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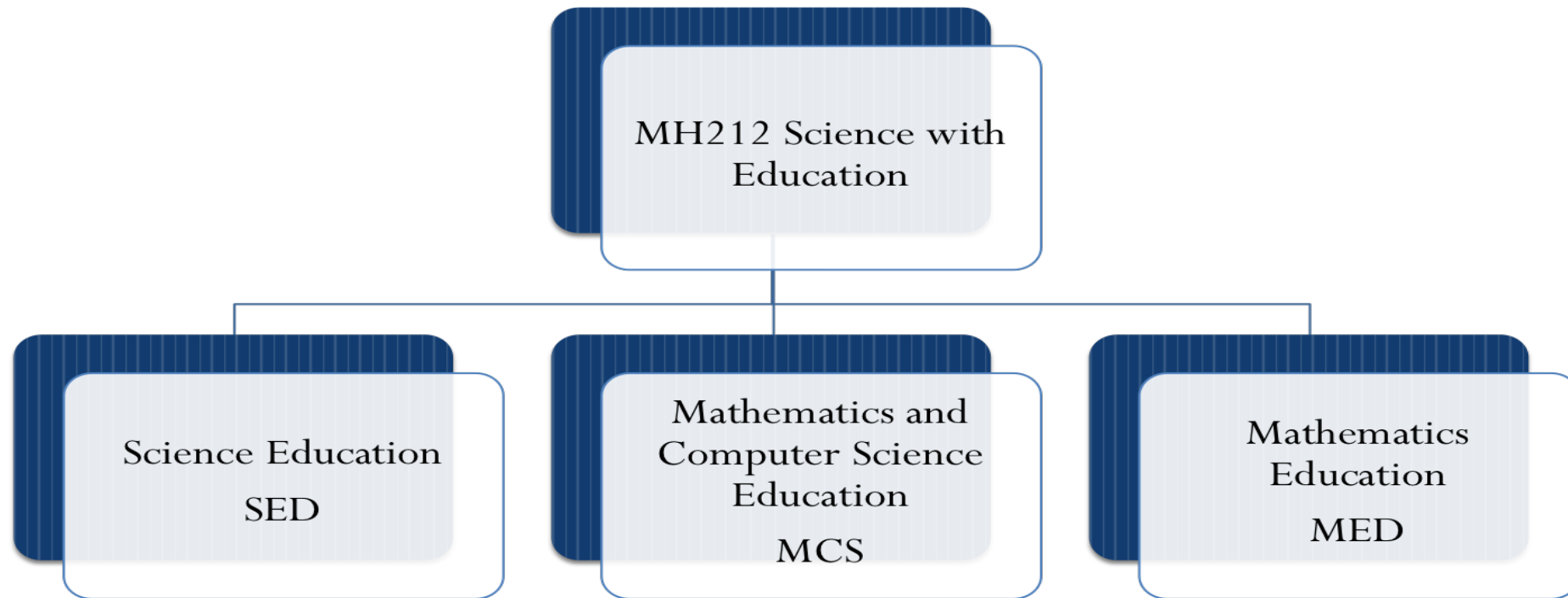
Curriculum Development in Ireland

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24.10.18

Course leader for the BSc Science and Mathematics and Computer Science Education

MH212 Science with Education

Science Education

SED

Mathematics and Computer Science Education

MCS

Mathematics Education

MED

Research

Public pedagogy and sustainability challenges: Activism, Action, and Change

Role of task development in developing curriculum making competences with PSTs

Evaluation of Algebra Project in Ireland

Learning to Disagree

Overview of my talk today

- General overview of Irish Education system
  - Time for questions and discussion

- Policy developments in Literacy and Numeracy
  - Time for questions and discussion

- Curriculum Development in Lower Secondary Education
  - Key questions for us to consider in curriculum development and sharing of experiences

Structure of Irish Education

Vocational or General Certificates

Year 4
Year 3
Year 2
Year 1

17+

ISCED 4

Leaving certificate

Leaving certificate

Further Education College

Leaving Certificate Applied

Leaving certificate

ISCED 3

11th
10th

Leaving Certificate

11th
10th

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)

11th
10th

Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

15 / 16

Optional transition year

Senior cycle

ISCED 2

9th
8th
7th

Junior cycle

12/13

Special needs education

ISCED 1

6th
5th
4th
3rd
2nd
1st
Senior infants
Junior infants

6

Primary school

4/5

Adult education and training

ISCED 020

Pre-primary school

3/4

©EducationGPS

Ireland (Éire)

2018

Theoretical starting age*

ISCED	Age	

ISCED 8

Higher doctoral degree

Variable years

Work experience

Doctoral degree (PhD)

Doctoral degree (PhD)

Year 4
Year 3
Year 2
Year 1

Year 4
Year 3
Year 2
Year 1

26+

22-26

ISCED 7

21-23

Master's

Postgraduate Diploma

Year 2
Year 1

Year 1

Master's

Postgraduate Diploma

Year 2
Year 1

Year 1

ISCED 6

21-23

Higher Diploma

Year 1

Higher Diploma

Year 1

Honours Bachelor's

University Certificate

University Diploma

Higher certificate

Ordinary Bachelor's

Honours Bachelor's

Year 4
Year 3
Year 2
Year 1

Year 1

Year 3
Year 2
Year 1

Year 2
Year 1

Year 3
Year 2
Year 1

Year 4
Year 3
Year 2
Year 1

University / College of Education

Institute of Technology

ISCED 5

17-19

ISCED 4

17+

Vocational or General Certificates

Year 4
Year 3
Year 2
Year 1

The Irish education system

- Education
  - Compulsory from age 6-16
  - Free in public schools
  - Most children start at age 5.

- Primary schools
  - Can start in September after 4th birthday
  - 8 years: Junior Infants, Senior Infants, then classes 1-6
  - Typically age 5 to 12.

- Secondary schools
  - Start after primary schools.
  - 5 or 6 years: age 13 - 18
  - Junior cycle, normally 3 years – Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement
  - Transition year (optional, more than half (54%) take up the option)
  - Senior cycle, 2 or 3 years
    - Leaving Certificate Examination (58,000)
    - Leaving Certificate Applied (Vocational track, only 5% in 2018)

Education at a glance

- The level of upper secondary attainment among 25-34 year-olds is one of the highest among OECD and partner countries (91.9 %, rank 10/45 , 2017)

- Almost all expected to graduate from an upper secondary general programme (100 %, rank 1/33 , 2016)

- In Ireland, expenditure on primary through tertiary educational institutions as a percentage of GDP is one of the lowest among OECD countries and partner economies. (3.5 %, rank 35/37 , 2015)

http://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=IRL&treshold=10&topic=EO

Policy actors in the Irish Education space – all under the aegis of Department of Education and Skills

