



New Teacher Showcase: Ms. S. Keogh

INTRODUCTION

This year we have decided to introduce a regular article showcasing one or more of our new teachers in Coláiste Dún an Rí. The aim of these articles is to allow students to connect with teachers on a more personal level by learning more about them as an individual. It is our hope that students gain a sense of what their subject teachers might be like outside of the classroom (when they're not enforcing the code of behaviour and giving you plenty of homework for the evening).

In this edition of the article, I decided to feature Ms. S. Keogh, who is new to Coláiste Dún an Rí this year. She is currently 24 years old, originally from Navan, teaching English and Religion. Let us learn a little more about everything from her teaching career to her own personality and enjoyments.

Where did you go to college and what did you study in college?

Ms. Keogh: "I did my undergrad in St Patrick's University in Maynooth, studying English and Theology. I then took a year out before I went back and did my professional Master of Education with Hibernia. Afterwards, I did my placement year: my first year was in St Claire's in Ballyjamesduff and then my second year was in Coláiste na Mí in Navan. I'm only a newly qualified teacher."

What did you get up to during your year off?

Ms. Keogh: "I actually had a baby! So, I had a year off to mind her - she's 3 now. I went back in the following September. As for balancing school life

with home life, I think it was more so difficult trying to balance doing a Master's while having a child, whereas now my times are a little more flexible, I'm not as tied down to assignments."

Out of the subjects you are qualified to teach, which one is your favourite?

Ms. Keogh: "English is definitely my favourite subject to teach. I particularly love poetry, but I also like doing comparative studies. Going through different texts, coming up with a theme and comparing that theme with other texts - I really enjoy doing that. I think poetry is also a great way of expressing yourself, for other people to express themselves, and for you to connect. It gives students the opportunity to really identify an area in their life that they could speak about through the use of poetry or finding a poet that they connect with in some form of way."

Have you always wanted to become a teacher?

Ms. Keogh: "It's always a job that I've wanted to do from a very early age. I remember wanting to get a whiteboard and chalkboard to play teachers, and my mam would be forced to be the student. I'd come home from school and I'd go back through my school copies and tick them where the teacher had already ticked - it was very much something I wanted to do from a very young age. It's something I've been dreaming of since I was what... 5? Whenever you start thinking of your future career."

In your experience, what is the most challenging part of being a teacher?

Ms. Keogh: "I think the most challenging part is 'getting everybody on your side'. In the classroom you have so many different people with so many different learning styles and so many different needs that sometimes it can be hard to cater to everybody. What's most challenging is to make sure that everybody is aware that you're trying your best to support them and give interesting content to make them enjoy your subject, which can be a tough challenge at times."



Personality

What is your dream holiday destination?

Ms. Keogh: "I don't know whether it would be sun or snow. Maybe the likes of the Maldives... I like the white sand and the blue water, the crystal blue water. And the heat... it's so nice to have a bit of heat and we're lacking it majorly. But then again, I don't know - I've never been skiing myself, but a lot of people begin to prefer that kind of holiday over a sun holiday when they do go."

What is your favourite food?

Ms. Keogh: "If it was my last dinner to ever have, it would be spaghetti Bolognese. It's so bland, I know people are like 'that is so boring!', but I could eat it all day long with garlic bread."

Who would you consider to be your "hero" or someone you admire?

Ms. Keogh: "There's been two people. As I said, I always knew I wanted to be a teacher but I've never had anybody in my life that was a teacher, my mam's a child psychologist and my dad works in a lab. I know that my personality types would be very different, but when I was in secondary school I had this particular teacher that you could tell loved her subjects. You could tell she had so much passion for what she taught; she had so much time for you if you needed it. She would do anything to help you, so I suppose she'd be one of my heroes."

But then my mam too - my mam is my rock. She's been my biggest cheerleader and my biggest supporter. I know as you grow up, you sometimes rebel against your parents, but she's always given me the inch for me not to take the mile, and I respect her a lot for that. I respect her for always letting me go and speak to her if I need to talk about anything. It's always been that way: nothing's off limits for us to talk about. My mam's also had cancer a couple times, so to see her come through that - she's such a positive person. She's so inspiring and she's just my hero."

What is your favourite pastime?

Ms. Keogh: "I love to go canoeing. I find it's really nice, you go out and it's just still and it's peaceful, and you're out of the house. Sometimes it can be very hard to get out of the house and you might not always be bothered, but I feel like if you get out for a couple of hours you wouldn't even see the time pass. I know that's good for my mental health as well as my physical."

How did you find life during quarantine?

Ms. Keogh: "I found it nice to just slow down and take things day by day. It really gave me the opportunity to look at what I was doing in my life, look at the importance of relaxing a little bit and not taking things too seriously. I found it tough too, though, as I don't live at home with my family, so I found it very difficult not being able to see my mam and my sisters. Overall, I do think it helped everybody even though some people aren't in the best circumstances. It really gave people the opportunity to identify that it's okay to be on our own sometimes; that our own company is good. I don't think people experience that a lot."

I would like to thank Ms. Keogh for sitting down with me and answering these questions. Thank you for reading and hopefully you learned something new about your English, Religion or SPHE teacher!