

NCCA



An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

Bunscoil
Primary



Leading Out Seminar Series

Seminar 1

10:00	Registration and networking opportunity
10:30	Welcome and Outline of the Leading Out Seminar Series Prof. Mary O'Sullivan, Chairperson, NCCA
10:45	Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment Arlene Forster, Deputy CEO, NCCA
11:15	Facilitated table discussion
12:00	System Conditions and Enablers John Hammond, CEO, NCCA
12:15	Facilitated table discussion
12:45	Plans for Future Engagement Patrick Sullivan, Director of Curriculum and Assessment (primary)
13:00	Close



Welcome and Outline of the Leading Out Seminar Series

Prof. Mary O'Sullivan



Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment

Arlene Forster, Deputy CEO

Curriculum birthday



Primary School Curriculum
Introduction



Curaclam na Bunscoile
Réamhrá



Changes aiming to light learning fire

Irish Independent, 10/09/1999

Radical overhaul announced for primary curriculum

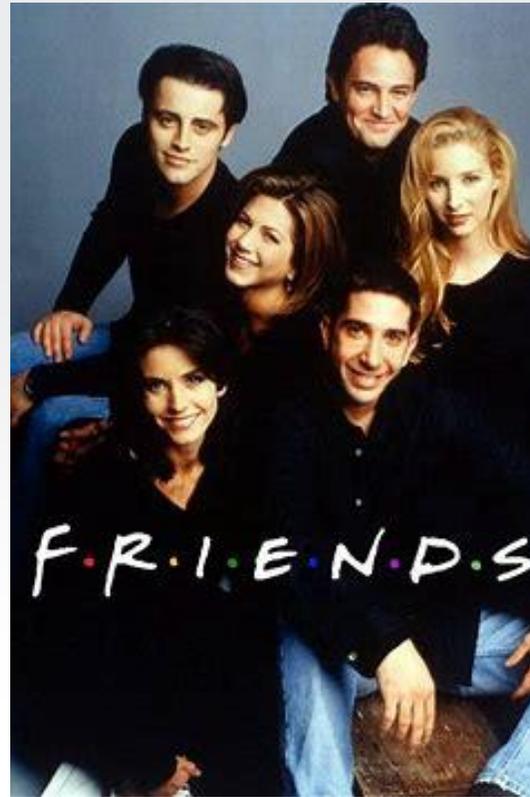
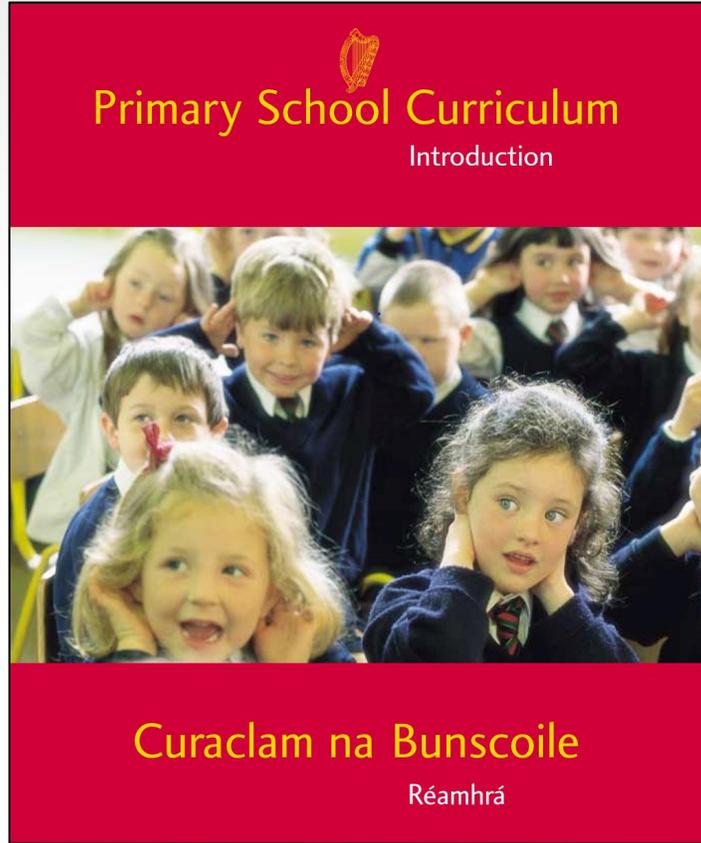
Irish Times, 10/09/1999

