

## Director's Report 2003 - Gerard McHugh

*"Globally increased emphasis is being placed on teacher's professional development. Policy processes and systems are moving from a preoccupation with universal preservice education, one of the great achievements of the twentieth century, to the challenges of creating opportunities for career-long education and training in the twenty-first."*

Bob Moon, (Open University, 2000)

### Introduction

In 2003, Dublin West Education Centre made very significant progress in creating opportunities for education and training for primary and post-primary teachers. It was the Centre's first full year in the new building in Tallaght and as such, trial, experimentation, pilots and drafts were the order of the day. It was a year of phenomenal activity in national in-service, particularly up to June, a year of unprecedented international activity, a year in which our new ICT facility was installed, launched and developed, a year which on many occasions saw the Centre being used by teachers and the educational community from 8.00am until 10.00pm, a year which saw a major gathering in our large room for an international speaker, a year in which partnerships with the educational community including third level colleges increased appreciably, a year which saw the core work of the Education Centre, short courses/programmes and support groups expand and grow.

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 made available to teachers in the area and to other persons and institutions. It is a promotional document also.

The report will address issues under the following headings:

- Local Programmes
- ICT Programmes
- National Programmes
- European/International Programmes
- Building
- Management and Administration
- Collaboration
- Future Directions

### Local Programmes

#### Overview

The core business of Education Centres is to provide for the professional development needs of teachers in the local area. This objective is achieved by making available courses and programmes, based in the Centre or in schools, which are designed to meet identified needs. It is achieved also by the establishment and maintenance of a plethora of support groups where teachers discuss, debate and share with colleagues working in analogous situations. Support groups establish which needs they wish to have addressed and facilitators and lecturers are provided by the Centre. The three elements of professional development outlined by Lieberman and Miller, direct teaching, learning in school and learning out of school are very clearly observable in the Centre's provision for teachers.

In 2003 the Centre developed its collaboration with national programmes in particular the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) and the Second Level Support Service (SLSS) as it attempted to co-ordinate and maximize provision for individual teachers and schools.

#### Spring and Autumn Programmes.

The emphasis of the Management Committee and Director in Dublin West is that Special Needs, Management and Curriculum are addressed in a significant way each term. We invest an enormous amount of effort also in attempting to provide programmes of interest for post-primary teachers, with varying in degrees of success. The attendance of primary teachers at local courses and programmes continues to outweigh the attendance of post-primary teachers by a large multiple.

I outline below a number of the courses which were offered in Spring/Autumn programmes in 2003 in some cases referring to the rationale for the particular programme and in some cases to outcomes.

### Special Needs

### **Learning Support Teachers (Primary)**

More than fifty learning support teachers availed of support in the Centre in 2003. One course/support group was in operation in the Spring. In the Autumn a plenary meeting of learning support teachers was attended by forty teachers in October. This was followed by an induction course for newly appointed learning support teachers and by a support group for more experienced practitioners. Sessions in Mathematics are planned for early 2004. We are grateful to Mary Coyne, Eithne O'Shea, Bernie Tobin, Carol Burke-Heneghan and Mary Kelly all of whom assisted the Centre in providing a much-appreciated service to learning support teachers.

### **Resource Teachers (Primary)**

Eighty-eight resource teachers completed a ten-hour course which was organised in conjunction with the Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education (IATSE). We are grateful to IATSE personnel and to our local team Orla Ni Bhroin and Caitriona Hogan for their continuing commitment to the cause of Resource Teachers and for sharing their vast experience in an area where the system has great needs. I look forward to holding a plenary session with Resource Teachers in 2004 as we continue to endeavour to meet needs which are prone to change on a regular basis.

### **Learning Support and Resource Teachers (Post-Primary)**

There are two areas where the incidence of attendance of post-primary teachers at courses in the Centre is significantly higher than in other areas, Special Needs and Information and Communications Technology.

In the Spring programme eight learning support teachers participated in an eight hour course designed and delivered by a team under the direction of Mairin Wilson. Most of the team work in the Special Education Department of the Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines. In the Autumn programme Mairin and her team worked with sixteen learning support and resource teachers and also with the Special Needs department in one post-primary school which where sixteen teachers took part in an in-house course. We appreciate the contribution of Mairin Wilson and her team in working with us on this matter, one of the key objectives set out in last years Annual Report. I intend to make further progress in this area in 2004.

### **Support Teachers**

The Support Teachers' Support Group met six times during the year. Twenty-six teachers in all participated in the group which is facilitated with commitment, passion and great expertise by Therese Hegarty. This number constitutes well over fifty per cent of the Support Teachers in Ireland and two-thirds of those working in the Dublin area. It is a testament to the quality of the interaction in the group that participation levels remain so high in an area where once a national programme was necessary. While the group would continue to require significant support nationally we are pleased in Dublin West to offer whatever assistance we can while the future of the Support Teachers structure and ways of supporting it are considered at national level.

### **Teachers of International Pupils.**

In last year's report I highlighted this area as a priority for 2003. I am pleased that the Resource Teachers of International Children otherwise known as the Language Teachers' group have been established as regular users of the Centre. Facilitation has been provided from within the group but also by Mary Coyne and Micheál Mullarkey. Pat Guerin from the Irish Refugee Council attended a meeting of the Support Group in May. Personnel from other agencies and support associations will work with the group in 2004. In all, twenty-five teachers took part in activities in 2003. One of our objectives in the coming year is to establish how many teachers in our catchment area are involved in this work at both primary and post-primary level, we are aware that many teachers hold temporary positions in their schools and consequently there can be a higher than average turnover.

### **Special Class Teachers' Support Group**

Following discussions between the Director and a number of Special Class Teachers it was decided to establish support groups for Special Class Teachers separate from general Resource Teacher groups. At least twenty-six Special Class Teachers have taken part in support activities in the Centre during 2003. Two support groups existed during the year, one based in Tallaght and the other covering other areas in our catchment. Both groups came together on 15<sup>th</sup> Dec for a presentation from and dialogue with two psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Carmel Reid and Orla Barrett. Consideration will be given to the efficacy of maintaining two groups and to when it might be feasible to amalgamate the groups for specific events.

