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## CHURCH LEADERS ON SHARED EDUCATION

### Joint Statement from Bishops Liam MacDaid and John McDowell

"We have been impressed by many of the Shared Education Projects in County Fermanagh with which we have gained some familiarity. These have, so far, been mainly in the Primary Sector. Any process which has as its purpose to protect the ethos and worthy cultural tradition of participants, while at the same time encouraging mutual respect, co-operation and sharing of resources is to be warmly welcomed.

"We owe it to our children to work our way through removing barriers of fear and misunderstanding, most of which now have little substance or foundation. We need to create an atmosphere where all our children can smile, play and work together in a spirit of trust. This will help us all to build a much healthier society. It will enable us to have the benefit of the best of our faith and of our tradition while respecting and allowing ourselves to be enriched by the culture and beliefs of others."



+Liam S. MacDaid  
Bishop of Clogher



+John McDowell  
Bishop of Clogher

### Statements from the Methodist and Presbyterian Church Leaders

"Shared Education is to be welcomed by all. It is great way of encouraging children and young people to get to know one another and barriers which might otherwise arise can be eliminated while children are young. This is quite apart from the fact that Shared Education, in many cases, allows education to stay in local smaller communities which might not otherwise be able to sustain a school due to small numbers of children." Rev. Ken Lindsay, Methodist President.

"The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has encouraged dialogue and enhanced contact between schools and educational sectors with the aim of developing closer relationships. Educational opportunities which enable young people from across the different school sectors to join together through contact, collaboration and sharing are to be welcomed. The Shared Education Projects in County Fermanagh are great role models of how this can actually happen on the ground and as such are to be both commended and encouraged." Rev. Trevor Gribben, Education Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.



Rev. Ken Lindsay



Rev. Trevor Gribben

# SUCCESSES IN YEAR THREE OF THE SHARED EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Year Three of the Shared Education Programme is coming to a close and with almost 50% of primary school pupils involved and all 14 post primary schools in the County participating, the year has been heralded as another success story. The sustainability of Shared Education has been ensured through achieving three priorities in the Programme for Government. Shared Education is now government policy.

## Programme for Government Priorities on Shared Education

- Establish a Ministerial advisory group to explore and bring forward recommendations to the Minister of Education to advance shared education;
- Ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015;
- Substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015.

## 25 Shared Education Partnerships

Schools across County Fermanagh and 3 schools in the Republic of Ireland formed 25 Shared Education Partnerships in 2011 – 2012; 19 at primary level and six at post primary level. This newsletter features stories and profiles of some of the partnerships and their work in more detail.

Particular highlights of Shared Education across the year included school performances or presentations on shared education activities and outputs to a wider audience. Events included:

- Representatives from Aughdrumsee PS and St. Macartan's PS featured in a BBC Newsline report on Shared Education in September 2011.
- St. Mary's PS, Tempo and Tempo Primary School's shared education brass band performed for the Education Minister and delegates at the Shared Education conference in Belfast on 26th September.
- The Principals of St. Mary's PS, Tempo – Fergal McCann - and Tempo Primary School – Alan Williamson (now Principal of Florencecourt PS) presented to the Shared Education conference in September and formed part of a panel for the Q and A.
- Other partnerships had display stands at the conference on Shared Education, namely: St. Mary's Newtownbutler, Newtownbutler PS and St. Joseph's Donagh; St. John the Baptist, Roscor and Belleek, CPS.
- Other attendees from local schools at the conference were Felicity Humphreys from the Moat Primary School, Fintan Murphy from Holy Trinity Primary School and Kate Doherty, Chair of the Board of Governors of Tempo Primary School, who participated in a panel discussion.

## The International Fund for Ireland Celebrates 25 Years

Another highlight was St. Martin's, Garrison and its partner school under the Shared Education Programme, Kilbarron National School in Ballyshannon, County Donegal, being the only schools invited to perform at the 25th anniversary celebrations of the International Fund for Ireland. The glittering event, which was held in the Grand Ballroom of the Europa Hotel on Friday, 24th February, saw 250 guests celebrate the work of the International Fund for Ireland over the last quarter of a century. Fermanagh was also represented through The Fermanagh Trust which had a display stand show-casing Shared Education and a number of delegates from the Trust mingled with other guests from across Ireland and further afield. Dr. Denis Rooney, CBE, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland thanked the schools saying: "I wish to thank the pupils and staff from St Martin's Primary School, Garrison and Kilbarron National School, Ballyshannon for providing the music at the special event held in the Europa Hotel in Belfast on Friday to mark the Fund's 25th Anniversary of peace building across the island of Ireland. The music helped to make the event a great occasion and wished the cross-community/cross-border school music group well in all their future shared musical activities."

Geraldine Higgins, Principal of St. Martin's Garrison, said: "There was a lot of excitement in the run up to the event and having been the only schools asked to perform on such a prestigious occasion, we felt very honoured. Some of the children couldn't sleep with excitement the night before, but we are pleased to report that everything went very well and we received thanks and praise from the International Fund and The Fermanagh Trust for our hard work and performance." Priscilla Leslie, Principal of Kilbarron National School, Ballyshannon, said: "The folk group has been practising and performing for a number of years now and on the back of our CD, which was a huge hit, we can now claim we have shot to national prominence having been asked to play to such an audience. The children from the two schools mix really well and we see this Shared Education partnership as adding incalculable strength to the children's experiences."



Pupil from St. Martin's, Garrison with Dr. Denis Rooney former chairman of the IFI.

