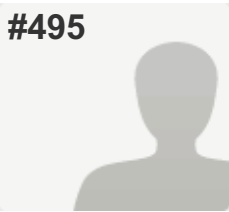


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PAGE 1: Please complete this consultation paper in respect of your area of interest and/or expertise

Q1: Name:	Sinead Duignan, ISKA National Coordinator
Q2: Organisation:	Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association, ISKA
Q3: Email:	iskanc@gmail.com

PAGE 2

Q4: 1(a) What improvements can be made within existing resources	<i>Respondent skipped this question</i>
Q5: 1(b) What improvements can be made through new provision	<i>Respondent skipped this question</i>

PAGE 3

Q6: 2. Comment on work currently being undertaken by the Department in your area of interest and/or expertise. (What are we doing well, what could we do better)?

Recently Steiner Primary schools, have begun to be recognised by the Department, this is a very welcome development and supports the DES work toward its goals regarding diversity, creativity and future skills.

School education inspectors need CPD inorder to be more supportive of the new Aistear framework and of differing pedagogies.

State Primary Teacher training itself will need to broaden and deepen inorder to include differing pedagogies to the Irish curriculum, early years child development and special needs training.

PAGE 4

Q7: 3. Are there opportunities (e.g. new areas of work) which the Department should consider when developing the 2016 - 2018 strategy which would advance the achievement of our mission, vision and objectives across the continuum of education and skills?	<i>Respondent skipped this question</i>
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PAGE 5

Q8: 4. How should success on achieving our strategies be measured.

Respondent skipped this question

PAGE 6

Q9: 5. Comment on any issues relating to the continuum of education and skills, in addition to your particular area of interest and/or expertise

Respondent skipped this question

PAGE 7

Q10: 6. Any other observations that you would suggest the Department should consider in the formulation of our strategy for education and skills 2016 - 2018

Respondent skipped this question

PAGE 8: A Programme for a Partnership Government - Chapter 10: Education

Q11: 1(a) Comment on the approach contained in the Programme for a Partnership Government (are we capturing the essential issues, are there additional matters we should take into account).

The programme for partnership states that early years is birth to five years, its unfortunate that this programme does not match the the DCYA's & NCCA's/Aistear perspective of early years, as they state early years as birth to 6 years. It is imperative that each department strives to be clear and in tune with one another. Five yrs old as the school starting age for formal learning is still too young and even one year can make a huge difference on a child's learning experience. One can see the reasoning for extending the free pre school, this is a very welcome development but in effect it is the primary education system that needs to change its views and expectations on a child's formal learning. A deeper understanding of child development will bring the state to a well documented realisation that children of all socio economic levels will benefit from a later commencement of formal learning.

Q12: 1(b) How should progress on Prioritising Early Years be measured?

A deeper understanding of child development will bring the state to a well documented realisation that children of all socio economic levels will benefit from a later commencement of formal learning, the ideal age being a child's 6th-7th year. This, when implemented will immediately reduce the present need for schools to assess the early years child academically. There will be a need for some form of screen testing for all children that could be applied in the early years system, but will not need to be academically based, rather it could be a developmental i.e. neurological, physiological and psychological in nature, which commences with parental permission through the health system/public health nurse during a child's first three months, continuing on into early years care & education and prior to the child attending primary school. Research suggestion; Institute for Neuro-Physiological Psychology (INPP). Sally Goddard Blythe <http://www.inpp.org.uk/research-publications/>

Q13: 1(c) What would you consider to be the priority actions and outcomes in this area?

DES inspectors through CPD must have an understanding of differing pedagogies so they can be informed when visiting EY services. Focus needs to be on lengthening the child's time in play activities, not teacher lead. Training required for adults on how not to lead/teach but be present in such a manner that the child feels safe in her environment to develop at her pace, whether this be through a framework like Aistear or another pedagogical perspective.

PAGE 9: A Programme for a Partnership Government - Chapter 10: Education

Q14: 2(a) Comment on the approach contained in the Programme for a Partnership Government (are we capturing the essential issues, are there additional matters we should take into account).

Later commencement of formal learning till 6-7th year (mentioned earlier in this submission) will have a positive longterm affect on how a child performs within the school system. This has among many advantages, the benefit of reducing anxiety and increasing a child's self esteem, which naturally will promote his/her chances of remaining in the school system.

Q15: 2(b) How should progress on Tackling Disadvantaged be measured?

A large number of longitudinal studies are necessary as academically assessing the child through testing in primary school is not child appropriate and does not give an accurate picture.

Q16: 2(c) What would you consider to be the priority actions and outcomes in this area?

