Traveller culture and history in the curriculum: a curriculum audit

Contents

1. Setting the Scene

Introduction

In September 2018, the Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton, T.D., requested the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) to undertake an audit of Traveller culture and history in the curriculum, which would include consideration of the resource provided by the NCCA's Intercultural Guidelines, which have been in place since 2005/06. The Minister asked that the audit would consider:

- the place of Traveller culture and history in the existing curriculum, from early childhood to senior cycle

- the current intercultural education guidelines and other resources for schools in relation to Travellers

- the opportunities for teaching about Traveller culture and history and how it is incorporated into existing curricular subjects (Minister's letter, 2018).

The broader context for this request is the Private Members 'Traveller Culture and History in Education Bill 2018', which is under consideration by, and in process in, the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Bill aims to provide for the "inclusion of Traveller culture and history in the curriculum taught by recognised schools in the State and for that purpose to amend the Education Act 1998".

In responding to the Minister's request, the initial sections of the audit examine the background and developments in key government legislation, strategies and guidelines of the recent past regarding the place and status of Travellers within the Irish education system and wider society. This includes a brief section on Traveller culture and history in Ireland. It is preceded by an outline of the guidance provided to schools and early years settings on Traveller education within the wider context of intercultural education. What follows next is a detailed exploration of current early childhood, primary and post-primary curricula in terms of opportunities for children and young people to encounter and learn about Traveller history and culture. In light of the earlier sections, the latter sections provide conclusions and considerations along with next steps mapping out the direction for furthering the work initiated in the audit.

Background

The Equal Status Act 2000 defines the term 'Traveller community' as the community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and by others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland. (Equal Status Act, 2000. Section 2 (1))

In March 2017 the then-Taoiseach Enda Kenny formally recognised Travellers as a distinct ethnic group within the Irish nation. An ethnic group is made up of people who share certain characteristics such as culture, language, religion and traditions. The Traveller Community is the sole group to have their ethnicity recognised domestically.

In January 2017, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) issued a research paper entitled 'A Social Portrait of Travellers in Ireland'. The research found that Travellers stand out as a group that experiences extreme levels of disadvantage in every facet of their lives, i.e. education, employment, housing and health (ESRI, 2017).

There is a very large disparity between Travellers and non-Travellers in the level of education completed. Most Travellers (70%) have experienced only primary or lower levels of education. Drawing on the Census of Population 2016, data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) indicates that:

- the level of education among Travellers remained well below that of the general population. Just 13.3 per cent of Traveller females were educated to upper secondary or above compared with 69.1 per cent of the general population

- nearly 6 in 10 Traveller men (57.2%) were educated to at most primary level in sharp contrast to the general population (13.6%)

- 167 Irish Travellers held a third level qualification in 2016, albeit up from 89 in 2011.

A consequence of poor educational attainment is a high unemployment rate, which was 80.2% among the Traveller community in 2016 (CSO, 2016). The high unemployment rate amongst Travellers is linked to educational disadvantage as well as other factors such as the widespread discrimination Travellers face when trying to access the workplace (All Ireland Traveller Health Study, 2010). As the All Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHS, 2010) pointed out, there is a lack of motivation to continue in mainstream education as Travellers feel that it is not associated with positive outcomes because of the high level of discrimination faced when seeking employment. Poor levels of education can also negatively affect many other aspects of life and research consistently highlights how poor educational outcomes lead to a lifetime of disadvantage for people from marginalised groups across the globe. Addressing the educational needs of the Traveller community has a central contribution to make to addressing the inequalities experienced by Travellers in society. This perspective resonates strongly with the Travelling with Austerity Report undertaken by Brian Harvey Social Research which refers to Travellers suffering from discrimination, poverty, social exclusion, limited educational opportunities and poor health (p.15, 2013).

Overall, the ESRI's report findings portray a stark picture of inequality and disadvantage in the lives and experiences of Travellers across the various domains that were the subject of the study, including education, work, housing and health. The report also highlights the high levels of prejudice and discrimination encountered by Travellers. In relation to education specifically, the report describes differences in educational attainment between Travellers and non-Travellers as 'dramatic'. The report does stress the importance of tackling educational disadvantage in addressing the challenges facing Travellers more generally - it claims that when

Travellers complete higher levels of education, we see a dramatic improvement in their chances of being in employment. Addressing educational disadvantage is seen as a priority (p.91, 2017).

In terms of policy recommendations, the report points to the tension between the mainstreaming approach and more targeted intervention. It is suggested that the scale of disadvantage and discrimination experienced by Travellers means that mainstreaming approaches might not be sufficient to address the problems; yet tailored policies run the risk of marginalising Travellers and negating their cultural identity. This dilemma is identified as particularly acute in relation to education, where challenges to be addressed include the intergenerational nature of disadvantage; larger family size, often situated in overcrowded accommodation, thus reducing opportunities to study; and wider societal discrimination, which impacts on educational ambition.

Among the recommendations made in this report is a call for teachers / early childhood practitioners to be provided with professional learning on Traveller and Roma culture, with approaches to embracing cultural diversity to be made a compulsory feature of both initial teacher education and continuous professional development. The embedding of Traveller and Roma culture in the curriculum is also recommended. This report provides a useful basis for considering the general nature and extent of disadvantage and discrimination experienced by Travellers, while its findings in relation to education are instructive in informing the audit that follows.

National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2021

Following on from the recognition of Travellers as a distinct ethnic group, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform launched the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2021 (NTRIS). The strategy is intended to overcome some of the challenges and to bring about important changes to the lives of the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland. The Department of Education and Skills participated in the development of the strategy.

Of particular interest to this curriculum audit is the experience of Traveller children and students in education. The poor progression of Travellers has often been ascribed to cultural differences and family practices as well as trying to integrate with the dominant culture's way of life (Piper and Garrett, 2005; Kiddle, 1999; Liegeois, 1987). The focus on cultural integration has been criticised and seems to have had little impact on progression. Recently, a more critical lens has emerged (Bhopal, 2010) which places understanding of phenomena like early school leaving in the context of a long history of oppression and marginalisation that Travellers have experienced in Irish society. When viewed through this lens, it is evident that Travellers encounter a number of complex challenges within an education system that was designed with the majority of children and young people in mind (Devine et al, 2008).

Research that employs a cultural deficit lens that problematises Traveller culture often tells us more about the researcher's views and beliefs about Travellers than it does about the complex issues facing the Traveller community. Recent research tends to adopt a more critical approach (Lynch and Lodge, 2004; Bhopal, 2010; Bhopal and Myers, 2009) and locates the poor educational outcomes of Travellers in the context of being an ethnic group that has experienced significant levels of oppression, prejudice and discrimination as a minority.

Many Travellers have reported negative memories of their own schooling (Hourigan and Campbell, 2010) and the damage done by the segregated model of education for Travellers that was in place up until the 1990s, can still be felt today. The parents of many school-aged Traveller children received a substandard education in segregated schools and classrooms in the not so distant past (Lynch and Lodge, 2004) and as a result, many of these Traveller parents are illiterate today (AITHS, 2010). These types of transgenerational issues are relevant as poor education levels among parents mean it is more difficult to actively support their children's learning in school by, for example, helping with homework. The Office of the Minister for Children (OMC) in the State of the Nation's Children Report (2010), as well as research carried out by the Department of Health and Children (2012) found that approximately six out of every ten Traveller children (58.9 per cent) lived in families where the mother had either no formal education or primary education only (OMC, 2010; Department of Health and Children, 2012). We know from numerous studies on educational disadvantage that a mother's level of education is a good predictor of poor educational outcomes for all children (Reay, 1996; Hooks, 1994; Hansen, Joshi and Dex, 2010). Transgenerational issues have also led to Travellers developing a mistrust of the education system and many fear their children will be treated as they were in the past. Not surprisingly, many Traveller parents feel anxiety engaging with the education system and may be reluctant to hand their children over to non-Traveller educators. In particular, there seems to be a reluctance to engage at the pre-school level. The low enrolment of Traveller children in preschools is of particular concern as Traveller children are then entering primary school already at a disadvantage. (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2017: 12). With effect from September 2011, the Resource Teachers for Travellers posts was discontinued in schools and Traveller children and students eligible for learning support were to receive tuition through the existing learning support provision in schools (Department of Education and Skills Circular 0017/2011).

The Visiting Teachers Service for Travellers assigned to the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was also discontinued with effect from September 2011. The overall purpose of the service was to promote, facilitate and support the education of Travellers across all sectors of the education system.

While school attendance can be poor in some cases (Forkam, 2006), it has improved greatly. The Education (Welfare) Acts 2000-2004 were enacted in order to monitor school attendance. Under the Education Act (2000) the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)[1] was established to oversee the issue of school attendance and try to tackle the problems of absenteeism and early school-leaving (Stokes, 2003; O'Brien Maguire, 2011). Schools are now required to contact Tusla: The Child and Family Agency when a child has been absent for 20 days or more without explanation. These requirements and provisions are still active, so school absence alone does not explain why Traveller children still lag behind their peers in both literacy and numeracy as most recently found in the evaluation of DEIS schools (Kavanagh, Weir and Moran, 2017), in which almost half of all Traveller students are enrolled. It is evident that the reasons for poor educational outcomes are multi-factoral and go beyond the singular issue of school attendance.

The ESRI (2017) found that among the reasons for early school leaving among Travellers were the often-negative experiences that Traveller children had in school. Traveller children (along with immigrant children and those with a disability) are significantly more likely to report being bullied at school (TUI Surveys, 2009, 2010; Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2016). Other studies have confirmed that as a group, Travellers are perceived negatively in Irish society (McGreil, 2011) and non-Traveller students have reported feeling the greatest levels of social separation or distance from Traveller students (Tormey and Gleeson, 2012). Previous research also found that racist attitudes towards Travellers were prevalent amongst children as young as 9-11 years old (O'Keefe and

[1] The general functions of the NEWB are to ensure that each child attends a recognised school or otherwise receives a certain minimum education. If a child is absent for 20 days or more from school, schools are obliged to report the absences to TUSLA. Parent/s or guardians can be taken to court and be criminalised for not sending their children to school.

O' Connor, 2001). In general, Devine, Kenny and Macneela (2008) suggest that what teachers see in school is only "the 'tip of the iceberg' of the incidence of racism in children's lives" (p. 370).

Consequently, given the often-negative views about Travellers prevalent in Irish society, it may be safe to assume that teachers in Irish schools may internalise negative beliefs about the Traveller community which may inadvertently affect how they work with Traveller children. While there is a dearth of research on teacher attitudes towards Travellers in the Irish context, research carried out in the UK has shown that teachers view Traveller children in a negative light and have unreasonably low expectations of them (Derrington, 2007; Bhopal, 2010). Considering the importance of teachers having high expectations of all learners (NCCA, 2006) this is an area of great concern as low teacher expectations can perpetuate self-fulfilling prophecies of failure (Hernnstein and Murray, 1994).

Studies have highlighted how teacher expectations impact on how they teach (Cooper, 1979; Good, 1981; Goulder, 1978; Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Muller et al., 1999; Bak ari, 2003; Cabello & Burstein, 1995) and have demonstrated that lowered teacher expectations are often internalised by children, which in turn have a negative impact on how a child engages with the educational process (Rist, 1970; Zirkel, 2005; Lynn and Parker, 2006; Howard, 2008). Numerous studies highlight how this deficit teaching model causes teachers to unfairly label students from minority backgrounds (Ford, Harris III, Tyson and Trotman, 2001; Youdell, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995) because they tend to employ a cultural deficit model (Solorzano et al., 2002) and blame minorities for the inequalities in education that they experience (Parker and Lynn, 2002). Many studies have concluded that the educational disadvantage experienced by Travellers is a 'cultural thing' and have suggested that Travellers are to blame for the poor educational outcomes that they experience (Lynch and Lodge, 2004). There

are many issues related to the question of teaching and Traveller education that require greater attention in the context of initial teacher education and continuing professional development.

The National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2021 (NTRIS) sets out 149 actions covering the themes of cultural identity, education, employment, children and youth, health, gender equality, anti-discrimination and equality, accommodation, and public services.

Key education-related actions proposed in the NTRIS include:

- Travellers and Roma should be supported in key areas including education, employment and economic development

- the development of education resources on Traveller and Roma culture and history for use in primary, post primary and adult education settings

- improved access, participation and outcomes for Travellers and Roma in education to achieve outcomes that are equal to those for the majority population

- SOLAS (the state organisation with responsibility for funding, planning and co-ordinating Further Education and Training) and Education and Training Boards (ETB) to consider the needs of disadvantaged groups including Travellers and Roma in the planning of Further Education and Training (FET) provision

- strengthening of cooperation between formal education and non-formal learning sectors to address the high rate of early school-leaving in the Traveller and Roma communities

- a positive culture of respect and protection for the cultural identity of Travellers and Roma across the education system[2].
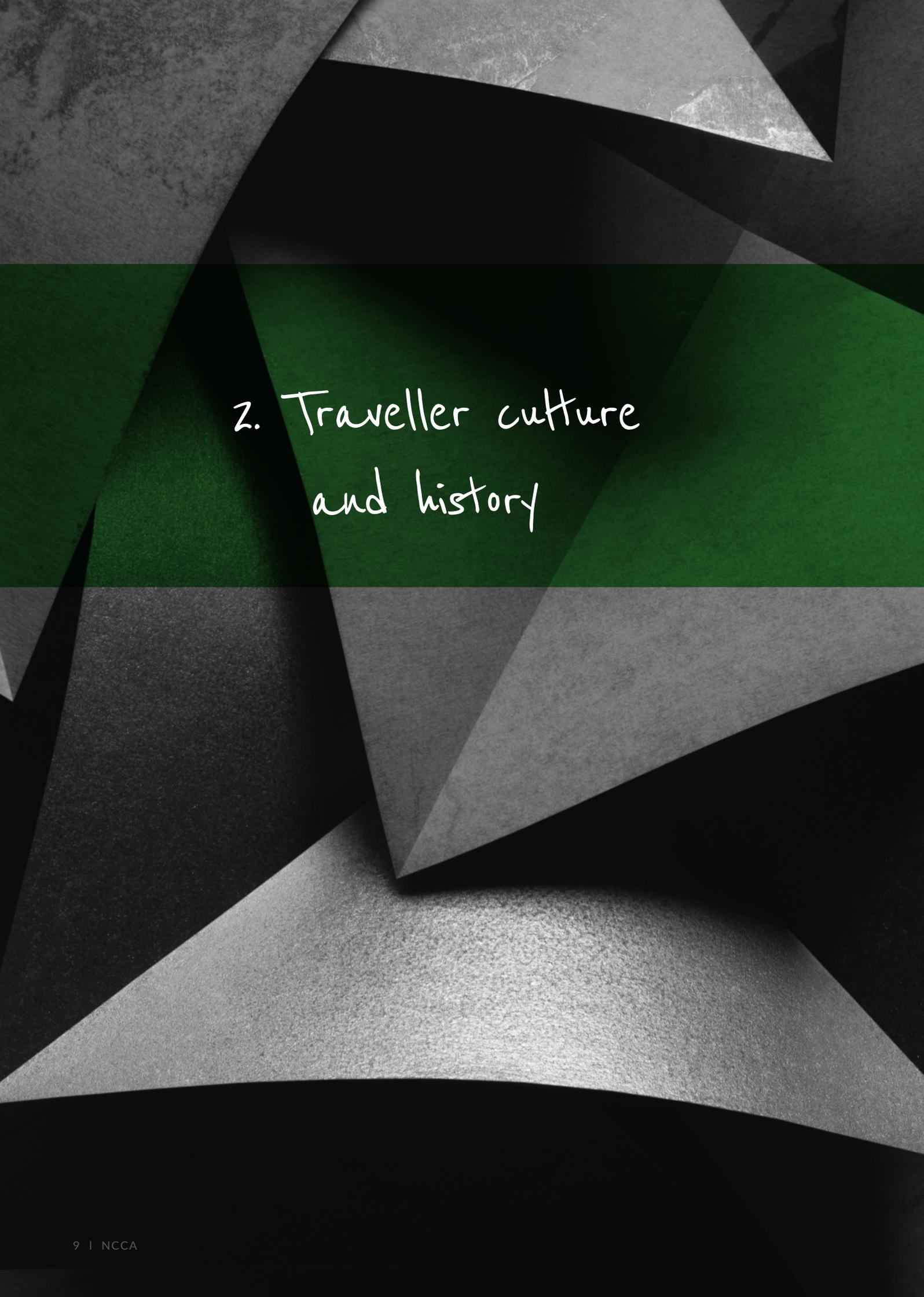
2. Traveller culture and history

For Travellers, belonging to a distinct ethnic minority means that they have a common ancestry, share fundamental cultural values and traditions, have a language and cultural heritage of their own and are seen by themselves and others as distinct and different. The following section offers an insight into key features of Traveller identity as noted by Traveller representatives on the NCCA advisory group considering the audit process.

Common ancestry

A person is born a Traveller. Usually, to be described as a Traveller an individual must have direct Traveller heritage, identify themselves as a Traveller and be identified as a Traveller by other Travellers.

Nomadism

One of the strongest influences on Traveller culture is nomadism, which is possibly one of the most distinctive features of Traveller culture that differentiates between Traveller and the wider "settled" Community.

Nomadic lifestyles serve, among others, three strong functions in particular within the community:

- social

- economic

- cultural.

The nomadic way of life of Travellers refers to the practice of some Travellers to travel from place to place, traditionally for commercial and cultural purposes; to buy and sell goods; to go to markets and fairs; and engage in new spaces.

Travellers share common cultural characteristics, traditions and values which are evident in their organisation of family, social and economic life. Nomadism, in a range of forms, has been central to the development and expression of these characteristics, traditions and values (IHRC, p. 9).

While nomadism has been described as a core activity of Traveller culture enactment, this does not necessarily imply that Travellers are defined singularly by Nomadism. Maintaining family ties and linking with the wider extended family is considered a cultural norm within the Traveller way of life, and Travellers' lives are often organised around this.

Family

Extended family is often considered a key element in Traveller culture with people identifying themselves by their family, clan or family name. The family name or connection is often considered important.

Economic activity

Traveller cultural expression traditionally includes enterprise, self-employment, occupational flexibility, and economic adaptation. Traditionally Travellers primarily generate income rather than live on a fixed income. Home is often the base for income generation with the whole family having a role. While hawking, labouring and trading remain common economic pursuits many Travellers work within mainstream industries.

Within a more contemporary context, traditional trades have a far more reduced standing and economic focus. Current barriers, including discrimination, have led to Travellers being included and visible in a small number of mainstream employment aspects.

Central themes to how Travellers live

Irish Travellers live in all types of accommodation including halting sites, camps, group housing schemes, local authority housing, private rented accommodation and privately-owned property.

Aspects of Traveller culture that can affect choices in accommodation include:

• extended family/ community presence in the area

• whether income is generated from the home

• restricted nomadic provisions and options for travel.

Travellers are a people of a strong nomadic history and activity. There are many traditional locations where specific families have resided over generations. Clans, family groupings and direct family connections are often identified as important connective factors within specific areas and locations.

Language

Language is often one of the most universal and diverse forms of expression of human culture, and perhaps even the most essential one. It is at the heart of issues of identity, memory and transmission of knowledge. Irish Travellers, while primarily English speakers, are often speakers of Gammon/Cant, which is a language that is derived from older Irish. While understood as having a much older history, it was first formally recorded in the early 18th century. While sometimes considered a 'secret' language, in light of the extensive reviews, research and recording it is, within a more contemporary context, considered more of a 'private' language then a 'secret' one. Travellers are not a homogenous group and there is great variation and diversity in their proficiency to speak Cant.

Oral traditions

Travellers largely maintain a very strong oral history tradition, with a resilient tradition of an oral transmission of culture and history from generation to generation. There exists in Traveller culture an awareness of how one generation passes encultured framing, concepts and understandings to another through the way the community lives, observes and enacts customs, religious expression, economic activity, craft making and other actions. This makes a sustained and consistent contribution towards community activity and understanding.

History

The historical context of Travellers is largely unwritten and unrecorded within a community inclusive context. There is a view among Travellers that they are among the last remaining peoples from older Gaelic Ireland and the last nomadic tribe. Many aspects of Cant/Gammon predate old Irish.

The context of Traveller history could be considered in terms of:

- state intervention
- where Travellers are recorded in ancient manuscripts
- inclusion in Oireachtas discussions
- economy
- the contribution to Irish heritage in music, storytelling and craft
- laws
- commissions
- war efforts
- struggle for independence
- the development of community activism in a drive towards equality and inclusion
- ethnic recognition.

Religion

While there is a clear diversity of faith within the community, the vast majority of Travellers are of Roman Catholic heritage. For many community members faith and expression of belief is very important. Religion and a wider older Celtic spiritual connection are a celebrated part of Traveller customs, notable in christenings, weddings, funerals, wakes, seasonal observances, pilgrimage, group activities, shrines, and ancestral observations.

Cultural heritage

Cultural heritage was defined by the World Conference on Cultural Policies as 'including the works of its artists, architects, musicians, writers and scientists and the work of anonymous artists, expressions of people's spirituality, and the body of values which give meaning to life'. Traveller cultural heritage is an expression of ways and understandings as developed by the community

and passed, intergenerationally, via customs, practices, spaces, objects, artistic expressions and values. The Traveller community's understanding of cultural heritage includes tangible and intangible works through which the creativity of the Traveller people find expression, such as languages, rites, beliefs, historic places and monuments, literature, works of art, archives and libraries. Common cultural heritage among Travellers is viewed as an indispensable resource, as it constitutes a unique source of human creativity, development and renewal.

Music and art

Travellers have a strong tradition of cultural expression through traditional music and have made a distinctly recognised cultural contribution to Irish music heritage. There are many well-known musicians from the Traveller community, such as Margaret Barry, Mikey Dunne and Family, John Doherty, John Doran, Trish Nolan, Pecker Dunne, Finbar Furey and Thomas McCarthy. Many of the early last century musicians are collected in the national archives and folklore collections. There are extensive references in Irish literature to Traveller music, songs and art.

Crafts and clothing

Tin smithing and a wide array of other craft work, including wood work, dyeing, weaving, fabric creation, herbal craft design, wagon making and creation of daily utilised tools such as kamogs (walking sticks), beady pockets (gopas) remain aspects of creation and expression that are intact within the community. These skills were held by older generations and their usage is now in decline within the Traveller Community.

Animals

Many Travellers have a sustained connection with the animal world through horses, dogs and hunting and this is a distinctive feature of Traveller culture.

3. International developments and guidance for Irish schools and early childhood settings

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)

Ireland's membership of the United Nations has been central to government policy development since joining in 1955. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and came into force in 1990. It sets out the basic human rights to which children everywhere are entitled. The Convention protects these rights by setting minimum standards that governments must meet in providing healthcare, education and legal and social services to children in their countries. Ireland ratified the Convention in 1992. In relation to the education of ethnic minority children, the Convention sets out a number of rights:

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members

3. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognised by law without unlawful interference

4. In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education (2006)

In a world experiencing rapid change, and where cultural, political, economic and social upheaval challenges traditional ways of life, education has a major role to play in promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Through programmes that encourage dialogue between students of different cultures, beliefs and religions, education can make an important and meaningful contribution to sustainable and tolerant societies. (UNESCO, 2006: 8)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Guidelines on Intercultural Education provide an internationally recognised perspective in terms of examining our national guidance around intercultural education. According to UNESCO, Intercultural Education is a response to the challenge to provide quality education for all. It is framed within a Human Rights perspective as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

The major challenge when discussing the issue of education and interculturalism is dealing with some of the inherent tensions that arise in reconciling competing world views with each other. In the context of this curriculum audit, two definitions of 'culture' and 'minority groups' set out in the guidelines are key considerations.

Culture as defined by UNESCO

Culture is defined in numerous ways. Culture is at the core of individual and social identity and is a major component in the reconciliation of group identities within a framework of social cohesion. In discussing culture, reference is made to all the factors that pattern an individual's ways of thinking, believing, feeling and acting as a member of society (UNESCO, 2006: 12).

The different cultural communities that compose a state, a nation, or any human society have unequal access to political and economic power and influence. 21st century society is multicultural in essence. Yet different cultures do not have the same possibilities for survival or expression in the modern world. In the context of political conflict and constantly changing environments, they evolve and adapt, with some more open to change (UNESCO, 2006: 15).

Minority groups as defined by UNESCO

The term 'minority culture' generally refers to the culture of 'marginalized or vulnerable groups who live in the shadow of majority populations with a different and dominant cultural ideology', the 'majority culture'. Education systems need to be responsive to the specific educational needs of all minority groups. Among the issues to be considered is how to foster the cultural, social and economic vitality of such communities through effective and adequate educational programmes that are based on the cultural perspectives and orientations of the learners, while at the same time providing for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable them to participate fully in the larger society (UNESCO, 2006: 17).

This document explores three principles for intercultural education. With reference to this curriculum audit, the guidance around how these principles should be implemented in terms of curriculum development is worth noting.

Principle one:

Intercultural Education respects the cultural identity of the learner through the provision of culturally appropriate and responsive quality education for all.

Principle two:

Intercultural Education provides every learner with the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to achieve active and full participation in society.

To achieve this principle, the guidelines recommend the use of curricula and teaching and learning materials that:

- build upon the diverse systems of knowledge and experiences of the learners

- incorporate their histories, knowledge and technologies, value systems and further social, economic and cultural aspirations

- introduce the learners to an understanding and an appreciation of their cultural heritage

- aim at developing respect for the learners' cultural identity, language and values, make use of local resources.

Additionally, the guidelines recommend the development of teaching and assessment methods that are culturally appropriate, appropriate teacher training that aims at familiarising teachers with the cultural heritage, culturally appropriate teaching methods, the promotion of learning environments that are respectful of cultural diversity and interaction between the school and the community and the involvement of the learners and / or their communities in the educational processes.

To achieve this principle, the guidelines recommend the use of curricula and teaching and learning materials that:

- impart knowledge about the history, traditions, language and culture of existing minorities to majority groups

- impart knowledge about society as a whole to minorities

- aim at eliminating prejudices about culturally distinct population groups within a country

- involve various cultural systems through the presentation of knowledge from different cultural perspectives

- create a comprehensive grasp of reading, writing and the spoken word, enabling the citizen to gain access to information, to understand clearly the situation in which he or she is living, to express his or her needs, and to take part in activities in the social environment.

The guidelines also make recommendations in relation to appropriate teaching and assessment methods, appropriate language teaching, appropriate initial teacher education and continuing professional development for teachers and educators.

Principle three:

Intercultural Education provides every learner with the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to achieve active and full participation in society.

The guidelines recommend the development of curricula that contribute to:

- the discovery of cultural diversity, awareness of the positive value of cultural diversity and respect for cultural heritage

- critical awareness of the struggle against racism and discrimination

- knowledge about cultural heritage through the teaching of history, geography, literature, languages, artistic and aesthetic disciplines, scientific and technological subjects

- understanding and respect for all peoples, their cultures, civilizations, values and ways of life, including domestic ethnic cultures and cultures of other nations

- awareness of the increasing global interdependence between peoples and nations

- awareness not only of rights but also of duties incumbent upon individuals, social groups and nations toward each other

- awareness of one's own cultural values that underlie the interpretation of situations and problems as well as the ability to reflect on and review information enriched by the knowledge of different cultural perspectives.

The guidelines also make recommendations around adequate teaching and learning methods, the acquisition of skills to communicate and co-operate beyond cultural barriers and to share and co-operate with others, the teaching and learning of foreign languages and adequate teacher initial education and continuing professional development.

National strategies and legislation

The development of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (2017 – 2021) (NTRIS) is built on existing work in Traveller education and intercultural education both nationally and internationally. This section provides an overview of some of the key government legislation, strategies and guidelines developed for educators and schools in relation to Traveller education and the curriculum.

In its preamble, the Education Act (1998) stresses the need to respect the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society. The Act requires each school to establish and maintain an admissions policy that provides for maximum accessibility to the school.

