

# intouch



**Vote for  
primary education**



# Vote #1 for Primary Education

2020 is set to be one of the busiest years yet for the union. In the spring alone we have a general election, teaching council elections, Equality, Youth and Northern Conferences, our annual Congress and a whole suite of informative events will be taking place across the country.

A new government will play a vital role in shaping the future of our primary education system

### Election 2020

This weekend, the country will go to the polls. A new government will play a vital role in shaping the future of our primary education system. From class sizes to pay inequality, supporting school leaders, resourcing a diverse range of pupils and funding schools, there is much to be done. Over the last number of weeks our members have raised these issues in every constituency across the country. In the last week of the general election, I urge you to get involved and share our campaign demands with parents, family and friends and ensure a resounding vote for primary education this Saturday.

We have already made it abundantly clear to all politicians that INTO expects long-standing equality claims for 2011-2014 entrants and for school leaders to be settled in 2020.

On the INTO website, there is a facility to send our core messages to all candidates in your local constituency. It only takes a minute and helps to ensure all those running for office are aware of the challenges we face and commit to stand up for our primary education system if elected.

*InTouch* has written to each of the main political parties with a series of questions on the key challenges facing primary education. You will find the answers to these questions in our election supplement included inside.

### Looking North

Following a three-year breakdown in power-sharing, 2020 kicked off with the formal

restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly at Stormont. INTO's Northern Office will seek to ensure that the restoration delivers for our members in Northern Ireland. It's absolutely crucial that teachers in Northern Ireland be given an early opportunity to ballot on the pay and workload agreement reached last summer and that the new assembly provides meaningful wage increases for our members for 2020 and 2021. The 'Northern News' section of the magazine includes updates on the work from the team in Belfast including guidance on entrance exams and a report on Northern Secretary Gerry Murphy's first six months as President of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

### Teaching Council

Elections to the Teaching Council are underway with a number of primary school teachers seeking election. INTO will not be endorsing any individual candidate but will seek to ensure that every member running has the opportunity to address our local meetings. We will also publish an election special with information on candidates which will be sent to all members ahead of voting commencing on the 24 February. Any member running for election is advised to contact INTO.

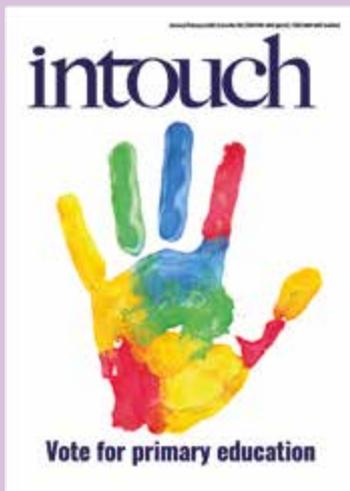
### Time For DEIS

I wish to thank all members who engaged with our #TimeForDEIS campaign before Christmas. 2,240 people took part sending almost 12,000 emails to politicians. We hope that the government improves the lot of all DEIS band one schools when the 2020/21 primary staffing schedule is announced.

I congratulate the Teachers' Musical Society as they celebrate twenty wonderfully creative years with the highly anticipated *Sister Act* to form part of their forthcoming programme. As usual, I'm really looking forward to attending the show, which runs from the 10-14 March.

John Boyle.

# intouch



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Tá mise ag vótáil  
ar son

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#WhereFuturesStart  
[www.into.ie/election2020](http://www.into.ie/election2020)

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# The challenge of falling enrolments

*18 years of decline to follow 18 years of growth*

Primary school enrolment numbers in the Republic of Ireland reached a peak of almost 570,000 in 2018. However, schools now face the challenge of falling enrolments, with numbers predicted to fall, year on year, until 2036.

A recent Department of Education and Skills (DES) publication says that the projected fall in enrolments alone would result in almost 9,000 fewer teachers being required by 2036, and taking account of projected teacher supply, that we may face what the DES calls “an excess of” almost 23,000 teachers by 2036.

## Demographic dividend

The INTO has responded to the DES publication by stressing the opportunity which arises through falling enrolments. The reduced numbers provide a ‘demographic dividend’ which the INTO believes must be used to reduce class size and improve the education service. Schools have widespread needs in the area of staffing, not least in order to cater for the more inclusive nature of our schools, to ensure that all absences are substituted through a supply panel mechanism and to cover for teachers undertaking CPD.

## Reduce class size!

The greatest need in primary schools is for all-round reductions in class size. Class sizes in Ireland remain at least four above comparative sizes across other EU member states and the OECD. It is

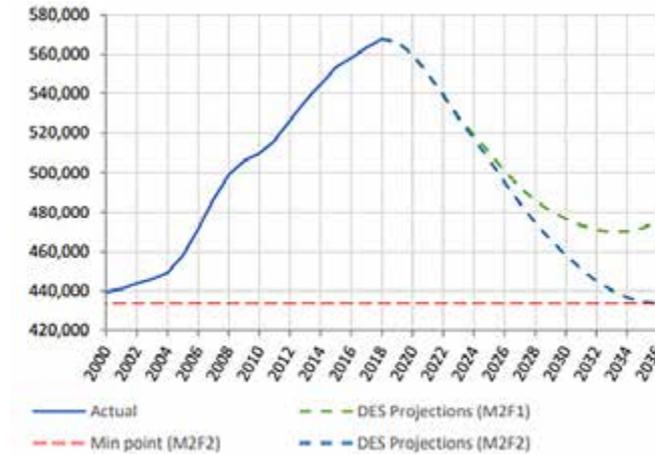


Figure 1. Enrolments in DES aided primary schools, actual and projected (M2F1 and M2F2), 2000 -2050

critical that the opportunity of falling enrolments is utilised to retain teachers, thus to reduce class sizes.

In its response to the DES teacher demand and supply modelling document, the INTO emphasized that it is “unconscionable that this State would export large numbers of teachers at a time when investment in our education service is below international norms, as evidenced for example in the OECD’s *Education at a Glance Reports*”.

## Regional factors

Enrolment projections across Ireland’s eight regional authority areas have also been examined in a DES publication. This indicates that the overall projected decline in enrolments will not be evenly distributed.

Across the years to 2036, for example,

the greatest decline is due to take place in the South West and in the West regions. These will each decline by over 29% in pupil population, while Dublin will also see a sharp fall of 28% in pupil numbers. Such falls potentially challenge the viability of some schools in a number of regions.

## Greatest challenge

These trends provide one of the greatest challenges for INTO over coming years. In the General Election campaign of 2020 the INTO is determined to secure commitments, across the political spectrum that declining enrolments will be utilised as an opportunity to improve the education service rather than to cut back on numbers of teachers in primary schools. The efforts of each and every member to ensure that this happens will be crucial.

## INTO submission on the Teaching Council’s Draft Guidelines on Social Media

In early 2019, the Teaching Council published *Draft Guidelines for Registered Teachers about the Use of Social Media* which are to be read in conjunction with the *Code of Professional Conduct*. As part of the consultation process, the Teaching Council sought the direct views of teachers on these guidelines.

INTO attended a stakeholders’ meeting on the draft guidelines in April 2019 and following a detailed review of the guidelines, INTO made oral and written submissions on behalf of members to the Council in September

2019. INTO’s submission is available at [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie).

Based on the INTO’s experience of fitness to teach complaints to date, we raised concerns and asked that the Council review the draft guidelines to ensure that:

1. The guidelines respect the fundamental rights of teachers and, in particular, the right of privacy and freedom of expression,
2. The guidelines shall not introduce new standards and/or augment the *Teaching Council Acts 2001-2015* and

the *Code of Professional Conduct* (2nd edition, 2016), and;

3. The guidelines shall provide clarification on the effect and application of the *Teaching Council Acts 2001-2015* and the *Code of Professional Conduct* (2nd edition, 2016), in particular, with respect to the standard expected of teachers communicating via electronic media in the context of fitness to teach. The Teaching Council anticipates that the finalised guidelines will be made available by the end of March 2020.

# High Court success for principal – dismissal quashed

INTO supported a principal who was dismissed from her post following allegations made by a special needs assistant (SNA). The High Court recently quashed the school’s decision to dismiss the member.

At the outset, the allegations made by the SNA were referred by the school to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, who deemed that the threshold for investigation was not reached based on the evidence. Notwithstanding the strong denials by the member of any wrongdoing, several sources of evidence to counter the SNA’s allegations,

Tusla’s determination on the matter and the member’s unblemished record over a 30-year career, the board of management of the school dismissed the member.

INTO successfully appealed the decision before the Disciplinary Appeals Panel (DAP) and a unanimous decision was made to reinstate the member with immediate effect and for no sanction to arise. Subsequently, the board of management confirmed its rejection of the DAP outcome and decision to dismiss the member.

With sanction from the Central

Executive Committee, INTO, on behalf of the member, initiated judicial review proceedings against the school.

Mr Justice Anthony Barr found in favour of the member on the basis that there was no evidence of the board of management’s consideration of the evidence as a whole, that the board did not identify what allegations were upheld, that the board of management failed to provide reasons for its decision to dismiss, and the failure to give due consideration to the DAP’s comprehensive findings and recommendations.

## Key dates for the Teaching Council elections

The current term for teachers serving on the council comes to an end in March 2020. Nominations closed at the end of January and details of all candidates running will be issued this month. All teachers registered with the Teaching Council are eligible to vote.

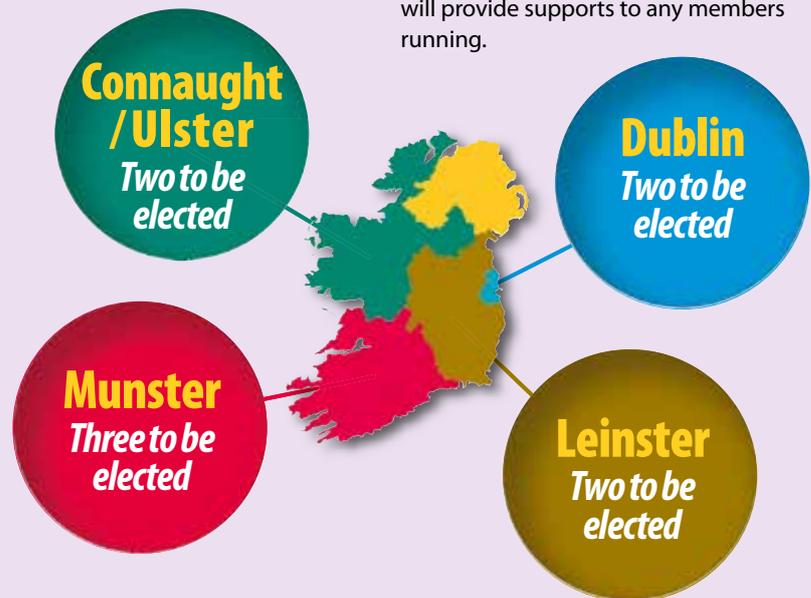
A total of nine registered primary teachers will be elected. The following number (see illustration) of registered teachers will be elected in each constituency (with at least one male and female member to be elected in each area).

The schedule is as follows:

- 9 January 2020 – Nomination process opened.
- 30 January 2020 – Close of nominations.
- 14 February 2020 – Candidates approved and published.
- 24 February 2020 – Voting commences.

- 11 March 2020 – Close of poll.
- 12 March 2020 – Results.

The INTO is not endorsing any particular candidates in this election but will provide supports to any members running.



## Global Citizenship School’s first human rights action day

Global Citizenship School has organised their first Human Rights Action Day for the week leading up to Friday 14 February – mid-term break time.

The theme is ‘A Home for Everyone’. A home is not legally a human right for Irish adults, but it is for Irish children. Children (0-18 yrs) are entitled, by law, to have the security of a home but, unfortunately, there are 4,000 homeless children in Ireland today. There are

homeless children in primary schools throughout our country and across all continents.

Teachers are asked to discuss homelessness with pupils and to make a short, simple video of children giving their views and to share the video among the whole school community. Discretion is important as there may be children in your class/school who are currently homeless but who do not wish

to be identified as homeless. Please post a photo of your school action on social media on Friday, 14 February using the hashtag #AHomeForEveryone, making sure you have the relevant parental permission.

Check out Global Citizenship Schools website by googling INTO Global Citizenship School. Class conversation prompts are under the tab ‘School actions’.

# Understanding your tax

Revenue has provided the INTO with the following information for members on their tax credit certificates, the new replacement for P60s and how to claim tax refunds.

## 2020 tax credit certificates

Tax credit certificates (TCC) for 2020 are currently being issued to all employees and pension recipients. Employees registered for myAccount on [www.ros.ie](http://www.ros.ie), and who have elected to receive correspondence electronically, will receive an email notification advising them that their 2020 TCC is available to view in My Documents, which is available in the top right hand corner of myAccount. Employees not registered for myAccount will receive their 2020 TCC in the post.

2020 TCCs contains information explaining that the P60 is being replaced by the Employment Detail Summary for the tax year 2019. More information on the Employment Detail Summary can be found below.

## Viewing pay and tax details in myAccount

Since 2019, employers and pension providers send Revenue details of pay, tax and other statutory deductions for each employee or pension recipient every time they get paid. Employees can now use myAccount to view their current year pay and deduction details as reported to Revenue.

Once logged into myAccount, this service can be accessed by clicking 'Manage Your Tax 2019' on the 'PAYE Services' page and clicking on 'View' beside the employment(s) listed.

If employees have any queries regarding the figures reported they should contact their employer in the first instance. If employees continue to have concerns regarding the figures reported by their employer, they can contact Revenue online through MyEnquiries.

## Employment Detail Summary (replacement P60)

As outlined above, since January last, employers and pension providers send Revenue details of pay, tax and other

statutory deductions for each employee or pension recipient every time they get paid.

This means that employers won't be issuing a P60 at the end of the year. Instead, Revenue will provide employees with an Employment Detail Summary.

This summary will be available in myAccount from January 2020 and will contain the employee's income and deduction details for 2019, as reported to Revenue by their employer. The information can be used in the same manner as the P60, for example, as proof of income to a third party.

Once logged into myAccount, this service can be accessed by clicking 'Review Your Tax' on the 'PAYE Services' page. The Employment Detail Summary will be listed under the tax year 2019.

## Preliminary End of Year Statement

From mid-January 2020, Revenue will make a Preliminary End of Year Statement available to all employees. This will provide employees with a preliminary calculation of their income tax and USC position for 2019 and indicate whether their tax position is balanced, underpaid or overpaid for the year.

Once logged into myAccount, this service can be accessed by clicking 'Review Your Tax' on the 'PAYE Services' page. The Preliminary End of Year Statement will be listed under the tax year 2019.

## Claiming a refund for 2019

In January 2020, the 2019 income tax return for PAYE employees will be available in myAccount. By completing a 2019 income tax return employees can:

- change existing credits/declared income;
- declare additional Income e.g. rental income, income from casual work;
- claim additional credits/reliefs e.g. health expenses.

2019 income tax returns will be pre

populated with pay and tax details received from employers. Where applicable, other income details, for example payments received from the Department of Agriculture or Food and the Marine (DAFM), will be displayed in an information table within the return. This information is provided solely to assist taxpayers in making their return. Recipients of such payments must still make a declaration of this income, and all other income, on their annual tax return. Benefits of displaying this information are as follows:

- minimises the burden on taxpayers;
  - makes it easier and faster to complete tax returns;
  - lessens the scope for errors or omissions;
  - further enables voluntary compliance.
- Once logged into myAccount, employees can file a return by clicking 'Review Your Tax' on the 'PAYE Services' card and then clicking 'Request' beside 'Statement of Liability' which will be listed under the tax year 2019.

## Changes to tax credits announced in Budget 2019

The main changes to personal income tax credits coming into effect from 1 January 2020 are as follows:

- The home carers tax credit has increased from €1,500 to €1,600.
- The earned income tax credit has increased from €1,350 to €1,500.
- The reduced rate of USC for medical card holders has been extended by one year.

## Managing your 2020 tax record

If employees need to make changes to their 2020 tax record, they can do so now by clicking on 'Manage Your Tax 2020' on the 'PAYE Services' page in myAccount. This will help ensure that employees pay the right tax at the right time from the start of 2020.

# INTO's #TimeForDEIS Campaign

At INTO Congress 2019, our membership voted to challenge social inequalities in our primary schools. These social inequalities are clearly manifest in our DEIS band one schools, which serve our most marginalised communities.

In light of the failure of government to reduce class sizes in DEIS band one schools, while every other school in the country has benefitted from such reductions, INTO ran a national campaign calling on the Minister for Education and Skills to directly intervene to lower class sizes in our most disadvantaged schools from September and announce this change in the forthcoming staffing schedule.

Almost 2,500 teachers and parents sent more than 12,000 emails in support of this campaign. Pupils from 3rd Class in Our Lady Immaculate SNS, Darndale joined the campaign explaining why they need smaller classes now.



## Employing a substitute teacher to cover for a substitute

After a substitute teacher has worked more than 40 school days in the academic year, or from the outset of a contract of more than 40 days' duration, they are classed as a non-casual substitute, and are broadly entitled to the same conditions of employment as their fixed-term or permanent colleagues. This is why a substitute teacher is paid at their personal rate – reflecting their point on the salary scale – after they have worked 40 school days.

However, both principals and substitute teachers are often unaware that non-casual substitutes are also

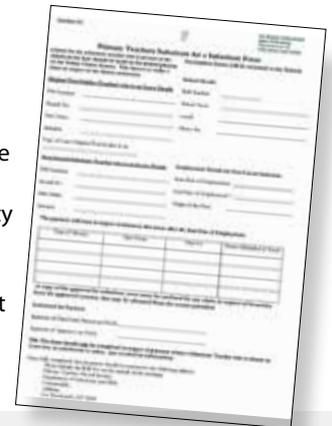
entitled to paid absences, such as sick leave, graduation leave, family illness leave, and even their own maternity leave. This entitlement to paid leave comes to an end at the end of the non-casual substitute teacher's contract.

Unfortunately, at present the OLCS does not reflect this entitlement, so when a non-casual substitute teacher is absent on substitutable leave – such as certified sick leave, or the second consecutive day of family illness leave – payment for their absence must be arranged directly with Primary Payroll.

In such an instance, the teacher who

is covering the absence will be paid through the OLCS, and the non-casual substitute will be paid using the Primary Teachers Substitute for a Substitute Form.

This form may be found on the sick leave and maternity leave pages of the INTO website, or on the Department of Education website.



## Important notice regarding crèche and senior camp at Congress 2020

The INTO has a policy of supporting the involvement of parents of young children in INTO activities including Annual Congress. The CEC is committed to continuing such support. However, stringent Tusla regulations make it very difficult to implement that support through provision of crèche facilities at the Congress venue.

### Crèche

In reviewing crèche provisions for the 2020 Congress, as in previous years, the Congress organising team sought advice from Tusla. It was clear and unequivocal that, under Tusla regulations, the rooms

available would not be approved for children and therefore a temporary crèche licence would not be granted to the INTO.

It is our judgement, based on our experiences at Congresses 2018 and 2019, that the more stringent regulations will make provision of crèche facilities all but impossible for future Congresses.

Accordingly, the CEC has decided to put in place a subvention process to assist parents who are delegates to INTO Congress, who have children under the age of five years. Details of the scheme may be found on the Officernet or can be emailed to you upon request by contacting gglackin@into.ie or (01) 804 7745.

### Senior camp

The senior camp for Congress 2020 will take place in Scoil na nÓg, Glanmire, and is suitable for children aged five to 12 years only.

To book your child/children into the senior camp, please complete the online booking form on the Congress page of the INTO website. Please note you are required to pay a refundable deposit of €30 per child.

Any queries in relation to the senior camp can be made by contacting Georgina Glackin at (01) 804 7745 or gglackin@into.ie.



