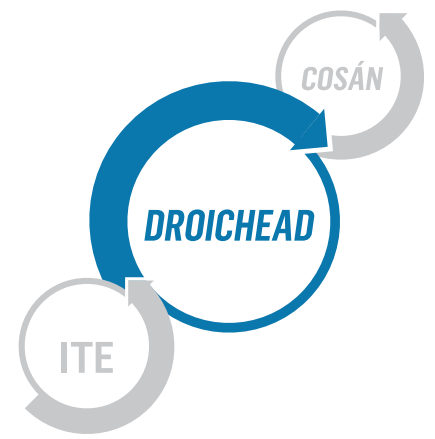




Droichead: Quality Assurance Report

January 2017

An Chomhairle
Mhúinteoireachta

The Teaching Council



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Glossary

Associate

An associate is a practising and fully-registered teacher who is also an experienced mentor and/or induction workshop facilitator, nominated by the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) to support the *Droichead* process in *Droichead* schools.

Continuum of Teacher Education

This describes the formal and informal educational and developmental activities in which teachers engage, as lifelong learners, during their teaching careers. It encompasses initial teacher education, induction, early and continuing professional development and later career support.

Droichead

Droichead, a period of supported professional practice, is a central feature of an integrated framework of induction which was piloted in a number of schools. Following completion of the *Droichead* process, newly qualified teachers are recommended by fellow professionals as being ready to move to the next phase of the continuum of teacher education. Upon this recommendation, the Teaching Council will remove the *Droichead* condition from the teacher's registration.

Mentor

A mentor is an experienced teacher who has completed Initial Mentor Training with the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT). He or she supports the professional learning of a newly qualified teacher and facilitates his or her induction into the school and the profession, in collaboration with colleagues.

National Induction Programme for Teachers

The National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) is a State-funded support service that co-ordinates the provision of a multi-faceted induction programme for teachers. Full-time team members, Regional Development Officers (RDOs), are supported in their work by a team of associates (see above).

Newly qualified teacher (NQT)

This refers to a teacher who meets the Council's requirements in terms of qualifications, but has not completed the required period of professional practice. In this document, newly qualified teacher (NQT) refers to all newly registered teachers who are beginning their teaching career, or may be returning to teaching after a period of absence, regardless of their date of qualification.

Professional learning portfolio

A professional learning portfolio is developed over time by each NQT, to support the process of reflection on his or her practice. The portfolio may provide a focus for the professional conversations that are central to *Droichead* and thus enable the NQT to identify areas in which he or she may need support or guidance.

Professional Support Team (PST)

The Professional Support Team is a team of experienced and fully-registered teachers, who work collaboratively to support the NQT during the *Droichead* process.

List of acronyms

DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (Department of Education and Skills policy Instrument to address educational disadvantage)
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
NIPT	National Induction Programme for Teachers
PST	Professional Support Team

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to Droichead Quality Assurance (DQA)

Droichead refers to the period of professional practice that an NQT in a *Droichead* school is required to undertake following his or her initial registration.

As stated in *Droichead A Guide for Schools 2015/2016*, it is vitally important that robust systems are put in place for assuring the quality and consistency of both the process and the recommendations made at the end of the process. For this reason, the *Droichead* Quality Assurance process was initiated with a view to examining the quality and consistency of the *Droichead* process in a number of schools involved in the pilot phase (which commenced in September 2013). The schools' experiences as outlined in this report are based on the policy arrangements that were in place during the **pilot phase**. It is noteworthy that upon conclusion of the *Droichead* pilot, there have been a number of significant changes made to *Droichead* policy, based on the feedback from participating schools. For the remainder of this report, the *Droichead* Quality Assurance process will be referred to as DQA.

