

linked

connecting learning

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Welcome to **Linked**...

This edition of **Linked** provides news and updates for teachers on a wide range of issues in addition to reports and case studies submitted by schools and members of the wider education community. We hope you find it an interesting and informative read.



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This newsletter is produced by a strategic planning group representing a range of education partner organisations in Northern Ireland.

As always, we welcome your comments, correspondence and contributions. Please feel free to contact us at linked@nicurriculum.org.uk if you have a suggestion or a good practice case study that you would like to share with us. **Linked** is also available online on the www.nicurriculum.org.uk website. Previous editions of the newsletter can be found by clicking on 'PMB News'.



Education Minister Mr John O'Dowd pictured at the launch of Children's Book Week

A message from the Education Minister

"Since taking up the role of Education Minister, I have seen at first hand the commitment and dedication of the education workforce. This dedication is leading to improved outcomes for pupils leaving our schools. In 2006, only 53% of young people left school with five good GCSEs including English and Maths. By 2010, this figure had risen to 59%.

It goes without saying that there is much more work needed to tackle the high levels of underachievement which still exist. However this is a challenge many across the sector will find impossible unless we look critically at the way education is structured and delivered. We have too many small schools; schools unable to provide a broad enough curricular offer for their pupils. We also have too many empty desks, 85,000 at present, draining school budgets as empty classrooms are heated and maintained.

We need to create a network of inter-dependent, sustainable schools that will help our workforce to provide pupils with the world-class education they deserve.

That is why, in September, I set out in a statement to the Assembly the next steps for education here. In that statement, I made it clear that, once we finalise the SEN and Early Years strategies, we will have in place an effective and coherent set of policies designed to improve educational outcomes for young people. So I do not intend, as Minister, to introduce new policies or initiatives aimed at schools.

What I do intend to do, however, is to drive forward the implementation of the policies we now have in place, focusing particularly on ensuring that we move to a pattern of school

provision that is strong, sustainable and capable of delivering in full the revised curriculum and, in post-primary, the Entitlement Framework, and of ensuring a high quality educational experience for every pupil.

I have asked the Education and Library Boards, working with CCMS, to co-ordinate an exercise to shape the future pattern of education delivery in their areas. I see this as critical in enabling the workforce to deliver for our pupils.

However I have gone much further. I have also commissioned a review of the Common Funding Formula for schools to ensure we not only create a sustainable estate, but also fund it effectively. I am also moving to put the Entitlement Framework on a legislative basis. You will find more details on my decision on page 2 in this edition of 'Linked', however I have decided to do this to take effect from 2013 on a phased basis, with full implementation by 2015.

You can find the full text of my statement on the Department of Education's website and I would encourage you to read it. It sets out my vision for the future shape of education here.

Those working right across the education system share the same aim of wanting to improve educational outcomes for all our young people and I firmly believe that these measures will help those working in schools achieve that goal. That is not to say there won't be difficult decisions in the future - however if we fail to grasp the nettle on this issue, we will fail the young people we are here to serve."

JOHN O'DOWD MLA

The Entitlement Framework

A key priority for the department, and for everyone working in schools, is to raise standards, tackle the long tail of underachievement and help every young person to achieve to their full potential.

The Entitlement Framework is needed to ensure that young people can access a choice of courses that meet their needs, interests and career aspirations. It will place a statutory obligation on schools to guarantee all pupils access to at least 24 courses at Key Stage 4 and 27 courses post-16, of which at least one third must be general, and one third applied.

The Entitlement Framework is about quality and coherence of provision which meets the needs of our young people.

In his statement to the Assembly on 26th September 2011, the Minister for Education, John O'Dowd MLA, set out clearly his commitment to putting pupils first. As part of this work he has confirmed that the Entitlement Framework will become statutory from September 2013.

The Minister is conscious of the budget settlement within which we are all working and has therefore decided to introduce a phased implementation of the full Entitlement Framework. While the full requirement remains a minimum of 24 courses at Key Stage 4 and 27 courses post-16, the numbers will be specified at a lower minimum to start with.

The table (above right) sets out the minimum number of courses schools will be required to offer in each school year.

	2013/14 School Year	2014/15 School Year	2015/16 School Year Onwards
Key Stage 4	18 Courses	21 Courses	24 Courses
Post-16	21 Courses	24 Courses	27 Courses

The Minister also recognises the need to provide greater clarity for schools on what constitutes general and applied courses and the Department has commissioned advice on this, establishing a working group to consider and test revised definitions. The current definitions are set out in the Department's circular 2006/20a "Delivering the Entitlement Framework", accessible via the following link: http://www.deni.gov.uk/22ppadelivering_the_entitlement_framework_guidance.pdf.

Further guidance will be issued to schools about these definitions over the coming months.

The Entitlement Framework will meet the needs of our young people by ensuring we have a curricular offer at Key Stage 4 and post-16 that engages and motivates them - they are the future and their education must properly prepare them for life and work in the 21st century.



The Entitlement Framework will ensure that young people can access a choice of courses that meet their needs, interests and career aspirations

GCSE consultation

Education Minister, John O'Dowd, is seeking views from the public and education professionals on proposed changes to the GCSE examination system.

The Department of Education has launched a public consultation on the changes, which propose putting assessment back to the end of the two-year course, as opposed to the current system where some subjects are assessed at the end of units.

The proposed changes also include increasing the marks allocated for spelling, punctuation and grammar in pupils' answers.

Speaking about the consultation, the Minister said: "I, and my Department, remain committed to delivering an education system that meets the needs of all pupils. An important element of this is ensuring that public examinations are sufficiently robust and in the most suitable format.

"GCSEs, in particular, are a vital passport to further employment, educational and training opportunities in later life. I am keen, therefore, to gather as much information as possible on any

proposed changes to how they are delivered before deciding on the best way forward.

"I urge anyone with any views on the matter to access the consultation document on my Department's website and submit their opinions. I would especially welcome input from those who work in education and also from children and young people who have had experience of GCSEs or will be sitting them in the future. To this end, my Department will shortly be publishing a young person's version of the consultation document."

The consultation on potential changes to GCSEs, is open until Friday 30th December 2011, and can be viewed at:

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/80-curriculum-and-assessment/115-curriculum-and-assessment-qualifications-pg.htm>

Developing the education workforce

The results of a survey to determine how teacher training needs have been met during the period 2009-11, in accordance with the education priority of 'developing the education workforce', have now been published.

Particular aspects of the survey related to:

- Training being delivered within key priority areas;
- Training needs being identified within school development plans;
- Levels to which staff availed of the training; and
- Effectiveness of the training.

This electronic survey was carried out during March and April 2011 by the Senior Education Officers of the Education and Library Boards in conjunction with the Boards' Central Management Support Unit.

Emails were issued to 1,230 schools and 229 completed questionnaires were returned, equating to a response rate of 18.6%.

From the responses received the following key findings have been made:

- Schools identified additional key priority areas for training, including ICT, the World Around Us and assessment skills;

- 60% of schools availed of training for 'every school a good school';
- 59% of schools availed of training for 'school development planning';
- 76% of schools availed of training for the 'revised curriculum';
- 76% of schools rated training for 'every school a good school' as either very good or good;
- 84% of schools rated training for 'school development planning' as either very good or good; and
- 72% of schools rated training for the 'revised curriculum' as either very good or good.

It is planned to carry out this survey again, covering the period 2011-12, and develop trend information. To encourage a healthy response the survey will be widely publicised in advance through this newsletter and within your schools.

The Senior Education Officers would like to thank all those who participated and assure you that the information provided will be beneficial in delivering more effective and efficient training and development.

TV for teachers

Educational programmes ready to view online now



A web-based educational television channel, which will deliver online programmes for use by teachers and schools in Northern Ireland, is now fully up and running. There are currently more than 20 programmes already online - with more being added on a regular basis.

The television channel, entitled ESaGS TV, after the Department of Education's 'Every School a Good School: A Policy for School Improvement', is accessible online now at www.ESaGS.tv.

The programmes cover a range of issues relating to the four characteristics of a good school and the associated quality indicators. These are: child centred provision; high quality teaching and learning; effective leadership; and a school connected to its community.

These professionally produced programmes feature schools from all sectors, phases and locations in Northern Ireland which have performed successfully in their most recent ETI Inspection. Interviews with principals and staff focus on sharing the good practice that exists within each school with a Northern Ireland-wide audience.

The programmes can be used for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and to support the ongoing process of self-evaluation. They are available on demand allowing schools and staff to access them at a time convenient to them.

Log on to www.ESaGS.tv now.

An overview of the programmes currently online can be found in the panel below, opposite and on page 6.

Section 1 - Child centred provision

The programmes in this section provide an insight into how schools make provision to meet the particular needs their pupils have and ensure they are supported in overcoming barriers to learning.

The development of effective pastoral care

Target phase: Primary **Programme duration:** 3 minutes and 17 seconds
Brief description: Straidbilly Primary School, a six teacher school, with a teaching Principal, describes the child-centred ethos which underpins a whole school approach to pastoral care.

What's on the inside?

Target phase: Post-primary **Programme duration:** 7 minutes and 51 seconds
Brief description: Edmund Rice College staff members discuss at length the excellent pastoral care in the school. In this ESaGS TV programme we hear from the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator about some of the issues and factors that are contributing to the highly successfully pastoral care provision within the school.

Teach and care

Target phase: Special and Primary **Programme duration:** 8 minutes and 21 seconds
Brief description: Safeguarding and well-being are at the heart of this programme and indeed are at the heart of pastoral care provision for the whole school community of Harberton School. Find out how the quality of pastoral care in the school supports its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Share and learn

Target phase: Special **Programme duration:** 6 minutes and 22 seconds
Brief description: Outreach provision in Harberton School provides support for both learning and behaviour. Principal Martin McGlade and Outreach Co-ordinator Lois Little provide an insight into the school's outreach provision and how it is managed.

Post-primary special educational needs

Target phase: Post-primary, Special and Primary **Programme duration:** 10 minutes and 42 seconds
Brief description: Strabane High School is committed to making sure Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support is the collective responsibility of all staff. The Principal outlines how SEN provision is very much a whole school issue and an integral element of the School Development Plan. In this programme, the SEN Co-ordinator discusses her role and how data is used effectively to track individual pupil progress and also how the data is used to inform future educational provision and target setting. Staff members also discuss how they have embraced the challenge of Inclusion and we hear from a feeder primary school Principal on the transition phase to Strabane High School.

