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Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

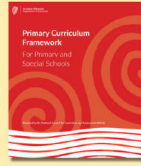
Primary Curriculum Framework

Day 1 - The Big Picture

Professional Learning Booklet

Key Messages

The Primary Curriculum Framework sets out a shared vision for high-quality learning, teaching and assessment for all children.



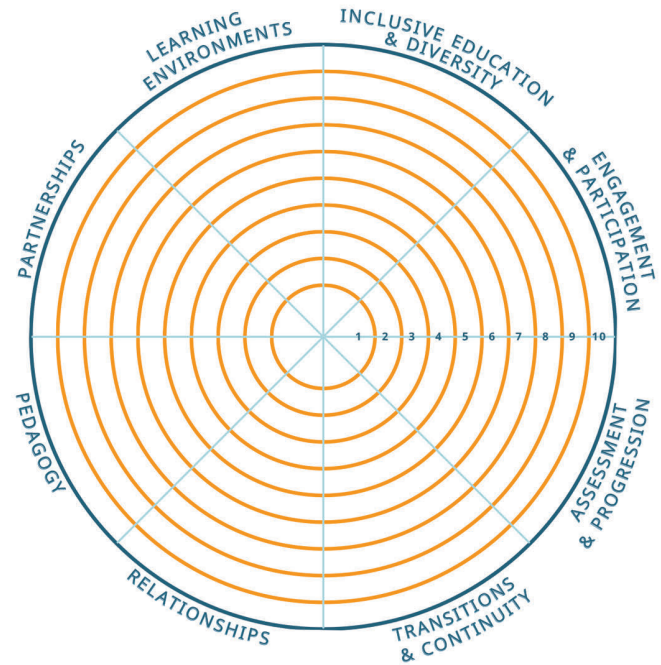
The 8 principles of learning, teaching and assessment act as a compass to guide professional decision making within our context.



Developing professional agency in a school's own context will play a pivotal role in helping every child to thrive and flourish.



Self-Reflection on the Principles of Learning, Teaching and Assessment



Key Learning

Next Steps

Think, Pair, Share

Vision for the Redeveloped Curriculum






The curriculum aims to provide a strong foundation for every child to thrive and flourish, supporting them in realising their full potential as individuals and as members of communities and society during childhood, as they progress through primary and special education and into post-primary education. Building on their previous experiences, the curriculum views children as unique, competent, and caring individuals, and it views teachers as committed, skilful, and agentic professionals*. It supports high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment that is inclusive and evidence-based, recognising the right of all children to make progress in all areas of their learning and development.




*An agentic teacher makes professional and informed decisions in response to the children's learning needs. (Primary Curriculum Framework, p.5)

What does it....



 ...look like?	
 ...sound like?	
 ...feel like?	

What does it....

 ...look like?	
 ...sound like?	
 ...feel like?	



Principles of Learning, Teaching, and Assessment

There are eight overarching principles that schools need to consider in pursuing the curriculum vision (see Figure 1). The principles convey what is valued in primary and special education and what lies at the heart of high-quality learning, teaching, and

assessment in the primary curriculum. They are broad in nature to reflect varied school contexts and children's different circumstances, experiences, and abilities.

