

## Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) as part of its work on the introduction of language and literacy in Irish-medium primary schools whether Gaelscoileanna or schools in Gaeltacht areas. It is designed for completion by parents, students, teachers and others with experience of Irish-medium primary education.

Responses to the questionnaire will contribute to the development of a consultation report and advice to the Minister for Education and Science on the introduction and development of language and literacy in Irish-medium primary schools.

The questions are based on the summary of issues highlighted in *Language and Literacy in Irish-medium primary schools: Descriptions of Practice*. This document is available at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) and the questionnaire is also available for completion online.

The questionnaire is in three parts.

**Part 1:** for completion by parents of children attending/who attended Irish-medium primary schools

**Part 2:** for completion by children attending Irish-medium primary school and by students currently attending post-primary schools, who attended an Irish-medium primary school.

**Part 3:** for completion by teachers and others with experience of Irish-medium settings.

The closing date for the receipt of the completed questionnaire is **Friday 29th September 2006**.

**Please note:** if you, or your organisation wish to make a submission in response to the document, you may find Appendix A to be of use for this purpose. Submissions should be received by Wednesday 29th September 2006 and should be addressed to **Language and Literacy in Irish-medium Primary Schools Survey, NCCA, 24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.**

Name:

Address:

Gaeltacht area  Non-Gaeltacht area

My answers are informed by my experience as ✓ (please tick)

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Parent/Guardian of child in</b>        | <input type="checkbox"/> Gaelscoil                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Gaeltacht school | <input type="checkbox"/> English-medium school                                      |
| <b>Teacher in</b>                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Gaelscoil                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Gaeltacht school | <input type="checkbox"/> English-medium school                                      |
| <b>Principal in</b>                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Gaelscoil                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Gaeltacht school | <input type="checkbox"/> English-medium school                                      |
| <b>Member of Board of Management in</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> Gaelscoil                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Gaeltacht school | <input type="checkbox"/> English-medium school                                      |
| <b>Cúntóir Teanga</b>                     | <input type="checkbox"/>                              |   |   |
| <b>Practitioner in pre-school setting</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish-medium school          |   | <input type="checkbox"/> English-medium school                                      |
| <b>Student</b>                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Primary                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Post-primary     |   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Gaelscoil                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Gaeltacht school | <input type="checkbox"/> Aonad/Sruth <input type="checkbox"/> English-medium school |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |   |   |

# Part 1

For completion by parents/guardians of children who attend/ed Irish-medium primary schools

**Please note:** Irish-medium schools refers to schools in which all instruction (except English) takes place through Irish.

## Section A

### The Irish language

1. Read the following statements and rank 1 to 7 in order of importance to you (1= most important).

**In learning Irish, do you hope that your child/children will:**

- speak Irish fluently
- develop a positive attitude to Irish
- learn Irish in order to succeed well in Irish in their examinations later on
- speaking both Irish and English equally well
- contribute to the use of Irish as the language of the community
- integrate into an Irish-speaking community
- be better language learners

Further comment \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Irish language learning before school

The language(s) learned by children in the home prior to attending school help(s) them in their learning in all areas of the curriculum.

**2. In my opinion, children who attend schools where teaching takes place through Irish**

- |  | Yes                      | No                       | Depends on the child     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| need to experience Irish at home                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| need to have some pre-school experience in Irish before junior infants | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Further comment \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Using the Irish language

Irish-medium education is provided in both Irish speaking and English speaking communities. Irish-medium education is availed of by children from Irish-speaking, English speaking, Irish and English-speaking and other language backgrounds. In some instances there is strong support for the Irish language in the home and wider community, and in other cases there is little support.

*Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by placing a tick ✓ in the appropriate box.*

### **3. I am happy with the amount of Irish spoken by my child/children in the home**

strongly agree     agree     disagree     strongly disagree

### **4. I am happy with the amount of Irish spoken by my child/children in Irish-medium primary schools**

strongly agree     agree     disagree     strongly disagree

### **5. I am happy with the amount of Irish spoken by my child/children in the community**

strongly agree     agree     disagree     strongly disagree

Further comment \_\_\_\_\_

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## Languages in the school

The Language area of the Primary School Curriculum (1999) comprises English and Irish. All children in Irish-medium and English-medium primary schools follow the same curriculum for English. Two separate curricula are provided for Irish: Gaeilge L1 for learners in Irish-medium primary schools and Gaeilge L2 for learners in English-medium primary schools.

### **6. In sending my child to an Irish-medium primary school I expect**

that subjects will be taught through Irish:    all of the time     most of the time     some of the time

that school activities will be through Irish:    all of the time     most of the time     some of the time

that communication with me as a parent/guardian will be in:    Irish     Irish and English     English

Further comment \_\_\_\_\_

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## Learning Irish and English in the school

**7. To what extent are you aware of the language which is first introduced to your children in school?**

fully aware     aware     not really aware     unaware

**8. Are you satisfied that you have enough information about this area of your child/children's learning?**

yes     no

Further comment \_\_\_\_\_

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## Support for children's oral (spoken) Irish language learning

**9. To what extent do you know how to support your child/children's oral (spoken) Irish language learning in the home?**

I have a good idea     I have some idea     I have no idea

Further comment \_\_\_\_\_

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## Support for children's oral (spoken) English language learning

**10. To what extent do you know how to support your child/children's oral (spoken) English language learning in the home?**

I have a good idea     I have some idea     I have no idea

Further comment \_\_\_\_\_

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## Section B

### Reading in Irish and in English

Schools adopt different approaches to the introduction of reading. In some instances children begin to read in Irish first, and in other instances they begin to read in English first.

### Learning to read Irish and English at school

**11. In sending your child/children to an Irish-medium school, which language(s) do you expect your child/children to learn to read in first?**

Irish first       English first       both Irish and English at the same time

Further comment \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Support for the child who is learning to read Irish

**12. To what extent do you know how to support your child/children who is/are reading in Irish in the home?**

very well       well enough       not well

Further comment \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Support for the child who is learning to read English

**13. To what extent do you know how to support your child/children who is/are reading in English in the home?**

very well       well enough       not well

Further comment \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Section C

### Resources in Irish

**14. How would you describe the quality of the learning resources (e.g. text books, comics, novels, short stories, magazines, computer software, DVDs and other reading material) that are available to you in Irish?**

Very good       good       not very good       not good at all

Further comment \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# PART 2

## For completion by students with experience of Irish medium primary education

**Section A** is for completion by children **who are currently attending an Irish-medium primary school.**  
**Section B** is for completion by students, **who attended an Irish-medium primary school.**

### Section A

#### Primary school children and Irish-medium schooling

Complete this section if you are attending an Irish-medium primary school.

1. I am in fifth class  sixth class

2. I am in a single class setting  multi-grade setting

If in a multi-grade setting, please name the classes \_\_\_\_\_

3. I speak Irish (more than one box may be ticked)

at home  in class/school  in the playground at school  to my friends outside school

4. I learn Irish by (more than one box may be ticked)

listening and talking to my teacher  watching TV (e.g. TG4)   
listening and talking to other children at school  listening and talking to other people in Irish   
listening to radio the in Irish  listening to music and songs in Irish

5. In Irish I write (more than one box may be ticked)

postcards  letters  poems/rhymes  stories  emails

other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6. I speak English** (more than one box may be ticked)

at home  in class/school  in the playground at school  to my friends outside school

**7. I learn English by** (more than one box may be ticked)

listening and talking to my teacher  watching TV   
listening and talking to other children at school  listening and talking to other people in English   
listening to the radio in English  listening to music and songs in English

**8. In English I write** (more than one box may be ticked)

postcards  letters  poems/rhymes  stories  emails

other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**9. When I read, I like to read (books, magazines, comics)**

in Irish  in Irish more than English  in English  in English more than Irish

Further comment \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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# Section B

## Post-primary students and Irish-medium primary schooling

Complete this section if you are currently attending a post-primary school *having attended* an Irish-medium primary school.

