



The Future (B)looms



Dr Christy Duffy
Chief Executive,
LWETB

As the year ends does the future bloom or loom? Much of this year has been dominated in the sociopolitical space by uncertainty. Almost every day the Brexit/news brought new ground breaking political developments. Regardless of where the future leads or which path is chosen we are in uncharted territory. Historians of the future will possibly read and interpret events in ways we cannot currently envisage.

All of this impacts on the education and training world we inhabit. In all our area of work we are in the midst of large scale changes that are shaping how education and training is taking place

and will take place in an Ireland of the future. So in this newsletter we looking at how LWETB is preparing for the future in every area of work we are responsible for. This is the theme which runs through all the different articles.

Our Vision Statement as outlined in our 5 year Strategy Statement speaks about developing and delivering high quality, vibrant, professional education and training services. Achieving this in times of uncertainty can be a challenge. We do not know what the future holds so how do we know whether the education and training services we are offering are

actually any good or be of any benefit to our learners in the future? The reality is we cannot know with certainty.

So our choice is either do nothing and keep doing the same things we always did or take a chance and use our collective wisdom to offer education and training services that prepare for a future we cannot be certain about. Luckily in LWETB we are committed to preparing for the future whether that be a future that blooms or looms. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our staff for the creativity and commitment to shaping the future that underpins the work we do in LWETB.

Preview:

Making Music Happen with
Music Generation

Training for the future at Athlone
Training Centre

LWETB linking with the wider European
Education Community



Students receiving their Academic Awards pictured with Dr. Christy Duffy CE LWETB and Liz Lavery Director of Schools, Youth and Music.

We would like to wish all our staff a very Happy Christmas & a peaceful New Year

Changing needs of Learners in Athlone VTOS

Athlone VTOS has had many changes in the last few years – the major one being that we moved premises and now have fantastic up to date facilities for students and staff. Three years ago Athlone VTOS was in a standalone building that had no parking facilities for students and no canteen. Now we are part of the campus at Garrycastle Training Centre which offers free parking and excellent canteen facilities to students and staff alike!

Free transport also means that Athlone VTOS is available to those outside the usual Athlone catchment area. The IT and Art facilities are second to none. The art class was specially designed so that there was plenty of space light and equipment for all the hands on activity that takes place there. Ceramics is a compulsory module in the Art programme and the ventilated kiln is placed in a special section of the art room so that students are able to get their final glazed pieces straight away!

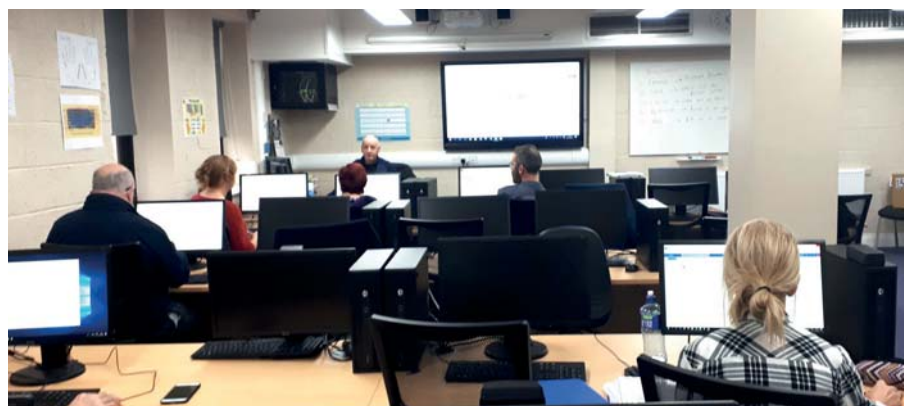
The IT rooms have all the latest computers and Clevertouch screens in the room for interactive use by the tutors. One Communications/ Software Development room is in the process of being updated and will boast 2 Clevertouch screens and seating area where students can work on group projects. Our horticulture area has been recently updated and designed by landscaping students at Garrycastle with a beautiful paved area, seating area, raised beds and polytunnel.

The benefit of being part of a larger campus is huge for students. Progression for VTOS students is one of our key areas - be it to employment or progression to another course or third level. There are many courses of various levels and types here in the Garrycastle campus and students are now crossing over from courses at Garrycastle to VTOS and vice versa. Adult Guidance is also on site so there are many support mechanisms for students.