Motivation is driving force behind innovation: Martin

Irish Examiner, 10/09/1999

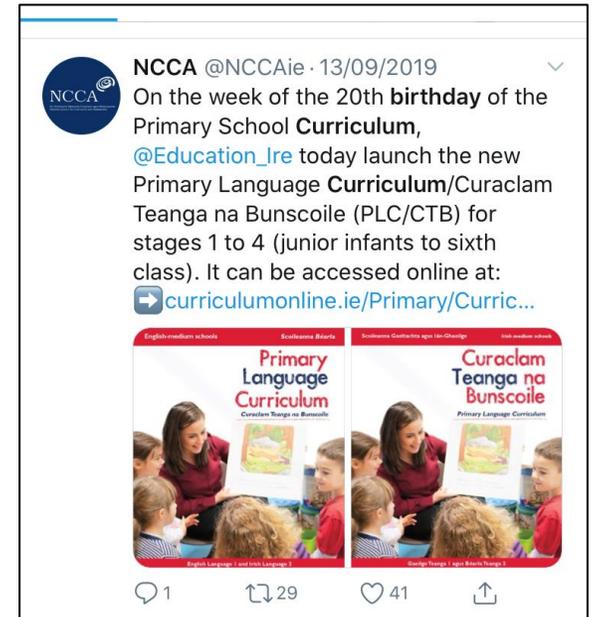
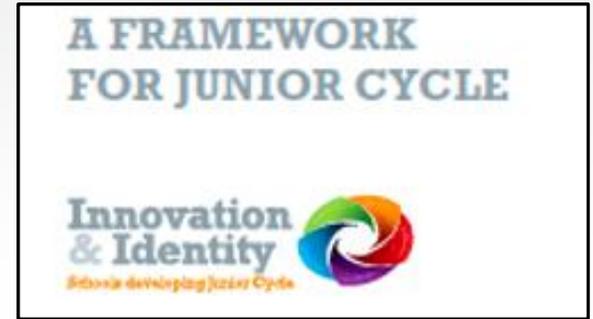
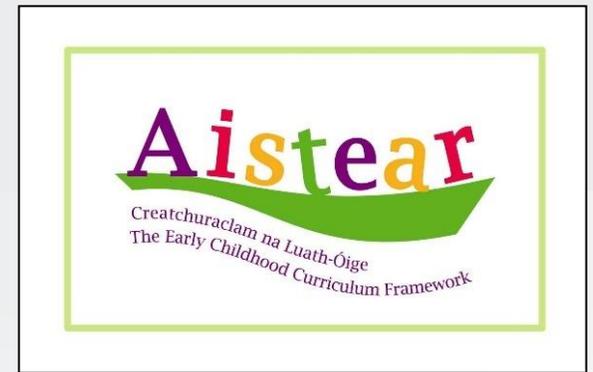
1999

