



**GROUP EFFORT**

“Not one of them thought it was uncool to learn how to sew,” says **JUDITH O’SULLIVAN** of her band of transition year students who roll up to class once a week at the the Victorian HQ of Roisin Cross Silks in Dublin’s Dun Laoghaire. “They were relaxed and hands-on from the start.” So no eye-rolling or pernicious texting? “Well, maybe a bit of apprehension, a bit of shuffling ... but that’s it. Maebh [Walshe, the class tutor] is very experienced in drawing them all out.” So there’s a *Project Runway*-style vibe? “Yes, the girls do help each other and there’s a competitive element too.” Over a six-week period, the girls learn about fabric, how to use a machine and, at the last couple of sessions, start personalising their own clothes. The genesis of the idea? “Mums, mostly, who come to the adult dressmaking classes,” says O’Sullivan, who is introducing a dressmaking class for teens too. “I am definitely doing that one,” says Mount Anville student Jessica Donnelly (second from left, back row) whose individual approach to dressing further undermines the myth of the teen clone. “I always look at fashion on the catwalk or in shops and think, I’d love to be able to make something like that, but make it different. With practise, it’s not that hard.” And as well as unexpectedly finding four other schoolmates in the class, Donnelly sweetly says, “it was fun to meet other girls: we made a new friend, a girl from St Andrews, and we’re going to her party tomorrow night.” [www.silks.ie](http://www.silks.ie)