## FUTURE OF YOUR SCHOOL - HAVE YOUR SAY BEFORE THE DEADLINE (4TH JUNE 2012)

### AREA PLANNING – PRIMARY SCHOOLS

An Area Planning Process for primary schools is on-going, which will determine the future of the primary schools estate, potentially for the next 30 / 40 years.

As part of this process, the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) has invited proposals from primary schools (and their communities) regarding the viability and sustainability of their school in the long-term. Given the success of the Fermanagh Shared Education Programme and the educational benefits for pupils, the area planning process provides an opportunity for schools to request that a Shared Education Model is explored as part of this process. This does not commit schools to anything at this stage. It is simply requesting the time and space to explore Shared Education as an option. Following a process of discussions and consultations, if that option is neither desired nor feasible then it does not have to proceed.

Shared Education models can vary greatly depending upon the local needs of the schools. They can range from shared campuses, shared facilities & resources, shared staff, shared classes to joint management structures. Furthermore, Shared Education does not threaten the ethos or traditions of the partner schools and the respective communities.

**The deadline for submissions to the WELB is 4th June 2012.**

### AREA PLANNING – POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS

A Strategic Report on the future of post primary schools has already been compiled by the WELB, in conjunction with other employing authorities, and this has been forwarded to the Department of Education (DE). The findings of the report, when approved by the DE, will be made known and a consultation period will follow. Again, schools participating in shared education are urged to consider if a shared option may provide the best education for the children in their area and to submit proposals on shared solutions to their employing authority and / or the WELB.

If you would like more information on Shared Education, please do not hesitate to contact the Fermanagh Trust.

# LOOKING FORWARD – YEAR FOUR OF THE SHARED EDUCATION PROGRAMME

## Shared Teachers and Teacher Exchange Scheme

Year 4 of the Shared Education Programme (2012/13) will see changes with the inclusion of shared teachers and a teacher exchange scheme across the school sectors. This follows on from the success of the joint curriculum planning and joint classes during the first three years of the Programme.

Shared teachers and teacher exchanges will enable the individual schools within the partnerships to have access to a much wider range of professional skills, beyond the limits of their own school. For example, a teacher in School A, who has a music specialism, may spend one day per week in School B, and this is reciprocated with a teacher in School B, who has a particular skill in ICT, teaching pupils in school A one day per week and helping to up-skill staff in this area of the curriculum in the process. This will be particularly beneficial for smaller schools with lower staffing levels. By co-operating and sharing, schools can provide a wider range of specialist expertise and more easily provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

A number of the partnerships plan to pilot this in their schools next year and we will be very interested to collate the learning from this initiative.

## Sustainable Shared Education Models

A number of partnerships have gained tremendous benefits from co-operating with their neighbouring school from a different sector over the last three years and they wish to build upon these linkages to sustain the sharing and collaboration in the future. Funding is available in Year 4 to support partnerships that wish to consolidate their linkages and to explore if a cross-sectoral model of education is appropriate for them and if it would be viable.

The above strands to the Fermanagh Shared Education Programme are consistent with government policy and the Department of Education's priorities, which are set out in the Programme for Government.

## PHOTO CORNER



Pupils from the Enniskillen Primary School cluster created an anti-bullying calendar which was launched just before Christmas.



Pupils involved in the Enniskillen Schools Sports Project participate in the Head of the Erne Competition earlier this year. The Programme is supported by Shared Education.

# IS THE SCHOOL ACROSS THE BORDER JUST THE SAME?

## Ministers Agree Education Survey in Border Region

At the North South Sectoral meeting on 1st February, the Education Ministers North and South agreed to conduct an education survey in the border region which will survey the view of up to 50,000 parents. In a Joint Communique issued after the meeting both Ministers stated:

**“Ministers recognised the importance of facilitating parental preference in participation in schools. They noted change in population on both sides of the border and how this might impact on schools. Taking account of these issues Ministers discussed how those parents who so wished might be enabled to send their children to schools on the other side of the border.**

**“To take forward greater parental preference in schools in the border region the Council discussed developing plans and next steps for the conduct of a joint survey to inform cross-border pupil movement and school planning. An interim report of work on the survey will be presented to the next NSMC Education meeting with the results from the survey and proposals on the way forward to be considered no later than the first NSMC Education meeting of 2013.”**

With the next North South Ministerial Council meeting on education scheduled for 30th May, some schools in the County will be particularly interested in these proposals for a way forward and the results of any future survey.

St. Mary's High School, Brollagh has already been working on a cross-border solution as an alternative to its closure, which was recommended in the Review of Post Primary Education by the Catholic Commission. Instead, the group fighting to save post primary provision in the North West of the County has proposed an initial three year pilot programme developing a cross-border learning community in North West Fermanagh, South Donegal and North Leitrim. The group has submitted this proposal to the Area Planning process and is now awaiting outcomes from that process.



St Mary's High School, Brollagh

## SCHOOLS FEATURE IN FILM SERIES

Filming has been taking place across the Shared Education partnerships to produce a series of DVDs which will document Shared Education in practice. These will be made available to each of the schools and they will be shown online on the Fermanagh Trust's website to showcase the work of Shared Education in the County after three years.

Also, on occasion, The Fermanagh Trust has been asked by funders, politicians and other individuals and groups to see footage of Shared Education at conferences and events. The reaction has been extremely positive and favourable and we are looking forward to presenting the DVDs to each of the partnerships before the end of June.

## TEACHERS GO BACK TO THE CLASSROOM

11 Principals and teachers from Fermanagh have been studying for a ground-breaking and innovative qualification – the MSc in Collaborative Leadership in Schools. The Programme is part-funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies and taught by Queen's University, Belfast. The principals and teachers complete 20hrs (One module) each semester and submit two assignments of 5000 words each.

