

**Director's Report on
Programmes and Activities 2001
and Plans for 2002
Gerard McHugh**

New worlds

want to be created by

free minds that can

dream unfettered

without fear, turning

obstacles into milestones

towards luminous

glories

- Ben Okri

Introduction

Dublin West Education Centre in the year 2001 was a place of new beginnings, major frustrations, mixed fortunes and some phenomenal achievements.

The purpose of the Annual Report is to account to you, the members representing the teachers and schools in the Dublin West area with regard to the work, programmes and activities of the education centre in the past year and to sketch out the proposed developments for the coming year. Copies are furnished to the In-Career Development Unit (ICDU), presented to those attending the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and available to teachers in the area and to other persons and institutions. It is a promotional document also.

There were many important developments during 2001 and while these will be recorded in the relevant sections it is appropriate to highlight them at this point. There was a change of Director in the Autumn, the centre was prevented from occupying its new building in 2001, the centre's responsibility as a manager of national programmes increased with a consequent increase in funds passing through the accounts, local programmes continued despite extraordinary constraints, participation in a European project commenced and plans have been put in place for several new programmes in the local programmes schedule for 2002.

The report will address issues under the following headings:

- **Change of Director**
- **Accommodation**
- **Local programmes**
- **ICT Activities**
- **National Programmes**
- **European Project**

- **Management and Administration**
- **Collaboration**
- **Future Developments**
- **Change of Director**

Donald Herron announced his intention in June of leaving Dublin West Education Centre to take up an appointment in Marino Institute of Education in September. The incoming director joins with Management Committee and staff in wishing Mr Herron every good fortune in his new appointment. He presided over a centre whose turnover increased by a multiple of one hundred and ten during his ten years as director. His contribution to the professional development of teachers in the catchment area of Dublin West and beyond has been significant, we offer our sincere gratitude. Incoming director, Gerard McHugh assumed the position of director in September following a standard selection procedure in June and July.

Accommodation

There have been frequent references in previous annual reports to the new building, “our future location is being pursued actively at local level with the Clondalkin Regional Technical College and the approval of the Department to develop the centre in conjunction with the Phase II of the College has been sought “(1994); “There are indications that the promised centre building on the Clondalkin RTC site will be ready in 1997” (1996); “The decision to provide dedicated buildings taken recently means that in a couple of years the Dublin West Education Centre will be located in the campus of the Clondalkin RTC” (1997); “The time scale for moving to the new building appears to be late March to Easter” (2001, Feb).

The new building was completed early in 2001 and arrangements were in progress for a removal firm to transfer furniture, equipment and documents on 8th May. However, as issues pertaining to the lease were still in dispute between the Department of Education & Science and the Institute of Technology Clondalkin (ITT), this arrangement had to be postponed. The issue of access to the building has been the major frustration which has cast a lengthy shadow over all of the centre’s activities subsequently and has occupied a large percentage of the new director’s time since September. The centre was not the client and as such was not party to negotiations and was not in possession of appropriate documentation. However the centre did engage in dialogue with many of those who were involved in negotiations including a number of sections and various personnel within the Department of Education & Science, the Chief State Solicitor’s Office (CSSO) and the ITT. Further-more there were several enquiries from public representatives who had been contacted by teachers who were frustrated that a service they had been promised was denied to them. This led to the issue being the subject of parliamentary questions, adjournment debate in The Dáil are being raised at the Public Accounts Committee of the Oireachtas. A meeting involving many of the parties who had responsibility for resolving the issue took place on the 10th December. Dublin West Education Centre was not represented at the meeting. A number of parties signalled to Dublin West in the days following the December meeting that the major issues has been resolved and that the lease would be signed and access granted to the centre in a short time. This did not happen.

The consequences of the delay in occupying the building can be summarised as follows:

1. An extraordinary amount of staff time has been wasted dealing with the matter.
2. All Summer, Autumn and national inservice programmes had to be booked at least twice, with consequent costs in terms of time and finance.
3. Some programmes had to be cancelled because of the lack of accommodation.

4. The centre's ability to generate income from national programmes was limited.
5. The teaching public was confused because of rumours and counter rumours as to when the centre would be open and available.
6. A climate of uncertainty was generated by a situation which by any standards was completely unacceptable.

Local Programmes

There has been a decrease in the local programmes schedule because of two distinct factors, accommodation and the prevalence of national programmes. The uncertainty about when the centre would gain access to its new building led to fewer local programmes taking place than would have been the case in the past. The whole school planning work of the centre has diminished significantly due to the National School Development Planning Initiatives for primary and post primary schools. These programmes work directly with schools from their headquarters in Drumcondra Education Centre and Marino Institute of Education respectively.