Reeling in the Years



Two decades later

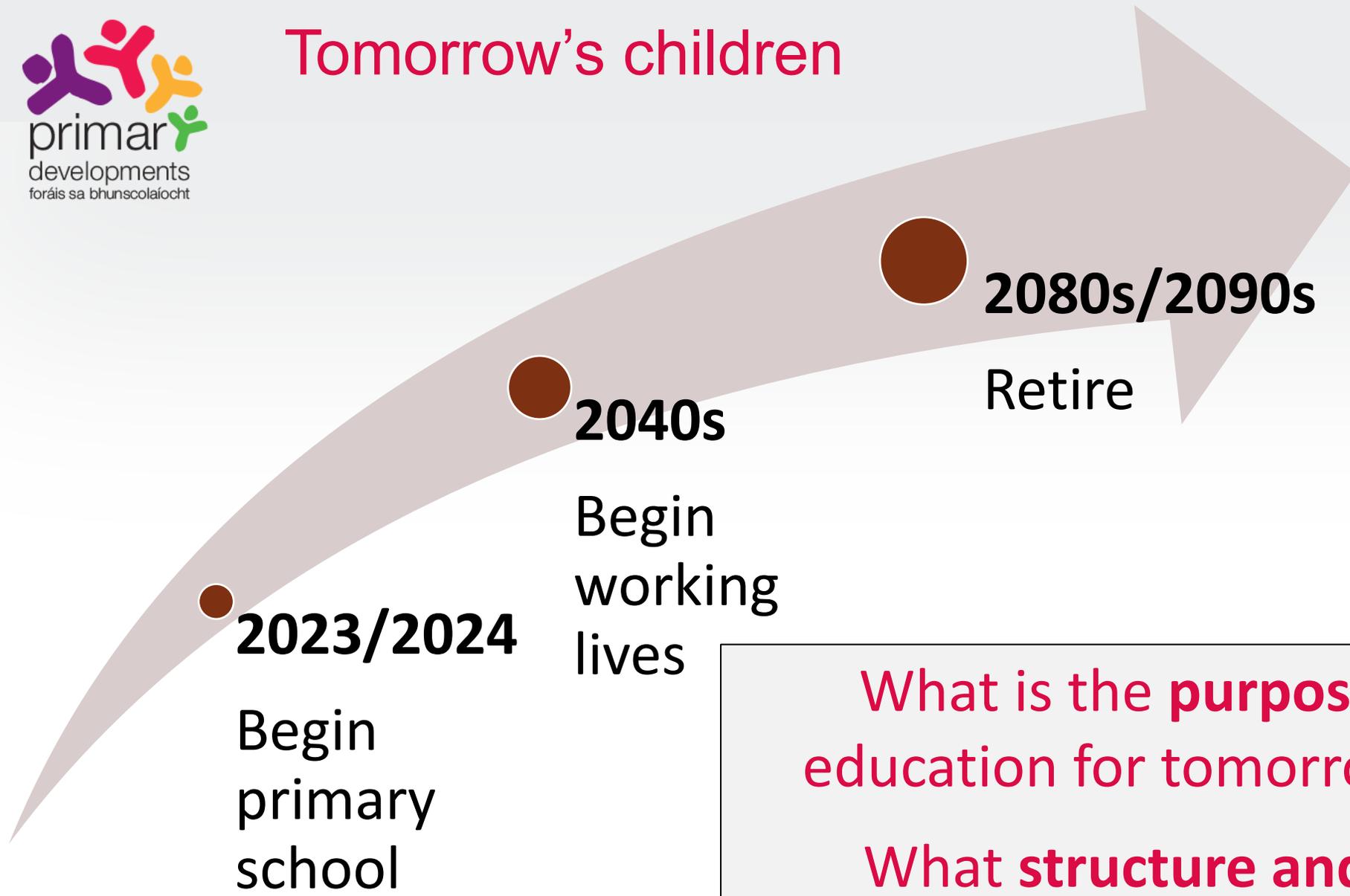
- 1999 curriculum is ‘of its time’
- Curriculum reviews and evaluations
- Work with schools
- Research
- Changing expectations
- Developments in the EC and JC sectors
- *Primary Language Curriculum /
Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile (2019)*



Successes alongside challenges

- Children's enjoyment of learning
 - Increased emphasis on active learning
 - Improved attainment in areas such as literacy, numeracy and science
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- Curriculum overload; paperwork
 - Supporting every child to make progress in their learning
 - Responding to and taking account of a changing society

