



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Literacy and Numeracy: The Irish Experience



Vlor-EPOS seminar

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25 April 2023

Overview of Presentation

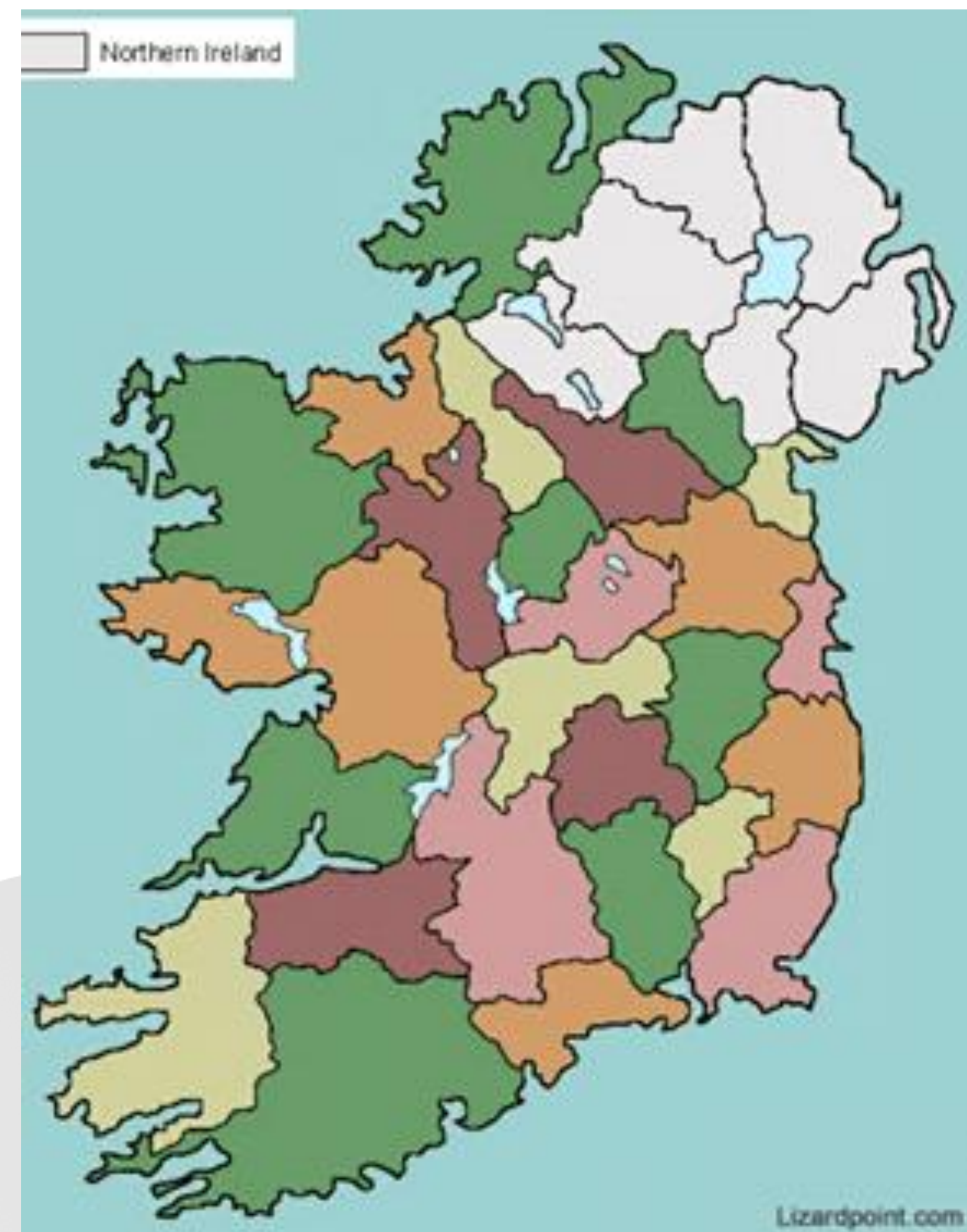


- Ireland – some general information
- Structure of Ireland's school system
- Overall expenditure in education
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Ireland's Performance
- Key strategies

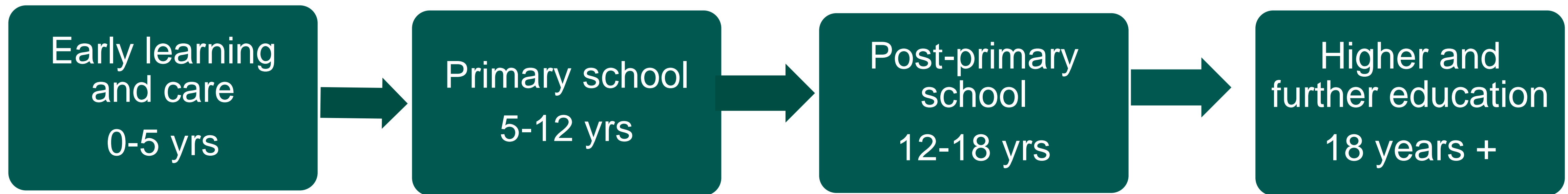
General Information: Demographics



- Ireland's population tops **5.1 million** (2022 census) for the first time since 1851 census
- Just over 2 million people (40.5%) in the greater Dublin area
- 59,600 (7.6% increase since last census in 2016)
- 703,700 non-Irish nationals (13.8% of the total pop) - largest population increase from migration in 15 years

