



The Review of the Primary Curriculum

INTO Consultative Conference on Education

15ú Samhain 2019

Arlene Forster, Deputy CEO, NCCA

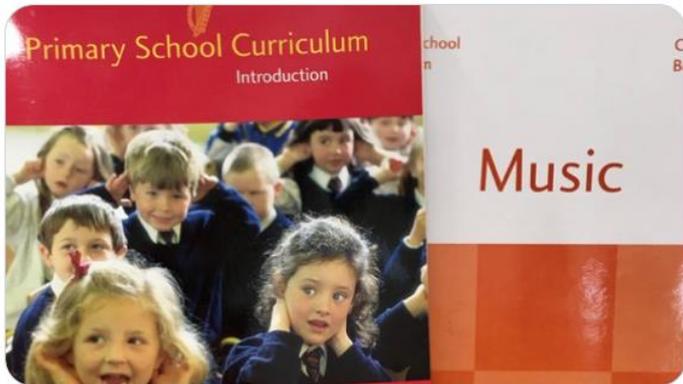
1999

Reeling in the Years



Regina Murphy, PhD · 09/09/2019

History: On this date 20yrs ago, the Primary School Curriculum 1999 was launched @dublincastleopw. 'Time for a change' was @IrishTimes header later. Then - as now. But v happy memories of all the negotiations it took to get to that point. Onwards! [irishtimes.com/news/education...](https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education...) #edchatie



NCCA and 4 others



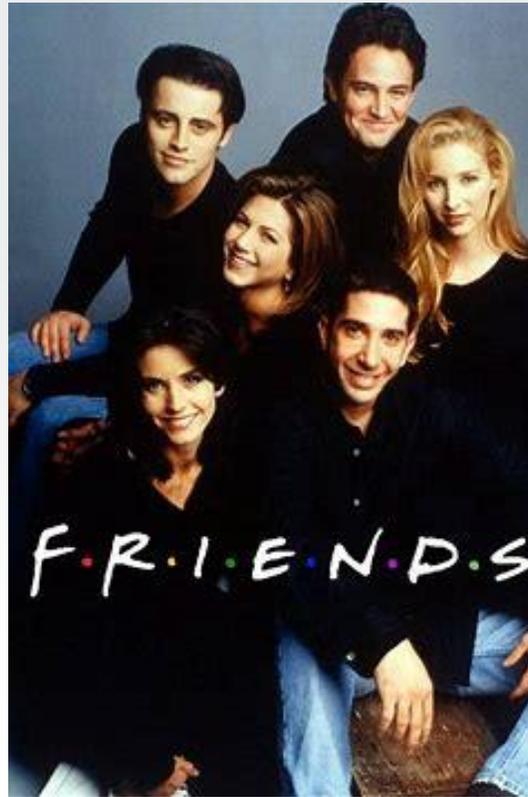
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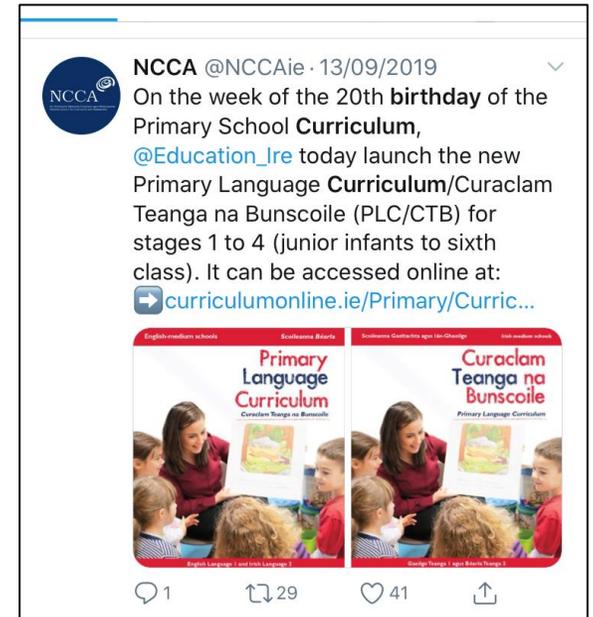
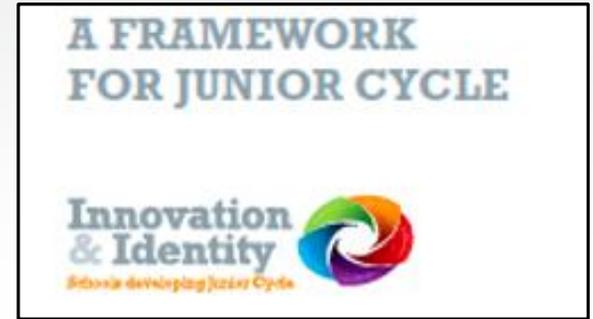
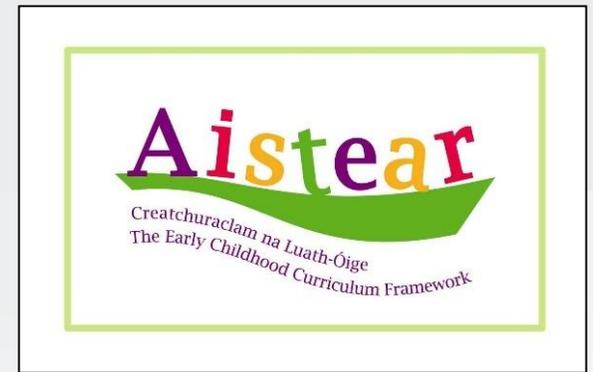