Spring Programme

The poster advertising the Spring Programme drew attention to the centre's commitment to school planning and to the Trinity College Dublin (TCD) diploma courses which are organised in conjunction with education centres. (See appendix). Programmes were organised in areas such as Arts and Crafts where Jill Molloy taught her course and in Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE) facilitated by Conor Harrison, Stephen McCarthy and Mairin Wilson. Whole School Planning featured, where the director working in collaboration with Eileen Doyle facilitated planning in two schools. A programme for recently appointed Learning Support Teachers was organised by Mary Coyne assisted by Eithne O'Shea and Bernie Tobin. One of the highlights of the Spring programme was once again the Write-a-Book project which in 2001 was co-ordinated by management committee treasurer John O'Mahony and was funded by the National Reading Initiative. All staff worked hard to ensure the success of a challenging process. Thirty four schools and one hundred and six teachers participated in all. The final event was a presentation to 208 children in the Lucan Spa Hotel on 3rd May where Terry Hassett-Henry commented in a very professional manner on all the award winning books.

(See Appendix)

Summer Programme

Two hundred and twenty one teachers participated in our summer programme under six topic areas. Two very successful water safety courses were organised by Michael Murphy and the Irish Water Safety Association, one in July and one in August. Courses for resource teachers were led by Orla Ni Bhroin and Irene Barber assisted by Anne Jackson while Mairin Ni Cheileachair and Thérèse Hegarty co-ordinated and delivered courses in Counselling Approaches. In the Arts area a Music course was delivered under the auspices of Fuaim (Regina Murphy), Jill Molloy led her last course on an Arts and Crafts theme. Finally Mary Johnston delivered a Wall Tall course in August.

Autumn Programme

The centre extends sympathy to the relatives of Jill Molloy whose name appeared on countless Dublin West posters over many years. Her Autumn courses had been fully booked in advance of a poster being issued and before her untimely death - may she rest in peace. In addition to the Art & Craft slot which in the event was occupied by Una Kelly and Liz Flemming, the Autumn

poster signalled a course for newly appointed learning support teachers which was co-ordinated by Mary Coyne, Eithne O'Shea and Bernie Tobin. Two Music courses, one for teachers of junior classes and one for teachers of senior classes were delivered by Enid Conaghan, three Principals' Support Groups under the direction of Micheál Mullarkey continued in operation, Therese Hegarty co-ordinated three sessions on the theme "Still want to be a teacher? and the Write a Book preparatory course was featured Brianóg Brady-Dawson. A course with the objective of preparing teachers for the Scrúdu Cáilíochta Gaeilge was organised for the first time in Dublin West. The course was located in Castleknock Community College and was delivered by Grainne McElwain and Christine Nash.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Our ICT advisor Fintan Keating has been a dynamic and supportive voice during 2001. He issued a number of informative, challenging and attractive newsletters to schools, he organised a veritable range of courses, which have enhanced significantly the computer literacy of our primary and post-primary teachers, and he provided enormous strength and support back at the centre in an uncertain and frustrating year.

Administrative assistance has been provided by Angie Grogan, who for much of the year juggled ICT responsibility with numerous other tasks. Micheál Mullarkey has also been a magnificent resource for the centre, his availability, advice, support and patience in ICT as well as in other matters is appreciated.

Early in the year the ICT advisor was closely involved in the Centre's disengagement from the computer room at the Old Blessington Road site. Work involved included negotiation and valuation of the hardware and subsequently "cleaning" all the computers for the transfer to the VEC. However, the absence of computer facilities since then has been a major drawback in the provision of certain courses including Career Guidance – Module 2, Web Design and Internet courses. Despite the lack of our own facilities, the ICT advisor ensured that the teachers in our catchment area were well serviced with ICT Courses.

Name of Course	Number of Courses
Phase 1 Primary	8
Phase 2 Primary	22
Phase 1 Post Primary	6
Phase 2 Post Primary	6
Internet & E-mail	4
Web Design – Tutor Training	1
Basic Troubleshooting	8
Career Guidance – Module 1	1
Teach to the Future, Post Primary	4
Teach to the Future, Primary	2
Special Needs – The Basics	1
Web Design	2
TOTAL	65

Due to a decrease in demand a number of Autumn courses had to be cancelled.

The 65 courses run over the year catered for up to 900 participants.

Because of our involvement in the Intel Teach to the Future programme, we wish to acknowledge generous and significant donation by Intel of the following equipment.

Two Data Projectors

Two Desktop PCs

Digital Camera

Web Cam Camera

Zip Drive

CD Writer

Intel Microscope

Now that the Minister for Education and Science on behalf of the government has announced funding for schools in ICT we look forward to another interesting year in the ICT department. We await anxiously however the opening of our new building and the installation of the up to date computer facility we have requested so that the imaginative and innovative work in ICT which has already been the norm can be enhanced.

