

KCETB ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2025



Eileen Curtis with Martha Bolger, Director FET, Cllr Andrea Dalton, Pauline Egan acting Chief Executive and Liam Scott Director of Organisation Support and Development

Eileen Curtis Retires as Chief Executive from KCETB

Kilkenny and Carlow ETB is delighted to dedicate the 2024/2025 Newsletter to Eileen Curtis, who retired as Chief Executive this year after 38 years of dedicated service in various senior leadership roles across Kilkenny and Carlow.

Eileen was educated in Glenmore, New Ross, Maynooth and Waterford. Eileen was Chief Executive of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board from February 2019 to March 2025. Between 2016 and 2019, Eileen was Director of Schools for KCETB, having served as Education Officer prior to that from 2013.



Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board
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Eileen Curtis pictured with husband John, daughter Aisling and partner Fergal



Eileen Curtis with Martha Bolger, Director FET, Pauline Egan acting Chief Executive and Liam Scott Director of Organisation Support and Development

Eileen set the tone for KCETB and Kilkenny VEC before that, becoming acting Chief Executive of County Kilkenny VEC in 2011. As Acting CE of Kilkenny VEC Eileen played a pivotal role in the amalgamation of Kilkenny and Carlow VECs and implementing the duties and asks of the Education and Training Act in 2013.

A powerhouse in building alliances and advancing the priorities of Kilkenny and Carlow ETB, Eileen always championed the belief that education is not just about imparting knowledge but about shaping futures and changing lives. With a clear vision to create an inclusive, supportive, and dynamic learning environment, Eileen ensured that every student and learner had the opportunity to thrive, to Flourish Through Learning.

With Eileen at the helm, her acumen and capacity to drive, motivate and inspire her team, helped lead KCETB through six years of significant change, with the expansion of services, growth of school and services enrolments, and the global pandemic, Covid 19.

Eileen always balanced the needs of the individual with the needs of the organisation. Eileen was a great ambassador for Kilkenny and Carlow ETB at a regional and national level, working in partnership with organisations, in particular NALA, Aontas, ETBI, SOLAS and SETU, becoming a respected voice for education and training.

In May, an event was held at the Woodford Dolmen Hotel to celebrate Eileen's career and retirement. Eileen's family along with current staff, Board members, retired colleagues and friends came together to honour Eileen's contributions, guidance, support and assistance over the past six years as Chief Executive. On the night, stories were shared of the great legacy Eileen leaves behind her, one that we will continue to honour.

In this newsletter, readers will see the wealth of her impact on schools and centres through the kind words shared and photos taken as she visited them towards the end of her tenure.

We thank Eileen for her unwavering support, and tireless work on behalf of Kilkenny and Carlow ETB and Co. Kilkenny VEC over the last 38 years and wish her many years of good health and happiness.

Welcome Note

As we turn the page on another academic year, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2024/2025 edition of our annual newsletter. This publication stands as a celebration of our collective achievements, learning experiences, resilience, and spirit throughout the past year, and offers a glimpse into the vibrant life of our schools and centres across Kilkenny and Carlow.

The 2024/2025 academic year was one marked by growth, learning, and triumphs. Within these pages, you will read about embracing new opportunities and facing challenges with determination. From classrooms to sports fields, from creative pursuits to scientific exploration, our students, learners and staff demonstrated an unwavering commitment to excellence.

Contained within this newsletter is a celebration of our ethos, to Flourish Through Learning, and Eileen Curtis championed this throughout her time in Kilkenny and Carlow ETB. As our Chief Executive, our leader, guide and mentor, Eileen retired this year, and I want to dedicate the 2024/2025 newsletter to her.

Each submission captures the unique identity and achievements of our schools, centres and offices, from the ETB Excellence Awards to student scholarships, innovative classroom projects and outreach initiatives to stories of teamwork and perseverance. I would like to thank all contributors for their dedication and creativity in helping bring this publication to life.

Students and learners have thrived beyond classroom walls with music and drama productions capturing imaginations, debating teams challenging conventions, and scientific pursuits being recognised at the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition. These activities have helped to enrich their experiences, and nurture essential life skills such as teamwork, creativity, and leadership.

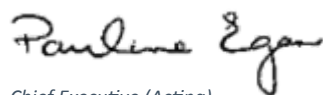
This year we welcomed new members to the KCETB Board, committees and Boards of Management. I thank all of those who make up these boards and committees for their commitment to and interest in the educational work that we do in our schools and colleges, our further education and training centres, our youth and community services and our music education programmes.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to all our directors, management and administrative teams and our staff in our schools, centres and services. Know that your work is valued and appreciated and it is through you that we bring to life our values of excellence in education, care, respect, equality and community every day.

As the school term comes to an end and the summer is nearly upon us, I want to extend my very best wishes to all taking part in exams and assessments and my every best wish to our retiring staff. I thank you for your service.

Bainigí taitneamh as na laethanta saoire Samhraidh!

Go raibh maith agaibh,



Chief Executive (Acting)



Pauline Egan

Abbey Community College: A Thriving Centre of Excellence in Education



Ms Michelle Jefford, Principal Abbey Community College, congratulating Ms Niamh Cuddihy, Abbey Community College Student of the Year 2024 at the 2024 KCETB Student of the Year Awards.

Abbey Community College has enjoyed an outstanding academic year, reaffirming its position as a centre of excellence in education. With over 1,000 students and staff entering its doors daily, the school continues to thrive, grow, and inspire a strong culture of achievement and community spirit.

This year, we celebrated exceptional results in both the Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle examinations. These academic successes reflect the dedication of students, the professionalism of staff, and the supportive partnership with parents and guardians. The school's ongoing commitment to high standards in teaching and learning has created an environment where every student is encouraged to reach their full potential. Throughout the year, we attended numerous prestigious events, highlighting the achievements of our former students, many of whom secured scholarships to esteemed universities.

Our commitment to academic excellence was further recognised when Abbey Community College received the runner-up position for the Excellence in Education Award

at the ETB Excellence Awards in Croke Park in March, in recognition of our Sustainability Week initiative.

The staff of Abbey Community College remain committed to continuous professional development, in particular to Senior Cycle Redevelopment, actively engaging in upskilling initiatives and collaborative learning. This dedication ensures that students thrive in a dynamic and supportive educational environment.





Members of Abbey Community College's amazing staff who took part in our annual Halloween Dress Up Day.

Abbey Voice and Participation

Abbey Community College has celebrated numerous sporting and academic achievements this year, reflecting the vibrant and inclusive culture of the school. Student involvement is central to school life, with initiatives such as Wellbeing Week, Anti-Bullying Week, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Literacy Week, and Sustainability Week showcasing student leadership. A strong focus on distributed leadership continues to enhance both co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, enriching the overall educational experience for all students.

School Pride and Reflection

Reflecting on the year, we take pride in the shared commitment of students, staff, management, and parents. United by our ethos, we work "Together Towards Excellence," continually strengthening Abbey Community College's reputation as a progressive, inclusive, and high-achieving school community.

School Self-Evaluation and Ethos

The ethos of Abbey Community College is central to daily life and supports the academic success of our students. As a learning hub in the heart of the community, we foster a positive culture for both students and staff. Through the School Self-Evaluation process, we continually assess and improve the teaching and learning experience for all.

Wellbeing continues to be a priority, with a strong focus on respect. Our Wellbeing Week was a fantastic success highlighting the importance of student and staff wellbeing. Further promoting the school's ethos and fostering a strong sense of belonging, Intercultural Day celebrated the rich diversity within the school community, with 49 nationalities and cultures represented. The event showcased Abbey Community College's commitment to inclusivity and mutual respect.



Ms Michelle Jefford, Principal Abbey Community College and Ms Helen O'Connor represent Abbey Community College at the 2025 ETB Excellence Awards while receiving their Excellence in Education Award.

*Music Performance Level 5 showcase
at GBS VISUAL – March 2025*



Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training

Year in Review

2024-25 has been a very busy and productive year for the students and staff at Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training. Full-time PLC Level 5 and Level 6 enrolments have again grown, to 1100 students. In addition to this programme provision, we are delighted to have launched two new Level 7 Degree programmes as part of the Tertiary Degree partnership with SETU. We welcomed also the Carlow VTOS programme to Carlow Institute, and staff and students have been welcomed into the wider college experience as a key part of the team. This brings a dedicated Level 4 full-time option, and is very much part of our strategic journey to a comprehensive Level 4 to Level 7 regional FET college provision.

Degree Programmes

Our new Degree Programmes, working in partnership with SETU Waterford have enriched the experience for the Institute. Staff have worked tirelessly to ensure that the programmes are successful, and that the student experience is a very positive one.

Our Bachelor of Business in Tourism & Hospitality Services and Bachelor of Science Applied Healthcare students have enjoyed a wide range of teaching and learning activities, and opportunities to visit and engage with staff and students at SETU. Notably, the BBus in Tourism & Hospitality Services students had a series of location-based training at the Woodford Dolmen Hotel for Accommodation Techniques, and Wine and Beverage Studies. Most recently, two of our BSc Applied Healthcare students have been presented with awards by SETU - Demly Areli Ramirez Mata received the Spirit of SETU award and Hanadi Murad received an award for Academic Achievement.

Student Support and College of Sanctuary

Our student engagement and participation programme continues to expand, with many targeted activities to support students to belong, engage and flourish through learning. Highlights include our successful application to be a College of Sanctuary, the first Further Education and Training college in Ireland to achieve this status, recognising our commitment to being an inclusive, supportive place of learning, that celebrates the diversity and experience of

our community. This was celebrated at our International Day on 11th March, with cultural celebrations from the student body. Our support services continue to grow in profile, with further enhancement of our Student Learning Centre, and the provision of targeted and open-access to learning support to help our student achieve.

International Programmes

We continue our engagement with the Erasmus+ programme, building on our status as an accredited college, with thirteen engagements with partner institutions across Europe for our students and staff. These visits meet our three key objectives for building Digital and Technological solutions for integrated work-based learning, utilising Transversal Skills and developing participant competencies and skills for work-integrated learning, and exploring the potential of AI generative tools for teaching and learning in VET. Visits have included groups working in Finland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Czechia and Sicily, with cascaded projects to the whole Institute community.



BSc Applied Healthcare awards presentation at SETU – KCTEB Carlow Institute students Demly Areli Ramirez Mata received the Spirit of SETU award and Hanadi Murad received an award for Academic Achievement. With Programme Co-ordinator, Maria Beagan and classmates.

Open Day and Recruitment

The Admissions team continue their very successful work in Marketing and Promotional events, with a wide range of engagement activities across the calendar, with focused events for school leavers, adult applicants and specific enrolment target groups. Our principle event is the annual Open Day in February, which showcased the Institute's programmes and facilities, and attracted over 1500 visitors. Other activities include a regional programme of schools' visits, information days and evenings, and participation in regional and local careers' events. Our in-house events are whole-team efforts, involving all staff and students,

including our Student Ambassador team, of 100 students, who lead tours and guide groups through the experience. Applications for the 2025-2026 academic year are open, and again we see an increase on last year's applications, and strong turnout for interviews. Of particular note, is our increased presence on social media channels, where updates on activities are promoted.

Educational Trips, Competitions and Workshops

Our educational field trip programme offers wide-ranging curriculum enhancement for all faculty areas, with opportunities to study and apply knowledge in occupational contexts. Highlights this year include the work practice application of skills by our Emergency Services students, whose engagements have included skills practice with Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service, which included real practical experience of fire and rescues services. Our Healthcare and Nursing students have had many engagements, including a Regional Healthcare provider careers day, with providers visiting the Institute to showcase the wide range of careers on offer. Our Make-up Artistry students participate in the national Professional Hair and Beauty Show – Ireland competitions at the RDS, winning five awards in a clean sweep of the competitions. Our Graphic Design and Illustration students had a brilliant workshop with the very talented Carlow-based designer, Paul Byrne of PB Studios – one highlight of many specific on-site workshops with professionals that enhance our students' learning.

Music and Performing Arts

Our Music students and Performing Arts students have presented a range of exciting performances, including their showcases productions, with both the Level 5 and – new this year – Level 6 students mounting full-scale productions at Visual Carlow, most recently with a dynamic production of Macbeth by the Advanced Performing Arts students, and Candid a showcase on original music, also studio produced, recorded and released online, by our Advanced Music Performance students. These, and many other activities, can be seen on our social media channels including Instagram and Facebook.



Paul Byrne of PB studios working with our Graphic Design and Illustration, Design and Drawing students

Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) Kilkenny



Joanne Kelly (BTEI Learner) delivering her activity to the service users in L'Arche Callan, promoting healthy fun exercise even in a chair!!!

This year in BTEI Kilkenny we saw further development in our aim to create more diverse pathways for everyone in our communities. We also aimed to increase our collaboration with other KCETB centres and outside services on projects which promote a richer learning environment. We opened our doors to just over 325 learners across Kilkenny city and county. Our programme offering was expanded into new communities providing more opportunities to those where barriers have led to disengagement in education.

As there was a huge demand for SNA programmes across the county, we decided to offer supporting modules to our learners to equip them for the ever-changing world of supporting those with additional needs in our communities. We saw our learners become the tutors in the Adaptive Physical Activity module lead by our very own sports guru Patrick McCormack, where students adapted and developed activities for people with all ranges of abilities and mobilities. We partnered with the SOS and L'Arche on this project and it was a great learning experience for all involved.

Along with the adaptive activities programmes we saw 15 new learners with additional needs take part in our Horticulture level 4 programme with the aim of attaining their QQI level 4 major award providing pathways for learning but also employment opportunities for those with additional needs. All 15 learners have already gained two QQI level 4 awards and are taking part in horticulture projects in their local communities as well as their classroom activities! Look out Diarmuid Gavin!!!



John Meaney and Eddie Butler having fun sowing seeds in the polytunnel!!

The Danville level 4 Horticulture group joined forces with the Commis Chef's in a joint venture where they grow and harvest freshly grown fruits and vegetables for the Commis Chef to create wonderful dishes. The Commis Chefs joined the horticulture groups to help develop skills and techniques to grow and harvest good crops.

Back at the Danville base in conjunction with KCETB'S Training Services the Barista course was launched in March 2025 where learners were taught how to master a variety of coffees and beverages. Our learner support programme grew to incorporate one to one support with IT and a drop in clinic where learners could book a time slot when required. Learners can now book a room for individual or group study sessions which has promoted peer support and learning here in BTEI.

Congratulations to all learners who have achieved their goals, gained a new qualification, and found their tribe this year in BTEI. The laughter in the classrooms, canteen and throughout the building has promoted a fun educational and supportive environment for all! Thank you to all the teaching and administrative staff whose dedication and support to the BTEI learners has made BTEI a happy place to learn and grow for all!



