

InTouch

Irish National Teachers' Organization
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann



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- **Maternity/ Adoptive Leave**

- **Salary Scales**
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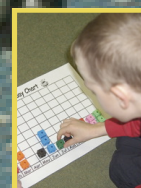
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General Secretary's Comment

School Reports – A Changed Landscape

Reports of Whole School Evaluations that take place from January of this year are to be published by the DES.

The INTO has consistently indicated its opposition to this development and indeed took the matter all the way to the Supreme Court in an effort to prevent, as a result of publication, the compilation of crude league tables of schools. Notwithstanding a favourable verdict in this case in the Supreme Court, under the Education Act a decision to publish these reports rests with the Minister for Education and Science. That decision has been taken by the Minister.

Without prejudice to our strong opposition to this development the Organisation has engaged

with the DES on this issue. We have secured the right of a school to publish, alongside a school report, a response to the report. We have also received assurances that in the event of a report being appealed that publication will not precede the outcome of the appeal.

The Organisation has also ensured that inspections which focus on individual teachers will not be published. For example Rule 161 inspections, Probation Reports or reports by inspectors involved in the investigation of complaints against teachers will not be published.

The Minister has stated her belief that there is a lack of information in relation to schools in the public domain. The INTO strongly disputes

this and points to the substantial increase in home school communication that has taken place in recent years. Teachers, and in particular principal teachers, have invested great energy in the provision of valuable information on pupils and schools to parents.

I believe that the publication of reports will add little of value to the education system. Parents and others are well aware of the quality service provided by teachers in primary schools. Perhaps if the reports shine a torch on large class sizes in primary schools, inadequate resource provision for classrooms and the lack of support services to schools then they will serve some purpose.

The INTO will keep the issue of school reports under

constant review and in particular, the issue of the identification of individual teachers. Accountability is not the issue here as primary teachers have always accepted that they are accountable for their work. Publication of reports will leave teachers open to a form of public commentary on their work to which no other worker is subjected.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that this development relates more to political expediency than to any great desire to improve the education system.

John Carr



Sheila is New Treasurer

The new Deputy General Secretary of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation is Sheila Nunan. She was elected in a postal ballot of INTO members, north and south. Sheila headed the poll on the first count and was elected on the third count.

A total of 13,645 votes was cast in the ballot. On the first count Sheila Nunan polled 4,730. Noel Ward got 3,491 votes, Tom O'Sullivan 3,334 and Billy Sheehan, 2,090.

Sheila will take over the position from current Deputy General Secretary, Catherine Byrne, next summer. Sheila will continue in her role as INTO President until Easter 2006 and from then until the summer will work alongside Catherine Byrne as Deputy General Secretary Designate.

Sheila attended primary school in St Conleth's NS and completed her secondary



education in the Holy Family Post Primary School in Newbridge. In 1975 Sheila went to UCD where she graduated with B. Soc.Sc. She then did the graduate teaching diploma in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra in 1978.

Sheila has worked in a number of different roles as a primary teacher. Her teaching career began in 1979 in Our Lady of Loreto Boys' NS, Tallaght. In 1982 she was appointed as the first Visiting Teacher for Travellers in the South County Dublin/North Wicklow region. In 1995 she joined the staff of St Kieran's NS in Bray having completed a Diploma in Special Education in St Patrick's Drumcondra. She was Acting Principal from 1999 until 2005.

Sheila has been an active INTO member for many years.

She was a Branch Organiser and Branch Secretary for Tallaght Branch and is currently a member of Cualann Branch. From 1995-2004 Sheila represented District 8 (South County, Tallaght, Cualann and Blessington) on the Central Executive Committee.

As part of her role on the CEC Sheila has represented the INTO on a number of national committees. She was appointed to the Council of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and also serves as INTO representative on the Schools Implementation Committee of the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) and on the Commission on School Accommodation.

Sheila is the current President of the INTO, a post held by her late grandfather TJ Nunan.

Irish Ferries Day of Protest

The Irish Ferries Day of Protest last December was discussed at a recent meeting of the CEC. Members of the CEC expressed their appreciation of the large number of INTO members who turned out to protest against the “race to the bottom” and to stand up against the exploitation of vulnerable workers.

The public opposition of the IPPN leadership to teacher participation in the protests was strongly criticised. It was argued that this position showed a lack of understanding of the basic principle of solidarity. Descriptions of the INTO proposal that schools would remain open but send representatives to the protests as “hugely disruptive”, “doesn’t make sense”, and sacrificing of teaching and learning time were dismissed as not only inaccurate but as providing an opportunity for others to criticise teach-

ers’ participation in the protests.

The CEC noted with concern that this, along with the public call for a separate salary scale for principals, had done damage to the INTO’s efforts to progress key issues relating to principals and deputy principals allowances. It was also stated that the last time the INTO took to the streets in pursuit of any issue was when the Organisation campaigned successfully for the introduction of release time for teaching principals. At the time this was not criticised from within as disruptive, no other group of workers took issue with our right to protest and all teachers lent their support to the cause.

The CEC reiterated its intention to engage with the Benchmarking Body as mandated by Congress. It was also decided to seek a meeting with the leadership of IPPN to clarify respective roles.



Benchmarking Body Appointed

The members of the second Benchmarking Body will include Mr Dan O’Keefe (Barrister) as Chairperson; Mr Bill Atley (former president SIPTU) and Mr Tom McKeivitt (former Assistant Secretary, PSEU) as ICTU nominees; Mr John Malone (former Secretary General, Dept of Agriculture) and Mr Willy Slattery (Director of US financial company State Street) as IBEC nominees; and Independent Members

Ms Olive Braiden (Chair of the Arts Council) and Mr Brendan Walsh, (retired UCD economist).

There will be early engagement in the discussions on the issues of modernisation and change. The INTO has already discussed a statement of claim with the ASTI and TUI and there will be consultation with members on the key issues in the coming months. The Benchmarking Body is scheduled to report in July 2007.

INTO SPECIAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Branches have been nominating delegates to the biennial INTO Special Education Conference which will take place on Saturday, 11 February in Portlaoise. The theme of the conference will be the future of special schools and classes. Among the contributors will be INTO General Secretary John Carr, the CEO of the National Council for Special Education, Pat Curtin, and Owen McCarthy from IATSE. A full report will be carried in the next edition.

BYE-ELECTION IN DISTRICT III (EDUCATION COMMITTEE)

Ms Sally Bonner, Eddrim Glebe, Mountcharles, Co Donegal gave notice to the General Secretary that she wished to withdraw from the Bye-election in District III for Education Committee Representative.

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Cover pic: Pictured at the launch of their research document on special schools are IATSE members Denis McCarthy, Rosemary Fahy, Aine O’Neill, Jerry Pierce, Máirín Kenny, Lisa Mullen-White, Josephine Doncel and Owen McCarthy - see page 10.

CEC Voices Concerns About the Welfare Act

At recent meetings the Central Executive Committee of the INTO has expressed serious concern about the operation of the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), particularly regarding the focus of the Board on data collection and the apparent lack of follow up at school level by Welfare Officers on cases reported. The General Secretary, Mr John Carr articulated the views of the CEC when he stated "the administration of the Welfare Act has undoubtedly caused significant increased workload for principals and teachers and it is not acceptable to the INTO if at the end of the day, no real improvement in service to teachers and pupils is evident at school level".

The INTO's representatives on the NEWB's Schools Implementation Committee,

namely Ms Anne McElduff, Assistant General Secretary, and Ms Sheila Nunan, INTO President, have put forward the views of the CEC in the strongest possible terms and have called for an urgent response in key areas including:

- A reduction in the number of returns schools are required to make each year from four to three.
- An end to the practice whereby the Annual Return is required during school holidays i.e. in July each year, when in fact, the Education (Welfare) Act itself only requires the Annual Return six weeks from the end of the school year;
- More simplified return forms so that unnecessary information no longer be sought, for example in the Annual Return of 2005 the NEWB

requested information on the number of pupils who had one hundred percent attendance. The INTO protested on the basis that it could not see what use would be made of such information.

Similarly, requiring schools to categorise pupils' absences creates additional unnecessary workload;

- An end to the practice whereby pupils must be kept on Roll Books at primary level until the school has been informed they have been registered elsewhere. Notwithstanding the legal position in this matter, the INTO has argued that the current system of retaining pupils on Roll Books, in circumstances where the school is satisfied the pupils will not be returning, is impractical. The INTO has

called on the Department of Education and Science to issue a Circular to clarify matters – particularly in relation to sixth class pupils transferring forward to post-primary level;

- A Circular to be issued confirming that schools are no longer required to calculate the average attendance figures at the end of each quarter since the NEWB has confirmed that this information is no longer required; and
- A full review of Roll Books and Registers at primary level in order to comply with the legislation.

Negotiations on these matters are continuing at the Implementation Committee. In the meantime, the NEWB has urged schools to make their returns via the web.

Publication of School Reports

The INTO met with the DES in December 2005 on the issue of the publication of WSE Reports. In stating its opposition to the proposal to publish these reports the INTO argued that there is an obligation on the DES to reconcile the Supreme Court decision in the Barney Sheedy case – that the publication of school reports could lead to comparisons being drawn between schools – with the Minister's proposal to publish.

A central concern for the Organisation remains the manner in which reports are written. The INTO argued that although there is no proposal to name teachers, nonetheless teachers would be identifiable particularly in smaller primary schools. The INTO argued that reports should be redacted in order to prevent the identification of teachers.

The Organisation argued that due regard must be made for the different contexts in which

schools operate and that the publication of reports in general would not bring any educational value to the system.

The Inspectorate responded that guidelines on WSE were being drawn up and that there was consultation with the unions on this. They stated their opinion that the publication of WSE reports would do great credit to teachers and schools and that to date only five of 5,000 reports had been appealed. The right to appeal would remain and no report published until an appeal process is complete. The Inspectorate undertook to look carefully at union concerns in relation to the identification of teachers but that in relation to the leadership in a school, learning support or various teams such as the special education/ middle management team, it could not redact reports and leave out mention of such matters as these are essential to any commentary on a school.

Guidelines on WSE

The INTO also met with the DES in relation to the publication of Guidelines on WSE. The union raised serious concerns about workload in the context of the Information Form which demanded the provision of information by principals such as the qualifications of teachers, much of which is already in the DES.

The DES undertook to re-examine this matter. Assurances were received that lists of extra-curricular activities and the results of standardised tests would not be presented in WSE reports.

The INTO raised the issue of the DES seeking copies of the minutes of board of management meetings and expressed concerns such as confidentiality of board of management minutes and the right of a board to keep matters confidential.

DES stated that it was seeking legal advice on this matter.

DES clarified that as part of

the WSE process Inspectors would meet with three parents nominated by the Parents' Association if affiliated to NPC. If not affiliated they would meet with the parents representatives on the BOM.

INTO raised the issue of some inspectors removing pupils' teachers' work from the school premises.

It was agreed that it was inappropriate to remove pupils' copies or teachers personal planning notes from the premises but that an inspector may take school resources such as copies of cuntas miosuil or elements of the school plan from the premises.

INTO argued that there should be a definite time frame for the issuing of School Reports.

The Inspectorate stated that they were anxious that this would be done within a period of perhaps twelve weeks.

A tracking system for school reports has now been implemented.

Teachers' Salary Scales and Allowances

Current Salary Scales shown below reflect the 1.5% SP increase applied on 1 December '05

COMMON BASIC	01/06/05 1.5% + Bmkg 3.25%	Nat Agree 01/12/05 1.5%
Point of Scale	€	€
1	28,387	28,813
2	29,393	29,834
3	30,399	30,855
4	31,409	31,880
5	32,972	33,467
6	33,989	34,498
7	35,002	35,527
8	37,554	38,117
9	38,828	39,411
10	40,351	40,956
11	41,866	42,494
12	43,395	44,046
13	44,670	45,340
14, 15, 16	46,361	47,056
17, 18, 19, 20	48,690	49,420
21, 22, 23, 24	51,770	52,547
25	55,175	56,003

PRINCIPALS' ALLOWANCES	01/06/05 1.5% + Bmkg 3.25%	Nat Agree 01/12/05 1.5%
	€	€
I (1-5)	8,534	8,662
II (6-7)	9,563	9,706
III (8-11)	11,219	11,387
IV (12-13)	13,163	13,361
V (14-16)	15,313	15,543
VI (17-19)	17,493	17,755
VII (20-23)	19,603	19,897
VIII (24-26)	21,735	22,061
IX (27-30)	23,308	23,658
X (31-35)	24,929	25,303
XI (36+)	27,368	27,778

Size of school by total number of authorised teaching posts inclusive of principals indicated by brackets

DEPUTY PRINCIPALS' ALLOWANCES	01/06/05 1.5% + Bmkg 3.25%	Nat Agree 01/12/05 1.5%
	€	€
I (1-5)	3,455	3,507
II (6-7)	4,519	4,586
III (8-11)	5,978	6,067
IV (12-13)	7,489	7,602
V (14-16)	8,958	9,092
VI (17-19)	10,490	10,647
VII (20-23)	11,963	12,143
VIII (24-26)	13,411	13,613
IX (27-30)	14,551	14,769
X (31-35)	15,662	15,897
XI (36+)	17,438	17,699

Size of school by total number of authorised teaching posts inclusive of principals indicated by brackets

GRADED POSTS	01/06/05 1.5% + Bmkg 3.25%	Nat Agree 01/12/05 1.5%
	€	€
Assistant Principal	7,811	7,929
Special Duties Post	3,455	3,507

OTHER ALLOWANCES	01/06/05 1.5% + Bmkg 3.25%	Nat Agree 01/12/05 1.5%
	€	€
Teaching through Irish	1,451	1,473
Gaeltacht Grant	2,808	2,850
Island Allowance	1,688	1,713

TEACHERS WITH MORE THAN 35 YEARS SERVICE	01/06/05 1.5% + Bmkg 3.25%	Nat Agree 01/12/05 1.5%
	€	€
	2,131	2,163

CALCULATING SALARY

A teacher's gross salary is comprised of various elements as follows:

- The appropriate incremental point of the common basic scale.
- Additional allowance for academic qualifications.*
- Additional allowance for a promoted post (ie, principal, deputy principal, assistant principal, special duties teacher.*
- Other Special Allowances.*
- Teachers' Children's Allowance in certain cases.*

* Note: These allowances may not be applicable to all teachers.

Teachers should check their salary and ensure that they are on the correct point of the incremental scale and are in receipt of the appropriate allowances.

ALLOWANCES ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS	01/06/05 1.5% + Bmkg 3.25%	Nat Agree 01/12/05 1.5%
	€	€
1 a (i) H Dip in Ed (Pass)	543	551
(ii) Higher Froebel Cert	543	551
b (i) H Dip in Ed (1st/2nd Hons)	1,133	1,150
(ii) Ard Teastas Gaeilge	1,133	1,150
c Primary Degree (Pass)	1,687	1,713
d Masters Degree by Thesis or Exam (Pass)	4,509	4,576
e Primary Degree (1st/2nd Hons).....	4,509	4,576
f Masters Degree (1st/2nd Hons).....	5,039	5,114
g Doctors Degree	5,627	5,711
2 Diploma for Teachers of Deaf.....	2,233	2,267
Diploma for Teachers of Blind		
Diploma for Teachers of Mentally and		
Physically Handicapped Children		

Only one of the allowances at (a) may be held together with one of the allowances (c) to (g)

Maternity/Adoptive Leave for Teachers

In light of Budget 2006, maternity/adoptive leave entitlements are set to increase later this year.

Paid Maternity / Adoptive Leave

In the case of paid maternity leave, an additional four weeks paid leave will be added to the current 18 weeks, increasing paid maternity leave to 22 weeks.

The additional paid leave in lieu granted to teachers for overlapping school holidays (where applicable) remains unchanged at present and is still a maximum entitlement of 30 days leave in lieu.

An additional four weeks paid leave will also be applied to adoptive leave, increasing it from the current sixteen weeks to 20 weeks paid leave.

The additional paid leave in lieu granted to teachers for overlapping school holidays (where applicable) remains unchanged at present and is still a maximum entitlement of 22 days leave in lieu.

Unpaid Maternity/ Adoptive Leave

The statutory entitlement to unpaid maternity/adoptive leave is also set to increase

by four weeks, increasing the existing maximum statutory entitlement of eight weeks to 12 weeks unpaid leave.

Teachers applying for unpaid maternity/ adoptive leave must take their unpaid maternity/ adoptive leave immediately following the paid maternity/ adoptive leave period.

There is a second option available to teachers which is extended unpaid maternity/ adoptive leave until the end of the school year, ie, 31 August.

Teachers need to notify their board of management four weeks before the end of their paid leave of their intention to take unpaid maternity/ adoptive leave.

Date of Application of Increases

The increases will come into effect from 1 March 2006.

In the case of paid maternity leave that you must commence maternity leave no later than two weeks prior to your stated due date.

The recent change announced in the budget increasing paid maternity leave from 18 to 22 weeks only applies to teachers who commence their paid maternity leave on or after 1 March 2006.

Teachers who commence

paid maternity leave prior to 1 March 2006 must adhere to the current arrangement of 18 weeks paid leave.

In the case of adoptive leave, teachers starting paid adoptive leave (which counts from the date of placement) on or after 1 March 2006 will be entitled to avail of the increases in paid adoptive leave.

Teachers who commence paid adoptive leave prior to 1 March 2006 must adhere to the current arrangement of 16 weeks paid leave.

In the case of both maternity and adoptive leave, teachers applying to take a period of unpaid maternity/adoptive leave will benefit from an increased entitlement of up to 12 weeks.

The increase in the additional unpaid maternity leave from eight to 12 weeks only applies to teachers who commence their unpaid leave on or after 1 March 2006, subject to their having notified their employer of their intention to take such leave.

Consequently, even if you start your paid maternity/ adoptive leave prior to 1 March 2006, availing of the 18 or 16 weeks (respectively) plus leave in lieu (if any), you are entitled to apply for up to 12 weeks unpaid maternity/adoptive leave – providing unpaid leave commences on or after 1 March 2006.

Future Increases

Budget 2006 also announced further increases in both paid maternity/adoptive leave and unpaid maternity/adoptive leave applicable from 1 March 2007.

From 1 March 2007 paid maternity leave will increase from 22 weeks to 26 weeks and paid adoptive leave will increase from 20 weeks to 24 weeks.

The statutory unpaid maternity/adoptive leave entitlement will increase from 12 weeks to a maximum of 16 weeks unpaid leave. Teachers will still have the option of availing of extended unpaid maternity/ adoptive leave until the end of the school year.

The increase in the paid maternity leave from 22 to 26 weeks will apply to teachers who will commence their maternity leave on or after 1 March 2007.

The increase in the paid adoptive leave from 20 to 24 weeks will apply to teachers who will commence their adoptive leave on or after 1 March 2007.

The increase in the additional unpaid maternity/adoptive leave from 12 to 16 weeks will apply to teachers who will commence their additional unpaid leave on or after 1 March 2007.

Special Schools and Inclusion

The Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education (IATSE) has produced a timely piece of research which has great relevance to the debate about inclusion in education.

The study, undertaken by Owen Mc Carthy and Dr Máirín Kenny, examines values, practice and procedure in special schools, their relationship to mainstream schools and their future as educational institutions.

It is 13 years since publication of the *Special Education Review Committee Report (1993)* which resulted in the fast-forwarding

of inclusion of pupils with special needs in mainstream schools. The national primary-level pupil population dropped steadily through the 1990s but while mainstream enrolments have been rising again since 2000, special school enrolments have fallen, as many children with special needs, who would previously have been placed in a special setting, are now included in mainstream.

The research provides valuable information about special schools and contains a strong assertion, by teachers in those

schools, of their continuing value. But it also raises questions about the capability and readiness of mainstream schools to provide for different categories and levels of special educational need. Provision for children with special educational needs is undergoing an unprecedented transformation, and getting the relationship between special and mainstream schools right is hugely important for pupils with special educational needs. Equally important for their parents is the element of choice of setting which the continued

existence of special schools offers.