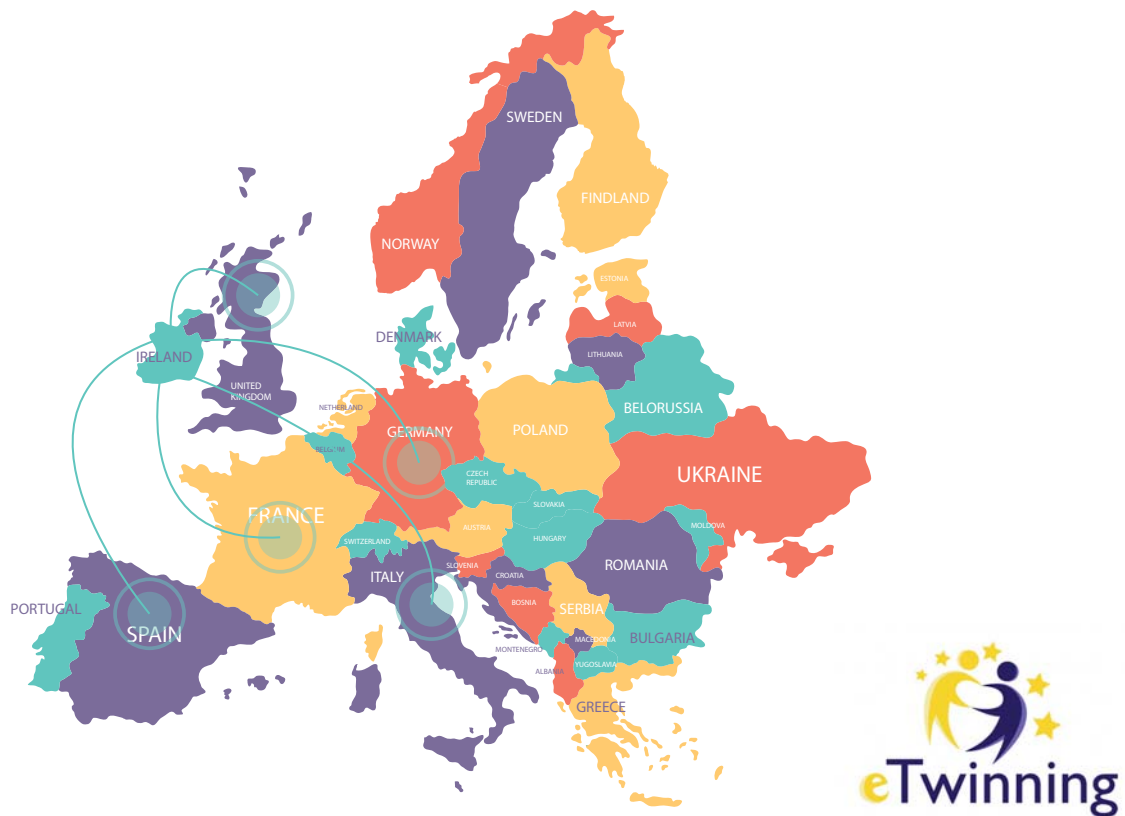
Pottery & ceramic work from Art students

Raised beds, paved area and polytunnel
- The horticulture area has been recently updated and designed by landscaping students at Garrycastle



The latest Clevertouch screens in our IT rooms

LWETB linking with the wider European Education Community.



On the 24th October 580 delegates from 45 countries gathered at the 2019 eTwinning conference in France. There were only 6 Irish secondary schools represented one of which was Columba College. Columba College was extended an invitation to attend the conference as we have previously completed eTwinning projects over the last number of years. eTwinning is a digital platform that is available in 31 languages. It is a community for schools in Europe and neighboring countries to share ideas, resources and work together to break boundaries and cross borders through a range of collaborative projects and activities. The theme of the conference was Democracy-Developing a Democratic Culture in our Schools - If not in Schools Then Where? In an ever changing society it is vital that our education system supports our students in developing an understanding of democratic decision making and encouraging

them to take an active role. It would be easy in our schools to say that the teaching of democracy should fall to the CSPE or the History teachers. It requires day to day learning, allowing students to observe, reflect, compare, research and experiment for themselves.

Schools are the perfect setting to learn about democracy, in fact there are few other settings where one can view a mix of justice and injustice, equality and inequality, participation and alienation, power and powerlessness while also learning to express ones ideas and debate, discuss, negotiate, be flexible and to argue and advocate for those who are treated unfairly.

Are our schools a place where our students are in a position to express their opinions even when they disagree with their peers and or teachers? Are we providing opportunities for them to get involved in real life school projects or issues? Are we taking their opinions

about how schools operate and are ran seriously or are we just ticking boxes? There appears to be no way to advocate democratic schools without inviting in democracy and politics.

Where the differences appear however, is on the matter of time. With the exception of our British neighbors, we are the only other education system that has placed the focus of teaching and learning firmly on the exam results and points. However all is not lost as there appears a window of opportunity in the structure of the Junior Cert, where teachers have more autonomy in their classrooms. This ownership needs to be grabbed with both hands in an effort to create classrooms that promote critical thinking, to allow our students to interact effectively and constructively with others, while fostering a culture of behaving in a socially responsible manner and of course providing space for democratic citizenship.- if not in schools then where?

Reflection from LWETB Youth Officer Maria Fox

As a new year and decade beckons in a matter of weeks, I ask what stands out for the Youth Work Unit as the abiding recollection from 2019?

The sometimes mundane tasks and duties that occupy our daily working lives filling our diary, desk and head spaces with to do lists, appointments, stresses and strains. But I do suspect you're interested in young people; in working to improve their lives and outcomes and are particularly concerned for the most marginalised, vulnerable and seldom heard of them. I suspect you're interested in being a good adult in their lives?

That's what keeps me going through the toughest of times and why what I choose to recall and highlight are the often little and occasionally bigger, eternally quiet examples of how due to the support of LWETB and ultimately the dedication and passion of a vibrant youth work sector in Longford and Westmeath the lives of young people are affected and improved daily because of what we do. These are the unseen successes of an unknown but dynamic, diverse and innovative

education methodology and practice that is Youth Work.

