

# KCETB Annual NEWSLETTER

# 2026



## Welcome Note

As Chief Executive of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board, I am very pleased to reflect on the achievements of the 2025–2026 academic year and to look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead for our organisation.

This past year has been one of strong progress and meaningful impact across our schools, further education and training services, and youth work provision. We have seen continued growth in learner participation, the expansion of innovative programmes, and sustained excellence in teaching, learning, and support services. Our commitment to inclusion, wellbeing, and learner success has been evident in the outcomes achieved by our students and learners, as well as in the positive feedback from our communities and partners.

Among the highlights of the year have been the successful delivery of new apprenticeship and upskilling pathways, further strengthening our role in supporting regional economic development. Our schools have continued to foster vibrant, inclusive environments where students can thrive academically and personally. This year has also seen significant achievements across our school communities, reflecting high standards of teaching and learning, strong student engagement, and the ambition and talent of our students. We have also deepened collaboration across services, enhancing progression pathways and ensuring that learners are supported at every stage of their journey.

These achievements would not have been possible without the dedication, professionalism, and creativity of our staff. Every member of KCETB plays a vital role in delivering on our mission, and it is your commitment that drives the quality and impact of our work.

As we look ahead, 2026 will be a significant year for KCETB as we develop our next Strategy Statement. This will be a key opportunity to shape the future

direction of our organisation in a rapidly evolving educational and economic landscape. Central to this process will be the voices and insights of our staff and partners. Your experience, expertise, and ideas will help ensure that our strategy is ambitious, relevant, and grounded in the realities of our work.

I warmly encourage all colleagues to engage in this process and help to shape a shared vision for KCETB that continues to place learners, communities, and opportunity at its heart.

Finally, I want to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks to all staff, Board members, learners, partners, and stakeholders for your continued commitment and support. I wish to particularly acknowledge the exceptional dedication, professionalism, and generosity of spirit demonstrated by our staff across all services. Your willingness to innovate, collaborate, and go beyond expectations to support our learners is the foundation of our success and the driving force behind the impact we achieve every day. Together, we are building a legacy of opportunity, innovation, and excellence, aligned to the needs of our region and the ambitions of those we serve.

**Thank you for your continued commitment to our collective vision and shared success.**



Lindsay Malone



## Fáilte

Mar Phríomhfheidhmeannach Bhord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach, tá áthas orm machnamh a dhéanamh ar éachtaí na bliana acadúla 2025–2026 agus féachaint chun cinn ar na deiseanna atá romhainn mar eagraíocht.

Bhí an bhliain seo caite ina tréimhse dul chun cinn láidir agus tionchar suntasach ar fud ár scoileanna, ár seirbhísí breisoideachais agus oiliúna, agus ár soláthar oibre don aos óg. Chonaiceamar fás leanúnach ar rannpháirtíocht foghlaimeoirí, leathnú ar chlár nuálacha, agus sárchaighdeán leanúnach i múineadh, foghlaim agus i seirbhísí tacaíochta. Bhí ár dtiomantas do chuimsiú, do leas an fhoghlaimeora, agus do rath an fhoghlaimeora le feiceáil sna torthaí a bhain ár scoláirí agus ár bhfoghlaimeoirí amach, chomh maith leis an aiseolas dearfach ó ár bpobail agus ár gcomhpháirtithe.

I measc bhuaicphointí na bliana bhí cur i bhfeidhm rathúil cosáin nua printíseachta agus uas-scileanna, rud a neartaigh ár ról i dtacú le forbairt eacnamaíoch réigiúnach. Lean ár scoileanna ar aghaidh ag cothú timpeallachtaí bríomhara, cuimsitheacha ina bhféadfaidh scoláirí rath a bhaint amach go hacadúil agus go pearsanta. Chonaic an bhliain seo freisin éachtaí suntasacha ar fud ár bpobail scoile, ag léiriú ardchaighdeáin teagaisc agus foghlama, rannpháirtíocht láidir na mac léinn, agus uaimhian agus tallann ár scoláirí. Threisíomar comhoibriú trasna seirbhísí freisin, ag cur le cosáin dul chun cinn agus ag cinntiú go dtugtar tacaíocht d'fhoghlaimeoirí ag gach céim dá dturas.

Ní bheadh na héachtaí seo indéanta gan díograis, gairmiúlacht agus cruthaitheacht ár bhfoirne. Tá ról lárnach ag gach ball de KCETB i gcur i gcrích ár misean, agus is é bhur dtiomantas a spreagann cáilíocht agus tionchar ár gcuid oibre.

Ag féachaint chun cinn, beidh 2026 ina bhliain thábhachtach do KCETB agus muid ag forbairt ár gcéad Ráiteas Straitéise eile. Tabharfaidh sé seo deis

thábhachtach treo amach anseo na heagraíochta a mhúnlú i dtimpeallacht oideachais agus eacnamaíoch atá ag athrú go tapa. Beidh guthanna agus léargais ár bhfoirne agus ár gcomhpháirtithe lárnach sa phróiseas seo. Cabhróidh bhur dtaithe, saineolas agus smaointe lena chinntiú go mbeidh ár straitéis uaimhianach, ábhartha agus bunaithe ar réaltachtaí ár gcuid oibre.

Molaim go láidir do gach comhghleacaí páirt a ghlacadh sa phróiseas seo agus cabhrú le fíс chomhroinnte do KCETB a mhúnlú a chuireann foghlaimeoirí, pobail agus deiseanna i gcroílár a chuid oibre.

Ar deireadh, ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas ó chroí a ghabháil le gach duine, le comhaltaí an bhoird, le foghlaimeoirí, le comhpháirtithe agus le páirtithe leasmhara as bhur dtiomantas agus bhur dtacaíocht leanúnach. Ba mhaith liom aitheantas ar leith a thabhairt don díograis eisceachtúil, don ghairmiúlacht agus don fhlaithiúlacht spioraid a léirigh ár bhfoirne ar fud na seirbhísí uile. Is é bhur dtoilteanas nuáil a dhéanamh, comhoibriú agus dul thar ionchais chun tacú lenár bhfoghlaimeoirí bunús ár ratha agus an fórsa tiomána taobh thiar den tionchar a bhainimid amach gach lá. Le chéile, táimid ag tógáil oidhreachta lán de dheiseanna, nuálaíocht agus barr feabhais, ailínithe le riachtanais ár réigiúin agus uaimhianta na ndaoine a ndéanaimid freastal orthu.

**Go raibh maith agaibh as bhur dtiomantas leanúnach dár bhfís chomhroinnte agus dár rath coiteann.**



Lindsay Malone

## Abbey Community College

### Together Towards Excellence

Abbey Community College continues to go from strength to strength, building on another highly successful academic year and reaffirming its reputation as a vibrant centre of excellence in education. With a thriving school community of over 1,000 students and staff, the Abbey remains a place where high expectations, strong relationships and a shared sense of purpose underpin daily life. Throughout the year, we have proudly showcased exceptional achievements across academic, sporting, cultural and co-curricular areas. Students once again achieved excellent Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate results, reflecting their commitment, the dedication of staff, and the strong partnership with parents and guardians. These successes demonstrate Abbey Community College's continued focus on high-quality teaching and learning, ensuring every student is supported to reach their full potential. We also proudly

celebrated former students as they took their next steps, including securing scholarships and places in prestigious third-level institutions.

### Promoting Cineáltas and Positive Relationships

This year, we unveiled our newly redesigned, student-friendly Bí Cineálta poster, created through a whole-school student competition. This initiative invited students to share their ideas and creativity around kindness, respect and positive relationships, ensuring that the final design truly reflected our student voice. The successful entry by sixth year student Ellie Moore now forms the centrepiece of our ongoing promotion of cineáltas throughout the school, reinforcing a shared understanding of respectful behaviour and fostering a culture where kindness, inclusion and positive relationships are visible, valued and actively encouraged across our school community.



Dr Pauline Egan, KCETB Director of Schools and Ms Michelle Jefford, Principal Abbey Community College congratulating Ms Isabelle O'Brien, Abbey Community College Student of the Year 2025 at the 2025 KCETB Student of the Year Awards.



Abbey Community College students Emily Doyle, Emily Kearns and Caitlin Kinsella representing their Certified Irish Angus Beef Schools Competition project at the Ploughing Championships as one of the five national finalists.

### Abbey Voice and Participation

Student voice flourished this year with a strong culture of distributed leadership continuing to enrich both co-curricular and extracurricular experiences. Generosity and social responsibility were strongly evident across Abbey Community College this year through outstanding student-led fundraising initiatives. Our school community proudly supported a range of deserving charities, including Pieta House, Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland, Waterford Food Bank, and the Dillon Quirke Foundation. Through creative events, themed days and collective efforts, students demonstrated empathy, leadership and a deep awareness of the needs of others, while reinforcing the values at the heart of our school ethos.

### Proud of Our Collective Journey

As we reflect on the year, we are proud of the



Abbey Community College's student-friendly Bí Cineálta poster, redesigned by sixth year student Ellie Moore.

collective commitment shown by our students, staff, leadership and parents/guardians. Guided by our shared ethos and a strong sense of community, we continue to strengthen Abbey Community College as a progressive, inclusive and high-achieving school, working Together Towards Excellence.

## Borris College

### School Show

Borris College was delighted to stage a school show this academic year to great effect. Under the direction of musical director Michael Florin Cahill and choreographer Marie Cashin the school performed Voulez-Vous: The Mamma Mia Story. The show sold out over three nights in October to great acclaim. The school's PE hall was transformed into a theatre full of atmosphere for the full week. The show offered an opportunity to over eighty students to showcase their immense talents and to create lifelong memories which will fondly be remembered for years to come. It also was a great opportunity for students to grow in confidence and to make new friendships with students from different year groups.



Stars of Mamma Mia

### Academic Excellence

The Leaving Certificate Class of 2025 received several entrance scholarships for their outstanding Leaving Certificate results. The school was delighted to attend these awards with their former students and their parents marking the great achievement of each of the students involved.

Aideen O' Keeffe who is studying for a degree in Biological and Biomedical Science at Trinity College Dublin received her entrance scholarship from TCD.

Eoin Doyle was awarded a scholarship at Dublin City University. Eoin is studying for a degree in Common Entry into Actuarial and Financial Mathematics at DCU.

Michael Drea received an entrance scholarship from University College Dublin. In keeping with the strong emphasis on excellence in STEM at Borris College, Michael is studying for a degree in Actuarial and Financial Mathematics.

In addition to entrance scholarships, Thomas Malone won a prestigious JP McManus All Ireland Scholarship. This scholarship is for outstanding Leaving Certificate results. Each year, just 125 students are selected from across the entire island of Ireland for this scholarship, making this an incredible accomplishment. Thomas is studying Engineering at the University of Limerick.



Sarah Doyle and Aideen O Keeffe Trinity College Dublin Scholarship

### Awards Day 2026

The school were delighted to celebrate their student awards Day in April. Student awards ranged from leadership to ethos, from academic to sporting, from languages to mathematics and from student of the year to Gaisce. It is always a very enjoyable day for students because of the wide array of awards on offer.

The special guest this year was Katelyn Cummins, Rose of Tralee 2025 and Winner of Dancing with the Stars 2026. Katelyn who is an apprentice electrician, gave an inspirational speech encouraging students to try their best but also to follow their own path in life. Katelyn shared with the students her own story, how you never know what doors are going to open for them but that they should avail themselves of the opportunities that are on offer and try their best. Katelyn's speech resonated with the students and her presence at the annual awards ceremony was very much appreciated by all who were present.



Awards Day



Pat Coffey, Eoin Doyle and Prof. Daire Keogh, President of DCU



JP McManus, Thomas Malone, Willie O'Dea T.D. and Pat Coffey

## Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training

### Group Mobility to Berlin

In February of this year, ELC & SNA students and staff from Carlow Institute visited Berlin as part of an Erasmus+ group mobility programme. The mobility was designed in collaboration with Meco Academie, a recognised Centre of Nursing studies and Early Learning & Care studies. The goal was to bring together learners and educators for a shared international learning experience.

During the mobility, learners had the opportunity to experience a different approach to education and training, particularly within early learning settings. At Kindergarten Kiga Alegría they observed day-to-day practices, explored a variety of teaching styles, and took part in discussions that encouraged them to reflect on their own learning and future careers. Engaging and collaborating with their peers in another country gave students a broader perspective and helped build transversal skills such as confidence and communication.

A key part of the experience was the meeting of students' Learning Outcomes. The experience provided our Level 5 and 6 students with a first-hand view of practice in two Early Years settings. Students were enabled to think critically about what they were seeing and how it connects to their studies at home. The structured nature of the programme, combined with hands-on experiences, made the learning both meaningful and memorable. The mobility also created valuable opportunities for staff. By engaging with colleagues abroad, they were able to exchange ideas, explore different approaches to teaching and learning, and reflect on their own practice. These professional conversations play an important role in strengthening teaching quality and bringing fresh perspectives back to the classroom. The strong connection built with Kindergarten Alegría has led both partners to explore the possibility of an extended working visit for future level 6 students.

Beyond the educational aspect, the trip offered the opportunity for cultural exchange and personal development. Students experienced life in a different European city, building independence and gaining a better understanding of different cultures and ways of working. Visits to key cultural sites and museums enabled students to appreciate another culture and develop transversal skills.



Berlin

Overall, the Erasmus+ mobility was a highly positive experience for both students and staff. It strengthened connections with international partners, enriched the learning experience, and highlighted the value of stepping outside the classroom to gain new perspectives.

"Berlin is a lovely city to visit, and the trip was a great team-building experience. Kindergarten Alegría was lovely and very child centred. The children's native languages are really valued in the multilingual setting which allows for the children's whole identity to be integrated into their learning environment. They have great playgrounds and facilities. It was a brilliant experience."

