schools will receive but it sets out a plan to bring about real change in our education system.

#### THE UNESCO ICT COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHERS

	TECHNOLOGY LITERACY	KNOWLEDGE DEEPENING	KNOWLEDGE CREATION
UNDERSTANDING ICT IN EDUCATION	Policy awareness	Policy understanding	Policy innovation
CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT	Basic knowledge	Knowledge application	Knowledge society skills
PEDAGOGY	Integrate technology	Complex problem solving	Self management
ICT	Basic tools	Complex tools	Pervasive tools
ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION	Standard classroom	Collaborative groups	Learning organizations
TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	Digital literacy	Manage and guide	Teacher as model learner

At present, there are multiple changes taking place in the Irish education system and the Strategy's thesis encompasses this. This Strategy is embedded within the Department's modernisation programme and it has been carefully considered and endorsed by senior management.

To this end, ICT should no longer be viewed as the responsibility of one unit or one section – as per previous strategies – now all in DES, from Secretary General, down have a responsibility to achieve full ICT integration.

#### FINAL WORD

The Digital Strategy for Schools maps out a path for ICT integration for the next five years. Ultimately, it is only a set of words on paper and the real test will be in how well the Strategy is implemented. Successful Strategy implementation will require leadership from all in the education system.

We should consider the young children who today are in Junior Infants and the world they will enter when they are Sixth Year students, 14 or 15 years down the line. What tools they will be using to support their learning and how can we prepare them to succeed in the world beyond school?

**Figure 2: The UNESCO ICT Competency Framework**

framework will assist those involved in designing and implementing teacher professional development programmes at each stage of the continuum of teacher education, i.e. initial teacher education, induction and continuous professional learning.

The Strategy's authors recognise that ICT integration is complex and takes time. It's clear that the system needs to develop the capacity and capability of all teachers to achieve

full ICT integration over time. Schools will be required to support teachers in considering how ICT can support teaching, learning and assessment in their classrooms. It is no longer enough for one or two teachers in a school to consider this issue but now all teachers must consider how best to use ICT. The integration of ICT into teaching, learning and assessment practices is therefore a key activity for all teachers in a modern, high-quality 21st century education system.



Minister Jan O'Sullivan being interviewed at the launch on Twitter by students from Mercy Secondary School in Inchicore, Dublin

"The Digital Strategy for Schools maps out a path for ICT integration for the next five years. Ultimately, it is only a set of words on paper and the real test will be in how well the Strategy is implemented. Successful Strategy implementation will require leadership from all in the education system."

We should also consider how to equip the teachers and school leaders who will work with these students so they can achieve meaningful ICT integration?

Schools require funding to support ICT integration and at the launch, Minister O'Sullivan announced a significant capital allocation of €210m over the next five years. From 2016, schools will receive an annual funding allocation for technology which will allow them to plan and integrate ICT in a more strategic way than before. The Minister has committed €30m for ICT school grants in 2016, rising to €50m per annum towards the end

of the strategy. The Department has committed to further investment in schools broadband and teacher CPD.

Let the next phase in Irish schools be the enhancement of our teaching, learning and assessment practices through full ICT integration and anchored and funded support systems. The *Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020: Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Assessment* can be accessed online at: [www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Digital-Strategy-for-Schools-2015-2020.pdf](http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Digital-Strategy-for-Schools-2015-2020.pdf)

*Dr Michael Hallissy is a founding partner with H2 Learning [www.h2.ie](http://www.h2.ie).*

*h2.ie. He has worked with a range of organisations such as The World Bank, Microsoft, Intel, the National University of Ireland, various HE institutions and others on ICT initiatives. With Hibernia College, Michael helped establish and initially directed the online Masters of Arts in Teaching and Learning (MATL) programme and still teaches on this course. Much of Michael's work is focused on the creative use of ICT in teaching and learning – particularly in using ICT in a constructivist manner. Michael completed his doctorate with the Institute of Education (IOE) in London where his research focused on the professionalism issues associated with online tutors. More recently Michael has worked on the Digital Strategy for Schools with the DES taking a lead role in the drafting of the document text. He has also led the National University of Ireland's feasibility study on MOOCs, and he is currently helping SOLAS to develop a new strategy for Technology Enhanced Learning in the Further Education and Training sector in Ireland.*

# Book Review of "Transition Year in Action"

By Gerry Jeffers



Review by Dr Orla McCormack, Lecturer in Education, Department of Education and Professional Studies, University of Limerick.

**Y**ou know, it will never catch on, this Transition Year thing”, or so believed a teacher attending a workshop on Transition Year (TY) in the mid-1990s (Jeffers, 2015, p.1). The range of TY activities and initiatives, as well as the positive views of teachers and students presented within the book “Transition Year in Action” (Jeffers, 2015), highlights the inaccuracies of this particular teacher’s view.

With his extensive experience in the area of TY, Gerry Jeffers is well-positioned to provide the in-depth exploration of the programme that this book delivers. Gerry’s long-term engagement with TY is reflected in the number of schools, teachers and students throughout the country who were willing to share their experiences and provide their perspectives on TY. The book places a strong emphasis on student and teacher voice and provides a number of examples of best practice currently being implemented in Irish schools. One cannot help but be impressed by the range of different TY activities and initiatives explored within the book. This ranges from more common aspects of TY relating to Work Experience and Community Care, to perhaps more unique innovations relating to, for example, CAST Film Festival and Development Education. Consisting of thirty-two chapters, it isn’t feasible within this short review to do justice to the diverse range of

topics covered. The impressive array of subjects include such areas as the use of portfolios in assessing students’ work, the challenges of teaching mathematics in TY, mini-companies, drama & music, the importance of the school context and ways of gaining parents’ perspective on the programme.

“One cannot help but be impressed by the range of different TY activities and initiatives explored within the book.

The views presented by teachers, students and other relevant personnel are frequently inspirational. While the book doesn’t shy away from concerns and tensions relating to TY, it provides an in-depth snapshot of the positive and inspiring work conducted by teachers, students and others throughout the country. The reader will frequently hear about teachers’ commitment to ensuring their students have a positive experience of TY as well as students developing a strong sense of intrinsic motivation and passion for the particular work they are doing. The focus on the positive, in the current climate, is refreshing! While not dominated by literature, the book effectively draws on supportive

literature (such as the work of Nell Noddings) in an accessible manner to justify aspects of TY and to provide a rationale for the different approaches employed. Acknowledging my initial reservations regarding the order of the chapters, the structure allows the reader to move between chapters in whatever order they wish. One would not have to read the chapters in the assigned order to gain an in-depth understanding of TY, but could, if they so wish, identify the chapters of most interest to them. The adopted structure perhaps reflects the desire to present “snapshots of TY” (p.6), which the book achieves.

Any school new to TY, those considering introducing it or schools wishing to revitalise their existing TY programme, would benefit from this book – as would any external organisation involved in the delivery of the programme. With its focus on best practice, TY co-ordinators and school principals would gain many new, supportive and helpful ideas from reading this particular piece of work, even if that is merely affirmation of their current practice. This resource could also be of benefit to parents who are frequently, as the book explores, provided with minimum information about the programme. I, for one, will be using the book with pre-service teachers in the hope that they can, in their future careers, continue the inspirational work presented within it!



# Successful Partnership between Coláiste na Carraige and Foróige Youth Entrepreneurship NFTE Programme Sees Donegal Teenagers Win European Youth Entrepreneurship Award in Budapest

Five teenage entrepreneurs from Donegal who are students at Coláiste na Carraige in Carrick have received the European Youth Entrepreneur of the Year Award at a ceremony in Budapest for their business, 'Milseog na Mara'. They produce a dessert range featuring locally-sourced Carrageen Moss seaweed as the main ingredient. Before reaching the European Final, the young people had already scooped the Youth Entrepreneur of the Year Award in Ireland, organised by Foróige. They have also had a segment on RTÉ Nationwide in recent weeks. The students, Mary Kate Carr, Aimée Byrne, Rebecca McShane, Paddy McShane and Ronan O'Hare from the Glencolmcille area are all graduates of the Foróige Youth Entrepreneurship programme in which they participated as part of their Transition Year curriculum.