I am currently attending an Irish-medium post-primary school

I am currently attending an English-medium post-primary school

### 10. Based on your experience of Irish-medium education in primary school

how well did your study of Irish prepare you for the study of Irish at post-primary level?

Very well  well enough  not well enough  not well

how well did your primary education through Irish prepare you for the study of other subjects at post-primary level through the medium of Irish?

Very well  well enough  not well enough  not well

how well did your study of English prepare you for the study of English at post-primary level?

Very well  well enough  not well enough  not well

### 11. How would you describe the quality of the learning resources (e.g. text books, comics, novels, short-stories, magazines, computer software, DVDs and other reading material) that were available to you in Irish when you were in primary school?

Very good  good  not very good  not good at all

Further comment \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# PART 3

## For completion by teachers and others with experience of Irish-medium settings

Please indicate whether you are responding as

a teacher in a Gaelscoil  a teacher in a Gaeltacht school

other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

As a teacher in a Gaelscoil or a Gaeltacht school please state the level at which you are teaching.

single class  multi-grade

junior infants/senior infants  first class/second class

third class/fourth class  fifth class/sixth class

multi-grade setting with multiple levels (please indicate levels) \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## Section A

### Policy and Planning

There is great diversity in children's language experience and competence found in all schools. The Primary School Curriculum recommends that schools consider a number of issues when planning for curriculum implementation at local level.

**1. From your experience, what are the important factors to consider in planning the language and literacy policy of the school?**

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**2. What special considerations are required in Irish-medium schools when planning for the language and literacy needs of children with general or specific learning disabilities?**

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**3. Further comments on policy and planning**

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## **Section B**

### **Oral language**

Children benefit from participation in an authentic language learning environment where real activities are based on their own interests and experiences. In their language learning, children become expressive and communicative, while they also master correct usage.

**4. What strategies have you found effective in developing children's oral language in Irish and in English?**

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**5. How have you used the three phases of language acquisition (pre-communication, communication, and post-communication) to improve children's use of idiomatic and grammatical forms in Irish?**

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# Section C

## Emergent reading and reading

Oral language provides the basis for the emergent reading programmes in both Irish and English. Approaches to literacy and questions such as the language in which children should start reading first are of central concern to Irish-medium primary schools.

**6. What factors are considered in deciding whether a child's emergent and reading should be introduced in their home language or the language of the school where the two are not the same?**

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**7. How have you used recommended emergent literacy activities in Irish and English to prepare children for formal or independent reading?**

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**8. What strategies have you found useful in encouraging the development of a reading culture in the home when, for example, parents experience difficulties in supporting their children's language and literacy needs?**

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# Section D

## Writing

Teachers in Irish-medium schools note that children's writing in English is more expressive than their writing in Irish.

**9. What strategies have you found useful in using oral language and reading to develop the expressiveness of children's writing?**

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**10. What strategies have you found effective for engaging children in the writing process in the case of both Irish and English?**

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## **Section E**

### **Supporting language and literacy development**

The Primary School Curriculum recommends a variety of strategies for assessing children's progress in learning. Learning support is provided for English and mathematics in many schools

**11. What strategies have you found effective in supporting language and literacy development in Irish-medium primary schools?**

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**12. In the context of an Irish-medium primary school, what particular issues relating to Learning Support provision should be considered?**

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**13. From your experience, please comment on standards achieved in English and Irish (oral language, reading and writing) by children in Irish-medium primary schools?**

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**The NCCA wishes to thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.**

Please send to **Language and Literacy in Irish-medium Primary Schools Survey, NCCA, 24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.**