



IPPN Submission to NCCA

Consultation on the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications

June 2024

Introduction

As the professional body for primary school leaders, IPPN welcomes the opportunity to offer perspectives on the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications.

IPPN acknowledges and welcomes

- the ambition to provide a broad, holistic and aspirational curriculum and the avoidance of a more pragmatic, functional and limited focus
- the thoroughly considered and planned approach that has been taken to the development of the framework, in the first instance, and to the draft specifications
- the coherence of approach and structure that has been achieved across those specifications
- the measures that have been taken to address curriculum overload
- the reduced number and size of the documents detailing the specifications
- the comprehensive and multi-faceted consultation process that has been undertaken
- the primacy that has been given to student and teacher agency
- the flexibility that has been introduced into the specifications with regard to allocation of time.

Observations

This is a generational opportunity to embrace, implement and embed a curriculum that has the potential to have a profoundly positive impact on the learning and life experiences of children.

To better ensure that the opportunity is not missed, or not availed of to the fullest extent, it is IPPN's view that it is imperative that

- the nature/extent of the professional development and learning opportunities afforded to school staffs is both comprehensive and adequately funded/resourced
- the professional development and learning opportunities afforded to school leaders, with regard to leading the process of implementation of the curriculum, are designed and delivered by professionals with school leadership experience

- the conducive conditions are created to ensure that sufficient capacity exists within schools to enable the effective implementation of the curriculum, including
 - an additional allocation to all schools of discrete time for leadership
 - the undertaking of a comprehensive pre-implementation assessment of what impact the rolling out of a new curriculum will have on workload for schools
 - a pausing or scaling back of the rollout of other DE actions or initiatives during the implementation phase of the curriculum
 - engagement with the Primary Education Forum with regard to the pacing and implementation of change
- linkages are created and practical supports are provided to ensure that the guidance for the preparation for teaching and learning is aligned with the professional development on planning for the implementation of the revised curriculum
- practical support and advice is available to schools from the Inspectorate, in a non-evaluative context, to assist with the process of curriculum implementation
- meaningful professional development is afforded to all teachers with regard to the teaching of modern foreign languages
- the implications for Initial Teacher Education are considered and comprehensive engagement is undertaken with the HEIs to ensure that student teachers are equipped with the skills, competencies and confidence required to plan and deliver effective learning experiences that are in keeping with the revised curriculum.

For consideration

Is there a danger that this revised primary curriculum framework, with its emphasis on increased agency and flexibility, will exacerbate the disconnect that already exists between approaches and drivers in post-primary education?