

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

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Organisation submission details

Name	
Position	
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Date	
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Yes

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

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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.

Please email your submission to PCRRsubmissions@ncca.ie

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Section 1

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

DPCF (Draft Primary Curriculum Framework)

DF (Draft Framework)

We agreed with proposed changes to be implemented. Recognition for increased time in PE and SESE is valuable. Fostering a good sense of wellbeing is identified as a key capability for children.

This aligns with important emphasis placed on mental health. We agreed with addressing the increasing rate of diversity in schools. The key principle of *Inclusive Education and Diversity* holds a major role in achieving diverse learning in the classroom.

The DPCF recognises children come first always and acknowledges teacher preparation and access to resources are paramount. It recognises the importance of wellbeing, integration and environment and must be meaningful, promoting integration in the classroom. An assessment culture is prioritised to support children's learning. Assessment is essential to high-quality learning and teaching across the curriculum. Integrating the new curriculum is easier due to flexibility of time and supports teacher and child to bridge the gap between the real and ideal. It recognises individual strengths, abilities and circumstances. We look forward to using this curriculum, providing meaningful educations.

(NCCA, 2020)

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.

The eight key principles convey significant influences on the enhancement of quality of teaching.

Each principle is developed with children's abilities and circumstances considered. We appreciated the principle of partnerships and good relationships are to be developed. From personal experiences we feel establishing these connections in schools can be overlooked.

Building a good alliance with the school community can prove beneficial to children's learning.

We concurred different and adaptable approaches in subject areas were not achieved as we attended primary school. Through key experiences in this area children will contribute to their holistic development. (NCCA, 2020)

The integrated approach towards learning of religion is valued. Combining religion with Ethics is a major advancement from the previous curriculum. Educating children on minority groups

avoids the curriculum becoming socially destructive. Positive attitudes, recognising children's individuality will avoid issues with ethnic learning. (Cusack, 2020, Lecture 5)

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.

There are notable amounts of connections between each educational level. To comprehend these links, we must note the other policy developments enhancing children's learning progressing from preschool, to primary and post-primary. Provision of preschool education and 'Aistear' has led to changes in what children knew before primary school. Teaching early junior classes, it is valuable to review the preschool curriculum building on children's experiences and learnings.

Children's education journey begins at home and flows from preschool to primary to post-primary and is essential to establish a strong foundation to build upon. Early learning will affect long-term education, i.e. the ability to read well is essential in all subjects. The eight principles build on ones from 'Aistear' and link with the eight principles of the 'Framework for Junior Cycle'

and the seven key competencies from the curriculum expand learning through four themes of 'Aistear' and are important for Junior Cycle key skills. 'Mo Scéal' and 'Education Passport' highlight if additional supports are required. Assessments and teacher's observations of children are included in the 'Education Passport' to post-primary school. (NCCA, 2020)

Connections are clearly established in terms of education for sustainable development. 'Aistear' emphasises ESD so that children in the early years are competent to comprehend the principles of SD ie. making sense of the world they live in. At primary level such aims for ESD are reflected in the general objectives of the curriculum. E.g. "enabling children to develop as a social being through living and cooperating with others". (NCCA ,1999) Finally at post primary level, connections made previously in ESD are reflected in subjects such as CSPE, SPHE. There is also opportunity evident to promote ESD in general through the new Junior Cycle.

(D.E.S., 2014)

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.

Key competencies outlined address urgent priorities sufficiently for children’s learning. Through the competency of fostering wellbeing, children advance their ability to be healthy as possible physically, emotionally, spiritually and socially. Knowing what it means to become an active citizen is a significant capability to include in the curriculum. Through the enforcement of this competency children acquire motivation to flourish as active citizens in society locally and globally.

The weekly timetable for language and mathematics is important. The monthly allows discretion, e.g. activities depending on good weather. Teachers communicating with each other when children move from teacher-to-teacher benefits learning. The new areas of learning, e.g. Education about Religions and Beliefs and Ethics, Modern Foreign Languages and role of

linguistic diversity provides educational variety. Feedback on the range of supports published in 2019 in the 'Primary Language Curriculum' and children's learning and support materials for teachers are consistent with principles of redeveloping the curriculum is reassuring.

(NCCA, 2020)

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.

It is appropriate that language, mathematics and wellbeing are included in Minimum Curriculum Time and science and technology education, social and environmental education and arts education allocated in Flexible Time, preventing too much or too little time spent in a curriculum area, supporting teachers in achieving various areas learning outcomes, whilst encouraging time for pedagogical approaches in planning. It is more practical as time is flexible

which is advantageous with weather for outdoor education, particularly if resources are not available for activities such as gardening, cooking demonstrations, etc. The third option was clearest, with time delegated in the most valuable way.

Children will be assisted in their development, emotionally, physically, and socially. In wellbeing children will rightfully be supported to flourishing positive and happy relationships throughout their lives.

(NCCA, 2020)

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.

The following statement in the DPCF proves holistic *“Primary school teachers can create a respectful school climate and build their curriculum and interactions to proactively promote inclusive principles in their school”* (DPCF, pg. 20). There is a set curriculum to be covered but flexibility in choice. High-quality teaching and learning being centre and acknowledging the importance of relationships is wonderful. There is no stereotyping, every child has an equal opportunity to participate. Teaching is organised to meet individual children’s strengths, needs and interests. Pedagogical and integration are central components, meaningful, achievable and positive. *“Inclusive education and diversity encourages a move away from thinking in terms of ability and disability to thinking about variability, competence and opportunity.”* (DPCF, pg. 20) Children and families should feel visible. Working in partnership with parents/guardians and good communication are paramount. (NCCA, 2020)

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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:

- 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.

Guidelines of teachers of students with general disabilities (NCCA, 2007) are based on the 1999 primary curriculum. The new curriculum recognises and responds to challenges and changing needs and priorities. Always having vision for education is important, the need for continued research and studies. Teachers should be forward-thinking and motivated, not resistant to change. Reporting templates will need updating to align with the new curriculum. “Through varied learning experiences, children make connections with diverse languages, cultures and worldviews.” (pg.20)

Since 1999,our society has become more multicultural, multi-denominational and multi-linguistic.

Teachers must be aware of potential problems in children’s personal lives.

Advancements in technology should be considered. The new curriculum would include digital use of technologies, responding to modern dynamic backgrounds occurring in society.

Through positive interactions, the new curriculum can play a major role in responding to the diverse range of learning areas occurring in schools.

(NCCA,2020)

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Thank you for your submission.

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