

JCSP

Newsletter

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE SCHOOL PROGRAMME



Issue 6 February 2008

See Inside

- * Young Scientist Success
- * National In-service Reports
- * JCSP Literacy Strategy
- * Recommended Reads
- * Close up on...
- * Paired Maths Initiative
- * Library Activities
- * JCSP Numeracy Initiatives

Davis College students achieve Young Scientist Success with 'Word Millionaire' Project!

Two Davis College senior students, Natalie Coughlan and Katie O'Connell, competed in this year's BT Young Scientist Competition at the RDS, Dublin. Their project entitled; 'An Investigation into the Effectiveness of the Who Wants to be a Word Millionaire? Initiative received a Highly Commended Award at the exhibition. Their mentor and English teacher, Mr. J. O' Sullivan, pointed out that the girls put in a huge effort throughout the project and deserved to be rewarded for their work. Natalie and Katie were only too happy to detail how they carried out their investigation and the results they found.



Katie and Natalie display their findings at their stand at the Young Scientist Exhibition.

In order to carry out our investigation we proceeded as follows;

- 1 We pre-tested all the Junior students of our school to determine as accurately as possible their individual reading ages.
- 2 A six week intensive 'Word Millionaire' programme then took place for our **experimental** classes. For purposes of comparison the **control** classes did not participate in the initiative. Parents and teachers helped to maintain an accurate word count until one million words was reached per class.
- 3 All students (control and experimental) were then post-tested. We compared: classes from within their respective year groups, students within specific pre-test reading ages categories and male versus female results.

The following are some of the general conclusions:

- * 80.6% of those students that participated in the Word

Millionaire' initiative showed an increase in their reading age.

- * The overall average reading age increase of the experimental groups was +5.8mts. The overall increase of the control groups was +1.9mts.
- * The three lowest streams (experimental) had a combined average increase of +6mts. The middle and top streams (experimental) increased by an average of +3.6mts and +3.9mts respectively.

Cover Image: Davis College students Katie O'Connell and Natalie Coughlan are visited by the Mayor of Mallow, Mr. Noel O' Connor at the Young Scientist Exhibition. Also pictured are their teachers, Ms. Maria White and Mr. Jim O'Sullivan (JCSP co-ordinator).

“Who Wants to be a Word Millionaire?” Initiative 2006 Interim Evaluation Report

“Who Wants to be a Word Millionaire?” is a short-term reading intervention that challenges a class group of students to engage in recreational reading and to collectively read over one million words within a reasonable timeframe (usually six weeks).

Synopsis of Evaluation Report Findings:

“I would rate the Word Millionaire initiative a huge success and look forward to operating it again next year”.

“Word Millionaire generated great excitement, enthusiasm and a sense of pride and achievement in students, who would otherwise be frustrated and unmotivated”.

“Our overall word-total was an amazing 2,389,101”.

“Because of the very large number of words read by the students, we had to change the name of our initiative to Word Multi-millionaire”.

“On Friday 26th of May, 2,955,384 words were read. Five students then asked if they could read a book over the weekend to make it 3 million”.

“Before the Word Millionaire challenge, one student commented that he couldn’t read a page, never mind a book. This student managed to complete his chosen book”.

“Now the idea of buying a book for themselves, or joining a library to borrow books, is not unreal to them”.

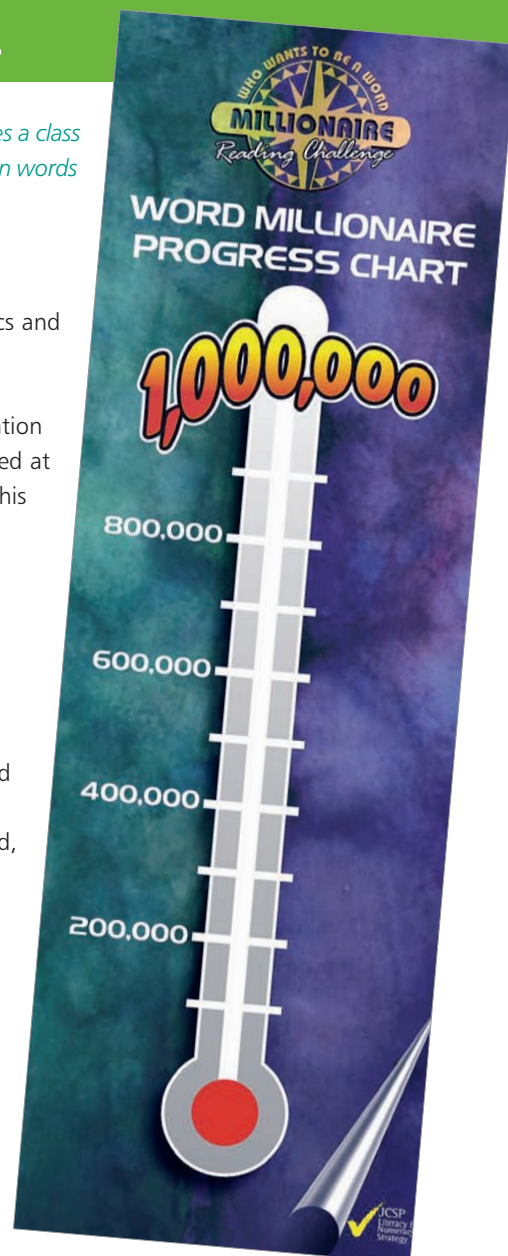
“We were worried that we would not have enough books to keep them going”.

Synopsis of Statistical Analysis:

- * **380 students** participated in this initiative.
- * **38 classes** participated in this initiative.
- * An equal number of first-year classes and second-year classes participated in the initiative. Students from third-year classes did not participate.
- * **58 teachers** participated in planning and implementing the initiative in the participating schools.
- * The following subject departments participated in the initiative: English, Resource, Learning Support, SPHE,

PE, Home Economics and Maths.

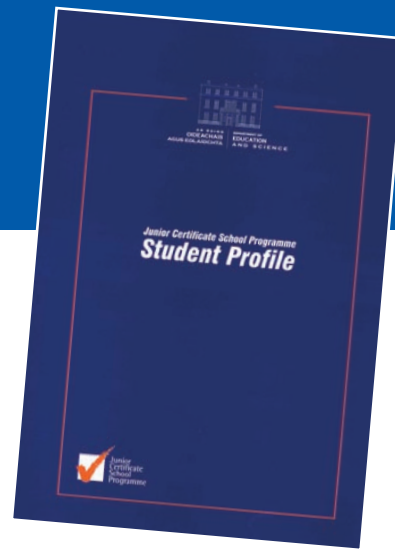
- * Twenty-three evaluation reports were returned at the completion of this initiative.
- * Nineteen of these evaluation reports contained pre and post-test results.
- * When these pre- and post-initiative test results were analysed, it was discovered that **71% of the students**, who had presented for and completed both pre and post testing, **had made progress** and had attained superior scores.
- * Two schools reported that **100% of students**, who participated in the initiative and who presented for the pre and post testing, **attained superior scores** in the post-initiative testing.
- * The greatest individual advancement in test-scores, within the allocated six-week timeframe, was + **3 years and 6 months in reading-age** equivalence.
- * **An overall average improvement of + 5.5 months in reading age** equivalence was attained by the cohort of students who sat for both pre and post testing.



Final Profiling

Deadline for Final Profiles is **April 11th 2008**. It is also important to note that **no Final Student Profiles will be available to schools before May 12th 2008**. This is to facilitate the administration that is needed for Final Profiling.

Please contact your link person on the JCSP support team if you have any difficulties.



Final Profiling – Step by Step

name	dept ed. id	dob	start date	statements
Black, Joe		01/01/1990	01/01/2006	E1, E2, E3

Read instructions below

The screenshot shows the 'New Student - JCSP' web form. At the top, a green box contains instructions: 1. Enter the details for the student. Press 'Save' to submit the details, or press 'Return without Saving' if you've made a mistake and want to start over. 2. There is no separate uploading stage, student profiles are viewable by you and the JCSP central office as soon as you press 'Save' on this page. 3. You can make as many additions, changes, and corrections to your profiles as you need to, it doesn't have to be all done in one login session. 4. When you're completely finished (for all the JCSP students for the entire year) you need to click the 'All Profiles Submitted' button (on the first page as soon as you login, click your login name at the bottom of the navigation on the left to go back to that screen). This notifies the JCSP central office that they can process your student information and prepare the certificates.

Annotations with red arrows point to the following elements:

- Read instructions below:** Points to the green instruction box at the top.
- Insert new student details here:** Points to the form fields for Last Name, White, First Name, Mary, Department of Education and Science Number, Date of Birth, Start Date in JCSP, and Statements Achieved.
- Click on subject code:** Points to the list of subject codes (e.g., E1: Personal Expression: Writing, E2: Experience of Literature & Media, etc.).
- Tick the Statement codes to be awarded:** Points to the checkboxes next to the subject codes.
- Click Save when finished:** Points to the 'Save' button at the bottom left.

- * You can come back and edit all information you have entered and saved until such time as you submit profiles to JCSP office.
- * Do not submit until you are satisfied that all information is correct.
- * Once you submit you can no longer edit.

The screenshot shows the 'Submission - JCSP' web page. A green box at the top contains instructions: 1. Enter the details for the student. Press 'Save' to submit the details, or press 'Return without Saving' if you've made a mistake and want to start over. 2. There is no separate uploading stage, student profiles are viewable by you and the JCSP central office as soon as you press 'Save' on this page. 3. You can make as many additions, changes, and corrections to your profiles as you need to, it doesn't have to be all done in one login session. 4. When you're completely finished (for all the JCSP students for the entire year) you need to click the 'All Profiles Submitted' button (on the first page as soon as you login, click your login name at the bottom of the navigation on the left to go back to that screen). This notifies the JCSP central office that they can process your student information and prepare the certificates.

Annotations with red arrows point to the following elements:

- To submit profiles Click here:** Points to the 'All Profiles Submitted' button.

REMEMBER!!!

It is important at this stage to print a copy of the Final Profiles for your records

The Making of the Book on Wicklow Gaol

Abbey Community College Wicklow – From Marie Fidgeon



Back Row L to R: Tyrone McNabb, Luke Anderson, Adam Caffrey, Joe Hogan, Philip Murphy, Paddy Keogh.
Middle Row: Emmet Goucher, Joe Lee, Craig Walsh. **Front Row:** Marie Fidgeon, class teacher and J.C.S.P. Co-ordinator, Mr. Thomas Tyrrell, Principal, Stan J. O'Reilly, class teacher and local historian.