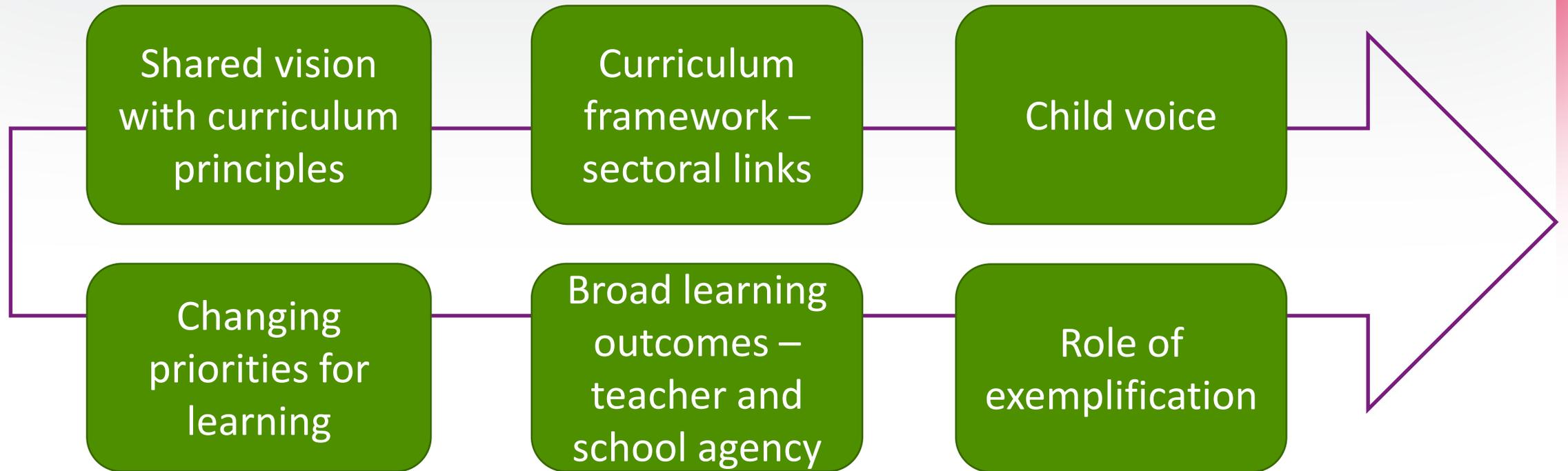
Tomorrow's children



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

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

Defining features of curriculum development



Review process

Three strands

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



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

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

Images removed

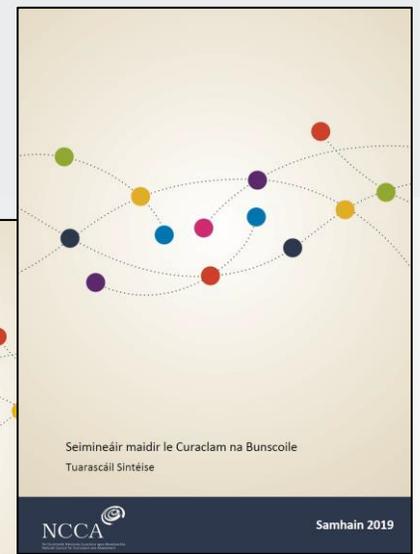
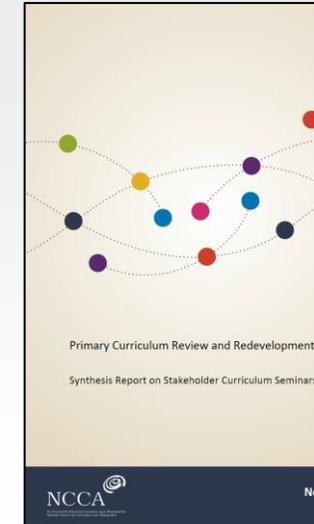
Stakeholder engagement through curriculum seminars