# New appointments in Head Office

## Assistant General Secretary/Director of Operations and Finance

**Gráinne Cleary** has been appointed as assistant general secretary/director of operations and finance. Gráinne, a native of Dublin, has worked with the INTO for over twenty years in the Membership, Finance and ICT Section. She was designated as the INTO data protection officer in 2018.

As assistant general secretary/director of operations and finance, Gráinne will have responsibility for implementing an organisational strategy for operations and finance in the INTO, managing the delivery of corporate services, human resources and data governance.

Gráinne, a graduate of DCU, is a Fellow of the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants. She holds a Post-Graduate Diploma in Personnel Management and was awarded a Certificate in Data Protection Practice from the Law Society of Ireland in 2018. Gráinne is currently studying for a Higher Diploma in Data Analytics in NCI.



## Assistant General Secretary/Director of Communications

**David Geary** has been appointed to the position of assistant general secretary/director of communications. David held the post of senior official in the Communications section since June 2018. Prior to that, he headed up international affairs for a series of high-profile business and membership organisations.

In his new role, David will have responsibility for the overall communications strategy for the organisation, North and South. The director of communications will work closely with the General Secretary and Northern Secretary and report directly to the General Secretary.

David graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from NUI Galway in 2007. Subsequently, undertaking postgraduate study he graduated with a law degree (LLB, 2010) and a Master's in International Public Policy and Diplomacy (MBS, 2011) from University College Cork. In 2019, David was included in the Yahoo Finance/OUTstanding list of 30 global LGBT+ leaders.



## Senior Official – Human Resources

**Bernie Mc Hale** has joined the INTO as senior official with responsibility for all aspects of strategic management within the HR function in Head Office and Northern Office. Bernie comes from a banking background, with a long career in undertaking both commercial and HR roles. She brings extensive HR experience to the INTO, having spent 15 years working exclusively in senior HR roles.

In her new position, Bernie will work with the INTO's senior leadership team on all elements of formal HR policies and practices including employee engagement, HR development, CPD, recruitment and selection, workforce planning, employee/industrial relations and succession/talent management.

Bernie is a native of Dublin, originally from Santry now living in Portmarnock. She is excited to be part of the INTO team and very much looking forward to working with and supporting her new colleagues in Dublin and Belfast to ensure best in class service to all members.



## Official – Legal and Industrial Relations

**TJ Clare** has been appointed to the role of official in the Legal and Industrial Relations (LIR) section in INTO Head Office. Prior to being appointed as official, TJ fulfilled the role of acting official in LIR and completed the INTO internship.

TJ graduated from St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, in 2011 with a Bachelor of Education degree. He taught in the Dublin 15 area from the beginning of his career, primarily in Scoil Bhríde Buachaillí, Blanchardstown Village.

In his role as official to the LIR section, TJ will work as part of the team advising, supporting and representing members in a range of areas including parental complaints, staff relations, disciplinary matters, fitness to teach and equality cases. The LIR section also contributes to developments with stakeholders such as school management, the Teaching Council and the Department of Education.

Before joining Head Office, TJ was an active member of the INTO, serving as branch secretary in the Dublin North City Branch, district development coordinator and as District 14 secretary. He was also involved in campaigns on a broad range of issues and was a lobbyist for the Dublin West constituency.



# Exciting opportunity to work in INTO Head Office

## Two fixed-term positions as paid interns

The INTO invites applications for two positions as paid interns for the school year 2020/2021. Persons appointed will be located, for work purposes, in INTO Head Office (35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1).

These positions will be filled by secondment from teaching, subject to securing board approval. Persons appointed will work normal office hours, Monday to Friday, for the school year 2020/21. They will be subject to INTO Head Office conditions and relevant staff policies. The appointees will continue to be paid their normal DES salary and to accrue pensionable service as teachers, and will receive an additional allowance subject to a maximum combined amount.

A full statement of conditions of employment is available on request: email [gglackin@into.ie](mailto:gglackin@into.ie).

- The INTO is seeking members who:
- are enthusiastic about INTO and its services;

- have an interest, and ideally involvement at school/branch level, in INTO;
- seek more experience of INTO and its operation;
- have excellent oral and written communication and interpersonal skills;
- are trustworthy and appreciate the confidentiality associated with handling issues for INTO members;
- have good IT skills;
- have high standards and vision for INTO and for education.

The responsibilities will include working directly with sections within INTO, as assigned, assisting with members' queries and cases, attending meetings and preparing papers as required, researching specific issues and such other duties as may be assigned by the general secretary.

- To apply, please forward:
- a copy of your CV;

- a cover letter (two pages max) outlining your interest in INTO and how you believe you could contribute to/benefit from working with our Head Office team;
- names and contact details of two referees (with note of how each person knows you).

Your application, including the above material, should be sent to Internships, Office of the Deputy General Secretary, INTO, 35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, or by email entitled 'Internships' to [gglackin@into.ie](mailto:gglackin@into.ie).

All applications must be received not later than **5 pm on Friday, 28 February 2020**.

It is anticipated that a short-listing and interview process will take place with interviews scheduled for **Monday, 23 March 2020**. All applicants will be advised of the outcome.

## The INTO's interns share insights from their year in Head Office



### Muireann Foynes, Dublin North East branch

I started out as intern in September 2019 in the Legal and Industrial Relations section, which deals with members who have issues in areas such as staff relations and parental complaints.

In the last number of months, I have travelled to various parts of the country meeting members and attending hearings with them, and supporting and advising them in conjunction with my colleagues. I deal with members' questions on the query line on a daily basis and also work on cases such as fitness to teach investigations and disciplinary inquiries.

I have learned so much in a short space

of time and the experience has been the most intense, but rewarding, continuous professional development I have ever undertaken.

I have hugely enjoyed my time so far in Head Office working alongside experienced and supportive colleagues, and I look forward to starting in the Conditions of Employment and Leadership section soon.

I would strongly encourage anyone considering applying for the position of intern in 2020/21 to go for it. It is a fantastic opportunity for personal and professional development.

### Lisa Gallagher, Galway branch

As an active INTO member at branch and district level, I had a desire to learn more about the inner workings of the union. This prompted me to apply for the position of INTO intern this time last year. This year has far exceeded all of my expectations and has been one of the most fulfilling, rewarding and informative of my career to date. Since joining INTO Head Office, I have worked primarily in the Conditions of Employment and Leadership Section. In my role I have assisted and advised members on day-to-



day issues and entitlements, presented seminars on current issues and been involved with both the Equality and Education committees.

Every day in INTO brings a host of new and exciting opportunities for learning and I look forward to gaining further experience in the months ahead in my new role in the Legal and Industrial Relations Section.

The internship has been the ultimate professional development experience and I have thoroughly enjoyed working alongside the most professional, supportive and hard-working staff in Head Office. I would highly recommend the internship to any teacher.

# General Election 2020

## Vote #1 for primary education on 8 Feb

The INTO is keen to ensure that all our members are fully informed, ahead of election day, of political parties' views on and commitments to primary education.

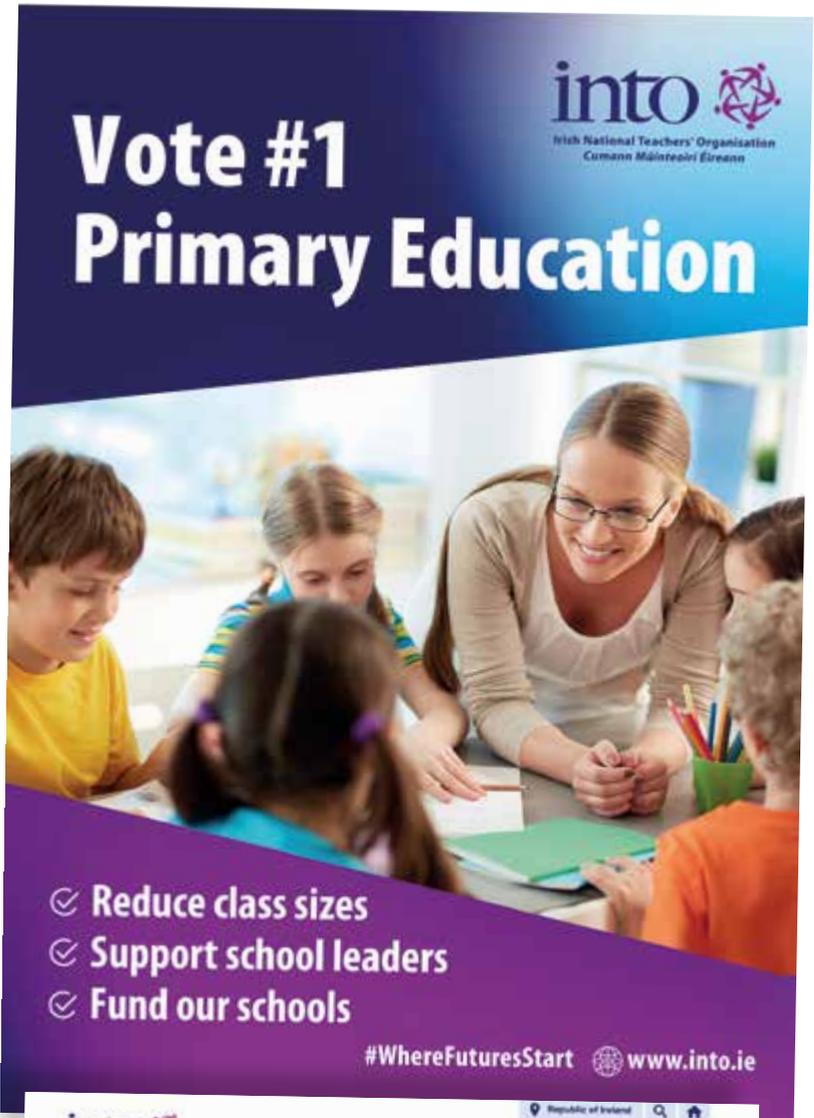
In addition to organising local hustings in various parts of the country, we have sent an election pack to each school with a sticker to display on the school window, a letterbox sticker for each teacher to highlight that they are supporting primary education, and canvas cards to share with candidates locally to facilitate conversation.

On the INTO website, in just a few clicks, members can email our priorities to all local candidates and share their local school's story on social media.

This general election, we are calling on politicians to:

- Reduce class sizes
- Support school leaders
- End pay inequality
- Fund our schools
- Resource inclusion

InTouch contacted the main political parties and posed specific questions on primary education and on teachers' conditions of service. The responses received are on the following pages for the information of members.



**into**  
Irish National Teachers' Organisation  
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

# Vote #1 Primary Education

- ✓ Reduce class sizes
- ✓ Support school leaders
- ✓ Fund our schools

#WhereFuturesStart [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie)



**Tá mise ag vótáil  
ar son  
BHUNOIDEACHAIS**

#WhereFuturesStart  
[www.into.ie/election2020](http://www.into.ie/election2020)



**into**  
Irish National Teachers' Organisation  
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

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#WhereFuturesStart  
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**I'm voting for  
PRIMARY EDUCATION**



**I'm voting for  
PRIMARY EDUCATION**

#WhereFuturesStart [www.into.ie/election2020](http://www.into.ie/election2020)



## FINE GAEL

Fine Gael believes in the potential within our education system to change our country for the better. In government, we have invested in education and we have a plan to continue this investment.

**1 Class sizes in Ireland are five above the EU average and our most disadvantaged schools have not had a reduction in class size in many years. Will you commit to an annual reduction in class size, for all primary schools, over the period of the next Government?**

We have reduced the pupil-teacher ratio to 26:1 but we want to do more and, over the lifetime of the next Government, we will reduce that further to at least 23:1.

**2 The allocation of per-pupil funding at primary level is much lower than that of second and third level education. How do you propose to address this?**

Over the past two years, we increased capitation by a combined 7.5% but we want to do more and, in the next Government, we commit to providing annual increases to the rate of capitation paid to schools.

**3 How will you support primary school leadership teams (principals, deputy principals and assistant principals)?**

In government, we have taken steps to support school leaders and worked through the Primary Education Forum to reduce the administrative burden they face but we want to do more to support school leaders, including those schools that take on additional special classes and teaching principals in their dual roles of class teachers and school managers.

**4 On pay, will you (a) resolve remaining equality issues (for post-2010 entrants to teaching, principals and deputy principals) and (b) increase pensions of retired teachers in line with pay of those still teaching?**

Addressing the issue of the difference in pay for post 2010 entrants is unfinished business and will be resolved in the context of the upcoming negotiations on a future pay deal.

Fine Gael understands the potential within our primary schools to impact positively on the lives of pupils and parents.

In government, we have already established pilots to provide hot meals in schools and free school books. By the end of this year 42,000 primary children will be provided hot meals and 15,500 primary children will be provided free school books but we want to do more and we will continue to expand both schemes.



**1 Class sizes in Ireland are five above the EU average and our most disadvantaged schools have not had a reduction in class size in many years. Will you commit to an annual reduction in class size, for all primary schools, over the period of the next Government?**

Class sizes have a vital role to play in ensuring that teachers have the time they need with each student to achieve the best educational outcomes.

Fianna Fáil secured the historic reduction of the pupil-teacher ratio in Budget 2018 through the leverage we were able to bring to bear through the Confidence and Supply Agreement.

We are committed to building on this achievement to drive the pupil-teacher ratio down even further, and to bring the pupil-teacher ratio down in line with the European average within the lifetime of the next government. This will be accompanied by further reductions in class sizes for DEIS schools.

This will require a concerted period of investment as pupil numbers continue to rise but will be rewarded in the long term. Investments made in the coming years will radically change the landscape of primary education.

**2 The allocation of per-pupil funding at primary level is much lower than that of second and third level education. How do you propose to address this?**

The failure on the part of the Government to provide appropriate levels of support

to primary schools had led to a whole host of issues. The pressure that is placed on school budgets has left schools with impossible decisions in some cases.

Voluntary contributions have put young families under pressure to the tune of €46 million per year and undermine the principle of free education. Despite the friction this causes with parents, capitation rates leave schools with no other choice but to rely on these payments in order to keep schools working.

Fianna Fáil have consistently secured increases in capitation rates for primary schools. In both 2018 and 2019, Fianna Fáil made the restoration of capitation levels a priority. We are committed to their full restoration in the lifetime of the next Government.

**3 How will you support primary school leadership teams (principals, deputy principals and assistant principals)?**

The role of principals, deputy principals and assistant principals has changed dramatically in recent years. The flurry of circulars which have issued from within the Department of Education calling for reforms across the board, without additional supports to implement them have landed directly at the door of school leaders.

Fianna Fáil is committed to a reduction in the number of circulars issued by the Department of Education which require immediate action on the part of schools. We are further committed to a

simplified process which gives teachers and schools the time they need to deliver on their core responsibilities. Through additional staffing for smaller schools and increased numbers of teachers, we provide the supports that school leaders need to focus on their core responsibilities and deliver the high-quality education our young people need.

**4 On pay, will you (a) resolve remaining equality issues (for post-2010 entrants to teaching, principals and deputy principals) and (b) increase pensions of retired teachers in line with pay of those still teaching?**

The ongoing pay inequality for new entrants to the teaching profession has resulted in a recruitment and retention crisis for teachers. Across the country, schools are experiencing greater and greater difficulty in securing cover and filling posts. This needs to be urgently addressed by attracting qualified teachers back into Ireland and into the profession.

Fianna Fáil have consistently called on the Minister for Education to address what he himself has described as "unfinished business". The increased expectations which have accompanied the minister's pronouncements at conferences have led us to the industrial action we are currently experiencing.

Fianna Fáil have been consistent in our commitment to ending the unequal treatment of teachers appointed after January 2011. We will deliver on that commitment.

# LABOUR

**1 Class sizes in Ireland are five above the EU average and our most disadvantaged schools have not had a reduction in class size in many years. Will you commit to an annual reduction in class size, for all primary schools, over the period of the next Government?**

Labour will reduce primary class sizes to the EU average by 2025 on a cost-neutral basis. We will also reduce DEIS class sizes in proportion to reductions in regular class sizes, and increase capitation to DEIS schools.

**2 The allocation of per-pupil funding at primary level is much lower than that of second and third level education. How do you propose to address this?**

Labour will make primary education genuinely free of charge, to fulfil the guarantee in the Constitution, including

free schoolbooks, a uniform grant and healthy school meals.

**3 How will you support primary school leadership teams (principals, deputy principals and assistant principals)?**

We will provide teaching principals with one administrative day per week. We will continue to expand the provision of special needs assistants in schools.

**4 On pay, will you (a) resolve remaining equality issues (for post-2010 entrants to teaching, principals and deputy principals) and (b) increase pensions of retired teachers in line with pay of those still teaching?**

Yes. Labour will end the two-tier pay system for teachers and school secretaries. And we will also ensure full pension restoration in line with full pay restoration.

**1 Class sizes in Ireland are five above the EU average and our most disadvantaged schools have not had a reduction in class size in many years. Will you commit to an annual reduction in class size, for all primary schools, over the period of the next Government?**

The Green Party provided for a reduction in class sizes in our Pre-Budget Submission for 2020 for all primary schools. We are fully aware of the need to prioritise supports for our most vulnerable children to ensure they reach their full potential.

Our many conversations with primary school teachers have all been centred around this discussion, and we know the reduction in class size is key and evidence shows learning outcomes improve when classes are smaller.

**2 The allocation of per-pupil funding at primary level is much lower than that of second and third level education. How do you propose to address this?**

We have repeatedly called for the restoration of the capitation grant for primary schools to pre-2010 levels.

The current under-resourcing of our primary schools is putting huge strain on students, teachers and principals. Schools are under huge financial stress as principals seek to make the money



stretch.

The increase in the capitation grant in the recent Budget was not enough even to keep up with demographic increases – increasing the capitation grant to pre-2010 levels is a practical step we can take to assist the struggles facing primary schools.

**3 How will you support primary school leadership teams (principals, deputy principals and assistant principals)?**

We have called for the provision of one administrative day every week for teaching principals, who are under enormous pressure to cope with the demands of their dual role.

The increased burden of administrative work is making effective school leadership next to impossible, and a structured restoration of posts of responsibility would ease this burden.

**4 On pay, will you (a) resolve remaining equality issues (for post-2010 entrants to teaching, principals and deputy principals) and (b) increase pensions of retired teachers in line with pay of those still teaching?**

The Green Party has repeatedly called for the swift and fair resolution of the equality issues for post-2010 entrants.

This is an issue of inter-generational discrimination and basic pay equality, and we are firmly committed to the principle of equal pay for equal work.



## Social Democrats

**1 Class sizes in Ireland are five above the EU average and our most disadvantaged schools have not had a reduction in class size in many years. Will you commit to an annual reduction in class size, for all primary schools, over the period of the next Government?**

Yes. We have committed to reducing class sizes, progressively aiming for a 20:1 ratio with lower ratios for DEIS schools.

**2 The allocation of per-pupil funding at primary level is much lower than that of second and third level education. How do you propose to address this?**

The Social Democrats stand for a properly-funded, world-class public education system. We recognise the

value of investment at all levels of education, and appreciate the value of investment at early stages of education in particular. We have no interest in pitting different sectors against each other, but in co-ordinating work across all sectors. We propose to restore capitation payments to 2010 levels.

**3 How will you support primary school leadership teams (principals, deputy principals and assistant principals)?**

We are committed to investment in continuous professional development for teachers and principals and more assistant principal/special duties posts.

**4 On pay, will you (a) resolve remaining equality issues (for post-2010 entrants to teaching, principals and deputy principals) and (b) increase pensions of retired teachers in line with pay of those still teaching?**

Yes.



## PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT SOCIALISM FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

**1 Class sizes in Ireland are five above the EU average and our most disadvantaged schools have not had a reduction in class size in many years. Will you commit to an annual reduction in class size, for all primary schools, over the period of the next Government?**

Definitely. Irish class sizes average 25 compared to a European average of 20 and one in five have 30 or more pupils. This is the legacy of underfunding and under-resourcing. A wealthy country like Ireland should seek to have class sizes that are below the European average – not above.