The report contains 18 recommendations, many of which call for recognition of the unique environment that special schools provide but also call for resources to enable stronger connectivity between mainstream and special schools.

From a trade union point of view, the study reports on the enormous administrative overload of special school principals.

The complete set of recommendations can be read on the IATSE website www.iatseireland.com

INTO Submission on the Implementation of EPSEN

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) recently called for submissions in relation to the implementation of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN). INTO made a comprehensive submission to the Council, and also looks forward to further opportunities to engage in the consultative process in relation to the implementation of the Act.

In its submission, INTO identified the various challenges which the implementation of the Act will present to schools and identified the supports and resources which schools will require in order to meet their obligations under the Act. The submission addresses various sections of the Act, including inclusive education, identification and assessment of need, the preparation of education plans, designation of schools, the provision of services and the respective roles of teachers, boards of management and special education needs organisers.

The INTO identifies the supports which must be put in place in order to allow for the effective implementation of the

Act. These supports include:

- the provision of clear **guidelines** for schools in relation to carrying out various functions, including the drawing up of education plans;
- the expansion of the National Educational Psychological Service to allow for assessments under the Act;
- a comprehensive programme of **professional development** for all teachers to address areas such as inclusive education, the drawing up of education plans and record keeping;
- the provision of **clear information to parents** in relation to the range of school options available for their child with special educational needs;
- the provision of **improved psychiatric, speech and language, physiotherapy and occupational therapy services** to schools; and
- the **provision of time within the school day, secretarial services, additional teaching and SNA support, and other resources** to allow schools to meet their obligations under the Act.

The full text of the submission is available on the INTO website, www.into.ie > What's New > Issues > Special Education

DVD for Traveller Parents on Primary School

Pavee Point recently produced a DVD for Traveller Parents on ways to support their children in primary school.

Pavee Parents Primary Concerns is an educational tool which stresses the importance of parental involvement and how this involvement enhances

a child's education. It also outlines the supports and organisations that are available for parents. For further information please contact: Jane Rooney, Education Coordinator, Pavee Point, 46 North Great Charles St, Dublin 1 or call (01) 8780255 ext 108 or email: education@pavee.iol.ie



Pictured at the launch are Tom O'Sullivan, Asst General Secretary INTO; Maugie Francis, National Education Officer for Travellers; Maggie Lawrence, Traveller parent; Noel Ward, INTO Senior Official, and Kathleen McDonnell, Traveller parent together with Jane Rooney, Pavee Point and Marianne Azema, Head of Investigations and Complaints, Ombudsman for Children's Office.

Support for Science

Www.ingeniousirelandonline.ie is a new educational website, for schoolchildren between ages 11 and 16. *Ingenious Ireland Online* explores Ireland's proud scientific heritage and is fully available in English and Gaeilge. School children can explore inspiring stories from Ireland's past, find an interesting future career, and discover hands-on projects that make science fun and interesting for everyone. Teachers will also find a wealth of information and resource materials to blend in with the curriculum, including worksheets, curriculum links, and classroom activities. *Ingenious Ireland Online* has been created in partnership with Mary Mulvihill, the Liberties Learning Initiative and the Junior Science Support Services, and is supported by Forfás and COGG.

Déanann Ingenious Ireland Online scrúdú ar eolaíocht agus ar theicneolaíocht, ar nuacht agus ar ghliceas na hÉireann. Scrúdaíonn sé an eolaíocht taobh thiar de na scéalta. Tugann sé léargas ar chás-staidéar fíor, agus tá gníomhaíochtaí foghlama ann agus ceangail churaclaim le haghaidh na scoileanna.

Infant Teaching

The High Scope programme is a well respected approach to curriculum in early years education. The INTO wishes to include High Scope in future professional development courses in infant / early years education organised by the PDU. Teachers who would be interested in receiving training in High Scope, or who like more information on High Scope are invited to contact the Education Section in INTO Head Office: Claire Garvey, cgarvey@into.ie or 01 8047742.

National Assessment of English Reading

In January, the Report of the National Assessment of English Reading (NAER), conducted in 2004 on 1st and 5th class pupils, was published.

The Report showed that up to one in 10 pupils who took these tests was born outside Ireland. First class pupils who spoke a language other than English or Gaeilge had an average score significantly below the overall average. Less than 2% of pupils at either grade level were from the Traveller community. Less than 1% of pupils were exempted from taking the test because their teacher felt they would be unable to complete it.

In both 1st and 5th class, girls scored significantly higher than boys.

In terms of overall achievement, the NAER found that there is no significant difference between the overall scores on the reading test of 5th class pupils in 1998 and 2004.

Scores on the test tended to be higher among pupils attending schools that had a high attendance rate and in which few pupils were in receipt of the books grant. The report argues that the level of resources available to schools has improved considerably since 1998. It argues that the pupil teacher ratio decreased from 27:1 to 19:1, the number of library books increased from 8 to almost 12

and that computer availability had increased dramatically. The report argues that it is too early to judge the 1999 curriculum on reading but states that improved economic conditions have not contributed to an increase in educational resources in the home. It suggests that classes of beginning readers should be given priority by school principals when assigning qualified and experienced teachers.

Four percent of 5th class pupils spend more than five hours a day watching television and these pupils obtained scores that are well below the average. Pupils with parents who have rules about the amount of time they can spend watching television have higher average scores than pupils whose parents do not.

General Secretary John Carr said that a key flaw in the report was that it failed to address the issue of class size.

He said that Irish pupils were in the second highest class sizes in the EU. In spite of this he said that Irish primary teachers had introduced a revised curriculum, integrated special needs children, included children born abroad and at the same time maintained standards.

He acknowledged that there were issues in relation to the

teaching of reading which were being taken on board by teachers as part of the revised curriculum.

"References in the report to pupil teacher ratio are misleading as, in the main, the extra teachers which reduced the pupil teacher ratio in recent years had not decreased class sizes substantially."

He said that exhorting teachers, particularly those in multi grade classrooms to introduce greater differentiation into their classroom practice fails to recognise the reality in those classrooms. This could only be achieved when class sizes were reduced. "There is a limit to the extent that anyone can multi-task."

He also said that the recommendations in relation to computers failed to recognise the issue of class size and the lack of technical back up for the computer. "Who teaches the other thirty children if teacher time is going to be increasingly devoted to teaching individual pupils how to use computer programmes?"

He said that the reading standards of disadvantaged pupils was related to the lack of wider social spending in Ireland. "Poverty, particularly child poverty, remains an issue and not enough is being done to tackle it."

New Director of NEPS

Paddy O'Dwyer has been appointed Director of NEPS to succeed Lee McCurtin. Paddy has been a psychologist with the DES for over 30 years and has worked in both primary and post primary schools. He also worked in the InCareer Development

Unit where he had responsibility for special education needs. In 1999 Paddy joined NEPS and became Regional Director for the Eastern Region (North) and the Western Region. He looks forward to a fruitful partnership with the INTO and other partners in education.



INTO CURRICULUM SURVEY

The Education Committee would like to thank all members who received and returned the questionnaire the curriculum circulated to a random selection of members last October. The results are in the process of being collated and

analysed, and will be presented at the Education Conference next November. The winner of the draw for a weekend away with Select Hotels of Ireland is Samantha McMahon of Borrisokane, Co Tipperary.

Your Call (1)

In this five part series, we present evidence on both sides from cases heard before the Equality Tribunal. You may judge whether the evidence establishes, on the balance of probabilities, that unlawful discrimination has occurred. On a separate page of *InTouch* we indicate (i) the outcome at the Tribunal and (ii) where the full case report may be found.

Did Gender Decide the Jobs?

Background

Three male workers claimed their gender was the reason they were not promoted to full-time positions in a public service organisation.

Eighteen full-time posts were filled following advertisement among part-time staff. A total of 28 applicants (11 males and 17 females) were interviewed. Following the selection process, 14 of the 17 female applicants and four of the 11 males were successful.

Claim

The claimants' union pointed to the significant gender imbalance in the success rate, the lack of a company equality policy and the all-male interview panel as prima facie evidence of discrimination. At hearing, one claimant contended that the interview was described to him as an "informal chat", another that the company's purpose was to

increase the number of female full-timers, and the third that a reference (at interview) to future vacancies indicated a predisposition against him.

Response

The respondent company stated that selection had been by way of fair interview, with qualifying criteria related to sick absence and disciplinary record, factors not gender-biased. The two male interviewers had received training, including an equality module, and there was in fact an equality policy in place. A job-specific interview briefing document, details of the scoring system and a copy of notes and interview marks were provided to the Equality Officer.

Outcome?

On the above brief outline, is there evidence of discrimination? See page 15.

IN BRIEF ...

● The ESRI's **Time Use in Ireland 2005** Report provides for the first time detailed data on Irish women and men's daily activities. It shows, for example, that on weekdays women spend an average of just over five hours on unpaid work and caring compared to one hour 40 minutes for men. Men spend substantially more time than women on travel and employment, leading to "gender equality in total committed time on weekdays".

Weekends show a less equal pattern, and the Report in general shows significant variation – by sex, family status and age – in time use on main activities.

● Which "d-" refers to the treatment of older people and Hispanics on the TV show **The Weakest Link**? As readers of the bestseller *Freakonomics* will know, a study of multiple episodes of the US version found discrimination against these categories of participants, but not against black or female contestants.

● A DVD which involved the participation of two primary schools was launched in Traveller Focus Week, December 2005. **Pavee Parents, Primary Concerns – A Guide to Your Child's Primary School** is available through Pavee Point Travellers' Centre (or 8780255 Ext. 108 or see website www.paveepoint.ie). See page 10.



Equality Committee members at work

L to r: Sheelagh Coyle (District 10); Barra Ó Dochartaigh (District 1) and Doreen Sheridan (District 3).

Males Into Primary Teaching Report Launched

The Minister for Education and Science at the end of 2005 launched the Report *Males Into Primary Teaching*. The Report, compiled by a Committee on which INTO was represented, was drawn up following concerns about the fall in the proportion of primary teachers who are male from over 30% in the 1970s to 18% in 2005.

At the launch, the Minister outlined her belief in the importance of greater gender balance in teaching "including the need for school environments to reflect society more comprehensively".

Also speaking at the launch were Dublin football captain and primary teacher Paddy Christie – who referred to the best part of the job as "the variety that every day brings" – and Niall Carty, one of 56 males of the 411 final-year B.Ed students in St Patrick's College. Niall spoke of the challenge and variety of the preservice course, and of looking forward to beginning his teaching career from September next.

Reflecting the World

The Report examines all the factors related to entering

teaching and holds that: "Since half a child's day is spent in school, the school needs to reflect the social world in which both men and women play their parts".

Recommendations include:

- A coordinated promotion campaign encouraging boys as well as girls to enter primary teaching, the campaign to be led by the Teaching Council with a dedicated budget for this purpose from the DES.
- Targets to be set for increasing the number of male entrants, over the next five and the next ten years, with

positive actions to support their achievement.

- Colleges of Education to highlight the diversity of programmes available.
- Specific supports to achieve greater retention of second-level students in honours Gaelige to Leaving Certificate level.
- The Institute of Guidance Counsellors to address the perception and evidence that primary teaching is not being offered by all counsellors for consideration, especially in the case of single-sex boys' schools.

EBS
BUILDING SOCIETY

EBS Building Society to Host First- time Buyers Seminar Cork

- EBS Building Society will host a *First Time Buyer's* seminar for INTO members and their spouses/partners in the Cork Education Centre, The Rectory, Western Rd, Cork on Wed, 8 March 2006.
 - The event will commence at 7.30 pm and will conclude with refreshments at 8.30 p.m.
 - The aim of the seminar is to demystify the process of buying a first home and help those who are new to the property market make the most informed decisions possible when it comes to choosing their property, their mortgage lender and their legal representative. The seminar will be addressed by Sharon McCormack and Mariann Russell from EBS Building Society, Westmoreland Street, Dublin as well as a representative from EBS in Cork. There will also be a local representative from the legal profession present.
 - The seminar is aimed at INTO members who may have queries on any aspect of the housing market and speakers will take prospective first time buyers through the various financial and legal steps involved in buying a first home.
- To register for the seminar please contact Fidelma or Georgina on 01 8047719 or email fheston@into.ie**

Vhi Healthcare & INTO Lifestyle and Wellness Workshops

Kilkenny and Waterford

Feeling tired? Worn out? Do you need some time for yourself?

The INTO and Vhi Healthcare are delighted to bring to INTO members a series of *Lifestyle and Wellness Workshops* which will be held throughout 2006. The workshops will be given by Vhi Healthcare's stress and lifestyle expert, Karen Belshaw and will address the following topics:

- Work life balance.
- Developing a healthy daily routine and wellness programme that fits into your daily life.
- Deep breathing and vocal

techniques (how not to lose your voice).

- Relaxation techniques.
- Knowing when to take a break.
- Using stress as a positive source.
- Assertiveness and time management.

The first of these workshops will take place in: Kilkenny Education Centre, Seville Lodge, Callan Rd, Kilkenny on Tuesday, 21 February at 7 p.m. and in Waterford Education Centre, Newtown Rd, Waterford on Wednesday, 22 February at 7 p.m.

The workshops are free of charge and will run from 7 p.m. until 8.30 p.m.

To register for the workshops please call Fidelma or Georgina in the Benefits Section on 01 8047719 or email fheston@into.ie. Places will be limited so registration will be on a first come first served basis.

Further workshops will be held in Tralee, Ennis, Sligo and Buncrana throughout 2006. Keep an eye on the Benefits Page and on the INTO website at www.into.ie for further details.



Quality Hotels and Comfort Inn

Dublin



BY CHOICE HOTELS



BY CHOICE HOTELS

QualityHotels offer the very best accommodation at 12 superb locations throughout Ireland including Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Killarney, Galway, Cork, Youghal and Clonakilty. You will find that wherever you want to go – we're already there!

Quality Hotels and the Comfort Inn, Dublin are delighted to bring to INTO members the following special offer:

- €50 discount off a two or three night break for two people in **any** QualityHotel or Comfort Inn, Dublin.
- Two nights B&B and one dinner from €74 pps (normally €99 pps).
- Three nights B&B and two

dinners from €124 pps (normally €149 pps). Many Quality Hotels feature excellent 'Club Vitae' leisure centres and Lannigan's restaurants, and as part of Ireland's fastest growing hotel group you will find that your lifestyle is well catered for with superb service, value and style in every hotel.

Phone: Callsave 1850 605 705 for reservations and please tell your reservations agent you are an INTO member. Visit websites at www.qualityhotels.ie or www.comfortinndublin.com

This special offer, available until 30 June 2006, is subject to availability and weekend supplement applies.

Competition

To celebrate the launch of this great offer Quality and Comfort Inn Hotels are giving you the opportunity to win a weekend for two at any of their hotels nationwide.

To be in with a chance to win all you have to do is send the answer to the following question on a postcard to the Benefits Section, INTO, 35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1:

What are the Leisure Centres in the Quality Hotels called?

Terms and Conditions apply. For details please see INTO website on www.into.ie/ROI/benefits

CAVAN CRYSTAL
HOTEL

Cavan Crystal Hotel

Contemporary Four Star Cavan Crystal Hotel, Dublin Road, Cavan.

The Cavan Crystal Hotel are delighted to renew their fantastic special offers for INTO members in 2006.

- Jan/Feb 2006: Weekend breaks from €15pps and Midweek Breaks from €10.9pps for two nights B&B plus one A la Carte evening meal – includes midterm break.
- Valentines Weekend Special (10 and 11 or 17 and 18 February): Enjoy two nights B&B plus one A la Carte evening meal with champagne and chocolates in your room on arrival from only €75pps*.
- March-June 2006: Weekend breaks from €75pps and Midweek Breaks from €35pps for two nights B&B plus one A la Carte evening meal.

Additional nights special offers also available.

**all of the above offers are subject to availability*

Contact reservations team on 049 4360600 or email info@cavancrystalhotel.com and quote INTO when booking. For further information log onto their website at www.cavancrystalhotel.com.

Cavan Crystal Hotel is a contemporary four star hotel offering the highest standard of quality.

Christmas Hamper Winners

Thank you to all of you who took part in our members survey which we ran in the December issue. We are collating your responses and will use the information gathered to bring you great discounts throughout 2006.

The winners of the four luxury Christmas hampers courtesy of Cornmarket, EBS, Vhi Healthcare and AIB were:

Lorraine O'Shea, Abbeylax, Co Laois (Cornmarket hamper).
Jennifer Beaton, Clondalkin, Dublin 22 (AIB hamper).
Mary Gibbons, Westport, Co Mayo (Vhi Healthcare hamper).
Kathleen Greenwood (see photo), Co Monaghan (EBS hamper).

A big thank you to the hamper sponsors and congratulations to all our winners.



Kathleen Greenwood, Threemilehouse Primary School Monaghan one of the four lucky winners of the luxury Christmas Hamper, courtesy of VHI, EBS, AIB and Cornmarket



Cornmarket Winner

Rosemarie Heaney, teacher from St Brigid's Convent NS, Killester, receiving her prize of a shopping voucher from Ronan Fennelly of Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd at the Cornmarket Dublin office, 14 December 2005.

Did Gender Decide the Jobs? – Your Call/The Tribunal's Decision

(Case summary – see Equality page 13.)

In the view of the Equality Officer, there was no discrimination. On examining all evidence, the decision was that marks were awarded on the basis of very clear guidelines. The Equality Officer emphasised the existence of definite interview procedures which were "meticulously followed", of clear notes and of

marking to match guidelines. The claimants did not establish prima facie claims of discrimination.

Employment Equality case reports may be found at www.equalitytribunal.ie, at 'Database of Decisions'. This case is **Three Named Employees vs. An Post**, Decision 013, 2005.

Su Doku

The Comhar Linn Su Doku challenge is to fill every space in the grid with one of the digits 1 to 9, so that all 9 digits appear on each row and each column, as well as in each of the 9 square-shaped cells. There is a unique solution to each puzzle. Good luck. Solution on page 55.

							4	7
1		4		9				5
	2		3		7	9		
2	8				4	1		
			5		8			
		9	7				8	2
		2	4		3		6	
7				1		2		8
9	3							

Froebel College Graduation Ceremony

An awards ceremony took place in the newly refurbished St Thomas' building in Froebel College, Blackrock in December last. Participants who successfully completed the certificate course in *Teaching Exceptionally Able Children*, the post-graduate Diploma

course in *Resource Teaching* and the *Level one Gaelige* course were awarded their respective certificates/diplomas.

Scholarships, funded by Foras na Gaeilge, were also awarded to four Froebel students at the ceremony.



Graduates from the Post Graduate Diploma Course in Resource Teaching with their lecturers at the recent Froebel Awards Ceremony

Trade Union Training for new Branch Officers

Branches are in the process of holding AGMs and electing officers. In many cases, cathaoirligh and secretaries will be taking up this role for the first time. INTO is committed to supporting newly elected officers, and to this end new branch secretaries and cathaoirligh will be offered a residential training course after Congress, as they begin their term of office. Newly elected officers will be contacted by INTO Head Office when details of the course have been finalised.

Well Being and Lifestyle Workshops

Vhi Healthcare and INTO will host two Wellbeing and Lifestyle workshops, one in Kilkenny on 21 February and the second in Waterford on 22 February. Further details in our Benefits and Discounts Section, page 14.

Appointment Procedures Seminars

Appointment Procedures Seminars

In June 2005, INTO held a pilot Appointment Procedures Seminar in Galway. The course, which was presented by INTO officials, was held in response to requests from principal teachers for guidance in this area. We are delighted that due to the positive response of principal teachers to the seminar, we are in a position to

hold two further seminars in Dublin and Cork. It is hoped that more seminars will be held later this school year.

