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## Breacadh Ré Nua do Scoileanna Beaga

*One of the first areas that the new education minister will have to consider will be the report on the 'Value for Money of Small Schools'.*

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# Breacadh Ré Nua do Scoileanna Beaga

by Seán Cottrell and Pat Goff



The election is done and dusted. There is an agreed *Programme For Government*, and new minister for Education & Skills and a senior minister for Children. One of the first areas that the new education minister will have to consider will be the report on the 'Value for Money of Small Schools'.

By whatever measure, whether educational or financial, IPPN does not support the forced amalgamation of small schools. Six years ago, small schools were the focus of an extensive research project undertaken jointly by St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra and IPPN. This research was published in a report entitled 'New Horizons for Smaller Schools and Teaching Principalship in Ireland', which is available on [ippn.ie](http://ippn.ie) in the Publications section within the Resources menu. The findings and recommendations were ahead of their time and are possibly even more relevant now, given the recommendations of the McCarthy Report, which proposes the closing/amalgamation of a large number of small schools for 'value for money' reasons.

One of the key conclusions based on the evidence is that there is no educational reason to close small schools. Naturally, we acknowledge there are many challenges facing small schools and Teaching Principals, such as professional isolation, lack of internal staff mobility, inadequate secretarial and caretaking services as well as the disproportionate burden of legislative and bureaucratic demands relative to staff capacity. It is worth pointing out that not all small schools are in rural communities; many are Church of Ireland schools, some of which are located in urban areas. There may be an economic gain in the short term but at what cost socially and in the long term? Even in strict economic terms, it is highly questionable how amalgamations save money. Typically, either an extension or a new school building is required; does it make sense to close one building and build or extend another for the same pupils? It is evident that forced amalgamations have been the cause of much conflict and stress, which in some cases has taken generations to resolve. There has to be a better way. Perhaps the solution lies with the people involved and not the bricks and mortar.

With the renewed focus on value for money and efficiency, it is unlikely that the status quo will remain. Small schools, particularly those with fewer than 50 pupils, are now subject to specific 'value for money' scrutiny. Where two school communities choose to amalgamate there is no issue, but it is important to understand what other options there are to forced amalgamations.

Both international and Irish research shows that the concept of 'clustering' smaller schools overcomes many of the economic and other factors raised during these reviews, as well as many of the challenges of the role of Teaching Principal, including the difficulty in attracting suitable candidates. Whilst there are several different models of clustering in operation in Canada, Australia, Finland and New Zealand, there are a number of reasons why we believe that the concept of *school federations* would work well in Ireland as an alternative to forced amalgamations. In a system of school federation, two or more small

schools would retain their existing buildings/campus and continue to act as a focal point in their own local communities but in effect they would become one school in all other ways. This 'new' federated school would have one roll number, one Administrative Principal, one Board of Management, one staffing schedule, one budget, one secretary, one caretaker and one set of school policies. This federation approach would be a 'win/win' both for the local communities involved and for the DES. Schools that have a retiring Principal could be the first to be included in this new federation model.

It is not traditional for Ministers to take the long view, but the value for money study will have far reaching consequences in many communities in Ireland for decades to come and it is essential to consider the implications beyond the immediate and the financial. There is a danger that we 'know the price of everything and the value of nothing'. Everyone bemoans the population flight from rural Ireland. The forced closure of a small school can herald the death of the local community. In the last generation, we have seen the 'rationalisation' of the local shop, public house, post office and Garda station. Once these closures take place, it is almost certain they will never reopen. What is now required is some lateral thinking with a solution that brings about greater efficiencies without using the blunt instrument of closure. The consequences of some decisions are more profound than others. You cannot 'un-ring' a bell.

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# A Reflection on the DES Review of Small Primary Schools Value for Money 2011

By Dr. Kevin Haugh (PhD), Past-pupil 1958-1966 of Doonaha N.S. in West Clare



"Educate, that you may be free."

Thomas Davis, Influences of Education, 1846.

The Department of Education and Skills has commenced a value for money review of small primary schools. For the purpose of the review a small primary school is taken to be one with less than 50 pupils. There is considerable education research evidence to suggest that the size of school is not an indicator of the quality of education delivered. In fact we are told that literacy levels are highest in Finland where one third of schools have a pupil population of fifty pupils or less. One fifth of primary schools in Ireland have enrolments of fifty pupils or less.

Would it not be more prudent to look at how good our schools are? We need to look at the quality of learning outcomes and how they meet the needs of the target communities. We need to look at both sides of the balance sheet – human and fiscal. What lessons were learned from the thinking of the 1960s with regard to smaller schools and investment in education? What were the educational, social and demographic outcomes for rural Ireland? What were the positives and negatives?

*The human socio-emotional and demographic costs to rural communities need to be taken into consideration.*

Short-term fiscal gains through closures and amalgamations could be lost in the long-term if standards in the new models configured are not on a par with the current models of provision. The human socio-emotional and demographic costs to rural communities need to be taken into consideration. Equally it is an insult to measure the delivery of education to our children in terms of value for money. The children of the twenty-first century need to be educated with painstaking excellence. They must be accorded the dignity and importance that is their right. In the midst of our worst struggles, our forefathers knew that part of our advancement and growth began with a sound education. Now, as in the

darkest moments of our history, it needs to be acknowledged that education is the currency of the future, giving our people social and geographic mobility.

In the 1960s, one of the more controversial features of 'investment thinking' was the recommendation that a number of small schools should be closed in keeping with cost-effect procedures. The Department of Education hoped that a centralised schooling system would make better use of teacher resources and reduce the spread of classes that predominated in one and two-teacher schools. It was hoped that the implementation of such a system would facilitate the nationwide introduction of the new child-centred curriculum of 1971 in primary schools throughout Ireland.

*Many rural communities were left without the service of a 'local school' and 'bussing' of children as young as four years old was an uninviting prospect to parents and prospective settlers.*

There was widespread opposition to the 'investment plan' in the communities where it signalled the impending demise of the local school. Despite the greatest efforts of local activists to secure a change of policy with regard to the closure of one and two teacher schools, the number of such schools was reduced from 3,194 to 1,168 during the period 1962–1979. While it can be argued that these closures effectively rid the countryside of buildings that were vermin-infested and in a deplorable condition, many people suggest that the strategy subsequently had a profound adverse influence in the communities.

Many rural communities were left without the service of a 'local school' and 'bussing' of children

as young as four years old was an uninviting prospect to parents and prospective settlers. Little thought was given to the psychological implications of putting a four-year-old child on a bus and whisk her away from her parents for the day. A child forgetting their lunch or, worse still, becoming ill in the course of the day might seem trivial but such are major disasters if they befall a child away from home, especially the very young.

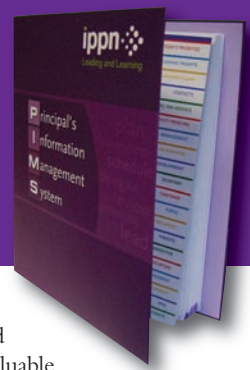
Hindsight supports the argument that the demise of the one and two-teacher schools was the death knell for many of the rural communities. Newly-married couples gravitated towards larger urban centres where their children were not subjected to the rigors of the "bussing" system. The counter-argument proffered by the pro-investment thinkers was that the school transport scheme, embellished by the rapid increase in private cars, alleviated the hardship of making longer journeys to school.

*Hindsight supports the argument that the demise of the one and two-teacher schools was the death knell for many of the rural communities.*

They also suggested that the centralised schooling system would not only be more cost-effective, it would also lend itself to the social development of the pupils. It can be conceded that 'investment thinking' around smaller schools in the 1960s took several children out of sub-standard, filthy school buildings and placed them in new or at very least refurbished surroundings with all of the requisite facilities of the era. However, the same argument cannot be made in 2011 when smaller schools are centrally-heated, with toilet and hygiene facilities, state of the art IT, recreation and learning facilities that are a credit to the teachers, parent associations and Boards of Management associated with them.

# PIMS – more than just a diary

By Riona Murray, Principal,  
St Enda's NS, Kilnadur, Dunmanway, Co. Cork



I began to reflect upon my usage of the PIMS diary in my two years in the role of Principal. On my appointment to the position in 2009 I felt all at sea and regularly contacted my previous Principal and others for advice on a range of issues, such as contact details of individuals in the department or in local authorities, what should be covered in a Principal's report at a Board of Management meeting, what grants I should expect etc. After two terms in the post I decided that I needed to develop a system of gathering and recording information that would be secure and locatable. I remembered that the Principal in my previous school could be found at various times searching for her 'bible', a large purple folder – PIMS! She would be found searching the school at particularly busy times such as just before a BoM or PA meeting. I thought that this 'bible' must have some fairly important information.

I located my own 'PIMS bible' in the shelving section that I had mentally entitled 'I'll come back to you later'. I began to use the diary regularly and it has proved to be an absolute lifesaver. I have had cause to have regular contact with the Department of Education and Skills in the course of an application to replace a prefabricated cabin at our school with permanent classrooms. Prior to using

the PIMS diary I wrote the various names of individuals in the department (and their contact telephone numbers) on scraps of paper or in A4 pads only to be unable to find these notes at the vital moment when you were sure to be asked "and who told you that?" or "when did you speak to him?"

*PIMS has proved to be an absolute lifesaver.*

I began recording a summary of every conversation I had with the Department in the 'Appointments Diary' section of the PIMS folder and having such a detailed record stood me in great stead. I also recorded what I needed to do next in the 'Today's Priorities' section, even though it could be several days before I consulted it again. This meant I developed a habit of creating a checklist of priorities, and more importantly, this checklist would be close at hand and stood a great chance of being consulted again and acted upon, which sadly my prior checklists invariably did not. I'm currently in my classroom dancing to the sweet tune of the Kango Hammer and my Deputy Principal and I are dreaming about colour schemes for our two new classrooms.