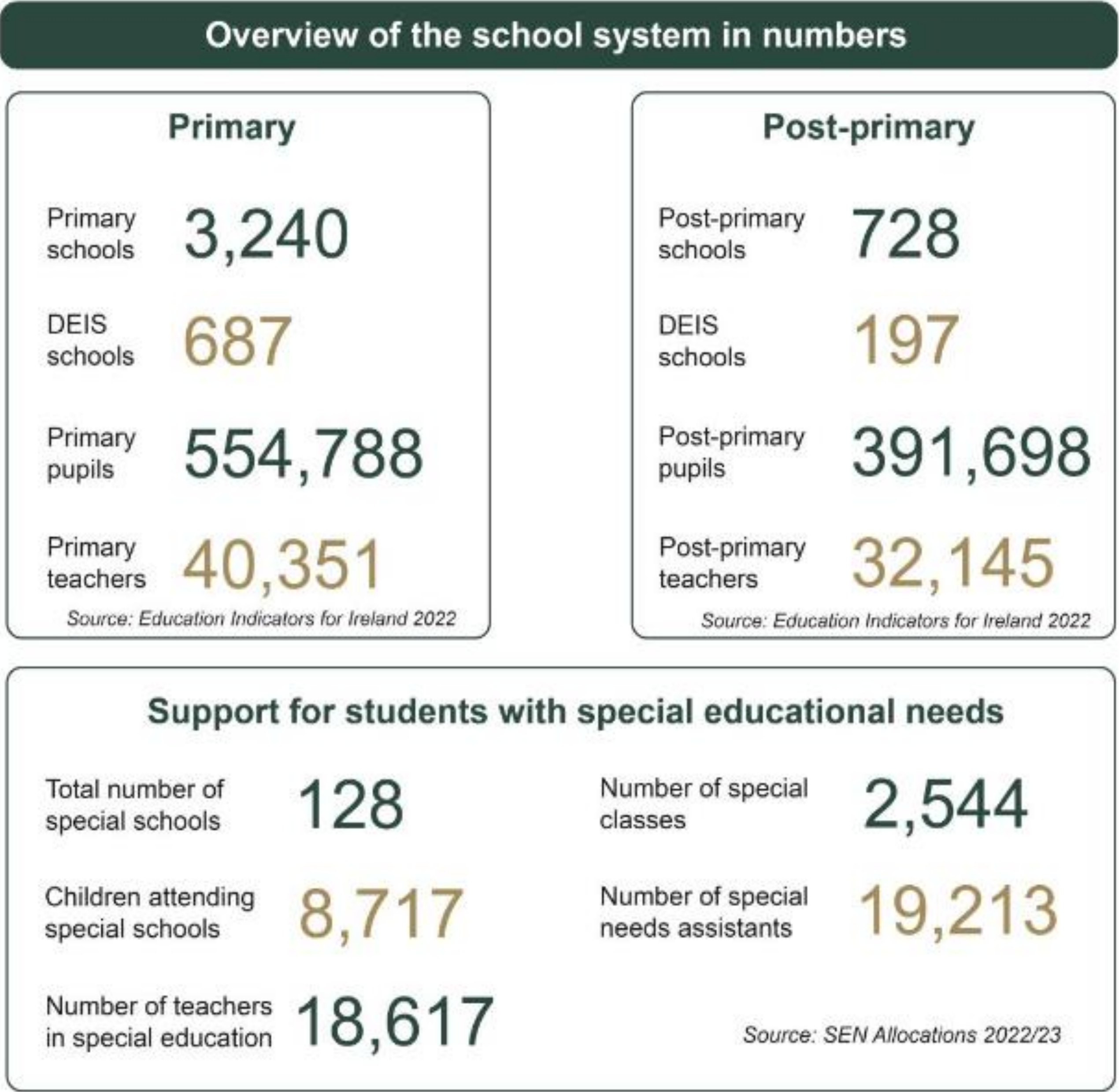


Stages of Education in Ireland



Compulsory education in Ireland – 6 to 16 years

Overview of Irish school system in numbers



Early learning and care (ELC)

- 4022 ELC settings
- 104,612 enrolled in ECCE scheme
- 26,197 staff

Governance of Schools



- **Centralised education system** governed by the Department of Education (policy making, allocation of resources, administration, and quality assurance)
- 3 models of school patronage - denominational, inter-denominational & multi-denominational
- Most students in state-funded schools (Only 7.8% boys & 5.8% girls in fee-charging schools (2021))
- Range of national management bodies (7 primary & 3 second-level)
- Schools managed by independent, voluntary boards of management established by founding patron (89.2% of primary pupils and 49.4% post-primary students attend Catholic ethos schools)
- No regional structures, municipalities or local education authorities, with the exception of **16 regionally-based Education and Training Boards (ETBs)**



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Overall expenditure on education



Overall spending on education (Dept of Ed)



	2023 – Euro '000	2022 - Euro '000	2021 - Euro '000
Total Education Budget (Revenue)	10,025,107 Current+Capital 9,164,707 current only	9,282,547 Current+Capital 8,490,147 current only	8,960,902 Current+capital 8,220,469 current only
Special Education budget element	2,590,000.00	2,321,364.00	2,017,675.00
Special Education as a % of Total Education budget	27%	26%	23%



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Current Special Education Policy

- A continuum of provision across mainstream schools, special classes and special schools.
- Mainstream schools frontloaded with resources through SEN allocation model to enable them to support all learners and promote inclusion.
- Parental choice for placements
- Special class or special school placements require a professional assessment and recommendation



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Literacy and Numeracy Strategy



LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR LEARNING AND LIFE

The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among
Children and Young People 2011-2020



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS



Overview



Background

Literacy and numeracy strategy for learning and life 2011

School Self-Evaluation (Cir 56/2022)

Interim review of the Strategy 2017 – new targets set

Going forward: New strategy being developed in 2023

Consultation and focus groups ongoing

Background



National assessments: National Assessments for English and Mathematics in Primary (2021 results due)

International assessments (PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS)

State examinations

Inspectorate evaluations

— *Assessment of reading and mathematics as part of DEIS initiatives*

Consultation – on the strategy

Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011-2020,



PILLAR

01

ENABLING PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LITERACY AND NUMERACY DEVELOPMENT

PILLAR

02

IMPROVING TEACHERS' AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (ECCE) PRACTITIONERS' PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

PILLAR

03

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

PILLAR

04

IMPROVING THE CURRICULUM AND THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

PILLAR

05

HELPING STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS TO ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL

PILLAR

06

IMPROVING ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION TO SUPPORT BETTER LEARNING IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Literacy and Numeracy Strategy for Learning and Life 2011-2020



Targets

- 1. To improve our attitudes to literacy and numeracy*
 - Foster an enjoyment of reading among children and young people
- 2. To improve outcomes at early childhood level*
 - Improve communication and oral language competence of young children in ECCE settings and their readiness to develop early mathematical language and ideas
- 3. To improve outcomes at primary level*
 - Increase the percentage of primary children performing at level 3 or 4 combined on national assessments by at least 5 percentage points (from 35%)
- 4. To improve outcomes at post-primary level.*
 - Halve percentage of 15 year old students performing at or below level 1 in PISA by 2020

Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011-2020, Interim Review - 2017



SNAPSHOT OF FINDINGS FROM NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



Much was achieved against the targets that were set.

