

ANNUAL
REPORT

20
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Education and Training
Boards Ireland
*Boird Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Éireann*





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The ETBI Annual Report 2025 gives the reader an overview of its initiatives and achievements over the course of the last 12 months.

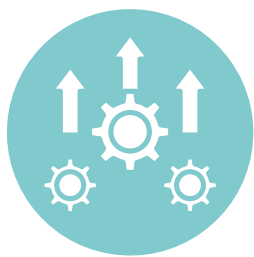
This report also explores the collaboration that took place between ETBI, the 16 member ETBs and other stakeholders, all while looking to the future.

Our sector goals:



1

**Provide strong
representation**



2

**Advance
excellence in
education,
training and
youthwork**



3

**Enhance
provision of
support
services to
ETBs**



4

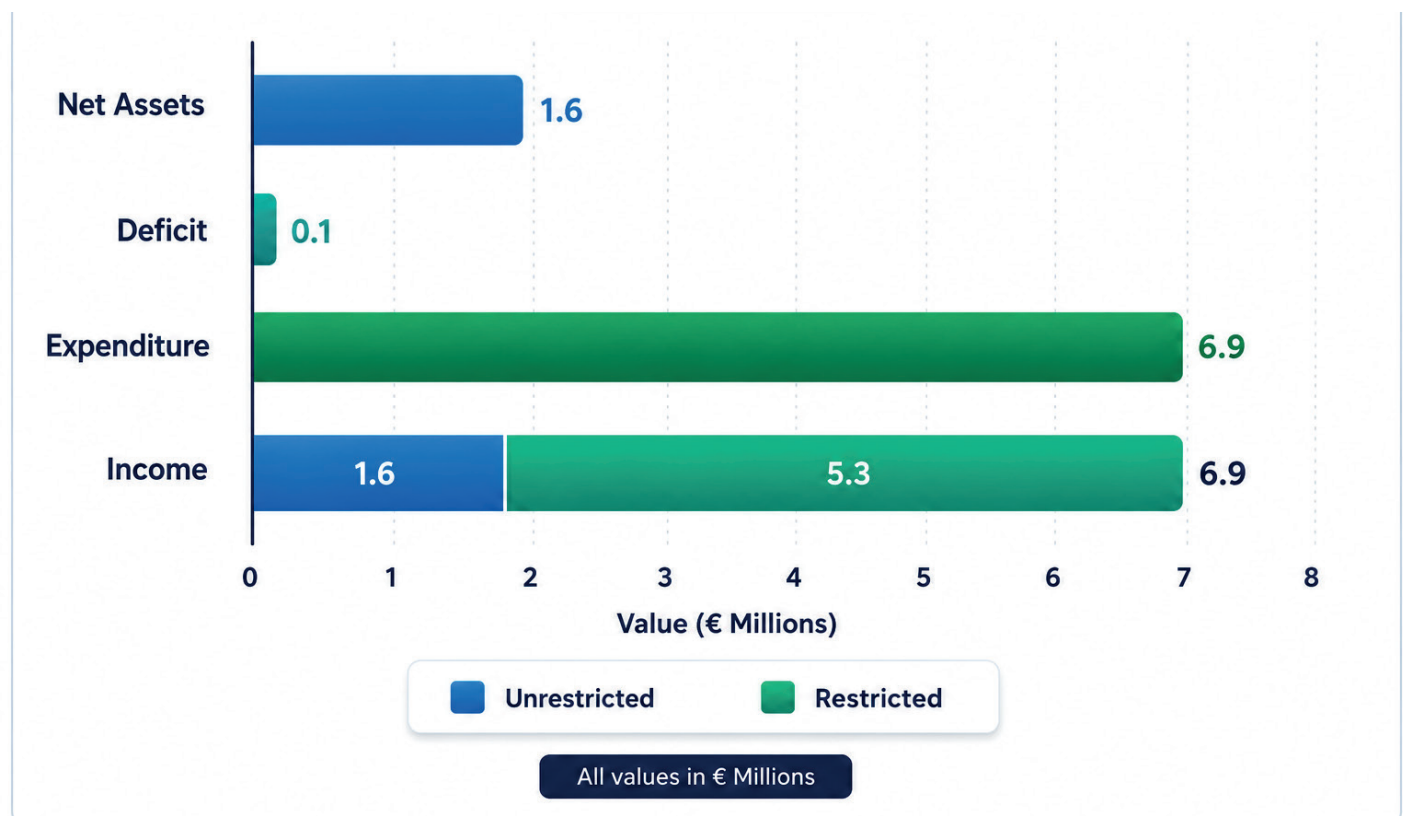
**Be ambitious
to transform
ETBI**



Meeting Statistics 2025

FAR	CE	Reserve	DOSD	DFET	DSCHOOLS	CLG	COUNCIL	JOINT FORUM
12.02.25	15.01.25	28.01.25	07.01.25	07.01.25	08.01.25	25.11.25	22.01.25	09-11.04.25
13.05.25	12.02.25	25.02.25	04.02.25	04.02.25	05.02.25	24.01.25	18.03.25	19-20.11.25
10.06.25	12.03.25	25.03.25	04.03.25	04.03.25	05.03.25		20.05.25	
19.09.25	11.06.25	29.04.25	25.04.25	25.04.25	07.05.25		17.06.25	
11.11.25	14.05.14	27.05.25	06.05.25	06.05.25	07.05.25		21.08.25	
	11.06.25	30.09.25	03.06.25	03.06.25	04.06.25		23.09.25	
	10.09.25	28.10.25	03.09.25	03.09.25	03.09.25		18.11.25	
	22.10.25	16.12.25	08.10.25	01.10.25	01.10.25			
	12.11.25		05.11.25	05.11.25	05.11.25			
	10.12.25		03.12.25	03.12.25	03.12.25			
5	10	8	10	10	10	2	7	2

Financial Statistics 2025





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Foreword: Cllr Roger Kennedy President ETBI

It is a privilege to introduce Education and Training Boards Irelands' Annual Report for 2025. This report reflects the depth, diversity and impact of the work taking place across the ETBs nationwide.

Over the course of the year, we have seen continued commitment from staff, leaders and partners across the sector, who are working together to support learners of all ages and backgrounds. Whether those learners are in our community national schools, post primary schools, further education and training settings or youth services, the focus remains on providing inclusive, high quality opportunities that respond to the unique needs of the learner and our communities.

This annual report highlights not only the scale of that work, but also the strong sense of collaboration that underpins it. Across the country, ETBs are supporting learners to succeed, while also adapting to an ever-evolving education landscape. This includes strengthening leadership, developing innovative programmes and ensuring that supports are in place for those who need them most.

As President, I am particularly proud of the shared commitment to public service that defines the ETB sector. You will see that the work outlined in this report demonstrates the dedication of staff and the positive difference being made every day.

I would like to thank everyone in ETBI and across the ETB network for their continued efforts and look forward to building on this progress in the year ahead.

Roger Kennedy



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Foreword: Dr James Eustace Acting General Secretary ETBI

The 2025 ETBI Annual Report is structured around four strategic goals that continue to guide ETBI's work and shape the support we provide to the ETBs.

Providing strong representation for ETBs remains central to our role. It ensures that the experience and priorities of our members are reflected in national policy and that ETBs continue to play a clear and valued role across the education and training system.

Advancing excellence in education, training and youth work is equally important. Through professional learning, collaboration and innovation, ETBI supports ongoing improvement in practice, helping to enhance the quality of learning experiences for all.

Enhancing support services to ETBs underpins this work. By providing guidance, practical tools and dedicated support, we aim to make it easier for ETBs to deliver effectively and consistently across a wide range of responsibilities.

Finally, our ambition to transform ETBI remains a key priority. This is about strengthening how we work as an organisation, building our capacity, improving our systems and ensuring we are well positioned to respond to future challenges.

Together, these goals provide a clear and balanced framework for the work of ETBI. They reflect our commitment to supporting ETBs in delivering high-quality, inclusive services and to continue improving how we operate as a representative organisation.