Commis Chefs & Horticulture groups working together on growing fruit and vegetables.



*Front row: Tahmina Sultana Mahamood , Mary Mullan, Millie Cody, Helen Blessing Etaferi, Jane Holland
Back row: Suleman Hassan, Carmel Ann White, Conor Paybody and Teacher Mary Byrne*

Borris College

We Changed Our Name

September 2024 marked an historically significant milestone for Borris College. After a consultation process involving all educational partners, the school's Board of Management agreed to change the name from Borris Vocational School to Borris College in September 2024. This change was implemented with the view of consolidating, building upon, and developing the great work achieved by the school since its inception in 1939.

With this change a new crest was developed which symbolises the Borris area with the viaduct, Mount Leinster and the Blackstairs Mountain being visible. The uniform was also updated with a new school skirt and school jumper agreed upon. The Borris College school community look forward to the next chapter in the school's development.

New Timetable

Given that tranche 1 of senior cycle redevelopment is due to commence in September 2025, the school made the decision to reconfigure its timetable moving from 40-minute classes to 58-minute classes. This was with the



First Years Entering School

aim of empowering students and staff to engage in more discussions and inquiry based learning due to the length of the classes.

The school is currently evaluating the effectiveness of the 58-minute classes through the school self-evaluation process. Following an advisory visit by a Department of Education Inspector, the SSE team are currently engaging with staff, parents and students seeking feedback. The committee is utilising the Lundy Model of Participation with students to ensure that their voices are central in this process.



Borris College students engaging in the Lundy Model of Student Participation

Students' Academic Successes

As a school we are very proud of all our students' successes. The mission of the school is to create a caring inclusive environment where each individual is encouraged to develop a sense of honesty, tolerance and responsibility and in which everybody acquires self-confidence to achieve his or her full potential. We have recently brought in a student leadership award which is based on our school's ethos.

Many of our Leaving Certificate Class of 2024 have achieved awards for their accolades. Caoilfhionn Ní Stoirí and Paddy O' Brien were awarded at the Trinity Entrance Exhibition Celebration. Caoilfhionn is currently studying a BA in English Literature and Classical Civilisation. Paddy is studying for a BA in Biological and Biomedical Science. Brigid Mackey was awarded a UCD Entrance Scholarship. Brigid is currently studying French with French Law in UCD. Abbie Murphy was awarded an Entrance Scholarship to Maynooth University. Abbie is currently studying for a BSc Bachelor of Data Science.

Grennan College

As this academic year draws to a close, we reflect upon another successful year in Grennan College. It is impossible to list all our achievements, but in small and big ways we have together acknowledged and celebrated them throughout the year.

In 2024, the school bade farewell to Seán Óg O'Sullivan and Miriam O'Donnell as they retired as Principal and Deputy Principal of the school. Between them, they provided almost 40 years of invaluable service to Grennan College.

Ethos Awards

This year Grennan College put a spotlight on our Ethos Core Values. A termly Ethos Award was introduced to celebrate students who live the core values in their daily lives. We are immensely proud of the large number of students who were nominated by their teachers for demonstrating excellence in education, care, respect, community and equality.



Sporting Success

It has been a fantastic year for all our sports stars. The U19 Boys' Soccer Team won the All-Ireland in February, and this was shortly followed by a very narrow loss for the U19 Boys' Hurling team in March. Our Basketball teams also competed impressively with the U19 Boys team and the 2nd Year Boys narrowly losing out in their Leinster and South-East Leinster finals, respectively, whilst our 1st Year Girls' team have reached the KCETB Final. Our Junior Boys and Girls' Soccer Teams emerged victorious in the KCETB Soccer Blitz in May.

Curricular Activities

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities have grown in strength this year. Highlights include four TY students winning the Innovation Award at the Student Enterprise Programme County Final for their Lock-It product. TY students also reached the National Finals of Junk Kouture with their amazing design made entirely from used tea bags.

All 2nd Year students engaged in a four-week workshop facilitated by Castlecomer Discovery Park to develop team building and enhance positive relationships.



TY students reached the National Finals of Junk Kouture with design made from used tea bags

Our Creative Schools Programme has nurtured creativity across the school this year by organising drama, music and dance workshops, holding our ETB Week Creative Competition and facilitating Art Therapy workshops during our wonderful Wellbeing Week which saw each student contribute to a beautiful art installation that now hangs proudly in our school.

Grennan College has continued to foster links with the local community by engaging with our local library, Grennan Equestrian Centre, Grennan Mills, St. Columba's, the biodiversity garden and more at various times throughout the year.



Art Therapy Wellbeing Week

VTOS Kilkenny



A display of some of the creativity from our Art Craft & Design Group on display for the end of year QQI Authenticator

The College of FET Nuncio Road Campus Kilkenny VTOS operates under the Aegis of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board and is located at the Bishop Birch training Institute, Nuncio Road, Kilkenny, and forms part of the College of FET Kilkenny. It is a vibrant centre with a proud tradition of serving the Educational needs of the locality. The learner is placed at the core of the service where top quality teaching and learning is provided and our highly dedicated staff strive to enable all learners to achieve their educational goals. The Nuncio Road Campus provides a broad range of courses in an inclusive environment that allows progression to the world of work and Further Education and Training. In September 2024 VTOS Kilkenny welcomed six different groups into the centre.

FIT Support (Fast Track to Information Technology)

Anne Cooper (Training and Employment Officer) with FIT delivered CV Workshops in November 2024 and Interview preparation workshops in January 2025. FIT also facilitated a series of mock interviews over 5 days in March 2025 and all participants found them to be very beneficial in particular the valuable feedback.

VTOS Craft Fair

This was held at the centre on the 12th December 2024. The morning was a resounding success with a mix of new and returning exhibitors. Over fifteen exhibitors displayed their wares including crafts, jewellery, photography, ceramics and woodcarving pieces. It was very well organised by the Start your own Business class. It was a showcase of a journey of growth where the participants talents were woven into the rich tapestry of their work.

Awards Night

Awards night 2024 took place in The Ormonde Hotel Kilkenny and participants received awards in a wide range of disciplines including Information Processing, eBusiness, Art, Craft & Design, Furniture and Design, City & Guilds and General learning at QQI Level 3. The night was a phenomenal success and one to treasure for family and friends.

Career Guidance

Career Guidance is provided by the Kilkenny Adult Guidance service and it allows individuals and groups the opportunity to identify, explore and review career options.

Learner Voice Aontas National FET Learner

This event was held in The Woodford Dolmen Hotel in Carlow on the 11th March 2025 and VTOS Kilkenny was well represented. It was an open and inclusive forum with positive engagement by all the participants.

Pop-Up-Coffee Mornings

VTOS Kilkenny hosted a number of coffee mornings throughout the year. It gave an opportunity to all participants to come together, exchange ideas and encourage new friendships.



Work carried out by one of our Woodcarving and eBusiness students displayed at our Christmas Fair

Woodcarving Exhibition “Take me Home”

This took place in MacDonagh Junction Kilkenny. It was the essence of brilliance and showcased the fruits of the hard work and dedication of the participants of the academic year 2024/2025.

A Note of Thanks

I would like to thank our teaching and administrative staff for their hard work and dedication . “Ní neart go cur le chéile”

Geraldine Moran
VTOS Co-Ordinator
April 2025



Bernadette O'Rourke AEO KCETB, Eileen Curtis (Chief Executive KCETB) Geraldine Moran (VTOS coordinator KCETB) Martha Bolger (Director of FET KCETB)

Organisation Support and Development

The role of Organisation Support and Development (OSD) is to manage, deliver and develop the organisational and strategic functions of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board and its work underpins the delivery of education and training throughout our schools and centres.

In 2025, the OSD Directorate reconfigured to four separate departments, those being Building, Estates and Procurement, Finance, Human Resources and Information, Technology and Governance.

The Organisation Support and Development (OSD) team, under Liam Scott, Director of OSD, supports the Chief Executive in the delivery of corporate governance and includes the management of services, included among those departments' duties are some of the following:

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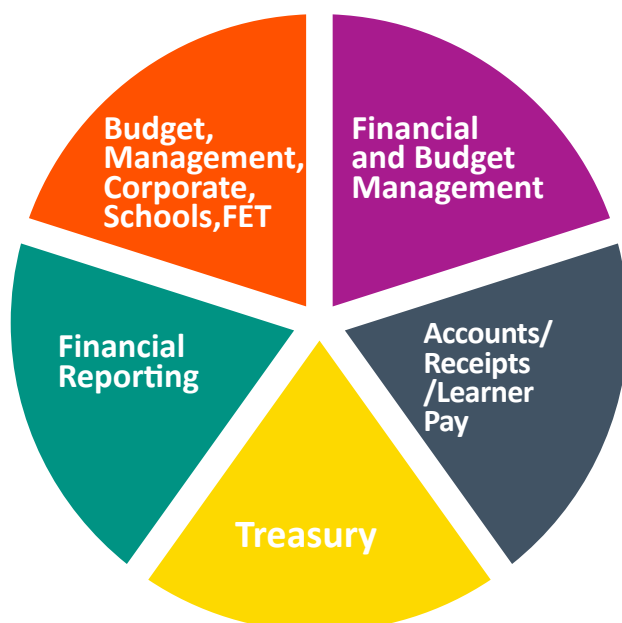
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Kilkenny City Vocational School



KCVS Students, Teachers and Kilkeny TD Peter 'Chap' Cleere at the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition

It was a great start to the academic year 2024/25 as we relaunched our KCVS School News publication. It is a visual and vibrant representation of all that our students and teachers continue to achieve. We also consolidated the KCVS Buddy Pod Programme which was launched last year. This is a group mentoring and peer learning collaborative initiative of which all our teachers are members.

Following a three day inspection at KCVS the inspection report on the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme by the Department of Education highlights several strengths that contribute to effective teaching and learning, student engagement, and integration with mainstream education in KCVS. The report was excellent and highlighted the highly effective teaching and learning practices in our school as well as our positive school culture. The success of this inspection resulted in our school being selected as a pilot school to trial a new method of DEIS inspection by the Department of Education. An intensive five day

inspection pilot took place and we were commended for excellent practice in all areas, including Learner Experience, Learner Outcomes and Quality of DEIS Planning. We would like to thank all of our students, parents and teachers

for their engagement with the DES inspectors this year.

At KCVS, fostering positive relationships and a supportive, anti-bullying school environment is a top priority as it is a



KCVS BÍ Cinealta Parents Focus Group

key area of focus in our Whole School Wellbeing Promotion plan. Throughout the academic year our Wellbeing Team and our Student Support Team have engaged in various initiatives to promote whole school wellbeing for all students and staff. We have also been working consistently on our new KCVS Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying policy. This policy will draw on the voice and experience of students, parents and staff from within our school community to ensure that we all work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

We celebrated national Maths and Science week where we focused on the importance and versatility of Maths and Science in our everyday lives. These weeks provided a fantastic opportunity for all students to engage in fun and educational Maths and Science activities. Broadening the scope of education in these subject areas inspired curiosity and creativity in our students.

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities continue to enhance the student experience in KCVS. Our students were involved in many different national competitions this year including the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition, Sci-Fest, the Let's Chat Medicine Programme, Junk Kouture, the Texaco Art Competition, BLAST Arts in Education Programme and the Student Enterprise Programme. This year, following their great success in Sci-Fest, three teams from KCVS qualified for the highly competitive BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition in Dublin while four of our students have been selected to take part in the prestigious Let's Chat Medicine Programme in June. Our students also reached the semi-finals of the KCETB Interschool's Senior Debating competition picking up a number of impressive victories along the way. Sport continues to thrive in KCVS and we have reached the Senior All-Ireland Volleyball Cup Final this year. Students have represented the school with great pride in hurling, football, soccer, basketball, tennis and athletics throughout the year.

Our students continue to engage with community partnerships and initiatives. Our partnership with Business in the Community and Bank of Ireland



KCVS staff students and parents bid a heartfelt farewell to KCETB CE Eileen Curtis

continues to thrive. Our students have really benefitted from working with their Bank of Ireland mentors. Our Green Schools initiative is continuing to go from strength to strength as our students participated in Climate Action Week, The Bin it Road Show initiative, the Water Ambassadors Programme and numerous litter picks throughout the year. Our student led upcycling initiative Re-Turn also won first prize in the Credit Union Upcycling Competition.

KCVS bid a heartfelt farewell to Eileen Curtis, KCETB CEO, as she retired from her role. An emotional morning in KCVS was marked by a warm and touching reception from staff, students and parents. Eileen's leadership will always be remembered in our school.

VTOS Carlow



Eileen Curtis, Chief Executive, Bernadette O'Rourke Adult Education Officer and members of the VTOS Team

2024/2025 has been one of the most exciting and transformative years for VTOS Carlow. In August 2024, the programme officially relocated to Carlow Institute of FET, marking the beginning of a new chapter filled with fresh opportunities and growth.

The transition into the Carlow Institute environment has been overwhelmingly positive. Learners have thrived in their new surroundings, with the majority now applying for QQI Level 5 programmes, a clear testament to the motivation and confidence fostered through the move. Many have already been offered and accepted places, reflecting the success of the programme in encouraging further education and progression. VTOS learners have also made their mark within the wider Carlow Institute community, actively participating in events and student organisations. A particular highlight this year is the election of two VTOS learners to the Student Council, ensuring that VTOS learners have a voice in shaping student life.

QQI Awards

Meanwhile, the Level 4 Office Skills group is reaching a significant milestone of their own. Learners are fully prepared to submit their work for IV, EA, and QQI certification. This marks the culmination of their hard work and commitment over the course of the year.

National Aontas FET Learner Forum

Several of our learners from the VTOS level 4 programme, attended the National Aontas FET Learner Forum in March 2025. It was a fantastic day filled with shared learner experiences across a wide range of FET programmes. Learner participation and evaluation provide vital feedback that informs programme development and improvement at both local and national levels. The VTOS learners truly appreciated being involved and having their voices heard.

Educational Trips

The VTOS Level 4 group recently enjoyed an exciting and educational trip to an escape room in Dublin, where they teamed up with Maths groups from Carlow Institute. The experience was both fun and intellectually stimulating, offering a great opportunity to build problem-solving skills and teamwork in a real-world setting. A fantastic day was had by all, and the group is already looking forward to more educational outings in the coming weeks.

Awards Evening

A major highlight of the year was the VTOS Awards Ceremony, held at Carlow Institute on 20 March 2025. Past learners from 2020 to 2024 were invited back to celebrate their achievements. Award recipients were honoured with QQI and City & Guilds certifications, in a fantastic evening shared with family, friends, and KCETB staff. It was a proud moment that recognised the commitment and success of VTOS learners over the past several years.