The Act (1998) made attendance at full-time education in Ireland compulsory for children between six and sixteen years of age [3]. The motivation for this policy focus on school retention stemmed from the fact that early school leaving was a major problem for children from disadvantaged backgrounds during that period (Stokes, 2003; Fleming and Murphy, 2000; National Economic and Social Forum, 1997) and there were concerns about the impact early school

[3] A child has to stay in school until the age 16 or the completion of 3 years of post-primary, which ever was the later.

leaving had on issues regarding social inclusion, employability and equality (Stokes, 2003). The Act (1998) requires each school to establish and maintain an admissions policy that provides for maximum accessibility to the school. Under the Act (1998), schools are required to have a school admissions policy that respects the principle of equality (Lodge and Lynch, 2004). A school's Board of Management is required to have a clear policy in place regarding access and participation to their school and must also set out the measures the school will take to ensure its admissions' policy is not discriminatory (Lodge and Lynch, 2004). In the past, schools could influence the nature of their student intake by putting in place specific admission policies such as the requirement to be from a particular religious background (Lodge and Lynch, 2004; Darmody, Smyth and Mc Coy, 2012). Up until recently, schools had the right to give preference to students that came from the same denominational background as the school. While schools can no longer use religion as a barrier, in schools that are over-subscribed, the 'sibling clause' allows schools to prioritise the siblings of children already enrolled and the children of past pupils. Because of the segregated model of education for Travellers that existed in the past, Traveller children are often automatically excluded because they cannot meet the family history criteria (Heffernan, 2012).

Guidelines on Traveller Education in Primary Schools (2002) [4]

In 2002, the Department of Education and Science (DES) published *Guidelines on Traveller Education for Primary Schools and Guidelines on Traveller Education in Second Level Schools* as part of its strategies on social inclusion, anti-poverty, promotion of equality and the tackling of educational disadvantage. It is DES policy that Travellers should be fully integrated into mainstream schools. The primary purpose of the guidelines was to provide practical guidance to teachers, schools, parents and management in implementing the DES policy on Traveller education.

The Primary guidelines emphasised and provided guidance on:

- a whole-school approach to Traveller education and learning support

- the role of the resource teacher for Travellers in supporting and consulting classroom teacher colleagues and in providing learning support, in an integrated setting, to those Traveller children with identified supplementary learning needs

- the opportunities provided in all the subject areas of the curriculum to promote an intercultural approach in the classroom

- appropriate approaches to the placement and support of the older child with little experience of formal schooling

- the inclusion of an anti-racist, intercultural statement and strategy in the school plan.

The guidelines provided statements on:

- ancestry, cultural values and traditions and language

- the stages in policy development for Traveller education in Ireland from 1963 onwards

- education provision for Travellers in September 2001

- the importance of interculturalism within the school. The guidelines stress the two elements of intercultural education: appreciation of diversity and challenging of inequality.

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[4] The Guidelines on Traveller Education in Primary Schools, The Guidelines on Traveller Education in Post-Primary Schools, the Guidelines on Intercultural Education in Primary Schools, The Guidelines on Intercultural Education in Post-Primary Schools were all developed prior to the recognition of Travellers as a distinct ethnic group within the Irish nation in 2017. All guidelines now need to be reviewed in light of Travellers recognition as a distinct ethnic group.

NCCA | 18

Guidelines on Traveller Education in Second Level Schools (2002)

The main aim for Traveller children over the age of twelve is to encourage them to continue in full time education and to promote the continuation of their full inclusive participation in education, while retaining respect and value for their distinctive culture. (DES, 2002b: 19)

Substantial progress was made in the integration of Travellers in primary schools, while at the time of publication it was felt that much remained to be done at second level. In this context it was essential for schools to foster an understanding of and a respect for Traveller culture. Each Traveller child should be integrated into the everyday life and practices of the school to the greatest degree possible, taking his or her individual needs and abilities into account.

The post-primary guidelines provided guidance on:

- Travellers as a distinct minority group in Irish society and addressing the particular ancestry, traditions, language and cultural values of the Traveller community

- policy framework for Traveller education

- education of Travellers in second-level schools including the integration of Travellers and a whole-school approach to intercultural education

- enrolment of Travellers in second-level schools

- long-term and short-term school planning and Traveller students

- retention of Traveller students in second-level schools

- validation of Traveller culture within the curriculum.

The guidelines identified opportunities within schools for fostering anti-racist and intercultural attitudes within each aspect of the curriculum. In addition, it was emphasised that each school's mission statement, characteristic spirit and atmosphere can be permeated by a commitment to providing equal opportunities for all young people and to recognising that preparation for a full life in an intercultural society is the right of every student (DES, 2002b: 20).

In the context of Traveller education, the guidelines emphasised the importance of a whole school approach to intercultural education addressing issues at school level, within school programmes provided and involving parents and the community (DES, 2002b: 24).

The guidelines at both primary and post-primary levels never became an intrinsic element of a broader strategy and no mentoring mechanisms were put in place for their full implementation.

**Guidelines on Intercultural Education in the
Primary School (2005)**

In 2005 NCCA published Guidelines on Intercultural Education in
the Primary School. The guidelines supported the Primary School
Curriculum (1999) and identified the ways in which intercultural
education permeated the curriculum (NCCA, 2005: 5). Two specific
aims of the guidelines were to

• raise awareness within the educational community of issues
  that arise from increasing linguistic, cultural and ethnic
  diversity in Ireland;

• address the curriculum needs of all children, whether from
  a minority or the majority ethnic group, which arise in the
  context of growing cultural and ethnic diversity.

In the guidelines, direct references to Travellers are
made on the following pages:

Page 12: refers specifically to the Irish Traveller community
with reference to the Irish Government's 1995 Report of the
Task Force on the Travelling Community.

Page 14: in referring to racist attitudes or beliefs from studies
in the 1980s onwards, found that only 13.5 per cent would
welcome a Traveller into the family through marriage while
59 per cent would not welcome Travellers as next-door
neighbours.

Page 16: in referring to racist practices by individuals and
institutions, provides examples of racism and discrimination
against the Travelling Community.

Pages 35, 43: in referring to cultural practices, states that
children in Traveller culture often speaking very directly and
openly to adults which is sometimes seen as rude in schools.

Page 54: in referring to identity and belonging suggests that
members of minority ethnic groups may be in danger of
developing a low sense of self-esteem. For example, some
Traveller children may not wish to be identified as Travellers
due to the negative images of Travellers to which they have
been exposed.

Page 69: in referring to discrimination and equality explains
that if someone is treated differently because they are a
traveller (refused access to a pub, called names, treated with
suspicion, etc.) then they have been directly discriminated
against.

Intercultural Education in the Post Primary School (2006)

Following the publication of the primary guidelines on intercultural education in 2005, NCCA published *Intercultural Education in the Post Primary School* in 2006. Both sets of guidelines were based on the same key principles and themes and were to provide a context for young people to develop intercultural competence in an integrated way throughout their primary and post-primary education.

The aim of these guidelines was to contribute to the development of Ireland as an intercultural society through the development of a shared sense that language, culture and ethnic diversity is valuable. They aimed to contribute to the development of a shared ability and sense of responsibility to protect for each other the right to be different and to live free from discrimination. The guidelines provide information on the following aspects of intercultural education:

The Context of Intercultural Education, which provides background information that places the rest of the guidelines in context.

Intercultural Education in the Post-Primary School, which explains the major elements of an intercultural approach to education.

School Planning, which highlights the ways in which intercultural education should be taken into account in school planning, policy development and in shaping the whole school environment.

Classroom Planning, which explores the ways in which the social, visual and educational environment of the classroom can maximise the intercultural experience of all students in school. It also looks at choosing resources and welcoming a student from another culture.

Intercultural Education across the Curriculum, which explores the integration of intercultural themes such as identity and belonging, similarity and difference, human rights and responsibilities, discrimination and equality, conflict and conflict resolution across a range of Junior Certificate subjects.

Approaches and Methodologies, which describes the approaches and methodologies that are particularly suitable for intercultural education.

Assessment and Cultural Diversity, which provides guidance on how teachers can broaden the range of tools used for assessment.

Language and Interculturalism, which explores the creation of a supportive language environment for learners of Irish and English.

According to the NCCA's guidelines, intercultural education has two focal points:

- it is education which respects, celebrates and recognises the normality of diversity in all parts of human life. It sensitises the learner to the idea that humans have naturally developed a range of different ways of life, customs and worldviews, and that this breadth of human life enriches all of us

- it is education which promotes equality and human rights, challenges unfair discrimination and promotes the values upon which equality is built (NCCA, 2006: i).

Some key features of intercultural education are:

- intercultural education is for all students irrespective of their ethnicity

- intercultural education is for all students irrespective of their age

- dialogue and story are identified as fundamental components of intercultural education

- intercultural education happens naturally through the 'hidden curriculum' of the social and visual world within which the student learns. While it is possible and necessary to include intercultural ideas in the taught 'formal curriculum', the images, messages and values that are conveyed throughout the school culture are also crucial. In exploring the hidden curriculum, it is important to note that what is absent can be as important as what is present

- intercultural education is concerned with ethnicity and culture and not simply with skin colour (NCCA, 2006: ii).

The Intercultural Education Guidelines (IEGs) argue that intercultural education helps to prevent racism by providing children with the opportunities 'to recognise and challenge prejudice and discrimination' (NCCA, 2006, p. 30). A criticism that has been made of the guidelines is that they can be viewed as downplaying the structural aspects of racism and the structural sources of social injustice by focusing to too great an extent on individualist sources of social injustice and seeing racism, for example, as commonly based in 'individual acts of meanness' (Kavanagh, 2013; Kitching, 2010a; Bryan, 2008). The extension of this critique is that they focus unduly on fixing individuals but not the institutions and cultures of schools and society that may assist, unknowingly or otherwise, in perpetuating the injustices in question.

The Yellow Flag Programme

The Yellow Flag programme is a schools-based programme that aims to support primary and secondary schools to become more inclusive of all cultures and ethnicities, celebrate diversity and challenge racism and discrimination. The Yellow Flag Programme was developed by the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) in 2008. It works with students, staff, management, parents and the wider community so that issues of diversity and equality can be understood outside the school setting and in everyday life, so that these issues are not seen to be addressed only within the formal curriculum. As part of the programme, participating schools provide teachers with access to the NCCA Intercultural Guidelines to ensure the implementation of the guidelines in Yellow Flag schools.

The report and recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy (2006)

This report published by the government in 2006 set out to examine existing provision and supports, and existing organisational and management structures, for Traveller education at all levels and made recommendations for change, as appropriate. It identified clear goals for Traveller education and made recommendations in relation to optimising or reallocating existing resources. The report took a holistic approach and sought to address all aspects of Traveller education for lifelong learning, that is, from pre-school to adult and continuing education.

The report was comprehensive and addressed the following issues for Travellers from early childhood to adult education:

- it provided a brief background on Irish Travellers, their education, accommodation, health, and other challenges facing them

- it provided an overview of all aspects of Traveller education up to 2005

- it addressed the important role of Traveller parents in education

- it outlined considerations in early childhood education and the provision made for Traveller pupils within primary and post-primary education. It summarised the measures taken by the Department of Education and Science to promote the education of Traveller pupils, identifying educational issues, making recommendations, and proposing plans of action with timescales

- it highlighted the provision available for Travellers in further and higher education and identified concerns and challenges for the sector.

The report provided a summary of the objectives, recommendations and outcomes and set out how it envisaged the future for Travellers in education and in general. It recommended an inclusive approach to Traveller education that addresses all aspects of Traveller education concurrently, in an intercultural manner. While it made extensive recommendations, in the context of this curriculum audit, the following recommendations are worth noting:

- early childhood education: Change the grounds on which pre-school education to Travellers is provided to an inclusive, integrated service

- primary education: End all segregated provision at primary level; equality and diversity training should be a compulsory component of the pre-service, induction and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of teachers and should continue to be a component of the CPD of inspectors and of the personnel of the School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI) and Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP)

- post-primary education: Enrolment policies should account for Travellers; segregated education should be phased out; equality and diversity training should be a compulsory component of the pre-service, induction and CPD of teachers and should continue to be a component of the CPD of inspectors and the personnel of SDPI and Second Level Support Services (SLSS).

Intercultural Education Strategy, 2010 - 2015 (2010)

The Intercultural Education Strategy aims to ensure that:

- all students experience an education that "respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership" (Education Act, 1998)

- all education providers are assisted with ensuring that inclusion and integration within an intercultural learning environment become the norm (DES, 2010:1).

Several key themes are continually highlighted for all sectors of education, which should:

- adopt a whole institution approach to creating an intercultural learning environment

- enhance and develop intercultural education skills across the whole education team

- support students to become proficient in the language of instruction

- encourage and promote active partnership and engagement between education providers, students, parents and communities

- promote effective communication

- promote and evaluate data gathering and monitoring so that policy and decision-making is evidence based.

These common themes highlight the fact that all educational sectors are facing similar challenges and opportunities, due to immigration, migration and increased social and cultural diversity in Ireland today (DES, 2010: 43)

The Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education

The *Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education* was published by Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) in 2016. It invites everyone involved in early childhood to embrace, promote and embed principles of inclusion in policies and everyday practice. The document states that doing this involves a continuous process of critically reflective practice with the aim of ensuring that all children and their families feel welcomed, valued and respected. The updated guidelines provide the map to create rich, inclusive environments which will stimulate and nurture Ireland's youngest citizens. The charter and guidelines are also a core element of the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) for children with disabilities and special educational needs [5] (DCYA, 2016b).

Part A of the Guidelines sets out the National Inclusion Charter, which aims to promote the values of diversity, equality and inclusion for all children attending early childhood settings. All settings are invited to sign up to the National Inclusion Charter by developing and implementing an inclusion policy.

Part B contains Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Guidelines for the Early Childhood Care and Education sector. The guidelines are divided into five sections, with each section further subdivided.

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[5] This model is focused on ensuring that every child with disabilities/special educational needs can fully participate in the ECCE programme and reap the benefits of quality early years care and education (DCYA, 2016).

Section 4: Diversity, Equality and Inclusion – Supporting families includes a section on Traveller and Roma Communities (DCYA, 2016a, p.64- 66).

The charter states that an inclusive culture involves:

- working in partnership and communicating openly with the child's family

- working in partnership with outside agencies that are involved with the family (once consent is given by the child's parents)

- actively promoting equal opportunities and anti-bias practices, so that all children and families feel included and valued

- having robust policies and procedures such as an inclusion policy and an equal opportunities policy

- recognising and valuing that all children are unique and learn and develop at their own rate

- using the AIM programme to meet the needs of children with disabilities/special educational needs

- encouraging children to recognise their individual qualities and the characteristics they share with their peers

- actively engaging children in making decisions

- respecting the diversity of children, families and communities throughout the early childhood service

- understanding that children have individual needs, views, cultures and beliefs, which must be treated with respect and represented throughout the early childhood service

- adults reflecting on their own attitudes and values (DCYA, 2016b).

The charter asks settings to strive to:

1. respect all children equally, nurturing each child's cultural identity and his/her sense of identity and belonging

2. acknowledge that parents are the primary educators and experts on their child and to provide supports as the child makes the transition from home to the setting

3. implement a curriculum that reflects the identities of all children and supports their abilities and interests in line with the *Aistear/ Síolta* Practice Guide (NCCA, 2015)

4. ensure that the settings embrace the needs of all children and delivers an inclusive and accessible environment

5. enable all children to participate meaningfully in all aspects of the curriculum and extend learning to challenge and promote the individual child's abilities

6. ensure that children of all abilities have equal access to culturally and developmentally appropriate play-based educational experiences, indoors and outdoors, which develop their understanding, dispositions, skills and holistic development

7. support children to celebrate diversity and feel comfortable with it

8. support children to experience an early childhood service in an environment free from bias, stereotypes and discrimination

9. empower children to stand up for themselves and others in difficult situations

10. ensure the safety and well-being of all children as these are central to every aspect of children's learning, well-being, welfare and development (DCYA, 2016b).

These guidelines aim to support all those working in early childhood to explore, understand and develop practices and approaches that embrace diversity, equality and inclusion and, through this, to create an inclusive culture where all children can realise their full potential. Specifically, the guidelines' stated objectives are to:

- foster awareness about diversity, equality and inclusion

- encourage discussion about bias and discrimination, and how it affects children and families. Challenge thinking on attitudes and values and reflect on how these impact on practice

- encourage and support those working in the sector to actively advocate for diversity, equality and inclusion for all children and their families

- provide guidance for training and practice

- help to introduce the anti-bias approach to early childhood services

- provide early childhood practitioners with the tools to deal with challenging issues, including discrimination and bias (DCYA, 2016b).

Initial Teacher Education: Development and InterCultural Education Project (DICE)

The important role of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) at primary level in enabling student teachers to facilitate intercultural education effectively is recognised in the DICE Project. The DICE project promotes the integration of development education and intercultural education in ITE. It aims to build the knowledge and understanding of student teachers so they will be equipped with the pedagogic skills and values to teach effectively in these areas. It was initiated in 2003, supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through Irish Aid and is

implemented by Dublin City University Institute of Education; Marino Institute of Education; Mary Immaculate College; and Maynooth University.

In summary, some important strategies and guidelines have been developed to support the education of Travellers and to promote intercultural education by different government departments and agencies in Ireland.

There are some common threads throughout the strategies and guidelines developed. A whole school/setting approach is recommended, with cognisance of the individual school/setting culture and hidden curriculum. Schools/settings and education systems need to actively promote cultural diversity and respect for rights and responsibilities to eliminate prejudice. Additionally, opportunities should be provided in subject and discipline areas to promote intercultural education and validate minority cultures. This implies that efforts should be made to validate and make visible aspects of Traveller culture and history at all levels of education.

Good practice approaches across these strategies and guidelines also suggest that teachers / early childhood practitioners need to be supported and educated on pedagogies to support intercultural education. In particular, efforts should be made to develop their knowledge and understanding of aspects of Traveller history and culture. The necessity of providing good education resources is a recommendation that features across these documents. The importance of engaging with children, students, parents, teachers / early childhood practitioners and the community to promote cultural diversity, tolerance, respect and cultural heritage is also emphasised in the documentation.

4. Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework

This section provides an overview of *Aistear*, the early childhood curriculum framework, highlighting opportunities for the integration of aspects of Traveller culture and history. The framework is for all children in Ireland from birth to 6 years. The Framework can be used by all adults who support children's learning and development – parents; early childhood practitioners in creches, full day care settings and preschools; and teachers in Early Start Units and in junior and senior infants classes in primary school. *Aistear* is the Irish word for journey and early childhood marks the beginning of children's life-long educational journey. The Framework provides information for adults to help them plan for and provide enjoyable and challenging learning experiences, so that all children can grow and develop as competent and confident learners within loving relationships with others.

The Framework describes learning and development using four interconnected themes of *Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating and Exploring and Thinking* and it provides guidelines on supporting children's learning through partnerships with parents, interactions, play, and assessment.

Aistear is underpinned by 12 principles of learning and development. These are presented in three groups.

The first group concerns children and their lives in early childhood:

- the child's uniqueness

- equality and diversity

- children as citizens.

The second group concerns children's connections with others:

- relationships

- parents, family and community

- the adult's role.

The third group concerns how children learn and develop:

- holistic learning and development

- active learning

- play and hands-on experiences

- relevant and meaningful experiences

- communication and language

- the learning environment.

Each principle is presented using a short statement. This is followed by an explanation of the principle from the child's perspective. The principles which have the most relevance to this audit are as follows: the child's uniqueness; equality and diversity; children as citizens; parents, family and community. These principles are set out in more detail below.

Group 1: Children and their lives in early childhood

The child's uniqueness

Each child has his/her own set of experiences and a unique life-story. He/she is an active learner growing up as a member of a family and community with particular traditions and ways of life.

- *Remember that I am a unique individual with my own strengths, interests, abilities, needs and experiences. Recognise and build on these when you are helping me to learn and develop.*

- *You know I am a confident and able learner and that I learn at my own rate about things that interest me. Support me to do this in a way that allows me to make decisions about what I learn and when, and how well I am learning.*

- *I need you, my parents and practitioners, to share what you know about me with each other. By doing this, you can get to know me better and plan things for me to do that will help me to learn in an enjoyable and meaningful way.*

- *In order for you to understand and support me you need to understand my family background and community. This is especially important if I come from a disadvantaged or marginalised community.*

Equality and diversity

Nurturing equality and diversity is important in early childhood. Promoting equality is about creating a fairer society in which everyone can participate equally with the opportunity to fulfil his/her potential. Diversity is about welcoming and valuing individual and group differences and understanding and celebrating difference as part of life.

- *Support me to feel equal to everyone else and do not let me be excluded because of my ethnicity, culture, faith/no faith, home language, family background and type, special educational need, physical appearance, gender, or ability. Recognise, value and accept me and my family.*

- *You may have to treat me in a different way to other children, to ensure I feel equal. Thank you for respecting my cultural identity and that of my family. Remember too that I may need you to help me to integrate into life in Ireland.*

- *Help me to learn to value social and cultural difference and to recognise that I live in a diverse, multi-ethnic society. Help me to learn to recognise and challenge injustice and discrimination and to stand up for myself and others.*

- *Remember that learning is more meaningful, motivating and enjoyable for me when activities and experiences are based on my skills, strengths and interests and when they are linked to my home culture and language.*

- *Help me to be open to the ideas, stories and experiences of others, and to listen and learn from these.*

Children as citizens

Children are citizens with rights and responsibilities. They have opinions that are worth listening to and have the right to be involved in making decisions about matters which affect them. In this way, they have a right to experience democracy. From this experience they learn that, as well as having rights, they also have a responsibility to respect and help others, and to care for their environment.

- *Remember that I too am a citizen. Help me to learn about my rights and responsibilities. Model fairness, justice and respect when you interact with me and others.*

- *Create an environment for me in which I feel confident and comfortable, and have opportunities to share my experiences, stories, ideas, and feelings. Model democracy in action. Involve me in making decisions and in planning activities and doing and reflecting on them with others.*

- *Let me share my views and opinions with you about things that matter to me. Help me to understand that others may have different views and opinions, and to respect these. As I communicate in different ways, this might mean you need to observe and interpret my facial expressions, body movements, gurgles, cries, moods, and my language(s).*

- *I have the right to be protected from harm. Help to ensure I am not endangered or neglected. If you have concerns report them to the relevant person.*

- *Encourage me to care for my own and others' belongings and for the environment. Help me to be open to the ideas, stories and experiences of others, and to listen and learn from these.*

Group 2: Children's connections with other

Parents, family and community

Parents are the most important people in children's lives. The care and education that children receive from their parents and family, especially during their early months and years, greatly influence their overall development. Extended family and community also have important roles to play.

- *Remember that my parents and my family are the most important people in my life. Value their opinions and expertise. Without the care and education I get from them I would not be who I am. They love me, look after me, and teach me important things about life and learning. They want the best for me. Give my parents opportunities to share information with you about me and about what I do at home.*

- *You, my parents and practitioners, need to work together to help me learn and develop to the best of my ability. Think about ways to make links between my home and where I spend time with you, because you are all important to me.*

- *My community is important to me too. Show through your interactions with me that you respect my family and where I come from.*

Aistear's themes

Aistear presents children's learning and development using four interconnected themes. These are: *Well-being; Identity and Belonging; Communicating;* and *Exploring and Thinking*. The themes describe what children learn—the dispositions, attitudes and values, skills, knowledge, and understanding. Each theme begins with a short overview of its importance for children as young learners. The theme is then presented using four aims. Each aim is divided into six learning goals. Some of these goals may be more suited to children as they get older.

Each theme offers some ideas and suggestions for the types of learning experiences that adults might provide for children in working towards *Aistear*'s aims and goals. These ideas and suggestions are known as sample learning opportunities. They are presented in three overlapping age groups: babies (birth to 18 months); toddlers (12 months to 3 years); and young children (2½ to 6 years). While most of the sample learning opportunities can be adapted and developed for different types of settings, some may be more suited to one type than to another. Most of the sample learning opportunities can also be adapted for use indoors or outdoors. Each theme is looked at next.

The theme of *Well-being* is about children being confident, happy and healthy.

The theme of *Identity and Belonging* is about children developing a positive sense of who they are and feeling that they are valued and respected as part of a family and community.

The theme of *Communicating* is about children sharing their experiences, thoughts, ideas, and feelings with others with growing confidence and competence in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes.

The theme of *Exploring and Thinking* is about children making sense of the things, places and people in their world by interacting with others, playing, investigating, questioning, and forming, testing and refining ideas.

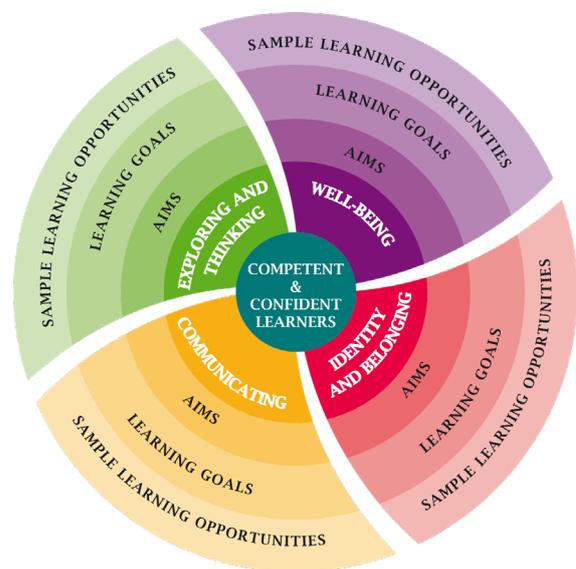The theme that is most connected to this work is *Identity and Belonging*.

Figure 2: Aistear's themes

Aims and learning goals for Identity and Belonging

Aims	Learning Goals
Aim 1: Children will have strong self-identities and will feel respected and affirmed as unique individuals with their own life stories	In partnership with the adult, children will 1. build respectful relationships with others 2. appreciate the features that make a person special and unique (name, size, hair, hand and footprint, gender, birthday) 3. understand that as individuals they are separate from others with their own needs, interests and abilities 4. have a sense of 'who they are' and be able to describe their backgrounds, strengths and abilities 5. feel valued and see themselves and their interests reflected in the environment 6. express their own ideas, preferences and needs, and have these responded to with respect and consistency
Aim 2: Children will have a sense of group identity where links with their family and community are acknowledged and extended.	In partnership with the adult, children will 1. feel that they have a place and a right to belong to the group 2. know that members of their family and community are positively acknowledged and welcomed 3. be able to share personal experiences about their own families and cultures, and come to know that there is a diversity of family structures, cultures and backgrounds 4. understand and take part in routines, customs, festivals, and celebrations 5. feel valued and see themselves and their interests reflected in the environment 6. express their own ideas, preferences and needs, and have these responded to with respect and consistency

Aims and learning goals for Identity and Belonging

Aims	Learning Goals
Aim 3: Children will be able to express their rights and show an understanding and regard for the identity, rights and views of others.	In partnership with the adult, children will 1. express their views and help make decisions in matters that affect them 2. understand the rules and the boundaries of acceptable behaviour 3. interact, work co-operatively, and help others 4. be aware of and respect others' needs, rights, feelings, culture, language, background, and religious beliefs 5. have a sense of social justice and recognise and deal with unfair behaviour 6. demonstrate the skills of co-operation, responsibility, negotiation, and conflict resolution.

Aims	Learning Goals
Aim 4: Children will see themselves as capable learners.	In partnership with the adult, children will 1. develop a broad range of abilities and interests 2. show an awareness of their own unique strengths, abilities and learning styles, and be willing to share their skills and knowledge with others 3. show increasing confidence and self-assurance in directing their own learning 4. demonstrate dispositions like curiosity, persistence and responsibility 5. experience learning opportunities that are based on personal interests, and linked to their home, community and culture 6. be motivated and begin to think about and recognise their own progress and achievements.

Aistear's Guidelines for good practice

Four sets of guidelines, focusing on different aspects of pedagogy, describe how the adult can support children's learning and development across these themes. The guidelines focus on

- building partnerships between parents and practitioners

- learning and developing through interactions

- learning and developing through play

- supporting learning and development through assessment.