Supporting children with additional needs

Target phase: Primary **Programme duration:** 5 minutes and 51 seconds
Brief description: Straidbilly Primary School, a six teacher school, with a teaching Principal, gives an overview of Special Needs provision in the school.

Section 2 - High quality teaching and learning

High quality teaching and learning is central to raising standards in schools and to addressing underachievement. Browse the programmes in this section to find content relating to your phase and experience. Alternatively have a look at how learning progresses in each phase.

Teachers' planning

Target phase: Primary **Programme duration:** 5 minutes and 31 seconds
Brief description: Straidbilly Primary School, a six teacher school, with a teaching Principal, takes us through their planning process.

Inclusive ICT

Target phase: Special and Primary **Programme duration:** 7 minutes and 32 seconds
Brief description: ESaGS TV takes a closer look at how the staff members at Kilronan School are promoting and utilising a wide range of emerging and assistive technologies to enable pupils with learning difficulties to have greater access to the curriculum. Using ICT to enhance communication is discussed in detail.

Inclusive play-based learning

Target phase: Special and Primary **Programme duration:** 7 minutes and 46 seconds
Brief description: Kilronan School staff members discuss the process of developing play-based learning for younger pupils within the school. Staff members including the Principal, the Head of Junior School, teachers and classroom assistants share their experiences of how improving play provision began and how that process has evolved and developed successfully within the school development plan over the last few years.

Emerging and inclusive ICT

Target phase: Special and Primary **Programme duration:** 7 minutes and 50 seconds
Brief description: Video-conferencing, Apple Mac computers, iPads, and video editing software are just a few of the emerging ICT technologies being used in Harberton School in Belfast to enhance the learning experience for all pupils. The Principal and staff provide us with an insight into how emerging ICT technologies are embedded through and across the curriculum.

Promoting literacy experiences

Target phase: Special and Primary **Programme duration:** 9 minutes and 28 seconds
Brief description: Harberton School takes us through its structured approach to literacy sessions which ensure that key concepts and skills are systematically taught within meaningful contexts.

It all adds up

Target phase: Special and Primary **Programme duration:** 5 minutes and 43 seconds
Brief description: This programme takes a look through the window at Harberton School to find out more about its structured approach to numeracy sessions which ensure that key concepts and skills are systematically taught within meaningful contexts.

The effective use of data to promote improvement

Targeted phase: Primary **Programme duration:** 3 minutes and 46 seconds
Brief description: Straidbilly Primary School, a six teacher school, with a teaching Principal, highlights the importance of using data to track children's performance.



Pupils on a visit to ESaGS TV studio

Section 3 - Effective leadership

School leadership is second only to classroom teaching in terms of its influence on outcomes for pupils. Browse the programmes in this section to find out how schools approach leadership in their setting and access materials to support your school as it develops a culture of self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

New beginning

Target phase: Primary and Special **Programme duration:** 5 minutes and 57 seconds

Brief description: The theme of this programme is very much centred on leadership within the primary school. We hear from the staff of Christ the Redeemer Primary School and Nursery Unit where successful leadership within the school has resulted in effective and sustainable improvement and standards that extend and enhance outcomes for all pupils.

Management development

Target phase: Primary and Special **Programme duration:** 3 minutes and 13 seconds

Brief description: Discover how Christ the Redeemer Primary School and Nursery Unit successfully liaised with the Regional Training Unit (RTU) and became the first school to participate in the European Foundation Quality Mark (EFQM). In this ESaGS TV programme the school takes us through the process and how it has enabled them to take the step from self-evaluation to excellence.

Using and analysing primary data

Target phase: Primary **Programme duration:** 10 minutes and 46 seconds

Brief description: The consistent use and analysis of school data is a key management skill of the primary school principal. Adele Kerr, Principal of Enniskillen Integrated Primary School, outlines how the school used the analysis of its performance data to identify an issue in the standard of the children's reading attainment. She discusses how the analysis of the data is leading to measurable gains in the children's reading skills and attainment. Adele also discusses how data is managed and the impact of using and analysing data on numeracy attainment and whole school improvement.

Developing a culture of self-evaluation

Target phase: Primary **Programme duration:** 4 minutes and 33 seconds

Brief description: Kells and Connor Primary School takes us through its approach to developing a culture of self-evaluation within the school.

Target setting and review

Target phase: Primary **Programme duration:** 3 minutes and 30 seconds

Brief description: St Anne's Corkey, a four teacher village primary school with a teaching Principal, takes us through the process of target setting and review.

Self-evaluation as part of the school culture

Target phase: Primary **Programme duration:** 2 minutes and 15 seconds

Brief description: St Anne's Corkey, a four teacher village primary school with a teaching Principal, gives us an insight into the self-evaluation process in their school using a three tier approach.

School development planning

Target phase: Primary **Programme duration:** 3 minutes and 8 seconds

Brief description: St Anne's Corkey, a four teacher village primary school with a teaching Principal, takes us through the process of formulating the School Development Plan.

Section 4 - A school connected to its community

Browse this section to see how schools have developed effective links and partnerships with local, regional, national and global communities.

Outstanding inside and out

Target phase: Primary **Programme duration:** 6 minutes and 10 seconds

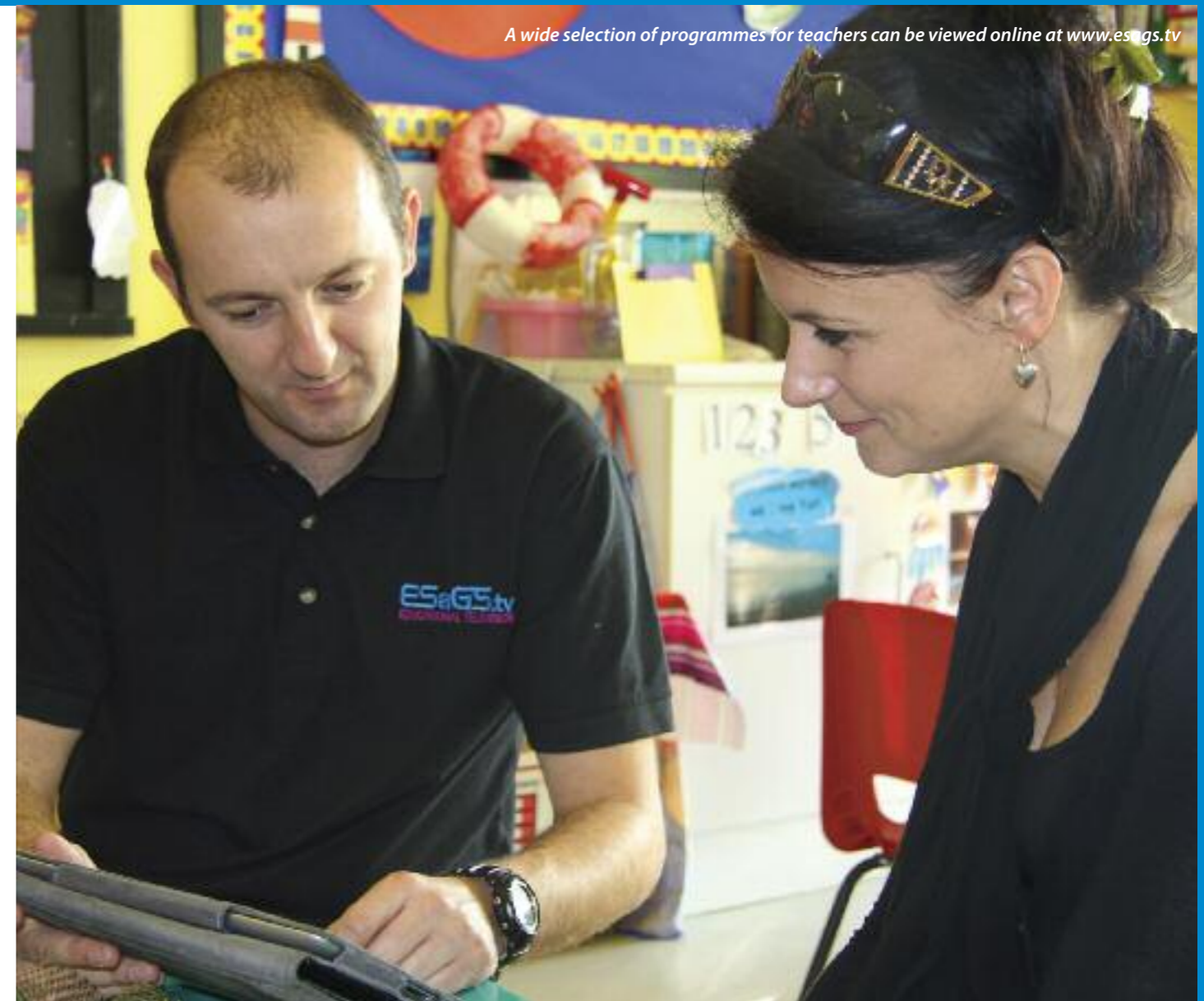
Brief description: St Anne's Corkey, a four teacher village primary school with a teaching Principal, describes the successful links and partnership they have developed over recent years.

Extended learning

Target phase: Post-primary **Programme duration:** 8 minutes and 43 seconds

Brief description: Edmund Rice College is an extended school providing a wide range of services and activities outside of the school day to help meet the needs of pupils, their families and the local community. In this ESaGS TV programme we find out how the school is successfully blending its pastoral care provision with its extended schools provision to have a significant impact on learning for all.

A wide selection of programmes for teachers can be viewed online at www.esags.tv



NEELB TV broadcasts 'Conference on Thinking'

Queen's University, Belfast hosted the 15th International Conference on Thinking (ICOT) in June of this year. The purpose of the conference was to foster collegial and educational exchange on the topic of thinking, the development of thinking, and the relationship between thinking and action.

During the conference, leading thinkers, researchers and practitioners debated and discussed the nature of high quality thinking and how it can be cultivated and valued in education, in business, for healthy living, for sport and leisure, for sustainability, and for working and living in a democratic and just society.

A NEELB TV crew was there throughout week to record a number of the key presentations as well as conduct presenter interviews.

To watch presentations by leading authorities including Art Costa, Galina Doyle, David Perkins, James Nottingham, as well as interviews with Edward de Bono, Guy Claxton and Lane Clark, please visit www.neelb.tv and click on the 'World Projects' tab.