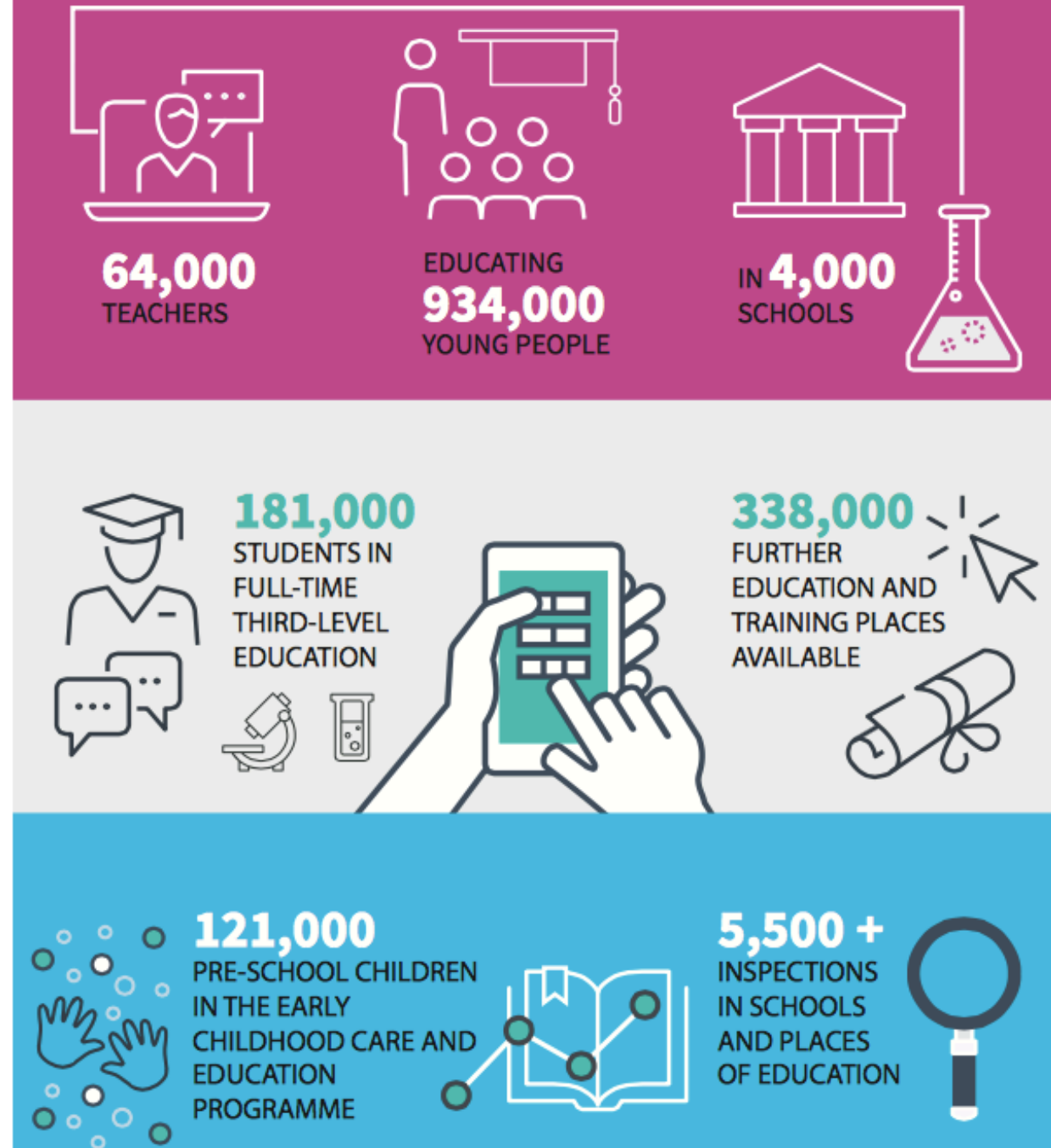DES – Teacher education section

DES – Inspection of schools

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

State Examinations Commission

Teaching Council

DES – work

- Functions centralised in DES
  - general regulations for the recognition of schools,
  - prescribes curricula,
  - implementation of curricula,
  - inspection of schools,
  - establishes regulations for the management, resourcing and staffing of schools,
  - centrally negotiates teachers' salary scales.

64,000 TEACHERS

EDUCATING 934,000 YOUNG PEOPLE

IN 4,000 SCHOOLS

181,000 STUDENTS IN FULL-TIME THIRD-LEVEL EDUCATION

338,000 FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PLACES AVAILABLE

121,000 PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMME

5,500 + INSPECTIONS IN SCHOOLS AND PLACES OF EDUCATION

Action plan for education -2018

Five goals with key themes that are being addressed

GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5
Improve the learning experience and the success of learners	Improve the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs	Help those delivering services to continuously improve	Build stronger bridges between education and the wider community	Improve national planning and support services

Themes for 2018

GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5
Wellbeing	Inclusion	Quality assurance	Enterprise	Strategic policy capability
Critical skills	Engaging learners	Leadership and professional development	Skills Capacity	Legislation
Better subject choices	Special Education needs	Excellence and Innovation	Career opportunities and Choice	Infrastructure
Transitions	Improving Access	Inspection and Support	Entrepreneurship	New ways of working
Embracing digital technologies	Tackling disadvantage		Vibrant Research Communities	Brexit

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

- Is a statutory body of the Department of Education and Skills.

- The twenty-five members of the Council are appointed by the Minster for a three-year term. The members represent the partners in education, industry and trade union interests, parents' organizations and other educational interests. The Council also includes one nominee each of the Minister for Education and Skills and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The Minister for Education and Skills appoints the Chairperson.

- The Council is supported in its work by three boards and a number of development groups. Members of these represent similar stakeholders to Council.

NCCA Structures
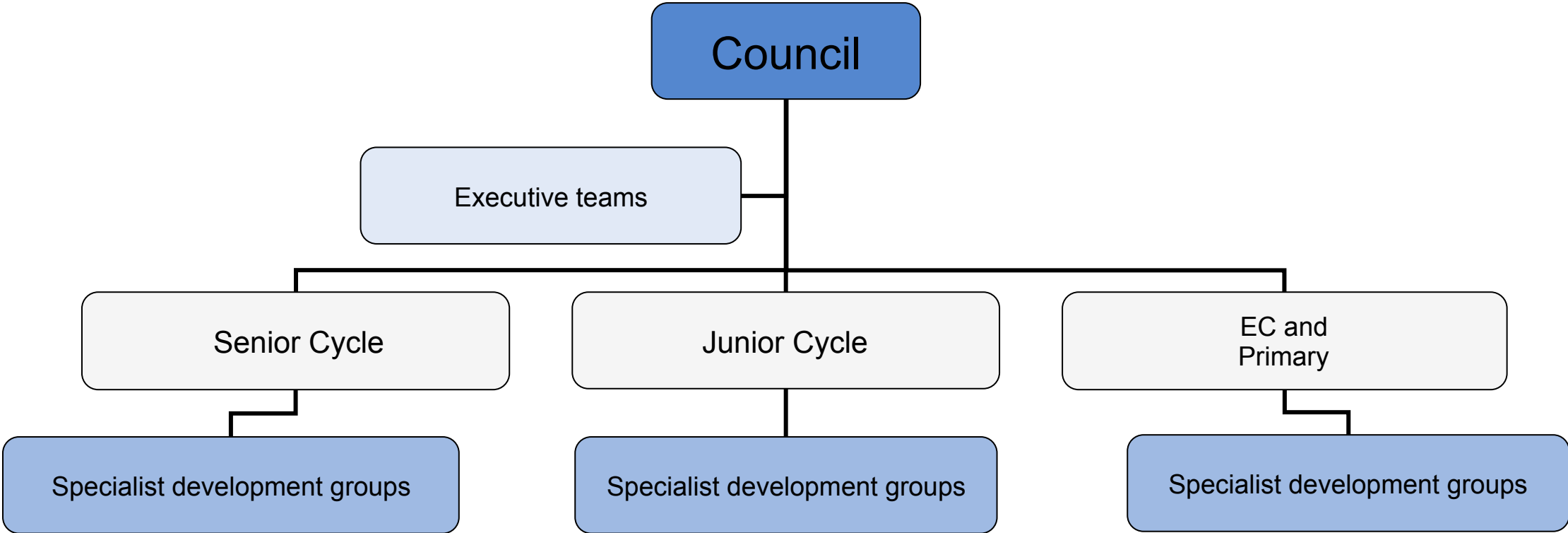
A representative Council

- Teacher unions

- School management

- Trade unions

- DES and SEC

- Business/employers

- Parents

- Foras na Gaeilge

- Nominations of the organisations are appointed by the Minister

Research evidence, good practice and international experience informs the advice.

The advice is based on discussions and deliberations by Council and its boards and development groups.

RESEARCH

DELIBERATIONS

CONSULTATIONS

NETWORKS

The advice is shaped by feedback from consultations with the public, schools and early childhood settings, education interests and others.