The guidelines describe good practice and use a number of learning experiences to show what this practice might look like. While these learning experiences usually focus on a particular age group of children and a particular type of setting, many of them can be adapted to suit other age groups and other settings. Thinking about my practice questions help the adult reflect on what he/she does and says to support children's learning and development. There are many connections across the four sets of guidelines. For example, many of the learning experiences in an individual set can support practice in the other guidelines.

There are some learning experiences that include references to Traveller children. See below for more information.

Theme: Identity and Belonging, Aim 2 and Learning goal 3

Age group: Toddlers Setting: Home and sessional service (playgroup)

Joseph (2 years and 11 months) and his family are Travellers. They recently moved to the area and Joseph's mammy, Kathleen, enrolled him for two mornings a week in the local playgroup. The manager, Joan, meets with Kathleen and explains how the service works and shows her the different rooms and the outdoor play area. Joan asks Kathleen about Joseph and his likes and dislikes. She explains that she knows very little about Traveller culture and traditions. Joan asks Kathleen to tell her a little about their way of life and the Traveller traditions that are important to her. Understanding these will help the staff to support Joseph. Kathleen tells Joan that as a family they generally travel in their trailer during the summer months and settle in one area for the rest of the year. She also explains that most Travellers are not as nomadic as they used to be. Kathleen says that Joseph loves animals, especially horses and dogs. She tells Joan that she doesn't want Joseph to be discriminated against because he is a Traveller. She is worried because her older children had negative experiences in other settings. In preparation for Joseph's arrival, and with Kathleen's help, Joan gets some books and jigsaws that depict Traveller life today. She organises displays of animals for Joseph to look at when he arrives. She tells the children that a new boy is joining them. A few days after Joseph's arrival Joan talks to the children about their homes. She uses wall displays to reinforce some of the points they talk about. These include pictures of the children's homes such as trailers, flats and terraced houses. They use these to talk about 'where we live'. The children bring photographs of their families and homes, and make lollipop stick models of them using junk materials, fabrics, wool, glitter, fancy paper, and card. They display these beside their photographs. Over the coming days they enjoy sharing stories about their family, pets and outings. Joan observes the children during their activities and ensures Joseph is included and that he is beginning to form friendships. She updates Kathleen regularly on how he is settling in. Reflection: How much do the children and I know about each other's family life and community?

In Building Partnerships with parents learning experience 11: Do you understand my culture and traditions?

Theme: Identity and Belonging, Aim 3 and Learning goal 4

Age group: Young children
Setting: Infant class (primary school)

The junior infant class has children from a range of cultures including Traveller children and children from Nigeria, China and Egypt. Early in the first term the teacher, Mrs O'Reilly, notices that some children are using racist and discriminatory remarks when interacting with certain children in the class. This seems to be happening mainly at playtime in the yard. One day she overhears a conversation in which one child says to another child, 'I don't want you to come to my birthday party 'cos you're brown'. The teacher talks to both children, reassuring Zara (who moved to Ireland from Nigeria two years ago) first and talking to her about how she is feeling. She then focuses on finding out why the other child, Anna, acted in such a way. Mrs O'Reilly is conscious there may be a number of reasons for Anna's behaviour. Did the girls disagree about something? Did Anna hear someone else saying what she said? Did Anna want to hurt Zara and use her skin colour to do this? Mrs O'Reilly talks with Anna about why she used hurtful comments when playing with Zara. She explains the hurt this can cause to Zara and that it is not ok to do that. She tries to help Anna think about how she would feel if it happened to her. Mrs O'Reilly looks for support as to how she might deal with this situation. She does some reading about young children and prejudice and discrimination. She refers to the school policy on inclusion and uses the document, Intercultural Education in the Primary School: Guidelines for Schools (NCCA, 2005). She visits www.action.ncca.ie for examples of practice from other teachers in responding to conflict. She also speaks to the principal. Mrs O'Reilly knows it is important to address this issue immediately in order to support Zara and Anna as well as the other children. She follows up in the classroom through initial work on feelings.

She uses storybooks to explore 'being left out' and 'name-calling'. Through this, she and the children think about the actions and thoughts of a perpetrator, a recipient, and an onlooker to a negative situation. She reviews the images of people displayed in the classroom through posters and photographs and changes some of these to reflect a greater variety of cultures. She also sources multicultural dolls (male and female with realistic physical features) for the pretend play area as well as a variety of skin coloured crayons and paints. If a similar incident happens she will talk to the parents of the children involved. For now, she will observe closely the relationship between Zara and Anna, and will work with the whole class on making the school experience positive for everyone.

Reflection: Am I unintentionally making it acceptable for children to hurt each other through words and actions?

In Learning and developing through interactions, Learning experience 19: I don't want you to come to my birthday party

Theme: Well-being, Aim 1 and Learning goal 5

Age group: Young children Setting: Sessional service (pre-school)

There are two Traveller children, Winnie (3 years) and David (4½ years), in the pre-school. The children live in a trailer on an official halting site on the outskirts of the town. Some of the children have made unkind comments about Travellers and where they live. Sarah, the pre-school manager, wants to deal with the name-calling and unkind comments immediately so that she can help the Traveller children feel proud of who they are. She also wants to make sure they feel they belong in the setting. Sarah thinks that, if the other children learn about Traveller life and come to understand that people have different backgrounds and traditions, Winnie and David will be able to make friends more easily. Sarah introduces a puppet, Ollie, who talks about how he feels when someone makes hurtful comments about him. She involves the children in the discussion and she explains that it is not nice to make nasty comments about people or about where they live. Sarah plans a number of small group activities in which two or three children play and work with Winnie and David. Sarah will support the children as they play together and will join in herself until the children are more comfortable with each other.

Reflection: How do I help children value and respect each other's background and traditions, and encourage them to play and work together?

Learning and developing through interactions, Learning experience 40: Don't hurt me because I'm different

Theme: Exploring and Thinking, Aim 2 and Learning goal 5

Age group: Toddlers Setting: Sessional service (playgroup)

Bernadette, a Traveller child (2 years and 10 months), is newly arrived to the playgroup in the middle of the year. Her family keep horses and travel to fairs all around the country. As part of their fortnightly team meeting the staff discuss what they can do to help Bernadette make the transition to the playgroup. They agree to source posters of horses and fairs to display on the walls. They also ask the local training centre to make a small trailer and a model halting site to add to the small world play area. They add more horses to the farm set. Michael (3 years) who lives on a farm loves everything to do with farming—animals, tractors and books about farming. Michael spends long sessions every day setting up and playing with the farm. He arranges gates to keep the cattle in and makes sure all the animals have water. This play mirrors the real-life things he loves to do with his Mam and Dad who both work on the farm. Michael is delighted with the addition of the new horses. Bernadette likes to stand nearby and watch Michael play. She often sits beside him, too, taking part in onlooker play. The staff observe this. After a few days, with a little prompting from Nora, the playgroup leader, Bernadette decides to join Michael in playing with the horses. They start to form a friendship. Nora supports this by asking them to do things like tidying up in pairs and she encourages them to play together outside.

They love to play horsey games. Bernadette really likes this as she often goes to watch her Da in sulky races with their own horse. Sometimes Michael pretends to be the horse and Bernadette pretends to be her Da. Bernadette holds on to his jumper as he runs around. Bernadette tells him to giddy-up and slow down. Occasionally Bernadette uses 'Cant' words while she is playing. Nora is interested in finding out more about this from Bernadette's parents. At the next team meeting she suggests to her colleagues that they learn and use some Cant words to help Bernadette feel happier and more comfortable in the playgroup. This would also help the other children to learn more about Traveller life.

Reflection: Do the play props in my setting reflect the cultures and backgrounds of all the children?

Learning and developing through play, Learning experience 54: We love horses so let's be friends

Aistear Síolta Practice Guide

The *Aistear Síolta* Practice Guide (NCCA, 2016) is an on-line resource that was developed to support practitioners in using *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (2009)* and *Síolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (2006)* together to develop the quality of their curriculum to better support children's learning and development. The Practice Guide contains several resources that support practitioners in:

* critically reflecting on curriculum and identifying what works well

* identifying priorities for development

* planning actions for positive change.

Curriculum foundations is where settings should start to focus on. There are four areas here:

* developing your curriculum and curriculum statement

* principles including rights of the child and practitioner image of the child

* themes of *Aistear*

* professional practice.

All of these are important for inclusive practice. In addition to the four elements of Curriculum Foundations six pillars of practice have been developed, each of which provides a self-evaluation tool for services.

The six curriculum pillars consist of:

1. building partnerships with parents

2. creating and using the learning environment

3. learning through play

4. nurturing and extending interactions

5. planning and assessing using the themes of *Aistear*

6. Supporting transitions.

Of particular use here are the self-evaluation tools in each of the pillars which ask questions such as: Does our equipment and materials reflect diversity including ability, gender, ethnicity and family structure? Do we encourage play experiences that are challenging, inclusive, safe and enjoyable indoors and outdoors?

Through implementing *Aistear* and by using the *Aistear Síolta* Practice Guide there are lots of opportunities for teaching and learning about Traveller culture and history. Of particular importance is the theme of Identity and Belonging and the principles that underpin *Aistear* as outlined above. Building strong partnerships with families and the provision of good quality, inclusive play experiences is also vital.

Impact of and support for *Aistear*

Since its publication in 2009 many early childhood settings have begun to use *Aistear* to provide enhanced experiences for children. However, it is important to note that there was no nationally coordinated implementation plan. While over the years limited funding was made available for training in some aspects of early childhood many of these courses made little or no reference to either *Aistear* or *Síolta*, leaving

settings unsure of the status of the frameworks. Since 2016, every child is entitled to two years of pre-school education building on the one-funded year that was made available from 2010 through the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme (DCYA, 2016). Settings receiving government funding through this scheme are required to adhere to the principles underpinning both *Aistear* and *Síolta*.

In 2016 a very significant change happened when the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) was given responsibility for improving the quality of learning for children in early years settings providing the ECCE Scheme. The inspections are designed to evaluate key aspects of education provision including looking for evidence of *Aistear*. In providing feedback, inspectors refer practitioners to the on-line *Aistear Síolta* Practice Guide (www.aistearsiolta.ie).

Alongside this the National *Síolta Aistear* Initiative was established in 2016 to provide central support and coordination of *Síolta* and *Aistear* implementation. Two national development officers were engaged to oversee this work. Also, as part of the universal supports under the Access and Inclusion Model (aim.gov.ie) close to 900 ECE professionals graduated in September 2017 with a level 6 special purpose higher education award from the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) programme. These are eligible to undertake the role of inclusion co-ordinator in their settings. A further 900 students were enrolled to undertake the LINC training in 2017–18. The City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs) have also delivered diversity, equality and inclusion training to providers based on the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education (DCYA, 2016).

First 5: A Whole of Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019-2028 published by the Government of Ireland in 2018 has four priorities for children aged under 5 years. Goal C: Positive play-based learning includes a focus on positive home learning environment, affordable, high-quality Early childhood settings,

supported transitions which include 'a consistently implemented curriculum framework' (Government of Ireland, 2018, p.4). While some progress has been made in terms of government policy and support for settings and schools to support *Aistear*, and while the work by organisations across the sector is noteworthy, much remains to be done. However, the publication of *First 5* is momentous for *Aistear*, as Goal D: An effective early childhood system, states that

> *through the NSAI a national plan for the phased, supported and simultaneous implementation of Aistear and Síolta in all ELC settings will be developed and that the application of both frameworks will be a contractual requirement and may in time become a statutory requirement (Government of Ireland, 2018, p.157).*

Mo Scéal Reporting Templates

Moving to primary school is an important part of every child's life. With this in mind, the NCCA developed reporting templates called *Mo Scéal* to facilitate the sharing of information on children's learning and development between preschools and parents/guardians and, with their consent, with the primary school the child is enrolled in. *Mo Scéal* means 'my story' and the reporting templates help to tell the story of the child's interests, strengths and challenges prior to starting junior infants.

The development of *Mo Scéal* involved research and consultation with teachers, practitioners, parents and children. Early drafts of *Mo Scéal* were piloted as part of the NCCA Preschool to Primary School Transitions Initiative in 2017. The final report on the initiative is available to read at https://www.ncca.ie/media/3367/transitionpreschoolprimary_reportfinalfeb.pdf. (NCCA, 2018)

Mo Scéal templates are now available in English and Irish on the NCCA website. There is no requirement to use them. Instead, the templates are a resource which preschools and schools can choose to use, as they collaborate on supporting children's transition to school. Transferring *Mo Scéal* from the preschool to the primary school involves a number of steps and detailed guidance as well as all accompanying materials are available from https://www.ncca.ie/en/early-childhood/mo-sceal.

Mo Scéal templates have four sections:

- **Section 1: Practitioner** provides space for the practitioner to include information on the child's learning and development using the four themes of *Aistear*

- **Section 2: Parent/Guardian** provides space for information that parents/guardians may like to share with their child's new school

- **Section 3: Child** provides an opportunity for the children to share something with the his/her new teacher and is an important section as it highlights the voice of the child during the transition

- **Section 4: Parent/Guardian** Consent asks for permission to share a copy of the child's report with the primary school.

The combined information from the practitioner, from parents/guardians and from the child will give the teacher unique insights into the child's learning and experiences from home and from preschool. This will be very useful, particularly in the initial weeks of junior infants. There is scope in the template for particular aspects of Traveller identity to be incorporated which is key to supporting the Traveller child's transition from preschool to primary school.

5. The Primary School Curriculum (1999)

This section provides an overview of the primary curriculum and again highlights opportunities for the integration of aspects of Traveller culture and history.

Introduction

At primary level, recognised schools provide a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects both the interests of children and the school's context and ethos. To achieve this, schools implement the Primary School Curriculum (Department of Education and Science, 1999) which is designed to provide opportunities for children to explore, investigate and develop an understanding of the human, social and cultural dimensions of life. Also, through their experiences of the curriculum, children acquire open, critical and responsible attitudes. It is an intercultural curriculum and the key characteristics of intercultural education are derived from the curriculum. The Introduction Statement explains that the curriculum has a particular responsibility to promote respect for diversity in both the school and the community. Children come from a diversity of cultural, religious, social and environmental and ethnic backgrounds, and these engender their own beliefs, values and aspirations. It [the curriculum] recognises the diversity of beliefs, values and aspirations of all religious and cultural groups in society (Department of Education and Science, 1999, 28). The curriculum is designed to be broad and balanced, affording flexibility to the teacher and the school to take account of the diverse backgrounds, interests, capabilities and cultures that are found in the school, including students from the Traveller community.
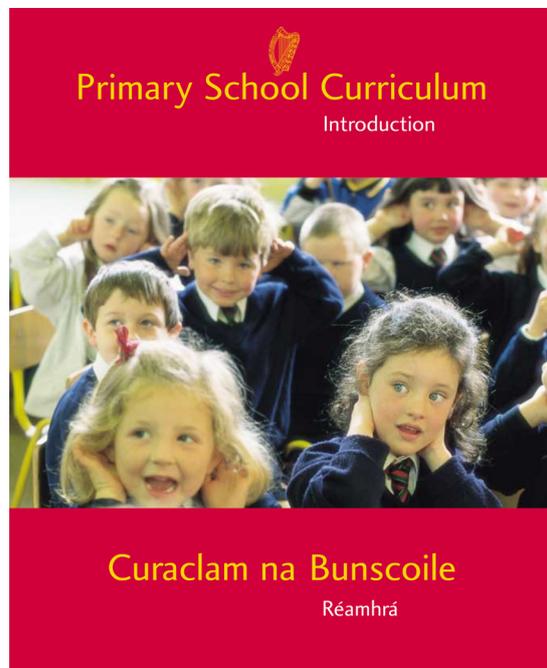

Figure 3: Primary School Curriculum

The curriculum presents a vision for primary education which:

- celebrates the uniqueness of the child and seeks to nurture the child in all elements of her or his life – spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical

- recognises that children live in and are part of society and that their personal development is deeply affected by their relationships in the home and with other people

- recognises that education not only reflects society but is a key influence in shaping its development

- equips people to share in the benefits of society and enables them to contribute effectively to society and to deal with and adjust to the changing nature of knowledge and of society.

- Based on the vision the three general aims of the primary curriculum are to:

- enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her own potential as an individual

- enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society

- prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning.

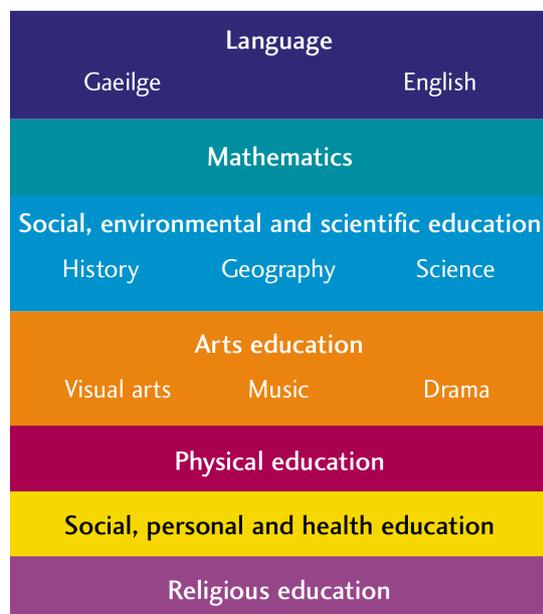The 1999 primary curriculum is divided into seven curriculum areas of learning

Figure 4: Primary curriculum areas of learning

The primary case studies in this section cover four of the seven curriculum areas, namely: Languages (the new curriculum for English and Irish for infants to 2nd class); Social, environmental and scientific education (SESE) (subdivided into the subjects of History, Geography and Science); Arts education (subdivided into Visual arts, Music and Drama) and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) which is considered both a curriculum area and a subject. Religious Education is not included in this audit as the patronage and ownership of schools has a direct impact on how some elements of the primary school curriculum are taught by teachers and experienced by children. In denominational schools, the rights of the patron under the Education Act (1998) enable a school to teach the curriculum from the faith perspective of the patron.

Review and redevelopment of the primary curriculum

This iteration of the Primary Curriculum, now in its twentieth year, is undergoing a review and redevelopment process by the NCCA, so that it can better meet the current and future needs, requirements and expectations of a modern and changing Irish society. This review is considering how the future primary curriculum should be structured, the content that should be included and how time might be used across the curriculum. This platform provides a timely opportunity to consider future possibilities for a redeveloped curriculum. The first curriculum area to undergo redevelopment is language and the NCCA has recently developed a new Primary Language Curriculum / Curaclam Teanga Bunscoile. A new Mathematics Curriculum is also currently in development. The next phase of consultation on the full redevelopment of the primary curriculum is due to begin towards the end of 2019 and into 2020. This phase of review involves considering some significant issues about a redeveloped primary curriculum including:

- the purpose of the primary curriculum taking account of developments in the early childhood sector and changing junior cycle experience when students begin post-primary school

- the values and principles underpinning the curriculum

- the priorities for our children's learning across the eight years of primary education

- the structure and content of the curriculum – the number of stages and what the curriculum will comprise in each stage

- an updated framework for allocating time within the curriculum

- important pedagogies to support children's learning and development across the curriculum.

Consultation on the proposals for a curriculum in Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) and Ethics

During a consultation on the proposed introduction of a new subject into the primary curriculum called Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) and Ethics in 2015 and 2016, the NCCA engaged with educators, parents and members of the general public to hear their views on the proposals. A significant amount of data was gathered during the consultation. A key theme which arose during the consultation was the desire for children's learning to contribute to fostering skills and dispositions which would enable them to engage positively with the world in which we live and promote inclusive practices in schools (NCCA, 2017). This was also linked to social and emotional learning with an emphasis on nurturing positive relationships. A significant aspect of the consultation focused on the emphasis schools already place on fostering a sense of belonging among children as well as supporting identity (NCCA, 2017, 37). Some examples included celebrating festivals of major religions, intercultural weeks, school visits to religious sites, class visits by members of different communities and assemblies. Children involved in the consultation noted how they 'include everybody, different skin tones or different beliefs. We respect them in every way possible' (NCCA, 2016, 39). There was a recognition that much of this work takes place informally, outside the formal curriculum. The findings were supportive of areas that would help children to deal with prejudice and discrimination, develop empathy, and awareness of rights and responsibilities. Parents were most supportive of providing children with critical thinking skills, helping them to understand the impact on prejudice and discrimination (Darmody and Smyth, 2017). The findings from the consultation will inform the review and redevelopment of the primary curriculum.

Current opportunities for the integration of Traveller culture and history in the primary curriculum

Until this curriculum redevelopment task is complete, the three primary curriculum areas that currently support learning opportunities and experiences about Traveller culture and history along with the new Primary Language Curriculum / Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile are: Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) (History and Geography in particular), Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Arts Education (Music and Visual Arts in particular). There are no explicit references to the distinct history and culture of the Traveller community or any other distinct minority group in the primary curriculum (1999).

Primary Language Curriculum / Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile

The new Primary Language Curriculum statement supports teaching and learning in English and Irish. The curriculum is for teachers of children of all abilities in all school contexts – English-medium schools, Gaeltacht schools, Irish-medium schools and special schools. The following excerpts from the curriculum are of direct relevance to the audit on Traveller culture and history in the curriculum.

In the rationale for the Primary Language Curriculum, the following statements set out on pages 6-10 are of relevance:

- the Curriculum 'supports the development of self-efficacy, identity and full participation in society,' while 'acknowledging the diversity of languages spoken in Irish primary schools.'
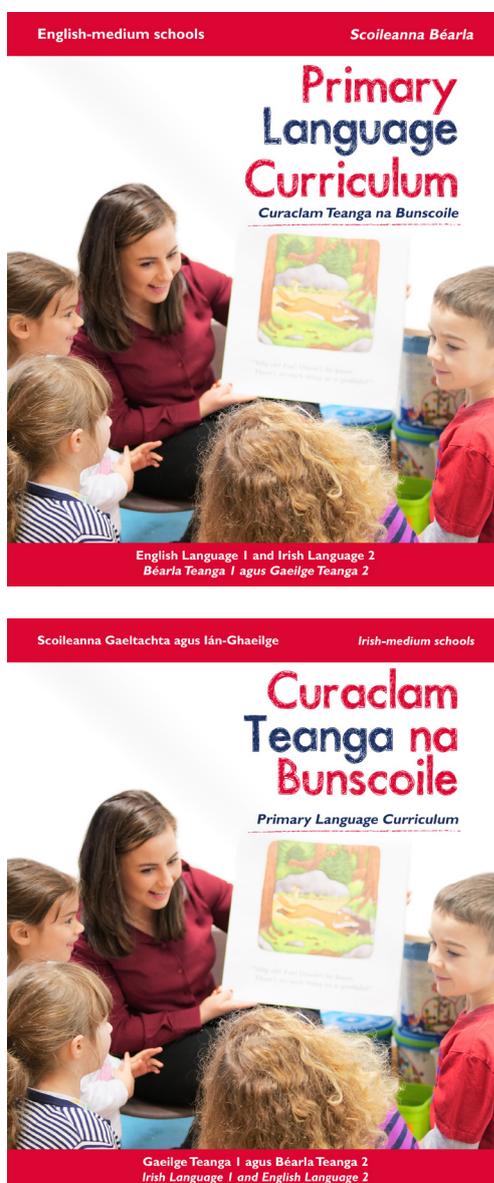

Figure 5: Primary Language Curriculum - English and Gaeilge

- 'As a child develops it enables them to think about their own cultural identity and their personal place in the world. Distinguishing characteristics of cultures are often contained within their languages. The learning of English and Irish both play an important role in developing an understanding of Irish cultural identity.'

- 'An environment that supports and promotes children's differences is important for children to feel accepted and comfortable; an environment where differences of need, culture and language are celebrated.'

- 'Encouraging children to explore similarities and differences between languages and cultures can be of great benefit to the classroom language-learning environment by fostering a greater appreciation of languages.'

- 'The language curriculum supports teachers to value the language experience of all children.'

In the aims for the Primary Language Curriculum, the following statements, which are relevant to this audit, are outlined on pages 12 and 13:

The Primary Language Curriculum aims to support teachers to:

- encourage children to embrace Irish positively and promote our cultural identity

- encourage children of different languages and cultures to be proud and to share their heritage

- embrace children's uniqueness by nurturing their appreciation of their home language, their understanding of language and diversity, and their ability to use different languages, gestures and tools to communicate with people in a variety of contexts and situations.

In the Learning Outcomes for Oral Language in the Primary Language Curriculum, pupils will:

- In the Learning Outcomes for Oral Language in the Primary Language Curriculum, pupils will:

- show interest in, demonstrate joint attention and actively listen and attend for enjoyment and for a particular purpose, and in other languages where appropriate

- express their individuality through their knowledge and use of various languages

- explore how culture and identity can influence how people communicate with others, verbally and non-verbally.

In the Learning Outcomes for Reading in the Primary Language Curriculum, pupils will:

- choose, read and critically respond to texts in a range of genres and languages across the curriculum for pleasure, interest and specific purposes

- recognise and examine the implications of culture and identity on the creation of texts across a range of genres.

In the Learning Outcomes for Writing in the Primary Language Curriculum, pupils will:

- use writing as a tool to clarify and structure thought and to express individuality

- use a variety of writing techniques to further develop and demonstrate an individual voice in their writing, including awareness of dialect.

Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) Curriculum: History

The History Curriculum statement explains that children should be enabled to develop an understanding of the actions, beliefs and motivations of people in the past and is fundamental to an appreciation of contemporary society. Broad objectives of the History Curriculum include:

- developing tolerance towards minorities in society and appreciating the contribution of various ethnic, cultural, religious and social groups to the evolution of modern Ireland

- developing a sense of personal, local, national European and wider identities through studying the history and cultural inheritance of local and other communities.

The specific content of the history curriculum that supports opportunities for teaching and learning about Traveller culture and history is delineated in Table 1.

Table 1 SESE - History: Curriculum opportunities and linkages to Traveller history and culture

Ages 4-6 (Infant classes)	Ages 6-8 (First and second classes)
• Stories Listen to, discuss, retell and record through pictures and other simple writing activities some stories from the lives of people who have made a contribution to local and/or national life and to the lives of people in other countries in a variety of ways	• Stories Become aware of the lives of women, men and children from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, including the lives of 'ordinary' as well as 'more famous' people Listen to, discuss, retell and record a range of myths and legends from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds in Ireland and other countries
Ages 8-10 (Third and fourth classes)	**Ages 10-12 (Fifth and sixth classes)**
• Homes Explore changes which have taken place in the home and other homes in the area; varying designs and materials in homes of different ages and types, including houses, caravans, flats, cottages, trailers; changes to the structure; changes in services (e.g. when electricity came to the home); changes in furniture and appliances used • Stories from the lives of people in the past Listen to, discuss, retell and record a range of stories from the lives of people who have made a contribution to local and/or national life and to the lives of people in other countries through technological, scientific, cultural and artistic activities as well as those who have contributed to social and political developments Become aware of the lives of women, men and children from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, including the lives of 'ordinary' as well as 'more famous' people • Life in Ireland since the 1950s Become familiar with aspects of the lives of these people; homes of people; clothes farming, foods and cooking technologies which people developed and used; people at work; tools and weapons language(s), culture, art and music leisure and pastimes; stories of individuals from this era	• Stories from the lives of people in the past Listen to, discuss, retell and record a wide range of stories from the lives of people who have made a contribution to local and/or national life and to the lives of people in other countries through technological, scientific, cultural and artistic activities as well as those who have contributed to social and political developments Become aware of the lives of women, men and children from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, including the lives of 'ordinary' as well as 'more famous' people • Ireland, Europe and the world, 1960 to the present Explore, discuss, compare and develop some simple understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, motivations and actions of differing individuals and groups of people in the past Begin to develop some appreciation of the 'mind-set' of former generations; appreciate that the notion of tolerance developed over time, that the notion of equality of treatment of people had to evolve over time Acquire insights into the attitudes and actions of people in contemporary Ireland Develop a growing sense of personal, national, European and wider identities. • Homes, housing and urban environments • Nomadism Identify examples of change and continuity in the 'line of development'

Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE): Geography

Like history, primary geography has obvious potential to be enriched by the treatment of aspects of Traveller identity. The geography curriculum statement explains that children should have opportunities to explore and learn about features in their human and natural environments. They investigate interactions of people with each other in the locality and wider contexts. A broad objective of the geography curriculum is:

- To learn of and come to value the diversity of peoples, cultures, and societies in Ireland and throughout the world, acquire an awareness of human interdependence and develop empathy with others.