### **Changing Children's Reputations**

This course subtitled "narrative conversations with children" designed by Therese Hegarty, based on the work of David Epsten and Michael White and Therese's own reflections and experience commenced in 2002 but gained in currency as 2003 progressed. Sixteen teachers worked on the final fourteen hours of the original course in the Spring while eighteen teachers are participating in the second course which commenced in the Autumn. This is the kind of response to teachers' needs which the Centre wishes to foster and develop. In the past, Education Centres frequently were the places where a course which started life on a small scale, later became part of the mainstream, having an impact on the system as a whole. I view this course as seminal and anticipate that it and its successors will play a central role in our system.

Therese accompanied by participants Mary Healy and Tina Doyle will address an international conference on "narrative practice" in Manchester in 2004

### **Special Needs Assistants**

Early in the Director's term of office, (Spring, 2002) training for Special Needs Assistants (SNA's) was identified as a significant need. Major steps were taken in 2002 to provide meaningful professional development opportunities and training for SNA's. In the Spring of 2003 two hundred and twelve SNA's and twenty principals availed of training in Dublin West. Courses were designed and delivered by a skilled team of facilitators including Bernie Collins, who co-ordinated the initiative, Mairin Ni Chéileachair, Therese Hegarty, Geraldine Hayes, David Ruddy, Anita Prunty, Seamus O'Neill and Sé Fulham. School principals, teachers and SNA's themselves were most appreciative of the efforts of Dublin West in providing opportunities at a time of great need and apprehension.

The Department of Education and Science asked the Education Centres and some Colleges of Education to collaborate with Department personnel in establishing a nationwide Foundation Course for SNA's which in some instances would qualify SNA's to pursue certificate courses in Colleges of Education. Consequently Dublin West joined with Navan, Kildare and Laois Education Centres as well as Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines, Mary Immaculate College of Education, Limerick and St Angela's College, Sligo in addressing such a course. The Director took part in a Steering Committee while Bernie Collins and Mairin Ni Chéileachair were among the team which designed the programme. In October Marian McHugh, Mary Manley and Chris Meehan were nominated by Dublin West to participate in national training. Following the training, these facilitators delivered a twenty-hour Foundation programme to twenty-seven SNA's in the final weeks of 2003. Arising from the imperative enunciated by school principals and SNA's and encouragement from the Department of Education and Science, a full programme of SNA training is in place for the early months of 2004 in our catchment area.

As a number of pupils who are entitled to the assistance of an SNA are in the post-primary sector, we endeavour to accommodate SNA's working in that sector in our programmes. However the number of applications coming from the post-primary sector remains relatively low.

### **Leadership/Management**

The scope of the leadership, management and administrative roles of school principals continues to expand. Concepts such as instructional leadership, organisational leadership, transformational and transactional leadership, which have been prevalent in the literature for two decades or more have been joined by concepts such as distributive leadership, situational leadership, leadership frames, reactive and proactive leadership as well as moral leadership and this is by no means a comprehensive review of the current state.

It is imperative that professional development opportunities should continue to be provided for principals. It behoves all providers and all of those who represent school leaders to contribute to ongoing training for school principals' and staffs on leadership issues. Dublin West Education Centre continues to support principals in particular. Almost ninety primary principals participate in four principals' support groups. Three groups continue to be facilitated by Mícheál Mullarkey, the fourth group comes from schools within our catchment area and beyond and aims to support principals of schools where autism units are located.

Mindful of the necessity to extend leadership responsibility in schools beyond principals the Centre is considering ways of providing professional development opportunities in leadership to staffs.

Discussions have taken place with post-primary personnel with a view to establishing how best leadership and management personnel in post-primary schools can be supported.

### **Parents**

The Centre collaborated with the National Parents' Council Primary in facilitating one session for parents on Parents' Associations and a session for parents and teachers on Boards of Management. I anticipate that as we are in the early stages of new Boards of Management in primary schools further leadership training will take place for parents and teachers.

### **Curriculum**

Theorists and practitioners alike talk about professional knowledge creation in education, about knowledge creation in schools and about the identification, maintenance and dissemination of good practice. Significant changes are taking place in classrooms and schools as teachers in both the primary and post-primary sectors grapple with new content and experiment with a variety of methodologies. National in-service plants seeds which need to be nourished and fostered so

that they will develop.

In the local course programme we have the flexibility to approach content and methodology in a creative way and delve deeper or we can engage in embedding and consolidation. With regard to the system primary an exciting, logical and fruitful partnership has been developed with the PCSP *cuiditheoiri* in curricular areas after curriculum key messages have already been delivered. We have achieved the objective signalled in last years report of developing the drop-in service. Further progress will be work in this area by arranging multiple "drop-in" evenings where teachers can attend the Centre and meet with *cuiditheoiri* in several curricular areas all in one afternoon or evening. This phenomenon lives out symbolically and practically traditional and contemporary Education Centre objectives, namely providing a meeting place for teachers where they can engage in dialogue and mutual support. In addition to the drop-in service more formal seminars were also offered in a range of curricular areas.

## **Mathematics**

The Mathematics programme which was delivered in the Spring by Catherine Daly, Kevin Barry and Sr Gemma Beggan achieved fame well beyond the ten teachers who actually took the ten-hour course in March, April and May. The emphasis was on activity based learning, the target audience was teachers of infants to second class and the sessions took place either side of Easter, however news of the course spread far and wide, led to calls for repeats and for a summer course in Maths. The summer course was delivered and the prospect of similar type courses directed not only at teachers of junior classes but also of senior classes and of children with special needs will be a reality in 2004.

## **English**

Primary Curriculum Support Programme personnel including Carol Burke-Henegan and Ena Morley worked on an interesting and popular curriculum English course in the Spring, Phonological awareness, "real" books, spelling, writing and poetry were covered in a stimulating yet empowering manner.

