

The Potential for Place-Based Pedagogy in
Irish Primary Schools
The Teachers' Perspective

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Abstract

Place-based pedagogy is focused on using local resources to teach and learn for the benefit of both students and places. A considerable body of research points to the benefits of this approach. This mixed-methods study comprises semi-structured qualitative interviews and a quantitative questionnaire, and examines the potential for place-based pedagogy in the Irish primary school setting from the teachers' perspective.

In an increasingly globalised world, with associated environmental and societal concerns, place-based pedagogy is proposed as an approach which may address some of the challenges faced by today's society. Schools and teachers play a role in determining the path taken by the future custodians of our planet. However, recognising the significant ongoing demands placed on teachers, it may not be feasible to expect them to shoulder additional burdens. For this reason, this study focuses on the perspective of teachers to determine whether they feel adopting a place-based pedagogy would be beneficial or realistic. Teachers were asked about the barriers they face, the pressures of their curriculum and the feasibility of a place-based approach. Their responses were analysed using constant comparative methodology and a range of analytic techniques.

The findings of this study indicate that teachers are broadly positive in relation to place-based pedagogy, recognising the strengths of the approach and equally confirming that a local focus is currently mandated in their curriculum. They reported that additional support is necessary for teachers to fully engage with this pedagogy, particularly in relation to their confidence and content knowledge. Study participants also referenced the role that adopting a place-based pedagogy could play in developing students' sense of place and identity and consequently how important they felt that was for all students. On this basis, it is recommended that future policy developments should reflect the potential for place-based pedagogy in Irish primary schools.

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List of Acronyms

BERA	British Education Research Association
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DE	Development Education
DES	Department of Education and Skills
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
INTO	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SESE	Social, Environmental and Scientific Education
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health education
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
STEN	Standard Ten (Standardised test reporting mechanism)
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.Context

This study is focused around the concept of place-based pedagogy. While only growing in recognition recently, place-based pedagogy is not a new concept. Combining elements of various theorists, academic approaches and educational concepts, place-based pedagogy echoes strongly with the thinking of John Dewey, who in his 1915 publication called for schools to function more like communities, rather than places in isolation from the normal lives of students. Dewey felt that as schools lost their local focus, children lost their curiosity or desire to learn the skills of respected adults in their family or community, which was once a primary motivation for learning. Dewey also argued that children should see themselves as individuals with a responsibility in and for their communities, with the ability to engage with others on ideas and options for the enhancement of their futures. Equally, Piaget's theory around students' inner motivation to learn and his contention that children learn best when they are active, are also key to a place-based approach (1973). Building on both Dewey and Piaget, Kolb proposed the idea that "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (1984, p. 38). Furthermore Vygotsky contended that learning develops from social interaction within a cultural construct (Wertsch, 1985). These and other theories speak to the ideas behind place-based pedagogy which has been defined in one instance as,

the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens. Community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the active engagement of local citizens, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school (Sobel, 2004, p. 7).

As mentioned previously this is not a new approach, many teachers frequently use local environments and communities to add to learning (Woodhouse, 2001). However, in the Irish context, the conscious adoption of place-based pedagogy and engagement with all elements of the concept is not currently widespread.

Place-based pedagogy has been championed since the mid-1990s (Smith, 2007), with advocates for place-based pedagogy maintaining that education based in the local community enables students to see the relevance of their learning and become more engaged in the process (Powers, 2004). It is not suggested that this should be the only focus of students learning in schools, but that in contrast, when students are only engaged in learning around distant and abstract ideas, it is more difficult for them to relate to the topic (Smith and Sobel, 2010a). As Lewicki (1998, p. 9) explains, “a pedagogy of place brings school and community together on a common pathway...this community expands outward from local landscape and home, to regional realities, to international issues”.

But why should place-based pedagogy be favoured over another approach to teaching and learning? Orr (1992, p. 126) argues that place-based pedagogy is particularly relevant now as “a great deal of what passes for knowledge is little more than abstraction piled on top of abstraction, disconnected from tangible experience, real problems, and the places where we live and work”. This may be particularly relevant for young people, where it has been argued that “place is a lens through which young people begin to make sense of themselves and their surroundings. It is where they form relationships and social networks, develop a sense of community and learn to live with others” (McInerney, Smyth and Down, 2011, p. 5). Alongside this there is increasing literature and anecdotal evidence arguing for children to reconnect with the natural environment through direct experiences outdoors (Louv, 2005; O’Malley, 2014).

1.2.Rationale behind project choice

Place-based pedagogy is something which has been of interest to the researcher for some time. The researcher has been employed as an Education Officer with Burrenbeo Trust, a community charity based in the Burren region of counties Clare and Galway in the west of Ireland, for the past five years. Burrenbeo Trust aims to connect people to their places and their role in caring for them, which effectively sees the researcher engaging with place-based pedagogy on an ongoing basis. This involves developing

and delivering place-based programmes in local primary and secondary schools as well as training courses on a place-based approach to pedagogy for teachers and other educators. The classroom based primary school programme which is delivered by the Burrenbeo Trust is called Ecobeo and the teacher training course is called Áitbheo. An outline on each course is provided in Appendix A.

The researcher's experience has posed questions around the significant potential for the expansion of place-based pedagogy in Irish education and the many possible benefits resulting. The project was chosen based on this professional experience and personal interest in the topic. Coupled with this interest in place-based pedagogy, wider questions around the purpose and role of education in today's world have also informed this study.

1.2.1. What is education for?

The concept of education and education reform is a key topic around the world (Robinson and Aronica, 2015), with questions around purpose frequently debated, encompassing discussion around its preoccupation with compartmentalisation and intellect (Stevenson, 2007). In discussing this point, Robinson and Aronica (2015, p xi) begin by suggesting "The most fundamental question is, *what is education for?*" Before going on to argue that "The aims of education are *to enable students to understand the world around them and the talents within them so that they can become fulfilled individuals and active, compassionate citizens*" (Robinson and Aronica, 2015, p xvi, italics in original). This aligns perfectly with the aims of place-based pedagogy.

There is similarity between this and the holistic education model proposed by Jordet (2010, cited in Fägerstam, 2014) where the aesthetic and practical aspects of learning are valued as well as the cognitive ones. Webber (2017, p. 36) proposes that "greater than a 'learn to earn' model, [place-based education] holds broader objectives in addition to curricular outcomes". In 1996, Dr. John Ryan, then senior advisor in Basic Education with UNESCO expands on this point,

The mission of education is to respond to the enduring needs of the human condition. Yes, education has a crucial role to play in the creation of knowledge and in its application to economic pursuits. But education must also respond to social conditions and cultural needs, to spiritual aspirations and personal

requirements. Education is a multipurpose, not a single-purpose tool. It is an investment – and a very wise one - in humanity and its future. (Ryan, 1996, p. 3)

Noddings (2005, p. 8) contends that the current focus of education which places emphasis on standardised testing “is not sufficient, and it may actually undermine our democracy, to concentrate on producing people who do well on standardized tests and who define success as getting a well-paid job.” If we are to make changes or question the role of education, there are decisions to be made. In 2012, then Minister for Education and Skills Ruairi Quinn commented, “of course educational reform is not just about boosting economic growth. It is also about helping students reach their potential and prepare for citizenship in a rapidly changing society” (Quinn, 2012, p. 125). These are questions and considerations which inform this study.

Place-based pedagogy also has the potential to expand education beyond the traditional anthropocentric western cultural traditions where humans have “a tendency to treat nature as existing primarily for human use” (Dunlap, 2002, p. 18). Dunlap contends that this attitude influences mainstream education where exploitation of natural resources is still promoted. Alongside this, a change in how environmental knowledge is shared in Ireland has occurred largely due to a change in land use patterns from agricultural to more urban interactions (Share, Tovey and Corcoran, 2007). Debate around the implications of this perceived disconnection on the wellbeing and cognitive development of children is becoming more common (Wayman, 2010). Children are also spending more time indoors involved in structured activities, and less time outdoors, engaging in free exploration learning from the natural environment (O’Malley, 2014).

Changes in our physical landscape amongst other factors have influenced the way children develop a sense of place and attachment to their natural surroundings, with an increasing body of research emerging around a “disconnection hypothesis” (Corcoran, Gray and Peillon, 2009, p. 39). However, a focus on topics related to place, environment, community and heritage can be difficult to assign to a particular subject area which can mean they are neglected or not treated in a holistic fashion (Gough and Gough, 2010).

1.2.2. What role can Place-based Pedagogy play?

The 1992 book, *Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World*, written by political scientist and environmental activist, David Orr is a key text in outlining the important role place could play in reversing the environmental destruction and damaging cultural trends of our time. Orr goes so far as to argue that we are not currently only putting our environment at risk but also humanity itself. As will be outlined further in the coming Literature Review chapter, place-based pedagogy as a curricular approach has been shown to improve student engagement and achievement (Lieberman and Hoody, 1998; Powers, 2004; Sobel, 2004; Smith and Sobel, 2010b), along with having the potential to address some of the serious concerns outlined by Orr.

Sir David Attenborough has said that “the wild world is becoming so remote to children that they miss out, and an interest in the natural world doesn't grow as it should. Nobody is going to protect the natural world unless they understand it”(Attenborough, cited in Cassidy, 2008). Likewise, Blenkinsop, Telford and Moore (2016, p. 356) “believe that education needs to be reviewed and re-oriented at a deep level in order that progress towards an ecologically equitable and flourishing planet might begin to be possible”. Educators have the potential to influence future generations and develop future environmentalists and conservationists (Place, 2016).

Humans are inextricably linked to, and dependent on our environments and the balance into the future is finely tuned. Place-based pedagogy can potentially play a role in ensuring this balance is maintained by reinforcing our awareness of this connection and the role we all play in securing the future of our places and planet more broadly.

1.3. Project Aim and Research Questions

As the concept of place-based pedagogy is under-researched in the Irish context there were many possible approaches which could be taken with this study. Professionally, the researcher has experience delivering place-based programmes in primary and secondary education contexts as well as delivering training to teachers and fellow educators. Place-based pedagogy is the researcher's main area of interest, particularly in terms of its possible expansion in the Irish education system. As it was beyond the scope of this study to carry out a comprehensive audit on the potential for place-based pedagogy in Ireland's education system, it was decided to focus on the primary setting

as this is where there is most evidence of place-based pedagogy to date, and it is also the setting in which the researcher has most experience.

Upon deciding on a setting, it was then necessary to determine a suitable research question. As teachers could ultimately be the primary agents of change in terms of extending place-based pedagogy, it was decided to focus the study on their perspective around the potential for place-based pedagogy in the Irish primary school setting. In conjunction with this task, a review of the existing curriculum would also be carried out which would establish the current prevalence of place-based pedagogy as prescribed by the curriculum. Finally, it was hoped that an investigation of the existing status of place-based pedagogy in initial teacher education in Ireland would be completed. This was to be done following the initial stages of data collection from teachers and an analysis of the curriculum, as these elements would inform the investigations in terms of the initial teacher education programmes. Ultimately, this final phase was beyond the scope and time scale of this research project.

Research Questions

The aims outlined above have resulted in formation of the following primary research question;

- What is the potential for place-based pedagogy in the Irish primary school setting from the teachers' perspective?

The primary research question will be supplemented by enquiry into the following sub-questions;

- Does the existing primary school curriculum allow for a place-based pedagogical approach?
- To what extent is place-based pedagogy included in initial teacher education?

1.4. Structure of the dissertation

This chapter has introduced the concept of place-based pedagogy and outlined the researcher's interest in pursuing this research topic. The research questions which form the basis of this study were identified. Chapter two presents a review of relevant literature and describes the existing research and policy literature relating to place-based pedagogy and the benefits of place-based pedagogy. Consideration is also given

to the significance of place in education and our lives. The current situation regarding the prevalence of place-based pedagogy nationally and internationally is outlined before discussion turns to the role of teachers and why they would or would not engage with innovative pedagogies. The review then looks at the primary school curriculum and its role.

The methodology chapter outlines the methodology used in this study, describing the research paradigm, the research design (which is a mixed-methods approach), and the data collection and analysis methods. Chapter four, 'Findings' presents a summary of the findings obtained after analysing the data collected. The findings are organised into five categories, which became apparent following analysis. Qualitative and quantitative data are presented together. Chapter five, 'Discussion' considers the findings in relation to existing literature and explores the significance of the findings of this study. Chapter six concludes the dissertation, summarising the work and outlining limitations and recommendations, as well as considering the study in the context of professional practice.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Hart (1998, p. 13) maintained that the purpose of a literature review was to “show command of the subject area and understanding of the problem; to justify the research topic, design and methodology”. This review outlines what is already known about the topic, poses some critical questions, refers to similar studies that exist, and proposes a position for this research in the existing research. The review first examines areas related to the concept of place-based pedagogy, the significance of place, the perceived benefits of place-based pedagogy and the positioning of place-based pedagogy internationally. Following this, the review considers more general concepts around teachers’ engagement with innovative pedagogies and the Irish primary school curriculum.

In considering the potential for a specific pedagogy, it is important to first consider what is meant by pedagogy. Wrigley, Thomson, and Lingard (2011, p. 10) propose a definition for pedagogy as “the need for alignment between knowledge, curriculum, assessment, institutional mores and social context framed by understandings about the nature of knowledge, of reality and human society, of human capacity for learning and growth and of aspirations of a better future.” Bolstad (2011) maintains that what is needed in schools is more project learning, more interdisciplinary teaching, and a more cross-curricular approach. It could be argued that place-based pedagogy addresses all the above. In considering the concept of pedagogy, Bartolomé (1994, p. 173) proposes that it was pointless to search for the ‘right’ teaching strategies and argued instead for a “humanizing pedagogy that respects and uses the reality, history, and perspectives of students as an integral part of educational practice”. The following review expands on these concepts and their potential application in the Irish primary school context.

2.2. What is Place-based Pedagogy?

Essentially, place-based pedagogy in practice is difficult to define. Plumb (2003) explains that

... thinking about place-based education is an exercise in shifting perspectives; it becomes unwieldy to pin-down a simple, all-inclusive statement that defines the goals and desired outcomes of place-based education. It’s a holistic

approach to education. It's a practical approach to environmental education. It's also a philosophical approach to life, and a response to pervasive placelessness. (Plumb, 2003, p. 23)

Place-based education is defined by the Center for Place-Based Learning and Community Engagement on their Promise of Place website as an immersive learning experience that “places students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, and uses these as a foundation for the study of language, arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum” (*Promise of Place*, no date).

For the purposes of this study, the definition proposed by Sobel (2004) will be used. Sobel defines place-based pedagogy as

... the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens. Community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the active engagement of local citizens, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school (Sobel, 2004, p. 7).

As is evidenced in several academic studies, there is uncertainty and overlap around related terms associated with place-based pedagogy (Powers, 2004). Community-based learning, service-learning, environment as an integrating concept, sustainability education, project-based learning, environmental education and outdoor learning all share similarities with place-based pedagogy (Powers, 2004). There is also interchangeability between the terms ‘place-based pedagogy’, ‘place-based learning’ and ‘place-based education’ in the literature. For the purposes of this study, place-based pedagogy will be seen to include place-based education and place-based learning.

Webber (2017) argues that attention should be paid to the history of place-based pedagogy and its development from the fields of outdoor education, non-formal education, experiential learning, critical pedagogies and land-based education. Webber (2017) contends that several scholars have been identified as the major contributors in the evolution of place-based education literature (Woodhouse and Knapp, 2000; Gruenewald and Smith, 2008; Smith and Sobel, 2010a). The situation in terms of positioning place-based pedagogy in relation to other pedagogies was perhaps put most succinctly by Smith and Sobel who stated that “place-based education is the basket; it’s not an egg in the basket” (2010a, p. 150).

It has been proposed that there are five common elements which are seen in place-based pedagogy in practice: a curriculum based in the local environment; students as creators of knowledge; inquiry and problem solving; teachers as facilitators; and a more permeable boundary between school and community (Smith, 2002, p. 593). Additional characteristics identified by Woodhouse and Knapp (2000) include a multidisciplinary approach, action learning and a multigenerational and multicultural dimension in interactions with the community. Place-based pedagogy can include direct observation, investigation, experimentation and knowledge application; this wide focus allows multidisciplinary study (Orr, 1992).

Scholarship on the general concept of ‘place’ is diverse and ubiquitous (Gruenewald, 2005). Throughout this research, where place is referenced, it relates to “local cultural and ecological environments of human communities” (Gruenewald, 2005, p. 263).

In considering the difference between place-based pedagogy and the arguably more recognised discipline, environmental education, Webber (2017, p. 59) states that “while place-based education literature is aligned with the goals of environmental education, it distinguishes itself for its socioecological emphasis upon local ecosystems and communities”. Consequently, Sobel (2004) and Orr (2013) have described place-based education as a more inclusive approach than environmental education. As outlined by Ardoin (2006), place-based pedagogy has the potential to move beyond the scientific approach of environmental education, to investigate the sociocultural, political, and economic dimensions of place. However, as has been stated in the case of environmental education, a preoccupation with terminology and discussion or confusion around approaches such as education in, about, for and with

the environment, takes from the importance and need to critique environmental education, it's potential and the relationship with formal education (O'Malley, 2014). The same could be argued in the case of place-based pedagogy.

The above is a condensed account of the discourse around place-based pedagogy. Unfortunately, more extensive discussion of the various approaches within place-based pedagogy is beyond the scope of this research.

2.2.1. What are the benefits of place-based pedagogy?

Studies have looked at the potential benefits of place-based pedagogy through different lenses, including academic benefits, community benefits, environmental behaviour benefits and benefits for children with special needs, among others.

An Irish study examining a local geography project found that children engaged in place-based pedagogy self-reported their learning as relevant for now and the future (Pike, 2011). Catling (1998) found that teaching using the locality and appropriate resources can develop children's spatial capabilities. While further research is needed, researchers have also reported cognitive and affective benefits from local place-based learning in a variety of studies (Blaut, 1997; Chawla, 2002; Pike, 2011). Practical applications of local learning were found to increase learning by Nundy (1999) working with children on fieldwork related to rivers. Powers (2004), investigating four place-based learning programmes, noted that students with special educational needs responded especially well to place-based pedagogy. Powers also noted an increase in student motivation for, and engagement in learning.

There has been a body of work completed considering the impact of outdoor environmental education, which could be considered a key component of place-based pedagogy. It is suggested that when outdoor environmental education is adequately planned and delivered it can improve academic standards as the learner shows more motivation when they return to the classroom (Williams, 2010). Louv (2005) contends that children spending time in nature benefits identity development, emotional health, conservation behaviour and academic outcomes. A 1998 US report found that students attending schools using the environment as an integrating context for learning performed better in reading, writing, maths, science and social studies; they had increased engagement and interest in learning, and had developed advanced thinking

skills for problem solving (Plumb, 2003). A similar US report found that place-based pedagogy has also led to community members becoming actively engaged in the school with some arguing that the school-community relationship can reinvigorate communities, fostering feelings of pride and value among students and community members (Plumb, 2003).

It has been found that children express strong feelings and opinions towards the natural environment (Bonnett and Williams, 1998), and adults (such as teachers) can influence a child's long term environmental behaviour (Mannion, Fenwick and Lynch, 2013). When considering the factors which influenced the environmental attitudes of a number of key historical environmentalists, Place (2016) found interaction with nature (alone or with friends), family, and education (reading) were the consistent factors identified. Interestingly Place found that for the most part "formal education was not a highly significant part of the historical figures researched. Education through the natural environment was a more influential classroom" (Place, 2016, p. 366). The most prominent finding in Place's study was "the influence that spending time in the outdoors, whether alone or with others, education (whether classroom or through reading) and 'place attachment' have on the development of environmental attitudes" (Place, 2016, p. 366).

Attempting to address community issues, Curtiss and Theobald (2000) considered how schools could be utilised to invigorate communities. They maintained that the answer was to "use schools as a source of community renewal rather than a cause of community disintegration" (2000, p. 111). They argued that creative and critical thinking is facilitated and encouraged when students contribute to their community.

While criticising the increasingly homogeneous education experience at schools and universities, Cannatella (2007) argued that current educational systems negate local elements of place. He goes on to argue that real-life lived experiences of place, rather than more abstract engagement leads to transformative education. Cannatella contends that we derive much of our learning from our experience in place. A 2004 paper compiled by Power investigated the work of the Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative. Power considered the effectiveness of place-based pedagogy and stated "existing evaluations of place-based programming show strong promise for improving student learning and community engagement, and closely related research has

demonstrated that students who are engaged in real-world learning are more likely to succeed than are those who learn equivalent material from more abstract textbooks” (Powers, 2004, p. 18).

The benefits of place-based pedagogy are, however, being questioned, particularly as it is seen that the literature around place-based pedagogy is ideological rather than empirical, and is often perceived as lacking in critical perspective (McInerney, Smyth and Down, 2011).

2.2.2. What is the significance of place? Why should we care?

Where once an immediate connection to place was established due to food sources, water, livelihood, energy, materials, recreation and sacred inspiration, this is no longer the case (Orr, 1992). Orr further contends we are now “a displaced people” (1992, p. 126). It has been argued that place-based pedagogy could potentially address some of the issues arising from such displacement, where people are again viewed as an ecology, within a cultural, political, social and biological context (Woodhouse, 2001). Considering this, place-based pedagogy may also be a means of addressing some of the other perceived weaknesses in the current education system where schools are seen to work towards economic ends rather than towards social and cultural benefits for society (Nachtigal, 1997). Connection to, and care for the environment, civic engagement, and community wellness are some of the intangible benefits of reimagining what and where a classroom could be (Webber, 2017). Place-based pedagogy allows for citizenship and ‘living well’ as explicit educational aims (Gruenewald, 2003). However, place-based pedagogy also allows for teaching of the existing curriculum, with some even arguing that it provides increased capacity for delivering existing curricula (Smith and Sobel, 2010b).

The origins of the inclusion of the term ‘place’ in relation to education may be traced back to the Orion Society, a US non-profit that publishes resources to inspire cultural approaches to community and nature. They began referring to ‘place-based’ education in the 1990s to widen their approach to environmental education (Webber, 2017). Sobel (2004, p. ii) quotes the Orion Society’s vision for place-based pedagogy, stating that it would include “enlightened localism – a local /global dialectic that is sensitive to broader ecological and social relationships at the same time as it strengthens and deepens people’s sense of community and land”.

Pickering (2017) contends that a child's interaction with and development of stories around local place provide a growing sense of place to a child. He goes on to argue that "this can provide a route for children to engage in understanding their own place in society and in nature. We can each weave our own stories around the places we value" (Pickering, 2017, p. 4). The suggestion is that as children learn both cognitively and effectively about their place, they also learn about themselves and in time this may lead to an awareness about the balance between nature and society (Pickering, 2017).

2.2.3. How well established is place-based pedagogy?

There has been considerable research and discussion of place-based pedagogy in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and North America. To date this is not the case in Ireland. While the school-based and community orientated approaches of North American have many similarities (Sobel, 2004; Gruenewald and Smith, 2008; Smith and Sobel, 2010a), the Australian, New Zealand and Canadian studies are more focused on place-responsive outdoor education with a focus on specific cultural elements (Brown, 2008). Specific cultural elements can be a particular factor where there is Indigenous knowledge or feelings around place (Somerville, 2010). The distinction between the two types was also discussed by Harrison (2010), who saw the distinction being that the American approach was concentrating on educational institutions using the local community and environment in their teaching while the Australian and Canadian approach involved more traditional outdoor environmental education, essentially learning about the environment.

Closer to the Irish situation, in the UK, Scotland has developed education for sustainability, which includes global citizenship, outdoor learning, and sustainable development in their curriculum, which means place-based pedagogy is included within a wider philosophy of curriculum implementation (Beames, Higgins and Nicol, 2012).

Pickering (2017) feels that in England the focus of place-based learning is on the development of the learner, where the environment is merely a resource from which to learn. This contrasts with Norway and Japan where he feels that the emphasis is more on respect and understanding for the environment first, and learning as secondary to this. Traditionally, outdoor education is more developed and widespread in the Scandinavian context, involving school-based learning outside the classroom, in both

natural and cultural landscapes or on school grounds, often with a cross-curricular approach (Dahlgren and Szczepanski, 1998).

Jordet (2010, cited in Fägerstam, 2014) conducted studies with primary school students in Norway and Mygind in Denmark (2005, cited in Fägerstam, 2014). The studies found that students spent at least half a day outdoors on a regular basis over a period of two to three years and that this regular school-based outdoor learning supplemented the existing curricula well, in addition to having a positive impact on interpersonal relations between students and between students and teachers. It was also seen to facilitate multidisciplinary learning.

As previously mentioned, the practice of place-based pedagogy is more established in North America. There are even a significant number of organisations, websites, articles, events and documentaries considering the relationship and connection between children and the natural world around them (O'Malley, 2014).