I think of the achievement of the young man in Athlone who sat and passed the Leaving Cert because of the direct intervention of a youth worker from the Gateway Project and who has since progressed to the Training Workshop. I think of the young men living in direct provision in Longford town engaging weekly with Co Longford Youth Service to address complex personal and group issues for the first time and enjoying themselves too on a trip to an international soccer match in the Aviva Stadium. I think of the pride of the young traveller women from the Youth Work Ireland Midlands project in Mullingar on presenting their art work publically in the local library. And I think of the LGBTI+ young people supported by Foróige, Youth Work Ireland Midlands and Co. Longford Youth Service to participate in local and national events. These are just a few of the countless examples of how youth work changes the lives of young people and why LWETB is proud to highlight this intrinsic and growing function.

LWETB will administer 33% more youth work funding in 2019. This includes new and additional funding for targeted youth work, capital funding for the purchase of equipment, annual grants for voluntary youth clubs and the specific funding for LGBTI+ and Youth Employability Initiatives to a total of over €800,000. LWETB Youth Work Unit plays its part in supporting the "one good adults" across Longford and Westmeath in their important work. Well done to you all, LWETB supports you.



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthai Óige
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health



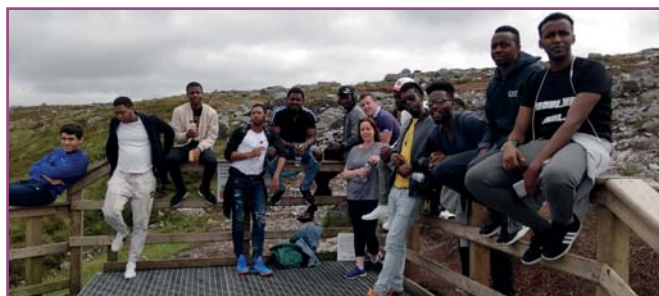
Learning through recreational and sporting activities



Mullingar Youth project Art Exhibition



Developing practical skills



Longford Youth Service on a recent hike

Shared Services Project - New Changes at LWETB



LWETB Head Office, Marlinstown Business Park, Mullingar

Longford and Westmeath ETB have recently commenced work on the implementation of the Shared Services Payroll Project. This project is being rolled out in conjunction with the Education Shared Business Services Centre (ESBS). This Centre has been established by the Department of Education and Skills to deliver shared services to the Education and Training sector nationally. This project involves the migration of existing Payroll and Travel and Subsistence (T&S) activities on a phased (wave) basis from all 16 ETBs to the ESBS Centre, located in Blanchardstown.

What are the benefits of moving Payroll and T & S to the ESBS Centre?

By migrating existing Payroll and T&S activities from all 16 ETBs to the ESBS Centre, there will be a common set of HR and payroll standard, policies and procedures across these

functions and across the sector.

By centralising the functions and standardising our approach to these activities we will free up resources to support LWETB to focus on its core objective, to deliver dynamic, diverse and innovative education and training services across Longford and Westmeath.

What does this mean of me as a staff member?

Following the migration of payroll and T&S to the ESBS Centre, your pay and travel & subsistence claims will be processed by the Centre, instead of LWETB. You will continue to get paid into your nominated bank account.

Currently LWETB uses Megapay for payroll and manages HR by a mixture of systems and a set of manual processes. As part of this project, a new Employee Self-Service System (CoreHR) will also be introduced.

Once this project is complete, you will be given access to the new system, this will then allow you: Access your pay details online, e.g. pay slips and other pay related documents, at a time that suits you.

- Print off your pay slips online.
- Update your personal information, including your bank details.
- Submit your T&S claims online.
- Submit leave requests online.

When will this migration to the Shared Business Services Centre happen?

LWETB is included in Wave 2 of the migration process and the project commenced in October and is currently scheduled to go live in quarter 2 of 2020.

The project is being co-ordinated by LWETB's HR Department. Further communications will follow via email in the coming weeks. Any queries can be submitted to payrollsharedservices@lwetb.ie

Horticulture programme from Athlone Training Centre has overachieved immensely!



Students on the LTI level 5 Horticulture programme that takes place at the horticulture training unit, Belvedere House, Mullingar

In September 2009 Belvedere House in Mullingar opened its doors to an LTI level 5 Horticulture programme. Westmeath Community Development, in conjunction with Athlone Training Centre, established classroom facilities within the visitor's centre. The programme began with 22 students studying nine modules and working practically within the grounds and gardens on various projects which required immediate attention. It became clear from the feedback of the students that the course was popular and enjoyable.

In 2012 the programme received new Training units from LWETB including classrooms and offices situated beside the walled garden. Funding from Belvedere of €5000 toward the polytunnels also showed the commitment to the programme, which enabled us to propagate over 20 thousand plants to date. The Horticulture team, coupled with administration support has an enormous wealth of Horticulture expertise behind them.

The extensive combined knowledge of both tutors, from traveling to gardens all over the world, offers students a unique opportunity to gain practical knowledge and skills. In 2018 the staff designed, with LWETB, the Garden Design level 5 module which is now available and delivered on the programme along with Plant ID, Plant Science, Soil science, plant propagation and a host of other modules. Dermot O Neil, gardening expert and RTE correspondent, worked alongside the coordinator to create the new RTE series 'Dermot's Secret Garden' and the students spent two years preparing his walled garden in Clondeglass, Co. Offaly for the cameras. In return Dermot brought the TV show to Belvedere to highlight the programme.

The coordinator also designed the LARCC garden in Multyfarnham and all landscape work and materials were fundraised for and implemented by the LTI Programme launched by President Mary McAleese.



