

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB

NEWSLETTER

EDITION 23 - OCTOBER 2026



New Autism Classes

Dublin College at
Higher Options &
World Skills

DDLETB
Youth & Sports

Mount Seskin CC
Celebrates
40 years



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

Forty Years of Community: A Birthday Weekend at Mount Seskin Community College



Past pupils now working in education, with Deputy Principal Charlie Ferguson (L-R): Shauna Ryan Farrell, Lorna O'Neill, Sandra Collins, Charlie Ferguson, Petrina Byrne, Maria McArdle and Keith McClean.

Mount Seskin Community College turned forty this September and marked the occasion in style with a birthday celebration weekend.

The celebrations began on Friday 18th September with a whole-school assembly. Deputy Principal Charlie Ferguson, a founding member of staff, told students the story of the school and how hard the local community worked together to make it a reality. He then cut a ribbon and the birthday cake and with the school band leading the way, the whole school sang Happy Birthday and every student was treated to a slice of birthday cake to mark the day.

On Sunday 20th September, the school opened its doors for a Community Open Day, welcoming past pupils, former and current staff, students and families from across the area.

For many past pupils, simply walking back through the doors was an emotional moment. Some arrived decades after they last sat in a classroom, and more than a few seemed to remember exactly where their old seat had been. All were grateful for the chance to take a walk down memory lane.



Past teacher Jim Halpin with past pupils (L-R) Jennifer O'Neill Beagan, Michelle Gartland Mulraney, Jim Halpin and Rachel Meehan Byrne.



Fr Martin Hughes, former chaplain at the college, meets former colleagues Katherine Aherne, Jim Halpin and Catherine McCarthy.

Staff who have served the school over the past four decades brought the day to life. Old colleagues were reunited, stories were swapped and there was no shortage of laughter as people shared what the school, under both of its names, has meant to them.

Current students from First to Sixth Year turned out in their dozens to act as guides and helpers, taking real pride in showing visitors the parts of school life they love most. Guests enjoyed a warm welcome, live music from the school band, subject showcases, activities and hospitality, all reflecting the energy and talent in the school today.

Behind the scenes, present and past members of the school's Parents' Council worked tirelessly in the kitchen all day. Their freshly baked goods kept visitors well fed and were a real highlight of the day.

The weekend also looked to the future. New families came to see the school for themselves, and many spoke about looking forward to joining the school community in the years ahead.

"Sunday was truly a wonderful occasion for our community," said Principal Aishling Ryan. "The welcome, the music, the subject showcases, the activities, the hospitality and the spirit of our team were second to none. We want to thank everybody for their preparation and participation to make the day special."

Forty years on, from Jobstown Community College to Mount Seskin Community College, the school remains a place of learning, friendship and belonging in Tallaght, and a proud part of the DDLETB family. Comhghairdeas le gach duine a bhí páirteach. Congratulations to everyone who helped make the birthday weekend so special. Lá breithe sona, Mount Seskin, and here's to the next forty years!

A very special congratulations to all the management, staff and students of Mount Seskin Community College as you celebrate your 40th Anniversary, from all of us in the DDLETB community.

For four decades, Mount Seskin CC has been at the heart of its community, supporting, inspiring and empowering generations of young people. This milestone is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the past, recognise the dedication of everyone who has contributed along the way, and look forward to an exciting future.

Wishing the entire Mount Seskin community a fantastic 40th Anniversary celebration, and many more successful years ahead!

Getting Ready to Open Balbriggan Community Special School

It is a very exciting time for everyone involved in setting up Balbriggan Community Special School. Starting a school from scratch involves a huge amount of work, but it also gives us the chance to be involved in all the small decisions that will shape the school for years to come.

Some of these are big decisions, such as planning how teaching and learning will work across the school. Others are smaller but still important, from designing our school crest and school uniform to deciding what furniture and equipment we need. It has been lovely to see the school gradually taking shape and beginning to feel like our own.



Sarah Liddy Deputy Principal and Graeme Crombie Principal

Our staff are working together to create consistency throughout the school. We are looking at general classroom layouts and agreeing on consistent visual supports for classrooms and shared areas. We hope that having familiar layouts and visuals across the building will make it easier for pupils to understand their surroundings, move around the school and know what to expect during their day.

Our teachers and SNAs have already begun visiting pupils in their homes. These visits provide a valuable opportunity to get to know each child, including their interests, preferences, strengths and individual needs, in a familiar and comfortable environment. Just as importantly, they are helping us to build positive relationships with pupils and their families before they begin their journey with us at Balbriggan Community Special School.

We have also launched our new school podcast, Inside BCSS. At the moment, the podcast is helping us to keep parents informed about the preparations taking place and to introduce some of the people involved in setting up the school. As the school grows, we hope the podcast will grow with it. In time, we would love to include pupil voice and parent voice and give members of our school community the chance to share their experiences and ideas.

Of course, there is also plenty of practical work going on behind the scenes. We are busy ordering everything from pens, paper and laminators to printers, interactive panels and furniture for our pupils and staff. We are also choosing sensory and curricular resources that will support our pupils' learning, communication, regulation and independence.

We are very grateful for the support we have received from DDLETB Head Office as we prepare to open the school. Colleagues in procurement, IT and other departments have supported us with the many practical tasks involved in establishing a new school. We have also appreciated the continued support from Head Office as the building works progress towards completion.

There is still plenty to be done, but it is wonderful to see everything starting to come together. We are really looking forward to opening our doors, welcoming our first pupils and beginning this first chapter for Balbriggan Community Special School.

Sarah Liddy, Deputy Principal, Balbriggan Community Special School.

Curriculum-Linked Materials Development for Post-Primary EAL Students Using AI Tools

On the 30th of September, teachers and school leaders from DDLETB and further afield attended a professional learning event focused on a recent EDINA Erasmus Project on the use of AI tools to support English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners in DDLETB Head Office in Tallaght.