Much like the similarities and differences between various international schools of thought in relation to place-based pedagogy, in Ireland there is overlap and uncertainty around environmental education and other types of education such as education for sustainable development (ESD) and development education (DE). While a National Strategy on ESD was developed in 2014 by the Department of Education and Skills, the aim to embed ESD in the education system is yet to be fulfilled (Department of Education and Skills, 2014). The Ubuntu network “actively promotes that Development Education be embedded into post-primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Ireland” (*Ubuntu*, no date), however there is no similar organisation for primary education. The Green Schools programme which is administered by An Taisce runs throughout the academic year and has been taken up by many schools (*Green Schools Ireland*, no date). Described by the Green Schools website as “Ireland’s leading environmental management and education programme for schools, promoting long-term, whole-school action for the environment, Green-Schools is a student-led programme with involvement from the wider community. The programme is operated and co-ordinated by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce (FEE member for Ireland)” (*Green Schools Ireland*, no date). Schools follow several environmental themes and are awarded flags once necessary steps are followed. The Social, Personal and Health Education Curriculum (SPHE) at primary level is often where elements

such as DE or ESD are evidenced. The positioning of the curriculum will be discussed in greater detail in section 2.4 below.

Arguably the most prolific advocates for place-based pedagogy in Ireland are Burrenbeo Trust, an independent landscape charity, by whom the researcher is employed. Burrenbeo Trust deliver place-based education and training courses in the Burren region.

2.3. Considering the teachers' perspective. Why do teachers engage with specific pedagogies?

In considering teachers' perspectives on place-based pedagogy, it is useful to consider why teachers engage with any innovative pedagogies. Unfortunately, there seems to be little previous research focused specifically on why teachers engage with place-based pedagogy. Engagement with innovative pedagogy is of particular interest in relation to this study given, as Plumb (2003, p. 31) contends, that "teaching place-based curricula is not easy. Not all schools are immediately convinced of its potential; teachers must have faith in a flexible curriculum that responds to their class's explorations in the community". And while teachers are primarily responsible for changes in pedagogy, teachers who try new teaching methods find that pedagogical change is stressful (Fullan and Miles, 1992). However, those that do engage with innovative pedagogy such as place-based pedagogy, have reported that they would never go back to former teaching methodologies (Plumb, 2003). Lieberman and Hoody (1998) conducted research with 250 educators, and the feedback from teachers who had engaged in a place-based pedagogy programme reported it as a highlight of their teaching career, reporting increased engagement in and enthusiasm for teaching, improved interactions and new opportunities for professional development.

In considering why teachers have engaged with place-based pedagogy, specifically around fieldtrips, some of the reasons reported include school factors (support from principal and colleagues, timetables and finances), wider support factors (help from parents or experts, curriculum constraints, transport, professional training) pupil factors (behaviour and attitudes), teacher factors (planning, attitude, collaboration, perception and experience) and place factors (season, topography, history) (Mannion, Fenwick and Lynch, 2013). Conversely, the potential barriers to engagement include

financial constraints, time, teacher–pupil ratios, safety concerns, weather, transport, disruption to classes, and teacher qualification (Higgins, Nicol and Ross, 2006; Mannion, Fenwick and Lynch, 2013). The importance of colleagues’ support for teachers engaging in innovative teaching was also referenced by Zhu, Wang, Cai and Engels (2013). Equally, two US-based evaluations of Place-based programmes found that administrative support was essential for teachers’ engagement (Plumb 2003). This could include a school support, such as from a principal or wider support factor, such as from the Department of Education.

Environmental Education is a more established concept in Ireland, and considerable research has been conducted on this topic (O’Malley, 2014). In 1987, an An Taisce report on decreasing quality and incidence of environmental education recommended that collaboration between parents and community, as well as ongoing training, would alleviate the issue and increase the delivery of environmental education at school (An Taisce, 1987). However, environmental education (similarly with ESD mentioned above) is still not a mainstream subject in Irish primary schools. This may be in part due to the view of environmental education as a supplementary add-on subject to the curriculum (O’Malley, 2014). Despite an attempt to establish environmental education as a mainstream approach internationally, it is still underrepresented in the formal education system (Orr, 1992). The limitations of environmental education and its positioning within formal education has also been considered more recently (Rickinson, 2001; Stevenson, 2008; Gough and Gough, 2010). Stevenson identified four key factors which have inhibited the progression of environmental education in the formal education setting: “the presentation of standardised knowledge associated with established disciplines, reliance on teachers as primary information sources, assessment procedures based on ease of marking and justification, and the control of students” (Smith, 2007, p. 189). Smith (2007) goes on to argue that place-based pedagogy might be one way of mitigating the inhibiting factors identified by Stevenson.

A study carried out by Fägerstam (2014) found that teachers’ perceptions of the educational potential of outdoor teaching included increased motivation, communication, and participation among students. They also found that the experience of being outdoors could provide a good base for starting indoor learning. However,

there were associated challenges, which include the students needing time to adjust to the new learning environment.

Walsh (2016) argues that teachers are traditionally conservative when it comes to engaging with new pedagogies. This ‘pedagogical conservatism’, as referred to by Simola (2005, p. 461), can result in tension between schools or teachers wanting to progress and those favouring conservatism. Walsh (2016, p. 13) does however conclude that

... in an era where curriculum is viewed as a social construction and where there is greater representative engagement in its development and review, further trust should be placed in the professionalism of teachers to use their judgement to construct and deliver relevant high quality educational experiences and outcomes for students.

Although perhaps dated, a curriculum survey carried out in 1996 by The Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) found that while 80% of teachers agreed with activity and discovery methods of learning in principle, in practice 60% of teachers preferred didactic methods (INTO Education Committee, 1996). It was suggested by Devine (1999) that the reluctance to move away from didactic methods may have been because of low government investment, as well as teachers’ assumptions and perspectives. In a more recent review of Irish teacher engagement with active learning pedagogies, Mc Morrow (2006) found that where teachers did engage with active learning pedagogy, they did so enthusiastically but this was limited due to the range of limiting factors which exist. These limiting factors included lack of training, resources or support structures within schools, from the Department of Education or the wider community. This may also prove to be the case for place-based pedagogy, where teachers may agree with the benefits in principle, but in practice they do not engage extensively with the pedagogy. Interestingly another study which looked at active learning pedagogy found that even where active learning was seen to improve test scores in students, teachers were unconvinced of the value of the active learning approach (O’Grady, Simmie and Kennedy, 2014).

A study conducted in Estonia examined the possible school environment factors which would support innovative behaviours in teachers. They identified interaction and

involvement, and a need and freedom for innovation as key factors in success of teacher innovation (Nemeržitski, Loogma, Heinla, and Eisenschmidt, 2013). These factors could also be considered in terms of teacher engagement with place-based pedagogy.

2.4. Opportunities for place-based pedagogy in the Irish Primary School curriculum

There are ongoing developments and initiatives in curriculum design in Ireland and internationally (Walsh, 2016). Walsh also notes that there is a potentially higher likelihood of more internationally-focused curricula developing, given the globalised nature of our world today. In researching the development of the Irish primary school curriculum, O'Malley (2014) found that there was a downgrading of environmental education following Irish independence. Previous curricula under colonial rule included elementary science, nature study, rural science and school gardening, and teachers were encouraged to take students outdoors. O'Malley contends that by 1922 this was no longer the case. Walsh, in considering the development of the Irish primary school curriculum comments that

... influences on the curriculum evolved from a colonial, to a nationalist to a child-centred perspective and each had a particular impact on the design, content and delivery of the curriculum in schools. These evolving influences also affected the role of the teacher, the concept of the learner and the nature of how learning transacted in schools. (Walsh, 2016, p. 3)

A report on *Curaclam na Bunscoile* (Primary School Curriculum) (1971-1999) recommended that collaboration between parents and community, coupled with training would improve the level of environmental education in Irish primary education (An Taisce, 1987, p. 5). The implementation of the New Curriculum (1999-present) has not addressed these issues but has potentially exacerbated the situation with the additional inclusion of SD and ESD, further adding to the perceived workload of teachers.

There is significant scope for place-based pedagogy within the current curriculum, particularly in terms of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE). The SESE strands promote humanistic approaches to the environment and clearly allow for

and make specific reference to local learning inside and outside the classroom. The Science SESE Teacher Guidelines (NCCA, 1999b) provide instructions for teachers to utilise their local environment to begin children's engagement with their natural environment. Similarly, the History and Geography SESE curriculum have many references to local studies. Over 400 activities included across all areas of the curriculum have potential from a place-based perspective. This accounts for approximately 20% of the overall curriculum activities. The SESE History (61 out of 197 strands) and SESE Geography (73 out of 282 strands) curriculum are particularly connected to local place. Science, PE and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) also have strong potential for local connections. A comprehensive although not exhaustive overview of the curricular areas where place-based pedagogy could easily be applied is included in Appendix B.

While the curriculum has been considered solely on an independent subject basis, place-based pedagogy provides potential for interdisciplinary cross-curricular work. Fägerstam (2014) found that both language and maths teachers reported improved on-task communication skills among students engaged in school-based outdoor education.

Previous research in Ireland indicates that the factors preventing teachers from engaging with environmental education included curriculum overload, lack of teacher confidence and knowledge, costs, transport, and health and safety issues (O'Malley, 2014). It is likely that similar issues may be factors in teachers engaging with place-based pedagogy. In discussions on the Irish primary school curriculum considerable attention is given to the idea of a currently overloaded primary school curriculum (NCCA, 2010a, 2010b). While six separate curricular areas incorporating eleven subjects (NCCA, 2010a, p. 5, 6, NCCA, 2010b, p. 10) could be viewed as overwhelming, place-based pedagogy should not be an additional element but rather a method for delivering the existing curriculum. In a 2014 study Power and Green found that preservice teachers who engaged with a place pedagogy were surprised that it was not an addition to the existing curriculum.

The 'crowded curriculum' notion that defines the curriculum as 'full' was severely disrupted. Many students came to understand how a place pedagogy frame work was not so much about increasing curriculum content but more concerned with expanding curriculum possibilities through new ways of

thinking about teaching and learning. Some students told us that although incorporating place pedagogies into the curriculum at first seemed daunting, they soon realised how surprisingly easy it was to combine these activities with curriculum requirements (Power and Green, 2014, p. 115).

However the same difficulty potentially arises as with environmental education where the onus is placed on the teachers to make the strategic links within the curriculum (Stevenson, 2008).

A place-based pedagogy could potentially allow teachers to shape their curriculum locally. However, as Gleeson (2010) argues, teachers may not have the confidence, or feel they have the capacity to develop curricula, due to the historical top-down approach to curriculum development.

2.5. Conclusion

As outlined above, place-based pedagogy can have various meanings, depending on the context. This can result in confusion and argument in relation to approach, terminology, relevance and significance of a place-based approach. While not exclusively related to place-based pedagogy, there are also a range of factors which have led to the development and delivery of curricula, and the pressures teachers may feel when engaging with new pedagogies. It is hoped that this research can contribute somewhat to making connections between these two topics and establishing the potential for place-based pedagogy in the Irish primary education context from the teachers' perspective.

The following chapter will outline the methodology used in this study. It includes a reiteration of the purpose of this study, followed by consideration of the underlying research paradigm, the research questions and the study's research design.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

When determining a research design, a number of factors must be considered, specifically the identification of a worldview stance or paradigm, the suitability of either a quantitative or qualitative research approach, and an assessment of how the research questions may best be addressed (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). With these considerations in mind, this study adopted a mixed methods research approach based in the pragmatist paradigm, involving the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. There are seven sections in this chapter that examine the purpose of this study, the underlying research paradigm, the research questions and the study's research design. The first section examines the research questions which inform this study. The second section examines the role of paradigms in research and outlines the paradigm which this study falls within. The third section is concerned with research design, outlining data collection methods, sampling, participant access and piloting. The fourth section speaks to the ethical concerns related to the study, and the final section considers the procedures used in data analysis.

3.2. Research Questions

As outlined in chapter one, this study is concerned with place-based pedagogy in the Irish primary school context. As previously stated, arising from the literature review and the researcher's professional experience, the following primary research question was identified;

- What is the potential for place-based pedagogy in the Irish primary school setting from teachers' perspective?

Initially, two sub-questions were also identified:

- Does the existing primary school curriculum allow for a place-based pedagogical approach?
- To what extent is place-based pedagogy included in initial teacher education?

Over the course of the research it became apparent that it was beyond the scope of the project to investigate the second sub-question.

3.3. Selecting a Paradigm

Patton (2002, p. 69) describes a paradigm as a “worldview”. As argued by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, p. 21), “all research needs a foundation for its inquiry and inquirers need to be aware of the implicit worldviews they bring to their studies”. Different types of worldviews and their similarities have been categorised (Creswell, 2009). As outlined by Taylor and Medina (2013),

... from a philosophical perspective, a paradigm comprises a view of the nature of reality (i.e., ontology) – whether it is external or internal to the knower; a related view of the type of knowledge that can be generated and standards for justifying it (i.e., epistemology); and a disciplined approach to generating that knowledge (i.e., methodology). (Taylor and Medina, 2013, p. 1)

One approach to determining paradigms is to consider ontological, epistemological and human nature or axiology assumptions, which in turn inform methodology choices (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Four of the major paradigms in educational research are positivist (and post-positivist), interpretivist/constructivist, transformative, and pragmatist (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). The positivist paradigm proposes one objective reality, which is reached by scientific methods, as outlined by Cohen et al. (2011), “positivism claims that science provides us with the clearest possible ideal of knowledge” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 7). Positivist research typically employs a quantitative methodology. In contrast, the interpretivist paradigm is based on the assumption that reality as we know it is constructed subjectively, which places the researcher at the centre of their research in a subjective fashion, again Cohen et al. (2011) explain “the interpretive paradigm ... is characterized by a concern for the individual” (2011, p. 17), where theory is devised from particular situations. Typically, qualitative methodologies are employed by the interpretive researcher.

The transformative paradigm developed to address the need to include political references as well as to allow for the potential for the research to have a “change agenda” in terms of the researchers life and work (Creswell, 2003, p. 9). Using qualitative and quantitative methodologies, allows the transformative researcher greater understanding of the various values and positions in relation to their subject according to Somekh and Lewin (2005). The final paradigm which will be considered for this study is the pragmatist paradigm, which as outlined by Patton (2002, p. 71)

means “judging the quality of a study by its intended purposes, available resources, procedures followed, and results obtained, all within context and for a specific audience”. The pragmatist approach allows the researcher to determine the most appropriate methodology based on the situation in hand (Patton, 2002). The pragmatist researcher is primarily concerned with the “what” and “how” of the research problem (Creswell, 2003, p. 11). In relation to the implications for researcher practice of the pragmatist approach, in ontological terms it allows researchers to consider singular and multiple realities, epistemologically practicality is favoured and axiologically multiple stances are recognised (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). In pragmatist research both quantitative and qualitative methodologies are typically used, as are formal or informal rhetoric (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). Pragmatism is typically associated with mixed-methods research (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007), as it “suggests that 'what works' to answer the research questions is the most useful approach to the investigation, be it a combination of experiments, case studies, surveys or whatever, as such combinations enhance the quality of the research”(Cohen et al., 2011, p. 23). This study is based in the pragmatist paradigm as to address the research questions outlined several approaches to data collection are necessary.

3.4. Research Design

Following the positioning of a research question within a paradigm it is necessary to consider research design and methods for data collection. Data collected can be broadly categorised into either qualitative or quantitative data. The methods used to collect the data have a bearing on the type of data obtained, and the decision is informed by the research paradigm which is itself informed by the research question. Qualitative data is associated with the interpretive paradigm and is considered subjective, focused more on words, experiences or feelings. It can provide an in-depth picture of the situation under investigation. Typical qualitative data collection instruments would include observation, interviews and conversations with focus groups.

Quantitative data is associated more often with research based in the positivist paradigm. The data is potentially more objective, consisting of numbers and statistics. Quantitative data can allow for greater breadth of information. Quantitative data is typically collected using questionnaire.

Mixed methods research is defined as “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). As outlined by Cohen et al. (2011, p. 23) mixed method research “is driven by the research questions (which are often more than one in number and which require both quantitative and qualitative data to answer them) rather than the methodological preferences of the researcher”. A central understanding in conducting mixed methods research is that “the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone” (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007, p. 5).

A mixed methods approach was chosen for this study to obtain in-depth data from the interviews and more generalised data from the questionnaires. The design was also sequential as the data obtained from the interviews was used to inform the content of the questionnaire. The interviews on their own would have provided a very localised picture and were conducted with participants who could be deemed to have above average knowledge on the topic as they were chosen as they had participated in a place-based pedagogical programme previously (further information on participant selection is included in Section 3.4.2). The questionnaire was designed to be completed by participants who had no prior knowledge of place-based pedagogy and consequently it was hoped would provide the perspective of teachers who had not previously engaged with place-based pedagogy. Thus, a mixed methods survey design was deemed most suitable to address the research questions of this study, combining qualitative semi-structured interviews and quantitative questionnaires as data collection methods. Survey is used to describe research that involves interviews or questionnaires (Gall, Borg and Gall, 1996).

As suggested in MacKenzie and Knipe (2006), quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires can be used to expand on the qualitative interview data. This follows a triangulation design, where different data types are combined and interpreted to build understanding of the concept (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). Patton (2002) argued that combining the quantitative and qualitative data allowed for greater understanding of the research question through comparison of the findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis. However, successful mixed methods research requires the

researcher to be knowledgeable in both qualitative and quantitative design and methods, which require more time and effort from the researcher (Creswell, 2009).

3.4.1. Data Collection Methods

The mixed methods survey approach as outlined above was employed using semi-structured qualitative interviews and an online quantitative questionnaire as data collection methods. Educational research frequently uses questionnaires and interviews to collect data that is not directly observable, such as feelings, motivations, attitudes and experiences (Gall et al., 1996).

Interviews

Interviews were used to ascertain the teachers' ideas, thoughts and feelings concerning place-based pedagogy, a data collection approach recommended by Bloland (1992). Dilley (2004, p. 132) also considers why a researcher would choose to conduct qualitative interviews, contending that the decision is “philosophical rather than instrumental in nature”.

As stated by Wellington (2000), decisions in relation to interview structure are based on the purpose of the research. Semi-structured interviews, while following an interview guide allow the interviewer to build conversation and improvise while adhering to a particular topic (Patton, 2002). The purpose of these interviews was to establish teachers' views about their experience with place-based pedagogy. As described in Somekh and Lewin (2005, p. 42) “the sense of the 'real' is at the heart of the interview”. In a semi-structured interview approach, the topics to be considered are decided in advance but the interviewer can change the wording and sequence as necessary. This differs from the structured or narrative interview format (Patton, 2002).

The design of the interview guide was informed by the researchers' professional experience (as outlined in chapter one) and a review of the relevant literature. The purpose of the interview was to gain insight from teachers into their experience of and views on, the potential for a place-based approach to pedagogy. The interview began by seeking some background information from the teacher, for example, their experience and personal interest in place-based pedagogy. The interview then moved to the teacher's feelings about the place-based programme in which they had

participated and whether this had impacted on their teaching. The focus then switched to broader questions around the place-based approach, proposing a definition and establishing their views on the definition before attempting to ascertain potential barriers to place-based pedagogy. The final topics included discussion of the Irish primary school curriculum and the resources available to teachers interested in taking a place-based approach. This follows the structure proposed by Wellington (2000), whereby the easier closed questions appear earlier in the interview, and the more challenging open questions, which require reflection, are at the end. Potential barriers to participation in place-based approaches, benefits to students and relevant curriculum links was researched in advance through relevant literature review which informed the interview guide. The guide consisted of 11 questions, and is included in Appendix C.

While consideration was given to focus groups, it was decided that interviews would ultimately provide the data required without involving the potential logistical difficulties posed by focus groups (Somekh and Lewin, 2005). The views of interview participants and questionnaire respondents on place-based pedagogy are of primary interest here (Creswell et al., 2003).

All interviews were carried out in the teacher's schools at their request. Interviews were recorded using a digital recording device and these recordings were used to prepare transcripts of the interviews.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire was used to identify current practice among teachers in relation to place-based pedagogy. The questionnaire was designed so that it could be completed by teachers who had no prior experience of place-based pedagogy.

Questionnaires are more commonly used to obtain quantitative data (Gall et al, 1996). They are efficient in sampling respondents over a wider geographical area and can also be less time consuming than interviews. However the depth of data received can be less than an interview, and the questions cannot be modified once the questionnaire has been distributed (Gall et al, 1996).

It was hoped that the questionnaire would describe the attitudes of the primary teacher population in relation to place-based pedagogy, ascertain how many teachers are

engaged in place-based activities, and identify the distribution of practice in relation to experience, location, class group and school size.

As outlined by Kelley, Clark, Brown and Sitzia (2003), there are advantages and disadvantages to using questionnaires. Some of the advantages include the creation of empirical data based on real-world observation, the breadth of coverage which can allow for generalisation, and the production of large amounts of data (ibid.). However, there are also potential disadvantages such as not focusing sufficiently in design on the data required, the data produced lacking necessary details, and securing response rates can be difficult (Kelley et al., 2003). Kelley et al. (2003, p. 263) explain that “the design, wording, form and order of questions can affect the type of responses obtained, and careful design is needed to minimize bias in results”. Cohen et al. (2011) also explain that good questionnaires must be clear in their purpose, cover all the relevant elements, ask appropriate questions and ensure that the data received is the most appropriate to answer the research questions.

Along with research on questionnaire design, significant research was also conducted in development and design of the questionnaire in terms of establishing variables. As explained by Creswell (2009, p. 52), “a variable refers to a characteristic or attribute of an individual or an organisation that can be measured or observed and that varies among people or organisations studied”. Variables were identified via analysis of the Irish Primary School Curriculum and relevant place-based pedagogy literature. The curriculum analysis was used to identify activities which could be considered place-based which are included on the curriculum, while the place-based literature was used to identify some of the known obstacles to place-based activities. This research was vital in formulating questions for inclusion on the questionnaire. The questionnaire was finalised after completion of the interviews and data obtained in the interviews informed elements of the questionnaire design. The questionnaire comprised 18 questions. 14 of the questions were closed-ended, three were closed-ended with the option to specify ‘Other’, and one was an open ended quantitative question. Four of the closed-ended questions included scales. The full questionnaire is included in Appendix D.

3.4.2. Sampling and Participant recruitment

In research, we can rarely study an entire population of individuals that interest us. It is thus necessary to select a sample and impose limitations on the study (Gall et al, 1996). The sampling strategy is an essential element in survey planning – for both questionnaires and interviews. Cohen et al. (2011, p. 143) state “the quality of a piece of research not only stands and falls by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted”.

For the teacher interviews, purposeful sampling, a non-random method of sampling whereby the researcher selects information-rich cases for study (Patton, 2002), was selected as the sampling method in this study. The teachers selected had engaged in some form of place-based pedagogy in the past, either by attending a training event or having a programme delivered in their classroom. See Appendix A for details of the programmes. In total, forty potential interviewees were contacted and invited to participate (see Appendix E). Interviews were conducted with the six who responded first. It was decided that six interviews were all that was possible given the time constraints, but also that six participants would give a good cross-section of experience, school size and location. As there were existing relationships and rapport with participants, there was good potential for interesting data (Creswell, 1998).

The sampling for the questionnaire was purposeful random sampling (Patton, 2002). Any practicing Irish primary school teachers could complete the questionnaire as no prior knowledge about place-based pedagogy was required to complete the questionnaire. The aim of the questionnaire was to describe attitudes and practices of the primary teacher population in relation to place-based pedagogy.

3.4.3. Negotiating access

As previously outlined the interview participants had all been involved in a place-based pedagogy programme previously delivered by the researchers’ employers, Burrenbeo Trust. As a result, there was an existing relationship established with relevant individuals and the researcher had access to contact details of previous participants. Forty teachers were emailed requesting an interview (see Appendix E). The first six to respond were chosen to participate. As outlined above this was decision

was based on time constraints associated with the study. The interviews were conducted in January and February 2017.

The questionnaire was hosted online using SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com). The questionnaire was circulated via email lists to the Primary Principals' Network, the local Education Centres and was emailed to approximately 3100 schools, from email detail obtained from the Department of Education website. The email provided details on the study and asked recipients to circulate among colleagues (See Appendix F). The questionnaire was also circulated via personal connections and Twitter. There are 35,669 primary school teachers in Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, 2017), it was hoped that a sample of approximately one percent would be achieved. This would require 356 respondents. The survey was circulated and available online throughout March 2017.

3.4.4. Piloting

Both data collection instruments were piloted to determine trustworthiness.

A pilot interview was conducted during the initial stages of the research. All procedures around invitation to participate, informed consent, confidentiality, recording and transcribing of interviews were carried out. No significant issues arose. The interview guide was reworked to include more detail on some questions. The issue of ambiguity in interview questions is noted by Wellington (2000). The process of transcribing the pilot interview helped to inform interview technique for subsequent interviews, highlighting the necessity to allow silences for participants to consider their response.

The questionnaire was piloted by circulating among five teachers and a work colleague of the researcher. All that piloted the questionnaire felt that the questions were clear, sufficiently allowed for investigation of the topic, and was appropriate in length.

3.5. Ethical Issues

Consideration was given to the potential ethical issues that might arise in this study. As outlined by Mears (2012), "when you set out to learn from others, it is important to consider how your work will affect them. The imperative of *first, do no harm* should drive every action and decision" (Mears, 2012, p. 174, italics in original). With this in mind, a comprehensive ethics checklist was completed (see Appendix G) in

accordance with NUI Galway School of Education ethics policy, and approved by the School of Education Research Committee.

