

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	Frank Geary
Position	Director
Organisation	IDEA (submission prepared by the IDEA Formal Education Working Group)
Date	28th January 2021
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 No

Please email your submission to PCRRsubmissions@ncca.ie

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

IDEA welcomes the Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment. The review offers an opportunity to generate a shared vision for the primary curriculum and to shape a curriculum and educational experience that meets the needs of all learners for years to come.

IDEA has actively engaged with stakeholders such as the Department of Education and Skills, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and the Teaching Council in previous years in relation to formal education.

Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment comes at a time where we are facing various global challenges, such as COVID-19, sustainability and climate and biodiversity breakdown. Though these challenges are great, they highlight that education reform is essential to Ireland's future as a safe, strong, prosperous, sustainable, socially cohesive and just society.

About IDEA:

The Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) is the national network for Development Education in Ireland and a leading voice for the sector. IDEA represents over 70 members involved in the practice, promotion and advancement of Development Education in formal, non-formal and informal settings. Together they work to strengthen Development Education in Ireland and to raise awareness of the crucial role it has to play in achieving an equal, just and sustainable future. IDEA's 2019-2023 Strategy promotes the essential role of Development Education in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Vision:

IDEA's vision is a world where all people are active global citizens.

About Global Citizenship Education/Development Education

Global Citizenship Education/Development Education is a **direct and active educational response to the issues of inequality and injustice** that characterise the world we live in. It is an approach to education that encompasses knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and action.

GCE/DE is driven by its core values and attitudes – justice, solidarity and empathy – and has at its heart a transformative agenda to challenge the structural causes of poverty and inequality and instilling a clear sense of global citizenship in learners. It also, therefore, entails a critical action component to put learning into practice in our everyday lives. Development Education is underpinned by key skills of critical thinking and analysis, of being able to question and challenge the messages and information we receive every day. It is also characterised by core methodologies,

namely participative and learner-centered approaches to teaching, which value the acquisition of skills and knowledge above getting the 'right' answer.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (through Irish Aid) supports the integration of Global Citizenship Education in the formal education sector. The collaboration between IDEA, Irish Aid and the Department of Education and Skills in this area has continued to strengthen as evidenced by the co-launch by the two departments of the Global Education Network of Europe's report on Global Education in Ireland. In addition, various partnerships have been established in relation to the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development 2014- 2020, of which IDEA is on the advisory committee, the Irish Aid Development Strategy 2017-2023, and the Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2018 -2020).

In the context of this submission, **Global Citizenship Education** is used as an umbrella term, which includes Development Education, Education for Sustainable Development, Intercultural Education, and related fields, and encompasses the work of various civil society organisations and other actors in education in advancing active global citizenship in formal education.

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*.

IDEA recognises the strong opportunities that a Primary Curriculum Framework can have to allow children to build an understanding of social justice, equality and sustainability within the curriculum, aligning to work that is happening through Aistear and at Junior Cycle. A curriculum that supports children to recognise how interconnected our world is, the importance of challenging stereotypes, developing an awareness of events occurring in the world and how we can all make a difference, is most favourable at this time and for the future.

We are conscious of the fact that children in primary schools around the country are learning in a new global reality, alongside challenges such as COVID-19 and teachers need to be supported to develop competence and confidence in exploring global issues in the classroom.

Research indicates that children readily absorb the biases and prejudices of their families, peers and the media and therefore do not enter school as empty slates. GCE is therefore 'critically important for children so that they can be given the opportunity to analyse and reflect upon their own prejudices and become well informed, proactive, open minded and caring global citizens' (Ruane et al., 2010)

Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment and coherence with policy and research:

In order for the Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment to be as comprehensive and coherent as possible, IDEA advocate that it should be explicitly linked to commitments on **international agreements, existing government policy and initiatives** that the Irish Government has committed to as well as any relevant research carried out, such as the following:

- A Better World, Ireland's Policy for International Development. It outlines Ireland's vision of a more equal, peaceful and sustainable world.; see [here](#)
- Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, 2014-2020 (and any successor strategy); see [here](#)
- Digital Learning Framework for Primary Schools, see [here](#)
- Education for Sustainable Development: A study of opportunities and linkages in the primary and post-primary curriculum, NCCA 2018, see [here](#)
- Intercultural Education in the Primary School, Guidelines for schools, NCCA, 2005, see [here](#)
- Intercultural Education Strategy, 2010 - 2015 (2010) and Intercultural Education in the Primary School, see [here](#).
- Irish Aid Development Education Strategy, 2017-2023; see [here](#)
- NCCA curriculum audit of Traveller Culture and History, see [here](#)