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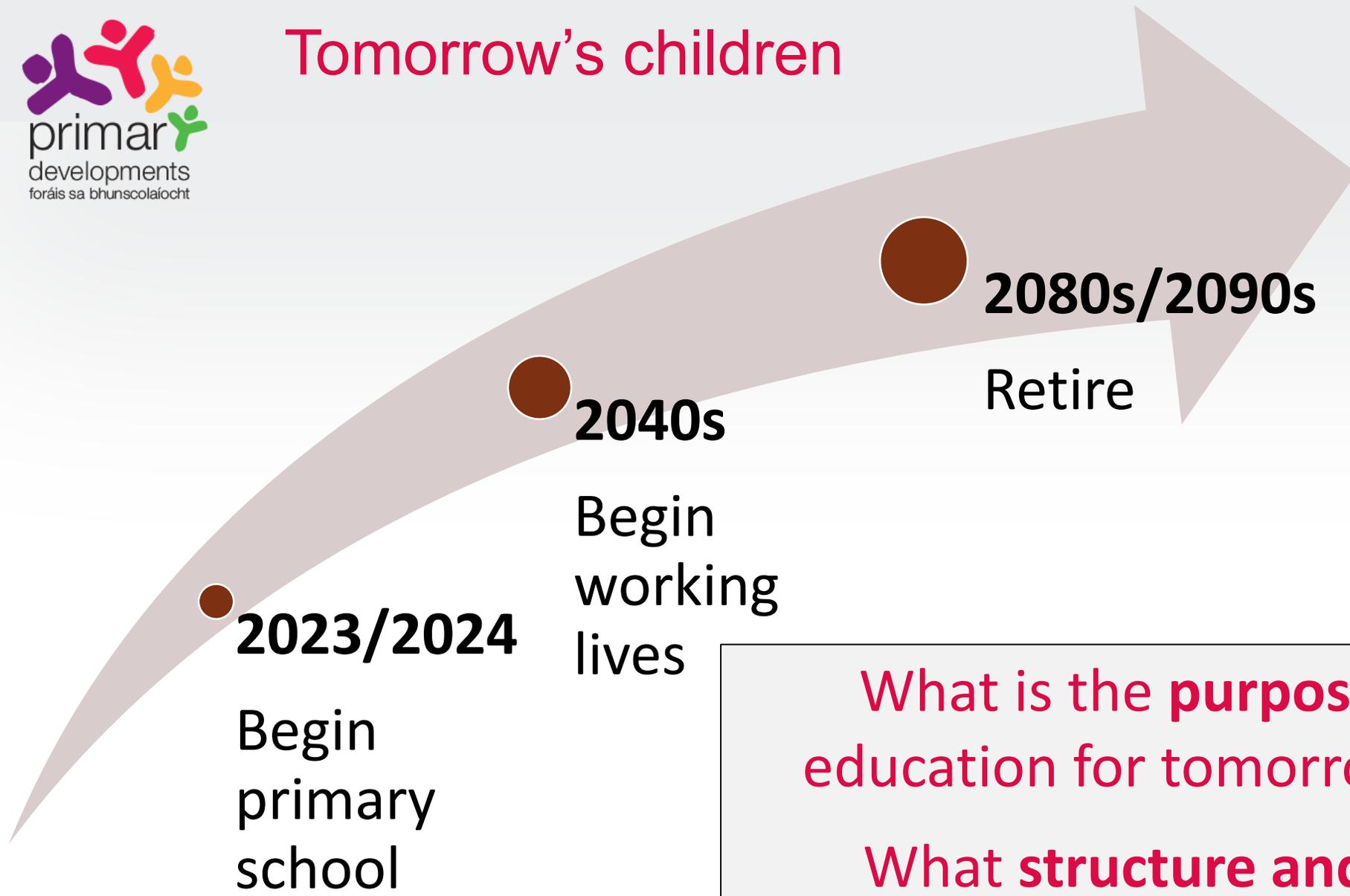


