



Oide

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Supporting the Professional  
Learning of School Leaders  
and Teachers

# Fostering an Inclusive School Culture

## In Primary Schools

# Welcome and Introductions



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Throughout this session we will reflect on the inclusion of all learners by:

- sharing and acknowledging the positive work of school
- promoting a shared ownership of a culture of belonging
- reflecting on factors external to our school context including implicit bias that influence a learner's sense of belonging



At your table group, introduce yourself and your school context



# Our Shared Expectations for Today

## **A Climate of Support:**

Sharing evidence of good practice, acknowledging the diversity of school contexts and experience

## **Proactive and Positive:**

Affirming the potential for schools to promote improved outcomes and experiences for learners

## **Promoting Equal Engagement:**

Encouraging participation, asking questions and creating a safe, respectful and confidential space

## **Focused:**

Maintaining a positive learning environment, focused on the fostering of equity, equality and belonging for learners



# Attendance

<https://tinyurl.com/FOSIC2526>





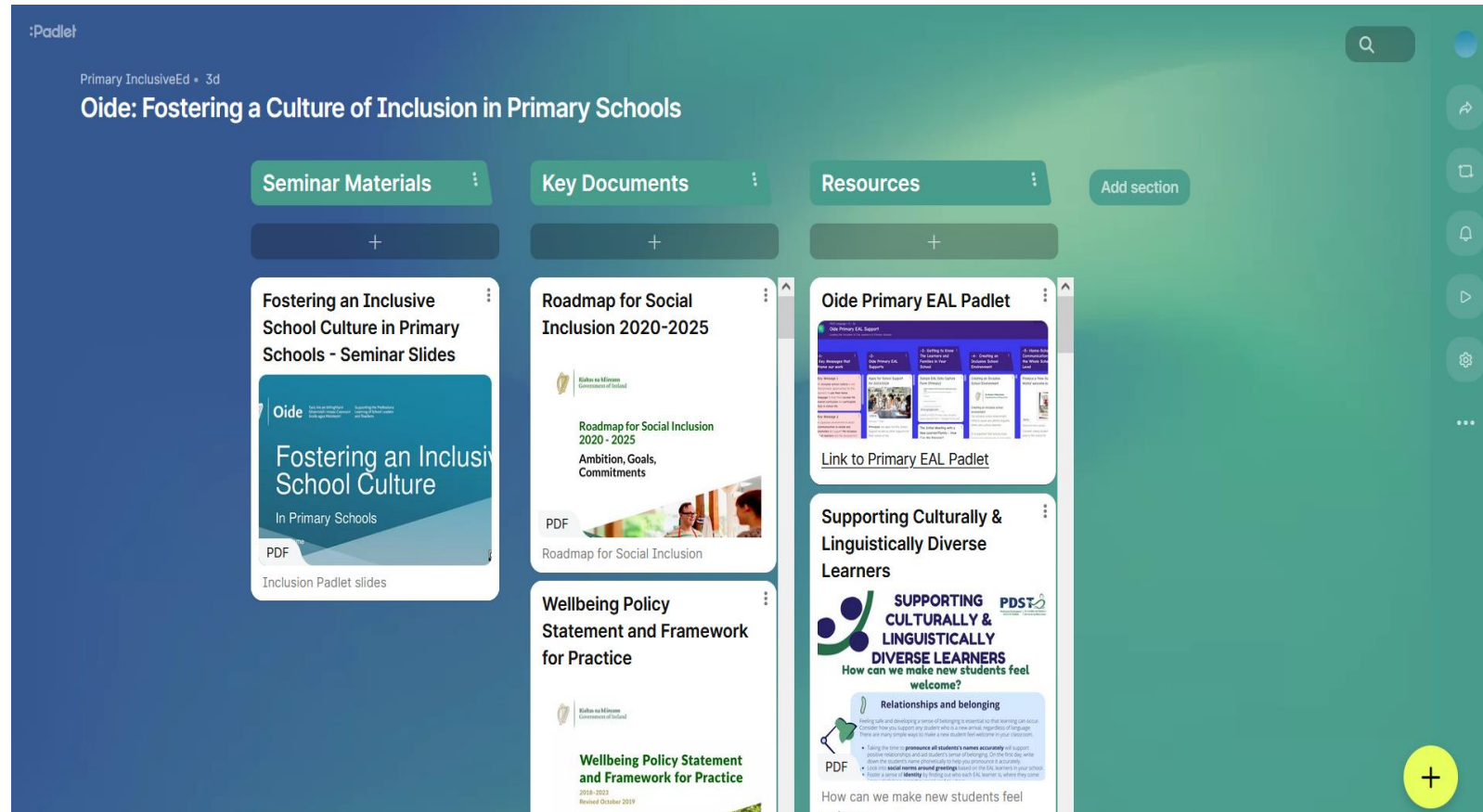
# Seminar Overview

<b>Session 1</b> 09:30 - 11:00	Understanding Inclusion
<b>Tea/Coffee</b> 11:00 - 11:15	
<b>Session 2</b> 11:15 - 13:00	Promoting a Sense of Belonging for all Learners Inclusive Pedagogical Approaches
<b>Lunch</b> 13:00 - 14:00	
<b>Session 3</b> 14:00 - 15:30	Building Relationships and Partnerships Whole School Approach and Leadership of an Inclusive School

# Seminar Resources and Supports



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**Oide.ie - Primary - Inclusive Education - DEIS & Social Inclusion - Professional Learning Materials**

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## Session 1

### Understanding Inclusion





# Session 1

By the end of this session participants will have begun to:

- develop their understanding of an inclusive school culture
- reflect on the inclusivity of their own school culture.





# Developing an Understanding of Inclusion

**What words or phrases  
come to mind when you  
think of the word inclusion  
in the context of schools?**

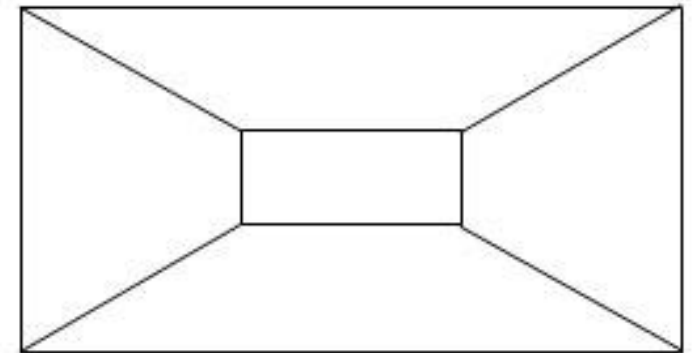
# Towards a Shared Understanding of Inclusion



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Working in groups of 4:

1. Each person selects a different inclusion statement from the centre of the table.
2. On your section of the placemat record the salient words in relation to your definition/reference.
3. In the centre of the placemat, record the common phrases/words/ideas to agree your groups shared understanding of inclusion.



# Diversity



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*Diversity is about all the ways in which people differ, and how they live their lives as individuals, within groups, and as part of a wider social group: for example, a person can be classified, or classify themselves, by their social class, gender, disability/ability, as a returned Irish emigrant, family status, as an inter-country adoptee, or from a different family structure, including foster care. They can be seen – or see themselves – as part of a minority group, a minority ethnic group or part of the majority/dominant group*

**Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter for Early Childhood Care and Education.**  
(Dept of Children and Youth Affairs, 2016, p. vi)

**Why do we need to consider diversity in the context of schools?**

**What are the opportunities for ALL learners when schools value diversity?**



# The Aims of Education

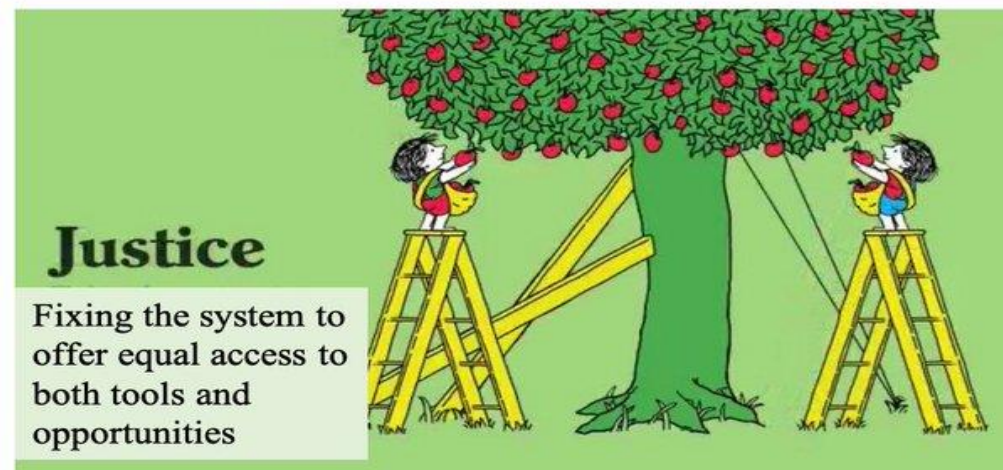
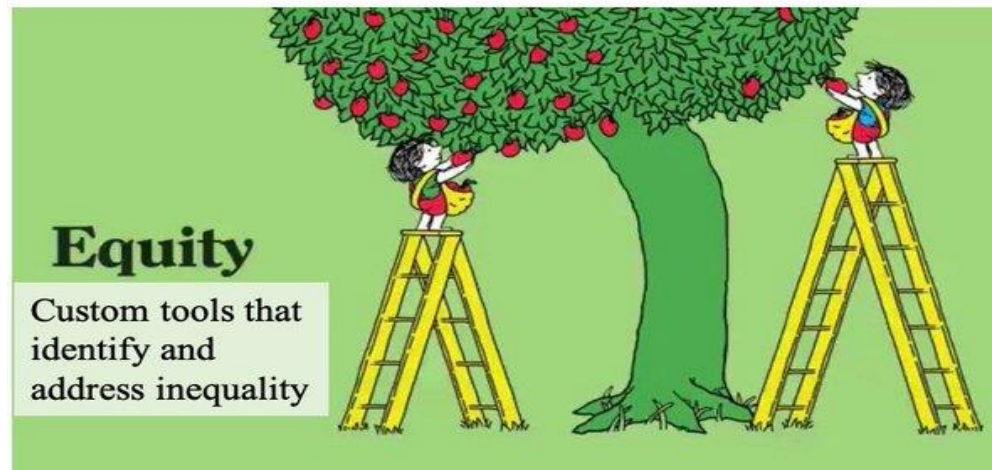
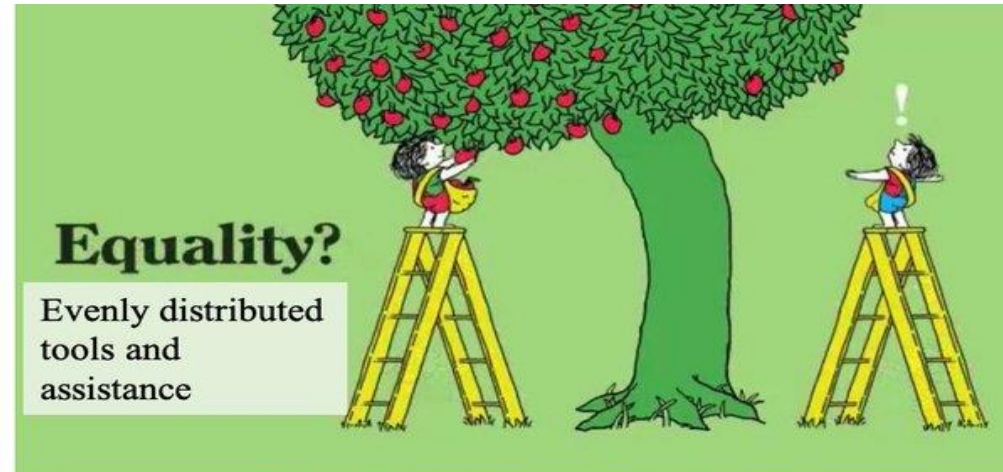
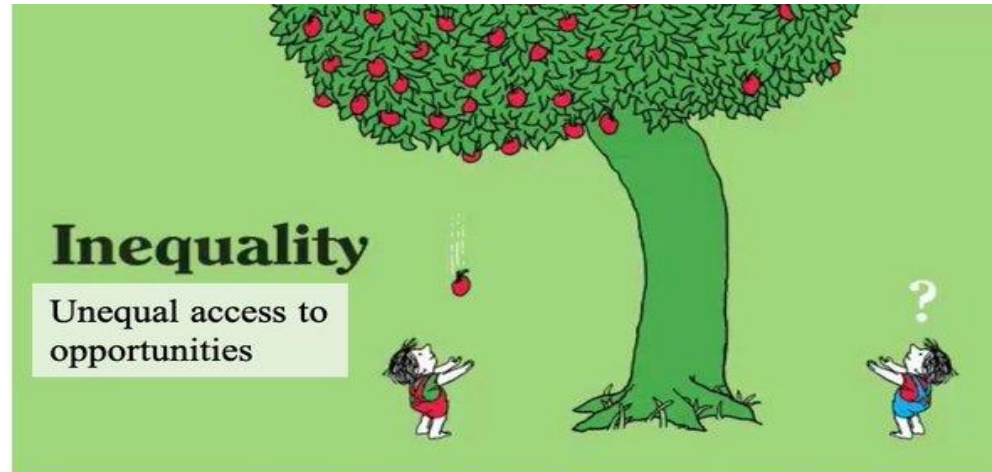
Article 29 of UNCRC states as one of the aims of education:

*"The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin."*

# Inequality, Equality, Equity and Justice



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# Inequality, Equality, Equity and Justice



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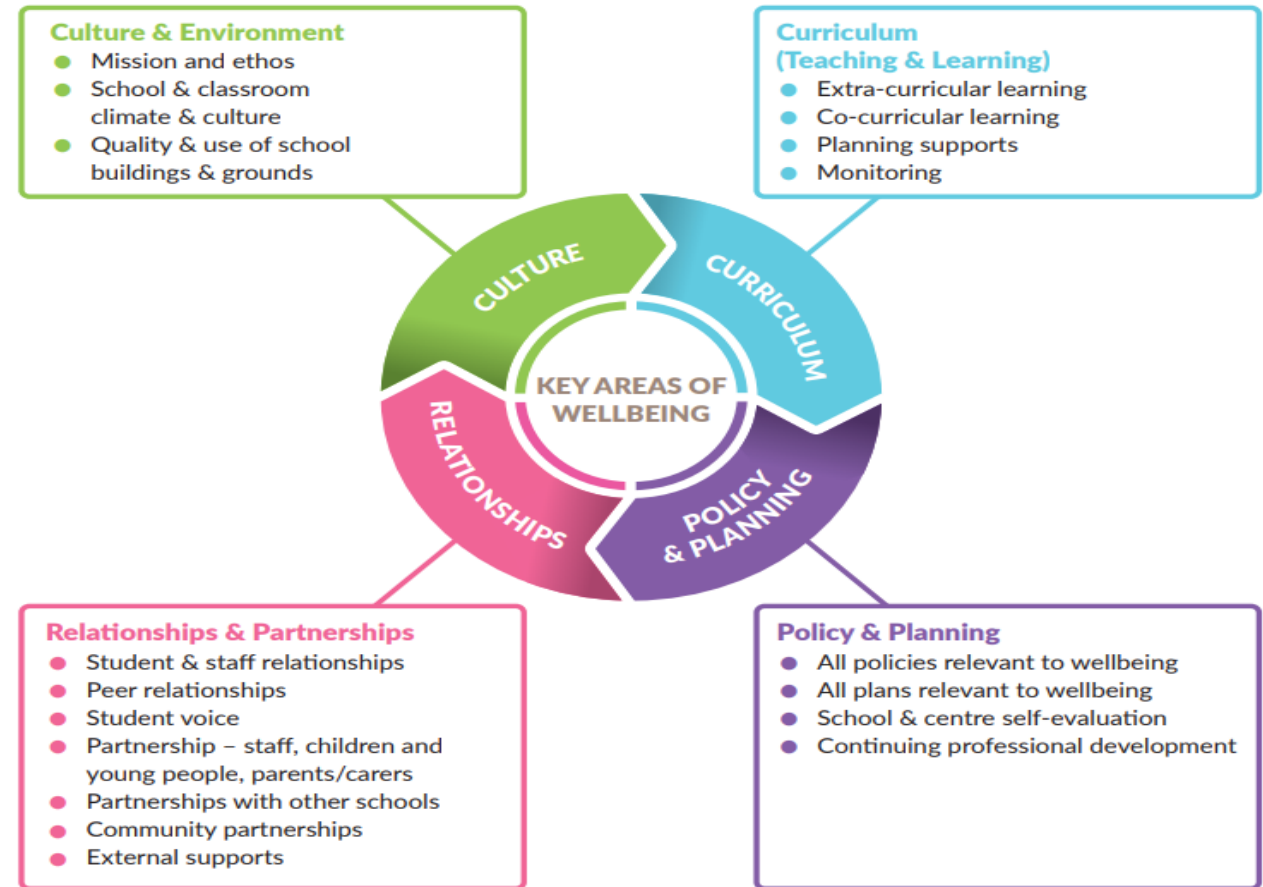


# Inclusion in Practice



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What should  
meaningful inclusion  
look like in schools?





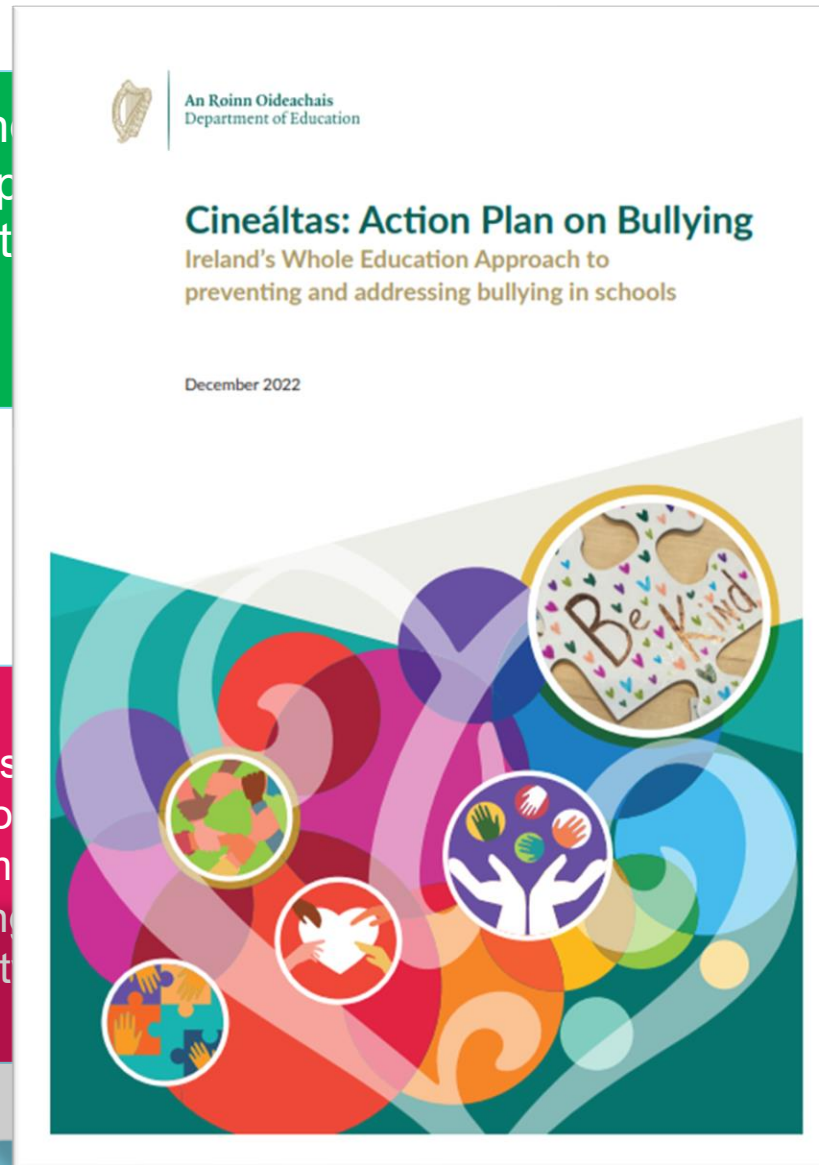
# Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying



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Creating a positive and inclusive school culture and environment provides a space where children, young people and staff experience a sense of belonging and are safe, connected and supported.

Promoting the development of the relationships and partnerships between children and young people, their families and the school community enhances our networks and understanding of each other's experiences in Irish society.



Inclusive and supportive curriculum for our children and young people with training and development for all school staff provides excellent support and opportunities for inclusive learning and empathy generation.

Effective and responsive policies and planning for children and young people, their families, education partners and key stakeholders are effective participants working together with government, acknowledges and enriches the role all play in preventing bullying in Irish schools.

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# Reflection on Inclusion

What are we doing as a whole school?

What am I doing in my classroom?





## Key Messages

Inclusive school cultures value learners as individuals and encourage them to achieve their potential.

Diverse school communities promote opportunities for all learners to develop skills necessary to participate actively in society.

School culture, relationships, partnerships, policy, planning and curriculum influence a learner's sense of belonging.

Fostering a culture of inclusion involves collaboration and partnership with staff, learners, parents/families and external agencies.