## **Gaeilge**

Brendán de Bhál took on the challenge of working with a small group of teachers, engaging in basic communication *i nGaeilge* in an enjoyable and supportive environment. In the Autumn Jane Kelly worked on a similar course, again with a small group of teachers but also with very favourable outcomes.

## **Music**

The emphasis on the Curriculum Music course in the Spring was on listening and responding, composition activities, practical activities and the recorder. Ten teachers enjoyed this programme immensely. The five sessions were organised on the basis of a collaboration with FUAIM and provided opportunities for PCSP designated trainers in Music, in this instance Mary Ryng, Christine Ferguson, Miriam O'Sullivan and Fidelma Morris to put into practice some of the ideas which had been discussed in training.

## **Visual Arts**

In addition to providing a tremendous *cuiditheoir* service Una Kelly worked on the more formal aspect of our Spring programme also. Clay in the Primary Classroom was the theme for her workshops which were delivered in March and April.

## **Other Primary Courses**

Workshops, seminars and support groups advertised under the headings of Counselling Workshops, Curriculum Physical Education, Making In-School Management More Effective and Infant Teachers' Support Group did not form in the Spring for a variety of reasons. However a number of the ideas associated with these initiatives were delivered for the summer programme and will continue to be incorporated into other courses as appropriate.

## **Write-a-Book**

The Write-a-Book project was coordinated in Dublin West again in 2003. The tasks of advertising, advising schools, receiving books, organising exchange of books, receiving books following the "swap," listing winners and preparing for the presentation ceremonies were carried out with aplomb by the Education Centre staff. An historic element to this years Write-a-Book was the fact that the presentation ceremonies were held in the new Centre building in Tallaght. When the ceremonies took place in May and June it was the first time pupils were received in the Centre. Following a very successful pilot presentation in May with the pupils from one school, St Thomas ' SNS, Jobstown a decision was made to locate all presentations ceremonies in the Centre.

In the event one thousand five hundred and fifty nine books were submitted by ninety classes in thirty schools. At the

presentation ceremonies, Terry Hassett Henry did a superb job as has been her style for many years in Dublin West. In the Autumn Carol Burke-Henegan enthused a new group of "would be" Write-a-Book teachers in a single session. We anticipate that they will join the Dublin West Education Centre Write-a-Book family in 2004.

### **Post-Primary Local Programmes**

As has already been indicated post-primary teachers participated in courses in the area of Learning Support/Resource/Special Needs and in programmes in the ICT area. Progress was made in a number of other areas also.

### **Maths/Physics/Technology**

In the Spring and Autumn schedules, interesting, stimulating and provocative sessions were advertised for Maths, Physics and Technology teachers. This series of lectures, collaborations with our neighbours in the Institute of Technology, Tallaght addressed topics such as "*Frontiers in Astronomy – where Physics and Mathematics meet,*" "*But what use is this Algebra stuff in the real world?*" "*Learning from Failure-Engineering Failures and Achievements*" "*Diagnostic Testing-an aid to Motivation and Achievement in Mathematics Education*" and "*Modelling and Control-A Different Approach*"

### **Classical Studies**

In collaboration with the Classical Association of Ireland a seminar on Junior Certificate Classical Studies was held in April following very extensive advertising and promotion. Tom Giblin from the Association and Margaret Desmond from the Department of Education and Science worked on the seminar. We hope that the new ground which was broken on this occasion will bear further fruit in ongoing relationships between the Association and this and other Education Centres.

### **English**

Teaching Film in the Learning Certificate Syllabus was the attractive title of a practical session which was scheduled for April. While numbers were low, those who attended Pauline Kelly's session were pleased. This is an area where I hope collaboration with the Second Level Support Services in the future will lead to a greater uptake among teachers.

### **Other Post-Primary Programmes**

Following consultation in the system, courses were offered in Social Personal and Health Education at Senior Cycle level and Civic Social and Personal Education at Junior Certificate level where the interesting concept of "*Student Councils: Students and Teachers Working Together*" was to be explored. These courses did not attract sufficient interest in order to justify proceeding with them in this instance. We do intend to revisit and research these areas.

### **Other Programmes**

#### **Newly Qualified Teachers**

In the Spring as part of our collaboration with Coláiste Mhuire, Marino six newly qualified teachers took part in a support group, Beginning Teachers' Network, facilitated by personnel from Coláiste Mhuire. We provided further support to NQT's in the Autumn when in partnership with St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, we hosted forty-five newly qualified teachers in the Centre. A minority of those who attended are participating in the Induction course organised by St Patrick's College. Dublin West committed itself at the meeting to support all NQT's in its catchment area and beyond who wish to avail of the Centre's services in this most important year in their careers.

### **Summer Programme**

Fifteen courses were offered in the Dublin West summer programme poster in 2003. This is in addition to the courses offered under the ICT banner. The kind of courses offered once again reflected the interests of the Director and Management Committee: Curriculum, Leadership/Management and Special Needs again hold pride of place. In line with our belief in the primacy of the late August course half of the courses were scheduled for the end of August, the remainder for early July.

The national co-ordinators of the Primary Curriculum Support Programme and School Development Planning (primary) Áine Lawlor and Eileen Flynn, the chairperson of the Management Committee Mairin Ni Cheileachair, Micheál Mullarkey, Assistant General Secretary of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation, Billy Sheehan, joined the Director in delivering a wide ranging and stimulating course "The Leadership of the Primary Principal" to twenty principals in August. A leadership course for in-school management personnel wasn't sufficiently subscribed in order to enable it to commence. "Teachers Adopting Counselling Approaches" was the title of an interesting and challenging course delivered with ease

and conviction by Mairin Ni Cheileachair in July.

Developing Communications Skills in Primary Schools, a course which would have been of interest to those in school management as well as to classroom practitioners, scheduled for mid August did not take place.

Half of our summer courses reflected curriculum themes: Mathematics-Infant to Second Class was oversubscribed and was a natural follow-on from one of our Spring courses. Catherine Daly and Dolores Corcoran provided opportunities for participants to make the 1999 curriculum in Maths come alive.

