

Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment

Written submission template for organisations, groups and individuals responding to the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework*

This template is intended to support you (and your colleagues/organisation) in developing a written submission in response to the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework*. Please e-mail your completed submission to PCRRsubmissions@ncca.ie

Individual submission details

Name	
Date	
E-mail	

Organisation submission details

Name	
Position	
Organisation	Irish Traveller Movement
Date	
E-mail	

The NCCA will publish written submissions received during the consultation. The submissions will include the author's/contributor's name/organisation. Do you consent to this submission being posted online?

Yes Yes No

Please email your submission to PCRRsubmissions@ncca.ie

Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).

The Irish Traveller Movement

The Irish Traveller Movement (1990-) is the national membership platform representing the voice of Travellers in Ireland. We bring together Travellers and representative organisations (40) to develop collective analyses and solutions on issues faced by the community to achieve greater equality for Travellers. We work from community development principles to challenge racism-individual, cultural, structural which Travellers face and promote equality, social justice and Traveller participation. Our work is Traveller-led, driven by the community nationally via local representative groups - the portal to ground-based expertise

Role of the Irish Traveller Movement in the context of Traveller education and policy

It convenes a national Traveller Education Working Group and has an expertise in national Traveller policy and advocacy. Traveller community engagement via its membership is critical to informing national Traveller policy, including on education matters and ITM is mandated to bring forward policy and related matters to national structures.

ITM is a National Traveller representative organisation on the **National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy NTRIS** the **NTRIS Education Working Group** coordinated under the DES. the Board of the **Children's Rights Alliance**.

The Irish Traveller Movement is the innovator and coordinator of The Yellow Flag Programme (YFP), the 8-step whole school model for primary and post primary schools which promotes and celebrates diversity and inclusion, and challenges and combats racism and identity-based bullying.

The remainder of the template includes two sections. Section 1 invites your overall comments and observations on the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework*. Section 2 is structured to align with the six key messages related to the framework. Each message is summarised as a support for you in working on the submission.

Section 1

Please outline your overall response to the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework*.

The Irish Traveller Movement, following a process of consultation with the NCCA in 2019 on an audit of the Pre, Primary and Post Primary Curriculum as such *“This curriculum audit focuses on identifying current opportunities across the early childhood, primary and post-primary curricula for children and young people to encounter and learn about aspects of Traveller culture and history. In addition, the audit aims to identify future possibilities in this regard as curricula are reviewed and developed on a broader scale and in a wider context”*

The Irish Traveller Movement support the findings of the audit and seek formally their inclusions across the 6 principle objectives of the Framework proposed.

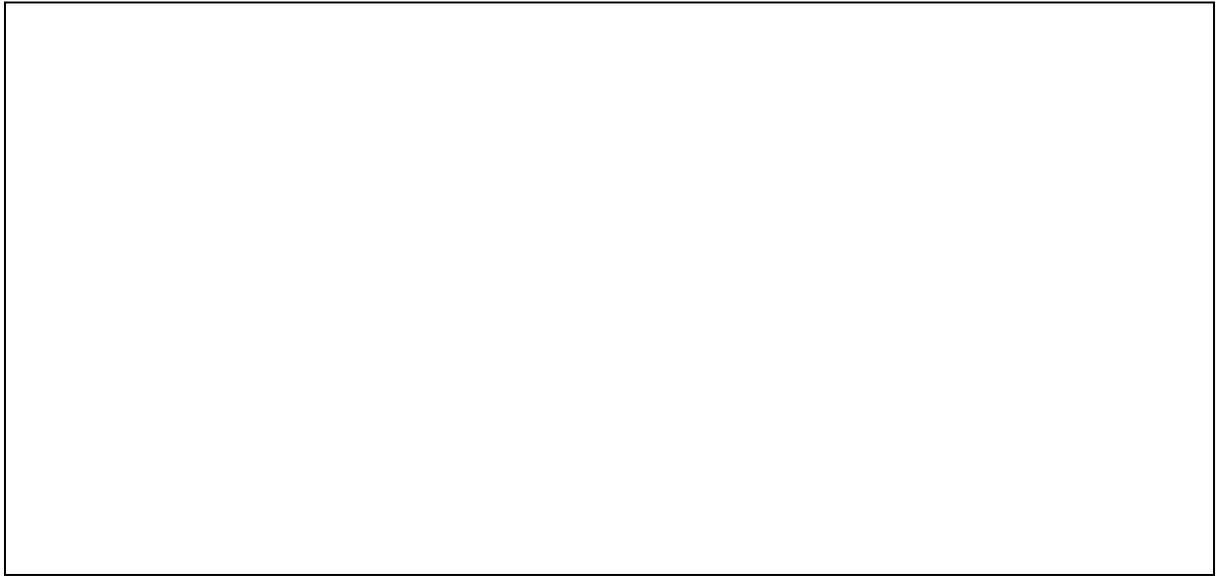
The NCCA audit indicated further; *It is important to note that this curriculum audit is a snapshot of the opportunities for building on existing curriculum practice and potential future opportunities in this regard. Therefore, the Irish Traveller submit additional and related recommendations over and above those contained in the audit, which we outline below.*