The aims of the seminar are:

- To update principals on the procedure relevant to the appointment of teachers.
- To update principals on recent legislation and Equality Tribunal decisions in this area.

- To enable principals, in their role as members of selection boards, to manage the appointment of teachers more effectively.

An application form is printed below. Please return this form, with the course fee of €75 to INTO Professional Development Unit. Places are strictly limited and will be filled on a first come first served basis.

Appointment Procedures – One Day Seminar

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

NAME/AINM	MOBILE NO/ UIMHIR FÓN PÓCA:
TEACHER NO/UIMHIR OIDE	E-MAIL/RIOMHPHOST
ROLL NO/UIMHIR ROLLA NA SCOILE	SCHOOL ADDRESS/SEOLADH NA SCOILE
PHONE NO/UIMHIR TEIL (SCHOOL):
PHONE NO/UIMHIR TEIL (HOME):

Please indicate the seminar you wish to attend

Dates	Venues	
Monday 27 February	Clarion Hotel, Liffey Valley, Dublin 22	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monday 13 March	Rochestown Park, Cork	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cheque to the amount of €75 is enclosed with this application		<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed/Sínithe

Please complete in full and return to INTO, Professional Development Unit, 35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

**Please note that applications will be accepted on a first come first served basis.*

Closing Dates: Dublin: 17 February and Cork: 3 March

Beginning to Teach

Report Recommends National System of Induction

A report on the experiences of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in primary schools by the Inspectorate of the DES has recommended the development of a national system of induction during the initial years of teaching. This is in line with INTO policy in this area. According to a survey of 192 NQTs, principals and teaching colleagues provided most assistance during the probation year.

The report argues that principals might beneficially ensure that:

- the newly qualified teacher fully implements the school's code of behaviour and receives the support and advice necessary to ensure that discipline is established in the classroom;
- regular visits are made to the new teacher's classroom in order to become familiar with the quality of the teacher's work and that encouragement, advice are provided;
- where possible, newly qualified teachers are not allocated infant classes during their first year;
- long-term and short-term

written planning is completed and monitored and that teachers present monthly progress records;

- the newly qualified teacher is familiar with completing the roll-book and any other relevant school forms and documents;
- the newly qualified teacher is familiar with the school plan for administrative and curricular areas;
- assessment procedures and the monitoring of pupils' work align with the schools' assessment approach; and
- where possible, an experienced teacher is assigned as a mentor to the newly qualified teacher.

The survey shows that the majority of NQTs felt satisfied with the level of preparedness for teaching stating that their initial education course prepared them well or very well to teach physical education, English, SESE, and Irish but less well to teach music, drama, visual arts and mathematics.

In the area of literacy, the report argues that some NQTs should:

- employ more successful

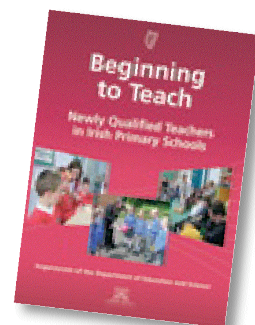
strategies for word identification;

- differentiate reading activities;
- promote a language experience approach to reading; monitor reading skills; and
- develop pupils' comprehension skills and higher-order thinking skills.

In the area of numeracy, inspectors argue that, in a minority of instances, there was scope for development regarding:

- the use of concrete materials in mathematics lessons;
- differentiation in the teaching of mathematical concepts;
- the pace of lessons and the scope of activities provided for pupils;
- the use of real-life problem-solving situations;
- the balance of teacher and pupil input during lessons; and
- oral mathematics and the systematic teaching of the language of mathematics.

Inspectors considered that in a minority of cases the teaching of Irish as a communicative language and the accuracy of newly qualified teachers' spoken Irish were also matters



requiring further attention.

The report also contains a copy of an Interim Reporting Template used by the Inspectorate in assessing NQTs which might provide useful information to NQTs. The INTO has argued that the publication of this document would be of benefit to NQTs.

Reacting to the publication of *Beginning to Teach*, INTO General Secretary John Carr said that the findings showed the need for the Minister to dust down the report on teacher education, *Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century* and to start implementing its recommendations. He also added that the recommendation in relation to principals providing more support for NQTs ignored the fact that three quarters of principals were full time class teachers.

Guidelines for Probationary Teachers in Primary Schools

In December the DES published *Guidelines for Probationary Teachers in Primary Schools*. These have been circulated to all schools. Such guidelines have been a key demand of the INTO in order to bring increased clarity and consistency into the process.

The guidelines outline sources of support and guidance available to NQTs. These include the principal, other teachers, a teacher from whom an NQT may be taking over a class, an identified teacher to whom an NQT may turn to for advice, other probationary teachers or recently qualified teachers. Other supports identified

include induction courses if available, the school plan, parents, pupils' progress records and named websites.

The publication gives an indication of what to expect when an inspector visits the classroom such as observing teaching, examining preparation and progress records, interacting with pupils and evaluating samples of the pupils' work. The guidelines state that at the end of a visit the inspector will discuss aspects of the work and offer advice and recommendations.

Information is provided on what inspectors look for when compiling reports such as a

beagthuaireisc or mórtuaireisc.

Guidance is provided in relation to written planning and preparation including long-term and short term planning.

Finally, advice is provided on effective teaching strategies and assessment.



Vere Foster medal winner



Vere Foster medal winner, Anita Brady who graduated from Mary Immaculate College pictured with INTO President, Sheila Nunan.

Wicklow girl wins national essay writing competition on disability

Tonya Swayne from St Michael's Girls' National School in Arklow, Co Wicklow was selected as the winner of the primary schools essay competition for the National Information Day on Disability 2005.

Tonya was presented with her prize at a ceremony hosted by Mr Frank Fahey, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform at the Helix Theatre in Dublin on 8 December 2005.

Tonya received €700 in art supplies/book/audio/video vouchers. Her school, St Michael's Girls National School, which was represented at the event by Tonya's class teacher Sinead Lucy, received €12,000 worth of computer/audio-visual equipment.

Tonya's essay was chosen from 26 county finalists and entries received from all over the country. According to the judges, her story captured the theme of the competition, 'I can, You can', by showing how a person can look past another's disability and with a little

patience and understanding reach out and communicate with them. This gives a clear message to others that if I can, you can too.

Along with Tonya, each county winner received €200 in art supply/book/audio/video vouchers and each school €2,000 worth of computer/audio-visual equipment.

President of the INTO and member of the judging panel Sheila Nunan said, "These stories show how clearly children understand the issues relating to disability and the importance of inclusion. Their insights provide clear evidence that the foundation stone of a more inclusive society is being laid in our schools and homes. I congratulate all who took part in this event".

The essay writing competition called 'I can, You can' was organised by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform with a prize fund of over €60,000 and designed to promote disability awareness among primary school children.



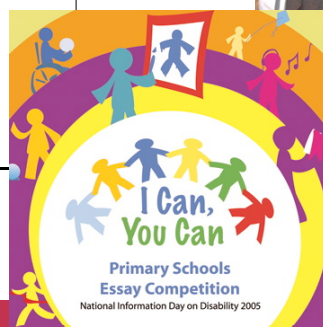
Tonya proudly shows off her winners trophy



Minister Frank Fahey TD presents Carlow winner Paul Gleeson with his prize

County Winners

County	Pupil	School
Carlow	Paul Gleeson	Bennekerry National School
Cavan	Emma Doyle	Ballynarry National School
Clare	Rory Jones	Holy Family Senior School
Cork	Anthony Corkery	Rylane National School
Donegal	Ryan Gillespie	Roshine National School
Dublin	Ben Naughton	Monkstown Educate Together NS
Galway	Wayne McDonagh	St. Patrick's Primary School
Kerry	Katie Prenderville	Muire Gan Smál NS
Kildare	Holly Hanlon	Scoil Bhride Naofa
Kilkenny	Eimear Meally	Presentation National School
Laois	Nicole Kelly	Newtown National School
Leitrim	Aoife Canning	Mohill National School
Limerick	Rebecca Holton	Caherline National School
Longford	Annalise Power	St. Joseph's NS
Louth	Sionainn Glenholmes	Gaelscoil Dhún Dealgan
Mayo	Fergal Rowe	Ballyheane National School
Meath	Shauna Hunt	St. Mary's National School
Monaghan	Eimear McEneaney	Doohamlet National School
Offaly	Isabelle Smyth	Charleville National School
Roscommon	John Healy	Ballinteva National School
Sligo	Eoin O'Boyle	St. Colmcille's National School
Tipperary	Mairéad Lambert	Presentation Primary School
Waterford	Michelle McDonald	Dunhill National School
Westmeath	Samantha Lane	Presentation SNS
Wexford	Madeline O'Carroll	Kilrane National School
Wicklow	Tonya Swayne	St Michael's GNS



COUNTY WINNER
WICKLOW

Tonya Swayne
St Michael's GNS

I feel the urge to grab him, shake him, stop him!
His piercing shriek, he won't stop, he can't stop.
I calm my mind, relax, breathe in, glare across
my thirteenth birthday cake and smile patiently. I tolerate
my cute, adorable seven year old Ben.
Someone, please explain! Why can't Ben speak to me? Why is Ben running
naked, jumping, flapping his hands frantically, constantly? His energy is
overwhelming. Ben desires routine. I must keep my music soft. Ben can't
contemplate noisy situations. Ben hears and he clenches his ears.
I want to indulge myself, purchase that red flamboyant coat. No! I can't
torture Ben's strange mind with that scary red colour he despises. Then
I'm told, ... Autistic Spectrum Disorder. I'm relieved. Perhaps people can
understand now and not scold Ben for being unsociable, impulsive and
demanding constant supervision.
How do I enter Ben's peculiar world? I need eye contact. I resent holding
his head. I sit, spin plates with him. He looks at me,
"I ..."
He looks away. We spin plates again. He stops,
"I love you," he says.
I'm nervous! I'm astounded! I'm entering Ben's unknown world! I see
my shocked, excited expression in Ben's lonely eyes.

NATIONAL WINNER

Running on Empty

Primary Schools Funding – 27 December 2005

The day to day running costs of the country's 3,200 primary schools far exceeds the funding provided by the Department of Education and Science. Without voluntary contributions by parents and fundraising activities by parents and teachers, schools would be seriously in the red.

All primary schools are funded on the basis of the

number of pupils on roll each year. But this level of funding is nowhere near enough.

"Most primary schools are on the bread line when it comes to funding," said INTO General Secretary, John Carr. But he claimed that the gap between state funding and real expenditure is covered over by local fundraising. "Many parents often raise questions when

asked for voluntary contributions or being asked to attend fundraising events. They expect the state to provide for free primary education. What they often fail to realize that schools are not raising money to get additional extras. They are fundraising for the bare necessities," he said. He described this as an unfair and unjust local education tax.

Serious problems in the school building programme

9 January 2006

Problems are emerging all over the country in the 'devolved' school building programme. Because of the under-funding of projects by the Department of Education local communities are being left with huge bills.

It is clear that the money being allocated to these projects is simply insufficient to meet building costs. Schools are finding themselves in serious financial difficulties because of this and are having to resort to huge

local fundraising projects or bank loans to make up the shortfall.

A case in point is Walshestown National School in Grange-bellew Co Louth. The local community there is left to pick up a bill of almost a quarter of a million euro. "The Department gave us a grant of only €350,000 to build a school that cost €590,000. "But we shouldn't have had to do this," says Principal, Declan Breathnach.

We didn't go off and build an outrageously expensive building. We built what I would call the minimum necessary to

implement the curriculum in primary schools. Despite repeated requests for additional help to the Department for retrospective funding we were refused. I would advise any school thinking of going into this scheme to be very careful.

He is also scathing about the fact that other schools who decided not to opt into the devolved scheme have been built under the main building programme. These schools were not left with shortfalls as the Department funded them properly.

INTO calls for resources for Gifted Children

14 January 2006

People often think that higher ability should make school work and other learning easier and therefore exceptionally talented children should achieve more with greater ease. There is sometimes a tendency to think that anybody can teach a gifted or talented child. Often people do not even tend to consider these children as having special needs.

They may be able to fulfil classroom requirements with very little effort. But children are not just individuals with academic needs. They are also social beings and need to learn to live and work in a group. Some gifted children often

display what might be called social problems. In a school setting when they see or grasp a learning outcome some alienate other pupils by dominating the group work or by passing remarks about the lesser abilities of others. This can lead to resentment on the part of other children.

Insecurity is also an issue for the gifted child knowing that they are different from others. As a result these children may try to hide their ability.

Many teachers in today's primary schools accommodate the needs of these children very skilfully. They manage to differentiate work successfully and establish clear lines of communication with parents to enable

difficulties to be overcome.

But this cannot be done automatically or without help. Special children have special needs which must be met. There may be resource implications in terms of school equipment, books and other materials that must be purchased. There may be staffing needs which are appropriate such as access to a resource teacher. There may be training needs for teachers which must be catered for and there is a compelling case to reduce class sizes if all children's needs are to be met.

All children are unique and have particular needs which the education system must meet.

INTO calls for major updating of the Rules for National Schools

9 January 2006

The Rules for National Schools as written are so out of date that schools could be forgiven for ignoring them completely. Over the past forty years they have been changed by Ministers for Education and then changed again. Yet there is no up-to-date publication of these Rules.

The failure to publish an up-to-date version of the Rules for National Schools is a cause of confusion for teachers and school management. Some Rules have been changed and updated, others have remained the same. Trying to find out which Rules were changed can be time consuming in the extreme. Yet these Rules are regularly referred to by school inspectors and officials when doing business with schools.

Schools are now governed by legislation such as the Education Act, the Education Welfare Act and the Education for Persons with Special Needs. A revised and updated curriculum, the second since the Rules were published forty years ago is in place. All of this legislation needs to be integrated with the Rules for National Schools in one publication.

The language of these rules has long been consigned to the dustbin of history. They are gender biased and refer to children with special needs in language that has been unacceptable for years. On these grounds alone a case for the updating and modernising the rules can be well made.

New Year Resolutions

Happy New Year! I usually start each New Year with millions and trillions of resolutions. I want to lose weight, exercise like a mad woman and take over the world! Two weeks into January, I'm back to the way I was, giving out to myself for not being able to keep three simple promises!! (Well, maybe the third one is slightly unrealistic!)

We hear so much about diets and exercise regimes; every magazine is full of the new celeb "drop a stone in a day" diets. When diet books talk about detoxing the body they give you the impression that a build up of foreign substances is the reason why you have gained weight and that if you rid the body of these toxins your weight problem will be magically solved. If this was true and your body was filled with toxins, wouldn't you be a very sick bunny and end up in hospital? 'Detox diets' are a marketing term to help sell books and products. The cause of weight gain is simple: if we take in more energy (in the form of food and drink) than we use, we gain weight.

Now I have cleared the air, work with me on a few basic principles and you won't have to be making New Year Resolutions about food and exercise ever again!

- Change the quality of the food you eat by choosing more fruit and vegetables each day. Get five portions of the good stuff down your gullet every day. I juice up a base of apple and carrots (makes it sweet and nice!) and I mix in whatever takes my fancy, veg or fruit! If I'm still hungry after a pint or two of this, I might have porridge with nuts or seeds. The processed cereals give you false energy and are full of sugar demons!
- Opt for whole grain foods two or three times each day, brown rice, brown pasta, couscous or lentils. They really fill you up and fill your body with fibre goodness!
- Only drink alcohol in moderation and leave a few alcohol free days in the week. Experts have told us one glass of red wine a day is beneficial but can you stop at one?
- Take 30 minutes of exercise every day, whatever you want as long as you're moving!
- Drink 8-10 glasses of water each day. The tap variety is perfect!
- If you smoke – give up. I'm saying no more – I know smokers hate people who lecture, you know yourself!
- To be in tiptop form for your class go to bed early regularly. Get at least 8 hours every night.
- Of course, before changing any aspect of your health, it's a good idea to speak to your GP.

Eating well and enjoying exercise shouldn't be a chore; look at this new part of your life as giving your working body the rewards it deserves at last. Wishing everyone a happy and healthy diet free New Year!

Rosalynn Normington's fifth in a series of healthy eating and lifestyle columns.

Rosalynn, a primary teacher, organises healthy eating classes in her spare time. She can be contacted at wormy@eircom.net

Slates Up!

Schools and Schooling in the Nineteenth Century



Pictured at the launch are Geraldine O'Connor, Susan Parkes, Valerie Coghlan and Karen Willoughby.

PHOTOGRAPHER:
GEORGE
WILLOUGHBY

Teachers and pupils in senior primary classes can now investigate how different going to school in the 19th century was from schooldays in the 21st century. Recently launched in The Church of Ireland College of Education *Slates Up! At School in the 19th Century* is an attractive new teacher/pupil activity book from CICE Publications.

Slates Up! offers insights into the early days of organized schooling in Ireland, and is full of ideas and activities designed to catch the imagination of children. Contents include a look at a typical schoolhouse: what materials were used in building a school, what size it would have been, and how it was furnished. Included too are instructions on how to make a one teacher schoolhouse.

A typical school day is outlined, and how children acquired the basics of a good education – the alphabet, reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic –

is explained in detail. There are plenty of opportunities for role-play, and also a guide to re-enacting a 19th century school day. Comprehensive 'Teacher Guidelines' are provided.

Karen Willoughby, the compiler of *Slates Up!*, is a primary school teacher who has a particular interest in the history of Irish education and the teaching of the history curriculum. The project has been guided by an editorial board comprising Susan Parkes, Geraldine O'Connor and Valerie Coghlan, all of whom are involved with the archives at the Church of Ireland College of Education.

Slates Up! is the first publication from CICE Publications. Price: €20/£15stg ISBN 0950928941. For class sets of 15 copies or over the cost per item is €15.

Please send orders by post to: *Slates Up!*, Church of Ireland College of Education, 96 Upper Rathmines Road, Dublin 6, Ireland. (post and packing is free). info@cice.ie

President's Dinner

Members of the Organising Committee of the President's Dinner pictured with Sheila Nunan, President 2004/05 at the function which was held in October 2005.



Commerce in class

A chara,
The marketing and sale of commercial products has been growing steadily in Irish schools in recent years, with unsolicited material penetrating the 'school market' each week. More and more companies are giving themselves an educational spin and targeting schools with unsolicited schemes, which place brand awareness and increased sales as the primary lesson objectives. Among those who have produced classroom resources for use in Irish schools are McDonalds, Coca-Cola, Samba Soccer, Le Crunch, Cadbury, SPAR, Independent Newspapers, Utterly Butterly and Renault.

The INTO in its recent statement on the shortage of funding to schools further highlighted this important issue as the arrival of these schemes shows how gaps in State funding of schools may be exploited by some for commercial gain. It is simply not the job of teacher or school to direct parental shopping, to endorse one supermarket over another or to do the work of commercial marketers. Educational spending in Ireland as a proportion of GDP is 4.5% and is one of the lowest in Europe with an average of 5.1%. As teachers we believe the

education school children receive is properly influenced by the ethos of the school, the National Curricula, current educational theory as well as local influences. Inserting a set commercial message into classrooms is to contaminate the learning process and place the brand rather than the student at the heart of the lesson.

We hope that the INTO will express its concern at the growing commercialisation of education and the growing number of schemes that require teachers to promote products in classrooms and support teachers promoting commercial free education in primary school classrooms. This problem could solve in a major way with a campaign to bring educational spending at least into line with our European counterparts.

Yours sincerely,
Joseph Fogarty, Glasnevin Educate Together, Niall Smyth, St Gabriels NS, Dublin 7

Irish Ferries march and IPPN

A Chara,
We the following undersigned principal teachers in Co Clare wish to totally reject the attempts by the IPPN leadership to interfere in industrial relations matters between the INTO and Primary School Management

Authorities during the lead up to the recent Irish Ferries demonstration and march organized by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. We reiterate that it is the INTO which represents us on all conditions of service and industrial relations issues and not any other body and we wish to restate our full support for the action taken by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions supported by the INTO.

