

The Revised Curriculum

How we will assess your child and report to you

Information for Post-Primary Parents 2008/09



Department of
Education

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Dear Parent,

This leaflet sets out for you how the revised curriculum will affect the education your child is receiving. I have been able to visit many schools and see first hand how it is giving teachers more flexibility to meet the educational needs of all our children.

The world around us is changing rapidly. We need to ensure our education system is capable of helping our young people develop the essential skills they will need in the years ahead. Skills to equip them to use new technologies, to communicate well, to work as part of a team, as well as continuing to develop their levels of literacy and numeracy.

The revised curriculum contains all the essential elements your child will need to help inform their choices for future career options and I am confident that our Principals and teachers will continue to deliver it in the best interests of all our children and young people.



Caitríona Ruane
Minister of Education



Revised Curriculum

A revised school curriculum is being introduced, covering the seven years of primary school (Years 1 to 7) and the first five years of post-primary school (Years 8 to 12) as follows:

Academic Year	Revised curriculum in for Year Groups
2007/08	Yrs 1,5,8,11
2008/09	Yrs 2,6,9,12
2009/10	Yrs 3,4,7,10

By June 2012 schools will have had at least three years of implementation for each year group.

Why a revised curriculum? What are the benefits for my child?

We live in changing times and the school curriculum needs to adapt to them. The revised curriculum will better prepare children for life and work in the 21st century,

providing them with the education and skills they need.

Some things are not changing. The areas covered by the revised curriculum are much the same as those covered under the previous curriculum. Developing your child's knowledge and understanding will continue to be a priority. And there will be a strong focus on reading, writing and maths, which are key to your child's progress in education and later life.

What is changing is that, unlike in the previous curriculum, the content for each area is not set out in great detail. There is now a greater emphasis on developing the skills your child needs – that is, what they can do, not just what they know and understand.

As we are not setting out the content of the curriculum in as much detail, schools/ teachers will have more flexibility over how they deliver the curriculum to meet children's needs.

Teachers, by adhering to the revised curriculum, will continue to concentrate on helping your child make progress in all areas of the curriculum and will support the development of your child's skills. This includes the sort of skills that employers are looking for, like the essential skills of reading, writing and maths, skills in ICT (Information and Communications Technology), the ability to communicate well, work with others and solve problems.

All this will better prepare your child for life and work in a changing world.

All children are entitled to a broad and balanced education, which they will get through the revised curriculum. For children who are experiencing learning difficulties, teachers will work with you as parents to identify children's needs and take action to meet them. If your child has special educational needs, as a result of a learning difficulty, the school will put in place an individual education plan. If the special educational

needs are very significant, the school may seek advice, support or an assessment from the local Education and Library Board.

What areas will the revised curriculum cover?

In addition to Religious Education, the areas covered by the revised curriculum are:

Post-primary
Language & Literacy
Mathematics & Numeracy
The Arts (Art & Design, Drama and Music)
Environment & Society (Geography, History)
Science & Technology
Learning for Life and Work (Personal Development, Citizenship, Employability. Also Home Economics in Years 8 to 10)
Physical Education
Modern Languages

The detailed content of the revised curriculum will change as your



child progresses from one Key Stage to another. The Key Stages are:

Key Stage 3	Years 8, 9 and 10 of post-primary school
Key Stage 4	Years 11 and 12 of post-primary school

These are the post-primary years when your child has to go to school. After Key Stage 4 they might go into a school sixth form or to a college of further education, or get training or a job.

The Entitlement Framework

As well as the revised curriculum, the Entitlement Framework will be introduced in 2013 for pupils aged 14 and above. When your child is choosing their GCSEs, A-Levels or other courses of the same level, their school will be able to provide access to a wider range of courses in order to best meet their needs. This provision will give them the opportunity to go on to further and higher education, to enter a training scheme or to take up employment.

The target date for the full implementation of the Entitlement Framework is September 2013 and by then schools will offer



a minimum number of courses (current targets – 24 courses at Key Stage 4 and 27 courses post 16). All schools will have to offer both general and applied courses. General courses may be more academic than applied courses. While applied courses are different in the way they are assessed they must be at the same level – broadly equivalent to GCSE at Key Stage 4 and GCE at post 16.

Some schools will be able to provide a wide range of courses themselves, but for many, access to the full Entitlement Framework will be secured through working with other schools, further education colleges and/or training organisations. Many schools are already working with each

other and with further education colleges in Learning Communities to increase the range of courses on offer to their pupils. Planning together in this way will ensure that whatever your child's interests and talents, there should be a more appropriate range of courses available linked into future careers pathways. Your child will receive high quality advice and guidance to help them when making their choices.

Assessment of Your Child's Progress

Your child will continue to be assessed by their class or subject teacher to see how they are doing at school. This helps teachers see what progress your child has made, including what your child finds easy or hard. This provides information which schools can report to you. It also helps the teacher plan how to help your child make further progress. It provides information to help older children make choices about the examination courses they will

follow and the qualifications and careers which they seek.

Teachers will continue to assess your child in all the different areas of the curriculum. This is to see what knowledge and understanding your child has gained during the school year. Teachers can use different ways to assess children and may use different forms of assessment to help them see where your child is at different points in the school year.

In the key areas of Language & Literacy and Mathematics & Numeracy, teachers at present carry out assessments to see the progress your child has made against certain levels. (At the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 children are expected to have reached certain levels.)

We will be making some changes to assessment arrangements once the revised curriculum is in place for all children in Years 1 to 12. This is to reflect the focus in the curriculum on necessary skills,

such as communication and using maths. Assessment will be against levels relating to these skills.

This will let you know how your child is doing and whether they have reached the level expected for their age in areas such as reading, writing and maths. You will get more information about these levels before they are used to assess your child. Children in Irish-medium schools or units will continue to be assessed through the medium of Irish.

In Years 12, 13 and 14, most children will sit GCSEs, AS and A-Level or other public examinations.

Reporting to You on Your Child's Progress

You will still get an annual report at the end of each school year. This will tell you how your child is doing in the various areas of the curriculum, including developing the skills of communication and using maths.

Over the next two years a more standard format is being

introduced for the annual report. This is sometimes known as the pupil profile. This means that no matter which school your child goes to, the report will have a similar layout. From June 2009 you will get such a report if your child is in Years 8 and 9. From June 2010 parents of all children in Years 8 to 12 will get an annual report in standard format.

Support for Schools and Teachers

Teachers are receiving training, and teaching materials and support are being provided to help all schools to deliver the revised curriculum and put in place the assessment and reporting arrangements. In addition, primary schools are receiving additional funding for classroom assistants and materials to help them meet the particular requirements of the curriculum for children in Years 1 and 2.

What else is happening?

The Education Minister, Caitriona Ruane, has made proposals about how children

should transfer from primary to post-primary schools from 2009/10 onwards. Transfer arrangements will not impact negatively on the revised curriculum nor will teachers be teaching to a test. This is a priority for the Minister and you will receive information about this from the Department in time for transfer 2010. All schools will still be delivering the revised curriculum and the assessment and reporting arrangements.

Where can I find more information?

You will receive information about the changes as they take effect for your child. You can also get more information on the Department of Education's website:

www.deni.gov.uk. If you would like to see more detail about the revised curriculum, assessment and reporting arrangements, you can visit the revised curriculum website at: www.nicurriculum.org.uk.

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