



Case Study: Sample School - Oide Post-Primary School

Senior Cycle Curriculum Mapping and Timetabling

Background

Oide Post-Primary School is a school reviewing how its senior cycle curriculum is organised and delivered across fifth and sixth year. A central question in this review is: *Is the curriculum currently offered meeting students' needs?* As part of this review, the school has mapped subject specifications against the current timetable to understand how curriculum time is distributed in practice. A further consideration is how the senior cycle L1/L2LP students' curriculum is being planned to allow for inclusion in mainstream lessons, as appropriate.

The review has been prompted by a combination of curriculum change, evolving student needs, and a desire to ensure that learning time is used as effectively as possible. As part of this process, a curriculum review committee was established (DP, SET Lead, Guidance Counsellor, Maths, MFL and Construction Studies Teacher). The committee conducted a curriculum-mapping exercise across subject areas to examine how senior cycle specification time could be organised in practice.

The next step for the curriculum review committee will be to consult with parents, staff and students, to develop a clear picture of how the curriculum can continue to evolve to meet students' needs. The committee is also cognisant that adaptations and adjustments to senior cycle curriculum provision may warrant ongoing, and potentially annual, review.

The Current Timetable

The mapping exercise shows that the timetable provides substantial class contact time for core subjects and option blocks across both years of the senior cycle. In most cases, the minimum requirements of subject specifications are met.

The analysis indicates some variation in curriculum provision between fifth and sixth year, with certain areas, including LCVP (LCW from September 2026), receiving a more limited time allocation. During the review process, a question was raised by a teacher regarding whether the school is obliged to offer seven subjects at Senior Cycle¹. This prompted further professional discussion on programme requirements, student choice, curriculum flexibility, and the introduction of Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes (L1/L2LP), including how appropriate planning can support senior students' participation in mainstream lessons where suitable.

Assessment and Learning Time

Across the two senior cycle years of 5th Year and 6th Year, the school calendar currently includes:

- Four formal assessment periods (such as in school exams).
- Mock examinations in sixth year
- Four professional learning days across two years, in the form of a full-day support for subject teachers, along with a full-day whole school programme support each year.

Assessment weeks in Junior Cycle were also considered as part of this review. When considered together, teachers estimate that these arrangements influence approximately five weeks (c. 140 hours) of tuition time across the senior cycle and eight weeks (c. 224 hours).² and eight weeks at junior cycle.

While these assessments support important aspects of learning, the school has also engaged in ongoing school improvement work to strengthen formative assessment practices. This work is monitored by the Teaching and Learning Assessment (TLA) committee, coordinated by the SSE Coordinator, through review of classroom practice,

¹ In the case of the established Leaving Certificate the approved course for recognised senior pupils must include not less than one shall be prescribed in paragraph (2)(b) of this rule, of which one shall be Irish. (Department of Education and Youth (2004). Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools 2004/05, p. 8.)

² Estimated tuition time is calculated on the basis of a 28-hour instructional week (equivalent to c. 5.6 hours per school day). On this basis, 27 school days equates to approximately 135 hours of tuition time. Junior Cycle estimates apply the same weekly assumption; the higher overall figure reflects the cumulative impact across a three-year programme compared with the two-year Senior Cycle.

student feedback and assessment evidence, with monitoring indicating positive impacts on student learning experiences and outcomes.

Building on this work, and following discussion at a staff meeting, the Curriculum Review Committee is reviewing the timing and frequency of assessment to ensure the most effective use of available teaching and learning time. As part of this review, the committee is also examining how assessment is used across the school, with a shared emphasis on ensuring assessment remains meaningful, proportionate and does not result in over-assessment.

SPHE Provision

SPHE is currently delivered within existing timetable structures for LCE fifth-year students. In LCA, SPHE is timetabled for one period and replaces Modules 1 and 4 of Social Education. For the current sixth-year cohort, provision is limited to a modular programme (eight weeks of RSE), timetabled in a block with Guidance. The new SPHE specification was introduced for fifth-year students in 2025, two years ahead of the mandatory implementation date of September 2027 ³. Teachers recognise the importance of ensuring that SPHE has a clear, consistent and sustainable place within the Senior Cycle timetable.

Programme Change: LCVP to LCW

At present, the school provides one Link Modules class; however, the current timetable allocation does not align with the recommended provision outlined in the 2022 Programme Statement (p. 24). From the next academic year, this will change to two Life Community and Work (LCW) classes⁴ (p.10 of the LCW specification), each lasting one hour. This reflects both programme requirements.

