

Sharing Works

Showcasing & Promoting Shared Education 2nd Edition 2021



Shared Education in Action across Partnerships
Update on the Mainstreaming of Shared Education
Shared Education Academic Research
Connecting Shared Education with Local Councils

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If you would like your partnership to feature in the next edition of the Sharing Works magazine, please forward relevant information and photographs to your Development Officer.

Foreword

I am pleased to have this opportunity to welcome you to the second edition of the *Sharing Works* magazine.

Since I took up my appointment as Minister of Education in June, I have been learning much about Shared Education and all the good work that has been taking place in your partnerships over the last number of years.

You will be aware that it was the intention that work would be taken forward on the mainstreaming of Shared Education and I am pleased to report that good progress has been made on this. My officials have been working closely with the Education Authority and a dedicated Stakeholder Reference Group, and with leaders and teachers representing Shared Education partnerships, to draft a strategy and a funding model for mainstreaming.

I hope to be in a position to launch the mainstreaming Shared Education strategy in the New Year.

I am fully aware that the last year and a half has been very difficult for the whole education sector. As pupils, teachers and leaders, you have had much to contend with as a result of the disruption caused by the implications of the Covid 19 pandemic. I very much hope that this new school year will see a return to something like normality.

I am looking forward to visiting schools and settings involved in Shared Education partnerships over the coming months, circumstances permitting, to meet you and to hear more about all the great work which is showcased in this magazine.

Michelle McIlveen MLA
Minister for Education



100 YEARS OF EDUCATION 1921-2021
RAISING STANDARDS AND IMPROVING THE
WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Shared Education Signature Project Overview

The Shared Education Signature Project has now entered its final year. This project has helped establish 159 Partnerships consisting of 371 schools from all sectors, across Northern Ireland. As a result of a £25m investment by The Executive office, Atlantic Philanthropies and the Department of Education over 70,000 children and young people have had the opportunity to engage in regular Shared Education Programmes.

In addition to the Shared Education Pupil Programmes a range of Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) approaches have been adopted throughout the project. This has enabled over 6000 teachers to participate in TPL Modules, Joint Practice Development Programmes, Partnership TPL and collaborative planning & evaluation. Not only has this enhanced the capacity of the workforce to deliver Shared Education but it has created professional learning communities which share experiences, expertise and resources regularly.

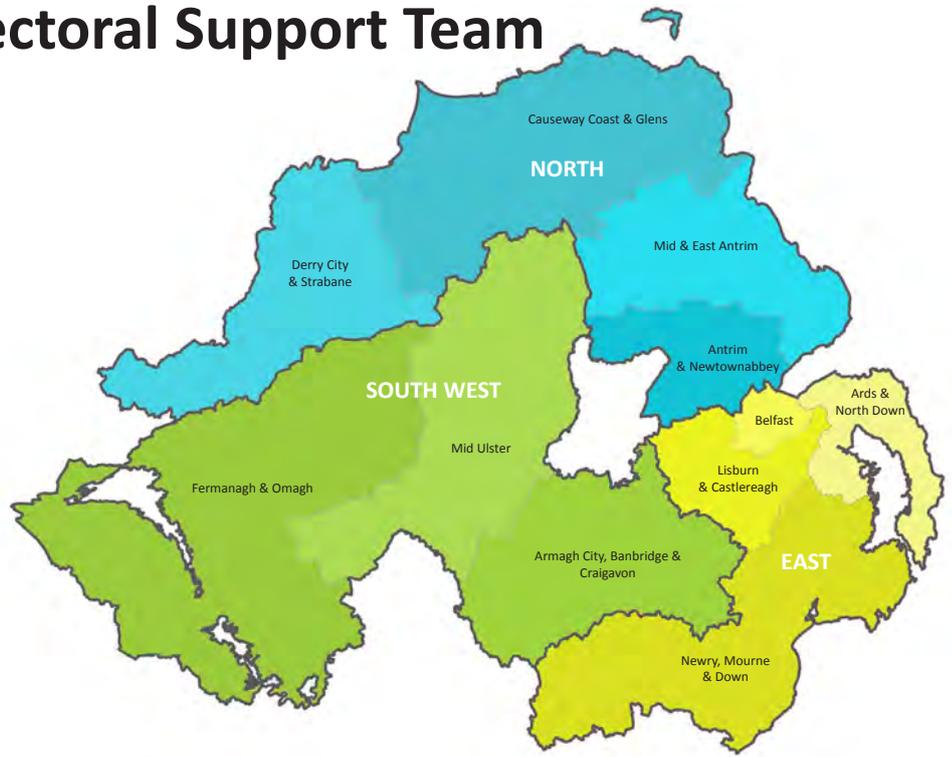
The learning from the SESP and the current Peace IV Projects is currently being used to support the development of a new Shared Education Strategy which will be launched in 2022. The investment, from SESP, has been valued by schools and partnerships across Northern Ireland. This has helped connect schools in local communities and break down barriers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the funders for their support throughout the SESP and I look forward to working with them as we move towards the Mainstreaming of Shared Education.

Paul Close
Education Authority



We love our Shared Education days out! They are always different, fun and interesting. I have enjoyed meeting new people and making new friends and it has helped improve my confidence. I enjoy the games we play and the things we learn about ourselves and other people. I just wish we had more days out with Shared Education.

Meet the SE and Sectoral Support Team



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Head of Service
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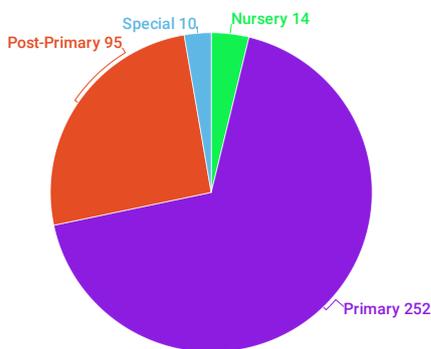
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Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) SESP Report Card

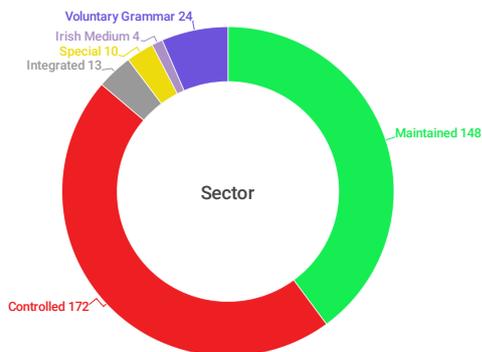
DSC: Shared Education Signature Project OBA Report Card (June 2020)

Total No. of Schools 371 	Total No. of Partnerships 159 
Ave No. of Pupils involved in Shared Activity per year of SESP 45,358 	Ave No. of Teachers involved in Shared Education per year of SESP 4,054 

Breakdown of Schools, by Type, Involved in SESP



Breakdown of Schools by Sector Involved in SESP



Number of Schools Within Each of the Previous ELBs



Shared Education Online TPL Hub

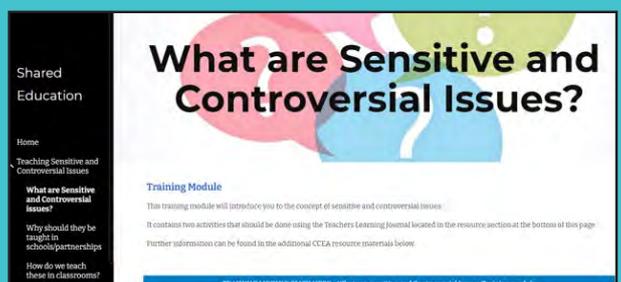
The Shared Education Teacher Professional Learning Hub has been developed, by the Education Authority, to:

- Promote cross-sectoral partnership working
- Develop an understanding of Shared Education
- Build the capacity of the school system to deliver highly effective Shared Education
- Share best practice from teachers, school leaders and academics
- Explore new approaches which can improve outcomes for children and young people
- Establish the link between Shared Education partnership working and School Improvement
- Facilitate teachers with a range of resources and materials that can be used to deliver Shared Education

The Shared Education TPL Hub provides teachers with an online learning platform which builds their capacity to deliver Shared Education. Each of the modules are supported by external expertise, practitioner voices and a series of resources to assist in delivery shared lessons.

Each academic year there will be additional modules provided and a series of Case Studies provided to demonstrate the quality work that has been ongoing across partnerships. The Shared Education TPL Hub can be located at the web address below:

<https://sites.google.com/view/shared-education/home>



Belfast City Council/Stena Line/EA Schools Intervention Project

In September 2019, Belfast City Council unveiled a statue of a 'Knotted Gun' at Girdwood Community Hub, in North Belfast. The statue, representing non-violence, was gifted to Belfast from The Olsson family, founders and owners of Stena Line. It replicates the famous statue by Carl Reutersvärd, which, among other places, is situated in front of the United Nations building in New York and is a well-known symbol of peace and non-violence.

As part of the project involving the location of the statue in Belfast, Stena Line also wished to invest in a programme for children and young people, through schools, which would look at nonviolence.

In that regard, the Council met with our colleagues in the Education Authority who are responsible for Shared Education. Through putting our collective heads together, the Stena Line Schools Intervention Project was born. A programme was put in place with 4 primary school partnerships with a combined funding and human resource from Stena Line, the Shared Education Programme through EA, with match funding from Belfast City Council's Good Relations Action Plan.

In the 2019/20 academic year four partnerships were established for this project:

- Malvern PS & St. Peter's PS
- St. John the Baptist PS & Finaghy PS
- Donegal Rd PS & St. Malachy's PS
- Springfield PS, Springhill PS & St. Clare's PS

Each of the partnership programmes involves one year group within Key Stage 2 and work has been ongoing in the development of these partnerships and the delivery of activities to promote shared engagement.

However, as we all now know, in March 2020 all activity was postponed due to Covid-19. This was disappointing, as the programmes for the young people had a number of exciting activities planned and unfortunately the pupil-to-pupil contact within the programme had to be paused.

Not being deterred, Covid presented an opportunity for us to accelerate and deliver aspects of the overall project that involved teacher training and development – aspects which were planned to be delivered during the life of the programme anyway. While contact between pupils was restricted, the project used this time to upskill staff in schools, to be more capable and competent in delivering activities on a shared education and partnership basis.

So for the Covid period, the project has focused on teacher professional learning as well as continued planning for the inevitable future pupil-to-pupil engagement.

The Council is delighted with the dedication and professionalism of our EA colleagues in the delivery of this project along with the commitment of the schools involved in the partnerships. We hope to re-emerge from the current restrictions with a stronger and more determined focus on making sure that the schools and young people involved in this programme will not have lost out.



The 'Knotted Gun' situated in the Girdwood Community Hub in North Belfast was gifted by the Olsson family, founders and owners of Stenaline

Blended Learning in Shared Education

Blended learning, using a mix of online and face to face work, has become steadily more important in shared education partnerships, both within Northern Ireland and for links across the border. Around 200 teachers have been learning how to use the tools to interact through a TPL module called Collaborative Learning Online for Shared Education and Reconciliation, better known as CLOSER. It was offered to the first cohort of teachers in 2017 and has run twenty times since then, including most recently in an online version. Evaluation by Professor Rhiannon Turner from QUB and my colleagues at Ulster of that course has shown 4 key things about the impact of using blended learning in shared education;

1. The model of the course, based on 2 days of intensive discovery of the tools in either Gsuite or Office 365 and Collaborate Ultra followed by a 6 week implementation project in the linked schools and a final day of presentations about what the partners learned seems to work very well. It enables schools to have the skills to work together in real-time and asynchronously
2. Using blended learning makes it possible to have far more frequent contact between pupils, at an individual and group level and this has led to friendships, respect for others, normalising of relationships and collaborative learning
3. When the online work was well planned by both partners, it complemented face to face sessions and gave added depth to the process of pupils learning together
4. Although there was some variation in pupils' access to hardware and internet connectivity, this is improving to a point where we can say that online learning is making a real contribution to the sustainability of shared education partnerships. There is a cost for the services of C2K, but this is not directly carried by schools.

So what next? The impact of Covid19 has pushed many more teachers and schools to explore online learning and a new Erasmus project called REBEL, Repurposing Education through Blended Learning, will create opportunities to build on the remarkable steps that are already being taken to address digital competence for both teachers and pupils. REBEL is a partnership between Ulster University's School of Education, supported by DE and EA and other teacher education providers in Dublin, Malta and Cyprus.

Two areas of particular interest in Northern Ireland are the schools that have not so far been involved in Shared Education and those involved in the education of 14-18 year olds. Many of those who have not yet taken part in Shared Education have found it difficult to find local partners; for them, well-designed online learning can overcome the challenges of being farther apart than schools in the first two phases of Shared Education.

For entirely understandable reasons, due to exam pressures and league tables, there has been less inter-school cooperation in the education of those at 14-18. There are some very impressive examples of pupils travelling to a neighbouring school to do a subject that is not available in their own. But isn't this the moment to start thinking in a more strategic way about how blended learning can make more courses available to more pupils wherever they happen to be? We're looking forward to exploring this with partners.

Dr Roger Austin,
Emeritus Professor,
School of Education,
Ulster University



School improvement networks and teachers as agents of change

As researchers working on shared education for over ten years, we have the privilege of visiting schools and working with teachers and school leaders across Northern Ireland. While thousands of children and young people from hundreds of schools learn together in each other’s classrooms, we get to see behind the scenes where teachers from different schools plan together, develop resources and design new and innovative ways of teaching.

More recently, we have been exploring how shared education can help schools improve. The Education Authority have been trialling an approach which connects school partnerships together into larger networks with the aim of pooling resources and expertise within the network. This initiative is known as Networks for Shared School Improvement or NSSI for short. One particular element of this approach involves teachers from different schools identifying common professional development needs together, sourcing external training or identifying expertise within the network of schools. Teachers then undertake training together and then return to their own schools to embark on action research, where they identify a problem or challenge and set about looking at the research evidence, trialling an intervention and collecting data on whether the intervention has had a positive impact in their school. In some cases teachers try this in their own classrooms or they work with other teachers. Importantly teachers who trained together also have opportunities to visit and observe practice in their partner schools as well as share resources and approaches. As examples we have worked with schools that have explored the value of implementing meta-cognition strategies with pupils in the classroom, other schools have sought to improve music provision and in another example, schools have explored new approaches to student well-being.

This is fundamentally different to more traditional approaches to professional development because teachers from different schools collaborate to identify common needs and design their own training programmes. In these networks we see teachers having opportunities to practice leadership, emerging as experts and having significant influence over pedagogy, the curriculum and contributing to school development plans, not just in their own schools but in schools across the network.

In our opinion, school networks such as NSSI and collaborative approaches to professional development such as JPD offer a pathway to educational change at the system level where schools working together can become learning organisations underpinned by self-evaluation, shared enquiry and ongoing cycles of action research. But the key driver of this possible system, are the teachers and schools themselves.

Dr Gavin Duffy
Dr Gareth Robinson
 School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
 Queen’s University Belfast.



Shared Education support in action from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Good Relations Team

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Good Relations Team is committed to promoting positive relationships between people of differing religious belief, political opinion and racial group.

As part of this important work, and inspired by progress achieved in other areas, the team developed an Education Networking Programme which aims to contribute to a shared education network across the borough, and encourages teachers to explore opportunities for pupils, families, school staff and the wider community to learn, play, share and achieve together. In 2018, it began working with the Education Authority to add value to Shared Education activities within the borough and collaboratively planned their first conference for teachers which took place in March 2019.

For this pilot, the audience was limited to schools involved in the Shared Education Signature Project. A recent audit had identified a need for SE schools to improve their connections to the wider community, so a 'Marketplace' of stalls was set up at the conference, manned by local organisations which felt they had something to offer to SE schools. The conference provided an opportunity for schools to learn from each other and to meet other organisations who may be able to facilitate some of the sessions when pupils come together. Attendees received a booklet containing information about all the organisations in attendance.

The conference was well-received and valued, so Council and EA worked together again the following year to plan a second conference in February 2020, this time generously hosted by Ulster University's Coleraine campus. On this occasion, the conference was opened to all schools in the borough, including those who had not yet ventured into the realms of Shared Education and once again the Marketplace proved to be a popular and valuable resource for teachers.

In March 2020, any plans for a conference in the new financial year sadly had to be shelved as everyone came to terms with the Covid-19 pandemic and the many consequences and uncertainties that this brought about for schools.

Instead, Council set about producing an updated and enhanced Community Connections booklet with information about the Marketplace organisations who attended the second conference (some of whom had altered their services to accommodate social distancing requirements) along with details about some funding organisations and other useful free resources. The Community Connections booklet was distributed to schools and is still available in digital form by contacting good.relations@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk.

The Good Relations team is pleased to have produced this useful resource as schools plan activities with their SE partners and the EA is now seeking to replicate this model across NI. Paul Close,

Shared Education & Sectoral Support School Improvement Professional with the EA commented, "The Community Connections Booklet, which has been developed by the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, is an excellent resource which can be used by Shared Education Partnerships. It provides school leaders with detailed information about the agencies and organisations, across the Borough, which can support their Shared Education Programmes. The booklet has helped develop the area of Community Connections and allows partnerships to familiarise themselves with additional opportunities which can enhance the learning experiences of children and young people".

In addition to the two conferences and the Community Connections booklet, Council's Good Relations programme has also made some funding available to school partnerships over the last few years for projects which would allow them to further develop their relationship.

These initiatives were diverse and included: a day of varied workshops at Corrymeela; a Bear Hospital project for younger pupils facilitated by Big Telly Theatre Company; an ICT project led by the Nerve Centre; a day in Garvagh People's Forest; health & fitness sessions with help from Council's Sports Development staff; a project learning about flight facilitated by Go Fly Your Kite; a series of tutorials on music and disability delivered by Project Sparks; and workshops on mental health and well-being for parents and children, facilitated by Parenting NI.

Patricia Harkin, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Good Relations Manager said, "We are delighted to have been able to work with the Education Authority to support Shared Education within our borough. The conferences, the school projects and the Community Connections resource booklet have all been well received by our local schools. Covid-19 makes planning a little unpredictable, but we hope to continue to support Shared Education in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area and build on progress made so far."



This project has received financial support from The Executive Office through the District Councils Good Relations Programme.

Edenderry Nursery School & Holy Cross Nursery School



Pivotal to the success of the partnership between Edenderry and Holy Cross Nursery Schools would be the very practical and 'real' engagement of the families of our pupils. In 2020, a group of parents from the two schools participated in a photography project. They met once a week for ten weeks and in each session visited one another's local areas, churches and then wider afield to shared and often new spaces. There is something so much less threatening about looking at a political mural from behind the lens of a camera! These excursions gave way to deep and meaningful conversations and learning- leading to a greater sense of empathy and understanding between the communities of Shankill and Ardoyne. The photographs that resulted documented this important journey and featured in an exhibition in the Houben Centre, a local shared space beside the infamous Twaddle Avenue.

Whilst the photography project was underway, the children in the two schools were enjoying our popular 'playdays' programme. It was on these days that children, staff and parents would come together to play and learn in one another's school. An activity on two of these days was buddy portrait painting, when the child looked closely at their buddy and painted their image on a canvas. These portraits were then brought together with the parents' photographs to be celebrated in the form of an exhibition.

The children, parents and staff came together and formally celebrated the fruits of their work with the children singing and parents able to see all that had been achieved. This was without doubt one of the proudest moments in the programme when so many important strands of work flowed together.

Enniskillen Nursery School, Holy Trinity Nursery Unit & Enniskillen Integrated Nursery Unit

Enniskillen Nursery school, Holy Trinity Nursery unit and Enniskillen Integrated Nursery unit pupils, parents and siblings all came together at the end of the school year for a celebration concert in a neutral space, The Killyhevlin Hotel.

The event began with the children from the three settings coming together to perform rhymes, songs and jingles. They had been working on these in their individual settings prior to this event, with Laura Browne from Music Box. The objective of this work was to improve the children's language, rhyme and rhythm.

Following on from this, all children, parents and staff of the three settings took part in an interactive sing along with renowned children's entertainer Tom Sweeney. This event was thoroughly enjoyed by all and helped develop the children's confidence and language skills. It was an opportunity to bring parents together with their children, thus involving them in their children's learning as well as reinforcing the value of shared education.



Ligoniel PS, St Vincent de Paul PS & St Gerard's Special School and Support Services, Belfast

Junior school pupils, parents and staff from Ligoniel Primary, St Vincent de Paul Primary and St Gerard's School and Support Services came together for a series of Parent and Child Play Workshops/Coffee Mornings in two out of the three partner school settings. These were the first events attended by St Gerard's parents and pupils since recently becoming part of the partnership and they were warmly welcomed by both schools! Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, we could not complete our last parent-pupil event, which was disappointing as the first two were a great success!

These events allowed parents to connect and interact with other parents from different schools and also gave pupils an opportunity to develop cross-community relationships by meeting children from different settings! Children collaborated with children from the partner schools to think creatively and take part in a range of craft activities.

The parents valued the chance to have time to chat with other parents, while children were taking part in seasonal arts and crafts activities, supported by older pupils, and staff. The feedback given suggested that parents would welcome more opportunities like this going forward. It is the partnership's intention to resume these events termly when possible, with a cumulative celebration "Fun Day" at the end of the academic year.

Our partnership viewed these events as really valuable opportunities for parents to come together with their children and be a part of their learning experience while also getting to meet other parents in an informal, enjoyable atmosphere. Staff involved in the Shared Education programme have developed positive links through planning for and evaluating events.



*There were lots of smiling faces!
We can't wait until next time!*

Steeple Nursery School, St Joseph's Nursery School & Riverside Special School



Everyone had such a fun day

On the 9th March 2020, three classes representing each of our partner schools met up for a shared education session. This session was developed by a working group of teaching professionals that represented all three schools in our partnership. They wanted to organise a shared education session that was similar for all learners in the partnership - safe, educational and fun.