The specific content of the geography curriculum that supports opportunities for teaching and learning about Traveller culture and history is delineated in Table 2.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

As part of SPHE children learn to appreciate other people. The SPHE curriculum statement explains that this subject contributes to interpersonal development by helping children understand the ways in which they can show respect, care and consideration in their dealings with others. SPHE plays an important role in developing an understanding of individual and group rights and responsibilities. A broad objective of the SPHE Curriculum is to appreciate respect and the diversity that exists in society and the positive contributions of various cultural, religious and social groups.

The specific content of SPHE that supports opportunities for teaching and learning about Traveller culture and history is delineated in Table 3.

Table 2 SESE - Geography: Curriculum opportunities and linkages to Traveller history and culture

Ages 4-6 (Infant classes)	Ages 6-8 (First and second classes)
● **Living in the local community** Acquire some awareness of different types of homes in the locality: flat, cottage, house, caravan, trailer	● **Living in the local community** Become aware of the lives of women, men and children from different social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, including the lives of 'ordinary' as well as 'more famous' people Listen to, discuss, retell and record a range of myths and legends from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds in Ireland and other countries
Ages 8-10 (Third and fourth classes)	**Ages 10-12 (Fifth and sixth classes)**
● **People living and working in the local area** Learn about and come to appreciate and respect the people and communities who live and work in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland: the various people and groups in the community Explore, investigate and come to appreciate the major features of the built environment in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland; his/her home, its location and surroundings;; the variety of homes in the area (e.g. houses, farmhouses, cottages, flats, caravans, mobile homes, trailers)	● **People living and working in the local area** Learn about and come to appreciate the peoples and communities who live and work in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland: respecting and valuing diversity in the community Explore, investigate and come to appreciate the major features of the built environment in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland; different types of homes in the area, including houses, cottages, flats, caravans, trailers, mobile homes ● **People and other lands** Become aware of various ethnic, religious and linguistic groups of peoples in Ireland, Europe and the wider world

Table 3 SPHE - Curriculum opportunities and linkages to Traveller history and culture

Ages 4-6 (Infant classes)	Ages 6-8 (First and second classes)
	• Living in the local community Be aware of and appreciate the diversity of cultures and people in the local community, recognise their contributions and be aware of how differences can enrich his/her experiences

Ages 8-10 (Third and fourth classes)	Ages 10-12 (Fifth and sixth classes)
• Myself and my family Compare and contrast life-styles of families in urban and rural areas, in different countries, and in different cultures within and outside Ireland • Local and wider communities Appreciate the diversity of people or groups within communities and the importance of mutual respect, empathy and understanding for living together in peace and harmony Examine how justice, fairness and equality may or may not be exemplified in a community: *exploring discrimination against particular groups, racism, recognising stereotyping of any kind and exploring how it can be counteracted* Become aware of his/her own culture and recognise traditions, festivals and celebrations that are unique to the locality, region or country.	• Myself and my family Compare and contrast the life-styles of families in different cultures, both in Ireland and abroad • Developing citizenship Recognise and understand the role of the individual and various groups in the community • National, European and wider communities Recognise and acknowledge the various cultural, religious, ethnic or other groups that exist in a community or society and explore ways in which these differences can be respected

Arts Education: Music

The introduction to the Music curriculum statement explains how music education is part of a balanced curriculum experience which can bring children to an awareness and appreciation of his / her unique cultural environment and ethos. Irish music is one of our strongest living traditions and it represents the experience and aspirations of generations of musicians. In exposing children to the rich background of their native musical traditions as well as other musical genres, music education contributes to the children's knowledge and understanding of others, their times, their cultures and their traditions.

A broad objective of the Music Curriculum is to listen to, enjoy and respond to a wide variety of music, including various genres and styles from different periods, cultures and ethnic groups, both live and recorded. As observed earlier, the richness of the Traveller contribution to distinctive Irish music might be explored here.

Arts Education: Visual Arts

The introduction to the Visual Arts curriculum statement explains how creative achievements in art contribute to children's sense of personal identity and self-esteem and help to create cultural awareness and empathy. The curriculum notes that children should be encouraged to discover and talk about variety in visual expression from different times and cultures and its role in those cultures.

In summary, the primary curriculum areas presented here do not represent an exhaustive study of all opportunities for teaching, learning and assessment about aspects of Traveller history and culture. Additional opportunities exist in both the curriculum areas included and in curriculum areas not included in this study. Those

listed should be viewed as a snapshot of the possibilities in the current primary curriculum, and the basis for deliberations about the potential to further embed Traveller culture and history as part of the wider review and redevelopment of the primary curriculum.
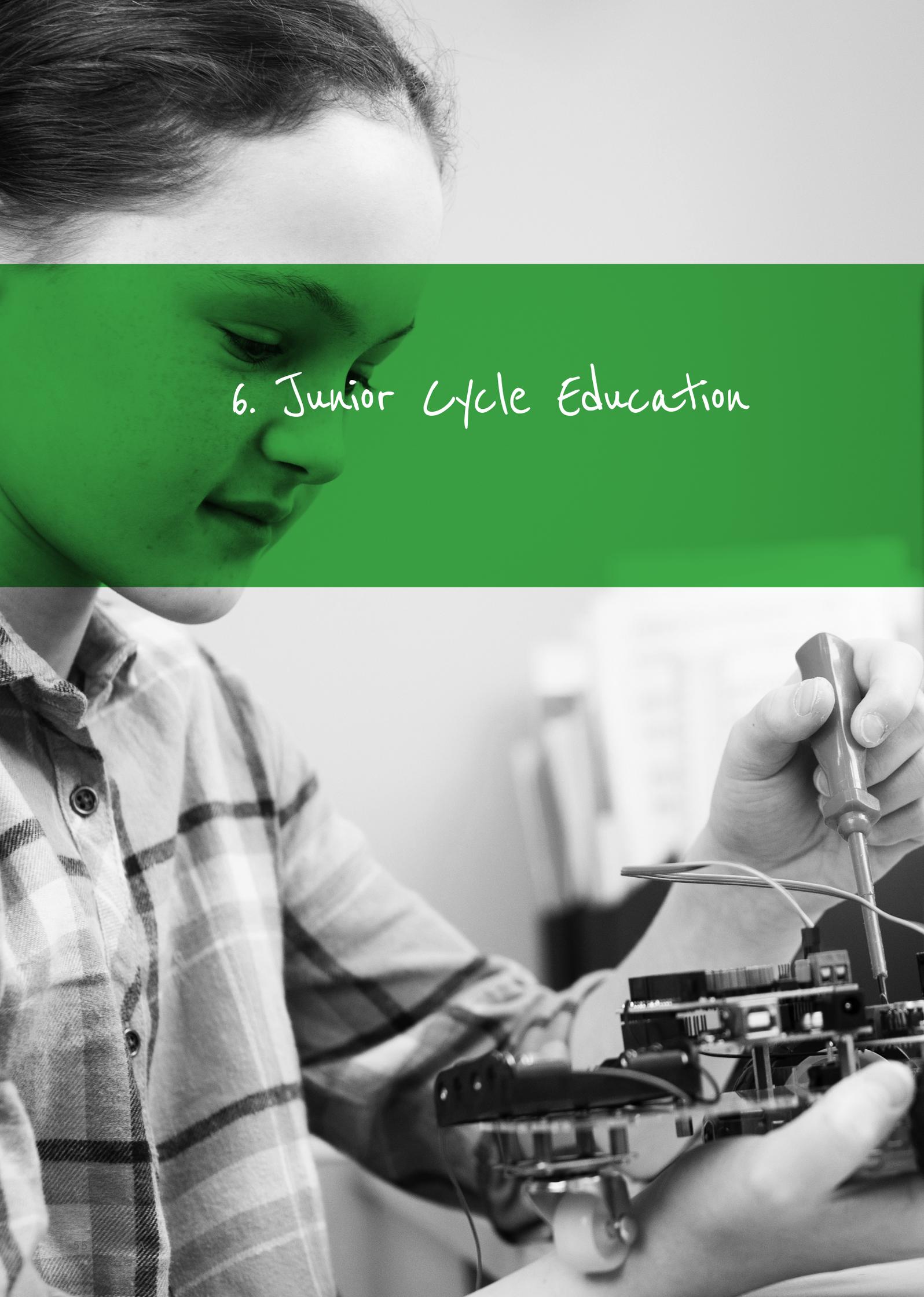
6. Junior Cycle Education

This section explores how the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) allows for the exploration of Traveller culture and history across various subjects and other curriculum components. The Framework is the basis for lower secondary education or the first three years in the post-primary system, catering for students typically aged 12 to 15 years.

Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)

The Framework for Junior Cycle incorporates a shared understanding of how teaching, learning and assessment practices should evolve to support the delivery of a quality, inclusive and relevant education that will meet the needs of junior cycle students, both now and in the future (Framework for Junior Cycle (DES, 2015: 6).

This framework document explains the structure of the reformed junior cycle programme, which is underpinned by eight principles, twenty-four statements of learning, and eight key skills.
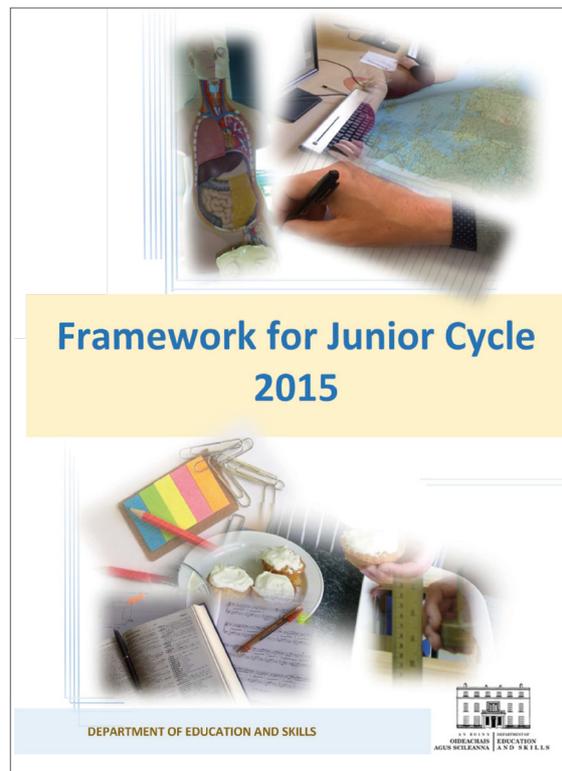

Figure 6: Framework for Junior Cycle 2015

Principles

The eight principles which form the bases of the junior cycle curriculum framework are presented in Figure 7.

While all the principles are key in informing the planning and implementation of junior cycle programmes in all schools for all students, of particular relevance to this curriculum audit are the following principles:
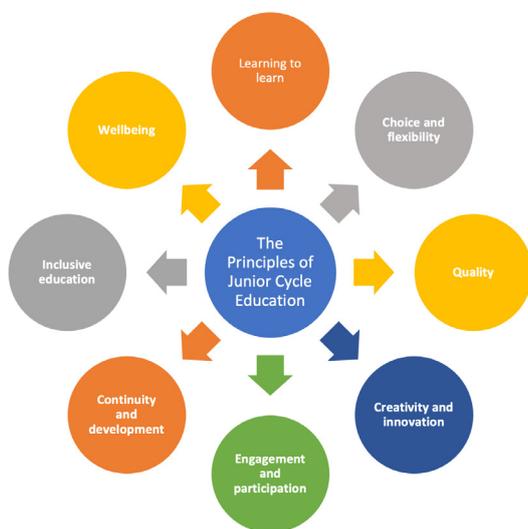

Figure 7: Priniciples of junior cycle

Engagement and participation

The experience of curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning encourages participation, generates engagement and enthusiasm, and connects with life outside the school.

Inclusive education

The educational experience is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcomes for all.

Learning to learn

High quality curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning support students in developing greater independence in learning and in meeting the challenges of life beyond school, of further education, and of woking life.

Choice and flexibility

The school's junior cycle programme is broad enough to offer a wide range of learning experiences to all, and flexible enough to offer choice to meet the needs of students. on, and of working life.

Statements of Learning

The learning at the core of junior cycle is described in 24 statements of learning (SOL). Schools should ensure that all statements of learning feature in the programmes of all junior cycle students. Of particular relevance to this curriculum audit are the following statements of learning, whereby the student:

- appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives (SOL 6) and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives (SOL 6)

- values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts (SOL 7)

- values local, national and international heritage, understands the importance of the relationship between past and current events and the forces that drive change (SOL 8)

- understands the origins and impacts of social, economic and environmental aspects of the world around her/him (SOL 9).

Statements of Learning

The Student

1. communicates effectively using a variety of means in a range of contexts in L1*
2. listens, speaks, reads and writes in L2* and one other language at a level of proficiency that is appropriate to her or his ability
3. creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts
4. creates and presents artistic works and appreciates the process and skills involved
5. has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making
6. appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives
7. values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts
8. values local, national and international heritage, understands the importance of the relationship between past and current events and the forces that drive change
9. understands the origins and impacts of social, economic, and environmental aspects of the world around her/him
10. has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably
11. takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others
12. is a confident and competent participant in physical activity and is motivated to be physically active
13. understands the importance of food and diet in making healthy lifestyle choices
14. makes informed financial decisions and develops good consumer skills
15. recognises the potential uses of mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of learning
16. describes, illustrates, interprets, predicts and explains patterns and relationships
17. devises and evaluates strategies for investigating and solving problems using mathematical knowledge, reasoning and skills
18. observes and evaluates empirical events and processes and draws valid deductions and conclusions
19. values the role and contribution of science and technology to society, and their personal, social and global importance
20. uses appropriate technologies in meeting a design challenge
21. applies practical skills as she/he develop models and products using a variety of materials and technologies
22. takes initiative, is innovative and develops entrepreneurial skills
23. brings an idea from conception to realisation
24. uses technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner

*L1 is the language medium of the school (Irish in Irish-medium schools). L2 is the second language (English in Irish-medium schools).

Figure 8: The twenty four statements of learning in junior cycle

Key skills

The Framework for Junior Cycle sets out the eight key skills that are required for successful learning by all students. Throughout the Junior Cycle, students develop their proficiency in these eight key skills across the curriculum. Students engage with the key skills through their different learning experiences and in the approaches to assessment used in the classroom and in examinations. These skills are key to learning in every area of junior cycle and beyond.

Figure 9: The eight key skills of junior cycle

Of particular note for this audit are the key skills of Being Literate and Being Numerate. Poor literacy and numeracy skills are often cited as factors that contribute to Traveller students' difficulties in accessing education. Junior Cycle Key Skills are built on findings from the national strategy Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life (2011- 2020). This strategy document recognised that some children and students need much greater levels of support to achieve their potential including members of the Traveller community.

Diversity and accessibility

Students in junior cycle come from a wide range of backgrounds and have a wide range of individual interests and needs. One of the key developments is the introduction of short courses into school programmes. A short course is equivalent to 100 tuition hours, which equates to half a full subject of 200 hours. Short courses can be developed by schools to respond to the specific needs of their student cohort. Short courses on caring for animals, equine studies, textile crafts or metalwork could be introduced by schools into their programmes to respond to the interests of Traveller students. Subject specifications and short courses developed by the NCCA are designed to be as universal as is feasible, providing meaningful and valuable learning opportunities for students from all cultural and social backgrounds and from a wide variety of individual circumstances. The greater degree of flexibility afforded by the Framework is intended to allow each school to take account of its local context and the backgrounds, interests, and abilities of students when planning its junior cycle programme. This flexibility will also allow each school to ensure that, within its programme, there is sufficient flexibility to cater for the individual learning needs of all students, including Traveller and other minority students (DES, 2015: 26).

Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs)

Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) are a crucial aspect of the Framework for Junior Cycle and have been designed for students with a high moderate to low mild general learning disability in post primary mainstream or special schools. A Level 2 Learning Programme is made up of Priority Learning Units and Short Courses.

There are five Priority Learning Units (PLUs) at the heart of the L2LPs. These focus on skills-based learning and the transference of those skills into different situations and experiences, such as classrooms, the wider school community and real-life situations. The PLUs can be viewed as an alternative key skills structure for students who are accessing L2LPs.

The five PLUs are Communication and Literacy, Numeracy, Personal Care, Living in a Community, and Preparing for Work. PLUs are presented as self-contained units, but when used in learning programmes will be integrated and developed in a wide range of contexts. The PLUs are clearly interconnected; they overlap and interlink. The learning outcomes for each PLU are aligned with the Level 2 indicators on the National Framework of Qualifications.

The overview of each PLU that follows indicates how Traveller education might be incorporated:

Communication and Literacy: Learning in this unit covers both verbal and non-verbal ways of receiving and giving information. Communication may take the form of listening and responding using augmentative or alternative communication systems. The unit looks at developing reading and writing skills and includes reference to how ICT is used in communication. The term communication is used in a broad way in this unit, which also considers how students can communicate through the expressive arts such as music and dance, which are important aspects of Traveller community culture. Communication can also take account of Cant, the language of the Irish Travelling community.

Numeracy: Numeracy is a daily living skill, with significant applications to home and community life, as well as in the area of academic progress and achievement. This unit draws on a broad range of real-life experiences, helping students develop knowledge and understanding in a range of topics such as number, shapes, space, money, time, and measurement. In practical terms this can support young adults from the Travelling community develop their budgeting, domestic (for example meal preparation) and work-life skills.

Personal Care: This unit is concerned with the personal development of students. It deals with their health and wellbeing covering areas such as healthy eating habits and healthy lifestyles. It is concerned with enabling students to be as independent as possible in catering for their personal care needs. This includes becoming aware of their sexuality, managing stress, and knowing how to stay safe in a range of contexts. Personal Care is tailored to specific student needs and contexts and can be delivered with respect to the Travelling community's cultural traditions.

Living in the community: This unit assists students in developing strategies to establish and maintain positive relationships with people around them. The elements include knowing how to deal with conflict and how to seek help and advice. It also considers the student's local community and the use of local facilities available to them. This particular element can facilitate students from the Travelling community to explore and share their heritage while also learning how to avail of amenities in the wider community.

Preparing for Work: This unit assists students in making the transition from school to further education, training or employment. This unit will assist students from the Travelling community explore different work and study related experiences and set goals for themselves beyond completing their junior cycle.

Wellbeing

The *Framework for Junior Cycle* provides for a new area of learning at junior cycle called Wellbeing. This area of learning makes the school's culture, ethos and commitment to wellbeing visible to students. It includes learning opportunities to enhance the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing of students. It enables students to build life skills and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school and to their community. There are four aspects of wellbeing in schools as can be seen in *Figure 10* opposite.

Wellbeing is of particular importance for students from the Traveller community, for whom the dissonance between the social, linguistic and cultural environments of the home and school can be a source of tension. Many Traveller children have been exposed to the negative images of Travellers in the media and the development of a positive sense of self is essential in this regard.
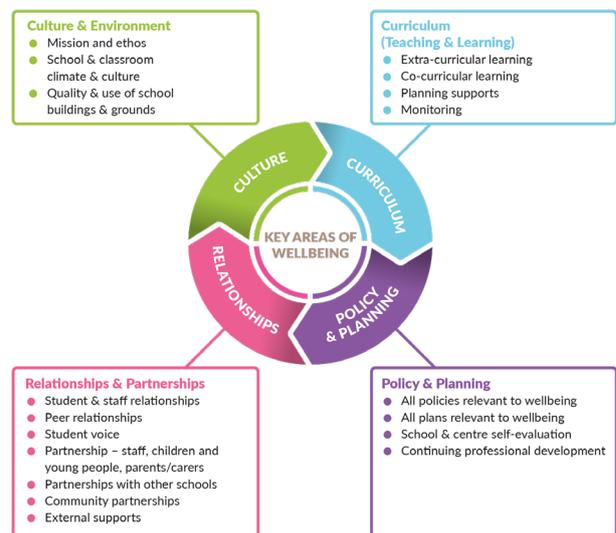
Culture & Environment
- Mission and ethos
- School & classroom climate & culture
- Quality & use of school buildings & grounds

Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)
- Extra-curricular learning
- Co-curricular learning
- Planning supports
- Monitoring

CULTURE · CURRICULUM · RELATIONSHIPS · POLICY & PLANNING

KEY AREAS OF WELLBEING

Relationships & Partnerships
- Student & staff relationships
- Peer relationships
- Student voice
- Partnership – staff, children and young people, parents/carers
- Partnerships with other schools
- Community partnerships
- External supports

Policy & Planning
- All policies relevant to wellbeing
- All plans relevant to wellbeing
- School & centre self-evaluation
- Continuing professional development

Figure 10: The four aspects of wellbeing in schools. (NCCA, 2016: 26)

Assessment in Junior Cycle

A significant change in the new Junior Cycle is in the area of assessment. A dual approach to assessment has been introduced, involving classroom-based assessment across the three years and a final externally-assessed, state-certified examination. This approach aims to recognise and value the different types of learning that take place in schools and the different strengths, abilities and interests of students, while allowing for a more rounded assessment of the educational achievements of each young person. The assessments cover a broad range of activities including oral presentations, written work of different types, practical or designing and making activities, artistic performances, scientific experiments, projects or other suitable tasks. Work related to the Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) is best seen as an integral part of ongoing assessment and routine classroom practice.

The final externally-assessed examination includes an Assessment Task and examination paper in many subjects. During these assessments, students engage with, demonstrate comprehension of, and provide written responses to stimulus material.
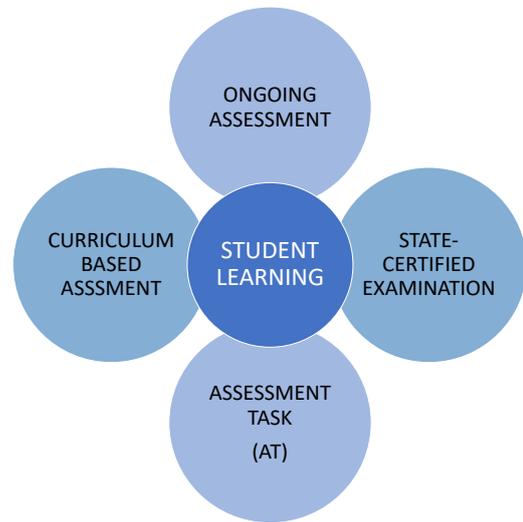
Figure 11: Interlinked nature of learning and assessment (DES, 2015:41)

Reporting in Junior Cycle

The reporting process at junior cycle culminates in the award of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) to students. This entails moving beyond the certification of a student's final results in the state-certified examinations towards providing a more rounded description of each student's educational achievements. The JCPA rewards achievement across subjects, short courses, wellbeing, Priority Learning Units (PLU) and other areas of learning.

The JCPA draws upon and reports on a student's achievement across all elements of learning and assessment including ongoing, formative assessment; Classroom-Based Assessments; and State Examinations Commission (SEC) grades which include results from the state-certified examinations and the Assessment Tasks.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements in curriculum specifications for junior cycle subjects and short courses to describe the knowledge, understanding, skills and values students should be able to demonstrate after a period of learning. In the junior cycle subject audit which follows, aspects of Traveller culture and history are mapped against sample learning outcomes from subject and short course specifications. This demonstrates the potential scope of learning outcomes where teaching, learning and assessment about Traveller culture and history is concerned. While there is no specific reference to the distinct culture and history of the Traveller community or any other distinct minority group, the Framework for Junior Cycle provides ample opportunity for students to encounter aspects of Traveller culture and history because the various elements of the Framework provide a basis for subject and short course learning outcomes.

Current opportunities for the integration of Traveller culture and history in Junior Cycle subject specifications

Table 4 indicates the Junior Cycle subjects and short courses which are explored as part of this curriculum audit. Each subject and short course specification audit includes its rationale and aims, a selection of sample learning outcomes from the subject and short course specification, and an overview of its assessment arrangements, focused on how they relate to aspects of Traveller culture and history (see section 3, pp. 21- 23).

English	Gaeilge
Modern Foreign Languages	History
Geography	Home Economics
Business Studies	Music
Visual Art	Religious Education
Engineering	Wood Technology
Science	Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)
Caring for Animals (Level 2 short course)	Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)

Table 4: Junior cycle subject specifications and short courses examined as part of the curriculum audit

English

English in Junior Cycle aims to develop students' knowledge of language and literature, to consolidate and deepen their literacy skills and make them more self-aware as learners.

Through language learning and use, students discover information, develop thinking, and express ideas and feelings. Respect is shown for students' competence in their home language and the community characteristics of their language use together with their literacy practices outside of school. The ability to appreciate literature from different cultures is important in developing the whole person and to this end students read literature with insight and imagination not only in class but privately as well (DES, 2015, 4).

Learning outcomes in the English specification are organised into three strands, oral language, reading and writing, with three cross-cutting strand elements.

Junior Cycle English includes learning outcomes relevant to many aspects of Traveller history and culture, particularly language, oral traditions, cultural heritage and family. The flexibility provided to schools in terms of determining the choice of texts that students can study provides huge scope for exploring aspects of Traveller history and culture. To illustrate the possibilities, a selection of sample learning outcomes from each strand are listed here, where students should be able to:

Oral Language

OL 2   Engage actively and responsively within class groups in order to listen to or recount experiences and to express feelings and ideas

OL5   Deliver a short oral text, alone and/or in collaboration with others, using appropriate language, style and visual content for specific audiences and chosen purposes

OL11   Engage with the world of oral language use as a pleasurable and purposeful activity

Reading

R3   Use a wide range of reading comprehension strategies appropriate to texts, including digital texts: to retrieve information; to link to previous knowledge, follow a process or argument, summarise, link main ideas; to monitor their own understanding; to question, analyse, synthesise and evaluate

Writing

W5   Write competently in a range of text forms, for example letter, report, multi-modal text, review, blog, using appropriate vocabulary, tone and a variety of styles to achieve a chosen purpose for different audiences
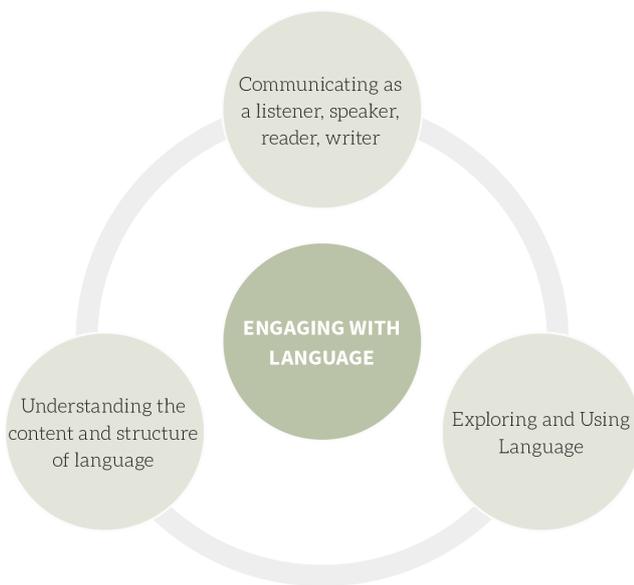
Assessment in English

Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments in English. Classroom-Based Assessment 1 is an oral communication assessment which provides students with the opportunity to select a format and topic of their choice, including the option to work with others and to perform, present, interview or respond to a prop or stimulus of interest to them. Students have the option to explore any aspect of their culture, history and/or family and to express themselves in a range of ways (e.g. through storytelling, performance or conversation).

The second Classroom-Based Assessment is the Collection of the Student's Texts. This offers students the opportunity to demonstrate their creativity in creating texts across a range of genres, responding to a wide variety of texts and personal experiences.

