



The redeveloped Primary School Curriculum – key messages for early enactment

Introduction

The redeveloped Primary School Curriculum aims to provide a strong foundation for every child to thrive and flourish. It supports high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment that is inclusive and evidence-based, recognising the right of all children to make progress in all areas of their learning and development. The redevelopment of the curriculum has been informed by national and international research, the voices of stakeholders, feedback and consultation, and sustained work with school communities.

The launch of this curriculum signals a significant shift in schools and across the wider system. The curriculum is intended to be used flexibly, thus stimulating a sense of agency and context-specific ownership. This is not solely the work of schools but all stakeholders of the education system. Change can, at times, be challenging. Negotiating this change will require mutual adaptation, encouragement and support, and a shift from policy implementation to policy enactment. Enactment of the redeveloped Primary School Curriculum involves reimagining learning, teaching and assessment in light of the curriculum's principles, ensuring that every decision in education is guided by what the curriculum values most.

The curriculum comes to life in the hands of the committed, skilful and agentic professionals in our schools.

It also comes to life through the voices and choices of children, and through the partnership of parents and families who support learning. Primary education is uniquely placed to build on children's early learning experiences and support their progression through primary and into post-primary education, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for their future lives. With this in mind, the following key messages for enactment can support all who encounter the curriculum in the coming years.

We are building on our strengths to support every child to reach their potential

The redeveloped Primary School Curriculum is for all children in primary and special schools. It builds on the strengths of the 1999 Primary School Curriculum to provide a strong foundation for every child to thrive and flourish. Its enactment calls for renewed focus on the curriculum's vision, ensuring that learning, teaching and assessment are intentionally shaped to support inclusion, engagement, progression, and holistic development. This means drawing on our collective expertise, exercising professional agency, and adapting practice to reflect the curriculum's vision and meet the diverse needs of all children, including those experiencing disadvantage, with special educational needs, and from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

We are all learning and growing as we enact the curriculum

Enacting the redeveloped curriculum is a collective journey of learning and change for everyone. This journey builds on existing knowledge and practice, and through collaboration, sharing, and dialogue, deeper understandings of the curriculum will develop to support meaningful enactment. Time and patience are essential to ensure that learning and change take place at a pace that allows sustainable transformation across the system and within schools and classrooms.

We will all work together to ensure positive learning experiences for every child

Successful curriculum enactment is a whole-system responsibility that involves every individual in the education community. Teachers, school leaders, children, families, initial teacher education providers, support services, inspectors, and education authorities all have important contributions to make in realising the curriculum's vision. Achieving this requires strong communication, collaboration, and shared responsibility within classrooms, across schools, and throughout the wider education system to ensure co-ordinated and consistent support and encouragement for all. It is about what we do for each other. When these efforts are sustained, they have a lasting impact on the learning and development of all children in our schools.

We have agency to make the curriculum engaging and meaningful for every child

The enactment of the redeveloped curriculum offers everyone an opportunity to embrace a renewed sense of agency and ownership of the curriculum's vision. Enactment is not simply about applying existing practices, it is about making informed, professional decisions that reflect the curriculum's vision for inclusion, engagement, progression, and holistic development. Cultivating agency among teachers and children means enabling thoughtful choices that bring the curriculum to life in diverse contexts. A sense of agency evolves over time and is strengthened when individuals feel trusted, have space to innovate and work together towards the curriculum's vision.