This partnership is cross sector, cross community and cross phase and has the following makeup:

Steeple Nursery School –
3 morning classes, 3 afternoon classes

St Joseph's Nursery School – 1 morning class,
1 full time call and 1 afternoon class

Riverside Special School - 2 morning classes

Together this working group established a plan. Every child in the partnership got to meet another class at Antrim Castle Gardens. Everyone was super excited to get on the bus. Every two pupils had the support of either a school staff member or a parent volunteer. When they arrived, they sang a few songs including Dingle, Dangle Scarecrow and Hokey Cokey. Then off they went on a big walk to the top of the 'cake.' At the top, Miss Gaston explained to them the historical importance of this cake feature. Everyone marched to the Grand Old Duke of York. When they marched themselves back down, they got to buddy up with a new friend and sat down for a juice and a snack in the Heritage Centre.

‘Let’s Do It Together’ Dromore & Drumnamoe Nursery Schools

In 2011 Dromore and Drumnamoe Nursery Schools published a book entitled “Let us Do It Together”, with the aim of illustrating to other schools exactly how a cross community partnership could work successfully, when both school communities were fully committed to fostering an ethos of tolerance and respect for all. The book was a culmination of many years of work by the two Principals, who led the schools in building friendships, gaining trust and developing a strong foundation that would help the partnership grow over the years into one, which continues to this day. It began 19 years ago, and is no doubt going to continue for many more to come because, despite many challenges [including funding issues], the benefits far outweigh the obstacles, and the school leaders remain totally committed to the ideology, that schools should be fully inclusive for all.

As Nursery School Principals we believe that our practice should be fully- inclusive and anti- discriminatory, and to ensure this, needs to be carefully planned for. Equality and diversity therefore are seen as an integral part of the pre-school curriculum, and never as an additional element. At the heart of inclusive practice is the promotion of developing all children and their families to ensure that they feel included, valued, motivated and inspired to be the best that they can be.

Dromore Nursery School and Drumnamoe Nursery School both opened in January 2002 and very quickly established a partnership based on a common commitment to giving children in our schools a sense of belonging, which is the best indicator of inclusion. The schools cater from between 78 and 104 pre-school children, between the ages of 3 and 4 years. They are both situated on stand-alone sites in residential areas of the respective communities of Dromore and Lurgan. Through an effective partnership between staff, parents, Governors and the wider community, the schools endeavour to provide children with a happy and successful pre-school experience leading to life-long learners. We firmly believe that nurture and firm foundations lead to establishing true citizenship, and as preschool is the child’s first experience of education it is essential that it all begins here.

As well - experienced Early Years Practitioners, the principals realised that young children are very much influenced by people and the world around them, for example their parents and family members, teachers and carers, friends, books and the toys they play with. These are their role models. We recognised that these children were spending a large portion of their day in their nursery school, and consequently this empowered us as teachers to impact their attitudes towards others, both positively and negatively. We had a responsibility therefore to always give accurate information to the children, actively encourage them to ask questions and express their views and feelings towards others respectfully, and to encourage them to carefully reflect on their ideas and look towards staff members as their role models. Consequently, we considered it to be very important that the staff themselves question their own beliefs and values in the whole process, that they self-reflect and consider their own practice, in terms of inclusion and diversity. This indeed was a journey in itself.

Over the years, as our partnership progressed, we worked through a number of initiatives, which only served to strengthen our resolve to promote Shared Education, and we fully embraced



Fun and celebration continued to be the most powerful tool in developing relationships between children, staff and parents.



every opportunity that the Signature Project afforded us. Together we constantly explored experiences, which would allow the continued fostering of positive attitudes and beliefs without discrimination.

During those early days our programme focused on class exchanges with children regularly visiting each other’s setting. Staff exchanges when the teaching and non-teaching staff would teach in each other’s schools for a day. This allowed the staff and children to get to know each other in the security of their own environments and quickly relationships developed naturally. We used seasonal festivals and life events to celebrate each other’s cultures and identify similarities and differences. Underpinning this was the involvement of parents, the wider family and community, this was achieved through a range of opportunities from social events, information events and celebration evenings to participating in school activities.

The year was rich with a series of opportunities to learn together. Our journey continues and takes us to where we are today. Our focus currently, is the area of emotional and physical health, and indeed their interdependency, as we feel that it is one, which is so crucial in the current climate due to the pandemic. We recognise that what is happening in our world right now will have an impact on our children and we want to minimise the negative and promote the positive.

Social and emotional development is one of the six areas of the Nursery curriculum, and getting it right, is key to every child’s life chances. With this in mind, combined with our commitment to inclusion, we aim to explore children’s social skills and mental health through what they see happening around them, and their interactions with others, with specific emphasis on the outdoors. We are focusing on their common environments of Dromore and Drumnamoe Nursery Schools and aim to ensure that both gardens can be enhanced, through further development, to ensure their richness, as a resource to be used by generations to come. This will be an ongoing plan over the next three years. It will be shared with other schools, within our NSSI partnerships, and cluster groups to ensure that the benefits of Outdoor Learning.

Year 9 Shared Education Multi-Sports Day

Year 9 students from Fivemiletown College and St Ciaran's Ballygawley joined together for an exciting Multi-Sports Day as part of our ongoing Shared Education partnership. The venue was the fabulous Peace Link in Clones, County Monaghan, which had kindly been made available to us through the Peace Building Through Sport programme.

The day was filled with glorious sunshine and a variety of fun activities. The participants were split into four teams (Red, Yellow, Blue and Green), with a mixture of students from both schools in each. All teams competed against each other in Athletics (60m, 400m, Long Jump, Shot Put), Rounders and Sit-Down Volleyball. It was brilliant to see all students having a go at the different activities, with Sit-Down Volleyball, played with a giant inflatable beach ball, a particular hit.

It was testament to how much effort and teamwork went into the day that the final results were so close: Red 531, Yellow 545, Blue 579, Green 579. As the Blue and Green team had tied, their head-to-head record had to be taken into account, with the Blue team emerging victorious by the narrowest of margins. Blue Team representatives from both schools were presented with the Challenge Cup.

Genuine friendships seemed to develop across the day as members of both schools played with, and competed against, each other. Seeing students choosing to mingle with each other during the lunch break was incredibly rewarding, and by the end of the day, it was hard to distinguish which students belonged to which school, such was the relaxed and cheery atmosphere amongst the group. And when even one of your most burly boys remarks 'That was actually pretty good', you know it's been a successful day!



Home Economics Cookbook



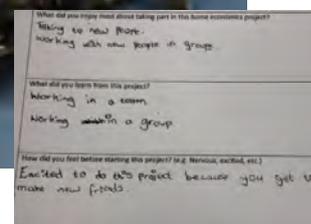
In 2018/19, 39 Year 10 Pupils from five of the six schools within the Strule partnership (Omagh Academy, CBS, Arvalee, Loreto and Sacred Heart College) engaged in the creation of 'Fabulous Foods for the Family' cookbook. The brief was to create a book of useful recipes that were suitable for all the family, whilst being economical, nutritious and easy to make.

Pupils met on four occasions (4 x 3.5 hour sessions) to develop the concept, consider the theory around healthy eating and choose recipes while using ICT skills to produce recipe guides along with Art to present and illustrate the information.

These shared education lessons promoted a more 'hands on' approach to learning, promoted inclusion and reconciliation and developed thinking skills, problem solving, decision making, working with others and self-management skills. Unfortunately, the pupils did not have time to collectively cook the recipes during that year.

So, in the autumn of 2019, all of the Strule schools participated in a Cookery week, using the recipe books for some independent cookery classes in their own school. Pupils had to choose a recipe from a pupil in another school. Each school then shared examples of the final creations on their social media accounts.

In 2020/21, the recipes were transferred into a Google site, with the view that all pupils could access the Google site for HE at home. However, some of the images of the recipes were of poor image quality and so that google site has not yet been utilised.



Royal School Dungannon & St Patrick's Academy Shared Education History Trip to Berlin

In the wee hours of 24th September 2019 thirty-three bleary-eyed History students departed from the gates of the Old Grey Mother to begin their inter-school trip to Berlin. Accompanying them on their journey were Mrs Stewart and Mr Kerr from RSD and Mr McCormick and Miss Donnelly from SPA. Having made it to Germany safely and stored their bags in their hotel, the group's first activity saw them embark on an informative guided walking tour of the city. During the tour, led by our guide Beth, the group was introduced to many of the sights associated with the Nazi period of Berlin's history, helping to bring many of the events only read about in textbooks into vivid reality. The tour concluded in bright sunshine at the Reichstag, Germany's parliament building. With some sore feet and tired heads, it was then back to the hotel for dinner and an early night.

After a good night's sleep, the group were up early and off to the Gesundbrunnen subway station for the Dark Worlds Underworld Tour. This is a restored wartime bunker and air raid shelter which is now a permanent exhibit on the experience of the Berlin population during the bombing raids of the war. The dark and eerie atmosphere was truly evocative of the claustrophobic conditions experienced by those who took refuge there 75 years ago. Having re-emerged to ground level, the next stop for the group was lunch followed by a visit to the Museum of the Wall. This museum documents the human history of the Berlin Wall and is located next to the legendary Checkpoint Charlie border crossing. Here the pupils saw, amongst other things, original objects from successful escapes by East Germans to West Berlin including chairlifts, false passports and hot-air balloons.

The museum theme continued into the afternoon as they then visited the chilling Topography of Terror museum, situated on the site of the former SS and Gestapo Headquarters. Here the students could see in detail the crimes committed by the Nazi

regime, both in Germany and in occupied Europe during World War II. Having had their fill of museums, and after dinner at the hotel, the group finished off the evening with some fun at a city centre bowling alley.

The third day of the tour kicked off with a coach journey to the picturesque town of Potsdam, one-time home of the Prussian royal family. Here the group went on a guided tour of the Cecilienhof Palace, where history was made in 1945 when Churchill, Stalin and Truman met to agree on how Germany would be divided after World War II. After a quick spot of lunch in Potsdam, it was on to the sombre venue of Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Over 200,000 people were imprisoned in the camp between 1936 and 1945, with many tens of thousands of those inmates dying at the hands of their SS captors. This was a particularly moving and poignant point of the trip which served to bring home the realities of the terror resulting from Nazi intolerance.

From Sachsenhausen, it was a 45-minute coach journey back to Berlin to for a guided tour of the Olympic Stadium. Built for the 1936 Berlin Olympics, the stadium is now home to Hertha Berlin in Germany's Budesliga, and the tour explained the stadium's history and association with the Nazi propaganda machine as well as its role as a modern stadium and concert venue. After dinner in a traditional German brauhaus, the group then finished off the day with a visit to Germany's tallest building, the TV Tower. Finished in 1969, the tower was a built by the communist East German government. From the top, the group had an excellent view of the city of Berlin at night.

After having packed their bags and checked out of their hotel, the final day of the trip started with some shopping on Berlin's famous shopping street, the Kudamm. With their spending money well and truly blown, the students then made their way to visit the Berlin Wall Memorial, a reminder of the division of Germany located in the centre of the city. The memorial contains the last piece of the Berlin Wall with the preserved grounds behind it and is thus able to convey an impression of how the border fortifications developed until the end of the 1980s. For their final visit of their busy schedule, the boys and girls made their way to visit the old Stasi Prison at Hohenschönhausen. Here they saw the conditions endured by prisoners and political opponents of the old East German communist regime between 1946 and 1990.

With the trip coming to an end, it was then time for everyone to make their way back to Tegel airport for their flight back to Dublin and an early morning arrival back at the gates of RSD.



Bangor Partnership

St Columbanus' College, Bangor Grammar
& Bangor Academy



We had a fantastic event involving the 3 schools in our partnership at St Columbanus' College. This was for NICCY's Mark The Day initiative to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the UNCRC.

We held a Shared Education Student Council meeting with pupils from different year groups across the 3 schools; St Columbanus' College, Bangor Grammar and Bangor Academy. The pupils did an icebreaker activity which allowed them to relax, get to know each other and make new friends.

We then divided the pupils into mixed groups. They looked through and discussed the UNCRC and identified three rights they deemed most significant. From this, the pupils constructed a Joint School's Charter which highlighted the importance of their chosen rights, how pupils could respect each other's rights and how adults could also respect them. The pupils were so enthusiastic throughout the task and it gave them the opportunity to voice their opinions effectively. They also realised they had very similar outlooks, despite being from different schools and coming from different backgrounds! After gaining more confidence, the feedback at the end of the event was pupil led and the pupils collated their ideas. More shared education events took place throughout the year where the pupils used their creativity to devise ways we could uphold what they had written in their charter!

Shaun in Year 8 said 'Our joint Student Council meeting on International Children's Day was really fun and interesting. It was good being able to talk to and team up with pupils from other schools. I also really enjoyed learning about all the rights that children have. We all liked being able to see that no matter where we are from, home or school, we all have the same rights.'

We also had a fun shared event at Bangor Academy, where we linked up with the RSPB for a Christmas Themed Conservation Project. 20 Year 8 pupils from St Columbanus' College met with 20 Year 8 pupils from Bangor Academy and learned about the importance of securing a healthy environment for wildlife. The pupils listened to a talk, watched videos and played games with Karen Shiel from the RSPB. They then made Christmas themed, biodegradable bird feeders to be hung on a tree outside the Town Hall. The pupils really enjoyed the event, formed relationships and learned a lot about conservation, protecting habitats and changing the fate of nature.

Grosvenor Grammar School & Our Lady & St Patrick's College, Knock

Year 9 Shared Education Trip to Stormont

written by some of the students



As part of our Shared Education Project, we went to Stormont with other students from Grosvenor Grammar School and Our Lady and St. Patrick's College, Knock. We travelled to Stormont after doing some fun ice breakers and finding out what we are going to be doing in Shared Education and why we are doing it.

When we arrived we went through a security check, then into the chamber where we had a really cool debate on whether school uniform should be worn. Everyone made really good points for and against! Afterwards, everyone voted by walking out of one of the side doors – one for aye one for nay.

We then got to meet Claire Hanna, who is a member of SDLP. We were able to ask her questions about Brexit and why we didn't have a government for such a long time. She made some very good points and generally spoke well.

We were then shown around more of the building. It is quite big and very ornate. We learnt about the history of Northern Ireland politics and why our country can be so divided at times. We had group discussions about the future of NI and all agreed that the old ideas of religious segregation were of no place in today's society.

Later we met Máirtín ó Muilleoir who is a member of Sinn Fein. He also was grilled about the devolved government and LGBT rights. We then went outside and got a group photo with the sun shining on the steps. We really enjoyed the visit and learned a lot!



St. Dominic's & Friends' School Lisburn History & Politics



St. Dominic's Grammar School for Girls and Friends' School Lisburn have developed a partnership going back to 2015 when both History departments participated in the 'Facing History and Ourselves' project which saw the creation of a resource around the Irish experience in WWI. It naturally seemed like the next step was to engage in the Shared Education Project when it was launched. As such, the partnership has existed since Year 1 of the project. Initially the project centered round the idea of a shared history of the events of 1916 - the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme.

Students have visited Glasnevin Cemetery and the Somme Centre, and have also taken part in a residential at Corrymeela each year to develop the programme and tackle our Shared History.

Politics also became a large part of the partnership four years ago with the beginning of the Politics in Action project. As the two initial schools to participate in this, it has allowed our pupils to gain huge experience and confidence in tackling complex issues such as Brexit. Politics and Action has since spread to around thirty other schools and we are proud of the role we have played in its development.

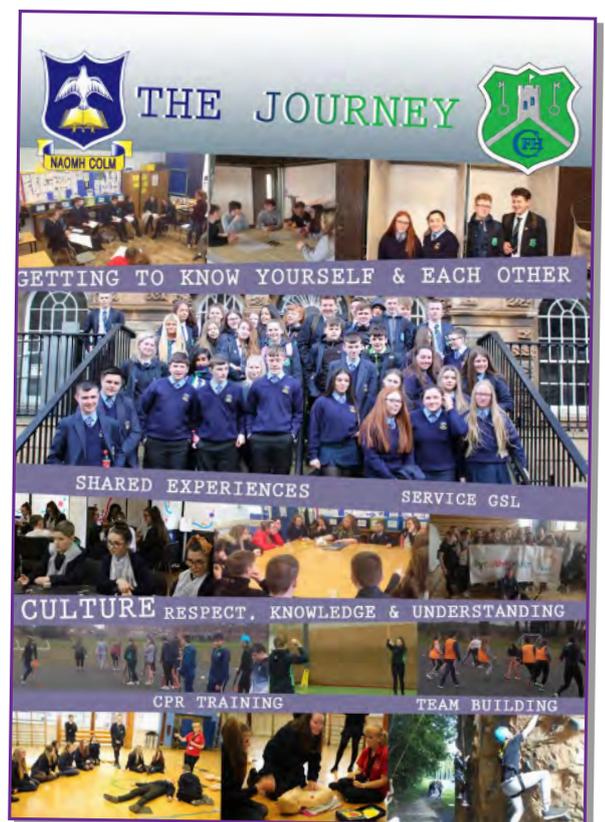
Our Year 13's Shared Education project met every two to three weeks from September. The project was led by the students and was entitled 'Making it Work: A Vision for a Post-Brexit Society'. They took part in many activities across the year including a visit to Stormont to take part in 'Select Committees' on Brexit and the future of Northern Ireland. Our 'Politics in Action' group met with representatives from Sinn Féin, DUP, UUP and Alliance to pose questions on elections, Brexit, a future United Ireland and a range of issues from mental health to our troubled past. The group also visited Westminster the day before the crucial Brexit vote was rejected. Here they had a tour of the chambers, took part in a 'select committee' workshop and met MPs and members from the House of Lords.

Shared Education Success! Fort Hill Integrated College & St Colm's High School

Fort Hill Integrated College and St Colm's High School are celebrating another year of having worked collaboratively across various aspects of school life as part of a Shared Education Programme. This has included Year 9 and 10 classes from each school following common units of work with an emphasis developing Literacy, Drama, ICT and PE skills. The students have met regularly throughout the year and together have enjoyed a range of educational experiences in both schools and in venues such as Ulster Museum and the Lisburn Linen Museum.

In addition, senior school students from both schools have previously teamed up to enhance their awareness of community service and understanding of global issues, with a focus on the theme of homelessness. In previous years, a number of students from each school embarked together upon the trip of a lifetime to Washington DC to participate in a range of projects such as working in food kitchens and hostels which provide for the many homeless people in the US capital. The experience galvanised their motivation to become more actively involved in their own communities; all have since embarked upon some form of social action to help benefit others.

Shared Education is a programme which has laid foundations for learning opportunities in innovative and exciting contexts along with fostering positive relations between young people from across communities in a spirit of joint purpose and reconciliation. St Colm's High School and Fort Hill Integrated College students look forward to further opportunities to learn and to live together.



Foyle Shared Partnership



The Foyle Shared Education Partnership comprising of St Mary's College, Lisneal College and St Cecilia's College have been involved in Shared Education from 2010. Throughout this time, they have developed many valuable links with local cross community groups including Reach Across. In conjunction with Reach Across they have developed a curricular model allowing the Year 10 pupils to 'Examine Factors which affect the community they grow in'.

With classroom based activities, community visits and talks from local community Leaders, the aim was to develop community relationships and also accredit the students with 2 credits at Level 1 of an OCN course called 'Skills for Leadership in the Community'. This allowed the students to gain a better understanding of the different areas of the City where they live and the different activities that students from both sides of the community take part in outside of school hours.

The course culminated with a visit to Stormont, The Peace Wall, Crumlin Road Jail and of course Dundonald Ice Bowl. Students were able to sign their names on the Peace Wall, Visit Stormont, meet some of the ministers, get an insight into Crumlin Road Jail and finish off with some valuable fun time at Dundonald Ice Bowl. The accredited course has proved to be a very effective model for moving forward and developing community relations. None of this would have been possible without the help, expertise, resources and motivation of Reach Across. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the course and visits.



Blessing Bags for the Homeless Strangford College & St Columba's Partnership



In November 2019, Strangford College and St Columba's took part in a fulfilling experience that proved to be a huge success. Our partnership worked with the charity Hope Outreach for the Homeless, using the Shared Education project as opportunity to provide for the community.

Hope Outreach is a charity that focuses specifically on the area of Belfast City Centre. As volunteers, members of this charity make sure that the homeless are looked after each night; providing the vulnerable with food and clothes. Both Strangford College and St Columba's recognised that this was a worthwhile cause. Our partnership believed that working with Hope Outreach would represent the ethos of Shared Education: different communities coming together in order to support each other.

Strangford College incorporated the Blessing Bags into our Kindness Week in school. The whole school contributed to this project and students from all year groups made donations. These included things such as: hand warmers; coins; plasters; toothbrushes; toothpaste; bottles of water; gloves; socks; cereal bars; tea bags; plastic cutlery; tissues; chewing gum and encouraging notes.

The day itself was a huge success as Year 11 students from both schools came together to share the experience of creating the Blessing Bags. Students really bonded over the experience of doing something so kind and meaningful. We aimed to create 150 Blessing Bags and instead we made 391! We were also left with 15 large shopping bags of donations. This was enough to supply the charity for 9 months – what an achievement!

Jim and Donna from Hope Outreach came out to Strangford College to receive the donations. They also took some time to speak to students about the charity; providing more information about the people they work with and the positive impact that the students' donations would have on the homeless community. This created a real sense of purpose and achievement: students felt proud of what they had done.

The students from Strangford College and St Columba's made a great team and we are extremely grateful that the Shared Education project allowed us to take part in something so fulfilling. The Blessing Bags will definitely be an activity that we will continue to do in the future.

Diversity Day at Belfast Boys' Model School with Mercy College

Year 9 pupils from Belfast Boys' Model School and Mercy College worked together through their LLW classes to understand more about tolerance, respect and resolving conflict. Their lessons were part of a unit of work building up to the main celebration – Diversity Day.

From October 2018 to March 2019 the pupils looked at expressing their own identity and the different ways in which others express their identity, concentrating on the similarities and differences between them. This allowed them to see how conflict is often caused by a lack of understanding. It also provided invaluable opportunities for the pupils to work and socialise together, forming relationships for the future.