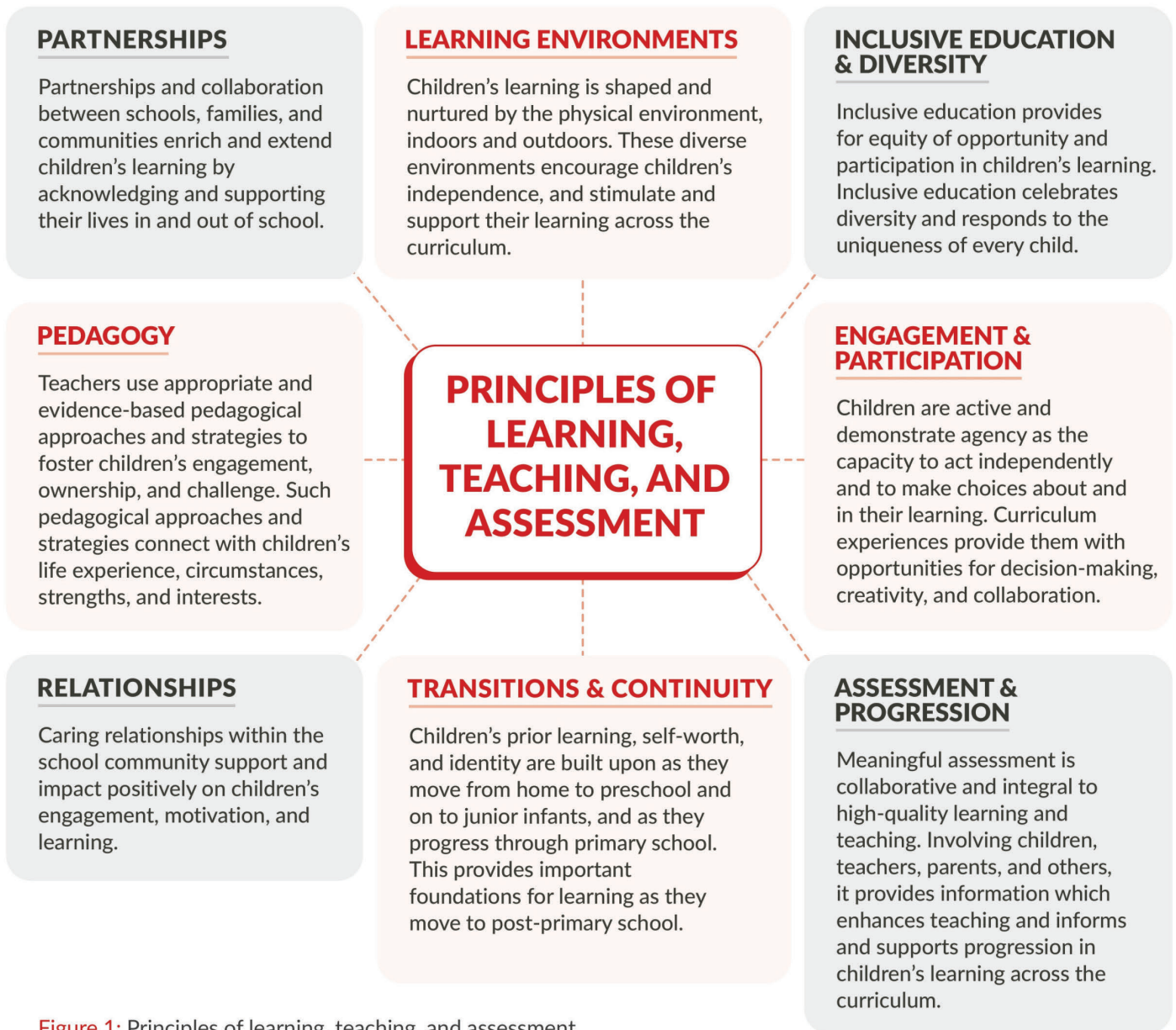


Figure 1: Principles of learning, teaching, and assessment

(Primary Curriculum Framework, p. 6)



Circular 67/2025



Jigsaw Activity - Key Learning

During the group activity, record key learning on each Principle of Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

Partnerships	Transitions & Continuity
Assessment & Progression	Learning Environments
Relationships	Inclusive Education & Diversity
Engagement & Participation	Pedagogy



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Partnerships

‘Partnerships and collaboration between schools, families, and communities enrich and extend children’s learning by acknowledging and supporting their lives in and out of school’.

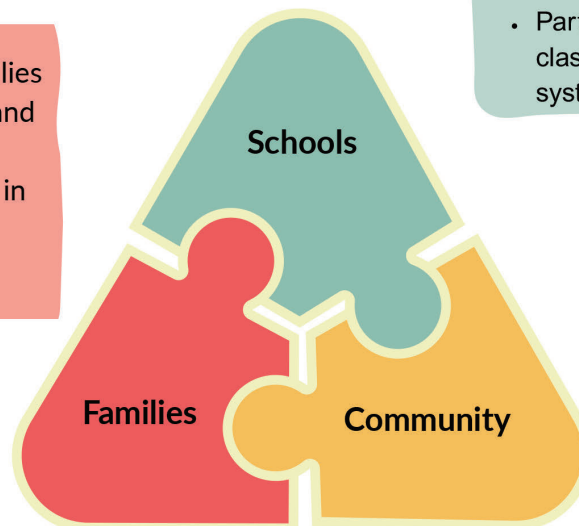
(Primary Curriculum Framework, p. 6)

Partnerships and collaboration are a core principle of the Primary Curriculum Framework. Children’s learning is shaped by experiences in school, at home and in the community. Strong partnerships connect these worlds. When schools, families, and communities work together, children’s full identities, interests, and experiences are acknowledged and celebrated. Such collaboration builds trust, mutual respect, and continuity across the key places where children live and learn, enriching learning and fostering a strong sense of belonging.