*"Our idea came to us when I got sick and my family made me a cold remedy using Carrageen Moss. Not only*

*"Coláiste na Carraige, is one of several operating the Foróige Youth Entrepreneurship programme, NFTE (Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship), which runs from September to May every year."*

*did I get over the cold quickly, but I realised this jelly like substance could be used in alternative ways to make chilled deserts and jellies,"* said Mary Kate. Market research carried out by the group found that the only other Carrageen Moss product available was dried seaweed and they realised that there was a gap in the market for their products. They now sell their jellies and mousses at country markets. *"We realised that our target market could be segmented into people who have*

*a keen interest in health-food and unique, quirky artisan products,"* she continued. The young business people used their Facebook page and Twitter account to generate awareness of their company and it wasn't long before they started trending on Twitter. They are now hoping to expand their business. *"Our product has a huge potential for development as it's so versatile. We are currently looking at healthy ice lollies for children further down the line,"* added Mary Kate.

Their school, Coláiste na Carraige, is one of several operating the Foróige Youth Entrepreneurship programme, NFTE (Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship), which runs from September to May every year. On average, 1,500 participants from low-income communities set up 600 businesses as a result of their participation in the programme, and generate a collective turnover of €250,000 per annum. Teachers attend an intensive training programme

called NFTE University which equips them with the skills and resources to successfully deliver the programme to their students. The programme explores all aspects of starting and successfully running a business and is delivered to young people from 12 to 18 years of age through schools and youth centres throughout Ireland. Each company receives a small seed-grant to get started. They learn about entrepreneurship, exploring business opportunities, market research and product development, working out costs, marketing and selling to customers, and corporate social responsibility.

Research carried out by NFTE among 3,600 participants found that 70% of all participants have found a job, either as an employee or an entrepreneur. The survey also shows that each NFTE entrepreneur in turn employs an average of 3.5 people. The NFTE programme was founded by US businessman Steve Mariotti in New York in 1987 to prevent at-risk young people from 'dropping out' of the education system.

Principal of Coláiste na Carraige, Pádraig O'Léime said, "Over the past 6 years, Coláiste na Carraige have developed very strong links with the local Foróige group. When the school commenced its Transition Year Programme in 2006, one of the key elements was a Cross Border-funded project called the KEY Programme. When the funding for this dried up, there was a gap in the programme and working with Foróige has more than filled this gap. Initially, Ms Zia McClean came to work with the Transition Year students after school. After that first year, the NFTE programme was incorporated into the school-day curriculum.

*The programme became the vehicle for our students to gain an array of business skills, including research, communication, accounting, presentation etc. Under the guidance and advice of Zia, the students worked hard to develop the product. They gathered the seaweed, cooked it, trialled different flavours, sourced equipment, contacted various advisers regarding food health and safety and*



Photo taken in Colaiste na Carraige prior to Leaving for Budapest. Left to right: Ronan O'Hare, Mary Kate Carr, Rebecca Mc Shane, Aimee Byrne, Paddy McShane

*"The programme became the vehicle for our students to gain an array of business skills, including research, communication, accounting, presentation etc. Under the guidance and advice of Zia, the students worked hard to develop the product."*

*brought their product to markets and fairs. After months of work they settled on four products, three flavoured jellies, honey, strawberry and blueberry. They also produced a chocolate mousse. They each took on a different aspect of the business, production, marketing, using social media etc.*

*Their success at local and All-Ireland level led to appearances on The John Creedon television programme during summer 2015 and prior to the European competition in Budapest, they featured on 'Nationwide' with Eileen Magnier.*

*In Budapest, they competed with projects from nine other European countries, including Great Britain, Germany, Austria and Holland. They were highly-commended for the use of natural resources, the simplicity of the idea, their hard work in bringing the idea to fruition, their use of social media and the professionalism with which they presented the project.*

*As Principal of Colaiste na Carraige, I am in no doubt about the significant*

*role that Foróige and the NFTE project played in the success of the team. I hasten to add that with or without the success, I am delighted to have Foróige involved in our Transition Year Programme. The programme helps not only with the skills already mentioned but also with self-esteem and self-confidence. Two years ago Foróige carried out a very successful Leadership Programme, the fruits of which are still being enjoyed in the school today. This year the "Be Happy, Be Healthy" Programme is being explored. I look forward to seeing what comes out of this endeavour.*

*I also would like to thank Foróige at a national level, in particular Mr Sean Campbell, who travelled to Budapest to support our students. This support is invaluable and shows the commitment of Foróige to the students who partake in the various different programmes.*

*Colaiste na Carraige is proud to be a Donegal ETB school and the spirit of entrepreneurship is actively encouraged by both the school and the ETB"*

# Student from CMETB's Largy College Named Overall Winner of **SciFest 2015**

**L**ouis Madden, a 5th year student at Largy College, Clones, has won the overall prize in the Grand Final of Scifest 2015 held in the Marino Institute, Dublin. Scifest, the patron of which is Mr. Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland, is an All-Ireland Science Competition for second level students. It is sponsored by Science Foundation Ireland, Intel and Boston Scientific and was attended by Mr Richard Bruton, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. This year, students from over 250 schools from both North and South of the Border competed at Regional competitions hosted by fourteen Institutes of Technology and Saint Mary's College Derry for one of the fifteen Grand Final places.

Louis' project "*Bringing Genetics to the Masses, The Next Step in Genetic Research*", which featured on the RTE Six-One News, was based upon successfully conducting genetic testing using apparatus which the student had built himself. Such commercially available equipment normally costs in the region of €10,000 to €20,000, however Louis built his equipment using new and recycled components for €150.

Louis, who earlier in the year finished in the top three in Europe, the Middle East and Africa in the Pure Sciences section of the global Google Science Fair 2015, will now receive further international acclaim as his success has secured an all-expenses trip to Phoenix, Arizona, USA, to the prestigious Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in May 2016, where over 1700 projects from around



Professor Mark Ferguson, Director General Science Foundation Ireland and Chief Scientific Advisor to the Government presenting the Grand Award to Louis Madden and the Teacher of Excellence Award to Ms. Sharon Magennis

"'Bringing Genetics to the Masses, The Next Step in Genetic Research', which featured on the RTE Six-One News, was based upon successfully conducting genetic testing using apparatus which the student had built himself."

the world will compete for four million dollars of scholarship funding.

Commenting after his success, an overjoyed Louis thanked his mentor Ms Sharon Magennis, Principal of Largy College, who was in attendance at the

Grand Final to accept a beautiful cut glass Excellence award. Louis went on to say that he was looking forward to continuing his studies towards his Leaving Certificate in 2017 and to further developing his project through the study of Engineering and Biology.



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# Further Education Teachers and Management, North and South, Jointly Lead the Way in International Peer Learning and Sharing Initiative



By Miriam O'Donoghue, Deputy Director, CDETB Curriculum Development Unit

## INTRODUCTION

More than 90 educators from City of Dublin Education and Training Board and Belfast Metropolitan College came together recently for a “Multiplier Event” to disseminate and critique the work that they have been doing together over the past year, to help to recognise the importance of informal peer

learning and sharing as a legitimate and valuable form of continuing professional development for teachers and managers.

The Multiplier Event was timely as the Teaching Council engages in a consultation process with teachers to learn about their experiences of

professional learning to help inform a national framework for teachers’ learning.

Participants were joined at this event by Mr Damien English, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills, Ms Carmel Kearns, Education Officer with the Teaching

Council, and Ms Jacinta Stewart, Chief Executive, City of Dublin ETB.