A number of pupils from both schools were also involved in training by the Youth Service to allow them to develop their leadership and communication skills, which would be necessary for the success of Diversity Day, when the Year 9 pupils from both schools would come together to experience concrete real life examples of how different cultures in Northern Ireland express their identity.

Diversity Day (April 2019) was a fantastic whole day event with 15 activities for pupils to take part in, ranging from music, dance and drumming to arts, craft and cookery. Both co-ordinators, all LLW teachers and 250 pupils were involved in workshops facilitated by Arsekta and the Confucius Institute. Staff and pupils in both schools who are originally from countries outside the UK provided activities for participants to gain a little understanding about life and cultures in their countries.

Shared Education initiatives like this are so important to broaden the horizons of pupils and to encourage them to be open minded and tolerant as well as respectful of others. It gives them the opportunity to mix in an otherwise divided society and, as we have seen over the years, they form lasting friendships and wider support networks that will benefit them in their future.

Videos and interviews from Diversity day are available on the CCEA Website in the Shared Education in Practice Area

<https://ceea.org.uk/learning-resources/supporting-shared-education/shared-education-practice#section-4119>



Ballymoney Shared Education

The Ballymoney Learning Community is a Shared Education Partnership that is embedded in the ethos of Our Lady of Lourdes, Dalriada and Ballymoney High School. With the pupils as the key stakeholders and at the heart of every decision, this year the focus was on sporting activities.

Thirty Year 10 pupils from each of the schools spent four fantastic action-packed days using the magnificent facilities at the University of Ulster Coleraine. One group of pupils got to take part in and coach a range of unusual sports such as American Football, Dodgeball, Wheelchair Basketball and Boccia over the four days. Making full use of both the experience and the facilities they completed their OCN Level 1 Qualification in Sports Leadership which will assist them in their GCSE studies next year. The pupils developed their teamwork, extended their problem-solving skills and awakened their creativity. It also enabled PE staff from all three schools to improve their knowledge and understanding of a range of different sports and games which could be incorporated into their day-to-day teaching.

Meanwhile the other group of pupils got the opportunity to carry out a range of STEM activities, and took part in a Marketing and Branding Workshop. They were treated to an excellent tour of the University of Ulster Campus before coming together with the Sports Leadership group on the final day.

The pupils gained a lot from the experience of visiting and working in the University. They thoroughly enjoyed getting out of school, getting to know, work with and have fun with their peers. We hope these experiences will create lasting memories that encourage conversations that help break down barriers across our community.

It would be impossible to make these valuable and worthwhile events happen without a lot of community engagement and we would like to acknowledge the support of The Community Sports Network, University of Ulster Coleraine and Young Enterprise who facilitated the event alongside the Ballymoney Building Communities Resource Centre.



Coleraine Grammar School & Loreto College

The History Departments at Coleraine Grammar School (CGS) and Loreto College have been involved in the Shared Education Project since 2015. The departments have developed excellent working relationships through the programme with increasing collaboration each year.

During the 2018/19 academic year we moved the project from KS3 to KS4 to focus on the new CCEA GCSE specification. Both CGS and Loreto College study Option 2 Changing Relations: Northern Ireland and its Neighbours, 1965-98. This unit of work looks specifically at the troubles in NI. One Year 11 History class from each school was involved in the programme. The initial shared experience was hosted by Loreto College. Pupils took part in several ice breaker activities to get to know one another and discussed the objectives for the programme. The highlight of the project was a shared trip to Derry/Londonderry to walk the walls and visit the Free Derry Museum and The Apprentice Boys of Derry/Siege Museum.

The Museum of Free Derry offers a full multi-media exhibition on the civil rights and early conflict era in the city, including the Battle of the Bogside, Internment, Bloody Sunday and Operation Motorman, all key areas of the GCSE specification. This trip challenged pupils to think about different perspectives and interpretations of the past.



Year 11 History Pupils from CGS and Loreto College enjoying a shared trip to Derry/Londonderry

The trip was followed up with lessons hosted by CGS which focused on answering source-based examination questions relating to NI. Pupils find these questions challenging and it was hoped that by helping pupils to structure their answers and by discussing the sources and considering different interpretations that pupil outcomes would improve.

Unfortunately, this two-year programme was halted by the Coronavirus Pandemic in March 2020 but we look forward to continuing the relationship between the History Departments and providing opportunities for children to learn together to prepare them for the diverse world of life and work.

Larne SESP Makaton Training 2020

In February and March 2020 Larne Shared Education Partnership hosted another successful Makaton training course for pupils in Roddensvale School, St Killian's College, Larne High School and Larne Grammar School. The course took place on three consecutive Tuesdays with pupils attending one two hour session at Roddensvale School. This year our uptake was higher than ever with over 80 pupils taking part. The course, facilitated by Roddensvale School's Makaton tutors, has been run annually since 2015 and is one of our partnership's particular successes.

Larne Grammar School pupil, Eva McGeown, commented on the usefulness of the course, especially in relation to her career plans. ***"The Makaton Course was a great opportunity for me as it gave me a chance to learn a new transferable skill for my future career working with children."*** She also praised the professionalism of the staff involved. ***"The staff at Roddensvale were very friendly and used a great teaching style, which included singing and games, which helped us become more confident around the other schools taking part."***

Anna Ewing, a Year 14 pupil from St Killian's College explained her reasons for her participation in the course. ***"I wanted to take part as I had previously visited Roddensvale, as part of the BT Young Scientist project, and I was aware of the communication difficulties which some young people experienced."*** She remarked upon the course's good reputation among staff and pupils. ***"Other students and teachers in my school had already participated in the Makaton training and recommended it to me."***

Anna also commented on the excellent opportunities the course provided for shared education and building relationships. ***"I also benefited from this training as I worked and chatted with pupils from other schools, whom I would not otherwise have met. I hope that Makaton training is offered in the future so other students can benefit from the opportunities that I was fortunate to have been afforded."***

Communication is, undoubtedly, a vital aspect of life and building relationships. One of the most exciting outcomes of the course is to hear stories of how our pupils are using the skills they learnt in their daily lives to communicate with other Makaton users. As a partnership, we are delighted to see that the course is having such a positive impact in the wider community.

St. Malachy's & Belfast Royal Academy Partnership



TAMHI is a mental health charity based in North Belfast. Our partnership first became involved through the Year 13 Enrichment programme. The timetables in the partner schools were mirrored so that shared enrichment could take place.

“Schools in the Community” is a very successful programme that has worked with over 200 young people in St Malachys and BRA since 2015. It is a good relations and resilience development-based programme. TAMHI trains the young people in Youth Leadership and Mental Wealth Games. These initiatives support children’s positive mental health and anti-bullying strategies through play. TAMHI also incorporates good relations work. The young people explore identity, division and discrimination and they are encouraged to share ideas for making society a better place to live. The young people study the links between their surroundings and their own emotional wellbeing.

In turn, these young leaders have applied their skills and delivered mental health based games and activities within their schools and within the local primary schools in North Belfast. These were extremely well received by the younger participants and their teachers. The St. Malachy’s / BRA pupils were credited as being a very positive influence on the EHWP of children in the local community. Over the course of the programme, pupils who begin as shy or reticent to engage emerge into inspirational leaders who can facilitate a mental health or PE session for 100s of other children.

Over the years we have evidence of a significant impact on skills and wellbeing using the Warwick Edinburgh wellbeing scale and the LORIC (Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative and Communication) Skills wheel with all average scores in the high 60s progressing to the high 80s and 90s. Many of the young people have used their work with TAMHI to secure University places and part time jobs.

Both TAMHI and St. Malachy’s College / BRA are extremely proud of the success of this scheme. It benefits both the participants and the primary school pupils in the wider community, by creating a safe and enjoyable space for young people to focus on developing their emotional wellbeing and resilience.

Making friendships that last a lifetime Knockloughrim & St Brigid’s Primary Schools

Knockloughrim and St Brigid’s Primary Schools have a long standing relationship in the Mid Ulster area. The schools have been partners even before Shared Education started and the partnership between the schools has been enhanced further by Shared Education. All year groups from P1 to P7 meet up as part of the programme, with friendships developing from an early age. Many friendships have continued even after pupils have moved on to Post Primary School.

The partnership embraces the local community with the annual P7 Fairtrade Coffee Morning with a joint choir being a real highlight. The Primary 7 pupils really look forward to our annual shared residential trip. The restrictions during the 2020/21 sadly have put events on hold, however last March just before the onset of Home Learning the P7 pupils could still take part and enjoy their residential as planned. With so many events cancelled it was such a relief that our P7 pupils could spend a few days together enjoying each other’s company and developing as people together.



We, like everyone, look forward to the day when we can again meet together and enjoy our community events.

‘Going for Gold’ Hill Croft & Rosstulla Primary Schools

In October 2018 the Hill Croft and Rosstulla partnership had the amazing opportunity to work with Jenny Mosley, the renowned pioneer of circle time and strategies for developing positive behaviour and happier schools. Staff from both schools attended a joint development session at the Corrs Corner hotel where Jenny shared her knowledge and expertise on the key concepts of Circle time and Golden time. Staff learned how these could facilitate a whole school approach on developing positive behaviours and relationships within the school setting. Jenny also then spent a day in each school, working with staff and pupils to give valuable practical guidance on how the strategies could be most beneficially used in each setting. The principals of the Golden rules were then implemented and pupils have benefited from Golden time and Circle time activities regularly to build their self-esteem and develop their communication and conflict resolution skills.

Laura Matchett, principal of Rosstulla said, “The training allowed us to develop and implement a whole school positive behaviour approach in line with our school behaviour policy. Using circle time as a tool to develop the core values of the golden rules has been very beneficial to our whole school community”.

Following the training key stage 2 pupils from each school took part in a Shared Education literacy project focusing on ‘circle time’. The classes enjoyed playing a variety of fun circle time games, going on trips to the cinema and the Mac to see ‘The Elves and the Shoe Maker’ and doing art activities based on Kandinsky’s work.

Cara McCoey one of the project teachers from Rosstulla said “I would say that the Shared Education project most definitely developed our children’s social, emotional and personal skills. The increased focus on circle time meant that as a staff we became more competent at delivering effective and high quality circle time experiences.” While her counterpart Jenny McAllister from Hill Croft said “I love circle time and this training was great at helping staff understand the key principles of circle time and to gain some proper training in the area. It also allowed staff from both schools to think through different ideas for different age groups and to implement it in their classrooms.” Jessica one of the pupils who took part in the project said “Circle time is fun, I love the games we play and the way we all listen to each other.”



A Royal Visit

Lurgan Junior High School & St Ronan’s College Lurgan



On 22nd May 2019, pupils involved in the Key Stage 3 partnership between Lurgan Junior High School and St Ronan’s College Lurgan had the privilege of being invited to Brownlow House in Lurgan for an afternoon with HRH Prince Charles.

Prince Charles was on his third and final day of his Royal visit when he visited Brownlow House to meet groups involved in local community relations projects.

Pupils from Lurgan Junior High School and St Ronan’s College Lurgan performed a joint medley of songs and music, which culminated in a joint performance of Ulster Scots and Irish dancing.

After being thoroughly entertained, Prince Charles spent time speaking with pupils and staff about the performances and their experiences of the Shared Education Project.

This experience encapsulated the success of the 2018/2019 year for the Key Stage 3 Lurgan partnership, which saw 412 students engaged in 40 activities across 8 projects. This unique experience will be fondly remembered for years to come by students and staff alike.



Shared Creative Flair from Derryhale & St. Oliver Plunkett's Primary Schools

Pupils, parents and staff from Derryhale and St. Oliver Plunkett's Primary Schools enjoyed showcasing their artwork at the Millennium Court Arts Centre in Portadown recently, where they held an art exhibition celebrating the culture in their local area.

This event was an opportunity to display the pupils' work and for parents and friends of each school to come together to enjoy the artistic skill and flair from both school communities.

It was a culmination of months of hard work from the pupils and staff who have enjoyed working together for many years and an opportunity to celebrate their shared local area. Having fun and learning from each other, as well as exploring our shared community has always been the focus of our activities together so we felt this was an ideal way to promote our partnership!

P1-3 focused on a local orchard, which they visited to stimulate their creative juices! They made apple prints and painted blossoms onto canvas.

P4/5 followed the Gargoyle Trail in Armagh then created their own versions of clay gargoyles. Each was beautifully presented on its own plinth!

P6/7, having visited both the Catholic and Church of Ireland Cathedrals in Armagh, were stimulated by the beauty of these ecclesiastical buildings and developed their own stained-glass windows.

Our shared school communities were very proud that their work was worthy to be exhibited in a local art gallery. We're sure from the photos you will agree!



St. Mary's PS Aughnacloy & Aughnacloy P.S.



Our partnership is one which is built upon years of hard work. While in the past, our programme involved our children learning together, in neutral venues, facilitated by outside agencies, we feel that one of our greatest strengths as a partnership, has been our smooth transition to inhouse programmes delivered by the teachers in our own schools.

The teachers, from both schools, have availed of the wide and varied TPL module opportunities afforded through the SESP. The learning from these courses has allowed us to develop and embed a series of lesson plans for each Key Stage in the school allowing the children to undertake innovative and engaging shared education lessons throughout their school life.

One such series of lessons is our art series that was created for our KS1 children. Having undertaken the TPL module 'Embedding Shared Education through Art and Design' with the inspiring Vine Haw, the KS1 teachers created a lesson series based on autumn, which we deliver yearly. These lessons begin by affording the children time to reacquaint themselves with each other following their FS play-based programme. We build in plenty of opportunities for games based on exploring our similarities and differences prior to undertaking any artwork. The children also share play time on the days of the art lessons.

The children explore many different art techniques throughout the course of the lessons while employing a range of different medium. This allows for a wonderful art display to be created in each school to celebrate the children's work. The children always select our outdoor art lesson as being a particular highlight of the art series. This lesson is based on the work of Andy Goldsworthy who creates outdoor art using natural materials. In this lesson, the children work in teams to create a piece of art using the materials in the natural environment. The art is displayed outside until mother nature comes along and wrecks it!!! The children always talk with such enthusiasm about their participation in this lesson and it is true that anyone visiting our school on this day would be unable to tell which school the children are from; such is their level of engagement and co-operation with each other.

The series of art lessons concludes with a visit to a local art gallery to view the work of a local artist. To conclude the last series of lessons in November 2019, the local artist came and met the children during the gallery visit and answered their questions about his art and how he became an artist. As the children move on through school and into KS2 they continue to undertake shared lessons based on WAU and ICT. While our shared education lessons are delivered through many different subject areas, we are always mindful of promoting the aims of reconciliation. We encourage our children to be respectful and curious and to build relationships that are based on trust and mutual respect.

Shared Education Trip to Titanic Centre Belfast St. Mary's PS Brookeborough & Brookeborough Controlled PS

Last March 2020, both schools shared a bus and a thoroughly enjoyable school trip to the Titanic centre in Belfast. The group consisted of P6 and P7 children and the staff consisted of teachers and classroom assistants from both schools. Prior to the school trip, the children had been learning about the Titanic topic in school in conjunction with the 'World Around Us' Revised Curriculum. It became evident very quickly that there was an innate curiosity about the Titanic among pupils and every pupil was fully engaged and genuinely interested in the Titanic Tour.

We were greeted by a Titanic tour guide and provided with individual headphones to enable us to hear all the information provided by the tour guide as we made our way around the building. The children mixed very well together as they were split into random groups to see different parts of the building at alternate times. As staff/supervisors, we were very pleased at the end of the tour when the tour guide praised us highly on the relevant and interesting questions that pupils from both our schools has asked about the Titanic. The children were so engrossed in the tour and the Virtual interactive activities and several of our pupils described the trip as 'one of the best trips ever.'



Polish Day at Bush PS

Primary 3 had a brilliant Shared Education day with Primary 3 children from Windmill IPS. Ms Agnieszka Kawalec, a parent of one of our P3 pupils, visited our school to help us learn more about Poland.

Agnieszka had an early start to her day as she prepared a traditional Polish Christmas dinner for all of us to sample. She came with lots of delicious dishes, including soup, dumplings and ginger bread. The children were so excited to try the different dishes. We had fun locating Poland on a world map, then on a map of Europe as we looked at the Countries around Poland. The children enjoyed learning Polish facts and words as well as making Polish flags.

Other pupils in our school, with Polish backgrounds, helped Agnieszka to answer our questions about Poland and even sang us a Polish song! It was so good we asked them to sing it again! You can see from the photographs that the children, and staff, thoroughly enjoyed a fabulous day.

Huge thanks to Agnieszka, it definitely wouldn't have been the same without her.

We look forward to several more International days.



Lithuanian Day with Windmill Integrated Primary School

Windmill Integrated Primary School held a 'Lithuanian Day' for Primary 3. Everyone had lots of fun learning about Lithuania from Lima (parent of a Windmill IPS pupil) and Viktoriya (parent of a Bush PS pupil). They taught us about where Lithuania is in Europe, their culture, language and food. The children thoroughly enjoyed tasting all the lovely samples that were kindly provided for them. They also particularly enjoyed seeing and feeling pieces of amber (Lithuanian gold) and making designs on eggs. In Lithuania, at Easter, children wrap eggs up in colourful flowers and onion skins then boil them to produce beautiful designs.



Under the Hawthorne Tree Collaborative Project

Holy Family Primary School & Omagh County Primary School

Year 7 pupils from Holy Family Primary School and Omagh County Primary School were learning all about the Irish famine through 'World Around Us' and by reading their class novel 'Under the Hawthorn Tree' by Marita Conlon-McKenna in Literacy.

To enrich their experience and understanding of this topic, P7 pupils participated in a school-based collaborative art project to create clay houses and drawing Irish Famine scenes with local artist Trevor Verner.

Aoife, from Holy Family PS, said she felt very relaxed doing the art and loved working in a group with her friend Emily from Omagh County because she "helped me with the clay when the walls of my house collapsed!"

Ethan, from Omagh County, loved "taking part" in the pencil workshop with Trevor. "I learned a few tips from Trevor about how to add shadows and tone to my picture."

Yr 6 Teacher at Holy Family PS, Mrs Claire Keogh enthusiastically spoke about the teamwork, motivation and participation of all pupils involved. She also merits the project's "valuable curriculum links" on the study of the Irish Famine and class novel as pupils also participated in novel related maths challenges and literacy tasks online.



Knocknagin PS & Desertmartin PS

'Why build walls, when we can build bridges?'

In our partnership, until this year, we had reached a stage where weekly shared classes take place in both schools for a good part of the year and this was very much routine. Pupils had become confident enough in either location to regard it as important to share their 'news' with staff in the 'other' school as much as their own. We had for the last few years therefore been seeking to develop wider links, between parents and the wider community.

P5-7 pupils and their teachers undertook a 'mini enterprise' as part of their shared activities, where the children worked in groups to plan and prepare for a Bake Sale in aid of a charity or charities of the pupils' choice. This then enabled pupils, staff & their families along with the wider community to become involved, whether through their attendance and/or in contributing items for sale. All aspects of this were very well supported and generous donations have been made to charity. In the context of a village where the very layout of homes is quite segregated, an opportunity for people to meet outside their usual social groups is rare indeed and it was heartening to see how enthusiastically this was supported.

One of the local churches invited the 2 schools, for Christmas 2018 and 2019, to take part in an open air community carol service where pupils sang together, a teacher from each school read & all those attending were invited back to the church hall for refreshments afterwards. Both years, the church ran competitions to encourage participation. In a village where for many years there was, as parents put it, 'no mixing' & frequently significant community tension this was completely overwhelming (in a good way!) for many people. We very much appreciated this church taking the initiative in such a way as it was a huge step in many ways and meant a great deal to adults who took part (the children of course were blissfully unaware it was about much more than Christmas).

Staff in both schools were asked what they felt were 'highlights' of the programme overall, answers were very similar, with the emphasis being on the benefit of widening relationships across and between both school communities as well as in the wider community. Teachers also commented on their appreciation of new friendships.

In terms of benefits to teaching and learning, all staff felt a lot gained by the widening of social contacts and contexts for pupils which allowed pupils to gain confidence and independence in a 'safe' setting. Specified planning time also facilitates creativity! There is also the very practical fact of 'two (or more) heads being better than one' which allowed for sharing of resources, knowledge & expertise as well as very valuable mutual support. All of this extended far beyond the context of shared classes.

Markethill PS & St. Patrick's PS, Crossmaglen

Prior to the current pandemic of 2020, primary 6 pupils of Markethill Primary School and St. Patrick's P.S Crossmaglen enjoyed an extremely enjoyable series of lessons incorporating the strands of Literacy and ICT.

Thanks to the support of the Shared Education Signature project both schools were able to purchase a number of programmable 'Spheros' robots. These unique lessons were based on Berlie Doherty's superb novel, 'Street Child', whose vivid characters provided an excellent vehicle for pupils to explore the harsh reality of life in Victorian Britain. Doherty transports the pupils back to a time when children would rather choose a life on the street to one in the grim conditions of the workhouse.

Like all good shared education meetings, our lessons began with active ice-breakers incorporating team sports challenges. These set the tone for working and achieving together, having fun and more importantly allowing pupils to rekindle friendships of old.

Once divided into smaller groups, a carousel structure was employed to allow pupils to experience a range of 'hands on' activities. Key moments of the story were brought to life by pupils through dramatic re-enactments including elements of freeze framing and hot seating.

As meetings continued, learning shifted to using the 'Spheros', which were used to depict Jim Jarvis, one of the main characters in the story. His physical journey was traced throughout the book as pupils undertook to show the same on a bird's eye view map. That was the easy part. Using an iPad application children then took to the challenge of setting the Spheros a series of commands that would guide 'Jim' safely across the map, avoiding the snares of the less formidable characters in the story such as Grimy Nick, a harsh, drunken task-master.

True to form, many pupils displayed their programming prowess, and capably changed roles to technology leaders, sharing their knowledge and skills with their peers (and teachers!).