### Major Emergency Medical Trauma Exercise

Major Emergency Medical Trauma Exercise at Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training, KCETB



First Response at Road Traffic Collision Simulation



Spinal Precautions at Carlow Institute's Simulated Trauma Event



The National Ambulance, Carlow Gardaí and Carlow County Fire and Rescue Service with students at Carlow Institute's Simulated Trauma Event,

Carlow Institute of Further Education was recently transformed into a large-scale, realistic emergency-medical response training environment, simulating

a major medical and road-traffic incident scene. A large number of students took part in the training exercises over the course of a full day, including students from:

- Emergency Services
- Make-Up Artistry
- Film Production
- Nursing Studies

Students experienced a wide range of critical conditions, including staged road collisions, under the guidance of the National Ambulance Service, Carlow County Fire and Rescue Service, and An Garda Síochána. Students responded at Emergency First Responder (EFR) level throughout the exercise.



Make-Up Artistry students creating realistic scenarios for the Medical Trauma Exercise at Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training

Make-Up Artistry students enhanced realism using professional special effects, while Film Production students documented the event. The exercise was coordinated by Muire Burke and supported by staff, local emergency services, and Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB). The initiative highlighted the Institute's commitment to preparing students for careers in frontline emergency and related services.

The event was made possible by the Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board, Carlow Institute of Further Education, Principal David Forde, staff and students at Carlow Institute, Ben Woodhouse (Acing Chief Officer), Ray Regan (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), Darryl Hayden (Station Officer), the members of Carlow County Fire and Rescue Service, Superintendent Anthony Farrell, Sergeant Conor Egan and members of Carlow Gardaí, Tom Gahan and Seán Dillon and their colleagues in the National Ambulance Service.

## Carlow School Completion

Carlow School Completion Programme (SCP) are based in Tyndall College, Carlow. They support 11 schools in the county, two of which are ETB schools, Tyndall College and Coláiste Aindriú. The team is led by Co-ordinator Sinead O'Keeffe, Angela Fleming is the Administrator and there are five project workers, Marita Brennan, Naoise Kelly, Nicole Clarke, Robyn Alcock and Laura Wall. Below is an outline of SCP led programmes run in our schools:

One of the SCP programmes the students took part in this year was the 'Active Future' programme in SETU. 5th year LCA students from Tyndall College and Coláiste Aindriú had the opportunity to work with third level sports science students who delivered sessions from their course. They learned lots of theory and took part in practical physical activity sessions.

There were also a number of attendance initiatives run for junior cycle students. Students with improved attendance were rewarded with a trip to JF Sports where they could choose sports equipment. Another group were brought to the Dolmen Hotel for lunch.

SCP also had a reward trip for senior SCP students who went to Liffey Valley for a shopping trip. Thanks to all the staff, students, families and organisations who have worked with Carlow SCP throughout the year.



Attendance Reward Recipients at Dolmen Hotel



Senior School Completion Rewardees at Liffey Valley Shopping Centre

## SCP led Programmes schools



Mind Out Programme	Life Skills Programme	Active Future Programme	Decider Skills	Transition Programme
Breakfast Club	Friends for Life/FriendsYouth	Music Generation	Desty	Working things Out
Be Healthy, Be Happy	Restorative Programme	Social Skills Programme	Small group work	One to one support
Holiday Provision	Check ins	Attendance Tracking	Family Support	Attendance Initiative

## Coláiste Aindriú

### Celebrating Creativity and Community: Coláiste Aindriú School Musical Success

Coláiste Aindriú recently celebrated a major creative success with the staging of its school musical, *Take a Chance on Me*, a lively and engaging adaptation of the popular musical *Mamma Mia*. The production showcased the school's strong commitment to the arts, inclusion and meaningful community links, and proved to be one of the highlights of the school year.

The musical was performed over three highly successful shows. A special matinee performance was held for pupils from local primary schools, followed by two evening performances for parents, families and members of the wider community. Each performance was met with tremendous support and enthusiastic applause, reflecting the strong sense of pride felt across the school and local community.

*Take a Chance on Me* was adapted and written by Coláiste Aindriú's drama directors, Ms Amy Williams and Ms Maire Lee, who carefully tailored the production to suit the strengths and talents of the students. Choreography was led by Ms Jacqueline McGuill, while musical direction was provided by Mr Colin Hynes. Together, the creative team supported students to deliver a confident, energetic and polished performance both on stage and behind the scenes.



Musical Advert



Cathal Nolan & Madison Dagg

What made this musical particularly special was its inclusive nature. Due to the unique size of Coláiste Aindriú, students from 1st Year through to 6th Year were able to participate, with every student given the opportunity to take part. This whole-school approach promoted teamwork, leadership and confidence while fostering strong connections between younger and older students.



Valentina McKeon & Madison Walsh



Rebecca Bermingham

The matinee performance also marked the launch of Coláiste Aindriú's Creative Cluster partnership with four local primary schools. As part of this initiative, students created their own book covers and book reviews which were exchanged with primary pupils on the day. In addition, Ms Byrne linked with the school's closest primary school as part of World Book Day celebrations. Senior primary pupils and Coláiste Aindriú's junior students read the same text and took part in a series of shared activities linked to the book, promoting literacy, collaboration and a love of reading across school settings.



Conor Phelan & Cathal Nolan

The school continues to strengthen community partnerships beyond the arts. This year, Coláiste Aindriú partnered with the local community garden and is already seeing the benefits of this

collaboration through the addition of a new school polytunnel. This project provides valuable learning opportunities for students while reinforcing the school's strong connections within the local community.



Madison Walsh, Lily May Curran & Madison Dagg

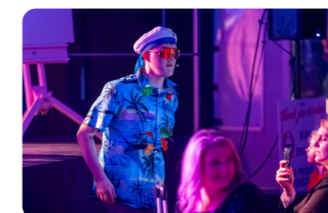
The success of the musical was further supported by the Coláiste Aindriú Parents' Association, who played a vital role in fundraising efforts. Their work, including the organisation of a raffle and running the shop during performances, was greatly appreciated and contributed significantly to the overall success of the production.



Conor Phelan, Ethan Jenkins and Cathal Nolan



Isis Cabral Gabiatto



Ethan Jenkins & Ms Williams



Final ensemble

## Coláiste Cois Siúire

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.

The school celebrated a historic milestone this academic year, celebrating 90 Years of educational presence in Mooncoin. Established in 1935 as one of the country's earliest Vocational Schools, Coláiste Cois Siúire marked nine decades of inclusive education in South Kilkenny. This milestone serves as a powerful reminder of the school's mission to serve the community while looking forward to a century of service.

The academic year began with a celebration of excellent State Exam results for the class of 2025 while we also welcomed our new first years into our school community. Following a very successful transitions programme, this group already felt at home and were eager to meet their teachers and begin their post primary school journey. The Student Leadership team and Peer Mentors played a vital role in welcoming the incoming first-year cohort, fostering the nurturing environment the school is renowned for.



CCS U-16 Boys Basketball

Our school extra-curricular lunch clubs flourished this year with Chapter Chat Club, Games Club and Music Club providing many opportunities for students to engage in some interesting and enjoyable activities. Chess Club in particular proved extremely popular and peaked in April with CCS hosting an interschools chess tournament for other nearby school clubs.

On the pitches, the school's hurling and football teams competed with distinction. From Under-16 Hurling clashes to the success of the school soccer team, student-athletes demonstrated immense grit and teamwork. Of particular note, the senior basketball team narrowly missed out on silverware in a hotly contested final.

Beyond sports, the "Young Food Producers Market" was a standout event, showcasing the entrepreneurial talents of our students as they marketed and sold local produce, while the CCS girls participated in the SHINE festival once again in SETU Arena.



TY Trip to Castlecomer Discovery Park

Transition Year students were particularly active this year, embodying the spirit of the school. The "TY GAA Future Leaders" program continued to thrive, with students organising local blitzes and coaching sessions. Educational trips provided a blend of historical exploration and artistic inspiration, while the Green Schools Committee remained a driving force in making our campus more sustainable.

As we look toward the 2026/27 academic year, Coláiste Cois Siúire remains a cornerstone of the Mooncoin community—a school that celebrates its rich heritage while continuously innovating for the future.



Marie Hayles Duiske College



TY Trip to Castlecomer Discovery Park

## KCETB SEN Community of Practice

### Strengthening Inclusive Practice through Collaboration and Innovation

This year, the KCETB SEN Community of Practice (CoP) has continued to play a central role in strengthening inclusive practice across our 13 post-primary schools. A key focus of our work has been enhancing student support planning, with a particular emphasis on improving the quality of target setting and the coherence of planning processes across schools.

A highlight of the year was our inter-ETB collaboration with WWETB, which provided a valuable opportunity to extend this work beyond our own network. Through this partnership, schools engaged in rich professional dialogue, sharing experiences and practical approaches to student support planning. A particular area of exploration was the potential of artificial intelligence to support target setting

and streamline planning processes, opening up new possibilities for more responsive and effective supports for students. This collaboration not only strengthened connections between our ETBs but also fostered a shared commitment to innovation and continuous improvement. Building on this success, we look forward to further developing inter-ETB collaboration in the coming year, creating additional opportunities for shared learning and collective capacity building.

Within our own CoP, we also facilitated a focused workshop on Special Needs Assistant (SNA) reviews. Four schools shared their experiences of reviewing SNA supports, offering practical insights and examples of effective practice. This session supported schools in reflecting on their own approaches, ensuring that SNA deployment is responsive, needs-based, and aligned with students' evolving profiles of need.



Coláiste Cois Siúire - RISE Showcase

A significant milestone this year was the ETBI RISE (Realising Inclusive Special Education) National Showcase, held in Killashee House Hotel on Thursday, 16th April. The event brought together schools from across the country to celebrate and share inclusive practices in action. KCETB was proudly represented, with a number of our schools showcasing the impactful work taking place within their settings.

In particular, Duiske College and Coláiste Cois Siúire delivered presentations that highlighted their innovative approaches to embedding provision mapping within whole-school systems. Their work demonstrated how provision mapping can be meaningfully integrated with the School Self-Evaluation process and aligned with national policy

frameworks, ensuring that inclusive practice is both strategic and sustainable. These presentations powerfully illustrated how schools are translating policy into practice, with a clear focus on improving outcomes and experiences for all learners.

The RISE Showcase was a celebration of the highly effective inclusive practices taking place across KCETB schools every day. It provided a platform to recognise the dedication, collaboration, and professionalism of staff, and reaffirmed our shared commitment to creating inclusive learning environments where every student can thrive.



KCETB RISE

## Coláiste Eoin Hacketstown

### A Year of Talent, Triumph and Togetherness (2025 to 2026)

The 2025 to 2026 academic year at Coláiste Eoin Hacketstown has been one of celebration, achievement and vibrant school life. Students embraced a wide range of opportunities, reflecting the richness of learning that is part of everyday life in our school.

A standout highlight was the success of our Business Department, where both Junior and Intermediate Student Enterprise teams were crowned winners at local level. These achievements see both teams progress to the National Finals, proudly representing Carlow and showcasing the creativity and innovation of our students.

Sport brought further success to the school community. Our Junior Hurlers secured the South Leinster title for the second year in a row, while basketball flourished with the 1st Year team winning their league and the 2nd Year team reaching the

semi finals. The school also enjoyed a strong run to the Senior Soccer Cup Final.

Transition Year students made a significant contribution across many areas. Their production, *Once Upon a Time in Lisdoonvarna*, written to reflect the unique character of the group, was a highlight of the year, while their participation in the Young Social Innovators programme saw them present at the Speak Out event in Kilkenny.

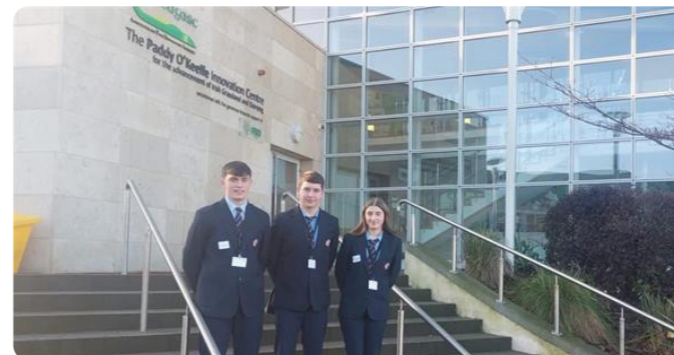


Eabha Byrne and Corey Foley



South Leinster Junior Hurling Champions

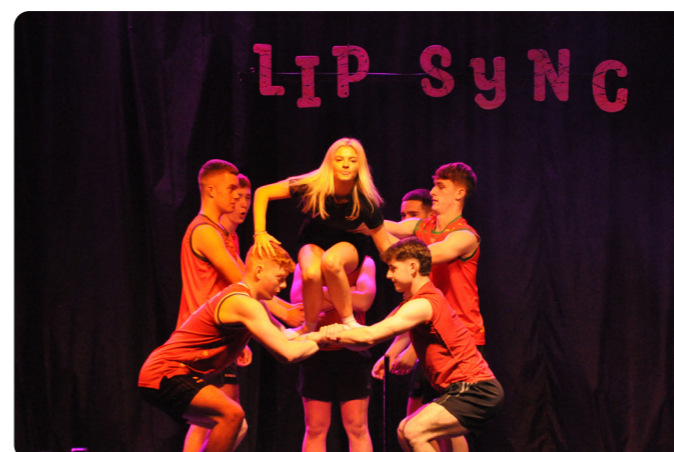
Student participation was a defining feature of the year. Our Ag Science students progressed to the National Final of the Certified Irish Angus Beef Competition in Croke Park. Students also took part in the Concern Debating competition and the IMTA Pi Quiz, with the debate team narrowly missing out on a place in the semi finals. Music remained an important part of school life, with our Grúpa Ceoil contributing to a range of school and community events.



CEH Aberdeen Angus Beef Com Daniel Collins Taylor Ryan & Emma Connolly

This year also marked the opening of Class Pine, our Autism Special Class, alongside the introduction of one to one devices for 2nd and 5th Year students, supporting a blended learning approach.

A key feature of school life was our whole school focus on wellbeing, most notably through the annual Lip Sync event, which brought students and staff together in a fun and inclusive way, fostering connection, confidence and a strong sense of belonging.



Lip Sync Hannah Daly, Mark Kinsella, Dáire Byrne, Conal Cullen, Evan Fitzachary, Luke Kelly, Jack Whelan

Grandparents and Special Persons Day, along with Carols by Candlelight, were special occasions that welcomed the wider community into the school, celebrating their continued positive influence and support in the lives of our young people.