Some of the targets related to national and international assessments:

- NAERM 2014 (results due in 2023 for NAERM in 2021)
- PISA 2015 / 2018: reducing students achieving at proficiency levels 1
- Junior and Leaving Certificate: e.g. exceeded take up levels in

Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011-2020, Interim Review



SNAPSHOT OF FINDINGS FROM NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

But challenges have been identified:

- PISA 2015/2018 – mathematics
- Literacy and numeracy gap
- Higher achievers
- Irish
- ICT

Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011-2020, Interim Review



PRIORITIES 2017 – 2020 FOR LITERACY AND NUMERACY

The central vision of our Statement of Strategy and Action Plan for Education is that the Irish Education and Training System should become the best in Europe over the next decade. (Action Plan for Education 2016-2019)

For the next four years, our key priorities for attention under the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy are:

- Improving numeracy outcomes for all students
- Tackling educational disadvantage
- Enabling higher-achieving students to reach their full potential
- Embedding achievements gained in literacy, with a particular focus on:
 - literacy for and through the Irish language
 - digital literacy.

PISA 2018



Table 1: The position of Ireland in PISA reading literacy assessment across the OECD, the EU and all PISA participating countries for 2009, 2015 and 2018 *Reading Literacy was the major domain in 2009 and 2018

Outcomes for students in PISA	OECD	EU	All PISA
Placing in 2018*	4 th (36 OECD)	3 rd (27 EU)	8 th (77 PISA)
Placing in 2015	3 rd (35 OECD)	2 nd (28 EU)	5 th (70 PISA)
Placing in 2009*	17 th (34 OECD)	n/a	21 st (65 PISA)

Table 2: The position of Ireland in PISA mathematical literacy assessment across the OECD, the EU and all PISA participating countries for 2012, 2015 and 2018
*Mathematical Literacy was the major domain in 2012

Outcomes for students in PISA	OECD	EU	All PISA
2018	16 th (37 OECD)	11 th (28 EU)	21 st (78 PISA)
2015	13 th (35 OECD)	9 th (28 EU)	18 th (70 PISA)
2012*	13 th (34 OECD)	n/a	20 th (65 PISA)

PISA 2018



How well did Irish students perform in Reading?

Percentage of students below Level 2 and at or above Level 5 in PISA 2018 reading literacy

PISA 2018		% of students below Level 2	% of students at or above Level 5
Reading	Ireland	11.8%	12.1%
	OECD average	22.6%	8.7%
	EU average	24.0%	7.7%

TIMSS Results 2019 - Summary



Seven countries outperform Ireland on **maths at Fourth Class**. (No change from 2015)

Twelve countries outperform Ireland on **science at Fourth Class**. (15 in 2015)

Six countries outperform Ireland on **maths and science at Second Year** (No change from 2015)

Seven countries outperform Ireland on **science at Second Year** (No change from 2015)

There are no significant gender differences, for maths or science, at Fourth Class or Second Year.



Key Strategies

Addressing Educational Disadvantage



DEIS is the main policy initiative of the Department to address educational disadvantage

Delivering Equality of opportunity In Schools
DEIS = OPPORTUNITY

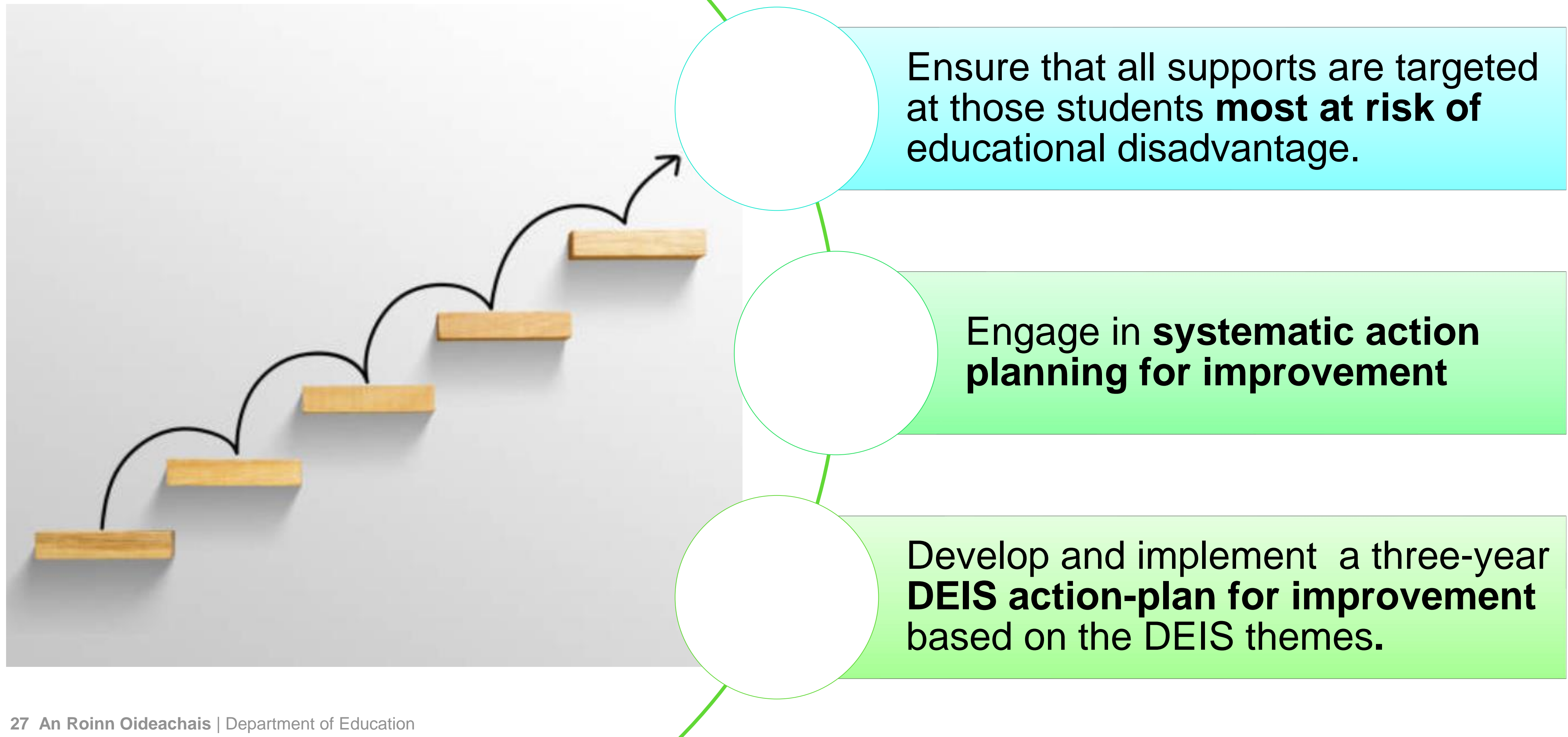
The Department allocates 180 million euro to the programme

