We are very grateful to have reached the end of a long and challenging semester in the University. We are all too well aware that our colleagues in our primary schools are continuing to teach face-to-face every day in particularly challenging circumstances. We are very well aware of all the issues schools and personnel have faced since September - the challenges of Covid, including illness and worry about illness, the cold, the difficulties of wet days when outdoor learning and play is impossible, the lack of availability of substitute teachers.

Given the particular challenges our schools have faced this Autumn and Winter, we are especially grateful for all the support that we and our student-teachers have received from so many of you. There have been students on placement since early in the Autumn. Schools have welcomed them, supported them and welcomed us when we have come to visit to supervise in the classroom. It has been wonderful for us to get back into schools and classrooms, to see children learning and student-teachers teaching after the strange experience of lockdown. We have a renewed appreciation of all the work that you are doing out in the schools day-to-day.

We wish you and your schools and families a healthy and happy Advent and Christmas and every blessing for 2022. We look forward to seeing many of you again in the Spring.

Anne Lodge, Geraldine O’Connor, Jacqui Wilkinson (Newsletter editor)
Welcome BEd 1 students

In October we welcomed 31 new BEd 1 students, linked with us in the Church of Ireland Centre. These students come from 13 different counties – Offaly, Dublin, Tipperary, Donegal, Cork, Cavan, Meath, Monaghan, Wicklow, Leitrim, Kilkenny, Laois and Kildare.

These students work together with all other BEd students in the Institute of Education for almost all modules, but are together as a group for Gaeilge, REMV (Religions, Ethics, Morals and Values), and the Religious Education Certificate.

The students are engaging in college life, clubs and societies and two of our BEd 1 students represented DCU at an Equestrian competition in Belfast last month. Congratulations to Alexandra and Caoimhe.

CIC/ IPPN Webinar:

At the heart of the community: Small rural schools in Europe and Northern Ireland
by Anne Lodge

We were delighted to have a large online turnout for the webinar on small primary schools at the heart of the community on the evening of 17th Nov. The audience included principals of small primary schools, 4th year B.Ed students whose special area of study is teaching and leading in small schools, members of the inspectorate, the NCCA, the INTO as well as members of the General Synod Board of Education the Church Education Society.

The keynote was given by Professor Carl Bagley and Dr. Montse Fargat from Queen’s University Belfast. They talked about small rural schools and their links to their communities sharing evidence from across Europe, as well as reporting on their new research with principals of small primary schools in Northern Ireland.

The keynote was responded by the principals of four small school from around Ireland to respond to them – Carolyn Good, Carrigduff NS, Co. Wexford; Alison Quill St. Michael’s NS, Co. Cork; Malachi MacAmhlaoinmh, Scoil Ghobhnait, Dún Chaoin, Co. Chiarrai and Siobhan Fitzgerald, Eglish NS, Co. Galway. Each principal spoke from her or his own context.

The event concluded with a live panel discussion to address questions put by members of the audience using the chat function. The discussion was lively and there was no lack of questions and comments from those in attendance both for our keynotes and for the four principals on the panel.

This webinar was a joint initiative Church of Ireland Centre DCU and Irish Primary Principals’ Network. We hope to have further joint initiatives in the future, particularly focused on small schools.

If you are interested in the webinar but were unable to attend on the night, there is a recording. Please email anne.lodge@dcu.ie for information on how to access.

Eucharist on the All Hallows’ Campus

At lunchtime on the final Wednesday of our teaching semester, a group of us gathered to celebrate the Eucharist on the All Hallows’ campus to mark the end of the final semester of lectures in DCU for our Church of Ireland Centre 4th year B.Eds. A number of students took an active part in the service, as did Jacqui Wilkinson and Eric Hughes the DCU Church of Ireland Chaplain. The Eucharist was celebrated by Rev. Anne Lodge
Religious Education
by Jacqui Wilkinson

The RE Cert course is for practising teachers in protestant primary schools who did not train in CICE or through the BEd DC004 track linked with the Church of Ireland Centre in DCU – so do not have the Follow Me Cert.

