



Circular Letter 0039/2018

To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teaching Staff of Primary Schools and Special Schools and Chief Executives of ETBs.

Update on Primary Language Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile, Primary Mathematics Curriculum and Notice of Additional School Closure 2018/19

1. Primary Language Curriculum - current arrangements

Schools will be aware that professional development support for the introduction and implementation of the Primary Language Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile (PLC) is currently being facilitated by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) in collaboration with National Council for Special Education (NCSE). This is in line with Circular 61/2015, which was issued to schools in November 2015 and a subsequent clarification letter, which was also issued to schools in February 2016, are available at:

http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0061_2015.pdf
and **<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/Primary-/Clarifications-on-the-Implementation-of-the-Primary-Language-Curriculum.pdf>**

We are now in Year 3 (2017/2018) of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) support for the new curriculum. Building on the Oral Language learning from last year, the current focus is on the Reading and Writing strands – infants to second class. Over the course of this school year (2017/18), PDST, in collaboration with NCSE, are facilitating one full-day school closure for whole-staff CPD combined with a suite of CPD models, including workshops and in-school support to include in-class modelling, summer courses, as well as website resources and publications. This suite of CPD supports will continue to be available to schools in 2018/19.

The work of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) on the PLC for third to sixth class continues. A consultation on the draft curriculum was held from 19 February to 4 May 2018. The curriculum for third to sixth class reflects the same rationale, aims and overview outlined in the PLC published in 2015. The Strands, Elements, and four components – Learning Outcomes, Progression Continua, Support Material, and Examples – remain the same to support continuity and coherence in children’s learning in Irish and English. Work on the senior part of the curriculum also responds to feedback from the introduction of the curriculum for junior



infants to second class, and provides further clarifications on the purpose of the Learning Outcomes and the Continua. The curriculum is designed to support all children in English-medium schools, Scoileanna Gaeltachta, Scoileanna Lán-Ghaeilge and special schools. Informed by the consultation findings, the curriculum will be finalised by the end of 2018.

2. Additional full-day school closure 2018/19

The Department understands the need for schools to engage at a whole-school level to achieve the desired changes in practice which will have a real impact on pupils' learning. Both time and support are required to embed this new style of curriculum in the system. Accordingly, in addition to the support arrangements referenced at 1 above, schools may also avail of an additional full-day school closure, as an exceptional measure in the school-year 2018/19. This will facilitate further whole-staff collaborative exploration of the curriculum, with a view to supporting implementation.

Schools should note, however, that this additional full-day closure will be led by the schools themselves. This closure will not be facilitated by the PDST or NCSE in the case of special schools and schools therefore, will be unable to request facilitation of this day through the PDST's or NCSE's school support application system.

However, schools can continue to apply for other supports from the services in the normal way and can access a range of CPD supports for the PLC together with relevant support material and resources at

www.pdst.ie/literacy/primarylanguagecurriculum
and **www.sess.ie/resources/curricular/primary-language-curriculum**

These resources will further assist whole-school collaborative exploration of the curriculum, with a view to supporting implementation. Support materials, including examples of children's language learning in Irish and in English, are available at

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Language-New-Junior-infants-2nd-class>

These materials will support the professional conversations teachers will have at a whole-school level as they become increasingly familiar with the Learning Outcomes of the PLC. They will also support school management in planning for the implementation the PLC.



3. Revised schedule for the implementation of the new Primary Mathematics Curriculum

Implementation in schools of the Primary Mathematics Curriculum (PMC) was originally intended to take place in two stages, with the first stage of implementation to cover junior infants to second class and the second stage to cover third class to sixth class. The Department has since determined that the curriculum will now be introduced to schools as a single-stage implementation, from junior infants through to sixth class.

While the revised approach to the implementation of the new PMC will impact on timing at the initial stages of implementation, the proposed date for full implementation of the PMC in all years of primary school, September 2021, remains unchanged.

A comprehensive professional development programme to support schools with the introduction and implementation of the PMC will be put in place, details of which will be made available to schools over the course of the 2018/19 school year. An information leaflet for parents will also be made available.

Eamonn Moran
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June 2018