- Education partners and wider stakeholders meeting and working together
- Organisational perspectives and experiences to discussions on key ideas for the redeveloped curriculum
- Focus not on curriculum details; on exploring possibilities and broad directions for change

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Seven key themes

- Moral purpose
- Teacher agency
- The learning context / environment
- Consultation during the developmental and implementation phases
- Curriculum alignment
- A playful pedagogy
- Joined-up thinking



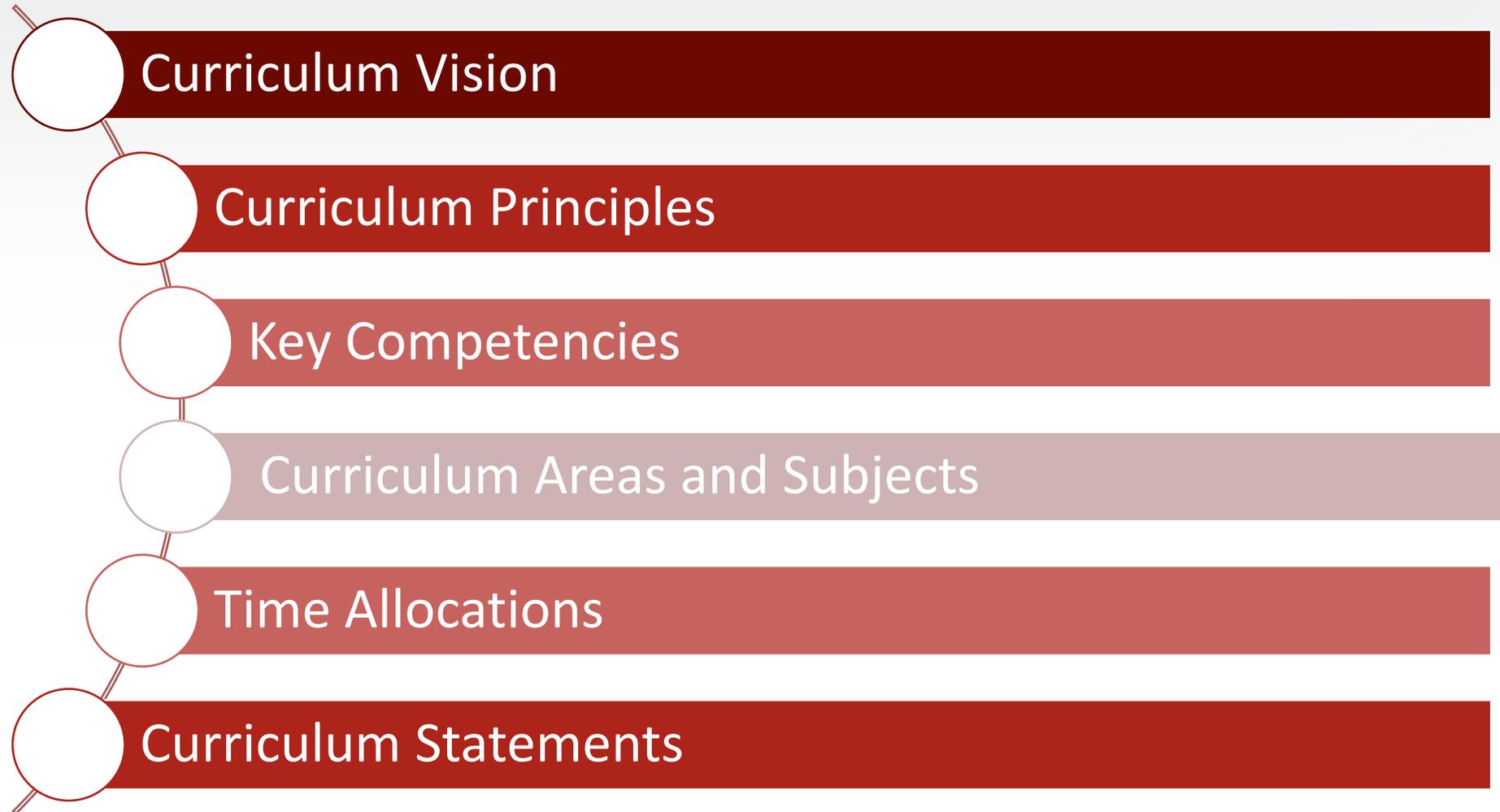
Tuarscáil Sintéise / *Synthesis Report*





Proposals for curriculum change

Overview of *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework*



Curriculum vision

- Supporting each child to grow, learn and flourish; unique, capable and caring individuals
- Teachers as committed, skilful and agentic professionals
- High quality teaching and learning that is inclusive and evidence-based

Principles to guide teaching and learning

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Curriculum principles

Engagement

Partnerships

Relationships

Pedagogy

**Inclusive
education and
diversity**

**Learning
environments**

Assessment

**Continuity and
progression**