**2 The allocation of per-pupil funding at primary level is much lower than that of second and third level education. How do you propose to address this?**

For every €10 spent at primary level, almost €12 is spent at secondary level and €16 at third level. We want to significantly increase the funding level of primary school levels. This should not be done by cutting money to other sectors of education but by increasing the tax take from corporations and the wealthy.

**3 How will you support primary school leadership teams (principals, deputy principals and assistant principals)?**

By offering enhanced training and opportunities to share experience. Our aim is to encourage a democratic and non-hierarchical culture in schools.

**4 On pay, will you (a) resolve remaining equality issues (for post-2010 entrants to teaching, principals and deputy principals) and (b) increase pensions of retired teachers in line with pay of those still teaching?**

Teachers hired post-2010 should get the exact same salary scale as those employed before that date, including all allowances. It is simply a blatant case of discrimination. All cuts to pension should be immediately restored and pension and gratuity based on a proportion of final salary before cuts.



**1 Class sizes in Ireland are five above the EU average and our most disadvantaged schools have not had a reduction in class size in many years. Will you commit to an annual reduction in class size, for all primary schools, over the period of the next Government?**

The failure to tackle class sizes, particularly where it relates to DEIS schools, is a sign of the low priority the current Government have placed in education. In the Sinn Féin manifesto, we've committed to reducing the student teacher ratio in primary schools to 18:1 in our first five years in government across the board, but prioritising bringing down the ratio in DEIS schools. We also want more schools to be given DEIS 2 status, allowing them access to school completion and home school community liaison.

**2 The allocation of per-pupil funding at primary level is much lower than that of second and**

**third level education. How do you propose to address this?**

Schools are heavily reliant on voluntary contributions and fundraising because the capitation grant is inadequate. We first need to establish what the shortfall is, and to gather information on that. Sinn Féin wants to increase capitation grants year on year, to work towards pre-2011 levels of capitation funding, and to ensure that schools are not forced to fundraise simply to keep the lights on.

**3 How will you support primary school leadership teams (principals, deputy principals and assistant principals)?**

We support the restoration of promoted posts. We believe the workload placed on principals and teaching principals is excessive, and the lack of career progression is harmful to the profession as a whole. This is a sensible way of

recognising and supporting those who take on leadership and duties.

**4 On pay, will you (a) resolve remaining equality issues (for post-2010 entrants to teaching, principals and deputy principals) and (b) increase pensions of retired teachers in line with pay of those still teaching?**

We have been very vocal in our view that pay equality must be delivered across the board, it has dragged on far too long. It is totally wrong that there could be two teachers sitting next to each other in a classroom, doing the same work, yet on different scales. Lower paid teachers have been poorly treated, this has been an ongoing aggravation to teachers, and has left many significantly down on income. We would restore pay equality and we firmly believe in the principle of equal pay for equal work.

# Tackling social inequality in schools

*Five organisations state their hopes for Election 2020*



**FOCUS**  
Ireland

*Challenging homelessness, changing lives*  
For children experiencing homelessness, school is an important source of stability in their lives. Yet, homelessness can make it very difficult for children to properly engage at school. For many children, they are traveling long distances every day to make it from their emergency accommodation to their school. They may not have access to laundry facilities or a nutritious meal in the morning or for lunch. They may also be experiencing the stress and stigma of not having a home, which can isolate them from other children.

Focus Ireland wants to see the incoming government commit to a new strategy on family homelessness which will address homelessness in the classroom and give schools the supports and resources they need to help children in this awful situation. The aim of the strategy must be to alleviate the effects of homelessness in the classroom so that every child can participate fully in their education.



**Barnardos**  
Because childhood lasts a lifetime

Barnardos' vision is a country where every child can reach their full potential. We deliver services and work with families, communities, and our partners to transform the lives of vulnerable children who are affected by adverse childhood experiences.

The substantial financial cost of sending a child to primary school means access to education is not free and anything but equal. Since 2005, Barnardos has been highlighting the costs incurred by parents in preparing their children to return to school in September. Each

year, parents describe the substantial costs imposed on them and the impact that this financial burden has on their household budget.

While many parents can manage school costs out of their regular household budget, many families must forgo paying bills and cut back on other costs. In doing so, they clearly demonstrate that the mantra of free education rings hollow.

We call on all political parties to commit to ensuring that primary school education will be free to all children within the lifetime of the next government. As a first step, building on the Budget 2020 announcement, the provision of free school books to all pupils must be fulfilled.



Society of St. Vincent de Paul

*Our goal is to fight poverty in all its forms through practical assistance to people in need.*

As the largest charity addressing social concern operating in Ireland, the Society of St Vincent de Paul has a deep interest in education. We see access to education as a critical enabler out of social exclusion and poverty. SVP has been spending approximately €4 million annually helping people in various situations and at different stages of the life cycle to access education and training to improve their life chances.

SVP believes that the cuts in capitation rates makes it harder for schools to meet their running costs. An underinvestment in public education contributes to higher education costs for parents. It can result in an increase in requests for voluntary contribution which puts extra financial pressure on low income families that SVP support.

SVP are asking that the 33rd Dáil makes the right choices regarding children's education and increase capitation rates to schools so that all children can fully participate in our education system.



**CHILDREN'S  
RIGHTS  
ALLIANCE**

Uniting Voices For Children

The Children's Rights Alliance is calling on the next government to make primary education free for every child. Supporting children and young people to stay in school and supporting their performance and attainment is crucial to tackling child poverty and social inequality. Children in Ireland have a right to free primary education and yet over a third of parents are going into debt to cover back to school costs for their children.

It would cost an estimated €103 million to cover the basics of free primary education. This investment would provide free school textbooks and workbooks, eliminate voluntary contributions and reinstate capitation rates for schools.

Free education needs to be a priority in the next programme for government to ensure that every child has an equal start and is supported to reach their full potential.



**into**  
Irish National Teachers' Organisation  
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

Teachers see first-hand the impact that poverty and social inequality has on children in Ireland. They witness the impact on pupils in their class every day as it manifests itself in school attendance, academic achievement, participation, social engagement and educational aspirations.

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said "An investment in education is an investment in the future and in all of us". We need immediate investment in primary education and a reduction in class sizes to tackle inequality and facilitate better support for all children, but particularly those most vulnerable in our society.



# Education conference 2019

The 2019 INTO Consultative Conference on Education took place on Friday, 15 and Saturday, 16 November in the Newpark Hotel, Kilkenny. The theme of the conference was *Review of the Primary Curriculum*.

## Speakers

INTO President, Feargal Brougham, welcomed the 400 delegates and guests to the Marble City and in his opening address contrasted the situation of Irish children and teachers in today's society to those he had met on a recent trip to Palestine, highlighting the important role of teachers as advocates for empathy.

Siobhán Lynskey, cathaoirleach of the Education Committee, outlined the structure and work of the committee and updated those present on the INTO's current priorities in education policy. Speaking about our current *Primary School Curriculum*, she noted the positive reception with which it was welcomed by teachers and considered to be child-centred and innovative. However, she also stressed that 20 years have elapsed, and Irish society has experienced unprecedented change since the 1999 *Curriculum* was published. A new curriculum, she emphasised, must be fit for purpose and meet the challenges that

societal changes bring.

INTO General Secretary, John Boyle, then addressed delegates and discussed the differences between the current generation of pupils and those in the primary school system at the time of the 1999 *Curriculum*. He also placed emphasis on the importance of the teacher's voice at all stages of curriculum development and review as we continue to be key decision makers regarding the type of primary curriculum that is developed for children now and for the years ahead. Dr Deirbhile Nic Craith, INTO Assistant

General Secretary and director of education and research, spoke about the teacher's role in mediating the curriculum to meet the needs of the children in the context of the school and reiterated the vital role of the teacher in curriculum design.

Arlene Forster, NCCA deputy chief executive, discussed the NCCA's ongoing development of a draft primary curriculum framework which will be available for consultation early in 2020. The final presentation of the opening session of the conference was provided



## Irish Teachers' Journal

INTO President Feargal Brougham launched the 7th edition of the Irish Teachers' Journal at the Education Conference in Kilkenny.

This edition includes articles on wellbeing, leadership practices, LGBT teacher experience during the marriage equality referendum, assessment for learning, collaborative teaching, intergroup contact initiatives and the power of primary schooling in children's lives. A copy of the Journal was sent to all schools in December.

The INTO is now delighted to issue a call for articles for the 2020 edition of the Journal.

The purpose of the journal is to stimulate teacher thought and creativity through discussions and reflections on current issues in education. It also aims to provide a platform for teachers who have engaged in research to bring their findings to a wider audience by having their articles published. Traditionally, many teachers engage in further study, and the INTO hopes that these teachers, and others, will submit articles to the Journal to be read and appreciated by their colleagues.

Please email articles for consideration (5,000 – 7,000 words) to Claire Garvey ([cgarvey@into.ie](mailto:cgarvey@into.ie)) not later than Friday 3 April, 2020.

Full author guidelines are available on the INTO website [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie).



by four fifth-class pupils from two local schools, who presented the findings of surveys done in their schools on the pupils' views on the curriculum. This proved one of the most popular segments of the conference with delegates, providing an alternate view on the realities of pupil experience of the curriculum to that of the teaching professionals.

Some of the pupils' findings were:

- Maths was the most enjoyed subject



for pupils in both schools, followed by PE for the boys and history for the girls. Maths and art were the two top subjects students would like to learn more frequently.

- Girls and boys both enjoyed learning through games ahead of any other method.
- When asked what would make them



happier in school, each group was in favour of less homework, while the boys wanted more free time, the girls more friends.

- Their vision of a perfect school included no uniforms, outside learning, fun learning in groups and individually in a 'kind and happy environment'. Delegates then heard keynote speaker Dr Thomas Walsh of Maynooth University, a former primary teacher and inspector,

consider what a curriculum is, and the evolution of curriculum in Ireland over the last decades with particular focus on the role of the teacher. Saturday's keynote speaker, Professor Emer Ring from Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, discussed the teacher education continuum and the centrality of pedagogy to teacher interaction with the curriculum.

All presentations are available to view on the education conference page on the INTO website at <https://www.into.ie/events/conferences/education-conference>.

**Workshops /discussion groups**

Discussion groups were held on the Friday afternoon, and on Saturday morning delegates were given the opportunity to attend a series of workshops and a Teachmeet/ Researchmeet session. This involved delegates sharing good practice, practical ideas and personal insights into their role as a teacher or as a result of their research. The feedback from attendees at all sessions was overwhelmingly positive.





# INTO bursary winners

The INTO awards six bursary awards every year for research that is carried out by members in the field of education studies.

This year, the bursaries awarded were €3,000 for Doctorate Level and €1,500 for Masters Level/Other.

65 applications were received, and they were all sent to an outside, independent assessor for consideration. The winners were presented with their award by General Secretary John Boyle during the annual Education Conference.



Laura O'Sullivan, currently a classroom teacher in Scoil Bhríde, Kill, Co Kildare and working towards a Masters in DCU on 'The Voices of Six Female Primary School Principals in Ireland.'



Bridget Flanagan was presented with the IMR Award for STEM research in Irish primary education. She is photographed with INTO President Feargal Brougham and Barry Kennedy, CEO of Irish Medical Research (IMR).

Other bursary winners, not photographed were:

Mairead Holden, currently on secondment from St. Teresa's Primary School, Balbriggan, Co Dublin and working towards a Doctorate at the University of Lincoln.

Dean Vaughan, currently a class teacher at Assumption Junior School, Walkinstown, Dublin 12 and working towards a Masters at Maynooth University.



Louise Campion, currently a support teacher in St Oliver Plunkett School, Malahide, Co. Dublin and working towards a Masters in DCU on 'Considering the Professional Relationship of Classroom Teacher and Support Teacher: Hidden Hierarchies and Potential Barriers to Effective Inclusion.'



Edmond Gubbins, currently a full time student working towards a Doctorate in Mary Immaculate College on 'Musical Futures as Critical Pedagogy: Investigating Generalist Primary Teachers' Musical Backgrounds and Experiences and the Influence of a Whole School Participatory Action Research on Music Learning and Teaching.'



Jane O'Connell, currently a principal in Saint Philip the Apostle Junior National School, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 and working towards a Doctorate on 'Is Tusa an Múinteoir: Engaging Students and Parents as Learners of the Irish Language in English-medium Primary Schools.'

# What to expect at your local branch meeting

Are you one of the many INTO members who has never attended a branch meeting? Or has it been so long since you last attended you can't quite remember what happens or why you should go?

Here's a short run-through of what happens and why it's beneficial to attend your local branch meeting.

Each branch should hold an AGM (annual general meeting) in December or January, along with at least one other ordinary general meeting. Branch meetings generally take place quarterly.

Notice of a meeting is sent out in advance and usually, the staff rep in a school will put a notice up in the staffroom or circulate the information via another medium, e.g. WhatsApp to INTO members on staff. The notice will generally include the agenda for the meeting so that members know in advance what will be discussed.

Usually, these meetings are held in a local hotel, or sometimes a school in the locality. Refreshments such as tea and scones may be provided before or after the meeting. Times vary, with some branches having their meetings straight after school, around 3.30 pm, and some having them in the evening, from 7 pm.

## 1 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting are read and agreed on, provided they are correct and that they are proposed and seconded by members in attendance.

Any matters arising are discussed.

## 2 Reports

The secretary's and organiser's reports will be provided, and relevant communication to the branch will be highlighted. Each part of the agenda is discussed and members attending can ask questions or seek clarification. There may be short reports on topical or local matters, e.g. Droichead, workload, lobbying, etc from the local representative of the Principals' Forum, Education Committee and/or Equality Committee.

## 3 Delegate opportunities

Opportunities to attend upcoming INTO conferences will be flagged, and members can seek to go as a delegate from their branch.

## 4 Key updates

At the meeting, the local Central Executive Committee (CEC) representative may also be in attendance and will give their report if present. The branch secretary will provide updates and information on what is happening at national and local level in terms of industrial relations, conditions of employment, and legal issues for teachers and schools. The CEC rep may also deliver good news to members, such as pay uplifts, that have been gained as a result of a combination

of the work undertaken in Head Office during negotiations with the government and the vital lobbying at local level by members on the ground.

## 5 AOB

To finish the meeting, AOB (any other business) is discussed, and motions of sympathy are observed. Once the meeting has concluded, it is a great opportunity for members to discuss what they have heard on an informal level with others attending in the locality. Branch meetings also provide a great opportunity for younger or new teachers to the area to meet their peers in the locality and to get to know local principals.

Branch meetings generally last about an hour, depending on local practice, and serve a social and informative purpose for members. There is no pressure on anyone to participate more than they feel comfortable with, and any member can come along simply to listen. You will leave more informed than when you went in, can have a chat with teachers and principals dealing with the same or similar issues to yourself, and get informal advice and support. For anyone who has never attended a branch meeting, or hasn't attended in a while, I would urge you to make 2020 the year that changes.

**MUIREANN FOYNES, Dublin North East branch.**

# Tributes



## Anne O'Leary

Anne began teaching in Scoil Phádraig Naofa, Rochestown, Cork in 2009. It was a job Anne loved, a job she excelled at and something to which she gave her all. Her colleagues remember her kindness to both pupils and staff. Anne believed in nurturing all children and encouraging them to reach their full potential. Both pupils and staff were lucky to benefit from her love of art, music and song. A visit to Anne's class would lift your spirit and you always left with a light step and a smile on your face.



When Anne had to take sick leave, she was sorely missed. Her sense of humour, her laugh and her smile had such an

impact on her colleagues and friends. Anne used this time to focus on her belief that the message of sun safety had to be a priority, especially for children. Though often very unwell, she continued her love of educating ... and so, 'Sunny Days' was born.

Anne's Sunny Days Melanoma Cancer Awareness campaign educated children on the need to be sun smart. It taught them to love and respect their own skin, never to burn and showed them how to make healthy sun protection choices. In 2016, she began a sun hat campaign in five schools, where pupils agreed to wear sun hats in their school yards from April to September.

Pupils and staff of Scoil Phádraig Naofa have learned so much about the importance of sun safety through Anne's hard work and research, as have many other schools. Indeed, spreading this important message became Anne's passion, even as her own health deteriorated. Her legacy is evident in many school yards where children can be seen running around in their 'Sunny Days' sun hats.

Anne passed away on the 25 August 2018 at the young age of 46, leaving behind a loving family, dear friends and colleagues.

Ar dheis Dé go rabh a hanam.

**Staff of Scoil Phadraig Naofa, Foxwood, Rochestown, Cork.**

## Fiona Geraghty

The community of St Molaga's were deeply saddened by the sudden and tragic passing of our teacher, colleague and friend – Fiona Geraghty.

Fiona began teaching third class in 2017. She was an enthusiastic, energetic teacher who always got the best from her students. She built a natural rapport with children in her class and they, in turn, flourished under her guidance. She was lively but calm, innovative and creative in her work and loved by pupils and staff alike.

Fiona threw herself wholeheartedly into school life, often finding joy

in the little things. From enthusiastically coaching her class in the school play, to rallying the troops for the annual teachers vs students football match, to researching antics for her Elf on the Shelf to get up to, she helped create a sense of wonder and excitement amongst her pupils.

As a colleague, Fiona possessed an infectious smile and had time for everyone. Always positive she was also extremely thoughtful, always willing to



offer help or guidance. Despite being relatively new to the staff, she slotted in seamlessly to the school community and became an integral part of school life.

We miss Fiona's positivity, her enthusiasm for life, her smile and her sparkle. Our thoughts and prayers are with her parents, Christopher and Mary, her

brothers David and Robert, her partner Fiachra, and all her many friends.

**Staff of St Molaga's NS, Balbriggan, Co Dublin.**

## Aileen Walsh-McCourt

Aileen started in Glenville NS in 2005, having previously taught in St Mary's on the Hill School in Cork City. She came to us with a smile, and her very arrival broke the mould. We had been a four-teacher school for so long, nice and neat, four teachers and four classes. Aileen became our fifth teacher. We were very fortunate to have been able to appoint someone of her calibre.

Aileen was always professional, personable and practical. She was sunny and outgoing and fully involved in all



that we did. She got on well with all of us as we grew and changed, and was caring and capable in every class she taught.

She was an active member of the school board of management that steered through the building project, giving freely of her time and talents outside of work hours. She was our first green school co-ordinator and was so proud when we were awarded our first Green Flag. She used her IT background to good effect in managing the school website and use of modern technology.

Her illness was a shock to us all. She was so vivacious. That she didn't recover seems incomprehensible. It must have been even more difficult for her husband Mick, and children Eimear, Caoimhe, and Con.

Aileen came to us with a smile, and she left us with a smile, too. Her last visit to the school was for a function in November. She looked so well. She met colleagues, parents, past pupils, engaging with everyone, talking and chatting as if it was just another day.

It was her goodbye. We all miss her so.

**Staff of Glenville NS, Co Cork.**



# New Year, same great you

## Kickstart your 2020 with health and fitness savings from Membership Plus and save up to 50% off gym memberships, sports equipment, groceries, vitamins and supplements

### Health offers

- Art & Healing Centre** 25% Discount Nenagh
- Bergin's Pharmacy** 15% Discount Newbridge
- Mary Street Pharmacy** 20% Discount Mullingar
- McSharry Pharmacy** 10% Discount 8 locations
- Myvitamins** 50% Discount Online
- North East Pilates** 15% Discount Drogheda
- Rochford's Pharmacy** 10% Discount Ennis
- Ruth's Pharmacy** 10% Discount Letterkenny
- Shivam Yoga** 70% Discount Dublin
- The Health Store** 10% Discount 10 locations & Online
- Tesco** 4% off Shopping Cards Order Online
- University Late Night Pharmacy** 10% Discount Galway
- VideoDoc** 50% Discount Online
- VITL** Free trial + 30% Discount Online



Your Membership Plus card gains you access to over 1,500 offers and discounts for you and your family to enjoy with savings on eating out, fashion, days out, hotels and travel, and much more

### Fitness savings

- Aura Leisure Centres** 10% Discount Countrywide
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- Educogym** Special Offer 9 locations
- Fitness Bootcamp** 10% Discount various locations
- Gym Plus** Special Offer 8 locations
- Halfords** 10% Discount Countrywide
- Kinetic Fitness** 20% Discount Wexford
- Kiwifit Gyms** 10% Discount 2 Dublin locations
- Mayfield Sports Complex** Up to 15% Discount Cork
- Skechers** 20% Discount Countrywide
- SPORTSCO** Special Offer Dublin
- Thurles Leisure Centre** 20% Discount Thurles
- Trespass** 20% Discount 9 locations
- Zest Fitness** Free trial + 20% Discount Dublin

## Don't miss out ...

### Keep an eye on your inbox

Membership Plus send out regular emails with new offers, competitions and time-limited offers, so make sure you've added Membership Plus to your safe sender list.

