

Final Report

2016-2017



School Details

School Name	Rathfarnham Educate Together National School
School Address	Loreto Avenue
	<u>Rathfarnham</u>
	Dublin 14
Teacher Name	<u>Aileen Cronin</u>



Historical

Please outline below how your school fulfilled the criteria for the historical section of the Blue Star Programme highlighting in particular where technology was used for this project work. Feel free to add photos where you can.

Sixth Class began their Blue Star Work by learning about the history of the European Union – when it was founded, how many members it first had, it's raison d'etre in the period after two World Wars etc. They synopsised this work in a presentation prepared for the visit of E.U. Ambassador, Mr. David Daly, and his family to mark the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome on March 25, 2017. (See photos of visit later in this report).

Sixth Class also did **video projects** on famous Europeans who have shaped our lives, from Albert Einstein to Coco Chanel to Leonardo Da Vinci and Anne Frank. They chose a historical European of particular interest to them, did all their own historical research and then created their own video, doing all editing, addition of musical backing tracks etc themselves. Links to a selection of these videos are attached below. Three of these were shown on the occasion of the visit of E.U. Ambassador, Mr. David Daly and were extremely well received.



Fifth Class also learnt about the history of the E.U. and why it was formed. Each child completed two projects. The first of these was on the E.U. itself, its history, Institutions and the different roles it plays. The second project focused on the 28 member countries. Fifth Class also each chose an influential European person about whom to learn. Their projects were among the displays shown to MEP Marian Harkin on the occasion of her visit to the school on Friday, April 28 and to the wider school community (parents, friends etc.) at an Open Morning to mark Europe Day on Tuesday, May 9th. (See photos below).













Fourth Class did fact files on the member countries of the E.U. As there are more than 28 children, those that could not pick a single country instead did a fact file on the E.U. itself. Sub-headings for the factfiles included History, Flag, Population, Language, Music, Culture, Currency and Landscape. Fourth Class say they learnt many, many interesting facts. They now know, for example, that the twelve stars on the E.U. flag symbolise protection and unity and that the population of Europe went up to 508 million on January 1, 2015. A fun fact that they enjoyed was that the airport in Brussels sells more chocolates than any other single location on earth!

Third Class learned about the history of European Folk Tales. They each picked an E.U. country and researched a folktale from that country. Stories included "The Devil's Barn" from Belgium, "The Naughty Monster" from Poland and "The Hedgehog" from Hungary. They retold the stories to their classmates and voted on which would be the best to dramatise. They then acted out the stories in small groups, having written their own scripts and resourced all costumes and props themselves. Their teacher recorded the dramas which were then shown to the school community during the Open Morning for Europe Day on May 9. A selection of these recordings are attached to the email acompanying this document.

Second Class made individual E.U. fact books in which they recorded interesting facts about E.U. countries. They also had visitors from Bulgaria and Finland who told them many interesting facts, including historical facts, about their countries. See photo belowl



First Class focused on Hungary this year. They had a visitor from Hungary who shared many interesting facts about his country. For history, First Class learnt about famous Hungarians such as Kodaly, Biro, Rubik and Houdini, and famous Hungarian inventions. They also learnt about traditional dress, dance, song and food and about Hungarian folktales. See photo of the First Class Display on Hungary below.





Senior Infants focused on Germany, Poland and Spain for the Blue Star Programme. For history they focused mainly on the Grimm Brothers, Wilhelm and Jakob, and all the Fairytales they collected. They learnt that, without the Grimm Brothers, many wonderful fairytales would have been lost. Senior Infants had lots of fun hearing some of the stories and drawing wonderful pictures inspired by the characters and settings. They then engaged in an etwinning project with a school in Poland whereby they exchanged drawings of fairytales and wrote responses to each other's work (see cultural section for more on this). Photos of Senior Infants Fairytales are seen below while those from Poland can be seen in the Cultural and Creative section of the report. Senior Infants also learnt some Spanish history this year. They learnt all about eight year old Maria who, along with her archaelogist father, discovered prehistoric paintings on the ceilings of caves in Altamira. They studied images of the paintings, done in charcoal and ochre, and the animals depicted such as bison and aurochs. They also learned all about the hunters who painted them and the type of lives they led.





