

4th December

Press Release

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

Launch of

Well-being and Post-Primary Schooling: A review of literature and research

The Ombudsman for Children, Emily Logan launched this research report in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin today. The report was prepared by Dr. Maeve O' Brien and the human development team of St. Patrick's College for the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). Speaking at the launch, Ms. Logan said 'It is really important not to underestimate the impact that schools and teachers can have on children's and young people's well-being. Since I became Ombudsman for Children, I have been struck many times by how much an individual teacher can influence an individual child's or young person's life. On countless occasions children and young people have told me how much they love school or how important education is to them thanks to the attention, kindness, support and care of a particular teacher. Being able to inspire children and young people to realise their potential is also about being able to make sure that positive mental health is taken as seriously as any of the other many skills children and young people develop at school.'

The NCCA commissioned the research to support its work in developing curriculum and assessment in post-primary school. While issues of student achievement get considerable and justifiable attention in educational debates, issues of student happiness and well-being at school may only get a passing mention. Dr. Anne Looney, CEO of NCCA said

at the launch that it was notable that ‘in these most challenging of times it is personal and social resilience that may prove at least as important as the skills and competences we have as a population to how we emerge from this economic crisis’.

Both Dr. Looney and Dr. Pauric Travers, President of St. Patrick’s College who hosted the event stressed the importance of continuing to commit to research projects such as this one. Dr. Travers commended the NCCA for commissioning the work, and noted the importance of such work for the College. Dr. Looney noted that it would be easy to strike research from the priority list when resources are scarce but added that to do so would lead to a loss of evidence, insight and imagination – three essential requirements for any education system.

Dr. Maeve O’ Brien presented an overview of the findings and noted that student ‘ill-being’ often gets more attention than well-being. She also echoed the points made by Emily Logan noting that care and interconnection were central to students’ development and well-being. She added that these aspects of schooling were often overlooked in debates on class size and school resourcing.

Ends.

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