Confidential and anonymous treatment of participants' data is expected in the conduct of research (BERA, 2011). Anonymity is generally achieved by using aliases and not using participants names or identifying stories in reporting (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2013). However, as the participants may be known to the researcher it may only be possible to assure confidentiality; "this means that although researchers know who has provided the information, or are able to identify participants from the information given, they will in no way make the connection known publicly; the boundaries surrounding the shared secret will be protected" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2013, p. 65). The interview participants were assigned pseudonyms, which will be used to report findings. The pseudonyms used are Ann, Tara, Phil, Niamh, Claire and Ellen.

All interview participants were provided with full information in relation to the study and their participation before they signed a form indicating informed consent (see Appendix H). Informed consent is considered essential in social science research (David, Edwards and Alldred, 2001) and "arises from the subject's right to freedom and self-determination" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2013, p. 52). In explaining the concept, the British Educational Research Association include the following in their research code of ethics: "researchers must take the steps necessary to ensure that all participants in the research understand the process in which they are to be engaged, including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported" (BERA, 2011, p. 5).

For the online questionnaire, a similar information page and question in relation to consent was included and was the first necessary element which respondents selected prior to progressing through the questionnaire (see Appendix D). All online questionnaire participants were guaranteed anonymity, and any documentation relating to the study was securely stored.

The issue of researcher positionality was one of the main ethical considerations in relation to this study. Burrenbeo Trust, the researcher's employer, are engaged in developing and promoting place-based pedagogy in Ireland and would therefore have

a strategic interest in the results of the study. Reporting negatively in terms of place-based pedagogy and its potential could conceivably have an impact on the future career of the researcher. As Creswell (1998) outlines, “researchers can jeopardize their jobs if they report unfavorable data or if participants disclose private information that might negatively influence the organization or workplace” (Creswell, 1998, p. 122). If the study findings reported that there was no possibility of or demand for increased engagement with place-based pedagogy in Ireland in the future, this could be significant for the future of the organisation.

This falls broadly under the umbrella of insider research, meaning “research by complete members of organizational systems and communities in and on their own organizations” (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007, p. 59). The concept of insider or embedded research has been considered by others who have engaged in similar studies (Wong, 2009; Rowley, 2014). While there can be benefits to insider research, as the researcher has built up knowledge, and is developing their own area of practice as opposed to research being done ‘on’ other people’s practice (Munn-Giddings, 2012), there is a danger that insiders are too close to the situation under review and are therefore unable to objectively carry out research, analysis and reporting (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007). In this situation as specified by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013, p. 179) “role negotiation, balance and trust are significant and difficult”. Equally, as outlined by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.134), the issue of positionality exists in all research, “as researchers, are part of the world that we are researching, and we cannot be completely objective about that, hence other people's perspectives are equally as valid as our own, and the task of research is to uncover these”.

As suggested by Creswell (1998) multiple strategies of validation were employed to ensure the research is accurate and transparent, with particular consideration to the specific issues around insider research. This is achieved by interviewing a number of sources, aligning the interview with the questionnaire data and cross referencing relevant documents. To ensure validity in insider research “potential researchers, through a process of reflexivity, need to be aware of the strengths and limits of their preunderstanding so that they can use their experiential and theoretical knowledge to

reframe their understanding of situations to which they are close” (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007, p. 72).

3.6. Validity and reliability

Consideration must be given to the validity and reliability of the study and the data it presents. The concepts of validity and reliability have different meanings in quantitative or qualitative research (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006). However, for both “it serves the purpose of checking on the quality of the data and the results” (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007, p. 133). Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, p. 146) define validity in mixed methods research as “the ability of the researcher to draw meaningful and accurate conclusions from all the data in the study”. “It is suggested that reliability is a necessary but insufficient condition for validity in research; reliability is a necessary precondition of validity, and validity may be a sufficient but not necessary condition for reliability” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2013, p. 133).

Validity of a questionnaire refers both to whether the instrument measures what it was intended to measure and equally whether the interpretation is accurate (Coe, 2012). Reliability in quantitative instruments meanwhile is concerned with “the dependability, consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents” of the study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2013, p. 146). The reliability and validity of the questionnaire instrument was considered to ensure that the questionnaire would measure the variables required. Piloting the questionnaire was one element of determining both reliability and validity. The reliability was also enhanced due to the online administration, which ensured that every participant had the same experience when completing the survey. As the questionnaire featured mainly closed-ended questions there is a greater likelihood of validity in the analysis.

The analysis and presentation of findings must also be valid, “data selected must be representative of the sample, the whole data set, the field” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 135). It can be argued that validity and reliability were enhanced in this study because a variety of data collection instruments were used. However, Bazeley (2004), contends that “as with any research, validity stems more from the appropriateness, thoroughness and effectiveness with which those methods are applied and the care given to thoughtful weighing of the evidence than from the application of

a particular set of rules or adherence to an established tradition” (Bazeley, 2004, p. 154).

3.7.Approach to and procedures followed in data analysis

Data analysis in a mixed method study involves analysis of the quantitative data using quantitative methods and qualitative data using qualitative methods (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). The quantitative data was input into the computer software package Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and then analysed using a variety of relevant tests. Tests performed included descriptive statistical tests on frequencies between variables, and crosstabs or chi-square tests to determine statistically significant relationships between variables.

The qualitative data was transcribed and then coded following the constant comparative method (Wellington, 2000). This method sees the data divided into ‘units of meaning’, before being grouped into corresponding categories, these categories are then further compared and combined or separated where necessary, the categories are continuously checked and integrated as required (Wellington, 2000). There was one qualitative response included on the questionnaire which was analysed in the same way as the qualitative interview data as outlined above.

Following the triangulation design, the analysis takes a concurrent analysis approach (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). The initial data analysis on both the quantitative and qualitative data is carried out separately before combining both data sets and comparing the results to develop a complete picture and answer the research questions posed (ibid). Following initial analysis, the data is then interpreted to explain the relevance of the results. These findings were developed and redrafted over several occasions.

3.7.1. Initial coding and category creation

The initial coding of data produced a broad range of categories. An example of a coded interview section is included in Appendix I. The initial categories created from the coding and analysis of the qualitative interviews were; identity, support, time, weather, connection, hassle, local resources, text books, pride of place, own childhood, abilities, sharing with parents, fear, community, enjoyment, progression, peer learning, meaningful engagement, curriculum, trusting teachers, challenges, cost, students

researching, whole school approach and action. The initial categories created from coding and analysis of the qualitative questionnaire response were; time, enjoyment, importance, teachers' knowledge, cost and resources, student age, community, ability/Special Educational Needs (SEN), curriculum, support and learning. While there was some crossover of initial coding categories there were also some that only occurred in one or other of the data sets or perhaps were more significant in one or other of the data sets.

Following closer examination of the data and the initial coding categories, five main categories were identified. There are various additional sub-categories in each of the five main categories. The codes which were included in each of the categories are outlined in Appendix J. An 'in vivo' code is used to illustrate each category title. The categories identified are;

- **Dealing with the practicalities**
“This form of education is worthwhile but in practical terms can be quite challenging” (Questionnaire number 114)
- **Considering the curriculum**
“It's not the curriculum per se. It's actually the breadth” (Tara, Line 334-335)
- **Unpicking the role of the school and teacher**
“Our enthusiasm should be nurtured not battered” (Questionnaire number 143)
- **Having an impact on student's experience**
“Maybe if they do it themselves they might learn for themselves and it might make a bit more of an impact on them” (Ellen, Line 105-107)
- **Building a sense of place, community and identity**
“It takes a village to raise a child, perhaps it also takes a village to educate a child” (Questionnaire number 151)

3.8. Conclusion

The methodology outlined above provides a detailed description of the basis for the approach taken in conducting this research. The methodology was chosen to address the research questions as explained. Consideration was given to the research design and data collection and analysis methods as well as discussion in terms of the ethical elements associated with this research.

The following chapter will consider the findings which resulted from analysis of the collected data.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter comprises a presentation of the findings from data collected from interviews and questionnaires with primary school teachers in response to the research question focus, the potential for place-based pedagogy in the Irish primary school curriculum from the perspective of the teacher. As outlined previously, data was collected via six semi-structured interviews and online questionnaires. In total 199 online questionnaires were completed. The data comprised qualitative data from the interviews and mainly quantitative data from the questionnaire. Both data collection methods included questions related to the teachers' personal interest in topics relevant to place-based pedagogy, the extent to which they follow place-based pedagogy as included in the curriculum, their views in terms of barriers which might exist to place-based pedagogy and their thoughts in terms of the potential for place-based pedagogy generally.

This chapter includes empirical findings, representative of all data gathered and analysed. Initially an overview of the participant demographics is presented. The findings are then presented in terms of the various categories and sub-categories which emerged during data analysis as outlined in chapter three.

4.2. Who were the participants?

In examining the responses of the participants, there were many variables which could have a bearing on their response. These include gender, age, school size and location. The following sections summarise some of the key data in terms of the demographic makeup of the participants. This includes both questionnaire and interview participants. As mentioned in the previous chapter, interview participants were assigned pseudonyms which will be used to report findings. The pseudonyms are Ann, Tara, Phil, Niamh, Claire and Ellen.

4.2.1. Gender

All six of the interview participants were female. The questionnaire participants were 31 males (16%) and 168 (84%) females. This is very close to the overall gender representation in Ireland, where 87% of primary school teachers are females (Department of Education and Skills, 2017).

4.2.2. Age

The participants ages were quite evenly spread over a range of categories. Again, this is quite a representative spread of primary teachers ages in Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, 2017). The ages of the questionnaire respondents are represented in the Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Questionnaire Respondent Ages

Age	Percentage
20 – 29	16%
30 – 39	35%
40 – 49	21%
50 – 59	27%
60 or older	1%

Estimations of the age of the interview participants, place Claire in the 30 – 39 bracket, Tara and Phil in the 40 – 49 bracket and Ann, Niamh and Ellen in the 50 – 59 bracket.

4.2.3. School size

Participants were asked approximately how many students attended their school. While this was broken down into smaller categories in the questionnaire, the combined result saw 61% teaching in schools with over 150 pupils and the remaining 39% in schools with under 150 pupils. Of the interviewed teachers, Ann and Niamh teach in schools with over 150 pupils while Tara, Claire, Phil and Ellen teach in schools with less than 150 pupils.

4.2.4. School location

The questionnaire participants were asked if their school could be best described as urban or rural. There was a very even spread of responses with 48% of responses from rural schools and 52% from urban schools. This was also reflected in the interview participants where three (Ann, Phil and Claire) teach in urban schools and three (Tara, Niamh and Ellen) teach in rural schools.

4.2.5. Teaching in the area they grew up

Participants were asked if they had grown up within 40kms of where they were teaching. Again, this was divided quite evenly, where 59% had and 41% had not. The interview participants were divided evenly, Niamh, Claire and Ellen having grown up near where they were teaching and Ann, Tara and Phil having grown up in another part of Ireland.

4.3.Presentation of Findings Categories

The categories identified which will be discussed below are;

- Dealing with the practicalities
- Considering the curriculum
- Unpicking the role of the school and teacher
- Having an impact on students' experience
- Building a sense of place, community and identity

4.4.Dealing with the practicalities

“This form of education is worthwhile but in practical terms can be quite challenging”
(Questionnaire number 114)

This category reports on the teachers' responses in relation to practicalities and barriers affecting their engagement with place-based pedagogy. This is considered under several headings.

4.4.1. What activities are teachers engaging with?

Following analysis of the Irish primary school curriculum as outlined in Chapter Two, several activities which are included in the curriculum and are explicitly linked to place-based pedagogy were identified. Questionnaire respondents were asked how often their class participate in these activities. The results are outlined in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Questionnaire Response to Class Participation in Place-based Activities

Activity	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Every Term	Every Year	Never or almost never
Go for a walk outside school grounds	1 (0.5%)	22 (11%)	34 (17%)	89 (45%)	37 (18.5%)	16 (8%)
Learn about a local heritage site (within 30kms of school)	-	3 (1.5%)	12 (6%)	52 (26.5%)	106 (54%)	24 (12%)
Visit a local heritage site (within 30kms of school)	-	-	4 (2%)	20 (10%)	107 (54%)	66 (34%)
Learn about a local wildlife site (within 30kms of school)	1 (0.5%)	4 (2%)	9 (4.5%)	41 (21%)	90 (46%)	52 (26%)
Visit a local wildlife site (within 30kms of school)	-	3 (1.5%)	2 (1%)	18 (9%)	92 (47%)	82 (41.5%)
Community member visits the class to speak to the children	-	-	5 (2.5%)	28 (14%)	121 (61%)	44 (22.5%)
Class get actively involved in a real world local problem	11 (5.5%)	13 (6.5%)	26 (13%)	41 (21%)	83 (42%)	23 (12%)
Class research local information online or using existing resources	1 (0.5%)	13 (7%)	25 (13%)	44 (23%)	68 (35.5%)	41 (21%)
Class research local information by asking a community member	1 (0.5%)	2 (1%)	15 (7.5%)	45 (23%)	83 (42%)	52 (26%)
Class campaign on a local issue	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	8 (4%)	30 (15%)	72 (37%)	82 (42%)
Class learn about local culture	4 (2%)	10 (5%)	29 (15%)	44 (22%)	87 (44%)	23 (12%)

In the qualitative questionnaire responses, numerous teachers gave examples of place-based activities which they had undertaken with their class.

The class group I teach leaves the school site for an annual trip which we try to integrate with place-based learning i.e. a local farm and a local historical house are popular places for us to visit with this age group. (Questionnaire number 88)

I used local knowledge and invited grandparents and local historians and artists in to talk to classes. (Questionnaire number 92)

First and Second class go for a weekly walk in the woods, (70 minutes Friday afternoon) I note it as part PE, SESE, and when we built 'dens' in the woods as

construction under Visual Arts. Our Junior and Senior infant classes (kindergarten) go for a daily woods walk (35 minutes) rain or shine. (Questionnaire number 151)

The teachers who participated in the interviews all gave examples of engaging with some of the activities outlined above.

We try and use the environment in the area at least every year we'd go at least one place if not two places, we try and do one in the Autumn and one in the Spring. (Ellen, Line 95 – 97)

It definitely is worth doing, definitely it's worth doing and even if it is just one visit in the whole year to someplace, that place kind of sticks out for the kids then and they will remember it - oh yeah I remember in third class we went to such and such a place you know and it definitely sticks. (Niamh, Line 176 - 179)

We went on a nature walk, (...) this week we are doing all about water in our locality. (Claire, line 78 -84)

So, while teachers report participating in some place-based activities, for many this is not a regular occurrence, with those that do engage doing so only once a term or once a year. The following section considers some of the reasons why place-based activities might not occur regularly or at all in a school.

4.4.2. What are the barriers to place-based pedagogy?

As outlined in chapter two, several potential barriers have been identified which deter teachers from engaging with place-based pedagogy. Questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate the level to which they felt these barriers impacted on their engagement with activities such as those discussed above, essentially with place-based pedagogy. The results are presented in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Questionnaire Response to Barriers to Place-based Pedagogy

Barrier	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Neutral	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Time	112 (60%)	51 (27.5%)	15 (8%)	6 (3%)	3 (1.5%)
Child Safety Concerns	86 (44%)	60 (30%)	28 (14%)	15 (8%)	8 (4%)
Management Support	62 (31%)	39 (20%)	51 (26%)	20 (10%)	26 (13%)
Teachers knowledge on related subject	64 (32%)	82 (42%)	24 (12%)	15 (8%)	12 (6%)
Teachers knowledge on local community	75 (38%)	75 (38%)	20 (10%)	16 (8%)	12 (6%)
Teachers knowledge on local place	75 (38%)	76 (38.5%)	19 (10%)	16 (8%)	11 (5.5%)
Access to appropriate resources	99 (50%)	66 (33%)	19 (9.5%)	12 (6%)	3 (1.5%)
Cost	97 (49%)	55 (28%)	21 (10.5%)	13 (6.5%)	12 (6%)
Student Numbers	75 (38%)	55 (28%)	30 (15%)	21 (10.5%)	17 (8.5%)
Behavioural concerns	68 (34%)	52 (26%)	33 (17%)	24 (12%)	21 (11%)

The barriers which are detailed above were also all mentioned in the qualitative questionnaire responses. A barrier which was not included in the initial question which was mentioned quite frequently in the qualitative responses related to the age of the children.

Time, cost and age of students are the main factors which influence our ability to participate in place-based learning. (Questionnaire number 2)

New Garda vetting rules make it more difficult to have visitors into the classroom. (Questionnaire number 11)

Of great importance, but unfortunately an over-loaded curriculum, time constraints, large classes, behavioural concerns and insurance concerns make it very difficult to get around to teaching these matters, despite the fact that I have a great personal interest in them. (Questionnaire number 35)

There is no funding available for trips and too much reliance on textbooks teaching about areas other than our own which takes away from the time when they could be learning from their own environment. (Questionnaire number 60)

Although my class are too young the school places huge importance on the older classes on local history. (Questionnaire number 139)

The teachers interviewed also discussed some of the barriers to engagement with place-based pedagogy. These included the breadth of the curriculum, weather for outdoor education, time, child protection, cost, management support and the teachers own knowledge. The role of the curriculum and teachers own knowledge will be further explored in following sections.

I think the teachers' own base knowledge of the area, em or their own perceived base knowledge of the area. If you're living in a community well and good you have something to start with, if you're not and that happens quite a bit that teachers are commuting, em. That may well come against it. I think eh your own confidence in yourself as a teacher. And it sounds a bit boring but your confidence in your own classroom management, your discipline, your procedure, your skills at keeping safe, children safe. (Tara, Line 147 -152)

Bigger schools would probably need a principal who's fairly proactive about getting all the new teachers on board with the local knowledge. (Tara, Line 242 -244)

You know the cost of buses are so expensive but I would love to bring the kids out and about but really it's not, we use our local environment about us here really where we can walk, but really we never actually go on a bus to something like that (Ellen, Line 55 – 58)

Child protection policies, (...) so if you're going to have place-based and you've the community coming in its a huge area (Ann, Line 345 – 347)

If you want to go out on fieldtrips the weather can influence it. You know it, you can be all set everything is right and the weather just doesn't coincide with the day (Niamh, Line 122 -124)

Some of the most prominent barriers were time, inconvenience, resources (financial and information) and child safety. Of these, the most frequently referenced barrier was time. This was also the barrier with which the highest percentage of respondents 'strongly agreed' in the questionnaire. The issue of time is closely related to the

curriculum which will be further examined in section 4.5 below. Similarly, the issue around information resources is related to section 4.6 below. Interestingly, the questionnaire respondents focused more on the barriers in their qualitative response, while the interview participants, who are all currently engaging in place-based learning, to some extent, were less focused on the barriers. When asked specifically, the interview participants did also refer to some of the same practicalities which might impact on delivery of place-based education but they were less of a factor.

4.5. Considering the curriculum

“It's not the curriculum per se. It's actually the breadth” (Tara, Line 334-335)

The relationship between place-based pedagogy and the existing curriculum was included as a sub research question so it is unsurprising that it featured extensively in the data. As referenced above, there is a degree of crossover between time as a barrier or limiting factor and the curriculum. The questionnaire respondents made multiple references to the curriculum as a limiting factor. Again, interestingly, the interview participants who, as stated previously, are more familiar with place-based pedagogy, were considerably less critical of the curriculum.

When asked if they felt that the activities outlined above fell under the remit of the curriculum, 93 percent of the questionnaire respondents felt that they did, while seven percent felt that they did not. The curriculum was also mentioned extensively in the qualitative questionnaire responses, particular in reference to an overloaded curriculum.

I think most teachers would like to engage in place based pedagogy but in an over loaded curriculum it is difficult to plan time for walks and visits to local sites. (Questionnaire number 136)

The interview participants largely reported that using local place was part of the curriculum, and something they were already required to do.

Local studies is part of the curriculum in history, SESE I suppose SESE Geography and then again like that we do local studies sometimes, we'll do maps of the area, maps of the classroom, maps of the school. (Ann, Line 167 – 169)

We do have to teach a local strand, that is one of the units or strands in the history curriculum and likewise with geography so we don't actually have a choice about that. (Tara, Line 81 -83)

It's what we should be doing, it's in the geography curriculum, the science curriculum, even religion you know, care and appreciation of the local environment are strands of the curriculum. (Phil, Line 115 – 117)

Interestingly, it was noted that while the activities fell under the remit of the curriculum they also mentioned a need to be flexible in your approach to ensure that the activities addressed the curriculum requirements as efficiently as possible.

I think the curriculum is very flexible really, (...) you can drag it in, you will find a way to drag it in if it suits you, you know it mightn't be just clear cut but you can fit it in under it (...), it does aid the different strands and strand units it definitely does (Ellen, Line 215 – 219)

The geography curriculum for example has just one small section on local studies (...) and you can think, emmm that's one tiny section of the whole curriculum but I intend making it a very big part of my year because I'm teaching 6th class this year, just fleshing that out and I think I've no problem justifying that to an inspector. The curriculum is overloaded there are far too many history, geography, science, maybe too many irrelevant learning eh learning objectives you know just not relevant to children, like lets kind of cut it down and make it more relevant. (Phil, Line 172 – 179)

I think you've got to be creative with your planning (...) you've got to kind of be creative with it and so long as you can look at the curriculum and write ok these objectives in English link in with what we're doing here, these objectives in art and these objectives in history so that one lesson I got from that I ticked boxes in terms of literacy, oral language, art and history, so I think it does allow for cross curricular links but you've got to kind of creative in that way and say ok while this is fantastic opportunity I'm going to get a lot ticked with it. (Claire, Line 221 -228)

I think that you have to be what's the word, innovative to a certain extent with the curriculum, the curriculum is overcrowded that's the biggest issue with the

curriculum.(...) Integration I suppose is the word, they like to think that we're integrating the curriculum all the time but you've to really think about it to integrate it. (Ann, Line 355 -361)

Phil was particularly convinced of the cross curricular potential of a place-based approach and her view that it was a way of enriching the existing curriculum rather than additional work.

The first point is it's cross curricular. Teachers will always say 'Oh no, not a new thing, not a new thing on the curriculum' but the beauty of using the local environment, em we're doing a history and art project at the moment (...) and it also involves geography and it just integrates those areas so well rather than having these artificial subject barriers. So, it's a very kind of organic approach to teaching and learning. (Phil, Line 99 -103)

Equally some of the questionnaire respondents mentioned the potential for place-based pedagogy in the curriculum.

It can cover so many different areas of the curriculum. The children can learn about their local community in a fun and exciting way. (Questionnaire number 26)

This is exactly the kind of learning that the "New" curriculum in 1972 envisaged and the "Revised" curriculum in 1999 encouraged. However, due to time constraints, fear and lack of knowledge we, as teachers, haven't really embraced it. (Questionnaire number 40)

Place based pedagogy is part and parcel of curriculum in SESE as per primary curriculum. (Questionnaire number 103)

However, many still went on to insinuate that place-based education would be an additional burden on top of the existing curriculum.

The curriculum is increasingly demanding on teachers and there are so many unscheduled interruptions it is difficult to cover what is already expected of us. (Questionnaire number 8)

Lack of curriculum time allocated to these areas is a problem. (Questionnaire number 12)

There simply is not enough time to cover these areas to any great detail due entirely to an already overcrowded curriculum and time constraints. (Questionnaire number 28)

Very packed curriculum and no incentive to new teachers to find out about local area unless personally interested. (Questionnaire number 93)

The questionnaire data relating to teachers' responses to the question of place-based pedagogy being part of the existing curriculum was analysed to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between their feelings around the curriculum and their years teaching, their school size and whether the school was urban or rural. No statistically significant relationship was found between any of these variables and their feelings about place-based education being included in the curriculum. Samples of the chi-square test results from SPSS can be seen in Appendix K.

4.6. Unpicking the role of the school and teacher

“Our enthusiasm should be nurtured not battered” (Questionnaire number 143)

Many participants discussed the role they as teachers play in relation to the prevalence of place-based education in their classroom. While they ultimately had control over whether place-based education was included for their students there were several specific elements cited which influenced this. The most commonly cited element was the teachers' own local knowledge or their perception of their own knowledge. This, in turn, was influenced by two elements, 1) the support they receive within the school and 2) the degree of freedom and confidence teachers have.

4.6.1. Support for place-based learning in schools

Both interview participants and questionnaire respondents frequently indicated that support from other teachers or in some incidences, a whole school approach would be required to facilitate place-based education.

I think that it requires careful planning and cooperation with staff, team teaching etc. It requires leaders within the school community and having a local teacher would really help. (Questionnaire number 33)

School wide approach needed so that knowledge can be built on each year. (Questionnaire number 128)

We're lucky in our school in that you'd send out permission slips and say we're going weather dependant on a certain day and parental support in our school would be very good for this sort of thing, it'd be great, good support from staff. (Claire, Line 205 – 208)

I suppose, other teachers within the school might have a better knowledge of the area, they might be from here or live here but it's just putting heads together and it is done here that if somebody is looking for something or somebody on the staff might know of somebody local that we could ask, so it's never an issue. (Niamh, Line 147 -150)

An alternative view in terms of the role of the school was also expressed, where it was felt that some of the activities outlined in the questionnaire (all of which are elements of the existing curriculum) would be better addressed by external agencies.

