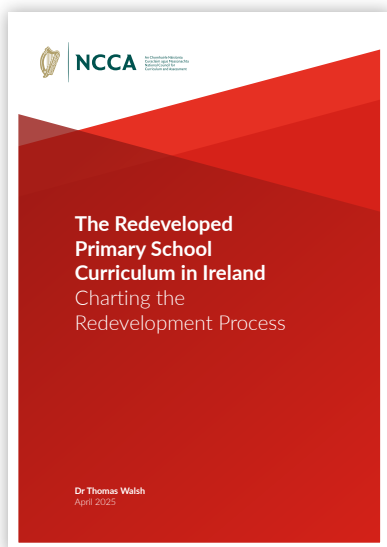


The Redeveloped Primary School Curriculum in Ireland

Executive Summary | Charting the Redevelopment Process

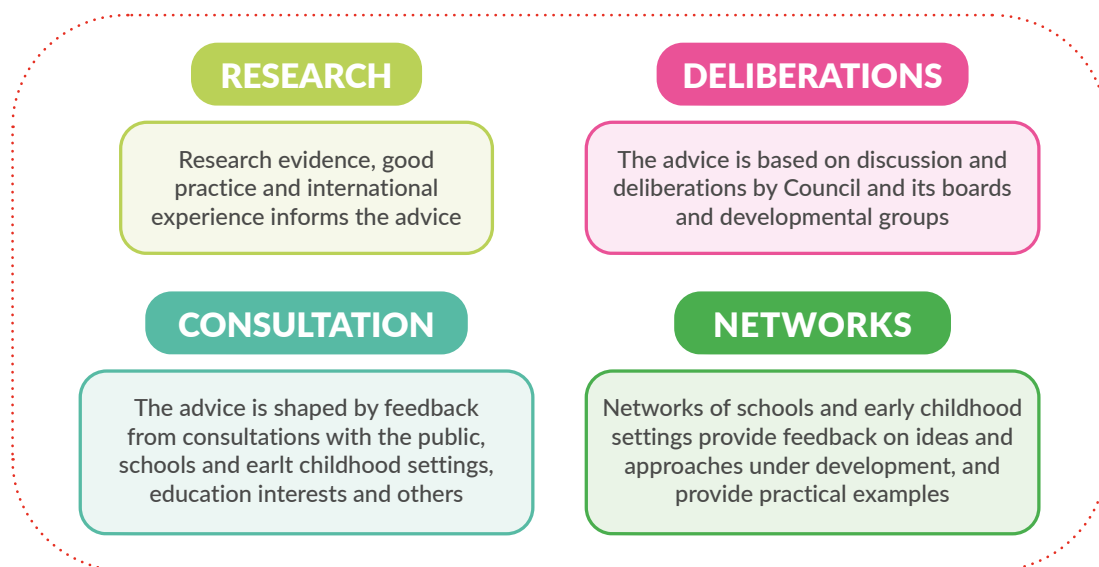


A redeveloped primary school curriculum is nearing completion and will be introduced into primary and special schools in Ireland in September 2025. This represents the fourth substantial revision to the primary school curriculum since the advent of political independence in 1922.

The purpose of the Charting the Redevelopment Process report is to delineate and document the process undertaken by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in redeveloping the primary school curriculum between 2012 and March 2025. This executive summary provides an overview of the report and the full document is available on the [NCCA website](#). Documenting the journey of curriculum redevelopment is important to ensure that the process is transparent and captured for those in Ireland and internationally who wish to understand the individual and collective steps taken in reshaping Ireland's primary school curriculum.

This report charts the redevelopment process across four distinct but interrelated strands that have been identified by the NCCA as the four interconnected elements which inform its development of advice on curriculum and assessment to the Minister for Education. As illustrated below, these are:

- **Research and policy developments** – this documents the key research and policy papers that were developed or commissioned by the NCCA to inform the redeveloped curriculum. These include a range of international audits, systematic literature reviews and thematic research reports, as well as research insights emanating from the NCCA-funded Children's School Lives project.
- **Consultations** – this documents the formal consultative processes facilitated by the NCCA to gather the views of children, parents, teachers, school leaders, boards of management, patrons and wider stakeholders in relation to the redeveloped curriculum. Strategies included online surveys, focus groups and seminar gatherings, as well as bespoke methods to elicit children's voices.
- **Networking** – this documents the wide array of networking opportunities developed and availed of by the NCCA to garner the views of the education sector in terms of curriculum redevelopment. These included a range of national seminars, engagement with the Schools Forum and the work of the Advisory Panel (Primary).
- **Deliberations** – this documents the internal processes within the NCCA in terms of working with the totality of evidence garnered through research, consultations and networking to make decisions in terms of producing the redeveloped primary school curriculum. This work was led by the NCCA Executive Team and involved wider representative structures such as NCCA Development Groups, the NCCA Board for Early Childhood and Primary and the NCCA Council.



Within each strand, key milestones in the redevelopment journey are explored, chronologically for the most part. While the four strands are useful in terms of documenting the key pillars of redevelopment, there are often overlaps in terms of these processes (e.g., research reports often informed consultation processes or networking events). As the processes and timelines for the development of the *Primary Language Curriculum* and *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* differed from the other elements of the redeveloped curriculum, these are delineated separately. Each strand references the multiplicity of publications and outputs that both informed and were outcomes of the redevelopment process, with a particular focus on those commissioned or published by the NCCA.



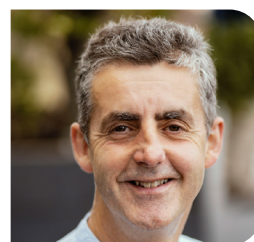
Professor Emerita Louise Hayward
University of Glasgow



Professor Jim Spillane
Northwestern University, Chicago



Dr Thomas Walsh
Maynooth University



Professor Dominic Wyse
University College London

Reflections on the redevelopment process are included from the four members of the Advisory Panel (Primary), namely Professor Louise Hayward, Professor Jim Spillane, Professor Dominic Wyse and Dr Thomas Walsh. These provide an international and external lens through which to reflect on the process to date

The redevelopment process has involved harnessing and distilling the voices and experience of partners across the entire landscape of education in Ireland, as well as perspectives from international research and experts. Through this process of thought partnering and ongoing dialogue, system and individual thinking have progressed a long way in the past decade as educational ideas and priorities were explored, discussed, contested and refined, and as new theories, concepts and pedagogies were interfaced with existing belief systems and practices. It is in the interfacing of the various forms of knowledge – research, policy and practice – that rich discussions and pathways forward emerged.

The long duration of, and the substantial reach of the primary curriculum redevelopment process, bodes well that it will prove educative for all those 'learning together' within the education system. But the journey is far from complete. The learning together and sense making must continue at all levels of the system and especially at school level; space and time must be provided for new shared and co-constructed understandings to emerge, to attend to the affective and emotional dimensions of curriculum change, for risk-taking and experimentation, and for the celebration of success.

Read the full report on NCCA.ie