Dr James Eustace

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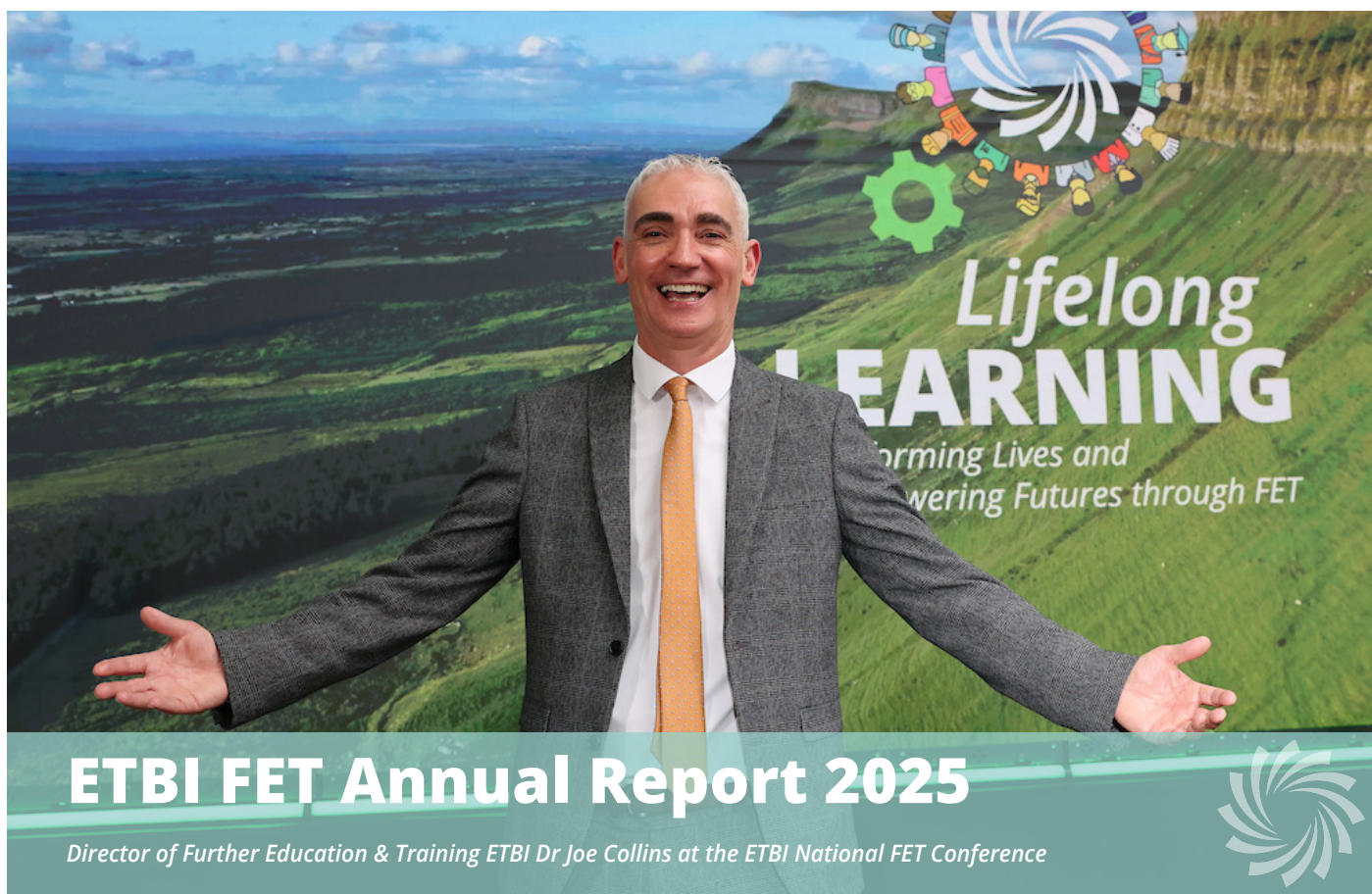
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USTOM
WORKWEAR

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Ireland

FET



In 2025, the ETBI FET Directorate was at the heart of many pivotal moments for the sector. As Ireland's 16 Education and Training Boards continued to support more than 226,000 learners across the country, the unit operated during a significant period of transition. The National FET Strategy 2020–2024 was brought to a close, while the team actively shaped the foundations of the upcoming *National FET Strategy 2026–2030* as well as the emerging *Tertiary Education Strategy*.

It was a landmark year for FET in ETBI and further afield. It was marked by national collaboration, progress on inclusion, and strong digital growth. A major highlight was the National FET Conference, hosted in Sligo under the theme *"Lifelong Learning – Transforming Lives and Empowering Futures."* The event brought together educators, practitioners, learners and policymakers to explore how FET continues to support people at every stage of life. Contributions from Niall Breslin and international vocational experts reinforced the role of FET in personal development and community impact.

Inclusion remained a central focus throughout the year. A significant milestone was reached when ten ETBs, alongside ETBI, formally adopted the AltitUDE Charter, demonstrating a shared commitment to embedding



Universal Design across the tertiary education sector and making learning more accessible for all.

Digital innovation also expanded the reach of FET nationwide. The ETBI Digital Library saw a 67% increase in page views, offering over 1,200 learning resources and 178 new eBooks to support learners and staff across the country.

Throughout the year the progress that was made by the FET division was guided by ETBI's four strategic goals.



Niall "Bressie" Breslin at the ETBI National FET Conference, Sligo



Laois & Offaly ETB Eileen Dunne and Gemma Brady with ETBI General Secretary Paddy Lavelle, Inclusion Unit Fergus Craddock and Niamh Clancy at ETBI's formal adoption of the AltitUDE Charter





Goal 1: Providing strong representation for ETBs

Delegate at World Skills, at the RDS Dublin

At the heart of the FET units work in 2025 was advocacy, ensuring that the voice of ETBs was heard, influential and grounded in the reality of FET. This was a year marked by significant policy development across areas such as inclusion, migration, skills and quality assurance, and the team played a central role in coordinating the sector's response.

Working closely with ETB Chief Executives, Directors of FET and national forums, FET brought together viewpoints from across the country to inform submissions to Government departments, statutory agencies and European bodies. This collaborative approach was particularly evident in the engagement with SOLAS on the development of the National FET Strategy 2026–2030, where ETBI fed into dialogue to ensure that ETB insights helped shape future direction.

Representation also extended beyond policy into national visibility and engagement. ETBI supported the FET sector's presence at WorldSkills Ireland 2025 in the RDS, where ETBs delivered a strong array of interactive demonstrations to more than 30,000 attendees. This provided a valuable

opportunity to showcase the breadth and relevance of FET provision, while engaging directly with learners, employers and the wider public.

Engagement with DFHERIS and QQI throughout the year ensured that ETB perspectives were reflected in quality assurance processes, national evaluations and policy decisions. A notable outcome of this work was agreement on External Authenticator pay and taxation arrangements, providing greater clarity and sustainability for a core quality function within FET.

Through consistent, coordinated advocacy, the Directorate helped position ETBs not just as providers within the system, but as trusted partners shaping national FET policy.



Louth & Meath ETB representative at World Skills



Apprentice at World Skills



Goal 2: Advancing excellence in education, training and youth work

Chief Executives from the 16 ETBs visit OECD headquarters in Paris

While policy set the direction, excellence in FET is realised through its people and practice. In 2025, ETBI FET focused on strengthening professional capacity across the sector, recognising that high quality provision depends on skilled and confident staff, where supported in their line of work.

European collaboration through Erasmus+ played a key role in this work. Staff from all 16 ETBs participated in mobilities across Europe, exploring approaches to outdoor education, adult literacy, vocational excellence and inclusive practice. These experiences supported staff to develop and reflect professionally, as well as share new ideas that could be adapted within Irish contexts. This included a Chief Executive delegation visiting Paris as part of an Erasmus+ VET study visit.

At a national level, the Professional Learning and Development programme delivered by ETBI continued to grow in scope and reach. During 2025, thousands of ETB staff engaged in learning opportunities focused on neurodiversity, trauma-informed practice, LGBTQ+ inclusion, antiracism, digital learning and leadership. These initiatives were not delivered in isolation,



Inclusion Unit Outdoor Education Training Centre Workshop, Gartan Outdoor Education Training Centre

but were aligned with national strategies such as Adult Literacy for Life, the Community Education Framework and policy developments in guidance and youth work.

Alongside this, a strong focus on learner access and pathways was reflected in the continued rollout of the ETBI Skills Box and Career Charts, providing clear, accessible information to schools, guidance services and learners nationally.

The impact of this focus on excellence was visible across services. Youthreach centres progressed inclusion initiatives, with several achieving the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark, while targeted developments such as the training of Irish Sign Language native External Authenticators strengthened access for deaf learners. Collectively, these actions reinforced a shared commitment across the sector to learner-centred education.



Goal 3: Enhancing support services to ETBs

Limerick Community Education Network in Limerick City, funded and supported by Limerick and Clare ETB

A defining strength of the FET Directorate is translating national strategy into everyday practice. In 2025, significant capacity was devoted to ensuring that national supports were responsive, reliable and in line with the actual realities of ETB operations on the ground and in the community.