### Follow Membership Plus

Like 'Membership Plus Ireland' on Facebook to keep the latest offers in your timeline.

## Save on the go with your digital Membership Plus card ...

The new digital Membership Plus card is an easy way to continue enjoying your Membership Plus discounts, even if you have left your plastic Membership Plus card at home!

It is conveniently accessible in the mobile app, here's how it works:

1. Download or update to the latest version of the Membership Plus app from the App Store or Google Play for free.
2. Log into the app using your registered email address and password or if you

haven't yet created an account, click on register to activate your card.

3. Choose any in-store offer to redeem.
4. Click the Use Now button at the bottom of the full offer page to access your digital card.
5. Present your digital card on your phone to redeem your discount.

If you need any help or would like to send us your feedback, suggestions or ideas, please email [info@membershipplus.ie](mailto:info@membershipplus.ie) or call us on 048 9052 2098.

### What other cardholders say...

"It's a brilliant card, I love using it. Keep the offers coming!"

"I love the feature of the app that tells you all the offers near you. I find it handy for when in shopping centres!"

"Thanks, it's always nice to get a discount. You don't feel as guilty

treating yourself or your friends to things you don't need but do enjoy!"  
"I used it during the Easter Holidays to save 15% on a weekend away. That is a super saving!"  
"It's great to get the discounts so readily in participating shops."

# Retirements

Pictures from branch and district functions to honour retiring members



## Ballina

Back row left to right: Catherine Forde, Anne Hickey, Rita McHugh, Aileen Horkan, branch secretary; Patricia Breslin, Anne Staunton, Vincent Duffy, CEC representative and Colin Syron, branch and district chairperson. Front row left to right: Martina Caden, Evelyn Judge, Geraldine Gill and Helen Gibbons.



## Limerick East

Left to right : Majella Sutton, branch secretary; Mary Richardson, branch chairperson; Joan O'Connor; Mary O'Dea; Lynn Agnew and Anne Horan, CEC representative District 13.



## District 5

Photo taken at District 5 meeting where a presentation was made to Mary Callan Brady, outgoing District 5 secretary. Mary was secretary of District 5 for 18 years. Back row left to right: Liam Maguire, District 5 treasurer; Rosena Jordan, INTO President 2016/17; Catherine Flanagan, CEC representative and John Boyle, INTO General Secretary. Front row left to right: Ann Maguire, District 5 chairperson; Mary Callan Brady, outgoing District 5 secretary and Niamh Harris, District 5 secretary.



## Limerick City

Front row left to right: Orla McCoy; Nola Murray; Feargal Brougham, INTO President; Geraldine Stackpoole and Margaret Bernard. Back row left to right: Denis O'Connor; Ann Marie Hayes, branch chairperson and Tom O'Dwyer.



## Birr Banagher

Back row left to right: Carmel Browne, CEC representative; Niall Kelly, branch chairperson; Niall Crofton, Joe Killeen, INTO President 2018/19; Joe Cleary and Liadhan Kelly, branch secretary. Front row left to right: Connie McGoey, Mary Lonergan, Breda Fitzpatrick and Maureen Birmingham.



# Free research resources on the Teaching Council website

The Teaching Council has developed a bank of resources to assist teachers in accessing research which is relevant to their classroom practice. The following resources and more, are available on the 'Research' pages of the Teaching Council's website:

### Library of research articles, journals and eBooks

The Teaching Council provides free access to this library for registered teachers. Videos showing how to access the library and how to search the library for relevant content are now available on the 'Research' pages of the Teaching Council's website.

### Research webinars

The Teaching Council produces research webinars on topics which are relevant to the teaching profession. Webinars often involve panel discussions or include guest speakers. These webinars can be watched live at the time of broadcast and recordings of all previous webinars are available to watch at any time on the 'Research' pages of the Teaching Council's website.

### Research ezines

Issued regularly to all registered teachers, the Teaching Council's research ezines include summaries of research articles which are relevant to the teaching



profession. The articles are chosen and summaries written by registered teachers. All previous ezines are available as a bank of resources on the Teaching Council's website.

## Book your breast health awareness and education programme today

The INTO in partnership with Breast Cancer Ireland and Cornmarket launched a Breast Health Awareness and Education Programme for teachers and support staff about the importance of breast health education. Qualified Breast Cancer Ireland outreach coordinators have been delivering presentations in primary schools throughout the Republic of Ireland. Using a medically induced mannequin, the outreach coordinator explains the eight signs and symptoms of breast cancer, as well as explaining how to perform a self-check examination.

We have six Breast Cancer Ireland outreach coordinators delivering the programme, travelling the length and breadth of the country. Since the launch in September 2019, over 450 expressions of interest from schools have been received and almost 90 school presentations had been completed by the end of 2019. Of the six coordinators, four are breast cancer survivors and two are nurses, and they have a genuine passion to educate others and share their stories. The feedback so far has been really positive.

We are encouraging all staff, both male and female, working in schools to come along to the presentation, not just teachers or INTO members. Educating on the importance of self-checking is the main focus of this programme.

Presentations can be arranged for 20-25 minutes during lunch time or 45 minutes after school hours (Croke Park hours). The programme will be rolled out over the next five years and a presentation can be arranged at a time/date that suits staff in your school.

To find out more or register your interest in a presentation, visit: <http://bit.ly/CornmarketBreastHealth>.



# INTO members awarded bursaries by Teaching Council

INTO members were among the recipients of 24 bursaries recently awarded by the Teaching Council to teachers and others engaged in a range of education-related research projects. The bursaries, totalling more than €86,000, were awarded under the third cycle of the John Coolahan Research Support Framework – a key element of the Council’s CROÍ (Collaboration and Research for Ongoing Innovation) research series.

The framework is designed to support teachers’ ongoing professional growth

through their engagement in and with research, and the sharing of learning from that process.

The research activities being supported by the Teaching Council under the framework cover a range of topics from professional learning, to well-being, to student teachers’ attitudes to teaching in a Gaelcholáiste. Ten INTO members were involved in six projects involving innovative partnerships across schools, and between schools and higher education institutions. Below is a list of the projects involving INTO members:

- *Developing Innovative, Research-informed Professional Learning Materials to Guide Primary Teachers’ Individual and Collaborative use of Standardised Testing in Support of Pupils’ Learning.* Zita Lysaght, Deirbhile Nic Craith, Siobhán Lynskey and Michael O’Leary.
- *An Exploration of Teacher Experiences and Perceptions of Social and Emotional Health Promotion in Irish Primary Schools: A Professional Learning Community Approach.* Sinéad Foley.
- *Portfolio-Based Learning for Teachers: Developing Professional Learning Pathways for Critical Thinking in Teaching.* Kathryn Corbett.
- *School University Partnership in Educational Research for Well-being (SUPER-WELL).* Grace Burke, Bebhinn Joyce.
- *To Explore the Impact of Lesson Study on Teachers’ Knowledge and Skills in STEM in Junior and Senior Infants.* Bridget Flanagan.
- *Initial Enrolment of Pupils with Autism in to Primary Education - How can School Leadership be Supported to Ensure a Positive and Professional Experience for Leader, Practitioner, Parent and Child.* Linda Dennehy.



## Re-vetting of registered teachers on a rolling three year cycle

On successful completion of the 2019 re-vetting project, which involved the re-vetting of the 37,000 registered teachers who held the old paper-based GCVU vetting result, all of the 105,000 teachers on the Register of Teachers now hold a National Vetting Bureau Vetting Disclosure.

It is expected that the Minister for Justice and Equality will announce, in the coming months, the requirement

that all persons working with children or vulnerable adults will be required to undergo re-vetting every three years. In preparation for this, the Teaching Council has commenced the re-vetting of registered teachers on a rolling three year period. Re-vetting will be linked to the teacher’s renewal of registration. Teachers who are issued a re-vetting letter, must complete the two stage vetting application process in order to be able to renew their registration.

## Conditional registration and extension requests

**The Teaching Council is currently reviewing the procedures for extension requests. This occurs when a teacher who has not met the condition attached to their registration within the given timeframe (generally three years) may request additional time to fulfil the condition and remain on the register. From January, the Council**

**will accept extension requests and supporting documentation via email. This will help streamline the process and facilitate quicker turnaround of extension decisions for teachers. In addition where a teacher submits an incomplete extension request, this will be returned to them for correction and re-submission.**

## Update on Droichead

The Droichead process has continued to grow again this year with more teachers applying every week. As of 23 December 2019, there were 1,610 teachers undertaking Droichead across 844 primary and special schools. In total there were 2,797 teachers availing of the process in 1,327 schools this year. This represents a significant growth on the same period last year.



## Vere Foster Awards



Louise Moriarty, Hibernia College.



Rachel Meagher, Hibernia College.



Caoimhe Shaw, Post Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary), DCU.



Nadine Kate Lyons, Professional Master of Education (Primary), Dublin City University.

### Vere Foster Medal

The INTO Congress of 1956, held in Belfast decided to organise a suitable memorial as a tribute to the memory of Vere Foster, Captain McCune-Reid, President of the INTO at the time, acted as secretary to the committee which undertook this task. He prepared and published an interesting and informative account of Foster's life and work.

The memorial takes the form of a Vere Foster medal, and is generally awarded by the INTO, to the student obtaining the highest mark in Teaching Practice and/or Curriculum areas of Education.



Sterling Silver, Gold Plated, Hall Marked

### Vere Foster 1819 – 1900

**First President of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation**

Vere Foster was born in Copenhagen of an Irish-born father. He worked in the UK Diplomatic Corps but left to help the victims of the great Famine on his brother's estate in Ardee, Co Louth.

Concerned by reports of the terrible conditions for those using emigrant ships, Foster campaigned in the USA and Britain for improved conditions for passengers. He helped to found and became the first President of the INTO, travelling throughout the country campaigning for the maintenance and improvement of national schools.

Foster is also known for the popular 'Vere Foster National School Writing Books'. He died in Belfast on 21 December 1900.

## The Irish Language Requirement – a year in statistics

A total of 182 teachers will undertake the Irish qualification this academic year, 32 men (18%) and 150 women (82%). 83 applicants undertook the Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (SCG) and 99 the Oiriúnú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (OCG). The teachers are teaching in various counties around the country.

182 mhúinteoir san iomlán atá ag tabhairt faoin gCáilíocht sa Ghaeilge sa bhliain acadúil seo – 32 fhear (18%) agus 150 bean (82%). Tabharfaidh 83 iarrthóir faoin SCG agus tabharfaidh 99 iarrthóir faoi OCG. Tá na múinteoirí ag múineadh i gcontaetha éagsúla ar fud na tíre:

More information about the Irish Language Requirement is available from Foireann na gCáilíochtaí Gaeilge, Institiúid Oideachais Marino. Web: [www.ilrweb.ie](http://www.ilrweb.ie) email: [scginfo@mie.ie](mailto:scginfo@mie.ie), [ocginfo@mie.ie](mailto:ocginfo@mie.ie).

### Líon na n-iarrthóirí sna contaetha éagsúla

|                     |    |                          |    |                          |    |
|---------------------|----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|
| Carlow/Ceatharlach  | 6  | Cavan/An Cabhán          | 6  | Clare/An Clár            | 4  |
| Cork/Corcaigh       | 9  | Donegal/Dún na nGall     | 15 | Dublin/Baile Átha Cliath | 46 |
| Galway/Gaillimh     | 4  | Kerry/Ciarraí            | 6  | Kildare/Cill Dara        | 5  |
| Laois               | 2  | Leitrim/Liatroim         | 2  | Limerick/Luimneach       | 3  |
| Louth/Lú            | 3  | Mayo/Maigh Eo            | 3  | Meath/An Mhí             | 8  |
| Monaghan/Muineachán | 4  | Offaly/Uíbh Fhailí       | 1  | Roscommon/Ros Comáin     | 1  |
| Sligo/Sligeach      | 1  | Tipperary/Tiobraid Árann | 3  | Waterford/Port Láirge    | 6  |
| Westmeath/An Iarmhí | 2  | Wexford/Loch Garman      | 4  | Cill Mhantáin            | 8  |
| Other/eile          | 30 |                          |    |                          |    |

## Win solar panels for your school

The Friends of the Earth *For the Love of Solar* competition is open for entries. Winning schools will receive solar panels designed and installed on the roof of their school with a 90% grant, allowing them to generate clean, free, renewable electricity to power their whiteboards, photocopiers and computers right from their roof. Schools all over the country are

invited to take part by coming up with an idea for a local project on climate action.

The Friends of the Earth *For the Love of Solar* schools competition is in its second year. In 2019, a pilot competition was run across five communities; Tipperary, Limerick, Mayo, Dublin and the Aran Islands.

Details of the winning projects from

2019 can be viewed at [www.foe.ie/solarschools](http://www.foe.ie/solarschools).

The 2020 competition will be held nationally and is open to all primary and secondary schools. The closing date for entries is 14 February 2020. The winners will be chosen by a combination of an independent judging panel and an online public vote.

## Clare school wins 'Something Fishy' competition

Doora NS, Ennis, Co Clare, has been named winner of Inland Fisheries Ireland's national 'Something Fishy' Awards 2019. The pupils from sixth class were presented with the trophy at an awards ceremony in Ennis. During the 2018-2019 academic year, 104 national schools and 12 education centres took part in the fisheries education programme which reached over 2,000 students across the country.

As part of 'Something Fishy', students learn about fish and the environment, enjoying classroom-based activities, as well as a practical fieldtrip with fisheries officers. The programme is an initiative of Inland Fisheries Ireland, in partnership with



Blackrock Education Centre.

Doora NS received the national accolade for their 'Something Fishy' blog project, which saw them complete artwork on the life cycle of a salmon, report on their field trip, and produce an exercise book.

## Dublin school wins Water Safety Ireland award

The Primary Aquatics Water Safety (PAWS) club of Scoil Eoin, Kilbarrack, Dublin 5, recently received the Leon Quinlan Perpetual Award for their efforts to promote and educate their local community about water safety. The award was set up in memory of Leon Quinlan, who sadly died while on holidays with his family.

Teacher Cora Coppinger, along with club representatives, were presented with the award by Chairman of Water Safety Ireland, Martin O'Sullivan, and Minister for Rural and Community Development Michael Ring TD.



## Learn outdoors with the HerbPatch

The HerbPatch is a not-for-profit educational project, developed, in conjunction with the Irish Register of Herbalists, to provide primary schools with a sensory herb garden, bringing the classroom outdoors and allowing children to plant, learn and have fun. The HerbPatch is a 1m x 1m square garden, containing nine specially selected child-friendly herbs – rosemary, parsley, peppermint, lavender, chamomile, marigold, lemonbalm, heartsease and thyme. To facilitate easy integration into the curriculum, lesson plans and

activity sheets were developed around the HerbPatch focusing on core skills like literacy and numeracy, as well as subjects like art, drama and English.

### What will schools get?

Each school will receive a very easy-to-use kit, containing the nine sensory plants, a laminated A3 Teacher's Aid for indoor or outdoor use, clear instructions on how to plant the 'plugs' (already germinated and 1-2 inches tall) and how best to lay them out (so taller plants don't block smaller plants, etc), together with login details

allowing online access to cross-curricular lesson plans, activity sheets and instructional videos.



### What is the cost per school?

The contribution for cost of materials and delivery is €30 per school.

To participate in the HerbPatch program, interested schools can apply online at [www.herbpatchproject.com](http://www.herbpatchproject.com) between the dates of 15 January and 15 February 2019. Kits will be sent out at the beginning of May.

## Baltydaniel NS wins NUI Galway science film competition

From documentaries about climate change to short films about hearing, pupils from all across the country brought their best cinematography work to the ReelLIFE science short film making competition at NUI Galway on Monday 9 December 2019. The short films allowed pupils to be imaginative and show their science knowledge on various topics.

Nine sixth class pupils, along with their teacher, Colman Lane, from Baltydaniel NS, Co Cork, showed off their short film *No New Water*, and took home the €1,000 cash prize for their school. Their film showed viewers just how important water is to not only humans, but to the entire planet.

The pupils went into great depth on topics such as how the water cycle works and the molecular structure of water, while also making the information easy to understand for the audience. The short film lasted four minutes and was edited well. The pupils found a way to incorporate comedy into the film's script and the end result truly made the film an enjoyable watch for viewers.

The film also explains that there is no simple method to get new water, hence the title. They explain that the water we have now is the same water we had millions of years ago, and will still be the same water in years to come. This is a very relevant topic in

today's society as our oceans become more polluted by plastics every day.

However, the pupils from Baltydaniel NS did not go unchallenged. Pupils from Gaelscoil Riabach, Galway, gave them a run for their money with their short film *Caithfidh muid labhairt faoi Karen* and earned themselves second place, while students from Sooeey NS, Sligo, secured third place with their short film *Drastic Action!*

Well done to all the pupils who took part from around the country, and we look forward to seeing what they bring next year for ReelLIFE Science 2020!

**CORMAC DOYLE, Transition Year student at Ashbourne Community School.**

## Pat McDonagh and Róisín Meaney honoured at Mary Immaculate College awards ceremony

130 students, graduates and alumni from MIC were recognised for their academic and other notable achievements at the annual college awards ceremony, with over €100,000 presented in scholarships and bursaries.

Among the awardees was founder and managing director of Supermac's, entrepreneur, Pat McDonagh, who was awarded the MIC Alumnus of the Year Award 2019, in recognition of his business achievements. Having graduated from MIC as a primary teacher in 1973, Pat identified an opportunity for a fast-food outlet whilst teaching in Kilrickle, Co Galway, resulting in the first Supermac's opening its doors in 1978 on Main Street, Ballinasloe. Since then, Supermac's has become a firm fixture in Irish towns and cities with over 116 restaurants throughout the country.

Limerick author, Róisín Meaney, who graduated from MIC as a primary teacher in 1980, also won an alumni award. Róisín, who was born in Listowel

but is based in Limerick, taught in St Mark's JS, Dublin, for two years following her graduation from MIC. After this she travelled to Zimbabwe where she worked as a high school English teacher in a township outside Harare for two years, before returning to Ireland where she began teaching in her

old primary school.

In 2008, with three published novels under her belt, she opted to leave the classroom to focus solely on her writing. To date, Róisín is the author of 16 novels for adults and two children's books, and her works have been translated into several languages.



Pictured at the Mary Immaculate College Awards Ceremony were Pat McDonagh, founder and managing director of Supermac's; Róisín Meaney, author and Professor Eugene Wall, President, Mary Immaculate College. Pic: Brian Arthur

## Water, come to me!

On Tuesday 19 November, *Water, Come to Me!* was launched by INTO President, Feargal Brougham, at Maynooth University.

The development education resource was written by Dr Tríona Stokes, Maynooth University Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education, in partnership with humanitarian aid agency, GOAL.

Presented in eight lessons for junior and senior infants, dance and drama are used to explore the theme of female agency through a little girl's daily journey for water in Burkina Faso. Critical questions about water use and access in Ireland are raised.