Intercultural Guidelines

Traveller Education Strategy

Oireachtas Report Traveller Progression

Oireachtas Report Reduced Timetable



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Section 2

Agency and flexibility in schools

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework proposes that the redeveloped curriculum will:

- Be for every child.
- Recognise teachers' and principals' agency and professionalism to enact the curriculum in their individual school context.
- Give more flexibility to schools in terms of planning and timetabling to identify and respond to priorities and opportunities.
- Connect with different school contexts in the education system.
- Give greater opportunities for flexibility and choice for children's learning.

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework outlines important messages in relation to agency and flexibility in schools. Please give your overall feedback in relation to this key message.

“Traveller pupils should have equality of access, participation and outcome in an inclusive school that acknowledges and respects their Traveller identity and culture”
(Traveller Education Strategy 2006)

- **According to the last Census (2016)** , (57.2%) of male Travellers had only primary-level education, four times the general population (13.6%) and just 13% of Traveller girls completed second-level compared to 69% nationally.
- **The Intercultural Education Strategy 2010-2015**^[1] and more recently the Department of Education and Skills Action Plan on Bullying 2013^[2] recognised that some children, particularly children of non-Irish nationals and Traveller children are more vulnerable to racist bullying because of their identity and recommended that preventative strategies needed to be put in place by schools to address this.
- **The ESRI in 2016** found one of the many reasons for leaving school early are likely to be the negative experiences Traveller children had in school Traveller (along with immigrant children and those with a disability) and are significantly more likely to report being bullied at school (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2016)

As referred in the Draft Framework: *As the competencies play a significant and central part in children's learning, they will be embedded across all curriculum areas and subjects from junior infants to sixth class through the learning outcomes. In this way, the curriculum areas and subjects contribute to the development of the key competencies. This gives them relevance across the curriculum while providing continuity and connectivity in children's learning as they move through primary school. Like all learning supported through the learning outcomes, it is acknowledged that children's progress towards the key competencies will be influenced by their varying circumstances, experiences and abilities.*

Irish Traveller Movement Reply Mandatory inclusion within Aistear would set the groundwork to ensure broad and explicit reference to Travellers and their history and culture. A review of the enrolment and acceptance criteria in early school settings would be useful to include in any such review.

As referred in the Draft Framework

- a. *Transitions and continuity Children’s prior learning, self-worth and identity are built upon as they move from home to preschool and on to junior infants, and as they progress through primary school.*
- b. *Recognise teachers’ and principals’ agency and professionalism to enact the curriculum in their individual school context.*

Irish Traveller Movement Reply School as a welcoming place from which to feel included and thrive is founded on a “majority centred lense”. Most common references within schools implicit or explicit, relate to a world different to that from which a Traveller child has emerged from their family, where everything was common and not different. From Junior infants a world is presented by others, pupils and teachers, which is at odds with that child’s experience and their difference is often singled out, in a negative way. The importance of an intercultural understanding by teachers, is critical to both shape and inform their own narrative and share that value set with their pupils, to provide the conditions to build on self-worth and identity and give Traveller pupils the same opportunity to progress.

Given there is limited understanding among the general population about Traveller culture and history, the issue of unconscious or conscious bias by others, through their home, school or community environment impacts on children’s understanding of Travellers. Focusing on ways in which Traveller culture and history can have greater presence and visibility in the curriculum is another way of contributing to self-worth and identity, once taught in an appropriate way

- Root out conscious and unconscious bias through the Continued Professional Development model and equip teachers with a intercultural and anti racism understanding.
- Ensure Traveller culture is implicit within curriculum as a mandatory inclusion, through a defined structure which would help guide and guarantee it is not left to the individual interested school or teaching staff. It must be explicitly named and identified within teaching materials across the curriculum, rather than singled out.
- Deepen engagement between local Traveller organisations, the community and schools, as key guardians to developing models.