It continued to provide hands on support through Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) and FETCH, resolving a high volume of system queries and acting as a critical interface between ETBs and SOLAS ICT. Alongside this operational support, there was substantial progress in programme and award infrastructure. Updates to the National Programme Database ensured that courses remained up to date and consistent, while new awards and modules guaranteed that FET continues to grow and adapt.

In a bid to ensure that quality assurance maintained its central focus, refresher training for External Authenticators helped maintain consistency and confidence across assessment processes, while new digital platforms supported the



dissemination of updated modules and guidance materials. Work also advanced on the new Contracted Training Procurement Framework, laying the groundwork for a more streamlined approach to provision from 2026 onwards.

These developments strengthened the foundations of the FET system, giving ETBs greater consistency and confidence in the supports that underpin delivery.

SOLAS
learning works



“Alongside this operational support, there was substantial progress in programme and award infrastructure.”



Goal 4: Being ambitious to transform ETBI

Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB CE Tom Grady, Donegal ETB CE Anne McHugh, Waterford & Wexford ETB CE Karina Daly with ETBI Director of FET Dr Joe Collins and General Secretary Paddy Lavelle

In 2025, FET focused on strengthening how it works from within. It put an intentional effort into building staff capability, improving systems and making it easier for ETBs to access the support they need on a daily basis.

A key element to this was investing in staff development and learning. FET delivered a wide range of professional learning opportunities, supporting staff in areas such as teaching practice, curriculum development, digital learning and emerging technologies. This was guided by a clear understanding of its staff needs, informed through skills analysis and ongoing engagement with teams. Paired with formal training, networks and peer learning opportunities allowed for a space where staff could share their experiences and build confidence.

At the same time, a strong emphasis was placed on improving how ETBI FET provides services to ETBs. Practical, day to day support remained a core part of this work, with ongoing assistance provided through systems such as PLSS and FETCH, helping ETBs manage programmes, data

and reporting requirements more effectively.

Access to clear guidance and resources was also strengthened. Templates, toolkits and structured supports were developed and updated throughout the year. This included module support packages, programme development templates and guidance materials made available through the ETBI Digital Library. This gave ETBs easier access to practical tools to support their work and helped ensure policies and processes were applied consistently. By making information easier to find and use, this reduced duplication and supported more efficient decision making at local level.

Regular engagement with ETBs continued to play a key role. Through networks, forums and working groups, FET maintained close connections

with staff across the sector, creating a space to share updates, respond to queries and better understand any and all emerging needs. This helped ensure that supports remained relevant and responsive, while also strengthening relationships across the sector.

Support for programme development and governance was also enhanced. Shared approaches, guidance and collaborative structures helped ETBs plan, deliver and review programmes more effectively, while also supporting greater consistency across the sector.

Collectively, this work has strengthened the FET unit within ETBI as an organisation that builds the skills and supports needed to operate more effectively, while ensuring that ETBs are well supported in delivering their services.



Strategic Enablers: Positioning, Performance & Partnership

Inclusion Unit Outdoor Education Training Centre Workshop, Gartan Outdoor Education Training Centre



In 2025, the FET directorate continued to strengthen how the sector is positioned, how it measures performance, and how it works in partnership to deliver meaningful impact. A key development was the creation of the Green Skills 2030 Project Plan, setting a clear direction to 2027 and positioning ETBs at the forefront of Ireland's response to the green agenda. This forward-looking approach was further reinforced through ongoing work with Outdoor Education and Training Centres, where a national review and sectoral engagement helped shape a shared vision for their role in advancing sustainability, climate action and learner wellbeing within FET.

Progress was also evident in how the Directorate uses data to inform decision-making and improve services. Through the use of analytics, engagement with digital guidance tools was tracked and over 6,000 views recorded across the interactive Skills Career Charts.

This offers valuable insight into how learners and guidance professionals are accessing information and highlights the growing need for digital resources in supporting pathways into education and employment.

Partnership remained central to delivery throughout the year. The signing of the ETBI-LGMA Common Protocol marked an



important step in strengthening collaboration between ETBs and the public library service, opening new opportunities for community engagement and shared access to learning resources.

This collaborative approach was also evident in the continued development of sectoral networks and communities of practice, including work with AHEAD to support consistent approaches

to disability provision through the Reasonable Accommodations in FET Review Group, and the ongoing development of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Network.

Together, these initiatives are strengthening shared practice across ETBs, supporting policy development, and ensuring that the FET system continues to evolve in a strategic, focused and inclusive way.



Cross Directorate Collaboration



Learners with their teacher at Adamstown Community College

Collaboration across ETBI continued to play a critical role in ensuring a joined up approach to supporting ETB learners. During the year, FET worked closely with the Schools Division on the Skills for Schools 2026 project, establishing a working group of school principals to better understand and address information gaps for parents attempting to navigate FET pathways. This work highlights shared dedication to making transitions between school and further education more accessible.

In parallel, colleagues from FET, Schools, ICT and Corporate functions established a cross-unit AI Working Group to develop a coordinated organisational response to emerging technologies. By working collaboratively, ETBI is ensuring that opportunities and risks associated with AI are approached in a formal and informed way across the organisation.

Looking Ahead for 2026



Looking ahead, the FET unit is focused on supporting the next phase of development across the sector. A key priority will be leading the transition to the National FET Strategy 2026–2030, ensuring that ETBs are supported in implementing its ambitions.



Operational improvements will also continue, with the planned launch of the *Wider Benefits of Learning* tool in early 2026. This initiative is expected to provide a more holistic way of capturing learner outcomes and recognising the wider personal and social impact of participation in further education and training. National and international engagement will remain a priority, with plans underway to host the National FET Conference 2026 in Cavan and ECADOC 2026, an international summer school for doctoral research in guidance. In addition, the implementation of the PLSS Strategic Roadmap 2026–2028 will further modernise digital systems, supporting a more connected and responsive learner experience across the sector.

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OSD Internal



OSD Internal Annual Report 2025

ETBI staff celebrating being awarded with the Investors in Diversity Bronze Accreditation by the Irish Centre for Diversity.



The Organisation Support and Development (OSD) Internal Directorate played a central role in keeping ETBI running effectively and preparing for the future. Working across governance, finance, HR, ICT, Communications and Facilities, OSD provides the supports that enable the organisation to deliver on its strategic goals. Often working behind the scenes, it helps ensure that ETBI is well governed, financially sound, digitally secure and supported by competent people and processes. Throughout the year, this work focused on resilience, supporting its staff and building a more efficient and forward-looking organisation.

The year was defined by progress in improving governance, supporting its staff and raising the profile of ETBI across Ireland.

A major focus for the year was on managing risk and governance, with significant work undertaken across areas like cybersecurity, financial controls and organisation-wide risk management. Large projects, including the SOLAS review of ETBI and preparations for the transfer of Post-Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI), showcased the organisation's ability to manage complexity while maintaining high standards of accountability and oversight. At the same time, there was a strong emphasis on developing the people within the

organisation. HR policies were streamlined and centralised, supporting greater consistency and clarity for staff. ETBI also achieved a Bronze Award from the Irish Centre for Diversity, this recognised the progress that ETBI had made in embedding equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation. This work was supported by ongoing investment in leadership development and staff training.

OSD internal also saw significant progress in promoting the ETBI brand and story. The implementation of the Communications Strategy brought increased visibility through initiatives such as ETB Week, a national documentary on TG4, and a special publication marking the 10th anniversary



ETBI Director of OSD Dr James Eustace at the launch of the ETBI Strategy, Cathal Brugha St, City of Dublin ETB

of ETBs. Together, these efforts helped highlight the impact of ETBs and the people they serve.



Goal 1: Provide Strong Representation

CEO Aontas Dearbháil Lawless with Waterford & Wexford ETB Director of FET Lindsay Malone at the launch of the ETB Book, "Shaping the future, leaving no one behind"

OSD internal played an important role in supporting ETBI's representation at a national level, ensuring that the organisation's voice was clear, coordinated and impactful.

The introduction of a sector-wide Public Affairs Strategy marked a significant step forward. For the first time, engagement with Government and stakeholders was approached in a structured and aligned way, helping to bring greater visibility to the role and impact of ETBs. This contributed to results such as increased recognition of youth work within the Programme for Government, additional leadership appointments across ETB schools and the expansion of the school meals programme.

Alongside this, communications work assisted the improved understanding of ETBI's contribution across the sector. The publication of *Education & Training Boards: Shaping the Future, Leaving No One Behind* provided a clear and accessible account of ETB impact for policymakers and stakeholders, helping to reinforce ETBI's position as a key national player. At its core, this work ensured



#SupportYourLocalETB



that ETBI was not just present in national discussions, but played

a significant role in shaping them, credibly and consistently.