VTOS learners



Councillor Andrea Dalton, Chairperson and Paul McGarry, VTOS Award Recipient

Youthreach Kilkenny



Michelle Murphy, Terry Byrne and Michelle Byrne at the Fergal Quinn Awards

Fergal Quinn Award

LCA learner Terry Byrne received a Fergal Quinn Award for attaining full marks across the LCA programme at a special awards event held for all national recipients in Athlone. This is an amazing achievement, and we are very proud to see Terry's hard work and commitment to the Youthreach programme and his LCA studies pay off.

Creative Schools

Kilkenny Youthreach is finishing out our two-year Creative Schools journey. We have experienced workshops and visiting artists across a wide range of disciplines, including, Dance, Sculpture, Drumming, Animation, Crochet and Poetry. Our learners created a Legacy Tree wire sculpture which is displayed proudly in our Sensory room and leaves a lasting mark of our Creative Schools experience.



Creative Schools Legacy Tree

Mission Possible School Achievement Awards

Kilkenny Youthreach learners attended an awards ceremony in Dublin where we learned we claimed first place in the Mission Possible School Achievement Awards. This recognises the quality and depth of the wellbeing initiatives and supports in place in our Centre. We won €1000 prize money to spend on upgrades to our Sensory room and are excited to introduce new visual and audio equipment to this space.

Eco Unesco Young Environmentalists

Kilkenny Youthreach are finalists in the Young Environmentalist Showcase and Awards to be held in Dublin in May. Our submission is called 'Together for a Greener Future: Our Journey to a More Sustainable School.' Our main goal is to tackle climate change. We wanted to do this on a local level so started with our school. We worked together to create solutions and implement ideas on how to make our school more sustainable. Actions to date include setting up a green page on Teams, holding a Clothing collection drive, Recycling awareness posters, Recycling incentive with returnable bottles, monthly green

gathering classes (1 STEAM class a month dedicated to enviro issues), installation of WEEE recycling bins for lightbulbs & batteries. It is a huge achievement to make the final in our first year of entering this initiative.



Kilkenny Youthreach Eco Unesco Group

AIB Future Sparks

An 'Exemplary School Award' was presented to Kilkenny Youthreach by the AIB Future Sparks Impact Awards. The judges were impressed by the Compassion in Action project, where learners supported vulnerable community members. The judges found that the learners showed exceptional empathy and social responsibility, cultivating a lasting culture of kindness and volunteerism.

Green Teams



Scoil Aireagail Sustainability Garden

In January, Buildings, Estates and Procurement launched Green Teams across our schools and centres. The Green Team consists of volunteer representatives from management and staff, with representatives serving as energy champions within their building. Among the many purposes of The Green Team, the aim is to create and foster a common understanding of energy practices as well as demonstrating leadership in environmental stewardship.

As part of The Green Team, schools and centres aim to reduce the organisation's environmental footprint and promote energy efficiency to achieve the goals set out in our Energy Action Plan.

What we want to achieve:

- Reduce energy related GHG emissions by 51% in 2030.
- Improve energy efficiency in the public sector by 50% by 2030

How are we going to achieve it?

• Action 1. Energy Meter Readings

'What gets measured gets managed'

A weekly manual reading of all our energy meters is an effective way to monitor and manage our energy usage. As part of Green Teams, the energy

champion fills out a bi-weekly meter reading that helps us reach our goals. Green Teams leaders have received the worksheet for weekly returns to greenteams@kcetb.ie

• Action 2. Biodiversity

In January, we asked each school and centre to identify and begin a project which promotes biodiversity in their location. Scoil Aireagail have installed an organic garden growing vegetables and flowers, this has been student led along with the help of their school caretaker. Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach received trees from Coill na nÓg that they have planted on their school grounds. Carlow Adult Learning Service are installing bird boxes to help with

this initiative. BTEI Carlow are also running a biodiversity and the natural environment modules scheduled for September.

• Action 3. Water Drinking Points

Schools and centres provide drinking water at water points; usually through one of two types, bottle fed or mains fed. We asked all locations to ensure that all water drinking points are mains fed, reducing our use of plastics. BTEI Carlow have their mains water in place as do Carlow Adult Learning Service.

For assistance or queries, please contact Philip Doyle or Colette Duggan at greenteams@kcetb.ie



Tree planting at Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach



Halloween at Youthreach

Youthreach Carlow Celebrating Success, Creativity, and Growth

The 2024/2025 academic year at Youthreach Carlow has been marked by remarkable achievements, creative growth, and a strong sense of community across all learning areas.

Our 2024 Leaving Certificate students achieved excellent results in Irish, English, Maths, Art, Construction Studies, Geography, History, and Polish. Every student secured a place at Carlow PLC—an outstanding reflection of their hard work and the consistent support of our dedicated staff.

QQI certification was another major success, with 104 portfolios awarded across Levels 3 and 4. Notably, four modules were delivered through e-portfolios, which received highly positive feedback from both learners and staff. Currently, 16 learners are pursuing their Level 4 General Learning Awards, with expectations high for successful certification in August 2025.

Creative expression took centre stage this year. In partnership with Crinniú na nÓg, learners developed and performed an original drama titled “The Corner Shop.” Additionally, poet Clifton Redmond worked with learners weekly on creative writing. This inspiring collaboration led to powerful public poetry readings at Culture Night

and the publication of a broadsheet. A poetry booklet launch is planned for graduation in May, marking another proud milestone.

Work experience remains a vital part of our programme. In June 2024, learners independently organised their placements, impressing employers and receiving glowing feedback. Planning for the upcoming June 2025 placements are already underway.

Physical activity and learner voice were also supported through funded sports programmes. Thanks to Carlow Sports Partnership, badminton ran from October to December 2024, followed by basketball from January to April 2025. Both initiatives were developed in response to learner requests and were enjoyed by all participants.

Two exciting Creative Schools projects are also in progress, providing opportunities for learners to explore new ideas and artistic expression in an inclusive, supportive environment.

We’re proud of all our learners and staff for their commitment and creativity this year. Here’s to a successful end to the academic term!



Youthreach students STEAM

Coláiste Aindriú

It has been a busy and productive year at Coláiste Aindriú, filled with numerous beneficial projects and initiatives that have enriched our community. Among the highlights, the RP Mentor Program has fostered a supportive environment, encouraging positive relationships and conflict resolution skills. Our school band initiative has brought music and joy to our halls, showcasing the talents and dedication of our students. Additionally, our gardening and biodiversity projects have seen students demonstrate remarkable leadership and creativity, contributing to a greener and more sustainable school environment.



Third Year student helping water newly planted beds

Our RP Mentors work together to be good role models for the first years in our school. The RP Mentors help the first years to transition from Primary into Secondary school and make the school a safe and welcoming space for them. Our mentors get regular updated training and are on hand to assist the first years if they have any worries or concerns. The RP mentors also run a number of circle times with first years, which provide time for fun and reflection among the 1st years. The mentors organised games and activities ensuring 1st years get to know one another, as well as helping them to settle into the school. Both our Senior Cycle mentors and our first years have reported that they can see the benefits of the RP mentor program and that they have got great enjoyment out of it.



School Band

A music club was started with the generous help of Mr Hynes in January. Within the club a senior rock band was formed. The band consists of Dylan Jenkins, Ethan Jenkins, Maurice Ryan on vocals, Cathal Nolan on bass guitar, Cian Holden on lead guitar, and Richard Kelly on drums. The boys entered the ETB's Got Talent for the first time this year recording a cover of Smells Like Teen Spirit. They started to develop their own sound by playing songs by bands such as Blink 182, Oasis and others. They developed their own band name called 'The Unsolicited Geese.' They have also written one original song to date called 'Carbonara.' The boys have been improving massively with each week, and who knows what the future holds for the very talented, and hardworking group.

The school grounds are currently bursting with colourful flower and

plant displays, thanks to the dedicated efforts of our active student gardeners. Under the expert guidance of Ms. Sharon Kellett and our Caretaker Jim Delaney, biodiversity is being actively encouraged, creating a vibrant and thriving environment. We are also delighted to announce that the school has secured funding for a polytunnel, which will be in place for the next academic year, further enhancing our gardening and sustainability projects.

As we reflect on these achievements, we also bid a fond farewell to Dr. Sharon Coffey, who has been the driving force behind our school for the past three years. Her vision and leadership have left an indelible mark on our institution. We are excited to welcome our new Principal, Ms. Sarah Kennedy, whose fresh perspective and commitment to excellence promise to lead us into a bright future.



RP Mentors at work with 1st Year Students

A Year of Celebration at Tyndall College

JCSP School Chicken Hatching Initiative: A Hands-On Learning Experience

This year, our school embarked on an exciting and educational journey as part of the Junior Cycle School Programme (JCSP): Animal Care Initiative - we hatched our very own chicks!

The project aimed to help students develop responsibility, empathy, and an awareness of animal needs while providing a unique, hands-on learning experience. Over several weeks, students carefully monitored the incubation process, observed the chicks hatching, and took responsibility for their care.



Success and Impact

The JCSP Chicken Hatching Initiative was a tremendous success! Students were actively engaged in every step of the process, demonstrating enthusiasm, curiosity, and care for the chicks. The project aligned with the school's DEIS plan and the Looking at Our Schools framework, promoting inclusive, hands-on learning experiences that support student engagement and wellbeing.

The experience left a lasting impression on everyone involved, proving that learning doesn't just happen in books - it happens in real-life experiences, too!

We look forward to hatching more learning opportunities in the future!

Cross-Curricular Learning and Student Engagement

This project extended beyond science, incorporating numeracy, budgeting, and hands-on learning. Students regularly checked incubator temperatures, measured chick feed portions, and researched the cost of keeping chickens, calculating a monthly budget for their care.

By setting up the chick brooder, feeding and handling the chicks, and observing their behaviour, students learned about animal welfare, habitat needs, and responsible care. Students reflected through oral discussions, deepening their understanding of responsibility, teamwork, and problem-solving. Students also explored sustainability and ethical farming practices in class discussions.

This initiative also supported students' social and emotional development, as they worked together to ensure the wellbeing of the chicks. Many students expressed a deep sense of connection to the animals, reinforcing the importance of caring for living creatures and respecting nature.

The Journey from Egg to Chick

The project began with the arrival of fertilised eggs, which were carefully placed in an incubator to maintain the ideal temperature and humidity for hatching. Students took turns monitoring the eggs, recording their observations, and learning about the science of embryonic development.

On hatching day, the classroom was filled with excitement and amazement as tiny chicks began breaking out of their shells!

Once hatched, the real work began. Students ensured that the chicks had access to warmth, food, and water, learning about their dietary needs and development. Through this hands-on experience, students not only learned about biology and animal care but also developed important skills such as teamwork, patience, and responsibility.



Santa Run

On December 19th, the entire school community participated in our fourth annual Charity Santa Run. It was a great success with the entire school completing the 3km fun run from Tyndall College to the SETU Sports Campus grounds and back again.

Ms Sarah Stafford and Ms Rebecca Kinchella had everyone well warmed up on the courts with some great dance moves before each group started the run. Many thanks to Donal McNally for the use of the SETU grounds. There were many spot prizes handed out for the best dressed, most festive attire and enthusiastic runners in each class.

Santa himself was on hand to help with the prizes. It was a great way to kick off the Christmas celebrations in Tyndall College. Many thanks to all the staff and students who made this day happen. We look forward to running it again next year.

Gaisce – The President’s Award: Celebrating 40 Years of Achievement

This year marks the 40th anniversary of ‘Gaisce – The President’s Award’, a programme that encourages young people across Ireland to challenge themselves and grow personally. Through the award, students engage in a range of activities that help them develop new skills, improve physical fitness, contribute to their communities, and push themselves on an adventurous journey. Through participating in Gaisce, students gain confidence, resilience, and important life skills that will serve them well into the future.

We are delighted to have many students currently working towards completing both the bronze and silver Gaisce awards this year. As part of the adventure journey, we have planned a camping trip for May 21st-23rd, where participants will test their outdoor skills and bond as a team. We are excited to celebrate the achievements of these students and look forward to seeing the personal growth they will experience as they complete this rewarding challenge.



Association of Home Economics Teachers Baking Competition

The Association of Home Economics Teachers ran a very exciting baking competition for all schools across Carlow and Kilkenny in aid of The Carlow Kilkenny Home Care Team. Each school ran their own in house competition, juniors were asked to bake and decorate cupcakes and seniors were asked to bake and decorate a sponge cake. One winner were selected from Junior and Senior categories. The winners were welcomed to Tyndall College for a live bake off. Participants received some fantastic prizes from businesses from Carlow and Kilkenny. It was a great day for students to showcase their excellent and delicious baking skills.

KCETB Youth Office

During the year, KCETB Youth Office worked to support the provision, co-ordination, administration and assessment of Youth Work in Kilkenny and Carlow in partnership with local youth work providers: Carlow Regional Youth Services, Ossory Youth Services and Foróige DRUM Youth Project.

KCETB has continued to promote Youth Work as a valuable non-formal educational approach and the significant role and responsibility that the Youth Work Sector play in providing innovative, responsive and inclusive programmes, supports and services to young people.

Funding to local Youth Service Providers:

In 2023, the Youth Office was responsible for the administration, governance and oversight of over €1.4 million in funding from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to local youth services and local voluntary youth clubs through 8 different grant schemes.



Graph highlighting the range of grants and amounts allocated to youth service providers across Kilkenny and Carlow in 2024

This funding directly benefiting young people in Kilkenny and Carlow through their participation and engagement in a variety of youth work supports, programmes and initiatives run by Carlow Regional Youth Service, Ossory Youth Services, Foróige DRUM Youth Project and local voluntary youth clubs. In 2024, approximately 6,754 young people benefiting from the various funding schemes outlined in the graph above.

KCETB undertook research of Urlingford and Johnstown, an area KCETB have identified as having limited youth provision. The research included online and face to face consultations with key stakeholders alongside desk research. DCEDIY have announced funding nationally for 10 new UBU Youth Services in 2025. It is the intention of the KCETB Youth Office to apply for UBU funding for this area once the application process opens in 2025.



Cover of the 'Have Your Say' Survey



Picture from ETBI 'Youth Work Matters' National Conference

DCEDIY National Targeted Youth Employability Support Initiative (TYESI) Training and Information Session

This session was organised for the network of youth workers employed in TYESI's nationally in September 2024. In conjunction with SETU, KCETB presented the NEET Research and Toolkit to the youth workers in Athlone as part of the DCEDIY Training. Key findings were discussed alongside ways in which the research and toolkit could be incorporated into practice within the TYESI's nationally.