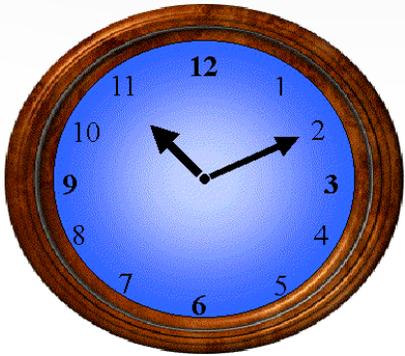
Priorities and structure

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



Time allocations

- Revisiting time allocations in light of calls for **more time for some areas** and requests for **new areas of learning**
- Providing **greater flexibility** with **time** allocations
 - Continuing with weekly allocations for language and maths, and considering this for the area of wellbeing
 - Moving to allocations over longer periods for other areas
 - Reinstating ‘discretionary time’ – with guidance – each school decides in response to its own priorities
- **Time taken from most** aspects of the curriculum



Learning, teaching and assessment

- Supporting **inclusive practices** that enable children to belong, feel respected, confident and safe so they can engage in meaningful learning
- Promoting **pedagogy** that **responds** to children's interests, needs and local circumstances
- Promoting more **play-based, inquiry-based and active** learning and teaching with a focus on the **outdoors**
- Providing more practical supports for **curriculum integration**
- Re-conceptualising **assessment** as a central part of teachers' work and valuing their professional judgements



