

**JCPRESS Urban Schools Initiative**  
**Report – Interim Report January '09**

Introduction:

The JCPRESS in September 2008, initiated a project to support a group of physical education teachers, working in schools with little or no facilities and with students who display challenging behaviour.

**Project Aims**

To provide to provide a group of physical education teachers in the Dublin area, with professional development which will empower them to address issues posed by their challenging work situations

**Objectives**

- To improve the physical education experience of their students by facilitating the development of innovative curriculum programs, based on the jcpe syllabus learning outcomes, suitable to the context of their learning environments
- To develop a model of good practice which can be used by teachers in similar circumstances

**Participating schools**

The following schools are participating in the initiative.

1	Robert Fennell	St Marys Secondary School, Baldoyle, Dublin 13
2	Eamonn McGinley	St Joseph's Secondary School, Convent Lane, Rush, Co. Dublin
3	Emer Kiely	St Joseph's Secondary School, Convent Lane, Rush, Co. Dublin
4	Barry Finn	Synge Street CBS, Synge Street, Dublin 8
5	Eimear Cullen	Patrician College, Deanstown Ave, Finglas West, Dublin 11
6	Dolores Heenan	Saint Dominic's Secondary School, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10
7	Elaine Dillon	Loreto College, Crumlin Road, Dublin 12
8	Martin Quinn	Loreto College, Crumlin Road, Dublin 12
9	Deirdre McDunphy	St Josephs Secondary School, Stanhope St, Dublin 7
10	*Emma Mc Cormick	Rosary College, Crumlin, Dublin 12
11	Alicia Halpin	Coláiste Eanna, Kilkieran Road, Cabra, Dublin 7
12	Eithne Davey	Technical Institute, Cambridge Road, Ringsend, Dublin 4
13	Hermine O'Keeffe	Marino College, 14-20 Marino Mart, Fairview, Dublin 3
14	Marie Clonan	Margaret Aylward Community College, The Thatch Road, Whitehall, Dublin 9
15	Sean Gallagher	Pobalscoil Rosmini, Gracepark Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9
16	Kevin McMahon	Pobalscoil Rosmini, Gracepark Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9

These teachers meet the criteria laid down for inclusion in the initiative: the schools are part of the DEIS programme (one school is awaiting outcome of application for DEIS status); have little or no facilities; principals have agreed to release teachers for three days in this academic year; teachers have agreed to form a community of practice and convene on at least three occasions outside of school time; and trial any ideas and/or strategies agreed.

\*This school replaced Our Lady Of Mercy Secondary School, Mourne Road, Drimnagh; who have not engaged with the project to date. It now transpires that Rosary College meets all of the criteria laid down for inclusion; despite reporting that they had a gym/sportshall when contacted initially re inclusion in this project

**Contributors and co-operating agencies**

The working group set up to direct the work of the initiate comprises Ger Murphy JCPRESS, Colm McGinty of the Irish Sports, Deborah Tannehill of PE PAYS Research Centre of the University of Limerick, and Marie Clonan participating teacher and representative of the PEAI

Deborah Tannehill, PE PAYS Research Centre of the University of Limerick, is acting as consultant to the project and her expertise and previous experience in working with physical educators in urban settings is proving invaluable.

The NBSS has agreed to work with the JCPESS in developing programmes to support these teachers.

### **Project Framework**

The initiative is made up of distinct stages with particular emphasis within each.

#### **Stage 1 (Sept. – Dec. 2008) Creating a community of practice.**

To date the group have met on 3 occasions:

1. This stage began with **the initial meeting of the group on 8<sup>th</sup> (evening) and 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2008.** Present were: fourteen of the teachers (two unable to attend); members of the working group; Mary O’Flaherty NCO who welcomed those in attendance and outlined the genesis and nature of the project and Grace Goc Karp a visiting lecturer from the University of Idaho

The seminar focused on:

- building working relationships between all parties involved
- undertaking an audit of where teachers are, in respect of their own capacities, interests and concerns in teaching physical education;
- Capacity building among the group of teachers by:
  - encouraging and facilitating teachers to talk about their own teaching practices and ideas and engage in critical discussion about these ideas with peers
  - ensuring that teachers’ knowledge of the subject matter, of teaching and learning, and of their students is shared and valued
  - encouraging teachers to identify their needs and seek avenues to provide for those needs
  - familiarising teachers with contemporary curriculum ideas;
- Identifying a programme of work which they will experiment with in their own schools and agreeing a mechanism for sharing the results of this experimentation.