I feel that while the school can support some of these aspects especially those that relate to the curriculum, other aspects may be better served by other agencies such as youth clubs, scouting or community/family based projects. (Questionnaire number 191)

This raises a question in terms of the role of schools. This point was developed further by Ellen in her interview, in which she says that students are being let down if their learning is not based in the local,

I think you've to start with what you know and then you can learn about the Taj Mahal then in years to come, I think if they learn about their own area, nobody's going to teach them, I think we let them down if we don't teach them what they have on their doorstep, I feel then what good is learning about the Taj Mahal, Aires Rock or any of these things, I think you have to teach them

what's around and then they appreciate it and yeah they probably be better to the environment as a result of it. (Ellen, 114-119)

The question of the role of schools will be further discussed in Section 4.8 below and has been considered in chapter one and will be further addressed in the chapter five.

4.6.2. Teachers' own knowledge around local places

Questionnaire respondents were asked if they had a personal interest in several topics which would be considered elements of place-based education. These included archaeology, community development, dance, environment, geology, history, literature, music, storytelling, visual art and wildlife. The responses were varied with most participants indicating personal interest in many of the topics. The topics which were selected most frequently were environment (106 responses), history (114 responses), music (104 responses), visual art (115 responses) and wildlife (105 responses). Eight participants responded that they were not interested in any of the topics.

The interview participants were also asked about personal interest in built, natural and cultural heritage. Some participants indicated a strong interest in all three areas and others being more interested in specific topics. All interview participants indicated personal interest in at least one area related to place-based education.

That's the reason I moved to this area, was for the natural heritage and the history and archaeology. (Phil, Line 39 -40)

Em, would I, I don't know, I wouldn't say I've a very, very keen interest in history per se, I'd have studied it in school but no it wouldn't be my main focus in the landscape. (Tara, Line 26 – 27)

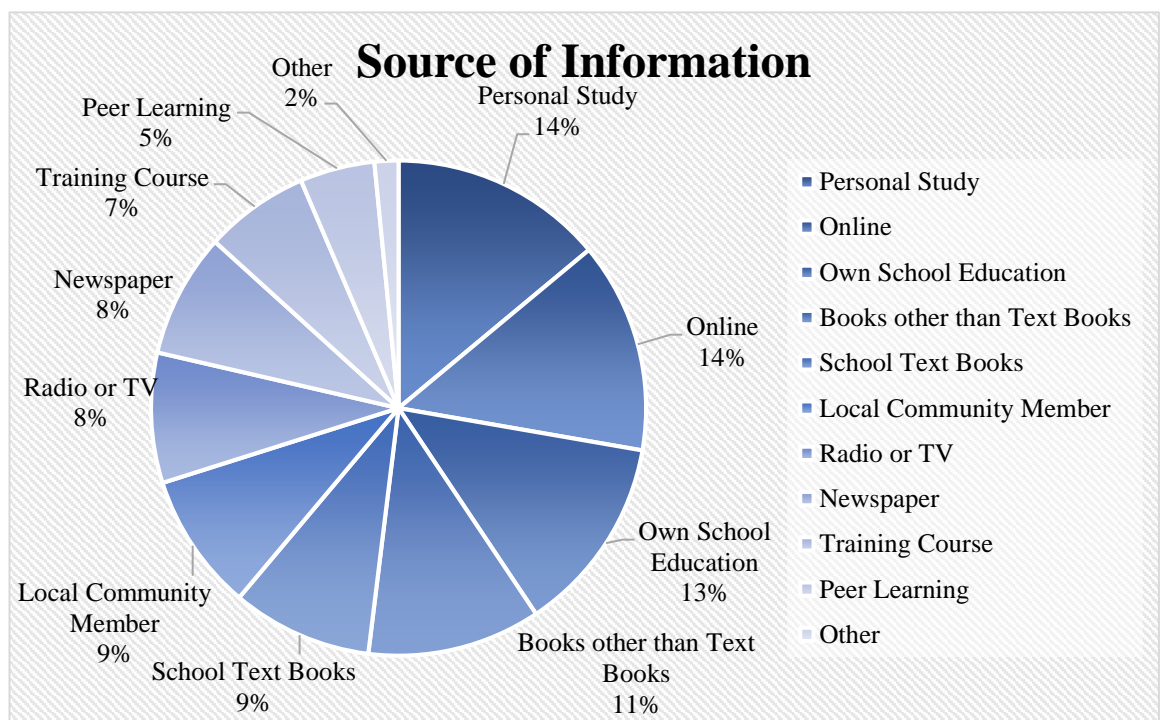
The built heritage wasn't particularly focused on locally, it would have been the typical stuff that was in every history book, like Newgrange, that sort of thing but in terms of the actual local stuff I wasn't really aware of, the more local aspects of what was on my doorstep, until I was older and a lot older, in my 20's when I'd gotten more into outdoors and walking and that sort of thing. (Claire, Line 31 -35)

Questionnaire participants were asked to indicate their own level of knowledge in terms of the topics relevant to place-based education. They were then asked where they had gained this knowledge and where would be most appropriate to gain this knowledge. Most topics had a largely even spread with respondents placing themselves on various points on a scale of one to five where five meant they felt they had sufficient knowledge to teach the topic and one indicated that they felt they had insufficient knowledge.

The topic which had the highest number indicating they had insufficient knowledge was archaeology (35). The topics where most felt they had sufficient knowledge were environment (51), history (64), literature (56), visual art (58) and wildlife (53). These topics are broadly reflective of the most popular topics that teachers indicated a personal interest in.

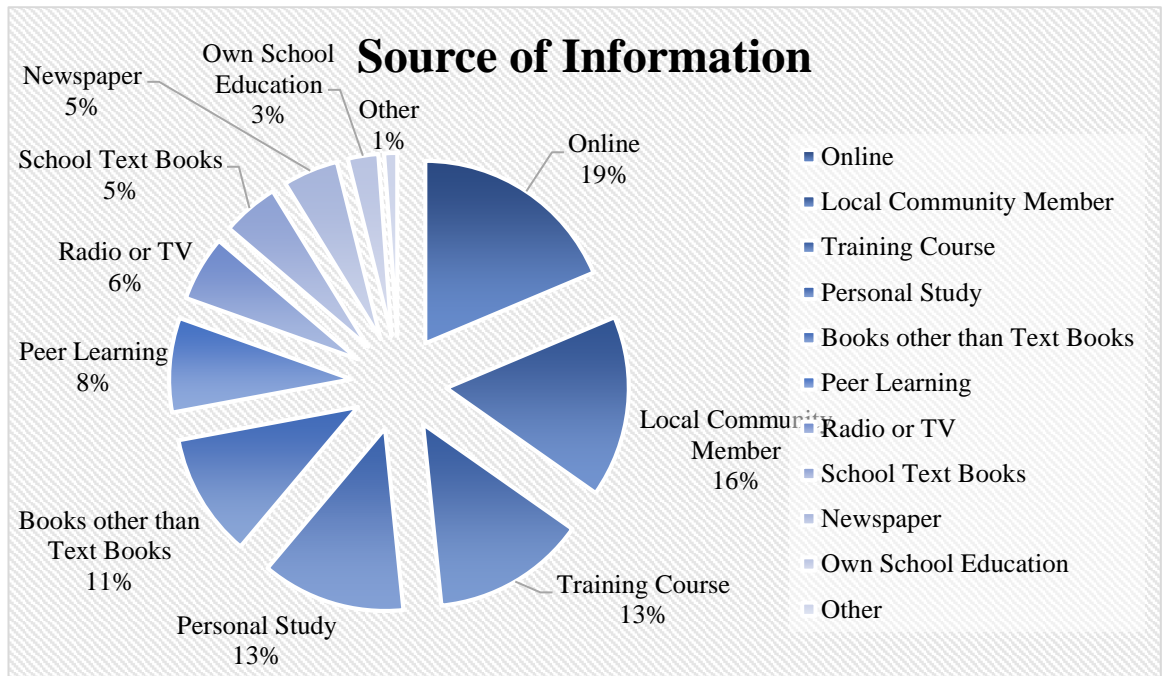
Responses in terms of where respondents had obtained the knowledge on these topics is displayed in the Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1 Questionnaire Responses regarding Source of Knowledge



Respondents were also asked where they would be able to obtain access knowledge in order to have sufficient knowledge to teach their students. The results are displayed in Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2 Questionnaire Responses to Where Knowledge Could be Obtained



The qualitative questionnaire response also included reference to teachers' knowledge on the topics being a factor in the delivery of place-based education.

It is generic unless the teacher resides and comes from the locality of their school of employment. I don't think it would be fair to expect a teacher from e.g. Belfast to know about the topology, geology, archaeology, local dances, songs, stories etc, in say West Kerry. (Questionnaire number 45)

Teachers also don't know how to obtain information that can be utilised in the primary classroom. (Questionnaire number 52)

Interview participants were also asked about whether they felt they had sufficient knowledge to teach students about their local place and equally where they had obtained this knowledge. As outlined in the previous section, this was mentioned by the interviewed teachers as a barrier to their engagement with place-based education. Related to Section 4.4.1, most of the interviewed teachers indicated that they had or could get knowledge on the local area from colleagues or past colleagues.

I suppose the onus really if you're doing place-based learning, that the onus is on the teacher to go and ask, ask the teachers who are local, that's what I did. (Claire, Line 286 -288)

My first year there I was doing some project with the children on the [PLACE] in 3rd and 4th class and the principal at the time, who's since retired, he would have been big into the local area and he had a load of knowledge for me so he got me a load of information on that, so you've got to ask, you've got to ask people around you. (Claire, Line 288 – 291)

If I was going to teach them about [TOWN], yeah we had a teacher here that did a lot of work on the local, [TEACHER NAME] she's big into that, the local knowledge and local monuments em and then certainly in this area there's availability there's all those maps that [NAME] did stuff like that so yeah you'd go and you'd find. (Ann, 375 – 377)

I think the knowledge you need is probably there in a school anyway. (Tara, 250 – 251)

Both interview participants and survey respondents were asked about their own knowledge in terms of their local area. Responses would indicate that this was a significant feature in relation to their delivery of place-based education as it was referenced in a considerable number of instances. Interestingly one interviewee, Tara, talks about their perception of their local knowledge.

I think the teachers own base knowledge of the area, em or their own perceived base knowledge of the area. If you're living in a community well and good you have something to start with, if you're not and that happens quite a bit that teachers are commuting, em. That may well come against it. (Tara, Line 147 - 150)

This may be a factor in more instances, where teachers believe they do not have sufficient local knowledge but as later referenced by Tara they in fact don't need huge levels of knowledge to engage with place-based education with their students.

To be honest (...) the children don't need a huge amount of technical knowledge, it's easy enough to learn it at that level. (Tara, Line 244 – 245)

All you need if you know you're going for a walk, all you need are a few nature books and half the fun is looking it up as well or taking a picture and bringing it back to class, that's what we often do if we see something and it's nature related, if we see something and we don't know we take a picture we come back, we look it up here. (Tara, Line 258 – 262)

The concept of teachers wanting to have all the knowledge before engaging in something was also alluded to by Phil.

A lot of teachers just feel I can't name more than three trees so I wouldn't be able to bring them for a walk down the [PLACE]. Em, I don't know what this kind of window is called, that's not necessary to know or even to be able to name all the trees but there's a fear there of not being in control and not being the all knowing one. (Phil, Line 136-139)

This will be further discussed in the upcoming section 4.6.3 which considers the role of freedom and confidence in teachers taking a place-based approach.

The implications of teachers not teaching in their local area was referenced frequently by the questionnaire respondents.

I find that as a teacher who is not local, I sometimes feel that the children already know more about some of the history and environment than I do. (Questionnaire number 4)

Teachers generally do not teach where they live thus there is a knowledge gap on local issues, historical sites etc. (Questionnaire number 14)

Very worthwhile but if you're not from the area it's very hard to have the local knowledge. (Questionnaire number 189)

Other respondents simply explained that they did not feel they had sufficient knowledge on the local area.

Teachers are not equipped in their schools to have the information required to teach about the local area. The school should provide this information as part of the curriculum. (Questionnaire number 121)

I would use this pedagogy more often if I had more concrete knowledge of certain topics. (Questionnaire number 193)

Awareness of the resources that currently exist such as the Heritage Councils Heritage in Schools scheme which was established to assist teachers in provision of local studies was expressed and commended by some, while others seemed unaware of the existence of the scheme.

I feel this learning would be enhanced if we had a panel of local experts who were available to visit schools to impart their knowledge of their specific interest. (Questionnaire number 192)

The local heritage council as well is brilliant, and they have a lot of experts as well who we can get in and we use them an awful lot as well, I get people into the school. (Claire, Line 291-293)

It isn't that much extra effort now because I've gathered the resources over the years and I suppose it's an accumulation of seeing heritage specialists as well and grabbing their stuff and using their stuff. (Ellen, Line 99 -101)

Others referred to resources within the community but outside of the school which could be used to gain necessary knowledge on the local area. This is a key component of place-based education.

I mean some parents and grandparents are local to here so they could tell us stuff and as I say, [NAME]he's the man that comes in to talk to them, absolutely there's [NAME] lives locally as well, (...) I'm sure if we asked some of the other people around the place that they would come in as well you know, yeah it is there it's just a question of getting to do it and time and all the rest. (Niamh, Line 114 -119)

I wouldn't have an indepth knowledge of the local history here but you know I went for coffee with somebody last week with a view to having her bring the class on a historical walk of [PLACE] and she was able to tell me about every building and how old the buildings were, (...) such a privilege for me as a teacher to be learning that as well and I'll have my own clipboard and I'll be taking notes. (Phil, Line 158 -164)

I have got together for each of the teachers [a resource] that has photocopies or maps or stories or whatever of the last 30 years teaching so when I came here I knew nothing, because I came and one of the Master that was here before me he knew a lot (...) then over the years I've got the heritage in schools specialists sheets and photocopied that and put it in the folder. The biggest thing would be the teachers own resources and the teachers own knowledge. (Ellen, Line 199 -210)

The questionnaire data relating to the teachers' own knowledge around the local area was analysed to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between their knowledge and their years teaching, their school size and whether the school was urban or rural. No statistical significance was found between any of these variables and their own knowledge. Samples of the chi-square test results from SPSS can be seen in Appendix K.

4.6.3. Freedom and confidence in teachers

One theme that emerged was the freedom that teachers have and their own confidence to deliver a place-based programme. In many ways, this is an extension of the preceding section which highlights how teachers feel they have insufficient knowledge on local topics. The interview participants spoke of fear around moving away from textbooks, confidence growing as teachers gain experience and feeling the need to know a lot before taking their class somewhere.

I think teachers should not be afraid (...) [to] move away from the workbook, say line through a page not done today this done instead, (...) take the pressure off yourself and say right well I am covering the curriculum here are my objectives it does not have to fit the book. (Claire, Line 243 -247)

It really comes to the teachers own knowledge I think and that only comes with time and you have to really nourish and nurture the younger teachers because you can't expect them to know everything the first year. (Ellen, Line 224 – 226)

I would think I would need to know a lot about the place I'm taking them to before I take them there. (Niamh, Line 107 – 108)

This final point made by Niamh contrasts with the earlier views of Tara who spoke about not needing to have all the answers, and instead looking up answers along with students.

Perhaps some of the pressures and questions around confidence outlined above result from the perceived changing system within education. Teachers' decreasing freedom and the negative impact it can have was alluded to by several participants.

Teachers were always very free to teach by instinct and I think there's a lot of it creeping in where it's 'we're doing it this way'. (Ann, Line 394-395)

If there were less to do, with more autonomy for teachers the pupils would gain a lot more skills to bring with them into their adult hood. (Questionnaire number 164)

Over the years I have seen this nugget being eroded by too many other demands and expectations (usually nonsensical paper work and notes) being put on teachers. Our enthusiasm should be nurtured not battered! (Questionnaire number 143)

You have issues with the Department of Education and inspectors and generally inspectors they don't really want to see what you've done on the blog they don't want to see that you've been out in the Burren really the odd one might, they want to see your paper work and they want to see that you've put your reflection down (...) and that you've written down what you're going to do for the two weeks and then you've written down what you actually did for the four weeks. (Ann, Line 326 -331)

As with the previous section, the questionnaire data relating to the barriers to place-based pedagogy was analysed to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the barriers and their gender, their own knowledge, their years teaching, their school size and whether the school was urban or rural. No statistical significance was found between any of these variables and the barriers they identified. Samples of the chi-square test results from SPSS can be seen in Appendix K.

4.7. Having an impact on students' experience

“Maybe if they do it themselves they might learn for themselves and it might make a bit more of an impact on them” (Ellen, Line 105-107)

Another category which emerged from the data analysis was the impact which a place-based approach can have on the students experience in school. While the research was focused specifically on the teacher's perspective, it is perhaps unsurprising that the teachers considered and reported on what the experience would be like for their students. The students' experience was referenced in terms of their enjoyment of place-based education, the potential for peer and active learning, that it was a more meaningful way of learning, the differing experience depending on the students age and ability (including children with special educational needs) and, perhaps most importantly, the impact on their learning.

4.7.1. Enjoyment of place-based learning

There were various responses which indicated that children were more likely to enjoy learning which was place-based. The increased enjoyment of the teacher was also referenced. This may be connected to place-based learning often being more active, allowing for peer learning and more meaningful learning as it is directly relatable.

It is very meaningful to the lives of the children. It facilitates developing research skills in students. (Questionnaire number 58)

Children readily and enthusiastically engage with local studies. (Questionnaire number 73)

This is the most relevant form of teaching for any child. Their learning grows from their immediate experiences. (Questionnaire number 76)

It is a very valuable and worthwhile experience for the children and they thoroughly enjoy learning about their local area. (Questionnaire number 188)

As a teacher I thoroughly enjoy using this methodology. (Questionnaire number 193)

While the comments about children's engagement with place-based education were predominately positive, Niamh outlined an alternative experience in her interview,

Some of them will love it, some of them they don't care, they're more into IT, whereas other kids would be more into the hands on, going out there looking to see what's around the place, absolutely. (Niamh, Line 81 -83)

Interestingly, the teachers that were interviewed generally did not make significant reference to the children's enjoyment of place-based learning. This may be because the questions which they were asked referred specifically to their own perspective rather than asking them to consider the impact on their students. Mention of the children or the teacher enjoying a place-based approach did however come up on a few occasions.

I know the kids love going out and looking at stuff and touching and feeling and you know experiencing it, not just looking at it on the screen. (Niamh, Line 140 – 141)

They're enjoying history, geography and science more now and I'm enjoying teaching it more, definitely and learning a lot more as well about [PLACE]. (Claire, 124-126)

I literally couldn't wait to come back in September to start (...) looking at the local town, looking at the local area with children. (Phil, Line 51-52)

4.7.2. Impact on Learning

The questionnaire asked teachers to assess their classes' knowledge on their local place. The responses are included in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Questionnaire Responses to Classes' Knowledge on Place-based Topics

Topic	Very knowledgeable	Somewhat knowledgeable	Not at all knowledgeable
Archaeology	7 (4%)	94 (47%)	98 (49%)
Community Development	17 (8.5%)	127 (64%)	55 (27.5%)
Dance	22 (11%)	125 (63.5%)	50 (25.5%)
Environment	76 (39%)	107 (54%)	13 (7%)
Geology	11 (6%)	90 (45%)	98 (49%)
History	43 (22%)	127 (64%)	28 (14%)
Literature	27 (14%)	97 (49%)	73 (37%)
Music	40 (20%)	116 (59%)	41 (21%)
Storytelling	33 (17%)	115 (58%)	50 (25%)
Visual Art	47 (24%)	111 (56%)	41 (20%)

The teachers interviewed also discussed their students' knowledge, or lack of knowledge, about their local place.

It's amazing how many children don't know a huge amount, or how many children aren't aware of (...) what's the closest castle to them, what's the closest river to them, why is that building there, who wrote that poem, that sort of thing (Claire, Line 140 -143)

We found out that they knew nothing, they knew nothing about [PLACE] what did they know? Nothing. And they weren't able to verbalise so we work on it in oral language as well, so even that as well as having it they're able to communicate it to people that this is what we do here. We found that when we asked them what's in [PLACE] 'Ah nothing' That's all, they didn't know that down at the crossroads the old post office was there and the barracks is still there, you know the cell is still there if they go in there and the parochial house, they didn't know anything about the history of the place and we said that we wanted them to know that (Ellen, Line 182 – 188)

An example I have is a child in this class who didn't do Ecobeo¹, she was too young at the time but until last year she had never seen a gentian, she lives across the road. Em and I was just stunned. We went every week for weeks last spring and into the autumn, now she knows her gentians from whatever else. (Tara, Line 124 – 128)

The positive impact which place-based education can have on students' learning was referenced regularly. This ranged from children being more likely to remember local based content to the possibility that place-based learning can help students with additional needs by 'levelling the playing field'. As mentioned in one of the interviews however, it is difficult to quantify the academic impact of a place-based approach.

Em, does it increase academic achievement? I couldn't say, because I don't know if I've tried to measure it. Academic achievement as it's measured at the moment, is measured through our standardised tests of reading and maths and gaeilge, em, I don't know that having the children out on the field and note

¹ See appendix A.

taking is necessarily going to help them get higher STENs or percentiles in those tests but maybe there's a different battery of tests needed and that could be something for further research. I think it certainly increases problem solving, it certainly increases critical thinking but how to measure that is another question. (Tara, Line 117 – 123)

The question around quantifiable benefits of place-based pedagogy for students is an area which could benefit from additional research at some point. Teachers, however, stated that they felt there was a positive impact on their students' learning, particularly in terms of what students remembered.

They will absolutely retain far more information and knowledge from exploring the local environment themselves, as opposed to reading about it from a text book or just talking about it in the classroom. (Questionnaire number 4)

I find also that children often remember the information they learn on field trips or from visitors to our school a lot more. (Questionnaire number 150)

They have a bit more engagement when they do it themselves. It takes longer though, that's the only thing, whereas I would you know, have it ready and you know it takes me less time to deliver it but then they don't remember it as long, (...) it does take a while for them to get it together to present it, so you just have to be patient I think. (Ellen, Line 72 -77)

Reference was also made to the impact which place-based education can have on students with special education needs (SEN). The impact of outdoor learning has been extensively researched in terms of children with SEN, as referenced in chapter two.

I think when you bring them out as a group you don't notice the different between the academically weaker, they're all the same in terms of ability. So it gives them a chance to be on a par with their peers if they don't have to write it down and I think that is more beneficial to that child than having to sit down and struggle trying to put pen to paper, you know they're on a par with the rest of their peers, they get just as much out of it, if not more than the child who is 'the brightest' in their classroom. (Claire, Line 96 – 101)

I think actually going into real world learning experiences, they appreciate it more and you are targeting children who may not be as academically you know able to achieve as others and you know, it gets more enjoyment for them. (Claire, Line 174 -176)

Pupils with SEN attending learning support teachers would benefit hugely from a literature programme based on the local folklore of the area, factual history stories from their locality. The content of such a programme would enable pupil to engage with stories and the language that are based on something more personal and closer to the child's community. (Questionnaire number 24)

4.8. Building a sense of place, community and identity

“It takes a village to raise a child, perhaps it also takes a village to educate a child” (Questionnaire number 151)

While participants were never directly asked about the potential for place-based education building children’s sense of place, community and identity, the idea was brought up by many. Reference was made to ‘stronger ties to the community’ in the place-based education definition which was proposed to the interview participants but was not included in any element of the questionnaire. Despite this, reference to pride or sense of place, identity and community engagement was evidenced in both the interview and qualitative questionnaire data.

A considerable number of the questionnaire respondents made strong and specific reference to a child’s sense of themselves being influenced by learning about and in the local place.

Local based learning is vital for children - it enables a sense of community to develop. (Questionnaire number 10)

A strong sense of place is in my view an integral part of a solid sense of identity and community and is therefore an important aspect of a child's education at primary school. (Questionnaire number 43)

It is important to give children a sense of place and belonging. (Questionnaire number 49)

Local environment is crucial to the children's learning. If we don't know who we are, how can we become what we want to be. (Questionnaire number 155)

This was echoed by the interview participants but interestingly was not as prominent a feature as in the questionnaire responses. However, the interview participants did refer to appreciation of local place and building sense of place.

Oh they care more. It's a sense of community really builds up, this sense of community, 'This is our community and wow we have something here that nobody else has'. (Ellen, Line 110 – 111)

I think you know it builds a huge sense of community and a sense of this is ours and it's worth learning about. (Ellen, Line 122 – 123)

It's important to make children realise what resources they have on their doorstep and we develop a sense of pride in their local area. (Phil, Line 106 - 107)

It gives the children more a sense of ownership to their area more, putting more value on their locality because I think as children grow up they don't feel a connection with their area, you know, yes their family is there but they don't have a deeper connection to their area and understanding of how their area developed (...) that it's not just you know where their family is from that they know more about it, and it's amazing how many children don't know a huge amount (Claire, Line 133 – 141)

Interestingly, when asked specifically about the possibility of place-based education potentially building active citizenship behaviours in students around their local place and environment, Niamh responded,

All we can do is tell them that the stuff is there, show them that the stuff is there and really it's up to them then in their outside of school lives, to know whether it means anything to them or not or whether they would be interested in it or not. We can do so much in school but outside of that, no. (Niamh, Line 92 – 95)

This presents an interesting question about the role of schools and community pride. While many participants indicated that they felt that place-based education had the

potential to build pride in the local area, is this the role of the school? This idea about taking care of places for the future was future explored by a number of the questionnaire respondents.