Local students had fun with the 'Stand Up' Mathematician Matt Parker, who spoke to them at a Maths Week Ireland show in St Mary's College Derry.

Festival of Maths hits Northern Ireland

The subject that divides the population into those who love it and those who loathe it had a make-over last month when Maths Week came to Northern Ireland to win new hearts and minds.

During the week-long all-Ireland event a host of national and international mathematicians put the fun back into sums with a vast array of maths games, teasers, challenges and magic maths shows.

Thousands of primary and post-primary students from all over the country took part as teachers organised a fantastic range of in-school activities to inspire and engage their pupils. These included maths related competitions and challenges, puzzles and quizzes, trails and treasure hunts, investigations, experiments, online games, fun days, mentoring and parental workshops.

The aim of Maths Week is to raise awareness, appreciation and understanding of 'maths for all'. The event seeks to promote a positive image of maths, highlighting its importance in careers and everyday life where numbers are all around us.

Speaking as he helped launch Maths Week at the Armagh Planetarium, the Minister for Education John O' Dowd said: "Numbers and maths are all around us in everyday life, from understanding speed and distances, to telling the time, using computers and dealing with money. It is therefore essential that our children and young people have a good grasp of numeracy, and leave school with a good GCSE in Maths, so that they can make their way in life."

He added: "Unfortunately, many young people and adults are put off by maths. Maths Week Ireland is an excellent initiative which aims to foster

more positive attitudes towards maths. It's about showing the importance and relevance of maths in a way that encourages, excites and motivates young people - and their teachers - to do well in maths.

"The initiative's aims dovetail well with my commitment to raising standards in both numeracy and literacy for all young people. Maths Week Ireland also helps get young people interested in pursuing studies in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) - those subjects that are so important to our economy.

"Gaining a good GCSE in Maths, along with English, opens up a wide range of pathways for young people as they seek to progress onto further learning, training or employment. A good grounding in numeracy from a young age is a crucial starting point in achieving this aim and Maths Week Ireland can be instrumental in this process."

This year's Maths Week ran from 15th - 22nd October 2011 and was an inclusive, all-island annual festival for the promotion of Maths. Co-ordinated by Calmast at the Waterford Institute of Technology, Maths Week is supported by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland and run as a partnership among 40 institutions and groups who are committed to promoting an interest in mathematics.

To find out more about Maths Week Ireland 2011 or to plan your school's participation for next year, log on to www.mathsweek.ie.

'Maths Week' highlights

Speaking about this year's event, Eoin Gill, Maths Week Ireland Co-ordinator said: "Currently in its sixth year, Maths Week has been a fantastic success to date. In 2010 over 100,000 people participated in events throughout the week and this year we exceeded these figures making Maths Week Ireland 2011 the biggest to date. The week, which is now firmly established in the calendar of the school year, has also begun attracting increasing interest from leading maths educators across Europe."



The University of Ulster, hosted three events with Australian Matt Parker, a stand up comedian and professional maths presenter who performed for a number of post-primary schools in Derry, Coleraine and Belfast. Matt is a highly enthusiastic mathematician whose life goal is to make people more excited about maths. "We're trying to find ways to get more people into maths," said Matt. Using a range of presentations and hands on activities he communicates maths in a very engaging and entertaining way.



One of Spain's best known maths promoters Dr Fernando Blasco entertained primary and post-primary students with a 'Mathematical Magic' show at Stranmillis University College where he used magic to introduce mathematical topics. Although magic tricks usually remain a secret, the patterns in some of them and the underlying ideas are even more interesting than the tricks themselves. Dr Fernando Blasco has written many books popularising maths and is a well-known face on Spanish television.

Dr Mark McCartney and Dr Colin Turner, from the University of Ulster, gave two talks showing the importance of mathematics in engineering, science and everyday life.

In his presentation 'Who needs mathematics now that we have computers?' Dr Mark McCartney argued that sometimes it is easy to think that computers can solve all the problems we might have in science and engineering and that maths is for people who don't get out very much. But mathematics and mathematicians are crucial in science and engineering, indeed mathematics is the most important language in the universe.

Dr Colin Turner's interactive presentation entitled 'Proving the Obviously Untrue' illustrated how mathematics helps us to understand the patterns and structures all around us in everything from science and engineering to art and music. The talk looked at how mathematics can help us explore our flawed assumptions about the way things work and deepen our understanding. There was an opportunity for audience members to help with some simple experiments.



The most high profile activity of the week was the 'Maths in the City' event staged outside Belfast City Hall. Throughout the afternoon professional maths presenters from Spain and England worked with students and staff from Stranmillis University College, and maths lecturers from all over Ireland to encourage members of the public to try their hand at fun maths-related activities with street performances, puzzles such as giant towers of Hanoi, magic tricks, mazes and maths music.

Making mathematics matter

Maths presenter and author Steve Humble (also known as Dr Maths) is a longstanding supporter of Maths Week.

“ He said: “Of all the many enrichment learning activities I take part in for maths in the UK and abroad - Maths Week Ireland is a fantastic example showing how it should be done. Great organisation and a range of activities catering for all ages and abilities - engaging all from primary school pupils to degree students. It’s a classic five star model which should be copied by other countries around the world.”

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Students attended the launch of Maths Week at the Armagh Planetarium

Having worked as a maths subject leader in various educational establishments for over 20 years, Steve Humble has spent the last five years as a Senior Regional Co-ordinator for the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM).

Now working as a Freelance Mathematics Consultant, he supports schools in raising their student achievement through creating a positive attitude to maths. Steve also works with the Further Mathematics Support Programme and teaches mathematics on the Primary PGCE Course at Newcastle University.

In his role as a maths publicist he writes a fortnightly column entitled 'Dr Maths' for the Newcastle Evening Chronicle newspaper to help create greater public understanding of mathematics. Carol Vorderman's recent UK government report on mathematics education described Steve as "an inspiring individual, providing opportunities for children to do mathematics that they find exciting and interesting". He also holds the Guinness World Record for the most children learning maths outside the classroom.

Steve Humble believes that the fundamentals of mathematics can be taught via practical experiments.

But if the prospect of running maths enrichment activities and events is a bit daunting - fear not - because the Maths Week website www.mathsweek.ie is a valuable resource for both primary and post primary teachers at any stage of the academic year.

The **Activities** section of the www.mathsweek.ie website is full of ideas, activities, resources, and materials, which should give teachers of all Key Stages lots of valuable information on how to successfully run interesting, challenging, rewarding and fun events.

For further information on the following list of maths-related activities, please log on to www.mathsweek.ie/puzzles:

How to run a maths event

Dr Maths provides his expert advice for teachers wanting to run in-school maths enrichment activities.

Maths heroes

An appreciation of the history of mathematics can motivate some students as it gives an insight into how great mathematicians of the past have experimented with the subject. Using the websites and books listed, students can make posters and booklets of their mathematical heroes recording their interesting stories.

Maths puzzles

Dr Maths provides his expert advice for teachers wishing to run a Maths Puzzle Day in school.

Maths mazes

Mazes offer open-ended problem-solving for all ages in an imaginative and creative environment. They develop mathematical logic skills and also require students to memorise quite lengthy sequences of moves in a particular order.

Maths art

There are many geometrical links between mathematics and art. An in-school Maths Art Day could explore a certain artist or style of painting with the students creating their own art or posters.

Code breaking for the young secret agent

The world of secret codes holds a fascinating air of mystery with secret agents trying to discover the enemy's plans before the enemy uncovers theirs. The Spartans are credited with creating the first system of military secret codes, or secret ciphers as they are sometimes called. This is why the study of secret codes and methods of breaking these codes is called Cryptology, from the Greek word 'kryptos' which means 'hidden'.

The magic of maths

You may be surprised to learn that there is a lot of mathematics behind magic, and by giving your students maths magic tricks to investigate, you and your class can learn new applications of mathematics and become maths magicians. You will find that these activities can be engaging for even the most reluctant maths student.

Maths trails

There are numerous mathematically rich examples, living and non-living, that can be found in the school playground, the local shopping centre, the park, the local sports ground, and the city museum or art gallery, to name a few. Why not take a walk on the wild side and create a maths trail? The trail consists of a sequence of designated sites along a planned route where students stop to explore mathematics in the environment.

Your feedback

Maths Week Ireland would like to know about successful events you have run, or if you have any good web resources, suggestions or ideas for maths that you would like to share with other teaching professionals. If so, please email them to mathsweek@wit.ie.



Pupils from Strathern School working with Action Renewables debating the issues around wind farms

Educate to innovate with STEM

W5 has recently been appointed the Northern Ireland contractor for the STEM Ambassadors Programme - a flagship initiative that highlights the unique career opportunities made possible through the study of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

Since the early 1990s not enough young people have been choosing Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects to maintain a ready supply of skilled scientists to filter into our local economy.

Recent research from the Confederation of British Industry highlighted that the UK needs to double the number of new science graduates over the next seven years, or see skilled jobs disappear.

Increasing the number of STEM graduates now appears second in the top ten education policy priorities for company directors (University of Birmingham - June 2009).

The importance of STEM expertise to the Northern Ireland economy is generally accepted as key to maintaining international competitiveness.

In the Report of the STEM Review, commissioned by the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Learning and published in September 2009, findings indicated that, like many other developed countries, our young people are increasingly disengaged from STEM. This manifests itself in reduced enrolment in courses in those STEM subjects which are critical to our future economic growth.

The Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Network (STEMNET) is a government initiative that creates opportunities to inspire, enthuse

and excite young people about STEM. It enables them to develop their creativity, problem-solving and employability skills, widens their choices and aims to support Northern Ireland's future competitiveness. A key element of the STEMNET initiative is the STEM Ambassadors Programme, which has been running for a number of years in Northern Ireland through Sentinus.

On 1st July 2011, W5 - Ireland's award-winning science and discovery centre - was appointed as the new contract holder for Northern Ireland. As well as a change of management, there is a change of focus and W5 is keen to help ensure that local post-primary schools are aware of the programme, can access STEM Ambassadors in their area and benefit from the wide range of STEM support resources available.

Judith Harvey, Head of Learning and Development at W5 commented: "The STEM Ambassadors Programme is STEMNET's flagship initiative. In Northern Ireland we have over 770 active STEM Ambassadors who have been CRB checked and approved and who offer their time and support to promote STEM subjects to young learners.