Networks of schools and early childhood settings provide feedback on ideas and approaches under development, and provide practical examples

Some thoughts on curriculum

- Curriculum is not 'neutral'
- It is a social, cultural, epistemological and political construction (Slattery, 2013)
- It is usually - and should be – contested (Biesta and Priestly, 2013)
- Direct influence of the NCCA applies in the curriculum as envisaged 'name and hope' approache (Reid,2006)
- How the curriculum is implemented and mediated by schools/ teachers is key to change (Dempsey, 2015)

Environmental Factors

- **Economic** recession – education still catching up
- The speed of **globalisation** and its twin demands – 'difference' and 'complexity'
  - Migration
- **Personalisation** of education – the individual or the common good?
- **Marketisation** of education – instrumental view of education for work
- **Social** inequality and the lack of a strong commitment to addressing it – access/outcome
- Generally, responding to 'imperatives'
- Insufficient **investment** in education

Competences/skills agenda

Job Creation and Local Economic Development 2018
PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

The rising demand for advanced skills

8

Evolution of employment in occupational groups defined by PIAAC problem-solving skills

Employment of workers with **advanced** problem-solving skills

Employment of workers with **poor** problem-solving skills

Employment of workers with **medium-low** problem-solving skills (PIAAC)
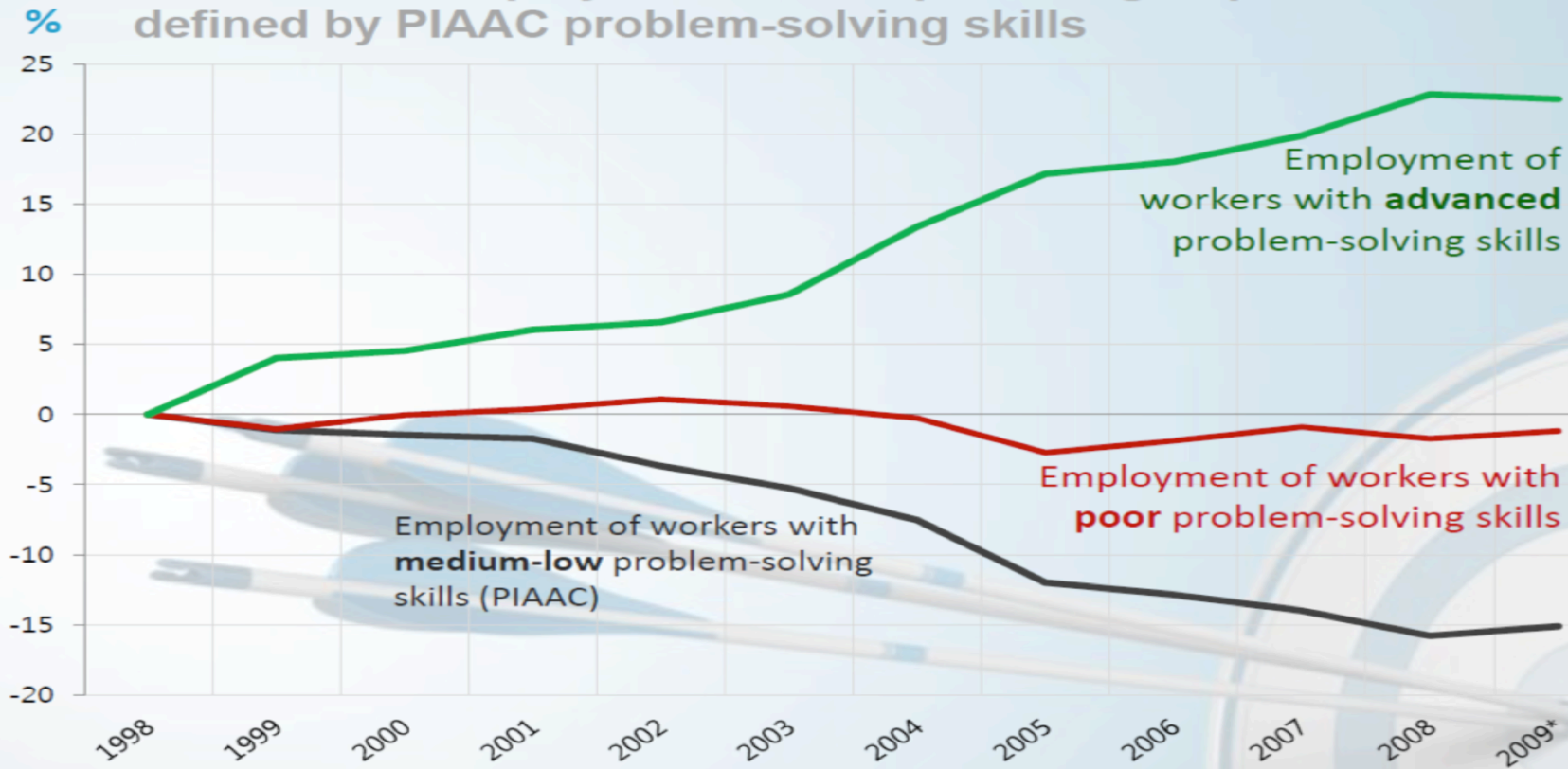
Source: PIAAC 2011

Twitter

facebook

ONLINE SAFETY

Storybird

THE GEOMETER'S SKETCHPAD

XBOX 360

Fathom
Dynamic Data™ Software

Microsoft® Lync
SharePoint 2010

Microsoft® Mathematics

Microsoft® Learning Suite

PREZI

KODU GAME LAB

WW Telescope

Tagxedo

Microsoft Live Labs Photosynth™

wikispaces

Docs

IMMUNEATTACK

Visualize. Explore. Discover.
Layerscape

WORDPRESS

Glogster
poster yourself

voicethread

View   Sketch

simSchool
play · learn · share · teach

Sploder!
Where games come true™

RAVEN
INTERACTIVE SOUND ANALYSIS SOFTWARE

DESIGN YOUR SOCIAL IMPACT GAME
with
GAMESTAR MECHANIC

Starry Night

SCRATCH

Audacity

GAPMINDER
SECOND LIFE

the education arcade

Wordle™

3D GAME LAB

KINECTIMALS

Curriculum from early childhood to end of primary school

Early childhood education
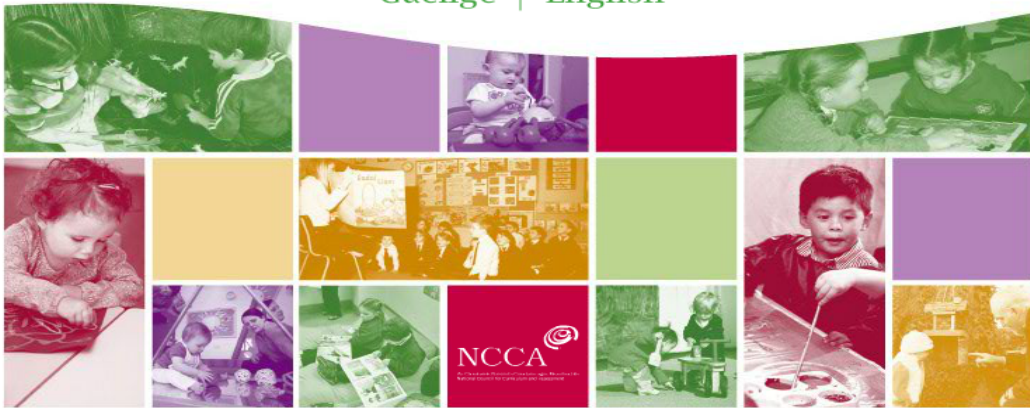
- *Aistear's* guidelines describe good practice in:
- *Building partnerships between* **parents and practitioners**
- *Learning and developing through* **interactions**
- *Learning and developing through* **play**
- *Supporting learning and development through* **assessment**

Themes

- Well-being
- Identity and belonging
- Communicating
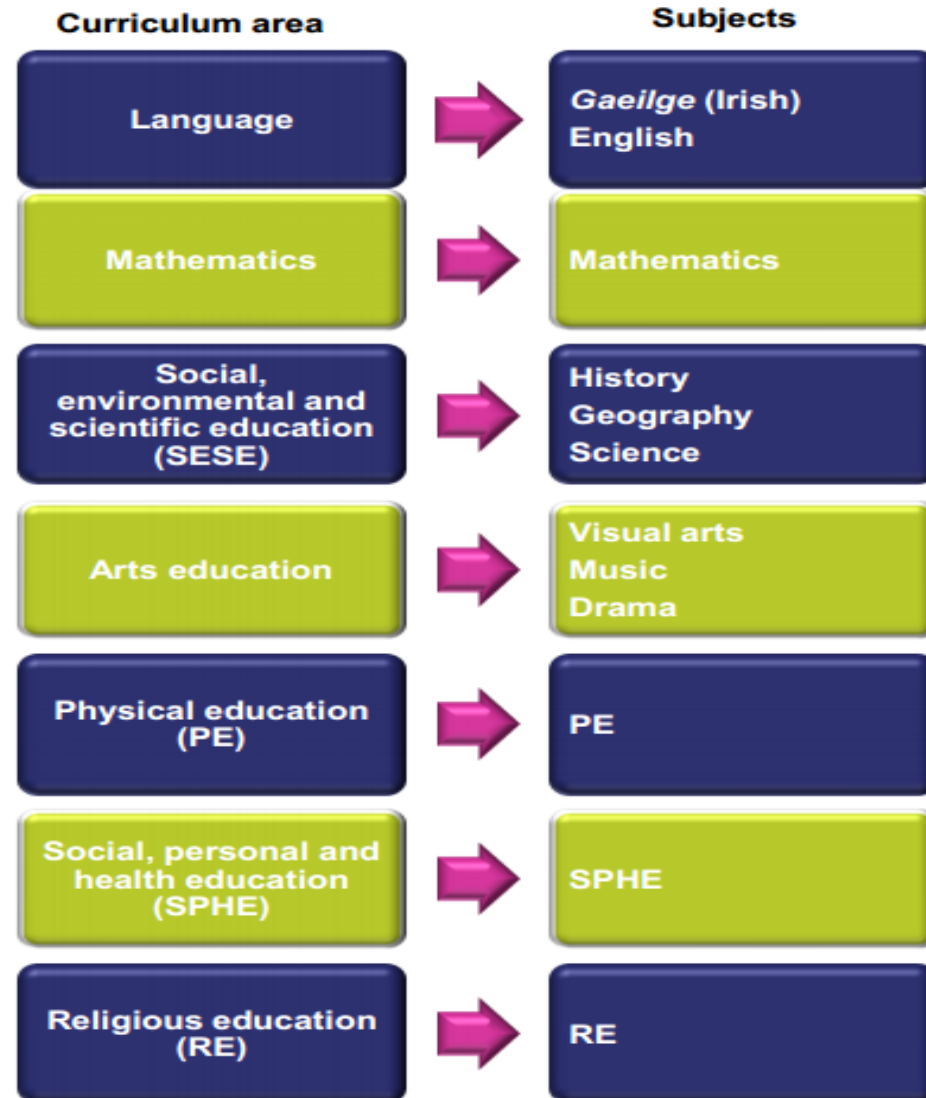- Exploring and thinking