The MSc has two specialist modules entitled "Collaborative School Leadership" and "Effective Collaboration for School Improvement." The modules were taught within a closed Shared Education Programme group. This allowed the participants to discuss collaboration within their SEP context and to network with other teachers in SEP partnerships.

Those participating from Fermanagh are:



Some of the MSc students. L-R: Aine King, Felicity Humphreys, Marie O'Shea, Rhonda Cathcart, Helena Palmer, Jacqueline Cassidy.

Fermanagh Participants	
Post Primary Schools	
Jacqueline Cassidy	St Eugene's College, Roslea
Evelene McDonald	St Eugene's College, Roslea
Helena Palmer	St Joseph's College, Enniskillen
Primary Schools	
Marie O'Shea	St John the Baptist, Roscor
Fergal McCann	St Mary's PS, Tempo
Martina McGarvey	St Mary's PS, Tempo
Aine King	St Mary's PS, Maguiresbridge
Helen O'Hanlon	St Mary's PS, Maguiresbridge
Stephen Dolan	St Patrick's PS Mullanaska
Felicity Humphreys	Moat PS, Lisnaskea
Rhonda Cathcart	Irvinestown CPS

## PARENTS PARTICIPATE IN RESPECTING DIFFERENCE TRAINING

Respecting Difference training for parents, which forms part of the Shared Education initiative in the County, was rolled out again in 2011/2012. This was on the back of very successful parent workshops in 2010/2011, when 230 parents received training delivered by the Early Years organisation. The Respecting Difference Programme (RDP) is a highly acclaimed initiative. Research has found robust evidence that the programme is effective in improving outcomes in young children in relation to their social and emotional development and awareness of and attitudes towards cultural differences. Rolling out the training to parents, Principals, teachers and classroom assistants has also been an extremely important part of Shared Education.

For example, 109 Principals, teachers and classroom assistants from Fermanagh primary schools attended training in January, April and October 2011 and 78 in 2012. The Respecting Difference Programme provides first-class professional development and capacity building for teachers. Teacher feedback included the following:

*"A very informative, worthwhile course which fits into the Foundation Curriculum so well."*

*"One of the best, most relevant and most enjoyable professional development training courses I've ever participated in."*

*"I feel the course was excellent and is relevant to my work in school. It is an excellent way of extending the curriculum."*

Schools that participated in the 2011 parent workshop programme were Florencecourt PS, St. Mary's PS, Mullymesker and St. Mary's PS, Killesher, St. Martin's PS, Garrison and Killbarron National School, Ballyshannon, Ballinamallard PS and St. Paul's PS, Irvinestown, Enniskillen Model PS and St. Patrick's PS Mullanaskea, St. Eugene's PS, The Knocks and Brookeborough PS, St. Joseph's PS, Ederney and Kesh PS. Parents that participated in the training previously found it extremely beneficial saying:

*"This programme is very useful for laying down the foundations for the future with your child mixing and integrating with other children and adults with differences." (Belleek Parent)*

*"The Respecting Difference programme is a great way to teach young children about the differences in society and make them aware that everyone is equal and just as important even if they look different, etc." (Florencecourt Parent)*

*"It was very interesting because I feel different sometimes. We are from Slovakia and we are living here 4 years so everything is new for us." (Irvinestown Parent)*

*"Excellent programme for kids and adults to mix different religions. Keep it going. Good work." (Lisnaskea Parent)*

*"Very good to show the different cultures and how we are not very different (have lots in common)." (Newtownbutler Parent)*

*"Will be more aware of involving and encouraging my child to accept everyone regardless of culture/religion/colour, etc." (Derrygonnelly parent)*

Schools that have participated in the 2012 parent training include: St. Patrick's Derrygonnelly PS, Derrygonnelly P.S, Killyhommon P.S, St. Joseph's PS, Donagh, Newtownbutler P.S, St. Mary's PS, Newtownbutler, St. John the Baptist PS, Belleek and Belleek PS, St. Ronan's and The Moat Primary Schools, Lisnaskea, St. Mary's, Teemore, Fairgreen National School, Belturbet, St. Mary's P.S, Killester, St. Mary's P.S, Mullymesker, St. Naille's P.S, Kinawley and Florencecourt P.S.



Parents Attend Respecting Difference Training in St Patrick's Primary School, Derrygonnelly.

## AN UPDATE FROM THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

# LISBELLAW PS, HOLY TRINITY, JONES MEMORIAL AND ENNISKILLEN INTEGRATED PS.

The above four schools have been working together in a shared education cluster, pooling their expertise and planning the curriculum together for two year groups, P4s and P7s and delivering joint classes. Two teachers from Lisbellaw Primary School give a brief account of the joint work that took place with their partner schools, throughout the year.

### Year Four Update By Glenda McElwaine, P4 Teacher, Lisbellaw Primary School

#### Danny the Champion of the World

This is a story that all Year 4 children will talk about to their grandchildren. Every child loved the story and in a sense became part of it. They knew the characters by name, had their favourites, predicted what they thought was going to happen and to an extent became emotionally involved. Imagine Danny thinking up the idea of putting sleeping tablets inside the raisins-brilliant! Danny was a young boy of similar age to the P4 pupils from our Shared Education Partnership. The children then worked with local artists to make fabulous masks of the main characters and animals involved in the story. Many children wanted to become Doc Spence - a favourite by far! The masks were amazing and the children worked together discussing the personalities of the characters and how to add facial features to show these.