"These ambassadors come from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines; academia, industry and business; but all share a passion for STEM. This is an invaluable and free resource for teachers, helping to deliver the STEM curriculum in fresh and innovative ways."

STEMNET's purpose is to enable all young people to achieve their potential in STEM by:

- Ensuring that all, regardless of background, are encouraged to understand the importance of science, technology, engineering and maths in their lives, as well as the excitement it can bring and the career opportunities to which the STEM subjects can lead;
- Helping all schools and colleges across the UK understand the range of STEM Enhancement and Enrichment opportunities available to them and the benefits these can bring to everyone involved; and
- Encouraging businesses, organisations and individuals wanting to support young people in STEM to target their efforts and resources in a way that will deliver the best results for them and young people.

As the NI contract holder, W5 coordinates the STEM Ambassadors Programme on a local level, ensuring all schools have knowledge of, and access to, STEM Ambassadors in their area.

W5's role is to identify professionals with STEM skills and help them to become STEM Ambassadors. It then links these ambassadors with local schools so they can act as role models and help inspire and engage young people about the value of STEM in their daily lives. W5 also aims to help local STEM employers engage with schools in their local community. STEM Ambassadors can support local schools through a wide range of activities and aim to work with schools in a way that best supports pupils' needs. These include:

- Providing careers advice and supporting events;
- Delivering a hands-on, practical project with pupils;
- Supporting interview skills days;
- Being interviewed over Skype as part of a school lesson;
- Taking part in a Teacher/Ambassador networking event at a school;
- Supporting the development of a STEM Club;
- Facilitating workplace visits; and
- Encouraging STEM Ambassadors to return to their former school as a positive role model.

A dynamic and innovative economy relies heavily on the skills of the workforce. Employers have a crucial role to play, both in terms of improving the attractiveness of the STEM sector and in highlighting the employment opportunities that exist locally to teachers and pupils.

Action is crucial in maintaining a skilled supply of apprentices and STEM graduates to safeguard the future economic growth of our science and technological capabilities here in Northern Ireland.

The STEM Ambassadors Programme aims to bridge this gap, utilising the skills, experience and enthusiasm of STEM professionals to bring tailored advice and assistance quickly and easily to schools across Northern Ireland.

W5 will be working with the main STEM support services across Northern Ireland, as well as the Education and Library Boards and Department of Education.

W5 is keen to ensure local post-primary schools are aware of the programme. In August, W5 wrote to all Principals in post-primary schools across Northern Ireland inviting them to meet up to discuss how the STEM Ambassadors Programme can support their school development plan and link with the CEIAG STEM audit that each school completed last year.

If you are interested in arranging a meeting with the team, please contact Mary Carson or Judith Harvey on 028 9046 7835 / 7789 or email stemnet@w5online.co.uk.

Further information on the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Network can also be found at www.stemnet.org.uk



Pupils design, build and test their very own wind powered car using Knex at W5



The **STEMWorks** website, launched by CCEA in January 2011, is proving to be a popular resource for teachers and pupils. STEMWorks offers a wide variety of information and online materials to help make the learning experience more interactive, engaging and fun.

Future Skills

Most recently CCEA has added the Employability/CEIAG resource 'Futures Skills' to the STEMWorks Futures section of the website. This resource allows pupils to explore a range of interesting and rewarding STEM-related jobs at all levels within the qualifications framework. A number of the jobs are also accompanied by profiles, giving pupils a flavour of what the job involves, likely earning potential and much more.

STEM Directory

The **STEM Directory** section of the STEMWorks website has grown rapidly in recent months with more than 100 local STEM-related companies now registered. Pupils and teachers can search the database to find out more about STEM organisations and how they can support schools with facilities such as onsite visits and educational resources.

The organisations registered in the directory range from start-up gaming companies to well-established pharmaceutical businesses. Examples of those who have registered include **N.I. Space Office, i-Path Diagnostics Ltd, Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, and Wee Man Studios**. All companies listed provide valuable opportunities for pupils to learn more about the importance of STEM subjects in the world of work.



Newsroom for STEM

STEMWorks also has its own dedicated newsroom (entitled News) to catch up on all the latest local and national news stories relating to the STEM sector, providing lots of relevant ideas and resources for use in the classroom.

For further information and opportunities to engage with STEM, go to:

<http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/stem> or contact **Melanie Mulligan, CCEA Education Manager, at mmulligan@ccea.org.uk**.

CCEA resources for Home Economics at Key Stage 3

Home Economics aims to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and values that will help them to make appropriate lifestyle choices. As part of 'Learning for Life and Work', it can make a significant contribution to the overall aim and objectives of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. To support teachers, CCEA has published a number of resources online. These include:

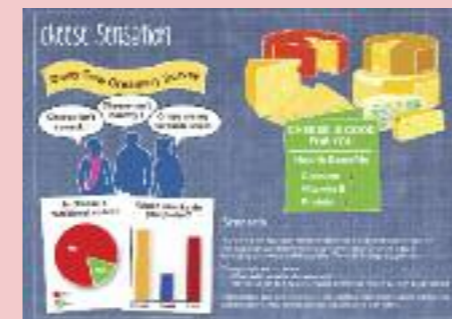
ZEST

The ZEST guidance materials are intended to support newly qualified and non-specialist Home Economics teachers. These materials highlight the important role that Home Economics has within Learning for Life and Work and address the following key aspects of learning: Food Competency; Health Promotion; Practical Skills; and Health and Safety.



Teen Building

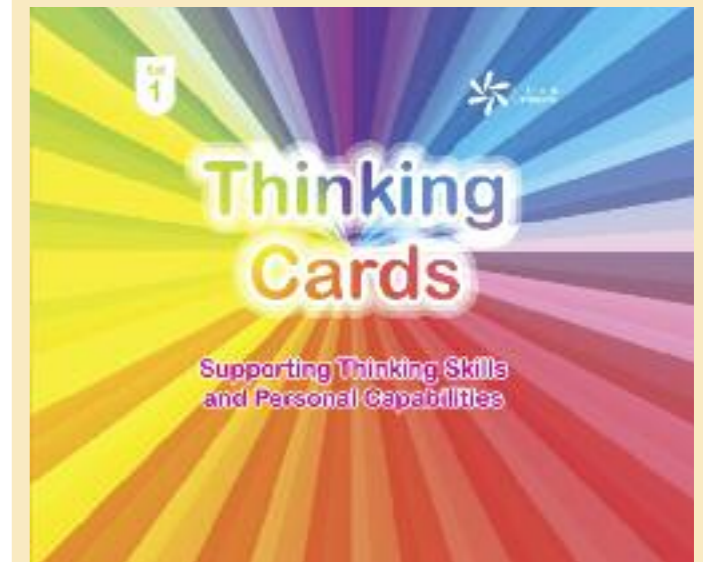
The Teen Building resource encourages pupils to explore the emotional and nutritional needs of teenagers. It offers lots of opportunities for pupils to develop and practice cookery skills. Within the resource teachers will also find useful opportunities to develop Communication skills with pupils.



STEM Futures: Cheese Sensation

Cheese Sensations is an enquiry-based learning and teaching resource which demonstrates the contribution of Home Economics to the STEM agenda. This online resource is accompanied by a video resource set in the local Agri-Food industry. Within the resource teachers will find opportunities to develop and assess Using ICT skills. A case study to illustrate how one school used the Cheese Sensations resource to develop a number of cross-curricular assessment tasks that could support the CCEA ICT Accreditation Scheme will soon be available on the website.

All of these resources are found at www.nicurriculum.org.uk



Coming soon!

Thinking Cards are an exciting new resource to support the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities framework. Each set contains a total of 50 cards divided into the five strands of the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities framework. A question or prompt on the front of the card is backed by a set of staged questions on the reverse.

The cards help pupils work their way through an activity by providing a bank of questions or suggestions. As pupils become more familiar with the cards they can search for questions they think will be useful. There will be three sets of cards available which you can select from to match with planned activities. Choosing which card to use is also useful when planning to use Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities within a lesson.

Several sets will be available within your school, and all the cards can be used in an online version for classroom display using a whiteboard or projector.

Thinking Cards are a hands-on resource for pupils to help stimulate, guide and scaffold thinking in the classroom. They will:

- make explicit the skills and capabilities needed for successful learning;
- develop a common language for Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities in the classroom;
- help structure pupils' thinking;
- promote independence in individual and group work;
- lead pupils through a problem, task or making a decision;
- suggest ways to 'get unstuck';
- guide and structure discussion during a group activity; and
- prompt reflection when reviewing a completed activity.

Thinking Cards will be supported by a range of materials for teachers. These will be made available on www.nicurriculum.org.uk.

For further information, please contact:

<p> Education Manager (Primary) Ciara Mahon cmahon@ccea.org.uk </p>	<p> Education Manager (Post-primary) Mick Davies mdavies@ccea.org.uk </p>
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Snapshots of innovative practice

Using a virtual learning environment to support curriculum delivery

Explore and exchange with Wikis at Glastry College

"I used a wiki with a Year 8 class to consolidate learning on e-safety. The class was split into five groups and given an area of e-safety to research, for example, chat rooms, texting and email. I created a LearningNI course containing helpful links, a wiki and a discussion area. Pupils could see the work done by the other groups but were not allowed to contribute. The discussion was set up so that pupils must ask the rest of their group if they can make a change to the wiki first. This was to avoid changes being made and overwriting others in the group and hence the wiki should get better, and not just *change*. As this task covers the Explore and Exchange requirements at Key Stage 3, I intend to submit it for approval by CCEA." **Alasdair Bailie, ICT HOD, Glastry College.**

"We loved doing the e-safety because we were able to work on it at home and had our own group chat room so we could discuss our plans out of school. We could also see the other groups' pages and what they discussed. We wrote about what we knew first and got more ideas from thinkyouknow.com. When we finished, we were very pleased and we all looked at finished wikis and said what we liked and what we could improve." **Year 8 pupil, Glastry College.**