I have also found PIMS to be an invaluable place to keep records of my notes from meetings with the Board of Management, Parents' Association, insurance provider etc. I also keep a record of contact numbers, for instance the local broadband provider, electrician, plumber and available substitute teachers in the 'Contacts' section. This means other staff such as the School Secretary and Deputy Principal can access this information easily. The fact that all documents in the folder are organised in a ring binder facilitates the addition of extra documents or removal of documents that you may not require. It can be manipulated to suit any size school.

At the end of last year I removed some sections of the PIMS diary, such as the 'Contacts' section and placed them in this year's addition. I then filed my PIMS. I have consulted last year's diary several times to confirm a variety of matters. PIMS has become a welcome addition to my already-cluttered desk and it is a resource that I'm sure I will be glad to see coming in the door every new school year.

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# Have School Transport changes been thought through?

By Damian White, Principal, Scoil Shinchill, Killeigh, Co. Offaly

School Transport is the latest avenue through which hard-pressed parents are to be relieved of some of their hard-earned and scarce cash.

With the exception of those children with a valid medical card, every child eligible for school bus transport will pay €50 per year, to a maximum of €110 per family, for the service. Further details of the scheme can be accessed from Bus Eireann's Primary Schools Transport Scheme Advance Notice document circulated to all schools, and also available on their website.

The change which is most contentious relates to the provision of transport under the Central/Closed School Rule (CSR). This will have major implications for many schools in rural areas. Under this rule, where a primary school closed and amalgamated with another, pupils residing in the closed school area are currently eligible for fee transport to the school of amalgamation. Under the Central School Rule,

where a number of schools closed and amalgamated into one new school, free transport is provided to eligible pupils living not less than 1 mile from the new school.

From September 2011, the 2 miles criteria will apply nationally. Current pupils who reside 2 miles or more from their school of amalgamation will retain eligibility for school transport for the duration of their Primary School cycle. From September 2012, eligibility based on the CSR will cease for all new pupils entering primary schools. The situation may then arise where the younger sibling will be eligible for transport to school A as it is nearer to the family residence while the older siblings continue to be eligible for transport to school B.

Bus Eireann has sent out its Advance Notice to prepare families for such eventualities. However, as a money-saving exercise, there are reasons to suggest that the issue may not have been fully

thought-through. Some central schools or schools of amalgamation have grown to facilitate numbers from their catchment areas and may now find these catchment areas severely curtailed. Conversely, schools may have restricted their growth due to available space or little likelihood of having to expand due to the CSR. The possibility now exists that the central school will have rooms to spare while the other school may have to add classrooms to cater for those coming from the new catchment areas. Bus Eireann may save money but the Department of Education will be at a loss. Of course, there are situations where amalgamations have taken place in the past and subsequent developments such as population growth or decline would indicate that they no longer make sense. However, the change to the CSR will only be effective if examined on a case by case basis, weighing up all pros and cons before making changes.



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# ICT Tips YouTube, Internet Video & Filtering

by Seaghan Moriarty, IPPN Technical Advisor



“The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the desire to learn.”

John Lubbock

Nowadays, with Interactive whiteboards, internet via the TV and internet in the pockets of a growing number of our pupils, the challenge for school leaders is to *inspire and lead learning* in whatever contexts are available – including outside the classroom.

## Using YouTube Wisely

YouTube is a video-sharing website through which users can upload and share videos. These videos feature an extremely broad range of topics, many of which are certainly not appropriate for education. Just as you would not allow pupils free reign on a school tour, visiting YouTube should

be directed, structured and have specific learning outcomes. Searching aimlessly or randomly on YouTube is not a good idea – let’s look at an example approach.

## The lifecycle of the salmon

Let’s assume that a teacher in your school has decided that she needs resources on ‘the lifecycle of the salmon’. Using YouTube.com resources, she takes the following approach:

1. Teacher researches the types of video available on the topic
2. Teacher categorises videos into whole life-cycle (e.g. diagrams), interesting (e.g. underwater spawning) and local relevance (e.g. Ireland, Atlantic Salmon, river runs)
3. In class, teacher directs individuals or groups to find videos in the above categories and judge the best ones based on criteria such as

clarity of information, age/detail appropriateness, quality of graphics/diagrams

4. Individuals or groups report back, sharing and justifying their choice of video. These could also be collated to create a ‘WebQuest’ for future use by the class / other classes.

## School Broadband Network (SBN)

### Filtering

Your school **might currently be blocking access to YouTube** because of the **level of filtering** you have chosen for your school. Therefore you should choose the filtering level which balances access to various resources with protecting pupils against accessing inappropriate materials. Below is a short reminder/summary.

| Up to 2010<br>- 2 levels of filtering  | 2010 onward<br>- 5 levels of filtering   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Option B:</b> a restrictive level which permits only pre-listed educational websites</p> | <p>Level 1: Only allows access to ‘Scoilnet’ and pre-filtered educational websites (Usage: rare)</p> <p>Level 2: Level 1 PLUS educational and related websites but with the ‘Games’ category blocked (Usage: seldom)</p>   |
| <p><b>Option A:</b> a generally open level which allows educational and related websites</p>   | <p>Level 3: same as the existing Level A (Usage: popular)</p> <p>Level 4: Level 3 plus ‘YouTube’, ‘personal storage category’ and similar sites. (Usage: common)</p> <p>Level 5 &amp; 6: These add ‘personal websites category’ such as Wordpress blogs and Social Networking type sites respectively.</p> |


For further information on how your school can opt for a different level, or how to request a website be categorised by the SBN, please read the pages: <http://www.ncte.ie/Broadband/Filtering/> and <http://www.ncte.ie/Broadband/FAQs/>

- Most schools now have a website / blog / wiki: Why not ‘embed’ YouTube videos?
- In addition to YouTube, check out TeachersTV.com, Vimeo.com, SchoolTube.com, Learner.org, and NeoK2.com.

## Related Ideas

- YouTube has a specific education section: <http://www.youtube.com/education>
- Why not inspire learning by creating your own learning videos and upload to YouTube?





# WORLD MAPS

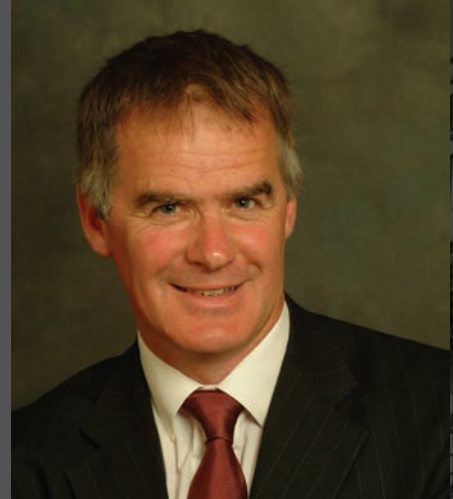
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# Legal Diary

by David Ruddy, B.L.



## ‘Primary school discriminates against Traveller pupil in enrolment application’

THE EQUALITY TRIBUNAL  
EQUAL STATUS ACTS 2000 – 2008

Mrs K (and on behalf of her son)

V

A Primary School

18<sup>th</sup> January 2011

### SUMMARY OF THE PARENTS’/PUPIL’S CASE

Mrs K. and her son returned to live in the town where the school is located after having previously resided in England and Dublin for a period of time. Mrs K stated that she made contact with the school in September, 2007 (through her sister-in-law) with the intention of having her son enrolled at the school for the school year 2007/2008. Mrs K stated that the School Secretary, Ms C, arranged an appointment for her to meet with the school Principal. She claimed that she received a telephone call from Ms C three days later to say the appointment was cancelled and that her son could not be enrolled because the school was full. Mrs K subsequently contacted Ms A, a Visiting Teacher for Travellers (VTT), and it was decided to send a letter to the school on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2007 making a formal application for the enrolment of her son. Mrs K received a reply to this letter from the school on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2007 requesting confirmation that the letter for enrolment was, in fact, from them as their letter initially had not been signed.

The VTT, Ms A, sent a further letter to the school on behalf of Mrs K on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2007 seeking a formal reply to their application for enrolment. Mrs K referred the school to the provisions of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 in this letter which provided that a written request for enrolment must be responded to within a period of 21 days. The VTT, Ms A, had a meeting with the School Principal, Mr B, in February, 2008 in order to discuss Mrs K’s application for enrolment of her son. There was no agreement reached following this meeting regarding Mrs K’s application. Mrs K decided to refer an appeal

under section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science in relation to the school’s refusal to grant their son’s application for enrolment. This appeal was scheduled to take place on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2008. However, Mrs K stated that she signed a waiver to withdraw the appeal on the basis that her son could commence at the school the following week.

*Mrs K stated that the Principal requested her to apologise for the way she had spoken to him and the School Secretary on the previous occasion.*

Mrs K stated that she went to the school the following day to make the relevant arrangements for her son to be enrolled. Mrs K stated that she met with the School Principal, for the first time on this occasion. He gave her an enrolment form to complete and other documentation including the school’s regulations and a book list for her son. Mrs K stated that she informed the Principal that she would need a bit of time to get the books and uniform for her son because she was on social welfare benefits. She asked if he could start without the books and the uniform. However, she claims that the Principal refused to accede to this request and he insisted that her son would have to have the uniform and books before he attended the school. Mrs K stated that she contacted the Local Community Welfare Officer to see if she could obtain financial assistance to acquire the books and uniform. She was informed that she would need a letter from the school to confirm her son was attending school. Mrs K stated that she went to the school and requested this letter from the School Secretary, Ms C, but was informed that such a letter could not be issued as her son was not actually attending the school at that juncture. Mrs K stated that she approached the Principal, who was standing at the gate as she left the school premises, and attempted to talk to

him about this issue. He completely ignored her and indicated that she would need to make an appointment. Mrs K denied that she became verbally abusive towards either the School Secretary or the Principal during the course of her conversations with them on this date.