The Dublin West Education Centre Website

The very comprehensive website for the centre has been revamped and expanded over the last year. With a total of 96 pages it covers all aspects of the centre's activities providing a valuable means of communication with local schools, along with on-line booking systems for all courses.

National Programmes

One of the key developments in Irish Education in the 1990's has been the concept of the national in-service programme. National in-service programmes are organised nationally for the department in a variety of areas both in the primary and post-primary sectors. At the end of 2001 there are more than twenty programmes which can be classified as national programmes, ranging from the very large to relatively small pilot or niche programmes. Education centres in the main are the agencies in which the programmes are located and administered. Cluster in-service sessions are organised by and take place in education centres where this is possible. Three national programmes were administered from Dublin West Education Centre in 2001: The Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP), The Primary Schools' Sports Initiative (PSSI) and The Substance Misuse Prevention Programme (SMPP) - primary.

The centre facilitates also the in-service activities of national post-primary programmes administered elsewhere: Leaving Certificate Physics, Chemistry and Biology as well as Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Home Economics, Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE) and School Development Planning.

Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP)

The PCSP is easily the largest in-service programme which is in operation at present, in fact it is one of the largest innovations ever undertaken by the Department in the area of in-service education. The PCSP team by the end of 2001 had grown to ninety-seven professionals (teachers on secondment) and seven administrative staff, all of whom have contracts with Dublin West Education Centre.

National co-ordinator, Aine Lawlor, Deputy co-ordinator Pdraig Ó Duibhir, assistant co-

ordinators, Anne O'Sullivan and Mary McDonald were joined by two further assistant co-ordinators in March, Valerie O'Dowd and Joan Crowley-O'Sullivan. Seminars in Visual Arts and Gaeilge were delivered in the system during the school year 2000/1 while some support was offered to schools in English. A developmental programme in Science was also in operation. In anticipation of the school year 2001/2 groups of trainers were recruited whose function would be to deliver seminars in areas such as Mathematics and Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) (seminars in Gaeilge were to continue). An interesting new concept came into being in September when the Cuiditheoiri/Support Persons concept was initiated. In the curricular areas of English and Visual Arts where seminars had been delivered in a previous school year and where schools were heading towards implementation of a revised curriculum, cuiditheoiri would provide support to schools as teachers dealt with the challenges of planning and implementing the revised curriculum. It was envisaged that the trainers in Gaeilge (Oiliunoiri) would also act as cuiditheoiri during the school year. A further feature of the expansion and workload of PCSP is that cuiditheoiri conducted seminars with school personnel on the Learning Support Guidelines and secondly SPHE trainers are designated to work in conjunction with personnel from the Department of Health and Children in conducting seminars for school representatives on the Children First Guidelines.

There were changes in administrative personnel at the PCSP offices during the year. In February, Carol Hemmingway resigned, Kathleen Fitzpatrick was appointed as administrator and Nicola Foley and Grainne Carwood were appointed to Grade 3 positions in March. In November, Carmel Finlay returned from the PCSP office to Dublin West central office and Emma Hamilton, and Brian Carpenter were appointed to PCSP at Grade 3 level. The centre wishes to acknowledge the pioneering work of all of those involved in PCSP and is pleased to be associated with the programme.

Plans are at an advanced stage in locating new premises for PCSP. In the early months of 2002 it is expected that PCSP will vacate the offices at 7, St Brigid's Road and move to another location.

The management structure for this hosted project comprises several layers. An Implementation Group representative of all the education partners agrees the major decisions. A sub-committee, the Technical Working Group, comprising partners with implementation responsibilities examine specific aspects for report to the Implementation Group. A steering group makes the immediate decisions and day-to day responsibility is that of the national co-ordinators. The education centre's role is one of administrative support and financial responsibility. Specific financial guidelines, congruent with the ICDU financial guidelines and within the terms of the PCSP budget, have been agreed. The director represents the centre on the PCSP Implementation Group, Technical Working Group, Steering Committee and on selection panels for professional and administrative staff. A member of management committee participates on selection panels for administrative staff.

The Primary Schools' Sports Initiative

This initiative was announced by the Minister for Education & Science at the INTO Congress, 2000. In announcing the project, the Minister intended to raise an "awareness of sports and healthy lifestyles throughout our schools nationally". The National Steering Group which the Minister appointed in 2000 was upgraded to Task Force status in January, 2001. The director of Dublin West Education Centre is a member of the Task Force since October. The terms of reference of the Task Force are as follows:

- To advise the Minister for Education and Science on the promotion of sport, Physical Education and healthy lifestyles in primary schools;
- To oversee the work of the national co-ordinators;
- To propose ways in which participation can be increased;

- To set targets to achieve these aims.