Initial idea

This book project grew out of a trip organised to reward a class of first year boys in Learning support, for all their efforts throughout the year. They had had a very good year, being co-operative and willing. I was thinking about what work I would do with them for their second year in Learning Support. I thought that it would be a good idea to take them to the restaurant in Wicklow Gaol as a treat and to see what they thought of making a book on the Gaol as a project for their second year. We made our first visit to the Gaol in mid May 2006.

I approached our School Completion Programme Co-ordinator for funding for the entry fees and lunch for the boys. We walked to the Gaol. The boys chose whatever they fancied for their lunch. They thoroughly enjoyed the experience and it was great to relax with them in a social setting. Then we were taken on a tour of the Old Gaol. The visit was a resounding success. The boys were very interested in all the different aspects of the Gaol, especially the punishment implements, the conditions, the young ages of the prisoners and what happened to the prisoners when

they were transported to Australia. We all had an enjoyable social time together.

Back in school Stan and I discussed with them the idea of making a book on the Gaol, for "The Make a Book Exhibition", where each one would take a particular aspect of the Gaol and write about that.

In September we revisited the Old Gaol, this time with notepaper, pens and a camera. They took notes from the displays on the walls of the Gaol on the particular aspect that interested them and questioned the Tour Guide. I took photos of them in each area of interest. Again we had our lunch and the funding was provided by the School Completion Programme.

During the following months, we used the Internet and Stan's extensive knowledge of the Gaol and the history of the town to make a chapter each of the book. Each boy made his own book on his particular aspect of the Gaol. In March we felt that the boys were making such progress that we could take them to see original sources of information. I again approached the School Completion

Programme with a view to taking them to see the grave of the last Governor of the Gaol, in nearby Nun's Cross and the Library in Bray, where Stan knew the man in charge of the archives, Mr. Robert Butler. I was a little apprehensive about what they would think of visiting a graveyard to do research for the book. I needn't have been. They loved it and I had to shoo them on to the bus to go and visit the bog, where local folklore has it that the bodies of prisoners who were hanged in Wicklow Gaol were disposed of. This information was given by Ellen Heatly our School Completion Programme co-ordinator. We went to the Library in Bray where Stan showed the boys the original papers of the day with the announcement of the death of the Governor and how the records were stored on the fiche. They were fascinated by all of this. We had a visit to McDonald's in Bray for lunch, where the manager of the restaurant sought me out to ask me which school the group was from. He complimented us on the good manners and behaviour of the group and offered to do us a good deal if we were visiting again. (The boys paid for their own lunches on this occasion.)

Back in school they wrote a letter to Robert Butler, of Bray Library, thanking him for his help. Then we settled down to the work of putting all the information on the different aspects of the Gaol that was of interest to each of the boys. They worked with enthusiasm at the project, using material from Stan O'Reilly and the Internet for further research. Each student wrote about his trip to the Gaol as a preface to his work and made his own book on the aspect of the Gaol which had caught his imagination. We then combined all the material to make it into one large book, with each individual's work forming a chapter of the book. We invited the parents of the boys to come to the school and had a pleasant social evening together. We put on a display photographs of the process on researching the book and each boy talked to his parents about his book.

We went to the Civic Offices in Dublin to see our books on display for the Make a Book Exhibition.

The school is involved with U.C.D.'s New Era outreach. The book was awarded a group prize and the students were presented with a medal each at the presentation of prizes in U.C.D.

Cross curricular aspects of the making of the book.

During the planning, research and production of this work the students used and developed a variety of cross curricular subjects and other skills:

Social Skills

- * Sharing tasks, ideas and suggestions. Group work skills. Mutual co-operation and valuing each other.
- * Appreciating the input of teachers and parents.
- * Building self esteem and gaining a more mature outlook during the project.
- * Teamwork.
- * Writing 'Thank You' letters
- * Presentation of gifts to those who helped them

Research Skills & Cross Curricular Skills

- * English
- * Information Technology
- * Research of original Newspapers and Microfiche.
- * Study and understanding of archival papers and materials.
- * History.
- * Home Economics. (Prison Foods)
- * Art.
- * Environmental Social Studies. (History and Geography)
- * Built Heritage. (An understanding of Wicklow Gaol and its use over 300 years.)
- * Site research and investigation. (Nun's Cross Graveyard & Devil's Glen Bog)
- * Communication Skills.
- * Organisation Skills.
- * Oral Presentation skills. (Presenting the project to interested parties and explaining what was involved in the planning and research)
- * Presentation Skills. (J .C.S.P Make a Book 2007, U.C.D New Era entry 2007) Organisation of presentations for Parents/Heritage Officer, Wicklow Co,
- * Council and talking about their work to visiting Polish teacher from the Comenius Project.
- * Work towards a planning, research and writing timeframe.
- * An understanding of Folklore.

Library Activities

at Coláiste Chathail Naofa, Dungarven

Ré Rocks!

Ré Ó Laighléis, acclaimed author of teenage and adult fiction presented a day-long reading /writing workshop to a group of 3rd Year students in the School Library on Thurs 25th Oct. This has been the first such writing workshop in the school and was hugely successful.

Ré instantly developed a positive rapport with the students. He read a number of his short stories to the students from his work Ecstasy and other stories. On the back of these select readings the students devised their own endings to his stories, which made for interesting

reading in themselves and stimulated further conversation and discussion. Character and dialogue in writing were the main areas of focus. By the end of the day long session all students had achieved a work output of which to be proud. They are more informed on the writing process and have developed further their own story writing skills. Well done to all involved. The day was summed up by this remark made by a student in his evaluation of the day's session.

"I learned story-writing is for the reader's enjoyment and that you can have fun writing. It doesn't have to be boring"

"Hidden Soldier" Visits Coláiste Chathail Naofa

The School Library hosted a most interesting visitor on Tuesday 27th in the form of Pádraig O'Keeffe, subject of the book "Hidden Soldier". Students were so interested in meeting this brave soldier who has escaped death on a number of occasions that two sessions were held to accommodate the numbers.

The students were fascinated by Pádraig O'Keeffe's life story to date. He gave the students an overview of his journey into the French Foreign Legion and the missions he has served on in major world conflict zones – Cambodia, Bosnia, Haiti and Iraq.

Pádraig spoke openly and honestly about his war experiences. The students were left in no doubt that death pervades in war and that Pádraig has been an incredibly lucky man to have defied death several times in the course of duty. "A Legend" is how he was described by one of the students after hearing his story.

It is thanks to first year student Tholim O'Leary that the visit happened. Tholim has been reading Pádraig O'Keeffe's "Hidden Soldier" and enthused so much about the book that enquiries were made about a possible visit by the author, who comes originally from Cobh. Tholim's mother had been to school with Pádraig and was able to facilitate the contact.

We are very grateful to Pádraig for visiting the school library and for donating to it several copies of his book. We wish him well on his next mission in life.

Sounds of Africa in School Library

On Tues 4th Dec, the JCSP School Library in Coláiste Chathail Naofa hosted drumming workshops for all 1st, 2nd and 3rd Year students. The sessions were presented by Patrick Naughton of Full Circle based in Ovens, Cork.

Through his fun and gentle manner Patrick developed a great rapport with the students. They responded with great teamwork, co-operation and music. The pulsating noise of 35 Ghanaian djembe drums being played in unison created a terrific uplifting and energetic sound. The students were also taught an African song. The workshops were thoroughly enjoyed and are likely to become an annual event.

Jane O'Loughlin, JCSP Librarian

Halloween Celebration

The students from Terence MacSwiney Community College, Knocknaheeny, Cork worked very hard in preparation for their 1st year Halloween celebration. Enthusiastic students worked diligently making decorations, carving pumpkins and painting the windows of the library. The overall effect was very impressive. The students were very proud of their work and we had a constant stream of admirers visiting the library .

1st year students put on a show for their parents in the library. They worked together preparing poems and jokes which they read to their parents. This was a huge

achievement for these students whose reading levels were quite low. They overcame their initial embarrassment and stood in front of parents, teachers and fellow students to read. They finished the show with a song and dance routine.

Light refreshments were served and parents sampled tea brack and Halloween cake made by the students. The Halloween celebration proved to be a very successful event for all those involved.

Anne Masterson, Librarian.

Terence McSweeney Community College, Cork



Deirdre Bevan, JCSP Co-ordinator presents certificates to the first year students at Terence McSweeney Community College.



Halloween cake



Halloween decorations



Halloween

First Year Celebration

at St. Paul's Community College, Waterford

First Year students at St. Paul's Community College celebrated the end of their first term in secondary school on Tuesday 18th of December. They have worked very hard earning certificates for Reading and for Maths for Fun. Their woodwork projects, and their written work was displayed in the library for their parents to see.

They spent the early part of the morning preparing for this celebration. The first two periods were spent baking their favourite cakes, the third period was spent setting the table and arranging the furniture in the library for this celebration.

Hilary Cantwell, JCSP Librarian.



Cakes for the celebration



Kathleen Smith and Tara O'Neill enjoying the celebration



Student Folders

Final Profiles Celebrations at Athenry



Third Year students at Presentation College, Athenry, Co. Galway proudly displaying their Final Profiles along side their co-ordinator Marian Spellman, their principal Mary Forde and Mick O'Riordan, from the JCSP team.



Mick O'Riordan from the JCSP Support Service presents a Final Profile to Siobhan Kenneally at Presentation College, Athenry, Co. Galway In the background is the Maths poster (Fractions) designed by Siobhan in a national JCSP competition.

Report on the Writers Club 2007

I began the preparative work to host the writer in residence early in September. This has involved a great deal of work in terms of liaising with staff, principal, students and working on a timetable so that students are not pulled out repeatedly from the same classes and as little disruption as possible happens to the library timetable. Below is the information I've circulated to all staff, management and to the writer Maeve Ingolsby.

Writer in Residence for Larkin Community College – Maeve Ingolsby

Aim: To give at-risk second year students already participating in the JCSP programme or who have been identified as needing to be on the programme, an intensive creative writing experience with a professional writer with previous experience of working with young people. The course is for 12 hours over a 4 week timeframe. The cost is being funded from the library budget.

Sometime after Christmas this group will go on to attend national writing Master-Classes held over two days presenting their own work, attend workshops with other students from schools that host the JCSP Demonstration Library Project and meet and work with a number of leading Irish writers who are participating in this project.

