

New Primary Language Curriculum for English and Irish - Junior Infants to Sixth Class

Information Leaflet for Parents

The curriculum used in primary schools is changing. The new Primary Language Curriculum for **English** and **Irish** is the first part of this. Children in junior infants to second class have already been experiencing this new curriculum. Soon your child in third to sixth class will also be learning through it.



Who is the new Language Curriculum for?

The new curriculum for English and Irish is for all children from junior infants to sixth class in all schools - English-medium schools, Gaeltacht schools, Gaelscoileanna and special schools.

Why is there a new curriculum?

The curriculum is changing so that it is up-to-date with the times we live in, with developments in language learning and the introduction of the Free Preschool Years. Since the last curriculum (1999), society and communities have changed greatly, as has your child's learning environment. Teachers say they would like more guidance on the best ways to help children in their language learning. Thanks to research, we now know more about how children learn to speak,

read and write and how to help them make progress in ways that are well suited to their learning needs.

How is the new Language Curriculum different from the one introduced in 1999?

The new curriculum is structured to make it easier for teachers to support children learning both English and Irish. As a parent, the biggest difference you'll see is in *how* your child will learn the two languages in school. Over the coming years,

- your child will have lots of opportunities to talk in class, give their opinion and express their thoughts and ideas. Children will also be given the opportunity to explore and offer their opinions on poems, stories and messages written by others. The curriculum highlights the importance of children developing their oral language skills as well as learning to read and write.
- your child will be supported in making progress in oral language, reading and writing at a level and pace suited to them. The new Language Curriculum supports children with different learning strengths and needs.
- your child's language learning in the infant classes will happen through play and playful interactions with their friends and teacher in the classroom. This will help them to build on their language learning in the preschool years based on *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.

- your child will learn to think about and question what they read and to consider authors' different perspectives. This will help them to express their own preferences and opinions.
- your child will see links between English and Irish and come to understand that what they learn in one helps when learning the other language.
- your child may be exposed to languages other than English and Irish as the new Language Curriculum highlights the importance and value of acknowledging and promoting all children's home languages.
- your child will have opportunities to engage with technology in creative and imaginative ways, supporting a positive and responsible attitude towards its use.

Overall, the new Language Curriculum supports teachers in providing language learning experiences that will help each child reach their full potential in English and Irish.

How does the Language Curriculum help my child to learn Irish?

The new Language Curriculum will support your child to learn Irish at a pace and level that suits them. In an English-medium school, your child will be encouraged to use Irish in Irish lessons and during the school day.

Gaeltacht schools and Gaelscoileanna can choose to teach through Irish during the whole school day for a period up to the end of senior infants.

Where this happens, your child will learn English in school after this period of time. Schools work with parents and boards of management when making this decision.

Support is available at the website below to help you and your child to use Irish at home.

Is the rest of the primary curriculum changing?

Yes, the primary curriculum (1999) is currently being reviewed and will be redeveloped in the coming years. See www.ncca.ie/primary for more information.

Where can I find more information?

The Language Curriculum can be viewed at www.curriculumonline.ie. There are videos introducing the curriculum as well as other material looking at different aspects of language learning and teaching.

How can I support my child at home?

As a parent or guardian, you can encourage your child to talk about things that interest them and to have fun with reading and writing. You can also encourage your child to read different genres, such as stories and poems and to give their thoughts and opinions on them. You might also give them opportunities to take part in different types of writing, for example, creating a shopping list, sending an email to a relative, writing a story or report as part of a library project. Additional information for parents can be found at www.ncca.ie/en/primary/resources-for-parents.