A national co-ordinator, Mairead Weymes and two assistant co-ordinators, John Williams and Réamonn O Donnchadha were appointed in the Spring.

A Liaison Committee was appointed to support the Task Force and to oversee the work of the co-ordinators. The director of the centre has been a member of the Liaison Committee since its inception. At a meeting of the Liaison Committee and the co-ordinators on 11th April the main focus of the work to be undertaken by the co-ordinators was agreed.

- The development of a pilot project in Physical Education to inform the in-service training for the implementation of the revised curriculum;
- The implementation of this project in selected schools;
- Collaboration with other educational and sport agencies;
- Evaluation of the pilot project;

The work of the co-ordinators has consisted in choosing twenty-seven schools to become involved in a pilot project, designing materials in two strands of the Physical Education programme of the revised curriculum namely Games and Athletics, conducting workshops amounting to one and a half days in the selected schools on the two strands indicated. The co-ordinators through the Task Force have presented an Interim Report to the Minister on their work and have produced a newsletter "Cos in Airde" which was circulated to every primary school in the country.

Towards the end of the year, John Williams, assistant co-ordinator submitted his resignation on his appointment to another national project which is administered by Dublin West Education Centre.

The PSSI is expected to have its work completed in the Summer of 2003 when a final report is to be submitted to the Minister. Close links will be maintained with the PCSP. The centre looks forward to working with the project in 2002.

Substance Misuse Prevention Programme (SMPP) Primary

The Substance Misuse Prevention Programme which became a fully fledged programme in January 1999 following a pilot phase was closed in August 2001. During its final months the team of trainers brought the number of schools who availed of a full day training in Walk Tall to 3048, approximately, ninety per cent of all primary schools.

An Irish language version of the Walk Tall programme "Misneach" was produced during the year and disseminated to Gaeltacht schools and Gaelscoileanna.

The vision for Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in the primary curriculum is that it will incorporate Walk Tall as well as Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), The Stay Safe Programme and Health Education. Consequently the Walk Tall Programme closed on the target date which had been set at its inception as a full time programme in August 2001.

In November the Department wrote to the centre and requested that we administer a rejuvenated SMPP (see appendix). The management committee responded to the request in the affirmative. The project will maintain links with the PCSP and in particular with its SPHE programme. The first responsibility in managing the new programme was to recruit a National Support Officer (NSO). This process was completed in December when the position was offered to John Williams. The NSO will take up his position on 1st February 2002. A Steering Committee will be established early in 2002.

European Project - EU “Roots and Wings Projects (2001 - 4)

The centre's investment in The Roots & Wings project commenced early in 2001. The chairperson and director attended a meeting in Vejle, Denmark on 1st - 3rd February when the main objectives of the project were agreed.

- To develop the Regional Co-ordinating Centres (RCC) including Dublin West to act as “support centres” for schools at all levels of European co-operation.
- To promote and initiate qualitative education/teaching in partnership projects within the RCC network by facilitating and co-ordinating exchanges of this quality practice.
- To initiate in-service-training programmes and seminars for teachers and head teachers.
- To launch and develop - together with schools (RCC) partnerships - collaborative virtual learning space in process focused learning environments.

The broad thrust of the thinking behind Roots & Wings is based on the belief and pedagogical approach that you can give your child two values in life: roots and wings. The main aim of the Roots and Wings network is to facilitate, support and monitor development in education and school life towards a European dimension, identity and profile in teaching and in school community in general. This may be achieved by developing themes of cultural heritage and by working in projects and processes in international partnerships. The success of this process is ensured by the RCC supporting schools and teachers by initiating a range of outputs from which schools and teachers and ultimately the students will benefit. The outputs will be introduced at various stages of the 3 year project, aiming to facilitate the process and ensure sustainability: even beyond the three years. A central tool in the support to schools and as means of communication in the RCC is Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

In November representatives from each of the participating regions assembled in Dublin for a meeting (14th - 16th). The meeting was hosted by Dublin West Education Centre and was intended to be our first international meeting in the new centre. However because of the unexpected and unprecedented delay in gaining access to our building we had to use facilities in Drumcondra Education Centre for which we are extremely grateful. We are also indebted to St Patrick's National School, Drumcondra and principal Mick Mangan, Corpus Christi GNS Home Farm Road, Drumcondra and principal Violet Ní Dhulaing, Holy Spirit BNS, Ballymun and principal Pat Fitzgerald and St Patrick's College of Education Drumcondra, president Padraic Travers and lecturer Bernie Collins and also management committee Vice Chairperson Stephen McCarthy and his wife Patricia all of whom played a part in ensuring that the hosting of the event by Dublin West Education Centre was efficient and effective and that national embarrassment was not caused. Our European partners however could not comprehend how a situation could obtain that our education centre building was completed for six months and that we could not use it.

