



Circular Letter 0051/2026

To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teaching Staff of recognised English-Medium Primary Schools and Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards

Implementing the Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools

1. Purpose of this circular

This circular provides guidance to recognised English-medium primary schools on the implementation of Is féidir liom, is féidir linn ... Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools and on the supports available to schools and teachers to implement the plan. It also clarifies expectations of the approaches to be adopted to support the effective teaching, learning and use of Irish.

The circular aligns with, and follows on from, Circular 0017/2023 on the Primary Curriculum Framework and Circular 0067/2025 on the redeveloped Primary Curriculum for Primary and Special Schools.

2. Teaching of Irish in English-medium schools

Irish is a core subject in all primary schools. English-medium schools play a vital role in enabling all pupils to enjoy Irish and experience success in learning it. For many children that attend these schools, the primary school classroom is the main site in which they encounter the Irish language and where they have the most sustained exposure to Irish.

A central feature of the Primary Language Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile (PLC/CTB) is the development of pupils' communicative competence in Irish. The PLC/CTB also places a strong emphasis on the development of positive attitudes towards Irish, the authentic use of Irish within and outside lessons, the provision of engaging and enjoyable learning experiences, and the facilitation of all learners in accordance with their abilities to learn and communicate in Irish.

3. The Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools

Is féidir liom, is féidir linn ... Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools was launched on 6 November 2025 and is available online for school leaders, teachers and schools.



The Action Plan was informed by an extensive consultation at national and school levels. It was also informed by research, Inspectorate reports and approaches to language planning for minority languages in other jurisdictions. The Action Plan particularly reflects the views of children and young people. The two reports on the consultation are available at the following links:

[Teaching and Learning Irish in English-Medium Schools: Literature Review and Perspectives of National Stakeholders](#)

[Teaching and Learning Irish in English-Medium Schools: Perspectives of Children, Young People, Parents, Teachers, Principals and Student Teachers](#)

This Action Plan aims to enhance the teaching, learning and use of Irish for pupils in English-medium schools. The plan supports schools and teachers to effectively enact the existing curriculum for Irish. Notably, it supports the development of pupils' oral language skills in Irish.

Many schools and teachers already provide innovative and creative opportunities for pupils to engage with the language both inside and outside the classroom. This plan builds on that strong foundation by supporting the sharing of inclusive good practice more widely and ensuring effective supports are in place.

Pillars

The plan is built on four key pillars:

- Fostering positive attitudes towards Irish
- Increasing the use of Irish
- Supporting access by all children and young people to learning Irish
- Integrating supports for Irish.

The pillars reflect the key elements that make a difference to language learning.

4. Irish lessons

A key objective of every Irish lesson is that pupils have opportunities to hear, speak and use Irish. The use of the communicative approach ensures that the emphasis in lessons is on enjoyable, interactive, and purposeful communication. As the target language, Irish should be used as early and as often as possible during lessons.

Frequent lessons in Irish each week provide pupils with sustained contact with the language and support progression in their learning. Mainstream class teachers should therefore plan for and include Irish lessons in their timetable in accordance with their school's agreed time allocations, based on either the Primary Curriculum Framework (2023) or the 1999 Primary School Curriculum (See table below).



Consideration should also be given to the use of the flexible time provided in the Primary Curriculum to support pupils' learning of Irish and increase their contact with the language.

Time allocations

The Primary Language Curriculum / Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile (PLC/CTB) was introduced from September 2016 for junior infants to 2nd class and from September 2019 for all class levels.

The existing time allocations, set out in the Primary School Curriculum (1999) provide minimum time allocations on a weekly basis which remain in place pending enactment of the redeveloped primary curriculum (see below). These are:

- Infants (Junior and Senior): 2.5 hours
- First to Sixth Class: 3.5 hours.

The suggested time allocations for Irish in English-medium schools under the redeveloped 2025 primary curriculum are set out as follows in the Primary Curriculum Framework (PCF) (2023):

- Infants (Junior & Senior): 2.5 hours per week
- First to Sixth Class: 3 hours per week.

Under the PCF, all primary schools will also have an allocation of monthly flexible time that can be used to increase teaching time in subject areas, including the teaching of Irish. These are:

- Infants (Junior and Senior): 5 hours
- First and Second Class: 6 hours
- Third to Sixth Class: 7 hours

5. Extending the use of Irish

The curriculum for Irish in English-medium schools provides for extending the use of Irish beyond the timetabled lessons so that pupils hear and listen to Irish and practise the language they have learned in real language contexts.

In this regard, school leaders and teachers are asked to make every effort to encourage and facilitate the informal use of Irish by pupils during the school day. They are also encouraged to teach other subjects or aspects of other subjects through Irish using the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach.

