



NCCA

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

Report on the consultation on the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications

December 2024

Contents

List of Tables	6
List of Figures	6
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION	9
SECTION 2: METHODOLOGY	11
2.1 Feedback Gathering	11
2.2 Analysis	12
2.3 Reporting	12
SECTION 3: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....	13
Findings on the Key Messages of the Primary School Curriculum Review and Redevelopment (PCRR).....	13
3.1 Introduction.....	13
3.1.1 The draft specifications build on the current Primary School Curriculum (1999) while responding to emerging priorities	13
3.1.2 Agency and Flexibility.....	14
3.1.3 Transitions and connections between preschool, primary, and post-primary curriculum and supporting progression through primary school.....	16
3.1.4 Learning, Teaching and Assessment	17
Findings on the Five Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications	20
3.2 Introduction.....	20
3.2.1 Arts Education.....	20
3.2.2 Primary Language Curriculum – including Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)	23
3.2.3 Social and Environmental Education (SEE)	27
3.2.4 Science, Technology and Engineering Education (STE)	31
3.2.5 Wellbeing	34
Findings: Questionnaires.....	38
3.3 Introduction.....	38
3.3.1 Educator Questionnaire	39
3.3.2 Parent/Guardian Questionnaire	81
SECTION 4: SUBMISSIONS: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	95
4.1 Overarching themes across the written submissions	95
4.1.1 Learning Outcomes: Benefits and challenges.....	95
4.1.2 Spirituality, patron’s programme, ethos, religion, beliefs.....	96
4.1.3 Enactment, implementation and supports.....	96
4.1.4 The inclusivity of the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications	96
4.1.5 Presentation of curriculum specifications	97
4.1.6 Ireland, Europe and the Global Dimension.....	97

4.1.7 Politics and being an active/global citizen.....	97
4.2 Feedback specific to particular curriculum areas and subjects	98
4.2.1 Arts Education.....	98
4.2.2 Primary Language Curriculum - including Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)	98
4.2.3 Social and Environmental Education (SEE)	99
4.2.4 Science, Technology and Engineering Education (STE)	99
4.2.5 Wellbeing	100
SECTION 5: CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	101
5.1 Introduction.....	101
5.2 Methodology.....	101
5.3 Sample.....	102
5.4.1 Findings.....	102
5.4.2 Findings from the second phase of the research: Case Studies on the five curriculum areas	103
SECTION 6: CONCLUSION.....	105
6.1 Introduction.....	105
6.2.1 Building on the strengths of the 1999 Curriculum	105
6.2.2 Agency	106
6.2.3 Learning Outcomes	106
6.2.4 Pedagogical approaches and assessment	106
6.2.5 Curriculum implementation and enactment.....	107
6.3.1 Arts Education.....	107
6.3.2 Primary Language Curriculum – including Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)	107
6.3.3 Social and Environmental Education	107
6.3.4 Science, Technology and Engineering Education.....	108
6.3.5 Wellbeing	108
6.4 The next steps in finalising the curriculum specifications	108
REFERENCES.....	110
APPENDIX A: COMMUNICATIONS.....	113
APPENDIX B: FEEDBACK ON SUPPORTS FOR CURRICULUM ENACTMENT	114
APPENDIX C: METHODOLOGY DETAILS.....	119
APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULES	126
APPENDIX E: CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE SCHEDULES	136
APPENDIX F: BILATERAL MEETINGS SCHEDULE	141

APPENDIX G: QUESTIONNAIRE TEMPLATES 143

APPENDIX H: WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS TEMPLATE..... 164



List of Tables

Table 1: Overview of feedback gathering	11
---	----

List of Figures

Figure 1: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, statement 1	40
Figure 2: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, statement 2.....	41
Figure 3: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, statement 3.....	42
Figure 4: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, statement 4.....	43
Figure 5: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, statement 5.....	44
Figure 6: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, statement 6.....	45
Figure 7: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, highest priority rankings	46
Figure 8: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement 1.....	47
Figure 9: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement 2.....	48
Figure 10: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement	49
Figure 11: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement 4	50
Figure 12: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement 5	51
Figure 13: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement 6	52
Figure 14: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement 7	53
Figure 15: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Language, highest priority rankings	54
Figure 16: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 1	55
Figure 17: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 2	56
Figure 18: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 3	57
Figure 19: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 4	58
Figure 20: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 5	58

Figure 21: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 6	59
Figure 22: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 7	60
Figure 23: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, highest priority rankings	61
Figure 24: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 1	62
Figure 25: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 2	62
Figure 26: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 3	63
Figure 27: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 4	64
Figure 28: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 5	64
Figure 29: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 6	65
Figure 30: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 7	64
Figure 31: Educator questionnaire, Science Technology and Engineering, highest priority rankings	67
Figure 32: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 1	68
Figure 33: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 2	69
Figure 34: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 3	70
Figure 35: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 4	71
Figure 36: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 5	71
Figure 37: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 6	72
Figure 38: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 7	73
Figure 39: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, highest priority rankings	74

Figure 40: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 1	75
Figure 41: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 2	76
Figure 42: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 3	77
Figure 43: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 4	77
Figure 44: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 5	78
Figure 45: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 6	79
Figure 46: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 7	80
Figure 47: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 8	81
Figure 48: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 1.....	82
Figure 49: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 2.....	83
Figure 50: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 3.....	84
Figure 51: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 4.....	85
Figure 52: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 5.....	86
Figure 53: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 6.....	87
Figure 54: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 7.....	88
Figure 55: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 8.....	88
Figure 56: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, Arts Education, statements 1-4	89
Figure 57: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, Modern Foreign Language, statements 1-2.....	90
Figure 58: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statements 1-2	91
Figure 59: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, Science Technology and Engineering Education, statements 1-3	92
Figure 60: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, Wellbeing, statements 1-5.....	93

Section 1: Introduction

Following an extensive development and consultation process, the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (PCF) (Government of Ireland) was published in March 2023. Arising from the PCF, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) developed draft curriculum specifications in:

- Arts Education;
- Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) in the Primary Language Curriculum;
- Social and Environmental Education (SEE);
- Science, Technology and Engineering Education (STE);
- Wellbeing.

This curriculum development work was informed by extensive research, significant interaction with school, findings from previous relevant consultations, and close engagement with NCCA's representative structures.

The draft curriculum specifications were published for consultation in March 2024, and the consultation continued until the end of June 2024. The purpose of the consultation was to ensure that anyone who wished to express their views on the draft specifications could do so, and this was achieved through a range of methods which are outlined in the Methodology section. A significant communications process was undertaken to publicise each feedback opportunity (for details, please see Appendix A). Specific efforts were undertaken to ensure the consultation involved a diverse range of participants and perspectives. NCCA received support from a range of organisations and agencies to organise focus groups for parents and carers who may experience barriers to participation.

A significant amount of feedback was gathered during the consultation, all of which has been analysed and the findings are presented in this report. Overall, there was a general welcome for the draft curriculum specifications, with a sense of excitement and positivity about the redevelopment and modernisation of the curriculum. The emphasis on teacher agency, flexibility, child agency, and viewing the child as an active participant was particularly appreciated. However, alongside this general positivity, concerns and reservations were raised regarding both the draft curriculum specifications and systemic issues related to curriculum changes. Challenges around implementation and enactment, particularly with respect to timing of introducing change and the pace at which it is expected to be enacted, as well as resourcing, were acknowledged. There were many suggestions regarding how the redeveloped curriculum could be implemented and enacted. While the main body of this report focuses on the feedback received on the draft specifications, Appendix B summarises the considerable range of responses on supports required for effective implementation.

A broad range of participants contributed to the consultation, and the range of views expressed is correspondingly wide. As with other curriculum consultations, some participants took the opportunity to express their views on issues unrelated to the content of the draft curriculum specifications. In addition, some feedback was focused on approaches and learning that are not in the draft specifications. This was particularly evident in the submissions and questionnaires, where inaccuracies about the content in the draft specifications were more evident in the

feedback provided. However, the vast majority of participants clearly were familiar with the specifications and a continua of views are represented in the feedback received.

This report is structured around two sets of feedback which are described in the Methodology in the next section and in Appendix C. This is followed by the Presentation of Findings in Section 3. The quantitative feedback from the questionnaires is then presented, also in Section 3. Section 4 provides an executive summary of the submissions received while Section 5 provides an executive summary of the consultation with children. The concluding section, Section 6, provides a synopsis of the findings from the consultation.

There are three published documents alongside this report, including:

- A technical report detailing the original verbatim questionnaire responses
- The report on the *Consultation with Children on the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications*
- The written submissions for which consent to publish was received.

Section 2: Methodology

Feedback was gathered across two significant and separate themes:

1. The degree to which the five draft specifications are consistent with the key messages associated with Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment (PCRR) and the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (See Appendix H for the Key Messages)
2. The contents of each of the five draft specifications.

The consultation was successful in gathering large amounts of feedback which will be of benefit to the finalisation of the specifications. An overview of the feedback gathering and analysis is provided below, with full details of the consultation methodology being found in Appendix H.

2.1 Feedback Gathering

A range of methods, all predicated on participants (other than children) having read the draft specifications, were used to gather feedback (see Table 1). Most of the feedback was gathered through discussions with teachers, school leaders, parents, education professionals and stakeholder bodies, some of which took place as Gaeilge. Feedback was also gathered through online questionnaires which were available as Gaeilge.

Table 1: Overview of feedback gathering

Consultation with children	Carried out on behalf of NCCA by a team from Marino Institute of Education. The Executive Summary can be found in Section 5. The full report can be found at: https://ncca.ie/media/2dyboryp/consultation_with_children_report.pdf
Bilateral meetings	11 bilateral meetings were held with stakeholder organisations (Please see Appendix F for the bilateral question schedule.)
In-person focus groups	Seven events were held for teachers and school leaders in Education Centres around the country. In total, 100 participants attended. Six additional focus groups were held with parents from diverse backgrounds. (Please see Appendix D for the in-person focus group question schedule and Appendix C for the list of organisations that supported focus groups with parents)
Online focus groups	Five online focus groups for teachers and school leaders were held, each focused on a single Curriculum Area. Two additional online focus groups were held, one for parents / guardians and one for migrant teachers. (Please see Appendix E for the online focus group question schedules.)
Consultative conference	Approximately 200 participants attended the Consultative Conference in Croke Park. (Please see Appendix E for the question schedules)

Schools Networks	Each draft Curriculum Area specification was considered by a number of schools that had responded to a public invitation in January 2024 from NCCA to be involved in the consultation. (Please see Appendix C for details.)
Questionnaires	Two questionnaires were provided through the Microsoft Forms platform: one for teachers, school leaders and other education professionals; and another for parents / guardians. (Please see Appendix G for the questionnaire texts.)
Submissions	An open call was circulated by NCCA for stakeholders and other interested parties to respond with their views to the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications. (Please see Section 4 for an executive summary of the written submissions.)

NCCA staff facilitated the bilateral meetings, focus groups (in-person and online), schools networks engagement and the discussion groups at the Consultative Conference, and NCCA notetakers recorded the discussions. Over the course of the initial round of focus groups and the consultative conference, NCCA facilitators noted the relative lack of diversity of representation of parents and teachers. To address this, NCCA worked with a number of representative groups (see Appendix G) to arrange focus groups with parents from a wide range of backgrounds and with a group of migrant teachers. While the feedback from all parents throughout all focus groups consistently raised similar issues and range of responses, those points that were raised by specific groups of parents are noted in the text. This is also the case with the feedback from migrant teachers.

2.2 Analysis

Feedback gathered through the bilateral meetings, focus groups (in-person and online), schools networks and consultative conference discussion groups was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) phased thematic analysis (see Appendix G).

The questionnaire responses were downloaded verbatim and converted to charts using the Microsoft Forms software. The written feedback from the questionnaire responses was included in the qualitative analysis for the specific curriculum area. Please see the Technical Report for verbatim questionnaire responses, including written text.

Submissions were reviewed and organised by an independent analyst. Where duplication had occurred (e.g. the same submission coming through both MS Forms and email), a single copy was retained.

2.3 Reporting

Following analysis, summaries of the findings were written and are included in full in Section 3 Presentation of Findings.

Section 3: Presentation of Findings

Findings on the Key Messages of the Primary School Curriculum Review and Redevelopment (PCRR)

3.1 Introduction

The following sections outline the main themes which emerged from the qualitative feedback that was recorded during the focus groups, Consultative Conference, Schools Networks meetings and bilateral meetings; along with the qualitative responses to the online professional and parent questionnaires; regarding the five Key Messages of the Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment (PCRR) (see Appendix C for the Key Messages). The findings are categorised under the Key Messages below. Key Messages four and five are discussed together in the section below on Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

3.1.1 The draft specifications build on the current Primary School Curriculum (1999) while responding to emerging priorities

Participants in the consultation events expressed predominantly positive views on how the draft curriculum specifications build on the strengths of the 1999 Curriculum. They frequently expressed respect and affection for the 25-year-old curriculum, yet favoured change. Many identified key features of that curriculum in the current specifications, such as its child-centred focus, promotion of active learning methodologies, and integrated learning, and they welcomed that continuity. There was praise for the ‘familiar language and terminology’ of the draft specifications. In the opinion of one participant, the specifications ‘indicated no alarming departures from approaches of the 1999 Curriculum’. A view was expressed that the redeveloped curriculum ‘captures the best [of 1999] and moves on’.

That concept of ‘moving on’ found expression in a number of responses across the consultation. Chief among those was the view that the specifications ‘reflected modern society’, particularly the many societal changes over the past 25 years. ‘Aitheantas tugtha do na hathruithe atá ann ó 1999’ [*the changes since 1999 are acknowledged*], in the view of another participant. Changes frequently referenced included diverse family structures and ethnicity, technological innovations, inclusion, multilingualism and environmental concerns such as sustainability. One participant described the redeveloped curriculum as ‘an adjustment to the reality of Ireland’. Some participants considered that current practice was in fact already taking account of such concerns and in the words of one, had ‘gone beyond the reach of 1999 Curriculum’. Others voiced concerns around particular changes in learning areas such as Arts and Languages. A few advised caution about possibly diminishing Irish cultural values as change was embraced.

There was welcome for the redeveloped curriculum’s structure, responses variously noting its ‘clarity’ and ‘brevity’. The Key Competencies received significant affirmation, in particular, Being an Active Citizen, Being Well and Being a Digital Learner, which were seen as ‘promoting holistic development’ of children. There was approval for the redeveloped structure and draft specifications which, it was felt, ‘identify and respond to emerging priorities for children’s learning’. Priorities referenced here included digital learning, outdoor learning, local environment, Modern Foreign Languages, Education for Sustainable Development, and Science, Technology

and Engineering Education. Some participants expressed concerns around a perceived 'over-emphasis on technology'. Some concern was heard too that the draft specifications 'don't sufficiently reflect the diverse needs of all children', referring particularly to children with Special Educational Needs. In the context of special education, mixed views were heard regarding the role of the Additional Support Pathways (Chapter 5) and whether further supports would be required for children with Special Educational Needs.

Concerns about perceived overload in the curriculum were voiced by a number of participants who considered that workload is being increased not only by 'new' areas such as Modern Foreign Languages and Engineering, but also by external events and initiatives such as the Green-Schools Flag Programme. 'Imní go bhfuil an iomarca scileanna le múineadh' [*concern that an excessive number of skills have to be taught*] was a related concern. Other views saw the redeveloped structure and specifications as attempting to tackle the overload issue, particularly where the broader Learning Outcomes could facilitate more integrated learning, while 'exemplification in the Toolkit' was also proposed as a useful way to lessen overload.

The broad range of pedagogical approaches suggested in the specifications such as collaborative learning, design thinking and giving children greater agency were welcomed. Some affirming comments were qualified by concerns about implementation and ensuring a balance in pedagogies, such as blending direct teaching with active learning and playful approaches. While there was a generally warm welcome for the foregrounding of play, some participants doubted that playful approaches were appropriate for children in senior classes at Stage 4 (5th and 6th Classes). Indeed, comments indicated participants' varied understandings of play-based approaches and indeed of play itself.

In comments about assessment, participants acknowledged that thinking around assessment had been changing in recent years, and that the draft specifications reflected this. Children engaging in self and peer-assessment met with general approval as did the continuum of assessment. However, there was anxiety too that standardised tests could limit teachers' agency in assessing children's learning.

3.1.2 Agency and Flexibility

The concept of agency met with a largely positive response. While a certain amount of comment referred to children's agency, participants were predominantly concerned with the classroom teacher as an agentic professional. Varied understandings of what agency actually means were evident in the range of participants' comments, with 'agency', 'autonomy', 'flexibility' and 'freedom' among terms used interchangeably. Agency was generally viewed as a term newly introduced to teachers, although some felt that the 1999 Curriculum had provided opportunities for teachers to be agentic, albeit implicitly. Some observed too that agency was evident in the everyday practice of integration, while others saw it in practices in their DEIS classrooms.

Notwithstanding the variety of ways in which agency was understood, its benefits were readily identified by participants, and many comments considered that the draft specifications empowered agency. The most frequently voiced view was that agency was at the core of teacher professionalism. In that view, a teacher's freedom to make judgements and decisions about the learning setting in which they worked was an essential element of their professional practice, with decisions involving planning, timetabling, pedagogies and assessment. Many comments referred

to the knowledge teachers have about the needs and interests of the children in their classroom, and their familiarity with the school setting and local area, seeing familiarity with these contextual factors as essential to exercising effective agency.

The freedom to respond to local events was noted, and frequently, it was stated that agency allows teachers to practise integration more flexibly, with adoption of less-rigid timetables. There was also approval of agentic practice that would allow teachers to bring more of their strengths and interests to their classrooms.

Across all of these identified benefits of agency, the redeveloped curriculum was seen as providing inter-related opportunities and support for the development of teachers' agentic practice. Some noted the Learning Outcomes in their broadly stated form as facilitating such practice. Many saw the emphasis on integration as supportive of agency, while the Key Competencies in turn were seen as enabling integration. Others viewed the flexibility in time allocations as valuable in the same regard, expressed by one as 'flexibility enables agency'. In addition, employing varied assessment approaches was viewed as an expression of agentic practice.

Qualifying the largely positive responses to developing teacher agency, a number of areas of concern also emerged. These may be understood as relating to teachers themselves, to classroom and schoolwide issues and to system-wide issues and influences external to the school.

Regarding teachers themselves, many participants saw the foregrounding of agency as a significant change for them, even suggesting that it would 'require a mind shift' on their part to see themselves as truly agentic professionals. Most comments were concerned with the confidence and self-belief required to make that change. Linked to those concerns was the issue of accountability, many responses suggesting that teachers might find the 'freedom' implied in agency to be a challenge if they were called on to defend and justify their practice choices.

That perceived tension between 'freedom' (termed 'autonomy' by many) and accountability pervaded much of the feedback from teachers, expressed by one as 'worrying and exciting in equal measure'. The role of the DE inspectorate was often raised as a consideration in supporting a greater sense of agency. Teachers, it was proposed, would require a high level of content knowledge and pedagogical competence. Consequently, it was unsurprising that there were many calls for support and guidance for teachers in developing skills of agency, from understanding the concept to implementing it in classrooms. One skill identified as necessary was the development of shared professional language that aligned with the redeveloped curriculum and that would facilitate dialogue between teachers and external agencies and, between teachers themselves.

Among other concerns for teachers was the question of planning, and here again, a tension was voiced in relation to a teacher's individual planning and the whole-school plan. Some worried that the whole-school plan, if required to be strictly implemented, could limit the teacher's classroom planning, thus diluting agency. It was suggested that 'contextualised whole-school planning would require a new approach'. How assessment approaches would be influenced by agentic practice – and *vice versa* – was also a subject of comments. The broader continuum of methods was welcomed but concerns were raised that standardised testing or traditional classroom testing could serve to limit agency – 'an baol go dtiteann múinteoirí siar ar scrúduithe a raibh taithí acu féin orthu' [*the risk that teachers may revert to using tests that they were familiar with*]. Constraints

on agency were also anticipated in the 'narrowing' influence of textbooks on classroom planning and pedagogy, while others saw a useful supportive role for textbooks.

Accountability again emerged as an issue in respect of children having fair and broad access to the curriculum. Some feared that a teacher could misuse agency, giving disproportionate time to favoured subjects. Being accountable to parents was also noted, with the suggestion that some parents might misunderstand or disagree with a teacher's agentic decisions, especially if comparing classes at the same level. The challenging role of principal as leader of a staff of agentic professionals was highlighted, with comments that the principal's own belief in agentic practice would be crucial in advocating its adoption by their staff.

A strongly expressed view from the consultations was that all stakeholders need to be supportive of developing teacher agency and should have a shared understanding of its implications for the work of teachers. Thus, while it was acknowledged that the particular nature of agency as enacted would vary from school to school, its fundamental features should be supported by school management, parents and the DE Inspectorate.

Participants made relatively few references to developing child agency. While comments were made approving children having agency in their learning, they were qualified by the view that children - rather like teachers - need to learn skills of being agentic while the teacher ensures balance in decision-making within the classroom. Comments here included 'Agency has to have parameters' and 'Children should have input, but teachers are the professionals'. It was suggested that the curriculum's Key Competencies supported children's agency. A key pedagogical practice in the Science, Technology and Engineering Education specifications - Design thinking - was also viewed as likely to promote children's agency. Children having a greater role in assessing their own work was viewed positively, and more generally, a participant said, 'The curriculum allows for children's voices to be included and heard a little louder than the previous curriculum'.

3.1.3 Transitions and connections between preschool, primary, and post-primary curriculum and supporting progression through primary school

Overall, participants perceived there to be a strong focus on transitions and connections within the draft curriculum specifications, with some noting that this emphasis is stronger than in the 1999 Primary School Curriculum. The emphasis on continuity of learning and on establishing connections between sectors (i.e. early years, primary, post-primary) was recognised as a key strength of the draft curriculum specifications. Participants acknowledged that the approach to learning and teaching in the draft specifications supports transitions and lessens the perceived gaps between sectors. In addition, an emphasis on child agency and choice from the early years to post-primary further supports continuity of learning.

The clear progression or 'flow' between stages / classes in the draft curriculum specifications was welcomed. Participants acknowledged the progression from an integrated approach at Stages 1 and 2 (Junior Infants - 2nd Class) to a more subject-specific approach in Stages 3 and 4 (3rd Class - 6th Class), noting that a playful approach to learning across the primary years would aid this transition. Indeed, there was significant support for the inclusion of playful pedagogies across the redeveloped curriculum. It was felt that a playful approach at all stages would promote a more integrated learning and teaching experience and support continuity of learning. However, several

participants called for a more focused approach to support continuity of learning between classes, which would also support transitions between junior and senior primary schools.

Clear alignment with *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* was noted as a strength of the draft specifications. It was felt that the specifications effectively expand on skill development from the early years, with participants acknowledging the direct links between the curricula. In addition, it was noted that the focus on play in the draft specifications aligns with and builds on the foundations of play in *Aistear*. Although the clear continuity between the early years and primary curriculum was welcomed, some participants called for clear messaging regarding the position of *Aistear* in the redeveloped curriculum. Furthermore, it was suggested that the curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and structure of the initial stages in primary schools should continue to build on the early years approach to support transition and promote continuity of learning.

There were mixed responses regarding the connections and continuity between the draft specifications and the post-primary curriculum. Some participants felt that the draft specifications effectively address the perceived gap between primary and post-primary curricula by supporting a deep dive into different curriculum areas (for example, in MFL in the Primary Language Curriculum and Science). A clear connection between an inquiry-based approach in the draft curriculum specifications and the Junior Cycle curriculum was also recognised and appreciated, with some participants noting that this will better prepare children for independent learning in post-primary education. Others, however, perceived there to be a disjoint between the pedagogical approaches in primary and post-primary, and queried whether the increased emphasis on playfulness at primary will ultimately heighten transition difficulties to post-primary. It was felt that any updates to the post-primary curriculum need to reflect the changes at primary-level to ensure alignment and support continuity of learning.

In offering guidance on how to support transitions, participants continuously cited the need to support collaboration and communication across the sectors. The need for more joined up thinking was emphasised, and participants felt that educators benefit from a more in-depth understanding and awareness of what happens across children's school lives. While some participants noted that *Mo Scéal* and the Education Passport support transitions, others felt they could be used more effectively and consistently. The need for greater communication between sectors and the establishment of stronger professional relationships was identified as essential in supporting transitions. Furthermore, the role of parents in supporting the transition process was emphasised, with a need for greater communication with parents/guardians regarding curriculum change and transitions being identified.

3.1.4 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The approach to learning, teaching and assessment in the draft curriculum specifications was met with approval. Participants were generally complimentary of the layout of the specifications, commending the use of bullet points, diagrams and linkage vocabulary words in improving clarity. The use of a visual continuum for assessment was also cited as being helpful. Some participants felt, however, that the language of the specifications needs to be streamlined and simplified to ensure uniformity across curricula documents.

The Learning Outcomes in the draft curriculum specifications were, on balance, well received, and participants felt that they effectively addressed progression across the eight years of primary

school. Participants felt that the Learning Outcomes were inclusive and were 'pitched well'. While the broadness of the Learning Outcomes was noted as a positive by many, some worried that this broadness would make it difficult to 'tie things down' in relation to learning. Additionally, others cautioned that the shift to Learning Outcomes in the redeveloped curriculum, as opposed to content objectives, may mean that teachers will be unclear about the content that needs to be taught and whether they are 'doing the right thing'. Several participants queried whether the Learning Outcomes were accessible for children with Special Educational Needs. It was suggested that the Additional Support Pathways should be clearly linked to the Learning Outcomes to facilitate teachers in supporting all children. Furthermore, the inclusion of a progression continuum in each curriculum area was recommended to support the adoption of the curriculum specifications in special education contexts.

The Key Competencies were perceived as a central feature of the specifications, and participants noted that they were visible in the Learning Outcomes. Participants felt that the Key Competencies were considerate of the emerging priorities for children's learning and reflect the skills, attitudes and values which children require to navigate modern society. In addition, the value of the Key Competencies was recognised in the development of children's learning and as part of life-long learning. The inclusion of the initials of the Key Competencies under the Learning Outcomes was praised, as participants believed it brought the competencies to the forefront, while providing clarity and support for teachers in their planning and preparation. Others, however, felt that the inclusion of the Key Competencies under the Learning Outcomes could potentially impact teacher agency.

The broad range of pedagogical approaches outlined in the draft curriculum specifications were praised. There was widespread approval for the inclusion of playful pedagogies and inquiry-based learning across the curriculum, in helping children to learn naturally and in supporting teachers to facilitate transitions. Participants responded positively to the perceived move away from textbook learning and acknowledged the clear child-centred focus of the specifications. While the comments regarding pedagogy were generally positive, some participants questioned where explicit teaching fits in the curriculum, asserting that this method deserves inclusion among the proposed pedagogical approaches. In addition, there was some concern over the interpretation and implementation of playful approaches, with many participants requesting further clarity on what playful pedagogies would look like in the senior classes.

The focus on assessment throughout the curriculum, along with the scope of assessment methods provided, was welcomed and participants perceived the approach to assessment to be aligned with guidance from the *Preparation for Teaching and Learning - Guidance for All Primary and Special Schools* (Government of Ireland, 2021) publication. Participants felt that the variety of assessment approaches would support teacher agency and flexibility and provide space for teachers to tailor their approach to assessment. Significant praise was given to the inclusion of intuitive assessment in the specifications, with participants welcoming the recognition of teacher professionalism and acknowledgment of the ongoing assessment which occurs in classrooms. In addition, the emphasis on formative assessment throughout the specifications was commended. Participants felt that the specifications will lead to a change in the perception and purpose of assessment; assessment will become more reflective and meaningful, and a greater emphasis will be placed on developing children's confidence rather than solely on attainment. There was concern, however, about the potential misalignment of some assessment strategies and the proposed pedagogical approaches in the draft curriculum specifications, with many participants stating the formal

assessment events (e.g. standardised tests) are at odds with the experiential and playful approaches proposed.

Findings on the Five Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications

3.2 Introduction

The following sections outline the main themes identified from the analysis of the qualitative feedback that was recorded during the focus groups, Consultative Conference, Schools Networks meetings and bilateral meetings, along with the qualitative responses to the online professional and parent questionnaires; regarding the content of the individual draft curriculum specifications. The findings are categorised under the respective curriculum areas.

3.2.1 Arts Education

Introduction

The analysis of consultation feedback depicted an overall welcome for the draft Arts Education Curriculum specification, with participants welcoming reference to partnerships between schools and artists, as well as integration both within the arts and across other curriculum areas. The feedback also highlighted specific concerns and recommendations for improvement around content, presentation and usability. Analysis of the feedback identified three themes. These themes are:

- Making Connections
- Reaching Equilibrium
- Usability and Cohesion

Theme 1: Making Connections

Participants praised the potential of the draft Arts Education curriculum to foster a range of connections; connections with the community and local artists, connections across art forms, connections with Irish culture and the wider world, and connections between the arts and other subjects. Evidence of progression and connections between pre-school, primary and post-primary Arts Education was also praised.

While there was praise for references made within the draft curriculum to ‘collaboration’ with community artists, there were calls for even greater and additional emphasis to be placed on the potential for connections to be made within the community through partnerships with local artists. Children’s engagement with ‘other artists’ and the local community was seen as a positive means of enabling the recognition of arts education beyond the classroom. In order for such partnerships to work in practice, however, it was felt that artists working with schools will need specific training in, and a deep understanding of the Arts Education curriculum.

The potential to link Arts Education with children’s ‘developing sense of Irishness’ was also discussed. Participants described the potential of the curriculum to promote children’s knowledge and understanding of Irish art, history and culture as well as those of other cultures on a global scale. A small number of participants felt there was a lack of reference to ‘historical and cultural aspects of art from around the world’ and there was a request for reference to be made to ‘diverse cultures’ rather than ‘different cultures’ in order to promote greater inclusivity. It was stated that there needs to be greater emphasis placed on the ‘connection to self, other and the wider world through the arts’. In this way, it was felt that Arts Education can connect with empathy and humanity.

Participants described opportunities afforded by the draft Arts Education specification to promote integration of learning 'within the arts' and 'beyond the arts' in terms of connectivity, interdisciplinary learning and cross-curricular integration. Links between Art, Drama and Music were welcomed and it was stated that the subjects are 'brought together incredibly well'. Participants described the benefits of this integrated approach, including flexibility, autonomy for schools, scope for creativity, thematic planning and addressing curriculum overload. Others felt that more detail and explanation was needed around the meaning of an 'integrated arts approach' and there was also a fear that such integration may not be feasible or achievable due to the broad nature of statements made around integration in the specification that warrant increased detail.

Despite many participants' positive reactions to integration, some feared that integration could result in a 'dilution of individual disciplines' within Arts Education and made strong calls for 'discipline specific learning' and the 'separation of subjects' to be maintained with Arts Education being described as 'valuable in and of itself'.

With regard to the status and positioning of Drama within the Arts Education curriculum, there were conflicting opinions. Some felt that Drama should be used as a methodology within other subjects, while others feared that Drama may not get enough attention from teachers and 'could be left behind' as a result of the focus on integration of art forms within the draft curriculum. There were also questions around the position of dance within the draft curriculum and whether there should be expectations for children's progression in the area of dance. While some praised the references to dance in the specification, others felt that its position should be elevated and more 'clearly articulated and presented' with a list of concepts in the same way as the listed concepts in Arts, Drama and Music are presented.

Theme 2: Reaching Equilibrium

There was a clear tension present between the openness and flexibility that the specification brings and a perceived lack of clarity that comes alongside a 'broad' curriculum. Many participants praised the fact that the Learning Outcomes within the specification allow for teacher agency, choice and flexibility and the freedom to plan for children's interests and needs. It was also felt that the learning outcomes 'offer scope for broader art experience' and 'flexibility around the use of materials'. However, other participants voiced concern that such broad learning outcomes are 'vague in nature' and could subsequently result in teachers not knowing 'what to do or where to start with the Learning Outcomes' and a resulting lack of progression in children's learning. Concern was expressed around the potential negative impact of broad Learning Outcomes on quality learning and progression for children. Some felt that broad learning outcomes may lead to teachers not knowing if 'they are covering everything in the curriculum' and 'gaps in learning'. It was also felt that learning outcomes may be more suited to teachers 'with good knowledge' and not clear or explicit enough for those with less knowledge, experience or confidence. A concern was expressed that teacher agency coupled with a perceived sense of curriculum overload could have a negative impact on coverage of the Arts Education curriculum.

With regard to Art, a number of participants expressed the concern that some media may be neglected and suggested greater clarification and definition around which media should be focused on. While there was a welcome for Drama being placed within Arts Education as a way of fostering children's empathy and engagement in problem-solving, there were calls 'to clarify expectations' within Drama. The opinion that the content of Music lacks ambition and is diluted was expressed, with some participants expressing the belief that broad Learning Outcomes for

Music is very problematic. A number of participants expressed concern that there is a lack of reference to music literacy within the draft specification. Some expressed the belief that 'dance appears to have been downgraded' from how it was in the 1999 curriculum.

While some participants felt that there was a 'focus on process over product' within the specification, which was positively viewed as enabling experience, engagement, expression and creativity in Arts Education, it was suggested that this could be more explicit in the Learning Outcomes.

There was praise for terminology such as 'children as arts-makers'. In this way, the view that the specification forefronts children's 'experience of learning' and references to 'power' and 'joy' were praised. Others suggested that the Aims chapter of the specification could place more emphasis on 'active engagement', the 'creative process' and 'enjoyment'. The positive impact of Arts Education on children's wellbeing was underscored by parents from diverse backgrounds.

Many praised the potential of this curriculum to promote children's creativity. In terms of the key competencies, a number of participants praised the links made between the Arts and competencies. Others felt there was too much emphasis placed on developing competencies.

While the specification was positively viewed as inclusive and reference to the Additional Support Pathways were welcomed, there were also calls for additional guidelines, such as the *Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Difficulties* (NCCA, 2002) to help support children with special educational needs (SEN) and teachers working in special educational settings.

There was praise for the progression in concepts currently situated within the Appendices and these were seen to provide 'guidance, clarity and clear steps for teaching, learning and assessment'. Others felt that the concepts need more emphasis in the specification. The appendices were also seen to be valuable in identifying potential gaps in children's learning.

References to 'child input in assessment', 'peer assessment and 'self-assessment' were valued. Positive references to assessment included 'connection to the continuum of assessment' as depicted in Figure 6. A concern was expressed around the assessment of 'children's creativity' within the Arts, with some participants expressing the belief that Arts Education subjects should not be assessed, but celebrated. Others emphasised the importance of assessing the development of skills within Arts Education.

Theme 3: Usability and Cohesion

Participants provided positive feedback on the overall structure, presentation and language register of the draft Arts Education curriculum. Overall, the draft curriculum was praised for being more 'compact and concise' than the 1999 curriculum and the principles, concepts, Learning Outcomes and guidance around assessment were described as clear and concise. Despite this, a number of participants suggested that the language used in this specification needs to be reviewed and streamlined with all other specifications in order to foster 'cohesiveness' across all curriculum areas and subjects.

The introduction was praised for being clear and the rationale was applauded for drawing on 'inclusive', 'aspirational' and 'positive' language. It was suggested that the language used in the Aims section could aid teacher planning. There were conflicting opinions expressed around the language of the learning outcomes. Some participants described the language as 'clear', 'accessible', 'succinct' and 'user friendly', while others described it as 'vague' and 'not specific

enough' for teacher planning and preparation. For example, the language used in learning outcomes for Music was described as 'complex' and 'in need of unpacking'. The principles were described by participants as 'clear' and 'to the point'.

The use of figures and tables within the specification was strongly welcomed by participants who expressed the view that this format ensures that the curriculum is easy to navigate. Many participants described the presentation of examples of how each key competency is developed through learning in Arts Education in Table 3 as 'clear', 'concise' and useful in drawing links between key competencies and Arts Education. A small number of participants felt that the inclusion of this table added a needless layer of difficulty for teachers and described the language of the competency examples as 'wordy' and 'vague'. Although the concepts were described as 'clear', 'concise' and 'easy to follow' by many participants, some felt that they would not be understood by 'generalists or non-experts'. While some participants alluded to the use of 'very clear summaries' between pages 20 and 22, others commented on the negative use of 'very long sentences' on pages 21 and 22 and in the section *Playful approaches* on page 25.

There was praise for the presentation of strands as 'well designed' and 'easy to navigate'. Some participants suggested that the strands 'map out a creative process' and are cohesive and less complicated than the 1999 curriculum. It was also felt that the broad nature of the language in the strand headings allow for creative approaches in schools. The use of multidirectional arrows in *Figure 2 Strands in Arts Education* was praised for depicting varying movement between the interrelated key processes of *Creating, Performing and Presenting, and Responding and Connecting*. However, it was suggested that placing *Responding and Connecting* as the first part of the diagram would emphasise the need to focus on 'experiencing before doing'.

With regard to the use of subject headings within the Learning Outcomes, there were contrasting opinions. While some participants suggested that individual subject headings should be included to organise learning outcomes in Stages 1 and 2, others praised the exclusion of subject headings. A number of participants felt that the subjects are clearly connected within the strands and the bringing together of the three subjects within one strand 'creates cohesiveness'.

3.2.2 Primary Language Curriculum – including Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

Introduction

While the 2019 *Primary Language Curriculum (PLC)* predominantly addressed the learning and teaching of English and Irish for Stages 1 – 4 (Junior Infants – 6th Class), Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) is now being formally added into the PLC for Stages 3 and 4 (3rd – 6th Classes) under the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (Government of Ireland, 2023). The inclusion of MFL to

these stages within the PLC is underpinned by a plurilingual¹ approach to language learning. With this in mind, Stage 3 (3rd and 4th Classes) of the PLC prioritises building both cultural and language awareness² amongst children. At Stage 4 (5th and 6th Classes), MFL focuses on children learning to communicate in a third language (L3) at a basic level while continuing to build their language and intercultural awareness. This section presents the four themes that were constructed to summarise the views of those who examined the addition of MFL to the PLC. These themes are:

- Language Learning: Competing Priorities
- Continuity and Progression
- Readiness for MFL
- Inclusion.

Comments that addressed implementation issues rather than the specification are summarised in Appendix B.

Theme 1: Language Learning – Competing Priorities

The inclusion of MFL at primary level was commended as an exciting and timely move forward for the PLC. Responses to the parent/guardian questionnaire indicated that MFL in the redeveloped curriculum was a ‘vital’ addition. Other participants praised the specification’s emphasis on plurilingualism, noting that it aligned with recent research on children’s language learning. The sections promoting and discussing language and intercultural awareness were well received with some noting that this would encourage schools to further celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity present in modern-day society while simultaneously developing children’s communicative competencies. Nevertheless, this positive welcome was qualified. Questions as to how teachers and schools were to practically manage the language learning priorities set out in the updated PLC specification were regularly raised. For example, there were significant concerns that addressing the addition of MFL to the PLC under the current time allocations posed a considerable challenge to L1 literacy attainment, particularly in a post-pandemic landscape or in DEIS contexts. Participants also highlighted their concern that MFL may ‘take time away’ from the

¹ Plurilingualism refers to the different languages an individual can use to support their learning and communication. While competence in each of these languages can vary, knowledge of multiple languages can support metalinguistic awareness that allows literacy in one language to be used as an aid in another.

² Language awareness enhances the child’s general awareness of languages. It refers to the development of the child’s understanding and awareness of the content, structure and patterns of language—how language works. Such knowledge is developed when the child compares and contrasts known and new languages, as well as reflecting on their own language learning strategies.

school's L1 and L2 i.e. English and Gaeilge. Others wondered if the emphasis of MFL should solely be on Oral Language and not include Reading and Writing.

The impact of introducing MFL on the current and future status of Gaeilge received significant attention throughout the feedback. Participants acknowledged that the central place afforded to language awareness with the addition of MFL to the PLC would support the teaching of Gaeilge. Others noted that this increased emphasis on an integrated approach to language teaching and language awareness would potentially support transferable language skills and improved attitudes to Irish. Be that as it may, concerns were still expressed that the introduction of MFL to primary schools would dilute the status of Gaeilge in Irish classrooms and in society more broadly. Furthermore, teacher contributors discussed the current difficulties they were experiencing in addressing L2 Learning Outcomes in English-medium schools. They noted that their recent experiences in L2 teaching could affect future L3 teaching.

Theme 2: Continuity and Progression

The 'Continuity and Progression' theme considers how MFL is positioned within and beyond the current PLC. Contributions from partners across the education system examined how the Learning Outcomes for MFL would support a cumulative progression of language skills during and after primary school³.

The alignment with and extension of the current PLC structure to include MFL was viewed positively in principle. There was agreement that the new element (*'Building an awareness of languages and cultures'*) was a welcome addition that formalised the work that some schools were already engaging with across all stages. Despite this, queries were still raised about the MFL Learning Outcomes. For example, merging the L3 Learning Outcomes across the three strands (Reading, Writing, Oral Language) and two stages (Stage 3, Stage 4) was considered challenging to navigate. It was stated that having Learning Outcomes in this format would make it difficult for teachers to precisely identify progress and learning. Furthermore, participants noted that the Learning Outcomes were quite *'aspirational'* in nature and would benefit from further refinement so that clear and realistic expectations of the desired competency for children learning an L3 at Stage 4 (5th and 6th Classes) was available. There were consistent requests for the specification to better support teachers by providing more specificity in terms of the depth and breadth of L3 content and skills to be taught in schools. This challenge in constructing a clear understanding of

³ Many of the comments that were initially organised under this theme related to the *implementation* of the specification rather than the updates to the PLC. For example, queries were raised as to how schools should choose an L3 to ensure continuity and progression for children within Stage 4 and when transitioning into post-primary schooling. Please see Appendix A for further details on these implementation type concerns and recommendations for supports.

what was expected of learners for MFL in Stages 3 and 4 (3rd – 6th Classes) was partially attributed to the absence of L3 assessment guidance. Participants recommended that more explicit and detailed explanations of the Learning Outcomes for MFL for each stage be provided.

A broader perspective on how the inclusion of MFL in the Redeveloped Primary School Curriculum aligns with other elements of the Irish education system was also offered. One contributor noted 'that MFL was the missing piece before between primary level and post-primary level' with others asserting that MFL could provide children with a strong foundation for future language learning. Some participants advocated for increased coordination between the inclusion of MFL in the PLC and other established language frameworks. For example, during discussions on how teachers should assess L3 communicative competency and proficiency, other benchmarks of communicative proficiency such as Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG) were recommended for review to support the finalisation of MFL in the PLC.

Theme 3: Readiness for MFL

This theme addresses teachers' readiness to engage with MFL at primary level. Some participants felt that previous experience of programmes (e.g. *Say Yes To Languages Sampler Module*) would provide them with a strong starting point for engaging with MFL. Others noted that they were still 'getting to grips' with the PLC and the subsequent shift to a learning outcome model of teaching and learning. The additional MFL Learning Outcomes would further enhance their workload in this area. Most significant though were concerns regarding teachers' L3 Language Competency and Pedagogical Competence and Confidence.

Throughout the feedback there was regular attention drawn to the minimum L3 qualifications or skills that teachers would need to address the Learning Outcomes set out in the specification, particularly at Stage 4 (5th and 6th Classes). It was felt that to provide high-quality learning and teaching experiences based on the aspirations of the curriculum, competence and confidence in the L3 would be essential e.g. knowing the necessary vocabulary, correct pronunciation. Teachers were frequently concerned that their current lack of L3 competency would hamper children's learning and result in a tokenistic approach to MFL.

It was noted by some that teachers could draw on their general language pedagogy skills and experience of teaching an L2 to help them address the MFL Learning Outcomes. However, other contributors questioned whether all teachers would be able to confidently and effectively transfer L1 and L2 pedagogical strategies to L3 teaching. Without a high level of knowledge in the L3 selected by a school for Stage 4 (5th and 6th Classes) instruction, participants asserted that certain pedagogical approaches would be challenging to implement. For example, the specifications advocate for 'appropriately playful and engaging learning experiences' to address all Learning Outcomes. One participant noted that since play is emergent, teachers may struggle to adopt play as a pedagogy if they do not have a high level of proficiency in the target language as this is necessary to respond to unexpected topics or language use by children. Similarly, using recommended pedagogical approaches like the communicative approach or Content and

Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to support authentic language learning would be difficult for teachers to achieve without a strong command of the target language⁴.

Theme 4: Inclusion

The focus on plurilingual competence and intercultural awareness was welcomed and was cited as an important component of the draft additions to the PLC to reflect the introduction of MFL. While there was a general agreement that the MFL additions adopted an inclusive tone due to its emphasis on plurilingualism and intercultural awareness, participants felt that further editing was required to better reflect the diverse range of learners in our system, including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN). A number of edits were suggested to ensure that a continuum of children's communication approaches would be reflected in the opening sections of the specification e.g. sign, gesture, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Regarding language choice at Stage 4, several contributors queried whether Irish Sign Language (ISL) could be selected for learning and teaching an L3 at Stage 4. It was felt that this would be inclusive and reflective of the growing appetite to learn this language. Sample statements for certain key competencies were also identified as areas that could benefit from further refinement, as some statements may not encompass the needs of all. Questions as to how this specification supported the language learning of children who use multiple forms of visual communication, and augmentative and alternative communication systems were frequently mentioned. Others questioned how relevant MFL is for special schools at primary level. Broader issues were also raised including the need to acknowledge that language and culture, while connected, are not necessarily interchangeable. The notion that MFL was only for children and teachers in stages 3 and 4 (3rd – 6th Classes) also caused some debate. Some noted that the ideas of plurilingualism and language awareness deserved to be more fully embedded within Stages 1 and 2 (Junior Infants – 2nd Class).

3.2.3 Social and Environmental Education (SEE)

Introduction

Analysis of the feedback gathered over the course of the consultation revealed an overall welcome for the Draft Social and Environmental Education (SEE) Curriculum Specification. Participants noted that the specification builds upon the strengths of the child-centred 1999

⁴ Suggestions to address teachers' L3 competence were offered e.g. using specialist teachers, online toolkits, short-, medium and long-term professional learning courses. Please see Appendix A for further details on these implementation issues.

Curriculum and supports the existing initiatives and good practices happening in schools. In general, it was felt that the curriculum has potential to support children's capacity to be active, informed and empowered citizens. Findings from across the SEE feedback also highlight some areas of concern, points for clarification and recommendations for specification enhancements. Analysis of the feedback identified three themes. These themes are:

- Accessibility and Useability
- Envisioning SEE
- Local, National and Global

Theme 1: Accessibility and Useability

Participants commented favourably on the structure and presentation of the draft specification. Participants highlighted the 'logical' and 'organic' nature of the draft specification, noting that this was supported by the accessible and succinct language used. In particular, description of the elements and strands was commended for being 'well laid out', 'easy to follow', 'jargon-free' and 'useable for teachers'. Some participants however, felt that the language was at times 'overly academic', with calls to extend the glossary and 'unpack' some concepts further. A suggestion was also made to utilise hyperlinks within the specification, linking new terminology to the glossary. Other recommendations to further enhance the readability of the specification included the highlighting of keywords and use of bullet points. Participants suggested more use of symbols, for example, to identify opportunities for integration within and across specifications.

The use of figures and tables throughout the specification was welcomed with participants expressing the view that presenting content in these formats provides clarity for the reader. Specific examples cited by participants were Table 3 (p.11) which outlines attributes of the seven key competencies that could be developed in the curriculum area, and Table 9 (p.21) which details Additional Support Pathways and was considered supportive of meaningful differentiation. Structurally, there were mixed views on the presentation of the Learning Outcomes tables (Table 7 and Table 8 p.13-18) with some feeling that it would be 'more practical for teachers if Stages 1 to 4 (Junior Infants – 6th Class) were presented side by side', as in the *Primary Language Curriculum* and *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*.

While there was overall positivity towards the redeveloped strand labels and a welcome for the interconnectedness between the human and natural therein, concern was raised in relation to an imbalance between history and geography within strands. Participants identified a 'geographic twist' in the strand labels, and it was noted that Learning Outcomes in the 'Environment and Sustainable Living' strand had a geography focus while those in the 'Exploration of our World' strand were centred on history. With regard to children's learning experience, it was cautioned that children may not engage with one of these subjects for an entire term if teachers adopted an approach of termly planning by strand.

