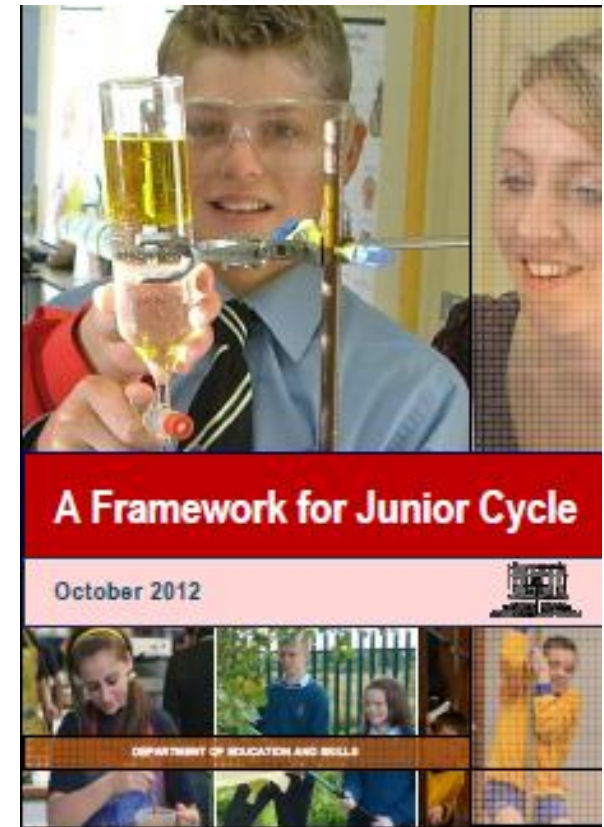


# A Framework for Junior Cycle

Information for Parents

An introduction to the  
Framework

May / June 2013



# Outline of presentation

- Why change?
- What is changing?
- How will it be assessed?
- How do we make sure it works?
- What do parents think?

# Why is change needed?

- Research highlights that some students
  - Not progressing in first year
  - Disengaging in second year
  - Not developing their particular skills and interests
- Junior Certificate terminal examination
  - Is **no longer** a high stakes exam
  - Has driven teaching style – over-focused on exams
  - Students are stressed
- Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

# Planning and Designing a JC programme

- **Framework's:**
  - 8 principles
  - 24 statements of learning
  - 8 key skills
- **Delivered through**
  - Subjects
  - Short courses
  - Priority learning units
  - Other learning experiences

# Phasing of subjects and short courses – timetable for DES and NCCA

- Sept. 2014, first certification in 2017
  - English
  - NCCA and other short courses will be available
- Sept. 2015, first certification in 2018
  - Irish; Science; Business Studies
- Sept. 2016, first certification in 2019
  - Art, Craft, Design; Modern languages; Home Economics; Music; Geography
- Sept. 2017, first certification in 2020
  - Mathematics; Technology subjects; RE; Jewish Studies; Classics; History

# Principles

- Quality
- Wellbeing
- Creativity and Innovation
- Choice and flexibility
- Engagement and participation
- Inclusive education
- Continuity and development
- Learning to Learn

# Principle of Quality

- All students experience a high quality education, characterised by high expectations of learners and the pursuit of excellence

# 24 Statements of Learning ( SOL)

- Describe what students should know, understand, value and be able to do at end of JC e.g.
  - Create and present artistic works and appreciate the process and skills involved
  - Make informed financial decisions and develop good consumer skills
  - Take initiative, be innovative and develop entrepreneurial skills



# Key skills

- 8 key skills are embedded into subjects, short courses and PLUs
  - Literacy
  - Numeracy
  - Managing Myself
  - Staying Well
  - Communicating
  - Being Creative
  - Managing Information and Thinking
  - Working with Others

# Skill: Working with Others

- Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict
- Co-operating
- Respecting difference
- Contributing to making the world a better place
- Learning with others
- Working with others through digital technology

# Implementation of the Framework

- Potentially very exciting and innovative  
BUT change of practice and culture
  - Does lead to initial concerns
  - Requires teachers and parents to think differently about learning
  - Does require support

However, our main focus is on the quality of learning, teaching and assessment which our young people experience

# A School Programme in Junior Cycle

All students will study English, Irish and Mathematics

Schools will be able to choose from:

- 18 other subjects
- Range of short courses
- Other learning experiences
- Priority Learning Units (PLUs)

# Short courses

- **NCCA short courses** e.g.
  - Social, Personal and Health Education
  - Civic, Social and Political Education
  - Physical Education
- **Schools and others are free to develop their own short courses**
- **Schools may substitute two short courses for one subject**
  - Maximum of four short courses allowed for certification