The afternoon showcased work carried out by DDLETB teachers who have been developing curriculum-linked resources for post-primary EAL students using tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, Diffit, Gamma, Chalkie AI, Gemini, and Kahoot AI. Through practical examples, participants explored how AI can help create differentiated learning materials, simplify complex texts, generate visual supports and improve access to the curriculum for students at varying levels of English proficiency.

DDLETB teachers shared resources developed across a range of subject areas and demonstrated how AI can be used to adapt existing classroom materials while maintaining curriculum relevance and high expectations for learners. A strong emphasis was placed on the role of teacher expertise in reviewing, adapting and refining AI-generated content to ensure quality and accuracy.

The event provided an excellent opportunity for educators to learn from one another, exchange ideas, and consider how AI tools can support inclusive teaching practices in their own schools.

Thank you to Mary Kenny (EAL Coordinator), Smitha Abraham (St. Kevins CC), Jana Elkhawad (Deansrath CC), Suzanne Downes (St. MacDara's CC), Carolina Fernández García (CP Setanta) and Deirdre Dunne (Digital Development Officer) for sharing their expertise and for their contribution to this important work in supporting EAL learners across DDLETB.

The long-term aim of the project is to create an internal staff website where useful resources can be shared and continue to link in with Oide and ETBI. The next phase of the project launch will take place at the University of Utrecht on the 13th and 14th of October 2026, and we will bring you all the news from that.

For EAL questions or support please contact marykenny@ddletb.ie



Developing Réalt in Ardgillan

A group of teachers from the Ardgillan College have completed the Forbairt Programme with Oide, a professional learning programme which supports schools and teachers in developing their practice, leadership and capacity to bring about meaningful change. Ms Domigan, Ms McGarrell, Ms Ní Mhurchú, Ms Dunne and Mr Walsh recently presented on the Ardgillan Forbairt project at the Forbairt Showcase in Athlone. As part of the Forbairt process, the Ardgillan team chose to focus on gifted and talented learners and to explore how we could further develop the opportunities, support and mentoring available to students who demonstrate particular strengths, talents and interests.

This work has resulted in the introduction of our Réalt Programme at Ardgillan College. *Réalt*, meaning *star*, reflects our belief that every student has the potential to shine, and that talent can be demonstrated in many different ways. Our approach in Ardgillan College is one of “raising all boats.” While the Réalt Programme emerged from our work on supporting gifted and talented learners, our ambition is for as much of the programme as possible to be accessible to as many students as possible. We want to create opportunities for students to challenge themselves, explore their interests, develop their talents, and experience success. This is rooted in our school motto of “*Mol an Óige agus Tiocfaidh Sí*” (praise the youth and they will flourish).

A key feature of the programme is the appointment of a Réalt Anchor for each year group. These teachers provide a point of contact for students, meeting with them, and offering mentoring, encouragement, and guidance. In particular, Réalt Anchors encourage students to become involved in extracurricular activities, helping them to explore their interests, develop their talents, and discover new opportunities beyond the classroom. We have also introduced a Réalt Merit on Tyro. Students can earn a Réalt Merit for completing extension tasks, additional homework, project work or other activities that demonstrate initiative and a willingness to challenge themselves. This provides a tangible way of recognising students who go beyond the expected and celebrate their engagement, curiosity and commitment to their learning.



Members of the Réalt team attended training organised by DDLETB SEAN Coordinator Frances Shannon at the DDLETB Head Office, focusing on gifted learners. This provided valuable opportunities for staff to develop their understanding of gifted and talented students and to consider effective approaches to supporting and challenging them within the school environment. We are also very grateful to Kingswood Community College for facilitating a visit for members of our team. This gave us the opportunity to meet with the coordinator of their Star Programme, learn from their experience and explore approaches to supporting gifted learners that could inform the continued development of Réalt at Ardgillan College.

Student voice remains central to the Réalt Programme. We want our approach to reflect the experiences, needs, and interests of our students. Regular focus groups provide students with an opportunity to share their views, suggest ideas, and contribute to the ongoing development of the programme.

Réalt is about creating a culture where students are encouraged to recognise their strengths and potential. It is about providing opportunities, celebrating achievement, and ensuring that students have the support and encouragement they need to flourish. The Forbairt Programme has provided a valuable opportunity for our teachers to reflect on our practice and work collaboratively towards positive change.

Leadership Connect: A Milestone Achievement with Oide Endorsement



DDLETB is delighted to announce and celebrate that the Leadership Connect Programme is now endorsed by Oide, a significant milestone and a wonderful recognition of the quality, ambition and impact of the programme.

Leadership Connect was developed with a clear purpose: to build leadership capacity across DDLETB and support colleagues at different stages of their leadership journey. Today, the programme brings together three complementary strands of professional learning: the Teacher Leadership Programme (TLP), Middle Leadership Programme (MLP) and Year Head Development Programme (YHDP).

Achieving Oide Leadership Endorsement is an important recognition of the thought, research, collaboration and ongoing evaluation that underpin Leadership Connect. Oide's Leadership Endorsement process is designed to recognise high-quality professional learning for leadership and considers areas including the quality of professional learning and facilitation, programme management and administration, and evaluation and impact. The process is open to leadership programmes across the continuum, from teacher and middle leadership through to aspiring, newly appointed, established and system leadership.

A programme built on research and reflection

Research, reflection and evaluation have been central to the development of Leadership Connect from the outset.

The journey began with research into leadership development and the needs of DDLETB colleagues, including the original research undertaken in 2021 to inform the redevelopment of the Middle Leadership Programme. This research helped to identify

the needs of colleagues taking on leadership roles and informed the design and subsequent redevelopment of the programme.

Leadership Connect has continued to evolve in response to feedback, experience and evidence. The Teacher Leadership Programme has been reviewed and reformed, the Middle Leadership Programme has been completely redeveloped, and the Year Head Development Programme was developed and piloted before being introduced more widely in 2024.

