

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB

NEWSLETTER

EDITION 20 - DECEMBER 2025



DUBLIN COLLEGE IS LAUNCHED!

Rath Dara Celebrates
40 years

Cycle Inclusion Centre
of Excellence

Past-Learners
Where are they now?

ddletb



Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Dublin and Dún Laoghaire
Átha Cliath agus Dhún Laoghaire Education and Training Board



I am delighted to share with you the 20th edition of the DDLETB Newsletter.

As this memorable year draws to a close, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to every one of you. Your dedication, kindness, and steadfast commitment to education and training have shaped a year filled with progress and pride across DDLETB.

This year also holds special significance as we celebrate the launch of Dublin College Further Education and Training and the opening of two new Community Special Schools (CSS), Lucan CSS and Belmayne CSS, reflecting our collective belief in inclusion and opportunity for every student. My heartfelt thanks to all who worked so passionately to make these important milestones possible.

To our learners, your resilience and enthusiasm inspire us. Watching you learn, grow, and succeed is at the heart of our mission and we are honoured to support you in reaching your potential.

To our wonderful staff, thank you for the compassion, creativity, and energy you bring to your work every day. You make our schools, centres, and colleges places where people feel supported, encouraged, and understood. Your impact reaches far beyond the classroom - you change lives, and I am deeply grateful for all you do.

To the wider DDLETB community, your belief in our work supports and strengthens us. Together, we build a learning community where everyone is welcomed and where everyone matters.

Looking back on 2025, we have much to be proud of—achievements big and small, challenges faced with unity, and progress made with determination. As we look ahead to 2026, we will carry forward this culture of hope, collaboration, and shared purpose.

I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful, safe, and restorative break, and every warm wish for the year to come.

Caitríona Murphy
Príomhfheidhmeannach / Chief Executive

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education & Training Board has officially launched 'Dublin College Further Education and Training.'

November 6th marked a significant day for Further Education and Training within DDLETB. On this date, Dublin College Further Education and Training was officially launched.

We are proud that all DDLETB's Further Education and Training locations, which to date have each had their own name and brand identity, are now one college with one brand. This is so much more than a rebrand. It is the realisation of a vision that places learners at the heart of a modern, inclusive, and future-facing education and training system. It marks the beginning of a new chapter for our college and for our learners. Dublin College offers learners the chance not only to pursue their studies at their chosen location, but also to explore and benefit from a range of learning pathways available throughout the college. What stands out now is a greater sense of belonging to a broader community, a college that is part of a wider effort to help people progress further in their education, careers, and personal development.

As guests arrived to celebrate the launch, they were welcomed by wonderful music from talented students at Dublin College Dún Laoghaire, adding a lively and personal

atmosphere to the occasion. Members of the Dublin College Blackrock Student Council also played a key role, warmly greeting attendees and offering invaluable assistance throughout the event. We were thrilled to welcome learners from across Dublin College, whose enthusiasm and contributions truly made the occasion memorable. Theo Holohan, recognised as National Apprentice of the Year in Carpentry and Joinery, and Emma McCann, awarded National Apprentice of the Year in Electrical Apprenticeship, both spoke about their journeys and emphasised the importance of apprenticeships. Nicole Farrelly, currently studying for our newly introduced Tertiary Degree Award, the BA (Honours) in Politics, Society and Media at Dublin College Blackrock, shared her experiences so far and discussed the new possibilities now open to her and her peers. Their participation served as a powerful reminder that this transformation is centred on providing enhanced opportunities and experiences to all our learners.



On the day Deputy Shane Moynihan formally opened Dublin College, and the new signage was later unveiled by Minister for Further and Higher Education, James Lawless TD.

Dublin College is not just a place to learn, it is a place to grow, to belong, and to thrive. We are proud to be part of a national movement that is reshaping the perception of FET as a first-class option, a powerful engine for personal development, social mobility, and economic resilience.

Through its visual identity, Dublin College expresses a simple belief, that education empowers everyone to go **Further Together**.

DDLETB welcomes the launch of Dublin College and looks forward to continued success and opportunity for learners.



Designing the new brand

The new Dublin College identity was designed to capture the transformative power of education, a bridge between learning, development, and success. At its heart is a distinctive logo, made of two square forms with 45-degree corners removed. These shapes represent pathways and progress, symbolising how Dublin College supports learners as they move from one stage of life or career to the next.

The design system is bold yet flexible. The logo and graphic shapes can be used dynamically across digital and print applications, creating a sense of energy and direction that mirrors the learner journey.

Dublin College's identity is designed to unite a network of unique learning environments. Each centre receives its own version of the logo, linking different locations, such as Tallaght, Swords, or Clondalkin to the overarching Dublin College brand. This approach maintains consistency while allowing space for individuality and community identity.

Follow the socials- [@mydublincollege](#) for updates & events

Ask for help! Dublin College is all about support. Don't be shy – reach out if you need guidance- info@mydublincollege.ie

Contact us- 01 452 9600

Visit our website - mydublincollege.ie

Leadership Connect



Teacher Leadership Programme

TLP is proudly running again this year, with TLP teams from schools across the organisation already engaging in two rich and energising general learning sessions. The first session, facilitated by John Cronin, Principal of Castleknock Community College, focused on leading teaching and learning and provided teams with valuable insights into effective instructional leadership. The second session explored the theme of school culture and was expertly facilitated by Nuala Ní Mhurchu, Principal of Ardgillan Community College, along with Deputy Principal Claire Scanlon and AP1 Cillian Walsh.

In addition to their collaborative learning, each team has now developed its action plan, with areas of focus including:

- **Castleknock CC:** Universal Design for Learning implementation
- **Greenhills CC:** Big Brother, Little Brother: Senior mentoring programme with 1st year students
- **Kingswood CC:** Improving students handwriting and taking pride in their work/handwriting
- **Ardgillan CC:** UDL- Creating a poster, reflection sheet to be put in journals and a bank of resources to be used for our students.
- **Fingal CC:** 'Bounce Back Better' - a programme for fostering student resilience
- **Luttrellstown CC:** Promoting gender balance and inclusion in Technology and Engineering education.
- **Collinstown Park CC:** Ready to Learn: Behaviour, organisation & teamwork
- **Coláiste Cois Life:** Fostering inclusion, integration and community in first year students.
- **CP Setanta:** Effective uses of AI for students
- **Swords CC:** Promote and support higher achievement within the school
- **St. Kevin's CC:** Student leadership and mentoring
- **Balbriggan CC:** Bloom's Taxonomy in BCC
- **Grange CC:** Junior Cycle Science Activity Packs: Enhancing Practical Work and Student Presentation Skills - focusing on Junior Cycle Science
- **Firhouse CC:** Catching Up, Keeping Up - Supporting continuity of learning through student friendly term plans. Planning for Learning, Assessment, Inclusion and Wellbeing
- **St. Mac Dara's CC:** Roots and Routes: Culture diversity within the school the co-hort
- **Deansrath CC:** Teaching and Learning
- **Lusk CC:** Stamp to Succeed: Formative Feedback
- **Skerries CC:** Are you G.A.M.E.?" A proposed new consistency charter in every lesson
- **Gaelcholáiste Reachrann:** Positive Feedback on VS Ware
- **Donabate CC:** Read for the Stars: Increase students' engagement and motivation to read for pleasure across the school community.
- **St. Finians CC:** Developing study strategies to support student success