Carols by Candlelight Sheila Whelan John Pender Pj Byrne Prin CEH Alan Costello NS Prin Debbie Byrne

Overall, the 2025 to 2026 academic year has been a highly successful one, defined by achievement, participation and a strong sense of belonging. At Coláiste Eoin Hacketstown, students continue to inspire through their enthusiasm, talent and willingness to get involved.



TY Show CEH Emma Connolly (Snow White) Chloe Lambe (Sleeping Beauty) Rachel Murphy (Cinderella)



Senior Enterprise winners Pater Kavanagh, Luke McGrath & Daniel Collins



Junior winners Lee Cullen, Joseph Langrell & Matthew O'Sullivan

## Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown

### All Ireland Junior B Camogie Winners 2026

Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown enjoyed a historic success as their Junior B camogie team captured the All-Ireland title following a thrilling victory over Coláiste Mhuire Ennis in Banagher. After a strong start and a closely contested second half, a decisive late goal secured a memorable win, with standout performances across the team and goalkeeper Alanna Dwyer making crucial saves.



The team received a warm welcome home from the school community, where captain Katie Dunphy addressed students and staff at a whole-school assembly. This victory capped an exceptional year for camogie in the school, with four major titles secured at junior level, highlighting the continued growth, talent and dedication within the programme.



### JCSP English Through Art Initiative

Third Year literacy students at Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown recently took part in a six-week JCSP literacy initiative, exploring key themes from their Junior Cycle English texts, including *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Outsiders*, through art. Working collaboratively, students created visual representations that supported both their literacy development and creative expression. The project resulted in a collection of impressive pieces, now displayed in the school, and provided a highly engaging and worthwhile learning experience for all involved.



### Partnerships with Parents



Parents involved in the HSCL programme at Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown have made a meaningful contribution to the wider community through their participation in parent classes. As part of this initiative, parents created over 300 baby hats for neonatal units, which were greatly appreciated by The Rotunda Hospital, Midlands Regional Hospital Portlaoise and St. Luke's General Hospital Kilkenny.

### Microsoft Dream Space STEM

Students from Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown were recently presented with their certificates at a graduation ceremony in Maynooth University, having successfully completed an NFQ Level 6 STEM course during Transition Year. The STEM Passport for Inclusion programme is designed to encourage participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics through hands-on learning and engagement with higher education. The school was also recognised for its strong engagement with the programme and received an award on the day.



Another highlight of the programme saw parents collaborate with teachers to perform a Christmas song at the school's carol service, further strengthening the positive partnership between home and school and enhancing community engagement.



### Lions Club teams up with CMJ for special tree planting drive

Kilkenny Lions Club partnered with Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown for a tree-planting initiative using native species to support biodiversity. Fifth Year and Leaving Cert students took part, planting cherry, mountain ash and hazel trees.

The project reflects the school's strong commitment to sustainability, supported by dedicated staff and the local Tidy Towns, alongside ongoing initiatives such as a wildflower meadow, pond, polytunnel, and vegetable garden that promote environmental awareness and hands-on learning.



### School Show

Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown recently staged its annual Transition Year school show, bringing audiences back to the 1980s with a lively production centred on high school life. Packed with iconic 80s music, energetic dance routines and vibrant costumes, the show captured the spirit of the decade throughout.

All TY students took to the stage across four nights, showcasing their talent, creativity and teamwork. The production remains one of the highlights of the TY programme and a memorable experience for both performers and audiences alike.



## Coláiste Pobal Osraí

Bhí bliain ghnóthach spreagúil scoile ann do dhaltaí agus d'fhoireann Choláiste 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.

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 gcailíní freisin i mbliana agus bhí an-éileamh orthu. Tús maith lena gcuid iarrachtaí freisin, le buanna ar scoileanna eile na cathrach.



*muintearas 26*

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.



*Camógaíocht Minor Camogie*

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 scemeanna 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.



*Ceoldráma TY Musical*

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.

## College of Further Education and Training Kilkenny

### Innovative Teaching Methods

#### Spotlight on Information Technology Management Tertiary Course

The Information Technology Management (ITM) Tertiary course continues to stand out as one of the flagship Tertiary programmes run by College of Further Education and Training, Kilkenny, and SETU Carlow. The first year of the course is driven by innovative teaching practices and a curriculum grounded firmly in real-world application. At the heart of its success is the collaborative approach adopted by staff across the College, ensuring students benefit from a rich, integrated learning experience that reflects modern industry demands. A standout example of this approach was the development of a bespoke, large-scale project in which students were challenged to design and fully equip a greenfield site for the new College of FET Kilkenny campus. Working in teams and guided by their teachers, students produced a comprehensive proposal detailing network infrastructure, hardware solutions for staff and students, software and licensing requirements, security systems, access points and sustainable green-IT practices. Inclusivity was a core focus, with evolving technologies incorporated to ensure the campus would be fully accessible for learners with diverse needs.

The project culminated in Project Nore, where students presented their work to peers, teachers and members of College management, supported by a professionally produced 90-page technical report. This experience not only showcased students' technical capability, but also their communication, research and project-management skills.

The course teachers further enhanced the students learning through active engagement with local enterprise. By engaging in an Enterprise Workshop teachers provided the ITM students with the

opportunity to build relationships with SMEs. From this, students further engaged with the SME's and collaborated with the business owners to design and develop bespoke websites, gaining invaluable experience of real-world client interaction. Cross-disciplinary collaboration was a key feature, with ITM students working alongside Business and Photography course students to deliver polished, industry-ready solutions for local entrepreneurs.



Tertiary - IT Management Students

The basis of the first year of the course is to build a strong academic foundation and is delivered through six key modules: Programming, Networking, Hardware, Operating Systems, Application and Interpersonal Communications and Mathematics. Across these modules, students engage in hands-on labs, virtualisation, coding in multiple languages, and applied problem-solving, all supported by a dedicated teaching team working cohesively across disciplines.

Collectively, these initiatives exemplify how collaborative teaching and authentic project work empower students to thrive within an academic environment while preparing confidently for the follow on three years of the course with SETU Carlow and the world of work.



College of Further Education and Training IT Management Students



CFETKK

## Duiske College

Duiske College continues to thrive as a dynamic, inclusive and forward-looking school community at the heart of Graiguenamanagh. Recent developments have been very positive, most notably the outcome of the Whole School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning, which affirmed the school’s strong culture of care, effective leadership, and the high quality of teaching and learning across all areas. The report also highlighted the strong relationships between staff and students and the shared commitment to ensuring that every student is supported to reach their full potential.



6th Year Music Students at National Concert Hall Workshop



TY student Megan O'Grady learning new skills on her Leargas Trip to France

Students benefit from a wide range of rich learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom. A particular highlight this year was the achievement of our Transition Year female students, who gained a Level 6 NFQ university qualification and secured access to the Points Pathway to STEM courses through the Passport for Inclusion

in partnership with Microsoft Dreamspace and Maynooth University. We also launched our Saibhriú Programme, which has strengthened collaboration

with local primary schools to support exceptionally able and gifted learners and to develop effective, shared teaching approaches. Our World of Work Programme, in partnership with Business in the Community Ireland, was another success, providing second-year students with valuable opportunities to engage with professionals from Coillte, gaining insights into career pathways and the world of work.



Rebecca Mahon who won Knorr Professional Student Chef of the Year 2026

Our growing relationship with Leargas and the Erasmus+ Programme has also been a major success. Staff participated in international training, sharing best practice with European colleagues and bringing valuable learning back to the school. Student mobility has expanded, with our senior cycle French exchange to Antibes continuing to provide a meaningful educational and international experience. In addition, our Transition Year students will travel to Spain later this term to deliver Gaelic football coaching as part of a cultural exchange programme and spend some time in Madrid and surrounding areas. These opportunities are fully funded through Erasmus+.

The school continues to achieve strong academic outcomes, including being ranked among the top

three mixed schools in Ireland for progression to third-level education in the Irish Times Progression Tables. This reflects the dedication of staff, the motivation of students, and the high expectations that underpin school life. One example of a student who has excelled in this progression, is past pupil Rebecca Mahon, who was recently crowned Knorr Professional Student Chef of the Year 2026.

Rebecca demonstrated exceptional culinary talent by preparing and presenting a meal, inspired by a “borderless cuisine” concept. Her achievement reflects the high standards and ambition we are proud to foster in our students.

These achievements are complemented by strong student leadership structures, a vibrant extra-curricular programme, and enduring links with the local community, all of which remain central to the life of Duiske College.



TY's during their weekly Outdoor Pursuits class

## Revealed: Kilkenny school deemed ‘among very top’ of schools in Ireland

Irish Times School Progression (Feeder Schools) tables



Second Year students enjoy their national plaudits of being the top 3 mixed schools in the country for progression to third level.

## Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach

### Ag Ceiliúradh na Foghlama, na Cruthaitheachta agus an Phobail i nGaelcholáiste Cheatharlach.

Bhí an bhliain seo lán le cruthaitheacht, fiosracht agus mothú láidir pobail ar fud na scoile. Ghlac daltaí páirt i réimse leathan deiseanna a chabhróidh leo forbairt a dhéanamh go hacadúil, ó thaobh cultúrtha de agus go pearsanta.

One of the standout highlights was the Transition Year musical, Grease, which brought students from our school and the St. Mary's CBS together in a vibrant celebration of music, drama and teamwork. The production showcased enormous talent both on stage and behind the scenes, with students taking responsibility for acting, choreography, set design and stage management. The performances were met with fantastic support from families and the wider community.



Feilescoilríamáiochta 2026

Fifth and sixth year Art History students travelled to Florence, where they explored world-renowned galleries and architectural masterpieces. Experiencing iconic works first-hand brought classroom learning vividly to life and deepened students' appreciation of Renaissance art and culture.

Transition Year students also enjoyed an unforgettable trip to Valkenberg, Brussels and Cologne. This educational and cultural journey

combined language, history and recreation.

Creative expression remained central to school life through our participation in Féile Scoilríamáiochta, where our drama group achieved the remarkable accomplishment of reaching the All-Ireland Final. This success reflected dedication, collaboration and a deep love of performance, and it was a source of great pride for the entire school community.

As part of a CBA, Odhran Ó Saoraí invited the Ambassador of the State of Palestine to Ireland, Dr Jilann Wahba Abdalmajid to our school. Odhran and the students of 3G CSPE class organised the event. During her visit, the Ambassador outlined the history of Palestine and provided context on key developments over time. She also spoke about the long-standing sense of solidarity shown by the Irish people towards her country. The talk prompted thoughtful engagement from students and offered a meaningful real-world dimension to their classroom learning.



Ambassador of Palestine Dr Jilann Wahba Adbalmajid

Thug Muintearas ETBI deis luachmhar do scoláirí a nguth a chur chun cinn faoin téama "Ár bhFís don Todhchaí: Ceiliúradhar Ghuthan Scoláire iscoileanna lán-Ghaeilge." Spreagadh iad chun a gcuid tuairimí agus mianta don oideachas lán-Ghaeilge a chur in iúl go muiinéach. Buaicphointe speisialta ba ea an deis a bhí ag na scoláirí bualadh leis an Uachtarán Catherine Connolly, rud a threisiú tábhacht rannpháirtíocht agus ceannaireacht an scoláire. The initiative placed student voice at the heart of discussion, empowering young people to articulate their values, aspirations and hopes for the future of Irish-medium education.

Finally, Seachtain na Gaeilge was celebrated with great enthusiasm, highlighting our commitment to the Irish language and culture. Through music, competitions, conversation and creativity, students were encouraged to promote Gaeilge in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

As we come to the end of another school year, we are grateful for all the creativity, strong connections, and a shared love of culture and learning. It has been a year to remember, and we thank our students, staff and families for their commitment and support. We now look forward to the new school year ahead and all the opportunities it will bring for our Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach community.

Ag deireadh na bliana seo, táimid fíorbhuíoch as pobal scoile atá lán de chruthaitheacht, cultúr agus foghlaim. Ba bhliain faoi leith í, agus gabhaimid buíochas ó chroí lenár ndaltaí, lenár bhfoireann agus lenár dteaghlach as a dtacaíocht leanúnach. Táimid anois ag tnúth leis an scoilbhliain nua atá romhainn agus leis na deiseanna uile a bheidh ann dúinn.



Seaimpíní Camógaíochta Laighean

Rinne an Coiste Gaeilge ceiliúradh bríomhar ar Sheachtain na Gaeilge, ag eagrú imeachtaí éagsúla thar thréimhse coicíse. I measc na n-imeachtaí bhí tráth na gceist, scannán Gaeilge sa phictiúrlann, céilí agus i bhfad níos mó. Chruthaigh na himeachtaí atmaisféar taitneamhach spreagúil, ag cur an Ghaeilge chun cinn mar theanga bheo shóisialta laistigh de phobal na scoile.



Grease TY Musical

## Grennan College

Grennan College experienced a positive and productive year in 2025- 2026, with a wide range of activities reflecting the school's strong commitment to student wellbeing, inclusion, and educational excellence in line with the ethos of KCETB. Throughout the year, particular emphasis was placed on supporting students' holistic development.



*Cara Chat and Connect Event*

Themed weeks such as Wellbeing Week and Green Week provided valuable opportunities for students to engage in activities promoting physical health, mindfulness, and environmental awareness.

The promotion of Irish language and culture remained a key feature of school life. Seachtain na Gaeilge was celebrated with enthusiasm, as students and staff participated in a range of inclusive activities designed to foster appreciation of the Irish language in an enjoyable and meaningful way. A highlight of the week was Burn Church playing a gig as Gaelige to students.

Student voice and leadership continued to be prioritised. The Student Council played an active role in representing the views of the student body and contributing to school initiatives. Their engagement with KCETB training opportunities supported the development of leadership, communication, and collaboration skills, further strengthening student participation in school life.

A new Cara mentoring programme was launched to support first year students. We began the school year by training twenty-five 5th Year Cara Mentors



*Grennan Gazette Launch*

who were then given the responsibility of taking between two or three first year students, under their wing to help them transition into life at Grennan College as a post-primary school student.