Evaluation is also embedded within the programme itself. Participant feedback, coordinator and facilitator reflection, and programme review have been used to continually refine the learning experience and ensure that the programmes remain relevant to educational advancements and the changing and emerging needs of DDLETB schools and colleges.

Most recently, a comprehensive research project has been undertaken by Programme Coordinators Caroline Daly and Janet Murphy to explore the impact and development of Leadership Connect. The research, titled *Shaping the Journey Ahead: Future Planning for Leadership Connect*, included an in-depth survey designed to capture participants' experiences of the reformed TLP, redeveloped MLP and YHDP over the past five years. It is helping to identify what is currently working well, what participants value and where further development may be needed.

This commitment to research and evaluation reflects a central principle of Leadership Connect: leadership development should not stand still. It should respond to evidence, listen to participants and continue to evolve and move. Echoing our paper aeroplane logo, it reminds us that learning is a journey that is always in motion.



Oide

*This is an Oide Endorsed Programme
Tá an clár seo formhuinithe ag Oide*

The Oide Leadership Endorsement process

The application for Oide endorsement provided an opportunity to bring together the considerable work that has gone into developing Leadership Connect and to reflect critically on the programme as a whole.

Oide's endorsement process involves three stages. The first is a written submission, in which the programme is assessed against the Oide Leadership Endorsement criteria. Providers may also be asked to submit additional evidence before progressing to the next stage.

The second stage is an Endorsement Panel meeting, providing an opportunity for the programme team to present their provision and engage in professional dialogue with the panel about the application, its design and impact.

The final stage is the decision on the application, with feedback provided to the provider. Successful programmes are published on the Oide website and can use the Oide Leadership Endorsement logo on their programme materials. Endorsement is awarded for four years, after which it can be renewed. For Leadership Connect, the process provided an opportunity not only to demonstrate the strengths and success of the programme, but also to reflect on the research, evidence, structures and collaborative work that have contributed to its development.

More than an endorsement

For everyone involved in Leadership Connect, the Oide Leadership Endorsement represents much more than a formal recognition. It provides external acknowledgement of the quality of a programme that has been

developed specifically in response to the needs and context of DDLETB schools and colleges.

It recognises the importance of high-quality facilitation, thoughtful programme design, effective administration and, crucially, a commitment to evaluating impact. It also reinforces DDLETB's commitment to providing relevant, evidence-informed and meaningful professional learning for colleagues across our schools.

The endorsement is particularly significant because Leadership Connect has been built collaboratively. It has grown through the contributions of coordinators, internal and external facilitators, participants, school leaders and the wider DDLETB team. Each has played a role in shaping the programme, sharing expertise, providing feedback and helping to create a culture where leadership development is valued and encouraged.

Looking to the future

Leadership Connect continues to grow. With TLP, MLP and YHDP now working together as three complementary strands, the programme offers colleagues opportunities to develop their leadership capacity at different points along their professional journey. Coordinators will continue to look for new opportunities to expand and develop that journey.

The four-year Oide endorsement provides an important foundation for the next stage of that development. It celebrates what has been achieved while also encouraging continued reflection, evaluation and improvement. Most importantly, this achievement belongs to the people who have shaped and delivered Leadership Connect and to those who continue to engage with it.

A sincere thank you to our Leadership Connect Coordinators, Caroline Daly and Janet Murphy, who design and develop the programme; Director of Schools Mark McDonald and former Director of Schools Adrian Flynn; our internal and external facilitators; our many participants over the years, representing more than 600 colleagues; the Development Team, past and present; and the wider DDLETB team. Thank you all for your energy, expertise, commitment and belief in developing leadership capacity across our schools.



Creating Space to Thrive: New Autism and Special Classes Across DDLETB

Expanding inclusive learning opportunities and supporting every learner to reach their potential.

Across DDLETB, new Autism and Special Classes are opening in our schools, creating additional opportunities for children and young people with additional educational needs to learn, grow and thrive in an inclusive school environment. These classes provide tailored teaching and support, while also enabling students to be part of the wider school community and participate in school life alongside their peers. With dedicated spaces, specialised resources and skilled staff, Autism and Special Classes help create learning environments that recognise individual strengths, support wellbeing and promote meaningful inclusion.

A New Chapter for Griffeen Community College

It's an exciting new chapter for Griffeen Community College as students and staff settle into their brand-new school building. This fantastic new space provides a modern, welcoming environment for learning, collaboration and school life. We wish the entire Griffeen Community College community every success and happiness as they begin this exciting new journey together!



The Suite at Griffeen Community College welcomed its very first students in September 2026. Home to two Autism Special Classes, the new facility provides a warm, inclusive and supportive environment where students can learn, participate and flourish. Students have settled in exceptionally well and are embracing the opportunities the new space offers. Designed to meet individual needs while promoting independence, The Suite supports students in developing confidence, social skills and independent living skills. Staff are delighted to see students thriving and engaging positively in all aspects of school life.

A little birdie tells us that the students have named the big teddy Noel, a tribute to school Principal Noel Kelly! 😊

Coláiste Cois Life Expands Specialist Provision



Coláiste Cois Life Team

Coláiste Cois Life has also expanded its specialist provision with the addition of Rang Banna Special Classes to the school.

Tá áthas an domhain ar Coláiste Cois Life le oscailt Rang Banna, ár seomra nua do dhaltaí le huathachais i Mí Mheán Fhómhair 2026. Tá tús álainn tar éis a bheith againn, tá na daltaí ag socrú isteach.

Is áit sábháilte, compordach í an seomra anois do na daltaí, ligeann siad a scíth, is féidir leo iad féin a rialú, agus is féidir leo mothú socair. Is álainn an rud é iad a fheiceáil agus iad compordach sa spás nua agus na buntáistí a bhaint as.

Gan amhras, tá rath iontach leis an trampailín! Is breá leis na daltaí é agus is é ceann de na gnéithe is fearr den seomra dóibh.