Eachtraí Foghlama Le Kayleigh Trappe



Goal 2: Advance Excellence in Education, Training and Youthwork

While OSD may operate behind the scenes, its work is crucial in supporting excellence across the ETB sector. In 2025, this was reflected across a range of initiatives that brought people together, strengthened learning and highlighted the impact of ETBs nationwide.

A key moment in the year was the ETBI Annual Congress, which brought together members, stakeholders and partners to reflect and openly discuss growth across schools, further education and training and youth services. The congress allowed for discussion about shared learning and strategic thinking, with strong engagement and positive feedback from delegates.

This emphasis on connection and collaboration was also seen during ETB Week 2025, which celebrated learners, staff and services across the country. Through a wide range of events and activities, ETB Week helped showcase the real diversity and impact of the ETB provision, while reinforcing our shared values across the sector.

We also saw the launch of a national documentary with TG4, *Eachtraí Foghlama le Kayleigh*

Trappe, which shone a light on real learner stories from across ETB settings. By bringing these stories to a wider audience, it helped illustrate the richness and diversity of ETB education, particularly through the Irish language.

Together, these initiatives helped promote excellence as a shared experience that is visible, celebrated and understood across the sector.



Kilkenny & Carlow ETB learner Rachel Bergin who received an All Stars award at ETB Week 2025 Croke Park with RTE TV presenter Ray Kennedy and singer songwriter Tolu Makay



Garage Theatre performers with PEACEPLUS Face Off Youth Worker Krista Hamilton at the ETBI Annual Congress, Cavan 2025



Goal 3 : Enhance Provision of Support Services to ETBs

Education & Training Boards Chief Executives with Department of Education and Youth Secretary General Bernie McNally

OSD internal continued to develop the supports that ETBs rely on, guaranteeing that they are useful and responsive, while aligning with the needs of the organisation.

A major focus was on governance and capacity building. Training delivered in partnership with the Department of Education and the Institute of Public Administration supported over 400 Board members, helping to build on governance, oversight and decision-making across the sector.

Communications supports also expanded during the course of the year. A series of masterclasses and training sessions helped ETBs build confidence across topics such as internal communications, crisis management and tackling misinformation. A dedicated support for Chief Executives led to further capacity in leadership. Investment in infrastructure also contributed to improved delivery of services. The ETBI lecture theatre was upgraded, which created a more modern and flexible space. This space



ETBI HR Manager Rachel Byrne

better supports training, meetings and events.

Across ICT, there was significant work undertaken to strengthen digital security and support staff. A number of initiatives such as the Cyber Awareness Campaign and the rollout of Zero Trust systems helped

protect the organisations' data, while building awareness and capability among staff.

Together, these developments ensured that ETBs were supported by systems and services that are both modern and fit for purpose.



Goal 4 : Be Ambitious to Transform ETBI

The OSD Corporate Services team played a key role in supporting ETBI's development as a up-to-date, resilient and forward-facing organisation.

A major step forward was taken with the introduction of a structured, organisation-wide approach to risk management. This covered areas such as governance, finance, business continuity and information security. It has strengthened oversight while ensuring that risks are identified and managed in a consistent way.

This work was reinforced through the SOLAS review of ETBI, which provided the highest level of assurance regarding governance and financial controls. It provided a strong endorsement of the organisation's systems and processes.

At the same time, OSD supported major developments within the organisation, including preparations for the integration of Post-Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI). This transition required coordination



across HR, finance and ICT, which demonstrated the organisation's ability to manage significant change effectively.

Developing people remained central to the OSD Corporate Services unit. Investment in leadership development, with continued progress in equality, diversity and inclusion, has supported a stronger culture within the organisation and improved staff experience.

Across ICT, the ongoing investment in cybersecurity and digital systems has further developed the resilience and preparedness of the organisation, ensuring that ETBI is well placed to meet any challenges it may face in the future.

Altogether, these developments have strengthened ETBI and OSD Corporate Services, from within.

Strategic Enablers (Positioning, Performance, Partnership)



The work of OSD internal in 2025 helped strengthen how ETBI positions itself, how it delivers its outputs and how it works with others.

ETBI's visibility and influence grew through a more planned approach to public affairs and communications, helping to ensure that the role of ETBs is better understood at national level. This was supported by strong internal performance, with improved planning, reporting and governance processes which helped consistent delivery across the organisation.

OSD Corporate Services closely collaborated with Government departments, ETBs and other stakeholders supporting shared progress on major initiatives, including the successful transition of PPLI.

Cross-Directorate Collaboration



As the central support function within ETBI, OSD internal works across all areas of the organisation to help connect people, systems and strategy.

Over the course of the year, it meant supporting major cross-directorate projects such as the development of the new ETBI Strategy, ICT delivery across FET and Schools as well as communications support for national initiatives and events.

This collaborative approach highlighted that work across ETBI is aligned, coordinated and supported by strong infrastructure. This led to the organisation delivering outcomes more effectively as a whole.

Priorities for 2026



Looking ahead, OSD will continue to build on the progress made in 2025, with a focus on building on already strong systems, improving processes and supporting its staff.

Key priorities include further development of ETBI's risk management approach, the implementation of a new Communications Strategy and continued investment in digital systems and cybersecurity.

Work will also continue to improve financial systems, data reporting and organisational processes. This will help to provide clearer insights and more efficient ways of working.

Alongside this, there will continue to be a strong focus on people. This includes progressing diversity and inclusion, supporting staff wellbeing all the while ensuring that the organisation has the skills and capacity needed for the future.

Together, these priorities reflect the ongoing commitment to building a stronger and more connected organisation. One that is equipped to support ETBs and deliver for learners across the country.

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OSD Sectoral



OSD SECTORAL Annual Report 2025



ETBI Director of OSD Corporate Services Dr James Eustace with Director of OSD ESectoral Suzanne Mullins and Director of Further Education & Training Dr Joe Collins

During 2025, the Sector-facing functions of the Organisation Support and Development (OSD) directorate played a vital role in supporting ETBs to operate effectively, consistently and in line with national requirements. Bringing together HR, ICT and Legal Services (LSSU), the work focused collectively on providing guidance, strengthening governance and supporting informed decision-making across the sector.

Working closely with ETBs, Government departments and national agencies, these services act as a bridge between policy and practice. OSD Sectoral ensures that legislation, systems and workforce developments are understood, implemented and applied in a consistent way across all 16 ETBs nationwide. Throughout the year, there was a focus directed at clarity, collaboration and building long-term capacity within the sector.

A defining feature of 2025 for OSD Sectoral was the further development of sector-wide consistency across workforce, legal and digital systems.

A key step forward was introducing a consistent approach to the role of Tutors across all 16 ETBs. It brought greater clarity to employment conditions and supported fair



Brendan Fitzsimons, Buildings Officer, at the 4th Annual ETB/SEAI Action Congress Portlaoise

and sustainable workforce practices. This work recognised the important role that Tutors play in delivering education and training.

In parallel, major progress was made in supporting the sector to respond to emerging risks and opportunities in digital technologies. This included the development of AI guidance, policy and training. This work provided ETBs with the practical tools required to approach AI adoption in a more structured and responsible way.

In line with this, the Legal Services Support Unit (LSSU) continued to deepen its understanding of legal obligations across the sector. It supported ETBs through practical advice, training and input into national policy developments. This included updates to Child Protection Procedures for Schools. Overall, this work shows how OSD Sectoral is supporting ETBs with practical guidance, useful tools and more consistent ways of approaching and working across complex areas.



Goal 1: Provide Strong Representation

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science James Lawless at ETBI HQ with Director of Schools Paul Fields, President of ETBI Councillor Roger Kennedy and General Secretary Paddy Lavelle

In 2025, OSD Sectoral played an important role in representing ETBs at national level, helping to ensure that policies and systems reflect how the sector works on the ground and in lived experiences.

This was particularly evident in the work of the LSSU. The unit played a key role in engaging with the Department of Education and Youth on the development of updated Child Protection Procedures for Schools.

At the same time, the HR function engaged with national stakeholders to support sector-wide workforce developments. This included the rollout of revised arrangements for Tutors across Adult, Community and Further Education. This helped ensure that ETB staffing approaches are recognised and supported at a national level.

In the digital space, the ICT group took a proactive approach to emerging areas such as AI, developing guidance and supports to help ETBs prepare for new national and EU requirements.



SOLAS Interim Chief Executive Officer Nessa White at the ETBI National FET Conference

Together, this work strengthened ETBI's role in leading national policy

discussions and helping to ensure that the member ETBs are consistently represented.



