

## **20 June, 2019 - Minister McHugh launches PE through Irish – PE as Gaeilge**

Programme to use Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to teach Irish through another subject

The Minister for Education and Skills Joe McHugh T.D. has (today) Thursday 20th June, launched a project using PE classes to promote and support the learning of Irish.

Minister McHugh was joined at Maynooth University by Ireland soccer international Amber Barrett, a History and English teacher in Beneavin College, Finglas, Dublin, and Ireland rugby captain Ciara Griffin, a primary teacher in CBS Tralee, along with Peter Kelly, All-Star Kildare footballer and teacher in St Patrick's Boys School, Rathangan.

The PE as Gaeilge project will run as a pilot, using the CLIL methodology in primary and post-primary schools over three years, with the project expanding each year.

Launching the project, Minister McHugh said: "We must be ambitious in our approach to the language and how it is taught and endeavour to make it relevant to the next generation and instil a love of the language.

"Initiatives like this will help to take learning out of the classroom, to make it as simple as possible for children to use and improve their Irish in a fun and everyday way. We are also combining all those other benefits that come with PE – it is good for the mind and body and wellbeing."

As part of the launch, Mikaila Greenan and Colm Keane, who have just completed teacher education degrees at Maynooth University Froebel Department and undertook CLIL research, demonstrated PE as Gaeilge lessons with 4th class pupils of English-medium primary school Scoil San Carlo, Leixlip.

The aim of the PE as Gaeilge project is to improve school children's competence, disposition and confidence when learning the language. It will also support practitioners and teachers to implement a CLIL approach to language learning.

Minister McHugh said: "We hope that the project will see more and more children adopt Irish naturally when they are talking, playing and communicating in real contexts beyond the classroom."

Tony Sweeney, Curriculum and Methodologies Module Coordinator, Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education, said: "We welcome CLIL as a dual-focused approach in which Gaeilge is used meaningfully in the teaching and learning in quality Physical Education lessons.

“Froebel Department’s student teachers at Maynooth University have been successfully employing this approach on a cross-curricular basis during their primary school placements in recent years.”

The Department will seek Expressions of Interest from English-medium Early Years settings and Schools in September 2019 to participate in the project. Those not selected for the Year 1 pilot may be included in Year 2/3.

Year 1 (2019/20) will be a pilot developmental phase including two Early Years settings, five primary and five post-primary schools. They will work together to identify and develop the resources and supports required for teachers and practitioners. Continuing Professional Development will be provided with implementation in Early Years settings and the classrooms taking place in the third term. A wider roll-out of the approach will take place on an incremental basis in Years 2 and 3.

Minister McHugh said: “Amber Barrett and Ciara Griffin and Peter Kelly are fine sporting ambassadors and hit heights that the rest of us only wish for. I am delighted that they have lent their support to this PE as Gaeilge project and all the health and educational benefits it will bring.

“I believe that over time, this project and further initiatives to teach subjects through Irish will help students become fluent and to speak Irish without thinking.”

Further information on CLIL is available here: <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/20-Year-Strategy-for-the-Irish-Language/clil.pdf>

<https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2019-press-releases/PR19-06-20%20.html>