

The background features a large, stylized sun with a gradient from purple to yellow. White rays emanate from the sun. Scattered around are several colorful, 3D-style triangles in shades of blue, purple, and yellow.

feilte

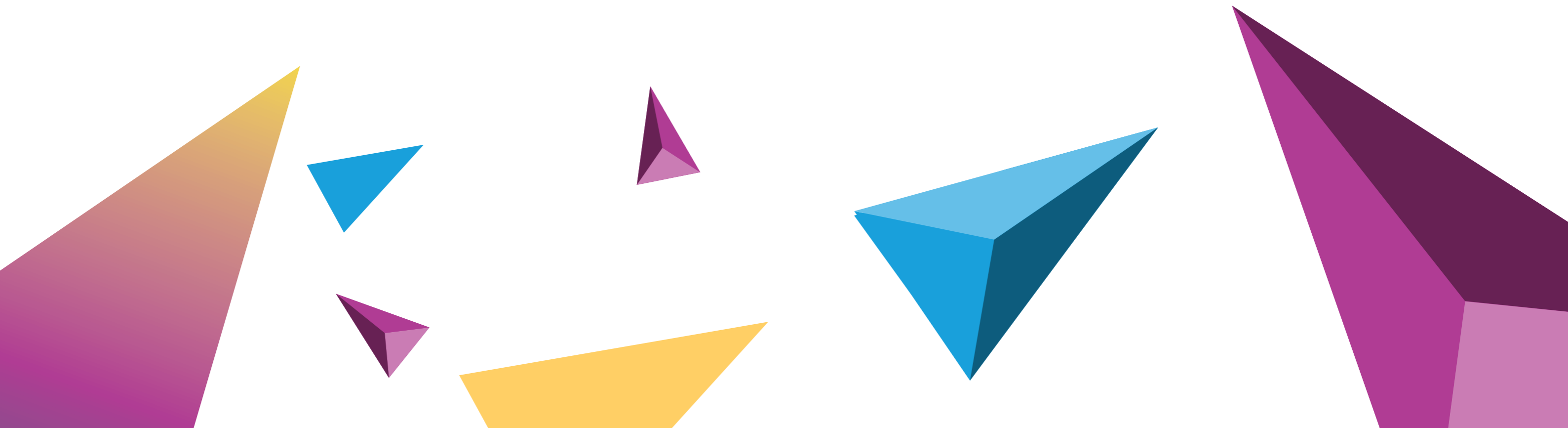
Bursary Scheme
2024

Summary of

Projects and
Professional Learning

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Foreword

A chara,

We are delighted to present this publication marking the inaugural year of the Féilte bursary scheme. The scheme has been very successful in promoting collaborative professional learning in schools across the country. The professional learning showcased here is a powerful reflection of the calibre, creativity, and commitment of the teaching profession in Ireland.

The reflections and resources shared in these pages demonstrate the breadth of impact achieved in such a short time, and they provide a valuable foundation for schools wishing to embark on similar journeys.

On behalf of the Teaching Council, we commend all those involved for their outstanding contributions. These projects highlight the excellent work taking place in schools every day, and the professionalism of our teachers. We look forward to seeing how these projects will continue to inspire, inform, and enrich the professional journeys of teachers.



Eamon Dennehy
Chairperson



Phil Fox
Acting Director

Overview of Féilte Bursary Scheme 2024

The Féilte Bursary Scheme is designed by the Teaching Council to support a culture of professional collaboration and knowledge sharing amongst teachers and schools. The bursary scheme is also designed to promote teaching as a profession.

Teachers were invited to apply for bursaries of **€2,000**, **€3,000**, and **€5,000** to support collaborative professional learning activities in their school communities.

A total of €100,000 worth of bursaries were paid to successful schools in February 2025.

This report gives an overview of the successful projects, reflections from the schools involved alongside some resources which may support other schools to engage in similar learning.

Funded projects

Schools were asked to describe their project and provide feedback on the impact of the bursary scheme. Schools were also asked to create a digital asset to capture the essence of their learning to support other schools who may wish to engage in a similar project.

Below is an outline of the 27 successful projects, reflections submitted by the teachers involved, and a range of digital assets which give a further sense of the projects and the professional learning.

Theme	School	Funding amount
Gaeilge		
Creative writing in Mathematics through Irish	Scoil na Maighdine Muire gan Smál, Camus, Co. na Gaillimhe	€5,000
Teaching Mathematics through Gaeilge	Drumlease National School, Dromahair, Co. Leitrim	€5,000
Teaching music through Irish (CLIL)	Ballinakill Mixed National School, Co. Laois	€2,000
Creating a community of practice for the teaching of music in Irish medium schools	Gaelcholáiste an Phiarsaigh, Rathfarnham	€3,000
Inclusion		
Comhrá and Coffee	East Cork Community Special School, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork	€2,000
Hospital teaching	Solas Hospital School, Crumlin, Co. Dublin	€5,000
“Our School, Our Community” - celebrating linguistic and cultural diversity	St. Colman's National School, Stradbally, Co. Laois	€5,000
Cross-sectoral Community of Practice in South East Ireland	Portlaw National School, Co. Waterford	€5,000
Universal Design for Learning	Scoil Mhuire Naofa, Carrigallen, Co. Leitrim	€2,000
Leadership		
Building leadership capacity with a focus on the new Mathematics Curriculum	St. Attracta's National School, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon	€2,000
Outdoor learning		
Nature Based Learning	Dalkey School Project, Dublin	€5,000
Outdoor learning	St Mary's Boys' School, Monaghan Town	€5,000

Restorative practice and anti-bullying

Anti-bullying policy review	Crannóg Nua School, Portrane, Co. Dublin	€2,000
Community of practice focusing on an anti-bullying policy review	Castlebridge National School, Co. Wexford	€2,000
Helping Hands	Beaufort College, Navan, Co. Meath	€5,000
Restorative practice	Ballymoney National School, Ballineen, Co. Cork	€2,000
Restorative practice	Parteen National School, Co. Clare	€2,000

Teaching and learning

Promoting collaboration and learning in DEIS settings	Le Chéile National School, Roxboro Road, Limerick	€5,000
Community of Practice to support teaching and learning in English	Newport College, Tipperary	€5,000
Enhancing student teacher professional development	Our Lady of Mercy College, Beaumont	€5,000
Professional Learning Community focusing on the new Mathematics curriculum	St. Joseph's National School, Dundalk, Co. Louth	€2,000

Technology

Inclusive pedagogy, digital literacy and student wellbeing	Scoil Aireagail, Ballyhale, Co. Kilkenny	€5,000
Integration of Artificial Intelligence into education	Bishop McEgan College, Macroom, Co. Cork	€5,000

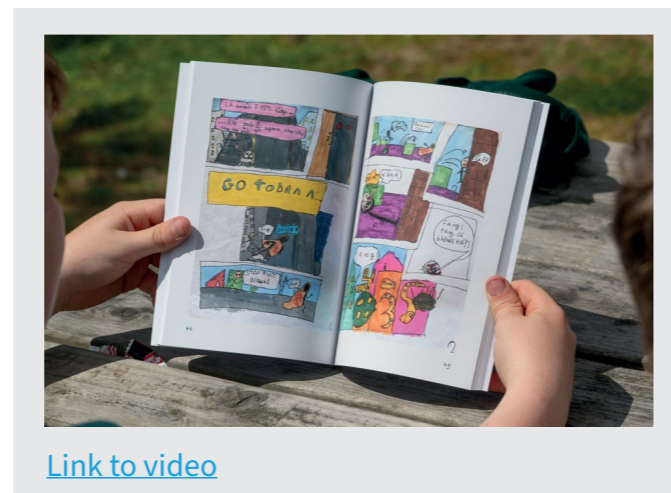
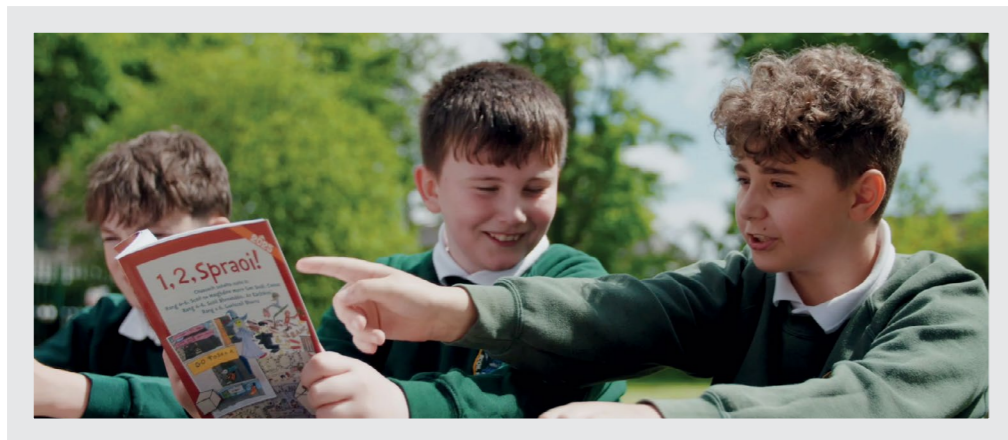
Wellbeing

Conversations that Count: A partnership of Professional Learning	Castletroy College, Limerick City	€5,000
Understanding trauma and wellbeing through Nurture	St. Finian's National School, Dublin	€2,000
Whole school approaches to SPHE through creative and arts-based interventions	Cork Educate Together, Wellington Road, Cork City	€5,000
Zones of regulation	Glenasmole National School, Bohernabreena, Co. Dublin	€2,000

Gaeilge

Creative writing in Mathematics through Irish Scoil na Maighdine Muire gan Smál, Camus, Co. na Gaillimhe

Scoil na Maighdine Muire gan Smál was awarded €5,000 to collaborate with Gaelscoil Bharra in Dublin, Scoil Bhreandáin in Mayo and Dublin City University, to introduce creative writing in Mathematics through Irish. This project aimed to create a Professional Learning Community to explore the teaching of Irish in tandem with the new Mathematics Curriculum in a creative, integrated and inclusive way.