In 2012 Annemarie Fleming and Darren Lynch were the first students to travel to the International Headquarters in KEW London to undertake their work experience there. Since then the Kew-Belvedere link has developed and we have had twelve students travel to Kew working in the Tropical glasshouses and Arboretum tutored by the best horticultural professionals in the UK including Tony Kirkham. This was the springboard for many to explore a degree in horticulture at the Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin. The LTI course at Belvedere has now sent over twenty-five students to the Botanical Gardens and ITB to complete their degrees. A phenomenal achievement for a programme which is designed to help those geographically and educationally disadvantaged within the Midlands. To date, there are six students are currently studying there not bad out of 12 for Educational progression! The programme has sustained an 80% progression rate throughout its progress over ten years. Looking around Ireland today you will see our students featured in management and assistant roles in Tullynally Castle, Birr Castle Board Bia, Outlook Gardens, Kelly Nurseries, Fernhill Garden Centre, Centre Parcs and Lyons Estate. Belvedere and the public continue to see the fruits of the students' skills and labour at the walled garden, a huge asset to the community.

“Rattle & Hum” - LWETB Music - Helping young people in Longford and Westmeath find ‘What they are looking for’!!



Students enjoying a Music Generation event



LWETB is delighted to be a key leader in the development, nurturing and growing of musicians and performers of the future in Longford and Westmeath. Music Generation, Ireland's National Music Education Programme transforms the lives of children and young people through access to high quality performance music education. Initiated by Music Network, Music Generation is co-funded by U2, The Ireland Funds, the Department of Education and Skills and Local Music Education Partnerships.

Music Generation has developed significantly in the last 5 years and is expected to expand further by 2021 with over 48,500 children and young people accessing services nationally.

Currently operating in Westmeath, LWETB in partnership with Laois Offaly ETB and Offaly County Council support Music Generation Offaly Westmeath (MGOW) to provide music education programmes to young people of all ages to develop musicianship and singing in their locality.

This partnership is 'making music happen' and guided by the values of equality of access, quality of experience, partnerships, creativity and sustainability and aims to make creating music part of young people's lives; to give them life enhancing skills through learning to sing and play instruments; to generate opportunities for children and young people to experience making music

with others whilst contributing to the development of their personal and social identity.

Programmes take place in a range of settings, both educational and community, during the day, at evenings and weekends. All of our programmes are delivered by professional musicians and performers and include instrument outreach programmes, live music performances, orchestra work and choral programmes.

An annual highlight is Singfest. This festival of singing brings together hundreds of singers of all ages over the course of 5 days. This secondary school focused day is very popular, providing pupils with a great opportunity to try something new and sing their hearts out!

LWETB is also pleased to be in partnership with Longford County Council establishing Music Generation in County Longford. Recruitment for a Development Officer is expected to be completed in the coming weeks and represents a huge step forward for children and young people in the Longford area, providing opportunities that heretofore were not available.

In a world of evolving uncertainty, music can be a common language. Who knows what the future will hold for LWETB Music Generation participants – the next U2 maybe??

**“ Education isn't just about feeding the brain.
Art and music feed the heart and soul.”**

- Julia Garwood



Youthreach continues to move with the times

Ballymahon Youthreach has recognised that student needs have changed and accordingly, has diversified its programme delivery over the past 5 years in a number of ways. Student evaluations form a central tenet of our annual Centre Evaluation and Improvement Plan. Students now look for a more engaging approach to teaching and learning. Management have identified a number of key areas to meet these needs:

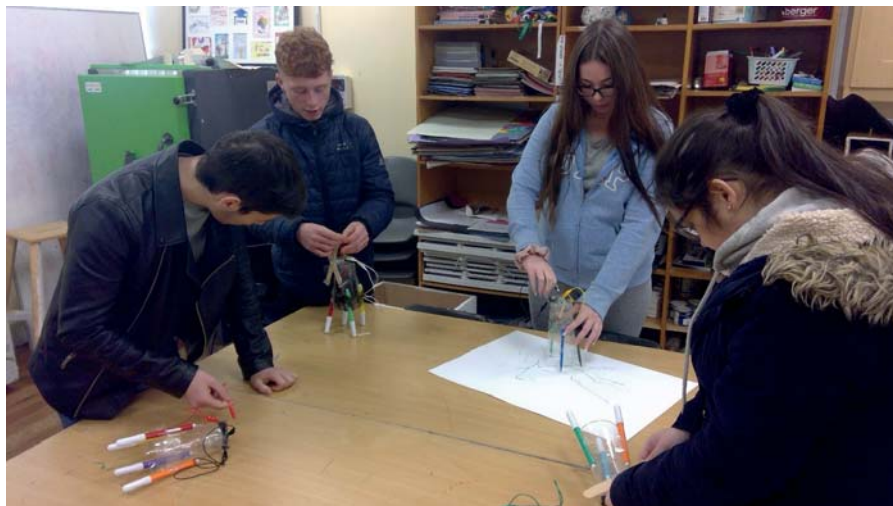
More practical modules – Students have a wide range of learning styles and require a more holistic approach to module delivery. New practical subjects such as Pyrography, STEM, Electronics, etc. allow for more kinesthetic learning to take place. Core modules like Personal Effectiveness can integrate with these subjects for a more applied understanding of concepts such as goal-setting, group-work, personal responsibility, selfmanaged learning and health & safety.