Curriculum connections between preschool, primary and post-primary schools

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework proposes that the redeveloped curriculum will:

- Provide a clear vision for children’s learning across the eight years of primary school.
- Link with learning experiences provided through the themes of the *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and connect with the subjects, key skills and statements of learning in the *Framework for Junior Cycle*.

- Support educational transitions by connecting with what and how children learn at home, in preschool and post-primary school.

The *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* outlines important messages in relation to curriculum connections between preschool, primary and post-primary schools. Please give your overall feedback in relation to this key message.

Cant see it , cant be it .

There has been an increased uptake of Traveller children in early / pre school settings over the last decade. The

- **Primary**

1. Social, environmental and scientific education (SESE): history, geography and science
2. Arts education: visual arts, music and drama
3. Social, personal and health education (SPHE)
4. Religious or ethical education is the responsibility of the different school patron bodies.

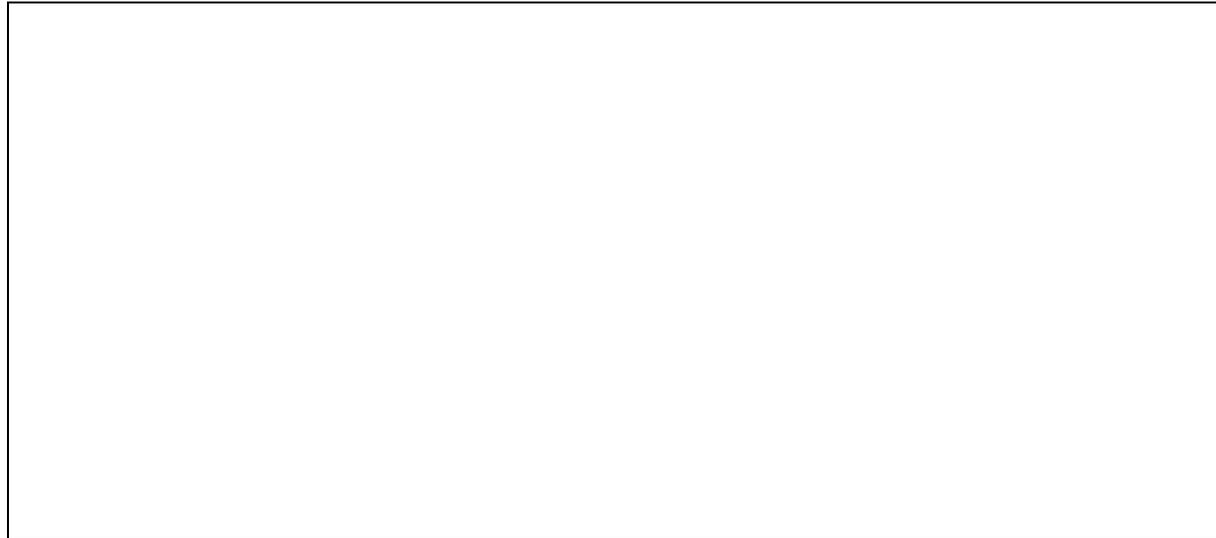
Emerging priorities for children’s learning

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework proposes that the redeveloped curriculum will:

- Embed seven key competencies across children’s learning outcomes from junior infants to sixth class.
- Focus on developing children’s skills, knowledge, dispositions, values and attitudes. The Learning Outcomes and the Key Competencies are broad in nature to describe this wider understanding of learning.
- Have increased emphasis on some existing areas such as PE and SPHE (Wellbeing) and digital learning, and have new aspects such as Modern Foreign Languages, Technology, Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) and Ethics, and a broader Arts Education.

The *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* outlines important messages in relation to emerging priorities for children’s learning. Please give your overall feedback in relation to this key message.