Management & Administration

Management Committee

Issues which received attention from the management committee during the year included appointment of director, staffing levels and deployment of staff, preparation for access to the new centre and administration of national projects.

A meeting was held on 25th May between management committee and personnel from the ICDO of the Department of Education & Science, principal officer Vincent Wrynn and assistant principal officer Paddy Bennis. At the meeting the Department agreed to a regrading of the centre's administrator to Grade 5. Both directors sought confirmation of this position in several meetings over the next five months. Written clarification was received in November/December agreeing the regrading with effect from June. The Heads of Agreement document prepared by Dublin

West Education Centre setting out the respective responsibilities of the Education Centre, The Department and a national project, specifically PCSP, was discussed. Both directors sought agreement from the Department in writing that it agreed the document. No such response was received by the end of the year. However the Department's assent to a slightly expanded version was received early in 2002 (see appendix).

The Committee addressed staffing issues on a number of occasions during the year and held a special meeting on the issue in October. There is little consistency in the education centre network as a whole on the issue of staff contracts. The issue is being addressed in the context of the review of education centres by the Centre for Management and Organisational Development (CMOD) from the Department of Finance and following advice from the Small Firms Association (SFA) and from a legal firm and also through dialogue with other education centres.

With regard to personnel, Carmel Finlay returned from PCSP to work in the centre in November and is dealing with accounts and projects. Angie Grogan spent much of the year working at reception and on the administration of ICT. Yvonne Fitzgibbon has been handling PCSP local responsibilities with assistance from others when that has been possible. Anne Almack, Maryse Browne and Karen Maher worked in the centre on short term contracts at times of great pressure.

It must be borne in mind that the accommodation situation which prevailed for the whole year placed enormous strains on staff. The split-site aspect of the centre, old vocational school building, prefabricated building and PCSP offices located at a distance constituted a significant cost in terms of staff time.

Arising from the deliberations of the October meeting on staffing and the prospect of occupying the new building the management committee advertised two positions. Grade 3 positions were offered to Aisling Quinn and Divinia Kerwick with effect from January 2002.

Management Sub Committees

Finance Sub Committee

The finance committee which was set up in late 1998 oversees compliance with the financial guidelines of the DES and recommendations of the IAU. It also has responsibility for examination and preparation of a financial report to committee on the centre's monthly and quarterly accounts. This involves adopting a budget for the year and examining and monitoring expenditures against this. Discussion of and recommendations on salary and conditions has become part of the brief also. It meets on a regular basis in advance of and reports to management committee meetings. Membership comprises Michael Murphy (convenor) John O'Mahony (treasurer), Conor Harrison (committee) the Director and the Administrator. In December the Finance Committee had a meeting with John Browne of the Department's Internal Audit Unit (IAU) and discussed a range of relevant issues.

ICT Sub Committee

The committee comprises Eddie Gilmartin (convenor) John O'Mahony (treasurer), Micheál Mullarkey (co-opted member), Fintan Keating (ICT advisor) and the director. The committee invested many hours indeed days working on specifications for appropriate ICT equipment for the new building. The ICT advisor deserves our congratulations for the painstaking detail he engaged in as tenders were sought for ICT equipment. At a meeting in October attended by the ICT advisor, the administrator and the director, the Department's architect, Noel Montayne indicated following a lengthy discussion of the issues that the centre should seek tenders for ICT equipment for the new building. Tenders were sought under nine headings. The ICT sub committee worked assiduously on the matter and submitted a very detailed document seeking funding. Approval of appropriate funding is awaited.

Other sub committees

Early in the new year in anticipation of a move to the new building, sub committee meetings took place with a view to ensuring a smooth transition.

Steering committees

The various steering committees which are listed at the start of the report exist for the purpose of directing the work of the project or pilot for which they are responsible. They are representative in composition and the director represents the centre on them. ICDU informs the centre of membership and chair. Steering Groups now exist for all centre national programmes.

At each meeting the work of a project is reviewed and plans for each stage of the work are discussed and decided. This will also include the direction of the work of the support team seconded to the project. Each Steering Group has responsibility for its budget and for seconded personnel. Where their decisions have implications for the centre's administrative and financial responsibilities the appropriate minute of the steering meeting forms the basis of the expenditures. The finance committee monitors while management committee notes these expenditures mindful that final responsibility is through the director (as accounting officer) to management committee.

The benefits are that all the detailed work rests with these steering committees rather than with the management committee.