Yours sincerely,
Declan Kelleher, Corofin NS; Sean Mc Mahon, Mullagh NS; Michael Drew, Bridgetown NS; Micheál O Concúir, Moy NS; Joe Carmody, Toonagh NS; Martina Sexton, Bansha NS; Mary Sexton, Burrane NS; Mona Lineen, Cahermurphy NS; M Keane, Carrigaholt NS; Pat Comber, Clohanbeg NS; Aideen O'Mahoney, Clohanes NS; Martin Keane, Clonigulane NS; Gráinne Sheehon, Coolmeen NS; Mary Clancy, Coore NS; Kathleen O'Connell, Cramny NS; Geraldine Burke, Cree NS; R. Dunphy, Cross NS; Mary Moloney, Doonaha NS; Carmel Hegarty, Drumdigus NS; Máire S Nic Áogain, Dunbeag NS; Carmel Coughlan, Kilmihil NS; Catherine McNamara, Knockerra NS; Liam Woolfe, Labasheeda NS; Assumpta Uí Choincheannain, Moveen NS; Gráinne Murrinan, Moyasta NS; Maura Clohessy, Querrin NS; Sheila Gavin, Shragh NS; Máire De Róiste, St Cuans - Kilbaha NS; Sr Mary

Mc Mahon, St Senans-Kilrush NS; Mary Lynch, Tullycrine NS; Philomena Morgan, Kilfenora NS; Mary Macnamara, Kilshanny NS; Martin Clohessy, Carron NS; Sr Rosáirí, Ennistymon Convent NS; Michael Rouine, Rineen NS; Pat Macnamara, Knockanean NS; Sean Keehan, Lurga NS; Sally O'Neill, St Senans Shannon; Martin Moloney, Stonehall NS; Mary Curley, Doorra NS; Gary Stack, Ennis NS; Pat Macnamara, Flagmount NS; Michael Gleeson, Killaloe BNS; Mary O'Mahony, Kilbane NS; Joe Brady, Kilmurry NS; James Kenny, Lakyle NS; Ted Harrington, Feakle NS; Patricia Wrynn, Scropul NS; Matthew Barrynet, New Quay NS; Michael Carrig, Quilty NS; John Reynolds, Liscannor NS; Sean O'Hehir, Lisdoonvarna NS; Dermot Ó Gorman, Clondrinagh NS; Anne Fitzpatrick, Quin NS; Eugene McMahon, Connolly NS; Conor Lynch, Ballynacally NS; Sean Ó Conphaola, Ennis Educate Together; Ber Nelson, Boston NS; Mary Cleary, Rockmount NS; Caitriona Ó Conphaola, Clouna NS; Gerard Connors, Kilnaboy NS; Brid Quelly, Fanore NS; Kevin Glynn, Lahinch NS; Killaloe Marion Nestor, Convent NS; Martin Scanlon, Scariff NS; Dan Graham, Meelick NS; Mary Ann McInerney, Broadford NS; Cyril Ó Liatháin, Ruan NS; Gearoid Ó Sullivan, Lissycasey NS; Ann Comyn, Tubber NS.

Comhar Linn INTO Credit Union Ltd

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Comhar Linn INTO Credit Union Ltd. is seeking applications for the position of Executive Officer from suitably qualified persons to cater for the increased workload within the Credit Union.

The position will be initially offered as a fixed term contract of two years.

Responsibilities

The appointee will be responsible for a range of duties to include: providing support to the Manager, Executive Committee and Board; developing key areas of membership growth and product development; supporting the administrative function of the credit union and policy development and implementation.

Qualifications/Skills profile

The ideal candidate will have a good working knowledge of the INTO and primary teachers' conditions of service, a strong ability to work on his/her own initiative, excellent communication and interpersonal skills and knowledge of appropriate IT and financial services products.

Because the job holder will be interfacing mainly with teachers in the primary school sector, experience as a primary school teacher would be highly desirable.

Salary

The salary will reflect the responsibilities of the post and will be based on Public Service Pay Scales.

Short listing may apply. Canvassing will disqualify.

Application by CV; applicants may provide additional information by way of covering letter outlining their interest in the post, if they so wish and how their experience /education profile matches the job requirements. The names and contact details of two referees should be included (these will not be contacted without prior notice to the candidate).

Applications in writing only and marked E.O.A should be addressed to:- The Secretary, Comhar Linn INTO Credit Union Ltd., 33 Parnell Sq., Dublin 1.

Closing date for receipt of Applications: 5.00 p.m. Thursday 16 February 2006.

Comhar Linn INTO Credit Union Ltd. is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

School Development Planning

Feedback from a survey carried out by SDPS in March 2005, indicates that practically all schools now have school plans in place covering a variety of issues. While much good work has been done, the greater challenge for many schools may relate to day-to-day implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the agreed decisions/ plans.

Questions schools are asking themselves in relation to this include the following:

- How can we ensure that decisions reached at the whole staff level are implemented in the classroom?
- What is the link between the whole school plan and the individual teacher's own long and short term preparation?
- What additional support and resourcing do school staff or others need to ensure that implementation of decisions takes place?
- How can the partners – parents and pupils be supported in making the whole school decisions a reality?
- How will we know that these decisions have made a difference to our pupils' learning?
- How can we gather and use evidence in relation to improvements in pupils' learning?
- What if something we decided was too ambitious or if priorities have to change?

In general, the school plan contextualises the learning for the pupils' needs in any particular school. The recording of decisions offers clarity to teachers in relation to the aspects of curriculum subjects for which they have responsibility, makes teachers aware of what was taught in previous classes and what will be taught in following years. In turn teacher preparation and reporting show evidence of alignment with school planning decisions and teaching methodologies that have been agreed upon at whole school level are developed in individual teachers' practice.

Teachers give priority attention to areas identified as priorities by the school as a whole.

For example, if the school plan outlines the preferred approach to subtraction, then teachers use the agreed language, methodology and concrete materials, and pupils will experience the same approach in all classrooms. Whole school decisions regarding timetabling for discrete time as well as time per subject are reflected in teachers' own practice in classrooms.

Taking assessment as another example, whole school decisions are reflected in teachers' planning and practice. Where teacher observation is the method used, staff will agree on a systematic way of recording their observations, and on a coherent set of remarks to use in relation to the quality of pupils' work, development, behaviour etc. Reports to parents and pupils, therefore will be reasonably consistent.

In relation to provision for pupils with special needs, individual teachers' planning will show evidence of co-ordination between staff based on whole school decisions recorded in the school plan. While the classroom teacher has primary responsibility for each pupil's learning, there is coordination of support to meet the needs of the child.

Schools decide at the outset that documents produced as part of the Plean Scoile, especially those in relation to curriculum, are primarily written to assist teachers in preparing for their work in the classroom. It is important to reach a collective decision as to what goes into the plan for each curriculum subject. The needs of the school will influence what is included eg, smaller schools, with mainly multi grade classes, may need to concentrate on stages where classes move from one classroom to another. Larger schools may need to focus on aligning the work of teachers working with the same grade or the co-ordination of



work at each class level. To a large extent such considerations determine how the documents will be structured and what they will contain.

SDPS Support Facilitation

The School Development Planning team for 2005/06 has 30 facilitators who are seconded from their own schools. Each facilitator works with 100 – 120 schools, depending on location and school size and you are welcome to contact your own school's facilitator at any stage during the year. To assist you with identification of priorities for planning, schools are invited to:

- Revisit work undertaken previously – is there work remaining to be completed/ to be followed up?
- Discuss, with the school community, the priorities that need to be addressed and record these on a planning diary.
- Regard planning as an ongoing process during the school year eg, work on school based

days, at staff meetings, on the SDP day, etc. all contributing to addressing identified priorities to enhance pupil learning.

- Consider who might attend planning meetings or planning days – will representatives of parents or members of the board of management be invited and enabled to participate?
- Liaise with other schools in the cluster where applicable or appropriate.

Curriculum Planning Materials

Planning materials for eight curriculum areas, namely:

- Gaeilge;
- English;
- mathematics;
- SPHE;
- science;
- visual arts;
- music; and
- PE

were developed in conjunction with NCCA, PCSP and the Inspectorate. Others, including history and geography, are currently being developed and will be available during 2006.



The requirements of different types of schools are taken into consideration in this work eg, revised materials to reflect the needs of Gaelscoileanna and Gaeltacht schools are now available on www.sdps.ie (leagan Gaeilge)

Use of these curriculum planning prompts and templates is entirely optional. They all follow a similar structure and layout and are intended to provide support for schools that may be at different stages of planning for each of the subjects.

Each document may be used in a variety of ways:

- as an overview of a whole-school development plan for a subject;
- as a guide for a school in reviewing its current practice;
- as a means of drawing previous decisions into a coherent unit; and
- as a strategy for addressing identified priorities in relation to a subject while maintaining a coherent overall approach to the subject.

Planning Materials for Key Organisational Areas

In order to assist schools with common organisational issues, a number of key areas have also been addressed by means of planning prompts, devised by SDPS. These prompts include questions, which are intended to guide a school community through a planning process. These include:

- Anti-Bullying
- Code of Behaviour
- Equal Opportunities
- Health and Safety
- Homework
- Management of Special Needs
- Substance Use
- Enrolment
- Child Protection
- Parental Involvement
- Data Protection and Record Keeping.

Appropriate use of these prompts will contribute to the development of a whole school policy for the particular area/s mentioned. The prompts are available to schools in hard copy from the school development planning facilitator and from the SDPS website at www.sdps.ie

Procedures and Practices

These consist of short statements setting out school

practice in areas where widespread collaboration may not be necessary. It may well be sufficient to record the practice in the school and ensure that it is communicated to all concerned. Topics available on www.sdps.ie include:

- Arrival and Dismissal of Pupils
 - Mobile Phones
 - Book Rental Scheme
 - Photocopying and Copyright
 - Brief Absences
 - Record Keeping and Data Protection
 - Career Break, Study Leave, Carer's Leave, Teacher Exchange and Secondment
 - School Tours
 - Selecting Textbooks
 - Class and Classroom Allocation
 - Student and Substitute Teachers
 - Competitions and Commercial Promotions
 - Support Staff
 - Contact with Other Schools
 - Supporting Staff Development
 - Emergency Closures
 - Transition to Second Level
 - Extra Curricular Activities
 - Use of School Premises
 - Healthy Eating.
- Other materials being developed by SDPS at this time

include planning materials for multi-grade classes, templates for long and short term preparation and materials for use in special schools. Teachers are invited to forward to SDPS examples of templates they currently use so that their good practice is shared and built upon.

Existing materials are constantly revised and updated based on feedback from users. Comments or suggestions from schools that have used these materials are always welcome and can be sent via e-mail to info@sdps.ie, or to SDPS, Drumcondra Education Centre, Dublin 9.

Boards of Management

Facilitators are also available to provide training for board of management members either individually or in groups. This service is available nationally and can be arranged through local Education Centres.

Your views

Views are always welcome by e-mail at info@sdps.ie or by phone at 01 857 6427 or by fax at 01 857 1128.

Eileen Flynn, National Co-ordinator of SDPS.

TEMPLATES FOR TEACHERS' PLANNING

SDPS is often asked to facilitate sessions on long and short term planning where the school's objective is to streamline its approach to Scéimeanna Bliana, Scéimeanna Coicíse/ Scéimeanna Seachtaine and Cuntas Míosúil. We are currently adding to the range of materials/templates in use so that schools may select, from a variety of options, those best suited to their own needs and preferences.

We invite all schools and/or individual teachers to forward samples of the templates or headings they use to set out

their long and short term plans and cuntas míosúil.

These materials will be used as samples of good practice, published on websites or otherwise made available to colleagues addressing the issue. All samples will be credited to their authors or confidentiality will be guaranteed where that is the author's preference.

We have a particular interest at present in addressing the needs of colleagues working in multi-grade classes and in special education and would welcome ideas from teachers working in those settings.

If it is possible to forward samples as e-mail attachments it would be particularly helpful but photocopies would also be welcomed. Please send, by 17 February 2006, to

Secretary, SDPS (Primary), Drumcondra Education Centre, Drumcondra, Dublin 9 or by e-mail to info@sdps.ie

Please include your own name, class/es taught and school name, so that your work can be acknowledged.



Special Needs Education

Reflecting on Reality in 2006

As I write this article I am approaching my twentieth year in the field of special needs education. I have variously been the 'special teacher', the 'handicapped teacher' (yes, it used to be okay to say that!), and the 'slow teacher', according to which group of students I was with. I am currently the 'dyslexic teacher', which excuse I (very subversively) use to explain my increasing memory lapses and moments of confusion!

During this time, the face of special needs education has changed dramatically. Initially, it was located almost entirely in the special schools. Revealing that you taught in one of these fine establishments used to get one of two reactions from people – they either gushed, and said how wonderful you must be, or (the more likely response) their eyes glazed over with disinterest. However, the whole scene has exploded over the past seven years and there is now special provision of some sort almost everywhere.

In our own school, Ennis NS, for example, there was one remedial teacher to meet the needs of a school population of 700 children for the nineteen years up to 1999. Now, six years later, we have eleven special educational needs (SEN) teachers dealing with a spectrum which includes general learning difficulties, emotional-behavioural challenges, autistic spectrum disorders, traveller education, non-national education, my own specialist class for students with dyslexia, and much more. This era has also seen the foundation of the National Educational Psychological Service, the introduction of new SEN legislation, and the appointment of Special Needs Assistants, and Special Educational Needs Organisers. A total sea change has occurred.

While perfection in SEN provision is still a distant dream, at least we have moved off the bottom rung of the ladder. However, there is one group – central players in the SEN arena – who have received no attention, and scant services, to date. I am referring to the families of children with special educational needs. As a special needs teacher, my heart goes out to parents. However incomplete the services for children may be, official support systems for their parents are non-existent. It is very distressing for a parent when they hear that their child has a learning difficulty. For some, it is hugely traumatic. They don't know where to turn for information and support, and, in truth, there is no statutory body charged with providing this for them.

As I travel around the country speaking to parent groups, it never ceases to amaze me how difficult it still is for them to get the information and advice they require. They have to stumble around gathering pieces of knowledge from here and there, usually from health professionals. The only useful information one mother could get was from her homeopath. It is ridiculous that they have to seek help from health services for issues that are actually educational concerns. There is a clear need for a dedicated agency dealing with this to be established under the auspices of the DES.

As parents gradually become informed, they may realise that they themselves have the same problem, but that it was never diagnosed. At our own Reading Class Information Nights, we have literally seen the realisation dawning in some parents' eyes: "My God, I'm dyslexic". Then follows a huge wave of guilt that they may have

bestowed these problems upon their child, along with a sadness that their own struggles were misunderstood, and their pain unrecognised for all those years. They have to go through the normal stages of grieving, both for the loss of the child they thought they had, and, in some cases, for the newly-recognised loss of their own childhood, too.

In particular, we must spare a thought for the siblings of our SEN children. Their lives are often totally overturned. I remember a nine-year-old girl being asked if she did Irish dancing. "Oh, she hasn't time for anything like that", replied her mother. "We need her to help mind Mike". Mike (pseudonym) was her younger severely autistic, and highly active, brother. Once he came home from school each day, it took two people to watch him. As his only sibling, this little girl was always 'on duty'. Although not out of single figures herself,

she had to be cast in an adult/carer role for her brother, out of sheer necessity. Her own childhood was sidelined. Another family sent all their children to boarding school because no one could study in the house due to the conduct of the youngest child, who had emotional and behavioural problems. Such stories are echoed all over the country.

A further issue for siblings is that they may have aspects of the learning difficulty themselves, but to a lesser extent. Parents tend to focus on the child with the most severe difficulties and, as parental energy is limited, the needs of the others may be overlooked. They may then end up with both socio-personal and learning constraints.

As SEN teachers, we are the people who, de facto, provide a lot of this missing support for parents and families at present. When parents realise that their

■ **Our title varies in English – remedial teacher, support teacher, resource teacher – but in Irish we have always got it right: oide feabhais – we make life better.**



child can be helped, their relief is palpable. We are often like co-parents of these children, usually being privy to more insider information about family, relationship, and medico-psychological issues than is normally the case. We generally have much more frequent, and more in-depth, contact with parents than in the mainstream situation. We are constantly providing emotional support, information and practical management advice, on top of our teaching activities.

It is important to acknowledge this for a number of reasons. Firstly we must recognise that this is very demanding. Many of us don't even realise we are doing this work but it takes its toll. It is possibly the reason you are exhausted at the end of that week when

you feel you got 'nothing done'. Secondly, it tells us that we need to take care of ourselves, physically and emotionally, so that we do not experience burn-out. Thirdly, it is important that we acknowledge for ourselves that we are doing a great job here in the absence of a parent support service. The deficient training, facilities and accommodation often available for SEN does not say much for the esteem in which we are held by 'the system'. Many of us are toiling away in glorified broom cupboards, cold corridors and, in one reported case, a boarded-up toilet, complete with smells. Despite all this, we are doing a Trojan job. Let us recognise that.

Sometimes we need to defend

a child from a parent who is too determined to 'fix' them. This is the parent who wants more homework for their child so that s/he can 'catch up' or 'not miss out', when the child actually needs less, but more specific, homework. This always feels like a form of denial to me, where the person who really needs to do their homework is the parent, and learn acceptance of their wonderful child as s/he is.

Fortunately, the majority of parents are reasonable, once they come to terms with the situation, and only want what is best for their child. In research carried out last year, I found that the three top things which parents wish for their SEN child are:

1. That s/he is happy.
2. That s/he has friends.
3. That s/he 'fits in'.

So-called educational goals came in well down the line. This finding was echoed by many of the presenters at the excellent Irish

Association of
Teachers in
Special

Education (IATSE) conference in Drumcondra last June (2005).

Luckily, SEN teachers all over the country have long been aware of the importance of personal and social goals. The removal of horrendous stress from a child by providing the correct educational setting for them, with appropriate workloads and goals, can turn them into a different person – calmer, happier, better able to cope. In my own case, parents have variously reported that a child has finally stopped wetting the bed – at age twelve; that a child now hops out of bed every morning instead of being dragged out crying; that a child will now have a conversation and use the phone. Special education teachers everywhere have similar experiences. These qualitative changes have a huge impact on family life and can restore lost harmony and hope to a household.

We must hold fast to the belief that the child's increased self-knowledge and improved self-esteem is the rising tide that lifts all boats – the boats of intelligence, of phonics, of verbal skills, of visual skills, of comprehension, and all the rest. It is the bottom line. When we achieve this, we have done a great deed, even on the days when the child's obvious improvements refuse to register on the psychometric tests.

The DES must put its own support agency for parents and siblings in place, and stop relying on the health services. Meantime we must continue to celebrate the good job we are doing. Our title varies in English – remedial teacher, support teacher, resource teacher – but in Irish we have always got it right: *oide feabhais* – we make life better.

**Fiona de Buitléir, Reading
Class, Ennis NS, Co Clare.**

Autistic Pride

"Flapping my hands was always 'inappropriate' behaviour... Look at all of these hand-flapping pictures. I'm happy. I may not always like it when non-autistic people bare their teeth at me when they're happy or trying to look happy. But that doesn't mean it's inappropriate for them to bare their teeth."

www.gettingthetruthout.org

Having a child diagnosed with autism is one of the most devastating experiences for a parent, particularly these days when there is more exposure and greater information on the condition being disseminated in the media. The syndrome of autism is a complex phenomenon with many and varying symptoms and characteristics, and probably poses the greatest challenge for mainstream schools where the numbers of autistic children is increasing. While almost all children with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) have a combination of social and communication problems, sensory problems, problems with executive functioning (organizing, planning, processing), autism also includes a bewildering range of behaviours, disorders, obsessions and abilities that can confuse and colour any parent's or teacher's expectations.