The RE Cert is again being offered as an online course starting in February 2022. Information was sent to schools last month and do contact Jacqui if you want further information or the application form. Applications were scheduled to close on 15 December but with everything as it is in schools, the application process will be re-opened after Christmas and the course will begin in early February.

Teachers currently teaching Follow Me or with a minimum of one year classroom experience teaching Follow Me are eligible to complete the course which builds on this necessary experience.

Separate to the RE Cert course but part of the programme for those undertaking the course are three webinars.

These webinars are planned for February, March and April 2022 and are suggested as CPD for schools. They will run from 3.30-4.30pm

Full details and registration forms will be sent out in January.

9 February: Digital resources for RE – websites, video clips etc.

9 March: Questioning in RE – asking the best questions and not needing the answers

6 April: School assemblies – re-thinking school assembly post-Covid.

Jacqueline.Wilkinson@dcu.ie

@JWilkinson31

I am hoping to organise a group trip to the Chester Beatty Library and Christ Church Cathedral in May 2022.

The Chester Beatty Library, in the grounds of Dublin Castle has a wonderful collection of art and artefacts from world religions, including from early Christianity. This session would provide a short interesting introduction to the collection.

Christ Church Cathedral is the diocesan cathedral and is a historic building in the heart of medieval Dublin. The Director of CIC was given the role of Priest Scholar in Christ Church Cathedral in September 2021, creating a link between the University, the Centre and the diocesan Cathedral.

Heavenly Father as we get closer to Christmas with all its excitement may we enjoy the special times at home with our families. We also pray for those children for whom this Christmas may be sad or lonely. As we give and receive presents, we pray that we will always remember the true meaning of Christmas – the birth of your son Jesus. Amen.

© Praying Together 2020

Dear God help us to remember the real meaning of Christmas and the birth of Jesus. Please help the homeless and less fortunate this Christmas. May everyone have a safe and warm Christmas with family and friends. Give us hope and joy this Christmas. Amen.

Heavenly Father, may this Christmas be a time of sharing, giving, love and happiness. Thank you Lord for this wonderful occasion and for our friends and family. On this occasion please help those who are less fortunate and lonely. Thank you for Christmas, a time that unites all friends and families. Amen.
Applying for the B.Ed. via the Church of Ireland Pathway DC004

by Anne Lodge

Students on the Church of Ireland Centre’s pathway study the B.Ed programme along with their classmates in DCU. Certain elements of the programme are unique to them.

- The CIC students do the majority of their School Placements in Protestant primary schools.
- They study the RE Cert to prepare to teach the *Follow Me* religious education programme used in Protestant primary schools and learn about the ethos of those schools.
- They take modules that study Christianity from a reformed perspective, look at world faiths, explore social and moral issues, and study the RE programmes and cultures of all types of Irish primary schools.
- They follow the specialism to prepare them to teach in small schools and multi-level classes. The aptitudes learned in this specialism benefit all those studying to be primary teachers. There are five modules in this specialism:
  - teaching in multi-level classes
  - inclusive classrooms
  - early years teaching
  - project-based learning in the classroom and the school

  - teaching and leading in small schools

**APPLICATION:**
Application is made via the CAO. Applicants need to include DC004 in their CAO choices by 1st February on the year of entry in order to be considered for eligibility.

**ELIGIBILITY:**
Students on this pathway need to demonstrate a knowledge of, and willingness to support, the Protestant ethos of these primary schools. Such knowledge and connection can include attendance at primary or post-primary schools under Protestant patronage, active engagement in a range of social and other clubs and activities (e.g. GFS, BB, GB, Church youth club). It can also include engagement with a parish or church or religious network in any of the Protestant traditions.

Eligibility is assessed by a separate application form sent out from DCU in the Spring. References will be sought to assess eligibility.

