

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Offaly Primary Schools Websites Launched!

Over 280 people attended the presentation of Offaly primary schools websites on Wednesday evening February 25th last. This was the culmination of many months work involving Offaly County Enterprise Board and Laois Education Centre on the "Practical Enterprise Programme" project, which has proved to be a very worthwhile experience for all involved. In total 27 schools in Offaly benefited from the programme funded by Offaly County Enterprise Board and the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE).

The main aims of the project were to foster business and enterprise skills among the participating pupils while simultaneously facilitating and supporting the creation of an up to date website for each school.

Offaly County Enterprise Board visited each of the schools involved on two occasions and provided the pupils with thought provoking exercises in the area of team building, creative thinking, planning and goal setting. These highly interactive sessions allowed pupils to examine their reasons for creating a school website, develop their teamwork skills and think creatively as they developed their website. The pupils enthusiastically applied their newly acquired skills as they began planning their site structure and content.

Following these sessions, participating teachers attended 6 training sessions plus follow-on support evenings on 'How to Create a Schools Website using their Website X5 software', which was organised by Laois Education Centre under the NCTE Teaching Skills Initiative (TSI). These workshops were completely hands on and the childrens' work was used by the teachers as they learned how to design and create a website. The teachers then

returned to their classes each week to pass on these skills to their pupils and to receive further input and revisions from the authors of various pages. Each school was provided with a three-user license for **WebSite X5** , which is a completely visual software, that in just five steps allows the user to create, customize and publish professional websites. In addition, domain names (.ie) and hosting for a three year period was organised by Laois Education Centre.

The ongoing nature of a vibrant, up to date website was constantly emphasised to all involved throughout the project. A launch date was agreed on and so all schools, site complete or under development, gathered in the Tullamore Court Hotel to launch their site on February 25<sup>th</sup>. Both pupils and teachers confidently presented their sites to the assembled guests. All the schools in attendance had the opportunity to view other schools work and learn from their achievements.

Jim Enright, Director of Laois Education Centre MC'd the event and thanked teachers, pupils and everyone associated with the programme for their commitment. He spoke of the importance of partnerships supporting education with and stated that this project clearly demonstrated what can be achieved by working in partnership bodies like the County Enterprise Boards. Sean Ryan, CEO, Offaly County Enterprise Board acknowledged the work of Laois Education Centre and the schools and praised the standard of work on show. He also acknowledged the positive support from the Board of Offaly County Enterprise and Enterprise Ireland in making funds available for this project. Paddy Bates, speaking on behalf of the Management Committee in Laois Education Centre told all involved that the websites would be of huge benefit to not only the schools but the wider community and encouraged everyone to let all their relations and friends abroad know about the website.

Feedback from both pupils and teachers has been hugely positive towards this project. They feel they have learnt so much from the process and are

looking forward to continuously updating and improving their sites. It will be of benefit to the schools and the wider community for many years to come.

### Practical Enterprise Programme Participating Schools

No.	School	Address	
1	Shinrone National School	Shinrone	Birr
2	Carrig National School	Carrig	Birr
3	Seir Kieran National School	Clareen	Birr
4	Scoil Bhríde	Ballyboy	Kilcormac
5	S N Chiarain Naofa	Clonmacnoise	Shannonbridge
6	St Joseph's National School	Arden View	Tullamore
7	St Francis National School	Clara	Clara
8	St Rynagh's National School	Banagher	Banagher
9	St Colman's National School	Cappagh	Croghan
10	Scoil Bhríde	Kilcruttin	Tullamore
11	Ballybryan National School		Rhode
12	Scoil Bhríde	Croghan	Rhode
13	Ballinamere National School	Ballinamere	Tullamore
14	S N Naomh Brogain	Bracknagh	Rathangan
15	Scoil Mhuire	Cloneygowan	Tullamore
16	Geashill National School	Geashill	Tullamore
17	Clonlisk National School	Clonlisk	Shinrone
18	St Joseph's National School	Moneygall	Birr
19	Dunkerrin National School	Dunkerrin	Birr
20	St Colman's National School	Mucklagh	Tullamore
21	Gaelscoil an Eiscir Riada	Cluain Calga	Tullamore
22	Coolderry Central National School	Coolderry	Birr
23	Scoil Naomh Eoin	Rath	Birr
24	Scoil Eoin Phoil	Arden View	Tullamore
25	Daingean National School	Daingean	
26	Killeigh National School	Killeigh	Tullamore
27	Walsh Island National School	Walsh Island	Tullamore