Then came a week of dance sessions! What an amazing opportunity for all children to be part of. They paired up, made routines, considered how the animals and characters would move and gradually added them step by step to end with the most entertaining and thoroughly enjoyable dance display. Parents came along to watch their child perform their routine with their partner school, incorporating the masks. The children still talk about Danny and I think they will for a long time.

*"My favourite thing was making the mask. I made Mr Victor Hazell." James, Year 4*

*"I loved the story and making up the bush dance with Eva." Kerri, Year 4*

### Year Seven Update, By Ruth Coalter, P7 Teacher

The year Seven Shared Education Partnership between Holy Trinity Primary School and Lisbellaw Primary School focused on supporting learning in the main Curriculum areas.

During Term One there was a focus on Literacy with both schools reading the novel *Twist of Gold* by Michael Morpurgo. This was followed up with mask making and creative dance relating to the novel.



Through Shared Education the students worked together to choreograph a dance routine.



The pupils for the four schools practice their dance movements.

## AN UPDATE FROM THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

*"I really enjoyed our "Twist of Gold" dance. It was so energetic, we all worked together and put our heart into it and our parents really enjoyed the performance." Annabel*

We also worked together on making a shared Anti-Bullying Calendar which was launched at a special event with invited guests at Enniskillen Library just before Christmas.

At the start of Term Two we continued on our Literacy focus and had an inspiring story telling day at Erne Integrated Primary School involving all four partnership schools. Our second activity during Term Two was a day at the Ulster American Folk Park. This time our focus switched to Mathematics and Numeracy and we followed a challenging but very enjoyable Maths Trail at the Folk Park.

In Term Three we continued on the Mathematics and Numeracy focus and had a stimulating Financial Capability Day hosted by Lisbellaw Primary School. Our final activities for this year will see all four schools in the partnership meeting up at the Lakeland Forum to take part in two "Olympic" themed days.

It has been a busy, rewarding year with a variety of activities which supported classroom work. We had fun learning together; moving around our partner schools, with the Shared Education Programme providing specialist facilitators who enriched the children's learning experiences and also those of the teachers.



The students practice their dance routines together.

*"The mask making was great and I was working with Barry. We made a Bounty Hunter and had fun using the crayons and paint." Glen.*

Shared Education has had a positive impact on our relationships with staff and pupils from our partner school. Children have no reservations about working with each other, sharing and cooperating. They know each other by name and through the regular contact have begun to build up friendships. You find the children often pair up with the same person that they have come to know. Within our village some children know others from living locally which has strengthened relationships outside the school context. In terms of staff the relationships have been excellent. Teachers love to discuss, question and share ideas as they are teaching the same year group. It has been a very successful year.



The pupils make masks together.



Putting the final touches to the props for the performance.

## AN UPDATE FROM THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

# ST. COLUMBAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL BELCOO AND MASTERSON'S NATIONAL SCHOOL MANORHAMILTON, BY PAULA MCMORRIS, P3 TEACHER

When my principal, Mr. Cox, gave me the opportunity to become involved with the Shared Education Partnership I was certainly very excited. However, before beginning it would be true to say that I had some reservations regarding the programme. I had concerns and worries about how the children from both schools would integrate, the logistics of planning trips, preparing paperwork and indeed how the adults would communicate with one another. I soon realised I had very little to be worried about as the programme has resulted in nothing but positive effects for all involved: pupils and adults alike!



Pupils getting to know each other between classes.

The new and unique 'Cross Border'- 'Cross Community' link between St. Columban's P.S and Masterson's National School was formed in September, 2011 and involves 35 children. Our action plan has a focus of 'Our Environment' with the children getting to know each other's villages - Belcoo and Manorhamilton.



Pupils from St. Columban's and Masterson National School take a seat to learn how big Mac Burgers are made.

It is difficult to document on paper the benefits of the Shared Education Partnership. The children have developed socially, emotionally and educationally. The learning objectives associated with the partnership are endless. Not only are the children exposed to areas of the curriculum but in my opinion the prospect for life-long learning is where the programme is unique. The chance for children to meet, work and play with other children from different communities and areas is a lesson which is difficult to teach without the opportunities the Shared Education Partnership offers. The children within the

two schools have formed friendships - this can be very easily identified and observed within the initial minutes of meeting on a trip day and indeed the same can be said for the adults involved!

The success of this partnership has far exceeded any expectations I had in September 2011 and I only hope this link can be maintained and indeed further developed, so other pupils and staff have the opportunity to make and develop friendships regardless of communities or indeed counties.



Deep in thought and silent reflection - Masterson and Belcoo pupils enjoy a presentation together.

## AN UPDATE FROM THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

# ST. JOSEPH'S EDERNEY AND LACK PS AND ST. JOSEPH'S EDERNEY AND KESH PS

Situated approximately half way between Lack and Kesh, St. Joseph's Primary school, Ederney has been working with both other schools on the Shared Education Programme. 157 pupils from the three schools have been involved across the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2.

One of the highlights between Ederney and Kesh was work around the theme of Autumn with the art class focusing on autumn bunting and the drama class taking the same theme, working towards a joint production. At Foundation Stage pupils from Lack and Ederney staged a performance for parents which was well attended by visitors from Lack, many of whom were visiting St. Joseph's for the first time.

Jill Parkinson, Principal of Kesh Primary School says: "The Shared Education Programme embeds the Northern Ireland curriculum in a very positive way introducing the learning areas of numeracy, literacy, The World Around Us and the creative areas".