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**
There are a maximum of 32 students per year given places in this stream in 1st year. The published points vary from year to year due to the small number of places on offer. This means it is impossible to pinpoint accurately from year to year.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE APPLICATION PROCESS CHECK THE DCU PROSPECTUS ONLINE.


Anne Lodge is the contact point for any queries about the DC004 / Church of Ireland Centre pathway through the B.Ed in DCU. Please email her on: anne.lodge@dcu.ie

DCU Open Day Nov 20th 2021

DCU ran a live Open Day in the DCU Institute of Education on the St. Patrick’s Campus on Saturday 20th November 2021. Care was taken to be Covid safe which limited the numbers in rooms for meetings and information sessions. We had a lot of interest throughout the day, including three 5th year students from Mount Temple Comprehensive photographed here with our two banners. Any further queries or follow-ups should be directed to anne.lodge@dcu.ie.
First teaching positions: voices of some recent graduates

We like to stay connected with our recent graduates and thanks to Rebecca (2020) who is in her second year teaching in Taney National School and to Aaron, Alana and Charlotte (2021) for giving us some insight into their classrooms at this busy time of year.

Aaron Whitehead (2021)

What a busy start to the school year!!!

Going back into a classroom this year has been exciting, the biggest difference for me is I finally have my own class of pupils to work with. I am currently teaching 2nd Class in Castleknock National School and have a group of 24 children, and I have thoroughly enjoyed this experience so far. I have moved up to Dublin from Wexford to teach.

Already this year in 2nd Class we have had both Maths Week and Science Week, with the latter providing great excitement with daily experiments and observations occurring. My favourite subject to teach is PE and we had the opportunity to base our class assembly off of this to show all the other classes how we can move to encourage activity.

I am currently undertaking Droichead, and I have had the opportunity to observe other teachers in CNS working with their classes. I found these observations to be extremely relevant to my teaching, given I had the opportunity to choose the curricular areas which I was going to learn more about. From these observations, I picked up multiple organisation strategies to implement into my classroom, especially for during station teaching where a lot is going on at once!

We are now counting down the days to Christmas, with lots of activities planned. The thematic planning is beginning to gradually ease into all the festive shenanigans for all curricular areas. Although there is no in-person carol service this year, we are going to record some festivities to ensure everyone gets to share the Christmas spirit!

The entire CNS community has been extremely welcoming and supportive of me during my NQT year, and I look forward to continuing working with all of the staff and developing further.

Alana Nixon (2021)

I am currently teaching Juniors, Seniors and 1st Class in St. Multose National School in Kinsale, Co. Cork. Needless to say, my multigrade specialism has come in handy!

My new class never fail to make me smile. Although they keep me on my toes, they also remind me daily of the small wonders in life; a snail family hidden amongst the leaves, a cloud that looks like a hot air balloon and a skipping rope that masquerades as an underwater sea snake – to name a few.

The staff in St Multose NS have been incredibly welcoming, kind and supportive. I could not have asked for a better team to work alongside. They endlessly endure my never ending questions with grace and a smile! I have already learned so much from them!

Teaching is everything I expected it to be and then some. The skills that I learned while studying in DCU have been invaluable to me; classroom management, multigrade teaching, leadership, reflection, enquiry
based learning etc. However, there are some things that I was unprepared for; e.g. having 1,256 thoughts simultaneously, while being needed in five places at once! - I am still working on that one!

Although there have been hard days, there have also been very rewarding days.

Overall, it has been a privilege to see the children progress socially, emotionally and academically since the beginning of the year. I feel blessed to have been given this opportunity and I look forward to the rest of the year with my little class.

Charlotte Hall (2021)

Having completed four years in DCU, I’m thrilled to be currently working in Taney Parish Primary School, Dundrum. I am very lucky to be in a school that is so welcoming and supportive of newly qualified teachers. Rachel Fraser, the school principal is also a new member of staff who has shown continuous support and has assisted me in a smooth transition from a university setting to my first teaching role.