Questions to Consider

- How do we build trust with families and the community?
- How do we show that parents and community are valued partners?
- How do we connect home, school, and community experiences?
- How does ‘Partnerships’ interact with other principles of learning, teaching and assessment?

- Involvement of families in school activities and decision-making
- Support for parents in fostering children's learning at home



- Collaboration among teachers, school leaders, and support staff and/or other schools
- Partnerships between different classes or age groups (e.g. buddy systems)

- Collaboration with local organisations/businesses
- Use of community resources to enrich the curriculum
- Opportunities to engage in community projects

‘Our organisation is delighted to contribute to the school's sports programmes. It's a win-win, the students learn and our community benefits.’

-Community Member

‘When my granddad talked about his school days to our class, I felt like my family was part of the school too.’

-2nd Class Child

‘I really enjoyed coming in to talk to the children about my job – they asked really interesting questions!’

-Parent





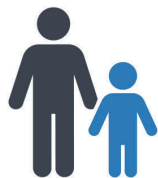
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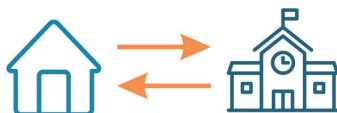
Relationships

'Caring relationships within the school community support and impact positively on children's engagement, motivation, and learning.'

(Primary Curriculum Framework, p. 6)



Teacher - Child Relationships



Home - School Relationships



Peer Relationships



Staff Relationships



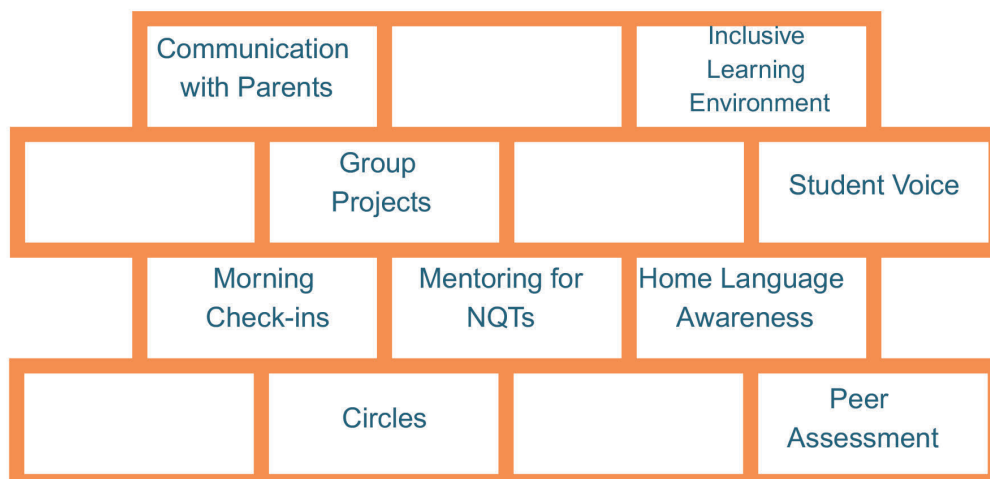
Community Relationships

Questions to Consider

- How do we nurture caring relationships in our school community?
- What do caring relationships look like/sound like/feel like in our classrooms?
- How do these caring relationships impact the children's engagement, motivation and learning?
- How does 'Relationships' interact with other principles of learning, teaching and assessment?

Fostering Caring Relationships

Are there other approaches you would include?



'I really value that my child's teacher takes the time to connect with me, even just a message in the journal or a few words at collection time.'

-Parent

'My principal calls in most mornings to see how I am and to see how the children are. It gives me a chance to flag things before they become issues but also builds a positive relationship with the children.'

-Teacher

'Our teacher asked us which country we would like to learn about and then we did a project together. I liked getting to choose.'

-4th Class Child



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Transitions & Continuity

‘Children’s prior learning, self-worth, and identity are built upon as they move from home to preschool and on to Junior Infants, and as they progress through primary school. This provides important foundations for learning as they move to post-primary school.’