[Link to video](#)

Teaching music through Irish (CLIL) Ballinakill National School, Co. Laois

Ballinakill National School was awarded €2,000 to collaborate with Abbeyleix South National School, Laois to form a Professional Learning Community to support the teaching of music through Irish. This project aimed to increase the exposure of learners to Irish by extending the use of Irish as a medium of communication and instruction in real contexts beyond discrete Irish language lessons.

School's reflection

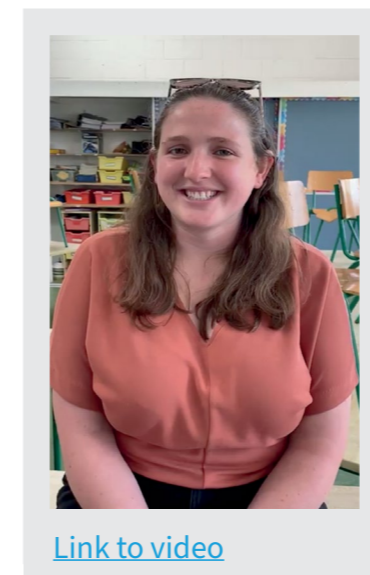
Participation in the Féilte Bursary Scheme has been a very worthwhile experience for both staff and students in our school, Ballinakill Mixed NS. The opportunity to engage in a collaborative, cross-school CLIL project, integrating Gaeilge and music, has enriched our teaching and learning practices. Teachers have developed new pedagogical skills, increased their confidence in using Irish, and engaged in meaningful professional dialogue through joint CPD workshops held together with Abbeyleix South NS. Observing peers and sharing best practices has strengthened a sense of professional community, while also deepening understanding of effective bilingual instruction.

Students responded enthusiastically to the use of music as a vehicle for language learning, resulting in increased motivation, creativity, and confidence in using Irish. The project also fostered a greater sense of cultural identity and pride.

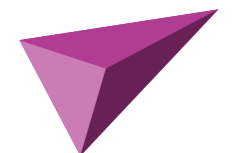
One challenge was the logistical complexity of organising substitute cover and coordinating visits between schools, which required careful planning. Time constraints also placed pressure on teachers' existing workloads. However, we felt that the professional and educational gains offset these difficulties.

Overall, the bursary enabled our participation in an innovative and collaborative approach to professional learning and curriculum development. It empowered our staff and enriched the student experience, leaving a lasting impact on our two school communities.

Resource



[Link to video](#)



Inclusion

Comhrá and Coffee

East Cork Community Special School, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork

East Cork Community Special School was awarded €2,000 to collaborate with Rochestown Community Special School, Cork to establish a Professional Learning Community. This project aimed to establish a culture of conversation and collaboration between the schools, fostering professional learning and peer support among teachers around shared practice, identifying current best practice approaches in the field of special education.

School's reflection

Participating in *Comhrá and Coffee* was an affirming and energising professional learning experience. This Community of Practice was supported by a light-touch group-coaching approach. It connected eight teachers from two developing special schools, East Cork Community Special School and Rochestown Community Special School, to engage in joint problem-solving, share practical ideas, and reflect on classroom practice. The informal atmosphere, supported by coffee and food, helped create a warm and trusting space across three online sessions and one in-person meeting.

Much has been written about how teaching can feel isolating at times. The initiative offered connection, reassurance, and a sense of community (Moynihan and O' Donovan, 2022). A strong sense of shared experience and professional alignment emerged. As one participant put it, "I was pleasantly surprised by how similar our classes were in structure and approach". The sessions created space for honest, supportive discussion, with teachers reflecting on their own practice and drawing inspiration from one another. One teacher highlighted the value of "small, thoughtful changes ... that can have a significant impact on professional growth and classroom practice".

The impact of experiencing coaching extended beyond the sessions. One teacher shared that they had started "asking more pointed and thoughtful questions" when guiding SNAs, encouraging autonomy and solution-focused thinking. Overall, the experience reinforced the power of collaboration and coaching to support growth in the special education context.

[Link to video](#) 



“

It was all about just getting teachers to work together, about pushing the idea of collaboration.

”



Hospital Teaching

Solas Hospital School, Crumlin, Co. Dublin

Solas Hospital School was awarded €5,000 to collaborate with seven schools* to support the hosting of the HOPE Congress 2025, an international congress of teachers in hospital schools. This project aimed to unite hospital educators from Ireland and around the world to share knowledge, practices, and insights tailored to the unique challenges of teaching children with medical and mental health needs.

*List of collaborating schools:

- Temple Street Hospital School
- Linn Dara Schools
- Children's Ark School
- Beaumont Hospital School
- National Rehabilitation Community Hospital School
- Cork University Hospital School
- The National Children's Hospital Special School

School's reflection

We are deeply grateful to the Teaching Council for awarding a Féilte bursary of €5,000 to support the HOPE Congress 2025, which took place in Dublin in May 2025. The congress brought together 294 hospital teachers and education professionals from across Europe and beyond, united by the theme Together: Sharing Information, Sharing Knowledge, Sharing Practice.

The bursary was an important contribution that helped us to provide a rich programme that balanced research, policy, and practical strategies through keynote lectures, oral presentations, and hands-on workshops. Particularly impactful were sessions amplifying the voices of students with medical or mental health needs, which powerfully reminded participants of the importance of inclusive and responsive educational practices.

The congress facilitated meaningful professional learning by creating spaces for hospital teachers to exchange ideas, reflect on shared challenges, and collaborate on solutions that will benefit students at home and internationally. The positive feedback from attendees highlighted the value of the event in inspiring new approaches, strengthening networks, and supporting the ongoing professional development of those working in this highly specialised field.

We sincerely thank the Teaching Council for their generous support in making this important learning experience possible.

Resource



[Link to video](#)

Cross-sectoral Community of Practice in South East Ireland Portlaw National School, Co. Waterford

Portlaw National School was awarded €5,000 as part of the Féilte Bursary Scheme to collaborate with St. Stephen's De La Salle, St. Ursula's Primary School and SETU Waterford, to embed Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in practice. This project aimed to establish a cross-sectoral Community of Practice in the South East of Ireland, enabling teachers to enhance their skills and embed UDL approaches, enriching their approach to inclusion within their schools.

School's reflection

The principals first met in a meeting hosted by SETU and we discussed what was possible with limited resources and the time constraints which DEIS schools, in particular, can suffer from. The three principals committed to releasing three or four teachers each for a UDL professional learning day and to develop a Community of Practice (CoP) from there.

The first half of the professional learning day was facilitated by Bláthnaid Breslin from UL. Brian Barron (Portlaw NS) and Caroline McGarry (SETU) facilitated the afternoon session where the teachers discussed ideas and came up with a plan for the CoP based on the ideas of lesson study.

Three groups were created, made up of teachers from each of the three schools. Each group planned a lesson which had UDL as a central component or philosophical mind-set as part of the preparation. Each group then agreed who would teach the lesson in their own classroom. The lesson study occurred in the schools with all their context specific needs. After feedback on the lesson, a second teacher volunteered to teach the next lesson and the preparation for learning was again collaborative.

As of May 19th, all groups have completed two lesson studies with a hope that the third will occur in the Autumn. The learning for the teachers and the pupils appears to be profound. The teachers have loved visiting each other's schools and are genuinely surprised at the impact that UDL is having on their pupils' learning, and their enjoyment of their learning.

We have plans to continue the CoP next year and on June 5th, we brought the nine classes from across the three schools together in SETU for a concert based on the Carnival of the Animals, one of the groups' focus for their lesson study.



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*The teachers
have loved
visiting
each other's
schools.*

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Universal Design for Learning Scoil Mhuire Naofa, Carrigallen, Co. Leitrim

