

# Galway schools represent Ireland for Moscow event

FIVE Galway schools will represent Ireland at the Microsoft Innovative Education Forum that takes place in Moscow next week.

Clontuskert NS, Woodlawn NS, Attymon NS, Athenry Boys and Scoil Chaitriona in Renmore are five of sixteen schools taking part in a unique collaborative, cross curricular project called Keep on Track that connects schools from Galway to Dublin along the Inter City Rail Line.

Kate Murray, a teacher at St Augustine's NS in Clontuskert, and her colleague Cathal O'Connell, who teaches at the Holy Spirit Boys NS in Ballymun, will make the long journey to represent the participating schools; they are also the project co-ordinators.

The Microsoft Innovative Education Forum is an international gathering of exceptional educators presenting their learning projects achieved through innovative usage of technology. So far European Innovative Education Forums have been held in London, Stockholm, Tallinn, Paris, Zagreb, Berlin and now Moscow.

The purpose of this event is to promote international sharing of innovative practices of technology integration and provide Europe-wide networking opportunities among top innovators. It also focuses international attention on the importance of technology innovation in education.

The agenda for the Forum



Clontuskert NS pupils Peter Lyons and Mark Bleahen present President Mary McAleese with a LEGO Shamrock which they designed, at St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin after the Clontuskert school received the Bronze Crest Science Award for their LEGO award winning project.

includes keynotes by well known experts on education and education technology issues. It will focus on structured collaborative sessions that allow the sharing of best practices with teachers from around Europe. The Forum will culminate in a Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony on Thursday evening next, March 24.

The Keep on Track Project has been chosen to represent Ireland at this event and as part of the project each school has adopted their local station to tell the rich story of that sta-

tion in a variety of formats.

Classes from Senior Infants to Sixth Class are taking part in the project, researching materials and engaging in learning experiences relevant to their own curricular level. Schools have compiled their work across all curricular areas and present project materials and outcomes on a joint project blog, the first project blog of its kind in the country using the Scoilnet Blogs platform.

Irish Rail, as Keep on Track sponsor, is making archive materials available to aid the implementation of the project

and is facilitating Railway Station visits from each school.

The project is supported by Galway, Athlone, Portlaoise, Kildare and Drumcondra Education Centres.

"This project is the most exciting project we have been involved with since I became Director of the Galway Education Centre over 13 years ago," said Director of Galway Education Centre, Bernard Kirk.

"The reason is simple. The project has been conceptualised, organised and driven by a group of committed primary school teachers under great leadership from Cathal O'Connell and Kate Murray.

"The Keep on Track Project goes to the heart of CPD for teachers by facilitating the sharing of practical ideas, concepts and curriculum implementation among peers in a supportive, constructive and excellently led project," he added.

The Galway Schools Library Service led by Josephine Vahey has offered their services to the project and are providing sets of class novels such as the Railway Children by Edith Nesbit and Stop the Train by Geraldine McCaughran, and research material to the schools involved.

A launch day will be held in the Radisson Hotel in Galway on June 9 where schools will present their project findings. A special Irish Rail train will bring all schools involved to and from Galway for the day of celebration.