At the severe end of the spectrum an autistic person may have Pervasive Development Delay (PDD) and may be non-verbal, non-communicative, self-injurious, self-stimulatory, engage in stimming behaviours such as rocking and pacing and may suffer frequent and severe episodes of distress or aggression. In schooling terms these children pose the greatest challenge for mainstream teachers and the international experts recommend specialist care in

small units where various intensive programmes eg, ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis), AIT (Auditory Integration Therapy) and communication methods eg, PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) can be implemented. Further up the spectrum autistic children and those with Asperger's Syndrome or high-functioning autism can manage and do well in school with the help of intervention strategies, individual teaching, OT and sensory related exercises, access to an SNA, access to computers, participation in social skills and Social Story writing programmes etc.

However, with the best intentions in the world and after sourcing and deploying the best available methods and therapies, there is often a feeling of uncertainty on just how much progress is or can be made. And now there is a growing activism among adult autistics, particularly among those who are high-functioning, but many who are not but who have found ways to communicate (usually by computers). They feel that society is treating autistics in an unjust and sometimes cruel manner and the greatest criticisms are reserved for those charities, organisations and professionals who 'care' for autistics, who try to treat or cure autism by forcing the autistic to fit or conform to the 'regular' or normal definition of functioning and behaviour. Autistic adults are becoming active and vocal on websites and at conferences, and last summer held the first ever Autistic Pride Day in the US. They want to be heard and their purpose is to advocate the integrity and validity of the autistic state. They declare that "those identified as autistic are not suffering from a pathological disease any more than those with dark skin are suffering from a form of skin disease." They insist that though some

autistics cannot speak this does not mean they have nothing to say. A browse through the most popular of their websites www.gettingthetruthout.org may shock but will change forever the way the rest of us NTs (Neurologically Typical) view autism. Autistics don't want to be 'cured'; instead they want society to try to see their existence and their behaviours as valid, not pitiful.

At a recent online conference (www.awares.org) organised by Wales International Autism Wendy Lawson, who herself has Asperger's Syndrome, presented a paper in which she focused on the subject of attention and explored autism as a different way of attending to various stimuli. NTs are polypotopic – we can attend mildly to several things and can switch attention fairly easily, while ASD people are monotopic – all the mental attention goes into one thing and switching is very difficult and confusing. Of course this has huge implications for social interaction and functioning, where fast changing environments such as classrooms or shops or restaurants can induce panic and anxiety, often resulting in meltdown. The autistic is unable to process all the sensory stimuli – noise, light, movement, work tasks, background distractions – all at the same time and is overwhelmed. S/he is struggling for coherence but does not have the tools to achieve it. Instead he is often forced to conform, to make eye contact, to sit still and listen, to endure what, to the rest of us NTs is perfectly easy, but to him or her is unbearable and even painful.

"If you were FOREVER forced (at times none too patiently) to do upsetting functions or at times acutely painful ones, just because everybody else does it with no discomfort, AND expects you to do the same; would that make you be outgoing, and a party personality? Or

would you turn away from your tormentors, acting as if you were uncomfortable or afraid or possibly frustrated with them?" (Morris 1999)

To cope with the meltdown s/he is experiencing the ASD person may shut down his or her sensory system and withdraw and/or engage in stereotypical or self-stimulatory behaviours in order to reduce the pain of the sensory overload. The child who gazes silently, transfixed, at the sunlight streaming down through the moving leaves of a tree or who swings incessantly on a swing or flaps his or her arms or delights in the constant flowing of water from a tap is perhaps regaining his or her equilibrium, anchoring him/herself again after a collision with this mad undifferentiated world of sensory chaos.

The challenge for us is to reach this child in his or her world first, not to force him or her to enter ours. The best guides in our search to access his world must be other ASD people, Asperger's sufferers and other autistics who communicate with us, some of whom write books or speak at conferences or set up websites. Notwithstanding the fact that, like all NTs, all autistics are different and individual, they can tell us how some things are in their world, how, in fact, NTs miss so much detail in a picture or in the rich texture of a wall or a floor or how a new leaf on a tree can fully engage them for long minutes – vision and information that they have access to but which we all miss by a long mile. Michelle Dawson at the University of Montreal has gathered evidence which suggests that ASD people are superior to NTs in several ways – they are better at visual searches, remembering auditory pitch and are quicker at information processing. If we listen to what autistics are writing and communicating

to us now, what excuse do we have for not adapting our teaching and our thinking to their styles, or at least not making an attempt at reading their world? If we protect them and allow them to develop in a safe environment and on their own terms, if we are patient and submit ourselves to listening to the signs and signals rather than trying to contort them into shapes of ourselves, if we give them tools which suit their needs, maybe, then maybe, over time we will reach them. It is not uncommon for non-verbal autistics, even in dire circumstances and without proper provision, to speak isolated words in adolescence, then some sentences, until by adulthood they can successfully communicate with a computer, almost entirely self-taught. There is a wealth of information on autism available now in publications and on websites that can assist us in our work with autistic children. Dr Tony Attwood and Carol Gray are two worth mentioning who are widely acclaimed for developing programmes and helpful practices that can be employed by special needs teachers. Attwood advocates equip-

ping the ASD child with various "tools" to cope with anger and anxiety – physical tools, relaxation tools, social tools, thinking tools – as well as a measuring tool or thermometer which takes the "temperature" of an emotion. Merely reading the testimonies of autistic people on www.gettingthetruthout.org can be a starting point towards helping us understand some of their truths and realities.

The success stories of high functioning autistics and Asperger's people have been highlighted in the media in recent years and many famous people such as W.B. Yeats and Albert Einstein are now reckoned to have had ASD. It was possibly their monotropic traits which favoured them in their art or science – that ability to focus so intensely on one thing that lent itself towards a scientific breakthrough or an astounding insight or an artistic creation. Academics

too, especially in the US, are 'coming out' with Asperger's Syndrome and it is not, particularly in the world of academe where obsessive intellectuals are not at all rare, considered such a handicap as it was in the past. Of course, not all ASD people are geniuses. Most will struggle to cope and be understood. One nine year old Asperger's boy, asked recently what he was finding most difficult at home or in school, replied animatedly: "Everything! It's 'Do this, do that.' Sometimes I think I'll have to make copies of myself to get it all done."

Reading the testimonies of those with autism, catching a glimpse of their world through their words and their eyes, hearing their attempts and struggles to make themselves understood to the uncomprehending NTs around them can only cause us to question what it is we regard as 'normal'

within the human spectrum of behaviour and perception, and ask not what it is that autistics are missing but what it is that we fail to see. Perhaps a time will come when their way of seeing the world might be harnessed creatively, scientifically, psychologically, neurologically, a time when they will be viewed as gifted rather than damaged, a time when they may lead us to some other mysterious realms of the mind and soul. The ability to see the world in an entirely different way, to see into minute things, to see the beauty of the physical world in tiny grains of sand falling through one's fingers or light dancing on drops of water might, after all, be closer to the transcendent than the rest of us may ever hope to achieve.

Mary Costello is a Special Education teacher in St Clare's Primary School, Dublin 6W.

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INCLUSION in the 21st Century

Recent initiatives at Departmental and other levels have highlighted current interest in special education.

However the ongoing and complex issue of inclusion/integration of pupils with learning difficulties into mainstream education and the ensuing implications is a topic that has never been definitely debated at national level. The present three-pronged special education system is testimony to this. The emergence of special schools in post WW2 Ireland – many founded by religious orders – was more to do with local concern than national policy. The beginning of the integration debate in the 1970s gave rise to the special class within mainstream education to cater for an ever increasing student population with learning/behavioural difficulties. At its zenith presently, the inclusion argument sees pupils with SEN remain within the mainstream class and their needs addressed by resource teachers and classroom assistants.

The supporters of inclusion see little future for the special school, particularly those that cater for pupils with mild general learning difficulties – the group of students with SEN seen as most easily integrated into mainstream primary and secondary schools. The role of the special school is therefore under scrutiny. Is its identity being lost in the maelstrom of curricular change, coupled with political and social inclusive policies. Or is its role distinct and important, and does it deserve much further discussion before judgements can be made?

External and Internal Influences on Policy

The DES is being challenged from different sides to be seen to promote inclusive practices. Internationally, the UNESCO

Conference at Salamanca (1994) called on all governments to adopt an inclusive educational policy and added that “regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and the cost effectiveness of the entire system.” (UNESCO)

The Salamanca Statment, while recognising the special school as a resource centre for special needs, clearly stated that the “fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together” (UNESCO) To this end, the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) and the *UN Standard Rules on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities* (1993) have come to be interpreted as documents which are the bedrock of the argument for inclusion. While recognising a continuum of provision for SEN, the *Warnock Report* (1978) and the *SERC report* (1993) highlighted an inclusion based on location, ie, the pupil with SEN would not be located with his/her peers. In recent years, particularly in the advent of the Education Act of 1998, the DES has come under increasing pressure to provide support services for pupils with SEN in mainstream education at both primary and secondary level. Parental demands, coupled with judicial decisions, have seen increased mainstream support services mainly through extra teaching staff and special needs assistants.

The Inclusive Reasoning

There is a very strong and vocal lobby for the inclusion of all pupils into mainstream education. Ainscow (1997), Booth

(1994) and others reflect a widely held view that special schools are at best a form of segregation and at worst a denial of basic human rights. The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) in Bristol claims that inclusive practices and policies are based on (a) human rights (b) good educational practice and (c) social sense. Children have a right to be educated together. Separation, it is claimed is both a devaluation of the pupil and discriminatory. The CSIE maintains that research exists to show that children do better in integrated settings. Inclusion promotes acceptance and dissolves prejudice. Retaining special school placement is not the answer to the inadequacies of mainstream education for pupils with SEN. Interestingly, the CSIE also claim that many adults who attended special schools identified early segregation as a key contributory factor to later prejudice and barriers encountered as adults.

Thomas and Loxley (2001) widen the debate. Inclusion, they contend, is the extension of the comprehensive ideal and is defended by their contention that a definitive educational system for SEN will forever elude us. They see inclusion as part of a broader social welfare reform package, which they maintain, has been largely ignored in western society with the emergence of the ‘New Right’. The New Right is characterised by an imperative to promote economic well-being while at the same time claiming that traditional values in morality, authority etc are being eroded by the pursuit of equality through civil rights. National economic well being is inconsistent with diversity and difference. “As schools attempt to improve their local market position, their policy and provision for children with difficulties becomes displaced.” (pg 95)

The Development of Inclusive Policies in Ireland

The INTO pamphlet *Inclusion* (2000) outlines the growth of inclusive thinking since 1990. In that year the then government signed an EU Council of Ministers Charter which obliged the Department of Education to promote the concept of inclusion in schools. The 1992 Green Paper, *Education for a Changing World* encouraged greater equality in education for disadvantaged groups with SEN, but also acknowledged that appropriate education should be provided in mainstream education where possible.

The White Paper, *Charting our Educational Future* (1995) set out an educational policy with aims that included the nurturing of values seen as important to Irish society, the development of the pupils’ self-identity and self-esteem, the promotion of quality and equality for all, especially the disadvantaged, and the education of the whole person. It emphasised the importance of pupils with SEN having the same opportunities and rights of access to education as all other pupils. The 1998 Education Act enshrined into law the rights of all children to appropriate education. There is a call in the 1999 White Paper on Early Childhood Education, *Ready to Learn* for the development of a comprehensive policy and provision for SEN in the early years of the pupil.

The Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 brings major changes to special education in Ireland. It establishes a National Council for Special Education “to plan and coordinate the provision of education and support services to children with special educational needs”. The Act also makes statutory the formulation of “educational plans” and provides for the implementation of policy through “special educational needs organisers.”

Century and the Special School

The Act stresses the “inclusive environment” as the optimal learning centre.

The Importance of Difference

In discussing the provision of education, Brown (2002) asserts that “a uniform system consolidates rather than mitigates social inequality.” Gregory (Davies, Gregory and McGuinn, 2002) claims that educational systems in any country are based on force claiming that we “take all young people – each of whom is a complex mixture of different abilities, needs, personalities and learning styles – and we force them through a ‘one-size-fits-all’ education system”. Hornby (1992) argues that the emphasis on integration should be replaced with one that optimises the appropriateness of education. He argues that the research and literature reviews fail to support the effectiveness of integration and that some pupils’ needs are not always catered for in a so-called ‘inclusive’ school.

Wilson’s (2000) premises on education are most significant. He defines education as the “serious learning of rational creatures... planned in some coherent and overall way” (pg 6). He argues that there is a temptation to use education to endorse a particular ideology or set of values, stating that a political or moral reason for doing so may not be educational one. He doubts if there exists a well found body of knowledge that can be called educational theory ie sets of true propositions which are significantly above the level of common sense. The only authority an educator can ultimately recognise is reason itself. He exhorts the educator to define special education in terms of reason as opposed to particular social values. He suggests that the most significant handicaps are those which impede a child from learning to be a person and not those which impede the

learning of physical, social, academic or vocational skills. In modern society, disability is judged by a person’s ability to cope with an educational system which is regarded as normal ie, a regime of subject based sessions throughout the day.

Wilson wonders whether the only safe form of social justice is one that is founded on the egalitarian principles of equality and rejection of difference, particularly in a society that rewards physical and academic achievements. In other words, why does a society have a conscience about ‘segregating’ pupils at one end of the IQ ladder when it consistently does it at the other end? For some pupils education is “learning the incidentals of ordinary living” (Hornby, 1992) while for others it is learning Pythagoras’ Theorem. Are both expected to learn and advance in the same setting? For Wilson, the veneer of inclusion cannot deny that disability exists and needs different approaches. While inclusion might be socially plausible, reason alone would dictate that educationally it is not.

The Special School Today

Where do special schools fit into our education system and how can their role be more recognised in society? The challenge for special schools is to be seen as vibrant centres of learning in a modern society. For the past twenty years I have been teaching in a school for pupils with mild general learning disability (MGLD). In that time the school has developed from enthusiastic beginnings of young Mercy Sisters into a modern education centre offering a differentiated curriculum at both primary and secondary levels. While the school’s inclusive practices at both curricular and extra curricular level are many, I will only reflect on one, which in many, ways encapsulates the changing nature of

special education.

In 1997 our school was accepted into the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme, a course which had begun in mainstream secondary schools two years previously. In the seven years to June 2004, some 50 students have begun the course with 39 students completing their final examinations. Of the 11 students who did not complete the two year programme, the majority left school securing employment.

The LCA students receive a single overall evaluation of their two years work based on completed modular assignments, seven diverse ‘tasks’ or projects and final written and oral examinations. Of the 39 students who completed the course from six separate LCA classes, the following is a breakdown of their final accreditation by the Department of Education and Science:

Distinction (85% - 100%)
– 12 pupils. Merit (70% - 84%)
– 27 pupils. Pass (60% - 74%)
– 0 pupils.

The programme offers the students many opportunities to integrate into their communities. There are four work experience placements of two weeks duration over the two years. For the Practical Achievement Task, many pupils have opted to do night classes to fulfil this part of the course. Of the 39 students that completed the course, 20 went on to further education in Post Leaving Certificate courses (PLC) in local colleges and FÁS courses. 15 students secured open employment immediately after finishing the LCA. The majority of the remaining pupils, 14 completed or are completing semi-sheltered training programmes with a view to open employment.

Conclusion

John Macbeth’s aptly titled book *Schools Must Speak for Themselves* (1999) is sufficient

reason for penning this article. Many of the 30 special schools for pupils with MGLD are offering certification courses including LCA, Junior Certificate, Junior Certificate School’s Programme, FETAC Level 3 as well as a differentiated but comprehensive primary curriculum. While there may appear to be overtones of segregation in the term of ‘special school’, my experience to date has led me to believe that these schools are an integral part of the “continuum of provision” in special education. Rather than seeing them as special, maybe their evolution now allows them to be seen as ‘foundation schools’. The majority of our pupils have come from mainstream settings but only a handful ever wished to return.

The announcement by the Minister of Education and Science on the allocation of 660 posts to alleviate learning difficulties in the primary sector will no doubt have positive outcomes for many pupils with SEN. Will such initiatives however, eliminate examination of a system that has provided valuable educational services for over half a century for many pupils who can’t fit into the mainstream schools? Like most terms ‘inclusion’ has differing interpretations. Recently I saw a photograph in a local newspaper of two past pupils with their caps and gowns at a PLC college conferring ceremony. If the function of education lies on a continuum of personal development and one’s role in society, these two former LCA students have greatly benefited from the broader inclusive practices of our school. Equality stems from the recognition of and provision for difference, not sameness.

Greg Brown, Catherine McAuley Special School, Limerick.

For bibliography see web version of *InTouch*.

Inclusion in the 21st Century and the Special School

by Greg Brown

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Reading Recovery

Readng Recovery is a very effective early intervention programme, targeting children who have completed one year in school, are between the ages of five years nine months and six years six months and are having difficulties in reading and writing.

It is an individualised, half-hour, daily, intensive programme of between eight to 20 weeks. A specially trained *Reading Recovery* teacher delivers the programme. The student is taught what s/he "needs to learn in the context of continuous text. The teacher designs a highly sequenced programme determined by the child's present performance, and acceleration is achieved as the child takes over the learning process and begins to work independently." ¹During each session the child reads three or four books that are familiar to him/her and is introduced to one new book which s/he works on during the session, using the skills and strategies that s/he has acquired. The child will read this new book unaided the next day, as the teacher takes a running record of miscues, and details of strategies the child is using. During the half-hour session the child also writes a story. The core of the programme is "comprehending messages in reading and constructing

messages in writing." ²In the *Reading Recovery* programme the students learn specific strategies that enable them to become independent readers and writers in a short time span. A very finely graded series of books is used in the programme.

Reading Recovery was developed in the mid 1970s by Dr Marie M. Clay, an educator and researcher living in New Zealand whose parents came from Co Tyrone, Northern Ireland. It has spread from New Zealand to Australia, the United States, Canada and Great Britain. It is continuing to spread and has gone from London to the Netherlands and also to Anguilla. It is currently being translated into Irish and Dutch. The five Area Boards in Northern Ireland embraced this programme in the early 1990s and from there it spread to the Republic of Ireland.

It was through the initiative of the Northern Province of the Mercy Congregation that *Reading Recovery* started as a pilot project in Monaghan Education Centre in 2000 under the expert skill and guidance, of the Teacher/Leader Elizabeth Connolly. The Sisters of Mercy, Northern Province, and the Department of Education and Science jointly supported the programme at the start. The success of the *Reading Recovery* programme in Monaghan Education Centre

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has exceeded all expectations with, to date, 80 teachers trained, over 60 schools participating and over 800 students who have satisfactorily completed the programme. This is all due to the dedication and hard work of Elizabeth Connolly, the National Coordinator of *Reading Recovery* in the Republic of Ireland. The Department of Education and Science now fund the *Reading Recovery* programme. At present there are five training centres in the country: Monaghan, Dublin, Galway, Cork and Limerick.

The training for a *Reading Recovery* teacher is a year long inservice course. While in training the teacher attends four assessment training sessions and 18 inservice training sessions at the training centre. The technique of delivering the programme is expertly facilitated by the Teacher/Leader through the exploration of

theory and good practice, through the observation and analysis of real live lessons, group discussion and interaction, as well as implementing *Reading Recovery* back in his/her own school. During

training the teacher works with four children under the direction of the Teacher/Leader. On successfully completing the course and meeting all the requirements as set out in the *Standards and Guidelines for the implementation of Reading Recovery*, a Certificate from the Institute of Education, University of London, is presented to each participant. The Institute of Education, University of London, holds the copyright for the training centres in Ireland, thus ensuring that the integrity and quality of *Reading Recovery* is maintained.

I am privileged to have been trained as a *Reading Recovery* teacher and consider this early intervention programme, as a really effective and efficient way, of bringing a child who has difficulty making progress in reading and writing, up to the average level of their class, in a very short time.

1. Marie M. Clay, *Reading Recovery: A Guidebook for Teachers in Training*, Heinemann Education, Auckland, 1993, page 9.
2. School of Early Childhood and Primary Education, *Reading Recovery National Network*, The Institute of Education University of London, 2005, page 1.