Tá an-áthas orainn le tús Rang Banna agus táimid ag tnúth go mór le cuimhneacháin dearfacha a chruthú tríd na bliana seo.

The school community are delighted to have opened Rang Banna, our new classroom for autistic students this September 2026. We have had a really lovely start, and the students are settling in so well. The room has quickly become a safe and comfortable space for the students, where they can relax, regulate and simply feel at ease. It has been so lovely to see how naturally they have taken to the space and how beneficial it has already been for them. And of course, the indoor trampoline has been a big hit! The students absolutely love it and it has definitely become one of the favourite parts of the room!

We are really happy with how Rang Banna has started and are looking forward to creating lots more positive memories throughout the year.



DUBLIN COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION
AND TRAINING

Dublin College Showcases Pathways, Possibilities and Potential at Higher Options and WorldSkills 2026

September was a busy and exciting month for Dublin College as we proudly participated in both Higher Options and WorldSkills Ireland 2026 at the RDS. Over three days, thousands of prospective learners, parents, guidance counsellors and educators attended both events, providing us with a fantastic opportunity to showcase the range of opportunities available across Dublin College.

At Higher Options, Dublin College staff welcomed learners from across the country, sharing information on our full-time and part-time courses, apprenticeships, PLC courses, tertiary degree programmes and progression pathways. This provided thousands of learners with an opportunity to explore the diverse range of pathways, qualifications and progression routes available across Dublin College's 32 locations.

Staff were on hand throughout the event to answer questions, share their experiences and help learners identify the educational and career routes best suited to their interests and ambitions. The stand also featured an interactive VR experience, allowing learners to step into simulated learning and work environments and gain an appreciation of the exciting opportunities that Further Education and Training can offer.



A highlight of Higher Options was hearing Dublin College Blackrock learner Mischa speak as part of the SOLAS Career Talks on The Irish Times stage, sharing her experiences and inspiring prospective learners to consider the many opportunities available through Further Education and Training.

Over at WorldSkills Ireland, Dublin College was represented through an engaging and interactive Floristry and Horticulture showcase led by Monica Alvarez from Dublin College Dundrum and Ciara from Dublin College Sallynoggin, with support from Dublin College staff member Lucy and a fantastic group of past and present learners. The team was also delighted to welcome Minister Marian Harkin, who stopped by to learn more about Floristry and Horticulture training at Dublin College. Minister Harkin took part in a practical workshop, experiencing the creativity, skill and learner engagement that were at the heart of the demonstrations.



We were also delighted to have Dublin College staff represented at the ETBI stand, where they engaged with attendees about the many pathways available through Further Education and Training.

A sincere thank you to all staff who contributed to the success of both events. Your commitment, energy and willingness to share your experiences helped ensure Dublin College was represented to the highest standard. Together, we showcased not only the range of opportunities available across Dublin College, but also the welcoming, learner-centred community that supports learners to develop their skills, achieve their goals and realise their potential.

Good News from WorldSkills

Beauty Therapy Success at WorldSkills Ireland 2026

Advanced Beauty Therapy graduates Emma and Julia proudly represented Dublin College Blackrock, demonstrating exceptional professionalism, creativity and technical skill throughout three days of competition. Emma achieved First Place and was awarded a Gold Medal for her outstanding performance, an exceptional achievement at national level. Congratulations to Emma, Julia and the entire Beauty Therapy team on this fantastic success.



International Success for Dublin College Apprentice



We are proud to celebrate the remarkable achievement of James Hunt, who was awarded a Medal of Excellence in the Electrical Installations category at WorldSkills Shanghai 2026.

Representing Team Ireland on the international stage, James competed against more than 1,400 skilled competitors from 68 countries and regions. His Medal of Excellence was one of just seven awarded to Team Ireland and recognises competitors who achieve an exceptional world-class standard of performance against rigorous international benchmarks. James completed Phase 2 of his electrical apprenticeship at Dublin College Baldoye. Congratulations to James on this outstanding accomplishment.



Your Voice. Our Future.

DDLETB is currently developing its new Statement of Strategy for 2027-2031, and we want to hear from you!

The strategy will guide our work over the next five years across schools, further education and training, youth services, community-based learning and the many supports we provide to learners and communities across Dublin and Dún Laoghaire.

We want to hear from learners, parents and guardians, community and voluntary organisations, employers, public bodies, partners, and anyone with an interest in education, training and lifelong learning. Your views will help us understand what DDLETB is doing well, where we can improve, and the priorities and challenges we should focus on as we plan for the future.

The consultation is open now and we encourage anyone with an interest in education, training, youth services and lifelong learning to take part.

A note for DDLETB staff: This survey is intended primarily for external stakeholders. A separate staff consultation survey will be circulated to all staff shortly to provide an opportunity to share your experiences, ideas and views on DDLETB's Statement of Strategy 2027-2031.

**DDLETB STATEMENT OF STRATEGY
2027-2031**



HAVE YOUR SAY!



Octo Share Your Views

Sharing Ideas, Shaping Success: Programme Coordinators Come Tog

DDLETB's Programme Coordinators, including TY, LCA and LCVP Coordinators, recently came together for a special Network Day, the first time the group had the opportunity to meet in person. It was a day filled with conversation, ideas, practical advice and plenty of sharing, with colleagues from across our schools bringing their own experiences and expertise to the table.

The day provided a welcome chance to step away from the day-to-day demands of coordinating programmes and spend time with colleagues facing many of the same opportunities and challenges. Rather than a traditional conference-style event, the focus was very much on conversation and collaboration, with coordinators sharing what works well in their schools, discussing challenges and picking up ideas that could be brought back to their own students and programmes.

A highlight of the morning was the table-talk format, where colleagues moved between small groups to share successful events, initiatives, speakers, visits, resources and approaches. The informal conversations showcased the huge amount of creativity and experience already within our schools. Whether it was a successful TY or LCA activity, a work experience idea, a new project or a resource that had made life a little easier, there was plenty of practical knowledge to take away.