(Primary Curriculum Framework, p. 6)

Effective transitions and continuity support each child’s progression by recognising their unique background, interests, and stage of development. Ongoing communication, from preschool through to post-primary, ensures alignment in pedagogy and curriculum, helping children feel secure and ready to learn.

Tools like ‘Mo Scéal’ and the Education Passport enable consistent documentation of learning, while strong family partnerships enrich this process. Professional dialogue and reflective practice among teachers strengthen coherence across transition points, including mid-year entries and movement between multi-grade settings.

‘Sharing information about learning and development is especially important at these transition points, so that teachers can plan experiences that enable children to continue to progress in their learning across the curriculum.’

(Primary Curriculum Framework, p. 30)

Preschool to Primary

Primary to Post-Primary

Class to Class

Class to SEN

Parent to School

One School Culture
to Another

Joining a Class Mid-Year

Questions to Consider

- How can I make transitions between class levels smooth and supportive for every child?
- How do I use professional dialogue with colleagues to support continuity in learning and teaching?
- How can I strengthen collaboration with preschools, post-primary schools, and families to support transitions and development?
- How does ‘Transitions and Continuity’ interact with other principles of learning, teaching and assessment?

‘Visiting my new school, and meeting teachers before starting, helped me feel less nervous and ready for the next chapter.’

-6th Class Child

‘Having structured tools like ‘Mo Scéal’ really helps us communicate children’s experiences effectively to primary teachers, creating a sense of trust and continuity from the start.’

-Preschool Educator

‘When my daughter moved from preschool to primary school, the sharing of information between teachers was invaluable. It made us feel included and reassured during a big moment in her life.’

-Parent





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Inclusive Education & Diversity

'Inclusive education provides for equity of opportunity and participation in children's learning.
Inclusive education celebrates diversity and responds to the uniqueness of every child.'

(Primary Curriculum Framework, p. 6)

'Inclusive practice focuses on extending what is available to all,
rather than providing something additional to some.'

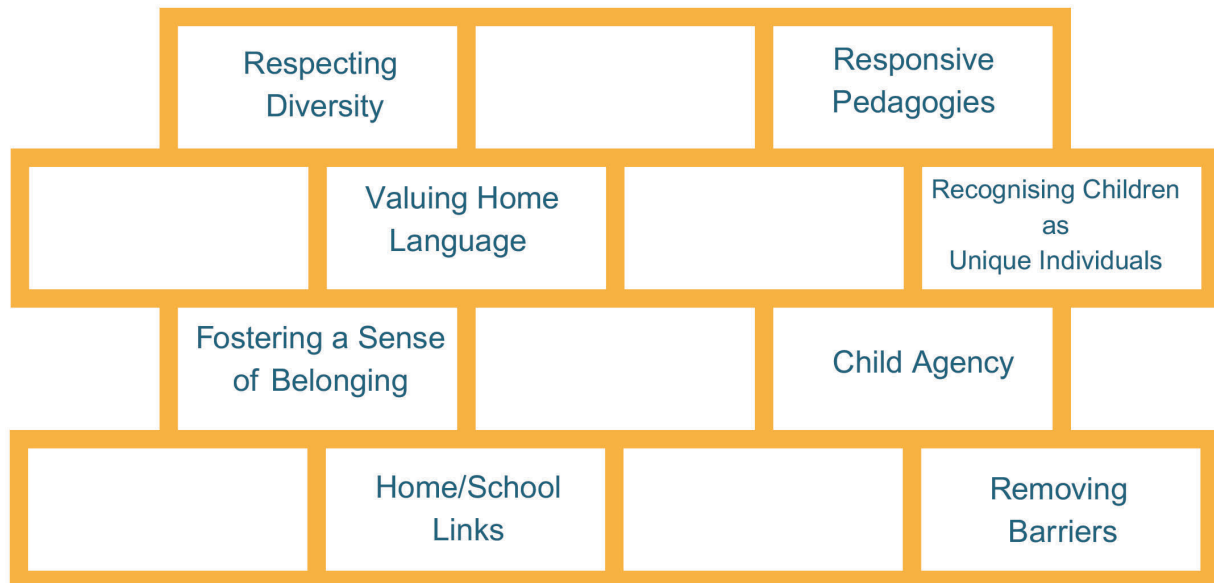
(Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011)

Questions to Consider

- How do we nurture inclusive learning environments in our school?
- What inclusive teaching approaches do I use in my everyday practice?
- How do we foster a sense of belonging for all pupils in our school?
- How does 'Inclusive Education and Diversity' interact with other principles of learning, teaching and assessment?