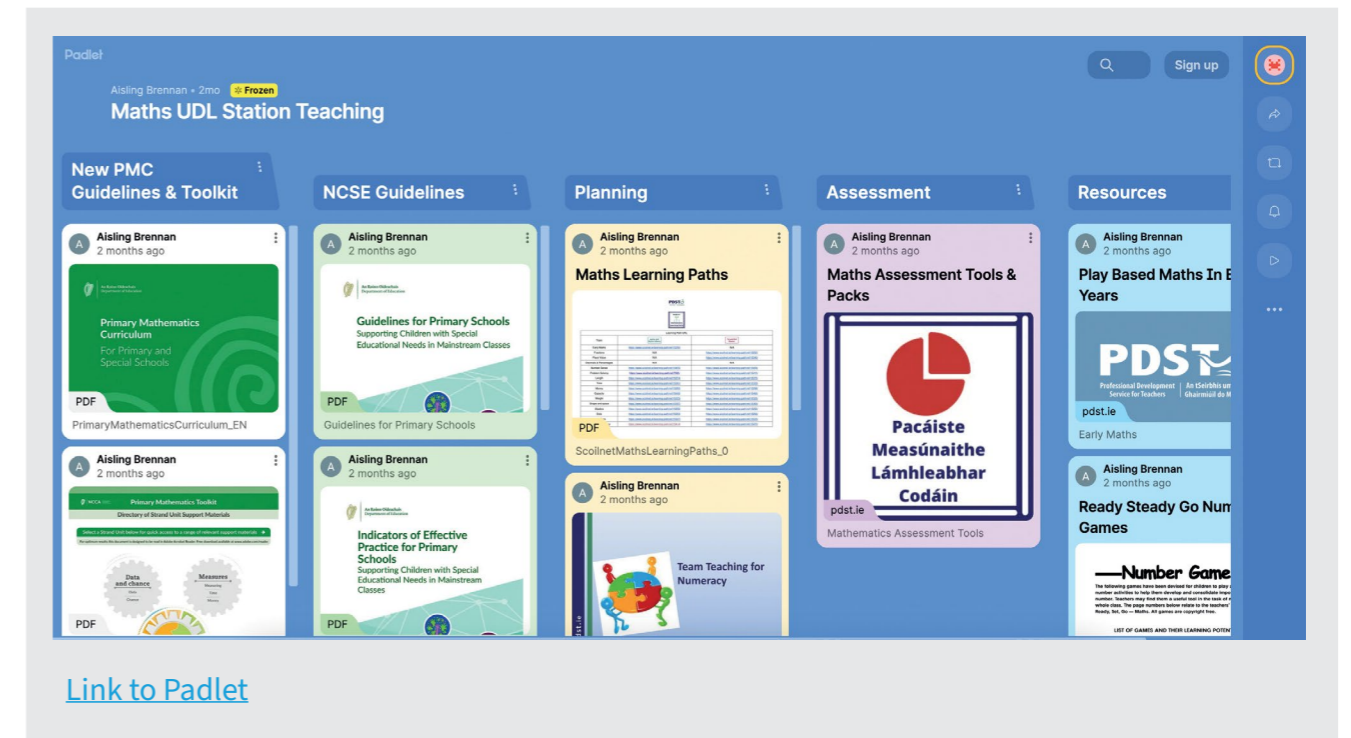
Scoil Mhuire Naofa was awarded €2,000 to collaborate with Ardkeeran NS, to promote meaningful integration and inclusion of autistic pupils into mainstream Mathematics classes. This project aimed to build staff capacity to apply Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to accommodate all learners and remove barriers in the learning process, including the creation of a structured and replicable six-week station teaching programmes for all class levels by 2026 in alignment with the new Primary Mathematics Curriculum.

School's reflection

The bursary scheme is an excellent idea – it gives motivated teachers an opportunity to trial and improve teaching, learning and inclusion within our settings with some spending to back it. It greatly enhanced collaboration and motivation between our two schools.

Resource

A padlet was created which incorporates the new Primary Mathematics Curriculum Guidelines and Toolkit, guidelines from the NCSE, and supporting documentation on lesson plans, assessment tools and packs, and other resources which could be incorporated into the classroom.



Leadership

Building leadership capacity with a focus on the new Mathematics Curriculum

St. Attracta's National School, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon

St. Attracta's National School was awarded €2,000 to collaborate with Scoil Phádraig, Westport, Mayo Education Centre and Maynooth University to focus on the new Mathematics Curriculum. This project aimed to build leadership capacity, foster collaboration, and promote professional learning by implementing the new Primary Curriculum Framework with a focus on the new Mathematics Curriculum.

School's reflection

Background

As part of our Teaching Council Féilte Bursary project, St. Attracta's National School, Ballaghaderreen, and Scoil Phádraig, Westport, collaboratively established a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to explore themes of teacher leadership and curricular leadership, with a particular focus on the implementation of the new Primary Mathematics Curriculum.

Impact on Pupils

The Féilte bursary project has significantly enhanced pupils' engagement and attitudes in mathematics. Post-initiative surveys show higher enthusiasm for maths and greater willingness to participate in class, reflected in teachers' observations of pupils being more engaged and enthusiastic during maths lessons. Pupils also exhibited increased confidence in their abilities – many are now more willing to tackle problems and even have strategies in place to overcome difficulties. Qualitative feedback suggests a deeper appreciation for learning in maths, with children recognising the value of multiple approaches and learning from mistakes, contributing to a more positive outlook overall.

Impact on Teachers

Teachers developed as curriculum leaders through this project, gaining both new pedagogical skills and a stronger sense of agency. In practice they introduced active, hands-on learning, mathematical talk, and playful problem-solving activities to make maths more engaging (as reported in teacher surveys). Cross-school Professional Learning Community (PLC) collaboration was particularly valuable – teachers exchanged strategies and led discussions, which boosted their confidence to implement the new Primary Mathematics Curriculum and to mentor colleagues. Throughout the project, teachers emphasised that providing time and autonomy for professional dialogue (teacher agency) was crucial for empowering them as leaders. As a result, teachers report feeling more self-assured in driving curriculum changes and more equipped to foster high-quality, consistent maths teaching across the school.



Outdoor learning

Nature Based Learning Dalkey School Project, Dublin

Dalkey School Project was awarded €5,000 to collaborate with Blackrock Education Centre, Monkstown Educate Together National School, Dun Laoghaire Educate Together, and Sallynoggin Killiney ETNS. Together they created a professional learning programme for teachers in the area of Nature Based Learning (NBL). This project aimed to support teachers to provide NBL for children in different primary school settings, enabling children to lead their play and learning in nature as an integral part of their education and healthy development.

School's reflection

In response to our schools' growing interest in outdoor learning, and their varied experience with Nature Based Learning, we created a weeklong course. Fifteen educators from eleven schools formed a vibrant learning community, and every participant described the experience as transformative, citing the power of learning both from and with peers.

Our aim was to support teachers to provide Nature Based Learning (NBL) for children in different primary school settings, enabling children to lead their play and learning in nature as an integral part of their education and healthy development. From the teachers' feedback on the course, we are confident we met our objectives of creating communities of learning, developing professional relationships to support NBL in our schools, developing confidence and competence in teachers in delivering NBL and supporting wellbeing in teachers and their future students.

The programme offered an immersion in nature-based pedagogy, fusing theory with practice. By threading outdoor experiences through mathematics, the arts, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), language, SESE, SPHE, and PE, teachers discovered that learning outdoors can meet curricular goals rather than add to their workload. By the end of the course, participants reported fresh confidence in bringing lessons outside.

The course nourished teachers professionally, emotionally, and physically. Many called this the most impactful CPD of their careers, noting enhanced wellbeing, renewed inspiration, and a toolkit of strategies ready for immediate use. Perhaps most significant was the deepened bond with nature. Participants left inspired to redesign their teaching around outdoor learning and sustainability, with a revived *grá* for the natural world.

Teachers have asked to sustain a community of practice during the year, which Blackrock Education Centre will facilitate. Five participants already plan to pursue full Forest School training. To broaden our reach, we would love to develop a "train-the-trainer" model for this course so Education Centres nationwide can offer it, ensuring more teachers, and thus more children, benefit from immersive Nature Based Learning. Alongside this, we are designing a QQI accredited Level 6 Certificate in Nature Based Learning, the first of its kind in Ireland. Building on the course, it will equip educators with seasonally grounded expertise to bring ESD and the new Primary Curriculum Framework to life.

[Link to video](#) 



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*The course
nourished teachers
professionally,
emotionally, and
physically.*

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Restorative practice and anti-bullying

Anti-bullying policy review

Crannóg Nua School, Portrane, Co. Dublin

Crannóg Nua School was awarded €2,000 to collaborate with Ballydowd Special School to establish a community of practice for an anti-bullying policy review in line with the *Bí Cineálta* procedures. This project aimed to foster shared learning, promote consistency, and enhance the implementation of effective anti-bullying strategies in their respective schools.



School's reflection

Our schools have recently engaged in a valuable collaborative initiative to establish a Community of Practice (CoP) between the schools, focused on the implementation of the new *Bí Cineálta* guidelines for preventing and addressing bullying behaviours. This joint effort provided an opportunity to review our current anti-bullying policies through a shared lens, bringing together the perspectives and expertise of both schools.

The CoP created a structured space for open dialogue, critical reflection, and professional learning. Through scheduled meetings and shared documentation, we were able to compare approaches, identify strengths, and discuss challenges in policy implementation. It became clear that while every school context is unique, the principles of prevention, empathy, and consistency are universally important.

One of the most significant benefits of this initiative was the shared analysis of real-world scenarios and the practical application of the *Bí Cineálta* framework. The collaborative nature of the CoP encouraged trust and mutual learning, allowing both schools to question existing practices and trial new strategies with confidence. This has already led to improvements in how we respond to incidents and support students in a restorative and respectful manner.

Going forward, the CoP will remain an important forum for monitoring progress and promoting consistency in the language and actions we use to address bullying. It is our hope that this model of collaboration will be replicated more widely, as it has proven to be an effective and sustainable approach to enhancing student and staff wellbeing.



Community of practice focusing on an anti-bullying policy review

Castlebridge National School, Co. Wexford

Castlebridge National School was awarded €2,000 to collaborate with Curracloe National School to establish a community of practice for an anti-bullying policy review. This project aimed to develop whole school community understanding of a whole education approach to bullying prevention in the Irish school setting (UNESCO World Anti-Bullying Forum 2021).