Criteria for selection based on:

- * Must have some degree of writing ability already so that they can do work independently and get the most out of the intervention
- * Behaviour will not preclude them from getting on with other students and getting the most from the intervention
- * Students not particularly involved in other activities
- * Students who have been identified as potential early school leavers but who had not been placed on the JCSP programme previously
- * Existing JCSP students from 2nd year

Hoped for outcomes

- * To improve writing ability in terms of creativity, imagination, structuring and layout
- * Creation of a positive dynamic within this diverse group of students
- * Improved self-image and motivation for the students
- * Increased awareness of the writing process
- * Increased attendance in school by individual students
- * A body of work from the students

Measures in place to assess programme

Recent essays to be taken up from teachers and graded. At the end of sessions essays to be re-graded by the students themselves. Interviews with students and questionnaire about their self-image with regard to writing ability and thoughts on writing to be given before and after the programme. Writing homework will be given as part of the programme

I selected the students for the programme in collaboration with the JCSP co-ordinator, Home School Liaison co-ordinator and the Project Co-ordinator. I wrote to their parents and held a meeting with the students which proved tricky as some were not in and I had to keep following things up. I then had to examine the timetable as students are selected across second year so a large number of teachers and classes are impacted. There are issues of students being signed in on the register and then coming to the library which means they won't quite have the hour as agreed with the writer. I have carried out the survey. I believe this amount of preparation work has been a key factor in the successful running of the programme.

The Writers Club programme ran on through October with 10 sessions most of which were in addition to regular classes. I wrote a letter to every individual parent updating them on their child's progress and affirming how well they were doing. The parents of three children rang to thank me for these letters and said how much they meant to them. On Friday 26th October the families of the students were invited to the library for the first ever public reading of their work. The students shared their work with a very appreciative audience and about half of the parents of the group came. The students helped to organise the event and took it all very seriously. We had lunch for them and their parents in the library afterwards.

Eileen Holian, Librarian.

Report on the Writers Club 2007

Here are just two poems written by our students.

The Sea

by Emmet Smith

Nemo
Fish
floating on
it's back, swimming
In a race, winning
Under the giant arch
Shot out of the large blow hole
Into the cave over the stump
Erosion's a bitch
The clown of the small fish
The sharks chasing it,
The clown is being laughed at
"Help me" it shouts
BUT NO ONE WILL HELP.

A Poem

by Sean McMahon

I am a writer. I am I swear.
If you don't believe me I don't care.
Trap me in the tower day and night
It doesn't matter I can still see the light.
I'll write a poem that is one of the best.
It will be as original as a United Crest.
I'll write the poem and get out of this tower.
And I'll do it all within an hour.
I'm out of the tower and full of joy.
If I was still in there I would just die.
I wrote many poems, but none like this one.
My life as a writer has just begun.

JCSP Initiatives 2007 – 2008

Paired Maths Initiative (2006)

Description of the Initiative:

The JCSP Paired Maths Initiative is an intervention that seeks to investigate the effectiveness of paired-work and peer-tutoring in supporting the development of enhanced understanding in maths and numeracy among students in the Programme. The Paired Maths template is multifaceted, highly flexible and versatile and offers a range of options to schools to plan, structure and design their specific and unique Paired Maths programme.

Synopsis of Findings:

"I found that the second year students pushed themselves more. They made a bigger effort because they wanted to do well in front of the transition years".

This initiative *"improved my working relationship with the students"*.

"It was an atmosphere that was very conducive to learning".

"The students were very excited and eager about meeting with the transition year students and working with them".

"A great atmosphere of work and co-operation existed throughout the initiative".

"I can do maths quicker with a partner".

"I was with Matthew. He helped me a lot when I needed it".

"I got 31 out of 32 marks. I was very proud of myself and I was happy. So was my partner".

"I would love to do Paired Maths again".

"Life became easier, because students were eager, motivated and interested".

"The students were keen to impress the older students".

Structural Configurations Employed:

- * Mixed Ability Model 1: (senior cycle students as tutors to JCSP students): This was the most popular model and configuration. **Six** case studies employed this model. Transition Year students were involved in each of these six case studies.
- * Mixed Ability Model 2: (more able peers from within their own class group serving as tutors to the targeted students): **Three** case studies employed this configuration, including a Senior Travellers Education Centre.
- * Cross-aged Model: (the JCSP student "pairs" as tutor,

with a selected student in primary school): **One** case study employed this configuration, which linked first class primary students with first year JCSP students.

Synopsis of Statistical Analysis:

- * **One hundred and ten** students, from these schools, participated in this JCSP Paired Maths Initiative 2006.
- * Schools prioritised first-year and second-year students for participation in this initiative. In total, **two second-year and eight first-year classes** participated in the initiative.
- * **Twenty-two** mathematics teachers were involved in the initiative. A Home School Community Liaison teacher also participated in one of the case studies.
- * The frequency of timetabled contact between tutor and tutee varied from one contact-session per week to three contact-sessions per week.
- * The average duration and timeframe for the Paired Maths initiative was **6 weeks**.
- * Statistical data (raw scores or mathematical age equivalences) was provided for a cumulative total of **130 sub-test results**, attained by students presenting for and completing both pre- and post-testing in the France Test Level 2.
- * When these sub-test statistics were analysed and compared, it was discovered that the **average improvement** achieved by students across these 130 sub-test results was **+ 15 months advancement** in mathematical age equivalence, within the six week timeframe of the initiative.
- * The greatest advancement in test scores occurred in the "Addition", "Subtraction", "Multiplication" and "Money and Measurement" sub-test domains. **75%** of the entire student cohort, who sat for and completed both pre- and post-tests in any test domain, achieved superior scores in the post-initiative testing.
- * In one school, **100%** of the students, who presented for and completed both pre-and post-testing, attained superior scores in the post-initiative assessment.
- * The greatest improvement achieved by any individual student was an **advancement of + 6 years** in mathematical age equivalence within the allocated timeframe. This advancement occurred in the "Division" sub-test domain.
- * The development of a positive attitudinal change towards mathematical and numerical activities was reported.

JCSP Initiatives 2007 – 2008

Recommended Numeracy Websites

www.teem.org.uk
www.aaamath.com
www.coolmath.com
www.mathsyear2000.org
www.mathsisfun.com
www.dfee.gov.uk/playingforsuccess
www.worksheetfactory.com
www.discoveryschool.com
www.basic-skills.co.uk

<http://equals.lhs.berkeley.edu>
www.mathematicallysane.com
www.c3.lanl.gov/mega-math
www.learner.org
www.math.clemson.edu/~simms/java/pentominoes/
<http://home.scarlet.be/~demeod/indexe.html>
http://math.about.com/od/tangrams/Tangram_Puzzles.htm
<http://tangrams.ca/>

Science Initiative – Biology

This science initiative was devised by Ms. Lennon to help students experience their learning in a concrete manner.

The students were studying the systems of the body so each system was photocopied for them and then they coloured it and laminated it. Then they cut each system into jigsaw pieces and the challenge was then to re-arrange them correctly.

When the initiative was completed, there was a celebration with 'goodies' and soft drinks. The following students were selected to receive prizes at the Christmas Celebration, Liam Edmond (1Oak), Kim Newsome (1 Oak), and Nicole Hubbard (3 Sycamore).

M. Lennon, Abbey Community College, Wicklow.



Science Students in Abbey

Flashmaster Initiative



Students using Flashmasters to challenge their computation skills

This first year class, 1 Oak, is a mixture of boys and girls, from different primary schools. There is a varying range of mathematical abilities in the class. After the initial introduction of the Flashmasters, about twenty minutes, the students took control of them. Initially some of the weaker students had a little difficulty in setting up the challenges they wanted. After a week or two all the students were comfortable with Flashmaster and could follow any instructions given to them and were capable of using all the functions.

I found that as every student could go at their own pace, the class as a whole progressed very quickly. The stronger ones enjoyed looking back on their results and trying to beat them. For the weaker students I found Flashmaster a great teaching aid. It gives the students confidence in their own abilities and as they have the control over the pace and what they are doing, they enjoy the challenge it brings. After completion of this initiative, a prize for best student was awarded to Kyle Whelan.

Jonathan Nolan, Abbey Community College, Wicklow.

JCSP Initiatives 2007 – 2008

JCSP General Numeracy Initiative (2006)

Description of the Initiative:

The JCSP General Numeracy Initiative 2006 is an intervention that seeks to investigate the effectiveness of child-centred, experiential and constructivist approaches and resources in supporting the development of enhanced mathematical and numerical understanding among students in the Programme.

Synopsis of Evaluation Report Findings:

"All the students, who were involved in the initiative, passed the examination in Junior Cert maths in 2006".

"The test results were absolutely remarkable".

"The students became more aware of the importance of mathematics in real-life".

"The students found that mathematics can be enjoyable".

"The initiative made the students become peer-tutors... if a student had a problem, there was always someone willing to help".

"There was a great sense of working together".

"The once dreaded maths class was now something to look forward to".

"I no longer get "what do we need to learn this for?"

"Lessons are more enjoyable and the students are more interested".

"Behavioural problems have decreased".

"All the students actively participated in these mathematical games and hated to hear the bell ring, at the end of class".

Synopsis of Statistical Analysis:

- * **Nine** initiative evaluation reports were returned for analysis.
- * **One hundred and fifty-four** students, from these schools, participated in this JCSP General Numeracy Initiative 2006.
- * Schools prioritised first-year and second-year students for participation in this initiative. In total, six second-year classes, eight first-year classes and one third year class participated in the initiative.
- * **Twenty-two** mathematics teachers were involved in the initiative.
- * Other teachers who participated were: a Learning Support teacher, a School Completion Co-ordinator and an Art teacher.
- * The average timeframe allocated, by participating schools, for the implementation of the initiative, was six weeks.
- * Statistical data (raw scores or mathematical age equivalences) was provided for a cumulative total of **162 sub-test results**, attained by students who presented for and completed both pre- and post-testing in the France Test, Level 2 or Level 1.
- * When these sub-test statistics were analysed and compared, it was discovered that the **average improvement** achieved by these students, across these 162 sub-test domains, was **+16 months advancement** in mathematical age equivalence, within the six week timeframe of the initiative.
- * The greatest advancement in test scores occurred in the "Addition" and "Money and Measurement" sub-test domains.
- * **84%** of the entire student cohort, who sat for and completed both pre- and post-tests in any test domain, achieved superior scores in the post-initiative testing.
- * In one school, **100%** of the students, who presented for and completed both pre-and post-testing, attained superior scores in the post-initiative assessment.
- * The greatest improvement achieved by any individual student was an **advancement of +6 years** in mathematical age equivalence within the allocated timeframe. This advancement occurred in the "Division" sub-test domain.