Bringing the Normans to life at Bangor Academy

"I created a LearningNI course to display History craft projects but it has grown into an area where learners can share their opinions on the topic and on each other's work. I have embedded Voki speaking avatars (www.voki.com) which the pupils love. These are fabulous for focusing pupils on spelling and grammar because pupils don't like their avatars not to sound as they should! I found that having the information, videos etc. in the course room gave the children more ownership and control. They used it much more this way than if I had directed them to a website to specifically watch a clip. The opportunity to upload homeworks has been useful as well as some pupils enjoy completing homeworks on the computer." **Paula Huntley, History Teacher, Bangor Academy.**

Differentiation via screen capture tutorials at St Patrick's College, Maghera

"The GCSE Construction course incorporates a Computer Aided Design module in which pupils are required to develop various construction details. I created a number of media files using a piece of free software called Windows Media Encoder which allowed me to record step-by-step movements on screen. These media files acted as tutorials for the pupils who were then able to access them both within school and at home. The tutorials assisted all pupils in the development of the required skills for completing the CAD element of the course. The files then further acted as a support mechanism for the pupils who found some concepts difficult. Uploading these tutorials to a LearningNI course has proven to be very beneficial in the delivery of my lessons and has allowed me to provide more focused support to individual students. This has led to a very successful outcome for this class." **Maureen McWilliams, Technology Teacher, St Patrick's College, Maghera.**

GCSE Geography course at Bloomfield Collegiate

"We have made available case study overviews, practice questions, course notes, CCEA specification and revision materials to students in a LearningNI course. This has provided consistency, has facilitated the sharing of resources amongst the department and is great for supporting students that are absent. Due to Controlled Assessment teachers are under increasing time pressures and this is where LearningNI has saved the day! Making digital versions of the data and course materials available to learners has been invaluable as class time can now be used more productively." **Anne Spence and Emma Whitford (HOD), Geography Department, Bloomfield Collegiate.**

Developing professionally at Sperrin Integrated College

"Striving for excellence in learning and teaching is at the heart of Sperrin Integrated College. LearningNI provides the perfect platform for developing pupils who are independent and fully engaged in their learning. The development of LearningNI as a virtual learning environment has been a major focus in the School Development Plan with significant time dedicated to it in our staff development programme during INSET days and directed time. Currently, around a third of our staff members have obtained the LearningNI User Award with teachers setting LearningNI Awards as PRSD, BT and EPD targets. This shared focus has enhanced teaching in the college and encouraged a culture of sharing good practice. We intend to continue developing our LearningNI usage with the introduction of more interactive media rich resources and availing of Web 2.0 technology to engage learners more fully and assist with developing 'blended learning' opportunities for pupils in our Area Learning Partnership collaborative classes." **Nigel Small, Biology Teacher and LearningNI Expert Award Holder, Sperrin Integrated College.**

Paperless GCSE ICT Course

Magherafelt High School is pioneering a paperless approach to GCSE ICT. The LearningNI course contains all learning and teaching resources and activities for the two year GCSE specification. These include video tutorials, topic presentations, activities, homeworks and teacher notes.

This innovative GCSE model was created by Errol Martin, ICT Head of Department at Magherafelt High School, in conjunction with CCEA and C2k. It is now available to teachers across Northern Ireland to download and use with their students.

Errol explained: "The new CCEA GCSE ICT specification requires coursework to be moderated electronically so we decided to apply this paperless concept to all aspects of the course from teaching and learning right through to assessment and monitoring. We use exclusively online activities to reinforce the learning that takes place through the topic presentations. The learning is then assessed through end of topic quizzes in LearningNI's Quizbuilder. The workspace area is used to store controlled assessments which have to be sent electronically to CCEA for e-moderation."

He added: "LearningNI has supported the transition to controlled assessment, providing students with a secure, seamless portal that facilitates the delivery of not only e-learning but also many aspects of e-assessment as well. Controlled assessment results have been excellent for both short and full course students. More importantly, the students enjoy using the computer to learn in whatever form this takes."

"We have several collaborative events arranged with other schools in the Magherafelt Learning Partnership which marry well the theory part of the course. We also hope to link with other schools around the province as we progress through the theory section."

Brian McCluskey, Principal of Magherafelt High School, commented: "The course is a fantastic resource for our GCSE ICT students and has helped them immensely with the more difficult aspects of the course. It features a range of activities including video tutorials, mind-mapping, webquests, wikis and blogs to name but a few. This course will be an invaluable resource for the ICT department and students studying GCSE ICT over the next few years."

To obtain a copy of the above course or other courses /course outlines available in LearningNI, follow the steps below:

- Go to LearningNI by clicking on the **desktop icon** (in school) or via <https://learningni.net> (outside school) and log in by entering your **C2k username and password**;
- Click on **Go to Library**;
- Click on the **second** tab - **Staff**;
- Under **Topic**, select **Resources for Courses** (at the bottom of the drop-down menu);
- Browse or Search for **CCEA GCSE ICT**

To obtain your own editable copy of the course, see Helpsheet '**How to Download and Edit Courses**' also located in the Resources for Courses area of LearningNI.



For further information or support regarding embedding new technologies in teaching and learning please contact Esther Woodhouse, C2k Curricular Services, on 028 9027 9000 or by email at esther.woodhouse@c2kni.org.uk.



A pupil from Bridge Integrated Primary School works on the online Titanic course

One school's e-learning journey leads all the way to the Titanic!

Report by: Audrey Turley and Elaine Young, Bridge Integrated Primary School, Banbridge

As ICT co-ordinators in Bridge Integrated Primary School, our journey in e-learning began a few years ago when C2k offered us training in LearningNI. We were excited at the prospect of putting a course online that pupils could access both in school and at home. A forthcoming residential trip to Shannaghmore Outdoor Education Centre provided a valuable opportunity to trial this new approach.

We created an online course and uploaded photographs of the activities children would encounter e.g. bouldering, climbing wall and kayaking. Then we posted a simple question in the discussion area: 'which of these activities are you looking forward to and why?'

We were overwhelmed by the range and quantity of responses - pupils were sharing their excitement and anticipation alongside valid anxieties and fears. This allowed their peers to offer reassurance and share positive stories from their own experience or that of their siblings.

Had this discussion taken place in class it would, undoubtedly have been more teacher led whereas this online environment allowed us to take a step back, enabling pupils to provide support for each other by

promoting positive attitudes. Pupils were posting comments and interacting with each other in the evenings, at weekends and even over holiday periods, which made us realise the potential for this type of learning as it generated so much enthusiasm.

We noted that in particular some of the quieter pupils in our classes contributed significantly more than they normally would have in a classroom setting. This positive experience left us eager to embrace the e-learning platform to further enhance our teaching.

More recently we have been seeking to use ICT to collaborate within and beyond the classroom, to share and exchange pupils' work and showcase their learning. Having participated in the CCEA ICT Accreditation scheme for many years, we were conscious that we needed to provide new opportunities for pupils to exchange in meaningful contexts.

We therefore availed of free training provided by Eamon McAteer from C2k. At the same time we were embarking on a World Around Us topic based on the Titanic.

Eamon made some wonderful suggestions and inspired us to wholeheartedly embrace e-learning as an innovative way to enhance teaching and learning. Despite our initial feelings of apprehension, we were determined to have a go, having the full support of our Principal, Mrs Teresa Devlin, and knowing that we were very much supported by Eamon and C2k. He established links with Andrews Memorial and Good Shepherd Primary Schools and, using his enthusiasm and expertise, helped us create an online course about the Titanic, which we are very excited to begin using.

The course will allow pupils to create blogs and enter discussion forums, where they can record their personal learning and comment on each other's opinions. This will be a valuable opportunity for reflective peer assessment.

As the six-week course unfolds, pupils will create wikis on a different aspect of the Titanic's journey, taking the form of video clips, audio or poster files etc, which allows them to take control of their own learning.

In addition, we see this as a fantastic way of developing our own professional skills in the area of ICT. It will take us into the realm of video conferencing - a personal first for both of us, yet challenging us to move beyond our comfort zone.

We are very excited to be taking part in a Virtual Field Trip to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum at Cultra, where we will hear experts impart their valuable knowledge and expertise without us even leaving the classroom!

The Virtual Field Trip is being made possible by NEELB TV. Peter Simpson, Manager of NEELB TV, said: "We are very pleased to be working with our colleagues at C2k once again and feel that this type of joined up approach to supporting education provides schools with a unique and powerful resource."

Paddy Gilmore who is Director of Learning and Partnership at NI Museums commented: "National Museums Northern Ireland is delighted to be involved in this collaborative partnership which showcases the opportunities for learning and engagement that are available for children at all of our sites."

As we embark on a very blended approach to learning we have no doubt that challenges do lie ahead but we hope that it will be a rewarding and valuable experience for everyone involved. Ultimately we hope to share our experiences with other colleagues and encourage them to jump aboard the e-learning train!

If you would like to be involved in the Titanic Course, please contact Eamon McAteer at eamon.mcateer@c2kni.org.uk for further details.

Using LearningNI to improve the IEP process

Report by: Gillian MacLean and Elaine McCann, Priory Integrated College



The production of the necessary paperwork for our SEN students is enough to send even the most capable SENCO reaching for Bach's Rescue Remedy! Ensuring that each subject teacher has contributed to each pupil's Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a huge logistical task, considering the growing amount of children on the SEN register.

When staff entered the course, they were able to access all the IEPs organised into KS3 and KS4 folders. One click and the IEP opened as a word document. By clicking on the comment box, teachers could add their comment regarding the individual pupil's achievements and needs in their particular subject or pastoral area.

These comments are available along with the IEP thus providing staff with a cross-curricular overview of pupils' achievements and difficulties. It also means that the IEP is a living, constantly updated document to which staff can contribute.

The feedback from our staff was overwhelmingly positive. One teacher stated: "LearningNI has been very useful. I can easily track through pupil progress and staff contribution." Others commented on its ease of use and accessibility. Comments and feedback from staff could be made throughout the year rather than a pressurised frenzy during review periods. In addition, Big Brother is always watching so staff who have not contributed can be tracked and then reminded to ensure full participation in IEP process.

This year, our SEN department decided to further improve and streamline the IEP process and aimed to enable staff to contribute in a more effective and meaningful manner. Following training through SENCO Induction and Development, we decided to use LearningNI. In March of this year, we set up an online course, and added the Special Needs register, all our IEPs and other relevant documentation. We also added a reference section to enable access to other relevant information.

We had two twilight sessions to inform staff and to show them how the new system would work. This allowed our staff time to look at the process and try it out.