We were also delighted to welcome a range of speakers and colleagues who brought additional ideas and opportunities to the day. Sean Murphy from Rath Dara Community College shared practical advice on creating meaningful work experience opportunities and making the most of student placements, while Oliver Delaney from Swords Community College shared insights into library initiatives and eResources.

Temi from Junior Achievement introduced the programmes and supports available to schools, while Breda, Senior Youth Officer with Foróige, highlighted opportunities for young people, including the Leadership for Life Programme. Colleagues from Dublin College also joined us to showcase opportunities across Dublin College locations, including pathways and TY taster programmes.



There was also an opportunity to hear about digital and other opportunities available through DDLETB and external partners, with Janet Murphy and Deirdre Dunne, from our Development Team sharing information and ideas for coordinators to explore with their students.

While the guest speakers brought plenty of new ideas to the table, the real strength of the day was the Programme Coordinators themselves. There was a very open and honest discussion about the realities of the role, what works, what can be challenging and how colleagues can support each other. Sometimes the most useful solution is simply hearing how another school approached a similar challenge, and there was plenty of that throughout the day.

Importantly, the conversation doesn't end with the Network Day. Programme Coordinators have continued access to the DDLETB Team, providing a space throughout the year to ask questions, share ideas, exchange resources, highlight opportunities and keep the conversation going. The Team also gives coordinators a way to stay connected with colleagues across the network and to know that there is support available when they need it.

The enthusiasm and engagement throughout the day showed just how valuable these connections can be. Bringing colleagues together in person created a relaxed and supportive space to share what we are doing across DDLETB, learn from each other and perhaps pick up one or two ideas to try back in our own schools. A sincere thank you to all our Programme Coordinators for the energy, openness and generosity they brought to the day, and to all of our guest speakers and colleagues who shared their time, knowledge and ideas.

We look forward to continuing to build the network, keep the conversation going and support one another in providing engaging and meaningful opportunities for our students across TY, LCA, LCVP and beyond.

For further information or if you would like to join the team please contact janetmurphy@ddletb.ie



A busy year for DDLETB Youth and Sports Development Services



2026 has been one of the busiest years yet for DDLETB Youth and Sports Development Services. From capital investment in youth projects and summer programmes to music camps, new partnerships and a renewed focus on good practice, the team has been working with funded youth services, community partners and local organisations to make sure young people aged 10–24 have safe, welcoming places to learn, create, connect and belong.

Here are some of the highlights from the year so far.

Summer highlights

Summer Holiday Meals Pilot: DDLETB secured €42,000 from the Department of Education and Youth to tackle holiday hunger among young people aged 10–18. Seven UBU-funded youth services, which provide targeted supports for young people in local communities, provided meals to around 200 young people each day during their summer programmes. Lunches were also provided at summer camps in Collinstown Sports Complex.

Sailing and Orienteering: Young people from youth services across the DDLETB area took to the water during the Easter break, from 30 March to 10 April, and again from 29 June to 31 July. Around 45 summer sailing sessions were booked, alongside the Easter orienteering programme.

Active Youth Challenge (AYC): Groups of young people across the county took part in the Active Youth Challenge, designing and delivering their own weekly activities over a 12-week period from February to May. The programme encouraged young people to get active, try new things and work together, finishing with a well-deserved celebration evening at Collinstown Sports Complex on 13th May.

Alternative Learning Programme (ALP): Learners on DDLETB's Alternative Learning Programme, which provides flexible learning opportunities and supports for young people, have enjoyed a wide range of activities and trips throughout the year, including a visit to the Irish Museum of Modern Art. These experiences complement the programme's day-to-day learning and activities.

Funding Reaching Clubs & Services

Local Youth Club Grant Scheme: €380,755 has been allocated in 2026, with 105 volunteer-led clubs approved to date across Blanchardstown, Clondalkin, Dún Laoghaire, North County Dublin, Rathdown and Tallaght. The funding supports local volunteers to provide activities, opportunities and positive experiences for young people in their communities.

Resilience and Effectiveness Initiative: €151,956 was awarded to eight UBU-funded youth services to help strengthen their capacity and sustain and develop their youth work provision. The funding provides important support for services facing cost pressures or with limited youth worker capacity, helping them continue to provide valuable supports and opportunities for young people.

Youth Capital Funding Scheme: DDLETB's €336,823 allocation was assessed by a panel in early September, with recommendations now submitted to the Department of Education and Youth for consideration. The funding will support improvements to youth facilities and spaces, helping to create better environments for young people to meet, participate and engage in youth work.

Oíche na hÓige: €47,000 has been confirmed to support Youth Night events taking place on 13 November. We are really looking forward to celebrating youth work, youth services and the contribution of young people across our communities on the night. You can read about Oíche na hÓige in the next article.

Clondalkin Outreach and Integration Project: Foróige has been selected to deliver a new UBU-funded outreach service in North Clondalkin. The project will bring structured street-based youth work directly into the Quarryvale, Rowlagh and Collinstown communities, with regular evening and Saturday provision. The new approach will help connect with young people who may not currently be engaging with traditional youth services and provide opportunities for them to access support, activities and positive relationships in their own communities.

Music Generation: a summer of music-making



**Music
Generation**

There has been plenty of exciting activity across Music Generation Fingal this year. A new DJ programme at Foróige Balbriggan grew into an Easter DJ camp and has proved to be a strong way of engaging neurodivergent teenagers, including learners from the Alternative Learning Programme.

Twelve young people began learning cello, while others took part in a spoken word and rap collaboration with Foróige Balbriggan's anti-racism programme. Young musicians also performed at Cruinniú na nÓg, while summer music camps took place across the county, including a Skerries–Rush camp that finished with Festival in a Van at the Mourne Estate in July.