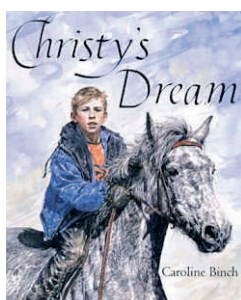
Picture Books

Picture books can be a great tool in developing literacy among JCSP students. There is a wide range of quality picture books being published all the time and there are always the classics.

It is not true that "picture books are for babies"! Many books have challenging themes and sophisticated illustration. The real beauty of picture books is that often the most complex of them can be accessed by weak readers. The amount of "story" told through the pictures can be more than through the text; readers can sometimes

spot little "mini stories" running through the illustration.

Picture books written for younger children can be used very successfully in paired reading; with JCSP students reading to primary school students. JCSP students will need lots of practise reading picture books aloud and this time is valuable because it gives them permission to relax and engage with the books, to enjoy them and to practise reading without feeling the stigma of reading "baby books". The skill of reading picture books aloud is a skill they will have for life.



Title: Christy's Dream
Author: Caroline Binch
Publisher: Frances Lincoln
ISBN: 9781845074722

This book has been a hit with many JCSP students. The story is about Christy who has a way with horses and longs for one of his own. He wants one so badly

it makes his insides ache. His only problem is his Ma; "haven't I enough to do without horses and jockeys to worry about?!" The illustrations are beautiful watercolours of realistic scenes like Smithfield horsefair.

Title: Belonging
Author: Jeannie Baker
Publisher: Walker Books
ISBN: 9780744592276



This is an unusual but special book. Each double page spread is a view through a window. Little hints show us it is a child's window. The scene is of urban decay. As the book progresses the view becomes gradually a little better and the child grows older. The images are made up of collage and are incredibly detailed. There is a lot of text which all takes the form of graffiti, signs etc. This book is accessible to those with very poor literacy. It would be a good book for exploring issues of responsibility and communities for CSPE or a school's Green Committee.



Title: When Jessie came across the sea
Author: Amy Hest
Illustrator: PJ Lynch
Publisher: Walker Books
ISBN: 9780763612740

The story is set in the early 1900's and is about a girl who is forced to leave her home, possibly Russia, and travel to New York on her own to earn money. It is about her fears, excitement and falling in love. This would be a difficult book for weak readers to read themselves but a good book to read aloud, to girls particularly, and would certainly resonate with anyone who has experienced migration.

Title: Once Upon an Ordinary School Day
Author: Colin McNaught
Illustrator: Satoshi Kitamura
Publisher: Andersen Press
ISBN: 9781842703090



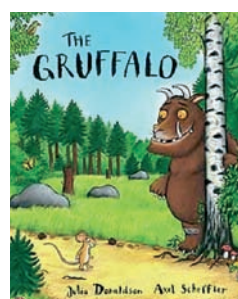
A boring old ordinary school day is transformed when a new teacher arrives, "a quite extraordinary figure". The new teacher plays music while the students have to make pictures in their heads. When their imaginations have been fired they have to write and the ordinary boy is suddenly writing like mad. This a great book to use in encouraging JCSP students in creative writing. The ordinary boy uses words he doesn't understand and thinks his story makes no sense but he uses his imagination and "the words just came flooding out". But it is realistic; other students fidget and look into space!



Title: Oops! A Preston Pig story
Author: Colin Mc Naughton
Publisher: Picture Lions
ISBN: 978007140152
Also Suddenly!
and Goal!

If JCSP students are reading picture books with younger primary school students the books they choose should be fun and fast paced. The Preston Pig stories are ideal.

Title: The Gruffalo
Author: Julia Donaldson
Illustrator: Alex Sheffler
Publisher: Macmillan
ISBN: 9780333710937



The Gruffalo is a classic. It is a great fun book for JCSP students to read to younger children. The text is in rhyme and takes a bit of practise to read well.

Eadaoin Quinn, JCSP Librarian, Enniscorthy Vocational School, Wexford.

Competition Announced

Clár Scoile an Teastais Shóisearaigh COMÓRTAS

AIRE! Múinteoirí agus scoláirí Ghaeilge agus Ealaíne

Tá seans agat do scileanna Ghaeilge agus Ealaíne a thaispeáint agus duais a bhuachaint.

An tasc: Cárta phoist chuig do bhaile a dhearadh as Gaeilge

Le bheith istigh ag an CDU ag an **9^ú lá de Mí Bealtaine, 2008**

Seoladh: Comórtas Chártaí Phoist , JCSP Support Service,
Captain's Road, Crumlin, Dublin 12.

Bí cinnte ainm na scoile, ainm ranga agus do ainm féin a chur ar an taobh thiar

Junior Certificate School Programme COMPETITION

Attention! Teachers and students of Irish and Art

A chance for you to demonstrate your skills in Irish and Art

The task: Postcard to send home to be designed in Irish

Closing date: May 9th, 2008.

Entries to be sent to: Comórtas Chártaí Phoist, JCSP Support Service,
Captain's road, Crumlin, Dublin 12.

Don't forget to put your name, class and school on the back of your entry

New Co-ordinators Meeting

The Regency Hotel 15.01.2008

At the meeting for new co-ordinators at the Regency Hotel, Drumcondra on 15th January, participants reported the following list as the highlights of the JCSP in their first term in the post.

Highlights

- * Pupils felt better about themselves – Proud of having their own folders.
- * Kids loved Reading Challenge
- * Trip to bookshop and Library
- * Christmas Celebration – 'Brill' response from Parents
- * Student reaction to Christmas postcards
- * Christmas Celebration – Coffee morning with presentation of certs, Christmas dinner for students, going to the movies in the afternoon (including popcorn).
- * Ice Skating trip – 3 JCSP groups – January 2008, got free tickets to Smithfield, Train into Dublin, 1 hour in National Museum, McDonalds, Ice-Skating
- * JCSP Christmas trips – Feedback from students
- * JCSP Resources
- * Whole School In-service
- * Celebration with teachers, parents, principal and students
- * Digital Story telling project on Christopher Columbus
- * Storyteller Niall De Burca did a workshop in the school
- * Seeing the reaction of the children to a certificate/postcard. Seeing the power of praise on students who might normally be troublesome
- * Support of parents
- * Christmas Celebration
- * Reading Initiative



- * Converting the reluctant teacher
- * Christmas celebration – students given certificates – took part in the Christmas concert singing and reading poems
- * Interest from subject teachers to get involved in Initiatives.
- * Very supportive core group of teachers
- * Christmas celebration
- * Reaction to the postcards by both students and parents
- * Multi-cultural celebration day
- * Visit to the visual Art centre in Derry
- * Orienteering as an outdoor education initiative
- * Funding, use of camera with class
- * Field trip with 1st years
- * Applying for initiatives and setting funding for all of them
- * Preparation of student folders (personal)
- * Christmas celebration
- * Students told me they like being in JCSP
- * All 1st yr teachers have now become involved in JCSP
- * Paired reading
- * Christmas Celebration
- * Reference to JCSP Group instead of the bottom stream
- * Parents feedback re: Postcards home
- * Our Christmas celebration for first year JCSP
- * Students loved working on the folders very proud of them
- * Storyteller initiative
- * Drama Initiative – school play at Christmas celebration
- * Paired reading programme (supported by Statia)
- * Students interest in reading challenge (book a week for six weeks)
- * Christmas celebration
- * Postcards
- * Word Millionaire
- * Christmas celebration
- * Samba drumming



Useful Websites for JCSP Students and their Teachers

www.wisekids.org.uk – this site includes a list of websites that provide homework help and also some fun resources.

www.zen.org/~brendan/kids-homework.html – this site gives access to Webster's dictionary, Roget's thesaurus and links to information on ancient Greeks, astronomy and other libraries.

www.globalschoolnet.org/index.cfm – the mission statement on this site states that it is there to support 21st century learning.

www.education-world.com

<http://educscapes.com/tap/topic21.htm> – excellent for educational portals and starting points.

www.kidsconnect.com –

a safe Internet gateway for kids.

www.webenglishteacher.com/ya.html

www.sitesforteachers.com/index.html

www.readinga-z.com – good for ideas.

www.teenreads.com

www.grouchy.com/angst –

a bit of fun.

Compiled by Karen O'Shea,

Librarian, Jobstown Community College, Jobstown, Tallaght, Dublin 24.



JCSP in Mixed Ability Setting

Firhouse Community College

In Firhouse we have been part of the JCSP for many years. As we follow a mixed ability programme, from first year we form JCSP groups of students for English, Irish and Maths and offer further support and activities to those who do not take French. For the other subjects students are in mixed settings. We have found that arranging groups in this way allows us to profile easily in English, Irish, Maths and the cross-curricular areas of attendance, punctuality etc. In general we do not profile in the other subjects.

Extra activities can include English, Art, History, Geography, Drama or P.E. and varies from year to year. This has meant that at times students may be profiled in Geography or History, for example. It has also meant that we can have cross-curricular input when we are participating in initiatives. For instance, last year when we were involved in 'Make Your Own Opolý' the JCSP (1) class made the money – complete with their own portraits on the notes – in art class. They also made the Good / Bad news cards. We then linked in with Transition Year students who decided the locations to go on the board, the value of same and translated these place names into Irish in class. This cross-curricular / cross-year component worked very well. The same JCSP and TY groups also worked together in the Ceili

initiative so we built up to a really enjoyable celebration.

Last year's JCSP (2) students were offered Drama twice a week as a follow on from our involvement in the Drama Initiative. This was very successful and enjoyable and we felt that we wanted to build further on the students' performing, vocal and literacy skills so we took part in the Primary Picture Books Initiative. The class spent a few weeks rehearsing for the event, reading to various members of staff who very kindly got involved, including our chaplain, SNA and HSCLC. The event went very well and the primary school class enjoyed it so much that we have been invited back to do it again.

As our students are in mixed ability settings, we have found that a useful means of profiling in other subjects such as music, is to become involved in an appropriate initiative. For instance, through the Samba initiative a few years ago our students had the excitement of being involved in something new while with the help of their music teacher they were able to achieve music statements.

Denise O'Flanagan, previously JCSP Co-ordinator at Firhouse Community College; now RDO with the JCSP Team.

JCSP Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Website

JCSP – Junior Certificate Schools Programme

http://www.jcspliteracy.ie/

JCSP Literacy & Numeracy Strategy

About Us Resources Interventions for Development Events Numeracy Research In-Service Video Links Home

Welcome,

Welcome to the Junior Certificate School Programme Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Website. We hope that you will find all kinds of useful materials and ideas here to use in your second level classroom.