Role of play

- *The playing adult steps sideward into another reality; the playing child advances forward to new stages of mastery*

Erik Erikson

- *Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood*

Fred Rogers

Primary school curriculum

| Curriculum area		Subjects
Language	→	*Gaeilge* (Irish) English
Mathematics	→	Mathematics
Social, environmental and scientific education (SESE)	→	History Geography Science
Arts education	→	Visual arts Music Drama
Physical education (PE)	→	PE
Social, personal and health education (SPHE)	→	SPHE
Religious education (RE)	→	RE

Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs

- The Department of Education and Skills (DES) provides for the education of children with special education needs through a number of support mechanisms depending on the child's assessed disability.

- Section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004 requires that: "A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with:

In general, educational provision for children with special needs is made:

- In special schools;
- In special classes attached to ordinary schools;
- In integrated settings in mainstream classes.

Immigration, Emigration and Net Migration, Ireland, 1987-2015 (000s)

Source: CSO Population and Migration Estimates, various releases. Year to April of ref. year
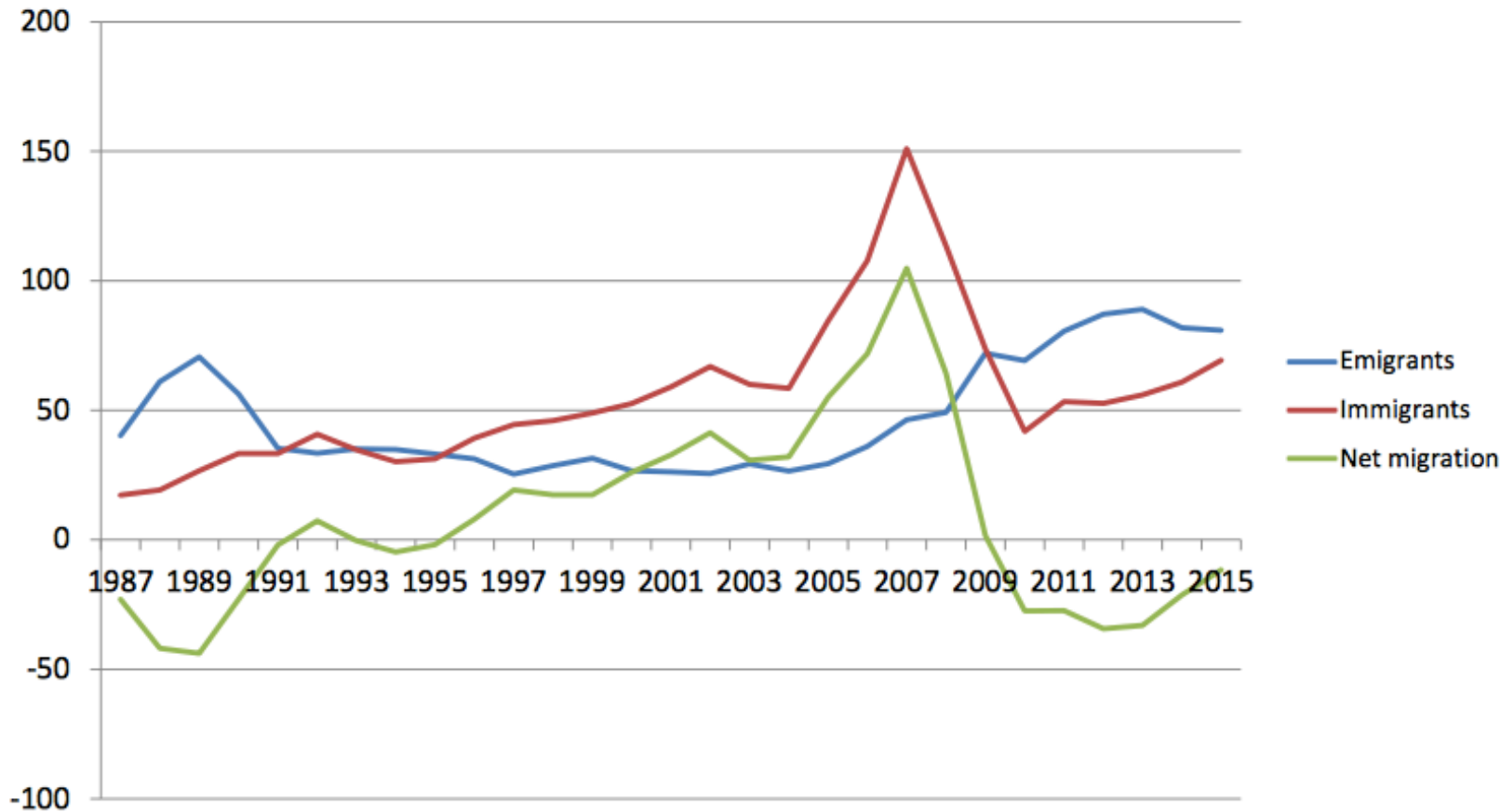
- 12% of school population
- 9% of primary school population and 3% of second level school population
- Predominantly White (Of non-Irish - 66% White; 9% Black, 14% Asian, 10 % Other in 2016 Census)
- Immigrant students are overrepresented in larger schools, schools located in urban areas and those with a socio-economically disadvantaged intake (Byrne et al 2010)

https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/education-forum/forum-2017-migrant-trajectories-through-education

Interesting features of the Irish education system

School size at primary and secondary 17-18

Enrolment Size (Number of Pupils)	Number of Schools	
	First Level	**Second Level**
Fewer than 50 pupils	578	8
50 – 99	693	14
100 – 199	748	71
200 - 299	534	97
300 - 499	423	185
500+	135	340
Total	**3,111**	**715**

Gender separation

- In most European countries (16 out of 26 for which data are available) there are no single sex schools for 15 year-olds.

- In Ireland approx 44% of all (15 year old) pupils are in single sex schools.

- 17 girls' schools, 18 boys' schools and 15 mixed schools in the top 50 third level feeder schools (Irish Times, 2017)

School autonomy

- Each school
  - A board of management (unpaid)
  - A school principal
  - Defines
    - Admission policy
    - School development plan and school discipline policies.
  - Selects teachers
  - Manages its own budget and timetable.
  - Is a Body Corporate(can be sued, must have insurance)

- Most schools have a "patron"
  - Traditionally a church body.
  - Now often "trust bodies" or ETBs

Role of churches

▶ Church schools are often public schools
  ◦ Most schools were initially established by a Church and then funded by the state.

