



Gaeilge

Overview

The *Gaeilge* curriculum is presented in two separate sections: the first for English-medium schools, and the second for Gaeltacht and all-Irish schools. In English-medium schools, the curriculum is designed to enable children to develop communicative competence in Irish in an enjoyable way. It also enhances the cultural identity of the child through cultural awareness activities.

In Irish-medium schools, the *Gaeilge* curriculum is designed so that children can develop greater mastery of the language, in a way which enhances their intellectual, emotional and imaginative development. It also supports their learning in other curriculum areas.

The benefits to children of being bilingual at an early age include enhanced self-esteem, positive attitude towards language learning, and greater cognitive flexibility.

Common to both sections is the use of a communicative task-based approach, where children have opportunities to use Irish in a range of contexts and for different purposes. Themes and topics are based on children's interests and needs.

Language:Gaeilge

In the *Gaeilge* curriculum, the four strands of *éisteacht*, *labhairt*, *léitheoireacht* and *scríbhneoireacht* (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are integrated. These strands are further sub-divided into strand-units such as *Ag cothú spéise* (Fostering interest), *Ag tuiscint teanga* (Understanding language) and *Ag úsáid teanga* (Using language). These may be further sub-divided into *Cumas agus muinín* (Competence and confidence) and *Samhlaíocht agus mothúcháin* (Imagination and Emotion). The curriculum promotes both language and cultural awareness.

In all classes, the emphasis is on the child being active in using *Gaeilge*, and in developing the four language skills. The curriculum is child-centred as opposed to language-centred. A number of strategies are used to develop the child's communicative competence. These include role-play, language games, tasks and problems, drills, drama, video, story, and poetry. In the teaching of reading, an emergent literacy approach is promoted, which emphasises the development of the child's general language ability as a basis for success in reading and writing.