Currently one third of all schools are in the DEIS programme:

- 967 primary schools
- 235 post-primary schools



What must the school do?



The DEIS themes are central to promoting equity and excellence



Attendance

Retention

Literacy and
numeracy

Transitions

Partnership
with parents
and others

Examination
attainment
(Post-Primary)

Leadership

CPD

Wellbeing





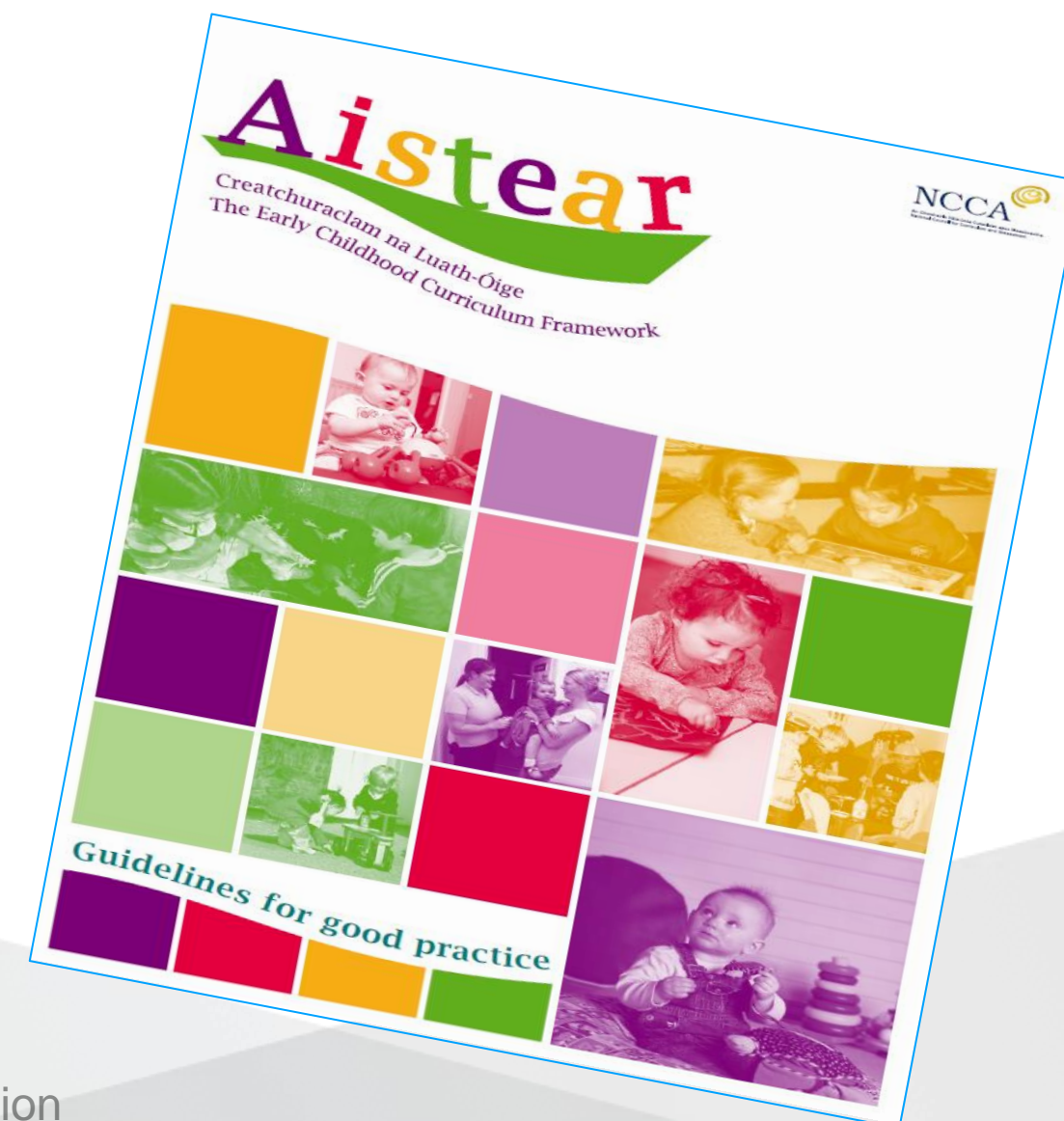
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Early Learning and Care Frameworks