# Tea/Coffee Break



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## Session 2

Inclusive Education:

Promoting a Sense of  
Belonging for all Learners &  
Inclusive Pedagogical  
Practices



## Session 2

By the end of this session participants will have begun to:

- explore the influence of learner identity and belonging on the teaching, learning and assessment process in schools
- consider how inclusive pedagogical approaches enhance a learner's sense of belonging in school.



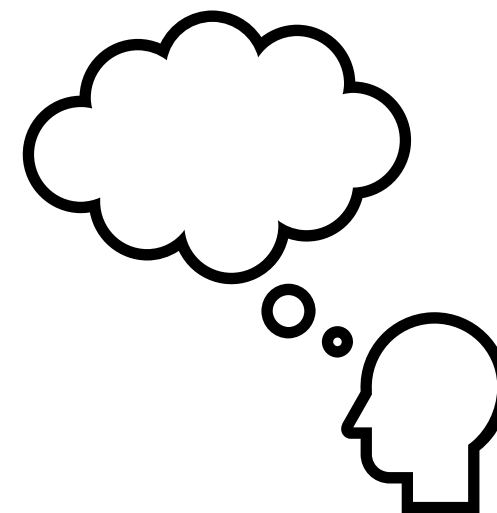
# Understanding Belonging

*"the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment"*

Goodenow (1993)

Think of a time when you had a strong sense of belonging.

What are the factors that contribute to your sense of belonging?

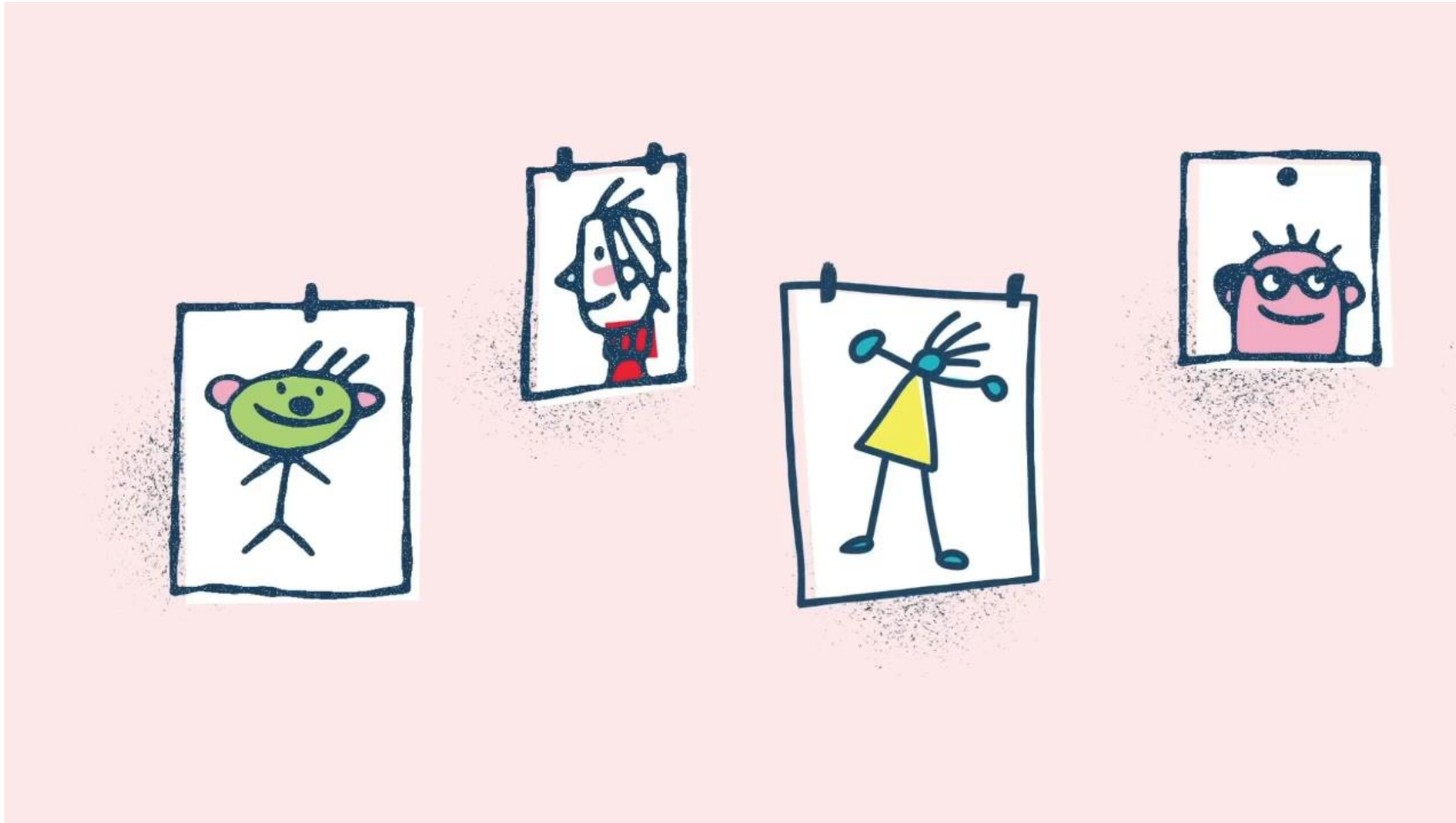




# Understanding Belonging



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# Children's School Lives

Children in primary schools most often feel happy, feel good about themselves, feel cared for, and feel safe.

Children of non-immigrant background are more likely to report higher levels of belonging than immigrant peers.

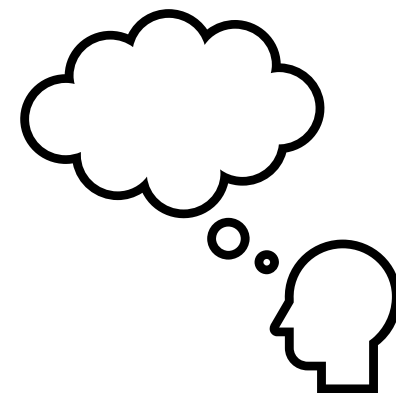
Boys more than girls tend to experience a stronger sense of social belonging in school, evident in making friends more easily, feeling like they belong and less inclined to be left out of things.

Friendships as a key source of happiness and support in school but also a source of stress; a quarter of older children reported being a victim of bullying at least once.



# Think, Pair, Share

- In twos or threes discuss one of the graphs on the table
- Discuss how belonging is experienced by different groups of children in this research

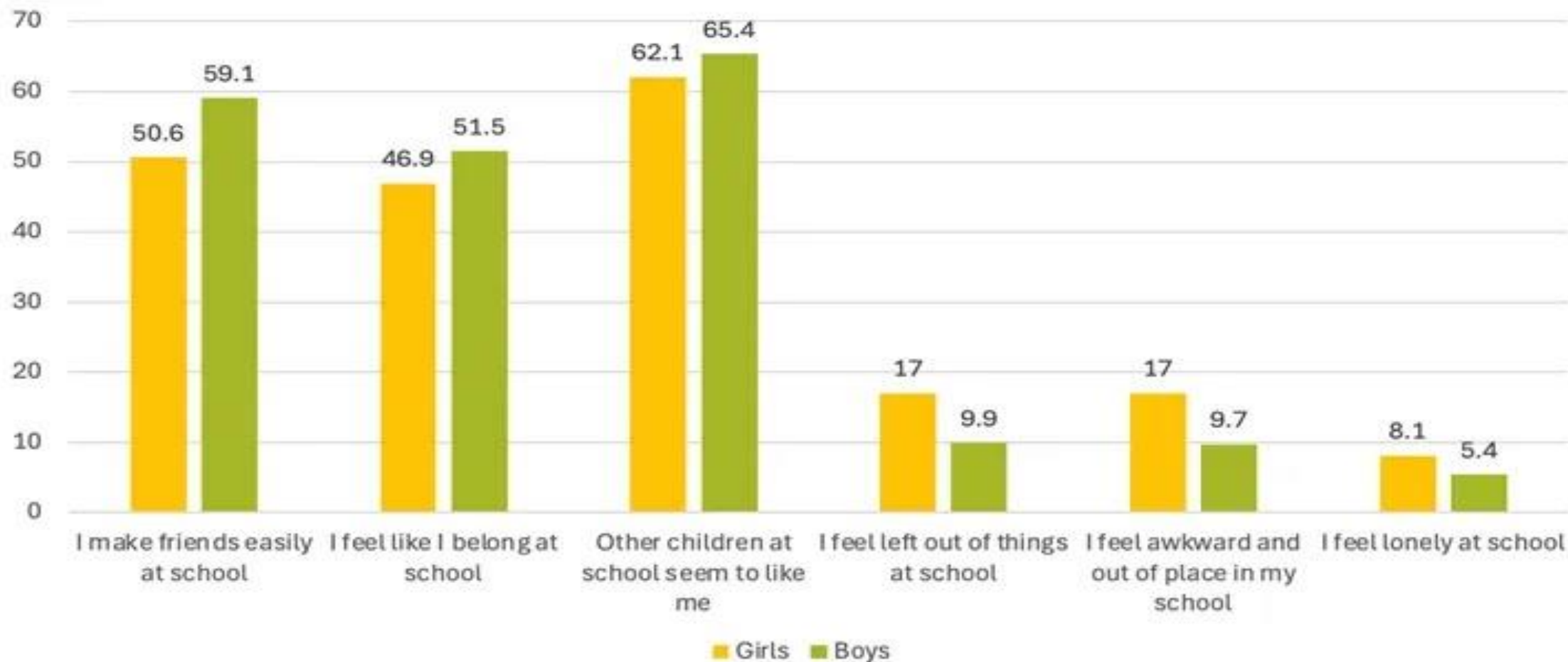


# Belonging/Gender

Cohort B (6th Class)