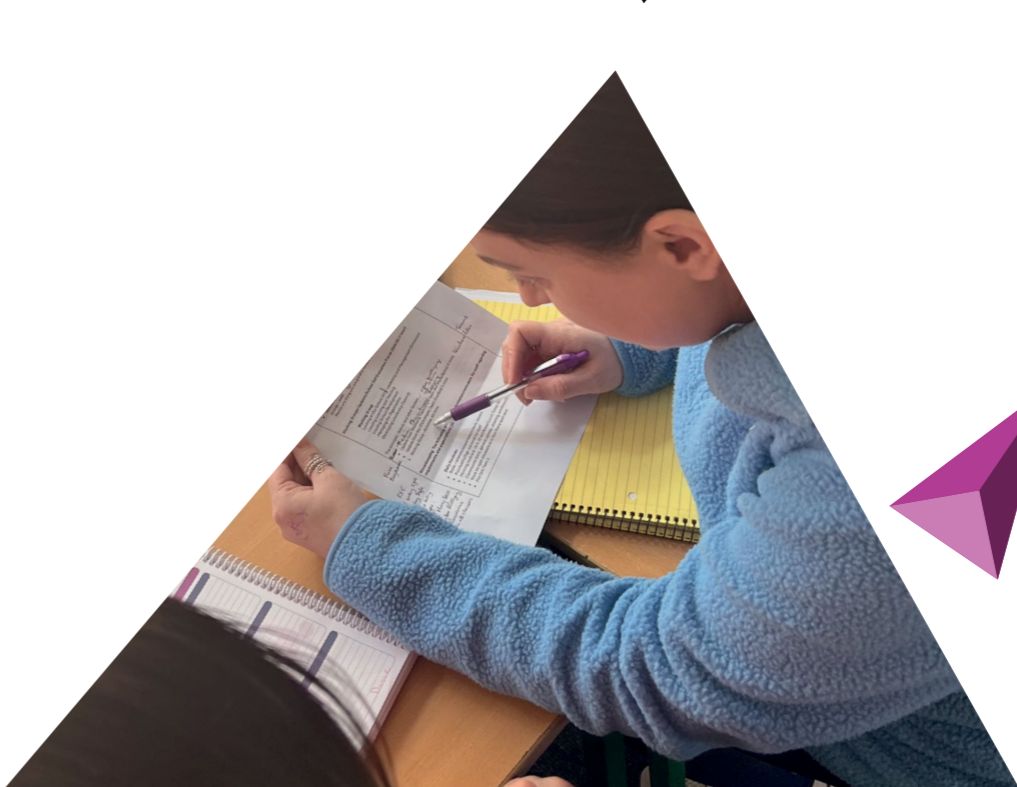
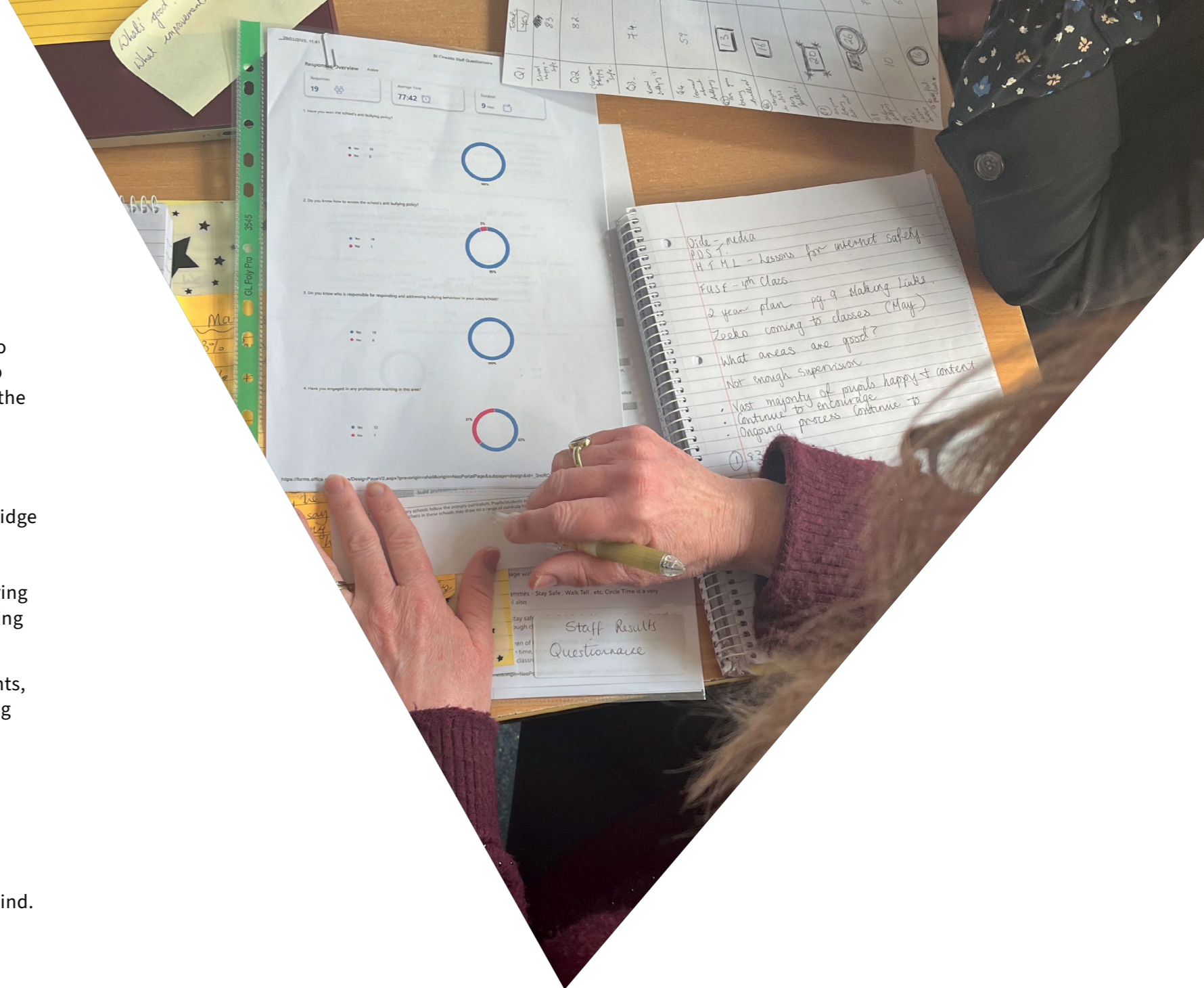
School reflection

As part of our ongoing commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive school environment, Castlebridge NS was proud to collaborate with Curracloe NS on a joint initiative promoting the Bí Cineálta anti-bullying message. This collaborative project brought our schools together to strengthen our education and prevention strategies around bullying. Staff from both schools worked closely, sharing best practices and resources to enhance our collective approach to supporting pupils and promoting kindness and respect.

An integral aspect of the project was gathering data from key stakeholders, including pupils, parents, and staff. This evidence-based approach helped to shape our focus and revealed that cyberbullying was a particular concern among parents and staff in both school communities. In response, we engaged Zeeko, an expert organisation in digital wellbeing, to deliver cyber safety talks tailored for pupils and parents in both schools. These sessions were well received and provided practical guidance on navigating the online world safely and respectfully.

This project has strengthened the ties between our schools, improved our shared knowledge, and reinforced the importance of a united, proactive stance against bullying. We remain committed to continuing this vital work and ensuring all our pupils feel safe, supported, and empowered to be kind.

Many thanks to the Teaching Council for their support in this, we are very grateful.



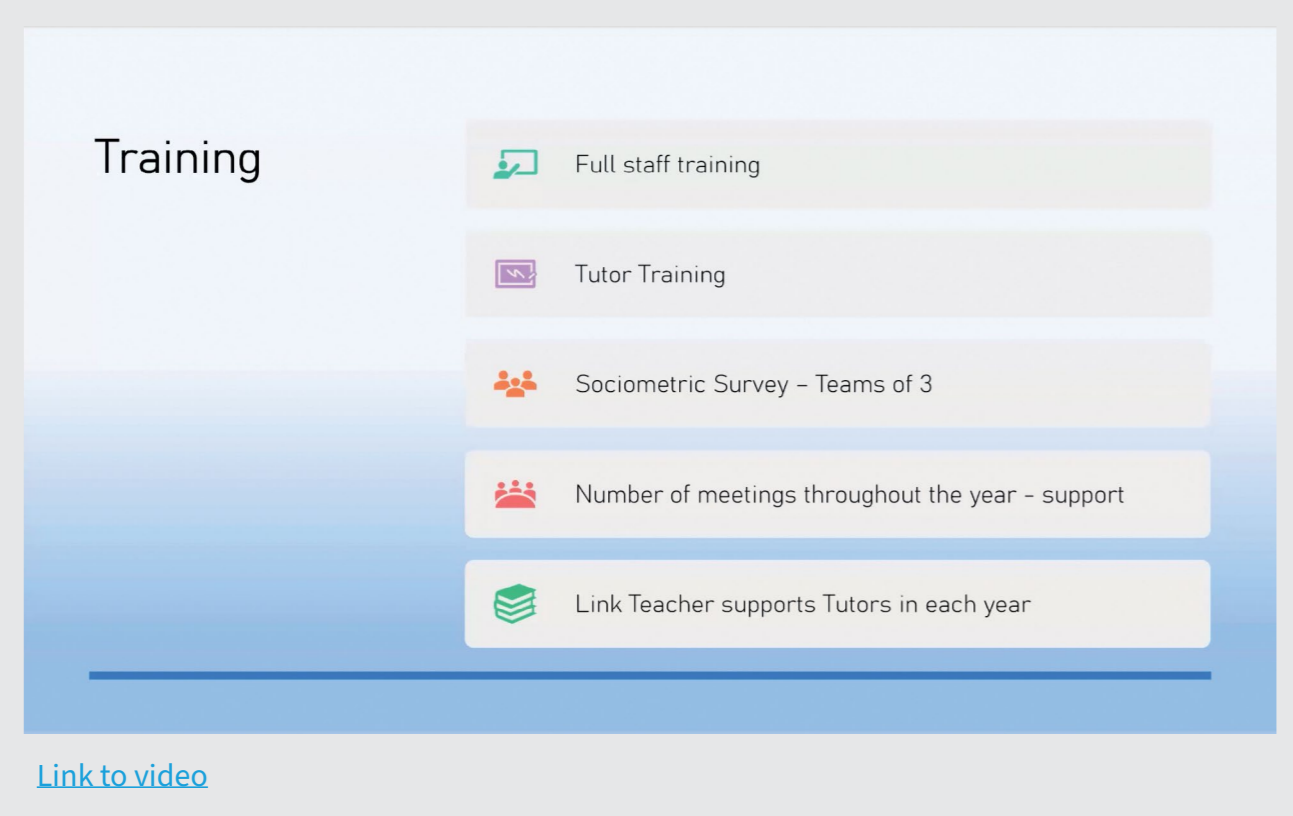
Helping Hands

Beaufort College, Navan, Co. Meath

Beaufort College was awarded €5,000 as part of the Féilte Bursary Scheme to collaborate with three schools* to establish a Professional Learning Community for wellbeing and anti-bullying. This project aimed to foster collaboration and innovation among teachers to address wellbeing, and hidden bullying, promote inclusion, and enhance psychological safety in schools.

