



NCCA

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



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	Evelyn Moriarty
Date	16/06/2022
E-mail	

Organisation submission details

Name	Scoil Naomh Pádraig, Ballyroan
Position	Mainstream Class Teacher. Assistant Principal 1
Organisation	Scoil Naomh Pádraig, Ballyroan
Date	16/02/2022
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 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*.

My overall response is very favourable.

The current climate is very complex and diverse and I think a lot of thought and research has gone into this initiative.

The curriculum needs to be changed to meet society's complex make-up.

Teaching, learning and assessment all need to be addressed under a different sphere and the new curriculum is proposing to do just that.

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.

First of all, planning is always a work in progress as all agentic professionals are only too aware. Every class is different and each teacher needs to reinvent himself/herself each year to meet the demands, abilities and skills of the pupils in front of him/her.

Therefore, the flexibility and acknowledgement of teachers as agentic professionals who know how to be flexible with timetabling and planning is a wonderful scaffolding for teachers.

It brings with it the freedom to be allowed teach as a class needs. Thank you.

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.

This is a recognition, an acknowledgement and an inclusion of prior learning and therefore a building on it so that the child continues to develop his/her learning journey.

This is very important and a plus for the new curriculum. It shows a broader understanding of the child and where they are at.

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.

These are absolutely excellent. They have struck a deep chord with me. All competencies together help to foster the foundations of a well-balanced, focussed, confident adult. Society today, is SO complex that children need to be well prepared for their future as adults. Being an active citizen, being able to communicate, being mathematical and understand the world, being digitally competent, being creative, learning to be a learner and with the formal introduction to wellbeing which leads to having high self-esteem and being emotionally intelligent; these competencies are so apt.

In my opinion, LEARNING TO BE A LEARNER is the foundation stone to all competencies.

Learning to be a learner is not just being an academic learner... it means learning to be a learner of ALL competencies.

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.

Moving from eleven subjects to five broad curriculum areas is a huge plus and alleviates curriculum overload...

Language, Mathematics, Science & Technology Education, Wellbeing, Arts Education, Social & Environmental Education (the five areas)

The fact that the curriculum areas support an integrated approach to teaching and learning, while support progression in learning is really advantageous and it also underpins assessment in its fullest form...

Greater choice in planning for, and facilitating coherent and relevant rich learning experiences gives the teacher a wonderful scaffolding with which to work.

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For stages 1&2, Language, Mathematics, Science & Technology Education in subject areas will ensure that children at this age have the BASICS. These basics are REALLY important as they are the root of academic learning for Stages 3&4. The other areas- Wellbeing, Social & Environmental Education & Arts education which do not define subject areas are **nuanced by their learning outcomes** and set the foundation for more subject-based areas.

Stages 3&4, 3rd to 6th class... Here all areas become more differentiated into subjects leading to the progression of the children's knowledge and learning and furthermore, bringing forth an awareness that different subjects are a way of organising the world and also giving meaning to good conceptual thought and research.

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.

Pedagogy:

Teachers, seen as skilful and agentic professionals sets the tone for their competency. The stated aspects of pedagogy clearly set out the role and skilfulness of teachers and this is a very positive scenario for them.

It acknowledges what we are really about as efficient teachers and where our thoughts, skills, knowledge and common sense are to the fore. Subject-knowledge, professional-knowledge, relational-knowledge and understanding and knowledge of the classroom and the school context all spelling out what pedagogy embraces.

It's all about **communication and interactions**.

Assessment:

The three key messages outlined in Webinar 3 that supported the PLC are also outlined in this draft framework:

- › **Assessment exists along a continuum**
- › **Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning**
- › **Assessment provides information for various stakeholders, and most importantly for children**

These three points are all very necessary in order to paint a full and realistic picture of the child.

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*.
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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.

Increased emphasis on existing areas:

Yes, you cannot throw the baby out with the bathwater so the saying goes... It is very important to keep what's there already and working well but needs more emphasis...

A List of what they are; ...

- › Child-centredness
- › Creativity
- › Assessment
- › PLC... relatively new but other subjects are now modelled on it with learning outcomes...

New areas of learning:

- › An Active citizen... nuanced in the 1999 curriculum but now really brought to the fore
- › Learning to be a learner
- › Wellbeing also brought to the fore
- › Religious/Ethical/ Multi-Belief Education
- › Mathematics, Science & Technology Education... together

Covid-19

Since the publication of the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework*, Covid-19 has presented a big challenge for schools. Please give your views on the implications of schools' experience of the pandemic for the finalisation of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*.

I think that it will be a big relief to all schools to get back to 'normal' and with the increased emphasis on wellbeing in the new curriculum, the challenges and anxieties that came to the fore with the onset of COVID-19 will be addressed and catered for.

I think it will add a lot of excitement to all classrooms and even though COVID hit after the publication of the *Draft Primary School Framework*, our changing, more demanding society and thorough research led to areas like wellbeing and religious and ethical knowledge been taken into big consideration. So, Well done!

Data Protection

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Thank you for your submission.

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