Oide

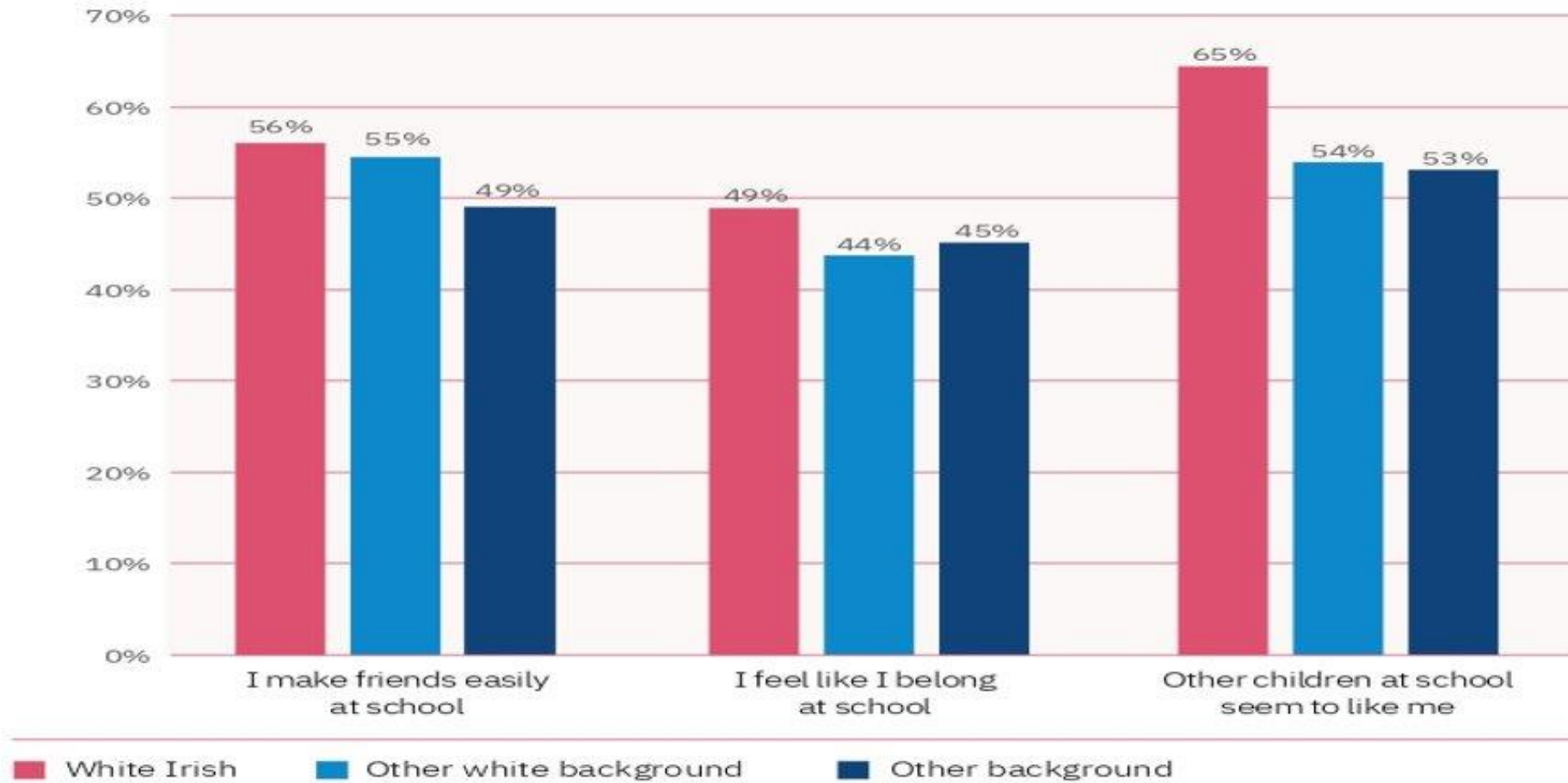


# Belonging/Ethnicity



Oide

## Cohort B (6th Class)

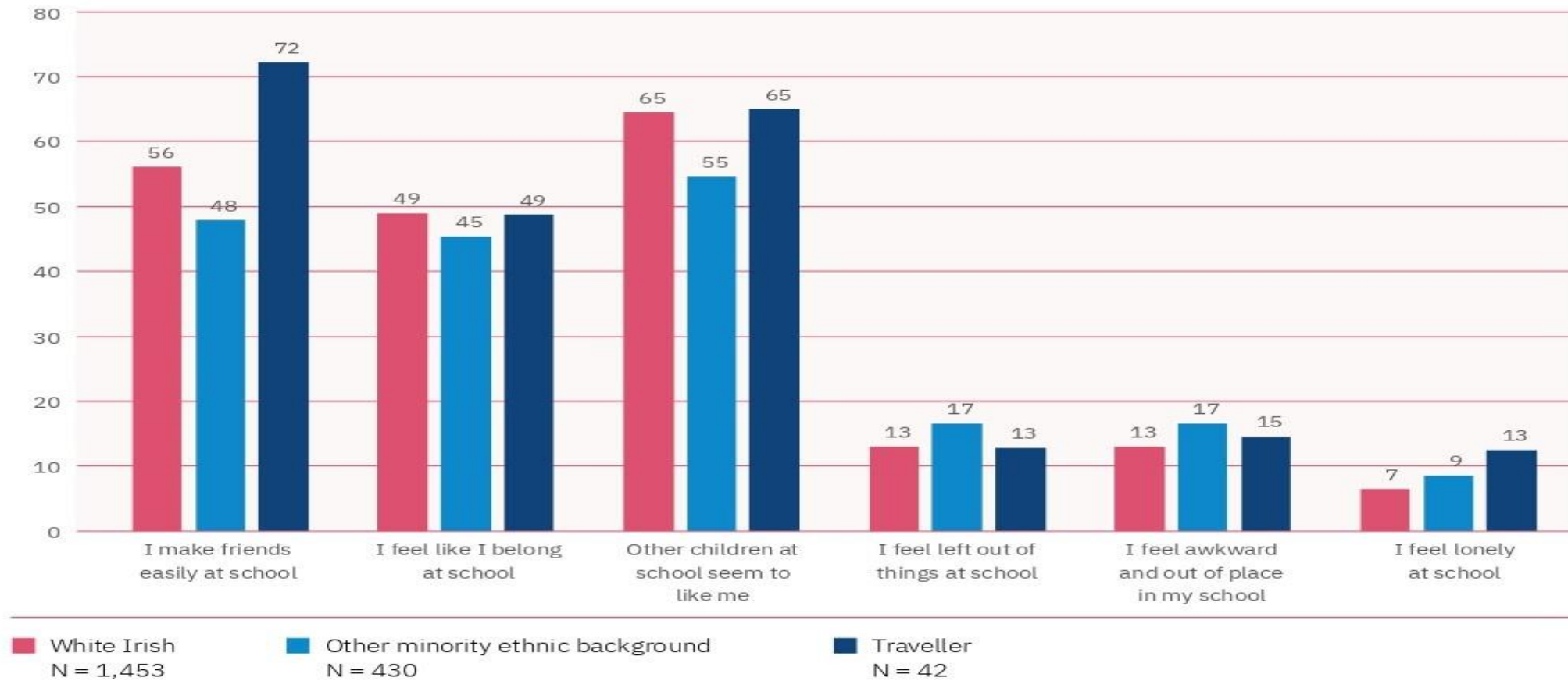


# Belonging/Ethnicity



Oide

## Cohort B (6th Class)







# Belonging

**What impact does a learner's sense of belonging have on their ability to engage in school life?**







# A Learners Sense of Belonging

Learners who report a strong sense of belonging in school:

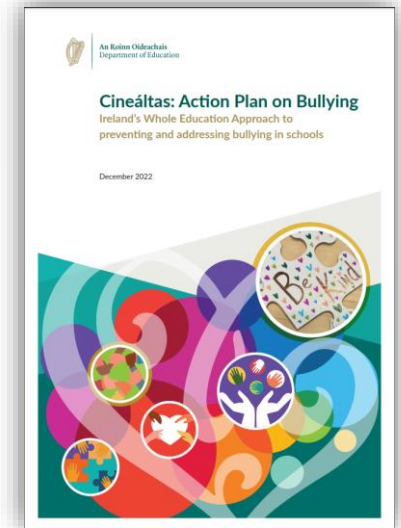
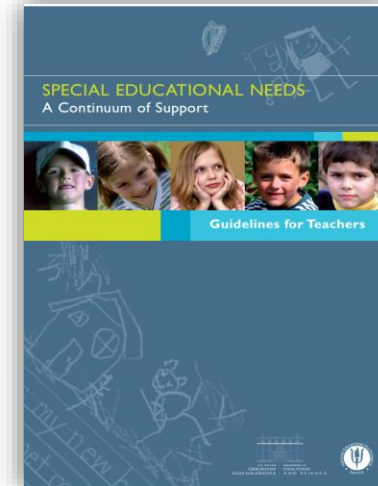
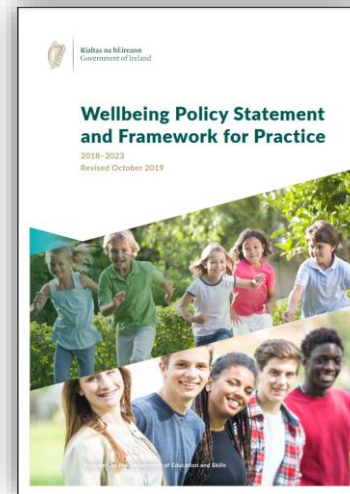
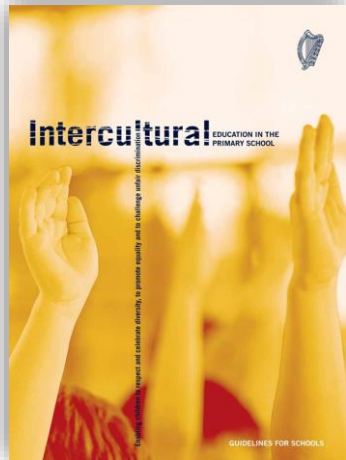
- better reading scores
- more likely to complete second-level education
- more likely to progress to third-level education
- better attendance
- display higher academic motivation, self-esteem and achievement
- less likely to engage in risky or antisocial behaviours
- less likely to be unsatisfied with their lives