My view on place-based learning is that it is a positive influence on children's sense of pride in their area. I feel that children who know their area well are less likely to damage it. (Questionnaire number 182)

Place based Pedagogy is essential for children's education. It will help them to realise that they are only guardians of their place for future generations. (Questionnaire number 62)

Primary schools are central to the development of a sense of community in the children and this should be recognized and actively supported. If we can create a sense of belonging to a community in our children we are giving them the confidence to move outside that community and explore the rest of the world, comfortable in the knowledge that they know who they are and where they have come from. This sense of community will also enable them to see themselves as belonging to the wider community of the country/continent/world they live in. A child who has a sense of being part of a wider world is empowered to live a very active and positive life making personal decisions in the knowledge that their actions affect everyone around them...not only in their own local community but in the wider communities to which they also belong. (Questionnaire number 16)

The question about the role of schools has been considered in chapter one and will be further examined in chapter five.

4.9. Conclusion

This chapter has presented findings from qualitative interviews and a quantitative questionnaire.

An overview of the profile of the respondents outlined the even spread of respondent demographics. Findings in terms of the amount of place-based activity teachers engage with as well as the barriers which teachers identified to engagement were reported. The findings on teachers' perspective on the curriculum indicated that most feel place-

based pedagogy is possible in the curriculum. Participants reported that it was important for teachers to be supported if they were going to take a place-based approach and equally that they needed sufficient local knowledge, freedom and confidence if they were to engage. The enjoyment that students feel when learning about local places as well as the potential and need to develop a sense of place, community and identity in students was also reported.

While the data collection methodologies employed varied, in adhering closely to the research questions the data obtained can be directly compared. While this was not explicitly planned in the research design it is interesting to note that similar themes and responses are evident irrespective of data collection methods. The more generalised data obtained via the questionnaire can be explored in greater detail through the in-depth information obtained via the interviews. This results in a fuller picture in terms of the situation regarding teachers' perspectives on place-based pedagogy.

The following chapter will discuss these findings and how they relate to the existing literature. The discussion will also consider how the findings have addressed the research questions outlined as well as the additional knowledge which these findings have provided in relation to the existing literature.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses key elements of the findings outlined in chapter four. The purpose of this chapter is to make sense of these findings, comparing them to and positioning them within the relevant literature. Elements from each of the categories of findings will now be discussed. The elements which will be discussed in detail are those which featured most prominently in the findings and in some way address the research questions. For clarity, the primary research question for this study was; ‘What is the Potential for Place-based Pedagogy in the Irish Primary School Setting from Teachers’ Perspective?’ This was supplemented by the sub-question; ‘Does the Existing Primary School Curriculum Allow for a Place-Based Pedagogical Approach?’

Certain elements of the findings both mirrored and contrasted with existing literature, and these will also be considered here. There were also some findings which were surprising to the researcher. This will also be examined in greater detail.

The findings outlined in chapter four were presented in five categories; ‘Dealing with the Practicalities’; ‘Considering the Curriculum’; ‘Unpicking the Role of the School and Teacher’; ‘Having an Impact on Students’ Experience’; and ‘Building a Sense of Place, Community and Identity’. The category on ‘Dealing with the Practicalities’ considered the activities which teachers are currently engaging with which would be considered place-based, as well as outlining the various barriers which teachers identified in their practice of place-based pedagogy. The subsequent category, ‘Considering the Curriculum’ reported teachers’ views on the suitability of a place-based approach to the existing curriculum, and their views more generally in terms of the curriculum. The third category, ‘Unpicking the Role of the School and Teacher’ focused on the importance of support for teachers who wish to engage with place-based pedagogy, as well as considering the importance of teachers’ local knowledge, and more generally the degree or freedom and confidence which teachers feel in their work. The category ‘Having an Impact on Students’ Experience’ focused on the enjoyment which students get from a place-based approach, as well as the impact that a local focus can have on students’ learning. The final category, ‘Building a Sense of Place, Community and Identity’ outlined the importance that teachers attached to

building pride of place and identity in their students', and the potential for place-based pedagogy to achieve this.

There are five sections in this chapter that each discuss one element of the findings in greater detail. The initial section considers the role of the curriculum in place-based pedagogy and in schools generally. The second section examines how teachers that want to engage with place-based pedagogy could be supported in this. The third section turns to the idea of the importance of the teachers' knowledge for the success of place-based pedagogy. Section four discusses the importance of students' enjoying place-based pedagogy, and the final section considers where the concepts of pride of place, community and identity fit in terms of place-based pedagogy and schools.

5.2. Does the curriculum help or hinder a place-based approach?

The question of the role of the curriculum was a key consideration in terms of the potential for place-based pedagogy, so much so that it was included as a research sub-question; 'Does the Existing Primary School Curriculum Allow for a Place-Based Pedagogical Approach?' It was felt that while discussion of teachers' perspectives on the potential for place-based pedagogy would include a variety of elements, the curriculum and its role was significant enough to deal with as a separate question. The researcher's initial analysis of the curriculum indicated that significant elements could be addressed using a place-based approach, and while the teachers who participated in this study broadly felt that place-based activities were included in their remit as laid out by the curriculum, there was substantial reporting of dissatisfaction in terms of the curriculum generally. Interestingly most of the literature in relation to curriculum in Ireland seems to be focused on the post-primary setting, and this could be an area which would warrant further study. Horgan and Douglas (2001, p. 139) have described Irish curriculum provision as a pendulum, moving back and forth from a more traditional didactic approach to one which is more child centred. Does this fluctuation lead to a certain degree of confusion where teachers are unsure which approach to take?

Findings in relation to curricular pressures have been reflected in numerous studies, where teachers reported feeling the curriculum was overloaded. A 2010 National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) report, which collated two earlier phases of information gathering around teachers' feelings towards the curriculum,

found that for both teachers and principals, time constraints were one of the greatest challenges in relation to the curriculum. However, in the same report it was questioned whether the idea of an overloaded curriculum is “imagined, perceived or real” (NCCA, 2010a, p. 7). The Cambridge Primary Review (2009), which examined the English education system described the English curriculum as overcrowded and unmanageable (Alexander and Flutter, 2009). The review went on to suggest that because of teachers focus on reading, writing and maths, other elements of education such as development of reflective or critical thinking and problem-solving, were being neglected. Creative subjects such as Art, Music and Drama were also being curtailed due to a focus on literacy and numeracy. Noddings (2005) speaks of teachers looking to teach the “whole child” and not just focus on specific subjects; she goes on to say that if education were more holistic, it could “relieve the awful sense of fragmentation that students experience” (Noddings, 2005, p. 9).

Could it be then that the issue is not with an overloaded curriculum as much as current delivery of the existing curriculum? The two NCCA reviews of curriculum (2005, 2008) and their implementation in schools referenced above, allude to this recognition that the curriculum places “emphasis on a theoretical rather than practical framework” (NCCA, 2008, p. 198), and because of this there is an argument for focussing more on providing practical support to teachers so that they can engage in a broad range of teaching methodologies. Then Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn contended that, “not only must we change what is taught in our schools and colleges, we must also change the way in which the curriculum itself is taught” (Quinn, 2012, p. 126). If teachers had the pedagogical knowledge and supports necessary would they still report an overloaded curriculum?

The feelings around curriculum overload could be further compounded by the additional programmes which are then offered to, and expected of, schools on topics including child protection, green schools, fitness programmes, sports, and artist in schools etc. As was evidenced particularly through the questionnaire data, place-based pedagogy could be seen by some as another additional programme or requirement. However, as outlined by the teachers who were interviewed, if you do engage with place-based pedagogy it is possible to use it as a tool to deliver the existing curriculum as opposed to creating additional work. This corresponds with the findings of Pike

(2015), who when considering primary school geography, found the curriculum was being interpreted differently depending on the school, and that while many schools engaged in innovative pedagogies to teach primary school geography, others focused only on content and ignored the elements which called on children to take an active role.

The concept of cross-curricular work and a holistic learning experience is something which was also addressed by the teachers that were interviewed. The teachers that were engaging with place-based pedagogy felt that it provided significant potential for cross-curricular work. It is specified in the introduction to the curriculum notes that “the strands are not discrete areas of learning, as they overlap and interact to form a holistic learning experience for the child” (NCCA, 1999a, p. 42), however two reviews conducted by the NCCA (2008) found that teachers were not implementing the curriculum in the holistic way it was envisaged.

Connected to the question of the curriculum was the reporting of an over reliance on text books. Pike (2015) contends that it was following the introduction of the 1971 Curriculum Na Bunscoile that the use of textbooks and workbooks became particularly commonplace, however one of the teachers interviewed spoke about how they and their pupils were enjoying learning more since they had stopped using textbooks and moved more towards local resources. Similar findings were reported in an article in a NCCA newsletter entitled ‘Ditching the Textbooks’ where a school had stopped using textbooks for their SESE (NCCA, 2009, p. 18). The teachers in this school found it “exciting and empowering” and also noticed that the children were more motivated and engaged. Connected to the findings around teachers’ freedom, the article concluded by saying that the school “have emphasised the importance of teacher professional judgement and flexibility in working with the curriculum” (NCCA, 2009, p.19).

A 2008 report by Pepper on curriculum change in ten countries, which was conducted to inform a primary curriculum review in England at the time, indicated that while some countries organise their curricula by subject (only two of ten), more do so by area. It was argued that organising by area allowed for greater cross-curricular focus. There was also a growing emphasis on “broader learning outcomes that seek to prepare pupils to be lifelong learners and active participants in society” (Pepper, 2008, p. 2).

An International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Framework (INCA) study (Métais, 2003, p. 6) found that in “countries with a tradition of centrally determined curricula there is a strong trend towards increasing local flexibility within prescribed time allocations, (...) schools devise a curriculum to suit local circumstances”. A locally-devised place-based interpretation of the curriculum that looked at themes or areas, rather than traditional subjects, would appear to be one approach which could be encouraged.

5.3. How can teachers who want to engage with place-based pedagogy be supported?

Participants in this study indicated that they would require support if they were to engage further with place-based pedagogy. This support ranged from needing there to be a whole school approach adopted to requiring parents to accompany them on fieldtrips. The NCCA review (2010) of both national and international curriculum overloading found that Scotland, Singapore, Korea and New Zealand have implemented a range of supportive measures for schools and teachers. Key to these supports is promotion of professional development among teachers, echoing the point raised above in terms of lifelong learning practice; in parallel teachers develop their range of teaching methodologies and assessment tools. Another element of support involved allowing time for teachers to implement new ideas, practices and curricular aims. Teachers were also encouraged to, and facilitated in, improving sourcing of teaching and learning materials, which reduced reliance on textbooks. Additionally, greater autonomy was given to schools and teachers in planning, allowing them to take local needs into account. On a related theme, Sylvia and Hutchinson (1985) maintained that teachers are motivated when they have the freedom to try new ideas, have appropriate levels of responsibility, and feel that there is intrinsic purpose to their work.

Is it then possible that if supports like those listed above were provided that teachers who wish to take a place-based approach in their teaching would be able to do so? Or is the list above essentially the wish list of any school or teacher and may not be realistic or achievable? As these supports have been implemented elsewhere it would appear that it is possible. It may however take a degree of political will to see them in practice in the Irish setting. Ultimately, this may come down to motivation, which

Maslow (1943) defined as the force that drives people to satisfy needs. If parents, teachers, the Department of Education or politicians see a need for a place-based approach, they may be convinced to bring about change, and implement the supports needed. It must however be recognised that there are many competing interests in relation to development and direction in education in Ireland, and while the researcher may recognise a need in terms of place-based pedagogy it cannot be assumed that this will be shared by others.

Husu and Tirri (2007) also looked at the requirements for developing a whole school pedagogical approach. Like Martin (2008) above, they maintain that the ethos and beliefs that teachers and their schools hold are fundamental in the development of educational institutions and professional communities. Husu and Tirri outlined the importance of schools and teachers determining and expressing pedagogical values.

The support of the wider school community and other staff within the school was mentioned by this study's participants as a contributing factor in the degree of engagement with place-based pedagogy. Many teachers also referenced the help they had been given by a member of staff at some point. The importance of peer-support and peer-learning cannot be over emphasised. As outlined by Jackson and Bruegmann (2009), peer-learning among teachers can have significant impacts on the students, and a teacher's performance can even be impacted by the teaching quality of their peers. Study participants spoke about colleagues providing them with local resources, being able to tell them about local places or working together to take classes on fieldtrips. Place-based pedagogy would seem to be most feasible in a school where a few teachers work together to develop suitable resources and organise fieldtrips. It is also possible that teachers that were not aware of or interested in place-based pedagogy could be positively influenced by peers who encouraged a place-based approach in their school.

If realistic implementation was possible, the supports outlined by the NCCA review along with a focus on a whole-school peer learning led approach could significantly strengthen the place-based pedagogy offering in Irish primary schools. However, as outlined above questions around motivation and priorities would need to be considered. There is a body of work to be done by those who believe there is a need for a place-based approach to convince the wider population of this.

5.4. How important is the teacher's knowledge?

Much has been written and researched around the importance and role of teachers' content knowledge versus pedagogical knowledge (Park and Oliver, 2008). Often the focus of teacher development and the process of learning to teach is on different types of professional knowledge (Turner-Bisset, 2001). However, Alexander, Rose and Woodhead (1992) suggested that improved teacher effectiveness would be achieved by focusing on enhancing primary teachers' subject content knowledge. While initial engagement with place-based pedagogy may require a focus on pedagogical content, the teachers who were the subject of this study were more concerned with their *local* content knowledge.

As outlined in the findings chapter, teachers indicated that they often feel they do not possess the local content knowledge necessary to engage with place-based pedagogy with their students. While no statistical significance was seen in relation to whether teachers grew up or lived in the area they were teaching, the teachers who were interviewed (who as stated were already engaged in place-based pedagogy) were less concerned with needing extensive local content knowledge. This could reflect the findings of Wilkins (2008) who found that when researching primary Mathematics teaching, teachers with more positive attitudes to Mathematics were more likely to believe in the effectiveness of inquiry-based teaching and use it more frequently. The teachers' beliefs were deemed to have the most significant effect on their practice. This was also acknowledged by Martin (2008, p. 13-14), who stated that "the beliefs held about a subject, the assumptions made about how it operates as a means of understanding the world, and the extent to which this is explicit are important considerations". So, perhaps the teachers currently engaged in place-based pedagogy hold more positive beliefs towards the pedagogy and were therefore more open to applying the inquiry-based learning techniques which would enable them to increase their content knowledge along with their students.

In discussing teaching of primary school geography specifically, Martin (2008, p. 36) alludes to the point which was raised by Tara in her interview, in relation to teachers' perceptions of their knowledge. Martin argues that primary teachers do not need to be geographers or possess the level of knowledge of the geography academic. Instead she proposes the importance of the lived or ethnogeography position, arguing that merely

by living in and engaging with the world around us provides adequate knowledge for starting geographical studies. This knowledge can then be used as a start point to encourage and engage in more detailed investigations with students.

Ethnogeography reflects the view that all primary student teachers (and their pupils) are geographers because they all live in the world. As a result of their daily interactions and decisions they will have built up a wide knowledge base about the world, near and far, through a range of direct and indirect experiences. What they don't perhaps recognise is that this knowledge is useful geographical knowledge and a point from which deeper conceptual understanding can be developed. (Martin, 2008, p. 36)

If there is an issue in terms of teachers' local knowledge, particularly as highlighted by some respondents, as teachers are travelling further for work, how can the perceived knowledge gap be addressed? Dolan (2012) makes a good case for including lifelong learning elements in initial teacher education, which would allow teachers to supplement their knowledge throughout their careers. Existing Continuing Professional Development (CPD), or in-service courses could also assist teachers in developing their local knowledge. In terms of the courses that teachers found most effective, research by Sugrue (2015) indicated that courses should focus on one subject area and should be tailored around the specific needs of individual schools. Equally the teachers who participated in Sugrue's study felt that an emphasis on critical thinking and personal development would be beneficial. Burrenbeo Trust currently deliver DES-approved summer courses on facilitating teachers taking a place-based approach in their schools. The course aims to equip participants with the tools necessary to access local content for their school. If place-based pedagogy is to become more prevalent in the Irish primary school setting, similar courses and resources may need to be made available on a wider scale.

In considering the research question 'What is the Potential for Place-based Pedagogy in the Irish Primary School Setting from Teachers' Perspective?' it is apparent that for teachers, their own knowledge plays a considerable role in choosing whether or not to engage with place-based pedagogy. Equally this is an area which can be addressed by including relevant content in initial teacher education, ongoing teacher training, and by encouraging peer learning (as discussed in the previous section).

5.5. Is it important that the students enjoy a place-based approach?

Many study participants indicated that their students enjoyed learning about their own place. The importance and significance of students enjoying their learning should not be underestimated. Ainley and Ainley (2011) looked at the contribution students' enjoyment has in their continuing interest in learning about science and found that their interest and enjoyment were very closely related. This is not solely a factor in relation to individual subjects. Darmody and Thornton (2015) highlight the importance of attachment and positive attitudes to school in terms of students' academic performance and future outcomes, and while their focus is on identifying the factors that have a negative effect on students' feelings about school, arguably a factor which can impact positively should also be encouraged and explored. Similarly, the 2005 NCCA publication reported students' views that how they learned a subject could determine how much they liked that subject. The students went on to report that "activities that involved collaborative learning, active learning, inquiry-based learning, differentiated learning and authentic learning were those reported as most enjoyable and interesting for children, regardless of the subject" (NCCA, 2005, p. 247). This further strengthens the argument for a place-based approach which would by its nature allow for project-based and active learning, be focused on authentic resources and would require the type of cross curricular development of concepts and skills suggested. In a continuation of the earlier discussion, the report goes on to suggest that,

... greater use of these learning methods by teachers would help alleviate the pressures of time in implementing the primary school curriculum. For example greater use of project based learning and authentic resources would enable teachers to address concepts and skills in a number of subjects simultaneously, and alleviate to some extent, the burden of teaching eleven curriculum subjects. (NCCA, 2005, p. 247)

This further strengthens the point made earlier in terms of focusing more on method of curriculum delivery rather than the curriculum in attempts to alleviate the perceived overloading. If students find this form of learning more enjoyable and it facilitates teachers meeting their curriculum, then it should be encouraged and supported where possible.

The question of whether it is important that students enjoy their learning has been considered extensively by Noddings (2005). Noddings argues that happiness should be an aim of education and that “we incorporate this aim into education not only by helping our students understand the components of happiness but also by making classrooms genuinely happy places” (Noddings, 2005, p. 5). Does it then follow that if it is possible to make content and curriculum more enjoyable for students that we should endeavour to do so?

5.6. Where does building a sense of pride, place and community fit?

One of the most interesting and unexpected findings of this study from the researcher’s perspective, related to the considerable reference made by participants to the importance of sense of place and community, and pride of place. Participants reported the significant potential for place-based pedagogy to instil such feelings in students. It is interesting to consider whether this is specifically seen as a role which schools and teachers should play. This is not something which was evidenced in the existing academic literature. The SPHE curriculum introduction states that it,

... provides opportunities for children to learn about, and actively participate in, the various communities to which they belong and to develop a sense of a shared commitment. It can also help them to value and take pride in their national, European and global identities and come to an understanding of what it means to be a citizen in the widest sense. (NCCA, 1999c)

However, there is no specific reference to building a sense of place or pride of place, and while there are numerous references to children developing their identity, this is never in terms of place as an element of their identity.

The question around the aim of education and whether schools should educate the whole person has been discussed previously, and while schools broadly aim to support the development of the whole person rather than merely the cognitive or academic domain (Tirri, 2011), does this element of children’s development get sufficient attention in our schools? Tirri (2011, p. 165) goes on to outline that “increasing recognition of the vital role that dealing with the implicit and explicit values that characterizes students’ lives is an essential facet of effective learning”. This is connected to the earlier section which considers the importance of children enjoying

school and their learning. This is particularly relevant to place-based learning when considering the findings of the study conducted by Jack (2010) around the significance of place attachments for children's wellbeing. Jack examines "the significance of children's place attachments for the development of their identity, security and sense of belonging". He also considers "the 'shrinking world of childhood', in which children's independent access to their surroundings is becoming ever more restricted as a result of parental fears, and the implications of this trend for the development of children's place attachments" (Jack, 2010, p. 755). The significance of developing place attachment is outlined by Spencer and Wooley (2000, p. 182), who maintain that "children gain their personal identity through their place attachment." It would seem that teachers recognise this and can see the potential for place-based learning in this regard, without it being an explicit element of their existing curriculum.

As was outlined extensively in chapter two, there is an increasing body of research around the implications for both people and the environment of a perceived growing disconnect from the natural world. This coupled with the evidence that suggests children's sense of identity is tied up with their interaction with their local place should be another strong argument for the adoption of a place-based approach in our schools.

The active citizenship element of place-based pedagogy is another important element of building pride of place and community, enabling students to take an active role in the future of their place. The curriculum allows for and encourages children's action within their schools and communities and promotes thinking about change for their environment and a sustainable future (Pike, 2015), however is this element being addressed sufficiently in schools? Are schools aware of the significance of developing pride of place and community and the importance of allowing children develop as active citizens. Devine (2002, p. 317) maintains that "it is vital that education for citizenship is not confined to the curricular arena alone but is conducted within a framework which acknowledges children's position as actual citizens rather than as potential citizens in the making". Are our schools adequately providing avenues for students to engage with their community and place on a meaningful level?

5.7. Conclusion

The findings of this study can be seen to closely correlate with the existing literature. They have been discussed in terms of the role of the curriculum, the importance of the

teachers own knowledge, the supports which are required if teachers are to increase their engagement with place-based pedagogy, the significance of students enjoying local based learning, and finally, a consideration of the importance of students developing a sense of place and community and how this can inform their ongoing identity development.

While the teachers who participated in this study generally feel overburdened, they are broadly positive towards place-based pedagogy and recognise the importance of connecting their students to their own place. With sufficient support for teachers and increased focus on sharing the rationale behind a place-based pedagogical approach there is significant potential for an increase in the use of place-based pedagogy in the Irish primary school system. However, there remains many questions in terms of what approach to take to achieve this. There are many competing interests in the field of education and effective communication is essential if the potential of place-based pedagogy is to be recognised. As outlined by Ruairi Quinn in 2012,

... some governments that invested considerable time and resources into reform have found little or no improvement in educational outcomes for students. The clear lesson is that reforms have to be thought through, planned and implemented carefully, with 'buy-in' from the main stakeholders and a clear understanding of why such changes are necessary for students and society as a whole (Quinn, 2012, p. 123).

If the prevalence of place-based pedagogy is to be increased in Ireland, the elements outlined by Quinn, careful planning with the support of all stakeholders and a strong case for why place-based pedagogy is necessary are essential.

The following chapter, chapter six will provide a conclusion to this dissertation, summarising the key findings, outlining the limitations of the study, before several recommendations are proposed. Consideration will then be given to the significance of this study for the researcher's professional practice, as well to its overall contribution to research.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1.Introduction

The main aim of this study was to consider the potential for place-based pedagogy in the Irish primary school context. The study focused on the teachers' perspective on this. While considerable research has been conducted on place-based pedagogy internationally, the perspective of the teacher has yet to be considered. It was felt that this was a key element in the progression of place-based pedagogy as teachers could play a key role in increasing the prevalence of place-based pedagogy. There has been no significant research on place-based pedagogy in the Irish context to date.

This chapter includes a number of sections including a summary of the study's key findings, consideration of the limitations of the study, recommendations arising from the study as well as discussion of the significance of the study for the professional practice of the researcher and the contribution to research generally.

6.1.Key Findings

As outlined extensively in the previous chapters the findings as a result of this study were in five categories. The main findings related to teachers views on the practicalities around adopting a place-based approach: the situation in relation to the curriculum and place-based pedagogy: the role of the school and teacher in promoting a place-based approach: students' experience with place-based pedagogy: and the potential for place-based pedagogy to build a sense of place and community and students' personal identity.

In response to the practicalities which can impact on the prevalence of place-based pedagogy, teachers were particularly concerned with time as a factor and while many teachers are engaging with activities considered to be place-based based in approach, the potential to increase this was limited by time. This is connected to teachers views on the curriculum, which again was seen in a mainly positive light but perceived to be overloaded. Discussion around whether the curriculum could be delivered using alternative methodologies, which may reduce the degree of overloading were considered. Taking such an approach requires a degree of confidence and freedom in teachers, which speaks to the importance they placed on needing to have adequate local knowledge before they would engage in place-based activities. It was suggested

that the level of knowledge required would be quite low, and equally the presence of supports from within the school community were highlighted. Again, for those that did engage in local place studies, there was a positive impact for the students, making their learning more enjoyable and meaningful. This prompts the question whether school and learning should be fun? Another question posed relates to the importance teachers attached to building pride of place and identity in their students, and the potential for place-based pedagogy to achieve this. This finding was surprising as it was not seen in existing literature.

The chosen methodology allowed for a combination of qualitative and quantitative data which gave a good overview of the current situation in terms of teachers' perspectives. The teachers who participated in the qualitative interviews had considerably more experience with place-based pedagogy, and were consequently less restrictive in their views for the potential of place-based pedagogy in their work.