Junior Infants focused on France and Italy this year. Presentations by parents from France and Italy covered many areas, such as traditions, music, language and food – all important elements of the history and culture of both countries. Irish history was not overlooked either. Building on work done last year for the Anniversary of 1916, children throughout the school continue to learn about events in Ireland in the early part of the 20th century. Junior Infant's introduction to Irish history came in the form of reading "A Dublin Fairytale". They also joined with the whole school in singing "Molly Malone" at Assembly and in singing "Óro sé do Bheatha Abhaile" for the EU Ambassador, Mr. David Daly.





Geographical

Please outline below how your school fulfilled the criteria for the geographical section of the Blue Star Programme. Feel free to add photos where you can.

Sixth Class learned about the capital cities of each of the 28 E.U. member states . They also learned about famous European landmarks such the Trevi Fountain in Rome, the Eiffel Tower in Paris and Italy's Leaning Tower of Pisa. They did sketches of these landmarks which were displayed in the classroom for the visit of Marian Harkin MEP and for the Open Morning on Europe Day.



Fifth Class Class's project focusing on the 28 member countries incorporated many geographical elements, including some of the major natural features in each country, the flag and capital city of each country as well as significant aspects of economic geography, e.g. main trading products, industries, types of agriculture etc.



Fourth Class's Fact Files on the 28 E.U. countries similarly involved considerable focus on Geography – key geographical features (lakes, rivers, mountains), population, currency etc. Children first explored the relative locations of their respective chosen countries on the map of Europe and then researched and wrote about the key aspects mentioned. All the information was then brought together in individual booklets with accompanying maps, photographs or each child's own illustrations. The factfiles formed part of the display for the visit of MEP Marian Harkin and for RETNS's Open Morning on Europe Day.



Third Class and Second Class children also each picked an individual E.U. country and learned some geographical facts which they recorded in their writing copies. Second Class focused particularly on Finland and Bulgaria as they have children with connections to both these countries. They explored their locations on the map and went through some geographical features during presentations by Finnish and Bulgarian visitors.



First Class's focus on Hungary involved locating Hungary on the map of Europe, highlighting its borders, neighbouring countries etc. They then learned about the capital, Budapest, and the amazing River Danube. They also learned about interesting features such as Thermal Baths as well as traditional foods such as Goulash.

Senior Infants focus on Germany and Poland involved locating both countries on the map of Europe and comparing and contrasting with Ireland in terms of land and sea borders, size, population etc. A German visitor, Hannah, then told them all about the kind of houses and apartments they live in, the language they speak (Senior Infants learned to count to ten in German!) and the games they play. Senior Infants asked questions about the cars they make in Germany, the animals they have there and whether they have a McDonalds! A Polish visitor, Alexandra, told the children all about the Polish countryside with its many lakes, plains and mountains. They learned about the climate, the different animals (including bears and bison) and the money. The children asked what Alexandra missed most about her country. She said the most important thing she missed was family but that she also missed the more marked seasonal changes of Poland.

Junior Infants were treated to PowerPoint presentations by Lisa (a mum from Italy) and Isabelle (a mum from France) on their respective countries. These PowerPoints showed where the countries are on the map of Europe and included other geographical elements including images of key landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower and Leaning Tower of Pisa. Junior Infants also learned about key landmarks of Dublin through reading "A Dublin Fairytale" and included their knowledge of Trinity College, the Ha'penny Bridge and St. Stephen's Green in their presentation to Marian Harkin MEP.

All Classes: Two displays, one in English and one in Irish, were created in the downstairs corridor highlighting the schools European connections. Countries with



which children in the school have connections through one or both parents were marked on the map. Small fact files on these countries were displayed and all children with such a connection wrote a brief commentary. Topics covered ranged from things children liked most about the country and specific memories to significant geographical, historical or cultural facts.





