

Abbey Community College officially opens extension



Detta Cahill, Abbey Community College Principal and Minister Richard Bruton. Photos: Mick Wall

Four years of careful planning, hard work and sacrifice were acknowledged recently with the official opening of Abbey Community College's state of the art extension which will provide 3215 square metres of additional space for both students and staff alike.

This impressive addition to the college marks the latest development to a school that has offered educational facilities to local youths for almost 140 years. The Sisters of the Sacred heart of Mary established a school and convent on the site back in 1879.

The school, in its current guise, was established in 2000 following the amalgamation of the Sacred Heart Secondary School, Ferrybank and Slieverue Vocational School. There is joint trusteeship between Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board and the Religious of The Sacred Heart of Mary.



Student Council

The college, originally built for 650 students, was opened in 2001 and has grown in popularity and academic success over the past 16 years.

The new facility features a host of extra classrooms, specialised science labs, woodwork and engineering rooms and an impressive open plan dining facility for students. The extension also incorporates a purpose built Special Educational Needs Unit.

Abbey Community College's students and staff, along with the Chairperson of Kilkenny ETB, Councillor Mary Hilda Cavanagh, public representatives and many guests from the broader school community, kicked off the official ceremony with a symbolic presentation and liturgy focussing on the importance of shared community.



Roisin Cleary, Richard Corin Williams, Evan Duggan and Clare Rizzo

The Minister for Education, Richard Bruton unveiled a commemorative plaque in the new extension and guests were treated to a wonderful display of sound and colour as hundreds of balloons were released from the new outdoor amphitheatre.

Minister Bruton took the opportunity to speak directly to Transition Year students in B2 and advised them on the importance of girls taking up Maths and Science subjects. He complimented the school on the uptake in Physics and pointed to the needs of our growing economy for the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects.

In addition to Physics, Abbey Community College offers Chemistry, Biology and Applied Maths and the Engineering and Technology facilities have been doubled with the new extension.



Balloons being released

He also recognised the highly successful LCVP programme at the college and acknowledged its importance in guaranteeing college entry for many students.

Speaking at opening, School Principal Detta Cahill said that it was an extremely proud day for the school.

“We have acknowledged the traditions of both our founding partners and we celebrate what has emerged. You see many butterflies around our hall today. They represent growth from small beginnings and the metamorphosis through caterpillar to the emergence of great beauty.”

Ms Cahill acknowledged the school’s amazing student body who she described as “outstanding young people who work hard, who care for our world and society, who are our chief ambassadors.”

She added that their excellent contribution to the growth of the college was beyond question. Ms Cahill also paid tribute to the school’s staff whom she said, were the best 70 people that any Principal could hope to work with. “Your dedication to our students is beyond question.”