*List of collaborating schools:

- Presentation Secondary School, Co. Kerry
- Eureka Secondary School, Co. Meath
- Scoil Naomh Eoin, Co. Meath



The image shows a graphic titled "Training" with a light blue background and a white border. It lists five training activities, each with a small icon and a text description:

- Full staff training (Icon: person at a computer)
- Tutor Training (Icon: person at a desk)
- Sociometric Survey – Teams of 3 (Icon: three people)
- Number of meetings throughout the year – support (Icon: group of people)
- Link Teacher supports Tutors in each year (Icon: stack of books)

At the bottom left of the graphic, there is a blue link that says "Link to video".

Reflection

The *Helping Hands* programme empowers schools to identify and address bullying and exclusion through data-driven tools, enhancing teacher capacity, collaboration, and inclusive practice within safe, supportive learning environments.

Student Wellbeing and Inclusion

- Identifies hidden social dynamics, including bullying, isolation, and exclusion.
- Supports early, targeted interventions to promote inclusion.
- Enhances psychological safety, fostering a sense of belonging for all students.
- Creates more balanced and cooperative classroom teams.

Teacher Capacity and Confidence

- Builds teacher skills in interpreting sociometric data (e.g. heat maps).
- Increases confidence in addressing complex social and emotional issues.
- Enables proactive responses to classroom dynamics, rather than reactive ones.
- Encourages reflective and data-informed decision-making.

Professional Collaboration

- Promotes collaboration through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).
- Facilitates sharing of strategies and interventions across school contexts.
- Supports joint development of transition strategies for at-risk students.
- Strengthens collective problem-solving and professional dialogue.

Sustainable Cultural Change

- Embeds inclusive practices into everyday school life.
- Aligns with School Self-Evaluation (SSE) for long-term planning.
- Encourages whole-school commitment to inclusion and well-being.
- Provides a replicable model for continuous improvement and professional learning.

The *Helping Hands* programme has had a meaningful impact by enhancing teachers' ability to create inclusive, supportive classrooms, leading to improved student well-being, stronger relationships, and a safer school climate. It also enhances the teaching and learning within the classroom by fostering a positive environment where students feel valued, engaged, and empowered to succeed both academically and socially.

Restorative practice Ballymoney National School, Ballineen, Co. Cork

Ballymoney National School was awarded €2,000 as part of the Féilte Bursary Scheme to collaborate with Kilgarriffe National School, to introduce restorative practice to both schools as well as professional learning in the area of teaching and learning for Autistic pupils. This project aimed to increase teachers' understanding of autism, improving teachers' ability to implement effective teaching strategies for autistic students, while enhancing communication and collaboration between teachers, students, and their families.

School's reflection

Receiving the €2,000 Féilte bursary was a transformative opportunity for our two small schools, enabling us to select complementary topics tailored to our specific needs. As schools that already share a teacher, this initiative strengthened our collaboration, fostering a deeper sense of community among our teachers.

One of the key aspects of our training was the three restorative practice sessions, thoughtfully spread over three months. This pacing allowed us to integrate new approaches gradually, ensuring a meaningful and sustainable shift in our practice. The ASD training was particularly impactful, as it was customised to our schools' contexts. By providing anonymized case studies of our pupils, we enabled the facilitator, Claire O'Neill, to incorporate practical, directly relevant advice into her workshops.

Beyond the valuable learning experiences, the bursary also facilitated networking opportunities, bringing our schools closer together. It was not just a chance to upskill but to cultivate relationships and exchange ideas that will continue to benefit our staff and students. This initiative has empowered us with knowledge and strategies that will have lasting effects, reinforcing the importance of shared learning and collaboration within small school settings. We are grateful for this invaluable opportunity to learn together.



Restorative practice Parteen National School, Co. Clare

Parteen National School was awarded €2,000 to collaborate with Scoil Seanáin Naofa, Co. Clare, to introduce restorative practice to both schools. This project aimed to enhance teacher capacity and collaboration by building professional skills in restorative practices among teachers and teacher leaders, while encouraging inter-school collaboration.

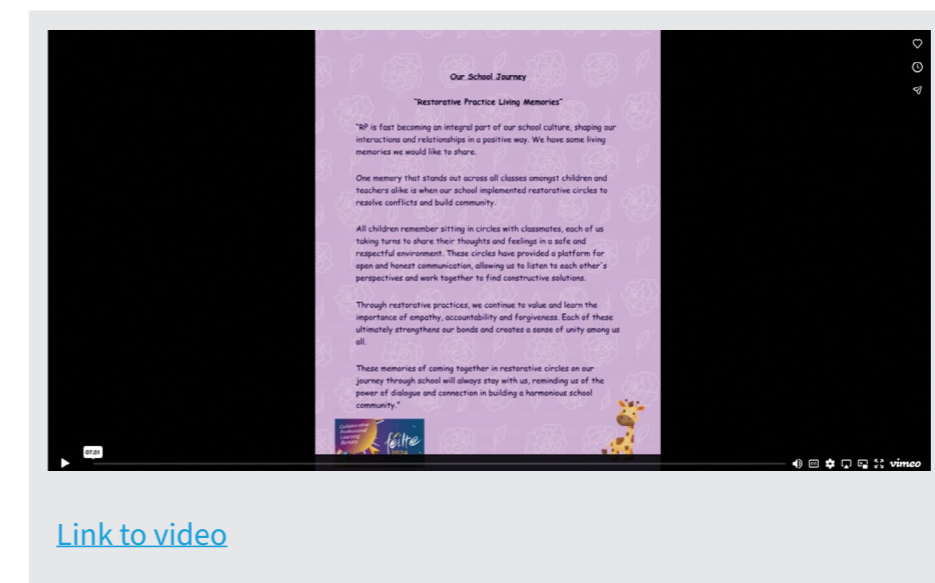
School's reflection

The Restorative Practice (RP) project between Parteen and Clonlara school has left a lasting impact on both communities. RP is fast becoming an integral part of our school culture, shaping our interactions and relationships in a positive way. One memory that stands out is the implementation of restorative circles – powerful moments where children and teachers came together, shared feelings openly, and listened with empathy. These circles taught us all the value of respectful communication and collective problem-solving.

Across classrooms, the introduction of RP playlists, RP giraffes, and RP lanyards has further embedded these practices in our daily routines. RP has been woven into policies like Bí Cinéalta, reinforcing a culture of kindness and respect.

A highlight of the project has been the collaboration between Parteen and Clonlara staff. From the first joint meeting of representatives on our full training day to the shared Beehives and Cafés (after school) and school visits, our partnership has been meaningful and productive. We have further connected as schools with activities like a basketball tournament and parent workshop evening with both schools showing how deep this connection has grown.

We are proud of the strong relationships we've built, grounded in RP values of empathy, accountability, and forgiveness. These memories and practices will guide us as we continue to grow and collaborate into the future – perhaps even through Féilte.



Teaching and learning

Community of Practice to support teaching and learning in English Newport College, Tipperary

Newport College was awarded €5,000 to develop a Community of Practice with Borrisokane Community College and Coláiste Phobail Ros Cré to support teaching and learning in English. Promoting effective collaboration, feedback and assessment strategies was a key focus of the project.

School's reflection

- Teachers valued the opportunity to collaborate both with each other and other schools.
- Teachers found it beneficial to hear 'high achievers' voice on their learning and valuable to get their feedback.
- An online team for sharing resources between English teachers in different schools [would be beneficial].
- CoP English meetings could be set up for English teachers that you could dip into as needed, depending on the topic.
- AI is posing challenges for English teachers – perhaps specific professional learning on AI specifically for English teachers would be beneficial.
- Time was a significant challenge for this project due to busy life of school and weather conditions.

Impact on students

During focus groups, students stated that they were happy to be included and appreciated having their voices heard. The analysed data suggests the following for students in relation to success criteria.

1. Enhancing Independent Learning
 - a. Both documents highlight that a significant proportion of students prefer working independently. Co-creating success criteria empowers students by allowing them to define what success looks like in their independent tasks, which aligns with their preferences and promotes ownership of their learning.
2. Incorporating feedback
 - a. The importance of teacher feedback is a recurring theme. By involving students in creating success criteria, teachers can clarify expectations and provide more focused and actionable feedback that resonates with the criteria students helped establish.
3. Addressing challenge levels
 - a. The data indicates that students feel 'a little bit challenged' but not enough to reach their full potential. Co-creating success criteria encourages students to set challenging yet achievable goals that push them beyond their comfort zones while maintaining a sense of control over their learning journey.