The conceptualisation of the DQA process has changed significantly since the early stages of policy development. In the first iteration of the *Droichead Guide for Schools 2013/2014* (for year 1 of the pilot), it was envisaged that the Inspectorate would have an important quality assurance role by evaluating the work of a sample of NQTs who had completed the *Droichead* process in schools, through observation of their classroom practice. This approach was discussed further by primary schools participating in the first year of the pilot, at a cluster meeting in February 2014. A significant level of concern was voiced by these schools in relation to the proposed approach. As a result, the Teaching Council reconsidered this approach to quality assurance. An alternative DQA process was developed and approved by Council in July 2014. The alternative DQA process takes cognisance of the core values of the Teaching Council; shared professional responsibility; professionally-led regulation, and collective professional confidence. This is reflected in the composition of the DQA (see Section 3) panels, which looks to the profession to assume responsibility not only for the induction of NQTs into the profession, but also the quality assurance of that process.

1.2 Purpose of DQA

The purpose of the DQA process is to examine both the quality and consistency of *Droichead* across schools, and also how NQTs' experiences reflect this quality and consistency. In achieving this, it is intended that the DQA process will seek to:

- assure the Teaching Council that the process is consistent across a range of different school types;
- ensure that the recommendations made to the Teaching Council in relation to NQTs have been made in adherence to the processes described in the Teaching Council's *Droichead Guide for Schools 2015/2016*;
- make recommendations to the Teaching Council in relation to the procedures for quality assurance for the *Droichead* process.

A secondary purpose of this process is to promote and develop a shared understanding across schools about what works well in *Droichead*, within various school contexts.

From the outset, in recognition of different school contexts, the focus was very much placed on consistency rather than uniformity across participating schools.

The following key principles guided the DQA process for 2015/2016:

- shared professional responsibility and professionally-led regulation;
- sharing good practice;
- the NQT is central to the process;
- fairness and consistency.

This is not a research report. The purpose of this document is to outline the findings of the DQA panels as a result of visits to a number *Droichead* schools. It is intended that this process will inform future policy development in relation to quality assurance. The findings of the research on the pilot phase of *Droichead*, conducted by the ESRI, can found in the report *Review of the Droichead Teacher Induction Pilot Programme* (2016).

2 School Selection

All schools that participated in *Droichead* during Year 1 (2013-2014) and Year 2 (2014-2015) of the pilot were invited to self-nominate for the DQA process. Almost 50 *Droichead* schools (primary and post-primary) expressed an interest in participating in the DQA process. A total of eight schools were selected, four from primary and four from post-primary. The selection endeavoured to include a broad cross-section of school types which included the following:

- a range of school types (e.g., DEIS / Non-DEIS / ETB / Single-sex / Co-ed / Community School / Voluntary secondary / Gaelscoil) and locations (geographical spread and urban / rural locations);
- small schools with teaching principals in primary sector;
- special schools.

2.1 Anonymisation

Schools participating in the DQA process are anonymised in this report. The schools' profiles are generalised and the schools are referred to using the anonymisation codes as outlined in the table below:

School A	School A is a rural primary school with seven teachers and a teaching principal. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> school in 2014-2015. The PST was formed from within the school, and all members completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Two NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process in this school.
School B	School B is a Special School with six teachers, in an urban area. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> school in 2014-2015. The PST was formed within the school and all PST members completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Two NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process in this school.
School C	School C is a primary school with 15 teachers and an administrative principal, in a rural area. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> school in 2014-2015. The PST was formed from within the school and all members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. One NQT has completed the <i>Droichead</i> process in the school.
School D	School D is a large mainstream primary school with 21 teachers with an administrative principal, in an urban area. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> school in 2014-2015. The PST was formed from within the school and all members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Three NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process in the school.
School E	School E is a DEIS post-primary school with 40 teachers, in an urban area. It is a single-sex school. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> school in 2013-2014 and all PST members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Four NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process in the school.
School F	School F is a single-sex fee-paying secondary school with 43 teachers. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> school in 2013-2014 and all members of the PST have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Seven NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process in the school.
School G	School G is a mixed community school in a rural area with 80 teachers. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> school in 2013-2014 and all members of the PST have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Six NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process in the school.
School H	School H is a mixed community school in a rural area with 47 teachers. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> school in 2013-2014 all PST members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Three NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> Process in the school.

