



**Primary Curriculum Framework (PCF):** The *PCF* refers to the framework of the redeveloped curriculum published in March 2023. The *PCF* sets out the purpose, structure and content for the redeveloped curriculum in primary and special schools. It highlights what is important in primary education and why; and provides a description of what should be prioritised in children's learning. The framework underpins the individual curriculum specifications. Understanding the *PCF*, in the first instance, is critical before detailed exploration of the individual specifications.

**Curriculum areas:** The redeveloped curriculum is presented in five broad curriculum areas informed by the curriculum framework (*PCF*). The curriculum areas are outlined on page 14 of the *PCF* document and include:

**1.** Language **2.** Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education **3.** Wellbeing **4.** Arts Education **5.** Social and Environmental Education

**Specification:** The curriculum area specification is the document which refers to the specific detail for each curriculum area of the redeveloped curriculum. The specification is distinct from the online toolkit. The specification outlines the link to the vision and principles of learning, teaching and assessment of the framework as well as the rationale, aims, strands, strand units, elements, learning outcomes, and guidance on the curriculum in practice.

**Toolkit:** The curriculum area toolkit is a set of supports developed and maintained by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). A toolkit is available for all five curriculum areas and will be added to by the NCCA in time. Each toolkit offers practical support for teachers in building rich learning experiences for children. The components of the toolkit are support materials, examples of children's learning and progression supports.

**Vision for the Redeveloped Primary School Curriculum:** The vision is a broad statement of purpose intended to inform all parts of the curriculum and ultimately the experiences of all children and teachers in primary and special schools.

**Principles of Learning, Teaching and Assessment:** 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 redeveloped primary curriculum. They are broad in nature to reflect varied school contexts and children's different circumstances, experiences, and abilities.

**Key competencies:** The redeveloped primary curriculum builds on and further develops children's early learning experiences in the home and preschool. It seeks to equip children with the essential knowledge, skills, concepts, dispositions, attitudes, and values which enable them to adapt to and deal with a range of situations, challenges, and contexts in support of broader Learning Outcomes. These capabilities are presented as seven inextricably linked key competencies that are relevant from stages 1 to 4.

**Attributes:** The attributes of the Key Competencies presented in the *PCF* are not intended as an exhaustive list but instead describe characteristic learning and development opportunities for children within each key competency which will be embedded through Learning Outcomes in the curriculum specifications.

**Teacher Agency:** Agency is the capacity to make choices and decisions about what to teach, when to teach it, and how to sequence and pace learning. This includes decisions about the specific learning experiences to be provided.

**Child Agency:** Children are active in their own learning and can display their agency by taking the initiative in learning situations, by observing and becoming involved in ongoing events, or by initiating conversations with others.

**The Central Components of High-Quality Learning, Teaching and Assessment:** Teachers make key decisions every day about learning, teaching and assessment, including decisions about what children learn, the sequence in which they learn, the pace at which they learn, and the activities and experiences through which they learn. These decisions are shaped the teacher's knowledge of the children and their prior learning; their knowledge of the curriculum; their knowledge of pedagogy.

**Enactment:** Enactment refers to the process of bringing the redeveloped curriculum into practice in schools. The introduction and enactment of the primary school curriculum requires a highly dynamic set of sustained conditions. Enactment requires reflection to move forward with both clarity and purpose and places confidence in teacher's professional judgements. The enactment of the curriculum recognises that teachers are bringing the curriculum to life in their classrooms, is intended to be used flexibly and can take account of each school's unique context.

**Implementation:** A term commonly used in educational policy and research to describe the process of putting curriculum design into practice. In the *PCF*, the term enactment rather than implementation is used, reflecting the view that curriculum change involves ongoing professional judgement, contextual adaptation, and dynamic conditions within schools.

**Learning Outcome:** A learning outcome describes the expected learning and development for children at the end of a period of time.