



Droichead: Quality Assurance Report

January 2018

An Chomhairle
Mhúinteoireachta



The Teaching Council

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.

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.

Droichead

The *Droichead* process is an integrated professional induction framework for newly qualified teachers. It recognises the effectiveness of the reconceptualised programmes of initial teacher education and particularly the extended school placement, in the professional preparation of student teachers. It builds on that phase, taking as its starting point the areas for further learning that have been identified by the NQT in collaboration with the HEI as part of the school placement experience. At the same time, it recognises that induction is a distinct phase of the continuum of teacher education, a socialisation process into the teaching profession. This integrated framework includes both school-based and additional professional learning activities to address the needs of teachers as they begin their careers. The main objective of the *Droichead* process is to support the professional learning of the NQTs during the induction phase, thus laying the foundations for subsequent professional growth and learning for the next phase of their career. Following the *Droichead* process, a declaration is made by the NQT that he or she is ready to move to the next phase on the continuum of teacher education. A joint declaration is made by the teacher and experienced colleagues, following collective reflection, that through their engagement in *Droichead*, they have participated in a quality teaching and learning process. The Teaching Council then removes the *Droichead* condition from the teacher's registration.

National Induction Programme for Teachers

The National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) is a State-funded service that supports the induction of NQTs, both primary and post-primary, into the teaching profession in Ireland. The main objective of induction is towards promoting the professional development of NQTs by way of systematic support in their first year of teaching, thus laying the foundations for subsequent professional growth and development. The NIPT 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).

Taisce

A professional learning portfolio is developed over time by each NQT, to support the process of reflection on his or her practice. The term Taisce, (Irish for treasure trove) is used to refer to this process of portfolio based learning. Engaging in the process of portfolio-based learning enables the teacher to reflect on their professional learning, and identify and plan for areas in which they may need further support or guidance. *Droichead* allows flexibility in the creation of Taisce, with the format and contents decided and owned by the newly qualified teacher. It should include key learning moments and insights from the *Droichead* process. Emphasis is placed on the quality, rather than quantity, of these learning opportunities with the teacher choosing which moments and insights to reflect on, and on how they wish to capture that reflection.

Chairperson's Foreword

We were privileged as members of the *Droichead* Quality Assurance panels to visit schools and speak with Principals, members of the Professional Support Team and Newly Qualified Teachers in our Quality Assurance process for *Droichead*. The focus of the DQA is placed on consistency rather than uniformity in the *Droichead* process in schools. We were happy to see that the *Droichead* process is operating on a highly professional level in schools across the country.

There was a high level of consistency in the responses received. The process itself, the training and support supplied to PST members were generally very positively received in schools. A number of schools made recommendations for improvements to the *Droichead* process. The most valuable part of the *Droichead* process for both PST members and NQTs was reported to be the peer-to-peer observations.

While challenges exist, *Droichead* is helping to create a culture of open doors in teaching, provide opportunities for professional conversations and has systemic benefits beyond the support experienced by NQTs. The *Droichead* process is non-judgemental and provides an opportunity to share good practice. As one Principal said, "It is our profession maturing; standing up and saying, "Like other professions we can support ourselves and we can nourish ourselves"".

Schools spoke about how *Droichead* was a positive experience for them, an opportunity for professional development for the whole staff. It gave practiced teachers the opportunity to reflect and helped to progress a school culture of support, openness and collaboration.

Indeed some schools have extended the supportive process beyond *Droichead* to all new teachers, PMEs, student teachers, or have examined open door policies, collegial collaborative policies, school teachmeets and teaching festivals following on from their *Droichead* involvement.