*What School Life Means for Students' Lives, OECD (2020)*

# Supports for Schools

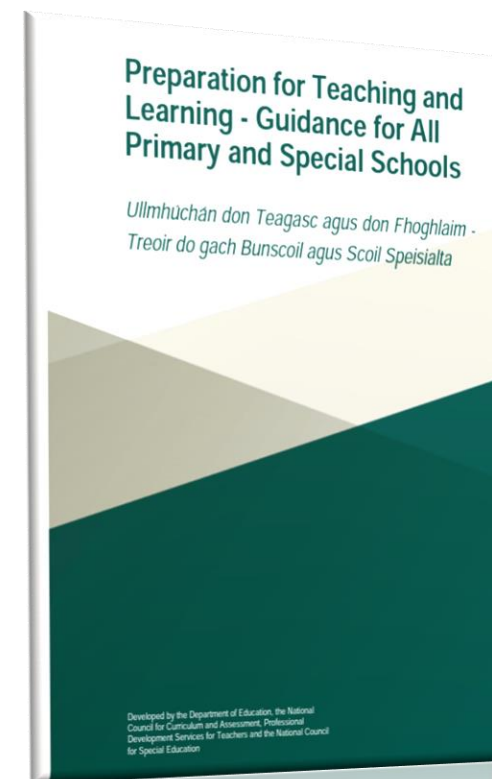
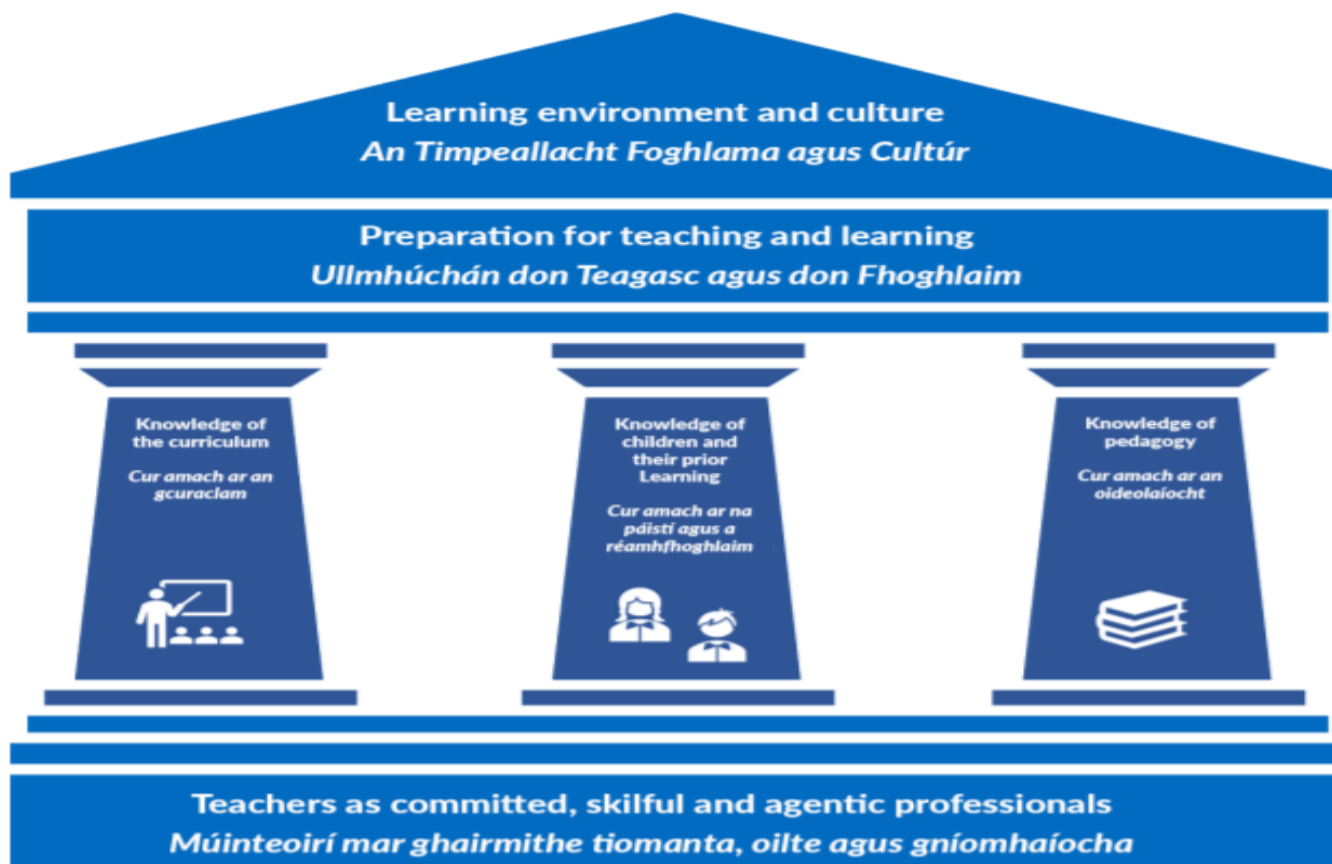


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# Fostering an Inclusive Learning Environment and Culture



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# Curriculum and Inclusion Principles of the Curriculum

## Wellbeing and relationships

Students' experiences in school, in other educational settings and in the wider society contribute directly to their overall wellbeing and to their holistic development. Students' experiences throughout senior cycle are supported in the

## Inclusive education and diversity

The educational experience in senior cycle is inclusive of every student, valuing and respecting diversity and the contribution each student can make. Every student has enjoyable experiences in and meaningful outcomes from senior cycle education

## Challenge, engagement and creativity

Students experience a challenging, engaging and high-quality education, with opportunities for new and deep learning and for critical, creative and innovative thinking.

## Learning to learn, learning for life

Students develop greater independence in, and understanding of, how they learn; deepen their capacity to meet the challenges of life within and beyond school; and have second-chance opportunities for learning and assessment.

## Choice and flexibility

Senior cycle facilitates broad learning and increased specialisation. It provides flexibility and coherence for students as they combine learning in a variety of ways, navigate their personal pathway through senior cycle, and pursue diverse futures.

## Continuity and transitions

Students build on their learning to date and are supported as they develop and pursue their chosen pathways, and as they transition to adult life.

## Participation and citizenship

Students participate in schools, communities and society, exercising their rights and responsibilities as local, national and global citizens in ethical and sustainable ways.

## Learning environments and partnerships

Partnerships and collaboration across schools, with families, communities, and with other learning environments, including online, enrich and extend student learning and expand the possibilities open to them.

Guiding Principles for a  
Redeveloped Senior Cycle

# Inclusion and Knowledge of Learner



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*“Knowledge of the children includes both the children as learners and the children as members of a family and community, and can be deepened through observation, information gathering and assessment.”*

Guidance for Preparation for Teaching and Learning p.8

**Who do we gather information from?**

**How do we gather this information?**







# Inclusive Pedagogical Practices

*'Focuses on extending what is available to all rather than providing something additional to some'*

Florian and Black-Hawkins, (2011)



**Share and record examples of inclusive pedagogical practices.**

# Inclusive Pedagogical Practices



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- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Differentiated Instruction
- Team Teaching
- Collaborative Learning
- Accessible Technology
- Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices
- Inclusive Language and Communication
- Flexible Assessment and Evaluation
- The Continuum of Support Approach
- Peer Support and Mentorship
- Active and Hands-On Learning
- Mindful Classroom Management