Governance of ELC Settings



- Government defines curriculum and standards, and regulates and funds sector
- National curriculum (Aistear) framework and quality framework (Síolta)





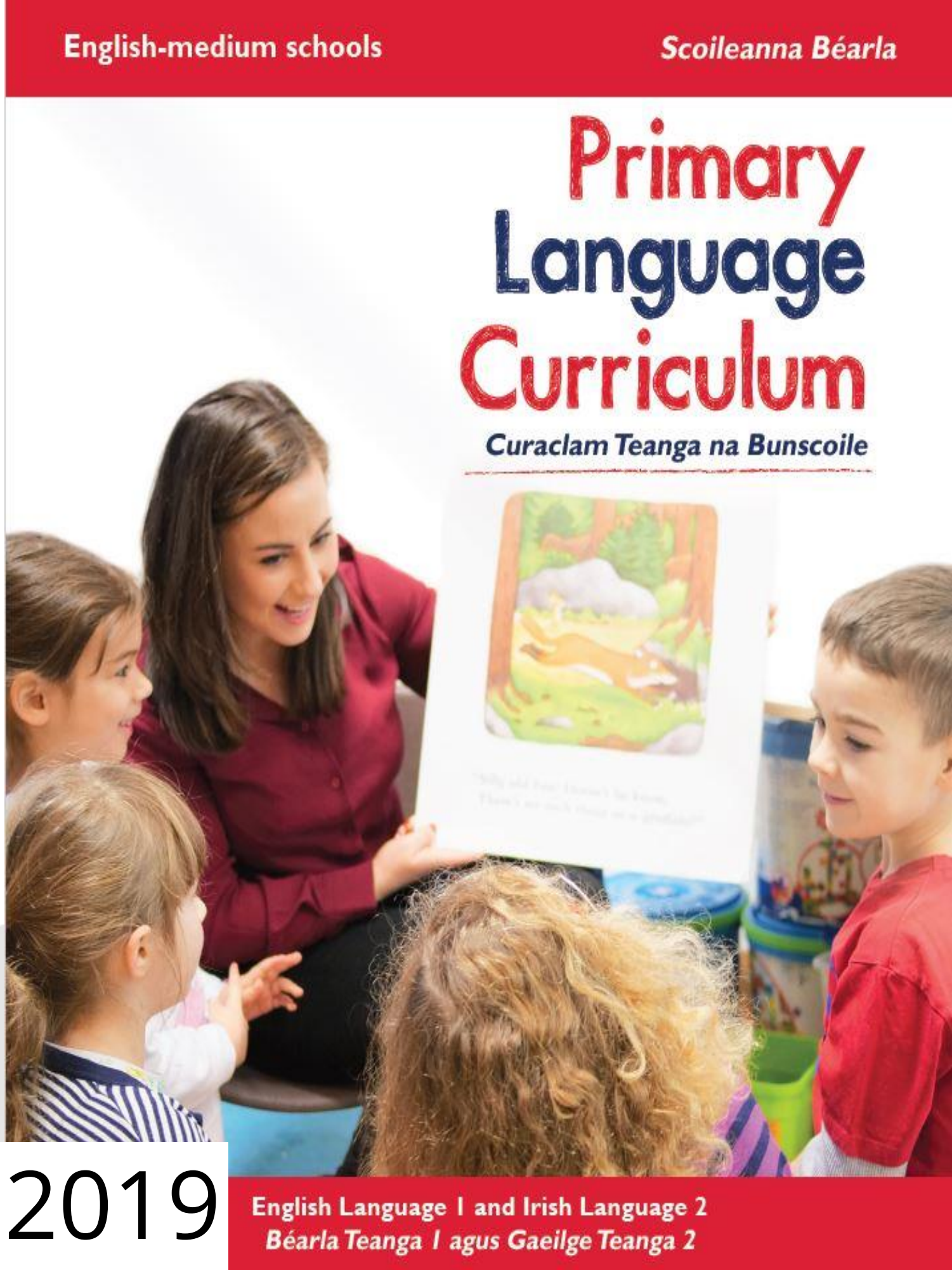
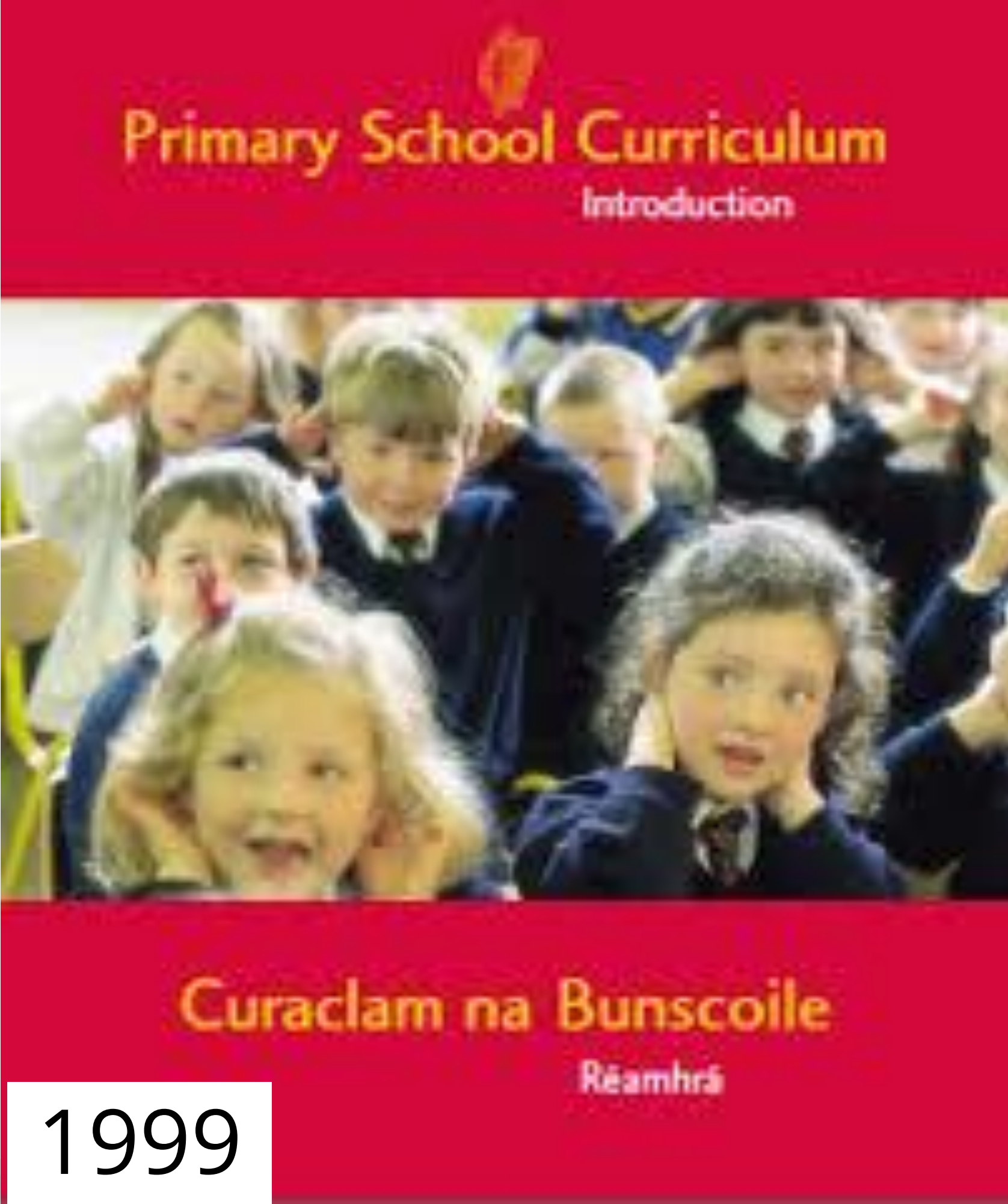
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Primary

