

All in a Day's Work

Ríona Murray—Primary School Teacher

Ríona Murray is a teacher in St. Enda's National School, Kilnadur, Dunmanway, Co. Cork. It is a two teacher school and she teaches the children in 2nd to 6th class.



Ríona Murray

Photos courtesy of Ríona Murray

things using our own produce. Our favourite dish has been a huge pot of soup for the whole school. If there is something interesting in the news or going on in the area we can stop what we normally do and study that. Teaching in a Primary School is great.

What is your main aim?

To do the best that I can for the children in my class.

What's the best thing about your job?

The children. They're great fun. I teach the children in my class for four years and I love that I get to know them really well. I know what's going on in their lives and what they like and dislike. They're like my own children by the time they leave the school in 6th class.

What is the worst thing about your job?

We never seem to have enough time in the school day!

Do you enjoy your work?

I love my job. I love the flexibility. I really enjoy the children's reactions when they are enjoying their work or when we head out on trips. Schools are such busy places nowadays and we have many visitors to the school working on Art, Music, Sport, Nature and more. It's never boring.

Where does your work take you?

Some of the best places we've gone to are outdoor education centres; we just love being out in nature, kayaking, swimming and even obstacle courses in the mud. The children always manage to beat me! The younger children recently had a particularly fantastic trip where they went pond dipping. They were so excited to see

all the living creatures in the pond. This year my class went to Manch, near Ballineen, Co. Cork, to the INFF (Irish National Forestry Foundation) and they loved the experience. They collected and analysed mini-beasts, studied habitats and leaves and trees. It was a great day out.

Do you work alone or as part of a team?

I work as part of a team of teachers, Special Needs Assistants and the children are a vital part of our school team too. We also have many visiting experts who regularly come to the school.

What do you like to do outside of your job?

I love being outdoors. I love to swim in Lough Hyne, a saltwater lake which is a marine nature reserve near Skibbereen. I love spotting the fish, starfish, and urchins under the water. It's amazing. I really enjoy being out and about with my two young children too. We regularly walk in the local woods and beach. My daughter loves checking under rocks (remembering to turn them back over again!) and in rock pools to see what she can spot. It's remarkable what you can find if you just take the time to look.

What is best piece of advice you have ever had?

Get out into nature!



Working in the school garden.

Have you always been interested in what you do?

Yes. I've always been interested in community and people. I was a member and voluntary leader in a great organisation called Foróige for many years and it made me realise that I wanted to work in education. When I was in transition year in secondary school I completed a block of work experience in a National School to see if I would really like it so I must have been thinking about it back then too.

What training did you do to get where you are today?

When I finished my leaving certificate I didn't know if I wanted to be a secondary school teacher or a primary school teacher so I did a Bachelor of Arts degree in UCC. After this course I could have applied to be a primary or secondary school teacher. I decided to be a primary school teacher so I applied for and completed a Postgraduate Diploma. I also completed a Masters in Science by night while teaching.

What is a day in your life like?

No two days are the same really. We have the usual Irish, English and Maths etc. but the great thing about Primary School teaching is that you can decide to do something different if you want to as well. We work on projects or, if the weather is good, we can get out into the garden. We have a small school garden that we all love. We manage to squeeze lots of vegetables into the space; potatoes, squash, carrots, onions, herbs and more. Each year we cook different



St. Enda's National School

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