I.T. Infrastructure – Investing in a strong I.T. infrastructure provides students with the wherewithal to engage with Information & Communications Technology at a level that was impossible 5 years ago. High-speed broadband, wi-fi data points, computers, laptops and interactive white-boards have become central to providing a modern learning environment of greater collaboration, communication and integration.

Digital learning tools – Staff have identified the need for a broadening of the base of teaching methodologies in the Centre. TEL courses which are being undertaken by some staff have given rise to digital tools becoming a central part of programme delivery. These tools, such as Socrative, Mindmeister, Mentimeter, Kahoot, etc. have allowed teachers provide greater differentiation of instruction to our students.

Online delivery of homework – Smartphones have become ubiquitous with young people and our provision needs to reflect this reality. With access becoming an issue over the years, Ballymahon Youthreach has developed a Homework Programme where students can log-in and complete their work remotely on their phones or on a home computer. Automated corrections allow the centre to quickly identify students who may be struggling or who may have specific learning difficulties.

Digitally delivered assessments – All staff have been provided with training in Microsoft Office 365. With a greater emphasis over the years on transparency and the life-cycle of assessments, teachers are now presenting student portfolios digitally. OneNote allows all data to be easily recorded and retrieved for Internal Verification and External Authentication. It also affords students the opportunity to easily continue from where they left off and work at their own pace. It has also encouraged teacher collaboration.



Students in STEM class in Ballymahon Youthreach



Students engaging in learning through digital tools

YOUTHREACH



Ireland's EU Structural and Investment Funds Programmes 2014-2020
Co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION
Investing in your future
European Social Fund

Celebrating Success - Our Future is in Safe Hands

If past performance is an indicator of future performance, then the students achieving recognition at the LWETB Annual Academic Excellence Awards 2019 will be very successful indeed! Fourteen young people from 7 LWETB schools received recognition for their academic achievement in Leaving Certificate at a ceremony held in The Park Hotel, Mullingar on Friday 6th September 2019. They were accompanied by family and friends to honour and celebrate their success.

The overall winner for the highest points achieved for 2019 was presented to Ms Emma Lennon from Athlone Community College. Emma is studying Mathematical Science in NUIG. All students achieving awards on the evening have progressed to both third level education or apprenticeships thereby ensuring that the future is safe in the hands of these competent and confident young people.



Luka Moric, Athlone Community College receiving award from Dr. Christy Duffy CE LWETB



Eimear Corcoran & Dylan Kiernan Ardcoil Phádraig, Granard



Ronan Farrell, Ballymahon Vocational School receiving award from Dr. Christy Duffy CE LWETB



Emma Lennon, Athlone Community College receiving award from Dr. Christy Duffy CE LWETB



Tara Noonan, Ballymahon Vocational School receiving award from Dr. Christy Duffy CE LWETB



Zofia Mika, Templemichael College, Longford receiving award from Dr. Christy Duffy CE LWETB



PJ Connaughton, Lanesboro Community College, receiving award from Dr. Christy Duffy CE LWETB



Hannah Hynes & Aidan Colgan, Mullingar Community College



Orla Costello, Lanesboro Community College, receiving award from Dr. Christy Duffy CE LWETB



Pádraig McCarthy, Castlepollard Community College, receiving award from Dr. Christy Duffy CE LWETB

Longford Family Learning - a huge success over the years

DEIS was launched in 2005 by the Department of Education and Skills. DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) is a national programme aimed at addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities. Schools participating in the DEIS programme have a high percentage of families from low socioeconomic backgrounds with incomes below the national average. Children in this category are in danger of school failure. By raising the education levels of mothers particularly in these families, the level of education of children is raised also.

The Adult Literacy service in Longford runs the DEIS programme under the Longford Family Learning Programme as part of Longford and Westmeath Education and Training board. DEIS schools in the county access training for parents through their Home School Liaison officer as required by each school in consultation with parents.

Programmes that are ongoing presently are: English as a Second Language (ESOL), Project Maths, Relaxation & Mindfulness, Xmas Crafts, Phonics and programmes as requested by schools. Schools in Longford town work together and amalgamate parents to access programmes.

In recent years ESOL for parents has been the highest demand with the influx of families from central Europe, Asia and Africa. At present we offer a beginners, intermediate and more advanced class for parents in the schools. The focus of these classes are on language for everyday life. Skills for parenting, accessing services and employment are creating a difference in the lives of people attending the programmes.

The mental health awareness upsurge in schools and society has led to a greater demand for Relaxation and Mindfulness classes. The focus of the Relaxation and Mindfulness class is to enhancing

parents' skills and awareness of the benefits for themselves, their children and grandchildren.

Project Maths is normally an intergenerational programme, enhancing parents and children's skills, raising the education level of parents and children. DEIS programmes planned for the future are more practically based with cookery, food & nutrition high on the agenda, DIY practical skills, gardening with your child as we approach spring.



Nader and Zina along with English teacher Sue O'Connor at their English class in Granard

Leadership and Management in LWETB Post-Primary Schools – A New Era

LWETB are currently embedding the implementation of Circular Letter 03/2018 in all its schools in Longford and Westmeath. The shift from the old Post of Responsibility model to the new Assistant Principal position is viewed as a positive move in the development of not only schools, but also the development of staffs while providing for a realignment of how schools are run and managed.