Music Generation Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown has reached more than 3,255 young people so far in 2026, with 11 different music programmes running in more than 32 centres across the county.

And then came a very special opportunity...

In September, Jam Hub and music production participants Alex Trzeciak and Qile Zheng, supported by musician educator Alice Grollero, were among just 13 young musicians from across Ireland invited to rehearse with Grammy-winning producer Jackknife Lee.

The experience reached an extraordinary finale when the young musicians performed “I Will Follow” alongside U2’s The Edge during his masterclass at Mount Temple Comprehensive School, the very school where U2 first formed.

It was an incredible opportunity for the young musicians and a memorable moment for everyone involved. The session will feature in an upcoming documentary marking 50 years of U2, bringing a very special connection between the next generation of musicians and one of Ireland’s most iconic bands.

Alex and Qile both take part in Jam Hub and music production sessions at the Beat Café and Loughlinstown Community Rooms.



Strengthening Planning & Support

Planning for need: The UBU Cycle 3 Area Profile, Needs Assessment and Service Requirements has been submitted, covering 13 priority areas. These include growing and emerging communities in Cherrywood, Woodbrook-Shanganagh, Citywest, Swords and Donabate-Portrane. This work helps ensure that future youth services and supports are planned around the needs of young people and communities as they change and grow.

Supporting volunteers: A draft DDLETB Youth Volunteer Strategy 2027–2030 is currently being developed to support, strengthen and sustain volunteering in youth clubs. Volunteers are at the heart of so many local youth services, and the strategy will help ensure they have the support they need to continue their valuable contribution. We look forward to sharing this with the wider DDLETB community.

Fingal Poverty Profile: Alongside Tusla and Empower, DDLETB is co-funding a poverty profile and needs assessment for the Fingal Children and Young People’s Services Committee. The report is due in December, and we will share further information in the New Year.

Looking Ahead

There is still plenty to look forward to in 2026, with Oíche na hÓige and Volunteer Recognition evenings in December celebrating those who keep our youth clubs running.

A huge thank you to our funded youth services, volunteer-led clubs, Music Generation, Fingal, South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Councils, Tusla, and all the youth workers, volunteers and young people who have made this such an incredible year.

DDLETB’s Youth & Sports Development Services continues to create opportunities for young people to get involved, build confidence and discover new possibilities. The team looks forward to sharing more of this great work.



Oíche na hÓige: A Night to Celebrate Youth

Oíche na hÓige / Youth Night returns on Friday 13 November 2026, bringing communities across Ireland together to celebrate young people and the fantastic work taking place in youth clubs, projects and services around the country.

The initiative is led by the Department of Education and Youth, in partnership with the Education and Training Boards, the National Youth Council of Ireland and the wider youth work sector.

So, what is Youth Night all about? Quite simply, it's about young people, having fun and showing their communities what youth work is all about! Youth clubs and services will open their doors and host events, showcases and activities designed and led by young people. From music, performances and art to sport, games, food, quizzes, exhibitions and workshops, there will be plenty of opportunities to try something new, develop skills, share talents and have the craic!

It is also a chance for the wider community to discover what is happening in local youth services and to recognise the important contribution of young people, youth workers and volunteers. Last year, more than 450 groups took part nationally, showcasing the incredible variety of youth work taking place across Ireland.

DDLETB Youth & Sport Development will be getting involved, with youth services across the DDLETB area preparing activities and events that give young people the opportunity to get

involved, meet others, discover new interests and showcase the creativity, energy and talent within their communities.

For young people, it's a chance to show off their talents, take part in something fun, meet new people, learn a new skill or simply find out more about what their local youth service has to offer. For youth services and the wider community, it is an opportunity to celebrate the positive contribution that youth work makes every day.

Behind all the fun is an important message too. Youth work provides welcoming spaces where young people can build confidence, develop new skills, make connections, explore their interests and have fun in a safe and supportive environment. Oíche na hÓige shines a light on the youth workers, volunteers and organisations who make those opportunities possible.

So, keep an eye out for details of DDLETB Youth Services and other events and activities coming up in November and encourage young people to get involved. Whether they are already part of a youth service or simply curious about what is available locally, Youth Night is a fantastic opportunity to come along, try something new and celebrate the energy, creativity and contribution of young people.

Friday 13 November 2026 – Oíche na hÓige

Find out more: **Oíche na hÓige / Youth Night information**



DLCTC Celebrates Learner Achievement at Annual Certification Day

On Wednesday 9 September, the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Community Training Centre (DLCTC) welcomed learners, families, staff, Board members and invited guests to its annual Certification Day.

The event celebrated the hard work, commitment and achievements of learners, with participants receiving a range of certifications, including QQI Major Awards.

The Centre was honoured to welcome Guest of Honour, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, James Lawless TD, along with Cormac Devlin TD. The ceremony was a wonderful celebration of learner achievement and the positive impact of DLCTC in helping individuals build confidence, gain qualifications and progress to further education, training and employment opportunities.

DDLETB extends its warmest congratulations to all graduates and wishes them every success in the years ahead.

Literacy Awareness Training across Dublin College...

A resounding success and a significant boost to learner engagement and support

In June, 78 Dublin College staff from across the region attended Literacy Awareness Training in one of our three former Training Centres: Baldoyle, Loughlinstown and Tallaght. The training was designed to enhance frontline staff's understanding of the literacy landscape in Ireland, demonstrate how they can make their everyday work more literacy-friendly, and equip them with practical ways to support people they meet who may have unmet literacy needs.



The training brought together receptionists, administrators, information officers, educators and other support staff from across Dublin College Further Education and Training. The training was a valuable opportunity to share on-the-ground experience, explore how to put literacy-friendly strategies into practice, and signpost learners to literacy support. The training focused on the important role that literacy plays in learner success, confidence and progression, both within education and in everyday life.