Leadership Connect



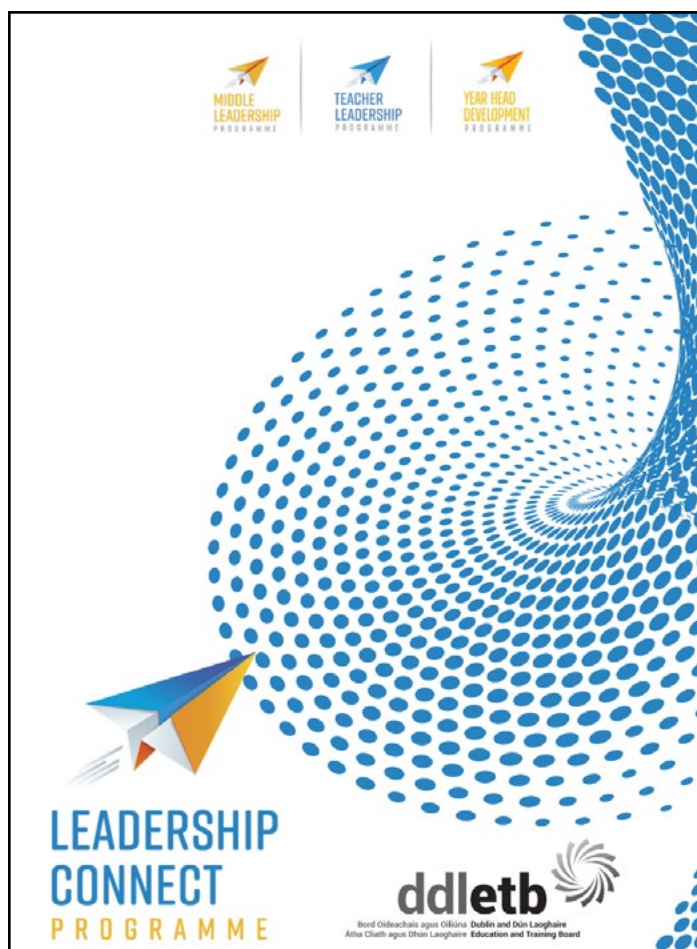
Middle Leadership Programme

MLP is progressing well on its journey, with participants having completed two highly successful sessions. The first, led by Mr. Harry Freeman, focused on the role of middle leaders, effective teamwork, and supporting both Senior Leaders and students. The second, delivered by Mary Murphy, Deputy Principal at Kingswood CC, offered an insightful exploration of Emotional Intelligence and Sustainable Leadership.

We extend our thanks to the leadership teams at Luttrellstown CC and Kingswood CC for warmly welcoming participants into their schools and supporting these sessions. Over the coming weeks, we will reflect on our learning so far, and we look forward to meeting again in January for a team-led session in the DDLETB Head Office.

The updated and revised Leadership Connect Reflection Journal has been thoughtfully redesigned to reflect the growing importance of reflective practice in effective leadership. This new edition offers clearer prompts, structured spaces for goal-setting, and guided reflections that help learners pause, evaluate, and strengthen their leadership approach over time. Created to support participants on their development journey, the journal encourages consistent self-awareness, intentional learning, and a deeper focus on personal growth.

As the Year Head Development Programme enters its second official year this January, it will once again offer a unique opportunity for year heads from across DDLETB to come together, share best practice, exchange skills, and support one another's learning. Four carefully designed in-person sessions will guide participants through key aspects of the role, while online check-ins will provide additional support and continuity throughout the programme. Schools will have the opportunity to put forward one year head to participate—please keep an eye on your emails for further details.



Respect

To treat **everyone** with consideration, courtesy, understanding and kindness. To show regard for the values, feelings, wishes and rights of others and to believe in your own self-worth.

Excellence



DDLETB Ethos Ambassador Programme

The DDLETB Ethos Ambassador Programme, now in its second year, is going from strength to strength, and the Student Ambassadors have been working exceptionally hard this term. With the first-ever DDLETB Student Ethos Ambassador interschool meetups taking place across the scheme.

Generously hosted by St Kevin's CC, Greenhills CC, Castleknock CC, Coláiste de hÍde, Luttrellstown CC and Ardgillan CC, these gatherings offered invaluable opportunities for each school's team of ambassadors to connect, share and grow. Students presented on the rich ethos of their own schools, learned from one another, and took time to listen, discuss and reflect on the unique lived experience of ethos in each community. These meetups mark an exciting milestone in fostering collaboration, understanding, and student leadership across the DDLETB.

Ethos Coordinator Caroline Daly is delighted with the success of the programme, and she has been consistently impressed by the high level of creativity, enthusiasm and active participation demonstrated by the students.