Administration and Personnel

As has been indicated elsewhere in this report, the administrative workload devolved to the centre's administrative staff is substantial. The uncertainty during 2001 surrounding the centre's possible move was a gratuitous additional substantial burden. For instance double booking of venues was a feature of the Summer and Autumn local programmes and also national in-service programmes particularly in the autumn.

The level of co-ordination necessary to deal with the workload is very high indeed. Despite the uncertainty there was an orderly direction of work and the use and allocation of the centre's resources and the efficient delivery of services to projects, local programmes, teachers and schools was managed at a high level.

The centre's administrator, Deirdre Cleary deserves enormous credit for maintaining a sense of normality in a situation which is far from normal. Her insight, ability and energy have continued to serve Dublin West Education Centre well. Yvonne Fitzgibbon, Carmel Finlay and Angie Grogan have displayed enormous levels of patience, skill and good humour in the most trying of circumstances. All of those who have supported the centre on a short term basis also deserve our thanks; Ann Almack, Maryse Browne, Karen Maher, Paul Hyland, Ray Dunne and James Doyle.

A special word for our hard working and amiable bookkeeper, Marie Fitzmaurice who joins us in Dublin West on Mondays and Tuesdays and whose good humour and confidence is a valuable asset.

Collaboration

Education Centre Network

Dublin West is one of twenty full time education centres spread throughout the country, three of them located in the Dublin area. It is envisaged that one or two further full time centres may come into being in the near future, one of them may have a brief for Gaeltacht schools and Gaelscoileanna.

Networking with other centres takes place in a number of ways. The director participates in meetings of directors of full time centres on a monthly basis where collegial planning in relation to national programmes takes place. It also enables dialogue at formal and informal levels with other directors. As there are regional aspects to the delivery of many national programmes, the *cuiditheoir*/support persons concept under PCSP for instance, there is opportunity for collaboration among centres in a region. The centre participates fully in regional networking where this is possible and profitable. Thirdly the centre participates in the affairs of the Association of Teacher Education Centres of Ireland (ATECI) and has played its part in consultative conferences under the auspices of ATECI which will culminate in a new constitution for the umbrella group in 2002.

Review of Education Centres

A fundamental review of education centres has been under way in the latter part of 2001 and is expected to be completed in Spring, 2002. The Centre for Management and Organisational Development (CMOD) in the Department of Finance is examining in detail what is happening in education centres.

A comprehensive questionnaire was completed by the director in November/December and returned to CMOD. Dublin West was selected for a visit by the review team. In November the chairperson and director hosted three members of the CMOD team for four and a half hours. Most aspects of the work of the education centre were discussed and the team toured the facility on Old Blessington Road and the PCSP offices on St Brigid's Road.

The centre has expectations that many of the anomalies and the *ad hoc*ery in the education centre system will be addressed in the review and that positive recommendations will be made in the areas of staffing and funding in particular.

Department of Education (ICDU)

Good relationships with the ICDU are essential if education centres are to pursue their work with dynamism and vigour. The ICDU ensures that funds and other resources are made available in time, in order to enable us to meet our commitments to our teachers and schools in general and to national programmes in particular. The meeting with the ICDU on 25th May was a positive development and we expect that such meetings will become annual events. The centre values the contact it maintains with Department inspectors attached to the ICDU, Breandán O Murphy, Colm Ó Ceallacháin and Emer Egan and administration staff Vincent Wrynn, Paddy Bennis, Bernie McCabe, Noel Doyle, Anton Sweeney, Joe O'Connor Joan McLaughlin, Ann Maher and Jimmy Malone. We wish Emer Egan and Bernie McCabe every success in the new responsibilities and in advance, Paddy Bennis on his retirement.

Universities and Colleges

The University of Limerick (UL) Guidance and Counselling diploma continued during the year. Sixteen students are taking part in the course. Management Committee has supported this development with UL for the Dublin area. These programmes fit with existing programmes and projects in the centre.

The education centre links with TCD's In-service Division have continued and diploma courses

offered by the University are advertised by the centre.

Building Co-operation

There are five users of the Old Vocational School on Old Blessington Road. Co-ordination of the work, use and care of the resource takes place through house meetings under the VEC Adult Education Officer for the area, Michael McLoughlin. Pressures are experienced as the building is at full capacity and resources (rooms, car parking) are stretched. The meetings facilitate smooth co-operation between the users. We are grateful to our colleagues for this co-operation and the sharing and pooling of resources that takes place. CYS personnel under John Gregg and Greg Tierney are always helpful in different tasks, Ger Harris has been very co-operative and helpful. The accommodation for computing and for social occasions are made available generously by Louise and Graham in Youthreach.

