



## **Primary Language Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile including Modern Foreign Languages – Frequently Asked Questions**

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### **1. Why has Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) been added to the Primary Language Curriculum (PLC)/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile (CTB)?**

Through MFL, children will develop their skills as language learners, deepening knowledge and skills already gained through learning English and Irish. Learning languages can enhance logical thinking, problem solving and creativity. The introduction of MFL also aims to further enable primary and special schools to promote an inclusive environment that celebrates the linguistic diversity of the children, staff and community. Furthermore, children are given greater opportunities to explore their own and other cultures and begin to understand and navigate cultural diversity in society. The addition of MFL to the PLC/CTB as part of the redeveloped Primary School Curriculum stems from [Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026](#). This strategy asked that consideration was to be given to the inclusion of foreign languages at primary level.

### **2. What does the Primary Curriculum Framework say about MFL in the redeveloped Primary School Curriculum?**

The framework states that from Stage 3 (3rd and 4th classes) onwards, MFL will be added to the language area of the curriculum, alongside English and Irish. At Stage 3 (3rd and 4th classes), children will build on their existing awareness of languages and cultures. They will progress to learning to communicate in a third language (L3) at a very basic to basic level at Stage 4 (5th and 6th classes).

Language Awareness involves an exploration of language through which children become more aware of their own language knowledge and explore connections with other languages. This exploration includes comparing and contrasting all languages in their repertoire and environment, developing a deeper awareness of how languages work and drawing their attention to how they learn languages.

### 3. At what stage is MFL being introduced into the curriculum?

MFL will commence at Stage 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Classes) with a focus on building an awareness of languages and cultures. This new element consolidates children’s existing knowledge of languages and cultures and builds a solid foundation for learning a third curriculum language (L3) at Stage 4 (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Classes).

At Stage 4 (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Classes), children will continue to focus on building an awareness of languages and cultures. They will also learn to communicate at a very basic to basic level in the school’s chosen L3.

Figure 1 illustrates the components of MFL within the PLC/CTB.

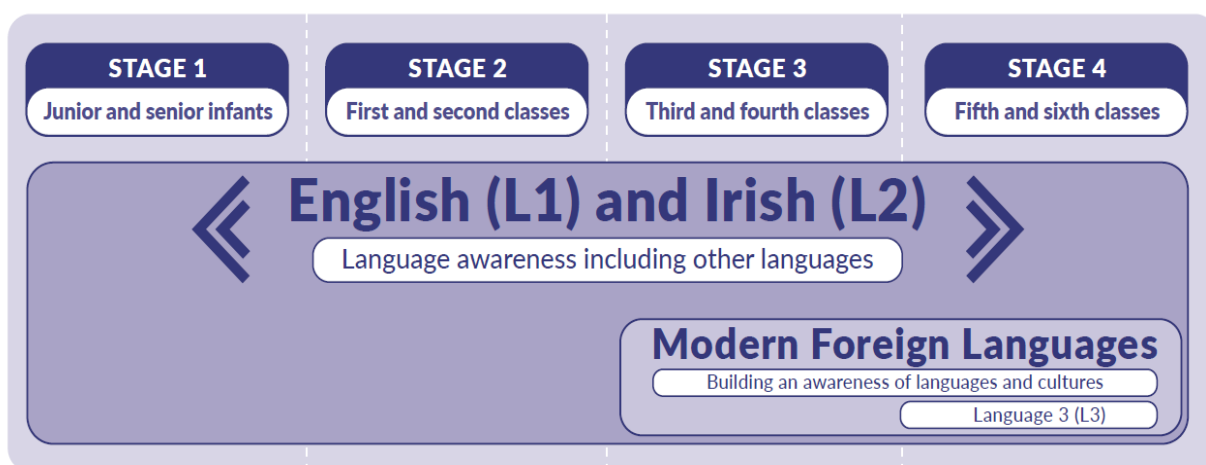


Figure 1: MFL in the PLC/CTB.

### 4. Has MFL ever been part of the primary curriculum before?

Teachers in Ireland have a great wealth of experience in language learning and teaching through their interaction with and experience of English, Irish and other languages.

‘Say Yes to Languages’, a primary languages sampler module, has been offered since 2021, with many schools participating. 1300 schools are registered for the module for the school year 2025/2026.

Some schools may have participated in the Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative (MLPSI) during the period spanning 1998-2012.

This will be the first time that MFL has officially formed part of the Primary School Curriculum, rather than being piloted.

## 5. How do schools choose an L3?

Schools may choose any L3 they wish based on their available resources, the current language competencies of their teachers, and the home languages in the classroom. Where possible, all children should begin learning the L3 as complete beginners.

Schools do not need to choose the L3 based on languages taught at post-primary level. Languages taught in first year at post-primary are taught with the assumption that the learner has no prior competency and knowledge of individual languages.

To ensure continuity and progression, children should learn the same L3 in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class, where possible.

## 6. How much time will be allocated to learning and teaching MFL in Stages 3 and 4?

The *Primary Curriculum Framework* outlines a suggested time allocation of one hour per week for learning and teaching MFL in Stages 3 and 4.

<b>Stage 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Building an awareness of languages and cultures</li></ul>	1 hour per week
<b>Stage 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Building an awareness of languages and cultures</li><li>Communicative competence in the L3 at a very basic to basic level</li></ul>	1 hour per week

In addition to these suggested minimum time allocations, schools may also draw on flexible time to further support MFL learning and teaching - up to 7 hours per month at Stages 3 and 4.

## 7. What prior NCCA research has been conducted on the inclusion of MFL in the Primary School Curriculum?

Prior NCCA work examining MFL in the Primary School Curriculum includes:

- Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment Background Paper - Integrating Modern Foreign Languages in a Redeveloped Primary Curriculum (2019)
- Modern Languages in the Primary School Curriculum: Feasibility and Futures (2008)
- Report on the Feasibility of Modern Languages in the Primary School Curriculum (2005)
- Modern Languages in Primary Schools: Teacher Guidelines (2001)
- Pilot Project on Modern Languages in the Primary School: Draft Curriculum Guidelines (1999)