Respondent skipped this question

PAGE 10: A Programme for a Partnership Government - Chapter 10: Education

Q17: 3(a) Comment on the approach contained in the Programme for a Partnership Government (are we capturing the essential issues, are there additional matters we should take into account).

These developments are so very welcome, it has been a long road, but, there can not be real diversity if a new alternative schools are still tied to the old state school curriculum. Or if inspectors are not aware of alternative pedagogies or are not supportive even of Ireland's Aistear framework for birth to 6 yr olds. Home schooling is an area that was not mentioned and it is an aspect of Ireland's education that requires thought and support.

Q18: 3(b) How should progress on Diversity and Choice for Parents be measured?

Questionnaires through Parent Associations within school communities would be one method to source the information to be measured.

Q19: 3(c) What would you consider to be the priority actions and outcomes in this area?

A state funded Steiner school is required to employ state trained teachers, these state trained teachers are required to have Steiner training. Steiner training is not offered by the state, but it is offered independently. In order for a teacher to attain CPD in his her chosen pedagogy the teacher will require time during the school year to attend CPD/ training days/ mentoring hours, not just state defined training. The new School Self Evaluation process will hopefully be an effective measure to deal with this lack, because the context that a state funded Steiner school is working within is a Steiner Waldorf pedagogy, not the Irish curriculum, there can not be real diversity if a school is still tied to the old school curriculum, what could result is the development of Steiner schools with a weakened pedagogy at the onset, which will not offer either quality Steiner education or diversity to the people of Ireland. CPD for DES inspectors regarding alternative pedagogies, curricula and home-schooling.

PAGE 11: A Programme for a Partnership Government - Chapter 10: Education

Q20: 4(a) Comment on the approach contained in the Programme for a Partnership Government (are we capturing the essential issues, are there additional matters we should take into account).

Respondent skipped this question

Q21: 4(b) How should progress on Promoting Excellence and Innovation in Schools be measured?	<i>Respondent skipped this question</i>
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Q22: 4(c) What would you consider to be the priority actions and outcomes in this area?	<i>Respondent skipped this question</i>
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PAGE 12: A Programme for a Partnership Government - Chapter 10: Education

Q23: 5(a) Comment on the approach contained in the Programme for a Partnership Government (are we capturing the essential issues, are there additional matters we should take into account).

Again from a Steiner Waldorf pedagogical perspective, later commencement of formal learning till a child's 6-7th year offers the child the space and time to develop the roots of their creative potential, which can then be formed and brought out through more movement based activities during primary school. Increased training & freedom within curriculum to use drama and art as methods of teaching rather than appendages to the academic lessons.

IT is disruptive to the true creative aspect developing within the child and is best not used at primary school level until 5th- 6th class.

At secondary level there is a huge need for active learning and the exploration and doing of the old crafts and new technologies.

Q24: 5(b) How should progress on Promoting Creativity and Entrepreneurial Capacity in Students be measured?

Again many longitudinal studies.

Q25: 5(c) What would you consider to be the priority actions and outcomes in this area?

The junior cert needs to be abolished.

PAGE 13: A Programme for a Partnership Government - Chapter 10: Education

Q26: 6(a) Comment on the approach contained in the Programme for a Partnership Government (are we capturing the essential issues, are there additional matters we should take into account).	<i>Respondent skipped this question</i>
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Q27: 6(b) How should progress on Making Better use of Educational Assets within Communities be measured?	<i>Respondent skipped this question</i>
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Q28: 6(c) What would you consider to be the priority actions and outcomes in this area?	<i>Respondent skipped this question</i>
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PAGE 14: A Programme for a Partnership Government - Chapter 10: Education

Q29: 7(a) Comment on the approach contained in the Programme for a Partnership Government (are we capturing the essential issues, are there additional matters we should take into account).

For special needs inclusion the curriculum will need to change in a deep way, be completely reviewed, to be fluid, movement based and creative. Teachers will be required to have huge support.

Q30: 7(b) How should progress on Special Needs Education be measured?	<i>Respondent skipped this question</i>
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Q31: 7(c) What would you consider to be the priority actions and outcomes in this area?

Training
Total curriculum review

PAGE 15: A Programme for a Partnership Government - Chapter 10: Education

Q32: 8(a) Comment on the approach contained in the Programme for a Partnership Government (are we capturing the essential issues, are there additional matters we should take into account).

Respondent skipped this question

Q33: 8(b) How should progress on Meeting the Skills Needs of the Future be measured?

Respondent skipped this question

Q34: 8(c) What would you consider to be the priority actions and outcomes in this area?

Respondent skipped this question