The strategy has been developed to offer you practical strategies that can be used as part of your teaching approach regardless of your subject area. These strategies are most effective when they are used in the context of a School-Wide Approach.

This web site has been developed by the JCSP support service for use by teachers. It is in the very early stages of development so you might not find everything here yet. Feel free to contact the support service for further details on any topic that interests you.

Latest News

APPLICATION FOR JCSP LIBRARY UNDER DEIS

Applications for school library must be returned to us by **FRIDAY JUNE 15TH.**

Download application form to return by post >>>

Download application to return by email >>>

View letter to principals >>>

BIGGER

Check out jcspliteracy.ie for information on the JCSP Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

National In-service Reports

(September 2007 – December 2007)

Art and JCSP In-service

This in-service day was held in the beautiful surroundings of IMMA, the Museum of Modern Art in Kilmainham in Dublin.

The day began with a presentation on the educational work of the museum's education department by Helen O'Donoghue, senior curator and head of education and community programmes. This was particularly interesting to teachers who wish to engage students with art works in a gallery or studio (statement 6) or who wish to make greater use of their local arts centre or arts officer.

The main work of the day took the form of presentations by Art teachers currently working with JCSP students and these were very favourably received by the 34 participants. Damien Culhane demonstrated his approaches to life drawing, printing and three-dimensional pieces, developing the students' skills throughout the three years. He displayed 2 sample Junior Certificate Art portfolios for the participants to grade.

Helen O'Brien and Mary Archer from St. Joseph's school for Deaf Boys in Cabra, spoke about a cross-curricular initiative they were involved in which featured Brazilian history, geography, Samba music and wonderful carnival-type headpieces.

Pat Sweeney, from Killinarden Community School, Dublin inspired participants with his energy and enthusiasm for his subject and his students. He demonstrated an array of

student worksheets, teacher resources and student art works and stressed the necessity of accumulating an enormous range of source materials. He even described how an old carpet was recycled by the Art department! Information on resources and arts funding were also shared and copies of *Guidelines for Artists working in Schools* developed by the Arts Council were distributed. The art statements were reviewed with a group of teachers agreeing to take the suggestions and develop them further during the year. If any art teachers are interested in this work, please contact the JCSP office at **01 453 5487**.

Some clips from two software packages were shown as extra teaching resources for teachers and students interested in engaging with new technologies to enhance their art work. These are available from an English company called 2Simple and are being used in some primary schools in Ireland. The ICT advisor at your local education centre can advise you further as they are familiar with these products. Check their website for more details www.2simple.com. Teachers may also like to check out a website created by RTE and NCTE to support the teaching of art in primary school. www.iamanartist.ie. Contact Statia Somers at statia-somers@slss.ie or Isabel Baker at isabelbaker@slss.ie for more information about these products.

Many thanks to all the staff at IMMA for their support in facilitating this in-service, especially Helen O'Donoghue, Mark Maguire and Sophie Byrne.

Religion and the JCSP

Drumcondra Education Centre hosted this gathering of 37 teachers of Religious Education from across the country.

Stanford Kingston represented the RE Support Service in a general introduction to the syllabus documentation, teacher guidelines and the website which has worksheets and ideas covering all aspects of the three year syllabus. A lively discussion took place in relation to the Junior Certificate examination requirements and the difficulties JCSP students encounter. However not all schools and students take the examination.

Participants were presented with the programmes, methods and materials used by three religion teachers currently working with JCSP students. Aisling Reidh, from Tallaght Community School, Declan Quinn from Liberties College and Georgina Keene from Kylemore College, Ballyfermot.

Later participants had the opportunity to consider the readability level of textbooks which can cause difficulties for students with poor literacy skills and teachers then shared ideas and strategies to help overcome these barriers.

Participants were interested to hear that it is possible for any teacher to borrow a large number of suitable books for a long period using a block loan card. This card is available from the public libraries if a teacher presents a letter signed by the school principal.

Some comments from the participants

"Great practical resources and practical advice, This is my first year teaching the JCSP programme so it was great to hear how to go about teaching the students."

"All the inputs were informative and helpful. The bag of resources seems fantastic!"

"Lots of little gems throughout the sharing of the day."

"Variation of presenters; great resources; handouts; visuals."

"Very realistic ideas for teaching topics."

Implementation Meeting for New Schools

Location: Regency Hotel
Date: Tuesday 11th and Wednesday 12th September

48 co-ordinators and principals attended the Tuesday in-service. 33 co-ordinators attended on day two.

New Teachers In-service

Location: Days Hotel, Galway
Date: Monday 8th October

Location: Ambassador Hotel
Date: Monday 8th October

Location: Dublin West Education Centre
Date: Tuesday 9th October

Location: Donegal Education Centre
Date: Tuesday 9th October

These meetings were well attended. An overview of the Programme and details of the profiling process were provided.

Co-ordinators Meetings

Location: Limerick Education Centre
Date: Monday 24th September

Location: Regency Hotel
Date: Monday 24th September

Location: Ambassador Hotel, Cork
Date: Tuesday 25th September

Location: Monaghan Education Centre
Date: Tuesday 25th September

Location: Plaza Hotel, Tallaght
Date: Thursday 27th September

These co-ordinators' meetings were very well attended. Current developments and updates in the Programme were identified, described and discussed. The new profile folders were very well received by co-ordinators.

Mindmapping and JCSP

Location: Ambassador Hotel, Cork
Date: Tuesday 23rd October

Twenty teachers attended this in-service in Cork. The applications and dynamics of Mind Mapping were explained and discussed and Mind Mapping strategies, approaches and resources, to support teaching and learning, were identified and described to the course participants. Ken Wickstone was the main presenter at this in-service. Jacqueline Holly (Abbeyfeale Vocational College) and Eamonn Murphy (St. Patrick's College, Gardiner's Hill) described projects undertaken in their schools where Mind Mapping strategies and Graphic Organisers were used to enhance the learning environment.

Science and JCSP

Location: Dublin West Education Centre
Date: Tuesday 6th November

Twenty-six science teachers attended this in-service in Tallaght. An overview of the Junior Cycle Science programme was provided by John Hennessy, National Co-ordinator Junior Science Support Service. Helen Corbett (Arklow Community College) described the very successful Bottle Rocket project in her school. Chris Barron (Killarney National Park Outdoor Education Centre) provided a very interesting presentation on the Outdoor Laboratory. Audrey Byrne (Lucan Community College) described how ICT can be used to support the teaching and learning of science. A materials exhibition was organised as part of this in-service.

Making Sense of Maths and Numeracy at Junior Cycle

Location: Regency Hotel
Date: Tuesday 27th November

Forty-four teachers attended this in-service. The presentation identified some of the major difficulties and challenges that students experience in learning numeracy and maths and described a range of strategies and approaches that can be employed to enhance mathematical and numerical understanding for J.C.S.P. students. An interesting presentation, on the concept and dynamics of Accelerated Maths, was provided by John Moore. Audrey Byrne (Lucan Community College) described how ICT can be used to support the teaching and learning of maths and numeracy. A materials exhibition was organised as part of this in-service.

National In-service Reports

(September 2007 – December 2007)

Outdoor Education and Cross-Curricular Links

Location: Kilmurray Lodge Hotel

Date: Thursday 22nd November

Twenty teachers attended this in-service in Limerick. The importance and benefits of developing cross-curricular approaches and outdoor education links were described and discussed. Maureen O Sullivan (Killarney Community College) described the very successful Orbit project in her school. Chris Barron (Killarney National Park) provided a very interesting presentation on the Outdoor Laboratory and the links developed between Killarney National Park and the Orbit Project. Ann Kennedy and Michael O Connor (St. Nessan's Community College) described how a cross-curricular approach was used to plan and develop the school's outstanding Make a Book project. Vivian Arthur (Resource Teacher) and Catherine O'Connell (JSCP Co-ordinator) (Ennis Community College) described the planning, first-steps and progress-to-date in developing a collaborative Orbit Project between Ennis Community College and the Burren Outdoor Education Centre. A materials exhibition was organised as part of this in-service.



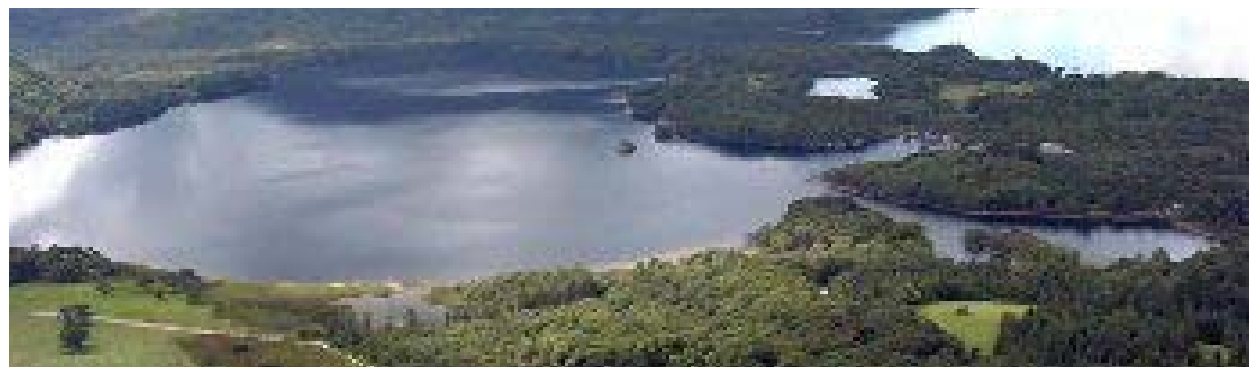
Students on a field trip



Students exploring in the great outdoors



Embracing nature..



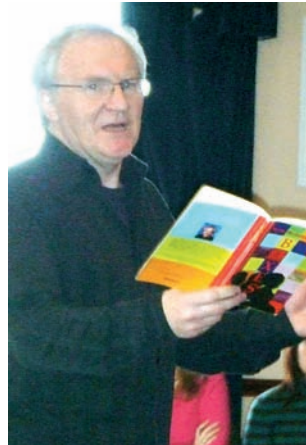
Killarney National Park

English In-service

Teachers of English gathered to enjoy a day of sharing expertise as well as participating in a most energising session with poet and dramatist Terry McDonagh. Terry used his poems from *Boxes*, a poetry collection for children published by Blaupause Books, Hamburg.



Terry McDonagh is a poet and dramatist of international acclaim. He has published several collections of poetry, a book of letters, a novel for young people and, in 2006, a collection of poetry for young people, *BOXES*. He has been writer in residence in Australia, Asia, several European countries and Ireland where he was resident writer in Coole Park, County Galway 2006.