*Water, Come to Me!* is available at [www.goalglobal.org/schools/resources](http://www.goalglobal.org/schools/resources).



Comhar Linn recently held its annual president's dinner, to honour the president of the INTO. Pictured at the event are Sheila Nunan, Chairperson, Comhar Linn; Caroline Farrell; Feargal Brougham, President, INTO and Sean Murray, CEO, Comhar Linn.



Pictured left to right: Evelyn Paul, Year 4 B.Ed., Froebel Department, Maynooth University; Maura Tierney, development education officer, GOAL; Mary Van Lieshout, deputy CEO, GOAL; Dr Tríona Stokes, Froebel Department, Maynooth University; Professor Marie McLoughlin, head of department, Froebel Department, Maynooth University; Feargal Brougham, President, INTO and Emma Palmer, Year 4 B.Ed., Froebel Department, Maynooth University.

## National Chess Month a great success

Over 100 primary schools and at least 3,000 children took part in National Chess Month in November and the feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive.

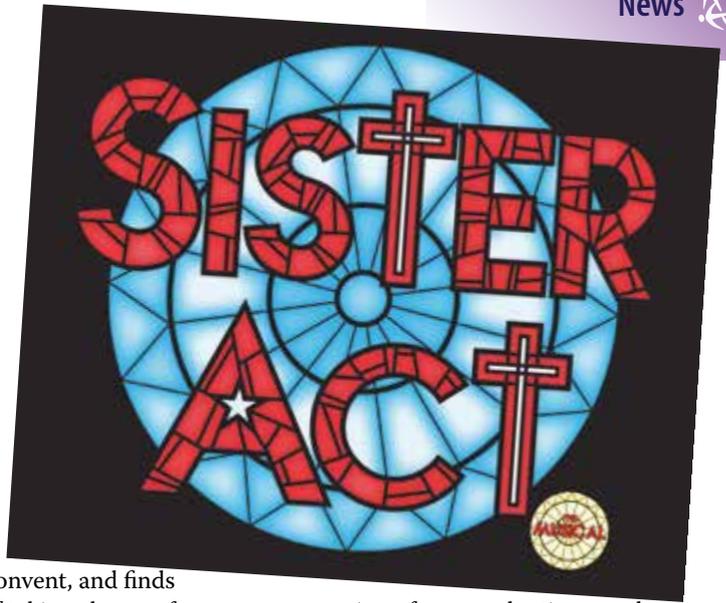
If you're interested in introducing chess to your classroom this year, visit [www.movesforlife.ie](http://www.movesforlife.ie) for instructions and videos on mini-games to get you started.

Even for children who know how to play the full game, mini-games can help to practise skills in a fun way – and they take a shorter time to play, so ideal for those spare ten minutes.



Photo: Ballyneale NS

# Teachers' Musical Society presents



in a convent, and finds herself taking charge of the failing choir, much to the annoyance of the Mother Superior.

encouraging of our productions, and we can't wait to perform for them again this year.

The cast of Teachers' Musical Society is made up primarily of primary and secondary teachers and, over time, the group has grown into one of the leading musical societies in Ireland. After the success of last year's award-winning production, *Evita*, the Teachers' Musical Society have decided to go in a completely different direction with the Broadway showstopper, *Sister Act*.

*Sister Act* is a feel-good musical based on the hit 1992 movie and is sure to have audiences jumping to their feet and singing along! It follows the story of Deloris Van Cartier as she goes undercover from her gangster boyfriend

*Sister Act* will be the 20th production staged by the Teachers' Musical Society, having first taken to the stage with *Fiddler on the Roof* in 2000. Twenty years on, the society still prides itself on providing a space for musical-loving teachers to get together and enjoy the buzz of performing. Our audiences, colleagues and friends throughout the years have been so supportive and



**The show opens with a preview night on Tuesday, 10 March and runs nightly until Saturday, 14 March. We will once again be taking to the stage in DCU, St Patrick's Campus, Drumcondra, with the show starting at 8pm nightly. Tickets are €17 opening night and €20 all other nights. or tickets log on to [www.eventbrite.ie](http://www.eventbrite.ie) or email [teachers.ms@gmail.com](mailto:teachers.ms@gmail.com).**

## intouch

If you wish to advertise in our InTouch magazine please contact Mary Bird Smyth. Phone 01 8047724

For bookings, pre-bookings please email [mbird@into.ie](mailto:mbird@into.ie) or [ads@into.ie](mailto:ads@into.ie)

Media Packs are available, if you would like one, please email [ads@into.ie](mailto:ads@into.ie)

We are delighted that our March InTouch issue will include a **School Tours Special Section** again this year.

We urge you to book your advertising space as early as possible as we have limited space available.



# KPMG

# Children's BOOKS Ireland Awards

## #ReadingHeroes

### TEACHERS –

### Do you want to give your students a love of reading?

Register, for free, to become a Junior Jury for the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards today, and encourage your students to have their voices heard by choosing the winner of the Junior Juries' Award 2020.

Participation will build students' capacities in key curriculum areas such as oral language, reading, writing, visual art, communication, working with others and being creative, as well as being a fun and interactive way to get children and young people of all ages interested in reading.

#### ALL GROUPS WILL RECEIVE

• A specially designed resource pack full of quizzes, creative writing and visual art activities and research projects • Poster • Bookmarks

#### SIGN YOUR GROUP UP TO APPLY FOR SOME OF THE FOLLOWING FREE OPPORTUNITIES\*

An author or illustrator visit to your school • copies of the shortlisted books • a workshop with a KPMG staff member • tickets for the awards ceremony in Dublin and/or shortlisting event in Belfast • a chance to be part of a short video about the Junior Juries \*these opportunities are limited and based on need

For more information and to register, visit [childrensbooksireland.ie](http://childrensbooksireland.ie)



# KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards

In 2020, the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards are in their first year of a new sponsorship as the awards celebrate 30 years. That's three decades of excellent writing and illustration for children, a wealth of riches when it comes to finding a book to suit the diversity of needs and interests found in the classroom.

Each year in January, we invite groups to register as Junior Juries in preparation for the announcement of the awards shortlist at the Belfast Children's Festival in March. Junior Juries can be a primary or secondary class group, a book club, a paired reading group (senior classes reading with juniors) or a community group. They can be any age and can read as many or as few of the shortlisted books as they wish. Usually, the shortlist consists of 10 books, which can be in English or Irish and range from picture books for the very young to titles for teenagers that deal with weighty issues. The views of several hundred groups all over the island of Ireland are taken into account and collated by Children's Books Ireland to decide the winner of the Junior Juries Award. To register, for free, go to [www.childrensbooksireland.ie](http://www.childrensbooksireland.ie).

Junior Juries are supported with a substantial resource pack which includes quizzes, research projects, and activities in the areas of visual art, creative writing, book reviewing, debate and critical discussion. Each group also receives lively posters and bookmarks. Participation is free so that the programme can be accessible to all children and young people, with the aim of fostering a love of reading and generating confidence in expressing their own critical opinions. Being part of the Junior Juries also builds pupils' capacities in key curriculum areas such as oral language, reading, writing, visual art, communication, working with others and being creative. Most importantly, it exposes them to books that they may not otherwise have had access to and supports teachers with resources to help engage avid and reluctant readers alike.

In 2020, for the first time, the KPMG Reading Hero Award will be presented. Within Junior Juries all over the island of Ireland are extraordinary individuals whose participation in the programme and whose interest in books and reading outside of the awards is remarkable. These individuals may be voracious



readers or may have completed their first book, overcoming learning or language difficulties to do so. The KPMG Reading Hero may have inspired their peers to get involved or may have made extraordinary efforts to engage with the activities set

for Good Awards, additional supports in the form of artist visits and a set of approximately 20 age-appropriate shortlisted books will be awarded to 20 upper primary school groups (4th to 6th class). For more information on how to qualify, go online to [www.childrensbooksireland.ie](http://www.childrensbooksireland.ie).

Research published by the Arts Council of Ireland and ESRI shows that children in late primary school tend to let reading habits drop, with those reporting no time spent reading increasing from 8% at age 9 to 21% at age 13. Further research from the National Literacy Trust has shown that pupils who had an author visit this academic year were twice as likely to read above the expected level for their age (31% vs 17%) and were more likely to enjoy reading (68% vs 47%) and writing (44% vs 32%). They also found that only 1 in 4 had had an author visit, and those from the poorest backgrounds were most likely to miss out. With the continued support of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, groups of any age in Northern Ireland can also apply for artist visits and books to be supplied.



by their group leader. They may not be the best student or the fastest reader, but their efforts will merit reward, and we want to hear, and share, their story. Groups can also register to be in with a chance of having a KPMG Junior Juries volunteer run a workshop in their school on 23 April.

Thanks to the generosity of Ecclesiastical, through their Movement

**Note: In previous years, the Junior Juries scheme and associated award were known as the shadowing scheme and the Children's Choice Award. The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards were formerly known as the Bisto Book of the Year Awards.**

# A great time to be a trade unionist

President of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and INTO Northern Secretary, Gerry Murphy reflects on his presidential role to date.

The Irish trade union movement is a big beast and, as such, it requires careful management. As president of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, I am surrounded by extremely capable Congress officers and senior trade union officials, all of whom are determined to ensure that the interests of the workers on this island are the movement's primary focus. Their support has been invaluable in carrying out this demanding role.

In the past eight months I have, as president, had the privilege of representing the movement at a number of significant events and met with a cross-section of many important and significant political and trade union figures from across Europe. I have been learning a whole new language – 'diplomatic speak' – which is not simply a spoken language but rather includes the spoken word alongside body language and facial expression. I'm getting better at understanding but I'm continuing to struggle to speak it fluently!

I have had the opportunity to get out and about with the people at the coalface, I have spoken at a number of picket lines, strike rallies and demonstrations. These are always inspiring events. The workers who have taken the courageous step of withdrawing their labour are always delighted to see the president of the ICTU and to know they have the solidarity of



Speaking at the 2019 Global Solidarity Summer School in Wexford.

Photo: Patrick Browne, Brownes Photography.

their fellow trade unionists across the island. I am very proud to have had the opportunity to address the workers who refused to give up on Harland and Wolff in Belfast. They were rewarded for their bravery when their jobs were saved. The support they received from trade unionists across the entire island, and all communities, was inspirational. I look forward to standing in solidarity with the Bord na Móna workers in the midlands who are being denied a just transition to alternative employment.

This year will bring significant political changes in both Belfast and Dublin. The trade union movement stands ready

to promote and defend the cause of labour, regardless of who holds power in Stormont or the Dáil. I, as president, will continue to represent your views and shout your challenges at those elected to govern. We face into 2020 united and strong and I'm excited to lead the largest civil society grouping on the island. The trade union movement has a clear understanding of the changes it wishes to see. It also has the campaigns and the will to back these up. It's a great time to be a trade unionist.



Above: As President of ICTU addressing supporters at UCU protest over pay and pensions at Queen's University. Right: Closing the TUFPP Palestinian Conference on Children.





# 'The teacher exception'

## *The problem when fair employment law*

The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order (FETO) 1998 legislation was introduced as part of the outworking of the Good Friday Agreement. FETO is the legislation which deals, alongside European Directives, with discrimination in the workplace in the North.

### **The teacher exception**

There is, however, a problem with the FETO legislation which directly impacts teachers. The wording of the legislation states that "this Order does not apply to or in relation to employment as a teacher in a school." This is known as 'the teacher exception'. In essence, this exception allows for difference of treatment on the grounds of religious belief in "very limited circumstances". In effect this means that schools can use religious belief as grounds upon which to choose between candidates for teaching posts and promotions where 'limited circumstances' can be demonstrated. For instance, the

ability to teach religious education or adhere to the particular ethos of a school could be considered among the 'limited circumstances', but it might also apply more broadly to contributing to the ethos of the school in question. It does not require too great a stretch of the intellect to begin to see the problems with this, particularly given the nature of the society we live in.

It should, however, be pointed out very clearly that the 'teacher exception' does not allow for discrimination in any circumstances other than recruitment and promotion and is not a carte blanche for discrimination in recruitment, either. For example, a tribunal decision in the NI Office for Fair and Industrial Tribunals found that the exception does not apply in selecting staff for redundancy:

"A worrying feature of this case is that there is evidence before us which suggests that the respondents believed that they were entitled to discriminate and that the fair employment legislation

did not apply to them. The legislation in its original form contained a general exemption from its scope in relation to employment as a teacher in a school (see: Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, Article 71). However, this was amended by Regulation 30 of the Fair Employment and Treatment (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 whereby the provision exempting the employment of a teacher in a school from the provisions of the 1998 order were amended to apply the exception only to the recruitment of a person as a teacher. Therefore the 1998 order prohibiting religious discrimination now applies in a redundancy situation." (Brudell v Board of Governors, Ballykelly Primary School and Western Education and Library Board 2010).

It is fair to conclude that, given this decision, in areas other than recruitment, teachers still enjoy the protection of the law, in so far as it goes, in protecting them from discriminatory treatment on the



# doesn't apply

grounds of their religious belief.

The initial intention of the exception for teachers was, according to those who argued for its inclusion in law, to ensure respect for the two main religious traditions in the north of Ireland. However, society has changed rapidly, and it has changed much, since the Good Friday Agreement and there is a strong case already being made that the teacher exemption is now well past any useful function in a post-conflict society still struggling with sectarian division. Within less than a decade of the introduction of the legislation there were already serious calls for a rethink.

## Petition of concern

A briefing paper on *Employment Mobility for Teachers and the FETO Exception* notes that "The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland carried out a review into the continued existence of the teacher exception between 2002 and 2004 ... and recommended that the exception should be removed in post-primary schools immediately and proposed that early consideration be given as to whether

the exception should also be removed for primary level schools." The briefing document also notes that an amendment to the Employment Bill put to the NI Assembly in 2016 which would have brought an end to the exception was blocked by a joint 'petition of concern' by

Within less than a decade of the introduction of the legislation there were already serious calls for a rethink

the two main nationalist parties.

The same briefing paper notes that teacher training and the nature of religious education in schools are also significant contributing factors to a lack of inter-community or inter-religious

mobility among teaching staff in the North, resulting in only tiny percentages of primary school teachers teaching in schools in sectors that they themselves were not educated in – or to speak more plainly, very few Protestants teach Catholic children and vice versa. Given these facts, the removal of the teacher exception should now be placed firmly on the agenda, alongside other measures aimed at creating a more open and diverse education system and a more tolerant and inclusive society.

## INTO campaign

INTO are quoted in the University of Ulster briefing paper as believing that "the days of the exception are numbered... we would welcome it disappearing". The continued existence of the exception is hard to justify in a changing Ireland. For INTO to begin campaigning on this issue we will need to formulate a policy position on this and it is to be hoped that the issue will be put to delegates at Northern Conference.

KEVIN DALY, INTO Northern Committee.

## Academic selection – classroom advice

Many concerned teachers have been contacting Northern Office regarding requests from parents to prepare children for the Common Entrance (CEA) and the Granada Learning (GL) exams. Because of the volume of queries in this regard, it is important to provide members with the correct information. Before the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) nominated Peter Weir for the position of Minister of Education, there was a ban on teachers using school facilities to distort and disrupt the curriculum by facilitating and focusing on tutoring children during school time for unregulated testing. The previous education administration

acknowledged the widely-held view that official policy could no longer accept as acceptable the gross disparity of academic selection. A ban on the use of publicly funded class time to prepare for private exams was introduced.

But this all changed in September 2016 with Peter Weir's 'coaching U-turn', which meant that schools could now effectively dismiss the curriculum in favour of teaching towards the transfer test. This means that we are in the 11th year of privately-funded exams for academic selection and INTO can only advise members that, if a principal requires a teacher to tutor and coach their pupils

for the test, then they do not need to follow the principal's request because preparation for the transfer exam during teaching hours is considered by INTO as a new initiative and, under our current action, INTO members are instructed to refuse to implement any new initiatives. Members cannot be required to tutor children outside of the normal school teaching hours either and, in these cases, INTO advises that members simply refuse. If tutoring for 11+ exams is offered as an after-school activity, schools will be advised that INTO members will only engage in a voluntary capacity.

TOMMY MCGLONE, INTO senior official.



# Why it's time for a revolution in our education system



Imagine how much our children would benefit from a properly funded and reformed education system

In the early 1500s, it was believed that the planets revolved around the Earth. When Nicolaus Copernicus proved that the Earth revolved around the sun, and not the other way around, the world experienced a paradigm shift. A paradigm shift is a fundamental change in approach or underlying assumptions. While perhaps not of the same order as the Copernican revolution in scientific thought, our education system is in need of a paradigm shift.

If we look at our education system today, what do we see? A workforce with extremely low morale as a result of a lack of funding and resources. Industrial action by teaching unions has been ongoing for eight years and remains unresolved; school inspections have not been co-operated with for about two years; the school population is going up; the number of teachers is going down; attractive options are available elsewhere, in the Republic and across the world. So what are the employers doing about it?

'Transformation', that's what! (The Education Transformation programme is a new programme of work being undertaken by the Department of

Education in Northern Ireland). Before you ask, don't ask, because I don't know what they mean either. The teacher trade unions have only been invited to give their penny's worth in the last few months. It could mean a reduction of the school estate but, through area planning, the employers have already been doing that using the Bain Report (December 2006). This report is actually causing the decline of rural communities, and still we are faced with increasing class sizes, teacher redundancies and a severe shortfall in funding. So what should we do about it?

Our Northern Secretary, Gerry Murphy, at a meeting with the Westminster Northern Ireland Affairs Committee investigating funding in the education system in Northern Ireland, tried to provide some way forward: "We need to invest very substantially initially to address the shortfalls. We have a special needs population, as already mentioned here, growing at 5% per annum. We simply do not have the resources to deal with that. The cuts – and I am not choosing to use the euphemism here of efficiency savings; they are cuts – across

the system are manifesting themselves in increased level of sickness across the whole piece. The immediate short-term solution is to invest now and then let us sit down, all of us together, and plan a way forward. They did it in health through Bengoa. I do not see why we could not, as an educational community, sit down together and sort a way forward for ourselves."

Even with the ongoing industrial action and the low morale of teachers and workers in the education system, the dedication and resilience of our teachers was evident when they managed to raise GCSE and A-level results and PIMS and PIRLS results (the primary school literacy and numeracy international testing scores) quite steeply upwards. In fact, our primary schools rank in the top 10 in the world, and the top five in literacy. Imagine how much our children would benefit from a properly funded and reformed education system.

In England, Ofsted did research into school improvement. The report found that there were two circumstances where the improvement of schools were perceived to work well. The first was when leaders to help a school improve had been found from staff within the school itself, rather than outside it. The second was when leaders took the time to understand the school and deliver bespoke support. The point here is that the only way to have an education system that provides for our younger generations is to have a complete review of the system and to value the contributions of those who work in the system.

It is time to leave the old paradigm behind and embrace the Copernican revolution needed to improve our education system. As this article goes to print, the Stormont Assembly has been asked to reconvene, after three years, by the UK and Irish governments under the 'New Decade, New Approach' deal. In the deal, apparently there is to be an external independent review of education provision.

Somebody was listening to our Northern Secretary!

**PAUL GROOGAN, INTO official.**

# Be the voice for the voiceless

INTO President Feargal Brougham reflects on his visit to Palestine

During the Hallowe'en break, I was lucky enough to be part of a delegation of Trade Union Friends of Palestine (TUFFP) to visit Palestine. This is the fourth annual delegation led by TUFFP (which is affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions) to Palestine. This year, the focus of the delegation was the psychological effects of the occupation on children. Our group of 17 was made up of trade union members from both sides of the border, working on behalf of children. We had members from INTO (8), Fórsa, Unison and NIPSA.