Leaf Hunt eTwinning: Groups from Second and Third Class engaged in an eTwinning project with a Sicilian Primary School. The children really enjoyed taking part in the project and would love to do some more eTwinning in the future.



Leaf Hunt by groups from 2nd and 3rd Rathfarnham Educate Together

Leaf hunt Sicicilian Primary school



Cultural & Creative

Please outline below how your school carried out the cultural and creative section of the Blue Star Programme focusing in particular on the creative elements of this part of the Programme. Feel free to add photos where you can.

Sixth Class sketched famous European landmarks including the Trevi Fountain, the Leaning Tower of Pisa and the Ha'penny Bridge.

Included in Sixth Class's "Inspirational Europeans" Video projects were such cultural and creative icons as Coco Chanel and J.K. Rowling. The actual videos were, moreover, a testimony to the creativity of the Sixth Class children themselves whose computer, editing and production skills were impressive. Perhaps the most creative and original element of Sixth Class's work this year, however, was the rap which they composed, choreographed and performed themselves (with a little help from their teacher!) on the theme of their "Inspirational Europeans" projects. They performed this for Marian Harkin MEP and for our visitors from the European Movement, Ryan and Isolde, on Friday April 28th.





Fifth Class, Fourth Class, Third and Second: The Projects, Factfiles and Factsheets on each of the 28 member states created in all these classes included information on the culture, art, music, literature and creative heritage of every one of these countries. Similarly, the specific focus on Bulgaria, Finand, Hungary, Poland, Germany, France and Italy in **Second Class, First Class, Senior Infants and Junior Infants** involved engaging with the literature, art, culture and food of these countries. A sample of the cultural aspects covered from Junior Infants to Fourth Class is as follows:

- Junior Infants listened to Italian music and tasted traditional Italian foods such as Parmesan cheese, breadsticks and Italian lemonade. They also learned about French food and learned a French song.
- Senior Infants learned about German literature and Fairytales. For Art, they drew and coloured wonderful pictures inspired by the fairytales and then shared these with children in a Polish school through an etwinning project. Senior Infants reviewed pictures drawn by Polish children on the same theme and, with some help from Third Class who had themselves been learning about European Folktales and who acted as scribes, prepared written responses to return to Poland (see photos below). Senior Infants also learned a little of the German language and listened to some Polish. They learned a lot about Polish traditions and festivals, including how Christmas and Easter are celebrated in Poland. It was very interesting to compare and contrast the Polish and Irish traditions. Earlier in the year Senior Infants created art inspired by the work of the Polish artist Jan Pienkowksi. They also drew pictures of hunters and animals inspired by their exploration of the paintings in the Caves of Altamira, Spain.



 First Class learned about the traditional dress, dance, songs and food of Hungary. They learned a little of the language and even got to listen to a traditional Hungarian story which was read to them by the wife of the E.U. Ambassador, Mrs. Aideen Daly. Among the Art work done in First Class this year were paintings inspired by the impressionist works of French artist, Claude Monet.









- Second Class learned about Bulgarian traditional costumes and dance and about the language, food and traditions of Finland. Second Class also learnt about games played by children in other countries.
- Third Class did a considerable amount of work on the folktales of EU member states, thereby learning a great deal about the different cultural contexts from which these emanate. They researched and retold these stories to their classmates. They then wrote scripts based on the stories and dramatised them. They sourced costumes and props themselves and their teacher recorded them and put them on the school blog.
- Fourth Class knitted a rectangle for Art and sewed on felt to make the flag of the country they had each done their project on.

All Classes:

The whole school learned and sang **Ode to Joy** for the visit of MEP Marian Harkin on April 29. They were accompanied on violin by two pupils. The school choir also sang Shaun Davey's theme song from the Special Olympics "May We Never Have to Say Goodbye".

The School Choir has been working on an international repertoire of songs all year which include songs in French, Latin, Italian as well as in English and "as Gaeilge". The choir sang "Oró sé do bheatha Abhaile" for the visit of Mr. David Daly, E.U. Ambassador and his family on March 24th.