Communicating as a listener, speaker, reader, writer

ENGAGING WITH LANGUAGE

Understanding the content and structure of language

Exploring and Using Language

Figure 12: Cross-cutting elements in junior cycle English specification

Gaeilge/Irish

Language is a window whereby students can look both at their historical and contemporary culture and identity, and therefore gain an appreciation of the importance of assuming personal ownership of the language. By thinking about and studying Irish and elements of the Irish culture, students' awareness of the culture of the language grows. Often this appreciation encourages students to consider their own place in the world and to think about cultural identity on a wider basis. The deeper connection and appreciation of the rich cultural heritage of their community can be empowering for students. Where students gain a better understanding of the language culture, they are given the opportunity to appreciate other cultures and languages. (DES, 2017: 5)

In the Junior Cycle specifications for Gaeilge/Irish, students consolidate and deepen their understanding of Irish. Students are encouraged to gain a better understanding of Irish culture and have respect and understanding for other cultures and languages. Learning outcomes in the Gaeilge/Irish specifications are organised into three integrated strands.

Many of the learning outcomes facilitate the inclusion of Traveller culture and history into classroom teaching and learning such as family, how Travellers live, oral traditions, cultural heritage and language. A large component of Gaeilge/Irish is the development of linguistic skills to describe everyday activities. Another key element is an awareness of cultural identity through social interaction and relevant literature.

To illustrate the possibilities, a selection of sample learning outcomes is listed next, where students should be able to:

Snáith 1/Strand 1: Cumas Cumarsáide / Communicative Competence

1.1 understand the main messages of Irish language communications relating to everyday life as long as it is spoken at a normal pace and it is clear

1.5 recognise dialects

1.9 enjoy a range of relevant authentic texts to develop reading ability

1.11 express personal communication messages relating to everyday life

1.17 communicate orally based on relevant Irish texts

1.18 develop and defend personal opinions on relevant issues of personal interest

Snáith 2: Feasacht teanga agus chultúrtha / Language and Cultural Awareness

2.6 choose aspects of the culture of the Irish language to study and present in a modern and creative way

2.7 complete a project/oral presentation on aspects of the living culture of the Irish language

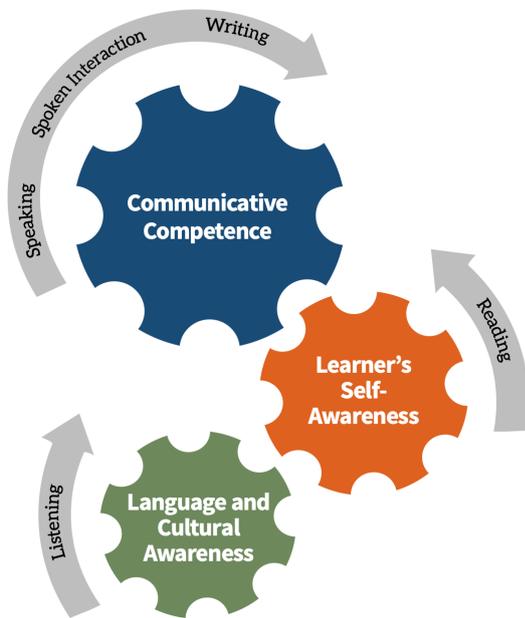**2.8** explore similarities and differences between plurilingual communities

Figure 13: Strands and elements of junior cycle Gaeilge specification

Assessment in Gaeilge

For Classroom-Based Assessment 1 students will create a Language portfolio with samples of their work. The portfolio may include a range of student-created texts, e.g. projects, learning logs, creative pieces (such as poems/songs created by the student), reflective pieces, recorded material (audio-visual and visual), texts, and presentations.

In Classroom-based Assessment 2 the Communicative task gives students the opportunity to choose a subject, topic or issue in which they are interested or which is important to them and explore it over a period of time. In this task, strong emphasis is placed on the student's oral and interactive skills and on their connection to other language users.

Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages

Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) includes the languages of French, German, Spanish and Italian. The MFL specification aims to

> *develop communicative language skills [...] to enable students to explore the interdependence between language and culture, to develop their appreciation of the relevance of languages to their lives for personal, social, educational, vocational and leisure purposes, and to derive enjoyment from language learning. (DES, 2015: 6)*

The rationale for Junior Cycle MFL includes the following text which could be associated with aspects of Traveller history and culture:

> *A fundamental feature of languages is that they give students access to new worlds and different ways of thinking. The resulting development of socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness also enhances students' cognitive development. By reflecting on other cultures and making comparisons they develop a deeper understanding of their own while appreciating diversity. (DES, 2015:4)*

In addition, the third strand in the Junior Cycle MFL specification, Socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness, refers to

> *Socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness [which] gives students access to new cultural dimensions and encourages them to reflect on their own culture. The three elements of this strand develop students' knowledge of the countries and cultures related to the target languages, and enable them to make comparisons with their own country and culture. (DES, 2015:11)*
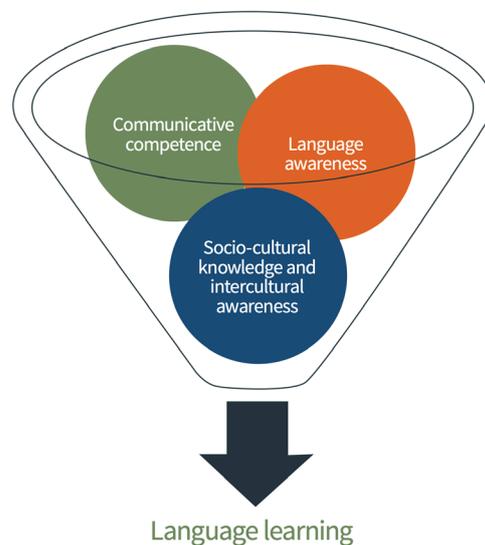

Figure 14: Strands of Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages specificaculture

Learning outcomes in the MFL specification are organised into three strands. The specification includes learning outcomes with content and skills relevant to many aspects of Traveller history and culture, particularly language, cultural heritage and oral traditions. To illustrate the possibilities, a selection of sample learning outcomes is listed here, where students should be able to:

Strand 2: Language Awareness

2.4 identify similarities and differences between the pronunciation, intonation and rhythm of the target language and that of other languages they know

2.5 compare grammar and vocabulary of the target language with that of other languages they know, making connections and distinctions as appropriate

Strand 3: Socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness

3.5 identify and explain some aspects of the target language country/countries in areas such as everyday living, interpersonal relations, customs and behaviours, social conventions

3.5 identify and reflect on common stereotypes about the target culture/s, including their own, and explain if and how their attitude towards the target country/countries is evolving

3.6 select, process and present information through the appropriate use of digital technologies, and evaluate it for truth and reliability

Assessment in Modern Foreign Languages

Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments. Classroom-Based Assessment 1 is an oral communication task. The purpose of this Classroom-Based Assessment is for the student to demonstrate the skills of oral production and oral interaction. Students may use any one of the following formats: interview, role-play, presentation or conversation in response to stimulus material. The second Classroom-Based Assessment is the submission of a student language portfolio. The student language portfolio will include a broad range of items, such as written texts, projects, audio-visual materials, learning logs, student reflections and learning goals. The flexibility provided by both Classroom-Based Assessments offers broad scope for the integration of aspects of Traveller culture and history and offers the opportunity for students to demonstrate their achievement in language learning in a format of their choosing.

History

The Junior Cycle history specification was introduced to schools in autumn 2018. The rationale sets out how it is of relevance to aspects of Traveller education:

> Understanding the actions of people in the past and understanding how we come to know about these actions helps us to develop positive values about History. These include a respect for truth and evidence, a commitment to being open to seeing the past from different perspectives and a regard for the integrity of the past. This way of seeing the world deepens our understanding of the relationship between past and current events and the forces that drive change; helps us to appreciate how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the culture in which we live; and enables us to value our local, national and international heritage. (DES, 2017: 4)

The rationale also refers to how the study of the 'richness and diversity of human experience in the past ...has impacted on and shaped our own identity and experience of the past'. (DES, 2017: 4) The specification also seeks to inculcate in students a sense of empathy with people in the past and a respect for their cultural inheritance and a regard for their heritage.

A number of learning outcomes in Strand 2: The History of Ireland allow for exploration of Traveller history and cultural heritage. A selection of sample learning outcomes is listed here, where students should be able to:
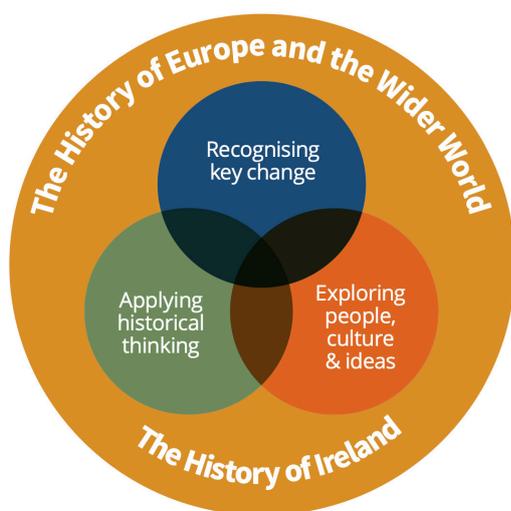

Figure 15: Contextual strands (Strand 2 and 3) in the junior cycle history specification

2.6   consider the historical significance of Christianity on the island of Ireland, including its contribution to culture and society in the Early Christian period

2.7   investigate the causes, course and consequences, nationally and internationally, of the Great Famine, and examine the significance of the Irish Diaspora

2.8   describe the impact of war on the lives of Irish people, referring to either World War One or World War Two

2.9   explain how the experience of women in Irish society changed during the twentieth century

2.10   examine how one sporting, cultural or social movement impacted on Irish life

2.11   make connections between local, personal or family history and wider national and/or international personalities, issues and events

2.12   debate the idea that the 1960s was an important decade on the island of Ireland, referring to relevant personalities, issues and events

Assessment in History

Classroom-Based Assessment 1 is called 'The Past in My Place' and allows students to explore aspects of personal or local history. Students complete a project related to an aspect of the history of their locality or place, which may include personal/family history, in a format of the student's choice. This has particular potential for developing knowledge and understanding of Traveller history, culture and identity. Classroom-Based Assessment 2 is called 'A Life in Time' and requires of students that they write about a person of historical significance in whom they are interested, again providing scope for students to explore the life of a person of significance in the Traveller community or whose life/ actions affected the Traveller community.

Geography

The aim of Junior Cycle Geography is to enable students to:

to become geographically literate. It stimulates curiosity, creating opportunities for students to read, analyse, synthesise and communicate about their immediate environment and wider world. It develops knowledge, skills, values and behaviours that allow students to explore the physical world, human activities, how we interact with our world and to recognise the interconnections between systems. (DES, 2017: 5)

The specification includes learning outcomes with content and skills relevant to many aspects of Traveller history and culture, particularly nomadism, how Travellers live and economic activity. To illustrate the possibilities, a selection of sample learning outcomes is listed here, where students should be able to:

Strand 2: Exploring how we interact with the physical world

2.3   identify how the physical landscape influences the development of primary activities

Strand 3: Exploring people, place and change

3.1   the demographic transition model to explain populations' characteristics and how populations change

3.2   investigate the causes and consequences of migration

3.4   consider the factors affecting the location and origin of rural and urban settlement in Ireland

3.5   examine the causes and effects of urban change in an Irish town or city

3.9   synthesise their learning of population, settlement and human development within the process of globalisation.

Assessment in Geography

Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments in
Geography. The first Classroom-Based Assessment, Geography
in the news, allows students undertake an inquiry into a recent
geographical event of their choosing that featured in the media.
The second Classroom-Based Assessment allows students
investigate geographical aspects in a local area. The Classroom-
Based Assessments provide broad scope and possibilities to
students to explore aspects of Traveller culture of their choosing
within a geographical context.

Home Economics

Junior Cycle Home Economics aims to:

[…] develop students' knowledge, attitudes, understanding, skills and values to achieve optimal, healthy and sustainable living for every person as an individual, and as a member of families and society. Students develop practical food and health literacy skills so that they are enabled to adopt a healthy lifestyle and make informed decisions that positively impact their health and wellbeing as individuals as well as within their families and society. (DES, 2017: 4)

The rationale for Junior Cycle Home Economics includes the following text which could be associated with aspects of Traveller history and culture:

The central focus of Home Economics as a field of study is achieving optimal, healthy and sustainable living for individuals, families and society. Individuals and families in every society are continually faced with new and emergent issues that can impact on their wellbeing. Such issues include concerns relating to food, nutrition, diet and health; family and social concerns; consumer issues; sustainability in the home; responsible family resource management; and textiles and clothing.

In Home Economics, students learn how to address these practical, real world, perennial problems of individuals, families, households and society in socially responsible ways. Practical perennial problems or concerns are endured from generation to generation by families and require critical decision-making skills to resolve them. Home Economics education uses a systems approach to empower individuals and families with the knowledge and skills to address these real-life concerns of everyday living.

Learning outcomes in the Home Economics specification are organised into three strands, with four cross-cutting strand elements:

Figure 16: Strands and elements of the junior cycle home economics specification

Junior Cycle Home Economics includes learning outcomes with content and skills relevant to many aspects of Traveller history and culture, particularly family, nomadism, how Travellers live, crafts and clothing and economic activity. To illustrate the possibilities, a selection of sample learning outcomes from each strand is listed here, where students should be able to:

Strand 1: Food, health and culinary skills

1.1   identify the factors that affect personal food choices

Strand 2: Responsible family living

2.1   discuss the different forms of the family

2.2   explore the roles and responsibilities of the family

2.3   discuss family relationships and the importance of strengthening relationships between individuals and families

2.8   describe sustainable everyday practices in the home to include energy efficiency, waste management and water conservation

Strand 3: Textiles and craft

3.1   demonstrate basic hand and machine sewing techniques

3.2   apply the design brief process and principles to the making of a creative textile item for an individual or the home

3.3   apply basic hand sewing and/or machine sewing techniques to the making of a textile item for an individual or the home in a safe and appropriate way

3.4   demonstrate fabric embellishment techniques

3.8   discuss the influences of trends and choices on textile and clothing, including ethical and ecological considerations

Assessment in Home Economics

Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments in Home Economics. A project-based Creative Textiles Classroom-Based Assessment provides students with the opportunity to make/ recycle a textile item for the individual or the home giving due regard to basic human needs, consumer trends, ecological issues and technology. The term 'textile item' encompasses all textile-based crafts for an individual and the home.

The Food Literacy Skills Brief Classroom-Based Assessment offers students the opportunity to demonstrate their culinary and creative food literacy skills and nutritional knowledge in the researching, analysing and planning of a food literacy skills brief for everyday living.

Students also undertake a practical food skills examination each of which is worth 50% of the externally-assessed, state-certified examination.

Business Studies

Junior Cycle Business Studies aims to:

> *[…] develop students' knowledge, attitudes, understanding, skills and values to achieve optimal, healthy and sustainable living for every person as an individual, and as a member of families and society. Students develop practical food and health literacy skills so that they are enabled to adopt a healthy lifestyle and make informed decisions that positively impact their health and wellbeing as individuals as well as within their families and society.*
>
> *(DES, 2017: 4)*

The rationale for Junior Cycle Business Studies includes the following text which could be associated with aspects of Travellers' social and economic history and culture:

> *Business studies encourages students to develop an appreciation of how their lives are shaped by economic and social factors. They are enabled to make informed decisions, to better manage their personal financial resources and to be adaptable, creative, and enterprising.*

> *Entrepreneurship enhances the quality of our collective and individual lives, often changing the way we work, communicate and live.*

> *Business studies encourages students to develop skills for learning, skills for work and skills for life.(DES, 2015: 4)*

Learning outcomes in the Business Studies specification are organised into three strands, with three cross-cutting strand elements:

Figure 17: Strands and elements of the junior cycle business studies specification

Junior Cycle Business Studies includes learning outcomes with content and skills relevant to how all people, including Travellers, generate income, manage their resources and engage with economic activity. Enterprise is a strong feature of Traveller culture. To illustrate the possibilities, a selection of sample learning outcomes from each strand is listed here, where students should be able to:

Strand 1: Personal Finance

1.1   Review the personal resources available to them to realise their needs and wants and analyse the extent to which realising their needs and wants may impact on individuals and society

Strand 2: Enterprise

2.1   Identify different types of financial, cultural and social enterprise and appreciate the role each plays in society

2.2   Describe the skills and characteristics of being enterprising and appreciate the role of an entrepreneur in an organisation, in society and to the economy

2.3   Differentiate between employment, work and volunteerism, identifying and describing features, benefits, rewards and careers within each

Strand 3: Our Economy

3.10   Use their knowledge, and information from a range of media sources, to discuss current economic issues and present an informed views

Assessment in Business Studies

Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments in Business Studies. For Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Business in Action students can choose from three broad areas: Finance in Action, Enterprise in Action or Economics in Action, which provides a broad scope for students to choose an area of personal interest. Business in Action is a group project. The collaborative structure of the project allows students to contribute to the project in the way that best suits their individual skills and talents and apply their skills in a practical way in its completion.

Classroom-Based Assessment 2: Presentation is an individual project and aims to encourage students to apply their learning to their daily lives. The Presentation requires the student to investigate and present on a business-related topic. The chosen topic may be directly related to specific course content or the student may decide to study an issue of personal or local relevance, provided it is related to the business environment. This provides great flexibly and choice to each student to focus on an issue that is relevant and meaningful to them. Each student presents orally on what they have learned, having examined a business-related topic, which supports students who are more confident in their oral communication skills.

The flexibility provided by the Classroom-Based Assessments in Business Studies allows students to choose from issues and topics that are of personal interest to them, allowing significant scope for students to look at Traveller social and economic history and culture if they so choose.

Music

The Junior Cycle music specification aims to contribute to

the development of artistic awareness and understanding, self-expression, self-esteem, imagination and multicultural sensitivity, and therefore, to the development of the whole person. Students will develop the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to produce and engage with authentic and original music, that is both theirs and the music of others. In doing so, they will develop the music literacy, critical skills and language necessary to engage with contemporary music culture. (DES, 2017: 5)

The rationale for Junior Cycle music includes the following text which is relevant to Traveller music culture:

Music is important as a catalyst for building cultural capital within the individual student and the class collective. Through encountering and engaging with an array of music activities, we can ensure that we continue to develop future citizens that are culturally engaged, culturally aware and culturally connected. Being culturally aware heightens student understanding of both national and international cultural identities. With an increasingly diverse and pluralist population, this understanding of others through a cultural lens will encourage students to develop as responsible and ethical citizens.]

Music is a source of understanding history, reflecting the social and cultural context and the era of its creation. Music can portray the cultural identity of a country, the mood of the people or the thoughts of the individuals who live there. Music education brings the young person to an awareness and appreciation of their own unique cultural environment and ethos. In engaging children with the rich background of their native musical traditions as well as other musical genres, music education contributes to the children's knowledge and understanding of others, their times, their cultures and traditions (DES, 2017:7)

Figure 18: Strands and elements of the junior cycle music specification

Learning outcomes in the Music specification are organised into three strands, with three cross-cutting strand elements: Junior Cycle Music includes learning outcomes with content and skills relevant to many aspects of Traveller culture and history providing huge scope for teachers and students. In particular, students can explore and express aspects such as music, family life, religion, language and cultural heritage. To illustrate the possibilities, a selection of sample learning outcomes from each strand is listed here, where students should be able to:

-

Strand 3: Culture and Context

3.1   collaborate with fellow students and peers to produce a playlist and a set of recordings to accompany a local historical event or community celebration

3.3   make a study of a particular contemporary or historical musical style; analyse its structures and use of musical devices, and describe the influence of other styles on it

3.7   compare compositions by two or more Irish-born composers; use listening, background reading, and scores (where appropriate) to explain and describe differences and similarities in the compositions

3.11   explore the time allocated to Irish artists and performers on a variety of local or national Irish media and present these findings to your class

Assessment in Music

Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments in Music. Classroom-Based Assessment 1 is a Composition Portfolio, which offers students an opportunity to celebrate their achievements as creators of music artefacts, by compiling a collection of their musical ideas and creative expressions in a variety of genres and styles over time.

In the context of this audit, students could create a musical piece that has a basis in folk or traditional music, such as work songs (linking to economic activity), religious songs and songs about love, loss and relationships (DES, 2017: 28)

The second Classroom-Based Assessment asks the students to prepare a Programme Note to inform an audience on the content of their upcoming performance which itself will comprise the practical examination. In the context of this audit, depending on the pieces chosen for the practical performance, students could relate the background story of their piece, or detail some famous exponents of the musical style or instrument. This could relate to aspects of Traveller musicians and musical culture and acknowledge the contribution of these piece(s) to Irish Music heritage.

As part of their final examination, students must perform three pieces, either individually or as part of a group. This performance could include music from Traveller musicians or songs about Traveller history and culture. (DES, 2017:31).

Visual Art

The rationale for Junior Cycle Visual Art states that the subject opens students'

> *minds to the traditions and values of other cultures and influences. Visual literacy and the ability to appreciate visual culture adds to the wealth of learning available through historical artefacts and to an understanding of the evolution of works of art, craft or design across the development of human society.(DES, 2016: 5)*

Visual Art aims to

> *provide the student with a set of personal attitudes and qualities as well as skills and processes and a sense of the aesthetic. This will be achieved by engaging the student practically and developing their self-confidence, inquisitiveness, imagination, and creativity ...," as well as, "authentic, real-world problem-solving capacities and the capacity to work over time, as an individual and in groups, on the design and execution of artistic and aesthetic tasks."* (DES, 2016: 6)

Learning outcomes in the Visual Art specification are organised into three strands, with five cross-cutting strand elements.
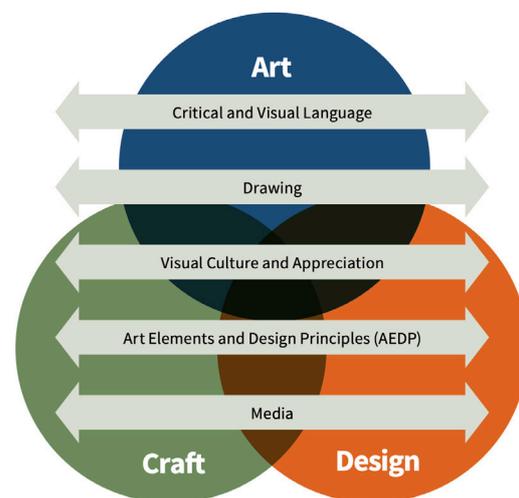

Figure 19: Strands and elements of junior cycle visual art specification

Junior Cycle Visual Art includes learning outcomes with content and skills relevant to all aspects of Traveller history and culture. Visual Art, by its nature, is a form of personal expression and the possibilities are innumerable. Visual Art provides a space to validate, affirm and celebrate cultural and ethnic differences. To illustrate some of the opportunities, a selection of sample learning outcomes from each strand is listed here, where students will:

Strand one: Art

1.1   analyse their work, or that of another, using appropriate vocabulary and knowledge

1.2   respond to an artwork using critical and visual language

1.6   use drawings to communicate their personal outlook or understanding

1.8   discuss examples of historical and contemporary visual art

Strand two: Craft

2.5   develop their ideas for craftwork through drawing

2.6   investigate their own personal approach to craftwork through the technical and creative application of drawing and mark-making

2.8   interpret the narrative, symbols and functions used in craftwork from their own and other world cultures

2.11   research the use of art elements and design principles in historical and contemporary craftwork from their own and other cultures

Strand three: Design

3.3   respond to and critique works of design using appropriate visual language

3.7   describe examples of historical and contemporary design

3.8   discuss historical and contemporary design practices

3.14   utilise media in their own design work based on a design brief

Assessment in Visual Art

Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments in Visual Art. Classroom-Based Assessment 1: From process to realisation is a project-based assessment in which students, either individually or in a group, choose one theme from a list prepared by the NCCA. They then generate ideas, experiment and develop these ideas in their Visual Art sketchpad, and realise an artwork through one of the three strands.

The second Classroom-Based Assessment is Communicate and reflect. For CBA 2, students will work on their own. They choose one theme from a list prepared by the SEC to generate ideas, experiments and other preparatory work in their Visual Art sketchpad. CBA 2 enables students to develop their own approach and techniques in their experimentation with different media. This allows them to engage with the themes and communicate and express their understanding of the them in ways that indicate their own personal circumstances.

After Classroom-Based Assessment 2 is completed, students will both significantly develop their ideas further and realise two pieces of work for the state-certified examination.

Religious Education

Junior Cycle Religious Education aims to develop knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values to enable young people to come to an understanding of religion and its relevance to life, relationships, society and the wider world. It aims to develop the students' ability to examine questions of meaning, purpose and relationships, to help students understand, respect and appreciate people's expression of beliefs, and to facilitate dialogue and reflection on the diversity of beliefs and values that inform responsible decision-making and ways of living. (DES, 2019: 5)

The rationale for Junior Cycle Religious Education is relevant to Traveller culture and history in that

Religious Education supports the development of students by helping them to explore how religious and other beliefs are expressed and encourages respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living. (DES, 2019: 4)

Junior Cycle Religious Education includes learning outcomes with content and skills relevant to Traveller history and culture, particularly in relation to Strand 1: Expressing Beliefs, which examines religious beliefs and rituals. This strand develops students' ability to understand, respect and appreciate how people's beliefs have been expressed in the past and continue to be expressed today through lifestyle, culture, rites and rituals, community building, social action and ways of life. It enables students to appreciate that people live out of their different beliefs — religious or otherwise.

A selection of sample learning outcomes is listed here, where students should be able to:

Strand 1: Expressing Beliefs

1.4   investigate how Christianity has contributed to Irish culture and heritage

1.5   explore the presence of religious themes in contemporary culture through an examination of art, music, literature or film

1.6   examine and appreciate how people give expression to religious belief in religious rituals, in formal places of worship and other sacred spaces

1.7   discuss the significance of non-religious rituals/celebrations for people's lives

1.8   describe the role of prayer in the lives of people of faith

1.11   research religious or other organisations, working at a national or international level to promote justice, peace and reconciliation and consider how their work is an expression of their founding vision

Assessment in Religious Education

Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments in Religious Education.

Classroom-Based Assessment 1 is of relevance to this audit. It allows students to research and present a report on a person of commitment whose religious beliefs or worldview have had a positive impact on the world around them, past or present. There is great scope for students to choose from a wide variety of people. For instance, the person chosen can be someone who is known to them, such as a family member, or someone whose beliefs have prompted him/her to act as an advocate for human rights and human dignity at a local, national or international level.

Engineering

The rationale for Junior Cycle Engineering (formally Metalwork) is of relevance to Traveller history and culture:

> As a result, preparing students for learning in the technology subjects is not just about teaching towards the technology but towards the skills that are fundamental to the technology subjects and are transferable into other areas of their learning: skills that encourage the student to problem-solve through creativity, innovation, communication, collaboration and exploration, all of which are developed in an active learning environment where students can advance their ideas from conception to realisation.

This project-based approach to Engineering requires students to develop a knowledge of materials and processes, and to demonstrate a capacity to select appropriate materials and processes for given applications (DES, 2018:4). A selection of sample learning outcomes is listed below:

Junior Cycle Engineering aims to:

> enable students to develop the disciplinary skills and knowledge to engineer an end product
>
> enable students to engage in goal-oriented problem solving, creating an awareness of engineering processes
>
> develop the necessary skills and apply engineering processes to manipulate material to manufacture a product with efficiency, accuracy, precision and a high-quality finish. (DES, 2018: 5)

Learning outcomes in the Engineering specification are organised into three strands, with four cross-cutting strand elements:
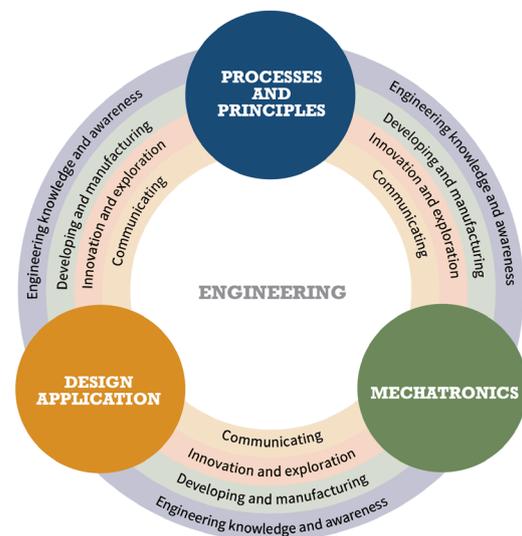

Figure 20: Strands and elements of the junior cycle engineering specification

Junior Cycle Engineering includes learning outcomes with content and skills relevant to metalwork, cultural heritage and craft. Many members of the Travelling community are engaged in a rich a tradition of the processes taught on the course. Many of the activities undertaken reflect the culture, crafts and traditions of the Traveller community. A selection of sample learning outcomes is listed here, where students should be able to:

Strand 1: Processes and principles

1.2   demonstrate a range of manufacturing processes

1.4   understand the properties associated with a range of engineered materials

1.7   develop engineered solutions to various challenges

1.8   identify appropriate tools and equipment specific to a task

1.9   apply suitable manufacturing processes to engineer a product

1.10   demonstrate high-quality work, to include accuracy and surface finish

1.11   create sketches, models and working drawings

Strand 2: Design application

2.3   choose a suitable material to engineer a product

2.4   explore how design impacts on the function and quality of a product including ergonomic considerations

2.5   apply appropriate engineering concepts and approaches in the execution of their design solutions

2.7   apply their knowledge of the properties associated with a range of engineering materials

2.8   manufacture a product from a working drawing

2.9   modify an existing product/design

2.11   present ideas through modelling and prototyping, using appropriate media

Assessment in Engineering

Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments in Engineering. A project set out by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) is worth 70%.