4. Motivation and engagement

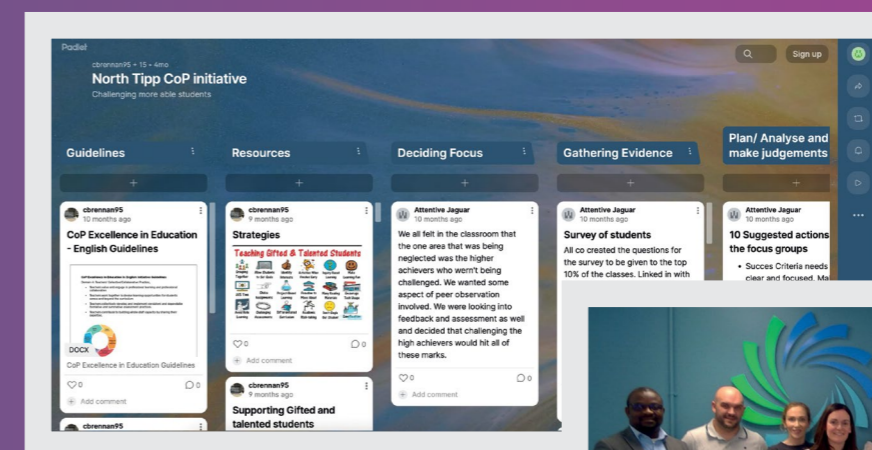
- a. Grades and self-motivation are primary motivators for students. When students are involved in defining their success criteria, they can create benchmarks that are personally meaningful, which can heighten motivation and investment in their work.

Students were surveyed at the end of the intervention on their understanding of 'success criteria'. Key points from this survey showed:

- i. Widespread understanding
 - a. All respondents indicated that they understand the term 'success criteria'.
- ii. Definitions provided
 - a. Success criteria was commonly described as:
 - i. A checklist or set of guidelines to ensure task completion
 - ii. Specific goals or standards to achieve full marks or meet requirements
 - iii. A way to measure what students should know or accomplish by the end of a task or lesson.
 - iii. Common themes in definitions
 - a. Focus on achieving standards (e.g. 'full marks', 'successful completion')
 - b. Emphasis on understanding requirements and goals for better task execution
 - c. Use of success criteria as a tool to align efforts and outcomes.

Resource

Click to access [the padlet](#)



Enhancing student teacher professional development Our Lady of Mercy College, Beaumont

Our Lady of Mercy College has been awarded €5,000 as part of the Féilte Bursary Scheme to collaborate with Grace Park Educate Together National School, Dublin, Coláiste na Mí, Meath, and Dublin City University to enhance student teacher professional development. This project aimed to support capacity building, the formation of sustainable and effective leadership and partnership structures, and resources to support school staff and student teachers within and across all schools involved in the project.

School's reflection

We have used the Rolfe, Freshwater & Jasper (2001) model to reflect on our experiences of co-designing and co-creating professional learning in the context of a cross-sectoral participatory action learning action research (PALAR) community of practice (CoP).

What

The professional learning initiative involved the establishment of a PALAR CoP bringing together teachers from two primary and two post-primary schools with teacher educators working in professional placement in initial teacher education (ITE) at Dublin City University Institute of Education (DCUIoE). The facilitation style was 'collaborative-directive', empowering all participants to collaboratively investigate, enhance, and enact practices that support the professional learning of student teachers and Treoraithe.

Participants attended two workshops, one hosted in DCUIoE and the other in one of the participating PP schools, engaging in reflection, auditing, and evaluation of existing practices, celebrating effective individual and organisational approaches that improve the professional placement experience and identifying and addressing practice-based barriers through collaboratively designed strategies. A core objective was to build collaborative and sustainable professional learning communities within and across schools, promoting the teaching profession and fostering leadership and partnership structures. The outputs included the development of a sustainable, engaging, interactive, self-paced online course to disseminate the learning and a suite of related resources for use in schools.

So What

Engagement in this CoP significantly enhanced the professional learning of both school- and DCU IoE-based teacher educators, strengthening school-HEI partnerships and developing capacity and agency among Treoraithe to nurture student teachers' professional growth and development. The CoP also provided a rich context for inter-school and cross-sectoral shared reflection, helping to identify factors that positively impact student teacher learning, making all stakeholders better informed and empowered within school-HEI partnerships. The project fostered synergies and greater impact than individual efforts could achieve, aligning with the Teaching Council's vision for supportive collaborative placement models.

Now What

Looking forward, with the support of the remaining Feilte Bursary funding, we anticipate that the work of the PALAR CoP will continue and expand beyond the four original partner schools ensuring a long-term impact. A crucial aspect of the project's design was sustainability and scalability. The interactive, self-paced online course will be key to extending the CoP's reach and impact well beyond its direct participants, making learning accessible across diverse educational contexts.

Furthermore, the CoP's activities are designed to identify opportunities for future development of cross-school and cross-sectoral HEI partnerships, ensuring continued professional learning and collaboration.

Reference

Rolfe, G., Freshwater, D., Jasper, M. (2001) Critical reflection in nursing and the helping professions: a user's guide. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Resource

[Link to video with an introduction to and overview of the course](#)

[Link to video with further details of the course](#)

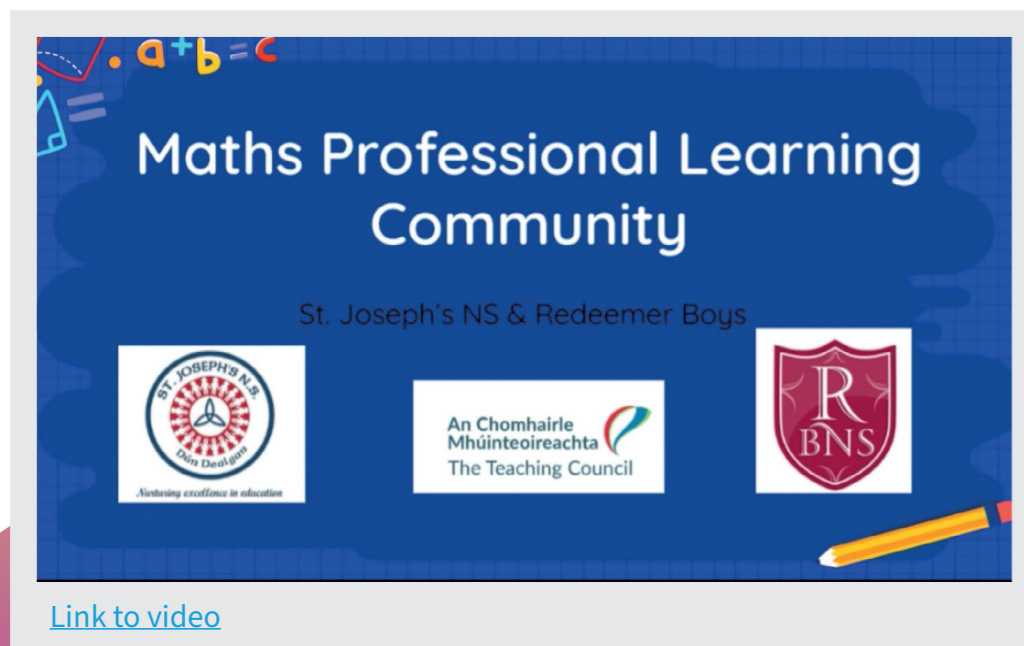
Professional Learning Community focusing on the new Mathematics Curriculum St. Joseph's National School, Dundalk, Co. Louth

St. Joseph's National School was awarded €2,000 to collaborate with Redeemer Boys' National School, to establish a Professional Learning Community focusing on the new Mathematics Curriculum. This project aimed to share best practices and teaching methodologies in the new Mathematics Curriculum, sharing successes and challenges of teaching in a DEIS Band 1 School.

School's reflection

The Féilte Bursary provided both St. Joseph's NS and the Redeemer Boys' School with the opportunity to collaborate on our chosen topic, which was the new Primary Maths Curriculum. We established a Professional Learning Community (PLC) that met every two weeks. This was the first establishment of a PLC for both schools, and we found it very beneficial to work alongside another DEIS Band 1 school. Within these meetings, we discussed some of the five key pedagogies as outlined in the curriculum and the research behind them. We also researched resources that would complement the pedagogies and planned lessons for our class levels, alongside another teacher.

As the lead teacher, I believe one of the most valuable aspects of this process was sitting down with other professionals and delving into something new. We were able to discuss problems that we were having in our classrooms while trying to implement one of these pedagogies and how best we could deal with them. It was incredible how the new resources acquired with the bursary supported the pedagogical practices and allowed the children to actively participate in the maths lessons. We reflected on how hands-on the new curriculum is and how we felt that there is a strong emphasis placed on using resources to help the children create their own mathematical understanding.



Inclusive pedagogy, digital literacy and student wellbeing Scoil Aireagail, Ballyhale, Co. Kilkenny

Scoil Aireagail was awarded €5,000 to collaborate with Scoil Náisiúnta Móin Ruadh, Kilkenny, and Newmarket NS, Kilkenny, to focus on inclusive pedagogy, digital literacy and student wellbeing. This project aimed to foster collaboration among schools, empowering teachers with innovative tools and strategies to create inclusive and supportive learning environments.