The whole school sang the School Song "Everyone Belongs" for both the visit of T.D. Eamon Ryan and E.U. Ambassador Mr. David Daly. RETNS believes that the Educate Together theme ties in very well with the E.U. motto "United in Diversity".



Every child in the school composed their "Wish for the World" inspired by the E.U. goals of avoiding wars, living together peacefully and accepting everybody else as they are. They then wrote these on a star which they decorated. The stars and wishes from each class were then used to create a whole-school display in the hall. (These can be seen in the photos of the visits of the T.D, E.U. Ambassador and MEP).



Institutional

Please outline below how your school carried out the learning for the the Institutional section of he Blue Star Programme. Feel free to add photos where you can.

General Work on the Institutions

Sixth and Fifth Classes both did a lot of work on the history of the E.U., it's raison d'etre and its Institutions. They learned about the European Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament and the roles and functions of the E.U. Projects prepared by both classes were on display both inside and outside their rooms on the occasion of the visit of Marian Harkin, MEP and on the school's Open Morning to mark Europe Day. (See below photos of PowerPoint presentation on the role of the E.U. made on the occasion of the visit of Eamon Ryan T. D. to the school on March 13). In Fourth Class those children not working on individual country projects instead created a FactFile on the EU itself, learning a lot about the Institutions and functions in the process.





Visit of Eamon Ryan T.D. March 13, 2017 Ireland and the E.U: The Perspective of a T.D.

The visit of Eamon Ryan T.D. provided children with the opportunity to explore the role of the E.U. both in general and - given Eamon Ryan's particular interest in environmental issues, in terms of the environment. They asked Deputy Ryan whether he thought membership of the EU had brought positive benefits for Ireland and what, if any, disadvantages there were to EU membership. The role of the EU in promoting ways to improve the environment and supporting research and activities which can lead to breakthroughs in Science and Technology were discussed, as were the possible impacts of Brexit. Deputy Ryan took questions from every class and his answers provided the children with plenty of food for thought. (See more photos of Deputy Ryan's Visit in the Section on Visits below)





Visit of E.U. Ambassador Mr. David Daly and his Family March 24, 2017 Mr. Daly is former EU Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives and is presently E.U. Head of Division for South East Asia and the ASEAN Countries.

Ireland and the E.U: The Perspective of an E.U Ambassador

The visit of E.U. Ambassador, Mr. David Daly, and his wife and daughter provided the children with a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the Institutions and workings of the E.U. Following a greeting in song by the school choir, our Student Council representatives presented a brief history of the EU with particular reference to the 60th anniversary of the **Treaty of Rome** on the following day, March 25th. Ambassador Daly then gave a talk to the children on the importance of the role of the EU and about his work for the European Commission and answered their questions. These included "How do you help the EU solve problems", "What is the best part of your job?", "How many countries have you been to?" and "Does your family like going to different places?" Ambassador Daly's wife Aideen and daughter Ceola also answered some questions, e.g., about the advantages and disadvantages of having to travel a lot. The visitors then watched videos created by sixth class on the lives of inspirational Europeans, did a short tour of the school guided by two members of our Green School committee, and visited first class where they looked at the class Hungarian project, a reminder for Ambassador Daly of his time as Hungarian Ambassador. Aideen Daly delighted the class by reading a Hungarian story, 'Hanna's Cold Winter', to the children. (See more photos of Ambassador Daly's Visit in the Section on Visits below)



Visit of Marian Harkin MEP on April 28, 2017 Ireland and the E.U: The Perspective of an MEP

The visit of MEP Marian Harkin provided yet another opportunity to learn about the roles, functions and Institutions of the E.U.