# Inclusive Pedagogical Practices

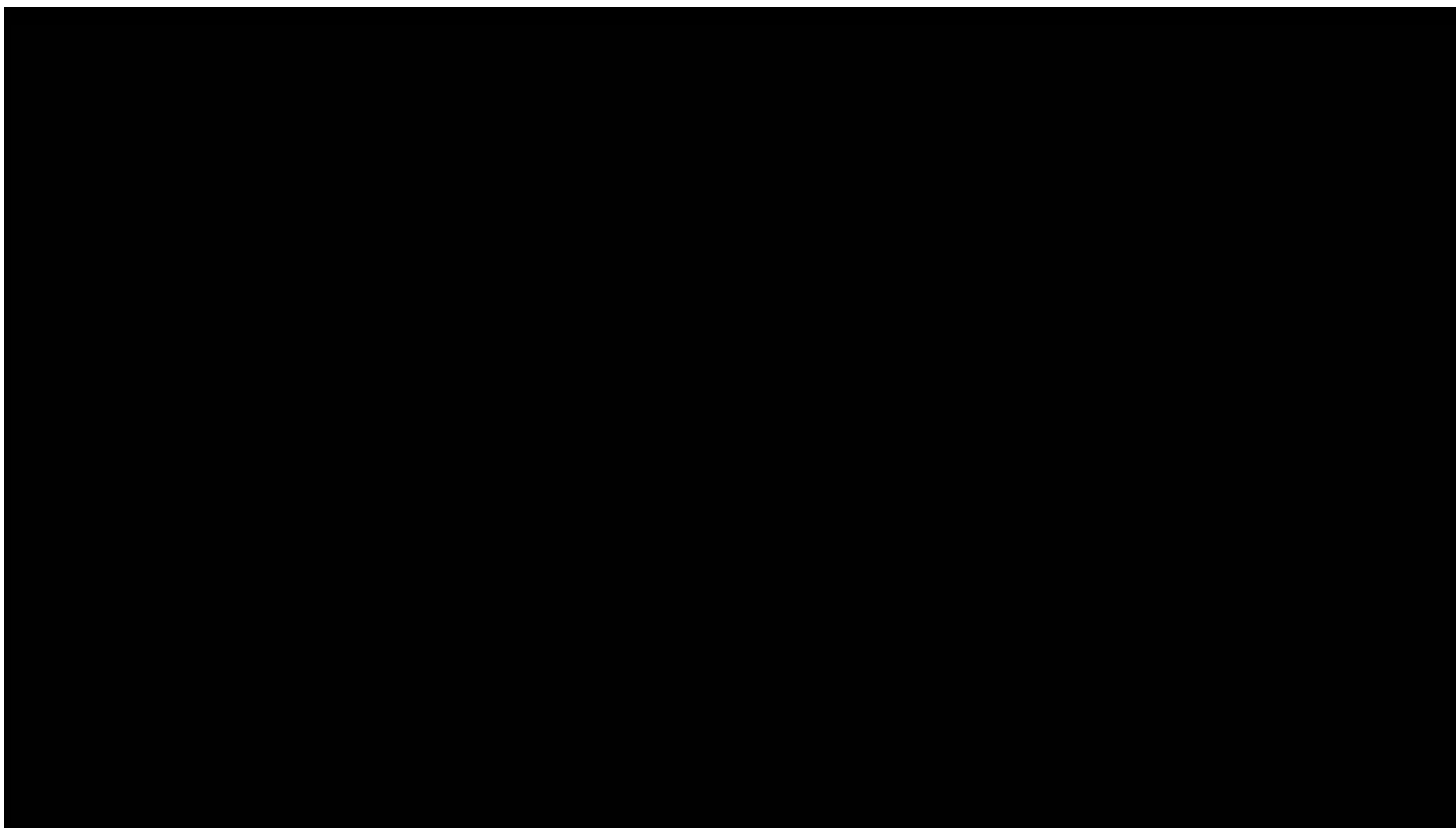
## Universal Design for Learning





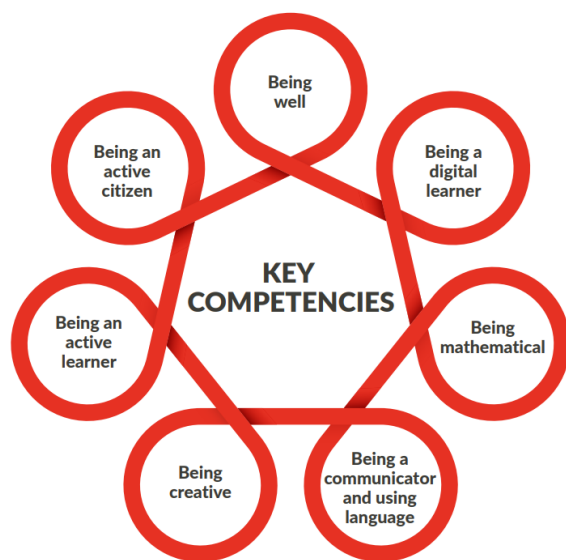
# Inclusive Pedagogical Practices

## Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practice Primary





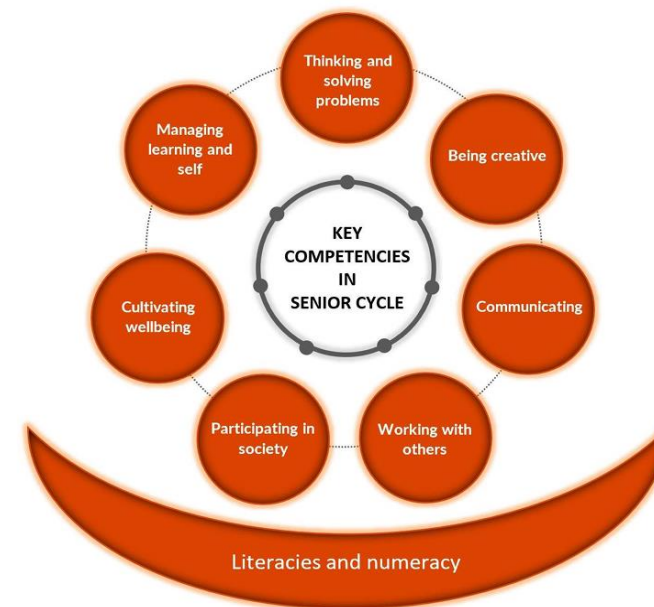
# Key Skills and Competencies



Primary Years



Junior Cycle



Senior Cycle

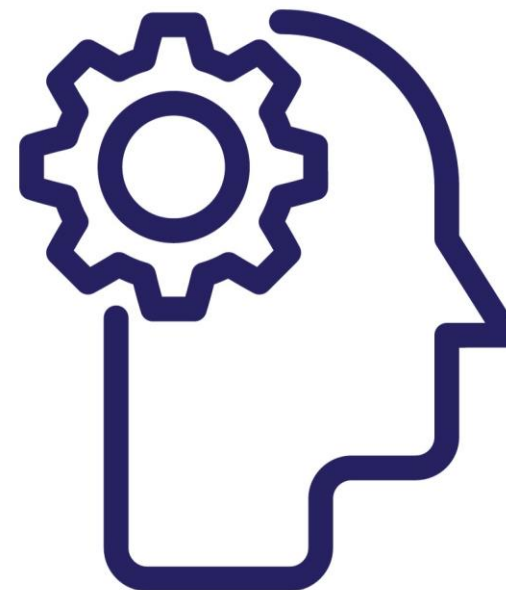


# Reflection on Inclusive Pedagogical Practices

What am I doing well in my classroom?

What are we doing well as a whole school?

What might we begin to progress in our school?





## Key Messages

Inclusive school cultures value learners as individuals and encourage them to achieve their potential.

Diverse school communities promote opportunities for all learners to develop skills necessary to participate actively in society.

School culture, relationships, partnerships, policy, planning and curriculum influence a learner's sense of belonging.

Fostering a culture of inclusion involves collaboration and partnership with staff, learners, parents/families and external agencies.



# Lunch



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## Session 3

Exploring  
Partnerships and  
Establishing Next  
Steps for Your  
School





## Session 3

By the end of this session participants will have begun to:

- reflect on the key considerations underpinning a partnership approach
- consider whole school leadership approaches to fostering an inclusive culture
- plan the next steps in relation to fostering a sense of belonging for all learners in their individual school contexts.



# Relationships and Partnerships

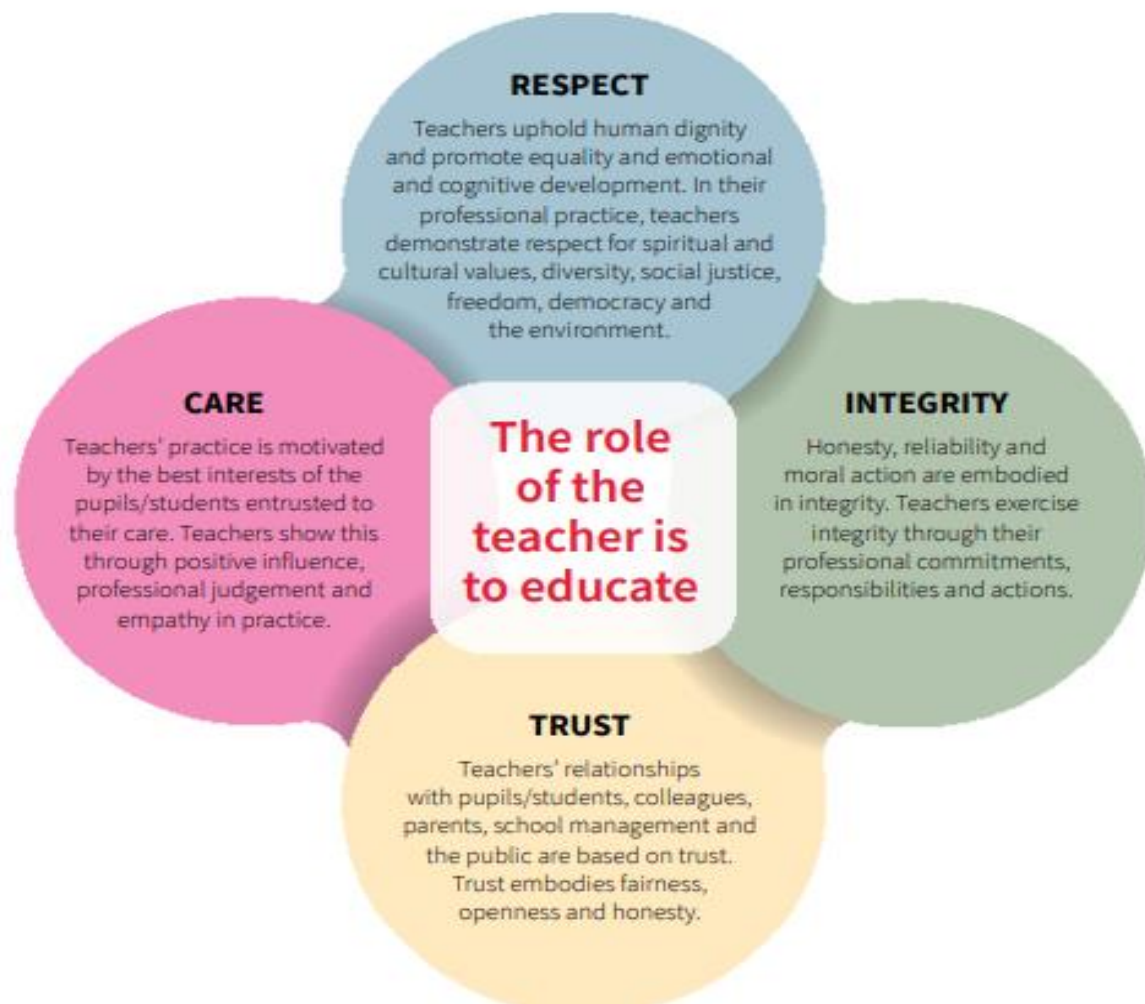
**What relationships and partnerships support the inclusion of all learners?**



# Building Effective Partnerships



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Teaching Council, Code of Professional Conduct, (2016)



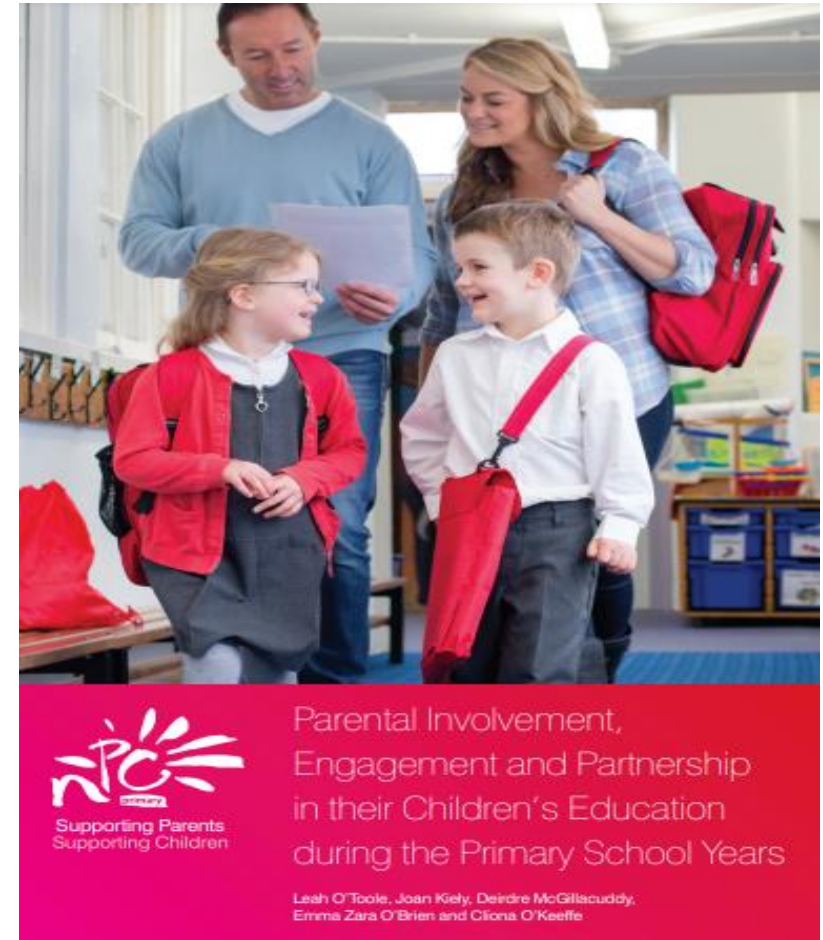
# Influencing Effective Partnerships



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- Sharing of power, responsibility and ownership
- A degree of mutuality, which begins with the process of listening to each other and incorporates responsive dialogue and 'give and take' on both sides
- Shared aims and goals, based on common ground but which also acknowledge important differences
- A commitment to joint action, in which parents, learners and professionals work together to get things done

