

# Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment

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

**Organisation submission details**

<b>Name</b>	Liam Guiney
<b>Position</b>	Member
<b>Organisation</b>	Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann
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<b>E-mail</b>	

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**Submission to  
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment**

**Submission on Arts Education and Dance within Arts Education.**

**on Behalf of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann**

**December 2020**

Please email your submission to [PCRRsubmissions@ncca.ie](mailto:PCRRsubmissions@ncca.ie)

**Introduction:** Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is involved in the preservation and promotion of Irish traditional music song, dance and language. We're a non-profit cultural movement with hundreds of local branches around the world. Our bunreacht defines the aims and objectives of our movement as follows:

- To promote Irish Traditional Music in all its forms;
- To restore the playing of the Harp and Uilleann Pipes in the National life of Ireland;
- To promote Irish Traditional Dancing;
- To foster and promote Traditional singing in both Irish and English;
- To foster and promote the Irish language at all times;
- To create a closer bond among all lovers of Irish music;
- To co-operate with all bodies working for the restoration or Irish Culture;
- To establish Branches throughout the country and abroad to achieve the foregoing aims and objectives.

**Dance within the arts:** Comhaltas as an organisation welcomes in principle the proposed idea of dance being moved from the PE curriculum into the Arts curricular area. As an organisation we have always encouraged branches to foster the relationship between the music and dance. We view dance as a response to music. The current PE curriculum supports this theory, “The Child is encouraged to dance in response to different stimuli and accompaniment” (Ireland, Department of Education and Skills, 1999). Therefore moving the dance strand from the PE curriculum to the Arts curriculum is in keeping with our guiding principles of supporting the many facets of the Traditional Irish Arts. As an organisation we take pride in our work in the promotion and education of the Traditional Irish Arts in many communities throughout Ireland and abroad, therefore we do not feel it's appropriate to separate any strand of the Traditional Irish Arts.

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann believes that all the strands of Traditional Irish Arts are equally important. However as an organisation we have a concern around Dance moving to an already crowded curricular area. Robinson (2001) talks about the ‘Hierarchy of the Arts’ and we would have a concern that the role of dance within this hierarchy be protected. An INTO submission (2017) on the draft primary curriculum framework outlines that the majority of teachers believe that the arts within education need to be protected. Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann concurs that Arts Education needs protecting and this includes all strands within this curriculum area.

**Dance and PE:** Changing the Dance strand from PE is also a fundamental shift in how we view movement in primary education. While we acknowledge the rationale behind the move, there are very obvious links between Dance and the Arts and Dance as a PE strand. Dance readily covers the Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) that focus on locomotor skills linked to walking, running, skipping, hopping and stability skills including landing and balancing as well as left right orientation and more (PDST, 2017). As educators we are very aware of the importance of these FMS and their cross curricular importance. As an organisation we also view Dance as an athletic form from a creative mind “think like artists but they have to train like athletes” as quoted by Dr Orfhlaith Ni Bhriain (2020) at a recent Oireachtas hearing on Dance. The returning to school documents issued by the Department of Education and Skills post COVID highlight the importance of movement breaks and their role in wellbeing; Bizzy Breaks and PE are fundamental to wellbeing. Dance is an integral part of those movement breaks in classrooms around the country post COVID. Therefore separating PE and movement is a concern.

**Conclusion:** Creative minds are all around us in society, the Arts teach our children this creativity. Ken Robinson (2001) states that creativity matters; children involved in the Arts are better communicators and better collaborators. In conclusion ‘the Arts matter’. The time devoted to the Arts must be ring-fenced within the curriculum and the role of each strand within this needs to be protected. Also in conclusion, Dance has a role in developing the physically literate child, therefore cross curricular integration between dance and PE and Dance linked with music is key. Dance in education involves the child in creating, performing and appreciating movement as a means of expression and communication”. (Ireland, Department of Education and Skills, (1999)

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