As a school community we placed a spotlight on attendance this year. Grennan College was a pilot school for ANSEO. The programme played an important role in supporting students' engagement, attendance, and overall wellbeing in Grennan College during 2026. Three attendance drives occurred this year with an average of a third of the students achieving 100% attendance for each drive.

Co-curricular and extracurricular activities also made a significant contribution to the school experience. Students engaged in a variety of

sporting, cultural, and wellbeing-focused activities, promoting teamwork, resilience, and school spirit. The Grennan College Gazette was launched this year with two editions of the newspaper published. Students had the opportunity to submit poems, articles or stories to the newspaper.



*Painting Mural*

As part of the Creative Engagement initiative, Transition Year students successfully designed and completed a large-scale mural within the school. This collaborative project provided students with an opportunity to explore their creativity while contributing positively to the school environment. Overall, 2026 was a year of meaningful engagement and steady progress for Grennan College. The school remains committed to providing a supportive, inclusive, and high-quality educational experience for all students, and looks forward to building on these successes in the years ahead.



*Grennan Gazette Launch*



*Wellbeing Walk with James Event*

## Kilkenny City Vocational School

The highlight of our school year 2025/2026 was being included in the Departments DEIS Strategy to 2035. Our school is the only Post Primary School showcased by the Department in their strategy as a model of exemplary practice.

The following is an excerpt of the Spotlight Piece used by the Department.

In our school we pride ourselves on the excellent rapport we've cultivated with our learners and parents. This trust-driven relationship is a cornerstone of our DEIS Plan, enabling us to gather rich qualitative data that goes beyond numbers. Our vision is realised through that rapport. Our learners feel safe sharing their experiences, aspirations and challenges and this helps us tailor supports that truly meet their needs. As a DEY Inspector put it "A real stand out is, teachers know their learners very well. They know how to provide an agile response to students' wellbeing and their educational needs so as to optimise educational outcomes".

We constantly strive to develop and sustain strong Parental Partnerships with regular, empathetic engagement ensuring that Parent Voice and Insights are central in identifying need, allocating resources and evaluating impact. Through surveys, focus groups and one-to-one check-ins, we capture very valuable nuanced feedback on what works, what does not work and how we can improve.

We have developed a strong culture of learning and improvement in our school and all staff constantly upskill and share best practice with peers. We ensure that teachers are given a platform to do this, thus ensuring a wide range of highly effective whole-school wellbeing, teaching and learning strategies are not just implemented throughout the school but are impacting positively on learners' experiences and outcomes. We constantly upskill on tracking key metrics, gathering feedback and reviewing interventions so that we provide highly individualised targeted support in a timely manner to our young people with identified needs.

We prioritise the integration of the DEY frameworks such as DEIS, Wellbeing, Looking at Our School, Student Voice and Provision Mapping and this integrated approach impacts in every aspect of



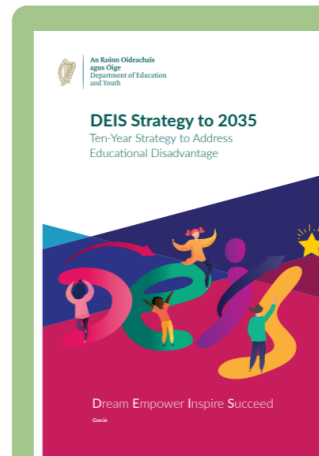
Coffee Morning

school life in a powerful way to bring about exemplary learner experiences and learner outcomes for learners. These frameworks have facilitated us in the development of robust structures, a rigorous approach to gathering, analysing and reviewing data, meaningful inclusion of parent and student voice and the implementation of systematic whole school approaches in a pre-emptive and timely manner.

In our school we are more than educators, we pride ourselves on being a supportive professional team and custodians of a living Ethos shaped by the values of Excellence in Education, Equity, Care, Community and Respect.

DEIS Action Planning in our school is central to that Ethos and fuels our efforts to create a supportive, inclusive environment where every student is supported to think and grow and to develop versatile skills that prepare them to play a positive, productive role in their communities. We aim to embed the belief that education can be transformative, it is a force that can change lives and shape futures.

Identifying student needs, allocating resources effectively and evaluating impact is at the heart of fostering equity and opportunity for our diverse student population. In our school it is not just about the data, it's about relationships and that is what makes the difference.



DEIS Action Planning in our school is central to that Ethos and fuels our efforts to create a supportive, inclusive environment where every student is supported to think and grow and to develop versatile skills that prepare

them to play a positive, productive role in their communities. We aim to embed the belief that education can be transformative, it is a force that can change lives and shape futures.

## Kilkenny School Completion

The Kilkenny School Completion Programme (SCP) has had another busy and positive year supporting young people across our schools and communities. Our work continues to focus on helping students remain engaged in education, promoting attendance, participation, and wellbeing.

This year, we successfully introduced iScoil as a hub within the programme, providing an alternative and flexible learning opportunity for young people who may struggle within a traditional school setting. The initiative has already shown encouraging engagement and has helped students continue their educational journey in a supportive environment.

Throughout the year, the SCP team also delivered two Three Strand events, bringing SCP staff, HSCL's and EWO's together. These events provided valuable opportunities for the three teams to share practice and work together.

In addition, Kilkenny SCP once again ran both the Easter Camp and Summer Camp programmes. These camps offered students fun, structured activities while also supporting social development, school engagement, and positive transitions into first year in many of our schools.

A key part of our work remains the ongoing support provided to students at risk of early school leaving. Through individual support, group work, attendance monitoring, mentoring, and collaboration with schools and families, the SCP team continues to make a meaningful difference in helping young people stay connected to education and achieve positive outcomes.

We look forward to continuing this important work and building on the successes of the year ahead.

## School Completion Na Siúire

### Roots of Empathy at School Completion Na Siúire

Roots of Empathy is an evidence-based programme delivered in primary school classrooms. The programme has shown a significant impact in reducing aggression among children by improving social and emotional competence and increasing empathy.



*Roots of Empathy Students*

School Completion Programme Na Siúire has a long-standing involvement with the programme and delivers it across primary schools in Waterford. At the heart of the programme is a baby and parent who visit the classroom every three weeks throughout the school year. A trained Roots of Empathy instructor guides the children to observe the baby's development and recognise and label the baby's feelings. The baby becomes the "teacher" in this experiential learning process, while the instructor helps the children reflect on their own emotions and the feelings of others.



*Students at St Ursula's*

Research from both national and international evaluations of Roots of Empathy highlights significant reductions in aggression and increases in pro-social behaviour among participating children. In addition to the family visits, the instructor also visits the classroom before and after each session to prepare and reinforce learning through specialised lesson plans, with 27 sessions delivered in total over the year.

This past year, the programme took place in De La Salle Primary School, St. Stephen's De La Salle Boys National School and St Ursula's Primary School, with babies Cooper and Freddie supported by their mums, Aisling and Dawn. Having had such a positive experience the first time around, Aisling happily returned for a second year.



*Students at De La Salle*

SCP facilitators Miriam Guinan and Abi Foskin led the programme. Every three weeks, Aisling and Dawn voluntarily brought their beautiful babies into 4th and 5th class classrooms, where the children observed and documented their development while learning valuable lessons in empathy, understanding and emotional awareness.

## Scoil Aireagail

### Building Confidence, Celebrating Success, and Creating Community

As we look back on a year full of progress, we are proud to celebrate the many achievements of Scoil Aireagail, both in learning and in community life. At the heart of every success this year was the high-quality teaching and learning taking place daily in our classrooms, providing the foundation for growth beyond them.

One of the standout highlights was the opening of our new Fitness Suite in September. Huge congratulations to our dedicated staff, students, Board of Management, KCETB, and Kilkenny GAA. Your hard work, commitment, and vision have brought this amazing space to life, creating even more opportunities for physical education, wellbeing, and student development.

Scoil Aireagail students excelled in a wide range of projects and competitions. Well done to all involved on the Art, Construction and Engineering wins at the Piltown Iverk Show, the five winners in the Thomastown Credit Union Art Competition (14–17 age category), and the 5th year students who shone in the National Stampa Competition with guidance from Maureen Roche and Ms. Dalton.

We also welcomed growth through learning programmes, including the Bank of Ireland Money Smarts Programme, and the Microsoft DreamSpace Ambassador initiative. Students trained in Makecode Arcade and Python, created a step tracker and an inclusive rock, paper, scissors game, and then shared their coding skills with 1st years using micro:bit and Python.



*AIB Future Sparks Award Winners*  
Congratulations to Holly Long who received the Gold Award at the Pope John Paul Awards for her commitment, kindness, determination, and involvement in parish life. We also celebrate Abbie Bolger and Abby O'Brien, who received an Award of Merit in From Farm to Fork for the Certified Irish



*Senior Hurlers*

Angus Schools competition. A special mention for TY student enterprise and impact: students' financial crime prevention initiative 'Say No to Money Muling' funded as part of Global Money Week reached over 500 students across 13 schools and went on to win the Senior Financial category in the AIB Future Sparks School Impact Awards, for the second year in a row.

We held many events that welcomed our community, including the American Tea Party and Auction, Christmas Market, Grandparents Day, and our Open Evening/Open Days for prospective students.



*Certified Irish Angus Schools Competition*

On the sports field, our senior hurlers achieved incredible success, winning South Leinster and Leinster post-primary finals, and narrowly missing out in the All-Ireland final after extra time. Our Junior and Senior camogie teams progressed to the All-Ireland semi-final stages. Many students achieved individual success in areas of athletics, equestrian and rowing.

We maintained our Gaelbratach status with wonderful Plé agus Tae events, a Céilí Mór for the whole school, Lá Gléasta Suas, and a highlight: Gaeltacht trip to Galway for our 6th year students preparing for their Irish orals.



*Thomastown Credit Union Art Competition*

All of these achievements, academic, sporting, creative, and community-focused are made possible by the hard work, dedication, and outstanding commitment of our excellent staff. Each initiative and success reflects learning that began in the classroom and was strengthened through meaningful experiences beyond it, demonstrating the impact of teaching that inspires confidence, curiosity, and ambition in every student. Thank you to everyone who supported Scoil Aireagail throughout the year. We look forward to building on this momentum with confidence, pride, and ambition.



*Stampa Competition*

## Tyndall College

On the 25th, 26th and 27th of November 2025, our school community came together to stage an outstanding production of I Have a Dream, our own adaptation of the much-loved musical Mamma Mia. Over 100 students from First to Sixth Year were involved, both on stage and behind the scenes, making this production one of the largest and most collaborative creative undertakings of the school year.

The journey began with auditions in August 2025 and continued through months of dedicated preparation. Students and staff alike committed countless hours to rehearsals every Wednesday and Friday after school, in addition to extra Saturday sessions as performance dates approached. This level of commitment reflected not only impressive

work ethic but also a genuine enthusiasm for the arts. By the final performance, the rewards of this dedication were evident in the confident performances, polished choreography, and strong ensemble work showcased throughout the show.

At its heart, I Have a Dream tells a story of identity, family, friendship and the often messy, joyful journey of growing up. These themes strongly mirror the lived experiences of our secondary school students. Throughout the process, students were encouraged to take creative risks, step outside their comfort zones and develop new skills. Many performers tried something entirely new, whether singing, acting, dancing, stage management or technical production, and grew tremendously in confidence as a result. The cast and crew truly



embodied the spirit of the production, shining both on and off the stage.

One particularly meaningful highlight was the sensory performance of the Westlife song I Have a Dream, featuring students from the Resource Centre. This powerful and moving scene combined both singing and signing and stood as a wonderful example of inclusion in action. It was a moment that resonated deeply with audiences and reflected the supportive, welcoming and inclusive ethos of our school community.

Overall, the production was far more than a theatrical performance; it was a shared experience that brought together students, staff and families in celebration of creativity, resilience and school pride. The memories and connections formed throughout the process will long be cherished by all who participated, as well as by those who were fortunate enough to attend the performances.

Looking ahead, plans are already underway for next year's special 10-Year Anniversary Musical, and excitement is already building. We look forward to another year of collaboration, creativity and celebration as this proud tradition continues.



*Tyndall College Motto*



*Tyndall students perform I Have A Dream*

## Adult Literacy Kilkenny

Adult Literacy for Life is Ireland's 10-year national strategy (launched in 2021) to improve adult literacy, numeracy and digital skills so that all adults can fully participate in society, work, and everyday life.

### Adult Literacy in Ireland (OECD 2023)

- 21% (≈700,000 adults) have low literacy
- Up from 18% in 2013
- 25% have low numeracy
- 28% have low problem-solving skills



ECO-UNESCO

### Research Project Funded through Adult Literacy for life

This resource pack has been created for tutors working in adult education across Ireland. To provide meaningful and usable resources to help tutors deliver climate and environmental literacy sessions to adult learners of all backgrounds.

The sessions and activities were developed by ECO-UNESCO in collaboration with learners and tutors from adult education services at Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board and Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board. Funded through the ALL Office

Climate and Environmental Literacy Resource Pack

Library Awareness Week: Where Learners from Kilkenny & Carlow toured their local Libraries and signed up to be members.

### What is the Collaboration and Innovation Fund (CIF)

Funds adult literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Supports new and creative ideas

- Requires 2 organisations to work together
- Targets people most at risk → Older adults, migrants, early school leavers
- About €1 million per year → Supports projects across Ireland



Learners visit to Library

### Seed to Feed → Recipient of the CIF

This was a very successful Project. The parents and children loved learning about which seeds to grow and cooking what they had grown. Great for Literacy Development and overall, well being.

If you want to know more, contact your Regional Literacy Coordinator:

Deirdre Geoghegan: 0877675547:  
deirdre.geoghegan@kcetb.ie  
or scan this code



Seed to Feed

## BTEI 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 to support them to progress personally, academically and professionally.

### BTEI Carlow Provision 2025-2026

- 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

### Highlights

The 2025/2026 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 Carlow town.