Margaret Sherlock,
Reading Recovery teacher,
St Paul's Primary School,
Abbeylands, Navan, Co Meath

LEARNING-SUPPORT

Neither Myth Nor Magic

Máiréad de Burca responds to last month's article by Brendan Prunty. She was involved as a designer and facilitator for the recent, highly successful INTO on-line induction course for learning-support/resource teachers. Máiréad has also completed a postgraduate Higher Diploma in Learning Support (HDLS) in University College Cork, and recently submitted her PhD thesis, also to UCC, which examines the learning-support provision currently available in Irish primary schools.

InTouch sometimes presents controversial viewpoints to prompt debate from INTO members, and Brendan Prunty's article was certainly controversial, claiming as it did, that learning-support is ineffective. Many practising learning-support teachers contacted me about the article, describing how it has lowered their morale and confidence. Learning-support teachers should not feel this way, and I am sure that Brendan Prunty did not intend such a reaction to his article. Let me state, for the record, that in my experience and according to my extensive research into this subject, learning-support teachers in Irish primary schools do an excellent job, often in less than excellent conditions.

Learning-support teachers who spoke to me were professionally offended, when Prunty quoted Lawrence (1973) as suggesting that, "better results could be achieved through the use of non-professional counsellors" (Prunty: *InTouch*, December, 2005: p.35). Lawrence wrote this piece thirty-three years ago, before any of our pupils or many of their parents were even born, and therefore, we cannot rely on it to describe or evaluate modern learning-support. In fact, all of the research quoted by Prunty refers to the older remedial service, the term 'learning-support' only being used officially in Ireland in 2000, by the Learning-Support Guidelines (Ireland, Department of Education and Science [DES], 2000). Being such a new service, no research has been conducted to date, which measures the effectiveness of learning-support. Therefore, the title of Prunty's

article should have referred to remedial education, not learning-support. 'Learning-support' is not simply a change of name, but is a change of philosophy; a change of focus; and refers to a far wider role than the remediation of learning difficulties.

As with all learning, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of learning-support in a holistic way. However, Prunty's claim that the service is ineffective because some pupils need long-term support, is not a fair test of learning-support. The focus of learning-support has changed radically in recent years. The older *Guidelines on Remedial Education* (Department of Education, 1988), state that, "pupils of low attainment who are adjudged to be performing at the peak of their ability should not be given a high priority" (p.15). The current *Learning-Support Guidelines* (Ireland, DES, 2000) in conjunction with Circular 02/05 (DES, 2005) contradict this stance, and require schools to give priority to low-achieving pupils, because they are perceived as being most in need of support. This is quite a shift in philosophy / mindset. Thus, the learning-support teacher of 2006 teaches:

- Pupils who experience High Incidence (HI) learning difficulties, such as dyslexia; mild learning disability; borderline learning disability etc...
- Pupils who experience Low Incidence (LI) learning difficulties, such as ASD; DCD; specific speech and language disorder etc...
- Pupils who score at / below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments;
- Pupils who need early intervention at Stage 2 of the Staged Approach;

- Pupils who experience short-term difficulties at Stage 2 of the Staged Approach.

It is important to note that pupils in need of short-term support, have been awarded the lowest priority rating for learning-support by all recent Department of Education and Science directives. Such pupils are generally deemed to be at Stage 1 of the Staged Approach (Circulars 24/03 and 02/05), and should therefore receive interventions from the class teacher in the first instance, not the learning-support teacher, according to this Staged Approach. Thus, learning-support cannot be judged on how quickly pupils are discharged, or 'cured'. It is a fact of life that some pupils WILL require long-term support, and will make minimal, if any, gain on standardised assessments. It may appear that learning-support has been ineffective for such pupils, when in fact it is likely to have made an immeasurable difference to their lives.

Thus, Prunty did not prove in his article that learning-support is ineffective, but that does not mean that the piece lacked value. If we allow it to, it could act as an impetus for debate and possible evaluation. For example, I found it interesting that learning-support teachers took Prunty's article so personally, and appeared to blame themselves for what was presented as an ineffective learning-support service.

According to the most recent DES Guidelines and directives, learning-support is not the responsibility of the learning-support teacher, but is a whole-school concern. Indeed, my recent research clearly demonstrates that ideally, learning-support is a whole-school effort,

needing the goodwill and co-operation of learning-support teachers, class teachers, principal teachers, parents, pupils, and the board of management. Ideal learning-support provision also requires consultation and collaboration between the whole-school community and between outside collaborative partners. In addition, the Department of Education and Science (DES) plays a very important role in supporting ideal learning-support provision, both locally and centrally. Therefore, while Prunty issued advice to learning-support teachers at the end of his article, he should ideally have addressed all of the collaborative partners involved.

I hope that this article encourages all teachers to contribute to the debate concerning learning-support provision in Irish primary schools. I also hope that it has enhanced learning-support teacher morale, since, contrary to Prunty's article, learning-support has not been shown to be ineffective. However, we cannot afford to be complacent, because unless the support of learning is embraced as a whole-school responsibility and receives all necessary supports from the whole-school community, from outside collaborative partners and from the DES, then it will not be as successful or as effective as it could otherwise be.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank most sincerely all of the teachers who participated in my research study. I hope to write another article for *InTouch*, later this year, to describe some of my findings.

Máiréad De Búrca,
(Learning Support Teacher), Clondrohid NS, Macroom, Co Cork.

Getting the Full Picture

Hidden Disability and Health in Special Education

Mary is a young teenager attending a special school. She comes from a troubled family background and her educational file notes that she is very insecure and unhappy. Mary doesn't like reading. She becomes very upset when she is asked to read from a book and will throw a tantrum if teacher presses the issue. Strangely enough, Mary can read lots of single words from flash cards when her teacher holds them up so she has obviously got some reading skill. Her teacher reckons that Mary has some kind of a 'hang up' about reading and doesn't worry about it too much – considering all Mary's other problems.

At a health screening someone tests Mary's eyesight. It turns out that she is long-sighted, so she can see a big flashcard held away from her; but the close-up printed page is just a blur. She urgently needs glasses.

Children with special needs often have additional, and at times hidden, disabilities which can be missed because signs in the child's behaviour are sometimes ignored, or mis-interpreted.

Peter has Down Syndrome and he is in a special class. He has a history of being very heedless and grumpy. He seems to like living in his own little world. He won't pay any attention when he is called and is constantly getting into trouble with school staff because he won't co-operate. He talks very loudly and his speech is poor. He's known around the school for his 'challenging behaviour'.

Close to the end of his school career someone discovers what is really wrong. A medical examination, in connection with another matter, uncovers the fact that Peter has a marked hearing loss in both ears. This has clearly been frustrating and

annoying him for years and making it very difficult for him to cope.

An overall characterization of a child as having emotional problems or as exhibiting challenging behaviour can create a distraction and interfere with a focused investigation of what is really going on in the child's life. All behaviour has meaning and in contexts in which oral communication is poor or absent, accurate interpretation of behaviour is important.

The current practice in Ireland is to classify children who have special needs by reference to the nature and severity of their most obvious disability. There are separate educational facilities for those with disabilities which are physical, learning, or sensory in nature. Thus we have had the development of schools and special classes whose brief is to meet the educational needs of clearly specified groups. However, disability does not respect this kind of human classification.

Often, the agent or event which brought about the child's overt disability does damage in other areas. A physical disability is often clearly visible, but additional difficulties may not be so obvious. It is well known, for example, that a high proportion of children with cerebral palsy have a learning disability – as well as having difficulty with movement and posture. Some have problems in interpreting visual stimuli and this can directly affect school performance, as many learning activi-

ties have a strong visual content.

Children with Down Syndrome can have hearing and visual problems and sometimes reduced energy levels arising from a congenital heart defect or a thyroid condition. It is important that these latter possibilities should be excluded before a child takes part in a PE programme, for example. A teacher needs to have a clear idea about the exact nature and extent of a child's disability if s/he is to devise a programme or set out any list of educational priorities.

Physical health is an issue which can affect the progress of a child with special needs in school. A recent report by the British learning disability charity, Mencap, has highlighted the fact that people with a learning disability have poorer physical health than the general population.

Even amongst a group of people whom one would have assumed to be particularly healthy the level of ill-health can be surprising. In 2003 all the athletes attending the International Special Olympics in Ireland were given a free health screening. Thirty percent reported never having received an eye exam. Forty percent were overweight. Fifty percent had at least one or more skin or nail conditions. Thirty two percent had some degree of hearing loss and fifty three percent had signs of gum infection.

The first National Oral Health Survey carried out here in 2002-2003 indicated that people with

disabilities are more likely to have more oral health problems and require more treatment than the rest of the population.

It is not the main function of a teacher to take care of a child's health, but from a professional point of view, it is important to know that the child with special needs is physically well and able to deal with school work. As with any other children, nagging colds and other infections can occur amongst children with disabilities. These can be longer lasting because of poor physical condition or because no one has bothered to treat the problem aggressively.

One of the worst attitudes for parents or a teacher to adopt is "Ah, sure the child is never well – after all he has a disability". This is known in medical parlance as "diagnostic overshadowing". Implicit in this is a wrong assumption that all the child's problems are somehow linked to the disability, when some may be as readily treatable as the illnesses of any other child.

Sometimes there is a communication problem when a child cannot understand or explain clearly what is wrong. This can result in distress or acting out. Dental problems are a good case in point and careful note should be taken if a child is reluctant to eat in school or appears cranky and distraught during or after snack or mealtimes.

Indications of any kind that a child is unwell or in some distress should be referred on to parents for action as soon as possible.

As teachers we all want to do a good job, but all the skill and commitment in the world will be of limited value if our children are not in a position to hear, to see and be healthy and comfortable in class.

Seán Andrews, Maynooth, Co Kildare



■ many learning activities have a strong visual content.

14th Annual INTO/EBS Handwriting Competition

Rules and Guidelines

The INTO are delighted to launch the annual INTO/EBS Handwriting Competition. The competition is open to all schools throughout the country and entries are judged on style, flair, neatness and layout of handwriting.

- Write entrant's name, category, school address & phone no. on the **back** of each entry.
- Entrants have the option to write a piece of prose or a poem.
- The focus is solely on handwriting, **no pictures or illustrations**
- Foreign languages are included in the competition
- Please **do not mount** the handwriting entries.
- Use pencil and/or pen as per guidelines.
- Adhere to paper size and number of words as per guidelines, and use only one side of the sheet of paper.
- Please note entries cannot be returned.

Entries that do not fit into the specified criteria will not be considered for judging.

Category Guidelines

Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third places for categories A to E, prizes will be awarded for first and second places in category F.

Category A – Junior Infants.

Up to 20 words permitted. Single sheet A5 paper ruled.

Pencil only.

Category B – Senior Infants: Up to 20 words permitted. Single sheet A5 paper ruled. Pencil only.

Category C – 1st and 2nd Classes:

Up to 100 words permitted.

Single sheet A4 or ruled foolscap paper. Pencil or pen.

Category D – 3rd and 4th Classes:

Up to 150 words permitted.

Single sheet A4 or foolscap paper ruled. Pen only.

Category E – 5th and 6th Classes:

Up to 200 words permitted.

Single sheet A4 or foolscap paper ruled. Pen only.

Category F – Special Recognition for Achievement in Handwriting:

This category is split into two sub categories:

- Physical disability* – which impinges on handwriting ability.
- Learning disability* – which

impinges on handwriting ability

Up to 50 words. Single sheet A4 or foolscap paper ruled, pen or pencil. First and second prizes will be awarded for both sub categories. A short citation (no more than 50 words) written by the teacher should accompany each piece stating the reason for that nomination and the sub category clearly marked.

Judging at Local Level

The local area co-ordinator along with two teachers will judge the competition. Schools with an enrolment of 200 pupils or less should submit the three best entries from each category to the co-ordinator. Schools with an enrolment of 201 pupils and upward should submit the six best entries from each category to the co-ordinator. Details of your local area co-ordinator are listed below.

Judging at National Level

The local area co-ordinator will submit the first prize only from each category to the National Co-ordinator.

School Prizes

There is a national draw for a data projector and €100 book vouchers for all schools entering the competition.

Timescale

- Entries at local level must be submitted to the local co-ordinator by **Friday, 24 February**
- The local awards presentations will commence in the week beginning **Monday, 6 March** and must be completed before **Friday, 17 March**.
- The winning entry in each category must be submitted by the co-ordinator to the National Co-ordinator, Brendan O'Sullivan by **Monday, 20 March**.
- The National Prizegiving ceremony will take place on Saturday, **1 April 2006** in EBS Head Office, Burlington Rd, Dublin 4.

Log on to www.into.ie or contact Georgina Markey in INTO Head Office at 01 8047745 for more information.

INTO/EBS HANDWRITING COMPETITION CO-ORDINATORS 2006

DUBLIN (D 8)

Mary Loftus
St Fergal's JNS
Boghall Rd, Bray
Co Wicklow
(s) 01 2868033
(m) 087 2966170

Dublin (D 9)

Noelle Stack
6 Dodder Pk Grove,
Rathfarnham,
Dublin 14
(s) 01 2989475
(m) 087 9814244

Dublin (D 14)

Orla Redmond
Our Lady of Victories
SGS, Ballymun Rd
Dublin 9
(s) 01 8379833
(h) 01 8512525

Dublin (D 15)

Mary Kildea
95 St Columbas Rise
Swo rds, Co Dublin
(h) 01 8402728
(m) 087 2181469

Carlow

Maria Doyle,
Bennekerry NS
(m) 087 6745951
(h) 059 9148954

Cavan

Fidelma Sheridan
St Patrick's NS, Loch
Gowna
(s) 043 83514
(h) 049 4336201
(m) 086 8533690

Clare

Tony Sweeney
Sonas, Tobar na Meala
Tobartaoscán, Ennis.
(h) 065 6868263
(s) 061 368333
(m) 087 2329627

Cork (D 12)

Ger Stack
'St Enda's', Kilcrea
Pk, Magazine Rd,
Cork
(h) 021 4542020
(s) 021 4291958
(m) 087 4180538

Cork (D 16)

Alice O'Connell
7 Brooklawn,
Rushbrooke, Cobh
(s) 021 4812038
(h) 021 4813840
(m) 087 6779465

Donegal

Paula Muldoon
Doonan,
Donegal Town
(h) 074 9721945

Galway

Martina Johnson
8 Montrose House,
Whitestrand Pk,
Saltilhill
(h) 091 582840

Kerry

Kathleen Lynch
Portmagee NS,
Portmagee
(s) 066 9477211
(m) 087 2239933

Kildare

Gerry O'Donoghue
Scoil Bhríde,
Athgarvan, The
Curragh
(h) 045 442175
(s) 045 441645
(m) 087 2642887

Kilkenny

Betty Brennan
Presentation Con. PS
Castlecumber
(s) 056 4441426
(m) 087 6167185

Laois

Niamh Campion
Newtown NS,
Newtown, Crettyard
(h) 0502 60690
(s) 056 4442494
(m) 086 8561104

Leitrim

Monica Scollan
C a ppagh House,
Mohill
(h) 071 9631364

Limerick

Brian Dillon
Castleconnell NS,
Castleconnell
(s) 061 377594
(h) 061 341426

Longford

Mary McDermott
St Joseph's Convent
of Mercy
(s) 043 45700
(h) 043 45406
(m) 087 7941965

Louth

Peter Darcy
St Mary's Boys NS
Congress Ave,
Drogheda
(s) 041 9831919

Mayo

Máire English
St Angela's NS, The
Lawn, Castlebar
(s) 094 9022902
(h) 094 9034806

Meath

Mary Burke
O'Growney NS,
Athboy

(s) 046 9432291

(h) 046 9432997
(m) 086 3908477

Monaghan

Catherine Kelly
'A rdglas', Monalty
Carrickmacross
(h) 042 9661666
(s) 042 9661134
(m) 086 0762420

Northern Ireland

Eddie Kennan
10 Tokio Gardens
Belfast BT15 4EE
(h) 048 90592401

Offaly

Mary O'Donoghue
Daingean NS
Daingean
(s) 0506 53337
(h) 0506 53052

Roscommon

John McLoughlin
Scoil na nAingéal
Naofa, Carrick Rd,
Boyle
(s) 071 9662737
(h) 071 9622146
(m) 086 1570189

Sligo

Geraldine Connell
Rathcormack NS
Drumcliff
(s) 071 9143962

(h) 071 9171937

Tipperary

Lucy Ryan
Miltown, Clonoulty,
Cashel
(s) 062 61833
(h) 0504 42396
(m) 087 6490586

Waterford

Ger Duggan
St Mary's BNS,
Ferrybank
(s) 051 851399
(m) 087 2750809

Westmeath

Fionnuala Kirk
36 A rdleigh Crescent,
Mullingar
(m) 087 7421619

Wexford

John Brennan
17 Ard Uain,
Greenville lane,
Enniscorthy
(s) 054 88892
(m) 087 2274923

Wicklow

Bernie Melia
Gaelscoil an Inbhir
Mhoir, Emoclew Rd
Arklow
(s) 0402 39199
(m) 087 2223676

Go Games

Traditionally in Gaelic games, there has been a tendency to nurture the perceived best to the neglect of the rest. This has arisen from the adult training and adult conditions young players are exposed to, and has led to a situation where many players who – for a variety of reasons – develop at a different rate to their peers, drop out of Gaelic games due to a lack of confidence in their ability, a lack of playing time and lack of fun. In recent years, there has been a greater appreciation and increased recognition of the need to ensure that a child-centred approach is adopted where the promotion and development of Gaelic games is concerned. In other words, it should be a case of children first, winning second.

What are the Go Games?

The GAA has responded to this need by designing six individual skill development games, known as *Go Games*. *Go Games* are small-sided, modified rules games in both Hurling (Go Hurling) and Gaelic Football (Go Gaelic) called *First Touch* (under eight), *Quick Touch* (under 10) and *Smart Touch* (under 12).

Each of the games is accompanied by a series of coaching classes which provide coaches with the ability to develop the specific skills for each game. The games are progressive in terms of the technical, tactical and team play challenges, they present as the children become more competent, while the physical demands are also increased as the children develop physically.

Why are Go Games important?

The *Go Games* are the first step in the *Pathway to Elite Performance (PEP)*. The *Pathway* has been designed to ensure that all participants play to learn, learn to compete and,

with time, compete to win as they progress through its four stages: the Recreation stage (Fun Do), Talent Identification stage (Can Do), the Talent Transfer stage (Want To) and the Elite Performance stage (Will Do).

Research on the Go Games

Small-sided games have been used for many years in a wide range of sports as a way of developing the tactical and technical abilities of players of all ages. However, to date there has been a distinct lack of scientific research to validate their use. Research conducted at DCU, under the guidance of Prof Niall Moyna has shed some light on this. The research, conducted by Mickey Whelan, was based on a number of hypotheses:

- The physical response would be greater during a 7-a-side game than a 15-a-side game.
 - Individual involvement – in terms of intentional ball contacts – would be greater during a 7-a-side game than a 15-a-side game.
 - Levels of enjoyment and perceived competence would be greater during a 7-a-side game than a 15-a-side game.
- Modifying the playing area of the 7-a-side game to ensure that each player had the same playing area to 'work' in allowed researchers to negate any influence of a greater playing area on the physical or technical data. By tracking the same seven players in a 15 and 7-a-side game (each of 30 minute duration) the data showed that the players were subjected to a greater physical demand in the small-sided game, while the number of intentional ball contacts, over a range of skills – including catches, kicks and scoring attempts, were significantly higher in the modified game.