The art class makes pumpkins together as part of the Shared Education Programme.

Former Chair of the Board of Governors at St. Joseph's, Eugene Monaghan says: "Initially the Governors welcomed the Programme wholeheartedly. We couldn't see it as anything but beneficial. The schools were developing new relationships, learning together and delivering parts of the curriculum."

Some of the benefits to the teachers from the three schools have been sharing ideas and good practice, seeing what works well in other schools and taking that back. And for the pupils, "we don't really get to meet other children apart from this project," one commented.

Tom Elliott, MLA, a member of the Board of Governors of Lack PS commented: "Whenever the Shared Education was first talked about there was enthusiasm and a bit of suspicion but then we moved onto the more positive aspects. It was like going into the unknown."

The parents and Governors weren't the only ones who felt they were going into the unknown at the start of the Programme, with a Kesh PS pupil adding: "When I first met the children from Ederney I was a bit shy but I got to know them and we just clicked."

Tom Elliott believes one of the strengths of the Shared Education Programme is that you don't have to give up anything: "The vast majority of the curriculum and the teaching methods are the same. There should be respect for religion but this can be taught in a separate manner."

Eugene Monaghan sums up the potential for Shared Education saying: "Once you start to build a house you don't stop at the windows, so I'd like to see the roof on the house."



Tom Elliott MLA

## AN UPDATE FROM THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

# SHARED EDUCATION AT THE MOAT AND ST. RONAN'S, LISNASKEA BY FELICITY HUMPHREYS, PRINCIPAL, THE MOAT P.S

Shared Education partnership building and shared class programmes have emphatically enhanced the learning experiences of the staff and children in the Lisnaskea area. Each year, the number of participants has grown. Shared Education is now well embedded in the school timetable. Moreover the spirit of co-operation is having a ripple effect in the local community.

Shared Education is more than simply a well-resourced programme for the schools. Governors and staff have embraced Shared Education with genuine enthusiasm and commitment to realise the benefits to the children, schools and community.

### A Snapshot of the Highlights:

The production of a book on 'Our Town, Lisnaskea', as seen through the eyes of the children in 2010, was no mean achievement. While research, interview techniques, photography and writing skills were enhanced, the pride our children had in this publication of their town is difficult to capture in words.

Keeping up with ICT and technology is an ongoing challenge for staff and of course to a much lesser extent, pupils. We have provided opportunities for moving image, video-conferencing, programming and networking.

We are fortunate to have the local Castle Park Centre within walking distance and the Share Centre just a few miles away and this has allowed us to develop the range of sporting activities. These include orienteering, river studies, watersports, tennis and golf. Drama, Dance and Art have featured highly on most programmes and Respecting Difference classes are a treat!

The staff have engaged in some staff development days in ICT and in the development of 'play' where we learned and laughed much!



The pupils from the Moat and St. Ronan's at the launch of their book 'Our Town, Lisnaskea'.



The book which was produced jointly by the two schools was a huge sell-out locally.



The pupils in class together.

## AN UPDATE FROM THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

# FERMANAGH FEIS FIRST FOR SHARED EDUCATION CHOIR

For the first time in its 50 year history the 2012 Fermanagh Feis played host to a Shared Education choir. The Shared Education Choir from Killyhommon Primary School, Boho and Derrygonnelly Primary School not only made history by taking part but actually came away from their section of the competition as overall winners!

Putting on the joint performance on Wednesday, 29th February were Key Stage 2 pupils (P5-7) who had started to work together three years ago under the Shared Education Programme and one result of that has been this joint choir.

Participating in the Choral Singing Small Primary School Choir category, the choir competed against four other choirs emerging overall winners after a compelling performance.

Eileen McKenzie, Principal of Killyhommon Primary School, said: "I want to pay tribute to the pupils for their hard work over many months and to the teachers and all involved with the choir. We first started working together on a number of Shared Education projects three years ago and this success shows that we can do better if we work together rather than separately".

Joan Cathcart from Derrygonnelly Primary School, said: "Shared Education offers pupils the opportunity to get to know one another through a curriculum-based programme but to also participate in important county wide initiatives such as the Fermanagh Feis. I also want to thank the pupils who spent many hours practising and the teachers who helped with the choir, the result of which has been this success at the Feis."

Gillian Rutherford, P3 and 4 teacher with Derrygonnelly Primary School, said: "It has been a real privilege and pleasure to work with both groups as part of the Shared Education Programme. The dedication of the pupils who worked so well together meant we were able to join seamlessly into one unit to form an award winning choir."



The Shared Education Choir, enjoys success at the Fermanagh Feis.

A Feis Fermanagh spokesperson stated: "The Feis encourages participation from all sides of the community and there has been a marked increase in choirs competing this year, particularly in the primary school sector. We were delighted that Killyhommon PS was able to participate for the first time by joining forces with Derrygonnelly CPS to form a Shared Education choir and wish to congratulate them on their success."

Speaking of the impact of the Shared Education Programme on schools in Fermanagh, Lauri McCusker, Director of The Fermanagh Trust, said: "This is an excellent example of collaborative working and partnership-building between schools. The joint choir is one of a number of positive outcomes of what can be achieved when two small rural schools work together through Shared Education."

"The educational, societal and community benefits of collaboration are clear and The Fermanagh Trust believes that schools co-operating is the way forward as resources become scarce with further pressures on school budgets. Congratulations to all of the children and teachers on their success."

