

# CONFERENCE

## RELIGION IN IRISH PRIMARY SCHOOLS

THURSDAY, 1ST MARCH, 2018

NEILL LECTURE THEATRE, TRINITY LONG ROOM HUB



Trinity College Dublin  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

Trinity Long Room Hub  
Arts & Humanities Research Institute



# PROGRAMME\*

# FOREWORD

**9.00**      **Registration**, tea and coffee available

**10.00**      **Keynote Lecture**  
Keynote Lecture by Professor Thorsten Knauth  
University Duisburg-Essen

**11.00**      **Paper Session**

1.    **James Nelson**, Queens University Belfast
2.    **Marie Parker-Jenkins**, University of Limerick
3.    **Daniel Faas** Trinity College Dublin

**13.00**      **Lunch**

**14.00**      **Curriculum Panel**

1.    **Jones Irwin**, Dublin City University
2.    **Colm Ó Cadhain**,  
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
3.    **Emer Nowlan**, Marino Institute of Education
4.    **Cora O'Farrell**, Dublin City University

**15.30**      **Closing Discussion**

*\* This event is free of charge*

## RELIGION IN IRISH PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Ireland has seen rapid social change in recent years. Successive Ministers have outlined plans to address the mismatch between a largely denominational (Catholic) primary education system, and increasing ethno-cultural and religious diversity. Considering these changes, there is now a variety of beliefs among children in Irish schools, yet over 95 per cent of primary schools are denominational. Schools have a crucial role to play in terms of social integration and inclusion.

This one-day conference is organised jointly by the Department of Sociology at Trinity College Dublin and the special interest group "Belief Systems, Ethics and Philosophy in Education" of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI).

## CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

- Daniel Faas, Associate Professor,  
Trinity College Dublin
- Merike Darmody, Research Officer,  
Economic and Social Research Institute
- Patrick Sullivan, Director,  
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

# KEYNOTE

## Professor Thorsten Knauth

### Biography

Thorsten Knauth is Professor for Religious Education at the Institute for Protestant Theology, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany. He is also Head of the Centre for Interreligious Learning at the Institute (AiL). He was educated as a Teacher for Religion and German Literature and Language before he started his PhD on the topic of “Religious Education and Dialogue” which he finished at the University of Hamburg in 1995. From 1996 - 2002 he worked as Assistant Professor for Religious Education in Hamburg and finished his Habilitation on “Problem-oriented religious education” in 2001. Between 2002 and 2005 he worked on Professorships in Hamburg, Karlsruhe and Cologne, before he was involved as Co-Project-Leader and Research Manager in the European Research Project “Religion in Education: A Contribution to Dialogue or a Factor of Conflict in Transforming Societies of European Countries” (REDCo). In 2008 he accepted a call on the Professorship for Religious Education at the University of Duisburg-Essen. Knauth’s research interests are directed to qualitative empirical research in RE, dialogical and interreligious approaches to RE and research on the intersectionality of religions, gender and social background.



# SPEAKERS

## James Nelson

James is a lecturer in Education in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen’s University Belfast. He is currently Deputy Director of the PGCE programme and coordinator of the Masters in Education Studies as well as an Associate Fellow of the George Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice. His research interests include religious education, shared education and teacher education. He is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (UK) and a member of the Advisory Board of the Irish Centre for Religious Education.



## Marie Parker-Jenkins

Marie is Professor of Education in the School of Education, University of Limerick in Ireland, and co-founder of the Research Centre for Education and Professional Practice. Before having an academic career in the UK, she taught in Bermuda, Canada and Australia where she obtained practical knowledge of children from culturally diverse backgrounds. She is the author of over 100 publications including books, reports and journal articles. Her research has included study of the expansion of religious schools, particularly those based on an Islamic and Jewish ethos; and in her consultancy capacity, she has provided workshops on such subjects as citizenship, community and identity. She has taught in six universities before coming to the University of Limerick, and her current research is concerned with responding to the needs of refugee/asylum seeker children in Ireland and child protection.



# SPEAKERS

## Daniel Faas

Daniel Faas is Associate Professor in Sociology, Founding Director of the MSc in Comparative Social Change and Member of the University Council at Trinity College Dublin. He is an elected Fellow of Trinity College Dublin (2015), winner of the Provost's Teaching Award (2012) and recipient of the Global Engagement Award (2016). His research interests are in the sociology of migration with specific emphasis on the intersection of migration and education. His work focuses on youth identities in relation to immigrant integration, national identity, multiculturalism and social cohesion, religion and schooling in Ireland and Europe, curriculum design and development, as well as comparative case study methodologies. He has published widely on these topics in high-impact peer-reviewed international journals, as well as a sole-authored monograph.



## Jones Irwin

Jones Irwin is Associate Professor in Philosophy and Education at the Institute of Education, Dublin City University. He is also (since 2014) Project Officer with NCCA on the Goodness Me, Goodness You! Curriculum. He has written widely on philosophy of education and values education, including a monograph on Paulo Freire. His next book is entitled Religion After the Death of God (Taylor and Francis./ Ashgate, London 2018). He is Visiting Fellow in Religion and Public Life to University of Leeds in 2018.



## Colm Ó Cadhain

Colm is an Education Officer with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) with a particular responsibility for Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) and Ethics for primary schools. Previously, he taught in a large urban junior primary in Lucan where he undertook a Masters in Education. He has also taught abroad, having spent some time teaching English in a French university. While interested in all areas of education he has a particular interest in inclusive education and the place of the child's voice. He is currently completing a doctorate in Ethical Education in DCU Institute of Education.



## Emer Nowlan

Emer Nowlan worked in Educate Together's national office from 2007 to 2017, and continues to volunteer with the organisation. During this time she has been involved in the ongoing development and support of the Ethical Education curriculum now taught in 82 primary and 9 post-primary Educate Together schools. Originally qualified as a teacher in the UK, Emer has worked in a range of educational contexts in five countries. She is currently working with the Migrant Teacher Project in the Marino Institute of Education, as well as lecturing in UCD and the DCU Institute of Education. Her research interests include ethnicity, gender, social class and religion in school contexts, and her PhD explored the experiences of young people from Chinese, Vietnamese and Filipino backgrounds in post-primary schools in Ireland.





# SPEAKERS

## Cora O'Farrell

Cora is a lecturer in Religious Education at Dublin City University. She also teaches on the Certificate in Religious Studies programme. Cora graduated from Coláiste Mhuire, Marino in 1987 and worked in three different primary schools in Dublin serving as a class teacher, learning support teacher and Home School Community Liaison coordinator. During that time she contributed to the design and delivery of a number of continuing professional development programmes provided by the DES, INTO and Drumcondra Education Centre. Cora's research interests include Religious Education, Practical Theology and Children's Spirituality. She has a passion for Montessori inspired forms of Religious Education and has undertaken training in both Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (levels 1 and 2) and Godly Play.