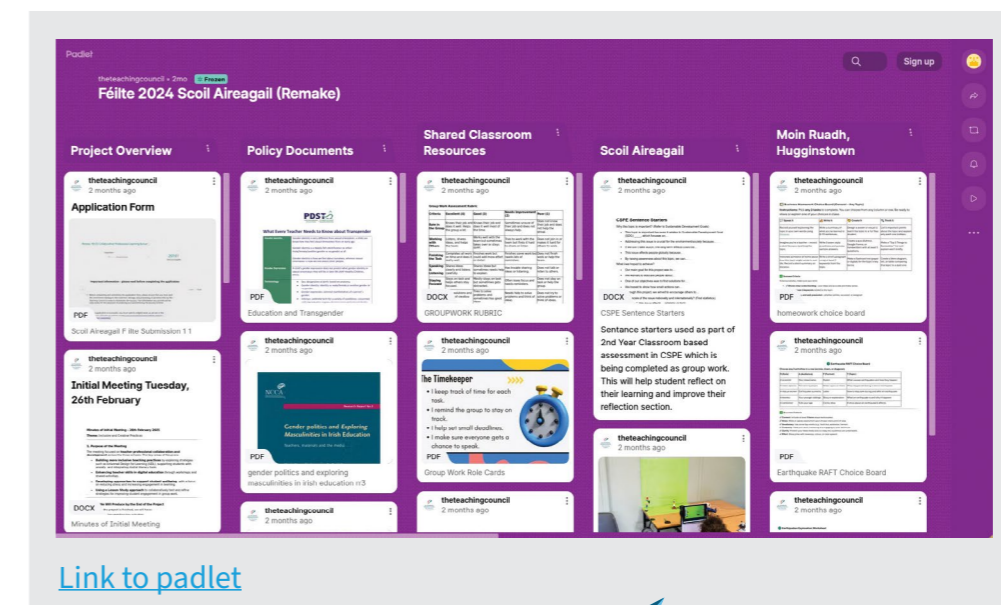
School's reflection

Scoil Aireagail, Móin Ruadh NS, and Newmarket NS have been engaged in a dynamic and collaborative professional teaching and learning project over the past number of months. This initiative has been made possible through the generous support of the FÉILTE Collaborative Professional Learning Bursary from the Teaching Council.

The project brought together educators and school leaders from both primary and post-primary sectors, creating a valuable space for cross-sectoral collaboration. Monthly meetings were held, where teachers and principals gathered to share experiences, insights, and effective strategies. A central theme of the initiative was inclusive education, with a strong emphasis on Universal Design for Learning (UDL)—an approach that aims to make learning accessible and engaging for all students.

In addition to UDL, the group also focused on enhancing digital literacy and participated in lesson study, a structured process of planning, observing, and refining classroom lessons. These collaborative sessions encouraged reflective practice, supported innovation in teaching, and allowed participants to learn directly from one another in a supportive and professional environment.

By building connections across school communities and promoting shared professional growth, this initiative has strengthened teaching practices and enriched the learning experience for students across all three schools.



Integration of Artificial Intelligence into education Bishop McEgan College, Macroom, Co. Cork

Bishop McEgan College was awarded €5,000 as part of the Féilte Bursary Scheme to collaborate with Coláiste Ghobnatan, Scoil Mhuire, St. Brogan's College, and Youthreach Macroom, to focus on the integration of Artificial Intelligence into education. This project aimed to support initiatives that foster innovation & professional development in education, empowering educators to keep pace with advancements in technology, in line with the Department of Education's Digital Strategy to 2027.

School's reflection

Participation in the Teaching Council FÉILTE Bursary project has been an incredibly valuable and impactful professional learning experience. The project was led by McEgan College, which took the central coordinating role across a broad cross-sectoral collaboration involving:

- St. Brogan's College, Bandon
- Coláiste Ghobnatan, Ballyvourney
- Scoil Mhuire, Ballingearry
- Youthreach Macroom
- McEgan College, Macroom

This diversity of schools, spanning mainstream post-primary and Youthreach, created a dynamic Community of Practice and Professional Learning Community, all focused on the pressing and evolving field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education.



Programme Overview

We designed a programme of five expert speakers to explore various aspects of AI's influence on education. To date, we've hosted:

- Patrick Hickey: Post-primary History and English teacher, AI integration specialist, and experienced CPD facilitator. Patrick featured on RTÉ and Newstalk, presenting innovative uses of AI like ChatGPT to enhance student engagement and teacher efficiency. On the 26 February, at McEgan College, Patrick gave a comprehensive session on AI and its implications for assessment.
- Prof. Jim O'Mahony: Co-chair of MTU's working group on generative artificial intelligence and is also a member of the National Advisory group on Generative AI for the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. On the 12 March, at McEgan College, Jim offered insights into a range of practical AI tools available to teachers and school leaders such as Google Notebook LM, Gamma and Claude.

Both sessions were insightful, practical, and fostered rich professional discussions among the participating schools.

Looking Ahead to 2025

Time constraints meant we could not complete the full series within one academic year, but we have secured three additional speakers for early in the 2025 school year:

- Mark Delahunty: Teacher and experienced conference and workshop speaker on AI in education, known for his practical insights and application of AI technologies within teaching and learning contexts.
- Mark Kelly: Founder & President of AI Ireland; Chief Customer Officer at Alldus International; author and globally-recognized AI keynote speaker
- Keith Young: Assistant Professor in ICT & Digital Learning, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

These sessions will further deepen our collective understanding of AI in teaching and learning.

Project Support & Resources

The bursary funding was pivotal in supporting the project, covering speaker fees, travel, and catering to support meaningful collaboration sessions and enabling the purchase of audiovisual equipment (including a television for presentations and workshops).

Collaboration & Impact

The collaboration between McEgan College, St. Brogan's College, Coláiste Ghobnatan, Scoil Mhuire and Youthreach, Macroom has been outstanding. The collaborative workshops, and the sharing of insights have strengthened professional relationships and expanded our collective expertise.

Reflection

This bursary-supported initiative has significantly enriched our understanding of AI's potential and challenges in education. It has also demonstrated the strength of cross-sector collaboration, and the momentum built ensures that our Professional Learning Community will continue to grow into 2025 and beyond.

Wellbeing

Conversations that Count: A Partnership of Professional Learning Castletroy College, Limerick City

Castletroy College was awarded €5,000 to collaborate with the University of Limerick, and six schools*, to create an agreed framework for student teachers on school placement. This project aimed to create a partnership model involving teachers, student teachers, schools and teacher educators, to maintain and improve teaching standards and support Treoraí as mentors of student teachers on school placement.

*List of collaborating schools:

- Kilkee Community College
- Killaloe Community College
- Colaiste Mhuire Askeaton
- Ennis Community College
- Raheenwood Community National School
- Limerick Community Special School

School's reflection

As part of the Féilte Bursary Scheme, we developed a collaborative and sustainable School-University Partnership between the School of Education (UL) and Limerick and Clare ETB. This project aimed to foster collaboration and communication within a school-university partnership, supporting both student teachers and treoraithe. Future-proofing a comprehensive framework for school placements, that ensures clear expectations and development while respecting the unique cultures and experiences of individual schools, is the long-term goal.

Professional Learning Event

Internationally, cooperating teachers are acknowledged as pivotal in shaping student teachers' experiences of school placement. Cooperating teachers have the capacity to facilitate student teachers' integration into the profession through daily interactions and mentorship. With respect to this and to initiate a partnership of professional learning, we organised a professional learning event, hosted at Limerick Education Centre, for principals and treoraithe, a highlight of the project. The aim of the event was to collaboratively devise a clear action plan and upskill teachers on mentoring practices. The event provided a forum for meaningful professional dialogue about the needs of student teachers and treoraithe, the complexity of learning to teach, as well as impactful ways that a treoraí can 'guide' student teachers. The outcome was an agreement from teachers to engage in regular professional conversations, observe student teachers, and provide constructive feedback.

Digital resource

The creation and inclusion of a shared digital space, using a website and Padlet, acted as a point of communication as well as cooperation and allowed the treoraithe to share their experiences. The Padlet also provided a space to share relevant resources to support the teachers. It was important that CTs had a space to share their previous experiences and give voice to any concerns or areas of difficulty that they could foresee, for school leaders to hear such concerns and offer support but also, for us as their HEI partners, to find ways to address those needs in terms of supports and CPD. This exchange on the Padlet highlighted the benefits of collaboration and in time will create a foundation for a Professional Learning Community.

Teachers reflected positively on the process of observing and providing feedback to student teachers, and noted the improvements they observed in student teachers' approaches to teaching and learning. One treoraí commented how *'The student teacher has really taken on the feedback...he is growing in confidence and is enjoying the experience of teaching more'*.

Challenges

However, the project was not without its challenges. The most notable barrier was the limited time available for teachers to fulfil project expectations, such as time to engage with the digital space, time to engage with the supports offered and time to mentor student teachers: *'The number one issue over the process is time. Schools are always busy regardless but trying to meet with the student to engage in a meaningful feedback session is difficult'*.

From our perspective, this project has emphasised the need for structured supports to enable schools to participate in school placement more effectively. Supporting treoraithe as mentors, strengthening school-university partnerships, and ensuring equity in student teacher experiences require dedicated resources and structured frameworks.

Future planning

Looking ahead, and given the partner schools' eagerness to stay involved, the project will expand to include more teachers across participating schools and in time, increase the number of schools. Next steps include the establishment of a formal memorandum of understanding between UL and LCETB, clearly defining roles and expectations.

Resource



Understanding trauma and wellbeing through Nurture St. Finian's National School, Dublin

St. Finian's National School was awarded €2,000 to collaborate with St. Oliver Plunkett's Junior National School, Finglas to empower staff to understand trauma and undertake professional learning with Nurture International. This project aims to use the Digital Development Portrait to design bespoke assessments and create weekly wellbeing goals using this data.

School's reflection

Being able to purchase the DDP and use this platform in our school has had a profoundly positive impact on our whole school community. Not only have we been able to come together through this professional learning experience, but we have also been able to identify the children in our school most at risk.