▶ Most schools are under the patronage of a church
  ◦ For historical reasons, different Christian denominations went to different schools.
  ◦ The role of the churches is declining (and controversial)
  ◦ The majority schools (Roman Catholic) accept non-Catholic students.
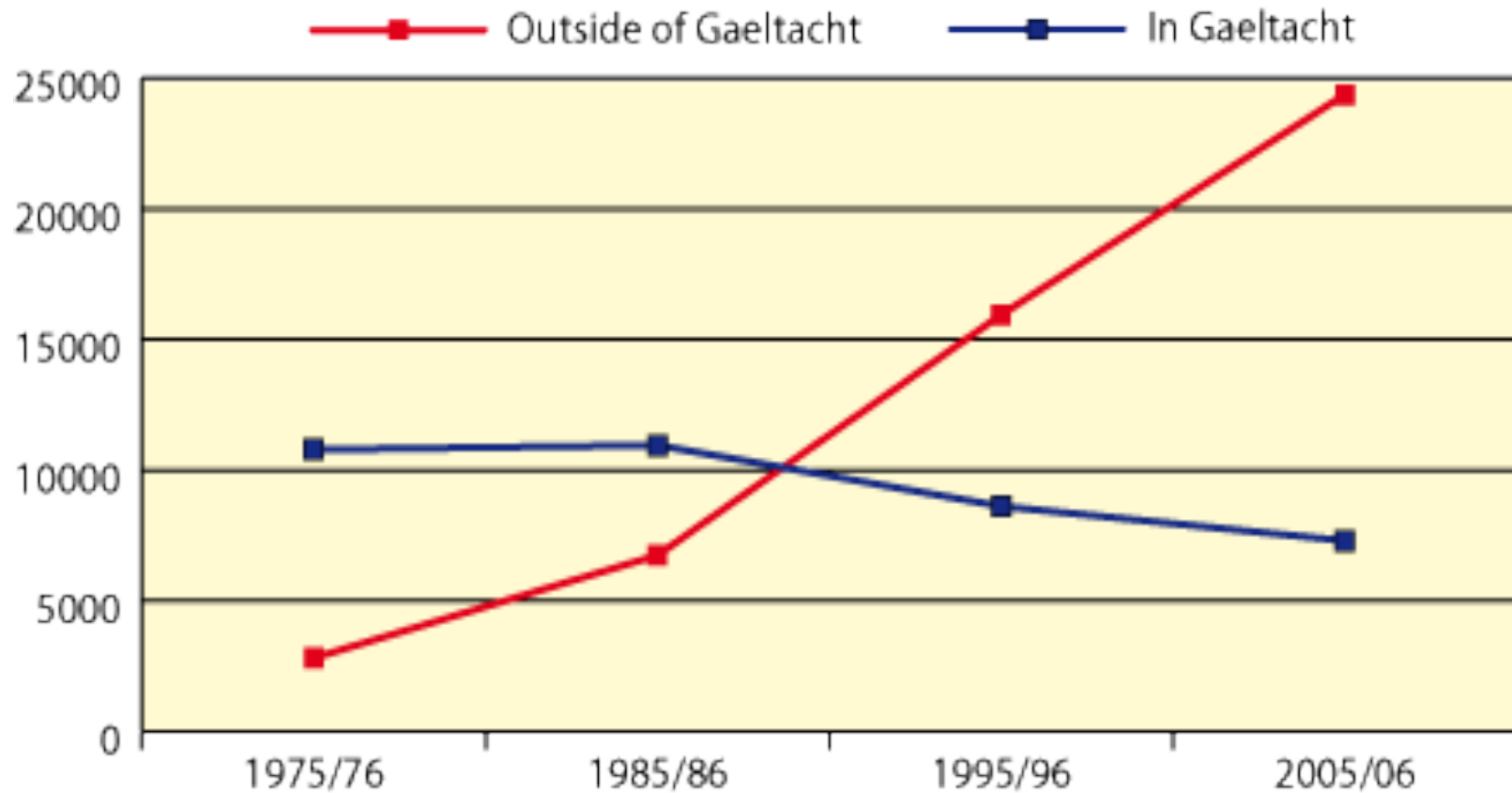
Irish primary schools 2018

Roman Catholic	2,785 – 90% of students
Church of Ireland	174
Multidenominational	115
Interdenominational	17
Presbyterian	15
Muslim	2
Methodist	1
Jewish	1
Methodist	1
Quaker	1
Total	**3.111**

Private schools

- There are a small number of private schools
  - These charge fees.
  - But also get state funds – teachers are paid by the state, but not the other costs.
  - About 47 private schools, less than 2% of total.

- Results
  - Over-represented in access to higher education
  - But statistically no better than other schools, but take in better performing students.
  - A way for parents to give their children an advantage?

Irish language schools
Enrolment in Irish medium schools.

Legend: Outside of Gaeltacht (red), In Gaeltacht (blue)

Chart: Enrolment values from 0 to 25000 across years 1975/76, 1985/86, 1995/96, 2005/06.

In 2018 there are 147 mainstream schools outside the Gaeltacht and 101 inside the Gaeltacht with 44,555 students in all Irish schools

Transition Year

- One year, between the junior and senior secondary cycles (age 15-16)

- In-school,
    - Not focussed on the formal curriculum
    - Wide range of educational activities
    - Curriculum sampling, projects, work experience.

- Impact
    - About 55% participate
    - Builds confidence, maturity
    - Contrast with the exam driven approach.

Literacy and numeracy 2010-present

A Joint Report by the Education and Training Inspectorate and the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate on Promoting and Improving Literacy in Post-Primary Schools

A Joint Report by the Education and Training Inspectorate and the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate on Promoting and Improving Numeracy in Post-Primary Schools

April 2015

REVIEW OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL REPORTS ON LITERACY AND NUMERACY

NATIONAL STRATEGY: LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR LEARNING AND LIFE 2011-2020
Interim Review: 2011 – 2016
New Targets: 2017 – 2020

PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES

TEACHING

LEADERSHIP

CURRICULUM

TACKLING EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

March 2017

LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR LEARNING AND LIFE

The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020

Literacy and Numeracy Forum – October 2018

- The forum aims
  - celebrate exemplars of quality, excellence and innovation in Literacy and Numeracy in the Irish school system

  - capture the voices of learners as to their reflections on the literacy and numeracy competence and knowledge

  - strive for excellence - providing curricula and learning outcomes appropriate for current and predicted future skills requirements and to

  - highlight the work of our education partners and industry to improve literacy and numeracy skills

Some things that have worked at school level

- having literacy and numeracy as a major strand in the school development plan;

- raising the profile of literacy and numeracy amongst all members of the school community;

- focusing on literacy and numeracy as part of the school self-evaluation process; and

- having regular meetings at which literacy and numeracy is at the core of the school's improvement and raising achievement agendas.

Lower Secondary Education Reforms

Key Skills – Lisbon Agenda 2000

2015

2006

KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING
European Reference Framework

2007

KEY SKILLS OF JUNIOR CYCLE

SENIOR CYCLE
KEY SKILLS FRAMEWORK

Curriculum as Product….

- Standardization
- Rote learning & memorization
- High Stakes Exams
- Tracking
- Accountability
- Linearity
- Evidence based
- Deterministic

Irish classroom 1920's…..