Building and Resources

New Building

The frustrating and disappointing developments in relation to the new building were outlined earlier in the report. Despite such unprecedented and unacceptable delays it is likely that the centre will occupy the new building early in 2002.

There will be several challenges in reaching a situation where the centre will be operating freely and fully. Cognisant of the fact that other education centres located in new buildings have had significant "snag lists" which have taken lengthy periods to be rectified we will be working assiduously in consultation with those who have responsibility in this area to ensure that our centre suffers no further delays.

The Department's architect approved spending of up to £6000 for the purchase of catering equipment for the kitchen at a meeting in October. This will be attended to immediately after the building is occupied. As indicated earlier we merely need the go-ahead and adequate funding and our ICT needs can be accommodated very quickly as all the ground work has been done by the ICT advisor and ICT sub committee already.

Equipment

Resources such as laminating and binding are in constant demand. An asset register is maintained of all equipment in the centre and equipment that is used on national projects. Equipment that is returned by departing trainers is allocated in the first instance to other project needs, thereafter to meet the centre's requirement or for disposal according to a procedure adopted by the centre and approved by the ICDU.

Library

The listing of the centre's library collection is facilitated by computerisation. The holdings reflect the centre's designated areas of interest, course work, language and the guidance and counselling course. The stock at the moment is just over 1235 texts and the number of teachers registered at the moment is 280.

Future Developments

The needs of schools are changing rapidly as society changes, as new programmes come on stream in schools, as the impact of legislation impinges on schools and as the relationship

between the teachers, management, parents and pupils assume proportions that might not have been envisaged some years ago. There is an argument that as there are a plethora of national programmes on offer teachers do not want or need local programmes. However there are aspects of school life that are perhaps not touched by national programmes, there is a need in many instances to follow the work of national programmes and there is always a need to look creatively and imaginatively towards the future. In this context and despite the fact that fewer local programmes have been offered by many education centres in recent years, Dublin West Education Centre re-commits itself to providing a myriad of possibilities to its teachers in an imaginative and constructive way. I sketched the thinking that permeates this approach in the completion of a Spring programme for 2002, thinking that will be enhanced and developed in the production of Summer and Autumn programmes.

- The Teacher and the Law - significant major legislation has gone on to the Statute Books in recent years, the impact on schools will be significant, we intend to address the issue.
- In-School Management will not be fully effective in schools until there is appropriate professional development which will inform, train and empower postholders. A collaborative approach to designing programmes to meet this need is in progress.
- There are at least eight categories of learning support/resource teachers in schools at present. There is some confusion and frustration among many of those appointed to such positions. The education centre will be proactive in assessing needs, establishing support groups and assisting in the provision of quality professional development for these groups.
- Special Needs Assistants have been appointed to schools at an increasing rate in the last few years. Teachers, resource teachers and special needs assistants will be facilitated by the education centre as issues are addressed
- A large number of schools in the Dublin West Education Centre catchment area are classified as disadvantaged. The education centre will work with these schools in whatever way they wish in order to assist them to provide an optimum service.
- "A measure of the health of an education system is its provision for the Arts"(Martin Drury). Innovative programmes in dance, creative writing, music and drama will be explored in the context of assisting teachers to work creatively with their pupils.
- While examinations and marking systems continue to play a major role in our system, the education centre will explore with personnel from subject associations and other fora, programmes which are geared towards using active, challenging and creative methodologies which will inspire pupils yet prepare them for examinations.

Annual Plan 2002 (Draft)

Programme	Season				Sector	
	Spring		Sp		Primary (P)	
	Summer		S		Post-Primary (PP)	
	Autumn		A			
Teachers and the Law	Sp		A	P	PP	
Nature Outside the Classroom	Sp		A	PP	PP	
Dyslexia Seminar	Sp		A	P	PP	

Dyslexia Support			A	P	PP
Counselling Approaches	Sp	S	A	P	
Still Want to be a Teacher?		S	A	P	
Learning Support Teachers' SG/Course	Sp	S	A	P	
LST/Resource Teacher SG/Course	Sp		S		PP
Resource/Special Class Teachers' SG/Course	Sp	S	A	P	
Support Teachers' SG/Course	Sp		A	P	
Special Needs Assistant/Teacher	Sp		A	P	
Interpreting Psychological Reports	SP		A	P	
Support for Teachers of Refugees			A	P	
Preparing Individualised Education Plans			A	P	
Principals' Support Groups	Sp		A	P	
Support for Principals/Deputy Principals			A		PP
In-School Management	Sp		A	P	
Whole School Planning Support			A	P	PP
Visual Arts	SP	S	A	P	
Science	Sp		A	P	
Gaeilge Labhartha			A	P	
SPHE	Sp		A	P	
Music	Sp	S	A	P	
Creating Learning Experiences Through Dance	SP		A	P	
Stimulating Creativity in Pupils	Sp		A	P	PP
Write - A - Book Project	Sp		A	P	
Infant Teachers SG/Course	Sp		A	P	
Fifth/Sixth Class SG/Course	Sp		A	P	
Other Support Groups as needs arise	Sp		A	P	PP
Civic Social & Political Education (CSPE)	SP		A		PP
Creative Approaches to Teaching in a variety of subjects:	Sp		A		PP
	Sp		A		PP
	Sp		A		PP
Music	Sp		A		PP
English	Sp		A		PP
Maths	Sp		A		PP