1. All subjects should be Traveller-proofed in precise ways, this should include functional guidelines on how the curriculum will be assessed based on that.
 - The fundamental framework to provide for the inclusion of Traveller Culture and History should be co-dependant on a prescribed syllabus in texts, with specific and required inclusions in teaching materials, lesson plans etc and in examination systems and other forms of assessment.
- By its nature this might encourage Traveller pupils to engage on specific Traveller topics, but could also cause the “othering / singling out” of pupils and be limiting in its outcome. The proposed value of inclusions from the Traveller sector is that implicit learning happens and arising from that, it will support both the confidence of Traveller pupils to articulate their identify in a non-hostile open environment, and also provide opportunities for learning among non-Traveller students.
 - **To include:** Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities, in service and specific training is essential for teachers in all cycles including the Junior Cycle.



Changing how the curriculum is structured and presented

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework proposes that the redeveloped curriculum will:

- Be broad and balanced in purpose and content.
- Be structured in five broad curriculum areas;
 - Language
 - Mathematics, Science and Technology Education
 - Wellbeing
 - Social and Environmental Education
 - Arts Education.

(In addition to the five areas above, the Patron's Programme is developed by a school's patron with the aim of contributing to the child's holistic development particularly from the religious and/or ethical perspective and in the process, underpins and supports the characteristic spirit of the school. These areas connect to the themes of *Aistear* and to the subject-based work in Junior Cycle.)

- Provide for an integrated learning experience, with curriculum areas in Stages 1 and 2 (junior Infants – second Class) and more subject-based learning in Stages 3 and 4 (third class – sixth class).
- Use broad learning outcomes to describe the expected learning and development for children.
- Incorporate the new *Primary Language Curriculum / Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile*.

The *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* outlines important messages in relation to changing how the curriculum is structured and presented. Please give your overall feedback in relation to this key message.

Supporting a variety of pedagogical approaches and strategies with assessment central to teaching and learning

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework proposes that the redeveloped curriculum will:

- Promote high quality teaching, learning and assessment.
- Conceptualise assessment as an essential and critical part of teaching and learning.
- Highlight the importance of teachers' professional judgement in supporting progression in children's learning.
- Encourage teachers to make meaningful connections with children's interests and experiences.
- Recognise the significance of quality relationships and their impact on children's learning.
- Recognise the role and influence of parents and families in children's education.

The *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* outlines important messages in relation to supporting a variety of pedagogical approaches and strategies with assessment central to teaching and learning. Please give your overall feedback in relation to this key message.

- **To track and audit the utilization of materials and teaching practice on Traveller related topics through the early, primary and post primary curriculum modules and broad monitoring timelined and targeted with expected outcomes from schools.**

In reply: The assumption that schools and education settings are the primary location to determine good practice or material resources for teaching about Traveller culture might be problematic. Where materials are being used, they are often out of date and at the least, paternalistic. Even in schools where there is a positive attitude to the inclusion of Traveller students, it is noticeable that they focus on romanticised aspects of culture such as wagons etc. Through our Yellow Flag Programme we have not come across any school teaching history and anthropology of the people or who might talk about culture as a dynamic notion and discuss the Traveller Community in that context. A more effective location would be educational institutions who are conducting proper anthropological research and documentation of Traveller history and culture; and by drawing on the community itself where there is an oral repository of information

- Accountability systems such as schools inspections must incorporate evaluation of effectiveness in connecting with Traveller and Roma students' communities and community organisations, ensuring equity of access and participation in an inclusive ethos, and delivering an intercultural curriculum.

Building on the successes and strengths of the 1999 curriculum while recognising and responding to the challenges and changing needs and priorities.

The 1999 curriculum contributed to many successes including:

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- Enhanced enjoyment of learning for children.
- Increased use of active methodologies for teaching and learning.
- Improved attainment levels in reading, mathematics and science as evidenced in national and international assessments.

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework proposes that the redeveloped curriculum will:

- Address curriculum overload at primary level.
- Take stock of strategies, initiatives and programmes and clarify priorities for children’s learning.
- Link with *Aistear* and *the Framework for Junior Cycle*.

The *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* outlines important messages in relation to building on the successes and strengths of the 1999 curriculum while recognising and responding to challenges and changing needs and priorities. Please give your overall feedback in relation to this key message.

Data Protection

The NCCA fully respects your right to privacy. Any personal information which you volunteer to the NCCA will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Acts. If you require further information related to data protection please

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visit www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement or you can contact the NCCA's Data Protection Officer at dpo@ncca.ie.

Thank you for your submission.

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