



Circular Letter 0039/2023

To Boards of Management and Principal Teachers, Teaching Staff of Primary Schools and Special Schools and CEOs of ETBs.

***Primary Mathematics Curriculum* for primary and special schools**

Support and Implementation

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1. *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* – Introduction

The introduction of the new *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* is a significant milestone in the ongoing development of the curriculum for primary and special schools, much of which is over 20 years old. The *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* is now available online at

www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary.

The *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* is fully aligned with the vision, principles and statements on learning, teaching and assessment of the

Primary Curriculum Framework, launched earlier this year by Minister Norma Foley TD.

The *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* offers an engaging, playful and inclusive learning experience for pupils, focusing on both the "how" and "what" of mathematical learning. Rooted in contemporary research, five pedagogical practices are identified as being central to the provision of high-quality mathematical learning experiences. These are

- Fostering productive disposition
- Emphasising mathematical modelling
- Using cognitively challenging tasks
- Promoting Maths talk
- Using formative assessment

These practices create an environment where pupils engage in meaningful and enriching learning processes, tailored to their individual needs and interests, fostering confidence and proficiency in Mathematics.

The curriculum recognises that Mathematics is intrinsic to our understanding of the world, and a child's mathematical journey starts from birth, evolving through early childhood, primary, and post-primary education. Each child is seen as naturally mathematical, capable of developing mathematical concepts over time. The curriculum encourages mathematical thinking and problem-solving, emphasising collaboration, communication, and multiple ways of expression. Mathematics is portrayed as a tool to comprehend and navigate everyday life, empowering pupils with skills for critical engagement. Furthermore, the curriculum highlights the beauty of Mathematics, promoting exploration, creativity, and innovation.

The *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* presents the rationale, aims, strands and elements, and Learning Outcomes that will inform the learning and teaching and assessment of Mathematics in primary and special schools in the coming years. It also provides guidance on the curriculum in practice. A toolkit, published alongside the curriculum, provides a range of supports for enacting the curriculum, such as mathematical concepts, progression continua, support materials and examples of children's learning. The toolkit will be continually updated over the coming years.

School leaders and teachers will explore and become familiar with the new curriculum during the 2023/2024 school year and will work towards implementation of the curriculum from Stages 1 - 4 (junior infants to sixth class) from September 2024.

A hard copy of the curriculum for each school leader and teacher will be delivered to schools in the coming weeks.

2. Support

To support the engagement, collaboration and professional learning of school leaders and teachers as they become familiar with and implement the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*, a suite of high-quality professional development supports will be provided by the Department, together with Oide and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

Oide will provide schools with a comprehensive range of face-to-face and online supports for the introduction, enactment and embedding of the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* over the course of an extensive three-phase continuous professional development (CPD) framework. In the case of special schools, this comprehensive suite of support will be provided by the NCSE Primary Curriculum team.

A summarised version of the information outlined below is available in the Appendix, should you wish to print it off for your reference or display it in your school.

Phase 1

Within the first phase (2023-2024), supports will include:

- **InfoVideo:** This short online presentation will introduce all primary and special schools to the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* and will provide an overview of the CPD framework.
- **School and curriculum leaders' seminar** (September – October 2023): This full-day face-to-face seminar will introduce all primary and special school leaders, along with a nominated curriculum leader per school, to the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* and will provide an overview of the CPD supports available. This seminar will be facilitated by a professional learning leader from Oide in the case of primary schools, or by the NCSE in the case of special schools.