Throughout the unit of work planned and taught by teachers from Markethill and St. Patrick's Primary Schools, the themes of 'hardship, resilience, friendship and hope' were front and central in every lesson. Such concepts of course can be explored in our separate schools, but how much more relevant was the impact of these lessons by learning together in a collective, with the value added skills of 'learning to learn' together. We have now had an absence of shared classes for the best part of a year. Pupils and staff in Markethill and Crossmaglen certainly look forward to the return of normality, and with that, more fun adventures in learning and playing together.

Maguiresbridge Controlled PS & St. Mary's PS



Maguiresbridge Controlled Primary School and St. Mary's have always had a good tradition of partnership from EMU days to CRED and now through Shared Education. We are delighted that our school communities involving all staff and children from Year 1 to Year 7, engage collaboratively with learning experiences incorporating a variety of curricular areas.

Year 1 children boosted their Numeracy skills using Numicon together as well as developing friendships through joint play date sessions. Year 2 enhanced their Literacy skills by expressing themselves through Autumn and Winter poetry as well as attending an exciting Halloween Ball at the beautiful Florence court House. Year 3 released their creative talents through music and collaboratively working together on Art tasks resulting in fine festive Christmas decorations. Year 4 and 5 enriched their knowledge about their wider community by engaging in Young Enterprise 'Our City' and 'Our World'. Whilst Year 6 and 7 enjoyed working as part of a team and applying skills through 'Business Beginnings' developing increased employability knowledge, skills and aspirations....You never know maybe the next Lord Sugar could be upon us!!!

Another initiative that proved successful for our wider community was the involvement of PSNI/Kids Court where Year 7 children learnt about road safety and were able to challenge driver behaviour in their local community. An end of year trip to Todd's Leap for a fun filled adventure day was a highlight for pupils and staff alike, to celebrate and value great friendships made through our wonderful working partnership.



Great satisfaction comes from sharing with others!



Moat PS & St Ronan's PS, Lisnaskea

Not only have pupils in both these schools been working hard in school through Shared Education lessons, the Parents, Friends and Teachers Association have also been engaging in Shared Education.

The PTFA's have joined forces to develop and work with the schools to benefit and involve all businesses and everyone in the community.

The first event held was a scarecrow trail, where local businesses displayed a scarecrow in their windows and children got to walk through the town and vote for their favourite.

During the 1st lockdown through Shared Education, we created a large display of Art work in the town as shown by the pictures, this was a great success and created a focal point within the town and raised people's spirits and hope.

During lock-down together the PTFA's applied to the Community Foundation for funding to support our families and we created a kid's pantry with our local supermarket. We have been successful again for this during the 2nd period of school closure to receive more funding to support our families.

We are currently working on a 'friendship project' during this current period of lockdown where families can create a piece of art work and share with someone they haven't seen due to lockdown, art work will then be displayed on both schools' websites.



St John the Baptist PS & Edenderry PS



St John the Baptist and Edenderry P.S. have shared cross community links for over 30 years. Both schools now have had ALL classes involved in shared activities.

We have taken a systematic and progressive approach to delivery – building slowly with the acceptance and accordance of all the stakeholders.

Piloting projects to ensure things were accepted by groups - to allow us to refer to other piloted year group work as a guarantee to assure any pre conceived fears. We now address our parents with a joint letter and a united front approach.

The P7 pupils from both schools undertook a WAU topic The Famine. A topic that allowed both sets of pupils to explore their shared past. Pupils took part in joint shared lessons in both schools simultaneously.

We chose a deliberately contentious area of shared History to address issues of pre conception and division.

Primary 5 pupils returned to the Peoples' Park this year. This was a celebration of a shared space. During the visit pupils studied the local trees and collected seeds to plant. The idea is hopefully to swap seedlings and plant these in the school grounds as another shared space.

Teachers and Staff have been brought along with joint training programmes, shared CPD days and clearly outlined shared documentation on all SE.



St. John's PS & Eden PS

Shared Education has many purposes and as a partnership St. John's PS and Eden PS fulfil these in abundance; delivering educational benefits and promoting equality being just two.

2020/21 is our sixth year of partnership and has developed from only one-year group's participation to all year groups across all Key Stages. As we have embedded Shared Education within our school communities we have seen positive relationships and friendships form and grow.

One of the many highlights of our partnership is our joint Sports and celebration day; all pupils participate in mixed age and ability teams to compete in an action packed day. This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase our educational highlights from the year whilst promoting equality in all activities we undertake.

Other highlights include pupils becoming aware of different cultural traditions within both schools including the use of different prayers, celebrations and language alongside sharing in Christmas productions and celebratory events. This year pupils have planned to facilitate shared School Council meetings; encouraging pupil voice within school life and Shared Education.



Aghadrumsee PS, St Macartan's PS & St. Tierney's PS



Staff, pupils and parents from Aghadrumsee Primary School, St Macartan's Primary School and St. Tierney's Primary School have a long standing partnership from 2009. Shared Education is the collaboration of the three school communities where children are given the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and experiences to enable them to make informed choices and contribute positively to an increasingly diverse and inclusive society. At the heart of everything, children are developing their educational attainment alongside developing stronger and mutually beneficial cross-community partnerships.

The children of our partnership have had the opportunity to participate in many activities. Fun, inclusive learning environments were created where pupils developed their Literacy, Numeracy, ICT and STEM skills.

2018 was the partnerships most adventurous year, almost 200 pupils across the partnership participated in Shared Education activities. These activities included active mental maths, problem solving using Izak 9, story time and play in Foundation Stage, drama activities, a STEM programme and developing film and animation skills through use of the ipad.

Developing pupil film and animation skills through the use of the ipad was particularly successful. Staff from the three partnership schools were upskilled on specific apps. Pupils were taught how to use book creator, imovie and garageband. Tasks set not only developed pupil's ICT skills but literacy and numeracy as well. Pupils from Year 4, 5, 6 and 7 were taught how to develop their film and animation skills through the use of the ipad.

Pupils gained intrinsic motivation for the tasks set as they were encouraged to incorporate their own interests and materials into these tasks. As part of their project pupils worked together to choose a short story or poem and then recorded them reading it, adding animation to match what they said. Pupils edited their film, using appropriate ICT tools and features to improve their created piece of work and then presented it to the rest of the pupils.

Through this programme of work pupils got to know each other, fostered trusting relationships, they learned about each other in a trusting environment and developed not only mutual respect for one another but developed firm friendships.

Enniskillen Model PS & St. Patrick's PS, Mullanaska



Both Enniskillen Model Primary School and St. Patrick's Primary School, Mullanaska set out on an ambitious Shared Education plan in 2019. It was agreed that they would endeavour to participate in Enniskillen's annual Saint Patrick's Day Parade with both schools designing and sharing a float. Each year there is an established theme and in 2019 this was, 'Go Green for '19' relating to ecological/environmental issues.

The co-ordinators Mrs. McCartney (Enniskillen Model P.S.) and Mrs. O'Connor (St. Patrick's P.S., Mullanaska) mobilised their respective Parent Teacher Associations. Each week, for at least 6 weeks prior to the event, the joint P.T.A met up weekly and planned how the float would look, who would supervise each section as well as organising a walking parade behind the float. Together, they used recycled materials to create an ecological 'garden' on the float. They made flowers, recycling bins, a wormery, a bug hotel as well as many other related things.

Whilst there was a focus on the environmental science aspect, the main agenda of the exercise was to develop relationships and push boundaries for both schools in terms of children, P.T.A, teachers, co-ordinators and parents. This was a brave but hugely worthwhile and well supported venture on the part of the schools.

On the actual day of the Parade, everyone had a wonderful time. Both principals attended as well as many other staff and parents from the two schools. The floats were also judged. Of course, there could only have been one winner in terms of hard work, aesthetics and by looking at the much bigger issues such as values education!

Both schools are very proud of this joint venture. It marked a significant progression in their partnership which first began in 2007. Tentatively, they moved from the former Education for Mutual Understanding programme into Shared Education where joint classes, joint bake sales, joint choirs, joint school councils, joint school trips formed the focus and programme for many years. These were all given high credit during three Education and Training Inspectorate visits.

After this solid foundation, both schools ventured into more cautious territory exploring each tradition's shared past in a more explicit way. The culmination of which in 2019 was this shared event. The venture was communicated to the local media where its successes were shared to a wider audience. It defined a time in both schools' Shared Education journey which is rooted in trust, respect, camaraderie and progress.

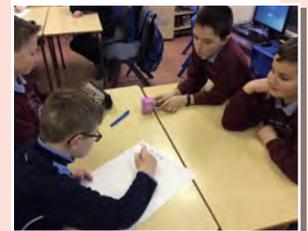
Woods PS & St. Trea's PS Celebrate Positive Links with Families

Our Shared Education Project began in September 2015 with a focus on establishing positive links between the schools, pupils and parents. We embarked on developing a joint PDMU scheme to help the children to develop both as individuals and as members of a community. Alongside this we also wanted to support each other in curriculum development projects. The children enjoyed participating in Problem Solving and Thinking Skill tasks, Creative Writing, Science and Technology projects and Sporting Events. The Foundation classes had great fun playing together and making new friends.

The biggest challenge that we faced was thinking of creative ways to involve the parents and the wider community. During the first year we held a Curriculum Information Evening on Maths. It went well but we wanted to encourage more parents to get involved so we decided to include the children in the events.

We held a 'Science Show' led by Sue McGrath. This was greatly enjoyed by everyone. Parents attended from both schools and enjoyed some refreshments together after the show.

Our next initiative was to organise a 'Family fun afternoon' where children and parents participated together in sporting activities with Paul Logan Tennis and a drumming workshop with Fun with Drums. This was a great success! The sun shone, everyone had fun and we even learned a few new skills! Parents were relaxed and enjoyed the event. This Fun Afternoon became an annual event for us as a way of celebrating at the end of the school year.



Fivemiletown Partnership supports NI Air Ambulance



Fivemiletown's Shared Education Partnership (comprising Fivemiletown Primary School, St Mary's Primary School and Fivemiletown Nursery) held a number of very successful sponsored events to raise money towards the work of the N.I. Air Ambulance in October 2018.

The P1-P2 children from both primary schools enjoyed a range of fun games and activities at Fivemiletown Primary school.

Meanwhile the P3 to P7 classes, from both primary schools, visited Fivemiletown College to participate in a Mini Olympics morning where the children received tuition from the College's staff and then had a go at a range of running, jumping and throwing events. They each got to sprint 70m, run the middle distance event of 400m and then try out the long jump. This was followed by the throwing events of the shot put and javelin. There was a scheduled break where they got to rest and socialise whilst enjoying a healthy piece of fruit, kindly sponsored by the Co-Op in Fivemiletown.

Shared Education Co-ordinator Mr Bloomfield commented, 'The children thoroughly enjoyed trying out these new athletic events and also meeting up with their friends from the neighbouring school. They were very enthusiastic about supporting the work of the N.I. Air Ambulance, after the visit of Mr Rodney Connor to both schools a few weeks ago. We would also like to thank the staff and pupils of Fivemiletown College for all their assistance with the running of the event.'

Fivemiletown Nursery enjoyed a sponsored art project led by Mrs Linda Boyd and assisted by P7 pupils from both primary schools. They created a painting of the N.I. Air Ambulance which was on display in the Nursery school. The Partnership schools would like to thank the kindness and generosity of the local community in supporting their efforts and were delighted to announce the total money raised was £2745.



Drumahoe PS,

Glendermott PS

& St Columb's Park House

Pupils and parents from Drumahoe PS and Glendermott PS took part in various outdoor learning events, facilitated by our community partner, St Columb's Park house.

Outdoor learning activities included making fat balls, bird feeders, going on nature trails, decorating pots, planting and making bark name badges for our club. The children played with frisbees and enjoyed the great outdoors. The children were learning, being creative, developing mindfulness, while engaging in the sensory activities, as well as gaining health benefits and working together. They tended and cared for their seeds and showed respect for each other and the environment.

Pupils planted apple trees in St Columb's Park House walled garden, as well as trees being donated to both school grounds as part of a scheme to share fruit trees to the community.

Parents and grandparents became involved and that added to the activities and allowed us to develop further community connections. Within our partnership, we see this as a valuable opportunity to bring parents together with their children thus involving them in their children's learning as well as reinforcing the values of Shared Education.



The News Shed! Cooley PS, Sixmilecross & St Oliver Plunkett PS, Beragh

In what has proved a positive move Cooley Primary School, Sixmilecross and St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, Beragh have been involved in Shared Education since the academic year 2015/2016. In its first tentative steps a small number of classes took part but as the 'sharing' experience developed successfully there was a focus on nursery, foundation stage and key stage one pupils working together in shared sessions. The programme has provided many opportunities for the children in both schools to have positive experiences in learning and in more social capacities. It has been great to see children grow as friends and develop positive relationships. Staff from partner schools have also worked together in planning, teaching and evaluating as well as key co-ordinators meeting together to share good practice. This is a sample of our shared education newsletter that is circulated to parents and families on a regular basis.

Year 1 children participated in sessions of Shared Education through play-based learning, art, music and PDMU. Children developed their creative skills and were able to explore their similarities and differences in a practical and fun way. The play-based learning focused on the topics of Space and Fairy Tales through which children had the opportunity to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. All pupils enjoyed playing and working together and looked forward to meeting up with their new friends each week.

Year 2 children participated in sessions of Shared Education through play and story-telling. The play-based learning focused around the topic of Space and children had the opportunity to role-play, use their imagination to create structures relevant to the topic, engage in writing and construction activities linked to this topic. Children had the opportunity to learn about who, where and what happened over their time together, developing their oral, communication and group work skills. In the final session all groups presented their own stories orally to the rest of the class. All children interacted well and feedback from both children and parents was very positive.



St Colmcille's PS, Carrickmore, McClintock PS, Seskinore & Roscavey PS, Beragh



The schools which are in the sixth year of the SESP partnership have in reality been developing links long for many years. Initially, the focus was on promoting fun and less contentious activities and building trust between the pupils, staff and parents.

External facilitators in neutral venues such as the Speedwell Trust and were used in those early days, however, we were also aware that we had considerable expertise within the schools themselves and the programme provided opportunities for staff to develop our own tailor-made programmes, Activity-based learning in Science, Numeracy Outdoor play, Maths Trails, drama, music and art activities were organised in the schools.

Supporting children with additional needs was another agreed priority and liaising with the Western Health Trust we secured the support of a Speech & Language Therapist to support staff, pupils and parents. In addition, our Educational psychologist presented training for staff and parents.

As the partnership schools spanned a distance of eleven miles between the schools the implications for travel costs were significant. We are committed to the preparing pupils well for their next stage of education and the diverse world of life and work through their knowledge, understanding and skills in reconciliation.

To this end, the PSNI presented workshops for pupils and parents on Internet safety and local politicians assisted in the organisation of events for our pupil councils in Omagh Council Chamber and at Stormont. Our commitment to the PATHS programme empowered the children to develop the fundamental social and emotional learning skills which will enable them to make positive choices throughout life and to explore issues such as identity, our similarities and differences, our shared beliefs and commitment to contribute to the development of a more secure and peaceful society.

St. Bronagh's PS, Rostrevor & Dromore Road PS, Warrenpoint

St. Bronagh's Primary School, Rostrevor and Dromore Road Primary School, Warrenpoint have a long history of Shared Education, and over the years, have developed positive working relationships and friendships. The schools began a sharing education programme many years ago through Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU), followed by the Schools Community Relations Programme (SCRIP), then through the Primary Curriculum Partnership Programme (PCPP) and currently, continue to strengthen their relationship with assistance from the Shared Education Signature Project.

In the 2019-20 academic year, they embarked on an exciting project, to link and build on their Shared Education practice, by working in collaboration with the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council School Partnership Programme. Funding from the Warrenpoint Municipal Parks Heritage Lottery contributed to their Shared Education programme. The Warrenpoint Municipal Park was used to enhance the children's learning experiences by engaging with their local community. The focus of this learning was on 'Biodiversity' in the local area and 'History, Reminiscence and Heritage' which included intergenerational interviews and living history workshops.

In term 1 of the 2019-20 academic year, the theme of the shared work was the Environment and Biodiversity. Over the course of 4 shared sessions, Years 2-5 from Dromore Road Primary School and Year 2 & 3 from St Bronagh's Primary School met in Warrenpoint park. In the first session the children found out all about mini-beasts and were involved in a mini-beast hunt and making mini-beast hotels to install in the park and bring back to school. Birds was the theme of the second session, this involved a murder mystery task in which the children had to identify the potential dangers to robins in the environment as well as a bird scavenger hunt. In session 3 they found out about recycling. The children enjoyed making a pencil case from an empty cereal box. The final week was based on the theme of trees. The children gathered leaves in the park, went on a leaf identification hunt and got some seeds ready for planting in the spring.

In term 2 Year 7 from St. Bronagh's Primary School and Years 6&7 Dromore Road Primary School participated in a collective memory project. This was an intergenerational project whereby children conducted interviews with members of the local community asking about their memories of the park over the years. The children worked with AmmA to produce an audio visual, combining footage of the interviews, photographs and artwork. The results of their work can be seen on the Discover Northern Ireland website. <https://discovernorthernireland.com/whats-on/warrenpoint-municipal-park-collective-memories-for-ehod-2020-p744801>

Also in term 2 Year 5 from St. Bronagh's Primary School and Years 4 & 5 from Dromore Road Primary School were involved in a project looking at old Warrenpoint. They had a tour of some of the historical buildings in Warrenpoint and looked at the history and creation of the park and how tourism developed in Warrenpoint. Unfortunately, due to the onset of the Covid 19 global pandemic they were only able to complete 3 of their 5 sessions before the schools closed. As a result of the school



closures, the remaining classes didn't get the opportunity to take part in this wonderful project. Hopefully, when the pandemic passes and life returns to normal the Partnership will be able to resume their relationship with the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, School Partnership Programme and complete their planned work together.

The schools believe this programme has helped to raise the profile of the partnership and make it visible within the local community. They are very thankful to Joanne Cummins and Rodney Mc Bride from the School Partnership Programme for their excellent organisation and support.

SHARED EDUCATION CONFERENCE Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown

The Cookstown Partnership was invited to attend this conference to showcase examples of high quality work produced in their schools during SE activities. We were very proud to be there to represent the staff and children of the 3 schools. It was a great occasion to have our work acknowledged and held up as good practice in Shared Education.



Fidelma Walls, Hilary Reid and Cherith Martin

Academy Primary School & Holy Family Primary School

Partnership links between Academy Primary School and Holy Family Primary School extend over a period of 25 years. "The Friendship Tree" was used in the early days of EMU (Education for Mutual Understanding Programme) to celebrate pupil and school achievements in the local community. Our schools frequently took the tree around community groups and presented it, allowing the community to recognise our close links, mutual respect, individual and joint achievements. EMU was soon firmly embedded within both schools. We embraced the programme fully forging links with the children from P4-7 through varied educational experiences and visits.

Once funding ended our Partnership explored other avenues of funding to keep Shared Education alive! PACT (Promoting a Culture of Trust) and CRED (Community Relations Equality and Diversity) were two initiatives we were involved in to maintain links. These promoted sport, mutual understanding and encouraged connections to the local and wider community.

Since then Shared Education has continued to evolve and teachers have worked collaboratively and strived to create safe, high quality teaching and learning opportunities where pupils are stimulated and lessons are linked to the NI Curriculum. Through 'Signature Project', Shared Education has provided funding that has helped to embed our shared links across the curriculum and to building and sustaining friendships among our pupils and staff.

In recent years ICT, WAU, STEM and MUSIC have been the main areas of curricular focus which links the work done within Shared Education to our School Development Plans. 'Pupil Voice' is paramount in the planning process at the beginning of each new academic year for all year groups. It has helped to support the planning, implementation and evaluation of Shared Education over the years.

We are going to take you through our Shared Education journey which has been beneficial to both schools in developing learning and teaching of WAU (World Around Us) and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). Our pathways have enabled us to make good friends and develop a mutual respect and cultural understanding of one another through the medium of our WAU topics.

As a Partnership we have had many exciting and meaningful experiences.

Let us take you on our journey...

Pleased to meet you! Primary 4 meet for the first time... Primary 4 and 5 classes enjoy getting to know each other through games, quizzes, and bingo! Primary 5 created Power Point Presentations on 'All About Me' as a way of introductions.

Both Primary 4 and 5 have also been involved in Science and Technology Workshops to enhance skills in STEM. This workshop was delivered by Sentinus and gave children a 'hands on' experience to create and make movable toys.

They have also had the opportunity to develop our link as 'Eco-Schools' and took part in workshops to make reusable wallets from tetra juice cartons. This gave children the chance to think about the relationship between Waste and our Planet and to



think about ways in which they can recycle and reuse materials in a creative and innovative way. Primary 4 have also enjoyed exchanging evacuee letters after exploring a shared novel: 'My Best Friend the Evacuee', which links well to their WAU topic about WW2.

Hotwires Kits were purchased with Shared Education funding and have been instrumental in developing children's coding skills to create circuits which links well to the STEM aspect of the curriculum.

As part of their topic about 'The Vikings' Primary 6 children visited Down County Museum to experience life as a Viking. They dressed up in traditional Viking clothes, listened to stories about everyday Viking life, held replica jewellery, pottery and weapons. The children also got to recreate Rune stones using clay.

Lego has also been a vital corner stone for developing WAU. We have used this as a resource to make models of The Titanic, Egyptian Pyramids, Victorian streets, buildings from the local area. Primary 7 children have also made Lego models to create animations which have helped to develop skills in UIC.