The eight schools selected represent a total of 24 PST members (including eight principals). Within these schools, the panels met with a total of 12 NQTs who had experienced and completed the *Droichead* process.

3 *Droichead* Quality Assurance Panels

3.1 Composition of the Panels

The composition and work of the DQA panels may be summarised as follows:

Review panels are established by the Teaching Council to quality assure the *Droichead* process. Each panel includes an independent Chairperson, a registered teacher from the relevant sector and a person with expertise in the support and/or evaluation of teaching and learning at school level. The review panel visits a sample of schools where the *Droichead* process has taken place, discusses the process with the Principal, the PST and the NQT and reviews the PST's and NQT's records in relation to the process. Such visits are pre-arranged and take place in a spirit of collegiality and collaboration. Following its review, the panel submits a report to the Teaching Council setting out its findings and recommendations in relation to the process. The report is considered by the Council and, following ratification, is published on the Council's website and circulated to the NIPT and the Inspectorate.¹

In December 2015, two DQA panels, one primary and one post-primary, were established by the Teaching Council. In order to ensure consistency, one Chairperson was appointed to oversee the work of both panels. A Teaching Council Associate, acting in the role of rapporteur, supported the work of each panel. DQA panel membership can be found in Appendix 1.

Each panel visited the selected schools relevant to its sector. The Chairperson visited all schools, both primary and post-primary. This report outlines the findings of these visits.

3.2 Preparation for the DQA Process

On 8 December 2015, the panels met in the Teaching Council offices in Maynooth to engage in professional development before the school visits. On that day the panels were briefed in full on the *Droichead* process, including the procedures and criteria involved in the process, the rationale for DQA and the roles and responsibilities of the panel members. A visit schedule and provisional dates for drafting and finalising the report were also agreed by panels and rapporteurs on that day.

¹ *Droichead A Guide for Schools 2015/2016*, p. 23

4 Process for *Droichead* Quality Assurance

4.1 School Visits

All school visits for the DQA process were carried out in a spirit of collegiality and co-operation. Visits took place between 19 January and 25 February 2016.

During each school visit the panels met with the school's Principal, PST members and also with the NQTs who had completed the *Droichead* process. The meetings were conducted in an open and collaborative manner and notes were recorded by the Rapporteur.

At the end of each visit, the panels met briefly to define the emerging themes of the visit and to consider same with a view to determining levels of consistency with other schools participating in the DQA process.

5 Droichead Quality Assurance Findings

The findings from each school have been compiled and a composite image has emerged that covers planning and implementing the *Droichead* process as it was experienced by NQTs and schools during the pilot phase of *Droichead*. Each is examined separately below.

5.1 Planning for *Droichead*

The overall findings of both the DQA panels under this heading can be summarised under three main sub-headings:

- the formation of the PST;
- planning for the *Droichead* process, and
- the mapping of the *Droichead* criteria onto *Examples of Good Practice in our School*.

5.1.1 The formation of the PST

The PST is a team of experienced and fully-registered teachers, who work collaboratively to support NQTs during the *Droichead* process. PSTs were formed in all schools, and all members of the PST have completed a programme of professional learning for *Droichead*, facilitated by the NIPT.

The following points were noted by the DQA panels:

- PST members were selected based on a combination of factors, including mentoring experience, an interest in the development of teaching and learning and possession of the interpersonal skills required to provide support for an NQT.
- The PSTs were consistently very supportive of many aspects of NQTs' progress; this is due to the personal and professional attributes outlined above, and also to the skills gained through the NIPT's programme of professional learning for *Droichead*.
- The PSTs acknowledged the important role of support from the NIPT in enabling them to develop consistency in their approach to the *Droichead* process at school level.
- PST members in all schools indicated that their own professional learning was enhanced by their involvement in the *Droichead* process.
- At post-primary level, support for NQTs in curriculum knowledge and appropriate assessment standards was enhanced when a member of the PST taught the same subject area. However, this was not always possible, as it was dependent on school capacity, particularly where there were single-teacher subject departments.
- The role of the Principal on the PST was acknowledged as being of key importance in all settings. This role involved planning for the *Droichead* process and classroom observations, in addition to retaining an oversight role.