Please email your submission to PCRRsubmissions@ncca.ie

- The National SDG Implementation Plan 2018 -2020, and the successor plan which will be developed in 2020, see [here](#)
- The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, the Department of Education and Skills, 2014-2020 (and its successor strategy); see [here](#)
- Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015); see [here](#)
- UNESCO 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report- Inclusion and Education, see [here](#)
- Young Children’s Engagement with Issues of Global Justice (Ruane et al., 2010), see [here](#)
- The Council of Europe have developed a Reference [Framework](#) of Competences for Democratic Culture, to be adapted for use in primary and secondary schools and higher education and vocational training institutions throughout Europe as well as national curricula and teaching programmes.
- PISA 2018 Global [Competences](#)
- Envision 4.7: Roadmap in support of SDG Target 4.7 see [here](#)

IDEA recognises that the primary curriculum, stages 1 to 4, is key in supporting children to learn about themselves as developing individuals and as members of their communities, building on their own experiences and on the work of Aistear for personal, social and emotional development.

During these key stages, children have opportunities to show they can take some responsibility for themselves and their environment. They begin to learn about their own and other people's feelings and become aware of the views, needs and rights of other children and people. As members of a class, school and wider community, they learn social skills such as how to share, take turns, play, help others, and problem solve. They begin to take an active part in the life of their school and its wider community. IDEA sees these stages as being particularly formative in nurturing the competencies of Global Citizenship in children and through this submission are advocating that any Primary Curriculum Framework reflects the importance of exploring GCE during stages 1 to 4 of the primary curriculum.

Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009) already provides a unique opportunity to promote the inclusion of a global and justice perspective in education programmes for young children at pre-school and junior primary school levels. The framework highlights the importance of global citizenship and diversity issues and provides the opportunity to support educators engaged in their implementation. Trócaire and St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra have undertaken research into young children’s engagement with issues of global justice. The report can be found [here](#).

The research indicates that young children are capable of **engaging with global justice issues** provided the strategies are appropriate to their age and cognitive development. The research points to the opportunity which exists to engage children at an early age with issues which have been previously viewed as beyond their world and level of understanding. It also points to the opportunity to expand the prevailing emphasis on aspects related to culture when introducing young children to the wider world. However, it is more than an opportunity. As **global citizens** in their own right, children should be allowed to participate 'on the basis of who they are, rather than who they will become' (Moss, 2002, cited in Nicholas, 2001:119).

The experience of IDEA and their members is that primary schools have been exploring Global Citizenship Education despite it not being explicit in the current curriculum (1999) and there is a lot of good practice already in this area. Therefore, including a focus on GCE in the new framework will formalise and provide a space for the work that is already taking place in many schools and curriculum areas to date and the necessary support to allow this to be effective.

Diversity and the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework:

IDEA welcome and support the statements made in relation to **diversity** in the draft framework and the recognition of how important it is to have a curriculum that enables children to feel respected, valued and engaged in learning through appropriately tailored experiences and through positive interactions within the school community and how in turn, these experiences and interactions play a role in the development of a more inclusive society in Ireland.

The table below shows one of the key descriptors from the Council of Europe's [Framework](#) of Competences for Democratic Culture, to be adapted for use in primary and secondary schools and higher education and vocational training institutions throughout Europe as well as national curricula and teaching programmes

2. Valuing cultural diversity

ID	Key No.	Descriptor	Classification
201	Key 7	Promotes the view that we should be tolerant of the different beliefs that are held by others in society	Basic
202	Key 8	Promotes the view that one should always strive for mutual understanding and meaningful dialogue between people and groups who are perceived to be "different" from one another	Basic
203		Argues that one should promote communication and dialogue between people from different cultural backgrounds	BI
204	Key 9	Expresses the view that the cultural diversity within a society should be positively valued and appreciated	Intermediate
205		Argues that one should try to learn from one another in order to deepen understanding of both one's own and other people's backgrounds	IA
206	Key 10	Argues that intercultural dialogue should be used to help us recognise our different identities and cultural affiliations	Advanced
207	Key 11	Argues that intercultural dialogue should be used to develop respect and a culture of "living together"	Advanced

IDEA supports the principles as set out in the **UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education (2006)** and which are also referenced in the **NCCA audit for Traveller Culture and History (2019)** in the curriculum. These principles should be taken into consideration for the primary curriculum framework.

