

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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Name	
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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

Please email your submission to PCRRsubmissions@ncca.ie

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

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

Section 1

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

Firstly, thank you for the opportunity to respond. I do so in a personal capacity. My comments include a light critique of draft Primary Curriculum framework and a few suggestions as an advocate for the arts, imagination and creativity.

Reading **Vision**: Imagination is mentioned in a limited way within the document. I think imagination is some fundamental to primary education and any vision of primary education should enshrine that term. Imaginative development is fundament every child's development. It is critical with regard to any curriculum revision, which aims for children's holistic development in a child-centred way. I would like to see the term **imagination** addressed more within the framework.

Regarding **Principles**: I think there is scope to include a ninth principle, which concerns the development of self-identity, self-expression, self-esteem and self-efficacy. Primary education should ensure that all children develop a positive sense of oneself, self-worth and self-determinism. *Relationships, partnerships and community* are mentioned but care, development and celebration of self is omitted.

Regarding **key competencies**: I am glad to creativity presented as a key competency but I think there is scope to unpack what is meant by term. It would be worthwhile to unpack the competency more in relation to so-named *creative habits of mind COH* or *studio habits*. I am wondering also where does the expressive and performative aspect of learning come into play. There is no mention of performance and the term expression is mentioned mainly in terms of the arts and digital learning. I ask might another competency concerning expression/ communication be included e.g. being expressive or being communicative. In addition, there should be some discrimination made between the different kinds of creative outputs e.g. invention, innovation, artistic work, performance or conceptual etc.

Regarding **curriculum subject areas**: I am happy to see Arts and digital technologies aligned under the term creativity. Both will benefit from this connection in terms of both contemporarising the arts curriculum and affording exciting arts-based creative use of technologies for creating, composing, curating and critiquing etc. The challenge, however, might be to retain the balance between the visceral and tangible experiences of mixing paints as opposed to the digital virtual experience of use paint software. On a separate note, it is important that we retain and use the discrete terms of visual arts, music and drama, dance, film and new media as opposed to the arts where appropriate so that they do not lose their identity or status with the new framework.

Regarding the paragraph on **Arts Education**: There is no reference within regarding the performative value of arts. Performance, display and critique about process and product are essential and enjoyable parts of learning about and through the arts. There is no mention of subject specific knowledge acquisition or subject specific lexicon development, which are essential in order to engage with cultural experiences with a sense of self-efficacy and confidence. I think it important to record that children be afforded ample

opportunities to critique the ever-increasing diversity of art and appreciate how the arts both respond and contribute to culture.

Regarding the paragraph on **Integration**: Because works of art are priori integrated, they lend themselves especially well for really interesting cross-curricular experiences. However, the arts are often subsumed by other subjects through subservient integration or reduced as a methodology for learning only. I think there could be a mention here of this potential pitfall and encourage more (i) co-equal integration, (ii) a double-focused approach with discrete and integration lessons and (iii) consider arts-led or integrated arts (arts only) experiences as well. Perhaps the term integration could also be replaced with *cross-curricular learning*.

Regarding **assessment**: I think performance-based and arts-based assessment could be mentioned. Both are under utilised as effective and enjoyable modes of assessment and excellent ways of enabling children illustrate their understanding as well as the development of other key competencies including collaboration.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Data Protection

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Thank you for your submission.

Please email your submission to PCRRsubmissions@ncca.ie