## PROMOTING ACCREDITATION OF LEARNING (PAL)

PAL is an Erasmus+ Key Action 2 project (2014-2016). It is a professional development model designed to help to recognise and reward the informal learning of professionals working in education. The model's key aim is to promote and strengthen peer-to-peer learning and sharing amongst teachers and management in VET schools, colleges and centres, and to create awareness of the value of this form of professional development. Much informal learning takes place every day in schools, colleges and centres through the sharing of ideas, resources, expertise and strategies with others. The act of sharing or learning from others often goes unnoticed and unrecognised and in many cases, individuals are not hugely aware of the value of the contribution they are making or the potential that they have to support the professional development of others.

PAL recognises that vast experience already exists amongst teachers and managers within educational institutions and that it is not always necessary to seek expertise from outside an organisation to facilitate CPD sessions for staff. Multifarious approaches can be used to support professional sharing of knowledge, skills, practice and experience amongst colleagues. Through a PAL system of accreditation the peer learning and sharing that teachers and management

engage in has the opportunity to be recorded, acknowledged, appreciated, reflected on, recognized and rewarded internally.

## THE PAL TOOLKIT

The PAL Toolkit focuses on process and provides step-by-step guidelines for a wide range of methodologies that help to structure and facilitate CPD sessions where the key purpose is to create an environment where staff can share and learn from each other. Each methodology is presented under the following headings:

- Description of the methodology
- Advance planning
- Number of participants
- Room set-up
- Suggested timing
- Implementation
- Useful links.

## PAL TOOLKIT METHODOLOGIES TO DATE INCLUDE:

- Café Style Workshop
- Twos and Fours
- Explain, Demonstrate, Imitate, Practice (EDIP)
- Professional Resource Gallery / Exhibition
- Show and Tell
- Lightning Talk
- PechaKucha
- Speed Geeking
- Shadowing
- Work-based learning (Field trips, Industry visits, Externships)
- Shared Resource Board
- Fish Bowl
- Benchmarking

- Carousel Brainstorm
- Professional Book Club
- Peer Observation
- Learning Walks
- Action Learning Sets
- Knowledge Hubs
- Communities of Practice
- 321 Discussion
- Think Tank
- Blogging

## PILOTING OF THE PAL TOOLKIT

Over the last six months, the PAL Toolkit has been piloted extensively by all partners. Close to 300 teachers and managers in CDETb have been involved in trying out different methodologies from the toolkit and the feedback has been very positive. Methodologies continue to be added to the toolkit and piloting continues. Two further drafts of the toolkit will be developed before the final publishing of the toolkit in June 2016.

## PAL TOOLKIT FEEDBACK

**Fish Bowl** This was very powerful. While I would acknowledge that the material was strong and powerful, my sense is that the method would be very engaging for a vast number of topics.

**Show and Tell** There was a good buzz in the room throughout and a good level of interest. There was good discussion at the end and some teachers made arrangements to contact each other after the session to find out more. Another session using this methodology was requested.

**Resource Board** It is a very explicit way for participants to contribute to the workshop, thus enhancing their sense of ownership over the whole day.

## PAL TOOLS

The PAL partners have developed:

- A PAL Toolkit of strategies and methodologies to support the ongoing process of sharing and learning from professional experiences
- A PAL Framework outlining the process of recognising, recording and rewarding informal professional learning activities and achievements
- A PAL Tracking Tool to help individuals record their professional learning
- A PAL Self-evaluation Template to support reflection on peer learning and sharing.





**Above left:** Left to Right: John Hogan, International Support CDETb, Miriam O'Donoghue, Deputy Director, CDETb Curriculum Development Unit, Damien English TD, Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills, Ms Jacinta Stewart, CE at City of Dublin ETB. **Above right:** Participants attending the PAL Multiplier Event

## CHAMPIONS OF LEARNING AND SHARING

By participating in the PAL Model of professional development a school, college or centre is saying that it recognizes the validity and value of informal learning and sharing as a legitimate form of continuing professional development and is prepared to accredit this, to recognize this, by awarding the status of PAL Learning Champion to individuals who meet specific criteria as outlined by the PAL Model of professional development and the PAL framework.

For example, in order to be recognised as a PAL Learning Champion, a staff member needs to attend an induction session facilitated by their own organisation and engage in a range of peer learning and sharing activities during the academic year to earn credits (PAL Points). The current requirement is 30 PAL Points, however this will be reviewed as part of the piloting process. The emphasis throughout is on informal learning and sharing activities rather than formal professional development which is typically funded, formally organised and /or certified externally. Ideas on different methods of sharing can be found in the PAL Toolkit. Potential Learning Champions track their learning and sharing activities on the PAL tracking tool and when the required number of PAL points have been achieved, they submit their PAL tracker

"Close to 300 teachers and managers in CDETb have been involved in trying out different methodologies from the toolkit and the feedback has been very positive. Methodologies continue to be added to the toolkit and piloting continues."

and completed self-reflection template for review. Learning Champion status is then awarded and recognised by the organisation through a celebratory event and PAL Certification.

The next phase of the PAL project (November 2015 – May 2016) is focussed on piloting the PAL framework and tracking process with teachers and managers who are interested in working towards Champion status. Following this, each partner will review the threshold of PAL points required for Learning Champion status, the minimum/maximum time frame required, and the length of time that the status of Learning Champion will be valid for before the cycle needs to begin again. It is hoped that partners will then start to integrate the framework into their existing staff development processes and timescales

as appropriate.

## MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PAL

Check out the protect website [www.palcpd.eu](http://www.palcpd.eu) or contact the CDETb PAL project team: John Hogan; [hoganCPDservices@eircom.net](mailto:hoganCPDservices@eircom.net). Miriam ODonoghue [miriam.odonoghue@cdu.cdetsb.ie](mailto:miriam.odonoghue@cdu.cdetsb.ie)

## PAL PROJECT PARTNERS:

Belfast Metropolitan College Northern Ireland  
City of Dublin Education and Training Board Ireland  
Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) Lithuania  
Kodolanyi Janos Fiskola (KJF) Hungary  
University of Humanities and Economics Poland

By participating in the PAL Model of professional development, we in CDETb are saying that we recognize the value of informal learning and sharing as a legitimate form of continuing professional development for our staff and we look forward to celebrating this later in the academic year by awarding the status of PAL Learning Champion to the many teachers in CDETb who gain PAL points through peer learning and sharing activities across the organisation Jacinta Stewart, Chief Executive, City of Dublin ETB.





# Standing Ovation for CMETB Musical Extravaganza

**C**avan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB) recently hosted its second

**Annual Secondary Schools Choral Festival** in the Garage Theatre located on Monaghan Education Campus. This thrilling musical event which involved over 350 secondary level students from across Cavan and Monaghan, eleven music teachers and nine schools, played to a full house and demonstrated the tremendous talent of young people around across the two counties.

The dedicated music teachers who collaborated to create this event included: Eilish Brennan, Castleblayney College, Caroline Duffy, St Louis Convent School, Monaghan, Ann-Marie Fox, Inver College, Carrickmacross, Avril Goldrick, Virginia College, Nuala Greenwood

& Séan McCague, Coláiste Oiriall, Monaghan, Cathy Kirke and Catherine Mulhern, St. Macartan's College, Monaghan, Cormac McCann, St. Bricin's College, Belturbet, Anita McDonald, Ballybay Community College and Lynn Sullivan, Largy College, Clones.

National Choral Singing Week in association with Mental Health Ireland takes place in the month of October with events happening right across the country. It's worth mentioning that group singing has been scientifically proven to lower stress, relieve anxiety and release endorphins that will leave you feeling completely rejuvenated which I know is how we all felt after the fantastic performance of our students last week!! said Niamh Smyth, Arts Education Officer for CMETB, commenting after the event.

Last year, CMETB held a public consultation in the Garage Theatre, with artists and teachers who were very passionate and who demanded that Cavan and Monaghan should have a schools choir as part of the holistic development of our students and a fundamental element of arts education in our schools across the two counties. Niamh Smyth said, Following that very vocal and enthusiastic plea from teachers, and many meetings later, here we are on our second Choral Festival...19 schools, 22 teachers and almost 1,000 students over the two festivals have been given the opportunity to experience the richness of the performing arts and a new understanding that music matters. It's been a phenomenal success and one we can build on.