Looking at Our Ethos

A Tool to Support the Work of Ethos Leadership Teams in ETB Schools

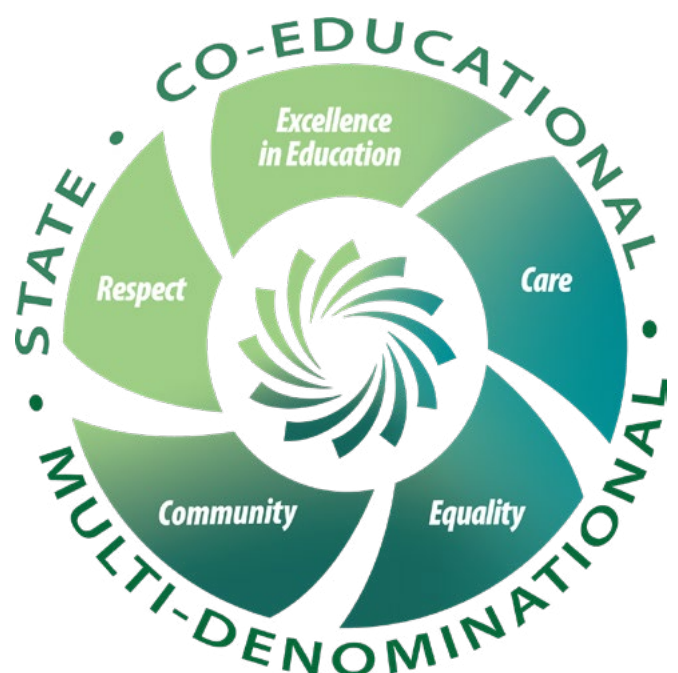
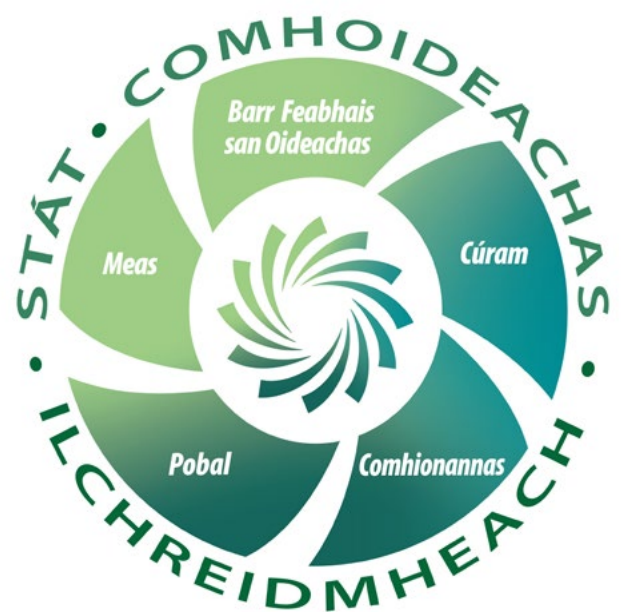
ETB Ethos

Ethos Leadership Teams across our schools are now preparing to engage with the national Looking at Our Ethos review process—an important and forward-looking initiative for all ETB schools from now until 2030. Grounded in the core values of the ETB Ethos – Care, Community, Equality, Respect and Excellence in Education – this process supports schools in exploring how these principles are expressed in daily practice.

This reflective phase invites each school community to take an in-depth, honest look at how their ethos is lived through relationships, teaching and learning, decision-making and everyday interactions. By identifying strengths, priorities and opportunities for growth, schools can ensure that their ethos remains not only visible but meaningful.

As schools move toward developing their Ethos Action Plans for 2026–2030, this review offers a valuable opportunity to shape the years ahead—ensuring that every ETB school continues to build an environment that is vibrant, inclusive and responsive to the needs of its learners and wider community.

For further information and for guidance and support on our ETB Ethos contact our DDLETB Ethos Coordinator Caroline Daly carolinedaly@ddletb.ie



Crannóg Nua Students Honoured with Youth Participation Award

Crannóg Nua School is delighted to announce that our students have been recognised with the Youth Participation Award, celebrating their outstanding contribution to promoting student voice and inclusive education within the school community. This award recognises the meaningful ways our students are actively shaping their learning environment, demonstrating leadership, creativity, and collaboration.

Listening, Learning, and Leading

One of the key targets in Crannóg Nua's School Improvement Plan is to strengthen student voice—to ensure that every student feels heard, valued, and involved in shaping the life of the school. Over the past year, staff and students have worked side by side to make this vision a reality. Teachers have collaborated closely with students to make sure that school policies, notices, and information are written in a student-friendly, accessible format so that all learners can engage fully. This includes re-designing school documents in clear, easy-to-read language and ensuring that they are meaningful for students of all abilities.

This collaborative approach has not only improved communication but has also fostered a deeper sense of ownership and pride among students. They are no longer just recipients of information—they are contributors, reviewers, and decision-makers. The Youth Participation Award highlights this genuine partnership between students and staff, and the school community is rightly proud of what has been achieved together.



Innovation Through Inclusion

In keeping with the schools ongoing commitment to inclusion and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), the students and staff are now co-developing an interactive Student Induction Platform. This exciting project is designed to support new students joining the school, helping them feel welcomed and confident from day one.

The induction platform combines videos, voiceovers, images, and text to cater for a variety of learning styles and literacy levels. Students have taken the lead in deciding what information should be included—everything from school routines and classroom expectations to wellbeing supports and activities. Staff have supported them in using accessible digital tools and design principles that make the resource both engaging and user-friendly.



By applying UDL principles, the project ensures that all learners—regardless of ability, background, or learning style—can access and understand important information in a way that works best for them. It's another example of how Crannóg Nua School continues to place student voice and inclusion at the heart of teaching and learning.

Celebrating a Shared Achievement

The Youth Participation Award is more than just a recognition—it's a celebration of a shared journey. It represents a community where students are empowered to express their ideas, staff listen and respond, and together they create positive change. The Youth Participation Award, run by TUSLA – the Child and Family Agency, recognises schools, services, and organisations that actively involve young people in decision-making processes that affect them. The award celebrates meaningful youth engagement, where children and young people are supported to share their views, contribute ideas, and help shape policies, programmes, and practices. It highlights environments where participation is genuine, inclusive, and empowering ensuring that young people's voices are heard, respected, and acted upon in line with the principles of Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Principal Jacqui McCarron praised the achievement, saying:

"This award belongs to every student and staff member who believes in the power of voice and inclusion. It's wonderful to see our students taking such an active role in shaping their school and leading the way for others."

As the school continues to build on this success, Crannóg Nua School remains committed to ensuring that every student's voice matters, and that the culture of participation and respect continues to grow at the heart of everything we do.

The Beauty of the Law

By Garda Kim Kelly

The parade square on graduation day in Garda Training College in Templemore seemed a very long way off and a very unlikely destination when I was studying beauty therapy two years ago, but it all goes to prove that life is a journey full of lessons and opportunities.

Like so many of my school friends in St Mac Dara's Community College in Templeogue, life after the Leaving Cert was a journey into the unknown. So, I was very thankful that I was always encouraged to not to be afraid to take the road less travelled, to have no regrets and as my granny Ettie would have said, to be true to myself.

Not everyone coming out of school has a crystal-clear idea of what exactly they want to do as a career and fewer still see themselves doing the same thing for the rest of their lives like our grandparents or even our parents would have done.



My uncle Eoghan is Principal of Dún Laoghaire Further Education Institute now Dublin College Dún Laoghaire and has always encouraged the younger generation in our family to consider further education as an option, particularly if we are unsure about our future. So, it was I entered the world of FET.