Goal 2: Advance Excellence in Education, Training and Youthwork

Senior Staff Officer in the Legal Services Support Unit Lisa Marie Donnelly at the ETBI Principals & Deputy Principals conference

Supporting excellence across the ETB system in 2025 meant ensuring that staff had access to the knowledge, skills and guidance needed to carry out their roles effectively and efficiently.

Across HR, a wide programme of professional learning was delivered. This covered key areas such as employment law, safeguarding, workplace dignity and vetting. These sessions helped staff understand their responsibilities more clearly and apply policies consistently in their day to day work.

The LSSU contributed to this through targeted legal inputs at national events, including leadership conferences and sectoral forums. By presenting on complex legal topics in a simplified way, these sessions helped to build the confidence and awareness among staff across a wide array of roles.

At the same time, the OSD Sectoral ICT function supported excellence through sector-wide training. It delved into topics such as artificial intelligence, combined with the development of guidance and tools to support



Donegal ETB Chairperson and Board member Councillor Donal Coyle with Director of Schools Martin Gormley at the launch of the ETB landmark Book "Shaping the future, leaving no one behind" in Buswells

its responsible use. This training ensures that staff are better equipped to understand both the opportunities and the risks associated with emerging technologies.

All in, the efforts within OSD Sectoral supported a more informed and capable workforce. One that is prepared to deliver gold standard, inclusive education and training across the ETB network.



Goal 3: Enhance Provision of Support Services to ETBs

Department of Education & Youth Assistant Secretary Planning and Building Unit, Hubert Loftus, City of Dublin Director of OSD Kay Cullinan, Chief Executive Christy Duffy and Director of Schools Wesleigh Hagen

A central priority for OSD Sectoral services in 2025 was ensuring that supports provided to ETBs were clear, accessible and responsive.

The HR function strengthened its support structures by improving access to resources, streamlining processes and enhancing its communications across the sector. The development of up-to-date information hubs and targeted support clinics helped reduce duplication.

Similarly, the LSSU continued to act as a first point of contact for legal queries. The team provided practical advice across areas such as governance, admissions and data protection. This service reduced over-reliance on external legal providers, while ensuring that advice is grounded in sectoral knowledge.

In the ICT space, the development of shared tools and guidance, particularly in relation to AI adoption, supported ETBs to approach digital transformation in a structured and coordinated way. The work of the ICT group also



CE Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB Tom Grady

helped build on the collaboration between ETB ICT teams, creating a shared space to address emerging challenges.

Overall, these developments

contributed to a more streamlined support system, where ETBs have access to relevant and practical guidance across areas that are key to operations.



Goal 4: Be Ambitious to Transform ETBI

ETB Week, Croke Park: RTE TV presenter Ray Kennedy with Kilkenney & Carlow ETB recipient of the All Stars award, Rachel Bergin

In 2025, OSD Sectoral strengthened how it works by building internal capability, it improved internal structures and supported more connected ways of working across its teams. While much of its work is delivered in partnership with ETBs, there was a clear emphasis on developing expertise within OSD itself through ongoing professional learning, collaboration and shared practice.

Staff benefited from targeted learning opportunities across key areas such as employment law, communications, procurement and digital developments, alongside more focused inputs like AI masterclasses. These sessions not only supported the wider sector but also helped build knowledge and confidence within OSD teams, ensuring they are better equipped to respond to any potential future challenges. In addition, specialist training was delivered through areas such as Buildings, which included decarbonisation, energy management, procurement and health and safety. This further strengthened the technical expertise within the team and supported a deeper understanding of complex operational areas.

A key part of this development was the continued use of

structured forums and working groups, which brought together staff from across ETBI and ETBs to share knowledge, discuss challenges and develop consistent approaches. With a number of expert working groups engaging hundreds of participants across the sector, these spaces acted as ongoing learning environments. Regular ICT and HR group meetings, along with targeted sessions on rising issues, supported the continuous learning and knowledge sharing within the unit.

Alongside this, improvements to systems and governance played an important role in strengthening how the unit operates. The development of standard operating procedures, clearer reporting structures and initiatives such as the introduction of a Change

Control Board supported more structured and transparent ways of working. These changes helped ensure that knowledge is captured, shared and applied consistently across teams.

Collaboration across ETBI also contributed to strengthening internal capacity. Initiatives such as cross-directorate projects helped build stronger connections between teams, encouraging more joined-up ways of working and knowledge sharing across the organisation.

Taken together, this work has supported the continued development of OSD Sectoral. It has helped to build a more informed and connected team who are better equipped to support ETBs and respond to evolving demands across the sector.

Strategic Enablers (Positioning, Performance, Partnership)



In 2025, OSD Sectoral helped strengthen the position of ETBI as a coordinated and reliable support to the ETB network, particularly across key operational areas.

This was reflected in improved consistency across the sector, stronger engagement with national stakeholders and visible leadership in areas such as workforce planning, legal guidance and digital governance.

Partnership also remained central, with strong collaboration between ETBI, ETBs, Government departments and external agencies. Together, there was a shared approach to addressing challenges and developing solutions.

Cross-Directorate Collaboration



Collaboration across ETBI continued to play a key role in delivering the activities by OSD Sectoral.

Examples include:

-  Joint work between LSSU and Schools on Child Protection Procedures
-  Collaboration between HR and Communications on sector-wide campaigns
-  ICT support for initiatives across Schools, FET and ILP

The connection between OSD Sectoral and its colleagues within ETBI allowed for expertise to be shared across and within the organisation.

Priorities for 2026



Looking ahead, the focus for OSD Sectoral will be on continuing to strengthen consistency, improve the systems and support staff across the sector.

Key priorities include:

-  Further development of governance and oversight structures. This includes the establishment of a Change Control Board
-  The continued investment in professional learning and workforce development
-  Strengthening digital systems, data management and AI preparedness
-  Enhancing communication and collaboration across ETBs and stakeholders

For OSD Sectoral, the aim is to build on the progress that was made in 2025. This will result in the ETBs being supported by strong, competent systems and services that enable them to deliver for learners.

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Schools Youth Work - Community National Schools - Community Special Schools - REALT



Schools: Youth Work – CNS – CSS – REALT Annual Report 2025

Cornamaddy Community National School Longford & Westmeath ETB learners

Throughout 2025, the Schools directorate brought together a diverse and interconnected portfolio of work that spanned Community National Schools (CNS), Community Special Schools (CSS), Community Hospital Schools (CHS), ETB patronage and ethos, Youth Work Services, and the Regional Education and Language Teams (REALT). Across these areas, the focus remained firmly on strengthening inclusion, governance and supporting quality outcomes for ETB learners. Working closely with the 16 ETBs, Government and partners across education and youth sectors, the Schools unit played a key role in connecting policy and practice. This work supported a more values-led sector that is capable of responding to complex and evolving learner needs.

A key achievement for Schools in 2025 was its strategic leadership across ethos, patronage and inclusive school provision. Through the development and oversight of major frameworks, including *'Looking at Our Ethos'*, alongside guidance for CNS and CSS, Schools helped bring clarity and coherence to these areas. This work provided ETBs with a grounding to enact their ethos in reality, while also ensuring the sector is well positioned to respond to evolving national policies and priorities.

Alongside this, major progress was made in strengthening national governance, particularly across intricate

initiatives such as REALT and youth services. Through sustained leadership and close cross-directorate collaboration, defined structures, data and more consistent reporting approaches were developed.

This supported more efficient planning, reduced risk and it enhanced engagement with Government, while also bringing greater confidence and consistency across the sector.

Over the course of the year, Schools also played a central role in positioning ETBI as a trusted sector leader. Through engagement with the Department of Education and Youth, the NCSE and other



key partners, ETBI's voice was evidently represented at national discussions on inclusive education, special schools, youth services and learner support. This advocacy strengthened ETBI's reputation as a credible and influential partner. It positioned ETBs in a way that allowed them to continue to play a key role in shaping and delivering shared education outcomes.





Goal 1: Provide Strong Representation

City of Dublin ETB representatives with Director of Schools Wesleigh Hagan and Chief Executive Christy Duffy

In 2025, Schools placed a particular focus on ensuring that the voice and experience of ETBs were openly showcased in national policy and sector development. This required ongoing engagement spanning schools, youth services, inclusion and patronage.

Working closely with the Department of Education and Youth and other national stakeholders, it led the development of ETB positions across key areas including CNS, CSS, REALT, youth work and values-based education. This work was not limited to formal submissions, it featured in the ongoing participation at advisory forums, sectoral discussions and cross-agency collaboration.

A particular focus was placed on clarifying roles, responsibilities and governance structures in areas including REALT and youth services. By bringing together perspectives from across the ETBs and grounding discussions in operational realities, the Schools team helped ensure that national developments were both informed and practical.