Students from Inver College in Carrickmacross, Jessica Mc Mahon and Caolan Brady performing 'Style' and 'Blank Space'

# GRETB at Launch of National Youth Strategy



"One-third of Ireland's population is under the age of 25, with young people between the ages of 10 – 24 representing 18.3% of the total population of 4.59 million. The National Youth Strategy has a particular focus on young people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, the poorest outcomes."

Left to right: Minister James Reilly, T.D., Keagan Forde, Michael Glynn, Dylan Crean and Evan Forde, at the launch of the National Youth Strategy in Bluebell Community Centre, Dublin.

**T**he Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr James Reilly TD, launched Ireland's first National Youth Strategy 2015-2020 in the Bluebell Youth and Community Project in Dublin last week. Twelve students from GRETB performed at the launch: EVØKE from St Brigid's College, Loughrea, (Keagan Forde, Evan Forde, Dylan Crean and Michael Glynn) and Merlin College Choral Group (Janet Akintunde, Audrey Oji, Chantel Ojedrian, Kinga Neumann, Sylvia Ukwuoma, Teniola Olaleye, Tyrone Ezeogu and Anthony Loye) together with their music teacher, Patricia Hynes.

The National Youth Strategy 2015-

2020 sets out Government's aim and objectives for young people, aged 10 to 24 years, so that they can be active and healthy, achieving their full potential in learning and development, safe and protected from harm, have economic security and opportunity and be connected and contributing to their world.

One-third of Ireland's population is under the age of 25, with young people between the ages of 10 – 24 representing 18.3% of the total population of 4.59 million. The National Youth Strategy has a particular focus on young people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, the poorest outcomes.

The Strategy identifies some fifty priority actions to be delivered by Government departments, state agencies and the voluntary youth services over 2015 to 2017. These actions include issues such as access to online youth mental health services, a National Obesity Policy and Action Plan, opportunities for those young people furthest from the labour market, youth entrepreneurship initiatives in schools and youth work settings and rolling out the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making (2015) so that young people are consulted and have opportunities to have their say and be involved in the decisions that impact on their lives.

# School Profile

## Scoil Chonglais Post-Primary School, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow

### CONTEXT

Operating under the aegis of Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB), the antecedents of Scoil Chonglais in Baltinglass date back to 1904. Current enrolment at the school is 552 students, drawn from a wide catchment area. Incoming first-year students transfer from as many as sixteen primary schools each year. The school provides programmes for Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate, and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme examinations, as well as a single Post-Leaving Certificate Course in Business and Office Technology.

As would be the experience of most post-primary schools, Scoil Chonglais has found it difficult to achieve the goals associated with current educational reform initiatives. As well as striving to achieve the goals associated with our own mission statement and objectives, we must attend to the requirements of national initiatives such as junior cycle reform, literacy and numeracy development, school self-evaluation, health & safety requirements, data protection, and policy development. In such circumstances, our experience is one of increased external expectations coupled with a diminished resource base critical to the successful achievement of these expectations.

While there is ample commentary and evidence on the impact of availability of material resources on educational provision, the core leadership challenge is in shaping the culture of the school. It is this culture that informs practice and influences the experience of both learner and teacher. The challenge of leadership is compounded when education reform is considered an externally-mandated process. The natural response for any semi-autonomous organisation such as a

school is to resist external reform or, at best, to absorb such reforms into the existing culture with the minimum disruption to current practice.

### SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

The School Development Planning (SDP) and School Self-Evaluation (SSE) processes are evident at many levels in the school. It is difficult, however, to coordinate these efforts to achieve both school goals and programme goals. In addition, the frequency with which national policies are developed and disseminated tends to exceed the rate at which initiatives are established in schools. The introduction of the most recent initiative occurs before prior initiatives have been embedded in

current. The result is that programmes have significantly less impact on teaching and learning than intended by designers. An example would be the adoption of Assessment for Learning (AfL) or Instructional Intelligence methodologies. While these are certainly evident in classrooms, it would be an overstatement to claim that they are the prevailing approaches throughout the school. Similarly, the use of ICT in support of teaching and learning has been greatly improved, but teachers still struggle to successfully integrate the use of technology as a learning tool into their planning and delivery.

At Scoil Chonglais, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) guides the school development and improvement process. The SLT (Assistant Principals,

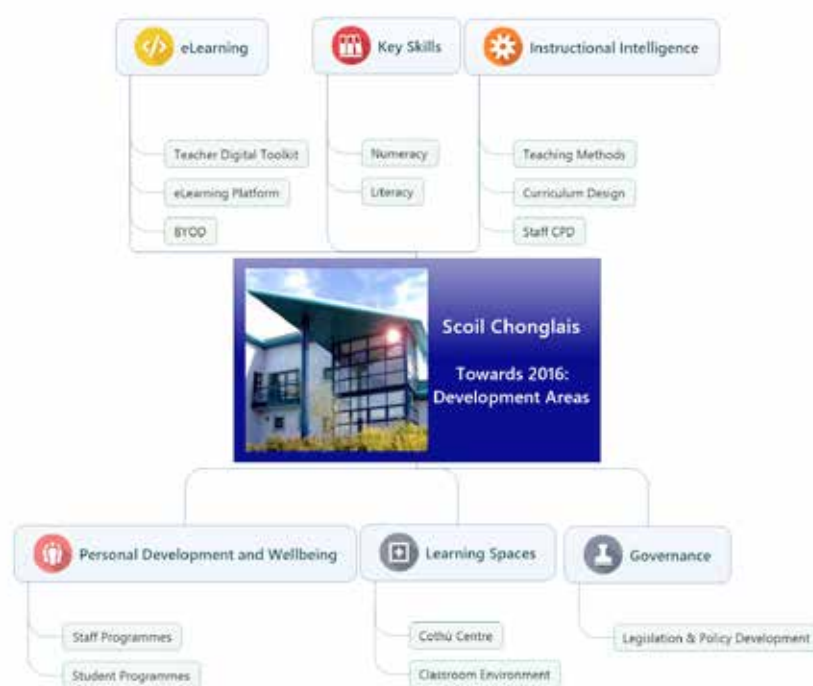
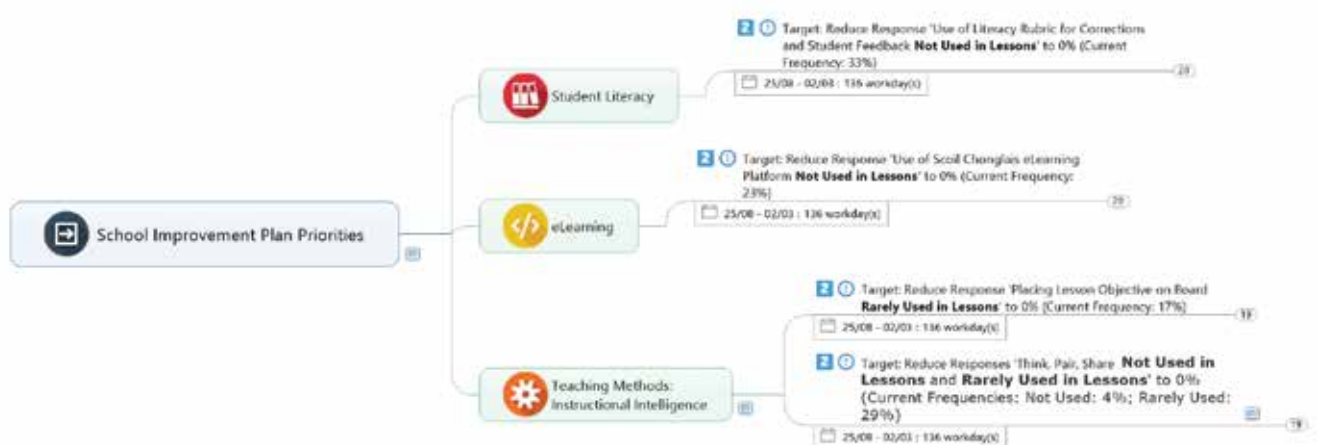


Figure 1: Outline of School Development Planning Areas





**Figure 2: School Development and Improvement Priorities 2015-2016**

Deputy Principal, and Principal) meets regularly to manage the school development/school self-evaluation process. One of the key approaches adopted is to try to incorporate new programmes of reform within initiatives already established in the school. For example, the emphasis on enhanced teaching methodologies identified within the Junior Cycle Reform programme is linked to the school's involvement in the Instructional Leadership ([www.instructionalleadership.ie](http://www.instructionalleadership.ie)) programme. In addition, the Key Skills associated with the Junior Cycle include a capacity to use digital technology to enhance learning. This aspect is incorporated into the school's eLearning Programme.