The sparkly things in life have always made me smile, and while I always had an interest in the law, beauty therapy was an itch I wanted to scratch, or rather a nail I wanted to polish, and looking back now I have nothing but the fondest memories of my time in Dublin College Sallynoggin (formally Sallynoggin College of Further Education). Strange as it may seem, it was a huge advantage to where I ultimately ended up. Reflecting on my life studying

Hairdressing and Beauty Therapies, I see a time spent developing communication skills, IT and phone skills and the benefit of work experience in a salon which is front facing public relations and people skills. All the above have helped add to my skill set and repertoire and basic life experience.

Many people in An Garda Síochána are part of a long family history with generations before them having served in uniform. My family have been pillars of different professions, but I've had role models of parents and grandparents who always thought nothing of putting others first, serving something bigger than themselves and doing the right thing.



So it was because of this, that I decided to swap the salon for the Garda Station, the brushes for the handcuffs and the GHD for the taser. But to get there, I had to rely on the expert guidance I received on the Pre-Garda Studies Course in Dublin College Blackrock (formally Blackrock Further Education institute). From learning basic criminal law to first aid and first responder training, we got to attend an open day in Blackrock Garda Station and the Coroner's Court and were guided through Garda interview preparation and fitness assessment training.

For the last year I have been in the Garda Training College in Templemore putting all of the skills I learned to the test and adding plenty of new ones. It has been tough, but rewarding and last month we had the big day of our Passing Out ceremony and I am delighted that I have now been assigned to serve in the Garda station in Dún Laoghaire near my old student beat (and where I can keep an eye on uncle Eoghan!). It was a road less travelled to get here but if you excuse the pun, I see the beauty in it, and I'd encourage anyone to use further education as a way of finding your feet and finding your way.



My name is Craig Tucker, and I am proud to be part of DDLETB's ICT Department team.

IT/Computers have been a passion of mine since I was a child, and working here allows me to meet new people every day while tackling exciting challenges – and no two days are ever the same!

My journey with education, however, was not always straightforward. I struggled with the school structure and left at a very young age. At that time, I never imagined that I would have the opportunity to return to learning. But at 15 years old, Dublin College Tallaght Priory, formerly known as Priory Youthreach, welcomed me with open arms and for the first time, I felt that maybe I could succeed in education.

Over two and a half years, I completed my full QQI Level 3 and Level 4 qualifications, which gave me the confidence to explore further opportunities. With the support and encouragement of everyone at Priory, I was offered a place at Liberties College (City of Dublin ETB) to study Computers and Networking at Level 5 and completing this course confirmed my passion for Information Technology.

Even though I tried out a few different jobs along the way to see what suited me, nothing could match the excitement and challenge of working in IT. I went on to complete a Level 6 course at Dublin College Tallaght (formerly Tallaght Training Centre), and soon after, the opportunity to join the team at DDLETB Head Office arose. I worked hard, prepared diligently, applied, and was thrilled to be offered the position – and joining Team DDLETB has been an incredible experience and opportunity for me.

My journey has taught me that even if a path looks uncertain or distant, with patience, perseverance, and the support of people willing to give you a chance, anything is possible. Being part of the ICT Department at DDLETB allows me to contribute to the education of so many learners, and it's a privilege to be involved in helping others achieve their goals while doing what I love every day.

With the support of my manager, Paul Byrne, and colleagues in DDLETB, I am currently exploring options to further my education in the future.

My name is Emmanuel Oladipo and I attended Adamstown Community College, a DDLETB school in Lucan. I liked Adamstown CC as a school, but the traditional structure didn't always suit me and I often felt I needed a different way of learning.

I graduated from LCA with merits – which felt like my first big “I can actually do this!” moment. Taking the Leaving Cert Applied route was recommended to me as an alternative pathway to the traditional Leaving Certificate, and I decided it might be a good option for me – a choice that ended up shaping everything that came next.

I then dived into a one-year PLC in Electrical Engineering in Coláiste Íde (City of Dublin ETB), I really enjoyed the programme and I passed with distinctions in all subjects, and briefly considered declaring myself a genius... but decided to remain humble.

Even though I really enjoyed The Electrical Engineering course, I wanted to challenge myself (and apparently my sanity) more, so I chose to apply to study Computer Science in UCD through the CAO. Four years later – after wrestling with code, deadlines, and a few existential crises – I proudly walked away with a 2:1 Honours Degree from UCD.

After graduating, I was ready for an adventure, so I packed my bags and moved to Amsterdam. There, I worked as an embedded software engineer, creating test cases for electric vehicle chargers. It was fun, challenging, and a bit terrifying, considering it was my first real job AND my first time living abroad. But I survived – and even enjoyed it!

After four years of bikes, canals, and trying not to get run over by cyclists, I decided it was time to return to Ireland. I'm now working with the head office team of DDLETB, ready for the next chapter and hoping it involves fewer near-collisions with bicycles.

My educational journey was not always traditional, and there were a few twists and turns along the way, but I am truly happy with where I have ended up. Working with DDLETB in the ICT Department and contributing to the learning experiences of so many students has been an interesting, rewarding and special experience – one that makes all the challenges along the way feel worthwhile.



Rath Dara Celebrating 40 Years Serving the Community of Dublin 15

Rath Dara Community College marks four decades of innovation, community partnership, and learner-centred growth with bursary awards, a new STEM/STEAM Room, and a proud vision for the future.

On Friday, November 28th Director of Schools Nichola Spokes, IT Manager Paul Byrne, and members of the Development Team were delighted to attend a wonderful afternoon of opportunity, positivity, and celebration at Rath Dara Community College.

The event helped to mark a significant milestone—the school’s 40th anniversary—and brought together staff, students, families, and partners to honour both the school’s past and its exciting future. Central to the celebration were The Harrison Bursary Award presentations and the grand opening of the school’s state-of-the-art STEM/STEAM Room.

Kindly sponsored and supported by Channor Real Estate owners, the Harrison Family, the Harrison Bursary Awards—now in their second year—were established and named in memory of three much-loved and influential teachers: Mr.

Paddy Scarlett, Mr. Terry Maddock, and Mrs. Mary Heffernan. Each year, the bursary provides former students with financial support as they continue their third-level education and is a testament to the community spirit at Rath Dara CC.

A sum of €2,000 is awarded to each learner in recognition of their hard work, contribution to the school community, and dedication to their studies. This year, four exceptional students were nominated, and in an inspiring testament to the talent and commitment of the group, the final award was shared between two deserving recipients. It was a proud moment for the learners, their families, and the school community. The Harrison Family, who have been extremely supportive of Rath Dara CC, were represented by members of their team at the ceremony and shared in the celebrations.