There was considerable commentary in relation to developing an understanding of traditions, cultures, religions, beliefs, worldviews, and heritage. While there was broad welcome for this type of learning, significant debate arose surrounding its role in the SEE curriculum. Those who saw it as 'positive and appropriate to the curriculum area', spoke of the importance of having a 'worldview beyond Ireland' and 'an understanding of all religions', noting that the specification is inclusive by highlighting that 'all and no religions are important'. Some welcomed it as 'a small item' within the SEE curriculum. This was contrasted by a view that Ethics, Religious and Beliefs

Education is an academic subject in its own right, with specific pedagogical approaches, and should not be subsumed into SEE. Others equated children's learning about religion, beliefs and world views with faith formation and the Patron's Programme.

The renewed focus on integration was welcomed, and opportunities to link with other curriculum areas were recognised. There was, however, call for more delineation between history and geography Learning Outcomes within the document to aid planning and progression. The specification's alignment with other curricula was acknowledged, and participants welcomed the common language used across specifications. Yet despite a general welcome for the common usage of Elements, Key Competencies, Concepts, Skills and Strands, uncertainty remains around how each contributes to the planning process, with questions raised about which component should be seen as the 'starting point'.

Theme 2: Envisioning SEE

There was extensive welcome for the range of signature pedagogies proposed. The repertoire of approaches was seen to connect with children's life experiences, circumstances, strengths and interests, thus supporting the principle of inclusion and the centrality of child voice. There was wide welcome for Chapter 6a and the underpinning concepts of 'Working as a Geographer' and 'Working as an Historian' which were seen to 'support child-friendly, inquiry-based learning'.

Indeed, explicit reference to inquiry-based learning in the context of the SEE curriculum was frequently cited as a positive change. There were, however, calls for further unpacking of the term 'inquiry' to support teachers in implementation. Similarly, while there was a shared sense of excitement around the promotion of playful learning approaches, this was caveated by noting that the necessary supports around play, and the balance between the three types of play (Teacher-led, Guided and Free), would need to be in place.

The focus on outdoor learning environments, fieldwork and place-based learning was identified as a strength of the draft specification. The use of the local environment was seen to 'highlight an aesthetic approach to the natural world' as well as providing opportunities to model and engage in sustainability practices on school grounds. While there was welcome for such awareness being fostered from an early age, it was argued that explicit focus on outdoor learning should continue in Stages 3 and 4 (3rd – 6th Classes). The opportunity to connect to the lived experiences of children through place-based learning was valued, and the promotion of partnerships and community links within the specification was also welcomed as a support to children and teachers alike. The foregrounding of dialogical pedagogy was seen as 'ground-breaking' and central to the promotion of multi-perspectivity. Positioning storytelling as a pedagogy within the draft specification was favoured, as was the emphasis placed on the role of digital technology (with further examples of relevant digital supports offered for inclusion).

SEE specific examples of assessment methods and the continuum of assessment were welcomed as inclusive and responsive to individual contexts. Notwithstanding the widespread support for the range of pedagogies and assessment methods highlighted, participants also noted the necessity of appropriate exemplification of such approaches in practice. For example, participants requested examples of what playful approaches look like across all class levels (particularly in relation to senior classes) within the context of history and geography. The importance of the toolkit was reiterated in relation to inquiry, with calls for example guiding questions to support teachers in ensuring that classroom inquiry is purposeful, relevant and meaningful to children's

lives. Participants also noted a need for examples of dialogical pedagogy as this may be new to some teachers.

The feedback relating to Learning Outcomes revealed various perspectives. On one hand, the broad Learning Outcomes were praised for the scope they offered teachers to be adaptive to their context. They were described as 'aspirational', with an acknowledgement that the curriculum 'needs to aim high'. The Learning Outcomes were viewed as fertile ground for the pedagogies espoused by the specification. From a Special Education perspective, it was argued that the redeveloped curriculum supports teachers to embed learning over time and gives agency to build upon children's interests and experiences. The point was made that the Learning Outcomes would also support the organisation of learning and teaching in multi-grade classes. Furthermore, it was noted that this broadness allows for a responsive approach in the classroom, enabling teachers to explore relevant and topical themes in depth, rather than following a prescriptive approach. Learning Outcomes, therefore, were seen to support teacher agency, cater for contextualised learning, and provide more flexibility to follow children's interests.

On the other hand, some participants were critical of the 'vagueness' of the Learning Outcomes. While some participants wanted specificity and detail on what 'should be taught', others felt that 'some detail' was needed as a starting point to 'guide teachers'. There was concern that a lack of specificity could lead to an over-reliance on textbooks and allow publishers to 'set the agenda' for SEE. Responses also referred to teachers' confidence and competence to teach SEE 'beyond the textbook'. The specialised content knowledge needed for teaching history and geography (particularly in relation to the local area), as well as enabling teachers to adopt a more concept and process-driven approach was discussed in this regard. However, the focus of concern here tended to be in relation to Continuing Professional Development provision, rather than changes needed to the specification.

The breadth of the Learning Outcomes also raised considerable debate around the equity of learning experiences across schools and classrooms. Concern was raised that the lack of specific content could lead to children 'missing out' on certain themes, experiences and 'fundamental knowledge' in history and geography, due to teacher preference and/knowledge, as well as school context, leading to a call for 'important topics' to be identified across the stages. The centrality of whole-school planning in supporting progression in SEE was reiterated across the feedback.

Theme 3: Local, National and Global

Increased focus on the 'local' within the specification was valued, with participants noting that this enables schools to respond to their individual context. While welcomed, there was evidence to suggest that further clarification of the term 'local' is needed to broaden its conceptualisation from the immediate local area, to include family, community, and children's own heritage and culture.

Using children's own local experiences as a starting point for learning before moving to a broader context in the senior classes was deemed appropriate. However, there was considerable feedback to suggest that the emphasis on 'local' needs to be embedded across all four stages, with a spiral approach recommended. Some participants raised concern around a potential over-focus on global issues, while others expressed the view that the jump from 'local' to 'global' is too great. It was proposed that further strengthening of the 'national' within the specification be considered, with some participants suggesting the explicit use of the terms 'Irish' and 'national identity' to

foster an awareness and appreciation of Irish heritage. Concern regarding children’s fundamental knowledge of Irish history and geography was aired, and specific inclusion of Traveller culture and history was recommended. It was opined that some topics in SEE, particularly in the subject area of history, can be contentious depending on one’s perspective and background. Although acknowledged that this is explicitly referenced in the specification, participants remarked that the text around this could be stronger. Further guidance was sought on how these topics could be addressed at a local level.

At a wider level, the proposed global learning themes were deemed to be a positive inclusion. While generally seen as age-appropriate at the relevant Stages, participants urged caution around the need for sensitivity in relation to these issues in an effort to ease, for example, eco- and climate-anxiety. Participants welcomed the language of ‘sustainable living’, but a query was raised about the absence of explicit reference to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The potential role of partnerships and collaboration with agencies that have existing resources and expertise in global learning themes was highlighted. There were suggestions that a dynamic repository of such agencies and centres could be included within the SEE Toolkit, with requests for further guidance on planning for integration and global learning themes.

The centrality of the child as a citizen was considered a real strength of the specification. There was a welcome for the development of a skillset, through their work as historians and geographers, that will empower children to act justly and sustainably, in a respectful and compassionate manner, thus preparing them for current and future citizenship.

3.2.4 Science, Technology and Engineering Education (STE)

Introduction

The *Primary Curriculum Framework* (DE, 2023) introduced an area of learning: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education (STEM) for Stages 1 and 2 (Junior Infants to 2nd Class) and the subjects of Science, Technology, and Engineering (STE) Education and Mathematics for Stages 3 and 4 (3rd – 6th Class). The *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* (PMC) was published in September 2023 for implementation from September 2024. Overall, there was positive and constructive engagement from participants in the consultation that provided both feedback affirming the contents of the draft STE Education specification and suggestions to help further shape its’ finalisation. The consultation highlighted broadly that teachers do not need to be convinced of the value of STE Education and that the draft specification would go some way to alleviate any apprehension to its’ introduction into primary schools. Overall, participants shared that the draft specification was timely for children’s learning now and into the future, that it would facilitate meaningful, active and integrated learning for children, and it provided a solid basis with further opportunities still to consider, in relation to learning, teaching and assessment. Analysis of the feedback identified three themes. These themes are:

- Timely Response: Children’s Learning Now and Into the Future
- Children’s Learning: Active, Meaningful and Integrated
- Thinking Ahead: Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Theme 1: Timely Response – Children’s Learning Now and Into the Future

There was a broad welcome across the consultation formats for the introduction of STE Education in primary and special schools. There was general appreciation for the way the draft specification set out learning in a nurturing, progressive and relevant way. It was noted that the draft specification would go some way in responding to the centrality of STEM in children's everyday lives both now and into the future. Participants noted that the inclusion of technology and engineering were especially relevant and timely in today's technological world.

Participants found the organisation of the introduction, rationale, and aims accessible and clear. It was noted that the reference to critical engagement in the aims connects to the attributes within the key competencies, in particular, Being an active learner and Being an active citizen. Some participants noted that the specification would get teachers excited about the area and that the inclusion of technology recognises learning experiences already taking place in some primary schools. The language used across the specification and the inclusion of a glossary were welcomed for supporting learning, teaching, and assessment. Additionally, the learning opportunities that the draft specification sets out through a rich learning environment were seen as clear and the elements, in particular, were felt to be reflective of real-life learning experiences for children. The explicit emphasis on aspects of learning that included sustainability, biodiversity, and the outdoors were particularly welcomed.

Participants shared feedback on aspects of Science, Technology and Engineering that highlighted strengths and challenges, with the emphasis on skills noted positively. Participants welcomed the focus on building children's resilience, as well as creativity and communication, as particularly positive, especially in today's fast paced and ever-evolving society. Participants highlighted that within Science there was recognition of the clear connections with learning in post-primary school. In particular, it was noted that the inclusion of terms like Biology, Chemistry and Physics would facilitate transitions in a positive way through their links to post-primary school learning / subjects. Participants shared that learning within Engineering provided positive recognition of the connection between the design thinking process in Engineering and the design and make process from the 1999 Primary Science Curriculum. Participants noted general appreciation that learning within Technology would address the needs of children in today's world, offering opportunities for skills development essential for participating and growing as learners in a changing environment. However, some expressed concerns about maintaining a balanced approach between digital and non-digital resources for learning, especially regarding devices and screen time. One group of parents from diverse backgrounds requested additional clarification about the definition of Technology being used in this specification, highlighting that the term can refer to both digital and traditional Technology which may result in mixed understandings. There were also calls for explicit use of terms for Technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI), while others acknowledged the rapidly evolving nature of digital technology and appreciated the open-ended nature of terminology. This acknowledgement included an appreciation that emerging developments in Technology could be facilitated and addressed through STE Education, therefore to some degree future proofing learning experiences.

Theme 2: Children's Learning - Active, Meaningful and Integrated

Participants welcomed the focus on active, collaborative and hands-on learning for children, and many commented on how the phrase 'hands-on and minds-on' learning captured the essence of the pedagogical vision of the specification. It was noted that this would support high-quality learning experiences for children. Some wished to see play as a signature pedagogy while others

saw the playfulness stem within the Learning Outcomes as being sufficient in supporting the presence of playful learning experiences across all pedagogical practices. It was highlighted that the STE Education key pedagogical practices; Scientific Inquiry, Design Thinking and Computational Thinking lend themselves to child-led active learning and would also support teacher preparation. Participants expressed some concern about potential fear children may experience when considering the problems and challenges of environmental stewardship in today's society. However, other participants highlighted how the focus on problem-solving (including real-world problem-solving) in the draft specification could facilitate children's understanding of how to respond to the problems and challenges of environmental stewardship both now and into the future.

Participants identified and welcomed the approach the draft specification took in relation to integrated STEM learning, enabling children to connect their learning across Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and to apply this to real-world and imagined contexts. Participants noted that the overarching statements (chapter 6D) were clear and accessible and serve to highlight the goals of integrated STEM. Participants welcomed the design phases in the approach to integrated STEM learning and concluded they were clearly explained and positive, however, clarity regarding the roles of the children and teacher in the design cycle was sought. Participants welcomed Mathematics as part of the integrated learning approach but sought further guidance on how to integrate STE Education and the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*, and STE Education and other curricular areas within the wider *Primary Curriculum Framework*. Participants sought to highlight that integration done well has a multiplier effect, and the draft specification aims to promote integration in this positive manner. However, it was noted that teachers would require clear guidance through the toolkit and professional development to achieve such meaningful integration.

Theme 3: Thinking Ahead - Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The strengths of the 1999 Primary Curriculum and how STE Education connects and builds on these were highlighted. These connections were identified as being supportive for teachers as they engage with STE Education. Some suggested that these connections be explicitly referenced or highlighted. While much was to be welcomed, some suggested that the Learning Outcomes required greater emphasis on local to global progression through the stages. There was positive consensus about the support provided by the *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum - Guidelines for Schools* (NCCA, 2007) and similar guidance for this specification was suggested.

A variety of suggestions were made to consider the layout, language and presentation of the specification, to support its use for teachers in the classroom. A review of language was suggested to ensure any new and disciplinary terms are included in the glossary. Text in the introduction and rationale were considered to have potential to be shortened. Contrasting views on the language of concepts in Technology were shared, with some participants noting they were clear and straightforward, while others suggested further simplification to support teacher agency as they engage with learning, teaching and assessment in this area. Participants shared that the presentation of graphics throughout the draft specification were a positive addition, however suggested the inclusion of an additional graphic for assessment methods that conveys no hierarchy of method.

Partnerships were highlighted consistently by those seeing the opportunities that the draft specification may create for meaningful STEM partnerships within the community both locally and

nationally. These partnerships were seen to develop a school's practice in relation to learning and teaching in STEM. Participants also highlighted how partnerships and support for families and their children's learning in this will also be important moving forward. In particular, parents from diverse backgrounds sought clearer messaging and communication about the types of learning experiences that children are undertaking in this curriculum area. It was felt the draft specification set high expectations for learning, teaching and assessment and many participants highlighted the need for adequate resourcing and supports to achieve this. These supports were highlighted in the context of achieving equity across schools in their engagement and provision of learning experiences. Some participants questioned how learning for high achievers would be facilitated, and how challenge would be built into to learning and teaching. Others expressed a concern regarding the accessibility of the Learning Outcomes for children with additional needs. Some participants felt that more explicit reference to the broad range of school contexts throughout the draft specification was required to enable flexibility and variability in learning experiences. Participants noted that this would support all schools to engage with STE Education to support all children achieve their potential.

Participants affirmed the timely nature of STE Education and its focus on children's active, meaningful and integrated learning, providing a positive evaluation of the contents of the draft specification. Participants also made suggestions, raised questions and provided meaningful feedback to support to finalisation of the draft specification. Overall, it was evident to participants that the draft specification made connections with and built upon the 1999 Primary Curriculum, as well as acknowledging the tentative and evolving nature of Science, Technology and Engineering.

3.2.5 Wellbeing

Introduction

Within the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (DE, 2023) the new curriculum area of Wellbeing was introduced which encompasses two important subjects: Physical Education (PE) and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), and focuses on learning and teaching about the interconnected dimensions of Wellbeing. Within this curriculum area, an integrated approach to learning and teaching about and for Wellbeing is supported at Stages 1 and 2 (Junior Infants – 2nd class), with more of a discrete focus on the subjects PE and SPHE, within the context of Wellbeing, at Stages 3 and 4 (3rd class – 6th class). Across all stages connections can be made between and across strands and strand units, as well as with other curriculum areas. Aligned with this integrative approach, the content of the draft Wellbeing Specification aims to build on the previous successes of PE and SPHE within the 1999 curriculum, supporting children's physical, social, emotional and spiritual development in a holistic manner, mirroring their real-life experience.

Analysis of the consultation feedback identified three themes. These themes are:

- Strong Foundations for a Holistic Wellbeing Curriculum
- Translating Pedagogy into Practice
- Connections and Partnerships

Theme 1: Strong Foundations for a Holistic Wellbeing Curriculum

It is evident from the responses received that there is broad welcome for this new curriculum area, with participants noting that the Wellbeing specification is 'progressive and inclusive' as well as being 'a positive asset to our schools'. According to participants, a multitude of factors contribute towards setting strong foundations for this perceived holistic curriculum.

Firstly, participants found the content of the Rationale and Introduction within the specification clear and comprehensive in nature, with the acknowledgment of wider factors outside of the specification which also affect broader wellbeing welcomed. They indicated a positive response also towards the Aims of the curriculum, deeming them 'well thought out' and 'carefully considered'. Integration across strands and strand units was welcomed and considered beneficial in terms of teacher planning. On this point, the integration symbol was also noted as helpful in identifying linkages within the curriculum. Additionally, the inclusion of initials relating to the Key Competencies alongside each Learning Outcome was considered effective in supporting integration with other curriculum areas, with some participants suggesting that this aspect could be strengthened even further still. There was broad consensus across the responses received when considering the topic of integration that Physical Education (PE) and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) work well together within this curriculum area. On this topic, the broadening of PE to incorporate Learning Outcomes across all strands of the curriculum was mostly welcomed, with suggestions for supports and some concerns regarding disciplinary focus noted. The increase in time allocated to Wellbeing was also viewed as a positive development. Notwithstanding this support, some contextualised concerns were also noted regarding planning challenges and timetabling constraints, as well as the preservation of disciplinary learning within an integrated curriculum.

Secondly, participants expressed positive views regarding the agency and flexibility afforded within the draft specification. The emphasis on child voice and agency within the Learning Outcomes was acknowledged by participants and deemed important in supporting teachers to meet the children 'where they are at'. Teacher agency and flexibility was also considered to be facilitated through the broad nature of the Learning Outcomes supporting 'a responsive and child-centred approach' to the learning and teaching of Wellbeing. However, the findings also indicated that the broad nature of the Learning Outcomes constituted an area of concern for teachers, with some participants considering the language vague, calling for more detail 'so that teachers know what they are referring to'.

Lastly, the approaches to learning, teaching and assessment underpinning the draft Wellbeing specification were, in the main, quite positively received by participants. The pedagogical practices outlined within the specification were broadly welcomed, with participants indicating that the approaches outlined were both 'relevant and well explained', with a particular appreciation evident within the feedback for the recognition afforded to playful approaches and direct teaching. The strands and strand units were also viewed positively, with participants feeling that they 'highlight the correct themes' and effectively demonstrate an integrated approach to learning and teaching in Wellbeing. The importance of age-appropriate content within the curriculum was also highlighted as a consideration here by some participants. In relation to assessment, there was general consensus that the approaches outlined within the specification were appropriate, while also acknowledging that this curriculum area can be challenging to assess. In this regard some participants felt that some PE- and SPHE- specific assessment examples would prove useful in providing clarity for teachers here. While the inclusion of Additional Support Pathways was welcomed and viewed as an effective approach in promoting the inclusion of all learners with

differing levels of need within the Wellbeing curriculum, some participants also felt that more direction and guidance would be beneficial in this area, especially for special schools and schools with special classes.

Theme 2: Translating Pedagogy into Practice

Following the analysis of feedback, it was found that participants' views within this theme can be categorised within one of three broad subthemes. Each of these subthemes considers what the pedagogy and content embodying the Wellbeing curriculum could potentially look like, in practical terms, within the classroom context. Namely, these subthemes explore participants' views pertaining to the draft specification content building upon that of the 1999 curriculum, significantly updated curriculum content and the introduction of new curriculum content within the Wellbeing curriculum, each of which is presented in turn below.

Firstly, when considering the content within the draft specification which builds upon that of the 1999 curriculum, a continued focus on key curriculum areas was positively received with suggestions for potential development in cases also offered. For example, learning relating to areas such as relationships, values, bullying, child abuse prevention and substance use/ misuse prevention were broadly welcomed. In particular, positive commentary was received regarding the 'Emotional Awareness and Expression' strand unit and its extension across both PE and SPHE, with participants considering the focus on emotional regulation beneficial, along with some suggestion for further development here. During discussions with migrant and community parent groups, the topic of food and nutrition arose, with some parents suggesting a stronger emphasis is needed. Additionally, appreciation was expressed for recognition of the differences between PE, Sport and Physical Activity and subsequent emphasis on a balanced approach to competition.

Mixed views were evident, however, in relation to the content pertaining to Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE). Here, when considering specific content within the 'Human Development' strand unit, participants acknowledged the importance of learning about puberty in school but indicated that more specificity within the Wellbeing curriculum in this area would prove supportive. The topic of child abuse prevention arose during discussions with migrant and community parent groups, with references to body part names, respecting body boundaries and learning about secrets viewed as important learning. In relation to RSE more generally, a clear consensus did not emerge within the findings regarding participants' views. For example, some people viewed the content as age-appropriate and important learning, while others were of the view that home is the most appropriate place for children to learn about RSE.

Secondly, feedback was also received from participants regarding areas from the 1999 curriculum which have undergone a more significant update in the draft specification than those outlined above. Here, for example, participants acknowledged the importance and value of the updated content regarding Media and Digital Wellbeing, reflecting technological advancements since the implementation of the 1999 curriculum, and with Learning Outcomes deemed 'open enough to incorporate new technology in the future'.

Significant developments reflected within the updated strand of 'Community and Belonging' were also welcomed in both PE and SPHE specific contexts, with elements relating to rights, fairness and citizenship receiving praise. Learning and teaching about diversity within this strand was also seen to promote an awareness and understanding of 'diverse cultures and identities' in school and in society, with some suggestions for further refinements noted here. This was reinforced during

discussions with parents from migrant backgrounds, parents living in direct provision, foster carers, and Traveller parents who spoke about the importance of children developing an understanding and awareness of different cultures, identities and abilities, so that all children 'fit in', feel safe and a sense of belonging.

And thirdly, a considerable amount of commentary within the feedback focused on new content and concepts introduced within the draft Wellbeing specification. In relation to PE, for example, the introduction of meaningful PE and physical literacy was broadly well received, with some call for further clarity in particular areas, such as Movement Education. Participants also felt that the use of PE Activity Areas as a medium to support learning represented the 'kernel of change' within this subject area when compared to the 1999 curriculum, welcoming the broad nature of this 'menu approach' and suggesting further clarity be provided in this area, as well as consideration regarding their placement within the layout of the specification. Additional commentary in relation to specific PE Activity Areas was also evident within the findings, with participants responding positively in relation to the inclusion of Alternative Activities, which were seen to provide increased choice, with 'something for everybody'. Mixed views regarding the positionality of dance within the wider primary curriculum was noted, with some participants viewing its incorporation, along with gymnastics, within Artistic and Aesthetic Activities as a positive move, but others favoring more of a discrete disciplinary focus for dance within PE.

In relation to the representation of family within the specification, the inclusion of diversity of family structures was well received overall. Participants acknowledged the importance of children learning about a variety of family structures 'helping them to be aware and to know to respond to what they will (and already do) encounter in their lives', with some suggestions received regarding the potential to include reference to marriage within the content on this topic. The specific reference to foster families was received positively during a discussion with foster carers and viewed as important for normalising different types of families. It was highlighted that the topic of family should be addressed in a sensitive and 'depersonalised' way. It was further suggested that the term 'blended family' could be considered for inclusion. Reference to sexual orientation, within the context of anti-discrimination in the curriculum, constituted a topic of discussion within the feedback. Here, it was found that the majority of participants deemed reference to this topic inclusive and important 'as it reflects diversity in society', with others who challenged its inclusion also being noted. Linked here also were participants positive views regarding the introduction of anti-discrimination principles, with some suggestions received to outline how this topic could be further strengthened within the Wellbeing curriculum. A positive response was also highlighted within the feedback in relation to content in the draft specification pertaining to consent and resilience.

It should be noted that feedback from participants was also received regarding topics which do not feature within the draft Wellbeing specification. The importance of mental health, suicide prevention, and movement breaks, for example, and the potential for their inclusion, was noted. A diversity of opinion was also shared on gender identity and LGBTI+ terminology that do not feature in the draft Wellbeing specification. Here participants advocating for the specific inclusion of LGBTI+ terminology and reference to gender identity within the specification stood in clear contrast to others who view this as inappropriate content for primary level.

Theme 3: Connections and Partnerships

The feedback obtained and analysed within this final theme relates to participants' perspectives with regards to key connections and partnerships linked to enactment of the Wellbeing curriculum.

Firstly, a diversity of views were evident within the feedback in relation to the connection between the Wellbeing curriculum and a school's ethos or Patron's Programme. In some cases opportunities for alignment were welcomed. However, in other cases separation between the two was advised. There was a general welcome noted within the findings, however, for reference to spirituality within the Wellbeing specification, although views regarding its specific framing therein differed.

Secondly, the importance of establishing and maintaining ongoing communication and partnership with parents/guardians in relation to teaching and learning in the Wellbeing curriculum was referenced by a significant number of participants. Here, it was felt that, as the primary educator of their child(ren), parents/guardians should be kept up-to-date as to the enactment of the Wellbeing curriculum in schools 'so that they can make informed decisions about their children's learning', such as providing additional support at home to reinforce curriculum learning or considering their child's participation in school in particular aspects of the curriculum. During discussions with parents from diverse backgrounds, attention was drawn to the importance of teachers and schools having an awareness and understanding of external factors that may impact their child(ren)'s learning in Wellbeing. Topics within Wellbeing may bring up 'big emotions' for some children and should be approached in a sensitive way, reflecting children's lived experiences, for example, their culture, their living/home environment or experiences of trauma such as loss or bereavement.

Lastly, during the consultation participants also commented upon the important partnership established when working with external facilitators. Mixed views were noted with some participants welcoming the complementary role of external facilitators in supporting teachers to deliver some aspects of the Wellbeing curriculum, while other participants advised caution in this regard. Notwithstanding the range of views offered here, the guidance outlined within the Wellbeing specification regarding this collaborative approach was well received.

Findings: Questionnaires

3.3 Introduction

During the consultation educators' and parents/guardians' questionnaires were conducted using the Microsoft Teams platform in order to gather feedback on the *Draft Curriculum Specifications*. Educators were invited to participate in questionnaires related to the draft curriculum specifications for Arts Education; the Primary Language Curriculum including Modern Foreign Languages; Social and Environmental Education, Science Technology and Engineering Education; and Wellbeing. Additionally, educators were invited to respond to a questionnaire discussing the alignment of the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications with the key messages from the *Primary Curriculum Framework*. There was a total response rate of 1,256 across the six educator questionnaires.

Parents/guardians were invited to participate in a questionnaire indicating their priorities and expectations for the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications. There were 615 responses to this questionnaire.

In the following sections, a selection of graphs/charts are used to illustrate educator and parent/guardian responses. Each graph/chart shown contains an individual identifier. Different types of graphs and charts were used to best illustrate the information gathered from the questionnaires.

3.3.1 Educator Questionnaire

The following sections outline the responses by educators to the questionnaires on the draft curriculum specifications for Arts Education; the *Primary Language Curriculum* including Modern Foreign Languages; Social and Environmental Education; Science, Technology and Engineering Education; and Wellbeing. Additionally, educator responses to the questionnaire on the alignment between the draft curriculum specifications and the key messages from the *Primary Curriculum Framework* are included in this section.

Arts Education

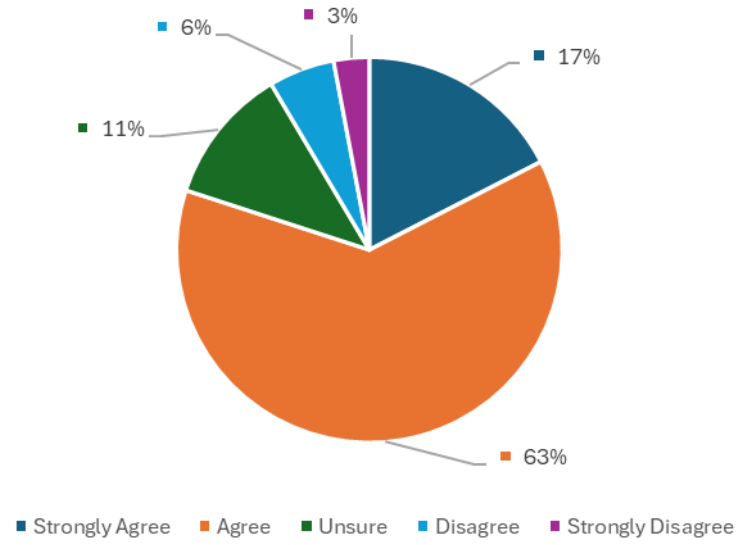
Educators were asked to what extent they would agree/disagree with statements related to the *Draft Primary Arts Education Curriculum*. 235 responses were gathered in this questionnaire. The participants responded by choosing one of five options: 'Strongly Agree'; 'Agree'; 'Unsure'; 'Disagree'; or 'Strongly Disagree'.

Participants were invited to respond to the statement, 'Chapters 1-3 provide an appropriate context, rationale, and aims for Arts Education'. The chart below (Figure 1) illustrates participants' responses, with percentages indicating the number of responses to each option. A significant majority of responses agreed (63%) with the statement, while an additional 17% strongly agreed. There were a very small number of negative responses to the statement, with 6% disagreeing, and a further 3% strongly disagreeing. This welcome for the initial three chapters in the draft specification was echoed across the other consultation strands.

Figure 1: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, statement 1

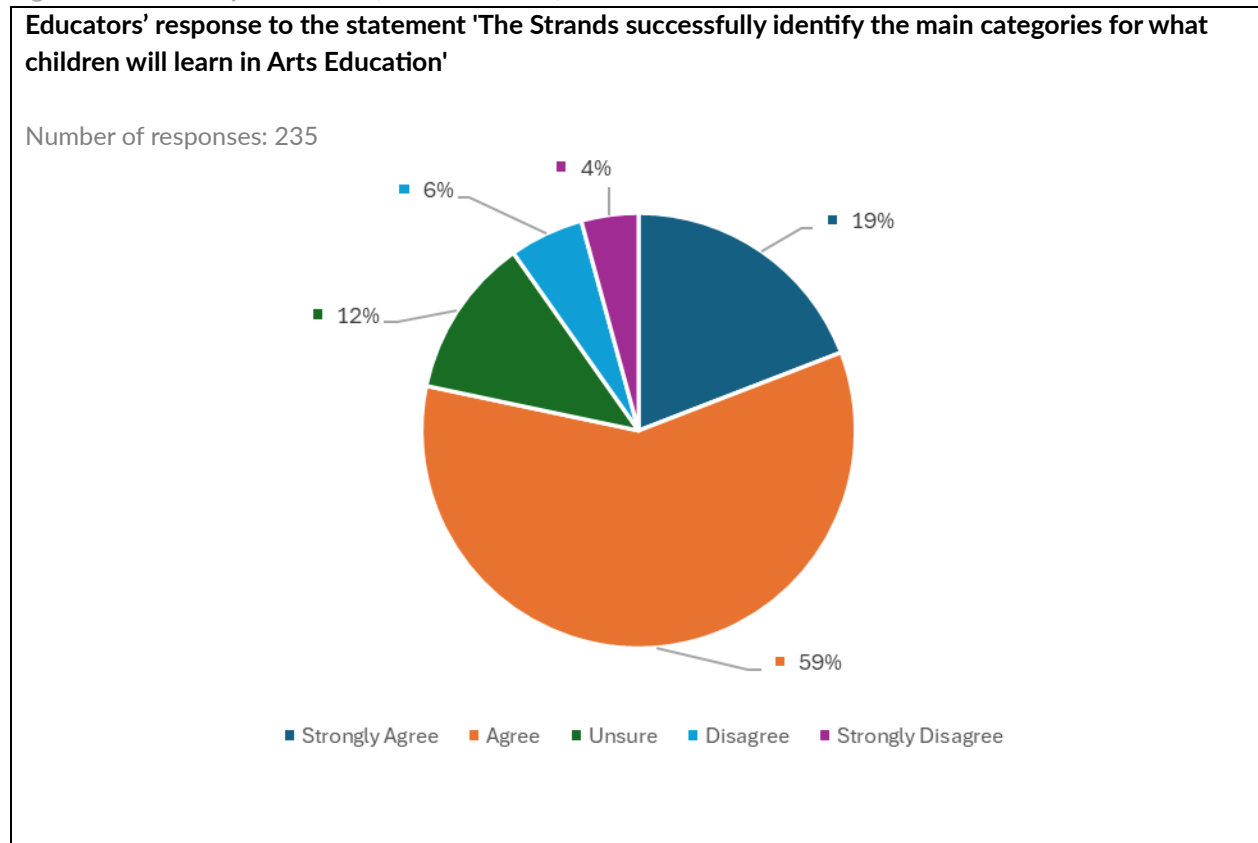
Educators' response to the statement 'Chapters 1-3 provide an appropriate context, rationale, and aims for Arts Education'

Number of responses: 235



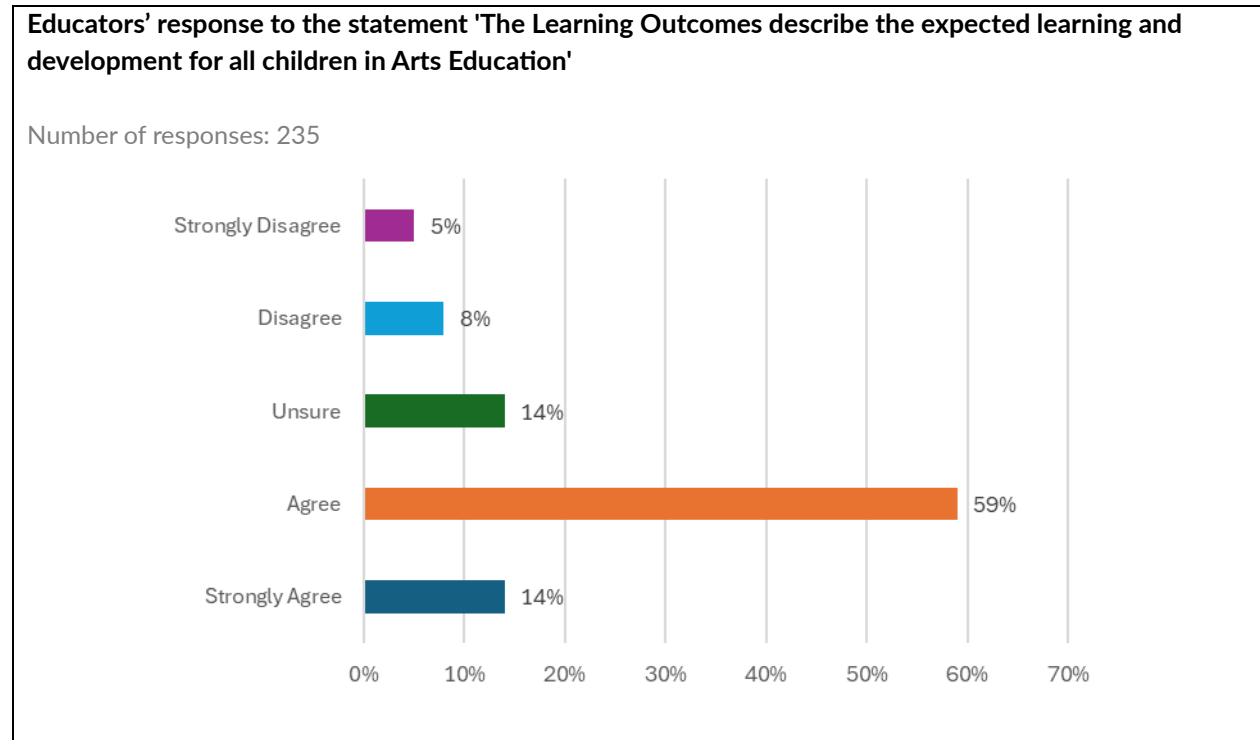
Educators gave their opinions on the statement: 'The Strands successfully identify the main categories for what children will learn in Arts Education'. Figure 2 shows that responses to this statement were positive. A combined total of 78% of responses fell within the 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' categories. This aligns with findings from across the consultation where favourable views were expressed towards the new and increasingly streamlined strands in Arts Education.

Figure 2: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, statement 2



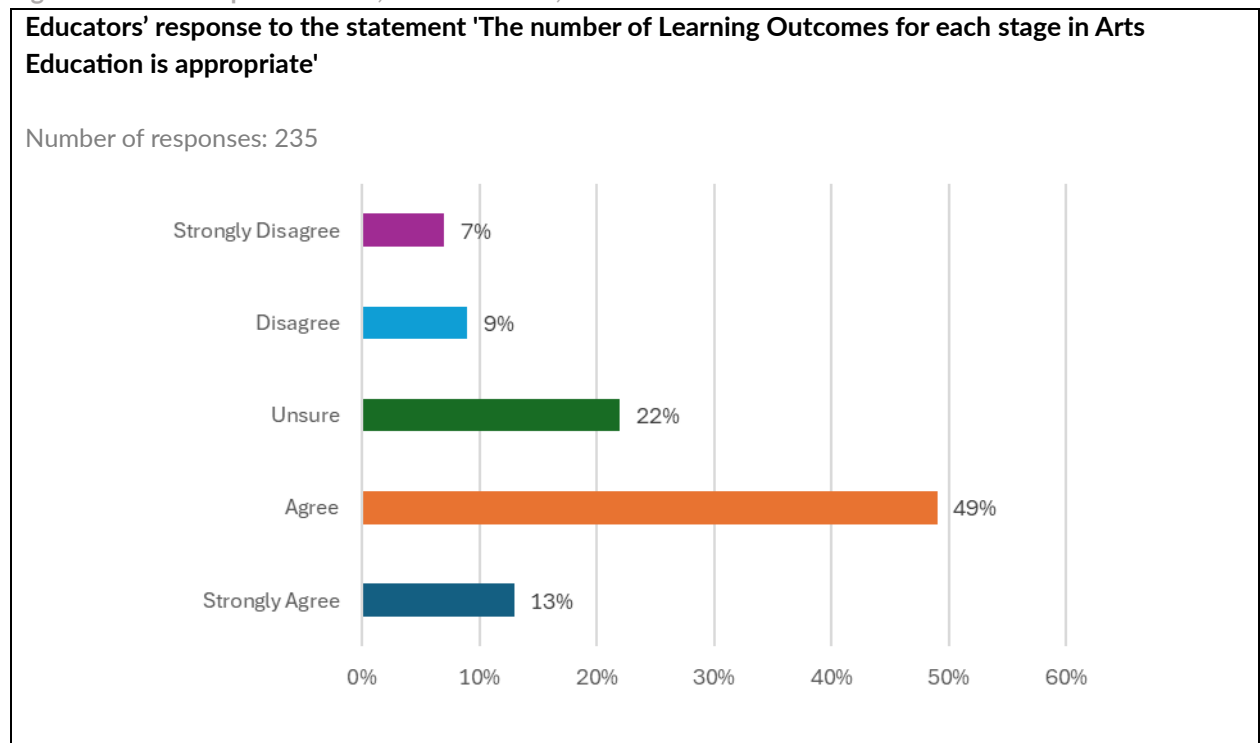
As illustrated by Figure 3 participants felt that the learning outcomes described the expected learning and development of all children in Arts Education. Of the 235 responses, 59% 'Agreed', 14% 'Strongly Agreed', while 14% were 'Unsure'. A small number of responses fell under the 'Disagree' (8%) and 'Strongly Disagree' (5%) categories.

Figure 3: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, statement 3



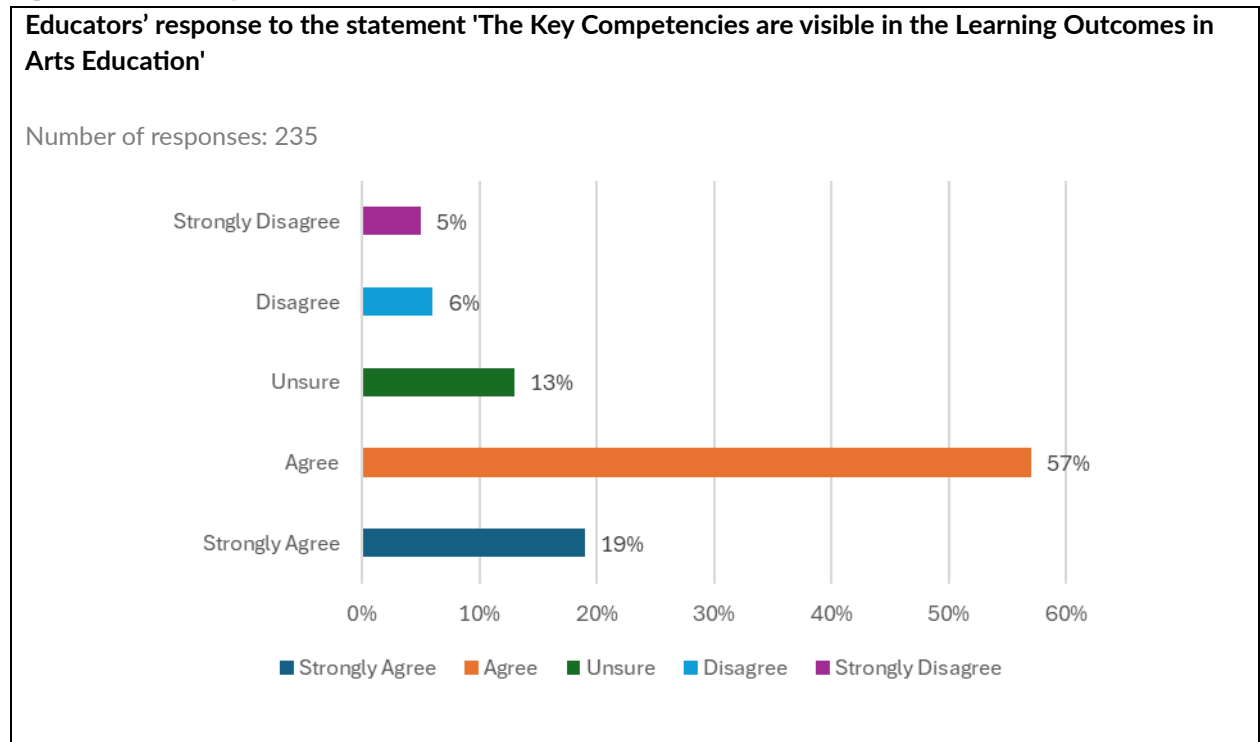
The trend of positive responses continued in response to the statement, 'The number of Learning Outcomes for each stage in Arts Education is appropriate': 'Agree' accounted for 49% of responses, and 'Strongly Agree' reached 13%. There was an increase in the number of instances of 'Unsure' being selected at 22%, suggesting some potential uncertainty around the area of Learning Outcomes for those participants. Echoes of a similar uncertainty were evidenced in the broader Arts Education consultation data with a number of calls being made for additional guidance and support in relation to the Learning Outcomes. Participants who disagreed with the statement remained in the minority, with 'Disagree' accounting for 9%, and 'Strongly Disagree' for 7%.

Figure 4: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, statement 4



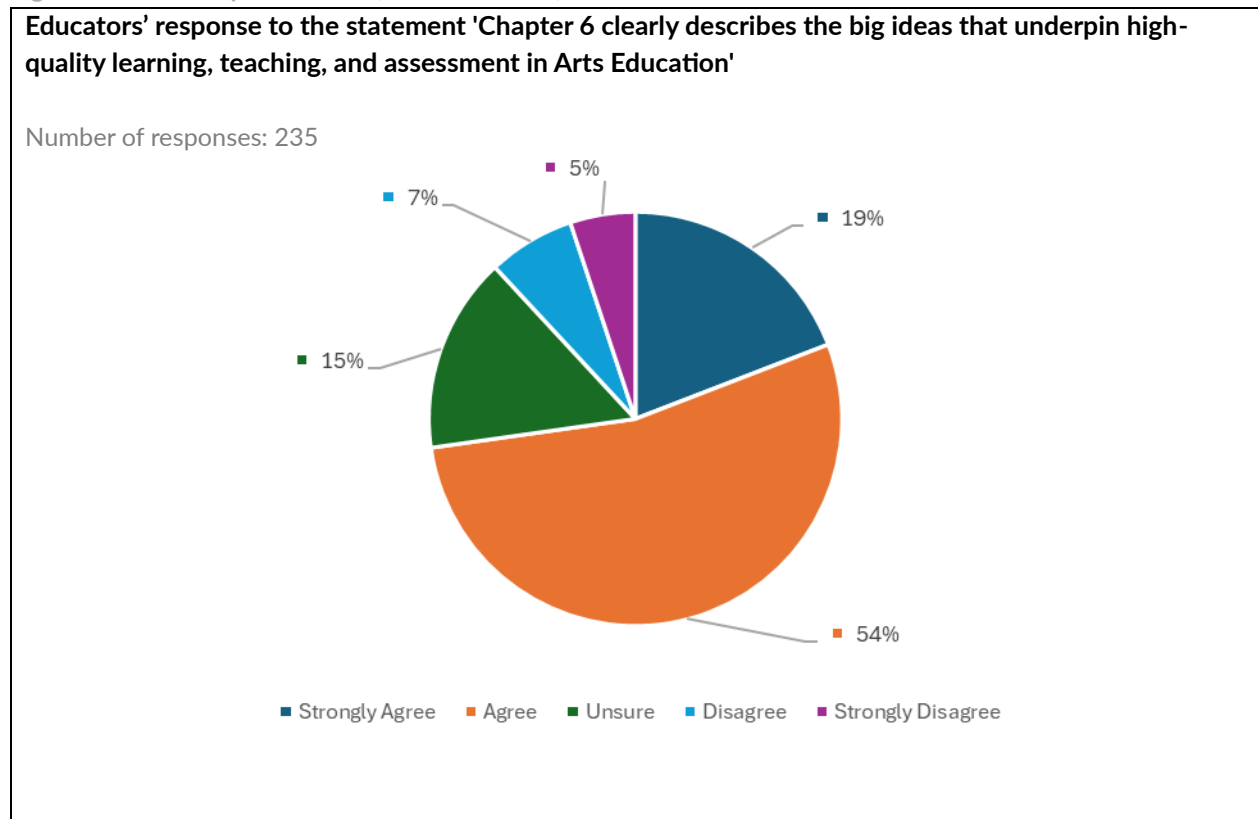
Participants were positive overall to the Key Competencies being visible in the Learning Outcomes in Arts Education, as shown in Figure 5. A combined 76% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the Key Competencies were visible in the Learning Outcomes in Arts Education. 13% of participants were unsure about the statement. While only 11% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Key Competencies are visible in the Learning Outcomes.

Figure 5: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, statement 5



Participants continued to respond positively to the draft specification, as illustrated in Figure 6. A significant majority of responses concurred with the statement that Chapter 6 clearly described the big ideas that underpin high-quality learning, teaching and assessment in Arts Education (54% agreed, 19% strongly agreed). This was in keeping with the broadly positive responses given throughout the questionnaire. In contrast, 15% were unsure while 7% disagreed and a further 5% strongly disagreed. This aligns with findings from across the consultation where there was a broad welcome for the ideas put forward in Chapter 6 of the draft specification.