For further information or support with using new technologies to support SEN and Inclusion contact Norma Price, C2k Curricular Services, on 02890 279000 or by email at norma.price@c2kni.org.uk.

How important are good manners in education?

Report by: Sarah-Lucy Hynds, Vice Principal, Saintfield High School

We are all familiar with William of Wykeham's famous quotation, 'Manners Maketh Man' but perhaps not so comfortable with its contemporary relevance.

Etiquette historians often delight in detailing how societies had better manners in the sepia-tinted world of yesterday; Edwardian dames, for example, knew how to handle every situation with the utmost politeness. While today's world, and in particular our youth, may scorn and mock rigid table rituals, the effects of bad behaviour and disrespect saturate our newspapers and television screens, and may even define the twenty-first century.

On 15th August 2011, in a post-riot context, David Cameron raised the issue of the urgent need to address the poor morality that led individuals to demonstrate so vehemently a total lack of respect for others and their property.

While the current Prime Minister of Britain insists that the rioters have 'a twisted moral code', one cannot help but examine our own moral standards; how we distinguish right from wrong, how we employ self-restraint, and how we integrate with others on a daily basis.

“Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. If you have that awareness, you have good manners, no matter which fork you use”
Emily Post, 'Manners for a New World', 2011

Manners, like beauty, are in the eye of the beholder. However, there are principles and ethics that are universal when operating in a democracy. If inclusion is now the cornerstone of Northern Ireland's unique education system, do we, as educators, now have the responsibility to instil in our young people those qualities which actively encourage mutual self-respect? In a word, yes. By dynamically supporting pupils to be more socially and emotionally aware, we are better equipping future generations for life beyond the classroom. Having good manners and respect for others is not outdated; it is the key to ultimate integration and collaboration within today's society.

Saintfield High School is a rural co-educational 11-16 school, with an enrolment of 369 pupils. We have enjoyed many successes throughout the years and are renowned for our high quality pastoral care, which is recognised throughout the wider school community.

In September 2009, following a series of Staff Development Days which focused on Emotional Intelligence and the need for teaching to evolve to match a growing sense of student democracy and independence, an important programme was designed and delivered to all Year 8 students which examined the power of good manners and respect within a learning environment.

Now commencing its third year in operation, the aptly named 'Good Manners Matter' programme continues to be highly effective, both inside and outside the classroom, and makes the school's commitment to being an emotionally intelligent educational institution, more vibrant. Taught through the English with Media Department, the primary aims of the programme are to promote positive behaviour through mutual respect, co-operation and self-discipline.

Pupils engage in a range of creative tasks through Drama and the use of multi-media, thereby embracing the creative objectives as set out in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Pupils work independently, in pairs, groups and as an entire class to complete tasks and activities that challenge how they interact with their peers, teachers, family and wider society.

The programme successfully tests students on a range of competences and proficiencies, taking into account all of the statutory Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities that children should have access to and apply at Key Stage 3.

Moreover, the activities within the programme are relevant to students' lives at school, as they bring the importance of good manners and respect firmly into the twenty-first century.

There is nothing Draconian about the objectives of this short course. In one section, pupils are even encouraged to examine a Victorian etiquette chart for young people and are afforded the opportunity to engage in a task that assesses the worth of various rules and routines from the late nineteenth century.

The primary goals of the programme are to get pupils thinking and talking about the importance of good manners and respect, and to reflect on how they engage with others and take responsibility for their own actions, no matter how insignificant they may appear at the time.

Establishing real, tangible relationships between pupils, teachers, families and/or carers is paramount to maintaining a supportive learning environment. It is an integral part of the learning process and this project has not only aided pupil learning but has modified and informed teaching to meet the needs of all students.

Students work through a specially created booklet so each individual pupil has access to the programme's aims and objectives. Since inclusion is at the heart of the initiative, each activity takes account of differentiation within the classroom and makes use of a variety of teaching strategies and up-to-date multi-media, for example, Microsoft Moviemaker and ComicLife.

The programme is divided into the following sections:

- What is understood by good manners;
- How to demonstrate respect for others;
- Respect for property; and
- Respect for oneself.

Since respect is a two-way street, the active role of the teacher in this course is vital, as they must lead by example. The intention was to create a course in which pupils' confidence and self-esteem was promoted, pupils were encouraged to value one another, and pupils developed and displayed a strong sense of belonging to Saintfield High School as a community.

The following areas are prioritised during the six-week programme:

- Children to work on developing one skill at a time;
- Teachers to give immediate positive feedback for manners success;
- Teachers to be tolerant of children's mistakes but not to overlook them;
- Teachers to give a non-critical prompt when children forget to display respect in school;
- Teachers to promote the importance of treating others equally through mutual respect and understanding;
- Children to understand the harm caused by thoughtless, unkind words and actions;
- The role-playing of difficult situations for children in order to demonstrate appropriate responses; and
- The creation of a class policy for basic manners.

Where the ethos is positive, pupils take a pride in their achievements and recognise the importance of high standards in their work and in their behaviour. The absence of a positive ethos is equally evident: pupils fail to acquire confidence and self-esteem, they lack respect for one another and there is no sense of community within the school. They are without motivation and determination to succeed. In turn, teachers' morale is adversely affected.

The 'Good Manners Matter' programme aims to support and advance positive behaviour displayed in the classroom by dealing with fundamental social and conduct issues.

In terms of meeting the holistic needs of the child, this programme seeks to develop the whole pupil from the primary source of respect. Only when students are taught holistically in an educational environment can the learning be interconnected and at its optimum.

Child development is most effective when approaches strive to simultaneously address the physical, emotional, relational, intellectual and spiritual aspects of a child's life.

The 'Good Manners Matter' programme seeks to nurture a child's personal development and excellence; a priority for Saintfield High School.

If Emotional Intelligence is based on skills associated with understanding ourselves and others, we cannot underestimate the importance of allowing pupils to have access to developing these attributes. In order to grow intellectually and emotionally, today's students must be able to operate in a shared society.

Often, when faced with poor behaviour we feel uneasy about addressing it. Sometimes our reasons are noble - we do not wish to insult or hurt people. Sometimes our reasons are ideological - we do not feel we have the right to pass judgement. And more than often, our reasons are simply human - we are not perfect beings ourselves.

However, as true educators, we have got to talk honestly and openly about behaviour and then act accordingly. When we do, we simply realise, good manners matter.



The 'Good Manners Matter' programme is delivered to all Year 8 students at Saintfield High School



The Investors in Pupils award believes every child matters

Investors in Pupils award

Report by Charles Fitzsimons, Head of Senior School, St Patrick's Grammar in Downpatrick

Last year we made the decision to launch the Investors in Pupils award at St Patrick's and we are now working towards our assessment day in June 2012.

We were very fortunate to move into a new school building towards the end of the last academic year and thought Investors in Pupils was a good vehicle to help us build on the sound practice that already exists in our school in terms of involving our students in their own education.

We wanted to recognise and reward our teachers, support staff, canteen staff, cleaners, governors, caretakers, parents and students who work together to make St Patrick's a happy learning environment. We wanted to create an atmosphere of pride in our new school building and encourage those who use it to respect and value it.

I believe we are the first school in Northern Ireland to work towards the Investors in Pupils award. However many schools in England have already received the award and feedback indicates that their students are happier, better behaved and know more about their own and others' learning.

The Investors in Pupils award was originally created by Cathlene Paul, the then Deputy Head Teacher at Royal Park Primary School in Leeds. It was piloted in Primary, Secondary and Special Schools through funding from the Leeds Training and Enterprise Council before being revised in 2000.

Investors in Pupils is based on the three principles of Investors in People [plan, do and review] and is about developing a culture where staff members feel confident and skilled in enabling students to participate in decision making processes. This includes supporting students to be active participants in the planning, delivery and evaluation of their learning. Student voice and student participation are at the very heart of this award.

Investors in Pupils helps students have a more in depth knowledge and understanding about their school, the jobs of everyone in it and that the school has a budget. It supports them in setting targets for the class and for themselves while recognising the importance of the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in their education, and how they as students can make a difference.

This award recognises progress in the following five areas:

- Learning;
- Behaviour;
- Attendance;
- Induction; and
- Classroom Management

Student participation underpins every aspect of the award and as each activity is introduced, developed and reviewed, we will need to address how students have been involved in the process and how they can be involved to a greater extent in the future.

The main aims of the award include:

- To provide a whole school framework for pupil participation;
- To empower pupils through involving them in everyday decision making processes;
- To help create a team ethos and strengthen relationships between students and between staff and students;
- To help improve the confidence and self-esteem of students;
- To help raise pupil achievement and motivation to learn;
- To help raise pupil attendance and improve punctuality; and
- To help promote positive behaviour and a greater awareness of social responsibility.

The potential benefits of the award include:

- Increased pupil participation;
- School improvement;
- Development of students' life skills - group decision making, communication, negotiation and presentation;
- Inclusion - to provide a welcoming, friendly, safe environment for all staff, students, and visitors to the school;
- Increased social responsibility;
- Better relationships between students and staff; and
- Improved links with governors.

- Pupils understand their individual roles and responsibilities and how they contribute to the school community;
- Students have the opportunity to express their opinions and have a say in decisions that affect them;
- Students have the opportunity to take on additional roles and responsibilities
- Students feel listened to and effective feedback strategies are in place; and
- Pupils understand the school budget, how their school is funded and the role of the governing body.

This award is a way of celebrating and building on the good practice that already exists within our school. Most of the evidence that is required for this award will stem from processes that we already have in place - such as assemblies, personal development sessions, parent/teacher meetings, school council, mentoring, extra-curricular activities, team-building and school fundraising tasks. Support and guidance is available the Investors in Pupils team, website, DVD and Handbook and the assessment day will include a pupil led tour of the school, interviews with a minimum of six adults (four members of staff, a governor, and a parent) and interviews with pupils. The award lasts for three years, at the end of which schools will be invited to be re-assessed.

We have created an Investors in People Action Plan in conjunction with the School Development Plan. This Action Plan is created on a termly basis and has been shown to our governors. In St Patrick's we launched the programme with our Year 8 students first and have worked together to create the following:

- A Mission Statement/Class Charter written by the pupils;
- A class target and each student needs a personal target; and
- An induction booklet produced by the students.