5.1.2 Planning for the *Droichead* process

The planning of the *Droichead* process, including timelines for observations and concluding the process, was discussed during each school visit. In all schools, planning for the *Droichead* process was evident.

The DQA panels also noted the following points in relation to how these eight schools planned for *Droichead*:

- It was apparent that sufficient time was given to the process by the PST and the support of the Principal in facilitating quality engagement was generally evident.
- The involvement of the NQT in the planning process was also evident. Initial meetings were held among the PST members and with the NQTs to outline roles and expectations during the year.
- In both primary and post-primary schools, meetings were held formally and informally outside of school time due to a reluctance to draw down the release time allowed for the *Droichead* process. Some solutions to these challenges were noted in the visits. A post-primary school – school G – allocated one class per week on a PST member's timetable for meetings with NQTs. This was noted as of particular benefit as it highlighted the value of mentoring during the *Droichead* process in the school, and enabled those involved to meet without impacting on class contact time.

The panels noted that due to the differing contexts of the primary and post-primary sectors, there were understandable differences as to how the process was planned and timelines adhered to:

- At primary level, the nature of the substitution model (one-day blocks), meant that the planning of induction activities, including observations, had to be very structured from the outset of the process.
- The benefits of early support for the NQT were noted in primary, particularly in relation to classroom management.
- The flexibility inherent in the substitution model available to the post-primary sector (for hourly blocks) meant that strict adherence to the planned timeline of induction activities, including observations, was not as evident as in the primary sector.

5.1.3 Mapping of *Droichead* Criteria onto *Examples of Good Practice in our School*

In order to guide the process, *Droichead* criteria and *Indicators of Good Practice* were developed by the Teaching Council. When participating in *Droichead*, schools are encouraged to further refine these onto *Examples of Practice in our School* to make them practicable for both the PSTs and the NQTs. The use of these criteria is key to ensuring a consistent approach to the *Droichead* process across different school settings. The following points summarise the findings of the panels in this regard:

- Most schools used the *Droichead* criteria explicitly from the start of the process, although some schools developed their use of the criteria over time. In some instances, PSTs revisited their *Examples of Practice in our School* to clarify expectations for the NQTs. The panels found that criteria used to guide the process in this way aided consistency throughout the *Droichead* process.
- The development of the *Examples of Practice in our School* was also seen as beneficial for the school as a whole. Many schools saw the criteria as having relevance for all staff and found that the effective sharing of the *Examples of Practice in our School* with all staff helped the visibility and understanding of the *Droichead* process in the school.
- In some instances the NQT participated in the meeting where these examples were devised, which helped with his or her understanding of the school's context and his or her inclusion in the process.

5.2 Implementing *Droichead*

The overall findings of the DQA panels under this heading can be summarised under six main sub-headings:

- Building the seamless continuum
- Professional conversations
- NQT experiences
- Observations of teaching and learning
- Professional learning portfolio
- Concluding the *Droichead* process

5.2.1 Building the seamless continuum

Schools acknowledged the links made across the continuum of teacher education as a result of *Droichead*. The supportive structures put in place for NQTs in individual schools were often also linked to supporting the experiences of the student teachers in those schools. The experience of working with the NQTs was also stated to have complemented the continuing professional development of all teachers on PSTs.

5.2.2 Professional Conversations

The primary and post-primary panels both heard evidence of a consistent approach to professional conversations in the eight schools visited. In each of the schools visited, the conversations were seen as central to the *Droichead* process.

5.2.3 The Experience of the NQT

The *Droichead* process provided NQTs with an induction into the teaching profession, including their socialisation into the core values inherent in the profession, such as respect, care, integrity and trust. These values, although difficult to measure or articulate, were alluded to by the schools involved in the DQA process.

The consistency of NQTs' experience of the *Droichead* process was a key area of consideration for the DQA panels. The panels sought to find whether there was consistency across schools in terms of the NQTs' understanding of the *Droichead* process and the support NQTs experienced during the *Droichead* process.

