



Francis Noone, teacher St Mary's NS, Michael Doyle, Knowledge Transfer and Training Manager Alexion, Fiona Bucys, Maintenance Planner, Alexion; Joan Travers-Hind, Principal St Mary's National School, David Whelan, Technical Specialist, Alexion, Stephen Murphy, Quality Control Analyst Alexion and Alice D'Arcy, MD STEAM Education missing from Pic Jenny Fuery, pictured with St Mary's National School pupils.

St Mary's NS and Alexion pair up to engage children in science

FOR one hour a week for ten weeks the 6th class pupils in Athlone primary school, St Mary's, become trainee engineers.

Since February 2018 classes in St Mary's NS have been the beneficiaries of a STEAM-in-a-Box program, developed by STEAM Education Ltd & facilitated and supported by the Athlone-based pharmaceutical company Alexion.

Coordinated for St Mary's by local man Michael Doyle, Alexion's Knowledge Transfer and Training Lead, Science-in-a-box engages children in hands-on activities and experiments which promote critical thinking and an exploration of the foundations of science from the formation of atoms to the evolution of life on earth. Engineering-in-a-Box (currently running with 6th class) explores how humans, and particularly engineers, con-



Alice D'Arcy, MD STEAM Education, Michael Doyle, Knowledge Transfer Training Manager Alexion, Joan Travers-Hind, Principal St Mary's National School and Francis Noone, Teacher St Mary's NS, pictured with 6th Class pupils Carlos, Jerry, Talha and Pinaak.

tinue to address challenges such as the need to create better forms of shelter for families, and designing more efficient and sustainable energy systems. It also explores how

scientists and engineers can develop and improve medical treatments and the quality of lives of patients and their families.

Michael Doyle said: "STEAM

is a wonderful initiative and it has been a great experience for Alexion to be involved in. We have developed an excellent relationship with St Mary's national school and

our employees are always looking to give back what they can to the local community."

One of the highlights is when Alexion welcomes the students and their teachers to their Monksland facility which give them the opportunity to show what they learned from the Science and Engineering programs and to display their end of term projects.

Over the last two school years, volunteers from Alexion have shared their passion for engineering with the students, introducing them to many engineering and science fields and opening their minds to potential careers.

STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths. These subjects are constantly cited as key to the future to the smart economy where the career possibilities are vast and the current opportunities are huge. Dr

Alice D'Arcy, MD of STEAM Education Ltd, believes that creative and critical thinking must both be nurtured and supported to thrive, and are both vital to a child's development as well as to education and industry. Research indicates that the optimum age for engagement with STEAM subjects is between 9 and 13 years.

"This is when a child's curiosity about the world they live in is most active. There is a natural fascination with what makes their world turn and how everyday things work. This, coupled with a limitless imagination, can lead them into an exciting world of discovery and learning. Through this exciting partnership between primary schools, industry and STEAM Education Alexion hope to inspire the next generation," Dr D'Arcy said.

Naughten helps Government defeat no-confidence motion

INDEPENDENT TD Denis Naughten voted with the Government on Tuesday night last, helping to defeat the motion of no-confidence in Housing Minister Eoghan Murphy.

The motion, proposed by the Social Democrats, was defeated by 56 votes to 53.

The motion by the Social Democrats called for Housing Minister Murphy to be removed from office in light of the continuing and worsening homelessness crisis.

In a post on his website on Tuesday last, the Roscom-

mon/Galway TD, who previously was a Fine Gael TD and was also an independent minister in the current Government, said he had proposed legislative reform that could release some of the many vacant homes across Ireland onto the housing market as part of the reform of the Fair Deal Nursing Home Support Scheme.

He said: "Minister Murphy has committed to working with me to bringing about this change. This would make a real difference to the families currently in emergency

accommodation and to families struggling to pay nursing home bills.

Naughten described the no-confidence motion as "a political stunt" by the Social Democrats to garner support in the recent by-elections.

"The vast majority of people that I have spoken to, while frustrated by the housing situation, have said that they do not want an election this side of Christmas," he added.

Longford/Westmeath TD Kevin 'Boxer' Moran, who is an independent and a Minister of State voted with the

Government also as did Fine Gael's Longford/Westmeath TD Peter Burke.

Fianna Fail abstained but neither of the local TDs Longford/Westmeath's Robert Troy or Roscommon/Galway's Eugene Murphy were recorded as present for the vote.

Labour's Deputy Willie Penrose was the only TD across Longford/Westmeath and Roscommon/Galway to vote in favour of the no-confidence motion.

The other local independent Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice

also did not register a vote.

Prior to the vote, he confirmed he had entered a pairing arrangement with Tanaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney for the motion of no confidence.

As part of his role as the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Coveney was due to launch a major humanitarian development in Gaza where Ireland is assisting in establishing a solar farm that will help resolve chronic water supply and sewage problems.

Deputy Fitzmaurice said: "My decision to grant Minister

Coveney a pairing was decided by the reality that it would in no way impact the outcome of the vote. Had I refused to grant the pairing arrangement with the Tanaiste, we would have simply cancelled each other out when it came to the vote anyway.

Deputy Fitzmaurice confirmed that he would, otherwise, have voted for the Social Democrats' motion of no confidence in Minister Eoghan Murphy.

However, he also queried the desire among voters for a Christmas week election.