- **Online collaboratives for school and curriculum leaders** (November 2023 – June 2024): These supportive online communities will be led by an Oide professional learning leader in the case of primary schools, or an NCSE primary curriculum advisor in the case of special schools.
- **School closure day** (November 2023 – June 2024): All primary schools will be assigned a date to work with an Oide professional learning leader to explore the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*. Small and medium schools will be clustered together off-site for this day, with larger schools receiving their support on-site. In the case of special schools, a school closure day will be assigned and facilitated by an NCSE primary curriculum advisor.
- **Online clinics** (January 2024 – May 2024): Regular access for school and curriculum leaders to an Oide professional learning leader, or an NCSE primary curriculum advisor will be provided, to answer any queries as primary and special schools begin to introduce the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*.
- **Muinín online workshop series** (January 2024 – June 2024): This series of elective online workshops for teachers will explore the five strands of the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*. Participating teachers will be grouped for these workshops depending on the classes / stages they teach. This workshop series will be facilitated by an Oide professional learning leader.
- **Oide online learning hub**: A repository of resources to support teachers and school leaders in exploring elements of the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* will be made available from the beginning of the school year and will be further developed throughout the year in response to the needs of schools and teachers.
- **Additional support material**: CPD engagements will also be designed and made available via the Oide online learning hub to assist school and curriculum leaders in introducing the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* within their particular school context. A link will also be provided to the relevant NCSE supports.

Phase 2

Within the second phase (2024-2025), supports will include:

- **Online collaboratives for school and curriculum leaders:** (October 2024 – May 2025): These supportive online communities will be led by an Oide professional learning leader in the case of

primary schools, or an NCSE primary curriculum advisor, in the case of special schools.

- **Stage focused additional supports (Available via Oide online learning hub)** (September 2024 – May 2025): This will be a series of engagements designed by Oide and available for all staff on the online learning hub.
- **School, curriculum and stage leader clinics** (November 2024 – May 2025): These elective online clinics will be facilitated by an Oide professional learning leader and will be available to schools who can nominate a stage or curriculum leader to help implement the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* in their schools.
- **Second school closure day** (October 2024 – May 2025): All primary schools will be assigned a date to work with an Oide professional learning leader to explore the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*. Small and medium schools will be clustered together for this day off-site, with larger schools receiving their support on-site. In the case of special schools, a school closure day will be assigned and facilitated by an NCSE primary curriculum advisor
- **Muinín online workshop series** (November 2024 – May 2025): This series of elective online workshops for teachers will explore the five strands of the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*. Participating teachers will be grouped according to their class level / stage. This workshop series will be facilitated by an Oide professional learning leader.
- **Oide online learning hub**: A repository of resources to support teachers and school leaders in exploring elements of the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* will continue to be made available and will be added to as needs emerge.

Phase 3

Within the third phase (2025-onwards), supports will include:

- **Bespoke in-school support**: Oide professional learning leaders will provide bespoke onsite in-school support to continue to embed the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*. This will be available on request from schools and Oide will issue details of how to apply closer to the time.
- **Collaboratives (online and face to face)**: These collaboratives will be self-directed by schools themselves to further support the implementation of the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*. Having

participated in Oide/ NCSE led collaboratives in the previous two phases, schools may opt to continue meeting independently to share their practice in embedding the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*

- **Muinín online workshop series:** The Muinín online workshop series will continue to be made available by Oide for teachers of all class levels.
- **Online learning hub:** A repository of resources to support teachers and school leaders in exploring elements of the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* will continue to be made available and will be added to as needs emerge.

3. School Closures

The Department understands the need for a whole-school approach to the introduction of changes in practice that will have a real impact on pupils' learning. Both time and support are required to ensure full engagement and prior planning of activities by schools to introduce the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*. Schools may therefore avail of the following:-

2023/2024 school year closure

All schools will be assigned a date from November 2023 - June 2024 to explore the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* with an Oide professional learning leader in the case of primary schools and an NCSE primary curriculum advisor in the case of special schools.

2024/25 school year closure

All schools will be assigned a date from October 2024 - May 2025 to explore the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* with an Oide professional learning leader in the case of primary schools and an NCSE primary curriculum advisor in the case of special schools.

4. Introduction and Implementation

In the 2023/2024 school year, teachers in all schools are expected to:

- Fully familiarise themselves with the rationale, aims, strands, elements, Learning Outcomes and the big ideas of the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*.
- Explore Chapter 6 of the curriculum documentation, which describes fundamental features of children's learning and the corresponding pedagogical practices that support and enhance that learning.