The study also outlined the numerous occasions that place-based pedagogy is referenced in the Irish primary school curriculum. As discussed previously, challenges exist around communication and resources if the curriculum is to be addressed using local resources. However, as outlined by the teachers interviewed (who are currently using a place-based approach) the potential to address your curriculum through local examples is vast.

6.2.Limitations

When conducting research, there are inevitably some limitations and shortcomings.

This research study was undertaken on a part time basis over a short timeframe during the 2016/2017 academic year. This had implications in terms of the scope of the study. This was particularly a factor in terms of the decision not to carry out the planned interviews with the staff of the teacher training colleges.

The participant sample, particularly for the interviews, was small, and so cannot be assumed to represent the overall views of primary school teachers on this topic. In terms of the sampling there is also an element of self-selection implicit in those that responded to this study. A total of 11 teachers responded and were happy to be interviewed. Perhaps those that did not respond would not have felt as positively towards place-based pedagogy. Equally in terms of the questionnaire respondents it is

conceivable that those that choose to respond had strong views in relation to place-based pedagogy, which could skew the results.

Another potential limitation, which could be argued is a feature of all research, is the positionality of the researcher. This impacts on the design of the research and also the interaction which participants have with the study. This is particularly the case in terms of the interviews.

While the conclusion in terms of the research question ‘What is the Potential for Place-based Pedagogy in the Irish Primary School Setting from Teachers’ Perspective?’ could be deemed to be positive, there are also questions and issues raised which are beyond the scope of this study. The most pressing question would be how to translate the findings from this study into an increase in place-based pedagogy in the Irish primary school system.

All possible efforts have been made to minimise and counteract the limitations listed above.

6.3.Recommendations

Arising from this study on teachers’ perspective on place-based pedagogy the following recommendations are proposed.

Policy

- Curriculum Review and Guidelines.

To highlight how place-based pedagogy can be used to deliver the curriculum, guidelines outlining where a local, cross-curricular approach can be implemented could be produced.

- Place-based Pedagogy included in initial teacher education.

Initial teacher education courses should all include significant reference to place-based pedagogy and outline its potential for delivering the curriculum.

Practice

- Development of Resources.

Resources should be developed which could be provided to teachers interested in engaging with place-based pedagogy. These resources could outline the activities which teachers can undertake and how they can be used to address their curriculum.

- Development of training on place-based pedagogy.

Training courses for CPD and in-service should be made available to teachers interested in engaging with place-based pedagogy. The number and frequency of these courses should be increased so that all teachers are facilitated.

Future Research

- Students perspective.

While this study focused on the teachers' perspective, there is considerable scope for research around the views of students and the impact on them when engaging with a place-based approach in Ireland. This could include analysis of the impact on students learning as well as their enjoyment and engagement with the concept.

- Other education settings.

It was beyond the scope of this research to consider more than one education setting. However, the potential for place-based pedagogy could be considered in the Irish education system more generally to include second and third level.

6.4. Contribution to research and professional practice

This study appears to be the first investigation of place-based pedagogy in the Irish context. It has highlighted the potential for this type of learning and teaching and equally the broadly positive feelings around this approach among Irish primary school teachers. This study will be used as a basis for development of place-based pedagogical training and resources by Burrenbeo Trust. In this regard, the study also has significant implications for the researcher's professional practice which is primarily concerned with expansion of place-based pedagogy in Ireland. It is hoped that the findings of this study will be used to shape additional training programmes and resources. This study will also be used to inform further communications between Burrenbeo Trust and the

Department of Education and the main initial teacher education colleges in terms of the potential for place-based pedagogy in Ireland.

6.5.Overall significance of this study

We live in uncertain times. Climate change, economic collapse and disconnected communities are worldwide issues. It is hoped that this study has outlined the potential for place-based pedagogy to address some of these issues. The aim of a place-based approach is to establish connections and engage with local places and communities, and to enable active community stewardship, where local communities determine what it is they want for their place and are empowered to take action on the issues which they encounter.

Irish primary schools have significant potential for reigniting communities' connections and engagement with local place; they are at the heart of the community. Equally, the benefits for students have been outlined. We go back again to the first chapter, which posed the question about the purpose of education, which Noddings (2005, p. 4) similarly asks, "surely, we should demand more from our schools than to educate people to be proficient in reading and mathematics? Too many highly proficient people commit fraud, pursue paths to success marked by greed, and care little about how their actions affect the lives of others." It could be argued, that surely, we should demand that our schools engage students with their local places, their communities, their built, natural and cultural heritage, and encourage them to take on the role of an active citizen who considers their impact on the world around them.

The habits we form from childhood make no small difference, but rather they make all the difference. —Aristotle

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APPENDIX A: Ecobeo and Áitbheo outline

Ecobeo

Ecobeo is a place-based learning programme which was designed, developed and delivered by Burrenbeo Trust. The objective of Ecobeo is to contribute to an increased sense of awareness, informed pride and responsibility for an individual's place amongst its residents and to encourage a sense of active stewardship going forward for both their community and environment, and the wider community and environment.

Burrenbeo Trust feel that this is a wonderful investment in both the students and also in the local place itself, as these young experts will be the future guardians of our outstanding national resource, namely in this region, the Burren.

- During 10 sessions of approximately two hours each of the students and teachers will investigate their local place and their role in its future.
- Covering many elements of the curriculum, the course provides a hands-on and fun learning experience with each child graduating from the course as Young Place Heroes with a huge bank of knowledge about their immediate place and community.
- Specifically-built modules around the local geology, archaeology, history, flora, fauna, culture and active conservation which address elements of the SESE History, SESE Geography, SESE Science, numeracy and literacy curricula and more.
- A team of experienced educators delivering the combination of classroom and field based activities to create a fun learning experience.
- An emphasis on active learning with Burrenbeo supplying additional learning materials and supports.
- A fun field trip into the Burren to explore all that was learned.
- A community showcase ceremony enabling the children to demonstrate their knowledge in the field and to their family and friends and graduate as Young Burren Experts.

The course is targeted at 5th and 6th classes, but may be extended to include other classes if necessary. Optimal numbers of participants would be approximately 25-30 children. The number of schools in any one year varies subject to available resources – Ecobeo is delivered at no cost to the participating schools or parents. The programme is a 10 week series of workshops. Scholarship calls are publicised at the end of each school year whereby the top classes of the school should send in an application explaining why they would like Áitbheo to come to their school.

Áitbheo

Using your local place as a teaching resource

The objective of this course is to provide primary schoolteachers, other educators, and people with an interest in place-based learning with some simple strategies and resources through which they can effectively integrate the learning resource of their local environment into the school curriculum. This course is based on ten years' experience of 'place-based education' in the Burren through which scores of teachers and over 1000 schoolchildren have connected with their own locality as part of the highly interactive and experiential Ecobeo heritage programme.

The summer training course will cover strands of SESE history, geography and science subjects. Specific themes which will be explored in the field and classroom will include landscape, built heritage, cultural heritage, biodiversity and conservation. On completion of this course, teachers and heritage educators will have the skills and resources which will allow them to deliver an effective place-based educational programme to their students.

The course aims to:

- Equip teachers and others with the skills and resources to deliver a place-based educational programme.
- Explore skills on observing, questioning, predicting, investigating, designing and communicating around local natural, built and cultural heritage.
- Provide access to resources such as podcasts, workbooks and other resources that will assist in developing and delivering a place-based education programme.
- Improve understanding of how such a course can be fully integrated with the school curriculum and enhance literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.
- Help connect teachers and others with the magic of outdoor learning in a fun and interactive way.

(Extract from the Burrenbeo Trust website, www.burrenbeo.com. Reproduced, by permission from Burrenbeo Trust)

APPENDIX B: Curriculum Analysis

Area: Social, Environmental and Scientific Education

Subject: History

Strand	Strand Unit	Stage	Relevant Activity
Myself and my family	My family or The family of a person known to me	1st and 2nd	explore and record significant features, events and dates in the past of the child's family and extended family
			collect, explore and discuss a range of simple evidence, noting changes and developments and items which have stayed the same
		3rd and 4th	examine changes and examples of continuity in the lives of parents and grandparents
			collect and use a range of simple historical evidence
	Homes	3rd and 4th	explore changes which have taken place in the home and other homes in the area
			discuss with older people items which have changed and those which have remained the same
			collect and/or examine old artefacts
		5th and 6th	investigate local and/or regional variations or similarities in building styles and materials
	My School	3rd and 4th	investigate the development of present buildings and the history of earlier school buildings
			attempt to reconstruct a school day in the past using a range of simple evidence
			compare school furniture and equipment of the past and the appearance of the classroom with those of today
			examine old roll books or other records; if possible old handwriting copybooks

		5th and 6th	relate the history of the school to the history of education in the parish or local area
	When my grandparents were young	1st and 2nd	explore and record aspects of the lives of people when his/her grandparents were young
			collect and/or examine simple evidence in school or in a local museum
			listen to adults talking about their own past
			compare lives of people in the past with the lives of people today, noting differences and similarities
			learn songs and dances, or play games from the past
			record material on appropriate timeline
	Games in the past	1st and 2nd	explore and record traditional non-formal games, especially those common in the locality and those known to parents or grandparents
		3rd and 4th	explore and discuss games and pastimes enjoyed by parents and grandparents in the past
			have some knowledge of games and pastimes enjoyed by children in ancient societies and in other lands.
		5th and 6th	become familiar with aspects of the history of games in the locality
			explore aspects of the leisure interests and games of local people in the past
	Feasts and Festivals in the past	1st and 2nd	explore and discuss the origins and traditions of some common festivals
			listen to, discuss, explore and record associated stories, legends, games and songs.

		3rd and 4th	become familiar with the origins and traditions associated with some common festivals in Ireland and other countries
	Buildings, sites or ruins in my locality	3rd and 4th	actively explore some features of the local environment
			investigate various aspects of these sites
		5th and 6th	actively explore some features of the local environment
			identify opportunities to become involved in enhancing and protecting the environmental features
	My locality through the ages	3rd and 4th	study a period or periods in the history of the local village, town, city area, townland, parish or county
			become familiar with important events in the history of the locality, referring to the wider national context where relevant
			collect related local ballads, stories and traditions.
		5th and 6th	study a period or periods in the history of the local village, town, city area, townland, parish or county
			become familiar with important events in the history of the locality, setting local figures or events in the national and international context where relevant
Story	Stories	Infants	listen to, discuss, retell and record through pictures and other simple writing activities some stories from the lives of people who have made a contribution to local and/or national life and to the lives of people in other countries in a variety of ways

			express or record stories through art work, drama, music, mime and movement and using information and communication technologies
			listen to local people telling stories about their past
		1st and 2nd	listen to, discuss, retell and record some simply told stories from the lives of people who have made a contribution to local and/or national life and to the lives of people in other countries through technological, scientific, cultural and artistic activities as well as those who have contributed to social and political developments
			listen to local people telling stories about their past
			listen to, discuss, retell and record a range of myths and legends from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds in Ireland and other countries
			distinguish between fictional accounts in stories, myths and legends and real people and events in the past
	Stories from the lives of people in the past	3rd and 4th	listen to local people telling stories about their past
			express or record stories through oral and written forms, art work, music, drama, mime, movement and information and communication technologies
		5th and 6th	listen to, discuss, retell and record a wide range of stories from the lives of people who have made a contribution to local and/or national life and to the lives of people in other countries through technological, scientific, cultural and artistic activities as well as those who have contributed to social and political developments

			listen to local people telling stories about their past
	Myths and Legends	3rd and 4th	listen to, discuss, retell and record a range of myths and legends from various cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds in Ireland and other countries
Early peoples and ancient societies		3rd and 4th	examine and become familiar with evidence we have which tells us about these people, especially evidence of these people which may be found locally
		5th and 6th	examine critically, and become familiar with, evidence we have which tells us about these people, especially evidence of these people which may be found locally and in Ireland, where appropriate
	Life, society, work and culture in the past	3rd and 4th	examine and become familiar with evidence from the periods studied, especially evidence which may be found locally
		5th and 6th	examine and become familiar with evidence which informs us about the lives of people in the periods studied, their thoughts and concerns, especially evidence which may be found locally
	Continuity and change over time	3rd and 4th	study aspects of social, artistic, technological and scientific developments over long periods
	Eras of change and conflict	5th and 6th	examine and become familiar with evidence which informs us about the lives of people in the periods studied, their thoughts and concerns, especially evidence which may be found locally
	Politics, conflict and society	5th and 6th	engage in simple studies of some of the more important aspects of periods in which political changes or movements have had an important influence on the lives of people in Ireland

Change and continuity	Continuity and change in the local environment	1st and 2nd	visit, explore and become aware of elements in the local environment which show continuity and change
			listen to and record memories of older people about such places
			compare photographs, drawings and simple accounts of the site in the past with the site now
			use simple work directives, work cards or trail leaflets
			record findings through drawing and other art work, modelling, photographs, information and communication technologies
		5th and 6th	study aspects of social, artistic, technological and scientific developments over long periods

Area: Social, Environmental and Scientific Education

Subject: Geography

Strand	Strand Unit	Stage	Relevant Activity
Human environments	Living in the local community	Infants	explore and discuss his/her membership of the family, school and local community
			become aware of, discuss and appreciate the people in the school community
			make simple drawings of school, immediate surroundings and journeys to and from school
			discuss the work of people in the home, at school, in the local community, in towns or countryside nearby and in wider environments
			become aware of some buildings and places where people work, especially those in the locality

		1st and 2nd	become aware of and learn to value the diversity of people who live in the local community and the contribution they make
			begin to recognise the interdependence of individuals and groups in the local community
			investigate the work of people in a range of locations in the locality
	People living and working in the local area and People living and working in a contrasting part of Ireland	3rd and 4th	learn about and come to appreciate and respect the people and communities who live and work in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland
			become aware of the natural features in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland and their relationship to the lives of people living in these places
			explore, investigate and come to appreciate the major features of the built environment in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland
			explore and investigate, especially through practical studies, a small number of the common economic activities of people in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland
			become aware of forms of transport and transport routes in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland
		5th and 6th	learn about and come to appreciate the peoples and communities who live and work in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland

			explore, investigate and come to appreciate the major features of the built environment in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland
			become aware of the natural features in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland and their interrelationship with the lives of people living in these places
			explore and investigate, especially through practical studies, one or more of the important economic activities of people in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland
			learn about the methods of transport and transport routes in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland
	People and other lands	3rd and 4th	begin to develop a sense of belonging to local, county, national, European and global communities
		5th and 6th	develop a sense of belonging to local, county, national, European and international communities.
	County, regional and national centres	3rd and 4th	become familiar with the location and names of urban areas in the county, some of their important buildings, factories and other features
	Trade and development issues	5th and 6th	become aware of the causes and effects of famine
Natural environments	The local natural environment	Infants	become aware of, explore and discuss some aspects of natural environments in the immediate locality of the school
			observe, collect and investigate a variety of natural materials in the local environment
			observe, discuss and investigate water in the local environment

		1st and 2nd	identify, explore and discuss aspects of some major natural features in the local environment
			observe, discuss and investigate water in the locality
			observe, collect and investigate a variety of natural materials in the local environment
		3rd and 4th	investigate and become familiar with some natural features in the local environment
			observe and explore ways in which these features have affected the lives of plants, animals and humans
			investigate the ways in which these features have been used by humans and the changes which have occurred as a result
		5th and 6th	investigate and learn about the main natural features in the locality and county
			become aware of the ways in which people, animals and plants have exploited and/or altered these features
	Land, rivers and seas of my county	3rd and 4th	become familiar with the names and locations of some major natural features in the county
	Rocks and Soils	3rd and 4th	observe, collect and examine different soil samples in the immediate and other environments
			begin to explore influence of soils and rocks on animal and plant life
		5th and 6th	collect and identify some common rocks in the locality
			identify and explore the use of stone in building and other human activities, especially in the locality

			compare soil samples from different parts of the locality
	Weather	Infants	record weather observations using a weather chart or diary
			become aware of some of the effects of different weather conditions on human, animal and plant life in the local environment
		1st and 2nd	observe and record the influences weather and seasonal changes have on people, animals and plants in the locality
			contrast weather in the locality with that in other areas
		3rd and 4th	use simple equipment to observe and record weather phenomena
			study weather variations during the year and their influence on plants, animals and human
			collect and record weather lore from the locality
		5th and 6th	collect weather lore, especially local traditions and knowledge
			explore weather patterns over the year in the locality using a variety of graphical and analytical skills
			develop some awareness of weather patterns in other parts of Ireland and factors influencing climate in the locality and in Ireland
Environmental awareness and care	Caring for my environment	Infants	observe, discuss and appreciate the attributes of the local environment
			appreciate that people share the environment with plant and animal life

			develop a sense of responsibility for taking care of and enhancing the environment
			identify, discuss and implement simple strategies for improving and caring for the environment
		1st and 2nd	identify, discuss and appreciate the natural and human features of the local environment
			observe and develop an awareness of living things in a range of habitats in local and wider environments
			observe similarities and differences among plants and animals in different local habitats
			realise that there is both an individual and a community responsibility for taking care of the environment
			identify, discuss and implement simple strategies for improving and caring for the environment
			identify and help to implement simple strategies for protecting, conserving and enhancing the environment
			become aware of ways in which the environment can be polluted or harmed
		3rd and 4th	examine a number of ways in which local and other environments could be improved or enhanced
			identify and discuss a local, national or global environmental issue
			realise that there is a personal and community responsibility for taking care of and conserving environments
		5th and 6th	examine a number of ways in which local and other environments could be improved or enhanced

			identify and discuss a local, national or global environmental issue
			come to appreciate individual, community and national responsibility for environmental care
	Environmental Awareness	3rd and 4th	identify, discuss and record aspects of local natural and human environments which are considered attractive or unattractive
			identify the interrelationships of living and non-living elements of local and other environments
			recognise how the actions of people may have an impact on environments
			recognise and investigate human activities which may have positive or adverse effects on local and wider environments
		5th and 6th	identify, discuss and appreciate attractive and unattractive elements of natural and human environments
			explore some examples of the interrelationship of climate, natural features, flora, fauna and human life in different environments in Ireland and in some of the main climatic regions of the world
			recognise and investigate aspects of human activities which may have positive or adverse effects on environments

Area: Social, Environmental and Scientific Education

Subject: Science

Strand	Strand Unit	Stage	Relevant Activity
Skills development for	Questioning	Infants	ask questions about animals and plants, familiar objects and events in the immediate environment

infant classes			
		1st and 2nd	ask questions about animals, plants, objects and events in the immediate environment
		3rd and 4th	ask questions about animals, plants, objects and events in the immediate environment and their relationships
		5th and 6th	ask questions about animals, plants, objects and events in the immediate environment and their relationships
	Observing	Infants	use the senses to observe animals, plants, objects and events in the immediate environment
			observe characteristics such as the shape, size, colour, pattern, texture, sound and smell of familiar things in the local environment
			observe differences and similarities
		1st and 2nd	observe accurately both inside and outside the classroom
			use all the senses, separately or in combination, to explore living things, objects and events in the immediate environment
			observe differences and similarities in the environment
			observe gradual changes in living things and familiar objects and events over a period
		3rd and 4th	observe and describe natural and human elements and processes in the immediate environment
			observe and describe characteristics such as the shape, size, colour, pattern, texture and

			interrelationships of elements in the local environment
		5th and 6th	observe, describe and discuss physical, natural and human elements and processes in the immediate environment
	Investigating and experimenting	Infants	carry out simple investigations set by the teacher, make observations and collect data
		3rd and 4th	collect information and data from a variety of sources, including observations in the environment, classroom observations and experiments, photographs, books, maps and information and communication technologies
Analysing	Recognising patterns	1st and 2nd	begin to look for and recognise patterns and relationships in observations
	Sorting and classifying	3rd and 4th	sort and group data on people, events and natural phenomena using a range of appropriate criteria
Designing and making	Exploring	Infants	handle and manipulate a range of materials in structured and unstructured situations
	Planning	Infants	imagine and suggest a possible object to be made
Living things	Myself	Infants	use all the senses (touch, smell, sight, taste, hearing) to become aware of and explore environment
		1st and 2nd	use all the senses to become aware of and explore environments
	Plants and animals	Infants	observe, discuss and identify a variety of plants and animals in different habitats in the immediate environment
			sort and group living things into sets
			recognise and identify the external parts of living things

			observe growth and change in some living things
			explore conditions for growth of bulbs and seeds
			become aware that animals and plants undergo seasonal change in appearance or behaviour
		1st and 2nd	observe, identify and explore a variety of living things in local habitats and environments
			recognise and describe the parts of some living things
			recognise that trees are plants
			group and sort living things into sets according to certain characteristics
			appreciate that living things have essential needs for growth
			understand that seasonal changes occur in living things and examine the changes in plant and animal life during the different seasons
			become familiar with the life cycles of common plants and animals.
		3rd and 4th	observe, identify and investigate the animals and plants that live in local environments
			observe and explore some ways in which plant and animal behaviour is influenced by, or adapted to, environmental condition
			sort and group living things into sets according to observable features
			use simple keys to identify common species of plants and animals
			discuss simple food chains

			become aware of some of the basic life processes in animals
			investigate the factors that affect plant growth
		5th and 6th	observe, identify and examine the animals and plants that live in local habitats and environments
			identify the interrelationships and interdependence between plants and animals in local and other habitats
			observe and explore some ways in which plant and animal behaviour is influenced by, or adapted to, environmental conditions
			recognise that there is a great diversity of plants and animals in different regions and environments
			construct and use simple keys to identify locally occurring species of plants and animals
			become aware of some of the basic life processes in animals and plants
			investigate the factors that affect plant growth
			understand some ways in which plants reproduce
Energy and forces	Light	Infants	observe colours in the local environment
	Sound	Infants	recognise and identify a variety of sounds in the environment
		1st and 2nd	recognise and identify a variety of sounds in the environment
		3rd and 4th	recognise and identify a variety of sounds in the environment

Materials	Properties and characteristics of materials	Infants	observe and investigate a range of familiar materials in the immediate environment
		3rd and 4th	identify and investigate a range of common materials in the immediate environment
Environmental awareness and care	Caring for my locality	Infants	observe, discuss and appreciate the attributes of the local environment
			appreciate that people share the environment with plant and animal life
			develop a sense of responsibility for taking care of and improving the environment
			identify, discuss and implement simple strategies for improving and caring for the environment
		1st and 2nd	identify, discuss and appreciate the natural and human features of the local environment
			observe and develop an awareness of living things in a range of habitats in local and wider environments
			observe similarities and differences among plants and animals in different local habitats
			develop an awareness that air, water, soil, living and non-living things are essential to the environment
			begin to recognise that people, animals and plants depend on one another
			realise that there is both an individual and a community responsibility for taking care of the environment
			identify, discuss and implement simple strategies for improving and caring for the environment

			identify and help to implement simple strategies for protecting, conserving and enhancing the environment
			become aware of ways in which the environment can be polluted or harmed
		3rd and 4th	examine a number of ways in which the local environment could be improved or enhanced
			identify and discuss a local, national or global environmental issue
			realise that there is a personal and community responsibility for taking care of the environment
		5th and 6th	participate in activities that contribute to the enhancement of the environment
			identify and discuss a local, national or global environmental issue
			come to appreciate individual, community and national responsibility for environmental care
	Environmental awareness	3rd and 4th	identify positive aspects of natural and built environments through observation, discussion and recording
			identify the interrelationship of the living and non-living elements of local and other environments
			recognise how the actions of people may impact upon environments
			come to appreciate the need to conserve resources
		5th and 6th	identify positive aspects of natural and built environments through observation, discussion and recording

			explore some examples of the interrelationship of living and non-living aspects of local and other environments
			come to appreciate the need to conserve resources
	Science and the Environment	3rd and 4th	recognise and investigate human activities which have positive or adverse effects on local and wider environments
		5th and 6th	recognise and investigate aspects of human activities that may have positive or adverse effects on environments

Area: Social, Personal and Health Education

Subject: SPHE

Strand	Strand Unit	Stage	Relevant Activity
Myself	Taking care of my body	Infants	discuss and explore some qualities and categories of food
		1st and 2nd	identify some of the foods that are derived from plant and animal sources
		3rd and 4th	explore some factors that influence the consumption of different food products
Myself and others	Myself and Family	3rd and 4th	compare and contrast life-styles of families in urban and rural areas, in different countries, and in different cultures within and outside Ireland.
		5th and 6th	compare and contrast the life-styles of families in different cultures, both in Ireland and abroad
Myself and the wider world	Developing citizenship	Infants	recognise that each person has an important contribution to make to the life of the community
			begin to become aware of local identity and to participate in and enjoy celebrating local events

			recognise and appreciate people or groups who serve the local community and how their contribution enhances the quality of life of others
			appreciate the environment and realise that each individual has a community and individual responsibility for protecting and caring for the environment
		1st and 2nd	begin to appreciate how people depend on each other in many aspects of life
			develop a sense of belonging to his/her own local community
			be aware of and appreciate the diversity of cultures and people in the local community, recognise their contributions and be aware of how differences can enrich his/her experiences
			appreciate the environment and realise that there is a community and individual responsibility in caring for and protecting the environment
		3rd and 4th	explore some of the issues and concerns in the local or national community
			become aware of his/her own culture and recognise traditions, festivals and celebrations that are unique to the locality, region or country
			appreciate and respect the environment and learn that there is an individual and community responsibility in caring for the environment and protecting it for future generations
		5th and 6th	explore the concept of the class or school as a community
			explore local traditions and folklore and develop a sense of pride in his/her local community

			recognise and explore the positive contributions made to the local community by various organisations, ethnic, social or community groups and individuals
			identify some local issues of concern and explore possible action that could be taken to address these issues
			become aware of elements of his/her own cultural heritage and traditions
			appreciate the environment and develop a sense of individual and community responsibility for caring for the environment and being custodians of the Earth for future generations
	Media Education	Infants	explore popular stories, books and rhymes and discuss some of the characters and their appealing traits
		1st and 2nd	begin to distinguish between fact and fiction in stories or situations in different media forms
		3rd and 4th	explore and examine some issues that are frequently raised in the media, the way they are portrayed and the accuracy of these presentations

Area: Language

Subject: English

Strand	Strand Unit	Stage	Relevant Activity
Receptiveness to language	Oral language: developing receptiveness to oral language	Infants	listen to a story or description and respond to it
		1st and 2nd	listen to stories, descriptions, instructions and directions and respond to them

		5th and 6th	listen to authors reading and discussing their own work
	Writing: creating and fostering the impulse to write	1st and 2nd	choose topics to write about
	Reading: developing concepts of language and print	Infants	listen to, enjoy and respond to stories, nursery rhymes, poems and songs
			become an active listener through the development of a range of listening activities based on stories read or told
	Reading: developing reading skills and strategies	Infants	encounter early reading through collaborative reading of large-format books and language-experience material
			engage in shared reading activities
		3rd and 4th	refine his/her listening skills through hearing the teacher read aloud.
Competence and confidence in using language	Reading: reading for pleasure and information	1st and 2nd	read from a range of children's literature, choosing material for reading during silent reading periods
	Oral language: developing competence and confidence in using oral language	3rd and 4th	make lists of local expressions and words

			hear, discuss and react to local storytellers
		5th and 6th	discuss the meaning, effect and diversity of local words and expressions
			use improvisational drama to learn how local idiom, accent and dialect can influence the effect of language in particular situations.
			discuss the positive and negative effects of jargon, slang and cliché, and express examples of them in his/her own language
	Reading: reading for pleasure and information	5th and 6th	read widely as an independent reader from a more challenging range of reading material, including stories, poems, myths, legends, novels and non-fiction texts appropriate to his/her age and reading ability
Developing cognitive abilities through language	Oral language: developing cognitive abilities through oral language	Infants	listen to a story or a narrative and ask questions about it
		1st and 2nd	listen to a story or narrative and ask questions about it
		3rd and 4th	discuss issues that directly affect his/her life
			explore historical events through improvisational drama
		5th and 6th	use a discussion of the familiar as the basis of a more formal or objective grasp of a topic or concept
			explore historical contexts through improvisational drama.