The Quality Framework for Leadership and Management in Irish schools as set out in 'Looking At Our School 2016 - a Quality Framework', provided a common understanding and language around the organisation and practice of leadership and management roles in Irish second-level schools. It identifies the key leadership and management areas in a school and includes Leading Teaching and Learning; Managing the organisation; Leading school development and Developing leadership capacity. Support for schools and providing groundwork for the successful implementation of the circular was a central focus for LWETB during academic year 2018/2019.

Key to the successful implementation of this new model was a complete review of Needs and Priorities in each school. This involved considerable engagement by the school community over a number of meetings to establish the overarching needs of each school. Following agreement on the Needs and Priorities by school leaders and staff, Boards of Management played their role in reviewing the needs. Finally, the Needs and Priorities was submitted to LWETB Head Office for review by the Director of Schools and sign off by the Chief Executive. While this work demanded time and effort in schools at the outset, it was a vital component in the successful implementation of a new middle management structure. It was clear that a distributed leadership model could only succeed if clear

overarching responsibilities were identified in the first instance.

Following agreement on the Needs and Priority of schools, significant recruitment competitions were held over a number of months paralleling with training to school leaders. Further comprehensive schedule and delivery of training provided by LWETB was provided to existing and newly appointed Assistant Principals.

At this point LWETB have completed the main recruitment for AP1 and AP2 positions for all our schools and training completed for 2019. Following the recruitment for posts, each school commenced the process of meeting with all post-holders to agree role and responsibilities based on the identified needs and priorities of each schools.

Support Meetings are now being planned by senior management in conjunction with the Director of Schools in preparation for the required Annual Report from each Assistant Principal. This integral part of the new Management and Leadership structure in schools provides valuable opportunity for reflection and development, affirm good practice, encourage collaboration, serve to further develop the leadership skills and capacities among the full leadership and management team and ensure accountability.

The next phase of this new era is being planned. An AP1 Network and AP2 Network is currently being established for early 2020. These networks arose out of the initial training day in 2019 and aims to support AP1 and AP2 staff in their new management roles and share best practice. LWETB will also provide follow up training and review meetings in mid-2020 to ensure that our management structures in schools are ready to proceed into the next decade with confidence.

Longford Youthreach have made significant changes

Since Granard Youthreach became Longford Youthreach in 2014 a number of subtle but significant changes have occurred in our programme. The most obvious change involves ease of access to the centre by our students. In the event of a late start they are still in a position to avail of the course for some portion of the day. The extra burden of bus expenses is no longer a major factor in our Budget. The facilities on Campus here are also superior to those in our previous location with a newly refurbished IT room, an excellent kitchen facility, a games room and a variety of other well equipped classrooms. Our student cohort has also evolved and we now provide second chance education for a large number of students from the traveling community. Prior to our move, the vast majority of our students would have been

from the settled community. Having the opportunity to work with such a capable, resilient and goodhumoured cohort of students is a source of great professional pride and satisfaction to all the staff.

Longford Youthreach continues to explore progression pathways for our students. A recent trip to Maynooth University provided 11 of our learners with their first interaction with a 3rd Level Institution. An explanation of all the Support Services available to students was a further element of the trip. We look forward to further positive developments to our Programme and greater recognition from the Department of Education and Skills for the work we do, dealing with marginalised second level students, in the out of mainstream setting that is Youthreach.

Positive Developments at Kilbeggan Youthreach

Kilbeggan Youthreach continues to move with the times, with the introduction of their College Access Programme last year they are now focusing on industry and opening the world of work to its students. Students within their second year are now entering the potential career areas in which they are hoping to study in the future.

This year students will partake in work placement within their careers of interests. Our introduction of Professional Insight will also be key for students when making those important career decisions. We intend on continuing to move with the times also in relation to teaching and learning with technology becoming the new

textbook Kilbeggan Youthreach is striving to develop its online subject areas to ensure that teaching and learning is reaching all of its students while sustaining the highest possible standard.

Currently we are investigating the area of Traineeships, which we hope will be a new area of adventure for us in the coming year or so. They will participate in 3 placements throughout the academic year in order to gauge whether these careers are really fields they wish to study in the future. From veterinary nursing, law, carpentry, teaching and mechanics students are now giving the year to really delve into these areas and make the necessary decisions before applying for college or their apprenticeships.



LWETB Board prepares for the future 2019-2024

The new Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board has now fully constituted including the council representatives from Longford and Westmeath County Councils, the staff Representatives, Parents representatives, and the representatives from a range of local and national bodies.

The Board on this occasion shows thirteen changes from the previous board with changes in the five members selected from the groups nominated by the Minister for Education and Skills. There was very positive interest from twenty-six groups and those nominated are of a significant quality including a former member of the Dáil and Senate as well as a solicitor, a former National Executive member of Comhairle na nÓg and a current member of the Teaching Council.

This is a very important time in the development of the Education and Training Boards and the framework within which we operate. The Introduction of the new Code of Governance for ETBs in January 2019 brings with it significant changes in the responsibilities of the Board, the Board Members and of the Executive.

Training will be provided to all the chairpersons of all the ETBs by ETBI and this will be followed detailed training for



all individual Board members. In addition, training will be provided for all Board of Management members over the coming months.