A central focus of the training was increasing awareness of the barriers that some learners face and identifying practical approaches to reduce these challenges. Through interactive discussions, learner ambassador video and collaborative activities, staff were encouraged to reflect on their own practice and identify opportunities to embed literacy support within their roles in Dublin College.



Dublin College staff participating in training in Dublin College Baldoyle, June 2026.

By supporting Literacy Awareness Training, Dublin College continues to demonstrate its dedication to fostering an environment where all learners have an opportunity to develop the skills they need to achieve their goals. The initiative represents an important step in building staff capacity, strengthening learner support, fostering a universal design approach, and promoting a culture of inclusion across Dublin College.

Thank you to Jo McCloskey, Director of Dublin College Further Education and Training for her support of the initiative. Thank you also to the Dublin College Managers in Dublin College Baldoye, Loughlinstown and Tallaght, for supporting staff attending and for providing venues for the training. Thank you to Sharon Hennessy for progressing the initiative and supporting it throughout. Thank you to Aleksander Stevancevic for supporting the promotion, recruitment, and registration for the training events and thank you to the excellent facilitators of Adult Literacy Organisers: Nuala Nedjati, Mary McGrath and Helen Cleary.

If you are interested in taking part in the next Literacy Awareness Session or in Plain Language training, contact our Regional Literacy Coordinator, Helena Browner, email: helenabrowner@ddletbaes.ie or phone: 086 832 8150.



Staff and facilitators who participated in Literacy Awareness Training in Dublin College Loughlinstown.



Pictured at Training in Dublin College Tallaght Julie Pillay, Information Officer, Blanchardstown, Helena Browner, Regional Literacy Coordinator, Anne Cantwell, Administrator Blanchardstown & Helen Cleary, ALO, Tallaght.



COLÁISTE ÁTHA CLIATH
DUBLIN COLLEGE

BREISOIDEACHAS AGUS OILIÚINT
FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Ardgillan Celebrates Wellread Award

Ardgillan College is delighted to have been awarded the Wellread National Award, recognising our commitment to developing and promoting a strong culture of reading across our whole school community. The Wellread National Award, supported by Oide, celebrates schools that actively promote reading for pleasure and work to establish a positive reading culture within their school communities. The award encourages the involvement of students, teachers, parents, ancillary staff and the wider community in reading and literacy related activities. A huge congratulations to Ms O'Farrell and all in the Library School Development Group on all of their hard work to get this award!

At Ardgillan College, reading is an important part of school life, and our award reflects the enthusiasm and creativity of students and staff in making reading accessible, enjoyable and visible throughout the school. Central to our reading culture is our state of the art O'Leary Library, named after the founding Principal of the College Mr O'Leary. The library is a welcoming space where students can read, study and explore new books, and it is available to students before school and during lunchtime. We have also organised DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) classes, giving students dedicated time to put aside their everyday schoolwork and simply enjoy reading.

We have worked closely with Fingal Libraries to encourage our students to become library users. As part of this initiative, the Library Development Group assisted students in applying for library cards to give them access to the extensive Fingal library network and its many resources. Fingal Libraries membership is free and provides access to books as well as a wide range of digital resources, including eBooks and eAudiobooks.

We were also delighted to welcome author Megan Wynne to Ardgillan College. Megan spoke to students in the O'Leary Library about reading and writing, giving

students the opportunity to meet an author and hear first hand about the creative process behind the books they enjoy. Reading has also been brought beyond the library walls. A community bookshelf was established in the school reception area, creating an opportunity for members of our wider school community to share and discover books. Alongside this, a Staff Bring a Book, Take a Book shelf was introduced, encouraging teachers and staff to exchange books and share their own reading recommendations.

Our teachers have also become reading role models. Staff members have displayed the title of the book they are currently reading on their classroom doors, sparking conversations about books and demonstrating that reading is something that continues throughout life.

To add an element of fun and mystery, students have been invited to choose mystery books without knowing the title or author until they open them. We have also held book review competitions, giving students an opportunity to share their opinions, recommend books to their peers and celebrate their favourite reads.



The Wellread Award is a wonderful recognition of the collective effort that has gone into creating this culture of reading at Ardgillan College. We are very proud of this achievement and would like to thank our students, staff and wider school community for their enthusiasm and commitment to making Ardgillan College a Wellread school.

Microsoft Dreamspace Ambassador Programme

Congratulations to our General learning level 4 learners Killian Farrell, Jessica Beagan, Jasmine Collins, Latoya Mc Donagh, Luke Farrell and Sam Duffy from Dublin College Blanchardstown who participated in the Microsoft Dreamspace Ambassador Programme. They worked hard over the year and achieved the Platinum Award, which is the highest award available.

The criteria for achieving the award included participating in monthly workshops such as Internet Safety, Older Wiser Learner, Python 101. Learners also had to complete Digital Pathways online modules. A firm favourite of these was Minecraft Education.

The group also had to organise two centre-based activities to share their learning with their peers. They hosted a Safer Internet Day Poster competition, and they also invited local Community Guard Sean to the centre to give a workshop on Online Safety.

The last requirement they had to fulfil was to organise a community event. The idea of a tea and tech morning was suggested. The learners invited members of the community to come in and learn some internet safety whilst enjoying a cup of tea and some treats.

Overall, the experience was a huge success, the learning was shared with the whole centre, learners and staff and the wider community



Celebrating an Outstanding Achievement at Blanchardstown Youthreach

Congratulations to our first Skills to Succeed graduate!

Dublin College Blanchardstown BRACE Centre is delighted to celebrate a fantastic achievement as our student Luke Farrell (Ashley) became the first student from Dublin College Blanchardstown BRACE Centre to successfully complete the entire Skills 2 Succeed programme.

This is a remarkable accomplishment and represents a huge commitment to learning, personal development and preparing for the world of work. The Skills to Succeed Academy, developed by Accenture, is designed to help learners build the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to make career choices, find employment and succeed in the workplace. The programme contains an impressive 121 individual learning modules across 12 courses.