ETBI Youth Work Matters National Conference

The ETBI conference titled 'Youth Work Matters' was held at Thomond Park on June 13th, 2024. This was an inaugural Youth Work Conference at which ETBs called for the restoration of funding to pre-austerity levels at the next budget. The conference highlighted the need for quality and extensive youth services as the population of young people has increased significantly with stark social changes that impact young people's lives.

The conference programme included keynote and panel discussions on the impact of youth work, creativity, diversity and youth homelessness. Foróige Kilkenny presented at the conference and covered the youth skills process including reference to the NEET's research progression pathways and a case study of a young person and their journey with Youth Skills.

Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach



Our TY students performing Voulez Vous on the stage in the Visual

Tá dul chun cinn thar cionn déanta ag ár ndaltaí arís i mbliana le barr feabhais sa Ghaeloideachas. Bhí daltaí gnóthach le linn na bliana le comórtais agus tionscadail éagsula. Seo thíos sampla beag den obair scothuil a bhí ar siúl i mbliana.

D'fhreastal ionadaithe ón scoil ar Mhuinteras i mbliana. Is ceiliúradh ar an ionchuimsiú i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge na mBord Oideachais agus Oiliúna é agus tugann sé deis do scoileanna machnamh a dhéanamh ar an gcleachtas, aitheantas a thabhairt don dea-obair inár scoileanna chun eispéireas ionchuimsitheach a chur ar fáil do phobail na scoileanna. Chuaigh triúr dár gcinnirí folláine go Átha Luain chun cur i láthair a dhéanamh os comhair Gaelcholáistí eile timpeall na tíre ar an obair ionchuimsitheach atá ar siúl inár scoil féin.

This has been a remarkable term for our debating teams. Both junior and senior teams competed fiercely in Díospóireacht Uí Chadhain, the All-Ireland Irish Language debating championships, progressing through many challenging rounds. While the junior team narrowly missed out in the quarter-finals, they have gained invaluable experience and shown great promise for the future. The senior team advanced to the semi-finals where they competed with students from scoileanna Gaeltachta.

Our talented students showcased their skills at the Scléip competition organised by Gael Linn. Singers and musicians captivated the audience with their remarkable performances as Gaeilge. Our cailíní from Bliain a 5, Ava Ní Dhéin, Rachel Ní Chorcoráin, Lauryn Webster agus Heidi Caesar Ní Chuidithe, were triumphant, winning the Leinster Senior Bands competition.

Juvenes Translatores is an annual EU-wide competition that celebrates the best young translators across Europe. Over 3,000 teenagers take on the challenge of translating a page of creative writing on a topical subject from any of the EU's 24 official languages into another. The competition is judged by professional translators from EU institutions. Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach was honoured to receive a special recognition award for one of our remarkable students – comhghairdeas ó chroí to 5th Year student Faith Nic Aogáin on this outstanding achievement.

Faith Nic Aogáin, Keelan Ó Nualláin and Eva Táth also took part in the Aistritheoirí Óga translation competition, run by the European Commission. We eagerly await the results of this competition, which will be announced in May. Well done to all involved – maith sibh!

Obair charthanachta

Through the year, our students have given back to the local community and within the school setting through their charity work. Several different events took place over the year. It was fantastic to see that some of our students were recognised both locally and nationally for their dedication to others.

Ruairí Ó Liatháin Ó Nualláin reached the national Lions Club final for his volunteering in the local community and Amber Ní Ruairc won the Special Achievement Garda Youth award. Táimid an-bródúil astu.

An Idirbhliain

The highlight of the TY calendar this year was our school production of Voulez Vous in the Visual Theatre. The dedication and passion shown by every member of the cast and crew was truly inspiring. Watching our students bring the beloved story and music of ABBA to life on stage was a joy, and it was clear that each participant grew in confidence, skill, and teamwork throughout the process. The energy and enthusiasm that filled the theatre were infectious, and the audience response was a testament to the talent and hard work of all involved.

Spórt

Our playing fields have been a hive of activity this year and we are thrilled to report on the outstanding performances of our junior and senior teams. From thrilling matches to well-earned victories, our teams have demonstrated skill, determination, and excellent sportsmanship in football, hurling, camogie, soccer and basketball, to name but a few.

A special congratulations to our Junior Girls Soccer Team who performed brilliantly throughout the season and were narrowly defeated in the Leinster Schools Final – an incredible achievement. Well done also to our Junior Boys Basketball Team who reached the Southeast Leinster Schools Final after a series of impressive performances. Unfortunately, they were defeated in the final after a gallant effort. Our Senior Boys Soccer team have progressed to the U19 Leinster Shield Final.

Níl anseo ach sampla beag de gach rud a bhí ar siúl inár scoil i mbliana. Táimid an-bhródúil as na daltaí agus an ionadaíocht a dhéanann siad ar son na scoile. Ní neart go cur le chéile.



Tomás de Buitléir, Kate Ní Shomacháin, Sorcha Ní Eachaoirn agus Issy Ní Dhochartaigh



Amber Ní Ruairc agus Orlagh Ní Fhaoláin at the Carlow Youth Awards



Faith Nic Aogáin, Conor O Raghallaigh agus Teegan Nic Eochaidh Ní Ghuaire ag Díospóireacht Uí Chadhain.

Community Education Service Kilkenny

A Year of Special Events

Community Education is a process of learning and change. It takes place within the community and is based on the needs of individuals and their communities. It provides flexible, learning options for people in their own local areas.

- Subjects included Music, Art and Crafts, Art Therapy, Healthy Eating, Gardening, drumming, Exercise, Chair Dance, Sewing, Fitness, Tai chi, yoga, basket making, Quilting and Flower Arranging.

SPECIAL EVENTS 2024 - 2025

First Aid / Defibrillator Training:

2024 saw a growth in groups looking for First Aid / Defibrillator training within Communities. The benefits of this course can improve the survival rates for someone experiencing Cardiac Arrest.

Age Friendly Community Gatherings:

Community Education visited Community Centres across Kilkenny with the Kilkenny Age Action Alliance to discuss all things Community Education and the types of courses available. These information sessions were run in Community where there is a recognised low level of interaction with both Age Action and Education. Information sessions were run in conjunction with Age Friendly Kilkenny, HSE and ALL (Adult Literacy for Life).

REACH:

Forty groups in Kilkenny were successful in approval for REACH 24 to a total value of approx €104,000. Groups received funding for programmes in Art, Fitness, Digital Literacy, Gardening and Cookery to mention a few.

Smart Phone Technology:

Courses in smart phone technology were run across the county of Kilkenny. These courses are designed to help learners to use a smart device. Users learnt about saving contacts, taking and saving photographs and smart phone safety.

Group Spotlight: Kilnaspic Peoples Shed

The Kilnaspic People's Shed, their People's Shed have in the last year been supported by Community Education Kilkenny to develop their Peoples Shed. They received Core funding for courses and REACH funding towards materials.

Courses have been run in Irish Conversation, Art, Apple Grafting & Basket Making.



Mummers Costumes Kilnaspic



Coláiste Pobail Osraí



Post-Primary Schools Basketball South East Winners

Bhí bliain ghnóthach spreagúil scoile ann do dhaltai agus d'fhoireann Cholaiste Pobail Osraí. Ghlac an scoil páirt in iliomad imeachtaí dírithe ar an ealaín, eolaíocht, ceol, teangacha, spórt, foghlaim agus forbairt scileanna.

An engaging school year for all at Coláiste Pobail Osraí, with participation in activities and events focusing on art, science, music, languages, sport, learning and skills development.

I measc na mbuaicphointí, bhain triúr ón Dara Bliain, Annabel, Muireann agus Faye, gradam RSA amach sa chomórtas BT Eolaí Óg as ucht a dtionscnamh ar cheamara do shoilse dearga.

Annabel, Muireann and Faye took home the Road Safety Authority award at BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition 2025 for their project on developing red light cameras.



Muireann, Faye agus Annabel ag an Eolaí Óg

Thug iarscoláire, ealaíontóir Kasia Kaminska, cuairt ar an scoil chun sraith cheardlanna a dhéanamh le ranganna ealaíne bunaithe ar an ngrianghráfadóireacht mar chuid den scéim BLAST.

Kasia Kaminska gave a series of workshops to art classes based on developing photography skills as part of the BLAST scheme.

Bhí an-rath ar fhoirne spóirt sa scoil, leis na foirne cispheile ach go háirithe ag sroichint agus ag buachaint craobhacha réigiúnacha. Tosaíodh foirne nua rugbaí na mbuachaillí agus na gailíní freisin i mbliana agus bhí an-éileamh orthu. Tús maith lena gcuid iarrachtaí freisin, le buanna ar scoileanna eile na cathrach.

There was great success for sports teams, particularly in basketball, with teams reaching and winning regional finals. An historic first as well, when both boys' and girls' rugby teams were established. They enjoyed great success, winning their first few matches against other city schools.



Caifé Comhrá Mayfair Library

Bhain Ruaidhrí (Bliain 3) agus Leila (Bliain 6) an chéad áit sóisearach agus sinsearach amach ag an gcomórtas náisiúnta ceoil Scléip sa ucht seinm ar an bpianó.

Third Year student Ruaidhrí and Sixth Year student Leila took home the first prizes in their respective categories at the national final of the Scléip music competition.

Thug daltaí Fraincise agus Gearmáinise cuairteanna ar scoileanna thar lear mar chuid de sceimeanna malartaithe, le cuairteanna ar an mBruiséil agus ar Bheirlín. D'fhreastail siad ar ranganna agus ar thurasanna ar láthreáin stairiúla agus cultúrtha.

French and German learners had the opportunity to practice their language skills abroad with trips to Brussels and Berlin respectively. They attended school and visited historic and cultural attractions.

I rith Sheachtain na Gaeilge, thug an scoil faoi chlár imeachtaí a chur ar siúl chun ceiliúradh a dhéanamh ar an teanga. Ina measc, cuireadh céilí ar siúl, d'fhreastal Cinnirí agus baill den Choiste Gaelbhrtach páirt i gCaifé Comhrá sa Leabharlann Mayfair le baill an phobail, tugadh cuairt ar bhunscoileanna chun cabhrú leis an teanga a spreagadh, agus reachtáil an Choiste Gaelbhrtach tráth na gceist ollmhór.

As part of the schedule of events for Seachtain na Gaeilge there was a student céilí, Cinnirí and Coiste Gaelbhrtach members visited the Mayfair Library to meet members of the public and converse as Gaeilge, visits took place to local primary schools, and the Coiste Gaelbhrtach organised a giant table quiz.

Coláiste Mhuire



Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown Crowned All-Ireland Champions

A momentous day for Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown arrived on February 15th as our senior camogie team captured the All-Ireland Colleges B Championship title for the first time. Facing Mercy College Roscommon, a team aiming for their fourth title in a row, our girls played with heart and belief. A dream start saw us race into a 0-4 to 0-0 lead, but Mercy fought back with a goal. However, thanks to a brilliant strike from Lillian Cleere, Johnstown led 1-5 to 1-2 at halftime. The second half was a true battle. Mercy levelled the game early, but a vital free from Orla Brophy steadied our side. The final quarter belonged to Johnstown, with Clea Whelan making a strong impact and Aoibhe Bourke sealing victory with a late goal. Outstanding team efforts across the field — from Mia Henderson's crucial saves to the defensive strength of Lorraine Bergin, Emma O'Connor, and Ciara Townsend — secured a 2-10 to 2-7 win. Celebrations followed with a guard of honour at school, community events, and a medal presentation night on April 11th. Congratulations to the team, coaches, and supporters on a historic achievement!

ETBI Ireland Awards

Congratulations to Rachel Bergin, 6th year, on her outstanding achievement at the National ETB All Stars talent competition. Rachel was shortlisted from 150 applicants and went on to claim second place at the ETB Excellence Awards, delivering a powerful performance of "Never Enough." Her

incredible talent, commitment, and passion for music have been a huge inspiration to us all at Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown. Rachel's success highlights the vibrant spirit of our students, and we are immensely proud of her.

Intercultural Day 2025

On Monday, April 7th, Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown celebrated Intercultural Day, a highlight of our Wellbeing and Ethos programme. The event recognised and celebrated the rich cultural diversity within our school community. Students representing sixteen different nationalities showcased their heritage through colourful information displays,

traditional foods, music, and dress. The gym was transformed into a vibrant hub of activity, with the sounds of international music creating a lively and welcoming atmosphere throughout the school. Visitors had the opportunity to sample delicious treats, learn about different traditions, and admire the creativity and pride in each display. First and second-year students participated in a fact-finding challenge, encouraging active engagement and learning. The day captured the ETB Core Value of Equality, as students celebrated their differences and connections. A huge thank you to the organising team for creating such an inspiring and joyful event that brought the whole school together.



Intercultural Day 2025



ETBI Awards

Music Generation Carlow



Music Generation Carlow students pictured with John Spillane at Féile Fearann Rí Festival in Cork, April 2025

Music Generation Carlow (MGC) Celebrates Innovation and Expansion Across Musical Genres in 2024/25. As the 2024/25 academic year draws to a close, Music Generation Carlow (MGC) reflects proudly on a transformative year that has showcased the expanding reach, diversity, and talent within our vibrant community of young musicians. With over 4,600 participants now actively engaged in MGC programming each week, this year marked significant growth in both musical opportunities and our programmes creative ambition.

At the heart of our traditional music strand, our ensembles Reelig, Reel-Nua, and ReelÓg have continued to shine, performing both nationally and internationally. A standout moment came in December with MGC's first-ever trad-focused concert at St. Andrew's Church, Bagenalstown, joined by acclaimed harpist Jill Devlin. Internationally, MGC's presence was felt at the Creative Connexions Festival in Spain and locally at the Pan Celtic Festival, where young musicians collaborated with peers from Wexford and Waterford, in an event with acclaimed group Téada.

A milestone for 2024 was the relaunch and further development of our Brass/Wind Programme, introducing brass and wind instruments to primary schools across the county. This initiative is the first step in our county-wide instrumental strategy, with the long-term goal of redeveloping BoomBrassic, our youth wind band, in late 2025.

