NCSE PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH PILOT PROGRAMME

SCHOOL RESEARCH SUMMARY

School name: CBS Thurles

Practising teacher lead: John O'Sullivan

Research theme: Investigating the benefits of one-hour classes for SEN (Special Education Needs) students and areas of practice to develop.

Research aim:

1. Identify the positive benefits for learning for SEN students.
2. Highlight areas for development to support SEN students' learning within one-hour classes.

Methods

I used a mixed methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative research methods. I distributed surveys via Microsoft Forms and followed up with focus group discussions.

The participants included teachers, students and parents. This included 45 teachers involved across 17 subject departments. There were 96 students included across all year groups. There were 10 parents from the Parents Council included.

Research findings

The research revealed that one-hour classes offered both benefits and challenges for SEN students and their learning experience.

My top three findings

1. **Enhanced Learning Experience**

One-hour classes allowed more time for active learning and better focus on individual student needs.

2. **Challenges in Focus and Retention**

Extended classes occasionally led to difficulties in maintaining attention spans and managing missed content.

3. **Improved Teacher-Student Interaction**

Increased opportunities for meaningful engagement during lessons.

Impact of my research

- Enhanced planning for Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to address barriers for SEN students.
- Greater emphasis on professional development in Digital Learning Technology (DLT) to support SEN learning.
- Plans to explore team-teaching practices to provide more tailored support in classrooms.
- Improved understanding of SEN students' needs and challenges within the one-hour class structure.
- Stronger teacher collaboration and sharing of best practices to support inclusion.
- Positive student feedback regarding reduced stress and better engagement in longer class periods.