Classroom-Based Assessment 1:

Engineering in action allows students to, individually or collaboratively, explore the applications of engineering in the world around them. Students will investigate real-life applications of the processes and principles of engineering. Students can focus their investigation through the lens of a specific strand, a combination of two strands or can adopt an integrated approach across all three strands. The students will communicate their findings through any appropriate media (DES, 2018: 20).

Classroom-Based Assessment 2:

Research and development encourages students to carry out research based on a theme which reflects an aspect of the final project. The purpose of this CBA is to research, explore and present their findings through any appropriate media. Classroom-Based Assessment 2 will inform the project assessment (DES, 2018: 21).

As part of the state-certified project students are issued a working drawing and asked to replicate the project with an element of their own creation.

Wood Technology

Junior Cycle Wood Technology aims to 'enable students to develop the necessary conceptual understanding, disciplinary skills and subject knowledge to design and create artefacts of value' (DES, 2018: 5). Wood Technology is a subject that allows students to explore and learn about a key natural resource that nature has provided. Trees and wooden material have a unique relationship with nature and humankind. In Wood Technology, students explore the natural and made world through the medium of design, seeking out opportunities to creatively and innovatively apply the material/resource in making and shaping their environment.

Learning in this subject is active and student centred, with learners collaborating in the pursuit of knowledge and in the safe management of the technology classroom environment.

Learning outcomes in the Wood Technology specification are organised into three strands, with four cross-cutting strand elements:
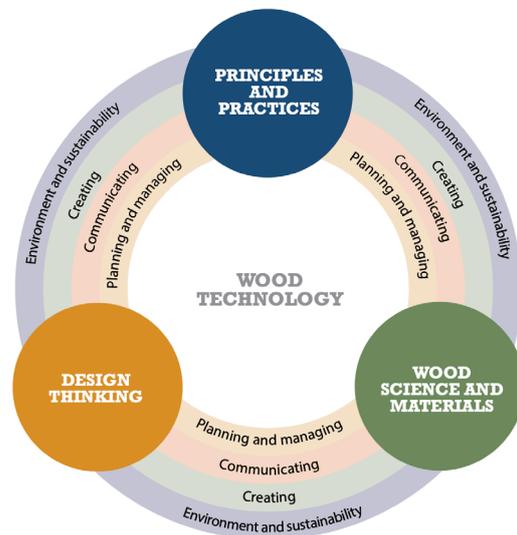

Figure 21: Strands and elements of the junior cycle wood technology specification

Junior Cycle Wood Technology includes learning outcomes with content and skills relevant to craft, cultural heritage and economic activity. A selection of sample learning outcomes is listed here:

Strand 1: Processes and principles

1.6   create sketches and working drawings to recognised standards using a variety of media

1.7   explain the function and application of a range of tools, equipment, fixtures and fittings

1.10   apply recognised health and safety practices in the use of tools, equipment and materials

Strand 2: Design thinking

2.6   produce sketches, drawings and models/prototypes to explore design ideas

2.10   devise templates and models using various media

2.11   produce purposeful, functional, appealing artefacts

2.12   create an artefact having considered factors such as materials, cost, time resources and skills

2.13   recognise the environmental and social impacts of design decisions

2.14   investigate how to minimise material use and manage waste

Strand 3: Wood science and material

3.1   identify common species of wood

3.4   evaluate the use of wood in comparison to alternative materials

3.8   utilise the natural aesthetics and properties of wood to enhance the appearance and function of an artefact

Assessment in Wood Technology

Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments in Wood Technology. A project set out by the State Examinations Commission is worth 70%.

For Classroom-Based Assessment 1: 'Wood science in our environment', students explore a wood science-related issue within a local/global context. They will analyse the information/data collected, evaluate and present the findings of their research of the issue they have investigated, with support/guidance from the teacher. The student can communicate their findings through any appropriate media (DES, 2018: 19).

For Classroom-Based Assessment 2: 'Self-analysis and evaluation', the student, individually, will conduct an analysis of his/her coursework and skills to date in Wood Technology. Students will focus their analysis and evaluation on a range of completed tasks or on a specific task. Students are expected to critically review their progress and identify areas of strength and areas for improvement, with a view to informing their planning and decisions for the project.

For the state-certified project students are issued a brief by the State Examinations Commission and are expected to produce a solution based on a theme. This solution will include a produced artefact and portfolio.

Science

Junior Cycle Science aims to

> develop students' evidence-based understanding of the natural world and their ability to gather and evaluate evidence: to consolidate and deepen their skills of working scientifically; to make them more self-aware as learners and become competent and confident in their ability to use and apply science in their everyday lives. (DES, 2015: 5)

The rationale for Junior Cycle Science includes the following text which could be associated with aspects of Traveller history and culture:

The wider benefits of scientific literacy are well established, including giving students the capacity to make contributions to political, social and cultural life as thoughtful and active citizens who appreciate the cultural and ethical values of science. This supports students to make informed decisions about many of the local, national and global challenges and opportunities they will be presented with as they live and work in a world increasingly shaped by scientists and their work. (DES, 2015:4)

Learning outcomes in the science specification are organised into a unifying strand and four contextual strands, with four cross-cutting strand elements.
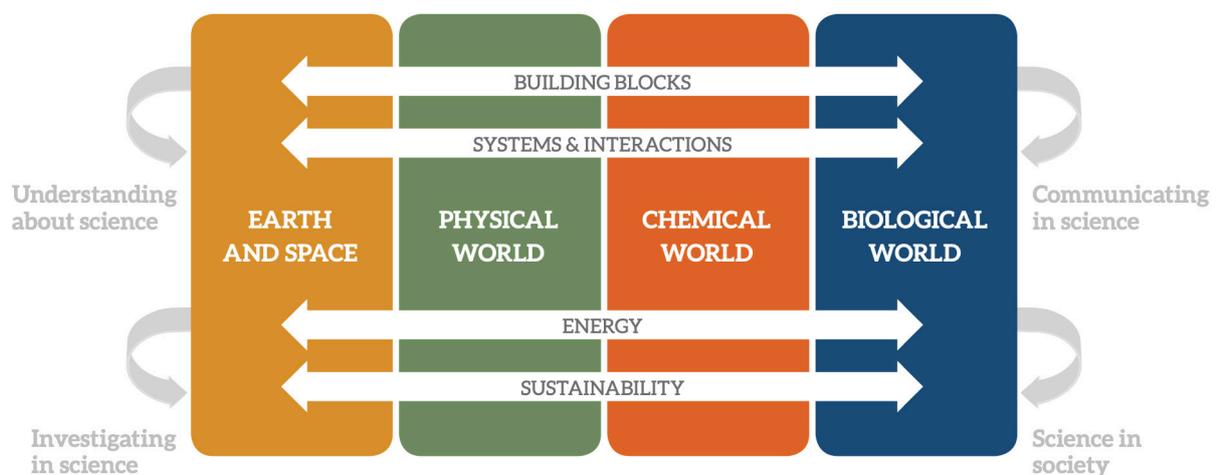

Figure 22: Strands and elements of the junior cycle science specification

Junior Cycle Science includes learning outcomes with content and skills relevant to many aspects of Traveller history and culture, particularly ethnicity, family, how Travellers live, animals and economic activity. To illustrate the possibilities, a selection of sample learning outcomes is listed below:

Strand three: Chemical world

10. evaluate how humans contribute to sustainability through the extraction, use, disposal, and recycling of materials.

Strand five: Biological world

6. evaluate how human health is affected by: inherited factors and environmental factors including nutrition; lifestyle choices; examine the role of micro-organisms in human health.

9. explain human sexual reproduction; discuss medical, ethical, and societal issues

10. evaluate how humans can successfully conserve ecological biodiversity and contribute to global food production; appreciate the benefits that people obtain from ecosystems

Assessment in Science

Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments in Science. Classroom-Based Assessment 1 is an Experimental Investigation which provides students with the opportunity to research a question of their own choice they have about some science-related phenomena which they have come across in the course of the three years of their studies. The second Classroom-Based Assessment is The Science in Society Investigation (SSI) which gives students an opportunity to explore a scientific topic or issue of the student's choice.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Short Course

SPHE is part of the broader Wellbeing programme in Junior Cycle.

In the SPHE classroom

> students have the dedicated space and time in this short course to develop their understanding and skills to learn about themselves, to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing in a rapidly changing world. [...] SPHE provides the context within which young people can learn about important physical, social, emotional and moral issues around relationships, sexual health, sexuality and gender identity, including where to get reliable information from trusted sources. (DES, 2016: 4)

This short course aims to develop students' positive sense of themselves and their physical, social, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing. It also aims to build the capacity of young people to develop and maintain healthy relationships. (DES, 2016:4) The junior cycle short course in SPHE is designed to enable all students to develop a positive sense of themselves and a commitment to caring for themselves and others.

A selection of sample learning outcomes is presented here, where students will:

Strand 1: Who am I?

1.2   welcome individual difference based on an appreciation of their own uniqueness

1.8   explain how stereotyping can contribute to a person's understanding and experience of rights and wellbeing

1.9   appreciate the importance of respectful and inclusive behaviour in promoting a safe environment free from bias and discrimination

Strand 2: Minding myself and others

2.3   describe what promotes a sense of belonging in school, at home and in the wider community and their own role in creating an inclusive environment

Strand 3: Team up

3.4   explain the different influences on relationships and levels of intimacy

Strand 4: My mental health

4.4   participate in an informed discussion about mental health issues experienced by young people and/or their friends and family

4.10   explain the wide range of life events where they might experience loss and bereavement

Assessment in SPHE

The SPHE project provides students with much scope to explore in more detail any topic related to the course of their choosing in more detail. Students are encouraged to choose the most suitable format in which to complete the project; written, digital, visual or audio formats. Students complete the project in pairs or small groups. Having completed the project, students are required to complete an individual reflection. Students can submit their reflections in a variety of formats including written, audio and video formats.

Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) Short Course

Like SPHE, CSPE is also part of the broader Wellbeing programme in Junior Cycle (see p. 63).

Civic, Social and Political Education has a special focus on promoting a sense of active citizenship and an awareness of the rights and responsibilities that are associated with being an Irish and global citizen. The junior cycle specification 'aims to inform, inspire, empower and enable young people to participate as active citizens in contemporary society at local, national and global levels, based on an understanding of human rights and social responsibilities.' (DES, 2016: 5) In this context, teachers and students deal with issues such as gender equity, racism and xenophobia, interculturalism, the environment, development, work and unemployment, poverty and homelessness and minorities. In this way there is broad scope to address aspects of Traveller culture and history such as cultural heritage, history, nomadism and their status as a recognised ethnic minority in Ireland. Junior Cycle CSPE is structured around three strands: Rights and responsibilities, Global citizenship and Exploring democracy.

A selection of sample learning outcomes is presented here, where students will:

Strand 1: Rights and responsibilities

1.1   discuss what it means to be human and to live in a community with rights and responsibilities

1.5   access and interpret numerical data showing local and global distribution of basic resources and patterns of inequalities

1.6   share stories of individuals or groups who inspire them because of their work for human rights

1.9   identify examples of social, cultural, language, economic, civic, religious, environmental and political rights

1.10   outline different perspectives in situations where there is an apparent conflict of rights or an abuse of rights

1.11   show an appreciation of their responsibility to promote and defend their individual human rights and those of others

Strand 2: Global citizenship

2.5   examine case studies or personal testimonies of people experiencing poverty or inequality from different contexts and countries and how they are working to overcome this

2.6   express an informed opinion about the root causes of poverty, both locally and globally

2.7   discuss, with evidence, positive and negative effects of development in their local area

Strand 3: Exploring democracy

3.9   list the nine grounds under which discrimination is illegal in Irish law, with examples

3.10   investigate how individuals or groups have used the law to bring about change in society

3.12   examine case studies of the use ofdigitalor other media in one of the following: a social justice movement a political election or referendum; a criminal investigation; an environmental movement

Level 2 Short Course: Caring for Animals

This short course aims to develop the student's knowledge, as well as cognitive, social and practical skills, in the context of learning about and caring for an animal of interest. The short course includes learning about the animal of choice, caring for the animal, the animal around the home, and the animal in the community. As there is a strong affinity among many Traveller students with animals, particularly horses and dogs, this course provides the opportunity to build on prior knowledge, develop skills and promote literacy and numeracy through a topic of interest to the learner.

Reflecting on Junior Cycle and Traveller education

In summary, there are many opportunities currently to explore and teach aspects of Traveller culture and history in the junior cycle classroom. The subjects and short courses presented here do not represent an exhaustive study of all the opportunities for teaching, learning and assessment about Traveller culture and history in the Junior Cycle programme. It is worth noting that many of the features of the Framework for Junior Cycle facilitate the identification of opportunities to explore aspects of Traveller history and culture. These developments include: moving from a prescribed syllabus to a learning outcomes-based specification; more flexible approaches to assessment; the integration of key skills that inform pedagogy; the introduction of short courses and a more flexible junior cycle programme; and changes to reporting, which allow for a more rounded description of the student's educational achievements.

However, other factors are also important in helping to promote and exploit these opportunities in the junior cycle curriculum. Teacher knowledge, professional development, teacher capacity and access to appropriate educational resources are significant factors in influencing whether topics relating to Traveller culture and history are included in teaching and learning experiences. School culture and ethos, school leadership and the student cohort also play a significant role in dictating the local school context in which a curriculum is enacted and has a direct impact on classroom teaching and learning.

7. Senior Cycle Education

This section considers how senior cycle provides for aspects of Traveller culture and history. Senior cycle refers to the stage in post-primary education that follows junior cycle and is generally taken by students between the ages of 15 and 18.

Senior Cycle Framework (2010)

The senior cycle framework is outlined in an NCCA document (2010) entitled *Towards Learning: An overview of senior cycle education*. *Towards Learning* sets out the vision for senior cycle, the values underpinning the vision, the eight principles and five key skills that are shaping review and development at senior cycle level.
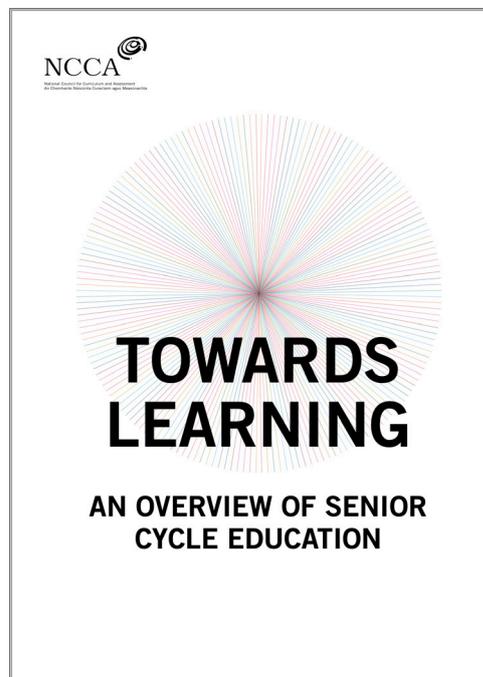
Figure 23: Towards Learning: An overview of senior cycle education

Overview of senior cycle

The vision for senior cycle is to support young people to become learners who are:

- Resourceful: they show their imagination, intelligence, intuition and other talents through curiosity, enquiry, open-mindedness, reflection, connecting learning, innovation, problem solving, creativity

- Confident: they develop their physical and mental well-being and become self-aware, have high self-efficacy, engage with ethics, values and beliefs, welcome opportunities, can cope with setbacks, can effect positive change

- Engaged: they participate in the social, community, national and international dimensions of their lives by showing respect for others, forming and sustaining caring relationships, making informed decisions, building practical know-how, taking interest in and responsibility for their social and physical environment, developing moral/ethical and political understanding, making lifestyle choices that are sustainable, contributing to their own material well-being and the material well-being of society

- Active: they pursue excellence in learning to the best of their ability and develop a love of learning by seeking and using knowledge, and understanding how knowledge is created, experiencing passion for, rigour in and commitment to learning, developing intellectual and critical thinking skills, exercising autonomy and independence in learning, managing their learning and making learning choices, setting and achieving learning goals, pursuing learning qualifications.

The vision for senior cycle is underpinned by the values of human dignity and respect, equality and inclusion, justice and fairness, and freedom and democracy. The eight principles which form the basis of the senior cycle curriculum framework are quality, inclusive education, continuity, choice and flexibility, participation, relevance and enjoyment, well-being, creativity and innovation, and lifelong learning.

While all the principles form an integral part in the planning and implementation of senior cycle programmes in schools, the following principles are particularly relevant to this curriculum audit:

Inclusive education:

That the experience of senior cycle is inclusive of all learners and contributes to the achievement of equality of opportunity, participation and outcome for all

Choice and flexibility:

That the curriculum, while broad in nature, offers sufficient choice and flexibility to meet the needs of learners

Participation, relevance and enjoyment:

That the experience of the curriculum encourages participation, is engaging and enjoyable for learners, and relevant to their lives

Lifelong learning:

That the curriculum supports learners in developing the skills of managing and directing their own learning that will assist them in meeting the challenges of life beyond school, in further and continuing education, and in working life.
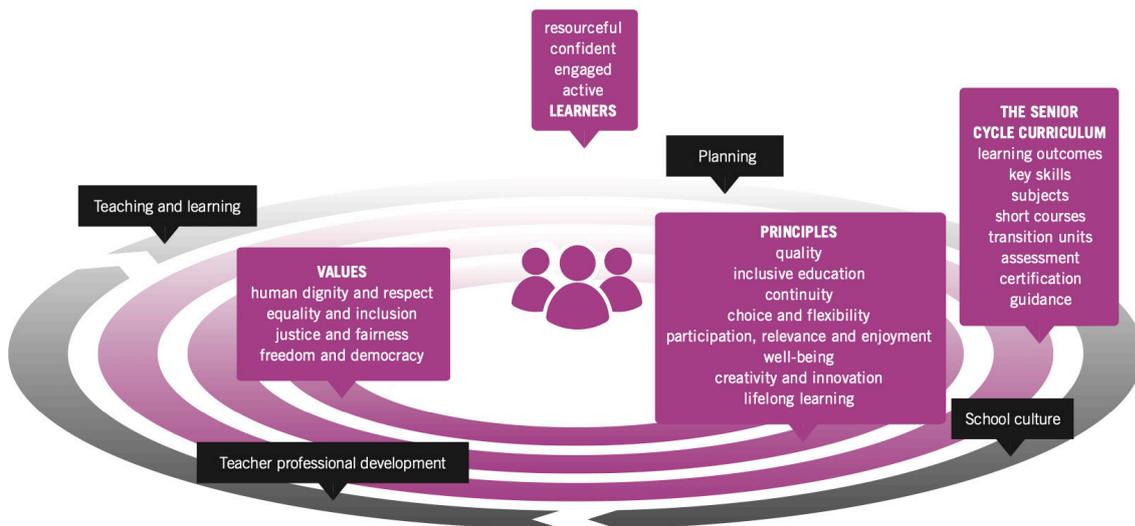
Figure 24: The vision for senior cycle education

Senior cycle key skills

The senior cycle framework sets out five key skills that are required for successful learning by all students. These are presented in Figure 25. The senior cycle key skills were first developed in 2008. As part of ongoing review and developments at junior and senior cycle, these key skills may be revised in the future, particularly considering the eight key skills at junior cycle.

Similar to junior cycle subject specifications, learning in new and revised senior cycle curriculum specifications is expressed as a set of learning outcomes. The learning outcomes help to ensure that the teaching and learning strategies adopted and the assessment approaches employed are consistent with each other and integrate the key skills effectively. New and revised subject specifications that are designed using the learning outcomes model include Politics and Society, Computer Science, Physical Education, Economics, Agricultural Science, Applied Mathematics and Art. Older syllabuses are not written with reference to learning outcomes but refer to learning objectives. This has resulted in curriculum content being more prescribed in nature, reducing the flexibility for engaging in aspects of Traveller culture and history in the classroom.
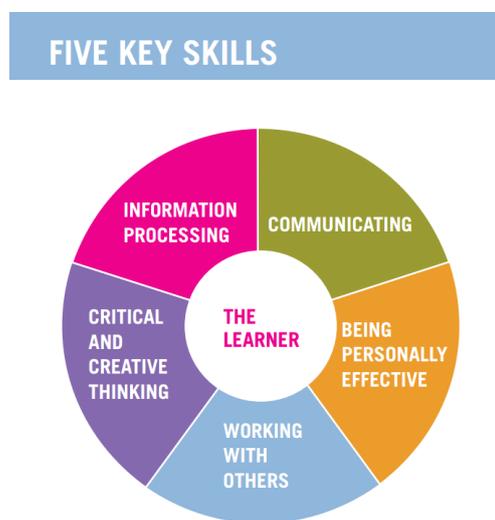
FIVE KEY SKILLS

Figure 25: The five senior cycle key skills

Leaving Certificate Programmes

The Leaving Certificate programme is provided through three routes. Students have an opportunity to experience a Transition Year Programme (TY or TYP) between junior cycle and senior cycle.

Transition Year

Each school develops its own individual Transition Year programme, best suited to the needs of its students. This flexibility means that the particular needs of individual students, including Travellers, can be well catered for in Transition Year. A Transition Year curriculum will normally include work experience, short modules, project work, visits to places of educational interest, enterprise education (mini-companies), computer studies and visiting speakers. Social awareness modules, project work and visiting speakers present schools with clear opportunities to link directly with the lives, history and culture of Travellers.

Leaving Certificate Established

An audit of the current opportunities for addressing aspects of Traveller culture and history in syllabuses and specifications of the Leaving Certificate Established is included from pages 109 – 129.

Transition Year (TY) is a one-year programme that forms the first year of a three-year senior cycle in many schools. It is designed to act as a bridge between the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate programmes. It is available to all second level schools and currently approximately 75% of schools offer the programme. Transition Year is optional for students in most schools. Each school designs its own Transition Year programme, within set guidelines, to suit the needs and interests of its students.

Leaving Certificate Established is a two-year programme that aims to provide learners with a broad, balanced education while also offering some specialisation towards a particular career option. Subjects are assessed through terminal written examinations and through additional assessment methods including oral and aural examinations, practical examinations and assessment of practical coursework at the end of the two-year programme of study. Performance in the examination can be used for purposes of selection into employment, and into further and higher education.

The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme is a two-year Leaving Certificate, available to students who wish to follow a practical or vocationally orientated programme. The Leaving Certificate Applied is made up of a range of courses that are structured round three elements: Vocational Preparation, Vocational Education and General Education.

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme is a Leaving Certificate with a focus on enterprise and preparation for working life.

Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

First developed in 1995, the fundamental goal of the Leaving Certificate Applied is to prepare Leaving Certificate participants for transition from the world of the school/centre to that of adult and working life. The LCA programme is designed for students who are more suited to a vocational pathway than the Leaving Certificate Established. At present, approximately 5% of students completing senior cycle are Leaving Certificate Applied students.

The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) has evolved from curriculum development projects aimed at strengthening the technological/vocational options and the development of personal skills at senior cycle. The Leaving Certificate Applied focuses on the needs and interests of students, using a variety of methodologies, making optimum use of the resources of the local community and paying particular attention to the needs of the local region. There is a need to recognise that individuals differ considerably in the ways they process, assimilate and recall information.

One of the key aims of the programme is to develop active citizens who have a sense of belonging to the local, national, European and global community, who have a capacity to gain access to information and structures, and an ability to fully participate in democratic society.

The programme, which is of two years' duration, has three main elements:

• Vocational Preparation

• Vocational Education

• General Education.

A range of courses is provided within each of these elements. One of the courses that is undertaken by all students of LCA in their

General Education element is Social Education.

Social Education consists of six modules covered over the course of the two years of the LCA. The topics include: Social and Health education (1 and 2), Contemporary Issues (1 and 2), My Community and Taking Charge.

Within this framework there is a lot of scope for the inclusion of Traveller history and culture.

The purpose of the module Contemporary Issues is to help students analyse and develop an understanding of contemporary issues at a local, national and global level. The students' study of Contemporary Issues is informed at all times by recognition of diversity and a commitment to human rights and social justice. The module provides the opportunity for students to learn about Traveller culture and history through the examination of issues of representation in the media, civic society and from a human rights perspective.

The aims of the module My Community are:

• to develop the students' research skills by examining the historical and present-day development of their local area

• to develop the students' sense of identity and pride in their local area, and a positive attitude to what it has to offer

• to use the local community as a base for learning

• to develop the students' map reading skills

• to develop the students' awareness of the various factors that influenced the planning and development of the local area

• to make the students aware of the resources, amenities and voluntary organisations that exist in their locality.

This allows scope for all students, including those from a Traveller background, to share their own personal history and become more aware of the history of others in their community. The suggested activities to be investigated include aspects of cultural history that may be particularly relevant for the purposes of this audit.

One of the electives that may be offered to LCA students is Religious Education. Within this area students are encouraged to investigate their experiences of religion and how it is experienced by members of their family and wider community.

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)

LCVP is a senior cycle programme of the Department of Education and Skills, designed to give a strong vocational dimension to the Leaving Certificate (established). The programme combines the virtues of academic study with a focus on self-directed learning, enterprise, work and the community. Young people taking the LCVP have a unique opportunity to develop their interpersonal, vocational and technological skills. These skills are equally relevant to the needs of those preparing for further education, seeking employment or planning to commence their own business sometime in the future. The numbers taking LCVP are approximately 25% of the total Leaving Certificate cohort, approximately 14,000 students.

In order to comply with the requirements of the LCVP, students must be studying two subjects from the designated Vocational Subject Groupings, at least five Leaving Certificate subjects one of which must be Irish and a Modern European Language other than English.

The LCVP students follow two Link Modules over the course of the two years:

1. Preparation for the World of Work

2. Enterprise Education.

The use of active teaching and learning methodologies is encouraged across the LCVP curriculum. Experiences such as work placement, career investigation, mini–enterprise, business and community visits are an integral part of the programme. While the LCVP is listed as a separate programme, the students of LCVP are studying varying subjects within the framework of the Leaving Certificate Established and so the range of subjects studied may include opportunities for inclusion.

Assessment and the Leaving Certificate

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) is responsible for the assessment, accreditation and certification of the Leaving Certificate examinations. Students who undertake the Leaving Certificate programmes during senior cycle are assessed by the SEC. The Commission is responsible for the operation of all aspects of the assessment of Leaving Certificate Established, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and Leaving Certificate Applied including written, oral, aural and practical components and assessed course work in some subjects. Assessment at Leaving Certificate level is accessible at two levels, higher and ordinary level. For some subjects a foundation level is also available.

Senior cycle review

NCCA is currently undertaking a review of senior cycle education. The review offers an opportunity to generate a shared vision for senior cycle and a strong base from which to shape a curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of all learners for years to come. The last significant changes to the structure of senior cycle were undertaken over twenty years ago.