	Reading: developing interests, attitudes and the ability to think	Infants	re-read, retell and act out familiar stories, poems or parts of stories
	Writing: clarifying thought through writing	1st and 2nd	listen to a story and write down questions to ask about it
Strand: Emotional and imaginative development through language	Oral language: developing emotional and imaginative life through oral language	Infants	listen to, learn and retell a rich variety of stories, rhymes and songs
			respond through discussion, mime and role-playing to stories, rhymes and songs heard and learnt
		1st and 2nd	listen to, read, learn and recite a varied and appropriate repertoire of rhymes and poems
			re-create stories and poems in improvisational drama
		5th and 6th	discuss with others his/her reactions to everyday experiences and to local, national and world events
	Reading: responding to text	1st and 2nd	continue to listen to and enjoy stories and poems being read aloud
			engage in spare-moment reading and browsing by having ready access to reading material
			engage with a wide variety of text
		5th and 6th	hear the teacher model a response to poems, fiction, plays and parts of plays

	Writing: developing emotional and imaginative life through writing	1st and 2nd	draw and write stories and poems
		3rd and 4th	use his/her own artwork and that of others as a stimulus to writing

Area: Language

Subject: Gaeilge

Strand	Strand Unit	Stage	Relevant Activity
Labhairt	Ag cothú spéise	3rd and 4th	dánta a aithris agus iad a phlé
			amhráin a chanadh
			gnéithe den chultúr a phlé
		5th and 6th	dánta a aithris
			amhráin a chanadh
			an Ghaeilge a labhairt i gcomhthéacsanna cultúrtha
Léitheoireacht	Ag úsáid teanga	3rd and 4th	léamh i gcomhthéacsanna cultúrtha scéalta gearra béaloidis, rainn, dánta dúchasacha.
Scríbhneoireacht	Ag úsáid teanga	3rd and 4th	scríobh i gcomhthéacsanna cultúrtha
		5th and 6th	scríobh i gcomhthéacsanna cultúrtha
Éisteacht	Ag cothú spéise	5th and 6th	éisteacht leis an nGaeilge i gcomhthéacsanna cultúrtha

Area: Mathematics

Subject: Mathematics

Strand	Strand Unit	Stage	Relevant Activity
Early mathematical activities	Classifying	Infants	classify objects on the basis of one attribute, such as colour, shape, texture or size

	Matching	Infants	match equivalent and non-equivalent sets using one-to-one correspondence
	Comparing	Infants	compare objects according to length, width, height, weight, quantity, thickness or size
			compare sets without counting
	Ordering	Infants	order objects according to length or height
			order sets without counting.
Number	Counting	Infants	count the number of objects in a set, 0–20
		1st and 2nd	count the number of objects in a set
	Comparing and ordering	Infants	compare equivalent and non-equivalent sets 0–10 by matching
			order sets of objects by number, 0–10
			use the language of ordinal number: first, second, third, last
		1st and 2nd	compare equivalent and non-equivalent sets
	Operations	1st and 2nd	develop an understanding of addition by combining or partitioning sets
			develop an understanding of subtraction as deducting, as complementing and as difference
		3rd and 4th	solve word problems involving addition and subtraction
	Analysis of number	Infants	explore the components of number, 1–10
			combine sets of objects, totals to 10
	Partitioning	Infants	partition sets of objects, 0–10
			use the symbols + and = to construct word sentences involving addition

Shape and Space	Spatial Awareness	Infants	explore, discuss, develop and use the vocabulary of spatial relations
		1st and 2nd	explore, discuss, develop and use the vocabulary of spatial relations
			give and follow simple directions within classroom and school settings, including turning directions using half and quarter turns
	3-D Shapes	Infants	sort, describe and name 3-D shapes: regular, irregular, cube, cuboid, sphere and cylinder
			combine 3-D shapes to make other shapes
			solve tasks and problems involving shape.
		1st and 2nd	discuss the use of 3-D shapes in the environment
		3rd and 4th	solve and complete practical tasks and problems involving 2-D and 3-D shapes
	2-D Shapes	Infants	sort, describe and name 2-D shapes: square, circle, triangle, rectangle
			combine and divide 2-D shapes to make larger or smaller shapes
			solve problems involving shape and space
			give simple moving and turning directions.
		1st and 2nd	identify and discuss the use of 2-D shapes in the environment
		3rd and 4th	identify the use of 2-D shapes in the environment
	Symmetry	1st and 2nd	identify line symmetry in shapes and in the environment
		3rd and 4th	identify line symmetry in the environment
	Angles	1st and 2nd	explore and recognise angles in the environment

		5th and 6th	recognise, classify and describe angles and relate angles to shape
Measures	Length	Infants	develop an understanding of the concept of length through exploration, discussion, and use of appropriate vocabulary
			compare and order objects according to length or height
			estimate and measure length in non-standard units
			select and use appropriate non-standard units to measure length, width or height. Discuss reasons for choice.
		1st and 2nd	estimate, measure and record length using metre and centimetre
			solve and complete practical tasks and problems involving length
		3rd and 4th	estimate, compare, measure and record lengths of a wide variety of objects, using appropriate metric units, and selecting suitable instruments of measurement
		5th and 6th	use and interpret scales on maps and plans
	Weight	Infants	develop an understanding of the concept of weight through exploration, handling of objects and use of appropriate vocabulary
			compare and order objects according to weight
			estimate and weigh in non-standard units
			select and use appropriate non-standard units to weigh objects
	Area	1st and 2nd	estimate and measure area using non-standard units
		5th and 6th	calculate area using acres and hectares

	Time	Infants	develop an understanding of the concept of time through the use of appropriate vocabulary
			sequence daily events or stages in a story
		3rd and 4th	consolidate and develop further a sense of time passing
Data	Recognising and interpreting data	Infants	sort and classify sets of objects by one and two criteria
			represent and interpret data in two rows or columns using real objects, models and pictures
		1st and 2nd	represent, read and interpret simple tables and charts
		5th and 6th	collect, organise and represent data using pie charts and trend graphs
	Chance	3rd and 4th	order events in terms of likelihood of occurrence
			identify and record outcomes of simple random processes
Algebra	Number Sentences	3rd and 4th	translate an addition, subtraction, multiplication or division number sentence with a frame into a word problem

Area: The Arts

Subject: Visual Arts

Strand	Strand Unit	Stage	Relevant Activity
Drawing	Making Drawings	Infants	discover and draw line and shape as seen in natural and manufactured objects and discover that lines can make shapes
			make drawings based on vividly recalled feelings, real and imaginative experiences and stories
			explore the relationship between how things feel and how they look

		1st and 2nd	explore shape as seen in natural and manufactured objects and become aware of the shape of shadows cast by objects
			draw from observation
		3rd and 4th	make drawings from recalled experiences, emphasising pattern, detail, context and location
			draw from observation
			express his/her imaginative life and interpret imaginative themes using inventive pattern and detail
		5th and 6th	discover how line could convey movement and rhythm
			draw imaginative themes using inventive pattern and detail
	Looking and Responding	Infants	look at and talk about his/her work, the work of other children and the work of artists
Paint and colour	Painting	Infants	discover colour in the visual environment to help develop sensitivity to colour
			discover colour, pattern and rhythm in colourful objects
			discover the relationship between how things feel and how they look
		1st and 2nd	use colour expressively to interpret themes based on his/her personal or imaginative life
			discover harmony and contrast in natural and manufactured objects and through themes chosen for their colour possibilities

			discover colour, pattern and rhythm in natural and manufactured objects and interpret them in his/her work
			discover colour in the visual environment and become sensitive to tonal variations between light and dark, and to variations in pure colour (hue)
		3rd and 4th	make paintings based on recalled feelings and experiences, exploring the spatial effects of colour and tone, using overlapping, and with some consideration of scale
		3rd and 4th	discover pattern and rhythm in natural and manufactured objects and use them purposefully in his/her work
	Looking and Responding	Infants	look at and talk about his/her work, the work of other children and the work of artists
		3rd and 4th	look at, handle and talk about natural and manufactured objects for experience of texture, shape, pattern
Print	Making prints	Infants	experiment with the effects that can be achieved with simple print-making
			use a variety of print-making techniques
Clay	Developing form in clay	Infants	make a clay form and manipulate it with fingers to suggest a subject
		1st and 2nd	change the form of a small ball of clay, using the medium expressively
		3rd and 4th	make sturdy figures in clay using the medium expressively and with imaginative detail
	Looking and responding	Infants	look at, handle and talk about objects with free-flowing forms

		1st and 2nd	look at, handle and talk about natural and manufactured objects for experience of three-dimensional form
		5th and 6th	look at and talk about ritual masks, street theatre masks and figures, and functional and decorative pottery from different cultures and different times
Constructi ons	Making constructions	Infants	make imaginative structures
		1st and 2nd	make imaginative structures
		3rd and 4th	make drawings from observation to analyse the structures of buildings and the natural structures of plants
	Looking and Responding	1st and 2nd	look at collections or photographs of natural and built structures and investigate spatial arrangements, balance and outline and how the spaces created relate to the whole
			look at and talk about a local building complex, at a famous building and at visually stimulating artefacts (or slides or prints)
		3rd and 4th	look at and talk about interesting examples of contemporary architecture and the work of great architects and builders of history.
		5th and 6th	look at and talk about impressive examples of buildings created in the past in different parts of the world and at contemporary architecture, sculpture, engineering and design
Fabric and Fibre	Creating in fabric and fibre	3rd and 4th	invent a costume for a character from a story or use fabric as a stimulus for an exotic costume design
	Looking and Responding	1st and 2nd	look at and talk about fabrics crafts and artefacts and visit a craftsperson at work if possible.

		3rd and 4th	look at and talk about woven, embroidered, knitted and other fabrics, including interesting items of clothing from different times and cultures
		5th and 6th	look at and talk about woven, embroidered, knitted and other fabrics, including interesting items of clothing from different times and cultures, and explore the role of textiles in culture

Area: The Arts Subject: Music

Strand	Strand Unit	Stage	Relevant Activity
Listening and Responding	Exploring sounds	Infants	listen to, identify and imitate familiar sounds in the immediate environment from varying sources
			describe sounds and classify them into sound families
		1st and 2nd	listen to, identify and describe sounds in the environment with increasing awareness
		3rd and 4th	classify and describe sounds within a narrow range
		5th and 6th	listen to sounds in the environment with an increased understanding of how sounds are produced and organised
	Listening to and Responding to Music	Infants	listen to a range of short pieces of music or excerpts
		1st and 2nd	listen to a range of short, familiar and unfamiliar pieces of music or excerpts
		3rd and 4th	listen to and describe music in various styles and genres, including familiar excerpts, recognising its function and historical context where appropriate

			respond imaginatively to longer pieces of music in a variety of ways
		5th and 6th	listen to and describe a broad range of musical styles and traditions, including familiar excerpts, recognising where appropriate its function and historical context
Performing	Song singing	Infants	recognise and sing familiar songs and melodies from other sources
		1st and 2nd	recognise and sing with increasing vocal control and confidence a growing range of songs and melodies
		3rd and 4th	sing from memory a widening repertoire of songs with increasing vocal control, confidence and expression
		5th and 6th	recognise and sing from memory a more demanding repertoire of songs with an awareness of the music's social, historical and cultural contexts
Composing	Improvising and creating	Infants	select sounds from a variety of sources to create simple sound ideas, individually and in groups
		1st and 2nd	recall, answer and invent simple melodic and rhythmic patterns, using voices, body percussion and instruments

Area: The Arts

Subject: Drama

Strand	Strand Unit	Stage	Relevant Activity
Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to	Exploring and making drama	Infants	develop the instinct for make-believe play into drama

understand ing			
			develop the ability to play in role as an integral part of the action
			experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action
		1st and 2nd	use the ability to play at make-believe to enter fully into participation in drama
			experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action
		3rd and 4th	enter into the fictional dramatic context with the same spontaneity and freedom that he/she has earlier applied to make-believe play
			begin the process of using script as a pre-text
		5th and 6th	enter appropriately and with facility, whether watched or unwatched, into the fictional dramatic context
			distinguish between various genres, such as comedy, tragedy, fantasy
	Reflecting on drama	Infants	experience the relationship between story, theme and life experience
		1st and 2nd	experience, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience
		3rd and 4th	use the sharing of insights arising out of dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people
	Co-operating and communicating in making drama	Infants	develop the ability, out of role, to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama

		1st and 2nd	develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the drama text is being made
		3rd and 4th	enact spontaneously for others in the group a scene from the drama, or share with the rest of the class a scene that has already been made in simultaneous small-group work

Area: Physical Education

Subject: Physical Education

Strand	Strand Unit	Stage	Relevant Activity
Athletics	Running	Infants	walk or jog in a non-competitive setting for periods extending from 30 seconds to 90 seconds
		1st and 2nd	walk or jog in a non-competitive setting for periods extending from 30 seconds to two minutes
		3rd and 4th	walk, jog or run in a non-competitive setting for periods extending from 30 seconds to 3 minutes
	Jumping	Infants	experiment with various ways of jumping
	Understanding and appreciation of athletics	5th and 6th	become aware of athletic events and athletes locally, nationally and internationally
Dance	Exploration, creation and performance of dance	Infants	respond imaginatively through movement to stimuli such as words, stories, poems, pictures, music
		Infants	perform simple singing games and folk dances
		Infants	create and perform simple dances with teacher's guidance
		1st and 2nd	create, practise and perform dances showing a clear beginning, middle and end

			continue to respond imaginatively through movement to stimuli such as words, stories, poems, pictures, songs and music
		3rd and 4th	develop work with a partner and begin to work in small groups
		3rd and 4th	perform a variety of selected Irish dances and folk dances that use frequent changes of formation
		5th and 6th	create, practise and perform longer and more complex dances with clear dance forms
			explore and experiment with the use of costume and props (e.g. masks) to enhance creation and performance of dance
			perform a variety of selected Irish and folk dances that use frequent changes of formation
	Understanding and appreciation of dance	3rd and 4th	observe, describe and discuss own dance and dance of others
		5th and 6th	become aware of local organisations and community groups involved in dance and opportunities in the community to participate in dance.
Games	Creating and playing games	Infants	create and develop games in pairs
			play simple playground games
		1st and 2nd	play playground games
	Understanding and appreciation of games	Infants	apply simple rules to games
		5th and 6th	become aware of games events and players locally, nationally and internationally.

Outdoor and adventure activities	Walking	Infants	undertake short walks within or adjacent to the school grounds
			find an object in a confined area of the school site, given simple clues
		1st and 2nd	undertake short walks, outside the school site where possible
			find an object on the school site, given simple clues
		3rd and 4th	undertake forest walks
	Walking, cycling and camping activities	5th and 6th	undertake forest walks
			develop a range of cycling skills
			prepare for camping or bivouacking
	Orienteering	Infants	identify areas of the hall, playing-field or school site
		1st and 2nd	identify areas of the hall, playing-field or school site
			find objects or areas by following a simple plan (set of drawings)
		3rd and 4th	identify symbols for familiar features on a map of a familiar area
			undertake a star orienteering activity
		5th and 6th	find controls on the school site, using a map or plan
			undertake a memory star orienteering course
			undertake point-to-point orienteering
			undertake score orienteering
	Outdoor challenges	Infants	undertake adventure trails

			undertake simple co-operative (trust) activities
		1st and 2nd	undertake adventure trails
			undertake simple co-operative (trust) activities
		3rd and 4th	undertake an adventure trail
			undertake simple co-operative (trust) activities
		5th and 6th	undertake an adventure trail
			undertake co-operative (trust) activities
			undertake physical challenges
	Water-based activities	5th and 6th	experience an introductory session in basic canoeing or sailing
	Understanding and appreciation of outdoor and adventure activities	Infants	begin to develop an appreciation of and respect for the environment
		1st and 2nd	develop an appreciation of and respect for the environment explored
		3rd and 4th	develop positive attitudes towards caring for the environment
			plan, observe, describe and discuss activities outdoors
		5th and 6th	develop positive attitudes towards caring for the environment
			plan, observe, describe and discuss activities outdoors
			discuss the safety aspects of activities undertaken

APPENDIX C: Interview Guide

Thank you very much for agreeing to this interview. It's just an informal chat so please feel free to share any thoughts or opinions. There are absolutely no right or wrong answers – it's not a test! But the more honest you can be the better. I'll be recording if that is ok just so I can listen back and transcribe but no one else will hear the recordings and what you say will be reported entirely anonymously.

So, to start I just want to get some background on you and your teaching experience.

1. How many years have you been teaching at primary school level?
2. How many years have you been teaching in this school?
3. Do you live locally (within c.20kms of the school)?
4. Did you grow up locally (within c. 40kms of the school)?
5. Would you describe yourself as having a personal interest outside of your teaching in local heritage?
 - More interested in;
 - i. Built Heritage (Archaeology, History)
 - ii. Natural Heritage (Biodiversity, Environment)
 - iii. Cultural Heritage (Music, Art, Storytelling, Dance)
6. So your class participated in Ecobeo recently. Can you tell me about your thoughts on Ecobeo/Áitbheo?
7. Having done Ecobeo/Áitbheo has your teaching changed?
 - Yes – can you give me specific examples
 - No – any reasons why
8. What does Place-based learning mean to you?
9. Place-based learning has been defined as

'the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. Emphasising hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens. Community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the active engagement of local citizens, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school.'

What do you think of that as a definition?

Do you think this is a feasible approach?

- Are there elements that would be more or less successful?
- What do you think are the factors that influence how or what is done?
- What would need to happen to make PBL more prevalent in your class?

10. Do you think the curriculum allows for activities such as those indicated above?

11. Do you feel you have sufficient local knowledge to teach about the local built, natural and cultural heritage?

- Yes – where did you acquire this knowledge
- No – how could you acquire this knowledge

APPENDIX D: Questionnaire

The following short survey forms part of a Master of Education (MEd) research project being completed at the School of Education in NUI Galway.

What is the project about?

The purpose of this research is to explore the potential for Place-based Pedagogy in the Irish Primary school curriculum. Place-based Pedagogy relates to use of local contexts and community resources to deliver the existing curriculum. Professionally, the researcher has been involved in developing and delivering place-based learning programmes with the Burrenbeo Trust, the research hopes to examine teachers' and teacher educators' perspectives on this topic. The research looks to explore the current prevalence of and the future potential for Place-based Pedagogy. This study will employ a mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis. Data will be collected through interviews, survey and analysis of the related literature.

What happens if I agree to take part?

The survey will take approximately 6-8 minutes to complete and will ask you about your teaching experience, personal interest in some relevant subjects, some areas of your teaching practice and your views on related topics. There are no right or wrong answers and your opinions and experience are all that is required.

All information will be kept strictly confidential and your identity as a participant will be completely anonymous. Data will be securely stored on a password-protected laptop. The anonymised data will be used in my MEd thesis and possibly in various publications.

There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. The possible benefits include having the opportunity to reflect on and share your views and experiences in relation to the research topic, and to contribute to potential developments in this field in the future. If you are interested in obtaining a report on the research please contact me via email and I will forward this information to you once the research is complete.

If you have any questions about any aspect of the study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher (details below) or project supervisor, Dr Elaine Keane, School of Education NUIG (091 493032, elaine.keane@nuigalway.ie).

Many thanks for your time.

* I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided, including its purposes and procedures, and that I have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

I give my consent to participate in this study.

Yes

* 1. Are you?

Male

Female

* 2. To which age group do you belong?

Under 20

20 - 29

30 - 39

40 - 49

50 - 59

60 or older

* 3. How many years have you been teaching at primary school level?

* 4. How many years have you been teaching in your current school?

* 5. Approximately how many pupils attend your current school?

0 - 50

51 - 100

101 - 150

150+

* 6. What class group are you currently teaching?

* 7. Which phrase best describes your current school?

Rural

Urban

* 8. Do you live within c.20kms of the school?

Yes

No

* 9. Did you grow up within c.40kms of the school?

Yes

No

* 10. Do you have a personal interest in (* tick all that apply)

Archaeology

Community development

Dance

Environment

Geology
 History
 Literature
 Music
 Storytelling
 Visual Art
 Wildlife
 None of Above

* 11. Below are a number of statements about activities that could take place in a school.
 Please indicate how frequently the following activities happen with your class.

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Every Term	Every Year	Never or Almost Never
Class go for a walk outside the school grounds						
Class learn about a local heritage site (within 30kms of school)						
Class visit a local heritage site (within 30kms of school)						
Class learn about a local wildlife site (within 30kms of school)						
Class visit a local wildlife site (within 30kms of school)						
Community member (parent, grandparent, someone with specialist knowledge/interest) visits the class to speak to children						
Class get actively involved in a real world local problem eg. Litter picking, flower planting						
Class research local information online or using existing resources						
Class research local information by asking community member						
Class campaign on a local issue eg. Raise awareness about Pollution						
Class learn about local Culture						

* 12. Do you think the activities listed in Q.11 fall under the remit of the curriculum?

Yes
 No

* 13. The following are potential factors which could influence whether activities such as those listed in Q. 11 take place. Please indicate the extent of your agreement with each factor.

	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Neutral	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree
Time					
Child safety concerns					
Management Support (Principal)					
Teachers knowledge on related subject					
Teachers knowledge on local community					
Teachers knowledge on local place					
Access to appropriate resources					
Cost					
Student numbers					
Behavioural concerns					
Other (please specify)					

* 14. How would you rate your local knowledge in terms of the below items? Sufficient knowledge refers to necessary knowledge to teach about the subject.

	Sufficient Knowledge 5	4	3	2	Insufficient Knowledge 1
Archaeology					
Community development					
Dance					
Environment					
Geology					
History					
Literature					
Music					
Storytelling					
Visual Art					
Wildlife					

* 15. For items for which you have sufficient knowledge (see Q.14), where did you get this knowledge? Please tick all that apply.

- Online
- School text books
- Books other than school text books
- Radio or TV programmes
- Newspapers
- Personal study
- Peer learning
- Training course
- Own school education
- Local community member
- Don't know
- Not applicable

Other (please specify)

* 16. For items for which you don't have sufficient knowledge (see Q.14), what methods would be best to obtain this knowledge? Please tick all that apply.

Online

School text books

Books other than school text books

Radio or TV programmes

Newspapers

Personal study

Peer learning

Training course

Own school education

Local community member

Don't know

Not applicable

Other (please specify)

* 17. Please rate your classes' knowledge on their local area in terms of the following subjects.