Two decades later

- 1999 curriculum is ‘of its time’
- Curriculum reviews and evaluations
- Work with schools
- Research
- Changing expectations
- Developments in the EC and JC sectors
- *Primary Language Curriculum /
Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile (2019)*



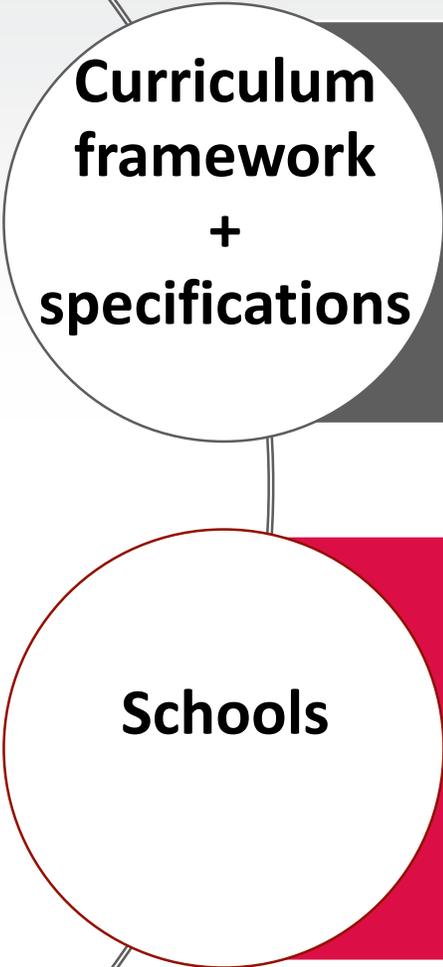
Tomorrow's children



What is the **purpose** of a primary education for tomorrow's children?

What **structure and components** within a curriculum can support this?