Mrs K stated that she subsequently contacted the VTT, who managed to arrange for financial assistance to be provided by the Community Welfare Officer so that she could obtain the school uniform for her son. Mrs K stated that she brought her son to school the following Monday wearing the proper uniform and she met with the Principal in the school corridor. Mrs K stated that the Principal requested her to apologise for the way she had spoken to him and the School Secretary on the previous occasion. Mrs K stated that she apologised to the Principal even though she had not been abusive on the previous occasion. She stated that the Principal informed her that he would not admit her son to the school until he had the proper books and he indicated that she would have to take her son home from school again that day. Mrs K contacted the VTT again and she was able to source financial assistance from the St Vincent de Paul for the cost of obtaining the books for her son.

Mrs K stated that she returned to the school with her son on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2008. He now had the appropriate books and uniform. She spoke to the Principal upon her arrival at the school. Mrs K stated that the Principal replied to her in a degrading manner and referred to a number of errors that she had made in completing the enrolment form. Mrs K stated that the Principal also informed her that her son could not commence at the school that day unless she produced a copy of his birth certificate. Mrs K stated that she felt the school was attempting to place one obstacle after another in her way in order to prevent her son from starting school. Mrs K stated that her son was very upset at this stage and informed her that he did not want to go to the school. Mrs K stated that she also became very upset because of the way she was being treated by the Principal and she accepts that she called him a ‘racist b……d’ purely out of frustration at the





manner in which she had been treated by him. Mrs K stated that she decided not to pursue the enrolment at that juncture as she felt her son would not be treated properly in the school. Mrs K stated that she did not have any further contact with the school following this meeting with the Principal and she sought a placement for him in another school where he commenced in September, 2008.

Mrs K claims that the school sought to exclude her son from because of her Traveller identity. Mrs K also claimed that she was subjected to harassment and victimisation in terms of the manner in which the application for the enrolment of her son was dealt with by the school.

#### **SUMMARY OF THE SCHOOL'S CASE**

The school denies that it discriminated against the pupil and his mother on any of the grounds claimed. This is a national school and it catered for approx 570 pupils during the school year 2007/2008. The school submitted that it has an open enrolment policy regardless of the background of the child and the fact that a child is a member of the Traveller community or a non Irish national is not a factor that is taken into consideration when deciding upon applications for enrolment. The school submitted that there were 27 members of the Traveller Community enrolled in the school year 2007/08 and that currently 25% of the students come from a non Irish background. The school also submitted that, between 1997 and 2009, it has enrolled a total of 19 children with the same surname as the pupil, including two of Mrs K's other sons.

The school stated that the School Secretary, Ms C, received a telephone call from an unidentified person during September 2007 after the school year had commenced. Ms C stated that the caller made enquiries about the possibilities about enrolling a child in fifth class; however she informed the caller that both of the classes in that particular year were full as there were thirty three students in each class. Ms C stated that the caller did not indicate whether or not she was a member of the Traveller Community nor did she express any dissatisfaction in relation to the information that had been conveyed to her. Ms C stated that she did not have any recollection of telephoning Mrs K in September 2007 to say an appointment with the School Principal had been cancelled. The respondent stated it did not receive any formal contact from Mrs K regarding the enrolment of

her son at the school until it received an unsigned letter from her (and her husband) on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2007 which was addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management (this letter was dated 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2007 by Mr & Mrs K). The school stated that it replied to Mrs K's letter on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007 and requested confirmation that it had, in fact, been sent by them as their initial letter had not been signed.

*The school stated that it received a further letter from Mrs K on 16th January, 2008 which formally requested the enrolment of her son at the school.*

The school stated that it received a further letter from Mrs K on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2008 which formally requested the enrolment of her son at the school. The school wrote to the VTT, Ms A, on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2008 and requested her to make contact with the school in order to discuss this matter and Mr B, School Principal, met with the VTT on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2008 (at the request of the BoM) in relation to this issue. The school stated that the issue regarding the enrolment of Mrs K's son was discussed regularly at Board of Management meetings and it actively sought to achieve a resolution to the matter. The school submitted that the VTT should have contacted the School Principal directly in order to discuss the issue regarding the enrolment of Mrs K's son, but instead of adopting an informal approach, she advised her to proceed with an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act, 1998.

The school stated that it was notified by the Department of Education and Science on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2008 that Mrs K had referred an appeal under section 29. The school stated that it never dealt with a section 29 appeal prior to the present case and the Principal stated that he sought to achieve a resolution to the matter. The school Principal stated that he arranged for a teacher to call to Mrs K's house on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2008 and she was informed that her son would be offered a place at the school on the condition that she withdrew the appeal under section 29. The school stated that it made arrangements to have Mrs K's son enrolled in fifth class despite the fact there

were already thirty three pupils in each of the classes in that year. The school stated that it was necessary for Mrs K's son to comply with the normal procedures such as the completion of an enrolment form, acquire a school uniform and books and provide a copy of his birth certificate before he could commence at the school. The school submitted that these basic requirements were applied to all students who wished to enrol at the school regardless of their nationality or whether they are from the Traveller or the settled community. The school stated that Mrs K attended the school on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2008 and she was informed about the necessary requirements for enrolment. The school stated that Mrs K attended the school on two occasions after 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2008 and sought to have her son attend class even though he did not have a school uniform, the required books or a copy of his birth certificate.

The school accepts that, on one occasion, Mrs K sought a letter from the School Secretary, Ms C, to state that her son was attending the school so that she could obtain financial assistance for the purchase of a school uniform from the Community Welfare Officer. It was submitted that the School Secretary could not provide such a letter as Mrs K's son was not attending the school at that juncture. The school stated that Mrs K became verbally abusive towards the Principal and accused the school of being racist. The school stated that Mrs K attended the school with her son a number of days later and on this occasion the Principal requested that she apologise for her abusive behaviour on the previous occasion. The school stated that when the Principal informed Mrs K that the enrolment form had been incorrectly completed and that the school would require a copy of his birth certificate, she again became verbally abusive and called him "a dirty racist b.....". The school stated that it did not have any further contact with Mrs K following this incident.

The school denies the allegation that is sought to put obstacles in the way of Mrs K in terms of their attempt to have their son enrolled at the school. The school submitted that the reason why he was ultimately not enrolled was as a result of Mrs K's failure to cooperate with the school and to comply with the standard requirements for enrolment that are applied to all students. The school also denies that it subjected Mrs K to harassment or victimisation.

## CONCLUSIONS OF THE EQUALITY OFFICER

'Section 7(2) of the Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2008 states that "An educational establishment shall not discriminate in relation to the admission or the terms or conditions of admission of a person as a student to the establishment"

Mrs K claims that her son was subjected to discrimination on the grounds of his membership of the Traveller Community in terms of the manner in which the school dealt with this application for enrolment.

On balance, I have found the school's evidence regarding the circumstances surrounding the telephone call in September 2007 to be more compelling. I accept that the first formal communication between the parties regarding the enrolment of Mrs K's son was effected when the school received a letter on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2007. The school also disputes that the letter which it received from Mrs K on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2007 constituted a formal application for enrolment on behalf of her son on the basis that the letter had not been signed. However, I do not concur with the school's contention in this regard. I am satisfied that Mrs K in this letter clearly conveyed the request that her son be considered for enrolment at the school. I accept that the letter did not contain Mrs K's original signature. Her name and address were clearly identified in typed format in this letter. In the circumstances, I am satisfied that the school was formally notified by Mrs K on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2007 that she wished to have her son enrolled at the school.

It is clear that a period of time, in excess of four months, had lapsed from when Mrs K made an initial application for enrolment (i.e. 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2007) of her son until the school informed her that there was a place available for him in the school (i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2008). The question that I must decide in considering the alleged discrimination in the present case is whether or not the inordinate length of time that it took the school to make a decision in relation to the application for enrolment was attributable in any way to Mrs K's membership of the Traveller Community. In considering this issue, I have taken note of the provisions of the Section 19(3) of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 which provides that the Board of Management of a school is obliged to make a decision in relation to a request for enrolment within 21 days and inform the parent in writing thereof. The obligations that are placed upon the school by this legislation are clear and unambiguous in terms of the manner in which it is obliged to respond to applications for enrolment. Based on the facts in the present case, the school clearly failed to comply with its obligations under that legislation in terms of Mrs K's application for the enrolment of her son at the school. The school submitted that it was trying to come to a resolution to the matter during this four month period; however, I am satisfied that it has not put forward any plausible reason to explain why it took a period of four months to put such measures in place to achieve this resolution.

It is clear from the evidence adduced that there wasn't a good working relationship between the

principal and the VTT (who acted on behalf of Mrs K in relation to the application for enrolment) and it would appear that this may have been a contributory factor in terms of why Mrs K's son was not offered a place at the school until 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2008. I note that the Principal stated in his direct evidence that he was dissatisfied with the manner in which the VTT had approached the issue and it is clear that he would have preferred both the VTT and Mrs K to have pursued an informal route rather than having referred an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998. However, it should be borne in mind that the only reason the VTT was acting on behalf of Mrs K in relation to the application for enrolment was because of the fact that she was member of the Traveller Community.

### *Mrs K has failed to establish a prima facie case of discrimination on family status, race and victimisation.*

Based on evidence adduced, the school has failed to provide any reason as to why it took a period of four months to make a decision in relation to Mrs K's application for the enrolment of her son at the school. It failed to comply with its statutory obligations under the Education Welfare Act, 2000 in this regard. In the circumstances I can only conclude that the reason why the school failed to make a decision in relation to Mrs K's application for the enrolment of her son for a period in excess of four months was attributable to his membership of the Traveller Community. I do not accept that it would have taken the school such a period of time to make a decision on the application for enrolment, in similar circumstances, from a member of the settled community.

