

Dr Thomas Walsh | Maynooth University

General Biography

Dr Thomas Walsh is an Associate Professor and Deputy Head of Department in the Department of Education, Maynooth University. Tom joined the Department in 2014 having previously worked as a primary school teacher, an education researcher and a primary school inspector at the Department of Education and Skills.

He holds a B.Ed from St Patrick's College Drumcondra, and an M.Ed and PhD from the National University of Ireland Maynooth. More recently he was awarded an Advanced Diploma in Law and Education from the Kings Inns. His doctoral thesis focused on the development and implementation of successive primary school curricula between 1897 and 1990. His book, *Primary Education in Ireland 1897-1990: Curriculum and Context*, was published by Peter Lang International Academic Publishers in 2012.

Tom teaches on a range of programmes in the Department on aspects relating to his research interests, including history of education, education policy and legislation, curriculum studies and team teaching. He has written a range of chapters and articles in these areas and is involved in a number of research projects (e.g., a SCoTENS project on constructions of childhood and a Teaching Council project on team teaching). Tom also supervises the research work of PME, M.Ed, Ed.D and PhD students.

I would be very interested in engaging with schools in relation to collaboratively developing policy and practice across a range of areas. I have always learned so much when working with teachers and schools in the past and feel I may be a support in terms of listening, reflecting back and supporting school to frame responses to challenges they are facing. I have a particular interest in curriculum change and enactment, looking at how schools can use the current curriculum to develop rich, meaningful and contextually-appropriate learning experiences for children. I work as an advisor to the NCCA on the redevelopment of the primary school curriculum and am really interested in how the proposed redeveloped curriculum framework will impact positively on teachers' agency and children's pedagogical experiences. So I would love to work with a school as it begins on or continues its journey of engagement with the principles, aims and content of the draft primary curriculum framework published in 2020. I also have a deep understanding of Aistear and would love to work with a school on integrating its principles and goals alongside current primary school curriculum provisions.

My research to date has focused a lot on the broader policies and legislation that inform the education system and I would be delighted to work with schools in framing local policies based on national guidance [e.g., inclusion (resource allocation model), induction (Droichead), admissions policy (2018 Act)]. I would be interested in supporting schools to gather data from children, parents or teachers and would have an interest in publishing this to support wider learning in the system (with the consent of participants of course).

Overall, I have a broad understanding of the education system and would love to learn more about how policy impacts on practice in schools and to support schools to integrate national policy into their school-based policies and practices.