Directions in curriculum development



**Curriculum
framework
+
specifications**

Providing a shared sense of direction

Clear vision and principles – what is important and why

Broad tramlines supporting school agency

Schools

Teachers and principals as ‘curriculum makers’

Professional collaboration - time and space

Curriculum development shaped by school context

Review process



Three strands

- Drawing on extensive research
- Collaborating with education partners and wider stakeholders
- Working closely with schools and preschools

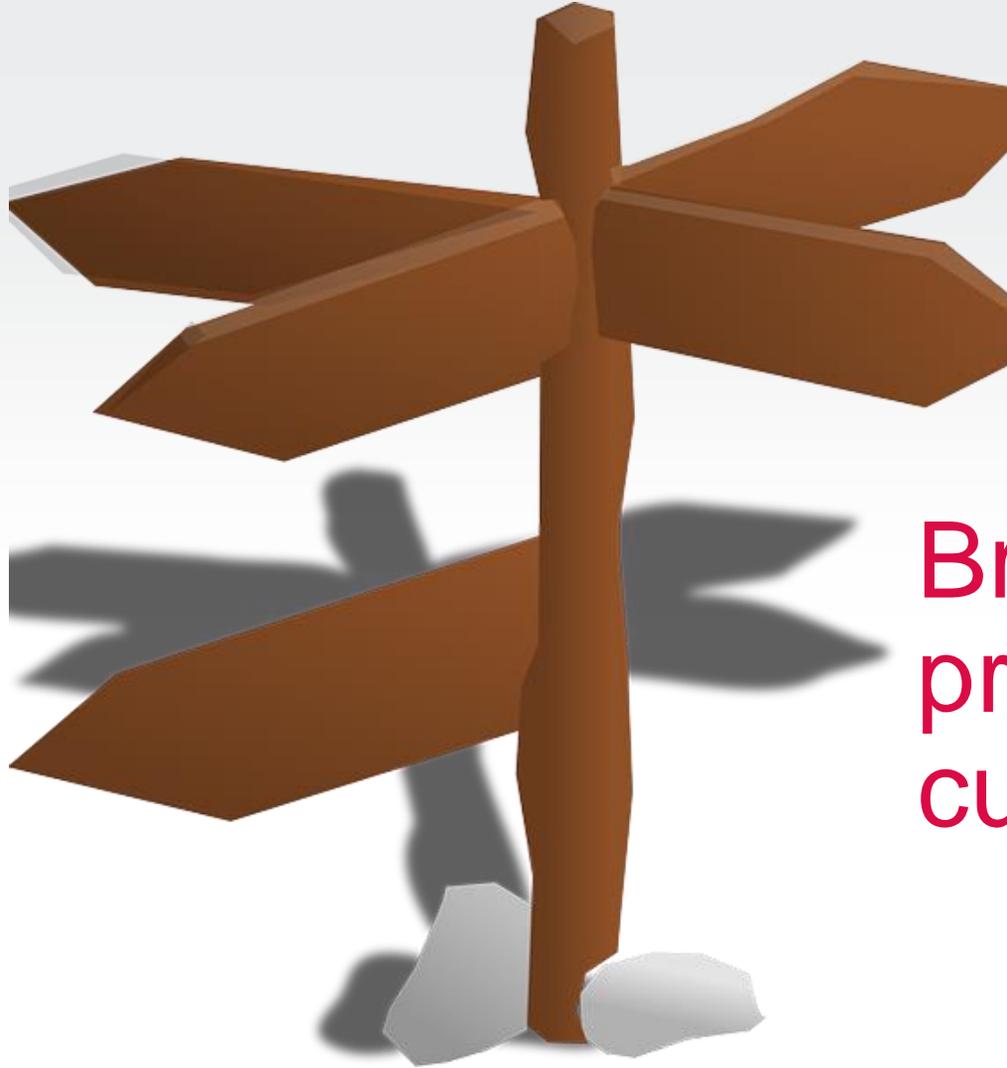
Building on the **successes** and **strengths** of the 1999 curriculum while responding to **challenges** and **changing needs and priorities**



Schools Forum

- Includes 44 schools representing the richness of primary school contexts
- Meets every 4-6 weeks
- Teachers and schools as central agents in curriculum development
- Share experiences, perspectives and reflections, and discuss key ideas for a redeveloped primary curriculum