Players also reported a greater level of enjoyment and had higher levels of perceived confidence playing the 7-a-side game

Summary of Go Gaelic Rules			
GO GAELIC	FIRST TOUCH	QUICK TOUCH	SMART TOUCH
Age	Under 8	Under 10	Under 12
Players	7-a-Side	9-a-Side	11-a-Side
Pitch Dimensions	45m x 30m	65m x 40m	100m x 40m
Zones	3 Zones	3 Zones	No Zones
Duration	4 x 7mins	4 x 8mins	2 x 20mins
Football	Size 1	Size 2	Size 3
Outfield Play	• No Solo • No Kicking	• On the Ground • Catch and Strike • Lift, Catch and Strike • No Solo • No Kicking	• Catch and Strike • Lift and Strike • No Solo • No Kicking

than the 15-a-side game. Players worked harder, got possession of the ball more often and had an increased number of opportunities to score in the small-sided game – who wouldn't enjoy it more!

Playing Go Games

A summary of the *Go Games* playing rules is illustrated in figures two and three. These rules are not necessarily set in stone – there is no reason why the rules cannot be modified to meet the varying needs and abilities that coaches meet. However, the philosophy of the *Go Games* – to promote full participation and fair play while catering for the developmental needs of the participants – is central to their success, as is the principle of ensuring that each player gets to play the entire game and experiences a number of different playing positions during each game.

Refereeing Go Games

Go Games are not only about Fair Play in the sense that all participants should get the opportunity to participate fully in the games. They are about fair play in terms of developing sportsmanship and in terms of respecting the opposition, respecting the match officials and respecting the game and a number of rules have been included specifically to reinforce these elements.

Go Games also provide an ideal opportunity to introduce young referees to our games. It is recommended that children

as young as 12 would referee *Go Games* and to this end a course has been developed to provide them with the knowledge and capabilities to do so.

Implementing Go Games

The *Go Games* were launched nationally on the 14 September. Each County is currently in the process of appointing a *Go Games* co-ordinator – one for Hurling and one for Gaelic Football, if needs be – and these, in turn, will have responsibility for training *Go Games* co-ordinators in every primary school and underage club.

Primary schools throughout the country will receive vouchers to redeem against *Go Games* equipment to aid with the promotion of the games. The national primary schools Gaelic games organisation – Cumann na mBunscol – will implement the *Go Games* as part of their series of initiatives. Other initiatives in the Fun Do stage of the *Pathway to Elite Performance (PEP)*, include the *ABC/Have-a-Ball Nursery Programmes*, coaching classes, 'Ú Can Skill' awards and summer camps.

The *Go Games* concept has been devised and developed by Pat Daly (GAA Head of Games), in conjunction with Jimmy D'Arcy (Coaching and Refereeing Coordinator) and Peter Horgan (National Projects Co-ordinator).

For further information on *Go Games* log onto www.gamesdevelopment.gaa.ie

By Peter Horgan, National Projects Coordinator

Census 2006

Be part of the bigger picture

What is a Census?

A census is an official count of the population of a country. This kind of census is called a population census and has been taken since ancient times. Ireland has been conducting Censuses of Population since 1841.

Why is a Census conducted?

A census is the greatest source of information about a country. It is designed to provide valuable statistics in order to give a detailed picture of a country's progress.

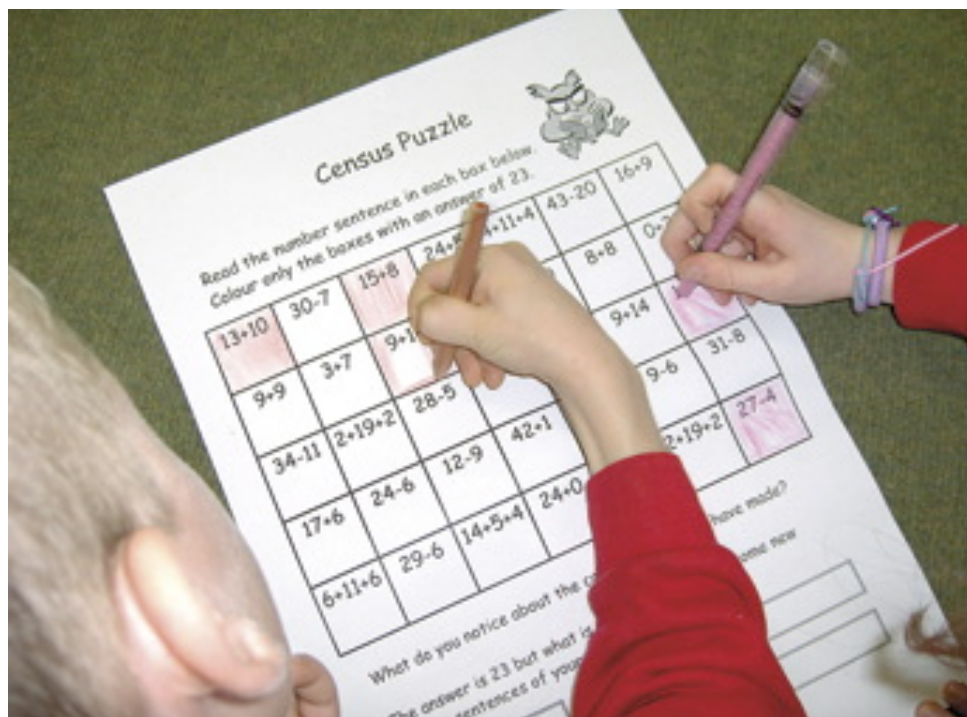
Census results are essential for effective policy, planning and decision making. This planning occurs at national, regional and local level. The study of census results and statistics enables us to track developments over a long period with considerable accuracy.

Census History

Old census returns are valuable historical and genealogical records.

Unfortunately, **most of** the returns for 1813, 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851 censuses were destroyed when the Custom House was burned in 1922.

The 1861 and 1871 census



returns were deliberately destroyed. The 1881 and 1891 census returns were pulped because of the paper shortages during the 1914-18 War. Of the pre-Independence censuses only the 1901 and 1911 census returns remain intact today. These census returns are the most frequently used records in

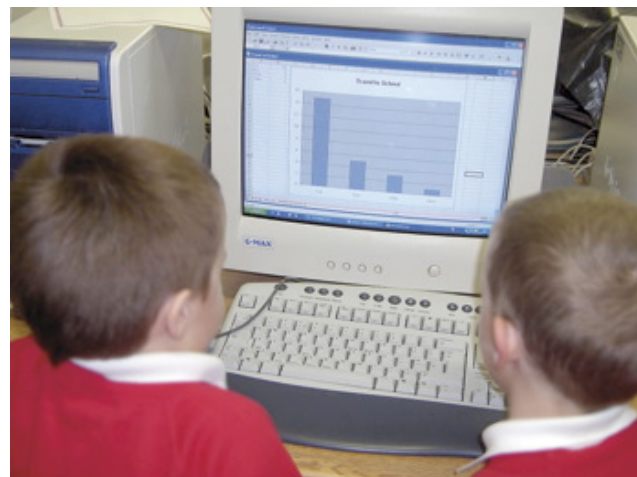
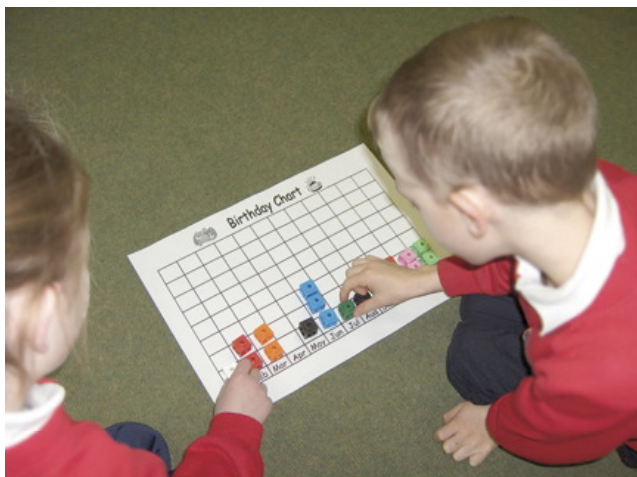
the National Archives, mainly for genealogical research.

Who carries out the Census?

The organisation that conducts the census in Ireland is the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The CSO is the Government statistical office and has been collecting and publishing a

wide range of social, economic and demographic information on Ireland since it was established in 1949. The Statistics Act, 1993 ensures that the data collected by the CSO is strictly confidential and can only be used for statistical purposes.

A temporary field force of nearly 4,500 persons is



employed to carry out the census at local and regional level.

Census 2006 for Schools

In the lead up to this year's census, a set of topic-based lessons has been developed by primary school teachers from first to sixth class.

This series of topic-based lessons has been designed to help children understand what the census is about and to learn how and why a census is conducted. These lessons have been piloted in classroom situations.

The aim of these lessons is to enable children to understand the census process and that data can be represented and

interpreted in different ways. By learning about Census 2006 and by engaging in related activities to solve real problems the children will value the importance of census statistics in helping to build our future as a nation. Each lesson has been developed specifically to incorporate the principles of the 1999 Primary School Curriculum.

The Census Lesson Packs include:

- Comprehensive teacher notes and lesson plans;
- Census information
- Census flashcard/fact cards.
- Sample Classroom Census forms.
- Language lists.

- Integration ideas.
- Assessment tasks.
- Home/school links.
- Extension activities.

Also included are graph templates and tally sheets, puzzles (with solutions), calendar activities and ICT tasks

The Census 2006 school lesson packs can be downloaded from:

www.cso.ie/census/

If you require further information on the census please contact:

Central Statistics Office,
Ardee Road, Rathmines,
Dublin 6.

Lo Call 1890 313414

or
email: census@cso.ie

Compiled by the Primary Curriculum Support Programme Mathematics Team.

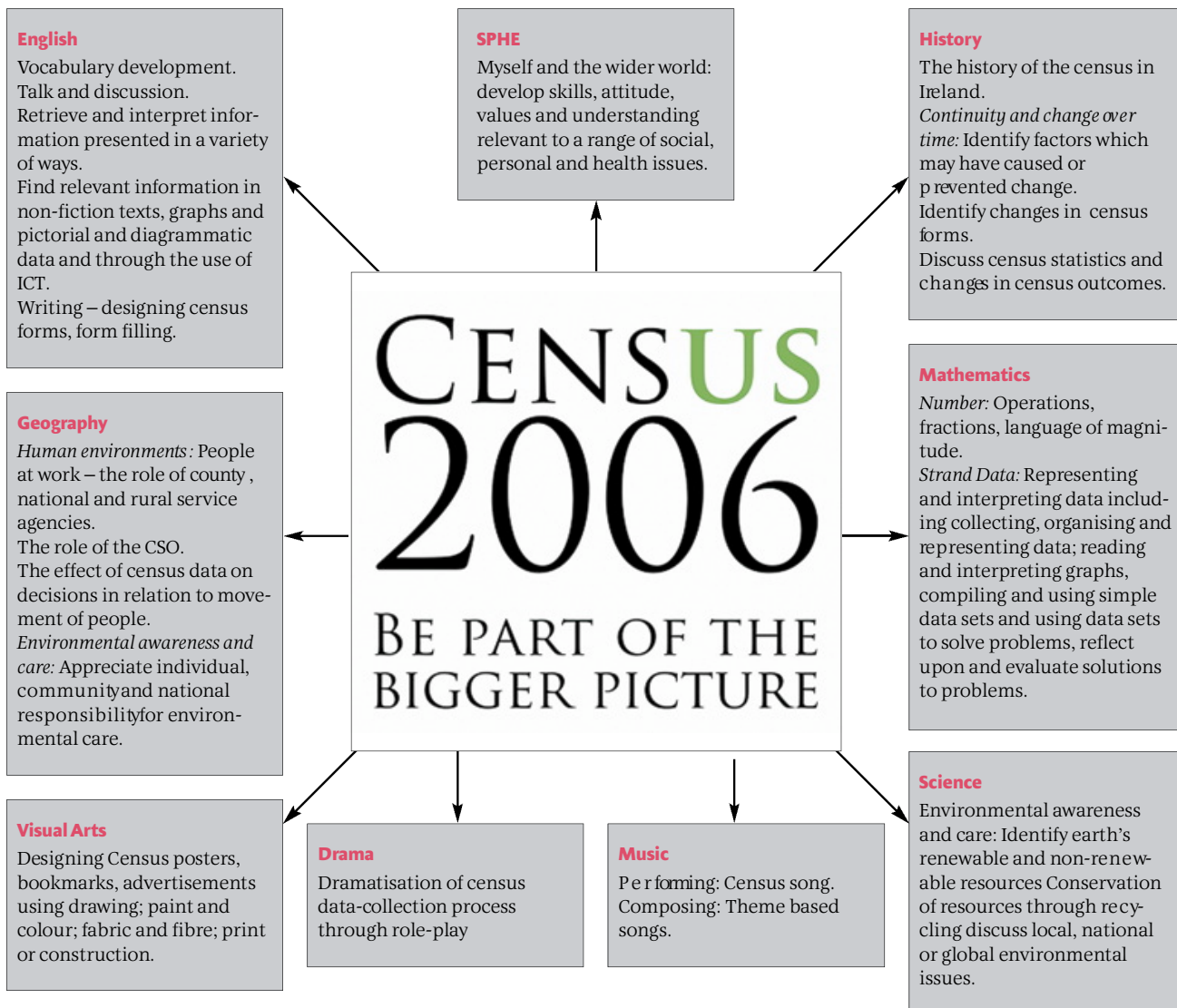
With special thanks to Mr Oliver Hynes and the pupils of Scoil Bhride, New Inn.

For further ideas on mathematics, visit www.pcsp.ie

Why not visit the National Archives site

www.nationalarchives.ie/genealogy/censusrtns.html

THE CENSUS WILL BE HELD ON 23 APRIL



Software – Recommendations

Information Communications Technology (ICT) in the Classroom

With all the hype about broadband and all that's associated with it, such as internet safety, routers, firewalls and download speeds etc. – one could be forgiven for taking one's eye off the ball. It's easy to get lost or confused when the technical jargon starts flying, and to forget that the primary purpose of technology in any school is the enhancement of teaching and learning. It's easy to forget that the use of technology should be rooted in the engagement of pupils with the curriculum. In my view, if it doesn't do that, it has no place within the walls of a primary school. You can have all the shiny computers, data projectors and digital devices that money can buy, but without a clearly defined educational purpose in mind, they're really just expensive ornaments. But when utilised properly, and in line with curricular objectives, such technology opens up a highly engaging and stimulating dimension to education that makes teaching and learning a journey of excitement and discovery for all concerned.

Central to this dynamic, I suggest, is the selection by the teacher of appropriate software products with which the children will engage, and which will enhance the attainment of the teacher's educational targets, be they reinforcement or reference titles, adventure/ simulation games, or, in the content free domain, word processing or presentation software, data-handling applications or authoring tools. This month's article, therefore, will focus on software applications, and will attempt to offer some guidance and ideas to teachers who wish to develop and expand their use of ICTs. It also presents a selection of what other teachers around the country are using to good effect.

Certainly, one of the most

frequently asked questions to come my way is that concerning the 'best' applications for use in primary school. The answer, of course, is never as simple as one might like, such is the variety of titles available, and, more importantly, such is the variety of child and children's needs that teachers are dealing with on a daily basis. A number of titles, however, do come to mind in this context, and I have no hesitation in recommending the following titles on the basis of my own use of them in primary education:

- **Maths Made Easy** (Prim-Ed) is in my opinion a superbly designed set of structured programmes which comprehensively covers all the concepts and skills pupils need to develop as they progress through the school. It's simple to use, extremely attractive to children, highly engaging and stimulating.
- **Reading for Literacy**, from the same company, tackles the development of literacy skills in a similar fashion, and with the same level of quality and thoroughness.
- **Children's Encarta** (Microsoft) – which is now packaged with the larger general encyclopaedia – is in my view the best example of children's reference software ever produced. With Microsoft's undeniable capacity for excellence, information is easily located, superbly presented in children's language (with text-to-speech if required) and brilliantly illustrated using all of the multimedia capabilities of modern computers: a wonderful tool for project work and research.
- Fantastic results can be achieved using nothing more than a children's word processor and a digital camera (prices of which have dropped substantially). No matter what the age or ability



level of the children, and no matter what the subject area, this combination offers unlimited potential for pupils to engage, with great enthusiasm, with almost any topic (and will, of course, generate a highly authentic print-rich environment to brighten any wall).

Teachers' Recommendations:

Last month, I invited teachers to write a paragraph describing their favourite educational application. Printed below is a representative selection:

Special Needs

Wordshark

(www.wordshark.co.uk) doesn't need fancy music and 3D graphics to impress anyone. Its 37 activities to teach phonological awareness and spelling are highly absorbing and extremely addictive. One of the program's strengths lies in how it supports so many different learning styles. It's a highly structured and personal program and I don't think my classroom would be complete without it.
Simon Lewis, Athy, Co Kildare

Kurzweil 3000

(www.kurzweiledu.com) facilitates Curriculum Access for those with literacy difficulties. A comprehensive Scan/Read Programme, its structure includes:

- Playback Scanned Text;
- dictionary and pronunciation aids.



- Word Processing; word prediction and speech.
 - Study Aids; highlighters and sticky notes.
 - Tests, including teachers' guidelines.
 - Internet Access; full Kurzweil 3000 support.
- Kurzweil 3000 enables and empowers my learning support students!
Teresa Pigott, Bantry, Co Cork

Adventure/Simulation Games

Who Nabbed Sam?

(www.diskovery.ie) is exceptional in a number of ways: it was produced in Ireland, by Irish teachers, and it is an official GAA product. It contains lots of photographs, both colour and monochrome, as well as video clips of famous GAA stars and matches. My pupils loved it, as much for the challenge of trying to capture the thief who robbed the Sam Maguire Cup, as the puzzles and problems that have to be solved along the way. High entertainment value added to lots of learning potential. A real winner.

Nicholas Flynn, Wexford.

Crystal Rainforest (www.sherstonhome.co.uk) introduces and develops Logo. It provides pupils with the opportunity to apply maths to problem solving situations, includes numerous

puzzles and problems, and is an ideal starting point for conservation and nature work.
Frances Mullen, Mount Merrion, Dublin.

Basic Skills

Destination Literacy

I found *Destination Literacy* a stimulating and enriching program. The program parallels the strands of the Revised Curriculum as children encounter a wide array of text genres including recipes, newspaper and magazine articles, diaries and brochures. Excellent graphics and visual images stimulate children's interest in reinforcement activities. Game show styles activities are extremely engaging and motivational and create a fun environment for children to practise skills learnt. This programme is suitable for infants to middle classes and could also be used with children with learning difficulties. This program integrates well

with other strands of the Curriculum such as history, geography, science, mathematics and music.
Helena Gannon, Kilternan, Dublin 18.

(A free 30 day trial of all the literacy, maths and music software in the Destination range can be tried out in advance at www.learninghorizons.ie)

RM Maths (www.rm.com) is an Integrated Learning System intended for use by all primary schoolchildren. It has a differentiated learning programme based on individual ability. The timed sessions are visually engaging and include full audio support. There is comprehensive coverage of the maths curriculum from number tasks to handling data. Children are given opportunity for further attempts with guided support to aid learning. The children feel they are succeeding. I can track their progress and problems in the teacher's program.

Johnny McCaw, Dublin 7.

The Irish-produced and recently revamped *Sounds to Words* (www.learninghorizons.ie) was designed as a multi-sensory teaching and reinforcement tool. The suite of four CD ROMs is a stand-alone phonics based reading program for primary schools. As such it is excellent and positive results are evident from the beginning. It is ideal for use by mainstream, learning support and resource teachers, as the flexibility of the suite lends itself to several applications in the teaching of phonics and phonological awareness. A demo version of the software can be tried online on their website.

Joe Molloy, Ballinteer, Dublin 16.

Content Free Applications

Windows Movie Maker: (free with Windows XP).

Children learn skills of film making – importing the pictures (scanned photos or digital stills) /video clips /audio (music tracks or voice recordings), sequencing, editing clips, adding transitions, effects and titles. I am using it with fourth class. Each child scanned photos and is making a DVD of their life story backed with their chosen music. They will add text to their story by adding titles and subtitles. A great introduction to film making!
Hilary Cadogan, Warrenmount, Dublin 8.