History					PP
Geography					PP
Science					
Other subjects					
Walk Tall		S	A	P	
Water Safety and Resuscitation		S		P	
Guest Speakers	Sp		A	P	PP
Induction of Newly Qualified Teachers			A	P	PP
English Curriculum		S		P	P

Ongoing support for:

- National Programmes, Primary and Post-Primary
- Subject Associations
- Conference Organising Committees

In Conclusion

During 2001 there was a further increase in the centre's activities. Funds going through the centre accounts for instance increased by fourteen % when compared with the previous year. There are many cogs in the wheel which keeps Dublin West Education Centre functioning. The centre is fortunate that all of the cogs despite the enormous impediments with which they must contend are committed wholeheartedly to the organisation and its ideals. A committed and effective management committee and a hardworking and efficient administration team have ensured that the centre's service to teachers, schools and the education system as a whole has been excellent. I thank all of them for their efforts and look forward to renewed excitement as we turn obstacles into milestones and create new worlds, meeting the challenges of 2002.

Management Committee and Staff 2001

Chair	Frances Leahy
Vice Chair	Stephen McCarthy
Secretary	Máirín Ní Chéileachair
Treasurer	John O'Mahony
Committee	Michael Murphy
	Eddie Guilmartin
	Conor Harrison
	Máirín Wilson
	David Irwin

Mary Byrne

Thérèse Hegarty

Centre Personnel Don Herron (to August)

Gerard McHugh (from September)

Deirdre Cleary

Yvonne Fitzgibbon

Camel Finlay

Angie Grogan

Marie Fitzmaurice

ICT Advisor Fintan Keating

Centre Assistants Anne Almack

Paddy Hyland

Karen Maher

Maryse Browne

Staff at PCSP HQ, 7, St Brigid's Road, Clondalkin

- Áine Lawlor (National Co-ordinator)
- Pádraig Ó Duibhir (Dep Nat Co-ordinator)
- Anne O'Sullivan (Ass't Co-ordinator)
- Mary Mc Donald (Ass't Co-ordinator)
- Valerie O Dowd (Ass't Co-ordinator)
- Joan Crowley-O'Sullivan (Ass't Co-ordinator)
- Kathleen Fitzpatrick (Administrator)
- Carol Hemmingway (to February)
- Mary Brady
- Mary King
- Nicola Foley
- Grainne Carwood
- Emma Hamilton
- Brian Carpenter

Primary Curriculum Support Programme

Steering Group

- Chair: Emer Egan (to June 2001)
- Colm Ó Ceallacháin (from Sept 2001)
- Áine Lawlor (Nat. Co-ordinator)

- Pádraig Ó Duibhir (Deputy Nat Co-ord)
- Michael Leonard (Cigireacht)
- Bernie McCabe/Noel Doyle (ICDU)
- Don Herron (DWECC to August 2001)
- Gerard McHugh (DWECC from Sept 2001)
- Secretary: Carol Hemmingway (PCSP Office to February)
- Kathleen Fitzpatrick (PCSP Office from March)

Substance Misuse Prevention Programme(to August 2001)

Project Management Group

- Brendan Ó Murchú Senior Inspector (Chairperson)
- John Williams (Acting) National co-ordinator(to April)
- Kathleen Henderson
- and Susan Dixon Joint acting Co-ordinator(from April - Aug)
- Don Herron DWECC
- Margaret Grogan Psychological Services(NEPS)
- Noel Doyle ICDU

Primary Schools Sports Initiative

Team

- Mairead Weymes National Co-ordinator
- John Williams Assistant National Co-ordinator
- Reamonn Ó Donnchadha Assistant National Co-ordinator

Primary School Sports Initiative

Liasion Committee (i.e Steering Committee)

- Michael Dermody Department of Education and Science
- Mairead Weymes National Co-ordinator
- Áine Lawlor (PCSP)
- Don Herron DWECC (to August)
- Gerard McHugh DWECC (from September)
- Noel Doyle ICDU