An approach being explored at the school is the use of project-mapping or mind-mapping software ([www.mindjet.com](http://www.mindjet.com)) to support the SDP/SSE process. The diagram in Figure 1 above is an overview of the main development areas associated with SDP/SEE at Scoil Chonglais. The software

allows each node to link to another project map. For example, the School Improvement Plan priorities for 2015-2016 are shown below in Figure 2.

The use of a planning approach informed by project management is not a solution to all of the challenges of the school improvement process. The model does facilitate the use of a planning tool to capture ideas, refine objectives, communicate goals and track progress over an extended period of time.

### LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

One of the overlooked dimensions of teaching and learning at post-primary learning is the physical environment within which the activity takes place. Classrooms are designed to reflect a predominant teaching methodology which sees student attention directed toward the front of the classroom where whiteboard and teacher dominate. The layout makes the use of collaborative learning methodologies ("Think, Pair,

Share", the use of placemats, frequent group-work, etc.) less likely to be introduced to the lesson.

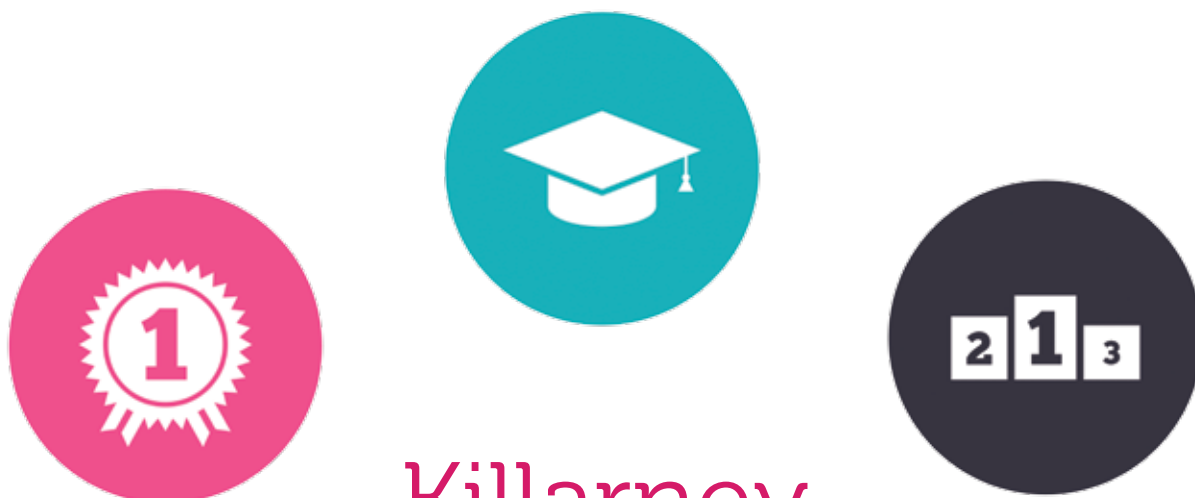
Despite the pressure on accommodation in the school at the moment, one room has been redesigned to encourage the flexible and easy reconfiguration of the learning space. With the support of our Parents' Council, a room at the school (Cothú Centre) has been fitted-out with Steelcase 'Node' Collaborative Chairs. The room can be booked by teachers and the intention is to encourage greater flexibility in the layout of classrooms. As with other initiatives, the impact to date has been modest, but consideration of physical classroom layout is now a point of discussion in the school improvement process. In addition, senior students can be observed making use of the space (See Figure 3 above) and the inclusion of a suite of laptop computers has enhanced the flexibility of the room.

### NEXT STEPS

The areas to be attended to within the SDP/SSE process are numerous and this appears to be the experience of the majority of schools. The examples outlined here can best be described as 'work in progress' showing some promise. More importantly, we are gaining insights into how we might manage the planning and improvement process while still attending to day-to-day priorities of teaching and learning. And if one lesson could be identified to date, it is that you may mandate and measure a change in practice, but meaningful reform requires the cultivation of new thinking.



**Figure 3. Students working in Cothú Centre May 2015**



# Killarney Community College House System

## A Systemic Approach to Prevent Bullying

In 2013, Killarney Community College, a Kerry ETB school, introduced a house system to the college. The purpose of the house system is to encourage full participation in school activities by all students. It enhances pupil-teacher relationships as members of each house work together to gain valuable points. It also plays a key part in the school's anti-bullying strategy, as senior students watch out for younger members. Therefore it supports the school's positive code of behaviour.

The school is divided up into five vertical groups – The Celts, The Titans, The Vikings, The Gaels and The

Spartans – with a house head and an assistant house head leading the group. There are students from all year groups in each house and all teachers and school management are also part of a house. Each house has Junior and Senior Captains who play a vital role in organizing events and liaising with the students in their house. Every house has its own identity with its own name, motto, colour and song.

Other benefits to the House System are that it improves student leadership skills, creates unity and respect, develops friendships between year groups and fosters healthy competition amongst the houses.

students to carve or decorate a pumpkin in order to win points for their houses. An amazing array of carved and decorated pumpkins were produced by the students.

There are up to five whole-school events during the year in which each student can earn points for their house in whole-school activities. At the end of the year, the house with the greatest number of points wins the title, the cup and the prize money, to be spent on a whole-house fun activity. In the past two years, the Vikings have won the House Competition but this year the competition will be fierce for the cup and title!



Two house events have taken place to date. 9th October 2015 saw the first KCC whole school house event kick off: The 5km fun walk/run! In order to gain points for their house, the students had to dress up in their house colours, to walk/run or wear a costume, or for even more points run/walk while wearing fancy dress. On 23rd October 2015, the second house event took place. It was a pumpkin competition which encouraged



# SCOIL AONGHUSA

## CNS Students Make

# SILICON VALLEY Connections!

**S**coil Aonghusa Community National School (CNS) in Mallow, Co Cork, is going global by partnering with an elementary school in Silicon Valley, California. The school is linking with Forest Hill Elementary, San Jose, for a Cultural Exchange". The project will involve teachers and pupils linking with classes in the California school and communicating throughout the year as pen pals and by email and video link via Google Hangouts. The School is preparing pupils for their future and part of this is by broadening their horizons and giving them the chance to learn about another country and culture from their own peers.

Silicon Valley is a technology hub with thousands of technology companies being based there, many of whom also have satellite offices in Ireland. During the Cultural Exchange, Scoil Aonghusa CNS pupils will develop friendships and learn about life for their peers in Silicon Valley, their school, culture and environment.

Principal of Forest Hill Elementary, Denise Khalid, commented, Forest Hill Elementary School is thrilled to be partnering with Scoil Aonghusa CNS. We look forward to building relationships with the students while increasing our knowledge of other cultures, traditions and people in our world. I feel our students would benefit greatly from the experience. I appreciate the opportunity and look forward to learning more about the Mallow school students. The first live video link chat with California classrooms, Google Hangouts and Pizza with American Friends, took place on Friday the 4th of December.