Ena Morley, Carol Burke-Henegan and Pauline Costello performed similar feats with English –Language Literature and the Arts.

Arising from our relationship with FUAIM “Come Join the Music” was the title of a practical music-making course which took place in July, facilitated by several tutors including a number of PCSP designated trainers.

Our further commitment to the Arts curriculum was exemplified when Una Kelly enthused the audience with a delightful course entitled “Fabric and Fibre in the Classroom”. This was Una’s last course with Dublin West before she joined the Department’s inspectorate, our loss giving way to significant gains for the system.

John Murphy, a PCSP designated Physical Education trainer, delivered most of a Physical Education course which was located in July in St Thomas’ JNS in Jobstown. This course was full from early on and participants enjoyed every minute of it.

Aquatics is a most important aspect of the Physical Education programme enunciated in the 1999 curriculum. In partnership with the Irish Water Safety Association Dublin West has been involved in “Aquatics, Water Safety and Resuscitation” for many years. In 2003 one hundred and eleven teachers worked hard on the course, a course which demands much more than twenty hours but which is nevertheless extremely rewarding. Led by Michael Murphy our course occupied the facilities of Stewarts School/Sports Complex in Palmerstown during the first week of July and the last week of August.

The only curriculum type course which did not form was the Walk Tall course under the auspices of the Substance Misuse Prevention Programme which was scheduled for July.

The Centre’s continuing commitment to courses in the Special Needs area is paramount and is evident in everything we do throughout the year. Eithne O’Shea and Bernie Tobin led an induction course for newly appointed support teachers in August. This course usually links with work which follows throughout the school year and is seen as a significant aspect of our support for schools in this very important area of school life.

Equally important is the provision of professional development opportunities for resource teachers. Orla Ni Bhrion and Caitriona Hogan led a course for resource teachers of children with special needs in July. The area is challenging for teachers who demonstrated their appreciation of the Centre’s attention to this area.

Therese Hegarty facilitated a course in August on the theme “Issues for Teachers of Children with Social and Emotional Difficulties”. This course explored a number of extremely important concepts and themes.

## **National Programmes**

The Department of Education & Science is responsible for approximately twenty-six national programmes ranging in size from the very small to the very large. National in-service is mediated through such programmes which are managed in most instances in Education Centres. Dublin West once again had the honour and the responsibility for managing three programmes, the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP), the largest of all programmes by a considerable distance, the Substance Misuse Prevention Programme (SMPP) and the Primary Schools’ Sports Initiative (PSSI) whose term expired during 2003 and which to all extents and purposes is now being subsumed under PCSP.

The Centre in its role as a local Education Centre of course facilitates the delivery of in-service in its catchment area by a large number of programmes. Needless to say PCSP in-service accounted for the largest proportion of activity in all Education Centres. In the period January to June PCSP seminars in Science, Gaeilge, Social Personal and Health Education and Learning Support ensured that the Centre’s facilities and several off-site venues were in regular use. In addition to this, PCSP *cuiditheoiri* worked in schools and in the Centre in the areas of English, Visual Arts, Mathematics as well as Gaeilge where trainers had a dual role. In the September-December period PCSP seminars were confined to the Learning Support area because of the interruption to the original PCSP schedule.

The Centre facilitated also the in-service activities of School Development Planning Programme both primary and post-primary and of a variety of other post-primary programmes including Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Religion, Junior Certificate Maths as well as a number of programmes under the Second Level Support Service banner, English, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP, Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP), Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE). The new Junior Certificate Science Programme came on stream in the late Autumn and preparations were in place to welcome the new History and Geography programmes early in 2004.

Arrangements were made during 2003 to provide office accommodation for Anne Henry of the School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI), post-primary. It is anticipated that Anne who has been a regular visitor to the Centre in 2003 will work from the Centre in 2004.

The Centre participated in the Department’s Circus and Fairground Programme in 2003 for the first time. A number of teachers have worked on the programmes.

## **ICT Advisor’s Report**

### **Background:**

In December 2001, Minister Michael Woods announced the DES Initiative ‘The Blueprint for the Future of ICT in Irish Education 2001 – 2003’. This document set out the Government’s plans for the further development and integration of ICT

in Education, continuing from the 'Schools IT 2000' framework document. At present, there is no indication when the DES will announce the next policy document. We (ICT Advisors) have been informed on a number of occasions that the IT Policy Unit in the DES are working on this policy document, which will be another 3 year plan.

### **ICT Planning and Advice Seminars:**

Four seminars were held in Spring 2003 – a follow up for the principals' ICT Planning workshops, a review day for ICT Tutors and two SIP evaluation days, one for coordinators and one for teachers involved. Attendance at the Principals' seminars was excellent, and means that almost all principals' received their pack which is a major help in formulating ICT Plans for schools.

### **School Visits:**

Although now viewed as 'the central role' of the ICT Advisor, it is still very difficult to fit in school visits on a regular basis. There is an ever increasing administration workload, with new courses coming on stream, new initiatives to be facilitated. Organisation of courses still takes up the majority of ICT Advisor's time. This service has become one of responding to requests and we are a long way from arriving at a planned schedule of school visitations, as I indicated last year. Requests for visits were facilitated as quickly as possible, and in this area at least I feel that I have served the schools well. As always, the nature of the requests varies a great deal and advice is sought on all aspects of IT, from technical issues to pedagogical use to planning.

### **DWEC Website:**

The website has been kept reasonably up to date during the year, but structures need to be put in place for regular appraisal of, and updating of content in all areas.