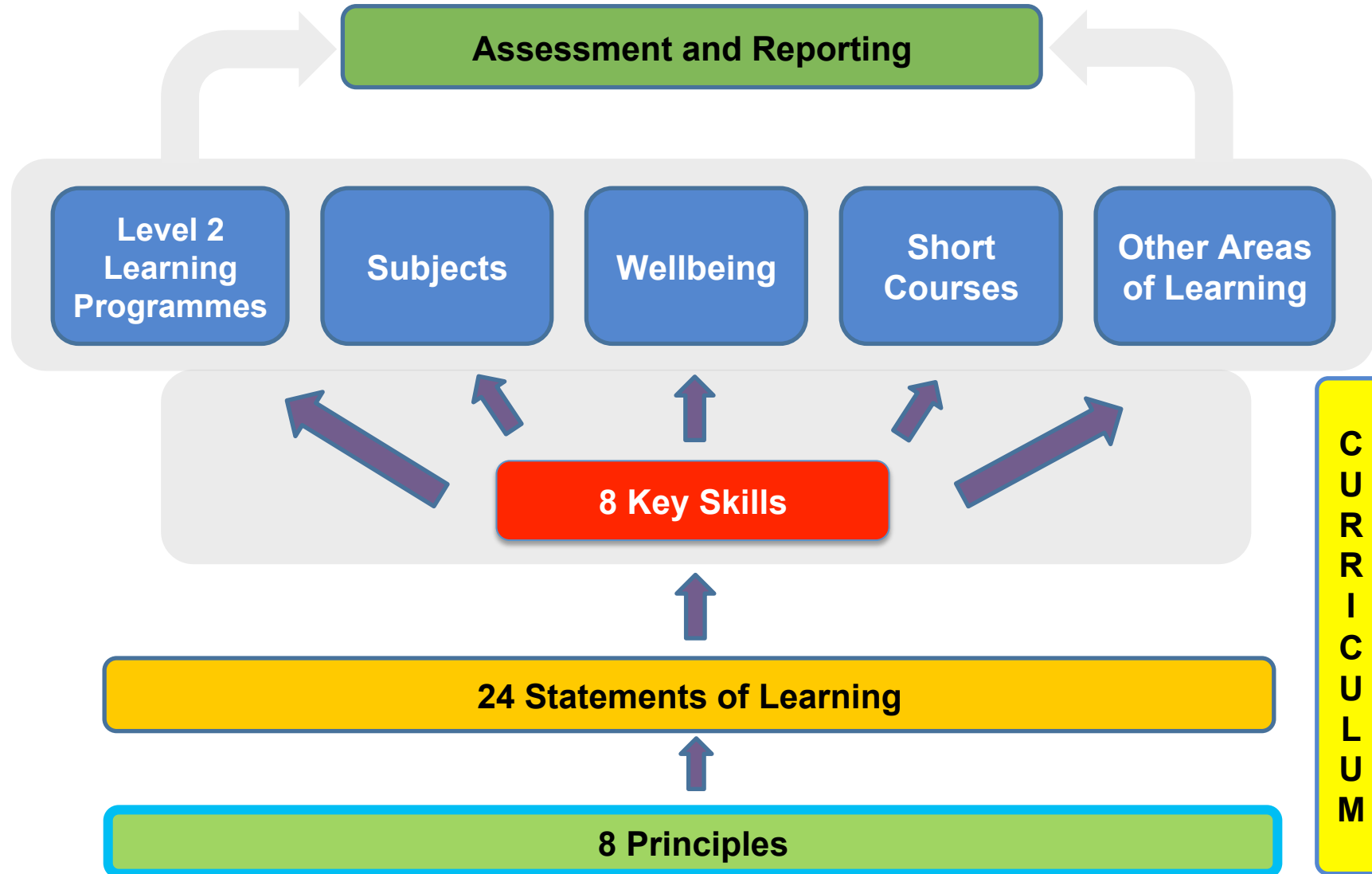Irish classroom 2016………..

What is the purpose of education in Junior Cycle?

- Help students become better learners and develop a love of learning

- Provide a solid foundation for further study

- To develop skills for learning and life

- To support learning through improved reporting to both students and parents

Research informed us:
- Exam dominated
- Dynamic of "giving out" and "acting up".
- Disengagement in 2nd Year
- Self-confidence dis-improved
- Streaming showed very significant consequences for all
- Stress levels high – mental health
- Self-image
- Lack of competence development
- Rote learning

Structure of the Junior Cycle

Assessment and Reporting

Level 2 Learning Programmes	Subjects	Wellbeing	Short Courses	Other Areas of Learning

8 Key Skills

24 Statements of Learning

8 Principles

CURRICULUM

The Principles of Junior Cycle Education

- Learning to Learn
- Choice and Flexibility
- Quality
- Creativity and Innovation
- Engagement and Participation
- Continuity and Development
- Inclusive Education
- Wellbeing

Phased implementation

Sept 2016

English
Science
Business Studies

Sept 2017

English
Science
Business Studies
Irish
Art, Craft & Design
Modern Languages

Wellbeing

Sept 2018

English
Science
Business Studies
Irish
Art, Craft & Design
Modern Languages
Maths
History
Geography
Music
Home Economics

Wellbeing

Subjects in the Curriculum:

All Students MUST:

Essential Learning:
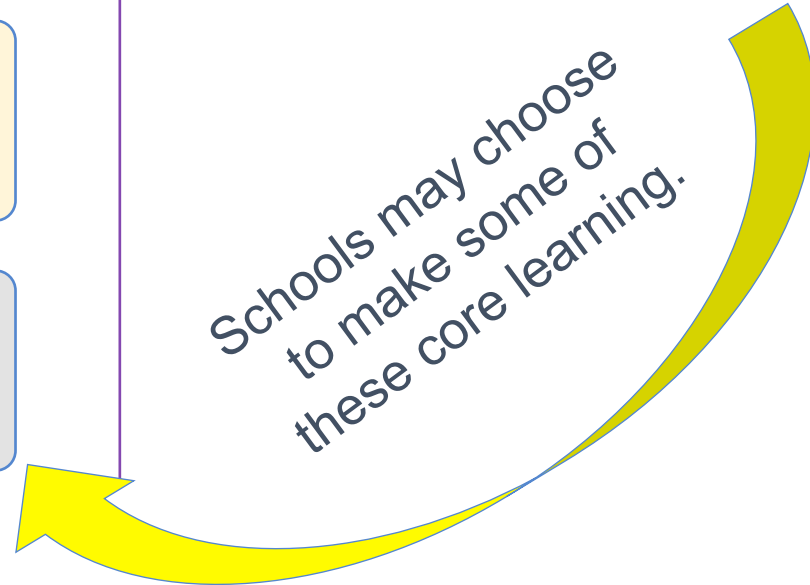
- English
- Irish
- Maths

18 Other Subjects

Schools may choose to make some of these core learning.

Sept 2019

All subjects from 2018 plus

Materials Technology Wood
Metalwork
Technology
Technical Graphics
Religious Education
Jewish Studies
Classics

Wellbeing

Furthermore:

- Other Areas of Learning will also be reported on

- Schools can offer the **Level 2 Learning Programme**

- Schools can offer Short Courses

Framework for Junior Cycle 2015

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Key Messages of Framework for Junior Cycle 2015

Flexible programme for student learning

Balance between knowledge and skills

Dual approach to assessment

Reporting a broader picture of learning

Student wellbeing is central to the Framework

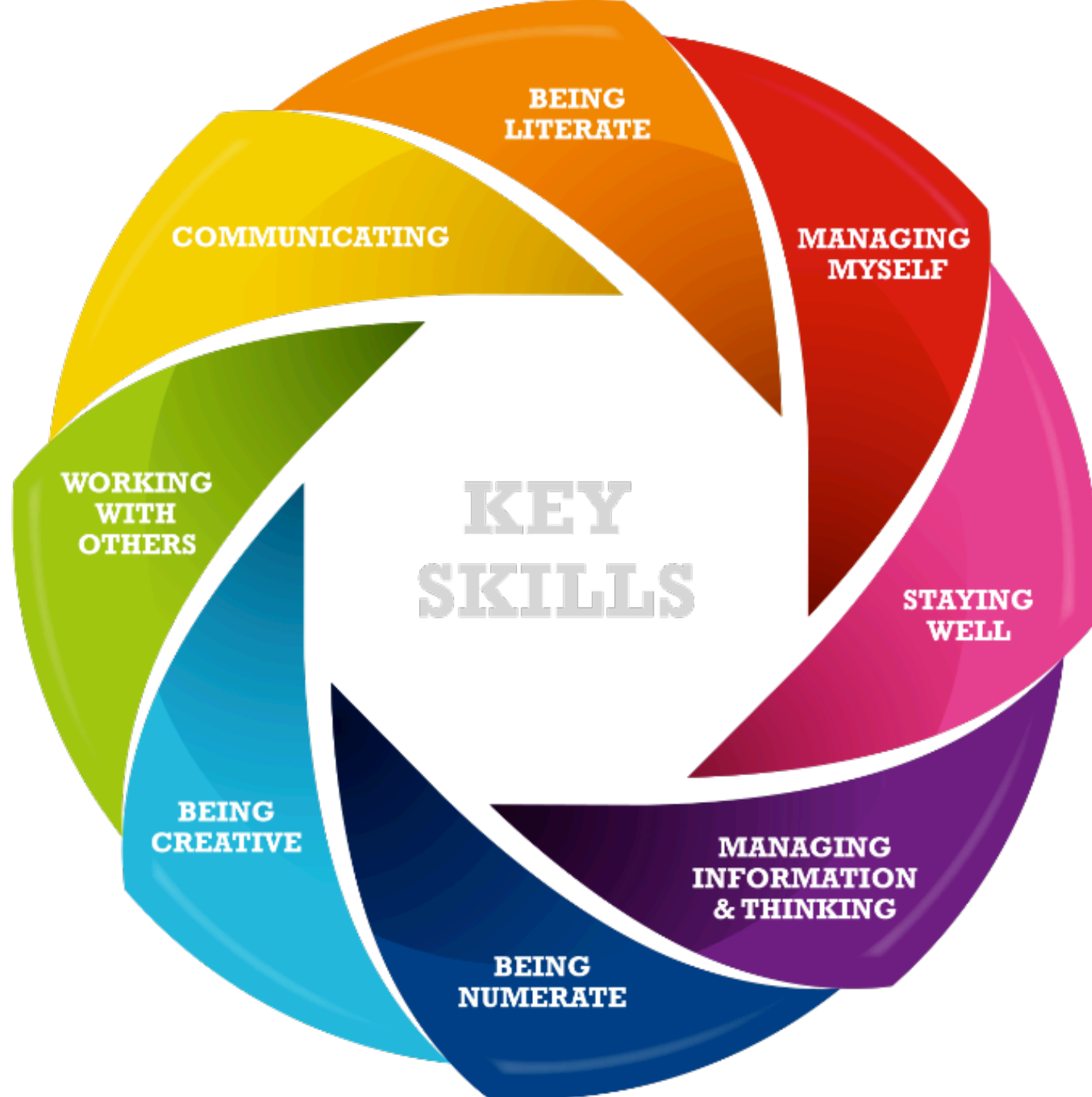**Supporting continuity and learning - building on primary school**