Mrs Mary Hill with her 2nd Grade Class, Forest Hill Elementary.



1st, 2nd, 3rd classes with Principal Mrs O'Riordan.



# Borris Vocational School, 1916 Film Project Til Death Do Us Part



By Deirdre Mooney, Art Teacher, Borris Vocational School, Co. Carlow

*I HEAR AND I FORGET  
I SEE AND I REMEMBER  
I DO AND I UNDERSTAND*

As a trainee teacher, this mantra was chorused to me by much older and much wiser and truly gifted lecturers. It is something that inspires me to this day, in everyday life and in my interactions at the chalk face.

As an Art teacher with a passion for History, I was committed about doing

something to commemorate the 1916 Uprising with my students. I had an idea that I could make a film about it, possibly to encourage the children to ask questions and record their parents and grandparents about their heritage, their experiences of growing up, of being Irish- in an Ireland that today is changing so quickly that strands of tradition co-exist with so many threads of the new in terms of media, multiculturalism and communication.

It is to be encouraged, I think, and for children to question – How did we arrive at this point? What was it like? What sacrifices have been made? Were the people from “long ago” like us? Did they love like we love – did they live as we live? Did they make the right decisions? How have they shaped my experiences of Ireland today? Why are we commemorating 1916? What is a patriot? What is all the fuss about?

*I SEE AND I REMEMBER*

A plan was formulated to bring these strands together.

Working from an art teacher’s perspective, I proposed that to commemorate the 1916 Uprising we would engage in the research delivery and execution of a film to celebrate this anniversary. With input and direction from Kilkenny Young Filmmakers, the Transition Year “Oak” class were engaged in all aspects of creative and technical production whilst exploring and expressing their thoughts about this historical event in visual form. This will form part of a planned 1916 Commemorative Installation Art work. It is envisaged that the film will ultimately be screened on the ceiling of a darkened room. Students will be asked to lie down to view it as a mark of respect to those who sacrificed their life for the freedom of the Irish nation.

*THEN THE MAGIC HAPPENED!  
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT!*

The idea was met by an enthusiastic response from school management, the TY coordinator, school staff,



Photo: Dylan Vaughan

“It is to be encouraged, I think, and for children to question – How did we arrive at this point? What was it like? What sacrifices have been made? Were the people from “long ago” like us? Did they love like we love – did they live as we live? ...”

parents and students. The local community embraced it and support was offered to the Film Art Project from the St Vincent de Paul in Thomastown for film props and costumes, Fr. Bollard and Ann Sheehy Sacristan of Mong Church offered the beautiful churches of the Thomastown Parish and Borris scouts offered their fabulous old historic building which served as Kilmainham Jail and the steps of O'Connell street GPO! The scene was set!

### ACTION!

Entitled *Til Death Do Us Part* the film focusses on the human story of Joseph Plunkett and Grace Gifford. We concentrated on the wedding of Gifford to Plunkett hours before he was shot at Kilmainham Jail in 1916. The story of Gifford and Plunkett became the students' story as they took ownership of the project story and researched aspects of the political climate in 1916 as well as the attire, hair styles and social decorum of the period.

Their role as Irish Volunteers or British Officers came to life as funding of €1000 was secured thanks to their TY Co-ordinator Jacqueline Sheil on application to The Five Nations Education Project. This ensured military costumes could be hired by the Art Department from Nomac Productions in Waterford and facilitated costings for buses from O'Neill's Transport and Kelly's Taxi to shoot on location. This project has

"Entitled *Til Death Do Us Part* the film focusses on the human story of Joseph Plunkett and Grace Gifford. We concentrated on the wedding of Gifford to Plunkett hours before he was shot at Kilmainham Jail in 1916. The story of Gifford and Plunkett became the students' story as they took ownership of the project story and researched aspects of the political climate in 1916 as well as the attire, hair styles and social decorum of the period.

been selected to represent Ireland at the Five Nations Educational Conference in Cardiff later this year, where it will be presented by Ms Sheil, the TY Programme Coordinator.

Music for the film was generously offered by Music Teacher, Ciaran Somers, an accomplished uilleann piper. His compilation of The Banks of the Barrow meanders poignantly throughout the film. Caroline Hanafin, the school secretary, helped to organise shoots on location in Borris and with some costumes for extras. Melissa Kavanagh, History Teacher, helpfully provided Kilmainham Jail Teacher's Pack, where the Gifford/Plunkett story was mentioned. Lessons were re-scheduled by the school's senior managers, John O'Sullivan and Olivia Kennedy, to facilitate the action! Thank you to the school and community who really wove their magic and got behind this Art Installation Film Project.

### I DO AND I UNDERSTAND

#### What did the Students Learn?

The Film Project provided the opportunity for them to work as a team. They learned how to share ideas, express themselves and to listen, and it provided them with the opportunity to take many leadership roles such as Film Director, Art Director and Hair/Make-Up Artist. They experienced all technical aspects of filming, such as sound, lighting and editing, and perhaps they may be inspired to work in this field in the future. This is a student film where they developed their own brand of cine-magic!

This project naturally lends itself to holistic child development and cross circularity. Aspects of Art, History, Irish and Music, as well as oral and written English/Drama/Communication skills, Physics, IT, CSPE, Engineering and Mathematics, were inherently covered as the project progressed.

As mentioned, this project was selected to represent Ireland at the Five Nations Education Conference where the Installation Art Film Project learning outcomes/objectives will be presented.

Indeed, it is the human story, the development of empathy, the study of what it was like to be a citizen of Ireland in 1916, anxious about political unrest, losing loved ones, human sacrifice in the belief of a better tomorrow, that will remain with the students, long after the popcorn is eaten! As one TY student observed, Really, people who lived in Ireland long ago were just the same as us...it could have been me.

The TY Oak students will remember 1916. They did – and they have understood.

## INSTALLATION ART FILM PROJECT LEARNING OUTCOMES/OBJECTIVES

1. To create awareness, understanding and knowledge of what citizenship means
2. To show the historical context and evolution of our state in order to help foster an appreciation of democracy and identity which will encourage active citizenship
3. That students will be better informed about concepts such as democracy, justice, equality, freedom, authority and the rule of law
4. By carrying out this action project, students will develop skills and aptitudes such as communication, initiative, interacting appropriately, team work, critical thinking, analysing information, expressing opinions, negotiating and participating in community action
5. On completion of this action project, teachers and students will have experienced and gained from effective forms of learning: active, interactive, relevant, critical, collaborative and participative
6. Finally, a legacy and lasting visual memory will be left behind as a reminder to all in our school community of the importance of the social and political world we inhabit.

# Official opening of the LCETB Further Education and Training Centre, Kilmallock Road, and the Launch of the new Further Education and Training Strategic Framework

The Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O'Sullivan, officially opened the new Limerick and Clare ETB (LCETB) Further Education and Training Centre, Kilmallock Road in October. Building on a local history of vibrant adult and community education as well as a strong community network, the newly-refurbished centre offers modern, spacious and fully-accessible facilities for adults in Limerick City and County. A wide range of full-time and part-time courses will be offered through programmes such as VTOS, Literacy, Community Education, Youthreach, Back to Education Initiative programmes and LFCE. It is envisaged that the campus will accommodate close to 500 students on a phased basis over the next three years. It has a unique potential to become a hub for community learning and development in the area. It fits within the national SOLAS FET Strategy 2014-2019 to include levels of active inclusion through the provision of high quality, more accessible and flexible education, training and skills development interventions and supports suited to the individual.

The Minister also congratulated the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board on the publication of its new Further Education and Training Strategic Framework 2015-2020. Its vision is that *Quality further education and training will inspire people to realise their personal and professional potential and contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of the region.*

In her speech, the Minister said *Today we are marking two important*



**Left to right:** Paul Patton, EO of Limerick and Clare ETB, Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O'Sullivan TD, Marie Gould, ETBI Further Education and Training (Quality Assurance) Officer and George O'Callaghan, CE of Limerick and Clare ETB.