Figure 6: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, statement 6

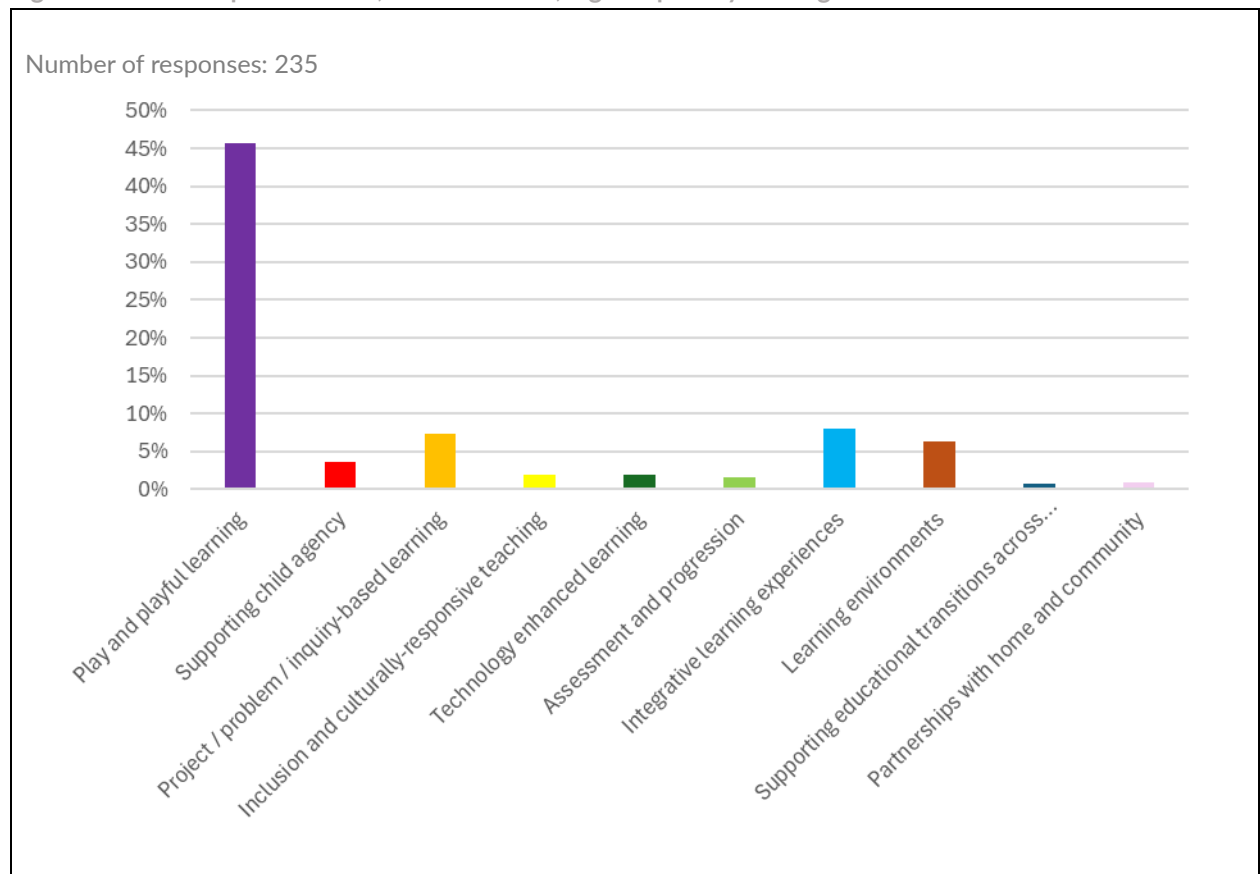


Participants were invited to rank the following priorities for practical supports in developing an online Toolkit for Arts Education:

- Play and playful learning
- Supporting child agency
- Project/ problem/ inquiry-based learning
- Inclusion and culturally-responsive teaching
- Technology enhanced learning
- Assessment and progression
- Integrative learning experiences
- Learning environments
- Supporting educational transitions across primary school
- Partnerships with home and community

Figure 7 illustrates the percentage of responses in which each support was selected as the highest priority.

Figure 7: Educator questionnaire, Arts Education, highest priority rankings



A large majority of responses were in agreement that supports for 'Play and Playful Learning' is the most important priority. This was by far the most popular response at 46%. There was a significant gap between the highest and second highest ranked priorities with 'Integrative learning experiences'; and 'Project/ problem/ inquiry-based learning' both garnering the same response rate at just below 10%. The perceived value and importance of play and playful learning for this curriculum area was similarly notable within the broader consultation data.

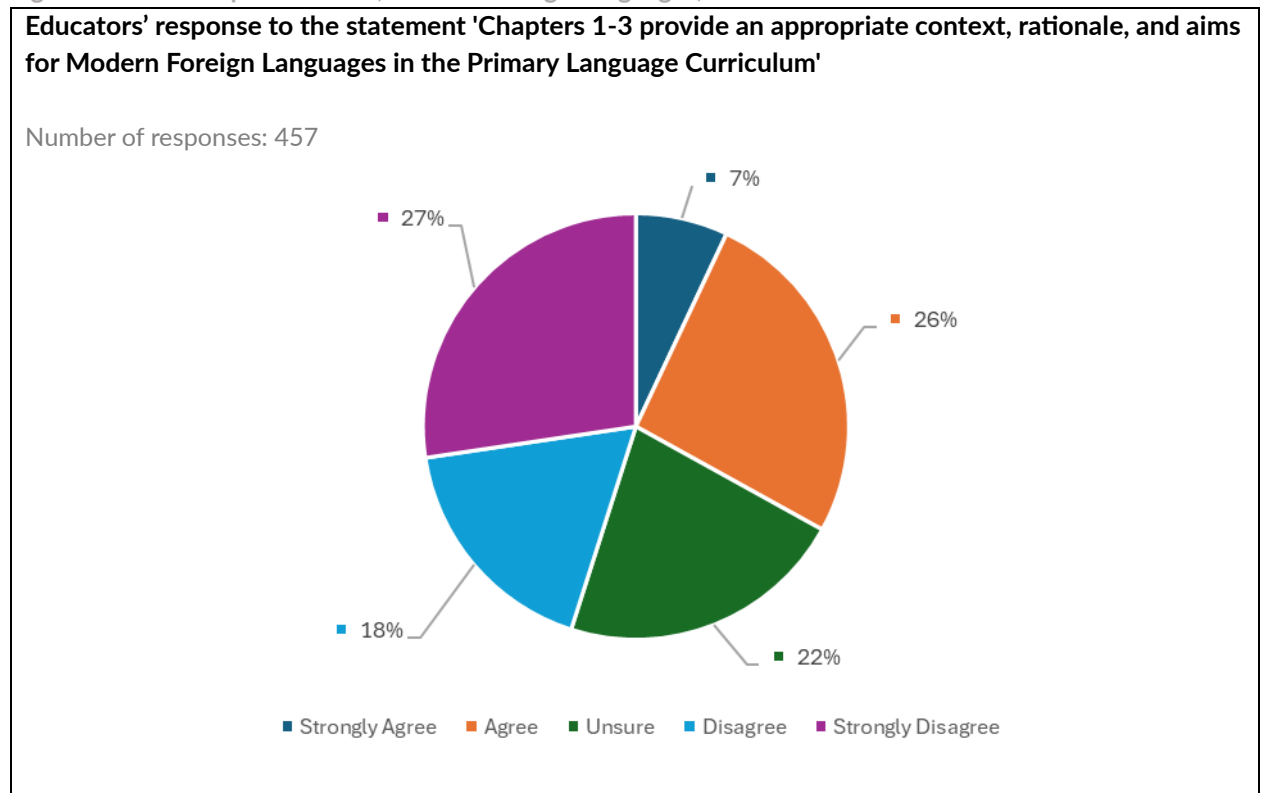
Updates to the Primary Language Curriculum to include Modern Foreign Languages

Educators were asked to what extent they agree/disagree with statements related to the draft updates to the *Primary Language Curriculum* to include Modern Foreign Languages. Responses to these statements varied considerably with 'Agree' and 'Strongly Disagree' frequently being the most popular responses.

With a total of 457 responses, this questionnaire saw a higher response rate than the other questionnaires concerning the other four curriculum areas. The fact that the response rate on this questionnaire was higher than the other questionnaires is notable. It is also notable that this questionnaire received more instances of the 'Strongly Disagree' option being consistently selected to every statement compared to the other questionnaires.

Participants' responses to the statement 'Chapters 1-3 provide an appropriate context, rationale, and aims for Modern Foreign Languages in the Primary Language Curriculum' are illustrated in Figure 8. The chart shows that responses were mixed. The three most selected options were 'Strongly Disagree' (27%), 'Agree' (26%), and 'Unsure' (22%).

Figure 8: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement 1



The results shown in Figure 9 are more positive but continue to illustrate a difference of opinions amongst participants. 'Agree' accounted for 32% of responses to the statement, 'Strongly Disagree' represented 26%, and 'Disagree' represented 20%. 'Unsure' accounted for 17% of responses, while 'Strongly Agree' was represented 5% of the responses.

Figure 9: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement 2

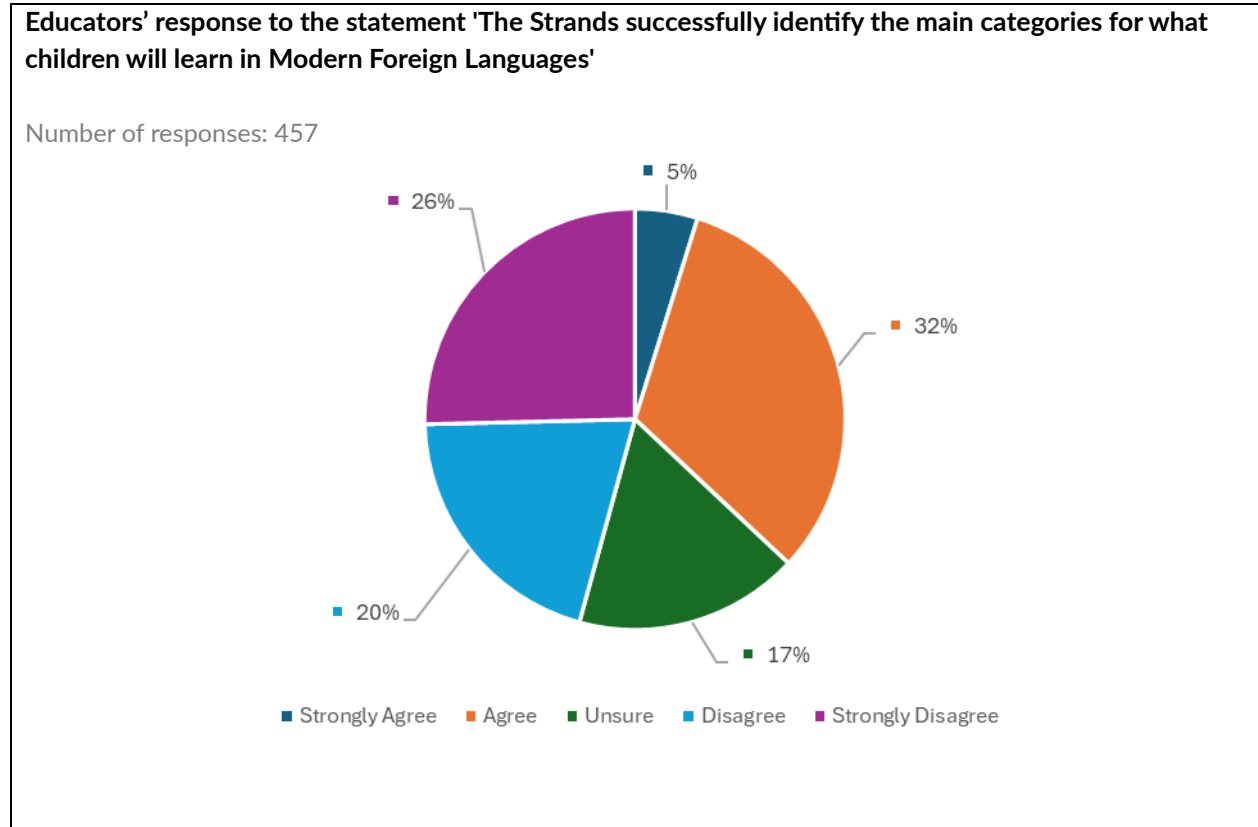
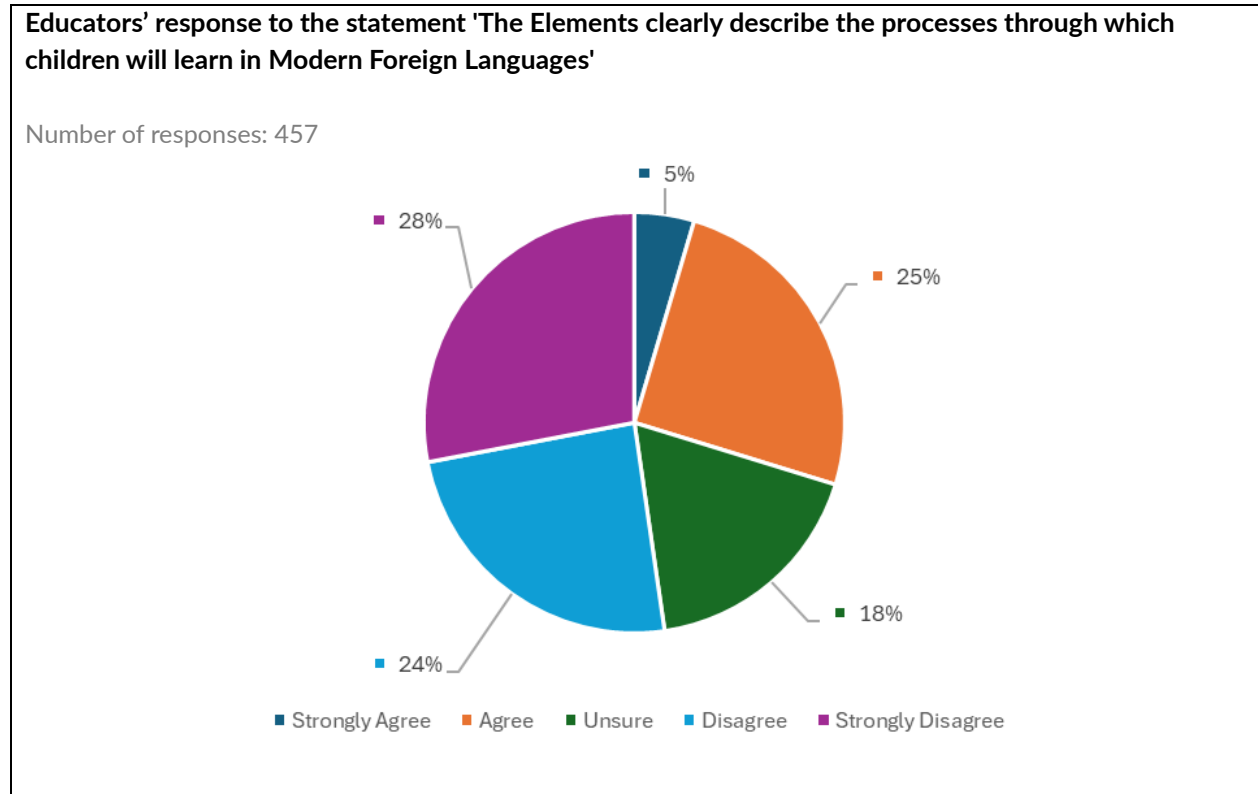


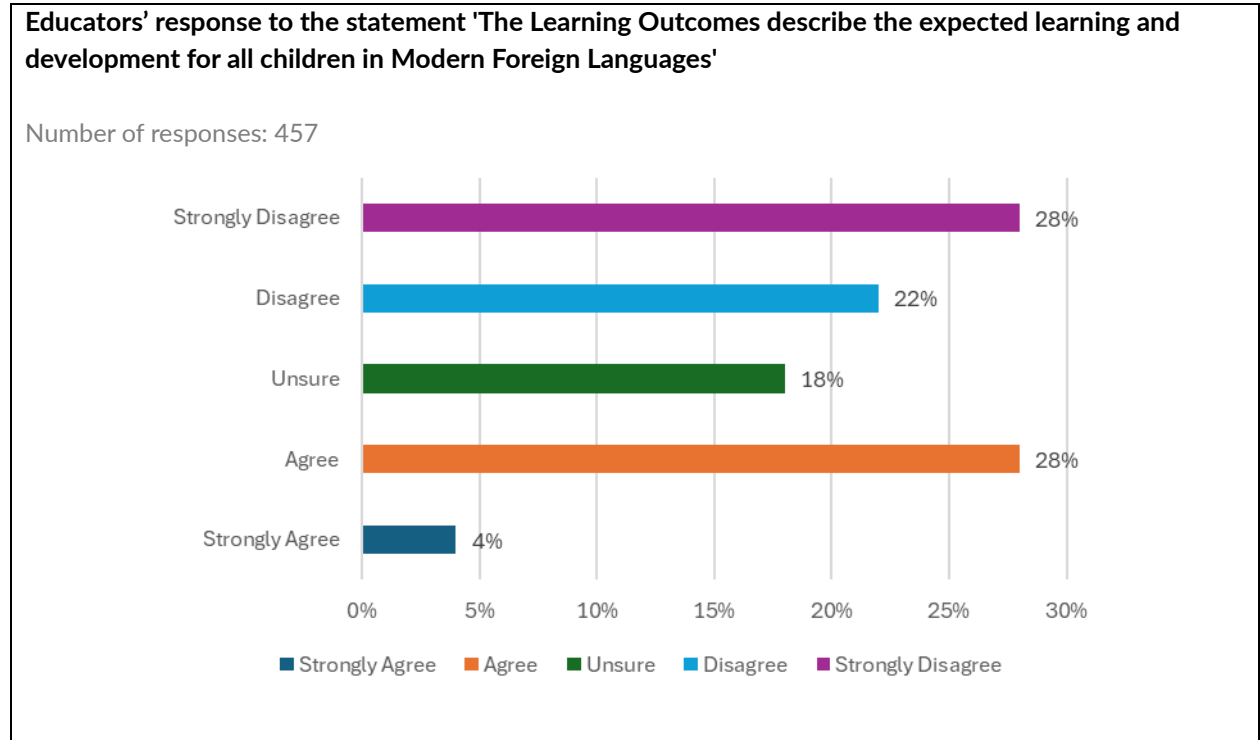
Figure 10 shows that participants were less certain about how the processes through which children will learn in Modern Foreign Languages were described in the elements. Most responses were in disagreement (52%) with the statement, while 25% agreed, and 5% strongly agreed.

Figure 10: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement 3



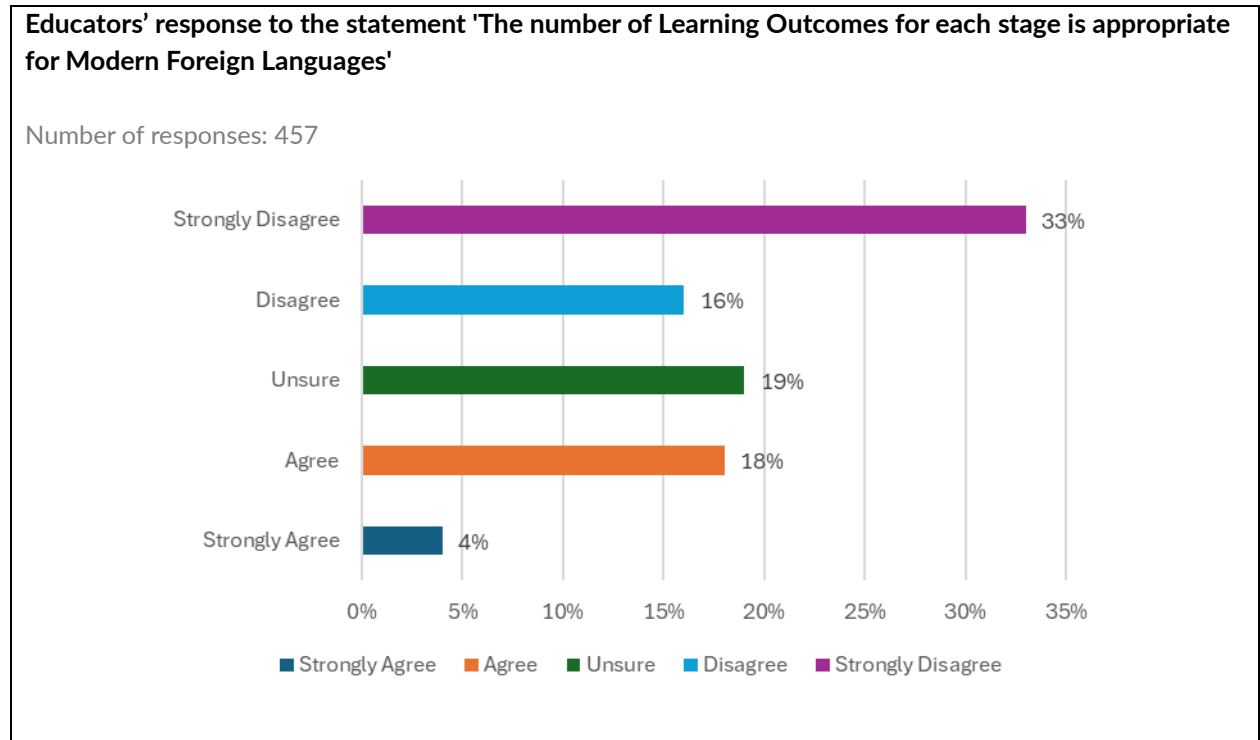
There was a mixed response to the statement on the Learning Outcomes as evidenced in Figure 11. 28% strongly disagreed with the statement while a further 28% were in agreement with the statement that 'The Learning Outcomes describe the expected learning and development for all children in Modern Foreign Languages'.

Figure 11: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement 4



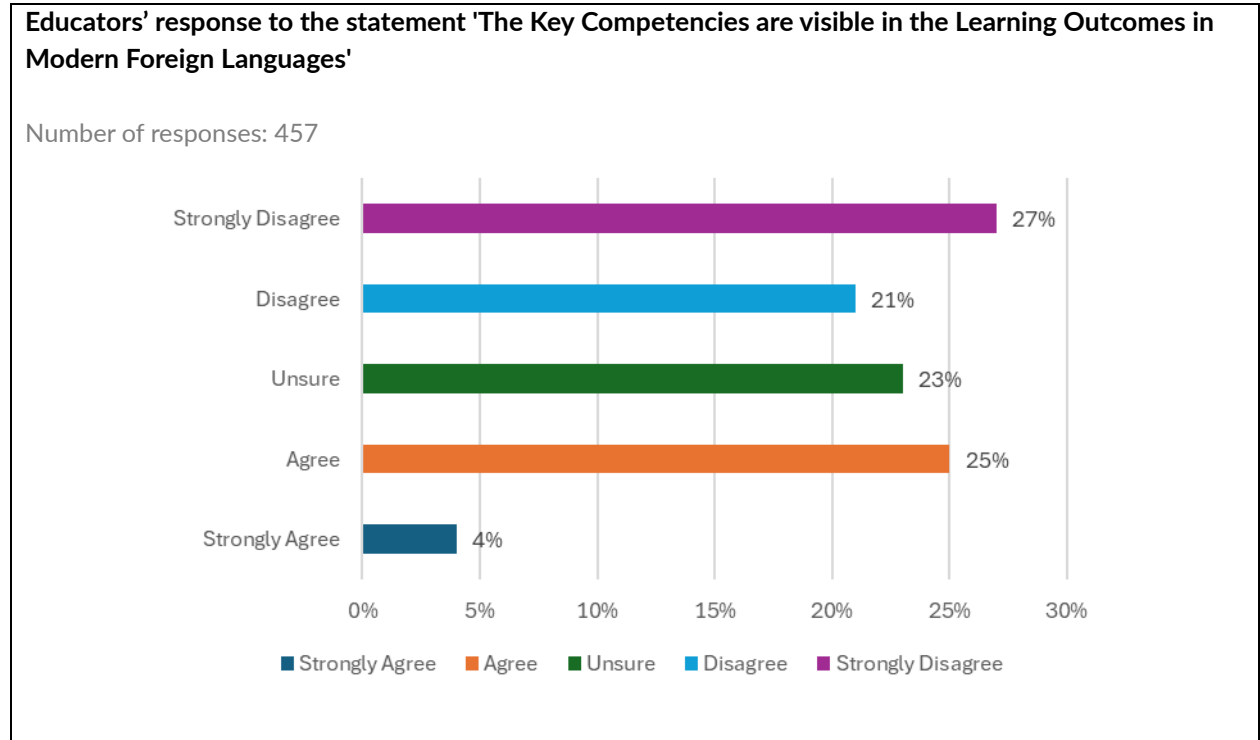
When asked their opinion on whether the number of Learning Outcomes for each stage was appropriate for Modern Foreign Languages, the number of 'Strongly Disagree' responses increased to 33%. What was also notable was that both the 'Agree' and 'Disagree' response rates fell. The number of 'Unsure' responses remained at a similar level to previous statements at 19%.

Figure 12: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement 5



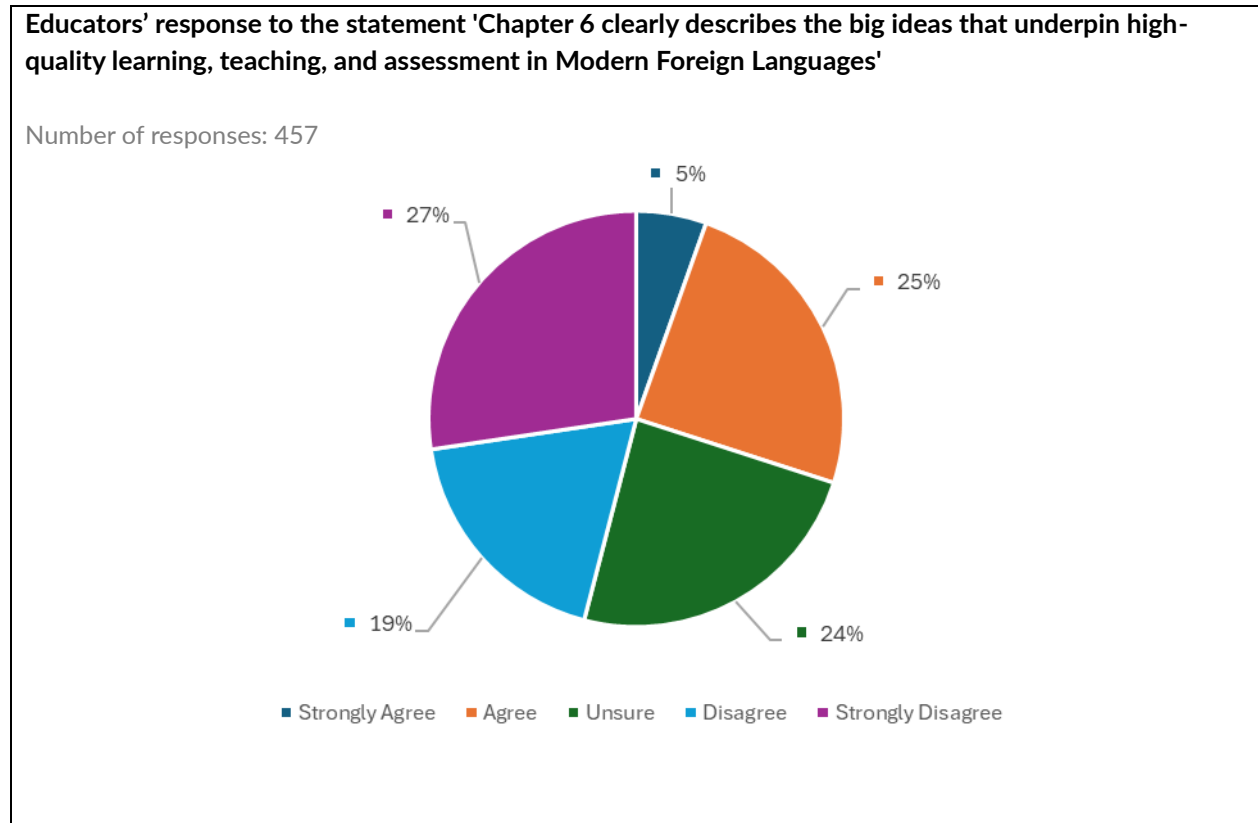
Opinions were mixed as to whether or not the Key Competencies were visible in the Learning Outcomes for Modern Foreign Languages. The consistent selection of the 'Strongly Disagree' option continued at a similar level to previous statements, at 27%. A total of 29% agreed/strongly agreed that the Key Competencies are visible in the Learning Outcomes.

Figure 13: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement 6



Responses differed significantly in reaction to the statement 'Chapter 6 clearly describes the big ideas that underpin high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment in Modern Foreign Languages'. Similar to previous statements, the three most popular responses were 'Strongly Disagree' (27%), 'Agree' (25%), and 'Unsure' (24%).

Figure 14: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Languages, statement 7

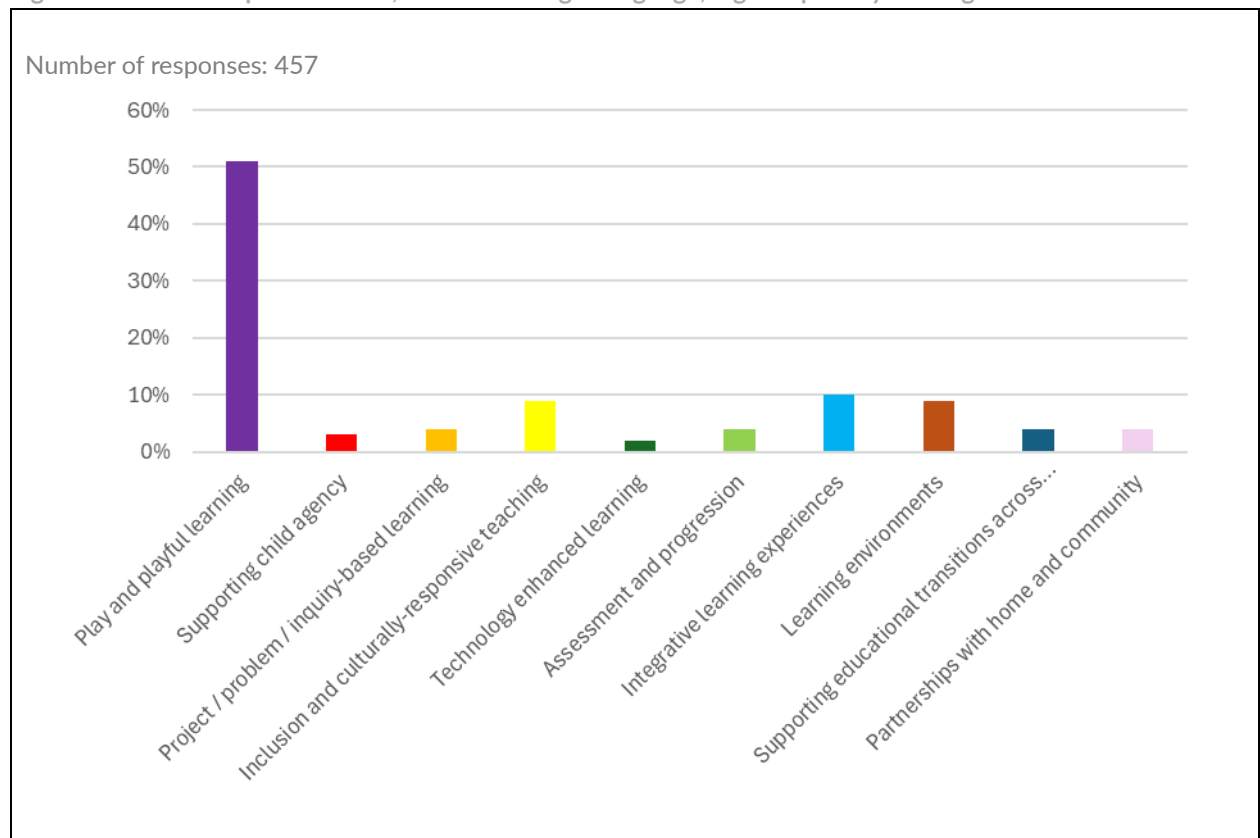


Participants were invited to rank the following priorities for practical supports in developing an online Toolkit for Modern Foreign Languages:

- Play and playful learning
- Supporting child agency
- Project/ problem/ inquiry-based learning
- Inclusion and culturally-responsive teaching
- Technology enhanced learning
- Assessment and progression
- Integrative learning experiences
- Learning environments
- Supporting educational transitions across primary school
- Partnerships with home and community

Figure 15 illustrates the percentage of responses in which each support was selected as the highest priority.

Figure 15: Educator questionnaire, Modern Foreign Language, highest priority rankings

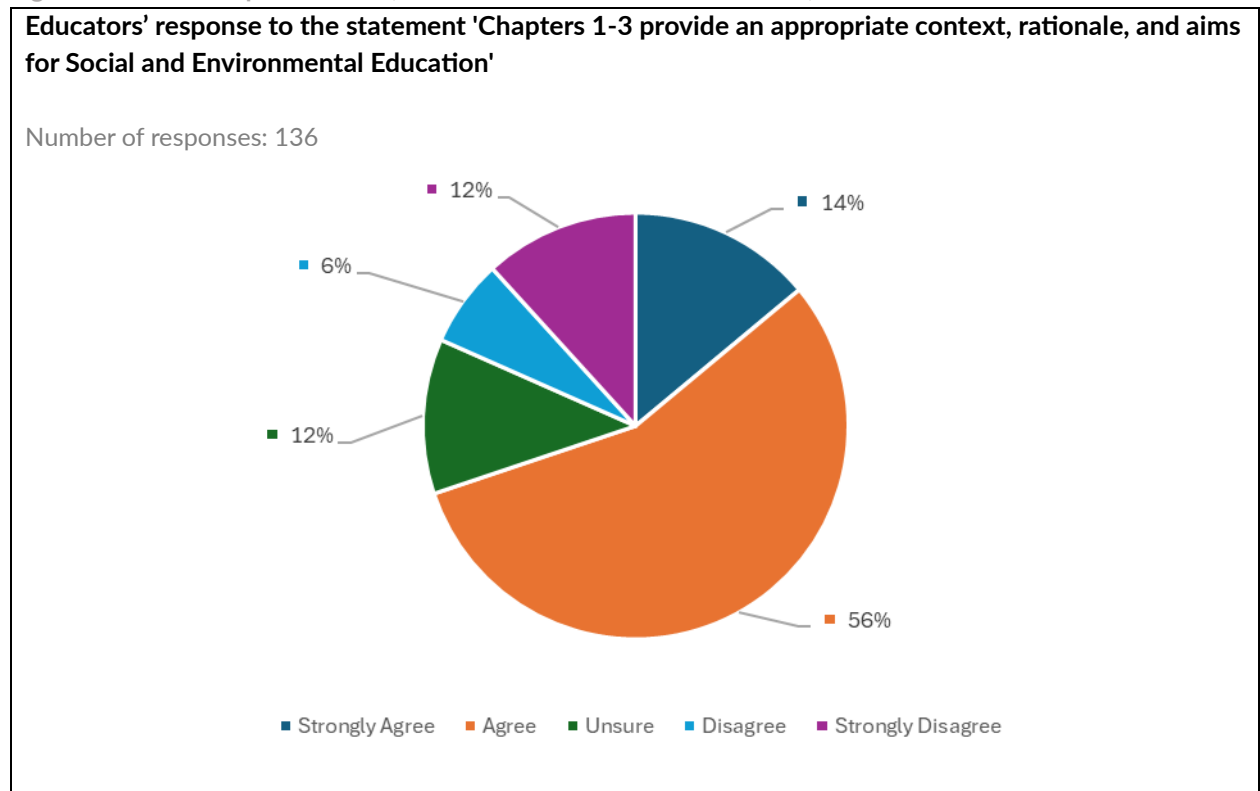


The results strongly show that participants believe ‘Play and playful learning’ to be the highest priority. Over 50% selected ‘Play and Playful Learning’ first in their rankings. This is in contrast to ‘Integrative Learning Experiences’ which received just 10% of the first priority rankings.

Social and Environmental Education

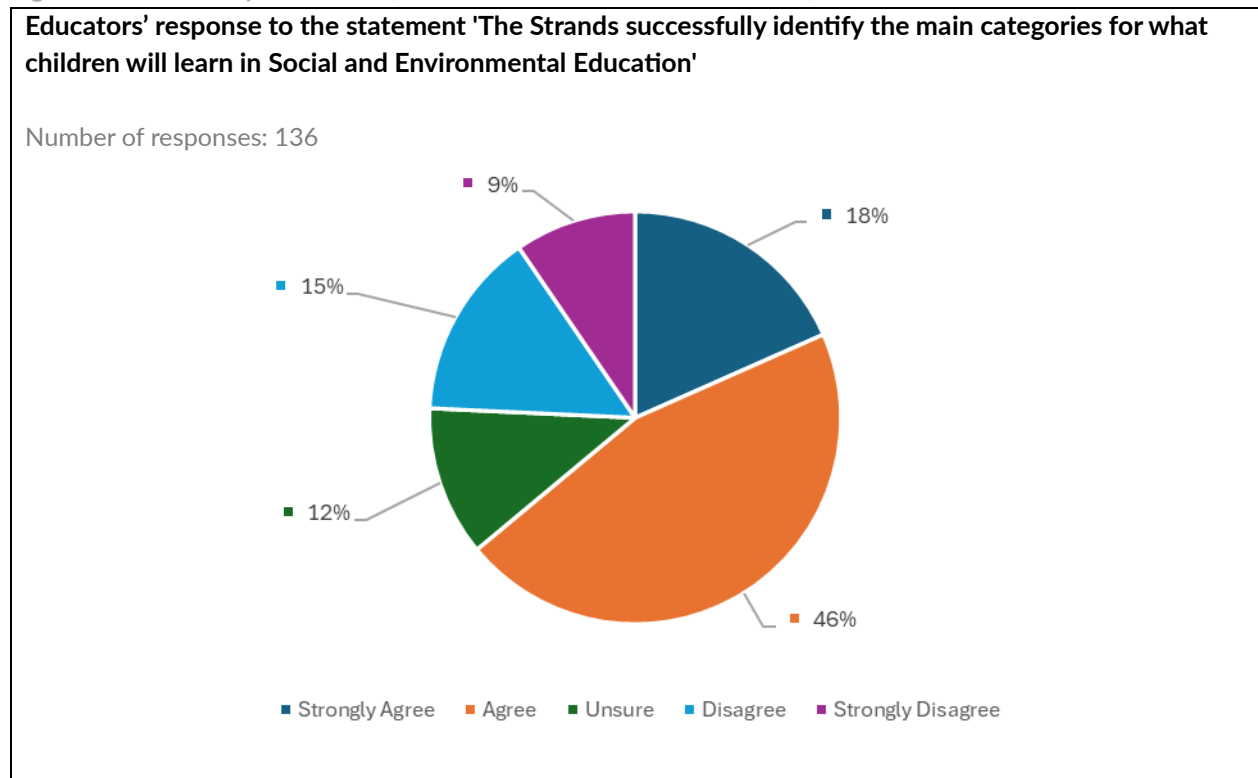
Educators were invited to respond to statements related to the *Draft Primary Social and Environmental Education Curriculum*. 136 responses were recorded in this questionnaire. Participants gave their opinions on whether Chapters 1-3 provides an appropriate context, rationale, and aims for Social and Environmental Education. A majority of responses indicated that they are appropriate with 56% agreeing and 14% strongly agreeing. 6% disagreed, 12% strongly disagreed while 12% were unsure. This aligns with data gathered from other strands of the consultation which suggest a broad welcome for the opening chapters of the draft specification due to their accessibility and clarity.

Figure 16: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 1



Participants responded positively to the statement: 'The Strands successfully identify the main categories for what children will learn in Social and Environmental Education'. 18% strongly agreed with the statement, and 46% agreed. A minority of 15% disagreed, and 9% strongly disagreed, while 12% indicated they were unsure. This echoes opinions collected across the consultation whereby, despite a general positivity towards the redeveloped strand labels due to their interconnectedness, some concerns were expressed regarding a potential imbalance between history and geography within the strands.

Figure 17: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 2

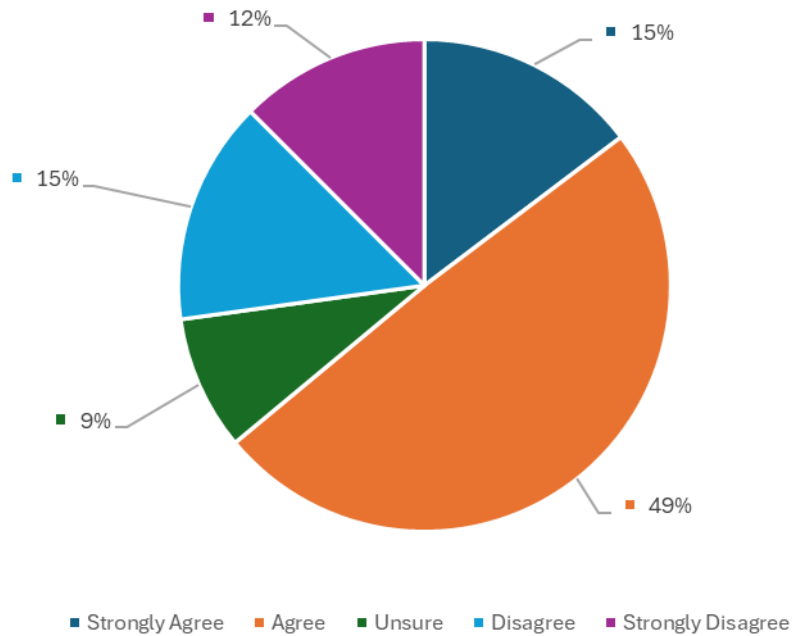


When asked if the elements clearly described the processes through which children would learn in Social and Environmental Education, 49% of participants agreed. The next most popular response was 'Strongly Agree' (15%), continuing the trend of positive reception to the statement. This was also borne out across other strands of the consultation wherein there was strong positivity for the inclusion of elements common to other curriculum areas in the specification and the alignment this offered. 9% of participants were unsure with a further 15% disagreeing and 12% strongly disagreeing.

Figure 18: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 3

Educators' response to the statement 'The Elements clearly describe the processes through which children learn in Social and Environmental Education'

Number of responses: 136

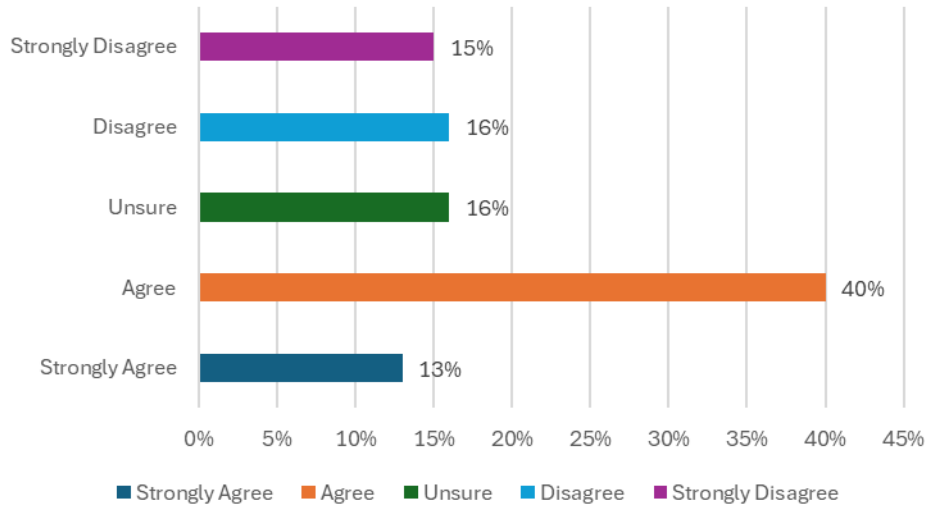


Participants were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement, 'The Learning Outcomes describe the expected learning and development for all children in Social and Environmental Education'. A majority of responses signified agreement with this statement with 40% agreeing and 13% strongly agreeing. This demonstrates that just over half of the educators surveyed believe that the Learning Outcomes successfully describe children's expected learning and development in Social and Environmental Education. This contrasts with 16% who disagreed and 15% who strongly disagreed. This aligns with qualitative data collected in the consultation as a number of participants welcomed the articulation of broad learning outcomes in SEE for the agency afforded to teachers build upon children's interests and experiences. On the other hand, there were also a number of participants who expressed that the Learning Outcomes were vague and lacked sufficient specificity.

Figure 19: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 4

Educators' response to the statement 'The Learning Outcomes describe the expected learning and development for all children in Social and Environmental Education'

Number of responses: 136

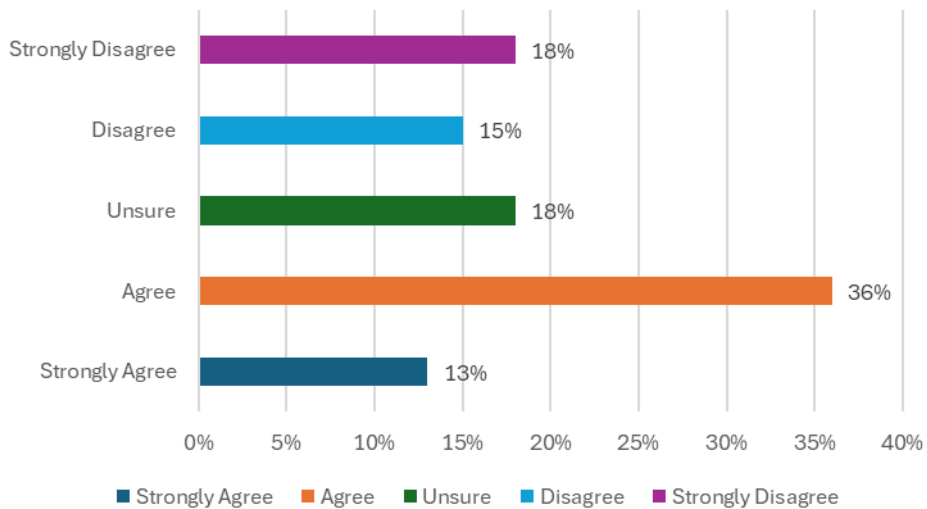


When asked if the number of Learning Outcomes for each stage in Social and Environmental Education is appropriate, there was broad agreement from 49% of the responses (Figure 20), with 36% agreeing and a further 13% strongly agreeing. This contrasts with 15% and 18% disagreeing and strongly disagreeing respectively.

Figure 20: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 5

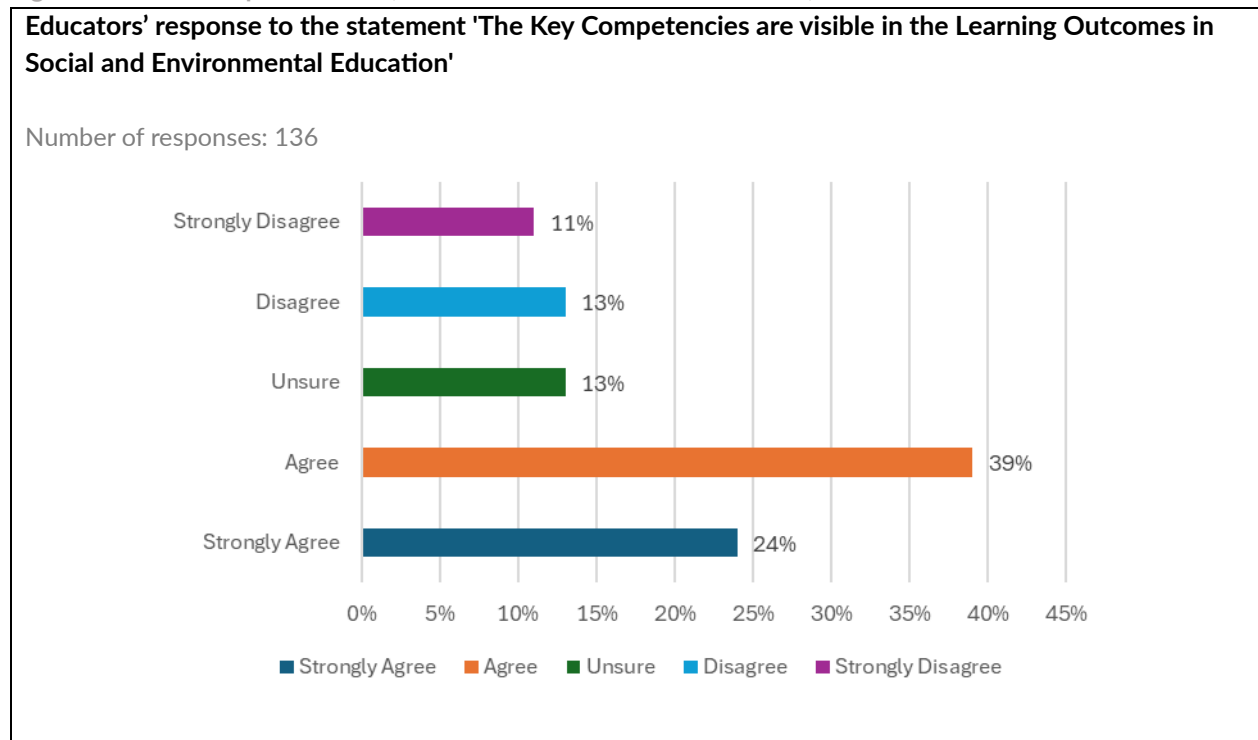
Educators' response to the statement 'The number of Learning Outcomes for each stage in Social and Environmental Education is appropriate'

Number of responses: 136



When asked if they agreed that the Key Competencies were visible in the Learning Outcomes for Social and Environmental Education, participants reacted positively. 39% of participants agreed, and 24% strongly agreed, marking a significant positive increase from previous statements. A further 13% of participants disagreed and 11% strongly disagreed. This correlates well with the positivity expressed in other strands of the consultation towards Table 3 (p.11) of the draft specification, which highlights examples of how the Key Competencies can be supported in practice.