Developing Inclusive Learning Environments

Are there other key approaches you would include?



'When children see their culture, language, or identity reflected in the classroom, you can see it in their eyes they know they belong.'

-Teacher

'Sometimes I find reading hard, but my teacher lets me draw my ideas to show what I'm thinking.'

-4th Class Child

'I plan my teaching around children's strengths. It's not about making them fit the curriculum; it's about shaping the curriculum to fit them.'

-Teacher





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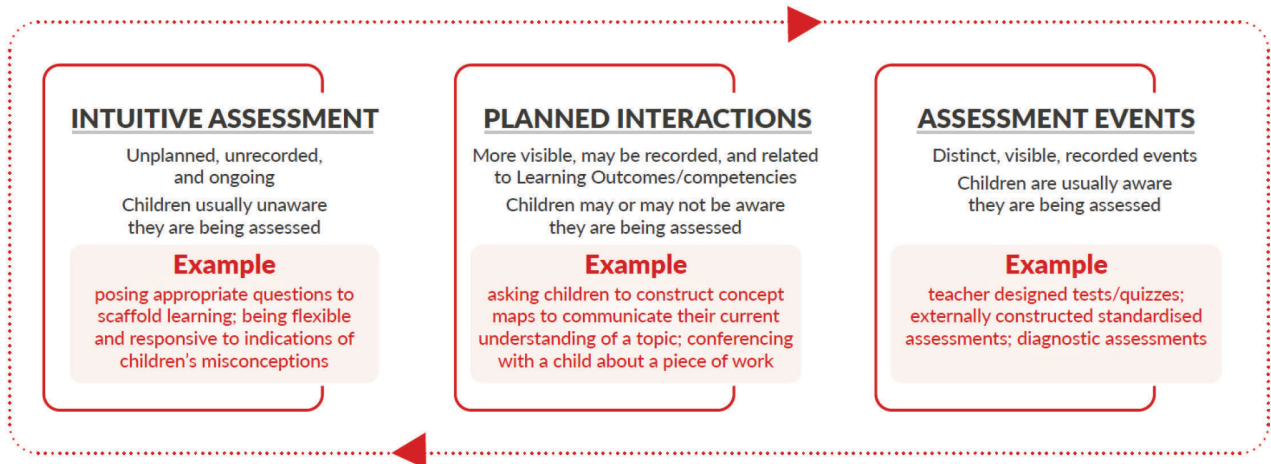
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Assessment and Progression

‘Meaningful assessment is collaborative and integral to high-quality learning and teaching. Involving children, teachers, parents, and others, it provides information which enhances teaching and informs and supports progression in children’s learning across the curriculum.’

(Primary Curriculum Framework, p. 6)

Continuum of Assessment



(Primary Curriculum Framework, p. 22)

Questions to Consider

- How does assessment support me to identify the next steps for each child's learning?
- In what ways do we support, monitor, and celebrate progression across the school? How do we share this information with children, parents, teachers, and other professionals?
- What assessment strategies are currently being used in our school? In what situations are they more or less effective?
- How does ‘Assessment and Progression’ interact with other principles of learning, teaching and assessment?



‘I want to know what my child can do and what steps are in place to help them make progress in their learning.’
-Parent

‘Intuitive assessment allows me to adjust my teaching in real-time to respond to the children’s needs.’
-Teacher

‘Time to talk about my work, with my teacher and my friends, helps my learning.’
-5th Class Child





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Engagement and Participation

‘Children are active and demonstrate agency as the capacity to act independently and to make choices about and in their learning. Curriculum experiences provide them with opportunities for decision-making, creativity, and collaboration.’

(Primary Curriculum Framework, p. 6)

In the Primary Curriculum Framework, engagement and participation are central to learning. Children are viewed as active agents, making choices within their learning, supported by teachers who design playful, meaningful experiences linked to their interests and curiosities. Engagement is strengthened when children have genuine voice and choice, fostering ownership and agency. Participation flourishes in collaborative, respectful environments built on trust. Flexible use of time, space and resources encourages independence, exploration and creativity. Crucially, engagement and participation go beyond compliance; this reflects children’s capacity to lead, question, create and connect learning to the wider world.



Questions to Consider

- How do we give children voice and choice in their learning?
- In what ways does our teaching promote active engagement rather than passive compliance?
- How do we create collaborative opportunities where children learn with and from each other?
- How does ‘Engagement and Participation’ interact with other principles of learning, teaching and assessment?