For example, **principle one** outlines: Intercultural Education respects the cultural identity of the learner through the provision of culturally appropriate and responsive quality education for all.

To achieve this principle, the guidelines recommend the use of curricula and teaching and learning materials that:

- Build upon the diverse systems of knowledge and experiences of the learners
- Incorporate their histories, knowledge and technologies, value systems and further social, economic and cultural aspirations
- Introduce the learners to an understanding and an appreciation of their cultural heritage
- Aim at developing respect for the learners' cultural identity, language and values, and make use of local resources.

The global dimension, interdependence and the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework:

It is important that the primary curriculum framework has a focus on the **global dimension**. IDEA recommends that the use of the word 'global' and 'wider community' be further emphasised in the framework. It is felt that there is too much of an individual focus rather than a sense of community or a collective. For example, it is important that children at primary level are able to understand that there are greater links between the **local and the global** community and indeed with individuals and communities. It is important that children have the opportunity to begin to understand interdependence and can look at the wider world and see how this might link to their own lives or on a local level and indeed start to think of solutions or actions that they could take.

For example if we look at COVID-19, Climate Change, anti-racism, such as the Black Lives Matter movement, it is important that children have some understanding of how these may connect with their own lives, their schools, local communities and home. We recommend that interdependence be included in one of the eight overarching principles, perhaps as part of the principle on partnership, which could be called 'partnership and interdependence'. This could also be part of the principle on relationships.

The following points are recommendations relating to the implementation of the primary curriculum framework, which should also be considered in addition to the points in section 2 of this submission:

The enactment of the curriculum

- It is recommended that clear guidance will be provided to teachers on how to implement each curriculum area.
- Approaches to embracing cultural diversity to be made a compulsory feature of both initial teacher education and continuous professional development.
- In relation to the Intercultural Education in the Primary School, Guidelines for schools, NCCA, (2005), Though the NCCA has sent a copy of the guidelines to all primary teachers in the Republic of Ireland, it was up to the teachers and their school administration to implement them. A lack of follow-up strategy may result in the loss of what is recognised as a very valuable piece of work. The target audience are teachers and steps should be taken by the relevant authorities to ensure that every teacher and school principal is trained and supported in using the guidelines.
- It is recommended that actors at the various levels of education have familiarity of the curriculum at all sectors from early childhood to post-primary and that there are clear transitions from one level to the next.
- IDEA recommends that the terms of reference for the NCCA Primary Framework Development Groups make reference to the need for issues such as race and gender to be integrated in an appropriate way into the curriculum where relevant. We wish to stress the importance of anti-racism education in primary schools.
- Civil society organisations and the Global Citizenship Education has a wealth of knowledge, support materials and participatory programmes in Global Citizenship Education and Intercultural Education and will continue their work with the primary sector to build capacity in the area of GCE across the whole-school community. IDEA recommends that a portal be created whereby primary schools/teachers can see what supports are available for schools in these areas. Perhaps this is building on supports that already exist through Scoilnet for example.

- The provision of specific training in relation to GCE should be examined at teacher training level ITE, e.g. through the [DICE](#) project, who promote the integration of development education and intercultural education in Initial Teacher Education at primary level in Ireland, and indeed the need for training at all levels of continued professional development – from teachers to school management and SNAs.

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.

- Democratic classrooms and having students as co-creators in teaching and learning will empower students by equally distributing the responsibilities of decision-making across the students and instructors in a class. Global Citizenship Education is a good example of how teachers have used their autonomy in the classroom to explore children's voice and rights to participating in decision making in schools. Support is needed to help teachers organize and structure active GCE.
- IDEA welcomes the messages in relation to agency and flexibility in schools as outlined above. If implemented, this framework will facilitate schools, teachers and children to explore concepts and resources in relation to Global Citizenship Education, and teachers will have agency to enact the curriculum in their individual school context.
- IDEA feel it is critical to emphasise the importance of the **Intercultural Education Strategy** ("IES"/ "Strategy") in devising a curriculum for primary level to ensure that:
 - All students experience an education that *"respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership"* (Education Act, 1998).
 - All education providers are assisted with ensuring that inclusion and integration within an intercultural learning environment become the norm.