Figure 21: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 6

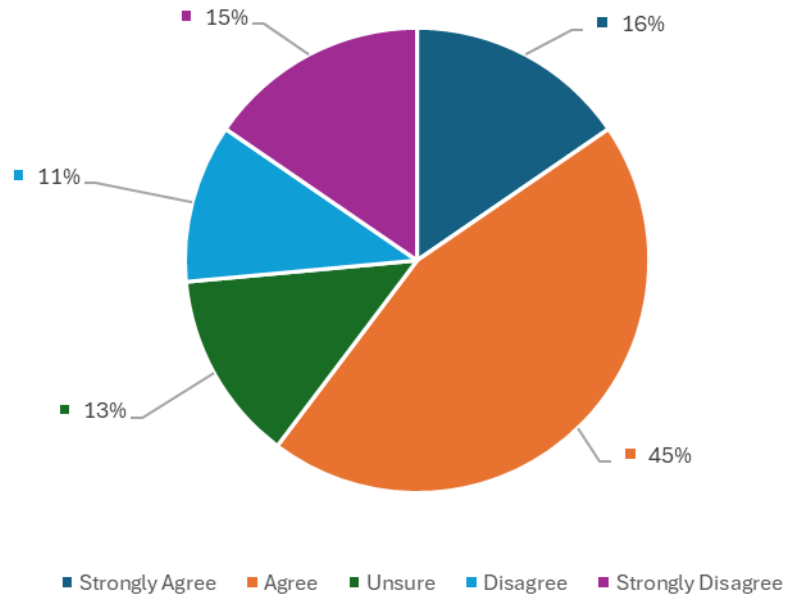


Participants felt that Chapter 6 clearly describes the big ideas that underpin high-quality learning, teaching and assessment in Social and Environmental Education, with 45% agreeing with the statement and 16% strongly agreeing. This finding coheres well with the qualitative data gathered around the pedagogical practices that underpin high-quality teaching in Social and Environmental Education which received extensive welcome. 15% strongly disagreed and 11% disagreed, while 13% of responses were unsure.

Figure 22: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statement 7

Educators' response to the statement 'Chapter 6 clearly describes the big ideas that underpin high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment in Social and Environmental Education'

Number of responses: 136

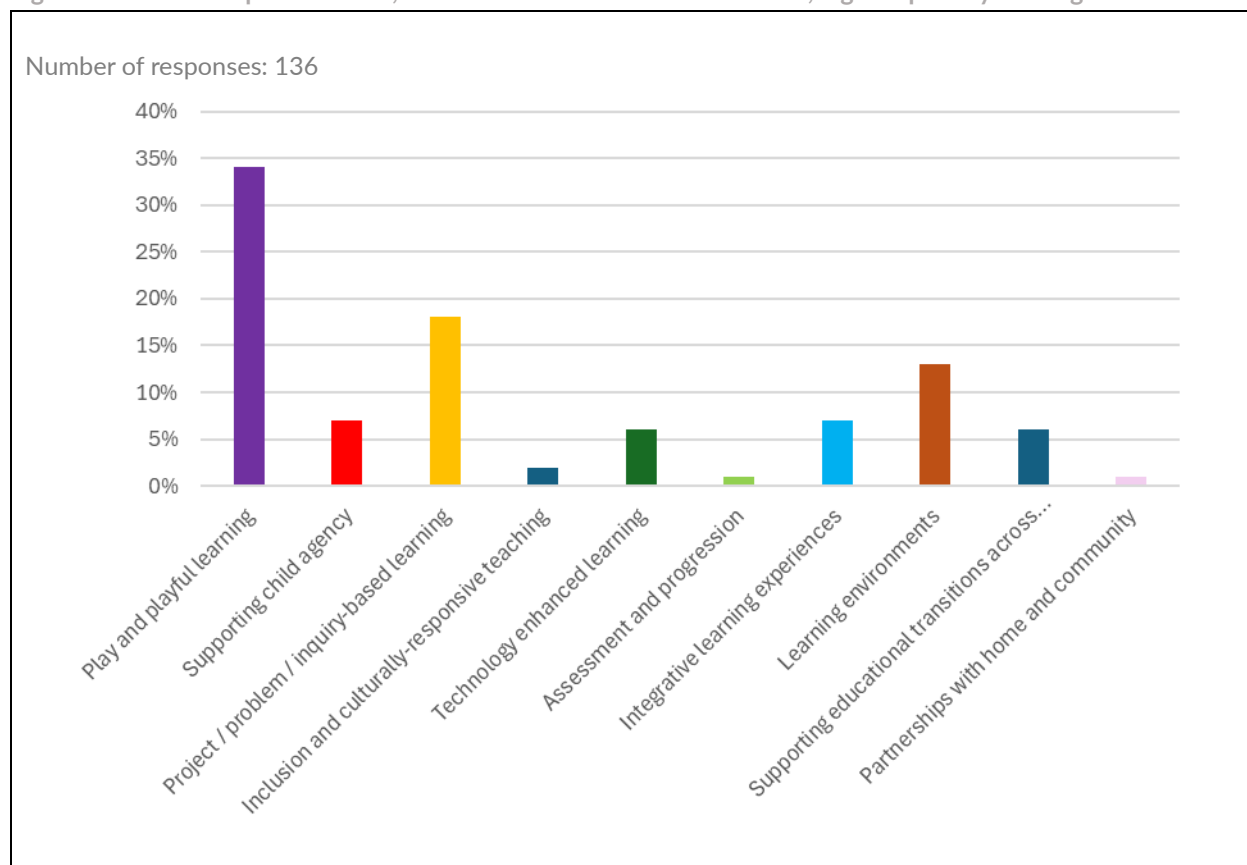


Participants were invited to rank the following priorities for practical supports in developing an online Toolkit for Social and Environmental Education:

- Play and playful learning
- Supporting child agency
- Project/ problem/ inquiry-based learning
- Inclusion and culturally-responsive teaching
- Technology enhanced learning
- Assessment and progression
- Integrative learning experiences
- Learning environments
- Supporting educational transitions across primary school
- Partnerships with home and community

Figure 23 illustrates the percentage of responses in which each support was selected as the highest priority.

Figure 23: Educator questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, highest priority rankings



'Play and Playful Learning' received the largest number of first priority responses at 34%. Many responses also indicated that 'Project / Problem/ Inquiry-based Learning' (18%) and 'Learning Environments' (13%), were a priority for practical supports in developing an online Toolkit for Social and Environmental Education.

Science, Technology and Engineering Education

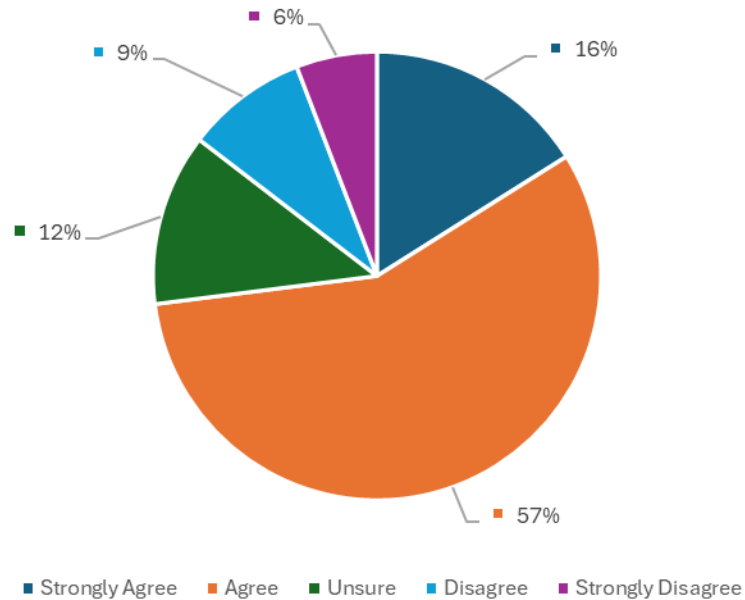
Educators were invited to share their opinions and respond to a series of statements related to the *Draft Primary Science Technology and Engineering Education Curriculum*, choosing from responses ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'. 137 participants took part in this questionnaire and responded to each of the statements.

Participants were asked to respond to a statement that Chapters 1-3 provide an appropriate context, rationale, and aims for Science, Technology and Engineering Education. A significant majority, 57% of participants, agreed with the statement while a further 16% strongly agreed (Figure 24). This finding reflected the perspectives gathered through other consultation formats, where participants generally welcomed the content and organisation of the introduction, rationale and aims as accessible and clear. 15% of participants disagreed/strongly disagreed that the first three chapters provide an appropriate context, rationale and aims.

Figure 24: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 1

Educators' response to the statement 'Chapters 1-3 provide an appropriate context, rationale, and aims for Science, Technology and Engineering Education'

Number of responses: 137

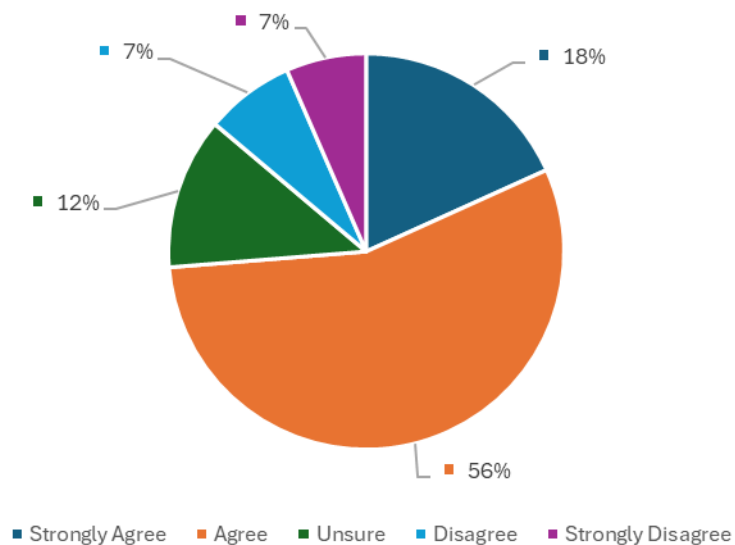


Participants were positive about the statement 'The Strands successfully identify the main categories for what children will learn in Science Technology and Engineering Education' with 56% agreeing and 18% strongly agreeing (Figure 25). A small number of responses disagreed or strongly disagreed while 12% were unsure.

Figure 25: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 2

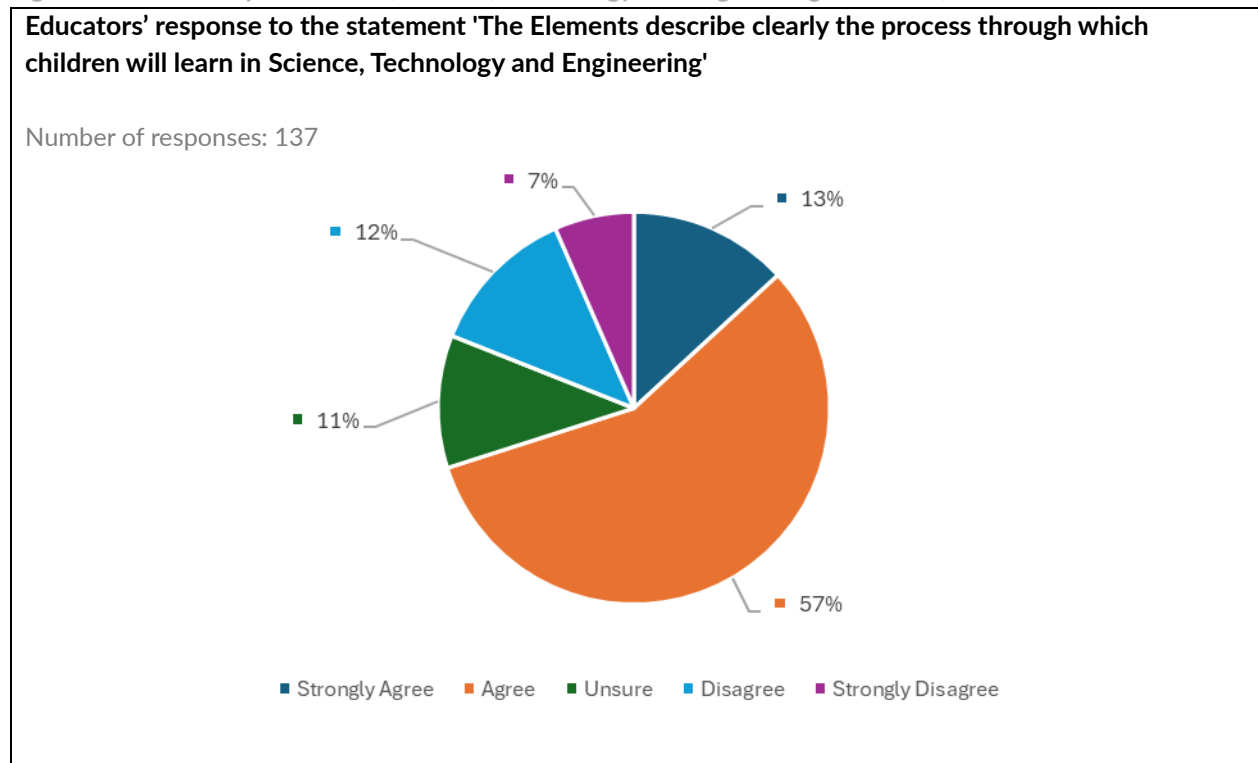
Educators' response to the statement 'The Strands successfully identify the main categories for what children will learn in Science, Technology and Engineering Education'

Number of responses: 137



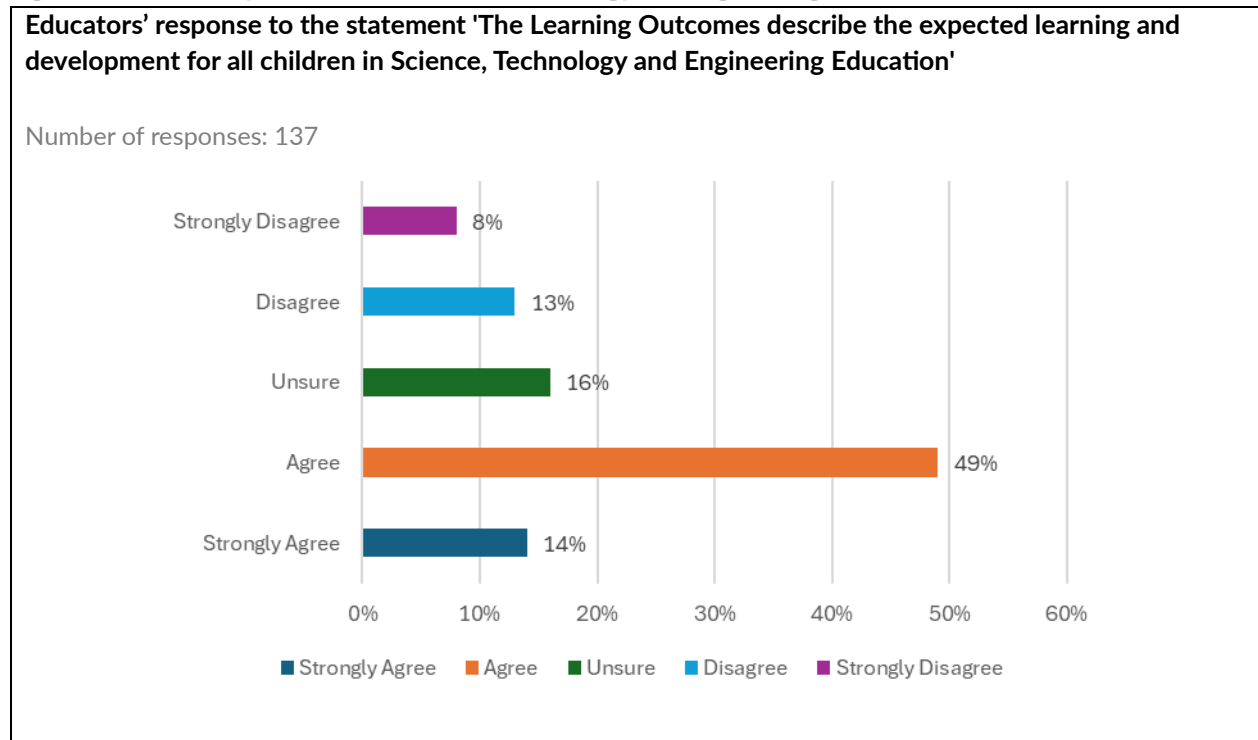
A positive pattern emerged in response to this question (Figure 26), with most participants agreeing or strongly agreeing (combined 70%) that the Elements describe clearly the process through which children will learn in Science, Technology and Engineering. This finding was similar to the views expressed in other consultation formats, where participants were in consensus that the elements clearly reflected high quality learning experiences in Science, Technology and Engineering. There was a small increase in the number of responses disagreeing with the statement as well (combined 19%).

Figure 26: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 3



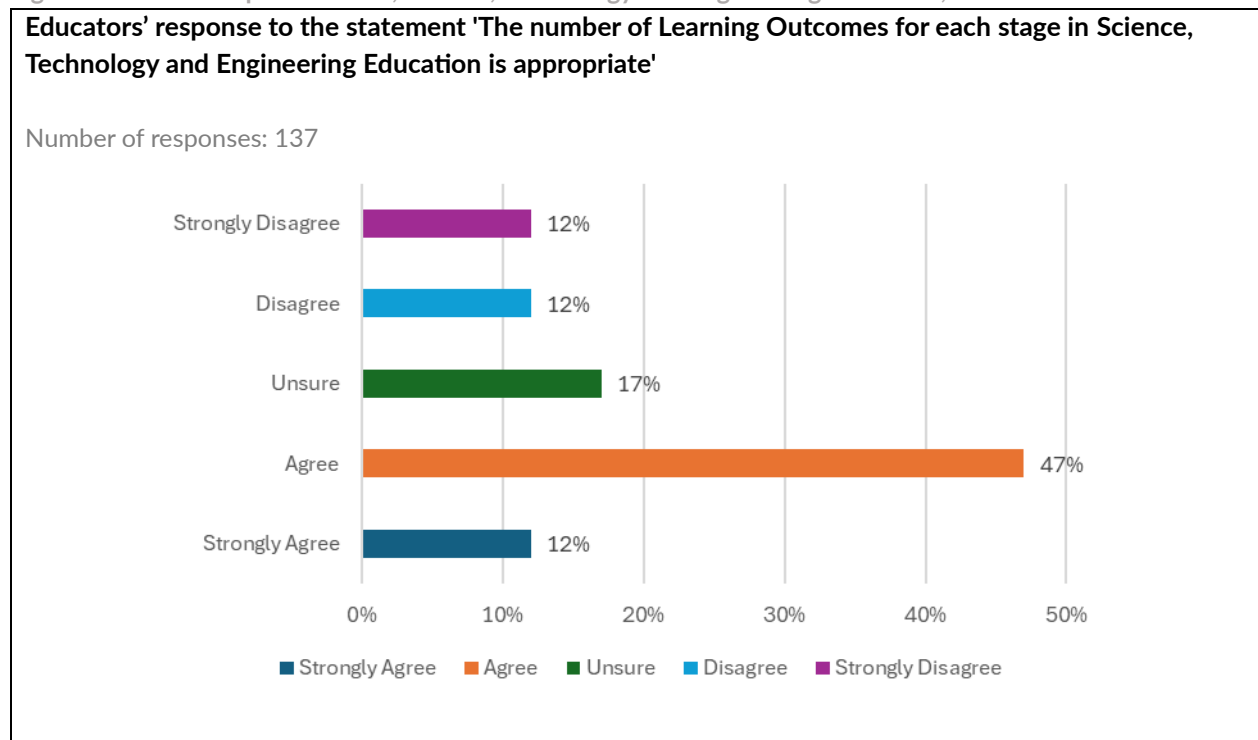
The pattern of positive responses continued, as illustrated in Figure 27 with 49% agreeing and 14% strongly agreeing that the Learning Outcomes describe the expected learning and development for all children in Science Technology and Engineering Education. This was in contrast to a smaller minority who disagreed (13%) and strongly disagreed (8%).

Figure 27: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 4



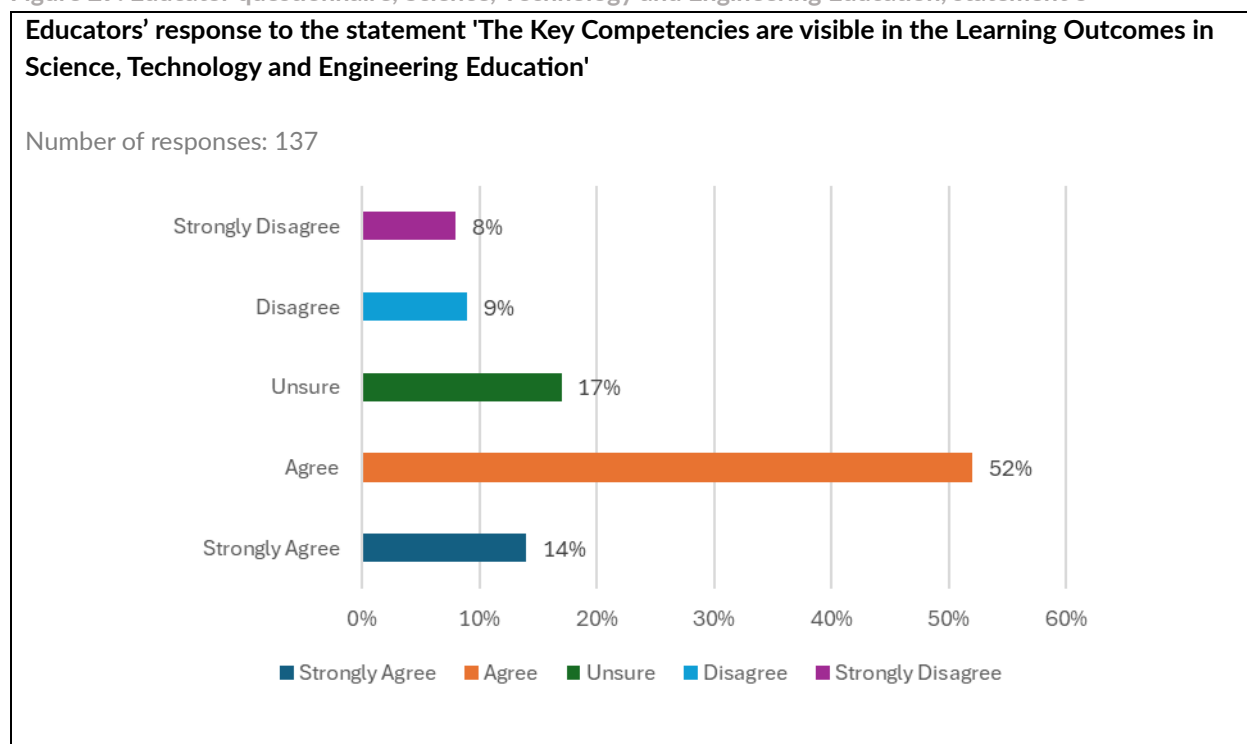
When asked to consider if the number of Learning Outcomes for each stage in Science, Technology and Engineering Education is appropriate, 47% agreed while 12% strongly agreed as shown in Figure 28. Some participants were of the view that the number of Learning Outcomes for each stage is not appropriate with 12% disagreeing and a further 12% strongly disagreeing.

Figure 28: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 5



Over half of participants (52%) agreed that the Key Competencies are visible in the Learning Outcomes in Science, Technology and Engineering Education', while an additional 14% strongly agreed. This finding was also reflected across other consultation formats where participants felt that they could clearly identify the Key Competencies in the Learning Outcomes. Figure 29 shows that – similar to previous questions, the number of participants that disagreed with the statement (combined 17%) was quite low.

Figure 29: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 6

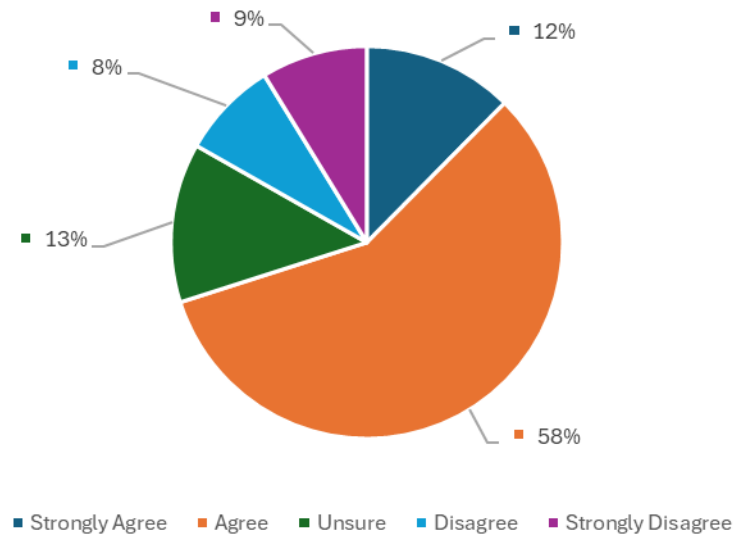


In keeping with the trend throughout the Science, Technology and Engineering Education questionnaire, the majority of responses were positive in reaction to the statement that Chapter 6 clearly describes the big ideas that underpin high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment in Science, Technology and Engineering Education. 58% agreed with the statement while 12% strongly agreed. The number of participants disagreeing (8%) or strongly disagreeing (13%) was considerably less.

Figure 30: Educator questionnaire, Science, Technology and Engineering Education, statement 7

Educators' response to the statement 'Chapter 6 clearly describes the big ideas that underpin high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment in Science, Technology and Engineering Education'

Number of responses: 137

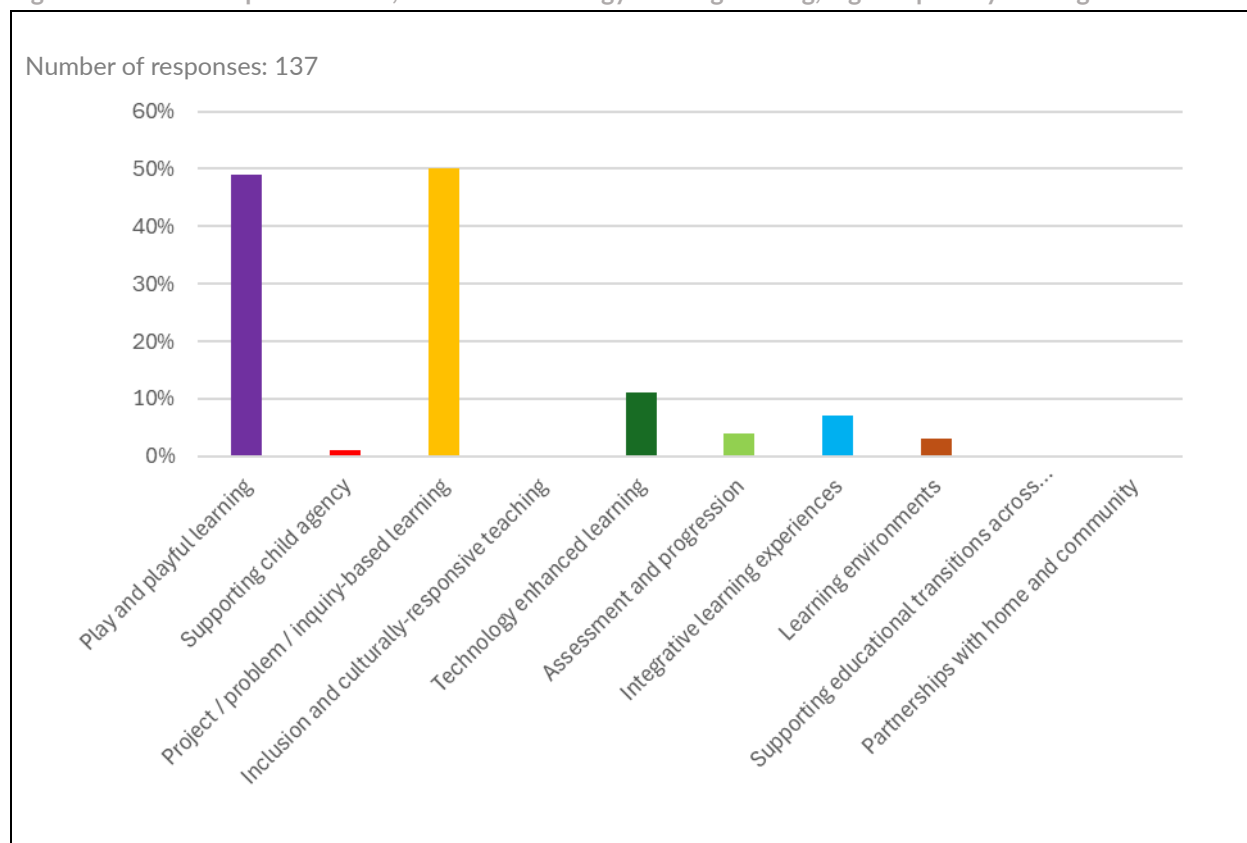


Participants were invited to rank the following priorities for practical supports in developing an online Toolkit for Science, Technology and Engineering:

- Play and playful learning
- Supporting child agency
- Project/ problem/ inquiry-based learning
- Inclusion and culturally-responsive teaching
- Technology enhanced learning
- Assessment and progression
- Integrative learning experiences
- Learning environments
- Supporting educational transitions across primary school
- Partnerships with home and community

Figure 31 illustrates the percentage of responses in which each support was selected as the highest priority.

Figure 31: Educator questionnaire, Science Technology and Engineering, highest priority rankings



The results indicate that participants believed 'Project / Problem / Inquiry Based Learning' to be the highest priority for support in an online Toolkit from the options given; receiving 50% of first priority selections. This was echoed across other consultation formats where participants requested exemplars of integrated STEM projects/activities in practice in the toolkit. This was closely followed by 'Play and Playful Learning' at 49%. The lowest ranking priorities were for 'Supporting Educational Transitions', 'Inclusion and Culturally Responsive Teaching' and 'Partnerships with Home and Community'; each receiving no first priority responses.

Wellbeing

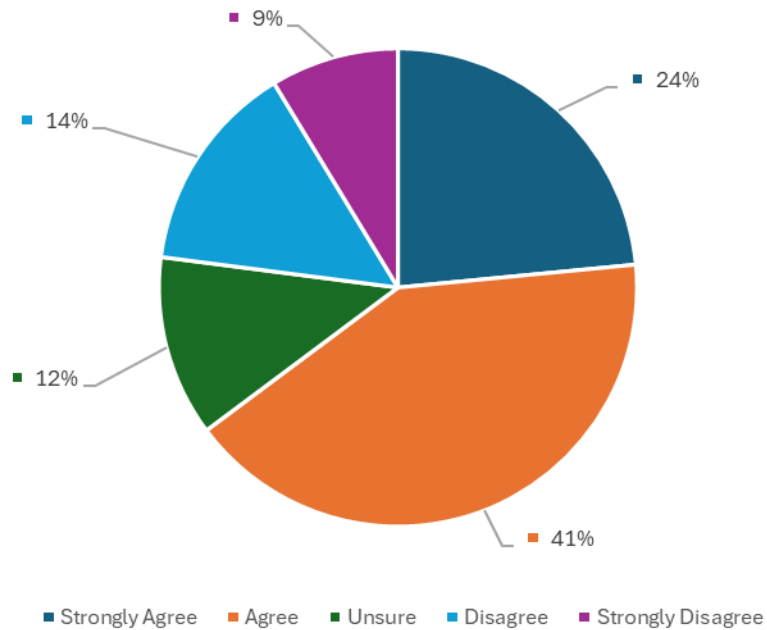
Educators were asked to what extent they agree/disagree with statements related to *The Draft Primary Wellbeing Curriculum*. This questionnaire had a response rate of 196. Responses to this questionnaire were predominantly positive, with the majority of responses either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements. Very few disagreed with the statements given.

Figure 32 illustrates responses to the statement that Chapters 1-3 provide an appropriate context, rationale, and aims for Wellbeing. It is evident from Figure 32 that the majority of responses were in agreement with the statement (65%) with 41% agreeing and 24% strongly agreeing. However, there was not universal consensus, with some participants not agreeing with the statement (14% disagreeing and 9% strongly disagreeing). This reflects perspectives across other consultation formats where the initial chapters were broadly welcomed, with some contextual concerns noted regarding planning and preserving disciplinary knowledge within an integrated curriculum area.

Figure 32: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 1

Educators' response to the statement 'Chapters 1-3 provide an appropriate context, rationale, and aims for Wellbeing'

Number of responses: 196



Participants largely agreed that the strands successfully identified the main categories for what children would learn in Wellbeing with 23% strongly agreeing and 39% agreeing, as illustrated in Figure 33. A minority of participants disagreed (15%) or strongly disagreed (9%). This was echoed across the consultation with a broad welcome for the Strands and Strand Units as identifying the appropriate categories and themes for learning in Wellbeing.

Figure 33: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 2

Educators' response to the statement 'The Strands successfully identify the main categories for what children will learn in Wellbeing'

Number of responses: 196

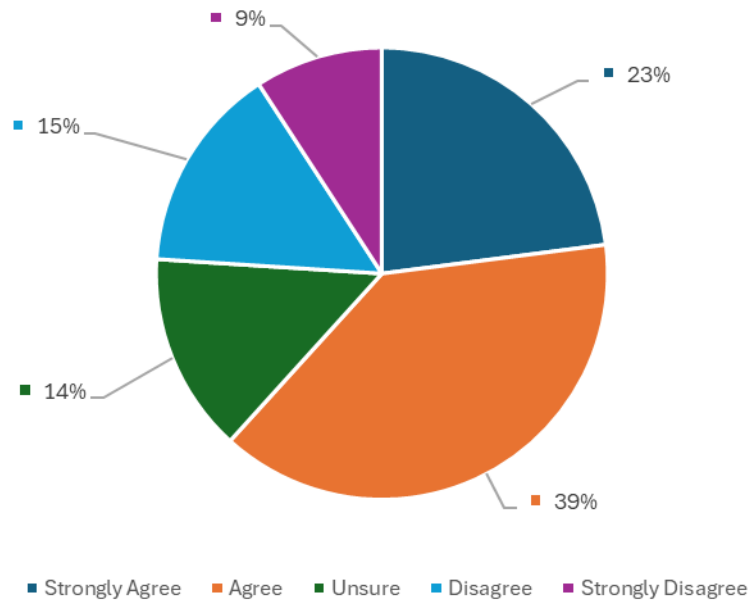


Figure 34 shows the continued positive response to statements in the Wellbeing questionnaire. A majority of responses agreed (35%), or strongly agreed (21%) that the Elements clearly described the processes through which children would learn in Wellbeing.

Figure 34: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 3

Educators' response to the statement 'The Elements describe clearly the processes through which children will learn in Wellbeing'

Number of responses: 196

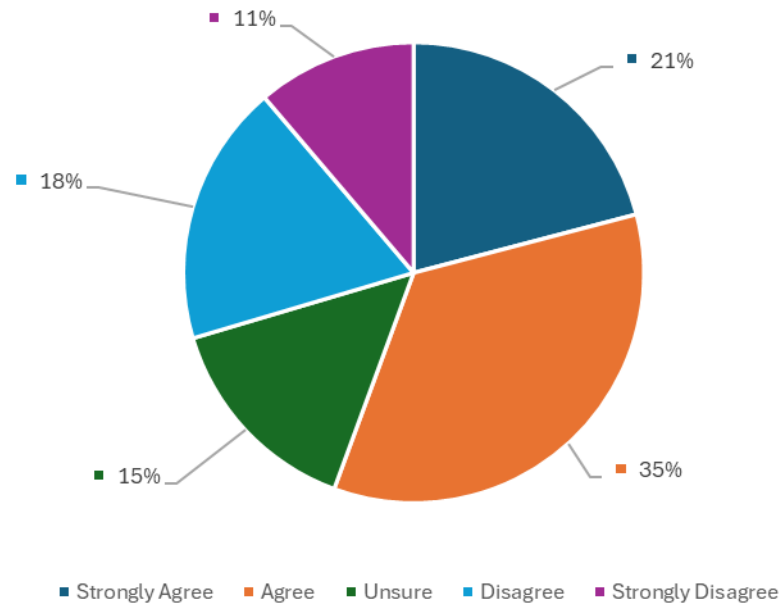
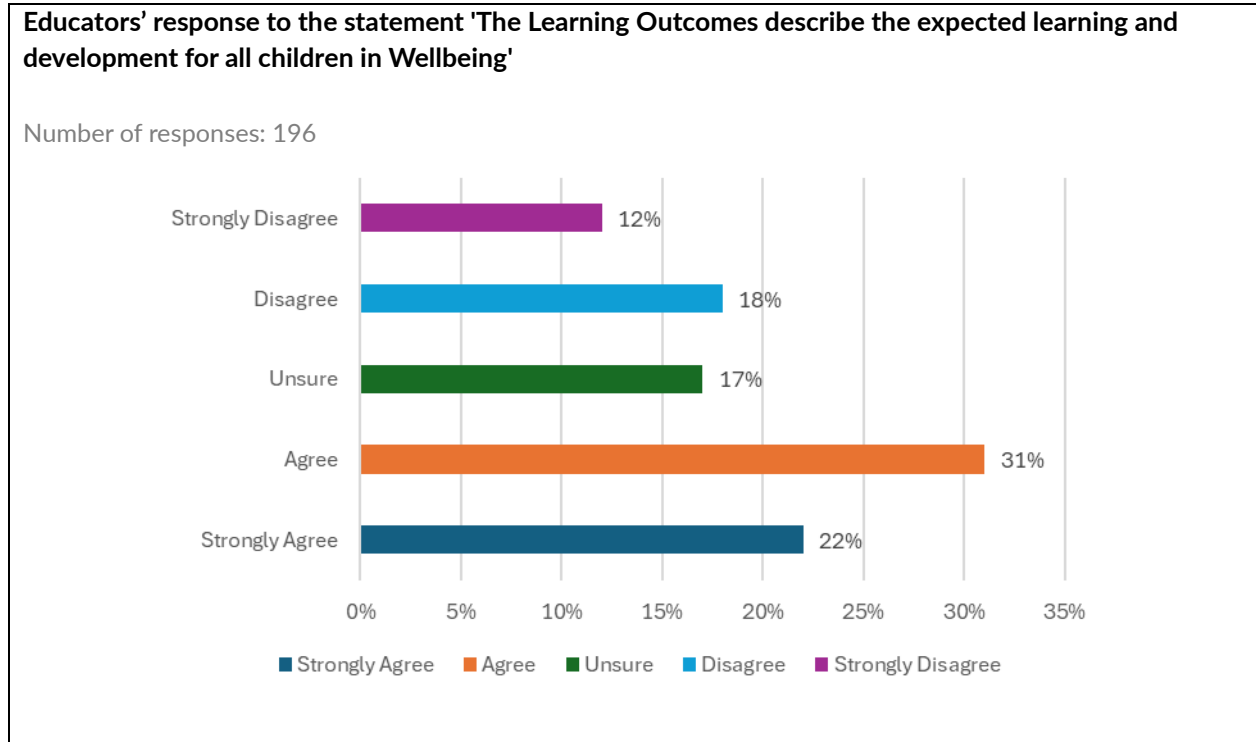


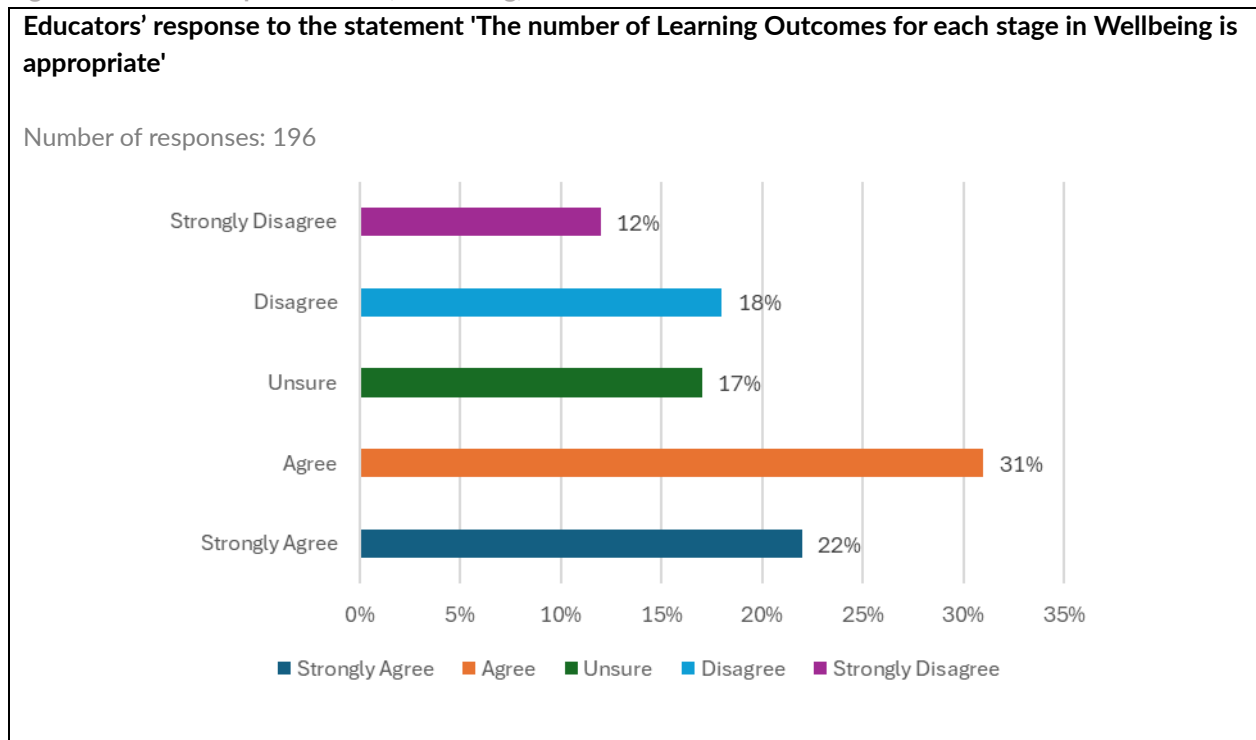
Figure 35 illustrates that just over half of the participants agreed/strongly agreed (53%) that the Learning Outcomes described the expected learning and development for all children in Wellbeing. Other participants had the opposite view about the Learning Outcomes describing the expected learning and development for children in Wellbeing with 30% either disagreeing/strongly disagreeing with the statement. A further 17% of participants were unsure. This is similar to findings in other consultation formats where content in the Learning Outcomes was generally positively received, viewed as appropriate and supporting a responsive approach, with others requesting greater clarity and guidance for particular aspects.

Figure 35: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 4



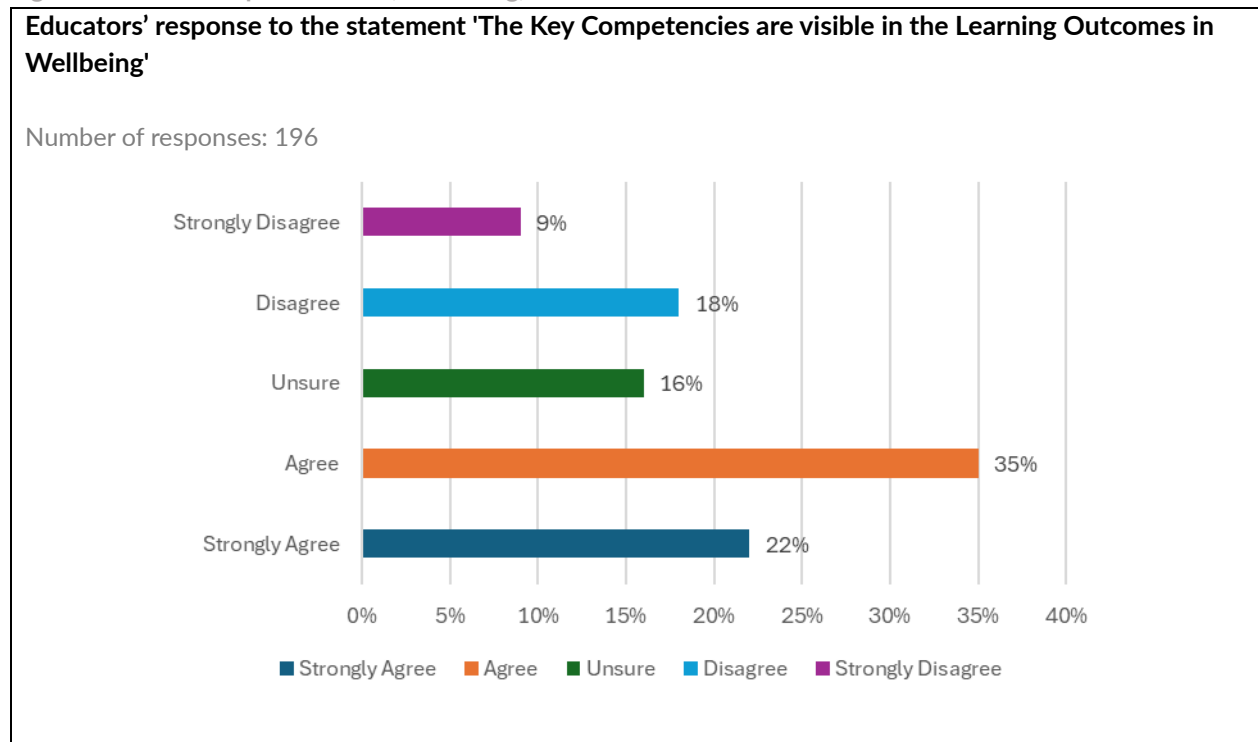
When considering if the number of Learning Outcomes for each stage in Wellbeing is appropriate, over half of the responses (53%) indicated either agreement or strong agreement (Figure 36). As in previous instances, a sizeable minority of responses disagreed with the number of Learning Outcomes for each stage in Wellbeing being appropriate (30%).

Figure 36: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 5



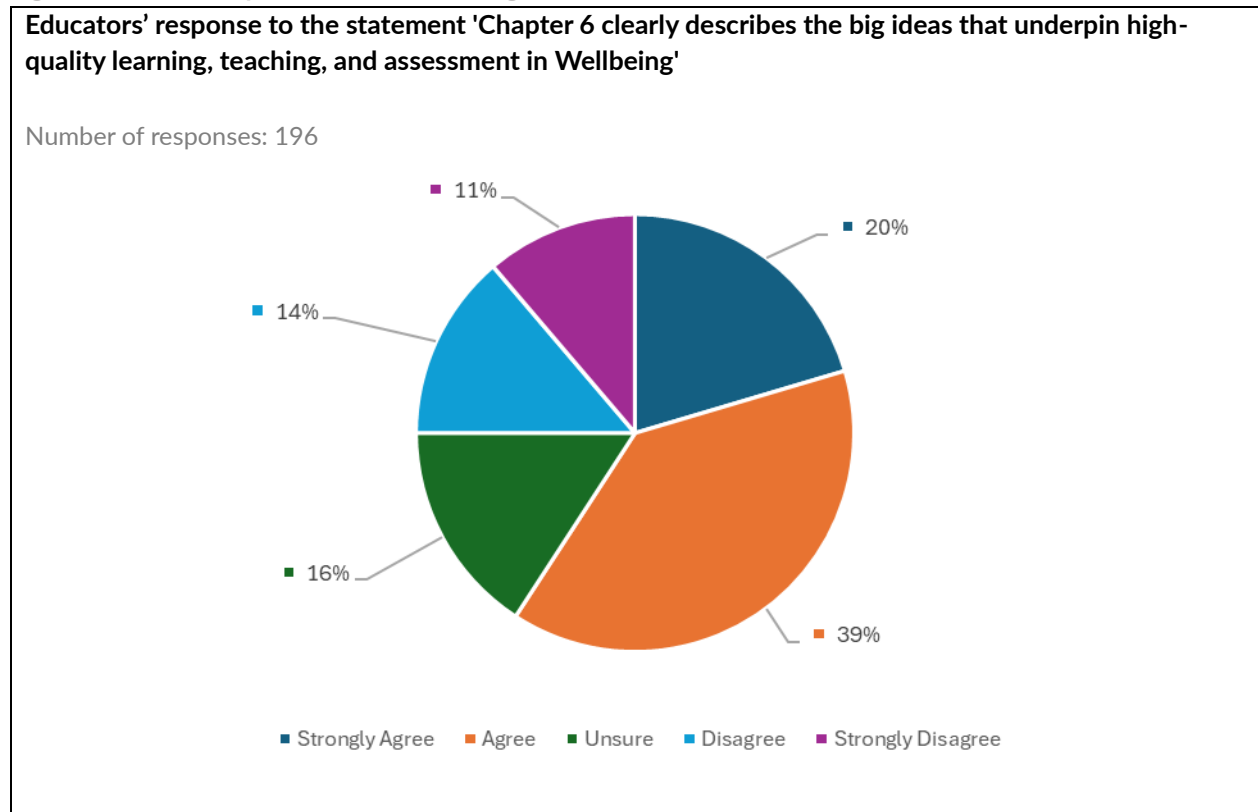
Findings (Figure 37) indicate agreement from participants that the Key Competencies are visible in the Learning Outcomes in Wellbeing. Over half of the responses (57%) were in agreement or strong agreement. Just under one third of responses (27%) were either in disagreement or strong disagreement. Overall this suggests that participants feel that the Key Competencies are visible in the Learning Outcomes. Similarly, in other consultation formats, the inclusion of the initials for Key Competencies in the Learning Outcomes was positively received and viewed as supporting an integrated approach in Wellbeing.