## PHOTO CORNER



Reverend Brian Russell, Chair of the Board of Governors at Kilbarron National School, Ballyshannon is introduced to Canon Lonergan, Chair of the Board of Governors, St. Martin's Primary School, Garrison by the School Principal, Geraldine Higgins.

## AN UPDATE FROM THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

### ST. PAUL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, IRVINESTOWN AND BALLINAMALLARD PRIMARY SCHOOL, BY KATE HASSARD AND ELIZABETH MULLIGAN, P3 TEACHERS

St Paul's Primary School, Irvinestown has a very successful cross-community partnership with Irvinestown Controlled Primary School, where they have worked co-operatively for many years for the benefit of the pupils. This joint work continues to grow and develop with plans to involve more classes in the forthcoming year.

Ballinamallard Primary School has joined this partnership during 2011/12 as many of its pupils are from the adjoining hinterland and it will help pupils (and their families) form friendships in the local area. The following is a brief account by the two P3 teachers from St Paul's PS and Ballinamallard PS, who worked jointly during the year.



The pupils in class together.



Pupils displaying their skills in art class.

In the first term we introduced the children to each other and provided a foundation for their friendships. Each week for 10 weeks they took part in a programme of dance. The children learned to respond to music, move and work together. The second session focused on music. They sang songs and used a variety of percussion instruments which we were able to purchase with Shared Education funding.

The second term started with a trip to Belfast to see the pantomime, which is an opportunity that many children living in rural areas do not get. The weekly sessions in school focused on the Media Initiative Respecting Differences Programme,

where the children took part in activities on cultural/ race and bullying issues. The drama focused on these issues and provided a format to improve children's self esteem and confidence. The finale of the term was a music and drama performance for both sets of parents. This show was extremely well supported by the children's parents and gave them an opportunity to see the children work and perform together. The children's work from the project was also on display.



Making friends.



The pupils get ready to perform to parents.

The children from both schools have formed strong friendships and they have looked forward to seeing their new friends each week, but also in the local community in shared clubs. They have developed an understanding of each others cultures and celebrations. The experience has given them an unforgettable set of positive, enjoyable experiences that wouldn't have been possible otherwise.

# THE MODEL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL MULLANASKEA BY ANNE KEYS, VICE-PRINCIPAL, THE MODEL

This year the P7 partnership between Enniskillen Model and St Patrick's, Mullanaskea involved a study of life in Ireland during the famine period.

Following an ice-breaker activity, the pupils enjoyed a day of role play at The Argory, Co. Armagh where they 'stepped back in time' and applied for jobs as servants.

The photographs taken on the day were used to produce a series of photo stories - pupils worked collaboratively to insert graphics, sound and pictures.

In the second term the pupils met again to develop storyboards based on the novel, 'Under the Hawthorn Tree', by Marita Conlon-McKenna.

During a trip to the Ulster American Folk Park they dressed up in period costume and experienced at first hand famine conditions and scenes from the novel. To support this theme the pupils also participated in a walking tour of Enniskillen which was hosted by Fermanagh County Museum; part of this included a visit to the old workhouse site and the famine graveyard.



The students pose for a photograph which was then used to produce a photo story-board.



The student listen intently in one of their Shared Education classes.

Pupils later worked in groups to act, film and direct short scenes from the novel. After filming 'on location' around the Model School grounds, they then learned how to edit the recordings, add music and credits to their short films.

The pupils are currently preparing a short presentation for their parents; this will include reports, monologues, choral speaking, songs and a chance to view the films.

Everyone involved has gained new friendships, skills and confidence

through this busy but very successful programme. The link between both schools is highly successful and enhanced by the Shared Education programme.

Involvement in the Shared Education Programme for the past several years has strengthened the school's understanding of and commitment to the CRED Policy (Community, Relations, Equality and Diversity). All of the planned programmes have been comprehensively developed and have strengthened staff and pupil relationships - genuine friendships have been established and embedded. Creating a culture of tolerance to different attitudes and beliefs has always been to the fore.

## AN UPDATE FROM THE POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS

# FOUNDATION LEARNING PROGRAMME BY JIMMY JACKSON-WARE, PRINCIPAL ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE, ENNISKILLEN

The Foundation Learning programme involves four schools – St. Joseph's College (lead school), St. Mary's High School, Brollagh, Devenish College and St. Fanchea's College. I have operational responsibility for the Programme on a day to day basis and in the longer term, budget responsibility, the resourcing of the Programme and convening meetings of the management committee - which happen twice per half term.

The Foundation Learning Programme's central objective is to meet the individual educational needs of those students who would be unable to access a traditional academic curriculum. An integral part of the NI curriculum is Learning for Life and Work, part of which is citizenship. What better way to develop citizenship than to work with people on a cross-community basis? We have students from Devenish, St. Fanchea's and Brollagh coming in here in their uniforms so it meets that citizenship criteria immediately. In regard to Learning for Life and Work, another aspect is employability and we do have one day's work related education and a six week module in preparation for that.

When we initially developed the concept of the Foundation Learning Programme we planned to locate the delivery of the programme outside the school in neutral venues. However, we quickly realised that we were imposing our fears and preconceptions on the students. Our students are very welcoming and the students have been gradually incorporated into the life of the school which has helped to develop very positive cross community relationships.

The Governors have been very positive and Shared Education is a regular agenda item at Board of Governor meetings where I give an update; we intend to award prizes to the students taking part in the Foundation



Students participating in the Foundation Learning Programme.

Learning Programme at our Annual Awards Ceremony. You only have to see the young people involved to know this is the right way to go and if anyone has any doubt about that I invite them to come in and see what the students get from it.