**Bastiani (1993, p. 105)**



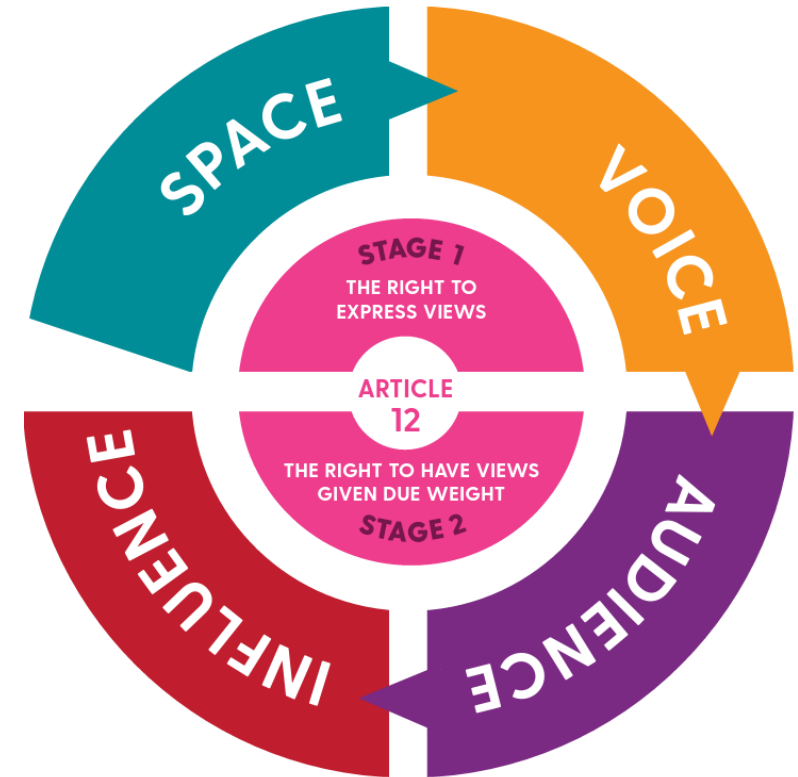
# Pupil Participation



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*"Being an Inclusive School means hearing the voices of all children on a continuous basis"*

Niall Muldoon, Ombudsman for Children,  
(2023)



Lundy, (2007)

Think/Pair/ Share some effective approaches for ensuring that the voices of the learners in your school are heard and acted upon.

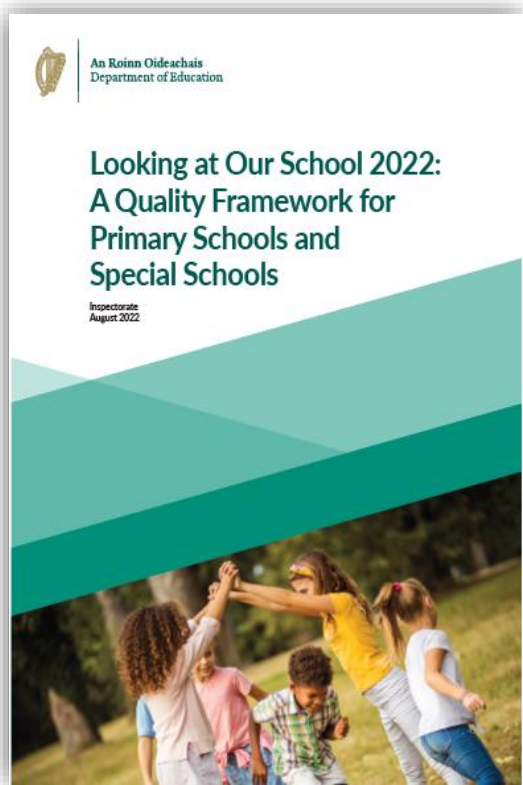
<https://hubnanog.ie/participation-framework/>



# Inclusion at Whole School Level



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## Inclusion of all learners:

- all learners meaningfully included in their school community
- high quality learning and teaching that is inclusive, learner-centred, informed and evidence based
- young people participating and making progress in learning
- high expectations and opportunities for all in accordance with their abilities, strengths, stages of development, and identified learning needs.

**Looking at our Schools (DE, 2022, p.8)**



## Key Messages

Inclusive school cultures value learners as individuals and encourage them to achieve their potential.

Diverse school communities promote opportunities for all learners to develop skills necessary to participate actively in society.

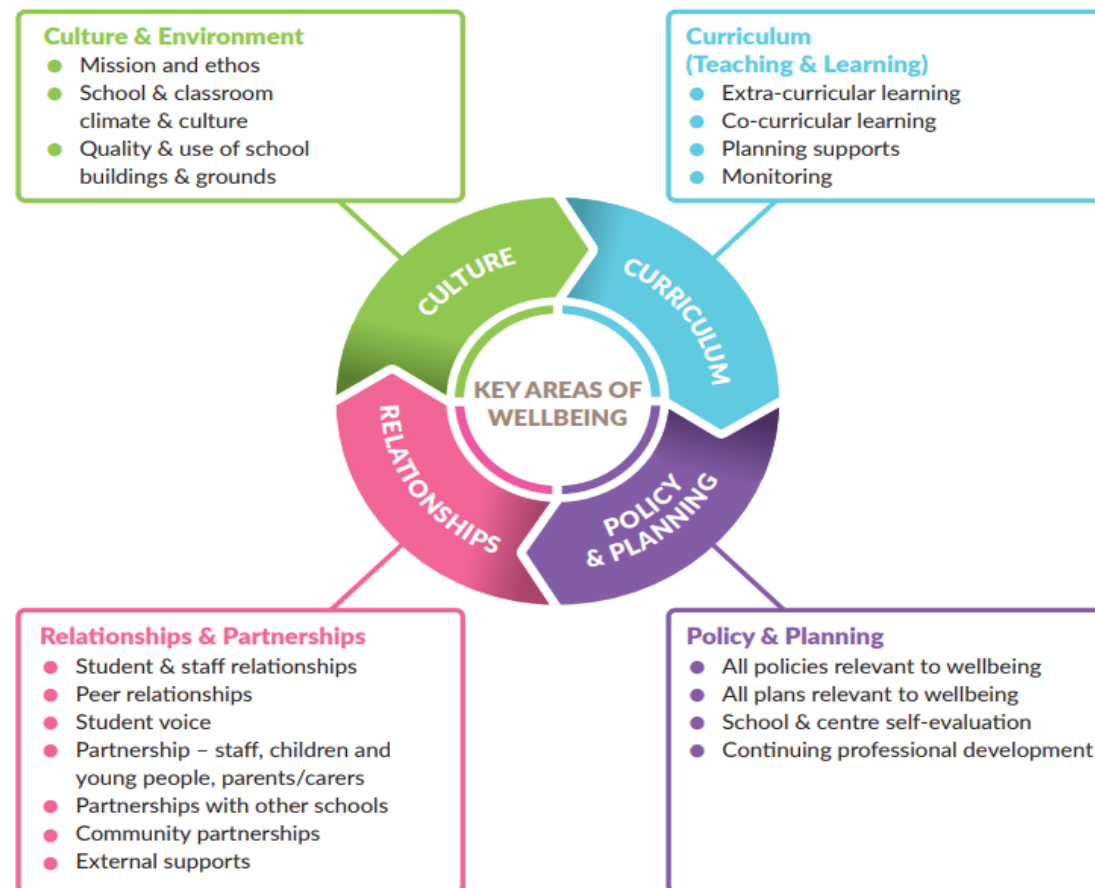
School culture, relationships, partnerships, policy, planning and curriculum influence learners' sense of belonging.

Fostering a culture of inclusion involves collaboration and partnership with staff, learners, parents/families and external agencies.



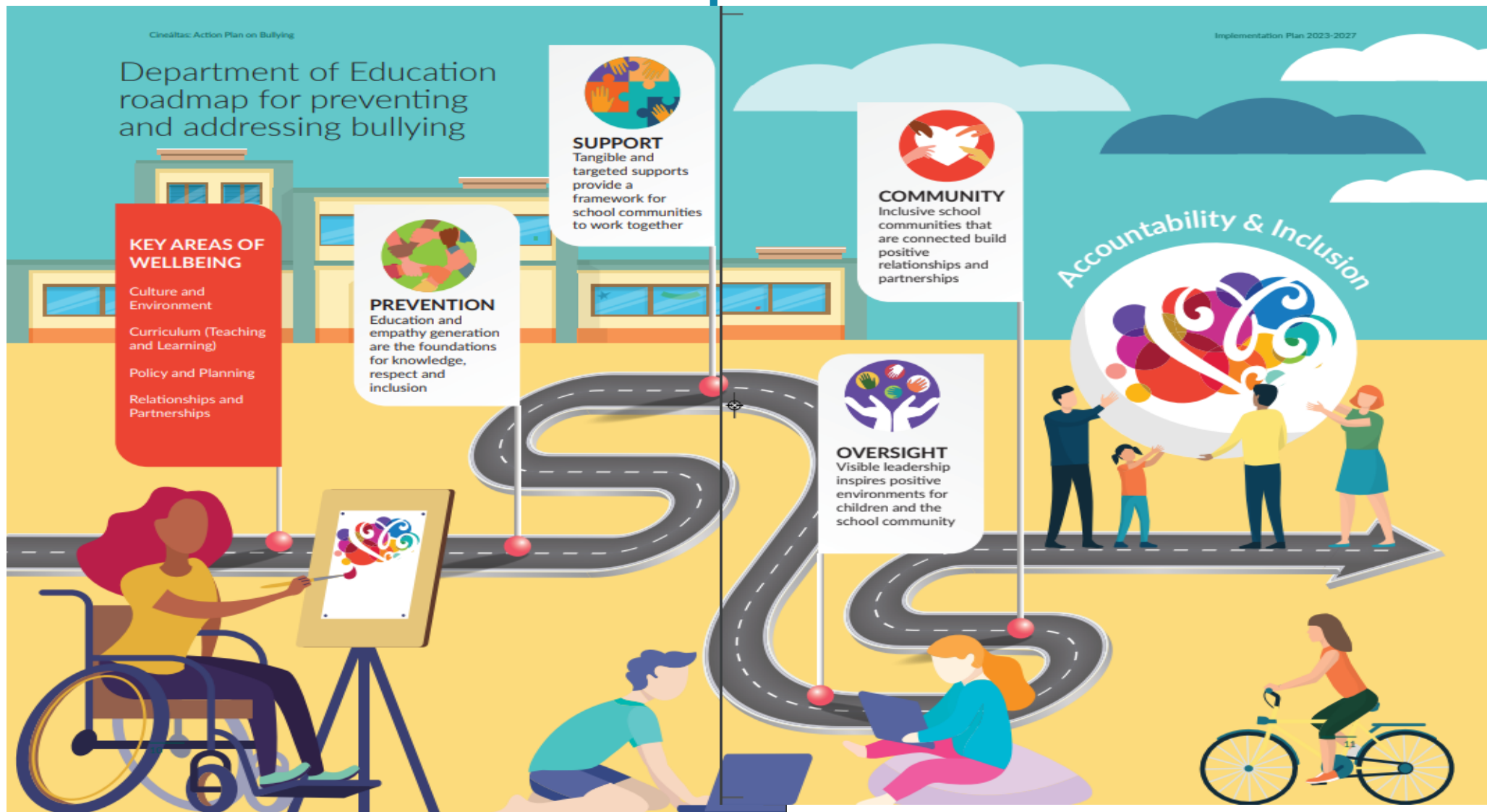
# Whole School Approach

What should meaningful inclusion look like in schools?