	Very knowledgeable	Somewhat knowledgeable	Not at all knowledgeable
Archaeology			
Community development			
Dance			
Environment			
Geology			
History			
Literature			
Music			
Storytelling			
Visual Art			
Wildlife			

* 18. Please add any comments, or your views about the type of learning focused on in this survey (place-based pedagogy).

APPENDIX E: Interview request email and information sheet

Hello _____,

I hope all is well with you. I'm doing a Masters in Education in the School of Education in NUIG at the moment and this year I'm doing a research thesis on the potential for place-based learning in the Irish primary school curriculum. I'll be looking at where place-based learning might fit into the curriculum and getting teachers' perspectives on a place-based learning approach.

I'm hoping to interview a number of teachers that have done Ecobee in the past to get their thoughts on how place-based learning worked in that context. I was wondering if I could interview you?

It would be informal and wouldn't take any longer than an hour. I've attached the information sheet and consent form which has more detail. If you are willing to participate I'd like to set a date in the next two weeks. I can come to your school or we can arrange somewhere else if necessary.

No problem if it doesn't suit and if you've any questions please get in touch with me or my research supervisor, Dr Elaine Keane, School of Education NUIG (091 493032, elaine.keane@nuigalway.ie).

All the best,

Áine (XXX XXXXXXXX)

Participant Information Sheet

‘Examining the Potential for Place-based Pedagogy in the Irish Primary school curriculum’

The following information is provided to assist you in deciding whether or not you wish to participate in this study. **Participation is entirely voluntary** and should you agree to participate you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Invitation to participate

You are being invited to take part in a Masters of Education research project. Before you decide to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the project about?

The purpose of this research is to explore the potential for Place-based Pedagogy in the Irish Primary school curriculum. Place-based Pedagogy relates to use of local contexts and community resources to deliver the existing curriculum. Building on the researcher’s professional experience in this area, the research hopes to examine teacher’s perspectives on this topic. The research looks to explore the current prevalence of and the future potential for Place-based Pedagogy.

This study will employ a mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis. Data will be collected through interviews, survey and analysis of the related literature.

What happens if I agree to take part in this project?

If you agree to take part in the study, the researcher would like to interview you in an informal and conversational manor. You will be asked to give your opinion on topics similar to those outlined below:

- Experience participating in a Place-based programme
- Opinions on the curriculum and its potential for Place-based Pedagogy
- Experience of teaching topics related to built, natural and cultural heritage
- Feasibility of Place-based Pedagogy in the Irish Primary school setting.

Interviews should take no more than an hour (however, there is no time limit if you want to talk for longer) and for the purpose of documenting information, with your permission, they will be **recorded**. You are free to withdraw from the interview at any point or you may refuse to answer any question asked. Following the interview, you will receive a copy of the transcript for your comment. At that stage, you may amend your transcript in any way that you wish. If you do not request any changes be made within **one month** of receiving the transcript it will be understood that no changes are required. Your name will not be used anywhere in the research – you will remain **anonymous**. All information will be kept **strictly confidential** and your identity as a participant will **only be known to the researcher**. Data will be securely stored.

With agreement from the participant, anonymous quotes may also be used for illustrative or promotional purposes by Burrenbeo Trust.

There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. The possible benefits include having the opportunity to reflect on and share your views and experiences in relation to the research topic, and to contribute to potential developments in this field in the future.

If you are interested in obtaining a report on the research please contact me via email and I will forward this information to you once the research is complete.

If you have any questions about any aspect of the study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher or project supervisor, Dr Elaine Keane, School of Education NUIG (091 493032, elaine.keane@nuigalway.ie).

Many thanks for your time.

Áine Bird (PHONE NUMBER, EMAIL ADDRESS)

APPENDIX F: Questionnaire request email

Dear Teacher,

I am writing to request teacher participants for a short online research survey. In completion of a Master in Education (MEd) in the School of Education in NUIG I'm working on a research thesis on the potential for place-based learning in the Irish primary school curriculum. I'll be looking at where place-based learning might fit into the curriculum and getting teachers' perspectives on a place-based learning approach.

The survey will take approximately **6-8 minutes** to complete and will ask you about your teaching experience, personal interest in some relevant subjects, some areas of your teaching practice and your views on related topics. There are **no right or wrong answers** and your opinions and experience are all that is required. All information will be kept strictly **confidential** and your identity as a participant will be completely **anonymous**.

The survey and all further information can be found by following this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FBVDKFB>. I truly value the time and information provided. By participating you are contributing to potential developments in this field in the future. I would appreciate if you could forward this request to any teacher colleagues.

If you have any questions please get in touch with me or my research supervisor, Dr Elaine Keane, School of Education NUIG (091 493032, elaine.keane@nuigalway.ie).

All the best,

Áine Bird (XXX XXXXXXXX)

APPENDIX G: Ethics Checklist

School of Education Ethics Checklist for MEd and MLitt Students

Student Name:	Áine Bird
Student ID Number:	03414531
Supervisor:	Dr Elaine Keane
Working Title of Thesis:	Examining the potential for place-based pedagogy in the Irish Primary school curriculum.
Methodology and Methods: (e.g. a Qualitative Study involving in-depth interviews with 8 teachers and a qualitative questionnaire with 20 students)	A mixed methods research study incorporating semi-structured interviews, a survey and document analysis. 9 interviews will be conducted with 3 groups – teachers who have completed a place-based training course, teachers who have had a place-based training course delivered in their classroom and Directors of undergraduate teacher education programmes. 3 members of each group will be interviewed. Additionally, a survey will be circulated to a random sample of teachers. It is hoped that approximately 50 responses will be received. In conjunction with the above the Primary School curriculum will be analysed in terms of potential for place-based pedagogy.

Please place a in the appropriate box to the right of each statement/point.

No point should be left blank (mark it as N/A if appropriate)

	Yes	No	N/A
Documentation			
Letter of introduction and permission request to gatekeeper			X
Letter of invitation to participant	X		
Consent form	X		
Letter to Gatekeeper			
At appropriate authority level			X
Summary and purpose of study			X
Permission request			X
Copies of letter of invitation to participant and consent form			X
Letter of Invitation to Participant			
Introduction – research for MEd thesis SoE, NUIG, plus name of supervisor	X		
Purpose of study	X		
Invitation to participate	X		
What participating will involve, including when, where, how long etc.	X		
Summary of procedures, and refer to consent form for further information	X		
Researcher's contact details (email and phone)	X		
Respond to invitation to participate by (date)	X		
Note that participant can contact the researcher (or supervisor – give name and contact details) if they have any questions	X		

Consent Form / Information Sheet*			
Purpose of study	X		
What participating involves	X		
Voluntary	X		
Right to withdraw without consequences	X		
Confidentiality or anonymity, use of pseudonyms	X		
Audio-/video-recording	X		
Transcription (who? If assistant, then confidentiality agreement)	X		
Who will have access to recordings/transcripts (researcher, supervisor and examiners)	X		
Storage of recordings/transcripts/questionnaire data	X		
Return of transcripts to participant for review and amendment (amendments to be requested by certain date)	X		
Copies of findings	X		
Note re. risks, benefits, and incentives	X		
Statement of consent to participate	X		
Two signature lines (researcher and participant) + dates	X		
* For questionnaires, an information sheet containing all of the above information as per the consent sheet, without statement of consent to participate, and with note that participant may contact the researcher or supervisor with any questions (give contact details). If it's an online survey, then this information, in summary form, must be provided at the beginning.	X		
* For questionnaires, the inclusion on the form (paper or online) of a statement (with Yes/No checkboxes) "I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided, including its purposes and procedures, and that I have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to participate in this study"	X		

Do you have any comments or questions regarding ethics-related issues in your research study?

Declarations:

I declare that I have discussed all issues pertinent to ethics-related issues with my supervisor and that we have completed this checklist together.

Student signature and date

I declare that I have discussed all issues pertinent to ethics-related issues with my student and that we have completed this checklist together.

Supervisor's signature and date

APPENDIX H: Consent Form

Participant Identification Number:

Title of Project: 'Examining the Potential for Place-based Pedagogy in the Irish Primary school curriculum'

Name of Researcher: Áine Bird

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I am satisfied that I understand the information provided and have had enough time to consider the information.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.
4. I understand that some relevant snippets (which will be unidentifiable to you as a participant) may be used by Burrenbeo Trust also.
5. I am satisfied that my name and other identifying features will not be used anywhere in the Masters report and other publications.
6. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

APPENDIX I: Example of coded interview section

Extract from Ellen interview.

Interview Transcript

Interview Coding

<p>272 things like that and that make them say this is our place and 273 we're proud of it because we have all this at our doorstep 274 but I think you have to make them aware and it's through 275 repetition. We start off with 2nd class really doing history 276 and geography and that kind of local history and science 277 and then it's done three or four times, it's done every 278 September for a month, every September for a month we 279 use our environment.</p> <p>280 A: Ok so, all of the class groups would be focused on local</p> <p>281 I: All of the class groups on local environment in history, 282 geography and science for the whole month of September 283 every year and it's usually after doing all that that we bring 284 them out and about in October for one day as well. It's 285 actually five weeks, four weeks and then one day out and 286 about from 3rd class out. We don't let any less than 3rd 287 class walk on the road because it's dangerous because it's a 288 main road. We go down that way, we walk on the road with 289 high vis vests.</p> <p>290 A: Why did you decide to focus a month, was it just how it 291 has been</p> <p>292 I: We found out that they knew nothing, they knew nothing 293 about [PLACE] what did they know? Nothing. And they 294 weren't able to verbalise so we work on it in oral language 295 as well, so even that as well as having it they're able to 296 communicate it to people that this is what we do here. We 297 found that when we asked them what's in [PLACE] 'Ah 298 nothing' That's all, they didn't know that down at the 299 crossroads the old post office was there and the barracks is 300 still there, you know the cell is still there if they go in there 301 and the parochial house, they didn't know anything about 302 the history of the place and we said that we wanted to 303 know that, so the only way that they will know that is that if 304 every classroom would do it for at least four weeks and 305 history, geography and science, the SESE for the whole 306 month and even some classes would go further depending 307 on if they were doing projects they would maybe spend 308 more time doing the OS maps, some would spend 8 weeks 309 doing it and other years 4 weeks, depends on the pressure 310 of work of course</p>	<p>'make them say this is our place and we're proud of it because we have all this at our doorstep' Making them aware through repetition Starting in 2nd class</p> <p>Doing it three or four times Doing local for a month every September</p> <p>Doing local in September for all class groups</p> <p>Bringing them out after doing the month on local</p> <p>Being dangerous for classes younger than 3rd to walk on the road</p> <p>Deciding to focus for a month as 'We found out that they knew nothing, they knew nothing about [PLACE] what did they know? Nothing.' Working on oral language around local place as well</p> <p>Saying there was nothing in the place when asked</p> <p>Knowing nothing about the history of the place Wanting them to know</p> <p>Going further in some classes doing projects</p> <p>Depending on the pressure from other areas</p>
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APPENDIX J: Codes in Categories

Identity	<p>Finding differences between places important and interesting</p> <p>Children's understanding of their own place</p> <p>Opening up their own place for children</p> <p>Opening up their horizon to their own place</p> <p>Holidaying abroad versus knowing their own place</p> <p>Showing them the history of their own place</p> <p>Dealing with every aspect of place</p> <p>Being privileged living somewhere</p> <p>Getting knowledge and appreciation for your place</p> <p>Giving children knowledge and appreciation</p> <p>Building a real sense of community</p> <p>Giving them a sense of place</p> <p>Giving them a sense of who they are, the place they're in and what makes it unique</p>
Support	<p>Being lucky with parental supports</p> <p>Being supported by staff</p> <p>Needing more adult support sometimes</p>
Time	<p>Taking time</p> <p>Preparing before bringing class</p> <p>Needing to be prepared before bringing the class</p> <p>Getting to it and time and all the rest</p> <p>Being under pressure for time</p> <p>Being conscious of not adding something new to teachers workload</p> <p>Taking quite a bit of organisation and preparation to go out</p> <p>Planning taking time</p>
Weather	<p>Having to consider weather</p> <p>Hating the cold – not bringing the children out in the winter</p> <p>Weather influencing what happens</p> <p>Organising a bus and then weather means it can't happen</p>
Connection	<p>Moving away because they're not 'draw' back to the area</p> <p>Growing up can lose connection to place</p> <p>Talking about connections with grandparents</p> <p>Developing ties to the community</p>
Hassle	<p>Finding sometimes 'it's not worth the hassle'</p> <p>Being easier to just be in the classroom</p> <p>Seeing how teachers wouldn't want to go out</p> <p>Being a 'fair hassle' bringing them out</p> <p>Being easier to teach in the classroom</p>
Local resources	<p>Finding it not much extra effort as the resources have been gathered over the years</p> <p>Taking stuff from experts that have visited the class</p> <p>Getting together resources for all the teachers</p> <p>Knowing nothing when she came to the school first</p> <p>Getting information from the principal there at the time</p>

	<p>Building a resource folder Having put together a book on local area Using the human resources that exist in places Recognising the expertise all around the place Seeing the local community resource as key Needing our own little toolkit Having generic planning and methodologies Mixing all resources to increase teachers knowledge Having printed resources available that you don't need to make yourself Saving the teacher a lot of bother if resources exist</p>
Resources – Text Books	<p>Doing a project not based on just books Making your own resources Cutting down on using textbooks Being tied by books – school using it to ensure everyone covering same things Gathering info from sources and making your own resources Not using workbooks Using workbooks for homework Disconnected workbooks with junior infants Considering class numbers and ease with workbooks Having a non local focus in school Following the history book – Newgrange etc Distant examples in the books not being tangible Having no book for Hist, Geog or Scien on booklist Putting together much better resources Having less reliance on books and workbooks in UK Often being too text book led</p>
Pride of Place	<p>Having so much in their place Feeling optimistic about the potential for active citizenship Giving them the info and hoping for action Adults being the same Hoping that by doing place based learning they grow up to respect Appreciating how old their place is Giving sense of ownership of area Valuing their locality more Being amazed by how many children aren't aware Giving a sense of importance for own area Having pride in the area as they get older Helping to develop infrastructure in the future Appreciating it more due to real world learning experience Providing the resources in the school themselves Children caring more a result 'This is our community and wow we have something here that nobody else has' Opening their eyes to whats on their doorstep 'make them say this is our place and we're proud of it because we have all this at our doorstep'</p>

	<p>‘we really wanted to get back to the local area where we were teaching and use the wonderful resource we have’</p> <p>Making children realise the resources on their doorstep</p> <p>Developing a sense of pride in their local area</p> <p>Wanting the children to know about their place</p> <p>Building a feeling for the place</p>
Own Childhood	<p>Growing up in a place and knowing about stories from there</p> <p>Describing great teacher that told them folklore stories</p> <p>Parents making a big deal about taking them places</p> <p>Learning history in school without connections</p>
Abilities	<p>Working for less academic children</p> <p>Levelling in terms of ability</p> <p>Being on a par with their peers</p> <p>Not having to write</p> <p>Being more beneficial than sitting down and struggle</p> <p>Being on a par with the rest of their peers</p> <p>Getting just as much out of it, if not more than the brightest child</p> <p>Targeting less academic children</p> <p>Challenging the more able and something achievable for the less able</p> <p>Being a nice holistic approach</p> <p>Being for every child in the class</p> <p>Getting more difficult if you have children with special needs</p> <p>Spending less time if the class were weak</p> <p>Feeling you won’t get every child engaging</p>
Sharing with Parents	<p>Going home and surveying parents</p> <p>Getting knowledge from the parents</p> <p>Filtering it through to home</p> <p>Parents not knowing themselves what things were</p> <p>Bringing friends and family</p>
Fear	<p>Having a fear of what’s out there</p> <p>Teachers feeling they don’t have the knowledge</p> <p>Having a fear of not being in control and not being the ‘all knowing one’</p> <p>Having confidence in yourself as a teacher</p> <p>Feeling you need to have the expert knowledge</p>
Community	<p>Showing them how important their community is</p> <p>Encouraging them to develop their community</p> <p>Building sense of belonging</p> <p>Having a wonderful community</p>
Enjoying	<p>Loving telling the children about outdoor stories</p> <p>Sharing stories about nature with children and them reacting</p> <p>Depending on the teacher so much</p> <p>Having a teacher with an interest in Birds</p> <p>Putting a big emphasise on nature in her teaching</p> <p>Trying as much as possible to use the local</p> <p>Enjoying History, Geog and Science more (Students and Teacher)</p> <p>Learning a lot more</p>

	<p>Targeting less academic children</p> <p>Children loving getting out and looking, touching, feeling and experiencing – not just looking at the screen</p> <p>Using fun</p>
Progression	<p>Starting learning with your local place, moving to country and then further</p> <p>‘I think you've to start with what you know and then you can learn about the Taj Mahal then in years to come’</p> <p>‘I think we let them down if we don't teach them what they have on their doorstep, I feel then what good is learning about the Taj Mahal, Aires Rock or any of these things, I think you have to teach them what’s around and then they appreciate it and yeah they probably be better to the environment as a result it.’</p> <p>Using local always as the starting point for History and Geography</p> <p>Letting it ripple out to more national, European, international, universal</p> <p>Starting local and how it affects you, how do you see it</p> <p>Learning the skills in your local place and then can apply them anywhere</p>
Peer Learning	<p>Having a teacher in another school with big interest</p> <p>Colleague being ‘into the whole local thing’</p> <p>Peer learning for students</p> <p>Asking colleagues</p> <p>Being very good for children to see that the teacher is learning about thing as well</p> <p>Presenting their findings to groups and then the class</p> <p>Learning from other teachers in the school</p>
Meaningful	<p>Meaningful experience for the students</p> <p>Learning through practical activities</p> <p>Remembering active learning better</p> <p>Learning by doing</p> <p>Building empathy by engaging with real life situations</p> <p>Being more meaningful for them</p> <p>Getting more learning out of it as well</p> <p>Using the real life examples to meet curriculum needs</p> <p>Better comparing to work without real world examples</p> <p>Using real world examples to teach concepts</p> <p>Not meaning anything without context</p> <p>Finding the relevance – your life, your granny, your street</p> <p>Needing to be able to contextualise it</p> <p>Finding outdoor work hands on and real</p>
Curriculum	<p>Being tied by curriculum</p> <p>Incorporating cross curricular</p> <p>Using place as a theme and working in all the subjects</p> <p>Having to be innovative with the curriculum</p> <p>Overcrowding in the curriculum being biggest issue</p> <p>Integration of place and curriculum</p> <p>Having to think about integrating</p> <p>Linking cross curricular</p>

	<p>Bringing it across the curricular area Being constrained by the curriculum Having an overloaded curriculum Reporting standardised tests Having to explain choices Having to be creative Being constrained by curriculum and paperwork, accountability Looking at curriculum and seeing what objectives are met Allowing for cross curricular links Finding the curriculum very flexible Finding that PBL aids curriculum Finding a way to drag in PBL if it suits you Not being clear cut but being able to drag it in Finding that it does aid the different strands and strand units Realising the potential/flexibility only coming with time Finding the curriculum so wide Having a wide and crowded curriculum Having to pick and choose what to cover Combining the two in terms of additional work and curriculum needs Finding it cross curricular Taking away artificial subject barriers Feeling the curriculum needn't be a restricting factor Making a small part of the curriculum a big part of the year Fleshing out one area Being able to justify it to an inspector Finding the curriculum overloaded Finding some elements irrelevant Making it more relevant Having to teach a local strand Not having a choice in terms of using local examples Using cross curricular work Having to think very hard about how it's going to feedback into other areas Having a very good curricula in general Finding them huge 'They're terribly terribly broad so you're restricted from that point of view' 'We could well say we're going to take a place-based approach for half of the year but the reality is you can't because of the breath of the curriculum and the constraints of the school day and the other subjects so it's not the curriculum per se. It's actually the breadth.'</p>
Trusting Teachers	<p>Being freer to teach by instinct in the past Feeling the onus on the teacher Putting their approach down to their time teaching Finding that teacher openness is important Being able to prioritise as a teacher</p>
Challenges	<p>Time being an issue. Diversity of abilities being an issue Potentially behaviours changing once you go outside</p>

	<p>Managing children when outside Being aware of their security and safety when out Focusing on planning/paperwork/reflection Fighting a battle with the system Impacted by Garda Vetting Not knowing the area definitely being an obstacle Having to be garda vetted Not wanting to insult someone re garda vetting Being restricted by teachers own knowledge Restricted by teachers commitment</p>
Cost	<p>Finding buses so expensive Going where you can walk, not needing a bus</p>
Students researching	<p>Letting children do more research Using laptops in the classroom Using active learning ‘that maybe if they do it themselves they might learn for themselves and it might make a bit more of an impact on them’ Having a bit more engagement when they do it themselves Taking longer when they do it themselves Challenging students to use another set of skills Not just reading and comprehension Finding out and researching for yourself Learning research skills Taking a problem solving approach Active learning approaches Developing skills</p>
Whole School approach	<p>Needing a whole school approach Deciding as a whole school that this is what we’re going to do Doing local in September for all class groups Deciding to focus for a month as ‘We found out that they knew nothing, they knew nothing about [PLACE] what did they know? Nothing.’ Coming down to individuals and the atmosphere in the school whether teacher comfortable not knowing the answers Having to commit totally to PBE if that’s your philosophy Needing a proactive principal in bigger schools Getting all the teachers on board</p>
Action	<p>Feeling that they should be doing active engagement Looking at whats missing and how the area can be improved Possibly could contribute to active citizenship but not necessarily aim Having active citizenship as a bi product</p>

APPENDIX K: Sample Chi-Square Tests from SPSS

Questionnaire Analysis

**Do you think the activities listed in Q.11 fall under the remit of the curriculum?
* How many years have you been teaching at primary school level?**

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.154 ^a	2	.562
Likelihood Ratio	1.098	2	.577
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	1	.987
N of Valid Cases	199		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.85.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.076	.562
	Cramer's V	.076	.562
N of Valid Cases		199	

**Do you think the activities listed in Q.11 fall under the remit of the curriculum?
* Approximately how many pupils attend your current school?**

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.331 ^a	3	.722
Likelihood Ratio	1.304	3	.728
Linear-by-Linear Association	.021	1	.885
N of Valid Cases	199		

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.31.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.082	.722
	Cramer's V	.082	.722
N of Valid Cases		199	

**Do you think the activities listed in Q.11 fall under the remit of the curriculum?
 * Which phrase best describes your current school?**

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.014 ^a	1	.906		
Continuity Correction ^b	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.014	1	.906		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.568
Linear-by-Linear Association	.014	1	.906		
N of Valid Cases	199				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.21.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.906
	Cramer's V	.906
N of Valid Cases	199	

How would you rate your local knowledge in terms of Archaeology? *
Approximately how many pupils attend your current school?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.474 ^a	12	.662
Likelihood Ratio	10.637	12	.560
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.489	1	.019
N of Valid Cases	199		

a. 7 cells (35.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.91.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.662
	Cramer's V	.662
N of Valid Cases	199	

How would you rate your local knowledge in terms of Archaeology? * Which phrase best describes your current school?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.110 ^a	4	.276
Likelihood Ratio	5.151	4	.272
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.587	1	.058
N of Valid Cases	199		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.84.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.276
	Cramer's V	.276
N of Valid Cases	199	

How would you rate your local knowledge in terms of Community Development? * How many years have you been teaching at primary school level?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.960 ^a	12	.532
Likelihood Ratio	12.128	12	.435
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.902	1	.168
N of Valid Cases	198		

a. 8 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.532
	Cramer's V	.532
N of Valid Cases	198	

How would you rate your local knowledge in terms of Environment? * Which phrase best describes your current school?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.445 ^a	4	.486
Likelihood Ratio	4.222	4	.377
Linear-by-Linear Association	.110	1	.740
N of Valid Cases	198		

a. 4 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .96.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.486
	Cramer's V	.486
N of Valid Cases	198	

How would you rate your local knowledge in terms of Geology? * Which phrase best describes your current school?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.071 ^a	4	.397
Likelihood Ratio	4.089	4	.394
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.306	1	.253
N of Valid Cases	199		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.73.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.397
	Cramer's V	.397
N of Valid Cases	199	

Time as an influencing factor? * How many years have you been teaching at primary school level?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.426 ^a	8	.600
Likelihood Ratio	7.328	8	.502
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.545	1	.111
N of Valid Cases	187		

a. 8 cells (53.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .91.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.600
	Cramer's V	.600
N of Valid Cases	187	

Time as an influencing factor? * Which phrase best describes your current school?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.825 ^a	4	.935
Likelihood Ratio	.830	4	.934
Linear-by-Linear Association	.616	1	.432
N of Valid Cases	187		

a. 4 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.41.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.935
	Cramer's V	.935
N of Valid Cases	187	

Child safety concerns as an influencing factor? * How many years have you been teaching at primary school level?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.725 ^a	8	.567
Likelihood Ratio	7.239	8	.511
Linear-by-Linear Association	.780	1	.377
N of Valid Cases	197		

a. 5 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.36.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.567
	Cramer's V	.567
N of Valid Cases	197	

Child safety concerns as an influencing factor? * Which phrase best describes your current school?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.313 ^a	4	.365
Likelihood Ratio	4.329	4	.363
Linear-by-Linear Association	.566	1	.452
N of Valid Cases	197		

a. 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.82.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.365
	Cramer's V	.365
N of Valid Cases	197	