### **Teaching Skills Initiative:**

In the year 2003, a total of 49 computer courses or support groups were held – 22 in the Spring term, 9 Summer Courses and 18 in Autumn. These were made up of:

<b>Name of Course</b>	<b>Number of Courses</b>
Phase 1 Primary	1
Phase 2 Primary (Advanced)	6
Phase 2 Post Primary	1
Internet & E-mail	1
Web Design	3
Basic Troubleshooting	1
Support Groups	12
Teach to the Future	1
Special Needs – The Basics	1
Special Needs – Learning Support	2
Teach to the Future	1
Networking	1
Seminars	3
Digital Video	2
Empowering Minds	2
NCTE Initiatives	3
Facility	1
Make the Computer Work for You	1
Quicken	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>

These courses catered for over 512 participants. These numbers are a very slight increase on the previous year. However, the year 2004 is already extremely busy. Advertising of Spring courses was begun early in December, and mailshots were more directly targeted at the intended participants. While this may be somewhat more expensive, as a tactic it has borne fruit, with some courses booking out many times over. Of particular interest in this regard is the Special Needs Learning Support course, which was offered to SNAs only. This was booked out 7 times! Another 2 of these courses will be run for teachers. Also very popular are Quicken for school finances, and Facility. For the first time, this year saw the development of a major problem with TSI funding. Up until July this year, we operated on a surplus of TSI funding received in previous years. This surplus is now gone and such a situation will not develop again. Twice in the Autumn term, the Centre has been left waiting on funding from NCTE and was unable to process claims as they were lodged. The system of getting 50 - 80% funding on receipt of application and the remainder on receipt of Final Financial Returns means that the Centre must either leave claimants waiting, or go into a debit balance. This situation is ongoing and is again hitting crisis point in 2004.

### **Technology Integration Initiative:**

This area can be divided into 2 sections – the Administration Network and the Training Network. The arranging for, and installation of all the IT equipment in the Centre (both networks) has taken a great deal of time this year. Much more remains to be done, particularly software installation.

Training Network: At last, for almost the full year, we have a fully functioning computer training room. This was very well utilised throughout the year and is now a major source of income by way of Venue fees (now agreed with NCTE for €20 per hour for NCTE courses), and also for outside bookings. Courses began in Mid March and continued throughout the year. There have been very few technical problems and any that arose were dealt with promptly by Educom. The donation of (i) Five specially commissioned Digital Video Editing machines from NCTE and (ii) an Apple iCart with 10 laptops in a wireless network from Apple Computers has added considerably to our facilities. The room has been used by many 'outside' organisations, including NCTE. Everyone has been highly impressed with the level of equipment.

Administration Network: The old Compaq server gave up the ghost during the year, and had to be replaced with a new server. A very important part of the new server is the backup system, which backs up all administration files every day. Once again, Educom have responded very promptly to all emergencies and problems.

### **Roots & Wings:**

It has been a very busy year for Roots & Wings, and it has taken up a considerable amount of time. In February, five of our schools submitted their Comenius 1 application forms to Léargas. Despite our worries about two in particular, August brought the good news that all were successful. These five projects have been working throughout the year, and are currently submitting renewal forms. In May a network meeting was held in the Czech Republic to prepare for the Thematic Conference and Contact Seminar for September. The September meeting was very successful, with another 4 of our schools setting up projects with their European partners. These four are now submitting their application forms. Of the original five schools, one ( Templeogue College ) had not been in Malmo and had not met the other participants. As support for the school, and to deliver ICT Training in First Class, I attended the first project meeting of this group in October.

It was decided by Roots & Wings to have an administrator in each country that would help schools in the use of First Class. I attended this administrator's course in Malmo in November. A number of attempts to get all our R&W schools together for training have failed. I hope to run an all day training session this term.

### **Conferences/Meetings:**

The number of meetings which must be attended has grown as the job has grown. I attended 7 NCTE meetings as well as an average of 2 incidental meetings (other than school visits) per week. The incidental meetings could take anything between 1 hour to 1 day i.e. 2 full day meetings with other ICT Advisors to work on Workplan. Conferences attended include Bett, CESI, Clicker day, ICT Expo, Education Show, Macromedia Seminar, 3 Microsoft Events.

### **Communication:**

An important part of the role is communications with schools by phone, e-mail and newsletters/updates. Three newsletters were issued during the year along with a number of mailshots with updates and advertisements for ICT courses.

### **Primary Curriculum Support Programme**

As the Education Centre which manages the PCSP, Dublin West is responsible for employing seconded teachers to work on the programme. In the first part of the year more than one hundred seconded teachers were working with PCSP. At the

beginning of the school year 2003/4 there were to be sixty-nine seconded teachers on the team. The recruitment, employment and deployment of administrative personnel is also the responsibility of the Centre. The Centre is responsible for PCSP finances, substantial compared to other programmes. The director represents the Centre on all four PCSP committees: the Implementation Group, the Technical Working Group, the Steering Committee and the Evaluation Committee.

Seminar delivery in Gaeilge, Social Personal and Health Education was concluded in June. With regard to Science most schools had two days seminars, schools which had originally been in the Science pilot project, did not have a second seminar yet. The Learning Support team delivered seminars and worked in a supportive roles during 2002/3. At the beginning of 2003/4 school year the Science, Gaeilge and Social Personal and Health Education teams were reduced and trainers became part of the Regional Curriculum Support Service (RCSS) working as *cuiditheoiri*. As a decision was made at national level to engage in "Consolidation and Review" during 2003/4 Music and Physical Education in-service did not commence as scheduled in September 2003. The teams designated to undertake the Music and Physical Education seminar delivery were advised accordingly.

The only seminar delivery involving PCSP personnel in the September-December team was the delivery of seminars to large schools by the Learning Support trainers who combined this task with *cuiditheoireacht* work. The work of PCSP *cuiditheoiri* has been welcomed enthusiastically by schools. While no major research has been done in this area to date the evidence from small scale research, some conducted by PCSP and some conducted in this Centre suggests that schools, teachers and principals find it most helpful and essential in the process of embedding the 1999 curriculum in schools and in the system. A theme resounding from all those who have been surveyed in that *cuiditheoireacht* must continue. This suggests Lieberman and Miller's contention that ultimately the most effective aspect of teacher professional development and learning is learning in school.

Anecdotal evidence from schools in many areas has also been most affirming of the *cuiditheoireacht* service.

