



Department of  
**Education**

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AN RÓINN

**Oideachais**

MÁNNYSTRIE D

**Lear**

30 September 2008

Dear colleague

## **CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS**

We are writing to you about the arrangements for managing the programme for implementing the revised curriculum and how we are approaching the associated inspection arrangements. We are very conscious of the hard work that is being done in schools to embed the revised curriculum. We developed that curriculum in close co-operation with teachers, and teachers' commitment to this revised approach is very evident. We want to thank you for all the work you are taking forward.

A key issue that has been raised is the need for clear communications from the Department and the other organisations involved in this area about what is expected of teachers. This letter is intended to make sure that school principals and their staff are kept informed directly about the latest developments. It complements the more detailed leaflet that is being issued to parents and the details about the curriculum, assessment and reporting arrangements for the 2008/09 school year, contained in the Department's recent circular.

The Minister of Education, Caitríona Ruane, has made clear that, in the interests of all our young people, we must keep the momentum of curriculum implementation going. The timetable for the roll-out therefore remains as previously communicated – from this term the statutory implementation of the revised curriculum will apply for Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 in primary and for Years 8, 9, 11 and 12 in post-primary schools.

Training and support will continue to be provided to schools as part of the targeted programme of revised curriculum training, sequenced in line with the statutory implementation timescales for principals and teachers, and building on the feedback that you have provided. Support will also be available from ELB Curriculum Advisory and

Support Officers in the course of their normal responsibilities. The provision of the 5 + 5 professional development days will continue in the 2008/09 and 2009/10 school years to support principals in leading the implementation within their school.

Over the implementation period, and consistent with the maintenance of high standards in learning and teaching, the approach of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will focus on the identification of best practice in schools. Inspectors will encourage teachers and report good or excellent practice in relation to the implementation of the revised curriculum. In these ways, ETI will work to support schools and to draw effective practice to the attention of a wider audience. Over the same period, ETI will monitor and report on the quality of support provided for schools as they work to implement successfully the revised curriculum.

This does not mean that schools can take little or no action. The Department and ETI recognise that teachers will need time to plan and amend their classroom practice as necessary to deliver the revised curriculum. Our joint focus during this time is on supporting principals/ teachers, and on ensuring that every child receives the best education, and achieves standards in line with their potential.

As the table below shows, the revised curriculum will be in place across Years 1 -12 by September 2010. We recognise, though, that it will take longer for progress in planning and teaching practice to be fully embedded. We therefore believe that inspection arrangements should reflect this up until June 2012 when all existing teachers should, in normal circumstances, have had at least three years of experience of implementation. We expect, therefore, to see a full implementation of the revised curriculum, with its associated assessment and reporting arrangements by June 2012. The ETI will continue to evaluate the support programme for principals and teachers and this feedback will inform the ongoing development of the programme.

**Phases of implementation:**

| Year Groups                          | Yrs 1, 5, 8 and 11 | Yrs 2, 6, 9 and 12 | Yrs 3, 4, 7 and 10 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Statutory implementation commences   | September 2007     | September 2008     | September 2009     |
| Inspection approaches run through to | June 2010          | June 2011          | June 2012          |

The Minister, Department and ETI recognise the challenges schools face and will continue to support principals and teachers in implementing the revised curriculum and associated assessment and reporting arrangements.

The Minister has made proposals about how children should transfer from primary to post-primary schools from 2009/10 onwards. This is a priority for the Minister and you will receive information about this in time for transfer 2010. However, we can be clear that neither InCAS nor the annual report to parents (pupil profile) are alternative tools for selection. The Minister is also clear that she does not want any transfer arrangements to impact negatively on the revised curriculum nor teachers to be teaching to a test. All schools will be delivering the revised curriculum and associated assessment and reporting arrangements.

In terms of further communication, the Department is issuing a leaflet to parents setting out information about curriculum, assessment and reporting. Additionally, information continues to be made available through the Department's website at: [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk) and through the revised curriculum website at: [www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk).

In due course, the Partnership Management Board will make available a Big Training Calendar through the revised curriculum website, which will set out training events across the range of education partners to assist principals and teachers in their planning.

Finally, we reiterate our appreciation of the good work which is ongoing in schools as we move through this implementation. We all have a part to play in delivering the revised curriculum, assessment and reporting arrangements for the benefit of the children and young people in our classrooms. We wish you well at the start of the new school year as you prepare to play your part, with us, in raising standards in our schools.

Yours sincerely



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Schools and Youth Policy Group



**Stanley Goudie**  
Chief Inspector