Redeveloping the Primary Curriculum

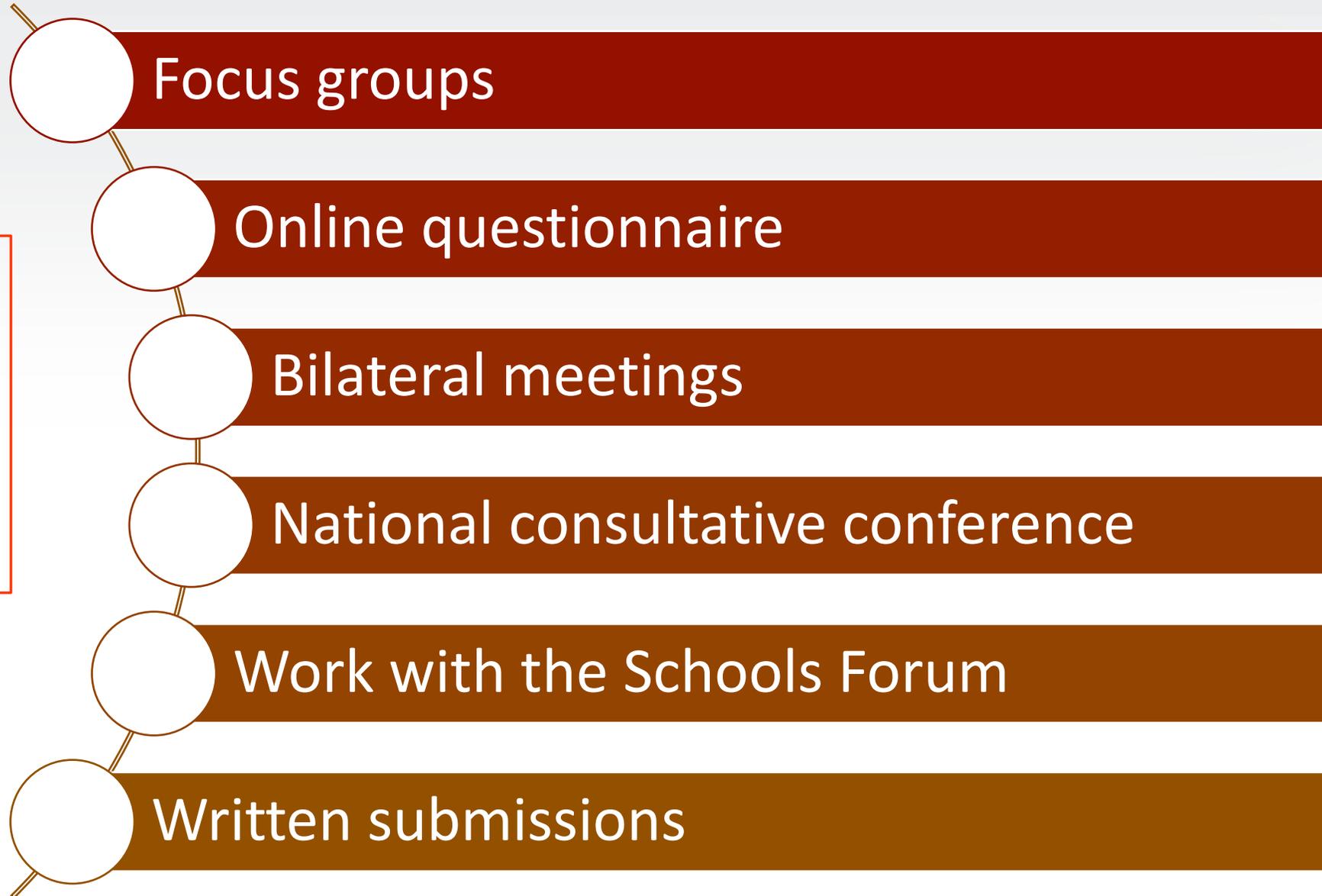
- Building on the **successes and strengths** of **1999**
- Updated **curriculum vision** – images of teachers and children
- Increased **agency** and **flexibility** for schools
- Strengthening **connections** across the education sectors
- Changing how the curriculum is **structured and presented**
- Clarifying **priorities** for children's learning
- Supporting a variety of **pedagogical approaches and strategies** with **assessment** central to teaching and learning



KEY MESSAGES

Consultation: January – June 2020

Finalise the
*Primary
Curriculum
Framework*
in Q4, 2020



Stakeholder engagement throughout PCRR

- Encouraging colleagues / members to participate in the consultation
- *Leading Out* seminar series – stakeholders actively identifying and advancing key enablers for curriculum change



The Draft Framework will set out the purpose, structure and content of the redeveloped curriculum AHEAD of curriculum specifications. This presents a key opportunity to build capacity and to develop ‘readiness’ to enact the next curriculum.

Think/pair/share.....

From what you've listened to, what for you and your organisation is the most significant key message and why?

What opportunities do you foresee in supporting this key message to become a reality?

Redeveloping the Primary Curriculum

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KEY MESSAGES



System Conditions and Enablers

John Hammond, CEO

NCCA and curriculum development

- ‘Schools change reforms as much as reforms change schools’ Cuban (1998)
- The curriculum as a resource and a basis for building understanding of the change involved
- The teacher and the school as key agent and stakeholder in *mediating* and *enacting* the resource
- The teacher as the key *change agent* and *curriculum developer*

Developing features of NCCA curriculum development work

- Establishing an evidence base
- Clarifying vision and purposes
- Pursuing continuity and progression across sectors
- Using curriculum frameworks
- Clarity around learning – use of learning outcomes
- Supporting practice through exemplification
- Moving towards more cyclical, systemic review



