A major step forward for the arts in education in Ireland took place in Dublin Castle on 19 May with the launch of the National Arts in Education Online Portal. The establishment of the portal was a major objective in the Arts in Education Charter. The portal www.artsineducation.ie will build a community of practice within arts and education. It will provide a space where both artists and teachers can be supported and inspired. It will be a platform through which good collaboration practice in arts in education and arts education will be supported, developed and enhanced.

Submissions for the portal will be invited on an ongoing basis and templates and guidelines have been drawn up to help those who wish to make a submission. The aim is to make the portal the key national digital resource of arts and education practice in Ireland. Quality of content will be a key guiding criterion. When in operation, the portal will provide an unprecedented opportunity for young people throughout the country to engage productively with arts-in-education in Ireland.

"Arts in Education practice enriches the lives of all those involved, from children and young people to artists and teachers. The arts are particularly powerful in nurturing and developing our minds and imaginations. I am delighted to support today’s launch. The portal will be the key national digital resource for arts and education practice in Ireland."

Jan O’Sullivan, Minister for Education and Skills.

"The Charter is a landmark attempt at co-operative policy endeavour for the arts in education. The portal demonstrates the key principles of good collaborative practice and provides an unprecedented opportunity for young people throughout the country to engage productively with arts-in-education in Ireland." 

Professor John Coolahan, Chair of Arts Charter Implementation Group.

Room 13 is a well established and renowned arts education programme with three key elements:
- A student run art studio.
- A student management committee.
- An artist in residence.

Following research into international Room 13 projects, the Room 13 Fingal Partnership was formed. The partnership wanted to establish art studios in primary schools in Fingal to provide children, teachers and artists with a space to exchange creative ideas, skills and experience. In Room 15, children are encouraged to take the lead, be creative and think for themselves. Upholding the child-centred ethos of Room 13 international is most important. The studio itself is a space where students, teachers and the artist(s) can work alongside one another during break times, and other scheduled times throughout the day sharing investigative times, findings and developments, or even drop in ad hoc on any given day to see what the artist is working on.

The studio compliments the formal curriculum and is most importantly a space for children to explore, discover and make art in a safe and supportive child-centred environment.

For more information on Room 13 contact Julie Clarke, Visual and Education Arts Officer, Fingal County Council, Grove Road, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 or email julie.clarke@fingal.ie

What the teachers say
We consider ourselves privileged to have such a space within our school where pupils can go and ‘make art’ in a very different way to the classroom environment.

The pupils absolutely love Room 13. Scoil Bhríde is a primary school and, therefore, operates within certain constraints. As a staff, we were curious about how the somewhat informal approach of Room 13 would work out. It has been interesting and uplifting to see that the pupils, in particular the senior pupils, have adopted a respectful attitude to the studio. Rather than taking advantage of the freedom offered within the studio and wanting the opportunity afforded to them, they have embraced this and used this in the spirit with which it was intended. They experiment, explore and enjoy the process rather than focusing solely on the end product.


As class teacher, you try to encourage children to be as creative as possible. However, in a classroom setting this is not always feasible as, firstly, there are the time constraints of setting up the classroom for art and tidying up afterwards. Secondly, in the classroom it is generally more practical to focus on

Cut and drawing. Image courtesy of Helen Barry

Full congratulations. Image courtesy of Helen Barry

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