Broad directions
proposed for
curriculum change

Draft Primary Curriculum Framework

Begins with a **vision** for the redeveloped curriculum...the uniqueness of each child and supporting him/her to grow, learn and flourish

- Teachers as **committed, skilful and agentic** professionals - **curriculum developers** working collaboratively with colleagues in their schools

Principles to guide teaching and learning

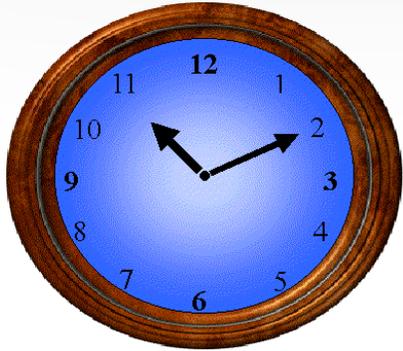


Priorities and structure

- Supporting educational **transitions**
- **Consolidating** initiatives, programmes and strategies – clarifying **what's important** for primary education
- Moving from subjects to a more **integrated curriculum** structure for early primary
- **Retaining subjects** to structure the curriculum for the later years in primary
- Exploring the integration of **new areas of learning** in the curriculum, e.g., key competencies, ERB and Ethics, modern foreign languages

Time allocations, learning and teaching

- Revisiting time allocations in light of calls for **more time** for some areas and requests for **new areas** of learning
- Providing **greater flexibility** with time allocations
 - Continuing with weekly allocations for language and maths, and considering this for the area of wellbeing
 - Moving to allocations over longer periods for other areas
 - Reinstating ‘discretionary time’ – with some guidance – each school decides in response to its own priorities
- Promoting more **play-based, inquiry-based** and **active** learning and teaching with a focus on the **outdoors**
- Re-conceptualising **assessment** as a central part of teachers’ work and valuing their professional judgements



Supporting and enabling change

- **Time** to become familiar with the new curriculum; time to work collaboratively with colleagues
- Ongoing access to high-quality and school-based **CPD**
- Creating opportunities for schools to balance **their priorities** alongside **national priorities**
- Focusing on complementary **policy alignment** to support and enable curriculum realisation
- Embedding curriculum changes in **Initial Teacher Education**
- Agreeing realistic and paced **timelines**
- Securing appropriate **resources**

Educational infrastructure

(drawing on work of Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015; Spillane, Hopkins and Sweet, 2018)