Dreamweaver MX 2004 (www.macromedia.com) is a simple and troublefree application for designing and develop-

ing websites. Children can quickly and easily create a school website and immediately see the results of their creative composition on the internet. The educational price is a fraction of the real cost. Courses in website design using Dreamweaver are available and free through Education Centres.
Paul Redmond, Levinstown, Co Kildare.

In Praise of HyperStudio 4 (www.hyperstudio.com). With apologies to all rappers and three former pupils who proved the point.

for downloadin' pix
and the cool grafix
for the best layout
there's no need to shout
MP3 or MPEG
download a sound
or a short movie
plan your layout
on a storyboard
jazz up your message
and they won't be bored
I've special needs
but you mightn't agree
cos with Hyper S 4
I'm the King of IT.

Éamon Ó hAogáin, Bóthar na hInse, Luimneach

Robbie O'Leary, is Principal of a large school in Dublin. He is well known for his involvement in ICT in education. He has written and lectured widely on the subject and is the producer of a range of popular educational software titles for Irish schools including *The Normans in Ireland, Who Took the Book?, Who Stole Mona?, and Who Nabbed Sam?*



As part of its continued commitment to supporting teachers using ICT, the NCTE has redeveloped the Software Central Website www.softwarecentral.ie. The site provides non-commercial evaluations of educational software titles. The evaluations are based on practical use of the software in Irish classrooms and have been written by practising

teachers with a view to providing other teachers with information on the suitability of the software. The site also provides advice on software licensing, suggestions on how to use software in the classroom and links to some useful freewebsites. Teachers are also encouraged to visit their local Education Centre and review the software available in the software libraries.

COMPETITION

Congratulations to the winner of last month's competition, Helena Gannon, Our Lady of the Wayside NS, Kilternan, Dublin 18. A highly specified HP Photo-smart digital camera is on its way. This month's prize is a 10-user site licence for either *Destination Literacy* or *Destination Maths*, courtesy of Learning Horizons, and a site licence for *Who Nabbed Sam?* courtesy of Diskovery, both of which are described above. If you would like to take part, please email your answer to the following question to competition@into.ie before 14 February:

What curriculum areas can the 'Software of the Month' on Software Central be used for?

Launch of Webwise

Internet Safety Day is on the 7 Feb and www.webwise.ie will be launched: a site well worth checking out for anyone who uses the internet.



Amhrán is Fiche

Ag Éilis Ní Chinnéide, Aoife Ní Fhearraigh agus Caitríona Ní Cheannabháin

Fios Feasa a sholáthair *Amhrán is Fiche* – dlúthdhiosca ar a bhfuil amhráin ó na Gaeltachtaí éagsúla ráite ag Éilis Ní Chinnéide, Aoife Ní Fhearraigh agus Caitríona Ní Cheannabháin. Chomh maith le bheith ina dlúthdhiosca ceoil tá sé úsáideach mar Cd Rom a thugann seans duit focail na amhráin a phriontáil, aistriúcháin Béarla a fháil ar an scáileán agus samplaí de cheachtanna a fháil bunaithe ar na hamhráin.

Tá sé seo fíor áisiúil d'aon mhúinteoir agus é/i i mbun teagasc ceoil. Go deimhín tá sé úsáideach mar cheacht le haghaidh léamh Gaeilge nó comhrá Gaeilge.

Tá meascán iontach d'amhráin ar an dlúthdhiosca seo ó "Bean Pháidín" go dtí "Tá na Báid". Is le tionlacan giotáir, fluíite agus feadóige atá na hamhráin. Tugtar treoir duit éisteach leis

na hamhránaithe agus ina dhiaidh sin an ceol a chiur ar siúl agus na hamhráin a rá i stíl karaioke rud a bheadh taitneamhach d'aon pháiste. Bhainteadh aon rang taitneamh as an dlúthdhiosca seo. Is féidir é a úsáid chun éisteach le ceol, amhrán a fhoghlaim nó obair scríofa a dhéanadht. Foilsithe ag Fios Feasa. Tá timpeall €30 ar an dlúthdhiosca seo agus molaim go mór é.

Léirmheas le Mícheál S. Mac Donnacha, Scoil Mhic Dara, An Cheathrú Rua, Co na Gaillimhe.



Gugalaí Gug

Ag Tadhg Mac Dhonnagáin

Bainfidh páistí bunscoile ar fud na tíre an-taitneamh as an mbail-iúchán seo de rannta traidisiúnta Gaeilge ó ghaeltacht Chonamara, is cuma an Gaelgeoirí líofa iad nó a mhalairt.

Tá na rannta curtha le chéile i leabhar álainn le pictiúir gheala ildaite, maisithe ag ealaíontóirí stiúideo Cartoon Saloon.

Ar chúl an leabhair tá tuilleadh eolais le fáil ar na rannta agus mínítear roinnt pointí canúna chomh maith, eolas atá an-úsáideach do mhúinteoirí.

Gabhann dlúthdhiosca ceoil leis an leabhar, agus baintear feidhm an-éifeachtach as ceol agus imeartas fuaime chun na véarsaí a chur i láthair.

Tá 30 píosa ar fad ann, idir rannta, amhráin agus fiú portaireacht béil. D'fhéadfadh an pacáiste freastal ar gach rang, na ranganna sóisearacha i nGaelscoileanna agus na ranganna sinsearacha i scoileanna eile.

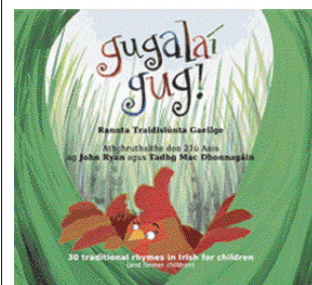
Futa Fata a d'fhoilsigh an pacáiste seo, agus mar is gnách tá caighdeán ard léiriúcháin ag baint leis.

Mholfaínn do mhúinteoirí *Gugalaí Gug* a úsáid mar áis teagaisc sa rang, áis a fhreagraíonn go maith don churaclam nua sa Ghaeilge.

Is féidir tuilleadh eolais a fháil faoi ar an idirlíon ag www.futafata.com.

Foilsithe ag: Futa Fata, An Spidéal, Co na Gaillimhe. ISBN: 0-9550983-0-0. Praghas: €9.99.

Léirmheas le Christina Ní Dheaghaidh, St Martin de Porres NS, Tallaght, Dublin 24.



Children of Stone

By Vincent McDonnell

Three children, Bolan, Alna, and Vanu, have to undertake a perilous journey in order to warn their father Gaelen that his enemy Nevel is trying to take over their native village of Marn.

The book is well written. The language content is within the range of the average child in fourth class. The story moves at a rapid pace and the plot has many unexpected twists and turns. The children come down the river in a small boat and escape certain death as they

approach a waterfall, only by the intervention of the nomads. Later on the children are surrounded by wolves and again avoid certain death when the leader of the nomads comes up with a plan for their survival.

McDonnell's book also gives an interesting insight into life in the Stone Age. This aspect of the book is worthy of special mention because it means that the book could be used in the classroom as a backdrop to the standard history book.

Modern issues such as prejudice and the ever increasing rate of change are also dealt with. The settled Stone Age dwellers are prejudiced against the nomads, who ultimately save the children from certain death. The book closes with the dawn of the Iron Age. The lives of children, the reader feels will never be the same again.

ISBN 1903464889. Publisher, Collins Press. Price €5.99.

Reviewed by Dan Finnan, Cullen NS, Cullen, Co Tipperary.



Questions & Answers

Q My SSIA is due to mature next June. What requirements must be fulfilled in order for the account to mature?

A The first SSIA's are due to mature in May 2006 and depending on when the account was opened, monthly thereafter until April 2007. Your account will mature at the end of month 61 after the commencement date. The maturity process is straightforward. All you have to do is complete an SSIA 4 Form, which will be issued by your SSIA Provider in advance of the maturity date, and return to the Provider within a specified time period. The Form contains a declaration stating that you:

- are the beneficial owner of

the assets in the SSIA;

- had only one SSIA;
- were resident or ordinarily resident in the State;
- subscribed to your SSIA from funds available to you without recourse to borrowing or deferral of loan repayments.

Tip By now, you should have received a preliminary advice from your SSIA provider. The advice provides a summary of steps outlining the maturity process. You will also be able to readily identify when your SSIA will mature. Take a note of the maturity date and ensure that you have completed and returned a SSIA 4 Form in advance of the maturity date.

WINNERS OF CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

Lorna Flynn, Scoil Mhuire, Sandymount, Dublin 4. Mary Teresa Calvey, Scoil Phadraig Naofa, Ballycroy, Westport, Co Mayo. Maire Kelly, Naomh Peadar agus Pól SNS, Foxford, Co Mayo. Eileen T. Vaughan, SN Padraig Naofa, Whitechurch, Co Cork. Proinsias Mac An Ri, Scoil Naomh Fainche, Collan, Co Meath. James O'Grady, Cromcastle Green BNS, Artane, Dublin 5. Rosmaire Uí Mhangain, St Mary's Girls NS, Bishop St, Limerick. Peter McArdle, Cnoc Mhuire JNS, Kilinarden, Tallaght, D24. Aidan Looney, St Joseph's NS, Milltown Malbay, Co Clare. Nora Kelly, Vallemount NS, Co Wicklow. Jane Savage, St Nicholas Monastery NS, Dundalk, Co Louth. Margaret Maginn, St Oliver Plunkett NS, Navan, Co Meath. Anne Chambers, St Patrick's NS, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. Norah O'Connor O'Regan, Scoil Aine Naofa, Rathcoole, Limerick. Ciara

Manley, Scoil Mhuire, Whitechurch, Ballyboden, Dublin 16. Liam Lawlor, Catherine McAuley Special School, SCR, Limerick. Noreen Moloney, St Aidan's Primary School, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford. Paula C. Kelly, St Anne's NS, Shankill, Dublin 18. Patricia Doolan, Stewart's School, Palmerstown, Dublin 20. Michael Lynch, SN Naomh Iosef, Ballybrown, Clarina, Co Limerick.

WINNERS OF NOVEMBER DRAW

CAR – Toyota Corolla

Eileen McGlynn, Dooish NS, Ballybofey, Co Donegal

CASH – €1,500

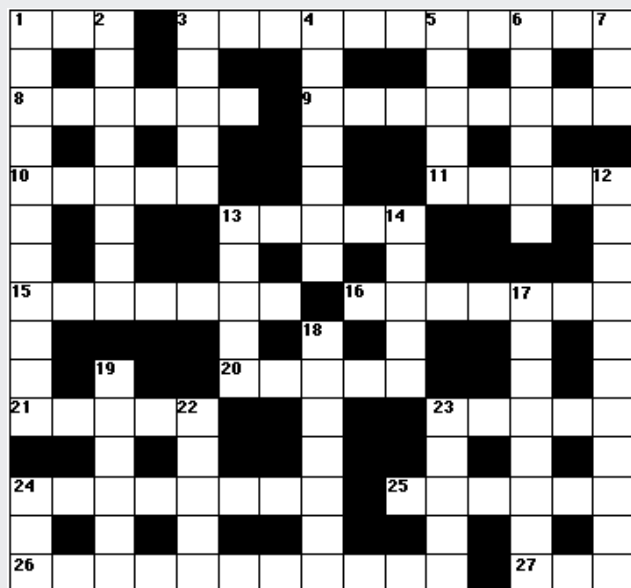
Lisa Burke, St Pauls JNS, Greenhills, Dublin 12.

WEEKEND FOR TWO in a Jury's Doyle Hotel

Cait Uí Chonchuir, Scoil Mhic Easmain, Rath Ronain, Tra Lí, Co Ciarraí.

Crossword No. 84

A draw for 2 x €100 will be made from all correct entries
Simply complete the crossword and send it
to InTouch, 35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, by Friday 24th February 2006



NAME:

ADDRESS:

Across

- The article I'm writing shows aspiration. (3)
- Reckoning that confuses a lilac count. (11)
- Rodney might be found over there. (6)
- Confection beloved of school traffic wardens. (8)
- The old submarine would love to be in a broken tuba. (1-4)
- Pulsate when the broth is stirred. (5)
- Following a craze, the editor ceased to be so colourful. (5)
- The most important person involved in mixing the pink gin. (7)
- Just the holiday-home for an artist in the Breffni county. (7)
- The doctor loves a novice to salivate. (5)
- Does this fraction get a bronze medal? (5)
- It's a question of location! (5)
- Such a condition can see axes idly distributed. (8)
- Meal about time gone by. (6)
- Was Billy's motor leased to one of the Merry Men? (4,7)
- Perish like a gaming cube. (3)

Down

- Bespoke Shakespearean drama. (2,3,4,2)
- Find chopped almond in a musical instrument. (8)

- A hundred departed (split). (5)
- Connive in disrupting a doe cull. (7)
- Share Capone with him of the salty wife. (5)
- Teach devilish painting. (6)
- A short sleep is your best bet. (3)
- May one not arrive with peripheral pieces at this recycling facility? (5,6)
- One's pal misses the point of food being cooked like this. (5)
- Entice the novice with a Texas accent. (5)
- Where the dire navy find grapes? (8)
- It sounds like the pirate has rough follicles! (7)
- Such fuel expires in front of the Spanish. (6)
- Attire in which the doctor can point to the ship. (5)
- Western warmth produces cereal. (5)
- We'd turn up for morning moisture. (3)

Crossword No 83 Solutions

Across: 1. Visual Arts 6. Ruth 10. Limit 11. Alabaster 12. Dead Sea 15. Ceres 17. Bach 18. Eire 19. Epsom 21. Claimed 23. Local 24. Pain 25. Agog 26. Floss 28. Emerged 33. Elopement 34. Gorse 35. Dark 36. Wallflower
Down: 1. Vile 2. Symmetric 3. Acted 4. Adage 5. Tear 7. Utter 8. Harassment 9. Parched 13. Soul 14. Abridge 16. Sellafield 20. Scarecrow 21. Classes 22. Epee 27. Odour 29. Motel 30. Regal 31. Feta 32. Fear

Winners of Christmas Bumper Crossword 82 were: Nuala Uí Ghearrailt, Trá Lí, Co Chiarraí, Mary Mac Namara, Finglas South, D. 11, Noirin Moynihan, Bishop St. Cork, Catherine O'Donoghue, Kilcock, Co. Kildare, Bernadette Murray, Firhouse, D. 24
Winners of Crossword No. 83 are: Honor Reid, Athlone Co. Westmeath and Mary Murray, Termonfeckin, Drogheda.

COPY DATE

Copy you wish to have considered for publication in the March issue of *InTouch* should arrive in Head Office by 6 February. The deadline for the April issue is 13 March

RAI

The Reading Association of Ireland (RAI) will host its Annual Spring Seminar with celebrated American children's book author and illustrator, Matt Faulkner on 18 February in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin. The theme is 'Fostering Creativity in our Children and in Ourselves'.

A Workshop with Matt Faulkner will explore methods for inspiring children to put down the Gameboy and pick up a pencil!

Early booking is advised as places are limited. Cost is €40 for non-members and €20 for members. Further information: See website www.reading.ie or contact Bernadette Dwyer, tel 01 8842261 or email Bernadette.dwyer@spd.dcu.ie or Finian O'Shea at foshe@cice.ie

DIARY DATES

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S FRIENDSHIP BRACELET DAY takes place again this year throughout the month of February. For further information see www.amnesty.ie or email fbd@amnesty.ie

BARRETSTOWN SERIOUS FUN DAY – 15 February, 2006. For further information log onto www.barretstown.org

NATIONAL TREE WEEK – 5 - 11 March. See www.treecouncil.ie

SEACHTAIN NA GAELGE – 12 March.

INDOOR SOCCER

The annual Soccer Blitz run by the Limerick Primary Teachers' Club takes place on Friday/Saturday, 24/25 February. There are three competitions: Men's (Open); Men's (Over 40) and Ladies. Application and entry fee of €40 to be paid by Friday, 10 February. Please send to William Dillon, Christ the King Boys' National School, Limerick. There are a number of rooms available at the Clarion Hotel, Steamboat Quay, Limerick. (Tel 061 444100) at a rate of €60 pps.

LIFELONG LEARNING

The third annual Cork Lifelong Learning Festival takes place in Cork City from Mon 3 April to Sun, 9 April, 2006. The festival promotes and celebrates learning in all its many forms, and encourages take-up amongst people from all ages and backgrounds.

For info: contact Tina Neylon 021 4924527 or Elmarie McCarthy 021 4924104; email learningfestival@corkcity.ie

COMMUNICATING WITH HORSES

One day workshop on Saturday, 25 February. Venue: Festina Lente Foundation, Old Connaught Ave, Bray, Co Wicklow. Objectives: To raise levels of awareness of the processes involved in effective communication with horses and help owner participants reconsider the way they keep and train their horses. Workshop Leader: Dr Marthe Kiley-Worthington, Director of the ECO/ETHO Research and Education Centre in France. Booking: Festina Lente: 01 2720704. €45 per person

(incl. lunch and refreshments). Proceeds to Festina Lente. Further info: Kevin Smith at 045 435791.

EDUCATION SHOW IRELAND

Now in its eleventh year the Education Show Ireland will be held from 6 to 8 April, 2006 in the Main Hall, RDS, Dublin 4. Adm: Free

New features planned for 2006 include:

- Sports & Fitness Zone
- School Tours Pavillion
- Seminars and workshops
- Diversity in Learning Information Point
- Computer Education Society of Ireland (CESI) Student Fair and Workshops.

GOLDEN PEN COMPETITION

For details of this years Golden Pen Competition contact Co-ordinator, The Golden Pen, Gurteen, Ballinasloe, Co Galway. Deadline for entries: 1 April, 2006.

SPRING DAY IN EUROPE

Registering for Spring Day in Europe (21 March 2006) is your chance to join thousands of teachers and pupils and contribute to the shaping and building of Europe. Register to learn, share, debate and speak out! Register schools that contribute by organising Spring Day events or activities will be given a signed digital certificate. The Irish Spring Day Advisor is Fred Boss (bossfred@gmail.com) and he is available to answer questions. To register and find out more log onto www.springday2006.org. All contributions will be

moderated in 20 languages. By registering, you guarantee that what you do with your pupils will be published on a safe European website.

Su Doku Solution

6	9	3	1	5	2	8	4	7
1	7	4	8	9	6	3	2	5
5	2	8	3	4	7	9	1	6
2	8	7	9	6	4	1	5	3
3	6	1	5	2	8	7	9	4
4	5	9	7	3	1	6	8	2
8	1	2	4	7	3	5	6	9
7	4	5	6	1	9	2	3	8
9	3	6	2	8	5	4	7	1

Solution to Su Doku quiz on page 15

Carysfort Reunion

1971 - 1973

1972 - 1974

1973 - 1975

Calling all those who graduated from Carysfort College of Education in 1972, 1973 and 1974 to revisit Carysfort on Saturday 29 April for lunch at 2 p.m.

The event will include an opportunity to recall/ revisit some of the highlights of our time in college. As places are limited please email cbayne@into.ie to make a reservation or phone 01 8047745 for more information.

InTouch General Editor: John Carr
Editor: Tom O'Sullivan
Assistant Editor: Lori Kealy
Editorial Assistants: Niamh Corduff, Marilyn Campbell
Advertising: Mary Bird Smyth, Advertising Executive; Marilyn Campbell, Booking Co-ordinator
Design: David Cooke
Photography: Moya Nolan, Photodisc, Digital Vision, Image 100.

Correspondence to: The Editor, InTouch, INTO Head Office, Vere Foster House, 35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1. **Telephone:** 8047700. **Fax:** 8722462. **LoCall:** 1850 708 708 **Email:** editor@into.ie **Website:** <http://www.into.ie>

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The views expressed in this journal are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the INTO.

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