The Primary School Curriculum



Language		
Gaeilge		English
Mathematics		
Social, environmental and scientific education		
History	Geography	Science
Arts education		
Visual arts	Music	Drama
Physical education		
Social, personal and health education		
Religious education		

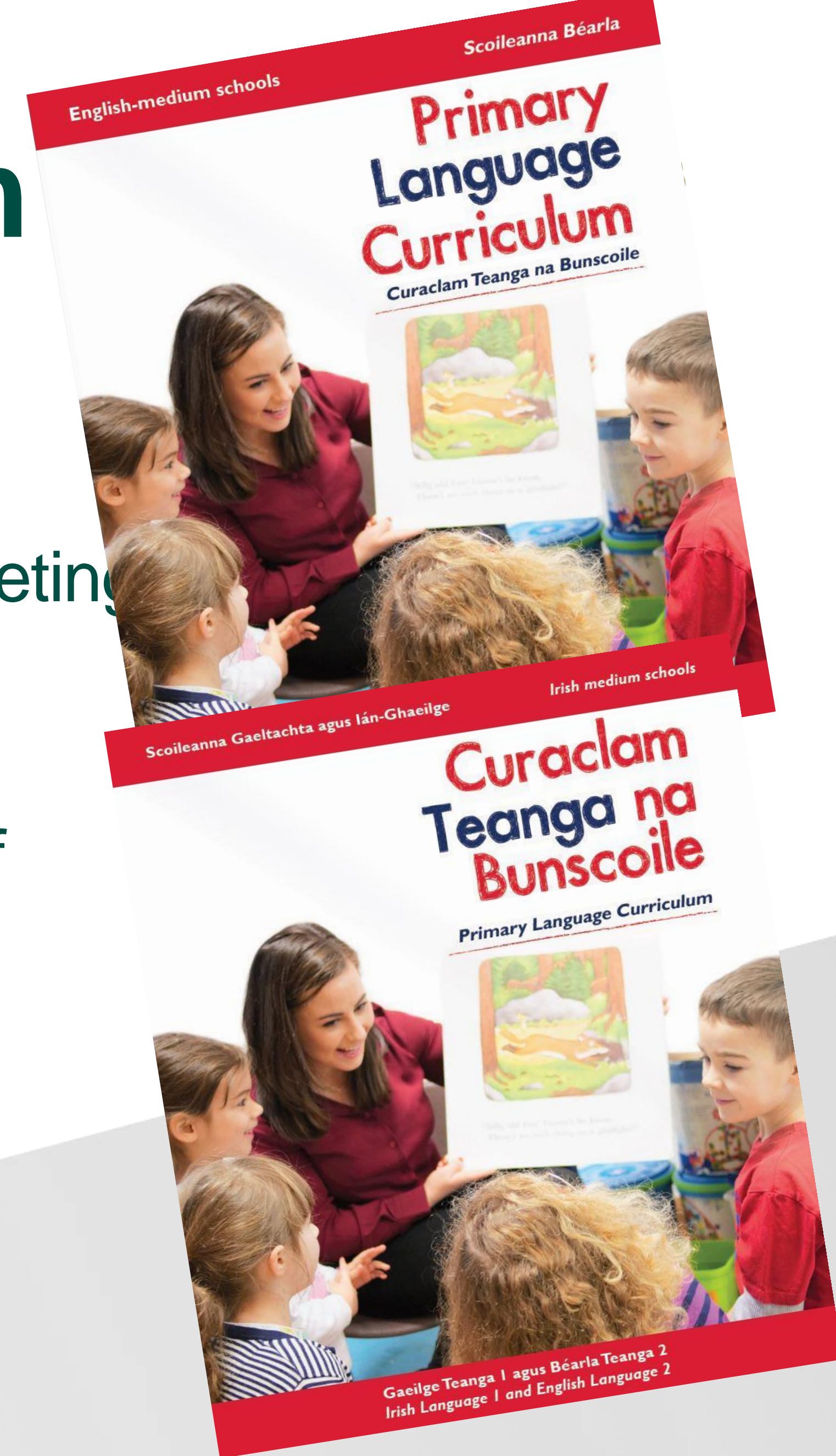


The Primary Language Curriculum

Learning Outcomes.....

what a learners knows, understands and is able to do after completing learning.....