Figure 37: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 6



Participants were asked if they agreed with the statement that Chapter 6 clearly describes the big ideas that underpin high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment in Wellbeing (See Figure 38). A majority of responses either agreed (39%) or strongly agreed (20%) with the statement. Less than a quarter of responses disagreed (14%) or strongly disagreed (11%). The number of 'Unsure' responses remained at a similar level throughout the questionnaire with 16% of participants selecting unsure in response to this statement. This echoes findings across the consultation where participants welcomed the approach to learning, teaching and assessment outlined in Chapter 6.

Figure 38: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, statement 7

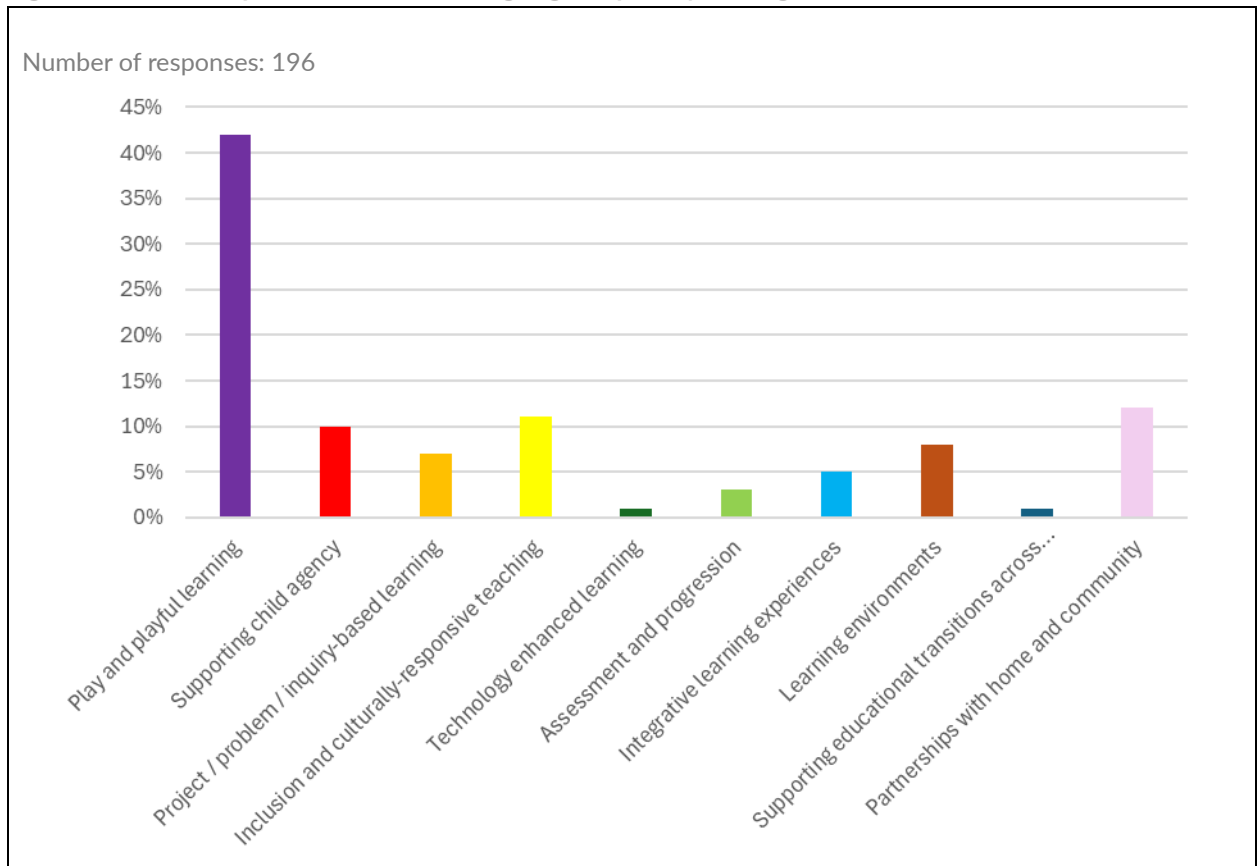


Participants were invited to rank the following priorities for practical supports in developing an online Toolkit for Wellbeing:

- Play and playful learning
- Supporting child agency
- Project/ problem/ inquiry-based learning
- Inclusion and culturally-responsive teaching
- Technology enhanced learning
- Assessment and progression
- Integrative learning experiences
- Learning environments
- Supporting educational transitions across primary school
- Partnerships with home and community

Figure 39 illustrates the percentage of responses in which each support was selected as the highest priority.

Figure 39: Educator questionnaire, Wellbeing, highest priority rankings



The results indicate that 'Play and Playful Learning' was considered to be the highest priority for support in Wellbeing by participants; receiving 42% of first priority responses. 'Partnerships with Home and Community' (12%), 'Inclusion and Culturally-Responsive Learning' (11%), and 'Supporting Child Agency' (10%) also received relatively high support. This is consistent with findings in other consultation formats where the focus on a playful approaches, inclusion and child voice and agency was welcomed. Similarly, the importance of a partnership approach with parents was highlighted across the consultation.

Alignment with *Primary Curriculum Framework*

Educators were asked to what extent they agree/disagree with a series of statements related to the draft curriculum specifications, and their alignment with the *Primary Curriculum Framework*, *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and the *Framework for Junior Cycle*. This questionnaire received 95 responses.

The survey's statements were phrased as follows: 'The draft curriculum specifications...' followed by a statement. For example: 'The draft curriculum specifications build on the strengths of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999)* and respond to ongoing change'.

Educators were asked to what extent they agreed/disagreed with the statement that the draft curriculum specifications build on the strengths of the *Primary School Curriculum of 1991* and responds to ongoing change. As shown in Figure 40, the responses given indicate that there was a greater number of instances of participants agreeing with the statement, with 44% agreeing with the statement and an additional 12% strongly agreeing with the statement. 17% disagreed with the statement, and a further 14% strongly disagreed, while 13% were unsure.

Figure 40: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 1

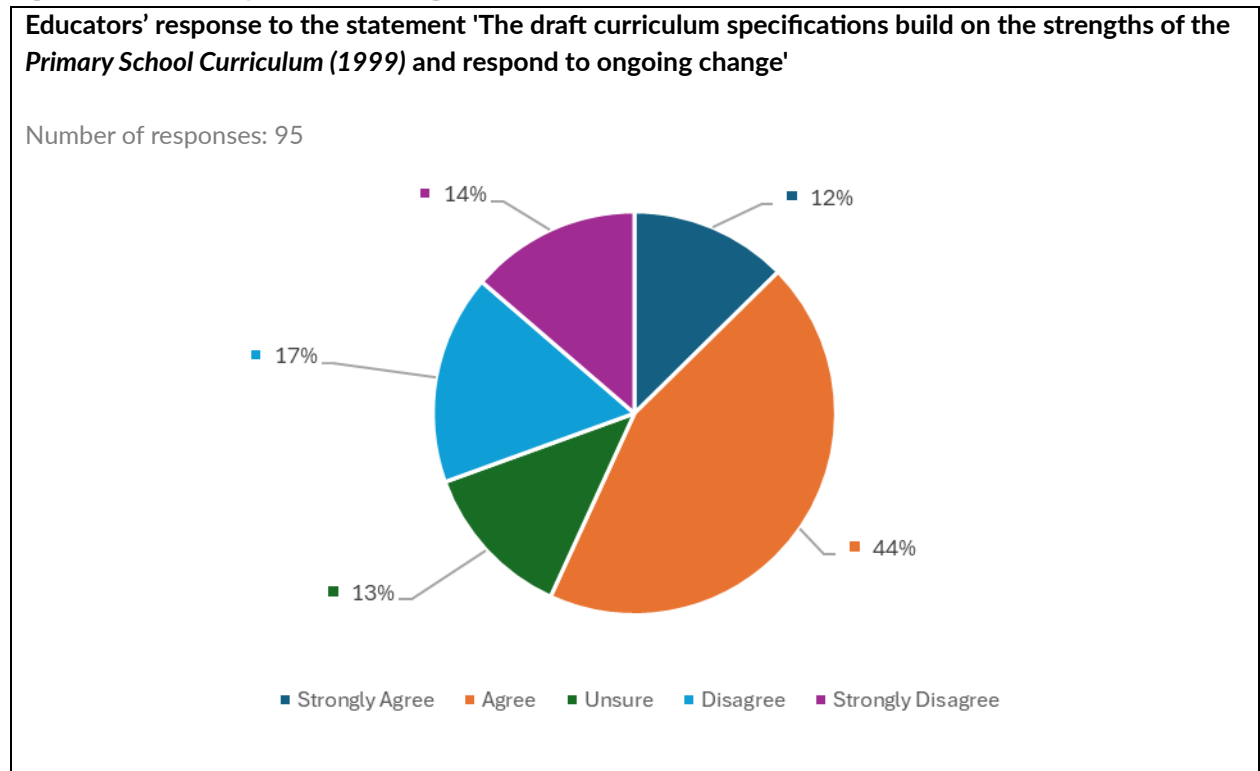
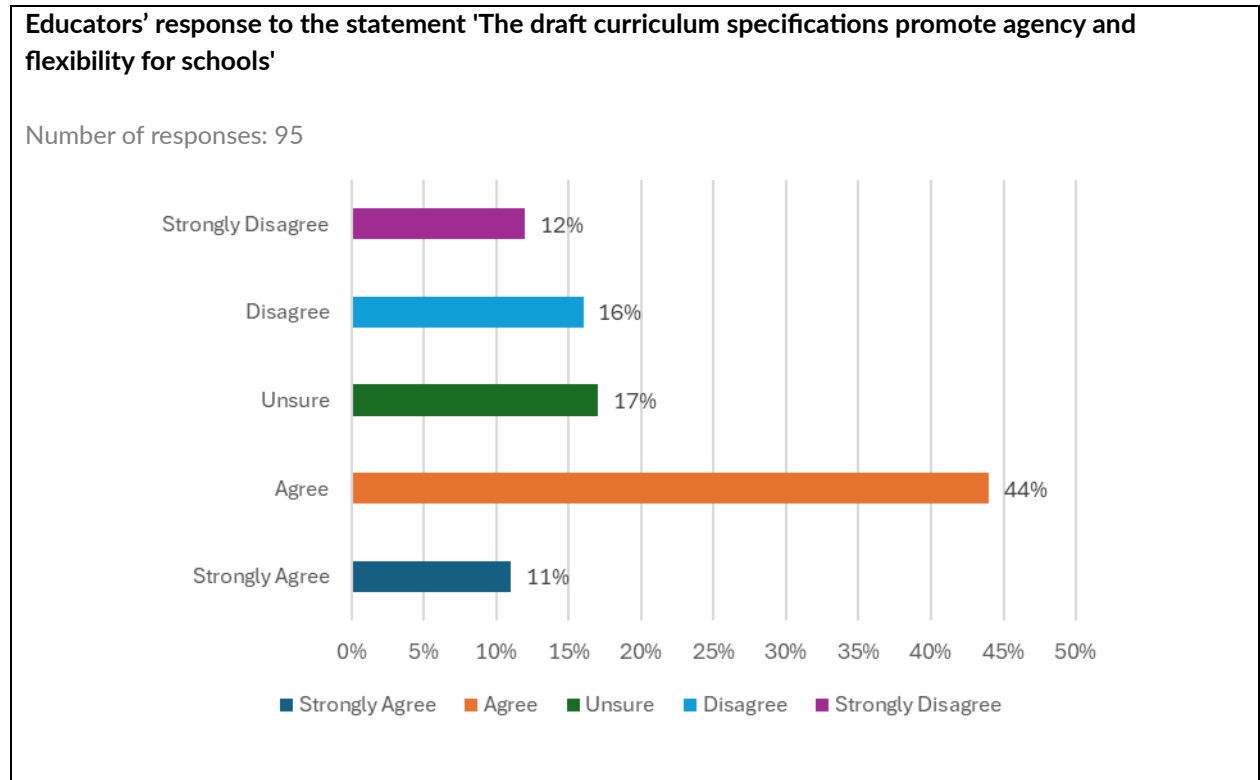


Figure 41 illustrates that most of the responses agreed that the draft curriculum specifications promote agency and flexibility for schools. More than half of responses (55%) were 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'. 17% were 'Disagree' and 14% were 'Strongly Disagree' while 13% indicated that they were 'Unsure'.

Figure 41: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 2

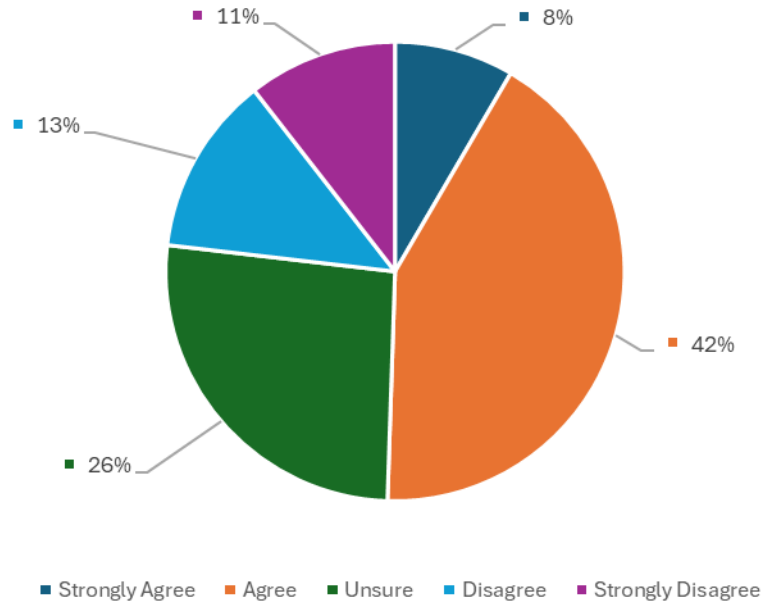


Half of the responses (50%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the draft curriculum specifications did connect with *Aistear* and the *Framework for Junior Cycle*. A larger number of responses than previously seen were unsure of this statement, with 26% selecting 'Unsure'. The number of responses indicating either 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' (24%) was lower.

Figure 42: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 3

Educators' response to the statement 'The draft curriculum specifications connect with Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and the Framework for Junior Cycle'

Number of responses: 95

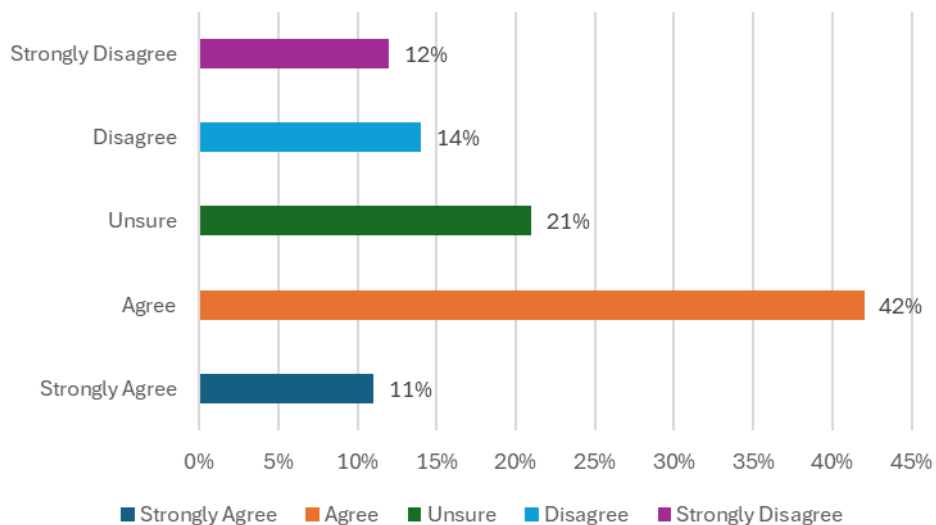


When asked to respond to the statement 'The draft curriculum specifications embed the Key Competencies from the *Primary Curriculum Framework* in Learning Outcomes' the majority of responses (combined 53%) indicated that educators agreed with the statement. Just over a quarter of responses were either 'Disagree' (14%), or 'Strongly Disagree' (12%).

Figure 43: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 4

Educators' response to the statement 'The draft curriculum specifications embed the Key Competencies from the *Primary Curriculum Framework* in Learning Outcomes'

Number of responses: 95



When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'The draft curriculum specifications focus on developing children's skills, disposition, values and attitudes', the majority of the responses indicated that participants agreed. The most popular response was 'Agree' (43%), followed by 'Disagree' (21%), 'Unsure' (19%), 'Strongly Agree' (9%), and 'Strongly Disagree' (8%).

Figure 44: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 5

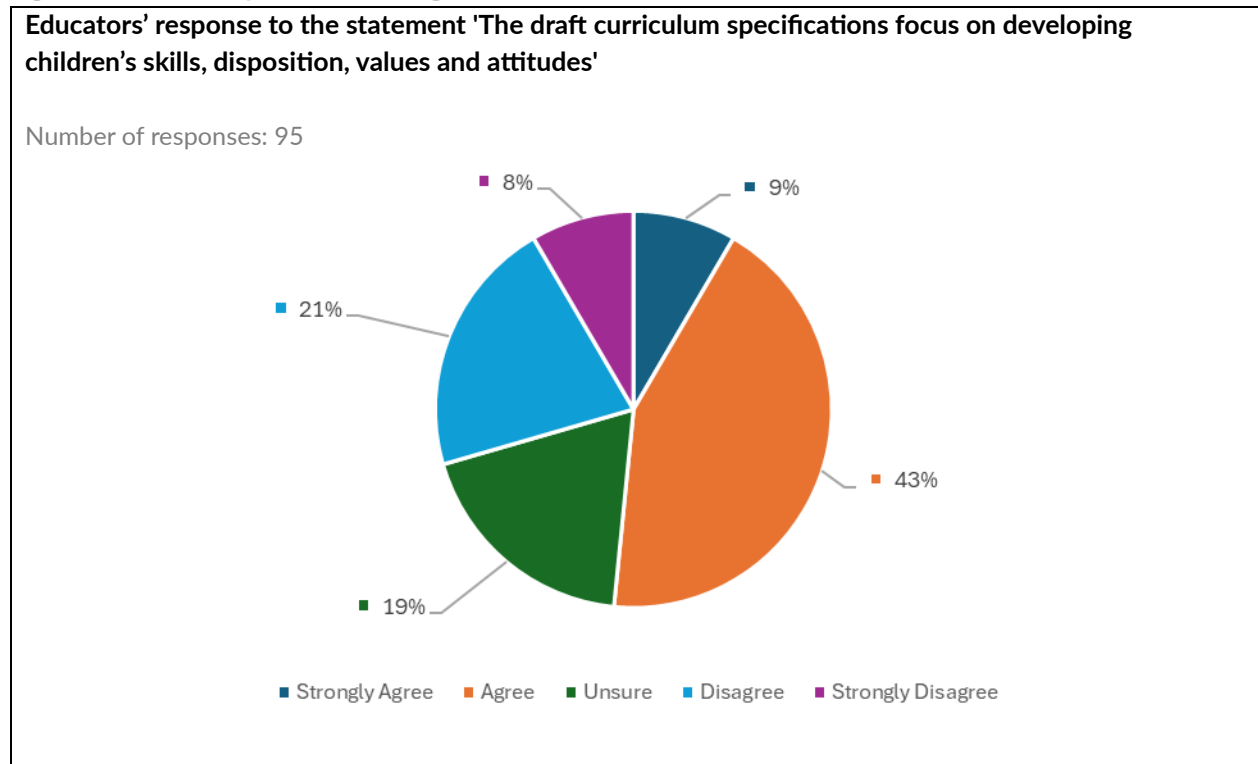
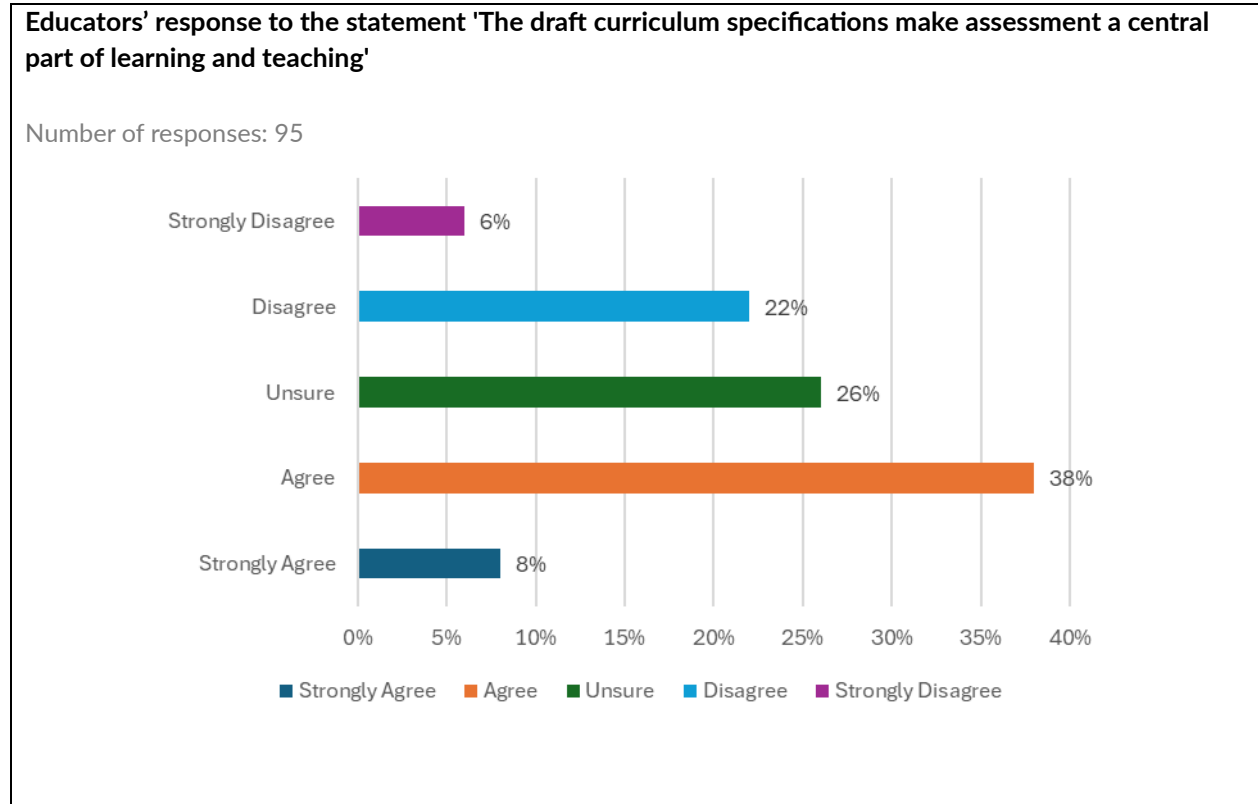


Figure 45 shows that results were mixed in response to the statement 'The draft curriculum specifications make assessment a central part of learning and teaching'. The most popular response was 'Agree' (38%), however a relatively significant portion of the participants selected 'Unsure' (26%), or 'Disagree' (22%). 8% strongly agreed, and 6% strongly disagreed.

Figure 45: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 6

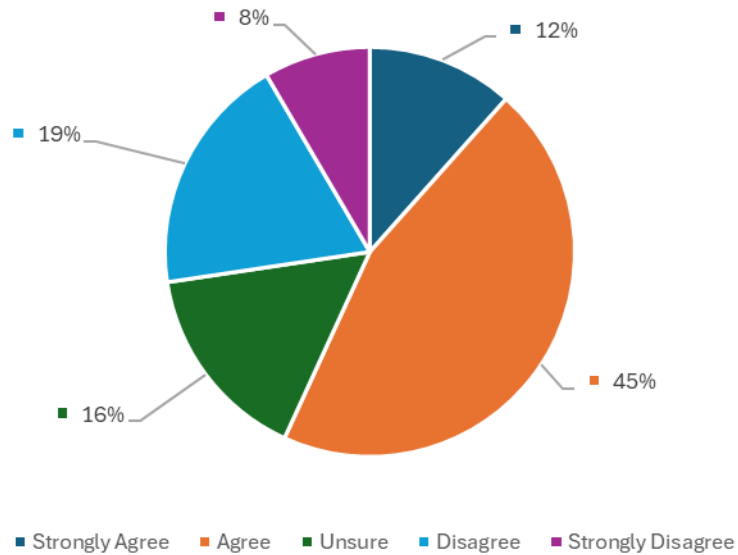


Participants were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'The draft curriculum specifications promote an integrated approach to learning, teaching, and assessment'. Most of the responses were positive, 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' combined accounted for 57% of responses. While 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree' represented just over a quarter of the responses (27%).

Figure 46: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 7

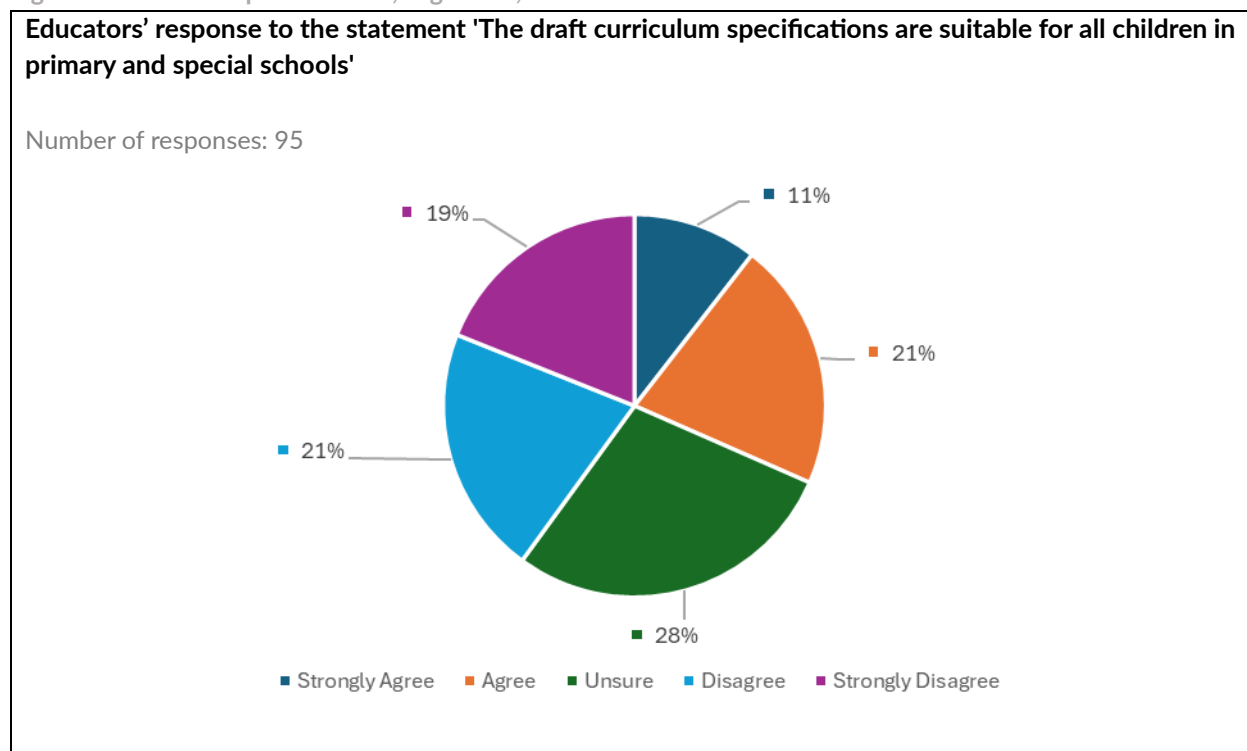
Educators' response to the statement 'The draft curriculum specifications promote an integrated approach to learning, teaching, and assessment'

Number of responses: 95



The statement 'The draft curriculum specifications are suitable for all children in primary and special schools' saw very mixed responses from participants. Unusually, the most popular response was 'Unsure' (28%). Both 'Agree' and 'Disagree' were selected an equal number of times (21% each). 'Strongly Disagree' accounted for 19% of responses, while 'Strongly Agree' only garnered 11%. The combined 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree' percentages amount to 40%, while the combined 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' percentages amount to 32%, suggesting that a slim majority of participants felt that the draft specifications are not suitable for all children in primary and special schools.

Figure 47: Educator questionnaire, alignment, statement 8



3.3.2 Parent/Guardian Questionnaire

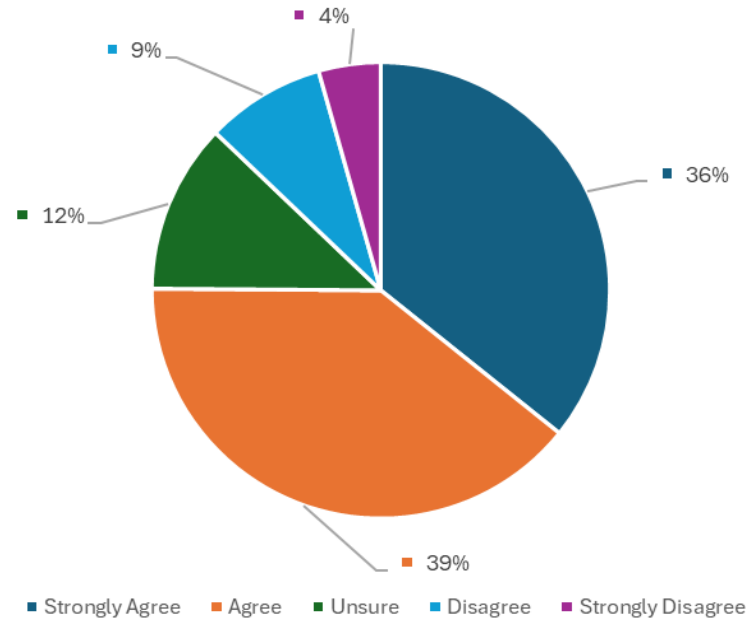
Parents/guardians were asked to respond to a series of statements relating to the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications. This questionnaire saw a response rate of 615 in total. They were asked to what extent they agreed with each statement, and each chose one of the following responses 'Strongly Agree'; 'Agree'; 'Unsure'; 'Disagree'; and 'Strongly Disagree'.

Participants were asked to what extent they agreed/disagreed with the statement 'The draft primary curriculum specifications build on the strengths of the current curriculum and respond to changing priorities for my child(ren)'s learning'. The majority of responses were in agreement with the statement as 39% indicated 'Agree' and another 36% indicated 'Strongly Agree'. 12% of participants were 'Unsure', 9% selected 'Disagree', and 4% selected 'Strongly Disagree'.

Figure 48: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 1

Parents'/Guardians' responses to the statement 'The draft primary curriculum specifications build on the strengths of the current curriculum and respond to changing priorities for my child(ren)'s learning'

Number of responses: 615



When asked to respond to the statement 'The draft primary curriculum specifications give teachers more flexibility to make sure the curriculum meets the needs of my child(ren)', a significant majority of participants indicated that they either agreed (31%) or strongly (39%) agreed with the statement. 17% of participants indicated that they were 'Unsure', while a combined 13% indicated disagreement or strong disagreement.

Figure 49: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 2

Parents'/Guardians' responses to the statement 'The draft primary curriculum specifications give teachers more flexibility to make sure the curriculum meets the needs of my child(ren)'

Number of responses: 615

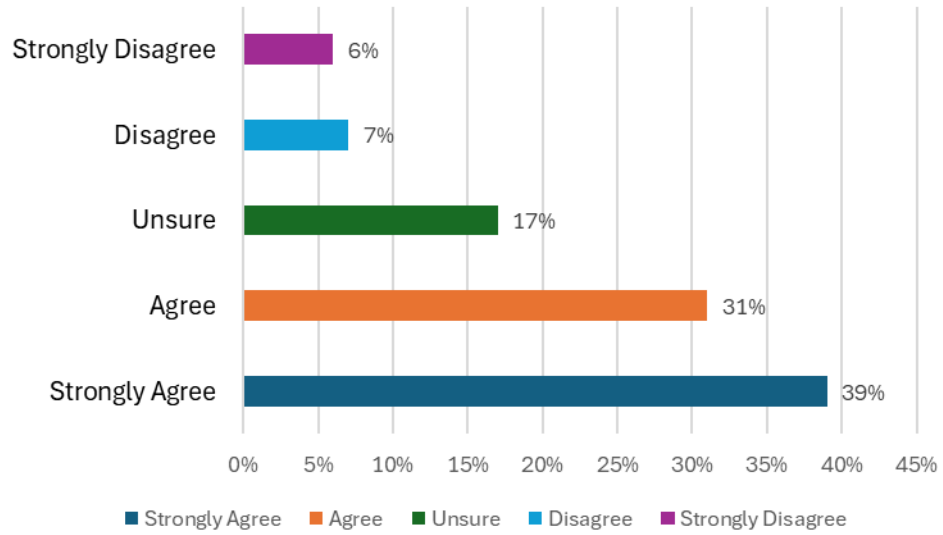
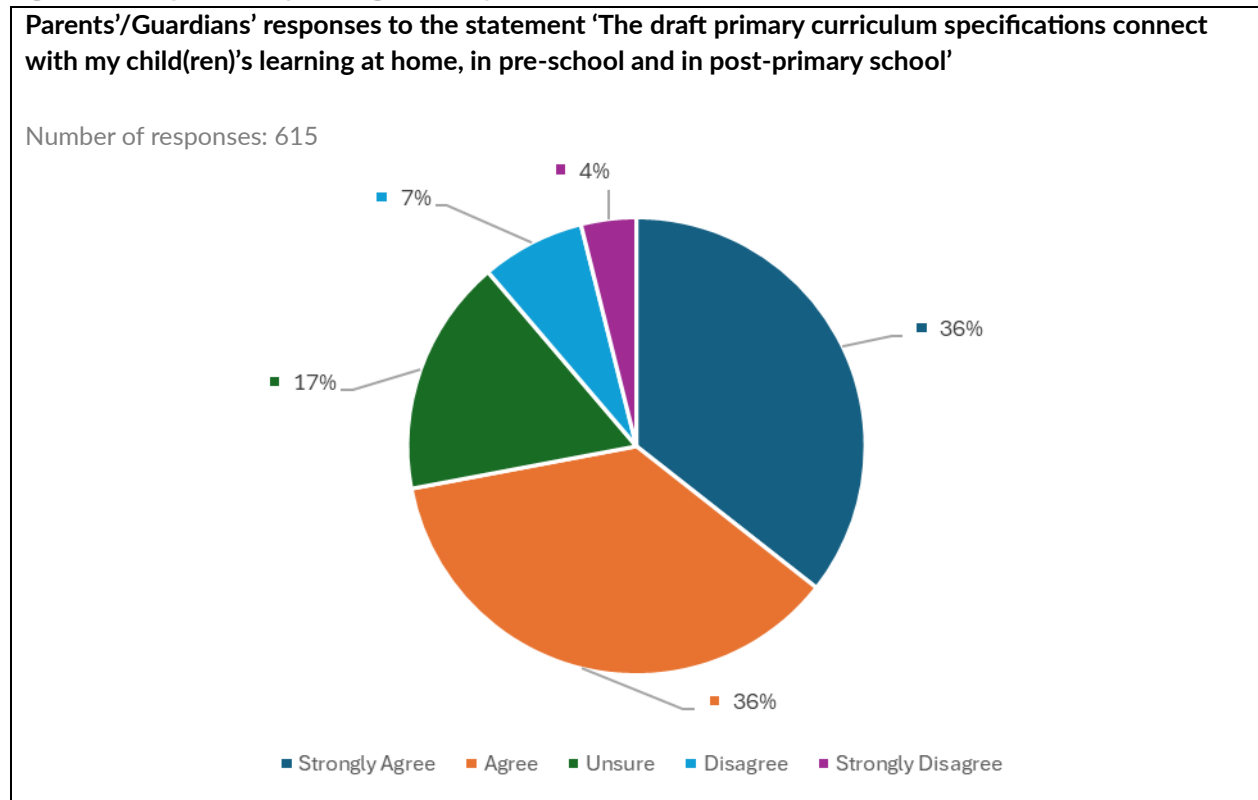


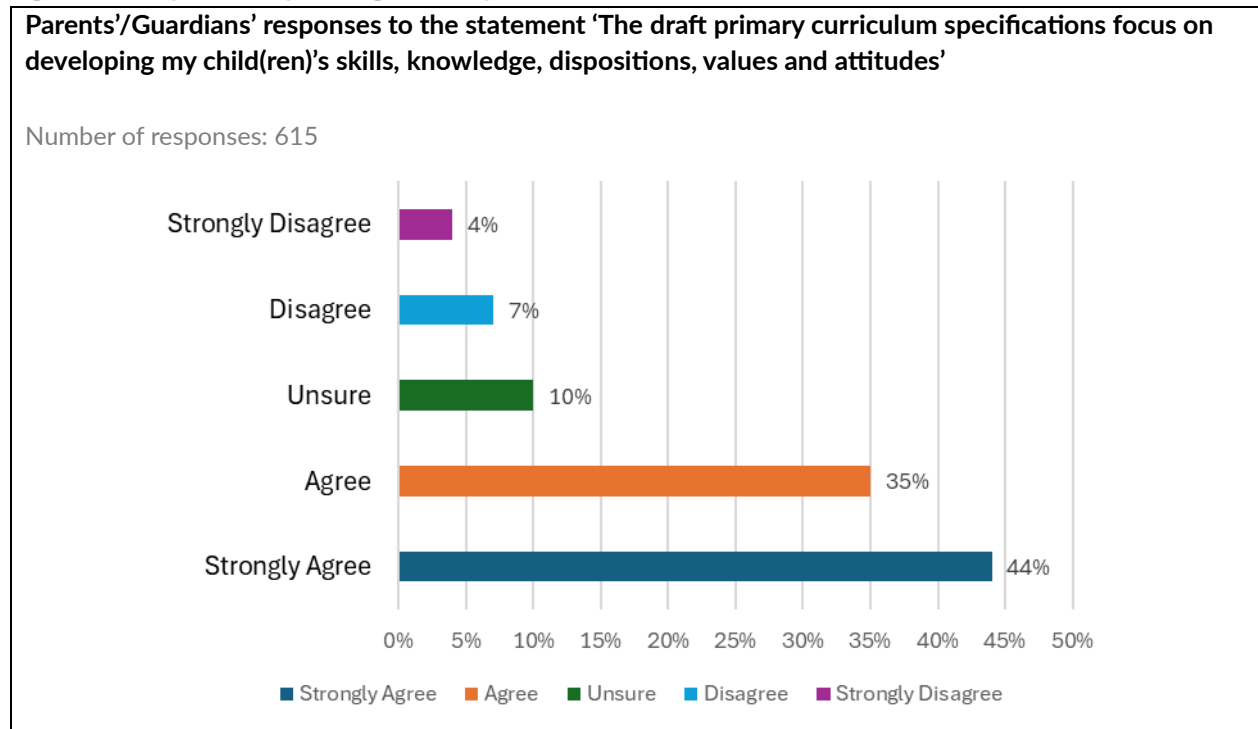
Figure 50 demonstrates the extent to which participants agreed with the statement 'The draft primary curriculum specifications connect with my child(ren)'s learning at home, in pre-school, and in post-primary school'. 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' each accounted for 36% of responses indicating a majority of agreement amongst the gathered responses. 17% of participants were 'Unsure' while 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree' accounted for 11% combined.

Figure 50: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 3



Participants largely agreed that the Draft Primary Curriculum specifications did focus on developing their children's skills, knowledge, dispositions, values, and attitudes. As represented in Figure 51, 79% of responses submitted were either 'Strongly Agree', or 'Agree'. 'Unsure', 'Disagree', and 'Strongly Disagree' all saw low numbers of responses.

Figure 51: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 4

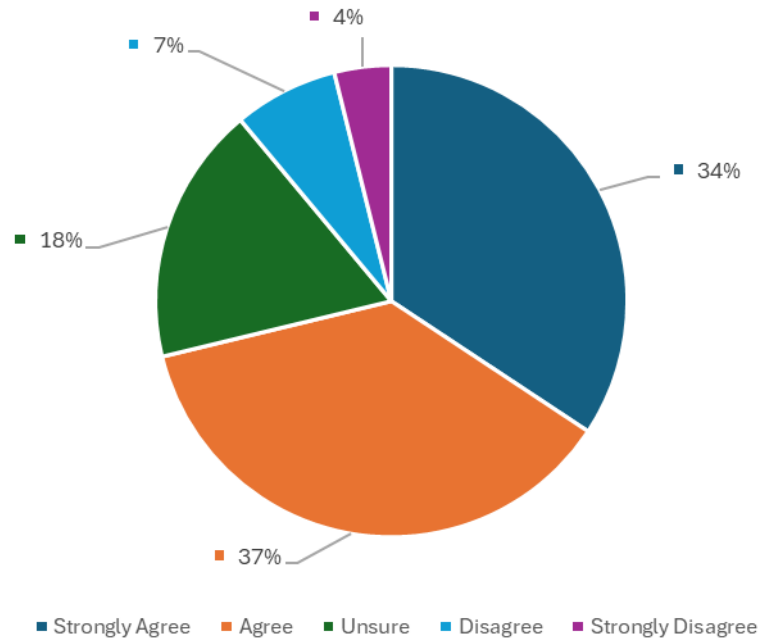


When asked to what extent they agreed/disagreed with the statement 'The draft primary curriculum Specifications value assessment as a central part of learning and teaching', the majority of responses were positive. 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' accounted for the majority (71%) of responses. 'Unsure' was selected more in response to this statement than previous instances, rising to 18%. 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree' were both selected a small number of times (11%).

Figure 52: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 5

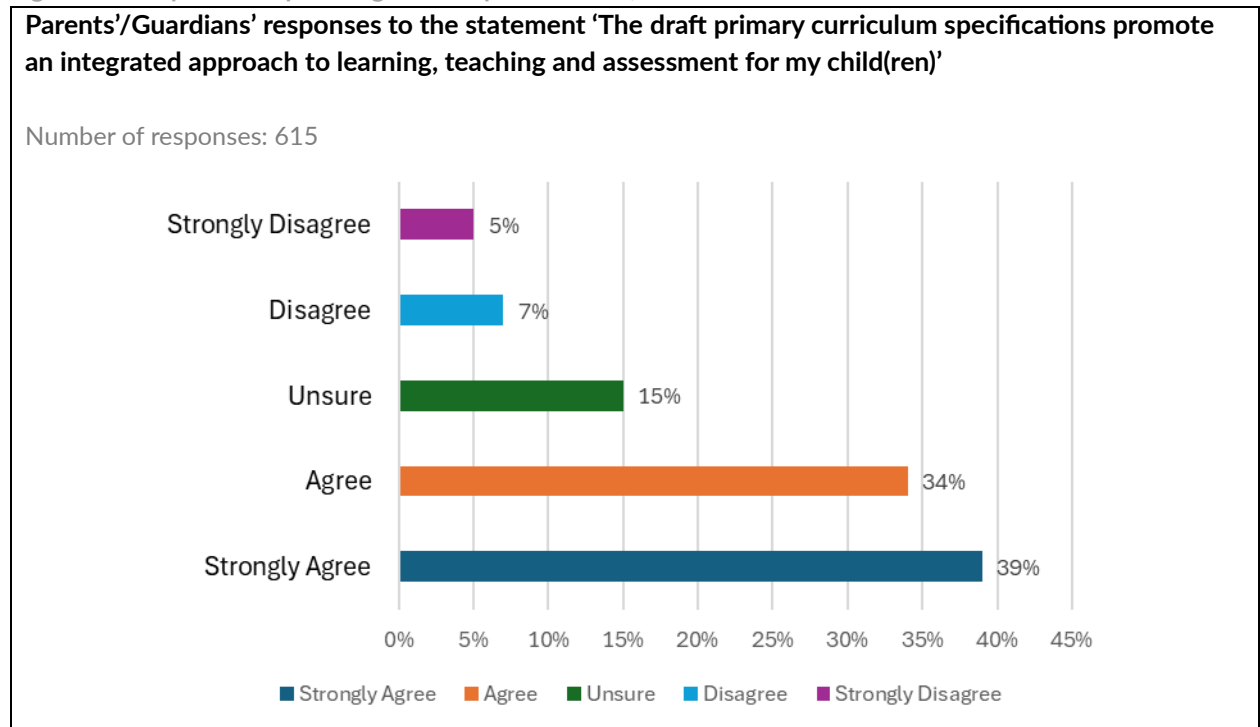
Parents'/Guardians' responses to the statement 'The draft primary curriculum specifications value assessment as a central part of learning and teaching'

Number of responses: 615



In response to the statement 'The draft primary curriculum specifications promote an integrated approach to learning, teaching, and assessment for my child(ren)' a combined 73% agreed and strongly agreed (Figure 53). In total, 'Strongly Agree' accounted for 39% of responses.'

Figure 53: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 6

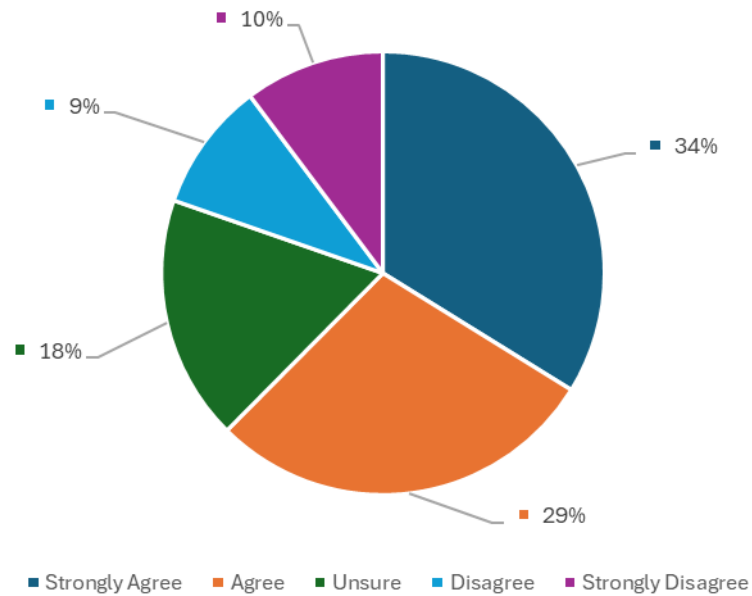


Parents/guardians responded positively to the statement 'The draft primary curriculum specifications are suitable for all children in primary and special schools'. 'Strongly Agree' was the most popular choice again, at 34% while 'Agree' accounted for 29% of the responses.

Figure 54: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 7

Parents'/Guardians' responses to the statement 'The draft primary curriculum specifications are suitable for all children in primary and special schools.'

