

Rannóg Pholasáí,
Curaim agus Measúnachta,
An Roinn Oideachais agus
Scileanna,
Sráid Mhaoilbhríde
Baile Atha Cliath 1
D01 RC96



*Curriculum and Assessment
Policy Unit,*
Department of Education and
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Marlborough Street
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Re: Clarifications on the Implementation of the Primary Language Curriculum

To: Principals, Teachers and Boards of Management of Primary Schools and Special Schools

Schools will be aware that support for the introduction and implementation of the new Primary Language Curriculum is currently being rolled out by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). This is in line with Circular 61/2015 which was issued to schools in November 2015 (available at http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0061_2015.pdf).

Information seminars for principals have been organised by PDST. In addition, the Department organised an information meeting with the education partners. A number of key concerns were highlighted in relation to School Closures in this academic year 2015/ 2106 and also in relation to the implementation of the new language curriculum.

Clarification on these two key areas is provided in the Appendix which accompanies this letter.

As it is expected that further clarifications will be sought during the implementation phase, it is proposed to provide a “questions and answers” document on the Department’s website. This document will be updated regularly as further issues are highlighted. A group of primary education stakeholders will meet regularly over the course of implementation to highlight any issues or clarifications sought in the course of implementation.

The new language curriculum will be phased in over the next number of years. In 2016/17, the focus will be on the oral strand for infants to second class. In 2017/18, the focus will be on the reading and writing strands. From September 2018 onwards, all strands of the language curriculum will be implemented for pupils in infants to second classes.

From now until September 2018, there is an opportunity for principals and teachers to explore and engage with the new language curriculum for English and Irish. This time is being deliberately given so that teachers can become familiar with the new curriculum and give consideration to how best to implement it in their classrooms.

Breda Naughton
Principal Officer
February 2016

APPENDIX

1. School Closures

1.1 School Closures - Provision in Circular

Section 6 of Circular 61/2015 provides as follows:

Continuing professional development (CPD) to support principals and teachers in the implementation of the new curriculum will be made available through the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST).

In line with the phased implementation approach, a three-year CPD framework is planned as follows:-

Year 1 November 2015 to June 2016

Familiarisation with the curriculum and initial preparation for schools, introduction to and planning for teaching and learning using the learning outcomes and the progression continua of the oral language strand.

This will involve

- a) a half-day information seminar for school Principals (facilitated by PDST), followed by a half-day school closure for whole-staff CPD through use of on-line supports and
- b) one subsequent full-day seminar for school Principals and one other teacher (facilitated by PDST), followed by a half-day school closure for whole-staff CPD through use of on-line supports.

Substitution for attendance at seminars, where required, will be provided.

Year 2 School-year 2016/17

Support for implementation and enablement – Oral Language

This will involve one full-day school closure for whole-staff CPD (facilitated by PDST), combined with ongoing elective support for schools from a suite of CPD models.

Year 3 School-year 2017/18

Support for implementation and enablement – Reading and Writing

This will involve one full-day school closure for whole-staff CPD (facilitated by PDST), combined with ongoing elective support for schools from a suite of CPD models.

In addition, PDST will continue to support schools on an ongoing basis by providing a suite of elective CPD models which schools and their teachers can choose from, based on their individual needs and contexts. These include workshops, classroom modelling, summer courses, as well as website resources and publications.

1.2 School Closures - Clarification on the timing of school closures 2015/16

While the half days referenced at a) and b) above are sequenced to facilitate reflection following each input by the PDST, schools have discretion as to the timing of the closures within this academic year. Schools may also combine both half-days into one full-day school closure, to be taken during the current school year, for the purpose of whole-staff discussion through use of online supports. These on-line supports will include a webinar and materials used by PDST at the seminars.

It is intended that schools will use their whole-staff discussion to familiarise themselves with the language curriculum and support materials, and begin their initial preparations using the online supports provided by the PDST.

2. Implementation

2.1 Implementation - Provision in Circular

Section 5 of Circular 61/2015 provides as follows in relation to implementation;

The new curriculum will be implemented on a phased basis from September 2016.

School Year 2016/17

There will be an initial emphasis on the Oral Language/Teanga ó Bhéal strand. From September 2016, this strand will begin to be implemented for infants to second class.

School Year 2017/18

From September 2017 the Reading/Léitheoireacht and Writing/Scríbhneoireacht strands will begin to be implemented for infants to second class alongside the oral language strand.

School Year 2018/19

From September 2018, there will be full implementation of all strands from infants to second class.

School Year 2019/20

From September 2019, implementation of Primary Language Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile for third to sixth class will begin.

2.2 Implementation – Clarification

This letter is intended to clarify that the reference to “begin to be implemented” for the school years 2016/17 and 2017/18 means that:

Following on from the full-day school closure for in-school, whole-staff CPD (facilitated by PDST), schools will begin to implement the Oral Language//Teanga ó Bhéal strands for infants to second class in 2016/17. Similarly, curriculum implementation will begin for the Reading/Léitheoireacht and Writing/Scríbhneoireacht strands in 2017/18.

Implementation is likely to involve ongoing familiarisation with the language curriculum and activities related to planning, and initial use of the language curriculum and its support materials. For example, schools might begin to plan for teaching and learning using the learning outcomes, the progression continua or a combination of both. They might also begin to explore the practice guides and incorporate them into their planning for oral language. Such engagement with the curriculum and its support materials will inform teaching and learning practice in the target strands for English and Irish.

Additional guidance will be provided in the questions and answers document which will be available at www.education.ie.