## DECISION

Mrs K has failed to establish a prima facie case of discrimination on family status, race and victimisation. I also find that Mrs K has failed to establish a prima facie case of harassment contrary of the Equal Status Acts. I also find that the school has discriminated against the complainants on the Traveller Community ground in terms of the manner in which it dealt with their application for enrolment i.e. between the date that the formal application was made until it agreed on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2008 to make a place for him available at the school.

Under Section 27(2) of the Equal Status Acts the maximum amount of compensation I can award is €6,349. In considering the amount of compensation that I should award in this case, I have taken into consideration the school's evidence that it has heretofore had a good track record in providing education to members of the Traveller Community. However, notwithstanding the foregoing, I have also taken into account the fact that Mrs K's son missed out on a year of his education as a result of the school's failure to deal with his application for enrolment in an appropriate manner during the school year 2007/08. In accordance with section 27(1)(a) of

the Act, I award Mrs K the sum of €3,500 in totality as redress for the effects of the discrimination.

I also order that the school put in place a system that will facilitate the timely compliance with its statutory obligations under the Education Welfare Act, 2000 in terms of the manner in which it deals with applications for enrolment of pupils at the school.'

## OBSERVATION

This case follows hot on the heels of another Equality Authority decision in December 2010 where a post-primary school, the Christian Brothers High School, Clonmel, were found to have discriminated against a Traveller pupil in its handling of his enrolment application.

### THE EQUALITY TRIBUNAL EQUAL STATUS ACTS 2000 – 2008

Mary Stokes (on behalf of her son John Stokes)

V

Christian Brothers' High School, Clonmel  
And  
The Department of Education & Skills  
(under appeal)

The pupil in question applied unsuccessfully for a place in the school. He claimed that the enrolment policy of the school gave priority to the sons of former pupils. The Equality Officer held that the members of the Traveller Community were at a particular disadvantage compared with non Travellers and that the High School had not proved that this criterion was objectively justified by a legitimate aim which was appropriate and necessary.

The pupil argued that giving priority to the sons of former pupils put members of the Traveller Community at a particular disadvantage compared with non Travellers since Travellers of the pupil's father's generation (those who would have been post-primary school-going age in the 1980s) were most unlikely to have attended post-primary school. Figures supplied by the Department show that less than 100 Travellers in the entire country in 1988 were enrolled in post-primary schools. Therefore the chances that a Traveller of the pupil's father's generation attended a post-primary school are extremely remote. The High School produced no evidence that any Travellers attended the school during the 1980s. In oral evidence, the school explained that, prior to 1990, entrance to High School was determined by competitive written examination. This would certainly have acted as a serious barrier to Travellers.

## OBSERVATION

Some schools may need to revisit their current enrolment policies in the light of these two new cases. Applications from members of the Traveller Community may almost fall into the category of exceptional circumstances rather than enjoying the same status as non Traveller applicants. At the very least, strict compliance with the relevant statutory provisions and time limits is essential.

# 2011 ONLINE SUMMER COURSES

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**Ciall Ceannaithe – IPPN online Summer Course – has been developed to provide a greater understanding of the innovative solutions to challenges facing Principals.**

A highly practical step-by-step course built on the collective wisdom and experience of seasoned Principals. The course is designed to professionally support Newly Appointed Principals through the first day, first week, first month and first year of their principalship. It is also a very suitable refresher course for experienced Principals who wish to reflect on current practice.

*Ciall Ceannaithe will run for the month of July 2011 at a cost of €95.*

*EPV days only available on successful completion of course (subject to DES Terms & Conditions)*

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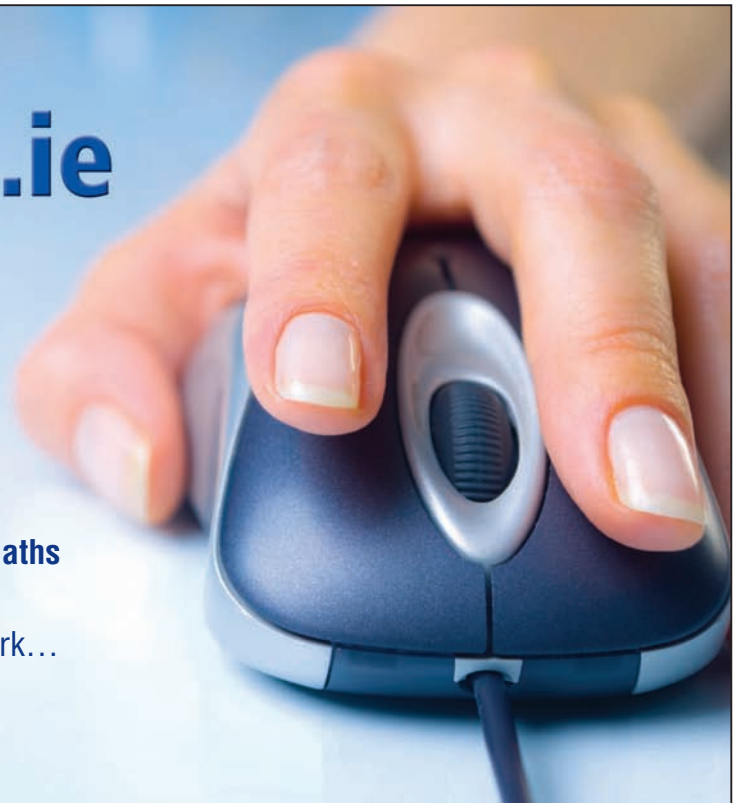
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- Access to broadband is necessary
- Course can be completed in a four week period (1st to 31st July)
- Last date for course commencement is 25th July

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- Free trial of the award-winning **Destination Maths** (*Riverdeep*), software, localised for Ireland
- Teacher's manuals, solutions, schemes of work... they're all online at [www.cjfallon.ie](http://www.cjfallon.ie)
- and our latest addition, **[www.mathletics.ie](http://www.mathletics.ie)**



# Language and teaching specialism is critical in the education of Deaf and hard of hearing children

By Liam O'Dwyer, CEO of the *Catholic Institute for Deaf People*



Communication, we are informed by PR and media gurus, is critical to success in any business or public venture. The potency of the Obama Presidential communication campaign was a key factor in securing his election and it now appears the lack of same is undermining our current political administration here in Ireland. As individuals, we tend to judge each other in respect of our communication skills – the firm handshake, eye contact, the capacity to use language to express thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions. The importance of language hit home to me in the early nineties when I took a job as personal manager with a Dutch Printing Company in Holland. The Managing Director interviewed me in excellent English, offered me the job and gave me a year to learn Dutch – on the basis that any communication in the company would be in Dutch from day one. I managed, it took me a year and a half but throughout that first year my sense of self worth was very low because I could not communicate properly, subtlety was lost, sentences were long and cumbersome, word order was poor and I could see in the eyes of my peers in the company that in my verbal interaction I was less than impressive – I might have done a good job but I didn't talk one.

This gave me a great starting point when I began working with the Deaf<sup>1</sup> community a number of years ago. The critical role of communication and language acquisition came alive for me. Imagine if you can't hear at all. How do you acquire language? Imagine you are hard of hearing. Even with a hearing aid or a cochlear implant, you are still going to miss chunks of conversation or humour or nuance or what the teacher is saying. How do you manage to be precise? Without subtitles or sign language, how can you be sure?

The education and development needs of deaf and hard of hearing children are critically unique in what is termed the world of disability. Language acquisition plays a vital role in the development of communication skills and cognitive functioning, as well as in the individual's social and emotional development. The extent to which such skills are developed will determine the extent to which deaf and hard of hearing children can participate in their home environment, their educational environment, the Deaf community and the

wider community. The unique communication and linguistic needs of Deaf people, particularly in the very early developmental years, require the availability of specialist skills and methodologies that will support their development and will transform the lives of individuals, families and communities who experience deafness.

*Education policy impacts on a sizeable cohort (approximately 2,000) of deaf and hard of hearing children currently in the education system.*

Education policy impacts on a sizeable cohort (approximately 2,000) of deaf and hard of hearing children currently in the education system. The outcomes required for these children do not differ from the outcomes required for hearing children. However, if the specialist skills and methodologies in language acquisition (signed, spoken, or both simultaneously)<sup>2</sup> are not available, particularly from birth to four/five years of age, early communication will suffer and subsequent literacy levels will be low. This in turn will isolate a deaf child and will leave her/him facing major challenges similar to those being faced by many deaf and hard of hearing adults in our society today.

Given that an estimated 90% of deaf and hard of hearing children are educated in mainstream schools, there is an urgency to ensure that their levels of academic attainment, language acquisition, cognitive functioning and personal development are on a par with those in the hearing community.

The cost of failure or non-delivery in all of these areas for the individual child can be catastrophic, leaving him/her with less than adequate language and communication skills, reduced learning, educational under-achievement, potentially reduced career opportunities, isolation and self esteem that is seriously impaired.

The schools for Deaf Children in Cabra and Limerick focus specifically on the provision of a unique educational and developmental experience in a supportive environment where pupils can learn, develop, interact and socialise with their peers. This unique experience should be available to all deaf and hard of hearing children, whether in deaf or



*A classroom in St. Mary's School & Residence for Deaf Girls.*

mainstream schools.

A child who is deaf or hard of hearing, regardless of the level of hearing loss, has critical needs to enable him/her hear and understand what is being communicated. The success of any system or school will depend on the extent to which these needs are met in each case. The crucial need of knowing what is being taught and understanding what is being taught are compounded in mainstream education if a child has no specialist support in spoken and written English and Sign Language.