Pupils from St Mary's PS Tempo & Tempo Primary School participate in Sport for Peace



Lisnasharragh PS, Cregagh PS & St Bernard's PS

In September 2019 Lisnasharragh Primary, Cregagh Primary and St. Bernard's Primary spent 4 fantastic days together at Mary Peters Track. At the track we took part in a community 'mini Olympics'. Each day was dedicated to a year group. Monday the 16th of September was for P7 children across the 3 schools, Tuesday was the P6 day, Wednesday was for P5 and finally finishing with Thursday for P4. During these days the children wore P.E kits and brought their lunches and snacks to fuel their body during the exciting activities. The Olympics activities consisted of relay, long jump, high jump, sprints, mini hurdles, javelin, shotput and long distance running. Each sporting event was taught to the children by a coach who was able to instruct and support the children during the activity. Every child got the opportunity to take part in each activity and learn new skills and techniques. At the end of each day the coaches got all the children into groups for the relay race activity. Finally, each day ended with an award ceremony. This was a fantastic week of sport and the weather was beautiful! The children had a blast and enjoyed seeing their friends from the other schools. Even some teachers and classroom assistants got involved in the activities. We will definitely organise another trip to Mary Peters as soon as we can!



Millburn PS & St Malachy's PS Shared Education Partnership

The central aim of our Shared Education project is to improve community relations in the Coleraine area which are centred on integrity, respect, compassion and collaboration. Through effective collaboration between our SE partnership and the Ulster University, under the umbrella of Shared Education, we aim to raise educational aspiration levels within our young people thus empowering them to pursue a university pathway in later life. Our objectives are mirrored in those outlined in the 'Five and Fifty Strategic Plan, Ulster University – Employment and Widening Access Objectives' *'Help to improve educational attainment and ambition particularly from communities that have previously been disengaged.'* The Year 5 and Year 6 students collaborated with 35 Primary PGCE teacher education students from the School of Education, Coleraine, in a number of Shared Education workshops exploring themes of Identity, Shared Spaces, Rights and The Child and Reconciliation through the following curriculum areas: ICT, PDMU, The Arts, Using Communication, Coding and STEM. This collaborative project enhanced the development of thinking skills, life skills and work skills for both our young people and PGCE students. It increased relationships with others through participative action and delivered educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources and ultimately enriched existing practice of community cohesion in the Coleraine area.



PGCE Primary modelled and demonstrated the ICT skills of animation and coding with the children of both schools. PGCE Primary students enabled the effective collaboration of both schools by illustrating their excellent communication and respectful integration of their various cultures and backgrounds.

Shauna McGill, PGCE Course Director, Ulster University, Coleraine.

Tullygally PS & Drumgor PS The relationship journey...



Tullygally PS and Drumgor PS have been working in partnership for 20+ years under different initiatives but over the past five years we have been involved in the SESP project. Drumgor PS has approx. 330 pupils and Tullygally PS has approx. 250, and before the pandemic every year group is involved in SE from Nursery to P7. Due to size difference of schools we have matched 1 class in Drumgor with corresponding class in Tullygally. Classes rotate each year so Drumgor pupils take part every other year. We were appointed to our roles as SE Co-ordinators in the middle of the second year of the project. When we began to work with each other in April 2017, we realised that there was significant work to be done.

We surveyed both school staffs, identified key areas of need and put evidence-based learning in place e.g. a focus on staff relationships. We both agreed that if the partnership was to become deep and meaningful, we needed to start building genuine relationships and that this needed to begin with staff, we needed to be the role models for the other stakeholders in the partnership; children, parents and the wider community.

We held a relationship development day for both schools in August 2017 and gave people the chance to discuss; what was working, what was not and how best to move forward. The open and honest forum developed a trust and respect that has served us well to date. We also enjoyed nice refreshments and laughter. It provided us with the information that we needed to make the necessary changes, which highlighted to staff that their views were valued. This day proved to be the catalyst for real growth.

In the year that followed, the relationships, quality of teaching and learning and overall strength of our partnership increased significantly. Most staff began looking forward to the shared sessions and working collaboratively, sharing experience, ideas, and resources. Our partnership began to work effectively at all levels and we began to share experiences and resources beyond the children's shared sessions.

We had shared training in a number of areas of mutual interest e.g. autism strategies, Numicon, IZak9, Mathletics, Positive Playgrounds, 2Simple. All this shared training strengthened relationships and ultimately benefited all learners.

A similar day was held in August 2018, with a particular emphasis on mindfulness, as we were planning to introduce an element of this into all shared sessions. This day was fantastic as not only could we plan moving forward, but we were able to celebrate just how far we had come in the previous year and how this had benefited all learners; most importantly, the children!

St Patrick's PS, Ballygalget & Kirkistown PS

Pupils in Primary 6 and Primary 7 from St Patrick's Primary School, Ballygalget and Kirkistown Primary School engaged in a 'Shared Future, Shared Goals' programme in partnership with the IFA and GAA to complement their PDMU project.

The ten week programme was packed with lots of fun filled activities and through team teaching with the specialised coaches, teachers became Learning Leaders and built capacity within the two partnership schools.

On alternate weeks the children visited each other's schools to enthusiastically participate in both class and practical activities. They became more aware of the importance of a healthy diet and active lifestyle and developed mental wellbeing and resilience strategies. The children worked well together in teams and were happy to showcase their learning at a celebratory event which was held at the end of the ten-week session.

This programme was a fantastic opportunity for our Primary 6 and Primary 7 children to develop their relationships and friendships within a PDMU focus, and the children certainly developed their understanding of different cultures and tradition within a sporting context. Teachers in our partnership schools are looking forward to delivering and extending this programme in the future.



Shared Schools, Shared Voices, Connected Communities!



St Patrick's and Windsor Hill Primary Schools have a longstanding tradition of working together which has entered its 4th decade! This successful partnership has only been strengthened through our involvement in the Shared Education Signature Project.

Since our successful application in 2015 we have rolled out a comprehensive programme which has impacted on the educational experiences of over 1000 children from both schools. The education opportunities that have been provided, through innovative and exciting lessons, have been down to the hardworking staff from both schools. Children continue to reap the rewards of Shared Education through programmes such as Accelerated Reader and Active Learn. These programmes, funded by Shared Education, continue to support staff and children as they aim to continually raise educational standards and attainment, albeit, ensuring the children's learning experiences are of the highest quality.

Our partnership ethos is routed in ensuring Shared Education develops and enriches the children's learning experiences holistically, covering all aspects of the curriculum. We were fortunate to be selected to participate in the 'Shared Future, Shared Goals' project which brought together the expertise from the Irish Football Association and Ulster GAA who delivered, in conjunction with school staff, a fantastic programme focusing on developing physical literacy and physical skills alongside educating pupils about the importance of sustaining health, growth and wellbeing.

The impact of the 'Shared Future, Shared Goals' project can best be described using the words of Cuán, he said, "I really did love the 'Shared Education Programme'. I enjoyed making new friends from Windsor Hill PS, discovering what things they liked to do in their spare time and what they were learning at school. I really liked the sporting event we all attended together, the teams were made up from St Patrick's and Windsor Hill. This was such fun as we all played together as one team and I liked to observe their strategies when playing football. It was such an enjoyable day." He summed up his experience stating, "When our locations kept us apart our schools drove us together!"

Our partnership also placed a strong emphasis on developing the children's creative and musical experiences. Both schools have extremely dedicated and passionate music coordinators who

looked to shared education as an opportunity to create a shared school choir and showcase the musical talents of our children. From their first practice it was clear to see that the children were as passionate about expressing themselves musically as their teachers. Our shared choirs showcased their talents initially internally, however, their reputation began to grow and it wasn't long before they were in high demand!

So much so that the choir has been invited to perform at the prestigious 'Newry Chamber of Commerce Ball' on an annual basis from 2017. They have provided the entertainment to over 650 guests at each annual charity event. The choir also spreads lots of 'Christmas Cheer' and has entertained shoppers at local Sainsbury's and Tesco Stores as well as securing a much sought after slot in the local Shopping Centre. As they say, 'good news travels fast' and that is certainly the case with our shared choir as they were commissioned to entertain customers in the local Bank of Ireland branch, Costa Coffee as well as commuters at Newry Train Station!

John, a pupil of Windsor Hill PS and a train enthusiast, shared his experiences about singing at the train station, "It was such an amazing experience. I loved being part of the shared choir and getting opportunities to sing in places like the train station. It makes school more enjoyable and fun!"

Miss Cullen, music coordinator from St. Patrick's, commented, "It was a fantastic experience for the Shared Choir. The pupils formed friendships and their excitement grew as we prepared for each performance. The positive comments from the community and the welcoming atmosphere we experienced at each event was amazing. We have really missed the experience of the Shared Choir this year due to the current circumstances and look forward to working together again hopefully in the near future."

As Beethoven himself eloquently said, 'Music can change the world' and in our case music has certainly opened up the classroom walls for our children and given them so many fantastic opportunities to spread happiness, cheer and see first-hand how working together can generate something magical! Both St. Patrick's and Windsor Hill look forward to continuing their shared experiences and are excited by what we can achieve, together!

Shared Education CLOSER Partnership Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, Annsborough Integrated PS & Castlewellaan PS

Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche and Annsborough Integrated Primary School, along with Castlewellaan Primary School, entered into the Shared Education Signature Project in the school year 2016/2017. Our partnership was unique as it combined three schools from three different sectors : Irish-Medium, Controlled and Integrated.

Máire, ICT Coordinator from Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche completed CLOSER training at C2K Ashfield with Roger Austin and Eamon McAteer in Term 3 2016/17. Donna, ICT Coordinator from AIPS completed CLOSER training in Term 1 2017/18.

With the overall focus of STEM and developing WAU, the Foundation Stage classes from all three schools came to Bunkers Hill, situated just behind Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, where we had an Easter Egg Hunt together, which was to be our introductory face-to-face activity in April 2017.

Máire and Donna went on to set up a ‘Gruffalo’ themed Fronter Room for their P1/foundation stage classes and they had a very successful joint project together, culminating in an enjoyable face-to-face ‘Gruffalo picnic’ in Castlewellaan Forest Park.

Throughout the project, the classes engaged with each other both via Fronter and via Collaborate video conferencing software.

We went on to engage in a number of other projects together via Fronter, before moving on to use Google Classroom. We also decided to expand the shared learning approach throughout the other classes in our schools, and so BBB arranged to go to C2K Ashfield to attend training in August 2018 on G Suite, and extended the invitation to a number of Irish-medium schools and our Shared Education partner schools AIPS and CPS, so that a number of schools would be on the same page moving forward with G Suite (thinking ahead towards setting up/maintaining links with teachers in corresponding classes in other schools).

In small steps, we expanded our use of Google Classrooms, setting up Google Classrooms for our individual class work, as well as joint Google Classrooms and Google Sites between corresponding classes in our schools - another fab way to work collaboratively online on common topics and themes, interspersed with continued face-to-face meet ups for all classes.

Donna and Máire went on to speak at the 3 day C2K eLearning Conference in St. Mary’s University Belfast in March 2019, as well as speaking to prospective CLOSER project participants in the Armagh City Hotel and Fortwilliam EA Centre in May 2019 about their experiences of the CLOSER programme and their professional development as a result. Máire also gave presentations at the C2K eLearning conference for Irish-medium schools in SMUCB in November 2018, as well as delivering training to Irish-medium schools on the use of Green Screen software, C2K Seomra Nuachta (Newsdesk) and the use of G Suite in general within the Irish-medium sector. Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche went on to win the C2K ICT Excellence Awards in June 2019. This progressive journey in building capacity in ICT & WAU in all our



schools has been a key achievement for us thanks to our Shared Education Partnership and the opportunities it has provided for both staff and pupils to increase their learning and abilities.

We found that establishing good collaborative practice from Foundation Stage was a key factor as it allowed time for budding friendships to develop throughout the following years at primary school. In hindsight it also provided our pupils, parents and staff with the capacity to handle with a great deal of confidence the remote learning that would become so vital in the midst of the current global pandemic with extended periods of lockdown. From a professional viewpoint it helped establish connections between teachers in the local area that continue to thrive to this day and thus helped develop a network of professional good practice and sharing of ideas and shared problem solving.

‘Sport Uniting Communities’ St. Brigid’s PS, Downpatrick & Downpatrick PS

Ulster Rugby and Ulster GAA led an event through “Sport Uniting Communities” for the P6 and P5/6 classes in St. Brigid’s Primary School, Downpatrick and Downpatrick Primary School in January 2020. Around 90 pupils were involved in the action packed, fun filled day. Large inflatables and lots of activities and competitions ensured the children had a memorable day, engaging in sport in an integrated way. The children thoroughly enjoyed this event and look forward to getting back to shared education activities very soon.



'A Celebration of Love'

Knockbreda Nursery School, Knockbreda PS
& St Bernard's PS and Pre-School

In February 2019, held a 'Celebration of Love Grandparent' event involving over 200 pupils from across our three partnership schools. This is an Early Years and Key Stage 1 partnership involving pupils aged 3-7 from Knockbreda Nursery School, Knockbreda Primary School, St Bernard's Primary School and Pre-School. Our partnership was formally established in 2016 and over the years, our focus areas have involved purposeful play and effective literacy learning in the outdoor environment.

Following a termly programme of shared Circle Times focusing on 'feelings and family', the children undertook shared learning opportunities across each of the partnership settings, learning both indoors and outdoors. Working in their partnership year groups, the staff created a shared planning document ensuring that the children had a balance of adult-led Circle Times and shared purposeful play experiences, making full use of the provision available in each of our school settings.

To close this programme of learning, the children came together in February 2019 to celebrate the people they love the most. For many of our children, this was their grandparents. Following the lead of the children, our partnership focused on how best to involve the grandparents in this event and as result, the celebration event was specifically aimed at inviting grandparents to come into school and be the 'guests of honour'. Each year group collaborated to create artwork depicting the people they love and also worked on a song and rhyme to perform for our important guests!

Parents, carers and grandparents were invited to shared in our Celebration of Love event, with each year group sharing their artwork and performing their songs and rhymes for their loved ones. This was a very positive event, with unexpectedly high levels of attendance and it was a wonderful opportunity to further strengthen the community links our Shared Education partnership has worked hard to create across our three partnership schools. At the close of the event, many of our grandparents were already asking when the next 'Grandparents' Day' would be taking place!



Harberton Special School & Taughmonagh Primary School



Harberton Special School and Taughmonagh Primary School have been collaborating for 4 years through the Shared Education Signature Project. Initially it involved 2 classes working together, but year on year class participation has increased and now all children from Nursery to P7 enjoy learning opportunities and experiences.

Our partnership involves children with a wide range of educational needs but through careful planning teachers have developed lessons that are cross curricular, promote thinking skills and personal capabilities and develop attitudes and dispositions. There is a shared play park between the 2 schools and this was acquired through money jointly applied for from the People's Millions Award. This is where shared lessons always start, allowing the children time to play and socialise together before embarking on their learning projects.

Outdoor Learning and Forest Schools have been a focus for a lot of the lessons. Years 3 and 4 pupils have been involved in planting and harvesting vegetables in a shared polytunnel and Years 5, 6 and 7 have used local parks to conduct Forest School lessons.

Last year, Years 3 and 4 from Taughmonagh Speech and Language Unit and Years 4 and 5 from Harberton undertook a project that combined 2 topics studied in each school, Myths and Legends and Cold lands. They enjoyed activities that developed and improved their literacy, Arts and World Around Us skills through listening to stories based on local and historical legends, constructing characters from stories and listening and dancing to traditional music.

While the children from both schools differ in their educational attainments, they learn a lot from each other. They learn to accommodate and respect difference, adapt to new and unfamiliar surroundings and they develop relationships and friendships with children who they may not ordinarily have come into contact with.

Through involvement in shared education, it is the hope that we will help these children develop into respectful, tolerant individuals who understand the importance of an inclusive society.

Our Primary Seven Partnership Harmony Hill & St Joseph's Primary Schools'- Lisburn

Harmony Hill and St. Joseph's have a long standing partnership spanning 25 plus years and have all classes, pupils and teachers, meeting and sharing good practice from Primary 1 to Primary 7 each year.

Primary Seven Conflict and Resolution Workshops.

The theme of our workshops is 'Conflict and Resolution'. We meet over a period of weeks and collaborate online in between. It is important to establish contacts between the two schools because many of our pupils end up moving on to the same secondary schools in Lisburn and Belfast.

'Getting to Know You'

We start our project every year with fun dance and drama workshops in the Racquets' Club in Lisburn, where we all take part in dance and drama warm ups, – all 150 of us! It's very busy, energetic and lots of fun. At the start some people are very reserved but after a short period of time we are all laughing and beginning to get along well. We move around the hall meeting our new friends, greeting each other in different ways and sometimes even having to do combat moves! After that we are placed into teams and create our own dance routines and play many drama games – every single pupil and teacher gets involved and the sound of laughter fills the large hall.

Workshops in each other's schools...

There are 5 classes with on average 30 in each class, 3 from Harmony Hill and 2 from St. Joseph's – we break into groups with different teachers and assistants from each school facilitating workshops and areas within the curriculum.

- Dance and drama – We learn to work together and dramatise our shared Novel- The boy in the Striped Pyjamas.
- Music – We learn to sing in rounds and in harmony. We perform the song 'Where is the Love; by the Black Eyed Peas – everyone gets involved even those who don't like singing love the rappin!
- PDMU and Numeracy – We work with Trocaire and the Global Learning Centre in Belfast to examine conflict on a global scale by playing 'The Trade Game'. There definitely is some conflict that arises during this game but the lessons we learn at the end make it worth it! Teams can get very competitive!
- We also look at the contributions made by refugees and asylum seekers in society. We discuss different cultures and celebrations around the world and touch on the subject of racism.



- Art – We study the work of Banksy, use our critical thinking to research his work and create our own displays. The work is creative and thought provoking and these displays are in the reception areas of each school for a period of time. Pupils are able to reflect on the impact of sharing powerful messages in creative ways.
- Literacy – we study the novel 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' by John Boyne and work on an online unit of work using 'Google Classroom'.

This year 2020/21 we will be working together on a new topic online 'Me, Myself and Moving On', we hope to collaborate in whatever way is possible as schools manage Covid restrictions. We will see what Term 3 brings but if not face to face contact, we will be sharing our work on Google Classroom. The principals and co-ordinators from both schools are keen to sustain our relationships, across a number of year groups, online.

What the pupils thought...

I enjoyed getting to know new people. I discovered we had a lot in common. I loved all the activities but drama was my favourite because we really interacted together. Shannon (St Joseph's)

I liked the Shared Education Days because we got to have a lot of fun activities and meet new people. I loved working together to make the word Lisburn with our bodies. You need to see the picture of it! Ruairi (Harmony Hill)

Ballykeel PS & St Brigid's PS, Ballymena

We have been working in partnership since 2013 and have always been thinking of new and exciting ways to involve our parents in our programmes.

We hosted a Spring Concert in 2018 which showcased many of our extremely talented pupils. There were songs and choir pieces, dances, dramas and a joint choir finale piece. We had parents, staff and Board of Governors from both schools attending and afterwards we enjoyed time to chat over a cup of tea and buns, or crisps and juice! We got our own t-shirts designed for the evening and all the boys and girls from both schools wore the same outfits adorned by our new Spring Concert logo.

The Spring Concert was such a success that we have decided we will host it again every year and that it will be an annual fixture on our Shared Education calendars.



Tag Rugby through Shared Education

Antrim PS & St Comgall's PS



The Primary Seven pupils from Antrim Primary School and St, Comgall's Primary School participate in Tag Rugby, through Shared Education.

Tag Rugby was new to pupils in both schools, so the teachers thought, for that reason, it would be an excellent sport to introduce, as there would be no preconceptions about it.

Coaches from "Ulster Rugby" came to both schools, to teach the teachers the rules. When they had learned the fundamentals, the teachers met and broke their six classes into groups of mixed gender and religion.

The first lesson was spent teaching the rules for the sport. Lessons were very successful and the children loved practising in the school playgrounds.

As the children's skills improved, lessons gradually progressed to matches among the two teams in each class, for a couple of weeks. The ultimate goal was to end the group of lessons with a Tag Rugby tournament, held in Antrim Forum. The teachers set out three pitches on the Antrim Forum astroturf and each match was umpired by a teacher from each school. Each match lasted 10 minutes and the competition was in the form of a knock out.

We had made contact with the Sports Development Office for Antrim, David McKee, who had been a former pupil of Antrim Primary School and he arranged for the Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council to attend. The Mayor awarded medals to the winners and runners up. Photographs were taken by the local Antrim Guardian and printed in the paper.

The Tag Rugby Tournament was a resounding success!



St. Patrick's P.S, Loughguile and Broughshane P.S have enjoyed an ever growing and developing relationship since the beginning of their CRED partnership in way back in 2012. Since then Shared Education has allowed us to expand from one year group working together to years one to seven- all inclusive! Our pupils experience a wealth of learning opportunities on site spanning literacy, numeracy, ICT, WAU, PDMU to outdoor adventures like climbing Slemish Mountain and visiting wind farms.

It's hard to choose one 'stand out' activity from the enriching provision our staff give the children, but the Year Seven 'Dragon's Den' project is hard to top. Year Seven engage in a five week literacy focus on advertising and marketing, culminating in presenting products and pitches to an intimidating set of 'dragons'.

The children work in close groups where everyone has their part to play and contributing is crucial to the success of their chosen product. We have had some very creative ideas in the past ranging from pet tracking devices to adventure bedroom furniture! Pupils get to be extremely creative not just with their ideas but in actually making prototype products to show to the dragons in their final pitch. They have to know each other well enough to carefully choose peers who will have the confidence to present a pitch. Artistic skills get an extra showcasing in creating product advertising posters and mathematical knowledge is put to the test as they work out budgets, percentages and expected profits. Despite the literacy focus it is actually a very cross- curricular activity.

Choosing the dragons has given us great scope over the years to invite a variety of parents into school who have business experience and challenge the unsuspecting children on their pitches. We always keep the dragons a closely guarded secret and every year a few children get a shock when the curtains are pulled to the theme of the famous TV show, and they see mum or dad on stage! It's a wonderful way to involve parents in what we are doing and gives them a true insight into how the children engage together and the type of work we do with them.

The dragons pull no punches and historically have put the young entrepreneurs through their paces, with children really having to think on their feet to answer probing questions about their product. Good interview practice for later years!