In eliciting the NQT responses across the eight schools participating in the DQA process, the following findings were evident:

- The NQTs felt that they were "gifted with the relationship" in terms of being mentored by members of the PST. The instant support offered in the school by PST members who would offer advice and counsel when it was most needed was consistently highly valued.
- The NQTs reported that the support from the PST reinforced their confidence in what they were doing well and also enabled their growth and development as professionals. In particular, the professional conversations with the Principal were noted as being very positive experiences.
- Many NQTs at post-primary level found that the greatest difficulty encountered was the pressure of attaining curriculum content knowledge across the broad spectrum of class settings. The impact of facing a full 22-hour timetable with several subject areas across both junior and senior cycles – pacing lessons appropriately and acquiring appropriate assessment standards – was cited as the area in which the NQTs required most support. This immediate need for syllabus mastery was a cause of concern for the NQTs. At post-primary level, NQTs on reduced hours found this reduction in contact hours to be very beneficial as it facilitated greater opportunities for learning and reflection.
- Some NQTs reported a lack of clarity around the *Droichead* process and felt that greater guidance was needed in relation to some aspects of the process.

5.2.4 Observations of Teaching and Learning

In the context of *Droichead*, observation refers to the observation by the NQT of the classroom practice of experienced teachers, and to the observation of the practice of NQTs by PST members. These are considered separately below:

○ Observations by the NQT

All NQTs had the opportunity to observe other teachers. These observations were reported to be very beneficial to the learning of NQTs. Most NQTs had at least three opportunities to observe other teachers teaching.

NQTs reported the benefits of all observations that they engaged in and stated that the observations helped them in specific aspects of their teaching and with specific cohorts of students. Challenges existed in some situations in relation to the availability of opportunities to observe in relevant settings relevant to each NQT. At primary level where single-class or multi-class situations existed, there were limited opportunities to observe the same class level being taught. At post-primary level, where a single-teacher subject department existed, NQTs had limited opportunities to observe their subject being taught.

For this type of observation, there was some lack of clarity noted around the most suitable feedback template to use for the observation of another teacher by the NQT.

○ Observations of the NQT

Observations of the NQT formed a central element to the *Droichead* process in all schools. The number of observations varied from three to more than five

- Observations were characterised as a collaborative enterprise. All schools agreed that the professional conversations / feedback between the NQT and PST following observations were constructive and beneficial to the *Droichead* process.
- The NIPT templates were consistently lauded as aiding the process of initiating professional conversations and reflective practice. NQTs welcomed feedback and felt that it enhanced both their confidence and skills as teachers. The formative and supportive nature of the feedback provided an opportunity to discuss specific areas for enhancing NQTs' practice. Some PST members noted the need for additional guidance and professional development, particularly in the area of feedback, to supplement the language needed for authentic engagement in the process of supporting their NQT. In addition to this, some PST members expressed concerns regarding the practice of limiting comments on the template to those solely of a positive nature. The need for clarification and ongoing training in this area was highlighted.
- The NQT-led focus of the conversations enabled ownership of the *Droichead* process by the NQT. Some PST members noted that although the conversations were led by the NQT, each post-observation conversation provided opportunities for PST members to highlight matters that were considered of inherent importance to the standards of teaching and learning expected in the school.

5.2.5 The Professional Learning Portfolio

It is important to note that at the early stages of the *Droichead* pilot the understanding of the purpose of the portfolio was evolving and so, for the schools, PSTs, and NQTs involved at this stage of policy development, the non-prescriptive nature of the professional learning portfolio presented challenges. The following areas of consistency were found by the panels:

- Professional learning portfolios were used by the majority of NQTs in the *Droichead* process in the pilot schools.
- A variety of formats of collection were used by the NQTs in this context. These included diaries, folders, artefact collection and online portfolios.
- Some NQTs benefited from clarifications received at cluster meetings and from their PST in relation to their professional learning portfolio. Some NQTs spoke about having to revisit their initial perceptions, understanding and work in relation to the purpose of constructing a portfolio.
- The emphasis from the NQTs' perspective tended to be on the collection for their portfolios rather than on the process of selection and reflection involved.
- Some NQTs reported that professional conversations with their PST or at cluster meetings about the professional learning portfolio were very beneficial in aiding reflective practice.