“ Student voice and student participation are at the very heart of this award ”

In order to achieve the award we are working towards an assessment day at the end of this academic year, where we will be required to demonstrate that we meet the criteria outlined in the Investors in Pupils handbook "Because every child matters".

The Investors in Pupils criteria that we must meet include:

- Vision statements, developed by students, are visible in each class;
- Class/group targets are developed by the members of each class/group;
- All students have identified and agreed an individual target;
- Students have negotiated rewards and ways to recognise success;
- All new pupils, staff and visitors have an effective induction;
- Pupils understand the different roles and responsibilities of supporting adults in the school and how they contribute to their learning and help them achieve;

This programme is already having a positive impact on our school community. We are improving the induction process for pupils and staff and are currently producing a DVD for Year 8 and feeder Primary Schools. The emphasis on target setting and targets for improvement is helping students become more motivated and focused on their learning. We have a Student Mentor System and a whole school focus on good behaviour in school, public transport and in sport.

We have also noticed an improvement in attendance and punctuality which will assist our staff to deliver the revised curriculum more effectively. Year 8 students' good attendance is rewarded through our merit system of Bronze, Silver, Gold certificates.

This award is all about raising standards, putting our students first, and ultimately helping them to achieve their full potential.

The specialist role Classroom Assistants play in supporting deaf children in mainstream schools

Report by: Sue McCrum, Senior Peripatetic Teacher of the Hearing Impaired, BELB



Classroom Assistants support deaf children in class, during break times, meal times and other school routines

A few weeks into each school year the Belfast Education and Library Board's Peripatetic Support Service for hearing impaired pupils provides a one-day training course for Classroom Assistants (CAs) who work with deaf children in the BELB area.

This training complements and reinforces the ongoing liaison between the peripatetic teachers and CAs. It also provides a valuable opportunity for CAs working with deaf children to meet each other and to share their experience. This is important because although these CAs are very much part of the school in which they work, they are usually isolated from others who do a similar job.

The fact that we now need to run a course such as this reflects the changes which have taken place in the education of deaf children in less than a decade. Time was when a Classroom Assistant working with deaf children would have fulfilled the role of a general assistant to the teacher in a special school or unit for the deaf. There remains a place for the valued assistants who work with deaf children in this environment, but for others the role has been transformed as a consequence of the technological advances and changes in attitude which have enabled most deaf children to be educated in mainstream schools.

In 2002 the fitting of digital hearing aids to children began in Northern Ireland. The Royal Victoria Hospital fitted eight children with digital aids that year and seventy-four children in 2003. Of the seventy-four, forty-seven children were fitted with moderate power digital aids and twenty-six children were fitted with high power digital aids. Three children who needed high power aids were offered digital, but preferred analogue aids; only one child with a moderate power aid preferred an analogue aid.

Neonatal Hearing Screening, which in Northern Ireland began with a pilot study at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, in early 2003, was rolled out to the whole of Northern Ireland by September 2005. This led to the earlier detection of deafness in babies, with the consequent benefits of early amplification and its implications for language development.

In the autumn of 2004, the Siemens Prisma 2K - a small BTE hearing aid designed with infant ears in mind - was made available.

Improvements in FM systems and the availability of funding for this equipment during the past few years have also made a major contribution to the successful inclusion of deaf children in mainstream schools.

These changes in the technology which became available proved to be most timely, because in September 2005 the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order (SEND O) was passed. This Order amended and added to the existing (NI) Order of 1996 and brought Northern Ireland schools within the scope of the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995. SEND O introduced new legislation, including the right of children with SEN to be included in mainstream schools if this was the wish of the parents and as long as such arrangements were compatible with the efficient education of other children. Schools were required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate children with SEN, within the bounds imposed by the efficient use of resources.

More deaf children have been, through parental choice, included in mainstream education. This has been made possible with the availability of improved hearing aid technology, but it has also required the increased use of CAs to support deaf children in their mainstream placements.

Classroom Assistants who support deaf children in mainstream schools have a specialist role which requires knowledge and understanding of deafness. The day's training we provide aims to deliver a basic understanding of the following:

- An introduction to hearing and hearing loss;
- Hearing aids - what they do, how they work and how to check them;
- Cochlear implants - who gets them, what they do and how to check them;
- FM systems - their use and checking;
- The role of the Classroom Assistant supporting a deaf child; and
- Practical strategies for supporting deaf pupils in the mainstream setting.

In Belfast, as elsewhere in Northern Ireland, we work in collaboration with other professionals to achieve the best provision for each pupil supported by our service. This is reflected in our CA training, when we involve staff from the Paediatric Audiology Department at the Royal Victoria Hospital and also from the Cochlear Implant Team at Belfast City Hospital.

Glen Houston, Audiological Scientist at the Royal, managed as always to convey relevant information about sound, hearing and hearing impairment in a way that engaged his audience. While Katie McCrory, an Audiologist at the Royal, capably took everyone through the basics of hearing aids and checking their function. Joanne Clarke-Lyttle, Advisory Teacher at the Regional Cochlear Implant Centre, gave us a clear account of cochlear implants and how to deal with them.

The rest of the day's training was delivered by members of the peripatetic team. CAs receive individual training from peripatetic staff on their pupil's hearing aids and FM system, but time spent reinforcing the importance of using this equipment is time well spent.

A general presentation on the role of the CA was followed by discussion groups, led by peripatetic staff, for CAs working with pre-school and primary children on the one hand and post-primary on the other. We feel that while some issues are common to all CAs, there are others which apply particularly to the different age groups.

As peripatetic teachers of the deaf subscribing to the inclusion agenda, we see our primary role as one of supporting and enabling deaf children to access all aspects of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. We rely on CAs to help us fulfil this role, not just in class, but during break times, meal times and other school routines. Good liaison is essential.

CAs are expected to support recommendations and programmes from the class teacher as appropriate. They monitor the equipment and report any problems to us if they cannot deal with them.

We encourage our CAs to aspire to the ideal expressed in the following comment from the ETI Report on the Effective use of Assistants for Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools' 2006: "In the best practice observed, the SEN CAs were well-informed and encouraged by the class teacher to show initiative; they were sensitive to the needs of the child, involved in fostering social participation with peers, encouraged the pupil to learn independently as part of the class without obtrusive support and helped to achieve targets and raise standards."

“ Supporting and enabling deaf children to access all aspects of the curriculum. ”

A further quote from a resume of a recent Ofsted SEN and Disability Review reflects our view that: 'High aspirations and a determination to enable young people to be as independent as possible ... (lead) ... most reliably to the best educational achievement'

So what do we want our CAs to take away from the day?

We want them to encourage the pupils they support to be as independent as possible in accessing the curriculum. In order to do this we want them to be treated just as any other pupil, but taking into account the specific needs that arise from their deafness.

Optimally functioning equipment is essential, as is good communication, not just with the pupil, but between all those concerned with the pupil's education. Many of the special considerations we recommend are nothing more than good practice and they benefit all pupils in the class.

We recognise that our CAs are skilled, dedicated, individuals who perform an invaluable service. They may, through training and experience, be more aware of some issues concerning deafness than some teachers in mainstream schools and we encourage them to be confident in approaching these teachers, in the pupil's best interests, to make sensitive comments and suggestions.

We see these people as invaluable in helping us support deaf children in mainstream schools. The process is one of continual learning. We don't have all the answers to all the issues, but through good communication, based on working as part of a team that has the pupil's best interests at heart, we can and do aim for the highest achievements in terms of successful inclusion.

This article was first published in the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD) magazine in January 2011



Pupils from Tempo PS and St Mary's PS in Tempo with Denis Rooney IFI and Minister for Education John O'Dowd at the Sharing Education Conference

Sharing education - the next steps

Report by: The Sharing Education Learning Forum (SELF)

A conference organised by the Sharing Education Learning Forum (SELF) met earlier this term to hear the lessons learned from more than four years of Sharing Education and to look at its future in Northern Ireland's schools.

The conference, which was held at the Hilton Hotel, Belfast and called 'Sharing Education - the Next Steps' was organised by the three groups who make up SELF including Queen's University, The Fermanagh Trust and the North Eastern Education and Library Board's Primary Integrating / Enriching Education Project (PIEE).

The Sharing Education Programme is a £6.6 million initiative funded by the International Fund for Ireland and The Atlantic Philanthropies. The Programme encourages schools to work together, to find new ways of 'sharing education' which offer additional curriculum-based educational opportunities for students, and in doing so provide the means for sustained and regular contact among people from different communities to promote understanding and reconciliation.

The conference looked at some of the work achieved since the programme launched in 2007 and which now involves 150 schools, across 48 separate partnerships and more than 10,000 pupils throughout Northern Ireland.

The Fermanagh Trust is responsible for 25 cross-sectoral partnerships involving 41 primary and all of the 14 post primary schools in the county. The North Eastern Education and Library Board's Primary Integrating / Enriching Education (PIEE) Project is working with 11 partnership across 27 primary schools while Queen's University currently looks after 12 partnerships across 71 schools including 43 post-primary and 28 primary schools.

In Fermanagh, more than 3000 pupils engage in weekly curriculum-based, shared classes from 55 schools. Queen's University recently completed a preliminary analysis of their current partnerships and found that they had generated 3,000 shared classes and more than 4,000 hours in which pupils from Controlled, Maintained and Integrated schools shared classes and learned together. The NEELB's PIEE project produced a similar analysis of their project and found 834 hours of shared classes using 165 shared resources and facilities had taken place over two years.

Denis Rooney CBE, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland, and speaking on behalf of IFI and the Atlantic Philanthropies said: "Today is about learning the lessons of the last four years so we can look to the future of sharing in education with real ambitions for its continued development and continued success."

"We would now like to see the models of sharing education, which are represented here today and we have helped to establish, adopted by the wider school community and supported by policy and adequate resources to help them become embedded as part of every day school life. Now is the time for the key stakeholders in education to reflect, engage and negotiate the pathway to a sharing education with appropriate objectives, targets and delivery mechanisms."

Professor Tony Gallagher, Professor of Education at Queen's University Belfast and spokesperson for SELF said: "Over the last four years the Sharing Education Programme has demonstrated that by running shared classes, on a sustained and regular basis, schools can increase opportunities for pupils, improve standards, and promote better understanding and new friendships."

"When schools work together, principals and teachers benefit, pupils and young people benefit, and the wider community benefits. Resources are used more effectively, and the quality of learning for all in the school community, teachers and pupils alike, is improved. Most important, young people learn together and they learn from each other, and this will help them build a shared and better future, together."