Terry McDonagh, Poet and Dramatist reads from his poetry during the in-service day

Terry believes that poetry has to be experienced by all the senses and encouraged the participants to allow students become physically involved with their poetry. Terry showed us how to 'warm up' our cold poetry 'muscles' with rhythm, rhyme and word play exercises. He illustrated how a poem should be walked so that the natural flow of the words would be experienced. Participants also mimed elements of the poetry freeze framing snapshots.



Taking a dramatic break... well it was an early start!



Preparing for the dramatics at the JCSP English Day



David Jackon takes note at the English Day



We can figure this one out....



Walking a Poem at the English day - you should try it...it beats walking the dog.....

Pauline Kelly, of the Second Level Support Service, brought the participants through a roller coaster session on writing using film as a stimulus. **The Bourne Identity** was used to

illustrate the methodology which inspired quite a magnificent piece of creative writing from participating teachers.



Pauline Kelly uses modern film classics to energise creative writing.



Teachers at the English In-service Day.



Creative juices are flowing



A group of teachers involved in a creative writing exercise following a trip to the pictures!

JCSP Literacy Strategy

A School Wide Approach to Literacy Modular Course

Literacy levels are a cause for concern for many teachers. Poor literacy is at the heart of so many difficulties we are faced with in school today and JCSP schools are putting together wonderful programmes to improve things.

A School Wide approach to Literacy is the topic of one of the JCSP Modular Courses. Two days of this modular course have taken place. A School Wide Approach is an approach that is now internationally regarded as the way to go with regard improving literacy levels. Teachers at the in-service agreed that in some of our schools up to 60 % of the students are struggling with their literacy. The impact of this is felt in every classroom. No level of learning support can manage to tackle this level of difficulty alone. It needs everyone on board. The JCSP literacy in-service outlines some strategies for tackling the problem on three levels:

- * in the subject classrooms
- * through short term interventions
- * in the context of a school wide approach with access to reading materials.

Schools are encouraged to target all of the first year cohort with a literacy programme as it is such a crucial year. Students can be supported both to catch up-through interventions to accelerate literacy development – and to keep up with the help of classroom strategies.

Such programmes, implemented in the context of high expectations and an affirming climate can make all the difference.

Literacy development however, spans the whole school from first year through to honours sixth years who when higher order reading skills are vital. With this in mind the skilled classroom teacher is key to the success.

Subject departments are encouraged to examine the literacy demands of their subject and to be knowledgeable of the readability of their textbooks. The JCSP Support Service offers a range of strategies that subject teachers can employ in supporting students with poor literacy to access the curriculum: strategies for tackling textbooks, for marking effectively and giving feedback, for developing writing and reading fluency. A range of support materials is available from the support service to help teachers implement these strategies in the classroom.

Along side the work of the classroom teacher schools are asked to explore how they can provide students with time to read. The JCSP Stars Read Campaign, launched by an Taoiseach, Bertie Aherne in Croke Park earlier in the year is about encouraging reading. But first we must find the time.



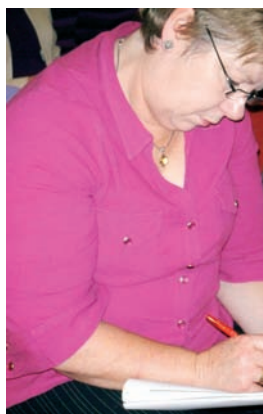
Schools are asked – ‘can you provide 20 minutes three times per week for reading?’. Here we ask that students be allowed time to read, and have access to reading material that is interesting but also appropriate to their reading age. Students who do not have regular opportunities to read at their own level they will find it very difficult to improve their literacy. School textbooks tend to have readability levels of around 14 – 15 years while the average reading age of JCSP students is about 9 years. This means that students are

faced with reading materials at least 6 years beyond their level day in, day out.

Finding 20 minutes 3 times per week is, however, a challenge. A challenge most JCSP schools are rising to. The large number of schools implementing, Drop Everything and Read, Paired Reading, Reading Challenge etc. shows how time for reading can be found. In many cases these interventions are becoming a regular feature of the school year in JCSP schools.



Literacy practices in JCSP classrooms



Working out the Readability of a Text at the literacy Day

The Modular course also allowed us to hear from practitioners who are developing very interesting elements to their Literacy Programmes. **Sinead O’Sullivan from Mercy Secondary School Goldenbridge** inspired the audience with her showing of a project her students had produced using **Photo Story** – a free imaging software downloadable from Microsoft.

She created a story with her students that was captured on

JCSP Literacy Strategy

A School Wide Approach to Literacy Modular Course



Catherine Slevin working hard at the literacy In-service

film and produced through this very, easy to use, software. Check it out, it's a very nice addition to your selection of tools to use with your students. Many teachers have JCSP digital camera from the initiatives so this would add great value to your digital photos.

Sinead also described her Drop Everything and Read Project where everyone in the school reads. Once the signal is given everyone in the school reads – the principal, the secretary, the teachers, the tea lady, the students everyone. Music over the intercom provides a soothing atmosphere and binds the school together in a common activity giving everyone a very clear message as to how reading is regarded by the school.

Ann Costello from Rosmini Community School outlined their cross age peer tutoring project. Ann's 2nd year JCSP students prepared to read to primary school students who attend a special school.

'Preplanning involved the selection of books for each student, The children are all at a different level in the primary school and have many disabilities so each book had to be inspected by their class teacher. The students doing the reading were given a programme to follow:

- * They were told to establish a relationship with the child
- * Describe the front cover, back and blurb of the book
- * Go through each picture in the book
- * Make a quiz based on the story

Then they were told to READ the story themselves. They were encouraged to be critical, say what they liked disliked about the book.

Finally they met the primary school pupil. They attempted to build a relationship with the child but this was quite difficult for some of them. The programme took place over one week each day. This was an excellent project. It gave

many of the JCSP students confident and at the same time presented them with a challenge. The weaker readers seemed to grow in confidence while the more fluid readers seemed to benefit from mixing with those who have disabilities. Some of the comments made by them included: 'You have to be patient' 'It's difficult to read to someone so young'.

Ann also ran a Drop Everything and Read Project with 3rd and 2nd year classes for 20 minutes every day for a week.

'A trolley of books and magazines was put together from existing stock along with new books and magazines bought in. Although students were very sceptical about the project before it began they kept reading and looked for full 40 minutes class and tended to read in pairs. The Guinness Book of Records was very popular; we had two copies, students fought to get these! Parents went out afterwards and bought the Guinness Book of Records which was on sale at this time of the year. Students were very reluctant to get involved the week before but loved it once we began and forced us to run for the full class time. A winning formula if this was the result!!'

On day 2 we had **Denise Meade from the Donahies Community School** describe her range of initiatives – five on the go at any time. She described a great team of teachers willing to get involved in all of the projects from *Make A Book to Reading Challenge* and *Paired Reading*. She brought along her **Talking Dice** which she found to be tremendous with the reluctant writers in her class. She found them to be a great support of creative writing which is often so difficult with the students. Denise described a school that is well on the road to a School Wide Approach to Literacy as so many of her team are engaging with the different JCSP strategies, interventions and support materials.



Literacy In-service



Readability Exercise

Denise O Flanagan from Firhouse Community School described a very sweet primary picture book initiative where her 2nd year students joined the primary school 1st class pupils...

'The class was first prepared explaining that we had chosen that group for their maturity etc. The group responded very well. We were afraid that one boy who has reading difficulties might back out, but he was EXTREMELY enthusiastic about it.

When we went to the primary school we were very impressed at, and proud of, the way they sat with their little groups of first class students and read 2 books to them. One of our students was so nervous he was literally shaking but he was delighted with himself. They were MODEL students and were very pleasant to the younger ones. One girl comes to mind. She has some behavioural problems and can be hostile. However, on that day she managed her group (which could have been lively) in a firm, positive way. I would definitely do this again.

I bought books and sweets as prizes for our own students and they presented the books they had read and a box of sweets to their own little groups. We presented certificates to our group at the end.

The parents of the primary school thought that this was a fantastic event and the principal has requested that we do it again.'

Marie Figeon from Abbey Community College described how she has developed and expanded Reading Challenge in her school to involved 3rd years as well as her Make A Book Project.

Jim O'Sullivan from Mallow, almost straight from the Young Scientist in the RDS described his winning research project on Word Millionaire. Well Done Jim.

The Modular courses were well received particularly, according to the evaluations, because of the voice of the practicing teachers. Participants really enjoyed hearing what was working in other schools and being inspired by the great work. A game mentioned by Ann Hughes **Bananagrams** and said to be very useful with the students was much appreciated. Writing frames and the discussion on marking policy was also noted as being particularly beneficial.

Literacy Support

Please note that further in-service on Literacy will be available and the support service also offer tailored, full staff in-service on *A School Wide Approach to Literacy* which is particularly tailored to meet the needs of the subject teacher and the individual school.

New Resource Pack for Writing School Literacy and Numeracy Plan

We have also developed a **Resource Pack** to support schools putting in place a literacy and numeracy plan. This pack will help schools in reviewing current provision and putting together their school literacy / numeracy plan. Please feel free to contact us should you like to get further information.

Check out **www.jcspliteracy.ie** to see the materials literacy / numeracy and resources that we have available to JCSP schools.



Ann Costello, Rosmini, with her colleagues at the Literacy In-service

Recommended Reads

The JCSP Demonstration Library Project library at St. Paul's Community College is now entering its sixth year and is a big part of school life. It is a busy place used by students, teachers and staff all through the day. The library is used for study, research, silent reading, as a space to facilitate group work and a host space for speakers, authors and visitors to the library. It is an active space and therefore can be the noisiest or quietest space in the school depending on what's going on.

Lunchtime activities include a craft club on a Monday, girls

club on Wednesday and a games club on a Thursday. There is also a homework club Monday – Wednesday for first years.

Students who use the library often comment that they would like to use the library even more.

"The couches are really cool it's the only time we get to relax in school"

"I love coming into the library to use the computers, the new ones are top class!"



Best New Book!

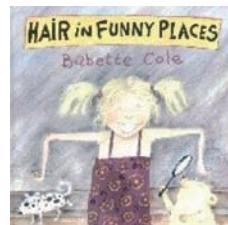
Title: The Invention of Hugo Cabret
Author: Brian Selznick
Publisher: Scholastic Inc.