LCVP is currently a mandatory programme in the school; however, over the past five years, an average of 60% of students have used LCVP for points. In 2025, while

³ CL0012/2025

⁴ The DEY will maintain the current LCVP supports available to schools, including as appropriate the maintenance of a co-ordinator post (i.e., school supports currently provided in respect of LCVP are unaffected by the curriculum redevelopment). **Department of Education and Youth** (2025) *Senior Cycle Redevelopment: Implementation Support Measures*. Dublin: Government of Ireland. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dfd8d-senior-cycle-redevelopment/> (Accessed: 28 January 2026).

participation was mandatory, only 77% of students completed both assessment components (portfolio and examination), and just 55% of that cohort ultimately used LCVP for points.

Teachers recognise that responding to this pattern cannot be achieved simply by adding time to the timetable; rather, it requires careful consideration of how existing time is allocated and how provision is structured. In this context, the review committee is considering whether the continued mandatory status of LCVP is the most effective approach and, if the new LCW specification were to become optional, how the school could ensure that both LCW and non-LCW students are provided with meaningful, targeted tuition aligned with their learning needs and curricular pathways, in line with Department of Education and Youth guidance.

The Shared Challenge for Oide PP’s Curriculum Review Committee

Teachers and school leaders in the fictional Oide PP School are grappling with the following Senior Cycle challenges:

Key challenges for consideration

1. How can this school’s timetable balance equitable time for curricular requirements (LCVP/LCW, SPHE/RSE, PE, RE⁵, Guidance) with the introduction of new subject specifications alongside existing syllabi?
2. As AACs are introduced, how do three summative assessments (e.g. 10/20/30s) best support student learning and experience?⁶
3. What meaningful and high-quality learning provision could be provided for students who do not choose LCW?⁷
4. What structures and processes could be used to engage students, parents and teachers in shaping senior cycle provision and timetabling decisions?

Task for Participants

Working in pairs, choose one of the questions above. Consider the challenge it presents for the Oide PP School and devise one or two practical recommendations or opportunities for improvement.

The purpose of this task is not to design a perfect timetable, but to practise making informed, collective decisions about how time, assessment and provision can be used to support student learning and wellbeing. Participants are encouraged to draw learning from the discussion and consider how it might apply within their own school contexts.

⁵ In planning provision, due cognisance must be given to the religious requirements of the school patron or the Deeds of Trust.

⁶ The learning outcomes assessed through AACs are embedded within the Leaving Certificate subject specification and focus on student learning across the full breadth of that specification. In this respect, AACs are designed to operate in a manner like Junior Cycle CBAs, supporting ongoing learning rather than functioning as stand-alone or additional assessment events.

⁷ Are there clear linkages between guidance provision and the strands of LCW, and can synergies be intentionally leveraged when devising provision and planning for learning in both areas?

Number	Subject	No. of Periods	No. of Periods	Total Allocated time	Min Spec Time Required	Over/Under Provision	Percentage Over/Under
1	English	4	4	266	180	86	48%
2	Irish	4	4	266	180	86	48%
3	Maths	4	4	266	180	86	48%
4	Option Block 1	3	3	199	180	19	11%
5	Option Block 2	3	3	199	180	19	11%
6	Option Block 3	3	3	199	180	19	11%
7	Option Block 4	3	3	199	180	19	11%
8	Physical Education Framework	1	1	66	88	-22	-25%
9	Social, Personal & Health Education	1	0	33	60	-27	-45%
10	Religious Education Framework	1	1	66	120	-54	-45%
11	LCVP - Link Modules	1	1	66	108	-42	-39%
12	Guidance/RSE	0	1	33		33	
		28	28	1859	1636	Total Specification Time	

This sample tool is illustrative only and should not be interpreted as guidance on how a Senior Cycle timetable should be drafted. Schools retain responsibility for developing timetabling arrangements that reflect their own curricular decisions, student needs, and organisational context, and which are subject to ratification by the Board of Management. In this context, the Department of Education and Youth does not favour any particular class length, with the sole caveat that class periods must be a minimum of 40 minutes in duration.

Class Length in mins

40

The class length can be adjusted in cell C2

Weeks per year

33.2

Year 1

Year 2

Number	Subject	No. of Periods	No. of Periods	Total Allocated		Min Spec Time Required	Over/Under Provision	Percentage Over/Under
				time	Required			
1	English	5	5	221	180	41	23%	
2	Irish	5	5	221	180	41	23%	
3	Maths	5	5	221	180	41	23%	
4	Option Block 1	5	5	221	180	41	23%	
5	Option Block 2	5	5	221	180	41	23%	
6	Option Block 3	5	5	221	180	41	23%	
7	Option Block 4	5	5	221	180	41	23%	
8	Physical Education Framework	2	2	89	88	1	1%	
9	Social, Personal & Health Education	2	0	44	60	-16	-26%	
10	Religious Education Framework	1	2	66	120	-54	-45%	
11	LCVP - Link Modules	2	2	89	108	-19	-18%	
12	Guidance/RSE	0	1	22		22	#DIV/0!	
		42	42	1859	1636	Total Specification Time		

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