On-line toolkit for teachers... progression continua, examples of children's language learning, support materials





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Lower Secondary

Framework for Junior Cycle



- Learning in the Junior Cycle is informed by:

- **Eight principles** that underpin the entire Framework for Junior Cycle



- **Twenty-four statements of learning** that are central to planning for, the students’ experience of, and the evaluation of the school’s junior cycle programme

Table 1: Twenty-four Statements of Learning

The student:
1. communicates effectively using a variety of means in a range of contexts in L1 ⁵
2. listens, speaks, reads and writes in L2 and one other language at a level of proficiency that is appropriate to her or his ability
3. creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts
4. creates and presents artistic works and appreciates the process and skills involved
5. has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making
6. appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives

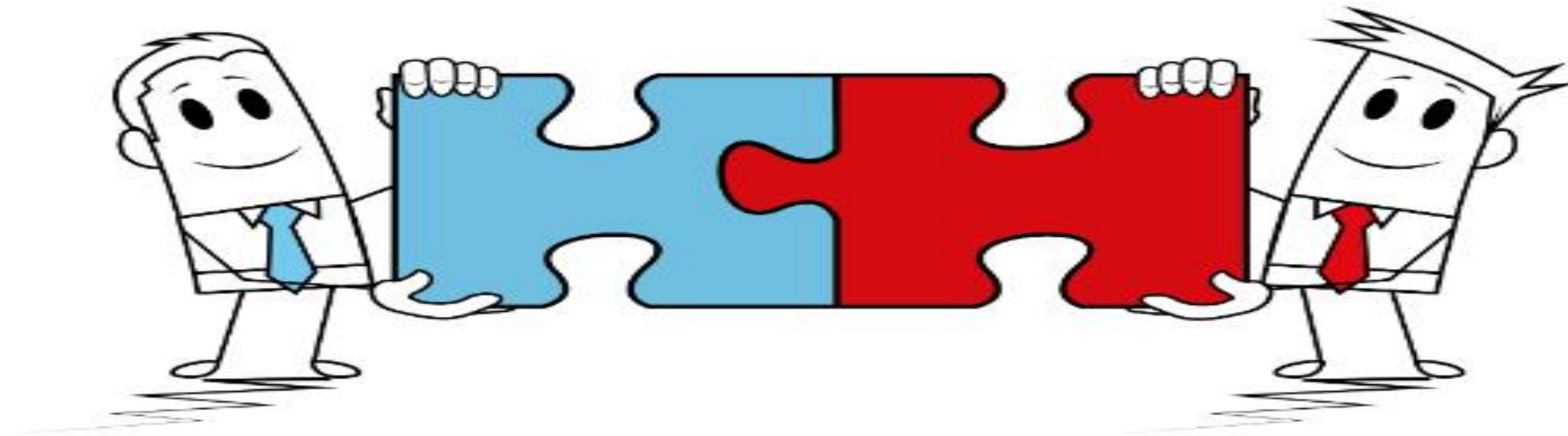
- **Eight key skills** that are required for successful learning by all students