The regional cluster model available in some areas is a good model in that it can offer some of the specialist services required to enable deaf and hard of hearing children develop close to home, academically and developmentally. Teachers in the regional cluster units have developed specialist skills which would be impossible to replicate throughout mainstream schools. However, the role of the regional cluster schools in mainstream needs to be enhanced and additional training material, specialist curriculum material, technology and



EPG Conference. Liam O'Dwyer, CEO CIDP; Dr John Bosco Conama, Irish Deaf Society and Trinity College Dublin; Bernard Daly, Chairperson DeafHear.ie and Dr Lorraine Leeson, Director of the Centre for Deaf Studies Trinity College Dublin.

other supports provided for the teachers and SNAs who work in these schools. In the context of the variety of needs among deaf and hard of hearing children, specialist skills in respect of language acquisition and spoken and sign language are essential to the development of the pupils. This means that it is not appropriate to place a child in any school unless such support is present, via the teacher, teaching assistant or SNA with support from the visiting teacher service.

The schools for Deaf Children in Cabra and Limerick have an appreciation of the unique nature of deaf education as an area of specialisation and of their role in providing an effective educational experience for the children. They focus specifically on the provision of a unique educational and developmental experience in a manner that is cognisant of the respective and differing needs of the pupils, who can learn, develop, interact and socialise with their peers in an understanding, supportive and bilingual environment.

All deaf children, whether in a mainstream school or in a School for Deaf Children, are entitled to have access to the best available expertise in deaf education and, in particular, should have the opportunity of developing proficiency in sign language. A child who has a serious hearing deficit cannot be taught without specialist language support, proper technical supports and regular appraisal to ensure that development is taking place. If the appropriate expertise, resources and learning environment are not available in a mainstream setting, the education system will be doing a disservice to the child.

The schools for Deaf Children in Cabra and Limerick have a key role as centres of specialist expertise in the education of deaf and hard of hearing children. The expertise in these schools should be harnessed to provide guidance, expert advice and back-up support to mainstream teachers and visiting teachers in delivering an integrated, informed and specialist approach to the teaching of all deaf and hard of hearing children. In particular, the schools can make an important contribution through provision of

mentoring and support to new teachers of deaf and hard of hearing children.

Those of us involved in the Cabra schools (Catholic Institute for Deaf People, DeafHear.ie, the Irish Deaf Society and the Centre for Deaf Studies Trinity College Dublin) are proposing that the role of the Schools for Deaf Children should be expanded to become a centre of expertise that is available to all deaf and hard of hearing children throughout the country and specifically, to develop a comprehensive outreach service to mainstream and cluster schools. Such a development would support the provision of an education that is of a high standard academically and developmentally, offering specialist teaching services via spoken and sign language to meet the distinctive needs of each pupil.

The outreach support service would include regular visits to the regional cluster schools by teachers from the Schools for Deaf Children and the provision of in-service training courses for mainstream teachers currently teaching deaf and hard of hearing children. Also, deaf and hard of hearing pupils in mainstream and in regional cluster schools could be invited to attend the Schools for Deaf Children for short periods. Such support, especially with respect to Irish Sign Language development, specialist spoken language and written English development, use of specialist subject-orientated teaching materials and awareness of the Deaf community would be an important intervention against the sense of isolation that many deaf and hard of hearing pupils in mainstream currently experience.

Two recent (2009) reports produced for the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) clarify the need for and importance of specialist intervention. Professor Marc Marschark in his report entitled 'Evidence of Best Practice Models and Actions in the Education of Deaf and hard of hearing children' – an international review, emphasises that 'Deaf and hard of hearing students require more and more appropriate support services in the classroom to allow them curriculum access equal to that of their hearing classmates. Existing models in several countries provide sign language interpreters, oral interpreters,

real-time text, note takers and /or similar services in ways that are efficient and effective. Finally, as indicated by existing research and students themselves, deaf and hard of hearing students in Ireland need to have high educational expectations placed on them by parents and educators. With high expectations and appropriate teaching and support services, those children can and will succeed'.

Dr. Jean Ware in her report entitled 'Research report on the role of special schools and classes in Ireland' states that "A finding from the review of the literature indicated that the key factor contributing to pupils' progress, including those with complex needs, was access to experienced and qualified specialist teachers, and recommended more access to appropriate training. In the current study, between one quarter and one third of teachers in special schools have undertaken specialist training at diploma level or higher. However, in addition, considerable numbers access relevant short courses and seminars provided mainly through the Special Education Support Service." (Both reports are available at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)).

It is time for a change in respect of the education of Deaf and hard of hearing children. While mainstreaming remains appropriate, it is of limited value if the resources are not available to appropriately support children. The current situation may even be undermining individual children. We hope that the Department of Education and Skills recognises the importance of specialism in enabling Deaf and hard of hearing children reach their potential.

*Author Liam O'Dwyer is the CEO of the Catholic Institute for Deaf People (CIDP) the trustee body for the two Cabra specialist Deaf schools St. Mary's and St. Joseph's in Dublin.*

#### FOOTNOTES:

- 1 In general, this paper refers to a Deaf person or Deaf persons with a capital D to symbolise their membership of a distinctive cultural, social and linguistic group referred to as the Deaf community.
- 2 References throughout this paper to sign language or signed language are to Irish Sign Language or ISL, which is the first and preferred language of the Deaf community in Ireland. References to spoken language or spoken English are to oral English and/or signed English, which is the literal signed translation of spoken English..



A section of St Joseph's School and Residence for Deaf Boys

# IPPN wishes to recruit

**IPPN wishes to recruit a Principal teacher to manage and administrate the confidential advice service for its members – *Principal Advice.***

## IPPN is...

- the professional association for the leaders of Irish Primary schools
- an independent, not-for-profit, voluntary organisation with charitable status (CHY 17221)
- our members are the leaders of Ireland's 3,300 primary school communities who are responsible for the education of over 500,000 children

## Leading Learning...

IPPN exists to improve the quality of education policy and practice in Ireland. Specifically, we aim to improve the learning experience of every child and help to build a better Ireland. We believe a powerful key to this is supporting and improving school leadership.

## This is a new role and is best suited to a candidate:

- With at least 10 years experience in the role of Principal
- With proven communication and interpersonal skills
- Displaying evidence of supporting other principals
- Who has undertaken on-going personal and professional development
- Who can demonstrate confidence in their usage of office computer systems
- Who can demonstrate a deep knowledge of the regulations and best practice relating to primary education and school leadership
- Who can provide evidence of their knowledge in the operations of boards of management and parent associations.

## Please note:

1. The role is a fixed-term, part-time (20 hours per week) contract for one year beginning September 1st 2011
2. Details of salary and conditions will be outlined to short-listed candidates
3. This role will ideally be based in IPPN's Support Office in Glounthaune, Co Cork
4. Further vacancies to the Principal Advice Team may be filled from the panel of short-listed candidates
5. All queries should be submitted by e-mail only to [director@ippn.ie](mailto:director@ippn.ie)

## Application Process

1. An application form for this post can be downloaded from [ippn.ie](http://ippn.ie) or from the Other Posts section of [EducationPosts.ie](http://EducationPosts.ie)
2. Please do not send a covering letter or CV
3. Please do not include written references
4. The closing date for applications is 30th April
5. Short-listing will apply
6. Application forms to be submitted by e-mail only to [director@ippn.ie](mailto:director@ippn.ie)

# Fáilte don Aire Nua



Mr. Ruairi Quinn, TD, was appointed Minister for Education and Skills by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny in the new Fine Gael/Labour Coalition Government on the 9th March.

Born in 1946, Ruairi Quinn was educated at Saint Michael's College, Ballsbridge, and Blackrock College. He studied architecture at University College Dublin in 1964 and later at the School of Ekistics in Athens.

Mr. Quinn is a former leader of the Labour Party and has experience in a number of senior ministries. He has served as Minister in the Departments of Labour, the Public Service, Enterprise & Employment and Finance with a term as Minister of State in the Department of the Environment. As former Labour Party spokesperson for Education, Ruairi Quinn showed a keen interest in the improvement of literacy and numeracy in Irish schools and was the key contributor to the Labour Party policy

document 'Reading as a Right: A path to literacy in the 21st Century'.

As opposition spokesperson, Mr Quinn demonstrated an understanding of the importance of the role of the Principal in tackling many of the challenges in schools today and he has attended IPPN Conferences for the past three years. IPPN wishes the Minister well in his new role and looks forward to working with him and his department in the challenging months and years ahead.

## Latest News

### MEETINGS/TRAINING HELD OR ATTENDED BY IPPN

- Meetings with
  - DES - General Secretary
  - Inspectorate
  - NEWB
  - DES senior officials on SNA Cap, Special Ed and NCSE
  - Teaching Council re. probation
  - INTO re. probation, extra hour, Teacher Redeployment Panel etc.
  - NAPD Symposium on the theme of 'Good policies will produce better schools; the need for joined up thinking in Irish education'
  - SESS training event on Autistic Spectrum Disorders
  - NCSE re. Special Education Consultative Forum
- Presentations to final year B. Ed students at Froebel College, St. Patrick's College, Coláiste Mhuire Marino and Mary Immaculate College

- IPPN presentations at
  - 'Misneach Extra' in Portlaoise
  - Misneach 2 in Kildare, Enniscorthy, Cork, Sligo and Monaghan
  - Forbairt in Kilkenny
- IPPN County Network meetings were held in Cork, Carlow, Kilkenny, Westmeath, Longford and Waterford
- CPSMA AGM
- Executive Committee meeting
- National Committee meeting.