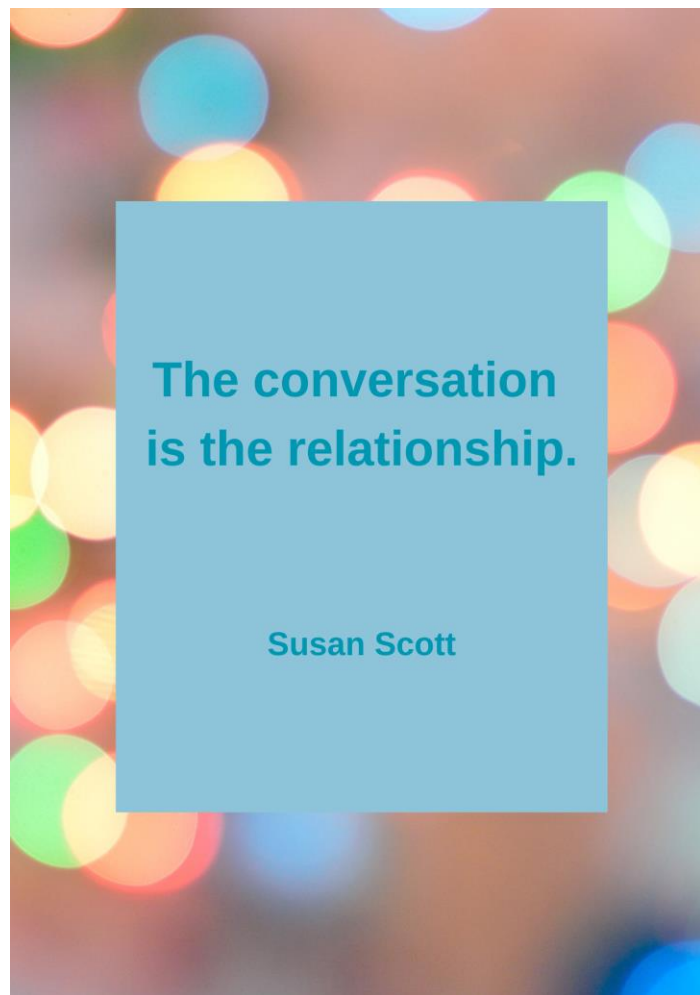


# Cineáltas Road Map





# Whole School Approach



What conversations do we need to have  
and with who?

What approaches will we use?



# Whole School Approach



The conversation  
is the relationship.

Susan Scott

What area will we develop?

How and in what ways will we develop  
this area?

When will this happen?



# Further Supports



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## Wellbeing in Education

Oide School Support from Wellbeing Team



Oide Technology in Education and Inclusion : Good Practice Videos



NCSE Supports and Professional Learning



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

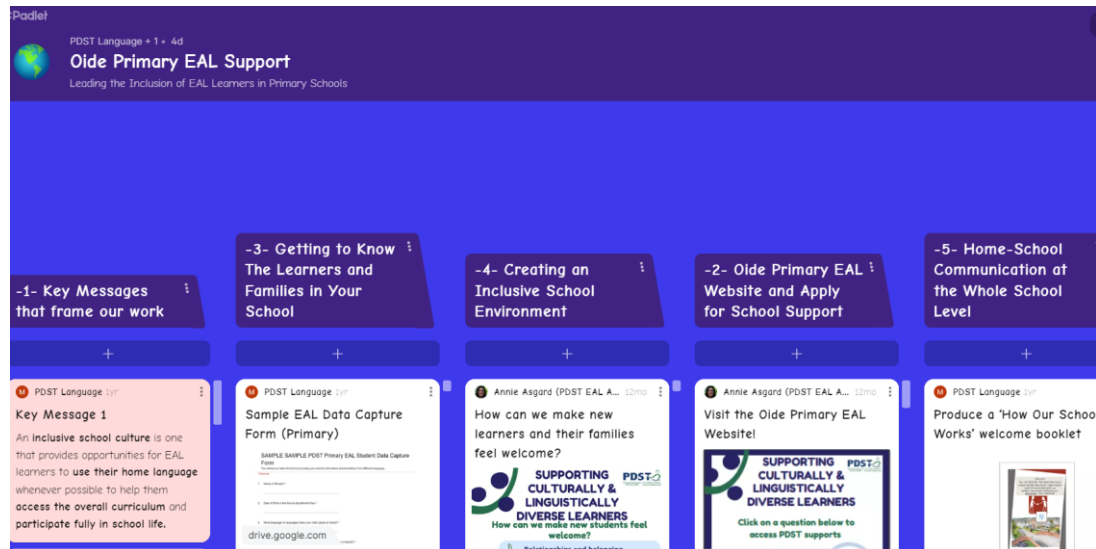
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais  
National Educational Psychological Service

NEPS Support and Professional Learning

# EAL Supports for Schools



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Digital Technology

Droichead Induction

Primary

Post-Primary

Irish-medium Education

Leadership



Droichead

Coming Soon



Junior Cycle Registration

Apply/Book Here



Primary and Post-primary  
School Support

Apply/Book Here

[Oide School Support for EAL](#)

[Oide Primary EAL Padlet](#)

[Oide EAL PLE in  
Education Centres](#)

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# References and Key Documents



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- Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying 2023 – 2027 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/52aaf-cinealtas-action-plan-on-bullying/#cinealtas-action-plan-on-bullying>
- Children's School Lives (CSL) NCCA 2020-2025 [Children's School Lives \(CSL\) | NCCA](#)
- Equal Status Act (2000-2018) <https://revisedacts.lawreform.ie/eli/2000/act/8/revised/en/html>
- Intercultural Education Guidelines in the Primary School (2005) (Currently Being Updated) [https://ncca.ie/en/resources/intercultural\\_ed\\_pri/](https://ncca.ie/en/resources/intercultural_ed_pri/)
- Intercultural Education Guidelines in the Post-Primary School (2006) [https://ncca.ie/en/resources/interc\\_guide\\_pp\\_eng/](https://ncca.ie/en/resources/interc_guide_pp_eng/)
- Intercultural Education Strategy 2010-2015 <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/120820/09c2c2c6-ba6e-4618-9358-e23f001fd353.pdf#page=null>
- Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (2021) [https://ncca.ie/media/4940/updated\\_guidelines\\_2021.pdf](https://ncca.ie/media/4940/updated_guidelines_2021.pdf)
- Looking at Our Schools 2022: A Quality Framework for Primary Schools and Special Schools <https://assets.gov.ie/232720/c8357d7a-dd03-416b-83dc-9847b99b025f.pdf>
- Migrant Integration Strategy (2017-2020) <https://assets.gov.ie/47825/fb954e6a395449a9a0494783dcb90e8e.pdf>
- National Action Plan Against Racism 2023-2027 (2023) <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/14d79-national-action-plan-against-racism/>
- National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020 <https://assets.gov.ie/95979/1cce0f7f-68dd-4cf4-b7cf-80a9b2c2e912.pdf>

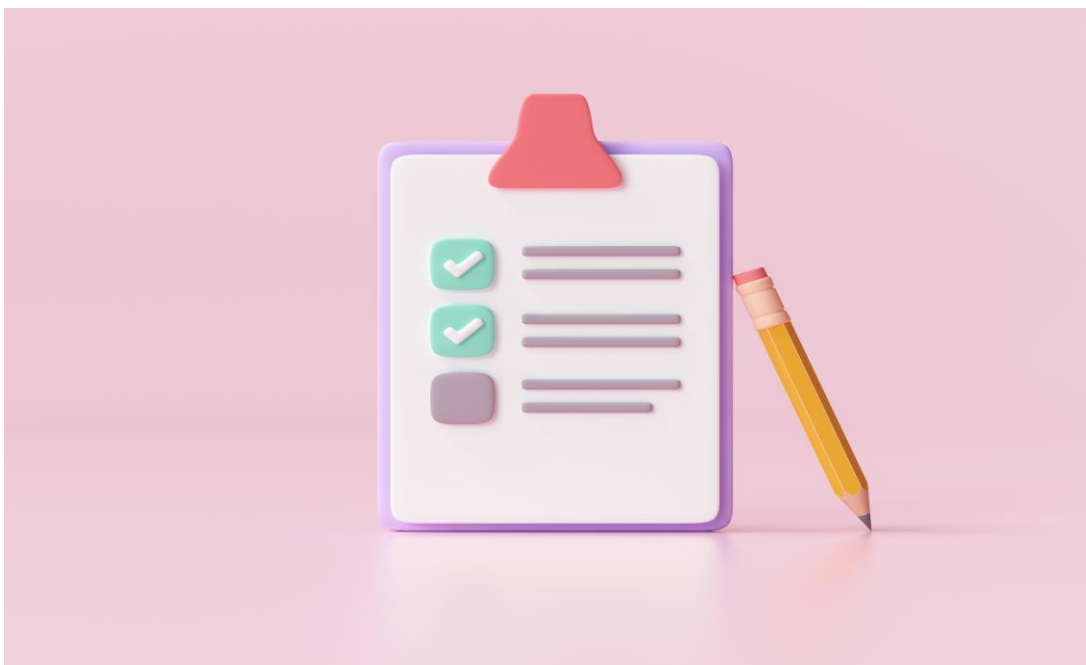


# References and Key Documents

- National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028 <https://assets.gov.ie/302190/2a33eef0-bd6f-4c2b-aebd-76aaa7f148d0.pdf>
- Nelis, S.M. *et al.* (2021) *Beyond achievement: Home, school and wellbeing findings from Pisa 2018 for students in Deis and non-DEIS Schools*. Dublin: Educational Research Centre.
- OECD (2017), PISA 2015 Results (Volume III): Students' Well-Being, OECD Publishing, Paris.
- Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools (2023) <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/84747851-0581-431b-b4d7-dc6ee850883e/2023-Primary-Framework-ENG-screen.pdf>
- Participation Framework National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making. <https://hubnanog.ie/participation-framework/>
- Special Education Needs, A Continuum of Support, (2007) See [www.assets.gov.ie](http://www.assets.gov.ie)
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child United Nations, June 2010. See [www.childrensrights.ie](http://www.childrensrights.ie)
- OECD (2020), "Sense of belonging at school", in *PISA 2018 Results (Volume III): What School Life Means for Students' Lives*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/d69dc209-en>.
- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice, (Revised 2019) See [www.assets.gov.ie](http://www.assets.gov.ie)
- Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes Guidelines for Schools (DEY, 2024)



# Evaluation





# THANK YOU!

## Go raibh maith agaibh!

“A teacher affects eternity, they can never tell  
where their influence stops.”

— Henry B. Adams