*milestones for LCETB – the opening of this fantastic education and training centre and the publication of its Strategic Framework for Further Education and Training. It is entirely appropriate that we mark both developments at the same time – delivering quality education requires modern, welcoming facilities, and it also requires a strategic vision. I want to wholeheartedly congratulate LCETB on successfully launching both today.*

*This new Education and Training Centre builds on the long tradition of adult and community education in the area and students will now have access to the latest technology and high quality teaching in a spacious and welcoming campus. I would urge everyone in Limerick to take time to examine the excellent and varied courses that are available here and to consider the benefits of taking a course. I have*

*every confidence that this great new facility will go from strength-to-strength over the coming years. LCETB has a clear and ambitious vision for its future and I would like to commend LCETB for adopting its strategic plan out to 2020. It builds upon a legacy of community engagement and charts an exciting course for the future, a course that everyone in Limerick should be proud of.*

The Strategy is an umbrella framework, which will promote a shared vision across the LCETB

FET service, and guide its FET centres, colleges, programmes and services in the next five years. It sets out four service-wide strategic priorities:

1. Access and Progression
2. Quality Teaching & Learning
3. Stakeholder Engagement
4. Effectiveness & Accountability in Governance & Leadership.

The implementation of this Strategy in the next five years will have a positive impact on the quality and relevance of the LCETB FET provision to meet the needs of the people, communities and employers in Limerick and Clare.

On the day, former VTOS student, Declan O'Neil, spoke about his experience of Adult Education over the years and the positive impact it had on his life. The Minister also presented Gaisce Bronze medals to three Youthreach Leaving Cert students, Mary-Ann Phelan, Molly Moloney and Patrick Hehir. The President's Award is an award for young people for who have set and achieved a demanding challenge in Community involvement, Personal skill, Physical recreation and Adventure journey.



# Louth and Meath ETB Top Scholars Honoured in Prestigious Ceremony

Scholars from all over Louth and Meath converged at Beaufort College in Navan with their proud parents and families to celebrate outstanding achievements in this year's Leaving Certificate. The school hall was festooned, the Beaufort music ensemble and choir were in place and refreshments awaited guests. Engineers, doctors and scientists of the future cut lectures to take their place at the podium and hear splendid commendations.

The annual presentation of Academic Awards for the students from each of the LMETB schools and centres who had achieved the highest academic grades was made by CEO of LMETB, Mr Peter Kierans, and Education and Leadership Officer, Ms Elizabeth Lavery. A very well-attended awards ceremony saw students from both Louth and Meath receive beautiful specially-engraved cut-glass awards marking their achievements.

In all, 38 presentations of were made with students representing LMETB schools and centres. Schools and centres from Louth included Scoil Uí Mhuirí, O'Fiach College, Youthreach Dundalk, VTOS Dundalk, Bush Post-primary, Youthreach Drogheda, VTOS Drogheda and St Oliver's Community College Drogheda.

Schools and centres from Meath included St Fintina's Post-primary, St Peter's College Dunboyne, Coláiste na hInse, Beaufort College, Youthreach Progression Navan, VTOS Navan, Dunshaughlin Community College, Ratoath College, O'Carolan College and St Oliver Post-primary Oldcastle. School Principals made short speeches of commendation for each student. The Principals told how their students attain the highest levels possible and yet retain an all-round balance. They described the contribution the students had made to their schools and how they excelled not only in academics but also

on the sports field, in voluntary activity and as colleagues with their fellow students.

The LMETB Scholar Award was presented to the overall highest achiever in LMETB. Two students, Gavin Maher from Dunshaughlin Community College and Martin Shields from O'Carolan College, Nobber, received the maximum 625 points in their Leaving Certificate.

CEO Peter Kierans who presided over the ceremony complimented the parents, the teachers, the school Principals and most of all the students themselves on their outstanding achievement. He said, Results of this nature can only be achieved by the combination of hard work by students, exceptional teaching skills by teachers, support from family and active and visionary leadership by the outstanding school Principals who now lead the 20 schools of Louth and Meath Education and Training Board.



**Front row** (l to r); Cian McKenna, St. Oliver Post-primary School, Oldcastle, Mark Byrne, VTOS Navan, Karen Smith, St Oliver Post-primary School, Oldcastle, Noaise Sheridan, O'Carolan College, Nobber, Martin Shields, O'Carolan College, Nobber, Gavin Maher, Dunshaughlin Community College, Aleksandra Granatyr, Beaufort College, Navan, Emma McDonnell, Beaufort College, Navan, Sarah Byrne, Youthreach Progression, Christopher Ronan, Dundalk YR. **Middle row** (l to r); Emmeline O'Malley, Ratoath College, Daragh Lafferty, Bush Post-primary School, Thomas Lynch, Coláiste na hInse, AnneMaire Woods, Scoil Uí Mhuirí, Dunleer, Jordan Power, Dunshaughlin Community College, Rujiraporn Ueasukpakdee, O'Fiach College, Dundalk, Kate Hanley, Dunshaughlin Community College, Rachel King, St Oliver's Community College, Drogheda, Luke McDonald, St Oliver's Community College, Drogheda, Sinead Corcoran, O'Fiach College, Dundalk. **Back row** (l to r); Christopher Dignam, Ratoath College, Michael O'Hara, Scoil Uí Mhuirí, Dunleer, Jade Farrell, Coláiste na hInse, Laytown, Fraia O'Toole, Coláiste na hInse, Laytown, Olawasuen Ishola, O'Fiach College, Dundalk.

# Nenagh College Students Travel to China for Cultural Exchange Programme

After a year of studying Chinese language and culture, eight lucky Transition Year students from Nenagh College took the opportunity to travel to China to partake in a 15-day cultural exchange programme. Nenagh College worked closely with UCC Confucius Institute, Irish Institute of Chinese Studies (UCC) and Shanghai University to organise the programme. It provided the students with an opportunity for non-Chinese students in Irish second level schools to visit China and to learn its language and culture. The eight students travelling included Sarah Slattery, Jeremy Kennedy, Jade Fahy, Colin Dillon, Tadhg Fogarty, Aisling Cummins, Emma Carey and Saoirse McGee. Accompanying them on their journey was their teacher, Mr David Cox.

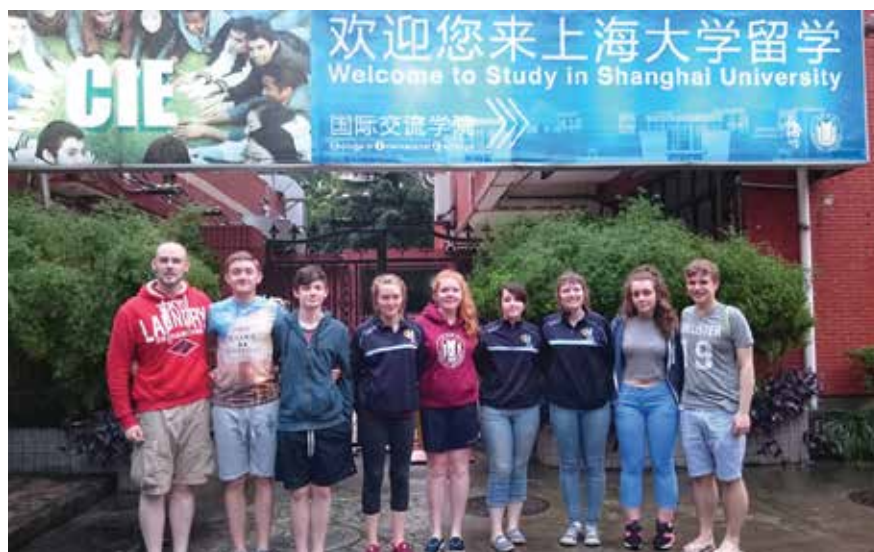
"Students engaged in classroom activities focussing on Chinese language (Mandarin), Chinese writing (Calligraphy) and Chinese History. They were immersed in Chinese culture with classes in martial arts and sightseeing trips around Shanghai which included a river cruise on the famous Huangpu River."