### IPPN EVENTS

- A seminar on *Your School & Staff Management* was held on 26th March in Citywest Hotel and was attended by 150 Principals, Deputy Principals, Teachers and Board of Management members. Speakers included Pat Gately, Principal, SN Clochar

Mhuire, Wexford; Margaret Cooney, Past Principal; Kevin Hennigan, LDS; Maria Doyle, Principal, Our Lady of Mercy PS, Waterford and Anna Mai Rooney, Principal, St Louis GS, Monaghan. Feedback on the event has been very positive.

- Enclosed with this issue in an application form for the *IPPN Deputy Principals' Conference* which will be held at Citywest Hotel, Dublin on 19th and 20th May. Keynote speaker is Pasi Sahlberg, Director General of the Centre for International Mobility and Cooperation (CIMO) in Helsinki, Finland. He has global expertise in educational reforms, training teachers, coaching schools and advising policy-makers in more than 40 countries. He is the author of 'Finnish Lessons: What can the world learn about educational change in Finland'. There will further keynotes and a be a wide range of workshops.

## www.ippn.ie – Recently-added resources

### DES CIRCULARS

All primary level DES Circulars are available to view or download from [ippn.ie](http://ippn.ie). They are organised by year published. The link has been moved to the main menu. You no longer need to log in to access the Circulars.

### PRINCIPAL ADVICE RECRUITMENT

- **Teachers**
  - Permanent Appointment
  - Temporary – Fixed Term
  - Temporary – Specified Purpose
- **Ancillary Staff**
  - Secretary – Interview Questions

- Secretary – Contract of Employment
- Secretary – Temporary – Fixed Term
- Secretary – Temporary – Specified Purpose
- Secretary – Permanent (1978 Scheme)
- Caretaker – Contract of Employment
- Caretaker – Temporary – Fixed Term
- Caretaker – Temporary – Specified Purpose
- Cleaner – Contract of Employment
- Cleaner – Temporary – Fixed Term
- Cleaner – Temporary – Specified Purpose
- Bus Escort – Contract of Employment
- Bus Escort – Temporary – Fixed Term

- Bus Escort – Temporary – Specified Purpose

### ● SNAs

- Standard Contract of Employment
- Temporary – Fixed Term
- Temporary – Specified Purpose

### SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT & CURRICULUM PLANNING

- E-Learning Plan – Part 1
- E-Learning Plan – Part 2

### RESOURCES/PUBLICATIONS

- Leadership+ Issue 61 Mar 2011.

# Small Schools and Inspirational Teachers

By Damian White, Leadership+ Editor and Principal,  
Scoil Shinchill, Killeigh, Co. Offaly



The picture on the Sunday Times was familiar. Renowned Irish playwright Marina Carr stared back at me as the article beside her picture outlined details of her latest production 'Phaedra', a joint Abbey Theatre / Princeton University project getting its first airing in the American ivy league college. Marina's writing accomplishments are regularly the stuff of dissection and awe on 'The View' and other arts programmes here and abroad. A few years ago, she was adjudged to be the female playwright whose writings are most likely to be still significant 100 years from now.

Marina's mother, Maura Carr was my teacher for 4 years and Principal of the 2-teacher Gortnamona National School from 1964 until her death in 1981 at 46 years old, two years older than I am now. Marina was a couple of years ahead of me in school, so Maura was about the age her prolific daughter is now when she passed away.

*If you are in a developing school, do you have the physical space to grow? If you grow from, say a 4 to 5 teacher school or 8 to 9 teachers, where do you place the new staff member to greatest effect?*

As was the way with 2-teacher schools then and, in many cases, still is, Maura taught 3rd to 6th class. She oversaw the building of the present school, which opened in 1965 and ensured that the position of the building allowed a view of the lake from both classrooms. She and her husband, playwright Hugh Carr, built their own house on the other side of the lake. The house featured a huge living room window allowing for a spectacular view of the lake and its resident swans. In Marina's acclaimed play 'The Mai', the leading character is the local school Principal whose husband is a classical musician. The set for the play features a giant window overlooking the

sea. Hardly a coincidence.

Maura Carr loved every child that walked through the doors of Gortnamona N.S. She homed in on every child's talent and encouraged it at every turn. The artist was encouraged to paint. The singer was allowed to perform. The technically-minded were, as I recall, asked to repair her children's bicycles! The lake was pivotal to so much of our learning, from the wildlife that surrounded it to the trees from the famous 'Woods of Gortnamona' which overshadowed it. We learned of Percy French who immortalised the area in song. We learned of life in the big house, and its demise during the Civil War. We learned the truths and legends surrounding the Fairy Fort and St Brigid's Well. We had visits from local artists and regular recitals of classical music from an aficionado with a decent turntable and a stack of 33s and 78s. Irish songs and popular favourites such as 'Fernando' or 'Blowin' in the Wind' were sung by all.

When inspectors came and went, she praised the answers we had given. On one occasion, a visiting inspector took out a newly-designed £5 note from his pocket and expressed his incredulity that we didn't recognise the picture of John Scotus Eregina on the front, saying that he was probably the most brilliant mind and most fantastic writer the country had produced. Feeling rather deflated at letting our teacher down with our ignorance of 12th Century philosophy, we were saved by a classmate who stumped the unsuspecting Cigire by asking 'what did he write?'. Who's thick now?, we all thought as he stuttered and blustered without giving us an answer. The teacher's smile behind his back told us she was pleased with the question.

Gortnamona was a school where *'the ditch was never flung in our vision'*, where creativity and free thinking were encouraged. While corporal punishment was still in vogue, it was a measure of last resort. Pupils from my time in Gortnamona have gone on to achieve great things in all walks of life. My best friend in Gortnamona, Declan Morrell, is now Vice President of EMI records in New York. Others have managed banks, worked in the arts,

industry and agriculture. While I can't speak for everyone who went there in the 1970s, our experience of the national school system was positive and enlightening.

The school today is a wonderful 4-teacher school carrying on the same tradition of broad-based education for every pupil under the astute leadership of Tom Daly. My children are the 6th generation of our family to benefit from its work. Tom took over in 1981 when Maura Carr succumbed to her illness. My clearest memory of her wake is of the single red rose she clasped between her joined hands. Other locals recall that as Maura made her final journey from the lakeside, the swans came ashore and stood to honour their friend.

*For some schools, the struggle will be to maintain numbers, due to population decline in an area, emigration or a maturing populace in a housing development.*

People across Ireland have mixed feelings about their experiences in Irish Primary schools from this era and before, many with good reason. However, there is not a day that I don't thank God for having attended that 2-teacher academy in the fields in Gortnamona and coming under the tutelage of Maura Carr.

While Gortnamona's current size now ensures its immunity from proposed small school closures, there are many others, with a similar history, which could be recalled in such terms by pupils past and present, which may not be so lucky. While it may make sense in some cases to finally turn the key in some schools, I would advise that the scalpel be used sparingly.

To the Minister, to whom I wish the best of good luck, he would do well to remember that it takes a minute to fell a tree and a lifetime to replace it.



# Time Management for Teaching Principals

By Micheál Rea, Principal, Walterstown NS, Cobh, Co. Cork



Over the last few years I have picked up a lot of good ideas or 'tricks of the trade' from more experienced Principals. From Mary O'Callaghan in Mitchelstown I learned the idea of 'exceeding expectations'; from Jim Daly in Ballyvolane, the simple idea of a whiteboard in the staffroom for communicating the week's activities and from Aidan O'Brien in Glounthaune, the value of good organisation! It was with this in mind that I planned the IPPN Conference Workshops to be as interactive as possible. I shared some of my practice but the main focus was on providing participants with as much time as possible to interact and learn from each other. The irony in the fact that I ran out of time at both workshops was not lost on the Principals present!

After my input we divided into groups according to school size. Firstly, we looked at some tricky situations that don't have answers in any circular. These 'grey areas' provoked much discussion and it was interesting to hear the variety of viewpoints.

These situations can take up a lot of our time as we agonise over the right thing to do. A healthy disrespect for the rules may be called for in order to get over these hurdles!

Secondly, we looked at Time (Guilt!) Management. In our groups, we looked at scenarios in relation to organising our time and fulfilling our responsibilities. The lack of admin support and the lack of facilities in schools was a great source of frustration. One Principal takes some of her admin time at home as she doesn't have a work space. Another Principal takes two Admin Days in one to allow her DP to work with her and thereby increase productivity. This requires a bit of creativity on OLCS but once the sub gets paid and the job gets done, everyone is happy.

Next we looked at the extra hour. There was some confusion about how it could be implemented and what is allowed. Many looked on it as an opportunity but wanted to implement it in a way

that doesn't cause bad feeling. Some guidance and examples of how to implement this extra hour would be a welcome addition to the resources section of the IPPN website so if you have a plan that is working, please share it (by sending it to [project@ippn.ie](mailto:project@ippn.ie) – Editor).

While there are many challenges in our job I was struck by the desire of Principals to make it work. There was no problem that couldn't be surmounted or beaten down to size. As a wise man once said, 'there are no problems – just opportunities for excellence!'

*Micheál ran two workshops at IPPN Conference 2011 at Citywest Hotel on this topic.*

*To view Micheál's workshop slides, go to [ippn.ie](http://ippn.ie) then follow the following menu path: Events – Events Archive - Annual Principals' Conference 2011 - Seminars - Time Management for Teaching Principals.*



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# Programme for Government 2011 – Education

*The following excerpt is from the publication issued by the Department of the Taoiseach*

## **EDUCATION**

This Government's ambition is to build a knowledge society. Education is at the heart of a more cohesive, more equal and more successful society, and it will be the engine of sustainable economic growth. Ireland has experienced a decline in educational outcomes in recent years. We will draw from top performing education models like Finland to reverse this trend. Even in our country's crisis, we can make progress in education and protect frontline services.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION**

We will maintain the free pre-school year in Early Childhood Care and Education to promote the best outcomes for children and families. We will improve the quality of the pre-school year by implementing standards and reviewing training options. As resources allow, this Government will invest in a targeted early childhood education programme for disadvantaged children, building on existing targeted pre-school supports for families most in need of assistance such as the young ballymun project.