Cornamaddy Community National School Longford & Westmeath ETB learners with their Principal Yvonne Naughton and teachers Aileen and Lauren

Over the course of the year, this approach led to greater vision and alignment across the sector. ETB priorities were better understood, duplication was reduced, and there was a newfound confidence in how national initiatives are managed and delivered. Crucially, ETBI became an even stronger trusted connector, bringing policy, practice and implementation together to support better results for its learners and communities.



Learners in Cornamaddy National School, Longford & Westmeath ETB



Goal 2: Advance Excellence in Education, Training and Youth Work

Department of Education & Youth Secretary General Bernie McNally at the Youth Work Matters Conference in Galway

A key priority for the unit in 2025, was supporting quality, inclusive practice across schools and youth services. This work focused on ensuring that educators, leaders and youth practitioners were supported not just through policy, but through meaningful opportunities to learn, collaborate and grow.

Across CNS, CSS and Community Colleges, it led a wide programme of professional learning, focused on ethos, leadership and inclusive practice. Initiatives linked to frameworks such as GMGY and IMBVE supported staff to explore how values are implemented in everyday school environments, building on both teaching practice and the school culture.

Creating opportunities for school leaders to come together and learn from one another remained an important part of its work. The CNS, CSS and CHS Principals' and Deputy Principals' Symposium, held in Portlaoise in May 2025, brought leaders from across the network together to explore key themes in school leadership and management. The day provided for a combination of expert input and peer-led workshops, while creating for honest discussion, learning and reflection. These types of engagements play an important role in strengthening

leadership practice, while also building connections and a shared understanding across schools and settings.

Leadership development also played an important role. By connecting research, theory and sector experience, it supported its leaders to engage with the complexities of inclusive education and school development with confidence and clarity.

In youth work, a similar emphasis was placed on collaboration and shared learning. National and North-South forums afforded opportunities for practitioners to exchange ideas with one another, learn from different approaches and strengthen service delivery. The development of planning tools supported youth organisations to align their work more closely with national priorities, all while remaining responsive to local

needs. The Youth Work Matters conference which took place in Galway explored the importance of youth work in the community and welcomed an address from the Department of Education and Youth Secretary General, Bernie McNally.

The ongoing work of REALT supported more coordinated access to education for learners, ensuring that those with complex needs are supported to engage in learning as early as possible.

Together, these initiatives allowed for stronger and more consistent practice across the sector. Teachers, leaders and youth practitioners reported greater confidence and clearer direction, while learners benefited from more inclusive, supportive and responsive environments.



Goal 3: Enhance Provision of Support Services to ETBs

Performers at the Youth Work Matters conference in Galway

Significant progress was made in 2025 in strengthening the supports available to ETBs, ensuring that they are clear, consistent and reactive to the needs of schools and services on the ground.

A focus was placed on improving governance and coordination across a number of national programmes. This included building support structures for REALT coordinators, developing communities of practice for ethos coordinators and improving access to guidance and resources across Schools.

Work also focused on improving data and reporting processes, giving ETBs clearer information to support planning, to track progress and to engage with national stakeholders. These improvements strengthened accountability and increased confidence across the sector. Alongside this work, ETBs were supported in areas like youth funding applications, helping them plan for the future and to ensure that services remain sustainable and aligned with their priorities.

The overall impact of this work was a more streamlined

and supported system. ETBs experienced greater clarity in their expectations, improved access to resources and more confidence in their ability to deliver across multiple areas of responsibility. As a result, processes became more efficient, risks were reduced and outcomes for the learners and communities improved.



Performers at the Youth Work Matters conference in Galway



Youth Work Ireland Galway and Galway City Comhairle na nÓg, from left to right, Jenneth Hession, David Naumova and Sonya Naumova Youth Work Matters in partnership with GRETB Salthill Hotel May 29th



Goal 4: Be Ambitious to Transform ETBI

The ETBI Schools team at the CNS, CSS and CHS Symposium for Principals & Deputy Principals Megan Whyte, Brenda Murphy, Dr Séamus Conboy and Niall Mulpeter

While much of Schools work is focused outwardly on supporting the ETBs, it was also a year of important development internally, strengthening how the team works and delivers the outcomes.

Over the course of the year, the team worked to build its capacity through regular engagement, clear planning processes and a shared sense of purpose. The introduction of more coordinated planning processes helped create a sense of clarity across the team, ensuring that priorities were understood and that progress could be tracked more effectively.

This approach helped strengthen teamwork within the unit, allowing them to respond more effectively to challenges that arose, while staying focused on key priorities. It also allowed for opportunities of reflection, learning and ongoing improvement.

As a result, Schools is now better positioned to support ETBs in a more strategic and coordinated way. This strengthening from the inside out has contributed



Nenagh Community National School staff Patricia and Shay with their Principal Mr Conor D'Arcy and learners

to a more capable and forward-looking function, one that is better equipped to navigate the ever-increasing complexity of the education and youth landscape.



Nenagh CNS learner

Strategic Enablers (Positioning, Performance, Partnership)



In 2025, the Schools team further developed how it plans, delivers and works with others across the sector. This was reflected in more streamlined roles, consistent delivery as well as robust working relationships with its key partners.

ETBI's role in areas such as inclusive education, ethos and youth work became more visible through ongoing engagement with the Department of Education and Youth and other national bodies. This allowed Schools to represent ETB priorities more clearly and contribute directly to national developments in these areas.

Strong partnerships underpinned the work that was carried out over the course of the year. Regular engagement with Government departments, statutory agencies, higher education institutions and youth organisations resulted in better coordination, shared understanding and more aligned ways of working across the sector.

Priorities for 2026



Looking ahead, Schools sets its sights on building on its already strong established foundations. A notable priority will be to embed the ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos and supporting its implementation across schools and associated professional learning.

The continued development of CNS and CSS will remain a priority, with an emphasis on matching growth with strong governance and quality provision. At the same time, REALT will continue to be developed as part of an integrated national support model.

In parallel, there will be a renewed consideration on positioning Youth work as a central part of both ETBI's work and the broader education sector, recognising its importance in supporting young people's development and wellbeing.

Together, these priorities showcase commitment to building a more inclusive and connected sector, one that's goal is to support its learners, schools and communities now and into the future.

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Schools Post-Primary



Schools Post-Primary Annual Report 2025

Gean Gilger ETBI with representatives from COGG, Oide, Limerick & Clare ETB and others at the Foram Feasa Beo event in Gael Choláiste Luminigh

In 2025, the ETBI Post-Primary Schools directorate supported the 16 ETBs in providing high-quality, inclusive education across their schools. It worked closely with school leaders, government departments, national and European partners all while playing an important role in supporting leadership, governance, professional learning and system-wide coordination.

It was a year of significant progress and collaboration for Post-Primary Schools, marked by an intentional focus on leadership, inclusion and sector wide coherence. A core priority throughout the year was the continuing support of school leaders across the ETB network. This was achieved through a programme of induction, national conferences, summer schools, Deputy Principal clusters and advisory networks. These arrangements guaranteed that leadership teams at all levels were supported in their roles and connected through shared learning and practice.

Governance continued to be a key area of focus, with targeted Board of Management training that strengthened the oversight, accountability and confidence of those at school-level. At the same time, the ongoing national rollout of the RISE Provision Mapping strategy represented a

major advancement for inclusive education. The strategy, now embedded in over 220 post-primary schools across all 16 ETBs, supports schools to take more structured approaches to inclusion.

Collaboration extended beyond the ETB sector, with ETBI leading a national cross-sectoral provision mapping pilot in partnership with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), Joint Managerial Body (JMB and ACCS (Association of Community & Comprehensive Schools). This work has strengthened alignment across different governance structures and laid the foundations for a shared national approach to inclusive education, supported through the development of a cross-pillar ETBI strategy via the Joint Forum.

Schools continued to expand its national and international

engagement, contributing to European initiatives focused on emerging areas such as AI and strengthening research partnerships. Programmes such as Fóram Feasa continued to grow, supporting communities of practice and professional learning, while research outputs informed national policy developments in areas including assessment and teacher supply.

Progress in Irish-medium education and student voice initiatives strengthened learner participation and identity, while the RISE Strategy continued to drive implementation of national policy, including Circular 28/2024. The securing of an additional dedicated post to support this work across special schools reflects the growing scale and importance of inclusive education across the sector.



Goal 1: Provide Strong Representation

Donegal ETB Director of Schools Dr Martin Gormley with teachers from Donegal ETB attending the Summer School for Middle Leaders in Galway

In 2025, a central priority for the Post-Primary Schools directorate was ensuring that the experience of ETB schools was clearly reflected in how education policy is shaped and delivered. This meant maintaining strong and ongoing engagement with the Department of Education and Youth and its Inspectorate, while bringing the day to day realities of schools into national discussions on leadership, inclusion and system reform.