KEY SKILLS

BEING LITERATE

MANAGING MYSELF

STAYING WELL

MANAGING INFORMATION & THINKING

BEING NUMERATE

BEING CREATIVE

WORKING WITH OTHERS

COMMUNICATING

Short Courses

Level 3

Civic, Social & Political Education

Social Personal Health Education

Physical Education

Coding

Philosophy

Digital Media Literacy

Chinese Language and Culture

Artistic Performance

Level 2

A Personal Project: Caring for Animals

Exploring Forensic Science

Enterprise in Animation

Short Course
A Personal Project:
Caring for Animals
Level 2

Short Course
Coding

Short Course
Civic, Social &
Political Education
A Citizenship Course

Specification for Junior Cycle

Wellbeing

300 & moving to 400 hours over 3 years

- Physical Education

- Social, Personal and Health Education (including Relationship and Sexuality Education)

- Civic, Social and Political Education

- Guidance

Why does wellbeing matter?

Student wellbeing is present when the students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community.

Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (2017)

Building a shared understanding of wellbeing

It is important that the whole school community builds and shares a common understanding of wellbeing, especially of what we mean when we talk about student wellbeing

Wellbeing for **All**

INDICATORS OF WELLBEING

ACTIVE
- Am I a confident and skilled participant in physical activity?
- How physically active am I?

RESPONSIBLE
- Do I take action to protect and promote my wellbeing and that of others?
- Do I make healthy eating choices?
- Do I know where my safety is at risk

CONNECTED
- Do I feel connected to my school, my friends, my community and the wider world?
- Do I appreciate that my actions and interactions impact on my own wellbeing and that of others, in local and global contexts?

RESILIENT
- Do I believe that I have the coping skills to deal with life's challenges?
- Do I know where I can go for help?
- Do I believe that with effort I can achieve?

RESPECTED
- Do I feel that I am listened to and valued?
- Do I have positive relationships with my friends, my peers and my teachers?

  Do I show care and respect for others?

AWARE
- Am I aware of my thoughts, feelings and behaviours and can I make sense of them?
- Am I aware of what my personal values are and do I think through my decisions?
- Do I understand what helps me to learn and howI can improve?

Who are L2LPs designed for?

Level 2 Learning
Programmes
Guidelines for Teachers

Learners with a low mild to high moderate learning disability

The special needs of this child is such as **to prevent him from accessing some or all of the subjects and short courses** on offer at junior cycle.

A Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015

What are Level 2 Learning Programmes?

- There are 5 Priority Learning Units (PLUs)

- Each PLU focuses on developing the social, personal and pre-vocational skills that prepare students for further study, for work and for life

| Communication and Literacy |
| Numeracy |
| Personal Care |
| Living in the Community |
| Preparing for Work |
| Plus 2 Short Courses |

One Subject's Journey

Transition from Primary School

1 First Year

Ongoing Assessment

2 Second Year

Check In 2nd Year
Classroom-Based Assessment

3 Third Year

Ongoing Assessment

Check In 3rd Year
Classroom-Based Assessment

Check In
Final Assessment
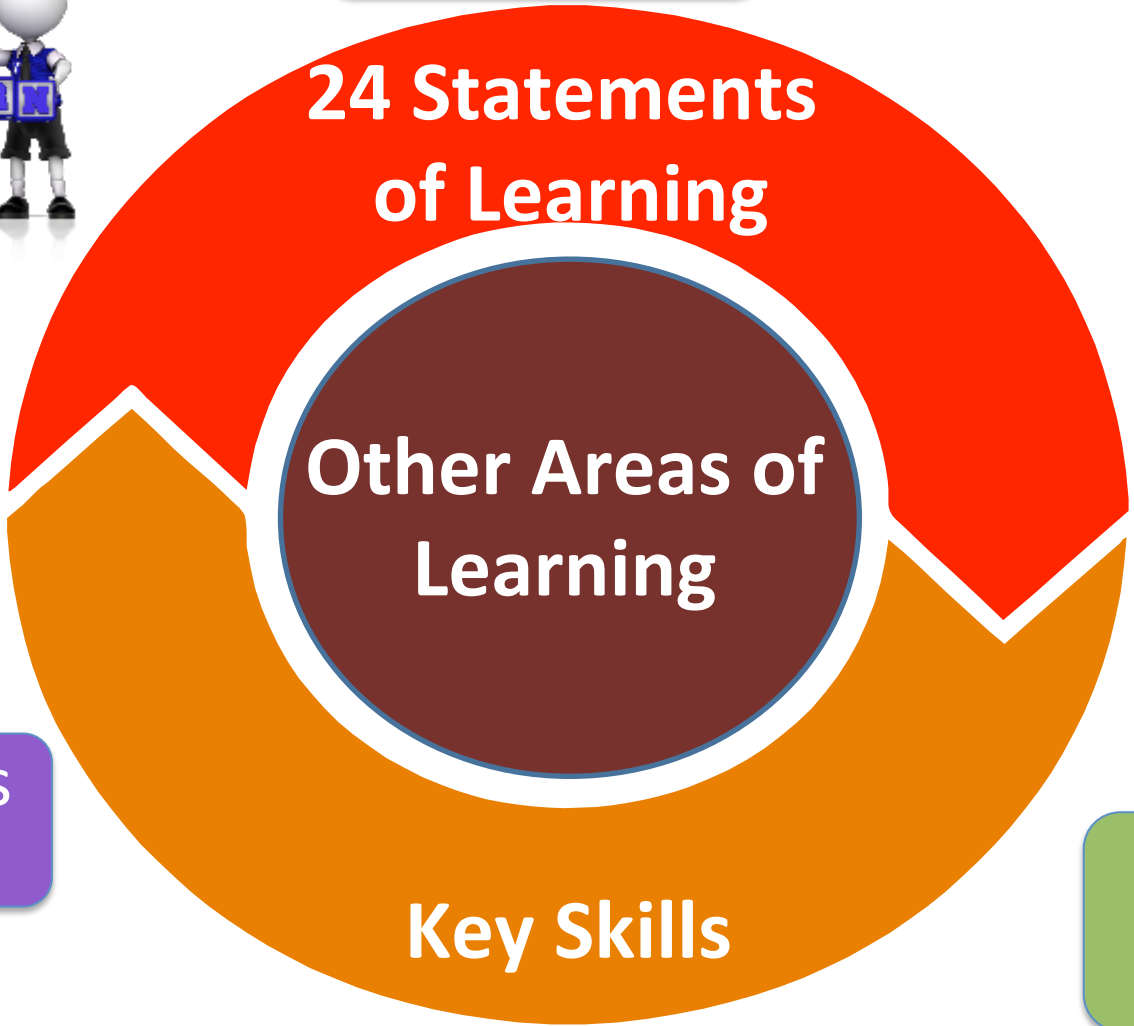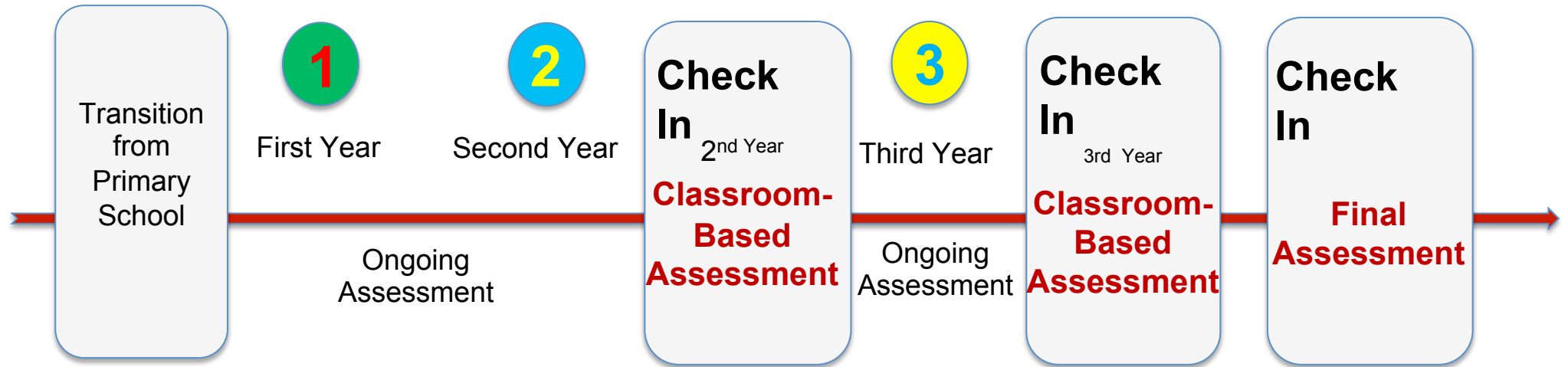
Ongoing assessment that supports student learning