ORPHAN, CLOCK KEEPER, AND THIEF, Hugo lives in the walls of a busy Paris train station, where his survival depends on secrets and anonymity. But then his world suddenly changes when he meets an eccentric, bookish girl and a bitter old man who runs a toy stall in the station, Hugo's undercover life, and his most precious secret, are put in jeopardy. At more than 500 pages, its proportions seem Potteresque, yet it makes for quick reading because Selznick's amazing drawings take up most of the book.

Most Read Book!

Title: Guinness World Records 2008
Publisher: Inc. Guinness World Records Limited; 2008 edition

Students associate this book with entertainment and do not necessarily think of it as a reading book. It has an attractive layout with eye-appealing pages that show pictures accompanied by explanations. Since most of the pictures are not self-explanatory, students must refer to the text. Students are curious about the book and even the most reluctant readers – as we have experienced – are eager to browse through it to discover the most fascinating records. Because of its bizarre and unique contents, a large number of students want to borrow this book. The Guinness Book of Records is an excellent source of general knowledge that can easily be linked with most cross-curricular areas.



Most Secretly Read Book!

Title: Hair in Funny Places
Author: Babette Cole

This is the most misfiled book in the library and my suspicions are that it is the most secretly read book here in St. Paul's. This is a funny, factual and frank book... the ideal ice-breaker for brave SPHE and Religion teachers. A glance at what happens to the body when it is hit by puberty. Hilarious illustrations of Mr and Mrs Hormone wreaking their revenge on the body, mixing their "Essence of Pube" and making mischief in the unsuspecting bodies of boys and girls as they fight their way towards adulthood will certainly raise a smile. But it is the frankness and simplicity of the text that really bites, encouraging an understanding of growing up.

For Teacher Collection

Title: Activities for Successful Spelling
Author: Philomena Ott

A practical activity workbook, which can be used separately, or as part of an integrated programme. Suitable for JCSP classrooms and one-to-one teaching of individuals with specific learning difficulties including dyslexia. Each section contains a range of multi-sensory activities, including word searches, simple crossword puzzles and dictation exercises. This is a great resource for anyone working with students who are struggling with spelling.



Hilary Cantwell, JCSP Librarian

Library Activities

from St. Paul's Community College



Games club in the library



A quiet read



Thanks to Allianz for their kind sponsorship of the refreshments at our launch of the Stars Read Campaign in Croke Park

New Design for the Student Profiling System



Co-ordinators do make sure you have your copy of the two folders that make up the new design for the Student Profiling System. Subject Statements Folder and Cross Curricular Statement Folder

JCSP Competition 2007 – National Winners & School Winners

A very sincere thank you to the huge number of teachers and students, that participated in this event. It was obvious that a considerable amount of time and effort was invested to produce the many outstanding entries that were received for this competition. The adjudication and judging of the "Overall Winners" and "Best in School" winners was a very difficult task, due to the quality and creativity of the entries. After much discussion and deliberating the following were selected.

National Winners

Jason McLoughlin, 1A, Ballinode College, Sligo.

Hong Xie, A3, Ennis Community College, Co. Clare

Laura Canavan, 2Ash, Abbey Community College, Wickow.

Leigh Kielthy, Bunclody Vocational School, Co. Wexford.

Christy Desmond, Bishop McEgan College, Macroom, Co. Cork.

Matthew Hendrick, Bunclody Vocational School, Co. Wexford

Wesley Kinsella, Group 2, St. Paul's YEP, Finglas, Dublin 11.

Lisa Larkin, New Ross Vocational College, Co. Wexford.

Shauna Jordan, 2A, Bunclody Vocational School, Co. Wexford.

Amanda Twomey, Terence McSweeney Community College, Cork.

Nikita Kearns, Mercy Secondary School, Goldenbridge, Dublin 8.

Craig Davies, New Court School, Newcourt Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

Rebecca Flood, St. Oliver's Community College, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Peter Braun, New Ross Vocational College, Co. Wexford.

Amy Brazil, Presentation Secondary School, Waterford.

Elizabeth McDonagh, A3, Ennis Community College, C. Clare.

Wesley Kinsella, St. Paul's YEP, Finglas, Dublin 11.

Danielle McAleer, St. Oliver's Community College, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Shaune Murphy, 2A, New Ross Vocational College, Co. Wexford.

Anthony Bradshaw, St. Paul's YEP, Finglas, Dublin 11.

Lukasz Kuchta, Bunclody Vocational School, Co. Wexford

Scott Shortall, Moyle Park College, Dublin 22.

Shane Cullinane, Rang 2B, Scoil Chuimsitheach Chiarain, An Cheathru Rua.

Dale Bazil, St. Paul's Community College, Waterford.

Khalim McCabe, Rosary College, Armagh Road, Crumlin, Dublin 12.

Nadia O'Brien, St. Thomas' Community College, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

Aaron Potts, 1A, Ballinode College, Sligo.

Crystal Kearns, Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore, Dublin 8.

Ruth Reynolds, New Court School, New Court Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

Jordan Burke, Collinstown Park Community College, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.

Declan Sheehan, Bishop Megan College, Macroom, Co. Cork.

Paul Hoban, Killinarden Community School, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

Kate Casey, Causeway Comprehensive School, Co. Kerry.

Helen Curtis, Bridgetown Vocational School, Co. Wexford.

Stephen Naughton, St. Peter's School, Rathgar, Dublin 6.

Michael Wilton, St. Oliver's Community College, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Donnchadh O'Falthaigh, Meanscoil San Nicholas, Waterford.

Gemma Walsh, Presentation Secondary School, Co. Waterford.

Kelly Anne McGannon, Bunclody Vocational School, Co. Wexford.

Kathleen O'Brien, 1 Rowan, Abbey Community College, Wicklow.

Jordan Russell, Balbriggan Community College, Co. Dublin.

Rebecca Breslin, St. Mary's School for Deaf Girls, Cabra, Dublin 7.

Gemma Fitzpatrick, Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore.

Tommy Ward, St. Patrick's College, Tuam, Co. Galway.

Jakub Rutkowski, St. Patrick's Community College, Naas, Co. Kildare.

Edvinas Plauskys, 2A, Vocational College, New Ross, Co. Wexford.

Best in School Winners

Tony Middleton, Muine Bheag Vocational School, Co. Carlow

Joe Carolan, A3, Ennis Community College, Co. Clare.

CJ Dolan, 2C, Terence McSweeney Community College, Cork.

Close up on...

The "Close up on..." section in our Newsletter provides a forum to showcase, acknowledge and highlight some of the range of JCSP activities and achievements in one particular school setting.

Cobh Community College has been selected as the first school to be featured and showcased. It is hoped that "Close Up on..." will become a regular and popular feature in all future Newsletters.



First Year Maths Games

Principal: Frank Donovan
Deputy Principal: Thomas Jones
JCSP Co-ordinator: Mary Smiddy

JCSP... The Cobh Experience

"We welcome all, on a basis of care and respect, and encourage each one to strive for personal excellence"

We began our JCSP journey in September 2005 with a second year group. Since then, 72 students have benefited from the programme. At present our numbers are as follows:

- Rang Aisling, Third Year, 8 students
- Rang Aoife, Second Year, 9 students
- Rang Ferdia, First Year, 11 students

When deciding on a structure for the programme we prioritised:

- * Literacy and numeracy development (6 classes per week as opposed to 4)
- * Creating positive learning experiences for all students
- * Encouraging regular attendance and ensuring school completion

- * Promoting opportunities for success
- * Improving students' self-esteem
- * Increasing positive contact with home
- * Developing cross-curricular approaches
- * Reducing the number of exam subjects while maintaining a broad based curriculum

What has worked well in JCSP?

- * From an organisational point of view, having a well-stocked Project Box with markers, pencils etc. has increased the popularity of the JCSP throughout the whole school.
- * The JCSP Student profiling process has increased students' confidence and self-esteem.
- * Paired Reading, with TY's working as tutors to First Years, increases social interaction between senior and junior students and promotes reading among both groups. At this stage, some of our tutors are JCSP graduates.
- * Reading Challenge promotes parent/ student/teacher co-operation, encourages reading at home, allows students to become familiar with writing book reviews and provides another opportunity to celebrate!

Close up on...



Day Canoeing

- * Word Millionaire has been a spectacular success in our school. The students' natural sense of competition and fun has meant that, on both occasions we have run this initiative, the students have surpassed the 2,000,000 word barrier. This causes much discussion and positive feedback from other groups.
- * Last year we got the 2C SRA Reading box and pre and post testing affirmed the benefits of this programme.



Make A Book

- * Make A Book is usually the highlight of our 2nd year group. Topics have varied greatly... 'Titanic', 'A Christmas Celebration', 'Knights and Castles'... but whatever the topic, participation in Make A Book always provides many valuable learning experiences for the students, e.g.
 - learning how to examine and research a topic using a cross curricular approach
 - providing opportunities to work on their own initiative (often requiring considerable amount of work to be performed at home).
 - developing their social and communication skills and competencies
 - getting the opportunity to display their work to the whole school and to the wider community e.g. on Awards Night and on Open Night
 - providing an opportunity for students to see other school 'Make A Book' exhibits

- * Participation in Make A Book can also achieve many other positive outcomes:
 - developing a class spirit
 - elevating the status of the class and making them feel very important and prominent in school
 - providing students with a great sense of pride in their work
- * Maths Games and Flashmaster have been enthusiastically received, creating active learning situations.

Comments

"Since the JCSP was initiated in Cobh Community College in September 2003 it has gone from strength to strength. Few initiatives have given so many students a very strong and personal belief in themselves as individuals, as this programme has managed to do. The sense of achievement and self-esteem that has been fostered in each student is a remarkable testament to the programme itself and the staff involved, particularly our Co-ordinator, Mary Smiddy."

(Principal)

"The girls enjoyed the different activities they were involved in and when they got their Junior Cert results we were very pleased with them."

(Parent)



Samba

"Rang Aisling is a very enthusiastic class that works well. They are also very helpful in class and are a delight to work with"

(Teacher)



**Word Millionaire
Winner Jan 2008**

Summer Celebration

Summer is fast approaching and it is time to think of organising a Summer celebration. This is an opportunity to display student's work, to share the activities, projects and successes of the school year. By presenting awards to students and celebrating their achievements we hope to help them approach the Junior Certificate exams with confidence.

As a positive occasion it attracts many parents who might normally be reluctant to visit the school. It is important for students to have their work affirmed by their teachers, co-ordinator and principal but most important of all by their parents.

There is a small subvention available to schools to help meet the cost of hosting a Summer Celebration.

To apply please complete the fax form below and return by April 18th 2008.

