



students learning with communities



Students Learning with Communities

# Primary School Children's Vision Screening Project



## Background

In the final year of the BSc in Optometry, students are required to obtain considerable clinical experience in the visual assessment of children. Vision screening of school-going children was recommended as a way to gain this experience, both in the form of on-site screenings at local primary schools, and referrals of children for more comprehensive assessment within the National Optometry Centre (N.O.C.) on the DIT Kevin St site.

## The Community

The first school screenings ran in the academic year 2009-10. Seven local schools agreed to be involved. Last year a further three schools got involved, which meant that all the national schools in Dublin 8 were now being covered by the project. One group of students also visited an after-school club in Ballymun.

The children screened ranged in age from four years old to twelve years old. The optometry students found it especially rewarding working with and helping children from areas that would be considered disadvantaged.

## Results

To date close to one thousand children have been screened. The students' confidence in their ability to test children has increased. The wait time between a screening by a HSE nurse and an appointment for a full test in Crumlin hospital is approximately 18 months. The wait time between our screenings and an appointment in the N.O.C. is no longer than 2 months. This means that children are getting the spectacles they need much quicker than before.

## Partners

### Optometry staff members:

Veronica O' Dwyer  
Siofra Harrington

### Schools:

Presentation N.S.  
Sancta Maria N.S.  
Mater Dei N.S.  
Scoil San Seamus N.S.  
St. Enda's N.S.  
St. Audoen's N.S.  
St Catherine's West N.S.  
St. Brigid's N.S.  
St. Francis N.S.  
Scoil Treasa Naofa N.S.  
Aisling Project Ballymun