‘Providing students in my class with a choice enhances their engagement and encourages them to become more motivated. It encourages them to take more ownership over their own learning and also builds a level of trust between us. As a result, children better understand their own learning, ask more questions, and show greater creativity.’

-6th Class Teacher

‘I love when teacher lets us choose how we present our work. Sometimes I like to write my stories using a tablet but other times I like to use my copy. It’s fun seeing how my friends decide to do theirs when we share our work afterwards. I like getting new ideas from them and seeing how they do things in ways I can try out next time.’

-6th Class Child





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Learning Environments

‘Children’s learning is shaped and nurtured by the physical environment, indoors and outdoors. These diverse environments encourage children’s independence, and stimulate and support their learning across the curriculum.’ (Primary Curriculum Framework, p. 6)



Nature and Experiential Learning

Utilising the learning environments in your local environment



Sense of Belonging

Creating a supportive & inclusive atmosphere



Authentic Local and Real Life Experiences

Drawing on the immediate community and environment as a resource for learning



Flexible and Adaptable

Spaces that can be adjusted easily for different learning experiences



Promoting Independence and Autonomy

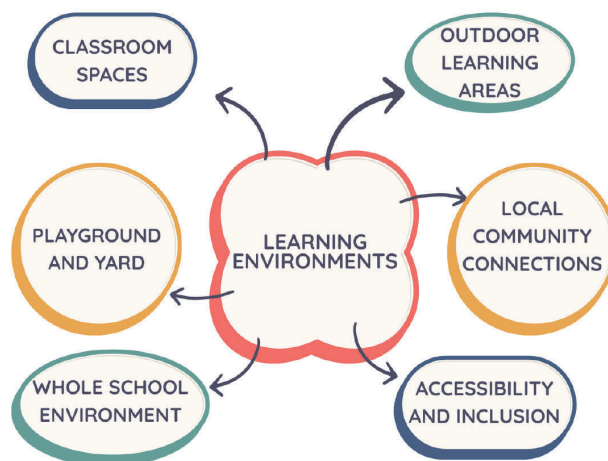
Choice in learning may involve what materials to use, where to sit, how to approach a task

‘Inclusive learning environments work to remove barriers to make learning more meaningful and relevant for every child, particularly those most vulnerable to exclusionary pressures. It also acknowledges that there are challenges to creating inclusive learning environments.’

(Primary Curriculum Framework, p. 33)

Questions to Consider

- In what way do we use the learning environment in our local environment?
- How do our classroom routines and layout promote independence and choice for all children?
- How do our environments change over time to reflect children’s learning journeys and evolving interests? e.g. changing classroom layout/seating, table names.
- How does ‘Learning Environments’ interact with other principles of learning, teaching and assessment?



‘Since redesigning our classroom to allow more flexible seating and collaborative spaces, I’ve noticed a huge improvement in children’s motivation and teamwork. The classroom truly feels alive.’

-Teacher

‘My child thrives when learning outdoors. The school’s garden project has not only made her excited about Science but also more enthusiastic about attending school.’

-Parent

‘I love when we learn about local History and Geography while visiting the sites we are learning about. Some of them are really close to my house.’

-1st Class Child





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Pedagogy

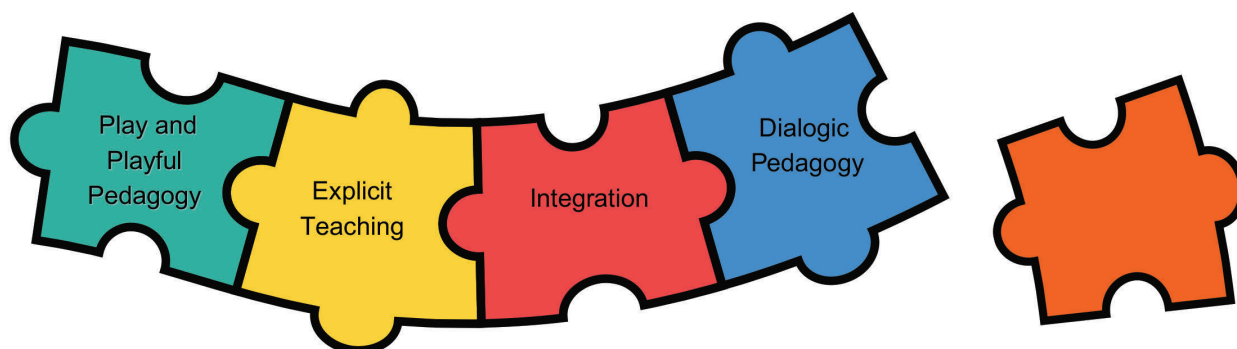
‘Teachers use appropriate and evidence-based pedagogical approaches and strategies to foster children’s engagement, ownership, and challenge. Such pedagogical approaches and strategies connect with children’s life experiences, circumstances, strengths and interests.’