Ann's retirement

Students continued to be supported in their learning with TEAMS VLP and the laptop loan scheme. This not only ensured that learners were

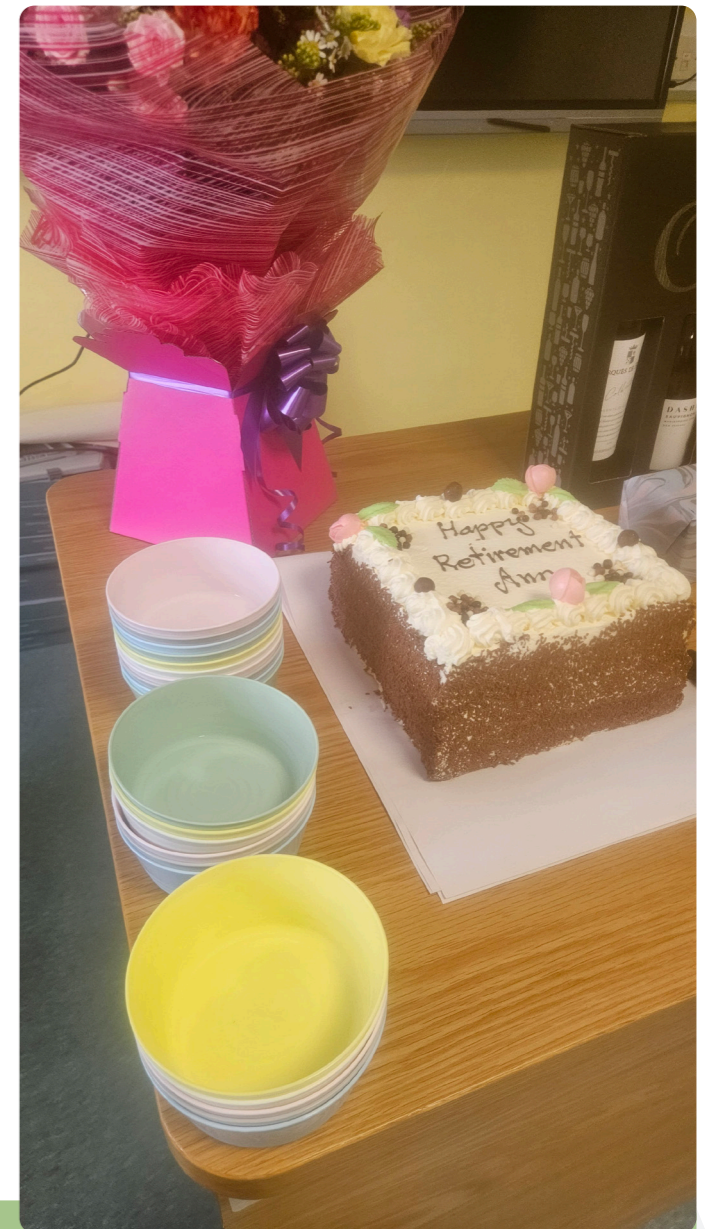
furnished with the tools necessary to complete their studies at home but also ensured that they developed or retained skills necessary to navigate an online learning environment.

Keeping with the theme of learner support BTEI Carlow, provided a series of IT & learner support sessions, where students could avail of computer skills support or support with their course work or academic writing skills.

In 2025/2026 the Carlow Horticulture classes were delivered in the BTEI centre, utilizing the gardening space to the rear of the BTEI building. While small, this proved highly successful and the centre now has a lovely biodiverse garden section that both students and staff can enjoy.

Finally on the 26th of March BTEI Carlow had a little gathering to mark the retirement, after 21 years teaching, of our friend and colleague Ann Redmond.

As part of this celebration, we were proud to be the first organisation to use the reusable party packs, a new sustainability initiative of Carlow Council which promotes waste free community celebrations across the County. This initiative is part of a wider regional project funded through the EPA National Waste Prevention Programme.



Reusable party pack

## BTEI Kilkenny: Annual Report Highlights

### Celebrating Learner Success & Community Partnership

This past year has been a transformative period for the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) in Kilkenny. By aligning our curriculum with the evolving needs of our learners, we have successfully created flexible, high-quality pathways that foster both personal growth and professional readiness within the KCETB framework.



Joiners Folly

### Academic & Vocational Excellence

Learner progression remains our primary metric of success. This year, we welcomed nine learners into the QQI Level 4 General Learning programme. Our commitment to retention is evidenced by four learners returning to Youthreach to further their studies, with two specialising in Childcare. Furthermore, we celebrated significant vocational milestones as one student successfully transitioned into a formal Apprenticeship Programme, while two students have progressed to further education at Ormonde College.



Specialist Support Learner completing the Adaptive Physical Activities module

### Transforming Learning Spaces

Investment in our facilities has directly enhanced our practical training capabilities:

- "Joiners Folly" Horticulture Site: We are immensely proud of our new horticulture facility, complete with a professional polytunnel. In a showcase of inter-departmental synergy, we have collaborated with Training Services' Commis Chefs, providing a 'farm-to-fork' experience as they learn to cultivate sustainable produce on-site.
- Barista Suite: The recent revamp of our Barista room has modernized our hospitality training, allowing us to increase course frequency and better prepare learners for local employment.

### Outdoor Leadership & Wellness

Our outdoor education programmes continue to lead the way. In Graiguenamanagh, our QQI Level 5 Canoeing learners have shown exceptional dedication and are now progressing to Level 6. Additionally, our Lowland Leader instructor course continues to be highly sought after, equipping learners with the navigation and leadership skills required for the burgeoning outdoor adventure sector.

The wellbeing of our community remains a priority. This year, Breast Cancer Ireland delivered a vital awareness session to both staff and learners, reinforcing our commitment to holistic education.

- Strategic Community Partnerships
- Our impact is amplified through robust collaboration with community stakeholders:
- Health & Social Care: Delivered QQI Level 4 modules with the Carers Association and engaged with Aurora (Adrienne Hayes) for work experience and employment opportunities.
- Mental Health & Inclusion: Partnerships with the Involvement Centre Kilkenny (Martha Clarke) and the Volunteer Centre (Paula Harte) provided hands-on experience in recovery and mental health understanding.
- Specialist Support: Expanded our reach to Ferrybank students, offering tailored modules in Adaptive Physical Activities (in collaboration with the Brothers of Charity) and Challenging Behaviour.



Learner from our QQI Level 5 Canoeing in Graiguenamanagh



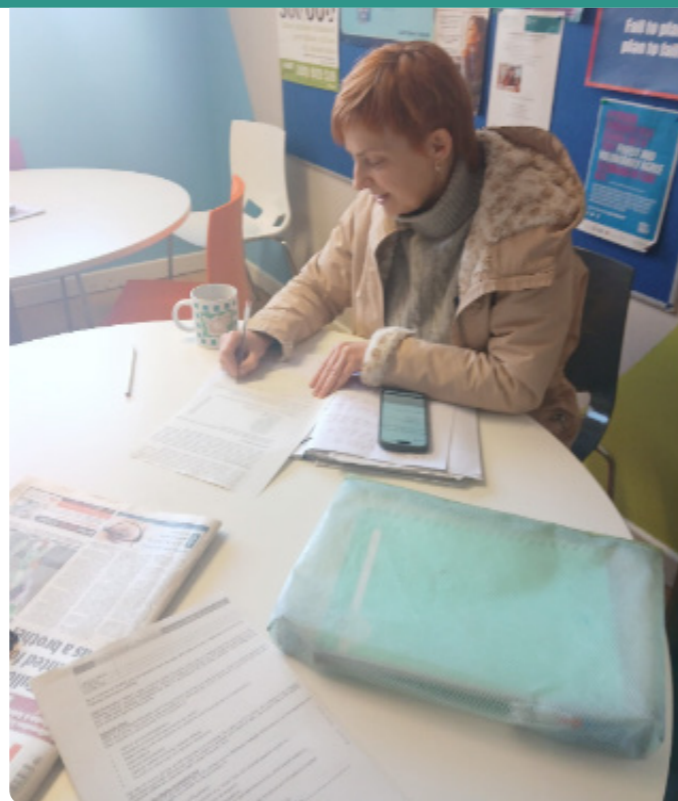
Learners from the Lowlands Leader

## Carlow Adult Learning Centre

### Turning Pages, Changing Lives: A Year of Adult Learning

Academic Year 25-26 has been another busy and productive year for the Adult Learning Service in Carlow. We have continued on our Core work of supporting our learners' development of foundation literacy and language skills and enhancing confidence, agency and the so-called 'soft skills'. As always we have provided classes in reading, writing, Communications, English language, digital skills, Skills for Work and Family Learning. Class provision was available throughout Carlow town and county, daytime and evening time in both small group and one-to-one provision. Much of our work is through themed approaches to learning including Career Preparation and Personal Effectiveness amongst others.

Alongside our regular work we have been involved in a number of initiatives and innovations this year as we try to offer enhanced provision and supports to our learners.



Wider benefits of Learning: Viktoriia N.

### Learner Engagement and Support:

Working with our colleagues in Learner Support we assisted in the production of the first Learner Handbook for Adult Learning Service Learners this year. Learners from Carlow Adult Learning Service participated in the Learner Forum and greatly enjoyed meeting up with learners from other programmes and finding out about the other opportunities offered by KCETB.

### Labhair Liom:

Ag leanúint ar aghaidh lenár n-iarratas rathúil ar an gCiste Comhoibríthe agus Nuálaíochta um Litearthacht do Dhaoine Fásta ar feadh an tSaoil, tháirgeamar an clár Labhair Liom lenár gcomhpháirtithe i nGlór Ceatharlach. Is bunchlár Gaeilge ocht seachtaine é seo atá deartha dóibh siúd ar mian leo a litearthacht agus a dteanga Gaeilge a fheabhsú. Tacaíonn sé le forbairt teanga, rud a léiríonn forbairt téamach sa bhunscoil. Mar sin tá sé thar a bheith feiliúnach do dhaoine fásta atá ag iarraidh a gcuid Gaeilge a fheabhsú nó atá

### Wider Benefits of Learning:

This year we worked with our colleagues in FET to prepare and implement the Wider Benefits of Learning (WBL) initiative. The WBL initiative is a new national approach to helping learners make visible the personal and meaningful benefits which they experience from their engagement in learning – things like enhanced confidence and greater hopefulness. Many of our learners have commenced on this exciting new initiative and are recognising the change that Adult Literacy and FET bring to their lives.



ag súil le tacaíocht a thabhairt do pháistí agus daoine óga i bhfoghlaim na teanga. Chuireamar an clár i láthair toscairí ó gach cearn d'Éirinn ag an Litearthacht don Saol Comhdháil Náisiúnta i bPáirc an Chrócaigh agus bhí suim mhór sa tionscadal. Táimid an-bhródúil as Labhair Liom agus tá sé ar fáil tríd: Adult Literacy for Life National Framework Strategy



Following on from our successful application to the Adult Literacy for Life Collaboration and Innovation Fund we produced the Labhair Liom programme with our partners in Glór Ceatharlach. This is an eight week basic Irish programme designed for those who wish to improve their Irish literacy and language. It supports language development, mirroring thematic development in Primary schooling. So it has proved very suitable for adults who are wanting to brush up on their own Irish language or who are hoping to support children and young people in learning the language. We presented the programme to delegates from all around Ireland at the Adult Literacy for Life National Conference at Croke Park and there was great interest in the project. We are so proud of Labhair

Liom and it is available through: Adult Literacy for Life National Framework Strategy

### Eco-Unesco

Sustainability is really important to us here in the Adult Learning Service so this year in partnership with Kilkenny Adult Learning Service with participated in the Eco-Unesco project. The project involved both staff and learners working with Eco-Unesco to generate the development of a brand-new Sustainability programme for Adult Learners engaged in foundation learning. We were so excited to be able to assist and influence the development of a key vehicle to spreading the environmentalist message to learners throughout Ireland. The fruits of our work are available at: Climate & Environmental Literacy Programme - ECO-UNESCO - Environmental Youth Organisation



## KCETB Carlow Adult Educational Guidance Service

In our work in Carlow Adult Guidance, we are reminded of our KCETB core values and the importance of our role in the wider Carlow community.

Our primary service is one-to-one career guidance meetings where we offer information and support on education opportunities, grant applications, interview preparation and goal setting.

### Value learning

We place our learners at the centre of our work. We support learners in Youthreach, Carlow as they navigate the world of further education and develop their goals. Some of our work with these learners over the year included:

- Open day visits to Colleges of Further and Higher Education
- Psychometric Testing
- Study skills modules
- Interview skills
- Financial and Learner supports in Further and Higher Education

Our cv and interview skills workshops in our Carlow office, delivered by Shane Rooney, Adult Guidance

Counsellor, were attended by over thirty learners from diverse nationalities.

### Aim for excellence

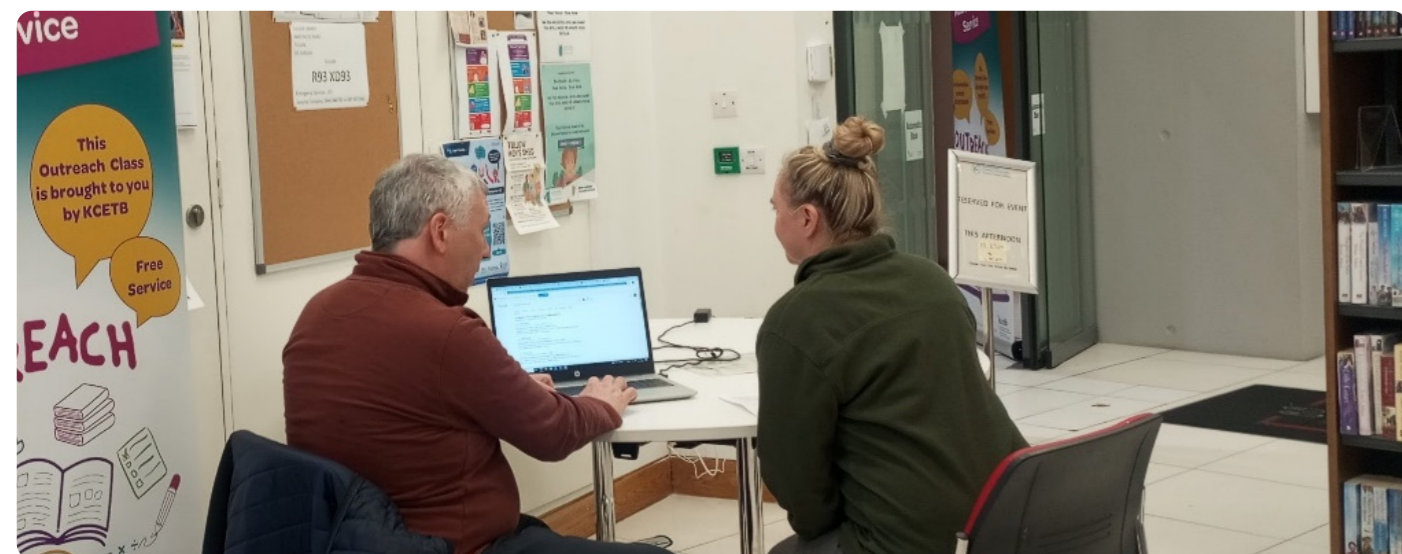
To aim for excellence in our interactions with learners, colleagues and vendors, our staff have completed training and further education courses, among them:

- Disability Awareness
- Adult Safeguarding
- First Aid
- Safety Representative and Safety Officer
- Universal Design for Guidance & Learning (UDG &UDL)

### Build relationships

We are continually building and nurturing key relationships with key groups in our community - all of us working together to deliver for our learners.