SEP comprises three broad strands of activities. These include:

Delivering shared education - increasing the number of pupils experiencing shared learning with partner schools from different community backgrounds. The criteria for funding gives priority to increasing the number of shared classes that sustain pupil to pupil relationships and which assists curriculum delivery.

Typical activities undertaken by schools include:

- Year 14 students completing 'A' level subjects in shared classes;
- Year 12 students completing GCSE subjects in shared classes;
- Jointly provided and accredited vocational training courses;
- Combined citizenship and personal development and mutual understanding classes;

- Science mentoring classes - primary school children from mixed backgrounds attending science classes in a post-primary school;
- Collaborative ICT projects through face-to-face contact and web-based learning;
- Joint schools drama production as part of the GCSE curriculum; and
- Foreign languages training for cross-community primary schools.

Supporting teacher development to deliver shared education - delivering shared classes to pupils from different community backgrounds places particular responsibilities on teachers and school planners. Educational and community relations experts support the teachers and planners involved in delivering shared education.

Ensuring organisational learning and inter-community collaboration amongst partner schools - supporting school staff to manage change through mentoring and joint events to allow for networking, the sharing of practice, and facilitated discussions on problem-solving and the development of new practice.

The conference highlighted the educational, societal and economic benefits of shared education and provided an insight into what teachers and pupils involved in the programme thought.

In a qualitative study of teachers delivering the Shared Education Programme, one comment captures a wide range of views held by those at the chalk-face: "The impact of SEP is that it gives our kids an ongoing cross-community opportunity to meet regularly, to get to know each other, and to lift the clouds of suspicion that may have existed. They now believe that it is okay to be different and that it is okay to be yourself. I am convinced that those involved in the programme will be more likely to challenge prejudices either in their homes or beyond."

A selection of case studies from school partnerships within the Sharing Education Programme can be found on pages 28 and 29.



Having performed at the Sharing Education Conference St John Bosco and Bellaghy PS joint choir are pictured with Daithí McKay MLA, Jim Clarke CCMS, Denis Rooney IFI, Shane McCurdy NEELB, and Mervyn Storey MLA

NEELB Primary Integrating/ Enriching Education Project

Schools involved in this Sharing Education case study:

St Anne's Corkey; Knockahollett; and St Brigid's Primary Schools, Cloughmills.

Overview: In 2009/10 the entire enrolment of 240 pupils across the three schools took part in shared classes and activities based on the World Around Us and other core areas of the curriculum which were common to all schools.

Although pupils from Years 1 to 5 met their peers face-to-face in school for a whole day, Years 6 and 7 did the most sharing, meeting approximately ten times during the school year with sessions averaging 60-90 minutes. All pupils were involved in a joint sports and fun day.

Teachers, classroom assistants and auxiliaries attended a staff development day while the Principals met for Leadership, Diversity and Partnering training. All teachers meet their counterparts approximately three times a year for whole school planning sessions. The frequent staff contact made possible through PIEE has enhanced the opportunities for professional development. Good practice is being shared within and between the three schools as a variety of skills and experience are brought to the table.

The Governors and parents first came together at the PIEE information evening hosted by NEELB, both attended an evening performance of music and dance involving pupils and a Governor from each school has been appointed as a PIEE supervisor.

Pupils' friendships and confidence levels are improving. At the start of project, when pupils were called upon to link up with a partner they always chose someone from their own school, but this has now shifted and they are pairing up with pupils from different schools. Overall, teachers have agreed that PIEE has been the vehicle for driving forward positive changes on a social and educational level.



Ballymoney Shared Education Partnership

Schools involved in this Sharing Education case study:

Dalriada School, Ballymoney; Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Ballymoney; Sandleford Special School, Coleraine; Ballymoney Model Primary School; Leaney Primary School; and St Brigid's Primary School.

Overview: This partnership comprises the entire Ballymoney Area Learning Community, in addition to a number of local primary schools. The partnership provides a wide range of shared activities from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4, encompassing accredited curricular provision in ICT, KS3 curricular provision and KS2 History and PE.

20 Pupils from Dalriada and Our Lady of Lourdes now meet on a weekly basis for Shared GCSE ICT. Without the partnership, it is unlikely that this subject would be available to pupils from Our Lady of Lourdes.

Year 10 pupils from Dalriada and Our Lady of Lourdes take part in shared Movie Maker classes in order to prepare them for the shared GCSE ICT option. Pupils also work together in collaborative dance and creative writing.

Year 5 pupils from Ballymoney Model PS, Leaney PS, St Brigid's PS and Sandleford School collaborate on a local history project that fulfills key areas of the Key Stage 2 curriculum. These pupils then work together again in Year 6 on a range of Key Stage 2 PE activities, with a new cohort of Year 5 pupils commencing the local history project.

Prior to the Sharing Education Programme, there was no substantive sharing between the schools. The first year of sharing led to pupils from partner schools selecting Dalriada as an option for moving on to for their 'A' level courses. They have also involved local primary schools in a range of collaborative curricular activities, again this is a direct result of the Sharing Education Programme.

Shared Education in the Roe Valley (SERV)

Schools involved in this Sharing Education case study:

St Mary's College, Limavady; Limavady High School; Rossmar School; Limavady Grammar School; St Patrick's College, Dungiven; Roe Valley Integrated; and Ballykelly; St Aidan's; St Anthony's; Craigbrack; St Finlough's; St Matthew's; Broadbridge; Faughanvale; Drumachose; Limavady Central; and Termoncanice Primary Schools.

Overview: The SERV project involves both primary and post-primary schools from the Roe Valley taking part in shared curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The post-primary strand is based around Limavady High School, St Mary's College, St Patrick's College, Limavady Grammar School and Rossmar School. Although relatively well established the SERV Partnership continues to develop and expand, adding new primary school partners and increasing the range of shared activities, both curricular and extra-curricular.

More than 120 post-primary pupils now attend a range of shared accredited curricular classes, across the partnership, including BTEC Land Based Technology, BTEC Child Care, and BTEC Health and Social Care. In addition to the accredited activities, SERV provides a wide range of curricular Key Stage 3 activities including Learning for Life and Work, PE and Science.

SERV also provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities including: shared student leadership council; parents and staff ICT refresher courses; and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Working with primary schools in the area, the project also provides a range of Key Stage 2 and transition activities.

This is probably the most developed of the SEP partnerships and even though SERV continues to expand provision it demonstrates that despite the perception that it is "doing everything" in fact there are still huge opportunities for further partnership working.



Moyle Learning Together Project

Schools involved in this Sharing Education case study:

Cross and Passion College, Ballycastle and Ballycastle High School.

Overview: This partnership had been sharing at Key Stage 5 for more than five years. However, the schools were keen to try to broaden this pre-existing relationship and work together at Key Stage 4 where they had no real experience of accredited curricular sharing.

Pupils now take part in a number of Key Stage 4 activities through weekly shared classes. Both schools act as venues for these subjects: their close proximity aiding the collaborative relationship.

The partnership is now offering even more shared Key Stage 4 activities than was originally intended and both schools agree that sharing is essential to their long term viability. More than 150 pupils take part in weekly shared classes in a range of Key Stage 4 accredited activities. These include: GCSE Technology; GCSE Child Development; GCSE Moving Image; BTEC Sport; Hospitality and Catering; and BTEC Countryside and Environment. The focus on Key Stage 4 activities broadens the pre-existing relationship the schools developed at 6th Form.

The development of Key Stage 4 activities vividly demonstrates how schools can offer a broader range of subjects for pupils to choose from by working together. Prior to embarking on the partnership the schools would have been unable to offer this range of subjects individually.

The accredited curricular activities are supplemented by a large scale programme of enrichment/extra-curricular activities, including shared musical projects, sport and student leadership projects. These activities help to further embed the collaborative relationship within the fabric of both schools in addition to providing additional opportunities for pupils to engage in activities that would otherwise have been unavailable.



Puppet heroes unveiled at school awards

Local charity Action Cancer has launched a new puppet show for 3-11 year olds at its annual awards ceremony for healthy schools.

Puppets Mambo and Jazz, Action Cancer's 'Health Action Heroes', are set to wing their way to schools across Northern Ireland, spreading the word about healthy lifestyles. The puppets replace old characters Wally and Wise, which have toured schools for more than ten years. Designed to capture the imagination of children at primary schools and nurseries, the Mambo and Jazz puppet show promotes four

golden rules that young children should follow to keep healthy; eat well, exercise regularly, be sun safe and be aware of the dangers of smoking. Action Cancer's fully qualified health promotion staff will deliver the show.

To get your school involved in the Health Action programme or to book the new Health Action Heroes puppet show contact Action Cancer on 028 9080 3344. A full list of 2011 award winners is available at www.actioncancer.org

Sesame Tree - new series of resources



The longest street in the world is helping young children in Northern Ireland learn about themselves and the world around them this year, thanks to a new series of educational resources to support Sesame Tree, Northern Ireland's very own version of Sesame Street, extending the fun and learning of the TV show into local classrooms.

Designed to support and develop the learning at the heart of the Sesame Tree programme, which was recently screened on CBeebies, the educational resources have been developed in partnership with the Education and Library Boards and Early Years - the organisation for young children.

As with other elements of the Sesame Tree project, the resources have been developed in line with the Northern Ireland Curriculum, in particular the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding aspect of the Foundation Stage.

Funding from the International Fund for Ireland is allowing Sesame Workshop to make the new resources available free of charge to all pre-school groups, nursery and primary schools across Northern Ireland.

The new resources complement the education packs produced for the initial series of Sesame Tree. There are two resources available. 'Let's Play and Learn Together Again' is designed for early years practitioners and teachers in pre-schools. While 'Out and About with Hilda 2' is designed to support the Foundation Stage (children aged 3-6 years). Both resources include DVDs, feature material from the Sesame Tree show, themed activity cards and detailed teachers' guides.

In addition to assisting in the development of the resources, the Education and Library Boards and Early Years have provided special information and training sessions for teachers and practitioners.

'Let's Play and Learn Together Again' and 'Out and About with Hilda 2' have now been distributed to schools and early years groups across Northern Ireland and all information and training sessions have been delivered. The television series is also being supported by a website for children, parents and caregivers - available at www.bbc.co.uk/sesametree.