Ciara Corcoran, chair of the Student Council, welcomed the MEP to our school. Then Marian listened to a beautiful performance of 'May We Never Have to Say Goodbye' from our choir. A number of representatives from each class gave details of what they have been learning in the Blue Star programme, culminating in a spirited rap performance from sixth class detailing the achievements of many famous Europeans they have been learning about. Marian told the children she was honoured to have been invited and she was very impressed with the work they were doing. She then spoke to the children about aspects of her work as an MEP, giving many examples of how it is possible to execute change for the greater good through the work of the European Parliament. Particular initiatives on which the MEP has worked include



ATMs which are more accessible to all, including the disabled, and Rights for Carers, including the right to take leave from work to fulfil their caring role. Assembly concluded with all the children singing the European Anthem, 'Ode to Joy'. Marian then visited every single class in the school to take questions, notwithstanding the punishing schedule which was ahead of her once she left the school. Questions from the children ranged from favourite aspects of her work to her views on the effects of Brexit and whether she thinks there should be more women in Irish politics! Two representatives from the Blue Star programme also attended on the day of Marian's visit and had a tour of the school to look at the children's work. The MEP's visit kick-started the build up to the culmination of our year's work, our Europe Day celebration on May 9th. (See more photos of Marian Harkin's Visit in the Section on Visits below)





Europe Day Celebrations

RETNS's work for the Blue Star Programme culminated on Europe Day, Tuesday, May 9 2017. The day began with an **Open Morning** to which parents, guardians and members of the local community were invited to view the children's work and talk to our student 'guides' about what each of the classes have been doing as part of the programme. Displays included written work, art work and projects as well as videos of dramas enacted by the children, a specially composed Rap and some PowerPoints presenting work completed as part of the programme. Later we gathered on the playground to have an aerial photograph taken with a specially commissioned drone, which caused great excitement! Can you spot the Gold Stars?



Next came our main event to mark Europe Day and the 60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. Everyone – students and staff - dressed in blue. The children also wore blue headbands with a blue star in the centre. We then walked through the local housing estate, joined by parents and some local residents, making our way to the local park where we sang Happy Birthday EU and did our *Handshake for Europe*.

Euro Wave

https://vimeo.com/216723902

Handshake for Europe

https://vimeo.com/216666366



Please list any visits to your school by Ministers, MEPs, TDs, Senators, Ambassadors or other VIPs as part of the Programme.

Visit of Eamon Ryan T.D. March 13, 2017 Ireland and the E.U: The Perspective of a T.D.

See full description in Institutional section above.







Visit of E.U. Ambassador Mr. David Daly and his Family March 24, 2017 Mr. Daly is former EU Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives and is presently E.U. Head of Division for South East Asia and the ASEAN Countries.

Ireland and the E.U: The Perspective of an E.U Ambassador

See full description in Institutional section above.













Visit of MEP Marian Harkin on April 28, 2017 Ireland and the E.U: The Perspective of an MEP

See full description in Institutional section above.













Visit of Representatives of Blue Star Programme on April 28, 2017

Ryan and Isolde from the Blue Star Programme at the European Movement also visited on the day of Marian Harkin's visit . They attended the assembly and accompanied Marian on her guided tour of the school's Blue Star projects.





Feedback

Please include any additional thoughts or comments that you had about the Blue Star Programme: would you participate again, how could the Programme be improved, did you do anything particularly different as part of your Programme?

Staff and students have really enjoyed participating in the Blue Star programme, with the combination of learning new and interesting facts, creatively presenting their learning and celebration, all of which have been aspects of the experience. We would certainly participate in the programme again.

We feel that we did do some quite different things for the programme, e.g. our Sixth Class videos of Inspirational Europeans, the Sixth Class Rap (a definite highpoint!), the whole school rendition of Ode to Joy, our recordings of Third Classes Folktale Dramas, the eTwinning projects with Sicily and Poland and, last but definitely not least, our drone photos of our European Wave and video of our Handshake for Europe to celebrate Europe Day.

Happy 60th Birthday Europe from all the kids and staff of Rathfarnham Educate Together National School.







Thank you!

Please submit this Action Plan, preferably by email to <u>bluestar@europeanmovement.ie</u> or post it to us at:

8 Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2, Ireland