During our eight day visit, we met up with school pupils, youth activists, teachers, trade unions, child psychologists, health professionals, education ministers and civil society activists. All of them painted a comprehensive, complex and harrowing picture of daily life for Palestinian children living under the Israeli government's illegal occupation of the West Bank and Jerusalem, where approximately 3 million Palestinians live. It was considered too difficult for us to attempt a visit to the Gaza Strip, where 2 million other Palestinians live.

Everywhere we visited – Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Hebron and the Jordan Valley – I found the Palestinians to be the most friendly, insightful and knowledgeable of people. As a nation too familiar with exploitation and emigration, their society places a huge emphasis on education. Palestine has one of the world's highest literacy rates.

This is quite surprising considering the pressure and stress under which teachers and pupils find themselves. Many of the staff and children we met in schools in Hebron and Jerusalem had to undergo daily searches and intimidation, travelling through security gates on their way to school. It is not unusual for infant pupils to have themselves and their bags/lunch boxes searched by armed soldiers at these gates. As the pupils don't speak Hebrew, and few of the soldiers speak Arabic, communication difficulties often lead to confusion and aggression.

Many Palestinian schools are chronically underfunded and lack basic infrastructure and equipment. The



playground of a school in Hebron had been taken by the Israeli security forces and is now used as a car park for settlers who have recently moved into the city. Palestinians are barred from this open space and we witnessed soldiers moving four and five year olds away at gun point.

In Bethlehem, we visited the Al Aroub Refugee Camp where the descendants of Palestinians, forcibly exiled from their lands in Israel in 1948, live today. The UN have run these camps since then. Up to now, the international community has funded them but, only last year, the Trump administration cut all their funding. Doctors told us that this has affected their immunisation programme and the school is finding it increasingly difficult to fund itself. Trump's callous decision has left some of the most vulnerable children in the world in a perilous position.

We met some inspirational teenagers who work as leaders in their community assisting others in coping with their daily struggles. Many teenagers are targeted by the Israeli Security Forces on suspicion of stone throwing. They are arrested in the middle of the night and brought through a military court system, not a civil one.

This is a flagrant breach of international law and must be stopped.

The teenagers only have access to a lawyer after they have signed a confession, and many of them are physically and verbally abused during interrogation. Teenagers and children can receive up to 20 years in prison

for throwing a stone at security personnel or at a vehicle.

A leading Palestinian psychologist explained to us that, in her opinion, many Palestinian children are living under stress that is worse than Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It is worse because it is continuing and shows no signs of abating, indeed the situation is slowly getting worse – more illegal settlements are being built, there are more walls fragmenting Palestinian lands, more encroachments on Palestinian lands, more extreme right wing politicians in Israel and a continuing lack of useful international support.

On 20 December, Fatou Bensouda of the International Criminal Court concluded: "in brief, I am satisfied that war crimes have been or are being committed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip".

It is incumbent on all of us with a voice to be the voice for the voiceless in our global society. One of the main refrains I heard everywhere in Palestine was: "Tell the world we are not terrorists, tell the world about our plight".

**FEARGAL BROUGHAM, INTO President.**

# Improve your financial well-being in

Doireann Sweeney, head of corporate communications in the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, addresses an aspect of personal well-being which is often overlooked, 'financial well-being'.



We talk a lot about the importance of looking after our physical and mental well-being. What is less talked about is our financial well-being. We all face decisions every day about how to spend and manage our money and those decisions have a huge impact on our financial well-being.

A recent CCPC report on financial well-being found that the vast majority of people are doing fine and meeting their current financial commitments. However, just over half (52%) of those surveyed reported little resilience against financial shocks such as sickness, redundancies, retirement or unexpected financial costs.

Financial well-being is not about being rich, rather it is about managing your money in such a way as to plan ahead. Life can change quickly so it is important to plan for those rainy days as well as your retirement.

## What can you do to improve your financial well-being?

Financial well-being is influenced by a combination of the money you have, how you use and manage that money and your inclination to save. Improving your financial well-being doesn't have to mean drastic steps and limiting yourself to a stringent budget. You need to be able to live, so you have to be realistic. You will be surprised how a few small changes can make all the difference.

When it comes to financial planning, there is no 'one size fits all' approach. It very much depends on your personal circumstances and goals, like whether you are trying to reduce debt or save more.

We have lots of information on our website, [www.ccpc.ie](http://www.ccpc.ie) but here are some ways to start:

### 1. Take a snapshot of your current financial situation

Taking a snapshot of your current financial situation, by working out how much money you have coming in and going out, is a good place to start. To guide you, you can download our financial health checklist from [ccpc.ie](http://ccpc.ie). Once you know where you are you can work out where you want to go and set your financial goals.

### 2. Identify your financial goals

Identifying personal goals is a useful next step. Many people make a list of goals and whether they are short-term, like saving for a holiday, medium-term, such as saving for a house deposit, or longer-term, like saving for retirement. People who are saving for longer-term goals such as retirement, should consider seeking independent financial advice.

### 3. Prepare a 12-month plan

Some months can be more costly than others, such as the month when your motor insurance is due, and preparing a 12-month plan in advance will help put some structure on your finances. Our budget planner on [www.ccpc.ie](http://www.ccpc.ie) will help you plan.

### 4. Be realistic in your plans

Taking the time to look at how you spend your money and where you can possibly make changes will help you work out how much you can afford to put away on a weekly or monthly basis. Saving even a small amount will get you into the savings habit and help you to start building up a small nest egg. There is a regular savings comparison tool on our website that shows you the various savings accounts available and the interest rates on offer.

### 5. Prioritise your debts

If you have outstanding debts, you should focus your efforts on clearing these before you prioritise saving, as interest rates on credit cards and personal loans are considerably higher than the interest you will earn on savings. This may mean that your savings plans have to go on the back burner for a while, but the short term pain of paying off your debts will put you in a better financial position to start saving in the future.

If you have credit card debt, set up a monthly payment for the same date that you get paid. Along with helping you avoid late payments, which can affect your credit rating, this will allow you to budget how much you have to spend for the rest of the month. Try to pay off more than the minimum payment as this will help you to clear your debt faster and reduce the amount of interest you pay.

### 6. Revise your plan

It is a good idea to review your plan regularly and ensure that you are on track to meet your goals. Regularly reviewing your plan may also help you to make further savings as better rates and deals may have come onto the market since you last looked at your finances. Make sure you are getting the best rates for mortgages, savings, credit cards and current accounts. This might sound like a lot of work but our money tools on [www.ccpc.ie](http://www.ccpc.ie) do the homework for you. There are savings to be made by shopping around for financial products.

**DOIREANN SWEENEY, head of corporate communications, Competition and Consumer Protection Commission. More information on financial well-being and the tools available can be found at [www.ccpc.ie](http://www.ccpc.ie).**

# Diversifying initial teacher education

## Maynooth University's *Turn to Teaching* project

Despite growing diversity in Irish society, the demographic of entrants to primary teaching has remained unchanged. Research by Elaine Keane and Manuela Heinz of NUI Galway identified significant commonalities among pre-service teachers in Ireland – they tend to be overwhelmingly white, female, settled, Catholic and middle-class. They are less likely to be mature students and the numbers of students with a disability remains exceptionally low. Indeed, the Irish Traveller community are almost entirely excluded from the primary teaching profession: in 2014, only one individual who applied for primary teaching at undergraduate level identified as a member of the Traveller community.

### So why is teacher diversity important?

Much of the international research on teacher diversity centres on the potential of teachers from underrepresented groups (Irish Travellers, students with a disability, students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students progressing from further education, migrants, and mature students) to act as positive role models for students from various socio-demographic backgrounds. The central thesis is that teachers from traditional minority groups set high expectations for students from marginalised groups and act as mentors and advocates for them, which impacts positively upon these students' academic engagement and achievement. Crucially, a more diverse teaching profession has benefits for all students, as students have an opportunity to see people from underrepresented groups in professional roles, which can help them overcome internalised beliefs about inferiority and difference.

In the Irish context, recent research by Gareth Burns of Maynooth University

into early career teachers and their experiences of working in DEIS primary schools, found that teachers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds make 'a different kind of difference', articulated in a strong desire to 'put something back' into their schools and are strongly invested in a professional and moral identity of 'teacher as role model'. This cohort of teachers grew up in the communities they now teach in and, consequently, their greater knowledge of students' local context enhanced their capacity to 'connect' with students on a personal level, and they demonstrated a willingness to open up their personal histories for discussion. They also articulated a felt desire to initiate open and inclusive relations with parents.

### Policy changes

This strong evidence base has led to consistent calls to diversify the teaching population in Ireland. The policy response has included recent government investment in the *Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH)*. This funding has supported the establishment of Maynooth University's *Turn To Teaching Project*, a unique three-year programme that aims to support students from underrepresented groups to move into initial teacher education (ITE). Launched in September 2018, the programme offers meaningful pathways into ITE for Irish Travellers, students with a disability, students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students progressing from further education, migrants, and mature students.

*Turn To Teaching* comprises three educational interventions:

1. 'Think About Teaching': A one-year foundation course for ITE, which prepares students from underrepresented groups for entry to

teaching degrees.

2. 'Rising Teachers, Rising Leaders' is a school outreach programme which:
  - i. equips second level students in DEIS schools and communities underrepresented in teaching, with the skills needed to access ITE directly and
  - ii. builds the capacity of 20 teachers from underrepresented groups in teaching, to mentor and support students from diverse backgrounds to aspire to a career in teaching.
3. 'Tar Linn ag Teagasc' provides all participants with access to a tailored Irish language competency based module to assist them to reach the required entry standard for ITE and to encourage participants to become future teachers of Irish.

The first year of the 'Think about Teaching' ITE foundation course has been a great success, with seven students commencing primary teaching degrees in Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education, while another 11 students are on pathways towards becoming post-primary teachers. Central to the success of the *Turn to Teaching* project has been the support given by the primary teaching profession. Supported by the Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education, a number of primary schools have provided school placement opportunities for *Turn to Teaching* students, and have been pivotal in supporting their journey to ITE. The primary and post-primary teachers (rising leaders) who mentor, support and encourage the rising teachers' (Leaving Cert students) teaching aspirations have played a critical leadership role in the growth and development of the project.

**Dr GARETH BURNS and Dr KATRIONA O'SULLIVAN,**  
*Turn to Teaching, Maynooth University.*

# Easy resilience-building exercises for the classroom

For years, psychologists have been emphasising the importance of resilience for preventing mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression. The more developed a child's resilience, the lower their chances are of developing mental illnesses later in life. Since children spend so much time in the classroom, it's important that these skills are being developed in the classroom as well as at home.

In this article we'll show you three exercises you can do in your classroom that are easy to follow and very impactful for the child.

## 1. The red and blue challenge

This is an exercise that teaches children how to focus their thoughts. The learning is that if you focus only on the bad things around you, all you will see is bad things. If you focus on positive things, you will see more positive things in your life.

### How to run the exercise

- Step 1: Tell the children to look around the room and find all the red things in the room. Give them 30 seconds to do this.
- Step 2: Next, instruct the class to close their eyes and then tell you how many red things are in the room. Mark on the board the highest number called out.

- Step 3: Now, without opening their eyes, ask them how many blue things are in the room (don't let them open their eyes to count the blue things). Mark this number on the board as well. It should be much lower than the red number because they hadn't focused on finding the blue items when their eyes were open.
- Step 4: Tell the children to open their eyes and look around the room for all the blue items.
- Step 5: Ask them why they think they couldn't count as many blue things as they could for the red things.

After the exercise, explain that it's easy to see the things we focus on. It's the same in life, if we focus our attention on the things we don't like or that don't go the way we want, we're missing out on all the positive things. Instead, we should try to focus on the things we're good at and that make us happy and we will feel happier.

### Discussion point after the exercise

If our feelings are created by the thoughts we focus on, and our feelings impact the way we experience life, how can we live a happier life?

## 2. Practicing gratitude together

This exercise teaches children to reflect on all the positives in their life and develops a more positive outlook.

### How to run the exercise

It's a good idea to give the children a few examples of things they can be grateful for outside of material things before beginning the exercise, e.g. being able to come to school and get an education every day, having friends to play with, or a family that takes care of them.

- Step 1: Hand out post-it notes and have students take out a piece of paper that they will hold onto after the exercise.

- Step 2: Have all the students write down something they're grateful for on their piece of paper and on a post-it note as well.
- Step 3: Have everyone come up and stick their post-it note on the board or a wall in the classroom.
- Step 4: Tell the children to read all of the post-it notes to understand what their classmates are grateful for. This is good for empathy building and understanding other children's circumstances.
- Step 5: Instruct the children to return to their desks and add anything new they've thought of to their own gratitude list.
- Step 6: (Optional) Ask the children if they're willing to share anything they added to their list after seeing everyone else's post-it notes.

Keeping a gratitude journal is a great way to reinforce the positive things in a child's life and should be done regularly (daily or weekly) for maximum benefit.

## 3. Classroom journaling

Writing down how we're feeling and what happened that day is a great way to spot things that might be upsetting us without even realising it. This is especially true for children who aren't yet capable of connecting the dots.

With a daily journal done at the end of the day in the classroom, children have the opportunity to reflect on their day and acknowledge how they're feeling.

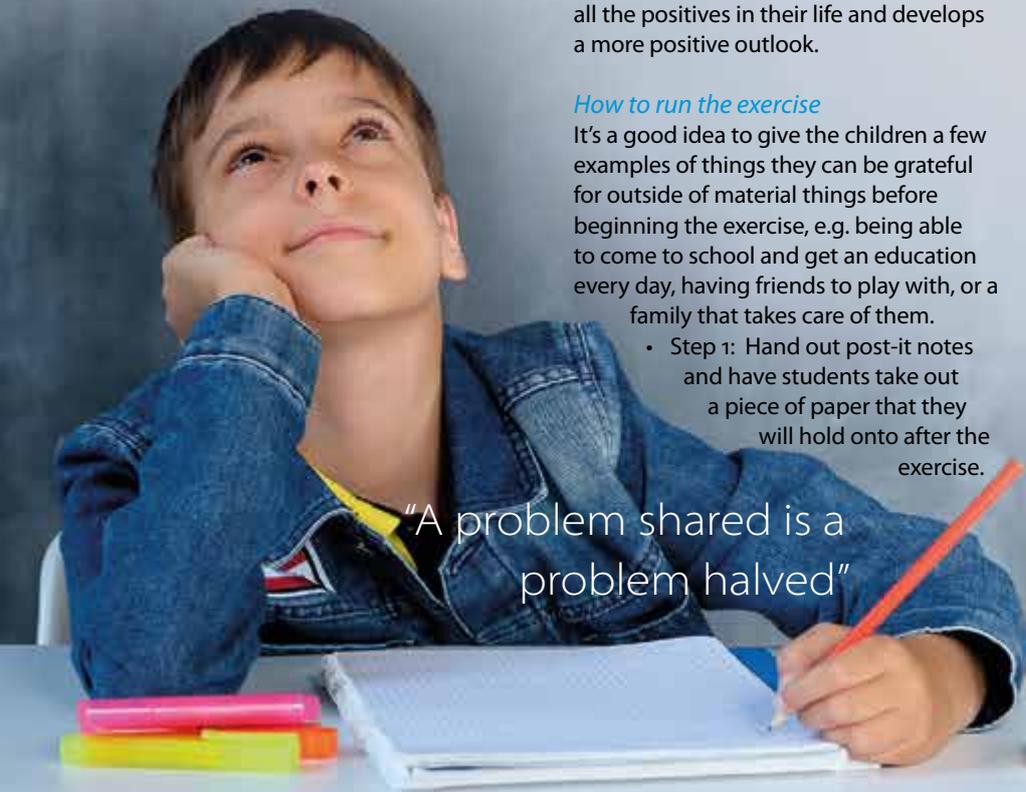
Your role in this exercise is to teach the children that if there's something bothering them, they should speak up about it so they can work with an adult to try and do something about it.

However, this should be a private exercise for the child to do alone while you emphasise the support that's available to them if they would like to speak to you about how they're feeling afterwards.

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**LISA TONER, founder of ETTCH. Further resources to help build confident, resilient children are available at <https://ettch.org>.**

"A problem shared is a problem halved"



# The importance of hot meals in schools

Hot meals in schools are one policy response to unacceptably high child poverty rates in the Republic of Ireland. Between 2008 and 2011 child poverty in Ireland rose at the fastest rate in Europe (11% on At Risk Of Poverty or social Exclusion [AROE] indicator), with Latvia (10.4%) and Bulgaria (7.6%) being our nearest rivals for this unwanted distinction. From 2011 to 2014 child poverty rates rose dramatically again (see graph based on official Irish Department of Social Protection statistics) before some reduction from the 2014 high, in recent years. It is no exaggeration to state that Irish society placed the burden of the last economic crash onto its children in disproportionate terms compared to any other society in the EU.

Child poverty and the related problem of child hunger in school was exacerbated in an Irish context by policy failures regarding lack of hot meal provision in schools over many decades. These policy failures involved a diffusion of responsibility for food provision in schools across many Irish government departments leading to a complete fragmentation of strategic response at national level – a fragmentation recognised as being unacceptable by the Department of Education and Skills in the DEIS Social Inclusion in Education Action Plan 2017.

In response to the issue of child hunger prevention in schools, our Educational Disadvantage Centre, Institute of Education, DCU established a national working group in 2013 consisting of organisations including the INTO, IPPN,

IMPACT (now Forsa), Barnardos, Healthy Food for All, as well as subsequently the Children’s Rights Alliance and Focus Ireland to examine and advocate for a national strategic response on this issue.

It was also raised as a priority issue at the joint INTO/Educational Disadvantage DEIS Conference (December 2015) to inform the 2017 DEIS Action Plan.

This Hunger Prevention in Schools Working Group highlighted the need for hot meal provision in schools as part of a phased universalism, targeting areas most in need and without the need for a stigmatising approach. It recognised the importance of providing hot meals for children and young people rather than establishing committees of professionals to make intrusive judgments into fluctuating levels of poverty of children and their families. Concern was also raised that the current Irish *National Children’s Policy Framework, Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (2014-2020)* does not have a robust antipoverty focus.

Even during the Celtic Tiger, research by the Educational Disadvantage Centre found 18% of pupils in a range of Dublin DEIS schools were either often, very often or every day too hungry to do their work in school, even in schools with breakfast clubs. More recent national surveys found that a 20% of students report that they are going to bed or school hungry.



These concerns are being addressed through the significant commitment of the Irish government in the last budget to expanding hot meals in schools to 35,000 more children, building on the initial almost 7,000 children receiving such hot

meals the previous year. This is part of a wider review with a commitment to further embedding hot meals in schools nationally.

Hot meals in schools need to be a routine, unremarkable part of Irish school life, as they are in many European countries, such as France, UK, Lithuania, Finland, Slovakia, Spain, Slovenia, Austria, etc. Our Hunger Prevention in Schools Working Group also argues for the benefits of kitchens in schools, as part of constructivist learning methodology where children can be involved in learning to cook, as part of integrated cross-curricular approaches, including additionally a lifelong learning angle for parental involvement.

**DR PAUL DOWNES** is director, Educational Disadvantage Centre, associate professor of Education (Psychology), Institute of Education, Dublin City University and advisor to the EU Commission on early school leaving and social, emotional education.

## CHILD POVERTY TARGET (DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION FIGURES 2017)

Figure 1. Progress on the child-specific social target – Source: SILC, various years



## BACKDROP OF INCREASED POVERTY RATES FOR CHILDREN

The AROPE indicator is defined as the share of the population in at least one of the following three conditions:

- 1) at risk of poverty, meaning below the poverty threshold,
- 2) in a situation of severe material deprivation,
- 3) living in a household with a very low work intensity. From 2008 to 2011, the AROPE for children rose in 21 EU Member States.

Eurostat: The largest increases in the AROPE since 2008 were in Ireland (+11.0 percentage points (pp) up to 2010) and Latvia (+10.4pp). They were closely followed by Bulgaria (+7.6pp), Hungary (+6.2pp) and Estonia (+5.4pp).