As a partnership we are proud of the growth we have shown in numbers, ideas and delivery of a wide range of curriculum subjects. But beyond that we are also acutely aware of and invested in the importance of modelling strong teacher relationships and friendships between all involved from both schools. We look forward to moving ahead in the years to come and all that our partnership will have to offer children, staff and parents in the future.

Exploring the Outdoors Together Castleroe PS & Ballyhackett PS



The goal in all shared education activities is to break down barriers and build lasting relationships. What better place to do this than on the beautiful Castlerock Beach? In this shared space pupils enjoyed Beach School facilitated by Margaret Finley. They were given the freedom to enjoy the beach and the opportunity to explore and discover in what for some was a new coastal environment. Not every day was sunny but together they made lasting memories as they braved the elements.

The ethos of Beach Schools just like Forest Schools is to allow children time to use their own imagination and creativity outdoors. So while all of the activities were carefully planned the schedule was flexible to allow the sessions to evolve in a way that maximised both fun and learning.

Some of the activities that the pupils engaged in were beachcombing and rock pooling with identification of flora and fauna. Code breaking using semaphore, morse and whistles. Campfire lighting and toasting mallows, shelter building and decorating. Pupils also took part in a beach clean and engaged in a discussion about marine pollution.

These after school sessions proved very beneficial in developing relationships and building on the work which had been taking place in shared lessons. We would highly recommend Beach School.

P7 Project: Our Place in Our City Ebrington PS & Holy Child PS



Holy Child Primary School and Ebrington Primary School are literally situated 'Across the River' from each other in Derry/Londonderry. Holy Child Primary School has been serving the Creggan Community in the City for over 60 years. Ebrington P.S, which has existed in the heart of Bonds Street in the Waterside since 1901, has just recently moved to a brand new school. The £27m project enabled the co-location of Ebrington with the grammar school, Foyle College, in separate new-build premises at the former Clooney Army Base site.

The history of the partnership goes back 14 years now to 2007, when the two schools were involved in a cross-community programme organised by local secondary schools. Following this, from 2011 to 2014, the schools took part in the Contested Spaces Project. SESP began in 2015, enhancing the partnership considerably by providing the time and resources required to enable highly effective contact to occur on a sustained, regular basis. Staff expertise has also been encouraged and developed in order to drive pupil activity forward in terms of educational and reconciliation outcomes. The vision of the partnership has always been to bring about real change not only in Northern Ireland, but first and foremost- here, in our own City.

The children of Ebrington and Holy Child enjoyed exploring the history of their City in the P7 Programme which ran between January and March 2019. After a visit to places of special significance within each community (namely St Columb's Cathedral and Long Tower Chapel), time was also spent exploring some shared spaces, including the Guildhall and the City Walls. Building upon this knowledge, the children were then led by their P7 teachers to investigate more about the history of the Siege. The map work which followed was especially enjoyable, and involved identifying various landmarks and street names, as well as exploring how the City has grown and developed in modern times.

It was fantastic to see some of the children's own maps in the follow-up activity. They worked in groups to symbolise some of the key landmarks, but most importantly they plotted their own two schools and the journey between them across the river. This was a reminder of the key locations within our City which have significance for both communities, including the two schools in which pupils from both localities now feel so naturally at home.

The final weeks of the programme were spent preparing for the Parent Celebration Showcase which is a culmination- not only of the P7 Programme- but of the children's involvement in Shared Education throughout Primary School. The children worked together to learn and perform a song, create and present their own modern day peace murals and to write and give speeches about their hopes for the future of Derry/Londonderry. Questionnaires from pupils, teachers and parents were most encouraging and we look forward to running the programme again post Covid-19.

Cumber Claudy PS & St Mary's PS, Altinure

Two rural schools in County Derry, Cumber Claudy PS and St Mary's PS, Altinure, have worked together in a shared capacity, be it EMU, CRED and in the Peace and Reconciliation programme for many years. SESP was a natural progression and something we have been proud to have been involved with. In both schools STEM was identified as an area we'd like to develop. Prior to our application and upon starting the project, we secured the services of STEM AWARE, a locally based educational company, delivering Science, Technology, Education and Maths in a blended manner. Our vision was to deliver a curriculum that would allow our pupils to relate to STEM in everyday life. Having STEM AWARE on board, we worked collaboratively to come up with an eight-week Key stage 2 programme for Year 5 pupils initially. In the first year Roisin and her team facilitated the lessons and as a result, teachers were upskilled. Pupils had CSI investigations, created Robocups, built bridges and rockets and devised marble runs. Pupils enthusiastically engaged in these exciting and stimulating sessions and friendships quickly developed through mixed working groups. Pupils communicated with each other through a Fronter room set up to continue to develop relationships. In the next two years, Yr6 & 7 programmes were developed, building on previous experiences to ensure progression and continuity. Teachers jointly delivered the sessions in each other's schools, sharing resources and making minor adjustments in light of pupils' feedback from focus groups. The benefits were clear to be seen for both pupils and teachers. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the practical nature of the sessions and meeting their partners weekly, whilst teachers gained confidence in the teaching of STEM and built quality relationships with their partner teachers.

In the planning stages, it was decided that if true friendships and relationships were to be sustained, a time to play, socialise and have fun was important. Social encounter days were added to the beginning and the end of the programmes with Ice breakers and PDMU sessions centred around similarities, differences, the wider world and Internet safety. Again, these were planned together and then the host school took responsibility for delivery, ably assisted by their partner teacher. A joint task for both schools was to come up with various designs for a shared logo. The leadership team and school councillors chose one from each school and then the winning entries were amalgamated. An end of year trip tied the programme together, giving the children an opportunity to spend a day together in a fun way.

Five years on the programme is still running successfully. Even with teacher changes and reduced budgets, we continue to deliver the programme and hundreds of children have availed of the opportunities. It was hoped that we might continue to have STEM Aware facilitate lessons with KS1, but budgetary constraints did not allow for this. Not to outwitted, we used staff development days to allow KS1 and Foundation stage teachers to come together and jointly plan STEM lessons. From this, we planned and completed joint twilights. A joint whole school STEM scheme was devised, which is an impressive body of work. A joint STEM policy was also written.

But STEM hasn't been our only achievement from our shared experience. Using joint staff development days, we have explored the teaching of Guided reading, a whole school approach to Music using Charanga, the planning and delivery of play, PATHS, PDMU policy and schemes and explored the Shared Education Pupil Pathway documents with a view to widening the experiences our children receive. We have also considered staff mental health, by all staff engaging in joint workshops.

The benefits from this project have been widespread. In previous years, Shared Education was the work of KS2 teachers only, but now we can honestly say, we have developed close working relationships and friendships in the whole school community. Staff are more than happy to share ideas and resources with each other and keep in touch regularly. The strength of the relationships between staff cannot be underestimated. This did not happen by accident. The use of staff training days allowed for the development of these relationships. Over the course of the programme we have seen changes in both leadership and teaching staff, but we have always endeavoured to build and maintain these relationships. We have built a strong leadership team, with a shared focus, who meet regularly to guide the project and continue to move it forward.

Parents have been involved through workshops and showcasing of pupils' work. They are updated through newsletters, school websites and social media sites. We also release a yearly newsletter highlighting our achievements. Governors are kept up to date of all achievements through co-ordinator presentations and yearly report.

On reflection, our shared journey has led to significant developments in both schools over the years. Close working relationships, strong friendships and high-quality teaching provision has made the project immensely worthwhile for both the pupils, the staff and the wider community.



Duneane PS & Moneynick PS Learning Partnership



Shared Education in the Duneane and Moneynick Learning Partnership joins not only the staff, pupils, governors and parents of both school communities, it joins the essence of the ethos and vision of both schools to Share, Learn and Achieve whilst Building Pupils' Strengths. Our School Development Plan lays the pathway for Shared Action Plans where school initiatives promote high quality centred learning, continuous professional development and the building of community.

Our pupils and staff share lessons developing their mutual understanding, thinking skills and personal capabilities through literacy, numeracy and external school initiatives. Our pupils spend time rekindling their friendship, embedding their understanding and building the strength of a shared vision. Through a detailed Personal Development and Mutual Understanding programme pupils present their cultural identity and understand and accept the differences of others. Numeracy and literacy are central to our lessons and allow our pupils to explore and share resources, experiences and learning opportunities.

Key Learning through play is an important aspect of the early years in Primary School. Numeracy, literacy, drama, art and ICT are consolidated and developed through play. Children can express their thoughts, ideas and creativity in a safe and interactive environment, where they can make decisions, work with others and develop a range of motor and social skills. The Duneane and Moneynick Learning Partnership believes "Play is the answer to how anything new comes about." (Jean Piaget)

Key Stage 1 explored number patterns and processes using the shared resource of Numicon to understand, consolidate and reinforce mathematical concepts using this multi-sensory apparatus. "Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember; involve me and I will understand." (Confucius)

Key Stage 2 had the opportunity to connect and communicate ideas with peers through the interactive IZAK9 mathematical resource. Izak9 encourages pupils to view maths differently, it illustrates thinking with number, colour and shape to investigate mathematical concepts and vocabulary. Our parents had the opportunity to explore and understand how and why IZAK9 will develop our mathematical thinking and contribute to meeting the targets identified in our Numeracy action plans.

Our Learning Partnership seeks new opportunities and in January 2020, Duneane and Moneynick Partners in Learning were invited to attend Stranmillis University Belfast on Friday 14 February to present as the 'Priority Schools' for the launch of the Daily Mile in conjunction with the British Heart Foundation - Love your Heart Campaign. To prepare for the launch of The Daily Mile in Stranmillis, the Learning Partnership launched their own 'Daily Mile' to build up pupils' confidence, resilience and endurance, ensuring we achieved our personal best on Friday 14 February at Stranmillis University.

Expanding on Community Connections

St Patrick's PS & Ballynahinch PS



At Christmas our P4 Shared Education choir from St Patrick's Primary and Ballynahinch Primary showcased their talents by performing for the local community at the Market House in Ballynahinch and for the elderly residents in Redburn Nursing Home and Hamilton Fold. They entertained the residents by singing some Christmas songs. This was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the great work happening in Shared Education.

The boys and girls from the P2 classes in both Ballynahinch Primary School and St Patrick's Primary School enjoyed a fun filled morning when they visited the local library for storytime. They listened to some autumn stories being read to them by Pamela the librarian.

The pupils in P6 participated in shared activities focussing on getting to know more about their local community. The children were given a very informative tour of Ballynahinch by local historian Mr Gerard Sloan. They learned all about the Battle of Ballynahinch and the history of Ballynahinch. Afterwards they had a tour of Edengrove Presbyterian Church led by Reverend Scott Woodburn. This was followed by a tour of St Patrick's Church, Ballynahinch given to them by Parish Priest Fr Brian Brown. The pupils enjoyed the opportunity to explore the similarities and differences between each other's religions and cultures. They also discussed the importance of having respect for each other's faith and beliefs.

We really hope to embed community connections in Shared Education to showcase our best practice and for this to become a staple feature for our yearly programme.



Community Links for NI Children’s Hospice in Coleraine Killowen PS & St John’s PS

In March 2020 Killowen Primary School and St John’s Primary School held a “Community Links” fundraiser with pupils, families and friends from both schools creating a human chain that connected from Killowen PS to St John’s PS, to raise £675 for NI Children’s Hospice.

The two schools have enjoyed a close relationship for many years, which has been strengthened through their Shared Education partnership, and the idea for a fundraiser came from a shared meeting of the Boards of Governors. The children then met in their classes and in their joint school council to discuss the idea further. They wanted to create a visual link to show the strong bond between the two schools, hence the human chain. Even the poster to advertise the event was a joint piece of work! The NI Children’s Hospice was the chosen charity as families from both schools have benefitted from their care and it is not representational of one side of the community.

There was a great turnout from local people too who were standing on their doorsteps to support the children. It was quite a spectacle in the neighbourhood! What a fantastic way to promote the positive effect of Shared Education in our local community!



St Colman’s PS, Dunmurry PS & Seymour Hill PS

Our schools have been working together for six years. Through our shared Education programme we were able to host a regular sports day event at Mary Peters track involving all Primary 4 to Primary 7 children. On 11th June 2019 we held our 3rd Annual sports day together with nearly 600 children taking part.

The day involved the children from each school taking part in sporting activities in various mixed country groups with some children even dressing up in their countries colours. We had decided early on that the event would be non-competitive and this worked well especially for our SEN children.

The children enjoyed the opportunity to take part in events such as the long jump, hurdles, javelin and sprint. Here are a few quotes from the children showing what they enjoyed most about our joint sports day.



‘I enjoyed the sprinting races. It was great going to a real athletics track for sports day...I felt like a real athlete’

‘It was really fun. The long jump was my favourite.’

‘I liked the long jump. It was a new skill for me. We don’t do the long jump at our own school sports day’

‘The best part was being able to see my friends again that I met during the school based sessions, and do something fun with them’

Sports day was also a great way to share the work that we do through shared education with our parents. They were able to meet parents from the other schools and support the teams as they competed in the various activities around the track. We also had fantastic support from our parents’ associations who helped provide snacks for all the children and supervise this.

It takes a great team to make our sports day happen every year and we are delighted that all our staff work well together and have embraced the ethos of shared education. Both staff and pupils have gained a lot from our shared education days and we are very much looking forward to being together again and sharing great practice!

Shared Choir enjoy The Peace Proms!

Randalstown Central and Mount St Michaels Primary Schools in Randalstown have a long history of working together through Shared Education. Throughout the school year children from both schools participate in the extensive programme which covers a wide range of curriculum areas. Over recent years the programme has established many new groups such as a Shared School Council and a Shared PTA. A Shared Choir was formed in 2016 under the supervision and guidance of staff members from each school.

The choir consisted of 25 pupils from both P7 classes and two members of staff from each school. The choir participated in many shared assemblies in each school and entered the Ballymena festival several times. Mrs Kelly from Mount St Michaels said 'The message and aim of our choir is to promote togetherness, enjoyment and fun'.

Each Christmas the Choir entertain the community at the annual 'lights switch' on in the centre of the town. The Shared Choir have also attended Ulster Orchestra events which were an amazing and rewarding experience for all the children.

One of the most successful events for the choir was when they attended the Peace Proms in 2018 and 2019. The Peace Proms is an annual event which is open to all choirs from all communities. It offers children an opportunity to sing alongside a full symphony youth orchestra. Choirs learn a variety of songs within their school environment and then perform these songs with 3000 other children at the Peace Proms concert. Staff reported that the fantastic selection of musical pieces for The Peace Proms performance ensured that rehearsals were fun, lively and the children responded enthusiastically.

Prior to the concert the choir attended an official rehearsal with Peace Prom staff at Queens University. This helped to build excitement and anticipation for the event. On Sunday 23rd February 2020 just before the first lockdown, 50 pupils and a number of staff left Randalstown to attend the Peace Proms. This truly was an amazing experience for all. The orchestra, the choir, the soloists, the dancers, the pipers, and the conductor pulled out all the stops to make it a memorable day that will live long in the memory of all who saw it.

Members of the school staff, parents and the choir fully enjoyed the experience. Mrs Barclay from Randalstown Central commented that it was a remarkable experience for pupils, parents and staff and also that on the journey home all the children were asking when they could do it again!!



“ Your mental health
is a priority
Your happiness
is an essential
Your self-care
is a necessity ”



Team Acorn and Team Oakfield participated in lots of fun activities to acknowledge Mental Health Awareness week. Parent's, pupils and staff from AIPS and OPSNU enjoyed a wide range of events that were organised across both schools to nurture pupils' holistic development.

'Made for More' conducted an assembly to equip young people with the knowledge and understanding that there is value in their identity and the choices that they make. Pilates sessions proved to be a huge hit with pupils and teachers, acknowledging that being active can improve wellbeing. Everyone's core strength was suitably challenged during Pilates! Digital Literacy provided pupils an opportunity to watch the movie 'Inside Out'. We swapped the popcorn for healthy snacks, giving a nod to looking after our bodies on the inside, too! PDMU reinforced lessons on managing emotions. Pupils were thoroughly engaged in an Uplift Performing Arts workshop to encourage them to pursue their dreams, increase self-confidence and explore their artistic talents and express their own creativity through dance, movement and drama.

'A Healthy Me', programme was delivered by the Public Health Agency to pupils in Primary six and seven and Mental Health Training was provided for teachers and parents.

Within our partnership, we saw this as a valuable shared opportunity to bring pupils, parents and teachers together to raise awareness and increase knowledge and understanding of Mental and Emotional Health and Wellbeing, increase awareness of signs and symptoms of mental ill health, promote self-help/resilience techniques and how to maintain a safe level of positive mental/emotional health and wellbeing and finally to promote self-care.

Technology to the rescue!

Like many of us, to continue our important relationships during our Covid restrictions, Sixmile Integrated Primary School and Ballycraigy Primary School have turned to a digital solution this academic year.

For the last decade Sixmile and Ballycraigy have been working hard to build a meaningful partnership with each other. The added commitment and support from Shared Education has helped our partnership to flourish. The elements of sustainability and quality have always been paramount in any of our joint activities and this year would not be any different!

Faced with the demanding challenges of Covid we searched for an interesting and worthwhile programme for this year, whilst keeping the pupils mental and physical health at the forefront of all our decisions.

The delivery of joint Forest Schools lessons provided an excellent start to the year. The online structure of each lesson allowed both schools to explore, in the safety of their own grounds, the educational and cooperative benefits of learning from our environment. Our follow up sessions meant the pupils were able to interact and share in their learning. We look forward to developing and adding this to our yearly routine of shared learning.

With all the media attention with the Black Lives Matter and Diversity we thought that this was opportunity not to be missed. With tailored good relations through the media of film some of our classes found a safe space to explore these issues. Online introduction sessions with plenary allowed pupils to reflect on their thoughts.

Later in the year both schools were able to engage with Lego therapy training. Feedback from the training was extremely positive. The momentum and excitement prompted us to implement Lego therapy sessions straightway. In the safety of class bubbles and staying in our own schools we embarked on an interactive, online digital Lego journey.

We look forward to the time where we can, once again, visit each other. Until that times comes technology has been our relationship hero. It has helped us not only to maintain a very much valued partnership but has allowed to grow, adding to ways we can connect and invest in our pupils, wellbeing, resilience, and friendships.



Magherafelt Partnership - SEN Health and Wellbeing Event

SENCOs from each of the 6 schools worked together to plan, implement and evaluate this programme where 60 students from Years 10-12 with representatives from each school within the MLP took part in this Health and Wellbeing event. Sponsorship was obtained from various local businesses to run a Health and Wellbeing Day for SEN students from all schools. Four workshops were held that targeted fitness, mental wellbeing and healthy eating. Some of the workshops were facilitated by local health providers, some were supported by senior students from some of the schools in MLP. A student pack was sponsored by local businesses. This was a massively popular event as suggested by post-evaluations and will hopefully be replicated this year. Parents were not invited to attend but gave permission. Next time it is thought that they should be invited. This event was primarily driven by the objective to create more inclusive programmes for SESP which included Kilonan school.



Could We Have Some TV Personalities of the Future?

The Year 5 pupils from St Columba's Primary, Kilrea and Kilrea Primary School were very excited to meet up for their annual Town Walk on 6th March, as part of their Shared Education programme for 2020. This year however there was the added thrill of being joined by the film crew from ESAGS TV.

The children met at St Patrick's Church, the site of the oldest settlement in the town and were welcomed by the Reverend Gary Miller. He invited them to see inside and learn a little about the history of the first church established there, so legend has it, by St Patrick's valet in the 5th Century AD.

Local historian, Pearl Hutchinson, then gave us a brief insight into the more recent history of the town and how it developed in the 19th Century, before we split into three groups and were led around by local tour guides. Along the way we learned about the oldest buildings, the hidden water pump under the war memorial and the cattle markets which used to be held in the Bank Square. On returning to Kilrea Primary we looked at old photographs to see if we could recognise where we had been and how the town has changed.

Over the past number of years, the children have been meeting regularly to share learning experiences in everything from music and drama to history and science. We believe the town walk helps them to appreciate their shared spaces within our area and we also benefit from the expertise of the local history group. We had planned to finish our year with a 'Fun Day' on a safety theme, which would involve the local Fire Brigade and Sustrans but unfortunately lockdown has postponed that to a future occasion. In the meantime, we hope to have fostered friendships which will continue to develop outside school and well into the future.



Whitehouse PS & Nursery & St James's PS & Nursery



Year 7 pupils from Whitehouse Primary and St James's Primary participated in a STEM Careers Event that was held in the assembly hall of Whitehouse Primary. This had been organised in conjunction with the W5 STEM Hub.

This event offered a unique and innovative forum to inspire Year 7 pupils from the two schools about how science, technology, engineering and maths contribute to our world and to show that STEM subjects can lead to exciting and diverse careers.

The pupils also participated in an 'e-bug' session led by researchers from Queen's University and the Public Health Authority. They learned about the 3 types of microbes/germs: Bacteria/Virus/Fungi before taking part in the 'sneeze gun experiment' which demonstrated the distance microbes in a sneeze can travel. Finally, the children participated in the 'Horrid Hands Activity' and learned about the importance of washing their hands;

- Before, during and after preparing food
- After using the bathroom
- After being near animals or animal waste
- After coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose
- If you are unwell or around other people who are sick.

"We participated in a STEM day held in our school. We had lots of fun designing and shooting our own rockets, doing forensic science and breaking German codes. We really enjoyed the day with St James's and we would love to see them again!"

Jessica and Harry B

"We learned how to make rockets using a weak acid and fizzy vitamin tablets and a small capsule. We had to fire the rockets in a bucket, so it didn't go all over the place. We also learned about Forensic science. This is when you use DNA traces to figure out who committed a crime. Finally, we did some code breaking. We had to decipher a message using a cipher wheel. We had an amazing time socializing and making friends. We were excited to see them again." Hannah and Rhyane

Carrickfergus Model PS, St Nicholas' PS & Sunnylands PS

Carrickfergus Model PS, St Nicholas' PS and Sunnylands PS are currently in their 6th year of the Shared Education Signature Project. Over the years, the children from all three schools have been provided with many opportunities to share wonderful experiences together. For the past two years, P2 to P7 children have been involved, working collaboratively in each other's schools. Foundation Stage pupils have had the opportunity to participate in indoor/outdoor play sessions and PDMU lessons. Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils have met with a focus on WAU and STEM activities. Through these mixed activities, skills in promoting reconciliation are developed.