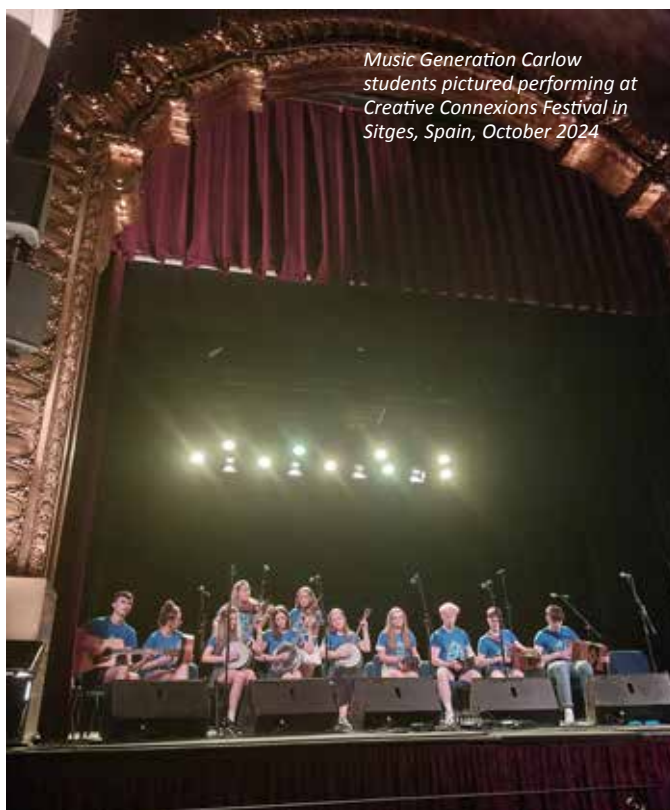
Our Rock/Pop Band Development Programme evolved from a successful pilot into a formalised offering, now supporting four emerging bands with weekly mentorship focused on songwriting and performance. These young artists took to the stage at the Carlow Arts Festival, Laois Outdoor Rock Concert in 2024 and our band finished off the 2024/25 academic year by raising the roof at our inaugural MGC Rocks the Tower bands night.

Special projects like Bangers and Crash at Visual Carlow provided innovative percussion experiences, encouraging creativity and collaboration among young performers.

This year also celebrated alumni success, with former participant and current Musician Educator Erinn Lennon accepted into postgraduate studies at the Royal Northern College of Music—a testament to the enduring impact of Music Generation Carlow.

Looking ahead, MGC is preparing to build on our relaunch of MouthBox vocal ensemble by expanding this ensemble into 2 additional areas around County Carlow (Carlow town and Tullow), and further deepen our alumni engagement. With plans for increased artist residencies and international collaborations, 2025/26 promises to be a year of ambition and artistic growth.

If you are inspired by the power of music to transform lives, we invite you to connect with us at musicgenerationcarlow@kctb.ie and be part of Carlow's musical journey.



Music Generation Carlow students pictured performing at Creative Connexions Festival in Sitges, Spain, October 2024

KCETB Training Services



Team Picture; EXPO 2025

KCETB FET Training Programmes Inspire Growth and Empower Communities Across Kilkenny and Carlow

KCETB Training Services continues to serve as a cornerstone of skill development, with employers, learners, and communities across Kilkenny and Carlow engaging in transformative education and training experiences.

Employers in the region exemplify this impact. In one particular company through the Skills for Work initiative, 19 employees enhanced their digital literacy, while five others completed First Aid training under Skills to Advance. A strong commitment to leadership development led 12 employees to

complete Train the Trainer, and others pursued welding and electrical apprenticeship programmes, boosting workforce capacity and safety.

KCETB's commitment to high-quality training is matched by investment in infrastructure. The January 2025 opening of new Electrical Workshops and classrooms at the Purcellsinch campus will support 112 apprentices, reflecting a 37% rise in electrical apprenticeship registrations. Events like the Apprenticeship Expo—welcoming over 1,050 attendees—further highlight regional enthusiasm for vocational training.

In hospitality and culinary arts, learners experienced



Purcellsinch Launch 2025

hands-on learning through visits to sustainable food hubs and participation in prestigious competitions. Commis Chef apprentices brought home silver medals from the Catex Junior Fish Larder competition and will complete international visits and experiences through Erasmus+ in France. A culminating culinary showcase in October celebrated the skills honed over two years of apprenticeship.

KCETB's Community Training Programmes also play a vital role in promoting inclusion and addressing barriers to education. Four Local Training Initiatives (LTIs) are active in Kilkenny and Carlow, catering to unemployed individuals and those facing social or economic challenges. Community Training Centres serve early school leavers aged 16 to 21, while tailored programmes through the National Learning Network support learners with disabilities.

In November and December 2024, the success of these initiatives was celebrated at graduation ceremonies. The Moving On and Making Connections LTIs saw 30 learners achieve 11 Major Awards and 127 QQI component certificates. The National Learning Network in Kilkenny recognised both learners and community partners, awarding the Kilkenny Book Centre for their support in work placements.



Making Connections LTI - graduation group

Across all programmes, KCETB FET and Training Services in particular, continues to cultivate excellence, opportunity, and empowerment. Through strong employer engagement, community partnerships, and learner-focused supports, KCETB is shaping a brighter future for the region—one learner at a time.



Thatching participants



KCETB's College of Further Education and Training

The 2024/2025 academic year marked continued progress in KCETB's pathways project at the College of Further Education and Training (FET), Kilkenny. Significant alignment has been achieved across services, professional expertise, timetabling, certification, events, student supports and campus utilisation.

Course Provision

A strategic reconfiguration of course locations was implemented to optimise resources and enhance provision. Nuncio Road now hosts programmes in Business, Art, Furniture Design, Childcare, and the Level 8 IT Management degree. Ormonde Road Campus has become the central hub for Healthcare, Beauty, IT, Media, Tattoo Artistry, and the Level 8 Public Health and Health Promotion degree. The Animal Grooming facilities were also relocated here. Gaol Road continues to deliver Kilkenny city's Art programmes, while Island Mill in Thomastown specialises in Art and Craft. The Equestrian Centre remains dedicated to equine studies and is currently undergoing development, with plans for new classrooms and learner facilities. Hairdressing programmes are in the process of relocation within the college structure.

Branding

The College's rebranding initiative is ongoing, with a new logo fully launched and signage installation underway across campuses, reinforcing a unified institutional identity.

Systems & Structures

Timetabling for full-time provision has been successfully streamlined, fostering greater collaboration and joint staff initiatives. Certification processes are being centralised under the oversight of an Assessment

Coordinator, ensuring continued alignment with KCETB's Assessment Policy and improving administrative efficiency.

Promotion & Access

For 2025/2026, a single comprehensive prospectus now showcases all programmes from Levels 3 to 8. This has been underpinned by focussed school and industry visits by the college's now full-time College Guidance Counsellor. A unified application system via the newly branded College of FET Kilkenny website simplifies the admissions process. This integrated approach is providing comprehensive information to prospective students while further promoting a cohesive college identity.

Tertiary

2024-2025 saw the launch of two SETU Tertiary Degrees in the College of FET, Kilkenny. Year 1 of the Level 8 Bachelor of Science (Honours) in IT Management with progression to the SETU Carlow Campus and the Level 8 Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Public Health and Health Promotion with progression to the SETU Waterford Campus proved to be a huge success. College of FET Teachers led the courses and engaged with their SETU colleagues throughout the year ensuring a high quality and positive experience for all registered learners.

The developments to date highlight KCETB's commitment to educational excellence and places the learner at the centre of further education and training advancements.



Animal Care learners engaged in dog grooming activities

Adult Literacy for Life

Adult Literacy for Life is a whole-of-society strategy. It aims to ensure that everyone has the literacy, numeracy and digital literacy to participate in society and succeed in life.

According to the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC, 2024)



Research Project funded through Adult Literacy for Life: Exploring perceptions and experience of unmet literacy needs among staff providing services to the public.

Phase 1 of this project aimed to explore the perceptions and experience of unmet literacy needs among staff and volunteers providing services to the public in Carlow and Kilkenny.

We know from our practice and from research that stigma is the main barrier that gets in the way of people with unmet literacy needs seeking help with their literacy and accessing support in other areas of their lives. We also know that the beliefs and perceptions we hold about people with unmet literacy needs are shaped by the media and our experiences of growing up in our family, our school, our community, and at work. Any gaps in our understanding are filled by these beliefs and perceptions/ norms.

Little has been done to address stigma around unmet literacy needs. This project is breaking new ground in Ireland. The findings from this project will shape a campaign, training or toolkit for staff providing services to the public to improve awareness of and support for people with unmet literacy needs. Understanding the lived experience of adults with unmet literacy needs is a core and important part of this project. The findings of Phase 1 will be launched in September.

1% of adults surveyed are at level 1 or below in literacy

28% of adults surveyed are at level 1 or below in adaptive problem solving

25% of adults surveyed are at level 1 or below in numeracy

Increasing participation for Traveller and Roma families through literacy was a joint initiative funded between KCETB, Pavee Point, Kilkenny and Carlow Traveller Movements, Tusla Education Support Services, Tusla Education Welfare Officers and Adult Literacy for Life. Twenty five organisations shared experiences and identified opportunities for future collaboration.



Traveller and Roma event 2024

Would you like to find out more about Literacy Awareness Training, Plain language, upcoming events, research project or PIAAC results?

Talk to your Regional Literacy Coordinator
Helen Walsh 087 767 5547 or helenm.walsh@kilkennycarlowetb.ie or scan the QR code



Duiske College

LGBTQ+ Quality Mark Awarded to Duiske College

Duiske College was awarded an LGBTQ+ Quality Mark in March 2025, recognising its commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for LGBTQ+ students. This was awarded by Belong To - Ireland's national LGBTQ+ youth organisation and acknowledges schools that have undertaken an 18-month journey to embed LGBTQ+ inclusion across their school and wider communities, policies, and practices.

The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark initiative involves a comprehensive approach to creating safe and supportive school environments. Participating schools implement evidence-based actions across key areas, including staff training, inclusive curriculum development and the establishment of policies that promote diversity and respect. A LGBTQ+ friends and allies lunchtime club was established. The programme also encourages collaboration with parents, community organisations, and local LGBTQ+ youth groups to enhance inclusivity.

Duiske College's achievement places it among 44 schools and education centres across Ireland recognised for their dedication to LGBTQ+ inclusion. At a celebratory event held at the Royal Marine Hotel in Dún Laoghaire, over 350 staff and students gathered to receive their awards. The ceremony, hosted by social media personality James Kavanagh, highlighted the collective efforts of schools in creating environments where all students feel safe and supported.

Duiske College's recognition with the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark underscores its commitment to inclusivity and the well-being of all its students. This achievement reflects the school's dedication to fostering a culture of respect, fairness, and honesty, aligning with its mission to provide a caring and inclusive educational environment.



Duiske College Students attending the STEM Initiative at Microsoft DreamSpace

STEM in Duiske College

Ten fifth year students from Duiske College in Graiguenamanagh have graduated from the STEM – Passport for Inclusion programme at Maynooth University. The STEM initiative encourages young females to explore careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

As part of their journey, the students participated in an immersive experience over three one-day workshops at Microsoft DreamSpace in Dublin last year, where they engaged with cutting-edge technology, problem-solving activities, and inspiring mentors in the industry. They completed project work set and evaluated by Maynooth University over the course of the year and this was set as a module in Transition Year with Mr Brennan, their Science teacher.

The students' hard work and commitment has now been rewarded with 50 additional CAO points for STEM courses at Maynooth University and other Technological Universities in Ireland, giving them a fantastic advantage for their future studies and careers.

"We are incredibly proud of these students for their dedication, ambition, and passion for innovation and to Mr Brennan for inspiring his students and assisting them in their endeavours," said principal Georgina Murphy.

"Their achievements highlight the importance of fostering female participation in STEM and ensuring that all young people have the opportunity to thrive in these dynamic fields," Ms Murphy continued.

A Night to Remember: 70 Years of Talent on Display at Duiske College

Duiske College celebrated its 70th anniversary in style with a vibrant variety show at The Abbey Hall in Graiguenamanagh which was filled by excited audiences on both nights of their performances.

On March 13 and 14, current and past students, staff, and the wider community were brought together for an unforgettable celebration of the school's establishment in the form of a two-night variety show, under the direction of the dedicated school teachers, Ms Reddy and Ms Flynn.

From the moment the curtain rose, the atmosphere in The Abbey Hall was electric as current students took to the stage with confidence and enthusiasm, delivering a colourful array of singing, dancing, comedy, and drama performances. Nearly the entire student body was involved, showcasing the incredible talent, teamwork, and school spirit that make Duiske College such a unique place.

A notable highlight was a performance by past pupil and renowned singer Robert Grace, who now holds a music deal with Sony Records, and has also had his singles reach the Top 20s of the Irish music charts. His return was much to the delight of the audience and he continues to inspire the school community. Many former students and staff also took part, adding a wonderful sense of nostalgia and pride to the occasion.

"It was a truly amazing production and a thoroughly enjoyable night," said Board of Management Chairperson, Niamh O'Driscoll.

"The extraordinary talent and confidence of the students were clear to see. The smiles and laughter on stage were a testament to the exceptional care and support they receive in Duiske College. As a past pupil and a parent, it filled my heart with pride," Ms O'Driscoll added.

School principal, Georgina Murphy, also reflected on the success of the event and echoed Ms O'Driscoll's positivity. "The variety show captured the creativity, energy, and community spirit that have defined Duiske College for 70 years. It was a pleasure to have our CE Ms Eileen Curtis and Director of Schools, Dr. Pauline Egan present on the night, along with all past principals and deputy principals for their contributions to Duiske College," she continued.

"We are incredibly proud of everyone involved and we had a ball in producing such a wonderful show. The two night celebration was a fitting tribute to Duiske College's proud history, and a glimpse of the bright future ahead," Ms Murphy said proudly.



Kevin Doyle, a TY student as Ms Trunchbull from Matilda

Duiske College Wins Prestigious National Ubuntu Award

First Place for "Immersive Technology and Teaching Sustainability".

Duiske College proudly took first place at the Ubuntu Award for Global Citizenship Education (GCE) 2024 for their groundbreaking project, "Adventures in Cyberland", in partnership with University College Dublin (UCD).

This award, presented annually by Ubuntu Network, is one of the most prestigious accolades in Ireland for post-primary schools demonstrating excellence in Global Citizenship Education. It recognises innovative, impactful, and student-centered approaches that promote sustainability, equality, and social justice in education.

"Adventures in Cyberland" stood out nationally for its creative use of immersive technology—including virtual and augmented reality—to explore sustainability challenges through interactive storytelling and digital landscapes. Students not only engaged with complex global issues but also developed 21st-century skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

The project reflected Duiske College's ongoing commitment to education for a better world, blending cutting-edge teaching methods with deep values of responsibility, empathy, and global awareness.

Winning the Ubuntu Award placed Duiske College among the leading voices in Irish education for sustainability and innovation. Ms Brophy, who led the project, spoke of her pride for the students in their dedication, commitment and work ethic throughout the process.

