



Derg Valley Shared Education



February 2017

What is the Derg Valley Shared Education Signature Project?

Castlederg High School, Killen PS, St Caireall's PS, Erganagh PS, Langfield PS, St Joseph's PS and Ardstraw Jubilee PS have all been successful in an application for funding through The Signature Shared Education Project. The application was submitted in December 2015 and related activities have been rolled out since March 2016.

This is a 4 year programme where it is hoped that pupils and Teaching staff from all 7 schools involved and the local Community will benefit through enhanced learning experiences and opportunities. The programme will involve Year 6 and 7 pupils from the Primary Schools and Year 8 pupils from Castlederg High School. There will also be opportunities for pupils from other year groups in Castlederg High to become involved.

A lot of fun activities have been planned such as workshops where pupils are challenged to build structures using Lego, investigating the effects of gravity using marbles and even eggs, orienteering days in Gortin Glens and 'Scratch' computer programming sessions in Omagh.

A History of Collaboration in Education

The Shared Education programme is building on links that have existed between these schools for the last 10 years through the Extended Schools Project. It is a great opportunity for everyone involved to access additional resources and expertise. It helps to strengthen links between the Primary and Post-Primary sectors of education and will assist in the transition of pupils from Year 7 to Year 8. This will enable pupils to settle in to Year 8 much more quickly and to be more familiar with not only their surroundings, but Teaching staff and teaching methods and strategies. This will have an overall positive effect on pupil performance.



What do the Children think?

A recount from a child

Last year our school took part in the Shared Education Programme with other local primary schools. We had lots of fun and we learned many new things together.

The first day we went to Erganagh and we designed a shield that represented all the things we did and liked about our schools. I drew medals to represent our success in the different sports we all play. Mrs Wallace let us play games together so that we would get to know each other better. I had a great time meeting new friends and playing games.



On our second day we went to Killen and we got to do science experiments. We had to design and make parachutes that would keep an egg safe while being dropped from a height.

In my group I met two girls called Clara and Lara.



We had a lot of fun; each of us had a different job which meant we got the work done a lot quicker. Again we had games, ice breakers I think you call them which were led by Mr Crawford. I enjoyed them. To finish the day we got to make aeroplanes, it's not as easy as it looks!

On the final day we got to stay in our own school. We were scientists designing and making Marble Runs. We started with Ice Breaker games led by Mrs Dooher and it was easier now as we were getting to know each other better.

We were all getting competitive as we wanted to build the best Marble Run. It was good fun to see how they all worked when we shared our ideas at end. I loved working and learning with other schools and I am looking forward to next year.



Orienteering in Gortin Glens

On Tuesday 27th of September approximately 60 enthusiastic P6 pupils from Langfield, St Joseph's, Ardstraw Jubilee, Erganagh, Killen and St Caireall's Primary Schools joined together for a fun-filled event at Gortin Glen Forest Park. The Forestry Commission staff treated the children to an action-packed day of orienteering and various other forest games and activities which enabled them to become more aware of the surrounding environment and its inhabitants. This was a great opportunity for the pupils and staff to get to know each other better whilst enjoying the great outdoors. Everyone had an enjoyable day, worked well together and we are all looking forward to meeting again in the future.



Staff Training

Year 7 teachers from each of the partnership schools along with Castlederg High School's ICT Co-ordinator, attended Coding and Robotics training on the 4th of October 2016. Richard Watson, from the BYTES project, led the day; which included a session covering the basics of Scratch programming along with a brief overview of other coding programmes, including Minecraft and Raspberry Pi. The day ended with a fun session attempting to control a range of drones and robots and Richard gave suggestions as to how these could be used to enhance teaching and learning in different subject areas.

SCRATCH

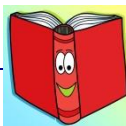
The Year 6 children undertook Scratch training at the Technology Education Centre, Omagh on three Tuesdays during the first term. The first session took place on Tuesday, 8th of November when the children were introduced to Scratch and followed the 'Getting Started' guide to introduce sprites into their work and



added movement and sound very successfully. This was then followed on 15th of November by the children animating their name or initials as a progression of the skills learned in the first session. This was followed by the addition of a 'Catch Game' where a sprite of their choice would catch falling items in their basket. Finally, on 6th of December the children had to extend their skills to make a 'Maze Game' that their sprite could navigate. All in all, three very successful training days, where the children really enjoyed and worked at successfully, improving their Scratch skills impressively. A big thanks to all those involved.

'What makes me me?'

At the most recent Shared Education activity the children were able to celebrate their differences and similarities. By playing a game entitled 'People Bingo' it was clear that we are all different. They also designed posters about what makes them unique and shared them with children from other schools. For the final activity they were in groups of six and they had to discuss six different pictures. Each group had to write three words which they would use to describe the person in each picture. Through this activity they learned never to judge a person based on their appearance.



I liked the people bingo and talking to other people about themselves.
I liked writing what we thought about the people in the pictures. I thought very differently about the people so I learnt 'don't judge a book by its cover.'

'Big Day Out'

A full day of activities awaited us in Castlederg High School. The pupils from all of the schools got the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities such as literacy, music and drama. The emphasis on this day was on fun, learning and co-operation. The pupils really enjoyed the 'Space' STEM based project. They enjoyed the wide range of activities on offer.

Fronter

Fronter is a virtual learning environment (VLE) used by millions of teachers and learners, at thousands of learning institutions around the world. It can be accessed anytime of the day or night from any computer that has internet access. In our cluster we are using it as a way of sharing photographs of the activities we have taken part in. Your child simply has to log on to their MySchool, at school or at home to see what they have been up to. **Why don't you have a look?**