# Including a child with a visual impairment in PE

A visual impairment can include both partial sight and blindness. In this edition, we look at how the 'TREE' model can help you with planning a PE lesson to be enjoyed by a class that includes a pupil with a visual impairment.

Planning an all-inclusive lesson can be challenging but, with careful consideration and some useful tips, a pupil with a visual impairment can easily enjoy PE with their classmates.

When creating any lesson plan, it is important to consider the

specific needs of the child and to include them in the process.

The 'TREE' model adapts how you approach planning your lessons to be more inclusive. It is broken in to four categories – 'Teaching Style', 'Rules', 'Equipment' and 'Environment'.

## TEACHING STYLE

Take a different approach to how you teach the lesson to the child.

- Use mobility training to familiarise the child with the teaching areas.
- Have the child in close proximity to you for demonstrations and instructions.
- Pre-teach the child and the SNA.
- Provide physical guidance e.g. by giving a tap on a body part. Be sure to

tell the child when you are going to physically assist them e.g. explain that you will hold their elbow and walk one step behind.

- Use tactile modelling for demonstrations (another pupil models a movement and the child feels the motion). Couple this with a verbal explanation.

- Break movements down into no more than three components in the correct order. Progress with additional components over time.
- Communicate with the child – check for understanding, praise achievements, get feedback.

- If a rule is inhibiting the child and cannot be easily changed, remove it.
- If available, use a Braille note taker for the rules.

## RULES

Change the rules of games to make them more suitable for the child.

- Focus on technique of movements rather than reaching a certain distance/height.
  - Encourage personal achievements, rather than scores/points.

## EQUIPMENT

Use the correct equipment to aid the child.

- Use auditory signals such as clapping.

- Balls can be adapted to create noise for activities – put rice in a beach ball or volleyball, wrap a ball in a plastic bag.
- Use a peer system to provide guidance for the child.
- Use a guide wire system/rope that is securely anchored from one point to another across a pitch or hall.
- Attach a PVC tube to a rope/wire – the child can hold the tube and run along the rope.
- If applicable, avail of visual supports such as posters, task cards or videos. Use colours that work best for the child.

## ENVIRONMENT

Ensure the child understands their surroundings.

- Use a 'clock system' e.g. 12 o'clock is straight ahead of the child.
- Describe the set up of each game to the child e.g. how many pupils are on each team, where to stand to wait their turn.

- Have clear boundary limitations and keep all doors fully open or closed.
- Avoid loose hazards.
- Use specific play zones.
- Consider lighting e.g. keep the sun behind the child, if possible, or allow the child to wear a baseball cap.

## Resources

- Staff Training for Physical Education for Children with Visual Impairments. Perkins School for the Blind. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=77fyMsRWrYs&t=22s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77fyMsRWrYs&t=22s)
- Adaptive PE Games for Blind and Visually Impaired Students. Produced by the Outreach Department of TSBVI. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=PB9eCkh4Ryk&t=323s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PB9eCkh4Ryk&t=323s)

SEAN GALLAGHER, Rosmini Community School, and SUSAN MARRON MURPHY, IPPEA Committee and Institute of Education, DCU.



# The INTO GAA Respect Exhibition Games are just around the corner!



The INTO GAA Respect Exhibition Games have been a feature of big match days in Croke Park since 1987. Gerry O'Meara, principal of Scoil Treasa in Firhouse, Co Dublin is national coordinator of the Mini Sevens, the name by which these games are known (although they are now played in ten-a-side format!).

In total, 240 boys and girls will play in the 2020 INTO Mini Sevens over six match days. Children from all 32 counties will play over the course of the season. Gerry would like to remind Cumann na mBunscol officers that the closing date for return of Mini Sevens forms from county secretaries is Friday, 8 May 2020.



GAA President John Horan, Mini Sevens Coordinator Gerry O Meara, and Cathaoirleach Cumann na mBunscol Liam Magee with Young Whistlers at the INTO Mini Sevens

## MINI- SEVENS SERIES -2019/20

The dates for participation are as below:

| Total enrolment 3rd to 6th classes incl. | To be born on or after this date |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 200+                                     | 1 Jan 2008                       |
| 170 – 199                                | 1 Dec 2007                       |
| 140 – 169                                | 1 Nov 2007                       |
| 110 – 139                                | 1 Oct 2007                       |
| 80 – 109                                 | 1 Sept 2007                      |
| 50 – 79                                  | 1 Aug 2007                       |
| 30 – 49                                  | 1 July 2007                      |
| 29 or less                               | 1 June 2007                      |

## Erne Eagles Rounders Club

Erne Eagles Rounders Club was established in 1985 by teenagers Fidelma Sheridan and her sister Maeve. (Fidelma is currently leas-cathaoirleach of Cumann na mBunscol).

The Erne Eagles first won the Men's Senior All Ireland title in 1998 and went on to win ten in a row from 1998 to 2007 – a record that will be difficult to break. They won again in 2009 but retired after that. In 2018, they came back to play one more year to honour a club member, Dymrna Reilly, who had sadly passed away. She had been passionate about the game of rounders and the team thought this a fitting way to remember her.

Despite a nine year gap, the Erne Eagles went on to win the All Ireland in 2018, and again this year. This is the 13th time this team have brought home the Corn Aodh Rua to County Cavan.

Will they try for three in a row in 2020?

### Interested in playing rounders?

GAA rounders is one of the four official GAA sports included in the original charter in 1884. It is played with a baseball bat and a sliotar and is not dissimilar to baseball/fast pitch softball.

It is played by all age groups from primary school up to senior level. There are boys and girls as well as mixed teams. Rounders is the only GAA sport that has mixed teams at senior level.

Because it is a limited contact sport, it suits recreational as well as competitive play. It is excellent for developing hand-eye coordination and is hugely inclusive – everyone gets a chance to bat so everyone gets a chance to play!

For more info: [www.gaarounders.ie/playrounders/howtoplay](http://www.gaarounders.ie/playrounders/howtoplay).

## Connacht teachers sweep the boards

There was great delight in Leitrim when Declan Bohan, principal of Bornacoola NS, was named as Public Relations Officer of the Year for 2019 by the Gaelic Writers Association at their awards ceremony. Declan has a long record of work in the ranks of Cumann na mBunscol. He is currently PRO of Cumann na mBunscol in Leitrim and previously served as cathaoirleach for almost a decade. Declan has served for almost 30 years in a variety of roles with the Leitrim County Board. He is a former 'Leitrim Guardian Personality of the Year', and is currently on the GAA's Central Hearings Committee (CHC). Declan recently completed a five-year stint as PRO and was elected as rúnai of Leitrim County Board at its recent convention.

Erne Eagles all-conquering Rounders team with founder member Fidelma Sheridan



Declan Bohan was named Gaelic Writers Association PRO of the Year for 2019



# Bringing out the artist in children

Every child is born an artist. That is my belief. Very young children believe it too. They love to draw and make with colours. Then something changes. Usually at about age seven or eight, they begin to have doubts. They look at the child beside them, making comparisons and think: 'Why can't I draw a picture like that?' Then they start to lose confidence and become critical of their own ability. They want their work to look less childish and more realistic. It's at that crucial stage they need most encouragement, praise about what's good about their work, and guidance to show them what they can do to improve it.

One of the most exciting things for me as an art educator is to see the light on a child's face when they make a breakthrough. A typical example is when they first discover perspective. Drawing a house with a man in the landscape, a young child will put a stripe of green at the bottom for grass and the stripe of blue at the top is the sky. Invite them to look out of the window, to see how the sky actually meets the grass at the horizon line, to notice how the grass runs behind the house; then add in more detail of what is behind or in front. As if by magic, the house becomes rooted in the ground.

Every child can be an artist. A sweeping statement, perhaps. I am talking about potential. Some children are naturally

creative and can draw or paint with ease. Others need a gentle coaxing and showing the way. It is a joy for me to spend time with children revealing that latent creativity. Using a variety of art media, through experimentation, they find some media more stimulating than others and by working in this way, each child is sure to find their own individual way of making art.

When children engage in creative activity, it sparks their natural curiosity and imaginative thought.

When children engage in creative activity, it sparks their natural curiosity and imaginative thought. Concentration is improved and the opportunity for learning is enhanced. Art is a key to opening up a child's imagination to engage and make learning personal to them. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every school had a dedicated art teacher?

My heritage work is extremely varied, as every class and every project is unique. The idea is that the pupils develop

their knowledge and ideas about a topic through making art. The subject is usually some aspect of heritage the children have researched – legends, local history and such. Exploring new ideas through art challenges them to think more creatively; bringing self-confidence to their art-making but also to areas of learning and indeed every aspect of their lives. We must nurture creative thought and encourage children to have ideas that are different, to think outside the box and to realise that there is more than one right answer. Later on, when they arrive in the workplace, they need the confidence to find new solutions, new ways of thinking.

People talk about creative thinking in the business world, but unless you've had the experience when you're young, how will you have the confidence to talk about that weird, unfamiliar, original idea you have in your head? Art in education and learning through creative activity is vital.

**Artist MARY WALLACE has a wealth of hands-on experience of how children respond to art. As a heritage specialist with the Heritage in Schools Scheme since 2010 she leads art projects with heritage themes. The Heritage in Schools Scheme is coordinated by the Heritage Council. To find out more and to book a visit from a heritage expert visit [www.heritageinschools.ie](http://www.heritageinschools.ie).**

# Paddington: life in a new country

Michael Bond, the creator of Paddington Bear grew up during the Second World War and created his lovable hero in the 1950s, a time when people were only just beginning to recover from the terrible destruction of war. As many children and parents from throughout the last half-century know, the Paddington Bear story goes as follows: The Brown family finds a bear from 'darkest Peru' sitting on a suitcase at London's Paddington train station. He has a note hanging around his neck that says "Please look after this bear. Thank You" The family adopts the marmalade-loving immigrant who later embarks on a series of entertaining adventures.

Bond recalled watching images of evacuee and refugee children wearing labels at train stations. These memories about the trauma of war inspired the creation of Paddington's famous label. Today, the Paddington story provides a gentle gateway to discussing the issue of refugees, family separation and unaccompanied minors. Paddington's story remains as relevant today as it was when Bond, created him in the 1950s. It allows children to focus on the difficulties faced when leaving one's home place and the experience of being a stranger in a new place.

Paddington was essentially an asylum seeker. In the second chapter of *A Bear Called Paddington*, Mr Brown briefly considers letting the authorities know about their unconventional guest but is dissuaded from doing so by his family. "He might get arrested as a stowaway," Jonathan, the Browns' son, says. Mrs Brown adds, "It's not as if he's done

anything wrong. I'm sure he didn't harm anyone traveling in a lifeboat like that." The precariousness of Paddington's immigrant status underpins his adventures – will he or won't he be allowed to stay? – and, reread in the current climate, give his story an exceptional poignancy. What's extraordinary is how powerful that story is today. While the bear is fictional, in reality, there are thousands of unaccompanied children who do not have a home. Around the world, over 65 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes, creating the largest refugee crisis since World War II. As a stowaway, Paddington traveled illegally by boat and was taken in by a middle-class London family. He survived on a lifeboat during the long journey from South America to London. Today, thousands of immigrants arrive every year on the shores of Europe seeking asylum. If Paddington were to apply for refugee status in Ireland or the UK today he would most likely be deported back to Peru or held in a

detention centre. Since he was not fleeing persecution, the little bear would be refused asylum. His tale is particularly timely – against the backdrop of Brexit, families being separated and undocumented children being detained at the US border.

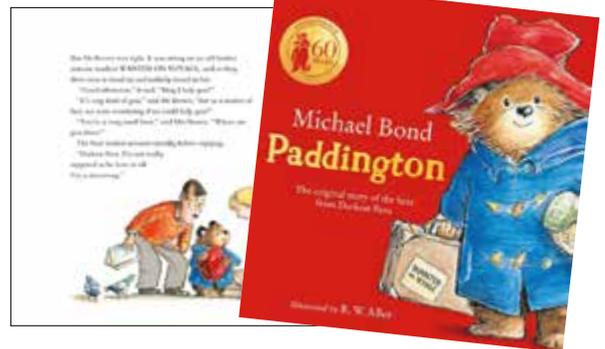
**Dr ANNE DOLAN** is a lecturer in primary geography, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. She is the author of *You, Me and Diversity: picturebooks for teaching development and intercultural education* published by Trentham Press/IOE London (2014).

## Resources

There are several refugee resources and case studies available online from the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Trócaire, Amnesty Information, and Unicef. <http://bit.ly/UNHCRRefugees>

Primary Resource Pack <http://bit.ly/UNICEFOutright>

*Journeys* by Brigid Golden and Aideen Roche is a whole-school resource on the theme of migration, rights, and integration. It is divided into four distinct themes: stereotypes; culture; journeys; and protection. *Journeys* is available from the CDU in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.



## LESSON PLAN

Children can complete an investigation based on the enquiry question: What would happen to Paddington Bear today if he was a real stowaway from 'darkest Peru'?

Children can use a variety of sources to investigate migration and to understand the reasons why people migrate and what it is like to arrive and settle in a new place.

Key questions for discussion based on the Paddington story:

- ⌘ What must it have felt like to arrive in London with no family or friends?

How would you feel if you had to move to a new country on your own?

- ⌘ How do you think the Browns' felt when they saw an unusual looking bear standing at the station?
- ⌘ Do you think they treated him well?
- ⌘ How would you like to be treated if you arrived somewhere completely new where people didn't look or sound like everyone you're used to being around?

Following the class discussion of the Paddington story, ask the class to think of questions that they have about child refugees. Ask the children to record

their questions on post-its for a display board.

- ⌘ Is Paddington a refugee, an asylum seeker or a migrant? What is the difference and does it matter?
- ⌘ Should Paddington be found at your nearest railway station (e.g. Heuston, Ceannt, Colbert) what welcome do you think he would receive?
- ⌘ How could we welcome a newcomer to this school or area?
- ⌘ What local information would be helpful.
- ⌘ Compile a welcome pack for newcomers.

# 11 February is Safer Internet Day

## What is Safer Internet Day?

Safer Internet Day is an EU-wide initiative supported by the European Commission to promote a safer internet for all users, especially young people. It will take place on Tuesday, 11 February 2020. Safer Internet Day is a great way for schools to set aside some time in their

calendars each year and do something to promote internet safety among pupils, teachers and parents. Last year, over 140,000 young people participated in Safer Internet Day. There are lots of ways you can get involved. Visit the Webwise Safer Internet Day Hub for ideas and inspiration: [bit.ly/SaferInternetDay2020](http://bit.ly/SaferInternetDay2020).

## Online Safety Checklist

With Safer Internet Day just around the corner, Webwise have developed a helpful online safety checklist for teachers. Here are some ways schools and teachers can help promote a better internet!

**JANE MC GARIGLE, project officer, Webwise, PDST.**

## ONLINE SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR TEACHERS



### 1. GET INFORMED

Get started by familiarising yourself with the school Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). Keep up to date with trends and issues via [webwise.ie](http://webwise.ie)



### 2. FREE RESOURCES

Introduce online safety into the classroom using the FREE Webwise Resources. Lessons cover topics including cyber-bullying, image-sharing and more.



### 3. SAVE THE DATE

Get students involved in online safety by signing up for Safer Internet Day, celebrated every February. [webwise.ie/saferinternetday](http://webwise.ie/saferinternetday)



### 4. INVOLVE PARENTS

Introduce parents to the [webwise.ie/parents](http://webwise.ie/parents) hub or host an online safety evening for parents using the Webwise Parents talks.



### 5. PRIVACY CHECK

Everyone has a right to privacy. Help protect yourself online by doing regular privacy checks and keep up to date with advice from [webwise.ie/teachers](http://webwise.ie/teachers).



### 6. LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Modelling good behaviour is one of the most powerful ways to educate young people. For more information and details on further training and support visit: [webwise.ie/teachers](http://webwise.ie/teachers).

**Visit [webwise.ie](http://webwise.ie) for more expert advice, support and FREE resources**



# Mothúcháin agus Iompar

Tá sraith ghleoite leabhar ar mhothúcháin agus iompar foilsithe ag an Áisaonad. Is mar áis do mhúinteoirí agus do thuismitheoirí a bhfuil páistí acu i mbunranganna bunscoile iad.

Cuireann siad páistí i mbun plé agus cainte faoina gcuid mothúcháin agus i mbun machnaimh ar a n-iompar agus ar a mothúcháin agus ar iompar daoine eile. Tá nótaí tacaíochta ag cúl gach leabhair ina bhfuil moltaí do mhúinteoirí maidir le conas an leabhar a úsáid.

Seacht leabhar glúine atá sa tsraith:

*Is liomsa é* (leabhar faoin roinnt)

*Tá má cróga*

*Rialacha, Rialacha!*

*Tá mé feargach*

*Níl mé sona, sásta* (leabhar faoin mbrón)

*Ní mise a rinne é* (ag foghlaim faoin bhfirinne)

*Is cuma liom!* (leabhar faoi mheas)

Tá tacaíocht phictiúrtha ann sna scéalta, chomh maith le teanga athráite, rud a thabharfaidh muinín do pháistí atá ag tosú ar an léitheoireacht.

Is é is aidhm leis na leabhair ná feasacht na bpáistí ar iompar oiriúnach agus dearfach i suíomhanna éagsúla a fhorbairt agus chun iad a spreagadh le bheith ag smaoineamh ar an méid a deir siad, agus ar an toradh a bhíonn ar a gcuid gníomhartha orthu féin agus ar dhaoine eile.

## Úsáid sa Rang:

- Is leabhair don léitheoireacht i gcomhpháirt iad na leabhair seo, léigh iad leis an rang iomlán, le grúpaí nó le páistí aonair chun tús a chur le comhphlé ar iompar dearfach. Déan an leabhar a athléamh ionas go dtógfar ar thuiscint agus ar theanga an ábhair.
- Caith am ag breathnú ar na pictiúir atá sa leabhar agus ceistigh na páistí faoi cad a shíleann siad a tharlódh sula léann sibh an scéal. I ndiaidh an leabhar

a léamh iarr ar na páistí an scéal a mhíniú ina gcuid focal féin.

- Labhair faoi cad a tharlaíonn sna scéalta - ar tharla a leithéid riamh do dhuine ar bith sa rang? Iarr ar na páistí, ar a seal, a scéal féin a roinnt leis an rang agus tabhair deis, ar deireadh, ceisteanna a chur ar a chéile faoin eispéaras a bhí acu.
- Labhair faoi na rudaí a dhéanann daoine sásta agus ansin faoi na rudaí a dhéanann daoine míshásta - pléigh cad is féidir a dhéanamh le go mbeidh daoine sona, sásta.

- Cuir ar a súile do pháistí go n-insíonn daoine bréaga ó am go chéile. Pléigh an tábhacht a bhaineann le bheith ionraic agus na fadhbanna a d'fhéadfadh bréaga a chruthú.
- Pléigh eachtra ó leabhar ar bith. Déan pictiúr 'roimh an eachtra' agus 'i ndiaidh na heachtra' a léiríonn na mothúcháin a bhí ar an gcarachtar. Iarr ar pháistí machnamh a dhéanamh ar eachtra a bhain dóibh féin agus pictiúr 'roimh an eachtra' agus 'i ndiaidh na heachtra' a léiríonn na mothúcháin a bhí acu a léiriú.