Other opportunities to support pupils' engagement with Irish beyond Irish lessons may include:



- participation in initiatives such as the Gaelbhratach scheme
- inter-school activities through Irish
- engaging with local Irish language groups
- provision of recognition and rewards for pupils who use Irish
- participation in Irish language summer camps.

6. Developing Irish language skills and competence to teach Irish

Availing of opportunities to use Irish is a very important means for school leaders and teachers of maintaining their skills and developing their confidence and competence in the language. This includes using Irish where possible with pupils, teachers and other adults in the school.

It also includes availing of opportunities to use Irish outside of school and participating in the teacher professional learning experiences (PLE) provided by Oide - the Department-funded support service for teachers and school leaders, An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG), the education support centres and Irish language course providers (See Section 10 below). In addition, Gréasán Gaeilge na hEarnála Poiblí provides opportunities for teachers to hear about and participate in social activities through Irish.

Beyond the school itself, engaging in Irish language events within one's own locality provides valuable opportunities for teachers to use the language authentically, and to strengthen both their linguistic and professional confidence. Other opportunities to use the language professionally include working in Coláistí Gaeilge.

7. Supporting access by all pupils to the learning of Irish

The provision of inclusive education for all children and young people, including those with additional educational needs, those at risk of educational disadvantage and those from migrant and ethnic minority backgrounds is a key feature of the Irish educational system. The principles of inclusion and differentiated learning apply to pupils' engagement with all curricular areas, including Irish.

Accordingly, schools are encouraged to provide all pupils, to the greatest extent possible and in a meaningful way, with opportunities to learn Irish and to participate in Irish language and cultural activities at a level appropriate to their learning needs and to achieve a level of personal proficiency appropriate to their ability.



8. Leading the teaching, learning and use of Irish

The school leadership team plays a key role in creating the right culture to promote and support the teaching, learning and use of Irish in their school. School leaders should consider how to

- use school self-evaluation (SSE) and school planning processes to reflect on provision for, and use of, Irish under the four pillars of the Action Plan (See Section 9 below)
- increase the visibility and audibility of Irish in the school
- celebrate the success and efforts of pupils and teachers
- enhance the language experience of pupils in lessons
- give pupils opportunities to use Irish outside of lessons
- support teachers and those championing the language in the school.

9. Planning for the teaching, learning and use of Irish

School leaders and teachers should consider how they can incorporate the Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools into their school self-evaluation processes and curriculum planning and review processes.

For example, they may consider their current provision and possibilities for improvement with reference to the four pillars in the Action Plan as follows:

- How can we foster positive attitudes towards Irish among our staff and pupils?
- How can we increase the use of Irish by pupils, teachers and others in the school/classroom?
- How can we adapt our teaching approaches to ensure that all pupils access the learning of Irish and experience success in learning it?
- How can we make better use of the supports and resources available for Irish?
- How can we share good practice for the teaching and learning of Irish within our school and learn from other schools and teachers?



10. Supports for schools and teachers

There is a range of supports in place to support the implementation of the Action Plan.

- Information on supports provided by Oide to support schools' engagement with the Action Plan is available at www.oide.ie. These supports include ongoing professional learning experiences, in-school support and summer courses.

Schools can book professional learning experiences via the event booking section of the Oide website at <https://dms.oide.ie/event/public>.

Queries regarding these supports or event bookings can be sent to eolas@oide.ie.

- Information on the Department's Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) project is available at [20-year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030](#).
- Information on supports provided by COGG including free summer courses and resources are available at www.cogg.ie. Supports for teaching PE through Irish are available at <https://cogg.ie/corpoideachas-tri-ghaeilge-claru/>.
- Information on supports provided by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) for Irish in primary schools is available at [Primary Language Toolkit | Curriculum Online](#). These include materials to support the informal use of Irish in primary schools.
- Information on updates, events and other supports for Irish provided by the NCCA is available at [Supports for learning and teaching Irish | NCCA](#).
- Local education support centres also provide a range of supports to teachers for Irish and the teaching of Irish. Information on these supports is available on local education support centre websites or in the communications to schools from individual centres. The supports include on-site summer courses in Irish provided by COGG and summer courses on CLIL provided by Oide.
- A list of Irish language course providers for adults is available at Scéal.ie.

The Aonad don Ghaeilge um Scoileanna Meán-Bhéarla in the department will also issue a newsletter each term with updates on supports for schools under the Action Plan.



11. Further information

For further information, please contact AGSMB@education.gov.ie.

Issued by:

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An tAonad Gaeilge um Scoileanna Meán-Bhéarla

Date issued: 30 April 2026