The regulatory environment that LWETB and indeed all ETBs operate has been becoming increasingly challenging over recent years and this trend can be seen to continue in the current reviews being carried out by the Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance Committee. It is good to have the assurance that LWETB has professionals from an accounting and commercial backgrounds supported by professionals from the agricultural and public sector in exercising their collective oversight of LWETB's activities. The Finance

Committee having oversight with a future focus and the Audit and Risk Committee with a retrospective focus aimed and ensuring compliance was achieved and ensuring that risks are minimised in an appropriate manner.

List of Members as follows: Mr. Luke Casserly, Mr. Donie Cassidy, Cllr. Aoife Davitt, Cllr. John Dolan, Cllr. Michael Dollard, Ms. Josephine Donohue, Ms. Niamh Ginnell, Cllr. Ken Glynn, Cllr. Gerry Hagan, Mr. Colm Harte, Cllr. Louise Heavin, Cllr. Frankie Keena, Cllr. Denis Leonard, Ms. Kathleen McGahern, Mr. Mark Murphy, Cllr. Garry Murtagh, Cllr. Peggy Nolan, Ms. Mary O'Brien, Cllr. Pat O'Toole, Cllr. Emily Wallace, Mr. Colin Whyte.

Transition Year in LWETB Schools - Developing by Change, not Chance!



Self Development Activity - Transition Year students from Columba College Kilucan

LWETB schools provide opportunities for students to access dynamic, diverse and innovative services across all its programmes while always aiming to enhance the student experience. One key area to a positive experience is participation in the Transition Year (TY) Programme. LWETB introduced Transition Year in 2014 with 89 students participating in the programme. However LWETB now have 322 students participating in TY running across a number of schools, providing opportunity for students to mature and develop confidence in themselves as they prepare for the world of further study and/or employment. It has been shown that TY has a positive impact in exam success of students and has led to an increase in students taking higher level subjects (due to increase in maturity) and so increased points in LC results each year. This is due to students making more informed decision with regard to subject options in 5th Year and thereby maximizing their opportunity for success.

Key to a successful TY experience is ensuring an innovative programme for young people and positive engagement. School leaders work tirelessly to ensure students are provided with an experience that is exciting and innovative.

Programmes introduced in recent years include the GAA Future Leaders

– Coaching and Refereeing Skills. While on the face of it, these seems narrow and directed at sport, research has shown that a capacity to operate as part of a team: exhibit strong communication skills; be trustworthy and willingness to compromise are all skills that are useful in a professional and work capacity. An ability to lead, find strength in others and knowing how to delegate and share responsibility is also a key factor in determining a good outcome for recruitment to employment in later life.

Further skills such as capacity to achieve personal goals, compete, be a winner and indeed be a graceful loser is experienced through activities such as BT Young Scientist, SciFest, and Gaisce. Understanding the world

of work with first-hand experience through Work Experience Modules is becoming more and more important as employers look not only for skills, but attitude, work ethic, willingness and positive human interaction as being vital elements when seeking staff. ICT skills are viewed as essential. Our digital native generation are entering into workplaces that may include working in stressful situations or working from home – all demanding self-discipline and results focus.

Thinking of others is also promoted through participation in community projects and fundraisers e.g. Darkness into Light, Autism Awareness Day and other events that enhance the life of others less fortunate. Finally ensuring our students' well-being and providing tools to enable students maintain well-being into adulthood form a significant part of the TY year. Mindfulness, fitness and self-awareness are all promoted and delivered across all LWETB schools. As we enter into a new decade, LWETB aims to continue to provide our young people with the skills and competencies to survive in an increasingly competitive world through all its programmes, of which TY plays a very significant part!



Ballymahon Transition Year Students

Adult Guidance - proving popular at FET



Liz Glennon and Caroline Cornally meeting MEP Mairéad McGuinness at the Midlands expo Mullingar

Returning to learning as an adult can be challenging, especially if early experiences of education were difficult. Over the past few years the service has been mindful of attracting students into LWETB and considering ways to highlight the benefits of returning to education for students and the value of Further Education and Training. With this in mind a series of initiatives were held which both enhanced and promoted the LWETB brand.

Such initiatives include a drop in morning in the FET Centre, Longford where our colleagues across FET and students from our Ballymahon and Granard centres join us for meetings and events. From time to time we have talks where a guest speaker is invited to the centres to offer guidance on the value of education.

We had significant numbers accessing the centre and a highlight was seeing current students

demonstrating their work to members of the public and seeing the obvious pride in their work.

We have also organised a variety of workshops. Recently from the recruitment agency Collins McNicholas in Mullingar and Athlone. The purpose was to get the professional advice for our students on interview techniques, CV preparation and general job seeking skills. We invited students from across the FET service including VTOS, BTEI, Adult Learning, PLC and Athlone Training Centre. Events are always very well attended and we hope to follow up with further sessions in Longford.

Earlier this year Mullingar Chamber organised an excellent Midland's Career expo in Mullingar primarily to showcase what employment opportunities were available to people locally. We in Guidance felt that this was an



Students at a career workshop in Mullingar

excellent opportunity to promote the LWETB brand for other employers which would benefit our students and also possibly encourage new learners into our range of programmes. The event was a tremendous success with 2300 people registered to attend. The LWETB stand was one of the busiest of the day with people enquiring about job opportunities but also education and training. We had received data from our colleagues in HR and also across FET so as to have as much information as possible available on the day. There was an obvious interest in the new Skills to Advance programme, part-time education and evening classes.

Senior Cycle Reform – What Might the Future Hold?

The world of work is undergoing rapid change! Schools are endeavouring to prepare and test students for industries or workplaces that may not have been developed yet.