During 2017, in the initial stages of the review, research emerging from other jurisdictions on the provision of second-level education was examined. Following on from this initial research, during 2018 – 2019 NCCA consulted with teachers, parents, and students in post-primary schools across Ireland as well as other stakeholders and the public on the purpose of senior cycle education, students' current experiences in school and considerations around future directions senior cycle education might take.

In the context of this curriculum audit, the review is very timely. The findings from this audit will help inform the senior cycle review and the future direction of senior cycle education in Ireland.

Current opportunities for the integration of Traveller culture and history in the senior cycle subject specifications and syllabi

There are thirty-four subjects available to students to study in order to achieve their Leaving Certificate. Not all subjects are available in every school. The subjects listed in Table 5 are those considered as having the most potential for integrating aspects of Traveller culture and history currently into classroom teaching and learning.

English	Gaeilge
History	Geography
Politics and Society	Home Economics
Agricultural Science	Biology
Art	Music
Business	Religious Education
Social, Personal and Health Education	

Table 5: Leaving certificate syllabi and specifications included in the curriculum audit

English

The English syllabus was introduced in 1998. The syllabus aims

at initiating students into enriching experiences with language so that they become more adept and thoughtful users of it and more critically aware of its power and significance in their lives. Each person lives in the midst of language. Language is fundamental to learning, communication, personal and cultural identity, and relationships [...] This syllabus will seek to ensure that the varied traditions within the Irish cultural context are adequately represented. (DES, 1998, 3)

The Leaving Certificate English syllabus acknowledges the importance of language learning for when the student leaves school, becoming an adult and a citizen. It is likewise concerned with the present and the capacity of students to engage and participate in their local and global communities.

The syllabus is built around two strands, comprehending and composing, and five general headings.

Leaving Certificate English is relevant to all aspects of Traveller culture and history as language is a form of personal expression and a means of communicating on all aspects of the person, their life, community and society.

To better understand what is intended by the five general headings, it is useful to look at descriptors for each:

Language of information

Students should encounter a range of texts composed for the dominant purpose of communicating information, e.g. reports, records, memos, bulletins, abstracts, media accounts, documentary films.

Language of argument

Students should encounter a range of texts with an argumentative function. The range of texts should encompass material which offer models of both deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning as used in journalistic, philosophical, scientific and legal contexts.
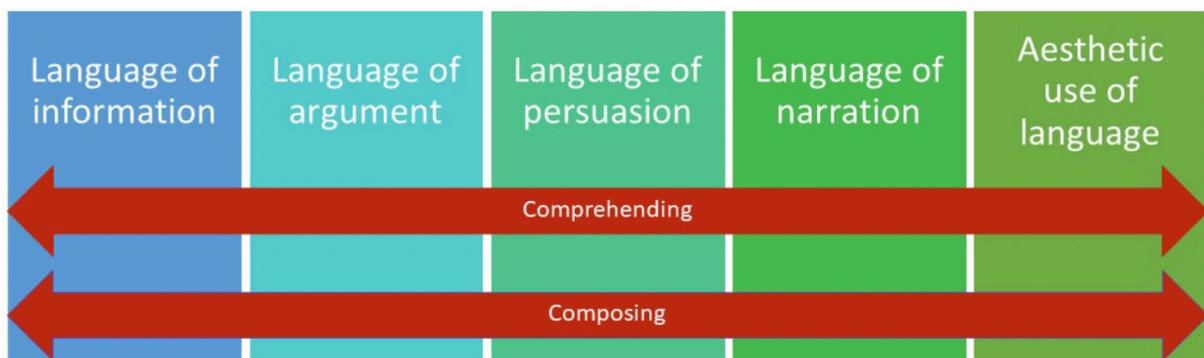

Figure 26: Strands of study for Leaving Certificate English

Language of persuasion

Students should encounter a range of texts which have a persuasive function, e.g. political speeches, advertising in all media, satiric texts, some forms of journalism.

Language of narration

Students should encounter a wide range of texts which have predominately a narrative function. This should involve students in encountering narratives of all kinds, e.g. short stories, novels, drama texts, autobiographies, biographies, travel-books and films.

Aesthetic use of language

Students should encounter a wide range of texts in a variety of literary genres for personal recreation and aesthetic pleasure. This would include engaging with fiction, drama, essay, poetry and film in an imaginative, responsive and critical manner.

The five general headings are divided into comprehending and composing learning outcomes. A selection of sample learning objectives is presented in the table provided:

In general, the learning outcomes in Leaving Certificate English are sufficiently broad, skills-based and process-oriented to ensure that all students can explore aspects of their history, cultural heritage, identity and culture. Comprehending and composing in a variety of genres, both fiction and non-fiction, can facilitate students to grapple with complex issues. Some years these themes or issues are strongly present in the prescribed Leaving Certificate text list, and the unseen texts also present opportunities. However, the scope for addressing content related to specific aspects of history and culture is largely dependent upon the professional capacity, interest and disposition of the teacher.

Language of information

4.1.2 Students should be able to:

- compose accurately in a range of information genres

Language of argument

4.2.1 Students should be able to:

- Distinguish between opinion, anecdote and evidence

- Evaluate the validity of an argument

- Attempt to identify assumptions present

Language of persuasion

4.3.1 Students should be able to:

- Identify the techniques being used to persuade e.g. tone, image, rhythm, choice of words, selection of detail

- Evaluate the impact of a passage in achieving its desired effect

- Indicate to which audience it is addressed

Language of narration

4.4.2 Students should be able to compose in a range of contexts

Aesthetic use of language

4.5.2 Students should be able to:

- Compose "interventions", i.e. alternative scenarios based on texts studied

- Compose analytical and coherent essays relative to a text

Gaeilge/Irish

Over the last number of years, changes have been made to students' experience of teaching and learning Gaelige/Irish. Substantial changes to the allocation of marks in the Leaving Certificate Gaeilge/Irish examination were announced in 2007. The intention of changing the allocation of marks was to promote the oral and communicative aspects of the language. The most significant change was the increase in marks awarded for the Oral Irish Examination from 25% to 40% across all levels. Consequently, the allocation of marks to other component parts, the aural examination and written examination, of the Irish examination was reduced. These changes came into effect for the 2012 examination. However, the changes weren't without their own challenges. The time available for the oral examination, and in particular the limited allocation of time for spontaneous conversation and the purpose and pedagogical implications of the 'Sraith Pictiúr' (series of pictures) feature have been some of the considerations arising from these changes. In this context work on reviewing Senior Cycle Gaeilge/Irish has begun in NCCA. The new specifications in Gaeilge/Irish, when finalised, will replace the current syllabus.

The current syllabus dates from 2004. The aim of the current Gaeilge/Irish syllabus is that there would be continuity from the junior certificate syllabus that would allow the previously acquired skills to be embedded and broadened. The aims include the following:

* that the different backgrounds and abilities of the students be recognised

* that students who do not have Gaeilge/Irish as their first language would be provided with the opportunity to possess a level of Gaeilge/Irish that would allow for confident communication

* that an insight into Irish culture and literature be offered and a taste of multicultural and multilingual society be provided

* that positive appreciation be cultivated towards the learning of language and speakers of other languages, as well as respect for culture

* that self-respect and self-confidence be nurtured through an understanding of identity and cultural heritage.

As language and communication is a form of self-expression and a means of communicating about one's own life, community, society, interests, beliefs, literature, arts, customs and ideas, the scope for exploring many aspects of Traveller culture and history is very broad in Gaeilge/Irish.

History

The Leaving Certificate History syllabus dates from 2003. The syllabus states that

> The study and writing of history is no more static than life itself. New evidence and new insights can lead to revision of the historical record and to a deepening of our historical understanding. This gives history a unique potential to develop the student's skills of critical thinking. Living within a changing world, the student of history will learn that his/her own judgements concerning the nature of historical events should be subjected to the most searching analysis and criticism. (DES, 2003:2)

In this context, looking at history through the lens of different individuals, communities or groups provides scope for exploring many aspects of Traveller history. There is flexibility and scope provided in the topics for study featured in Figure 27 (DES, 2003: 12).

All students of History complete a research study on an aspect of the past in which they have a particular interest. This can be drawn from a local, national or international context. Students have freedom to work on a theme relating to Traveller history. The research study is worth 20% of the total available marks to a student. The written examination is worth 80% of the total available marks.

Early Modern field of study
Irish history, 1494-1815
1. Reform and Reformation in Tudor Ireland, 1494-1558
2. Rebellion and conquest in Elizabethan Ireland, 1558-1603
3. Kingdom versus colony — the struggle for mastery in Ireland, 1603-1660
4. Establishing a colonial ascendancy, 1660-1715
5. Colony versus kingdom – tensions in mid-18th century Ireland, 1715-1770
6. The end of the Irish kingdom and the establishment of the Union, 1770-1815
History of Europe and the wider world, 1492-1815
1. Europe from Renaissance to Reformation, 1492-1567
2. Religion and power – politics in the later sixteenth century, 1567-1609
3. The eclipse of Old Europe, 1609-1660
4. Europe in the age of Louis XIV, 1660-1715
5. Establishing empires, 1715-1775
6. Empires in revolution, 1775-1815
Later Modern field of study
Irish history, 1815-1993
1. Ireland and the Union, 1815-1870
2. Movements for political and social reform, 1870-1914
3. The pursuit of sovereignty and the impact of partition, 1912-1949
4. The Irish diaspora, 1840-1966
5. Politics and society in Northern Ireland, 1949-1993
6. Government, economy and society in the Republic of Ireland, 1949-1989
History of Europe and the wider world, 1815-1992
1. Nationalism and state formation in Europe, 1815-1871
2. Nation states and international tensions, 1871-1920
3. Dictatorship and democracy, 1920-1945
4. Division and realignment in Europe, 1945-1992
5. European retreat from empire and the aftermath, 1945-1990
6. The United States and the world, 1945-1989

Figure 27: Fields of study in leaving certificate history syllabus

Politics and Society

Politics and Society is a new specification and was introduced in 2018. The subject is built on the principles of Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) at junior cycle, including an active citizenship project. It is a learning outcomes-based model, structured around four strands: Power and Decision Making, Active Citizenship, Human Rights and Responsibilities, Globalisation and Localisation.

The subject explores issues relating to Traveller culture and history such as power, social class, access to education, representation and democracy, discrimination, justice, equality, diversity and identity. Therefore, there is broad scope to address many aspects of Traveller history and culture.

A selection of sample learning outcomes is listed in the table provided.

As part of the assessment of Politics and Society, students complete a Citizenship Project worth 20% of the available marks. The project assesses the student's ability to use the knowledge, concepts and skills of Politics and Society to make judgements as to how to be active in communities, as well as the student's capacity to reflect upon and evaluate what they have learned or achieved from being an active participant in civil, social and political life. The citizenship project is based on a brief issued annually by the SEC. The brief outlines a number of topics from which students choose one for their citizen project.

5.3 the idea of equality in relation to rights:

describe what it means for people to be entitled to rights without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status

describe the grounds under which discrimination is illegal in Irish law (gender, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the Traveller community) and the role of the equal status acts in prohibiting discrimination

illustrate the distinction between direct and indirect discrimination

describe patterns of diversity which exist on the island of Ireland, including:

- *ethnic diversity and membership of the Traveller community*

- *language diversity*

- *religious diversity*

- *diversity of sexual orientation*

- *diversity of ability and disability.*

7.3 diversity in the European Union

describe patterns of ethnic and cultural diversity which exist within the European Union including:

- *ethnic diversity within states and within the European Union*

- *language diversity*

- *religious diversity.*

7.4 understanding diversity

apply in their own words and to their own environment the following arguments about culture and identity:

national groups and ethnic groups are those that share a common culture (which implies common values, beliefs, ways of doing things, and may imply a common history and language)

national groups and ethnic groups are 'imagined communities'; social constructs which involve the imagining of an 'us' and a 'them', something which can have significant consequences for how people understand and interact with those seen to be in the 'other'.

Art

The new specification for Leaving Certificate Art will be introduced for fifth year students in 2020. The first examination based on the new specification will be in June 2022.

The draft specification states, in the rationale, that Art is 'the language we use that gives our ideas form.' (forthcoming DES, 2019: 10). Art, 'promotes creative and critical thinking, supports the development of problem-solving skills, and strengthens the learner's ability to communicate ideas through their own work to an intended audience ...', which encourages students to, 'develop a respect for their fellow learners and the wider community; to become more empathetic.' (forthcoming DES, 2019: 10).

A new aspect to Leaving Certificate Art has been introduced called Visual Studies. It aims to introduce a more integrated approach between students' practical work and their understanding of contemporary or historical art. Visual Studies 'opens the vast world of culture and developments in art through the work of artists, past and present [and] enables us to gain an understanding of how many cultures have represented our internal thoughts and ideas in an external way across time' (forthcoming DES, 2019: 10). The subject is still concerned with helping students to, 'gain a sense of achievement, enjoyment and personal fulfilment as well as an understanding of the artistic process and value of the work they have researched, created and to which they respond' (forthcoming DES, 2019: 11).

The aim of Leaving Certificate Art is to

develop in learners the knowledge, skills, understanding and values needed to bring an idea to realisation and to respond to, understand, analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others. Each learner is a unique individual and will be enabled to develop their own skill set in a personal way. The learner will become aware of the world of Visual Studies, how it can inform their own work and life, and thereby become more aware of their own place in a wider society (forthcoming DES, 2019: 11)

Some of the objectives relevant in particular to Traveller culture and history state that students should:

- engage with current practitioners and connect with current practice, galleries, museums and contemporary art spaces, real-life encounters and the wider art community

- appreciate and respond critically to their own work, that of their peers as well as society and their environment

- appreciate and enjoy the processes involved in researching, creating and responding to Art as a lifelong skill (forthcoming DES, 2019: 11,12).

Learning outcomes in Art are organised into three strands, which are inter-dependent and, 'interconnected and supportive of the artistic process.' (forthcoming DES, 2019: 14). These strands also 'signify the importance of the symbiotic relationship between the learner, the practical work with which they are involved and their understanding of the place of, and emphasis on, Visual Studies within their work' (forthcoming DES, 2019: 14).

The learning outcomes of Art have been written to recognise this inter-connectedness as well as to 'reflect the fact that the relationship between the practical making of a work and the knowledge, skills, values and understanding of relevant examples of Visual Studies are symbiotic in nature. It is possible, in each strand, to apply some of the learning outcomes to both the practical making of work as well as to the field of Visual Studies' (forthcoming DES, 2019: 21). The strands are further divided into relevant strand units, which contain a group of learning outcomes.

The coursework component of assessment is worth 70% of the available marks. Students undertake both the practical coursework (50%) and invigilated examination (20%). Both pieces of work will be based on the same stimulus, which is chosen by the student. They research, ideate, develop and realise two pieces of work. The practical coursework component sees students realising work over an extended time period. The invigilated examination sees students creating a second realised work based on the same stimulus and the ideas and work they researched and developed during their overall coursework project. The scope and flexibility provided by the coursework supports students in addressing any aspect of Traveller history and culture.
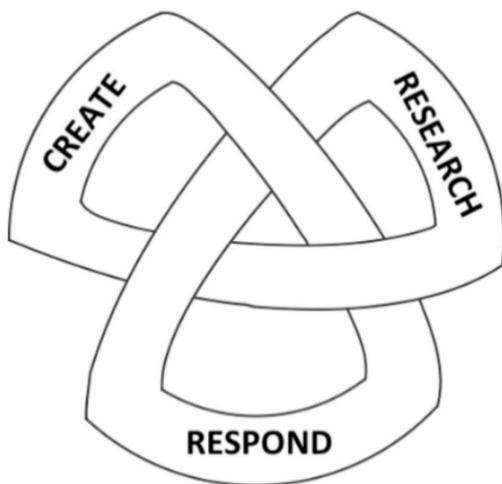

Figure 28: The strands of the leaving certificate art specification

Leaving Certificate Art includes learning outcomes with content and skills relevant to all aspects of Traveller culture and history as art is an expression of one's self. To illustrate the possibilities, a selection of learning outcomes is listed in the table provided:

Respond Strand

3.1   Analysis

- question established and new ideas and work

3.2   Contextual enquiries

- locate their own work in relation to other artwork within a particular context/s (stylistically, socially, politically, ethically, etc.)

3.3   Impact and value

- value their own work and the work of others

- experience art through sensory and/or emotional responses

3.5   Process

- interpret sources of information

- respond to a selection of drawings, studies and realised work

- synthesise their selection of visual responses

- articulate an effective rationale for their choices

Research Strand

1.1   Looking

- experience the natural and built environment as a source of inspiration

- identify the sources that support the development of their work

1.4   Contextual enquiries

- use the wider context of how the world is continually changing, socially, politically, ethically, etc. in their work

- engage with a recognised artist or work of art

- identify links with artists of the past and present that have explored similar topics or themes

1.5   Process

- draft a selection of drawings and studies that support their ideas and work

- use a selection of visual responses that are relevant to their area of study

Create Strand

2.1   Making

- interpret primary sources including the natural and built environment and the human figure as a source of inspiration

- apply appropriate skills, knowledge and techniques

- create realised work based on their research

2.3   Process

- describe their motivation/area of enquiry

- illustrate sources of information

- create a selection of drawings, studies and realised work

- justify their selection of relevant visual responses

Music

The Leaving Certificate Music syllabus dates from 1996. The objectives of the syllabus include:

- to develop an understanding of how music contributes to the social, historical, technological, economic and cultural aspects of life

- to encourage students to listen purposefully to a wide variety of musical styles and genres, including music from the past and the present and from our own and other environments, and to articulate their perceptions in a musically literate manner

- to foster an appreciation of the cultural and expressive qualities of music

- to cultivate an awareness of and a tolerance for the artistic views of others

- to value, through participation, musical creativity and the social sharing of music (DES, 1996: 2).

There are aspects of the syllabus that are particularly relevant for this audit: Irish Music, Listening Elective and the Performance component. All students should have sufficient experience of listening to Irish music to enable them to understand, identify and describe from aural and visual perception:

- the range and variety of Irish music heard today

- Irish musical idioms and influences

- traditional and modern-day performing styles

- the contribution Irish music has made to folk music in other countries, especially in North America (DES, 1996:11).

There is an option to take an elective in composing, performing or listening. As part of the Listening Elective students can study a special topic of their own choice. There is scope here to undertake a course of study that incorporates musical and other aspects of Traveller culture.

Students are required to complete a performance component, and this performance (if chosen to be the elective element) can be worth 50% of the final examination. As part of their final examination, students must perform a selection of pieces, either individually or as part of a group. This performance can include music from Traveller musicians or songs about Traveller history and culture.

Agricultural Science

Agricultural Science is a new specification and is due to be introduced in September 2019. Agricultural Science is the study of the science and technology underlying the principles and practices of modern agriculture.

> *It is a scientific approach to the knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes that affect the long-term sustainability of natural resources – the land, plants, and animals – and emphasises the managed use of these resources for the economic and social benefit of humankind […] Through a study of agricultural science, students develop many practical skills when handling, observing and investigating plants and animals and through the range of other practical activities encountered (DES, 2018:7)*

Learning outcomes in Agricultural Science are organised into four strands, with seven cross-cutting themes, as illustrated in Figure 28. Strand One: Scientific Practices is an integrated strand, so that Strand One learning outcomes, which focus on how science works, on scientific investigation and on the role and contribution of science to agriculture, are integrated into teaching, learning and assessment associated with learning outcomes in the other three strands.
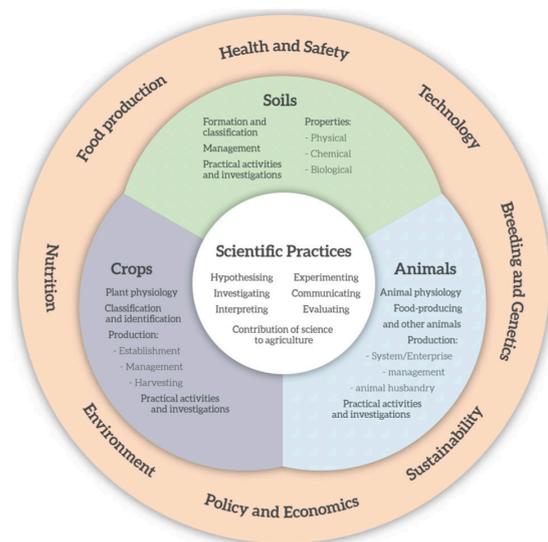

Figure 29: Agricultural Science strands and cross-cutting themes

There are opportunities for teaching and learning about aspects of Traveller culture in Agricultural Science, in particular, how Travellers live and connections with animals.

A selection of sample learning outcomes is presented in the table provided.

3 .1   Plant physiology

- relate the main structures of the plant to its fundamental processes: photosynthesis, respiration, transpiration and nutrient absorption

- describe the principles of genetic improvement and selection

3 .2   Classification/ identification

- apply their knowledge of structure and function to identify a variety of grasses, cultivated crops and weeds

- distinguish between annual, biennial and perennial lifecycles

- explain the importance of plant breeding and seed varieties

4 .1   Animal physiology

- compare the ruminant and monogastric digestive systems, including the role of microorganisms describe the mammalian animal reproductive cycle and methods of fertilisation of two farm animals

4 .2   Classification/ identification

- describe the characteristics of common types, breeds and crosses of cattle, sheep, and one of the following farm animals: pigs, poultry, horses

4 .3   Production

- discuss the importance of nutrition and ration formulation to meet the protein, energy and performance requirements at different growth/ development stages of cattle, sheep, and one of the following farm animals: pigs, poultry, horses

- describe the nutritive properties of food constituents and their function in growth and development compare two different systems of animal production for a chosen enterprise

- discuss the environmental implications of animal production

- identify the potential hazards (physical, biological, health) associated with working with farm animals, and safe work practices/controls

4 .3 .1   System/enterprise

- describe the scientific principles underlying the management of the lifecycle of a selected farm animal

4 .3 .2   Management

- discuss management practices for handling and housing farm animals; optimal animal health and welfare; slurry/farmyard manure; delivering sustainable and environmentally friendly production systems; ensuring quality, safe and traceable food for the consumer

- appreciate the role of policies related to traceability and animal welfare, and their connection with the food-supply chain

4 .3 .3   Animal husbandry and health

- discuss the factors to be taken into account when considering the welfare of farm animals

Geography

The Geography syllabus dates from 2003. The rationale for Leaving Certificate Geography states that the subject is 'concerned with the study of people and their environment,' and as such 'examines the changing interrelationships between the physical and human worlds'. Through studying Geography students gain the skills to 'help them make informed judgements about issues at local, national, and international levels' (DES, 2003: 2).

The aims of the Geography syllabus include:

- to develop a knowledge and understanding of a selection of contrasting physical and human (social, economic, and cultural) environments and of the relationships that exist between them

- to promote an awareness of the spatial, structural, and temporal patterns of environmental phenomena, both physical and human, at a variety of scales, and to realise that these patterns can change with time

- to recognise, and be sensitive to other people and their culture, here in Ireland and elsewhere

- to provide students, through their study of geography, with an interesting and enjoyable experience and imbue in them a lifelong love of their natural and cultural environment (DES, 2003: 2).

Learning outcomes in the Geography syllabus are presented in core, optional and elective units. All students engage with the learning outcomes in the core units and choose one of the optional units. Students taking the Higher level examination engage with the learning outcomes in one of the elective units.

Core Unit 1: Patterns and processes in the physical environment

Core Unit 2: Regional geography

Core Unit 3: Geographical investigation and skills

Elective Unit 4: Patterns and processes in economic activities

Elective Unit 5: Patterns and processes in the human environment

Optional Unit 6: Global interdependence

Optional Unit 7: Geoecology

Optional Unit 8: Culture and identity

Optional Unit 9: The atmosphere-ocean environment

Aspects of Traveller culture in relation to nomadism, economic activity, how Travellers live and cultural heritage can be explored in Geography. To illustrate the range of possibilities a selection of sample learning objectives is presented in the table provided.

As part of assessment in Geography, students must complete a geographical investigation from an annual list of topics issued to schools by the State Examinations Commission. The geographical investigation is worth 20% of the available marks. There is scope within the options to focus on aspects of Traveller culture, particularly migration, movement of people, how people live, cultural heritage and identity.

2.1	The concept of region
•	Physical regions including climatic regions, administrative regions, cultural regions, socio-economic regions, nodal/city/urban regions
2.2	The dynamics of regions
•	Two contrasting Irish regions: the study of each region should include physical processes, economic processes, secondary activities, tertiary activities, human processes, e.g. language, religion, urban and rural development, population dynamics
2.4	The complexity of regions and how boundaries may change over time
5.1	Population dynamics change over time
5.2	Population characteristics have an impact on levels of human development.
5.3	Population movements have an impact on the donor and receiver regions.
5.4	Settlements can be identified in relation to site, situation and function.
5.5	Urban settlements display an ever-changing land use pattern and pose planning problems.
5.6	Problems can develop from the growth of urban centres
8.1	Populations can be examined according to physical and cultural indicators. Culture and identity are tied to ideas of ethnicity, which include race, language, religion, and nationality.
8.2	Nationality and the nation state are political entities placed on the physical and cultural landscape.
8.3	Identity as a concept entails a variety of cultural factors including nationality, language, race, and religion.

Biology

The Biology syllabus is currently under review. The new specification for Biology includes a proposal for a practical assessment. A trial of practical assessments for the 2014 draft specifications was undertaken by the SEC in 2017 – 2018. The new draft specification for Biology, which began development in 2019, will be reviewed considering the findings arising from the trial. The current biology syllabus dates from 2001. According to the syllabus, 'Biology is the study of life. Through the study of biology students employ the processes of science in their investigations and explore the diversity of life and the inter-relationship between organisms and their environment' (DES, 2001 :2).

The biology syllabus contains three units of study:

Unit 1: Biology – the study of life

Unit 2: The cell

Unit 3: The organism.

The biology syllabus allows scope for the inclusion of aspects of Traveller culture such as ethnicity, connections with animals and how Travellers live. A selection of sample learning objectives is presented in the table provided.

1.5 A study of an eco-system

Select and visit one ecosystem.

- Broad overview of the selected ecosystem

- Identify any five fauna and any five flora using simple keys

- Identify a variety of habitats within the selected ecosystem

- Conduct a quantitative study of plants and animals of a sample area of the selected ecosystem.

3.1.8 The animal kingdom as exemplified by the Human.

3.2 Complexity of the Human including nutrition, digestive system, human diet, breathing system and reproduction.

Business

The Business syllabus dates from 1996 and contains seven units of study.

The aims of the syllabus include:

- to contribute to a balanced and appropriate general education, leading to the personal and social development of students through a study of business and enterprise

- To encourage initiative and self-reliance in each student

- To develop a clear understanding of the role of enterprise, to encourage the development of appropriate enterprise learning skills, and to generate in students a positive and ethical attitude to enterprise in personal, business and public life (DES, 1996: I).

In the context of this curriculum audit, Unit 2: Enterprise provides the most opportunity to explore aspects of Traveller culture, particularly Traveller enterprise, how Travellers generate income, traditional Traveller economic activities and the impact of Traveller enterprises on local economies. A selection of sample learning objectives is presented in the table provided.

2.1   Introduction and definition of enterprise

- A broad definition of enterprise, ensuring its relevance to a wide range of activities in personal, business and public life as well as business start-up.

2.2   Entrepreneurs and enterprise skills

- Characteristics of entrepreneurs

- Enterprise skills-innate and learned

- Application of enterprise skills to different situations

Home Economics: Scientific and Social

The Home Economics: Scientific and Social syllabus dates from 2001. Home economics–Scientific and Social is an applied subject combining theory with practice in order to develop understanding and solve problems. It is concerned with the way individuals and families manage their resources to meet physical, emotional, intellectual, social and economic needs. [...] Home economics emphasises the interdependent relationship that exists between individuals or families and their immediate and distant environments and promotes a sense of responsibility towards sustaining resources within those environments (DES, 2001: 2).