- Leabhair glúine a phléann le mothúcháin agus le hiompar dearfach a chothú
- Moltaí le haghaidh ceachtanna i ngach leabhar
- D'aoisghrúpa 5 go 9 mbliana

 Coláiste Ollscoile Naomh Muire Béal Feirste

Ar fáil annas é

An tÁisaonad  
Coláiste Ollscoile Naomh Muire  
191 Bóthar na bhFíol  
Béal Feirste  
BT12 6FE

www.aisaonad.org  
ordú@aisaonad.org  
028048 90 243864

 Fóirís na Gaeilge

- Baineann cuid mhaith den ábhar sna scéalta le rialacha, pléigh na rialacha sin de réir mar a thagann siad chun cinn, ansin pléigh na rialacha scoile/baile atá ar eolas acu. Pléigh cén fáth a bhfuil rialacha riachtanach agus cad a tharlódh mura mbeadh rialacha ann. Pléigh na fadhbanna a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ann gan rialacha. Labhair faoi na rialacha gur mhaith leis na páistí chun go mbeadh a saol féin níos fearr.

- Labhair ar an straitéis a d'úsáid an carachtar sa leabhar *Tá mé Cróga*. Shocraigh an carachtar síos agus tharraing anáil. Iarr ar na páistí anáil isteach go mall agus anáil amach arís. An gcabhródh sé seo leo socrú síos dá mbeadh eagla orthu? Ar fáil [www.litriocht.com](http://www.litriocht.com) [www.stmarys-belfast.ac.uk/aisaonad/](http://www.stmarys-belfast.ac.uk/aisaonad/)

**MÁIRE NIC AN RÍ, oifigeach bunscoile, COGG.**

# Reviews

## Thought provoking insights

*Teachers and Teacher Unions in a Globalised World*, an anniversary book written for the occasion of the sesquicentenary of the INTO, yields rich and thought-provoking insights into a range of issues that are central to primary education and teacher professionalism in Ireland. The clue to what lies between the covers of the book is to be found in the subtitle – History, Theory and Policy.

John Carr (former INTO General Secretary) and Lori Beckett trace and explore the complex interplay between political and social developments in this country and beyond, and their influence on the Irish educational landscape. The role of teacher activists in shaping this landscape is underlined throughout and the reader is left in no doubt regarding the importance of research-active teachers and teacher union research in addressing the challenges presented to educational policy and practice in Ireland.

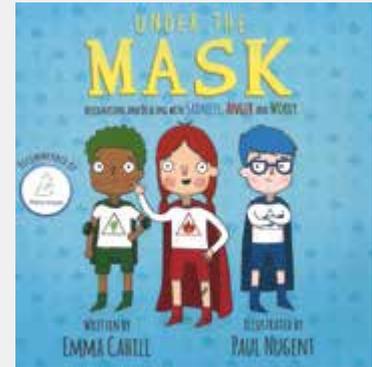
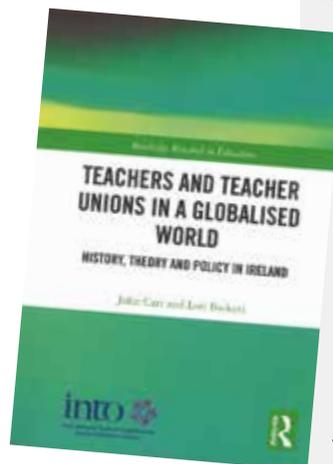
A number of themes permeate the book. For example, as the authors probe our history, recent past, and present we are prompted to reflect on the common (mis)interpretation of terms such as 'activism' and 'professionalism' and to reconsider their true meaning. Watershed moments in the history of education are analysed, such as the 1922 National Programme of Primary Instruction and

the INTO 1941 inquiry into the Irish language question. The significance of teacher input into debate at national level is made clear, not least because 'collectively, teachers have seen it all on the island of Ireland in regard to the ways ordinary people live in local school communities north and south.'

The level of detail and analysis in the book is quite extensive, making for a challenging read at times, especially for those who might be less familiar with educational-political discourse. The book is likely to be of particular interest to teachers who are currently engaged in educational research or those who are keen to do so but are seeking avenues to explore.

Routledge.  
ISBN: ISBN: 978-1-138-29011-2 (hardback), ISBN: 978-1-315-26654-1 (eBook).  
Cost: £120stg (hardback), £22.50stg (eBook).

**Reviewed by ANNE ENGLISH, Blackrock, Co Dublin.**



## Valuable life skills for children

*Under the Mask* has been referred to by Marty Guilfoyle as a 'mental health masterpiece' and it is easy to see why. I think this is one of the best books I have ever encountered for the valuable life skills it can teach the children in our care. With its insightful, careful wording and beautiful illustrations it is really accessible to children across all stages of primary school.

This book shows children, through the use of three empowering superheroes, how to identify and name their feelings and emotions. It details some fantastic coping mechanisms that tie in really well with the Fun Friends program and Friends for Life program used in many schools.

Blaze, Crash and Rustle are fun and engaging characters that not only normalise but validate emotions children can often be overwhelmed by.

Every home, classroom and SET setting could benefit from a copy of *Under the Mask*. It is a wonderful resource as a story starter, circle time activity or drama lesson and holds such valuable messages for our young people.

I think this book would be suitable from four to 10 year olds.

Independently published. ISBN: 9781691280629. Cost: €10.

**Reviewed by JEAN O'MALLEY, Co Galway.**

## Ideal book for any rugby fan

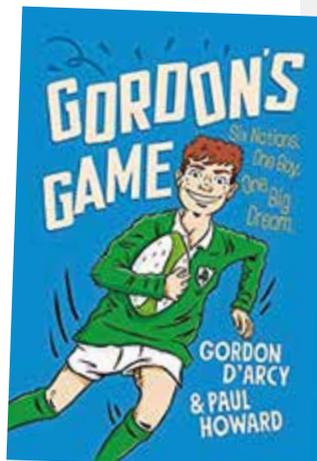
*Gordon's Game* is a charming book with a lot of heart and humour. Written by Gordon D'Arcy and Paul Howard it tells the story of Gordon's own journey to greatness with the Irish rugby team.

The book chronicles major events in Gordon's life, from first watching rugby with his dad, to playing school's rugby with Clongowes and putting on the green jersey for the first time. Along the way, Gordon has many lessons to learn, from having a good work ethic to humility.

Realising the importance of friends, keeping promises and not letting success go to your head are strong themes in the book. The story is full of humour and the illustrations from Alan Nolan add to it. Many well-known Irish players make an appearance in the story, including Paul O'Connell, Brian O'Driscoll and Ronan O'Gara.

This is an ideal book for any rugby fan, young or old. A perfect class read in the run up to the upcoming Six Nations. Recommended for readers aged 10+.

Penguin Ireland. ISBN: 781-84488-4681. Cost: €12.



**Reviewed by GARY TROY, Cabra, Dublin 7.**

# Finishing Touches

## Noticeboard



### Mortgage and Tax Advisory Seminars for INTO members and their families

ITAS Accounting and EDUC Mortgage seminars will take place at 7pm as follows:

- Thursday 13 February in the Newpark Hotel, Kilkenny
- Thursday 2 April in the Clayton Hotel, Lapp's Quay, Cork
- Thursday 14 May in the Teachers' Club, 36 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

INTO members and their families are very welcome to attend.

The seminar will cover the following topics:

- Tips on mortgage applications
- First time buyers, moving home or investment properties
- Saving money by changing mortgage providers
- The role of your solicitors in buying or selling property
- Ownership options
- The importance of drafting/ updating your will after purchasing property
- Tax reliefs available for property owners
- How to reduce your tax bill on rental income
- Understanding your tax obligations
- Gifting or inheriting property
- Tax tips
- Offers exclusive to INTO members

The above information is provided in conjunction with our partners at EDUC Mortgages, ITAS Accounting and Summit Law.

To register for this event, please INTO Events on [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie)



### Marino Institute of Education Postgraduate Theses

The Marino Institute of Education Library would like to notify MIE alumni of our intention to upload postgraduate theses to our institutional repository page on TARA (Trinity's Access to Research Archive) in order to preserve and provide access to research undertaken at MIE.

If you do not wish for your thesis to be made available in this way please email Genevieve Larkin, Head of Library Services, before 1 March 2020: [Genevieve.larkin@mie.ie](mailto:Genevieve.larkin@mie.ie) or write to Genevieve Larkin, Head of Library Services, Marino Institute of Education Library, Griffith Ave, Marino, D9.



### Past Students Association of CICE Conference

The Past Students Association of the Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE), and now incorporating the Church of Ireland Centre in DCU, invites all past students or any teachers working in Church of Ireland or other protestant-managed schools to attend our annual conference to be held in Kilkenny from 6th-8th March 2020. Workshops will include Art and IT.

Further details can be obtained from [psacice@gmail.com](mailto:psacice@gmail.com) or our Facebook Page – PastStudents CICE.



### Global Citizenship School

Let 2020 be the year that your pupils participate in Global Citizenship School. Check out our new webpages with ready-to-go lessons organised by class group, teacher resources, teacher supports and possible activities at [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie) (search Global Citizenship School) or <https://sites.google.com/view/globalcitizenshipschool>



### Aware is seeking volunteers

Just a few hours of your time each week can really make a difference in someone else's life. Volunteer with Aware today. Aware is the national organisation providing support, education, and information services for those impacted by depression, bipolar disorder and other mood-related conditions. For more information, visit [aware.ie/](http://aware.ie/) volunteering



### Join Spanish Choir Ireland

Join Spanish Choir Ireland in the Teachers' Club, Parnell Square on Mondays from 6:15pm-7:45pm.

Basic Spanish recommended. No musical experience needed. First rehearsal free/ *Primer ensayo gratis.*

Perform songs from Spain and Latin America. Improve your voice while brushing up on your Español! Gain confidence and join a community.

Call: 083 8505978

Email: [donal@fingalacademyofmusic.com](mailto:donal@fingalacademyofmusic.com)

# Where Teachers Borrow



**Comhar Linn**  
INTO Credit Union

[comharlinnintocu.ie](https://www.comharlinnintocu.ie)

## Comhar Linn Draw winners

Results: November 2019

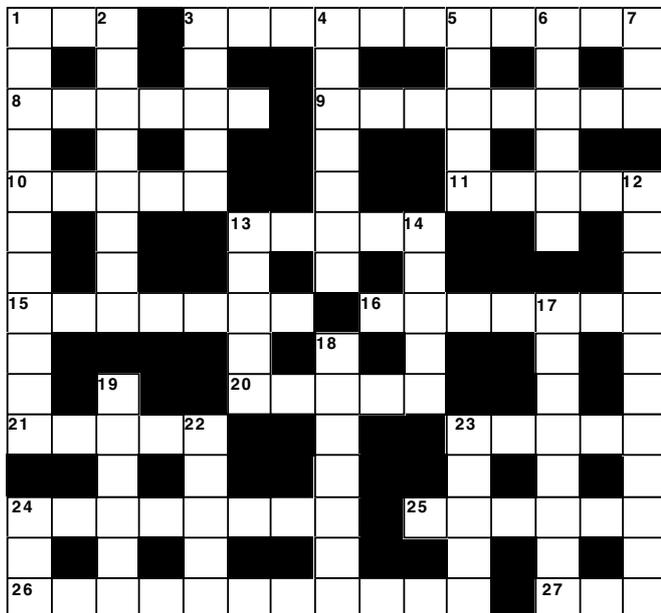
- 1 Winner from District 17 Car – Toyota Yaris Hybrid  
2 Frankie Kirwan Cash €2,000  
3 Orla Fields Cash €1,000

- 4 Oonagh Kenny Cash €1,000  
5 Winner from District 1 Cash €1,000  
Draw held November, 2019.

25 lucky winners also won our Bumper November Christmas Hamper. Please go to our website to view hamper winners <https://www.comharlinnintocu.ie/drawresults>.

## Comhar Linn Crossword No. 203

A draw for 2 x €100 will be made from all correct entries. Simply complete the crossword and send it to 'InTouch Crossword', INTO, 35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, before Friday 28th February 2020. Photocopied crosswords are not accepted.



NAME:  
ADDRESS:

Open to INTO Members only

To read the Crossword Competition Terms & Conditions and INTO's Data Privacy Policy Notice please visit <https://www.into.ie/about/compliance/data-privacy-notice/>

### Across

- Say nothing when you keep her. (3)
- Degrees in this will show one to be more than right! (6,5)
- Such music is keen to come back round, note. (6)
- From Java, Rose makes it to a Balkan capital. (8)
- The chap's embraced the Spanish - they're such cads! (5)
- Might the artist take out a lease on this? (5)
- Shell cartons of newly collected hazelnuts at first. (5)
- Industrial action caused by some wayward hair? (7)
- Various characters can identify the redeemer. (7)
- Part of a step that gives a tyre grip. (5)
- A quay in Westmeath? Far out! (5)
- Clemency removes an article from the creamy mixture. (5)
- What's in front of a nightingale in Tuscany is capital! (8)
- How am I doing in this colour? (6)
- Drink with the Pope Emeritus in the East. (11)
- In such misfortune, we take in nothing. (3)

### Down

- The fen near that place in Cork looks good enough to eat! (11)
- As encountered in physics, does this attract one to agriculture? (8,5)
- Nothing is written in these of solar aberration. (5)
- One French noise is not reliable. (7)
- Heedful of a conflict to the east. (5)
- This musical should have what it takes to make things go smoothly! (6)
- Beautiful Laois demesne (with a cute room). (3,5)
- A tenor barely can arrange to memorise thus. (5,2,4)
- See 7 down.
- Stockpile love in a difficult setting. (5)
- Synopsis concerning a vista. (8)
- Ponder what a mirror should do. (9)
- Where cowboys drink, you'll find Sarah with nothing on. (6)
- See 2 down.
- Accommodation for a minister of means. (5)
- Lie - feigning innocence - being beginners. (3)

### InTouch Bumper Christmas Crossword Nov/Dec no 202 2019 Solutions

#### Across

- Chattered
- Taken up
- Met
- IOU
- Rusty
- Val
- Icy
- Little Women
- Suspends
- Knee
- Off
- Meekly
- Panto
- Cargo
- Pauper
- Leap year
- Guest
- Gaped
- Bechamel
- Infant
- Angel
- Elegy
- Gleams
- Two turtle doves
- North Pole
- Well-to-do
- Ham sandwich
- I do
- Ass
- Islam
- Car
- Tie
- Scrooge
- Pumps iron

#### Down

- Christmas pageant
- Assisted
- Thyme
- Raved
- Dill
- Keel
- New wave
- Pop music
- Main course
- Toys
- Nay
- Skua
- Dew
- Frosty the Snowman
- Legend
- Nee
- Lied
- Genial
- Pigeonhole
- Eye
- Land mass
- Ash
- Grew
- Caroller
- Greater
- Gel
- Prince of Peace
- Epsom
- Lairs
- Gift
- Dado
- rail
- Harp

### InTouch October No. 201 Solutions

#### Across

- Eat
- Grandmaster
- Unites
- Unstable
- Links
- Cheap
- Beach
- Eyewash
- Applied
- Muses
- Lilac
- Roost
- Boadicea
- Scampi
- Troublesome
- Les

#### Down

- Equilateral triangle
- Guess
- Nouveau riche
- Attic
- Tables
- Rye
- Paediatrics
- Bosom
- Hopes
- Informal
- Isobars
- El Paso
- Climb
- Butt

### Crossword winners

Crossword winners 200 were Aileen Hooper, Co. Dublin and Eilín Loibhéad, Co. Kerry.

Crossword winners 201 were Annette Dinneen, Co. Kerry and Claire Daly, Co. Monaghan

Bumper winners 202 were Dermot O'Gorman, Co. Clare, Neasa Carroll, D 15, Catherine Conneely, Co. Donegal, John O'Brien, D 24 and Alan Foley, Co. Cork

Each month  
Children's Books  
Ireland recommend a book of the  
month for primary pupils



## CBI recommended read – February

# A Sea of Stories

Written by Sylvia Bishop and illustrated by Paddy Donnelly. Stripes Publishing, 2019. ISBN 9781788950817. 96pp. Cost: €11.19/£7.99.



This charming story focuses on the relationship between Roo and Grandpa. Grandpa's cottage is cluttered with the bits and pieces of a seafaring life. Roo's mum says that Grandpa has brought the whole world into his cottage. Roo is disappointed that they can't visit the cove, where most of his stories begin or end. He can no longer negotiate the path down to this magical place. And Roo realises that her

mum was wrong – Grandpa can't bring the cove to his cottage. Roo hears about the community surrounding her granddad, and she hatches a plan.

This is a lovely story about the power of love, family, community and storytelling. Roo is an intrepid female protagonist. Grandpa is an interesting and contented individual. The language is perfect for a child recently migrated to independent reading. That said, it would make a perfect read-aloud too. Donnelly's bright, colourful textured images are interspersed with lively line drawings. The attractive illustrations move the storyline along wonderfully.

In a classroom setting, this book could generate discussions about the concept of home, a life well lived, ageism, feminism, memory, the power of stories, the importance of supportive communities and much more. (Age 7–9).

**Children's Books Ireland is the national children's books organisation of Ireland. For further information and more reviews, visit [www.childrensbooksireland.ie](http://www.childrensbooksireland.ie)**

### InTouch competitions and draws

From time to time, the INTO runs competitions and draws for our members via InTouch, our e-newsletter, website or social media. Only essential data required for the running of the competition is requested from members. The data collected is deleted once the winners have been selected.

The full name and county of prize winners are published by the INTO. By entering the competition, it is assumed consent is given by members for publication of these details.

For more information on T&Cs for competitions visit the benefits section of the INTO website.

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lárshuíomh oideachais na héireann



Star site



Top 10

**THE MOST CLICKED RESOURCES AT THE START OF THIS MONTH**

**THE FAMINE: AN GORTA MÓR POWERPOINT PRESENTATION**  
<http://bit.ly/AnGortaMór>  
*Presentation showing the causes and the aftermath.*

**SINKING OF THE TITANIC**  
<http://bit.ly/SinkingOfTitanic>  
*Account from an eye witness who was on board the ship.*

**BIA – BOSCA LÓIN**  
[bit.ly/BoscaLóin](http://bit.ly/BoscaLóin)  
*Seo cur i láthair PDF le focail don téama bosca lóin.*

**THE CELTS IN IRELAND**  
<https://tinyurl.com/u49zw7a>  
*Information from Ask About Ireland about these early settlers.*

**FRACTION GAMES**  
<http://bit.ly/AnGortaMór>  
*Games include; mixed fractions, adding fractions, subtracting fractions, reduce fractions, greatest common factor, lowest common factor.*

**ABANDONED IRELAND – THE WORKHOUSE**  
<http://bit.ly/AbandonedIreland>  
*Information about workhouses which were introduced into Ireland as part of the English Poor Law system in 1838.*

**WEATHERDUDE**  
[www.wxduke.com](http://www.wxduke.com)  
*Looks at the funny aspect of weather and how it affects us.*

**COUNTRIES OF EUROPE**  
<http://bit.ly/CountriesofEurope>  
*Tests knowledge of country location – quite difficult in parts.*

**MONEY – SHOPPING WORKSHEET**  
<https://tinyurl.com/t4f6gpf>  
*Worksheet encourages students to look and use a sample price list from a fruit shop to solve problems.*

**INTERACTIVE MAP OF EUROPE**  
*Drag and drop activity – various levels of difficulty.*

**ONES TO WATCH**

**SCOIL FIONNTÁIN NAOFA, SHANAHOE, ABBEYLEIX, CO LAOIS.**  
<https://shanahoens.weebly.com>  
*Great navigation with information on all aspects of school life. Archive of old news items is very impressive.*

**NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS**  
[www.natgeokids.com/ie](http://www.natgeokids.com/ie)  
*National Geographic for Kids is big on education, and the site is full of information about the world around us, from China, to dinosaurs, to space missions, and everything in between.*

**HOW STUFF WORKS**  
[www.howstuffworks.com](http://www.howstuffworks.com)  
*This has been around a while and while aimed at older pupils (12+) it covers a wide range of topics – explaining how things work! Useful for projects.*

**MATHS BOT**  
<https://mathsbot.com>  
*Contains tools for maths teachers and while the revision guides and practice papers may not be relevant, modelling tools such as fraction walls, geoboards and counting sticks will be useful.*