There are thirteen secondary schools, with forty students from Ireland alone participating in the programme. The group departed from Cork airport on 12th June 2015, and embarked on a 15-day learning adventure in Shanghai. Students engaged in classroom activities focussing on Chinese language (Mandarin), Chinese writing (Calligraphy) and Chinese History. They

were immersed in Chinese culture with classes in martial arts and sightseeing trips around Shanghai which included a river cruise on the famous Huangpu River. Shopping is always a key feature of any school trip abroad and Shanghai did not disappoint! Located a mere ten-minute walk from accommodation in Shanghai University, was the renowned Daning International Commerce Plaza. This shopping plaza contains over forty restaurants and hundreds of shops to satisfy every need.

In order to prepare for this venture to China, Nenagh College Transition Year students for the past academic year have completed modules in both Chinese language and culture. Their hard work and dedication culminated in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. The students also participated in the YCT test at the end of the programme. This Chinese Language Proficiency test was developed specifically for non-native speakers to improve their Chinese proficiency.

Nenagh College students with their teacher, Mr David Cox, arriving at Shanghai University. The university has over 2,900 faculty staff which includes 500 full-time professors, 930 associate professors and over 38,000 students.



Nenagh College students with their teacher, Mr. David Cox arriving at Shanghai University. The university has over 2,900 faculty staff which includes 500 full-time professors, 930 associate professors and over 38,000 students.

# Enniscorthy Youthreach Winners of the X-Hale Youth Awards Film Competition 2015

The Annual Irish Cancer Society Annual X-Hale Awards took place on Thursday, 2nd July, 2015, in The Light House Cinema in Smithfield, Dublin 7, with Enniscorthy Youthreach taking two top Awards. They won the overall at Senior Level and also the Award for most hits on YouTube, with over 72,000 views.

There were 41 entries in this year's competition from all over the country.

The Irish Cancer Society through the X-Hale Youth Awards want Youth Organisations to play their part in helping to prevent young people in our community from starting to smoke.

Currently in Ireland about 12% of school-aged young people are reported to smoke with rates as high as 25% of 15/17-year-old girls in some areas.

script was written, the sets made and the overall production took place and it depicts a young girl being pressurised into smoking. This was achieved by introducing some similar scenes from horror movies acted out by the cast from Youthreach.

This video was put on YouTube by the Irish Cancer Society, and within hours it went viral.

The message being portrayed by this short film is to prevent young people from starting to smoke.

Enniscorthy Youthreach students, with assistance of their teacher, Mr Hugh John Dunne, set about creating an anti-smoking video which they entered into the competition. The

Digital Media was introduced as an extra-curricular Module at Enniscorthy Youthreach in 2014/2015. The students had to carry out a lot of research regarding the topic and then make sure they had the correct equipment. The checklist included script, rehearsals, camera, microphones, locations, props and make-up.



L to r: Kevin O'Hagan, Cancer Prevention Manager, Irish Cancer Society, Hugh Dunne, Teacher at Enniscorthy Youthreach, students at Enniscorthy Youthreach: Dillon Butler, Kayleigh Foley, Rebecca Kavanagh, Zoe Kelly, Chris Flynn and John McCormack, Chief Executive Officer, Irish Cancer Society.

## Kerry ETB Head Office Opening at Centrepont

Kerry Education and Training Board was delighted to welcome the Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O'Sullivan TD, to officially open Kerry Education and Training Board's new Head Office at Centrepont, John Joe Sheehy Road, Tralee in October.

On July 1st 2013, Kerry Education and Training Board was established, replacing Kerry Education Service (the VEC in Kerry). This was a momentous occasion for the people of Kerry who have been served by both the Town and County VEC, latterly KES, since 1930. The new Education and Training Board retained all of its previous functionality and was entrusted with the additional responsibility for the provision of training programmes and opportunities for learners in Kerry. In October 2013, SOLAS was established and on January 1st 2014, the former FÁS Training Centre in Monavalley, Tralee, was integrated into this new structure when

it became the Kerry ETB Training Centre.

With the increased levels of functionality came the demand for additional office accommodation. In June 2015, Kerry Education and Training Board relocated to its new Head Office on John Joe Sheehy Road, Tralee, which accommodates all of the ETB's Administration Departments, the Kerry Adult Guidance and Information Service (KAGS), part of the Kerry ETB Training Centre course recruitment office and provides direct access to the local metropolitan area network.

The new office location is very accessible to the public with the offices located directly opposite the Tralee



Minister Jan O'Sullivan, cuts the ribbon at the new Kerry Education and Training Board offices at the Centrepont building on the John Joe Sheehy road.

Bus and Train Station. This central location is beneficial in helping to raise the profile of the ETB as a new organisation.

The Kerry ETB Board members and staff look forward to the continued development and expansion of the scheme in the years ahead from its new head office location.



# Minister Turns the Sod for Major New Education and Training Campus in Carlow

On 4 November 2015, the Minister for Education, Jan O'Sullivan TD, performed the 'Turning the sod' ceremony for the advance works preceding the start of a major educational building project in Carlow town.



Minister O'Sullivan turning the sod for KCETB's new Carlow Campus.

When the Public Private Partnership (PPP) building project is completed in 2017, the **Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB) Carlow Campus** will include

- a new post-primary school for 1000 pupils
- a new 1000-place facility for Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training
- a sports hall and fitness suites to serve the students in both post-primary school and FET college.

This is a huge project costing around €5-30 million, one of a number of new schools being built for the Department of Education and Skills under public-private partnership in 2016.

The site for the KCETB Carlow Campus is at Mortarstown, on the Kilkenny Road. The Minister turned the sod

for the advance works which have started this week, to include building a roundabout, providing a footpath, lighting and signage for the new campus. The contractor for the advance works is SIAC.

The contractor for the main building works will be appointed later this year; building will start in Spring 2016, and will be completed by September 2017.

This important development represents very positive collaboration between the ETB and IT Carlow: the new KCETB Carlow Campus is to be built on a site which IT Carlow is transferring to the ETB in exchange for the old ETB school building. This exchange works well for both IT Carlow and KCETB – it enables the IT to expand its teaching facilities on its main campus, while the ETB gains the benefit of a larger site to accommodate its new multi-level campus and create a new education and training hub for the Carlow area.

In arriving at a decision to make this major investment in Carlow town, the Department of Education and Skills looked at the population growth in the area and determined that there would be a need for an extra 800 places at post-primary level by 2018-20. It was decided to expand the ETB school to cater for the increase in student numbers. This is a very significant development for the school and the ETB, based on their past record and

their proven capacity to meet the needs of wide range of students. In coming to this decision, the Department considered the school's excellent inspection and whole-school evaluation reports and its performance on school completion and other measures.

The new post-primary school for Carlow gives a unique opportunity for Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board to build on the 90-year legacy of Carlow Vocational School and to create a state of the art school for the 21st century.

The new school is to be named Tyndall College, to honour the world-renowned Carlow-born scientist, John Tyndall, who was responsible in the nineteenth century for (among other things) being the first to describe the greenhouse effect and to discover why the sky appears blue.

By September 2017, Carlow will have two brand new state-of-the-art modern buildings, with first-class education and training facilities, offering the very best environment for high-quality teaching and learning. Tyndall College will have an inclusive ethos, offering a wide range of subject options, catering for all students' interests and abilities, respecting the cultural and religious backgrounds of all families, and educating their children together in a caring atmosphere that encourages everyone to reach their full potential.

KCETB will shortly take over the training functions for counties Carlow and Kilkenny that were formerly undertaken by FÁS. The new building for Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training will serve as a hub for Further Education and Training (FET) in Carlow, offering high-quality full-time and part-time programmes that are directly linked to opportunities in the labour market.

# Education and Training Boards (ETBs) in Ireland



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