It is important that the curriculum framework is for every child and that children see themselves reflected in the curriculum framework. It is also important that teachers have the agency and flexibility to interpret and adapt the curriculum to respond to the children in their class. It is critical that teachers have the capacity and necessary support to do this effectively.

Please email your submission to PCRRsubmissions@ncca.ie

- This level of flexibility provides greater scope for schools to embed GCE in their school communities whilst also meeting the requirements of the formal curriculum and any learning outcomes that will be developed. For example, this will provide increasing opportunities for schools to explore the **Sustainable Development Goals**, and in implementing the recommendations as set out by the Department of Education’s National Strategy in relation to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), particularly in relation to **Recommendations 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14 and 39**. SDG 4 and target 4.7 is critical to any curriculum development. Target 4.7 states ‘By 2030, ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non- violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development’. This is measured by indicator 4.7.1 ‘**Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment**’. As such, education is both a goal in itself and a key enabler for ensuring the achievement of the other 16 SDGs.
- The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework encourages and supports integration in a number of ways, as outlined in page 21 and 22 of the draft framework. This is a very favourable approach and one that provides the opportunity for teachers and children to draw on multiple sources of knowledge and skills as they pursue learning. The draft framework recognises that the ‘teacher’s interactions with children and their lived experience enables the identification of fruitful themes, interdisciplinary skills, big ideas and real-world problems that are starting points for integrated teaching and learning’. IDEA is in favour of the approach of connecting the curriculum to children’s lives in meaningful ways. GCE is a powerful vehicle by which this can be achieved and can enhance and support this approach in schools.

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.

Please email your submission to PCRRsubmissions@ncca.ie

- IDEA strongly believes that the draft Primary Curriculum Framework should build on previous and subsequent learning experiences and educational cycles/phases, Aistear and the Framework for Junior Cycle in particular. This should also inform the on-going developments at senior cycle.
 - **Aistear:**
 - The **12 Principles** of early learning and development as set out in Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, provide an excellent foundation for a Primary Curriculum to develop and nurture the competencies of Global Citizenship further, in particular but not limited to the following principles:
 - Equality and diversity
 - Children as citizens
 - Active learning
 - Aistear presents children’s learning and development using **four themes** and IDEA feel that these will also need to be continued on through a Primary Curriculum Framework, in particular the following aims:
 - Well-being
 - care for the environment
 - understand that others may have beliefs and values different to their own.
 - be active citizens.
 - Identity and Belonging
 - see themselves as part of a wider community and know about their local area, including some of its places, features and people be aware of and respect others’ needs, rights, feelings, culture, language, background, and religious beliefs
 - have a sense of social justice and recognise and deal with unfair behaviour
 - Communicating

- use language with confidence and competence for giving and receiving information, asking questions, requesting, refusing, negotiating, problem-solving, imagining and recreating roles and situations, and clarifying thinking, ideas and feelings
- share their feelings, thoughts and ideas by story-telling, making art, moving to music, role-playing, problem-solving, and responding to these experiences
- Exploring and Thinking.
 - demonstrate a growing understanding of themselves and others in their community
 - learn about the natural environment and its features, materials, animals, and plants, and their own responsibility as carers
 - Collaborate with others to share interests and to solve problems confidently
 - Use their creativity and imagination to think of new ways to solve problems.
- **Junior Cycle:**
 - IDEA recommends ensuring that a Primary Curriculum Framework provides a foundation in GCE to build the key skills and statements of learning (SOL) as set out in the Framework for Junior Cycle, and principals for JC such as wellbeing, creativity and innovation and engagement and participation. The Primary Curriculum Framework can provide a foundation for the following statements of learning at Junior Cycle, in relation to GCE:
 - SOL 5. Has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making
 - SOL 6 Appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives
 - SOL 7 Values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts
 - SOL 8 Values local, national and international heritage, understands the importance of the relationship between past and current events and the forces that drive change

- SOL 9 Understands the origins and impacts of social, economic and environmental aspects of the world around her/him
- SOL 10 Has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably
- SOL: bringing an idea from conceptualisation to realisation-check

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.

IDEA very much welcomes the work that has been done on developing key competencies, in particular in relation to, **being an active citizen** and the opportunities this will provide for schools to explore Global Citizenship and the synergies between this and other competencies such as **being creative, fostering wellbeing** and **communicating and using language** and how this will equip children to being active citizenship for a more just and sustainable world.