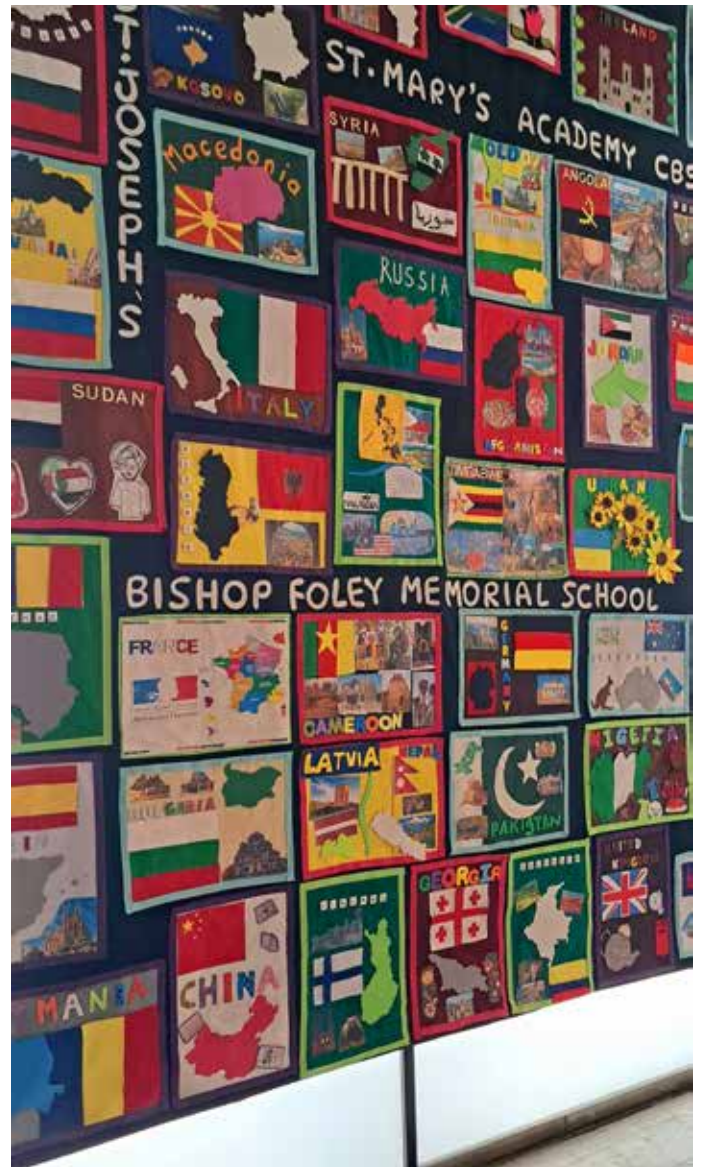
Learning Together, Growing Together:

Embracing Inclusion and Diversity in Carlow Adult Learning Service

In Carlow Adult Learning Service we have a very diverse learning community. We are committed to nurturing inclusivity and diversity through our engagement in a variety of intercultural activities. These initiatives not only enrich our educational environment but also strengthen our bonds with the broader community.

The diversity of our student body is reflected throughout our service provision in Adult Literacy & Learning and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). This year under our ESOL provision we made a new partnership with St Claire's Hospitality Kitchen, Graiguecullen – offering outreach English language classes in St. Claire's. This unique setting enabled us to engage learners in English language learning whilst they also benefited from the nourishing meals provided by St. Claire's Kitchen. This initiative was a resounding success, offering a supportive and welcoming space for individuals to improve their English language skills whilst building a sense of community and ensuring that we met our learners in a space that facilitated their convenience. We also did an information session and 'Meet and Greet' in St. Claire's with Helen Walsh, our Regional Literacy Co-ordinator, meeting St. Claire's clients to start the conversation about learning and assist them in finding out more about KCETB.

We are proud to have participated in Carlow County Council's first 'One-Stop-Shop' event for individuals from other countries who have chosen to make Carlow their home. The 'One Stop Shop' was run in the Seven Oaks Hotel and had representation from statutory and community/ voluntary organisations throughout Carlow. Our involvement in this forum enabled us to connect with potential learners, other



Intercultural Wall Hanging

organisations and individuals dedicated to supporting migrants, further enhancing our ability to serve this community.

This year we were also busy supporting applicants for International Protection throughout Carlow Town and County. International Protection Applicants engaged in English Language and Adult Literacy classes throughout the year in Bagenalstown, Tullow and Carlow Town. We also participated in organising and delivering an information morning on education options and navigating the Further Education landscape, with our colleagues in FET, for International Protection Applicants. This proved to be a very helpful and interesting morning for those who participated.

These intercultural activities reflect our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and community engagement and we, as educators and staff, are certainly enriched by these initiatives. We look forward to continuing and expanding these initiatives, fostering a learning environment where everyone feels valued and supported.



St. Claire's Hospitality Kitchen

Kilkenny Adult Guidance Service: A Year in Review

The 2024/2025 academic year has been a busy and rewarding one for Kilkenny Adult Guidance Service (KAGS), marked by new initiatives, expanded services, and continued support for learners throughout the region. Our core activities have been strengthened, and we've been proud to introduce a range of new offerings to meet the diverse needs of our learners.

This year saw the continuation of our usual guidance meetings, alongside a variety of group sessions designed to support learners in their educational and career development. We are particularly excited about the expanded provision for the Nuncio Road campus, which now accommodates Ormonde Road learners. This development has allowed us to better meet the needs of our growing learner base. Eoin has been instrumental in supporting the majority of the BTEI learners, and we've now established a dedicated time slot every Tuesday afternoon for one-on-one sessions and drop-in support at the centre, providing greater flexibility and accessibility for our learners.

In terms of new initiatives, we piloted the Wider Benefits of Learning tool, which has provided invaluable insights into the broader impact of learning on personal and professional development. The feedback from the Guidance Counsellors, who participated fully in this project, has been instrumental in refining the tool and ensuring it meets the needs of our learners. We liaised with our colleagues in Carlow, where members of the Kilkenny team facilitated guidance sessions for three groups. We continue to collaborate across services to support the work of the Guidance Service in each area.

In addition to our one-on-one guidance and group support, we have worked in collaboration with several key partners. These include Kilkenny Leader Partnership, with whom we held information sessions, and a number of well-received stands at MacDonagh Junction throughout the year. Our team also presented to the Home School Liaison Team from Kilkenny and Carlow, providing essential resources and guidance for families in need. Furthermore, we attended



Orla Reddy, Adult Guidance Coordinator with Helen Walsh, Adult Literacy for All attending the Public Participation Event in Castlecomer Hall.

the CAO Autumn Conferences, and Orla represented the service at the Euroguidance Conference in Athlone, where the latest trends and best practices in career guidance were discussed.

We are grateful for the opportunity to offer additional supports such as Educational Psychology, Therapeutic Counselling, and Dyslexia screening carried out in-house. The Onwards and Upwards group, designed to provide the first steps back to learning in a group, resumed in September, with a group running up to Christmas and a new group thereafter.

Staff training has been a priority this year, with all members completing First Aid and Manual Handling training. Additionally, a Decider Skills Training session was delivered, offering an evidence-based CBT approach to help learners develop and maintain positive mental health.

We've also worked closely with Community Education to offer a Referencing Webinar, available on the learner portal, and have collaborated with Sharon and Joanne Doyle on the development of the FET Guidance page on the portal, providing learners with easy access to relevant resources.

In summary, the 2024/2025 academic year has been a period of growth, development, and collaboration for Kilkenny Adult Guidance Service. As we continue to support our learners in their educational journeys, we remain committed to offering high-quality guidance and resources to help them succeed.



Adult Guidance, Community Education and Music Generation Staff during ETB Week in March 2025

Scoil Aireagail

A Year of Growth, Innovation, and Community



Opening of new school building

As the academic year of 2024/2025 at Scoil Aireagail comes to a close, we take great pride in reflecting on a year filled with celebration, innovation, and achievement. From national competition success to new learning initiatives, sporting milestones to sustainable action, our school community continues to flourish, guided by our core values of Excellence in Education, Care, Community, Respect, and Equality.

One of the most memorable moments of the year was the official opening of our new school building. This special occasion brought together students, staff, families, past pupils, and neighbours to celebrate a new chapter in Scoil Aireagail's history. A moving poem by student Caoimhe Corcoran, written for the event, beautifully captured the spirit and pride of our school.



Mullinavat Active Retirement demonstrating to 3rd Year students recipes for World Home Economics Day and Global Money week.

In the heart of the town where rivers flow,
Stands Scoil Aireagail, a place we know.
A beacon of knowledge, with doors open wide,
Where dreams take flight and hopes abide.

Within these walls, where memories are made,
We learn and grow, our fears allayed.
Each lesson taught, a guiding light,
Each friendship honed, a bond so tight.

The classrooms hum with voices clear,
Of students striving year by year.
Teachers guide with wisdom's hand,
Helping us to understand.

Through trials faced and triumphs won,
We stand together, all as one.
With every step, we carve our way,
Toward tomorrow, bright as day.

Scoil Aireagail, our second home,
Where minds are free, and spirits roam.
A place of pride, where roots run deep,
In our hearts, your legacy we keep.

We were delighted to receive funding from the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) initiative, which enabled the creation of our "Waste Not, Grow Lots" sustainability garden project. Spearheaded by our Transition Year students, the garden was developed using upcycled and salvaged materials from our school's construction site. Old pipes, wooden offcuts, underlay, and other discarded items were creatively reused to build raised beds, a composter, and even a bat box. Food waste from the Home Economics room is now composted on-site, and students are growing organic vegetables—learning about environmental responsibility and healthy living in a hands-on way.

We were also proud recipients of a Féilte Collaborative Professional Learning Bursary, the highest funding band awarded by the Teaching Council. This cross-sectoral project with SN Móin Ruadh and Newmarket NS supports professional learning across three key areas: inclusive pedagogy, digital literacy, and student wellbeing.

Continuing with our digital innovation, teachers piloted the use of digital portfolios with Transition Year students this year. Students documented their work across subjects using Microsoft tools, culminating in a final presentation in Microsoft Sway. This initiative is part of our digital strategy going forward, building confidence and digital fluency in a world that is increasingly technology-driven.

Another standout project was Smart Money for Smart Teens—a financial literacy book written, researched, and published by our 3rd Year students. Funded by the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission as part of Global Money Week, the book covers saving, budgeting, banking, online safety, and more in a format that speaks to teenagers. The project raised over €500 for St. Vincent de Paul, included workshops in local primary schools, and featured a special intergenerational event with the Mullinavat Active Retirement Group. It won the CCPC's National Financial Literacy Competition and was shortlisted for the AIB Future Sparks School Impact Awards.



Smart Money for Smart Teens, 3rd Year students who wrote the book.

This year's Grandparents' Day, held during ETBI and Wellbeing Week, was a joyful celebration of intergenerational connection. Grandparents and significant others joined us for an afternoon of music, poetry, and storytelling. It was a privilege to also honour Ms. Eileen Curtis, Chief Executive of KCETB, as she prepares for her retirement.



Grand Parents Day

On the sports field, Scoil Aireagail teams continued to shine. Our Senior Hurling Team proudly represented the school in the South Leinster Final at Nowlan Park, while our Junior Camogie Team battled bravely in the Leinster Final. We were also thrilled to see our Senior Girls' Soccer Team crowned overall winners of the KCETB Soccer Tournament, a brilliant achievement that reflects the team's talent, determination, and teamwork.



Scoil Aireagail Senior Hurling Team



Senior Hurling South Leinster Final



Senior Hurling South Leinster Final

As we look back, we are filled with pride and gratitude. The achievements of this year are a reflection of the dedication, creativity, and community spirit that define Scoil Aireagail. We look forward to building on this success in the year ahead.

Carlow School Completion Programme



Carlow SCP & Sean & Olaf from Tyndall College Presenting Father Dunphy with the funds raised from the Jumble Sale

Some of the initiatives we ran as a team this year include a jumble sale we ran in Tyndall College in November, whereby we asked for donations of items we could resell from teachers, parents, students and the wider community. We stored these items and had support from students to organise them into categories, and also to advertise this event as much as possible in the lead up to the day. We managed to raise over €800 for St.Clare's Hospitality Kitchen in Carlow which had put out a public call out for support to ensure they could keep their doors open to those most in need. This local charity feeds those in need who may not be able to afford a hot meal themselves everyday and they depend on volunteers and donations to stay in operation.

We also ran the Active Future Programme in conjunction with SETU Carlow's Sports Science students and lecturers for 8 weeks. This programme entailed senior students from Tyndall College Carlow and Coláiste Aindriú Muine Bheag travelling to SETU each week to learn about fitness and various forms of movement, with health lectures and guest speakers covering a wide range of wellbeing topics. Some

of the students reported that they would like to return to SETU to study in the future since taking part in this programme

Another successful programme we ran was the Attendance Initiatives in some of the primary schools in our cluster with the aim of improving the attendance of some of the young people in the school by tracking their



Students from St. Fiacc's NS & Holy Family BNS with their prizes from the Attendance Initiative. Also in the photo are Carlow SCP Project Workers Nicole Clarke & Naoise Kelly.



Students from Tyndall College & Coláiste Aindriú taking part in the Active Future Programme in SETU.

attendance over an 8 week period, and prizes were awarded to those who had the best track record and the most improved. This had a great influence on the young people's attendance whom we work with. The Prize winners were brought to JF Sports where they were allowed to pick sports equipment up to the value of €100 each.

Back to Education Initiative Carlow

The Back to Education Initiative Carlow provides part-time learning opportunities for young people and adults giving them a chance to combine a return to learning with family, work, and other responsibilities.

Courses are offered on a flexible part-time basis throughout Carlow town and County affording learners the opportunity to build up their qualifications at a time and pace suitable to their needs. The BTEI currently offers a suite of educational options at QQI levels 3 to 6, covering Computers & ICT Skills, Office Administration, Healthcare, Horticulture, Childcare and Special Needs Assisting.

BTEI Horticulture students busy at work

At the core of BTEI provision is a learner centred holistic approach, whereby learners are provided with support, advice, and guidance in order to support them to progress personally, academically and professionally.

BTEI CARLOW PROVISION 2024 - 2025

BTEI Community Strand	St. Catherine's Community Services Centre
ICT/Office Skills	Carlow
Horticulture	Carlow & Myshall
Office Administration	Carlow
Health Care	Carlow & Tullow
Childcare	Carlow
Special Needs Assisting	Carlow



BTEI Horticulture students busy at work



BTEI Horticulture students busy at work

The 2024/2025 academic year was busy as usual, with BTEI providing onsite tuition to its learners in Carlow town and County. Courses ranging from Level 3 to Level 5 were delivered at BTEI campus in Burrin Street Carlow and outreached to Tullow, Myshall and centres in town.

Based on feedback from students, new modules were introduced this year, including Spreadsheets Level 3 and Health & Safety At Work Level 5 added as part of the Office Administration programme.

Students continued to be supported in their learning with TEAMS VLP and the laptop loan scheme. This not only ensured that learners were furnished with the tools necessary to complete their studies at home but also ensured that they developed or retained skills necessary to navigate an online learning environment.