(Primary Curriculum Framework, p. 6)

The Primary Curriculum Framework outlines pedagogy as dynamic, reflective, intentional, and evidence-based, rather than rigid or one-size-fits-all. Teachers are seen as committed, skilful, and agentic professionals, trusted to make informed choices based on children’s needs, interests, prior learning, and the curriculum itself.

Pedagogical approaches must be appropriate, evidence-based, and responsive to children’s backgrounds, experiences, and strengths. The Primary Curriculum Framework promotes the use of varied and flexible approaches to pedagogy and, in turn, learning experiences. Playful and integrated pedagogical approaches are central to the Primary Curriculum Framework.

Examples of Pedagogical Approaches



Questions to Consider

- How do I become familiar with, and begin enacting, the pedagogical approaches in the redeveloped curriculum?
- How can my knowledge of the children support my decision making around the next steps for their learning?
- How do I create a classroom atmosphere that fosters play and playful pedagogy to support this learning?
- How does ‘Pedagogy’ interact with other principles of learning, teaching and assessment?

‘I really like when we discuss things as a whole class. Sometimes my friends come up with ideas that I wouldn’t have thought of and that gives me new ideas. I like that we can agree or disagree with each other too. I feel confident to speak when there is no right or wrong answer.’

-5th Class Child

‘The students are so much more engaged when we use a dialogic approach in our classroom. They have become much better listeners and speakers and it has opened their minds to seeing things from different perspectives. This inclusive practice encourages participation from all students.’

-Class Teacher



Reflection

Focus:

If Well Developed

As a child...

As a teacher...

As a parent...

As a school...

Reflecting on our Current Practice

As a child...

As a teacher...

As a parent...

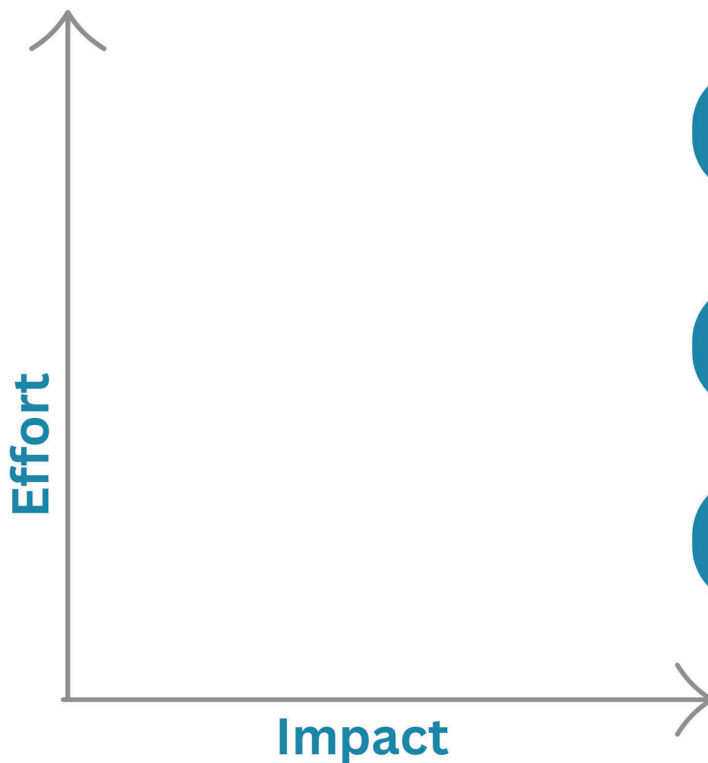
As a school...

Identifying Opportunities

What possible opportunities exist to build upon current practice?



Impact, Effort & Balance



What will be the impact on learning, teaching and assessment?

What will be the effort required from all to develop and maintain?

How does this interact with other aspects of curriculum and is balance present?



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