However, despite the uncertainty of what lies ahead it is being increasingly acknowledged that critical thinking, creativity and problem solving are just as important as academic knowledge. These skills are essential if businesses, industries and services are to function effectively and meet the needs of a future Ireland. To meet these changes, LWETB schools must aim to constantly adapt our learning environments and teaching methodologies to prepare our students for future successful careers and balanced lifestyles. This also includes a necessity to look at how we assess our young people at Senior Cycle.

Research from the NCCA suggests that there is a strong demand for change and reform in Senior Cycle. It is suggested that this change should reflect the needs of an emerging world and needs to include life skills development as well as academic and vocational skills.

Reform is always a very complex issue.

Currently NCCA is conducting a formal Review of the Senior Cycle Programme and consultation meetings has already been held to gather feedback from stakeholders in relation to senior cycle - its past and possible future. Ms. Beatrice Pont, OECD Senior Analyst, speaking at the Senior Cycle Seminar in Croke Park in October of this year stated that our current Senior Cycle system has a range of strengths. However, she also said that the OECD analysis suggested areas in which the senior cycle could improve. It acknowledges that focus on the Leaving Certificate examinations often dominates the experience for young people with exam stress for both students and teachers just one area highlighted during the review. It is now widely acknowledged that third level education should no longer be considered just university or college. Access to technical, vocational, creative and professional learning could and should be enhanced, with improved links to apprenticeships, traineeships and employment. Access to quality work experience for students should play a vital role offering 'real' work-based experience to students in partnership and coordination with employers. LWETB are

well placed to support this with access to both Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) programmes in Mullingar Community College and Templemichael College in Longford, and Vocational Training programmes in Athlone Training Centre. New programmes are coming on-stream all the time ensuring students are prepared for this ever-changing world of work.

Also central to this reform is an increased focus on student and staff wellbeing concentrating on a holistic model to ensure both physical and mental health is promoted and protected. LWETB schools and programmes have always put the learner in the centre of its delivery and ensure that learners gain a positive learning experience whether in schools, further education or training programmes.

Currently LWETB schools are entering into the final phases of implementation of the new Junior Cycle programme. This has involved significant changes to classroom activity, how students are assessed, and the range and kind of subjects available to them. It would seem to make sense that a new framework should follow for the Senior Cycle. In any event LWETB will support any changes in the best interest of its students.

Learning is Blooming at Mullingar VTOS



As the first term of the 2019/2020 academic year is well under way, Learning is Blooming at Mullingar VTOS. All learners in the centre, have settled well and enjoying the many teambuilding activities that have taken place.

Over the years technology has revolutionized our world and daily lives.

Technology has created tools and resources at our finger tips. Computers are increasingly faster, more portable and higher powered than ever before.

Mullingar VTOS wholeheartedly supports and promotes the integration of high quality ICT training into our teaching and learning in the centre. Computers are increasingly faster, more portable and higher powered than ever before. All computers in the centre have recently been upgraded as part of LWETB's TEL Strategy.

White boards and markers are only used occasionally in the classroom. Clever touch screens, interactive projectors, iPads are the tools we use today. Students can access training notes, classroom resources on their smartphones and mobile devices.

All VTOS Staff are have engaged in CPD training and will continue to engage CPD as modern day technology continues to evolve and transform our lives. As always we will continue to adapt our training programmes to meet both the digital literacy skills needed to embrace everyday living in today' modern world as well as equipping our learners with the skills needed for today's technology enhanced workplace.

An exciting development in this area will be the introduction of blended learning into all our programmes from September 2020 onwards. Watch this space!

Training for the future at Athlone Training Centre



With the advancements in modern manufacturing the Athlone Training Centre is striving to remain on the cutting edge of industry leading training and trends. With today's rapidly developing and expanding advanced manufacturing sector, the Athlone Training Centre will be running traineeships aiming to train people as Advanced Manufacturing Technicians. The Athlone Training Centre has been in talks with one of the world's leading technology manufactures, intel. Armed with this market leading input, a traineeship offering highly desired

industry skills, training and knowledge is in the works and will be ready for enrolment early 2020.

With the year drawing to a close and plans nearing completion, the Athlone Training Centre is gearing up for a busy 2020 with multiple building and expansion projects ready to commence. One such project is a general workshop extension and two new classrooms to accommodate our ever growing offerings in Training. The new space will allow the training centre to accommodate two additional groups of apprentices per year.



With the current demand on training to provide places for budding apprentices it is a fantastic opportunity for the Athlone Training Centre to aid the continued national efforts to increase capacity for apprenticeship training.

Along with the expansion of apprenticeship at the training centre, there is a view to expanding the Traineeships offered to learners. The Athlone Training Centre has teamed up with Haas Automation, any F1 viewers will be very familiar with the name, to offer state of the art CNC machining capabilities through the purchasing of two new 4 axis CNC milling machines and one 3 axis CNC turning centre. These machines promise to offer learners the opportunity to train on industry standard machinery found across the country.

With nearly 1000 learners per year comes its share of paperwork, files & folders. The Athlone Training centre are planning on constructing an onsite storage unit to house this information in a safe and secure manor. The unit will be housed on site at the Athlone Training Centre and will centralise over ten years of records in one place.



Athlone Training Centre
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SOLAS
An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leasúnaigh agus Scileanna
Further Education and Training Authority



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills