



# NCCA

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta  
Curaclaim agus Measúnachta  
National Council for  
Curriculum and Assessment

## Press Release

### NCCA opens most significant primary consultation in 25 years

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) today opens the public consultation on the redevelopment of the Primary School Curriculum. This landmark step marks the most significant redevelopment of the curriculum in 25 years. Much has changed in our world since the current primary curriculum was introduced in 1999. The children in our primary school classrooms are the adults of tomorrow, and as we look ahead to the world they will live and work in it is important that their experiences in school provide solid foundations for them to thrive and to flourish and reach their full potential.

Speaking about the significance of the consultation, Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD, said "I encourage all educators, parents, and stakeholders to contribute to this consultation on the latest stage of primary curriculum change. Together, we can create a curriculum that empowers our children to thrive and succeed in our modern and changing world."

This consultation provides an opportunity for members of the public to have their say on the future of primary education by sharing their views on the draft curriculum specifications for:

- Arts Education (Art, Drama and Music)
- Modern Foreign Languages in the Primary Language Curriculum
- Social and Environmental Education (History and Geography)
- Science, Technology and Engineering
- Wellbeing (Social, Personal and Health Education, and Physical Education).

The drafting of these specifications has been supported by an extensive development process that has included collaborating with Development Groups, drawing on a robust research base, listening to the voices of key stakeholders including children, teachers and school leaders, and collaborating with an advisory panel.

The *Primary Curriculum Framework* for all primary and special schools, launched one year ago, sets the vision, principles, key competencies, and structure of the curriculum. Flowing from the framework, the draft curriculum documents, published today, set out a number of new proposals, some of which include:

- Placing an increased emphasis on some existing areas of the current curriculum such as Physical Education (PE) and Social, Personal and Health Education within Wellbeing, digital learning and sustainability.
- Introducing new aspects of learning such as Modern Foreign Languages (for children in Third to Sixth Classes), Engineering, and a broader Arts Education including dance and media arts.
- Strengthening linkages with learning provided through *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and connections with learning in the *Framework for Junior Cycle*.

- Placing a renewed focus on 'how' children learn, including play, inquiry, integrated learning, project-based learning and digital learning approaches, and promoting critical thinking and problem solving.
- Presenting broad learning outcomes which provide flexibility to respond to emerging priorities and promoting an integrated approach to learning and teaching to reflect children's lived experience in an interconnected and interdependent world.

Findings of this important consultation will help inform the finalisation of the curriculum specifications. These specifications will shape children's learning for the next decade and beyond.

Welcoming the opening of the consultation, Arlene Forster, NCCA's Chief Executive, noted:

"The consultation beginning today marks another important step in redeveloping the primary curriculum. I encourage everyone to take this opportunity to get involved to help ensure that the curriculum continues to play its role in supporting great teaching and learning for all children across our primary and special schools in the years ahead."

The consultation runs from March 6<sup>th</sup> to June 7<sup>th</sup> 2024 and includes focus group events, questionnaires, written submissions, work with schools networks, a consultative seminar and bilateral meetings with stakeholders.

Gathering the voice of children is another important aspect of the consultation and involves working with schools to hear from children themselves.

The following are ways in which members of the public can become involved:

- **Focus Group Events:** Online and in-person focus groups will be conducted from March to May 2024 for teachers, school leaders and parents.
- **Questionnaires:** There are two online questionnaires, one for education professionals and one for parents. Each should take no more than ten minutes to complete.
- **Written submissions:** Individuals, groups and organisations are also invited to submit written general feedback and / or more specific feedback on one or more of the draft curriculum specifications.

Further information can be found at the dedicated Consultation webpage

<https://ncca.ie/en/primary/primary-developments/primary-curriculum-review-and-redevelopment/consultation-2024/>.

NCCA endeavours to hear all voices and welcomes all feedback on the draft curriculum specifications.

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#### **Note to Editors:**

For further information on the consultation or to access the draft specifications, please visit <https://ncca.ie/en/primary/primary-developments/primary-curriculum-review-and-redevelopment/consultation-2024/>

**Social media:**

Twitter/ X: @nccaie

Facebook: @nccaireland

Instagram: ncca\_irl

LinkedIn: NCCAie

**Contacts:**

Dr Patrick Sullivan, Deputy CEO, NCCA [patrick.sullivan@ncca.ie](mailto:patrick.sullivan@ncca.ie)

**Background information:**

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is a statutory body of the Department of Education. The twenty-six members of the Council are appointed by the Minister for a four-year term. The members represent the partners in education, industry and trade union interests, parents' organisations and other educational interests. The Council also includes one nominee each of the Minister for Education and the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The Minister for Education appoints the Chairperson. The Council is supported in its work by three boards and a number of development groups. Members of these represent similar stakeholders to Council. The day-to-day work of the Council is led by the Chief Executive Officer supported by a full-time executive staff.

**Publications and Reports**

[Primary Curriculum Framework](#) (Department of Education, 2023)