

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	Noirin Burke
Position	Secretariat
Organisation	Irish Ocean Literacy Network
Date	29/1/2021
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).

The Irish Ocean Literacy Network, IOLN which was formed in 2016, is an all-Ireland group of organisations including public sector, research, and non-governmental stakeholders with the vision to achieve an ocean literate society.

An ocean literate society is described as one that understands the ocean's influence on us and our influence on it. Its membership (up to 90) is very diverse, stretches from coast to coast and all focussed on our maritime and marine interests.

Of our 116 members, approximately 35% are involved in formal education, working from Montessori to 3rd level. You can find more information about the network at www.irishoceanliteracy.ie

In the context of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021 – 2030 ("The Decade" for short), Ocean Literacy will play a key role to transform ocean knowledge into action. As part of the Decade, OL will help influence the ocean science research agenda by identifying the science questions that are most relevant to society, promote positive actions within society for a sustainable ocean and encourage young people to take in driving the ocean economy or engaging with marine science. For more information on the Ocean Decade see <https://oceandecade.org/>

Within this context the role of formal education and the Primary school curriculum is a key driver for ocean literacy in Ireland.

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

- The Irish Ocean Literacy Network welcomes the new framework which provide more flexibility to need the needs of the child and the school.
- We welcome the increased emphasis on PE and SPHE time which will provide more opportunities for students to connect to their outdoor environment, including freshwater and marine.
- The Irish Ocean Literacy Network aims to create an ocean literate society across the Island of Ireland. This includes schools, communities and wider society. Through increased ocean literacy, we empower people of all ages to understand their connection with the ocean and its connection to them. Through this higher understanding citizens of all ages should be able to communicate about the ocean in a meaningful way, and make informed actions for a positive ocean. We welcome the frameworks reference to the importance of the family and community in education.
- We feel the continuity of learning and interconnection of subjects is highly important, and would recommend the continuation of theme based learning into stage 3 and 4.
- We would like to highlight the links between the school curriculum and Ocean Literacy and delivery of STEM, digital learning and wellbeing.
- We welcome the connections between the Aistear curriculum, and New Junior Cycle curriculum, in particular the role of problem solving, skills based learning and cross-curricular methodologies,
- We would welcome a reference to oceans and its links to human health and wellbeing as identified in <https://sophie2020.eu/>
- We would like to highlight the opportunity of Ireland to showcase marine in STEM and geography to align with the EU Blue Schools Initiative which aims to inspire teacher, school director or staff of education services, to challenge their students, from kindergarten, primary, lower and upper secondary, technical or vocational schools, to develop a “Find the blue” project that links them to the ocean or the sea.

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.

- We welcome the increased flexibility of the draft primary curriculum framework to address the needs and learning styles of all children, and the needs of the school.
- Increased flexibility in timetabling and planning is also seen as a positive action, providing more time for schools to engage in outdoor activities, including marine and freshwater locations, providing flexibility to work around weather and tides.

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 IOLN welcomes increased connections between preschool, primary and post primary curriculums. The importance of our ocean, ocean services and the links between ocean and climate regulation and human health makes ocean literacy an important tool in peoples understanding, awareness and motivation to make positive environmental choices.

It is vitally important that this message is communicated across preschool, primary and post primary levels.

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 Irish Ocean Literacy Network welcomes a focus on the development of student's skills, value and attitudes as well as knowledge. The increased emphasis on wellbeing, digital learning and arts provides a valuable platform for incorporating ocean literacy, our connection to water, new innovation in ocean exploration and monitoring, and use of art for stimulating conversation and dialogue around marine litter and ocean issues.

The Irish Ocean Literacy Network would welcome the inclusion of the ocean in wording of one or more of curriculum areas, for example the role of the ocean and outdoor environments in SPHE and wellbeing.

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

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- 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 Irish Ocean Literacy Network welcomes an integrated approach to the learning experience, however we feel this should be continued to stages 3 and 4.

If subject based learning is implemented in stages 3 and 4 we would welcome the inclusion of ocean on the curriculum.

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.

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The Irish Ocean Literacy Network welcomes the role of parents and families in children's education, with particular focus on our off-shore islands, coastal communications and connections to our maritime heritage and culture which are an integral part of who we are as an island nation.

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 Irish Ocean Literacy Network welcomes the link between *Aistear* and the Framework for Junior Cycle, both areas where Ocean literacy can be incorporated in exploring the world around us, identify how the ocean connects us all and addressing societal issues such as climate change and the role of the ocean in human health, fisheries and food production.

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.

Thank you for your submission.

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