I would want the Foundation Learning Programme to continue. I think it has been hugely beneficial to the young people in Fermanagh so I would support its continued development.

### **A Teachers Perspective**

**By Kate Gallagher Arruda , Foundation Support teacher, Foundation Learning Programme**

I was based in London for many years working with 14 – 19 year olds. Previous to my current role I was Entitlement Framework Co-ordinator for the Fermanagh Learning Community. What attracted me to this position was dealing with students with specific learning difficulties. The uniqueness of the Programme is that it brings these students together while catering for their individual needs. Benefits to me as a teacher include the bringing together of resources, knowledge and having the input of four principals – and that also benefits the students.

While following the post-primary curriculum, a particular strength of the Programme is a community relations

## AN UPDATE FROM THE POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS

one as we are bringing together students from different schools, genders and religions. The Programme provides the young people with a positive learning experience that they may not have otherwise had. Some of the pupils experience a range of learning difficulties including Dyslexia, Autism, Aspergers Syndrome and Downs Syndrome. Positive results within the classroom have been increased confidence, self-esteem and motivation for learning.

Positive relationships and friendships have also developed inside and outside the classroom. Students focus on what they have in common and they now socialise at weekends together also. These are opportunities for friendships and relationships to develop that the students may not have had without the Programme. The experience is spilling out to parents when we have open days and parent teacher meetings and its fantastic when we see the breaking down of barriers and the positive impacts on building relationships within the community.

The Programme has broken down religious barriers with the students beginning to explore and find out more about each other. For example, on Remembrance Sunday we worked to raise awareness among all the students and all were involved in preparing for St. Patrick's Day. All in all the Shared Education Programme has been very positive in terms of bringing benefits to the community and hopefully to the future.

## FRENCH IMMERSION COURSE

### SHARED EDUCATION "EST FORMIDABLE" SAY A LEVEL FRENCH STUDENTS

Four schools from Enniskillen which have joined forces to offer a French Immersion Programme to A Level students under Shared Education say the course will assist students achieve a successful standard in their oral examinations by encouraging them to use French at all times.

49 students from St. Michael's College, Mount Lourdes Grammar School, Portora Royal and the Collegiate Grammar School from Years 13 and 14 participate in the workshop-based programme which brings a depth of culture to their studies, while they develop their reading, listening, debating and thinking skills.

Some of the comments from the pupils at Mount Lourdes Grammar School included: "Fantastique!", "Super!", "A very worthwhile day" and "A different way of learning French."

Nathan Richmond, a pupil at Portora Royal said: "I think that the Shared Education Programme is great. Not only has it allowed us to integrate with pupils from different schools, but also to learn useful French vocabulary at the same time. It is very helpful to get a variety of different teachers working together, incorporating their different ways of teaching. The only thing that I think could be improved is the amount of time or opportunities we get to talk to and socialise with the other pupils. Apart from this it is very useful and enjoyable."



Students participating in the French Immersion Course.

Tom O'Hagan, a pupil at St. Michael's College said: "We all really enjoyed interacting with new people, speaking and improving our French. It's a pity we only had a few opportunities this year, I wish we could do this more often. C'était une expérience formidable!"

## AN UPDATE FROM THE POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The pupils at the Collegiate Grammar School said: "We really enjoyed the day; it was a great opportunity to meet new people whilst improving our French. It was really good to experience the various teaching styles: each of the teachers had something different to offer, which we found refreshing! The activities were engaging and stimulating. It was a successful day. Being put into groups, away from our friends encouraged us to build relationships with the other pupils. Nous attendons la visite à Gortatole avec impatience, ça va être super, woo hooo! "

Isabelle Leonard, French teacher at St. Michael's College who initiated and is coordinating the programme said:

"The French Immersion Course complements the A Level course delivered by the schools and strengthens contacts between students, teachers, departments and schools. Delivering this Programme via Shared Education allows students to meet and share experiences through the medium of French and in preparation for their French examination".

Lauri McCusker, Director of the Fermanagh Trust, said: "The French Immersion Programme enables teachers to pool their resources, share their ideas and techniques while improving delivery of the Northern Ireland curriculum through collaboration. The possibilities for Shared Education are limitless. There are opportunities for schools, teachers, students and communities. Shared Education draws on the resources already available within schools and by taking a collaborative, partnership-based approach, more can be achieved together.

## SOUTH EAST FERMANAGH UPDATE

Post Primary Schools in South East Fermanagh – Lisnaskea High School, St. Aidan's High School, Derrylin and St. Eugene's College, Roslea – have again linked up through the Shared Education Programme on a very successful Reading Intervention Programme. St. Comghall's College and Lisnaskea High school are also partnering on a Year 9 and Year 11 Art Project.

Brenda Davis, Course Coordinator, explains more about the reading intervention initiative: "It is a structured phonics programme designed to develop pupils' spelling and reading skills. Pupils learn to develop an appreciation of characteristic visual patterns in words and relate these to the sound of the words. The pupils engage in a range of multi-sensory activities which are designed to reinforce the teaching focus. Improvement in literacy has benefits for children across all areas of the curriculum. As the saying goes, if we can't learn to read, we can't read to learn."

Colin O'Callaghan, Head of English and Year 8 Form teacher at Lisnaskea High School sees the Shared Education Programme as opening up the curriculum for a rural and isolated area. "The Shared Education programme allowed us set up systems to access other things on site, raise the pupils' self esteem and put us in touch with our neighbours," he said.