Primary 4 pupils from Sunnylands, Model and St Nicholas' PS enjoyed meeting their partnership friends on their icebreaker days. They enjoyed dancing together, playing parachute games and creating drawings of each other, to name just a few of the group activities.

Primary Five Rocket Investigation

Primary 5 children from the three schools met to jointly plan and design their rockets linked to their WAU topic. They then met again to construct their rocket, working together on implementing their design. Finally, they met again to launch their rockets. The children really enjoyed their shared technology lesson and were delighted with how high they flew.



Mary Poppins

Primary 5, 6 and 7 pupils, teachers and classroom assistants from St Nicholas' and Sunnylands PS visited Carrickfergus Model PS to see their partnership classes perform the musical, 'Mary Poppins', on stage. This was a first for all three schools and a very enjoyable afternoon indeed. Within our partnership we saw this as a valuable opportunity to reinforce the values of Shared Education, and we had hoped to repeat the experience in March, with the performance of Beauty and the Beast, but unfortunately this did not happen due to school closure.

St John's PS & Lisnagelvin PS Year 6 Shared Education Programme



Year 6 children from St John's Primary School and Lisnagelvin Primary School started their Shared Education Programme in September 2019. One hundred and eighty children from both schools, who had already participated in the Shared Education Signature Project (SESP) the year before, renewed old friendships. It was really exciting for the children to meet up again.

Over the weeks, the children explored Literacy, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding and the Arts. The children enjoyed making clay models, designing cartoons, writing scripts, singing and exploring issues like anti bullying. The children developed team work, and ways to deal with conflict. They were able to visit both schools and benefited from lessons taught by all Year 6 teachers. Our Year 6 shared council met twice during the term to share their views about the programme and make suggestions to improve activities. This work will help to change perceptions and develop skills to enable our children to be successful contributors to society.

It was a busy term of shared learning for our Year 6 children. Their shared education culminated in a celebration concert. This was a wonderful opportunity for our children to showcase their talents. We were delighted to welcome a big number of our parents and Governors to enjoy an afternoon of Irish dancing, Scottish set dancing, singing, poetry and instruments. It was great to see how friendships formed the previous year during the Year 5 programme had developed. For both groups of children, playtime at break and lunch times was the highlight of each week. We hope these friendships formed through shared education will last a life time.

Local Schools Share Education to Help All Pupils

St Patrick's and St Brigid's Primary School and Ballycastle Integrated Primary School have taken part in the Shared Education initiative for the last six years to help make cross-sector collaborations an integral part of school life. Both schools have developed a range of Shared Educational experiences to enhance the educational and personal development opportunities available to pupils and staff. The project also seeks to further community cohesion and sharing of expertise and resources. Both schools have a long collaborative history and this project has enabled them to make their work much more structured through additional funding provided by the 'Shared Education Project'. Mr Kinney and Mrs Evans the principals of both primary schools confirm their long history of sharing staff expertise as well as pupil interaction at all levels and they agree that this additional funding has had a significant impact on what both schools have been able to offer the children, parents and staff.

The project includes children from all Key Stages and aims to provide a shared model of learning between the two schools with a specific budget to enhance the quality of provision offered. At present the schools have developed shared outdoor play in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 where children from both schools meet once a week to take part in outdoor play experiences in the school grounds and then progress to other areas in their community such as the beach and the forest. The extra funding means that previously prohibitive costs for transport and resources such as waterproof clothing has been removed. Teachers also are provided with dedicated time to plan and evaluate highly targeted lessons and examine areas of good practice between schools.

Children are also well catered for in Key Stage One as groups are provided with one to one assistance and shared literacy activities once a week where they meet to discuss and evaluate their learning. Learning support assistants are able to avail of additional training and resources that would not previously be available due to budget constraints. Staff are available more regularly to work with these groups of children and provide support. From the sharing of resources and professional practice both staff and pupils alike can advance their capacity for teaching and learning.

During the course of the project the schools have worked with local agencies such as the Corrymeela Community where Primary 7 students engaged in a global learning and international development day. Both schools, which are Rights Respecting Schools, explored and examined the issues and benefits of working together with facilitators to identify how we are all important within a multicultural society. The children also investigated issues of Global Learning and identified how their actions affect others in the developing world and how they can work towards building a more equitable society.

Key Stage Two pupils have worked with the Eikon Peace Centre where they took part in the International Day of Peace and also worked collaboratively to produce a peace pledge and assembly for the local community. They have also developed their problem solving and communication skills by taking part in outdoor education trips and are currently the only primary schools in Northern Ireland involved in the John Muir Award. This award encourages young people to explore a wild space and take active measures to protect it for future generations. Pupils from Primary Five to Seven have helped to discover and protect the local forest, beach and the Glenshesk River. Pupils have also worked with other non-governmental organisations funded through Peace 4 funding and the National Lottery such as the Building Communities Resource Centre. This project was part of a wider national project addressing areas of conflict resolution and multi-cultural awareness. Pupils took part in a wide range of initiatives with several community groups and worked with a wide range of different faiths.

Mr Kinney and Mrs McCloskey, the co-ordinators of the project, stated that "Taking part in this project has helped both schools to develop and expand on a wide range of on-going initiatives by providing both the time and money to deliver them to a higher standard. Both schools, and their staff are committed to the aims and values of Shared Education. As Rights Respecting and Eco -Schools, they are both aware of the importance this project makes in ensuring we are part of the continued process of developing the students of this community to contribute positively to society and raise their overall life chances and opportunities. We have no doubt that both schools are looking forward to continuing these positive relationships for many more years". Mrs Mc Closkey from Ballycastle Integrated Primary further stated that "The heavy emphasis on the use of the natural environment around both schools not only develops the pupils physically and emotionally but also helps enhance their mental health and well-being alongside, being a vehicle for delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum". Both schools look forward to a return to a return to normal teaching conditions later this year so they can recommence their Shared Education initiatives.



We have no doubt that both schools are looking forward to continuing these positive relationships for many more years

St Malachy's & Harpur's Hill Primary Schools

Shared Education through play-based learning

Harpur's Hill and St Malachy's Primary Schools have developed and synchronised their play-based learning planners so that the children can move seamlessly between the two schools, whilst enjoying each other's company and enhancing their learning experiences at the same time. Teachers and classroom assistants work in tandem supporting and encouraging all the children in their learning.

Due to the nature of play-based learning playing such a vital role in the development of our children, this area of the curriculum alongside shared education, is now embedded into both schools' planners and School Development Plans. We were also able to engage our parents by introducing them and their children to MIFC 'Respecting Differences' puppets. This proved to be a big success for teachers, pupils and parents.



Laurelhill & St Patrick's SHE Health class

2020 saw the introduction of a new Shared Education project for our partnership. We wanted to focus on SEN provision in both schools. We had previously focused on SEN within both History departments but this time we were looking at a new avenue/subject.

We decided to look at improving SEN pupils Physical and Mental Health through the subject area of Science.

Both schools Yr8 SEN class has 15 pupils in each class with 1 teacher and 1 or 2 classroom assistants. The pupils first met for an icebreaker day at Lisburn Bowl in September 2019 for a morning of bowling and Icebreaker activities.

Over the course of the year we met in each other's schools on a rotational basis for 2 ½ day sessions per term.

Each day was split up into Practical and Theory sessions on Physical Health, Mental Health, Diet, Hygiene, Active lifestyle and Practical PE.

The pupils initially were a bit shy but after the first Ice Breaker day friendships were made.

Unfortunately, Covid set in in March and our project had to be called off but we hope to resume it in September 2021.

Strabane PS & Sion Mills PS



Our schools are separated by distance but, over the past 5 years of Shared Education, have grown much closer. With nearly 100% of pupils and staff involved in various projects throughout the school year, shared education has become an integral part of the school calendar. KS2 pupils regularly ask 'what are we doing in Shared Education this year?' and pupils who have yet to join ask 'when is it our turn?'

Every year the staff of both schools plan for developing the whole child. One particular year the P7 teachers used the book THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS to help pupils develop their understanding of inclusion, diversity, and discrimination. Novels were purchased so that every pupil had access to the text. Lessons were shared and taught in the build-up to an epic week of activities culminating in a one-off performance.

All the children participated through acting, ICT, art or music to bring the performance of the novel together. Staff utilised their skill sets to lead the pupils in activities which would allow them to be fully engrossed in the themes. Despite various obstacles the staff & pupils worked together to produce a highly successful, entertaining & thought-provoking performance which was enjoyed not only by pupils, staff, governors, clergy & parents but also the Children's commissioner for NI.

The children were able to convey their message by physically tearing up the vocabulary displayed around the room: discrimination, prejudice, bias, intolerance, anti-Semitism, unfairness, inequality, racism. Students stood together in a circle at the end singing a message of hope.

It was a stark reminder that a clear vision, teamwork and determination can achieve so much in a very short time.

Crumlin Integrated PS, St Joseph's PS, Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach & Crumlin Integrated College

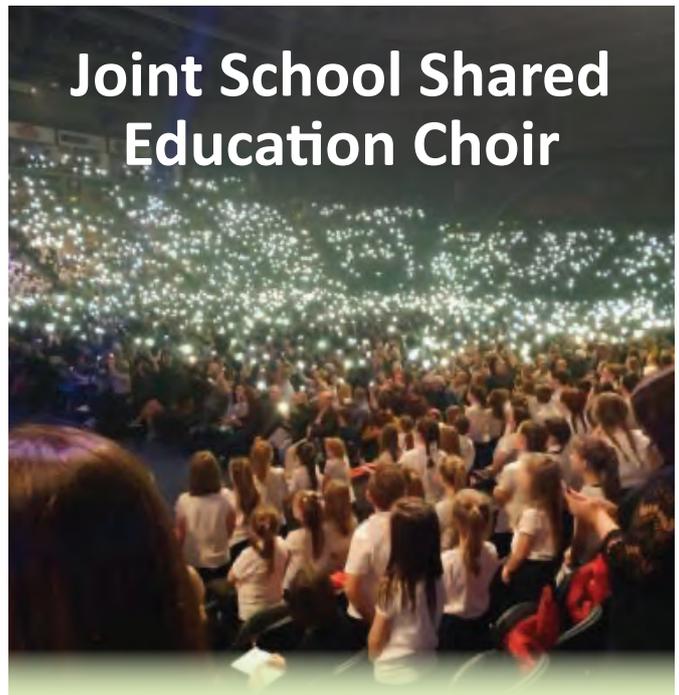
The partnership between the four schools is currently in its sixth year and shows no signs of slowing down. The years 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 are involved in this Shared Education partnership which has provided many opportunities for the children of all four schools to have wonderful and engaging experiences. The partnership goals are to develop cross-community relationships and involve pupils, parents, teachers, school leaders and community representatives in our shared goal.

Last year, Years 5 and 8 were involved in the hugely successful and engaging 'Salmon in the Classroom' project. This project is to develop environmental awareness of their local area and to instil respect for their community. The project began with some classroom based group work where the children invented a device to help the planet - this was a fun and engaging lesson to start the project. The children then learned about the lifecycle of the salmon and produced a creative piece of artwork to demonstrate the lifecycle. The fun really began when members from the Ballinderry River's Trust visited the children and delivered salmon eggs to the classrooms. Over about an 8-week period the children cared for the eggs - recorded temperature of water, cleaned the water and disposed of any dead eggs. When the eggs had hatched and the fry were ready to be released, the children took part in a pond dipping exercise with local fishermen before releasing the fry into the local river.

Our Shared Education Project is about inspiring our young people and equipping them with skills that will help in life. It develops an open mind and allows children to work with others from all backgrounds.



Joint School Shared Education Choir



St. John's Primary School, Gilford and Seagoe Primary School, Portadown have had a close partnership for many years. During this time, pupils have had numerous opportunities to participate in a range of lessons and activities.

The highlight for a lot of our children is our joint school Shared Education choir sessions. Over the last few years the children have participated in the Peace Proms at the SSE Arena in Belfast and various charity singing events.

For a number of weeks prior to the Peace Proms concert the children meet to rehearse the songs and dances that they will be performing at the event. They also visited Queen's University, Belfast for a rehearsal with several other schools, providing them not only with a platform to sing and learn new techniques associated with singing but the chance to see the university.

The concert was an amazing experience for the children, staff and parents. The children performed with 4000 singers from all over Northern Ireland to a capacity audience. In addition to performing, they had the opportunity to receive singing advice from the renowned conductor, Greg Beardsell and the occasion also provided them with plenty of time to engage with their friends and further develop new friendships.

Many of the children commented that this was the best experience they had ever had in school and was a memory they would treasure. In addition, lots of the parents who attended the concert were thrilled that the children had the opportunity to participate in this prestigious event and at such a great venue. For those schools that have a joint school Shared Education Choir or are thinking of forming one, this event provides a great opportunity for children to sing, dance, express and enjoy themselves, to develop and reinforce friendships and overall, to have a fantastic experience.

An Arts focused Programme for P7 at Drumachose PS & Termoncanice PS, Limavady

We at Drumachose Primary School and Termoncanice Primary School in Limavady have been involved in Shared Education since 2016 after previously developing partnership through CRED programmes, Extended Schools and other initiatives. As our partnership has developed, we are now at the stage where every child in both schools (800+ children) is involved in Shared Education throughout each year. A key aim for our partnership has been to enable the children to develop positive relationships and friendships with each other with a clear focus on shared learning experiences linked to the curriculum.

Our P7 year group have been involved from the inception of our Shared Education partnership and over the years we have developed and refined our programme based on the topic of the Irish Potato Famine. This collaboration started out creating shared stories about the famine developed through joint creative writing sessions both face to face and using Google Classroom. We developed this further the following year by creating Stop, Go animation videos of the stories that the children had written which was then all put together as an iMovie over a number of sessions.

In the third year of our work with the P7s we decided to develop this further with a focus on the Arts. A programme was planned incorporating Art, Music and Drama. We also involved Limavady High School and St Mary's High School, who themselves are involved in their own very successful Shared Education partnership.

The first element of the programme looked at Art work by the Irish artist J P Rooney. The children in mixed groups of 5 or 6 created their own large scale art work in the style of J P Rooney over the course of a number of weeks. 100+ children and paint is not always a good combination, but the results were fantastic.

The second element of the programme was a full day of Drama workshops based on the events of the novel Under the Hawthorn Tree. Limavady High School hosted us for this and the workshops were planned and facilitated by the excellent drama department staff and students. A great day was had, allowing children to explore the events of the famine, but also to step outside of their comfort zones and engage with each other and develop working relationships in a different way.

Next we returned to Art. Staff and students from the Art department at St Mary's High School led a series of workshops to create famine cottages from clay. The children again worked in small mixed groups to firstly model a cottage and then to paint it and apply a glaze finish a few weeks later. Over 100 children in Termoncanice assembly hall all creating clay models perhaps does not sound like every teacher's idea of fun, but the children worked really well together and the finished results were amazing.



The programme also incorporated photography. We called on the expertise of a local photographer and parent to run a photography workshop at Limavady Workhouse. Children again worked in mixed groups to use iPads to take photos of the old building.

The final element of the programme was to introduce Music. We managed to get the traditional musician Tom Sweeney to visit Limavady and perform a selection of songs and poems from the famine era. Tom even wrote a special song for the occasion titled 'Leaving Limavady' which we were able to teach the children and they performed together.

The culmination of the programme was a shared art exhibition. Roe Valley Arts and Culture Centre ably facilitated us in hosting an exhibition in April of 2019. Work on show was produced by children from P4-P7 during their Shared Education activities. P7 displayed their J P Rooney inspired art work and their famine cottages, while we had Titanic inspired art work from P6, joint paintings from P5 and fossils created by P4.

Parents, staff and Governors from both schools attended a special launch evening and the work was then on show for the public over a number of weeks.

The mix of the different elements of our P7 programme were a real success. The children were able to develop great collaborative working partnerships and develop positive relationships and friendships with children from different backgrounds, cultures and experiences to themselves. We have definitely found that it is best to let this happen naturally, not in a contrived or forced way. The shared curriculum focus is a key ingredient of this which then allows those relationships to be developed further in exploring respect and mutual understanding.

Sadly the Coronavirus pandemic put a stop to a successful repeat of this programme last year, but we look forward to revisiting it as and when we are back to normality. Many thanks must go to the staff from both schools who have so willingly bought in to this partnership and to Limavady High School and St Mary's High School for helping to facilitate our P7 programme.

Newtownhamilton HS, Newry HS, St Joseph's HS, Crossmaglen & St Paul's HS, Bessbrook students take part in Politics in Action



In September 2019, our Shared Education Partnership History students teamed up with Politics in Action to provide our pupils with a coherent voice on current political and social issues. Peter Weil (CEO, Politics in Action) mentored our pupils as they learned how to listen to debates, contribute to discussions and demonstrate respect for all those involved, including those who held opposing views. Our pupils developed key transferable skills as they presented an issue and prepared to bring it to the attention of our political leaders.

Our programme commenced in October 2019 with our first face to face visit with Peter and participating pupils from our four partner schools. At this workshop, pupils presented ideas and issues which were important to them. After deep and meaningful discussions pupils agreed that the topic for investigation was: 'Cannabis should be legalised'. Our 23 intrepid pupils embarked on a journey, to enable them to reach a decision on whether or not this proposal should be upheld.

Pupils travelled to Parliament Buildings, Stormont where they had the invaluable opportunity to listen to the views of experienced MLAs including Mike Nesbitt (UUP), Justin McNulty (SDLP) and William Irwin (DUP). This visit was followed up by an outing to the Dáil, Dublin where pupils fielded questions to our guest speaker Senator Niall O Donnghaile from Sinn Fein (former Mayor of Belfast). They also embraced the great opportunity to question Senator Aodhan O Riordain, Irish Labour Party and former Minister at the Department of Health with responsibility for the National Drugs Strategy, on whether or not cannabis should be legalised.

After a splendid Christmas dinner, pupils had the privilege of interviewing their third guest, Senator Michael McDowell (Former Minister of Justice, Deputy Taoiseach and high-profile barrister) on the legalisation of cannabis. Of course, no trip to Dublin in December would be complete without an opportunity for some essential Christmas shopping!

Pupils and staff continued to work on their ideas, researching our topic as we prepared for our trip to Westminster Parliament Buildings, London. Not only did our pupils complete an informative tour of Parliament Buildings but we were also able to pack in a lot of popular tourist attractions too. These included: Churchill's War Rooms, The Sky Garden, Piccadilly Circus, The Royal Mews, Buckingham Palace, Horse Guards Parade, Westminster Abbey, Tower of London, a tranquil walk through St James' Park, and a quick glimpse of HRH Prince Charles as he returned to his residence – and, of course no trip to London would be complete without a wonderful West End show: Wicked. During the residential trip pupils had the opportunity to build friendships whilst continuing to work on our investigation. Undoubtedly it was a whirlwind, action packed visit, but its value was immeasurable.

On our return, students continued to prepare for our ultimate grand finale: - presenting our findings to MLAs and other interested parties such as Addiction NI. We were putting the final touches to the delivery of our ideas through presentation, drama, video and case studies and were ready to set out confidently as one voice to Parliament Buildings, Stormont on 19 March 2020 when all unfortunately had to be postponed due to the emergence of Covid 19.

While our students were extremely disappointed that they were unable to present their findings to our politicians, they all understood that what they had gained together over the course of the year had been invaluable. We had the pleasure of witnessing shy and quiet students develop into confident students, willing to publicly ask questions and give their opinions. Meanwhile the confident and bubbly students developed their leadership skills and honed their skill of keeping everyone within their group involved, motivated and engaged.

We cannot commend this programme enough and would encourage other partnerships to take the opportunity to get involved. Our pupils certainly found their voice and had the opportunity of directly engaging with politicians in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and the UK. Overall, it was a very successful programme.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Peter Weil and his team, the politicians who were so willing to participate, the support of committed teaching staff and of course, most importantly, our cohort of students who willingly got involved. Their full commitment and dedication underpinned and shone throughout the whole programme.

Planting for the future in The Derg Valley

Castledearg HS, Killen PS, St Caireall's PS, Ardstraw-Jubilee PS, St Joseph's PS & Langfield PS

The Derg Valley Shared Education Partnership has been working together now for 6 years, and Covid-19 was not going to stand in their way of continuing this work, even if it was more distanced than usual! The partnership, which comprises of Castledearg High School, Killen Primary, St Caireall's Primary, Ardstraw-Jubilee Primary, St Joseph's Primary and Langfield Primary Schools', had decided to focus on the theme of 'The Great Outdoors'. Part of the plan was to establish a Forest School within the grounds of each school. A number of staff from all schools had begun their Forest School Leader Training.

Another aim of the plan was the planting of some trees within school grounds. Forest Schools' don't have to exist in the deep dark woods, they can be in any outdoor space, even if there's just 1 tree! All schools within the partnership are fortunate to have extensive grounds, which easily can be used for such outdoor lessons. The trees are intended to be a symbol of the work already completed by the partnership over the past 6 years, and the commitment to continue this work for many years to come. Over the winter months, the trees have been planted at each school. Unfortunately, current restrictions meant that the schools had to complete this task individually, but felt that it should still be a shared experience as far as possible.

Mrs Moore, Castledearg High School' s Shared Education Co-Ordinator said "Forest Schools are still a relatively new concept in Northern Ireland, particularly at post primary level. The ethos of a Forest School is based on allowing young people to work in an outdoor space for an extended period of time, whatever the weather! It helps to promote self-esteem, confidence, independence and creativity, and of course has an added positive impact on mental health. Learning experiences can be more memorable when taken outdoors, where natural materials, sights, sounds and smells all help capture moments and of course learning!"