This year we joined our support colleagues in St. Catherine's in Carlow and Forward Steps Resource Centre in Tullow to celebrate their anniversary milestones. Uachtaráin na hEireann, Catherine Connolly joined the celebrations in Tullow to mark of



Meeting a learner at our Outreach service in Tullow Library.

25 years of Forward Steps in the local community.

At our Outreach sessions in Tullow, we work with learners in the community as well as those new to the community in the local International Protection Centre.

Our local partners also include Carlow Libraries, Local Area Integration Team, CRYs, Local Intreo Office and HSE.

Our Ukrainian interpreter works with our guidance counsellor to assist some of our learners with any language difficulties during their guidance meetings.

### Promote openness

We regularly assess our office environment to ensure it is a welcoming and safe place for learners, staff and colleagues. Following UDL principles, we have improved our visual displays, the physical navigation through the office and redesigned our Service User Agreement (SUA) for ease of reading and understanding.

During the year, we invited a leading psychologist to deliver an awareness course in Neurodiversity to enhance our skills and abilities to support learners. Several of our KCETB FET and Guidance colleagues were invited to attend this day-long training. Our service in Carlow also offers Counselling and Educational Psychology appointments ensuring we support all our learners at various stages of their journeys.

### Enhance community

Supporting all learners in the community, we collaborated with our colleagues in Kilkenny Adult Guidance to produce a booklet to assist International Protection Applicants navigate the further education landscape.

*Shane Rooney, Adult Guidance Counsellor, delivering an information session for Support Services at DSP Intreo Event for Jobseekers in local hotel.*

We had a presence at local Intreo jobs fairs, Skillsnet events, KASES (Kilkenny/ Carlow Area Supported Employability Services) open day as well as supporting our local apprenticeship expo and some of Carlow's local schools.



Carlow Guidance at Apprentice Expo



## Youthreach Carlow

The 2025/26 academic year has been an exceptionally busy and rewarding one for Youthreach Carlow. Throughout the year, staff demonstrated unwavering commitment, playing a central role in supporting learner growth, confidence, and personal development across all areas of the programme.

Our Leaving Certificate learners sat their examinations in June 2025 and achieved outstanding results across all subjects, reflecting both their dedication and the support provided throughout the year. QQI learners also enjoyed significant success, earning a wide range of awards. Progression remained a key focus, with all learners who applied to Carlow Institute of Further Education successfully securing places. In addition, one learner progressed to SETU Carlow, while another achieved a major milestone by securing an Electrical Apprenticeship with the ESB. These achievements highlight the diverse pathways available to our learners as they continue their Further Education and Training journeys. Alongside academic success, learners also completed several certified programmes, including Manual Handling, Fire Safety, and E-scooter training.



Creative Schools Wall Art

We were delighted to receive continued support from Carlow Sports Partnership (Carlow Active), who funded sports activities throughout the academic year. Their support will culminate in a celebratory learner trip at the end of May, recognising the hard work and achievements of all participants.

Creativity and community engagement were also central to this year's activities. With the support of Take Apart Carlow, learners and staff participated in a highly successful lantern-making project led by artist Tom Meskill. This culminated in a vibrant community parade on March 21st, showcasing the creativity and collaboration within the centre.

Our summer programme in June and July 2025 provided learners with valuable opportunities to develop key life skills such as adaptability, initiative, critical thinking, and problem-solving outside the traditional classroom setting. A wide variety of trips and activities ensured an engaging and enjoyable experience for all involved. During this time, learners also contributed to the creation of striking Wall Art led by Graham Carew, funded by Creative Schools, now proudly displayed at the entrance to Youthreach. Additionally, the group developed a "Write to Bake" booklet, combining creativity with practical skills.



Lantren Art

Finally, our work experience programme proved highly successful, with all learners securing placements of their choice. Feedback from both employers and learners was overwhelmingly positive, further reinforcing the strength of partnerships built within the local community.

Overall, it has been a year of achievement, growth, and opportunity at Youthreach Carlow.



Carlow Active



Lantren Art and Students

## Community Education Carlow

### Supported Training Memorial Service

In December Community Education staff were honoured to attend a memorial service held in the grounds of St Dymphna's Hospital. The event marked the completion of a meaningful redevelopment project undertaken by the Supported Training group in Skillsbase, made possible through funding from KCETB Community Education and the Reach programme, with additional support from the HSE.



KCETB Staff HSE Staff and Support training Learners

Over the past three years, learners have transformed the hospital grounds through a series of creative and practical projects. These have included the development of two sensory garden spaces, the renovation of a garden shed featuring stained glass windows, and the installation of benches, mosaics, willow and wire sculptures. Learners also designed and built a pond complete with a bridge, creating welcoming and therapeutic outdoor spaces for all to enjoy.

Reach funding was used to redevelop the cemetery located on the hospital grounds, ensuring it became a respectful and reflective space to honour the memory of former residents. The group cleared areas that had become overgrown and neglected, restored the statue of the Virgin Mary, and installed stained glass panels. A slab of Kilkenny slate bearing the handprints of the learners was also placed at the site, alongside a pillar of Carlow granite engraved with Ogham, symbolising remembrance, heritage and connection.

Geraldine Maher, Coordinator of Supported Training Services, acknowledged the vital role played by KCETB in supporting the project. "Without them, this project could not have been achieved," she said.



Stained Glass

Martha Bolger, Director of Further Education and Training at KCETB, praised the work of the learners and the collaborative approach behind the initiative. "This is a wonderful celebration of learners' achievements and what can be done through an interagency approach to supporting those in our communities by exploring creative and practical ways to demonstrate and achieve ambition, learning and sustainable outcomes," she said.



Hand Made wooden bridge



Retored Statue of Virgin Mary

Funding for tutors and materials for this project was provided through the Reach Grant 2025. This year over €180,000 has already been paid to community groups under Reach 2026, enabling them to deliver impactful projects within their own communities.



Ogham Stone



Kilkenny Slate engraved with the learners hadprints

## Community Education Kilkenny and Carlow

### Community Education Showcase Event

The Community Education Offices in Kilkenny and Carlow held a Community Education Showcase Event in Thomastown in late October. The event brought together learners, community groups and tutors from across the two counties to highlight and showcase the diverse educational opportunities that are available through Community Education.

Community Education provides groups with the opportunity to offer courses in the community, for the community and by the community. KCETB is committed to accessible, learner-focused education that responds to community needs.



Biddy o Dwyer Chair exercise Demo

A large number of community groups had stands where they showcased some of the activities that they have enjoyed during the Community Education courses that they undertook, e.g. Borris Lace, painting, jewellery making, etc. A number of diverse groups gave a presentation on what community education has meant to their groups. There were insights from Supported Training Services, La Nua, Cois Nore and the Tullahought Defibrillator Training Group.



Dunamagan

There was also a lively session from tutor Bridget O'Dwyer, who engaged the crowd in some seated physical activity. Tutor Lissa Oliver also shared her insights into delivering a number of creative writing courses online. These courses have proven to be extremely popular with participants.

The Community Education staff were delighted to welcome Dr Lindsay Malone, CE, KCETB; Martha Bolger, KCETB Director of Further Education and Training; and Dearbhail Lawless, Chief Executive of AONTAS, to the event.

### Community Creativity Shines Through Christmas Wreath Project

Community education brought festive creativity to life across Carlow and Kilkenny this past Christmas with the hugely successful Community Wreath Project. The initiative provided art tutors and 19 wooden wreath templates to community groups, offering an opportunity for people to come together,

learn new skills and create something special for their local areas.

The project proved to be incredibly popular, with applications far exceeding the number of templates available. Such was the enthusiasm that several groups who did not receive a wooden template sourced or created their own, ensuring they could still take part. This response highlighted the strong appetite for creative, inclusive community activities and the determination of groups to be involved.



Ballyfoyle Jewellery Making

Art tutors worked closely with participants, guiding them through design ideas and techniques while encouraging individual and group creativity. The completed wreaths were of a remarkably high standard, each one reflecting the personality, skills and collaborative spirit of the group that made it. Natural materials, handmade decorations and thoughtful seasonal designs featured strongly throughout the project.

Once completed, the wreaths were proudly displayed within communities across Carlow and Kilkenny throughout the Christmas season. These displays added colour and warmth to local spaces while showcasing the talent and effort of those involved.



Thomastown art

## FET Learner Support Service

### Learner Voice, Representation, and Inclusive Practice in Action Across KCETB

April 2026 marked a period of strong learner engagement and inclusive practice across Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB), reflecting our continued commitment to learner-centred and accessible Further Education and Training (FET).



On 29 April, the KCETB FET Learner Voice Forum was held in the Ormonde Hotel, bringing together learners and staff from FET provision across Carlow and Kilkenny as part of the FET Maturity Model Self-Review process. The forum provided learners with an opportunity to share their lived experiences of FET, with a particular focus on learner supports and the learner handbook. Through facilitated round-table discussions, learners reflected openly on what is working well in their centres and identified areas for improvement.

Learners engaged confidently and constructively throughout the day, offering valuable feedback that will directly inform future planning and quality improvement. Staff supported the event by facilitating discussions, assisting with language barriers, providing IT support, and supporting the smooth running of the forum. The event highlighted the importance of inclusive spaces where learners feel valued and heard, and demonstrated the

positive impact of learner-centred practice across KCETB services.

Learner representation was also evident earlier in the month at the DFHERIS Cost of Education Event, held on 22 April in the Midlands Hotel, Portlaoise. Two learners from Kilkenny College of Further Education and Training attended the event, contributing to national-level discussions on the financial realities of education. Their participation ensured that the learner voice was central to conversations around educational costs, available supports, and barriers faced by learners.

This strong focus on learner experience aligns closely with KCETB's work on Reasonable Accommodations and Accessibility. Joanne Doyle, Learner Support and Wellbeing Co-ordinator, and Fiona O'Flaherty, Quality Assurance Officer, represent KCETB on the National ETBI-AHEAD Reasonable Accommodations in FET Maturity Model Self-Review Group. At local level, they chair the KCETB Reasonable Accommodations in FET Group and are currently leading a self-review that will inform both a national report by AHEAD and a five-year KCETB action plan.



Key priorities include the development of a KCETB Universal Design for Learning (UDL) training programme, updating FET learner support information on the KCETB website, and further improving the accessibility of the KCETB website. Continuing to promote learner voice, KCETB FET

would like to remind learners that the End of Course Learner Feedback survey is currently open. All FET learners are encouraged to complete the survey, which provides an important opportunity for learners to share their experiences and influence future improvement. Together, these initiatives demonstrate KCETB's commitment to listening to learners, embedding inclusive practice, and strengthening FET provision for all.



Learner Forum



Joanne Doyle at FET Learner Forum

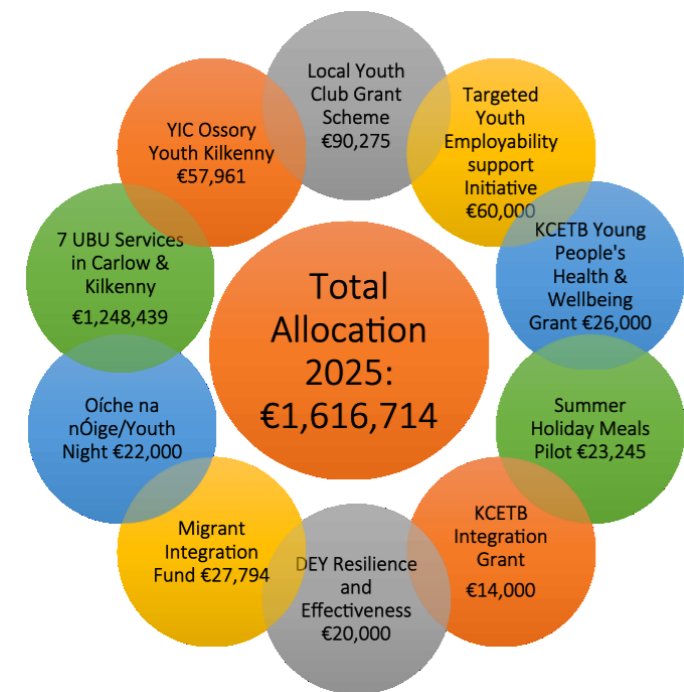


Staff and learners at the FET Learner Voice Event

## KCETB Youth Office Carlow and Kilkenny

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 Foroige 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.

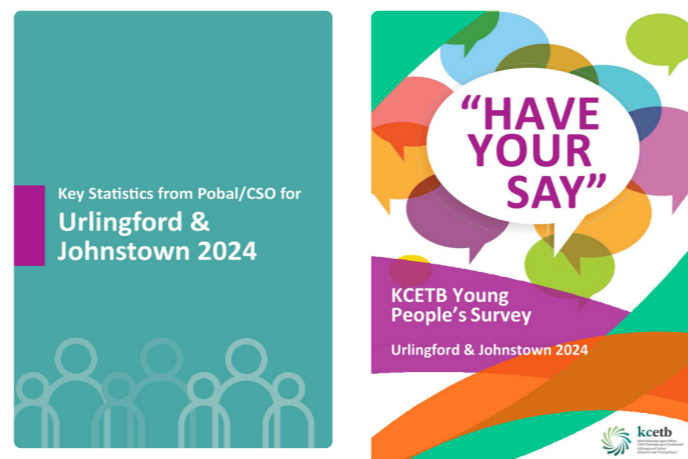


Graph highlighting the range of grants/funds and amounts allocated to youth service providers across Kilkenny and Carlow in 2025

This funding directly benefited 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 2025, 9,538 young people benefited from the various funding schemes outlined in the graph above.

