



Mrs R Rice

IT Educator of the Year
2020

St Mary's acting vice-principal Roisin Rice named as the IT educator of the year

Acting St Mary's College vice principal Roisin Rice has been named the Northern Ireland IT Educator of the Year by the British Computer Society.



Pictured is the St. Marys College E-Sports Team (the only female e-sports team in the north-west). The girls will travel to Ballymena later this month to take part in the Northern Ireland heats. The competition is part of the exclusive Digital Schoolhouse Programme. Pictured with Ms Roisin Rice, acting vice-principal, Miss Rebecca Orr and Miss Rebecca Poole are students Lillie Craddock, Millie Breslin, Elaina Grander, Rachael Gorman, Orraith Kelly, Nikita Morrison and Rebecca Lewis. Copyright: other

The popular Northland Road teacher has been in education for almost 20 years with the last seven happily spent in St Mary's inspiring the girls to become the next generation of digital whizz-kids.

The deserved recognition for her sterling work comes amidst the rapidly growing IT sector with a plethora of large firms expanding in the local and regional area of Northern Ireland.

This drives the passionate educator to the challenge of giving her students new and innovative ways to improve their ICT skills through digital technology.



The present Acting vice-principal at St. Mary's completed her undergraduate degree at Queen's University Belfast and during postgraduate education began studying ICT. Her teaching career saw her take up posts in Religious Education and ICT before obtaining a Masters Degree in 2010 also from Queen's University.

Ms Rice says: "Completing my Masters degree further ignited my passion for working in this area. When I joined the teaching staff of St Mary's College in 2013, I was employed as a teacher of Religious Education.

“However, I was keen to contribute my skills and expertise in the area of ICT and Computing and became involved in the Microsoft Expert Educator Programme.

“I am **passionate** about working with teachers to **improve learning**, share **good practice**, develop a sustainable **digital strategy** and **promote** excellence in **learning** and teaching using **digital technology**.”

Speaking further about receiving the award, Ms Rice explains her passion for being an educator and how the support from principal, Mrs Marie Lindsay, pushed her that extra mile in submitting an application for the school to become a ‘Digital Schoolhouse’.

“I’ve been teaching ICT for almost all of my career and I am passionate about being an educator and always looking out for new and innovative ways to teach and inspire the young people that I work with, especially using ICT and Digital Technologies.

“On hearing about a programme called Digital Schoolhouse that focuses on using play-based learning to teach computational thinking skills and computing by providing workshops for local primary schools and their teachers,

“I just knew that it would be perfect for St Mary’s College. As I said, our principal is an extremely innovative leader and when I explained how the programme works we decided to submit an application for St Mary’s College to become a Digital Schoolhouse.”

After a lengthy and rigorous application procedure St. Mary’s College was awarded ‘Digital Schoolhouse’ status and became only one of five in Northern Ireland at the time.

Expressing how proud she is of achieving such large numbers into the programme that includes educational outreach to a wide number of primary schools from throughout the city, she describes it as the most enjoyable year of her teaching career to date.

“Since launching our Digital Schoolhouse over a year ago, nearly 900 primary school children and over 60 teachers had taken part in the exciting and fun-filled programme and it has been the most enjoyable and rewarding year of my teaching career.

“It’s wonderful to welcome primary school students and their teachers to St Mary’s. Our own students benefit as well as they help out with the workshops, thus gaining valuable skills and experiences working with younger children and also developing their own computational thinking abilities.”

It was during last year’s programme that Ms Rice met Dr Irene Bell, Chair of the Northern Ireland Computing at Schools and the Regional Academic Lead for Digital Schoolhouse.

Dr. Bell supported and encouraged Roisin and the other participants on their Digital Schoolhouse journey.

“This is my very first award from industry and I am absolutely thrilled to have received it. I am grateful to Dr Bell for nominating me. We look forward to beginning our second year as a Digital Schoolhouse and are once again fully booked up for this year.”

Acting Principal, Brendan McGinn also paid tribute to his Acting Deputy, saying:

“We are absolutely delighted for Roisin and it comes as no surprise. She has been a **strong advocate** for the effective use of **IT in the classroom** and as a practitioner, this **award is thoroughly deserved**. She has accumulated huge experience in this area and continues to be a **role model** for us all at St Mary’s College.”

<https://www.derryjournal.com/education/st-marys-acting-vice-principal-roisin-rice-named-it-educator-year-1381141>