Please include any further information which you feel is relevant.



Fax Reply – JCSP Summer Celebration Initiative April 2008

JCSP Fax: 01 402 0435

School: _____

Principal: _____

Co-ordinator: _____

Fax: _____

Please note that applications for this subvention must be returned by April 18th.

Summer Celebration – €100

Outline of Proposal _____

Proposed implementation dates: _____

We will furnish an evaluation report: _____

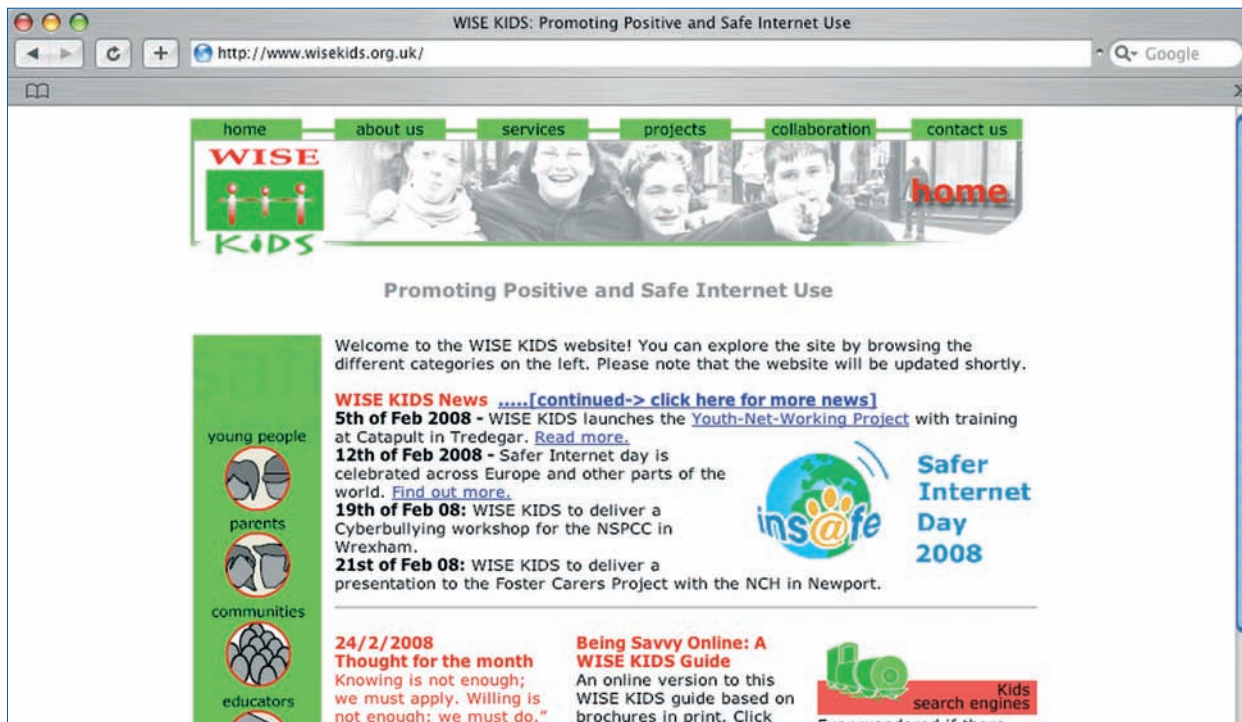
Signed: _____

Principal: _____

JCSP Co-ordinator: _____

Useful Websites

Wise Kids – A Website Promoting Internet Safety



Karen O'Shea, Librarian in Jobstown, finds this website useful for suggesting ways of providing safe internet usage. Check it out www.wisekids.org.uk

Web English Teacher



Some great ideas to be found on Web English Teacher

In-service Calendar January to June 2008

Course	Dates	Venues
New Co-ordinators Meeting – For new co-ordinators of schools which joined the Programme this year	Tuesday 15th January 2008	The Regency Hotel, Drumcondra
Make A Book Introductory Meeting - *Half Day AM For teachers new to the Make A Book Project who hope to participate in the exhibition in April.	Tuesday 22nd January 2008 Wednesday 23rd January 2008	Limerick Education Centre Curriculum Development Unit
Whole School Approach to Literacy Development at Junior Cycle – Modular Day 2 Practical approaches to making your subject accessible for students with literacy difficulties. Teachers will outline what has worked well in their classroom.	Tuesday 29th January 2008	The Regency Hotel, Drumcondra
JCSP Library Co-ordinators Meeting – For JCSP Co-ordinators in Library Project Schools	Friday 1st February 2008	Curriculum Development Unit
Developing Readers and Reading Spaces in your School Modular Day 2 – This course will look at ways in which schools can create reading spaces; develop their stock of books and increase their students' reading for pleasure.	Tuesday 5th February 2008	Curriculum Development Unit
Regional Cluster Network Meetings – for JCSP teachers and co-ordinators, an opportunity to share best practice and resources	Wednesday 6th February 2008	Wexford Education Centre, Tralee Education Centre, Dublin West Education Centre
Regional Cluster Network Meetings – for JCSP teachers and co-ordinators, an opportunity to share best practice and resources	Thursday 7th February 2008	Clare Education Centre
Making Sense of Maths & Numeracy at Junior Cycle Modular Day 2 – Presentations will offer strategies and techniques in the teaching of Maths and Numeracy, sharing resources and best practice.	Thursday 7th February 2008	The Regency Hotel, Drumcondra
Using Digital Images to Tell a Story – how to use a digital camera creatively to make a multimedia rich story in any subject area. This will be a practical session.	Tuesday 19th February 2008	Digital Hub Dublin
Outdoor Activities and Cross-Curricular Links – his session will look at successful strategies for bringing the outdoors into the classroom – linking PE, Geography, History, Science and other curricular areas.	Wednesday 20th February 2008	Donegal Education Centre
Geography Statement & Resources Review: – Teachers interested in updating and developing statements	Thursday 21st February 2008	Curriculum Development Unit
History Statement Review: Teachers interested in updating and developing statements.	Thursday 21st February 2008	Curriculum Development Unit
English Statement Review: Teachers interested in updating and developing statements.	Thursday 21st February 2008	Curriculum Development Unit
Technical Graphics Statement Review: Teachers interested in updating and developing statements.	Thursday 21st February 2008	Curriculum Development Unit
Gaeilge & the JCSP – Presentations will offer strategies and techniques in the teaching of Gaeilge, sharing resources and best practice.	Tuesday 26th February 2008	The Ambassador Hotel, Cork
Drama in Education: Creative drama and theatre in education workshop with poet and author Terry McDonagh	Thursday 28th February 2008	Curriculum Development Unit
Co-ordinators Meeting – Support for Co-ordinators & Librarians in implementing the JCSP in school. Recent updates and Final Profiling will be outlined.	Wednesday 5th March 2008 Thursday 6th March 2008 Thursday 6th March 2008 Monday 10th March 2008 Wednesday 12th March 2008 Thursday 13th March 2008	Donegal Education Centre Drumcondra Education Centre Cork Ambassador Hotel Limerick Education Centre Monaghan Education Centre Curriculum Development Unit
Make A Book Exhibition Dublin – Exhibition of students' writing	Wednesday 9th April 2008	Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin
Make A Book Exhibition Cork – Exhibition of students' writing	Tuesday 22nd April 2008	Millennium Hall, City Hall, Cork

PLEASE NOTE YOU WILL BE INFORMED OF ANY CHANGES TO THIS CALENDAR

Times: Full day courses commence at 10.00, registration at 9.30, and finish at 3.30.

If you are interested in attending any of the in-service courses, your JCSP co-ordinator has a copy of the fax reply form, or call the JCSP office to reserve a place on 01 402 0425 / 01 453 5487 or email jcsp@iol.ie. Tailored, in-school, full staff in-service on any aspect of the JCSP framework can be arranged with the Support Service.

The Support Team



Aideen Cassidy – *National Co-ordinator
Literacy Advisor*

Tel: 087 233 3839
Email: aideen.cassidy@cdu.cdvec.ie
aideencassidy@slss.ie

Bernadette Kiely – *Assistant National Co-ordinator
JCSP Library Project Co-ordinator*

Tel: 087 220 8187
Email: bernie.kiely@cdu.cdvec.ie
berniekiely@slss.ie

Kathleen Moran – *Senior Project Librarian
JCSP Demonstration Library Project*

Tel: 087 214 7787
Email: kathleen.moran@cdu.cdvec.ie

Jerry McCarthy – *JCSP Regional Development Officer
Numeracy Advisor*

Tel: 087 654 0164
Email: jerrymccarthy@slss.ie

Isabel Baker – *JCSP Regional Development Officer
Literacy Advisor*

Tel: 086 172 6174
Email: isabelbaker@slss.ie

Mary Clare Higgins – *JCSP Regional Development Officer
Literacy/Numeracy Advisor*

Tel: 087 626 3151
Email: maryclarehiggins@slss.ie

Statia Somers – *JCSP Regional Development Officer
Literacy Advisor*

Tel: 087 263 7837
Email: statiasomers@slss.ie

Denise O’Flanagan – *JCSP Regional Development Officer
Literacy/Numeracy Advisor*

Tel: 087 962 7555
Email: deniseoflanagan@slss.ie

Mick O’Riordan – *JCSP Regional Development Officer
Literacy Advisor*

Tel: 087 216 2351
Email: michaeloriordan@slss.ie

Dorothy Butterly – *JCSP Regional Development Officer
Literacy Advisor*

Tel: 087 654 0246
Email: dorothybutterly@slss.ie

Lisa Carter – *Office Manager*

Tel: 01 453 5487
Email: lisa.carter@cdu.cdvec.ie

Damien O’Reilly – *Office Manager*

Tel: 01 402 0425
Email: damien.o’reilly@cdu.cdvec.ie

Tommy Doonan – *Administration*

Tel: 01 453 5487
Email: tommy.doonan@cdu.cdvec.ie

Dorota Ruszczok – *Administration*

Tel: 01 453 5487

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The Junior Certificate School Programme Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and the Demonstration Library Project is funded by the Early Literacy Initiative and the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) Action Plan.

Do Get in touch...

...if we can support your school in any way in implementing the JCSP. We are available to visit your school, as well as engage in a process of professional development with the team of teachers or the full staff. We can provide inputs on any aspect of the JCSP, as well as the JCSP Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, in the context of a process of professional development.

Additionally, please let us know of your views or comments on any aspect of the Student Profiling System. We need to hear how you are finding the use of statements in your classroom and how the process of positive feedback to the students is going.