I wish to pay tribute to everyone involved in the PCSP team to congratulate each of them on being major agents of change in Irish primary schools and to thank them for their commitment. I wish to specifically mention the talented, creative and extremely hard working senior team in PCSP, Aine Lawlor (National Co-ordinator), Mary McDonald, Valerie O'Dowd, Marie McLoughlin, Karin Bacon and Margaret Rossiter (Assistant Co-ordinators), their work will have an impact on Irish life for generations.

From its senior team PCSP lost Padraig O'Duibhir (Deputy National Co-ordinator) and Joan Crowley O'Sullivan Assistant Co-ordinator) to St Patrick's College, Drumcondra and to the Special Education Support Service (SESS) respectively. I join with the many tributes paid to Padraig and Joan, their work in PCSP was truly outstanding, the system is fortunate that they will continue to work with the education family. It is a matter of great regret that Padraig and Joan have not been replaced on the PCSP team to date, this places unfair burdens on others in a team which has in fact has lost at least six personnel since the summer.

The team in the PCSP office is also smaller than it was at the beginning of the year. We send our good wishes to Mary Brady, Nicola Foley, Emma Hamilton, Beatrice McAndrew and Tracey Fitzgibbon who worked with PCSP for varying periods in the first half of the year. Kathleen Fitzpatrick (Administrator) Mary King and Susan Kennedy have worked diligently in the PCSP office all year, we are in their debt.

The PCSP will issue a mid-term report on their work in 2004. An interim report on the evaluation of PCSP's work is expected early in 2004 and a final report is promised for later in the year.

## **Substance Misuse Prevention Programme**

Early in 2003 Susan Dixon was appointed as Assistant National Support Officer to join John Williams and Mary Johnston on the SMPP team.

The team works with three hundred and twenty primary schools in fourteen Local Drugs Task Force Areas (LDTFA's) in Dublin, Cork and North Wicklow. I indicate briefly a sample of the activity which was undertaken by the team during 2003.

- Responding to requests from schools for various types of support
- Policy work - information meetings on policy
- Work with Area School Substance Policy Support Groups
- Participation in Action 43 meetings (Drugs Strategy)
- Walk Tall updates to staffs
- Methodology workshops with staffs
- Parent information seminars
- Joint actions with the PCSP, SPHE co-ordinator
- In-service days for teachers in (LDTFA's)
- Participation in LDTFA Education and Prevention Sub-committees
- Participation in Drugs Education Workers Forum (DEWF) and on sub-committees
- Participation in Community Awareness of Drugs (CAD) activities
- Links and partnerships with a large number of other organisations in education, health and the Gardai
- Involvement in School Drug Information (ERIC) booklet
- Publication of a number of Walk Tall newsletters
- Organisation of a number of 27- hour evening courses for teachers on Walk Tall
- Organisation of a number of 20-hour summer courses through the Education Centre network.

- Involvement with Cross Border Drug and Alcohol Education Forum
- Involvement with some Colleges and Education

As the year came to a close John Williams announced his intention of resigning his position with the SMPP in order to become principal of Divine Word NS in Marley Grange. I thank John for his tremendous commitment to SMPP for many years. His contribution is acknowledged throughout the system. While wishing John the very best in his new position I have every expectation that his experience and wise counsel will still be available to the SMPP and to Dublin West.

### **Primary Schools' Sports Initiative**

The untimely and unexpected death of Michael Darmody on 2<sup>nd</sup> February came as a tremendous shock to the Physical Education community in general. Michael chaired the two committees which oversaw the Primary Schools' Sports Initiative (PSSI), the Liaison Group and the Task Force. Michael was a dynamic driving force behind the advancement of Physical Education in Ireland. Furthermore he was a great person with whom to work and he is missed sadly by many in the education world. To his family I extend our heartfelt sympathy.

The PSSI was scheduled to finish at the end of the school year 2002/3. The National Co-ordinator Mairead Weymes and assistant co-ordinators Bernadette Cotter and Sadie Biddulph returned to their schools following the termination of their secondments, they would have remained on secondment as PCSP trainers had the Physical Education programme gone ahead as planned.

The team completed work in schools early in the year in the strands of Gymnastics, Aquatics and Dance. The report to the Minister is at an advanced stage but has not been completed. The team worked assiduously on curriculum materials and brought these to an advanced stage of preparation. It was necessary for the team to reassemble in November to do some further work on the materials.

As 2003 came to a close it was decided that remaining PSSI funds would be transferred to PCSP and that any further work would be carried out under the auspices of PCSP.

I wish to place on the record our appreciation of the work done during the year by Mairead, Bernadette and Sadie, they have done a great service to the cause of Physical Education in primary schools. I wish them well and look forward to their considerable talents being used to full effect when national in-service in Physical Education gets under way

### **European/International Programmes**

In 2003 Dublin West had three district international experiences two of which were anticipated and a third which was a surprise.

#### **Arion Visit on 29<sup>th</sup> January**

The international section of the Department of Education & Science requested in late December 2002 that Dublin West would facilitate an Arion visit from European educators in January. On 29<sup>th</sup> January sixteen visitors from thirteen countries throughout Europe were hosted in Nano Nagle Junior School and Talbot Senior School in Bawnogue, Clondalkin and also in Deansrath Community School. The group then attended a lecture in Dublin West delivered by the Director on the "Role of Education Centres in the Irish system". We are grateful to the staffs, parents and members of the communities in the three schools who portrayed a very positive but realistic view of the challenges in our system and of the very professional way in which schools and communities address these. Few if any of the visitors would have encountered or have been aware of the level of home school community co-operation which was observed in Bawnogue and Deansrath.

#### **Intervisitation**

Under the auspices of the European Forum on Educational Administration the twelfth European Intervisitation Programme was held in Ireland on 21<sup>st</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> September. The theme of the Intervisitation was the *Learning Community in a Pluralist Society -Identity and Inclusion*. The group of almost one hundred educationalists visited forty-two educational establishments in Dublin on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Sixteen of these venues were organised by Dublin West and included primary, post-primary schools, some colleges of further education and also An Cosan, The Shanty Education and Training Centre providing community based education and childcare.