Those themes were highlighted at a wide range of national forums and advisory groups, where ETBI worked alongside key partners such as the NCSE, NCCA and State Examinations Commission. Through many submissions, consultations and ongoing engagement, ETBI ensured that perspectives from ETB schools helped inform developments in areas such as Senior Cycle reform, staffing and Irish-medium education.

At the same time, engagement at European level ensured that the sector remained connected to wider developments, particularly in areas such as inclusive education, teacher retention and the growing role of AI in schools. These connections also supported international research partnerships, strengthening professional learning across the ETB system.



Dr Johanna Fitzgerald, Dr Brian Mac Giolla Phadraig and Gean Gilger at Muintearas

A key strength of this work was the link between research and practice. The evidence generated across ETB schools, including the developments in Irish-medium education and inclusive approaches, fed directly into national conversations and policy development.

Over the course of the year, the Schools approach led to stronger alignment between national policy and school-level practice.

At its core, this work ensured that ETB schools were not just responding to change but actively helping to shape it.



Goal 2: Advance Excellence in Education, Training and Youthwork

ETBI General Secretary Paddy Lavelle with learners from Coláiste Cois Life Dublin & Dún Laoghaire ETB at Muintearas, Galway

In 2025, advancing excellence across ETB post-primary schools centred on supporting the people who lead, who teach and who shape the learners experience every day. It placed a significant emphasis on creating meaningful opportunities for school leaders and teachers to connect, learn and grow together.

Throughout the year, our school leaders engaged in a range of development opportunities, from national conferences and induction programmes to summer schools and peer networks. Events like the ETBI Principals and Deputy Principals Conference brought together over 300 leaders, where a space was created for shared learning and reflection. Alongside the likes of this conference and the annual ETBI Summer School for Middle Leaders, ongoing collaboration with Oide ensured that ETB perspectives were reflected in national professional learning programmes.

A particular strength of the year was the continued growth of collaborative professional learning. Initiatives such as Fóram Feasa brought together teachers and leaders working in Irish-medium settings, while Muintearas '25.



Dr Johanna Fitzgerald with inclusion coordinators at the Realising Inclusive Special Education (RISE) in ETB Post Primary Schools: Induction Day, Athlone

highlighted the importance of student voice in shaping school life. Programmes such as the CLIL professional learning initiative supported innovation in teaching and learning, particularly in Irish-medium contexts.

At the same time, the RISE Provision Mapping strategy continued to expand, supported by a structured programme of national and regional professional learning. Schools were supported not only to adopt new approaches, but to embed them in practice,

using shared tools, data and collaboration to strengthen inclusive education. This work was complemented by the ongoing development of the Cooperation Hours Scheme, which enhanced provision and subject choice across special schools while fostering new communities of practice among teachers.

At its core, this work was about enabling schools to learn from one another and in doing so, strengthening the quality and inclusiveness of education across the ETB network.



Goal 3: Enhance Provision of Support Services to ETBs

Dublin & Dún Laoghaire Development Officer Frances Shannon with Aishling Ryan Principal of Mount Seskin Community College at the RISE induction day

Over the course of the year, Schools continued to play a central role in supporting the ETBs through consistent and practical engagement.

This was reflected in the ongoing work of the Directors of Schools Forum, which met regularly throughout the year to guide strategic direction and support coordinated implementation at a local level. Alongside this, weekly engagement with Directors of Schools and the RISE team created an important space for real-time feedback, discussion and shared problem-solving. These regular touchpoints helped ensure that any issues could be addressed early on, while also strengthening the shared understanding of policy as it developed.

Support for governance remained a key priority. Through Board of Management training and workshops, including at the ETBI Congress, schools were supported to strengthen oversight, roles and responsibilities. At the same time, it provided ongoing



Cork ETB Director of Schools Pat McKelvey with delegates at the ETBI Summer School for Middle Leaders

advisory support across areas such as leadership, teaching and learning, research and policy implementation, ensuring that ETBs could access clear, evidence-informed guidance when needed.

This support was complemented by webinars, briefings and engagement with networks such as the Post-Primary Principals

Network, that helped maintain strong communication between policy, leadership as well as practice. Collaboration across ETBI and with external partners also ensured a collaborative approach, including work on national initiatives such as the Local Creative Youth Partnership and the development of an ETB AI Policy framework.



Goal 4: Be Ambitious to Transform ETBI

Dr Johanna Fitzgerald, Paddy Lavelle, Niamh Stack, Michael Moegie Maher and Professor Anne Looney at the ETBI Post Primary Principals & Deputy Principals conference

In 2025, the Schools Directorate played a vital role in supporting ETBI's continued growth as a modern and progressive organisation. It was a year defined by collaboration and innovation, placing a strong emphasis on developing people.

A key step in strengthening this work was the appointment of a dedicated Inclusive Special Education Policy and Development Officer, which reinforced ETBI's leadership role in this area and supported a more coordinated approach to inclusive education across the sector.

As well as this, significant investment was made in leadership and professional learning. Through induction programmes, summer schools, leadership networks and Communities of Practice, school leaders and staff were supported to develop their skills, to share their experience with one another and strengthen practice. Initiatives such as Fóram Feasa and the RISE strategy also contributed to this, creating structured opportunities for ongoing learning and collaboration across the sector. Collaboration continued to play a central role throughout the year. Partnerships with higher



*Professor Niamh Stack
Head of the
Department of
Psychology Mary I,
president of the GAA
Jarlath Burns and
Executive Dean of the
Institute of Education
Professor Anne Looney*

education institutions expanded, including work on the RISE Provision Mapping strategy and participation in innovation projects such as the AI-focused Diotima initiative with TCD Learnovate.

At European level, ETBI remained engaged in research and policy partnerships, while hosting knowledge exchange events that created opportunities to learn from and contribute to wider developments in education.

Internally, there was also a strong emphasis on improving how teams work together. Enhanced planning processes,

including the introduction of a shared calendar of events, supported better coordination across directorates. Joint approaches to inclusive and special education, spanning post-primary, CNS and special school settings, helped ensure greater consistency and alignment across the organisation.

Taken together, these developments have strengthened ETBI as a connected organisation that invests in its people, supports collaboration and is well positioned to respond to the evolving needs of its schools and learners.

Strategic Enablers (Positioning, Performance, Partnership)



ETBI's position as a trusted partner continued to grow, both nationally and internationally. Through its leadership in areas including inclusive education, governance and school leadership, ETBI continues to be recognised for its ability to connect policy, research and practice in ways that are practical, while building growth. This was particularly evident in the contribution to inclusive system development and the continued leadership in Irish-medium post-primary education.

This strong positioning was supported by consistent and quality delivery across core areas of activity. Throughout the year, induction programmes, professional learning, advisory supports and engagement structures were delivered at length, with high levels of participation across schools and ETBs. The sustained focus on research, networks and professional learning ensured that support remained relevant and based on the needs of the school.

Partnership continued to be a defining feature of Schools work. Close collaboration with the Department of Education and Youth, national agencies, Oide, education stakeholders, third-level institutions and European partners guaranteed that ETBI remained connected to wider developments, while also contributing its own expertise to the sector. These relationships strengthened both the reach and impact of its work, supporting a more aligned and collaborative education landscape.

Cross Directorate Collaboration



Collaboration across ETBI continued to be a key strength in 2025, supporting a more joined up and consistent approach to delivering for Schools. The Post-Primary Schools team worked closely with colleagues across inclusion, special educational needs, policy, digital and European engagement functions, ensuring that activity across the organisation remained aligned with shared priorities and strategic goals.

This collaborative approach was particularly important in advancing inclusive education and Irish language priorities. Through ongoing engagement with inclusion and SEN leadership, the Directors of Schools Forum, and colleagues across youth work and FET, a more coordinated approach began to take shape, one that connects policy development with practice across different parts of the organisation.

Strong links were also maintained with Communications, HR and other directorates, supporting clearer messaging and more coordinated planning. A key example of this was the Joint Forum, where cross-directorate work on inclusive education strategy progressed during the year, laying the groundwork for a shared position and future direction.

Together, these collaborative efforts ensured that ETBI continues to operate as a connected organisation, with different parts of the organisation working together to deliver better outcomes for schools and learners.



Priorities for 2026

President of ETBI Councillor Roger Kennedy with Waterford & Wexford ETB Director of Schools Emma Ryan and delegates at the ETBI Post-Primary Principals & Deputy Principals Conference



Supporting our school leaders will remain central, with the further development of induction and professional learning pathways, alongside a strengthened focus on middle leadership and Deputy Principal roles.