IDEA believe Global Citizenship Education should not be a discrete curriculum area but more an element or cross cutting theme that can be explored across the curriculum. For example, GCE provides much opportunity for children to meet the needs of the Primary Language Curriculum. It can empowers children to develop their thinking, expression, reflection, critique and empathy, and it supports the development of self-efficacy, identity and full participation in society, all important parts of GCE.

IDEA supports references in the curriculum framework that recognise children as active citizens now and not just into the future. As is evidenced from research carried out by the Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education, St. Patrick’s College, Drumcondra and Trócaire ‘A child’s goal is not to

become a successful adult.... A child's goal is to be a successful child.... Children are not incompetent members of adults' society; they are competent members of their own society, which has its own standards and its own culture...a children's culture is loosely based on the majority adult culture within which it exists. But it adapts the majority adult culture to its own purposes and it includes elements that are lacking in the adult culture ' (pp. 198-199 cited in Hirschfeld, 2002).

In relation to Table 2: Attributes of each key competency, perhaps a graphic representation would be better here, similar to how this is presented at junior cycle, [see here](#). We note that it is important to consider terminology and how this flows across all sectors of education, between primary and post-primary in particular. The key competencies as set out in the draft framework for primary are referred to as key skills at post-primary, for example in the framework for junior cycle. It is important to have consistency in the terminology where possible.

As outlined in the 2019 report, 'Empathy, Social Values, and Civic Behaviour Among Early Adolescents in Ireland', carried out by the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre NUI Galway, one of the key findings in relation to Social and Emotional Learning in schools, was that in the Irish school system, primary school was seen as a more conducive space for values promotion than secondary school. We can definitely say that in comparison with the 1999 Curriculum space, the opportunity for a review at primary level provides a key opportunity to consider how we prepare our children for the 'modern world' and in particular the space we give to value-based education, in what is now a much more complex sphere of values and values contestation. It is welcome that this is recognised in the key competency, *Being an active citizen*, that 'fosters within children the knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes, values and dispositions that motivate and empower them as citizens to take positive actions to live justly, sustainably and with regard for the rights of others. It helps children question, critique and understand what is happening in the world within a framework of human rights, equality and social justice' (p.8).

Please note, Wellbeing is one of the 8 principles of Junior Cycle whilst Fostering Wellbeing is recognised as a key competency in this draft framework in addition to Wellbeing as one of the five broad curriculum areas outlined in the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework.

Interdependence, the inter-connectedness of people and environments, local and global has never been so important. This includes the significant contexts of globalisation and sustainable development. Whilst the key competency *Being a digital learner*, is recognised as 'enabling children to critically engage and contribute in a digitally connected and interdependent world', no further reference is made to interdependence. IDEA feels that more consideration needs to be given to this in the key competencies or the eight overarching principles of teaching and learning that schools need to consider in pursuing the curriculum vision.

Digital learning:

There is an increasing emphasis on digital teaching and learning in education and in the draft framework. It is important that teachers' capacity to develop students' digital information, learning

and communication skills is enhanced and that work is done to tackle any digital divide that may exist in schools. IDEA does support the inclusion of 'being a digital learner' as a key competency in the draft framework.

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.

The primary curriculum provides an important context for real-life learning through local, national and international partnerships that support children's development as global citizens. IDEA recognises the importance of the **8 overarching principles as outlined in Table 1**, in particular Partnership. The GCE sector in Ireland has a long-standing relationship with primary schools over many decades and has worked directly with schools, through various programmes of IDEA members/Civil society organisation to enhance teaching and learning in relation to GCE. IDEA

would like to see these experiences as being central to the primary framework.

Please note, Wellbeing is one of the 8 principles of Junior Cycle whilst Fostering Wellbeing is recognised as a key competency in this draft framework in addition to Wellbeing as one of the five broad curriculum areas outlined in the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework.

In addition to the five broad curriculum areas above, priority should be given to the following **interdisciplinary topics** when renewing the curriculum areas, namely **global citizenship, and sustainability**. These transversal themes should be reflected in all curriculum areas/modules where applicable. This will provide a good foundation for the key statements of learning at junior Cycle and various elements that have been integrated into curriculum areas at junior cycle, such as sustainability as included in Science, Home Economics and Geography at junior cycle. This will allow for progression for learners from primary to junior cycle. Whilst IDEA welcomes Wellbeing and Social and Environmental Education, IDEA feels strongly that synergies should be made between these curriculum areas so that for example learners understand wellbeing in the context of Social and Environmental Education and that learners understand how the two are related, and their curriculum nurtures respect for all, builds a sense of belonging to a common humanity and helps children become responsible and active global citizens, who are able and willing to contribute to the wellbeing of people and planet.