## **EMPOWERING SCHOOLS TO IMPROVE STANDARDS**

A priority in education will be to recruit, train and support the highest calibre of teachers. School leadership will be fundamental to furthering this aim.

We will give greater freedom and autonomy to school principals and boards to raise educational standards by devolving more responsibility locally, with greater freedom to allocate and manage staff with required flexibility and to delegate management responsibilities to teachers as school priorities require.

We will require schools, with the support of the Inspectorate, to draw up five year development plans for their schools and individual teachers.

Administrative functions, relating to maintenance, school building projects and coordination of support services currently carried out by principals will be devolved locally.

## **PROTECTING THE FRONTLINE**

Education will be a priority for this Government. It will endeavour to protect and enhance the educational experience of children, young people and students. To that end, it will endeavour to protect frontline services in education, and seek efficiencies in work and school practices, in line with the Croke Park Agreement.

## **IMPROVING OUTCOMES**

A longer term aim of this Government will be to position Ireland in the top ten performing countries in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

We will review Junior and Leaving Certificate systems and implement reforms necessary to encourage greater innovation and independent learning, building on the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's work in this area. Maths and science teaching at second level will be reformed, including making science a compulsory Junior Cert subject by 2014. Professional development for maths and science teachers will be prioritised.

The system for evaluating schools will be reformed so parents have access to more information when choosing a school for their family. A new system of self-evaluation will be introduced, requiring all schools to evaluate their own performance year on year and publish information across a wide range of criteria. A bonus points system for maths, which is linked to specific maths or science courses, will be introduced to encourage greater participation in courses where skills shortages currently exist.

## **MAKING LITERACY A NATIONAL CAUSE**

This Government believes that no child should leave an Irish school unable to read and write.

A national literacy strategy for children and young people will be developed as a matter of urgency, with school-level targets that are related to national targets. Every school will be required to have a literacy action plan, with demonstrable outcomes. Responsibility for achieving these outcomes will be vested in the school principals, who will also receive

continuous professional development to support the implementation of the strategy.

Pre-service and in-service training in teaching of literacy for all primary and secondary school teachers will be improved, with dedicated literacy mentors to work intensively with teachers in most disadvantaged primary schools.

*We will give greater freedom and autonomy to school principals and boards to raise educational standards by devolving more responsibility locally*

Together with a new focus on how literacy is taught, time spent on quality literacy tuition is important. DEIS primary schools will be required to teach literacy for 120 minutes per day; non-DEIS schools to teach literacy for 90 minutes per day. This time includes incorporating structured literacy tuition into teaching of other subjects.

Local authorities will be supported in developing Right to Read campaigns involving community supports for literacy, from within existing budgets such as more spacious social housing, longer opening hours for libraries, homework clubs and summer camps that improve literacy through sport and games.

## **21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS**

This Government will end the treatment of ICT in education as a stand-alone issue, but will integrate it across education policy. This will begin with merging the National Centre for Technology in Education with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. A new plan to develop ICT in teaching, learning and assessment will be developed. This plan will incorporate the integration of ICT policy across other agencies, such as the Professional Development Services for Teachers, the State Examinations Commission, and Project Maths.

The primary priority for investment in ICT in the immediate term will be the integration of

ICT in teaching and learning across the curriculum and investing in broadband development to ensure schools have access to fibre-powered broadband. Investment in ICT will be maximised through pooling of ICT procurement. Greater use of online platforms will be made to offer a wide range of subjects and lessons online, and to enable schools to 'share' teachers via live web casts. These online lessons will be made available through a new Digital School Resource, bringing together existing resources from National Council for Curriculum Assessment, Department of Education and other sources as a cost effective means of sharing expertise between schools.

We will engage with the publishing industry to develop more online learning resources and new mediums for their learning materials.

### **BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE**

This Government will prioritise school building projects in a revised national development plan.

The objective of this Government will be to progressively phase out the inefficient renting of school prefabs. In the interim the negotiation of prefab rental contracts will be part of a reformed public procurement policy to encourage greater value for money, transparency and reduce dependency on temporary accommodation.

The devolution of an annual capital budget to schools will be piloted to allow schools to plan for capital projects.

The Department of Education's central database of school accommodation will be overhauled to ensure a complete inventory of school buildings and associated structures is maintained so deficiencies are easily identifiable.

### *We will publish a plan for the implementation of the EPSEN Act 2004 to prioritise access for children with special needs to an individual education plan.*

In areas of demographic growth, Shared Educational Campuses will be the preferred model for future development of educational infrastructure. New schools will be built to grow with their communities and to provide for more interactive, child-friendly model of education.

Local authorities will be required to complete Educational Impact Assessment on residential zoning, to identify potential need for schools.

We will negotiate the transfer of school infrastructure currently owned by 18 religious orders cited in Ryan Report, at no extra cost, to the State. In principle, school buildings and land will be zoned for educational use, so that they cannot easily be sold and lost to system.

### **DELIVERING EQUITY IN EDUCATION**

We will consider recommendations of the review of the DEIS programme and use it as platform for new initiatives to deliver better outcomes for students in disadvantaged areas.

We will examine how to make existing expenditure on educational disadvantage more effective, and innovative ways in which teenagers at risk of leaving school system can stay connected, for example through use of ICT-based distance learning and projects such as iScoil.

We will publish a plan for the implementation of the EPSEN Act 2004 to prioritise access for children with special needs to an individual education plan. The priority will be to move to a system where necessary supports follow a child from primary to second level and to achieve greater integration of special needs-related services. We will support diversity in education of children with special needs, recognising that both intensive education and mainstreaming can be seen to work for individual children. We recognise the critical importance of early

diagnosis of autism and early intervention and address current deficits in this area. We will reverse the cut to the number of psychologists in National Educational Psychological Service in Budget 2011. We will encourage schools to develop anti-bullying policies and in particular, strategies to combat homophobic bullying to support students. We will improve co-ordination and integration to delivery of services to the Traveller community across all Government departments, using available resources more effectively to deliver on principles of social inclusion, particularly in area of Traveller education through the DEIS programme. We will examine supports in place for gifted students and create improved links with third level institutions on regional basis, to provide gifted students with access to new programmes or educational resources.

### **PATRONAGE**

We will initiate a time-limited Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector to allow all stakeholders including parents to engage in open debate on change of patronage in communities where it is appropriate and necessary. The Forum will have concise terms of reference and will sit for a maximum of 12 months.

The Forum's recommendations will be drawn up into White Paper for consideration and implementation by Government to ensure that education system can provide sufficiently diverse number of schools, catering for all religions and none. We will give parents and local communities the opportunity to have a say in the patronage of existing and future schools, for example by direct ballot. We will also move towards a more pluralist system of patronage at second level, recognising a wider number of patrons. People of non-faith or minority religious backgrounds and publically identified LGBT people should not be deterred from training or taking up employment as teachers in the State.

*There are further sections on Third Level Reform and Lifelong Learning. Download the full Programme for Government 2011 from [www.taoiseach.gov.ie](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie).*

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# Fighting Words

by Seán Love, Director



*Fighting Words* is a creative writing centre located beside Croke Park in Dublin. It is a place where expert tutoring in creative writing is provided free, so that everyone can benefit on an equal basis. The centre is a beautiful, welcoming and magical place.

*Fighting Words* was established by Roddy Doyle and Seán Love, (former Director of Amnesty International), opening its doors in January 2009.

In its first two years, over 15,000 children and 5,000 adults have attended writing workshops at *Fighting Words*. While most students come from Dublin, they travel from every county in the country.

*Fighting Words* works on the premise that giving children the chance and the space to explore the limitlessness of their imaginations does great things. It allows them to dream; to imagine the world that they want to live in, to speak up about it and make it happen. The raw skills that are nurtured are some of the key ingredients for being successful at school, and thereafter, in life.

Mornings are dedicated to working with children from primary schools. Afternoons are for teenagers. Evenings are for adults. Outside of school time, there are free weekend and summer camps at which young people can write and make their own films, animations, musicals, radio documentaries and plays. There are also special programmes for students who suffer from learning difficulties, mental health problems, visual impairment and a range of other special needs.

School trips with primary school children (first to sixth class) take place each weekday morning, 10am-12pm. Encouraged and helped by *Fighting Words* tutors, the class begins an original story together which they see being projected up onto a big screen in the *Fighting Words* centre as they write. The children decide on all the characters and plot, and go through the story together, sentence by sentence, editing as they go. An artist illustrates the story as it is being written.

Once the outline of a story has taken solid shape, the children then have the opportunity to take the story on individually, on paper, and can add their own illustrations. Throughout the session, tutors

work with the children to encourage and assist them as required. Their work will be bound and each child will receive a simple illustrated copy of the book they have written to take home with them. The book is personalised to each child, with their photo included on the back of their book.

*Fighting Words* has over 400 volunteer tutors. They come from all walks of life: professional writers, aspiring writers, teachers, retired teachers, visual artists, film makers, photographers, journalists.... There is a comprehensive child protection policy, and all volunteers are interviewed, trained and subject to Garda vetting.

*Fighting Words* is generally booked out months in advance. Bookings for the next academic year opened on 1st April 2011.