Conditions conducive to curriculum development

Shared vision
and purpose

Research, data
and information

Stakeholder
engagement and
communication

Timing and
pacing

Securing
Resources

Feasibility and
Capacity building

Recognising
teacher and
school agency

Model of CPD

Cyclical, systemic
review

Conditions conducive to supporting change

Research,
data and
information

- Our Children's Lives – Primary Longitudinal Study
- Research papers
- Evidence base for thinking and decision taking

Conditions conducive to supporting change

Stakeholder
engagement
and
communication

- More than involvement
- Mutual trust
- Clear and frequent communication
- Public dialogue

Conditions conducive to supporting change

Securing Resources

- Time and pacing
- Complementary policy alignment

Conditions conducive to supporting change

Feasibility
and
Capacity-
building

- Existing knowledge/skills
- Multiple levels – ITE to classroom materials

Conditions conducive to supporting change

Model of CPD

- Continual
- Well-resourced
- School and network-based
- Specific and capacity-building
- Aligned
- Mutual adaptation/local enactment

Conditions conducive to supporting change

Teacher
and
school
agency

- Real devolution
- Real uptake
- Endorsement and support

Centrality of stakeholder engagement

...engaging stakeholders is important...because it facilitates ownership of the vision and trust in the process, which are key for design, implementation and eventually for sustainability of any policy...in the medium and long terms. Stakeholder engagement is, in this sense, a self-reinforcing exercise, as education professionals who see their role valued in the policy process are more likely to make further contributions. Stakeholder engagement can also help adjust the policy design to make it more realistic to schools' needs by building on stakeholders' knowledge, experience and practical contributions.

Discussion/activity

From your perspective what 3 conditions are significant at system level?

Thinking about the short term (next 1-2 years) what are the most immediate conditions that are critical to support curriculum change?



Plans for Future Engagement

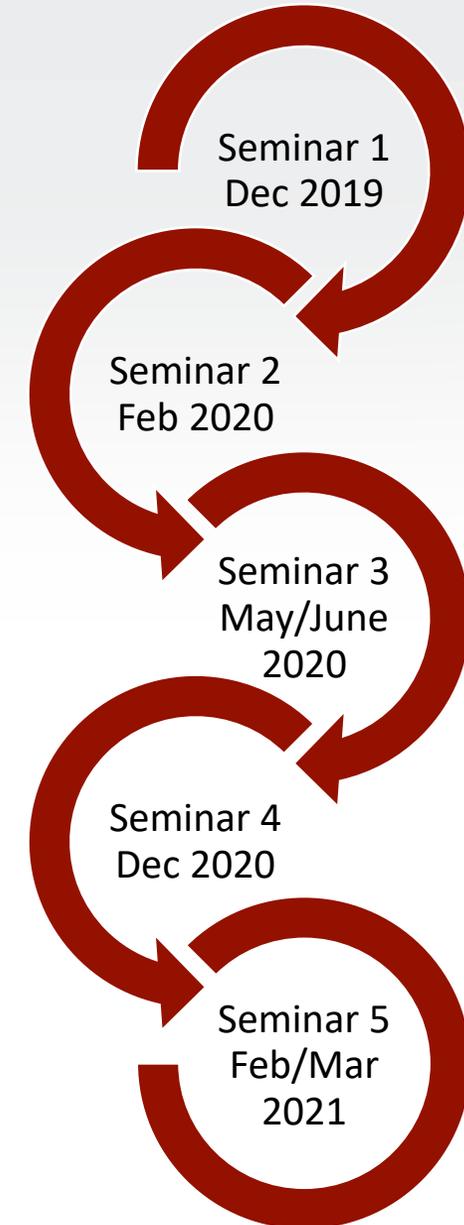
Patrick Sullivan, Director

Seminar series

Sustained engagement

Participant led

Evolving





Thank You!

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