The draft framework makes reference to strands and elements in **Table 3: Components in curriculum specifications**. One way to ensure global citizenship and sustainability is embedded in all areas and stages of the curriculum across primary would be to consider these as **cross-cutting themes or elements** and therefore essential areas of learning in all areas of the curriculum, from mathematics, science and technology education to arts education.

In relation to **Table 3: Components in curriculum specifications**, it would be useful to link or make reference to the key competencies and principles and how they relate to the specific curriculum specifications. Perhaps an **Overview: Links** section would be useful, similar to those included in the specifications at Junior Cycle, for example see [here](#), page 6.

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.

Assessment:

IDEA supports meaningful assessment and progression, with assessment that is collaborative and integral to high- quality teaching and learning involving children, teachers, parents and others, that provides information that enhances teaching and informs and supports progression in children's learning across the curriculum. IDEA supports the three types of assessment as set out in figure 4 of the draft framework.

Transitions in primary but also into post-primary should be taken into consideration when it comes to designing a framework for assessment. Throughout a child's time in primary school, teachers use information gathered through intuitive and planned assessment as well as through assessment events, to help shape meaningful and engaging activities and experiences for children aiding progression in their learning. IDEA agrees that it is important that those teachers have opportunities for professional conversations about the child's learning and about how they can be further supported in their learning and also feel that a meaningful assessment is made available when the child moves into post-primary.

Assessment should be inclusive and provide all pupils with equal opportunities to demonstrate their performance and achievements. It is important that it is free from bias and does not disadvantage pupils. A fair assessment should also be open and transparent to all staff, pupils and parents.

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.

Please email your submission to PCRRsubmissions@ncca.ie

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.

Link with *Aistear* and *the Framework for Junior Cycle*:

As mentioned above, IDEA strongly believes that the Primary Curriculum Framework should build on previous and subsequent learning experiences and educational cycles/phases, *Aistear* and the Framework for Junior Cycle in particular, for the reasons outlined in the section above in relation to curriculum connections between preschool, primary and post-primary schools.

Active methodologies:

IDEA is in support of increased use of active methodologies for teaching and learning. In order to support critical thinking, respect for different perspectives, equality and interdependence, children must have the opportunities to *practice* these skills and values. Active methodologies and GCE allows students to engage actively in their learning. Active methods are essential where children engage in dialogue and work together to understand the world and their place in it. Engagement with the core concepts of GCE involves the head, the heart and hands and supports new actions in the lives of children, even at a small-scale level. IDEA supports the principles of engagement and pedagogy in allowing students to explore real life issues in relation to Global Citizenship Education.

Student/learner voice and a democratic classroom:

IDEA welcomes statements in the draft framework on placing democratic practices at the centre of the learning process, although little reference to student voice. One of the biggest educational challenges that teachers face today is how to address classroom practices from a truly inclusive and democratic perspective. Student voice is underpinned by children's rights and democratic practices. Student voice construct at whole-school level, should be facilitated to become a meaningful instrument for student voice for active citizenship and democratic practice at whole-school level. It is important to make reference to this in a framework for primary curriculum. Perhaps this should be included in the principles as outlined in the draft framework, perhaps as part of the principle on engagement.

Learning environment and an emphasis on outdoor learning:

IDEA supports the inclusion of Learning environments as one of the principles of the draft framework. Learning environments, indoor or outdoor can make the curriculum come alive and completely alter the learning experiences provided for children. Taking the curriculum outside can improve attainment, increase engagement, and develop a wide range of skills including problem solving, communication and resilience. **Outdoor learning** provides endless opportunities for experiential, contextual and applied education, such as the outdoor classrooms/spaces that have been created as a result of COVID-19.

At a time when we are increasingly concerned about the physical and emotional wellbeing of our children and young people, and question whether they will leave education with the skills and competencies they will need for the future, outdoor learning brings with it a range of benefits which are now widely evidenced, acknowledged and accepted, particularly in relation to Education for Sustainable Development. Outdoor learning can offers one approaches for children people to engage with the world around them, and provides a stimulating context to explore how we can all contribute to a more sustainable present and future.

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