In Saint Finian's, a key priority of ours is working together as part of a professional team, one of the key aspects of the Féilte Bursary Scheme. This bursary scheme allowed us to buy a platform that unites as all leaders and as primary caregivers for the care of each child. We came together, we assessed every student in the school, and we taught each other how to then continue this ourselves in our own classrooms. Through this, teachers, SNAs and support teachers were able to connect, learn, and share experiences. This allowed us to accurately and correctly showcase the need in each classroom, and thus put in place the necessary measures to support them.

Each pupil was assessed in three key areas: Concentration and Focus, Emotional Resilience and Social Skills and Emotional Resilience. These are the main barriers to learning and it is our role as educators to work together through our professional learning experience to best approach these areas of need.

Class teachers can assess their classes to a more in depth model by creating a 'Class Portrait', which shows them unique and tailored ways to best support their class collectively, through sensory strategies and interactive games.

The bursary allowed us to enhance inclusion in our school. Through this assessment tool, each and every child is screened thoroughly through the collaboration of each stakeholder involved in their education.



[Link to video](#)

Whole school approaches to SPHE through creative and arts-based interventions

Cork Educate Together, Wellington Road, Cork City

Cork Educate Together was awarded €5,000 to collaborate with DCU, and five schools*, to create a collaborative network of SPHE teachers. This project aims to increase awareness of the importance of whole school approaches to SPHE through creative and arts-based interventions, encouraging cross-sectoral collaborations between teachers, students, and other key stakeholders, such as teacher education leads and national organisations of strategic relevance.

*List of collaborating schools:

- Larkin Community College, Dublin
- Dominican College, Dublin
- Newbridge College, Co. Kildare
- St Anne's School, Co. Clare
- St Mary's Secondary School, Dublin

School's reflection

The Le Chéile SPHE Project, sponsored by the FÉILTE Bursary

The Le Chéile SPHE Project aimed to establish and sustain a collaborative network of cross-sector SPHE educators, united by a shared mission to co-design, deliver and showcase creative, whole-school approaches to SPHE.

The project team comprised of post-primary teachers working across a range of sectors, school contexts and geographical locations. As recent graduates of the DCU Graduate Diploma in SPHE—the first specialist teacher education programme of its kind in Ireland—the team demonstrated a strong commitment to ongoing professional learning through collaboration, critical reflection, co-design and the sharing of practice.

The initiative was supported through partnerships with Dublin City University and collaborators from the arts sector.

The vision underpinning the Le Chéile SPHE Project was to create opportunities for young people to engage with peers from diverse areas, backgrounds and educational settings. Central to this vision was the encouragement and amplification of student voice. The project team sought to provide a space in which students could articulate their lived experiences of growing up and reflect on how SPHE can support them in navigating these experiences.

Creativity played a key role in both the design and implementation of the project, with particular emphasis on its contribution to the wellbeing space.

Teachers participating in the project benefitted significantly from collaboration within a national network of SPHE educators. The creative methodologies employed during the workshop supported students in engaging with complex and meaningful topics both intellectually and emotionally, enabling exploration of their lived realities. This approach provided valuable insights for the planning and delivery of relevant and responsive SPHE programmes in schools.

The cross-school dimension of the project highlighted the benefits of collaborative planning and implementation in the SPHE context. Students reported enjoying the opportunity to come together with their peers, while the creative activities facilitated dialogue, connection and reflection. Student voice was central to all aspects of the project.

The initiative concluded with a reflective exercise in which students examined the insights and experiences shared throughout the workshop. This process resulted in the creation of a collective piece, Our Call, which articulates young people's lived experiences and outlines their aspirations for a curriculum that supports their holistic development and educational journey.

Resource



Zones of regulation

Glenasmole National School, Bohernabreena, Co. Dublin

Glenasmole National School was awarded €2,000 as part of the Féilte Bursary Scheme to collaborate with Saint Martin's National School, Dublin, to introduce zones of regulation in both schools. This project aims to enhance inclusive education by strengthening staff capacity to meet diverse student needs through practical strategies, aligning with the Wellbeing Framework for Practice.

School's reflection

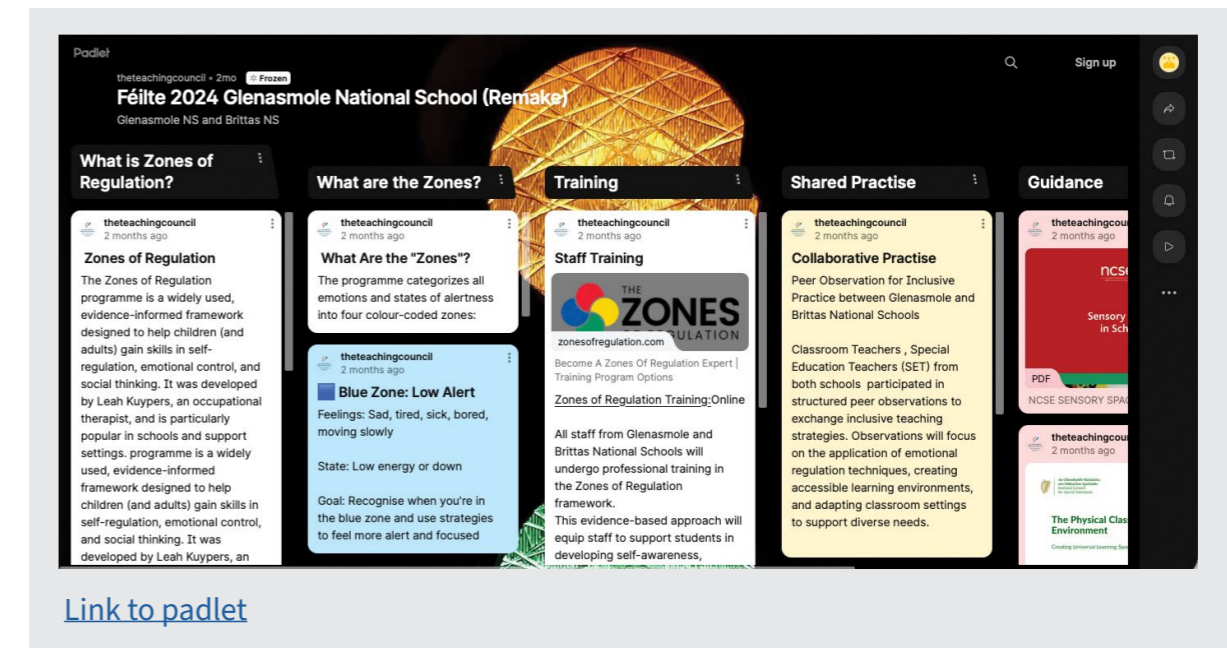
As small rural schools with multigrade classrooms, Glenasmole National School and Brittas National School have benefited greatly from participating in professional learning around the Zones of Regulation. Through online training and follow-up collaboration provided much needed external support and meaningful professional growth.

The online component offered a clear, practical way to access to the Zones framework, equipping us with a structured way to support emotional regulation and wellbeing in the classroom. However, what made the biggest impact was the collaborative element. Visiting our partner school and observing the strategies in action within a real classroom context brought the learning to life. Seeing how another small school adapted the same approach was incredibly helpful and relevant.

This process not only deepened our understanding of the Zones of Regulation, but also strengthened professional relationships across our schools. In smaller settings where staff numbers are limited, creating opportunities like this to share good practice and learn from each other is essential. The experience reaffirmed the importance of professional collaboration and gave us the confidence and tools to embed emotional regulation strategies meaningfully in our daily teaching practice.

Resource

As part of this project, the schools developed a padlet which may support other schools who wish to undertake something similar.



Links

Creative writing in Mathematics through Irish - Scoil na Maighdine Muire gan Smál, Camus, Co. na Gaillimhe

[Link to video](#)

Teaching music through Irish (CLIL) - Ballinakill National School, Co. Laois

[Link to video](#)

Comhrá and Coffee - Establishing a Professional Learning Community focusing on special education teaching - East Cork Community Special School, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork

[Link to video](#)

Hospital Teaching - Solas Hospital School, Crumlin, Co. Dublin

[Link to video](#)

Universal Design for Learning - Scoil Mhuire Naofa, Carrigallen, Co. Leitrim

[Link to padlet](#)

Building leadership capacity with a focus on the new Mathematics Curriculum - St. Attracta's National School, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon

[Link to video](#)

Nature Based Learning - Dalkey School Project, Dublin

[Link to video](#)

Helping Hands - Beaufort College, Navan, Co. Meath

[Link to video](#)

Restorative Practice - Parteen National School, Co. Clare

[Link to video](#)

Community of Practice to support teaching and learning in English - Newport College, Tipperary

[Link to padlet](#)

Enhancing student teacher professional development - Our Lady of Mercy College, Beaumont

[Link to video](#) / [Link to video](#)

Professional Learning Community focusing on the new Mathematics Curriculum - St. Joseph's National School, Dundalk, Co. Louth

[Link to video](#)

Inclusive pedagogy, digital literacy and student wellbeing - Scoil Aireagail, Ballyhale, Co. Kilkenny

[Link to padlet](#)

Conversations that Count: A Partnership of Professional Learning - Castletroy College, Limerick City

[Link to video](#) / [Link to poster](#)

Understanding trauma and wellbeing through Nurture - St. Finian's National School, Dublin


[Link to video](#)

Whole school approaches to SPHE through creative and arts-based interventions - Cork Educate Together, Wellington Road, Cork City

[Link to video](#)

Zones of regulation - Glenasmole National School, Bohernabreena, Co. Dublin

[Link to padlet](#)

An Chomhairle
Mhúinteoireachta 
The Teaching Council

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