- Engage at a whole-school level to explore, discuss and reflect on the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* in relation to the particular context of their own school.
- Become familiar with the range of supports in the Primary Mathematics Toolkit, available at www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary
- Attend the CPD facilitated by Oide and/or NCSE.

School leadership teams are expected to support teachers as they become familiar with the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* by:

- Attendance, along with a nominated curriculum leader per school, at a school and curriculum leaders' seminar in September/ October 2023. The seminar will introduce the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* and provide an overview of the CPD supports available.
- Leading the introduction to the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* within their schools and facilitating whole-school staff discussions and collaborative reflection, learning and planning to ensure that the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* is implemented in an incremental way.
- Participating in online collaboratives for school and curriculum leaders.
- Encouraging teachers' participation in the Muinín online workshop series to explore the five strands of the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*.
- Encouraging teachers to engage with the Oide online learning hub.
- Using staff meetings/Croke Park hours to encourage whole staff engagement with the additional support material for the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* available on the Oide online learning hub.
- Engaging with parents/guardians around the introduction of the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum* and explaining what this means in terms of their children's learning experiences and in terms of school closures for staff CPD.

5. Preparation for Teaching and Learning

In 2021, the Department of Education published *Preparation for Teaching and Learning - Guidance for All Primary and Special Schools*. The guidance supports teachers in primary and special schools with their preparation for teaching and learning across the *Primary School Curriculum* 1999 and more recent curriculum specifications. Preparation for teaching and learning is best understood as an ongoing process, which evolves as new information is continuously learned about children, their needs, their interests and their abilities. It includes invisible, visible and recorded preparation. All three are

complementary and necessary to support the provision of appropriate learning experiences for all children.

This guidance was developed in collaboration with schools and teachers, the NCCA, and relevant support services. The guidance recognises teachers as committed, skilled professionals who exercise their agency by making decisions about what children learn, the sequence in which they learn and the experiences through which they learn. It aims to support all teachers and school leaders by providing a renewed understanding of how planning and preparation for teaching and learning is demonstrated in the classroom.

6. Further Information

Further information can be found via the following websites:

www.gov.ie

www.ncca.ie

www.curriculumonline.ie

www.oide.ie

www.ncse.ie



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7. Appendix 1: Primary Mathematics Curriculum CPD Framework

Phase 1 (2023-24)	Phase 2 (2024-25)	Phase 3 (2025 – beyond)
Introduction	Implementation	Embedding
InfoVideo		
School and Curriculum Leaders' Seminar <i>(Sept-Oct, online booking required)</i>		
School and Curriculum Leaders' Online Collaboratives: Oide/NCSE-led <i>(Nov-June, dates will be assigned)</i>	School and Curriculum Leaders' Online Collaboratives: Oide/NCSE-led <i>(Oct-May, dates will be assigned)</i>	School and Curriculum Leaders' Collaboratives: School-led
School Closure Day 1: Small and medium sized schools will be clustered off-site <i>(Nov-June, date will be assigned)</i>	School Closure Day 2: Small and medium sized schools will be clustered off-site <i>(Oct-May, date will be assigned)</i>	In-school support (upon application)
School and Curriculum Leaders' Online Clinics <i>(Jan- May, dates will be assigned)</i>	School, Curriculum and Stage Leaders' Online Clinics <i>(Nov- May, dates will be assigned)</i>	
Muinín Online Workshop Series <i>(Jan- June, events will be advertised)</i>	Muinín Online Workshop Series <i>(Nov- May, events will be advertised)</i>	Muinín Online Workshop Series <i>(Nov- May, events will be advertised)</i>

Oide Online Learning Hub <i>(Available throughout the year)</i>	Oide Online Learning Hub <i>(Available throughout the year)</i>	Oide Online Learning Hub <i>(Available via Oide online learning hub throughout the year)</i>
Additional Support Materials <i>(Available via Oide online learning hub throughout the year)</i>	Stage-focused Supports <i>(Available via Oide online learning hub throughout the year)</i>	