I am in the process of completing Droichead. I have an amazing professional support team who are guiding me through my first year as a NQT in fifth class. I am also very lucky to have Rebecca McLoone as my partner teacher. I really enjoy planning collaboratively and bouncing ideas off each other.

I have really enjoyed getting to know my class this past term and now feel I can teach and use examples incorporating the students’ interests to make their learning experiences relevant to them.

School has been extremely busy this term! It’s fantastic to see the children so happy in school. While this year has been particularly chaotic, the children are continuing with the normal tradition of a Christmas Nativity. It is brilliant see them participating in visual arts, drama, and music once again.

This first term has flown, and I look forward to the remainder of the year with my class and colleagues at Taney Parish National School.

Rebecca McCloone (2020)

I feel very lucky to be going into my first full year of teaching 5th class in Taney Parish Primary School, Dundrum. Having completed a maternity contract in Junior Infants last year, I feel very fortunate to continue my teaching journey in the school. The jump from Junior Infants to 5th class has been a challenging one, however the support from the amazing staff in Taney has been a great help. It has been a huge learning opportunity for me and I am looking forward to further developing as a teacher.

It has been difficult going into a second year of teaching under COVID19 regulations, however the children’s positivity and excitement has been hugely encouraging. We have been fortunate this year to be able to participate in more extra-curricular activities such as swimming, hockey and dance, starting next term. These activities mean so much to the children and it has been a joy watching them participating and enjoy themselves with their friends.

There have been many changes in the school this year, including welcoming our new principal, Rachel Fraser. She has been so supportive to both Charlotte and I as we work together in this new role, as partner teachers. Rachel has shown great kindness and leadership and has been a wonderful addition to Taney.

Although at times, there have been challenges, these first few months have been hugely rewarding and I look forward to the rest of the year.
Working with the PDST
By Beryl Healy

I qualified from the Church of Ireland College of Education in 1993. After two years subbing in Dublin, I joined the staff of Drumcondra National School in 1995 and became principal in 1998. While I love teaching and the daily interaction with pupils, I have always felt it was important to embrace new challenges outside of the classroom, while remaining within the education sector. In 2018, I joined the PDST as an advisor on the primary STEM team.

The role of an advisor on the primary STEM team is wide-ranging. We provide professional learning opportunities and support in maths, science, STEM, and team teaching for inclusion, to name but a few. My workplace is different every day, providing opportunities to facilitate professional development in schools, education centres and, since COVID, online. Every school is unique and the support I provide to each school is tailored to their context. The initial conversation with the principal or co-ordinator to identify priorities and formulate a bespoke plan is so important, as it ensures the support I provide will have an impact on teaching and learning.

My time as an advisor has been very rewarding, as I have been able to focus on teaching and learning; the reason I became a teacher in the first place. I have taken part in PDST initiatives, such as the Digital Portfolios Pilot and Lesson Study, and I am currently supporting schools participating in the Equality Diversity & Inclusion in STEM initiative in collaboration with UCD. Such initiatives have challenged me to develop my expertise in new areas. I support schools of all sizes, but I especially enjoy working with small schools. Teaching multi-grade is challenging and I am so privileged to be in the position where I can combine my experience of teaching multi-grade with the expertise I have obtained in the PDST, to support teachers working in small schools.

Ireland is a small place and it has been lovely to unexpectedly re-connect with college friends and teachers who previously worked in Drumcondra NS. The PDST is a fantastic experience for anyone interested in working in a different field of education. I am looking forward to putting my new knowledge and skills to good use when I return to the classroom.

Have you a good news story to share from school? Are you a graduate who has experience teaching in a different context or working alongside teachers in a different role?

Please do consider writing for this newsletter which is sent to all schools linked to the Church of Ireland Centre, DCU?