Governance and support structures will also continue to evolve, with ongoing Board of Management training and enhanced advisory supports ensuring that schools and ETBs are well equipped to respond to emerging challenges. At the same time, ETBI will deepen its engagement at European level, particularly in areas such as leadership development and the growing role of AI in education.

Inclusive education will remain a key priority. The continued expansion of the RISE strategy, alongside closer alignment with the Department of Education and Youth, NCSE and other partners, will support more coordinated activities across the sector.

Further work will also take place to embed the Irish language framework across ETBI, strengthen national networks in Irish-medium education, and progress key areas of policy such as Junior Cycle Gaeilge reform. In parallel, the continued development of the Cooperation Hours Scheme will support greater flexibility, capacity and subject choice within special schools.

Overall, the focus for 2026 is on strengthening what is already working well, deepening collaboration, supporting leadership and ensuring that ETBs are well positioned to deliver inclusive education for all learners.

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Instructional Leadership



Instructional Leadership Annual Report 2025

Principal Yvonne Naughton with teachers Aileen and Lauren in Cornamaddy CNS Longford & Westmeath ETB



The Instructional Leadership Programme (ILP) plays an important role in supporting teachers and school leaders to strengthen teaching and learning across primary, post primary and further education settings.

In 2025, the programme continued to grow in breadth and impact, while offering practical, evidence-informed professional learning that encouraged reflection, collaboration and continuous improvement.



Through a range of initiatives, partnerships and research activity, ILP supported educators to develop their practice and

deepen their understanding of how teaching influences student learning. This work is underpinned by a strong

commitment to inclusive, quality education and to supporting schools in responding to the evolving needs of learners.



Cohort 1 of Lasair: Delegates at the event supporting Principals and Deputy Principals as Instructional Leaders



Goal 1: Provide Strong Representation

In 2025, ILP continued to play an important role in representing the voice of teaching and learning within the wider education sector. At its core, it brings the lived experience of teachers and school leaders into national conversations about what effective teaching looks like and how it can be supported.

This was reflected in ongoing engagement with key partners such as the Teaching Council, NAPD and the National Council for Special Education. Events such as the NAPD Conference in Galway provided a valuable platform to share the impact of ILP, with school leaders speaking openly about their own journeys through the programme and

how it has shaped their practice. These moments not only showcased the work of ILP but also helped strengthen wider understanding of instructional leadership as a key driver of school improvement.

At the same time, the programme's growing links with higher education and

professional bodies have helped position ILP as an important contributor to national discussions on teaching, leadership and professional learning. Through its work, ILP continues to ensure that the voice of teachers, and their impact on learners, is clearly represented in how education evolves.



Goal 2: Advance Excellence in Education, Training and Youthwork

Supporting excellence in teaching and learning remains at the heart of the Instructional Leadership Programme. In 2025, this was brought to life through a wide range of programmes and learning experiences designed to support teachers and school leaders to reflect on, develop and strengthen their practice.

The year saw continued progression of Cohort 16, alongside the graduation of participants in the Peer Instructional Conferencing and Coaching programme, where teachers developed the skills to support one another through structured, reflective dialogue. These initiatives placed collaboration at the centre of professional learning, encouraging teachers to learn from one another and make sustained changes to their practice.

A significant development was the launch of Lasair, a programme designed specifically to support post-

primary senior leadership teams in leading teaching and learning within their schools. The first cohort completed the programme during the year, marking an important step in strengthening instructional leadership at school leadership level. Similarly, the development of Eochair, tailored for primary teachers, extended the reach of ILP and supported the implementation of the new primary curriculum through practical, classroom focused learning.

Across all programmes, there was a strong emphasis on creating positive, inclusive learning environments. New

elements such as Tribes, focusing on collaboration, respect and student wellbeing, further strengthened this approach and highlighted the importance of relationships in teaching and learning.

Together, these initiatives supported teachers and school leaders to reflect more deeply on their practice, build confidence in their role, and explore new ways of engaging learners. The impact is seen not only in improved classroom practice, but in stronger professional connections and a shared commitment to continuous improvement across schools.



Goal 3: Enhance Provision of Support Services to ETBs

Over the course of the year, ILP continued to strengthen the supports available to schools by developing structures that encourage ongoing learning, reflection and collaboration beyond individual programmes.

A key part of this work was the development of a stronger digital and knowledge-sharing infrastructure. The redesign of the ILP website created a more accessible and user-friendly space for resources, research and programme information, supporting teachers and leaders to engage with content at their own pace and revisit learning over time.

Alongside this, work progressed on developing a more formal support framework for

programme graduates. This includes plans to create online spaces for teachers to continue professional conversations, share experiences and access resources, helping to sustain the impact of the programme beyond initial participation.

Research also played an important role in strengthening support. Ongoing studies examining the impact of ILP on teaching practice, professional reflection and learner outcomes are helping to build

a clearer picture of what works and why. This work is complemented by the securing of funding for an external evaluation of the programme, which will provide further insight into its impact at both teacher and sector level. Taken together, these developments are helping to ensure that ILP is not just a series of programmes, but part of a wider, sustained support system for teachers and schools.



Goal 4: Be Ambitious to Transform ETBI

In 2025, the continued development of the Instructional Leadership Programme focused not only on strengthening the programme itself, but also on developing the knowledge and expertise within the ILP team. This dual focus supported a more informed, reflective and responsive approach to professional learning.

A key aspect of this was the growing role of research in shaping both the programme and professional practice. Ongoing doctoral research undertaken within the team has deepened understanding of how teachers engage with professional learning and the conditions that support meaningful and sustained development. This has directly informed programme design, strengthening the team's ability to develop learning experiences that are grounded in evidence and responsive to the needs of participants.

Alongside this, there was a continued emphasis on building skills within the team. Targeted

online learning, including courses in areas such as digital design, content creation and web development, supported the development of practical skills to enhance programme delivery, communication and engagement.

The programme itself also continued to evolve through the rollout and refinement of key initiatives. Lasair and Eochair expanded the programme across different education settings, while existing programmes, including peer instructional coaching, were updated to reflect participant feedback and remain relevant. Together, this reflects a more structured and thoughtful

approach to programme design and delivery.

Improvements to digital infrastructure further supported this work. The redesign of the ILP website created a more accessible and user-friendly platform for resources, research and programme information, helping to strengthen engagement with participants.

Taken together, these developments reflect a programme that continues to learn and adapt, while strengthening both its internal capacity and its ability to support high-quality, sustained professional learning across the system.

Strategic Enablers (Positioning, Performance, Partnership)



In 2025, the continued development of the Instructional Leadership Programme was supported by a strong focus on positioning, performance and partnership, ensuring that the programme remained responsive and aligned with the needs of teachers and schools.

ILP's position within the education landscape continued to strengthen, with growing recognition of its role in supporting instructional leadership across primary, post-primary and further education. While emphasising reflective practice, collaboration and evidence-informed teaching, the programme is increasingly seen as a valuable contributor to a national conversation on teaching quality and professional learning.

This strong positioning is supported by consistent delivery and sustained engagement. Across the year, programmes such as Lasair, Eochair and the Peer Instructional Coaching initiative continued to attract participation from a wide range of schools, reflecting the demand for quality, practice-focused professional learning.

Ongoing research and reporting have strengthened this work, helping to build a clearer

understanding of impact and inform future development.

Partnership remains central to the success of ILP. Relationships with organisations like the Teaching Council, NAPD, NCSE support shared learning, innovation and the continued development of instructional leadership across the sector.

Priorities for 2026



Looking ahead, the Instructional Leadership Programme will continue to build on the strong foundations established in recent years, with a focus on sustainability, evaluation and strengthening supports for participants.

A key priority will be the completion and publication of the external evaluation of ILP, which will provide important insights into the programme's impact on teaching practice, collaboration and student learning. This work will help inform future direction and support ongoing improvement.

There will also be a strong focus on enhancing supports for programme graduates. Plans are in place to further develop the ILP website as a central hub for resources and research, alongside the

introduction of online spaces to support professional dialogue and shared learning between teachers across schools. These developments aim to ensure that engagement with ILP continues beyond individual programmes and becomes part of a sustained professional learning journey.

Partnership development will remain an important area of focus, with continued collaboration at national level and opportunities to establish new connections, including potential cross-border

engagement. Ongoing work with partners such as NCSE will also support the refinement of programme content, ensuring it remains responsive to feedback and aligned with evolving school needs.

Finally, attention will be given to ensuring the sustainable delivery of ILP across different education settings. This includes expanding access, meeting growing demand and supporting school and teacher leaders at all levels to engage with instructional leadership as a central part of their practice.



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