Redeveloping the Primary Curriculum

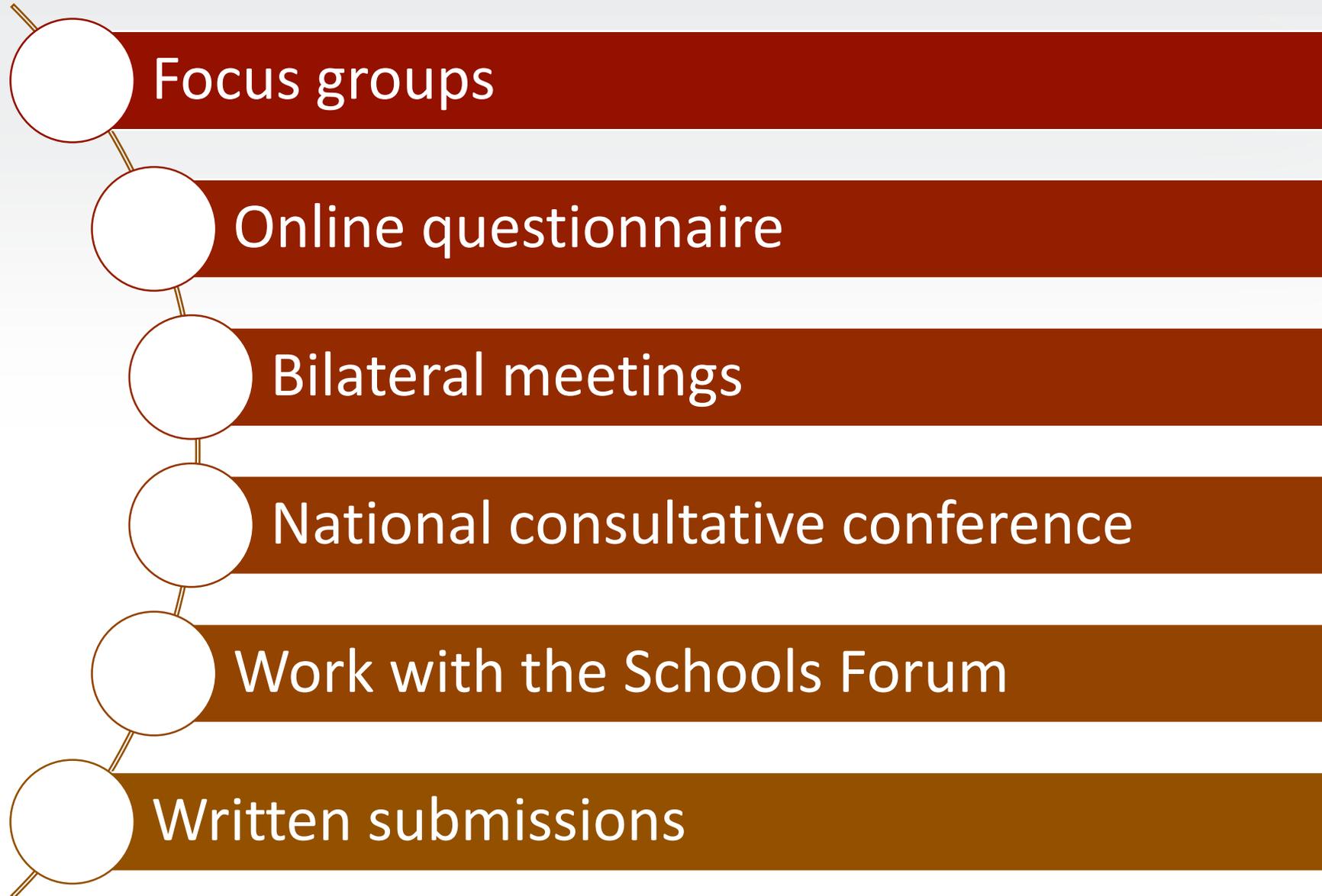


- Increased **agency** for schools; **image of teachers** as competent, skilled professionals
- Greater **synergy** across the education sectors
- New and changing **priorities** for children's learning
- A clear articulation of responsive **pedagogy**
- Re-conceptualising **assessment** as central to learning and teaching



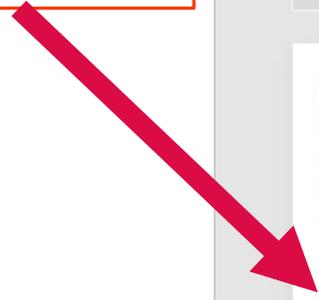
Consultation: January – June 2020

Get involved and share your thoughts on the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework*



www.ncca.ie/en/primary/primary-developments/curriculum-review-and-redevelopment

Click on the **Contact Form** to register for the consultation e-bulletins



Home / Primary / Primary Developments / Curriculum Review And Redevelopment

Curriculum Review and Redevelopment

NCCA is reviewing and redeveloping the Primary School Curriculum. We are working with teachers and early childhood practitioners, school leaders, parents and children, management bodies, researchers and other stakeholders to develop a high-quality curriculum for the next 10 - 15 years.

- Charting the Journey Forward
- Stay up to Date**
- Consultation on Structure and time
- Schools Forum
- Seminar 1
- Seminar 2
- Seminar 3
- Seminar 4
- Seminar 5

Please fill out the below form to receive:

- Updates on the review and redevelopment of the primary school curriculum
- Links to consultations
- Calls for expression of interest in events

[> Contact form](#)