Keeping with the theme of learner support BTEI Carlow, developed a series of academic writing support classes to enhance the learners' skills and competencies within this area. All level 5 students were provided with the opportunity to attend two academic writing workshops, whilst level 4 and level 3 students attended one introductory session. Initial feedback from learners engaged with these supports has been extremely positive and it is hoped that BTEI will be able to facilitate these supports in the next academic year.

Coláiste Cois Siúire



KCETB Student of the Year 2024 Eibhlín Holden pictured with Principal Conor Power and Deputy Principal Linda McCormack

As we approach the end of another successful school year, we are delighted to share some of the highlights and achievements that have made this year so special in Coláiste Cois Siúire.

Our commitment to academic excellence was once again evident as our school community began the year celebrating outstanding state exam results at both Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle levels. The school was once again privileged to award our Vicky Phelan Scholarship to a graduate bound for third level education, and, to recognise our KCETB Student of the Year for 2024. Coláiste Cois Siúire's commitment to enabling our learners to flourish and achieve their potential in our care is underpinned by our school communities unique relational qualities: every teacher knows every student, and vice-versa.

As a school community we embraced various themes that have shaped and guided us as learners and teachers

throughout the year. The theme of Care was an area of focus for our ethos leads this year with students and teachers alike recognising the many ways that this core value is alive in our school community but also celebrated by all at key intervals such as Kindness Matters Week and ETB Week.

The extra-curricular calendar this year was an extremely busy one with students enjoying participation and success in a number of sporting and other competitive areas, with notable successes in basketball, soccer, hurling, and Gaelic football. Junior hurlers won the Leinster Hurling Shield, while junior Gaelic footballers and senior basketballers reached the semi-final stages of their respective competitions. The Chess Club, Games Club and debating team continued to attract enthusiastic participants and to compete on behalf of the school.

Transition Year students had an enriching and engaging experience

As a school community we embraced various themes that have shaped and guided us as learners and teachers throughout the year.

this year. Students participated in a wide variety of activities in and out of school with the trip to Delphi being a resounding success. Students were inspired by visits from engaging notable speakers.

The Parents Association played a crucial role in enhancing our school environment this year, organising successful fundraising events, sponsoring sports kits, classroom materials, buddy benches in a sensory garden area, and, sponsoring medals and trophies for our Awards Night. Their combined efforts have ensured the Vicky Phelan Scholarship is fully funded for 2025.

We are incredibly proud of our students, staff, and community for their dedication and hard work. We look forward to a future of continued growth and success.



Kindness Matters Week 2025



Winners of the Leinster Junior Hurling Shield 2025

Kilkenny Adult Learning



Learners with Orla Mackey

This year, Kilkenny Adult Learning Service continued to support learners from all walks of life, fostering literacy, digital confidence, creativity, and personal growth. Our wide range of programmes from Family Learning and ESOL to vocational training, digital technology and self-advocacy provided inclusive, community-driven education that supports QQI certification, City & Guilds certification and lifelong learning.

Family Learning

Our Family Learning programmes bring parents and children together in intercultural, intergenerational spaces. These courses strengthen literacy, numeracy, digital skills, and creativity, helping parents re-engage with education while deepening their connection to schools and their children's learning. The programmes promote collaboration, critical thinking, and lifelong curiosity.



Family Learning Stick Man Sack

Interagency Work

Learners welcomed author Orla Mackey, who inspired them with insights from her novel *Mouthing*. Interagency groups explored literacy through research projects and visited the Volunteer Centre to learn about community engagement. End-of-term quizzes brought fun and excitement, boosting literacy, numeracy, and digital fluency.



Learners visiting Kilkenny Volunteer Centre

Creative and Inclusive Learning
Neurodiverse learners thrived in Visual Art QQI modules, experimenting with clay, textiles, and painting. A dynamic drama group explored role-play and performance, enhancing communication and confidence. Meanwhile, learners at the Irish Wheelchair Association championed self-advocacy, diving into political engagement and accessibility initiatives.

Electrical apprentices and independent learners developed practical literacy,

numeracy, and digital skills for work and daily life.

ESOL

ESOL learners made strong progress, completing QQI Levels 1 and 2 in Listening and Speaking modules, while QQI Levels 1 and 2 Reading and Writing are ongoing. An Intensive ESOL Learning Group participated in Kilkenny's Meet and Greet, building community connections and improving communication through real-world interaction.

Digital Photography, Driver Theory, and Smart Tech

Our photography learners developed personal styles and technical skills, showcasing creativity and expression. Driver Theory classes provided critical support as learners navigated recent changes in test app systems.

Smart Tech sessions empowered older adults to confidently use everyday tools learning about WiFi, security,

online banking, and digital ticketing in a supportive environment.

In conclusion, through collaboration, innovation, and learner-centred education, Kilkenny Adult Learning Service continues to build a vibrant, inclusive learning community where everyone has the opportunity to grow, connect, and thrive.

Thank you to the tutors and staff for making it a great year!

Ethos in KCETB 2024/25

The 2024/25 academic year marked another exciting chapter for the Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB) as it continued to champion a values-based education system.

This year, the Professional Learning Network (PLN) shifted from fully online sessions to a hybrid model. This change strengthened collaboration and professional dialogue among Ethos Leads, who played a key role in fostering inclusive practices in their schools. The year began with inspiring presentations from Duiske College Ethos Coordinator William Watson who recently completed his Masters' Degree in this area, and guest lecturer Dr. Anne Marie Kavanagh, which set the tone for reflective and evidence-based practice.

A highlight of the year was the Ethos Symposium 2025, which had an exceptional lineup of speakers including Dr. Hannagh McGinley, Briana Fitzsimons, Dr. Benjamin Mallon and many more. These experts brought a wealth of experience in diversity, human rights, and intercultural education, reinforcing KCETB's commitment to meaningful and practical engagement with these themes. The event was very well attended by KCETB, with almost all schools being represented on the day.

KCETB also had our annual photography competition and the number of entries and standard of photos was at it's highest ever. There was participation from all schools and the judges had a very difficult time discerning the winning entries. Some of those successful entrants are visible below.

KCETB schools also embraced a new e-learning module developed with DCU. It offers practical insights for school leaders, teachers, and Ethos teams, ensuring that learning environments were affirming and equitable for all students.



Equality. Róisín Wall and Cara Ruth. Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown

The e-learning module entitled "Supporting ETB staff to affirm social class, racial and ethnic diversity" aims to support ETB staff in their work with students and families from diverse social class, racial and ethnic backgrounds. It was developed on behalf of Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) by Dr Anne Marie Kavanagh, Assistant Professor in Ethical and Intercultural Education from Dublin City University (DCU). The eLearning module aims to support ETB staff with the enactment of the ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos, specifically domain 4 – Equality.

In terms of the curricular expression of ethos, schools such as Duiske College, Kilkenny City Vocational School, Borris College and Tyndall College have all integrated Identity, Multi-Belief and Values Education (IMBVE) into their curriculum. With updated units of learning for the 3-year course, digital and print resources, and whole-staff training options (most recently taking part in Kilkenny Education Centre with over 30 participants). KCETB schools are well-equipped to integrate this subject into their daily practice in what is now the second year of the programme.

Schools within KCETB are using their own context to encourage effective initiatives— like Ethos Ambassador programmes, inspiring school displays, inclusive awards, community integration and participation, restorative practice, and values-based leadership to name but a few — all of which engage with the Patrons' Framework on Ethos to provide a culture of Excellence in Education, Care, Equality, Community and Respect



Excellence in Education. Éabha Ní Mhórdha. Gaelcholdáiste Cheatharlach

Coláiste Eoin Hacketstown

“Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.” — Vince Lombardi-Famous American Football Coach

I am delighted to see so much wonderful work taking place in the school each day by the staff and students of Coláiste Eoin. I have observed many examples of great leadership demonstrated by staff and students around the school each week and I believe that leadership is defined by ‘action and example’.

Our students performed very well in the Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle state examinations again in 2024 and this was reflected in some of the fantastic results obtained. Kate Murphy, a Leaving Certificate student from last year, received a DCU Scholar’s Award in the Helix DCU on the evening of November 27th 2024 in recognition of her outstanding LC results. This Scholar’s Award celebrates DCU students that have scored 600+ points in the Leaving Certificate. Kate is studying Primary Education in DCU. In the pursuit of perfection, Kate has certainly caught excellence here. Jane Fitzgerald is another 2024 LC student that has excelled academically. Jane received an entrance exhibition award from Trinity College, Dublin where she is studying Psychology. We are very proud of Kate and Jane’s achievements and indeed the success of all our students.



Junk Kouture 2024-2025

To ensure the continued success and achievement of all our students, the school has a number of teaching and learning initiatives, structures and supports in place again for this year. These include supervised after school study, Study Clix, ‘Rayse The Game’-Study Skills, ICT/Digital Support, Microsoft Teams/Office 365, paired-reading programme, AEN/SEN resources, Mentor Programme for 1st, 3rd and 6th Year students and the Athena Analytics Academic Tracker. Our

6th year students also attended the Higher Options and World Skills Day on the 25th of September and went to the SETU and Carlow College Open Days. We also facilitated a trip for TY, 5th and 6th Year students to the Careers, College and Apprenticeships on the 19th of November. A French Exchange Programme took place again this year. We hosted guest speakers from 3rd Level colleges, Universities and Further Education Institutions from all over the country.



Coláiste Eoin 2nd year Girls Basketball Team

Transition Year continues to be a very busy year group with lots of activities, trips, excursions and workshops taking place. Lip Sync was a terrific success again this year, running for three consecutive nights and all our local primary feeder schools were invited to come along for the ‘Premiere’ of the Lip Sync show. Our Halloween Fancy Dress Day was a big hit again back in October with so many brilliant costumes on show from the students & the staff. There was a Christmas themed day on Friday 20th of December also which was an enjoyable way to wrap up the term.

The 'Groupa Ceoil' continues to thrill and entertain our Coláiste Eoin staff and students and members of the local community e.g. the Day Care Centre and local Primary Schools. A remembrance tree for the month of November was placed in the GPA to recognise all souls. Each student received a piece of paper cut out in the shape of a leaf on which they could write the name of the person/people close to them that they want to remember.



DCU Scholar's Award Recipient Kate Murphy pictured with Deputy Principal Ms. Mary Hunt and Principal Mr. Alan Costello.

More extra-curricular activities have been added to the school schedule this year such as Tag Rugby, Chess Club, Lego Club, Coding and Art Club. We are thrilled with the success of our students in the TY Mini Companies, Groupa Ceoil, soccer, basketball, debating, hurling, camogie, tag rugby, art, coding and gaelic football. Teachers are very generous with their time here in offering these new activities to students & it is great to see so much student participation.



'Transition Year Drumming and Bodhran Workshop'

The student voice is very strong in Coláiste Eoin and it is great to see this evidenced through the Meitheal Group, Green Schools, Focus Groups, the Student Debating Team and Student Council training was held in the Dolmen Hotel, Carlow, on Tuesday 19th of November.

Primary Feeder School Visits took place back in September and we held our 'Open Night' on Wednesday 2nd of October. This was a really nice occasion and an opportunity to promote and showcase our school.

Inclusion week was well celebrated in the school during the week of the 24th of February 2025. Grandparent's Day was hugely successful this year. This community event took place on Friday 28th of February.

The Transition Years had a wonderful experience taking part in the TY Show

and continue to engage in a wide number of activities and workshops. The TY's enjoyed the foreign trip to Italy this year which is a major highlight of the TY Programme.

In terms of school projects our new school roof is an important development for the school. We will have a number of changes taking place for academic year 2025-2026 with the introduction of 1:1 devices for next year's 2nd and 5th student year groups. The intention is to roll this out for all other students in the coming years. We also welcome the granting of a special autism class by the NCSE (National Council for Special Education) and the Department for 2025-2026 for our school. This will be a welcome addition to the school as we look to continue to serve the needs of our local community.

Alan Costello-Principal



Coláiste Eoin 1st Year Girls Basketball Team

FET Learner Support Service



Director of FET Martha Bolger opens the National FET Learner forum

KCETB FET Learner Voice.

80 adult learners gathered at the Woodford Dolmen Hotel in Carlow on the 11th of March, 2025 for a regional meeting of the National Further Education and Training (FET) Learner Forum.

This event was jointly hosted by the FET Learner Support Service and AONTAS. Events like this provide a valuable platform for learners to share their experiences, reflect on their educational journeys, and contribute to shaping the future of further education in Carlow and Kilkenny.

The National FET Learner Forum is a collaborative initiative led by AONTAS, the National Adult Learning Organisation, in partnership with SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, and local Education and Training Boards. Throughout 2025, thousands of adult learners from across Ireland participate in regional forums, offering invaluable insights into the diverse experiences of learners nationwide.

Speaking at the forum, Martha Bolger, Director of Further Education and Training said, "The AONTAS FET Learner forum is all about our learners. We want to hear about our learners' experiences in FET and how they think it can be improved. Events like today

promote dialogue and collaboration to help in building trust and engagement with the learner voice."

Quotes from learners about the forum on the day included.

"I felt my voice was being listened to and that we as a group of learners can help shape the future of learning with KCETB."

"I enjoyed hearing about other people's experiences with their courses and being able to comfortably give feedback about my course."

Learners highlighted both peer support and Special Needs Assistant (SNA) support as positive aspects of their courses. Some Youthreach learners shared how their experiences in further education and training have been transformative, boosting their

confidence after negative experiences in mainstream education.

For some learners, the lack of transportation options or complete absence of transport in their area was a significant concern.

In conjunction with the forum a learner survey was carried out across all our FET centres. 191 learners returned the survey. The information gathered at the forum and through the survey will be combined to produce a report on what learners have to say about the FET service in KCETB. This report is due to be released in May. The report findings will be used to identify and inform areas for development and improvement in our FET wide service and may also identify areas of strength and positive impact within our service.



Large crowd attend National FET Learner Forum 11 Mar 25 Dolmen Hotel, Carlow

KCETB SEN COP - Peer to Peer Collaboration



KCETB SEN Community of Practice: Strengthening Inclusion through Collaboration and Innovation

Now in its third year, the KCETB Special Educational Needs (SEN) Community of Practice continues to thrive as a powerful engine for professional collaboration and shared expertise across our 13 schools. This year marked another successful chapter in our journey, with a strong focus on learning from one another, deepening inclusive practices, and driving system wide improvements that benefit all learners.

From the outset, our priority was to amplify the voices and practices within our KCETB schools. At our opening Community of Practice (CoP) day, colleagues from across our schools came together to co-design and deliver a dynamic workshop exploring SEN communication systems that enhance whole-school support structures. This session was both thought-provoking and highly practical, offering realistic, adaptable strategies that schools can tailor to their own contexts. It was a strong reminder of the power of peer-led learning and the value of collaboration in addressing the diverse needs of our students.