Following the bursary presentations, attendees heard from Sean Murphy, Programme and IT Coordinator and a dedicated teacher at Rath Dara CC for the past 35 years. Before our DDLETB IT Manager Paul Byrne was invited to cut the ribbon on the new space, Sean shared the story of how the new STEM Room came to fruition and spoke about the incredible impact this innovative learning space has already had on students.



The STEM Room is the result of years of planning and hard work by Sean, the school leadership team, Principal Emily Boyle and Deputy Principal Cathal McDaniel and the Digital team, who have campaigned tirelessly and sought funding and support from a wide network of local businesses—including Amazon AWS - Creative Hut, ebay, TUD Blanchardstown, R-Tech.ie, Conaty Catering and Guideware P&C Insurance & Technology—to bring this dream to life. The DDLETB IT team, the Director of Schools, and the Head Office team have also supported the project, greatly admiring the commitment shown by the Rath Dara CC team in creating such a transformative space for their learners.



Equipped with Lego, Art Tablets, Coding equipment, Podcasting tools, Kepla Blocks, Robotics kits, Micro:bit sets, Gravitax, Digital Cameras, Laptops, Smart Tablets, Lego Education Robotics Kits, VR Sets, a Cleverlive Screen, 3D printers, a Combo printer, and much more, the STEM Room has quickly become a favourite learning and play space for all students across the school, including students from the schools ASD classes.

Speaking at the event Principal Emily Boyle stated:

“Growth cannot happen without new experiences and new experiences are not possible without the support of others. It is only as a community that we have the pathway to reach our full potential. Thank you to the DDLETB and the community of Dublin 15 who help Rath Dara CC every day to not only dream but achieve.”



A DEIS school, Rath Dara Community College (formerly Riversdale CC) has seen many changes over its 40 years in Dublin 15. A staple in the community of Corduff and Ladyswell since 1986, countless students and staff have passed through its doors, with many students returning to join the team of committed teachers who continue to shape the school's future. A name change and rebrand in 2021 further strengthened the college's deep roots in the community and brought with it a renewed sense of positivity, energy, and strategic vision. The college is widely known for its exceptional care for students and its willingness to embrace new educational advancements and systems to support every learner.



In recent years, the school has continued to grow and innovate. In addition to the STEM Room, Rath Dara CC has introduced one-to-one devices for learners, opened two new ASD classrooms, created a new urban forest and stepping-stone pond, refurbished science and home economics rooms, and welcomed new all-weather sports facilities. The college now shares its vibrant campus with Danu Community Special School and maintains a long-standing partnership with Dublin College Blanchardstown (formerly Adult Education Centre Blanchardstown), strengthening lifelong learning opportunities within the community. The future is bright, and Rath Dara Community College fully intends to grab it with both hands.



On behalf of DDLETB we would like to acknowledge and thank the above-mentioned companies who have greatly supported the school and their vision. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

A huge well done to the Leadership Team, Staff and Learners at Rath Dara CC from all of us at DDLETB, wishing you all a very happy 40th anniversary.



Oireachtas Finalists for Ardgillan!

Ardgillan College were recently invited to take part in the Houses of the Oireachtas Politics and Society Quiz, an event that brings together students from across Ireland to test their understanding of political systems, public affairs, and the workings of our national parliament. Eager to rise to the challenge, the Ardgillan team—Sixth Year students Abbi and Catherine, joined by Alex from Fifth Year—set off early on a cold November morning, catching the train to Kildare Street for what would be an exciting and memorable day.

Over eight rounds of ten questions that included rounds about the history of the institution, who's who in the world of ministers and technical rules about the running of both the Dáil and Seanad among others. The atmosphere was buzzing with anticipation as teams gathered from schools across the nation, each hoping to secure a spot in the upcoming national finals. After intensive questioning and a very close scoreboard, Ardgillan College successfully secured a place in the national finals later on in December.

To celebrate the students' achievements and acknowledge their hard work, the Houses of the Oireachtas kindly hosted a lunch for students and Mr Creagh. During the meal, TDs and Senators took the time to speak with the students, offering advice, encouragement, and insights into life within the Oireachtas.

Ardgillan College is immensely proud of Abbi, Catherine, and Alex for their outstanding performance, enthusiasm, and representation of our school community. We congratulate them on reaching the national finals and look forward to supporting them as they prepare for the next stage of this exciting competition.



Navigating Digital Barriers: Implications for Inclusion into Lifelong Learning

Kevin McCabe, Information Officer at Dublin College Balbriggan, Sarsfield House, recently made a significant contribution to the field of adult education with the publication of his article “Navigating Digital Barriers: Implications for Inclusion into Lifelong Learning” in *The Adult Journal of Adult and Community Education*. The article can be [accessed here](#).

Kevin’s work explores the challenges faced by adults with limited digital skills when applying online for adult education courses through FETCH (www.fetchcourses.ie). While FETCH’s mission is to make lifelong learning more accessible for all adults in Ireland, Kevin’s article highlights how the online application process can sometimes be disempowering for digitally vulnerable learners. The article offers practical recommendations and emphasises the importance of hearing the voices of adult learners to make online systems more inclusive and user-friendly.



Kevin had the honour of presenting his findings at the Aontas Adult Education Summit 2025, held at the Aviva Stadium. The summit, opened by Minister Harkin on November 19th and 20th, brought together educators, policymakers, and community leaders to discuss innovations and challenges in adult and community education. Kevin’s presentation sparked thoughtful discussion around digital accessibility and inclusion in lifelong learning.

Joining Kevin in supporting this work was Anne Whelan, Community Education Facilitator for Dublin College Balbriggan and Swords, and a member of the Aontas board. Together, they highlighted the vital role of community education in bridging digital gaps and ensuring all adult learners have equitable access to educational opportunities. Kevin’s research and presentation underline the importance of inclusive digital practices in adult education, sparking conversations that aim to improve access and engagement for all learners in Ireland.

Picture left: Kevin McCabe with Anne Whelan.



Dublin College Rush learners recently attended the Gate Theatre in Dublin to see the play POOR as part of their SPHE programme. The visit offered students a chance to experience not only live theatre but powerful and engaging themes.

The play, adapted by Sonya Kelly and based on Katriona O'Sullivan's bestselling memoir, vividly portrays her journey from a childhood marked by poverty, addiction, and homelessness in England to building a new life in Dublin and ultimately achieving academic success at Trinity College, Dublin.

The performance was both moving and inspiring, encouraging learners to reflect on resilience, determination, the importance of education in overcoming challenges, and motivation to consider how resilience and community can shape one's future.

A must see for anyone who is lucky enough to grab some tickets!