121 Modules Across 12 Courses

Ashley has completed every module across the following courses:

- Choose a Career – 6 modules
- Getting a Job – 23 modules
- Success in Work – 12 modules
- Gen AI Fundamentals – 5 modules
- Lifelong Learning – 7 modules
- Emotional Intelligence – 6 modules
- Solving Problems – 8 modules
- Thinking Critically – 9 modules
- Understanding Technology – 10 modules
- Technology at Work – 12 modules
- Exploring Coding – 16 modules
- Discovering Data – 7 modules

That is 121 modules in total – an incredible body of learning and achievement!

Preparing for the Future

Completing the programme is about much more than simply ticking off 121 modules. Throughout the programme, Ashley has developed a wide range of skills that can be used in education, employment and everyday life.



The courses cover important areas such as career planning, identifying personal skills, CV writing, applications and interviews, workplace behaviour, communication, emotional intelligence, problem-solving and critical thinking. They also provide opportunities to develop digital skills, learn about technology, coding, data and generative AI.

These are skills that can help a young person to approach future opportunities with greater confidence. Whether progressing into further education, training, an apprenticeship or employment, the knowledge and experience gained through Skills to Succeed can provide a strong foundation for the next stage of her journey.

Most importantly, completing all 121 modules demonstrates determination, commitment, perseverance and a willingness to keep learning – qualities that are valuable in every workplace and throughout life.

A First for Dublin College Blanchardstown BRACE Centre

Becoming the first Dublin College Blanchardstown BRACE Centre student to complete all 121 Skills to Succeed modules is something to be incredibly proud of.

We would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Ashley on this fantastic achievement. It is a wonderful example of what can be accomplished through dedication and hard work, and we hope this achievement is the beginning of many more successes in the future.

Congratulations Ashley on completing Skills 2 Succeed – 121 modules completed and a whole world of future opportunities ahead!



From Kishoge CC to the World: Transition Year Takes Centre Stage

The international media interest in our Transition Year programme really began in autumn 2024, when we were approached by The Guardian. We accepted their invitation to visit the school and, in late September/early October, journalist Zoe Williams and a photographer spent a full day in Kishoge CC looking at our TY programme in considerable detail. They spoke to students, teachers, school management and others involved in the programme, and the resulting article was published on The Guardian website on 16th October 2024.

That article was very significant for us in bringing the programme to an international audience. It also led directly to further interest from European media. There was even mention of Arte, the French-German television network, producing a fly-on-the-wall documentary following our Transition Year students over a six-to-eight-week period. The proposal progressed, but as of yet has not proceeded.

The Guardian article also led to interest from French-language radio. A journalist subsequently visited Kishoge CC and produced a short radio feature on Transition Year and our programme. The piece was broadcast to a French-speaking audience internationally, including in France, Switzerland and Canada, and again brought considerable attention to what we are doing in Kishoge CC.

More recently, we were approached by La Presse in Canada, one of the major French-language news organisations in North America. Their interest again stemmed from the previous international coverage of Transition Year. They visited us in May 2026, and their article was subsequently published towards the end of August, looking more broadly at the concept of Transition Year in Ireland and using Kishoge CC as an example of how the programme operates in practice.

What links all of this coverage is the fact that Transition Year is quite unusual internationally. There is no direct equivalent in most other education systems: a full year in which students can step away from the traditional examination cycle and have the time and space to develop personally, try new subjects and experiences, engage with their communities, explore careers and the world of work, and become more independent learners.

This is particularly interesting when we look at countries such as France and Germany. While both have programmes and initiatives that provide opportunities for career exploration, work experience, personal development and study beyond the traditional classroom, neither has a direct equivalent to the Irish Transition Year: a dedicated, nationwide year within the post-primary cycle that is specifically designed around these experiences rather than preparation for a particular examination. The Irish model therefore offers something quite distinctive and helps explain why it continues to attract international curiosity.

That is increasingly what the international media appear to find interesting. At a time when many countries are looking at how education can better prepare young people for life beyond examinations, the Irish Transition Year model offers something very different. In many ways, it is one of the less recognised strengths of the Irish education system.

Kishoge CC has been fortunate to be able to showcase that through a broad and continually evolving programme, and the fact that one international feature has repeatedly led to another has given us an opportunity to share both our own programme and the wider value of Transition Year with audiences well beyond Ireland.

Take a look at the coverage to date:

- <https://www.lapresse.ca/international/europe/la-presse-en-irlande/un-an-de-pause-a-l-ecole-pour-mieux-reussir/2026-08-22/l-annee-magique.php>
- The Guardian article: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2024/oct/16/ireland-school-secret-transition-year-off-curriculum>



Editor

Janet Murphy - janetmurphy@ddletb.ie

Development Team

Janet Murphy
Caroline Daly
Frances Shannon
Mary Kenny
Deirdre Dunne
Priscilla Kirwan
devteam@ddletb.ie

FET Contact

Jessica Sheekey - jessicasheekey@ddletb.ie

Communications

Janet Murphy
Jessica Sheekey (Dublin College)
Jennifer Farley

Design & Layout

Jennifer Farley

Contributors

Claire Barkey – DDLETB Youth Development Officer
Avril Buttimer – Mount Seskin CC
Cillian Walshe – Ardgillan College
Sarah Liddy – Balbriggan Community Special School
Louise Rocks – DDLETB Head of Strategy,
Communications and Transformation
Cormac Ó Rinn - Coláiste Cois Life
Ellen McDonald - Griffeen CC
Michael Manners - Kishoge CC
Elaine O'Brien - Dublin College
Blanchardstown BRACE Centre
Sandra Byrne - Dublin College
Blanchardstown BRACE Centre



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Tag us #Teamddletb

 ddletb.ie

 @ddletb

 @ddletb

 @ddletb-learn

in **Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB**



DUBLIN COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION
AND TRAINING

 @mydublincollege

 @mydublincollege

 @mydublincollege