Eight general issues

- epistemological (what should count as knowledge?),
- political (who shall control the selection and distribution of knowledge),
- economic (how is the control of knowledge linked to the existing and unequal distribution of power, goods, and services in society?),
- ideological (what knowledge is of most worth?),
- technical (how shall curricular knowledge be made accessible to students?),
- aesthetic (how do we act "artfully" as designers?),
- ethical (how shall we treat others responsibly and justly in education?),
- and historical (what traditions in the field already exist to help us answer these questions?)

(Beyer and Apple 1988, p. 5)

Some final comments

School education is one of the most important and contested policy areas for governments across the world.

Evidence of relative performance internationally has become a key driver of policy.

Human capital in the form of a highly educated population is seen as a key determinant of social justice and economic success.

The pace and character of social, economic and technological change has profound implications for how we conceive education in the future.

Discussion
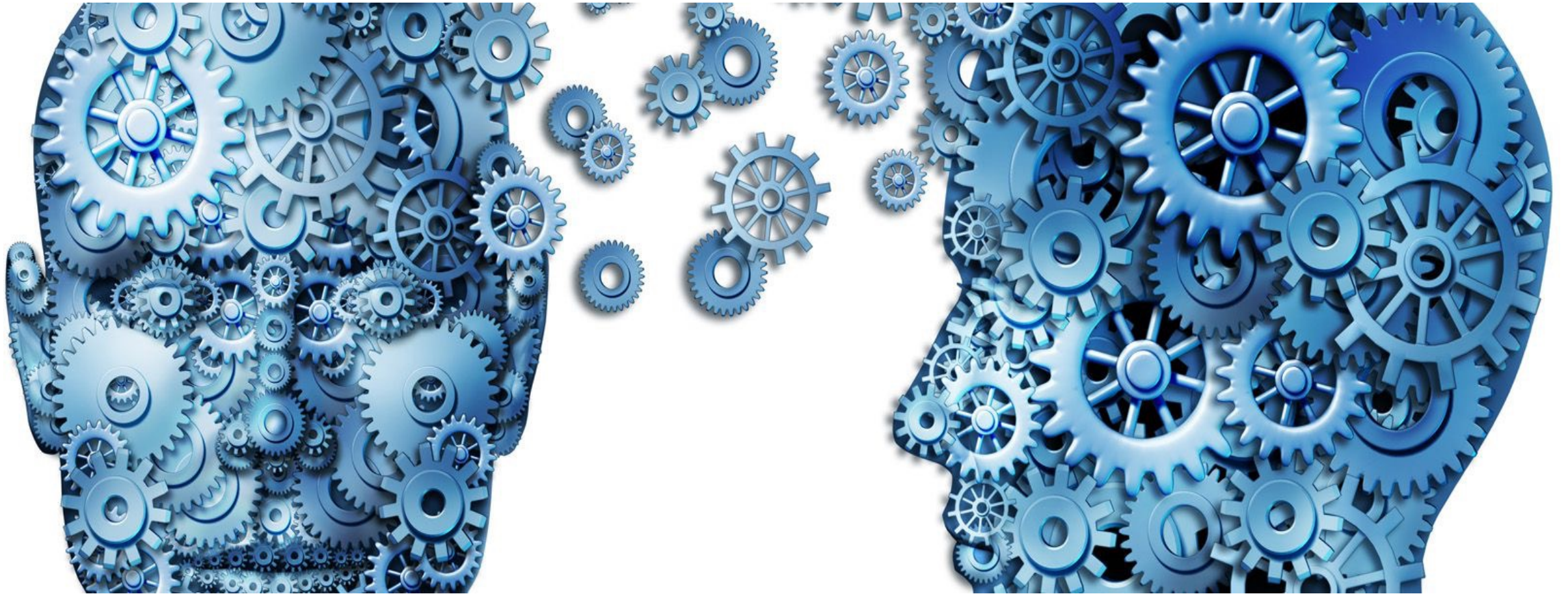
Websites to consult

- www.ncca.ie for all curriculum documents and examples of assessment materials

- www.des.ie for Department of Education

- www.teachingcouncil.ie For information on teacher registration

- https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Evaluation-Reports-Guidelines/School-Self-Evaluation-Guidelines-2016-2020-Post-Primary.pdf school self evaluation guidelines

Features of Quality - EEI

Key Features of Quality in support of student and teacher judgement for the Extended Experimental Investigation are described here. The Features of Quality are the criteria used to assess the student work as best fitting one of the four Descriptors.

	Exceptional	Above Expectations	In Line with Expectations	Yet to Meet Expectations
Investigating	• Forms a testable hypothesis or prediction with justification • Describes considerations related to reliability and fairness • Safely assembles, and accurately uses, appropriate equipment and technologies to collect and record reliable data • Describes the method used to accurately collect and record good quality, reliable data in a manner that could be easily repeated • Records a sufficient amount of good quality data	• Forms a testable hypothesis or prediction with justification • Identifies the variable to be measured and the variable to be changed • Safely uses appropriate equipment • Describes the method and equipment used to collect and record data • Records a sufficient amount of good quality data	• With limited guidance, forms a testable hypothesis/prediction with justification • Safely uses appropriate equipment • Describes the method used to collect data - some of the steps are understandable but lack some detail • Records data collected	• Uses a given investigation question • Is directed in using equipment to collect and record data • Data collection method described is not repeatable
Communicating	• Presents data in the most appropriate way using relevant scientific terminology and informative representations; calculations, if any, are performed to a high degree of accuracy • Describes the relationships between the variables • Shows examples of creativity in presentation or uses an innovative approach that truly enhances the work	• Displays data neatly and accurately, using relevant scientific terminology and informative representations; calculations, if any, are performed to a high degree of accuracy • Describes the relationships between the variables • Uses a unique approach that truly enhances the work	• Displays data on simple tables, charts or graphs, allowing for some errors in scaling or plotting • Describes the relationships between the variables • Was creative at times; thoughtfully presented	• Displays data on incomplete tables, charts or graphs, allowing for some errors in scaling or plotting • Restates given information and data
Knowledge & Understanding	• Provides a comprehensive and logically-sequenced conclusion supported by the data; identifies and explains any anomalous data • Uses relevant science knowledge to assess and describe whether the hypothesis has/has not been supported • Describes in detail the strengths and weaknesses of their own investigations, including appropriate improvements and or refinements, or explains fully why no further improvements could reasonably be achieved	• Draws a conclusion consistent with the data, identifies any anomalous data • Uses relevant science knowledge to assess whether the hypothesis has/has not been supported by the conclusion • Identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the investigation and suggests appropriate improvements, or explains why the procedures were of sufficient quality	• Draws a conclusion and comments on whether the conclusion supports the hypothesis • Identifies some features of the investigation that could be improved and suggests improvements	• Draws a conclusion • Identifies a feature of the investigation that could be improved

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