DUBLIN COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION
AND TRAINING



Congratulations to Dublin College Tallaght ESOL learners, Valerii Matuskenko and Anatolii Zhdanov, who proudly showcased their innovative new organic fertiliser, Green Star, at the National Ploughing Championships in Scraggan, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, in September 2025.

Since arriving in Ireland after fleeing the war in Ukraine, Valerii and Anatolii have been dedicated participants in Dublin College's ESOL/English classes at the Citywest Hotel. Although neither had a farming background, they identified a growing need for an Irish-made organic fertiliser and set out to create a solution. Their hard work paid off as they spent three days presenting Green Star to visitors from the worlds of agricultural science and business.

A highlight of their experience was meeting John Spink, Head of the Crop Science Department at Teagasc, who expressed great interest in their project. Their story is a remarkable example of resilience, innovation, and the power of learning to open new doors.

DDLETB Head Office Staff Come Together for an Energising End-of-Year Gathering

DDLETB Head Office staff enjoyed a lively and uplifting team event this week, celebrating achievements, strengthening connections, and taking a well-earned moment to reflect on the year so far.

The morning began with team-building, followed by a highly engaging and thought-provoking workshop on wellbeing delivered by Shane Martin of Moodwatchers. Shane's blend of insight, humour and practical tools offered staff a valuable reminder of the importance of balance, positivity and self-care in a busy working environment.

Our Director of Organisational Support and Development then delivered an informative presentation, highlighting progress across key initiatives. This included a review of the successful launch of Dublin College, exciting developments in our two new Community Special Schools, and updates from our schools, colleges and centres—each showcasing the dedication and innovation happening right across DDLETB.

The event concluded with best wishes from our CE Caitríona Murphy, coffee, chats and a welcome spark of Christmas cheer, giving colleagues the chance to reconnect informally and celebrate the collective work of the organisation.

Head Office teams work tirelessly behind the scenes to support more than 5,000 staff and 85,000 learners, and gatherings like this serve as an important reminder of the people, passion and collaboration that keep our organisation moving forward. It was a wonderful opportunity to share success stories, recharge, and take a well-deserved breath before the busy season ahead.



Edina Erasmus Project



DDLETB is participating in an Erasmus project (including school visits) to look at how Newly-Arrived Migrants are received in post primary schools in different European countries. Work done to date by the Edina Erasmus project is hosted here: <https://edinaplatform.eu/>

In Ireland, EAL students are immersed in mainstream subject classes from when they arrive. While in other partner countries, students from a migrant/refugee background are taught separately to their host country peers until they have the language required to actively participate in schooling in a mainstream class. The two systems are very different and visiting teachers learned a lot by seeing how things work in other EU country contexts.

Three members of DDLETB staff visited Northern Spain and were hosted by the University of Oviedo. Mary Kenny (DDLETB project lead, Head Office), Karla Medina-McNamara (Coláiste Pobail Setanta) and Jana Elkhawad (Deansrath CC) - visited two post primary schools in Oviedo: La Milagrosa, a semi-private, state-funded Catholic school, and Pablo Miaja National School, a fully state-owned school.

At La Milagrosa, the visit focused on a school tour and a discussion with Newly Arrived Migrant (NAM) students aged 12–14. They shared personal stories, how they perceive themselves in their new country, their integration into the school community, and their coping strategies. Their countries of origin included Russia, China, Cuba, various

Latin American countries, and Romania. Pablo Miaja has a student body of 92–94% migrant students, most without Castilian Spanish as a mother tongue. Visitors met the Deputy Principal and NAM (Newly-Arrived Migrant) teachers who teach Spanish as an Additional Language, including the SEN coordinator, then also observed classes.

EDINA is a European Erasmus+ project that helps schools welcome, assess, and support newly arrived migrant students so they can integrate and succeed in their new education systems.

The workshops and school visits to Oviedo showed how inclusive teaching, differentiation, and a strong culture of reading support migrant children and demonstrated best practice in welcoming newly arrived students.

Two of our DDLETB Community Colleges hosted Erasmus school visits related to this project: A big thank you to Adamstown CC and St Kevin's CC who excellently showcased how immersion and language learning works in DDLETB schools.

For further information on the project and EAL support contact marykenny@ddletb.ie

Rugby Flourishes at all levels in Ardgillan!

Rugby at Ardgillan College has experienced one of its strongest years to date, with enthusiasm for the sport growing rapidly among both boys and girls. Across all year groups, participation levels have soared, new teams have formed, and competitive success has followed—making this year a standout in the school's sporting calendar.



First Year Girls: A Remarkable Start to the Season!

The First-Year girls have been one of the brightest highlights of the year. With over 28 players taking up rugby—many for the first time—the sport has seen phenomenal growth among our newest students. Their commitment and energy allowed Ardgillan to enter two teams into the Tag 7s blitz competitions this term.

Across more than 15 blitz matches, the girls delivered outstanding performances, suffering only two losses. Their success reflects not

only raw talent but also their enthusiasm and willingness to embrace a new sport. Interest continues to grow, with more students joining each week.

First Year Boys: Strength in Numbers

Our First-Year boys have also shown unprecedented interest in rugby, with a remarkable 45 students signing up to play. In their opening blitz of the year, Ardgillan was able to field three full teams, giving every player valuable game time and experience. With more fixtures scheduled in the months ahead, coaches are excited

to see this talented group develop further as the season progresses.

Junior Boys: Growing Skill and Confidence

The Junior boys' team has demonstrated strong commitment as they continue to compete in Division 3. Many players are still relatively new to the sport, yet their progress has been exceptional. Having participated in two blitz events so far, the improvement since last year has been clearly evident, and the squad's determination bodes well for future competitions.

Junior & Senior Girls 7s – Strong Performances

Both the Junior and Senior girls' 7s teams performed superbly this year, showing grit, teamwork, and excellent skill throughout their campaigns. Despite going unbeaten, the Junior girls narrowly missed out on a place in the Leinster Finals due to tries scored—a heartbreaking but incredibly proud moment for such a talented group.

The Senior girls also impressed, losing just one closely contested game against St. Andrew's College, which unfortunately cost them a spot in the final. However, the day ended on a high note when the girls met Ireland legend Johnny Sexton, who surprised them by asking them for a photo—an unforgettable moment for the team!!!

Senior Boys: A Strong Push Towards Finals Day

Our Senior boys' rugby team has been a force to be reckoned with this season. Despite significant team changes following last year's Sixth Year departures, the squad has stepped up remarkably. The team now finds itself in the semi-final of the Shield, after an impressive win over Templeogue College.

