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## **Full STEAM Ahead for Meath Schools**

STEAM Meath, a fully-funded STEAM learning programme for primary and post-primary schools, was launched today (Thursday, 26 October) at Scoil Bhríde Primary School, Cannistown, and St. Joseph's Mercy Secondary School in Navan.

Supported by Meta, STEAM Meath aims to ignite creativity and transform education in eleven primary schools and eight secondary schools across the county, which is being piloted as a three-year programme.

STEAM Meath is built around *FIRST*® LEGO® League, a global team robotics challenge. *FIRST* LEGO League has been running in Ireland since 2016. Engaging in *FIRST* LEGO League provides an opportunity for young people to discover robotics and take part in an innovation challenge to solve real-world problems.

Students at the Meath schools have a fun opportunity to discover the world of STEAM and develop key life skills including teamwork, innovation, collaboration, confidence and persistence along with design thinking and programming skills all through the use of a range of hands-on and engaging LEGO Education resources.

STEAM covers science, technology, engineering, the arts and maths; activities intrinsic to the Irish curriculum and the Digital Strategy for Schools.

*FIRST* LEGO League is not just about young people building robots; it is about robots building people too, says Ross Maguire of CreativeHUT and Learnit, the company that coordinates delivery of the Irish programme.

*“Cooperation and competition unites teams and, by working together, the young people are taking their first steps to becoming tomorrow’s innovators, creators and problem solvers”.*

A mix of nineteen schools across the municipal districts of Ashbourne, Kells, Navan, Ratoath, Trim and Laytown/Bettystown are part of STEAM Meath, embarking on a robotics voyage of discovery. They include small rural schools, larger urban schools, a Gaelscoil, and a diversity of boys, girls, and mixed schools.

The new STEAM Meath programme is funded by Meta continuing their positive impact on STEM learning for students throughout Meath. Meta have been part of the community in County Meath since breaking ground on their Clonee Data Centre in 2016.

Participating schools get a fully-funded *FIRST* LEGO League support package which includes LEGO education resources, registration for the *FIRST* LEGO League national competition, teacher training and student workshops, and participation in a showcase or tournament.

The teacher support and professional development opportunity empowers educators with the necessary tools, confidence, and knowledge to effectively integrate STEAM education into their classrooms.

Dr. Éadaoin McGovern, Director of the Navan Education Support Centre (NESC), stated

*“It’s fantastic to see schools across Meath gain an opportunity to engage in such an innovative project. Navan Education Support Centre are proud to be a part of this initiative and are excited by the potential impact it will have in local schools. This is an exciting schools project for the region and a unique opportunity to bring the STEAM curriculum to life for teachers and students.”*

Speaking at the announcement today Cllr. Pádraig Fitzsimons, Leas Cathaoirleach/Deputy Mayor of Navan said; *“I am delighted to see an education initiative that captivates the imagination and promotes interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking, teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving. By increasing STEAM awareness and enjoyment in schools, I have no doubt young people will be encouraged to consider STEAM subjects in higher education, thereby meeting the big demand for graduates in Ireland’s workforce.”*

Throughout the three-year programme, a series of interactive and hands-on student workshops will inspire students and nurture their passion for STEAM subjects. They will encourage students to collaborate, innovate, and apply their knowledge in practical settings.

Paying tribute to the immense generosity of Meta, Ross Maguire of CreativeHUT and Learnit also highlighted the very productive partnership with local education interests, including the schools involved, Navan Education Centre, and *Oide*, the professional development service for teachers.

*“We have immense global corporations, like Meta, and a small local business, CreativeHUT & Learnit, partnering with our dedicated educators in Irish schools to create the next generation of Scientists, Innovators and Engineers & Problem Solvers, and that is a very exciting prospect for all involved.”*

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**Project website:**                      <https://fll.learnit.ie/pages/steam-meath>

**Participating Schools – STEAM Meath:**

- Ashbourne:*      Scoil Naomh Treasa; Ashbourne Community School
- Kells:*              Our Lady of Mercy Jnr School; St. Louis National School; Athboy Community School
- Laytown:*        Gaelscoil an Bhradáin Feasa; Drogheda Educate Together Secondary School
- Navan:*            Scoil Bhride Cannistown; St. Anne's Loreto, Coláiste Na Mí, St. Joseph's Mercy Secondary School
- Ratoath:*        Dunboyne Junior Primary School, Rathregan National School, St. Joseph's National School, St. Peter's College
- Trim:*              St. Michael's Primary School, St. Finian's National School Clonard, Boyne Community School, Enfield Community College