# Priority learning units (PLUs)

- Meet the learning needs of a small number of students with learning disabilities
- Provide certification
- PLUs - Social, pre-vocational and life skills
  - Communicating and literacy
  - Numeracy
  - Personal Care
  - Living in a community
  - Preparing for work

# Other Educational Experiences

- **Prioritised by schools:**
  - Guidance
  - Aspects of pastoral care
  - Elements of religious education
  - Other learning initiatives – public speaking, student council, Gaisce award, Green Flag, Young Scientist, musicals, sports etc
- For the first time, learning experiences will be formally recognised and recorded in the school's reporting system

# So what will a typical student study for certification?

- Minimum of 8 subjects to maximum of 10 subjects
- May substitute two short courses for a subject up to a maximum of 4 short courses
- Range of options for certification within a school (mindful of possible Senior Cycle choices) to reflect
  - the identified needs of students and parents
  - the resources available



# Why change assessment?

- Junior Cycle is no longer a high stakes exam
  - 90% students complete LC
- Assessment best when assessment for learning is the norm throughout the 3 years
- Enable learners with their teacher's support
  - to discuss their learning and be clear about outcomes
  - to recognise achievements
  - to identify both gaps in their learning and how it can be improved
  - to develop confidence in their own abilities
  - to be motivated and have high expectations that are realistic

# Why change assessment?

- Assessment: to improve (not to prove) learning
- Move focus from terminal exam to a quality learning experience for students
- Current Junior Certificate examination phased out and replaced by a school-based assessment over an 8 year period

# Assessment for School Certificate at end of junior cycle

- **Subjects**

- School-work component for all subjects completed in Year 2 and Year 3 (generally 40% of overall marks but may vary across subjects)
- Final assessment component for all subjects completed at the end of Year 3 (60% of marks)
- Final assessment component
  - An examination of no more than two hours
  - Two levels for English, Irish and Mathematics
  - Common level for all other subjects

# Assessment at end of junior cycle

- **Subjects**

- Irish, English and Mathematics still administered and marked by State Examinations Commission (SEC)
- SEC marks added by the school to school-work marks
- For all other subjects, for interim, papers and marking schemes from SEC, marked by teachers in the school
- Short courses and PLUs assessed by school only
- Teachers guided by an assessment and moderation toolkit and will have training

# Grades in the new school-based certification

- Grades for marking on a five-point scale
  - Not achieved 0% - 39%
  - Achieved 40% - 54%
  - Achieved with Merit 55% - 74%
  - Achieved with Higher Merit 75% - 89%
  - Achieved with Distinction 90% - 100%

# Reporting

- Best reporting is one that is continuous throughout JC in order to enhance learning, teaching and the way learners are assessed
- No surprises

In the autumn after 3<sup>rd</sup> year, the report will include

- **Achievement profile**
  - Summary of learning experiences and achievements
- **School Certificate – issued from Sept. 2017**
  - awarded to a student in between 8-10 subjects or equivalent

# Quality assurance to support new junior cycle

- Subject specifications (syllabuses)
- New reporting system
- Improve the quality of learning by providing training for principals and teachers
- Support from SEC on the examinations
- School Self Evaluation

# Quality assurance at the end of junior cycle (contd.)

- **DES will**
  - Provide schools with Data Profile arising from its statistical analysis
  - Monitor results awarded and identify unusual patterns
  - Provide advice and support
  - Continue to evaluate, through its inspectorate, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment



# National and international benchmarking

- Standardised testing
- Periodic National Assessment of Maths and English Reading in line with *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy*
- Continued participation in international evaluations

# What Support will be available to Schools and to Parents?

- From NCCA [www.juniorcycle.ie](http://www.juniorcycle.ie)
- State Examinations Commission – assessment resources [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie)
- Education Partners – Consultation Group
  - Includes National Parents Councils – both Primary and Post-Primary
  - Opportunity for partners to inform DES of “on the ground” issues
  - Identifies the needs of Parents who will play a critical role in the successful implementation of the JC
  - DES officials will report back on parent information meetings
- Parental support, participation and encouragement for the school and the students
  - Key on-line resources
  - Information meetings
  - [www.npc.ie](http://www.npc.ie) and [www.npcpp.ie](http://www.npcpp.ie)

# For you as Parents– what are the concerns that have been raised ?

- Why are English, Irish and Maths compulsory?
- Will other subjects be marginalised?
- Why can't the Framework be introduced sooner?
- Bias of teachers if the relationship between teacher and student is not good?
- Are Primary experiences being linked to Junior Cycle? Primary teachers need to understand changes and not place so much pressure on pupils in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes?
- Will the programme change radically in 2014?