Many participants were amazed at what they saw and were extremely grateful for the efforts of staffs in making them welcome and in demonstrating relevant educational activities, I thank all of those who made the intervisitation very successful.

#### **Roots and Wings**

The Centre's involvement with Roots and Wings continued throughout 2003 and is referred to in the ICT Advisor's Report. I want to acknowledge again this year the contribution of Fintan Keating, our ICT advisor in maintaining the Roots and Wings programme in Ireland. He has done this job so well that his skills are requested from time to time in a European context.

The Director and ICT advisor attended a planning meeting in Olomouc, Czech Republic in May and the Roots and Wings conference in Olomouc in September. The Director delivered the keynotes address "Teaching, Learning and Leading

Education in a European Context – An Irish Perspective “ to this conference on 18<sup>th</sup> September. 2004 will be an important year for Roots and Wings.

## **Building**

The fact that the Building section has moved several places down the director's annual report and is never a top of the agenda at the Management Committee meetings is a success story in itself. For too long the issue of the new building and access to it dominated agendas at Dublin West. Some tasks remain such as installation of blinds and completion of signage but these are well under way.

During 2003 we learned a lot about the building, what is comfortable and what is not. With a plan in place we can accommodate large numbers throughout the building. There have been very logistical challenges in the catering area but these have been dealt with admirably by staff.

I wish to express our appreciation to all of those in the Institute of Technology , Tallaght, with whom we are in contact especially Colm Collins (Director), Paul Caffrey and Paul Campbell, they are very understanding landlords.\_

## **Management and Administration**

### **Management Committee**

The Management Committee of the Centre continued to support the work of the Centre in a positive and caring manner during the year. Mairin Ni Cheileachair, Conor Harrison, Eddie Guilmartin and John O'Mahony continued in the roles respectively as Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Frances Leahy, Therese Hegarty, Michael Murphy and Mairin Wilson remained on the committee and Fiona O'Brien joined the committee for the first time at the Annual General Meeting. I appreciate deeply the contribution of Management Committee both on an individual basis and collectively during 2003.

In the Autumn Frances Leahy announced that she would be resigning from the Committee and at year-end Conor Harrison decided to resign from the committee. On my own behalf and on behalf of the education community of Dublin West I thank each of them for the generous service which they have given to the committee for many years. I wish them well in their new roles in management in education.

### **Administration and Personnel**

The administrative staff of the Centre are charged with a multiplicity of tasks which they discharge efficiently and effectively. Roles are subject to ongoing change as the needs of the Centre change.

During the course of the year just ended Deirdre Cleary again oversaw the work of the Centre, forged new links at our new address and continued to work with a range of post-primary programmes. Yvonne Fitzgibbon worked on PCSP matters and throughout the year assumed responsibility for the SMPP also later in the year. Carmel Finlay continued to work on Accounts and participated in other Centre activities also, Angie Grogan worked on ICT early in the year and subsequently on a wide range of issues, particularly at the request of the Director. Belinda Bermingham devoted a lot of her time to the SMPP and Write-a-Book Projects early in the year and has assumed responsibility for reception duties later on. Suzanne Lambe handled reception duties, the Primary Schools' Sports Initiative and worked to the Director from January until she left Dublin West in September. Each member of staff to varying degrees shared other responsibilities such as a Write-a-Book project during the year. In a spirit of mutual support enormous feats can be achieved. I want to thank most sincerely each member of the administrative team for her contribution.

I offer best wishes to Suzanne Lambe in her new position, she played a key role in the Centre at a very important time in its development.

The role of Housekeeper assumed major importance as large numbers attended at the Centre. Marian Collins has a wonderful sense of how to deal with all the challenges which accompany the large numbers, I thank her.

Tony O'Sullivan and Bernard O'Reilly help to make us feel safe and secure and work very well with all members of staff in ensuring that rooms are in order and that activities roll over in an efficient and smooth manner.

Comments from many of those who use our building suggest that our administrative, housekeeping and caretaking staff make people feel welcome – a wonderful accolade.

### **Management Sub-Committees**

Three sub-committees were convened during 2003. I want to pay tribute to the personnel who gave of their time to attend to the work of the sub-committees.

### **Finance Sub-Committee**

Membership comprised Michael Murphy (Convenor), John O'Mahony (Treasurer), the Director and Administrator.

In 2003 on the advice of the Management Committee and Finance Committee the Centre employed Emer Bradley (Accountant) to examine Dublin West's accounts and to recommend a way forward. Emer invested a considerable during the year on behalf of the Management Committee with very positive outcomes. We thank also Eamonn Barry of Butler

Barry who worked on accounts early in the year.

New auditors were appointed to carry out an audit of the accounts for 2003. Ryan, Casey & Co took on the role which was played by A.J. King & Co previously. We thank A.J. King & Co for their work and look forward to working with Ryan Casey & Co.

### **ICT Sub-Committee**

The committee comprised Eddie Guilmartin (Convenor), John O'Mahony (Treasurer), Micheál Mullarkey (co-opted member), Fintan Keating (ICT advisor) and the director. The administrator attended some meetings.

A reward for a huge investment of time on the part of the ICT sub-committee was realised when the new ICT facility was at the stage that it could be used for the delivery of course. I congratulate the committee members on their assiduous work over the years. I commend highly Fintan Keating for the enormous efforts he had to continue to invest in the computer room before it became ready for use. It is one of the finest facilities in the country, Fintan and the ICT committee can be justly proud.

The committee made recommendations about the use of ICT facility throughout the building and again Fintan has done a wonderful job to try to ensure that all our facilities operate to optimum level.

### **Staff Liaison Sub-Committee**

The committee comprised Therese Hegarty and Mairin Wilson who worked closely with Mairin Ni Cheileachair as chair and the director. The committee met with staff individually and a group and reported progress. This work is ongoing.

### **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. The ICDO informs the Centre of membership and chair. Steering Groups 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 a 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 the 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.

### **Resources**

#### **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 requirements or for disposal according to a procedure adopted by the Centre and approved by the ICDO.