5.2.6 Concluding the process

In general, the schools participating in the DQA process reported that the conclusion of *Droichead* did not cause challenges for schools. It was reported by some Principals that there was a need for greater clarity of procedures to be followed when an additional period of time was required.

In the primary schools participating in the DQA process, it was a common practice to include a final observation (usually by the Principal). It was also reported that some schools experienced difficulties completing the process within their agreed timeframe, where they had not built in flexibility should an NQT require more time.

All schools involved in the DQA process consistently reported their positive experiences of *Droichead*. The schools noted the positive impact *Droichead* had on school culture. In particular, repeated reference was made to the development of a collaborative culture within schools and the fact that *Droichead* complemented other areas of leadership growth. Some schools also commented on the potential within the *Droichead* process to develop distributed and functional leadership across the staff and, so, to build capacity in leading teaching and learning across the school.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Recommendations in relation to *Droichead*

In order to ensure the quality and consistency of the *Droichead* process in schools, the panels made the following recommendations:

6.1.1 Planning for the *Droichead* process

- Clarity of message from the outset for all involved in the *Droichead* process is vital in ensuring quality and consistency. A clear and shared understanding in relation to roles, responsibilities and expectations among the NQT, PST members and the Principal is vital from the beginning of the process.
- Use of clear **communication** throughout the process was found to be a key element in ensuring consistency. It is important that in all communications regarding *Droichead*, ranging from professional conversations with PST members to NIPT cluster meetings, the same message is consistently maintained.
- Explicit use of ***Droichead* criteria**, and contextualised development of these, would aid consistency across schools. NIPT support to schools in their development is key to ensuring the quality and consistency of the *Droichead* process.
- Maintaining **records** that support the *Droichead* process and ensure clarity of understanding of both the NQT and PST, such as completed feedback forms, would be very beneficial, especially should an NQT experience difficulty.
- Clearer guidelines on procedures for schools to support them in circumstances where an **NQT is experiencing difficulty** would aid consistency of the *Droichead* process across schools, while also alleviating the concerns of PSTs in relation to challenges that may arise.
- Subject to the Council's minimum duration requirements, the importance of deciding on a timeframe for the process that is appropriate for the NQT's learning should be highlighted as part of PST professional development.

6.1.2 The *Droichead* process in schools

- It is important that the *Droichead* process is supported by a **whole-school approach**, working in collaboration with the wider system.
- **Time**, and the use of same, emerged as a strong concern in the meetings in all schools. The availability of flexible and easily accessed *Droichead* release time would support the quality, consistency and sustainability of the process.
- The continued **support of the NIPT** in mapping out the process in schools, and subsequent visits to follow up on PST professional development, will be very beneficial in maintaining a common understanding of the collegiate nature of the process and a consistent approach across schools, particularly with regard to the use of the criteria to be embedded in school culture.

6.2 Recommendations in relation to the *Droichead* Quality Assurance process

In the light of the work done in *Droichead* Quality Assurance this year, a number of considerations arise as to how the DQA process can contribute to and enhance policy and practice. The following aspects need to be further examined and explored:

- The **composition of DQA panels** and the structure of school visits in the context of a larger cohort of schools. Panels should have a minimum of two people and should also have expertise in the area of special education, have capacity to work in Gaelscoileanna and have sectorspecific knowledge.
- The **sample size and selection mechanisms** for schools involved in DQA, in the context of a larger cohort of schools and in keeping with best practice for robust systems for quality assurance.
- Mechanisms to provide **feedback** to the Teaching Council and/or to individual schools participating in the DQA process to inform policy development and ensure quality enhancement throughout the process.