Number of responses: 615

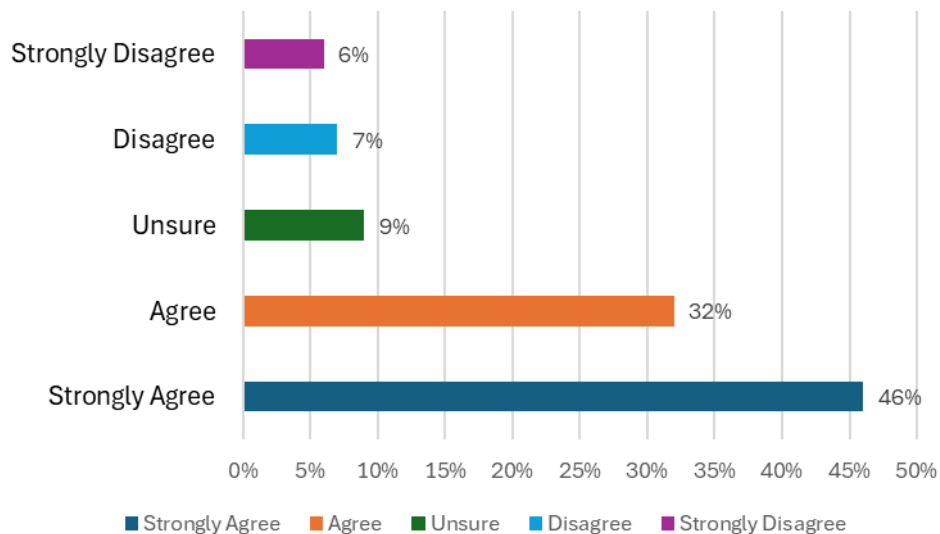


Participants agreed that the Draft Primary Curriculum specifications do support development of the seven Key Competencies presented in the *Primary Curriculum Framework*. 'Strongly Agree' accounted for almost half of the responses (49%). 'Agree' accounted for 32%. A small number of responses indicated that some participants disagreed or were unsure.

Figure 55: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, statement 8

Parents'/Guardians' responses to the statement 'The draft primary curriculum specifications support the development of the seven key competencies presented in the Primary Curriculum Framework'

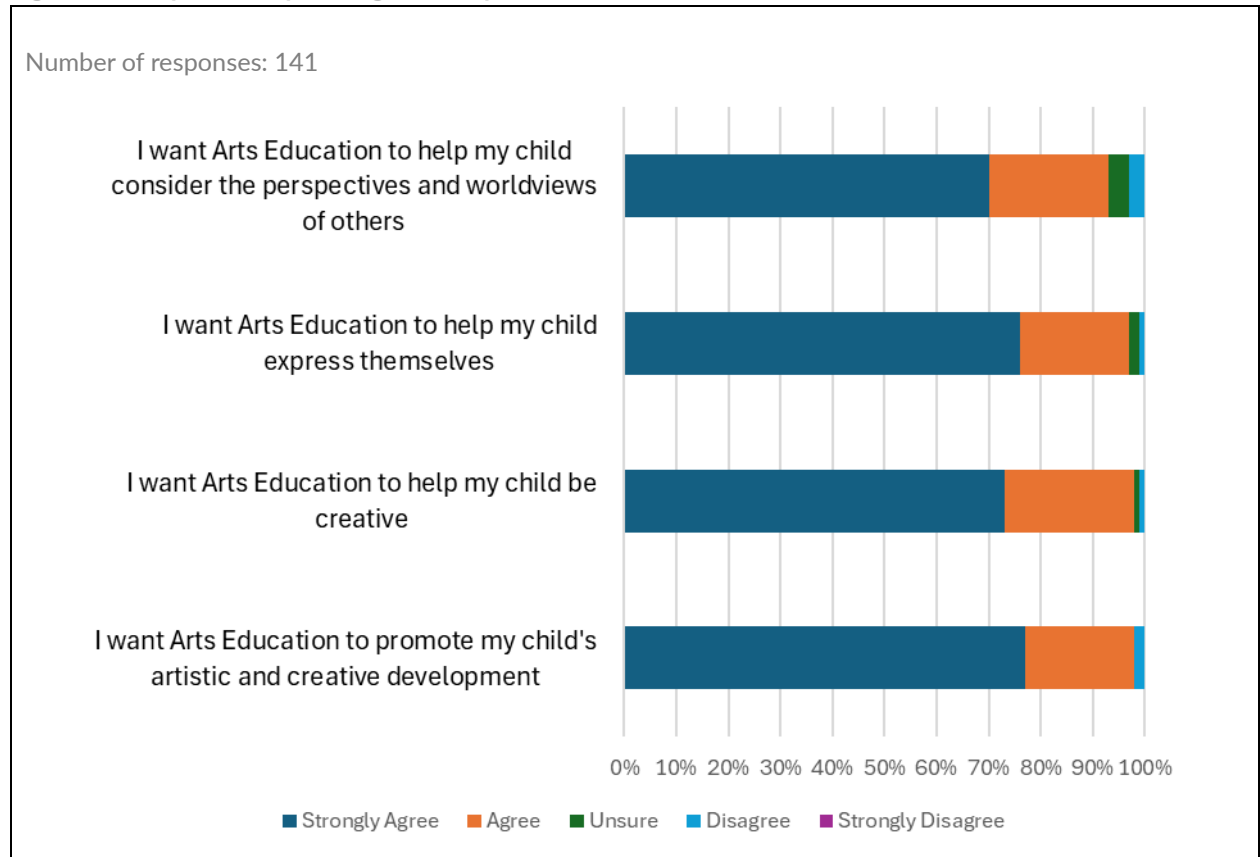
Number of responses: 615



Arts Education

Parents/guardians were asked a series of questions related to their expectations of the Arts Education curriculum area. Participants were given statements and asked to indicate how much they agreed with them by choosing one of the following options: 'Strongly Agree; Agree; Unsure; Disagree; Strongly Disagree'.

Figure 56: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, Arts Education, statements 1-4

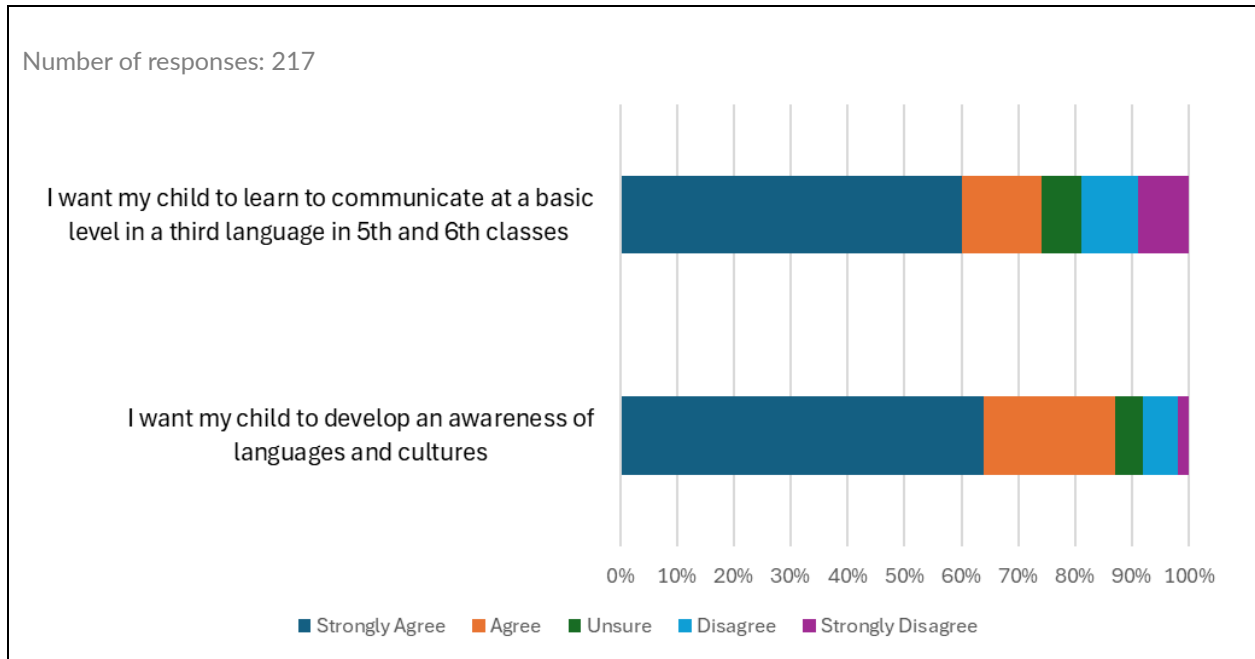


Responses to each of the statements relating to Arts Education were overwhelmingly positive. Across the four statements, 'Strongly Agree' was chosen by participants 74% of the time. 'Agree' was the next common response, making up almost a quarter of responses. The chart shown in Figure 56 demonstrates a strong enthusiasm and support for Arts Education among parents/guardians.

Updates to the Primary Language Curriculum to include Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

Parents/guardians were asked two questions related to their expectations for the inclusion of Modern Foreign Languages in the *Primary Languages Curriculum*. Participants were given statements and asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with them by choosing one of the following options: 'Strongly Agree; Agree; Unsure; Disagree; Strongly Disagree'.

Figure 57: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, Modern Foreign Language, statements 1-2

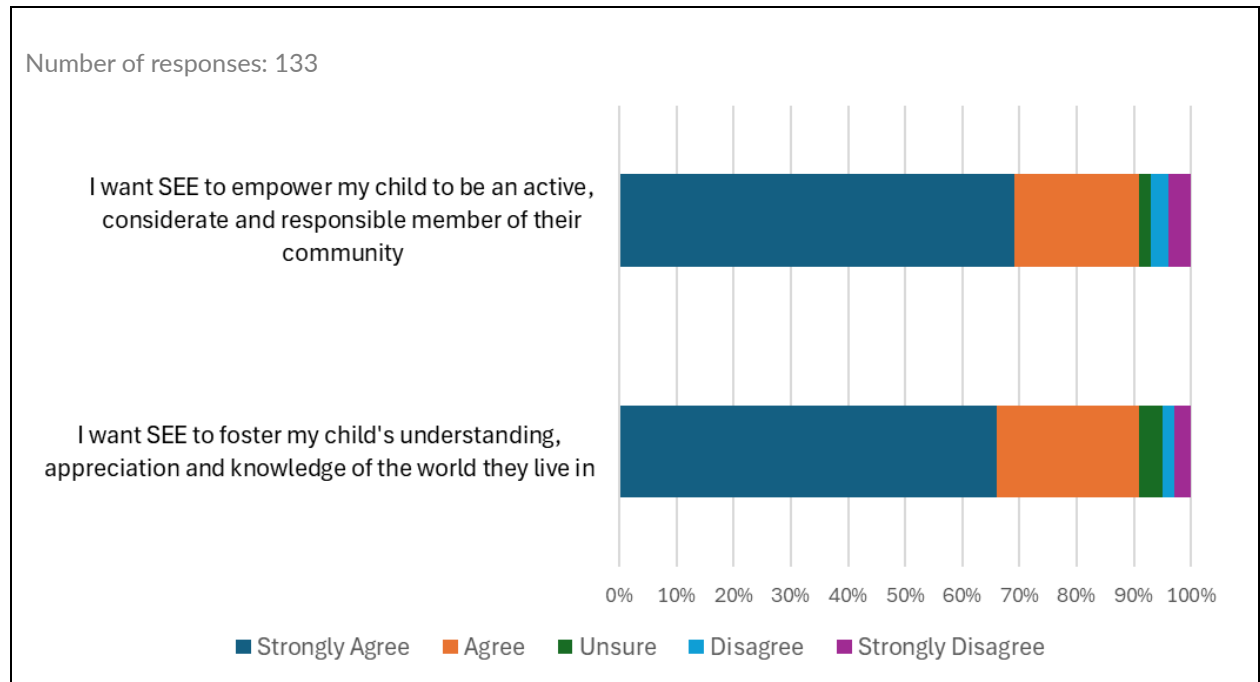


Parent/guardians were very positive in response to the above statements. Over 60% of participants selected 'Strongly Agree'. This demonstrates that participants' expectations for the inclusion of Modern Foreign Language in the *Primary Language Curriculum* are very much in line with the ambitions and direction of this curriculum area. Very few responses were in disagreement with the statements, however, there were slightly more instances of disagreement in response to the statement 'I want my child to learn to communicate at a basic level in a third language in 5th and 6th classes.

Social and Environmental Education (SEE)

Participants were asked two questions related to their expectations of the Social and Environmental Education Curriculum Area. Participants were presented with two statements and asked to indicate how much they agreed with them by choosing one of the following options: 'Strongly Agree; Agree; Unsure; Disagree; Strongly Disagree'.

Figure 58: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, Social and Environmental Education, statements 1-2

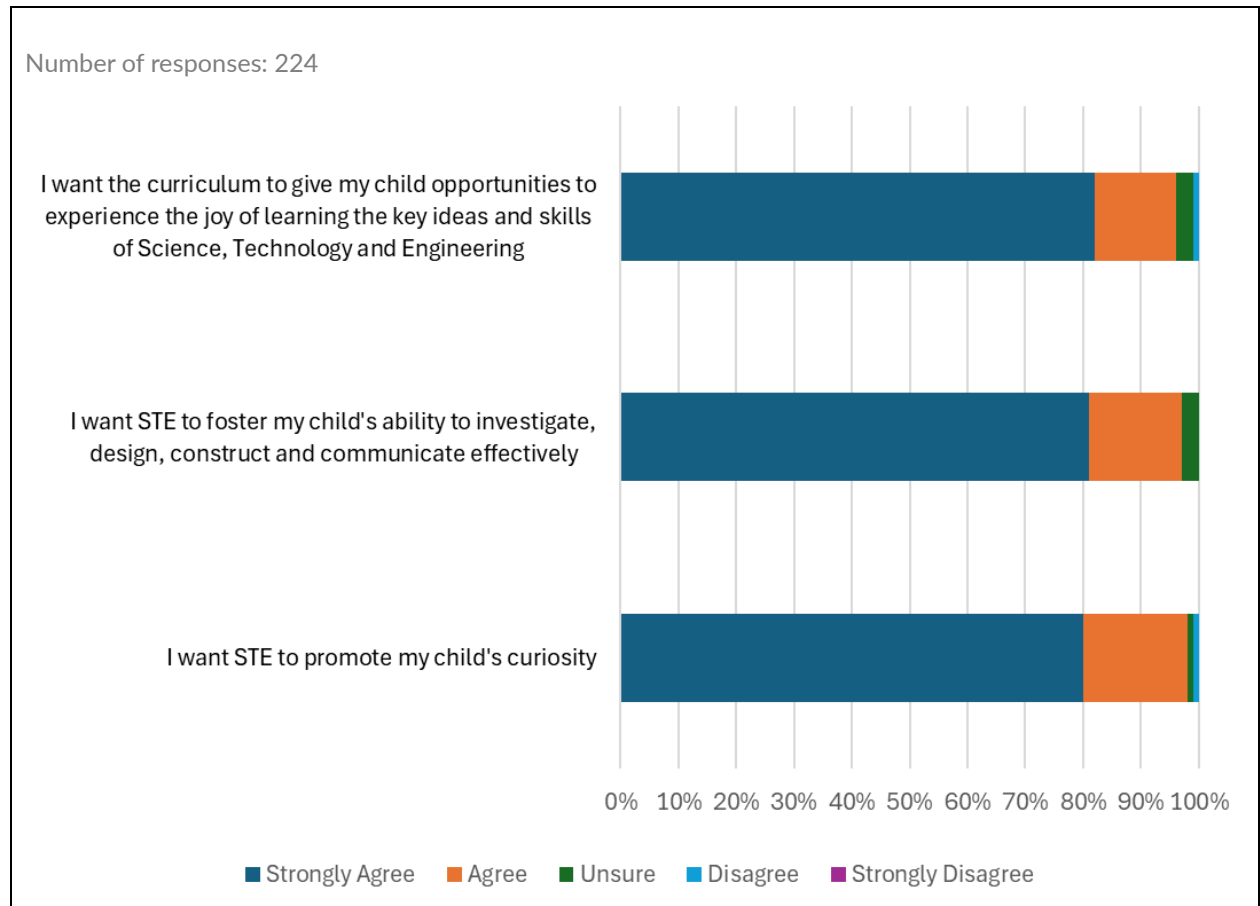


A majority of responses indicated that parents/guardians do want Social and Environmental Education to empower their children to be active, considerate and responsible members of their communities. Again, 'Strongly Agree' (66%) was the most popular choice, followed by 'Agree' (25%). 'Unsure', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree' were each selected a much smaller number of times. Parents/guardians continued to respond very positively in response to the statement 'I want SEE to foster my child's understanding, appreciation, and knowledge of the world they live in'. 'Strongly Agree', and 'Agree' accounted for most of the responses. 'Unsure', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree' were selected a handful of times.

Science, Technology, and Engineering (STE) Education

Parents/guardians were asked three questions related to their expectations of the Science, Technology, and Engineering Education curriculum area. Participants were presented with statements and asked to indicate how much they agreed with them by choosing one of the following options: 'Strongly Agree; Agree; Unsure; Disagree; Strongly Disagree'.

Figure 59: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, Science Technology and Engineering Education, statements 1-3

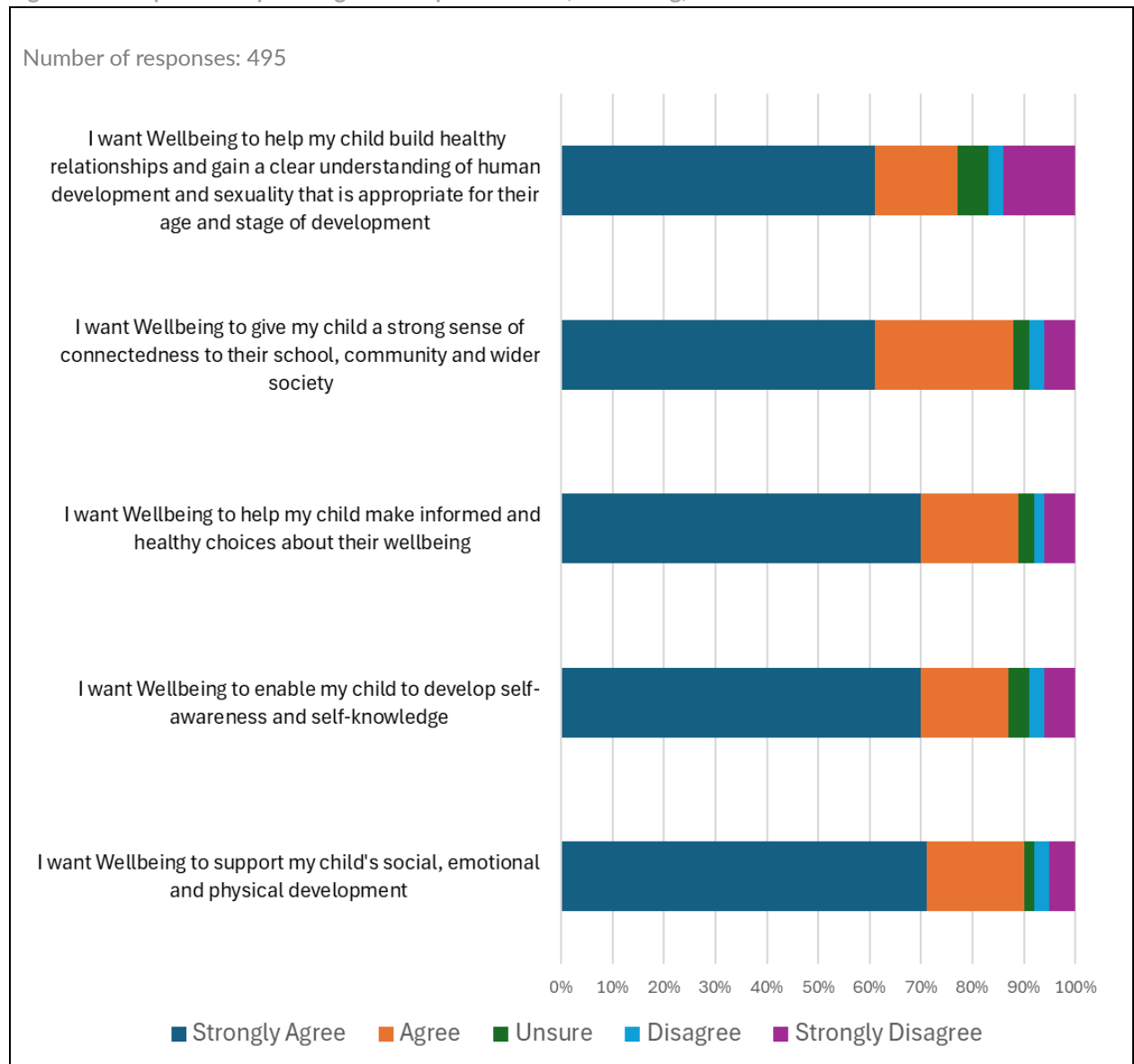


It may be worth noting that the responses to the statements related to Science, Technology and Engineering Education were especially positive; perhaps indicating an enthusiasm for this curriculum area. Participants selected 'Strongly Agree' at least 80% of the time in response to each statement. No statement received more than a 1% response rate for 'Disagree'.

Wellbeing

Parents/guardians were asked three questions related to their expectations of the Wellbeing curriculum area. Participants were presented with statements and asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with them by choosing one of the following options: 'Strongly Agree; Agree; Unsure; Disagree; Strongly Disagree'.

Figure 60: Responses to parent/guardian questionnaire, Wellbeing, statements 1-5



'Strongly Agree' was the most popular response to statements relating to Wellbeing, by a significant margin. However, it is notable that despite the overwhelmingly positive responses to these statements, 'Strongly Disagree' was selected more often than 'Disagree' in response to all four statements, suggesting a small number of participants who feel very strongly about topics surrounding this curriculum area. The statement, 'I want my child to build healthy relationships and gain a clear understanding of human development and sexuality that is appropriate for their age and stage of development', received the least positive response with 'Strongly Disagree' making up 14% of responses. This negative response to the statement was however still lower

when compared to the responses for 'Strongly Agree' (61%) and 'Agree' (16%). Similarly, in other consultation formats, participants expressed diverse views on the content related to human development and sexuality; some participants viewed the proposals as appropriate and important; others called for stronger emphasis or greater clarity; while others disagreed with the inclusion of content pertaining to sexuality education in primary education.

Section 4: Submissions: Executive Summary

The following sections describe the overarching themes emerging across the written submissions from organisations/groups and individuals, followed by the themes emerging within each of the curriculum areas under consultation. It is notable that across the submissions, many opposing views and beliefs were expressed, which often sit in tension with each other. As with other formats of consultation, the feedback collected during the consultation was analysed and is presented impartially below.

4.1 Overarching themes across the written submissions

4.1.1 Learning Outcomes: Benefits and challenges

Organisations praised the broadness, flexibility, and teacher and child agency offered by Learning Outcomes more generally. However, it was felt by some that Learning Outcomes could be vague, unclear and overloaded, rendering some Learning Outcomes 'opaque.' Some participants queried whether the shift from focusing on 'what to learn,' to 'how to learn' might present a purposeful omission of content so that parents/the public remain unaware of what will be taught to their children.

It was suggested that the broadness of the Learning Outcomes would allow flexibility for a teacher with a wealth of knowledge and confidence but could act as a barrier for teachers who are newly qualified or not as confident or competent in certain curriculum areas. It was cautioned that the textbook could potentially fill the content gap in the absence of suitable resources, and that the spiral nature of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999)* may be lost.

Most organisations recommended that detailed and descriptive resources accompany the Learning Outcomes within toolkits:

- to illustrate what the Learning Outcomes look like in practice
- to show progression across Learning Outcomes
- to prevent differing interpretations or misconceptions of flexibility (e.g., some content being perceived as less or more significant than other content)
- to provide formal guidelines for assessment, which would ensure congruence between a teacher's interpretation of Learning Outcomes and expectations of the inspectorate or school management.

The challenging balance between broad and flexible Learning Outcomes and content also featured strongly across individual submissions. Submissions drew attention to the challenges of not specifying content and the uncertainty of the 'unknown' quantity of what content would be taught particularly in relation to sensitive topics within RSE (e.g., puberty), as well as around terminology used such as 'inclusivity' and 'diversity.' Of note is that some individual submissions objected to the inclusion of SPHE Learning Outcomes regarding more sensitive topics such as 'gender identity' and 'sexual identity' which were not in fact present in the draft Wellbeing specification. These submissions tended to follow a template format indicative of the pre-formatted submissions which were received, and in this case, were based on mis- and/or dis-information.

Some submissions called for the consultation to be postponed until the 'content' of the draft specifications had been developed thoroughly through the toolkits. While individual submissions from educational practitioners acknowledged the benefit of broad Learning Outcomes but also balanced this with requests for extensive toolkits (as described above).

4.1.2 Spirituality, patron's programme, ethos, religion, beliefs

Some organisations drew attention to ambiguity concerning the values that underpin the draft specifications. A perceived reduction in references to spirituality across the draft specifications was provided as an example. They considered that learning related to cultures, religions and beliefs were framed without a religious ethos, and questioned the validity of exploring these themes in the absence of a religious belief system, which would usually be intrinsically connected.

Conversely, other organisations voiced the need for these themes to be explored outside of a faith-based perspective, to avoid 'religious tourism' or 'othering' children who did not follow the same faith. They noted a parent's right to determine suitable religious teaching for their children (and the option to 'opt out') and the necessity to explore these themes in a pluralistic manner. They questioned whether other curriculum areas would be taught through the 'lens' of the school ethos or coloured by individual teacher viewpoint and subjectivity.

It was suggested that a discrete curriculum subject should be created for Religion, Beliefs and Worldviews within SEE. Mirroring the conflicting submissions of organisations, responses from individuals were split across those who were in favour of foregrounding the declared values of the draft specifications and the perceived role ethos informing learning and teaching in primary and special schools.

4.1.3 Enactment, implementation and supports

Participants provided a wealth of feedback on the supports which would be required to successfully implement the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications. The feedback provided echoes those outlined for other sources of feedback during the consultation. These centred around a solid plan, CPD/training for all relevant educational personnel, adequate time, comprehensive toolkit, funding for resources (including IT procurement and maintenance) and experiences, and assurance that all resources will be made available in Irish alongside the English equivalents.

While enactment is not directly related to the focus of feedback through this consultation (as opposed to curriculum supports), it has been tightly bound to the presentation and perception of the new curriculum areas / subjects.

4.1.4 The inclusivity of the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications

Participants welcomed the inclusivity of the draft specifications and the additional pathways presented but requested further clarification on the application of these pathways to primary and special education classroom practice. It was noted that progression continua assist teachers working in settings with children with special educational needs, supporting them on their path to

learning. It was suggested that further support could be provided to teachers in supporting all children on their path to learning, particularly those with complex needs.

The focus on play at all levels of primary education was welcomed, especially from those participants working in SEN settings as every child could access the curriculum areas and subjects. Some concern was expressed about supporting meaningful play from Stage 2 (1st and 2nd Classes) onwards, and it was noted that resources and training would be helpful in this regard.

It was suggested that specific reference should be made to the diversity of human experience. Specific reference to the term 'disability' was also suggested in this context. The absence of LGBTI+ inclusive statements was also noted and it was suggested that this should be included and integrated in an age-appropriate manner. However, other submissions expressed the opinion that reference to LGBTI+, in particular gender identity, would not be appropriate in the finalised specifications.

4.1.5 Presentation of curriculum specifications

Much feedback focused on the need to make the draft specifications as clear, concise and accessible as possible. Participants noted the importance of being able to navigate the draft specifications quickly and easily and find the key information with ease. Specific suggestions were made including; a consistent structure across all draft specifications, fewer pedagogical approaches, and the use of clear language. Further feedback reflected views gathered through other consultation data.

4.1.6 Ireland, Europe and the Global Dimension

Many organisations referred to a lacking Irish and/or European dimension, and the importance of their inclusion. It was suggested that there needed to be an increased emphasis placed on exploring and celebrating Irish heritage, and Ireland's place in Europe. Participants commented that the global dimension and global framing of the draft specifications was very apparent. This was reported in both a positive and negative way across the submissions.

4.1.7 Politics and being an active/global citizen

There were many submissions which reflected on the presence of politics and active citizenship within the draft specifications. These presented both positive and negative viewpoints. The positive viewpoints expressed how the inclusion of these themes was progressive, with children learning about themes that are important in today's world such as climate, environment, sustainable living, human rights, democracy, equity and social justice.

Conversely, some submissions reflected that these were not age-appropriate themes for children to engage with and they could lead to feelings of insecurity and fear about the world today. It was suggested that the draft specifications would culture a generation of activists, rather than focusing on the basics (e.g. literacy and numeracy) of educational attainment.

4.2 Feedback specific to particular curriculum areas and subjects

Aside from the recurring themes emerging across submissions, some participants referred to specific curriculum areas and/or subjects. They were categorised according to

- positive features
- challenging features
- suggested changes
- suggestions around enactment.

4.2.1 Arts Education

Organisations commended the emphasis on inclusion within the Draft Arts Education Curriculum Specification. The presence of different cultures, art forms, sensory and embodied approaches, movement, sound, and broadening of learning in Drama all merited praise within submissions. The integrative nature of the specification was also praised. Participants welcomed the inclusion of the multiple processes connected to children's arts-making in the strands.

The challenges and suggestions, which were presented, centred around the need to:

- Broaden the definition of art forms, while including a further focus on cultural and traditional art forms
- Expand and clarify opportunities for integration across the arts and other curriculum areas
- Provide clearer explanations of embodied approaches to the arts, including the wellbeing-related benefits that arts education offers
- Provide more detail on learning and progression across the stages
- Consider the concepts chosen in the area of Drama
- Highlight the importance of a safe learning environment in the Arts
- Seek further coherence and consistency with other specifications

Aside from the collective enactment suggestions outlined above, those specific to Arts included supports to illustrate integration, an expanded glossary, an extended bank of audiovisual materials, suggested musical excerpts and smaller class sizes to allow space for Arts education.

4.2.2 Primary Language Curriculum - including Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

Many organisations reacted very positively to the inclusion of a MFL within the Primary Language Curriculum (PLC) and the plurilingual and intercultural dimension of the Learning Outcomes. They noted that it aligned well with global and citizenship education as well as children acting as social agents through their linguistic repertoires. The majority of challenges identified around the inclusion of MFL centred around the logistics and enactment of MFL in primary schools, rather than the content of the draft specification itself. Specific points noted across submissions related to:

- the need to review the current PLC before adding a further language to its structure
- the lack of teacher competence in MFL
- challenges relating to the learning and teaching of Irish being an obstacle to adding MFL

- the reduced time for the school's Language 1 and Language 2 (English and Irish) and the potential impact on children's literacy.
- Suggestions for amendments included:
- clarification of some terminology
- the inclusion of an action-orientated approach over a communicative approach
- the addition of a section on assessment
- clarity around and amendment to references to Irish Sign Language (ISL)
- the extension of the new element, 'Building an awareness of languages and cultures' to Stage 1 and 2 (Junior Infants – 2nd Class)
- the addition of details around accommodations for children with special educational needs.

The queries and concerns around enactment were many. They included similar concerns and questions to those outlined elsewhere in this report (Please see Appendix B).

4.2.3 Social and Environmental Education (SEE)

The focus on global learning themes and the global dimension was praised. Participants merited the opportunities the draft specification presented for children to engage in learning experiences outdoors and for place-based learning. The focus on partnerships and project-based learning was also commended. The inclusion of 'inquiry' and 'story' were welcomed.

As mentioned above under overarching themes, the role of the ethos of the school and/or the values of the draft specifications around which themes like religions, beliefs and worldviews are to be explored was noted. The focus on global learning was also criticised by some participants who were of the view that these SEE themes should be framed in a more impartial way. The need to clarify assessment methods was noted in this area, as well as a need for greater clarity around connected and distinct curriculum components.

The broadness of the Learning Outcomes was mentioned, specifically in relation to Geography. It was felt that the draft specification would require a comprehensive toolkit to describe the Learning Outcomes in practice. It was noted that the structure of the draft specification and the structure of the components of the curriculum were confusing. It was suggested that some of the skills, like mapping, would benefit from being unpacked and explained, while the addition of 'inquiry' as a pedagogy would be desirable. As mentioned above, the need to place SEE in a local Irish context to greater extent was noted.

4.2.4 Science, Technology and Engineering Education (STE)

The draft STE Curriculum Specification was commended. Noteworthy features included the importance placed on partnerships, the approach to integrated STEM learning and the breakdown of concepts underpinning Technology.

Challenges identified were the move away from a spiral curriculum to broad and unclear Learning Outcomes, which in a small number of submissions, were reported to be less desirable than the content objectives of the 1999 Primary School Curriculum and the lack of integration with Mathematics. The inclusion of explicit lists of STEM skills within the specification were requested.

It was noted that there was a disproportionate focus on Science and a need to extend the Learning Outcomes for Technology and Engineering.

Feedback pointed to the definition of Technology being narrow, extending only to digital technology and computational thinking. It was suggested that greater integration opportunities and cross-curricular links should be made. More project-based work was suggested for Engineering as a way to enhance its hands-on nature. It was suggested that a breakdown of Engineering be provided in the appendices, in line with that provided for Technology. Further topics for inclusion in Technology and Engineering were suggested. Some viewpoints from individual submissions were concerned with the negative effects of the overuse of digital devices.

4.2.5 Wellbeing

The draft specification was praised for its inclusion of areas of study which are relevant in today's society. Those noted included safety and media education, the inclusion of teaching and learning about diverse families, consent, boundaries, bodily autonomy, values and emotional regulation. Participants welcomed the strengths-based focus of 'Emotional and relational education,' specifically in relation to 'resilience.' It was noted that in a time of mis- and dis- information, that this curriculum empowers children to safeguard their own health and wellbeing.

The challenges identified with the Wellbeing curriculum were the inverse views to those listed in a positive light above. Some participants felt that certain areas/themes of exploration of the Wellbeing curriculum were not age-appropriate and may contradict religious, personal or parental views. These participants also noted that the Learning Outcomes were too broad to allow any clear sense of the content which would be taught under these areas/themes, requesting that the toolkits be completed before their views were gathered. Some submissions pointed to a perceived stance on activism and political content taken within the draft Wellbeing specification.

The same push and pull between viewpoints outlined in the overarching themes and SEE were presented across the views for Wellbeing. It was noted that mental health literacy and an understanding of what can hurt and help our mental health should be included in the draft specification, and it was suggested the specification should make direct reference to the concept of 'one good adult.'

Feedback was received calling for the removal of references to gender identity from Wellbeing despite gender identity not being included in the draft specification. However, other submissions noted the absence of direct reference to gender identity and called for its future inclusion in an age appropriate way in the specification. It was further suggested that references to bullying should specifically include LGBTI+ bullying. Additionally there were suggestions that references to all of the protected characteristics under Irish law should be strengthen in the specification.

With regard to PE, positive feedback was received for the inclusion of definitions for Physical Education, physical activity and sport. Some participants queried how to timetable and name integrated learning experiences at Stages 1 and 2, and whether these would be named as Wellbeing or PE. Greater explanation of PE terminology was also noted as being desirable as well a call for further explanation of each strand unit within 'Movement Education'.

Section 5: Consultation with Children: Executive Summary

5.1 Introduction

In November 2023, Marino Institute of Education successfully tendered for a research project, commissioned by NCCA, to consult with children on their views about their experience of curriculum. This '*Consultation with children as part of the redevelopment of the Primary School Curriculum*', progresses from a previous study, a consultation with children at the time of the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework*, published in June 2022. Like the previous study, this project involved engaging with children around their experience of curriculum in school. Fifteen schools comprise the sample for the consultation with children around the six key messages of the redeveloped Primary curriculum. The research study was conducted in two phases. In phase one, group interviews with children were carried out by the research team, two classes in each of the fifteen schools. The second phase of the research study involved a series of seven case studies, conducted in seven schools chosen from the same original sample of fifteen schools. These were carried out to gain in-depth knowledge of children's experience of the five curriculum areas: Language; Science, Technology, and Engineering Education (STE); Wellbeing; Social and Environmental Education (SEE); and Arts Education. Two of the seven case studies focused on the views of children with special educational needs and children from the Travelling Community.

The context for the consultation is the development of the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications, content for the redeveloped primary curriculum. The *Primary Curriculum Framework* was published in March 2023. The curriculum specifications for each curriculum area are currently being devised through consultation with various stakeholders. It is hoped that the findings from this research study will inform the final curriculum specifications. As per the previous study, (Kiely et al, 2022), the six key messages underpinning the *Primary Curriculum Framework* formed the basis for the questions put to the children (See Appendix G for the Key Messages).

The research team collected both sets of data (phase one: fifteen schools; phase two: seven schools) in schools. This differed from the previous consultation with children in 2022, whereby classroom teachers collected the data. Because the previous study took place as schools emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, it was decided to limit the numbers of external personnel entering schools and so teachers were upskilled to collect the data through online training workshops and support from the research team.

5.2 Methodology

For phase one of the research project, group interviews with children were held in two classes in each of the fifteen schools. For phase two, brief group interviews with children, (hereafter referred to as phase two, task 1) based on a particular curriculum area, were held in two classes in each of seven schools. This was followed by a methodology chosen by the children, (hereafter referred to as phase two, task 2) whereby they gave additional details on a specific curriculum area. The children chose from a suite of methodologies, as follows: walk and talk tours of relevant curriculum areas of the class and school, drawings, concept/conversation maps, use of emoji stickers to indicate likes and dislikes of curriculum areas, sentence starters on a worksheet and guided drawings on an embodied language experience. A member of the teaching staff in each of

the seven schools was also interviewed, (hereafter referred to as phase 2, task 3), typically the classroom teacher but in some instances the school principal or a teacher designated by the school principal. These interviews were conducted to get a sense of the particular school context.

5.3 Sample

The fifteen schools in the sample included urban and rural settings, DEIS and non-DEIS schools, vertical schools, English-medium, Irish-medium, a Gaeltacht school, two special schools, and one mainstream school with a large population of children from the Travelling community.

5.4.1 Findings

Findings from both phases of the research follow, beginning with the findings from phase one -

Key Message 1: Building on success of 1999 curriculum and responding to new challenges and developments

Children indicated strong satisfaction with and preference for PE and the Arts. They spoke about how these subjects allow for freedom, imaginative exploration, agency and spending time with friends. Children want more opportunity to move, to engage in active learning, to have opportunities for conversation and creative expression. They do not like sitting for long periods and do not like workbooks.

Children in Irish-medium schools like Irish and especially like learning Irish through other subjects, such as Drama. Children in English-medium schools find learning Irish through repetition and answering questions to be difficult, but they enjoy activities such as making pizzas through Irish or doing PE through Irish.

Key Message 2 – Building agency and flexibility in schools

There is a need for more agency and autonomy in learning experiences for children of all ages. According to the children, the teacher, principal, the government, the president, subject experts such as archaeologists are in charge and children must do what they are instructed to do. Children's definition of choice may vary significantly from adults. If they are given a limited array of choices for a specific task, they do not see this as choice.

Key Message 3: Building connections between preschool, primary and post-primary schools

Children in infant classes saw connections with preschool in terms of play, friends and nice teachers. Children in senior classes look forward to some aspects of post-primary such as more freedom and new practical subjects but have fears around workload, forming friendships and difficulty of curriculum content.

Key message 4: Emerging priorities for children's learning

Children value curriculum topics that will 'stand to them' in later life, such as mathematics and literacy. They are quite focused on this and on the usefulness of subjects for their future careers. Children want to know more about themselves and the world they live in, other cultures and languages.

Key message 5: Changing how the curriculum is presented and structured

Children like the idea of immersing themselves in depth in two subjects a day if the subjects are Art and PE. However, they report a fear of boredom and fear of missing out on other subjects if there is a deep focus on one or two subjects only.

Key Message 6: Pedagogical Approaches

In many respects, the findings from phase one of the study mirrored findings from the report on the consultation with children on the *Draft Primary Curriculum* (Kiely et al, 2022). Children report they would like more active learning, technology-based and play-based learning, more opportunities to work outdoors and with a partner/peer. Children show a clear preference for playful and active learning methodologies. They appreciate playful teaching, such as games, for subjects they find difficult, particularly in senior classes. Their experiences of the curriculum are clearly influenced by the teaching methodologies used in each subject. Additionally, the specific workbooks used for curriculum areas/subjects often influence children's experiences of that curriculum area. The current data set demonstrated a strong love of reading by children. The data also revealed an awareness of assessment practices and children furnished examples of practices of self-assessment, peer-assessment and teacher-assessment. The children talked about opportunities to work alone, in pairs and in groups and debated the merits and de-merits of group work and peer assessment.

5.4.2 Findings from the second phase of the research: Case Studies on the five curriculum areas

Case Study A: Social and Environmental Education (SEE)

Older children enjoy engaging with certain aspects of History and Geography, specifically Irish history and learning about other countries, while the younger children, especially, found learning about the environment less interesting, although they recognised its importance. Project work appears central to particularly History and Geography and is greatly enjoyed by children. Interactive, investigative and playful approaches to SEE were preferred over text-based work. Learning approaches used affected children's learning experience of the curriculum area. Children had opportunities to visit local sites, buildings, museums and libraries, which enhanced their learning experience of the subject. The children in this case study did not seem to have a metacognitive understanding of the skills of a historian or a geographer.

Case Study B: Arts Education

Arts Education was highly prized amongst children for the freedom it gives them to be creative, to try out ideas, to be agentic in their choices and to be able to chat with their peers as they work. Visual Arts was repeatedly mentioned as a favourite subject amongst children in junior and senior classes. Concerns were expressed around the time given to Arts Education. It seems to 'slip off' the timetable sometimes, while other curriculum areas are prioritised. Findings indicate that skills development in Arts Education needs additional focus.

Case Study C: Wellbeing

It was striking that there is a strong emphasis on children's wellbeing across all schools, not just the school in which the Case Study was conducted. The sense of school being a safe and nurturing space for children is universally prioritised. Emotional wellbeing and regulation and the language around emotional wellbeing is a strong focus in this case-study school, as well as

online/digital safety. Wellbeing has a whole-school approach and curriculum-wise, is integrated throughout subjects, rather than restricted to the teaching of SPHE and PE. Children are aware and vocal about the subjects and activities that promote their wellbeing, mentioning P.E. and SPHE and the arts, as well as playing with their friends, using the school library, and having a say on committees such as the student council and green schools committee.

Case Study D: Science, Technology and Engineering Education (STE)

Findings from this case study demonstrated sophisticated practices in relation to the integration of technology with both Science and Engineering. Children report they use iPad's for 'nearly everything', including the documentation of processes around Science experiments and engineering processes. Curriculum experiences are supported by field trips and participation in exhibitions and events such as Science Week and Science Blast. Methodologies experienced include a considerable amount of collaborative learning.

Case Study E: The Primary Language Curriculum including Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

Findings demonstrated that children had some plurilingual awareness of language, demonstrating an ability to discuss languages and make comparisons across languages in this case-study school, which was a Gaelscoil. The children were aware of how languages can be learned through culture (e.g. song and sport) and through community use (e.g. signage in the local supermarket, announcements on public transport). In learning language, children had experience of working in pairs, of direct teaching and use of the interactive whiteboard and textbooks. The children in this school seemed to be strongly and favourably disposed towards learning additional languages and recognised the cultural benefits accruing to this activity, such as the ability to communicate with others when travelling abroad.

Section 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The consultation process was very informative, presenting opportunities to those who wished to share their views on the draft specifications to do so. The consultation engagements ranged from once-off feedback events to more sustained and in-depth engagements. NCCA is grateful to those who participated and provided feedback on the draft specifications. While vast majority of feedback was constructive, some feedback, particularly through the submissions was less respectful of the work completed to date and the curriculum development processes through which this was undertaken. These particular submissions were frequently based on misinformation and / or disinformation and were often confrontational in tone. In stating this it is important to note that all of the feedback gathered during the consultation, regardless of content, has been analysed and the main findings have been reported upon in this report. As is to be expected, some feedback concerned issues and themes that were the focus of the earlier consultation on the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* which concluded in March 2022, e.g., suggested time allocations, curriculum structure and the inclusion of new areas of learning. As this additional feedback was outside the parameters of this consultation, it will not impact the finalisation of the Curriculum Specifications or the contents of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* which was approved by the Minister for Education in 2023. Nonetheless, for the purpose of completeness, this feedback is included in this report.

As with all NCCA consultations, the findings will be considered by Council and decisions then taken as to the actions required in finalising the curriculum specifications. This decision making is contextualised by a range of policies, legislation and international conventions that inform NCCA's activities. These include, but are not limited to, the [Primary Curriculum Framework](#); NCCA's [Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025](#); the [Education Act \(1998\)](#); the [Equality Act \(2004\)](#); the [Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act \(2004\)](#); and the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1989\)](#). In addition, decision making aligns with strategies such as [Ireland's Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024 - 2033: Every Learner from Birth to Young Adulthood](#); and guidance such as [Preparation for Teaching and Learning: Guidance for All Primary and Special Schools \(GoI, 2021\)](#).

As noted in the Introduction to this report, significant amounts of feedback were received from a broad range of participants. Consequently, a substantial variety of diverse perspectives has been articulated across the feedback, and while there was much consensus emerging, there are examples of contested issues. Taking the analysis as a whole, the feedback highlights key points to inform NCCA's work in finalising the curriculum specifications.

A synopsis of the overall findings followed by findings on each of the five Draft Curriculum Specifications are captured below.

6.2.1 Building on the strengths of the 1999 Curriculum

There was praise for how the draft curriculum specifications maintain the strengths of the 1999 Curriculum, and a welcome for the continuity of some of its key features, including its child-

centred approach and active learning methods. While many endorsed the draft specifications' structure, the meaningful inclusion of the Key Competencies, and the priorities for children's learning such as digital and outdoor learning, concerns emerged about potential overemphasis on technology, increased workload, and the need for further support for teachers and school leaders in catering for diverse needs, particularly for Special Educational Needs.

6.2.2 Agency

The concept of agency received mostly positive feedback, with a focus mainly on teachers' professional agency. Participants noted that the draft curriculum specifications support and empower agency through the Learning Outcomes, Key Competencies and varied assessment approaches, by enabling flexibility and integration. However, the consultation did initiate discussion and debate with concerns raised about the shift in teacher mindset required, balancing autonomy with accountability, and potential constraints from school-wide plans, standardised tests, and textbooks. Familiarity with contextual factors was seen as essential to exercising effective agency. While support for teacher agency was strong, ensuring consistent understanding and support from all stakeholders was emphasised. Child agency was discussed less, but also seen as supported in the context of the redeveloped curriculum's Key Competencies and assessment approaches, allowing for children's voices to be included and heard louder than the previous curriculum.

6.2.3 Learning Outcomes

Feedback on Learning Outcomes, as a general feature of all curriculum specifications, drew varied responses. The flexibility and openness of Learning Outcomes was widely welcomed by some, but that same flexibility and openness was also characterised as a problem by others. One point of view is that the Learning Outcomes allow teachers to respond to their learning context and children, but another perspective characterised this as leading to too great a diversification of learning, potentially causing inequalities. It was also suggested that there should be greater clarity about the connections between the Additional Support Pathways and the Learning Outcomes to support teachers in their planning and practice.

6.2.4 Pedagogical approaches and assessment

There was a strong welcome for the variety of pedagogical approaches put forward in the draft curriculum specifications, with notable positivity towards the inclusion of playful pedagogies. However, the need for additional guidance which would support teachers, particularly those in senior classes, to successfully integrate playful pedagogies into their practice was frequently mentioned. Although the focus on transitions and progression across the draft curriculum specifications was largely welcomed, there were consistent calls for greater communication and collaboration between stakeholders, including parents, across the early years, primary and post-primary sectors. While it was acknowledged that the draft curriculum specifications reflect changing thinking around assessment in recent years, mixed reactions also surfaced regarding pedagogical approaches and assessment methods, with some worried about implementation and balance.

6.2.5 Curriculum implementation and enactment

One area of consensus arising from the consultation that yielded considerable feedback is the very significant concern across all stakeholders about implementation and enactment of the curriculum and the supports required in that regard. It is fair to say that the entire consultation took place amid concerns about implementation, support needs, and system capacity. While NCCA did not set out to gather information on those issues, as data gathering was focused on the contents of the draft curriculum specifications, it became very clear that these issues are at least as significant to stakeholders as the curriculum itself. A summary of the feedback on curriculum implementation and enactment is set out in Appendix B.