Mrs Wilson , Principal of Castledearg High School commented " We are delighted to be involved in such a positive and productive shared education partnership and we would like thank all our partner schools for their participation. Our pupils enjoyed every minute of planting these trees in the Autumn, when we were in school, a mixture of copper beeches, acers and chestnuts trees. While it was a shame we were not able to bring all pupils in the partnership together to carry out the planting, the spirit in which they were planted was not at all lost on all the pupils. They understood the project was symbolic of looking towards a better future for us all, where we work together to build a better understanding of each other and put emphasis on the importance of caring for our environment. The trees are a permanent symbol of the hope of the young people for their bright future and is made all the more significant, knowing they have been planted during this time of crisis. We look forward to seeing them grow and flourish – just like the young people who planted them! Well done to all staff and pupils involved!"

Glengormley IPS & Mossgrove PS



Joint School council with the Mayor at Mossley Mill



Joint Choir during rehearsal

St Patrick's GS, City of Armagh HS & St Catherine's College *Sentinus Coding Event*



On Wednesday 12th February St Patrick's welcomed City of Armagh High School and St Catherine's College to our annual Shared Education Coding Event. This year we were joined by Sentinus who delivered Digital Maker Workshops on Sonic Pi (code-based music creation and performance tool) and BBC Microbit (pocket sized computer programming using Code Blocks and Python). Pupils also got to experience digital design using the Java based program, Processing. Everybody enjoyed the day, learning new programming skills and making new friends along the way!



Raising Aspirations

Teachers from our partnership schools, Blackwater Integrated College, De La Salle High School and St. Mary's High School developed a programme to help our newcomer children settle and integrate into their new community.

We have embarked on a journey with these young people, beginning two years ago, with our theme of 'Raising Aspirations'. Our journey began with a tour of Queen's University, where we hoped to nurture personal ambitions by introducing the young people to a range of educational and career opportunities. The children chatted with current students and found out about degree courses. This was followed by a tour of the university and then on to Botanic Gardens and the Palm house to experience some of Northern Ireland's impressive gardening work. This provided an opportunity for the students to learn about horticultural careers and further/higher-level courses available in our NI universities and colleges. An enjoyable afternoon was spent having a look around the Ulster Museum and participating in an art workshop. This allowed all pupils from the three schools to meet with each other in a relaxed environment forming lasting friendships.

This year, building upon the success of this trip, our newcomer children visited St George's Market where the pupils browsed the many market stalls on show, and experienced foods from around the world. This was followed by a guided tour of Belfast City Hall where they learned about how people are voted into council and how local laws are passed. The pupils were given the opportunity to conduct interschool interviews with a focus on recognising and sharing our personal and cultural identity. As a result, many social media contacts were exchanged-building relationships for the future.

These events have helped to instil a feeling of belonging and positive citizenship that will hopefully be seen across our three communities. After the success of last year's newcomer trip to Queen's University, Belfast, and The Ulster Museum, the newcomer young people from our three SHED schools were brought together for another unforgettable trip to Belfast.



Starting at St George's Market, our group had the opportunity to browse the many market stalls on show, as well as experience and try foods from around the world- for many, these were tastes of home. Following this was a guided tour of City Hall, Belfast, where our children learned about how people are voted into council and how local laws are passed- we even got to try on the famous robes. For me, the most important aspect of our day away was the chance our young people had to interact with each other, meeting other people from the same backgrounds, some of which have been displaced through no fault of their own. Our newcomer children were given the opportunity to conduct interschool interviews, and, as a result of building relationships while on the SHED trip, many social media contacts were exchanged-building relationships for the future.

New arrivals are a very diverse group. They can range from "new to English" to "fluent" in terms of their English language development. They can arrive at any age and with widely different socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Some come from privileged urban backgrounds having had a high standard of education, others have had little or interrupted schooling or may have experienced traumatic events.

Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim Grammar School & St. Benedicts College



The post primary schools in Antrim and Randalstown have a history of good relations and effective collaborative practice spanning many years. School leaders work together through the Antrim Learning Community and the Moving Forward Together partnership. The schools have been involved in numerous joint programmes and projects where pupils and staff have come together including the PACT programme, PIRCH programme, Peace 3 and 4 work and more.

The schools have been involved in Shared Education from 2015. Delivery of SE initially started with Year 8 pupils only but soon evolved to include over 800 pupils throughout KS3. Our focus is around the delivery of a LLW T.E.E.N programme at KS3 which develops life skills and developing positive relationships. Other projects undertaken include a yearly fun walk/ run in collaboration with A&NBC, a Year 8 Art Competition, Ulster Rugby and ICT coding workshops for Year 9, and Year 10 short film-making project in association with BEAM incorporating the English and Drama departments, Y10 Mini Volleyball Leaders Award, KS3 Joint Student Council workshops to A&NBC, Student visits to Stormont and Westminster (London), Joint Eco Club (KS3 and KS4) and a Peace IV Project (KS3) which allows pupils with additional needs from each of the partnership schools to come together. We facilitated a joint Christmas Choir, PE workshops, Year 12 Interview skills and careers events, shared classes at A-Level between Sixth Form pupils in Antrim Grammar School and Parkhall Integrated College and a Year 13/14 SE mentoring programme. In 2019, Year 8 Induction sessions led by external facilitators Uber Heroes from Ulster University and Young Enterprise with a focus on mental well-being and resilience helped pupils feel less apprehensive and anxious and awarded pupils the opportunity to begin their Shared Education journey and develop relationships in a safe, engaging and challenging environment.

Community and parental engagement have been an important part of our SE action planning. The partnership carried out parental surveys of the shared education programme in conduct with QUB. In 2018/19 the Eco Club assisted in a Tidy Randalstown initiative, alongside the local council, to improve green spaces within the community. The partnership continues to have a strong relationship with the local council and maintains this through Peace IV programmes. The three schools also play an avid part of the Moving Forward Together partnership of eighteen local schools. Recently, our Joint Student Council focused on charity within the local community. We have been working with the Mid-Antrim Animal Sanctuary to raise awareness of their work and fundraised to support this. In doing so we have been highlighting the work of Shared Education within the local community.

The Strategic Leadership Forum (SLF) made up of 3 BOG's, 3 Principals, and 3 school-based coordinators has the responsibility for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of SE. This group has overseen the delivery of a staff well-being conference to over 500 staff from across the partnership in August 2018. The 3 school-based Coordinators present the impact and successes of Shared Education to principals and governors annually to advocate and promote shared education to a wider audience.

Shared Education is included in the School Development Plans of all 3 schools and we have developed joint SE policies. Throughout the project a number of subject leaders have linked up, discussing schemes, teaching expertise, sharing resources and developing a variety of TPL experiences. This helps create a culture of collaboration, knowledge of shared education, staff well-being and networking between Principals / HODs / Teachers / LSAs, improved communication and the sharing of expertise throughout the partnership on many levels.

The partnership is not without challenges. The '18 hours for every child' requirement introduced by DE for 2018/19 has unfortunately reduced our programme again to Year 8 only. An uneven difference in enrolment in each school has also prevented the opportunity to offer a SE experience to every child within the partnership. With funding further reduced and the impact of Covid 19 our SE pupil experience is currently on hold. We do look forward to continuing to engage pupils in the Shared Education work again and bring our communities together for the purpose of reconciliation, to support teacher professional learning and high-quality teaching and learning and for the development of our pupils and our community.

Celebrating Cultural Diversity and Community Connections in Newcastle

The Shared Education Partnership of St Mary's Primary School, Newcastle and All Children's Integrated Primary School, Newcastle celebrated cultural diversity in their communities by attending a shared assembly in Shimna Integrated High School. The purpose of these assemblies was to highlight cultural celebrations of Remembrance Day and St Patrick's Day.

In November 2019, the Primary Four and Primary Five pupils from both schools performed the song 'Willy McBride' for the high school audience and listened to the history of Remembrance Day and why it is celebrated here in Northern Ireland.

Unfortunately due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the St Patrick's Day assembly was postponed but we look forward to celebrating this together at a later date.



Lurgan College & St Ronan's College

The bespoke approach we take to our unique KS4/5 context allows for meaningful and sustained contact between pupils. For example, some classes run on a weekly basis (e.g. Critical Thinking and Ceara Special School Project); some are periodic modules running for 4-6 weeks (e.g. the Cultural Awareness class); ongoing meetings on a termly basis happen in subjects such as History, supplemented by online work. Lessons from remote learning during lockdown will enable us to expand this not only in terms of contact time but in terms of the substance of learning that takes place there. Our pupils are extremely well prepared to the next stage of their education and life through the significant elements of understanding and reconciliation we build into our programme. For example, our ongoing use of GIS technology to allow pupils to express and explore each others' perceptions has run not just in the town of Lurgan with Geographers, but also Derry with Historians during an educational visit. The Historians have also had the chance to attend Theatre of Witness workshops - these hard-hitting personal stories of people involved in the Troubles are powerful testimonies to the reality of division, and have had significant impacts on our young people who have attended these. Further plans were in place to take 6th form geography and RE students on an educational visit to the peace walls of Belfast, using the same technology and approach to explore contentious space and perceptions of diverse histories in the city.

Furthermore, our groundbreaking and innovative cultural awareness programme, organised in collaboration with ABC council, has allowed - for the first time - the teaching of Irish and Ulster Scots to pupils from and in both schools. This programme also wove in broader aspects of cultural awareness and understanding, equipping our pupils not only with knowledge about each other's cultures but also, the skills to be able to appreciate and understand each other better.

We have a wide and increasing range of subject areas that have experienced quality learning in shared classrooms including: History, Politics, Critical Thinking, English, Cultural Awareness Course, Ceara Special School Enrichment Programme, Just One Life, RE, Geography. These have included: weekly face to face classes; educational visits (including to Derry); visiting lectures to 6th form classes; and, excitingly, some of these have managed to continue into 2020/21 via the medium of Zoom/Google Meet. This is enabling us to explore the significant potential of remote learning processes that are being developed during the pandemic to increase the



efficiency and effectiveness of pupil interaction without necessarily having to be physically in the same building. There are plans to explore into 2021/22 how we can embed this learning further into our practices.

At present, the collaborative leadership structures are well established in both schools with high degrees of collective ownership and commitment, coming from Boards of Governors down to SLTs. Both co-ordinators are members of SLT which gives us sufficient strategic level leadership position to allow us effectively to plan in a wholistic way whilst being able to ensure the fine grained delivery of the programme in our respective schools. The partnership between the coordinators allows for timely and effective communication between the schools, enabling us to troubleshoot quickly and respond to challenges. Without this dedicated, hands-on leadership in both schools, the programme would simply not run as effectively. There is significant collective planning for the delivery of all aspects of our programme. High awareness is shown in quality evaluation of the programme, allowing us strategically to build year on year some innovative programme elements (such as our Cultural Programme, which includes elements of Irish and Ulster Scots). There has been collaborative CPD during the pandemic, in conjunction with the CALC through the two Magenta Principles workshops allowed staff from both our schools to meet virtually to conduct training together.

Following on from this, there are plans to develop a teaching and learning subgroup in the ALC, and the already established partnerships between our two schools will provide a strong central element to that. Furthermore, both co-ordinators were invited during the first lockdown to join an EA working party lead by Shane Cromer on continuity of learning, and we worked together with Shane in the KS4/5 element.

St Brigid's PS, Downpatrick & Downpatrick PS

Ulster Rugby and Ulster GAA led an event through "Sport Uniting Communities" for the P6 and P5/6 classes in St. Brigid's Primary School, Downpatrick and Downpatrick Primary School in January 2020. Around 90 pupils were involved in the action packed, fun filled day. Large inflatables and lots of activities and competitions ensured the children had a memorable day, engaging in sport in an integrated way.

The children thoroughly enjoyed this event and look forward to getting back to shared education activities very soon.



Mitchell House, Ashfield Boys' HS, St Joseph's PS & St Joseph's College

The Shared Education programme between Ashfield Boys' High School (ABHS) and Mitchell House School (MHS) originally started in 2015 to allow higher ability pupils from MHS to attend classes at ABHS. This was on the back of the two schools having already established a collaborative approach. Mitchell House School is a Special Educational Needs School for pupils with physical disabilities and Ashfield Boys' High School is a Controlled all ability boys high school, both based in East Belfast, less than one mile apart. In 2018-2019 the partnership was extended with two further schools joining – St Joseph's College; a Maintained Co-Educational Secondary School based in South-East Belfast and St Joseph's Primary School; a Maintained Co-Educational Primary School based in East Belfast. Delivery of the Shared Education Programme for all four schools is based on play-based learning for Foundation/Key Stage 1, WAU, Topic and Sport for Key Stage 2, academic classes, LLW and nurture groups for Key Stage 3 and GCSE classes for Key Stage 4 including ICT, HE and Engineering. There are whole school interactions through Music and Sport.

Shared Education is embedded in all four schools' action plans and there continues to be a collaborative approach from leadership in all schools. Teacher Professional Learning approaches have allowed coordinators within Literacy, Numeracy and SEN to focus on common needs, as well as combined training for Numicon across all four schools.

The aim for our partnership is to reflect upon the uniqueness of our partnership with a range of pupils from 5-19 and provide



opportunities within and beyond the classroom to develop self-confidence and allow pupils to understand and explore diversity within our local community.

Some of the recent projects we have engaged in are: Ashfield Boys' High School and St Joseph's College visiting and singing carols for local nursing homes; Mitchell House School and St Joseph's Primary School sharing school facilities and local parks for play-based collaboration throughout an academic year; Mitchell House School and Ashfield Boys' High School enjoying diversity sessions provided by YMCA; and Mitchell House School and Ashfield Boys' High School sharing timetabled to extend the learning of more able pupils and achieve their full potential for GCSE level subjects.

Currie PS & Holy Family PS

Currie Primary School and Holy Family Primary School have successfully completed the “Shared Future, Shared Goals” programme, led by the Education Authority and funded by the Shared Education Signature Project.

Coaches from the Irish Football Association and the Ulster Gaelic Athletic Association delivered the programme which provided the schools with a mix of physical activity, such as learning football skills, and classroom-based learning on topics including circulation, nutrition and mental health and well-being.

Both the staff and the children worked hard and were committed to successfully completing the programme. Their principals, Mrs Galway and Mrs McQuaid, commented on how the children really looked forward to meeting their friends from their partner school and that it was a great opportunity to learn together. Sport really has a special way of bringing people together.



Introducing Wellie & Waterproof Wednesdays



This title was introduced to both St. Colman’s Primary School, Annaclone and Fair Hill Primary, Kinallen after partaking in the Teacher Professional Learning module on Exploring Playful Learning. Our dedication to these three days had to be declared from the outset and the aim was to have an impact focused approach to adapting or initiating a new strategy to playful learning, suitable to our partnership.

Straight away, we felt that developing ‘good, hard’ play using natural materials in the great outdoors would be our primary focus, while enhancing thinking skills and personal capabilities and strengthening collaboration with older peers. This came from the idea that we as adults had a playroom growing up called ‘outside’ and always had the ability to create something from what was available around us. Our older children are often the best teachers and need valuable time to play.

The gathering of useful resources to inspire such play was our starting point by asking the help of our parents and wider community, together with establishing suitable spaces to hold these resources. An empty square in the playground saw the development of an outdoor shed thanks to the invaluable support from our caretaker and parent who was a joiner by trade. Painting followed and the covering of a hand-ball alley which led to an outdoor classroom beside our new shed. This meant we could have valuable shelter in the Winter months as well as our waterproofs and boots.



Our passion and love for these ‘Wellie Wednesdays’ stretched to both schools and is shared by many with parents commenting that ‘outdoor is always so much more fun!’ As the playground is strewn with a wealth of random materials, our children are deciding that cracked plastic cups will complete their unicorn castle where ‘100 unicorns play hide and seek.’ The unicorns they refer to are pointed shells! Others choose suitable stones as controllers to play Mario Kart on an old cardboard box as their screen. What better way to reinforce weight and time with our older peers, using buckets, stones, planks of wood, twigs and chalk. The recent feedback received from the IQM Awards testifies to a positive playful atmosphere in St. Colman’s and demonstrates our commitment to developing play in both Annaclone and Fair Hill.

‘The contribution that this plays to wellbeing, resilience, cooperation and happiness is fully understood by staff. It was delightful to hear about and see photographs of how children are able to engage in creative activities using scraps of pipe, wood and other various materials to conjure up magnificent artefacts and ingenious contraptions such as a secret trap with a canon that fires cannonballs.’ We firmly believe that we have brought about a transformation of our school environments to maximise outdoor play.

World War II Short Films

Primary 4 worked with Nerve Centre to go back in time and create their own short films. They show cased their films to parents in the local community centre in the style of a WW2 Tea Party where they danced and sang songs of the 1940's era.



Community ICT Night Classes

The community of Rasharkin were offered the opportunity to avail of free ICT lessons lead by Northern Regional College with a level 1 accreditation qualification. Due to popular demand a second night each week had to be planned for. Both school halls were used to facilitate this.



Christmas Tree Festival

Rasharkin Presbyterian Church invited St. Patrick's to design and showcase a Christmas tree for their annual 'Christmas Tree Festival' in the theme of 'As shepherds watch their flock by night'. Both schools formed a joint choir and performed at the opening of this event.



Woodhall Orienteering

Primary 7 got to experience dizzy new heights, face their fears and put their navigational skills to the test!



Izak9

Having just purchased Izak9 sets, children in KS2 had the opportunity to try them out by creating their own mathematical games to challenge each other.



Bring the Outdoors Indoors - Art Exhibition

Using Limavady Roe Park as stimulus, children created their own art using materials they gathered on their visit. The local community were invited to view the masterpieces while getting the chance to chat with the artists themselves.



Scratch Coding

Getting up to scratch with Scratch in primary 6/7. Children developed their own online games using this coding programme. Future gamers in the making!



Branching Out Together in Rasharkin!

We in St. Patrick's Primary and Rasharkin Primary are in our 5th year of the Shared Education journey, having worked together previously there has been a strong continual bond built up between pupils and staff but also among the local community. Over the years more children throughout both schools have had the opportunity to participate in all things shared and we are now in a position whereby all children in both schools have experienced shared learning with their partner school. Our aim is to deliver areas of the curriculum in a fun, stimulating and exciting way while allowing all children the opportunity to get stuck in, learn something new and have the chance to make a new friend along the way.

From the outset we wanted the children to feel more connected and so our first order of business was to design a joint school crest that would be used in all shared documents. All children within KS2 were invited to take part in the art competition and the onerous task was judged by a local organisation with no affiliated links to either school. The winning entry incorporated elements of both school's original crest as well as adding a fresh perspective as to what Shared Education means to our children in our setting.



Joint Shared Education Newsletter

Keeping parents, grandparents and the local community up to date on school events.

TPL - Maths Investigations

Maths coordinators and teachers met to plan and develop a shared bank of maths investigations suitable for each year group to use.



eBook - History of Rasharkin

With the help of Rasharkin History Group, children got to learn what Rasharkin was like in the past. They went on a history tour of the village learning new and interesting things about historical buildings and local landmarks which they included into their eBook.



Sports Uniting Communities

Children got the opportunity to try out and learn the skills of each other's sports with the help of Ballymoney Sports Council, Ulster GAA, Ulster Rugby and NI Football. A few enjoyed it so much that they joined local clubs outside school.

Get Fit, Zumba!

All children and staff from both schools got to showcase their moves on the Zumba dance floor. A nice way to get to know each other while getting fit!



Animation Event

Children stepped into the world of online animations, learning how to storyboard, plan, film, edit and use voice over to create animations on the topic of Fair Trade. They showcased their creations at a star-studded red-carpet VIP event in the local community centre for family and friends to attend.



Forest Schools

Getting active and outdoors is always a fun learning experience for children of all ages. We utilized our own school grounds as well as Portglenone Forest and Glenariff Forest. Both schools were accredited the Forest Schools Award due to their work in this area.



CRIS Flags and Emblems

With the help and expertise of Community Relations in Schools (CRIS), primary 7 had the opportunity to learn a little about their own culture and traditions, starting with flags and emblems.



Some quotes from Parents:

Very worthwhile project, has lasting implications.

In our village it's good for everyone to work together.

It gives children a broader perspective and exposes them to things they would not have been exposed to.

It gives children an insight to different views within a community and hopefully promotes relationships for a peaceful future within our society.

I personally feel that if more parents thought and felt like me there would be fewer problems in this country. Understanding is beneficial and by all means not threatening.

I feel it is really important for our children to experience diversity, so they inherently understand that we are all the same, regardless of our 'label'.

It gives children the chance to meet and develop, understand and learn from each other.

Some quotes from Children:

I looked forward to every Thursday so as I could meet and play with more new friends from our partner school. (P2)

Shared Education has given us the chance to learn so much more in a fun day. (P6)

We have been taught about acceptance and that it is okay to be different. (P5)

It was nice to be able to meet up with more friends our age and get to know more people that live in Ballycastle. It was nice learning with them. (Year 10)

I like walking to our friends' school because we get to do shape hunts and nature walks along the way. (P1)

I like visiting the playground of the other school so as I can play with different toys and try new games outside. (P1)

I am now more interested in looking after our local environment once I saw how nice it was. It is important not to leave a trace behind. (Year 8)

I enjoyed being part of the Shared School Council 'Gaelross' as we worked together to plan decisions for our partnership. (P7)

We learned about each other's traditions and learned to be accepting. (Year 9)

Some quotes from Teachers:

One of the main benefits for me was having that time set aside, each week, to learn outdoors in the fresh air with no other commitments getting in the way. Great for everyone's mental health too!

Having the opportunity to co-teach with another teacher from a different school was a first for me and certainly proved beneficial. I think we learned from each other!

Everyone needs to co-exist and not in isolation...therefore an 'all-inclusive' approach needs to be taken.

It takes a village to rear a child! Everyone needs to be involved and everyone benefits.

We were very lucky that our schools were close in proximity which meant we could walk to & fro each week, spending less of our budget on transport and more on the delivery of lessons & resources.

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