Contact Jacqui
jacqueline.wilkinson@dcu.ie
Living Faith
Living History
Exhibition and Publication

By Anne Lodge

Church of Ireland primary schools around the United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough were invited to take part in an exhibition and publication entitled ‘Living Faith, Living History’. The exhibition of produced by children ten primary schools around the United Dioceses was on display in the north aisle in Christ Church Cathedral from Tuesday 26th October until Thursday 11th November 2021. The following schools took part and produced beautiful work about their own parishes:

- Athy Model School
- Castleknock National School
- Drumcondra National School
- Holmpatrick National School
- Kill o the Grange National School
- Kilternan National School
- St. George’s National School
- St. Matthew’s National School, Irishtown
- Springdale National School
- Whitechurch National School

The children and their teachers in each school completed their projects in spite of all the limitations imposed by Covid-19. Particular credit is due to the teacher and the children in one school, Holmpatrick NS. They actually finished their projects during lockdown in Spring 2021 without help from anyone other than their families.

As part of their projects, children explored the history of their parish churches. They explored graveyards. They found out information about local history of their church and their school. They also explored the current life of their parish. They interviewed people involved with the parish. They found out the activities that happen in their parish as well as finding out about the links between their school and their parish. Some of them also wrote prayers for their parish and their school. They made wonderful art work including pictures of churches, or graveyards, of stained glass windows and of activities in the parish.

Many schools did a local exhibition first before giving us all their materials for the cathedral exhibition. In fact, the children produced so much material that we were not able to display all of it on the 18 metres of display boards in the cathedral! We tweeted out some examples of material each day that the exhibition ran. The book containing the projects will be published in Spring 2022.

We absolutely loved the ‘Living History Living Faith’ projects that we completed during the last academic school year. It was so nice to come back after the school closures and seemingly endless lockdowns, and really reconnect with our local church, graveyard and our wonderful local parishioners.

Our school has a link of long-standing to our local church and completing these projects was a great way of bringing this link to the attention of not only our students but to our whole school community. Karl Lawless, Drumcondra NS.
My class had the opportunity to take part in the Living Faith Living History project last year. It made our local church, its history and the work that it does now the focus of our learning. We had a fantastic and fascinating trip where we learnt about grave robbers, the crypt and the important role that our church played in local history. As a teacher, it was great to see my class learning about local history and making connections to our local church. David McAndrew 5th class St Matthew’s NS, Irishtown

The children were thrilled to work in groups to research information on each of the four churches in our parish, namely Athy, Kilberry, Fontstown and Kilkea. Each group worked on a particular church finding out the history of that church as well as interviewing family members who worship there. The children researched activities that take place in our busy parish and discovered that there is something for everybody from the very young to the not so very young! The children thoroughly enjoyed working together on this project and were very proud to see their project on display in Christ Church Cathedral.  

Liz Deane Athy Model School

We all felt very proud of ourselves when we saw our work displayed in Christ Church Cathedral especially when we saw other people admiring our work too. During our visit to Christ Church Cathedral we also got to take a look around the cathedral and admired the high ceilings above our heads and the tiles below our feet. We all agreed the best part (apart from our wonderful work!) was heading down to the crypts where it was a bit spooky but filled with interesting artefacts. Katie Nolan Kilternan NS

The project was both challenging and enjoyable for the children. They really enjoyed working together with their classmates and they were very proud of the finished piece. We are now looking forward to visiting Christchurch Cathedral to view the children’s work which is exhibited there for two weeks. I am very proud of how hard the children worked and I was delighted to see them so excited and engaged as they learned about the history of their school and parish. Sara Whitley, Kill o’the Grange NS

It was my absolute pleasure to take part in the ‘Living Faith Living History’ project with my 4th and 5th class This project provided our pupils with a wonderful platform to explore their school and church, both now and in the past. This was particularly special for us as our school celebrated its 300 year anniversary in 2020. We were extremely fortunate to engage in several virtual interviews with a number of people in our parish. The pupils really enjoyed taking part in the interviews and this really brought our project to life. It was wonderful to see the strong relationships between our interviewees and our church and school.  

Emma Furney, Castleknock NS