Ardgillan College will face Ashbourne Community School next week, with hopes high for securing a place in the Finals Day on 11 December. With momentum on their side, the team is determined to finish the year on a high.

Rugby at Ardgillan College continues to go from strength to strength, driven by passionate players and an ever-growing sporting culture within the school. This year's achievements are a testament to the resilience and talent of our students, and the future of rugby at Ardgillan has never looked brighter. Thank you to Mr Goodman, Mr Coyle, Mr Young, Mr Connole, Mr Conoulty, Ms O' Neill, Ms Delaney and Ms Kennedy for all of their work with the teams!





Castleknock Community College - Tree of Carols

The local Church of Ireland invited our Castleknock Community College to contribute a Christmas Tree to their annual Christmas Tree Festival, and we were delighted to take part.

In response, we designed and created “This Tree of Carols,” a celebration of the central role music plays in our college community.

Music is woven into the fabric of school life, and our choir’s contributions to countless school events and celebrations make them a vital part of our shared identity. This tree was chosen as a reflection of that vibrant musical spirit.

Each page adorning the tree features a favourite Christmas carol, carefully selected by members of the choir, teachers, and students.

The LCA1 class took on the task of tea-staining and preparing the sheet music, adding a warm, handcrafted charm to the tree. The result is not just a display of festive decoration, but a tangible representation of the care, creativity, and effort of our school community.

This collaborative project brought together many areas of our college. It was supported by the Art Department, with Ms Woolmington and Ms Havel, the Music Department, with Ms Staunton and Ms Conlon and our Chaplain, Ms Mullins. The final assembly was carried out by our TY students – Sarah Nealon, Deidre Brady, Clodagh Sheehan, and Geet Agrawal – whose teamwork ensured that the tree would stand as a proud centrepiece.

This Tree of Carols is more than just a festive decoration. It is a celebration of our creativity, our voices, and the music that connects us all. It embodies the joy of working together and the pride in our school community.

Cycling Inclusion Centre of Excellence

DDLETB in partnership with Variety Ireland and Active South Dublin launch Irelands first “Cycling Inclusion Centre of Excellence” located in Collinstown Park Sports Complex.

We were very excited to hold the launch of this innovative project on Thursday, November 20th. The new cycling centre was officially opened by Minister of State at the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Emer Higgins TD, Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Sean Canney TD, Deputy Mayor of South Dublin County Council, Cllr. Trevor Gilligan and Dr. Aoife O’Donohue, Assistant National Director of Disability Services at the HSE. We were also delighted to have many local politicians, DDLETB staff and representatives and community members in attendance along with the most important attendees of the day, children from the Arch Club, Collinstown Community College mainstream and AS unit, Scoil Mochua CRC, St. Marys SNS mainstream and AS unit and St. Peters JNS.



The Bike hub opened in 2021 with a fleet of 50 standard bikes in various sizes. As the need for this programme increased, there was a need to retain more bikes. Some of which are recycled bikes donated by Frontline bikes. In April 2024, work was expanded to include teaching children with additional needs. It quickly became clear that there was a huge demand for this support from children and families and that very few facilities existed for children who required adapted cycling experiences.

To meet these needs, the team began developing the tools and equipment required to deliver a programme that could grow organically alongside the children they work with. The response has been incredible—far beyond the expectations of all involved. The feedback from both parents and children has been overwhelmingly positive.

The hub is designed to make cycling accessible to everyone and offers free supervised access to a wide selection of mainstream bikes, mobility trikes, wheelchair transporters, and an extensive range of adapted mobility trikes. A key feature of the complex is its permanently designed inclusive cycling course, which creates a safe environment where people with and without disabilities can learn and cycle together. This inclusive approach ensures a fully integrated, empowering, and confidence-building experience for all users.

New storage containers are now in place, along with a wheelchair carrier bike and six medical trikes, which have been added to existing stock.

Over the past year, the team also added:

- 2 adult balance bikes
- 4 children's balance bikes
- 1 small medical trike
- Bike stands for practising stationary pedalling
- 2 custom-built bikes with rear bars to support older children struggling with balance
- 2 go-karts, hugely popular for confidence-building and fun
- 1 hand-powered trike, loved by all the children



These additions mean that families can now enjoy cycling together, regardless of individual needs. We are also thrilled to offer road safety lessons in a quiet, secure setting on our newly built, custom-designed road and games track. This space also encourages free play for children who may need a break from cycling.

At the same event, Variety Ireland unveiled its new Recycle Mobility Programme Impact Report 2025, conducted by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. This report analyses the mental and physical health benefits that adaptive mobility bikes and trikes provide to children and their families, further highlighting the life-changing impact of inclusive cycling.

We are incredibly passionate about teaching cycling to all children, and we can't wait to share this wonderful resource with the whole community!

None of this would have been possible without the vision and hard work of Helen and the wonderful team at Collinstown Park Sports Complex, Kevin and his team at Variety Ireland, Aoife and the team at HSE, Active South Dublin, DDLETB Youth and Sports Team and Buildings Team, Volunteers, local parents and the huge support of the local community.

Well done and thank you to everyone.



Barnardo's Plugged in Switched off Event in Google HQ

On Friday 14th November Greenhills CC Webwise Student Ambassadors travelled to Google HQ where 6th year student Tadgh was chosen as a Webwise Youth Advisory Panellist.

Greenhills College was proudly represented as student Tadgh took part in a high-profile panel discussion on internet safety—an area that continues to be a key priority for young people, schools and families nationwide.

The event was connected to Barnardo's long-running Online Safety Programme, in which Greenhills College has actively participated for several years. The programme, coordinated in our school by Maria Donoghue, empowers students to become informed digital citizens and strong advocates for safer online practices. Our Webwise Ambassadors—typically drawn from our Student Council class captains—play a central role, using their student voice to raise awareness, lead initiatives and influence positive change within the school community.

A standout feature of the programme is the unique opportunity it gives students to visit the Dublin headquarters of major multinational tech companies such as Google, TikTok, X and Microsoft. These visits not only deepen students' understanding of online platforms but also help them to imagine exciting possibilities for their own future careers in the tech industry.

We are incredibly proud of Tadgh for representing Greenhills College with confidence and insight. He has been an outstanding ambassador for our school, and his contribution to the conversation on internet safety reflects the very best of our student leadership.

Greenhills Students Shine at National Online Safety Event

On Wednesday, 26th November, two of our 6th year Webwise Ambassadors, Daniel and Tadgh, represented Greenhills Community College at an important online safety event held at the Clayton Hotel in Ballsbridge.