Innovation remained a key theme throughout the year. We were privileged to welcome Sinead O'Hara, Education Officer with WWETB, who delivered an engaging presentation on the use of Artificial Intelligence in the Special Educational Needs space. This session encouraged schools to begin exploring the potential of AI to enhance student support planning, an area that holds great promise for the future of inclusive education.

Another significant milestone for our CoP this year has been the full engagement of all 13 KCETB schools in the process of Provision Mapping. This work is not only strengthening inclusive practices but also enabling schools

to align their support structures with national frameworks such as Cineáltas and the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice. Across our network, schools have shown remarkable creativity in how they approach Provision Mapping particularly in their efforts to meaningfully capture both student and parent voice using multi-modal methods across the Continuum of Support.

The strength of our SEN Community of Practice lies in the generosity of our members, the willingness to share, reflect, innovate, and grow together. Through this collective commitment, we continue to raise the standard of inclusive education across KCETB, ensuring that every student is seen, heard, and supported to thrive.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on deepening our shared learning and embedding inclusive practices that serve the needs of all students in every classroom.



KCETB SEN COP - Working together to support learner experiences & outcomes



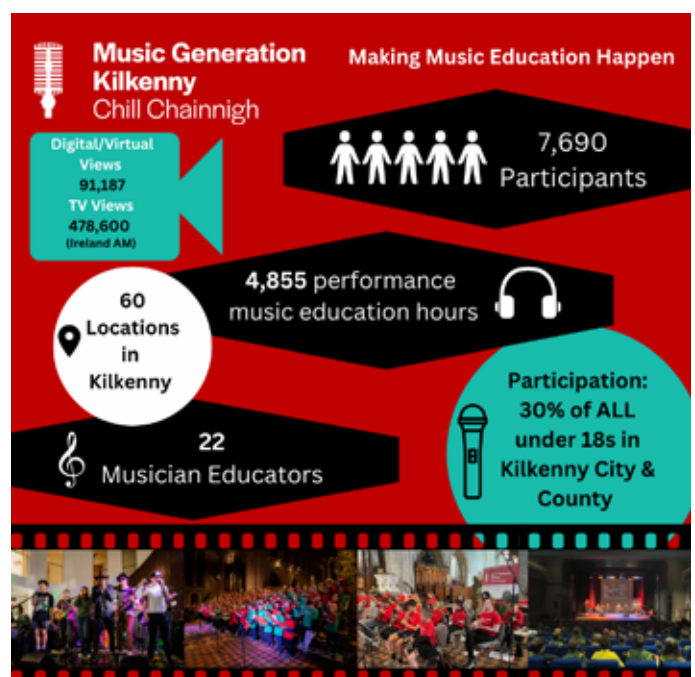
Music Generation Kilkenny young string performers in the Christmas SINGOUT concert at St. Canice's Cathedral led by Musician Educator Andreea Boursos
Photo: Freddie Greenall

Music Generation Kilkenny

Music Generation Kilkenny had a very successful year of music making in 2024/2025 with **7,690** children and young people participating in music programmes across the city and county.

30% of the total population of 18s and under across county Kilkenny took part in a Music Generation programme in 2024, with 4,855 hours of performance music education delivered to children and young people in the county.

The vision and ethos of Music Generation Kilkenny is to transform the lives of children and young people through access to high quality performance music education. Underpinning this vision are the values of access, quality, inclusion, diversity, creativity, partnership, and sustainability. At its core are children/young people and musicians.



Currently, Music Generation Kilkenny runs partnership programmes in:

- 24 primary schools across five strands: vocal, ukulele, string, percussion and the 'Music Makers' programme (aimed at Junior Infant to Second Class pupils). This strong foundation supports the progression of children and young people into Music Generation Kilkenny's after-school music hubs and will continue to support hub programme planning and development in 2025-2026.
- 2 secondary school programmes delivering small group tuition on acoustic guitar, electric guitar, mandolin, banjo, and piano/keyboard in addition to a TY programme across several Kilkenny secondary schools.
- SEN programme - an inclusive music programme run in partnership with the School of the Holy Spirit.

Music Generation Kilkenny runs after-school music hubs for young people who want to learn an instrument or explore their singing skills in a group setting:

- **Creative Music Space**
An after-school rock and pop music hub run in partnership with Foróige at the DRUM, MacDonagh Shopping Centre on Thursdays delivering small group lessons in ukulele, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, drums and singing.
- **South Kilkenny Music Hub**
An after-school music hub in south Kilkenny run in partnership with Coláiste Cois Siúire, Mooncoin, servicing the south Kilkenny corridor and providing small group lessons in acoustic guitar, electric guitar, bass guitar, and drums. We are continually

expanding this emerging hub to include additional instrument/vocal tuition.

- **Trad Hub & Ensemble**
An after-school traditional Irish music hub run in partnership with Foróige at the Courthouse, Castlecomer. This hub and ensemble provides an opportunity for young traditional players to get involved in fun weekly lessons and performance opportunities. Instruments include fiddle, bodhrán, concertina, whistle, flute, and banjo.
- **Uilleann Pipe Hub**
An after-school Uilleann Pipe hub on Wednesdays in Kilkenny City in partnership with Na Píobairí Uilleann and Kilkenny Pipers Club.



*Young Uilleann Piper participating in TRADCAMP 2024
Photo: Maurice Gunning*

New in 2024-2025:

Music Generation Kilkenny established 4 after-school hubs in primary school settings. These serve as gateway access provision between our primary school programmes and after-school music hubs.



Music Generation Kilkenny SONG
COLLECTIVE Performance
Photo: DGM Photographic

Highlights of the year include:

BOOKVILLE FESTIVAL - Music Generation Kilkenny delivered a series of vocal, drumming and toddler music workshops in partnership with the Bookville Kilkenny Festival.

JINGLE BELL ROCKOUT - In December 2024, young musicians from the Creative Music Space entertained on the festival live stage in 'Jingle Bell Rockout' in what is becoming a popular annual community event for our young musicians.

SING OUT – *Singing in a Winter Wonderland*. Music Generation Kilkenny's annual Christmas concert was a sold-out success in December 2024. 310 children from primary schools across Kilkenny performed in a packed St. Canice's Cathedral alongside young musicians from the Creative Music Space. Joining them onstage were young violinists from the Music Generation Kilkenny primary school string programme and young drummers from the Music Generation Kilkenny Percussion Programme.

SONG COLLECTIVE - Throughout the month of April, young Kilkenny musicians showcased their musical talent through writing, recording, releasing, and performing their own songs, through the 'Song Collective' Workshops facilitated by Music Generation Kilkenny, in partnership with Foróige. The aim of the 'Song Collective' project is to support young musicians to create their own communities and to establish a vibrant youth music scene in Kilkenny. The workshops culminated in a showcase performance by participating young bands at The DRUM Youth Centre.

UKE JAM – 675 children who learn the Ukulele weekly throughout the academic year as part of the Music Generation Kilkenny primary school Ukulele programme came together in the Set Theatre in May 2025 for a spectacular jamming session called 'UKE JAM'.

SOUTHSIDE SOUNDS - We are very committed to providing high quality performance music education in all parts of the county. This project offers an immersive and interactive musical experience in south Kilkenny, combining hands-on instrument taster sessions with modern sound production and recording techniques. Participants are given the opportunity to explore various instruments, engage in song writing workshops and experience professional recording in the Music Generation Kilkenny Mobile Recording Studio. This project is made possible with funds provided by Kilkenny County Council and Creative Ireland.

FROM SCRATCH: "From Scratch" is a super fun workshop where young people aged 13-18 can learn how to: DJ: Learn to mix songs and get the party started!; Rap: Write your own lyrics and rock the mic!

Make Music: Discover how to create your own beats! Participants have the opportunity to show off their new skills at real pop-up shows around Kilkenny with performances taking place in Windgap Community Centre, Castlecomer Discovery Park and The Drum Youth Centre.

SUMMER DRUMMERS - Primary school playgrounds came alive to the sound of samba drumming when over 2,000 children participated in 'Summer Drummers' across fourteen primary schools in Kilkenny City and County.

TRADCAMP – TradCamp is a partnership between Music Generation Kilkenny and Music Generation Tipperary. Young traditional musicians from both counties came together for a weeklong camp culminating in a concert at the end of the camp in each county. In 2025 they performed at St. Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny and Clonmel Junction Festival, Tipperary.

In 2024–2025 Music Generation Kilkenny delivered **toddler music workshops, rhythm workshops, youth drumming workshops, song writing and sound production workshops** throughout the year; participated in **Bookville Kilkenny, Yulefest Kilkenny, Cruinniú na nÓg, St. Patrick's Day Kilkenny Festival** and partnered/collaborated with **Foróige, Na Píobairí Uilleann, The Kilkenny Pipers Club, Kilkenny County Library Service** to name a few.

Carlow Adult Guidance Service

Over the past year, the Carlow Adult Guidance Service has been busy rolling out new and creative ways to support people across the county. We make sure everyone has a fair shot at moving forward in education, training, or work—no matter their background or circumstances.

A big focus has been reaching out to those who might otherwise miss out. One great example is the work done in International Protection Accommodation Centres, where guidance staff offered one-to-one sessions and CV workshops. These were designed to help people build confidence and figure out their next steps. To make things even more accessible, a Ukrainian translator was brought in so language wouldn't be a barrier.

The team also got involved in local events, including a Department of Social Protection jobs fair. There, we gave advice on the spot and ran a CV and interview skills workshop—which even caught the attention of two visiting Government Ministers!

Online, the service teamed up with a professional career consultancy to run a series of webinars for KCETB learners. These covered all the basics of CV writing and interview prep, with the added bonus of being easy to access from anywhere.

Community connection remained a priority, with staff taking part in the local Integration Forum and setting up outreach sessions in Tullow Library and Tullow Family Resource Centre.

All in all, it's been a year of getting out into the community, meeting people where they're at, and making sure support is available to those who need it most in overcoming barriers to progression in Education, Training and Employment. Our message is that wherever you are in your Educational journey, KCETB Carlow Adult Guidance Service is here to help you take the next step.



KCETB's Regional Education And Language Team (REALT)

2024/25 proved to be another busy year for KCETB's Regional Education And Language Team (REALT), providing families with support & guidance in terms of Primary, Post-Primary and Further Education opportunities. These families include Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, as well as International Protection Applicants who are also fleeing ongoing conflicts & difficulties in countries across the World. Schools throughout Kilkenny and Carlow continue to support these families as they begin a new chapter of their lives, going above and beyond in supporting these children to become involved in sports and arts, both at a school level & within their community. This integration has also had huge benefits for existing schools and communities, who now have the opportunity to interact with cultures and nationalities from around the globe.

This year in particular saw the added stresses of Accommodation Centre closures and, as a result, many families found themselves needing to move to new locations not only within Kilkenny and Carlow but also to counties further afar, which in many cases meant new schools for children. However, thanks to the work of KCETB,

as well as Local Authority supports and volunteer groups, the impact of these moves on the education and wellbeing of these children & families was minimal.

As the school year draws to a close, KCETB REALT would like to thank all the schools and various agencies that we've worked with over the year in our efforts to support these families find school places & transport for their children, as well as providing guidance for those looking to improve their English and develop their skills via FET. With a long history of emigration in the hopes for a better life, Ireland as a nation understands the importance of not only supporting those who arrive on our shores looking to start a new life, but also of the role Education plays in attaining this better life. The words Of Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations, highlight this importance:

"Education is a human right with immense power to transform"

Quality Assurance at KCETB - Further Education and Training Division

What we do...

Formally established in January 2020, OUR ROLE IS TO OVERSEE THE ADMINISTRATION, COORDINATION, review, and approval of Quality Assurance activities across all KCETB FET provision.

Key Areas of Responsibility...

Quality Assurance are involved in many important areas that directly and indirectly support the Teaching, Learning and Assessment activities that are core to KCETB FET. These include:

Documentation: Development and maintenance of all QA policies and procedures
External Authentication (EA): Independent verification of assessment standards

Listed Awarding Bodies: Collaboration with certification bodies

Results Approval Panel (RAP): Review and approval of assessment results

Assessment Appeals: Management of appeals processes

QA Support Visits: Regular centre visits planned throughout 2024-2025

Programme Validation: Development of new educational programs

Programme review: Reviewing new and existing programmes to determine currency and relevance

QA Training: Professional development for KCETB staff

Recognition of Prior Learning: Flexible qualification pathways

Governance and Quality Management: Maintaining robust oversight structures

Academic Integrity: Upholding educational standards

Data analysis: Monitoring, reviewing and reporting key metrics to support informed decision making



QA CONTACT DETAILS

The QA Team can be contacted in relation to quality assurance queries:

Email: qa.info@kilkennycarlwb.ie

Phone: 056-781 3098

Location: Unit 10 Danville Business Park,
Ring road, Kilkenny R95 W293

2024 Highlight

Details

Governance Structures	In 2024, the Quality Assurance Oversight Committee (QAOC) approved changes to its configuration resulting in a new Quality Committee.
QA Handbook	The publication of the Quality Assurance (QA) handbook was a key milestone in 2024.
Website Redesign & QA Bulletin	QA completely redesigned the website to improve user-friendliness and accessibility. and introduced a new style QA Bulletin.
Development of MUP Process	KCETB has been working collaboratively with the 16 ETBs and ETB Ireland to update QQI Module Descriptors at levels 4, 5, and 6.
Integration of LAB to RAP	The December Results Approval Panel (RAP) now facilitates the presentation of all Listed Awarding Bodies (LAB).
QA Portal Access Improvements	Working with IT, we simplified access to QA portal documents by setting up center-based permissions.
Family Learning Resources	In collaboration with the Adult Learning Services and several ETBs, QA developed and published resources to support the new programme.
ESOL City & Guilds Certification	KCETB became the first ETB in Ireland to certify learners for the City and Guilds ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) qualification.

SUPPORTING FET LEARNERS IN 2024

2024 LEARNER NUMBERS

16,006 Started (Total)

5,575 Started (Certified courses)





IT Management SETU Visit

Tertiary Office

In 2024, KCETB initiated their tertiary education offerings with four-degree programmes in IT Management, Applied Health Care, Public Health and Health Promotion, and Tourism & Hospitality.

These degrees are available at our two Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Colleges – Carlow Institute and College of FET Kilkenny, with progression opportunities to SETU's campuses in Carlow and Waterford.

In total, for the 2024 to 2025 academic year, 34 students registered across all four degrees. The table below presents the demographic and socioeconomic profiles of the learners who enrolled in the courses, including gender, age, education, and economic status.