#### **Library**

The listing of the Centre's library collection is facilitated by computerization. The holdings reflect the Centre's designated areas of interest, course work, language and guidance and counselling course. Some titles were purchased during the year. Consideration will be given to further library purchases in 2004.

### **Collaboration**

#### **Education Centre Network**

Dublin West is one of twenty-one full time Education Centres spread throughout the country, three of them located in the Dublin area.

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 *cuiditheoiri*/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. The Association of Teacher Education Centres of Ireland (ATECI) has a regional structure; Dublin West Education Centre, Blackrock Education Centre and Kildare Education Centre comprise Region 2.

### **Review of Education Centres**

The Centre for Management and Organisation Development (CMOD) in the Department of Finance conducted a review of the Education Centre network between 2001 and late 2002. The report was released in January 2003. In summary the report missed the point in many respects and did not seem to appreciate the contribution which Centres were making in their communities.

The report recommends an increased staffing level in level in Centres and significantly recommends that large Centres such as Dublin West should have a deputy director. However such improvements were expected to be achieved by CMOD in the context of closing three full time Centres and several part-time Centres. The recommendation to close Centres is completely unacceptable.

The report did mobilise the network to make a response upon which the Minister for Education & Science has commented favourably.

### **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 meet our commitments to our teachers and schools in general and to national programmes in particular. The Centre values the contact it maintains with Department inspectors attached to the ICDU, Breandán O'Murchu, Claire Breslin and Gabriel Martin and administration staff, Paul Doyle, Michael Troy, Noel Doyle, Laura Bracken, Jennifer Fitzpatrick, Jimmy Mahon, Joe O'Connor, Joan McLaughlin, Anne Maher, Tracey Tobin and Noel O'Connor and others from time to time.

### **Third Level Links**

The University of Limerick (UL) Guidance and Counselling diploma recommenced in Dublin West in the Autumn. This programme fits with existing programmes in the Centre and with our vision for the future.

Hibernia College approached the Centre in August with a view to using the Centre for interviewing prospective course participants and for on-site lecture delivery. Our first knowledge of Hibernia College was when the director was asked by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) in June to take part in a validation process on an application from Hibernia College to offer a blended modular graduate diploma in primary teaching. The request to use facilities came five weeks after the validation exercise.

The Centre agreed to make facilities available. Many of the participants on the initial Hibernia graduate diploma course are already teaching in our area as untrained graduates and are availing of the Centre for national in-service and local programmes.

A Higher Diploma in Professional Education Studies (School Planning) under the auspices of National University of Ireland, Galway, NUIG has commenced in the Centre. A number of sessions took place in 2003, the course will continue in 2004 with Dublin West as one of the venues which will be used.

Other third level links have been mentioned earlier in the report, they include:

- Coláiste Mhuire, Marino - Induction
- St Patrick's College, Drumcondra – Induction
- Institute of Technology, Tallaght – Maths/Physics/Technology
- Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines – SNA training
- Vicarious contact with two other Colleges of (Education SNA training)

Plans are in train for a partnership with the Mater Dei Institute in 2004. It is likely that further third level links will be made in the next year.

### **Other Links**

I list other groups with which the Centre has developed a relationship or which uses the facilities of the Centre for educational or training purposes.

- The Association of Teachers of Technology (conference)
- Association of Geography Teachers Ireland
- Classical Association Ireland
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation.
- Irish Primary Principals' Network

- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
- National Parents' Council (Primary)
- National Parents' Council (Post-Primary)
- Down Syndrome Ireland
- Arts Council
- Abbey Theatre
- Steps Junior Engineer for Ireland (K'nex Project)
- Edmund Rice Schools Trust
- Wyeth
- Revenue Commissioners
- M50 Project

## **Future Directions**

The future is exciting. Indeed there are challenges but in a spirit of commitment, partnership and service, there is every reason why such challenges can be turned to advantage. We continue to live in a fast moving, demanding and sometimes unjust society. If schools as it is sometimes alleged are slower to change than some other institutions it behoves those of us who have responsibilities for the professional development of teachers and the support of schools to be cognisant of the impact of change in schools and to be facilitative and encouraging, ensuring that the consequences of change lead to synergistic outcomes.

I set ten objectives at last year's Annual General Meeting. Seven have been achieved virtually in full, with regard to one other there has been considerable progress while in the cases of two objectives some progress can be demonstrated. I intend to consolidate progress in 2004 on objectives set previously. I would like to make progress also in the following areas:

- Establish induction programmes as part of the regular work of the Centre
- Develop the drop-in service in collaboration with PCSP *cuiditheoiri* further to include the concept of multiple drop-ins.
- In consultation with SLSS, increase the number of post-primary teachers who use the Education Centre.
- Explore the concept of 'resource teacher of international children' at post-primary level and establish structures for professional development.
- Develop further partnerships with third level institutions.
- Consolidate partnerships with groups such as Footsteps Down Syndrome Ireland and initiate and maintain partnerships with other educational groups
- Overhaul the Centre website.
- Initiate or take part in a Gaeilge project.
- Design programmes which will support teachers working with pupils at the 'gifted' end of the special needs spectrum.

## **In Conclusion:**

Moon's challenge was that we must create opportunities for career long education for teachers. I believe that in 2003 in our first full year in Tallaght, Dublin West Education Centre met these challenges head-on. Indeed the Centre for the first time played a part in each of the three "I's" of teacher development 'initiation' in our relationship with Hibernia College, 'induction' in our partnership with Coláiste Mhuire, Marino and St Patrick's College, and 'in-service' both in the traditional areas of Centre involvement and also in newer innovative ways. In the twenty-first century I believe we cannot avoid the connectedness of the world as described by Handy, Covey and others. In Dublin West I suggest we have already developed a capacity to connect in a meaningful and positive way with a plethora of organisations.

I contend that a consequence of our vibrant liaisons with many new interesting and innovative partners will be the provision of enhanced learning opportunities for the large cohort of teachers whom we serve which in turn will empower and enable the thousands of pupils under their care.