

Jordanstown School is involved in an Erasmus project with a range of leading schools for the Visually Impaired across Europe. Our partner schools are:

Centre IRIS, Slovenia

GOA, Prague,

Visio, Holland

Royal Blind School, Edinburgh

Lega del filo d'Oro Onlus, Italy



The project is called SMILE too which stands for Social Skills Make Inclusive Life Easier. As the name suggests, the aim of this 3 year project is to share knowledge about the development of social skills in children and young people who are Visually Impaired with the aim of developing resources for educators to support social skills in this population.

“Sighted children observe and imitate people’s social behaviours, learning from any visual cues given. This is known as incidental learning. If these opportunities aren’t available to a child, understanding and development of appropriate social behaviour can become fragmented. Having appropriate social skills is crucial to a child’s everyday interactions. They enable the child to interact with others, establish friendships and later develop personal and work relationships”. [RNIB website 8 November 2017](#)

It is well documented that the development of social skills relies heavily on observation and imitation. Children and young people with visual impairment often do not have this advantage. Much of social interaction is non verbal and social cues and body language may be abstract concepts to the child with Visual Impairment. The development of social skills needs careful consideration as it differs considerably from that of their sighted peers. Children who are visually impaired can find it difficult to acquire social skills that are vital for developing relationships and understanding social situations throughout their lifetime. It cannot be assumed that they will develop social skills automatically like their sighted peers. This has an impact both in school and in the wider world.

The staff involved in the SMILE too project are experienced and qualified teachers of the Visually Impaired. They are also involved in outreach work and support children in mainstream and other special schools. We are keen to involve staff and give them the opportunity to meet colleagues across Europe who face the same issues and exchange knowledge and good practice. This creates meaningful and lasting links with organisations similar to our own and includes Jordanstown School in a European wide perspective on socialisation for Visually Impaired children and young people.

SMILE too

Social skills make inclusive life easier too