Both students have been working tirelessly with Webwise to promote safe online practices, and the event provided a fantastic opportunity for them to showcase their dedication. Daniel and Tadgh participated in a lively and thought-provoking discussion with a wide range of stakeholders from Digital Literacy Ireland, as well as programme coordinators from Webwise, sharing their insights and experiences from a student perspective.

We are incredibly proud of Daniel and Tadgh for their ongoing commitment to making the internet a safer place for young people. Their leadership, enthusiasm, and thoughtful contributions are a true credit to our school and to the wider Webwise programme.



Parents & Guardians Encouraged to Shape the Future of Primary Education

The Department of Education and Youth's Primary Schools Survey 2030 will close on December 16th, after inviting parents of all children aged 0–12 to share their views on the future direction of primary education in Ireland. The survey explored preferences for multi-denominational, co-educational and Irish-medium schooling. The Department of Education and Youth will use the results of the survey to plan how they provide education at primary level, and to ensure that schools meet the needs of local communities.



This was an important opportunity to inform the future educational landscape across Ireland.”

– Caitríona Murphy, Chief Executive, DDLETB

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education & Training Board has strongly encouraged parents, primary school staff, and boards of management to participate and help ensure that future schools reflect Ireland's increasingly diverse communities.

Why is the Department of Education and Youth undertaking this survey?

School communities are reflective of the rich and diverse society we live in. In the context of the evolving environment within which schools are operating, the availability of up-to-date data and in particular, clear data on the preferences of parents and guardians in respect of the primary schools which their children currently attend, or will attend in coming years, is very important. The results of the survey will help the department in planning education provision at primary level.

Data Demonstrates a Clear Need for More Diverse School Options

Figures from recent survey compiled by Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), the national representative body for Ireland's 16 ETBs, including DDLETB, reveal that just 5% of primary schools nationwide are multi-denominational. The remaining 95% operate under religious patronage, primarily that of the Catholic Church. Census 2022 data highlighted a significant disconnect between the religious beliefs of Ireland's population and the educational options currently available.

In the 2022 Census, 31% of people in Ireland reported that they do not identify as Catholic, including over 14% who identified as non-religious, with notable increases across a range of other beliefs.

Nichola Spokes, Director of Schools with DDLETB, noted:

“The Census data shows a clear need for more diverse primary school options in our region. A sizeable proportion of our community is not currently served by the existing system, in which 95% of schools operate with a Catholic ethos. Families should have access to schools that reflect their values, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds. Greater educational diversity will help ensure inclusion, equality, and respect for all identities within our community. Expanding school choice is essential for meeting the needs of all families.”

ETBI's recent research further examined demand for multi-denominational schooling nationwide. The findings show that 61% of people nationally would prefer education under a multi-denominational patronage rather than a religious one. Notably, even among those who identify as Catholic, a majority indicate a preference for multi-denominational education. The evidence demonstrates that change is clearly needed.

Caitríona Murphy, DDLETB Chief Executive, highlighted that future schools should reflect Ireland's increasingly diverse society and emphasised the value of the Department's information resources, which helped families make informed contributions.

What Are Community National Schools?

DDLETB are the proud patrons of nine Community National Schools and three Community Special Schools, and we echo ETBI in expressing our openness to the reconfiguration of additional schools to CNS status within its region.

Community National Schools (CNS) are state-funded, co-educational, multi-denominational primary schools. Established to reflect the realities of a modern and diverse Ireland, CNS schools offer a welcoming, inclusive ethos where children of all faiths and none learn together during the school day. CNS schools follow the national primary curriculum, provide a broad range of extra-curricular activities, and promote values such as excellence in education, respect, equality, care and community.



Caitríona Murphy noted that: "It is important to note that when a school becomes a Community National School under the patronage of its local ETB, the many excellent things already in place continue unchanged – the curriculum, the staff, and extra-curricular offerings all remain the same. The key difference is that the ethos of a Community National School embraces all children and their families equally throughout the entire school day. Rather than prioritising one faith tradition, children learn about a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, including the beliefs of their classmates. Catholic families still retain the option for their children to celebrate First Holy Communion or Confirmation; the only change is that preparation for these sacraments takes place outside the regular school day."

Find out more!

For detailed information on the survey, which again closes on December 16th, and on primary school patrons, please visit:

www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/information-on-primary-school-patrons-and-their-schools/#education-and-training-board-cns

Education & Training Boards Ireland (ETBI): **www.etbi.ie**

Further information about ETB Community National Schools, which are state, multi-denominational and co-educational, can be found at **www.cns.ie**.

Winter Wonderland 2025: A Magical Week for Our Community

Winter Wonderland 2025 at Collinstown Park Sports Centre, welcomed over 400 children throughout an unforgettable week of festive fun and inclusive celebration. Daytime sessions were enjoyed by classes from St. Peter's Junior and Senior Schools, St. Mary's SNS, and Scoil Mochua CRC, who explored the sensory stations, met Santa, and took part in a range of engaging activities designed for children of all abilities.

In the evenings, the event opened its doors to our wider community groups, including Karate, Tara Dance, Newlands FC, Adapted Judo, and several cycling clubs. Members of the Arch Club, Adamstown Blue Warriors, Collinstown FC, and the children of our Adult Education students also joined in the celebrations. This broad participation truly reflected the spirit of community connection at the heart of Winter Wonderland.

The project continues to be supported by South Dublin County Council (SDCC), whose funding enables the purchase of additional equipment such as sensory boards as well as all of the children's presents. This support ensures

the experience is engaging, accessible, and memorable for every child who attends.

A huge contribution also came from 22 Transition Year students and music teacher Helen McHugh from Collinstown Park CC, who together dedicated countless hours in the lead-up to the event. Their preparation included practising face painting, organising music, and volunteering across three evenings and a Saturday so that families could attend outside school hours. Their enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment were vital to bringing the magic of Winter Wonderland to life.



Behind the scenes, John Whelan remains the driving force of the entire operation. From October to December, John volunteers countless hours shopping, coordinating, and travelling around the country to source the fantastic equipment that makes the experience so special. During the event itself, John—better known to children as Santa Claus—welcomes every child personally, using Lámh communication where needed. This thoughtful approach has created deeply meaningful and emotional moments for parents, teachers, and children alike.

The generosity of our community has also been remarkable. Thanks to the substantial food donations received, we will be able to support many local families with meaningful hampers that will help ease the financial pressure of the Christmas season.

Winter Wonderland 2025 has once again shown what we can achieve when schools, volunteers, local groups, and community partners come together. A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who played a part in making this event so special.

ddletb



Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Dublin and Dún Laoghaire
Átha Cliath agus Dhún Laoghaire Education and Training Board

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