School H	School H is a mainstream primary school with 24 teachers and an administrative principal in an urban area. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> School in 2015-2016. The PST was formed from within the school and all PST members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. One NQT has completed the <i>Droichead</i> process at this school
School I	School I is a single-sex post-primary school with 43 teachers. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> School in 2015-2016. The PST was formed from within the school and all PST members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Three NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process at this school.
School J	School J is a mixed, post-primary, Deis, Gaelscoil with 25 teachers in an urban area and a teaching principal. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> school in 2015-2016. The PST has an external member and all members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Three NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process at this school.
School K	School K is a large mainstream primary school with 39 teachers and 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 PST members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Two NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process at this school.
School L	School L is a large mainstream primary school with 30 teachers and an administrative principal in an urban area. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> School in 2015-2016. The PST was formed from within the school and all PST members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Two NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process at this school.
School M	School M is a large mainstream primary school with 36 teachers and an administrative principal in an urban area. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> School in 2015-2016. The PST was formed from within the school and all PST members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. One NQT has completed the <i>Droichead</i> process at this school.
School N	School N is a single-sex post-primary school with 61 teachers. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> School in 2013-2014. The PST was formed from within the school and all PST members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Six NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process at this school.
School O	School O is a post-primary, DEIS, community college with 55 teachers. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> School in 2013-2014. The PST was formed from within the school and all PST members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Five NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process at this school.
School P	School P is a large mainstream primary school with 37 teachers and an administrative principal in an urban area. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> School in 2015-2016. The PST was formed from within the school and all PST members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Seven NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process at this school.
School Q	School Q is a rural primary school with 4 teachers and a teaching principal. It is a DEIS school. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> school in 2014- 2015. The PST was formed 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 at this school.
School R	School R is a rural primary school with 4 teachers and a teaching principal. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> school in 2015-2016. The PST was formed 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 at this school.
School S	School S is a single-sex post-primary school with 58 teachers. It registered as a <i>Droichead</i> School in 2013-2014. The PST was formed from within the school. Some PST members have completed <i>Droichead</i> professional development with the NIPT. Four NQTs have completed the <i>Droichead</i> process at this school.

School T	School T is a large post-primary community school with 100 teachers. It registered as a Droichead School in 2013-2014. The PST was formed from within the school and all PST members have completed Droichead professional development with the NIPT. Five NQTs have completed the Droichead process at this school.
School U	School U is a special school with seven teachers and an administrative principal. It registered as a Droichead school in 2015-2016. The PST was formed within the school and all members have completed Droichead Professional Development with the NIPT. Three NQTs have completed the Droichead process in the school.
School V	School V is a large mainstream primary school with 30 teachers and an administrative principal in an urban area. It registered as a Droichead School in 2014-2015. The PST was formed from within the school and all PST members have completed Droichead professional development with the NIPT. One NQT has completed the Droichead process at this school.
School W	School W is a single-sex post-primary school with 53 teachers. It registered as a Droichead School in 2014-2015. The PST was formed from within the school and all PST members have completed Droichead professional development with the NIPT. One NQT has completed the Droichead process at this school.
School X	School X is a community school with 90 teachers. It registered as a Droichead School in 2014-2015. The PST was formed from within the school and all PST members have completed Droichead professional development with the NIPT. Five NQTs have completed the Droichead process at this school.

Across the 24 schools the DQA Panel met with 97 PST members and a total of 36 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.

Teaching Council members who are registered teachers from the primary or post primary sector were invited to self-nominate for the panel. Appointment was made by the Director of the Council.

The review panel visits a sample of schools where the *Droichead* process has taken place and discusses the process separately with the Principal, the PST and the NQT. 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.

In October 2017, 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 November 2017, 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 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 agreed by the panels and rapporteur on that day.

Further training was facilitated for additional panel members on 14 December 2017. These members were available to support the work of the DQA panel where needed.

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 23 November 2017 and 9 February 2018.

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 panel 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.

Niall Duddy

Niall Duddy was elected to the Teaching Council in the Connacht/Munster/Ulster, Voluntary (post- primary) constituency. He is a teacher of mathematics at Presentation College, Athenry, Co. Galway. Niall previously taught/lectured in mathematics at NUIG and at Shannon College of Hotel Management and is a holder of a B. Sc. (Mathematics) and H. Dip. Ed. from NUIG and M. Sc. (Cryptography) from UCC. An active member of the ASTI, Niall is the current Galway branch secretary.

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