### **Outcomes**

#### **Developing a community of practice**

- i) There was overwhelming support for the work of the initiative by the participating teachers who all reported finding the inservice very helpful. Comments included:
  - ‘Great to get the ball rolling- we needed to get together to start it so hopefully we’re on our way. Everyone very amenable and helpful’.
  - ‘Lets see if all we tried to discuss and organise we can do – if we do, it should be helpful’
- ii) A timetable of work for the year was set out and agreed
- iii) Two schools (2x2 teachers) agreed to run workshops for the group on the evening /night of 5<sup>th</sup> November.
- iv) Communication. A mailing list has been established for the group and a wiki has been created to facilitate the sharing of ideas and resources within the group

#### **2. Community of Practice Meeting and Workshop 5<sup>th</sup> November**

This evening workshop comprised two sessions led by teachers from two of the participating schools. Martin Quinn and Elaine Dillon from the host school, Loreto College Crumlin, gave a workshop in warm-up games and Eamonn McGinley and Emer Kiely, St Joseph’s Secondary School, Convent Lane, Rush conducted a session on skipping.

The sessions were considered very helpful by participants. Comments e.g. “I will definitely use all the ideas given to us last night. The handouts are great. I will soon have a good bank of ideas which will be very helpful for future” and “Excellent workshop. Materials very well presented. Thanks to all involved. Setting a very high standard for the rest of us!” reflected an appreciation of relevance of the content to the context in which they work.

3. **The second one-day seminar** took place on 11<sup>th</sup> December with a brief meeting on the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup>. The seminar focused on:

- i) Building relationships with service providers. The meeting was addressed by Coilín O'Reilly from Dublin City Council, 11 of the 13 schools are located in this area. This was a very positive and productive session with a commitment by the DCC representative to work toward the provision of orienteering facilities in the area; as part of an orienteering project to be undertaken by the group.
- ii) Following a meeting of the JCPSS and NBSS held on 13<sup>th</sup> October to identify how these teachers might be supported in dealing with students displaying challenging behaviour in the PE context, each participating school completed a questionnaire on the behaviour patterns of 10 of their students who display challenging behaviour. An initial analysis of the data was carried out and the results were used to inform a two hour workshop on behaviour management delivered by two members of the NBSS on the morning of 11<sup>th</sup> December. While the presentation was considered helpful, the teachers considered that there was a lack of appreciation of the PE context. There followed a very productive session where the teachers shared examples of strategies which they have found to be effective in dealing with challenging behaviour in physical education.
- iii) Deborah Tannehill conducted a session on how Frisbee games can be used to meet the learning outcomes in a number of areas of work in the JCPE. This session was reported as being very helpful by teachers.
- iv) Future work and direction.
  - (1) It was decided that time would be dedicated at the next meeting of the group to the development of schemes of work in all areas of work (except aquatics – in recognition of the particular difficulties associated with the provision of this area) at junior cycle.
  - (2) Individual teachers also choose to trial a new activity or teaching strategy and report on their experiences at the next meeting of the group

#### **Currently Stage 2 (Dec 2008 – February 2009)**

- Teachers trial the ideas and strategies agreed and
- Document and log experiences

#### **Stage 3**

- Sharing experiences
- Further capacity building
- A further programme of work

#### **Stage 4**

- Reflection on experience and on knowledge and resources amassed during project
- Identification of how such learning and sharing can be sustained among the group
- Identification of how this learning can be shared with teachers working in similar circumstances

#### **Support programme**

- A further meeting with the NBSS is scheduled for mid-January to identify how we can best support these teachers in dealing with students with challenging behaviour.
- Meeting with Dublin City Council to further the aforementioned orienteering project

#### **Data Collection**

Data collection has begun in recognition of the fact that this project has the potential to inform the development of models of good practice for teachers working in challenging environments. It can also serve as an opportunity to inform the development of professional development structures in physical education and indeed the wider educational community