

ASPIRE PROJECT LAUNCH

The ASPIRE (Advancing Shared Partnerships through Inclusive Relationships in Education) Project launched at Monaghan Peace Campus in April 2025. It is a four-year, cross border & cross-sectoral Shared Education initiative. It is supported by PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) and will receive €34.5m (£29m).

This project is led by The Education Authority in partnership with Léargas, Early Years- the organisation for young children, the National Childhood Network and Fermanagh Trust.

It will build positive connections between children and young people from different socio-economic, cultural, and political backgrounds through collaboration between and within schools and pre-school settings.

Project partners will work with stakeholders to harness digital technology to develop and deliver innovative and creative programmes for pupils, educators, and wider communities.



PRESCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Children from Scallywags and St. John's pre-schools, in Co. Louth, came together for a final ASPIRE shared session. The children collaboratively created pieces of art for each setting, a visual story of their shared experiences. They selected photos themselves, choosing moments that meant the most to them, and proudly displayed these on the wall. Alongside each image, they shared what they remembered and what they'd looked forward to during their time together.



PEACE & RECONCILIATION WORKSHOPS

ASPIRE project partners jointly held several professional learning workshops focused on Peace and Reconciliation in Antrim, Belfast, Letterkenny, Craigavon, Sligo, Newry and Omagh, which were attended by 292 educators in May 2025.



ASPIRE DIGITAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

45 Primary and Post Primary partnerships attended ASPIRE's Professional Learning launch event in March 2025, at W5 in Belfast, to listen to experts in the digital field provide insight into how digital technology can be utilised in classrooms.

In April and May, facilitators from the event, provided workshops for 110 teachers from 101 schools and shared digital insights on the software packages, including Adobe, Minecraft Education and Just2Easy.

All educators went back to their partnership schools and delivered a mini-series of lessons with their pupils, which culminated in showcase events in June 2025.



POST PRIMARY PARTNERSHIP

ASPIRE Ambassadors from Banbridge Academy, Our Lady's Grammar School and Abbey Christian Brother's Grammar School were welcomed to the Long Gallery at Stormont to speak in front of the Education Minister, Paul Givan, and a selection of MLAs during a special celebration event. Within their Shared Education partnership project, the young people explored themes of rights and social responsibility across local, national, and global contexts.



PRIMARY PARTNERSHIP

Crannog Buí, Wood School, and St Riaghan's recently collaborated on a marine life-themed initiative as part of their ASPIRE project. Pupils from the three primary schools took advantage of their local Donegal coastlines to learn about sea-life and the local environment, led by a facilitator from the Explorers Education programme. Other activities focused on Wellbeing, including a joint sports day, art projects, library visits, and shared story time. Senior pupils also had the chance to try kayaking and paddleboarding.



LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS

School and early years settings leaders attended Professional Learning workshops delivered by Dr. Mark Barr and Peter Geoghagan, former ETI Inspectors. They examined the requirements of leading high-quality and effective partnership working. They also gathered and analysed evidence of progress and explored the values underpinning the vision for Shared Education partnerships, to support the aims of ASPIRE project and align with policy.

PRESCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Children from Barnesmore Montessori and Donegal Playgroup embarked on a magical bus tour across Donegal, visiting all seven local junior schools as part of their transitions themed shared education session. At each stop, principals and teachers were there to welcome them warmly, with photos capturing the joyful moments. The bus buzzed with lively conversations about what they saw looking out of the windows and the journey allowed children to begin forming connections with peers who will be joining them in primary school.



PRESCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

The children at Holy Trinity Preschool and Little Treasures Playgroup have enjoyed a wide range of innovative activities through ASPIRE.

This included gymnastics, a teddy bear's picnic, playing music and visiting Fermanagh Fun Farm! The partnership focused on two outcomes from the Shared Education Act, demonstrating significant success in promoting good relations and respect for identity.

The sessions have enabled children and adults from both settings to build new friendships and enjoy memorable experiences together.



POST PRIMARY PARTNERSHIP

Dundalk Grammar School and St Vincent's School partnered through the ASPIRE programme to create a shared learning project titled Unity in Diversity. The project celebrates friendship that transcends differences and highlights the value of inclusion. Pupils engaged in a variety of activities, including touring the historic Derry City Walls, sharing meals, learning sign language together, taking part in céilís, and learning about dementia through educational sessions and visits to a local dementia care unit.



PRIMARY PARTNERSHIP

Jones Memorial Primary School and Holy Trinity Primary School, in Enniskillen, proudly showcased the culmination of their ASPIRE Shared Education project in May 2025, with a vibrant exhibition of creativity and collaboration, which included original short stories inspired by local heritage, clay sculptures and visual artwork reflecting the town's culture and a video of an original song written and performed by the pupils.



The ASPIRE project is supported by PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

For more information on the project please contact:

Education Authority: aspire@eani.org.uk

Léargas: aspire@leargas.ie

Early Years- the organisation for young children:
aspire.preschool@early-years.org

National Childhood Network: info@ncn.ie