The aims of the syllabus include:

- to allow students, male and female, to acquire and develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, competence and attitudes necessary to contribute to a personal and family environment conducive to human development, health, leisure, security, and happiness

- to develop an understanding of the physical, emotional, intellectual, economic and social needs of individuals or families and to encourage an appreciation of the diversity of socioeconomic and cultural influences on family life

- to encourage students to develop and apply the management skills necessary for the effective organisation and management of available resources to satisfy personal and family needs in a continuously changing economic, social and technological climate

- to develop an awareness of the interdependence of the individual or family and the environment and to promote a sense of responsibility to global issues (DES, 2001: 2).
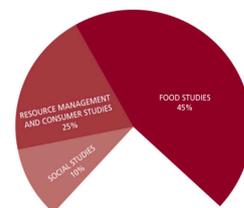
The core syllabus contains three areas of study and students also choose one elective.

The three areas of study provide significant scope to integrate aspects of Traveller culture into classroom teaching and learning. In particular, Home Economics: Scientific and Social can address aspects of family, how Travellers live, identity, economic activity, nomadism, crafts and clothing.
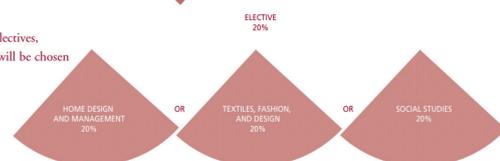

Figure 30: The syllabus structure of Home Economics: Scientific and Social (DES, 2001: 3)

A selection of sample learning objectives relevant to Traveller culture is presented in the table provided.

1. Food studies

1.1.1 Factors affecting food choices, to include: culture, eating patterns, sensory aspects,nutritional awareness, health status, availability, finance, marketing and advertising

1.3.3 Meal management and planning: Management and planning of meals with reference to: current dietary guidelines, dietary requirements through the life cycle, resources available, i.e. knowledge and skills, time, money, equipment, choice of foods

2. Resource management and consumer studies

2.1.2 Factors that affect family resource management, to include: stages in life-cycle, employment pattern, culture, values, standards, sex roles, management of dual role, life-style as determined by socio-economic status and composition of family

2.1.4 Housing: Factors that determine individual and family housing choices, to include: socio-economic factors, national housing policy, trends in housing development, availability

2.1.6 Textiles: Use of textiles as a resource for household and clothing purposes

3. Social studies

3.1.1 Introducing sociological concepts:Sociological concepts, to include: society, culture,norms,values; role, status, socio-economic groupings, social mobility; primary and secondary social groups, kinship,socialisation; social institutions; social change

3.1.2 Defining the family: The universality of the concept of family

3.1.3 Family structures: The historical development of the family in Ireland from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present day; characteristics of modern family structures; social, economic and technological changes affecting modern family structures

3.1.4 Family functions: physical, economic, emotional, educational, and social; how these family functions may be adopted or supplemented by other social institutions

3.1.5 Marriage: cultural variations in marital arrangements, commitment, customs, legal obligation, rights and responsibilities within the marriage relationship

3.1.6 Family as a caring unit: Roles and responsibilities of family members and how these roles change through the life-cycle of the family; gender issues in relation to family roles; social and economic factors that have affected the changing roles of family members in recent times; role conflict; child-parent relationships; the role of older people within the family

There are three electives, from which students choose one:

- Elective 1: Home design and management: To allow students to further develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to resource management and consumer studies.

- Elective 2: Textiles, fashion, and design: To allow students to further develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to textiles and design.

- Elective 3: Social studies: To allow students to further develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to social studies.

Assessment is in the form of a terminal written examination and an assessment of practical work, which is an integral part of the study of home economics. There is also an assessment of practical work for those students who study the textiles, fashion and design elective.

Religious Education

The Religious Education syllabus dates from 2003. The rationale for Leaving Certificate Religious Education includes the following statements:

The emphasis in the syllabus on the value of religious belief and on diversity and mutual respect is of particular relevance for national and global citizenship....Religious education in the Leaving Certificate programme calls for the exploration of issues such as meaning and value, the nature of morality, the development and diversity of belief, the principles of a just society, and the implications of scientific progress. Such exploration takes place in personal, local and global contexts and will be a valuable resource for the active, participatory citizenship envisaged in the aim of education (DES, 2003 p.4).

This emphasis on respect for diversity of beliefs and the exploration of issues of social justice provides rich opportunities for making linkages with Traveller culture and history throughout the course. Specifically, **Section F Issues of Justice and Peace** in the Religious Education syllabus includes content and outcomes which are directly relevant to Traveller culture and history presented in the table provided.

1.1 Social analysis: reflection on one's own situation and context in the light of questions of resources, power, meaning, relationships and identifying questions of economic, political, cultural and social structures arising out of this situation

1.2 Social analysis in action: the question of poverty in Ireland: using the principles outlined in above to identify the issues involved in the nature and causes of poverty in Ireland; the question of discrimination in Ireland: using the principles outlined to examine the issue of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic background, religion, disability, class, or gender

2.1 Visions of justice: justice as right relationship; justice as revenge; justice as fair play; justice as the promotion of equality; justice as the upholding of human rights

2.2 Visions of peace: the links between justice and peace; types of peace; non-violence as lifestyle and form of protest

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Framework

This curriculum framework was published in 2011. Senior cycle SPHE aims to support learners in making informed choices for health and wellbeing now and in the future. The framework builds on students' prior learning in primary and junior cycle SPHE.

The framework is built around five areas of learning:

- mental health

- gender studies

- substance use

- relationships and sexuality education

- physical activity and nutrition.

The rationale for SPHE states that

> *SPHE must be inclusive of the many diverse groups in Irish society. These differences may be due to a variety of influences including culture, family background, beliefs, gender, health, physical and intellectual abilities. It is important to recognise that students coming from these diverse backgrounds may need to meet more than one set of cultural expectations, for example, those of the school, their family, their culture and/or their religious beliefs. It is important that all students learn to listen to one another, developing empathy and remaining sufficiently open minded to be accepting of and sensitive towards difference. In developing SPHE in the school, the richness that diversity brings to SPHE should be embraced. Consultation as part of planning for SPHE should be inclusive of all cultural groups. The language, teaching practices and resources used in SPHE should be similarly inclusive (NCCA, 2011: 7).*

In this context, SPHE sets out a number of objectives, many relevant to this curriculum audit:

- develop self-awareness through opportunities to reflect on thoughts, values, attitudes and feelings

- develop students' self-efficacythe confidence to think and behave independently especially in the face of social pressure

- strengthen students' capacity to empathise with another person's situation, feelings and motives in order to enhance relationships with other people

- develop coping strategies for adolescence and adult life in support of greater resilience.

While SPHE is not a subject that is assessed externally for certification in the Leaving Certificate, it is seen as of fundamental importance to the growth, development and maturity of all students. It is particularly pertinent in terms of developing young people's self-awareness, self-confidence, sense of identity and empathy for difference and health and wellbeing.

A selection of sample learning outcomes relevant to this curriculum audit is presented the table.

Mental health

- examine with others the personal attitudes, values and life experiences which enhance or damage self-esteem and ways to deal with the different demands of these situations

- discuss how they might best support themselves and others in times of bereavement and loss

- recognise the different types of abusive and bullying behaviour and the impact of such behaviour on individuals and their relationships

Gender studies

- research using a variety of sources, gender and socialisation in different cultural settings including consideration of the impact on health and wellbeing

- investigate the ways in which individual males and females experience school differently

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE)

- compare what they value in relationships with what is valued by significant other groups, e.g. family, church, older people, friends, different cultures

- construct a personal life plan including consideration of their personal, social and vocational goals and the place of parenthood in this plan

- compare their understanding of the responsibilities of being a parent/guardian with parents/guardians' understanding of their responsibilities

- discuss the role of commitment and relationship skills in marriage and other committed relationships, that help to support lasting relationships and family life
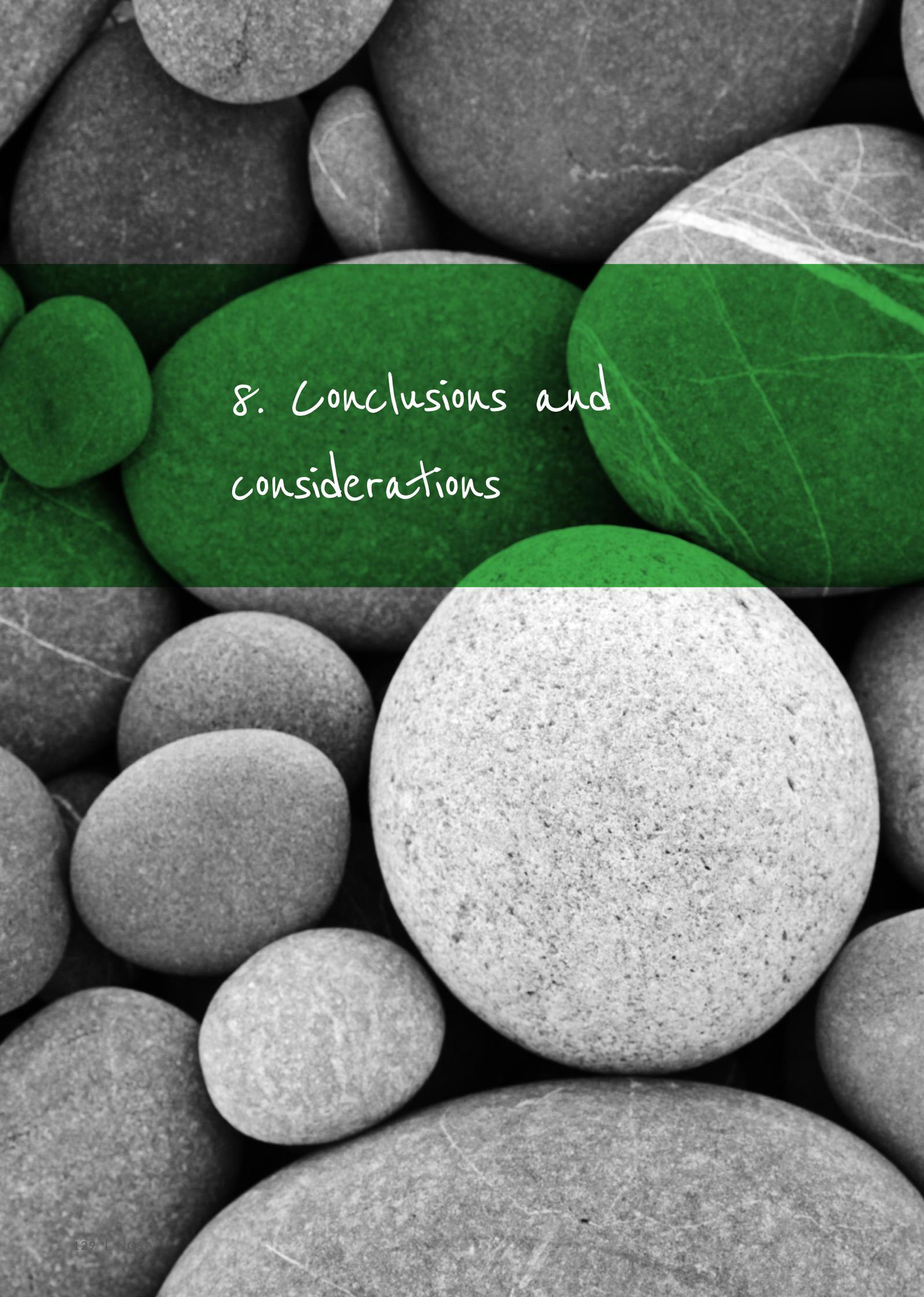
8. Conclusions and considerations

In July 2018 a Private Members 'Traveller Culture and History in Education Bill 2018' was introduced to the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Bill is currently under consideration by, and in process in, the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Bill aims 'to provide for the inclusion of Traveller culture and history in the curriculum taught by recognised schools in the State and for that purpose to amend the Education Act 1998.' (Government publications, 2018)

In this broader context, in September 2018, NCCA was requested by the Minister for Education and Skills to undertake an audit of Traveller culture and history in the curriculum.

Both these developments follow the recognition, in March 2017, of the Traveller community as a distinct ethnic group in Ireland and it is the only group with this recognition domestically. In what ways can that recognition be made tangible and meaningful? The National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (2017) sets outs a number of targets related to the educational attainment of Traveller children, students and adults. The realisation of these targets, as listed earlier, would go far to improve overall educational outcomes for members of the Traveller community. At a more specific level, it is widely acknowledged that there is limited understanding among the general population, including among teachers / early childhood practitioners, about Traveller culture and history. As a result, for some students from the Traveller community, the dissonance between the social, linguistic and cultural environments of the home and school can become a source of disaffection and disengagement. A complex additional issue is the unconscious or conscious bias which impacts on children's understanding of Travellers, either through their home, school or community environment. So, focusing on ways in which Traveller culture and history can have greater presence and become more visible in the curriculum is another way of contributing towards meaningful respect, recognition, broad integration, relationship-building, and promoting inclusion. A celebration of Traveller culture and history in the curriculum would support its presence and visibility in schools / early childhood settings while challenging bias and stereotypes.

The purpose of this curriculum audit is to identify current opportunities across the early childhood, primary and post-primary curricula for children and young people to encounter and learn about aspects of Traveller culture and history. In addition, the audit aims to identify future possibilities in this regard as curricula are reviewed and developed on a broader scale and in a wider context. It is important to note that this curriculum audit is a snapshot at a particular point in time of the opportunities for building on existing curriculum practice and potential future opportunities in this regard.

Curriculum frameworks and developments

As outlined in sections 4 – 7, the audit has highlighted the many current opportunities to embed Traveller culture and history across the curriculum at early childhood, primary and post-primary levels. However, to exploit future opportunities, the following considerations will need to be taken into account as the NCCA reviews and develops curriculum frameworks and specifications in the coming years:

Respect for the learners' cultural identity, language and values

To contribute to addressing any issues of bias, prejudice, stigmatisation and discrimination experienced by members of the Traveller community the curriculum must be grounded in principles of intercultural education that encourage social acceptance, promote equity, inclusion, fairness and respect for and celebration of cultural identity, language and values.

Early childhood education

At early childhood level, as outlined in section 4, a nationally coordinated implementation plan for Aistear would be an ideal vehicle for supporting the development of a foundation for Traveller culture and history through the Framework. Since 2016, every child is entitled to two years of pre-school education building on the one, funded year that was made available from 2010 through the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. While the development of the National Síolta Aistear Initiative to support implementation is welcome, more is needed. Settings receiving government funding through the ECCE scheme are required to adhere to the principles underpinning both Aistear and Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and DES inspections focus on aspects of both frameworks. However, greater investigation is needed to see what experiences Traveller children are having in early childhood settings. Figures for how many Traveller children accessed the two preschool years in 2017-2018

and what percentage of Traveller children did not take up a place they were entitled to would be useful too. Anecdotally, it seems that many Traveller children are not taking up places they are entitled to. But review and further research is needed into how Traveller children's sense of identity and belonging is supported in early years settings and how inclusive settings really are.

Primary education

At primary level, as outlined in section 5, the NCCA is tasked with redeveloping the primary curriculum at a time when modern Irish society comprises more diverse cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups than at any other time in history. This is reflected in the primary school population to a far greater extent than when the current Primary School Curriculum (1999) was devised. The introduction of Aistear (2009) and the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) give rise to a need for greater curriculum alignment and continuity across all phases of education. These changes collectively present an opportunity to develop a vision for a primary curriculum which will provide high-quality experiences and outcomes for all children's learning, development and wellbeing. To support this process, the NCCA is working closely with schools and settings, accessing curriculum research and holding curriculum seminars to support dialogue around curriculum change. The findings from this curriculum audit will also inform this curriculum development process. More specifically, in late 2019, public consultation will commence on a draft framework for a redeveloped primary curriculum. This will give an opportunity to evaluate whether a proposed future primary curriculum provides an improved vehicle for Traveller education more generally but Traveller culture and history in the curriculum in particular.

Junior cycle education

At junior cycle level, as outlined in section 6, the recent implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 has facilitated the integration of aspects of Traveller culture and history across many subject specifications and short courses and potential exists for further progress in this regard. In particular, some key developments at junior cycle have facilitated this integration and should be noted as aspects of the curriculum developments at junior cycle also extend into senior cycle:

- moving from a prescribed syllabus to outcomes-based specifications of learning. Learning outcomes provide schools and teachers with greater clarity and more flexibility in terms of how knowledge, skills and competences are imparted to children and young people

- the inclusion of key skills. Key skills are the main driver for pedagogy that is collaborative and engaging and they serve to create opportunities for teachers to employ active methodologies which respond to students' needs and abilities

- more diverse approaches to assessment, which facilitate young people to demonstrate their learning in different formats and provide a more rounded description of a student's educational achievement

- flexibility to design school programmes that include a mixture of subjects and short courses and have the achievements in both recognised. Short courses can be developed by teachers, other agencies or groups to suit the specific needs and interests of their student cohort in junior cycle. Short courses may be aligned either with the indicators for Level 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or with those for Level 2

- more detailed approaches to reporting student achievement, which gives a more rounded and comprehensive profile of a student's achievement across different measures and standards

- the integration of wellbeing. Wellbeing is included as a theme in early childhood but is more broadly defined and integrated at junior cycle level where it exists as a principle, can be linked to several statements of learning and key skills, and is closely linked to the curriculum areas of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Physical Education (PE) and Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE).

Senior cycle education

At senior cycle level, as outlined in section 7, the review of senior cycle offers an opportunity to generate a shared vision for senior cycle and a strong base from which to shape a curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of all learners for years to come. Research, learnings and developments from early childhood, primary, and particularly junior cycle will inform this review. Emerging findings from senior cycle students, teachers, parents, the public and other stakeholders, and research from other jurisdictions will contribute significantly to this review.

The findings from this curriculum audit will further inform curriculum developments in this stage of education through the review of senior cycle. Specifically, NCCA will publish a report for public consultation outlining ways in which, and phases through which, the senior cycle should be developed for the future. Again, this will provide an opportunity to evaluate whether what is being proposed at senior cycle provides a good fit with what is needed for Traveller education more generally but Traveller culture and history in the curriculum in particular.

Across different levels of education, early childhood, primary and post-primary, ensuring alignment between what is said in broader curriculum framework documents and what is presented in particular subject or curriculum area specifications is essential. Currently, this is particularly relevant in the context of planned developments at primary and senior cycle levels.

Curriculum themes, areas and subjects across all levels

As outlined in sections 4 – 7, when developing curriculum specifications for curriculum areas and subjects, the following approaches by the NCCA would contribute to facilitate a situation where all children and students, and specifically those from the Traveller community, would encounter content directly related to themselves, to their experience and their own culture and identity:

- in developing the brief for new subject specifications/areas of learning / themes, ensure that reference is made to the inclusion as appropriate of aspects of Traveller culture and history and/or other minority cultures

- in developing specifications, articulate rich learning outcomes that balance knowledge, skills, dispositions and values leading to different approaches to assessment that align with the learner's needs, capacity and experience

- the development of curriculum specifications with learning outcomes which support teaching, learning and assessment about personal, local and cultural issues (e.g. as in Junior Cycle Music, History, Geography, Visual Art; Senior Cycle Politics and Society, Home Economics: Social and Scientific)

- the development of curriculum specifications which facilitate learning, teaching and assessment about personal, local and cultural issues (e.g. the new Primary Language Curriculum / Curaclam Teanga Bunscoile, Junior Cycle Business Studies). This creates a situation where students have multiple opportunities to encounter aspects of their own or another's history and culture across different subject areas

- the inclusion of different approaches to assessment, for example, the Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) at Junior Cycle level. CBAs allow students to identify an area of interest to them and to have the skills they demonstrate assessed.

CBAs mean that teachers can support those students who have an interest in appropriate content, research and actions related to Traveller history and culture. This approach to assessment, where flexibility is provided to students to study in more detail topics that are personally selected will also be considered at other levels of education

- carry out a cyclical review of curriculum specifications, especially when a new specification has gone through an initial cycle of implementation or when a subject / curriculum area specification has been in the system over a long period of time to ensure that the knowledge, skills and competences developed in that subject / curriculum area remain relevant and meaningful

- provide content related to Traveller culture and history or other cultures in assessment support materials, for example, in sample questions or in the online annotated examples of student work for relevant specifications

- implement more targeted approaches to involving Traveller voices and stakeholders in reviews and consultations.

Policy and practice

More generally, as outlined in section 3 of the audit, much has been done to develop strategies and school guidelines to support Traveller children and students' achievement in education. However, the implementation of these strategies and guidelines has been challenging and expected improvements in the educational attainment of Traveller children and students has not been fully realised in all cases. A significant challenge in preparing the audit was the identification of schools / early childhood settings within the education system that currently provide learning and teaching opportunities to develop children's and students' knowledge and understanding of Traveller culture and history in the wider context of intercultural education. While the relevant education policy documents were readily identified and audited, the instances of developed approaches and practices in schools and early childhood settings proved difficult to source. This dichotomy is similarly identified in the Travelling with Austerity Report (2013) which includes a pen portrait by Thomas McCann, member of the Traveller Community. McCann refers to his disappointment with policies and structures unrealised and how the gap between policy and practice and its realisation can prove very difficult to bridge. With this salutary message in mind, to implement the strategies and guidelines and take full advantage of the opportunities set out in this audit, in the process contributing to improving educational outcomes for Traveller children and students, the following points related to connecting policy and practice should be considered:

Teacher/Early Childhood Practitioner professional development

Provision of Early Childhood Education and Care/Initial Teacher Education (ITE) / and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities play a valuable role. Early childhood practitioners and teachers need opportunities to improve their knowledge and understanding of Traveller culture and history; to develop pedagogical approaches to intercultural education in the classroom; and, more generally, develop a disposition towards intercultural learning. CPD provision would benefit from the inclusion of opportunities for teachers / early childhood practitioners to consider and reflect on their own personal and professional attitudes, values and beliefs about Traveller culture and history within the wider context of intercultural education. CPD, related to changes in curriculum, needs to reflect Traveller culture and history with opportunities for an emphasis on hearing directly from under-represented voices in society. Currently voices from minority groups are often absent as part of CPD opportunities on cultural diversity in education. Provision of ITE/ECCE and CPD could be planned in the context of an Intercultural Framework which articulates and supports the big ideas for developing learners' awareness of culture, pluralism in society, specific cultures and histories, and how to address prejudice.

A range of relevant bodies will need to be involved in this context, including the Teaching Council, support services such as the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), Better Start, City and County Child Care Committees and Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT), and teacher/practitioner professional networks, for example, the various post-primary subject associations. Some of these bodies are already involved in professional support related to intercultural education and Traveller education.

Supports for school/early childhood setting leaders

The leaders of schools and educational settings are an important target group too. Provision of professional development courses and/or supports and resources for school/setting leaders to implement a whole-school / setting approach to intercultural education generally and specifically to support the integration of Traveller children and students is essential. An awareness of the importance of the school/setting's ethos and culture, hidden curriculum and policies, the way in which it provides for and organises the formal curriculum and extracurricular activities is critical to the aim of supporting Traveller children and students. The audit has identified many current opportunities within areas of learning and subjects to address aspects of Traveller history and culture. However, within schools/settings it requires a coordinated approach to teaching and learning for the inherent potential in these opportunities to be fully realised. Leadership is key in this context.

Inspectorate

The Inspectorate can also play an important role in advancing and advocating for a whole-school or whole-setting approach to intercultural education generally through the processes of School Self Evaluation (SSE), the Whole School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE MLL), subject inspections and Early childhood setting inspections. The outcomes of inspection processes and evaluations could provide a very important source of data through which to further review Traveller education along with knowledge and understanding Traveller culture and history in the curriculum.

Education agencies

A range of other education agencies can also advance the profile of Traveller culture and history and aspects of intercultural education in their work. For example, the State Examinations Commission (SEC) can ensure that the diversity in Irish society is well reflected in the assessment items, materials and examples it uses. It can integrate aspects of Traveller culture and history or other minority cultures into assessment items and materials where appropriate.

Support services such as the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), Better Start, Childcare Committees, JCT and professional bodies such as the Teaching Council can actively promote the principles of intercultural education and, where feasible, the integration of aspects of Traveller culture and history through teacher/practitioner professional development programmes and initiatives.

Education resources to support teaching and learning about Traveller history and culture

There are many resources and sources of knowledge and information related to intercultural education and Traveller culture and history already available or in existence. What schools and other settings often find useful is for an audit of available resources to take place and for a one-stop-shop or portal to be developed where teachers / early childhood practitioners know they're likely to find accessible and curated material that they can use in their educational setting. The undertaking of an audit and/or the establishment of a portal is one of the next steps that could be taken in the context of promoting Traveller culture and history in the curriculum. This might also assist in identifying where new support material and resources may need to be developed, a task in which the Traveller community will need to be directly involved.

Examples of current good practice from schools, education settings and other educational institutions are an essential source of ideas and support material. These can demonstrate in real terms what effective learning and teaching about Traveller culture and history can look like and how it can be managed in real settings and real time. This can validate and make visible the meaningful presence of aspects of Traveller culture and history in the formal and informal curriculum. The audit reported on here took place over a short time period with very limited time to explore current practice in schools and other settings. An important next step would be to investigate practice in schools and other educational settings much more extensively and gather a range of examples of good practice so that they can be made available through the kind of portal mentioned earlier.

9. Next Steps

The audit will be published online and disseminated to all interested parties towards the end of 2019. Then in response to the preceding section of the audit, the following areas of enquiry provide potential routes for the Council going forward. The suggestions are interconnected, complementary of each other and provide a cohesive approach to further advancing the teaching and learning of aspects of Traveller culture and history in the wider context of intercultural and inclusive education goals.

Identifying existing initiatives and supports

Across the three education sectors (early childhood, primary and post-primary), there are national and local voluntary initiatives positively impacting on and supporting minority ethnic groups including the Traveller community to access and engage with education. This extends to educational institutions who are conducting anthropological research and documentation of Traveller culture and history and the Traveller community itself where there is an oral repository of information. By linking in with organisations and individuals involved in delivering these projects and research, the NCCA will firstly identify the various supports and initiatives and then explore how they can be further enhanced, supported and possibly replicated. One example is the Yellow Flag Programme that aims to support schools to become more inclusive of all cultures and ethnicities, celebrate diversity and challenge racism and discrimination. It would be beneficial if the Yellow Flag Programme was extended to include Early Childhood Settings.

Identifying existing resources and materials

The NCCA can identify suitable resources and materials which enable intercultural education and understanding to permeate across the curriculum in settings and schools. This search will also encompass suitable and age-appropriate materials to support learning about Traveller history and culture. When identified the resources can be made available as a suite to a wider audience of teachers, early childhood practitioners, parents and school leaders. This gathering of existing materials will assist in identifying the kinds of new support material and resources that need developing.

Working directly with early childhood settings and schools

Beginning in 2020, the NCCA intends to work with a number of early childhood settings and schools which cater for children and students from diverse linguistic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This will provide opportunities to identify good practice underpinned by principles of inclusion, the Intercultural Education Guidelines (NCCA), and learning about Traveller history and culture. The settings and schools will be invited to share their stories of integrating a diverse cohort of learners from different ethnic groups including those from the Traveller community. The key themes which emerge through this engagement will provide a greater understanding of the enhanced learning experiences, opportunities and outcomes of all learners in these settings / schools.

A central component of this work will be planned opportunities to listen to and hear directly from children and students about their experiences of learning about their own culture and history as well as those of others. This will include an exploration of both the positive and negative impact of role models and stereotypes on children's and students' learning and development and how appropriate action can promote a conceptualisation of positive role models. Children and students will be invited to share their thoughts and ideas in an age appropriate way. In this way, we can learn about their challenges and opportunities experienced through the education system and better understand the gap between policy and practice. This will also involve engaging with parents to hear about the processes of involvement in their children's learning. It will be an opportunity to explore how parents view and understand their involvement and the links that exist between the setting / school and home environment.

This school / setting-based work could lead to NCCA working with the settings / schools to develop a small number of additional support materials that illustrate practical ways to develop and enhance children's sense of identity and belonging while promoting inclusion and understanding of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. In addition to this and more generally, this targeted approach with settings and schools will directly inform and support the NCCA's check-in with *Aistear*, the review of the primary curriculum and the review of senior cycle.

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Note: The Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate curriculum specification and syllabus documents examined in the course of this audit may be consulted by visiting www.curriculumonline.ie and following the relevant links.

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