School Self-Evaluation



School self-evaluation and External Evaluation

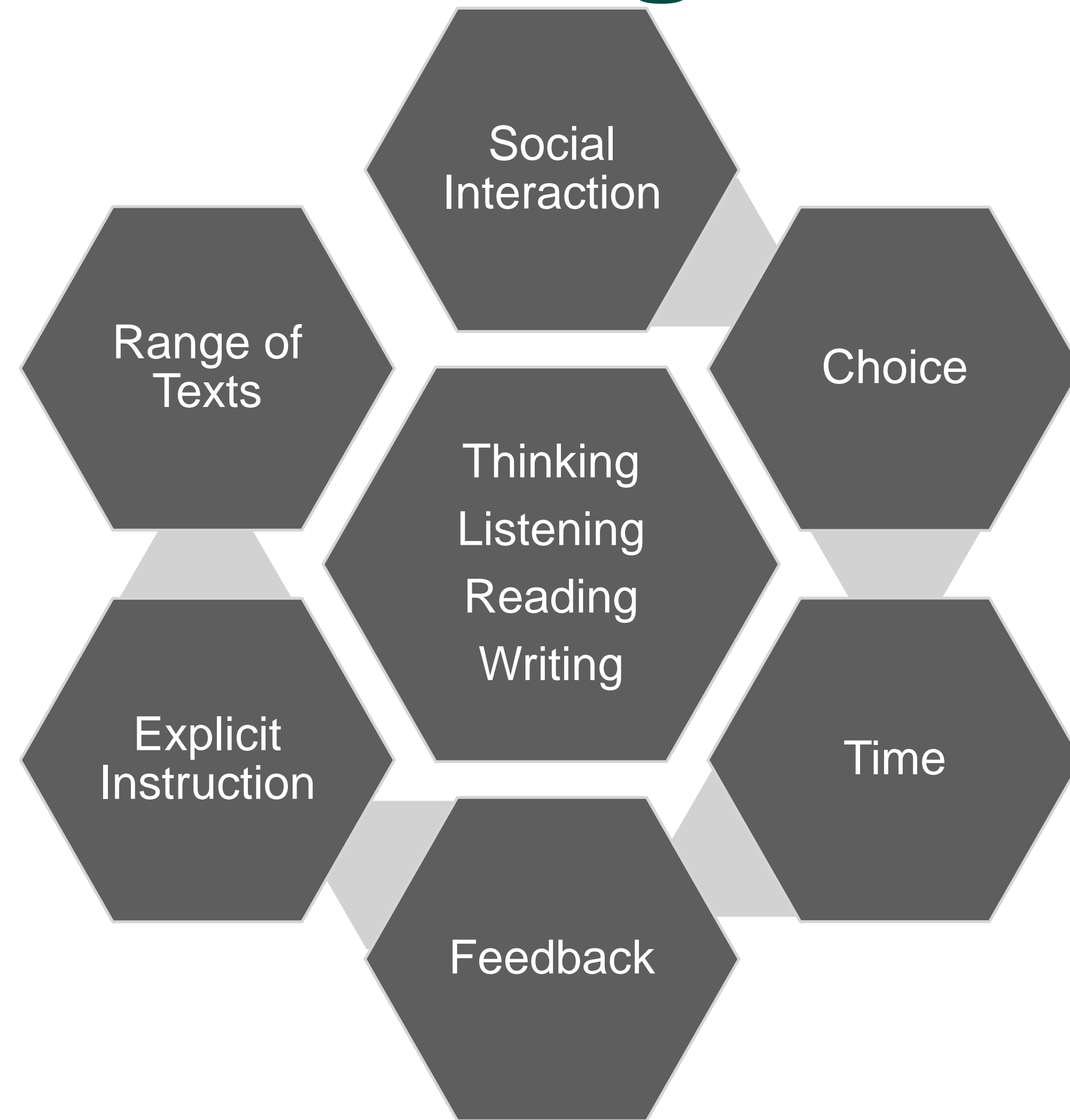


Complementary processes, both focused on improvement, key to maintaining the quality of our schools

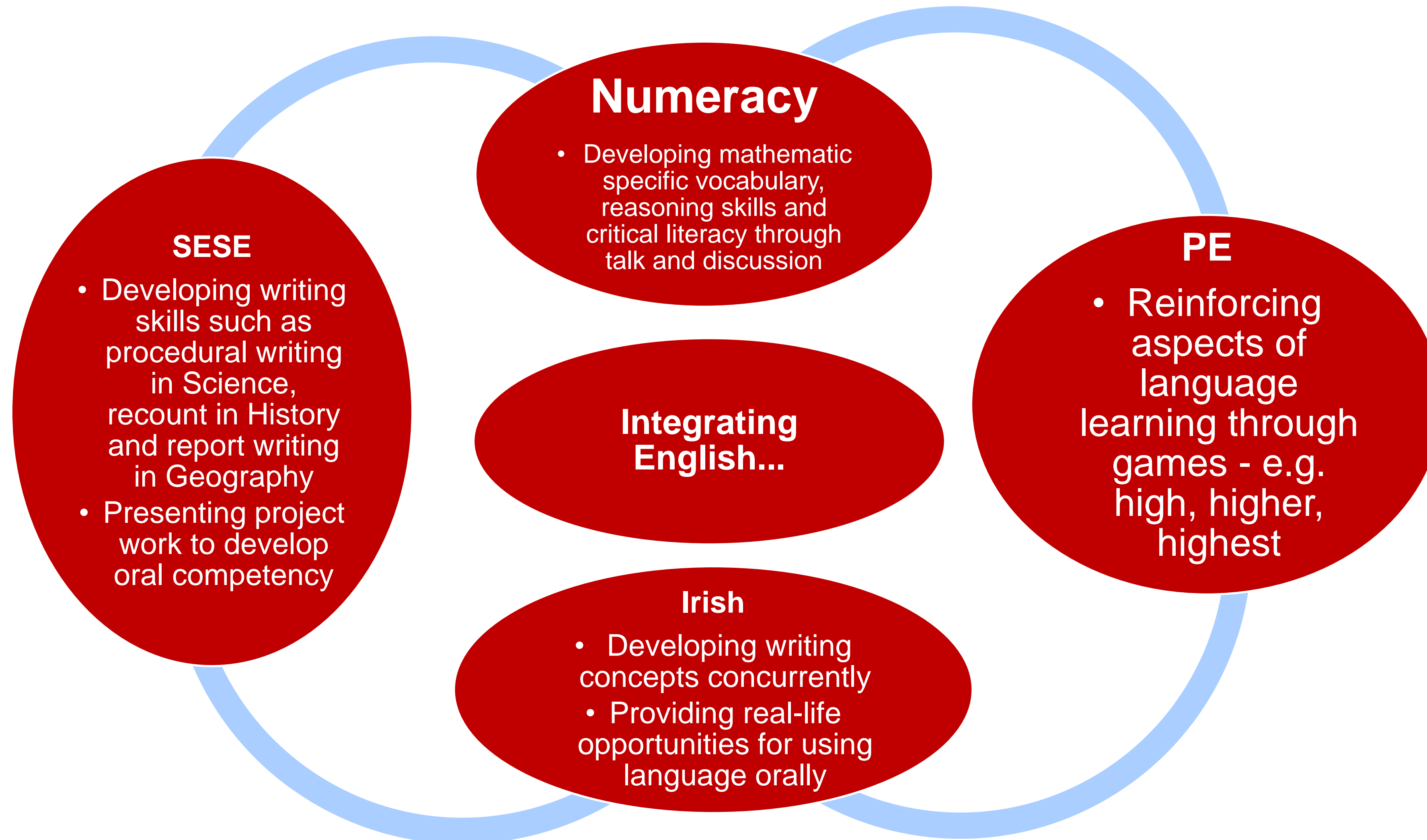
LAOS (2022) is the framework for both school self-evaluation and external evaluation

Long-term vision is for a well-integrated system of evaluation that combines external and internal perspectives

Examples of Strategies



Integrating Language



Other educational developments



Embedding *Aistear* (ELC) in Primary system

Primary Curriculum Framework – 2023 ISCED1

Primary Language Curriculum (Irish and English) - 2016

Primary Mathematics Curriculum - 2023

Framework for Junior Cycle (JC) - 2015 ISCED2

Senior Cycle Redevelopment - (2024+) ISCED3

Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026

STEM Education Policy Statement - 2017-2026

Digital Strategy for Schools – 2022 -2027

DEIS Plan 2017 -

Supports for Schools - National Bodies/Agencies



- The Department of Education Inspectorate
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)
- An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)

National Continuing Professional Development Support Services

- Better Start Quality Development Service (Early years)
- Oide – primary and post-primary <https://oide.ie>
- National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011-2020 – what's the latest?





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go raibh maith agaibh!

thank you!