For more information:

Email [info@fightingwords.ie](mailto:info@fightingwords.ie)

Phone: 01 894 4576

Write to: **Fighting Words, Behan Square, 13 Russell Street, Dublin 1.**

Website: [www.fightingwords.ie](http://www.fightingwords.ie)

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## TextaParent.ie – New Features

The following new features on Textparent.ie have enhanced the service and received a very positive response from users over the past few months:

- **Quick Send** – this facility allows you to send a message to a group without having saved that group onto your account in advance. In the ‘Send Message’ screen chose Copy & Paste to import your numbers
- **Purchase history** – a full purchase history report is available under the ‘Reports’ tab
- **Group numbers** – in the ‘Send Message’ screen you can now see how many numbers are contained in each group you are sending to
- **Video tutorials** – useful tutorials in the ‘Resources’ section on the following topics:

- Message reports
- Sending messages with fadas / non-standard characters
- Using Copy & Paste

- **Quick Reference Guide** – also available in the ‘Resources’ section of the site and ideal for new users. Available in MS Word 1997-2003 format
- SMS trí mheáin na Gaeilge.
- **Choice of Sender IDs** – in the ‘Send Message’ screen you can chose from a variety of senders
- **Contacts Report** – In the ‘My Contacts’ tab you can to save your contact and/or group information to an Excel spreadsheet which can then be edited or printed

- **Old Reports** – You can chose to delete old reports you no longer wish to keep
- **New Password** – on your ‘School Profile’ you can change your password.

We have had some very good suggestions from members about further enhancements and these are currently being evaluated for implementation. As an IPPN member service we are always keen to hear about users’ experiences and we would be delighted to receive your feedback on the new features listed above and any additional features that as a user you feel would enhance the service. Simply e-mail [info@textaparent.ie](mailto:info@textaparent.ie) and the Support Office will respond to your query as soon as possible.



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# Principal in Profile:

## Fiona Byrnes, Principal of St. Anthony's Special School, Castlebar, Co. Mayo



Looking back on my entry into the teaching profession, I was a young, naïve and totally inexperienced trainee teacher leaving Coláiste Phádraig in 1989. There was a recession then too, jobs were scarce, with hundreds of applicants for every job. My first temporary job, at my old primary school, St. Angela's Convent of Mercy in Castlebar, working alongside experienced and generous teachers, gave me a great start. Then as a substitute teacher I experienced first-hand what it was like to teach in every type of school, from a small rural 2-teacher school to a big urban school as well as a Gaelscoil.

When I started my job at St. Anthony's Special School, I hadn't studied Special Education in St. Pats and a general awareness of conditions like Down Syndrome was about the extent of my knowledge. So to arrive into the reception class to meet 9 little pupils who all had special needs was, to say the least, scary but I loved it! No internet or computers or SESS or NCSE to ask for help – the children showed me what 'Special Education' was all about. While very sadly some of my pupils passed away from terminal conditions, I spent two happy years in St. Anthony's and the seeds of my future career in Special Education were sown.

*When I started my job at St. Anthony's Special School, I hadn't studied Special Education in St. Pats and a general awareness of conditions like Down Syndrome was about the extent of my knowledge.*

Having worked as a Resource Teacher for Travellers in the Convent School in Boyle, Co. Roscommon for a year and as a Remedial teacher between two schools in Strandhill and Ransboro in Sligo, I figured that I should take the hint that my career was likely to be in Special Education so I accepted a permanent position back in St. Anthony's Special School in 1997 and it was like coming home.

At the time the school was in a dreadfully run-down building. It was hard to keep a straight (cross) face when a student kicked at the wall in temper only for it to slowly detach and fall out into the yard – the look on his face! I assimilated from the Principal, Hilda Kavanagh, some of the prerequisite skills for being a Principal – sense of humour (a must have), ability to use adhesive, grout, nails and a hammer (desirable), and a qualification as a diplomat (priceless). While the building was literally falling down, the atmosphere was more than enough to compensate and we never had a problem getting children to enrol. The ethos of mutual respect, trust, collaboration and genuine caring for all permeated the musty corridors and classrooms. After many years working tirelessly for a new building, finally in 2004 we moved into a brand new purpose-built school. Hilda retired and I was appointed Principal just before the school was finished.

I am often asked what is different about Special Schools. Let me try to describe it. A Special School is just like any other. We have pupils, teachers, SNAs and other staff. We teach a curriculum, prepare notes, get circulars from the Department and have to follow them but we are different. We have many more and also different types of staff. We link in almost daily with numerous agencies and individuals. Our Patron, Western Care, is a voluntary organisation which provides some services and supports directly to pupils but most therapeutic services are provided by the HSE. As Principal I work with many agencies and different personnel around the needs of the children in the school – co-ordinating visits and meetings with Speech & Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Public Health Nurses, Dietician, Behaviour Support Specialists, CAMHS personnel and the HSE Environmental Health Officer; planning healthy school dinners with our school chef and keeping up with our part-time School Nurse, who often has queues outside the door.

With 6 class teachers, 4 part-time subject specialist teachers, 10 SNAs, 16 bus escorts, school nurse, school chef, kitchen assistant, secretary, caretaker and a cleaner to manage, it is a busy time. It's a good job that I don't have

to teach a class myself. I really don't think I would be able to do both jobs satisfactorily.

The continuing development of all in the school is important and suitable training and CPD for all the staff is a priority for me as Principal and for the BoM. It is only in very recent times that Special Schools were even notified about in-service training courses for LSTs and RTs. There appeared to be a presumption that we must already have the necessary and relevant expertise but this is not accurate. We have the same professional development needs in best practices and new developments in Special Education as mainstream teachers. Non-teaching staff have their own CPD needs that must also be provided for.

For many years Special Schools have catered for children who were at the fringes of society. Special needs children were a rarity in many mainstream schools. Now all has changed. More and more children with complex needs are surviving infancy and coming into the school system. More children are being diagnosed with Learning Difficulties, ASD and EBD every year. The population of special needs children is changing and growing and we, like every other school, must adapt and change to meet the new challenges that presents.

Most pupils in St Anthony's would have what we would term 'Mild +' i.e. Mild GLD + one or more of the following: ASD, Physical Disability, Assessed Syndrome, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, EBD, ADHD. Because we are classified as a 'Mild School' we are heavily penalised on the support structures as a result of the NCSE and DES Review of SNAs. This review used the completely out of date SERC Report from 1993 on which to base staffing resources, and appeared to look only at statistics rather than the actual needs of the children. There was no accommodation of the complex needs of children in Special Schools. I only hope that the new government will listen to the many suggestions made by Special Schools through NABMSE and INTO consultative conferences on the Future of Special Schools & Education and, more

importantly, work with us to develop realistic models and approaches to support children with complex needs.

In a Special School, flexibility to quickly adapt and change as required is the key to success. Our teachers meet weekly while the whole staff meets every term. Our curriculum comes from many directions – NCCA Curriculum for Children with Mild/Moderate/Severe Learning Needs, the Revised Primary Curriculum, JCSP, FETAC, and ASDAN, among others. The majority of our students are over 12 years of age but meeting the specific curricular needs of the 14-18 year age group is a challenge. We are trying to access FETAC Levels 1 and 2 so that these students can achieve recognised certification and validation of their own learning. We do not provide a Junior or Leaving Cert programme and are prevented from offering the JCSP, which would be the best option for our students, as only DEIS schools can participate in that programme. Apparently you cannot be ‘Special’ and ‘Disadvantaged’ at the same time in the Department’s view, even though we are exactly that! Special Schools don’t tick the correct boxes, we work outside the box in many aspects but we don’t get the recognition or

support that is warranted. There are fantastic innovations that are happening in Special Schools every day. Maybe it’s time to celebrate the success that comes from the achievements of the children against many odds and not just academic attainment.

*In a Special School, flexibility to quickly adapt and change as required is the key to success.*

We try to ensure that all children have the opportunity to consolidate classroom learning through extracurricular activities. We acquired a school bus which is used in so many different ways that it requires a monthly rota. Supporting students with practical issues, academic issues, emotional issues and social issues around their own learning is what we are all about. We achieve this thanks to the most dedicated, committed and enthusiastic staff one could ever hope to work alongside. We all have high expectations of not only our students but also of each other in our respective roles. We have built effective partnerships with everyone in the wider school community and in return the

whole community, and especially the Board of Management, gives great support to the work of all the staff in the school.

I would describe St Anthony’s as being focussed on the **Students, Professional team, Ethos, Challenges, Innovation, Achievement and Love for Learning** – truly **SPECIAL**. The acknowledgement of personal worth *no matter what* is the greatest gift you can give to anyone and we can give that gift to our children, and each other, every day.

I am truly fortunate that my career has led me to where I am today. I have a wonderfully supportive husband, fellow teacher Clem, and family. I find the collegial support of IPPN invaluable – I am involved with the County Network in Mayo and am on the National Committee. I very much enjoy what I do and try to learn from mistakes. I challenge myself to keep progressing and learning and try to encourage others in their own learning and development. Really, isn’t that what we all hope for? As the Olympic champion Bart Conner stated, ‘Chance can allow you to accomplish a goal every once in a while, but consistent achievement happens only if you love what you are doing.’ And I do.



# Are you planning to retire in 2011?

**If you have made the decision to retire in the coming weeks or months of 2011 we wish you every happiness and fulfilment in the future.**

IPPAN acknowledges the importance of providing every possible support for Newly Appointed Principals and aims to contact them as soon as they are appointed. However, the greatest challenge we face is to find out the names of these Newly Appointed Principals as early as possible.

To assist the work being done in the IPPAN Support Office could you please let us know of your impending retirement and also the name of the Newly Appointed Principal as soon as that decision has been made? This would be of enormous help to us and I know would be very much appreciated by the Newly Appointed Principal.

Any information that you can provide can be emailed or mailed to Jackie at the IPPAN Support Office

[support3@ippn.ie](mailto:support3@ippn.ie)



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