Appendices

Appendix 1: DQA Panel Membership

PRIMARY PANEL

Chair: Jerry Cronin

A former teacher and Secondary School Principal, Jerry Cronin served on the second Teaching Council, as a nominee of second-level management. He has chaired Boards of Management at primary and post-primary levels. He currently chairs the Board of Laurel Hill Secondary School, Glenstal Secondary School and also the Le Chéile Schools' Trust Board of Directors

As an Advisor to the National Curriculum Advisory Group, he contributes to formulation of the Joint Managerial Body's curricular policy. He is a member of Limerick's Southside Education Consortium and in this capacity participated in the development of Limerick's Southside Education Campus. As a member of an interagency working group, he has recently been engaged on the development of a Quality Assurance Framework for children's services in Limerick.

Kathleen O'Connor

A graduate of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Kathleen taught in Scoil na Mainistreach, Celbridge, Co. Kildare and St Joseph's N.S., Ballyadams, Co. Laois, where she was appointed Principal in 1999. Long convinced of the power of CPD to enhance the professional life of the teacher, Kathleen returned to St Patrick's College in 1996 to engage in post-graduate studies. While working in Ballyadams she joined the management committee of Laois Education Centre and has acted as Chair of the centre and regional representative to the board of ATECI. A life-long member of the INTO Kathleen supported the union's pro-active stance in relation to the formation of the Teaching Council of Ireland and she was elected to serve as a Council Member in 2012. Kathleen retired from teaching in 2014 and is currently engaged in post-graduate study.

Brendan Doody

Brendan Doody has worked in the Inspectorate since 2000. He was appointed to the role of Assistant Chief Inspector in the Department of Education and Skills in December 2015. Prior to that, he was assigned to the School Improvement and Quality Unit in the Inspectorate, working mainly on areas relating to social inclusion, school self-evaluation and teacher education. Prior to his appointment to the Inspectorate, he worked as a Principal in a primary school and as a teacher in a DEIS school.

Rita Nic Amhlaoibh

Rita Nic Amhlaoibh is a Senior Inspector with the Department of Education and Skills, and a former Principal. Her work in the Department has included responsibility for evaluating the work of an extensive number of primary probationary teachers over many years. She works as part of the team with responsibility for probation in the Inspectorate Policy Support Unit, which focuses on overall School Improvement and Quality. Rita provides advice and support on behalf of the Inspectorate to the *Droichead* pilot scheme at Regional level.

POST-PRIMARY PANEL

Chair: Jerry Cronin

A former teacher and Secondary School Principal, Jerry Cronin served on the second Teaching Council, as a nominee of second-level management. He has chaired Boards of Management at primary and post-primary levels. He currently chairs the Board of Laurel Hill Secondary School, Glenstal Secondary School and also the Le Chéile Schools' Trust Board of Directors

As an Advisor to the National Curriculum Advisory Group, he contributes to formulation of the Joint Managerial Body's curricular policy. He is a member of Limerick's Southside Education Consortium and in this capacity participated in the development of Limerick's Southside Education Campus. As a member of an interagency working group, he has recently been engaged on the development of a Quality Assurance Framework for children's services in Limerick.

Lily Cronin

Lily Cronin was re-elected to the Teaching Council in the Connacht/Munster/Ulster, Voluntary (post-primary) constituency. A native of Killarney, Lily teaches at Mercy Mounthawk Secondary School, Tralee. She is the former Chairperson of the Council and has an in-depth knowledge of its functions. Lily's vision is that the Council will enhance the status of the profession and represent the professional views of the teacher.

Kate O'Carroll

Kate O'Carroll is a post-primary senior Inspector with the Department of Education and Skills. She has carried out both whole-school evaluations and subject inspections of English in the course of her work in the Inspectorate. Kate is currently assigned to the School Improvement and Quality Unit within the Inspectorate, and has liaised since 2013 with the National Induction Programme for Teachers with regard to the *Droichead* pilot in post-primary schools. In this capacity she has delivered inputs at a number of training days for members of professional support teams, and has worked with a number of inspector colleagues to develop examples of attainment based on the *Droichead* evaluation criteria and indicators of good practice.

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