6.3.1 Arts Education

The increasingly integrated and streamlined approach to Arts Education and the conceptualisation of all children as Arts-Makers in the draft specification was welcomed across the consultation. Whilst connections made to the wider world and diverse cultural contexts of the arts were viewed positively in the main, there were calls for increased reference to the rich vibrancy of Irish traditional culture, heritage, craft and artforms. The Learning Outcomes received a significant amount of feedback. While it was acknowledged that the broad nature of the Learning Outcomes allows for flexibility, it was also suggested that they could benefit from increased clarity and specificity. There was agreement in relation to the importance of process in Arts Education. The need to ensure standards and progression in the arts subjects was referenced, and the concepts and related progression overview were particularly well received. Finally, concerns were expressed about the position of dance, with greater clarity needed on the learning in this area.

6.3.2 Primary Language Curriculum – including Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

Plurilingualism, as detailed in the MFL update to the Primary language Curriculum, was warmly welcomed as reflecting the needs of a modern Ireland. However, considerable concern emerged around how MFL would be enacted in schools and how teachers would balance language learning priorities. The findings relating to *Progression and Continuity* and *Inclusion* were particularly pertinent to the vision of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* supporting every learner to reach their full potential. There was agreement on the necessity to include assessment guidance to aid teachers in identifying and supporting children's progress with MFL. The increased focus on linguistic and cultural awareness was commended as fostering an appreciation of diversity. Issues relating to teachers' proficiency and pedagogical confidence in MFL were repeatedly raised. Taken together, the findings relating to the introduction of MFL in the Primary language Curriculum highlight the reciprocally influential nature of implementation issues, teacher professional development, and curriculum aspirations.

6.3.3 Social and Environmental Education

The consultation findings note that the draft specification for Social and Environmental Education builds upon the strengths of the 1999 Curriculum, reinforces many effective practices in schools, and has potential to support children's capacity to be active, informed, and empowered citizens. Whilst the structure, accessibility, and useability of the specification were viewed positively overall, concerns were raised regarding the balance between history and geography within the

strands. The pedagogical practices received extensive welcome, the view expressed that they connect meaningfully with children's lived experience, support inclusion, and enhance the centrality of child voice. However, some questions arose relating to the proposed Learning Outcomes, with balancing the interplay between affording teachers' agency and providing requisite specificity of curriculum content identified as an aspect requiring further consideration. The inclusion of suggested global learning themes was, in general, deemed as positive, although there was some concern documented regarding a potential over-focus on global issues and a relative lack of emphasis on Irish/national themes.

6.3.4 Science, Technology and Engineering Education

The inclusion of Science, Technology and Engineering Education in the redeveloped primary curriculum was welcomed as a relevant and significant development for Irish children in today's society, while also building on the strengths of the current primary curriculum. There was general positivity towards the promotion of active and collaborative learning throughout the specification. While there was a strong welcome for the approach to integrated learning, drawing together the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, it was felt that increased clarity about the role of the teacher and child throughout the process could be provided. Given that some teachers may not have strong familiarity with aspects of the content of this specification, particularly in Technology, the need for high-quality professional learning opportunities was consistently referenced as important. There was also agreement that the Online Toolkit would be of great significance in ensuring successful implementation of this curriculum.

6.3.5 Wellbeing

The introduction of Wellbeing, integrating PE and SPHE, was broadly welcomed and praised for its holistic, balanced approach. Some concerns were noted regarding planning, broad Learning Outcomes, and preserving subject based learning, albeit with an emphasis on teacher and child agency and an integration symbol highlighted as helpful. Learning Outcomes were generally well received, particularly content which builds on the 1999 curriculum, along with newer areas including physical literacy, resilience and digital wellbeing. Suggested edits and mixed views emerged in relation to PE activity areas, diverse family structures and RSE. Feedback also reflected contrasting perspectives regarding topics which do not feature within the draft specification, such as mental health, movement breaks, gender identity, and LGBTI+ terminology. The importance of ongoing partnership with parents was noted, along with diverse opinions in relation to the appropriateness of connections with patrons' programmes and external facilitators. Overall, the draft provides a strong foundation, but requires further clarity in certain areas.

6.4 The next steps in finalising the curriculum specifications

The findings from the consultation with children and broader stakeholders will inform the finalisation of the curriculum specifications in the coming months. This work will be supported by, and progressed with, the education partners through the five [NCCA Primary Development Groups](#), [Board for Early Childhood and Primary](#), and [Council](#). The main priorities and key considerations for finalising the specifications include:

- Thorough review of the Learning Outcomes and Progression Pathways to provide greater clarity and guidance to teachers in their preparation and practice;
- Streamlining of the language and terminology used across the documents for consistency and clarity with a view to improving the overall accessibility;
- Greater focus on Irish traditions, heritage and culture; as well as Ireland's place in Europe;
- Greater clarity on the nature, purpose and role of integration and play in the curriculum.

Following this period of deliberation across NCCA's structures, the curriculum specifications will be shared with the Minister for Education for consideration in Spring 2025. Concurrently, work on supporting guidance for curriculum planning/preparation and teaching will be progressed with the development of toolkit materials and exemplification of practice. When completed, the redeveloped Primary School Curriculum will comprise the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (DE, 2023), Curriculum Specifications and the Online Toolkits. Importantly, NCCA will also engage with the Department of Education, through its structures, to support the introduction and enactment of the curriculum in the coming years, using feedback collected during the consultation as a key reference. All of this is in pursuit of the curriculum vision which aims to:

Provide a strong foundation for every child to thrive and flourish, supporting them in realising their full potential as individuals and as members of communities and society during childhood, as they progress through primary and special education and into post-primary education. Building on their previous experiences, the curriculum views children as unique, competent and caring individuals, and it views teachers as committed, skilful and agentic professionals. It supports high-quality learning, teaching and assessment that is inclusive and evidence-based, recognising the right of all children to make progress in all areas of their learning and development (DE, 2023, 5).

References

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology'. *Qualitative Research in psychology*, 3(2), pp. 77 – 101. Stationery Office.

Council of Europe (2001) *Common European framework of reference for languages (CEFR): learning, teaching, assessment*. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/>

Government of Ireland (1999) *The Primary School Curriculum*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Skills (2015) *Framework for Junior Cycle*. Available at: <https://ncca.ie/media/3249/framework-for-junior-cycle-2015-en.pdf>

Department of Education (2023) *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*. Available at: <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/primary/curriculum-areas/mathematics/>

Department of Education (2023) *Primary Curriculum Framework*. Available at: <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/primary/the-primary-curriculum-framework/>

Department of Education (2024) *Say Yes To Languages – Language Sampler Module 2024/2025*. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/91c8d-say-yes-to-languages-language-sampler-module-202223/>

Education Act 1998, Dublin: The Stationery Office. Available at: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/51/enacted/en/html>

Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, Dublin: The Stationery Office. Available at: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/act/30/enacted/en/html>

Equality Act 2004. Dublin: The Stationery Office. Available at: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/act/24/enacted/en/html>

Government of Ireland (2019) *Primary Language Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile*. Dublin: Government of Ireland Available at: <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/primary/curriculum-areas/primary-language/>

Government of Ireland (2021) *Preparation for Teaching and Learning – Guidance for All Primary and Special Schools*. Available at: <https://ncca.ie/media/5016/preparation-for-teaching-and-learning.pdf>

Government of Ireland (2023) *Ireland's Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033: Every learner from birth to young adulthood*. Available at: [gov - Literacy, Numeracy and Digital literacy Strategy \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/gov-literacy-numeracy-and-digital-literacy-strategy)

Kiely, J., Haals Brosnan, M., Uí Chianáin, A., Colum, M. and Dunne, C. (2022) *Report on the consultation with children on the Draft Primary Curriculum*. Available at: [final-report-on-the-consultation-with-children-on-the-new-draft-primary-curriculum_june-2022.pdf \(ncca.ie\)](https://ncca.ie/media/1351/assessment-guidelines.pdf)

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2007) *Assessment in the primary school curriculum: Guidelines for schools*. Dublin: NCCA. Available at: <https://ncca.ie/media/1351/assessment-guidelines.pdf>

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2002) *Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Difficulties*. Dublin: NCCA. Available at: [sen_introduction.pdf](https://ncca.ie/media/1351/assessment-guidelines.pdf)

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2009) *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. Dublin: NCCA. Available at: <https://curriculumonline.ie/Early-Childhood>

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2017) *Consultation on the proposals for a curriculum in Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) and Ethics: Final report*. Available at: https://ncca.ie/media/1898/consultation_report_erbe_february2017.pdf

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) *Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. Available at: [strategic-plan-2022-2025.pdf \(ncca.ie\)](https://ncca.ie/media/1898/consultation_report_erbe_february2017.pdf)

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2024) *Draft Arts Education Curriculum Specification*. Available at: https://ncca.ie/media/ihskm4o/draft_primary_artseducation_specification_2024.pdf

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2024) *Draft Social and Environmental Education Specification (SEE)*. Available at: https://ncca.ie/media/353c0fa0/primary_draft_see_2024.pdf

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2024) *Draft Science, Technology and Engineering Education Curriculum Specification*. Available at: https://ncca.ie/media/2vvcabyb/draft_ste_specification_2024.pdf

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2024) *Draft Wellbeing Curriculum Specification*. Available at: https://ncca.ie/media/csmh55u0/draft_primary_wellbeing_specification_2024.pdf

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2024) *Primary Language Curriculum – including draft Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)*. Available at: https://ncca.ie/media/5pcpf4je/draft_plc_modernforeignlanguages.pdf

Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge. Available at: <https://www.teg.ie/>

United Nations General Assembly. (1989) *United Nations convention on the rights of the child*. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

Appendix A: Communications

Find below a summary of key elements of the Communications Strategy employed during the consultation.

- Press release issued by NCCA on the launch date of consultation (March 6th) and circulated to various stakeholders and media outlets. Pre-press release meeting with educational correspondents took place on March 5th 2024.
 - Dedicated consultation webpage on ncca.ie. News features and banners across ncca.ie and consultationonline.ie.
 - A number of news items featured in NCCA's *info@ncca* e-newsletter, issued to over 9000 subscribers twice over the course of the consultation.
 - Active in seeking coverage from national and local press. Articles featured across a wide range of newspapers (e.g. Irish Times, Irish Examiner, Sunday Independent, Donegal Daily, Kilkenny People, Wicklow People and Tipperary Live) and online media (e.g. journal.ie, newstalk.ie, joe.ie and schooldays.ie).
 - Interviews conducted across various radio channels, including national and local radio. Additional features on radio programmes over course of consultation.
 - An information e-mail issued to every primary and special school in the country, including a note on the consultation for sharing with parents/ guardians in their school.
 - Extensive coverage across all NCCA's social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter / X), providing information on the consultation and encouraging involvement. A small number of paid promotional posts were used to target audiences and promote the focus group events.
 - Liaising with key stakeholders, seeking their support in spreading awareness of the consultation. Stakeholders assisted in sharing information on the consultation through established physical and online newsletters and publications.
 - Working with schools in NCCA's Schools Forum to help spread awareness of their contribution to the development process and to encourage engagement in the consultation from their wider school communities.
 - RTE News2day television feature on 'Children have their say on the Primary School curriculum'.
 - Development and use of a promotional video that featured the voice of children, teachers, school leaders, parents, grandparents, SNAs and others, encouraging the public to have their say on proposals.
 - Development and distribution of an information leaflet containing QR codes to bring readers to the consultation website.
 - Attendance and use of information stalls at key events engaging with teachers, parents and other stakeholders e.g. ESAI Research Conference (Maynooth), INTO Annual Congress (Derry) and SDG National Stakeholder Forum (Croke Park).
-

Appendix B: Feedback on Supports for Curriculum Enactment

Introduction

Over the course of the consultation, participants voiced considerable feedback in relation to the implementation of the redeveloped Primary School Curriculum, albeit that the consultation was focused on the contents of the draft curriculum specifications. In line with NCCA's commitment to report on all perspectives expressed during the consultation, this Appendix outlines the feedback on implementation. Overall, participants considered that the redeveloped curriculum must be accompanied by supports to ensure its successful introduction, implementation and embedding. Supports in the following areas were highlighted: funding and resourcing; leadership; professional development; collaboration, clustering and partnerships; toolkits; time; competency development; messaging; and specific support for MFL. Supporting teacher and school leader wellbeing during the implementation process was also seen as paramount.

Funding and Resourcing

Participants were clear on the need for funding and resourcing of the redeveloped Primary School Curriculum. The key points raised include:

- The successful implementation of the new primary curriculum specifications will require adequate funding and resources. Schools will need resources to support all areas of the curriculum including the use of technology across the curriculum. Resources should be distributed equitably among schools.
- Resources and a range of artefacts that are age- and stage- appropriate to support the curriculum could be made available online through a portal or through local / regional Education Centres. Participants indicated they would welcome guidance around the use and availability of resources.
- Participants would also welcome a reduction in class size to facilitate teaching the new curriculum and guidance regarding parents' rights to request that their children opt out of aspects of the curriculum.

Leadership

Feedback included a recognition that school culture has a significant impact on curriculum implementation. Participants identified school leaders as having a key role in shaping school culture and in leading curriculum implementation at school level, with some of the key points of feedback being:

- School leaders need to be given time for sense-making regarding the new curriculum specifications. CPD for school leaders should be led by experienced leadership professionals, and collaboration with OIDE should take place in planning future CPD for school leaders.
- Other necessary supports identified include guidance on distributed leadership, release time for deputy principals, and the restoration of posts of responsibility for specific curriculum areas, to support the process of implementation at school level.

Approaches to Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Participants were very clear in their views on calling for comprehensive professional development to support their implementation of the new curriculum specifications. They stressed the importance of CPD across the education system, though there was some concern expressed

regarding possible CPD fatigue with a phased implementation of the new specifications. Some of the key findings include:

- A preference among participants for a multimodal / hybrid approach to CPD, involving a variety of approaches to reflect teachers' and school leaders' needs and the diversity of school contexts.
- As examples of approaches to CPD that were well-received, participants mentioned the current approach to CPD for the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*, CPD offered as part of the Creative Schools Project, and the phased approach to implementation of the 1999 *Primary School Curriculum*. The feedback was clear that a cascade model, where some teachers in a school are provided with CPD and in turn provide CPD to their colleagues, would not be appropriate.
- In-person, blended and online approaches to CPD that is school-based, whole-school focussed, and context specific would be welcomed. In addition, a sustained support model was identified as preferable, with reviews of CPD carried out in the early stages to identify what further supports may be needed.
- A strengths-based approach was suggested with schools having flexibility and autonomy to choose which curriculum area to engage with first. Such an approach could address concerns around perceptions of subject hierarchy.
- Participants also requested whole-school planning days, involving school closures, with support from Oide.
- Participants cited the need for CPD that supports genuine culturally responsive pedagogy that involves communities of practice; includes access to experts where relevant to topics; is linked to current practice; supports teachers in developing their own resources; contributes to teachers' and school leaders' background knowledge; provides guidance on learning about religions, beliefs and worldviews; and illustrates how curriculum areas relate to and align with each other.
- It was suggested that a system of supply panels to facilitate teachers and school leaders engaging in CPD should be provided at system level.

Clustering, Communities of Practice, Collaboration, and Partnerships

Participants acknowledged the importance of collaboration, partnerships and communities of practice for sharing practice, planning together and learning from each other to support the implementation of new curriculum specifications and to increase communication between teachers, school leaders and schools. Some of the key findings under this topic include:

- Participants noted that primary school teachers get little opportunity to share practice or to observe other teachers beyond their involvement with *Droichead*. Participants highlighted the potential within schools to provide opportunities for teachers to share practice and ideas with peers, and to observe practice through lesson study, lesson demonstration, class-swapping and/or skill-sharing.
- Communities can be a significant resource for schools. Examples of partnership in action include the Creative Schools Project, and Music Generation. Providing links to artists, galleries and agencies in the community and online was suggested. Traveller parents also suggested inviting speakers / crafts people from the travelling community into school to share their crafts and expertise for the benefit of all children.
- Clustering of similar schools to enable collaboration was suggested, such as special schools clustering together.

- Education Centres were identified as having a role in facilitating the development of partnerships, school networking, creating resource banks, and clustering of schools, particularly in relation to small schools.
- Participants suggested that guidelines around liaising with external professionals such as psychologists would be welcome.

Toolkits

Participants welcomed proposals for Online Toolkits and stated that it was important that they are regularly updated as a living resource. Other key findings under this topic include:

- Participants indicated a preference for examples of Toolkits to be available for the curriculum implementation stage or even earlier to encourage teacher and school leader engagement.
- Participants stressed the need for Toolkits to be accessible, practical and usable, and to be inclusive of multigrade and special education settings. Toolkits should be available simultaneously in both Irish and English.
- Specific suggestions for Toolkit resources include exemplification of integration; pedagogical approaches; inquiry-based learning; playful pedagogies; creativity; and learning outcomes and assessment in practice for all curriculum areas. Such resources should reflect realistic and authentic contexts. In addition, Toolkits should offer guidance for planning, sample lesson plans and suggested resources and materials; guidance regarding pupil voice; pupil agency; outdoor learning; fieldwork; wellbeing; project-based learning; computational skills; sustainability; citizenship education; supporting home languages; AI; culture; global learning themes; integrated projects; and additional support pathways.
- Traveller parents shared that there are useful videos available online showing, e.g. examples of Traveller crafts.
- Toolkits should contribute to developing teachers' confidence and competence regarding the new specifications.
- Toolkits should also be available to parents.

Time

Feedback indicated that participants have fears of increased workload associated with implementing the new curriculum. Consequently, the issue of allowing time and space for sense-making and for the system to engage with, plan for, and embed the new curriculum is essential. Additional key findings related to the topic of 'time' include:

- Clarity is required on timeline for full implementation. A phased roll-out of the curriculum changes is suggested.
- Time, particularly in-built release time, is needed for ongoing in-school collaboration beyond the curriculum implementation phase, for whole-school planning and curriculum-mapping to support the implementation of a learning outcomes curriculum, and to sustain a learning outcomes approach over time.
- Time is also required to build, source and prepare resources.

Teacher competency and confidence

Participants identified the need for an updating of the Initial Teacher Education courses to prepare future teachers to understand the key messages and to teach a learning outcomes-based curriculum. Additional key findings related to the topic of 'teacher competency and confidence' include:

- A comprehensive professional development programme will be required for all teachers and school leaders currently in the system to develop their confidence and competence to teach the redeveloped curriculum.
- Support will be required to develop the necessary disciplinary knowledge and competence, across all curriculum areas.

Consistency and clear messaging of Key Messages and alignment

Creating awareness of the redeveloped curriculum across the system and strategic collaboration between stakeholders was seen as essential by participants, with many citing the move to a learning outcomes curriculum as a cultural shift in primary education. Additional key findings related to this topic include:

- The importance of ensuring clarity and consistency of key messages across all stakeholders in all communications was emphasised to support embedded system-wide change. Shared understandings of the key messages should be developed, for example a shared understanding of assessment in an integrated curriculum. A video to communicate key messages and the purpose of education is suggested.
- The changes from the 1999 *Primary School Curriculum* must be outlined and understood by all stakeholders. Planned changes and an explanation of terminology must also be communicated to parents.
- A curriculum map outlining how the various components of the curriculum work together would be useful. An infographic is suggested.
- There should be system-wide and cross-sectoral alignment across all curricula.
- The Inspectorate should have an advisory role during the implementation process, with expectations regarding school inspections clear and transparent.

Primary Language Curriculum / *Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile* to include Modern Foreign Languages

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) is a new addition to the *Primary Language Curriculum / Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile*. Feedback indicates concerns around the introduction of MFL and strong calls for specific support. There are also concerns regarding equity among schools in the provision of MFL. Some of the key findings include:

- A long-term implementation strategy for MFL is required.
- Developing teacher confidence and competence in teaching MFL will be necessary given that MFL is a new aspect of the primary school curriculum. The inclusion of MFL in Initial Teacher Education and professional development for current teachers and school leaders is central to developing such confidence and competence. CPD should include language awareness, plurilingual approaches, pedagogies, and the development of competencies in third and additional languages.
- It was suggested that funded modern language programmes should be available in Education Centres or universities to develop teaching expertise in modern languages. The CEFR should be used to support the development of language confidence and competence. It was also suggested that specialist MFL teachers could be appointed.
- The 'Say Yes to Languages' Sampler Module was suggested as a model to introduce and develop MFL, building on Languages Connect and Language Learning passports for children.

Participants suggested that guidance around selecting a suitable MFL for their context would be useful.

- An MFL Toolkit should be provided, to include examples of pedagogies in practice; use of CLIL; guidance around pronunciation and grammar; pair-work; language games; authentic language use; video samples; ISL; and assessment in MFL. Good quality printed materials may also be useful. The Toolkit should offer guidance around content for each learning outcome; supporting home languages; celebrating and integrating cultures; and AI in language learning. Clarity is needed around progression from stage 3 to stage 4 and how stage 3 provides a foundation for stage 4.
- Programmes such as E-twinning and Erasmus should be encouraged.
- Supports for the inclusion of children with special or additional needs in language learning experiences must be developed.
- Supports should be available for parents regarding MFL.
- Partnerships with the community, and with post-primary schools in the community, should be explored with a view to supporting MFL in primary schools and clarifying and managing expectations.

Appendix C: Methodology details

Data Gathering

Focus Groups

In-person focus groups with teachers and school leaders: Education Centre locations:

Venue – Education Centre	Audience	Date	Time
Athlone Education Centre	Teachers and principals	March 13 th	3:45 - 5:15pm
Cavan (Cavan Crystal Hotel)	Teachers and principals	March 19 th	3:45 - 5:15pm
Dublin West Education Centre	Teachers and principals	March 20 th	3:45 - 5:15pm
Waterford Teachers' Centre	Teachers and principals	March 21 st	3:45 - 5:15pm
Sligo Education Centre	Teachers and principals	April 9 th	3:45 - 5:15pm
Cork Education Centre	Teachers and principals	April 10 th	3:45 - 5:15pm
Galway Education Centre	Múinteoirí agus príomhoidí	April 16 th	3:45 - 5:15pm

In addition, NCCA supported the National Parents Council in holding an in-person Focus Group event for parents on May 11th in the Ashling Hotel, Dublin. NCCA would also like to thank and acknowledge the following organisations for their assistance in facilitating in-person focus groups with parents/guardians from diverse backgrounds:

- The Galway Traveller Movement
- Young Ballymun, Dublin
- Bracken Educate Together National School, Balbriggan
- Bedford Row Project, Limerick
- EPIC – Empowering People in Care, Dublin
- Kinsale Road Accommodation Centre for International Protection Applicants, Cork
- Irish Foster Care Association
- Fostering First Ireland

Online focus groups took place on the Zoom platform, with one online event per curriculum area:

Curriculum Area	Date	Time
Primary Language Curriculum including MFL	April 17 th	7-8pm
Arts Education	April 18 th	7-8pm

Wellbeing	April 23 rd	7-8pm
Social and Environmental Education	April 24 th	7-8pm
Science, Technology and Engineering Education	April 25 th	7-8pm
Parents / guardians	May 7 th	7-8.15pm
Migrant Teacher Group in association with Marino Institute of Education	May 22 nd	4-5pm

Bilateral Meetings

Bilateral meetings were held with the following groups:

Stakeholder Organisations
An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)
Grúpa Ghaeilge – Conradh na Gaeilge, Gaeloideachas, Gael Linn, An Foras Pátrúnachta, Sealbhú
Education and Training Boards Ireland (Community National Schools Schools)
Catholic Primary School management Association (CPSMA)
Church of Ireland Board of Education
Educate Together
Muslim Board of Education
Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO)
Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN)
National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE)
Arts Council

Consultative Conference

In addition to the feedback gathering activities referenced in the report, keynote presentations were given by the research team in Marino Institute carrying out the consultation with children and by the research team in University College Dublin undertaking the *Children's School Lives* Study. Children along with their teachers, parents, SNAs and school leaders, from the five local schools that participated in a video 'Experiences from the Classroom' shown at the beginning of the conference were in attendance. During a panel discussion with ten children from across these schools, they were invited to elaborate on aspects of the video and their classroom experiences of

their choice. RTE News2day did a television feature on ‘Children have their say on the Primary School curriculum’ from the conference.

Schools Networks

A total of 25 primary and special schools participated in the networks. The networks represented both a geographical and contextual spread of school type, including: urban DEIS, rural DEIS, Gaelscoil, special schools, schools with special classes, small rural and large urban. Each network of five schools focused on a single curriculum area. A number of in-person meetings of all schools involved in the various networks was held, in addition to online meetings and in-school focus groups conducted by NCCA teams. In-depth feedback and practical suggestions for refining and enhancing the draft specifications were collected through discussions and workshops with the participating teachers.

Facilitation/Note-taking

NCCA staff facilitated the bilateral meetings, focus groups (in-person and online), schools networks engagement and the discussion groups at the Consultative Conference. NCCA notetakers recorded the discussions. Immediately following the end of any given event, facilitators and notetakers reviewed the notes to ensure that all perspectives had been captured. Notetakers used the question templates to organise the raw notes.

Questionnaires

For educators, a separate questionnaire was provided for each curriculum area, in addition to a questionnaire to gather feedback on alignment with the *Primary Curriculum Framework*. Following advice from representative groups, a single questionnaire was designed for parents. All questionnaires included opportunities for written feedback in addition to the range of ranking and Likert scale questions.

Overview of feedback gathering

Consultation method	Participants	Number
Bi-lateral meetings	Stakeholder organisations and interest groups	11 meetings
Questionnaires and number of responses received		
Online questionnaire: Arts Education	Educators	235
Online questionnaire: Modern Foreign Languages	Educators	457
Online questionnaire : Social and Environmental Education	Educators	136
Online questionnaire: Science, Technology and Engineering Education	Educators	137

Online questionnaire: Wellbeing	Educators	196
Online questionnaire: Alignment with <i>Primary Curriculum Framework</i>	Educators	95
Online questionnaire	Parents	615
<u>Focus Groups</u>	Teachers, School Leaders, Parents	341
<u>Consultative Conference</u>	Education Stakeholders	200 approx.
<u>Written submissions</u>	Individuals and organisations	1102 ⁵

Feedback Analysis

Six- phase analysis plan as follows:

1. Familiarisation with the feedback
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

Source: Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology'. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77 – 101.

Key Messages

The following key messages associated with Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment (PCRR) informed the collection of data on the alignment between the draft Curriculum Specifications and the *Primary Curriculum Framework*. This data is categorised as Findings on the Key Messages of the Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment (PCRR).

⁵ Approximately 16% of organisations/groups and 60% of individuals who made submissions did not give permission to publish their submission. See following section on Submissions.

1. Building on the **successes and strengths of the 1999 curriculum** such as children's enjoyment of learning and teachers' increased use of active learning methodologies. Responding **to key challenges** which schools have identified such as curriculum overload and using assessment in a meaningful way to inform teaching and learning.
2. Recognising the importance of **agency and flexibility for schools**, the variety of school contexts that exist in our system, and providing for learning environments that support the learning of every child. Increasing flexibility for schools in terms of planning and timetabling.
3. Supporting **transitions between home, preschool and post-primary** by providing a vision for children's learning across the eight years of primary school which links with learning experiences provided through *Aistear* and connects learning in the *Framework for Junior Cycle*.
4. Responding **to emerging priorities for children's learning** and embedding seven key competencies from junior infants to sixth class. Giving more time and prominence to wellbeing, introducing modern foreign languages from third class, broadening the arts education area and increasing the focus on technology.
5. **Supporting a variety of pedagogical approaches and strategies with assessment central to teaching and learning.** Emphasising the importance of curriculum integration, inclusive practice, inquiry based-learning and playful pedagogy. Assessment recognised as a central part of teacher's daily practice.

Written Submissions

Feedback gathering

An open call was circulated by NCCA for stakeholders (children, parents, teachers and school leaders), academics, and other interested parties to respond with their views to the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications. Details were circulated through NCCA's stakeholders' channels and online via the NCCA website and social media channels.

Consultation period

Feedback was gathered between March and June 2024. The initial deadline of 5pm on June 7th 2024 was extended to 5pm on June 18th 2024.

Instruments and submission format

Written submissions were gathered through two instruments – an online MS Form and open email submission to NCCA. The online MS Form gathered responses on (1) the alignment of the draft curriculum specifications with the *Primary Curriculum Framework*, (2) responses on the individual Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications and (3) additional comments on potential supports for implementing the curriculum in schools. The open email submission did not require any particular feedback format. The responses received through this format varied from those which followed the format of the MS Form and those which used a freeform format.

Participant details and publication permissions

Participant details were gathered on the MS online form. Participants self-selected whether their submission was a response as an individual or as an organisation or body. Feedback was grouped and analysed according to these subcategories.

In addition, participants were asked whether they were happy to be listed as a contributor to the consultation with their submission published online. The feedback presented in Section 4 of this report represents all submissions received via the MS form and via email. However, a proportion

of these submissions with permission are available to view in an additional document accompanying this report.

Participant details gathered within the MS Form

1. I am responding (a) as an individual, (b) on behalf of an organisation of body
2. Organisation or body name _____
3. Are you willing to be listed as a contributor to the consultation? (a) Yes, (b) No
4. Are you willing to have your submission published? (a) Yes, (b) No

Feedback trends / Participants

Participants who identified themselves as an ‘organisation or body’ represented educational organisations, colleges of education, religious organisations, charities, organisations with a remit within the specific curriculum areas under consultation, special interest groups in the curriculum areas under consultation and suppliers of goods and services in the curriculum areas under consultation.

Participants who identified themselves as ‘individuals’ were teachers, school leaders, parents and other members of the public. Some of the submissions received from individuals could be grouped together as they contained identical or verbatim content. They appeared to have been submitted in response to different initiatives (online or otherwise), where response templates were provided by an organisation for individual submissions. Concerns expressed through pre-formatted responses, prepared by an organisation, that centred around Learning Outcomes which were incorrectly purported to be part of the draft specifications, a call to pause the consultation process as the draft specifications were deemed incomplete without the associated toolkits (and content) which will accompany them going forwards and objections to specific Learning Outcomes on religious or moral grounds. These submissions could be characterised as being submitted in waves, where the consecutive order of the date of submission showed that groupings of response-type were concentrated together at certain points in time.

Sample size

Total number of submissions received

Instrument	Count (n)	Adjusted Count (n)
Received via MS online Form	430	317*
Received by email	672	672
TOTAL	1,102	989

*The 430 submissions received through the MS online form were reduced to 317 when blank forms were removed.

Data analysis

The organisational and group responses were initially analysed, followed by individuals’ responses. The data sets from each cohort were analysed using Braun and Clarke’s methodology for thematic analysis (2006). Findings from each of the cohorts are presented in Section 4.

Appendix D: Focus Group Schedules

In-person Focus Groups, 2024 : Facilitator's guide/notes

1	Please introduce yourself and briefly tell us why you are here today.	
2	<p>How do you think the draft specifications build on the 1999 curriculum?</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p> <p><i>Respond to challenges, changing needs and priorities</i></p> <p><i>Vision of the child / teacher</i></p> <p><i>Curriculum overload</i></p> <p><i>Inclusion</i></p> <p><i>Diversity of school and classroom context</i></p> <p><i>Changes in pedagogy / assessment approaches</i></p>	
3	<p>Do you see scope for agency and flexibility within the specification?</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p> <p><i>Learning Outcomes</i></p> <p><i>Time allocations</i></p> <p><i>Integration</i></p> <p><i>Pedagogical approaches</i></p> <p><i>Assessment approaches</i></p>	
4	<p>Would anyone like to comment on how the draft specifications support children coming into junior infants, progressing from class to class and moving on to post-primary school.</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p> <p><i>Aistear and the Framework for Junior Cycle</i></p> <p><i>Playful and engaging learning from junior infants to 6th class</i></p> <p><i>Progression in Learning Outcomes</i></p> <p><i>Transitions</i></p> <p><i>Special education into mainstream classrooms</i></p>	

5	<p>What's your view on how learning, teaching, and assessment is presented in the specifications?</p> <p>(or in any one specification that you're particularly interested in)</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p> <p><i>Chapter 5 Learning Outcomes</i></p> <p><i>Key Competencies evident in Learning Outcomes</i></p> <p><i>Chapter 6 Curriculum in Practice</i></p> <p><i>Playful and engaging learning experiences (Pedagogies)</i></p> <p><i>Assessment central to learning and teaching</i></p>	
6	<p>NCCA will be developing online Toolkits for each new curriculum area. The toolkits will provide practical supports for teachers. What kinds of supports would you like to see included in the Toolkits?</p>	
7	<p>What supports would teachers and schools require for the implementation of the draft curriculum specifications?</p>	
8	<p>Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't had a chance to say so far?</p>	

Grúpaí Fócais ar na láthair go pearsanta ar Athbhreithniú agus Athfhorbairt ar Churaclam na Bunscoile, 2024

	<p>Cuir tú féin i láthair le do thoil agus inis dúinn cén fáth go bhfuil tú i láthair inniu.</p>	
1	<p>Conas a thógann dréachtsonraíochtaí ar churaclam 1999 dar leat?</p> <p>Leideanna, má bhíonn gá leo:</p> <p><i>Freagairt do dhúshláin, riachtanais agus do thosaíochtaí a bhíonn ag athrú</i></p> <p><i>Fís an pháiste / an mhúinteora</i></p> <p><i>Ró-ualach curaclaim</i></p> <p><i>Ionchuimsiú</i></p> <p><i>Ilchineáilacht ó thaobh comhthéacs scoile agus an tseomra ranga de</i></p> <p><i>Athruithe in oideolaíocht / i gcuir chuige i leith an mheasúnaithe</i></p>	

2	<p>An bhfeiceann tú acmhainneacht don chumas gníomhúcháin agus don tsolúbthacht laistigh den tsonraíocht?</p> <p>Leideanna, má bhíonn gá leo:</p> <p><i>Torthaí Foghlama</i></p> <p><i>Leithdháiltí ama</i></p> <p><i>Comhtháthú</i></p> <p><i>Cuir chuige oideolaíochta</i></p> <p><i>Cuir chuige i leith an mheasúnaithe</i></p>	
3	<p>Ar mhaith le duine ar bith tuairim a roinnt ar an gcaoi a dtacaíonn na dréachtsonraíochtaí le páistí ag teacht isteach sna naíonáin shóisearacha, ag bogadh ar aghaidh ó rang go rang agus ag dul ar aghaidh go dtí an iar-bhunscoil?</p> <p>Leideanna, má bhíonn gá leo:</p> <p><i>Aistear agus an Creat don tSraith Shóisearach</i></p> <p><i>Foghlaim spraiúil agus tharraingteach ó na naíonáin shóisearacha go rang a sé</i></p> <p><i>Dul chun cinn i dTorthaí Foghlama</i></p> <p><i>Aistrithe</i></p> <p><i>Oideachas speisialta i seomraí ranga príomhshrutha</i></p>	
4	<p>Cad é do dhearcadh ar an gcaoi a gcuirtear foghlaim, teagasc, agus measúnú i láthair sna sonraíochtaí?</p> <p>(nó in aon sonraíocht ar leith a bhfuil spéis ar leith agat inti)</p> <p>Leideanna, má bhíonn gá leo:</p> <p><i>Caibidil 5 Torthaí Foghlama</i></p> <p><i>Caibidil 6 Curaclam i gCleachtas</i></p> <p><i>Eispéiris foghlama spraiúla agus tharraingteacha (Oideolaíochtaí)</i></p> <p><i>Measúnú atá lárnach i leith foghlama agus teagaisc</i></p>	
5	<p>Beidh Uirlisí Úsáide ar Líne á bhforbairt ag CNCM do gach réimse nua curaclaim. Cuirfidh na hUirlisí Úsáide tacaíocht phraiticiúil ar fáil do mhúinteoirí. Cad iad na cineálacha tacaíochtaí ba mhaith leat a fheiceáil san áireamh sna hUirlisí Úsáide?</p>	

6	Cad iad na tacaíochtaí a theastóidh ó mhúinteoirí agus scoileanna do chur i bhfeidhm na ndruchtsonraíochtaí curaclaim?	
7	Ar mhaith leat aon ní eile a lua nach bhfuair tú deis é a lua go dtí seo?	

Online Focus Groups, 2024: Facilitator's guide/notes

Draft Arts Curriculum

1	Brief introductions Please introduce yourself and briefly tell us your overall view on the draft Arts curriculum specification.	
2	What are your thoughts on Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (The Introduction, Rationale, and Aims)?	
3	What are your thoughts on Chapter 4 (The Strands)? Prompts if needed: <i>Do the Strands effectively organise learning and teaching?</i> <i>Do they describe 'how' children learn in Art, Drama and Music?</i>	
4	What are your thoughts on Chapter 5 (The Learning Outcomes)? Prompts if needed: <i>Stages 1 and 2</i> <i>Stages 3 and 4 - Art, Drama and Music</i> <i>Integrated outcomes - space for combining Art, Drama, Music and other artforms including Dance and Media Arts</i> <i>The Concepts and Appendices</i>	
5	How do the Key Competencies come through in the Learning Outcomes in Chapter 5? Prompts if needed: <i>Are the initials of the associated Key Competencies helpful under each LO?</i>	
6	Chapter 6 (The Curriculum in Practice) offers guidance around quality learning, teaching and assessment. What are your thoughts on Chapter 6? Prompts if needed: <i>The vision of the child as an arts-maker</i>	

	<i>The signature pedagogies: Creativity; Play; Integration; Sensory and Embodied Approaches; Cultural Responsiveness; Collaboration and Partnerships</i> <i>Assessment</i>	
7	NCCA will be developing online Toolkits for each new curriculum area. The toolkits will provide practical supports for teachers. What kinds of supports would you like to see included in the Arts Toolkit?	
8	What supports would teachers and schools require for the implementation of the Arts Curriculum?	
9	Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't had a chance to say so far?	

Draft Social and Environmental Education Curriculum

1	Brief introductions Please introduce yourself and briefly tell us your overall view on the draft Social and Environmental Education curriculum specification.	
2	What are your thoughts on Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (The Introduction, Rationale, and Aims)?	
3	What are your thoughts on Chapter 4 (The Strands and Elements)? Prompts if needed: <i>Do the Strands effectively organise learning and teaching?</i> <i>Do the Elements describe 'how' children learn in History and Geography?</i>	
4	What are your thoughts on Chapter 5 (The Learning Outcomes)? Prompts if needed: <i>Integrated LOs at Stages 1 and 2</i> <i>Stages 3 and 4 - History and Geography incorporating learning about religions, beliefs and worldviews</i> <i>Working as a Historian/Geographer - Concepts and skills permeating throughout and in Appendix 1</i>	
5	How do the Key Competencies come through in the Learning Outcomes in Chapter 5? Prompts if needed:	

	Are the initials of the associated Key Competencies helpful under each LO?	
6	Chapter 6 (The Curriculum in Practice) offers guidance around quality learning, teaching and assessment. What are your thoughts on Chapter 6? Prompts if needed: <i>The vision of the child Working as a Historian/Geographer</i> <i>The signature pedagogies: Inquiry; Playful learning; Story; Place-based learning and fieldwork outdoors; Dialogical pedagogy; Applying digital skills/Technology enhanced learning</i> <i>Assessment – Appropriate for SEE</i>	
7	NCCA will be developing online Toolkits for each new curriculum area. The toolkits will provide practical supports for teachers. What kinds of supports would you like to see included in the SEE Toolkit?	
8	What supports would teachers and schools require for the implementation of the Social and Environmental Education Curriculum?	
9	Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't had a chance to say so far?	

Draft Science, Technology and Engineering Education Curriculum

1	Brief introductions Please introduce yourself and briefly tell us your overall view on the draft Science, Technology and Engineering Education Curriculum specification.	
2	What are your thoughts on Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (The Introduction, Rationale, and Aims)?	
3	What are your thoughts on Chapter 4 (The Strands and Elements)? Prompts if needed: <i>Do the Strands effectively organise learning and teaching?</i> <i>Do the Elements describe 'how' children learn in STE?</i>	
4	What are your thoughts on Chapter 5 (The Learning Outcomes)? Prompts if needed: <i>Expected learning and skills development</i>	

	<p><i>Progression across four stages</i></p> <p><i>Role of concepts</i></p> <p><i>Support teacher agency</i></p> <p><i>Support children to have a voice and choice in their learning</i></p>	
5	<p>How do the Key Competencies come through in the Learning Outcomes in Chapter 5?</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p> <p><i>Are the initials of the associated Key Competencies helpful under each LO?</i></p>	
6	<p>Chapter 6 (The Curriculum in Practice) offers guidance around quality learning, teaching and assessment. What are your thoughts on Chapter 6?</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p> <p><i>The learning experiences outlined in Chapter 6a?</i></p> <p><i>The presentation and clarity of the pedagogies?</i></p> <p><i>Assessment methods?</i></p> <p><i>The approach to integrated STEM learning?</i></p>	
7	<p>NCCA will be developing online Toolkits for each new curriculum area. The toolkits will provide practical supports for teachers. What kinds of supports would you like to see included in the STEM Toolkit?</p>	
8	<p>What supports would teachers and schools require for the implementation of the Science, Technology and Engineering Curriculum?</p>	
9	<p>Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't had a chance to say so far?</p>	

Primary Language Curriculum including Modern Foreign Languages

1	<p>Brief introductions</p> <p>Please introduce yourself and briefly tell us your overall view on the draft Primary Language Curriculum including Modern Foreign Languages specification.</p>	
2	<p>What are your thoughts on Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (The Introduction, Rationale, and Aims)?</p>	
3	<p>What are your thoughts on the new Element?</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p>	

	<p>Does the new Element describe 'how' children learn?</p> <p>Does the new Element accurately reflect the introduction of MFL to the PLC.</p> <p>Is it clear that the new Element reflects both the increased emphasis on language awareness in Stages 3 and 4, and the existing aspects of languages awareness in the PLC for all stages.</p> <p>Feedback on the graphic.</p>	
4	<p>What are your thoughts on Chapter 5 (The Learning Outcomes)?</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p> <p><i>Building an Awareness of Languages and Cultures</i></p> <p><i>Learning to communicate in the L3</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities for integration with L1 and L2</i></p> <p><i>Accessibility and useability</i></p> <p><i>Clear that the Learning Outcomes in table 1 are for both Stages 3 and 4.</i></p> <p><i>Clear that the Learning Outcomes in Table 2 is for Stage 4</i></p> <p><i>Clear that the Learning Outcomes apply to all three strands (OL, R, W)</i></p>	
5	<p>How do the Key Competencies come through in the Learning Outcomes in Chapter 5?</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p> <p><i>Are the initials of the associated Key Competencies helpful under each LO?</i></p>	
6	<p>Chapter 6 (The Curriculum in Practice) offers guidance around quality learning, teaching and assessment. What are your thoughts on Chapter 6?</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p> <p><i>The time allocations?</i></p> <p><i>The role of the teacher</i></p> <p><i>Languages used</i></p> <p><i>Building on existing practice</i></p> <p><i>Assessment?</i></p>	
7	<p>NCCA will be developing online Toolkits for each new curriculum area. The toolkits will provide practical supports for teachers. What kinds of supports would you like to see included in the MFL Toolkit?</p>	

8	What supports would teachers and schools require for the implementation of Modern Foreign Languages in the Primary Language Curriculum?	
9	Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't had a chance to say so far?	

Draft Wellbeing Curriculum

1	<p>Brief introductions</p> <p>Please introduce yourself and briefly tell us your overall view on the draft Wellbeing curriculum specification.</p>	
2	<p>What are your thoughts on Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (The Introduction, Rationale, and Aims)?</p>	
3	<p>What are your thoughts on Chapter 4 (the Strands and Elements)?</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p> <p><i>Do the Strands effectively organise learning and teaching?</i></p> <p><i>Do the Elements describe 'how' children learn in PE and SPHE?</i></p>	
4	<p>What are your thoughts on Chapter 5 (The Learning Outcomes)?</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p> <p><i>Expected learning and development in SPHE & PE</i></p> <p><i>Progression in learning from Stage 1 to Stage 4</i></p> <p><i>Child voice and choice</i></p> <p><i>Teacher agency</i></p> <p><i>Inclusion</i></p>	
5	<p>How do the Key Competencies come through in the Learning Outcomes in Chapter 5?</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p> <p><i>Are the initials of the associated Key Competencies helpful under each LO?</i></p>	
6	<p>Chapter 6 (The Curriculum in Practice) offers guidance around quality learning, teaching and assessment. What are your thoughts on Chapter 6?</p> <p>Prompts if needed:</p> <p><i>Playful learning experiences</i></p>	

	<p><i>High-quality teaching</i></p> <p><i>Assessment methods</i></p> <p><i>PE activity areas</i></p> <p><i>Are the practical considerations outlined (wider policy, time allocations, external facilitators) helpful for teachers?</i></p> <p><i>The time allocations</i></p>	
7	NCCA will be developing online Toolkits for each new curriculum area. The toolkits will provide practical supports for teachers. What kinds of supports would you like to see included in the Wellbeing Toolkit?	
8	What supports would teachers and schools require for the implementation of the Wellbeing curriculum?	
9	Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't had a chance to say so far?	

Appendix E: Consultative Conference Schedules

Consultative Conference, Croke Park, 30th April, 2024: Facilitators Schedule

Facilitator's Guide for Roundtable Discussion 1: Key Messages from the *Primary Curriculum Framework* in the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications

1	<p>Please introduce yourself and tell us briefly what you think about this new curriculum structure?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Curriculum areas</i> • <i>Integrated Learning Outcomes for Stages 1 & 2; subjects in Stages 3 & 4</i>
2	<p>What's your view on how the draft specifications relate to the 1999 curriculum?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Curriculum overload</i> • <i>Respond to challenges, changing needs and priorities</i>
3	<p>Do you think the draft specifications will give schools greater agency and flexibility?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Time allocations</i> • <i>Learning Outcomes</i> • <i>Pedagogical approaches and strategies</i> • <i>Integration</i>
4	<p>Would anyone like to comment on how the draft specifications support children coming into junior infants, progressing from class to class and moving on to post-primary school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Aistear and the Framework for Junior Cycle</i> • <i>Playful and engaging learning from junior infants to 6th class</i> • <i>Transitions</i>
5	<p>What's your view on how learning, teaching, and assessment is presented in the specifications?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Principles of learning, teaching and assessment</i> • <i>Key Competencies</i> • <i>Assessment central to learning and teaching</i>
6	<p>Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't had a chance to say so far?</p>

Facilitator's Guide for Roundtable Discussions 2 & 3: Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications

Roundtable Discussion 2: 12.35 – 13.15 Roundtable Discussion 3: 14.35 – 15.15 Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications				
Arts Education	PLC/MFL	Social and Environmental Education	Science, Technology and	Wellbeing

			Engineering Education	
Tables 1 - 4	Tables 5 - 8	Tables 9 - 12	Tables 13 - 16	Tables 17 - 20

Arts Education

1	Brief introductions Please introduce yourself** and briefly tell us your overall view on the draft Arts curriculum specification.
2	What are your thoughts on the Introduction, Rationale, and Aims (Chapters 1, 2 and 3 in the document)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Broad and balanced arts education</i>
3	Overall, are the Strands and Learning Outcomes in Chapters 4 and 5 likely to support learning and teaching in the Arts? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Integration</i> <i>Organising learning and teaching</i> <i>Integrated outcomes – space for combining Art, Drama, Music and other artforms including Dance and Media Arts?</i> <i>Concepts and Appendices</i> <i>Key Competencies</i>
4	In your view, does Chapter 6 provide effective guidance around quality learning, teaching and assessment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Children as arts-makers</i> <i>The signature pedagogies: Creativity; Play; Integration; Sensory and Embodied Approaches; Cultural Responsiveness; Collaboration and Partnerships</i>
5	What supports would teachers and schools require for the implementation of the Arts Curriculum?
6	Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't had a chance to say so far?

**The introductions will not be needed for Discussion 2 as participants will be remaining in situ from Discussion 1. Should any new participant join, they can be invited to introduce themselves.

Primary Language Curriculum, including Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

1	Brief introductions Please introduce yourself** and briefly tell us your overall view on the PLC with Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)?
2	What are your thoughts on the new text in the Introduction, Rationale, and Aims (Chapters 1, 2 and 3) supporting the introduction of MFL? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Building an Awareness of Languages and Cultures</i>
3	Overall, is the additional Element and new Learning Outcomes in Chapters 4 and 5 likely to support language learning and teaching that incorporates MFL? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Integration opportunities with L1 and L2</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does the new 'Element' accurately reflect the introduction of MFL to the PLC</i> • <i>New graphic</i> • <i>Building an Awareness of Languages and Cultures</i>
4	<p>In your view, does the new text in Chapter 6 provide effective guidance around quality learning and teaching for MFL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The role of the teacher</i> • <i>Languages used</i> • <i>A balance of integrated and discrete learning and teaching experiences</i>
5	<p>What supports would teachers and schools require for the implementation of MFL in the PLC?</p>
6	<p>Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't had a chance to say so far?</p>

**The introductions will not be needed for Discussion 2 as participants will be remaining in situ from Discussion 1. Should any new participant join, they can be invited to introduce themselves.