Some of the pupils involved commented:

*"I didn't know much about the Shared Education Programme, but it will help us later on the future, help us with a job or going to University."*

*"I enjoy making new friends and meeting people from new communities and backgrounds."*

*"If it wasn't for the Shared Education Programme I wouldn't have met these friends."*



Students developing their spelling and reading skills by working collaboratively.

## AN UPDATE FROM THE POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS

*"When I first came to school I was calm and excited to meet new people. We get to know their interests and community background. My parents think the Shared Education Programme is a good idea."*

Martin McBrien Principal of St. Aidan's Derrylin said:

*"The pupils have been involved in the Programme for two years and it benefits them through improving their literacy, social and communication skills. I can say the pupils really enjoyed the Programme and made friends easily. Their view is that they love going to a different school, meeting new friends and learning new skills with a different teacher in another school."*



Pupils practicing their literacy and communication skills together.

Dr. Martin Knox, Principal of St. Eugene's College, Roslea said:

*"In terms of our Board of Governors it's been a significant move to be involved in a cross-community programme. The Shared Education Programme has helped at a grassroots level bringing children together. "There's never been a complaint from anyone, which is indicative of how successful the initiative has been. There was a celebration event at Enniskillen Castle and the pupils were actively mixing with each other. The children mature as a result of initiatives such as this and become better adjusted. Programmes such as this help us to move towards a more mutually inclusive environment."*

## ACCREDITED QUALIFICATIONS FOR 247 YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH SHARED EDUCATION

247 post primary pupils have had the opportunity to receive certified qualifications in various activities as part of the Fermanagh Trust's Shared Education Programme – which will undoubtedly help them as they apply for University or seek further education and/or training.

From September, 2011 – June, 2012, the pupils from St. Fanchea's College, St. Joseph's College, Mount Lourdes Grammar School, The Collegiate Grammar School, Devenish College and Erne Integrated College participated in the Post 16 Personal Development and Skills Programme.

**Certified activities they participated in included:**

- ECDL Extra (Level 2 ITQ Certificate) certified by BCS – The Chartered Institute for IT
- First Aid; Life Saving Skills: Bronze Medallion Lifesaving Course from The Royal Life Saving Society UK
- Self-Defense, NVQ Level 1 in Ju Jitsu credited by the World Ju Jitsu Federation (WJFF) and City and Guilds
- Trampolining Awards certified by British Gymnastics
- The Duke of Edinburgh Award - which is still in progress with 12 students progressing towards a bronze award and 12 towards a silver award



One of the certified activities that Post 16 students can participate in under the Shared Education Programme.

# SUPPORT FOR SHARED EDUCATION GOING FORWARD

## **Barry Mulholland, Chief Executive, Western Education and Library Board**

Feedback about the Programme is very positive and it's obviously having an impact in terms of both education and also community relations in the county. The extension of the programme for another year is important at this juncture with the outcomes of the Viability Audits soon to be released and for the forthcoming area based planning process. The Fermanagh Trust can play a valuable role as an external broker to help facilitate discussions between schools about potential cross-sectoral models where that may be appropriate.

## **Jim Clarke, Chief Executive, Catholic Council for Maintained Schools**

CCMS acknowledges the contribution which the Fermanagh Shared Education Programme has made to developing school partnerships and enhancing outreach to the community. The cross-sectoral linkages have helped to unlock the potential of schools to work together at a curricular, pastoral and community level but have also challenged perceptions in the wider community and diminished long-held misgivings. It is encouraging that the Shared Education Programme cherishes diversity and respects others in what it does. The Council, like the WELB, believes that it has the potential to play a role in facilitating new arrangements for the provision of education under any proposals emerging from Area Based Planning.



## **Brendan Hegarty, Chief Executive, Fermanagh District Council (On behalf of the Council)**

The Fermanagh Shared Education Programme has been operating since 2009 following extensive research by the Fermanagh Trust indicating a strong desire among parents, educators and community representatives for increased opportunities for collaboration on a cross community basis between schools, so that pupils would have the opportunity to learn and interact with others of a different religion/community background. In this time the programme has had a widespread impact in local communities, including extended families, governors, clergy and community representatives. The programme encourages improved relationships at a local level; however, oftentimes in areas where there is hurt and division involvement in the programme can challenge communities. The Council is very concerned regarding the sustainability of schools across Fermanagh and Members are of the opinion that "Shared Education" should be given due and proper consideration by the Department of Education when considering sustainability.

## **Barry Boyle, Network Co-ordinator and Community Development Worker, Fermanagh Rural Community Network (FRCN)**

FRCN are fully supportive of Fermanagh Trust's Shared Education Programme. Through our contact with communities throughout the County feedback on the Programme has been very positive and evident through improved community relations particularly in areas where communities have been polarised through the effects of past history and minority communities being very small in number. The wide range of activities operated by the programme are not just confined to the schoolchildren but many are attended by parents and other relations, thus communities are brought together, fostering greater cross-community linkages and building of trust and relationships.

## **Chris McCarney, Peace III Programme Manager. (The SW Cluster is responsible for the PEACE III Programme across the district councils of Magherafelt, Cookstown, Dungannon & Fermanagh.)**

Over the last 3 years we have been involved in the development, delivery and monitoring of 84 peace building projects across the cluster area. I would like to confirm that all feedback to the Peace III Partnership from social partners, councillors and schools recognise the success and the peace building outcomes delivered by the IFI Fermanagh Shared Education Programme. Consequently, the SW cluster is promoting the Shared Education Programme as a model of good practice and trying to encourage schools in other council areas to follow the Fermanagh Trust model.

For further details on the Fermanagh Trust Shared Education Programme, please contact:



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