### New UBU Project Urlingford and Johnstown

In 2025, the Department of Education and Youth allocated 1.2 million in funding to 10 new UBU sites across the Country. Urlingford/Johnstown was identified as the area of greatest priority by KCETB given the high level of need and limited youth work provision. Extensive research was completed for the area inclusive of consultations with key stakeholders and analysis of statistical data. This enabled us to identify key issues, needs and priority groups of young people to be supported by the new Project. KCETB were successful in securing funding for a new UBU Project. Ossory Youth were selected as the new service provider following a selection process. The project commenced in December 2025.



Cover of the KCETB Research Reports Oíche na hÓige

Oíche na hÓige / Youth Night 2025 took place on Friday, 21 November 2025. This national initiative saw youth clubs and services across Ireland open their doors to local communities, providing an opportunity to showcase and celebrate the impact and value of youth work. Within this context, UBU-funded projects delivered through CRYs and Ossory Youth were strongly represented. A total of 12 local youth clubs were successful in securing funding under the scheme, enabling them to participate in and contribute to the event. Their

involvement highlighted the breadth and quality of youth work being undertaken at a local level, as well as its positive contribution to young people and the wider community.

### Summer Meals Pilot 2025

The Summer 2025 Holiday Meals Pilot Programme is designed to support young people aged 10-18 years who may not have access to a hot or filling meal when schools are closed during the summer months.

In Kilkenny and Carlow, six UBU-funded projects operating under CRYs and Ossory Youth, were successful in securing funding through this initiative. Their involvement facilitated the targeted delivery of supports to young people, helping to alleviate food insecurity and promote health and well-being during the summer period.

KCETB Youth Office was delighted to

welcome staff from the Department of Education and Youth (Youth Affairs Unit) to Kilkenny. Karl Duff, Jill Fanin (Principal Officers), Lisa Kavanagh (Youth Sector Specialist), and Nicola Ergen (Clerical Officer) attended on behalf of DEY.

They were joined by KCETB Youth Officers Saoirse Prendergast and Mairead Donohoe, John O'Neill, Adult Education Officer, Martha Bolger, Director of Further Education, and Dr Lindsay Malone, Chief Executive of KCETB.

During the visit, the Department officials visited UBU youth services in Carlow and Kilkenny, gaining first-hand insight into the vital youth work taking place to support young people across the region. KCETB is delighted to work closely with the Department of Education and Youth to ensure young people in our communities have access to high-quality youth work supports and opportunities.



Department visit

## Kilkenny Adult Guidance

### A Year of Progress and Partnership

Through strong collaboration with local partners and the dedication of its staff, Kilkenny Adult Guidance Service empowers learners to define and pursue meaningful educational, personal and vocational goals. In 2025, the Kilkenny Adult Guidance Service supported 2,805 individuals. The team has delivered guidance, career planning, and one-to-one support across all Further Education and Training centres in Kilkenny.



DSP event Ormonde Hotel Oct 25

A key highlight was Joan's work with VTOS students on the Nuncio Road campus. In partnership with FIT (Fast Track into Information Technology), she facilitated CV preparation sessions and interview skills workshops, culminating in mock interviews. This initiative proved highly successful, equipping learners with the confidence and practical skills needed for the job market.

Donna has been working closely with learners in Kilkenny Youthreach, supporting them to explore a wide range of career paths and life opportunities. She organised an engaging Careers Day featuring guest speakers, including Suzy from "Snout and About," a former Youthreach learner now working as a sound engineer, and members of the Defence

Forces. Field trips to Carlow Institute of Further Education and SETU's Centre for Aerospace Engineering, further broadened the students' awareness of progression pathways and emerging industries.

Eoin has been working weekly with part-time learners at the Danville Campus, providing guidance on progression routes and supporting job applications. He also delivered study skills sessions to Phase 2 Electrical Apprentices, helping them build a strong foundation as they begin the theoretical component of their training.

Sharon has produced the service guide for International Protection Applicants to provide clear information where it is needed. She has updated the KCETB Learner Support with the Learner Support and Wellbeing Coordinator along with the course information publications. Keep an eye on the internal information screens for more of her work! Our personal and social development group, Onwards and Upwards, continues to support clients taking the first steps back to groupwork and classroom settings. Sharon liaises with tutor Maria to ensure that the group has all the materials it needs to keep creating new works in a safe and friendly learning environment.



Snout and About Youthreach Careers Day

Beyond centre-based work, Orla Reddy spoke on KCLR FM's Learning Local series, sponsored by KCETB, providing an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the service. The team also

collaborated on local initiatives with the Kilkenny Integration Team, Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement and the Department of Social Protection, while contributing to events such as Careers in Hospitality, Jobs Fairs, and Kilkenny PPN engagements.

The team looks forward to building on this impact and continuing to support many more learners in reaching their full potential in the year ahead.



OnwardsUpwardsGroup



## Kilkenny Adult Learning Service

This year, Kilkenny Adult Learning Service has proudly supported learners from all walks of life, helping them build confidence, skills, and new opportunities. From literacy and digital learning to creativity and personal development, our diverse programmes—including Family Literacy, ESOL, vocational training, digital technology, and driver theory, continue to offer inclusive, community-focused pathways that support QQI certification and lifelong learning.



*Kilkenny Adult Learning Service St. John's Junior School Easter Decorations*

At the Watergarden, our learners focused on developing their personal, social, and musical skills. A highlight was a joyful performance of Christmas hymns and carols, where learners showcased their talents in a lively and festive celebration.

Family Literacy across Kilkenny continues to build with the ethos of encouraging families

to learn together, creating opportunities that benefit everyone, children and adults alike. This intergenerational approach helps build confidence, supports lifelong learning, and fosters a positive attitude towards education in everyday life.



*Kilkenny Adult Learning Service Learners with Peter 'Chap' Cleere outside Dail Eireann*

Across Thomastown, Urlingford, and Danville, learners embraced technology with enthusiasm, building digital skills and confidence. From designing calendars to creating cards for special occasions, participants overcame initial fears and discovered new abilities.



*Kilkenny Adult Learning Service Learners at Kilkenny Castle Park as part of Life Science module*

One of the Level 3 Digital Media groups had a standout achievement on April 15th, 2026, when the group organised a trip to Dáil Éireann, entirely planned and booked online by the learners as part of their coursework. The visit proved to be both educational and memorable. The group received

a warm welcome from Peter "Chap" Cleere and enjoyed a guided tour of the building, including a chance to observe the chamber in session.



*Kilkenny Adult Learning Service REHAB Care Group - Using shapes to make Christmas decorations*

RehabCare learners have been working towards a Level 2 certificate in Shape and Space. Along the way, they explored creativity by making Christmas decorations and constructing square-based pyramids, combining practical skills with fun learning.



Meanwhile, the group at the Irish Wheelchair Association continues to make excellent progress towards their Level 3 Certificates in Managing Personal Finance and Self-Advocacy. Their work on identifying financial scams and raising awareness about the misuse of blue badge parking spaces has been particularly impactful.

Interagency learners are working at achieving a Level 2 Certificate in Life Science. As part of their studies they recently attended the Reptile Zoo in Kilkenny.

In conclusion, thanks to collaboration, creativity, and a strong focus on the learner, Kilkenny Adult Learning Service continues to grow a vibrant and welcoming learning community, one where everyone is encouraged to learn, connect, and shine.

A huge thank you to our fantastic tutors and staff for their energy, dedication, and commitment!



*Kilkenny Adult Learning Service REHAB Care Group - Square based pyramids*

## Kilkenny Youthreach

### Volunteering

Before Christmas, our learners took part in Team Hope's Shoebox Appeal. Over the course of a month, learners worked on an LCA general education task that involved checking shoeboxes and, where necessary, removing or adding items to ensure each box was ready to go. Learners really embraced the spirit of the appeal and were happy to put in extra hours, especially when flu season hit and other volunteers were unable to help.

All their hard work paid off. On 11th December, 4,498 shoeboxes were transported to Eswanti, Southern Africa and a few days later 1,620 shoeboxes were delivered to Albania. Once again, our learners were proud to be part of this initiative which has become an annual tradition at Kilkenny Youthreach. It was a pleasure to see our learners step up when needed and contribute in a meaningful way—truly showing the spirit of Kilkenny Youthreach.



Shoebox Appeal

### Ministerial Visit

On 18th February, Kilkenny Youthreach were delighted to welcome Minister for Further and Higher Education, James Lawless to the centre. During his visit Minister Lawless and his team spent time with students who showcased a range of displays from their STEAM workshops. An artistically talented learner, Nancy Brophy, presented the Minister with a textile artwork which now hangs pride of place in his office in Dáil Éireann.

Our Home Economics team were busy preparing sandwiches and some treats, while the Learner Council also took the opportunity to share their views and opinions with Minister Lawless. It was a fantastic day—one that was truly memorable for everyone involved.

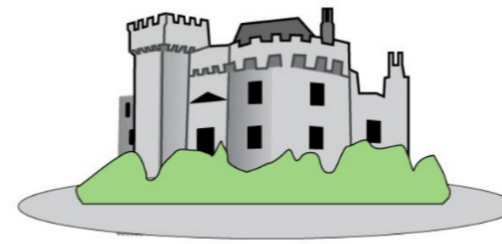


Minister Lawless visit

### Farm Visit

Our LCA students had an unforgettable day out at Ériu Farm, a biodynamic farm in Jerpoint, swapping the classroom for wellies and fresh country air! From feeding hungry calves and helping cows head out to graze on lush grass, to collecting eggs and even bottle-feeding calves, everyone got stuck into farm life.

A real highlight was meeting a brand-new calf, giving students a special glimpse into life on the farm from the very beginning. They also explored how animals are cared for, where they are housed, and how the farm manages waste in a sustainable way. To top it all off, students worked together to cook their own lunch from the freshly collected eggs over an outdoor fire—a crowd favourite! It was a fun-filled, hands-on day packed with learning, laughter, and plenty of muddy boots.



**Kilkenny Youthreach**



Farm Visit



Learner Group

## Music Generation Carlow



### Music Generation Carlow Cheatharlach

As the 2025/26 academic year draws to a close, Music Generation Carlow (MGC) reflects on another dynamic and forward-looking year, marked by artistic ideas, increased participation, and possible exciting international opportunities. With over 4,900 children and young people now engaging in MGC programmes each week, our reach and impact across County Carlow continues to grow and mature.

A major highlight this year was the 11th edition of Music @ Mount Leinster, our flagship Traditional Irish Music Festival. Responding proactively to recommendations from an independent review, the festival introduced meaningful enhancements to programming and audience experience. The gala concert, held at the George Bernard Shaw Theatre, was a standout success, showcasing the exceptional talent from young musicians who travelled from all over the country.

Our traditional ensembles, Reelig, Reel Nua, and junior group ReelÓg, continued to shine. At the Pan Celtic Festival 2026, Reelig and Reel-Nua performed at the prestigious opening concert, with Reelig delivering a special presidential salute for President Catherine Connolly, marking a proud moment for MGC. ReelÓg also proudly represented Carlow for a second consecutive year at the Féile Fearann Rí, where they performed alongside acclaimed musician Clare Sands, further highlighting the strength of our emerging young talent.

This year also saw the much-anticipated return of BoomBrasstic, our county brass, wind, and percussion ensemble, signalling renewed

momentum in our instrumental strategy and providing new pathways for young musicians. Members of BoomBrasstic joined with young musicians from MGC's Pop/Rock, Traditional Irish and Encore Primary School Vocal Program to launch Carlow Art's Office new 10 year strategy- to great acclaim.

In April 2026, MGC launched its first retrospective exhibition in partnership with Carlow Library Services at Carlow Town Library. This exhibition celebrates the journey of MGC through a rich collection of photographs and video, complemented by a three-week programme of live performances and workshops that brought the story of MGC to life for the wider community.



Ruby Horahan Band Development Program

Our youth-led initiative, MGC: Rocks the Tower, has further developed into a flagship platform for emerging rock and pop artists. These professionally staged events provide young performers with real-world gig experiences while fostering music appreciation among their peers in high-quality, accessible venues.

Looking outward, MGC has successfully secured EU funding—aligned with Council of the European Union initiatives during Ireland's Presidency in 2026—in partnership with Carlow County Council.

This support will facilitate a cultural exchange with Dole in late 2026, strengthening ties between the twinned towns and paving the way for MGC musicians to represent Carlow internationally in early 2027.

As we look ahead, recruitment for our 2026 community programmes is now open. To get involved, contact [musicgenerationcarlow@kcetb.ie](mailto:musicgenerationcarlow@kcetb.ie) and be part of Carlow's evolving musical journey.



Aoibheann O'Brien Reelig MGC Senior Traditional Ensemble

## Music Generation Kilkenny



# Music Generation Kilkenny

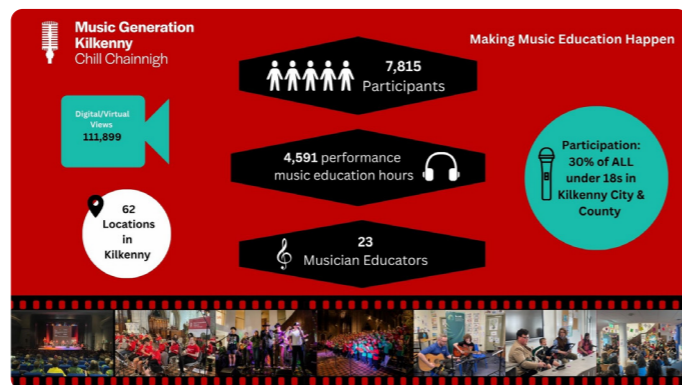
## Chill Channigh

Music Generation Kilkenny had a very successful year of music making in 2025/2026 with 7,815 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 Kilkenny programme in 2025, with 4,591 hours of performance music education delivered to children and young people in the county.