Social and Environmental Education (SEE)

1	<p>Brief introductions Please introduce yourself** and briefly tell us your overall view on the draft SEE curriculum specification.</p>
2	<p>What are your thoughts on the Introduction, Rationale, and Aims (Chapters 1, 2 and 3 in the document)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stages 3 and 4 – History and Geography incorporating learning about religions, beliefs and worldviews</i>
3	<p>Overall, are the Strands, Elements and Learning Outcomes in Chapters 4 and 5 likely to support learning and teaching in SEE?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Integration</i> • <i>Organising learning and teaching</i> • <i>Incorporating learning about religions, beliefs and worldviews</i>
4	<p>In your view, does Chapter 6 provide effective guidance around quality learning, teaching and assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The child working as a Historian/Geographer</i> • <i>Pedagogies: Inquiry; Playful learning; Story; Place-based learning and fieldwork outdoors; Dialogical pedagogy; Applying digital skills/Technology enhanced learning</i>
5	<p>What supports would teachers and schools require for the implementation of the SEE Curriculum?</p>
6	<p>Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't had a chance to say so far?</p>

**The introductions will not be needed for Discussion 2 as participants will be remaining in situ from Discussion 1. Should any new participant join, they can be invited to introduce themselves.

Science and Technology and Engineering Education (STE)

1	<p>Brief introductions Please introduce yourself** and briefly tell us your overall view on the draft STE curriculum specification.</p>
2	<p>What are your thoughts on the Introduction, Rationale, and Aims (Chapters 1, 2 and 3 in the document)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning opportunities that reflect real-world experiences in STE</i>
3	<p>Overall, are the Strands, Elements and Learning Outcomes in Chapters 4 and 5 likely to support learning and teaching in STE?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Integration</i> • <i>Organising learning and teaching</i> • <i>Concepts</i> • <i>Progression across four stages</i>
4	<p>In your view, does Chapter 6 provide effective guidance around quality learning, teaching and assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The approach to integrated STEM learning</i> • <i>The promoted pedagogies: Scientific Inquiry, Design Thinking, Computational Thinking</i> • <i>Child-led inquiry and design</i>
5	<p>What supports would teachers and schools require for the implementation of the STE Curriculum?</p>
6	<p>Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't had a chance to say so far?</p>

**The introductions will not be needed for Discussion 2 as participants will be remaining in situ from Discussion 1. Should any new participant join, they can be invited to introduce themselves.

Wellbeing

1	<p>Brief introductions Please introduce yourself** and briefly tell us your overall view on the draft Wellbeing curriculum specification.</p>
2	<p>What are your thoughts on the Introduction, Rationale, and Aims (Chapters 1, 2 and 3 in the document)?</p>
3	<p>Overall, are the Strands, Elements and Learning Outcomes in Chapters 4 and 5 likely to support learning and teaching in Wellbeing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Integration</i> • <i>Organising learning and teaching</i> • <i>Child voice and choice</i> • <i>Key Competencies</i>
4	<p>In your view, does Chapter 6 provide effective guidance around quality learning, teaching and assessment.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are the practical considerations outlined (wider policy, time allocations, external facilitators) helpful for teachers?</i> • <i>Will the PE activity areas support a broad and balanced experience for children in PE?</i> • <i>Pedagogies: collaborative & cooperative learning; direct teaching; discovery learning; playful approaches; relational pedagogy.</i>
5	What supports would teachers and schools require for the implementation of the Wellbeing Curriculum?
6	Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't had a chance to say so far?

**The introductions will not be needed for Discussion 2 as participants will be remaining in situ from Discussion 1. Should any new participant join, they can be invited to introduce themselves.

Appendix F: Bilateral meetings schedule

Bilateral Meetings, 2024: Facilitators Guide/Notes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Invite participants to introduce themselves and the Facilitator introduces themselves and the Note takers and identifies the various roles. ○ Where appropriate, link back to and acknowledge previous engagement with NCCA (e.g. PCRR consultation, attendance at stakeholder engagement events/seminars) • Preamble: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This meeting is one in a series of meetings being held with education stakeholder organisations as part of the consultation on the draft curriculum specifications, and should take about an hour. ○ The questions correlate to the 6 Key Messages in the <i>Primary Curriculum Framework</i> which outline what the Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment sets out to achieve. These questions, along with links to the draft specifications, the Primary Curriculum Framework and the Key Messages themselves were shared with you in advance. ○ The purpose of the meeting is to gather your organisation’s response to the draft curriculum specifications and whether the draft specifications have achieved the key messages. You may wish to speak about the draft specifications in general, or focus more specifically on a curriculum area. ○ We hope that, following this meeting, your organisation will also consider making a written submission. 	
1.	Please outline your organisation’s overall response to the draft curriculum specifications. You may wish to make specific reference to one or more of the draft specifications.
2	From your organisation’s perspective, how do you think the draft specifications build on the 1999 curriculum and respond to challenges, changing needs and priorities?
3	What are your organisation’s thoughts on how the draft specification support agency and flexibility in schools?
4	From your organisation’s perspective, how do the draft specifications support transitions and make connections with what and how children learn in preschool, primary, special and post-primary schools?
5	What is your organisation’s view on how learning, teaching, and assessment is presented in the specifications or in any one particular specification?

6	From your organisation's perspective, what supports will teachers and schools require for the implementation of the draft curriculum specifications?	
7	Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't had a chance to say so far?	
	<p>Final comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage consideration of making a written submission using the template available on the NCCA website. • As appropriate, discuss the possibility of dissemination of the questionnaire and written submission templates to the members/staff of the organisation. 	

Appendix G: Questionnaire Templates

Professional Questionnaire (English)

Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications – Professional Questionnaire
Introduction
<p>Mas mian leat an ceistneoir a chomhlanú trí Ghaeilge, roghnaigh an rogha Gaeilge sa roghchlár anuas teanga.</p> <p>Thank you for taking part in this questionnaire on the draft Curriculum from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). If you would like more information about the consultation, you will find it here. Your views are appreciated and valuable to the redevelopment of the Primary School Curriculum. The estimated time for completing this questionnaire is 10 minutes and you will be able to download a copy of your responses at the end of the questionnaire. Please note that only completed questionnaires can be used.</p>
Data Protection
<p>NCCA is committed to protecting your privacy and does not collect personal information about you through this survey. Any personal information which you choose to share with us will be respected in line with the highest standards of security and confidentiality in accordance with GDPR (2016) and the Data Protection Acts (1998 - 2018).</p> <p>NCCA, as a public body operating under the Open Data and Public Service Information Directive (2021), is required to publish publicly funded research. Further information on the NCCA's Data Protection Policy can be found at: https://ncca.ie/en/resources/ncca-data-protection-policy</p> <p>In accordance with the NCCA's Open Data and Public Service Information Directive (2021), any data from this survey will be further anonymised and aggregated and only made available after the final report is completed. This is expected to be in Autumn / Winter 2024.</p> <p>Should you have any questions in relation to the collection or use of data in this survey, please contact the NCCA's Data Protection Officer at dpo@ncca.ie</p>
Section 1: Participant Details
<p>I am responding as a:</p> <p>Mainstream Teacher</p> <p>Special Education Teacher</p> <p>Primary School Principal</p> <p>Post-Primary Teacher / Principal</p> <p>Student Teacher</p> <p>Special Needs Assistant</p> <p>Early Childhood Educator</p>

Educator in Initial Teacher Education

Other (Please Specify)

Please indicate your school context (please tick all that apply):

Vertical school (Junior Infants – 6th class)

Infant / Junior School

Scoil sa Ghaeltacht

Gaelscoil

Special School

DEIS

Mainstream school with a special class(es) / ASD Class

Multigrade

Single-grade

Urban

Rural

Post-primary

Other (Please Specify)

Section 2: Overall response to the curriculum

The draft curriculum specifications work together. Looking across all five documents, do you agree / disagree that the draft curriculum specifications:

Build on the strengths of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999)* and respond to ongoing change

Promote agency and flexibility for schools

Connect with *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and the *Framework for Junior Cycle*

Embed the Key Competencies from the *Primary Curriculum Framework* in Learning Outcomes

Focus on developing children's skills, knowledge, dispositions, values and attitudes

Make assessment a central part of learning and teaching

Promote an integrated approach to learning, teaching and assessment

Are suitable for all children in primary and special schools.

Draft Arts Education Curriculum

Chapters 1, 2 and 3: Introduction, Rationale, Aims

To what extent do you agree/disagree that Chapters 1-3 provide an appropriate context, rationale and aims for Arts Education.

Chapters 4 and 5: Strands and Learning Outcomes

To what extent do you agree/disagree that:

The Strands successfully identify the main categories for what children will learn in Arts Education

The Learning Outcomes describe the expected learning and development for all children in Arts Education

The number of Learning Outcomes for each stage in Arts Education is appropriate

The Key Competencies are visible in the Learning Outcomes in Arts Education.

Chapter 6: Curriculum in Practice

To what extent do you agree / disagree that Chapter 6 clearly describes the big ideas that underpin high-quality learning, teaching and assessment in Arts Education.

If you would like to add any comments about the draft Arts Curriculum, you can do that here.

**100 words max*

Draft updates to the Primary Language Curriculum to include Modern Foreign Languages

Chapters 1, 2 and 3: Introduction, Rationale, Aims

To what extent do you agree/disagree that Chapters 1-3 provide an appropriate context, rationale and aims for Modern Foreign Languages in the *Primary Language Curriculum*.

Chapters 4 and 5: Strands and Elements; and Learning Outcomes

To what extent do you agree/disagree that:

The Strands successfully identify the main categories for what children will learn in MFL

The Elements clearly describe the processes through which children will learn in MFL

The Learning Outcomes describe the expected learning and development for all children in MFL

The number of Learning Outcomes for each stage is appropriate for MFL

The Key Competencies are visible in the Learning Outcomes for MFL.

Chapter 6: Curriculum in Practice

To what extent do you agree / disagree that Chapter 6 clearly describes the big ideas that underpin high-quality learning, teaching and assessment in MFL.

If you would like to add any comments about the draft *Primary Language Curriculum* including Modern Foreign Languages, you can do that here.

**100 words max*

Draft Social and Environmental Education (SEE) Curriculum

Chapters 1, 2 and 3: Introduction, Rationale, Aims

To what extent do you agree/disagree that Chapters 1-3 provide an appropriate context, rationale and aims for SEE.

Chapters 4 and 5: Strands and Elements; and Learning Outcomes

To what extent do you agree/disagree that:

The Strands successfully identify the main categories for what children will learn in SEE

The Elements clearly describe the processes through which children will learn in SEE

The Learning Outcomes describe the expected learning and development for all children in SEE

The number of Learning Outcomes for each stage in SEE is appropriate

The Key Competencies are visible in the Learning Outcomes for SEE.

Chapter 6: Curriculum in Practice

To what extent do you agree / disagree that Chapter 6 clearly describes the big ideas that underpin high-quality learning, teaching and assessment in SEE.

If you would like to add any comments about the draft SEE Curriculum, you can do that here.

**100 words max*

Draft Science, Technology and Engineering Education (STE) Curriculum

Chapters 1, 2 and 3: Introduction, Rationale, Aims

To what extent do you agree/disagree that Chapters 1-3 provide an appropriate context, rationale and aims for STE.

Chapters 4 and 5: Strands and Elements; and Learning Outcomes

To what extent do you agree/disagree that:

The Strands successfully identify the main categories for what children will learn in STE

The Elements clearly describe the processes through which children will learn in STE

The Learning Outcomes describe the expected learning and development for all children in STE

The number of Learning Outcomes for each stage in STE is appropriate

The Key Competencies are visible in the Learning Outcomes in STE.

Chapter 6: Curriculum in Practice

To what extent do you agree / disagree that Chapter 6 clearly describes the big ideas that underpin high-quality learning, teaching and assessment in STE.

If you would like to add any comments about the draft STE Curriculum, you can do that here.

**100 words max*

Draft Wellbeing

Chapters 1, 2 and 3: Introduction, Rationale, Aims

To what extent do you agree/disagree that Chapters 1-3 provide an appropriate context, rationale and aims for the Wellbeing Curriculum.

Chapters 4 and 5: Strands and Elements; and Learning Outcomes

To what extent do you agree/disagree that:

The Strands successfully identify the main categories for what children will learn in Wellbeing

The Elements clearly describe the processes through which children will learn in Wellbeing

The Learning Outcomes describe the expected learning and development for all children in Wellbeing

The number of Learning Outcomes for each stage is appropriate for Wellbeing

The Key Competencies are visible in the Learning Outcomes for Wellbeing.

Chapter 6: Curriculum in Practice

To what extent do you agree / disagree that Chapter 6 clearly describes the big ideas that underpin high-quality learning, teaching and assessment in Wellbeing.

If you would like to add any comments about the draft Wellbeing Curriculum, you can do that here.

**100 words max*

Section 4: Enacting the Curriculum

NCCA will be developing online Toolkits for each of the new curriculum areas. The toolkits will provide practical support in planning for and providing rich learning experiences for children. Please rank the following in order of priority for support:

Principles of learning, teaching and assessment

Key Competencies

Play and playful learning

Project/problem/inquiry-based learning

Integrative learning experiences

Assessment and progression

Supporting child agency

Learning environments

Inclusion and culturally-responsive teaching

Integrated learning experiences

Partnerships with home and community

Supporting educational transitions across primary school

Technology-enhanced learning

If you would like to add any comments about the support needed for the implementation of the draft Curriculum specifications, you can do that here.

**100 words max*

Your response has been submitted.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you would like to give more detailed feedback on the draft curriculum specifications, please complete an online submission form.

Suirbhé Gairmithe (Gaeilge)

Dréachtsonraíocht Churaclam an Oideachais Shóisialta agus Imshaoil (OSI)- Suirbhé Gairmithe

Réamhrá

Mas mian leat an ceistneoir a chomhlánú trí Ghaeilge, roghnaigh an rogha Gaeilge sa roghchlár anuas teanga.

Go raibh maith agat as páirt a ghlacadh sa cheistneoir seo ar dhréachtchuraclam an Oideachais Shóisialta agus Imshaoil ón gComhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta (CNCM). Má tá tuilleadh eolais uait maidir leis an gcomhairliúchán, gheobhaidh tú ar

<https://bit.ly/ComhairliuchanBunscoile24> é. Is mór againn do chuid tuairimí agus tá siad an-tábhachtach don athfhorbairt ar Churaclam na Bunscoile. Meastar go nglacfaidh sé 10 nóiméad ort an suirbhé seo a chomhlánú agus beidh tú in ann cóip de fhreagraí do shuirbhé a íoslódáil ag deireadh an tsuirbhé. **Tabhair do d'aire le do thoil nach féidir ach suirbhéanna comhlánaithe a úsáid.**

Cosaint Sonraí

Tá CNCM tiomanta do phríobháideacht agus chosaint agus ní bhailítear aon fhaisnéis phearsanta fút tríd an suirbhé seo. Caithfear le haon fhaisnéis phearsanta a sholáthraíonn tú dúinn de réir na gcaighdeán is airde de shlándáil agus rúndacht, i gcomhréir le RGCS (2016) agus leis na hAchtanna um Chosaint Sonraí (1998-2018).

Caithfidh CNCM, mar chomhlacht poiblí atá ag feidhmiú faoin Treoir maidir le Sonraí Oscailte agus Faisnéis Phoiblí (2021), taighde a bhfuair maoiniú ón bpobal a fhoilsiú go poiblí. Tá tuilleadh eolais faoi Bheartas Cosanta Sonraí CNCM le fáil ag

<https://ncca.ie/en/resources/ncca-data-protection-policy>

I gcomhréir leis an Treoir maidir le Sonraí Oscailte agus Faisnéis Phoiblí (2021) CNCM, déanfar aon sonraí ón suirbhé seo a anaithnidiú a thuilleadh agus a thabhairt le chéile agus ní dhéanfar iad a fhoilsiú go dtí go bhfoilseofar an tuarascáil deiridh. Táthar ag súil go dtarlóidh sé seo i bhfhómhar / geimhreadh na bliana 2024.

Má tá aon cheist agat i dtaca le bailiú nó úsáid na sonraí sa suirbhé seo, iarrtar ort teagmháil a dhéanamh le hOifigeach Cosanta Sonraí CNCM ag dpo@ncca.ie

Cuid 1: Sonraí an Rannpháirtí

Táim ag freagairt mar:

Mhúinteoir Príomhshrutha

Mhúinteoir oideachais speisialta

Phríomhoide Bunscoile

Mhúinteoir / príomhoide iar-bhunscoile

Mhúinteoir faoi oiliúint

Chúntóir riachtanas speisialta

Oideoir luath-óige

Oideoir Oideachais Tosaigh Múinteoirí

Sainigh do chomhthéacs scoile, le do thoil (cuir tic le gach ceann a bhaineann libh)

Scoil Ingearach (Naíonáin Shóisearacha - Rang a 6)

Scoil Naíonán / Shóisearach

Scoil sa Ghaeltacht

Gaelscoil

Scoil Speisialta

DEIS

Scoil phríomhshrutha ina bhfuil rang(anna) speisialta / Rang ASD

Ilghrád

Aonghrád

Scoil Uirbeach

Scoil Tuaithe

Iar-bhunscoil

Cuid 2: Freagra ginearálta ar an gcuraclam

Aontaím go láidir- Aontaím- Nílím cinnte- Easaontaím- Easaontaím go láidir

Uimhir 1 – 5

Seo a leanas a dhéanann na dréachtshonraíochtaí curaclaim:

- Tógáil ar láidreachtaí an churaclaim reatha agus aghaidh a thabhairt ar thosaíochtaí atá ag athrú d'fhoghlaim mo pháiste/pháistí
- Níos mó solúbthachta a thabhairt do mhúinteoirí le cinntiú go bhfreastalaíonn an curaclam ar riachtanais mo pháiste/pháistí
- Nascadh le foghlaim mo pháiste/pháistí sa bhaile, sa réamhscoil agus san iar-bhunscoil
- Tacú le forbairt na seacht bpríomhinniúlacht a léirítear i g*Creatchuraclam na Bunscoile*
 - A bheith i do shaoránach gníomhach
 - A bheith cruthaitheach
 - A bheith i d'fhoghlaim digiteach
 - A bheith matamaiticiúil
 - A bheith i do chumarsáidí agus teanga a úsáid
 - A bheith slán
 - A bheith i d'fhoghlaim gníomhach
- Díriú ar scileanna, eolas, meonta, luachanna agus dearcthaí mo pháiste/pháistí a fhorbairt
- Tábhacht a leagan ar an measúnú mar ghné lárnach den teagasc agus den fhoghlaim
- Cur chuige comhtháite i leith na foghlama, an teagaisc agus an mheasúnaithe a chur chun cinn do mo pháiste/pháistí
- A bheith oiriúnach do gach páiste i mbunscoileanna agus i scoileanna speisialta

Dréachtsonraíocht Churaclam an Oideachais Ealaíon - Suirbhé Gairmithe

Caibidlí 1, 2 agus 3 Réamhrá, Réasúnaíocht, Aidhmeanna

Cén méid a aontaíonn/easaontaíonn tú go dtugann Caibidlí 1-3 comhthéacs, réasúnaíocht agus aidhmeanna oiriúnacha don Oideachas Ealaíon

Caibidlí 4 agus 5: Snáitheanna agus torthaí foghlama

Cén méid a aontaíonn / easaontaíonn tú leis na ráitis seo a leanas:

Éiríonn leis na Snáitheanna na príomhchatagóirí maidir lena bhfoghlaim an páiste in Oideachas Ealaíon a shainiú

Déanann na Torthaí Foghlama cur síos ar an bhfoghlaim agus ar an bhforbairt a mbeifear ag súil leo don pháiste san Oideachas Ealaíon

Tá líon na dTorthaí Foghlama i gcomhair gach céim san Oideachas Ealaíon iomchuí

Tá na Príomhinniúlachtaí feiceálach i dTorthaí Foghlama an Oideachais Ealaíon

Caibidil 6: An Curaclam i gCleachtas

Cén méid a aontaíonn/ easaontaíonn tú go ndéantar cur síos soiléir i gCaibidil 6 ar na smaointe móra atá mar bhonn agus taca le foghlaim, teagasc agus measúnú ar ardchaighdeán san Oideachas Ealaíon

Más mian leat aon tuairim eile a thabhairt maidir leis an dréachtchuraclam Ealaíon, is féidir leat sin a dhéanamh anseo.

(150 focal ar a mhéad)

Dréacht-nuashonruithe ar Churaclam Teanga na Bunscoile le Nuatheangacha lasachta

Caibidilí 1, 2 agus 3 Réamhrá, Réasúnaíocht, Aidhmeanna

Cén méid a aontaíonn/easaontaíonn tú go dtugann Caibidilí 1-3 comhthéacs, réasúnaíocht agus aidhmeanna oiriúnacha do na Nuatheangacha lasachta i gCuraclam Teanga na Bunscoile

Caibidilí 4 agus 5: Snáitheanna agus torthaí foghlama

Cén méid a aontaíonn / easaontaíonn tú leis na ráitis seo a leanas:

Éiríonn leis na Snáitheanna na príomhchatagóirí maidir lena bhfoghlaiméidh an páiste in NTI a shainaithint

Déanann na Gnéithe cur síos soiléir ar na próisis trína bhfoghlaiméidh an páiste in NTI

Déanann na Torthaí Foghlama cur síos ar an bhfoghlaim agus ar an bhforbairt a mbeifear ag súil leo don pháiste in NTI

Tá líon na dTorthaí Foghlama i gcomhair gach céim in NTI iomchuí

Tá na Príomhinniúlachtaí feiceálach i dTorthaí Foghlama NTI

Caibidil 6: An Curaclam i gCleachtas

Cén méid a aontaíonn/ easaontaíonn tú go ndéantar cur síos soiléir i gCaibidil 6 ar na smaointe móra atá mar bhonn agus taca le foghlaim, teagasc agus measúnú ar ardchaighdeán in NTI

Más mian leat aon tuairim eile a thabhairt maidir le Dréachtchuraclam Teanga na Bunscoile lena n-áirítear na Nuatheangacha lasachta, is féidir leat sin a dhéanamh anseo.

(150 focal ar a mhéad)

Dréachtsonraíocht Churaclam an Oideachais Shóisialta agus Imshaoil (OSI)- Suirbhé

Gairmithe

Caibidlí 1, 2 agus 3 Réamhrá, Réasúnaíocht, Aidhmeanna

Cén méid a aontaíonn/easaontaíonn tú go:

dtugann Caibidlí 1-3 comhthéacs, réasúnaíocht agus aidhmeanna oiriúnacha do OSI

Caibidlí 4 agus 5: Snáitheanna agus torthaí foghlama

Cén méid a aontaíonn / easaontaíonn tú leis na ráitis seo a leanas:

Éiríonn leis na Snáitheanna na príomhchatagóirí maidir lena bhfoghlaiméidh an páiste in OSI a shainaithint

Déanann na Gnéithe cur síos soiléir ar na próisis trína bhfoghlaiméidh an páiste in OSI

Déanann na Torthaí Foghlama cur síos ar an bhfoghlaim agus ar an bhforbairt a mbeifear ag súil leo don pháiste in OSI

Tá líon na dTorthaí Foghlama i gcomhair gach céim in OSI iomchuí

Tá na Príomhinniúlachtaí feiceálach i dTorthaí Foghlama OSI

Caibidil 6: An Curaclam i gCleachtas

Cén méid a aontaíonn/ easaontaíonn tú go nDéantar cur síos soiléir i gCaibidil 6 ar na smaointe móra atá mar bhonn agus taca le foghlaim, teagasc agus measúnú ar ardchaighdeán in OSI

Más mian leat aon tuairim eile a thabhairt maidir le dréachtchuraclam OSI, is féidir leat sin a dhéanamh anseo.

(150 focal ar a mhéad)

Dréachtchuraclam Oideachais Eolaíochta, Teicneolaíochta agus Innealtóireachta - Suirbhé

Caibidlí 1, 2 agus 3 Réamhrá, Réasúnaíocht, Aidhmeanna

To what extent do you agree/disagree that Chapters 1-3 provide an appropriate context, rationale and aims for STE.

Cén méid a aontaíonn/easaontaíonn tú go dtugann Caibidlí 1-3 comhthéacs, réasúnaíocht agus aidhmeanna oiriúnacha do ETI

Caibidlí 4 agus 5: Snáitheanna agus torthaí foghlama

Cén méid a aontaíonn / easaontaíonn tú leis na ráitis seo a leanas:

Éiríonn leis na Snáitheanna na príomhchatagóirí maidir lena bhfoghlaiméidh an páiste in ETI a shainaithint

Déanann na Gnéithe cur síos soiléir ar na próisis trína bhfoghlaiméidh an páiste san ETI

Déanann na Torthaí Foghlama cur síos ar an bhfoghlaim agus ar an bhforbairt a mbeifear ag súil leo don pháiste in ETI

Tá líon na dTorthaí Foghlama i gcomhair gach céim in ETI iomchuí

Tá na Príomhinniúlachtaí feiceálach i dTorthaí Foghlama ETI

Caibidil 6: An Curaclam i gCleachtas

Cén méid a aontaíonn/ easaontaíonn tú go ndéantar cur síos soiléir i gCaibidil 6 ar na smaointe móra atá mar bhonn agus taca le foghlaim, teagasc agus measúnú ar ardchaighdeán in ETI

Más mian leat aon tuairim eile a thabhairt maidir leis an dréachtchuraclam ETI, is féidir leat sin a dhéanamh anseo.

(150 focal ar a mhéad)

Dréachtsonraíocht Churaclam Folláine - Suirbhé Gairmithe

Caibidlí 1, 2 agus 3 Réamhrá, Réasúnaíocht, Aidhmeanna

Cén méid a aontaíonn/easaontaíonn tú go dTugann Caibidlí 1-3 comhthéacs, réasúnaíocht agus aidhmeanna oiriúnacha don Churaclam Folláine

Caibidlí 4 agus 5: Snáitheanna agus torthaí foghlama

Cén méid a aontaíonn / easaontaíonn tú leis na ráitis seo a leanas:

Éiríonn leis na Snáitheanna na príomhchatagóirí maidir lena bhfoghlaiméidh an páiste san Fholláine a shainaithint

Déanann na Gnéithe cur síos soiléir ar na próisis trína bhfoghlaiméidh an páiste san Fholláine

Déanann na Torthaí Foghlama cur síos ar an bhfoghlaim agus ar an bhforbairt a mbeifear ag súil leo don pháiste san Fholláine

Tá líon na dTorthaí Foghlama i gcomhair gach céim san Fholláine iomchuí

Tá na Príomhinniúlachtaí feiceálach i dTorthaí Foghlama Folláine

Caibidil 6: An Curaclam i gCleachtas

Cén méid a aontaíonn / easaontaíonn tú go ndéantar cur síos soiléir i gCaibidil 6 ar na smaointe móra atá mar bhonn agus taca le foghlaim, teagasc agus measúnú ar ardchaighdeán san Fholláine

Más mian leat aon tuairim eile a thabhairt maidir leis an dréachtchuraclam Folláine, is féidir leat sin a dhéanamh anseo.

(150 focal ar a mhéad)

Section 4: An Curaclam a chur i bhFeidhm

Beidh Uirlisí Úsáide ar Líne á bhforbairt ag CNCM do gach ceann de na réimsí nua curaclaim. Cuirfidh na huirlisí úsáide tacaíocht phraiticiúil ar fáil maidir le heispéiris shaibhir foghlama a phleanáil agus a sholáthar do pháistí.

Cuir iad seo a leanas in ord tosaíochta ó thaobh tacaíochta den OSI:

Súgradh agus foghlaim spráúil

Foghlaim ar bhonn tionscadail/faidhbe/fiosraithe

Eispéiris foghlama chomhtháite

Measúnú agus dul chun cinn

Tacú le cumas gníomhúcháin linbh

Timpeallachtaí foghlama

Ionchuimsiú agus an teagasc freagrúil ó thaobh cultúir de

Foghlaim atá breisithe ag an teicneolaíocht

Comhpháirtíochtaí leis an mbaile agus leis an bpobal

Ag tacú le haistrithe oideachasúla sa bhunscoil

Tá do chuid freagraí curtha isteach.

Go raibh maith agat as an gceistneoir seo a chomhlánú. Más maith leat tuilleadh aiseolais a thabhairt ar réimse curaclaim eile nó aiseolais breise ar na dréachtshonraíochtaí curaclaim,

iarrtar ort ceistneoir eile nó foirm iarratais ar líne a chomhlánú ar

<https://bit.ly/ComhairliuchanBunscoile24>

Parent/Guardian Questionnaire (English)

Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications – Parent/Guardian Questionnaire

Introduction

Mas mian leat an ceistneoir a chomhlánú trí Ghaeilge, roghnaigh an rogha Gaeilge sa roghchlár anuas teanga.

Welcome to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) questionnaire. NCCA is asking parents/guardians for their views on planned changes to the Primary School Curriculum. Here are the links to the draft curriculum documents:

Arts Education (Art, Drama and Music)

Modern Foreign Languages as part of the *Primary Language Curriculum*

Science, Technology and Engineering Education

Social and Environmental Education (Geography and History)

Wellbeing (Physical Education and; Social, Personal and Health Education)

If you would like to do the questionnaire 'as Gaeilge', click the down arrow next to 'English' and select 'Gaeilge'. You can give your views on one, more or all of the curriculum areas.

Data Protection

NCCA is committed to protecting your privacy and does not collect personal information about you through this survey. Any personal information which you choose to share with us will be respected in line with the highest standards of security and confidentiality in accordance with GDPR (2016) and the Data Protection Acts (1998 - 2018).

NCCA, as a public body operating under the Open Data and Public Service Information Directive (2021), is required to publish publicly funded research. Further information on the NCCA's Data Protection Policy can be found at: <https://ncca.ie/en/resources/ncca-data-protection-policy>

In accordance with the NCCA's Open Data and Public Service Information Directive (2021), any data from this survey will be further anonymised and aggregated and only made available after the final report is completed. This is expected to be in Autumn / Winter 2024.

Should you have any questions in relation to the collection or use of data in this survey, please contact the NCCA's Data Protection Officer at dpo@ncca.ie

Section 1: Your Child(ren)'s School

We would like to know a little more about your child(ren)'s school. Please tick any/all of these that apply.

My child(ren) is:

In preschool

In primary school

In a special school

In secondary school

Home schooled

Other

Section 2: Overall response to the curriculum

Strongly Agree – Agree – Unsure – Disagree – Strongly Disagree

Number 1 – 5

The draft curriculum specifications:

Build on the strengths of the current curriculum and respond to changing priorities for my child(ren)'s learning

Give teachers more flexibility to make sure the curriculum meets the needs of my child(ren)

Connect with my child(ren)'s learning at home, in pre-school and in post-primary school

Focus on developing my child(ren)'s skills, knowledge, dispositions, values and attitudes

Value assessment as a central part of learning and teaching

Promote an integrated approach to learning, teaching and assessment for my child(ren)

Are suitable for all children in primary and special schools.

Support the development of the seven key competencies presented in the *Primary Curriculum Framework*

Being an active citizen

Being creative

Being a digital learner

Being mathematical

Being a communicator and using language

Being well

Being an active learner

Section 3: The Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications

You can give your views on one or more of the draft curriculum areas.

Arts Education (Art, Drama, Music) (**branch to new section*)

Modern Foreign Languages as part of the *Primary Language Curriculum* (**branch to new section*)

Science, Technology and Engineering Education (**branch to new section*)

Social and Environmental Education (Geography and History) (**branch to new section*)

Wellbeing (Physical Education and; Social, Personal and Health Education) (**branch to new section*)

Section 3(a): draft Arts Education Curriculum (Art, Drama, Music)

To what extent do you agree/disagree that:

I want Arts Education to promote my child's artistic and creative development

I want Arts Education to help my child to be creative

I want Arts Education to help my child express themselves

I want Arts Education to help my child consider the perspectives and worldviews of others.

Are there any additional comments about the draft Arts Education curriculum that you wish to make?

**Limit response to 150 words*

Section 3(b): draft updates to the Primary Language Curriculum to include Modern Foreign Languages

To what extent do you agree/disagree that:

I want my child to develop an awareness of languages and cultures

I want my child to learn to communicate at a basic level in a third language in 5th and 6th classes.

Are there any additional comments about Modern Foreign Languages as part of the *Primary Language Curriculum* that you wish to make? *Please accompany your response with page number(s)*

**Limit response to 150 words*

Section 3(c): draft Social and Environmental Education (SEE) Curriculum (Geography and History)

To what extent do you agree/disagree that:

I want SEE to foster my child's understanding, appreciation and knowledge of the world they live in

I want SEE to empower my child to be an active, considerate and responsible member of their community.

Are there any additional comments about the draft Social and Environmental Education curriculum that you wish to make?

**Limit response to 150 words*

Section 3(d): draft Science, Technology and Engineering (STE) Curriculum

To what extent do you agree/disagree that:

- I want STE to promote my child's curiosity

- I want STE to foster my child's ability to investigate, design, construct and communicate effectively
- I want the curriculum to give my child opportunities to experience the joy of learning the key ideas and skills of Science, Technology, and Engineering.

Are there any additional comments about the draft Science, Technology and Engineering Education curriculum that you wish to make?

*Limit response to 150 words

Section 3(e): draft Wellbeing Curriculum (Physical Education and; Social, Personal and Health Education)

Do what extent do you agree/disagree that:

- I want Wellbeing to support my child's social, emotional and physical development
- I want Wellbeing to enable my child to develop self-awareness and self-knowledge
- I want Wellbeing to help my child make informed and healthy choices about their wellbeing
- I want Wellbeing to give my child a strong sense of connectedness to their school, community and wider society
- I want Wellbeing to help my child build healthy relationships and gain a clear understanding of human development and sexuality that is appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Are there any additional comments about the draft Wellbeing curriculum that you wish to make?

*Limit response to 150 words

Section 4: Supporting Parents and Teachers

1. What supports for the new curriculum areas would help you with your child's learning at home?

*Limit response to 250 words

2. Would you be interested in attending either an online or in-person event for parents organised by the NCCA and National Parents' Council to provide further feedback before the middle of May?

If yes, please provide your email address.

Your response has been submitted.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you want to sign up for email updates, please click this link.

Suirbhé Tuismitheora/Caomhnóra (Gaeilge)

Dréachtsonraíochtaí Churaclam na Bunscoile – Suirbhé Tuismitheora/Caomhnóra

Réamhrá

Mas mian leat an ceistneoir a chomhlanú trí Ghaeilge, roghnaigh an rogha Gaeilge sa roghchlár anuas teanga.

Fáilte chuig suirbhé na Comhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta (CNCM). Tá CNCM ag lorg tuairimí tuismitheoirí/caomhnóirí maidir leis na hathruithe atá beartaithe do Churaclam na Bunscoile. Seo na naisc chuig cáipéisí an dréachtchuraclaim:

- Oideachas Ealaíon (Ealaín, Drámaíocht agus Ceol) anseo
- Nuatheangacha lasachta mar chuid de Churaclam Teanga na Bunscoile anseo
- Oideachas Eolaíochta, Teicneolaíochta agus Innealtóireachta anseo
- Oideachas Sóisialta agus Imshaoil (Tíreolaíocht agus Stair) anseo
- Folláine (Corpoideachas agus Oideachas Sóisialta; Pearsanta agus Sláinte) anseo

Más mian leat an suirbhé a chomhlánú i nGaeilge, brúigh ar an tsaighead síos in aice le 'Béarla' agus roghnaigh an rogha 'Gaeilge'. Is féidir leat do chuid tuairimí ar réimse curaclaim amháin nó níos mó a thabhairt.

Cosaint Sonraí

Tá CNCM tiomanta do do phríobháideachas a chosaint agus ní bhailítear aon fhaisnéis phearsanta fút tríd an suirbhé seo. Caithfear le haon fhaisnéis phearsanta a sholáthraíonn tú dúinn de réir na gcaighdeán is airde de shlándáil agus rúndacht, i gcomhréir le RGCS (2016) agus leis na hAchtanna um Chosaint Sonraí (1998-2018).

Caithfidh CNCM, mar chomhlacht poiblí atá ag feidhmiú faoin Treoir maidir le Sonraí Oscailte agus Faisnéis Phoiblí (2021), taighde a bhfuair maoiniú ón bpobal a fhoilsiú go poiblí. Tá tuilleadh eolais faoi Bheartas Cosanta Sonraí CNCM le fáil ag <https://ncca.ie/en/resources/ncca-data-protection-policy>

I gcomhréir leis an Treoir maidir le Sonraí Oscailte agus Faisnéis Phoiblí (2021) CNCM, déanfar aon sonraí ón suirbhé seo a anaithnidiú a thuilleadh agus a thabhairt le chéile agus ní dhéanfar iad a fhoilsiú go dtí go bhfoilseofar an tuarascáil deiridh. Táthar ag súil go dtarlóidh sé seo i bhfhómhar / geimhreadh na bliana 2024.

Má tá aon cheist agat i dtaca le bailiú nó úsáid na sonraí sa suirbhé seo, iarrtar ort teagmháil a dhéanamh le hOifigeach Cosanta Sonraí CNCM ag dpo@ncca.ie

Cuid 1: Scoil do pháiste/pháistí

1. Ba mhaith linn tuilleadh eolais a fháil faoi scoil do pháiste/pháistí. Cuir tic le haon cheann/gach ceann acu seo má bhaineann siad le do pháiste.

Tá mo pháiste/pháistí ar:

- Réamhscoil
- Bhunscoil

- Scoil speisialta
- Mheánscoil
- Scolaíocht bhaile
- Eile

Cuid 2: Freagra ginearálta ar an gcuraclam

Aontaím go láidir– Aontaím– Nílím cinnte– Easaontaím– Easaontaím go láidir

Uimhir 1 – 5

Seo a leanas a dhéanann na dréachtshonraíochtaí curaclaim:

- Tógáil ar láidreachtaí an churaclaim reatha agus aghaidh a thabhairt ar thosaíochtaí atá ag athrú d'fhoghlaim mo pháiste/pháistí
- Níos mó solúbthachta a thabhairt do mhúinteoirí le cinntiú go bhfreastalaíonn an curaclam ar riachtanais mo pháiste/pháistí
- Nascadh le foghlaim mo pháiste/pháistí sa bhaile, sa réamhscoil agus san iar-bhunscoil
- Tacú le forbairt na seacht bpríomhinniúlacht a léirítear i gCreatchuraclam na Bunscoile
 - o A bheith i do shaoránach gníomhach
 - o A bheith cruthaitheach
 - o A bheith i d'fhoghlaim digiteach
 - o A bheith matamaiticiúil
 - o A bheith i do chumarsáidí agus teanga a úsáid
 - o A bheith slán
 - o A bheith i d'fhoghlaim gníomhach
- Díriú ar scileanna, eolas, meonta, luachanna agus dearchtaí mo pháiste/pháistí a fhorbairt
- Tábhacht a leagan ar an measúnú mar ghné lárnach den teagasc agus den fhoghlaim
- Cur chuige comhtháite i leith na foghlama, an teagaisc agus an mheasúnaithe a chur chun cinn do mo pháiste/pháistí
- A bheith oiriúnach do gach páiste i mbunscoileanna agus i scoileanna speisialta trongly

Cuid 3: Dréachtshonraíochtaí Churaclam na Bunscoile

Is féidir leat do chuid tuairimí ar réimse curaclaim amháin nó níos mó a thabhairt.

- Oideachas Ealaíon (Ealaín, Drámaíocht, Ceol) (*brainse chuig cuid nua)
- Nuatheangacha lasachta mar chuid de Churaclam Teanga na Bunscoile (*brainse chuig cuid nua)
- Oideachas Eolaíochta, Teicneolaíochta agus Innealtóireachta (*brainse chuig cuid nua)
- Oideachas Sóisialta agus Imshaoil (Tíreolaíocht agus Stair) (*brainse chuig cuid nua)

- Folláine (Corpoideachas agus; Oideachas Sóisialta, Pearsanta agus Sláinte) (*brainse chuig cuid nua)

Cuid 3(a): dréachtsonraíocht Curaclaim Oideachais Ealaíon (Ealaín, Drámaíocht, Ceol)

Léigh ANSEO é

Cén méid a aontaíonn / easaontaíonn tú leis na ráitis seo a leanas:

- Ba mhaith liom go gcuirfeadh an tOideachas Ealaíon forbairt ealaíonta agus chruthaitheach mo pháiste chun cinn
- Ba mhaith liom go gcabhródh an tOideachas Ealaíon le mo pháiste a bheith cruthaitheach
- Ba mhaith liom go gcabhródh an tOideachas Ealaíon le mo pháiste é féin a chur in iúl
- Ba mhaith liom go gcabhródh an tOideachas Ealaíon le mo pháiste cuimhneamh ar pheirspictíochtaí agus cruinneshamhlacha daoine eile.

Ar mhaith leat aon tuairim eile a thabhairt i dtaobh dhréachtchuraclam an Oideachais Ealaíon?

*Ná scríobh níos mó ná 150 focal i do fhreagra

Cuid 3(b): dréacht-nuashonruithe ar Churaclam Teanga na Bunscoile chun Nuatheangacha lasachta a chur san áireamh

Léigh ANSEO é

Cén méid a aontaíonn / easaontaíonn tú leis na ráitis seo a leanas:

- Ba mhaith liom go bhforbródh mo pháiste feasacht ar theangacha agus ar chultúir
- Ba mhaith liom go bhfoghlaimedh mo pháiste le cumarsáid a dhéanamh ag bunleibhéal i dtríú teanga i rang 5 agus 6.

Ar mhaith leat aon tuairim eile a thabhairt i dtaobh na Nuatheangacha lasachta mar chuid de Churaclam Teanga na Bunscoile? Bíodh uimhir an leathanaigh nó uimhreacha na leathanach in éineacht le do fhreagra

*Ná scríobh níos mó ná 150 focal i do fhreagra

Cuid 3(c): dréachtchuraclam Oideachais Shóisialta agus Imshaoil (OSI) (Tíreolaíocht agus Stair)

Léigh ANSEO é

Cén méid a aontaíonn / easaontaíonn tú leis na ráitis seo a leanas:

- Ba mhaith liom go gcothódh OSI tuiscint, léirthuisicint agus eolas mo pháiste maidir leis an domhan ina bhfuil cónaí air
- Ba mhaith liom go gcumasódh OSI mo pháiste le bheith ina bhall gníomhach, measúil agus freagrach dá phobal.

Ar mhaith leat aon tuairim eile a thabhairt i dtaobh Dhréachtsonraíocht Churaclaim Oideachais Shóisialta agus Imshaoil?

*Ná scríobh níos mó ná 150 focal i do fhreagra

Cuid 3(d): dréachtchuraclam Oideachais Eolaíochta, Teicneolaíochta agus Innealtóireachta (ETI)

Léigh ANSEO é

Cén méid a aontaíonn / easaontaíonn tú leis na ráitis seo a leanas:

- Ba mhaith liom go spreagfadh OSI fiosracht mo pháiste
- Ba mhaith liom go gcothódh OSI cumas mo pháiste iniúchadh, dearadh, tógáil agus cumarsáid a dhéanamh go héifeachtach
- Ba mhaith liom go dtabharfadh an curaclam deiseanna do mo pháiste taithí a fháil ar an aoibhneas a bhaineann le príomhsmainte agus príomhscileanna na hEolaíochta, na Teicneolaíochta agus na hInnealtóireachta a fhoghlaim.

Ar mhaith leat aon tuairim eile a thabhairt i dtaobh dhréachtchuraclam an Oideachais Eolaíochta, Teicneolaíochta agus Innealtóireachta?

*Ná scríobh níos mó ná 150 focal i do fhreagra

Cuid 3(e): dréachtchuraclam Folláine (an Corpoideachas agus; an tOideachas Sóisialta, Pearsanta agus Sláinte)

Léigh ANSEO é

Cén méid a aontaíonn / easaontaíonn tú leis na ráitis seo a leanas:

- Ba mhaith liom go dtacódh Folláine le forbairt shóisialta, mhothúcháinach agus fhisiciúil mo pháiste
- Ba mhaith liom go gcumasódh Folláine mo pháiste le féinfheasacht agus féineolas a fhorbairt
- Ba mhaith liom go gcabhródh Folláine le mo pháiste roghanna eolacha agus sláintiúla a dhéanamh maidir lena fholláine
- Ba mhaith liom go bhforbródh Folláine braistint láidir i mo pháiste go bhfuil dlúthbhaint aige lena scoil, lena phobal agus leis an tsochaí níos leithne
- Ba mhaith liom go gcabhródh Folláine le mo pháiste caidrimh shláintiúla a fhorbairt agus tuiscint shoiléir a fháil ar fhorbairt agus ar ghnéasacht an duine atá oiriúnach dá aois agus dá chéim forbartha.

Ar mhaith leat aon tuairim eile a thabhairt i dtaobh dhréachtchuraclam na Folláine?

*Ná scríobh níos mó ná 150 focal i do fhreagra

Cuid 4: Tacú le Tuismitheoirí agus Múinteoirí

1. Cad iad na tacaíochtaí do na réimsí nua curaclaim ar mhaith leat a fheiceáil chun cabhrú leat le foghlaim do pháiste sa bhaile?

*Ná scríobh níos mó ná 250 focal i do fhreagra

Tá do chuid freagraí curtha isteach.

Go raibh maith agat as an gceistneoir seo a chomhlánú. Más mian leat síniú suas do nuashonruithe ríomhphoist, brúigh ar an nasc seo le do thoil.

Appendix H: Written Submissions Template

Section 1: Alignment with the *Primary Curriculum Framework*

The Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications work together, as set out in the *Primary Curriculum Framework* to:

Build on the strengths of the Primary School Curriculum (1999) and respond to changing priorities

Promote agency and flexibility to schools in enacting the curriculum

Connect with learning experiences provided through *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and the *Framework for Junior Cycle*

Embed the seven key competencies in learning outcomes from junior infants to sixth class

Focus on developing children's skills, knowledge, dispositions, values and attitudes

Position assessment as a central part of learning and teaching

Promote an integrated approach to learning, teaching and assessment

Be for all children in primary and special schools

Please outline your response on the extent to which the Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications address the key messages, making reference to one or more of the draft curriculum specifications.

Section 2: Individual Draft Primary Curriculum Specifications

You are invited to provide your response on one or more draft curriculum specification:

Arts Education (Art, Music and Drama)

Primary Language Curriculum including Modern Foreign Languages

Science, Technology and Engineering Education

Social and Environmental Education (Geography and History)

Wellbeing (Physical Education and; Social, Personal and Health Education)

Please include the page number(s) relevant to your comments.

Section 2(a): draft Arts Education Curriculum

Please outline your response on the draft Arts Education Curriculum specification, with reference to specific chapters and page numbers, where relevant.

Section 2(b): draft updates to the *Primary Language Curriculum* to include Modern Foreign Languages

Please outline your response on the draft updates to the *Primary Language Curriculum* to include Modern Foreign Languages, with reference to specific chapters and page numbers, where relevant.

Section 2(c): draft Social and Environmental Education Curriculum

Please outline your response on the draft Social and Environmental Education Curriculum specification, with reference to specific chapters and page numbers, where relevant.

Section 2(d): draft Science, Technology and Engineering Education Curriculum

Please outline your response on the draft Science, Technology and Engineering Education Curriculum specification, with reference to specific chapters and page numbers, where relevant.

Section 2(e): draft Wellbeing Curriculum

Please outline your response on the draft Wellbeing Curriculum specification, with reference to specific chapters and page numbers, where relevant.

Section 3: Implementing the Curriculum

In your view, what curriculum supports will teachers and school leaders require in implementing the curriculum?

Are there any general comments in relation to implementing the curriculum in schools that you wish to make?



NCCA

An Chomhairle Náisiúnaí
Curáilíní agus Measúnachta
National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment