



Light a fire with STEAM!

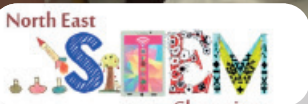
In the words of WB Yeats, "education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." If you wish to 'light a fire' in your classroom, get involved with STEM Education – educating students in four specific disciplines: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

This takes an interdisciplinary and applied approach that integrates them by solving real-world problems.

Our journey with STEM began in 2018 and we have watched 'the fire' spread through our classrooms, communities and beyond through ERASMUS+. Saint Mary's Parish Primary School (Drogheda; cluster lead school), Aston Village ETNS (Drogheda) and Scoil na gCailíní (Castleblayney) were chosen by the Department of Education to participate in the Schools' Excellence Fund – STEM, a Government strategy to embed STEM in teaching and learning through collaborative clusters.

We added the Arts to our project, including the inquiry and problem-based learning methods used in the creative process. We believe STEAM education is the future because it develops 21st Century skills. We aim to emphasise STEAM by creating a professional learning community of STE(A)M Champions who engage in collaborative projects, creating knowledge and sharing best practice with other teachers and the wider school community.

Many teachers participated in CPD to



improve their understanding, confidence and competence, experiencing hands-on STEAM activities and receiving comprehensive curriculum-linked resources. The PDST also provided professional development opportunities such as using SeeSaw to record learning and LEGO WeDo. Teachers then collaborated to build a bank of STEAM lessons, shared on our website.

Our schools participated in initiatives such as Intel Mini Scientist, ESB Science Blast and VEX Robotics. STEAM experts visited our schools to speak to the

pupils. We wanted pupils, especially girls, to meet role models and to see the significance of STEAM in their daily lives. We invited local businesses to become sponsors or ambassadors. A STEM Fair was held to showcase our work and stakeholders were invited with over 700 people in attendance at one fair.

We can confidently say that we are now all STEM Champions. Over 2,000 children, 100 teachers and the wider community explored the wonder and creativity of STEAM Education. You can learn more via bit.ly/NESTEMChampions

MAGS LEONARD, BIO???



Vere Foster Medal

Ex-INTO President Mary Wagner presents the Vere Foster Medal to Shaunagh Maher at the recent Marino Institute of Education graduation ceremony in Trinity College Dublin. Shaunagh achieved the highest marks on School Placement on the B.Ed. degree. Also pictured: Dr Seán Delaney, Dr Julie Uí Choistealbha and Dr Joan Kiely, MIE.

Super stuff

St Etchen's NS, Kinnegad recently won €3,000 in the Avonmore Super Milk Super Science Experiment competition. L-R: principal Matt Melvin, pupils Dominykas and Molly, teacher Sandra Champkin, pupils Ava, Sophia and Caedyn and chair of the Parents Council Marina Donnelly. Pic: Chris Bellew /Fennell(Intern)



Proud to be me

The students, staff and community of Portlaoise ET were treated to a very colourful day in November when they officially raised their LGBTQI+ flag. The school was inspired by the union's campaign for inclusivity last year when the INTO presented Rainbow flags to schools all over Ireland.

ROZZ LEWIS, teacher, Portlaoise ET.