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.



Stats InfoGraphic 2025

- Uilleann Pipe Hub**  
 An after-school Uilleann Pipe hub on Wednesdays in Kilkenny City in partnership with Na Píobairí Uilleann and Kilkenny Pipers Club.

### Highlights of the year include:

**JINGLE BELL ROCKOUT – Yulefest Kilkenny**  
 Music Generation Kilkenny's popular festive showcase returned to Yulefest Kilkenny in December at the Yulefest Bandstand on The Parade, Kilkenny. Young musicians from the Creative Music Space performed Christmas favourites and festive classics in a free, open-air family concert.

**TRY THE PIPES – Uilleann Pipe Taster**  
 In partnership with Na Píobairí Uilleann, Music Generation Kilkenny delivered a free uilleann pipe taster session in November at the Medieval Mile Museum. Young people aged 10–18 had the opportunity to hear accomplished pipers perform



SingOut Music Makers

and try the instrument themselves supported by professional tutors.

**SINGOUT 2025 – Singing in a Winter Wonderland**  
 Over 285 children from Music Generation Kilkenny primary schools performed at St. Canice's Cathedral in December, joined by young musicians from the Music Makers programme, primary school string players, musicians from the Creative Music Space, and the Kilkenny Youth Choir. This much-loved annual Christmas concert was a festive highlight for families and the wider community.



SingOut 25 Choir

**#MUSICCHANGEDME – National Video Project**  
 Music Generation Kilkenny was delighted to be selected as one of just three Music Generation areas nationwide to take part in #MusicChangedMe - a short video series led by the National Development Office celebrating the positive impact of music on young people's lives.

The project featured current and former Music Generation Kilkenny choir members, whose reflections explored how music shaped their confidence, creativity, friendships and personal development. Participants worked collaboratively with a professional videographer and producer, with the resulting videos offering a powerful insight into the lasting impact of music education.



SingOut Youth Choir

**CEOL ÓG – Ceiliúradh Óg an Cheoil**  
 As part of the St. Patrick's Day Festival Kilkenny, Music Generation Kilkenny presented Ceol Óg at St. Canice's Cathedral, featuring the Castlecomer Trad Ensemble, young uilleann pipers and the Kilkenny Youth Choir in a celebratory youth concert.

**UKE JAM**  
 In May, 850 children who participated weekly in the Music Generation Kilkenny primary school Ukulele programme came together at the Set Theatre for UKE JAM, a large-scale celebratory performance uniting young ukulele players from across the county.



In 2025–2026 Music Generation Kilkenny delivered toddler music workshops, rhythm workshops, youth drumming workshops, song writing and sound production workshops throughout the year, participated in 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.

## Quality Assurance

During 2025, the Quality Assurance (QA) Team for Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB) continued to play a central role in overseeing, coordinating and enhancing quality across all Further Education and Training (FET) provision. The QA team supported governance, compliance, continuous improvement and capacity building across centres, while also aligning programmes with awarding body requirements.

A significant area of activity during the year was QA documentation and policy development. In total, 104 controlled documents were issued through the QA Document Management System in 2025, representing a substantial increase on 2024. This included forms, descriptors, assessment packs, standard operating procedures and reports. A notable contributor to this increase was the national Module Update Process, which resulted in the revision of 24 module descriptors locally. Terms of Reference for key quality committees were also standardised, assigned document numbers and brought under formal document control.

External Authentication (EA) remained a core QA function. In 2025, 92 EA reports were processed across 12 KCETB centres, involving 70 External Authenticators. EA activity continued to support assessment integrity, with grade change recommendations monitored and strengthened through improvements to RAP and EA reporting processes.

The Results Approval Process (RAP) underwent further refinement in 2025. Pre-population of RAP reports using PLSS data facilitated improved data accuracy. Updated RAP process documentation further supported consistency in reporting outcomes and grade change decisions. A small number of assessment appeals progressed through formal QA procedures, with outcomes recorded and monitored, while additional cases were appropriately triaged at earlier stages.

QA engagement with centres was strengthened through a revised model of QA support visits. A combined online session in November 2025 streamlined communication of key updates, followed by targeted centre visits. By early 2026, the majority of centres had completed their visits. Other key activity areas included programme validation, with multiple new and amended programmes approved. In total there were ten QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) programmes validated in 2025 and a number of others submitted for approval, which will be validated in 2026.

There was continued development in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), where 27 applications for 46 modules were processed across exemptions, certified learning and experiential routes. Governance structures functioned effectively throughout the year, supported by regular meetings of the key quality committees:

- **QAOC** – Quality Assurance Oversight Committee
- **PAC** – Programme and Awards Committee
- **RAP** – Results Approval Process
- **QC** – Quality Committee
- **AIC** – Academic Integrity Committee

Academic Integrity remained a strategic priority, underpinned by policy updates, staff development, targeted monitoring and a dedicated Academic Integrity Week. Collectively, QA activities in 2025 demonstrate a strong quality culture, increased system maturity and a clear foundation for the priorities identified for 2026.

## Tertiary

In 2025, KCETB continued 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 2025, 41 students registered across all four degrees, an 20.6% increase on 2024 enrolment.



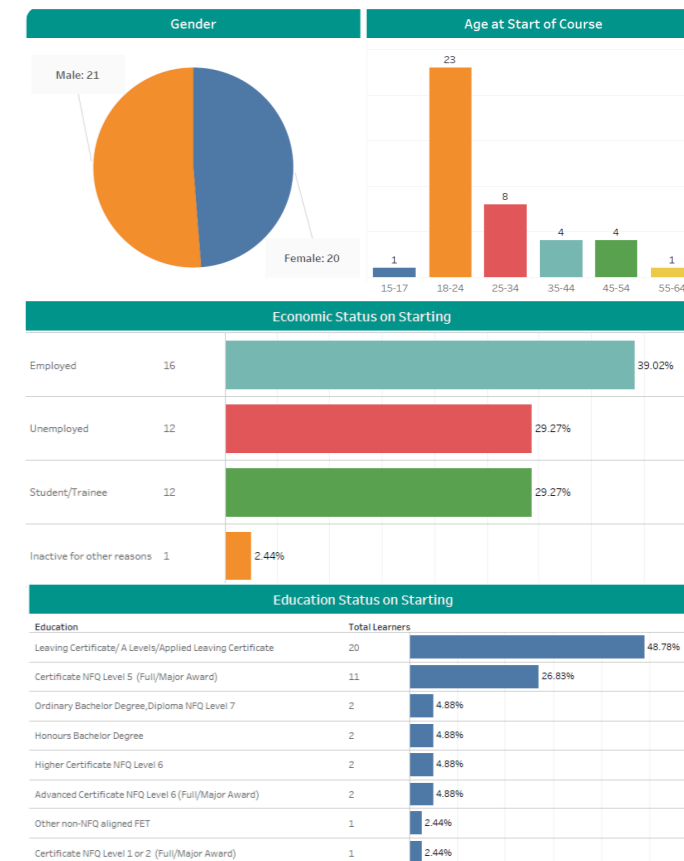
Applied Health Care and Public Health visit to SETU Waterford



IT Management learners visit to SETU Carlow

Colleges and teaching teams have actively engaged in rolling out the programmes and have already commenced working on the promotion for the 2026-2027 intake.

In the 2025 - 2026 academic year, a total of 41 Learners registered across the 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.



Of the 34 who registered in September for the 2024-2025 intake, there were four who were early finishers, with a further learner obtaining advanced entry, resulting in 29 remaining on the degrees. Of those 25 fully finished the programme, and four received partial certification. The following is an overview of the learner outcomes across all four degrees:

 <b>Tourism and Hospitality:</b> 4 Fully Certified, 1 Partially Certified	 <b>Applied Health Care:</b> 4 Fully Certified, 1 Partially Certified	 <b>Public Health and Health Promotion:</b> 8 Fully Certified	 <b>IT Management:</b> 6 Fully Certified, 2 Partially Certified, 1 eligible for advanced entry into year 2
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## Training Services

### Training Services: Milestone Achievements & Future Growth

It has been an extraordinary season for Training Services. From traditional crafts to launching modern career paths, our recent highlights reflect a deep commitment to vocational excellence and community engagement. As we look back on the past few months, the sheer diversity of our programmes—ranging from heritage skills to high-level financial accounting—demonstrates our mission to provide a pathway for every learner.



Minister Harkin presents Joanne Leahy with Apprentice of the Year Award in Hospitality, Food & Agriculture Category

### Building the Workforce of Tomorrow

Our apprenticeship programmes continue to expand, providing vital pathways for local talent to enter high-demand industries. A major highlight

in 2025 was the official launch of the Accounting Technician Apprenticeship at the Carlow Institute. We were delighted to welcome a dedicated cohort of 16 participants who are now beginning their professional journeys in the world of finance.

The success of our vocational routes was further celebrated at the recent Apprenticeship Graduation hosted by KCETB at the Newpark Hotel. It was a momentous occasion, allowing us to recognise the resilience and hard work of our latest graduates. This momentum was mirrored at the now-annual Apprenticeship Expo at Carlow Institute. With over 50 employers and 1,000 attendees present, the night was a resounding success, proving that the appetite for hands-on, skills-based learning is stronger than ever.

We celebrated our Commis Chef apprentice Joanne Leahy winning the Hospitality, Food and Agriculture Award at the National Apprentice of the Year Awards



Final thatched roof

### Tradition Meets Innovation

In a unique blend of past and future, our pilot Thatching Programme officially concluded. The impact of this initiative reached far beyond the classroom, gaining national coverage on RTÉ's Nationwide. The programme sparked numerous

## Workforce Skilling and Upskilling

We continue to provide and deliver in areas such as healthcare, engineering, transport and logistics to name a selection of sectors through our Contracted Training and Skills to Advance provision. We are delighted to continue to deliver on these vital areas that benefit the region.

### A Commitment to Inclusive Learning

Finally, we are proud to report that our National Learning Network (NLN) programmes are currently operating at full capacity. This vital service ensures learners of all backgrounds have the support they need to thrive. We recently capped off these achievements with a beautiful graduation ceremony at St. Patrick's College, celebrating the incredible personal growth of our NLN learners.

As we look forward, we remain committed to building a future powered by skills, community, and innovation.

media discussions regarding its vital role in preserving traditional Irish heritage and its modern-day environmental relevance.

### Shaping the Next Generation

We are also making significant strides through our Transition Year (TY) provision. By introducing Culinary and Electrical programmes at TY level, we are bridging the gap between secondary education and professional reality. To support this, we have developed specific iVET modules, ensuring students earn recognised credentials that align perfectly with our long-term apprenticeship offerings.



Wayne Electrical TY



NLN Graduation learners

## Organisation Support and Development: Finance

### Finance Shared Services Implementation

Over the coming months, Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB) will take an important step in modernising its finance operations. As part of the national Shared Services Implementation (SSI) programme, KCETB will transition agreed finance activities to the Education and Business Services (ESBS).



Staff Training Day in Head Office, Carlow

The official go-live date is 22 June 2026, at which point KCETB will become the eighth ETB nationally to make this transition. This follows a series of successful implementations across the sector, with all ETBs expected to move to shared services by 2027.

In preparation for this change, work is already well underway. Between April and June 2026, KCETB Head Office is working closely with ESBS to ensure the transition is carefully planned, well supported, and as smooth as possible for schools and centres. Training and engagement form a key part of this preparation. Principals, centre managers, and administrators will receive information sessions and targeted training, supported by clear communications and training materials shared in advance. Live online training sessions will begin from 18 May, with each participant required to attend one 90-minute session only. Training

schedules will be issued by KCETB Head Office, with flexibility offered where possible to accommodate busy workloads.

Following go-live, KCETB will enter a two-month hyper-care period, running from June to August 2026. During this time, all transitioned finance activities will be closely monitored by both KCETB and ESBS. Additional training, guidance, or support will be provided where needed, and schools and centres will be able to contact the ESBS Helpdesk with any queries or issues that arise.

Hyper-care refers to this enhanced level of support immediately after go-live, designed to ensure that new processes are operating effectively and that staff feel supported throughout the change.



Staff Training Day

## Organisation Support and Development: ITG

### Information, Technology and Governance Highlights

Over the past academic year, the ITG Department has focused on strengthening the digital, governance and information foundations that support staff, learners and services across KCETB. This includes improvements to our Staff Portal, cyber security, digital tools, accessibility, and compliance with national and statutory requirements.



AI Image

While much of this work happens behind the scenes, it plays an important role in enabling day-to-day operations, protecting information, and supporting staff across schools, centres and offices.

#### 1. New KCETB AI Policy – What Staff Need to Know

- New AI Policy launched in March 2026
- Clear guidance on responsible AI use
- Aligned with public sector data protection requirements

*Why it matters: Gives staff clarity and confidence*

#### 2. Cyber Security Awareness Programme Rolled Out

- Cyber security training delivered to staff
- Phishing simulations and practical advice
- Supports KCETB risk management

*Why it matters: Protects staff and learner data*

#### 3. Microsoft Teams Clean-Up Improves Collaboration

- Inactive Teams reviewed and removed
- Automated lifecycle management in place
- Cleaner and faster Teams environment

*Why it matters: Easier collaboration*

#### 4. Roll-out of Windows 11, Autopilot & Security Baselines

- Windows 11 now standard on new devices
- Autopilot enables rapid setup
- Enhanced security baselines applied

*Why it matters: Faster and safer device*

#### 5. Updated Staff Portal & SharePoint News Hub

- Staff Portal refreshed
- Regular news and updates published
- Policies centralised

*Why it matters: One trusted source*

#### 6. Irish Language Act – Practical Actions for Staff

- Irish language working groups supported
- Staff initiatives promoted
- Resources developed on SharePoint

*Why it matters: Supports statutory obligations*

#### 7. Information Security Management System (ISMS) Journey

- ISO 27001 ISMS work underway
- Collaboration with IAU and ETBs
- Improved information risk management

*Why it matters: Strengthens trust and protection*



Inactive Microsoft Teams Clean up





**kcetb**

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach  
*Kilkenny and Carlow  
Education and Training Board*